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57th Season

The lost pub of Buckhurst Hill:
the 'Prince Alfred' (aka the 'Ting-Tang')

The first entry in local directories for a beer house in Alfred Road was in 1870 when the retailer was Thomas Rivett.

In the 1871 and 1881 censuses the beer house keeper was George Reeves (although his occupation was given as bricklayer in 1871). He and his wife Sarah ran the beer house for a few years; they were succeeded by John Ginn in 1886. By 1890 the retailer was John Ruewell, 'beer house keeper and labourer', with his wife Elizabeth Ruewell. Their eldest son, and their boarder, were both labourers. The business appears to have not been enough on its own to support a family; the wife sometimes actually ran the beer house whilst the husband did some other work. By 1894 John Taylor was the beer retailer, and in a directory of 1896 is the first mention of the Prince Alfred, run by Taylor. Between 1898 and 1917 the listings mention William French and, later on, his widow Eliza or Elizabeth French, who in 1911 was described as doing 'domestic work and beer house keeper'. By 1923 the man in charge was Albert Edward Lloyd. In 1929 the premises were numbered 22 Alfred Road.

Albert Lloyd and his wife Annie ran the premises until their enforced closure. Trading ceased on 18 March 1941 – a high explosive device caused severe damage to the building and garden, and it was not rebuilt. A E Lloyd, as a Whitbread tenant, then moved to the General Havelock public house in Ranelagh Grove, SW1.

One-time local resident H E Noble, living in Chigwell in 1988, wrote about the pub:

Commonly called the Ting-Tang, no known reason. Managed for Whitbread's by Albert Lloyd and wife (little man, large, bosomy wife). Sometimes quite rowdy Sunday lunchtimes. Frequented by Surridges, Woods, Fosters, and – better class – Salmons at lunchtimes. Occasional fisticuffs, with fists sometimes through windows. Local ploughman named Mead also regular customer, with his two sons, Sundays quite rumbustious at times, but he had a college-dressed daughter, quite attractive, who used to accompany them, quite out of character, as it were, BUT she never got drunk like the rest.

The pub's urinal stuck on the side, open air, was quite primitive.

We used to buy arrowroot and Brighton biscuits from the pub. These were approximately 4 inches in diameter and cost one (old) penny each, and we also bought Carter's crisps, at 2d a packet, at that time (1920s) about the only make around.

The long back garden of the pub, and all the houses on that side, backed onto open land and French's brickfield, where Mr Salmon lived on site and was the foreman. We were always told those men worked very hard (possibly piecework) but got good money.

Reverting to the pub, as you stood at the front, the private bar on the left, off-licence in the middle, and then the public bar with wooden floor, 'spit and sawdust', literally, was, as far as I can remember, good enough for those who used it.

On the subject of the pub's nickname, another local man, Jim Goodey, recalls, writing in 2003:

The pub had a nickname, the Ting-Tang. There have been many suggestions as to why it was so named, and the best one I ever heard and I feel it could be the original naming of it, is this. I can just remember it because I was only about nine or eleven at the time. The drinkers came out of the public bar and turned left and there was a urinal (in the fog I assume they followed the smell). When it rained or there was a shower, above their heads was a rusty old corrugated flat roof and above that was a leaky gutter – and the drips came down on the roof – ting-tang-ting-tang!

With thanks to the archive collected by the Buckhurst Hill Historical Society. **Lynn H Jones**

The Francies family and transport part 6: the Francies 'caravan'

In 1947 Will Francies' love of motors took him in a new direction – he would buy a 'caravan' so that his wife and children could enjoy weekends away from home at 22 Brooklyn Avenue, Loughton.

The Ministry of Supply were holding an auction of ex-military vehicles at Dorchester so Will went down to Dorset and came back with a Crossley FWD (four-wheel drive). Made between 1940 and 1945, primarily for the RAF, there were two types – a tractor unit to tow '*Queen Mary*' aircraft trailers, and lorries with a longer wheelbase. It is uncertain which sort this one was.

It had thick steel floors and thick sides with about 5 inches of insulation as it had been fitted out originally as a workshop for use in heat and cold, possibly the Arctic.

Wife Gladys burst into tears when she first saw the Crossley; presumably it did not match her vision of a holiday caravan. It was big and needed a lot of time-consuming work to convert it.

Elder daughter Valerie's holiday task was to rub it down and paint it cream instead of khaki, so up and down a ladder and up on the roof!

There was no toilet so Will took out the passenger seat next to the driver's and replaced it with an Elsan chemical toilet which had to be reached via an outside ladder. Gladys was not impressed!

Will gutted the rest of the interior and fitted it with bunks and shelves for kitchen equipment. Cooking was done over a Primus. Eventually the Crossley van was permanently parked in a friend's fruit farm at Rochford where Valerie remembers spending many happy weekends.

Acknowledgements – John Harrison, Valerie Lightfoot, Sue Golding. **Joan Francies**

The Angela Caff

I park my Lambretta Scooter on the concrete apron which slopes from the Epping New Road up to the entrance of the Angela Caff. It is my home from home, an escape from the mediocrity of living in a respectable, law-abiding household, an example of working class Torydom. Ugh!

Several racing bikes are stacked against the fence and stepping from the door balancing brimming mugs of tea are three of my new found mates. It's late afternoon and I've just finished my insurance round collecting premiums and sorting out minor claims. Several of my erstwhile acquaintances have, in the past, kindly offered to rob me – to later share the loot – it would've been a pretty insignificant amount. Thanks, but No Thanks! I have my own dreams for the future. I certainly don't want to end up in the nick.

Big Harold, Bombhole Bob and Tom, the anarchist, seat themselves down making sure they're facing due west to catch the last rays of the late afternoon's sunshine. Their damp costumes are on the fence, drying out. They've been up the road to the Bomb Hole, a deep pool created by a landmine at the end of the war. It had blown out a 90 foot deep crater and the surrounding forest was devastated. Now birch scrub has grown up but there's still a pleasant open grassy glade close to the open water. We are all addicted sun worshippers and enjoy bathing in natural waters especially when surrounded by the peace and tranquillity of this, our local forest.

So, it's hellos all round as I dive into Ma Penn's caff, passing several seriously committed punters playing the fruit machines for cigarette prizes, as I arrive at the counter, beyond which is the kitchen. Ma Penn has had a good day and beaten the bookies for a nice few quid. She smilingly serves me a nice mug of tea and a nice hamburger with a generous dollop of nice greasy onions. Yummy! I'm starving hungry having had no grub since breakfast time.

Rose ('Ma') Penn at the door of her caff

Rose Penn is a larger than life character in every way. First, she's well-built to put it politely – I can only guess how many stones she weighs – in the late teens at least. She is a tough, strong-minded lady who doesn't suffer fools gladly. And of course she's an inveterate gambler and loves her beloved horses. However, a little bird told me on the QT that she's actually in a win-win situation regarding her gambling interests. She has a close and fruitful relationship with the local bookie according to inspired gossip and when necessary pays off her gambling debts with nookie. No wonder she so often wears a smile on her face.

I take a pew and join the gang. We're planning our first-for-the-year day trip to Thorpe Bay which adjoins Southend proper. I will hitchhike, the others will cycle. We like it there because even when the tide's out, well out, as it so often is, we still have a raised concrete enclosure that retains several feet of sea water in which we can refresh ourselves whilst we wait patiently for the tide to turn. We are businesslike. Tom checks the tides timetable that is published in the evening newspaper before we visit. Another bonus we often receive is that even when the lands in Essex and Kent are shrouded with cloud, the actual estuary is often bathed in sunshine. An interesting phenomenon. Our aim is to obtain an early tan to start the summer off nicely. Yippee!

I am in the centre with the trilby; Big Harold is on the right

Now news from Big Harold who was once a slim, wiry racing cyclist, now turned body builder and weight-lifter. He's described by some wags as 'body beautiful'. Certainly he has magnificent pectorals. Ha! He tells us about his new young lady friend, a red headed and freckled beauty – none of us has seen her yet. Love often arrives like an unexpected hurricane – our Harold is now smitten – yet again! Will it last? Harold has a lovely little earner, he was once apprenticed to a firm in Stratford that made ornate stained-glass leaded windows usually for churches. Now freedom-loving Harold works part-time making ornate lanterns in a garden shed. They fetch high prices in top West End stores. Another of his interests is collecting vintage bikes and he's already bought a Penny Farthing at the right price.

Bombhole Bob is five years older than Big Harold and has a wife he loves dearly and four lively and pro-active kids. Always a pleasure to meet them. The eldest, Danny, is already an entrepreneur and shares his dad's enthusiasms by riding his bike and outdoor swimming. Bob in his youth worked hard on ill-paid jobs and was once the secretary of the London Young Communist League. He's now found security on the dole – benefits all round – it pays more than any net wage he could possibly earn: a ridiculous state of affairs for so many.

