LOUGHTON AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Staples Road Infants School in 1898, from volume 2 of Percy Thompson's *Notes on Loughton*. *[Many L&DHS members, like the Editor, are probably ex-SRS. I found this image very nostalgic, so unchanged, and yet so different.]*

This, our final *Newsletter* of the 2010/2011 season, opens with Eddie Dare's obituary. This would have appeared in our previous issue, but we had already sent back the final proofs to the printers.

However, this unavoidable delay in no way diminishes our appreciation of his life and his contribution to the Loughton & District Historical Society.

Eddie Dare, 1919–2010

On 29 September 2010 the Society lost one of its oldest members, Eddie Dare, when he passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home in Ibbetson Path.

Born on 8 August 1919, and thus a peace baby, Eddie was the eldest of seven siblings. He did not have a good beginning and contracted polio at a young age. This left him lame, but you would never have known it! At first he lived in West Ham, and later in Heybridge, near Maldon. His family moved to Riddons Road in Lewisham's Grove Park Housing Estate in 1939 or 1940. After leaving Catford Central School, Eddie followed the traditions of his ancestors, who had been millers in Devonshire. Thus he trained as a baker and began by cycling Lewisham streets to deliver the bread, also delivering medicines for a local doctor to earn a little extra. It was his subsequent work in the sweltering basement ovens of east and south London that made him more socially conscious and he later wrote a fascinating article describing the long night hours and appalling conditions in underground bakeries during the 1930s.

Towards the end of the 1930s, Eddie followed his father to sea as a baker on the Union Castle Line. It was on a visit to South Africa that he was shocked to see the working conditions in the docks when he went ashore in Durban. This experience determined the rest of his life – it gave him his philosophy, which was a fighting one. Back in Britain he soon became involved in politics, joining the Labour Party and eventually the Communist Party.

During the war years, he worked briefly for Lewisham Council. It was during the war that he met Olive and they married in 1942. Olive, who came from Bermondsey, shared his social concerns on many issues.

In 1951, he moved with his wife and family to the then new LCC estate at Debden. With his interest in the politics of the left, he established a Communist branch and became secretary. He ran meetings and walked miles round the 6,000 houses in Debden, knocking on doors and handing out leaflets. After the fall of the USSR, Eddie rejoined the Labour Party and, without success, stood for council office under the Labour banner. He left again, he said, after the invasion of Iraq.

Eddie joined the Civil Service in 1943. In spite of his politics, he was promoted – promotion boards never turned him down – over the years, which was

entirely through ability. He started at the old Board of Trade, but was transferred to the DHSS, ending up at Hannibal House near the Elephant and Castle (not far from his South London origins) in the Department of Health. He retired in the early 1980s as a principal, or grade 7 as they had just become.

In his union he was a brilliant organiser and for three years he was also chairman of the Marx Memorial Library. He was also a key member of the committee of the Socialist History Society, where he revived and ran its lively newsletter, editing several of the society's publications including one concerned with East End Jewish bakers. His letters to the press – especially the *West Essex Gazette* – were often published. Over the years Eddie took part in many campaigns. He was always fond of people, enjoying company and vigorous discussion.

He was an active member of the Loughton & District Historical Society and served 10 years on our committee, and as newsletter editor from 1992 to 1997, typing it on his old Wordstar word-processor, and contributing many interesting articles and snippets. He researched and wrote for the *Local Historian* nationally, a peer-reviewed account of the Loughton Mutual Labour-Aid Society in 1994 and was pleased to find it cited by international academics in the ensuing years.

Having attained the age of 91 in August, Eddie was still politically active, in the last month of his life lobbying Chris Pond, as County Councillor, calumnising the Coalition Government, and putting in a Freedom of Information Act request about social care to the County Council. His mind was still razor-sharp, but he had a fall the following month, breaking his right arm, followed by a miserable but brief stay in hospital. Back at home he had another fall, but soon rallied, and chatted to the ambulance crew who had been called, telling them of his ongoing campaigning and stating, just before being helped into bed by the paramedic and his daughter Janet: 'So it's on to a hundred – I love life. The world is an interesting place and I want to see what happens.'

He died that night in his sleep.

Second World War public air raid shelters in Loughton

PETER COOK

Newsletter 184 (January/February 2010) carried – under the title 'From The Archives' and submitted by John Redfern – details of the ARP Warden Posts and Public Air Raid Shelters in Loughton and the surrounding areas. The Editor added a footnote wondering if anyone had any memories they might care to relate and although, as far as I am aware, there has been no response to date, perhaps this may jog one or two memories and expand the topic a bit further.

My personal recollections relate to the shelter situated at the junction of Forest Road and Smarts Lane, which covered more or less the whole of the triangle down to the commencement of the houses in both roads. At that time the only trees on the site were the large oaks on the point by the crossroads, and a thin wooded strip alongside the fence which ran from Belle Vue Cottages in Smarts Lane down to Simmonds Engineering at the top of Forest Road. The arrival of the shelter not only offered safety during air raids, but, from the point of view of the local children, another play area as an alternative to the forest.

The entrance, a wide concrete ramp, was just off Forest Road at the edge of the trees and was closed off with two large wooden gates at the point where it entered the ground and became a tunnel. The gates were locked unless an air raid ensued, at which point they were unlocked, presumably by the local warden. As most houses had by then their own Anderson or Morrison shelters I can only remember our family using the public shelter on two or three occasions, but I seem to recall that once in the tunnel there was seating along the sides and other branch tunnels leading off. Above ground, spread over the area, were a number of brick boxes open on one side, which presumably were ventilation shaft outlets, but which provided excellent 'pill boxes' for our war games.

Alongside the entrance was a small brick building, probably housing the equipment required to provide lighting and ventilation, and, as it was possible to climb onto the flat roof, we did. You then jumped off or, if of a slightly more nervous disposition, held onto the edge of the roof and dropped. Passing adults would admonish us, saying 'You'll break your legs', but I don't recall anyone suffering any damage other than the usual grazed knees.

At the end of the war it remained permanently locked but at some point someone managed to remove one of the ventilation shaft covers. How we got down I'm not sure – there may have been ladders on the shaft walls as a means of escape should the entrance be blocked – but of course explorations were carried out by torchlight until one day someone claimed to have heard strange noises and footsteps, after which it was always said to be haunted. It is interesting to note that in the ARP list it was a Category B Shelter 'to be concrete lined and permanent', although whether the permanency was intended to extend beyond the cessation of hostilities is not determined. It was eventually demolished, the small building and our 'pill boxes' were levelled and the ramp buried. Whether the tunnels were filled I know not – maybe the archives hold the answer – but the whole area is now completely overgrown and, to the best of my knowledge, no trace remains.

The Great Gale of January 1930

[RICHARD MORRIS *has been extensively photographing and transcribing the late Percy Thompson's original notes.]*

The winter of 1929–30 was marked by much rain and by several severe gales which occasioned much damage.

The gale of Sunday, January 12 1930 was of unprecedented violence. Following a day of fairly strong wind, a severe gale arose at soon after 6pm and raged without cessation until 11pm, when it began to moderate: during those five hours some of the wind gusts were of extraordinary force, velocities of over 100 miles an hour being registered in places. Great damage was caused throughout the entire South of England.

At Loughton, eight large elms were thrown down in Church Lane, five of them almost side by side, one elm at the top of the new Spareleaze Hill was snapped off at some 12 feet from the ground, several trees were uprooted around Borders Farm, and one in Border's Lane; in addition, many branches were broken off.

At the old churchyard of St Nicholas, a large old elm, (about 11 ft in girth), abutting on the south boundary of the churchyard, (a reminder of the old course of Border's Lane before its diversion some 60 years ago), was uprooted, exposing and breaking to pieces in its fall a brick vault, 9 feet by 6 feet, of whose existence no trace was visible at the surface: this vault (the brickwork of which is in excellent condition) is near to the headstone which commemorates Louisa Muggeridge: no coffins were exposed, owing to the fall of the brick vaulted roof and superincumbent earth.

The Parish Registers tell us that in 1734 a grant of a site for a vault was made to Mr John Lawton, who resided at Golding's Hill (probably at Feltham Lodge). He was buried there in 1754 and others of his family also were buried in the churchyard, presumably in the same vault; but no memorial exists anywhere today to any Lawton: it is just possible, therefore, that the vault now exposed may be the Lawton vault.

The moulded coping and foliated cross finial to the apex of the east gable of St Nicholas Memorial Chapel was demolished by the gale.

A tall Spruce Fir near the NW corner of the churchyard was snapped off at the butt.

Several big trees in Rectory Lane, close to the churchyard, were thrown down and others broken off: four large elms on the other side of the Lane were uprooted, side by side.

At Goldings Hill several large elms, and a small sycamore, were destroyed; at the top of Pump Hill a large tree was broken off at a few feet above the ground.

The upper part of the front of Vanryne's shoeing forge in the High Road was hurled to the ground.

Now read on . . .

The 'Great Storm': 18 June 1930

Following several days of torrid heat, and a heavy thunderstorm and rainstorm in London on the previous evening, when many places were flooded, a long-continued thunderstorm, accompanied by a cloudburst which lasted nearly two hours, broke over Loughton in the afternoon of Wednesday, 18 June 1930. The writer has no such local remembrance during his 37 years of residence in Loughton.

The High Road, by Gould's Warehouse

The Loughton Brook overflowed its channel (owing, no doubt, in part to the interference with the natural course of the stream where the Brooklyn Estate was developed some years ago) and flooded the High Road and the nearby houses. Brook Cottage and several of the new bungalows (one significantly known as 'Doublewaters'!) which adjoin the Brook, were flooded out, and their wooden fences broken down. The houses forming the terrace known as Brook Villas had their basements filled with five or six feet depth of water, and the High Road was converted into a shallow lake, with the tarred roadway and sidewalks broken up by the rush of water.

