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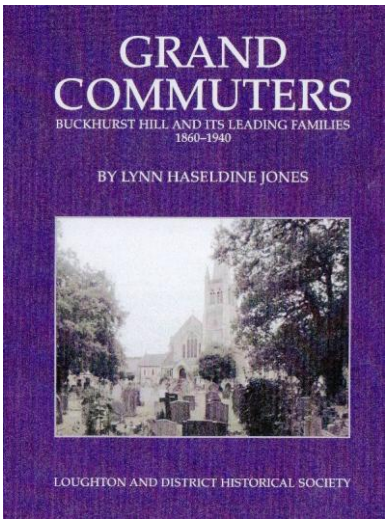
Golden Jubilee: 50th Season

Grand Commuters and *Forest for the People*

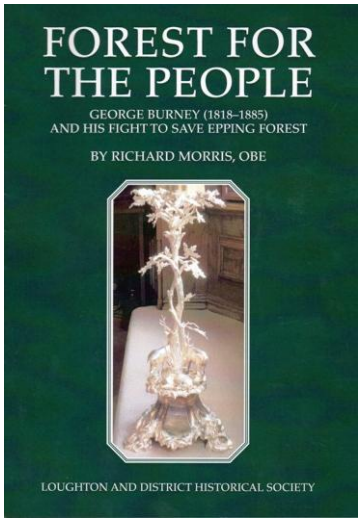


The Society has just published *Grand Commuters: Buckhurst Hill and its Leading Families 1860–1940,* by Lynn Haseldine Jones. Very little has been written about Buckhurst Hill for the best part of 50 years. From time to time, articles have appeared in this *Newsletter* and in local papers, but this is the first time the LDHS has been able to offer a book on any aspect of Buckhurst Hill's history. Lynn Haseldine Jones has spent some years researching the families who effectively ran Buckhurst Hill. They were major employers in the town, they were influential in politics and religion locally, and their influence can be discerned even today.

Many interesting families lived in the prosperous developing suburb of Buckhurst Hill in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The golden age of the suburb began with the coming of the railway in 1856, which encouraged men of business to set up homes here for their often large families.

Many were philanthropists, using their wealth and position to assist the community, either in politics or religion.

The Buxtons and the Linders were politically Liberals; the Powells were supporters of the Conservative Party. The Powells, Buxtons and Howards were Anglicans; the Linders and the Westhorps were keen Congregationalists. Buckhurst Hill still benefits from their charity and evidence of their activities in the Church of St John the Baptist, Buckhurst Hill, and St James's United Reformed (formerly the Congregational) Church can be seen to this day. The families were also talented – Powell glass was famous nationally in both churches and art galleries, and the novels written by, and the scientific discoveries made by, members of the Silberrad family were well known in their day. Edward North Buxton's memory is rightly revered in connection with his efforts to preserve both Epping, Hatfield and Hainault forests, and his book on Epping Forest is still sought by collectors. The Howard chemical works produced important products and other businessmen were involved in shipping, ironworks and other enterprises of importance to the British Empire of the time.



For the most part, their ample houses have disappeared, replaced, particularly in the 1960s and 70s, by smaller 'executive residences' and blocks of flats. But their names live on,– Knighton, Luctons, Oakfield, Sunnycroft, Devon House, Ardmore.

The only house remaining is Holmehurst, Manor Road, the former home of the Westhorps which Lynn has included because, although part of Loughton until 1996, it was occupied by a series of families, beginning with the Westhorps, who regarded themselves as part of Buckhurst Hill society rather than that of Loughton or Chingford.

Fortunately, a small number of photographs remain to show how much fine architecture we have lost and many of these are printed in the book. The Knighton estate and large house were of course technically in Woodford, but they have always been considered as part of the history of Buckhurst Hill because the Knighton Estate was in the manor of Buckhurst. Knighton Woods was originally part of the Great Forest of Essex, and has a long history of illegal enclosures, but it was finally enclosed in the early part of the 19th century.

We owe Lynn much for filling in this gap in our local history and in this book she has documented something of the houses and families and of what they left to Buckhurst Hill. The book has 48 pages of text and 16 pages of plates which makes 64 pages and is priced at £4 for members and £4.50 for others.

In December we published *Forest for the People: George Burney (1818–1885) and His Fight to Save Epping Forest* by Richard Morris which is the story of an iron-tank manufacturer, from Millwall on the Isle of Dogs in East London, who achieved some notoriety in the 1870s, in the fight to save Epping Forest from enclosure.

He organised the pulling down of fences on pieces of forest land which he believed had been illegally enclosed. His involvement in helping to save the Forest was, however, much greater than just pulling down fences. Richard's booklet seeks to explain Burney's wider activities, and to give some background to his family and business in East London. Burney & Company became known internationally for its iron products and was sole supplier of iron water tanks to the Royal Navy. The book has 44 pages (including 8 pages of illustrations) and is £3 for members and £3.50 for others.

A Century and a Half of Loughton in Pictures: further information

What follows is a collection of various extra information/comments from L&DHS members and readers of Chris Pond's recent book. The comments should be read while being able to refer to the book. If you haven't yet purchased a copy . . .

Gary Cootes knocked on CP's door about the 'Yeomanry' photo on page 26 of the book.

Gary's comments

It is in fact the Loughton Platoon of the 4th Essex Regiment Volunteers. I would presume that they are just returning from a Church Parade at St John's. I think you have dated it about right, too (1909).

The tallest one on parade, with corporal's chevrons, is my old next door neighbour, Jack Davey. He was born in 1880 and lived all his life in Loughton, at 172 Forest Road. He never married and lived with his sister, a spinster, Alice Davey. He joined the Essex Volunteers some time prior to 1900 and in that year volunteered for service in the Boer War, serving with the City of London Imperial Volunteers. He later served for a short while with the Bechuanaland Police, before returning home. He was awarded the Queen's South Africa medal. On his return home he joined the Metropolitan Police for about a year or so and, whilst serving, was awarded the 1902 Coronation medal. If you look closely you can see he wears both these medals in the photo. Jack was mobilised in August 1914 and served throughout the First World War in the Middle East with the Essex Regiment and then with the Royal Field Artillery. He was demobilised in 1919 at Purfleet . . . a colourful character!

Jack Davey

Mounted Yeomanry outside The Crown

The gentleman at the front of the parade is Dr Butler-Harris but all the others are unknown.

From correspondence between Mike Alston and Chris Pond

Plate 20 (High Road and Lopping Hall in 1900): On double checking, it seems the shops were erected on the forecourt in 1937–38. They were the Forest Library (Yes, the loaned books did have a maroon plastic cover) and Mann's confectioner. In 1963, they were enlarged to take in more of the lower hall.

Plate 25 (Monghyr Cottage): Mike and Chris agree that Monghyr Cottage was occupied by an architect named Williamson – any ideas from members as to any of his buildings?

Plate 33 (Church Hill looking south towards the town): MA – Just beyond the house on the left was, in the 1930s, the 'Anglo-French Laundry', run by a Mrs Freeman. CP – Quite correct. After the Second World War it became the Domextra Water Softener Works.

Plate 61 (Buses at the Crown terminus): MA – In the 1930s, in summer, there was always, below the left-hand side, a large jug on a stand, labelled 'oatmeal water' (presumably for thirsty drivers). This was also the terminus where we youngsters would go on board the buses and look for cards in discarded cigarette packets. The man in the white coat is a driver. I always thought it a strange attire, as it must regularly have got soiled by the nature of his job. CP –Was the oatmeal water for drivers, or for horses and dogs? I'm rather surprised the staff let lads crawl over their buses, but hope you still have some of the cigarette cards!

Plate 110 (Loughton Cinema): MA – Yes, this *is* an early photo, as the land on the left is yet to be built on – a row of shops starting with a fish shop and running along towards Brooklyn Avenue. The space in the sloping roof behind the façade led to the projection room, and the projectionist would often come out for a breather. The manager was Mr Sparrow, who was always in evening dress.

Plate 112 (Prince George, 1931): MA – Prince George's visit, well remembered! Many lined the High Road (including children such as me) to wave to him after the event. But, to our disappointment, staff on either side of him deliberately blocked the windows with their bodies and outstretched arms, to shield him from our gaze.

From Stuart Low, a reader and past contributor from Australia

Thanks for directing my sister in the right direction to buy the *A Century and a Half of Loughton in Pictures*. She duly brought it to Australia. It is a great little book and the photos bring back so many memories. Some, however, frighten the life out of me. After the wide roads and pavements of Australia, I had forgotten just how narrow some of the roads in Loughton are in comparison, especially some of the pictures of Loughton High Road.

The Great Cat of Loughton (Plate 126) was the result of hours of work by my uncle, Bernard Low, and was originally a Lion. Bernard died last year after celebrating his 100th birthday. I spent the years from

1957 to 1964 in Queens Road (Plate 128) so this photo was taken around that time. My parent's house was at the start of the white houses on the left of the picture. I also lived in a prefab (Plate 117) for some years and remember it as being spacious and well fitted out. However, looking at that picture it seems to have shrunk!

