

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 81

Jan 1984

Visit to St John's Clerkenwell

Saturday, 28th January, 2.30pm
St John's Gate, Clerkenwell

There are still a few tickets available for the visit to this interesting and ancient establishment. Please telephone Horace Shooter on 388 3016 if you wish to reserve a ticket.

Scrope Davies – our February talk

Thursday, 9th February, 7pm
Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Rd WC1

That unusual personality, Scrope Davies, friend of Byron and Shelley, is the subject of our February lecture. The speaker is T.A. Burnett of the British Library

THE HIGHGATE OSTRICH FARM

Ruby Jobson has written to us re the item on the Highgate Ostrich Farm in South Africa featured in our last newsletter.

'My husband and I visited the Highgate Ostrich Farm near Oudtshoorn in 1969, when I had just retired from the Headship of Highgate Junior School.

After ten days in Cape Town we started on a coach tour by the Garden Route to Durban. We stayed the first night at Oudtshoorn and on the second day of our journey we visited an ostrich farm. When we arrived we were amazed to see at the entrance, the name 'Highgate Ostrich Farm' which stood out in bold lettering. We were escorted around the farm by young Mr Hooper who said the family left Highgate in 1850 and he was the great grandson of the original Mr Hooper who began the enterprise. We have a slide of your Mr Hooper squatting on a clutch of ostrich eggs to show they were tough enough to bear his weight. I still have the feather dusting brush I bought in the shop there.'

Charles Lee

Charles Lee, President of the Society, died on December 6th, aged 82.

We will not be the only society or organisation to mourn his loss. He was a much respected member of several, especially in the field of transport history.

He was, as anyone who knew him will testify, a remarkable man. He was an articulate link with the Edwardian past of London and, dressed in his distinctive way, he gave the impression of being part of that period. He had a remarkable memory and could give a highly detailed lecture in a crisp, distinct voice without notes.

His publications included several on the London Transport underground lines, and two on horse buses and the early motor buses. He also wrote the authoritative book on St Pancras church and parish. Indeed this subject and transport were his main loves. He first became churchwarden of ST Pancras church in Euston Road in 1948 and was still serving as such ten years later when his friend Horace Shooter (our Meetings Secretary) became junior warden. Mr Lee was still active until his death as one of the trustees of the Church Lands, a body of much antiquity. Mr Lee was responsible for ensuring the safety of their records and the addition of much new information about their history.

Many historians and researchers sought his help. This he gave gladly even to people he knew would produce nothing of originality although this did not prevent him being mildly astringent about such people and productions. He cared very much about accuracy and detail to an extent which sometimes hindered his narrative in his books. The sad thing is that we were never able to persuade him to commit his own memoirs to paper. On more than one occasion when I mentioned this to him he said that no one would be interested in them.

As a young man Mr Lee worked as a publicist for silent films. He told the anecdote about the time he hired four horse-

men to ride round London to advertise the film 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse'. One horseman fell ill and Mr Lee did the job himself. "The streets of London look quite strange through the eyeholes of a skull" he said. He also appeared in 'Aida' at the Old Vic.

In the 1920s he began his career in publishing in the transport field with such journals as the Railway Gazette and the Railway Magazine. For a number of years, too, he helped run the Mother and Baby Home in Camden Road

We shall miss his familiar figure at our council meetings. He would arrive usually with carefully written information for any of us who had recently contacted him for help in research. He was punctilious in speaking through the chairman and usually had something to report of historical interest at most meetings.

Members of the Society attended his funeral service and a donation was sent, instead of flowers, to a children's charity of his choice.

John Richardson

DOWN WITH BARS AND GATES!

The last item Charles Lee sent this Newsletter was the photostat reproduced below. In 1891, after years of lobbying and complaining by St Pancras Vestry, an Act of Parliament allowed the gates at the end of Woburn Place by St Pancras Church, to be taken down. This meant, at last, that traffic had a free route from Euston Station down to Holborn. The importance of this event may be judged by the fact that there was a special opening ceremony and that the chairman of the ICC performed it.

A HAMPSTEAD ENCOUNTER

Dr Jeremy Black of the University of Durham has sent us the following item from the Worcester Post-Man of Dec 24th 1719:

'London, December 19

On Wednesday, the 9th at Night, an old Officer having been in Town, and returning to his lodgings in Pond-street, at Hampstead, was met by a Highwayman at the Foot of the Hill, who bid him deliver his Money; but he told him, he was mistaken, for he should not have it without fighting, and took a Pistol to fire at him, but it flash'd in the Pan, upon which the Highwayman fir'd a Pistol also, but miss'd him; and the Officer wheeling off, came again upon him, and fir'd his other Pistol, and shot him into the Arm, which so disheartned the Rogue, that he sheer'd off, + , being well mounted, the Officer could not come up with him; but believes he has disabled him from doing further Mischief this Winter.'

ORAL HISTORY COURSE

The Department for External Studies of the University of Oxford in conjunction with Bracknell College, are holding a one-day school on Oral History on Feb. 4th at Bulmershe College, Woodlands Avenue, Earley Reading. There are contributions on the value and practice of oral history. It costs £6 including meals (£4.40 for retired pensioners) and tickets may be obtained from the Tutor in Charge, Woodley Hill House, Bracknell College, Eastcourt Avenue, Earley, Nr Reading. (Reading 61621)

✽ LONDON + COUNTY + COUNCIL. ✽

Westry of Saint Pancras.

REMOVAL OF GATES AND BARS'

UNDER THE
LONDON STREETS (REMOVAL OF GATES) ACT, 1890.

✽ THE THOROUGHFARE, HERETOFORE BLOCKED, ✽

BY THE

Woburn Place Gate, near St. Pancras Church,

EUSTON ROAD,

WILL BE DECLARED OPEN ON
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1891, at 1.30 p.m.

BY

THE RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, BART., M.P.,

Chairman of the London County Council.

This Ticket will admit the bearer to the Enclosure, near St. Pancras Church.

Book Reviews

'A wonderful, richly coloured, whirling kaleidoscope of movement and change': such a description of the English landscape may surprise the reader who is unaware of the recent rapid developments in understanding our rural surroundings. Most people assume that the landscape that is threatened by modern agribusiness, motorways, factories and the rest is essentially a medieval, Merrie England one. To discover the truth of the matter I warmly recommend you to read Chris Taylor's 'Village and Farmstead' (George Philip, 1983, £10.95). It is beautifully illustrated, often with aerial photographs, painstakingly researched and fluently written. Mr Taylor shows how, from the earliest farmers before 3000BC right up to the 20th century, settlements in England have rarely stayed put but have been almost continually on the move. They have crept up a valley here, towards a crossroads there, sometimes even returned to the original spot. Many have been wiped out by rapacious landlords, whether powerful individuals or even more powerful local government or military authorities. (Remember Tyneham?) We can even see the process here in Camden, looking back only a few years: first the High Street became moribund, then a quarter of a mile to the north the Camden Lock area sprang into exuberant life, and now the High Street looks as if it is fighting back. Do read this fascinating book on how to unravel the history of English settlement.

It is always a pleasure to welcome a really good book for beginners in archaeology. This one is Kevin Greene's Archaeology: an Introduction (Batsford, £14.95 cased, £7.95 paperback). His story is clearly told, the illustrations and examples are refreshingly unhackneyed, and a wide range of modern archaeological techniques is presented in a very readable text. In the early part of the book we are shown how archaeology gradually developed from the pastime of the 18th century gentlemen like Dr Stukeley to the highly scientific, but even more fascinating subject that it is today. Kevin Greene is an experienced teacher of undergraduates and adults and knows how to communicate his own enthusiasms. So - spend your Christmas book tokens on either of these!

Cherry Lavell

Archaeology in Camden

Many members may have seen a letter in the Times (25 Nov 1983) from Andrew Selkirk, who edits Current Archaeology and lives in Nassington Road, N.W.3. His letter drew unflattering comparisons between the London Borough of Barnet, where there are no professional archaeologists but a skilled and active archaeological society, and Camden Borough where 'the council has been most lavish in its support for professional archaeologists, but there is no archaeological society' (to quote Mr Selkirk's words).

Unfortunately Mr Selkirk has drawn quite the wrong conclusions from superficial appearances. Barnet is indeed very lucky in having one of the best archaeological societies in the whole country - HADAS, the Hendon and District Archaeological Society. They do indeed carry out excavations and other work to professional standards, and put on better exhibitions than many professionals manage. In Camden, alas, we are lacking in the strong archaeological leadership that such a society needs, although we have been trying since 1971 to set up an archaeological group within the CHS. It was the vacuum on the amateur side that led us to urge the Council to support the setting up of the Inner London Archaeological Unit, so that at least the Camden planning applications could be monitored for their possible interest in archaeological terms. ILAU had to spread itself over numerous London boroughs but at least they were able to examine the Tottenham Court Road manor site (of which only the edges remained) and maintain watching briefs here and there.

So there is no question, as Mr Selkirk thinks, of the professionals keeping the amateurs out of Camden. A letter sent to the Times in order to put him right failed to achieve publication, but at least Mr Selkirk has been privately apprised of the true situation in Camden. Meantime, if anyone knows a skilled archaeologist resident in or near Camden with the enthusiasm and leadership to initiate and run a thriving section within CHS please send him/her along!

Cherry Lavell

Advance Notice

Forthcoming talks are:

March 22 at the Working Men's College,
Richard Conquest on Agar Town
April 25th at Burgh House, Matthew
Norgate on Gerald du Maurier

Wartime Camden

Do you remember gas masks, doddlebugs and rationing, or even Zeppelin raids? Even if your memory does not stretch back that far, you can find out how your parents or grandparents lived in 'Wartime Camden', a new publication from Camden's Local History Library.

