

NEWSLETTER 225

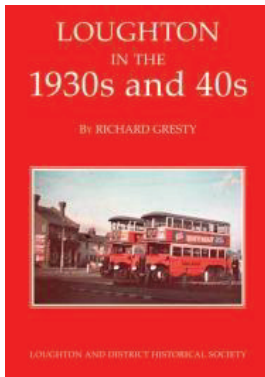
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57th Season

Loughton in the 1930s and 40s

The Society's latest publication came about from a phone call Chris Pond received from Richard Gresty from his home in Fleet, Hampshire. He told Chris he had grown up in Loughton in the 1930s and had moved away for his war service and after his parents retired in 1944. He told Chris that he had prepared an account of his life and career – he went on from the Army to become Defence Services Secretary to the Queen, with an MVO and MBE in the Birthday



Honours of 1976 and 1981, respectively.

Richard Gresty's memories of Loughton (which we now issue as a book) relate to a very different place from the town of today. When he was growing up, the LCC Debden Estate, which doubled Loughton's population after 1945, was still all fields. The centre of the 2020 High Road, at least on the western side, is radically different from 'his' Loughton, the one described in this book. Yet, although only one shop he describes is still in use for the same trade and under the same name today, if he visited today, he would find something essentially familiar about the place.

He points out that there were very few private cars in his boyhood. The book's cover features a superb early colour picture of buses at the Crown in 1939. Tradesmen were at a householder's beck and call; they went to great lengths to provide deliveries and service, and poor service caused his mother to switch to another grocer.

But, is it so different? In the past year or so, individual trades, such as butchers, organic food shops and a baker have returned to the town. We have three supermarkets in the High Road, and numerous coffee shops, but there is still the ethos of service and quality growing again, as shops seek that unique selling point that will give them the edge over their competitors, just as Mrs Gresty found 80 years ago.

Continuing social and commercial activity within Loughton is easy to track from this book. The quiet, contented life of the 1930s in Loughton may have gone, but three generations on, it would be strange if nothing had changed.

Richard's book records a way of life that has passed, but is still somehow quite familiar. It is a very

interesting read with the helpful addition of 30 illustrations in the text.

Loughton in the 1930s and 40s, by Richard Gresty: ISBN 978-1-905269-30-3, available to members from the chairman (call first) for £5.50 or from the Loughton Bookshop at £6.95.

My brief career as a Chigwell Urban District councillor

I was born and brought up in a London County Council (LCC) prefab in Hackney. My parents and grandparents were all life-long supporters of the Labour Party and voted for them at every election. But then again, so did practically everyone else in Hackney! From 1945 to 1965, the year the old Hackney borough was merged with Shoreditch and Stoke Newington to form the new GLC borough of Hackney, the only non-Labour councillors were Communists; one was elected in 1945 and two in 1949. At the following four elections to the council, in 1953, 1956, 1959 and 1962, Labour won all 45 seats. Not a Conservative in sight and the Liberal Party barely existed.

I began to take an interest in politics at the age of 14 and, along with a few friends, decided to go along to a meeting of the Hackney Labour Party's youth section, the Hackney Young Socialists (YS), which, we were told, was the biggest YS group in the country. A month or so before my 15th birthday, after a few meetings, I joined and started to become active in local politics.

In 1965, the new Greater London Council (GLC), which had replaced the old LCC, decided in its wisdom to demolish our prefab. Mind you, when they were erected in 1946 they were supposed to have been temporary dwellings for a maximum of 10 years, so by 1965 they were well past their sell-by date. My family was offered a GLC house on the Debden Estate, which we moved into at the beginning of August 1965.

I had a strange relationship with Loughton in my first three years because, being 18 in 1965, I left school and went off to a teacher training college in Norwich in September, so I wasn't really able to get settled in Loughton until I was about 21 and really knew very little about the town or its politics.

When I returned from college, I began to throw myself into local Loughton life and joined the Chigwell and Loughton History Society and the Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society as well as spending some time playing table tennis at Loughton

Hall and becoming a regular at the Corbett Theatre. So, I think I made up for my three 'lost' Loughton years!

As far as local politics were concerned, I naturally joined the local Labour Party but, although it didn't come as a complete shock, it certainly proved to be very different to Hackney as, of course, it was the Conservative Party that had the stranglehold on the local authority, the Chigwell Urban District Council (CUDC).

CUDC had been formed back in 1933 from three local authorities: Buckhurst Hill Urban District, Loughton Urban District and Chigwell Civil Parish (formerly a part of Epping Rural District). By the time I began to take an interest in my new local area, there were 24 councillors, six each from Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Loughton North and Loughton South. Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell were solidly Conservative; Loughton South was mostly Conservative, although Labour did manage to get the odd councillor in 'good' years, while Loughton North was the reverse, mostly Labour with the Conservatives winning in 'good' years for them. In all though, it was a totally alien political landscape to the solid Labour one I had left behind in Hackney.

Elections were held every year with two of the six ward councillors retiring on a rota basis, with each individual term of office therefore being for three years.

In early 1972 I was chosen by the Labour Party to stand for Loughton North in the forthcoming CUDC election to be held in May. This was due to be the last-ever election for Chigwell Council as the planned reorganisation of local government was scheduled to start in 1974, at which time all the old Urban and Rural District Councils were to be enlarged and become District Councils. Chigwell itself was to be amalgamated with Waltham Holy Cross Urban District Council and most of Epping and Ongar Rural District Council to become the new Epping Forest District Council.

At that time, the make-up of Chigwell Council was 19 Conservative and five Labour. Labour held four seats in Loughton North and one in Loughton South. The two retiring councillors in Loughton North were both Conservatives, one of whom was former CUDC chairman, Councillor Tony Swallow.

Shortly before the election, the *West Essex Gazette* carried out a survey to see which councillors were most known by the public. Councillor Swallow easily topped the poll. Which wasn't exactly the news I was hoping for from this survey!

However, on the day itself, shortly before polling closed, I bumped into Councillor Swallow at one of the polling stations. He came over to me and shook my hand, saying, 'Congratulations, you've won this easily. And you deserve it for all the work you've put in,' which I thought was very decent of him as losing his seat after 12 years' service must have been a big disappointment to him.

And he was right, as our other candidate, Dr Alan Hilton, and myself topped the poll in Loughton North and got elected, thus increasing the Labour Party's representation on the council to seven. In fact, I

received the highest vote in the whole of Chigwell to become CUDC's youngest councillor. I was just 24.



Labour new boys Norman Jacobs and Dr Alan Hilton discuss their plans for making an impact on Chigwell Council. They increased Labour representation from five to seven.

The election was held on 6 May 1972 and on 24 May I attended my first council meeting. At the time I kept a diary and this is my entry for that day,

My first Council meeting tonight. My maiden speech, my maiden proposal and my maiden question. I found it very overwhelming at first but a lot of the tension went when they started the argument over my speech. I think things will be a lot better next time when I'm not so new and when the awesome surroundings seem not so awesome.

Unfortunately I cannot remember what my first speech, proposal and question were about, though I expect at least one of them must have been about housing as in the following week's *Gazette* it was reported that there was a 'fierce debate' over the council's housing policy and that four Labour councillors (including me) had 'stormed out of the chamber', with even one of those who remained nevertheless describing the Council's policy as 'pitiful, disgraceful and terrible'. The result of the debate was that no action was taken on proceeding with a council house building programme.



The Town Hall in Old Station Road, where Sainsbury's is now.

The Town Hall was, of course, in Old Station Road, where Sainsbury's is today. The council chamber itself was set out in a sort of horseshoe shape with 22 councillors sitting round the horseshoe and the chairman and vice-chairman, along with the town clerk, sitting on the top table facing the horseshoe.

There were other council officers sitting at desks in the centre of the horseshoe.

Every councillor had to take part in a number of committees. Councils were then run on the old committee style with a committee chairman and a proportionate number of councillors from each party rather than the modern method of portfolio holders and cabinet government. I was appointed to the Highways Committee, the Establishments Committee and the Public Health Committee. This latter committee seemed to consist mostly of having to look at pots of yoghurt that had gone mouldy and issuing warnings to the shops that had sold them.

A big part of a councillor's time was also taken up dealing with problems brought to them by their constituents. The Labour Group used to hold a formal weekly 'surgery', with each councillor taking a turn each week. But constituents would also get in touch directly in between times. Practically all of the cases I dealt with were concerned with housing, either constituents trying to get on the housing list, or, once they were on it, trying to get the offer of a house. Also, there were a number of complaints about the state of repair of their council house.

