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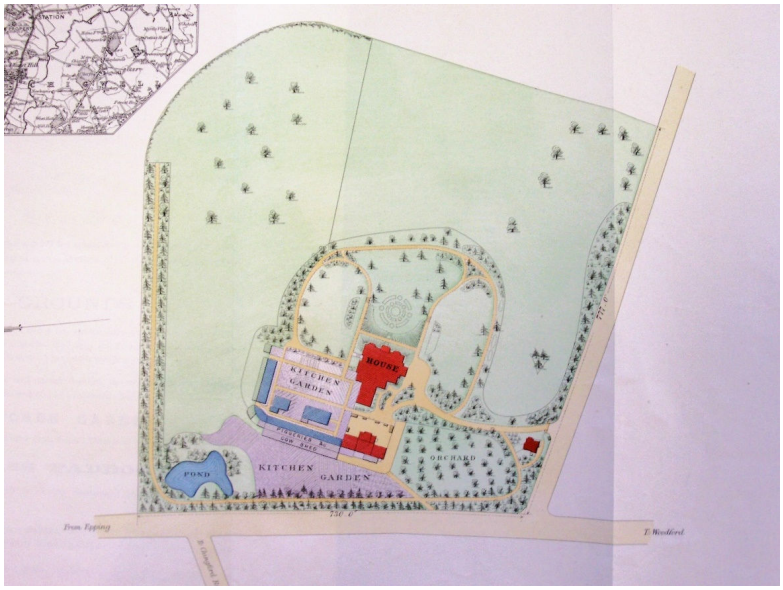
52nd Season

Warren Hill House



A recent planning application for an extension to one of Loughton's larger stately Victorian mansions prompted me to research the history of the house over the past 150 years, to see if any covenants had been imposed which would prohibit new buildings.

As is often the case in historical research the results of my investigations produced more information than I had expected and demonstrated the considerable amount of source material available in researching the history of houses.

Warren Hill House lies on the northern side of Manor Road, towards the junction with the Epping New Road, and the site is surrounded by Epping Forest. The plot was carved out of a substantial enclosure, made in about 1865, and covered about 18 acres at that time.

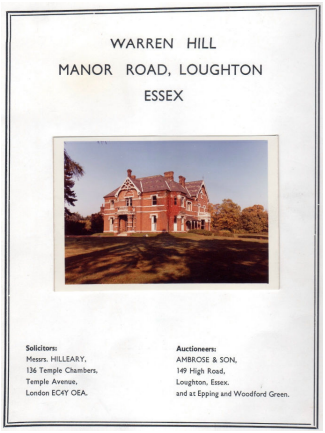
Reference is made to the enclosure in one of the documents submitted to the Epping Forest Commissioners in 1872, in which the plot is described as 'an entrance lodge and site cleared for a residence'. The owner is shown as Nathaniel Sewell.

A Deed of Enfranchisement, probably between the Lord of the Manor and Nathaniel Sewell, had been signed in 1865, and included the condition that 'no house erected on the land should be used as a public house, inn or beer shop or a place of public entertainment or public worship'.

The 1871 census refers to Sewell's Lodge in Manor Road, with John Weeks, a gardener, the then occupant.

The main house on the plot was built in about 1873 for William Henry Sewell, a brewer, shipbroker and cooper, who was possibly the son of Nathaniel Sewell. The Epping Forest Commissioners 'Draft Scheme' published in July 1876, describes the plot as: 'Residence, stables, gardens, entrance lodge, and plantation (5 acres) with grass land attached to the residence of another 13ac 2r 11p.' The land is stated to have been enclosed in 1865 and released from forestal rights.

The census of 1881 shows William Sewell living at Warren Hill House with his wife and three sons. A cook, three housemaids and a kitchen maid also lived in the house. A coach house had been built near the main house and in rooms above this lived Henry Allsop the coachman, and his wife. Alfred Smith, the gardener in 1881, lived at Warren Hill Lodge, with his wife, son and daughter.



In January 1882, Sir Arthur Hobhouse, the arbitrator appointed under the Epping Forest Act of 1878, issued an Order with regard to Warren Hill House and the accompanying land. Under the Order the arbitrator agreed that although the enclosure had been made since 1851, he would not require the land to be thrown back into the Forest, on payment by William Sewell of £700.

Title in the land would then be quieted and 'be released from all rights of common over the same in all respects as if the enclosure thereof had been a valid and proper enclosure'.

A condition was imposed on the 13 acres of grassland that 'no building shall ever be placed thereon except ornamental lodges on sites and according to plans to be approved by the Conservators (Corporation of London)'.

After William Sewell's death in 1890, the house, stables and land, were put up for sale at auction. The sale brochure describes the ground floor of the mansion as including a handsome outer porch, leading to a pair of massive oak doors which open to an entrance hall, a spacious inner hall which contained a fine wide stone staircase lit by a lanthorn roof, enriched with stained glass. The layout of the ground floor included a library, a drawing room, a morning room, a dining room, and a billiard room and music saloon measuring about 40ft by 23ft. The upper floor had seven bedrooms.

The house was purchased by Samuel Henry Johnson, who lived at Warren Hill House until his death in 1909. By 1913 the house had been sold to Sir Daniel Mackinnon Hamilton (1860–1939), who was head of the Mackinnon Mackenzie merchant house in India. In September 1913, Suffragists attempted to set fire to Warren Hill House, while Sir Daniel was in Scotland. Why the Suffragists chose his house in their fight for the emancipation of women is not known.

In November 1930, Sir Daniel Hamilton sold the house to William Lusty, whose family business was known nationally for its soups and pickles and for Lloyd Loom furniture. William lived at Warren Hill House with his family for over 30 years, until his death in 1961. The family were better known in local social circles for their links with Buckhurst Hill, but the house was often the centre for gatherings of local people.

In the 1960s, following William's death, at least two planning applications were submitted by his executors for the development of the site with new houses and flats but the applications were refused by Chigwell Urban District Council. However, by 1974, when the house, stables and lodge and adjoining land were put up for sale, outline planning consent had been obtained to convert the mansion into seven flats and a house, the stables into three houses, and to extend the lodge to provide a detached bungalow. Consent was also given for the construction of 19 garages!

The Conservators of Epping Forest were concerned about such a major development of the site, and the potential impact on the Forest, but there was little they could do in view of the outline planning consent. This left the 12 acres of grassland on which no houses could be built. The Epping Forest Committee approached the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London and sought permission to bid for the complete lot, with the intention that, if successful, they would retain the grassland and add it to the Forest, but immediately re-sell the mansion, stables and lodge with their gardens. Approval was given for this strategy and, in March 1974, the City Surveyor was successful in purchasing the complete lot for £110,000. The 12 acres of grassland to the east of Warren Hill House now form part of the Forest.

The Conservators received several expressions of interest for the purchase of the mansion, stables and lodge and their gardens, but negotiations dragged on and it was not until September 1975 that the sale was completed. By 1977 the conversion of the mansion into six apartments (seven had been approved in the 1973 planning consent) had commenced. Today the apartments are referred to as Warren Hall, the remaining part of the main house as Warren House (not to be confused with the Warren House HQ of the Conservators), the stables have become Manor Court, and the lodge remains Warren Hill Lodge.

The planning application for a two-storey extension to the main house was submitted in August 2014. The outcome of the application is not yet known.

RICHARD MORRIS

Fairs

Background

A fair, defined as a large market, held periodically, dates back many centuries. According to Cicero the Greeks used their religious games for trading and the Romans, too, traded at the annual feast at the temple of Voltumna in Etruria. The Roman fairs were holidays on which there was no work.

In England, in the Middle Ages, many fairs developed as temporary markets and were especially important for long-distance and international trade (see page 16). Wholesale traders travelled for days to fairs where they could buy or sell. Fairs might be tied to a special Christian religious occasion, perhaps the anniversary of the dedication of a church.

Tradesmen would bring and sell, even in churchyards. In the reign of Edward I it was felt that churchyards and the precincts of abbeys were desecrated by fairs and a law embodied in the Statute of Winton was passed to try to stop them being held near places of worship.

Fairs might be held annually, usually on the feast day of the patron saint to whom the church was dedicated. This custom was followed until the reign of Henry VI, by which time there were many fairs at such festivals as St Peter's day at Westminster or St Bartholomew's at Smithfield (the famous Bartholomew Fair, celebrated in Ben Jonson's eponymous play) and on St Cuthbert's day at Durham.

Because of the great numbers coming to fairs there could be disturbances and occasionally riots, so the privilege of holding a fair was granted by Royal charter. Initially they could only be held in towns or places where there was strong control, ie, where a bishop, sheriff or governor was able to keep order. Over time privileges became attached to some fairs, such as granting a holiday (the word 'fair' is derived from the Latin *feriae*: holidays) and allowing freedom from arrest in certain circumstances. Officials handed down justice to those who came to the fair and even a small fair later had a court to decide offences and disputes. This could be a 'pie powder' court (from Old French *pieds pouldrés*, literally 'dusty feet', describing

an itinerant trader who went from place to place with his wares, from Medieval Latin *pedes pulverosi*).