Three hours after the rain had ceased the Brook was brimful of turbulent rushing water, more like a Swiss streamlet than a sluggish Essex brook.

In Woodland [Road], Forest Road and elsewhere, low-lying houses were flooded: and the surface of all roads was ploughed up into gulleys by the downrush of water, and the surface-gulleys choked with muddy sand.

The playground wall of the Council Schools in Staples Road broke down owing to the downrush of water from the higher slopes, which flooded the houses in Woodland [Road], sweeping away the garden crops in its passage.

Several houses in Loughton were struck by lightning, including 'Hatfields' and one in Alderton Hill Road, but no great amount of damage ensued.

The Oriolet Hospital – York Hill, Loughton

[*From* Lost Hospitals of London. *The Oriolet Hospital was mentioned in the article 'Some random recollections of Loughton in the 1890s', by Percy Thompson in* Newsletter 186*. It seemed interesting to find out a little more about it, which the Editor's wife then did.*]

Oriolet Hospital, York Hill, Loughton, Essex
Medical dates: 1895–1903; Medical Character: Specialist (vegetarian)

The Oriolet Hospital and Convalescent Home opened in 1895, endowed by the prominent vegetarian, Dr Arnold Hills (1857–1927), as a centre of treatment for sick vegetarians. The barrister Mr Josiah Oldfield (1863–1953), an

Oxford graduate in law and theology who had adopted vegetarianism whilst a student, was made its Warden.

The Hospital consisted of a Victorian house named *Oriolet* and an open-air ward with 20 beds. The 2-acre site on the border of Epping Forest was surrounded by a fence and was large enough to make it unnecessary for patients ever to leave the premises (in fact, they were not allowed to except on very special occasions, and then only with written permission).

Surgical, medical and convalescent cases were admitted without payment or letters of referral. Those suffering from early cancers took priority for admission. Medical records were kept as to the effect of the dietetic treatment (it was said that patients who self-referred themselves from other hospitals were cured).

Patients were not allowed to possess any money; that which they brought with them had to be deposited with the Sister-in-Charge. No patient was allowed to grumble.

The medical press, of course, complained about the faddiness and restrictions of the Hospital's régime – that 'for a patient to ask a physician to cure with certain reservations is much like asking a surgeon to cut off a leg with one hand in his breeches pocket'. The objection lay in the fact that the patient himself chose to be admitted to a vegetarian hospital rather than the referring physician prescribing such a treatment from the many others available.

In September 1897 Dr Oldfield (he had qualified medically that same year) attended the 4th International Vegetarian Congress in London, where an exhibition of vegetarian products was being held at the same time. (A new vegetable fat *Albene* was displayed. Without taste or smell, it was highly spoken of amongst vegetarians.) Dr Oldfield's exhibit consisted of a real baby in a cot and a collection of models of things not actually at the Hospital, but needed there – a bronchitis kettle and tent, hot-water bottles, etc.

By 1900 the Hospital had 24 beds – 8 for male patients, 10 for females and 6 for children. Paying patients were charged from 1 guinea (£1.05) a week and 10 beds were reserved for poor patients at a fee of 7s 6d (37p) a week; there were four free beds. TB patients were admitted for open-air treatment and those with cancer for dietetic treatment.

By the turn of the century Dr Oldfield had resigned as Warden and moved to London to found his own hospital – the Hospital of St Francis – in the New Kent Road.

In May 1903 the Salvation Army took over the Oriolet Hospital. Florence Booth (1861–1957), who was in charge of the Women's Social Work, had been a vegetarian for 15 years and it had been one of her long-cherished ambitions to acquire the property.

The Hospital was renamed the Oriolet Hygienic Home and opened in June 1903 for the treatment of TB patients. Mrs Booth held a press conference, inviting journalists to a fruitarian banquet at the Home, where she explained the *raison d'être* of the new departure – that three of God's greatest blessings would be freely used at Oriolet: fresh air, pure food and clean water. The diet would be strictly vegetarian – nuts, fruits and grain – prepared for each individual patient's needs.

Although there would be paying patients, the fees were not large and, as soon as funds permitted, those who were too poor to pay would also be admitted. It was intended to supplement the existing open-air wards with revolving open-air shelters. The Home would also offer hydropathic treatments, including Turkish baths.

However, the doctor in charge of the new venture became unwell and no replacement could be found. The Salvation Army was forced to give up the enterprise and, although Mrs Booth hoped to re-establish the hospital in another house, this did not happen.

Present status (December 2010)

In 1908 the premises were taken over by St Ethelburga's Home for Girls, which moved from Kilburn so that the 40 girls (aged from 8 to 14 years) could have space to play and to tend their own little vegetable garden.

The Home closed in 1922 and the building then became the York House Hotel. Part of the site became a tea garden until 1929 (some of it still remains as the garden of the Wheatsheaf public house).

The Hotel has since been demolished and new homes have been built on the site, as well as a new road – York Crescent.

The only remnant of the Oriolet Hospital is a dragon finial on the roof of No 97 Staples Road.

1. No 97 Staples Road

2. The dragon finial

3. The dragon finial on the roof of No 97, second from the left in Staples Road

Inclosure of Epping Forest recommended

[A piece by MONTAGUE BURGOYNE, ESQ, *from* The Labourer's Friend. *This book prints a selection from the publications of the Labourer's Friend Society,which were intended to show the utility and national advantage of allotting land for cottage husbandry, 1831.]*

Epping, Sept 7th, 1831. I am visiting every part of this extensive forest, which contains above 12,000 acres, of which 3,278 are the property of the crown. There are twenty parishes either wholly or partly within this forest: I have visited them all, in order to qualify myself for answering any objections which can be brought against the inclosing a considerable part of this forest (or I may say forests) for the occupation of the poor, as the part called Hainault is detached from that which is called Waltham. In my tour, I find all my former opinions fully confirmed, and am prepared to redeem the pledge I have given, of proving, that if the spots to be inclosed are properly selected, and judiciously inclosed, the interest of every person concerned in these forests, from the king to the peasant, will be considerably benefited, without sacrificing any part of their comforts and amusements. I find a general wish among the

labouring poor to have a small portion of land which they may cultivate by spade husbandry for the provision of their family; and I find an equal desire among the parish officers, that a few acres should be entrusted to them, on which they may employ their poor in the manner they find best, according to their own discretion. The complaint of the pressure of the poor-rates is general; *but where allotments of land are provided for the labouring poor, they are considerably alleviated.* In the parish of Loughton, forty-eight allotments are given to the poor, at a very small rent, by the benevolent minister of that parish; the labouring poor are here happy and content, none wanting work; the poor-rates 2s *6d* in the pound; whilst at Thoydon Bois [*sic*], a parish almost in sight of Loughton, having no allotments of land, they are *6s* at a rack rent, and the poor miserable and discontented. In almost all the parishes I visited, I found that applications for work were far more numerous than the parish officers could find: especially in the winter, and the overseers apprehend great difficulty in employing them during the approaching winter, for they have none but artificial unnecessary work to offer them; employing six men when two would be sufficient.

Submitted by CHRIS POND, who comments: 'No doubt the 48 allotments are the Potato Ground.'

RICHARD MORRIS adds: 'Burgoyne's comments in 1831 were not the first occasion that he recommended the inclosure of Epping Forest. In 1806, at a meeting in Chelmsford, he suggested that "this large tract [the 10,000 acres of Waltham Forest] of land in the vicinity of the metropolis, which at present only serves as an encouragement for wood-stealers, a refuge for highwaymen, and a shelter for half starved deer, should be converted to the use of the community and the encouragement of industry".' [Morris, R, *The Verderers and Courts of Waltham Forest, in the County of Essex, 1250–2000*, (2004), 109.]

Jane and Elizabeth Du Bois – an American tragedy in Essex

TERRY CARTER*

A 1935 tragedy which became highly sensationalised, is of the young Du Bois sisters, Jane and Elizabeth.

On the morning of Thursday, 21 February 1935 John Kirton, a pilot with Hillman Airways, took off from Essex Airport, now known as Stapleford Tawney, and was flying over the Channel coast en-route to France. Captain Kirton had on board two girls as his only passengers. He knew them, as two days previously he had flown them and other passengers from Le Bourget to Essex. There was minor air turbulence as the plane flew south. Alone in the cockpit and unable to leave his seat he turned to open the communicating door which separated the cockpit from the main cabin of his De Havilland DH84 Dragon, identification number G-ACEV. About to ask his passengers if they were comfortable, Kirton found, to his horror, that the main cabin was empty.

He wirelessed to alert the nearest airfield at Croydon, then banked and headed back to Essex Airport. Nowadays L & DHS members know Stapleford Tawney, near Abridge, simply as a light but busy airfield, but in 1935 it had greater status, handling international flights with full Customs and Immigration. On landing Kirton found that the passenger entry door was insecure and had apparently only been held in place by the slipstream. All that remained in the cabin was a lady's shoe, a whisky bottle and sealed letters addressed to Mr and Mrs Du Bois. These were passed to the Romford Coroner, Mr C E Lewis.

The eyewitnesses

Among those who saw what happened were gas-fitters George Watling and Tom Collins, working on a new bungalow on Upminster's Springfield Estate. In 1935 commercial airliners were rare and they had spotted one, flying at a height they later estimated as 5,000 feet. As it passed them, according to their statements, 'suddenly, what looked like two packages fell away from it and fluttered to the ground like sheets of paper'. They gathered speed and struck the ground with a terrific thud a little distance away. The two men rushed to the spot to find the bodies of two girls, lying close together, face down and with their arms about each other. One had a watch that was still going. The plane flew on.