For older residents reading this, it may be of interest to mention some of the councillors' names that I recall and which may be familiar to you. Bob O'Malley was the chairman, Ron Garner, vice-chairman, and later, from 1973, chairman, and Arthur Welch, the Housing Committee chairman. Other Conservative councillors included their group leader, Doug James, Norman Risdon, Vic Milner, Norman Croucher, Stan Barnett, Lilian Scott, Ian Beattie and George Perry, who was the only councillor to have sat throughout the whole period of CUDC having first been elected in 1933. He also went on to be elected to Chigwell's successor council, Epping Forest District. On the Labour side, we had group leader, Harry Worby, Stan Palfreman, Brian Mooney, Bert Chapman and Mike Bacon, with whom I am still in touch to this day. There was also the town clerk, Brian Ostler, and his deputy, Kurt Treitel.

As I predicted in my diary above, things did improve after that first meeting and I was no longer overawed by the council chamber and threw myself into the cut and thrust of the debates, which did get quite heated at times. These debates seemed to be dominated by housing issues. Labour continued to press for more council houses to be built and opposed all rent rises. One debate in particular that got everyone very excited was when a proposal was put forward to build an 18-hole golf course in Roding Valley. How is it that this council can build a golf course but not houses was the bone of contention in that debate. Everything seemed to come back to housing!

One issue where there was a measure of agreement between the two parties was over the plans to turn Rectory Lane into a dual carriageway with five roundabouts as a feeder road for the new M11. An alternative proposal, which gained support from both parties, was put forward calling for a completely new road to be built behind the Debden Industrial Estate, so that the interchange between the M11 and the

feeder road would be at Abridge rather than at Debden. I think we all know how successful that bit of cross party co-operation turned out to be!



The coming of the M11.

During my time as councillor, the GLC, along with London Underground, came up with a proposal to build a new Underground line from Wimbledon to Hainault. As a very small part of this was planned to go through the very southern edge of Chigwell Urban District, we were invited to send a representative along to take part in the planning meetings. As a daily commuter from Debden up to London, I was thought to be the best person to represent Chigwell and so was sent along to look after our interests. If I originally thought that the Chigwell council chamber was overawing, it was nothing compared to the splendour of County Hall in London and the rooms we met in there.

It was there that I also met some well-known London politicians such as the future chairman of the GLC, Sir Horace Cutler, who chaired this particular committee; also, a young newly elected GLC councillor called Ken Livingstone as well as the leader of the Labour group on the GLC and later MP and Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson. My main contribution to this committee was to propose a mile-long extension at the Hainault End to Grange Farm to bring more visitors in to Chigwell.

As might be expected, I got very involved in trying to preserve as much of the history of the district as possible. Another difference in the way the council operated then to how councils operate now was that all planning applications were considered by the Planning Committee – there was no devolving to the officers for a decision. Even though not a member of the committee, councillors could go along and speak on applications that were in their ward.

As the area covered by the Hills Amenity Society was in my Ward, I worked very closely with them on trying to stop the worst excesses of new developments which we felt would spoil the unique nature of the area. Quite early on in my tenure, I walked round the area with some of their members and we drew up a list of the parts that were most in need of conserving and I used that list in future discussions at Planning Committee and full council whenever applications came up that affected the area.

My own personal crusade on the council, however, came early on in my tenure when the Highways Committee proposed to knock down the shops on the corner of High Beech Road and Smarts Lane to make way for a car park. Backed by the local History

Society, I campaigned to save these examples of 100-year-old Victorian architecture. The two shop owners themselves, Mr Don Lill, who ran a do-it-yourself shop called 'Victor's Handyman' and Mr Ramon Sabey, who had a hairdressers, were devastated by the news and both described it as a 'disaster' for them personally.

I first opposed it at Highways Committee, then, when it was agreed there, at full council. I managed to get a reference back, but the Highways Committee upheld their previous decision, so I once again opposed it at full council. I then organised a petition, which gained over 1000 signatures and got the local MP, John Biggs-Davison, involved. And, even though he was a Conservative, he supported our petition and agreed to hand it over himself to Brian Ostler, the town clerk. In the end, the council agreed to defer the final decision to the new Epping Forest Council.



The shops which disappeared to make room for a car park.

It just seemed like complete vandalism to me, to destroy these two examples of Victorian architecture in the centre of Loughton. And for what? A 15-place car park! As we know, of course, Epping Forest Council agreed to the plan and the shops were demolished for the car park that is still there today.

Coincidentally, one of my main opponents over the scheme was the same Tony Swallow I had defeated for my seat. Councillor Swallow had returned to the council as a result of the death of Councillor Bert Chapman. Bert was the sole Labour councillor in Loughton South. Sadly, in November 1972, he collapsed and died at a Labour Party meeting. The resulting by-election saw Tony Swallow return to the council in what was to prove to be the definitive last-ever election to Chigwell Urban District Council. Councillor Swallow's view was that 1000 signatures wasn't really that significant considering the population of Loughton.

The by-election meant that Labour were down to six representatives, all from Loughton North.

The final meeting of Chigwell Urban District Council was held on Wednesday, 13 March 1974 under its chairman, Ron Garner, the 20th CUDC chairman. For the first (and only!) time, the public gallery was packed to hear Councillor Garner say, 'As a councillor I am more used to opening ceremonies than closing ceremonies and more used to happy occasions than this essentially sad occasion.'

As the youngest member of the council, I was called on to speak and, even though I say so myself, I think I made one of the best speeches I had ever made. It was non-partisan with the main point being how sad I was at the passing of Chigwell Council and, rather than amalgamating us into a larger area which seemed to make the council more impersonal and more remote from people's lives, I thought that, if anything, it would have been better to go back to the smaller town and rural district councils. There was a big feeling at the time that amalgamating with Waltham Abbey in particular was a very poor step as we had little in common and were physically divided by a large chunk of Epping Forest.

Afterwards, I received the congratulations of many Conservative members who said they agreed with everything I had said in my speech and one, in particular, Councillor Lilian Scott, who I had continually been at odds with since becoming a councillor, asked me if I was interested in furthering my political career and becoming an MP. She said she didn't often agree with me but she knew I always had the best interests of Loughton and Chigwell at heart and she said she thought I would make an excellent MP. Just as my council career started with Councillor Tony Swallow's remark about how I deserved to win the seat from him, I now finished my council career with this comment from Councillor Lilian Scott. Perhaps some of the Tories weren't so bad after all!

In spite of Mrs Scott's kind remarks, however, I had already decided against pursuing a political career. I had become more and more involved with my trade union, the CPSA, and decided to spend more time on that than on local (or national) politics. I did stand for the new Epping Forest District Council but for Loughton South, where I thought I had little chance of being elected, a feeling that was proved to be right.

However, that wasn't quite the end of my actions as a councillor as two days after that final meeting, my last act as a councillor, again connected to local history occurred on 15 March, when I took part in a ceremony to mark the opening of the new library and museum complex in Traps Hill as, in those days, the Urban District Council was very much involved in the governance of local libraries. I had been working with local studies librarian, Chris Johnson, for a number of years (both before and during my period as a councillor) to set-up a local history museum, which at last had come to fruition. The ceremony involved the dropping of a time capsule into the new complex.

And then it really was all over as Chigwell Urban District formally came to an end at midnight on Sunday, 31 March and with it my time as a local councillor.

Norman Jacobs

Mike Alston

Michael Alston passed away peacefully surrounded by his family at Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, on 7 January. He was born in Loughton in 1924 to parents Margaret and John, and he had one sister, Diana. He went to Felsted School and in 1942 joined the Royal Navy aged 18. He first served in HMS *Middleton*, an

Arctic destroyer which escorted merchant vessels carrying supplies to just beyond the Arctic Circle on three convoys. After gaining his commission in 1943, he served in fleet minesweepers in the Mediterranean until 1946, rising to the rank of sub-lieutenant. After a career at ICI, in 1991 he completed his life's work *Destroyer and Preserver – The Story of HMS Middleton & Her Ship's Company*, which was published in 1993. Mike was the secretary and a founding member of the HMS Middleton L74 Association, established in 1985.

Towards the end of the nineties, Mike campaigned for an Arctic Star medal to be issued by Britain and, in 2013, he was one of 40 veterans to be awarded the medal at Downing Street.

Other medals Mike earned for his service included the Russian Arctic Star, the Russian Ushakov Medal for bravery and the French Legion D'Honneur for bravery.

