

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 159

Jan 1997

The Building of Christ Church

Thurs 16 January, 7.30pm
Christ Church Vicarage, 10 Cannon Place, NW3

The spire of Hampstead's Christ Church is a spectacular landmark visible across the Heath. The building history of the church is succinctly described in Christopher Wade's *Streets of Hampstead*: '...built in 1852 by the rich congregation of Well Walk Chapel. The architect was Samuel Dawkes, noted for his railway stations and for Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum. In the 1860s George Gilbert Scott added a west gallery (later removed) and in the 1870s his eponymous son supervised repairs to the spire and added the west porch. Ewan Christian designed the north aisle.'

There is, however, a great deal more to the story, for a lot of controversy and interest surrounded the building of the church. This has been extensively researched by Jane Cox, former Assistant Keeper at the Public Record Office, our speaker for this evening.

Please note that we have been invited to use the vicarage (address above) for our meeting.

Continental Taste

Thurs 20 February, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church House, Lancing Street NW1

The Society is to publish an Occasional Paper, written by Peter Barber and Peter Jacomelli, on the Swiss-Italian café restaurants which were once a prominent feature of London and of provincial cities and towns. Some were in Camden, notably Reggiori's at King's Cross, a grand building that will be remembered by quite a few members.

This feature of culinary history had specific dates. The first one was begun by the Gatti family, which had made its fortune from ice and ice-cream. They had an ice well in New Wharf Road in a building now used by the Canal Museum, and from here ice was supplied to local retailers, including butchers in Kentish Town. The family diversified into confectionery and then into restaurants, the first of which opened in 1847. The last restaurant of this kind appears to have been one in Richmond, which closed in 1987.

Peter Barber, who needs no introduction to members, is our speaker on this most unusual subject.

Advance Notice

Forthcoming meetings include:

13 March (~~date to be confirmed~~) at Burgh House: Peter Woodford on the centenary of the Heath & Old Hampstead Society.

17 Apr at St Pancras Church House: Why NW1? Why NW3? by Simon Morris – the development of postal districts.

15 May at Burgh House: Dickens in the borough of Camden, by Edward Preston.

June (date to be confirmed) AGM and lecture at the Coram Foundation with a view of picture collection.

THE DU MAURIERS AT BURGH HOUSE

The current exhibition at Burgh House marks the centenary of the death of the celebrated nineteenth-century artist and novelist, George du Maurier, the creator of Trilby and her mesmeric Svengali.

The exhibition contains original drawings, including five of George's *Punch* cartoons, and many reproductions. It looks at his cartoons, concentrating on those using Hampstead scenes as a backdrop, and picturing members of his family (and his huge St Bernard dog Changi); his satires of the wilder excesses of the Aesthetic Movement; and his penetrating comments on society. Theatre memorabilia include delightful statuettes of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree as Svengali. There is also valuable archive material from *Punch*.

Other members of the family are included: actor-manager Gerald, and his novelist daughter Daphne who grew up in the family home, Cannon Hall, Cannon Place; George's son Guy, an army officer who also wrote a popular play.

The exhibition runs until 28 February. Open 12.00 – 5.00pm, Wednesday-Sunday.

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society, c/o Local Studies and Archives Centre, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road, WC1X 8PA. The Editor is John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL (Tel: 0171-607 1628, Fax: 0171-609 6451), 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 Theobalds Road address. The Editor of the Camden History Review is Peter Woodford, 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS (0171-435 2088)

Anniversaries 1997

Camden anniversaries for next year include:

50 YEARS

St Pancras Vestry Hall in Pancras Road was demolished (see 1847 below)

100 YEARS

The Old Bell at 123 Holborn, one of the last galleried inns in London, was demolished.

The new Hampstead Central Library at Arkwright Road was opened on 10 November. Its stock included 8000 volumes from the library of Professor Henry Morley. Earlier that year, in April, Hampstead opened a new branch library in Antrim Grove, but such was their zeal to keep down the cost that they did not use an architect. This was made apparent in 1925 when serious defects in the structure developed and by 1935 the building had become unsafe. The present building was opened in 1937 to replace it.

The spectacular Rising Sun pub in Tottenham Court Road, designed by Treadwell & Martin, was opened.

Hampstead Ambulance Station in Lawn Road was opened. The drinking fountain at West End Green was erected, in memory of a member of the Miles family, who lived in the area. Nearby Fortune Green was bought for the public, after a protracted campaign.

The Mary Ward Centre in Tavistock Street was opened. It was known then as the Passmore Edwards Settlement after John Passmore Edwards who funded it. The architects of this *art nouveau* building were A. Dunbar Smith and Cecil Brewer.

The Hampstead Antiquarian and Historical Society was founded by C.J. Munich, who remained its secretary until his death in 1924. For the first ten years of its existence the society published some valuable annuals containing historical articles. The first president of the society was Sir Walter Besant

150 YEARS

The first public baths in St Pancras, located in Tolmers Square, were opened in August.

Bloomsbury Market, built to serve the Bedford Estate, was demolished to make way for the creation of New Oxford Street.

The Metropolitan Association for the Improvement of Dwellings of the Industrious Classes opened model buildings in Pancras Road, opposite Old St Pancras Church. And in Dyott Street, model lodging houses were opened to accommodate 104 single men, who paid 4d a day.

At the British Museum, the portico was completed in March, and the great Central Hall was opened in April, designed by Robert Smirke.

The Orphan Working School moved to the junction of Haverstock Hill and Prince of Wales Road.

The Round House, designed by R.B. Dockray, was opened. Its function was to house engines that were being cleaned or serviced, but with the increase in engine size it quickly became redundant and was converted to use as a warehouse.

St Pancras Vestry Hall in Pancras Road was built.

200 YEARS

A reservoir for the New River Company was formed on the future site of Tolmers Square.

The Royal College of Surgeons bought a house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, on the site of its present building.

250 YEARS

St John's, Church Row was consecrated on 8 October. The new church – the one which survives today – was designed by John Saunderson.

In West Street, off Shaftesbury Avenue, the first consecrated Methodist church opened. It took the place of a building originally owned by the French Protestants from c1680, the lease of which was obtained by John Wesley in 1743.

The chapel in the Foundling Hospital was completed: Handel gave profits from his music for its support.

PEOPLE

Anniversaries of notable people with Camden connections:

50 YEARS

Died:

James Agate, critic (Antrim Mansions and Fairfax Road)

J. L. Garvin, journalist (Greville Place)

Bernard Spilsbury, pathologist (Frognal, South Hill Park)

Sidney Webb, Socialist writer (Netherhall Gardens and Albany Street)

Richard Le Gallienne, poet (Bedford Place, Coram Street, Doughty Street)

Arthur Machen, writer (Great Russell Street)

Edith Craig, actress (Taverton Street, Camden Road)

100 YEARS

Born:

Kingsley Martin, editor of *The New Statesman* (East Heath Road)

Died:

George Gilbert Scott the younger, architect (Church Row)

Edward Walford, historical writer (Church Row)

150 YEARS

Born:

Ellen Terry, actress (Stanhope Street, Camden Road, Taverton Street, Mornington Crescent)

Annie Besant, feminist and theosophist (Mortimer Crescent, Tavistock Square)

Millicent Fawcett, feminist (Gower Street)

George Sims, writer (Gower Street)

Died:

Sir John Franklin, explorer (Bedford Place)

William Collins, artist (North End, Pond Street, Hampstead Square)

Richard Schnebbelie, artist (Jamestown Street)

200 YEARS

Born: Anthony Panizzi, principal librarian of the British Museum (Bloomsbury Square)

Mary Godwin Shelley, creator of *Frankenstein* (Polygon, Marchmont Street, Mabledon Place)

George Shillibeer, initiator of London's buses (Tottenham Court Road)

Died: Mary Wollstonecraft, feminist writer (Store Street, Charlotte Street, Judd Place West, Chalton Street, Polygon)

John Wilkes, politician (Red Lion Square)

250 YEARS

Born: Joseph Farington, artist (Charlotte Street)

300 YEARS

Born: Henry Flitcroft, architect (Frognal)

William Hogarth, artist (Bull and Bush, North End)

A Curious Cradling

Next time you are walking along Great Russell Street I ask you to pause and imagine yourself back in the same place 140 years ago, in the 1850s.

There would be a good chance that you might see a man of medium height in his thirties, with a fine head of black hair and a black beard, making his way from Dean Street in Soho towards the British Museum – the Library section. Conversation would reveal a German accent. In fact, he was born in Trier, Germany, of Jewish parentage. He was busy writing a book which would eventually change and divide our twentieth-century world. The name of the book was, of course, *Das Kapital*, and its author Karl Marx (1818-1883).

He lived in Soho from 1850-56 at 28 Dean Street. Three of his children died there. It is said that when the third of them, Edgar, died of consumption at the age of eight, a funeral service for him was held in Whitfield's Chapel in Tottenham Court Road, now the American Church in London. Marx was inconsolable: it isn't often that we think of him as a loving father.

This is by no means the end of the Communist story in our area. In 1848 Marx met his friend, Frederick Engels (later a resident in Regent's Park Road) at the German Workers' Educational Society at 20 Great Windmill Street in Soho. There, together, they wrote the Communist Manifesto. The building is now the Red Lion pub and I am told that a new plaque commemorating these events is to be placed on the outside of the building very shortly.

In 1856, Marx and his family moved to Grafton Terrace, Kentish Town, and later to No. 1 Maitland Park Road (bombed during the last war), where he died. Of his 68 years he had spent 34 of them in London.

The early Communist story in Camden continues after the deaths of Marx and Engels. In 1903, while Lenin and his wife stayed at 30 Holford Square, the 2nd Congress of the Russian Democratic Labour Party met at 107 Charlotte Street. Here some of the great debates took place, such as should the Party be Bolshevik or Menshevik. The building which Lenin then knew was replaced by one opened by the Queen Mother in 1967, now known as Astor College and is a Hall of Residence of University College London. It lies just behind the American Church, and there is a plaque just inside to remind visitors of its Communist antecedents.

Yet although Communism had some of its beginnings in London, and especially in Bloomsbury, it did not take root in the capital. The greatest number of Communist MPs we ever had at one time were the two elected to the 1945 Parliament – one of whom, Philip Piratin, died in 1995 aged 88.

I cannot resist ending without a 'communist' footnote of my own. About thirty years ago, I was on holiday

in the then united Yugoslavia. Next to me on a local bus was a university student from Ljubljana University, who spoke excellent English. Conversation revealed that he had spent a holiday in London, and stayed at the old YMCA in Great Russell Street. I asked him as somebody coming from a Communist country whether he had been to see where Karl Marx had lived in Dean Street. He said he hadn't. I asked him if he had been to see where the great book on Communism had been written in the British Museum. No, he hadn't. I asked whether he had been to see where the founder of Communism was buried in Highgate Cemetery. He said, no he hadn't. I said, "Well, what kind of a Communist are you, that you didn't visit these famous Communist sites when in London? What *did* you do when you were in London?" He said, "I went to some marvellous discos". Perhaps this goes a little way to explain some recent events in world history!