And, finally, a brief biography of Tom the anarchist who is the oldest of the trio. Tom's inherited his mother's three-bedroomed house in Leytonstone, has occasional lodgers, usually young nurses who he tries to get into bed with. He steadfastly remains a bachelor. He had been a full-time qualified printer and quite affluent but has since retired in his 40s. He now works part-time Saturday nights for the Sunday newspapers for a nice few quid. And, Tom never fails to give me a copy of *Freedom,* the anarchist weekly, when he sees me.

This caff is one part of a lively social scene that has, by accident rather than design, evolved on this particular patch of the Epping New Road at Buckhurst Hill that was built to favour stage coaches. It allowed their horses to use a more level, shorter and quicker route to Epping, Newmarket and beyond. It is now known as the A11. Today most of the traffic is composed of lorries – not too many cars on the road as yet, but, growing gradually. Cyclists face the future with foreboding.

My eyes nearly popped out of my head when I saw Chris the other day, age 15, driving an articulated lorry and parking it opposite the caff on the forecourt of the pub – the Reindeer. How had he got away with it? He's certainly grown up to be a Jack the Lad. Chris is the youngest of Rose Penn's four children – two boys and two girls. But Chris is the one we are pally with.

Three of us enjoying refreshments on the concrete apron in front of the caff – I am on the right

The caff has its regular clientele by day including us, especially on sunny late afternoons. However, it really comes alive in the evenings when the local lads and lasses turn up to enjoy the latest rock and roll numbers on the jukebox and enjoy each other's company and make new friends.

Rose only closes after the last customers have left. Her bloke, Jim, is often in charge in the evenings

which gives Rose a break – it's open from morn to night seven days a week. On Sundays, Ernie a former bike rider, brings his chess set up in the afternoon and many a night there are late evening card schools. I am for my sins a semi-retired poker player but that's another story. This caff is part of a glorious anarchy. Rules and regs are healthily disregarded. Within the last few months, the Reindeer pub has also got itself a jukebox. Weekends are rock and roll time there and we jazz and jive to the rhythmic sounds with great enthusiasm. It is a very happy go lucky and spirited scene. Everyone has a good time in good company but sometimes, just sometimes, a fight will break out usually conforming to the Queensbury Rules – dukes only! One night 'Boy' fell out with 'Basher' (real nicknames) inside the bar. The fight was ejected from the pub, spilled out onto the forecourt and they finally fell into the middle of the Epping New Road. Leo the Lion (he had a tattooed lion on his forehead) and I held up the traffic till they had fought themselves to a standstill.

Another day, another dollar. I work a four-day week and I only have to attend the office to render my accounts in the form of a balanced budget, deliver a little new business and report small claims I've paid out. It only takes a couple of hours once a week. The punters do try to pull off a flanker sometimes. An illustration: I paid out on a good quality overcoat that had been burnt – only a little damage. Several weeks later another punter a few roads away made a claim. I recognised it immediately – the self-same overcoat. Not to be reported – I didn't of course accept the claim so all's well and perhaps now they realise I'm not a complete mug.

So, today, I finish mid-afternoon with quality time to visit Ma Penn's and relax with a coffee and a snack. The caff's empty. Then I'm joined by a young man I'd never seen before who tells me he works on the bar up the road at the Bald Faced Stag. However, the conversation turns abruptly. He gives me a spiel advocating his nasty racist and fascist views; little does he know I'm a devout Red. He doesn't know me from Adam – I hate his sort of talk delivered with a fanatic's fervour. I try to rationalise with him. 'Have you a girlfriend?'

'No, I've only just moved here last week.'

'So, if you do meet, say a really attractive and nice Jewish girl and fall in love with . . .'

'F— Jews, I wouldn't . . . '

I lose it! I grab him by the throat and shake him like the rabid rat he is. Behind me Rose is in action mode. 'Get out of my caff the pair of you – Now! Or I'll shoot!' There is Ma Penn looking resplendent, brandishing a murderous looking double-barrelled 12 bore shotgun, levelled straight at HIM. The fascist paled and is frit. He couldn't rush away from the premises quick enough and was never, of course, seen again. We were both convulsed with laughter. A dramatic high for the day. I still wonder, was the gun actually loaded or not?

I really must buy Rose a nice big bunch of roses – Red ones of course.

Postscript. The above memoir illustrates what life was like in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the described area. This part of Buckhurst Hill has now been largely rebuilt. The Reindeer public house, long gone, has been replaced by a block of three- and four-storey flats. The Duke of Edinburgh public house, even longer gone, is now a very private looking, gated housing community. A sign of insipient apartheid?

An undated postcard of the Duke of Edinburgh, Epping New Road.

A row of terraced town houses complete with essential ground floor integrated garages has replaced the Angela and Alpha caffs. So many of us used to enjoy the cheap and cheerful services they provided.

This once thriving social scene, as I knew it, has been thoroughly erased – no sign that it ever even existed. The new builds seem well designed and as pleasant on the eye as they can possibly be but . . . a bland nothingness pervades and a socially devoid desert has been created.

'Individuality rules – there is no such thing as society' – Margaret Thatcher.

Will the cycle rotate and will a socially desirable society be rebuilt? **Pete Relph**

Durrant's Handbook for Essex

(Robert) Miller Christy (1861–1928), the well-known Essex author, wrote this book in 1887. His introduction covers such topics as history, geology, industries, newspapers, churches, castles, railways and hunting. Below is the section on cycling, followed by his entries on Loughton and Buckhurst Hill.

Mr Robert Cook, of White House Farm, Chelmsford, Hon Sec and Treasurer of the Essex County Cyclists' Association, and Captain of the West Essex Cycling Club, has kindly supplied the following information: There is [he writes] probably no county in England that is more favourable to cycling than Essex. This is, firstly, on account of its flatness and the scarcity of steep or dangerous hills, and, secondly, because of the smooth gravelly roads, almost invariably met with in all parts of the county. It is necessary, however, to except the main roads adjacent to London, which are macadamised and consequently lumpy where the traffic is heavy.

One frequently hears from those who have but recently ventured upon a bicycle or tricycle, complaints as to the 'vile state of the roads' in Essex; but those who have 'toured' in the Shires, or Scotland, or Wales, or in many other parts of our island, have had to traverse roads of a slippery, chalky nature that would not for a moment bear comparison with those in our own neighbourhood, to say nothing of the loose, winding hills which the tourist, unhappily, cannot avoid. The advantages referred to naturally led to bicycling and tricycling being quickly taken up in Essex on its first

general introduction into the county as a practical and pleasant means of locomotion; and clubs devoted exclusively to this branch of athletics were speedily formed in most of the principal towns. These clubs subsequently formed themselves into a county association in 1883, and the institution in the same year of a county bicycling championship has been the means of making the sport even more popular with the younger riders.

The vast improvements that have been made in the mechanism of tricycles quite recently has allowed not only ladies, but both sexes of mature years, to take part in a pastime which had previously been debarred them, and there are probably as many machines with the extra wheel in use at the present time as there are of those of the more elegant, if less safe, bicycle.

Perhaps the most attractive spot in Essex for cyclists is Epping Forest, where, every day, and especially on Saturdays, may be seen hundreds of riders of all ages and classes enjoying the charming scenery to be found there, presuming, of course, that the weather is favourable. There are, however, many other resorts within the county where the tourist is wont to wend his way, and in the summer months, Southend, Clacton, Walton-on-the-Naze, and other towns on the east coast are especially popular, though the roads leading to them are generally very loose and stony.

The National Cyclists' Union, the Cyclists' Touring Club, and other large institutions have done much to add to the comfort of tourists by arranging a fixed tariff at one of the principal hotels in most towns throughout the country, by appointing efficient workmen as repairers, and by erecting conspicuous notices on the dangerous hills, warning riders that they are unrideable. With the steam rollers which are now in use on most of our main roads, enthusiasts are only waiting for some genius to introduce a new motive-power to the tricycle in the shape of electricity or otherwise, when the millennium, as far as concerns this modern means of locomotion, will unquestionably have arrived.

Hills that are dangerous for bicyclists are noted in the following parishes – Ardleigh, Billericay, Brentwood, Buckhurst Hill, Chingford, Danbury, North Fambridge, Hadleigh, Hatfield Broad Oak, High Beech, Horndon-on-the-Hill, Lawford, Maldon, Rayleigh, Rochford, St Lawrence, South Weald, Stock and Great Waltham.

Loughton
A picturesque parish on the borders of Epping Forest. Its church (St John the Baptist), built in 1846, is of brick in the Norman style. It is cruciform, and has a low central tower containing 8 bells. The registers date from 1673. The memorial church of St Nicholas was built in 1877 on the site of the original church, and contains brasses removed from this to John Stonnard (1541) and his wives Joan and Catherine, William Nodes, gent (1594), and his 6 sons, and to the Wroth family. The church of St Mary the Virgin, built in 1871, is of stone in the Early English style. It is a chapel-of-ease to the mother church of St John the Baptist. There are also Union and Wesleyan chapels. The Public Hall, built in 1883, contains an Assembly Room, Institute, Reading Room and Library of 300 volumes.

