LOUGHTON AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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54th Season

Mary Anne Clarke (1776–1852) and Loughton Lodge

Some members may recall the article that I wrote in March 2008 (*Newsletter 177*) about the scandal in the early years of the nineteenth century which involved the selling of commissions in the army by Mary Anne Clarke, a mistress of Frederick, Duke of York (1766-1827), second son of George III, and the links with the novelist Daphne Du Maurier, and Loughton.

Title page from *Investigation of Charges brought against HRH the Duke of York by Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle, Member of Parliament for Oakhampton,* 1809.
Frederick, Duke of York, the sketch is not by Rowlandson.

I recently acquired two leather-bound volumes of the proceedings before a House of Commons Committee, published in 1809, when the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, was accused of being complicit in the scandal. The volumes also contain delightful hand-coloured engravings by Hopwood, from sketches by Thomas Rowlandson, of 14 of the principal individuals involved, including Mary Anne Clarke, and they are believed to be 'fair likenesses'.

The inquiry occupied 12 parliamentary days, and became a piece of public theatre, with the pert and saucy Mrs Clarke, who cheerfully admitted all the charges and implicated the Duke, the star attraction. However, in the subsequent debate in the House the charges brought against the Duke were rejected by 364–123 votes, but on a second motion the vote was against his complete exoneration, and the Duke resigned as C-in-C on the next day.

Mary Anne Clarke from a sketch by Rowlandson

A mass of literature about Mary Anne Clarke appeared after the parliamentary investigation in 1809, some of which was inaccurate, and the caricaturists and satirists had a field day. A couple of years later it was revealed that Mrs Clarke had received payment from the Duke's chief accuser, and the Prince Regent reappointed the now-exonerated Duke as Commander-in-Chief.

As indicated in my earlier article, a daughter of Mary Anne Clarke married Louis-Mathurin-Busson du Maurier, and was the great-grandmother of the novelist Daphne du Maurier (1907–1989). In 1954 Du Maurier wrote a novel based on her great-great-grandmother's life entitled *Mary Anne* and included many references to Mrs Clarke staying at Loughton Lodge. (I have a copy of the first edition published by Victor Gollancz. The book has been reprinted at least three times in paperback in 1992, 2003 and 2013.)

Du Maurier acknowledges in her novel that much research for the book was done at the British Museum

and in the Public Record Office, and in the book's dedication she states that Gertrude Lawrence was to have acted the part on the stage, had she not died in New York in September 1952. I therefore think that we can assume that much of the story in the novel is based on the facts as recorded in various contemporary journals, newspapers and books.

As far as the two volumes of the parliamentary proceedings are concerned they provide confirmation that Mary Anne Clarke periodically resided at Loughton. Only a couple of references are made to Loughton and they relate to the period after Mary Anne's relationship with the Duke of York had been terminated in 1806, but before the charges were brought against him in Parliament in 1809. (I am grateful to Chris Pond for assisting in finding this link.)

On 9 February 1809, Mary Ann Taylor, a friend of Mrs Clarke, was called as a witness before the inquiry. In her examination by the Attorney-General reference was made to the court-martial of Mrs Clarke's brother, Captain Thompson, when Mrs Clarke was described as a widow of Loughton Lodge, Essex.

In her novel Daphne Du Maurier links the visits to Loughton with William Coxhead Marsh. He was supposed to be a friend of the Duke of York who lived in Essex and had much property in the county, and his name crops up in the novel no less than 15 times.

The *Victoria County History for Essex* (vol 4) refers to the Coxhead Marsh family of Gaynes Park in Theydon Garnon parish, and says that William Coxhead Marsh inherited the estate in 1811 although he may have been living there since 1806. The family owned much property in this part of Essex and it is likely that he offered Mary Anne the use of Loughton Lodge as a refuge from London when the scandal was the talk of society.

I have also looked at other manuscripts in the British Library, the Essex Record Office and in the Berkshire Record Office at Reading, but they all concentrate on the details of the scandal involving Mary Anne Clarke, the Duke of York, and Colonel Wardle the MP who made the accusations against the Duke in Parliament.

A book was published in 1970: *By Royal Appointment – A Biography of Mary Ann Clarke, Mistress of the Duke of York,* by Paul Berry, but this contains no references to either Coxhead Marsh or Loughton. In 2009 a book with the title *Infamous Essex Women,* by Dee Gordon, was published and this has a chapter on the Duke of York scandal and the link with Loughton.

If Daphne Du Maurier's novel is to be believed, Mary Anne made frequent visits to Loughton after her liaison with the Duke ended in May 1806, and later after the parliamentary enquiry in 1809, and two actions in the courts concerning perjury and libel, when in the latter case Mary Anne was found guilty and sent to prison for nine months.

RICHARD MORRIS

Percy Harold Chidgey

In June 2015 I visited Belgium and, staying in Poperinge, took the opportunity to visit the Bandaghem Military Cemetery. Here lies Percy Harold Chidgey, of Buckhurst Hill, who is commemorated on the war memorial inside St James United Reformed Church.

Percy Harold Chidgey was born on 3 February 1891, and was educated at Bancroft's School. He was the son of Hugh Chidgey, an architect and surveyor, who was twice Mayor of Stepney. Percy worked as a surveyor before joining the RAMC on 20 May 1915, later receiving a commission into the Royal Engineers in 1916. He landed in France on 2 January 1917 and began his work of guiding the building of the vast network of trenches and the construction and maintenance of roads and railway tracks. In April 1918 the Germans launched a series of massive counter-offensives. The British were forced to withdraw to a defensive line near Ypres, and Percy was wounded during the battle and died of wounds in Belgium on 12 April 1918, aged 27. Percy's father Hugh was, as Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel, the chairman of the committee which decided upon the lychgate as the First World War memorial in Buckhurst Hill.

The Chidgey family first lived in Mile End, and moved to Wanstead by 1911, when they lived at Grove Cottage, George Lane. They are therefore also commemorated on the memorial in Wanstead United Reformed Church, where they worshipped until their move to Buckhurst Hill. In Palmerston Road they lived at a house called Magdala (now demolished) and later moved to High Clere on the High Road (which has also been demolished and replaced by flats).

To mark the connection with both Buckhurst Hill and Wanstead (where I now live), I took the liberty of planting by his grave two cuttings of rosemary (for remembrance), and signed the visitors' book accordingly.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.

LYNN HASELDINE JONES with many thanks to MAGGIE BROWN for her work *Our 15: Remembered Lives* published by Wanstead United Reformed Church in 2015, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Devil in Woodford Wells

I recently managed to acquire, through the wonders of the internet, a copy of *The Devil in Woodford Wells*, written by Sir Harold Hobson (1904–1992), the renowned theatre critic of the *Sunday Times*. The book was first published in 1946 (my edition conforms to the Book Production War Economy Standard). This is described as a 'fantastic' or 'fantasy' novel, yet full of autobiographical detail, including many references to Woodford, where the author lived.

Harold Hobson's house in Knighton Drive, which was built for him in 1937. He refers to it in the book, as being of Mediterranean appearance, and having a triangular garden.

The tale is set in 1941, and commences with a meeting at the British Museum, where a man is refused entry. The British Library Reading Room was closed during the Second World War to all other than those whose work was of 'national importance' – the author, appearing as journalist and broadcaster John Mallard, could get in, but the stranger, whose name was revealed as Enoch Soames, could not. It transpires that Enoch Soames was a fictional character in a story by Max Beerbohm; a poet who made a pact with the Devil in 1897 – he would give up his soul if only he could go forward in time 100 years to read in the British Museum how literary critics of the future would regard his poetry. Expecting to be highly regarded, but disappointed by what he read, his bargain was made and he disappeared. However, here he is in 1941, back from Hell trying to get into the Reading Room again.

Mallard invites Soames back to Woodford, where he meets Mallard's wife and daughter. Hobson's descriptions of Woodford are very interesting – he refers to the Naked Lady (meaning the Naked Beauty, or Hurst House), 'opposite to him glittered the smooth white front of the Naked Lady. The statue of the undraped girl from which the house received its name threw only a brief shadow on the grass of the lawn that ran down towards the high road . . .' is his description of the house as it must have appeared in 1808, whilst mentioning that it was painted green for camouflage during the war.

Soames, coming from Hell as he does, finds the area a little chilly, and his view of Mallard's village of Woodford is a concern, for Mallard says:

'I dwelt in a village, and a village is near to the soil, to the elemental, to things that are exempt from the restraints of a cowardly morality. Rape and seduction and lust, he gave me to understand, are the concomitants of village life. I interrupted Soames' flow of eloquence – which seemed to me to paint Woodford Wells in somewhat livelier colours than the place altogether deserves'!

The story continues as Mallard researches a famous cricket match at Woodford Wells in 1808, enlisting the help of Soames. One of the players in this match was Benjamin Aislabie, whose portrait was featured in our last *Newsletter*, in connection with the Bowls at Chigwell. It turns out that another of the star players, Lord Frederick Beauclerk, a clergyman who died in 1850, is a friend of Soames in Hell and this leads Mallard and his wife to work out that the Devil himself, who visits them in the last pages of the book, did in fact play in the cricket match at Woodford. Or was it all the work of a wartime German spy ring, trying to get information from a journalist?

Some might consider this a trifle of a book, but it is beautifully written, witty and full of detail. Although almost 60 years old, I think it deserves a place on the shelves not just of any Woodfordian, but anyone with an interest in local history.