Charter fairs

In the 13th century, the creation of fairs by Royal charter became widespread: the Crown was attempting to bring new fairs and existing fairs under its control. By the 12th and 13th centuries most English fairs had charters and were reorganised to fall in line with fairs in Europe. But the grant of a charter did not mean that there was a right to hold a fair. Protection of the Royal revenues was needed before a fair could be held in an abbey, town or a village. Over 1,500 charters were issued between 1199 and 1350 granting rights to hold markets or fairs.

Many of these charters were granted to fairs that already existed such as Nottingham Goose Fair which was there when granted a charter by Edward I in 1284, for a fair to be held in November.[1]

Some fairs existed by right because they were never granted a charter but the King, or his representative in the borough, allowed them to be held because they had been established for a long time.

Hiring fairs also called 'statute' or 'mop'fairs.

These date from the time of Edward III when he attempted to regulate the labour market by the Statute of Labourers of 1351. This was a time of a serious national shortage of labour after the Black Death. Later laws, especially the Statute of Apprentices 1563, laid down a special day when the high constables of the shire would proclaim the rates of pay and conditions of employment for the next year. Because of the large numbers attending a fair, it soon developed into a place for masters to hire servants and workers to find work.

Sippers and topers, c 1900, Bidford on Avon Mop Fair
(John Benjamin Stone)

Later, when wage rates and conditions were no longer officially set, the hiring fair was a useful institution, as rural employment was by annual agreement. Prospective workers would come to the street or market place, sometimes wearing a badge or carrying a tool to show their trade – shepherds held a crook or a tuft of wool, cowmen had wisps of straw, dairymaids carried a milking stool or pail and housemaids held brooms or mops. This is why some hiring fairs were known as 'mop' fairs. Employers would interview them and, if they were thought satisfactory, hire them for the coming year, giving a shilling to seal the bargain. The hired servants would then wear bright ribbons to indicate that they had been hired and then spend the shilling amongst the stalls set up at the fair selling food and drink and offering games to play.

Farm workers, labourers, servants and some craftsmen would work for their employer from October to October.

Hiring fairs were also known as statute fairs (or 'statutes' or colloquially 'stattys'), because an Act of Parliament of 1677 protected the yearly bonds made between masters and servants. In my village in Bedfordshire the site of the statute fair is still pointed out, even though now built on. It was known as the 'statty' and remembered by older residents as a great day in the village but in their time it was a funfair.

Although Michaelmas Day is celebrated on 29 September, mop fairs were tied to the seasons and the harvest, not to the calendar. After the Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1752 and 11 days dropped from that year, the end of the harvest moved eleven days later to 10 October, known as 'Old Michaelmas Day', and since 1752 this has been the date for mop fairs to take place.

The description of wife-selling in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy is based on an incident of wife-selling at the village of Andover in 1817.

Modern mops

The original purpose of even the hiring fairs was soon superseded by the amusement side. Three-quarters of the East Riding hiring fairs in Yorkshire did not survive into the 20th century, but the mop fairs held in Studley, Stratford, Warwick, Burton, and Loughborough, owe their existence and continuation to the original hiring fairs. Over 200 fairs take place every weekend in the United Kingdom. Fairs still open successfully on traditional sites all over the country, with the Goose Fair at Nottingham and Hull Fair both growing in size and popularity every year.

Tewkesbury and other mop fairs take over the entire town centre for two days, attracting thousands of visitors. In recent times the mops have become little more than funfairs.

Local markets and fairs

Between 1108 and 1118 Queen Maud, wife of Henry I, granted fairs to the canons of Waltham on the festival of the Holy Cross. These fairs were confirmed by both Henry II and Richard I and, in 1253, Henry III confirmed to the Abbey a Tuesday market and two annual fairs, one on the vigil of the Invention (ie, 'Finding') of the Holy Cross (2 May) and the other seven days after the vigil of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (13 September).

At the dissolution of the monasteries the right passed with the manor, and 'yearly fairs' were included in a grant of 1553 to Joan, Lady Denny. She also had the right to hold 'longpearne courts' (possibly pie-powder courts) at the fair. But in 1560 the market and fair was said to be 'much decayed'.

Henry Denny was granted a licence to hold it on Tuesday instead of Sunday and in the mid-17th century a lot of meat but little corn was sold there.

In about 1655 two fairs were being held, each lasting a single day, on 3 May and 14 September.

In 1665 the inhabitants of Waltham Abbey were in trouble at Quarter Sessions for holding a fair in the churchyard and about 1730 fairs were still being held on 3 May and 14 September, and there was also a 'statute' or hiring fair on 15 September. After 1752, and the alteration of the calendar, the fairs were moved to 14 May and 25–26 September. In the 1880s there seems to have been another fair in June for a few years.

Sir William Addison relates how James II in 1681 returning from two days' hunting in Essex to London called unexpectedly on the Dorsets at Copt Hall. The Earl was away dining at Ruckholts and the 'cook and butler had gone to Waltham fair, but the Countess did her best to entertain His Majesty'.

In about 1735 the market was said to be well provided, especially with meat and poultry, but most of the stock was bought early by dealers for resale in London, so the local population did not get much benefit. In 1888 the market was bought from Sir Hereward Wake by the local board for £2,500; then, as before, it was principally a meat market. It is now controlled by the district council.

One of the abbot of Waltham's three fairs was to be held on the heath at Eppingbury which was the open ground between Eppingbury farm and Epping High Street. It seems that authority for the abbot's market at Epping lapsed at the dissolution, but in 1575 Elizabeth I granted it to Sir Thomas Heneage as lord of the manor and Epping District Council purchased the rights from the trustees of the lord of the manor in 1955.

A statute fair, for hiring servants, etc, was held at Chigwell on 30 September according to *White's Directory of Essex 1848*. Pleasure fairs took place occasionally in the 20th century in the Roding Valley, and Chingford Plain.

No markets were held in Loughton until the farmers' market in 2004.

Fairs are still common in Europe and, in the United States, fairs draw in as many as 150 million people each summer to county fairs and state fairs, though in the US the word 'fair' could denote an industrial exhibition.

Funfairs will be looked at in more detail in a later article.

TED MARTIN

Note

1. Wolverhampton, like Nottingham, was granted a charter for an already existing fair, as was Stockport in Cheshire.

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The Great War 1914–1918: a schoolboy's perspective

As 2014 is the 100th anniversary of the Great War, this may be an appropriate time for a few recollections of what the conflict meant to a schoolboy in the 1930s.

With Britain at peace, youngsters such as myself had to rely on what we read, as parents were reluctant to talk to their children about the war. However, our sources of information were the wealth of books and magazines on the subject. We particularly revelled in the aerial exploits, and our heroes were aces such as Ball, Bishop, Mannock, McCudden . . . and even Germans such as von Richthofen and Udet. Little did anyone realise that this would be a valuable aid to recruitment for the RAF in 1939!

Most of our fathers would have served in the Great War, but few were prepared to offer any details. My own father, John Alston, who had lived in Loughton since 1905, joined the army in 1916, when he was just over 20. His regiment, The Queen's Own Westminsters, were then fighting on the Western Front in France, but later moved to Greece. He and his fellows were infuriated by the singer, Florrie Forde, who sang a number entitled 'If you don't want to fight, go to Salonika'. He must have wanted to revive some memories as, in 1937, he took our family on holiday to Belgium. During this time we went on several coach trips to Ypres, Arras and other battle areas, and he occasionally pointed out places where he thought he had been. What stuck in my own memory was the sight of the vast military cemeteries containing thousands of graves, with white headstones kept in immaculate condition. In some places one could walk along reconstructed trenches lined with concrete reproductions of sandbags. However, I found it more poignant to gaze at those stretches which remained untouched. Indeed, after a little prodding around, one could still find any number of shell splinters.

One of the few veterans prepared to talk at any length about his experiences was Colonel Colley, the headmaster of my preparatory school, St Aubyn's at Woodford Green. He often found occasions to tell his classes about his involvement, and proudly displayed on his study wall a German *pickelhaube* helmet. Apart from the splendid war memorial on King's Green, the only relic in Loughton I recall was a canon, painted in light grey, in the Lopping Hall space in front of what is now Whitney's. It disappeared in the mid-thirties to make way for the Forest Library and a sweet shop, and was presumably turned into scrap.