Mike for a time lived in Traps Hill and was a regular contributor to the *Newsletter* – a photo of him receiving his Arctic Star medal from then Prime Minister David Cameron is in *Newsletter* 202.

With thanks to the *Maidenhead Advertiser*

In tribute to Mike, we republish his article from *Newsletter* 190 of Sept/Oct 2011.

Loughton bus services in the 1930s

My memories of those distant days – some 80-odd years ago – could well contain inaccuracies, but may help others to reconstruct Loughton's road transport system at that time.

In the very early 1930s the LGOC (London General Omnibus Company) operated two local services – No 100, which ran between the Elephant & Castle in London and either Loughton Garage at the bottom of Goldings Hill or 'Epping Town' (the addition of 'Town' has always intrigued me, as I don't know why the additional appellation was considered necessary). The second service was No 138 between London's Victoria Station and Loughton's 'The Crown' Hotel. Both services had double-decker buses, mostly the NS model first introduced in 1925, which had solid rubber tyres and so produced a bumpy ride. A few years later this model was replaced by the LT, which had six pneumatic-tyred wheels, but still retained an outside staircase. In due course another model, ST, appeared, complete with inside stairs between the two decks. About this time several things happened. There was a short period, I think called 'deregulation', when a number of different companies were allowed to operate. One was Western Superways, which had single-decker brown coaches, and another was 'Yellow Tiger' which had lighter brown coaches. However, these 'pirate' or independent operators, as they were called, didn't last long. In July 1933, the London Passenger Transport Board unified all bus services and the words 'London Transport' replaced 'General' on bus sides. Also changed were the route numbers, from 100 to 10A and 138 to 38A.

Around 1935, London Transport introduced the Green Line coach services in the Loughton area. These single-decker vehicles were distinguished by their

comfort, and that they were more speedy as they had far fewer stops than the red buses. Loughton had two routes – No 718 between Epping and Windsor, and No 720 between Bishop's Stortford and Aldgate. On the question of stopping places, there was a significant change in 1935. Up till then it was (surprisingly) permitted to hail a bus anywhere between official stops – although, often, the bus driver pretended not to see, and simply swept past. From then on this practice was, sensibly, withdrawn.

A well-remembered feature was the ticket inspector, a formidable figure in black-capelet-fitted raincoat, who would board a bus unexpectedly and check every passenger's ticket. This meant that conductors had always to be careful when issuing tickets, to ensure they had punched the correct destination. Thus, tickets in those days were elaborate affairs with a different colour for each value and with dozens of destinations printed on them. All these coloured tickets were held clipped to a long wooden board, starting with one (old) penny in white, and moving up the price scale. One curiosity I remember was a small one and a halfpenny pink ticket whose use I never discovered. I once asked a conductor, who smiled, and said it was for people who took up one and a half seats! In contrast to the black-coated inspectors, drivers of the buses wore long white coats during the summer months. While they looked smart, it seems odd today that they were so well-dressed as, inevitably, the coats were easily soiled and must have cost a lot in laundering!

If there is one outstanding memory, it is of our favourite conductor, Don, who was often on the bus taking several of us youngsters to school in Woodford. Now and then he would walk up and down the bus calling, 'All fares please', while studiously ignoring the hands holding up our tuppences. That is until an inspector was believed to be ahead; usually signalled by a conductor on a bus coming in the opposite direction. He would then rush around collecting our money and issuing tickets.

Mike Alston

Support for Holocaust Survivors Exhibition



A group of boys evacuated from the Second World War concentration camps and housed in Loughton is the subject of a planned exhibition by Epping Forest District Museum.

A £59,600 National Lottery Heritage Fund grant has been secured for the project which explores the

story of the holocaust survivors sent to Holmehurst hostel, Loughton. The dates of the exhibition at the museum in Waltham Abbey depend on the Covid 19 instructions.

The youngsters were part of a contingent of child refugees brought to the UK under a government agreement following the liberation of concentration camps in 1945.

Hostels

The first group was taken from Theresienstadt concentration camp to Prague, flown to Carlisle Airport and on to Windermere in the Lake District where they were housed on an old RAF base to recover, rehabilitate and learn English. From here they were sent to hostels across the UK.

This project focuses on the 23 boys sent to Holmehurst, Loughton (now in Buckhurst Hill, after parish boundary changes in 1996) and the staff who supported them during their time there.

Holmehurst in Manor Road, Buckhurst Hill, is now a private house, but for 12 months it was home to these boys recovering from their experiences in the concentration camps.

The Holmehurst story

'The Holmehurst story is a little-known or forgotten piece of Epping Forest District history', said Councillor Nigel Bedford, Cabinet member for Community and Partnerships:

Money raised by National Lottery players has made this exhibition possible. It marks 75 years since liberation of the camps and includes objects from the Jewish Museum and Imperial War Museum, London, along with first-hand accounts from the survivors themselves.

Among the Holmehurst boys are:

Ben Helfgott – former Chairman turned President of the '45 Aid Society who became an Olympic weightlifter and was knighted by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2018 for services to Holocaust Education.

Gary Winogradski – one of the Schindler boys.

Roman Halter – trained as an architect but went on to become an artist, creating artwork to portray his Holocaust experiences.

Harry Spiro – frequently speaks about his Holocaust experiences in schools and to other audiences.

Objects featured in the exhibition include items from Belsen, Auschwitz and Theresienstadt camps familiar to the 700 or so child survivors.

Survivors

The exhibition will also showcase facsimiles of memory quilts made by survivors, their families and the '45 Aid Society, for the 70th anniversary of the end of the war. The '45 Aid Society is a charity set up to support survivors across the UK and is helping the museum with this exhibition.

Alongside and prior to the exhibition there will be a programme of workshops with members of the local Jewish community, school pupils and museum visitors. Activities also include work with the local

Integration Support Service as an opportunity to celebrate the successful integration of migrants and refugees within the district, also subject to Covid 19.

As part of the project's legacy, a learning resource for schools will be produced along with a local history publication by Loughton & District Historical Society to ensure this important local story continues to be told.

Loughton Carnival



I was interested to read of the Loughton Carnival in *Newsletter 223* (pages 1–2). The pictures seen here of the carnival were taken from the bedroom window of 24 Highland Avenue, Loughton, which was my wife Valerie's family home about 1954/55. The procession was going to the LNER sports ground at the end of Highland Avenue, about 100 yards to the left of the pictures. Incidentally my grandfather was the

groundsman there. The fair used to come to this area for many years, I'm not sure when it stopped coming.

The picture is of me dressed as Hank the Cowboy. I was about 7 or 8 years old. Hank was a ventriloquist's dummy operated by Francis Coudrill (1913–1989). They had a cartoon/puppet show on the children's 1950s TV show 'Whirligig' called 'Hank Rides Again'. Some episodes can be found on



Youtube.

As far as I remember the carnival met in Staples Road, Loughton, and I was offered a donkey to ride

on, which my father led. He told me afterwards that the donkey kept treading on his foot!

I have found a video clip on www.eafa.org.uk (which is the East Anglia Film Archive) about a reporting-to-printing of an article in the *West Essex Gazette*. It centres on Loughton fair and in it there is a shot of the fair's programme which shows the date as 19–26 July 1952. If you want to look at it, it is listed under educational – local newspaper production of the *West Essex Gazette* in 1952:

<http://www.eafa.org.uk/search.aspx#&page=1&navid=&tagid=437%2c%2c%2c&psize=10>

I would be interested to know whether anyone else can remember the carnival (it gets a brief mention in *The Loughton Roding Estate – from Cattle Grazing to Double Glazing* by Alison Whiting (LDHS, 1998)).

David Thame

Can anyone identify these images?

A long shot, I know, but these unidentified images have come into my collection recently, and it would be great to identify the people and the places.



The first, *may* be the Princes Road school, in Buckhurst Hill, but the only clue is the III in front of the child at the far right of the front row. There seems to be a sprinkling of home-knitted cardigans and jumpers such as I remember from my primary schooldays in the 1960s, but it could be earlier. A few home-cut hair styles, too, with uneven fringes for both boys and girls. The classroom is wood panelled, with a threadbare curtain at the window.



This second image is labelled an 'East End double wedding' but that's all! Lots of moustaches, and two beards, one particularly fine. Very grand, flowery hats for the ladies, and hats for most of the children, too. In the background is a large gate and, beyond, the backs

of a pair of terraced houses; could the photo have been taken in a stable yard, or a builder's yard, perhaps?