LYNN HASELDINE JONES *with many thanks to* GEORGINA GREEN

County High School for Girls, Loughton – Preparatory Department

Following her article in the last Newsletter *about her time at Essex House Kindergarten and Preparatory School, Joan Francies continues her memories of schooldays in Loughton.*

At first this building seemed vast and intimidating to an anxious nine year old. The three preparatory classrooms were on the ground floor to the left of the panelled entrance hall. They were staffed by Miss Leahy, class I; Miss Moore, Lower II; and Miss Churchill, Upper II. The head of the whole school was Miss Verini but we only encountered her at the daily morning assembly.

During assembly a sixth former went onto the stage and read a passage from the large Bible resting on the lectern. Miss Churchill also went onto the stage and played a lovely selection of gramophone records of classical music. Then we all sang a hymn, said prayers and finally marched out to the sounds of Miss James playing stirring marches on the grand piano. To the side of the stage hung a fine portrait in oils of our very first headmistress, Miss Hall. Within a few years this would be balanced by a portrait on the other side of Miss Verini.

Outside the building there were two playing fields, a swimming pool which was out of use because of subsidence, a netball/tennis court and an underground air raid shelter. I don't remember using the shelter very much but I do recollect all of us being in the main hall for assembly when a bomb or shell fell nearby in Station Road.

Our uniform was the same as for the 'big' girls – a very dark navy gymslip over a white blouse, and a dark navy blazer with the school shield on the pocket. We were allowed to wear any summer dress (it *was* wartime) but if we had ribbons in our hair they had to

be white. I was reprimanded once because my mother had made me a dress with ribbons of the same fabric.

In the summer we had panamas, in winter the unbecoming velour with hat band. Regulation brown socks ended just below our knees and we were supposed to wear house-shoes inside the building. These were black and had a bar across the instep.

For gym lessons we stripped down to the regulation navy knickers and wore black plimsolls as we did also for games.

Geography, physical training and games were now listed on my reports but I don't remember many of the lessons in any subject except standing by Miss Moore's raised desk and crying because I couldn't understand the arithmetic. Learning by heart and reciting lots of poems came easily to me but I have no recollections of the art, dramatics or music lessons. I do, however, recall dancing 'Sir Roger de Coverley' and marching in various formations in the big hall.

Each year the Preparatory Department held a Spring Festival where different aspects of our work and interests were on display and our parents were invited. I remember mounting a feather collection which included the blue striped feather of a jay, a long tail feather of a pheasant and a lovely velvety owl feather.

In the preparatory classes we each had a shield upon which we drew and painted various devices according to which duties we had performed that year – flower monitor, form captain, head girl of Preparatory Department . . . no doubt there were others. We learned the heraldic names for the colours we used – azure, gules, vert, sable, etc, and at the end of the year we held a ceremony in the big hall where a scroll was presented to the teacher in charge and a description of our amended shield was read out. When we had drawn and coloured our 'new' shields they were hung in the corridor outside our classrooms.

In summer 1944 I was particularly looking forward to this ceremony but it did not take place and I didn't have the courage to ask why.

That autumn I became part of the 'big' school and one day went to look at my shield. They had all gone! So, too, had the Preparatory Department.

JOAN FRANCIES

Prairie Wolves in Epping Forest

We have received from Mr A D Bartlett, the superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, some interesting information in reference to a new addition to the collection of animals in Regent's Park. Mr Bartlett writes:

> Some short time since a gentleman called upon me at the gardens and offered to present to the society an animal that he believed to be a prairie wolf. He mentioned some particulars concerning its history that caused me not at once to accept his offer, fearing that the animal might prove to be a useless mongrel. At the same time, I asked his address and promised to call and see the animal. Accordingly I went to Leytonstone, and on my arrival I inquired for Mr R Payze, and found the gentleman who had so kindly offered the animal in question. He was very pleased to meet me, and introduced me to what I at once pronounced to be a veritable prairie wolf (*Canis latrans*). The history of this animal I give as near as possible in Mr Payze's words. In the month of May last year some men who were on their way to London with cartloads of hay told him, on their coming through some part of Epping Forest, they had found or caught three fox cubs, and they had them in a sack tied to the tail of the cart. Believing them to be fox cubs, he bought one of them for a few shillings, and the men went on their way towards London. The animal was at that time so small that it could be put into a pint pot, and I have every reason to believe the following narrative will fully explain what otherwise would appear a strange mystery. Mr Payze introduced me to Mr Swan (who was formerly a servant to Colonel Howard), and he told me that some few years ago four cubs were brought to England in a ship belonging to Mr J R Fletcher, of the Union Docks, and were turned down (supposed to be fox cubs) in Ongar Wood, which joins Epping Forest. These cubs were brought home in a box and kept for a few days at Colonel Howard's, the Goldens, Loughton. They were then taken to the late Mr Arkwright's, master of the Essex Hunt, and were turned out at Marl's Farm, and the man Swan was present when they were turned out. I have also been informed that from time to time an animal, supposed to be a large grey fox, has been hunted, but never caught, always escaping into the forest. I think it highly probable that some of the same kind as the animal now in the gardens still exist in the forest, as this species of wolf is not much larger than a large male fox, and, not having any scent like the fox, would not be likely to get killed by foxhounds or followed any great distance by them.

Subsequently, in company with Mr Bartlett, we visited Epping Forest, and from the inquiries made we have little doubt as to the fact of the animal in question having been born in the forest. Swan and other persons who have been acquainted with the forest for many years told us they well recollect the circumstance of the 'strange animals from foreign parts' being turned down, and we expect shortly to have further confirmatory evidence from others who were present on the occasion. When first born, the prairie wolf might readily be mistaken for a cub fox. Mr Payze, who is a lover of animals, and has from time to time kept many tame foxes, was under the impression until quite recently that 'Charlie', as the animal is called, was a fox. As it developed, however, he noticed several points quite distinct from the common fox, and as, moreover, the animal (although quite quiet with his children) showed unmistakable snappish tendencies towards strangers, he decided to consult Mr Bartlett, with the result that the superintendent of the Zoological Gardens has pronounced it to be, without doubt, a prairie wolf. From the inquiries we made, we think there is every probability that the prairie wolf has bred pretty freely in the forest. The less frequented parts of it are quite suited to the habits of the animal. There he can find plenty of food, and is comparatively free from molestation. Many old frequenters of the Epping woods told us they had seen 'curiously coloured fox cubs' which had been captured, while more than one informant spoke of the 'large grey fox' mentioned by Mr Bartlett. The hay carriers, who are constantly going to and fro, are keen poachers. Passing through the forest during the night and early morning, they let no opportunity escape to capture anything that comes in their way. We know as a matter of fact that numbers of cub foxes and other animals are taken by the hay carriers every year. If they are not disposed of on the way they are taken to Leadenhall Market, where they are readily sold; and it is highly probable many a cub prairie wolf has been sold in

London as a cub fox. The animal in question is now deposited in the bear den in the Zoological Gardens.

The Times, Monday, 21 July 1884

Wanstead Round Table Book Club 1916–2015: part 1

Despite its title the Wanstead Book Club always had strong connections with Loughton (many of its members were drawn from Loughton Methodist Church, including several of the ministers), while from 2003 until 2015 the Club met in Loughton Library. However, due to the increasing age of the remaining members and the failure to recruit significant numbers of new members, it was decided that the final meeting would be in June 2015.

For some years I had provided a home for the archives of the Club, the most significant of which were the records (minute books) from 1927 to 2003 of every meeting, which provided summaries of the discussion of every book considered in the period. I thought that this might be a valuable and interesting historical resource and therefore offered the archives to the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, who were pleased to accept them. I also wrote a history of the Club, below. In the next *Newsletter* will be an analysis of the books considered.

Background and general history

The club was founded in 1916 by the Rev T Henry Fenn of Hermon Hill Methodist Church and held its first meeting in September that year when Rev Fenn presented a paper on the book *Day-dreams of a Schoolmaster* by Darcy W Thompson. This information comes from a booklet describing the history of the first 50 years of the club (1916–1966).

While the information in this booklet is quite limited it does give a list of all the books discussed and in the great majority the dates, their presenters and the members of the Club over this period. It also lists the 11 rules of the Club which, we are told, had not been altered in this period.* According to this history of the first 50 years a previous account had been prepared covering the first 40 years, which would appear to have been a more substantial volume, but there is no trace of this among the archives inherited by me. The history written for the 50th anniversary includes a reasonably full account of the previous 10 years and refers the reader to the 40-year history for the earlier period.

*I discovered by chance that this was not quite true. In March 1931 it was agreed that the maximum number of members be increased from 20 to 25.

Supplementary lists give the titles of the books considered between 1966 and 1976 and between 1976 and 1986, together with the presenters' names, but there is no sign of any other later attempts to produce a conflated history. The history of the years between 1956 and 1966 allude to some issues which have arisen in greater form later. The rules restricted membership to 25 but already by 1966 there are references to membership being below this figure and attendances having declined. The rules do not refer to the sex of the members but it was clearly assumed at this time that they would be all men although apparently there was a woman member in 1917 although this abbreviated account does not give the reason why she (a Mrs Addis) was the only one until the 1980s. In a way which today seems somewhat patronising this history speaks of the ladies' contributions in terms of lending the Secretary a pair of spectacles, and, of course, preparing the refreshments, for, as required by rule 5, the meetings took place in members' houses. Apart from the list of books considered there is rather little said about them in the abbreviated history.