Childhood

META ROSENEIL

The flags were out in Frankfurt am Main on 28 August, the day I was born, to celebrate the birthday of its illustrious home-grown poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He is regarded as Germany's Shakespeare and world renowned for his wonderful poetry and prose. In subsequent years my mother always told me the flags were out for me.

Until 1939 my childhood was a happy one, although the dark clouds of the Nazis taking over the country were getting stronger and more menacing each year from 1933. The Jewish people were being excluded from all walks of life; doctors, lawyers, teachers were all being dismissed from their posts, and most of these professionals emigrated to other countries.

The rank and file stayed put temporarily although, as the state of affairs became progressively more threatening, it was apparent that life in Germany for the Jewish people was becoming very difficult, and Germany could no longer be called home. Even park benches bore the legend 'FORBIDDEN TO JEWS'. Swimming pools were out of bounds, as were museums and libraries.

In May 1939, when I was seven, my parents, brother and I left the city of my birth and came to England. I cannot remember learning English, but somehow, as a child, it is easy to absorb another language, and very soon I was fully conversant. Ever since I have treasured this remarkable language, with its wonderful stock of words derived from Latin and Teutonic sources.

We lived in the East End of London in a couple of rooms, sadly in the company of mice and bugs, but at least we were safe from the Nazi scourge. On 3 September 1939, my brother and I were evacuated to Cambridgeshire, to the home of a dairy farmer, and I can recall our wonderment at seeing the cows coming in to be milked, our first contact with the countryside. We were well treated but, as the 'phoney' war continued, my parents decided to take us back to London, as they missed their children.

Everything was rationed: all groceries, including sweets, clothes had to be bought with coupons, and it must have been hard for my mother to keep house on the scanty rations she could purchase.

Then came the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, and we all sat huddled in our Anderson shelter as the planes roared overhead and bombs came whistling down. More evacuation followed, this time to a little village near Bristol, and Mum came too. We stayed there for over a year, and occasionally Dad came down for a visit, but he had to earn a living in London and keep food on the table for the four of us. It was a very hard time for him.

When the 'doodlebugs' and rockets started coming we went to stay with relatives in Dorking. In between, while back in London, every evening we had to take our blankets and pillows to a local warehouse to sleep there, as the country was on alert constantly, and bombs continued to fall all night.

As we all know, after six long years of war and destruction, eventually the Nazis were beaten, and in May 1945 came the much longed for VE Day, when peace came to Europe again. We had to wait until August for Japan to surrender before all warfare ceased. Forever, we hoped, but, as we have all seen, in the years since then there is still great hostility between nations all over the world.

I look back on my childhood as an experience of life. We were content with little in those days. Our only priority was staying alive, and we managed to do this. I feel for my parents, for they had to bear the brunt of those horrific years to keep a family well fed under constant stress, and I admire them tremendously for coping so well during those war-torn years.

[Meta Roseneil is a member of Epping Forest U3A. After the War, she lived in Clapton for over 20 years. When she married in 1968, she moved to Buckhurst Hill. She is still a resident there.]

Mystery photo of Buckhurst Hill

LYNN HASELDINE-JONES

Further to the article concerning the mystery photograph of Buckhurst Hill in *Newsletter 195*, our editor received letters from Mr Malcolm Lord, General Secretary and Past-President of the Buckhurst Hill Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club, and fellow Past-President and researcher Alan Burgoine. Mr Lord stated that his organisation published a history in 2010 and the research undertaken by the authors of that volume had not revealed that they had any property relating to bowls or tennis in Palmerston Road.

I have checked the local directories for the 1920s and it would appear that there were three organisations involved in these sports at this time. In 1923 there was 'Buckhurst Hill Bowling Club' on the Epping New Road, Hon Sec at that time being A G Wells, and also 'Buckhurst Hill Lawn Tennis Club' situated on the High Road, Hon Sec being Kenneth Brown. Mr Lord's history states that the tennis courts off the High Road were held on an annual tenancy from a Miss Chambers. This would have been Mary Anne Howell Chambers, the daughter of Dr John Chambers of The Lodge, High Road (she died in 1929). At that time there was no mention of any sporting facilities in Palmerston Road.

However, by 1929, the two organisations of 1923 had merged to become 'Buckhurst Hill Bowling and Lawn Tennis Clubs', listed on the Epping New Road, Hon Sec being Arthur Goodman. At the same time there was an organisation on Palmerston Road called

'Buckhurst Hill Hard Courts Tennis Club' which was based at number 63.

In 1933 the organisations were listed as two quite distinct entities:

> Buckhurst Hill Bowling and Tennis Club (S Earl, Sec), Epping New Road and
> Buckhurst Hill Hard Courts Tennis Club (A Thompson Sec) Palmerston Road.

Presumably Buckhurst Hill Hard Courts Tennis Club was a relatively short-lived organisation (however there are certainly a number of people around who remember playing on hard courts behind the Bald Faced Stag on the High Road in the 1950s – perhaps it moved there from Palmerston Road?); Buckhurst Hill Bowling and Tennis Club is still with us, having celebrated its centenary in 2010.

I am most grateful to Mr Lord and Mr Burgoine for shedding more light on this matter.

Harlow and its Railway – Part 4

RICHARD BRADLEY

[This article is reproduced from The Great Eastern Journal*, April 2011, published by the Great Eastern Railway Society, with the kind permission of the author and the editors of that* Journal*. Some minor amendments have been made to help those not familiar with railway terminology and some of the more detailed changes to track layouts have been omitted. All changes have been reviewed by and approved by the author – Ed.]*

Work elsewhere in the New Town

While work was going on at Harlow station, preparations for electrification were taking place elsewhere in the New Town. The most significant project was the demolition of Burnt Mill station and the construction in its place of the new station to serve the town. The new station was much larger than the one it replaced and was mainly sited to the east of the level crossing separating the staggered platforms of the old station. Burnt Mill signal box remained in operation embedded in the London end of the new up platform until superseded by the power signal box being built at Harlow.

At the same time as the new station was being built Little Parndon Road bridge was replaced by a new bridge carrying the main spine road linking the New Town with the A414 road on the Hertfordshire side of the border, and the bridge at Parndon Mill was raised to provide sufficient clearance for the catenary.

Although the mill it originally served had closed in 1898 and was pulled down in 1926, Latton Mill bridge had survived because it provided access to the River Stort. It was raised to provide clearance for electrification but was demolished in 1965 two years after the Riverway bridge was built about 100 yards away on the country side. The new bridge was built by the Loughton civil engineering firm of W & C French and Co Ltd at its own expense in return for the Development Corporation granting it a lease at a nominal rent on an area of land on the river side of the railway line intended for a plant depot. The new bridge opened up the land between the railway and the river and in the next few years it became the site of the town's main warehouse park.

The only other bridge built in this period was the New Park footbridge, opened in 1964, which replaced a boarded crossing about half a mile on the country side of Burnt Mill station. The crossing had carried a footpath between Netteswell Cross and the River Stort but it later became the main link between parts of the newly-created Harlow Town Park. The new bridge was of concrete with ramps to make it suitable for bicycles and prams.

The new electrified line

The train service at Harlow had improved slightly as the New Town had grown but BR(E) was not prepared to make radical alterations in advance of electrification so the changes amounted to little more than tinkering with the existing timetable. The result was far from satisfactory. For example the 1958 timetable shows a fast Cambridge to London train stopping at Burnt Mill (but not Harlow) in the morning rush hour but the corresponding down service in the evening is shown as stopping at Harlow rather than Burnt Mill! Services were further disrupted by electrification works.

As a taste of what was to come, the new station, named Harlow Town, was formally opened on 13 July 1960. It was a striking modern design of concrete, brick and glass, its distinguishing features being three 50ft high concrete lift towers linked by a footbridge crossing the entire width of the station and a glass fronted booking hall surmounted by a deep canopy mirroring that over the footbridge. At ground level there were four tracks served by a pair of island platforms capable of taking 12-car trains. A siding was also provided for parcels traffic. The station was featured in the *Architects' Journal* of December that year which described it in the following words: 'the railway station is a punctuation mark in a lineal system at the point at which it meets the outside world. Few if any modern stations convey this idea so well as Harlow Town.'

To prepare for the opening of the new station, Harlow Station had been renamed Harlow Mill on 13 June 1960, the name being taken from the nearby former mill on the River Stort. Burnt Mill had also been renamed Harlow Town on the same date, anticipating the new station's formal opening by a month. The new power signal box at Harlow Mill was commissioned on 24 July 1960 and replaced the old signal boxes at Harlow and Burnt Mill on the same date.

The new electrified service began on 21 November 1960 running at 30-minute intervals throughout the day on weekdays and 20 minutes in rush hours. At first the service was disrupted by failures of the new multiple units caused mainly by faulty electrical equipment. Rolling stock built for the London, Tilbury and Southend line and for the London Midland Region had to be drafted in to maintain the service. Services gradually returned to normal and by mid-1963 the original stock had been rebuilt and was back at work operating reliably. Despite these teething

troubles passenger patronage is reported to have increased by 30%.