Both images have come to me as scans or photocopies, so any markings on the backs of the originals are missing. Can anyone identify them? **Lynn Jones**

The death of Mrs Edward North Buxton

Emily Buxton, the widow of the late Edward North Buxton, died last October after surviving her husband five years. For a short time after their marriage, at the ages of 21 and 20, the young couple came to live at the Brewery, while they were looking for the home they soon found in Knighton. It would not be true to say that Mrs Buxton enjoyed her stay in the East End; in fact she always referred to the Board Room as that 'dreadful drawing room'. It must have seemed like a prison to her, for she had spent all her childhood in the little village of Tittleshall, buried in the heart of Norfolk, and when she came to the Brewery, had just returned from a honeymoon trip with a partner whose journeys always avoided the beaten track.

From Egypt to Palestine, Damascus, Constantinople, and then home by boat up the Danube to the centre of Europe, which was not so easy a journey then as it is today. One incident of the trip may be worth recording. They set out from Jaffa on the coast straight across country to Jerusalem with a donkey and a local guide. Whether the guide really lost the way, or merely felt that two was company [and] three was none, is a matter of conjecture, but whatever the cause, he deserted the party and Mr Buxton was left to his own resources, without a map, in a country he did not know, the night coming on, and only the stars to guide him. After the manner of his own heart he took a short cut straight across the hills, and those who knew him will no doubt suspect that he thoroughly enjoyed his experience, but both of them have confirmed that when, at about midnight, the lights of Jerusalem showed up in the distance, they were not a little relieved. The gates of the city were locked and barred and, after much banging, the guard was awakened, and they and their donkey were admitted to find shelter, if not comfort, in a small inn.

Although Mrs Buxton never accompanied her husband on the longer trips that constituted his main holidays, she went with him on a number of occasions to the Alps and the Pyrenees. His first trip to the Pyrenees was in search of a suitable place for her to undergo a rest cure. The search took him to the little village of Gavarnie, then quite unknown to tourists. From the door of a local inn he espied a chamois, borrowed an ancient weapon from his host, stalked and shot the chamois, and immediately telegraphed home that he had found the very place for the rest cure. That was the beginning of the long and happy connection of the Buxton family with one of the loveliest and steepest corners of Europe.

This article reads as if the couple with which it deals were always on holiday. That is very far from the truth. The interests of both were many sided, and if they were energetic in their pleasures, they were still more so in the serious business of life. In the London County Council, Board of Education, in Parliament, the Essex County Council, as Verderer of Epping Forest, as Chairman of Quarter Sessions and Chairman of the Commons and Footpaths Association, Mr Buxton's time was occupied so fully that it is difficult to imagine how he found opportunity to work at the Brewery; and indeed it is not in the details of the work at Brick Lane that he will be remembered, but rather as a member of the Board, and as the Trade's chosen

representative on licensing questions, who could look at questions from a rather wider aspect and with a judgement ripened by experience, gained in many fields.

No one who had seen him at work would ever have refused him as an arbitrator. He was in his element, extracting with a genial humour evidence from a nervous or ignorant witness, and at his best giving an impartial judgement in a case.

The characteristic of the impartial umpire gave him, above all else, the position that he held at Truman's when Chairman from 1897–1911. His judgement was always sought; it gave him his position at Quarter Sessions where no successful appeal was ever made against his decisions, and it gave him the power to settle, without leaving any sense of bitterness, a long list of disputes over open spaces and footpaths.

There was another trait which added spice to his character – he loved a fight, just as he loved a close finish to a game. In the days of the struggle for the opening of Epping Forest to the public, in which he fought in the front rank, it was not sufficient for him that the unlawful enclosures should be given back to the forest, he must himself pull down the fences and smash the locked-up gates. Whether in a fight for the people's rights, or in a tight corner on a mountain, he never seemed to understand the meaning of the word fear.

He could be violently obstinate, especially in small things, and if he were told that a certain thing was impossible and that another was easier, he would for a certainty choose the first. He was quite conscious of this side of his character, and secretly enjoyed the frequent chaffing he received from Mrs Buxton on the subject.

Her interests lay mainly in local charities, but she followed public events closely and held many definite views which were considerably more to the right than her husband's, a fact which added life to the discussions and was a constant source of enjoyment to the whole family. Some of her money had its origin in a strange way. Her grandfather, Admiral Digby, had a dream while on board his flagship, in which he heard a voice saying 'Digby, Digby, go to the north'. Seeing no particular reason why he should go in any other direction, the Admiral put his ship about and obeyed the mysterious call. Before long, a Spanish galley was sighted, chased and captured. It was full of treasure and some of the prize money was eventually inherited by Mrs Buxton.

It would be natural to expect that in a married life as completely happy as theirs, the two would have possessed a number of common tastes. That was not the case, but though different in many ways, they seemed to complete each other, the one supplying what the other lacked. To his restless energy both in work and play, she acted as the soothing influence – the person who could say with effect – 'I think you went too far'. She was by nature rather nervous and in many ways reserved, so that his enthusiasm and utter lack of fear gave just the support she needed.

Her eyesight began to fail some years before the War, and since 1914 she was entirely blind. To minimise the distress of that affliction was Mr Buxton's main concern throughout his later years. In a thousand little ways he was constantly trying to keep up her spirits and pleasure in life, and although at first she had times of great depression, with his help she fought it down, and regained her interests so that her last years were happy and serene.

From *The Black Eagle Magazine*, the annual publication of Truman, Hanbury, Buxton and Co Ltd, Spitalfields, E1 (established 1666), Volume 1, No 2, July 1930

Gas lamps in Loughton



A member asked me when gas lamps disappeared from Loughton. I think the answer is 'early 1960s' though someone may correct me!

LUDC gas lamps were of a standard design, with conical, not four-sided, lanterns. I think they were latterly painted cream, but that was a wartime expedient to make them stand out

in the blackout (they spent 1939-44 unilluminated). At first the gas lamps were lit by a lamplighter, with a pole and a wick, but by 1960, pilot lights and time clocks had made their appearance. The removal of these elegant lamps, and their replacement with ugly concrete electric lights, was most regrettable.

Chris Pond

Durrant's Handbook for Essex part 2

This is what R Miller Christy had to say about the Theydons:

Theydon Bois

A pleasant parish on the River Roding, containing a portion of Epping Forest. Its church (St Mary) of brick and stone, in the Early English style, was built in 1844, but six years later it was discovered to be unsound, and had to be rebuilt. It has nave, chancel, north vestry, and a tower with clock and three bells. There are a few mural monuments, a memorial east window, and a painting of the royal arms of James I. The registers date from 1717.

Theydon Garnon

The church (All Saints) consists of a lofty, square, embattled brick tower, built by Sir John Crosby in 1552, a nave with modern north aisle, and a chancel. The south porch is of timber, and the octagonal piers of the aisle are also wooden. The windows are mostly uninteresting, but that at the east end is a fine 5-light one of the 14th century. High up on the wall is a fine brass, representing a priest (William Kirkaby, 1458), wearing a cope. In the same position is another brass to Elleyne Braunche (kneeling, 1567). There are also fine monuments to Sir John Archer, judge (1681), Lady Anne Fitzwilliam (1602), Mary Archer (1776), and many others. The register dates from 1558. The old Court Rolls of the Manor from an early date are preserved in the parish chest. Gaynes Park Hall (S Chisenhall-Marsh Esq), approached by a noble avenue, is a fine modern stone mansion, standing on a lofty eminence in a beautiful park of 100 acres, and commanding very extensive views of the Roding valley and the surrounding country. Coopersale House (Miss Archer Houblon) is another good mansion of brick and stone, formerly the residence of the Archer family. An ancient oak by the roadside near at hand, known as the Theydon Oak, gives its name to an adjoining public house. The entire parish is picturesque and richly wooded.

Theydon Mount

Hill Hall, the property, but not now the residence, of the Smijth family, baronets, is a noble quadrangular building, of large size, very massively built, and in the Classic style of architecture, though parts of it date from 1548. The entrance hall, dining and drawing rooms, library, etc, are large and lofty apartments, hung with an extensive series of family portraits. That of Sir Thomas Smijth is ascribed to Titian, and another of Henry VIII to Holbein. The view from the south front is a fine and very extensive one, stretching over the well-wooded park to the hills on the opposite side of the Roding valley. The mansion was begun by Sir Thomas Smijth, who was born at Saffron Walden in 1514. He was one of the most eminent statesmen and accomplished scholars of his day, and held many important offices, including that of Secretary of State under Edward VI and Elizabeth. His *De Republica Anglorum* is a well-known work. The church (St Michael) was destroyed by lightning and rebuilt in 1600. It is a small building, occupying an eminence in the corner of the park, and consisting of nave, chancel, and embattled tower, all of red brick. The windows are chiefly square 2-light ones, but that at the east end has 3 lights and interlacing tracery. Within are some sumptuous monuments to the memory of former owners of Hill Hall, including a fine canopied one to Sir Thomas Smijth and his wife; another with effigies to Sir William (1626), and several others. In the churchyard is a curious epitaph to Philip Gloyns, farmer, who died in 1806. The register dates from 1564.