Compiled by Valerie Hart and Lesley Marshall, this publication grew out of the successful 'Camden at War' exhibition held in 1980. To this has been added extracts from essays submitted to the Camden History Society's essay competition on the same theme.

Several of the people whose reminiscences are published here were children during World War 1 and their memories add poignancy to the bare facts:

"...my father unwillingly joined the Army Service Corps leaving behind five children and a pregnant wife. I remember his parcel of clothing arriving containing his only decent suit and his pair of boots, wrapped in the jacket and tied with his bootlaces, on which was a luggage label. The suit was brushed and put away to await his return." Unfortunately in this case, Father did not return.

This publication is copiously illustrated with photographs from the files of Camden's own Local History Library, with additional material from the Imperial War Museum and

London Transport. 'Wartime Camden' is available from all Camden libraries and from bookshops price £1.50 (plus 30p postage and packing).

Our picture shows the Holborn War Weapons Week Parade passing Holborn Town Hall in High Holborn in May 1941

ARCHIVES FOR HIGHGATE

The Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution would be glad to have any material which may be of interest to future historians, such as letters, photographs, prints, deeds, wills, old maps, minute books of societies etc. We already have a collection of such documents, some over 200 years old, some only 50 years or less, but which are already becoming of historic interest.

There is now a newly constructed archives room which gives the Institution better facilities for storage of documents.

If members of the Camden History Society are moving house, or perhaps clearing up the affairs of an elderly relative, or simply throwing out, please remember that the rubbish of today and yesterday forms some of the archives of tomorrow. Please contact our librarian, Gwynydd Gosling at 11 South Grove, N.6 (340 3343).

Elizabeth Cunnington
Member of the Archives Committee, Highgate
Literary and Scientific Institution.



newsletter

No 82
Mar 1984

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Agar Town—the most famous slum in London

Wednesday, March 22nd 7.0pm
Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road, W.C.1

Agar Town was an area north of old St Pancras church, stretching up to what is now Agar Grove, and going east to York Way. It drew its name from a previous landowner, William Agar, who lived at a pleasant mansion called Elmi Lodge off Pancras Way before the Regent's Canal was built c1820. His land was built on by speculative builders on short leases so that no investment was attractive and the houses were no more than hovels. They were slums immediately and were swept away only when the Midland Railway came. Some of the area is now being rejuvenated by new industry and housing including the hopefully entitled Camden Village.

However, it was a notorious slum and it was made infamous by Charles Dickens in Household Words. Our speaker, Richard Conquest, has made a study of the area for some years, and his talk will be breaking new ground.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK'S BUSY DAY

In the last Newsletter we reproduced an invitation to the opening of the Bars and Gates off Euston Road in 1891. The ceremony was performed by Sir John Lubbock, chairman of the LCC. Peter Barber has sent us an extract from Lubbock's diary for that day - 17th Oct 1891:

'Opened of (sic) the Gate and Bar in St Pancras and then went on and opened Waterloo Park. It is in beautiful piece of ground, 29 acres - a noble gift.'

Sir John's Diary is now in the British Library and is numbered Add. Ms 62683

The Du Mauriers remembered

Wednesday April 11th and
Wednesday April 25th, at Burgh House,
N.W.3, both at 8pm

Together with Burgh House we are celebrating three du Maurier anniversaries as from April.

George de Maurier was born in Paris 150 years ago (6 March 1834). His maternal grandmother was Mary Anne Clarke, notorious mistress of the 'noble' Duke of York. From 1860 du Maurier became a frequent contributor to Punch, specialising in satirical drawings of fashionable society. His Curate's Egg joke has passed into the language. Late in life he achieved fame with his novels, notably Trilby, commemorated by trilby hats and a Florida town: its villain, Svengali, is ever with us. The artist lived in Hampstead from 1869 and is buried in the parish churchyard.

Gerald du Maurier, the youngest of George's five children, was born at 27 Church Row, Hampstead in 1873 and died at Cannon Hall in Hampstead fifty years ago (11 April 1934). He created the role of Captain Hook/Mr Darling in Peter Pan in 1904 and, two years later, was even more successful as the gentleman crook Raffles. His relaxed 'natural' acting caused a histrionic revolution.

Daphne du Maurier, Gerald's second daughter was born in 1907 and grew up in Hampstead. Her literary reputation was established in 1934 with a frank biography of her father, followed by the novels Jamaica Inn and the legendary Rebecca, both of which were later filmed by Hitchcock. Two short stories of hers, The Birds and Don't Look Now were also made into films.

On April 11th Leonée Ormond will be giving a talk on George du Maurier and on April 25th Matthew Norgate, drama critic, will speak about Gerald.

An exhibition 'The du Mauriers: a Hampstead family' will be open from 31 March to 28 May at Burgh House on Wednesdays-

John Gage the new Review editor

We have appointed Dr John Gage as our new Editor of the Review in succession to Michael Chambers. He is looking for contributions to the next Review and he may be reached on 435 0756 or at 21 Lambolle Road, N.W.3.

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT

Your Committee has decided not to fill the post of President of the Society, left vacant by the death of Charles Lee, until the Annual Meeting in June. This will enable members to nominate. Before his death Charles Lee was working on a publication to commemorate the centenary of the opening of the Cable Tramway in Highgate Village. The Society was going to publish this in May this year.

Malcolm Holmes has nobly taken on the task of reviving this publication from the transcript of a talk Mr Lee gave on the subject and if all goes well the publication will still come out in May, together with other contributions. There will be an exhibition at the London Transport Museum on Cable Tramways at the same time.

LYNDHURST GARDENS HISTORY

Roy Allen writes to say that some notes he has compiled on Lyndhurst Gardens have been deposited at Swiss Cottage. They deal mainly with the recent history of the site, the formation and building up of the street, its early days and occupants and later upheavals.

Subscriptions Due

Subscriptions for 1984 are now due and a renewal form is enclosed. It would help our Treasurer a lot if members were prompt with their renewals! There is no increase of subscription this year.

A SCHOOLBOY REMEMBERED

Members will be pleased to know that the Cambridge University Press are using excerpts from the 'Diary of a London Schoolboy' which was published by the Society, in a publication to help 11-12 year olds become more aware of their language, and how it developed and is used.

Sundays, 12-5pm. To round all this off a booklet about the du Mauriers and Hampstead will be published this month and the Everyman Cinema will be showing du Maurier films in April and May. Apart from being the year of the du Mauriers, this is also the year of William Morris. Our annual meeting talk concerns him but members will certainly be interested in the three talks under the auspices of the London Borough of Camden detailed on the enclosed leaflet.

Advance Notice

Dates for your diary:

May 11th, 7.30pm, Keats House, N.W.3
Dr Hillas Smith on the Medical Life of John Keats.

June 13th at the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square. The Annual General Meeting and a talk on the Art Workers Guild and William Morris.

1 Sep Outing to Sudeley Castle and Chipping Camden.

Sep 19th and 26th, at Burgh House, two talks by Richard Russell on Leigh Hunt, his family and background.

Oct 10th at Holborn Library. Bridget Cherry on 'Revising Pevsner - 30 years of architectural change in North London'.

Dec 12th at Burgh House: Christmas Party and Christopher Wade on the Stately Homes of Hampstead.

A delayed Review

We were hoping that Camden History Review No 11 would be available in time to send out with this Newsletter. Unfortunately it is still delayed and, hopefully, will be sent out separately this month. We apologise for this delay.

BICENTENARY OF JOHN SCOTT

This is the bicentenary year of John Scott, editor of the London Magazine, who died at Chalk Farm. He was born in Aberdeen on 24 October 1784, five days after his friend and rival editor, Leigh Hunt. Scott died in the Chalk Farm Tavern in 1821 after being shot in a foolish duel. The full story is told in Regency Editor: Life of John Scott by Patrick O'Leary (Aberdeen University Press, £14).

Memories of Kentish Town

Miss Florence Goddard of Worthing writes:

I have just been given a copy of The Kentish Town Packet which has afforded me much interest as I was born and brought up in the area.

The school I attended was what is now called Parliament Hill School. When I first entered there in 1908 at the age of ten it was Kentish Town Secondary School and was temporarily housed in the upper part of what was then known as Burghley Road Elementary School, our entrance being in Ingestre Road.

My parents were informed that I should not be attending at these premises for more than two years, as land had been acquired for a new building in the Highgate Road. This date proved to be too optimistic as the school was not ready for occupation until September 1913.

During the intervening years and before building began we were sometimes taken up to the site on what we ourselves called 'botany trots' and I well remember the wild and completely overgrown state of the grounds. I also remember the house on the site - its name was Gothic Hall. It was a long, low structure, the windows and doors boarded up and we were forbidden to attempt to get in, as it was considered dangerous. I would very much like to know the history of the house - when it was built and who its owners were.

In the Packet mention is made of a school, Miss Symond's, at 51 Dartmouth Park Road. My brother was a pupil there from 1914 to 1919, and I myself was one of the teachers there from 1919 until the school closed in 1925. A few years ago I wrote a history of the school and this is deposited in the archives at Swiss Cottage Library.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE FABIANS

An exhibition to mark 100 years of Fabian Socialism will be opened at St. Pancras Library on Sunday 11th March by Neil Kinnock. The Fabians were closely connected with various parts of Camden and this exhibition will be of much interest to us. It continues until 7th April.

Found on a Barrow

I suppose members other than myself have occasionally thumbed through the contents of those barrows which, most days, stand in Farringdon Road opposite the Morning Star building. I imagine the proprietor has user's rights there for I'm sure that tidy minded planners would certainly not allow them there now as a new application - which only goes to show something. However, I hardly ever find anything I want there, but two weeks ago I happened upon a piece of St Pancras history.