In early 1961 it was estimated that about 1,000 people a day travelled to London from Harlow Town every morning of which about 680 were season ticket holders. This demand had been foreseen by the addition to the basic timetable of three diesel railcar-worked fast trains between Bishop's Stortford and London in the morning and evening peaks (one originated at Audley End). They used the then unelectrified Lea Valley route and, taking only 32 minutes for the journey from Harlow Town to Liverpool Street, they offered possibly the fastest service to London that the town had seen.

Liverpool Street-Bishops Stortford multiple unit 510 stops at Harlow on its way to Bishop's Stortford on a Saturday in March 1973. (Author.)

The new goods depot

The New Town grew rapidly in the 1950s and the goods yard at Harlow was kept busy handling steel and other construction materials. In 1961 a project to enlarge and improve the yard began. The first stage involved the construction of a new coal depot on land to the south of the existing yard. This had two sidings which were linked to the London end of the arrival and run-round roads by a group of three new exchange sidings intended mainly for glass works traffic. At the same time a trailing connection to the up main line was installed at the London end of the yard. The enlarged yard was completed in June 1961.

The second stage of the project began in 1962. This was designed to replace the old goods yard and its structures with a mechanised freight distribution depot which would replace other yards in the locality and serve the surrounding area within a 15-mile radius. The site of the old yard was completely cleared, only the arrival and run-round roads being retained. Sheds were constructed for inwards and outwards sundries traffic and sidings provided alongside for general traffic. An office was built on the site of the old goods shed. The new depot opened in June 1964. Access from the main line was from the facing connection on the up main line though up trains could leave from the trailing connection installed in 1961.

The 1970s and after

The goods yard was very busy until the early 1970s being served by four trains a day including the Lea Valley Enterprise, a fast fitted service introduced in 1960 to serve the industries of the Lea Valley; it also had its own diesel shunter. However the decline in wagon load freight meant that its days were numbered. It closed in stages, sundries traffic going first, and the specialised traffic for the glass works last. In the 1980s the then more or less moribund yard became an aggregate terminal and today it is occupied by a rail-served plant producing coated roadstone.

The inauguration of Harlow Town as Harlow's principal station marked the beginning of a decline in Harlow Mill's fortunes. For the next 10-15 years it remained a busy small station serving the needs of people living in Old Harlow (as the original settlement was now called) and enjoying the same basic service as Harlow Town. However, as it was not served by fast trains to London, there was a drift of passengers away to Harlow Town. While the goods yard and office were open the station retained a degree of vitality but with their decline and closure it gradually acquired a bleaker appearance not helped by the demolition of the eastern side of the 1841 station building around 1970.

Harlow today

Harlow has now matured into a conventional town of more than 80,000 inhabitants though it still retains a new town ambience. The industrial base has declined and service industries have expanded. The glass works is still operational but now relies on recycled glass delivered by road so, apart from the roadstone terminal on the site of the goods yard, rail no longer has a function in moving freight. On the other hand, commuting to London is well established and the frequency of trains has never been better (although passenger comfort is perhaps a different matter). So, in general terms Harlow is like many other towns in the South East where the railway, while of negligible importance as far as general freight is concerned, still performs a vital service in terms of passenger transport.

Electrification changed the railway dramatically but many features were still discernible for the next decade or two until the decline of freight traffic and the rationalisation of infrastructure swept them away. Harlow Mill station is now a dismal sight with only a fragment of the original station building remaining in a down at heel industrial area. The original station building was not particularly attractive but it is regrettable that it was not retained and restored as it would have improved the appearance of the area significantly.

In contrast, the recently renovated Harlow Town station is still smart and up to date. When the station was listed as a Grade 2 listed building in 1996 the listing entry said:

'the Eastern Region Architect's Department was the most creative branch of British Railways, designing a number of powerful modern stations in conjunction with the Region's electrification. The new station for Harlow New Town was the flagship of this achievement. It is a building with powerful spatial qualities, of especial interest particularly for its architectural design.'

Harlow can count itself privileged to have a railway building of such importance and it is fitting

that the station now presents the face of the modern railway in the town.

Harlow Town Station by night in 1962, a time when road traffic was considerably lighter than today! The station was designed by Paul Hamilton with John Bicknell and Ian Fraser of the Architects Department of British Railways (Eastern Region), chief architect, H H Powell. (Museum of Harlow.)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people who have helped me with this article. They include Great Eastern Railway Society members Andy Rush, Chris Cock, Ken Butcher, Graham Kenworthy and Peter Kay; former Harlow railwaymen Michael Valla, Pete Dunn and Ron Perry; and Peter Steggall who kindly provided me with his memories of Harlow in the 1930s when his father was stationmaster. I would also like to thank Dawn Whitehead of the NRM, Deborah Jones and John Herrick of the Science and Social Picture Library, and David Devine of the Museum of Harlow for their help in providing images.

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(Concluded)

James Hilton (1900–1954)

TERRY CARTER

'There's only one thing more important . . . and that is, after you've done what you set out to do, to feel that it's been worth doing.'
James Hilton, *Random Harvest*

Many L&DHS members, and *Newsletter* readers, must have read *Goodbye, Mr Chips,* or watched various film versions (of which the Robert Donat, 1939, version is by far the best?). Who has not read or seen *Lost Horizon?* – in 1937 ladies wept and swooned as Ronald Colman completed his agonising journey back to *Shangri-La,* his very own undiscovered Utopia. Indeed, how many dwellings all over the country have since been given that fictitious name.

Both those novels were the work of James Hilton, and the 30s films were largely scripted by him. The following is a very brief resumé of his life and works.

Born on 9 September 1900 in Leigh, Lancashire, James Hilton was the son of John Hilton, the headmaster of Chapel End School in Walthamstow. He attended elementary and grammar school in north London until June 1914, when he won a scholarship to Haileybury College. When his father realised the extent of Haileybury's military connections, and that it had a CCF, Hilton withdrew. Instead he was allowed to choose a public school for himself. Touring England's finest schools alone, he settled on the Leys School in Cambridge, and was educated there, and at Christ's College, Cambridge. He edited and contributed to the Leys School magazine and later, while a 17-year-old undergraduate at Christ's College, one of his articles was accepted by the *Manchester Guardian*. Still an undergraduate, his first novel, *Catherine Herself* was published in 1920, when he was only 20.

By 1921 his parents had moved to Woodford Green. James joined them and lived there with them for over a decade while working as a journalist for a number of newspapers, including *The Irish Independent*, followed by a number of British papers. Even before his 1933 *Lost Horizon,* Hilton had published eight novels, but none drew much attention from the public or critics, although in 1931 he enjoyed some success with *And Now Goodbye*.

English literature, history and music – he played the piano very well – were to remain among Hilton's main interests for the rest of his life.

In 1931, he took up writing fiction full time. Then, in 1933, he wrote *Lost Horizon* and the mythical paradise of *Shangri-La* became a household word. Hilton is said to have based both *Lost Horizon*, and *'Shangri-La'* on the *National Geographic Magazine* articles of Joseph Rock, an Austrian-American botanist and ethnologist, famed for exploring remote Chinese provinces and Tibetan borderlands.

One more event in 1933 would ensure that Hilton had really arrived. He was asked to write a 3,000 word short story for the magazine *The British Weekly*. Hilton relates that, after a week without inspiration, he went out cycling 'in a blue funk', on a foggy winter morning in Epping Forest. 'Suddenly an idea bobbed up and I saw the whole story in a flash.' In four days he had 'banged out' a story about an elderly, much-loved schoolmaster which he entitled *Goodbye, Mr Chips,* later to be re-cast as a full-length novel. It was an immediate success, both in Britain and America,

and by early 1934 Hilton was a best-selling author. This triumph sparked an insatiable appetite to read his work and all his earlier novels were reissued.

Hilton's headmaster father was one of the inspirations for the character of Mr Chipping in *Goodbye, Mr Chips*. Also, Hilton was born in Wilkinson Street, Leigh, and there is a teacher in the book called Mr Wilkinson, and the whole setting is reputedly based on The Leys School.

In 1935, he married his English wife, Alice Brown, and then left for Hollywood. Many of his books became world-wide hit movies, most notably, of course, *Lost Horizon* and *Goodbye, Mr Chips*, and also another Ronald Colman weepie, *Random Harvest* (1942).

Hilton was now a sought-after Hollywood scriptwriter and a popular figure in Hollywood, counting Frank Capra *(It's a Wonderful Life),* Ronald Colman and Greer Garson amongst his many friends.

His two marriages seem to have been rather unsuccessful. His first ended in a Mexican divorce in 1937 and only seven days later he married Galina Kopineck, a young starlet. This union proved volatile and Hilton again divorced eight years later. But he continued to write best-selling novels before, during and after the Second World War including *Random Harvest*, *So Well Remembered* and *Time and Time Again*. He was honoured with an Academy Award in 1942 for the screenplay of the Greer Garson/Walter Pidgeon wartime classic, *Mrs Miniver*.

In all he wrote 22 novels, and was associated with 14 films. Three plays, based on his novels, were written by other authors. Possessing an imposing voice, Hilton served as the narrator for *Madame Curie* (1943) and the adaptation of his novel, *So Well Remembered* (1947), in addition to hosting CBS Radio's Hallmark Playhouse from 1948 until 1953.