Geoffrey Palmer

RESTORING A FOUNTAIN

The drinking fountain in Well Walk is no ordinary one – it is a direct descendant of the famous Hampstead Wells which flourished in the eighteenth century. As part of the centenary celebrations of the Heath and Old Hampstead Society, and in conjunction with Camden Council and the Heritage of London Trust, an appeal has been launched to restore this fountain and the flow of chalybeate water.

Its restoration would be a mark of gratitude to Christopher Wade, now retired as founder-curator of Hampstead Museum and a remembrance of Diana Wade's contributions to local activities. If you would like to make a donation, please send it to John Smith, Hon. Treasurer, Heath & Old Hampstead Society, 23a Buckland Crescent, Hampstead NW3 5DH.

A LONDON MODEL

A miniature model of London, costing £1 million, has been made as part of a drive to attract businesses from abroad into London. It measures 14.5 metres by 4.5 metres (north to south it goes from King's Cross to Victoria and east to west from the City Airport to Paddington) and it displays 30,000 of the capital's buildings. The model, built by Pipers International, will go on general public display at the NatWest HQ in the City in February.

EMINENT ELIZABETHANS

Dr Ann Saunders, one of our Vice-Presidents, will be giving an evening class at the Globe Education Centre in February 1997 entitled *Eminent Elizabethans*. The class will meet at 7pm on the four Tuesdays in the month. The subjects will include: *Gloriana Herself* (5 Feb); *Good Counsellors* (12 Feb); *Captains Courageous* (19 Feb); and *Exquisite Limners* (26 Feb).

The cost of the course will be £20 (£18 for Friends of the Globe or Senior Citizens; £15 for students).

That Lighthouse (continued)

David Hayes has been continuing his researches into the 'Lighthouse' building at King's Cross:

Shown here is an illustration (from the GLRO) of the building and the London Cabmen's Mission, an organisation founded in 1871 to promote the 'moral and spiritual uplift of the London cabman', and which moved to 370 Gray's Inn Road in 1873-4 to a building built for it by the Metropolitan Railway. The annual reports of the Mission survive in a file of the Charity Organisation Society, which investigated the activities of the Mission for many years – it was described by one witness as 'near fraud as possible'. John Dupée, the Mission's superintendent, whom critics alleged to be lining his own pockets, was universally despised by the cabmen, especially after the closure of the cabmen's shelter in 1880. COS agents reported that services there were attended not by cabmen, but by local middle-class shopkeepers.

The illustration (taken from the 1888 report) purports to show from right to left, Nos 368-378 Gray's Inn Road. It should be treated with great suspicion. It is signed by Montague Chatterton, the local (Acton Street) printer of the Mission's annual reports. The window cases are far too tall and slender; the chimney stacks (in reality quite bulky affairs) scarcely noticeable; the Great Northern station only a vague and inaccurate impression; the vertical backdrop (top right) a pure fiction. The 'lighthouse' has no weathervane, and a rather shrivelled bulbous 'hat' – *c.f.* the tower just visible through the murk in O'Connor's 1881 painting.

Most strikingly, the frontage ends abruptly at square-ended 378 Gray's Inn Road, without any hint of No. 380, the rounded end to the block on which the present-day 'lighthouse' stands. A break in the brickwork does suggest that it may have been separately built, but in ratebooks it appears (as an unnumbered appendage to No. 378) in 1875, the same year as Nos. 372-378.

I tend to think that Chatterton deliberately omitted No. 380 for simplicity, and that the picture was an idealised view intended to illustrate the position of the mission hall relative to the Great Northern station.



It is to be hoped that the original tower was indeed on the 'invisible' No. 380 rather than on No. 378, otherwise we would be looking at *three* versions of the 'lighthouse' in as many decades. We already know from a Goad plan of 1892 that the tower at that time (on No. 380) was slate-clad; and from a c.1901 photograph that it had by then its present metal-clad form.

Another picture gracing the cover of some earlier reports is even more suspect, showing the mission hall, a fragment of No. 372 to its left, and in place of No. 368 on the right a wide gap containing what looks like the glazed arched roof of the Met. station trainshed – a good few yards further west than it should be; and according to the ratebooks No. 368 was occupied a good year before No. 372.

None of this gets us any closer to identifying the erectors of the 'lighthouse' in any of its incarnations. I was inclining to the view that it was put up by the Met. Railway itself, when I discovered a jocular letter in the *St Pancras Guardian* of 10 July 1886, signed by 'J.R.'. It lampoons:

'A weathercock not 100 miles from King's-cross, mounted up on the top of a tower erected by an enterprising tradesman over his very prominent shop....the laughing-stock and standing joke of all the outside passengers of the King's-cross buses. Let the wind be where it will – north, south, east or west, blow high or blow low – this determined cock sustains a rigid and fixed direction – south-west....'

I am now investigating the various occupants of No. 380 in the late 19th century to see if there is a clue as to which one may have built the tower.

INVESTIGATING ORGAN FACTORIES

The Rev. Nicholas Thistlethwaite is researching two organ-making firms which occupied premises in St Pancras. One is the famous William Hill & Son who were at 12 Tottenham Court, a terrace on the south side of what is now Euston Road, to the east of the junction with Tottenham Court Road. The premises they used had been occupied by organ builders since the 1790s. After Hill's death his son, Thomas, moved the firm to a new location in Islington – this was destroyed during the last War. The Hills themselves lived over the shop for a time, but in the 1860s moved to various addresses in the Regent's Park-Primrose Hill area.

The Rev. Thistlethwaite is also interested in the firm of Gray & Son (later Gray & Davison), who were at 4 New Road, later to become 370 Euston Road. The premises included a Gothic archway on the north side of Euston Road which gave on to a long narrow passage between buildings, with the workshop behind, and it included an imposing erecting room designed by Scott, where concerts were sometimes given.

Any member with appropriate information should write to the Rev. Thistlethwaite at The Vicarage, Trumpington, Cambridge CB2 2LH.

newsletter

No 160

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Mar 1997

A Hundred years of the Heath and Old Hampstead Society

Thurs, 13 March, 7.30pm,
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

When the Heath and Old Hampstead Society was formed a hundred years ago its members would still have had fairly fresh memories of the bruising battle to save the heath from the building developments planned by the lord of the manor. That major fight was won, but there have been many skirmishes since to prevent pockets of deprecation on what is regarded as one of London's most glorious open spaces.

In more modern times the hardest fought contests have been to do with the village as the commercial value of Hampstead began to overwhelm the planning regulations. It is to the credit of the Hampstead campaigners over the years that much of the fabric of the village has survived, though it is fair to say that the atmosphere of 'old Hampstead' has disappeared beneath the flow of tourists and restaurant customers.

But the Society deserves the gratitude of the public at large, for it is unlikely, in the absence of such an organisation, that the planning authorities would have had either the appetite or application to have saved so much. A book, *A Constant Vigil, 1897-1997*, which tells the story of the HOHS and its many battles will be published in March. It has been edited by Peter Woodford (editor of our own *Camden History Review*), who is our speaker this evening. Copies of the book will be available for purchase (£10 per copy) and it may be possible to have a pre-view of the Exhibition on the same subject which is open to the public from 15 March until 27 June (Wed-Sun 12-5pm).

Why NW1? Why NW3?

Thurs, 17 Apr, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church House, Lancing Street NW1

It is a challenge to work out how the north London postal districts were allocated – they are based on alphabetically ordered centres. Thus N1 is probably Canonbury or Barnsbury, (is N2 East Finchley?), N3 is Finchley, N4 Finsbury Park, N5 Highbury etc. But while the SW districts appear to have no logical order, the NW districts also seem to be alphabetical.

Old photographs which include street name plates show us our district was merely 'N.' – indeed, quite a few of these old plates still remain on the sides of houses. Who devised the present system and when? And is it the best one?

Our speaker on this unusual topic, which will encompass the development of the London postal service, is Simon Morris. Many members will recall how Mr Morris, some years back, talked to us on the seemingly unexciting subject of the creation of the Finchley Road – it was a memorable and funny talk. We look forward to the same sort of treat.

Advance Notice

Dates to put in your diary:

15 May: Dickens in Camden, by Edward Preston; at Burgh House

19 Jun: AGM at Coram Fields, including talk on the Foundling Hospital and its art collection

17 July: Betty Bennett on Mary Shelley; at Burgh House

9 August: Outing to Wealden Open Air Museum and Midhurst, organised by Ruth Hayes

18 Sep: The Streets of west Bloomsbury: talk by various members of the Bloomsbury research group

16 Oct: The making of the Hampstead Tube, by Roger Cline

Nov: Holborn Restaurant, by Michael Ogden

Dec: Lord Harley and his Circle, by Dr Ann Saunders

A FOOTNOTE FROM BRYSON

Bill Bryson, the American author of quite a few very funny travel books, has this to say in his book on Britain, *Notes from a Small Island*: "... and it is quite extraordinary, let me say here, how much good local history there is in this country."

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Our Lady of Hal

The pictures reproduced here show the temporary 'little hut' or mission hall of Our Lady of Hal in Arlington Road, Camden Town. Long gone, it was erected on the east side of the road in 1922 by the Belgian Missionary Fathers of Scheut, otherwise known as the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They needed to create a training centre for their missionaries and somewhere for the Belgians who had fled to London during and after the First World War to meet and hold services.

Why did they come here? Scheut is a small village not far to the south-west of Brussels, vulnerable in wartime, and during the years of the War the Missionaries had not been able to go out into the world from their training centre there. They hoped this would never happen in London, and chose Camden Town because it provided cheap property. The 'little hut' was built, pastoral work and missionary training begun and, not surprisingly, Catholics flocked to the first Catholic church in the area. They were of many nationalities, but Irish predominated.

By the late 1920s, when it was still run by the Belgians, the little church was bursting at the seams. But it was decided that an Irish architect, not a Belgian, should be employed to build a new church for the growing congregation. He was Wilfred Clarence Mangan of Preston, already known for his Catholic churches in Willesden and Morden. In fact, though he did not become a Licentiate of RIBA until 1933, he went on to build numerous well thought out Catholic churches in the south of England, before he died in 1968.

The permanent Our Lady of Hal was built opposite the temporary building and was opened in 1933. It is a large red-brick rectangular hall, with an apsidal chancel and a great quantity of rather basic wooden pews which once accommodated a congregation of

3,000 or more, now reduced to something like 700. The upper part of the internal walls is painted cream and there are round-headed lancet windows with leaded panes of plain glass in the apse, and in smaller clerestory windows high in the roof. Light, and a little draughty on a windy day, it is saved from being barn-like by the warm purple and red brick lower walls up to dado level, the redder, smoother brick surrounds to the many confessional and other doors, and especially by the timbers of the roof, which descend on all sides in a way that seems to enclose and protect the worshippers and is not unlike the timber roof of the temporary church. There is a west and organ gallery and a chapel on the south side dedicated to Our Lady of Hal and there she is – or rather a modern carved wood replica of the original, wearing a rich gold and silver cloak and a golden crown. The Belgian link is emphasised again in this chapel by a bronze memorial to Albert I, King of the Belgians 1909-1934.