Lynn Jones

Another Essex will

Elizabeth Spranger of North Weald Bassett, widow, 20 January 1581

To the poor people 10s. To my sons Edward and Andrew each 5 beasts at 24; if both die before, to my daughters equally. To my daughters Joan, Helen, Agnes, Mary and Elizabeth, each 1 quarter of wheat at 24, Edward and Andrew each a bed, a quarter of wheat, and an iron dripping pan at 24. Edward my copper pan, Elizabeth my best kettle, and my daughters a kettle apiece at 24. To Robert my son £20. To my godchildren 12d apiece. To Joan and Elizabeth each a brass pot and Andrew and Edward each 3 pair sheets. The rest of my goods to Richard whom I make executor, I make overseers my brothers Thomas Jener and Robert Thurgood, and for their pains 10s each. To Richard Spranger tailor a young bullock with calf. To all my children here in the house with me all my cushions, all my pewter and my candlesticks equally divided. To Henry Spranger, my son Robert's son 10s at 20. Witnesses Thomas Hoskyn, clerk (Rector of Magdalen Laver), Richard Spranger, Thomas Benton, Thomas Jener, Robert Thurgood, 16 February 1581.

The will described above, and those mentioned in *Newsletters 220, 221 and 224*, are gratefully taken from *Essex Wills – the Commissary Court 1578–1588* abstracted and edited by F G Emmison, and published by the Essex Record Office in collaboration with the Friends of Historic Essex, 1995.

The Essex Motor Club Cripples' Fund

John Harrison writes – *Motor Cycling* of 20 October 1920 says: 'The Essex Motor Club have for a number of years organized an outing in the summer and a Christmas tree at the school for the winter, for a

number of crippled children of the East End of London. The honorary secretary of the club, Mr D S Kapadia, Holme Villa, Algers Road, Loughton, Essex, is appealing for funds for this most worthy object, and subscriptions from those willing to assist will be welcome.'

Chris Pond has been able to provide more information about D S Kapadia: Douglas Stuart Kapadia had an interesting lineage. He was the second son of Ardeshir Kapadia (1866–1927), who had been sent to England to study law by his father, a Parsee Bombay cloth merchant. He duly qualified as a barrister, but never seems to have practised widely, nor to have returned to India. He was, however, counsel for serial killer, Amelia Dyer, 'the ogress of Reading', who was hanged for murdering numerous children, on a test case of one, in 1896.

Ardeshir married Zoe Davinia Young Hamrott in Lambeth in 1886; they had four sons and a daughter, and lived in Kent, and then in Deptford, moving to Essex by 1911, when they were at Aldborough Hall, Aldborough Hatch, Ilford. Ardeshir became a member of the Ilford Urban District Council 1914–20; he was the man behind the much-missed Pioneer market which was in Ilford until 2012. He died in 1927.

Their son, Douglas Stuart, was born in Kent in 1890. He was a shipbroker, and came to Loughton in about 1914, living in Algers Road in two nearly adjacent houses, Nos 31 and 35 (Clovelly and Holme Villa), one under the name of D S Kapadia, and the other of Douglas Stuart. He had married Emily Strong in 1913, and they had two sons. Both the parents and children then seem to have dropped the surname of Kapadia; this was done by deed poll in December 1920. Douglas seems to have died in Romford in 1965. His interest in motoring is unexplained.

John Harrison/Chris Pond

Warriner's Building Supplies



This picture shows Warriner's building supplies shop, built onto a villa at the corner of Rectory Lane and Goldings Hill, in about 1928. The site is now covered by Amshold House, Lord Sugar's HQ. The little boy is Dan Warriner, who for many years ran the extant undertakers' business.

Chris Pond

Caravan weekend

Great Britain's first motor road comes in for a deal of criticism, but, on the evening of which I write, it is near deserted, and, on 'Muffin's' comfy saddle I settle back to enjoy the 30-odd miles between me and the 'Canadian Star'. Perhaps I had better explain that Britain's first motor road was constructed soon after the First World War to link London with Southend; that 'Muffin' is my lightweight Excelsior motorcycle (austere successor to the 100 mph 'Golden Flash' of happy memories), and that the 'Canadian Star' is the family caravan – named after a ship of my acquaintance.

The miles slip easily past; rain has fallen and the sweet scents of field and woodland are mine to enjoy. A fresh wind blows across from the river, meeting me strongly on the open stretches. I have regularly travelled this fine road ever since it was opened, and today enjoy my ride, for the one-time scrubby pasture-land and unkempt hedges have given place to cultivated fields, and, over the past few years, there has been a great tidying-up. Indeed, hard work and bounteous nature have changed the picture. Especially at harvest time the 'arterial' presents ever-changing vistas of colour and interest.

My young people long ago christened a certain rounded hill we passed 'Sugar Loaf Hill', and, further on, the bold ridge of hills through which the Rayleigh cutting is driven, became the 'Hills of Donegal'.



The Rayleigh cutting in 1925 – rather more traffic nowadays.

Now the noticeboard welcoming all and sundry to Southend-on-Sea is passed, and shortly I turn off the arterial road into a different world. The straight ribbon of concrete is exchanged for a narrow, winding lane, the bungaloid growths and old motor-car dumps give place to thatched cottages, a fine old Essex church, and, strangely, an aerodrome. I pass through an ancient market square, take a road which leads to salt water and, in due time, turn down 'the' lane, enter a field beside a splendid house, and there, alone in a vast orchard, stands the 'Canadian Star', converted by my own hands from its war-time use as an RAF workshop van into a caravan – attractive in an elephantine way.

From the lofty windows I can see the sun rise over acres of fruit trees stretching almost as far as the eye can see, and beyond, nestling in the shelter of mighty elms, Brookfield Farm with its huge barns stands sharp and clear.

On this lovely evening the field of ripening corn glows with golden light as the sun sinks, throwing the coppice beyond into sharp silhouette. A lone thrush fills these magic moments with liquid song; from the nearby lake comes the throaty cry of a moorhen and the splash of a leaping carp.

After the meal is eaten and the lamp lit, mine host from the fine new house calls in for a chat over a glass of ale. He talks of his precious orchard, of the many pests (including the 'scrumpters'!) of the help given him over the difficult

years by the scientific boffins. I bring him news of outside affairs which appear to take second place to his never-ending battle to grow and harvest the perfect crop. And after his departure I turn in, gazing awhile at 'our' cornfield, now bathed in moonlight – ageless symbol of peace and nature's bounteous gifts to mankind.

Here is the brooding silence of the countryside – profound and satisfying to one accustomed to suburban life with its everlasting background of traffic noise, the raving of untrained dogs and the grunting of distorted radio. Truly a haven of peace to the light sleeper. Goodnight.

Will Francies

This was published in the *West Essex Gazette* on 17 July 1953, and is submitted by Sue Golding. For photos of the caravan, see *Newsletter* 224; for more on Will's wartime experiences, see *Newsletters* 200 and 201.

St Ethelburga's Home for Girls, Loughton

St Ethelburga's Home for Girls at Loughton was opened by the Waifs and Strays Society in 1908. It replaced the Alexandra Home for Girls in Kilburn whose cramped building stood directly next to a railway line.

The new home, located at 28 York Hill, had previously housed the Oriole Hospital and Convalescent Home, notable for being a vegetarian establishment. St Ethelburga's was officially opened on 3 July 1908 by the Bishop of Barking. It accommodated 40 girls aged 8 to 14. The house closed in 1922. The building was then occupied by the York House Hotel until it was demolished in 1930. The site is now covered by the housing of York Crescent. Photographs are available on the website www.childrenshomes.org.uk

Chris Pond

Correspondence

An American professor called me having seen the piece in *Newsletter* 142, page 3 about the ill-advised and delinquent 17th century rector of Chigwell, Dr Uty.