On 20 December 1954, sadly at too young an age, Hilton died of liver cancer in hospital in Long Beach, California. But, more happily, by this time his first wife, Alice, had been reconciled with him and nursed him till the very end. They had not only been reconciled, but reunited as man and wife when they learned that their Mexican divorce had not been legal.

The strong local connection persists to this day. James Hilton wrote his two most remembered books, *Lost Horizon* and *Goodbye, Mr Chips* while living in a modest semi-detached house on Oak Hill Gardens, Woodford Green, on the edge of Epping Forest. The house still stands, with a blue plaque marking Hilton's residence.

While Hilton's work has fallen out of fashion in recent years, his contributions to popular culture are undeniable. *Mr Chips* and *Shangri-la* have become part of the common vernacular, and the past success of his other books and screenplays confirms him as a major local figure.

Warren Hill House

From an 1890 sales brochure of Warren Hill House. Both the main house and the stables still exist, although of course the main house is now divided into apartments.

Priests Garth

This is the story of Priests Garth from 1906 until 1936, as researched and remembered by MICHAEL ALSTON, grand-nephew of the house's first owner, the Reverend Alexander T Kirkpatrick.

Priests Garth was completed by May 1906 – see contemporary photos. It was built for a Church of England clergyman, Alexander Kirkpatrick (born 1862), and his wife Isabel (born Isabel Alston, 1865). They had married relatively late in life, on 15 August, 1905, and so Priests Garth was their first (and only) permanent home. Their maid/housekeeper Ellen Taber was to stay with the house for over 30 years.

[*Note* by Chris Pond: In fact, William Chapman Waller had the house built (see *Loughton 100 Years Ago*). The Kirkpatricks rented it (as is proved by the Loughton Urban District Council valuation list of 1911). Waller gave the house to his daughter Evelyn, who was the 1911 owner. By 1929 the Kirkpatricks had bought it from her.]

Alexander (always known to the Alston family as 'Uncle Alec') was the elder son of Alexander Kirkpatrick of Donacomper, Celbridge, Co Kildare in Ireland. He had been an overseas missionary for about five years in east Australia, and, after marrying and moving to Loughton, regularly assisted, as a priest, at services at St Mary's and St John's churches.

In 1907 they unexpectedly acquired a 'ready-made' family – a girl aged 17 and her brother aged 13 (the niece and nephew of Isabel) when Isabel's brother, William Alston, had been left a widower. When he died his two children, Cecily (born 1890) and John (born 1894) lived with various relations until finally coming to live with Alec and Isabel. They completed their respective educations from Priests Garth, with John joining the Army in 1916 until his 'demob' in 1919. Sadly their Aunt Isabel died in 1918 aged 53, perhaps a victim of the influenza epidemic of that time.

Cecily and John continued to live at Priests Garth, well cared for by Ellen, until their marriages in 1920 and 1922, respectively. Cecily had become a teacher in London, but, after marrying, moved to Worcestershire. However, while still teaching she had, one weekend, brought a fellow teacher, Margaret Wilson, home. John was at home, too (then working with a London shipping firm) and, on 4 October 1922 Margaret became Mrs John Alston. They moved to Wembley, leaving Uncle Alec on his own, apart from the attentive Ellen.

In June 1924 John and Margaret Alston moved temporarily back to Priests Garth, and, on 6 October that year their son, Michael John Alston, was born – in the front bedroom. A few days after his birth the cot curtain caught fire (ignited by being blown onto an oil lamp) but disaster was averted, If it had not been, this report would not have existed! The Alstons moved back to Wembley in March 1925, but only briefly as they were having a house built in Traps Hill, just a short walk from Priests Garth. They moved into No 33 at the end of December, 1926, staying there until 1960, naming it Motts Croft.

The Alstons had a very warm relationship with their Uncle Alec, and visits were frequent. By tradition he was at Motts Croft for tea on most Saturday afternoons, and spent many Christmas Days there. As Michael grew up, and was joined by a sister, Diana, in 1927, he regularly went to Priests Garth for tea – a sumptuous spread provided by Ellen. At Christmas, Ellen provided, out of her own pocket, a second lot of presents from Father Christmas, which we had to look for in the cupboard under the stairs!

Uncle Alec Kirkpatrick died peacefully in October 1933. On the Kirkpatrick side he had a younger brother, Ivone, a retired Colonel in the British Army with two sons, Freddy and Ivone, Jr. In his will, Alec made generous bequests to Cecily and John, but Priests Garth and its contents was left to his nephew Freddy (a retired Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy).

Freddy had his own house, and so it was agreed that his father, Colonel Ivone Kirkpatrick, CBE (who was widowed in 1931), should live there. He moved into Priests Garth in 1934 (having been widowed in 1931), together with several trophies, none bigger than an immense buffalo head which was mounted on the wall above the doorway to the dining room in the front. He was happy to allow Michael and Diana Alston to continue to come to Priests Garth for their regular teas with Ellen. He is remembered as rather 'peppery' and deaf and, because of his deafness, shouted rather than spoke. He died of a heart attack whilst out walking in November 1936.

With his death, the occupation of Priests Garth by the Kirkpatricks came to an end. The house was sold (no details of the buyer) and Ellen, together with some of the furniture, moved in with the Alston family at Motts Croft in Traps Hill.

While Colonel Ivone Kirkpatrick's two sons never lived in Priests Garth it is worth recording their subsequent careers. Freddy Kirkpatrick was recalled to the Royal Navy in 1939, and spent most of the War at sea, some of it in minesweepers. He finally retired as a Commander RN. His brother, Ivone, had a particularly distinguished career in the British Diplomatic Service. He was First Secretary at the British Embassy in Berlin from 1933 to 1938; UK High Commissioner for Germany from 1950 to 1953; and ultimately Chairman of the Independent Television Authority from 1957 to 1962.

[A 'garth' has various, but similar meetings: A grassy quadrangle surrounded by cloisters: a courtyard surrounded by a cloister: a yard, garden, or paddock: a ridge of land. Ed.]

The case of Alfred Rix

Submitted by CHRIS POND

5 July 1841

[Two years after Loughton was taken into the Metropolitan Police District – from Old Bailey online.]

930. ALFRED RIX was indicted for stealing, on the 25th of May, 3 heifers, price £15, the property of William Wiggins.

WILLIAM WIGGINS. I am a grocer, and live at Woodford. I had three heifers, which I kept on Epping Forest—I missed them at the latter end of May, or early in June—I had seen them last on the Queen's birthday, which, I think, was the 24th of May—it was on a Monday—I live on the Forest, next door to Mr Rounding—they were opposite his house—on the 3rd of June I saw three heifers in possession of a policeman at Ilford—they are what I lost—I valued them at £15, but I think them worth more—they are well worth £5 a piece.

WILLIAM WILKS. I am a blacksmith, and live at Loughton. On Tuesday night, the 25th of May, about half-past ten o'clock, I saw the prisoner in conversation with Mrs Vichel, inquiring the way to Romford—Vichel is a baker, and lives next door to me, at the bottom of Goldham's [*Goldings*]-hill—she Mrs could not direct him, and asked me to do so—I told him the way to Romford—he went on four or five rods in that direction, then returned, running,

exclaiming as he passed me, 'I have left my things'—he came back in a minute or two with three heifers—I suspected something, and went to tell Richard Fuller my suspicions—I did not find Fuller at home, and told the ostler—he told me to go to the station, and as I went I met Arthur Talmage—I told him my suspicions, and we went together on the road to Romford about a quarter of a mile, and met the prisoner returning with the three heifers—I asked him where he was going—he said, to Abridge, which is about three miles from Loughton—we followed him with the heifers—he drove them on the road to the Plume of Feathers public-house, and there I gave him into custody with the heifers.

Cross-examined by MR LUCAS.

Q. He went back with you?

A. Yes—I called for a pint of beer, and asked him to drink—we stopped there nearly half an hour before the policeman came—I kept close to the prisoner—he did not attempt to get away.

JOHN EDWARDS (*police-constable H115*). On the night of the 25th of May I was near the Plume of Feathers, and took the prisoner into custody, and secured the heifers—Wilks told me he had stopped him with three heifers which he thought were stolen—the prisoner said they were his property, that he had purchased them of a Mr William Smith that day at Waltham Abbey market—he said Smith was a jobber living at Little Adam [i.e., Hadham], in Hertfordshire—I found on him two knives, a leather purse, and a new hempen halter—he said he lived at Cheshunt, and rented a cottage there with four acres of land attached, and gave the name of Alfred Rix—I asked him what detained him so long coming from Waltham market to Loughton, it being only four miles—he said he had stopped at a beer-shop for two hours on the road from Waltham to Loughton—there is but one beer-shop on that road—he said he had purchased some bread and cheese there—I went there and made inquiry there—I did not take him there.

JAMES AYTON. I am sergeant of police at Loughton. On the night of the 25th of May the prisoner was brought to the house used as a station [*this was apparently on or near the present cricket ground]*, in the custody of Edwards—I saw him searched, and two clasp-knives, one baiter, a leather purse, and a piece of cloth found on him—I asked how he came by the heifers—he said he was going to Romford market with them, and he had bought them at Waltham Abbey market, for £18 10*s*, of a William Smith—the heifers were shown to Wiggins—I made inquiry at Chingford about them—they are now at Ilford station—I did not inquire where the prisoner described himself as living.

