

NEWSLETTER 218

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018

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56th Season

Heather Murray

The Society lost two of its stalwarts in the spring of 2018, our president, Heather, Lady Murray of Epping Forest, and former chairman, Dr Donald Pohl.

Heather Murray was President for 14 years from 2004, when she succeeded her late husband, Lionel (Len) Murray. Until infirmity caught up with her, she was also a very regular attendee at meetings. Heather Woolf was a nurse; she and Len came to live in Loughton in the 1950s. Heather used to run the AGM, when the President takes the chair, and always had some characteristic peppery comment to move it along. She will be much missed.

Donald Pohl was born in South Africa in 1940. After a spell working in a bank, he took a degree at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, and came to Britain in 1972 to take his PhD at the University of Dundee. His topic was the early 19th century Scottish essayist and author, Christopher North. Donald came to Loughton whilst teaching at Redbridge College, and amassed a huge collection of everyday antiques at his house, Hillside, in Queens Road. He wrote *Loughton 1851* for the Society in 1988, and was its chairman from then till 1992.

Our new President, elected at the May AGM, is Professor David Stevenson, of the LSE, who lives in Loughton, and without a doubt is the most distinguished professional historian ever to have lived amongst us. His MA and PhD were taken at Cambridge, and he has lectured at LSE since 1982; his eight seminal books on the Great War are esteemed as some of the most enlightened studies of that war ever published.

CHRIS POND

Memories of Buckhurst Hill



Neil Rumbol has sent us his reminiscences of his time in Buckhurst Hill, which can be read on page 6 of this

Newsletter. As a taster, here are two of his photographs, and more appear on page 16.

Above we see Queen's Road in 1977, ready for the Silver Jubilee; note the Post Office, and beyond, jeweller's Went, Ashford and Davis, and then Barclays Bank.

And below, further down Queen's Road, showing Les George, later replaced by the Parish Office, now shops.

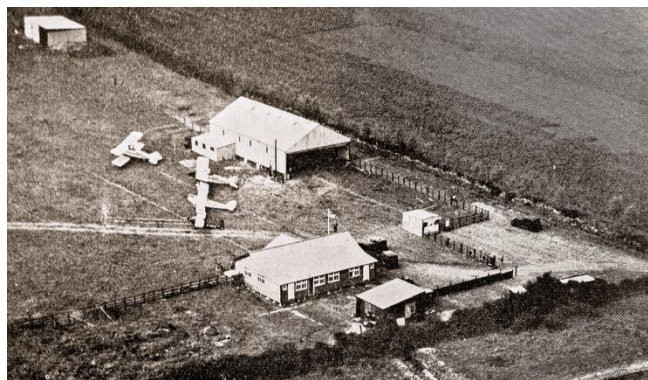


Loughton Air Park – Abridge Aerodrome

The Society has published *Loughton Air Park – Abridge Aerodrome* which tells the story of the little-known and now long-gone aerodrome in the south-west corner of the county of Essex. Known variously as Loughton Air Park, Loughton Aerodrome (Abridge) and Abridge Aerodrome this landing ground lay west of the B172 Abridge to Theydon Bois road and north-west of Piggotts Farm. Situated on the northern side of the River Roding, the aerodrome was in the parish of Theydon Bois and within the administrative area of Epping Rural District Council (RDC); it abutted the Loughton Urban District Council (UDC) area on its western side.

During its brief life in the 1930s, Loughton Air Park was a hive of activity and the location for many 'flying circus' air displays. From the aerodrome, scheduled services were projected to 'all other parts of the world', and three flying clubs taught hundreds of people to fly there, including the 'flying busmen' – LT drivers and conductors from local garages.

Flying teachers included the country's only one-legged flying instructor, and another who was later to disappear in a crash in the English Channel. Among their pupils were a 'society girl' parachutist, who went on to become a glider pilot of international renown; and Britain's youngest female pilot, subsequently awarded the MBE for her wartime flying activities. It was also the location of the King of the Gold Coast's first flight in an aeroplane.



Abridge Airport, Summer 1933

The aerodrome had a darker side, too, its final year seeing the tragic deaths of two young airmen, and ending its days as the scene of a thwarted smuggling attempt involving some of the decade's most notorious confidence-tricksters.

Chapter 1 sets the scene while the remaining nine chapters deal with local gliding and flying clubs; Loughton Aerodrome (Abridge) in 1932; a 'Great Air Display' in 1933; Commercial Airways (Essex) and the East Anglian Aero Club in 1934; liquidation in 1935; Atlas Air Services and Abridge Flying Club in 1936; illegal flights in 1937; the end in 1938 and later; and, finally, memories of people who saw the aerodrome in its heyday. There is also an extensive Appendix listing those who flew at Abridge Aerodrome followed by a list of sources and suggestions for further reading.

The author, Alan Simpson, lives in Barkingside and has lived for much of his life near the border between Essex and London. He developed an interest in local history while at school and studied history at university. After working for many years in the Civil Service, he now works at the Royal College of Surgeons in London. A keen photographer and post card collector, he is a member of several local history societies. This is Alan's fourth book, his previous titles being: *How the Railway Came to Leytonstone* (Leyton & Leytonstone Historical Society, 2006); *Leyton & Leytonstone Past & Present* (History Press, 2009 – revised edition 2012); and *Air Raids on South-West Essex in the Great War* (Pen & Sword, 2015). Alan is currently researching the history of Maylands Aerodrome and Romford Flying Club. He also continues to expand his collection of postcards of Barkingside with a view to producing a 'then and now' book of the area in due course.

The book is a paperback in A5 format and contains 100 pages including 12 pages of photographs. It costs £5 for members and £6 for others. TED MARTIN

More on Epping Mill

Further to Chris Pond's article in Newsletter 216, Peter Newman of Theydon Bois writes:

Epping Mill was at Bell Common, one of the highest points near Epping, but was pulled down in 1869. It was one of the first trig points to be used in making the original Ordnance Survey map in 1799 when we expected to be invaded by the French, probably via Essex.

Some years ago I purchased a reprint of the first edition of the one inch OS map of Brentwood and East London, sheet 72. I probably saw it advertised in *The Guardian* and it was published by David & Charles, Brunel House, Newton Abbot, Devon.

At the bottom of the map it says: 'Engraved at the ORDNANCE MAP OFFICE Southampton. The Outline by E George, the Writing by J W Froggett, the Hills by Alfd Baker & Published by Colonel Colby, RE, FRS, L&E MRLA &c. July 12th 1844.' (I have tried to reproduce the type as nearly as I can but it is minute.)

The windmill is clearly marked at Bell Common and at the bottom of the map there is an extended account of the history and making of the OS maps. I quote the relevant passage: 'The principal trigonometrical stations – as those at Langdon Hill and Hadleigh Hill – were observed by the 'great theodolite', but the interior stations such as those at Brentwood steeple, Billericay Chapel and Epping Mill – were fixed with the 'small circular instrument' [ie theodolite] which on account of its handy size could be very readily taken to the tops of steeples, towers etc.' It also says 'Railways inserted to November 1892. Levels revised in 1884.'

PETER NEWMAN

There will be more on Epping Mill in the next *Newsletter* (Ed).

Loughton in 1925

From the *West Essex Gazette Directory* 1925:

Area of Loughton – 3,961 acres

Rateable value – £38, 848

Population – in 1921 was 5,749

Post Office – Postmaster E H A Haestier. Letters delivered at 7am, 2.15pm, 5.45pm; on Saturdays no deliveries after 2.15pm. Letters despatched at 9.45am, 11.15am, 4.20pm, 8.40pm, 9.25pm; Sundays 9pm. Open on Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday and all Bank Holidays 9am to 10 o'clock.

Goldings Hill Sub-Office – Postmaster A W Leech.

Lopping Hall – This Hall was erected in 1884, and cost £3,060. On the ground floor there are two Committee Rooms, a Reading Room, a Library, Lavatories, and three rooms for the Caretaker. On the first floor there is a large Assembly Room, which will accommodate about 400; also a commodious green room, and ladies and gentlemen's cloak rooms. The following is the Committee elected as Trustees; D J Davey (Chairman), B H Eastes, C Fry, S H Salter, H Lebbon, and John Herd; Secretary L W Bone; Caretaker, Mrs Pearce. Offices of the Urban District Council on the second floor; London Joint and Midland Bank Limited, ground floor; the Library in the Lopping Hall opened in 1885, contains over 3,500 works in the departments of history, poetry, fiction, etc, which are lent on payment of a small subscription. Hours of attendance – Tuesdays and Fridays 7 to 8pm; and Wednesdays 3 to 4pm. L W Bone, librarian.

Officer of Customs and Excise and Old-Age Pension Officer – F W Asbury, Kendal Avenue, Epping.

Local papers – the *West Essex Gazette* published every Saturday, price one penny. The terms of subscription by post are 1s 9d per quarter; it can be obtained of any local agent in the district, or Smith and Son's bookstall. It has the largest circulation amongst all classes in the neighbourhood, and is, therefore, the best medium for advertisements of

every description. Publishers, Davis and Co, Epping. *The Loughton and District Advertiser* published every Saturday, price one penny.