The deceased

The national press swiftly discovered that the victims were the Du Bois sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, daughters of Coert Du Bois, American Consul in Naples. It was confirmed that the only passengers on the 10am flight were indeed the beautiful, expensively fur-coated American girls. Press headlines blaring 'Bright young things' and 'Sisters' round of gay parties' were the typical responses to the tragedy.

Born in San Francisco, the girls were well known to, and their bodies identified by, London's American Embassy staff. Coert Du Bois was 53 and he and his Bostonian wife Margaret had only two children: Jane aged 20 and Elizabeth aged 23. Jane had suffered from chronic asthma for 10 years and was pessimistic about recovery. The papers went on: 'Years of living abroad in an eternal atmosphere of gaiety; a constant round of artificial excitement, with dances and parties, produced adult minds in these two girls.'

They were well known in Paris, and in London supposedly mixed with a crowd 'renowned for the hectic measure of their pleasures'. Both girls drank whisky, sometimes a good deal of it and a good deal too much, especially considering their youth.

There was mystery surrounding their sojourn in London where rooms had been booked for them at the American Women's Club. A woman telephoned the club from the hotel where the sisters were staying in Mayfair and reported that they were indisposed and excused them, saying that neither intended visiting the club. At the hotel the girls kept closely to their rooms where they had a good deal of alcohol to drink. On one occasion during this stay they were found crying bitterly. Not a single friend was reported to be aware of their presence, and they seemed determined to keep away from everyone they knew and appeared afraid that questions might be asked which perhaps they did not want to answer.

The Press revealed that on a previous occasion in London Jane, the younger sister, had worn a wedding ring and a hotel employee stated 'I remember the ring because she always used the name Du Bois but she never spoke of her husband'. Another time, when one of the girls was involved in a car collision in which a cyclist was injured, the investigating policeman was referred to the Embassy.

The motive

An inquest was held on Monday, 25 February 1935 before Coroner Lewis.

A report from Naples suggested that the sisters Du Bois had been close friends of two Royal Air Force officers, Flying Officer John A C Forbes and Flight Lieutenant Henry L Beatty (a half brother of Earl Beatty). Both were part of the nine-man crew killed in a flying-boat disaster, several days earlier, on 15 February 1935. Four new flying-boats were being ferried to Singapore by 210 Squadron RAF, but had stopped off in Italy for maintenance and to allow some of the crew to recover from influenza. Two aircraft had then taken off for Malta, shortly after which a Short 'Singapore' crashed into a mountainside near Messina in Sicily.

During the enforced 10-day stay in Naples, the two officers had got to know the girls well and subsequently all four were seen together at dances, parties and outings. The night before Forbes and Beatty left for Malta they took Jane and Elizabeth out to dinner, then said farewell, as they were to leave early next day. They never saw one other again. British newspapers reported 'unofficial engagements', a suggestion refuted by the daughter of a Bedford doctor, who had become engaged to Forbes in September and was planning to marry him in April 1935. Beatty's mother only knew of the girls from a mention in a letter home. However, a friend agreed that it was conceivable that, if there were any sentimental attachments, they could have become grief-stricken at the airmen's fate, but at this stage of the inquest, many of their friends vehemently discounted the flying-boat incident as the trigger for their fall. However, the sisters were so devoted that it was suggested that Elizabeth agreed to join her suffering sister in ending her life. It was also reported that, as they walked to the plane, Jane said 'Darling, would not John love to be with us?'

The mystery of the booking

The girls arrived at Essex Airport from King's Cross Coach station with only a single item of luggage between them. One of the heavily smoking young ladies paid over four £5 notes and a £1 note to secure all available seats. The planes were small and had no flight attendant, and no need was, at that time, seen for them. The scheduled flight had by now, to all intents and purposes, became a charter flight. The tragedy might still have been averted. A man desperately wanted to travel to Paris, having received news that his mother was gravely ill there. He telephoned the aerodrome and begged for a seat on the 10 am flight, but was told that all seats had been taken. It was suggested that he go to the field on the off-chance, but he did not turn up. The airline had believed that named 'friends' would be flying with the girls and one sister offered to ring and find out where they were. She told the pilot, Kirton, that she could not contact them and it was imperative they leave, though it was later established that no telephone call was made.

Elizabeth and Jane sat in the two rear seats and, to Kirton, everything seemed normal. After take-off he refused them permission to smoke, but agreed to close both the intervening door and ventilation windows through which he could see into the cabin. This was allegedly against draughts. He crossed the south coast then opened the internal door. He could not see the girls, just a suitcase.

His opinion was that it was improbable that the door could have opened accidentally, so great was the pressure of the slipstream from the propeller, and suggested that it must have needed the combined strength of the two girls to have forced it. The sisters appeared to have taken a last drink together, then (clasped hand in hand) their weight was thrown against the door, which gave slowly under their combined strength. As they plunged out, one lost a shoe.

The verdict

Major H Cooper the Air Ministry's investigator, concluded that the 'Dragon door mechanism was not faulty'. Mr Lewis had the letters found in the cabin, read to the jury, despite protest from the Du Bois family solicitor. Fully reproduced in contemporary newspapers, they seemed to justify the supposition that the Sicilian plane crash triggered a period of severe depression for both girls. The jury did not hesitate to bring in a verdict of 'suicide whilst the balance of their minds was disturbed'. They were cremated in London later that day.

Further notes and postscript

Hillman Airways was a successful local firm formed for charter flights by Edward Hillman in 1931. By 1935 regular flights took place from Abridge where its blue and white livery was well known. Just a week previous to the tragedy, a cargo of gold had been lost from the same aircraft. Resulting from the fatal incident, fears were expressed that either the pilot of such aircraft would require a central locking system or that a flight attendant would have to be employed. The growing size of aircraft made these innovations come about naturally. Within a short time after the inquest there were changes in the board of Hillman Airways and their pilot, John Kirton, left. Despite speculation, the company announced that there was no connection between the twin deaths, the previous loss of gold bullion and his resignation. Within a year the successful family airline was taken over by another company. The rapidly developing size of commercial aircraft soon brought a curtailment to the international status of Essex Airport. For more on Stapleford Tawney see page 9.

*With thanks to the Essex Police Museum, partly from whose sources this article was adapted.

Loughton's first police station

PERCY THOMPSON

The Metropolitan Police Force was constituted by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. At Loughton, the first police station was the house on Church Hill (opposite the 'White House') since for many years occupied by Martin Harris as a saddler's, and now (1931) in part used as a butcher's shop. In the Vestry Minutes this police station is mentioned in May 1854, and also in the Rate Book for 1851.

In 1860 the present Police Station was erected.

Percy Thompson's *Notes* 2/ Loughton's First Police Station

[*Since Percy Thompson wrote this note, the police station opened in 1860 on the corner of Forest Road and the High Road, has been demolished and replaced on the same site by today's police station. The 'shop' referred to on Church Hill, the site of the first police station, is now a private house.*]

Local airfields

TED MARTIN

South-west Essex has or had a number of airfields, some dating from the early days of flying and involved in the two World Wars.

Chingford

The Royal Flying Corps had naval and military wings. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, insisted that the naval wing should be part of the Royal Navy, so it became the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). They were made responsible for defence against air raids, a task they had until February 1916 when the RFC took over. They had to train pilots and a list of inland stations was made in 1914 and Chingford was one.

Chingford RNAS Aerodrome was opened in May 1915 but planes were seen there in 1914 when the field was prepared. It was described as 'a strip of fogbound and soggy meadowland . . . between a reservoir and a sewage farm', roughly near the site of the present William Girling reservoir. Chingford was a second class landing ground and a main training station for RNAS pilots. It became No 207 Training Depot station with Hainault Farm (see below) as a sub-station. Senior personnel were instructors. The King George reservoir was used as a navigation landmark, but some pilots crashed into it. A navy 'whaler' was kept on it to help rescue or the recovery of bodies. This is thought to be the only time the white ensign was flown on a reservoir. Several aeroplanes crashed into Epping Forest.

RNAS Chingford was run like a ship, with a No 1 (First Lieutenant) assisting the CO, and a 'ship's company', time was measured in 'bells', the dining room was the 'mess deck'.

Ivor Novello[1] joined the RNAS in 1915 and was a pupil of fellow thespian Ben Travers[2] at Chingford. Travers said Novello sang while flying, but Novello did not qualify as a pilot.

It closed in 1919 and reverted to pasture. Sir Alan Cobham used it to end his National Aviation Day tours in October 1932. After the Second World War the site went under the Girling Reservoir.

Chipping Ongar (Willingale Airfield)

The airfield was built from August 1942 by the US 831 Engineer Aviation Battalion as a Class A bomber field. Using rubble from the London Blitz as hardcore they laid out runways, hard standings and perimeter tracks; buildings and technical facilities were hidden in the countryside.

Intended for a US heavy bomber group, it became the home of the B-26s of the 387th Medium Bomber Group. They began to arrive on 21 June 1943 from Kentucky and by early July all personnel and equipment of Squadrons 556–559 were there. The first mission took place on 31 July and from then until D-Day they were continuously in action completing 204 missions until they left on 21 July 1944.

In January 1945 the US Air Force gave up Chipping Ongar and it went to the RAF's Technical Training Command until October 1948. The Ministry of Defence gave it up in 1959, though it was suggested as a possible site for a third London airport in the 1970s.