Buckhurst Hill
An ecclesiastical district, formed in 1838 out of Chigwell parish. Its church (St John) was built of stone in the Early English style in 1837, but has since been much enlarged. The town, which is populous, has many good shops and residences, and may be regarded as a suburb of London. It is very pleasantly situated on a hill-top, with fine views over the Roding valley and Epping Forest, an outlying portion of which, known as Lord's Bushes, immediately adjoins the main street. The hill between Woodford and Epping, is long, steep and rough. It is unrideable for cyclists. The headquarters of the Essex Field Club (Wm Cole Esq, FES, Hon Sec, 8 Knighton Villas) are in this town. Inns: Bald Faced Stag, and Roebuck (CTC) – both excellent.

Durrant's Handbook for Essex: a guide to the principal buildings, places, and objects of interest in each parish in the county; for the use of tourists and others. With an introduction treating of its history, geology, area, population, literature, antiquities, worthies, natural history, etc.
Published by Edmund Durrant and Co, 90 High Street, Chelmsford, in 1887.
Lynn Jones

Dickens and Essex

The connection of Charles Dickens with Chigwell is well known and in 1962 the delightfully named Rudolph Robert penned an article for *Essex Countryside* about this, entitled 'Enchanted with Chigwell'. His article was in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the author's birth. The once local historian and bookseller William Addison also wrote about the places visited or written about by Dickens in his 1955 book, *In the Steps of Charles Dickens*.

Both of them wrote of the dislike Dickens had for Chelmsford, when Dickens called it 'the dullest and most stupid place on earth'. So it is obvious that Dickens, probably in his years as a reporter, travelled around and through the county and knew it quite well.

Dickens first went to Chelmsford in 1835 to report the election for the *Morning Chronicle*. Driving himself to Braintree in a gig he reported on the election scene: 'banners, drums, Conservative emblems, horsemen, go-carts filled every little green and open space' while people waited for the arrival of the candidates. Every time his horse heard a drum he bounced into a hedge on the left side of the road, 'and every time I got him out he bounced into the hedge on the right side'. Dickens broke his whip but thought he had driven in 'something like style'. Perhaps we should feel sorry for the horse and be grateful that drums no longer figure in elections!

In Chelmsford the weather was wild and wet and this led to the comment above, made when he stayed at the Black Boy Hotel looking out of the window at the rain and thinking that his dinner was the only thing likely to restore hope. He found only an army drill manual to read and thought that he had read it often enough to 'drill 100 recruits from memory'. The unfortunately named hotel was demolished in 1857 and had been converted to that use from the town house of the De Vere's, Earls of Oxford. It figures briefly in the *Pickwick Papers*, chapter 20. *Pickwick Papers* in part is set in the eastern counties (as is *David Copperfield*) and shows how familiar Dickens was with the road to Ipswich, via Chelmsford. He also felt that the townscape of Chelmsford provided very little scenic appreciation: 'only two immense prisons, large enough to hold all the inhabitants of the county'.

Many years later, talking of his time as a reporter, he said: 'Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London . . . I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known to this country. I have

been . . . belated on miry roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheeless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken post-boys and have got back in time for publication.'

Arabin House in Manor Road at High Beach is thought to be a late 16th or early l7th century house remodelled about 1800. It is a Grade II listed country house set in 11 acres of mature park land. In January 2018, it was valued at £10 million. It stands on what was once the Manor House of Woodredon and was bought in 1834 by William St Julien Arabin (1773–1841) who was a lawyer and judge. Arabin attended St Paul's School, London, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was admitted to Inner Temple in 1793, called to the Bar in 1801 and appointed Serjeant-at-Law in 1824.[1] As a judge, Arabin was an eccentric figure, not remarkable for lucidity of speech or intelligence, notorious for his confused pronouncements and in later life he became partially deaf. Dickens used this local resident as the model for Serjeant Snubbin, leading counsel in *Bardell* v *Pickwick* (Chapter 34 of *The Pickwick Papers*). Some of Arabin's most famous quotes include:

If there ever was a case of clearer evidence than this of persons acting together, this case is that case

and

They will steal the very teeth out of your mouth as you walk through the streets – I know it from experience.

Also, William Addison quoted from the *Recollections* of Serjeant Robinson:

Arabin: 'Well, witness, your name is John Tomkins.'
Witness: 'No, my lord, John Taylor.'
Arabin: 'Ah, I see you are a sailor, and you live in the New Cut.'
Witness: 'No, my lord, I live at Wapping.'
Arabin: 'Never mind your being out shopping. Had you your watch?'

In *Great Expectations*, Dickens' familiarity with the Essex bank of the Thames is used to describe Magwitch's attempted escape. Addison argues that, as Pip says that the terrain was 'like my own marsh country', meaning the Hoo marshes on the opposite side of the river, the action took place mainly on the Essex bank. Pip's landing place was near a 'little squat lighthouse' and Addison says this must be on a stony spit . . . about a mile west of Mucking Lighthouse . . . which was the only landing place within miles'. They then decided to seek shelter for the night at what must have been the Lobster Smack inn on Canvey Island (*Great Expectations*, Chapter 54, which Addison considers is 'in a class of its own in the literature of the estuary'). Dickens also wrote of the Thames in 'Down with the Tide' in *Miscellaneous Pieces* and, in a more sombre vein, in *Our Mutual Friend*.

Dickens was very familiar with the outskirts of East London and with Chigwell, the scene of part of *Barnaby Rudge*. He wrote to John Forster, his friend, biographer and executor: 'Chigwell, my dear fellow, is the greatest place in the world. Name your day for going. Such a delicious old inn opposite the church-yard – such a lovely ride – such beautiful forest scenery – such an out of the way, rural place – such a sexton! I say again, name your day.'

The King's Head, Chigwell, photo courtesy of Richard Morris

Forster wrote: 'The day was named at once . . . His promise was exceeded by our enjoyment and his delight in the double recognition of himself and *Barnaby*, by the landlord of the nice old inn, far exceeded any pride he would have taken in what the world thinks the highest sort of honour.'

Addison describes the hostelry in depth. He also tells how the Powells of Luctons, Buckhurst Hill, had a London town house next door to Dickens in Tavistock Square. Mrs Powell asked Dickens why the King's Head is called the Maypole in the novel, which is the name of a pub in Chigwell Row. She said local people had difficulty in accepting the King's Head as the Maypole because Chigwell had no village green; also if Chigwell Row was meant, the church was modern and did not fit his description of the church in the novel. Addison said that one of Mrs Powell's daughters told him that Dickens had 'patched' the two areas to produce a composite picture.

Interestingly for us is the prototype of The Warren, the great house in *Barnaby Rudge*. Some have said it was Rolls Park, the now demolished home of the Harvey family, but Addison says that Dickensians opt for old Loughton Hall, destroyed by fire in December 1836. So Dickens must have visited the area before the 1840s to gather material and indeed Ackroyd, in his book *Dickens*, suggests that *Barnaby* was a much delayed novel, overtaken by other commitments in the early days of the author's fame.

In his biography Forster tells how:

Dickens was very fond of riding in those early years, and there was no recreation he so much indulged, or with such profit to himself, in the intervals of his hardest work . . . His notion of finding rest from mental exertion in as much bodily exertion of equal severity continued with him to the last; taking in the later years what I always thought the too great strain of as many miles in walking as he [then] took in the saddle.'

So he would have ridden a horse out to Chigwell and other villages in the environs of London and walked in later years the 16 miles to Cheshunt (see below) and from his office in London to his home at Gad's Hill near Rochester.

The visit to the King's Head at Chigwell was in 1841 when he was writing *Barnaby Rudge,* then

publishing in serial parts. It is a book largely set in the Chigwell area and one of my favourites. It centres round an actual historical event – the anti-Catholic riots led by Lord George Gordon in 1780. There were several days of rioting which began with a massive and orderly protest in London against the Papists Act of 1778, intended to reduce official discrimination against British Catholics enacted by the Popery Act 1698. Lord George Gordon, head of the Protestant Association, warned that the law would enable Catholics in the British Army to become a dangerous threat. The protest led to widespread rioting and looting, including attacks on Newgate Prison and the Bank of England and was the most destructive in the history of London. Painted on the wall of Newgate prison was the proclamation that the inmates had been freed by the authority of 'His Majesty, King Mob'. The term 'King Mob' afterwards denoted an unruly and fearsome proletariat.

According to Peter Ackroyd, the themes of the novel arose from the relationship Dickens had with his ne'er-do-well father (as neither of the main fathers in the novel is trusted by his son), and the political situation in England at the time of writing which engaged all the author's liberal sympathies for the downtrodden, so much so that he was writing anonymous pieces for *The Examiner*.

The *Uncommercial Traveller*, chapter 29, tells of the great sensation caused at Titbull's Almshouses when 'a tall, straight sallow lady' inhabitant was swept up by a 'gipsy-party' in a spring-van and taken to Epping Forest for a day's pleasure! In later years Dickens gave readings from his works and visited Colchester, where: 'half the town was turned away' from the hall.