The purchase I made was the public-life scrapbook of the solicitor to St Pancras Vestry in the 1860s and 1870s, one William Durrant Cooper whose practice was at 81 Guilford Street. Unfortunately a number of pages had been removed from the book but enough remained to warrant rescuing Mr Cooper from the barrow and possible oblivion. He emerges with three main interests.

Firstly, he was an antiquarian, very knowledgeable about Sussex and about Hastings in particular. He was editor of the publications for the Sussex Archaeological Society and his advice was sought in a dispute between the Cinque ports of Dover and Hastings as to which town had precedence at the ceremony to instal a new Lord Warden of the ports. This controversy was, of course, a complete waste of time for sensible people, but it consumed, needless to say, many inches of newspaper quite a few of which are pasted in Mr Cooper's scrapbook. The main experts were a Mr Knocker, town clerk of Dover and Mr Cooper representing Hastings. It is not clear who won eventually.

Secondly, Mr Cooper was an expert on Richard Cobden whose statue stands by Mornington Crescent station and was erected while Mr Cooper was solicitor to the Vestry. Cooper contributed a brief life of Cobden to a publication called 'Worthies of Sussex' and this is pasted proudly into the scrapbook.

But it was his work as solicitor to St Pancras Vestry which provides most of the scrapbook. He has included ten printed papers which are his descriptions of various railway and tramway bills which affected the parish between 1866 to 1875. These are, in fact, his briefs to the Vestry and include his advice on each of them.

So far as I know these documents are not in the Local History archives, so Mr Cooper's labour in pasting them into his book was not in vain.

A note at the end of the book records that he was born in 1812 and died in 1875.

John Richardson

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society is on June 13th at the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square - more details of this in the next Newsletter. If you have nominations for the officers of the Society or the Committee will you please send them in well before that date. The present incumbents are as follows:

President: Vacant
Vice Presidents: R Michael Robbins, Dr Ann Saunders, Frank Cole and Anthony Cooper.

Chairman: John Richardson
Vice Chairman: Christopher Wade
Secretary: Jane Ramsay
Treasurer: Helen Lefroy
Publications Editor: Vacant. (John Gage is now editor of the Review)
Meetings Secretary: Horace Shooter
Archivist: Malcolm Holmes

Council Members: Peter Barber, Eric Brassington, Roger Cline, Christina Gee, Philip Greenall, Cherry Lavell, Deirdre Le Faye, Rosemay Weinstein, Ann Winsler.

Auditor: Peter Russell



Two more postcard views of Camden, both c1906. At the top is Mornington Crescent and at the bottom is Parliament Hill Road.

newsletter

No 83

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

May 1984

The Medical Life of Keats – Our May Talk

Friday, May 11th at 7.30pm
Keats House, Keats Grove, N.W.3

The medical history of John Keats has always been of interest, probably because this supremely gifted poet died so young. Our talk, by Dr Hillas Smith, will be held in the house in which he lived and wrote some of his best work. There is restricted accommodation and those members who have not already applied for their ticket should telephone Mrs Christina Gee, the Deputy Curator at Keats House (435 2062) to make sure that tickets are still available.

Advance Notice

Dates for your Diary:

Sep 1: Outing to Sudeley Castle and Chipping Camden

Sep 19th and 26th: two talks by Richard Russell on Leigh Hunt, his family and background. At Burgh House.

Oct 10: Bridget Cherry on 'Revising Pevsner - 30 years of architectural change in north London. At Holborn Library.

Nov 20: John Richardson on the history of Highgate. At Lauderdale House.

Dec 12: Christmas Party and Christopher Wade on the Stately Homes of Hampstead. At Burgh House.

HIGHGATE CEMETERY VISITORS' DAYS

Highgate Cemetery (the old one) is open more days than you would think nowadays. However, they do have 'official' open days and these are on the following dates: June 3, August 12th and September 23rd, from 1pm to 5pm. A new book by Felix Barker on the Cemetery is due to appear this summer as well.

The Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 13th, 6.30pm
Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, W.C.1

As usual we are holding our Annual Meeting at a venue of historical importance in Camden. The Art Workers' Guild, an all-male Arts and Crafts Movement organisation was formed a hundred years ago from the amalgamation of three societies. Its importance is that it enabled architects, designers and artists to exchange ideas and work together at a particularly significant time for art in this country. William Morris whose birth in 1834 we also commemorate this year was a sympathetic supporter.

Our business meeting begins at 6.30pm and after that there will be a talk on the history of the Guild. Refreshments will be available and there will be time for a social gathering.

Welcome to the Review

With this Newsletter we enclose the CHS Review NO 11. It is very late and we apologise for this although we are sure that you will find the publication worth the wait. In future contributions to the Review should be sent to John Gage at 21 Lambolle Road, N.W.3.

Coleridge and his World

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution is to mount an exhibition 'Coleridge and his World', opening on Tuesday, June 26th. It will give a picture of his life and of the world in which he lived. Coleridge is remembered mostly for his poems, in particular The Ancient Mariner, but he was also a political journalist with a keen awareness of the social and moral issues of his day. This side of his life will be explored. Entrance to the exhibition will be free and there will be a catalogue for which a charge will be made.

Book Review

The London Encyclopaedia by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert (Macmillan, £24).

This book has attracted mixed reviews. Generally it has been welcomed but an unevenness of treatment and a considerable number of errors have been pointed out. There are bound to be errors in a book of such detail and extent and with over 1000 pages. However there does appear to be, given that there were 160 contributors who ought to have had the time, knowledge and energy to have checked their pieces thoroughly, too many of them. Indeed one of the irritating things about the book is that you are not informed who has written what.

The uneven nature of the information and the sometimes odd selection of material will be a more complex thing to rectify in future editions. Some entries are very lazy indeed - just condensations of old, and not to be trusted, topographical tomes with no obvious later research into later and better documented publications. At other times you wonder what editorial policy allowed some entries and did not include others. Streets must have presented a problem. What streets should you include? The main ones only? That would be boring, but where do you stop if you go into the minor ones?

As far as I can tell there seems to be no worked-out policy on this. For example, King Henry's Road in Hampstead is included even though there is nothing to note other than its derivation and the Holiday Inn hotel, but Regent's Park Road is left out. Bayham Street is in simply because the young Dickens briefly lived there but Camden High Street, much more important in terms of local history, is out.

Some of the selections, therefore, seem random and dependent upon whatever odd snippet of information had happened to fall into the card index system.

It would be churlish to complain more and there is no doubt in my mind that Messrs Weinreb and Hibbert and their publishers were probably exhausted by the time they came to publish. For my part I find its advantages far outweigh the drawbacks. The scope of the book is much wider than previous London encyclopaedias which tended to concentrate on the Cities of London and Westminster. Indeed the book takes in the whole of the Greater London area, a size not lightly attempted and it is the more refreshing for it. There would

have been no point in repeating the detail contained in the classic London Past and Present volumes which had a considerable bias towards the City of London especially when you consider that the bombs and the Corporation have erased most of it. So, it's good to find places like Gidea Park, Wembley Stadium and Southall and to have a history of them, albeit a bit potted.

Also the book includes items that we really like reading about but stuffy academic historians would have excluded, like department stores, football clubs, odd charities etc. It is readable and entertaining for most of the time and very easy to use with a comprehensive index.

If you haven't bought a copy already you may prefer to wait a while. First it is being re-offered by one of the book clubs and second, it is being revised, hopefully to accommodate some of the corrections that have come to light, by the publishers at the moment.

JR

HIGHGATE INFORMATION

Two members have written with information to add to John Richardson's recently published book on Highgate. George Halse, referring to p.63, says that he remembers using the footpath from York Rise to Chester Road when he was a boy in the 1920s, whereas the book states that it was closed in 1914. John Richardson replies that his information was based on an item in the Hampstead and Highgate Express in 1914 and can only assume that the Burdett-Coutts estate did not proceed with the plan to close it that they announced.

Anthony Cooper has been tracking down the 'Highgate' birthplace of Nicholas Bentley, the author, which John Richardson wasn't able to find. His father, Edmund C. Bentley, famed for 'Trent's Last Case' and clerihews, is listed in the County Suburbs Directory of 1907 as living at 75 Dartmouth Park Hill, the year in which Nicholas was born. So this is probably the 'Highgate' origin for Nicholas. Anthony Cooper also discovered that Edmund Bentley lived previously, by 1903, at 15 Brookfield Mansions on Highgate West Hill.