Fairlop (Hainault Farm; Forest Farm)

Fairlop was built on Forest Farm (with another airfield close by, to the west of Hainault Road, known as Hainault Farm), and was chosen to be a sub-station to the Royal Naval Air Service flying school at Chingford from April 1916. The first flight across London started from Fairlop. Edward Petre flew a Handley Page monoplane to Brooklands in 50 minutes on 27 July 1912.[3]

C Flight of No 39 Home Defence squadron RFC was based there from 15 April 1916. (A Flight was at North Weald, B Flight at Hornchurch (Suttons Farm) and their headquarters were Salway Lodge, Woodford Green.) They were the front line against Zeppelins. W Leefe Robinson of 39 Squadron brought down Zeppelin SL11 on Sunday, 3 September, but was based at Suttons Farm[4] and Lieutenant A de B Brandon at Fairlop was responsible for crippling L33 so badly that it crashed at Little Wigborough.[5]

No 54 Training Depot Station at Fairlop was disbanded in February 1919. Flying at Fairlop and Hainault Farm had finished by the end of 1919, but the area, on the north side of Forest Road, was not reinstated in the Second World War.

On the outbreak of that war, the site to the south of Forest Road was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and, starting in September 1940, an airfield with three concrete runways and accommodation for over 1,000 personnel was built. On 10 September, RAF Fairlop was operational and 603 squadron moved from Hornchurch and, in 1942 when that field became waterlogged, they were joined by Spitfires of 64, 81 and 411 squadrons. Czechs of No 313 squadron were there from April to June 1942 and were replaced by No 122 'Bombay' squadron. Other squadrons there were: No 64 (winter 1942–43), and, in April 1943, a change from Spitfires to Typhoons, with 182 and 247 squadrons. No 182 was used to bomb enemy airfields

in France. They were replaced in September by 164 squadron, flying Mark IV Hurricanes, used to bomb V1 sites. 164 shared Fairlop with 195, a Typhoon squadron, and later took over their Typhoons, when 195 was disbanded in February 1944, and 164 then moved to Thorney Island in Hampshire. No 193, another Typhoon squadron, arrived in February but departed in March to join 164 at Thorney Island.

Fairlop was put on a 'care and maintenance' basis, but by the middle of 1944 No 24 Balloon Centre was there, with the WAAF in charge of the balloons.

In February 1945 the Balloon Command disbanded and the airfield was vacated in September and closed in April 1946. It was also considered as a site for a London airport, but returned to agriculture and then became part of Hainault Forest Country Park.

Hornchurch (Suttons Farm)

As mentioned above, B Flight of No 39 Home Defence squadron was based here in 1916, and W Leefe Robinson, VC, of 39 Squadron brought down Zeppelin SL11 flying from Suttons Farm, which had been established in 1915 but by 1917 had become an important airfield.

It was returned to its previous owner after the war, but, in 1922, it was decided that additional airfields were needed. Hornchurch (still called Suttons Farm) opened on 1 April 1928 when the first squadron (No 111) landed. In January 1929 the name was changed to RAF Hornchurch. From then until 1939 the latest fighter aircraft were stationed there culminating in February 1939 when Spitfires landed to re-equip 74 Squadron. In September 1939 Hornchurch had three of the 12 Spitfire squadrons in Fighter Command and was in No 11 Group to defend the south-eastern approaches to London. It was a large grass airfield with a perimeter track and three large hangars and satellite airfields at Rochford (now Southend Airport) and Manston (now Kent International Airport).

Early wartime patrols and intercepts were undertaken by Spitfires from No 74 squadron but the hard winter severely hampered flying. In the Spring of 1940 Spitfires from 54 squadron took part in the Battle of France and many squadrons were sent to Hornchurch to relieve battle-weary squadrons. Nos 41, 54, and 65 squadrons were heavily engaged until August when 222, 264, 266, and 603 moved into to relieve them.

The airfield was bombed on 24 August, leaving 85 craters and had another 13 attacks before the end of the year. After the Battle of Britain, Hornchurch aircraft had accounted for 411 enemy aircraft.

In 1941 Hornchurch squadrons escorted bombers on raids over France and Fighter Command squadrons were reorganised into Wings so that three or four squadrons went into battle together.

In August 1941 No 403, a Canadian squadron, arrived with a more powerful Spitfire (VB) but were only there for a short time and lost four pilots. The Spitfire IX arrived with No 64 squadron in July 1942 and from August Hornchurch aircraft escorted the bombers of the USAAF's 8th and 9th Air Forces on daylight raids over Germany. No 54 squadron, the longest serving squadron at Hornchurch, left in November 1941.

Fighter Command became 'Air Defence of Great Britain' when the Second Tactical Air Force was created, but Hornchurch stayed in No 11 Group, now known as Station 136. On 21 January 1944 a sole enemy bomber destroyed eight Spitfires with just three bombs – the first raid for three years.

The station was now controlled by North Weald but operations were scaled down and Spitfire squadrons gradually left. From November 1944 until June 1945 an Air Sea Rescue Squadron, a Radar calibration squadron and one from the Fleet Air Arm were there. The station then went to Technical Training Command. During the war it had brought down 907 enemy aircraft, plus another 444 probables, but with 481 of its pilots killed.

From 1952 to 1962 Hornchurch was an Aircrew Selection Centre but was put up for sale in February 1963 after 47 years of RAF service. It is now the Hornchurch Country Park and some wartime relics remain.

Matching

Matching was built in 1943 by the 834th and 840th Engineer Aviation Battalions USAAF and was ready by November. The B-26 aircraft of the 391st Group started to arrive on 30 January 1944, the last one on 24 February.

Operations started on 15 February by attacking enemy airfields. On 24 February the Ninth Bomber Command attacked airfields in northern Holland and, in March, flew offensives against railways. Attacks on marshalling yards in April and May and two missions on D-Day followed. From D-Day they attacked bridges and flew to support the break-out from St Lô of the US 1st and 3rd Armies. In August 9,100 sorties were flown and 10,000 tons of bombs dropped.

The 391st left Matching on 19 September to go to France and C-47 Skytrains from the 9th Troop Carrier Command came for training exercises with British paratroopers. The airfield then went back to the RAF under No 3 Group of Bomber Command and at the end of 1944 was put on a care and maintenance basis.

In 1945 Matching was passed to 38 Group and an Operational and Refresher Training Unit for Stirling bombers and Horsa Gliders came and was involved in Operation Varsity.[6]

The land then went back to the Rowe family of Rockwood Hall to become farmland.

North Weald[7]

'A' flight of 39 HD squadron RFC moved from Hounslow to North Weald in August 1916, after the RFC established a small airfield west of the village for the Home Defence Force. As described above, three flights of this squadron were spread over the three local airfields and flew against the Zeppelins and Gothas. On Sunday, 1 October 1916, Lieutenant W J Tempest, based at North Weald, brought down airship L31 which crashed at Potters Bar, but on his return to the airfield misjudged his height and smashed the

undercarriage and propeller of his BE2C, but was awarded the DSO on 13 October. On 20 May 1918 a Bristol Fighter flown from No 39 squadron at North Weald by Lieutenant A J Arkell attacked a twin-engined Gotha north of Hainault Forest and, by firing in turns with his observer, A T C Stagg, brought it down near Roman Road in East Ham.

After the First World War the airfield was run-down, but by 1926 work on its reconstruction began. It opened as RAF North Weald in September 1927. Modernised again in the 1930s, by 1939 it covered 400 acres: its original four grass runways replaced by two concrete ones.

As a Sector station of number 11 Fighter Group, it was put on 'War Alert' in August 1939. Squadrons based there were 56 and 151 with Hurricanes, and 604 Squadron which had twin-engine Bristol Blenheim 1Fs.

The 'Battle of Barking Creek': on 6 September Pilot Officer Hulton Harrop, flying a North Weald Hurricane from No 56 Squadron, was killed after Spitfires from Hornchurch shot down two Hurricanes. Harrop was the first pilot to be shot down over England in the Second World War.

In October 1939 the Blenheims of 604 were transferred to Northolt in exchange for 25 squadron, also equipped with Blenheims. During the 'Phoney War', 11 Group carried out co-ordination exercises with radar and the Observer Corps. The hard winter of 1939/40 prevented flying operations.

During the German invasion of France in May/June 1940, teams from Nos 56 and 151 squadrons were sent to France to replace losses where they also had heavy losses and later at Dunkirk. No 111 replaced them.

King George VI visited North Weald on 27 June 1940.

Early in the Battle of Britain 56 and 151 squadrons were heavily involved. North Weald was bombed on 24 August, more than 200 bombs being dropped. Many facilities were damaged. No 56 Squadron lost 11 aircraft and 151 Squadron had just 10 serviceable machines. They lost so many pilots on 31 August that both squadrons were withdrawn. Nos 249, 46 and 245 replaced them. On 3 September, the station was bombed again. Hangars, living quarters, operations room and other buildings were destroyed – five people died and 39 were injured. The operations room was later removed to Blake Hall.

In combating German raids on London, North Weald played a major role and losses were heavy. In October, 257 squadron arrived and on 29 October, the station was again bombed, killing six and wounding 42. On 11 November Hurricanes of 46 and 257 squadrons attacked a large force of fighters and bombers of the Italian Air Force and claimed six and 11 aircraft, respectively.

No 25 Squadron, as night fighters, converted from Blenheims to radar-equipped Bristol Beaufighters and, in September, shot down, in one night, a Dornier 17 and Heinkel 111. During the Battle of Britain, 41 aircrew from North Weald and its satellite airfield at Stapleford Tawney were killed, and 17 people were killed on the ground, but the airfield was never out of action.

At the end of the year 257 left and 56 squadron returned.