In 1859 Dickens became interested in psychic phenomena and suggested that an account of a haunted house at Cheshunt in nearby Hertfordshire should be investigated. Wilkie Collins and W H Willis travelled ahead in a brougham (they took some fresh fish because Dickens did not trust the local hotel) and Dickens and John Hollinshead walked the 16 miles to Cheshunt – Dickens was a prodigious walker! They eventually found the villa and Dickens wrote: 'I can hear of no one at Cheshunt who ever heard of anything worse in it . . . than rats, and a servant . . . said to have a skillful way of poaching for rabbits at untimely hours.'

Another connection with Hertfordshire arose when the efforts Dickens made to promote the careers of the family of his mistress, Ellen ('Nelly') Ternan, had come to nothing. Dickens had made friends in Italy with Thomas Trollope and, when Thomas's wife died suddenly, his brother, the writer Anthony, took on the care of Thomas's daughter Bice at his home at Waltham Cross. Dickens arranged for Fanny Ternan, Nelly's sister, to go to Waltham Cross on alternate weekends from May 1865, staying from Saturday to Monday, to give Bice singing lessons. Fanny later married Thomas, so Dickens brought them together.

I think it is fair to say that no other English novelist travelled over so much of England and Scotland both as a young and older man and portrayed so much of the country as it was at that time in print. We are lucky that he left a hoofprint in the local area and perhaps it would be best to finish with his description of The King's Head[2] at Chigwell, The Maypole in *Barnaby Rudge*:

The Maypole . . . was an old building, with more gable ends than a lazy man would care to count on a sunny day; huge zigzag chimneys, out of which it seemed as though even smoke could not choose but come in more than naturally fantastic shapes imparted to it in its tortuous progress; and vast stables, gloomy, ruinous and empty . . . the Maypole was really an old house, a very old house . . . its windows were old diamond-pane lattices, its floors were sunken and uneven, its ceilings blackened by the hand of time and heavy with massive beams. Over the doorway was an ancient porch, quaintly and grotesquely carved; and here on summer evenings the more favoured customers smoked and drank . . .

I am grateful to Richard Morris for the use of his photo of the King's Head and alerting me to William Addison's book on Dickens.

Notes

1. William St Julien Arabin (1773–1841) was born either in Norwich or abroad, the only surviving son of General William John Arabin of Ireland, who left him significant estates in Essex and Middlesex. He was descended from one of the oldest families in Provence and his Huguenot ancestor Bartholomew d'Arabin fled to Holland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and came to England with King William III in 1688. Arabin was also Deputy Recorder of the City of London and served as Judge-Advocate-General of the Army 1838–39. He was a judge of the Central Criminal Court and of the Sheriffs' Court of the City of London and was a Verderer of the forests of Epping and Hainault. Arabin married Mary Meux in Camden in 1802. He died at Arabin House on 15 December 1841. (Wikipedia.) For Arabin House see: https//houseandheritage.org/2018/01/30/arabinhouse

2. The King's Head dates back to Stuart times but had many alterations. It has always been an important hostelry and from 1713 was used for meetings of the Forest Verderers' Court of Attachments of Waltham Forest. In the 1850s it was a favourite for public authorities banqueting at the general expense on the good fare the inn was noted for! (*Essex County History*.) Richard Morris writes: 'The Verderers obviously found this inn to be suitable for their deliberations and even had their own wine cellar, which was stocked by the holders of licences to hunt the Forest who, according to a record of June 1723, were required to supply three dozen bottles of wine to the court's officers.' (*The Verderers and Courts of Waltham Forest, 1250–2000* (LDHS, 2004).)

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Ted Martin

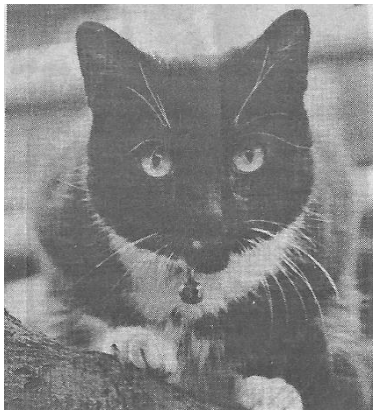
Dickens in Wanstead

In 2017 journalist Ann-Marie Abbasah investigated whether or not Dickens owned a house in Wanstead. It appeared that a house advertisement claimed that he had owned the property, and Bonham's, the auctioneers, had previously held documents, later sold, which showed his signature on the conveyancing documents. Ms Abbasah contacted the

archivist at Wanstead United Reformed Church, Maggie Brown, who confirmed that Dickens did indeed buy the property, in Grove Road (now Grosvenor Road), probably to house his mistress, Ellen (Nelly) Ternan, though this property is not mentioned in Claire Tomalin's *The Invisible Woman* (Penguin, 2014), though many others are. The book is a very readable account of the affair.
With thanks to the *Ilford Recorder* of 26 January and 21 September 2017 (Ed)

All fur Henry!

Passenger plea puts puss in clover



Central Line travellers were not slow to help out when Henry, the Buckhurst Hill station cat, fell ill. They put paws into pockets to produce a total of £48 when Henry, had to be taken to the vet suffering from a lump in the side and worms and mites in his ears.

But when the Palmerston Road Hospital consultant heard about the station appeal he waived the fee. Passengers arriving at the station on Tuesday were informed that the money they donated would instead be used, with their approval, to keep Henry well fed and with 'future creature comforts'. His food is normally paid for by station staff.

Station foreman David Pitman said, 'Henry has been here for 13 years and lots of passengers know and like him. We put a notice asking for donations towards vet's fees but didn't really expect anyone to help. We were very surprised at the response and are extremely grateful.'

Independent, 10 January 1992

Your editor remembers buying little catmint treats for Henry from the much-missed pet shop at the bottom of Queen's Road.

Cats' Brains

I used to run Lenham Archaeological Society, which has now become a Historical Society: Lenham Heritage Society. When we were studying the field names of the parish, we discovered one called Cats' Brains on the 1841 tithe map. There is no real explanation of the name that I can find on the internet . . . except comment in 2001 from your Society!

Out local Kent Archaeological Society explanation (which was told to me by Dennis Anstey a member of KAS) was that it is associated with fields near the Downs, and is so called because of the preponderance of quartz-like grains of chalk resembling cats' brains. These come from areas of the harder chalk called Melbourne rock and there is a seam of that that runs along the North Downs on the line of the Pilgrims Way. It is presumably why that trackway does not wear away. The only other places that I noticed these small nodules was near an area of iron slag, where Romans/Iron Age people had been smelting it in Lenham, and also at a Romano-British iron workings near Brede in East Sussex. As that latter location was not near chalk, it made me wonder if the Romans transported calcium carbonate in the form of 'cats' brains' to slag their iron of impurities (easier to transport than chalk, perhaps?)

Our 'cats' brains' field is adjacent to a chalk pit field and both lie just below the Pilgrims Way.

You can see the chalk pit (ploughed out) on Google Earth TQ 8940.6272.

My scribbled cat's brain'!

Lesley Feakes

The article (from *Newsletter 149* of October 2001) Lesley refers to deserves to reappear . . .

Cats Brains in Loughton

In the 1739 Demesne Survey of the Parish of Loughton, Robert Stiles (1663–1739), a substantial landowner in the manor of Debden Hall, possessed a broad swathe of farmland surrounding the manor house. Old field-names were carefully recorded in these surveys, and Debden's fields included such straightforward descriptive titles as Goose Acres and Horse Leys. However, one of the fields had the extraordinary name of Cats Brains. This was a five-acre field which, together with a group of other fields in the vicinity had the collective name of Hassops. This was mentioned in a document of c1400 as Harshipps, which by 1585 had become a small roadside green, which was still in existence in the mid-nineteenth century. The name may be from Anglo-Saxon hros si, meaning horse path.

But how did Cats Brains come by its bizarre monicker? This was a problem which defeated William Chapman Waller, Loughton's best-known 19th-century historian. In his 10-part survey, *Essex Field-Names*, Waller struggles to find a logical meaning for the name:

The word 'cat' in this connexion seems generally to be derived from the surname, and the combination 'Cats Brains' is somewhat startling. At first glance it seems as though it must be a corruption of something quite different. By chance, however, I came on an early grant to the Abbot of Bordesley, County of Warwick, of lands 'between Catchesbrayn and Grosfurlong' . . . which indicates that the modern form is not so far removed from the ancient, whatever the meaning of that may be.

Waller later discovered a further example of a field called Cats Brains in Oxfordshire, and it is now known that there are in fact nine examples in that county, six in Gloucestershire, two in Wiltshire, two in Surrey, and one each in Dorset, Essex (our Loughton one), Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, and Warwickshire.

In fact, the name has a straightforward if slightly gruesome meaning. It derives from Middle English cattes-brayen, and is a medieval expression for soil consisting of rough clay mixed with small pebbles, not unlike the consistency of – well, you get the picture.

Rather remarkably, Cats Brains still exists. The substantial hill slope on farmland immediately east of Willingale Road roughly between Audley Gardens and St Thomas More church is Cats Brains. A footpath from the Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall and Debden Park school leading to Theydon Park Road in Theydon Bois takes the wayfarer right past Cats Brains, which lies on the left. Like many medieval fields, Cats Brains has recently been amalgamated with others to form a larger 'prairie' field, but this broad shoulder of hillside remains a distinctive, and certainly the most strangely-named, Loughton landmark.