Bank – the London Joint and Midland Bank Limited, adjoining the Lopping Hall, manager Mr D O Freeman. Open from 9am to 3pm; Saturdays 9am to 12 noon. Places of Worship – St John the Baptist (Parish Church); services as given in the Parish Magazine; Rector, Mr P N Maitland, MA – St Mary the Virgin; services as given in the Parish Magazine; Vicar Rev C A Gell – Union Church; services 11am and 6.30pm; Minister Rev H J Wicks, DD – Wesleyan Chapel; services at 11am and 6.30pm – Mission Hall, Goldings Hill; services at 11.15am and 6.30pm – Forest Hall; service at 7pm – Holy Innocents, High Beech; services at 11am and 6.30pm (in winter, 3.30pm); Vicar Rev W D Jones. Churchwardens – St John's J D Maitland and F King; St Mary's F S Foster and A Baker.

Overseers – M Smith and G Perry.
Collector of Rates – C J French, Council Offices.
Registrar of births and deaths – S J Wilks, Church Hill.
Collector of Taxes – E M Rudge.
Relieving Officer – S J Wilks, Church Hill.

Loughton School Managers – Mr A W Leech, JP (chairman), Mrs Carey Woods, Mr J A Herd, Rev P N Maitland, Mr Bernard Howard, and Rev H J Wicks DD; Correspondent, EC Edgar; office, Hetton House, Station Road, Loughton. Schools – Council School: Boys, Head Master H E Williams, BA; Girls, Head Mistress, Miss A K True; Infants, Head Mistress, Miss Hayes – County High School for Girls: Principal, Miss M E Hall, MA.

Loughton Cricket Club – President, Mr W W Maitland, Treasurer, J W Marston, General Hon Secretaries H E Godin and M H Van der Gucht, Match Hon Sec A W J Osborne, Captain 1st XI Frank S Foster, Vice-Captain 1st XI P V A Miller, Captain 2nd XI D L Jacques, Vice-Captain 2nd XI G J Traveller. Ground opposite the King's Head. Old Loughtonians Hockey Club – Captain and Match Secretary L H Shelley, Hon Sec F A Parker, High Road, Loughton; 1st and 2nd XI matches usually played on the ground at the King's Oak Hotel, High Beech, and 3rd and 4th XI matches on the Loughton CC ground. Loughton FC – president, Mr F Harvey, Hon Sec, A Keep, Hon Treasurer, H Sharp. Ground, Loughton Railway Station; colours, blue jerseys, white knickers.

Fire appliances – a Fire Station adjoins the Lopping Hall. The Brigade comprises a Superintendent, a Chief Officer, and six men under the Urban Council. Alarm of fire should be given at the Lopping Hall.

Loughton Station – Station Master L Staples. *West Essex Gazette*, timetables to be had at Messrs W H Smith and Son's bookstall at the Station, and of the local newsagents, price 1d.

Police – Metropolitan Police Force.
Metropolitan Special Constabulary Reserve J Division.
Loughton Police Station. Chief Inspector, A W Walstow.
Inspector J B Ashby. Sergeants A W Collin, A G Gaydon, G Perry.

Water – the water is supplied from the Metropolitan Water Works.

Gas – the gas is supplied by the Gas, Light and Coke Company.

The Club, Station Road – a handsome, modern building, comprising Club Room, Reading Room. Gymnasium, Billiard Room, etc. Secretary E Botting.

Loughton Literary and Debating Society – President, J Dietrichsen, Secretary, W J Saull, MA. Meetings held at the Club.

League of Nations Union (Loughton Branch) – President, J Dietrichsen, Joint Hon Secretaries, Messrs Smallwood and Matthews.

Loughton District Nursing Association (affiliated to Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses) – The Queen's Nurse resides at Lynwood, Queen's Road. Application for her services should be made to any of the medical men, or the Hon Sec, Mrs B F Howard. Queen's Nurse, Miss Flanders. Benevolent Institutions – the following are in connection with the Parish Church – Shoe, Coal and Clothing Club, Mothers' Union, Sewing Class, and Parochial Free Library. The following are in connection with St Mary's – Clothing and Coal Club and Mothers' Meeting. The following are in connection with the Union Chapel – Mothers' Meeting, Girls' Guild and Provident Club – the other branches of Church work include Mothers' Union, Girls' Friendly Society, County Association, Ladies' Home Mission, the Essex Needlework Guild, St Mary's Missions to Seamen (Hon Sec Mrs McKenzie), Waifs and Strays Society, Children's Union, and Parochial Missionary Association.

Early closing day – Thursday, 1 o'clock throughout the year.

Loughton Unionist Association – President, F Dent JP, CA, Chairman, F S Foster, JP, joint Hon Secs Mrs Redwood (Bincombe, High Road), and Mr J Ayton Mann (Connaught Avenue).

Loughton Choral Society – Conductor, Henry Riding, FRCO, President, Dr Pendred, Librarian, G Palfrey, Hon Treasurer, H J Goodwin. Meets for practice every Monday during the session at 8pm in the Lopping Hall.

Loughton Operatic Society – Hon Sec Mrs Walter Hogg, Chester Lodge, Hon Treasurer, A H Pallant, Conductor, Henry Riding, FRCO, Loughton School.

Loughton Brotherhood – held at the Lincoln Hall. President W E Stevens, Hon Sec L A J Hutchin.

Loughton Women's Institute – President, Miss M Zimmerman, Hon Secs Mrs Culpin and Mrs Newman, Hon Treasurer Miss Dent.

Loughton Independent Labour Party – chairman Alderman Muriel Lester, Hon Sec Norman Henderson, Station Road.

The same publication gave household advice, such as:

What every Housewife Should Know

Renovating an umbrella. Sponge a black silk umbrella with strong tea which has been well sweetened. The tea will restore the colour of the fabric; the sugar will stiffen it.

Storing furs. Shake the furs thoroughly, then wrap them in newspaper. Place them in a cardboard box lined with newspapers, put the cover on the box, and tie down. Then paste over with newspaper. Moths have a strong dislike to printers' ink, and the furs will be free from them for the summer.

Cleaning brown boots. Brown boots or shoes should be rubbed over with a slice of raw potato before the polish is applied. Then they are easy to clean and take a good polish.

West Essex Gazette Directory 1925

Chingford Reservoirs

I found the picture below of the opening of the King George V Reservoir, Chingford whilst doing some motoring research.

Many members will have driven on the A110 to Enfield between the two Chingford reservoirs which form part of a chain down the Lea Valley, the King

George V Reservoir (KGV) (north side) and the William Girling Reservoir (WGR) (south side).



Construction of the KGV started in 1908 and was completed in 1912, but King George V did not officially open 'his' reservoir until 1913. It is the largest reservoir in London covering 420 acres/170 hectares. An interesting engineering innovation in the project was the pumping station having five gas-fuelled liquid-piston pumps designed by H A Humphrey (Herbert A Humphrey, 1868–1951). Though these have been redundant since 1970, three of them remain *in situ*. If you want to know more about these, there is a Wikipedia page on Humphrey pumps.

Work began on the WGR in 1936. The construction process is notable as mechanical scrapers and bulldozers were used, the first use of these in construction of reservoir dams in Britain. These initially ensured rapid progress, but construction was delayed by two landslips and then the Second World War. Wikipedia advises, 'Subsequent investigations into [the second] landslip can be regarded as the birth of modern soil mechanics in Britain.' The dam was completed, and officially opened by William Girling, then chairman of the Metropolitan Water Board in 1951 – there seems to have been a practice of people opening reservoirs named after themselves!

The reservoirs are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest as they are a wintering ground for wildfowl. It is reported that 85 species of wetland birds have been recorded there.

It will not be apparent in the picture but the King's cars would not have had number plates. Though practice has changed in recent years, the Crown and government departments used to be exempt from legislation unless the legislation indicated otherwise. When the Motor Car Act of 1903 introduced registration plates none of the King's cars carried them. This resulted in policemen stopping them, not realising the situation and then feeling somewhat embarrassed. One particularly 'Keystone Cops' type incident was reported in the *Dundee Courier* of 15 August 1922 when five of the King's cars were brought to that city by boat to be driven on to

Balmoral for a hunting party and the Dundee Police, who did not know that King's cars did not require number plates, pursued them. Since 1936 the practice has been that only the Monarch's official cars, ie, the Rolls-Royce and Bentley limousines now used for formal functions, do not carry plates.

JOHN HARRISON

The Girl's Own Paper

I recently acquired a volume called *The Girl's Own Annual*, which is a bound set of issues of *The Girl's Own Paper*, from October 1892 to September 1893, including a Christmas and a summer special. The magazine appealed to young girls of all stations in life, and featured articles, stories and advice, with a distinctive religious outlook. Of particular interest was the section at the end of each issue, entitled 'Answers to Correspondents'. There were rules:

1. No charge is made for answering questions.
2. All correspondents to give initials or pseudonym.
3. The editor reserves the right of declining to reply to any of the questions.
4. No direct answers can be sent by the editor through the post.
5. No more than two questions can be asked in any one letter.
6. No addresses of firms, tradesmen, or any other matter of the nature of an advertisement may be inserted.

Some questions covered how to pronounce words; how to behave at a tea party; medical matters; how to cook and sew; how to treat servants (and how to treat masters and mistresses). Of local interest was:

Lettie Crudge – Write to the Steward of the Bethlehem Royal Hospital, Lambeth Road, SE, as there is a convalescent branch at Whitley – Mr G H Heydon, Steward; or else to the After Care Association, which assists poor and friendless female convalescents on leaving asylums for the insane; Hon Secretary H Thornhill Roxby, Esq, Arden Lea, The Drive, Walthamstow.

Nineteen – Whether you have need or not to earn money for yourself for the next year or two, there is no blessing on idleness. Our time is not our own, nor our talents to be 'laid by in a napkin'. We recommend to your notice the Society of Watchers and Workers for Invalids, Secretary Miss E A Jacob . . . and the Odd Minutes Society, Secretary Miss Janette Powel [*sic*], Luctons, Buckhurst Hill, Essex . . . If you want to aid your sister in earning a living, take in two or three pupils for an hour or two daily.