The exterior is much larger than the interior suggests and it soon becomes apparent that the church is surrounded on both sides and above by domestic quarters, some net-curtained, which include teaching rooms, and, to the right, the rather forbidding four-storied presbytery. The entrance to the church is up a small flight of steps between two white stone neo-Romanesque pillars into a small porch or narthex. Over the pillars are three modern mosaics: St Peter with his keys, Our Lady of Hal, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Fathers must have owned at least five of the pre-existing terrace houses to fit in this large, but not over-obtrusive 1930s building.

Why is the church dedicated to Our Lady of Hal? Hal (French: *Halle*, but not to be confused with the German *Halle* near Leipzig and much further east), is a town close to Scheut to which the original Belgian Fathers often walked to pray. Here there is a fourteenth-century basilican church of the Virgin and in it is an older statue of the Virgin Mary. This is reputed



The 'little hut' of Our Lady of Hal on the east side of Arlington Road, Camden Town.

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Interior and Statue of Our Lady of Hal, The Belgian Church, Camden Town.

The interior of the 'little hut' in Arlington Street

to have been given by Elizabeth of Hungary to her daughter, Sophia and then to have been put in St Martin's chapel, which predated the church, and then in the church itself. In 1580 this Virgin performed a miracle. She caught in her robes the cannon balls of the Brussels Protestants who were attacking the church, saving it from destruction: the cannon smoke turned her into a Black Virgin in the process. Some of the cannon balls are still in the church in Hal.

Naturally, the Black Virgin then became a centre of pilgrimage and there are records of over 300 English, Irish and Scots who went there subsequently, including Mary Queen of Scots and Katharine of Aragon.

So what could be more natural than for the Missionary Fathers of Scheut to name their new home after their miraculous former neighbour, especially at a time when they too needed protection from their enemies. By 1953 the church in Arlington Road had six priests and confessions were heard in Dutch, Flemish, French, Spanish and Chinese – Portuguese was added more recently.

In the 1980s all the remaining Belgian fathers but one were recalled to Belgium and the church was taken into the Diocese of Westminster. The one who remained, Father Joseph Van Pelt, died last December, and his death marks the last connection with the founders.

Our Lady of Hal is still very much part of the local community. On the site of the 'little hut' was built, after the last war, the Van Zuyt Centre, named after Father Albert Van Zuyt, a Belgian priest who worked here for 25 years. Outside bleak, stained and brutal, it does not compare with the church architecturally but that does not worry the 'street people' who come to the daily soup kitchen, or the children at its play group.

The church of Our Lady of Hal is open every day from 7.30am to 7.30pm and is a peaceful surprise in the cacophony of Camden Town.

Shirley Neale

Continental Taste

An excellent lecture in February by Peter Barber, accompanied by Peter Jacomelli, on the Swiss-Italian restaurants which once proliferated in London and the provinces, was much appreciated by the large attendance. Members will receive a free copy of an Occasional Paper on the subject with their May *Newsletter*.

The Stone Horse in Park Village

Mr R. Gerrelli writes:

When my great great grandfather arrived from Italy early in the last century, he settled into the infamous St Giles rookery, and as a plaster figure maker joined other itinerant traders in the streets of London.

By 1852 the family were living in Somers Town – their home in Isaacs Place is now covered by the new British Library. That same year my grandfather was christened at St Pancras Old Church.

As the demand for plaster figures declined his father turned to working in stone and the story of a stone horse, made by him, being somewhere at the top of Parkway was told to me by my father, who was born in Bayham Street in 1902.

I had often wondered where this horse could possibly have been when at the top of Parkway – and it was in Park Village East that I discovered it.

It had been erected originally outside a mid Victorian building [No. 1] which had been a riding school. However, not wishing to create a wrong impression, the horse was taken down when the premises were occupied by a firm of meat packers some time after 1945 and put into storage. With the permission of the Church Commissioners, who owned the building, the statue was later acquired by the resident who lived opposite at 6 Park Village East, in whose garden it still stands.

Later occupiers of the stables-cum-meat packing building reinstated a moulded concrete copy of the original, which is what we see today.

I've been unable to substantiate my belief that the original was the work of my ancestor but I like to think it is true nevertheless.

NB The Society's publication *Primrose Hill to Euston Road* notes (p.27): 'Now a film studio, No. 1 was built, probably in the 1890s, in the garden of the York & Albany pub, and for over 30 years was a riding school. The rising line of windows facing the road is evidence of an internal ramp for its earlier equine occupants. The horse statue is reportedly a replica of the one which once adorned the riding school; its white-painted twin visible in the grounds of No. 6 is thought to be the original.'

MEMORIES OF SOUTH END GREEN

Memories of South End Green by Joyce Maxwell has been produced by the South End Green Association, which is celebrating its thirtieth birthday.

The author, born in 1920 in Constantine Road, goes down Memory Lane, dodging the trams and trolleybuses and other forms of transport on her doorstep. She remembers East Heath Road being called Donkey Stand Hill. There was so little traffic on the road that you could have a donkey ride up and down the hill for a halfpenny. The streets, the fairs, the war years are recalled, also some local tradesmen, such as bookseller George Orwell. 'And who', she asks, 'remembers that the infamous murderer, Christie, worked in the tramyard in Fleet Road and ate his lunch very often in there?'

The pamphlet is available from Burgh House Book-stall for £3, or by post, price £3.25, from the SEGA (Secretary Miss F. Hetherington, 22 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, NW3 2RL).

Christopher Wade

COSMO MEMORIES

Mrs Marion Manheimer has written to enquire if any members have interesting photographic records of the Cosmo Restaurant (and its immediate area) in Finchley Road, which her mother owns. She would like to copy these for display in the restaurant. Mrs Manheimer is at 14 Woodsome Road, NW5 1RY (0171-482 3097).

More Money for Tottenham

It has earlier been reported in the *Newsletter* that with the aid of a generous donation from the Arthur Andersen Foundation the Society has begun a project to transcribe the medieval court rolls of Tottenham manor. These records, which have not before been researched, so far as we know, are divided over the Guildhall Library and what used to be called the Greater London Record Office. The Society felt that these rolls could well reveal much of what life was like in the western half of Kentish Town from the 14th century onwards. We therefore decided that with this grant from the Foundation, augmented by matching funds from the Society, we should employ a professional researcher to transcribe them - they are not only in medieval, semi-legal Latin, but difficult to transcribe from their fragile and sometimes faded condition. Pauline Sidell, archivist to the Grocers' Company, is doing the work for us.

It is a slow and exacting job. Almost all the material so far has related to the management of land and the transgressions of occupants. Field names crop up, but are impossible to locate at the moment. Hopefully, these will be easier to pinpoint as the narrative goes on, for other clues as to their whereabouts might well occur. We do, however, have lots of names of early residents and we have also discovered that some transcribed court records of the same period, a copy of which had lodged in John Richardson's filing cabinet for many years, also belong to Tottenham of that period, although the originals are wrongly deposited in Haringey's Bruce Castle archives, and filed under Tottenham. These neatly fill gaps in the sequence at the Guildhall Library.

Members will be pleased to hear that the Andersen Foundation has donated a further £1,000 to this project, and the Society is also adding funds so that it may continue for another year. Then we shall review the matter again.

Open House '97

Each year the event called Open House gets bigger and even more popular - though its organisation is sometimes a bit of a gamble! The worthy object is to open up to the general public for two days some of the best buildings in London which would not normally be accessible.

This year the organisers expect to have over 500 buildings open on 20/21 September. A booklet, which gives details of these, will be available in August and may be obtained from London Open House by sending a self-addressed, stamped (39p) envelope with a cheque or stamps to the value of £1, to PO Box 6984, London N6 6PY. It will also be obtainable from Camden libraries and from Tourist Information Centres.

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 161

May 1997

Dickens in Camden

Thurs, 15 May, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Dickens lived at numerous addresses, but the ones that were the scene of the most important episodes of his life were in Camden. There was Bayham Street in his boyhood, when his father was sent to Marshalsea prison for debt – this period marked him, as it would any of us, for life. Doughty Street was his home when his much loved sister-in-law died – again a traumatic time for the then famous novelist. And Tavistock House, where a prosperous and very social life was led, together with amateur theatricals. But there are quite a few other addresses – Gower Street, the Polygon, Fitzroy Street, Cranleigh Street are some.

Our speaker for the evening, Edward Preston, National Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship, therefore has a lot of ground to cover. It is, oddly enough, only the second time in the Society's 27 years that we have had a Dickens lecture. We look forward to it.

The Annual General Meeting

Thurs, 19 June, 6.30pm

The Thomas Coram Foundation

40 Brunswick Square WC1

One of the least-known art collections in the metropolis is that held by the Thomas Coram Foundation in Brunswick Square, and it is at the headquarters of the Foundation that this year we have our annual meeting. The archivist for the Foundation, Ms Rhiannan Harris, will give a talk and a conducted tour of the collection.

The Foundation has its roots in the unswerving dedication of Thomas Coram, a retired sea captain, who founded in 1742 a home for orphaned and abandoned children in Hatton Garden. It was immediately overwhelmed with foundlings in those desperate years of the gin-shop epidemic. The governors then acquired acres of green fields north of today's Guilford Street. There they built an impressive Foundling Hospital, parts of which survive, used today by the Coram Playing Fields. The Hospital itself moved to Berkhamsted in 1926, but the Foundation, which deals with the welfare and health of children, remains in Brunswick Square.

The art collection was begun at the instigation of a keen supporter of the Hospital, William Hogarth, whose birth (1697) we celebrate this year. Hogarth himself painted a well-known painting of Coram (which is in the Tate exhibition on Hogarth at the moment), and he persuaded other leading artists (including Gainsborough and Reynolds) to donate paintings to the Hospital in the hope that a public display of them would attract funds.

As always on Annual General Meeting nights, the evening's business begins one hour earlier. We assemble at 6.30pm for refreshments, at 7pm is the Annual Meeting, and at 7.30pm the talk.

Any member who has nominations for either Officers or Council, should send these to the Secretary, Jane Ramsay, before the meeting. Members are reminded that at the last AGM Roger Cline reluctantly allowed himself to be appointed Acting-Treasurer in the hope that we would find a replacement during the year. We have not yet managed to do so. Also, at the time of writing we do not have an auditor and we would welcome a volunteer. The work is not arduous and is confined to one part of the year.