Sources

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Stephen Pewsey

The Black Eagle Sports and Social Club

Although we may be living in a period that calls for unstinting devotion and earnestness to our daily tasks, so much the more does it become necessary when the occasion permits to relax and take an interest in what is sometimes called the Sporting side of life.

It is often thought that of those who are daily engaged in the manufacture of alcoholic beverages, there could be but a negligible percentage of men able to compete with those who are not connected with the industry of which we are justly proud.

Yet it is well known that the Breweries of London produce athletes well able to hold their own in their respective spheres and reflect credit on their promoting organisations.

As far as our own Sports Club is concerned we boast a membership of five hundred and sixty seven, which is approximately ninety five per cent of the Brewery employees. This probably reflects on the untiring zeal and energy of E S Finch, who took over the Secretaryship in 1923, when the membership totalled but one hundred.

The photograph . . . shows the Brewery Cricket Team in 1889, but prior to this date a team was in existence. Therefore it would be probably true to say that the Firm were amongst the first of the large Breweries to encourage Sport.

It was in 1884 that the late Mr Gerald Buxton first came to the Brewery, and, as well as becoming active in Brewery matters, took a very keen interest in the sporting side, which he continued to do right up to the last; in fact he sent a message to all employees on the occasion of the annual sports by Mrs Buxton, who came to present the prizes.

In 1884 Mr Gerald Buxton instituted the series of cricket matches with Messrs Whitbreads' Brewery which took place every summer for many years at Knighton, Buckhurst Hill, and for which his father, the late Mr Edward North Buxton, kept practically open house to the brewery clerks, men and their wives.

Black Eagle Cricket Club, 1889
Back row: *Walter Rich*, *John Rogers*, *Geo Stock*
Third row: *Rimmington (Senr)*, *A Beardwell*, *Pettett (Senr)*, *A Rich*, *Waller*, *Harman*, *W Willis*, *French*, *J Willson*, *Mann*
Second row: *J Rattray*, *H Blythe*, *R Fuller*, *F Ray*, *H Baster*, *T Aves*, *J Fryer*
Front row: *Rimmington*, *E Pettit*, *A Fairman*, *T Maughan*

Since the War the Sports have been held annually from 1919. The first year was a much smaller event than those that have followed, and was held at Great West Hatch at the invitation of the late Mr J M Hanbury. The following year Mr J H Buxton invited the whole of the employees to Easneye and the next year Mr Gerald Buxton invited all employees and their wives to Birch Hall, Theydon Bois, where they were entertained to tea in marquees specially erected for the purpose.

Since this date the Sports have been held on the Sports Ground at Highams Park, and are attended by the Directors and their wives, and all Brewery employees, their wives and children are invited, nearly two thousand persons in all.

From *The Black Eagle Magazine*,
the annual publication of
Truman, Hanbury, Buxton and Co Ltd,
Spitalfields, E1 (established 1666),
Volume 1, No 1, July 1929

The Brook School

I was interested to read, in *Newsletter 222*, the late Keith Rann's reference to Miss Kemp and Miss Turnage who were teachers at The Brook during our time there from 1956 until 1961. I knew the two of them better than most because in our 5th year, I made several visits to 25 The Uplands for extra lessons with Miss Kemp, in preparation for my geography O-Level exam. I recall that Miss Turnage was sometimes not there, but if she was, she tended to keep out of the way and let Miss Kemp get on with her teaching, without interruption!

Some of you may also remember Mr F G Davies, the Headmaster during the above period. Many years after I left The Brook, I was at the University of Wales (as it was known then) at Aberystwyth, and when I was doing teaching practice in Pembroke Dock in south Wales, I discovered that Mr Davies was living in Pembroke, and by some means, long since forgotten, was able to obtain his address and visit

him. Can't recall a lot now, but it was interesting to see him again some 7 or 8 years after I'd left The Brook.

On a different line, if there is anyone out there who has any photographs of the original Brook School buildings, or of staff and/or pupils, which they would be willing to share with me for personal use only, I would be interested to hear from them. If you knew me or were there sometime during the dates above, then feel free to get in touch. I can be contacted via barrinium@btinternet.com and would be pleased to hear from you. Many thanks. **Neil Rumbol**

A new guide booklet

Epping Forest District Museum has produced a new booklet entitled *The Story of the Epping Forest District in 30 Objects.* It covers a number of items of note to Loughton and District Historical Society members, such as the work of Octavius Dixie Deacon, and Walter Spradbery, and mention is made of the buildings of Edmond Egan, such as the Lopping Hall and Deacon's house. With photos of Church's butchers and W Cottis and Sons, images of public houses and woolly mammoths, there is something for everyone in the 36 pages. Available from the Museum bookshop for £4.50 (ISBN 978–1–910759–33–2).

The publication is mentioned in the Winter 2019/20 edition of *Forest Focus*, the newsletter of Epping Forest. Also in the edition is an article on Richard Morris's book *Saving Epping Forest* (LDHS, 2019) and information on speedway in the Forest, and the history of the Orion Harriers **The Editor**

Who's living at Rainham Hall? Anthony Denney . . .

Rainham Hall is a Queen Anne-style house built in 1729 by a sea merchant, John Harle. It was acquired by the National Trust (NT) in 1949. It is situated in the centre of Rainham Village, and is considered one of the country's finest surviving early Georgian merchant houses.

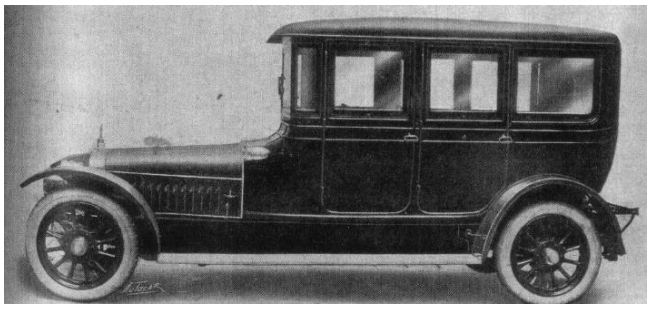
Unlike many historic houses, Rainham Hall had not had one particular special past occupant, and it has not been passed down from generations of a single family. Instead, it has been home to a richly diverse 'cast of characters'. In fact, the NT says that 'in the 290 years Rainham Hall has been standing, it has had over 50 different inhabitants and their families live there'.

Every two years, NT aims to bring back one of its historic inhabitants, to tell the story of the site from their point of view, thus 'who is living at Rainham Hall today?'

In 2018 seven children who had lived there in the 1940s and 1950s when the Hall was requisitioned as a day nursery, 'moved out'. In 2019, photographer, interior designer and 'tastemaker' Anthony Denney, moved back in.

With the help of the local community, local artists, students and various grants, the NT has aimed to capture the essence of Denney's style, decorating all the rooms in the Hall based on his work in *British Vogue* and *House and Garden* magazines. Denney (1913– 1990) was an influential designer, and of special note is the splendid programme for the exhibition, called *The Denney Edition* which is available for a voluntary contribution of £5. The Denney exhibition runs until June 2021. Staff at Rainham Hall are enthusiastic and knowledgeable (and there is a good tea room!). Worth a visit if you are in the area – Rainham Hall, The Broadway, Rainham, London RM13 9YN, tel 01708 525579 or contact rainhamhall@nationaltrust.org.uk for prices and opening times (free for NT members). **Editor**

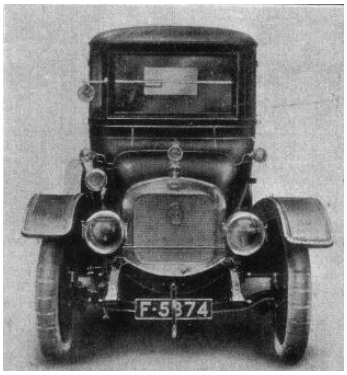
One man and his car



I found the pictures above and below in *The Autocar* of 8 June 1912. I was leafing through a bound volume of the magazines looking for articles of interest, and had actually turned a couple of pages further on, when it occurred to me the car had an Essex registration, F 5874, and I perhaps ought to look at it further in case it had local connections.

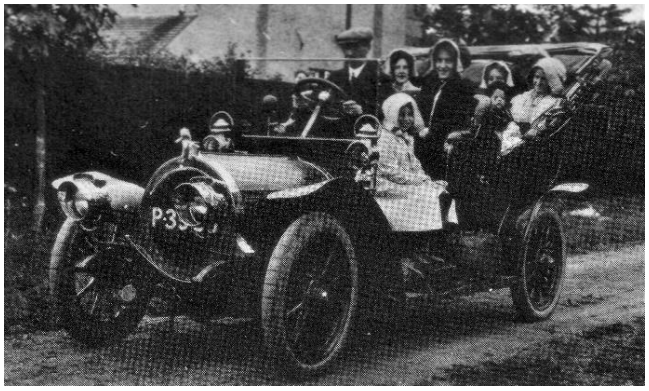
It turned out it did as the caption to the photos read:

A Cann saloon body on a 25–30 hp Sunbeam chassis, the tapered bonnet having been specially made to conform with the curves of the dash. The owner of this car is Mr W R Clarke of Debden Hall, Laughton [*sic*], who has had the interior of the car lined with mahogany and fitted with every imaginable convenience in the way of cupboards, tables and shelves. The whole of this elaborate cabinet work was carried out in the works of Messrs Cann Ltd.