It may be of interest that George Archer, the Secretary who would have prepared this history (he was Secretary from 1960 to 1970) was a relative of mine.

The bulk of the material comprising the archives is the set of minute books. These covered the period from 9 July 1927 to 10 November 2003. Neither at the beginning nor at the end is there any mention of minutes being a new venture, nor of a decision to cease producing them. Therefore, it is possible that there were records before 1927 and perhaps for a period after 2003 although as the November 2003 meeting is right at the end of a minute book it is probable that it was subsequently decided to discontinue them rather than start a new minute book. Increasing concern had been expressed in the minutes during 2002 and 2003 about declining membership and attendance although the only agreed change to which I can find reference was to move from evening meetings to afternoons.

Certainly by the time I joined in September 2005 there was no question of minutes being produced. Since the meeting in November 2003 was held at the home of Paul Goddard it appears that the decision to stop meeting in people's houses and move into Loughton Library instead was taken at about the same time – once again I can only report that by September 2005 they were already at the Library.

A few remarks about the minute books

The vast majority of the minutes are hand-written and for this reason quite difficult to read. I have therefore only dipped into them but a few remarks are worth making.

The early minutes from 1927 are quite brief and concentrate on administrative matters such as those attending, membership and thanks to the presenters and hosts for refreshments. There were also occasional outings by car with a tea included. The presentation of a book is recorded in 4/5 lines and the discussion almost formulaically with the words 'discussion ensued in which every member took part' (occasionally it is described as an 'animated' discussion). These early minutes are quite formal recording votes of thanks and elections of officers. After 1945 the discussion of the book took up rather more space although the phrase about everyone taking part in the discussion continued with occasional references to a 'lively' or 'animated' discussion. The length of the reports of the presentation and discussion gradually expanded with the

views expressed in discussion being recorded at greater length. By the 1970s the whole report was often three pages long. It was in October 1976 that the first part-typed minutes appeared.

I have also looked at the minutes to see if any major public events were recorded or mentioned. I glanced through those for 1929–1931, 1938–1939, 1945–1946, 1956–1957 and 1972 but in no case were there specific references to the events of those years. There was a meeting of the Club in June 1939 at which a programme for 1939–1940 was approved, but the Club did not meet again until August 1945.

In the post-war years there were references to food shortages and appeals for the members to bring 'bread coupons' and 'bread units' to help the providers of the refreshments. There were also more distant echoes of the outside world. In the early 1930s several books were discussed relevant to the issues of peace. In January 1931 the book *The Christian Alternative to War* led to a few lines of description of its contents in the minutes and to the meeting being described as 'very good'. In February 1931 the book *Evolution and Creation* led to the presenter saying that a change of views had recently occurred in the Methodist Church, which was followed by a 'lively discussion'. In April 1931 *Political Thought in England* was described as 'largely a defence of political Liberalism'. In the discussion of Leslie Weatherhead's *Psychology in the Service of the Soul* (October 1931) the chairman argued that psychology 'was a science of little value, that it was dangerous to patients in many cases'.

It is not clear what 'Jewish problem' is meant in the discussion of the Biblical book of *Esther* in December 1945 but 'a fitting silence prevailed at the finish of the paper' about Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* in January 1958. This was followed by a 'discussion of a grave nature'. At that date there were some members who had served in the British forces in Germany after the War who were able to contribute personal reflections. In December 1956 a book about the Quakers led to a 'rampant discussion' about slavery.

In this context it may also be interesting to note a few comments some of which may reflect their times. In January 1946 it was suggested during a discussion of *Silas Marner* that 'George Eliot was a woman of uneasy conscience by reason of her union with Lewes and that this union had influenced the whole trend of her literary career'. In September 1938 Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* had been chosen but the presenter told the meeting that he had found this book 'unfit for the Round Table', apologised to those who had bought it, and instead talked about works by John Bunyan. In April 1947 Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea* was said to have led to 'a concensus [*sic*] of opinion that the book was of interminable length and might have been considerably shortened with profit'. It is quite a surprise to see the negative reception which George Orwell's *1984* (surely today thought a modern classic from a man seen as a defender of freedom against dictatorship) received in May 1972. The minutes say that the presenter was thanked for his interesting survey of science fiction literature but that the book was described as 'a sick book by a sick man' and as a book 'only fit for putting on the fire'.

I do not intend to say much about the members. I fear that it is a case of *sic transit gloria*. But it is worth noting that church ministers were until the 1980s regular members of the Club. Female members were first admitted in the 1984–1985 season. In September 1984 'four lady visitors' were welcomed, and in November they were 'welcomed into full membership'. Although four were mentioned three names are recorded, namely, Emily Chisholm, Bertha Matthews and Patricia Smith.

ROGER GIBBS

The Story of Debden Hall – or is it?

The following article was written by S R Cotton, and the photograph of the house was captioned:

'Although the present Debden Hall at Debden Green, Loughton, is a modern house, there has been a manor on the site for many centuries. The present occupier, Mr S R Cotton, is anxious to obtain prints and more information about previous halls. He would also like information regarding the association of the Cotton family with Essex – there is a Cottons recreation ground at Romford, a public-house named the Cotton Arms in Poplar, and in Leytonstone there is a Cottons Lane.'

The present Debden Hall, built in 1930 on the site of the manor, which had a history going back almost to the time of the Conqueror.

An Ancient History?

Debden, variously recorded in bygone days, in different chronicles, as Depden, Deepden, Depdon, Dependon, Dependana, Dependin, from Saxon words all of which meant 'a valley', is a small hamlet situated about mid-way between Loughton and Epping, a mile and a half south of the main road linking these two places and thirteen miles from London . . .

Siward Uld is recorded as holding the lands at the time of the Confessor. At the time of the great survey the lands belonged to one Ralph Peverel,[1] the whole being eventually divided into six manors, of which it appears that Debden Hall or Debenhall was one.

William, grandson of the Ralph Peverel mentioned, succeeded to the estate of the hall (the division of the land into six manors seems to have been prior to this, as is also the adoption of the name). He lost it, in common with all his other possessions, in 1153, when he was disinherited by Henry II and had to flee the country for the crime of poisoning Ralph, Earl of Chester.

In 1155 Henry II gave it to his own son, John, Earl of Mortain, who on succeeding to the Crown conferred the estate on Geoffrey Fitz-Piers, Earl of Essex, whose daughter Maud conveyed it by marriage to Henry de Rohun [*should*

read Bohun], Earl of Hereford. He was succeeded by his son Humphrey, the grandson of the same name, who died in 1298, and in turn by his great grandson, Humphrey de Rohun [*sic*], Earl of Hereford and Northampton, who died in 1372, having married Joan, daughter of Richard, Earl of Arundel, by whom there were two heirs, Eleanor, who married Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, sixth son of Edward III, and Mary, who married Henry, Earl of Derby, afterwards Henry IV. Lady Eleanor had one son and four daughters, of whom Anne, the eldest, became sole heir of her mother, succeeding to a partition of the Rohun estates with the other co-heir, who was Henry V.

Hence the manor of Debden Hall became vested in the Crown as part of the Duchy of Lancaster and was part of the jointure of the queens of Henry V, Henry VI and Edward IV.

It was conveyed by grant (recorded value at the time being about £33 13s 4d) by Henry VIII to Thomas, Lord Audley, from whose only daughter it descended to her son, Thomas, Howard de Walden, Earl of Suffolk, in whose family it continued till 1660, when it was sold by James, Earl of Suffolk, to Thomas Grove, who in turn sold it to Sir Richard Browne, Bt. The latter died in 1672 and was succeeded by his son, Sir Richard, who married Frances, sister of Sir Robert Atkins, who was at that time Chief Baron of Exchequer. Both Sir Richard and Lady Atkins died in 1685. It is recorded that one died first and the other died within a space of three days of a broken heart.

Sir Richard had sold the estate in 1680 (that is five years before he died) to John Edwards, whose son and heir, Henry, sold it with the manor of Deynes[2] to Richard Chiswell in July 1715. This Richard Chiswell was the son of Richard Chiswell, merchant, of London.

Richard Chiswell, the son, erected (or re-erected) the mansion of Debden Hall itself in the year 1715. According to the records so far traced regarding the actual architecture itself, the south-east side was built in Grecian style, ornamented with massive pillars. This would seem to be the main side, or front, of the mansion.

Late in 1929 the hall was destroyed by fire and the site came into the possession of Mr Austin. In the following year Mr Austin had the present hall built on the existing site. Mr Austin died in 1936 and the hall passed into the hands of the trustees until January 1948, when it was purchased by Mr T W Parker. S R COTTON

*Essex Countryside,*Vol 9, No 56, September 1961

[**Notes**

1. In the 1777 Chapman and André map Peverells Wood is shown between Saffron Walden to the north and Debden to the south.

2. A house called 'Deans' is shown to the east of Debden House in the Chapman and André 1777 map – to the south of Saffron Walden.]

In fact, in the above article, apart from his opening comments about the origin of the name Debden, only the very last paragraph is likely to be true. *All his other remarks relate to Debden Hall*, SAFFRON WALDEN!

There is a plan to rebuild Loughton's Debden Hall and agents for the applicant have submitted a document to Epping Forest District Council referring on a number of occasions to the history of what is the wrong Debden Hall.