WILLIAM RICHARDSON. I am inspector of police. I showed Wiggins the heifers, which he claimed—I received them from Edwards.

WILLIAM WIGGINS *re-examined.* I saw them afterwards at the station at Ilford, under the care of Inspector Richardson . . .

Cross-examined by MR LUCAS.

Q. What do you know them by? have you any marks about them?

A. Not particularly—there were no others turned out like them—I bred and weaned them—I had seen them daily for twelve months—they have the Forest mark on them—I know them to be my cattle—they are very peculiar, and their tails were cut square—I have had them from fifteen to eighteen months—there is one brown and white, and one nearly black and red.

JAMES EDWARDS *re-examined.* I made inquiries at Cheshunt where the prisoner said he lived, and could hear of no such name having either a cottage or land.

(Reuben Nye, of Thomas-street, Hackney-road; and John Living, of Victoria-place, Bethnal-green; deposed to the prisoner's good character, and stated that he lived in Thomas-street, Hackney.)

GUILTY. Aged 55.—Transported for Ten Years.

A personal note from George Pearson (1875–1973)

CHRIS POND writes: 'I chanced on a 1967 copy letter from 92-year-old George Pearson in the LDHS Francies Collection at Loughton Library. A very nice quotation about his time in Loughton. This could go in the *Newsletter* as a follow-up to Stephen Pewsey's excellent article in *NL190*, September/October 2011, "George Pearson in Loughton".'

A Blue Plaque was erected, in honour of his memory, on Staples Road Junior School. He was Headmaster there from 1908 to 1913, but there is much more about his very full life in Stephen's article, which far-distant readers of these *Newsletters*, who seem to be increasing in numbers, can find on our website.

Mowbray House, 9 Victoria Road, Malvern
Aug 1st /67

My dear Willie Francies,

How very kind of you to send me that most interesting publication *Essex Countryside*. It was a real delight to read your article 'A Consort of Violins'. It brought back so many happy memories of those days of long ago. The illustrations almost brought tears to my eyes, for they stirred visions that once urged my actions.

In my adventurous life, Loughton stands out like a mountain peak. It was there that I saw a promised land far off that tempted me to desert the joy of daily contact with Youth, as a Schoolmaster, loving and beloved by boys who would still remember him when they were Men.

I have often regretted that fatal step in to the mad arena of the Film World . . . but . . .

> 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we will."

And now, aged 92, I rest quietly in peace, the dust and turmoil of life's journey almost ended, mentally rather lonely 'for musing on companions gone, we deeply feel ourselves alone'.

But letters such as yours dispel sad thoughts, and stir anew the dying embers of old age. As I look back, I am sure that my happiest days were as a Schoolmaster in Loughton.

Your own life story is presumably one of ups and downs, but you have gained a peaceful happiness, recovered your health, and are able to enjoy retirement amid the delights of God's Garden. The Sea and Sky . . . the soft breeze, the birds and the flowers, and the companionship of those you love.

I wish you long years yet to share these blessings.

With my kindest regards, I remain,
Yours sincerely,
(Signed) George Pearson

Feedback re *Newsletter 196*

JOHN HARRISON

Claybury Hospital

I think I can usefully comment further on the item on Claybury Hospital in *Newsletter 196*. As I then worked for Epping Forest District Council, I represented the

authority at the public inquiry. Though the majority of the site was in Redbridge, part of the entrance lodges gardens were in our area and the overall scheme would had implications for Epping Forest, so EFDC was an interested party at the inquiry. The comment, 'The NHS pressed for extensive demolition and maximum new-build, whereas the Local Planning Authority and English Heritage argued for maximum retention of the historic buildings and restriction of new-build to the existing footprint, in accordance with the Green Belt allocation in the Unitary Development Plan' is a bit simplistic. The prospective developers and NHS did recognise that the site was in the Green Belt and also a heritage landscape as it was parkland designed by Repton and tailored their scheme accordingly, retaining much of the open area of the site. The issue between the parties was the extent of redevelopment. I do not recall English Heritage being involved in the inquiry, but they may have given evidence on a day when I was not present. Fortunately, I did not have to attend for the full 60 days of the inquiry. My personal view is that public inquiries with their adversarial approach are not a good way to deal with major issues like the Claybury Hospital scheme, though it is difficult to put forward a suitable alternative system.

The treatment of the poor in Victorian Buckhurst Hill

LYNN HASELDINE JONES

The Village Hospital

The poor of the community did not find it easy to obtain medical treatment. For example, the Village Hospital, in Hospital Lane (now Knighton Lane) stated in its regulations the following concerning the poor: 'As a general rule, patients in receipt of outdoor relief shall not be received, and under no circumstances unless the Guardians are willing to contribute not less than five shillings a week for each such patient.'

The Buckhurst Hill Congregational Dorcas Society

The Congregational Church set up a Dorcas[1] Society for the purpose of supplying the poor of the neighbourhood with warm and good clothing at a low price. The Society was run by a small group of ladies, and their names, given in an undated[2] set of rules, were: President, Mrs Fraser; Treasurer, Mrs Lockett; Secretary, Miss Westhorp; Committee: Mrs Linder, Mrs E Morris, Mrs Westhorp, Mrs Lewis, Mrs St Alphonse, Mrs Wallet.

Each lady subscribed a sum of at least five shillings. She would then attend a session of sewing on the first Tuesday of each month, from 2 to 5 o'clock in the Church Vestry. If she could not attend she would either pay a fine of sixpence, or had the option of asking for a piece of work to be sent to her home (that is, something for her to sew) and she would have to have completed it by the next meeting. To keep the ladies entertained whilst working, 'an interesting book' was read aloud during some part of each meeting.

The items produced would be sold to the poor at reasonable prices (note – sold, not given) at the annual sale which would be on the afternoon of the second Tuesday in December.

The Buckhurst Hill Charitable Relief Society

The report of the Buckhurst Hill Charitable Relief Society for December 1870 had the following to say about the poor of Buckhurst Hill:

'The near approach of winter, when the labouring poor amongst us are often thrown out of work, has induced the committee of this society to resume the method of dispensing relief which was initiated last year, and which, it is believed, was attended with satisfactory results.

When it is considered that often the very existence of the poor depends upon charity; and moreover their welfare, moral as well as physical, upon the manner in which it is dispensed, it becomes a matter of great importance to do this in the best possible way, so as to effect the most good, and occasion the least evil.

Much of the charity expended by benevolent individuals runs to waste, or worse, is turned to positive abuse owing to the utter want of knowledge of the persons relieved. Moreover it frequently happens (and the experience of the committee has confirmed the fact) that by private haphazard alms giving the most importunate, and least deserving cases are over-assisted, whilst the more retiring and necessitous are comparatively overlooked.

To check these abuses, arising from private benevolence, and want of combined action, is the object of this, and other societies, where similar agency is employed; to discourage the indiscriminate almsgiving by individuals, and to substitute a more systematic and organised mode of relief; to repress, as far as possible, the system of begging from house to house practised here and elsewhere by the idle and dishonest and to economise the flow of charity by affording judicious assistance to the really deserving . . . etc.'

In five months the committee had 20 sittings and 84 persons applied for relief. One man, described as a mechanic, together with his wife and children, was assisted to emigrate. Fifty nine people were assisted by sums of one to five shillings, drawn on local tradespeople; that is, they were given goods to the value by shopkeepers, who were paid by the committee for what they had given to the 'deserving' poor.

In 1870 the Committee was headed by the Chairman, Nathanael Powell, assisted by the Treasurer Edward North Buxton. The other members were: William Charles Barnes of Oak Hall; Samuel Linder of Oakfield; The Rev William Henry Frend of the Church of St John the Baptist, Buckhurst Hill; The Rev C A Leveson; Alfred Clapham of Ormonde House; The Rev William Dorling, initially of Buckhurst Hill Congregational Church, later of the King's Place Independent Chapel; Frederick Gordon of Ellerslie; John Dyer of Queen's Road; Dr Frederick Cory of the Elms, Queen's Road; W Snow of Harlow Villa, Palmerston Road; Benjamin Thornton Fowler of Queen's Road; Theophilus Westhorp of Holmehurst; Alexander Fraser of Devon House.

Just how much door to door begging there was in Buckhurst Hill is impossible to estimate, but clearly

these gentlemen considered it to be a problem. It is interesting to note the appearance of the names Linder, Westhorp and Fraser in both the philanthropic activities of the ladies of the Dorcas Society and the men of the Charitable Relief Society: some families of Victorian Buckhurst Hill took their responsibilities towards the less fortunate very seriously by the standards of the time.

References

Buckhurst Hill Congregational Dorcas Society rules (undated) held in Loughton Library.

Teverson, George: *A Brief Chronicle of Fifty Years Service in Buckhurst Hill: Buckhurst Hill Congregational Church 1874–1924.*

The 42nd Annual Report of the Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Chingford, Loughton and Woodford Village Hospital 1908, held in Loughton Library.

