

newsletter

No 135

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jan 1993

Learning for a Purpose

Mond, 18 January, 7.30pm
Chalk Farm Library, Sharpleshall Street, NW1

The subject of our January talk is the Industrial School movement which blossomed in the 19th century; our speaker, Gillian Gear, has made this her particular subject. The main object of the schools was to provide education for working-class boys and girls which would fit them, as the Victorians saw it, for employment, and therefore great emphasis was put on industrial, rather than on academic skills. St Michael's school in Highgate Village, founded by local resident, Harry Chester (Chester Road is named after him), a senior civil servant in the government's Education department, was a showpiece Industrial school. Even closer to home, the Regent's Park Boys' Home, in Regent's Park Road, was a long-lived experiment in the same field: this will be a prominent feature of the talk.

The Suburb

Wed 3 February, 7.30pm
Haverstock Arms, Haverstock Hill, NW3

Hampstead Garden Suburb was part of the important garden-city movement which sought to separate people from their workplaces, in planned environments which, hopefully, would produce close-knit communities. In the case of Hampstead the hoped-for mix of people did not materialise and the Suburb settled down into the well-kept middle-class preserve that it is today. It was an idealistic venture - but has it worked? Our speaker on its history is no stranger to the Society. Christopher Ikin is an acknowledged expert on Hampstead, and on the Heath in particular, and his breadth of knowledge should ensure an interesting and thoughtful talk.

The venue, by the way, is a pub at the junction of Haverstock Hill and Lawn Road. If you want to (and it helps us with the landlord for future bookings) do buy a drink before or after the talk. We are in the room upstairs. Please note change of date!!

Advance Notice

Events to come include:
10 March, 7.30pm, Hampstead Parish Church crypt;
Julian Litten on 'The Dead Beneath our Feet: the Post-

Reformation Burial Vault 1550-1850
22 April, 7.30, St Pancras Church Hall, Lancing Street,
NW1, Robin Woolven on the Rev. Edward Walford -
Church Row's Cantankerous Compiler.

Touring the Soane Museum

Tues, 2 March, 6.30pm
Sir John Soane Museum, 13 Lincolns Inn Fields,
WC2A 3BP

We have arranged a tour of the refurbished Sir John Soane Museum, one of the lesser-known, but quite amazing attractions of London. Scaffolding has clad the building for many months while work has proceeded both inside and out. The tour will have to be limited to 25 members and so you are urged to book your place quickly on a first-come/first-accepted basis. Please write, including a SAE, to Ms Susan Palmer, at the Museum, for a ticket. There will be a £1 fee at the door, which will cover simple refreshments and the tour. The renovated coloured glass will be on view but, alas, not particularly visible on a March night, but the newly restored Canaletto painting of Venice will be there to admire.

SIR JOHN SUMMERSON

The distinguished architectural historian and Camden resident, Sir John Summerson (bn 1904), died on 10 November. His books, particularly *Georgian London*, set a new standard for architectural historians and, some say, actually created the profession. Locally he will be remembered for his long and productive curatorship of the Sir John Soane Museum in Lincolns Inn Fields (see above). And in the 1980s he played a prominent part in the campaign to restore the Seven Dials pillar - one now exists, albeit still wrapped in hoardings.

He was a kindly man, well-known in his neighbourhood of Eton Villas, quite distinctive from his tall, aristocratic bearing. His opinions were often surprising when it came to conservation matters - he was not someone who could be relied on to join a 'Save the....' Campaign.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Unless you pay by banker's order, a form is enclosed with this Newsletter reminding you that your annual subscription is due soon. It helps the Treasurer a great deal (and saves the Society money) if you could please be prompt!

A Family in Kentish Town

Mr Arthur Ashton has been researching his family's history in Kentish Town. His father's family, of agricultural stock, came from Great Paxton in Huntingdonshire, and his mother's (Platte) from Wolfhagen in north Hesse. Grandfather Ashton married at St Martin's church in Kentish Town in 1888 and the couple came to live in Frideswide Place, where Mr Ashton's father was born. Grandfather (Heinrich) Platte settled in England, having married an English woman, and they lived in Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park. Heinrich (or Henry as he now called himself) was a baker by trade and Blackstock Road was one of the centres of the interlocking pattern of German immigrant bakers (see article by Maureen Waugh in *Camden History Review* 16). His wife died, he remarried and they moved to Dalby Street, Kentish Town: his baker's shop there was smashed by angry residents during the 1st World War in an anti-German riot.

Henry's shop was about ten houses away from the Ashton house at no. 36 and Mr Ashton's father began to help out at the shop for extra money, where he met Platte's daughter, whom he later married. The bakehouse behind the shop was coal-fired; among the stories Mr Ashton can recall is one concerning the way in which, after the first day's batch of dough had been mixed - by hand and in wooden troughs - the men would put a board across the top to use as a bed on which they could snatch a few hours' sleep while the dough was rising: the dough would tilt the board, the men would be rolled off and awakened for work! The bakehouse would also be used on Sundays by neighbours who brought in their roasts.

Mr Ashton's father then moved into the railway business, working as a van-boy with a railway company, helping with the horse-drawn waggons which were once so numerous. He went on to become a wood machinist at Gilbey's in Camden Town, making the wooden cases in which bottles were then cartoned. During the 1st World War his mother became a railway porter. Later on, the family moved to Hornsey, but then back to Gaisford Street in Kentish Town where Mr Ashton went to the infants' school there and then on to Torriano Avenue school. He can remember sheep and cattle being driven past the school on their way to the Caledonian Road cattle market.

Anniversaries in 1993

Camden anniversaries in 1993 are as follows:

100 Years

In 1893 the Moreland Hall in Hampstead was opened; it was designed by R. Norman Shaw; bars and gates were taken down from numerous squares and roads in London, including those barring Oakley Square; Hampstead ratepayers voted by 2777 to 2022 to adopt the Free Libraries Act; the Highgate Bathing Pond at Millfield Lane was opened; the Fitzroy Tavern in Fitzrovia was rebuilt; gipsies were evicted from Fortune Green before it became a public open space. Sometime Camden residents born this year were Sir Herbert Read, composer Arthur Benjamin, writer Vera Brittain, Dora Carrington, Geoffrey Hutchinson,

Dorothy Sayers, Cedric Hardwicke, dancer Phyllis Bedells and painter James Gunn. The artist, Ford Madox Brown, died this year.

150 Years

In 1843 the Tailors' Benevolent Almshouses were erected at the junction of Haverstock Hill and Prince of Wales Road; the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, whose building still stands in Prince of Wales Road as part of the buildings of the St Richard of Chichester School (see monogram on gates), was founded; Park Chapel in Arlington Road, Camden Town was opened; the Hospital for Women in Red Lion Square was founded; the 'last' duel was fought - between Colonel Fawcett and Lt Monro (see *Camden History Review* 13). The architect of St Pancras New Church in Euston Road, William Inwood, died; the singer Adelina Patti, one-time Hampstead resident, was born.

200 Years

The burial ground attached to the St James' chapel in Hampstead Road was consecrated; this belonged to St James's parish, Piccadilly, which had outgrown its own burial ground and wanted a new one in open fields. Guilford Street was formed and the building of the famous Polygon buildings in Somers Town began. Born were Charles Eastlake and William Clarkson Stanfield, painters; Lord Mansfield, owner of Kenwood, died.

250 Years

Born this year were Anna Barbauld, who later lived in Church Row, and Thomas Leverton, architect of some of Bedford Square.

300 Years

Fenton House in Hampstead was built. John Harrison, horologist, who is buried in Hampstead churchyard, was born this year.

SAVING THE VCH

Those members who were present at the Annual Meeting will remember that we discussed the present severe funding problems of the Victoria County History project. This series of books, established in the reign of Queen Victoria, comprises at the moment 200 volumes, divided by counties and then subdivided into local areas. Much of Camden still needs to be done - St Pancras and Holborn are still not researched, though Hampstead has been published. The arrangement for funding in London was that a group of London boroughs was contributing an annual sum. Unfortunately, several boroughs in the present economic climate have either reduced or entirely cancelled their contributions, leaving the London part of the project in danger of collapse. It is not a venture which can easily be revived, because the skilled staff would be dispersed and in other employment. Therefore, efforts have been concentrated on continuing the research in a limited form.

The Camden History Society announced at its Annual Meeting a donation of £1000 to the VCH and we have received a grateful reply. We are also delighted to hear that the Corporation of London has given a one-off grant of £10,000. Incidentally, the volumes of VCH in the Guildhall Library are the most heavily used books there.

A House near England's Lane

The watercolour shown here, by kind permission of the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Gough Maps 18, Folio 16), is unsigned and undated but is entitled "Rhodes's farm in the fieldway to Hampstead".

Thomas Rhodes, a great-uncle of Cecil Rhodes, was a St Pancras vestryman and farmer (see John Richardson's article in *Camden History Review* 2) and in 1826 he became a trustee for the turnpike that is now Finchley Road. From 1791-2 he was sub-tenant of most of the Eton College Estate, with two farms on England's Lane: Chalcotts, on the south-east side, and Upper Chalcotts, above a short prolongation of the present lane.

Probably Upper Chalcotts was the farm in question and the fieldway was the long track, seen on Rocque's map of 1746, that led from England's Lane up the north-east wall of Belsize Park, through the modern passage above the Belsize Tavern, and so to Spring Path and the top of Fitzjohns Avenue. By 1862 the lower end had become the short side-lane shown off "Ingram's " Lane on Weller's map (*The Streets of Belsize*, p42).

Weller marks two structures on the left-hand side of the short lane and these might be the buildings depicted by the artist, who was facing London with the rest of Upper Chalcotts off his picture to the right. The curve in the fieldway was later represented by a very slight bend in the lane, just perceptible to the SE of the 182' spotheight on the 25" OS map of 1866.

Primrose Hill lies in the distance but, facing the end of the fieldway, there is a curious stepped building which looks too good to be true; and it does not seem to be marked on maps.

Nowadays the view would be down the last part of Belsize Park Gardens. Another watercolour of a local scene (Folio 15) is possibly the same artist and it seems to date from 1816-25. The present work could also belong to this period, since Rhodes was here until 1844.

Roy Allen

CHARGES AT RIBA

That excellent library at the Royal Institute of British Architects, in Portland Place, is the latest to succumb to the need to raise money. Library admission in future will not be free to non-members of RIBA. There will be an annual charge for corporate members and a charge of £15 to students for membership of the loan library. Those non-members who want to use the invaluable reference library there, or the Prints and Drawings Collection in Portman Square, will have to buy a £9 day ticket or an annual pass for £90.

TALKS ON HAMPSTEAD

Christopher Wade is giving again his celebrated lectures entitled 'Hampstead Past'. There are two talks and they will be given at Burgh House in February as follows: 4th, 7.30pm and 5th, 2.30pm for part one, and 11th at 7.30pm and 12th at 2.30pm for part two. Admission is £2 for each talk.



APPEAL FOR LAUDERDALE HOUSE

As you may know the Trustees of Lauderdale House have recently had very bad news indeed as to their running grant from Camden Council, which will make it virtually impossible for them to continue offering the facilities of the house in the same way as before. This news was received *after* the launch of an appeal for the restoration of the Long Gallery in the house.