Prints of the House

We even have prints advertised as being of Debden Hall, Loughton even though they are of the other Debden Hall:

Bartlett, William Henry, 1809–1854, Debden Hall, Essex – The Seat of Sir Fras Vincent to Whom this Plate is Respectfully Inscribed

London: George Virtue, 1835. A pleasant antique print of old Debden Hall at Loughton – a view of the graceful house from the water. Engraved from an original study by William Henry Bartlett and originally produced for *The History and Topography of Essex* published in parts from 1831 onwards.

Neale, John Preston, 1780-1847: Debden Hall, Essex

London: Jones & Co., [1831]. A pleasant antique print of old Debden Hall at Loughton - a view of the graceful house from the water. Engraved by T Matthews from an original study by John Preston Neale. Originally produced for the part-work *Views of the Seats, Mansions, Castles, etc. of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England* (London 1829–1831).

Both images from www.ashrare.com

Victoria County History

The present Debden Hall was built about 1930 to replace a previous building on the site which was demolished in the previous year. A photograph of the earlier building (c1898?) shows a large house of two stories and attics having a pedimented doorcase and a long range of outbuildings. The house appears to have dated from the early 19th century.'

Debden Hall in 1920, before the fire

The Chapman and André map of 1777 shows a building called Debden Hall, occupied by Alex Hamilton, Esq. It also shows the other Debden Hall,

near Saffron Walden, as being occupied by Richard Chiswell, Esq.

Some occupants of Loughton's Debden House

Alexander Hamilton was a London solicitor, the son of Scottish antiquarian William Hamilton (died 1724). He married Charlotte Styles and in 1744 he moved her remains, and that of three of his children to Loughton. His son Anthony Hamilton (1739–1812) became Rector of Loughton in 1804 and was buried there (Richard Morris *A History of St Nicholas' Church Loughton* (LDHS, 2015) and Wikipedia).

Further information is provided on the website of Debden House (www.debdenhouse.com):

Debden Green and Debden Hall can be traced back to 1777 where they are shown on Chapman and Andre's Map of Essex. Debden House was a section of Debden Hall, and there is a record in 1851 of Essex magistrate John Williams owning the Debden Hall Estate, which included Debden Green House (the present Debden House). On the death of Mr Williams in 1883 the estate was purchased by Joseph Thomas Palmer who owned the printing ink manufacturers Slater and Palmer in Marshgate Lane, Stratford. Mr Palmer resided at Debden Hall with his son and sister-in-law and seven servants. Mr Palmer died in 1898 [*sic*] and his son-in-law Mr Clarke occupied the Hall until his death in 1917.

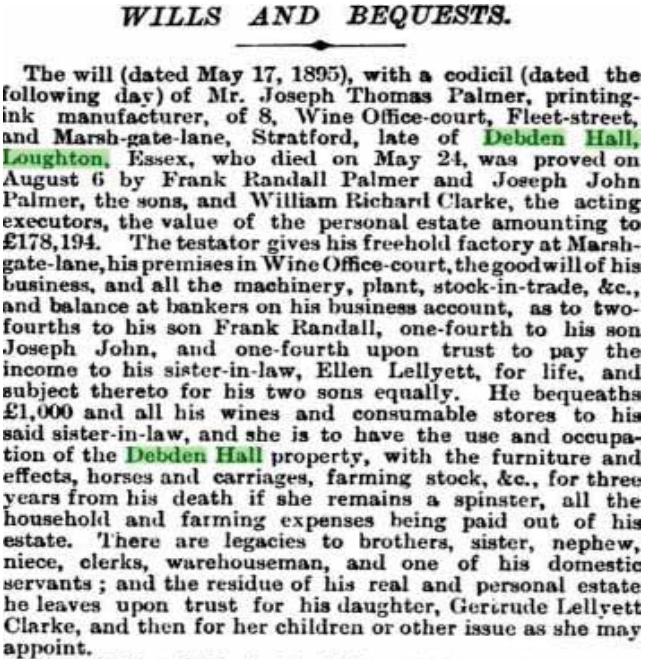
The whole estate, which includes Debden Hall, The Mount, Debden Green House and Debden Green Farm, was put up for auction on 8th October 1920 and sold in lots. Mr Edward Green purchased Debden Green House in 1920 and lived there with his family.

In 1946 after an extensive search for a residential education centre, East Ham Borough (now the London Borough of Newham) purchased Gould's Farm, the land adjacent to Debden House. The following year it acquired Debden Green House, re-uniting a large part of the Debden Green Estate. The official opening of the 'Residential Adult Education Centre' took place on the 25th February 1949 and was performed by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Knight.

This is more like the truth. *John Williams* referred to in the above section certainly lived at Debden Hall (from censuses from 1851), from where his sister's death was announced on 10 June 1863 (Miss Mary Williams, aged 80, late of Elm Grove, Mortlake, Surrey: *Essex Standard,* 12 June 1863) and his death was announced in *The Times* of 9 January 1883: 'on the 4th inst. At his mansion, John Williams esq of Debden Hall, Loughton, Essex, in his 92nd year.' The same newspaper announced the sale of the property on 14 April 1883:

By order of the trustees of the will of the late John Williams esq of Debden Hall, Loughton, Essex, in the parishes of Loughton and Theydon Bois, adjoining Epping Forest – very valuable and important freehold residential and building estates (a small portion copyhold), beautifully situate amidst the charming scenery of and adjoining Epping Forest, about half a mile from Theydon Bois, a mile and a half from Chigwell Lane, two miles from Loughton station on the Great Eastern Railway, and only 14 miles from the Metropolis; distinguished as Debden Hall, consisting of a picturesque and well-built mansion, replete with every accommodation for a family, delightfully placed in a sheltered position in a park, adorned by grand old forest trees, pleasure grounds, lawns, shrubberies, shady walks, wooded dells with running stream and waterfall; lodge entrance, productive walled kitchen garden, vinery, ample stabling and outbuildings, extensive farm buildings and about 143 acres of well-wooded park-like pasture, meadows, arable and woodland. A comfortable detached freehold residence, extensive stables, buildings and about 22 acres of meadowland, known as The Mount; an attractive freehold detached residence distinguished as The Beeches, with gardens, pleasure grounds and about 34 acres of park-like meadow pasture and arable land forming in its entirety a most enjoyable pleasure farm; a pretty detached freehold cottage residence with greenhouse and garden known as Elm Cottage and containing an area of nearly half an acre, a capital detached residence known as Debden Green House, with stabling, gardens and paddock containing altogether about 2 acres, a very important freehold property known as the Birch Hall Estate, of about 136 acres of grandly timbered and undulating land with a large frontage to two roads, adjoining and having magnificent views of the lovely scenery of Epping Forest, and possessing some of the most beautiful sites in the county for one or more residences, or is admirably adapted for subdivision for a building estate, when by the formation of new roads many thousand feet of building frontage might be obtained; numerous cottages, gardens and building land the whole estate containing an area of nearly 350 acres . . . to be sold Friday 1 June 1883.

Joseph Thomas Palmer, who appears at the Hall in the 1891 census (in 1881 he was a manufacturing chemist in Walthamstow) in fact died in 1895, aged 54, his death on 24th May of that year being announced in *The Times* on the next day.



WILLS AND BEQUESTS.

The will (dated May 17, 1895), with a codicil (dated the following day) of Mr. Joseph Thomas Palmer, printing-ink manufacturer, of 8, Wine Office-court, Fleet-street, and Marsh-gate-lane, Stratford, late of Debden Hall, Loughton, Essex, who died on May 24, was proved on August 6 by Frank Randall Palmer and Joseph John Palmer, the sons, and William Richard Clarke, the acting executors, the value of the personal estate amounting to £178,194. The testator gives his freehold factory at Marsh-gate-lane, his premises in Wine Office-court, the goodwill of his business, and all the machinery, plant, stock-in-trade, &c., and balance at bankers on his business account, as to two-fourths to his son Frank Randall, one-fourth to his son Joseph John, and one-fourth upon trust to pay the income to his sister-in-law, Ellen Lellyett, for life, and subject thereto for his two sons equally. He bequeaths £1,000 and all his wines and consumable stores to his said sister-in-law, and she is to have the use and occupation of the Debden Hall property, with the furniture and effects, horses and carriages, farming stock, &c., for three years from his death if she remains a spinster, all the household and farming expenses being paid out of his estate. There are legacies to brothers, sister, nephew, niece, clerks, warehouseman, and one of his domestic servants; and the residue of his real and personal estate he leaves upon trust for his daughter, Gertrude Lellyett Clarke, and then for her children or other issue as she may appoint.

The will of Joseph Thomas Palmer was detailed in the *Morning Post* of Friday 30 August 1895

The Mr Clarke mentioned above was married to J T Palmer's daughter Gertrude at St John's Loughton on 8 August 1890. She died in her 45th year in 1912 and he died in a London nursing home on 5 June 1917.

The property was sold in 1920 and there was the following description:

An auction in 1920 broke up the estate; the farm and the land were purchased by Essex landowners Gould's limited. The farmhouse, known as Debden Green House, was subsequently bought by William Edward Stevens. Debden Hall was sold as a separate lot on 8 October 1920 and the residence was described as facing south, overlooking the

well-timbered undulating park in which it stood, and was approached through iron gates, with stone columns and ball pediment, by a carriage drive 300 yards long, through an avenue of lime and horse chestnuts, terminating in a broad sweep in front of the house.