The Odd Minutes Society was mentioned again in the issue of 28 January 1893; it was described as 'a work society for the benefit of the East-End poor'.

Other answers (sometimes the mind boggles at what the question must have been: they were not printed) included:

- You may eat jelly with a fork.
- Never accept the photograph portraits of any men to whom you are not engaged without the full knowledge and consent of your parents.
- Blood poisoning can certainly be produced by bad smells.

- You should return home when the twilight commences. Our paper does not deal with questions like your second.
- You should not correspond with any man (excepting a father, brother or uncle) to whom you are not engaged. If he desires to correspond with you he should obtain the right, with your parents' consent, by asking you to be his wife.
- We fear you possess neither common sense nor even modesty, or you would not ask such questions. If you do not know that such things are wrong, it is not likely that you will listen to our teaching. We decline to reply further.



The first weekly number of *The Girl's Own Paper* appeared on 3 January 1880. As with its male counterpart *The Boy's Own Paper*, the magazine was published by the Religious Tract Society (which subsequently became Lutterworth Press). In October 1929, the title became *The Girl's Own Paper and Woman's Magazine* but in 1930 the *Woman's Magazine* became a separate publication. In December 1947 the name was changed to *The Girl's Own Paper and Heiress*. By 1951 it was called *Heiress* incorporating *The Girl's Own Paper*. In 1956 *Heiress* closed down, and the name 'Girl's Own Paper' ceased to exist (Wikipedia).

THE EDITOR

Down Memory Lane

Sausages that tasted of electricity, a doctor's daily dip – all year round – in Wake Valley Pond and sheep grazing on one side of the High Road, cows on the other, are just some of Will Francies' memories. His talk, *Loughton as I have known it* [was] arranged by Chigwell and Loughton History Society, at Loughton Union Church on Saturday. It was so popular, the already packed-out Bentley Room had to be forsaken for the Church itself.

Will Francies was born in Smarts Lane, Loughton, in 1902. His mother was left penniless on the death of his father in 1915. Will had many jobs but developed a passion for the open road, and cars and motor bikes.

He served in the Merchant Navy during the last war, was torpedoed and spent three days in an open boat before being rescued. After war work in a Walthamstow factory, it was back to his cars and his own car hire service at the Old Forge, Loughton.

Travelling down memory lane, Will told his enthralled audience of the first motor car in Loughton, believed to be owned by the Fletchers at 'Dragons', an old house built in 1883, in Nursery Road, Loughton.

Old Loughtonians, among them 85 year old Frank Askew, joined in with their memories.

Perhaps the most beautiful tale of all was of charming Brook Cottage standing amid a velvet lawn which sloped down to the brook, its orchard and garden a riot of colour each summer. The little white cottage had a plaque 'Parva sed apta domini', 'small but sufficient unto the Lord'. Woolworth's now stands on the site.

West Essex Gazette, 19 March 1982

Submitted by JOAN FRANCIES

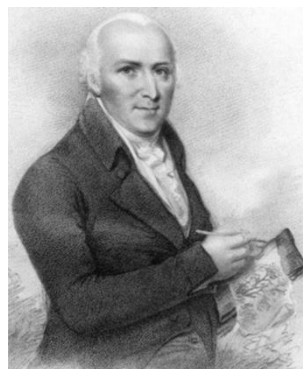
For Brook Cottage, see the image on page 297 of *Epping Forest Then and Now*. For Dragons, see *Newsletter 204* and for Will's war service, see *Newsletters 200 and 201* available on our website.

Humphry Repton (1752–1818): landscape gardener

Humphry Repton spent his childhood and early married life in Suffolk and Norfolk, but in 1786 he moved with his family to a cottage at Hare Street, Gidea Park. The site is now Lloyds Bank on the corner

of Balgores Lane and Main Road, between Romford and Gallows Corner.

In 1788, aged 36, he realised that nobody had stepped in to replace Capability Brown (who had died five years earlier) and so he decided to set up in business as a landscape gardener. His previous



experiences had given him a good background for this work and he quickly became established working for all sorts of people from the *nouveaux riches* to the aristocracy. Repton claimed that by the end of his career he had written more than 400 reports although only 339 sites are known today. Many of his clients were given a 'Red Book' containing a text with his ideas illustrated with delicate watercolours with an overlay to show his transformations.

110 'Red Books' have survived and it is not surprising that several of them are for places fairly close to his home. They include Higham Hill (now Woodford County High School) for John Harman (1793/4) and Woodford Hall for John Maitland (1801). His bound work on Wanstead for William Long Wellesley in 1813 was discovered in 2002 and adds to our knowledge of his work locally. Claybury Hall for James Hatch (1791) was his only commission in Ilford.

Humphry Repton died 200 years ago, on 24 March 1818, aged 65, and was buried in the village of Aylsham, Norfolk, where his grave is marked by a stone inscribed with the epitaph he had written for himself, and by a bed of roses. GEORGINA GREEN

With thanks to Ilford Historical Society for permission to reprint from their December 2017 newsletter.

How Epping celebrated Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

Of all the celebrations enjoyed by Epping's gay Victorians, the diamond jubilee festivities of 1897 seem to have been the happiest and gayest. The many and varied events occupied two whole days – and part of the nights as well – and the *Essex Times*, the *Essex Herald* and the *Epping Monthly Record* gave graphic reports of the celebrations.

The whole town was decorated from end to end with flags, banners and streamers. Confetti battles, athletic and water sports, an old folks' dinner, children's teas, a decorative procession, a cyclists' 'lantern ride' and a huge

thirty foot high bonfire and fireworks were all included in the general rejoicings.

The celebrations started at 7am on June 22, when the local company of the 1st Battalion the Essex Volunteer Regiment marched through the High Street and fired three volleys – a ‘fire of joy’, accompanied by ringing cheers for the Queen and the playing of the National Anthem by the town brass band.

The local churches and chapels united in a choral service of thanksgiving in St John’s parish church, after which the gay Victorians streamed out to enjoy themselves in the manner of the times. The *Essex Times* reporter described the town as a veritable fairyland of colour, with red, white and blue predominating, and with a huge banner inscribed ‘God bless our Queen’ suspended between the tall Venetian masts in the market place.

The many old inns, shops and houses were festooned in bunting, with the royal standard floating conspicuously from the roof of Northlands, the house of Dr Trevor Fowler. Included in the sports were a bandsman’s race, the bandsmen playing their instruments as they ran, and a novel zoological race, the entries for this including goats, rabbits, rats, a cat, a goose, a bantam, a duck, a guinea pig, an owl, a frog and a tortoise! Some 7000 or 8000 spectators watched the fireworks and bonfire and a display by the fire brigade.

The rejoicings ended late in the evening of the second day – the children’s day. Dancing in the market place to the music of the town band, an ‘alfresco promenade’, a ‘lantern ride’ by cyclists in fancy dress costumes and the prize giving on the steps of Northlands made a grand finale to an historic occasion in the life of the old Essex market town.

Epping’s great jubilee bonfire on the night of June 22 burned for over an hour, and formed a link in the mighty chain of beacon lights that flashed all over Great Britain on that memorable night of the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria.

SIDNEY HILLS

Essex Countryside, Vol 17, No 153, October 1969

Some memories of Buckhurst Hill

I was brought up in Buckhurst Hill from shortly after my birth in Gloucestershire in 1945, just before the end of the War, until Mum and I moved from there to the Southend area in 1986. My parents had married in Gloucestershire in 1935 and started married life in Leytonstone before buying the house in Buckhurst Hill in 1936. The houses in Chestnut Avenue were just being built and only a couple of blocks had been started on both sides of the road, when they bought number 14. I understood that the first block on our side of the road was ‘show houses’, just three instead of the usual four in a block, so as to display the three types of property that would be available in the road. However, looking at the first block now on Google Earth, it would appear that this was not the case, unless some major structural alterations have taken place to one or more of the properties in that block, which I very much doubt, as they all appear virtually identical.

As far as I know they moved into the house soon after it was completed but were not there too many years before Dad went into the RAF and Mum was subsequently evacuated to Perranporth with the school where she taught, Oxford & Elson House School, in Leytonstone, which was where I attended primary school.



My father, Charles Rumbol, painting 14 Chestnut Avenue; note the sunray windows. The girl in the window next door is Daisy Childs.

I don’t know how long Mum was in Cornwall, but I know that sometime during the War, she was engaged in regular Fire Watching which took place in some sort of tunnels/excavations beneath the comparatively new bridge leading from Farm Way, just west of Roding Valley Station. When I was at primary school, I always remember we tried to get to the station to catch the 4.12 Epping train because if we missed it we had to wait for the Hainault (via Newbury Park) train to come and go before the next one through Woodford, which was sometimes a Grange Hill, which we would use if we did not want to shop in Buckhurst Hill, then getting off at Roding Valley. I used to travel to and from school with Mum but one day I must have felt rebellious as when they closed the doors in Snaresbrook station, I decided to hold open the door that I was standing by, rather naïvely as I was in the back carriage with the guard, and got thrown off the train until Mum intervened and saved me! No idea now what my punishment was.