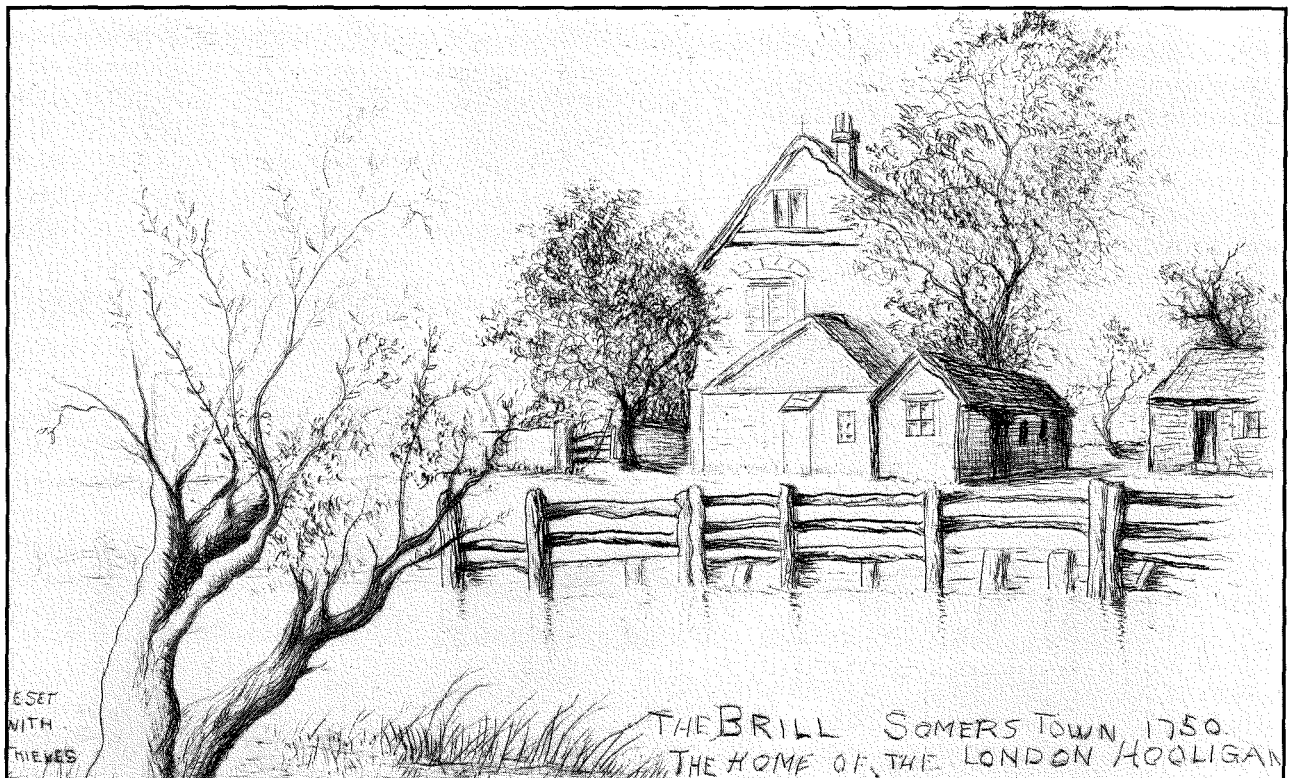
The timber frame of Lauderdale House dates from about 1580 and the house since then has undergone numerous changes. The Long Gallery will be entirely renovated, with a new ceiling based on a design of a ceiling in Cromwell House across the road, which will incorporate the coats-of-arms of five Lord Mayors of London who have been associated with the house. It is intended to make the Gallery again fit for 'masques, games and music'.

The target figure for the Appeal is £200,000. Details may be obtained from the Co-ordinator, Lauderdale House Society, Waterlow Park, Highgate Hill, N6 5HG (081-348 8716)

REVIVING MIDDLESEX

There is a Trust which seeks to make the public aware that the county of Middlesex still exists. It also has the uphill task of explaining that most of London is in Middlesex, and not the other way around, and that the term London should apply only to the City itself. The Trust's leaflet has an interesting potted history of the county's development. Middlesex was first recorded in a Saxon charter of 704AD as 'Provincia Middelseaxan', the third oldest county after Kent and Essex. In fact it was originally part of the kingdom of Essex (whose capital was London) until the Danes overran Essex and captured London in the mid-ninth century. In 886AD Alfred the Great retook London and established the boundary between the Saxons and Danelaw along the river Lea. Middlesex (including modern Hertfordshire) remained part of the Kingdom of Wessex until the Norman Conquest. From at least 1549 (the earliest records) until the creation of county councils in 1889, Middlesex was administered by magistrates from Clerkenwell. The Middlesex County Council sat at the Middlesex Guildhall in Parliament Square from 1889 until its abolition in 1965. The administration of Middlesex was never conducted from Brentford and the only claim for Brentford being the County Town is the fact that the County elections were held there during the 18th and 19th centuries. The only valid claim to be the County Town for Middlesex is that of Clerkenwell.

A 1750 view of the Brill farmhouse and alehouse in Somers Town with, presumably, the Fleet river before it. The print is notable for its description of the Brill being the 'home of the London Hooligan'.



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No 136

Mar 1993

The Dead Beneath our Feet

Wed, 10 March, 7.30pm
Hampstead Parish Church crypt, Church Row, NW3

Our speaker, Julian Litten's, exhibition at the V & A last year depicting the English Way of Death, summed up the fashions and the foibles of how our ancestors have dealt with the loss and marking of death since 1450. For those who missed the exhibition, there are two consolations. One is his sumptuously illustrated book *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450*, which was published by Robert Hale last year for £25. To a degree the way that we have buried our nearest and dearest has reflected the age we have lived in, and the story of how our fairly simple funeral customs became, in the Victorian age, grotesque in more ways than one, is a fascinating one. Mr Litten is a curator at the V & A. The full title of his talk is 'The Dead Beneath our Feet: the Post-Reformation Burial Vault 1550-1850'. Our venue is new for us and, we hope, an appropriate one.

A Cantankerous Cleric

Thurs, 22nd April, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church Hall, Lancing Street, NW1
(street opposite east entrance to Euston Station)

The Rev. Edward Walford is summarily described in the DNB as a 'compiler'. Most of us know him for his enormously informative six books called *Old and New London*, which he and Walter Thornbury published in the 1870s. Less known, but equally valuable, are the two books entitled *Greater London*, published in 1883-84. Those volumes are renowned for their illustrations - an immense labour by several hands - and these have been a blessing to numerous print sellers who give them a modern hand-colouring, stick on a label to say they are 'Genuine 100 years old', and sell them to unsuspecting tourists.

Walford lived in Church Row and has attracted the interest of our speaker this evening, Robin Woolven. Walford, cantankerous it seems, was also indecisive. Son of a Church of England rector, and educated at Hackney C of E school, he was ordained a priest himself, became then a lay member of a Roman Catholic communion, switched back to the C of E, was again admitted to the Catholic church in 1871, and was a Church of England adherent on his deathbed.

His literary labours covered a wide spectrum. He was briefly editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, edited a series on the peerage, and was later in charge of the *Antiquary* magazine.

Eric Brassington and Sir Anthony Cox

Two long-time members of the Society have died recently. Eric Brassington was, in fact, a founding member towards the end of 1969, representing then the St Pancras Antiquarian Society, a group with which he had an even longer association than with us. He was honorary treasurer of several organisations and was an assiduous attender of our Council meetings, though usually of few words. He will be much missed.

Sir Anthony Cox, a distinguished architect, was very active in his later years in matters concerning the conservation of the Highgate Village which he loved. He was a formidable committee member and was much respected by planning officers who had to deal with his constructive comments on proposed schemes. His death occurs at a difficult time in Highgate where his advice and tenacity will be much missed, particularly in the forthcoming battle on the bid to develop the Garden Centre ground at the rear of the High Street.

Advance Notice

Dates for your diary:

25 May: Linda Clark on the development of Somers Town and its relevance to the building of Capitalism.

Venue not yet known

21 June: Annual meeting at Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution. Speaker, John Carswell, on the saving of Kenwood

7 August: Annual outing to Blenheim

DON'T FORGET SUBSCRIPTIONS!

It will save an enormous amount of our Treasurer's time, and cost to the Society, if you would kindly return the subscription form which was circulated with the last Newsletter - those of you who do not pay by Banker's Order, that is.

Belsize Illustrated

The artist who painted Rhodes's farm (see *Newsletter* 135) may be responsible for another watercolour in the Bodleian Library. This work (Gough Maps 18, Folio 15) is entitled "A View of Mr Yates's House - taken in the private road near Bellesize House, Hampstead" and it shows Hunters Lodge across a rebuilt stretch of Belsize Lane, diverted eastwards by George Todd in 1816 or shortly afterwards (*Newsletter* 128).

Swiss Cottage Local History Collection has a remarkably accurate copy, done with pen and ink and grey wash, and this is reproduced on p61 of *The Streets of Belsize* and beneath this article; in this case the title is simply "View in the Private Road near Bellsise House, Hampstead".

By 'private road' is meant a short length of the original Belsize Lane, now well inside the grounds of the villa built by Todd in 1810-11 and finally known as Belsize Court.

There does not seem to have been a Yates in Hunters Lodge at any likely period; and he is not mentioned on the copy. The artist may have misheard the name of William Tate, who built the place in 1812 and departed in 1829. In any case it appears that the painting was made between 1816 and 1825, the probable date when Belsize House changed its name to Belsize Park. This mansion was 360 yards to the south but the historic name would add interest to the picture.

What Todd called his residence is not known but from 1839, when it was occupied by Matthew Forster, it was being reported variously as (modern spelling)

Belsize Villa and as a latter-day Belsize House, which later it certainly was. This seems unlikely to be the Belsize House mentioned by the artist: 'Yates's' needs explaining and more vegetation might be expected on the 1816 walls in the foreground; and the old lane would no longer have the appearance of a road.

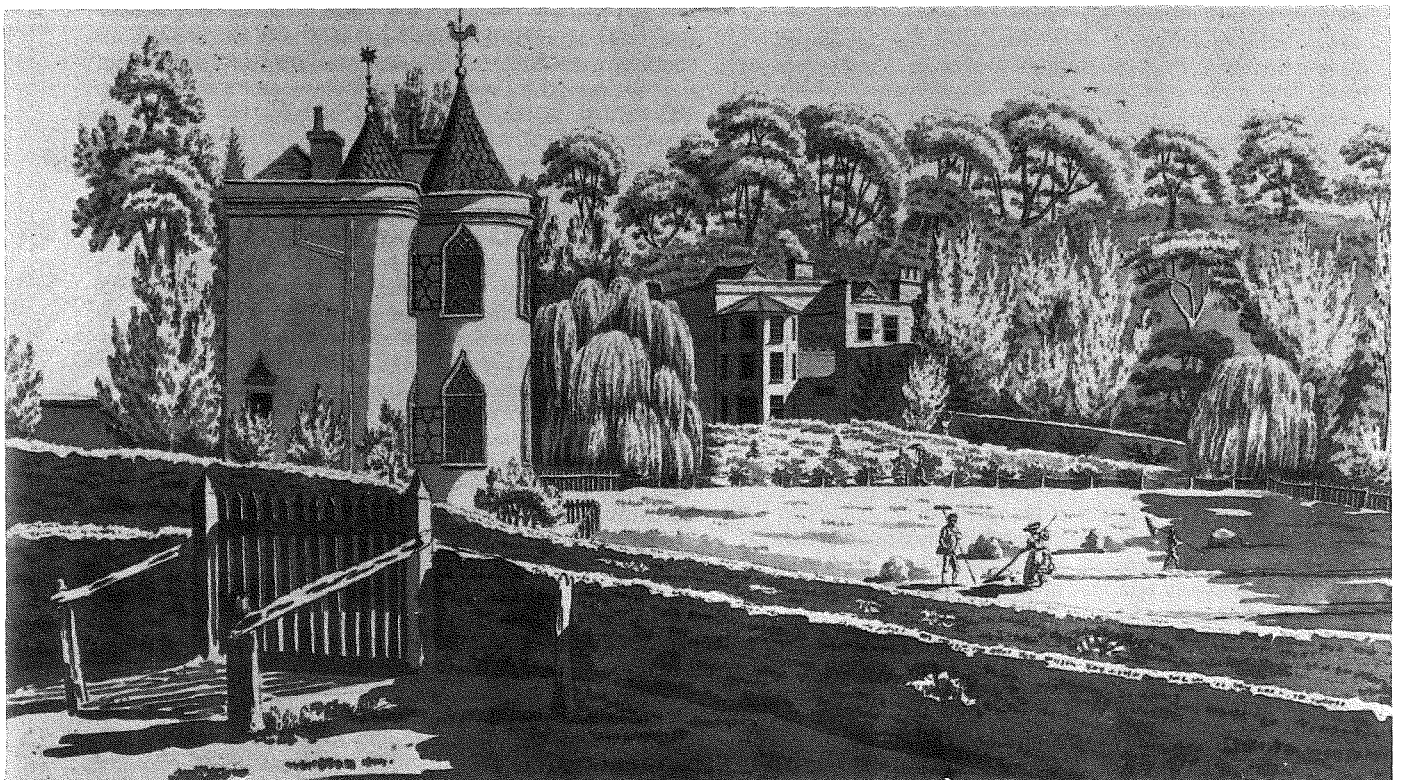
In the background the pair of houses seems to have existed in that form since the start of the rate books in 1774. Much the same lay-out is shown on the 25" OS map of 1866, when the left-hand component (approached from Belsize Lane) was Belsize Lodge.