There was a flagged terrace on the south and east fronts with well-kept lawns sloping to the gravelled paths through the gardens. The pleasure gardens had been laid out with great care and taste and were beautifully timbered with clumps of specimen trees and flowering shrubs, rose beds and pergolas. There was a most delightful rock garden with lily pond profusely planted with many kinds of alpines and other plants and adjoining was a rustic arbour screened by rambling roses. A stream with rustic oak bridges led to picturesque walks with a profusion of wild flowers dividing the lawns from a strip of woodland. In the park was an ancient tumulus.

The walled kitchen garden was well stocked with fruit trees with a range of span-roof greenhouses and vinery, potting sheds, tool house, etc, and a brick and slated fruit room. Debden Hall and grounds in 1920 extend to around 5.634 acres while Debden Park extended to 16.949 acres.

Ground Floor – dining room, drawing room, breakfast room, billiard room,* ballroom, domestic offices

First floor – 10 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms and 2 bathrooms

Second floor – 6 maids' rooms, box rooms, etc

Stabling for seven horses

Garage for six cars

* There is an image of the billiard room taken by Bedford Lemere Company on 31 August 1908 on the website for Historic England (www.viewfinder.historicengland.org.uk)

This is from the sale document of 1920 available on:

http://planpub.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/00487880.pdf

Mr Cotton above has not proved very reliable so far. He then refers to a fire in 1929, with the site then coming into the possession of a Mr Austin.

Thomas William Parker

An article appeared in the local *Epping Forest Guardian* on 8 February 2008, concerning the researches of Leslie Jerman. Again the building of the house by Chiswell in 1715 gets a mention. The article then goes on with Mr Jerman saying:

It was later acquired by the Austin family, who ran a large furniture business, and Mr Austin built the new hall in 1930 with materials and fittings in the mansion coming from America.

The estate passed into the hands of trustees until January 1948, when it was bought by Thomas William Parker. Another potential buyer had been Sir Stafford Cripps, the former Government minister.

After the last hall was burgled in 1960 it was sold to a builder and demolished. Part of the land is now covered by houses and called Ripley View.

The last person to live in the hall, Godfrey Parker, who now lives in Wiltshire has just got in touch with me. He heard of my search via a letter in the *Guardian* on the internet. Mr Parker and the internet have put the hall back on the map again. In a letter, he said:

> 'I was away at boarding school, and it was clear to me that my home was unlike that of the other boys. We had staff at Debden Hall. Living in were a housekeeper and maid. In addition there was a dairy maid, two and sometimes three full-time gardeners plus a chauffeur.
>
> One of the gardeners informed me that prior to the war there were 20 gardeners. The stream had a waterfall, and water from here could be diverted into ponds in the rockery.
>
> Many guests came to play tennis, snooker, table tennis and cards – usually about 12, but it could be 20 . . .'

Mr Parker was born in Chigwell in 1939, and eventually left Debden Hall in 1958 to start his own business next to the Atomic Weapons Establishment of Aldermaston. His father, Thomas William Parker, was a civil engineer, who built many houses.

Mr Parker said: 'I have looked over many houses in my time, but have never seen a house containing the superior quality construction of Debden Hall. I still feel my home and roots are in Loughton, and I am very fond of the area.'

Thomas William Parker had a somewhat chequered career:

Counsel prosecuting for the Inland Revenue alleged at Stratford Magistrates' Court yesterday that Thomas William Parker, who was a millionaire, and also owned the Colony Restaurant in Mayfair, had defrauded the country of nearly £65,000 over 12 years by making false annual returns in respect of three of his companies.

Parker, of Palace Green, Kensington Palace Gardens, appeared on 22 summonses accusing him of causing false trade returns to be delivered between 1950 and 1960, while another alleges that he conspired to produce false accounts of a company between 1949 and 1962.

Appearing with him on the conspiracy summons was Albert Edward Bassett, an insurance broker, of the Causeway, Sutton, Surrey . . .

Mr David Tench, for the prosecution, alleged that Parker set out on a deliberate path of fraud so that the amount of income tax to be paid by his three companies was substantially lower than it should have been.

Parker had used nine different systems to bring about the fraud in relation to the three companies of which he was managing director and in complete control.

Mr Tench said that Parker formerly lived at Debden Hall, Loughton, Essex, and the wages for two of his gardeners had been put through the books of one of his firms, Home Counties Plant Hire, as though they were employees of this firm. The cost of the oil used for heating the hall was also included in the firm's books.

Another instance outlined by the prosecution was £8,000 spent on Parker's luxury Kensington flat but which he put through the books of a building firm formed specially to develop a housing estate . . .

The Times, Friday, 11 September 1964

He was sentenced to three years on 24 November 1964.

John Giles Austin

He was born in Holborn in 1870 and married in 1890 Flora Louise (Bramston). Their children were John James (1891), Frank (1892), George Frederick (1893), Cecil Bramston (1897) and Queenie Flora (1900). In 1891 the family were living in East Ham and J G Austin was the manager of a saw mill. In 1901 they were in Green Lane Gardens, Romford, and he was a timber merchant. By 1911 J G Austin and children John, George and Cecil were at Seven Kings, Ilford; Flora appears to have separated and was in Ilford

with Frank and Queenie and another child, Doris Louise, born in Romford in 1902.

As can be seen from the image, J G Austin was a freeemason. The obituary below (from the *Transactions of the Quantuor Coronati Lodge*, p 142) gives his death as being on 10 February 1938, not 1936 as Mr Cotton states.


OBITUARY.

It is with much regret we have to record the death of the

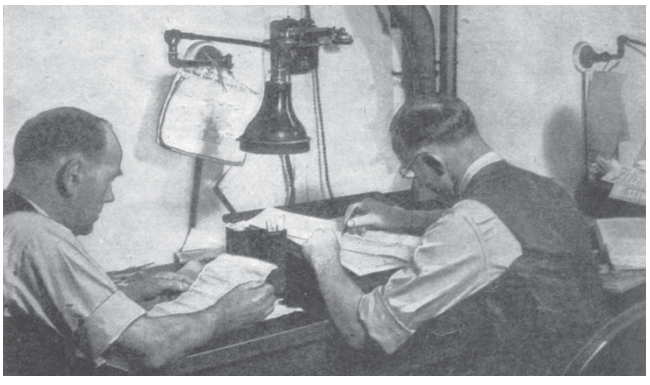
All this began by an analysis of an article by S R Cotton on what he thought was the history of his house. The true history is just as interesting. Let's hope he had better luck on the Cottons of Leytonstone. William Cotton paid for the construction of St John the Baptist Church, Leytonstone, and there is a blue plaque to Benjamin Cotton on a Georgian building at 694 Leytonstone High Road.

Compiled by LYNN HASELDINE JONES

The proof-reader: another job gone!

Many people say to me: 'Why do we get so many mistakes in newspapers these days and we even find them in books!' This is because the changes in print technology not only threw out the compositor but also his cousin the proof-reader who was also deemed to be redundant. There now seems to be a cavalier approach to 'typos' (we used to call them 'literals') and other inaccuracies, almost as if they are a necessary evil and we must put up with them. But if I find a series of mistakes in a book, then, for me, the whole work is suspect and devalued.

In 1954 I joined The Eastern Press Ltd for a job as a proof-reader's assistant (called a 'copyholder') and a traineeship as a proof-reader at 3 Chancery Lane, on the corner of Fleet Street and Chancery Lane. No. 3 Chancery Lane was then the offices of Sweet & Maxwell, the law publishers, and Eastern Press, who then printed all their law books, had its London Office and proofreading department on the third floor of the building.

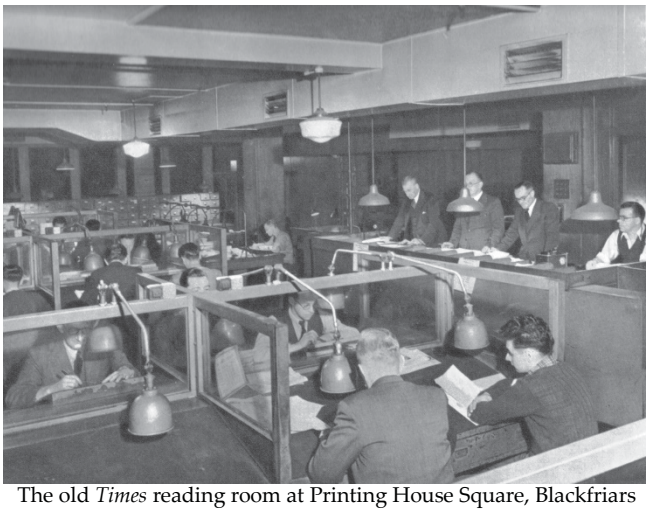


Reader and copyholder

In those days, publishers worked with closely associated printers, because of the heaviness and immovability of type and because they needed to beat deadlines to outdo rivals in the market. Eastern worked very closely with Sweets and was practically a department of the publishers

The necessity for accurate proofreading and correction of printed matter was recognised as far back as Shakespeare's day and it was well established by the nineteenth century in London and the provinces. Many well-known authors worked as readers in their early days.

Firms that produced a large amount of typesetting had a reading department, be they a newspaper, jobbing printer or book house. In big firms and newspapers this could be a large department. In smaller firms, there might only be one or two readers who would borrow an apprentice from the composing department to help them as a copyholder. In many firms new entrants, whether their apprenticeships were in composing, printing machine managing or the warehouse, had to spend a period in the reading department – a good way to enhance their literacy skills.