There are three things to look at here; the car's owner, its manufacturer and its coachbuilder. All Mr Google would tell me about W R Clarke came from an article by Chris Pond in LDHS *Newsletter 192* about early Essex-registered cars in Loughton.

This told me this was clearly not his first car as on 5 January 1907 he had registered a brown 25 hp Speedwell, F 2183. Speedwell seems to have been a relatively obscure early motoring firm which existed from around 1900. Initially they sold imported cars under their own name, but then produced their own cars in Chiswick, probably largely using imported components. The company traded as the Speedwell Motor & Engineering Co Ltd, Reading, till 1906 and was re-formed as the New Speedwell Motor Co Ltd, London, in that year. It seems to have ceased trading in 1908. They are also reported as having premises in Knightsbridge which I would think likely to have been a showroom. The Speedwell 25 was a four-cylinder model produced in 1907 and 1908. Its cubic capacity was 4,942cc. The picture below shows a Speedwell which I think is of the same type as Mr Clarke's.



I contacted Chris Pond for more information about Mr Clarke. He advised, 'He was born in Bow in 1855 or 1856. He married Gertrude Lellyett Palmer, daughter of Joseph Thomas Palmer, the previous owner of Debden Hall, who owned Slater and Palmer printing ink manufacturers of Marshgate Lane, Stratford, on 8 August 1890 at St John's Church, Loughton. She was an invalid and had three live-in nurses at the time of the 1911 census; she died in 1912. Also there in 1911 were nine servants. The Hall had 30 rooms. He had a son and daughter (Dorothy). At one time he lived at Chigwell Row.

He was a manufacturer of dog biscuits with premises at Thomas Street, Limehouse. He died at 15 Manchester Street, Marylebone (a nursing home) on 5 June 1917 and left the astonishing sum of £133,967 9s 7d; say £15 million in today's money.'

I have augmented Chris's comments with additional ones from an article about Debden Hall by Lynn Haseldine Jones in *Newsletter 211*. Lynn's article says that the Debden Hall estate was auctioned in lots on 8 October 1920, fairly soon after Mr Clarke's death. The Hall was destroyed by a fire in 1929, but the following year the then owner, a Mr Austin, built a new hall. This was short-lived, however, as in 1960 after a burglary it was demolished. Lynn informs me Mr Clarke's full name was William Richard Clarke.

I was able to find out more about the dogfood business. One website reported: 'W G Clarke & Sons was established in Limehouse, London, in 1851 as a purveyor of food for game and poultry and dog food.' It seems to have later specialised in dog food. Its products included Melox Dogfood, City Meat Dog Biscuits and Buffalo Dog Cakes as well as hard biscuits for the navy. The Buffalo Dog Cakes name might seem confusing until I point out they contained buffalo meat. Chris recalls the family dog being fed Melox Dog Biscuits in the 1950s.

At one time the firm had a royal warrant. Googling 'Melox dog food' reveals some nice images of enamel signs advertising the company's products (see also page 16).

The company was taken over by Spratt's of nearby Bromley by Bow which in turn was taken over by Spillers in 1961.

In 1979 Spillers were acquired by Dalgety & Co and they sold their pet food business to Nestlé in 1997.

The business seems to have had independent existence up to at least the 1960s. I strongly suspect Mr Clarke would have been a dog owner, but I have no idea of what type(s).

Moving on to the car's manufacturer, Sunbeam; this name was registered by John Marston, a cycle maker in 1888. The company, like many other cycle builders of that era, later started making cars. The first one was manufactured in 1899 but series production did not start till 1901. Its works were at Moorfields, Blakenhall, Wolverhampton. In 1905 the car manufacturing arm was split off from the cycle business under the name, Sunbeam Motor Car Co Ltd. In 1934 the company had to call in the receiver and the firm was acquired by the Rootes brothers of Rootes Group fame.

At this time the Rootes Brothers had a controlling interest in Humber which had Commer and Hillman as wholly owned subsidiaries. Upon acquisition Rootes stopped making Sunbeam cars but continued with another more successful arm of the company, Sunbeam trolleybus manufacture. In 1938, however, Rootes rebranded their Talbot subsidiary as Sunbeam-Talbot. This name continued until 1954 when the 'Talbot' was dropped and the marque name reverted to 'Sunbeam'.

From 1964 on the American Chrysler company started to build up a holding in the Rootes Group and in 1967 took it over and the Chrysler name was adopted. The final models sold under the Sunbeam name were the Rapier and Alpine, based on the Rootes 'Arrow' range, the most famous model in the range being the Hillman Hunter. The Rapier and Alpine were discontinued in 1976.

The following year, however, the Sunbeam name was revived as a model name for a hatchback saloon, the Chrysler Sunbeam. In 1979 the name was changed to Talbot Sunbeam, a hark back to the earlier Sunbeam-Talbot name, and in 1981, when the model was discontinued, the Sunbeam name finally disappeared from the motoring scene. The Sunbeam 25/30 was a six-cylinder car with a 5103cc engine which was manufactured from 1907 to 1911.

Nowadays, a car is, of course, bought as one unit, a chassis and body, or strictly speaking, in these days of unitary construction, cars no longer have chassis. In the early days of motoring it was common for the car purchaser to buy a chassis from a manufacturer and take it to a separate coachbuilding company to have a body fitted. This would often be to the customer's design. This practice gradually died out, though some prestige manufacturers such as Rolls-Royce continued to supply chassis for coachbuilt bodies to be added after the Second World War. Mr Clarke chose to have Cann Ltd make the body for his new Sunbeam.

I had not previously heard of Cann Ltd and needed to do some research. Again Mr Google kindly helped. The founder of Canns was George Cann, born on 15 March 1859 in St Thomas, Exeter, one of seven siblings. It seems some of his siblings worked in allied trades to coachbuilding as they included a coachpainter, a harness maker and an iron moulder. Cann Coachworks was established in Miller Street, Camden, early in the 20th century. Interestingly its telegraphic address was 'CANNABLIST, LONDON'!

It is not known when the company ceased trading, but it does not appear to have had a very long life. It seems to have survived the First World War, but no more car bodies were made after the War. The company had a reputation for high quality work. Though they presumably undertook any commission they were offered, they seem to be particularly noted for bodying Rolls-Royces (they bodied the second Rolls-Royce car made and many others), White steam cars (this was an American make), Minervas (a Belgian car manufacturer) and various other foreign car makes.

For those interested, contemporary Cann adverts can be found on http://www.bentleyspotting.com/2010/10/cann-of-camden-town.html?m=0 and https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Cann.

HM The Queen once famously ordered an adaptation to a Jaguar, when she requested provision to store her handbag. Mr Clarke clearly specified the provision of a lot of storage space in his car; cupboards, tables and shelves; seemingly everything but the kitchen sink.

Cars of this era did not have boots, though some could carry a trunk on a grid at the back. Any luggage had to be accommodated inside the car and, if the car's owners were going on holiday, a trunk would be sent ahead by rail. Cars generally started having boots only from around the 1930s. Presumably Mr Clarke perceived the need to provide some storage for things like parcels (and possibly his wife's handbag!) and made provision for it. Sadly Mr Clarke's car does not seem to have survived, which is a shame particularly as it seems to have been a fine example of the coachbuilder's craft.

John Harrison

Pond Punch – tasting notes

At the last members' evening of 2019, on 12 December (coincidentally, also the day of the General Election), those attending the Loughton and District Historical Society meeting, held at the local Methodist church, were welcomed with a festive appetizer. Pond Punch was served by popular demand for the second year running. The recipe for this cocktail has been passed down through the Pond family for some generations.

The following observations were made. A full fruity flavour with a hint of citrus, a well-balanced sweetness and lifted with a light effervescence. Also noted, were subtle hints of spices and a zing of ginger. All leaving a refreshing taste to the palate.

The main event was three presentations given by members – Maurice Day, Alyson Parker and John Harrison. Each of their presentations was rewarded with enthusiastic applause. The meeting concluded and members dispersed in a festive fashion. No ill effects from Pond Punch were noted!

Antony Newson

There wasn't any citrus in it, but you've forgotten the subtle wintriness of quince!

Chris Pond

A cripple children's outing

An appeal is being made through the AA by the Cripples Mission of the Shaftesbury Society Ragged School Union for cars to be provided to enable 300 cripple [*sic*] children to be taken for an outing in Epping Forest on a date to be fixed in July. AA members willing to assist are requested to communicate with the Hon Secretary of the Mission, 166, Sewardstone Road, Bethnal Green, London, E.