I did once have the privilege of travelling in the driver’s cab of an original red Central Line train, albeit for only one station. I was going home from London and had boarded a ‘Woodford’ train, and so got out at Woodford along with everyone else. I was in the front compartment and so must have wandered forward to the front of the carriage and somehow got into conversation with the driver, who told me the train was going to the sidings beyond Grange Hill. I must have somehow asked him if he could drop me off at Roding Valley and he agreed. Technically, of course, the train was now out of service, and carried no passengers, but true to his word I travelled round Woodford Junction in the cab. He stopped adjacent to the exit at Roding Valley, which wasn’t manned at that moment as there was no train due, I got out and he headed off to Grange Hill with his empty train.

Whilst in primary school we also had a cat which I think was either black or black and white; she was out all day and often used to walk up Oak Rise to meet us as we walked home from the station. Unfortunately, she was not spayed and had several kittens which my parents could not cope with, and they and her were taken to the PDSA in Redbridge. I have tried for years to remember what her name was but without success. I even contacted the PDSA there to see if their records could help me, but sadly was told that their paper

records had not been kept and so they couldn't help. Fancy actively disposing of so many records.

I note looking recently on Google Earth, that there is still a tree in the footpath outside the old house, although I doubt it's the same tree although it does look quite substantial! The tree that was there in the early days suffered from the effects of animal grazing. In the days before milk floats were motorised, the horse which pulled the UD (United Dairies) milk float would regularly have a feed from the tree while Tom (our milkman) was delivering to adjacent houses. I used on occasions to go up Chestnut Avenue with Tom and help him deliver the milk, enjoying riding in the float, but I think that was when the horses no longer pulled the floats. On the subject of trees, there was once one outside number 20, which we used as a stump when playing 'French cricket' (with the bat held vertically in front of our legs) on the footpath; that tree has now gone.

Although I was born in Lydney on the edge of the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, Mum had returned to Buckhurst Hill by the time Dad had been demobbed from the RAF, and life started to return to something resembling normality, although at that stage, I remember little of it myself. My earliest recollections are threefold, although I cannot put any specific dates on them. I can clearly recall being in Harrisons (grocers) in Queen's Road with Mum when they were tearing coupons out of her pale brown Ration Book. I believe Rationing ended in 1954 and so this was probably when I was perhaps 7 or 8 in the early '50s.

My other two recollections with even less idea of dates, must have been before I left primary school in 1956, for us to be in Leytonstone; both took place in and around Lyons (teashop) then in the High Road. Mum and I were walking up the road and a woman told her off for pulling me faster than I wanted to go! Secondly, whilst actually in Lyons, and apparently sharing a table with a woman, I took it into my head to blow on the ashtray on the table, so the lady's meal was covered in ash and Mum had to pay for a replacement! Can't remember my fate!

Back in Buckhurst Hill, I was always told that I would sit alongside the railway in Queen's Road, where the crossing gates had been (I think they went about 1948 as a result of electrification), although not sure whether I was in pram, pushchair or on my feet, watching the trains go by; in those days goods trains consisting largely of individual trucks, were common going through to Loughton and beyond, and returning, and as each truck went by, I would shout 'buffers', 'buffers', 'buffers' until the train had gone or I had got bored (no idea which was first!), or Mum had had enough! Not sure of dates here, but it had to be before the wall was built, else I would not have seen anything. After the wall had been built at the crossing site, I recall a girl on a bike, go crashing into it while we were in Harrisons; her brakes had apparently failed and she had been unable to stop, and had to be rescued by ambulance.

In those days, walking to the station was fairly straightforward as the 'lower' up platform ticket office was available and was accessed via the path

alongside the subway. Between Albert Road and the subway were about six houses on either side of the road, and nearest to Albert Road were about three shops. Firstly, was Rice's, which was a tobacconist, cum sweet shop (today we might call it a convenience store) and which in school years we would visit regularly when getting off the train from Loughton on the way home. Next, I believe was a butcher's shop and something else on the corner but can't recall what, or the butcher's name. On the south side of that section of road was I believe an undertaker's on the corner, although I cannot remember the details.

It is sad to note now that throughout Albert Road nothing is left of the houses I knew, from the end of Buckhurst Way to Palmerston Road; all now appear to be flats or similar, including, sadly, the well-established Prince of Wales pub which stood along the east side of Albert Road, south of Lower Queen's Road.

Although in my early days (but unbeknown to me) I understand that there was little development in Buckhurst Way, by the time I can recall, there were houses all along and under the Roding Valley to Chigwell railway line, and on towards Hillside Avenue in Woodford, as well as Chestnut Avenue (where I lived) and Chestnut Close. The houses in Chestnut Avenue were built by a company called V & F Jenner, which name remained on our drain cover beyond my time there!

Most of Hornbeam Road contained prefabs (see page 16) and these remained for many years, with just a few houses at the far end towards Roding Valley. From time to time when looking out of my bedroom window over the prefab roofs and across the fields, there would be a complete sheet of water looking north and south, and eastward almost to New Barns Farm, as the river flooded on regular occasions. For many years our nearest transport was at Buckhurst Hill station either for trains or the 254 bus into Loughton and Debden; only in more recent years was the route extended into South Woodford to terminate in Daisy Road close to the station. Roding Valley Station was accessible of course, but the trains were much less frequent than from Buckhurst Hill.

At the end of Chestnut Avenue there were two bungalows built on the opposite side of the road to my house, adjacent to the path from Walnut Way. One often hears about 'all roads lead to . . .' but in my case it was all footpaths lead to Luxborough Lane (and thence to Chigwell). At the junction of Buckhurst Way with Albert Road, there still is a footpath which originates effectively on the High Road in Buckhurst Hill, follows through Lords Bushes, over the railway just south of Buckhurst Hill station, across the Buckhurst Way/Albert Road junction to cross the River Roding close to the bridge carrying the Roding Valley to Chigwell railway line; this line, of course, originally linked through Newbury Park to the main line from Liverpool Street, at Seven Kings. I am sure from somewhere that Mum and I have been from Roding Valley station to Ilford by that means. I clearly remember that a steam goods train would chuff over the bridge (over the Roding) sometime in the evening around I think 9pm on a regular basis.

Returning to footpaths, further south there was Squirrels Lane which crossed the main line from Lords Bushes along the line of Walnut Way to become the footpath which then passed across what became Chestnut Avenue and Hornbeam Road to pass alongside the railway embankment to meet the other path by the bridge over the river. Finally, there was the track from Monkham's Farm along Farm Way, across the main line just north of Woodford Junction (via what I always called Roding Valley Bridge, although there was an earlier bridge). This clearly ran down past what would become Roding Valley station and probably met the Squirrels Lane path alongside the railway embankment leading to the river. The aim of course being to provide links from various parts of Buckhurst Hill to Chigwell via Luxborough Lane.

Incidentally I'm sure that the traffic priority at the junction of Forest Edge and Farm Way has been changed since I left Buckhurst Hill; we used to have to give way to traffic going along Forest Edge whereas now it appears that the Farm Way/Station Way traffic has priority across the junction.

While at primary school, I discovered that the families of two friends came to Buckhurst Hill to play tennis and cricket on Sunday afternoons. The path that passed between Buckhurst Way and Albert Road, on its route to the river bridge passed through the allotments alongside the river and then there was a wide bend where the river bed was usually exposed showing the pebbles, which section we knew as 'the beach'. On the other side of the river was a sports field that my friends' families would use, on the east side of the river and north of the railway. I don't know how long it was used, but I would often join them on a Sunday afternoon, not to play sport, but simply to enjoy the area and be kids! It appears that this sports field was excavated to obtain gravel for the M11 and so now the entire area is simply a large pond, ex-gravel workings. I have no idea whether anywhere else was provided for the families to use or whether the activity simply passed into oblivion. Also, the river has now lost its gentle bend, although this was straightened, and the 'beach' lost, before I left Buckhurst Hill.

Until I was about 14 or 15 in the late '50s, we did not have a phone, and where necessary, sometimes to phone Dad at his work in Aldgate, we would use one of the two phone boxes then available to us. There was one in the footpath from Walnut Way across Buckhurst Way to Chestnut Avenue; however the one we normally used was in Buckhurst Way close to the junction with Albert Road. I recall that the number of that call box was BUCKhurst 4125. However, some years before we got a phone, we did have television which was obtained early in 1953 in time for the Coronation. I seem to recall at some time that we tried to watch a cricket match, but the picture was distorted and the players were all crooked! Our first television came from a shop near Gates Corner although I can't recall the name. Gates Corner has of course long since disappeared as a junction with the Southend Road/North Circular Road when the main roads were all rearranged to link ultimately with the new M11, and the traffic light-controlled crossroads

disappeared. Sometime later we changed our television suppliers to Reliable Radio who I think had shops in Queen's Road and also in Station Way in Roding Valley.

Most of my early life was therefore linked to Buckhurst Hill, although, as mentioned, I attended primary school in Leytonstone, before failing my 11+ (we were supposed to write an essay about 'a day in school' or similar, but I decided to write about a day trip to Clacton – well that's my excuse anyway!) and going on to secondary school at The Brook in Roding Road, Loughton; sadly, even that was completely demolished some years ago now. I remember more than once whilst at The Brook, being asked in connection with our woodwork classes, to go with others to Scott's Woodyard (as we knew it – don't know the precise name) to collect some items for use. The woodyard was I suppose about half way up Old Station Road towards the Crown. My memory tells me that it had a large white panelled gate across the entrance and then on entering it seemed like the main street of a small wild-west town, with a dusty road between wooden buildings on either side.

When I first knew about the original station in Loughton, I always thought that the entrance gate was the remains of a level crossing gate, and that the line followed the route of the 'main street' towards the original station, near what is now Lopping Hall. Sadly, in some ways, this is not true as the line ran much closer to the edge of the now Station Road. I doubt if we would be allowed to go shopping from school in this day and age, with all the Health & Safety Regulations that are now brought to bear on everyone.