The Powell Scrapbooks, Vestry House Museum, Walthamstow.

www.wikipedia.org

Notes

1. A Dorcas Society is a local group of people, usually based in a church, with a mission of providing clothing for the poor. The first society was founded in Douglas, Isle of Man, on 1 December 1834, as part of the community's thanksgiving for being spared from an outbreak of cholera, when the poor of the town had their clothes and bedding destroyed as part of the effort to prevent the disease. The Society was named after Tabitha, also called Dorcas, in Acts 9, v36.

2. The document is undated but from the names listed it would appear to be in the early days of the church. Messrs Fraser, Lockett, Westhorp (of Holmehurst), Linder (of Oakfield), Morris and Wallet are all mentioned as being involved in the initial establishment of the church in the 1860s and 1870s.

Arthur Osborne Montgomery Jay (1858–1945)

TED MARTIN

Over the years Loughton has had many connections with the East End, from the children and families who came to Loughton for a country day out in the 19th and early 20th centuries to the successful entrepreneurs and businessmen who made their fortunes in the East End and then moved to leafy Loughton to retire or to travel to their workplaces daily by train. There were also the writers, and many others, who had East End roots but then, when they became successful, moved to what perhaps had been their childhood country playground.

One of those writers to migrate to Loughton, though born in Poplar, was Arthur Morrison, and, as related in *Arthur Morrison* by Stan Newens, published by the Society in 2008, Morrison based his novel *A Child of the Jago* on the East End slum area known as the Old Nichol.

A recent BBC Book,[1] expanded on the connection between Morrison and Arthur Osborne Montgomery Jay (known as Osborne Jay), a radical Church of England clergyman and social commentator. He was the priest in the parish containing the Old Nichol and Morrison may have named his literary version of the area after him: 'Jay-go'.

Early life

Osborne Jay was born on 14 April 1858 at Landour, in north India, and was the second son of the Rev William James Jay and Harriet, daughter of Martin Rawling of St Ives, Huntingdonshire. His parents married in 1850 just as his father became chaplain to the Bengal establishment, a post he held until his return to England in 1860.

The Rev Osborne Jay

From 1860 to 1866 Jay's father was chaplain to the East India Hospital, Poplar, and so Osborne had connections with the East End of London which went back to his childhood. In 1865 the Maharaja Duleep Singh presented William Jay to the rectory of Elvedon, Suffolk, and Osborne was sent to a boarding-school in Leamington Spa, until about 1870.

From there Osborne Jay went to Eton and on 1 September 1876 was admitted to St Catharine's College, Cambridge. He took his BA in 1880. In 1881 he was ordained as deacon in the Diocese of London and became curate of Holy Trinity, Stepney, taking priest's orders in 1882 and his MA in 1883.

Jay ran a college mission in Stepney from 1883 until 1886 and described in one of his books[2] how 'on the closing of this enterprise I was living in a dismal street near Ratcliff Highway, close to the famous "Tiger-Bay", drawing a stipend from the Bishop of Bedford's Fund . . . and looking for fresh opportunities of work'.

Holy Trinity, Shoreditch

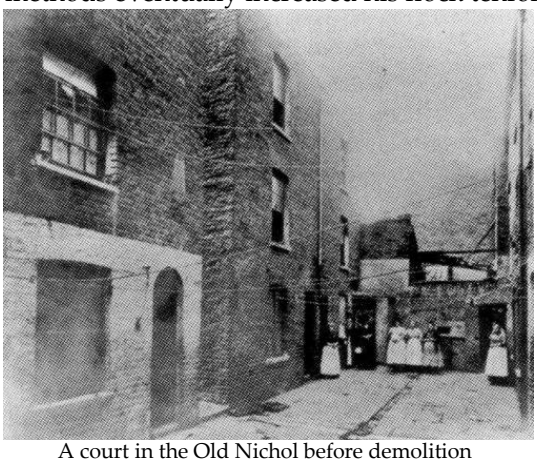
The Bishop of London offered Jay the living of Holy Trinity, Shoreditch, at £200 a year and a deal 'of hard work to be done, and that for many years to come'. The parish was formed in 1866 from parts of the parishes of Saint Philip, Bethnal Green, and Saint Leonard, Shoreditch, and was on the border between Bethnal Green and Shoreditch, an impoverished area which contained the notorious Old Nichol slum.

Osborne Jay accepted the parish in December 1886. There was no church building and services were held in a hay loft. He had a grant from Magdalen College, Oxford. Within 10 years he raised £25,000 to build a church, a social club, a lodging house in Old Nichol Street, and a gymnasium. As the BBC book relates:

'He also set out raising public consciousness about the plight of his flock – ruffling Victorian feathers in the process. Jay inspired – indeed he still inspires – strong reactions. Among some contemporary commentators he was a social radical in a world where radicalism was viewed askance. A century later, he has been viewed by some as a rampant self-publicist, misogynist and egomaniac, and by others as a truly inspirational and electrifying figure in a down-trodden corner of the East End.'

Jay's methods to increase his congregation included a boxing club for the men of the Old Nichol on the ground floor of the church (the worship area

was on the first floor – probably the only English Anglican church ever to have this arrangement). A church used for boxing was shocking to many, but Jay's methods eventually increased his flock tenfold.



A court in the Old Nichol before demolition

At this time Jay was described by Charles Booth[3] (a social reformer), as a 'stout, plain, coarse-looking fellow with all the appearance of a fringe fighter out of training'. According to Booth, Jay's enthusiasm, his touch of vulgarity and that he was not too strait-laced in assessing his parishioners' crimes, ensured his remarkable position in Bethnal Green:

'Behind the almost brutal exterior there must be a man of the most sincere religious sentiment: no other motive seems adequate to account for the extraordinary devotion displayed in his life . . . one cannot but feel that he has been a civilizing and humanizing even if not a spiritual influence among the criminals, semi-criminals and the degenerates whose confidence and intimacy he has won.'

Deaf to the pleas of the Bishop of London to keep a lower profile, Jay wrote three books[4] about life in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green. These said that no religious organisations had been working in the area before him, which was wrong, but told also of the appalling conditions in which people were living.

When Jay read Arthur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) he invited the novelist to come to live in the parish and experience life in the Old Nichol. Morrison accepted the invitation, and, as we know from the book by Stan Newens, the Old Nichol became the Jago of Morrison's novel *Child of the Jago*. The maps of the Jago in the novel are very similar to the streets of the Old Nichol and the character of Father Sturt in the book was modelled closely upon Jay. One of Morrison's cockney stories was reprinted in *Newsletter 195*.

Jay successfully campaigned for the new LCC to demolish the Old Nichol and replace it with an estate of model dwellings (known as the Boundary Street Estate) and was annoyed when the former slum dwellers were not rehoused on it but were made to go elsewhere.

In the late 1890s Ernest Aves[5] commented that Jay was, with the exception of the Bishop of Stepney, the 'best known man associated with the Church in Bethnal Green'. He described Jay's ministry as successful, measured by attendance at church and by the success of his clubs. Unlike many churches, more than half of the congregation at Holy Trinity were men. Aves said: 'he looks like a prize fighter', thus comparing his muscular Christianity with his personal appearance. He had never 'had the gloves on in his life' and is described as 'a voluble and discursive talker' and that he had roused considerable opposition in neighbouring parishes

'in his buildings he has attached very great importance, and has secured great richness in design, compactness, and great aesthetic beauty. He is a High churchman, and estimates very highly the parish system of the Church of England. He thinks that one "should clean one's own doorstep" and that useful work has to be concentrated in the way which strict adherence to the parochial system alone makes possible.'[6]

'To check the survival of the unfit'

Jay was known as a humane man, but thought the criminal elements of society (i.e., the inhabitants of the Old Nichol) could not be reformed and should be removed forcibly to penal colonies to serve life sentences and not be allowed to have children. He was reported in *The London*, 12 March 1896,[7] as believing that this would remove criminality from the population.

He said poverty was the chief reason for degradation

'the . . . semi-criminal class are in their present position through physical, moral, and mental peculiarities . . ., no energy or staying power . . . their natural gifts are small. Cunning, not wisdom; sharpness, not intelligence, are stamped even on their faces . . . we forget that there is this large class which never had a fair chance of being quickened into life.'

He thought the problem could be solved by stopping the supply of persons born to be lazy, immoral, and deficient in intellect. This could only be done by sending them to a penal settlement: 'all men are not equal . . . ; but we can prevent them bringing into the world children stamped with the character of their parents.'

They should be kept for life at the settlement, resembling a prison, but larger and far less gloomy with gardens, covered promenades, a gymnasium, and baths, recreation rooms, reading rooms, and even a theatre and concert room. 'The inmates should be treated as well as, say, the inmates of Hanwell.'[8] There would be punishment, solitary confinement, or even corporal punishment, but they could be ruled without punishment and would gladly 'be put where they would lose some liberty, but gain a better and perhaps a happier life'.

Selection of inmates could be easily settled: anyone convicted the second or third time, even for stealing, could be made the subject of careful examination by a board of experts.

When asked whether there would be a great outcry against shutting human beings off from all contact with the outside world, he said. 'No doubt; but the public must be educated to the idea. But it can scarcely be rationally argued that society has a right to condemn criminal lunatics and others to life-long imprisonment, and yet possess no authority to act in a similar preventive manner as regards the semi-criminals . . .'