Remembrance Day, 11 November, was always scrupulously observed and, wherever we were at 11 am, traffic came to a halt, and everyone, but everyone, stood to attention during the two minutes' silence. The only human reminders were one-armed and ever-

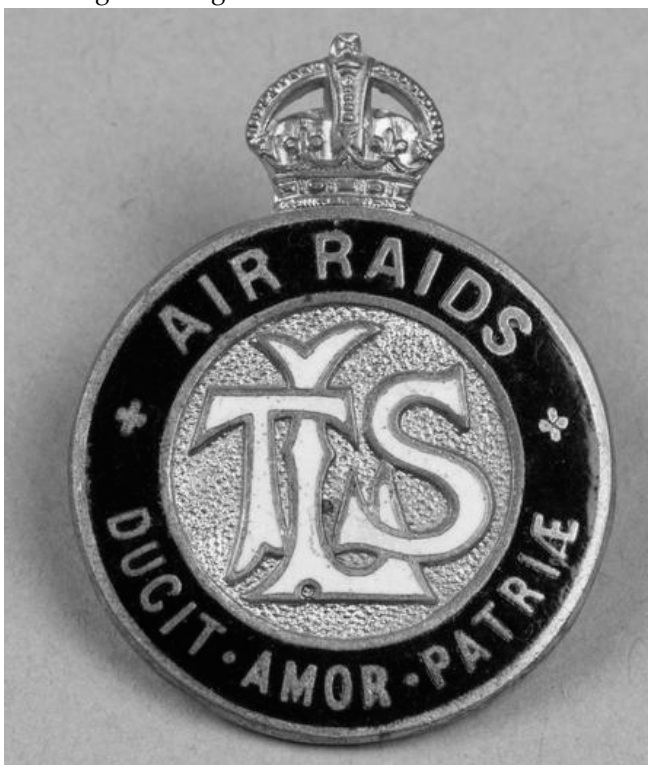
cheerful Mr Green, who ran the café by the old Loughton Station, and a man with one leg who appeared regularly on the High Road.

As the 1930s progressed, there were ever-increasing signs that another conflict lay ahead, and we realised we were living in inter-, rather than post-, war times.

As a footnote, my father joined the Home Guard when it was formed, and I followed in 1941 as soon as I was 17, and prior to joining the Royal Navy. And so, for a short while, father and son were truly 'brothers-in-arms'. MIKE ALSTON

The Great War – London air raids

At the service held on 4 August 2014 at St Mary's Church, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, our member, Sheila Horley, showed me a most interesting lapel badge, which belonged to her mother, who was a telephonist at the North telephone exchange in Islington.



Eveline Daisy Meakins, the holder of the badge, was born in Bedford in 1892. Her father was an engine driver, who changed career to run a dairy in Paignton. She took the Civil Service exam, and by 1915, was a telephonist at the North exchange, which covered Barnsbury (its lines are now 020 7607 xxxx) and was located at 7 Barnsbury Grove.

When the Zeppelin and Gotha raids alarmed London in 1915–1918, Post Office telephone staff were invited to volunteer for air-raid precautions duties, and of course had to maintain the service even when a raid was imminent or actually in progress. To identify themselves to police, they were issued with these enamelled lapel badges, with LTS in art nouveau script (for London Telephone Service), and 'Air Raids', below the George V crown. The motto, *Ducit amor patriae*, means *Love of my country leads me*.

The outgoing section of the Exchange – E D Meakins, acting as a clerk, is on the extreme left.

After her marriage to Stanley Pike in 1928, the family moved to Hainault, and to Loughton in 1950. Eveline died in 1978. The badge is a most interesting memento of the Great War, and led to this account of one family's migration history. CHRIS POND

Walter Carrett of the Rifle Brigade

The Tower of London commemorated the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War by inviting members of the public to nominate a member of the Commonwealth forces who was killed in the War to be included in the Roll of Honour and remembered at a special ceremony. Every evening from 3 August to Armistice Day, 180 names from the Roll of Honour were read in a ceremony which culminated in the playing of the Last Post at sunset in the Tower of London moat.

During this period the moat was progressively filled with 888,246 ceramic poppies – one for every death in the British forces in World War One. This installation was known as Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, see the photo on page 16.

Anyone could nominate a service person to be included. I arranged for my great uncle to be so included.

His name was Walter Frederick Carrett – with no 'e' as our surname was not spelt that way at that time. Walter was the son of a Metropolitan Police constable (Walter Richard Carrett) born in Hackney, London, in 1899. He served as a Rifleman in the 9th Battalion Rifle Brigade (service number S/34706) and died in France on 23 March 1918. He is commemorated at the Pozières Memorial.

More information can be found on the Tower of London website at:

https://poppies.hrp.org.uk

And footage from each evening's ceremony can be viewed here:

https://poppies.hrp.org.uk/roll-of-honour

SUE CARRETTE

The Buckhurst Hill Athenaeum

This society ran debates and musical evenings, which took place in the Palmerston Road schoolroom on Mondays at 7.45 in the winter months, for which the fee in the mid-1890s was 3s per session. The Honorary Secretary at that time was W T Richardson of Hillcote (this house was situated on the Epping New Road; it has just been demolished). The Athenaeum began in 1890 and was founded by the Reverend Addison Alexander Charlesworth (24 May 1865 to 7 March 1919), the son of the Reverend William Henry Charlesworth of Palmerston Road who had been the minister of Buckhurst Hill Congregational Church. By 1906 the Secretary was Percy S Brandon of The Laurels, Palmerston Road, and the Chairman was the Reverend J R Legge of the Congregational Church.

The Rev J R Legge

The sixteenth annual general meeting, held in September 1906, had the following individuals appointed to positions in the society:

President: Rev J R Legge, MA

Vice-Presidents: Edward North Buxton, John Conquest, James Mark Dietrichsen, David Howard, Eliot Howard, Andrew Johnston, Col Mark Lockwood, MP, and F T Shadbolt.

The Treasurer was J W Miller and the Auditor was H Reginald Sibson. On the Committee were E Ensor Barnett, Henry Linder, W G Mills, W J Phillips, O A Richardson, Robert Elliott Seabrooke, Walter Smith, and H L Williams.

The hard-working Secretary was Percy S Brandon.

Papers were given by a wide variety of speakers, some local and others invited from a distance. In the 1906–07 season the speakers included Mr W E Church who was a favourite with the society. He spoke on his recollections of people and places in London in the last 50 years. His advice was 'the best way to see London was from the top of an omnibus, and to go from, say, Limehouse in the extreme east, to Hammersmith in the extreme west, and from, say, Highgate in the north to Peckham Rye in the south. Moreover these journeys can be made at a very small cost'.

Other speakers were Miss Linder (presumably Evelyn, on The Arthurian Legends, described as an 'exquisite paper, so charmingly delivered'); Sinjoro S Nicholl (on Esperanto); well-known Buckhurst Hill 'authoress', as she called herself, Miss Una Silberrad (on the necessity of deception); David Howard ('what science teaches us of life'); Harry de Windt ('the famous explorer' who spoke of his journey 'from Paris to New York – Overland', ie, via Europe and Siberia); local businessman Alfred Ordway Goodrich on municipal trading (he lived at Fairview, now the building occupied by the Tooley and Foster Partnership); the Rev Fielding Ould (who spoke on 'the dangers of modern magic'); and the President the Rev Legge himself ('half an hour with Wordsworth').

The second half of the season, after the Christmas break, included speakers such as Lieutenant-Colonel J H Patterson, DSO, on 'Wild Men and Wild Beasts of East Africa', who praised the work of Edward North Buxton in securing the preservation of fauna in East Africa. The lecture was illustrated by 100 lantern slides.

Dr Haydn Brown, a former resident of Buckhurst Hill, spoke on 'physical degeneration'. In his view some of the main causes of degeneration were 'excessive smoking (especially cigarettes), excessive drinking, over-work, over-education, habits creating ill-health, marriage of the unfit', and, what he considered to be the chief cause, improper diet and excessive eating, particularly of butchers' meat.

Mr H L Sackett lectured on how the construction of the Channel Tunnel would be a threat to the security of England, and Mrs Despard, a leading suffragette, also addressed the society. A large audience turned out to hear S Hazzledine Warren speak about prehistoric art. The original founder, the Rev Addison A Charlesworth spoke on the play, 'The Merchant of Venice'. The closing lecture of the season was on 'Deep-sea divers and compressed air workers – their risks and safeguards' by Dr Leonard Hill. This talk was illustrated by slides and a professional diver named Bateman was also present in full costume.

By 1911 the President was David Howard and the Treasurer was Edward Salmon of 2 St John's Villas, Palmerston Road. Percy Brandon was still the Secretary but he had moved from The Laurels to Grasmere in Scotland Road. By then the price was still 3s per session but individual tickets could be purchased by non-members for 1s per lecture.

Two lectures heard in 1910 were 'Days in a Negro Republic (leaves from Liberia)' by John R Raphael, the travel editor of *The African World*, and 'To the Southern Pacific across the Andes' by Captain W J P Benson, FRGS. Eliot Howard of Ardmore spoke about 'Essex Hedgerows as Landmarks of History'. It was not all serious lectures, though: in 1910 there was also a popular recital by Mr W Edward Kaye of extracts from Dickens, and on 27 February 1911 there was an

amateur musical evening when locals such as Edward Salmon and Mrs Clifford Tee sang songs and others played piano pieces.

The meetings were held weekly during the autumn and winter 'terms' and it must have been a demanding job for the Secretary to get the speakers and arrange the hall, provide the slide equipment, and so on. As is often the case today, many people were members but few wanted to do the work. So, sadly when Percy Brandon gave notice that he wished to be relieved of his duties, no-one could be found to take over the post. Some of the meetings had been poorly attended. It was suggested that perhaps there would be more male attendees if they could perhaps smoke at an interval, or that refreshments could be provided. No volunteer stepped forward to keep the society going, and it folded in October 1911, after 21 years.