The old *Times* reading room at Printing House Square, Blackfriars

London proof-readers came from two sources: in firms where the London Society of Compositors (later the London Typographical Society and National Graphical Association) was recognised, they would be journeymen compositors who wanted to be readers – no qualification was required for this – the fact that the person was a compositor was thought to be sufficient. Then there were readers who had qualified by examinations held by the Association of Correctors of the Press (ACP) and they were allocated to firms (including newspapers) which recognised the ACP. There was also a 'dual card-holder' who was a compositor who had taken the ACP examination and was thus a member of both unions and could work in firms organised by either. There were also a few 'open houses' where the management did not recognise any particular union but did not mind union members working there. Obviously the unions were not keen on these, but did not seriously object provided the conditions were reasonable.

The ACP was started by a handful of readers meeting at a pub in Fetter Lane EC4 in September 1854 who only wished to form some kind of voluntary employment agency and to try to improve their conditions and long working hours. In the course of the next century the ACP became an efficient and

powerful trade union and it upheld high standards of craftsmanship by requiring prospective members to pass a practical examination, which, in my own experience, was probably the most difficult test I have ever taken.

What was the reader's duty? George Chaloner, a former secretary of the ACP, and also an experienced reader said 150 years ago that: 'the reader is the servant not of the author but of the master printer, who pays him to find out errors of compositors in putting MS into type. It is not the reader's duty to look out for authors' mistakes, but if he observes any he may query them . . .' A little later the *Daily Chronicle* said: 'Their function is to intervene between the author and compositor on the one hand and the public on the other, and to see that all printed matter is, as far as possible, purged from mistakes before it is sent to press.'

In the nineteenth century proof-readers were appreciated by the great and the good. Charles Dickens was quoted in *The Times* in 1867 as saying: 'he could gratefully acknowledge that he never went through the pages of any book he had ever written without something being presented to him by a reader – something overlooked, some slight inconsistency, some little lapse he had made; in short . . . some indication of having been followed by a trained mind and not merely by a skilled eye.'

On 5 December 1896, Sidney Lee, the editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* talked to the monthly meeting of the ACP: 'Were it put on record how many wrong dates have been set right, how many misquotations have been adjusted, how many errors in grammar or how many mis-spellings have been removed from the proofs of the *Dictionary of National Biography* by the gentlemen who correct the press, not the most peevish men of letters could withhold an enthusiastic word of commendation.'

And in 1906 from *Punch*:

Indebtedness? Yes! Where's the scribe who won't bless
Like Browning, the service extreme they render?
How many a 'masterpiece' were a mere mess
But for that true Argus, so vigilant, tender? . . .

(This was in support of a second pension for readers' widows.)

Our readers at Eastern found many queries in law books that led to corrections and rewrites and, of course, law books have to be accurate.

There are British Standards for correcting proofs, the first one was based on the traditional marks used by readers over the centuries. Then there came a later one using symbols rather than some words to bring us into line with Europe – though I never *saw* any European publisher use anything like our new Standard – though I worked with a few of them!

To correct a proof the method was to imagine a line drawn down the centre of the proof and to correct errors, working from left to right, placing the correction symbol in the left or right margin, according to whether the error fell to the left or right of the imaginary line, and making the appropriate insertion (caret) or deletion mark in the text. The secret of accurate proof-reading is to read what is actually there and *not* what you *think* is there and it cannot be done on a screen!

The proof-reader only required the copyholder's services for roughly half the time that he was working on each proof, because he would read the proof through first before having the author's copy read to him. This allowed the copyholder time to read and study – of which I took full advantage.

The next step up from a copyholder was a 'reviser' (someone who checked that the reader's corrections had been carried out properly by checking a further corrected proof against the reader's 'first proof').

When a copyholder came to the end of his 'time', and this was not fixed, usually about six or seven years, the next big hurdle was the readers' examination which was only held when the ACP had vacancies for readers on its books. I took it in early 1961. I had attended evening classes at the London School of Printing on proofreading and typesetting and had done well on the course and achieved 'first place' in my last year.

The ACP entrance examination in 1936. Notice, no ladies present! The old printing industry was an all-male industry apart from the bindery and the office.

In the examination we had to correct six proofs on various subjects, including geography, politics and literature with deliberate grammatical, spelling and factual mistakes inserted into them by experts.

I remember that I found it gruelling and convinced myself that I'd failed miserably. Although the ACP never disclosed pass marks, success was judged by how soon you were called for interview to discuss a job as a reader from the time when the results were announced. I was informed that I'd passed within three days and was called for interview the next day. So I presumed I'd done fairly well.

Eastern offered me a job as a reader so I set off to see the Secretary of the ACP at their offices opposite Dr Johnson's house in Gough Square, EC4. The

Secretary was rather an austere man and he gave me a talk on what was expected of me in my new career and presented me with my union card and a copy of the official history of the ACP, which I still have.

So into the 1960s, and I was a journeyman proof-reader at age 21.

That early experience at Eastern 60 or more years ago gave me an excellent grounding on which I was able to base my later career. Such training and experience could not be bought and it made me a great believer in the apprenticeship system which recent governments have wantonly thrown away but are now trying to recover.

The introduction of the computer and offset litho printing plus the misuse of the power of the unions led to the demise of the old newspaper industry. Computer technology was adopted by printers and publishers alike and printers these days only print and bind, the typesetting is done by the publisher or a specialist bureau and both use the author's data.

And now nothing remains of the printing trade as I knew it and as it had developed over the previous 500 years.

There are also no more professional proof-readers. Those who read proofs for publishers come to it from many other disciplines and, so far as I know, there is no uniform standard of training such as that laid down by the ACP and the printing colleges, who used to work closely together.

Proof-reading on newspapers is probably carried out by the journalist after typing his copy and/or the subeditor. In books and periodicals the publisher *should* have someone in addition to the author to read the work and this could be the copy-editor or a freelance or in-house reader. Judging by some of the results I see, even in books from university presses and the BBC, it is sometimes done badly or not at all.

Sic transit gloria mundi! TED MARTIN

Valence House

In the last *Newsletter* I wrote about the reopening of the Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey. This reminded me of another local museum which I had enjoyed visiting, so one day back in March I went again to remind myself of its features. Valence House is the only surviving manor house in Dagenham. It is in Valence Park, with its moat, and is a most interesting timber-framed building, parts of which date back 700 years. It has been fully restored and now contains galleries covering a wide range of local history. One of the oldest objects there is the Dagenham Idol, a 4,000 year old figure thought to be a fertility offering. He retains a somewhat sad smile, sitting in his glass case. There are also whale bones, explaining the name of Whalebone Lane.

The whale bones

A popular legend, repeated by Daniel Defoe in his 1724 book *A Tour Through the Whole Islands of Great Britain*, suggests that the bones came from:

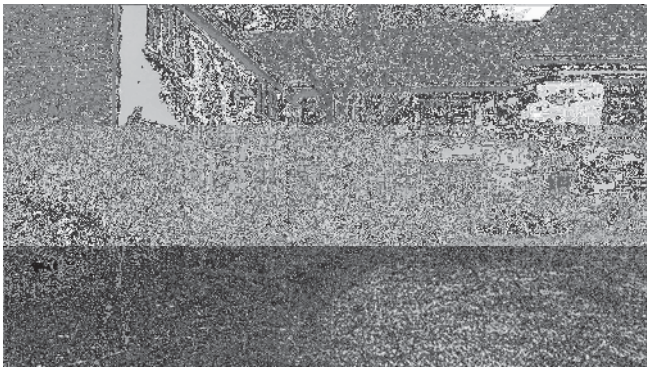
'a monstrous creature . . . being about eight and twenty foot long' that had become stranded in the Thames off Dagenham in a great storm in 1658.

The whale bones

However, historical maps show that a single whale bone had been set up beside Chadwell Heath Road as early as the 1640s, possibly for use as a cattle scratcher. The bone became a well-known local landmark.

When Chadwell Heath High Road became a turnpike road in 1721, a toll gate and octagonal toll house were built at the crossroads with the road to Hainault. The whale bone was moved to the crossroads, which became known as Whalebone Cross. At a later date, two whale bones, possibly forming an arch, marked the junction.

After the toll house was demolished, the bones were taken to decorate the entrance to Whalebone House. When that building was destroyed during the Second World War, the bones were rescued for display . . . Over the years, the whale bones have given their name to many local buildings and roads such as Whalebone Farm, Whalebone House, Whalebone Beer House, Whalebone Lane and Whalebone Library.



Valence House and a metal representation of the much smaller, and wooden, Dagenham Idol inside

The Dagenham Girl Pipers have small corner of the museum to themselves. The borough has a collection of newsreels covering local history and there is a tiny cinema with two plush tip-up seats where you can sit and watch the day's 10 or so minutes of newsreels – they are changed frequently and on the day I was there the topic was sport.

There is a good café and the same building holds the local studies and archives department.

Valence House Museum, with the Archives and Local Studies Centre is open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm.

Becontree Avenue, Dagenham, London RM8 3HT, Tel 020 8227 2034: www.lbbd.gov.uk/valence

LYNN HASELDINE JONES

Newsletter 209

We have received a number of contributions from readers giving comments on the articles in Newsletter 209:

Shops in Loughton

The references to Ford's china shop on page 6 and William Addison on page 7 reminded me that Mr and Mrs Ford and Mr (later Sir William) Addison had adjacent shops in the High Road in the 1940s. Ford's (No 171) was a most amazing shop, long established and renowned all over

Essex, for its range of fine china which was stacked from floor to ceiling, making it quite daunting for a small boy to walk around, even when accompanied by his parent.