The present office holders are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Prof. Christopher Elrington

VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Dr. Ann Saunders, Gillian Tindall

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade

ACTING TREASURER: Roger Cline

SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: Peter Woodford

PUBLICATIONS SALES: Sheila Ayres

MEETINGS SECRETARY: Michael Ogden

PUBLICITY: Joan Barraclough

ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes

AUDITOR: Vacant

THE COUNCIL:

Peter Barber, Ruth Hayes, Ivor Kamlisch, Sue Palmer, Barbara Scott, Robin Woolven

Advance Notice

Please put these dates in your diary:

17 July: Betty Bennett on Mary Shelley; at Burgh House

9 August: Outing to Weald and Downland Museum, and Midhurst; organised by Ruth Hayes

18 Sept: The Streets of West Bloomsbury; talk by various members of the Bloomsbury research group. At St Pancras Church House.

16 Oct: The making of the Hampstead Tube, by Roger Cline; at Burgh House.

20 Nov: Holborn Restaurant, by Michael Ogden; at St Pancras Church House

18 Dec: Lord Harley and his Circle, by Dr Ann Saunders; at Burgh House.

A Visit to the West Sussex Weald

This year's Annual Outing is to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton – an application form is enclosed with this *Newsletter*, so that you can book your seat on the coach. We shall also be visiting Midhurst, an attractive small town which has associations with sometime Camden resident, H.G. Wells, and with Camden Town statue subject, Richard Cobden. At the Museum there are now some forty buildings representing various styles of vernacular architecture of the Weald. You can find out how they were built and about the lives of their former residents.

Help Wanted

We are experiencing some problems with our present method of printing address labels, as the equipment is becoming outdated.

We are looking for someone who has a computer which could cope with a database of approximately 400 names and addresses, and print out labels for the despatch of the *Newsletter*. If you think you could help, please contact the Secretary, Jane Ramsay, on 0171-586 4436.

Continental Taste

With this *Newsletter* is a copy of *Continental Taste*, by Peter Barber and Peter Jacomelli, the cost of which is covered by your subscription. The launch of the publication at the Canal Museum (where Gatti had his large ice well) was a great success – about 100 copies were sold that evening.

REGENT'S PARK REVISITED

Roger Cline's talk 'The Controversial History of Regent's Park', is being repeated by popular demand in May. It will be at Chalk Farm Library, Sharpleshall Street NW1 on Friday, 16th May at 7pm. Admission is by ticket only, price £1, obtainable at Chalk Farm Library, or by telephone on 0171-722 5571. The talk coincides with a Spring Fair at the Library, which aims

to bring together residents with an interest in local history, the Camden Archivist and the CHS. A wide selection of local history publications will be on sale.

RELOCATION OF GENEALOGICAL MATERIAL

Family researchers may like to know that microfilms of the census, probate records, death duty records and non-conformist registers were relocated from the Public Record Office to the Family Records Centre, Myddelton Street, EC1 on 10 March. The Office for National Statistics also relocated its Public Search Room to the same address.

NEW RAILINGS

The London Borough of Camden is to replace the railings around Rochester Terrace Gardens in Camden Town. It is believed these were removed during the last war and the Council is having great difficulty in locating details or photographs of the original designs. If you have such a photograph (perhaps a postcard exists?) or can remember them, can you please contact Mark Taylor of the Parks and Open Spaces Dept as soon as possible. He is on 0171-278 4444 ext 4391. The Council intends to install the new railings by mid-July and the design needs to be finalised quickly.

A KENWOOD WALK

As part of the celebrations to mark the centenary of the Heath & Old Hampstead Society, Christopher Wade is leading a walk called 'Kenwood Views' on Sunday, 8th June. Tickets are £1. Details from Burgh House (0171-431 0144)

Don't forget also that the excellent exhibition at Burgh House to mark the centenary runs until 27 June.

JUBILEE BULLETIN

The Hornsey Historical Society celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1996. The Society's Bulletin 38 includes an article on the moves which led to its foundation in 1971, but also takes us back much further to 1909 when those industrious researchers, W. McB and F. Marcham, suggested in the *Hornsey Journal* the formation of a historical society for Hornsey. Surprisingly, nothing happened and it was not until 1971 that Hornsey, in danger of being overwhelmed by the creation of Haringey, got its society.

Other articles in the Bulletin include one on A.J. Jaeger, close friend of Elgar and inspiration for 'Nimrod' of the *Enigma Variations*. He lived near Alexandra Palace. Ken Gay reminds us that Hornsey too has a place in cinema history. In an article on Robert Paul the film pioneer, he states that Britain's first purpose-built film studio was at the corner of present-day Sydney and Newton Roads. Paul, though little known today, was among the most important of the early English film producers. An inventor himself, he demonstrated his 'Theatograph' at Finsbury Technical College on the same day as the Lumière Brothers

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presented their patented cinematograph process at the Regent Street Polytechnic in 1896. Details of Paul's first projector were published that year and the machine is said to be the first commercially produced 35mm film projector in Britain - it was developed at 44 Hatton Garden.

His studio in Sydney Road comprised a miniature stage, complete with back cloths, traps and a trolley-mounted camera.

Copies of the Bulletin may be obtained from the HHS, The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane N8 7EL (0181-348 8429) for £2.50 plus 35p postage.

150 YEARS OF MAITLAND PARK

In 1847 Ebenezer Maitland financed the building of the Orphans' Working School on 13 acres of land at the corner of Prince of Wales Road and Haverstock Hill. The institution had been founded in 1758 by fourteen gentlemen, who were in favour of orphans being taught to work rather than to read. The first premises were a house in Hoxton, superseded later by a building in the City Road. By the 1930s the building at Kentish Town was known as the Alexandra Orphanage. It suffered bomb damage in the war and was demolished in the late 1940s to make way for the council estate that bears the name of Maitland Park.

The Maitland Park Residents' Association are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Orphan School's relocation to Kentish Town with a local history fun day on Saturday 26 July, 1-6pm. The most important guest that day will be Doug Dielhenn, whose boyhood days were spent at the Orphanage between 1935 and 1939. His father had died when he was two and his mother struggled to provide for her sons on a widow's pension of ten shillings a week. Eventually, she brought both Doug and his elder brother Gordon from where they lived in Dagenham to the Orphanage. Their mother was allowed to visit them on the last Wednesday and Saturday of the month for two hours. He recalls that the children were known by numbers, and were frequently beaten.

Details about the event may be obtained from Beth Shaw, Chair of MPRA, 17 Oak House, Maitland Park Villas NW3 2ED (0171-485 7209)

Those Postal Districts

A large attendance, despite a last-minute change of venue, heard Simon Morris give an entertaining talk on the subject of the London postal districts.

The districts, he told us, were introduced in 1857 and after various amendments divided into the present numbered sub-districts in 1917. They were formed for the convenience of the post office, being areas that revolved around sorting offices - they were not co-terminous with boroughs or any other form of historical boundary. Despite that, they became important markers in Londoners' understanding of the topogra-

phy of their city and, on the way, became social and class indicators.

An important change in delivering post came with Rowland Hill's recommendation in 1837 that a system of local sorting offices be established - at that time the post for the London and its surrounding area was sorted only at St Martin's le Grand, leading to long delays in delivery. His suggestion, like many others of his, was not taken up by the Post Office and it was not until Hill himself had the power to implement it, that the sorting offices were established.

The Post Office contrived a scheme of ten districts within twelve miles of the General Post Office. These were EC and WC, N, S, E, W, NE, SE, NW and SW. Mr Morris's audience was quick to notice that two of those districts no longer exist - NE and S. The former was later absorbed into an enlarged E district, and S into SW and SE. The two central districts were formed so that the postmen should not have to walk more than fifteen minutes from St Martin's le Grand before the delivery beat commenced.

The area encompassed was a very large one - as far as Sutton, Ealing, Enfield and Romford - too large, in fact, for the system to bear.

In 1866 the novelist, Anthony Trollope, who was then Surveyor to the Post Office, began to reform Hill's scheme. He recommended the abolition of NE and S, because there were not enough letters to justify separate districts. This was not done without some opposition - particularly from tradesmen, and it is interesting to note that in 1891 some residents of Hackney, including a bank manager and a Member of Parliament, petitioned for the reinstatement of NE, because the transfer of their property to the E district - the East End, or so it seemed to those unfamiliar with the terrain - had affected the value of local property. The Post Office agreed, and addresses in Hackney, Homerton and Clapton went back to NE - some street plates bearing those initials still survive.

In 1917 numbered sub-districts were introduced. The system adopted was that the main sorting office for a whole district was designated '1' and then the sub-districts were numbered after it in alphabetical order. Thus, in 'NW' Camden Town is NW1 and in 'N' Islington is N1.

END OF THE TELEPHONE MUSEUM

It seems that British Telecom, despite its vast profits, is not able to bear the expense of maintaining its own collection of telephones and other gadgetry for public display. The Museum in which they are housed is to be closed and no announcement has yet been made as to what is to happen to its contents.

The old era in which companies took pride in such matters and provided extended staff facilities (playing fields, clubs, health centres etc) has gone, though profits are much larger.



The Pocock house in Maida Vale.

The Pocock House

The local and national press featured in April the demolition of 136 Maida Vale, the former home of William Friese-Green, the cinema pioneer. Sad as this may be for cinema enthusiasts, it is also a house of some significance to the Camden History Society, for it was the home of the Pocock family of whose daily lives in the 1820s we know a great deal.

It was here on 29 October 1826, that John Thomas Pocock, then aged 11³/₄, 'Made up my mind to keep a daily journal of any occurrences of note and so I got Papa's old banking account book and began upon the leaves which had not been written upon.' This fascinating diary, which encompassed a close but difficult home life in which his father went to prison for debt before he died, and John's subsequent journeys to Australia and South Africa, was kept until he himself died in 1876.

Part of that diary was published by the Camden History Society - *The Diary of a London Schoolboy 1826-1830* - in 1980 and has since sold out. It was recently re-edited by a descendant, Tom Pocock, extended to include the journeys to Australia and South Africa, and republished in hardback form by Historical Publications Ltd. That volume, called *The Travels of a London Schoolboy 1826-1830* may be obtained from bookshops for £15 (ISBN 0 948667 35 4).

Much of the Diary centres around the house in Maida Vale, where the young John enjoyed life with his parents, brothers, sisters and friends. But it was a life punctuated by many anxieties - financial worries of a severe kind, the death of a close friend, the difficulty of finding work to suit him and, eventually, the death of his much loved father.

On 25 October in 1829 he records in his Diary: 'My Father much worse to-day & sensible of approaching dissolution. In the afternoon he called us all in the room & bid us farewell individually. There were some of his favourite russet pippins on the table, & he divided them, giving half an apple to each child;

this he adopted as a relief to the solemn scene. My Father was a strong-minded man, I never knew him to be overcome by his feelings until now; he had a rare and perfect command over all his passions until now; but this affecting scene was too much for him. He thought he would have gone through it with fortitude, but when it came to the eldest children, Emily & myself, for our share, he could no longer conceal his grief. Nature had her way & my Father covering his eyes with shrunken hands wept, bitterly wept, & we were equally moved. To me, and me only, he gave a whole apple & this I will keep for ever.'