Whilst at The Brook we had a school trip to Norwich. Now some 60 years on, I have not the faintest idea why half The Brook kids were yanked off to Norwich! However, it meant we did something that no-one can do now. Because of the curve at Loughton station, mainline carriages would not fit into the platform, and so we had a special underground train provided into which we all filed at Loughton station. We were then taken just to Buckhurst Hill station, where we all filed out and the train went on to Woodford to become part of the rush hour. In the meantime, a train of mainline carriages had been waiting in the sidings of the then goods yard at Loughton, and this train then followed us into Buckhurst Hill. We all duly piled into the mainline carriages and the train (can't remember what was on the front) set off for Norwich. The most interesting part for me now (though not, perhaps, at the time) is the fact that when we got to Leyton, we obviously did not continue on the Central Line through the tunnel to Stratford, but followed the old mainline Great Eastern tracks to the north of the tunnel to link up with the main line to Norwich, nearer to Stratford. Those tracks and that link to Stratford from Leyton station are now of course long gone.

Returning towards home territory, I was interested to discover that when Debden Station was first opened, it was initially known as Chigwell Road station, but in the same year (1856) this was changed to Chigwell Lane (which name I was aware of) but

did not become Debden until electrification in September 1949.

As regards the local schools, I was never aware of any secondary schools in Buckhurst Hill, and as far as I can think only Princes Road primary school for that age group, although I have no knowledge off-hand of when that was opened or whether it was built as a school originally (it certainly looked like a school!). It is marked as a school on a map which appears to have been last revised in 1897, but sadly like so many other things, has now been demolished. I have no idea where senior pupils in Buckhurst Hill would have gone before The Brook and Buckhurst Hill County High School (BHCHS) were built. I don't know a date off-hand, but assume The Brook was built at a similar time to BHCHS, just before the War.

It is strange how one can be blind to obvious things! The number of times I have been up and down the hill (Bucket's Hill) into Loughton, past W & C French's North Farm site are immeasurable, but when I looked on Google Earth recently and moved on from there towards Loughton I came across what looked like a (onetime) farmyard area and buildings on the right, but I had no recollection whatsoever of it being there; albeit there are now several properties apparently involved, it is even shown on this map as Beech Farm, so must have been there for ages, but I cannot recall a thing, just the houses on towards Loughton!

I recently came across an extensive article about Kings Place and Langfords. I definitely remember the name Langfords clearly but, strangely and unfortunately, I cannot picture anything of the old building near the junction with Palmerston Road and Westbury Lane. Although our family doctor was Dr Dayus at the top of Westbury Lane (why we had one right up there I'll never know!), I do remember we sometimes attended a doctor (Dr Lorimer I think, although I remember there was also another local doctor nearby whose name I can't recall) in Palmerston Road very close to that junction. I also recently came across the name of Sweep Street, which I do not remember at all. The part from The Three Colts and Princes Road to Lords Bushes, I can remember much more clearly, but no idea why, although we did sometimes access the middle of Queen's Road via the railway footbridge and Lords Bushes to Kings Place. It seems now that the name Kings Place is reserved for the section south of Queen's Road, between there and the start of Lords Bushes, while the remainder to Palmerston Road is Kings Avenue.

I also saw reference to the existence of Back Lane. My memory in the area is simply of an arched entrance from Queen's Road between Matthew's chemists and a café, which allowed access to the rear of shops for goods deliveries, backing on to what is now Back Lane (although I never remember ever going under the arch to see what was there!). The only access from Victoria Road was, latterly in my time, to the then newly established car park (no, I can't recall when it was first established), but there was no access that I recall to the rear of any shops from there. That corner at the junction of Queen's Road and Victoria

Road used to have a Nat West Bank and then Murray's bakery adjacent in Victoria Road, both now obliterated by Waitrose. Murray's actual shop was across the bottom of Queen's Road at the end of Princes Road, adjacent to Moore's stationers and paper shop, who used to deliver our daily paper. Strangely, while preparing this article, I have just come across by chance an old blank invoice relating to 'The News Shop' at 14 Queen's Road, which was the location of Moore's stationers. I assume that it became The News Shop when Moore's gave up trading.

I should know the name of that café by the arch, as in school days at The Brook, we sometimes went there off the train from Loughton before I headed home below the railway, but at the moment the name will not come to me. They had a window that sold ice cream and drinks without needing to go in. It wasn't the Lorelei, which was in the row of shops set back slightly above Kings Place/Avenue, separated by an access alley from Hobley's Bakery and a couple of shops I can't name, including the greengrocer's adjacent to the alley (where a boy from near me in Chestnut Avenue sometimes worked after we'd left school). Neither was it the Gaytime, which name became more unfortunate as time went by, and which was in the centre of Loughton and became a Wimpy well before I left Buckhurst Hill.

Doing a little casual Googled research, there are many mentions of shops in Queen's Road between Princes Road/Victoria Road and the railway. I thought I would add here my recollections.

On the corner there was Pardoe's toy shop (where we bought, *inter alia*, various items to add to my growing Hornby Dublo railway set taking shape in the spare bedroom!); we also used Pardoe's chimney sweep, but while I have a suspicion that they were connected, this is far from objective knowledge! Then there was Harrison's the grocers, and, as mentioned previously, I clearly remember being with Mum and watching them tear off ration coupons from the pale brownish Ration Book. Harrison's also delivered groceries; they later became Fairprice when I assume Harrison's sold up, though I can't put a date on that change. Next to them I think was Walker's Dry Cleaning. Then Piggott's the butchers who's 'boy' would deliver our Sunday joint on Saturday mornings. The lady (I think she was Mrs Piggott) in the little cashier's hut in the shop somehow got the idea that I liked horseradish sauce on bread and butter, and would always comment on it whenever we went in there! I claim complete innocence and ignorance – no idea where that originally came from. Next to them was Jefford's the greengrocer. Finally, as I recall was the tobacconists, sweet shop and Post Office (can't remember the name, if any) and it looks as though those premises still serve the same purpose today – almost unique (I'll leave that as written, although I always understand that something is either unique or not; 'unique' could not be qualified in that way!).

The Railway pub still remains although clearly changed in its provisions since my day. I think the paint was always brown/cream colours! The public conveniences which were built as a substantial brick

building between the access to the rear of the pub and the railway, seem to have deteriorated to one of those little round hovels, with the area looking as though that might have only recently been installed, with weeds growing behind it (at least when photographed by Google in July 2016). It also appears that the width of the toilet area has been extended into part of what was the exit path from the 'lower' exit from the down platform, with part of the considerable wall removed.

This reminds me that I used to meet Dad off the train around 5.20pm often sitting on the steps adjacent to the lower exit hut from the 'down' line platform. I don't think this entrance has been used in many years, and not sure even if the hut still exists. Similarly, Dad would leave home around 7.15–7.20am in order to get to the 'lower' ticket office before 7.30am in order to qualify for a 'workman's' ticket (cheaper than after that time). This lower ticket office is also, I believe, long closed, with people from below the tracks, having to go under the subway and round to the main entrance to get on to the 'up' platform. [The entrances have now been reopened for disabled access (Ed.)] I can distinctly remember the fact that at sometime during my years at The Brook, they used to still have a roaring coal fire in the waiting room on the 'down' platform although I think the idea must have stopped quite early!

Queen's Road (above the railway) used to be two-way traffic and I recall having driven up it (legally!) which must have been fairly soon after getting my licence. I also recall seeing at least two vehicles driving up it after it had been made one-way. Of course, it was then a 'normal' full-width road without the parking bays that it is festooned with these days; also, although parking was allowed mostly on either side, there were no meters and it was all free.

I have intentionally mostly restricted my comments to aspects generally south of Palmerston Road, but must relate one incident. Thinking of the junction of Palmerston Road and Roding Lane, with Albert Road and Loughton Way, at a time long before traffic lights were installed. I remember when I bought my first car in Ongar (for some reason!) and was driving back home with Dad for company, I was coming along Loughton Way towards the junction when I became scared of the junction (no lights there at that time) and decided at the last minute that it would be easier to turn left into Hurst Road and then approach Roding Lane via Rous Road so avoiding the crossroads and just having to cope with a T-junction. Trouble was I'd only driven this car (an old black 'upright' Ford, SXM980 – the things one remembers!) from Ongar somehow and while I could cope with 45 degree turns, right-angled turns were still not in my vocabulary, so I ended up mounting the kerb having managed the said 45 degree but not managing 90 degrees. Nothing too disastrous and I did manage to stop before I actually hit the corner fence!

At the top on the High Road was the Bald Faced Stag which although much changed has at least remained intact, although I see that the Roebuck has followed the fate of the Prince of Wales, having been demolished and replaced with flats albeit with in general terms a similar and acceptable appearance.

South of the Stag towards Woodford there was the base of what I recall as a hay transport company with massive lorries laden with bales of hay. This was Askew's, and appeared to have been based in what is now an electricity substation; however, I have recently come to understand that it was in fact just to the south of Holly House, rather than to the north between Holly House and the Stag, as I had previously thought. I understand that Askew's also had a base in England's Lane in Loughton.

I have referred mostly to changes that have occurred in the area, but perhaps I should just mention a couple of things that, thank goodness, appear to be the same as they were in my day. That is the green spaces and horse chestnut trees that remain along the High Road between the top of Queen's Road and the cricket field, along with the pond on the west side of the road, alongside Church Road and St. John's Church (Buckhurst Hill). I understand that technically in some way, these areas are still part of Epping Forest.