LYNN HASELDINE JONES, with thanks to CHRIS POND for papers about the Buckhurst Hill Athenaeum.

My first holiday in Essex

Next year I shall, perhaps, be going abroad for my holidays. Here on my desk are the blurbs and the baits, the penny plains and the tuppence coloureds: Italy, Portugal, Spain and the rest . . . I am told that I do not know what my greying years have missed. I could have been swilling with my friends in the sun cups of black coffee, walking in the wake of veiled women and gibbering red-fezzed gents or, even, bargaining in some Brazilian bazaar for a bauble I could have bought at the shop on the corner for half the price . . .

I do not think I would have done any of those things. And I do not think – now – that I shall be going abroad, next year or ever . . . England, say what you will, is the best place for a holiday; it is also the cheapest. In the years before World War One we used to go by a two horse brake from London to High Beech and Theydon Bois for half a crown a head. Looking back, I suppose it was as primitive a business as that of Boadicea charging into Colchester to destroy the Roman legions there. I wonder if her chariot presented as pretty a picture as ours? I doubt it. Ours was painted a buttercup-gold picked out in black with the owner's name and freehand swirls that boiled up the blood just to look at them. There was a collapsible step-ladder at the back, with two thinly upholstered seats that faced each other and ran the length of the brake. Above us sat the driver with, beside him, the man who played the cornet. The cornet was a must. It shepherded our songs and soothed our souls. I do not know by what strange alchemy our cabined world was all at once transformed into an English Eisteddfod, but as soon as the wheels began to turn we all began to sing. Two of the favourite old-timers were 'Daisy Bell' and 'Bird in a Gilded Cage'. Sometimes (usually after the first bottles of beer had been uncorked) someone would start a 'round' – 'Three Blind Mice' perhaps. This was never a success: it needed too much concentration. Besides, we wanted to look out. By now the bricks and mortar we knew so well were behind us, and our 'Oohs!' and 'Ahs!' as we clattered through Woodford and skirted the fringes of Epping Forest were as heartfelt as would have been those of a youngster who, heavy with bucket and spade, stares for the first unbelieving time at the sea.

These excursions were only for the day. Apart from an early spell of convalescence with my grandmother my first holiday of any duration was from school. We were fortunate enough to have as a master a man who had served under Baden-Powell at Mafeking and was now 'something in the Scouts'. Mother did not like him. He had, she said, a face like a chunk of mildewed bark; and she was prepared to swear that the knicker-bocker suit he always wore was the suit he went to bed in. She was not often wrong in her personal assessments, but she was in this. He told us one day that when we broke up in the summer he proposed to take 20 or so of us for a week's holiday at Loughton. It would cost 10 shillings, but not to worry: our parents could pay by instalments. Mother was not happy about it; it smacked of charity and the Ragged School Union, but father said 'We're payin' fer it, ent we? 'Sides, it'll learn 'im ter stand on 'is own two fit'.

That winter of the weekly sixpence was the longest I had ever known. And the rainiest. It rained at Devonshire Street (where on the great day we boarded our train), at Stratford (where we stopped long enough to buy the *Magnet*, the *Gem* and *Chips*) and at Leytonstone, Snaresbrook and Woodford. At Buckhurst Hill the rain had stopped, and at Loughton – well, it had never started. Mr Vautier fell us in, told us to swing our arms, and left-righted us out of the station into the sunshine of a new world.

The house we stayed at was big and bright, with stairs that spiralled to unknown heights, and baths which, when you had finished with them, did not have to be up-ended and hung on a nail on the kitchen wall. We did not see much of it during the day. As soon as we had bolted our breakfast we set off for the forest where under the guidance of 'sir' we made fires without matches, improvised stretchers from broomsticks and string, and struggled with bowlines on bights for the men we might one day be required to haul up the slippery slopes of Beachy Head. Here, too, in undergrowth flecked by the sun, we tracked to their doom in Debden Slade the 'Injuns' who, last night had raided our tents and scalped our women. We enjoyed that; it was better than the pictures.

Mr Vautier warned us about the dangers of getting lost; it was so easy. You walked in a circle and came back to the place you had started from. We took that with a pinch of salt, so he said: 'All right, I'll prove it.' He straddled the trunk of a fallen tree as he might have straddled a horse. 'I'll sit here. You lot go on walking. Anywhere. Anyhow.' He looked at his watch. 'It's now 10 o'clock. You'll be back at 12.' And oddly enough, we were! – though not at 12 but 20 to . . . It was because of this that he taught us how to find our way; the sun by day and the stars by night. We each carried an exercise book into which, alongside sketches of oaks and elms and birds, we dotted the constellations of Ursa Major and Minor and connected them by a line to the Pole Star. And for the first time we caressed a compass and pored over Ordnance maps, proud that now we could find unaided our way to Zambesi and Nile.

It was not all life in the open air. At night, when we thought we were tired, we gathered in the huge drawing room and played games: dominoes, tiddlywinks, draughts and ludo, and sang till we were hoarse songs we knew like 'Ten Green Bottles' and 'One Man went to Mow', and songs we did not know, like:

The prettiest girl that I ever thaw
Wath thucking thider through a straw
I didn't thee how, I told the gel,
She thucked the thider through tho well

And

There was a man named Michael Finnagen
He grew whiskers on his chinagen
The wind came out and blew them in agen
Poor old Michael Finnagen
FINNAGEN!

[*In my childhood in the North West, the last line was BEGINNAGEN! So you kept going back to the beginning as often as you wanted! Editor*.]

Then there was this, which I hoped would surprise my parents:

Never let your braces dangle,
Never let your braces dangle;
One poor sport, he got caught,
Right in the middle of the mangle.
Right through the rollers he went, by gum!
Squashed as flat as linoleum;
Now he's singing in Kingdom Come –
Never let your braces dangle!

It left father unmoved, but it surprised mother all right – she boxed my ears and sent me to bed. As I groped tearfully for the stairs I heard her say: 'I told you we shouldn't have let him go.'

For that brief interlude, thanks be to God! It was the last holiday I knew until, some years later father took us to Frinton. I was lucky. Many of those with whom I had shared that interlude never had a holiday at Frinton or anywhere else – unless you could call embarkation at Folkestone, 1914, a holiday. What had our wise man said? 'You walk in circles and come back to where you started.' There were no circles at Folkestone – just one straight line to France where, scarlet in fetid fields, the poppies were waiting to blow . . . C V SMITH

From *Essex Countryside*, Vol 25, No 249, October 1977.

Henry A Francies: a career in Loughton

Henry Francies was born on 21 January 1904, the second child of Henry R S and Louisa Francies of 56 Smarts Lane, Loughton.

He regarded himself as a healthy child, apart from the usual measles, etc. He attended Staples Road Elementary School, 'with much pleasure', he said, leaving in January 1918 for office work in the City for 11s per week.

However, his working life began before he left school; in 1914 he did a paper round at 6am for two years at 2s per week.

In addition he did domestic jobs 6.30am to 8am in two private houses in Albion Hill and acted as general errand boy and did garden jobs at Bowditch's (a tailor's and draper's business), High Road, Loughton, in 1916 and 1917 for 8s 6d per week, his hours being 7.45–8.30 am and after school, with Saturday until 9pm all day, hard work mowing the lawn, digging the garden and generally assisting.

From January to May 1918 he took an office job at 69 Cannon Street, earning 11s per week.

Later in 1918 Henry took up a post doing clerical work at Goulds of Loughton, who were corn merchants, farmers and dairymen. His job included some rent collecting, calling for orders, and visiting shops, gardens, etc. His long hours were 6am to 5pm. Later he became the dairy book keeper for three years for about £2 per week, with extra Sunday relief duties, for 5s, 5am to 9am monthly. He was there until 1929.

In May 1929 Henry took a book-keeping post at A J Diggens and Sons, of High Road, Loughton, starting at £3 12s per week, working 8.30 to 5pm.

In 1945 the business changed and became a limited company, and Henry became secretary and a director until the firm went into voluntary liquidation in 1964.

With great thanks to Henry's daughter Joan Francies for the photograph and the list of her father's jobs. LYNN HASELDINE JONES

The men who make pianos

Introduced into this country in about 1760, the piano quickly superseded the much inferior harpsichord. The most eminent English makers have been Broadwood, Collard, Kirkman and Brinsmead, and among the leading French and German makers are Erard, Pleyel and Bechstein.

Upright pianos were introduced about 1800 and 'cottage' pianos about 1840. Other kinds are the grand, the semi-grand and the square, all worked on the same principle of strings being struck by small hammers.

Today's piano is an instrument of high precision, and this selection of photographs taken at the premises of Alfred Knight Ltd of Loughton, gives some idea of the many processes involved in the manufacture of the modern piano.