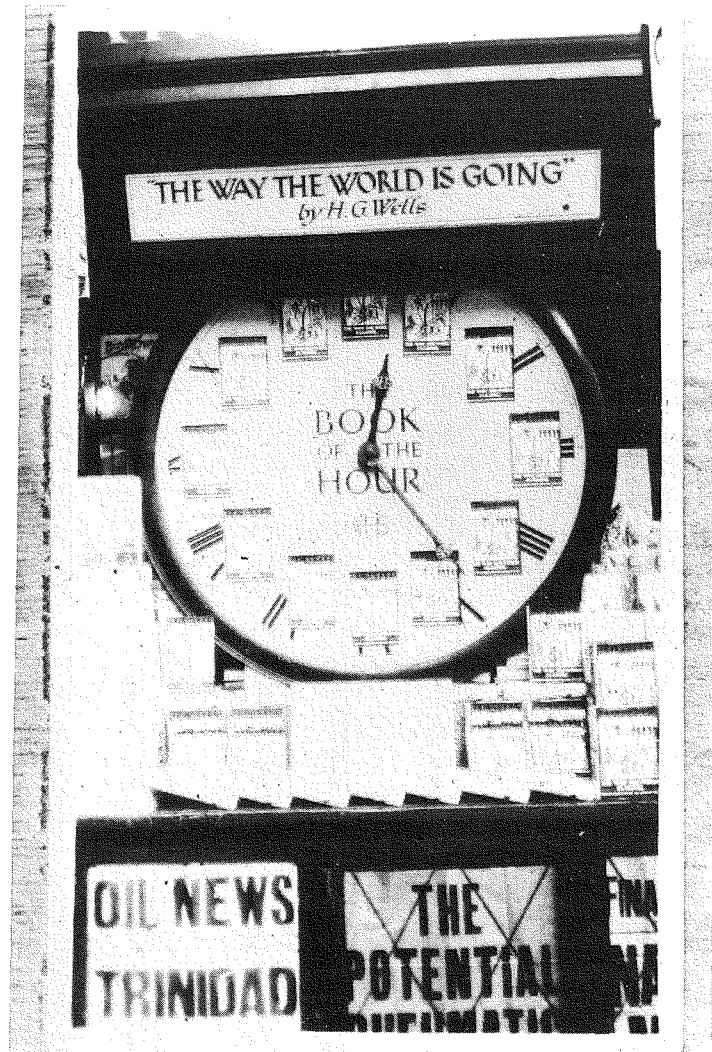
FIRE AT BROOMFIELD HOUSE

A sad north London loss is Broomfield House in Southgate, destroyed by fire very recently with all its museum contents. It is shown on a 16th century map and had a distinguished staircase. Its loss in an area of London which has few old buildings left is much to be regretted.

W. H. Smith at St. Pancras

We recently printed a photograph of an early branch of W.H. Smith at Swiss Cottage. Joan de Bunsen has kindly sent the two photographs reproduced here which shows the bookstall at St Pancras Station which her father managed. The clock was a publicity gimmick devised by him. Ms de Bunsen thinks that the date of the photos is in the 1920s but she cannot trace the H.G. Wells book which would help to make a definite date - the title is not listed in the biography by Lovatt Dickson.

The firm of W.H. Smith was founded by Henry Walton Smith and his wife in Little Grosvenor Street in 1792 but it was his son William Henry who developed the business at 42 Duke Street. In 1848 William Henry and his son bought up the bookstall rights on railway stations and opened their first railway stall at Euston that year.



ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION IN BOOKSTALL, ST. PANCRAS STATION (L.M.S.)

W. T. CLARKE & CO. LTD., REGISTERED ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS,
SILVER STREET, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.1. 'PHONE HOLBORN 7704.

Publication News

Despite valiant efforts by Malcolm Holmes and others, the book we are publishing to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Highgate Camble Tramway, will not be available in May as was hoped. The work is based on a talk given by the late Charles Lee and there were found to be too many areas which needed further elaboration for the written format to be finished in time. Therefore it will be published in July instead.

ST. SILAS RESEARCHES

One of our members is engaged in research covering the social and architectural history of St Silas Street, N.W.5. which was demolished in the 1960s, and the immediate area. He would be grateful to hear from anyone who has photographs, letters, reminiscences, information about residents etc to help build up a complete picture of the area. Please write to Mr D.C. Whyman, 94 Poers Hall End, Witham, Essex.

EXAMINING THE PAST

An evening course has just begun at the Grange Museum, Neasden, which seeks to teach beginners how to use, examine and evaluate historical artefacts and evidence. The course includes an introduction to the museum's own collection and will also include some fieldwork in the area. The course teacher is Valerie Bott and the fee is £10 (half price for the unwaged). Grange Museum is near Neasden station and the telephone number if you wish to enrol is 452 8311.

BURGH HOUSE HAPPENINGS

At Burgh House from June 2nd to September 2nd will be an Exhibition on Hampstead Heath, including its archaeology, natural history, general history and the funfairs etc. The material for this is from the Local History Collection of Camden. Members may also like to know that a book on the history of Hampstead Heath and the other open spaces like Parliament Hill, Golders Hill etc, by one of our members, Alan Farmer, will be appearing in the summer. More details of this will appear in the next Newsletter.



A 1927 picture of Chalton Street from the collection of the GLC

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 84

Jul 1984

July Tour of Charterhouse

July 11th, 2.30pm
Meet in Charterhouse Square

We were unable to arrange a lecture for July but we do have a visit to Charterhouse, in Charterhouse Square. A Carthusian monastery was founded on the site in 1370 but its modern history began in 1611 when Thomas Sutton of Cambridgeshire, reputed to be the richest commoner in England, bought the Square and founded a hospital, chapel and school. The school moved out to Godalming in 1872. Its pupils included Steele, Addison, John Wesley, Baden-Powell and Thackeray - it has a lot to answer for! Because of circumstances too complicated to go into, the visit is a weekday afternoon - which will please some people and annoy others.

The party is limited to 25. Those who wish to go should contact Horace Shooter on 388 3016, at 27 Flaxman Terrace, W.C.1. Charterhouse charge a fee of £1 for the visit (half price to pensioners)

THREAT TO PRIME HIGHGATE SITE

The Witanhurst saga continues of course, but across the road at Nos 78/9 Highgate West Hill another may be developing. No details are yet available but there is talk of a planning application to build in the garden of this house. Many members will know this terraced garden as it is one of those regularly open to the public. The site itself is of more than passing historic interest. The house is on the site, and contains remnants of, the old White Hart Inn, and the garden was a market garden by 1769 - it continued as such into the more recent and well-known Cutbush days.

September Outing to Sudeley Castle

Saturday, September 1st
Meet as on the enclosed leaflet

The annual outing this year is to the Cotswolds. The centrepiece of the trip is Sudeley Castle at Winchcombe, planned in the early 15th century by Ralph Boteler. His castle was later owned and extended by Richard of Gloucester (later Richard III). Other stops will be made at Cheltenham (where anyone with a Trade Union membership will be vigorously inter-rogated!) and at Woodstock.

The beauty of the Cotswolds can hardly be exaggerated and we are sure that this will be a popular trip.

An application form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square. Gavin Stamp gave an entertaining and informative talk about the Guild and its outstanding personalities.

We welcomed the new Mayor of Camden, Cllr Barbara Hughes and also were delighted to appoint our new president, Dr Ann Saunders, well-known as a writer and historian. At the same time we appointed another well-known historian, Professor Henry Loyn, as a Vice-President.

Officers elected were:

PRESIDENT: Dr Ann Saunders
VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Anthony Cooper,
Professor Henry Loyn, R. Michael Robbins.

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay
TREASURER: Helen Lefroy
EDITOR OF REVIEW: Dr John Gage
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Horace Shooter
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Peter Barber, Eric Brassington, Roger Cline, Christina Gee, Philip Greenall, Cherry Lavell, Deirdre Le Faye, Rosemary Weinstein, Gillian Tindall, Ann Winser.

AUDITOR: Peter Russell.

THE LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

The 84th Annual Meeting of the London Topographical Society is on July 4th -

This Newsletter will probably not be in time to inform you that the 84th Annual Meeting of the London Topographical Society is on July 4th at the London School of Economics in Houghton Street, at 6pm.

The significance of the venue is that the records kept by Charles Booth of his surveys of London are kept here, and this year the LTS are issuing, as their publication to members, a reprint of Booth's famous maps of Poverty and Wealth in London. Street by street for the metropolitan area they are coloured to indicate the affluence, of lack of it, of the population - a tremendous labour and a publication which no one interested in the history of London, should do without. Those CHS members who are not also members of the LTS should join, even if just for this - the secretary is Patrick Frazer, 36 Old Deer Park Gardens, Richmond, Surrey.

A DEATH IN HAMPSTEAD

A death is recorded in the Gentleman's Magazine for November 1800 (p1110):

'Death at his house at Hampstead after only two days illness of Cornwall Smalley esq a Russia merchant, a man of great wealth, and universally loved by all his numerous acquaintance. The poor in him will lose a friend; and the gentlemen of the Hampstead monthly club will have great reason to regret the loss of a member....'

Could anyone suggest what the Hampstead club was? It seems a bit late for the Kit Cat Club.

HOLBORN SOCIETY REVIVED

Members in the south of Camden will be interested to know that the Holborn Society has been revived. It has been in the doldrums for a few years and we are happy to see it active again in the cause of conservation in that part of the borough. Those who wish to join should write to Shaku Daley at 6 Rokeby House, Lambs Conduit Street, W.C.1.

The Hornsey Bulletin

It is always a pleasure to receive a new edition of the Hornsey Historical Bulletin - published by the Hornsey Historical Society.

Particularly welcome, in No 25 just published, is a comprehensive survey of the records relating to the Bishop's Lodge in Highgate, a moated building, the site of which is apparent on the western edge of Highgate golf course. Also of Highgate interest are the recollections of Edward Gardner whose family were long-established jobmasters in the village - that is they were suppliers of horses to people who had a coach. His memories were written around 1943 and published in the Muswell Hill Record in 1955 - so this is a welcome reprint.

The Bulletin also deals with rural Finsbury Park and with George Shadbolt whose collection of rural Hornsey photographs made such a delightful exhibition at the Museum of London recently - they are now on show at Bruce Castle Museum and are well worth seeing. Shadbolt was a pioneer in photographic methods in the 1850s and, fortunately, many of his pictures were topographical.

Copies of the Bulletin may be obtained price £1.95 plus 26p postage from the Hornsey Historical Society, Old School House, 136 Tottenham Lane, N.8.