More on the incident and background are given in Sir Simonds d'Ewes' journal, at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=G14r93QOkWUC&pg=PA143&lpg=PA143&dq=%22emmanuel+uty%22&source=bl&ots=dnJzJgmAS5&sig=ACfU3U1ajvfiX4am5v4_XcetX88Um6dKzQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjhk-mRx8TnAhW3QhUIHb6lAksQ6AEwAXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=%22emmanuel%20uty%22&f=false

What intrigued me more was that past bits of the *Newsletter*, through the power of the Internet, attract the attention of scholars 3,000 miles away, and that they seem to regard the LDHS as an established and learned society! Below is the relevant extract from *Newsletter* 142:

A Chigwell Fragment

In 1643 the House of Commons caused to be issued a pamphlet entitled *The First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests*, which was a dossier of the sins of 100 Church of England ministers whose livings had been sequestered – that is, the ministers had been

removed from their livings at the House's insistence. The catalogue of misdeeds is a very miscellaneous one, starting with the incumbent of Arlington in Sussex, who was deprived for 18 offences of buggery, including one with a mare. Several Essex ministers are included: Humphrey Dawes of Nazeing, an habitual drunkard; Edward Alston of Pentlow for the attempted seduction of several women; and Ambrose Westhorp of Great Totham, who most unwisely compared his female parishioners with sows. Many, however, were for doctrinal misdeeds, including Dr Emmanuel Uty, Rector of Chigwell.

Uty's misdeeds were: 'That he affirmed that there hath been no true Religion in England these 40 years'; that 'he loved the Pope with all his heart'; that 'whatsoever men of holy Orders speake they speake by Divine inspiration, and that if the Devill himself would have Holy orders put on him, he would be inspired by the Holy Ghost'. He denied the King's supremacy of the Church and blasphemously stated that 'The Command of the Arch-bishop of Canterburie was to be equally obeyed with the Word of God'. More seriously for the House, he opined 'that Parliament-men are Mechanicks and illiterate, and have nothing to doe [but] to intermeddle in matters of Religion'.

Little is known of Dr Uty, but he was probably not continuously resident at Chigwell, as the Rectory was leased out during and beyond his incumbency.

Chris Pond

Correspondence: Home Guard, Chigwell



Please find the attached photograph. I have in my possession what appears to be the end of a hip flask engraved with 'Lt AP (or AF?) Spurgeon Best Wishes from 2 Pl 52 Esx Bn HG March 1943'.

The 52 Essex Battalion Home Guard was based in Chigwell. The object was found by my brother-in-law on a grass verge in Eastbourne, East Sussex, in the 1980s. I have no clue how it got there. I can find no record of a Lt A P Spurgeon on the internet. My efforts on Facebook have also failed. So if you would like it, please let me know.

Harvey Smith

Many thanks indeed for this. The 52nd Bn were indeed based in the Chigwell Urban District, but I don't know where exactly No 2 platoon operated (52 covered Chigwell, Loughton and Buckhurst Hill). I

will try to do some research, but unfortunately, the records have not survived.

My guess is that A P Sturgeon was a young man who joined the Home Guard, as many did, whilst awaiting call-up, and received the gift on joining the Army. In short, I think the proper place for this interesting relic is the Epping Forest District Museum, if they'll accept it, so yes, if you would like, we'll attempt to place it there. A most interesting relic!

Chris Pond

Should you find yourself in Shepherd's Bush . . .

And feel you miss the atmosphere of the much-missed Fairhead's of Ilford, try Dave Horatha and Co, established 1919. The website says: 'Shepherd's Bush Market opened for business in 1914. For 100 years, the traders of Shepherd's Bush market have kept the open-air stalls and railway arches packed to the gills with fabrics, food and furniture, open rain or shine, making it one of the best in London.'

Many traders in the market have passed their sites down for generations. In 1919, after the First World War, Dave Horada opened a stall in the market selling dress and curtain fabrics, household linens and menswear:

When my grandfather arrived in England in the early 1900s, he spoke very little English. Immigration officers had spelled his surname incorrectly, and it was only after he opened up the business in 1919 that he realised the name was incorrect. But he thought it would be bad luck to change the business name, so it remains Dave Horatha & Co to this day. – James Horada

Recommended not just for the fabrics sold, but the shop fittings are a gem – only the overhead cash system is missing (though they used to have one).

Visit www.horatha.com

Lynn Jones

Newspaper cuttings

Sunday customers. David Surridge, a labourer, of Epping New Road, was summoned before J Parnell Esq at the Waltham Abbey Police Court, on Tuesday last, for being in the Bull's Head Public House, Loughton, on Sunday, 5th March, during prohibited hours. Inspector Curtis, of the N Division, stationed at Loughton, deposed that at 11.30pm on the day in question he visited the Bull's Head, and found the defendant and another man in the bar, with a pint pewter pot and two glasses containing ale in front of them. He asked the defendant where he resided, and he said at Woodford. He afterwards gave his correct address, which turned out to be a distance of only one and a quarter miles from the Bull's Head. He admitted having had one glass of ale, which he had paid for, and was having another at the expense of the other man, who was a *bona fide* traveller.

Soiree dansante. The Loughton Amateur Cricket Club gave their annual soiree on Friday evening last in the Assembly Room of the Roebuck Hotel. About fifty members and friends assembled. Dancing commenced at 9 o'clock and was continued until 4 o'clock, and the proceedings were occasionally interspersed with vocal music. Mr W Geaves's Quadrille band was in attendance.

From *The Woodford Times*, March 1882

It pays to advertise

Newsletter 223 included an article by Joan Francies, 'The Francies family and transport, part 5: Francies Motor Services', primarily about her uncle's car-hire business, Francies Motor Services (FMS). This included a couple of advertisements reproduced from a scrapbook featuring the firm's advertising from 1937 to 1941. Joan has lent me this scrapbook and using this and other information from Joan and other family members, Will Francies' two daughters, Valerie Lightfoot and Carol Warren and granddaughter, Sue Golding, I can write about the business, particularly their advertising.

In my experience, if a business advertises in a local paper, unless it is something like a shop where products stocked might change or sales take place, the advertisements placed in local papers do not change often. Mr Francies, however, seems to have employed a lot of ingenuity thinking of different ways to publicise his firm.

The album starts with an advertisement inserted in the *West Essex Gazette* in Dec 1937/Jan 1938 which is headed 'Xmas Travel – Hire a Daimler from FMS and be assured of comfort allied with efficient and courteous service'. The address is given as '220a High Road (Opposite Cinema), Loughton' with 'Opening Dec 24' in brackets alongside. The cinema was demolished in 1963 and four shops with flats above were built on the site. Opposite, where the business would have been, is now a parade of shops. Another address is given, 22 Brooklyn Avenue, Loughton, a house very close to the centre of Loughton, roughly behind the cinema. 'Residence' appears next to this address. Mr Francies initially ran his business from home but it grew and he obviously acquired his own premises nearby. This is confirmed by *Kelly's Directory* for 1939 listing No 22 as 'Francies, William Richard, cars for hire'. Incidentally, the house now bears a blue plaque to Ron Greenwood, England football manager, who lived there after the Francies. Choosing to open a business on the day before Christmas seems a strange one, but no doubt there was a good reason for this. The home address continued to appear in advertising until March 1938. The business proclaimed itself as 'CAR HIRE SPECIALISTS. High Class Modern Cars – CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN or to DRIVE YOURSELF' in the advert.

The next advertisement went into the *West Essex Gazette* in January 1938 – most adverts went into that paper, but the book also includes ones that went into the *Loughton Advertiser* [sic], *Goldings Mission Magazine*, *Essex Echo*, *LPTB Timetable* (London Passenger Transport Board) and *Buckhurst Hill Cricket Club* (presumably a match programme). Goldings Mission was a 'tin chapel' made of corrugated iron; it is now Goldings Church occupying much more modern premises. The January 1938 advertisement proclaims,

FOR YOUR NEW YEAR ENGAGEMENTS Hire a Daimler from FMS and be assured of comfort allied with efficient and courteous service.

There are three circular letters in the book dated February 1938, November 1938 and April 1939,

obviously to be sent to prospective clients. Each has an encircled number on it, no doubt indicating the number of copies the printer ran off: 250, 150 and 100, respectively. The latter two offer Daimler and Austin cars and an indication of the work they were undertaking: weddings, theatre parties, race meetings, London stations, docks and airports, hospitals, conducted motor tours '&c motor repairs'. The motor repairs are not referred to in any of the newspaper, etc, advertisements in the scrapbook. Members of the Francies family tell me that no car repairs were actually carried out.