The right-hand component (on Haverstock Hill) is less conspicuous in the picture but the 1866 map shows that it was the larger house, with a wide front facing London, and extensive grounds; Swiss Cottage has a set of photographs. Dobson Willoughby lived here from 1821 until he died in 1833; his family later gave their name to Willoughby Road. By 1838 this part was called Elm House but in 1865-66 a new tenant changed the name to Ivy Bank. Nine years later both parts were demolished and replaced by a single new house, again Ivy Bank.

For good measure the artist reverses the contours and gives us a picturesque but imaginary hill, placed just where the land starts to run down to the Fleet.

Roy Allen.

The Ivy Bank Estate from Belsize Lane, with Hunter's Lodge (left), early 19th century



FINDING WHITAKER

We are indebted to the *Ham & High* for a news item last November indicating that the founder of *Whitaker's Almanac*, Joseph Whitaker, is buried in Highgate Cemetery. The item stemmed from the fact that the famous publication was celebrating 125 years, but until recently no-one knew where the founder, who died in 1895, was buried. Unfortunately, the location of his grave is not known. Like the Rev. Walford (see p1) he also edited the *Gentleman's Magazine* and in January 1858 began *The Bookseller* magazine, 'the organ of the book trade', which is still required reading in the publishing world. Both the *Almanac* and the magazine are still both owned by the family which is also responsible for the running of the ISBN scheme.

A MURAL SAVED

It is rare that a conservation battle is won, or at least mostly won, quickly. Many people will have admired the historical mural which has covered the end gable wall of St Mary and St Pancras Church Primary School at the corner of Chalton Street and Polygon Road since 1986. It features many people important in the history of Somers Town, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, and the St Pancras Housing Association pioneers, Edith Neville and Father Basil Jellicoe. Ironically, it is a proposal for a block of flats adjacent to be built by the Association which threatens to obscure the mural from view. It was painted over three summers by Karen Gregory.

The cause for its re-creation at another venue by the same artist was taken up by Claire Tomalin, and it has recently been announced that some funding will be forthcoming from the Gulbenkian Foundation.

FAMILY HISTORY FAIR

There will be a Family History Fair on Sunday 16 May at the Royal Horticultural Society Old Hall, Vincent Square, SW1, starting at 10am and ending at 5pm. There will be more than 120 exhibitors. On show will be publications, maps, postcards, computer software as well as professional researchers.

REMEMBERING HAMPSTEAD GENERAL

It is unlikely that when the happy day comes for the demolition of the present Royal Free Hospital building that there will be many people seeking architectural souvenirs. This reflection is provoked by letters from Pauline Skelton, who was a trainee nurse at the old Hampstead General Hospital in 1959, and from Julia Smith, who lives in Lawn Road. An appeal has been launched to provide the money to save, restore and relocate the stone frieze from the front of the old General Hospital. About £700 has already been raised, following an article in the *Ham & High*.

The stones themselves were carefully saved when the building was demolished but have since languished in the bushes near the Medical School of the present Royal Free. Hampstead General Hospital was built in 1902 on the site of the house in which Sir Rowland Hill, originator of the Penny Post, lived.

Donations towards this historical cause should be sent to the Hampstead General Nurse League (Stones Fund), c/o Mary Hanley, League Treasurer, 356 Baddow Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7QF.

PUTTING MATTERS RIGHT

There are some odd omissions from the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The present publishers, the Oxford University Press, are currently preparing a completely revised edition of the work in both printed and electronic form and welcome amendments and inclusions - this is the right time to suggest people who, despite their merit, have been omitted. If you have any suggestions please contact Robin Woolven (071-794 2382), who is preparing a list of Camden associated figures. Alternatively, write direct to the Editor, New DNB, Oxford University Press, FREEPOST, Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6BR. If you are suggesting a new entry it would be advisable to first check with Robin, who has the list of the 'Missing Persons' included in the new 1993 supplement to the 'old' DNB (on sale at £65).

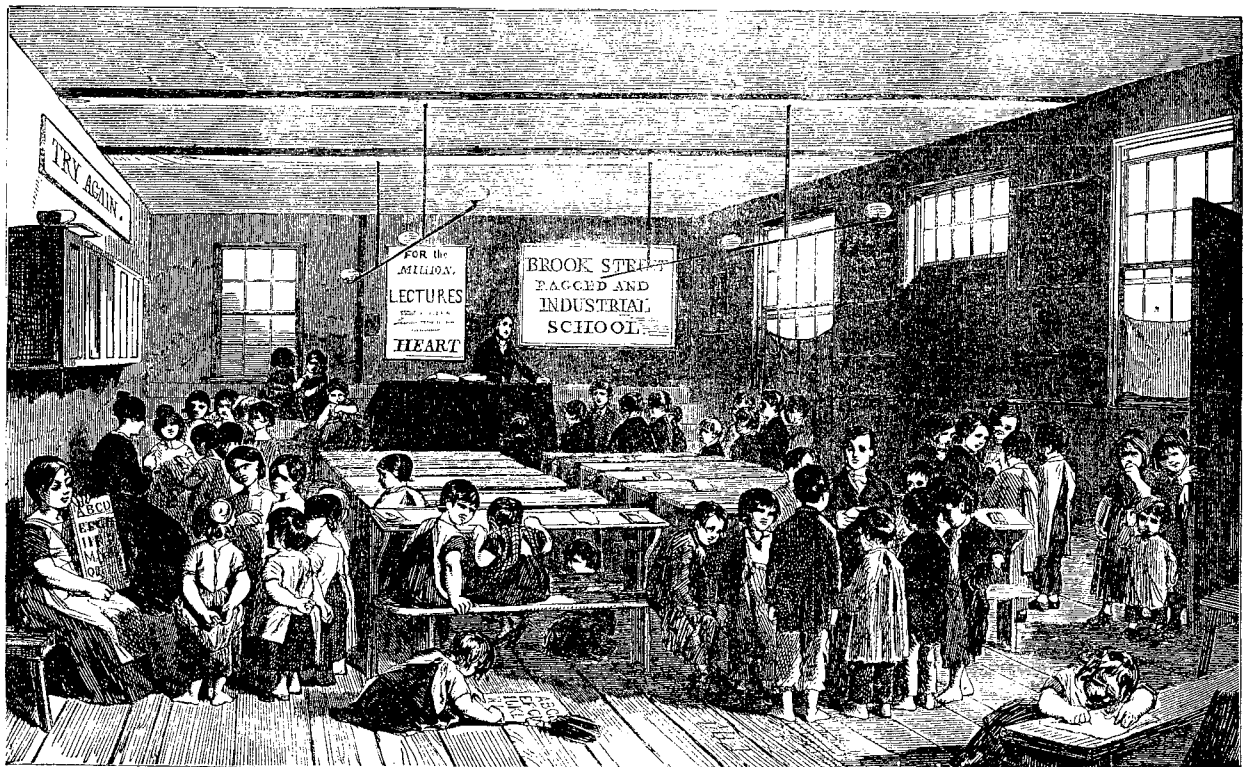
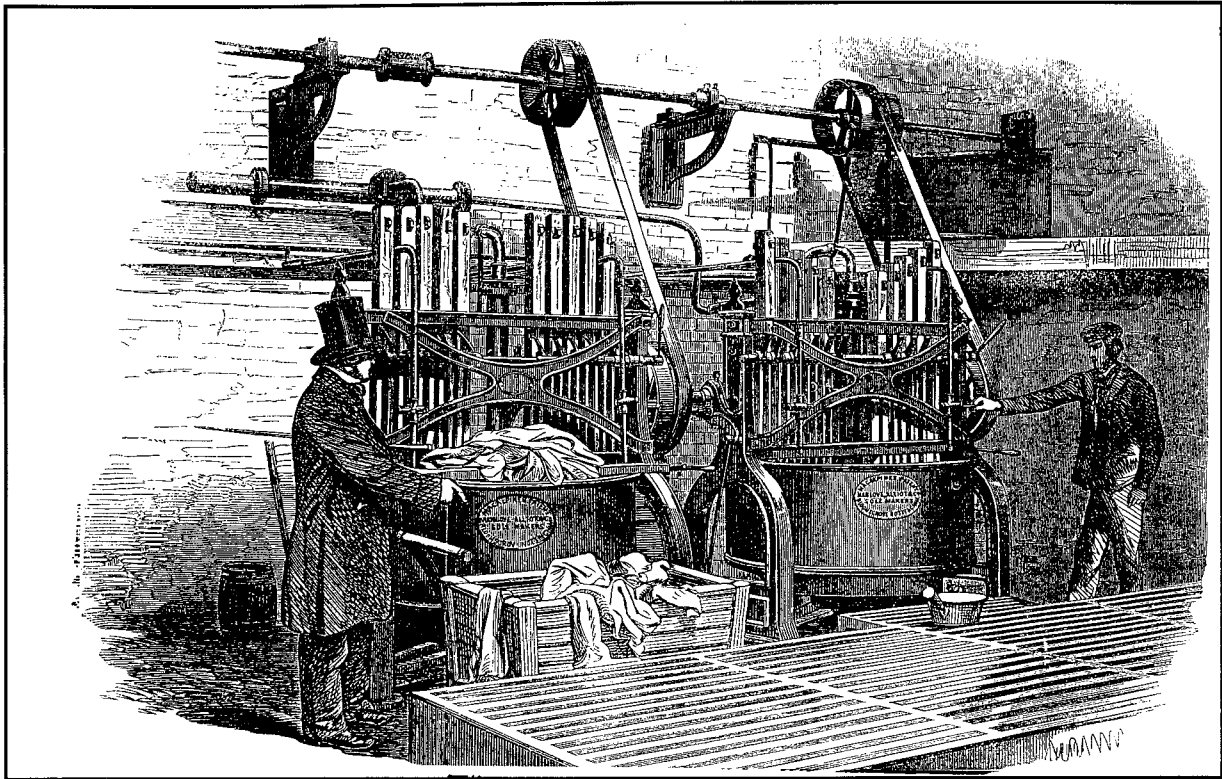
THE STORY OF THE VCH

Our President, Professor C.R. Elrington, is also the Editor of the Victoria County History, that celebrated series of volumes which provides so much basic information for local history researchers. On Tuesday 27 April (5.30pm) he will be giving an address entitled 'To Birmingham by Way of Beachy Head: English Local History and the V.C.H.'. Members of CHS who would like to go are welcome. It will be held in the Beveridge Hall, Senate House, University of London. Tea will be served in the Macmillan Hall from 4.45pm.

UPDATING THE INSTITUTION

As members will see when they attend this year's Annual Meeting of the Society at the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution, considerable changes have been made there. The library has been completely changed and expanded, and the main hall and members' lounge have been refurbished. But there was insufficient money to complete the job. So, the Appeal for development funds is still open and those who have some cash to spare for a worthy cause should contact Donald Crane on 071-485 4294. The Institution is now unique in London and its library and facilities, given the parlous state of local councils, are more necessary than ever.

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society, Local History Library, Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3. It is edited by John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL, to whom all contributions should be sent. The Secretary of the Society is Mrs Jane Ramsay c/o the Swiss Cottage address, and the Treasurer is Roger Cline, 34, Kingstown Street, NW1 8JP



Pictures of the Poor

Two illustrations from the *Illustrated London News* of 1857.

The top one is of a steam washing machine recently installed in St Pancras Workhouse in Pancras Road. The bottom picture is of the Brook Street Ragged and Industrial School in Holborn.

newsletter

No 137

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May 1993

Cradled in Caricature: George Cruikshank

Tues, 11 May, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church Hall, Lancing Street, NW1

George Cruikshank, the famous illustrator, was a resident of Camden, living at 263 Hampstead Road from 1850 until his death in 1878. His was a golden age of caricature and our speaker, John Wardroper, will be presenting slides of much of his work and of other work that led up to it. Cruikshank had, however, another side to him - around the corner: unknown to his wife and everyone else, he had a mistress by whom he had numerous children. It was a secret only revealed on his death.