CLUB FOR LISTED PROPERTY OWNERS

The British have clubs and societies for almost everything. One that may have escaped your notice is the Listed Property Owners Club - there are 500,000 listed buildings in the country, whose owners face the same problems over maintenance and dealing with local planners when they apply to make alterations or improvements.

Membership is £24 a year and members get six copies a year of the club magazine, which includes pieces on maintenance and repairs, news about legislative changes and lists of sympathetic architects. (Telephone for details: 01732 451468).

A BUILDING IDENTIFIED

The large white house in the distance on the extreme left of the 1875 photograph at p63 of *The Streets of Belsize* appears to be Belsize Court (pp 76-77), demolished about 1937 and replaced by blocks of flats bearing its name around the new part of Wedderburn Road.

Further left, there would have been a better view of Rosslyn House (pp 71-72), on the high ground crossed by Lyndhurst Road. The viewpoint is near the bottom of the future Fitzjohns Avenue, with Belsize Lane behind the church building. This, the former temporary church (*Newsletter* 154), served mainly as a mission hall in 1865-66, was closed as a place of worship in 1872, and since the following year had been the first home of Trinity (now Holy Trinity) School; presumably the name was displayed at the back, facing the lane.

Roy Allen

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society. The Editor is John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL (Tel: 0171-607 1628, Fax: 0171-609 6451), to whom all contributions should be sent.

The Secretary of the Society is Mrs Jane Ramsay, Garden Flat, 62 Fellows Road, NW3, 3LJ (0171 586 4436), and the Treasurer is Roger Cline, 34 Kingstown Street, NW1 8JP.

The Editor of the *Camden History Review* is Peter Woodford, 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS (0171-435 2088)

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 162

July 1997

Mary Shelley

Thurs, 17 July, 7.30

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Mary Shelley, the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, was born two hundred years ago - her famous mother died very shortly after the birth. When aged 17, she eloped with Percy Bysshe Shelley and married him in 1816 after the suicide of his wife, Harriet. Two years later she published her most famous work, *Frankenstein*, the weird Gothic novel which has remained fascinating to successive generations.

Hers was a dramatic life, and our speaker this evening, Betty Bennett, is an expert on it. Author of several books on Mary Shelley and related subjects, she has just been commissioned to write a new biography of her. She was also editor of the 3-volume letters of Mary Shelley published in the last few years. She has recently retired as Dean of the American University, the College of Arts and Sciences in Washington DC.

Seats on the Coach

Sat, 9 August

There are still some seats available on the annual coach outing. This year the Society is visiting the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton - a fascinating place, and also the pleasant town of Midhurst. Members who would like to go should contact the organiser, Ruth Hayes, by telephone please - on 0181- 397 6752 (home) or else on 0171-253 1787 (office). Details of the trip were on a separate leaflet enclosed with the last Newsletter.

THE JESTER FESTIVAL

A hardy annual in the Society's calendar is the Jester Festival held at Fortune Green. We have a stall there, which does very well selling publications and signing up members. This year the festival is on 12/13th July. Dick Weindling will also be leading two walks around Hampstead Cemetery.

The Annual Meeting

A good attendance gathered at the Thomas Coram Foundation building in Brunswick Square for this year's Annual Meeting. After the business meeting we had a short talk by Jane King on the history of the Foundling, and then a conducted tour around the magnificent art collection housed there. (See separate item in this Newsletter.)

The Officers and Council elected for the forthcoming year were:

PRESIDENT: *Prof. Christopher Elrington*

VICE PRESIDENTS: *Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Dr Ann Saunders, Gillian Tindall*

CHAIRMAN: *John Richardson*

VICE-CHAIRMAN: *Christopher Wade*

SECRETARY: *Jane Ramsay*

TREASURER: *Roger Cline (Acting Treasurer)*

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: *Dr Peter Woodford*

PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: *Sheila Ayres*

MEETINGS SECRETARY: *Michael Ogden*

PUBLICITY OFFICER: *Joan Barraclough*

ARCHIVIST: *Malcolm Holmes*

HON. AUDITOR: *vacant*

Council Members: Peter Barber, Ruth Hayes, Ivor Kamlish, Sue Palmer, Barbara Scott, Dick Weindling, Robin Woolven

JOHN DAVIES

John Davies, an active member of the Society for many years, died in May, aged 65. His interest in genealogy and his wide knowledge of historical source material were invaluable, both for the revision of the *Streets of West Hampstead* and for the current Hampstead Cemetery Group. He had lived in Hampstead for some 25 years.

Christopher Wade

POLLS APART

As the former Prime Minister, John Major, retreats even further into the backbenches, it should be noted that he first stood for Parliament in St Pancras North in 1974, a tough seat to fight - and one which he did not win then, or on a subsequent occasion. One of the signatories of his election papers was our own Peter Barber.

St Pancras Chambers

St Pancras Chambers, the one-time Midland Grand Hotel in Euston Road, has long been the object of concern. Much of it has lain empty and derelict for a long time, damage has been done in recent years by film crews and partygoers in the main public rooms, and there are no plans for the re-use of the building. The outside has been cleaned and some restoration has been done inside by COTAC which, tantalisingly, underlined just how much more there was to do.

The building has recently been sold to London & Continental Railways, which is building the Channel Tunnel link to St Pancras Station. But no obligation was placed on the company to do anything with the building until *after* the rail link is up and running. This could be a long time, and it is therefore encouraging to learn that the company has invited seven teams of architects/conservators to propose plans for the future restoration and use of the building. A decision will be made early August as to which team will be commissioned.

In the meantime, the Mayor of Camden was present in May when the company officially reopened the porte cochère fronting Euston Road. This is the old entrance to the hotel, though sadly the reception desk area to the right as you go in, has long since disappeared. The entrance area now houses exhibition material related to the history of the building, and will be open to the public from 11.30am to 14.30pm, Monday to Friday.

A member of the CHS, Dr Marianne Colloms, works for one of the architects engaged to advise on the refurbishment and restoration of the building. She writes:

'Quite a number of visitors are arriving, despite very limited publicity. This has taken the owners by surprise and they want to employ a receptionist(s) to act as guide(s) to show visitors around. The person(s) must be interested in and if possible be knowledgeable about the building and its setting and be able to talk to people and relate to them. They don't however have to know a lot about railways, though an interest would be a bonus.

The company envisages about 3-4 hours a day at present, 3-4 days a week, rising to 4-5 hours a day plus, hopefully, one day at the weekend. This will be paid work, though I do not yet know the rate. The job could, of course, be shared between a number of people on a shift basis.

Any member interested should contact the consulting architect, Stephen Levrant (0171-435 7502).

Changes at the Thomas Coram Foundation

We learnt at the Annual Meeting that the Coram Foundation Art Collection is to open more frequently to the public. The Foundation is anxious to attract volunteer room stewards to make this possible. Particularly, they need volunteer staff for *Enlightened Self Interest: The Foundling Hospital and Hogarth*, an exhibition running from 3-29th November.

The Foundling Hospital (from which the Thomas Coram Foundation developed) was closely connected with William Hogarth. Not only did he support it financially, but he helped to establish the art collection that now adorns the Brunswick Square headquarters. The fairly modern building there also includes the old Board Room of the Foundling, which was taken down and re-erected.

Members interested should contact the Curator, Ms Rhian Harris on 0171-278 2424.

A CHANGE OF NAME

Just in case you didn't know, the Greater London Record Office in Northampton Road, EC1, is now called the London Metropolitan Archives. This followed the recent revamp of the archive floor. The library and the archive section are now in one large room, and there is an improved facility for microform viewing.

In a recent bulletin from LMA, it is reported that the thousands of plans of Hampstead Garden Suburb have been transferred there.

Opening hours are Monday, Wed and Friday: 9.30am-4.45pm; Tuesday and Thursday: 9.30am-7.30pm. The telephone number is 0171-332 3820.

GEORGE CHILDS' DRAWING BOOK

The Hampstead Museum at Burgh House has recently been the lucky recipient - from the Rt Hon. Sir Henry Brooke, of a coloured 'drawing book', depicting 24 views of Hampstead, made c.1837, by George Childs.

Childs was born about the turn of the nineteenth century, and died in 1873. Published lithographs by him appear by 1826, and soon he was exhibiting at the Royal Society for British Artists, when his address was 14 Arlington Street, Sadler's Wells. By 1833 he is listed at 12 Amwell Street, Pentonville and he was possibly living there when he drew the beautiful lithographs of Hampstead scenes.

Restoring Hampstead Cemetery

The Friends of Hampstead Cemetery, in partnership with Camden Council and English Heritage, have obtained a grant under the Urban Parks Programme, for the restoration of Hampstead Cemetery. The amount is over £1m, which will be topped up with matched funding. It will be used to restore monuments, the improvement of the drainage system, roads and paths, and the replacement of dead or elderly trees. The railings along the main road will also be reinstalled.

Although a large part of the matched funding will come from Camden Council, the Friends have committed themselves to contribute £75,000. They need help in raising this large sum. The first major fundraising event was on 29 June, in the garden of 5 Ranulf Road, at which a number of local celebrities, such as Alan Coren and Glenda Jackson, were due to make an appearance.

Those who wish to join the Friends, or who can help in various ways, should contact the Secretary, Marianne Colloms on 0171-794 2839.

TEMPLE MOORE - A HAMPSTEAD ARCHITECT

Temple Moore (1856-1920) was among the greatest of all Gothic Revival architects. His reputation rests chiefly on a succession of beautiful new churches built in the quarter century down to the Great War, but he was also responsible for numerous restorations, and secular buildings. He is a vital link in the history of the Scott dynasty, being a pupil of George Gilbert Scott jr, and master of Giles Gilbert. He lived and worked in Hampstead from 1875 until his death.

A book on his life is about to be published, written by Geoffrey K. Brandwood. It may be obtained at a pre-publication price (£39.50 post free - a saving of £10) from Paul Watkins Publishing, 18 Adelaide Street, Stamford, Lincs, PE9 2EN. It is 320pp, plus 214 photographic plates on an extra 96 pages. Bound in real cloth and printed on long-life paper.

The Cinemas of Camden

Camden Council is publishing this month a book to celebrate one hundred years of cinema. Entitled *The Cinemas of Camden*, it is by Mark Aston, who last year gave a talk on the subject to the Society.

Since the Edwardian era, Camden has been home to over fifty full-time cinemas whose glory, construction, films and social life have been captured in this fascinating book. Currently there are only eight cinemas open in Camden, but many of the old buildings survive, used for other purposes.