From *Motor Cycling*, 4 June 1919
Submitted by **John Harrison**

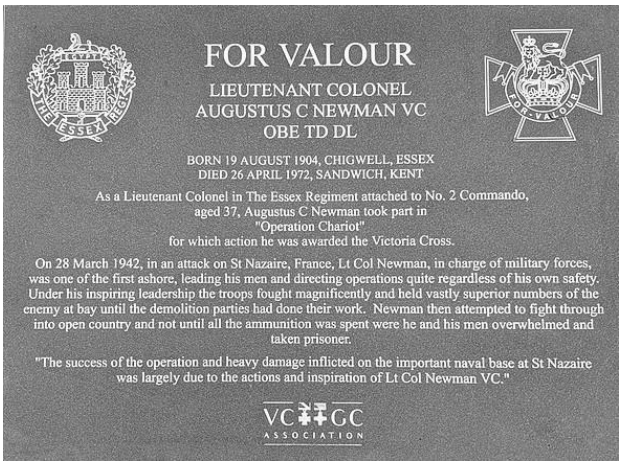
Another Essex will

John Grene of North Weald Bassett, 1585

To the poor of North Weald 6s 8d and of Epping Street 6s 8d. To John my son 10s that he borrowed of me. The rest of my goods to my son William whom I make executor. Witnesses Robert Fletcher, John Spranger, 22 April 1585.

Augustus Charles Newman, VC

When strolling through the churchyard of St Peter's in Sandwich, Kent, in the summer of 2018 I came across the plaque below. Intrigued by the reference to Chigwell and to the St Nazaire Raid (which is in general portrayed in the 1952 film 'Gift Horse'), I decided to do more research when possible.



[By Hsq7278: Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=82939329]

Augustus Charles Newman (1904–1972) was born on 19 August 1904 in Chigwell, the son of Augustus Bertie and Alice Margaret Newman (*née* Paine), who had married in 1901 in Sussex, as Alice Margaret was from Worthing. Their first child was a daughter, Phyllis Marion, born in South Woodford in 1902.

The Newman family had been living in Buckhurst Hill for some time. Augustus Bertie's parents John Newman and Mary Susannah (*née* Robinson) were both from Norfolk, and married in Kings Lynn in 1855. He was a railway station master, and their first child, Charles, was born in Stratford in 1861 (he was later a banker's clerk). Their other children, Ellen (1866), John William (1868), Augustus Bertie (1870) and Edith May (1872) were all born in Buckhurst Hill and in 1881 Colonel Newman's grandfather, John, was station master at Buckhurst Hill, living in the stationmaster's house in Queen's Road. The family later lived at Talbot Villas in Princes Road. John Newman the grandfather died on 14 February 1890 as a result of injuries sustained in a railway accident on the platform of Buckhurst Hill station on 11 January 1890.

Augustus Charles Newman attended Bancroft's School, an independent boarding school, until he was 18. On leaving school, he joined the local civil engineering firm of W & C French in 1922, working for them for the whole of his civilian life and becoming Chairman of the Board in 1960 until his retirement in August 1969.

In 1929 he married Audrey Hickman and they had five daughters and a son. For a time after the war they lived at the Chestnuts, 109 High Road, Buckhurst Hill, a fine old house, dating back to the 1860s, which at this time was owned by W & C French. The house was demolished in the late 1960s and replaced by the Greenhill development after he retired to Kent.

Newman had a wide range of interests including rugby, boxing, shooting, music, freemasonry and, especially, golf. Joining the Territorial Army about the age of 20 he always took his golf clubs with him whenever he went to camp. His first posting was to the Engineer and Railway Staff Corps but he later moved to the 4th Battalion, The Essex Regiment. Starting as a private soldier, he was soon commissioned, and by the outbreak of the Second World War, he was a major with 16 years' service. The Territorials were quickly mobilised and after training Major Newman was asked if he would volunteer for a dangerous job. Although he had no further information, he willingly agreed.

He was then put in command of a band of 20 volunteers which, with specialists from the Signals, Engineers and Service Corps, was eventually composed of 150 men, to form No 3 Special Independent Company. These Special Independent Companies were the forerunners of the Commandos.

British Commandos, 1942

They briefly saw service in Norway, but were soon evacuated to England, where they re-formed and retrained for 'raids on the French coast'. Newman's company was upset to be posted to Dungeness on defensive anti-invasion duties. He considered asking to rejoin the Essex Regiment who were in West Africa. He was then called to a meeting which informed him that they were to be formed into Special Service Battalions and raids would take place on a larger scale. He was offered the post of second in command of the first battalion to be formed.

It was decided in April 1941 that the large Special Service Battalions should be re-formed into smaller units, called 'Commandos'. The 1st Battalion was split into two Commandos, with Newman's old CO commanding the 1st and Newman, promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, the 2nd.

Early in 1942, Newman went to the War Office, to meet the new Director of Combined Operations, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, who told him that No 2 Commando would provide troops for a raid on St Nazaire. The naval part of the operation was to be commanded by Commander R E D Ryder. The raid – code named 'Operation Chariot' – was to make the large dry dock at St Nazaire unusable by the *Tirpitz* – Germany's last remaining battleship. On 13 March 1942, Mountbatten told Newman that he was 'not expecting anyone to return from the operation. If we lose you all, you will be the equivalent of the loss of one merchant ship, but your success will save many merchant ships. We have to look at the thing in those terms.'

An old US destroyer, renamed HMS *Campbeltown*, was laden with explosives and commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Stephen Beattie. The troops would be carried in a fleet of 16 motor launches. The

total complement for the raid was 611 men, of whom 257 were commandos. Two groups were to be on the motor launches, and one on *Campbeltown*. They set sail from Falmouth on 26 March 1942, escorted by two destroyers, and Newman was on HMS *Atherstone*.

As she entered entered the Loire estuary *Campbeltown* received heavy fire and then gave covering fire for the commandos who disembarked and made for their respective targets. *Campbeltown* then lodged itself into the dock gates. Newman and his HQ staff went ashore from *Motor Gun Boat 314*. Soon afterwards the launches were destroyed by enemy fire, which meant that they were stranded. Newman told his men: 'Well chaps, we've missed the boat home. We'll just have to walk.' Under fire, they made their way to a girder bridge, which they charged across without stopping and avoided enemy troops, trying to evade capture, by scrambling through gardens, over walls, through hen houses and even through houses.

By dawn, Newman was sheltering with 15 men in a cellar, and to stop all of them being killed, he dashed upstairs and surrendered. They were taken to German HQ and were worried that the time for the detonation of the explosives on the *Campbeltown* had passed. The Germans could not understand the purpose of the raid, until 10.35am, when the *Campbeltown* exploded, causing tremendous damage. The prisoners, now also including Beattie and naval personnel, were taken to a prison camp at Rennes, where a German officer told Newman of the outstanding bravery of Sergeant Tom Durrant, who had continued to fire his Lewis Gun, even though mortally wounded.

Augustus Charles Newman

After moving to prison in Germany, the commandant ordered a special parade when he asked Newman to bring Beattie before him. He announced Beattie had been awarded the VC and similar awards to Ryder and Able Seaman Bill Savage were gazetted the same day, but there was no award announced for Newman. Newman spent the rest of the war in a POW camp before being liberated in 1945. On returning to England he put Tom Durrant's name forward for an award and both Durrant and he were awarded the VC, gazetted on 19 June 1945.

After leaving the army, he returned to work for W & C French, retiring as Chairman in 1969. After the Second World War, Newman continued in the Territorial Army, subsequently serving in the Special Air Service. He served as Deputy Lieutenant of Essex, 1946 to 1948. On 1 October 1959 he was appointed Major in the Engineer and Railway Staff Corps.

His love of golf led him to choose Sandwich for his and Audrey's retirement and he moved to Fishergate House, The Quay, about 1962, close to the St George's Golf Club. He had only a short retirement dying on 26 April 1972, aged 67. His medal group including his VC and OBE were purchased privately in 1990 by Michael Ashcroft and are displayed in the Ashcroft Gallery, Imperial War Museum. His other honours were the Territorial Decoration, Légion d'Honneur (France), and Croix de Guerre (France):

On 28 March 1942 in the attack on St. Nazaire, France, Lieutenant-Colonel Newman was in charge of the military forces and he was one of the first ashore, leading his men and directing operations quite regardless of his own safety. Under his inspiring leadership the troops fought magnificently and held vastly superior numbers of the enemy at bay until the demolition parties had done their work. The colonel then attempted to fight through into open country and not until all the ammunition was spent were he and his men overwhelmed and taken prisoner.

The London Gazette (Supplement).
15 June 1945, p 3171.

Campbeltown on the dock gates

The St Nazaire Raid

Known as Operation Chariot this was an amphibious attack on the heavily defended Normandie dry dock at St Nazaire by the Royal Navy and British Commandos under the auspices of Combined Operations Headquarters on 28 March 1942. St Nazaire was chosen because the loss of its dry dock would force any large German warship in need of repairs, such as *Tirpitz*, to return home and thus run the gauntlet of the Royal Navy and other British forces, via the English Channel or what was known in military circles as the GIUK gap (an area in the northern Atlantic Ocean forming a naval 'choke point'. It is an acronym for *Greenland, Iceland* and the *United Kingdom*, the gap is the open ocean between these three landmasses.)