It is also pleasing to note that Monkham's Lane between Farm Way and Knighton Lane (separating Lords Bushes from Knighton Woods) has managed to avoid being turned into a quick access road to and from the High Road. Long may it continue as a footpath and bridleway.

If any reader attended, or knows anyone who attended, either Oxford & Elson House School in Leytonstone or The Brook School in Loughton, I would be most interested to hear from you, especially if you were there at the same time as I was and may even remember me (for better or worse!), but also even if you've never actually heard of me. I was at Oxford & Elson House (Primary Section) latterly in Form IV.A in Wallwood Road, until July 1956, when I left and then joined the first year (as it was then) at The Brook in September 1956. I was at The Brook for five years until July 1961. I have plenty of names in mind of people in both schools whom I'd love to hear from again, but do not want to turn this into a list, so shall not include them here! Please contact me by e-mail via echidnopsis@gmail.com. Similarly, if anyone has any objective comments or additional information on anything I have written, then I can be reached at the same address. And does anyone have any photographs of Brook School?

NEIL RUMBOL

Unravelling the Yarn

An unusual title for a book with local history connections, this is a new publication by the Leyton and Leytonstone Historical Society. Claire Weiss began her married life in 1971 at 9 Manor Road, Leyton. She began to research the history of the house when she found out that Zoë Hart Dyke had been born there in 1896. Zoë Lady Hart Dyke became famous in the 1930s and 1940s for producing silk at her silk farm at Lullingstone Castle in Kent – silk which was used in royal weddings right up to the 1980s. Claire has uncovered much information about this remarkable woman, and the circle in which she moved. With an introduction by the Mayor of Waltham Forest, this beautifully produced book is

available from Leyton and Leytonstone Historical Society (www.leytonhistorysociety.org.uk) for £10: ISBN 978-1-9998278-3-0, *Unravelling the Yarn – Zoë Hart Dyke and the Leyton Silk Road* by Claire Weiss.

EDITOR

Not all railway staff of note were men: Freda May Codner



Freda May Codner was born in Holloway in 1905, the daughter of Lawrence, a correspondence clerk, and his wife Fanny. In 1939 she was living with her mother in Valley Hill, Loughton. Here is a report of her retirement.

Miss F M Codner receiving the clock from Mr M B Thomas

Few visitors to the Public Relations and Publicity Office failed to meet Miss F M Codner (Personal Secretary to Mr M B Thomas, PR and PO) who recently retired after serving the railway for 40 years.

The esteem in which Freda Codner was held by her colleagues in the PR and PO and former colleagues in the Goods Manager's office, Rates and Charges section, King's Cross, was amply demonstrated by the large gathering of friends who assembled at Liverpool Street for the presentation of an electric clock and other personal gifts.

Presenting the clock Mr M B Thomas said that this was a rather sad occasion for not only was he losing a competent secretary, he was also losing a friend. He was particularly pleased to see so many of Miss Codner's friends from other departments present.

Mr J F Wheatley, Chief Clerk PR and PO, thanked Miss Codner for all she had done for the department. Other speakers spoke of the kindnesses Miss Codner had shown in the past and of her cheerful disposition.

Replying Miss Codner said she was pleased to see so many of her old friends present. She liked hearing the complimentary remarks that had been made even though all the things said were not true. She looked back on her service with pride. Her 10 years in the PR and PO had been happy as also had the previous 30 years in the Rates and Charges section.

A few days prior to the presentation referred to above, Miss Codner had been presented with a gold watch to mark the completion of her 40 years' service.

During the war the office in which Miss Codner was working was evacuated to Loughton, and former GMO staff will remember how, with the aid of a most competent and willing committee, she kept in touch with those serving with HM forces; she collected money from the staff at home and used it to send parcels or postal orders each month to the chaps and girls away, and letters written by the committee on behalf of all were enclosed. Replies from the troops were reproduced in a monthly bulletin, together with items of news from the home front (promotions, etc) and a copy sent to each member of the forces . . . [One] Bunny Ashman started this bulletin and Miss Codner eventually took over as editor in his place until after the end of the war when nearly all the troops were home again. Among her most treasured possessions is a magnificent album of photographs of the boys and girls for whom this happy contact was arranged.

British Railways (Eastern Region) Magazine, July 1960

Miss Codner's retirement was listed as '11 June 1960, shorthand typist at Liverpool Street'; she died in Kent in 1982. With thanks to Bill King, Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway Society. IAN STRUGNELL

Colonel I Kirkpatrick - sudden death in street [in 1936]

While walking in Buckhurst Hill, Essex, yesterday, Colonel Ivone Kirkpatrick, CBE, collapsed and died in the street. His brother, the Rev A T Kirkpatrick, a retired Church of England clergyman, died in a similar manner a few years ago, and since then Colonel Kirkpatrick has lived in Loughton.

A member of a well-known Irish family, Colonel Kirkpatrick was 76. He joined the South Staffordshire Regiment in 1880, and served in the Nile Expedition four years later, being present at the battle of Kibekán. He commanded a section of the Camel Corps during the frontier operations in the Sudan in 1885-6 and after service on the staff in India commanded the 2nd battalion of his regiment in 1907.

In the War he commanded the 6th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and from 1915 to 1919 served on the Embarkation Staff. He was mentioned twice in dispatches.

Colonel Kirkpatrick married the Hon Mary Hardinge (second daughter of General the Hon Sir Arthur Hardinge), who was for some time a maid of honour to Queen Victoria, and died in 1931.

From an unidentified newspaper cutting for sale on ebay, 9 April 2018

The Rev Alexander Thomas Kirkpatrick MA was living at Priest's Garth, Church Hill, Loughton, in 1929. He died in late 1933, aged 70. A 1935 directory shows the Colonel living at 51 Church Hill, High Road, Loughton.

Orchards East

Orchards East (OE) is an exciting new environmental and cultural project covering six counties in the east of England – Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and based in the School of History at the University of East Anglia, it is devoted to discovering and understanding the past, present and future of orchards in Eastern England, and will last for three years.

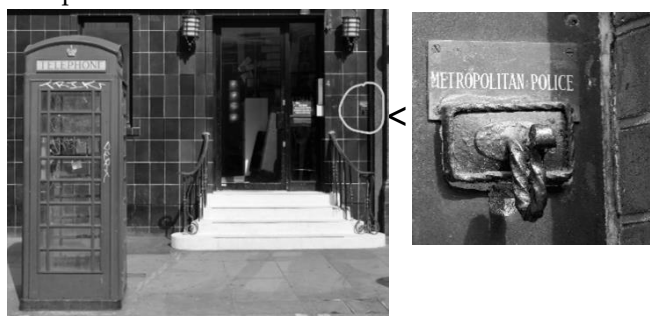
The project extends initiatives already developed by the Suffolk Traditional Orchards Group and other partners, including the East of England Apples and Orchards Project. A collaborative project, working with existing county orchard groups, other interested organisations and orchard owners, OE hopes to stimulate interest and engage a wide new audience.

The project aims to work with hundreds of volunteers to survey and record old orchard sites across the East of England, as well as research the social, cultural and economic history of fruit growing in the region. Results of these investigations will be shared through education and publication.

Visit www.orchardseast.org.uk With thanks to The Essex Society for Archaeology and History's Spring 2018 Newsletter.

Metropolitan Police cloak hook

In the early days of the Metropolitan Police the uniform included a heavy woollen cloak. With the increase of motor traffic in the 1930s, and before the widespread introduction of traffic lights, police officers began to be deployed to direct traffic at busy junctions. However, the cloak prevented the police officer's arm movements from being observed by motorists, and so the cloak had to be removed whilst directing traffic. To cater for the need to temporarily store cloaks at busy junctions where a police officer would frequently direct the traffic, the Metropolitan Police installed a number of hooks on nearby walls for this sole purpose. Locally, there was one on a wall at Gates' Corner, Woodford, before it was swept away with the construction of the North Circular Road at that point.



As an anachronism, one last hook survives, although it is doubtful if it is ever used for its original purpose. For a police officer directing the traffic at the busy junction of Long Acre and St Martin's Lane in the West End, a hook was provided outside number 4 Great Newport Street. It's still there today, inconspicuously sited between a graffiti-ridden telephone box and a 'club'. PETER HASELDINE

The Silver Jubilee 1977 in Loughton

The Silver Jubilee of HM The Queen in 1977 was celebrated all over the country, and many events took place within the Epping Forest district. Here is what went on in Loughton:

- 5th May – *The Enquiry* (Charlotte Hastings), May 5/6/7 at Lopping Hall presented by West Essex Repertory Company, 8pm.
- 14th May – *It's A District Knockout* at Loughton Pool, Traps Hill, 7.30pm. Organised by the Recreation Department – plus exhibitions and demonstrations. Adults 80p, children 40p.
- 18th May – Special Jubilee Exhibition at Loughton Central Library (open until 28th May) organised by the 10th Waltham Forest (Loughton) Company of the Boys' Brigade.
- 19th May – *The Merchant of Venice*, May 19/20/21 at Lopping Hall, presented by Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society, 8pm.
- 21st May – Mile-of-pennies Jubilee fund-raising event in High Road organised by the Boys' Brigade.
- 26th May – Jubilee Wine and Cheese Evening at St Mary's Church Hall, given by Loughton Village Townswomen's Guild, 8pm. Admission 60p. In aid of the Epping Forest and District branch of the Spastics Society.