Later life and death

Jay did not marry and said he did not get on well with women. He stayed at Holy Trinity, Shoreditch, until 1921, where he would have seen some improvement to the abject poverty which surrounded him 40 years before. In 1921 he retired to Great Malvern, where he died of 'senile cerebral degeneration' at his home, Thornbury, Avenue Road, on 14 January 1945. Holy Trinity Church was damaged in the Second World War and later demolished.

He did much for the labouring poor in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green though his methods did not commend him to the establishment and denied him any chance of preferment within the Church. His 'penal settlements' idea seems extreme today but it was in line with the authoritarian approach to the problems of the time and Arthur Morrison's opinion was basically the same:

'the majority of the Jago people are semi-criminal . . . families going back to the third or fourth generation and all criminals and lunatics . . . you never see a tall man among them, all the criminal classes are stunted . . . I believe as Father Jay does in penal settlements . . . Let the weed die out and then proceed to raise the raisable.'

Notes

1. Joseph Bullman, Neil Hegarty and Brian Hill, *The Secret History of Our Streets, London* (BBC Books, 2012), pp 139–188, an absorbing, well-written book (but showing some signs of haste) which is a modern update of some of the areas visited by Charles Booth (see note 3, below). The book accompanied the BBC TV series of the same name and covers the history of streets in various areas of London. It has an art paper illustrations section, but some photos are printed in the text on bulky book wove paper which makes them appear 'muddy'. Bulky book wove and double-spacing of the text give a book 1-inch thick: probably to justify a cover price of £20! A normal design would have produced 212 pages as against 346 and a decent paper for the in-text photos could have been used – an ancient publisher's trick practised on a public who are usually very well aware of it.

2. *Life in Darkest London* (1891), p. 12.

3. Charles Booth was born in Liverpool on 30 March 1840, the son of liberal nonconformists. He attended the Royal Institution School in Liverpool and, in 1862, joined his eldest brother Alfred in Alfred Booth and Co and became very wealthy. On 29 April 1871 he married Mary Macaulay, niece of historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, and early in marriage had a breakdown due to overwork. In 1875, they settled in London and saw great wealth and intractable poverty in the city. A meeting to organise an inquiry into poverty in London was held on 17 April 1886 and this work, headed by Booth, continued until 1903. The third and final edition of *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan, 1902–1903) went into 17 volumes. They investigated poverty, industry and religious influences and included a description of the social and moral influences on Londoners' lives. He was a fellow of the Royal Society and had honorary degrees from the Universities of Cambridge, Liverpool and Oxford. He died after a stroke on 23 November 1916 at his home in Leicestershire.

4. *Life in Darkest London* (1891), *The Social Problem and its Solution* (1893) and *A Story of Shoreditch* (1896).

5. Booth drew on the resources of Toynbee Hall, in the East End. Many of his assistants came from it, and many later became distinguished figures in public life. They included Ernest Aves (1857–1917), a writer.

6. Ernest Aves report on district IX, Booth Collection.

7. 'A New Scheme by The Rev Osborne Jay, A Militant Bethnal Green Parson, for Sending the Submerged to a Penal Settlement', *The London*, 12 March 1896.

8. The First Middlesex County Asylum at Hanwell, opened in 1831, built for the *pauper* insane, was the first purpose-built asylum in England and Wales.

References and further reading

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Counting our chickens

TERRY CARTER

Some local residents, particularly newer ones, may not be much fussed about chickens but they might be surprised at the contribution backyard hens made to our hard-pressed wartime and post-war area. For about eleven years from 1946 they were a significant part of life in our house.

Even though many farm workers, and townies like my father, were still away from home, egg production in Britain at the end of the war was almost the same as in 1939, thanks to ordinary people like the families of many members of the L&DHS with a little bit of ground at the back of the house where hens could scratch away happily. Amazingly, at the end of the Second World War, well over one-third of British eggs were being laid by garden chickens.

During the war many local residents, including those who were very wealthy, kept a few hens, even though, prior to the outbreak of hostilities, such an activity was somewhat frowned upon by many better off folk, their opinion being that, in normal circumstances, it was rather *infra dig*. But needs must . . . However, when peace was finally restored, most of them quickly got rid of their birds, but many of us still kept them, carrying on what we had been doing for a long time even before the war started. After all, egg rationing went on till 1952, and they were expensive!

It wasn't only chickens as, during the war, a number of our neighbours, and no doubt many elsewhere, especially older residents, or wives whose husbands were serving in the Forces, were also breeding rabbits for meat, and quite a number continued after 1945. After the war ended, with Epping Forest cleared of dangerous materials, skilful, but illicit rabbit netting also augmented certain local larders, but that only lasted several years before being halted by the deadly myxomatosis. Thankfully, we didn't hear of any case of the disease infecting local domestic rabbits.

In those tough wartime years, and continuing thereafter, as well as satisfying a common need, a camaraderie developed among some of the keener poultry and rabbit keepers. I learned a lot about chickens and always had a very soft spot for them, and for my pet bantam, a very tame bird who would follow me at heel around the garden. So I was sad to see the decline of the backyard hen in the 50s and 60s.

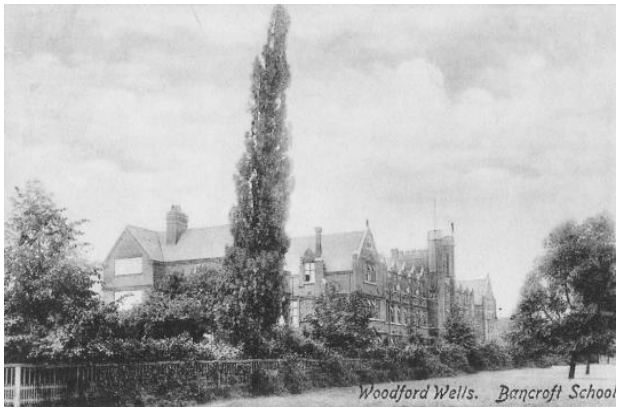
I end on a sad note. Chickens seemed to enjoy their lives just after the war, scratching about contentedly, producing about 120 eggs a year, a figure which almost doubled by the mid-60s, although by then most hens were housed in cruel cramped cages. It's even worse now. Chickens produce over 300 eggs each year, but when any hen's output tapers off, it is

sent straight to the pet food factory. Chickens deserve better!

ANN – All Number Now

ANN stood for 'All Number Now' and was the subject of a Post Office advertising campaign in 1968, when exchange names were finally abolished. So LOUghton became 01–508.

The extraordinary thing about this photo of Jack Street's milk float, with his horse, Robin, is that it shows the phone number as 508. That is because Jack continued to use horse traction till 1969 or 1970 – and had his float repainted with the new number. Space precludes ease of reading: the number is 508 1128. The photo was taken in Algers Road.



Bancrofts School, Woodford Wells, 1906

William Sparks DSM (1922–2002)

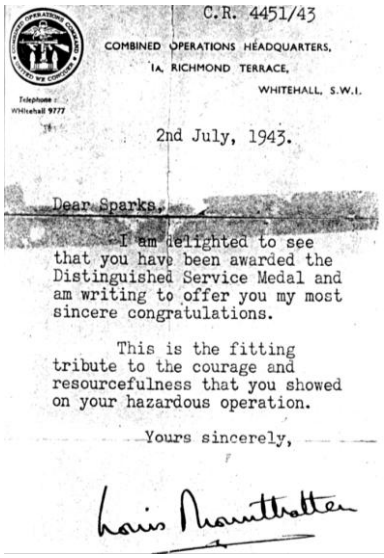
A Second World War hero, one of the only two survivors of 'Operation Frankton', popularly known as 'Cockleshell Heroes', Bill Sparks is commemorated by a Blue Plaque in Poundfield Road, Loughton.

Bill Sparks was born in London in 1922 to Christopher and Charlotte Sparks who married in 1917 in Southwark. His birth was registered in Holborn. When he was about 15 he lived in Islington.

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, 17-year-old Bill wanted to go to sea, but to the annoyance of his father, who had been a stoker, Bill was persuaded to join the Marines. His brother Benny was killed in March 1942 when his ship *HMS Naiad* was hit by a torpedo from a U-boat and sank north of Sidi Barrani, Egypt. Bill's father had always told Bill not to volunteer for anything but when he heard about the company Major Hasler was putting together, he volunteered, giving his reasons as 'revenge for the death of his brother'.

In December 1942 he was one of the 13 men who trained for a mission behind enemy lines. They trained intensively in two-man collapsible canoes, which were given the code name, 'Cockles', not knowing what the mission entailed. They were finally told about Operation Frankton, a daring raid on Bordeaux to blow up four of the largest cargo ships there. Tragically, of the 10 men who went on the mission all but two were either captured and shot, or drowned. Bill was in a canoe with Major 'Blondie' Hasler, the leader of the operation. Bill and Major Hasler were the only ones to survive and eventually return home to England. Ironically, Bill was brought back under arrest as he did not have papers and they thought he was dead. He managed to get away and went home to let his father and step-mother know he was alive and well, before checking in at headquarters. Winston Churchill believed the mission shortened the Second World War by six months. *[For readers interested in more about this raid, there are sites online giving extensive details of the mission – Ed.]*

In 1943 Bill was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, and Major Hasler the DSO. As reported in the *London Gazette* it was 'For courage and enterprise'. According to Bill he was dumbfounded and did not tell anyone in case there had been a mistake. He says in his book: 'When I walked through the huge gates of Buckingham Palace in a brand new set of blues, it was the proudest moment of my life.' Bill continued with his life in the Marines, embarking on raids in various parts of Europe and the Mediterranean.