Addison's bookshop at No 169 was a post war arrival and as far as I can recall was the only true bookshop in Loughton. Mrs Sharpe's Roses Library (No 162), Johnson's (No 142) and G & M E Charlton (No 235) were primarily stationers and newsagents – the latter two also doing daily home deliveries of newspapers. There was always a waiting list for boys wanting to do an early morning paper round to earn a few shillings a week!

I only occasionally went inside Addison's, always with my Mother, as books were primarily given as presents in those days in exchange for a birthday or Christmas book token. I recall that the shop was always deathly quiet, with a solitary Mr Addison seated well below the counter, engrossed in his local studies. We felt obliged to whisper in hushed tones, when looking round the bookshelves to avoid disturbing him! I still have a copy of his first book, titled *Epping Forest* published by Dent in 1945 which I retrieved from my Aunt's bookshelves some 50 years later, still with its pristine green cloth binding, but dust jacket missing, as it was usual to discard dust covers immediately after purchase in those days. I doubt if she had ever read it!

PHILIP SHAW

The Pantcheffs – and the *Waverley*

The Pantcheff family: I recall my mother Dorothy Dell (née Perrin) spoke of knowing a fellow pupil called Pantcheva while she was at Loughton High School. I think Dorothy won a scholarship from Woodford Green Junior School. She was born in January 1908 in a house/shop/workshop, then number 4 Whitehall Road; the house is still there but re-numbered 158. It seems likely that the person my mother recalled was probably Marika, although I cannot match up the dates.

My brother, nine years younger than me, had an 'Atalanta' kite when he was a boy and we lived at 31 Church Hill, Loughton.

The Waverley: I now live in the Southend-on Sea-area and chose to take a small group of my family on the *Waverley* to celebrate my 80th birthday last September. The trip started at 12.30 on a Saturday, the steamer had already travelled from Tower Pier to Southend with a large group of passengers who disembarked and continued their journey by coach.

Our trip was to London via Gravesend, where we picked up more travellers. Our destination was Tower Bridge which had to be opened specially for us. The bridge has the primary function of being a road and was closed again when the *Waverley* was safely in the Pool of London. It appears that the bridge also marks a change in management of the river. With the engines off we were initially tied up to the embankment wall, awaiting the arrival of the pilot boat which took us in tow and slowly turned us round in our own length and ready to return down river. The steamer needed to wait for the traffic on the bridge to cease and the bridge open again so we could resume our journey.

The chance to move around on the boat allowed a good view of all the developments within London itself including the Shard and the Cheese Grater and many smaller but equally new buildings shoe-horned into the footprints of the previous London skyline. At all times our unusual presence on the river gave us an enthusiastic welcome from the embankment walkers.

We reached Gravesend by dusk and completed our journey to Southend through gathering darkness picked out by street lights, on both sides of the estuary. Although officially closed the pier railway trains awaited our return and brought us back to land by 9.30pm. It was a long day but well worth the effort. ROSEMARY CARRINGTON

Rowantree and Ivydene, Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill

Some correction is needed to the caption to the photo of these two properties in the article about Sophocles Xenophon Pantcheff in *Newsletter 209*. The caption to the photo indicates that Rowantree (152 Queen's Road where Mr Pantcheff lived) and Ivydene (154) 'were joined together when the [Daneley Court] nursing home was created in the 1970s'. They were not in fact joined until around 1989. I should know about this as I dealt with the planning application for the link!

I have checked my facts using the Epping Forest planning registers. Planning permission was granted for the use of Rowantree/152 as a nursing home in 1983 and for Ivydene/154 in 1985. I was not involved with these applications as I was not then working for Epping Forest (or living in Loughton). I guess for a couple of years these two properties were in one ownership and operated as one business but were not physically linked.

Rowantree and Ivydene in 2009, showing the pattern of gables mentioned

My involvement came in 1988 when the applicant's agent came to see me about constructing a link between the two properties. Ivydene and Rowantree were slightly unusual houses in that their roof ridge lines were at right angles to the road rather than the more usual parallel and therefore both had gable fronts. Rowantree had a single wide gable at the front; Ivydene, two narrower gables. The agent showed me a sketch of a link with another gable facing Queen's Road. This would have resulted in four gables of different widths and heights and looked very incongruous. I thought for a few moments and sketched an alternative. This was a link with the roof ridge running parallel to Queen's Road; two storeys plus a dormer in a relatively steeply pitched roof, thus avoiding the incongruous fourth gable. The agent took my sketch away and made the application on that basis and the application was approved on 21 November 1988. A planning officer can sometimes suggest amendments to a proposal, but in this instance I think my suggestion considerably improved a scheme. One has been in planning a long time when one finds a proposal one has been involved in determining has been demolished! JOHN HARRISON

Mrs Kelsey

A follow-up to Richard Pantcheff's interesting article – I remember being taught by a Mrs Kelsey at Loughton County High School for Girls. I have looked her up in my old school reports. So far as I can tell she was only there for one term and her name was not written in full. However there are no other similar initials. In the report of summer 1946 the mark for Latin and Antiquities was signed MK. I remember she took part in the play that the staff put on each

year and seemed a friendly, vibrant and enthusiastic teacher; and with a very pleasant appearance, too.

JOAN FRANCIES

More on Capability Brown 2016

In the item in *Newsletter 209* the author refers to work by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown at Copped Hall as being the nearest to Loughton, and then points to his contributions to landscapes at Stowe, Wrest Park and Wimpole. But there is another site on which he worked which is also close to Loughton, namely, at Navestock in Brentwood district. Although the landscape there to which he contributed is now largely given over to arable agriculture, the shelter belts of trees and the lake formed by damming a local stream, which are typical features of his work, are visible, and public footpaths allow access to the area, although not to the Hall which was the residence of the Waldegrave family, who commissioned the work (the Hall was demolished in 1811).

I often walk in the Navestock area and from time to time lead walks for the West Essex Ramblers there and point to the landscape around Navestock church, the manor house almost next door and the approximate location of Navestock Hall nearby which was built early in the 18th century but then demolished only a century later. Initially an avenue of lime trees was built from the Hall to the London Road just behind the Woodman pub, but later in the 18th century Capability Brown was employed to redesign the landscape as a result of which this avenue was cut down as inconsistent with the by then fashionable idea that the landscape should look 'natural' (or, more truly, 'better' than natural).

There is a footbridge, known as Hawkes Bridge, over the Roding behind the Woodman pub as you approach Stanford Rivers on the A113, and a public footpath (often unfortunately cropped) which leads between belts of trees past the body of water known as Lady's Pond, eventually to St Thomas's Church at Navestock. Lady's Pond was created at the suggestion of Brown by damming the Wetstaff Brook which drains this part of Navestock parish.

I am indebted for this information to Keith Gardner, who wrote a booklet, *Navestock 2000* about the parish.

ROGER GIBBS

Loughton Volunteers

I am sending you this old photograph of the Loughton Volunteers taken in August 1899 in camp at Colchester. We were a company of the Old 1st VBER. [Volunteer Battalion Essex Regiment].

Our dress was black with green piping. The officer in the centre is the late Dr Butler Harris, of Loughton. He was very popular with all of us boys. Those wearing equipment are just going to mount guard. I am in the bottom left corner (kneeling). We became Territorials in 1908 and were part of the newly formed 4th Essex Regiment T-S, C Company. Our dress was changed to khaki, with scarlet for walking out, not forgetting the swagger cane.

We were in camp in Clacton on 4 August 1914. We did a bit of foot-slogging next day to Harwich (Landguard). Our transport was two country carts (commandeered), but that is another story. There are not many of us left now, but some of the younger generation may like to see their fathers or grandfathers as they were then! Dr Butler Harris was demobilised in 1919 with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

WT CHAMBERS (ex-sgt), 75 Peel Road Woodford

Essex Countryside, Vol 9, No 53, June 1961

Submitted by LYNN HASELDINE JONES *with thanks to* BILL OLIVER

A horse and his master

Everard Richard Calthrop of Goldings, with his Arab horse, Ro-Akbar, who greeted his master every morning by shaking hands.

There is a blue plaque to Calthrop, who was a railway engineer and developer of the parachute in the First World War, on his house in Clays Lane.

CHRIS POND

Owner's liability for unlicensed chauffeur

At the Epping Petty Sessions, Randolph Bingley, of Stanford Rivers, was summoned and fined £1 for employing Leonard Pascall to drive a car, who had not a licence. In giving evidence, PC Payne said defendant was under the impression that Pascall had a licence.

Automotor Journal – 6 June 1908

Submitted by JOHN HARRISON

The little blitz in Loughton

Meg Johnson of Roundmead Avenue and her letter to her family

This account was written at the time of the Little Blitz, a now largely forgotten period of the War. It was the Germans' Operation Steinbock, designed as retaliation for Allied raids on German cities, but it lacked aircraft and latterly, fuel for them. It started in January 1944 and was the last period of bombing of the UK by piloted aircraft. Meg's full name was Mabel Kenyon Johnson (1915–88).

No 67 Roundmead Avenue was a nearly new detached house built by Reader Brothers and first occupied only in 1939. At the time of writing, Meg was six months' pregnant.