The first permanent cinema in Camden was the Dara,

later known as the Fan, in Delancey Street, Camden Town. This opened in 1908 and closed c.1917. The building still exists today as the Camden Snooker Club. The ABC in Pond Street is the oldest surviving cinema, having first opened in 1913 as the Hampstead Picture Playhouse, while the Everyman in Hampstead, opened 1933, is the oldest repertory cinema in the world and has built a reputation presenting the best of old and new features.

Records were broken at the Dominion Theatre in Tottenham Court Road where the film version of *The Sound of Music* ran for over four years, playing 2551 times to over 3 million people. At the first opening of a Saturday morning 'Kiddies Club' in 1937 at the Gaumont (later Parkway) Cinema, a live penguin from London Zoo was introduced on stage as a mascot and the children were asked to choose a suitable name.

Mark Aston is a librarian at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre and was born in Camden.

The book, price £6.50, with 84 pages and 76 illustrations, is on sale at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library. It may be obtained by post for £8.25. Make cheques payable to the London Borough of Camden.

LINDA CARMEN

Gabriel Summers is doing some research on the Hampstead painter, Linda Carmen, who died in 1991, aged 81. Under another name, she wrote novels and campaigned in the cause of victims of sexual assault.

If any member has recollections of her, please contact Mr Summers at 180 Randolph Avenue, W9 1PE (0171 624 1846).

NEW MEMBERS

New members joining the Society include Mr M.J. Nash de Grant, Cllr Gloria Lazenby, Mr John Lynch, Mrs Wilma Malik and the Rev. Marcus Nolan.

HAMPSTEAD PAST

Christopher Wade's *Hampstead Past*, which has been out of print for some time, has recently been reissued by Historical Publications Ltd. The book, 144 pages and lavishly illustrated, costs £14.95

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society. The Editor is John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL (Tel: 0171-607 1628, Fax: 0171-609 6451), to whom all contributions should be sent.

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The Editor of the *Camden History Review* is Peter Woodford, 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS (0171-435 2088)

Pictures of St Pancras

It is sometimes difficult to understand why some postcards were ever photographed and printed. Below (top) is one depicting 'St Pancras Corporation' at Christmas 1911. We certainly have a mace bearer in the gathering and three other gentlemen carrying staves. Three others wear overalls. Suggestions as to the event would be welcome.



This is a more recent view of what is probably Pancras Road. Judging by the trolleybus it was taken c.1950, and includes a Rickett & Cockerell coal delivery cart.



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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 163

Sep 1997

The Streets of Bloomsbury

Thurs, 18 Sept, 7.30pm

At the Georgian Group headquarters,
6 Fitzroy Square W1 (east side of Square)

On sale as from this meeting is the Society's very attractive new publication, *Streets of Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia*, researched and written by members of our own group and designed by Ivor Kamlish.

This area contains some of Camden's grandest architecture – Bedford Square (by Leverton), Gordon and Tavistock Squares (Cubitt) and Fitzroy Square (Adam) represent just some of the treasures. But the interest of these two areas lies not only in the buildings, but in the multitude of great artists, writers, lawyers and doctors who clustered around the institutions of higher learning in the area. There is, of course, a perennial interest in the famous Bloomsbury Group or Set, which centred on Fitzroy and Gordon Squares.

Our talk this month, given by members of the group and led by Dr Peter Woodford, is about the research for the book and about items in the publication. (This is, by the way, the first of three volumes dealing with the south of the borough.) The book follows the customary street-by-street approach within areas. It enables a reader to follow in footsteps of the famous if he or she wishes. But it also deals with much more. The origins of Pied Bull Yard, or Coptic Street, or Barter Street. Why are the Bedfords and their connections all over the place? Who were the Fitzroys? Does the Museum Tavern predate the Museum? What was grown where Bloomsbury Square is now, liquorice or cherries? What had Baron Southampton to do with Southampton Row? (Answer: nothing; though he had everything to do with Fitzroy Square.)

We thought that a change of venue was appropriate for this talk, and we have been kindly offered the use of the premises of the Georgian Group in Fitzroy Square. The book is 96pp and costs a remarkably modest £5.95. Congratulations are in order to the research team, Sheila Ayres, Steve Denford, Liz Eccleshare, David Hayes, David Hellings, Tatiana Wolff, Peter Woodford, Robin Woolven and, of course, to Ivor Kamlish for cramming so many words and illustrations into a design that still seems spacious.

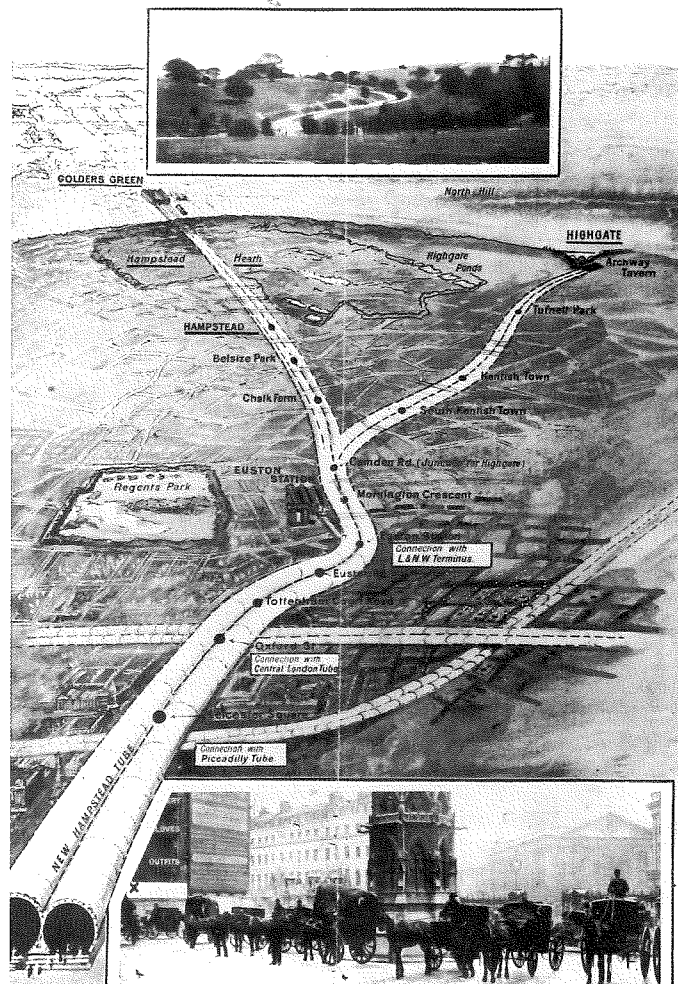
The Making of the Hampstead Tube

Thurs, 16 Oct, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

The 'Hampstead Tube' was opened on 22nd June ninety years ago. It was a bit of a misnomer because the railway, terminating at Charing Cross at the time, went off, as it does now, into two branches at Camden Town. One ended in the green fields of Golders Green, the other at the dismal urban terrain of Archway Station (then called Highgate). In going through Euston, it joined with an earlier underground line that had been extended from the Angel to King's Cross and Euston. The intricacies of all this, and the story of

A bird's-eye view of the Hampstead Tube.



how a larger-than-life entrepreneur came to build what became the Northern Line is the subject of our expert speaker, Roger Cline. Then, of course, there are the spectral stations at Kentish Town and the Bull and Bush.... And the confusing changes of name – Oxford Street to Tottenham Court Road, Tottenham Court Road to Goodge Street

Advance Notice

Please put the following meetings in your diary:

20 Nov: Holborn Restaurant, by Michael Ogden; at St Pancras Church House

18 Dec: Lord Harley and his Circle, by Dr Ann Saunders; at Burgh House

Picture of St Pancras

In the last *Newsletter* we published a photograph of 'St Pancras Corporation' at Christmas 1911 and invited members to hazard a guess at the occasion and the function of the various men in the group.

Mary Isabel Smith suggests that the third gentleman from the left (with beard) was the beadle or tipstaff; the men with staves are special constables, and those in aprons are probably officers of either the butchers' or grocers' guilds. "I was born in 1911 and my grandfather was a special constable in Cheltenham, when I was a child. He had an armband and a truncheon, which was of great interest to me."

Kit Ikin suggests that the scene might be a visit to the Workhouse Christmas Dinner (aprons not overalls). Might it include the churchwardens?

Malcolm Tucker writes: The 'postcard' was once a readily available size of photographic printing paper, rather longer than the modern 3½" x 5" and considerably stouter in weight. The words POST Card were often pre-printed on the back, but they are not an indication that the user intended to send the print through the post. I would guess that the 1911 Christmas lunchtime scene was intended for private circulation among the participants." As regards the other picture of Pancras Road, he notes: "Although the signal gantry and the foggy atmosphere have gone, the scene in Pancras Road with the wrought-iron hog-backed girder bridge at the north end of St Pancras Station still exists - for the moment, that is, since the intended CTRL terminal will sweep away this section of the road."

END OF A BUSINESS

In 1986 we had a talk on the optician's business of W. Johnson & Sons in Tottenham Court Road, and those who heard this will remember seeing the early forms of reading glasses that the firm possessed. Johnson's were one of the longest-established Camden firms and you will be sorry to hear that, due to the new terms offered on renewal of their lease, they have recently ceased trading.

The oldest firm that we know of in Camden is Leverton's, the undertakers, established in 1789. It would be helpful if members could keep an eye open for long-established companies or businesses and let us know about them.

CAMLEY STREET EXHIBITION

Hidden away in the King's Cross railway lands is the Camley Street Natural Park, which is always a pleasure to visit. From the beginning of 1998 the building of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link will begin to transform this area and Lara Harris, Project Officer of the London Wildlife Trust feels that this is a good time to mount an exhibition, focused on the Camley Street area, which reflects the past and anticipates the future. She would be interested to receive ideas or material for this. Please write to her at the Camley Street Natural Park, 12 Camley Street, NW1 0NX (0171-833 2311).

A SORT OF GOODBYE TO THE WOOLVENS

We are sorry to report that Sonia and Robin Woolven have moved, on retirement, from Hampstead to the Cotswolds. We shall miss their genial company very much, though they remain members and, no doubt, we shall see them occasionally. We wish them much happiness in their new home.

Open House in Camden

This year's architectural treat, the London Open House, is on 20/21 September. The buildings open to the public are a wonderful mixture. They include 18 Shirlock Road, an architect's own home converted in 1994 by Robert Dye from a 19th-century terraced house to a 3-storey maisonette; Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church; British Medical Association House in Tavistock Square; the Calthorpe Project in Grays Inn Road; the Dominion Theatre; Imagination in Store Street; the ITN building in Grays Inn Road; the London Taxi Centre in Herbrand Street, a 1931 multi-storey garage in art deco; Mary Ward House in Tavistock Place (Arts and Crafts); Nightingale House in Parkhill Road; St Silas the Martyr in Shipton Place; the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square and there is a Hatton Garden area walk.

In other areas, the list includes the College of Arms, Custom House, the Mansion House, Broadcasting House, Lyceum Theatre, the Pet Cemetery in Hyde Park, the Society of Antiquaries at Burlington House, St Cyprian's church in Glentworth Street, the Ark building at Hammersmith and the Wigmore Hall.