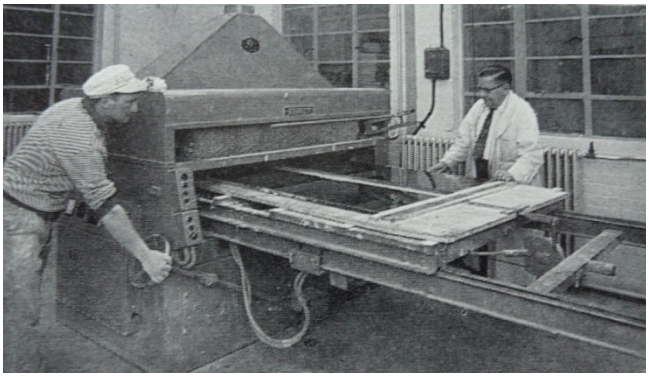
Peter Sellers, Adam Faith, George Shearing and Julie Andrews are just a few of the many star entertainers who have become owners of pianos manufactured by Alfred Knight Ltd of Loughton.

Formed in 1936 by Mr Alfred Knight, MBE, the company's first pianos were made at Edmonton. The company moved to its present address 14 years later, and over the years both premises and production have increased considerably. Today approximately 90 people are employed by the company.

Throughout the Second World War the company made pianos for the NAAFI and in post-war years has concentrated on exports. Approximately 80 per cent of its production goes abroad, including to such countries as Russia and Japan. It has also established assembly plants in

Australia, South Africa, Western Germany, Holland and the United States.

Alfred Knight Ltd is essentially a family business. Mr Knight's two cousins Harry and Jack Knight manage the factory and his daughter and her husband run the office.



Essex Countryside, Vol 14, No 115, August 1966

The City of Woodford?

The Church Times of October 1907 reported that there was a possibility that the whole of Essex, which then came under the supervision of the Bishop of St Albans, might soon have its own Bishop, and that the Cathedral of Essex could be sited at Woodford. In fact this was one of the aims of the Bishop of St Albans, Edgar Jacob, who believed that the mission of the Church in the East End of London could not be advanced by a Bishop who lived in St Albans and had responsibility for Hertfordshire as well as Essex. The Bishopric of Chelmsford was finally agreed following an Act of Parliament which received Royal Assent on 15 August 1913. Parishes had been asked to vote on the most suitable location for the Essex See Cathedral City and the results were:

Chelmsford 191 Colchester 101 West Ham 63 Woodford 13 Barking 8 Waltham 6 Thaxted 1

And so the Cathedral is in Chelmsford, and Woodford did not become a City.*

* With extra information from Neale, Kenneth (Ed), *Essex 'Full of Profitable Things'* (Leopard's Head Press Ltd, 1996).

CHRIS POND

Mystery object in Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill

Does anyone know the origin of this object? It appears to be a parish boundary marker for St James, Clerkenwell, but what is it doing in Queen's Road? An internet search reveals that there is a very similar object in the front garden of a house in EN4 – could it be that the boundary markers were removed from Clerkenwell and sold off as scrap metal? The use of the pillar in Queen's Road appears to be to prevent vehicles damaging the side of a wall – did the owner simply buy it to protect the wall?

LYNN HASELDINE JONES

Loughton School

I started my career at Loughton School in September 1922 at the beginning of Michaelmas Term. I had not then reached my eleventh birthday. To say that I was like a fish out of water would be an understatement, for I had no idea what to expect, and there was nobody in my family who had had experience of a Secondary School. Add to this my natural shyness, and you will get a pretty good idea of what I felt like.

At that time the Essex County Council had not made a grant to cover the cost of a season ticket, and I remember it cost my father 18/- (90p) for a term. The first train or 'the early' as we called it left Woodford at 8.16 and got us to Loughton in plenty of time. The 'late' left at 8.35 and gave us just time to walk to school with the Epping crowd whose train got into Loughton simultaneously. If however we missed this and had to catch the 'late late' at 8.40, we had to run all the way from Loughton station to school and if we were lucky, managed to scramble into Assembly by the skin of our teeth!

Just before 9am the bell rang and we all went into Assembly, sitting at any available place. We then had to stand while the Headmaster Mr William Vincent entered, followed by all the masters in order of seniority. After saying a few words of welcome Mr Vincent would announce the hymn to be sung. As it was the beginning of term this would be No 576 in *Hymns Ancient and Modern,* 'Lord Behold Us With Thy Blessing', which we sung to the tune 'Eton College', the Headmaster playing the old harmonium and drowning us all with his strong tenor voice. This was followed by prayers, the Lord's Prayer, and instructions as to classes. I was sent to Form III with two other Scholarship boys, E P (Teddy) Brown from Wanstead and R H G (Reg) Phillips from Ongar. The form master was Mr S M Durrant.

Mr Vincent ran the school along the lines of a Public School and he ran it very well. Most of the boys there had their fees paid by their parents; some of whom were very well off, a few boys – a very few – would take the rise out of a Scholarship boy, which didn't help any, but I suppose was inevitable. I was very conscious that my parents were very poor, and could not afford to give me money, even for a cup of cocoa at mid-morning break! A school lunch was out of the question; so we ate our sandwiches in the otherwise empty Assembly Room. If we decided to go home to dinner, when the bell rang at 12.55, it would give us just time to catch the 1.10 but we had to be back on Woodford station at 2pm which didn't give us long. Afternoon school started at 2.25.

As I began to feel my feet, so I also began to get into mischief and was soon in trouble. For an imposition we had to fill a page of an exercise book with neat handwriting and we were rarely given less than two. It was doubly hard if we had to copy out in Latin. There wasn't much chance either of using a page for a second time as the master invariably drew a blue pencil line from corner to corner. At one time the Head gave me an 'impot', but the next day I got grit in my eye, and he was kindness itself in using an eyebath to remove it. I thought he had forgotten all about the 'impot' but he hadn't and Maurice Harvey and I had to go up to the study for a very different reason. Maurice went over the armchair first and kicked up such a row he only got two, so

I did likewise. Each term we had a half-day which was known as a Merit Half, but any boy who had three 'impots' during the period lost his. I'm afraid I lost several.

Loughton School

The following year my father fell out of a tree he was pruning in Mornington Road and was unable to work. In 1925 he died leaving my mother with no income whatsoever. How she kept me at school I shall never know. She was given a little money by Uncle Stephen at the Nursery and the people Dad had worked for; she also did some dressmaking. There was no hope of clothing or equipment for games and sports and I had to pretend I didn't like them. I was given a second-hand hockey stick so I could take part in the compulsory games. One afternoon a week was given over to these, and when we used the LNER ground next to the station, if we could, we caught the 3.57 train home! The next train was at 4.06 followed by the 4.27. If we missed these it was the 4.44 but this was a short train from Ongar and we would have to wait while the engine drew off and the other six carriages backed on.

Hockey was always the No 1 game at Loughton, and the Old Boys' Association – the Old Loughtonians, kept up this tradition, and have done so ever since. Currently the Old Loughtonians Hockey Club is the strongest it has ever been, having a large sports ground and Club House in Luxborough Lane and is able to field no less than five Men's Elevens, two Ladies' Elevens, a Veteran Eleven, a Colts Eleven and are now going ahead building an indoor hockey pitch.

Mr Vincent and his school had a profound effect on me and I owe them more than I can say. It was just unfortunate that my financial circumstances restricted some activities. Within a year of starting at this school the Headmaster's health deteriorated so that he was forced to retire, and he died. The school was then taken over by Mr O G Johnson who for a time had Mr E E Sly and Mrs Sly to assist him, until he was able to continue himself.

By 1927 I was determined to start work so that I could earn some money and make things easier for mother . . . in the August of that year I began work in the motor trade where I spent the rest of my working life.

JACK FARMER from *Woodford As I Knew It*,
published by Mr Farmer in 1986

Epping Forest – the natural playground

Some years ago Georgina Green conducted a series of interviews with local people about life in the Epping Forest area. Here are some memories of people in the Loughton district:

Mrs Barbara Scrutton remembers collecting sweet chestnuts from the forest:

I was born in 1909 and my father was Bosworth, the butcher who had a shop by the King's Head in Loughton, where we lived. My father had the fields by the brook (now covered by Brooklyn Avenue) and I remember taking the cans of tea over to the hay makers in the summer.

I often walked in the forest with my father when I was young. I remember looking at badger setts, and seeing badgers playing by the stream down from Loughton Camp quite early one morning, around 1916. We used to gather sweet chestnuts in the autumn, from Strawberry Hill or near Broadstrood. You had to get out early before someone else collected them, and it was best just after a frost – that brought the best ones down. We would skin them and eat them raw, or take them home and roast them.

When I was older I walked my dogs every day up to High Beach, Upshire, Copped Hall and then across to Bell Common and Ambresbury Banks, I seldom saw many people, but there were often deer and also red squirrels, I remember.

Mrs Gussie Galer also played in the forest as a child. Her father, Bob Harrington, was a well-known local character making a living as a general dealer in the winter, and in the summer he had swingboats and donkey rides. Mrs Galer remembers:

Our recreation round here used to be to play in the forest. It didn't matter how far you went in, you'd be safe. Maybe six or seven of us would go, boys and girls – whoever wanted to join in, and we'd take an old broom and a couple of chairs, a bottle of lemonade and some bread and jam. We'd sweep all the leaves away down to the bare earth to make a square – that was our sitting room. Another bare patch would be another room, and we'd play there for hours, even all day long. It was a regular thing for us to play in the forest all day, there was nothing else for us to do in those days. Our parents knew where to find us if they wanted us for anything, and we were quite safe, but out of their way.