67 Roundmead Avenue Loughton Essex
3rd March 1944

. . . The fact is we came away to avoid the raids last Thursday, leaving Euston at 5.30 pm – we felt we could not stand it any longer. Last Tuesday was a wretched night round us – we had a great 1,000lb bomb at the back of us again, just by the hedge by the allotments, and a dear old couple I knew so well lost their lives, they were burnt to death only 6 houses away – a phosphorous bomb went straight through their house.

Loughton (our end) was showered with incendiaries and altogether it was pretty awful. Poor Mum was in a bad state, for she rushed up the road thinking of my friend who is expecting her baby in April (the house hit was next door to her) and the flames coming out and Mum knowing the couple were inside just made her feel ill – she really was in a bad way – and then 4 of us sleeping in the shelter was just too much – I could hardly move! Sue was very nervous, she always has been of the bombs and the poor little soul seems to always have to know just what they do. However, to cut a long story short, we took flight and came home – lucky for me the house is not damaged – the huge bomb was one of those piercing bombs and fell on soft earth. The crater is frightening – had it gone on the cement road outside, I'm afraid we should not have been here to tell the tale. I think we had a good escape.

Well . . . , things have moved fast since then – I have put my house in the auctioneers' hands and it is to be sold by auction on 29th March (I hope we can get the other things in hand before then) and I rang Maples and many other firms about moving my stuff – and Maples were the only ones who would do it, and they are moving me out this next Monday. Mum and I are travelling down early Monday morning, probably leaving Crewe about 4 o'clock in the morning – and we hope to get away the same night.

We have been house-hunting since arriving here [in Cheshire], and have found one very nice one – we may know something about it tomorrow, but I shall probably have my furniture sent here unless we can settle this house quickly until something suitable comes along. I guess something like the bombs just had to make me get a move on and my word I have moved fast. Otherwise I should have gone on quite happily down there and no doubt found in the end that I couldn't move until the end of the War.

Everything . . . is in order except that we have to get Reader Bros. to sign a statement to the effect that the £1,050 on my house is a mortgage. Ron then has to go before a committee and apparently they deduct death duty – then it has to be reclaimed. I was wondering if you could write to Mr. Reader or the solicitor – whoever you think best – and ask for the statement.

The Little Blitz was not much documented until 2014, when John Conen, who gave a paper that year at the Loughton Festival Second World War study day, wrote his book, *The Little Blitz.* Other local damage occurred on 18–19 April at Leytonstone railway station, which was largely demolished, and the Wesley Hall belonging to Loughton Methodist Church, which was destroyed when bombs were dropped in Habgood Road, again with loss of life.

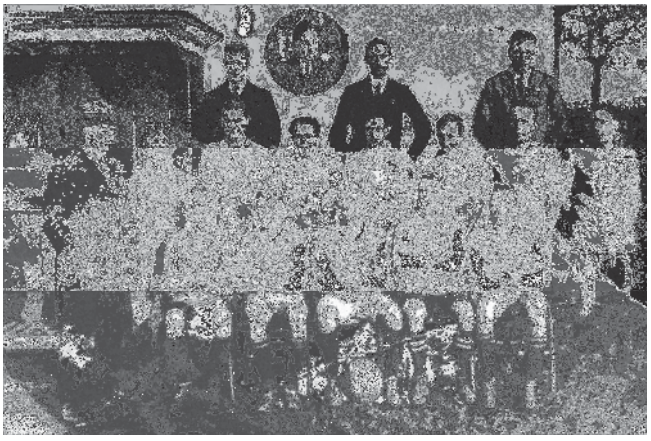
The people killed were Swiss citizen, Charles Albert Winterfeld, 60, and his wife, Maud Sophia, 61, of 73 Roundmead Avenue and the date was 23 February 1944. They are commemorated on the Loughton Civilian War Memorial at the Police Station.

We are indebted to Meg's son, now living in New Zealand, for this account.

Submitted by CHRIS POND

Football in Loughton

A friend of the LDHS saw a couple of photos of Loughton football teams on e-bay, and bought them. Does anyone know what Loughton PC Football Club was, and where the picture was taken? I was wondering if photo No 1 was in St John's Parish Hall before the wcs, etc, were built on the end facing Church Lane. It may be even that some of the faces are known to some of you!



LPC 1921-22

Photo No 2 may be the Loughton Club.

Loughton 1923-24

We know this is our Loughton, as the photos are signed by Beckett, the local photographer.

CHRIS POND

Essex Motor Cycle Gymkhana

Very entertaining was the annual gymkhana held on Saturday last by the Essex MC on the cycle track at High Beech. Many of the events were of a novel character, one specially amusing being the chicken stealing race in which a lady passenger had to secure a chicken from a hencoop, run with it to the car, the race then continuing back to the finishing line. Miss Davies was the first to bag her bird, but she was beaten in the race to the post by Mrs Brown, driven by Mr Bates on a Ford car. One of the most successful competitors was Mr G L Fletcher on a Douglas motor cycle, he winning no less than four events, including the belt fixing competition, apple bobbing, needle threading, and musical chairs. Tilting and lemon cutting was won by Mr L A Baddley, while the flower competition went to Mr Bates on his Ford car. *Automotor Journal*, 2 September 1911

Submitted by JOHN HARRISON

Loughton an island?

Among the defence measures proposed in 1803 to repel the threatened invasion by Napoleon was the

flooding of the Lea Valley. It would probably have meant just the high points of Loughton and Chingford above the flood with the Roding flooding as well and the waters stretching right across to Enfield! This is revealed in *Britain against Napoleon: The Organization of Victory 1793–1815*, by Roger Knight, p 276:

Rather more dramatic was the scheme to flood the Lea Valley to the east of London to stop an enemy advance after a landing on the Essex coast. A dam and a 'floating gate' were constructed at Four Mills, Bow, under the supervision of John Rennie, who considered it would take 26 days stoppage of the river before the flooding was complete. Under his direction it was partially completed, but abandoned after the end of the first invasion scare in 1805.

Submitted by TED MARTIN

A wintry scene

A wintry scene taken in Manor Road in 1968.

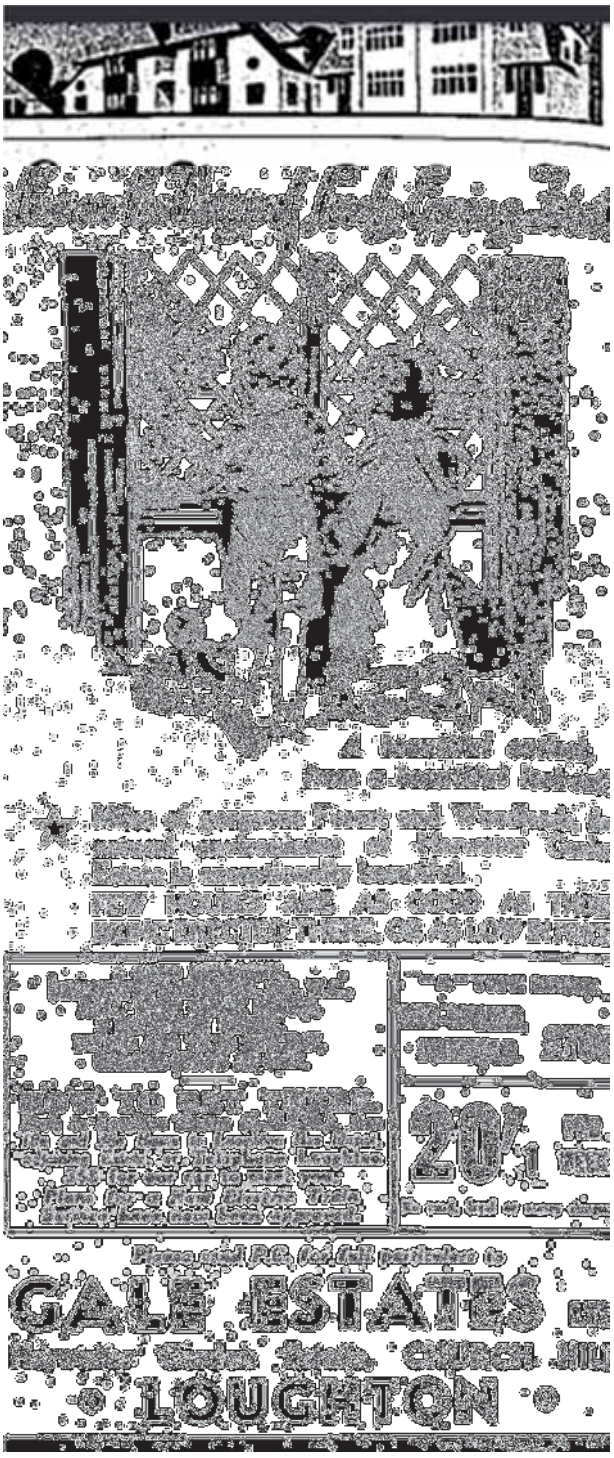
The Warren Hill Estate

This attractive postcard, which has previously appeared in these pages and also in *A Century and a Half of Loughton in Pictures* (LDHS 2012), shows the entrance to the Warren Estate at the top of Warren Hill, not too far from the bleak scene shown above. There is a coach and liveried coachman and the picture dates from about 1900. Askew's a local contracting firm ran a coach as a tourist attraction and it is possible that this is it.

Warren Hill House is a mansion in 17 acres by an unknown architect for the first owner, W H Sewell and dates from about 1874.

CHRIS POND

The Harwater Estate



A 1936 advertisement for the Harwater Estate – 'few houses are as good as those being erected there, or as low in price'.

CHRIS POND

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