To obtain a catalogue write to London Open House, PO Box 6984, London N6 6PY, or else phone their Hotline on 0891 600 061 (calls charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p at other times).

Wartime Memories

George Morley has sent us some memories of the wireless station at Parliament Hill in the last war. Mr Morley was in charge from 1943, and was billeted at 50 Downshire Hill with Mr and Mrs Tristan Rawson, the former an actor who had been involved with the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park. Rawson was also the Chief Air Raid Warden together with Elizabeth Divine, also of Downshire Hill.

Mr Morley found that he was also responsible for the defence of Hampstead Heath in the event of an invasion. The WAAF's had a barrage balloon at the Tanza Road entrance to the Hill, and the fairground contained 'rocket-type guns'. At this time sheep, possibly belonging to Millfield Farm on the Highgate side, grazed on the Heath. All of his staff were in billets, some at 33 Heath Hurst Road and some in Tanza Road.

It was during this period that Mr Morley met his future wife, who was a member of the WRNS and stationed at Northways, a block of flats in Swiss Cottage. They were married at St Dominic's Priory in Southampton Road in 1944.

Outing to the Weald

Joan Barraclough reports on the August visit: Sussex inland was the destination for this year's Camden History Society outing. The first stop was at Midhurst, where members could see Ye Old Tea Shoppe where H.G. Wells once lodged. He also lived in Hampstead, which he did not like. After a pleasant look round this beautiful little town, the party moved on to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum near Singleton, which claims to be the only agricultural open-air museum in this country. All others are industrial.

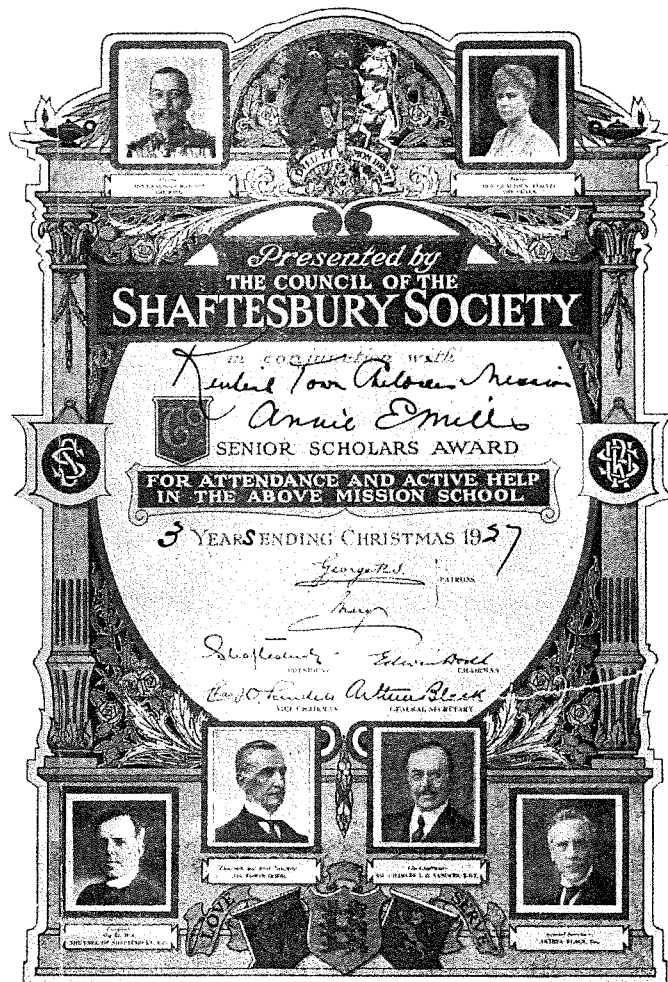
Members could see the authentic (if uncomfortable) houses, some dating back to the fourteenth century, pigs of earlier breeds than those now preferred, straw beehives, a charcoal burner's hut and equipment, a working watermill and the horses. One called Blair, whose mother "went into Labour" on election night, was named for the Prime Minister.

Cream tea and scones eased thirst and fatigue before the run home with a very pleasant driver.

London's Records

The Annual Conference of the London Archive Users' Forum is on 22nd November at the Institute of Historical Research, Malet Street WC1. In the chair will be Victor Belcher.

The conference will highlight the topical subject of the governance of London, from the perspective of its records. The speakers will each take the subject from a different angle. James Sewell, archivist to the City



Roy Hidson has sent us this bookplate from a volume entitled 'The Greatest Book in the World' published in 1927. It was presented by the Shaftesbury Society to Annie E. Mills of the Kentish Town Children's Mission. The location is unknown.

Corporation, will explore the rich vein of archives in the City's Record Office as key to the City and its historical contribution to the London scene. Simon Morris will identify a range of *ad hoc* bodies, established in earlier centuries to make and mend the roads, build the bridges, and sweep the streets. Simon Fowler of the Public Record Office will explore the vast holdings at Kew which deal with the study of London. Geoff Pick of the London Metropolitan Archives will describe the traumas, at least from an archivist's point of view, undergone by London government in the last four decades.

Tickets are available at £16 for members of LAUF and £18 for non-members. Please enclose a SAE if an acknowledgement of booking is required. Applications to David Stewart, 12 Heathside, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9TB.



The romance of steam railways had many down sides. This picture of Weirs Passage, off Chalton Street, Somers Town in 1926 is vivid evidence of the soot encrusted buildings that adjoined railway land.

NEW DISCOVERY ON THE THAMES

Members who enjoyed Gustav Milne's talks to the Society on the Great Fire and King Alfred's London, will be interested to learn that he has recently been in the news in relation to an excavation in Chelsea. Archaeologists have discovered a double row of well preserved timber piles, carbon dated to between 700 and 900, which stretches around the house boats moored there. It is thought that they were erected by King Offa, the Saxon king, to protect his palace here and that a Synod was held at the building in 787. The archaeologists, under the leadership of Mike Webber, are convinced that remains of the palace survive under the thick bank of mud and gravel on which the houseboats rest.

It is the most important find so far in the 3-year Thames Foreshore Project which aims to map all the archaeological remains along the length of the river.

NATIONAL LIBRARIES WEEK AT THE LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE

As part of National Libraries Week, the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre is organising an Open Day on Saturday, 8 November. Family historians, local history researchers and anyone interested in archives and Camden's history, will have the chance to find out more about the work of the Centre and see parts of the collections not normally accessible to the public. There will be guided tours of the Centre and its Conservation Workshop; a local history shop with bargain books and special discounts on some titles, and talks on tracing your family history.

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 164

Nov 1997

Holborn Restaurant

Thurs, 13 Nov, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church House,
Lancing Street, NW1

Some older members may have have fond memories of the Holborn Restaurant, an opulent and ornate eatery at 218 High Holborn. It opened as a restaurant in 1874 having, according to Weinreb's *London Encyclopedia*, been a casino, swimming pool and dance hall. It was extended and redecorated in his inimitable style by T.R. Collcutt in terra-cotta Empire style, and with its three Masonic rooms was ideally located to catch the overspill trade from Great Queen Street. According to Weinreb, 961 chairs were on the sale list when it was demolished in 1955.

Michael Ogden is our guide to this establishment in November. Please note that the date is a week *earlier* than the one quoted in the last *Newsletter*.

Lord Harley and his friends

Thurs, 18 Dec, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Our President, Ann Saunders, is our speaker for the Christmas meeting again. This time her subjects are the first and second earls of Oxford and Mortimer, Robert and Edward Harley, whose collection of manuscripts and books was at the heart of the British Museum's library. They had a lively acquaintance across the field of arts, and a lot of genuine friends. They also, of course, had a profound influence on the development of London north of Oxford Street, east of Marylebone Lane.

Open Day at the Local Studies Centre

Saturday, 8 November, 10-5.
Holborn Library, Theobalds Road, WC1

As part of National Libraries Week the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre is organising an Open Day. Family historians, local history researchers and anyone interested in archives or Camden's history will have the chance to find out more about the work of the Centre and see parts of the collections not normally accessible to the public.

Attractions will include guided tours of the Centre and the Conservation workshop, a local history shop, talks on tracing your family tree etc. Further details may be obtained from the Centre on 0171 413 6342.

QUAKERS, QUACKS AND CULTURE

An Exhibition opens at Burgh House on 8 November (it runs until 20 March) which depicts the history of Burgh House and some of the interesting people who have lived in it from 1703. It starts with the Sewells, who were Quakers, continues with William Gibbon, the 18th-century Spa doctor, and ends with the present Community Centre and the Museum.

The New Review

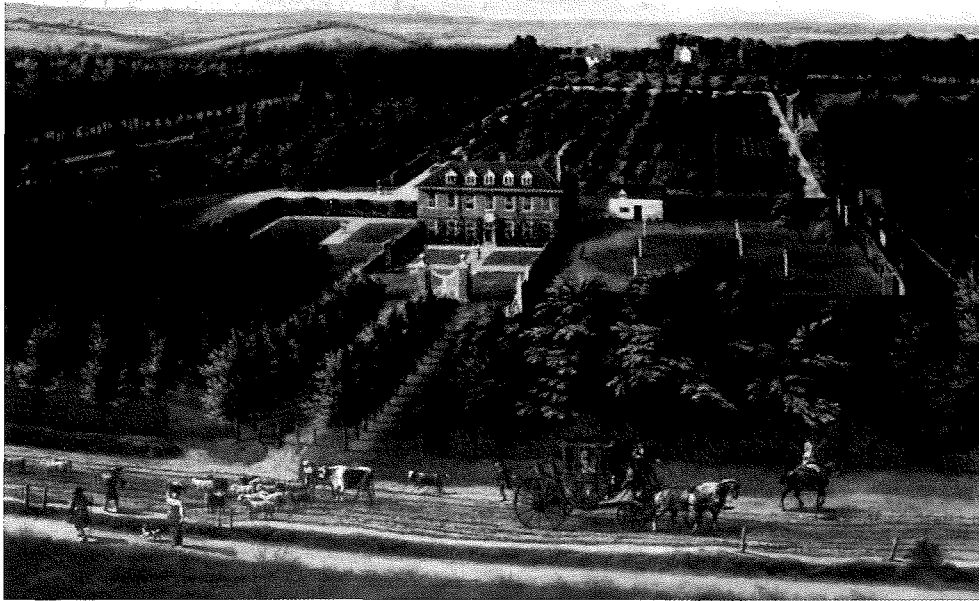
If all goes well, you should receive with this Newsletter a copy of the CHS Review 21. It is full of interesting material - from George Bernard Shaw's foray into local politics, to the opening of the Orphan Working School in West Kentish Town. The St Pancras Church Lands are examined, as are the little-known organisations, the Camden Town Literary & Scientific Institution and the London Cabmen's Mission. Other articles are on Christ Church Hampstead, the Repton Red Books relating to Kenwood, and Sir William Collins.