From late 1940 onwards Allied and Commonwealth units flew in, to carry out operations over occupied Europe. Among these were, in May 1941, 242 Canadian squadron, first at Stapleford and then at North Weald. No 71 (Eagle) squadron (US volunteers), came in June, equipped with Hurricanes; then Spitfires of No 121, also US volunteers, in December. From 1941 to 1944 Spitfires flown by British, Canadian, New Zealand, Czechoslovakian and Norwegian squadrons flew offensive operations such as attacking enemy airfields and ground targets, bomber escorts and large formations of fighters looking for trouble.

In February 1942 Nos 121 (Eagle), 402 (Canadian) and 222, took part in the fighting when the German cruisers *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen*, escorted by destroyers and fighters, forced their way through the Channel.

The North Weald wing supported the Combined Forces operation on Dieppe in August 1942, with 331 and 332 Norwegian squadrons claiming 16 kills and 14 probables. On 12 March 1943 the Wing met at least 24 FW 190s in battle over France, claiming six destroyed and six damaged. On 9 October the 500th enemy aircraft was destroyed – by a North Weald Norwegian pilot.

But as with Hornchurch as the threat to Britain became less, the value of North Weald as a fighter base began to diminish.

The Norwegians at North Weald continued to escort allied bombers until they moved to the south coast in spring 1944. They were closely involved in D-Day in 1944.

In August 1944, Nos 310 and 312 (Czech) squadrons, and 234 squadron (with Mustangs), arrived to carry out reconnaissance flights over France, attacking rail, road and river transport, as well as acting as fighter cover to bombers attacking the V1 sites. At Arnhem in September 1944, they provided fighter escort and antiflak patrols for gliders and tugs.

In the final months of the war, North Weald hosted the Polish Transport Command squadrons flying Vickers Warwicks.

On Saturday and Sunday 23–24 June 1945, North Weald had the first post-war Air Display as part of a rally of 1,800 Royal Observer Corps members. On 15 September 1945 the airfield was the base for the first post-war fly-past over London of 300 aircraft, led by the airfield's new CO, Douglas Bader, on the anniversary of the Battle of Britain. [8]

From 1949 the airfield had jet fighters from 111 squadron, but in 1958 was put on a 'care and maintenance basis' until closed in September 1964. It is still an active civil airfield under the control of EFDC and hosts public events, such as bus rallies, and a Sunday market. There is a fine museum at Ad Astra house, open on Sundays.

Stapleford Tawney **(see also page 5)**

Stapleford was established as the Essex Aerodrome in 1933 for Hillman Airways, a pioneer airline providing

services to Paris and elsewhere in Europe using De Havilland biplanes. Amy Johnson[9] was a pilot for them. Hillman got into into financial trouble, and was merged with three other airlines to form British Airways Ltd which began operating in 1936, but four months later they moved to Heston Aerodrome, leaving Stapleford as a base for private flying only.

In 1938 No 21 Elementary and Reserve Flying School was established at Stapleford. Perhaps its most famous pupil was Air Vice-Marshal 'Johnnie' Johnson, who working in Loughton as a civil engineer, went there at weekends for flying training.[10]

At the outbreak of war the field was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and a perimeter track, dispersal points and some buildings were provided. It is a grass surfaced field and was said at the time to be 'extremely rough'. Ready by March 1940 it became a satellite to North Weald. No 151 squadron's Hurricanes began patrolling towards the end of August. It lost six aircraft before it was replaced by No 46 which in their first month claimed 19 victories but lost 20 aircraft. By November Stapleford could not be used because of wet weather so 46 squadron moved to North Weald.

A secret 'SOE' unit which had moved to North Weald in August 1940 dispersed to Stapleford on 4 September as a result of the bombing raids. They used Whitley bombers to drop agents into enemy territory twice before moving to Suffolk.

On 9 April 1941, 242 squadron came to Stapleford, but three of their aircraft collided in cloud over the channel and all the pilots were killed. Then No 3 squadron's Hurricanes were based there and 277 Air Sea Rescue squadron was mobilised there.

In March 1943 the field was removed from Fighter Command and transferred to No 34 Wing of Army Co-operation Command. No 656 squadron used the field flying Austers (an American designed light aircraft used as Air Observation Posts and perfect for small airfields). However, the Command was dis-banded in June and the Austers went to India.

The airfield was then used for D-Day preparations and various units came. A V2 rocket landed in the middle of the field on 20 November leaving a 60ft crater and another one landed on the main camp on 23 February 1945, killing 17 and injuring 50. It is still busy today for private flying.

Sources and further reading

Barfoot, John: *Over Here and Over There: Ilford Aerodromes and Airmen in the Great War*. ISBN 0–86025–845–2. Romford: Ian Henry Publications, 1998. A very detailed account of the day-by-day combats, events and personalities from airfields in the Ilford Area in the First World War.

Davis, Leonard: *Chingfliers, Chingboys and Chingford Aerodrome*. Chingford Historical Society, Bulletin No 16, 1996. A duplicated, comb-bound document based on the *Chingflier* magazine published on the airfield during the First World War, but with some additional local information and reminiscence.

Smith, Graham: *Essex Airfields in the Second World War*. ISBN 1–85306–405–X. Newbury: Countryside Books, 1996. One of an excellent series of books covering various counties, full of information and stories of heroism and mishap, which give an insight into what it really was like on the airfields during the war, how they came about and their eventual fate.

Notes

1. Ivor Novello (David Ivor Davies) (1893–1951), actor, composer, songwriter and playwright. Wrote 'Keep the Home Fires Burning', most popular song of the First World War. Had great success with musicals such as 'The Dancing Years'.

2. Ben Travers (1886–1980), playwright, famous for farces at the Aldwych Theatre, staged continuously from 1922 until 1933.

3. Frederick Handley-Page (1885–1962), businessman and engineer, set up aircraft factory at Barking Creekmouth (site now part of Fords), 1909; used Fairlop playing fields for test flying.

4. See also R Morris, 'The First Blitz', *Newsletter 179*; R Layton, 'Epping Forest and the Military in the Great War', *Newsletter 181*.

5. These stories and many others are in John Barfoot, *Over Here and Over There: Ilford Aerodromes and Airmen in the Great War*.

6. Operation Varsity (24 March 1945), allied airborne operation with more than 16,000 paratroopers and several thousand aircraft; the largest single airborne operation in history on a single day and in one location, meant to secure a foothold across the Rhine.

7. See also Arthur Moreton, 'RAF North Weald in the Second World War' in *Newsletters 167* and *168* (2005/2006).

8. The Norwegian Memorial Stone, unveiled in 1952, is dedicated to 36 Norwegians who died while flying from North Weald, the RAF and the people of the district.

9. Amy Johnson (1903–1941), a pioneer pilot; flew solo from England to Australia in 1930, to Japan via Siberia in 1931 and to Cape Town in 1932; a pilot in the Air Transport Auxiliary (delivering new aircraft from the factories to operational airfields), she drowned in the Thames estuary after bailing out in 1941.

10. See *Newsletter 148* for an article on 'Johnnie' Johnson

Memories of an Epping Forest Retreat

If we achieved full attendance for a year at our Methodist Sunday School during the 1920s we went on an outing to Epping Forest.

The Superintendent, Mr King, announced one year we were going somewhere he had never heard of, but thought it sounded 'foreign'! It was Theydon Bois. The trip would cost two pence each and included our tea and the charabanc ride. Normally I would have had my younger sister to look after, but this year my mother (a widow) decided that she could only afford for one of us to go, and being eight years old, I could look after myself.

On Sunday we met at the Church Hall. This always seemed a dingy, dusty room. Mr King and his helper Mr Timms (a very rotund gentleman) were waiting for us. I expect that nowadays having just two adults in charge of so many children wouldn't be allowed, but then we were all on our best behaviour. We had been told to dress neatly, but not in our Sunday clothes. The 'chara' was open-topped and it was lovely to get on and not have to pay a fare.

I remember arriving on a large grassed area and seeing two very long buildings in front of us. There were plenty of people from other Sunday Schools, who were probably also Londoners. We formed ourselves into two neat lines and headed towards the enormous wooden huts. 'Oh good, we were going to eat first.' In those days we always seemed to be hungry.

Inside we couldn't believe our eyes. There were rows and rows of wooden tables with cloths. I remember thinking that this room was much cleaner and brighter than our old Church Hall. There must have been hundreds of people sitting down. Ladies came up with plates of meat paste sandwiches and

handed them out. We were not allowed to help ourselves in case we took too many. I expect some children would have wrapped them in their hankies to take home to share with their hard-up families. We were each given a bun (with very few currants) and orange squash. Although it seemed very watered down, for me it was a real treat because we never had it at home.

After we had eaten our tea we all filed outside as there were plenty of others waiting to take our places. We were walked over the green to see the trains, and then allowed some time to play. They had a slide and some swings: not very many, but enough for everybody to have a turn.

All too soon it was over, and time to return to Tottenham and our usual everyday lives, with a whole year to wait before 'going away' again.

Many years later I learned that where we had been taken was called a Retreat. *[Probably Yates's.]*

[Dictated by Joyce Birch, aged 91 (the Editor's mother-in-law).]

Free education?

BARBARA WILCOX

[Barbara writes: the following was sent to me, by my cousin, after a discussion that started with current university fees, then moved on to secondary education during the Second World War. Is it harder today than was 70 years ago when my cousin went to the local Grammar School, Buckhurst Hill County High? It was a shame his parents didn't live to see the result of their sacrifice, as he became President of an international oil company.]