The 'conducted motor tours' require a special mention. The scrapbook includes a handbill for an Easter 1938 'Motor Tour of Snowdonia'. 'Luxury Travel by FMS Daimler' was offered at a moderate inclusive charge. Other advertising indicates the Daimlers had six or seven seats and the Austins four, so presumably this tour was in a six- or seven-seater car. There is also an article from an unnamed newspaper dated June 1938 entitled 'Rubbernecking in the Wye Valley'. This describes a motor tour by 'four young Loughtonians' including the writer, so presumably it was in one of the Austins. The itinerary seems to have been an overnight drive arriving at Ross-on-Wye at dawn with an onward journey with various stops to Aberystwyth, a night spent in Aberystwyth with the journey back the following day by a different route. Mr Francies was the 'driver-navigator' and the tour covered 500 miles. I cannot help wondering why people chose the means of transport in preference to a motor coach which would have been much more cost-effective, but presumably there was a market for such tours. Loughton and surrounding areas were quite affluent, so no doubt there was the clientele who could pay for such expensive trips.

One advert, dated 16 May 1938, offers a much shorter 'country tour' of 25 miles, costing 12s 6d in an Austin saloon with four passengers or £1 in a Daimler Limousine accommodating seven passengers. Another advertisement, dated August 1938, offers tours to Clacton, Frinton, Walton, Westcliff, Brighton, Margate, Hastings, Bognor, Whipsnade, '&c'. As the January 1938 adverts demonstrate, Will Francies was willing to exploit seasons with appropriate suggestions. In similar vein a February 1939 advert proclaims 'TAKE A SPRING HOLIDAY!' and an August 1939 one 'AUGUST HOLIDAY SUGGESTIONS by FMS.'

Given the fact that basically the same 'product' was being sold, there was great ingenuity in writing advertising copy. My favourite one comes from April 1938, helping people to remember the FMS phone number (which now seems remarkably short):

Think of a number : : : 2
Double it : : : : = 4
Add the Number you first thought of (2) = 6
And the answer is the telephone number of FMS,
LOUGHTON 246, always at your service for high-class CAR HIRE.

Another, for October 1938, picks up the title of a then popular radio programme:

'IN TOWN TO-NIGHT! (or Any Night) FMS Daimler Cars at Your Service for Luxury Travel at Moderate Cost.'

One advert, from May 1939, goes poetical:

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST or WEST
IT'S ALL THE SAME TO FMS.



Starting with the January/February 1939 advertisement, membership of the Loughton Chamber of Trade is mentioned quite frequently. A February 1940 one, however, proclaims, 'Members Loughton Chambre of Trade'! From January 1940 a slightly strange phrase started appearing in some of the advertisements, 'Loughton Branch', suggesting the business had premises elsewhere. Family members are not aware of any other premises, so maybe this was an attempt to make the firm seem larger than it actually was.

War clouds were forming when this scrapbook was compiled. This is first picked up in an April 1939 advert, 'NATIONAL SERVICE AND FMS. Local and County Authorities and the ARP Dept use our Motor Hire Service. The Volunteer for National Service has his transport problems too!' The adverts pre-date *Fawlty Towers*, but the War itself is not mentioned until a 1940 one (this page has five advertisements but just one date given, February 1940) offering, 'Cars at any time for Hospital, Nursing Home, London Stations, *Evacuation*, Local or London Journeys.' (My emphasis.) The last advertisement on this page is the only one which features pictures of any of the cars, a Daimler and two Austins, all with blacked-out headlights.

The final pages of the book are marked '1940/1'. Will Francies was called up for national service then. He served in the merchant navy as an engineer until his ship, the *Andalucia Star* was torpedoed by a U-boat on 6 October 1942 (see *Newsletters* 200 and 201). He then worked in the factory of the Wells-Brimtoy toy manufacturers in Walthamstow; though they would not have been making toys during the war.

The business seems to have closed around this time, presumably because Will had been called up. It reopened in November 1944 – no doubt as Will had been released from National Service. The business restarted on the site of one of the two blacksmith's forges in Loughton, in this instance one which occupied the site now accessed by the lane between Papa John's Pizza and Halo Hair Care. His diary for this period, which I have had access to, gives glimpses into the process this entailed as he had to attend a 'fateful interview' on 7 November 1944. This appears to relate to him obtaining petrol coupons. These were granted, fortunately for him, as his entry for 16 November reads, 'Adverts off for FMS. Petrol

coupons arrive. Happy now.' Clearly, he recognised the need to resume regular advertising. The next day's entry hints at a problem recommissioning one of his vehicles which had no doubt been laid up for a while, 'First run in car – brakes bad'. Two days later he wrote, 'Work all day with car jobs', so no doubt he carried out that repair and possibly others to the vehicle.

Two photos survive showing cars at these premises. One, showing four cars, was reproduced in *Newsletter* 225. The second photo (reproduced here) shows DLN 331, a 1937 Daimler Coventry which also featured in the four-car photo and a 1949/50 Austin FL1 Hire Car (KXH 537), the version of the FX3 London taxi which had a front passenger door and bench seat instead of the luggage compartment. Will Francies is the gentleman who appears in both the photos.



Weddings, taxi/chauffeur work and self-drive hire were no doubt an important part of the business's work. Not mentioned in the advertising is funeral work, but this was carried out (or should one say undertaken!). Will's premises were adjacent to A & P Diggens' funeral directors (they were on the site now occupied by Halo Hair Care and two adjoining shops; for a photograph of Diggens see *Newsletter* 203) and there was synchronicity between the two businesses and Will's brother, Henry, worked for them. Will often drove the hearses for Diggens.

Joan Francies has looked at his appointments diary for December 1940 and reports he had nine bookings on Christmas Day. The following day he had a famous passenger. This was the sculptor Jacob Epstein who lived in Loughton. He was picked up at 3pm and taken to Hyde Park Gate for a charge of £1 2s, about £67.70 in today's money according to the Bank of England inflation calculator website.

Will Francies' diary entries reporting the demise of the company seem to confirm the synchronicity with Diggens funeral directors. His diary entries for July 1952 report an unfortunate situation:

14.7.52 Fed up with FMS
17.7.52 No jobs.
23.7.52 No jobs for 2 days.
24.7.52 FMS 1 job desperate position now, draft letter to P & A Diggens re Lloyd.
31.7.52 FMS busier. Re-draft and type letter to A & P Diggens re transfer of FMS. Very worried.
1.8.52 Deliver fateful letter re transfer FMS to Lloyd to Alec D. What next. Awful suspense.

It is not clear what 'Lloyd' refers to, possibly Lloyd's Bank who might have had a loan secured on the premises. The 5 August entry confirms the sale of the business to Diggins at a price of £1,500, approximate £67,700 at today's prices. He subsequently writes, 'Am I lucky or daft?' Having been unsure whether selling the business was a good idea he seems to have decided it was a good one as on 27 August he writes, 'I'm dead lucky re sale of FMS'. It is difficult to account for the decline in business, but the most obvious factor would seem to be increased car ownership resulting in less need for their services.

John Harrison

Miss Morrell of Loughton County High School

I wonder if members of the Loughton & District Historical Society might be able to help me with an enquiry, please? I am completing a biography of Dr Harold Moody, the Jamaican-born founder of The League of Coloured Peoples, a lobby for black civil rights which flourished in Britain from 1931 to the early 1950s. In 1944 the League, which for long had acknowledged the role of the school curriculum in shaping children's racial perceptions, produced a thoughtful report entitled *Race Relations and the Schools*, which contained suggestions of how racial ideas might be gradually changed by an amended curriculum.

Among the several 'educationists' who contributed to the report was Miss J M Morrell, an English teacher at Loughton County High School. I have found online a photograph of her, and a note that she was still teaching at the School into the early 1960s, and I suspect you may have members who were taught by her, perhaps even knew her personally. I do not know how Harold Moody came to know her. It may have been through his Christian connections: he was a leading Congregationalist, President of Christian Endeavour in the 1930s, and chairman of the London Missionary Society in 1943, and probably by his preaching, well-known to large numbers of people across the country. I would be grateful for your help in asking if any members knew Miss Morrell. I am pleased to see that the Loughton & District Historical Society is a member of the British Association for British History, the trustees of which I currently chair.

David Killingray

Janet Morrell was born in Neath on 8 October 1906 and died in Hounslow in 1977. She was living in 1939 with Miss Eleanor Verini, the headmistress of Loughton CHS, at 55a Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill. Number 55, known as Maybank, was divided into flats by then. This is very close to the Buckhurst Hill Congregational Church. The Congregationalists did not have a separate chapel in Loughton, but had joined with the Baptists to form the Loughton Union Church. They were much stronger in Woodford and Buckhurst Hill nearby. Christian Endeavour flourished also in the Loughton Methodist Church.