THE SOANES AT HOME

An Exhibition showing Sir John Soane and his family at home in their marvellous house in Lincoln's Inn Fields is now on at the Sir John Soane's Museum. It has been devised by the Museum's Archivist (and CHS member), Sue Palmer, and it runs until 28th February.

The house, of course, always has a magical attraction, and this is enhanced by this delightful array of items relating to the daily life of the Soanes - such as the watercolour by Gandy on the cover of the book/catalogue depicting Soane and his wife having breakfast. There is also on show a picture of Soane's bedroom - alas an exhibit which no longer exists. There is more than just Lincoln's Inn Fields here - there are lots of fascinating pictures of different parts of London, all relevant to the great architect's life and work.

An exhibition not to be missed - and it's free! The well-produced book about the subject of the exhibition costs £12.50.



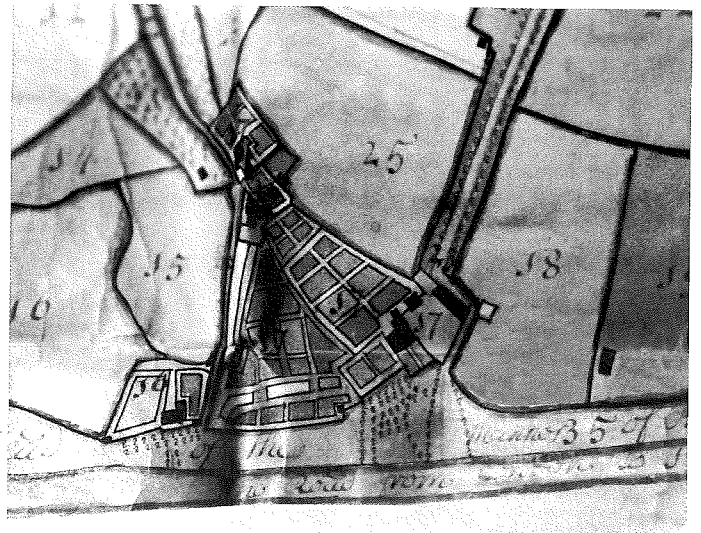
Jan Siberechts' painting, at first identified as being Pemberton's house in The Grove at Highgate.

From Highgate to Belsize

In May 1994 we published in the *Newsletter* a reproduction of a painting by Jan Siberechts (1626-1703), then up for sale at the Leger Gallery. It was identified by the gallery as the mansion of Sir Francis Pemberton in The Grove at Highgate, and on that basis was subsequently sold to the Tate Gallery for an undisclosed sum with the aid of a grant from National Art Collections Fund.

However, Peter Barber and John Richardson had substantial doubts about the identification of the mansion. Topographically, it was all wrong and the features in the far distance did not fit in with viewpoints from Highgate Village. And the coat-of-arms on the coach (not discernible in this picture) were those of a widow or single woman, since they were within a lozenge shape – if the picture were meant to be Pemberton's house, then it would be expected that the coat-of-arms would be his. The layout of the gardens did not match in the slightest detail those of the same house a hundred years later, nor was there a narrow patch of water (to the far left of the painting and again difficult to pick out in this reproduction) that we know of in Highgate Village.

CHS member Roy Allen eventually came up with the answer. The house and its grounds are shown without reasonable doubt on John Grove's map of the Belsize area for 1714, reproduced here. If you turn the map clockwise a bit you will see that it matches fairly precisely the Siberechts painting. In particular, the gardens in front of the mansion (though then in two halves rather than in quarters, and the layout of the garden to the left of the mansion are good evidence. In both pictures there is a courtyard of sorts to the right flanked by a row of stables and a small building near



John Grove's map of the Belsize area, 1714.

the house. To the far left of the house is a long stretch of water visible on both pictures. To the rear are orchard gardens, very similar in both illustrations.

The occupant of the house in 1696 – the date of the painting – has still not been determined. What we do know is that the mansion was just north of Belsize Lane with today's Rosslyn Hill in the foreground. The elongated stretch of pond had gone by 1820 when a witness at a turnpike enquiry said that there was formerly a 'moat' on the spot.

The painting is now retitled 'A View of a House and its Estates in Belsize'. It is well worth a look at the Tate – it is in Room 1.

Music at St Michael's

Next to Sainsbury's in Camden Town is St Michael's, the rather neglected parish church of Camden Town. It is an unusual Arts and Crafts building, designed by Bodley and Garner, which was consecrated on 29 September 1880 – the eight-year-old Marquess of Camden had laid the cornerstone the year before. It was opened incomplete, for the chancel, chapel and vestries were not added until the 1890s. The planned tower was never built.

In December 1988 the *Daily Telegraph* commented that 'The church is under-used and seriously under-maintained - far too large for its tiny congregation. Yet it is an undoubted masterpiece, with a marvellous soaring interior.'

It had at one time a good reputation for its music. Francis Grubb, who now lives in Norwich, has recently written to Malcolm Holmes, Camden's Archivist, on this subject. He relates:

'My wife and I were married there in 1950, having sung in the choir as teenagers for some years previously. In those days the talented musician-cum-thespian Norman de Langdale (b. 1895?) had been the vicar since 1936, acting as his own choirmaster. There was at that time no vicarage, and the choir consequently used to meet at Norman's flat, 2 Oval Road. Here a mixed chorus, made up largely of enthusiastic youngsters plus a few old growlers, would dutifully rehearse, gathered around the grand piano and, in winter, before a roaring log fire.

Come festival times, and we always knew which particular setting of the Eucharist we were going to sing, namely the Mass of St Michael, written by de Langdale himself, reputedly a pupil of C.V. Stanford whilst at Cambridge. Even if a trifle sentimental by today's standards, this was no naive composition, but a competently crafted work with an independent organ part, whose author had amply demonstrated his skills through the ease with which he was able to move from one key to another.

The years passed, de Langdale retired in 1971, and we ourselves settled near Cambridge, from where my wife commuted to Steeple Bumpstead (Essex), officiating there as village dispenser to Sir Alexander Fleming's son, Dr Robert Fleming. With some surprise, we discovered that here Norman de Langdale's father had once been the incumbent and it was with even greater astonishment that we learned that our old mentor had come home and been laid to rest in the village during a sadly unattended ceremony (he apparently had no living relatives), in an unmarked grave in the overflow burial ground. This was c.1984, and we had known nothing about it.

Years later again, I began to search for the apparently lost (and certainly unpublished) setting of the Ordinary – now de Langdale's only memorial – and dis-

covered that, although all the choir copies had been destroyed in a vestry flood, one of these had long before been cast aside because it was incorrectly assembled, and subsequently was still around later to be rescued from the trash can by a member of the old congregation. This and the original autograph were eventually entrusted to me by two previous organists. The working copy I have deposited in the archives of the University of East Anglia Music School, and the original I have sent to Malcolm Holmes for the Camden archives.'

KENTISH TOWN PAST

John Richardson's latest book, *Kentish Town Past*, is now in the shops – there will be a review in the next *Newsletter*. In the usual format of the 'Past' series, it is a history of Kentish Town from medieval times, drawing on material in the court rolls, until modern days. It is accompanied by 161 illustrations. Hardback, 144 pages – an excellent Christmas present!

TAKE THE PULLMAN

At the Church Farmhouse Museum, Greyhound Hill, Hendon, there is an exhibition about Pullman and his trains. Phone 0181 203 0130 for opening times - it is on until 23rd November.

ROMNEY'S HOUSE FOR SALE

Nowadays, Romney's house in Hampstead would sell for an astronomic sum. Roy Allen has sent us a cutting from *The Times* for 16 April 1801, which includes the sale notice of his house, then being auctioned by Christie's.

'A copyhold estate of inheritance, held of the Manor, Hampstead, the property of George Romney esq, retiring farther into the country. Lot 4: A substantial well-built house, with offices and garden, desirably situate on Hollybush-hill, let on lease to Mrs Rundell, of which 3 years are unexpired at Lady Day, 1801, at a low old rent of £50, the tenant paying land and every other tax, to keep and leave the premises in repair. Lot 2: A dwelling house, 3-stall stable, coachhouse, and convenient offices and large garden &c, adjoining the above, in the occupation of George Romney Esq, erected under his direction, with a suite of large apartments, comprising a painting-room, with perfect light, a capacious show-room, well-suited to the artist, and several small, neat, convenient apartments, from two of which balconies are thrown, which give command of extensive, rich, and picturesque prospects. The premises are well supplied with excellent spring water.'

THE LAMAS CONFERENCE

This year's LAMAS Conference has a low-life theme – 'London of Human Frailty – The Weak, the Wicked and the Well-meaning'. It is on Saturday, 29 November, from 10-5, and is at the Museum of London.

Speakers include Brian Bloice on London's underworld through the eyes of Henry Mayhew, Dennis



Politics in St Pancras – see below.

Edwards on Sinful Sport, Virginia Berridge on Opium Dens, John Black on Plebeian Illegitimacy and Cathy Rose on Bethnal Green Criminals. If that weren't enough, Dr Lesley Hall's talk is entitled 'Hairless Perverts with Twitching Lips – early 20th-century London Sex Reformers.

Rush for tickets (£5 inc. tea) to Local History Conference, 36 Church Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7PX. Cheque/PO payable to London & Middlesex Archaeological Society plus SAE.

WHALE 25 years old

Virginia Berridge reports that the West Hampstead Association for Leisure (WHALE) has recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The first AGM on 29 March 1973, reported that 'West Hampstead Association for Leisure has succeeded at last in obtaining financial support from the Council to renovate and open a temporary community centre at 60-62 Mill Lane, the old Express Dairy. It is hoped to open the centre by mid May... and that it will include pottery and carpentry workshops, a colour television and a discotheque....'

In fact, things had got going in the early 1970s when a group of people who had moved into the area decided there was no open space and started campaigning for somewhere for their children to play. This was Playspace, which shaded off into WHALE. Playspace, apart from decoratively painting the railway bridge off Mill Lane, used Westbere Copse and other spaces for its work. The first West Hampstead festival was organised in June 1973.

A WEIGHTY PROBLEM

The Science Museum, like someone remembering a long-kept library book, has written to say that in 1863 (yes 1863) the Museum borrowed some weights from a Mr J. Yates of the International Decimal Association, Highgate. They would rather like to have some details about Mr Yates and his Association.

A POLITICAL POSTCARD

A postcard depicting what is probably election activity by the South East St Pancras Labour Party has turned up – it is reproduced above. Any information would be welcome.

A HUNDRED YEARS OLD

The building which now houses the Camden Arts Centre in Arkwright Road was originally the Hampstead Central Library. This opened on 10 November 1897, the result mainly of a handsome donation by Henry Harben, a Hampstead resident and general manager of the Prudential Assurance Company. An exhibition will be on show to the public as from 11th November to mark the 100th anniversary.

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