'In those days (1941–45) we certainly had to pay school fees, which was always a bone of contention with my father. As far as I recall, the basic fee was 5 guineas per term, but it was means tested, based on the father's income. As you well know, railwaymen's income in those days was not very high (I don't know about today) so my fee was 1 guinea per term. But in those days, a guinea three times a year was no small sum for a railwayman.

Added to that was the obligatory school uniform: blazer and cap with school badge, dark grey trousers, grey shirts, school tie, sports outfit (football shirts and shorts, football boots and socks, cricket flannels and shoes) and house shoes, which we were obliged to wear whenever we were in school. Full price for these items, no means test. And, of course, these had to be regularly replaced as they wore out, or we grew bigger.

As you can imagine, all in all, it came to a fair sum. At the time, I did not, of course, appreciate it, but as I grew older, I became everlastingly grateful to my parents for forgoing their own personal (and my brother's and sister's) consumption to finance me through high school.

Without it, my later life would have been very different.' *[Barbara's cousin's name is not disclosed – Ed.]*

The story of Loughton Cricket Club –Part 3

[We resume the story as recorded in the club's Minutes, 1880–1926, in 1910, and then through a pre-First World War period of relative financial difficulty for the Club, into the abandonment of the fixture list during hostilities, then a more prosperous post-war era, leading to the successful purchase of the 'Field' in 1926. First mooted in May 1923, this took three years to complete, and the Minutes contain a 'blow by blow' account of the arduous raising of the purchase price. Watch out for the regular mentions of one Mr Salter and his pony!

As in Parts 1 and 2 much lengthy detail, e.g., of annual accounts and Committee elections etc has been edited from this article.

Minutes for the years 1911–1914 contain little of great significance, being mainly concerned with reporting the renting of the Ground to Loughton Amateur Athletic Club, and to be used for the Loughton School Sports. There are also details of the financial difficulties of those years, a period in which the Club barely managed to stay in surplus, at least on an income and expenditure basis, and sometimes only did so by virtue of some generous Member donations, Ed.]

The impact of the Great War (1914)

Percy Thompson writes: 'So far the history of the Loughton Cricket Club had consisted of an uneventful series of Annual and Committee meetings, the record of matches lost or won, changes of personnel, and the inevitable difficulty in "making both ends meet" financially, such as might be expected in a village sports club. But now a sudden and violent change was to come, and the peaceful play on a cricket ground was to be swept aside by contest on a western field where "cricket" was disregarded! August 4 1914, saw the Outbreak of the Great War which was to overthrow empires and shake the very foundations of civilisation. Small wonder that the Loughton Cricket Club for a time ceased to be, and, in common with many other peace-time institutions, seemed destined to perish in the world-wide debâcle. Yet it was to rise, Phoenix-like, from its ashes and in after years was to attain a degree of prosperity denied it in its pre-War history. But the hour was not yet!'

For some time after the actual outbreak of War, an attempt was made to carry on as usual.

A Committee meeting was held on Sept 1st 1914, when ordinary business was transacted, and no reference is made in the Minutes to the grave national events then in progress. No Annual Meeting was held, as customary, that winter, until March of the following year (1915).

The Minutes record that 'a considerable discussion took place as to the advisability of playing Cricket during the Season 1915'. This is the first definite indication of the effect of the War upon the Club's activities. It was decided to hold the Annual Meeting, at all events, in March.

This was accordingly done, on March 24 1915, when it became evident that the Club's activities during the summer of 1914, had only been partially affected by the War, since 50 matches had been played.

The question of carrying on during the War was debated and finally the following Resolution was passed, 'That the fixture list be cancelled & that the ground be opened for Practice as the Committee may arrange'.

This was the last Annual Meeting of the Club held for four years! Not until after the end of the War could the members be called together again.

The Committee again met on April 26 1915, and, in view of the changed circumstances, asked the landlords, Messrs Gould, to reduce the rent of the ground.

The next meeting of the Committee was not until a year later, on May 5 1916, when the Club's financial position had to be considered, being evidently at a very low ebb. It was

agreed to offer the use of the ground to the Bankers' Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers at 25s per month, on condition that it was kept in order.

As Mr Salter, the Club's grazing tenant, had not paid his rent for 1915, he was to be given notice unless that were done, and another tenant sought.

Again an interval of one year without a Meeting.

On April 4 1917, a deficit of 19s 10d was announced; it was resolved to acquaint those members who had continued to subscribe with the state of the finances.

Two more years pass without a Meeting; then, with the termination of the War in November 1918, came a renaissance.

On March 21 1919, a general Meeting was held when the Chairman had to remind the members that two of their number, Ralph Godin and Charles Fry, had lost their lives on active service.

At this reconstruction meeting of the Club, the Officers elected included: President, Mr W W Maitland; Captain, F S Foster.

It was agreed, on the Captain's motion, to erect a memorial in the Pavilion to members who had fallen in the War.

The Committee, on March 29 1919, made arrangements to restore the Cricket Ground to a condition fit for play after the enforced neglect during the War years.

Loughton Amateur Athletic Club and Loughton School resumed their renting of the Ground

At the Nov 18 meeting of the Committee, Mr Salter, the grazing tenant, was again in trouble. His pony was alleged to graze indiscriminately all over the Ground, instead of being tethered outside the mown 'boundary'.

Post war recovery

At the Annual Meeting held on Dec 4 1919, the financial statement for the year showed that the Club had recovered its vitality in a remarkable degree. The Committee, on Jan 30 1920, decided to erect in the Pavilion a bronze memorial to Club members who had fallen in the Great War. The Memorial was to be 'in dull bronze on matchwood and incised letters' in the following wording:

'Loughton CC
In Memory of
Charles H Fry
R E Godin
C Wollen
Killed in the Great War 1914–1918'

About the time of the Committee meeting on March 12 1920, a suggestion was made to take on a lease for seven years of the Cricket Field from Messrs Gould, but this could not be arranged and the scheme fell through.

Again was Mr Salter in trouble with the Committee. He had given permission for a goat to be tethered in the Cricket Field and was requested not to permit any grazing except by his own pony.

That year (1920) for the first time, a Service was organised by the Loughton Comrades of the Great War and was held in the Field on a Sunday in July.

The membership of the Club was now 177. The Captain stated that in his opinion the past season had been the best within his memory, so far as the first eleven was concerned.

The seven meetings of the Committee during 1921 were devoid of noteworthy interest.

At the Annual Meeting, held on Nov 9 1921, The accounts disclosed a total income of £271 0s 5d, of which over £241 was subscriptions, wages £99, and a balance on the wrong side of £17 5s.

Again in 1922 the Committee Meetings had little of interest to decide.

On Dec 11 the question of Sunday cricket was discussed and the Committee decided unanimously 'that no Sunday Cricket should be played by the Club'.

The purchase of the Cricket Field

At this Meeting of the Committee, the idea of buying the Cricket Field was first mooted. Marston stated that several of the Club's honorary members had raised the question, suggesting that it would be worthwhile, at least, to enquire tentatively as to the price that would be accepted.

Mr Salter was again an offender, it being alleged that his pony was accustomed to 'career loose' over the field; he was to be written to about it.

At the Annual Meeting of Nov 16 1923, the Chairman referred to the recent death of Mr Percy Miller, who for nineteen years had acted as Hon Treasurer of the Club, and who had in many ways been a generous benefactor to it. 'He was one of England's perfect gentlemen', was the speaker's verdict.

The Committee, at its meeting on January 21 1924, learned that enquiry had been made of the Lord of the Manor, through the intermediary of his brother the Rector, as to the possibility of purchasing the Cricket Field; the Lord had replied that he had no intention of selling, but that the Club should always have the first refusal. However, at the next meeting of the Committee, on March 17 1924, the Agents to the Lord of the Manor, Messrs Savill, sent a confidential communication in which they hinted that Mr Maitland would probably be willing to sell the Ground to the Club for £1,700. The Committee decided to try to obtain a year's Option at that figure.

At its meeting on May 22 1924, the Committee definitely decided to purchase the Cricket Field as its 'Percy B Miller Memorial'. Accordingly, on June 19, a sub-committee of six persons was appointed to consider and draw up a public Appeal for subscriptions to the Purchase Fund of the Field; and at a special Committee meeting on July 25, over 700 letters of Appeal were despatched.

On Sept 11 1924, it was announced that £875 15s 6d had been received or promised towards the Field Purchase Fund to date.

At the Committee Meeting on Nov 10 1924, the announcement was made that the Purchase Fund [had] reached £950. 'The Treasurer pointed out very strongly that the playing Members had [done] nothing to help the fund either by subscriptions or working for subscriptions.' An offer from an anonymous person was referred to, which offer was that in the event of the whole of the purchase money not being raised, the writer would loan the balance at 2 per cent.

At the Annual Meeting held on Nov 28 1924, the Chairman gave a résumé of the negotiations for the purchase of the Cricket Ground, for which £1,700 was needed and of which they had been promised some £800 to that date. He announced that the Field, when purchased, would be constituted as a Memorial to the late P B Miller.

On Feb 6 1925, the Field Purchase Fund had now reached £1,065; a letter from Messrs Savill stated that the offer to sell was only valid until March 25. An offer from Mr Boake of £200 towards the Fund subject to no Sunday Play ever being allowed, was discussed; it was decided to refer this offer to a Meeting of Subscribers to be called for March 19. Meanwhile, Mr Liell was to be asked to draw up a draft Trust Deed.

The Meeting of Subscribers to the Ground Purchase Fund was duly held at the Lopping Hall on March 19 1925, with Mr B F Howard in the Chair. Mr Boake's offer of £200, which was made subject to a Clause being inserted in the

Trust Deed forbidding Sunday play, was rejected by a large majority.