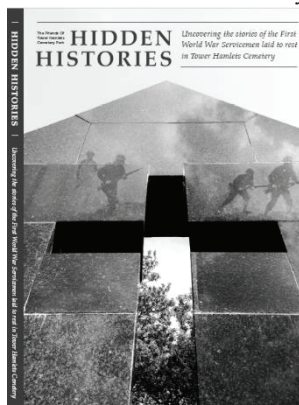
I am wondering if Miss Morrell knew the South African novelist, Peter Abrahams, who lived in

Loughton with his British wife, Daphne, from about 1950, who is known to have entertained other black activists in his house.

Chris Pond

Hidden Histories

A hefty tome has been produced by the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, called *Hidden*



Histories. It tells the stories of 204 service personnel who lost their lives during or shortly after the First World War, and are recorded on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission War Memorial, located just inside the entrance to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. The book follows the lives of those, mostly

but not entirely, born in the East End, who regardless of their varied service, ended up in the cemetery. A great deal of genealogical research has been undertaken by the team, some of whom are members of the East of London Family History Society. The cemetery is now closed for burials, but is well worth a visit. The book, funded by the National Lottery, is ISBN 978-095-647-7934.

The book can be ordered for £14.99 plus £4.50 postage from The Friends of Tower Hamlets, Cemetery Park, The Soanes Centre, Southern Grove, Mile End, London, E3 4PX.

Editor

Correspondence concerning Mr Bass and his Alvis car

I found your website during a Google search. I was researching a pre-Second World War resident of Loughton, one Eric W Bass who lived at 'The Elms', Church Lane in Loughton and I discovered through your excellently indexed Newsletter (*Number 181*) that unfortunately he had died in a Japanese POW camp in the Second World War – a very sad end. My reason for researching him was that he had owned an Alvis sports car in the mid-1930s.

I am the Technical Advisor for a motor club, the Alvis Owner Club, and I am researching the owners of a particular type of Alvis car, the 'Speed Twenty' model, of which there were only 350 of the early versions manufactured between 1931 and 1933, one of which was owned new by Mr Bass. Many of these cars belonged to interesting people and I am researching them one by one. Curiously 120 of the 350 cars still survive including Mr Bass's, although it is now residing in Australia!

We know Mr Bass bought the car new from Charles Follett, the London Alvis distributor in Berkeley Street, W1. Follett received the chassis from Alvis on 11 November 1932 and sent it to Vanden Plas for the sports body to be constructed. Curiously Follett's started the 12 months' guarantee date (we have the guarantee card) to Mr Bass on 13 December 1932 so perhaps Mr Bass drove it home to have it for Christmas 1932 and registered it in early January 1933

making the car a 1933 model, more profitable when selling! Don't suppose we will ever find out and its unimportant anyway!

Mr Bass used his Alvis car for motor sporting events and took part in at least one 'Colmore Trial' in 1933 when he came second and I discovered a photograph of the car, on that event.



My reason for contacting you to is to discover if Mr Bass or his family were well known in the area and if there are any interesting anecdotes relating to him or them, or indeed, if any of his family/descendants are still around as they may be interested to know his old Alvis survives. The photograph shows Mr Bass in action in his Alvis during the event mentioned.

Nicholas J Simpson

Technical Advisor, Alvis Owner Club Ltd

The Elms was very large house on an acre or so of land. It was demolished around 1970 and replaced by a whole street, called Elmores. My first trace of it is 1931, and the owner is given as Mrs Catherine A Bass. She was about 60 in the mid-1930s. She kept a Mr Ogilvie and his wife in a separate dwelling at the Elms; he is listed as chauffeur. Telephone: Loughton 404. The house occupies an acre plot, so they must have been moneyed folk. Eric W Bass himself is listed in 1937 as the occupier of Chalford, Traps Hill. I think this house has been replaced. Bass is a well-known name hereabouts, from the building firm based in neighbouring Chingford, (J W D Bass and Sons).

Chris Pond

Eric Bass is mentioned in an online guide to memorials in Loughton and it says there are memorials in both St Mary's church and also St John's; that's logical as it is situated in Church Lane, where he lived before the war. I wonder if he is mentioned on the town war memorial for the Second World War? [Apparently not – Ed.] He was a Lieutenant and died in a Japanese POW camp in 1944 so may have been on service in Malaysia until it was overrun by the Japanese.

We have an owner for the Alvis named D M Drew of Barrow-in-Furness in 1938, presumably after Mr Bass sold it and nothing then until it appeared in Queensland, Australia, in 1954 registered with a

Queensland plate Q391351. Nobody knows how it came to be there. The present owner has owned it for many years and bought it in Australia and has no information. It's been on a Victoria, Australia, plate GCY057 for some years with the current owner, Barry Gough.

It would be very interesting to look up EV8741 at Chelmsford (Essex Record Office) and see if there is anything else recorded – maybe a later owner(s) which would be super for our records and for the current owner. Normally, up to the 1970s owner changes were passed back to be recorded at the original registration authority so there may be something in Chelmsford.

Nicholas J Simpson

Ripley Grange

Following initial (but happily unfounded) resident concern, LRA councillor and our chairman, Chris Pond, has secured the statutory listing of Ripley Grange, its garden buildings and outhouses by Historic England at Grade II*.



This mansion, situated in its own grounds off Debden Lane (which has recently changed hands) was designed by Wallis Gilbert and Partners (a firm better known for art deco factories) in 1930 for Charles Frederick Clark ('the carbon paper king').

Grade II* is the highest grade of listing apart from Grade I (which covers medieval cathedrals, the Tower of London, etc); there is only one other building of this grade in Loughton, which is the Warren House, the Forest HQ.

Editor

Loughton blue plaque – The Rev William Dawson

At a gathering following a meeting of New Vistas club on Tuesday, 21 January, the latest Loughton blue plaque was unveiled on the wall of the Loughton Club. The club was 'built, founded and endowed' by the Rev William Dawson in 1901 and opened on 13 July of that year. The inscription quoted is on the label attached to the portrait of Dawson by George Lance Calkin (1859–1936), p 16, which is inside the club, on the wall of the staircase. The portrait was presented to the club by its members, having been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1903. The portrait of Dawson by Calkin has been somewhat damaged by the passage of time.



William Dawson was born in Hopton, Suffolk, in 1836, the son of the Rev Henry and Susannah Rebecca Dawson. His father was the Rector of Hopton. William and his brother Henry (who was in the 6th Dragoon Guards) were both educated at

Harrow School as their father had been. William left Harrow in 1854 and studied at Exeter College, Oxford, gaining a 1st class BA in law, followed by an MA in 1863. He, like his father, became a Church of England clergyman, and was Rector of St John's Clerkenwell from 1870 to 1893, of which he wrote a history. He was Warden of the Finsbury and East London Polytechnic from 1893 to 1899 (later Queen Mary College) and on his retirement came to live in Loughton at a house called Susancroft (later High Gables; demolished), in Upper Park. He was Honorary Assistant Priest at St Mary's, Loughton, from 1893 to 1911. He did not marry, and the 1901 and 1911 censuses show him living in Loughton with a housekeeper, Mary Taylor, and a servant, Elizabeth Angelina Good. Rev William Dawson died in 1927.



The plaque being 'unveiled' by Deputy Mayor and LDHS member, Tessa Cochrane.



The plaque unveiled on 21 January 2020.

The Loughton Club is described in the *Kelly's Directory* of 1929 as:

built in 1901, [it] is a structure of red brick, erected by the Rev W Dawson MA for the benefit of the village, and consists of reading and billiard rooms and a large room used as a gymnasium and for concerts, etc.' The new Pevsner guide describes it as – 'brick, partly rendered, with a segmental pediment over the entrance and octagonal lead cupola hinting at Queen Anne Revival. Probably by Horace White.

George Lance Calkin (1859–1936)

Calkin was born in London, to Emily and George Calkin, a musician and composer. He was educated at a private school and then attended the Slade School of Fine Art and the Royal Academy Schools. His principal works were portraits of King Edward VII, King George V, the Marquis of Camden and Joseph Chamberlain. Calkin married Alice Annie O'Brien (1870–1957) in Camberwell in 1891; they had three daughters. In 1895 he became a member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters. Calkin died in 1936 in Fulham.



George Lance Calkin

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Wikipedia

Lynn Jones



Ripley Grange in colour, see page 15.

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