JR

Adelina Patti in Primrose Hill

Myrtle Sinton who lives in Bangor, Co. Down, writes:

Last year when on holiday in London I visited Primrose Hill Road on a sentimental journey because I had lived there in a residential club known as 'The Green Cross Club' at 6a Primrose Hill Road, during the war years until my return home to Northern Ireland in October 1946.

Naturally I was disappointed to find that luxury flats had been built on that stretch of the road where the Club had been, but one cannot stop progress.

However, what prompted me to write was an item in 'More Streets of Hampstead'. On page 57 there is a reference to Adelina Patti having lived briefly at No 8 before going to South Wales. This surprised me as when I first resided in the residential club at 6a I was informed that Adelina Patti had lived there and in fact there was a beautiful room panelled throughout in solid mahogany, which one could well imagine was a perfect setting for her.

Advance Notice

Sep 19th and 26th: two talks by Richard Russell on Leigh Hunt, his family and background. At Burgh House.

Oct 10: Bridget Cherry on 'Revising Pevsner - 30 years of architectural change in north London. At Holborn Library.

Nov 20: John Richardson on the history of Highgate. At Lauderdale House.

Dec 12: Christmas Party and Christopher Wade on the Stately Homes of Hampstead. At Burgh House.

THE WELLS FORECASTS

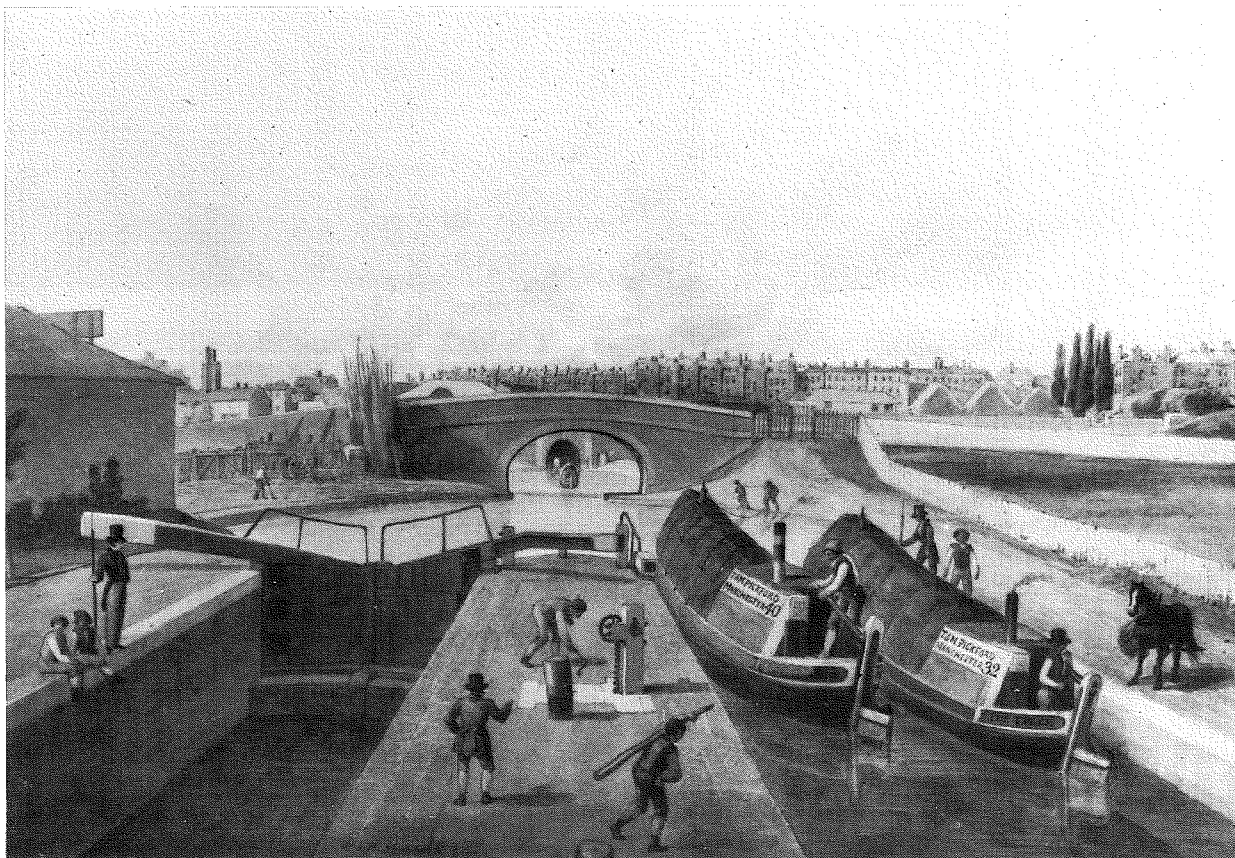
We published in the last Newsletter a picture of a W.H. Smith bookstall which advertised an H.G. Wells book called 'The Way the World is Going'. This was an unfamiliar title but Malcolm Holmes has tracked it down as being 'The Way the World is Going: guesses and forecasts of the years ahead - 26 articles and a lecture' published by Benn in 1928. (From a catalogue of the H.G. Wells collection in Bromley Public Libraries.)

REGENTS CANAL WALKS

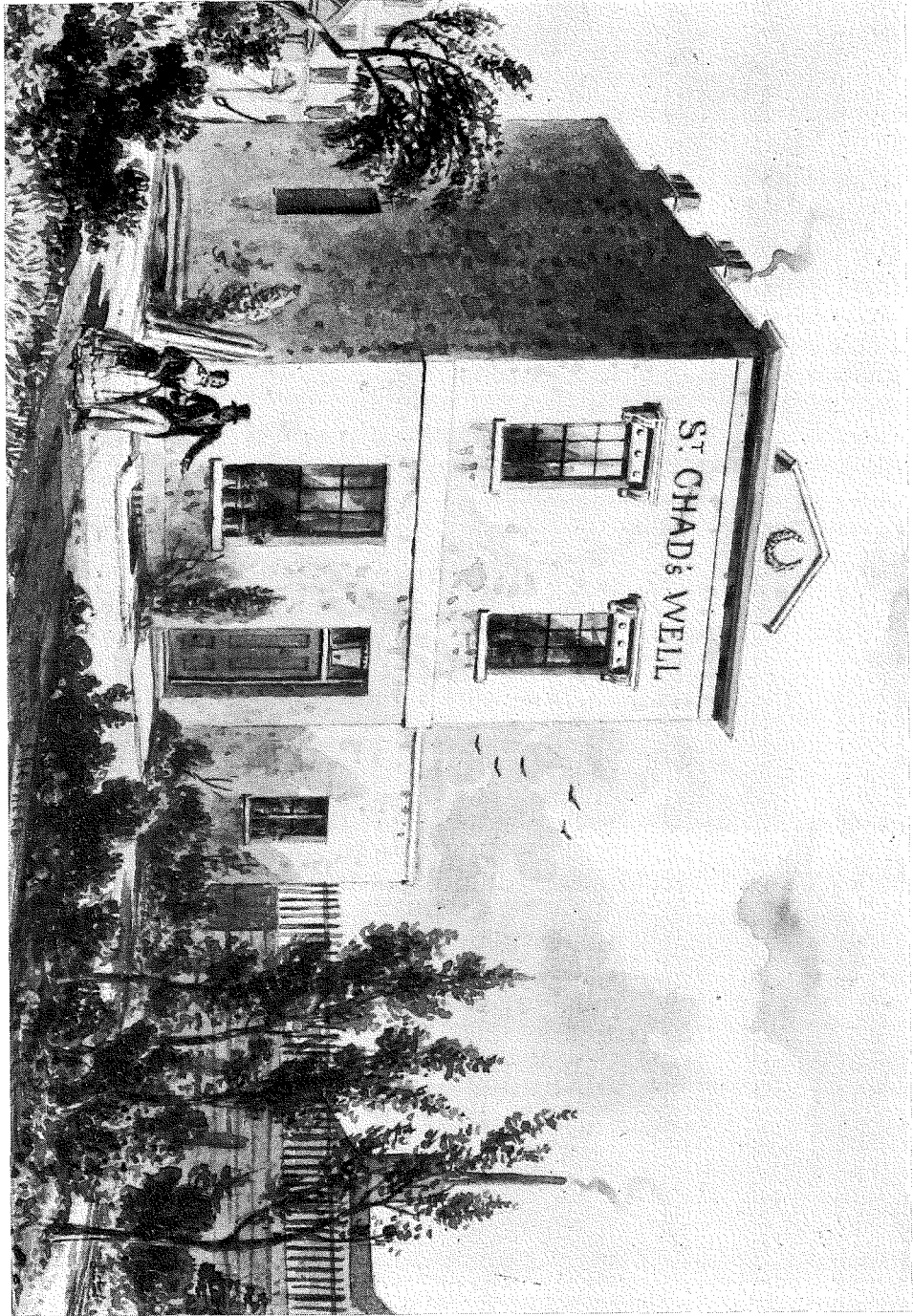
The Inland Waterways Association are organising a number of walks along the Regent's Canal. Walks begin at Camden Town underground station where you meet your guide. Going to Islington the walks on August 5, Oct 7, Dec 2 at 2.30pm or on July 17 at 6.15pm. Going to Paddington the walks are on Sep 2, Nov 4 at 2.30pm or on Aug 14 at 6.15pm. Each walk lasts 2 hours and there is a charge of £1 for Inland Waterways Association funds.

ST CHAD'S WELL

Overleaf we illustrate the building called St Chad's Well which was situated at what is now 364/6 Grays Inn Road. In the 18th century three wells existed in the vicinity - the other two being St Pancras Wells and Bagnigge Wells, all of them renowned for their chalybeate waters. The site of St Chad's is now covered by Kings Cross Metropolitan Railway station, which may account for the continuous leakage of water onto the eastbound platform.