My father was a general dealer – he dealt in all sorts of things, logs, rabbits, eggs, etc. He obtained the logs from the Superintendent of Epping Forest, Mr McKenzie, buying the fallen trees, or the wood felled by the forest workmen. My brothers and some other men would then cut up the wood to manageable pieces and bring it back to the yard to be sawn up on their saw-bench. They took the horse and cart into the forest to collect the timbers. Once it was in small logs, us younger ones would take it around Loughton to residents who had ordered it, or our regular customers, with the horse and cart. Everyone knew they could get logs from the Harringtons for their winter fires.

Quoted with kind permission from:
GEORGINA GREEN, *Keepers, Cockneys and Kitchen Maids – Memories of Epping Forest 1900–1925*,
published privately, 1987.

Thankful villages

What makes Strethall, a tiny Essex village four miles west of Saffron Walden, so special? Why does the village not contain a war memorial to the fallen of the First World War?

The parish Church, standing serenely amongst fields, still contains evidence of its Saxon origins. However, there are no monuments of remembrance in the church or in the village.

In March of 2014 Canon John D Brown, the Chairman of the Churches Visitors and Tourism Association, wrote an article in *The Month*, the

Chelmsford Diocese newspaper of the Church of England, entitled 'World War One Commemoration Lasts Four Years', in which he encouraged congregations to open their churches at advertised times during the next four years so that relatives might view any war memorial standing therein . . . however, he said 'but do not go to Strethall for that purpose'.

Strethall Parish Church

Strethall is the only village in Essex which lost no men in the First World War; all those who left to serve in the Great War returned home again. It is known as a 'Thankful Village' or 'Blessed Village', one of only 53 such villages (civil parishes) in England and Wales, a miniscule proportion of the total of over 16,000 English villages. There were no villages in Scotland or Ireland (which was part of the UK at that time) which did not lose any military personnel in that war; the only village in France which was spared was Thierville in Normandy.

The term 'Thankful Villages' was first used in 1931 by the writer Arthur Mee. He was writing a series of books about the English counties; by the 1930s a war memorial was a common feature in villages and towns throughout the United Kingdom, but Mee noticed that there were a tiny number of villages which had no such memorial to the fallen. Mee identified 32 such villages (civil parishes), a number recently updated to 52. Any community which enjoyed this rare distinction must have been thankful indeed, in an age when family and community life, broken by war, was the norm. Thirteen of the English and Welsh villages are considered 'Doubly Thankful' (including Strethall), in that they also lost no one in active service in the Second World War.

Of course there were still hardships at the end of the Great War for the 50 persons living at that time in Strethall; food rationing had been introduced at the beginning of 1918 as so many merchant ships bringing food to Britain were sunk in the Atlantic by German U-boats. Coal, essential for heating and cooking, had been rationed since 1916. In addition many of the fortunate veterans who returned home alive were permanently damaged, whether physically or mentally. By the end of the Great War the Army had treated 80,000 cases of 'shell shock'.

However, considering the scale of the losses in the War – the United Kingdom lost 2.2% of its population – as the beginning of 1919 dawned in the peaceful village of Strethall the inhabitants will have reflected that, unlike the vast majority of UK villages, it was indeed thankful to have emerged unscathed from the carnage of the War. MARGARET SINFIELD

Arthur Mee and Loughton

The above article mentions the writer Arthur Mee (1875–1943). He was responsible for a series of books called *The King's England* which was described as 'a new Domesday Book of 10,000 towns and villages, edited by Arthur Mee in 41 volumes'. It was said that 'nothing like these books has even been presented to the English people. Every place has been visited. The Compilers have travelled half a million miles and have prepared a unique picture of our countryside as it has come down through the ages, a census of all that is enduring and worthy of record.'

So what did Mee have to say about Loughton?

Loughton is on the edge of Epping Forest, and it must forever be proud of the Village Hampden who saved the forest from being stolen from the people. It has lost its old church, of which but a stone or two and a fragment of the churchyard wall remain, but on its site a church was built last century 'in memory of all who lie in the churchyard'.

In the new church are a few things from the old one: a little glass of two kneeling figures older than the Reformation, a charming little cupboard of the 16th century with a tiny painting of the Annunciation three inches deep, and four brasses with 26 people on them. Three of the brasses are 16th century: George Stonard in armour with his wife, John Stonard with two wives, and William Nodes with eight sons whose names are all given. The other brass is 17th century and shows Abel Guilliams kneeling with his wife and their 10 children. In one of the windows is a charming figure of St Winifred in memory of a lady of Loughton who died in Samoa.

It was Thomas Willingale who made Loughton famous last century by his brave fight for the rights of the people to the freedom of Epping Forest. He was a poor villager who made a scanty living by gathering wood and grazing animals there. But in the middle of the last century, when the lands of the people were being everywhere enclosed, even the Crown rights of Epping Forest were sold and the villagers were robbed of their rights. Willingale was then an old man, but the thought of the injustice was too much for him, and he flung himself into the battle for the preservation of a beauty spot and of customs as old as history. The Corporation of London came to his assistance in the end, and after 15 years of battles in Parliament and the Courts a Royal Commission found that the old man was right and that the enclosures were illegal.

A vast sum of money was spent before Epping Forest was declared free for the people again, but in the end Queen Victoria went down and opened 6,800 acres as a public place for ever.

The Essex volume was first published in August 1940, and the 1949 Hodder and Stoughton edition had the following publisher's note: 'the visitation of Essex for the King's England series was completed in the early months of the Hitler War and is a picture of the

county as it was before aerial bombardment of the Island. It has not been thought desirable to take note of changes the war has brought about in some churches and other buildings.'

The Cenotaph

Mention of Arthur Mee brought to mind another writer of the 20s and 30s whose travel books sold in their thousands all over the world – H V Morton. Unfortunately Morton only briefly visited Essex; he described Hornchurch and Colchester in his book *The Call of England* first published in 1928. In an earlier article Mike Alston mentioned the observance of Remembrance Day. H V Morton had the following to say about the Cenotaph:

Ten-thirty am on a cold, grey February morning.

There is expectancy at the Horse Guards, where two living statues draped in scarlet cloaks sit their patient chargers. A group of sightseers wait at the gates for the high note of a silver cavalry trumpet, for the click of hoofs on the cobbles and a shining cavalcade beneath an arch, the pageantry that precedes that silent ceremony of changing a guard that 'turns out' for no man but the King.

Laden omnibuses go down to Westminster or up to Charing Cross, and as they pass every passenger looks at the two Life Guards in their scarlet glory, for they are one of the sights of London that never grows stale. Taxicabs and limousines spin smoothly left and right, men and women enter and leave Government offices: a Whitehall morning is moving easily, leisurely, elegantly, if you like, towards noon.

I walk on to Westminster, and in the centre of the road, cream-coloured, dominant, stands the Cenotaph.

More than six years ago the last shot was fired. Six years. It is long enough for a heart to become convalescent. Sharp agonies which at the time of their happening seem incapable of healing have a merciful habit of mending in six years. A broken love affair that turned the world into a pointless waste of Time has ended in a happy marriage in six years. A death that left so much unspoken, so much regret, so much to atone for, falls in six years into its pathetic perspective a little nearer Nineveh and Tyre.

I look up at the Cenotaph. A parcels delivery boy riding a tricycle van takes off his worn cap. An omnibus goes by. The men lift their hats. Men passing with papers and documents under their arms, attaché and despatch cases in their hands – all the business of life – bare their heads as they hurry by.

Six years have made no difference here. The Cenotaph – that mass of national emotion frozen in stone – is holy to this generation. Although I have seen it so many times on that day once a year when it comes alive to an accompaniment of pomp as simple and as beautiful as church ritual, I think that I like it best just standing here in a grey morning, with its feet in flowers and ordinary folk going by, remembering.

Look! Near the mottled white and black of the War Office far up Whitehall is a platoon of Guardsmen marching. As they come near I see that they are men of the Irish Guards. They swing their arms and stride out, carrying their rifles at a perfect 'slope'. They are very young, the 'eighteen-year-olds' we used to call them in 1918 when they were called up to form the 'young soldiers' battalions'. I remember how frightened some of them were at this thing that had happened to them, and how often, when one was orderly officer padding round at night, a boy soldier would be crying like a child in the darkness at some harshness or in a wave of homesickness.

The old recipe has worked with the Guards! On they come, a platoon of tough Irish soldiers, their solemn faces grim and set under their peaked caps, their belts snow white with pipeclay.

They approach the Cenotaph:

'Platoon!' roars the Sergeant. 'Eyes – right!'

He slaps his rifle butt, and the heads swing round.

'Eyes – front!'

The Cenotaph stands there with a wind pulling . . . pulling like fingers touching the Flag.

H V Morton *The Heart of London* Methuen and Co Ltd first published 1925. Henry Vollam Morton (1892–1979) was a very fine writer. For more about him, visit the website www.hvmorton.co.uk

LYNN HASELDINE JONES, with thanks to Niall Taylor of the H V Morton Society.