Members may like to know that a Cruikshank exhibition compiled to mark the 200th anniversary of his birth in 1792, is showing during the month of May at the delightful Orleans Gallery in Twickenham - a building well worth the visit even without the Cruikshank exhibition. On show are 150 examples of his work, from caricatures to book illustrations and comic art. The hours at Twickenham are Tue-Sat 1-5.30, Sun and Bank Holidays, 2-5.30.

This talk is additional to our published programme and is at short notice to members, but we do hope that many of you will be able to come for what promises to be a lively evening.

Saving Kenwood - and the Annual Meeting

Mon 21 Jun, 7pm
Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution
11 South Grove, N6

Our Annual Meeting is being held at the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution. For those of you who haven't been into the building for some years, a surprise awaits, for it has mostly been refurbished and expanded. The library has been much improved and there are better research facilities for those who use the local collections. It is well worth seeing, and we should be thankful that the Institution, one of the few of its kind left in the country and now over 150 years old, is in such a fine state.

Our talk on the night is by John Carswell, whose subject is that of the book he published last year - the saving of Kenwood. It was a long and difficult campaign, but an essential one to win. The loss to the amenities of the Heath and Parliament Hill would have been disastrous if all the area of the Kenwood fields, which run south of the present fenced Kenwood grounds, had been lost, let alone the house and inner grounds. The campaigners did not, in fact, have a hope of gaining the house, but were mainly intent on saving the grounds, and it was one of those strokes of good fortune for Londoners that the house was bought by Iveagh and generously given to them. The timing of this talk could not be better, as substantial changes have occurred in the grounds of Kenwood during the last year.

Simple refreshments will be available at 7pm, the AGM is at 7.30 and the talk begins at 8pm. You are invited to make any nominations for officers or our Committee. These should be sent to our Secretary, Jane Ramsay, c/o Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3.

The present incumbents are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Professor Christopher Elrington
VICE-PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Dr Ann Saunders

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay
TREASURER: Roger Cline
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: Christopher Wade
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Horace Shooter
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes
PUBLICITY: Diana Rau
EDITOR OF THE CHS REVIEW: John Gage

Council Members:
Peter Barber, John Broad, Ruth Hayes, Lester May,
Sue Palmer, Gillian Tindall, Robin Woolven

Somers Town and the Building of Capitalism

Tues, 25 May, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church Hall, Lancing St, NW1

Somers Town never fulfilled the hopes of its developers. Near to the New Road, it was expected to be profitable for both the estate owners and the builders, but it came at a bad time and eventually succumbed to the smoke of two railways. Our speaker, Linda Clark, last year published a well-researched book on the building of Somers Town and its relevance to the capitalist system of the time. It will be interesting to hear a different viewpoint on the beginnings of this financial failure placed within the context of the period.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations are in order to our president, Christopher Elrington, who has recently had conferred on him a Professorship in History by the University of London. This was mainly in respect of his distinguished work as General Editor of the *Victoria County History* series. Christopher's inaugural lecture, entitled *To Birmingham by way of Beachy Head*, was given at the University on 27 April.

Remembering Anthony Cooper

The much-missed Anthony Cooper, who did much of the work on our publication *Primrose Hill to Euston Road*, left a provision in his will which has enabled the Local Studies Library at Swiss Cottage to carry out a detailed photographic survey of the whole of the Regent's Canal within Camden - Anthony's house backed on to the canal at Chalk Farm. That survey has now been completed and the pictures are available for the enjoyment and research of members of the public. A small ceremony marked the end of the project and we met, appropriately, at the London Canal Museum in 12/13 New Wharf Road, N1. Members who haven't yet been to the Museum will find it fascinating - there are not only canal artefacts, including a boat, but also there is the old ice well constructed by the Gatti firm of ice cream manufacturers, complete with horse-ramp down to it.

The Museum is open at the present from Wednesday to Sunday each week from 10am to 4.30pm, and also on Bank Holiday Mondays. Admission is £2.50 for adults and £1.25 for children and concessionaries. The Museum is struggling to survive at the moment and your custom and that of your friends would be more than welcome!

SPREADING THE NEWS

For various reasons the members who gather every two months to help put the *Newsletter* into envelopes and arrange for its distribution are down to two. Last time we appealed for help in this several members did say they could make themselves available but, alas, did not actually appear!. So if they, or anyone else can help with a couple of hours six times a year, please contact Jane Ramsay on 071-586 4436

GOING TO BLENHEIM

The Society's Annual Outing, this time to the magnificent Blenheim, is on Saturday, 7 August. Not to be missed. A form is enclosed for you to book your seats on the coach - first come, first served.

THE JESTER FESTIVAL

We have been invited again to join in West Hampstead's annual jollifications on and around Fortune Green, known as the Jester Festival, now in its twentieth year. Last year our stall sold over a hundred copies of *The Streets of West Hampstead* and we will be having a stall this year on 10 and 11 July on the Green. In addition, there will be a history walk, led by Dick Weindling, on Sunday, 4 July, starting at 6pm on West End Green, and two Hampstead Cemetery walks on the 4th and 11th at 3pm. More information from the Festival Office, 071-435 1276.

BACK NUMBERS ON OFFER

If anyone wants back numbers of this *Newsletter*, from No. 51 onwards, with a few gaps, apply to Wendy Trewin, 071-435 0207.

CORRECTION

In our last *Newsletter* we gave the address for donations to the appeal to re-erect the stone frieze that used to be on Hampstead General Hospital, as 356 Baddow Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7QF. This should have read 359 Baddow Road.

CELEBRATIONS AT FENTON HOUSE

As members may know 1993 is the 300th anniversary of the building of Fenton House in Hampstead Grove. There are quite a few events to mark the passage of time:

On 8 June at 11am in the Marquee in the grounds, Christopher Wade will be giving his celebrated *Hampstead Past* lecture. Tickets, including a light luncheon, cost £12.50. On 9 June there is a Festival Fair from 11am to 3.30pm with stalls selling goods, produce, plants etc, and there will be musical entertainments. On 11 June at 11am, Tracy Avery will be giving an illustrated lecture on the exceptional collection of porcelain at Fenton House. On 12 June Fenton House actually celebrates its birthday. One of the events at 2.30 will consist of a recreation of what life was like at Fenton House in 1693 in the context of what was happening in the world at that time. Tickets £6, children £2.50.

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society, c/o Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3. It is edited by John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL (071-607 1628), to whom all contributions should be sent. The Secretary of the Society is Mrs Jane Ramsay and the Treasurer is Roger Cline c/o the Library.

Things Past

We have had some highly entertaining lectures recently. Way back in February Christopher Ikin talked to us about the history of *Hampstead Garden Suburb*. We learnt that some houses contained 'sleeping balconies', indicative, perhaps, of warmer summers in those days. The Central Square, with its two churches and the Institute, was the planned focal point but, unfortunately it contained no shops and no pubs and has never fulfilled the hopes of the planners. The Suburb has been called 'a failed venture in practical socialism', but it has many champions.

In March Julian Litten gave a sparkling talk to a packed audience on *The Dead Beneath our Feet*, a splendid survey of crypt tombs much enjoyed by the audience in Hampstead parish church crypt. Those who missed this should buy his book.

Robin Woolven was our April speaker with a well-researched talk on the Rev. Edward Walford whose compilation histories of London were a remarkable achievement even if they were just compilations. We shall see what we might do about having a blue plaque erected to him in Church Row - he lived next to Park's house.

New Publications

There are two new publications about Hampstead. One is a revised version of *Hampstead Town Trail*, compiled by Christopher Wade. Economically priced at £1, it is available from him at 28 Willoughby Road, NW3 (please include postage) or else at Burgh House and CHS meetings.

Hampstead Museum has produced a booklet entitled *Where they lived in Hampstead*, a comprehensive survey with map of 157 notable residents of Hampstead, together with a guide map. That, too, is priced £1 and is available as above.

From the Hornsey Historical Society comes *Bulletin 34*. Articles include reminiscences of working life at a carpenter's in Hornsey, a description of Duckett's Manor and its connection with Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. There is also a fascinating piece on a nursery garden in Crouch End.

Also from the Hornsey Society is Ian Murray's *Haringey Before our Time*, a brief history of that area, covering Tottenham, Wood Green, Hornsey, Muswell Hill and Crouch End. This is an invaluable concise guide to the development of this varied area. The booklet has 32pp, with illustrations, and costs £2.70 plus 30p postage and packing. Both the Hornsey publications may be obtained from the Society at The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL

A Villa in Hampstead

Deirdre Le Faye has sent us a poem from a *Miscellaneous Assemblage of Epigrams* published in 1794. It is entitled *Mr C-R-Y's Villa at Hampstead 1760*. Who was this gentleman, presumably Carey? Is it written by an estate agent?

'Stranger approach! prepare to see
A palace in epitome.
A rural queen, in this retreat,
Has fix'd her airy summer's seat:
Midst grottos, lawns, and blooming trees,
She here enjoys the balmy breeze;
And here, with calm contempt, looks down
On the tumultuous joys of town.

The villa splendid, tho' not great,
With ev'ry mark of art complete,
Presents to view, on ev'ry side,
The spoils of oriental pride:
All that rich China's marts display,
Grotesque in shape, in colours gay;
Enamell'd jars, or painted screens,
Fat idols, pagods, mandarines!

But chiefly here regales our eyes
Whate'er the Flemish school supplies,
Of landskip rare, with labour'd skill,
By Berchem, Brughel, or Paul Brill; -
Names which the connoisseur reveres,
Tho' harsh to nice poetic ears.

etc etc

NEW HOURS AT HOLBORN

In the not too distant future the whole of Camden's Local Studies library will move out of Swiss Cottage Library to be relocated at Holborn Library in Theobalds Road. Inconvenient though this will be for people in the north of the borough it will have the advantage of the collection being with local material already at Holborn and, we hope, with more space for users.

While conversion work is going on the use of the Holborn archives is restricted and from further notice research may be done only by appointment (071-413 6342). If you have difficulty contacting this number ring Swiss Cottage for the time being on 071-413 6522.

A DEGREE AT GOLDSMITHS'

Goldsmiths' College at New Cross, part of the University of London, has sent us details of a part-time MA course in English Local and Regional History. It concentrates on material derived from the home counties rather than from London. Teaching will be on two evenings a week over two years, approximately four hours each week over a period of 25 weeks a year. Fees are about £800 per year. Application forms may be obtained from The Registrar, Goldsmiths' College, University of London, Lewisham Way, SE14 6NW.

PLASTICS AT HENDON

An unusual exhibition is at the Church Farmhouse Museum in Greyhound Hill, Hendon, NW4. It is on the history of plastics. Did you know that plastic was first exhibited in 1862? There are hundreds of exhibits - radios, telephones, cameras, household goods and jewellery among them. Admission is free. Mon-Thurs 10-5, Sat 10-1 and 2-5.30, Sun 2-5.30.

Building the Railway

The watercolour shown here, by kind permission of Guildhall Library, appears to depict the London & Birmingham Railway under construction, seen from above the western entrance to Primrose Hill Tunnel. Cruchley's map of 1838 has a diagonal footpath that could be the one lined with stores. Nowadays the viewpoint would be near the junction of Hilgrove Road and Finchley Road, while the three bridges would be for Loudoun Road (with South Hampstead station on the near side), Abbey Road and Kilburn Priory.

Disposal of the spoil from the tunnel is the main theme of the picture. Tunnels through soft ground were normally excavated by first sinking a number of shafts on the desired line, and then working outwards in each direction from the bottom of each shaft. Tunnelling from either end had to wait until the approach cuttings had been dug. Much of the spoil therefore came out through the shafts, which later were either filled in or (with a superstructure), left open for ventilation.

At Primrose Hill the railway was allowed four shafts, one of which could be permanent; this is still open, behind louvres, west of Hawtrey Road and near the mid point of the tunnel. From here, and from a working shaft about 200 yards to the west (in the centre of Adelaide Road), the spoil was taken to the loading platform shown in the picture; and, to judge by the cutting which frames the view, the hillside itself made a sizeable contribution. The platform, with two heads, serves both the main line and a temporary railway going off to the right. This unusual structure is not recorded by John C. Bourne in his *Drawings of the London and Birmingham Railway* (1839).

There seems to have been a change of plan. Originally all spoil was to be taken eastwards to the nearby Camden goods depot, where the ground level was being raised. Perhaps the temporary railway led to a dump, which was cleared when trains could run through the tunnel to the depot. Or, as the spoil was mostly London Clay, there might have been a brickworks.