The Regent's Canal, showing the east entrance to the Islington tunnel. Like the illustration of St Chad's Well overleaf, this is by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd.



newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 85

Sep 1984

Leigh Hunt in Hampstead

The bi-centenary of the birth of the poet Leigh Hunt is being celebrated at Burgh House in September. An exhibition about his life, organised by the London Borough of Camden, will be at Burgh House from Sep 8 until Oct 28. At least, that is the plan, but the organisers are having some difficulty in finding sufficient number of invigilators to cover the period of the exhibition. So, a cry for help is addressed to CHS members. If anyone can give some hours to help guard this valuable exhibition please call Mrs Gee, Curator of Keats House, on 435 2062.

Also arranged in connection with this event are three evenings at Burgh House. On Sep 19 and 26th, at 7.30pm, Richard Russell, a Leigh Hunt descendant, is giving a two-part talk on the family. This is a CHS event.

On September 30th Barbara Leigh-Hunt and Richard Pasco will read a programme of his work. This event, organised by the London Borough of Camden, will cost £3.50 (including wine). Please apply for tickets (with a sae) to either Burgh House or Keats House.

The exhibition mentioned above includes portraits, letters, first editions and family memorabilia, and pays particular attention to Hunt's early years, especially those in Hampstead. Although Hunt achieved notoriety in 1813 by being gaoled for libelling the Prince Regent, his greatest claim to fame is his encouragement of a group of young poets and artists, who met at his home in the Vale of Health, Hampstead. This group included John Keats and Shelley..

The exhibition demonstrates the versatility of Hunt's own writings, which included poetry, drama, essays, literary criticism, theatrical criticism and political journalism and satire. As a publisher he was the first person to print a poem by Keats, in 1816.

Please note: Burgh House is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. On other days it is open from noon to 5pm

North London Revisited

Wednesday, October 10th, 7.30pm
Swiss Cottage Library, N.W.3

In 1952 Nikolaus Pevsner published his London (Volume Two) a survey of London other than the Cities of London and Westminster. This included, of course, north London, and many changes have occurred since. During the later years of his life Bridget Cherry, a Hornsey resident, did much of the work in the revision of his London volumes and it will be fascinating to hear her talk, which is entitled 'Thirty Years of Architectural Change in North London.'

Camden Town Help Wanted

The Society is planning to issue a book entitled 'The Streets of Camden Town' which will cover the area of our pamphlet 'Camden Town Walk'. It will not be an entirely original work, since our book 'Primrose Hill to the Euston Road' covers the western side of Camden High Street: Anthony Cooper is already working on an edited version of the relevant passages from the Primrose Hill book.

What we need is someone willing to research the streets from Camden High Street to the St Pancras main railway line from Crown-dale Road to Camden Square along the lines of our earlier Streets books and produce a draft early in the new year.

Any offers to Roger Cline, 34 Kingstown Street, N.W.1 (722 6421).

WHITTINGTON HOSPITAL HISTORY

A group of people interested in the history of Whittington Hospital has set up a history project. They would welcome old photos and documents, memories from old staff or patients, and also help and donations. Please contact Mrs Joan Dacre, Voluntary Services Organiser, Whittington Hospital, Highgate Hill, N.19.

A new book on Hampstead Heath

There has long been a gap on Hampstead bookshelves for a history of the Heath. Christopher Ikin's authoritative Heath Centenary booklet of 1971 was invaluable but all too brief. Now, at last, we have a handsome picture book from Historical Publications, called simply HAMPSTEAD HEATH, in which CHS member Alan Farmer has scope to examine the development of the Heath in some detail over the last four centuries or so.

What is immediately striking is the variety of the Heath, both in its uses over the years and in its origins. 'A patchwork of history', the author calls it, for one part has been adapted from the old village common (East Heath) and others from farmland (Parliament Hill and the Heath Extension) or from eighteenth century landscaped parks (Kenwood and Golders Hill).

Among its uses and misuses, the Heath was despoiled in the nineteenth century by the sand-digging of Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, who also lease a prime part of it for brickfields. There is no sympathy here for this lord of the manor, who is likened to the 'wicked landlord in Victorian melodrama'. Much of Sandy Heath, it seems, was carted away to St Pancras in the 1860s for the Midland Railway extension. At least, the Heath was not built upon, unlike the same lord's estate in Kent, which lost part of its village green. Hampstead was ever better at protest, though in this book the real hero of the Battle for the Heath is Sir Thomas' father, who hedged round his headstrong heir with admirable restrictive clauses.

Alan Farmer is a fine war correspondent, reporting the landlord's forty-year campaign to develop his land and all the manoeuvres and machinations of the opposing forces. But how nearly the war was lost! And then, after the Heath was acquired in 1871, how nearly it became a municipal park! It is good to be reminded that the Hampstead Heath Protection Society was formed to fight not the Lord of the Manor but the Metropolitan Board of Works, who tried to tidy up the Heath in the 1890s.

The struggle to keep the wildness of the Heath continues today in the face of GLC notices on its borders saying 'Welcome to your Park'.

The author recounts many of the old legends about the Heath and sensibly squashes some of them, such as the naming of the Vale of Health (not a refuge in the Great Plague) and Boadicea's Grave (not a grave at all, possibly the site of a windmill). However,

he allows that Romans may have built a road across the Heath, that Jack Straw may have camped hereabouts and that judges may have walked on Judges Walk - but not in the year of the Great Plague, when there was no assize for London. There is also new research here, notably about the Riot of Hampstead Heath in 1775, when the mob tried to halt a private development by the actress, Mrs Lessingham.

All these stories are well illustrated, in fact half the book is a picture gallery. Apart from many familiar old prints, here are a rare 1755 view of Heath House, possibly the oldest oil of Hampstead; John Wootton's prospect of Ken Wood (to be seen in their current exhibition at the House), a wide range of Victorian engravings (praises be for the Illustrated London News) and an evocative oil of Hampstead Ponds by Bryan Senior in 1971. The coloured maps are a great asset, relating the Heath's development to today's landmarks and showing how it shrank from 337 acres in 1680 to 225 in the mid nineteenth century, and then grew to the present 800 acres and more.

Heath lovers everywhere will revel in these revelations.

Christopher Wade.

Hampstead Heath by Alan Farmer is published by Historical Publications at £7.50. It will be on sale from the end of September at local bookshops and Burgh House, price £7.50. It is a paperback, 176 pages, with over 100 illustrations and maps, some of which are in colour. It will also be available at CHS meetings on the bookstall.

Hampstead Streets Revisited

One of the Society's first research projects was to attempt derivations of all Camden's street names. A number of local groups were formed in 1971 for this purpose but the only one to reach its goal was the Hampstead team, skippered by the CHS Treasurer of the time, Wilfrid Meadows. They not only tackled the names of the streets but surveyed all their historic houses and notable residents. The result was the attractive paperback THE STREETS OF HAMPSTEAD, first published in 1972 and reprinted with corrections in 1973 and 1976. It has been out of print for over a year, so we are glad to announce that an entirely new, revised and extended edition of the work is due out later this month.

As before, the publishers are the High Hill Press (in association with the CHS) and we are grateful to Ian Norrie for his support. Christopher Wade, who compiled

and edited the original version, has entirely rewritten and augmented this latest edition, adding information from his continuous researches over the last ten years or so. The quotation from Stendhal that he used in the first edition is, he says, still true: 'It is terrifying to think how much research is needed to determine the truth of even the most unimportant fact.'

Copies of the book, costing about £3 we are told, will be on sale at our meetings and, of course, from good local bookshops.

LECTURES ON LONDON ARCHITECTURE

The Museum of London continues its excellent series of lunchtime lectures in conjunction with the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the RIBA.

The series covers the architecture of London from 1920 to the present and from the lectures already given in the summer members may be assured of a high standard to come.

All lectures begin at 1.10pm:

Sep 19: Devonshire House, Piccadilly, William Kent's masterpiece and its demolition in the 1920s. Speaker - David Pearce

Sep 21: Croydon Airport, London's first airport of the 1920s. Speaker - Sir Peter Masefield

Sep 26: The Adelphi, Robert Adam's monumental development, demolished in 1874. Speaker - John Wilton-Ely

Sep 28: The Face of the 30s - major banks and offices. Speaker Alan Powers

Oct 3: A Lost Architectural Heritage - the aftermath of the Blitz. Speaker - John Wittich

Oct 5: It is hoped that Berthold Lubetkin will speak about his work

Oct 10: Lost Theatres of London: the main losses of the 1950s and subsequently. Speaker - John Earl

Oct 12: The Festival Hall - a major landmark of the 1950s. Speaker Andrew Saint

Oct 17: The Euston Arch and its destruction. Speaker Ian Grant

Oct 19: The Denham Film Studios. Speaker Colin Sorensen

Oct 24: Pimlico School - an outstanding concept of the 1960s. Speaker - John Bancroft

Oct 26: The National Theatre. Speaker - Sir Denys Lasdun

NEW MAGAZINES FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS

For years only one magazine, *The Local Historian*, has existed for enthusiasts. Suddenly, two new magazines have begun publication in this hazardous field.

Local History, published by Susan and Robert Howard, of 3 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham, costs £7.50 per annum including postage. It has 20pp. It has articles about local studies libraries, local history in Notts, Salford and Rutland, the Ancient Order of Foresters and the English Water bailiff. Also it has a good news section and a comparatively recent listing of publications - unlike that of the *Local Historian* which seems to feature publications published two years ago.

It is a promising first edition but it has to be said that its layout is messy and unappetising.