HMS *Campbeltown*, an obsolete First World War destroyer, previously USS *Buchanan*, came into RN service in 1940 as one of the 50 destroyers transferred

to the UK under the Destroyers for Bases Agreement with the US. The ship was converted to resemble a German destroyer and packed with delayed-action explosives, well-hidden within a steel and concrete case.

HMS Campbeltown *being converted for the raid. There were twin lines of armour plate down each side of the ship to protect the Commandos. Two of her funnels have been removed, with the remaining two cut at an angle.*

Campbeltown with two other destroyers (HMS *Tynedale* and HMS *Atherstone*) and 18 smaller boats left Falmouth, Cornwall, at 14:00 on 26 March 1942 and crossed the English Channel to France. Not having the range to reach St Nazaire unaided, the MTBs and MGBs were taken in tow by *Campbeltown* and *Atherstone*. When the convoy encountered two French fishing trawlers, their crews were taken off and they were sunk as they might report the composition and location of the convoy. At 17:00 the convoy received a signal from Commander-in-Chief Plymouth that five German torpedo boats were nearby. Two hours later another signal informed them that two destroyers, HMS *Cleveland* and HMS *Brocklesby*, were on their way at full speed to join them.

At 21:00 they were 65 nautical miles from St Nazaire and changed course towards the estuary, leaving *Atherstone* and *Tynedale* as a sea patrol. Then they put the Motor Gun Boat (MGB) and two torpedo Motor Launches (ML) in the lead, followed by *Campbeltown*. The rest of the MLs were in two columns on either side and astern of the destroyer, with the Motor Torpedo Boat (MTB) bringing up the rear, but *ML 341*, developed engine trouble and was abandoned.

At 22:00 the British submarine *Sturgeon* directed her navigation beacon out to sea to guide the convoy in. At about this time *Campbeltown* raised the German naval ensign in an attempt to deceive German lookouts into thinking she was one of their destroyers. At 23:30 on 27 March, five RAF squadrons (35 Whitleys and 27 Wellingtons) started bombing runs on St Nazaire, above 6,000 feet and were ordered to remain over the port for 60 minutes to divert attention from the sea. They had orders to bomb only clearly identified military targets and drop only one bomb at a time, but poor weather with full cloud cover over meant only four aircraft bombed their targets in St Nazaire. Six aircraft managed to bomb other nearby targets.

About 2am, the German submarine *U-593* sighted the convoy and dived, later reporting the British ships as moving westward, which further complicated German understanding of the raid.

The unusual behaviour of the bombers worried German Kapitän Mecke. At 00:00 on 28 March, he issued a warning about a possible parachute landing. At 01:00 on 28 March, he followed up by ordering all guns to cease firing and searchlights put out in case the bombers were using them to locate the port. They were in a state of high alert and harbour defence companies and ships' crews were ordered to leave air raid shelters. Then a lookout reported seeing some activity at sea, so Mecke suspected some type of landing and ordered extra vigilance at the harbour approaches.

At 00:30 hours on 28 March the convoy crossed the shoals at the mouth of the Loire estuary, with *Campbeltown* scraping the bottom twice. Each time she pulled free, and they proceeded towards the harbour in darkness. When they were about eight minutes from the dock gates, at 01:22, the entire convoy was caught in searchlights on both banks of the estuary. A naval signal light demanded identification.

MGB 314

MGB 314 replied using a coded response obtained from a German trawler boarded during a previous raid. When there were a few bursts fired from a shore battery, both *Campbeltown* and *MGB 314* sent: 'Ship being fired upon by friendly forces'. The deception gave them a little more time before every German gun opened fire. At 01:28, with the convoy 1 mile from the dock gates, Beattie ordered the German flag lowered and the White Ensign raised. The German fire increased and when the guard ship opened fire she was quickly silenced by the ships in the convoy.

By now all ships in the convoy were within range to engage shore targets and were firing on gun emplacements and searchlights. *Campbeltown* was hit several times and increased speed. The helmsman was killed, and his replacement was wounded and then also replaced. Beattie was blinded by searchlights, but knew they were close to their objective.

Under heavy fire, *MGB 314*, carrying Newman and his HQ staff, turned into the estuary as *Campbeltown* cleared the end of the Old Mole, cut through anti-torpedo netting strung across the entrance and rammed the dock gates at 01:34, just three minutes later than scheduled. The force of the impact drove the ship 33 feet onto the gates.

The commandos landed to destroy machinery and other structures. All the small craft intended to

transport the commandos back to England were destroyed. The commandos fought their way through the town to escape overland but many surrendered when they ran out of ammunition or were surrounded by the Wehrmacht defending St Nazaire.

The Germans could not understand the real purpose of the raid and were interrogating the captured men when the explosives hidden on *Campbeltown* detonated at 10.35 that day, putting the dock out of service until 1948.

Of the 611 men in the raid, 228 returned to Britain, 168 were killed and 215 became prisoners of war. German casualties included over 360 dead, some of whom were killed after the raid when *Campbeltown* exploded. Eighty-nine members of the raiding party were awarded decorations which included five Victoria Crosses. After the war, St Nazaire was one of 38 battle honours awarded to the Commandos. Within British military circles, the operation has been called 'The Greatest Raid of All'.

The survivors formed their own association, the St Nazaire Society, which is a registered charity in the United Kingdom. A memorial to the raid erected in Falmouth bears the following inscription:

OPERATION CHARIOT
FROM THIS HARBOUR 622 SAILORS
AND COMMANDOS SET SAIL FOR
THE SUCCESSFUL RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE
28th MARCH 1942. 168 WERE KILLED
5 VICTORIA CROSSES WERE AWARDED

_____
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
THEIR COMRADES BY
THE ST. NAZAIRE SOCIETY

The St Nazaire memorial at Falmouth

On 4 September 2002, a tree and seat at the National Memorial Arboretum were dedicated to the men of the raid, bearing the inscription: 'In memory of the Royal Navy Sailors and Army Commandos killed in the raid on St Nazaire on 28 March 1942.'

The 1952 film 'Gift Horse' gives a general impression of the raid. The film, starring Trevor Howard, Richard Attenborough and Dora Bryan, was made with the co-operation of the Admiralty and the St Nazaire Society. There is extensive information about the raid online from Wikipedia and other sources.

I am grateful to Lynn Haseldine Jones for extra information on the Newmans and their homes and lives in Buckhurst Hill.

Notes

1. Converting *Campbeltown* for the raid took 10 days. She had to be lightened to raise her draught to get over the sand banks in the estuary. It was done by completely stripping all her internal compartments. The dockyard removed her three 4-inch guns, torpedoes and depth charges from the deck and replaced the forward gun with a light, quick–firing 12-pounder 3-inch gun. Eight 20mm Oerlikons were installed on mountings raised above deck level. The bridge and wheelhouse were given extra armour-plate protection, and two rows of armour were fixed along the sides of the ship to protect the Commandos on the open deck. Two of her four funnels were removed, and the forward two were cut at an angle to resemble those of a German destroyer. The bow was packed with 4.5 tons of high explosives, which were set in concrete. The explosive charge would be timed to detonate after the raiders had left the harbour. So that the Germans could not tow her away, the crew would open the ship's seacocks before abandoning ship. If she became disabled or sunk before getting to the dock, four motor launches were detailed to take the crew off and put the commandos ashore. The charge would be reset to explode after the last boat had left.

2. The Germans had around 5,000 troops in the immediate area of St Nazaire. The port was defended by the 280th Naval Artillery Battalion composed of 28 guns of various calibres from 75mm to 280mm railway guns, all positioned to guard the coastal approaches. The heavy guns were supplemented by the guns and searchlights of the 22nd Naval Flak Brigade.

3. A new HMS *Campbeltown*, a Type 22 frigate, was launched on 7 October 1987. She carried the ship's bell from the first *Campbeltown* which was rescued during the raid and was presented to the town of Campbelltown, Pennsylvania, at the end of the Second World War. In 1988 the people of Campbelltown voted to lend the bell to the new ship for as long as she remained in Royal Navy service. The bell was returned to the town on 21 June 2011 when HMS *Campbeltown* was decommissioned.

Ted Martin

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LOUGHTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(Registered Charity 287274) www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org.uk
President: Professor David Stevenson
Chairman: Dr Chris Pond, Forest Villa, Staples Road, Loughton IG10 1HP (020 8508 2361)
Treasurer: Antony Newson, 17 Highland Avenue, Loughton IG10 3AJ (020 8508 5014)
Membership Secretary: Ian Strugnell, 22 Hatfields, Loughton IG10 1TJ
Newsletter Editor: Lynn Haseldine Jones, The Lodge, Snaresbrook House, Woodford Road, London E18 2UB (020 8530 3409)
Newsletter Production: Ted Martin

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