Sheep stealing in Loughton

On Saturday night some thieves got into the lower meads of Alderton Farm, Loughton, and slaughtered a fine Southdown ewe, carrying away the hind legs and one shoulder, and throwing the remainder into a ditch, where it was found by the bailiff. These meads are in a very secluded place, adjacent to the Woodford and Loughton railway, now under construction.

Essex Standard, 23 January 1856,
submitted by CHRIS POND

The Maypole

I received a letter from Nigel Prout, of Uxbridge, Ontario, who had found the following MS poem in some family papers. He, and I, wonder whether any of our members have ever come across it before:

The Maypole

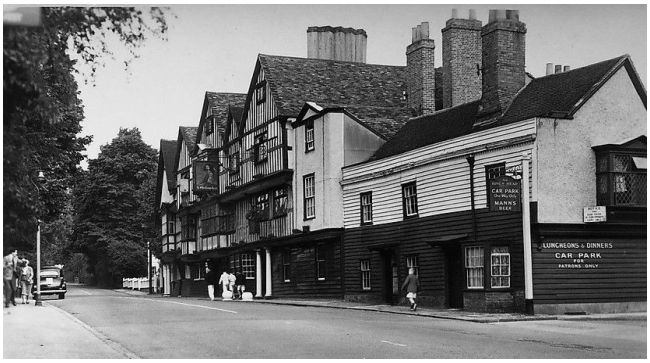
Dare I turn my memory's gaze to fast receding years,
To mid-Victorian Dickens' day and supernatural fears?
To catch a glimpse of blacken'd oak, mine host, and mullion'd frames
The gleam of polish'd pewter, and the dancing firelight flames?
The air is warm, and heavy the scent of the punch and the wine
There's good roast beef and English duck, all spiced with bay and thyme.

There's a clash of hooves on flagstones, the excitement's high within
'Tis Dickens back just once again, to the famous Maypole inn.
The picture clears to my mind's eye, the figures live and breathe
There's Rudge and Vardon, Lord George too* –
They live, they love, they grieve.

But the coach has gone from the flagstones;
There's the whisper of rubber instead.
No more does he fill the doorway –
For the host of the Maypole is dead.
He'll not hear the harsh roar of their engines
When the modern folk come to dine.
And they'll know not of the punch or the stirrup-cup laced with wine.

And the figures recede in the distance
And few of them now at all
But they still have an air of belonging
As they gaze from their place of the wall.
And when I and my lady go dining
Where the beams are black overhead,
We know it is really the Maypole –
Tho' at Chigwell they say
'The King's Head'.

*Characters in *Barnaby Rudge*, by Charles Dickens.



King's Head,, Chigwell

CHRIS POND

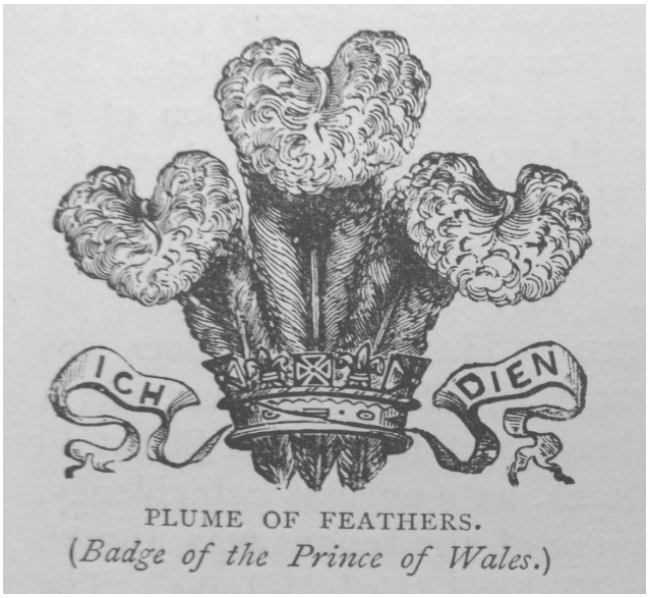
Please let Chris know if you know anything of this poem!

The Plume of Feathers

In his book *The Trade Signs of Essex* published in 1887, Miller Christy mentions a list of inns (provided by a Mr G Creed of Epping) in the Epping Division in September 1789. Those for Loughton were the Reindeer, the Crown, the King's Head and the Plume of Feathers. Christy had the following to say about the Plume of Feathers – 'the sign of the FEATHERS at Hatfield Broad Oak is clearly identical with that of the PLUME OF FEATHERS at Loughton; indeed, the former appears in Mr Creed's list as having been the Plume of Feathers in 1789. The house at Loughton is also mentioned in the same list, so that both are at least a hundred years old. Both, of course, now at least represent the badge of our Princes of Wales. Ostrich feathers have been among the devices of our kings and princes from very early times; and the pretty tale of how the Black Prince took them from the King of Bohemia whom he killed in the battle of Creci, is a pure delusion. As the Rev H L Elliot points out, 'Single feathers, differenced in various ways, were used as badges by the kings and the Beauforts before the Wars of the Roses. Henry VI used two feathers in saltire, the sinister argent, surmounted of the dexter, or, as here depicted, as one of his badges.'

Christy also mentions another Loughton establishment –

'At Loughton is a beer-shop known as the Bag of Nails . . . a bag of nails, with the spikes of the nails sticking through it, was formerly a very common sign, and may be seen on old tokens. The sign seems, in some cases at least, to have been a corruption from the 'Bacchanals.'



Miller Christy, *The Trade Signs of Essex* (Edmund Durrant and Co, 1887).

Walthamstow Historical Society centenary

Walthamstow Historical Society is celebrating its centenary year in 2014–2015. The Society was founded in 1914–1915 as the Walthamstow Antiquarian Society.

The origins of the Society lie in a small band of enthusiasts who were keen to further the study of local history and publish books in which such knowledge would be available 'for all comers and for all time'. The aim was to promote the study and enjoyment of local history, particularly in the vicinity of Walthamstow.

In the furtherance of these aims a series of 38 large-paper monographs was published between 1914 and 1940. Following a lapse of 11 years a new series of monographs was launched of which 43 have been published to date.

The Society was responsible for establishing a museum at the Old Vestry House in 1930 as well as subsequently founding the much-renowned William Morris Gallery.

The name of the Society was changed to the Walthamstow Historical Society in April 1987.

The Society holds a series of meetings (usually at Trinity United Reformed Church, 58 Orford Road, Walthamstow), organises walks around the area and arranges visits to places of interest. In the forthcoming months, topics of the talks include 'London in the Great War'; 'Daisy Warwick' (who was at one time President of the Society – a post now held by our own Chris Pond, who co-authored his first book for them, in 1970); 'The Real William Morris', and a magic lantern show. Details can be found on the Society's website at www.walthamstowhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Our congratulations to the members of the Society on reaching this remarkable milestone!

A view of Loughton in the 17th century – visitations in the Archdeaconry of Essex in 1683

The visitation . . . is the first of four such functions held in the Essex Archdeaconry during the period from 1683 to 1686 . . . The Archdeacon of Essex at this date was the Venerable Thomas Turner and . . . his Archdeaconry were systematic, and his enquiries both exhaustive and thorough. That he did not spare himself in the performance of his task will be evident when it is noticed that he made a personal visit to each of the churches specified in the record, and that the Visitations commenced each day at 8am and continued with very little interruption until 6pm . . .

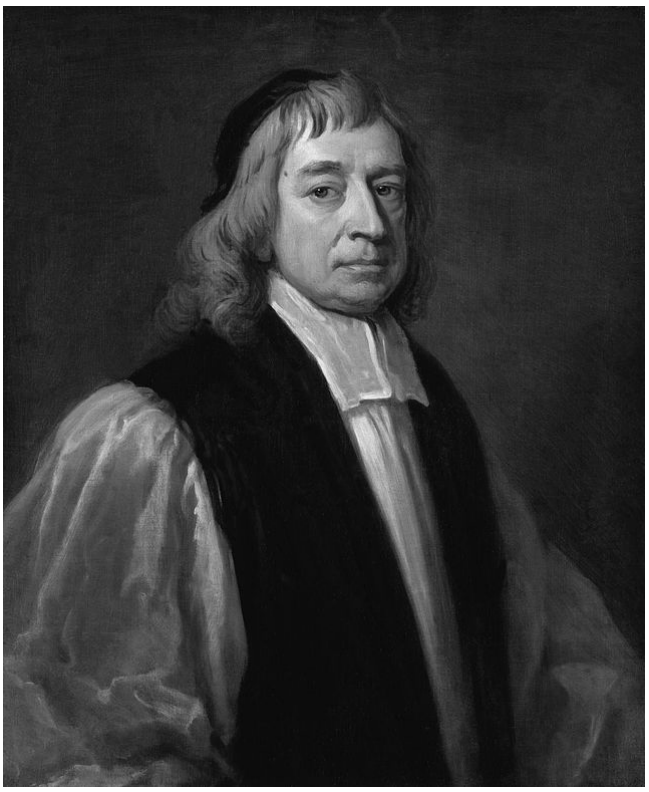
These records reflect a period in which the Church was making a determined effort to recover the ground lost in the confusion into which it had been thrown during the Commonwealth upheaval and the earlier years of the restoration of the monarchy. Twenty years had elapsed since Charles II had ascended the throne, but that much was still needed in the way of reform and reconstruction is evident from the state of things disclosed in these Visitation entries.