C.R. 4451/43

COMBINED OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS,
1A, RICHMOND TERRACE,
WHITEHALL, S.W.1.

Telephone: Whitehall 9777

2nd July, 1943.

Dear Sparks,

I am delighted to see that you have been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and am writing to offer you my most sincere congratulations.

This is the fitting tribute to the courage and resourcefulness that you showed on your hazardous operation.

Yours sincerely,

Louis Mountbatten

Bill Sparks and his medals.

Right: letter from Louis Mountbatten which reads:

Dear Sparks,
I am delighted to see that you have been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and am writing to offer you my most sincere congratulations.

This is the fitting tribute to the courage and resourcefulness that you showed on your hazardous mission.

Yours sincerely (signed) Louis Mountbatten

When he was demobbed, he applied for a job as a conductor on London Trolleybuses. He says 'I rather enjoyed conducting a trolleybus through the streets of London', although he quickly graduated to driving trolleys. But he did not settle into civilian life easily and started to have itchy feet. He took a job as a policeman during the emergency in Malaya. In 1948 he was called to be a witness at the War Trials held in Germany.

Bill married his first wife Violet in 1947 starting married life at Sandown Road, Stoke Newington, in North London. The strong local connection is that

they soon moved on to Loughton, where they lived in a council house in Poundfield Road. By then their family consisted of three sons (two sons from Violet's previous marriage were adopted by Bill) and a daughter. The family lived here until 1971.

In the fifties Bill was approached by José Ferrer who wanted to make a film about Operation Frankton. Much to Bill's surprise, this was real and he worked with Anthony Newley (who played Sparks in the film) and Trevor Howard. *Cockleshell Heroes* was premiered on 16 November 1955 with the proceeds going to The Royal Marines Association. This was followed by a launch in France and on to the USA and Canada where Bill spent time touring advertising the film.

Directed by Ferrer, and written by Bryan Forbes, the storyline was described as: 'A British Army Reserve Major must work with a veteran Captain and a group of incorrigible recruits to attempt what is generally regarded as a suicide mission: the covert destruction of an entire German shipyard in occupied France.' All names were changed, Bill Sparks became 'Marine Clarke'.

Bill moved to Canvey Island from Loughton in 1971 with his first wife Violet after the last of their children left home. During his years on Canvey, Bill was a member of the Conservative Club and the British Legion.

Bill had tried for years to get recognition for his colleagues who did not return from France. Some of them had been tortured, and Bill was called to give evidence at war trials in 1948. It was in 1980 that he contacted the local MP, Bernard Braine, who helped him in his quest. A monument was raised in Poole, the home of the Cockleshell Heroes. It was unveiled on 11 December 1983 thanks to Bill and Bernard Braine.

In 1982 his wife, Violet, died of cancer and it was following this that he decided to do a re-enactment of the Frankton Operation by paddling up the River Gironde to Bordeaux to raise money for cancer. It was in the waters round Canvey Island that he did his training. He said the journey this time was a lot safer, but harder. He was then 61 years old. He kept his canoe in the back garden.

Training around Canvey Island for his re-enactment

In 1984 he married his second wife Irene. Due to ill health, respiratory problems left over from the war, he had to retire early from his job at London Transport. In 1986 the couple decided to move to Sussex.

Sadly, Bill was once again in the news in 1988 when, due to a change in his pension, Bill and his wife found themselves very short of cash, and he had to sell his DSM medal. It was sold at Sotheby's to businessman Lord Ashcroft, who stipulated the medal was to stay in Sotheby's safe and be made available to Bill whenever he needed it. He later went on to write two books about his life and Operation Frankton. Bill died in 2002 and is buried in St Andrew's Churchyard, Alfriston, Sussex.

[With thanks to The Canvey Community Archive and The Evening Echo – *Ed]*

The King in Epping Forest

Submitted by JOHN HARRISON

The King's trip in Epping Forest next week revives memories of earlier monarchs associated with the eastern playground of the Capital City. Queen Elizabeth's hunting lodge is familiar to all lovers of Essex, and Anne Boleyn's tower *(see below)* still stands to recall the days when the Forest was of greater extent, and had Henry VIII among its visitors. But never before has a ruler enjoyed a motor-car trip through the delightful glades and excellent roads. On Tuesday next the King will leave Bishop's Hall, the Essex home of Colonel Lockwood, MP, and will go to Newmarket, taking a circuitous route which will enable His Majesty to see Epping Forest for the first time. He will enter the Forest at Theydon Bois, and after crossing a considerable portion of the wildest region in the Forest, will proceed *via* Epping and Harlow. The Theydon Bois district comprises Boadicea's Camp, or Ambresbury Banks, and the beautiful Monk Woods, so called because they were a favourite resort of the monks of Waltham Abbey. This visit to the Forest has been arranged by Colonel Lockwood at His Majesty's express desire.

Boleyn Castle, East Ham

The Eastward Way Out

Unfortunately towards the Forest from the West End and the City is uninviting – even repelling. Otherwise southern motorists would enjoy its beauties in larger numbers than is now the case. But to go by the Stratford route is to encounter a collection of traffic of very varied constituents and a road surface that has no equal, luckily, in the Metropolis. It is rather a pity that in the great scheme of road reform and the improvement of traffic conditions in London little is heard of the way out eastward. And yet something of the kind is needed to open up Essex and East Anglia, both from the touring and business points of view.

Motor-Car Journal, 28 October 1905

Two advertisements from a 1925 directory

Submitted by RICHARD MORRIS

W & C French and Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge

As you may remember I worked for W & C French all my working life in the UK and one of our projects was the refurbishment of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge. As our joiners shop in Abridge had acquired a stock of old oak ship's timbers, we were able to replace a lot of the Tudor wall timbers. The joiners shop manager hated using the timber as quite often there would be a musket ball buried in the wood and it played havoc with the saw blades. The last time I was at the Hunting Lodge it was mainly a natural history museum, but it seems it may have changed now. The story goes that QE 1 used to climb the stairs on her horse, but it seemed a bit unlikely. Also it is interesting to note that, while we see Tudor houses as being white walls with stained black timber, it is most likely that the timber was also painted white as the Tudors probably weren't interested in the look of the build so much as we are now.

[From Stuart Low to the Editor]

The Gipsy Camp

The snow falls deep; the Forest lies alone:
The boy goes hasty for his load of brakes,
Then thinks upon the fire and hurries back;
The Gipsy knocks his hands and tucks them up,
And seeks his squalid camp, half hid in snow,
Beneath the oak, which breaks away the wind,
And bushes close, with snow like hovel warm:
There stinking mutton roasts upon the coals,
And the half roasted dog squats close and rubs,
Then feels the heat too strong and goes aloof;
He watches well, but none a bit can spare,
And vainly waits the morsel thrown away:
'Tis thus they live – a picture to the place;
A quiet, pilfering, unprotected race.

JOHN CLARE (1793–1864)*

*For John Clare, see the following *Newsletters: 175*; *182* for biography; *185* for Clare at Dr Allen's Asylum.

Nursing

Submitted by CHRIS POND

Miss Gertrude Hick has been appointed Sister in Charge of the Oriolet Hospital, Loughton, Essex, which has twenty beds, and which is open to patients without payment or letters. Patients suffering from early forms of cancer take priority for admission. Miss Hick was trained at the London Hospital, and held the position of Staff Nurse for two years in a surgical and accident ward.

Nursing Record, 6 April, 1895

On Saturday, September 18th, at the Harvest Festival of the Oriolet Hospital, Lady Gwendolen Herbert will address the nurses. Mrs Boult will also give an address; and the Festival Sermon will be delivered by Josiah Oldfield, MA.

On the 19th, Miss May Yates will give an address on 'The World Beautiful', and the Festival Sermon will be preached by Harry Cocking, Esq. There will be music and refreshments. Applications for invitation, tickets, etc should be made to the Warden, Oriolet, Loughton, Essex.

Nursing Record, September 1897

London Underground 150

As was extremely well publicised, on 9 January 2013 London Underground celebrated 150 years since the first underground journey took place between Paddington and Farringdon on the Metropolitan Railway. In partnership with the London Transport Museum, it began celebrating with a range of events and activities that will continue throughout 2013. The events will explore the Tube's history and also look at the vital role it will have in the future – both in the lives of Londoners and the economy of the City and the UK. The celebrations include a return of steam trains to the Underground. These will commemorate the anniversary with a 'Steam on The Met' event in May 2013, the month in which it was traditionally held. *Ed*

LOUGHTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Registered Charity 287274) **www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org.uk**
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