The Meeting authorised the executive of the Cricket Club to proceed with the purchase of the Ground. The Meeting also required a Clause to be inserted in the Trust Deed to compel the Trust Deed to 'preserve the picturesqueness of the ground and to prevent any obstruction of the view from the existing roadways, fences to be of rustic character and not over 4ft 6ins high'.

At the Committee Meeting on April 6 1925, it was announced that the Purchase Fund then stood at £1,353.

By this date the third eleven had been formed.

At the Committee Meeting on June 18 1925, the Chairman expressed the opinion that the purchase money would have to be paid by the end of next September at latest; this indicates that the option to purchase the field had been extended.

The Treasurer stated that the Ground Purchase Fund stood at £1,599 18s 2d.

On Jan 27 1926, the Committee decided to call a Public Meeting for the purpose of passing the Trust Deed; to that date £1,636 19s 6d had been promised, of which £1,500 was in hand.

On June 14 1926, the Committee adopted the text of the Trust Deed as drafted by Mr Liell. It was announced that the Fund now reached £1,708 10s 6d. The amount required for the purchase was £1,700, plus £45 for expenses, thus leaving a balance of £65 11s still to be obtained.

On Nov 8 1926, the death of the President of the Club, Mr W W Maitland, was reported; a letter of condolence was directed to be sent to Mrs Maitland.

Some £30 was still required to close the Ground Purchase Fund.

At the Annual Meeting, which was held on Nov 15 1926, a vote of condolence was passed to Mrs Maitland on the loss of her husband, Mr William Whitaker Maitland, President of the Club for the past 17 years.

The Officers for the ensuing year were: President, Mr John Whitaker Maitland; Captain First Eleven, F S Foster.

The Treasurer reported that the purchase of the Ground had cost £1,746 6s. The balance sheet for the year showed an income of £224 15s 11d, of which £188 17s had been subscriptions, wages £100 13s, rates £14 13s 9d (the rent item now disappears, of course), tithe rent 15/10. There was a credit balance of £14 13s 1d.

Percy Thompson concludes:

The history of the Loughton Cricket Club has now been traced in some detail for a space of 46 years and may judiciously be broken off at this point. We have watched its earlier struggles, we have seen it pass through the lean years of the War and afterwards recover, and more, its former prosperity, we leave it crowned with the acquisition, in something like perpetuity, of its playing field. Henceforth it would seem that the story of the Club may be of domestic interest only.

The cricket field is intended to be a memorial of the late Percy Bradley Miller, a generous supporter of the Cricket Club; he acted as its honorary treasurer from 1904 until his decease in 1923 and has been justly described by Frank S Foster as 'the finest friend the Loughton C C ever had'.

Frank S Foster had been (up to 1927) for 21 years in succession elected Captain of the Club, becoming a member in 1894 and a playing member in 1896. Parker acted as wicket keeper for 20 years! J R Lillico, an old Captain, had been intimately associated with the Club for something like 32 years and contributed the final sum of £25 needed to complete the purchase of the Ground. Charles Allis has been (up to 1927) groundsman for just 30 years, having been engaged in that capacity at the opening of the 1897 season. [Thompson added a later note: 'Charles Allis died on 24th March 1940.'] *(Concluded.)*

Loughton rectors and curates

PERCY THOMPSON

The Rev Anthony Hamilton: The Vestry of St Martin-in-the-Fields appointed a Committee on 24 July 1834 to enquire into parish affairs. This Committee, in its 3rd Report, reports 'that the Rev Anthony Hamilton, Archdeacon of Taunton!, Residentiary Canon of Litchfield!!, Rector or Vicar of Saint Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside!!!, Rector or Vicar of Loughton, in Essex!!!!, Chaplain in ordinary to the King!!!!!, and Librarian to St Martin's Library!!!!!, is the Parish Clerk of St Martin-in-the-Fields!!!!!!, and in informing their fellow parishioners of the fact, your Committee beg to ask whether it be possible for a gentleman, having so many lucrative and dignified appointments, to execute one so humble as that of Parish Clerk? But, as might be supposed Mr Hamilton does not execute the office. Although appointed so long since as May 1st 1812, a period exceeding twenty-two years, he has never performed the duty, but during the whole of that time, has employed a Deputy, at a paltry salary, himself pocketing the difference for doing nothing': ' . . . most efficiently performed by Mr Perks, the deputy Parish Clerk, for £25 per annum allowed to him by the Rev Mr Hamilton, whilst he receives £334 per annum!'

The Rev Thomas Trundle Storks: Previous to being presented to the living of Loughton by Mr William Whitaker Maitland, his patron, entered into an agreement with him, dated 4th December 1851, whereby he (Storks) undertook to resign on receiving one month's notice from his patron requiring him so to do, 'to the intent and purpose that John Whitaker Maitland of Trinity Hall, Cambridge Esquire or Henry Whitaker Maitand of Loughton aforesaid Esquire, sons of the said William Whitaker Maitland may either of them the said John Whitaker Maitland or Henry Whitaker Maitland then being of proper age and in Holy Orders qualifying him to be presented to the said Rectory and being willing to accept such presentation', &c. No wonder that, in 1856, Storks was presented with silver plate to the value of £74 7s 6d by his patron!

The Rev John Whitaker Maitland, BA: was licensed as Curate at Bishop's Stortford on 21st December 1854, ordained Priest on 18th May 1856, and admitted to the Rectory of Loughton on 10th November of that year; he was inducted two days later (on 12th Nov 1856) by the Rev John Smith, MA, Perpetual Curate of Buckhurst Hill, in the presence of William Whitaker Maitland, the Rev T T Storks, and William Grout, parish clerk.

The Rev Felix Palmer, MA: was licensed as Curate at Loughton on 30th April 1857.

The Rev William Watson, MA: was licensed to act as 'Assistant Minister' without stipend, on 23rd December 1858.

The Rev Edward M Webster, MA: was licensed as Curate of Loughton on 26th August 1862. Salary £120.

The Rev Charles F Rogers: was licensed as Curate at Loughton on 26th May 1872. Salary £100.

The Rev Richard Edward Coles, BA: was licensed as Curate at Loughton on 28th March 1873. Salary £200, the Licence including 'to officiate in the chapel of Ease of Saint Mary the Virgin'.

The Rev Charles Arthur Watson, BA: was licensed Curate at Loughton on 12th July 1889. Salary £160.

Percy Thompson Notes 2/ Some Loughton Rectors and Curates

‘Prince George – son of the Chief of the Yemassee Indians’

TERRY CARTER

On the Chigwell School website, in the section listing ‘Famous Old Chigwellians’ there is an entry that simply reads: ‘Prince George – Son of the Chief of the Yemessee Indians’.

It seems that the son of an Indian chief indeed attended Chigwell School between 1713 and 1714. It is recorded that ‘Prince’ George really was the son of the then leader of this Indian tribe, (or ‘Native American’, if we are to be strictly PC).

Funded by the Quaker Society, he was housed in Ilford. It seems strange that Prince George ended up at Chigwell School, the most likely reason being that he was rescued by Quakers from the imminent bloody Yamassee Indians War (various spellings of the name are in existence).

The Yamassee War (1715–1717) was a violent conflict between British settlers of colonial South Carolina and various Native American Indian tribes, including the Yamassee, Creek and Cherokee. They killed hundreds of colonists and destroyed many settlements. Traders ‘in the field’ were massacred throughout the American southeast. The Yamassee War was one of the most disruptive and transformational conflicts of colonial America, and one of the American Indians’ most serious challenges to European dominance. For over a year the colony faced the possibility of annihilation. About 7% of South Carolina’s white citizenry was killed, and the war marked the end of the early colonial era of the American South.

What little more is known of George is written in ‘The Mystery of the lost Yamasee Prince’, by Frank J Klingberg, *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (Vol 63:1, January 1962), pp. 18–32. The brief tale is described as: ‘An intriguing tale of a Yamasee prince, nicknamed “Prince George”, who was taken to England to train as an Anglican minister in 1714, but whose final fate seems lost in the mists of history.’

It seems plausible to me that, when news of the progress of the war filtered back to England, including accounts of the massacre of 200 white settlers in one raid, George may somehow have been the victim of rough justice, on the basis of ‘an eye for an eye’. Of course, he could simply have succumbed to a harsh winter – nobody will ever know. See: Wikipedia – ‘Yamassee Indians War’.

Memories of Loughton, Part 3

TOM GILBERT

I was baptised at St Mary’s Church by the Rev Cyril Gell in 1934 and when I was 8 years old in 1942 I joined the Church choir. It was an all boys choir and you had to audition before being accepted. There was a definite pecking order in the choir among the choristers, with head and deputy head boys. Also most of the men had been choirboys and they seemed to think they had been either better behaved, or much better singers than the present boys. Choir practice was at least once a week and there were the minimum of two Sunday services, not including Festival days and weddings.

All the boys liked a wedding for not only could we make disparaging remarks about the wedding party afterwards, but we got paid 2s 6d a wedding. We might have looked little angels in our starched collars, black bow ties and white surplices, but we were horrible little boys, like all of our gender. Later on we swapped collars for ruffs but I am not sure it changed us. From time to time the choir had an outing. One was a visit to Whipsnade Zoo followed by singing evensong at Waltham Abbey.

As I got older and more senior in the choir, apart from having a leadership role, I began to fancy some of the girls who would sit in the front of the church as near to the choir as they could get; however, like my contemporaries, I was very vague about girls, except they were different to boys. The church treasurer was a Mr Truman and he always sat in the same pew each Sunday with his family, among whom was his daughter, Christine. She played tennis and, as we all know, eventually got to the women’s final at Wimbledon. Mr Wagstaff, the choirmaster, and the vicar, the Rev Leslie Bewers, were anxious that we did not fraternise with the opposite sex and they were not allowed in the church choir.