- 28th May – a Jubilee Dance arranged by Epping Forest District Arts Council with the Reg North Big Band at Loughton College, Borders Lane, 8pm. £1.50 incl buffet. Bar. Guest celebrity: Barbara Large (Black and White Minstrels, Mike Yarwood etc). Tickets available from the Recreation Department, 25 Hemnall Street, Epping and EFDC Information Offices.
- 30th May – exhibition of sports equipment and photographs, 30th May to 11th June at Loughton Library, organised by the Sports Council.
- 5th June – Special Jubilee Parade, Loughton Methodist Church, 11am.
- 9th June – Sports Quiz in Loughton Library, 7.30pm, Sports Council.
- 2nd July – Jubilee Fete and Open Day organised by Debden CA at Loughton Hall, opens 1.30pm. Admission 10p. Fete to include side shows, displays and exhibitions.
- 10th September – Jubilee Youth Fete at Brook School organised by the Youth Service.
- 17th September – Real Ale Festival (British Rail Social Club) Jubilee celebration organised with the aid of CAMRA.
- 8th October – Arts, crafts and models – all day exhibition at Davenant School, Loughton Arts Council.
- 26th October – exhibition of prize winners, Jubilee Photographic Competition at Lopping Hall, 8pm, organised by the Arts Council.

From the Epping Forest District Council
Souvenir Brochure, price 15p.

Does anyone have photographs of these events?

EDITOR

More on Buckhurst Hill House

Further to the article on Buckhurst Hill House in *Newsletter 217*, I can add that Lady Crossman and her family moved into Chester Lodge, 12 Albion Hill, during the War. There she founded the Loughton At Home club – which was a bit like the Buckhurst Hill Athenaeum, and was still going in 2000. I gave it a couple of lectures.

R Seifert will in all probability have been Richard Seifert, who went on to design Centre Point. He was a Swiss emigré and started off in a small way in London in the 1940s. The house was probably requisitioned by one of the services.

The street in Golders Green was probably Corringham Road, NW11. CHRIS POND

Gandhi in Loughton

It is a popular local tale that Gandhi visited Loughton during the time he was living in London, studying to be a lawyer. Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948) was born in present-day Gujarat, the son of the chief minister of one of British India's myriad of princely states. He came to England in 1888 to study law, and was called to the Bar in 1891. His stay in London was an eventful one. He shared digs with fellow-student Josiah Oldfield who, like Gandhi, was a vegetarian and later played an important role in Loughton's history.

Encouraged by Oldfield, Gandhi became active in the vegetarian movement. The Vegetarian Society had been founded in 1847 by evangelical Christians concerned with improving both the diet of the poor and animal welfare, and was closely aligned with the temperance movement. By the time Gandhi arrived in

London, vegetarianism had been widely popularised by the Theosophical Society, a booming esoteric movement loosely based on Buddhism. Gandhi joined the Vegetarian Society, and was elected to its executive committee. He also founded a branch in Bayswater where he was living, and was later a delegate to an international vegetarian conference.



Gandhi and Josiah Oldfield, c1890

Gandhi returned to India immediately after being called to the Bar, and from there went to practise law in South Africa from 1903–1915, where he gained a considerable reputation as what would now be called a human rights activist, and it was in that context that he made two return visits to London, in 1906 and 1909.

Meanwhile, under the patronage of the shipbuilding magnate Arnold Hills, Josiah Oldfield had turned his back on the legal profession in order to take on the task of Warden of Oriole Hospital. This fruitarian institution was financed by Hills and opened in 1895 in Loughton, in what is now York Crescent.

The Oriole pioneered a number of therapeutic techniques, including the use of open-air wards, despite the fact that Oldfield did not receive his formal medical qualification until 1897. By 1900, Oldfield was planning larger-scale vegetarian medical facilities, and resigned as Warden of Oriole to set up the Hospital of St Francis in south London.

Oriole was sold to the Salvation Army in 1903 not, as has been claimed, because its benefactor Arnold Hills went bankrupt, but because it struggled without the inspirational leadership of Oldfield. The Sally Army ran Oriole as a tuberculosis hospital but the venture, still run on vegetarian lines, did not prosper, and in 1906 the premises were sold again, this time to Essex County Council. Oriole was then used as a temporary first home for the newly-established Loughton County High School for Girls, while the permanent school building in Alderton Hill was under construction. This was completed in 1908, and Oriole was sold yet again, becoming an orphanage, the St Ethelburga's Home for Girls.

Gandhi made two further short visits to London in the Edwardian era, in 1906 and 1909. His trip in 1906 was entirely concerned with achieving political rights for Indians living in South Africa, and although Oriole was still run along vegetarian lines, it no longer had any links with Oldfield, who in 1903 had moved on to found a much larger vegetarian hospital in Bromley, Kent. The 1909 visit was in connection

with mass protests by Indians in South Africa who had lost many of their civil rights under new discriminatory legislation, and by that time, Oriole was an orphanage and had ceased to have any connection with vegetarianism.

This chronology means that Gandhi did not and could not have come to Loughton during any of his early visits to England. The image of Gandhi striding along Loughton High Road in his characteristic white loincloth, deep in conversation with his close friend Josiah Oldfield, is an endearing one, but it did not happen. Oldfield's association with Loughton dated only from 1895–1900, and Gandhi was in South Africa for the whole of that time. He did not in any case adopt his trademark *dhoti* loincloth until decades later, and spent his time in London 1889–91 self-consciously dressed as an 'English gentleman'.

Gandhi did, however, visit Loughton in 1931. While Britain was letting its hair down in the Roaring Twenties, Gandhi was turning the demands of the Indian National Congress, a small political party arguing for Indian self-government, into a mass movement based on large-scale civil disobedience and peaceful protest. By 1931, Britain had to listen to Gandhi's demands, and a meeting of all parties, known as the Round Table Conference was arranged in London. Gandhi was actually in prison in India at the time, but was hastily released so that he could participate.

The Mahatma was a master publicist, and turned his visit into a media circus. There were carefully staged trips to cotton mills in the north, meetings with famous men and women, such as the 'accidental' encounter with Charlie Chaplin in Canning Town and, of course, the selection of the humble surroundings of Kingsley Hall in the East End as his headquarters. Kingsley Hall was run by Doris and Muriel Lester, two pacifist sisters from Loughton. Gandhi was by this time over 60 years old, and his devoted followers arranged some rest time in between his hectic schedule of political meetings, speeches and journeys to every corner of England.

So on Sunday, 20 September 1931, Gandhi left Kingsley Hall in Bow, and made his way to Buckhurst Hill for a private visit to Ardmere, the home of Elizabeth Fox Howard. The Howards, who owned a pharmaceutical business, were prominent Quakers and pacifists. Ardmere Lane stands on the site of Ardmere, which was demolished in 1994. When he arrived, a walk in Epping Forest was organised. It was only a short stroll from Ardmere through Powell's Forest, so crossing into Loughton, to enjoy the fine vistas from Warren Hill. From there, the small party meandered along Fairmead Bottom. According to the *Woodford Times*, the group must have been quite a spectacle, as Gandhi 'wore sandals and his loincloth, and was bareheaded'. He found his surroundings fascinating; again, as the *Woodford Times* reported, Gandhi was 'much interested in the historical associations of the forest, and in the animals found there'.

But there is an intriguing mystery on which to end. As the group made their way along Fairmead Bottom, an old man came up and, addressing Gandhi by

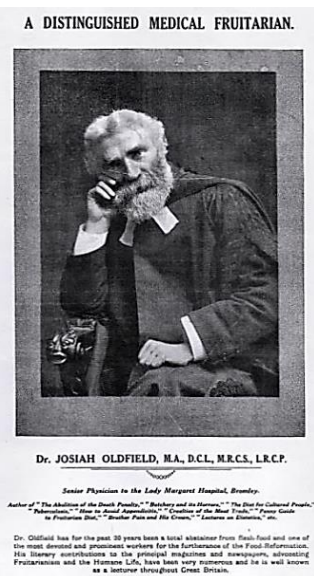
name, offered him a handful of freshly-picked blackberries, which Gandhi accepted with a smile. Hard to imagine that the anonymous old man would have kept such an encounter to himself. Wouldn't that have the makings of a family tale, to be handed down the generations, or at least a yarn to savour for many years in one of Epping Forest's numerous public-houses? So is there still a Loughton family out there that can proudly boast that it was their ancestor who gave Mahatma Gandhi a bunch of Epping Forest blackberries?

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STEPHEN PEWSEY

... and more on Josiah Oldfield



The text on the left reads: 'Dr JOSIAH OLDFIELD, MA, DCL, MRCS, LRCP Senior Physician to the Lady Margaret Hospital, Bromley Author of 'The Abolition of the Death Penalty', 'Butchery and its Horrors', 'The Diet for Cultured People', 'Tuberculosis', 'How to Avoid Appendicitis', 'Cruelties of the Meat Trade', 'Penny Guide to the Fuitarian Diet', 'Brother Pain and the Crown', 'Lectures on Dietists'. Dr Oldfield has for the past 20 years been a total abstainer from flesh food and one of the most devoted and prominent workers for the furtherance of the Food Reformation. His literary contributions to the

principal magazines and newspapers, advocating Fruitarianism and the Humane Life, have been numerous and he is well known as a lecturer throughout Great Britain.'

In the article above and *Newsletter 217* there are references to Josiah Oldfield. He was an ardent vegetarian and friend of M K Gandhi, and was the medical director of the Oriolet Fruitarian Hospital, York Hill/Staples Road. Loughton Town Council has just agreed in principle to grant him a blue plaque.