Exploring Local History is its rival, and it is a better looking publication, but some of its articles are of the sort found in the worthy county magazines. It is published by Elmcrest Publishing, 78 Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol and costs £9.50 per annum. It has 32 pages. The first edition features the Black Country Museum, Sheffield street names, Eastbourne, Winchester, Castle Rushen, King Arthur and Probate Inventories.

The problem, of course, is that local historians are notoriously insular in their appetite, and it is difficult within a magazine to please a national palate. If I had to make a choice I would take *Local History* because it contains more information for the working historian. (It does, incidentally, give a good review to the *CHS Review* - but that has not influenced my choice!). If only they would get a typographer.

John Richardson

THE ABBE MOREL EFFIGY

Concern has been expressed about the future of a tomb effigy of the Abbe Morel, of uncertain date. Originally this reclining figure was above the tomb in St Mary's, Hampstead, but has since been removed to a shed in the garden of 5 Holly Place. This house is about to be sold (if it hasn't been sold already) and the effigy must be relocated or demolished. It is rather dilapidated and removal to a suitable place would cost a lot of money. If any members have any bright ideas please contact, soon, Mr D. Corble, 82 Winchester Court, Vicarage Gate, W.8.

Hampstead Clubs

The previous Newsletter recorded the death of Cornwall Smalley in Hampstead in 1800 - his obituary referred to a monthly club in Hampstead he belonged to.

Two suggestions have been made as to the identity of this club. The first, from Dick Weindling, is that it was the Hampstead Dinner Club. This was founded in December 1784 and the first monthly dinner took place in January 1785 in the Long Room, Well Walk. Each member paid 4/- whether he turned up or not and a further obligation for those present was to put a shilling in a box to be distributed among the poor in the winter season.

In addition to the Long Room, other venues included the Red Lion inn which stood on the site of the police station in Rosslyn Hill, the Bull and Bush and the Assembly Rooms, Holly Bush Hill.

In 1786 the first annual Venison Dinner was held at an additional cost of 5/-. The club was very patriotic and loyal to the king.

An early member was Josiah Boydell, painter and engraver, who founded the Hampstead Volunteers and lived in West End for about 25 years. Other members included Thomas Longman the publisher, Lord Chancellor Loughborough, Richard Pepper Arden, the Master of the Rolls, and Spencer Perceval later Prime Minister.

The minutes of the club, which were brief and irregular, have a few interesting entries. In Oct 1790 'Mr Creed lays a dozen of claret that there will be war betwixt England and Spain within three months, and Mr Bowles lays the contrary.' Another entry which the references do not date, 'Mr Sheppard bets a dozen of claret with Mr Lavie that there will be no fair at West End.' Thomas Sheppard was MP for Frome and lived in Upper Heath while Germain Lavie lived in Lauritson Lodge which stood on the site of the synagogue in Dennington Park Road. Lavie, a local magistrate, was very active in banning West End Fair after the serious riot of 1819.

The club continued to meet until July 1859, when, after 'a most excellent dinner of turtle, venison, toasted cheese, champagne, and seltzer water, and some good rubbers of whist, and amidst thunder and lightning, the club declared itself dissolved.'

Alternatively Christopher Ikin suggests that the club in question was the Philo-Investigists. Barratt (Vol 2 p50) says:

'In 1781 certain well-disposed Hampstead gentlemen, grown weary of the eternal triangle which pervaded ordinary intercourse in those days, when politics, religion, and social affairs presented so many matters for disputation, formed themselves into an association with the kindly aim of detaching themselves from discord of any sort, and meeting just as friends. In these times we should call a society of that description an eccentric club. They called themselves Philo-Investigists - that is, Lovers of Investigation - and the usual form of address by one member to another was 'Brother Phil.'

Besides becoming a benefit society, they established and conducted a Sunday School, and were soon able to count on their roll the names of 120 children, 95 of whom attended divine service. This school dated from 1787, when the Sunday School movement, originated by Robert Raikes in 1780, was beginning to take shape.

The Philo-Investigists issued a copper token or medal, about the size of a crown piece.

THE CAMLEY STREET PARK

Through no design on the Editor's part, this Newsletter is mainly concerned with Hampstead topics. However, members may like to know that an interesting project is continuing in that part of Camden which has received few environmental favours in the last 150 years - by Camley Street, St Pancras. In between Camley Street, once the most depressing road in Camden, and the Regent's Canal, a group of young people are creating a natural park with a pond, marsh and reedbeds surrounded by woodland. In time they hope to establish a wild-life centre here. Please go and visit it - its a project worth supporting.

LONDON STUDIES

The University of London Department of Extra-Mural Studies runs a number of classes on London history. These include Markets and Villages of London, Clothing and Fashion, Working in London, Transport systems, local government in Hornsey. In addition there is to be a seminar on national newspaper and periodical history. We haven't the space to include details and members are urged to obtain a prospectus from the Department at 26 Russell Square, W.C.1 (636 8000 x 3852).

newsletter

No. 86
of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY Nov 1984

A History of Highgate – our November talk

Tuesday, November 20th, 7.30pm
Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill.

Because of the existence of the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution the Village has always taken its history seriously. The archives have been accumulated there in a way which is probably unique in London. So, when our chairman, John Richardson, came to write the book he published last year he had a wealth of material which was as difficult to condense into a manageable book as it will be to put it into an hour's talk - especially with slides!

He will be giving his talk in one of the oldest and most important houses in Highgate - and the audience will be very few yards from most of the subjects discussed.

Publication News

It looks as though the CHS Review No 12 will be published and despatched to members later this month. However, John Gage its editor is already at work on No 13 which is due for publication in November 1985. He is anxious to receive contributions for this - or at least an intimation that a piece is being written. If you have any please let him know at 21 Lambolle Road, N.W.3 (435 0756)

HELP WANTED

The Society is looking for someone with an hour or two to spare, during the day, once every two months, to operate the Data-card machine which addresses the envelopes for the Newsletter. The machine is at St Pancras Library and is electrically operated by a footpedal. Experience is not essential as instruction will be given. If you think you could help, please contact Jane Ramsay at Swiss Cottage Library (586 5989) or leave a message with the Local History Department staff there.

Christmas Party and the Stately Homes of Hampstead

Wednesday, December 12th, 7pm
Burgh House, New End Square N.W.3

First of all, reversing the headline, the talk. Christopher Wade needs no recommendation as a speaker on Hampstead's history. His subject, the stately homes of the Village will put us in a suitably envious mood before we have to discipline ourselves to be thankful-for-what-we-have-got, for Christmas. The Christmas party follows at which the essay competition winners will be presented with their prizes.

We have to make a charge for the food and wine for this part of the evening, although of course you are very welcome just to come for the talk. If you return the enclosed form the charge is £2.50. If you fail to do so but decide on the night you want to come then it's £3. So, it's a 50p incentive to pay in advance but more importantly, it is very helpful to us to know how many to cater for.

Secondhand books for sale

Besides our usual publications, including the new Streets of Hampstead and Alan Farmer's Hampstead Heath, the bookstall will be offering at the November and subsequent meetings some good quality second-hand books on London, mostly out of print.

Bargains range from the large size 'London in Maps' by Philippa Glanville, published by Connoisseur Press 1972, offered at £12.00, through 'George du Maurier' by D.P. Whiteley published by Art and Technics 1943 at £4.00, full of his Punch cartoons and other illustrations, to some books at £1 on Grosvenor Square before the new American Embassy was built there.

BURGH HOUSE EVENTS

It was intended that an exhibition devoted to modern architecture in Hampstead should begin on November 3rd. However, this has been postponed and instead there will be a display of material and artefacts accumulated by Burgh House of historical interest over the past few years. This begins on the same date and runs until December 21st.

The Grylls family in Hampstead

The Grylls family name has cropped up in various parts of northern Camden, notably at Burgh House in New End Square, which Thomas John Grylls rented in 1884. He was a partner in Burlison and Grylls, the distinguished stained-glass painters, whose work can be sampled in Westminster Abbey and many west country churches. To celebrate the centenary of the family arriving in Hampstead the Grylls organised a Gathering of their now widely scattered relations at Burgh House this summer. This is an extract from an article about the family's history, compiled for the Gathering by one of the participants, Peter Moore:

As they stand and can be traced, the facts are that Thomas John Grylls was the grandson of a Thomas Grills, date and origin unknown; his son Thomas Grills was born in Millbrook, Devon, according to the 1851 census, and came to London. On 18 February 1844 at St Pancras New Church he married Hannah Littlejohn Tucker, born 1820 at St Germans, Cornwall. At that date both Thomas' and Hannah's fathers were dead, though a witness to the marriage was Jane Tucker, perhaps Hannah's sister.

Thomas Grills snr is described as an organ-builder on his marriage certificate as well as on that of his son nearly 30 years later. It was not that unusual an occupation in the area north of the Marylebone Road where the manufacture of both organs and pianos for the burgeoning Victorian religious and domestic life had long established itself. His position in his craft may only be guessed at; from his early years in Tufnell Park to the later small but solid family house in Willes Road, the indication is that he was on the craft side, in later years a senior and respected member of his craft, conversant and appreciative enough of musical accomplishment to pass it on to his son, on sufficiently friendly terms with the architects and builders of the churches in which he was installing or supervising the installation of instruments to enquire of them if they perhaps knew of any openings for an artistically gifted son.

This son was born on 21 January 1845 and christened Thomas John. Shortly after the family's move from Tufnell Park, a daughter Elizabeth Sarah was born on 21 October 1848. We know of no other family.