Only mature ladies were altos. My voice as a treble kept going until I reached almost 16 and then it went with a vengeance and I didn’t join the men’s choir. On one occasion, the great Sir Sydney Nicholson inspected our choir for its recognition as a Royal School of Church Music choir. A small group of choirboys each Christmas used to go carol singing, especially in those moneyed parts of Loughton such as Alderton Hill. We would give a short recital and then be invited into the house to sing more carols. This would result in a good donation to our funds together with mince pies and squash. It was a lucrative activity!

If the choir was an all-male bastion so were most of the activities for children in the 1940s. All activities were divided up by gender (the only contact with girls was at school but even then we kept to our own) and at the same time as joining the choir I joined the Cubs. Along with the choir the Scout movement became the major interest in my early life. I joined the 39th Epping Forest (St Mary’s) Cub Pack in 1942, during the War. We met once a week and would go to the Church hall. Akela was a Mrs Gray; the previous Akela was in the Army in North Africa. I wrote to him once and he replied with drawings of himself under palm trees. His name was Jack Haylett and he came originally from Caister, Great Yarmouth. After the war he became our choirmaster and ran the cub pack at our sister church St Michael’s. (Jack died in 2002, aged 90 but I could not get to his funeral because of snow. He is buried at High Beach Church.)

I eventually became a sixer of the yellow six and competition between the sixes was red hot. Each month the best six (tidiness, behaviour, achievements,

and helpfulness) would result in winning the coveted trophy. We were not able to go camping because of the war but there were trips and activities to the forest.

When I was eleven I went up into the Scouts. Whereas I had been a big fish in a small pond in the cubs, very secure and comfortable, the scouts were a much tougher proposition altogether. The older scouts were up to 15 years old and scout meetings were much rougher than cubs. We played games like British Bulldogs, which always ended up with the little or newest ones getting knocked about. Added to this, the St Mary's Church Hall floor was none too smooth and the not infrequent splinter in delicate parts was a regular occurrence. Scouts in these days wore khaki shorts, shirts and wide brimmed hats not unlike cowboys. We also carried ash staves marked out in measured feet and inches and sheath knives attached to our belts. Discipline and tidiness was important and Skipper Gray followed *Scouting for Boys* by Baden Powell to the letter.

The age of 11 was a watershed in our lives. The war had ended in Europe in May 1945, but continued for some months in the Far East. It was, however, the age at which decisions were made about your ongoing education. In those days following the 1944 Education Act there were three tiers of school available. By taking the 11+ exam, you would either go to a Grammar School, Technical High School or Secondary Modern School. Parents regarded the need to pass the 11+ as very important. Promises of bicycles if you passed were not uncommon and you all felt under a lot of pressure, although it was not recognised. Even though I did not pass, Dad bought me a Rudge Cycle.

Following the 11+, I went to Roding Road Secondary Modern. It was a big school compared to the junior school with some 200 pupils, taking children from different junior schools around the district. The teachers knew all the boys by their surnames and this led to my problem on my first day. We were all in the assembly hall and being allocated to our new classes. Names were being called out and in the end the only person without a teacher was me. Eventually it was worked out that the Headmaster had called out Thomas and not Gilbert!

School life was pretty tough. The teachers brooked no misbehaviour and any such was dealt with by the imposition of lines, detention or the cane by either the form teacher or the headmaster. In the main I experienced little bullying and being a somewhat timid and well-behaved child seemed to get on well at school.

We had the usual three Rs and technical subjects, such as woodwork and metalwork at which I did not excel. There was also gardening, keeping a very big garden with flowers and vegetables, art, geography, history and science. In most of these I was fairly competent but singing gave me my greatest satisfaction. The Head and Deputy were both Welsh and they used to run Eisteddfods at which competitive singing took place. This short-lived aptitude meant that I would be entered for outside competitions both as a member of the school choir and as soloist. I always seemed to be in competition with girls and their soprano voices.

I enjoyed school but there were subjects that I did not like and this was mainly due to the teacher or perhaps because I was not good at them. Notable among those were PE, woodwork and metalwork (no good), gardening (did not like the teacher who, in theory lessons, tended to throw blackboard rubbers around).

One of the impressions of my childhood was of always being busy. There was Scouts at least once a week, choir practice once a week, Church at least three times on Sunday, Sunday school, going out with friends either up the forest or out on our bikes. When we were 11 most of us had bikes and we began to explore wider. On a Saturday or during the school holidays we would get our Mums to pack sandwiches and set off. Sometimes we would cycle to Southend-on-Sea or my Grandparents at Billericay. I even used to cycle across London to visit an old Aunt in Ladbroke Grove, cycling up Oxford Street. We discovered all sorts of new places.

When looking for entertainment we sometimes went to the cinema. There was a small 'pictures' as we called it, in Loughton High Road and I occasionally went there. The first time I was taken there was to see *Snow White.* I must have been about 5 and I was so frightened of the witch that I screamed the place down and had to be taken out. I never saw the film again until it came out on video. I also remember seeing *Sanders of the River* with Paul Robeson and *The Outlaw*, about Billy the Kid, with Jane Russell. A film was made in the late 40's about the ill-fated Antarctic expedition of Captain Scott. This was a film of endurance and heroism and considered a very moral example of the best of Britishness, so much so that the schools hired the cinema and we went in school time to see it.

Apart from the pictures we had the radio and this for us meant Children's Hour at 5pm each evening with Uncle Mac.

My first Scout Camp when I was 11 was at Broadstone Warren near East Grinstead, Skip Gray was a stickler for fresh air, exercise and cleanliness, important attributes as laid down by Robert Baden Powell in *Scouting for Boys*. The camp was for two weeks and my recollection is of non-stop rain. We slept in a bell tent that would leak if you touched the canvas sides and the water would flow over the groundsheets, making our blankets wet. We used to dig a trench around the outside of the tent to divert the water but that was not always successful. Each morning we had to run down a muddy path to wash at a standpipe, and by the time we got back we were as muddy again.

In 1947 I went to the Essex County Jamboree held at Belchamps near Southend. There must have been some 1,000 Scouts, many from other countries. Camping close to us were some Scouts from Germany which, in 1947, two years after the end of the war, gave us a strange feeling. However, we got on well with them and found them very friendly. When I became a Patrol Leader, I often took my Patrol for

weekend camp at Debden or Gilwell Park. We had to walk carrying our gear in rucksacks or the troop trek cart.

When I first arrived at Roding Road School it was fairly small in terms of the number of pupils. The end of the war had seen a lot of damage to housing and there was a severe shortage in London. New estates and new towns were built all around the environs of London, and Debden was designated as one such area. Houses seemed to go up almost overnight and there was already a prefab estate called Oakwood Drive. This was years later to be pulled down, and houses built in its place. Almost overnight, so it seemed between July and September 1947, the school population rose, and mobile classrooms appeared on part of the playing field to accommodate the newcomers. There was some antagonism by some groups, due to the attitude of the new pupils to us locals in the school, but overall things settled fairly well, When I was 13 the government changed the age at which we could leave school from 14 to 15. In hindsight this must have caused the staff a problem. What to do with these children? Our curriculum was entirely different from anything we had experienced. We had public speaking, civics where we visited council meetings, courts, etc, photography, not only taking pictures but also processing and enlarging, drama, and learnt about the Welfare State, which had recently come into being, and discussion groups. I also opted to do domestic science rather than wood and metalwork. Our teacher was Mr Ripley and what I learnt in that year was to hold me in good stead for my future career.

(Concluded.)

Loughton County High School for Girls – school magazines

CHRIS POND

In the autumn, I received an e-mail from Mr Patrick Brandon of Ely, whose people came from the Loughton-Buckhurst Hill area, and a member of whose family, Ida Evelyn Brandon (b 1909), was a pupil at Loughton County High School for Girls. He had inherited from her the first six editions of the Loughton County High School Magazine, which I knew about, but had never seen.

LCHS was founded in 1906 and started life, until 1908, with 29 girls and two mistresses in Oriolet, York Hill (the site of York Crescent flats). In 1908 the present (Roding Valley High School) building was opened, and the school moved there. By 1923, the date of the first magazine, it had 400 girls, and an impressive academic record, with four girls admitted to Cambridge in one year (1923–24); it gained more Highers passes than any other girls' school in England, save for Bedford Modern School. In 1919, an annexe was opened, the former Braeside Military Hospital in Connaught Avenue, and was used until an extension was completed on the main site in 1923.

The illustration is of the cover design for the magazines, and was executed by an LCHS pupil, Priscilla Mary Ellingford (b 1905; later Warner). She won the Essex County Art Scholarship, and later studied at the Royal College of Art, before becoming an author and illustrator responsible, according to the British Library catalogue, for 14 books. It's rather stylish and surprisingly modern.

[More from the school mags and Mr Brandon's other gifts in later Newsletters.]

Tailpiece

Newsletter 130, circulated at the January 1996 meeting of the then Chigwell & Loughton History Society, began thus:

'Our October meeting, which attracted one of our largest attendances, was beset with difficulties. First, the absence of the screen on which our speaker, David Mander, could illustrate his talk on 'The History of Hackney', problems with the power supply to the projector, and finally the lack of a lectern on which the speaker could rest his notes. It may sound ominous, but steps have been taken to see that such problems do not occur again!'

15 years and 59 *Newsletters* later, I'm sure the memory of those 'difficulties' can raise a smile or two.

We owe sincere thanks to all this season's valued contributors, and look forward to your continued support.

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