Forming the tunnel proved to be a difficult job and it was fortunate that Robert Stephenson, appointed chief engineer to the railway in September 1833, was close at hand: his office, at first elsewhere, soon moved to the Eyre Arms Hotel in St John's Wood. By July 1834 he had taken a 'comfortable house' on Haverstock Hill, below Belsize Grove, and he lived here until shortly after the death of his wife, Frances, in October 1842.

In a sense we owe this picture to Eton College. Professor Thompson points out, on p219 of his *Hampstead: Building a Borough* (1974), that the original tunnel was shallow and a cutting would have sufficed. But that would not have been to the liking of the college, which owned the land almost as far west as Avenue Road and had plans for development. Eton was also able to insist on a 'substantial and ornamental' entrance at its end of the tunnel, facing Chalk Farm, and this is shown on p39 of *The Streets of Belsize*. The entrance at the other end, out of sight in the watercolour, was of standard design.

The railway opened as far as Boxmoor on 20 July 1837, with intermediate stations only at Harrow and Watford; it was nearly 42 years before trains stopped at South Hampstead.

Roy Allen



Courtesy of Guildhall Library, City of London

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 138

Jul 1993

Folk Music in Camden Town

Wed, 21 July, 7.30pm
Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, NW1

Camden has many national institutions within its borders. One of the more unusual is the English Folk Dance and Song Society, housed today in Cecil Sharp House. Sharp, who was once principal of the Hampstead Conservatoire in Eton Avenue (the building is now submerged in the Embassy Theatre), published a *Book of British Song* in 1902 and in 1904 joined the committee of the Folk Song Society; seven years later he founded the English Folk Dance Society. The two societies joined forces in 1932, eight years after Sharp's death.

The site of the Society's distinctive building, opened in 1930, was previously occupied by two Italianate villas, and was once earmarked by the LNWR for the erection of tenements for railway workers, but an early conservation campaign prevented the scheme.

Tonight's lecture on the history of the Society is by its Chief Executive, Brenda Godrich.

An Outing to Blenheim

Saturday, 7 Aug

There are a few seats left on the coach for the Society's annual outing - this year to Blenheim. If you want to go please telephone Robin Woolven on 071-794 2382

A Bloomsbury Quartet

Saturday, 28 August, 2.25pm
Meet outside Dominion Theatre,
Tottenham Court Road, W1

Many of you will remember the splendid talk we had last year at Chalk Farm, given by Valerie Colin-Russ, on the various depictions of lions to be found in London. Ms Colin-Russ has this time kindly offered to take us for a tour of part of Bloomsbury, taking in four significant squares - Bedford, the most complete, Bloomsbury, the first, together with Russell and Red Lion.

Things to Come

22 Sep, 2.30pm: A guided tour of Lincoln's Inn. This is being organised by Sue Palmer of the Sir John Soane's Museum (071-4052107). There will be a charge of £2 for the tour payable on the day. This event will be featured again in the next *Newsletter*, but as it has received no previous publicity we are giving full details here. It would be helpful if you could let Sue know in advance if you intend to go so that some idea of the numbers may be obtained.

(This takes the place of the September lecture, which has been postponed until 11 October)

11 Oct, 6.30pm. *From Fields to Gardens*, a history of the Lincoln's Inn Fields. Talk by Sue Palmer at Lincoln's Inn.

26 Oct, 7.30pm (venue to be confirmed, but probably St Pancras Church Hall). *The Mail Coach Builders*, by David Honour.

A Kite among the Pigeons

Controversy has broken out over the continued usage by the Corporation of London of the name 'Kite Hill' to denote Parliament Hill - it is used in printed maps and, indeed, in the excellent brochure they produce entitled *Hampstead Heath Diary 1993*.

'Kite Hill', of course, has no historical basis, which the Corporation freely admit, but they do say that it is in common use. Others are happy that it should be used since place names must begin some time and it is in any case an apt and attractive name. However, there is a campaign to persuade the Corporation to return to Parliament Hill to denote the hill and to use Parliament Hill Fields for the land around it (at the moment the latter is described merely as Parliament Hill, which is a misnomer). Parliament Hill appears to be a late 18th-century invention and derives, most probably, from the fact that you could then see the Houses of Parliament from its eminence. The name does not have anything to do with the attempt to blow up Parliament in 1605, nor was it ever known (except in error on one map) as Traitors' Hill!

We would be interested to have your views on this. Does the adoption of a new name - the renaming of pubs is a frequent example - really matter if the new name has a true significance? It has validity in the matter of Kite Hill, and occasionally a new pub name is appropriate. But should we let it pass?

John Gage

John Gage, the editor of the *Camden History Review*, died, aged 82, on 25 May. He had been ill for some time after a stroke.

John was brought up a Methodist but went to a Jesuit school - the only good secondary school in the area: he emerged a rigorous agnostic, fascinated by science and history. As he got older his interests covered a much wider span - he did sculpture and drawing at the St Martin's School of Art, he was a good cook and a wine expert, and had a working knowledge of eight languages; he was also a pharmacist and scientist and it was in science that he made his living.

John edited the last six editions of the *Review* and died while working on the next edition.

THE CAMDEN PICTURE SHOW

At Burgh House (until 26 September) is a collection of rarely-seen paintings and prints of various parts of Camden - many are usually held in store at Swiss Cottage. There are, of course, a good number depicting the charms of Hampstead, but there are also some rare glimpses of Kentish Town, Camden Town and Holborn to be enjoyed.

The Goldfinger Legacy

Not everyone likes Erno Goldfinger's architecture - Trellick Tower in North Kensington and his Governmental building at the Elephant & Castle, on which the architect lavished much talent and thought, are pet hates of many, including this Editor. However, there is no denying the architectural importance of the houses he built at Nos 1-3 Willow Road in 1938. There was much protest at the time, for they replaced a row of 18th-century cottages. Goldfinger retorted that his houses were 'an adaptation of eighteenth-century style'. Now, of course, they are listed and the object of many a student of modern architecture.

Since Goldfinger's death in 1987 and that of his widow, Ursula, in 1991, there has been a move to open the house in the Willow Road terrace in which they lived for 50 years to the public - its furnishings and fittings are contemporary with the house (even the linoleum is original - a remarkable thing in a house which has witnessed the growing up of three children). In theory the National Trust will open it to the public in the usual way, but they are awaiting a decision by the Inland Revenue and the heritage secretary, Peter Brooke, as to whether part of the value of the house can be accepted in lieu of death duties. If it cannot then Goldfinger's heirs will be obliged to sell the house to raise the necessary money.

BUYING BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY

CHS members may like to know that the Local Studies Library at Swiss Cottage now stocks the entire range of CHS publications.

Saxons in Shorts Gardens

Somehow, the report of the archaeological dig, conducted by the Department of Greater London Archaeology of the Museum of London, at 2-26 Shorts Gardens and 19-41 Earlham Street in June-October 1989, was not noted in this *Newsletter*. Rather late, the most important findings are listed below.

It would seem that the area was occupied in the late 8th century by a group of artisans, mainly working with iron, both smelting and smithing it. This adds to the body of recent evidence that the Covent Garden area was the site of Lundenwic, the Saxon settlement outside the walls of the City of London after the Romans had departed. This is the most northerly part of Lundenwic so far found and it is, of course, in Camden and not in Westminster.

The smiths appear to have lived in a small group of wattle and daub houses, which may have been whitewashed - some pieces of daub still had whitewash adhering. The roofs may have been of thatch. The yards were made from compacted gravel, and small gardens probably provided herbs and vegetables. A fence, either marking a division of property or a field boundary, ran across the site.

Charred bread grains were found around the hearths of domestic cooking fires, as well as fragments of butchered bone and oyster shell. Whole animal skeletons and unbutchered bone were scarce on the site, suggesting that the meat was brought in ready butchered from elsewhere.

There was evidence of other crafts: a number of loomweights, bone needles etc were found on the site, indicating weaving.

VIOLENT TIMES

The *Gentleman's Magazine* for much of its publishing life was a fascinating mixture of news, esoteric articles, social chit-chat and downright sleaze. It recorded much of the violence of the 18th century, as shown in the following extracts relating to local places:

In Mar 1731 it noted a quarrel between Justices Webster and De Veil (the latter was the magistrate at Bow Street court) in which Webster had stabbed De Veil in the stomach. Webster was fined one shilling.

In August the same year a baker killed a blacksmith at Highgate after a quarrel at a skittle ground there.

In June 1732 a man, convicted of perjury, was killed by the mob while standing in the pillory at Seven Dials.

In November 1752 an 8-year-old boy, who carried newspapers about Highgate, was decoyed by a baker's apprentice out of Hornsey Lane into a field and there had his throat cut when he refused to hand over any money. The villain was later arrested in Holloway and the boy was reported as 'likely to recover'.



This view is outside Camden, but only just. It shows the tumble-down cottages of Townsend's Yard, on the north side of Highgate High Street - the little road that runs down to the Garden Centre, as it appeared in the 1920s

A Railway outlet

Roy Allen has sent us a photograph of an old ventilator to the second Primrose Hill Tunnel. He writes:

'The photograph, taken across the back of Wadham Gardens from Lower Merton Rise, shows the ventilator to the second Primrose Hill Tunnel, opened in 1879. Only the original tunnel (see *Newsletter 137*) is straight: this one, for the fast lines, makes a detour to the south but even so it does not get nearer than 370 yards from the summit of the hill. With the new tunnel came South Hampstead Station, at first known as Loudoun Road.

By 1922, a third tunnel, or rather a pair of tunnels, had been opened for the electric service from Euston to Watford Junction. These tunnels are to the north of the other two and they run below Adelaide Road from Elsworthy Rise westwards to the bend. This is hardly Primrose Hill and in railway parlance the 1922 work is South Hampstead DC Lines Tunnels. In July of that year Loudoun Road, closed in 1917, reopened as South Hampstead and with a new up platform, built at the expense of nearby back gardens in Hilgrove Road.'



A VILLA IN HAMPSTEAD

We published in the last Newsletter a laudatory description of a villa in Hampstead, published in 1760. The owner was described as Mr C-r-y. Kit Ikin suggests that on the evidence of the 1762 Survey of Hampstead the fortunate man was Robert Carey of (probably) Old Grove House.

The Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held in the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution on 21 June. Officers and Council elected were as follows:

PRESIDENT: Professor Christopher Elrington
VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Dr Ann Saunders

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay
TREASURER: Roger Cline
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: Christopher Wade
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Horace Shooter
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes
PUBLICITY: Diana Rau

Council Members:

Peter Barber, John Broad, Ruth Hayes, Lester May, Sue Palmer, Gillian Tindall, Robin Woolven

The Chairman in his address pointed out (to her evident surprise) that Jane Ramsay had now been Secretary of the Society for fifteen years, and thanked her for her invaluable work in this post. He dwelt on the proposed move of the Local History Department at Swiss Cottage down to Holborn Library in Theobalds Road. There was, he said, more room there for researchers (and staff), but he hoped that Camden's budget will stretch to equipping it properly with such elementary things nowadays as decent photocopiers, facilities for the use of laptop word processors etc.

He announced that two members, Arne Kaplan and Chris Ross, had agreed to take on the editing of the next edition of the *Camden History Review*. Contributions should be sent to them at 18 Cavendish Mansions, Mill Lane, NW6 1TE (071-431 4786)

We had two talks after the business meeting. John Carswell told us about the personalities of the men principally involved in the saving of Kenwood for the public - Shaw Lefevre and Sir Arthur Crosfield in particular. Afterwards we heard Carol Colson, who has been in charge of the works for English Heritage at Kenwood, where the ponds have been dredged and brought back to what is thought to be their earlier appearance. There had been no spectacular finds beneath the silt, but the old pattern of the medieval fish ponds had been rediscovered and it was possible also to put forward the view that the Thousand Pound Pond, the one that lies in front of the orchestra cover, was cut as a reservoir. The ornamental sham bridge by the orchestra pond had also been expertly and lovingly rebuilt.

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society and is edited by John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL (071-607 1628), to whom all contributions should be sent. The Secretary of the Society is Mrs Jane Ramsay and the Treasurer is Roger Cline, both c/o Local Studies Department, Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3.