Again we speculate: in his late teens Thomas John is placed with the stained glass firm of Clayton & Bell; working in the same office, a couple of years his senior, and somewhat better connected, is John Burlison. In 1868 their apprenticeship comes to an end, and they decide to launch out on their own

in partnership trusting in the Burlison connections to get them enough work to start. It is possible that they received encouragement from the architect G.F. Bodley, who claimed that he was not able to get craftsmen to carry out work to his liking.

On 27 August 1870 at St Martin's Kentish Town, this partnership is strengthened by family ties, when Thomas John's sister Elizabeth Sarah marries John Burlison: her father appears as a witness. Two years later, on 27 July 1872, Thomas John marries at Kentish Town Parish Church (St John the Baptist); his young bride is Jane Margaret Richardson, daughter of John William Richardson, who is described as a sculptor of Leighton Road, barely five minutes walk from the Grylls' house. At this time Thomas Grills, who now appears as Grylls, was still living. The witnesses to the marriage were Walter Wise and Janie Symons.

Thomas John and Jane Margaret lived close to familiar stamping-grounds for several years. A measure of the firm's success and prosperity is the six children born to them before 1884, by which time the house at Carleton Road was outgrown, and they moved to the large family residence of Burgh House, New End Square, Hampstead, rented for the sum of £100 per annum.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Please put these dates in your diary:

Jan 29th at Holborn Library, 7pm: Kevin Bales talking about Charles Booth and the compilation of his famous Poverty Map of London

Feb 21st at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution (time to be announced) Peter Barber on the fight to save Highgate and Queens Woods.

A SILVER TROWEL RECORDED

Deirdre Le Faye has sent us a catalogue issued by Spinks with illustrations and descriptions of English silver from 1878-1938 in it. One of the items is 'A ceremonial silver trowel, decorated with coloured enamels, signed "Alex Fisher" and inscribed "With me the first stone was laid of the New Hampstead Hospital by HRH Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein October 21st 1902"'. Princess Christian was Queen Victoria's third daughter.

The trowel is actually illustrated in colour on the front of the catalogue and a lovely example of the decorative art of the period it is. It is, however, valued in the catalogue at £2750.

On the Streets Again

The Streets of Hampstead (2nd Edition)
by Christopher Wade. Published by High
Hill Press in association with the Camden
History Society, price £3

This is one of those products which
should have, diagonally across the corner
of the front cover, the words NEW BUT OLD
FORMULA!! For that indeed is what it con-
tains - new work but written in the same
accessible way.

This was the first publication in which
the CHS was involved - in 1972. It eman-
ated from a working party set up by the
Society to examine Hampstead's streets and,
helped by capital (and of course retailing)
put in by Ian Norrie of the High Hill Book-
shop, it became a sell-out. A new edition
is timely. Not only has much changed, es-
pecially in the High Street, but new infor-
mation has come to light. Furthermore it
is out in time to help celebrate 1000 years
of Hampstead in 1986.

The production of the first edition was
a group effort with Christopher Wade not
only contributing a great deal but editing
it and impressing his style on the whole
thing. This second edition is a complete
rewrite by him along with a lot of new
research.

This new edition has a greater depth to it.
The author has had the time to examine
some of the 'tried and tested' stories
associated with Hampstead. He has also had
the opportunity to explore how some of
the illustrious names of Hampstead may have
affected life in the Village or drawn
inspiration from it. After all, it is all
very well knowing that D.H. Lawrence lived
here for a time but it would also be nice
to know what milkman he used. That is
always the most difficult sort of information
to obtain and the author has made some
inroads into the area.

The book is the same format as before -
landscape with double column setting. I
find this a rather offputting format myself
although others like it. However, it is
typeset so that roads and buildings are
easily identifiable if you were carrying
the book around with you. This sort of
guide, though, would benefit from the
intelligent use of subheads to break up
the slabs of copy.

The reason for the landscape shape is, I
thought, that most topographical illust-
rations are shaped that way. These, alas,
are a disappointing feature: there are not
many of them and those that do appear are
not very well printed.

However, welcome back Streets of Hampstead.
The author's style is not formidable, it
is not 'highways and byways', but it is
economic, digestible and humorous. For
any one who wants to walk about in the
Village, and most people do, it is the
ideal book. If you have the old one
please consign it to your archives
and take advantage of the new one.

JR

Book Review

The Art and Architecture of London - an
illustrated guide, by Ann Saunders, 480pp,
Phaidon Press 1984, £22.50

This book passed my first three tests for
a book on London. It did not quote Dr John-
son on being tired of life, it did not "make
no apology for yet another book on London"
and it has an index. In fact, it has four
indexes - places of worship, funeral monu-
ments, artists and craftsmen as well as a
general index.

This book, which has occupied our new Pre-
sident of the Camden History Society for
many years, has just under 500 pages of
double-column text with many black and white
photographs, many unfamiliar to the readers
of standard London books. The attractive
production of the book is what you would
expect from this art-book publisher. The
first half of the book deals with the cities
of London and Westminster and the second with
the surrounding boroughs, out as far as
Haringey, Hampton and Havering. Camden is
allotted nineteen pages (only four to Hamp-
stead), but what makes the book so delight-
ful is that it is so much more than a list of
statistics. Most sections on the old Lon-
don boroughs start with a geographical des-
cription followed by an account of the
public buildings and their artistic contents.
Small sketch maps assist the reader not
familiar with the area. There are plenty of
facts here, but the descriptions are a
compulsive read because they give a vivid
account of the scene - it is quite clear
they have been written after a close obser-
vation of the area. There is a mention of
the opening hours of the public buildings,
to encourage you to visit.

The last big book published on London was
the London Encyclopaedia by Weinreb and
Hibbert, reviewed in the January 1984 News-
letter. You get double the number of pages
in the Encyclopaedia for not much more
money, but there is such a string of facts
in that book that I soon got indigestion.
You can pick up Dr Saunders' book to in-
vestigate one area or building and carry on
reading happily through the following
chapters and find yourself exploring un-
known regions of Greater London.

In his foreword, Prince Philip refers to "this splendid book" and I agree. It will give many hours of enjoyable browsing and more serious reading. It is well worth adding to your library.

Roger Cline

The Ley Lines Revealed

Ley Lines in Question by Tom Williamson and Liz Bellamy. Published by World's Work, 1983, £9.95

The past is a different country, and when it is made to satisfy people's need to believe in a distant Golden Age when life was simple and contented, some quite strange things happen. Many years ago one Alfred Watkins had a vision when he 'saw' the English countryside criss-crossed by a network of 'old straight tracks' (also known as 'leys'), and his enthusiastic writings on the subject remain a steady inspiration, if that is the word, for people who seek a mystic relationship with the landscape. Put simply, the Watkins theory said that ancient man travelled across the country along a series of perfectly straight lines marked out by burial mounds, hillforts and other ancient features. Rediscovering these tracks, Watkins said, was a matter of careful study of maps and landscape features. He gave himself enormous numbers of features to play with by saying that the Neolithic 'lines' were so powerful that ever afterwards people have been impelled to place other major buildings like churches on them.

Such were the attractions of his writings that large numbers of people have devoted their leisure time to drawing lines all over the Ordnance Survey map - even people who ought to know something about weighing evidence. There is even a magazine called The Leyhunter. However, archaeologists have tended to remain stuffily aloof, writing Watkins off as unworthy of serious debate. But now, 60 years on, two young Cambridge archaeologists have tackled the Old Straight Trackers and leyhunters head on by making this serious study of the problem. No, not really head on, because a cunning feature of their book is that for most of the time they leave you in doubt as to which side they are really on! Stealthily they withdraw piece after piece from the leyhunters' platform until it finally lies exposed as a pile of disconnected and worm-eaten rubbish. It is quite the most careful and thorough examination of the 'evidence' put forward by Watkins and his followers that we are likely to see.

It is not that the authors discount the value of 'revelations'; they point out that many scientists have had them. What distinguishes the scientist is that, unlike the mystic, he goes on to do the painstaking collection of evidence which will prove the truth (or otherwise) of his revelation. Leyhunters seem quite uninterested in the many real facts of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon life which have accrued from scientific archaeological investigation, and Williamson and Bellamy demonstrate this all too clearly.

So, dear CHS reader, please put away all thoughts of making an Old Straight Track between St Paul's Cathedral, the Parliament Hill round barrow, the Spaniards, and the railway tunnel at Boreham Wood! Remember that a pencil line on the map is many yards wide on the ground, and you might more profitably connect pubs or telephone boxes. But do meantime have fun reading this elegant book, and then relegate your Watkins and your Michell to the attic.

Cherry Lavell

CHANNING SCHOOL REMEMBERED

A Progress: Channing School 1885-1985 by E.M. Saunders published by John Catt Ltd
It was a Unitarian tradition to educate daughters and not just sons. Because of this many Unitarian names appear among the early lists of women students at Bedford and other colleges. The first woman to be admitted to the school of the Royal Academy, Laura Herford was Unitarian, as too were the founders of Channing School in Highgate.

Matilda and Emily Sharpe had a father who was a benefactor of University College, so that caring about education was in the blood. When they founded Channing School it was in association with the Rev. Spears a minister of the faith. They took a lease on a house at the corner of Highgate Hill and Cholmeley Park on the Bank, and the school opened there in January 1885. Hence this publication which is unusual in that it is ready in time!

Matilda Sharpe was the dominant person - eccentric, idealistic, forceful and unbendingly moral, but she had a comprehension of education far removed from the headmistresses at most other girls' schools who had no higher wish for their pupils than that they should turn out to be suitable wives.

Each chapter in this well-put-together history has a 'hard' and 'soft' section, if I may term them thus. The first is straight history and facts and the other is a miscellany of recollections and letters. It's a good read, even if you didn't go to Channing. There is no price on the volume but I daresay the school office would know. JR