Essex – as part of the great diocese of London – had for its bishop Henry Compton (born 1632, Bishop of London 1675–1713).

He was popularly if somewhat irreverently styled 'Jack Boots' by reason of his having at one period of his career held a Commission as Cornet in the Royal Horse Guards. Even during his episcopate he accompanied the Princess Anne in military attire, and subsequently took command of a body of troops. He was actually the last of the prelates to bear arms in England. His views were strictly Anglican, and he took a firm stand both against Rome on the one hand, and against Nonconformity on the other. It was during the episcopate of Bishop Compton that the custom of preaching in the surplice began to be revived in the county.

That energetic measures were needed for the due observance of reverence in worship, and decency in matters pertaining to Church discipline and order, is clearly evident in nearly every parish in which these Visitations were held. Partly owing to the scandal of the Commonwealth administration, partly to the custom of pluralities and non-residence, partly also to the unsettled and conflicting views of various clergy, and no doubt in no inconsiderable degree to the indifference of many of the laity, abuses of all kinds became rife.

Thus we read of cases in which the fabrics of the churches were in a sad state of decay both externally and within; of churchyards over-run with weeds remaining unfenced and in consequence desecrated by the incursions of cattle; of graves within the church and chancel lying exposed to view; of belfries defiled with pigeons and other birds, and even in one instance used as a lumber room for dairy and other utensils.



Bishop Henry Compton by Sir Godfrey Kneller, National Portrait Gallery (creative commons)

Moreover, there are other entries showing that churches were devoid of either chalice or paten. Bibles and prayer books were imperfect or altogether wanting. Communion tables were standing in the body of the church, instead of at the east end altar-wise; and the sanctuary being without anything in the nature of a rail, was used as a dumping ground for benches, or maybe occasionally a church chest. Fonts were stopped up, bells cracked and frequently ropeless, church chests without locks or keys, and terriers either lost, or missing. If, however, these records unveil much that is deplorable in the life and condition of the church at this period, they shew also another side. They testify that the authorities were striving to meet and to cope with the difficulties, and doing their utmost to carefully and thoroughly investigate matters, with a view to uplifting the ideal of worship, instilling a sense of reverence and devotion, and laying down a stricter code of discipline in all cases.

Repairs were to be undertaken and certified completed within a specified time. Abuses were to be done away. The sanctuaries to be reverently cared for, and the holy tables to be placed 'altar-wise' at the east end and enclosed within a decent rail. Kneelers were to be provided ('pessocks' as they are sometimes termed) by the churchwardens, and put into the seats in order that the worshippers might be encouraged to kneel. Terriers of the property and belongings of the church were to be compiled, and produced at the next Visitation. Catechising was to be frequent and regular, and the people were to be admonished to send their children and servants. The vessels for the service of the altar were to be provided where necessary, and the apostolic precept was to be observed that all things shall be done 'decently and in order'.

As the Visitations continue, and we come to those of later date, a marked improvement becomes observable as regards the character of the entries. They treat for the most part of such matters as repairs to the fabrics and such other defects as would be occasioned by fair wear and tear, and

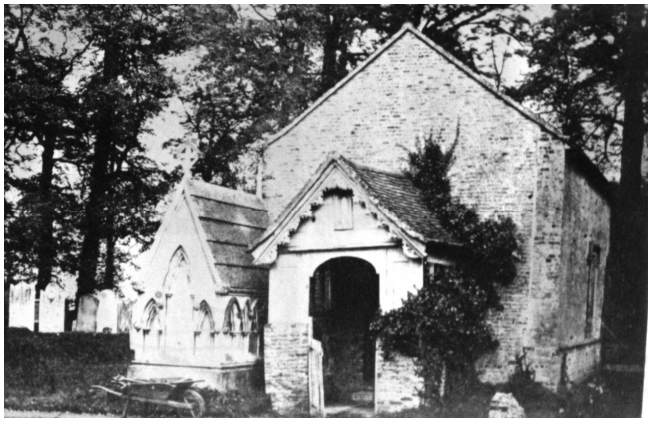
we come across fewer entries which betoken lack of reverence or decency in the matter of public worship.

Moreover, these records are invaluable as quarries from which to extract historical and archaeological data. They serve to furnish us with so much that we should otherwise probably never have known, such as for example the date, character, and condition of many of our communion vessels, and in some cases the names of the donors, together with the circumstances under which these vessels were given or procured. So, too, with the church chests: we find from these entries the approximate date at which some of them came into possession of the church; in other entries details are given as to their condition, with injunctions to use them for the safeguarding of the registers. These old records likewise inform us as to the names of the incumbents, curates, churchwardens, patrons, and others connected with many of the churches, and also give particulars of bequests and church lands. They therefore throw sidelights on the story of the Church in Essex both authoritative and reliable, and in consequence are treasures to be studied, valued and safeguarded.

Loughton got off quite lightly

LOWTON
Mr Jonas Warley – Rector (and later to be Archdeacon of Colchester)
Mr Samuel Sampson – Curate
Mr Carolus Cutler – Guardian
Henricus Todd – Guardian
There wants a book of Cannons; the Acts and proclamations appointed to be read in Churches
Some tyles wanting in ye Church
The Chancell one side of it to be whited
The table of ye Degrees of marriage
A Cupp of silver and patten. A pewter flagon there is already
All ye whole parish received ye Sacrament at Easter and Whitsuntide last
The Chest to have another Lock sett on it. Ye Minister to have one key and ye Churchwarden another
There is noe Terrier, but one must be made by ye next Visitation at Easter

Signed by the mark of Henry X Todd
THE REV WJ PRESSEY, MA, FSA
in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, Vol XIX, Part IV, published by the Society, 1929.



St Nicholas' Church, Loughton, which would have been the subject of the Visitation in 1683. Almost all of Loughton's medieval church, St Nicholas, was demolished after the completion of St John's in 1844. Its chancel was left as a funeral chapel. But this in turn was replaced by Eden Nesfield's new St Nicholas in 1877, just after this photo (1876). The position of the old church can be judged by the Gothic tomb, which is still there.' From *A Century and a Half of Loughton in Pictures* (LDHS, 2012).

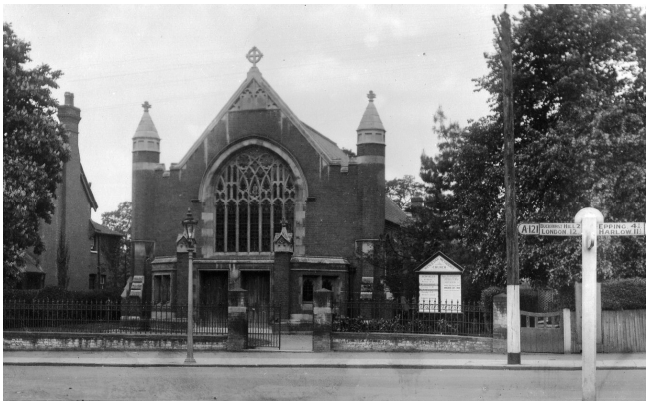
Some Loughton churches

More scenes from *A Century and a Half of Loughton in Pictures* (LDHS, 2012).

St John's (Sidney Smirke, architect) dates from the 1840s. This photo shows the church from the town cemetery next door.

The handsome lychgate was the gift of William Waller as a memorial to his daughter, Vera Margaret, who died in 1895 aged 7. It was built by the Loughton carpenter, Duncan Davey.

Church House in Church Lane was built c 1850 for the Parish as a Sunday School and sexton's house. It is said to incorporate work from the pre-1846 St Nicholas' church.



The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was designed by Gordon and Gunton and opened in 1903. It is pictured here in 1929, when the minister still lived in Buckhurst Hill. Sadly it was demolished and replaced by a new church in 1987, which has, in fact, become every bit as much a Loughton landmark as its predecessor.

The Loughton Union Church (Baptist and Congregational) was the leading nonconformist church of the town. It was established in 1814, but this Italianate chapel dated from the mid-1860s. James Cubitt built the schoolroom on the left some 25 years later. All was demolished in 1972 for a stark gault brick cube replacement, which has now reverted to calling itself 'Loughton Baptist Church'.

Captions by CHRIS POND

Farewell

A recent departure from the scene was the Queen Elizabeth Riding School in Forest Side, Chingford. It closed after 60 years, during which time many young people have learnt to ride and to care for animals. In particular troubled teenagers were given a sense of responsibility looking after the horses and ponies. It was also the local base for the Horse Rangers which gave many young people their first introduction to the world of horses. It is not known yet what will happen to the site, which is next to the Queen Elizabeth pub and restaurant.

'Village Fair' by Flemish artist Gillis Mostaert, 1590 (see page 2)

The Tower of London ceremony
Reader: Mr Charles MacKay, Chairman, Historic Royal Palaces.
Last Post: Drummer Barton (see page 5)

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