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 139

Sep 1993

Lincoln's Inn and its Fields

It is thought that on Lincoln's Inn Fields Anthony Babington and his thirteen accomplices were hanged, drawn and quartered in 1586. But by 1613 the Fields were attractive enough to warrant the attention of a property developer who found himself up against an early conservation campaign led by the lawyers of Lincoln's Inn, who petitioned Charles I that '[the fields should be] converted into walks after the same manner as Morefeildes'. Nothing much happened to this suggestion though the central part of the Fields was protected from building as part of the deal when fine houses were built around them.

The Fields have had an interesting history, much of it unrelated to the Inn of Court that they take their name from. Who better to give us a talk on their past than Sue Palmer, CHS Council member and Archivist at the Sir John Soane Museum, one of the most interesting buildings facing the Fields?

Her talk, entitled **From Fields to Gardens**, is on Monday, 11 October at 6.30pm at Lincoln's Inn. We are not sure yet which hall we shall be in and members should report to the Porter's Lodge on the south-east side of the Square, where directions will be given.

The same Porter's Lodge is also the starting point for a tour around Lincoln's Inn itself on Wednesday, 22 September at 2.30pm. As noted in the last Newsletter, this is being organised by Sue Palmer and members should arrive at the Lodge by ten minutes before the start time. There will be a charge of £2 each for the tour payable on the day. If you intend to go it would be helpful if you could telephone her in advance on (071-405 2107 weekdays) so that she has some idea of numbers.

A NEW PRIMROSE HILL GROUP

Our successful publication dealing with the streets from Primrose Hill down to Euston Road will soon be out of print and we would like to republish it. However, we do need people to update it - it is remarkable how things change in a matter of years. Buildings disappear, new ones come, and features are taken away or added. Members who would like to join this group, which will of course have a good research base already in existence, should contact the Society's Secretary, Jane Ramsay, c/o Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3.

The Mail Coach builders

Tues 26 October, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church House, Lancing St NW1
(opposite Eversholt Street entrance to Euston Station)

This talk promises to cover entirely new ground. Our speaker, David Honour, who specialises in archaeological reconstruction and design for the Royal Palaces, will be describing the evolution of the mail coach but, as he says, not revelling in its romantic image, but dealing with the reality of travel by that method. That is his central theme but as an important element he will mention particularly the firm run by Joseph Wright of Islington whose coach-building enterprise was the largest in London, and possibly in the country at the very time that the first railways threatened his future. Wright, however, was a versatile man - he was not left stranded by the new invention. He went on to design railway coaches for the London & Greenwich and the London & Birmingham railways and, even later, he was appointed a judge of new bus designs by the London General Omnibus Company. When he died in 1859 he was bracketed by one newspaper with Brunel and Robert Stephenson, who had also died that year.

Things to Come

Wed Nov 17, Burgh House: Dr Ann Saunders on William Chambers, the architect.

Things Past

Joan Barraclough has sent us her annual report on the Society's Outing, which this year was to Blenheim Palace:

'Have Robin and Sonia Woolven missed their vocations? Should they spend their time organising coach tours? The Camden History Society outing to Blenheim Palace went so smoothly that there was no battle or hassle about the visit, though the vast, ornate pile commemorated a successful battle. Nowadays, of course, a general would beg a grateful country not to lumber him with a country seat. A suburban villa would do better. Information and literature provided all the background knowledge required. Then it was up to members to decide what to do.

A tour of the house was essential - and how good the guides were. It was not only the magnificence of the

paintings, furniture and silver which impressed, but the extraordinary stories of the personalities who came to live there. Riches and power did not save them from grief, of course. The appalling number of child deaths recorded was tragic.

From the great and capable Duke of Marlborough to the victorious Winston Churchill, those who lived in the house, who died or were born there, were described and depicted. In the room where Winston was born, so many documents and pictures recorded events of our own time, those many of us remembered. There was much else with which those young today are familiar. Exam nerves, for example - young Winston was sick just after scraping into Harrow.

The house and its splendour could occupy a full day, the wonderful grounds another. The cascade was underpowered after a spell of dry weather. The rose garden perfumed the district, the temple of Diana held a reminder of eighteenth-century fondness for the classics. There was a motor launch for trips on the lakes, a miniature railway, and every opportunity for photographs.'

(This Newsletter is going to press before anyone has sent in photographs! Hopefully, next edition...[Ed.]

The Kite Hill controversy

We noted in the previous *Newsletter* that the Corporation of London has persistently called Parliament Hill, 'Kite Hill', to the dismay of some. Kit Ikin points out that the practice began in the days of the GLC who maintained that this was the name the public used. According to them, he says, Parliament Hill was the actual viewpoint, but Kite Hill was the shoulder to the north. He feels, in any case, that the name for the hill should be restored.

Mary Stapleton, on the other hand, votes for Kite Hill as 'a vivid reminder of the way it was (and is) used by people, just as Anglers' Lane in Kentish Town reminds us of activity on the banks of the river Fleet.'

John Stephenson has sent us a copy of a letter from Mary Port, Chair of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee to the Corporation expressing opposition to the use of Kite Hill. She also points out that the cricket ground, running track and bowling green are imprecisely located on their map of the area.

Kit Ikin also feels that we should try to kill the story that the Middlesex elections were held on Parliament Hill. They were held on Hampstead Heath and Potter (*Random Recollections* 1907 p87) places them on Shepherd's Green (now the reservoir and the two Heath islands of shrubbery).

The First theatre in Camden Town

What must surely be the first theatrical venue in Camden Town is shown in this handbill discovered in an old biography of the actor, Edmund Kean. He is here shown in 1805 appearing in *The Mountaineers* at the Theatre at Wivell's Billiard Room in Camden Town. The precise location of this establishment can only be discovered by an exhaustive study of the rate books for the period, though an Abraham Wyvell was licensee of The Wheatsheaf in King Street (now Plender Street) from 1792-7.

John Richardson

At the Theatre, Wivell's Billiard Room,
CAMDEN-TOWN.

This present Evening, Friday, Feb. 15, 1805,
Will be presented the Romantic Opera of

The Mountaineers,

OR
Love and Madnefs :

	Octavian,	Mr. KEAN	
	Bulcazen Muley,	Mr. NEWMAN	
	Rogue,	Mr. SMITH	
Count Virelet,	Mr. COLLINS	Killmalock,	Mr. THOMAS
And Sadi,	Mr. GROSETT.		
Zoradia,	Mrs. GROSETT		
And Agnes,	Miss BARNES.		

End of the Play

A Comic Song, by Mr. Grosett

To which will be added the Farce of

The Spoiled Child,

Little Pickle,	Mrs. GROSETT	
Old Pickle,	Mr. NEWMAN	John, Mr. KEAN.
And Telamachus Tag,	(the Author and Actor) Mr. GROSETT.	
Miss Barbara Pickle,	Miss BARNES.	

PIT 2s. GALLERY 1s. Doors to be opened at 6, and begin at 7.

James, Printer, Chapel Street, Gosh.

STUDYING FAMILY HISTORY

The Open University will be commencing a course entitled 'Studying Family and Community History: 19th and 20th centuries' in February 1994. There are no entry requirements and there is no need to undertake a full degree, but the course does offer, on successful completion, a certificate which could count towards a BA degree. The course number is DA301. Those interested should contact Ruth Finnegan, Course Team Chairman, or Jacqueline Eustace, Course Manager, at the Open University (0908 654535).

Philip Greenall's Collection

As many members will know Philip Greenall had an extensive collection of coins and trade tokens. In fact, his collection of 870 Venetian coins has just been donated in his memory by his widow, Stella Greenall, to the British Museum. Stella has kindly sent us a reprint of his paper in the *British Numismatic Journal* 1991 in which he attempts to redefine the geographical location of those tokens issued in London and Middlesex under the three headings of City, Metropolitan Middlesex and Rural Middlesex. Those identified as Holborn are in the second category, whereas Hampstead and Highgate are in the third section. Hampstead had a token, amongst others, stamped with the words 'The Well Neighbourhood' and Highgate boasts several specimens. Philip also possessed a token for the Mother Red Cap 'halfway house' at Holloway - not Camden Town, where the Mother Red Cap was also known as a halfway house. Whereas the Camden Town tavern was roughly halfway between London and Hampstead the Holloway establishment, sited today near Junction Road, appears to be halfway between nowhere in particular.

As regards Philip's paper, Robert Thompson writes: 'The topographical evidence of 17th century tokens has been difficult to extract from the London and Middlesex series in Williamson's catalogue. The late Philip Greenall shows, for example, that the sequence downstream of Wapping, Shadwell, Ratcliff, Limehouse and Blackwall are listed by Williamson as London, Middlesex, London, Middlesex and London respectively. Instead of this haphazard arrangement the author proposes to divide Middlesex (outside the City) into an inner urban and an outer rural area, the boundary between which would be a 'green belt' free of dwellings, or of token issuers at least, which had a minimum width of one third of a mile.

One disadvantage in this proposal is that parts of St Pancras, Shoreditch, Stepney and Westminster are to be found in each of the divisions of Middlesex. While parish boundaries may also be arbitrary to some extent, they do have the sanction of custom, they mark out jurisdictions within which records were created, and they are supported by a reference apparatus. However, some such division of 17th-century Middlesex is surely helpful.

Although it proved impossible to print a map, Stella Greenall has added a long appendix listing place-names in four divisions, referring to Williamson but with proper identifications, refinements, corrections and additions. Division I, The City, adds for example a Grammar School at Fleet Ditch (in the Bridewell?), and notes that the supposed name 'Paulin's Church' for St Paul's Cathedral is likely to have been Maudlin's Church. Division II, Metropolitan Middlesex, appears to contribute to London topography the name Gibbons Street for the site of the first Theatre Royal. Division III, Rural Middlesex, publishes a Palmer's Green token bearing a fox (the sign of the Fox is still

there). Division IV lists such names as St Martin's Lane which could belong in more than one division, and street names which have not been identified.

The Greenall paper is now the most reliable key to the tokens of London and Middlesex, and should be the first work to consult for the fullest listing of known tokens. These, uniting in a single document locality, sign and trader, come nearer than anything else to a trade directory for the third quarter of the seventeenth century.'

New Publications

Camden's Local History Department has published two new books. The first is *Kentish Town: Its past in Pictures*, one of Camden's series of landscape books depicting different parts of the borough. The first view puts us right at the entrance to Kentish Town as approached from the south. It is one of the excellent pen drawings by Hieronymus Grimm of a rural Kentish Town of 1772, just where Kentish Town Road and the present Royal College Street meet - a view which gives three-dimensional life to the 1800 map of St Pancras - the Kentish Town section is reproduced also. Further north, and a few pages later, we see Kentish Town chapel - the Owl bookshop is now on part of the site, in its 1852 form in a watercolour that strongly suggests the 18th rather than the 19th century.

Later on we have sections on East and West Kentish Town and here the illustrations are of shops, social life, and terraces, most looking grimy but, of course, traffic free. There is a splendid picture of some robust and seemingly aggressive farriers in Fortress Road, complete with two rather unfriendly-looking dogs, and we have, thanks to the photographic survey before the Northern line was built, a distinct and detailed look at many of the buildings along the main artery of Kentish Town.

The book of 52 pages, compiled and captioned by Lesley Marshall, costs £4.95, and is not to be missed. Orders may be placed with Local History Publications, Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road WC1X 8PA. Cheques should be made out to the London Borough of Camden and postage and packing of £1.50 should be added. Alternatively, the title will be sold at CHS meetings.

On a smaller scale is a 'heritage trail' around Chalk Farm and Primrose Hill, compiled by Bob Carpenter. The walk takes us from Chalk Farm station in a brisk canter around the streets of Chalk Farm. The 12 page-booklet is distinctly laid out and well worth the price of £1.50. It is not, of course, as detailed as the street guide published by the CHS, but it is a good basic guide - though the picture of the church of St Mark's appears to be reversed. Copies may be obtained as above, this time with 50p for postage.

George Gissing's Camden

Described as 'the last Victorian Novelist' George Gissing (1857-1903) spent a formative six years of his apprenticeship to literature living in and moving frequently between down-market (mostly lodging) houses in Camden. This note merely lists those places where Gissing was recorded (in his letters and other documents) as living so the reader interested in serious literary criticism of the novelist and his work (in particular the relationship between his experience of poverty in London and his work) is referred to such works as Gillian Tindall's *The Born Exile: George Gissing*, or John Halperin's *Gissing - A Life in Books*.