CHRIS POND

The Buckhurst Hill Choral Society

In Buckhurst Hill Hall at 8pm on 24 November 1914 the Buckhurst Hill Choral Society performed a 'Grand Patriotic Concert in aid of Local Relief Funds'. The artistes were Miss Helen Blain and Mr José de Moraes, with flautist Miss Edith Penville, and at the piano Messrs Bristow Robinson and Otley Marshall (the piano was a Chappell Concert Grand Pianoforte). Otley Marshall was the conductor of the choir.

The programme began with the choir and audience singing the recessional 'God of our Fathers' (Rudyard Kipling) followed by the chorus 'For Empire and for King'

this patriotic chorus written and composed by Mr Percy Fletcher gained the First Prize of £50 in Dr Charles Harriss's Chorus of Empire competition, and was sung by the Imperial Choir (which includes the Buckhurst Hill Choral Society) at the Crystal Palace on 12 May 1911 when the Imperial Choir had the honour of singing before Their Most Gracious Majesties The King and Queen.

There followed pieces by the soloists (including 'Land of Hope and Glory' sung by Helen Blain), and a part song by Adam, then an interval of 10 minutes. The second half began with 'Song of the Vikings' and continued with solo pieces and then an 'Epilogue' of Elgar's 'It Comes from the Misty Ages' which was part of 'The Banner of St George', 'composed for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 . . . As will be seen the words are especially applicable to the present time . . .' The evening ended with the 'National Anthems of the Allied Nations', that is 'La Brabanconne' of Belgium, the Russian National Anthem 'God Bless the noble Czar' and the French 'Marseillaise'. Naturally the final item was 'God Save the King' as arranged by Sir Edward Elgar.

There is no price on the programme, so it is not possible to establish how much was raised for the 'local relief funds' but presumably there was a collection as well as an entrance fee.

So who were in the Buckhurst Hill Choral Society? The event in 1914 was part of their eighth season and the next concert was advertised as being in March 1915. 'There are vacancies for all voices and now is an excellent time to join the Society. Rehearsals recommence on Friday 27th November at the Westbury Hall.'

The conductor was Otley Marshall, about whom more shortly. The President in 1914 was local man David Howard, but in 1911¹ it had been the well-known Imperial musician and conductor Charles A E Harriss (born 1862, England, died 1929, Canada). The chairman and honorary treasurer was Augustus George Challis (1834–1917), Esq, of Garden Reach, Westbury Road. The Hon Accompanist was Arthur Bristow Robinson (1869–1947), a cashier/accountant, and father of Buckhurst Hill historian Arthur Walter Robinson (who sang bass, see below, and who later lived at the old farmhouse building, Dorset Villa, 44 Westbury Lane). There were a number of honorary members, who perhaps did not sing, but supported the choral society – some of these were John

Conquest, Sir Stafford Crossman of Buckhurst Hill House, G E Gratton, the Princes Road schoolmaster, and Lady Hamilton.

The members of the choir were:

Sopranos: Misses A Baker, A C Banks, E J Chidgey, M Collins, R Collins, V Nash, F G Needham, E M Newham, L Padfield, D Sheldon, M Sheldon, M A Stacy,² N A Stacy, Mrs W J Clark, E M Gonville, A Marshall, A F Richmond.

Tenors: T Banks, J Bates, H C Castle (who was also Hon Assistant Secretary), C E Collins, G A Needham.

Contraltos: Misses M Collier, K Holwell, M J Needham, Mrs M E Cahill, F Nash, O A Richardson, A B Robinson, A E Stacy.

Basses: J H Aitken, W H Collier, A B Newman, A W Robinson, E J Woods (also Hon organist).

The Hon Secretary was Mrs A F Richmond of 5 St Kilda Villas, Queen's Road. Elizabeth, the widow of Archibald Fullerton Richmond, was the mother of Alexandra Jessica Fullerton Richmond, known as Queenie, who married Clifford Vernon Heap, the headmaster of Daiglen School.

The conductor of the Buckhurst Hill Choral Society (and also the Chingford Choral Society, and the Walthamstow Choral Union, as well as Music Director of the Buckhurst Hill Musical Society and organist of the Parish Church) was John Otley Marshall. He also advertised as being Professor of Singing and Voice Production, organ and pianoforte playing, accompanist and coach, with an office and town studio 'near Oxford Circus' and at this time, 1914, gave his address as Rocklands, Palmerston Road.

John Otley Marshall was born in Marylebone in 1884. He married in 1910 Chrissie Nellie (Ling) and they had two children, Gladys in 1911 and Lawrence in 1914. He appears as a most patriotic citizen here, conducting a concert to raise funds for the needs of the community during the early months of what was to become known as the Great War. By 1917, however, Mr Marshall's views had perhaps changed – he appealed to the Buckhurst Hill Military Tribunal³ in November 1917 against being called up – and his case is described as 'John Otley Marshall, organist and professor of music, aged 33, married, appeal dismissed'.⁴ Marshall died aged 81 in Croydon in 1965.

Notes

1. *Musical Times*, 1 June 1911 on www.jstor.org accessed on 8 April 2018.

2. For more about the Stacy family of Woodthorpe see *Newsletter* 199 of Nov/Dec 2013, pp 2–3.

3. For more about the Military Tribunal see *Newsletter* 205 of April/May 2015, pp 1–3.

4. Bill Oliver, *The Path of Duty* (Royal British Legion Buckhurst Hill Branch, 2009, p 74.

LYNN HASELDINE JONES

Loughton's international event

Over the Easter weekend 2018 an unusual international event was held in the area which I organised. As most LDHS members will know I am interested in vehicle registrations. I am a member of Europlate, an international club for those sharing the

interest. Every two years we hold a convention for members and this year I volunteered to host it in Epping Forest. I have previously hosted it in 1996. Over 50 people attended from Britain, Europe, Russia, the United States, Canada and Australia. In total 16 countries were represented. The event is intended to be a family occasion, so the total number quoted includes family members, etc.

Although I do not personally do so, many Europlate members collect number plates and the main event of the weekend is the 'Platemeet' where members display some of their collections, sell plates, trade plates, talk about their plates, etc, on the Saturday. This was held in the Loughton Club. Unless you came to the Platemeet it is difficult to envisage how many different sizes, shapes, colours, materials and scripts in which number plates have been produced. Therefore, you will not appreciate the 'spectacle' of it all. Plates are not just pieces of metal or plastic, but you often have to understand history, geography and politics to understand their complexities.



To give just one example, until 1974 local authorities issued registrations in this country, but for a period before partition authorities in what was to become the Irish Republic would not co-operate with the British government by issuing registrations and collecting road tax and for a period this role passed to the Royal Irish Constabulary.

The event was spread over four days with other events including visits to the Whitewebbs Museum of Transport in Enfield, P & A Wood, the Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealers in Dunmow who specialise in 'heritage' vehicles, and the London Transport Museum. In the evening after the Platemeet there was a convention dinner with various trophies being presented such as the best individual plate, the best photo display and the best overall display. The best individual plate award went to a Frenchman who had a 1925 Argentine plate.

JOHN HARRISON

And John is too modest to mention that he won one of the convention awards, the Editor's Award. This goes to the person the editor thinks has contributed most to the *Europlate* newsletter (Ed).

Loughton: the annual lopping demonstration

On Friday night, the 11th inst. with the commencement of the lopping season, until the lopping right was abolished, a number of persons assembled in Loughton at about eleven o'clock, and headed by a drum and fife band, proceeded by the main road to Staple Hill, and before twelve o'clock

gathered round the large summer house which has been erected thereon by the Conservators of the Forest. The night proved fine and very mild. There were from 40 to 50 persons present. About a dozen Forest keepers under the direction of Captain Mackenzie, the Forest Superintendent, and Mr Foster, Deputy Superintendent, attended. They were instructed not to offer any opposition to the persons who might engage in lopping, but to ascertain their names in order to summon them before the magistrates. Precisely at the first stroke of the clock of the parish church at midnight, about half a dozen men, who were stationed on the surrounding trees, commenced to lop off a dozen or more branches, as an assertion of the right which they still claim. The completion of the ceremony of the first lopping of the season was greeted with loud applause, and the band played some lively airs. One of the Forest keepers, named Herbert Butt, was struck by one of the bystanders. A number of men, previous to the dispersion of the crowd, commenced lopping in addition to the other prominent ringleaders. Summonses have been issued against the ringleaders.

Stratford Times, 16 November 1881

Submitted by STEPHEN PEWSEY

Soapsud Alley

I have just seen Jackie Barbet's request in the last *Newsletter* for information on the location of Soapsud Alley. An elderly resident, who lived in Forest Way, just off York Hill, not to be confused with Forest Road, told me some years ago that it used to be called Soapsud Alley as residents strung their washing lines across the road, or probably track, at that time. Forest Way is a narrow public road but there is no turning point and it ends at the forest edge.

It fits in with mention of the Brick Ground too. My neighbour at 30 York Hill was clearing a section of his garden and came across a burnt area that went through to the garden of No 32 York Hill. We know this was a brick ground and that they hand made bricks, several of which we found in our garden (I live next door to No 30) and incorporated them into our garden wall.

We have no dates for the Brick Ground but that was followed by a yard which made coffins so it may have been a wood yard. The subsequent houses that were built in 1914, Nos 30 and 32 York Hill, were part of the Loughton Lodge estate.

D I RHODES

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More Neil Rumbol views of Buckhurst Hill



Cottages next to St Stephen's Church, Albert Road, 1976



Cottages near Lower Queen's Road, 1976



View from rear bedroom of 14 Chestnut Avenue, showing prefabs



Another view of the prefabs, Easter 1968