Born in Wakefield, Gissing was a successful prize-winning classical scholar at Owen's College in Manchester who, in 1876, suffered a bout of gonorrhoea and fell for the young but worldly-wise Marianne Helen 'Nellie' Harrison. In June 1876 Gissing was caught stealing to support Nellie and he served a month's hard labour before sailing for America in September that year. He had some articles published in America but was back in England in October 1877 spending six weeks with his family in Yorkshire before coming down to London intending to make his literary reputation - a task that took many years. Gissing first found lodgings 'off Gray's Inn Road' but by January 1878 he had found himself a single basement room at 22 Colville Place off Whitfield Street and Nellie came down to join him. The couple spent some months (just) surviving there, he writing and tutoring while she was drinking heavily. By November 1878 they were living in a single room at 31 Gower Place (a small terraced house about a third of the way along the north side from Gower Street) but by January 1879 the couple were living a few hundred yards south-west at '70 Huntley Street, Bedford Square' another small terraced house now used by UCH. By the summer of 1879 George and Nellie had moved to 38 Edward Street (now Varndell Street) joining Hampstead Road and Cumberland Market. It was from here that the couple had the banns read for their wedding on 27 October 1879 at the chapel of St James, Hampstead Road. (Here we disagree with Harry Hodgkinson's unpublished paper held at the Marylebone Library in which it is claimed that they lived in the Edward Street just north of Dorset Square.)

Once married, Mr and Mrs George Gissing set up their home at 5 Hanover Street, Islington, and it was in this the year of his marriage that George started writing *Workers in the Dawn*, only published (in May 1880) when he used the last £125 of his £500 share of the trust fund left by his father to pay the publisher of the novel. The couple moved to 55 Wornington Road, Westbourne Grove but Nell continued her drinking, was spitting blood and had again taken to the streets to pay for her alcohol habit - eventually in July 1881 George packed Nellie off to lodgings in Hastings and at the end of the same month he and his cat 'Grimm' were again in lodgings in Camden. This time he was at 15 Gower Place across the road from his previous rooms and on a site that was taken into the Gower Place frontage of the extension of University College. But Nellie would not stay away and she returned after a month. In January 1882 Nellie's public fits caused Gissing to take her into UCH but to no avail as Nellie's addiction to alcohol was driving her insane. In February 1882 Nellie was put into an invalid's boarding house in Battersea and she died in a similar establishment near Waterloo on 29 February 1888 of a range of nasty problems charitably described as 'chronic laryngitis' on

the death certificate, which itself described Gissing as a journalist.

Gissing was indeed making his way as a tutor and 'teacher of languages' while he was contributing articles to some of the leading journals. The cost of Nellie's invalid care was a continual drain on Gissing's meagre income and, when she was away from him, Gissing was himself ill whilst at 15 Gower Place.

He moved up-market, first in February 1882 to 29 Dorchester Place, Marylebone, then five months later to 17 Oakley Crescent, Chelsea where he remained for 20 months before coming back to '62 Milton Street, Regent's Park', i.e. Marylebone, in May 1884. In the period 1882-83 he had written his novel *The Unclassed*, so his reputation was slowly growing when he moved back to his final lodgings in Camden in September 1884 when he was at 18 Rutland (now Mackworth) Street off the Hampstead Road. Three months later he found a recently-built apartment at 7k Cornwall Residences, Regent's Park - in fact a building on the south side of Allsop Place with a back view of Baker Street station. Gissing used the flat as his base and wrote here (and on his many travels in Europe) his next four long novels before he moved to Exeter in January 1891. Just before then, on 24 September 1890 (the year that he wrote *New Grub Street*) Gissing met the 23-year-old Edith Underwood, an uneducated and plain young woman whose family home was at 23 St Paul's Crescent, Camden Town. The couple were married at the St Pancras Register Office on 25 February 1891, whereupon they went off to live (unfortunately unhappily) in Exeter. George and Edith finally parted in 1897, by which time his literary reputation was more established. Gissing had another 17 or so books and novels published before he died in the south of France in 1903 having (bigamously) married a French woman, Gabrielle Fleury, in Rouen in December 1899. By this time Edith was, like the first Mrs Gissing, moving around in lodgings in London with their two sons while George was mixing with such literary figures as Henry James, Arthur Conan Doyle and H.G. Wells, who were all part of Gissing's later career.

In his early period in London George Gissing spent many months working in his uncomfortable rooms in Camden and in the warmer British Museum Reading Room - he knew his St Pancras and St Marylebone but whereas some of his residences in St Marylebone can be identified in those of his novels describing the hard life of the unfortunate cut of London society, there is little that can be exactly identified as 'Camden' other than his description of King's Cross underground station in his 1894 novel *In the Year of the Jubilee*. The robust reader may well identify other Camden locations in Gissing's extensive output but be warned: his style is not that of Charles Dickens with whom he shared, said Gissing's friend Morley Roberts, 'sympathy for the suffering of others... (which came)... out of his own personal miseries and trials.' Perhaps the best start would be Gissing's 1902 semi-autobiographical *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*.

Robin Woolven

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society and is edited by John Richardson, to whom all contributions should be sent at 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL. The Secretary of the Society is Jane Ramsay and the Treasurer is Roger Cline, both c/o Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3.

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 140

Nov 1993

Sir William Chambers - our November talk

Wed 17 November
Burgh House, New End Square
NW3. 7.30pm

Our talk this evening is on the distinguished architect, Sir William Chambers, and our speaker is our own Vice-President, Dr Ann Saunders - a combination hard to resist. Chambers, who helped to popularise a mixture of Chinese and Classical - see the Pagoda in Kew Gardens - was a Scot who was born in Sweden, where he spent much of his youth. Other London buildings of his which still survive are Somerset House, Manresa House in Roehampton and Wick House in Richmond for Sir Joshua Reynolds. He also built for Viscount Melbourne the house off Piccadilly which later became the principal part of the Albany apartments. It was Henry Holland who converted the house into apartments for bachelors and built the additional chambers in the grounds which are now so coveted and zealously guarded.

The History of Kentish Town

Tues 14 December
Gospel Oak Methodist Church
Lisburne Road, NW3. 7.30pm

We have not had a talk on the history of Kentish Town for many years. Recently the Local Studies Library of Camden published a handsome pictorial history of its development which has achieved very good sales. Tonight, Malcolm Holmes, head of Local Studies, who needs little introduction to members, is our speaker on this general history of Kentish Town - an overview talk which, we hope, will encourage members to join the proposed group to publish a street-by-street guide to the area.

We are using a new venue on the evening. This new church is near the junction with Agincourt and Mansfield Roads and for those coming by bus it can be reached by numbers 24 and 46. Normally our December meeting features drinks and refreshments to celebrate Christmas but it has not been possible to arrange these at this venue. We therefore hope that as many members as possible will congregate afterwards for a drink in a nearby pub - to be nominated on the night.

WALKING WITH COLERIDGE

There are numerous historical walks around London and parts of Camden these days, but members may wish to know that there is a Coleridge walk around Highgate on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays of each week. Organised by Private Tours, walkers are invited to meet at the ticket barrier at Highgate underground station on the day (further details and advance booking may be obtained from Ann Vinall on 081-342 9515). The cost is £5 each (£3.50 concessions).

Coleridge came to Highgate in 1816 into the care of Dr Gilman, to break his opium addiction. In fact he stayed for the rest of his life, writing many of his essays and a good deal of poetry in the The Grove. A talkative man, he was host to numerous personalities such as Carlyle, Wordsworth, Lamb and Emerson.

WHAT'S NEW AT BURGH HOUSE?

The Hampstead Museum at Burgh House is presented each year with interesting memorabilia and ephemera relating to old Hampstead. An exhibition entitled *What's New?* is being held there until 19 December, featuring the gifts and donations so kindly made.

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

The annual Local History Conference organised by the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society on 20 November features London in sickness and in health, a topical subject at a time when facilities we have always relied on are threatened with closure - it still seems incredible that institutions embedded in the London framework such as Barts or UCH should be at risk.

The Conference - actually more a series of talks - has the themes 'From monastic hospitals to NHS trusts', 'Practitioners outside hospitals in the 16th and 17th centuries', '19th century water supplies', and the 19th century problems of sewage disposal.

Tickets for what promises to be a fascinating event may be purchased for £3.50 (Inc. tea and coffee) from the Local History Conference, 20 Rosebury Vale, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 6AQ. It begins at 10.10am and lasts until 4.30pm, and is at the Museum of London.

Hampstead in Canada

There is a Ville de Hampstead - it is a suburb of Montreal City in the Quebec province. Its place names are taken from Hampstead proper but its concept appears to have been based on Hampstead Garden Suburb.

This strictly residential community was inaugurated on 19 February 1914 and, intentionally, Hampstead Garden Suburb was taken as a model for its development. From the outset it was agreed that all lots should be of a reasonable size with a maximum of trees, shrubs and green areas and over the years (as with the Suburb) the concept has remained virtually intact. A document from the Town Clerk of Ville de Hampstead, which we have obtained through the kind offices of Allan Yates of Hollycroft Avenue, has broken down the population precisely: 92% speak English and 6.44% speak French; 5226 are Jewish by religion, 1014 are Catholics, 1092 are Protestants out of a population of 7800.

A map of the Ville, reproduced below, shows the numerous streets named after old Hampstead streets. But we have not been able to find out if one of the founders of the Ville was a nostalgic former Hampstead resident. Of course, Christopher Wade, while recognising the street names, would get completely lost if he were there.

The Old Railway Tunnel

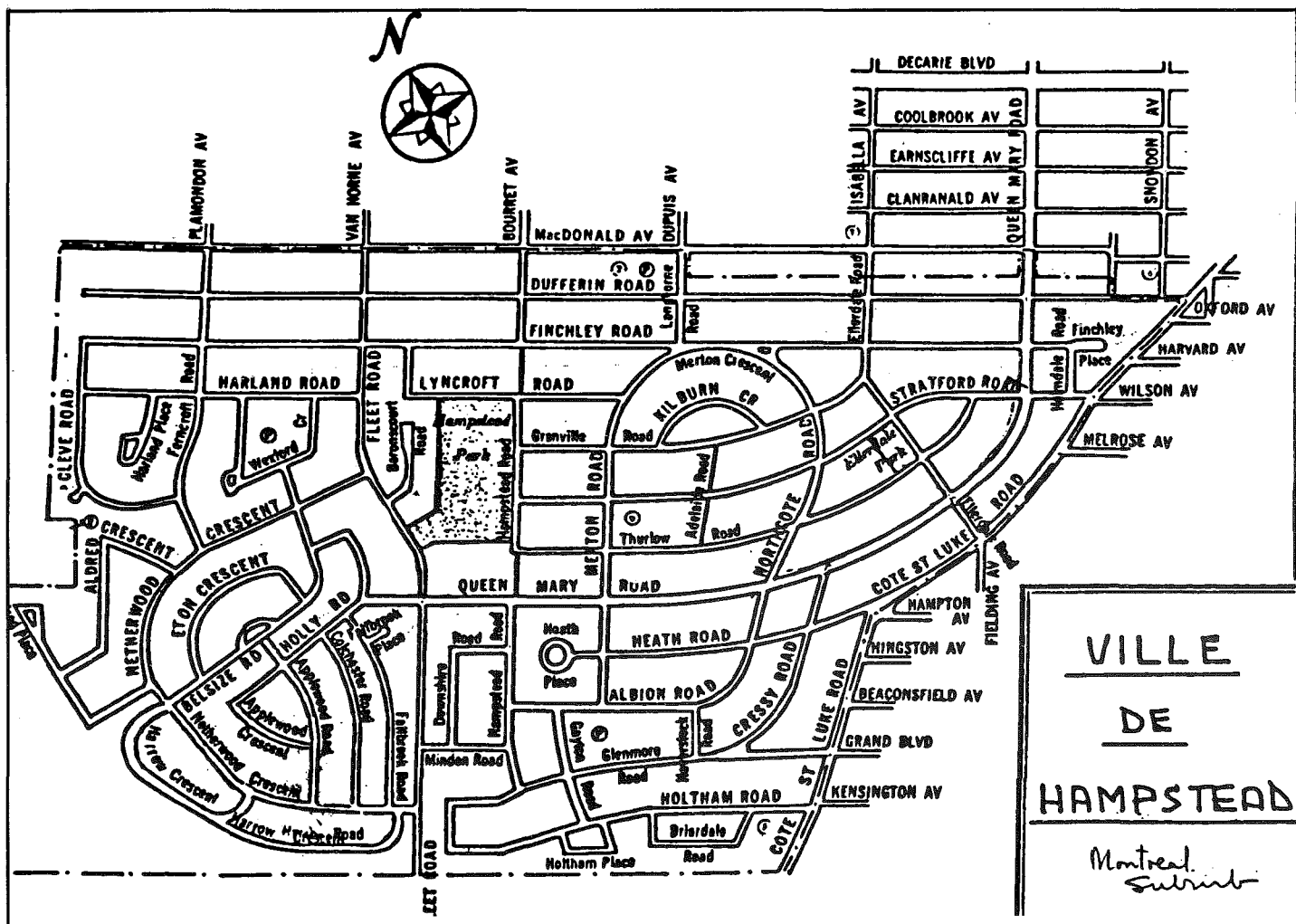
From 1926 until 1930 I was at St Christopher's School, No. 32 Belsize Lane - a large red-brick building, several storeys high, which rumbled regularly as trains passed underneath. An occasional puff of smoke would emerge from an unseen chimney in the roof of the tunnel. We were told it was the tunnel (if I remember from so long ago) from West Hampstead to Broad Street.

We senior pupils used a cellar as a cloakroom, where we teased newcomers. A bunch of us would drag away a heavy boot-locker, disclosing a small iron door which could be opened. This led down to the tunnel. You had to look down and not say what you saw...whereupon the victim was scared stiff by 'Oohs!' and cries of horror. We were honour-bound never to give the secret away.

Of course, only the first few rungs of an iron ladder leading down into pitch darkness were visible.

I wonder if the building is still there and if any fellow pupils remember. Miss Violet Wright was headmistress at the time - she never caught us!

Marjorie Holder née Markham



The End of Belsize House

The watercolour shown here, one of a pair by an unknown artist, depicts the last version of Belsize House. This seems to have been built in 1811-12 during the tenancy of William Everett, who had succeeded Spencer Perceval in the old mansion in 1809. The historic site was astride the eastern part of Belsize Park (the street) but the house illustrated faced Haverstock Hill, about 75 yards nearer the main road and just south-east of Belsize Avenue (roughly at no. 10).

These pictures were in disintegrating frames of a type in use around the turn of the century, this one being marked 'Belsize Park, London: House of John Wright, Grandfather of Florence Wolsey'. Wright, a banker, arrived at Belsize House in 1824-5 and it was probably he who changed the name to Belsize Park, perhaps because 11 Rosslyn Hill (which still stands) was calling itself Belsize.

Wright had 45 acres of his own but, not content with this, he later started buying up the leases of nearby properties. His first major acquisition, in 1834, was the nineteen acres of the future Hillfield, south of his drive (most of Belsize Avenue); see pp 95-97 of Professor Thompson's *Hampstead: Building a Borough* (1974). From 1838 his tenant was Basil George Woodd, a prominent wine merchant.

By 1840 Wright also owned four houses in or near Belsize Lane, those shown on pp61 and 76 of *The Streets of Belsize*. Meanwhile a bailiff had become necessary and in 1837-8 a house was built for him in the grounds. This all came to a sudden end in November 1840 with the failure of Wright & Co, the family bank in Henrietta Street; their downfall was said to be due largely to his 'extraordinary mania' for the 'most adventurous speculations'. Belsize Park was then in the hands of 'Assignees of John Wright, a bankrupt'.

Next came Sebastian Gonzalez Martinez, another wine merchant. He took over in the autumn of 1841 and lost no time in setting up a toll for horses and carriages on the private part of Belsize Lane, west of Daleham Mews; this

was being used for access to Finchley Road, opened about 1830 and now generating local traffic. Queen Victoria is reputed to have been called upon to pay toll by a small girl who had been left in charge of the gate (*Newsletter* 126).

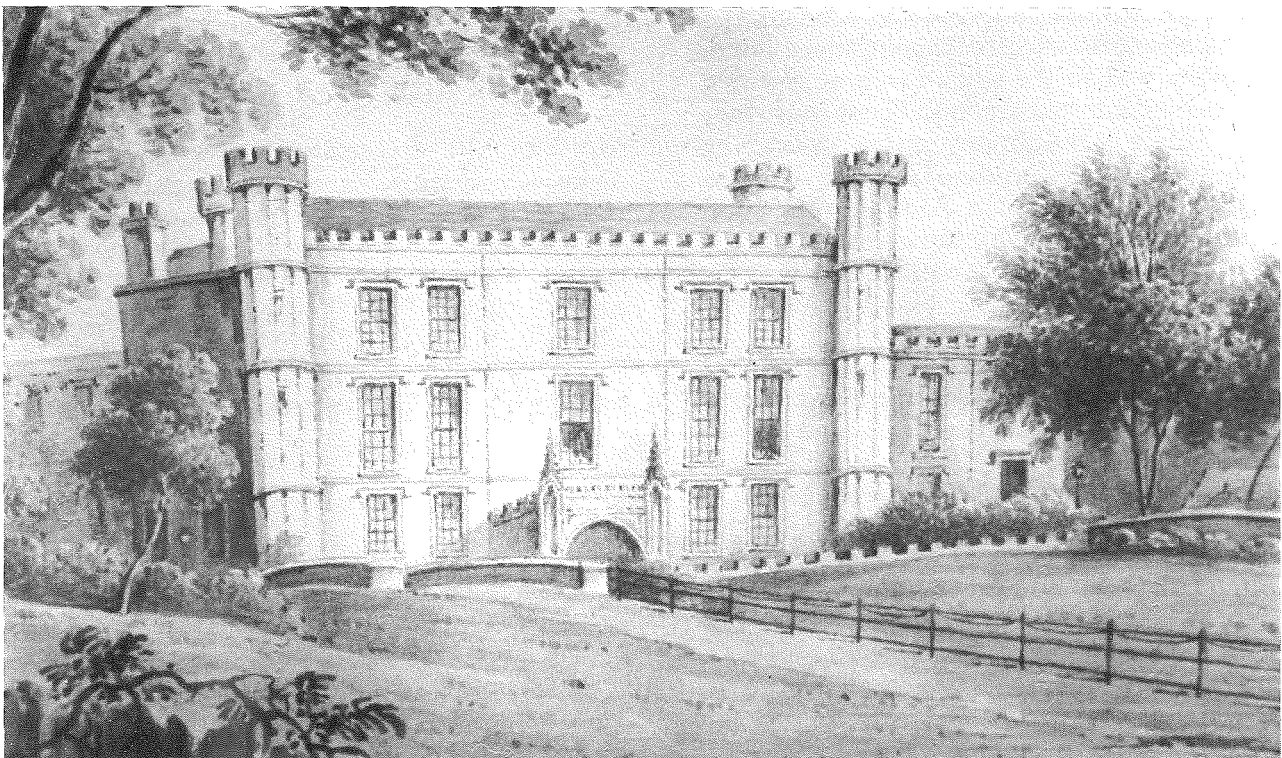
Sebastian and his wife Jane, each born in Spain about 1776, were the 'aged gentleman and lady, Roman Catholics' recalled by William Howitt on p22 of his *Northern Heights* (1869). Jane died in 1852 and Sebastian soon departed for Regent's Park.

The house came down in the autumn of 1853 but not before another unknown artist has made three quick pen-and-wash drawings, one of which is shown in *Newsletter* 134. Comparing this with the watercolour, it appears that the front has been rebuilt, in the same style but without a porch (Wright claimed he had made improvements); and the historic name has been revived.

Wright's grand-daughter has the same name as an artist, the Florence Wolsey (a figure painter) who exhibited between 1893 and 1910. She is recorded as living in Peckham Road, Camberwell, and in a house with a name familiar in Belsize history: Shelford Lodge. That was the name given by the future Earl of Rosslyn, in 1793 or shortly afterwards, to what by 1808 was known as Rosslyn House. Despite the Belsize link, it seems that the two women were not the same person.

Much is not clear but the artist was probably the Florence Wolsey (38, birth unregistered, unmarried and a butcher's daughter) who in the 1891 census was living with her parents in a terrace house that became no. 15 Peckham Road (now flats). Her family had lived at Ramsey and could have heard of Shelford Lodge (*Newsletters* 108, 124); and her mother, maiden name unknown, was born about 1831 at Peckham and is therefore unlikely to have been a daughter of Wright's.

Roy Allen



Lauderdale Revealed

Our Council member, Peter Barber, is one of the compilers of a new book entitled *Lauderdale Revealed*, which deals with the history of Lauderdale House in Highgate Village. It is a most thorough investigation of the building history and the occupiers, and presents us with a lot of new material, for which the authors must be congratulated.

There is, first of all, the legend that the house was used by Nell Gwyn and Charles II occasionally and that (an extra legend) she threatened to throw their young son over the balcony unless he was given a title. This royal-and-mistress connection has never been proved but Peter Barber struck gold when he went to the Public Record Office to examine the 1685 inventory which accompanied the bankruptcy documents relating to an owner, John Hinde. When finally deciphered these documents not only provided much detail, previously unknown, about the layout of the house at that time, and its contents, but also mentions the 'King's Chamber'. As this was written only about 15 years after Nell Gwyn and the King would have lived there it provides for the first time very good evidence indeed for the legend.

This well-illustrated publication may be obtained only at Lauderdale House at £8 a copy - all profits go to house renovation. It may be obtained by post from the Lauderdale House Society, Highgate Hill, N6 5HG at a price of £10.

Beating the Bounds of Camden

The custom of 'beating the bounds' of a parish is a very early one indeed. On Rogation weekend the vicar, churchwardens, leading parishioners, and numerous schoolchildren or poor children, went around the limits of the parish to ensure that boundary stones remained intact and in the same location and that there had been no encroachments. Those boundary stones may still be seen in many places around the edges of the borough of Camden. The walk was also meant as a supplication to the Almighty for good crops. Beating the Bounds continued well past the time when maps were available - certainly it did in St Pancras and Hampstead.

'Perambulating the bounds', as it is also called, has been renewed in Camden in recent years as a charity walk by the Mayor and it has generally been organised by Malcolm Holmes, head of Camden's Local Studies Library. But this year Malcolm has brought out a booklet to go with the walk. It details the buildings or features that may be seen on the route, and expounds on street name derivations.

This is a lively and enterprising publication and worth a place on any member's bookshelf. It may be obtained from the Local History Department at Swiss Cottage or Holborn, or else at CHS meetings.

A NEW JUBILEE WALKWAY

Members may remember that a Silver Jubilee Walkway through much of central London was established to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. The Camden section includes Euston Station, Bloomsbury, Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Soane Museum. A revised Walkway map and guide is now available free and may be obtained from Camden Town Hall (Argyle Street entrance), any Camden Library or else by post from the Camden Local Studies Library at Holborn Library, 32-8 Theobalds Road WC1X 8PA, enclosing a SAE.

Bloomsbury Past

A new comprehensive history of Bloomsbury is a rarity. *Bloomsbury Past* by Richard Tames (which will be reviewed in the next Newsletter) seeks to remedy that gap. With 218 illustrations it is part of the hard-back series published by Historical Publications which includes *Hampstead Past*, *Highgate Past* and *Camden Town and Primrose Hill Past*.

The narrative covers the agricultural beginnings, the development of southern Bloomsbury and the Foundling Estates, and then the numerous institutions and many noted residents who came to live in what were then regarded as only just respectable squares and terraces. Featured too, of course, is the British Museum and the University of London. A good read and an excellent Christmas present. Price £13.95 from bookshops.

A KITE AMONG THE PIGEONS

Continuing the discussion over the use of Kite Hill to denote Parliament Hill, we have a copy of a letter from Edward Fosbrook, who is chairman of the Cromwell Area Residents Association, to the secretary of the English Cross Country Championships, pointing out that the map which was issued by them relating to the recent cross country championships used the dreaded Kite Hill instead of the correct Parliament Hill.

Mr Fosbrook also mentions that he is a churchwarden of the interesting St Michael's Camden Road (now much overshadowed by Sainsbury's) and offers to show members around on Sundays and Wednesdays. (His telephone number is 081-340 8656). Very much a Camden Town man, his great-grandfather was born in Rock Cottage, Agar Town, his grandfather at 4 Camplins Cottages (Camden Street) and he himself was born in James Street.

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