

newsletter

No 165

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jan 1998

The Jews' Free School

Thurs, 15 January, 7.30pm
Pax House, Lyndhurst Road NW3

The Jews' Free School may be traced back to 1732, 96 years after the resettlement of Jews – mainly Sephardim – in England. At a time when London's indigenous population allowed its children to be largely uneducated or at best put into Dame schools, the immigrant Jews had ensured that their children received instruction in Hebrew and the Jewish religion. A school was begun in 1644 in the City (which also taught reading and arithmetic). In 1732 a Talmud Torah, which may be viewed as the original of the Jews' Free School, was established in connection with the Ashkenazi Great Synagogue in Duke's Place.

The fascinating history of this well-known London institution (which today is in Camden Road) will be told by Dr Gerry Black, whose book on the history of the school has recently been published.

Please note the new venue. The name of it is probably not familiar, but most of you will know the outside of the building well. This attractive and substantial Regency building, once known as Rosslyn Lodge, then as 19 Lyndhurst Road, is now the headquarters of the Girl Guides Association. In *More Streets of Hampstead* we learn that in the 1830s it was the home of Matthew Forster MP, 'who contributed towards the abolition of the West African slave trade by importing palm oil from the area for lubricating railway axles. The African chiefs found this a more profitable enterprise than selling their own people as slaves.'

Pax House is a short walk from Belsize Park underground station.

The Soanes at Home

Tuesday, 3rd February, 7pm
Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields WC2

As mentioned in the last *Newsletter*, an interesting exhibition at the Sir John Soane's Museum illuminates the daily life of Soane and his family. It has been curated by CHS member Susan Palmer, Archivist to the Museum. We have arranged for a talk by her on one of the evenings that the Museum stays open late,

with the opportunity to see the exhibition as well. Please note the earlier time for starting. Members will be able to see round the house before and after the talk, and the exhibition, but unfortunately the exhibition is not free and admission to that is £2. Otherwise, viewing the house is free.

Those members who have never been to the Museum will have a splendid introduction, and those of you who know it already will be happy to renew their acquaintance.

Closure of Keats House

Keats House is temporarily closed for major repair work as from 1 December 1997. It is hoped to reopen it by April 1998, but there are substantial doubts about this date. Weather proofing, renewal of floors and the removal of asbestos are included in the work.

However, as the *Ham & High* reported on 21 November, the City of London, which is now responsible for the building, will not be able to restore the building to its former glory 'in the way that we would like to see' because of budget restraints.

WHY HYLDA COURT?

Malcolm Holmes would like to find out more about the architecturally interesting block of flats in St Alban's Road, off Highgate Road, called Hylda Court. Suggestions for architect have included Lubetkin, and it has also been said that the block was built for a sea captain to provide a pension for his wife. Parts of the block are said to resemble a bridge of a ship with portholes. In the rear twenty flats have access off a central feature with five walkways, which is said to resemble a funnel of a ship.

Research or knowledge would be welcome.

RAVE REVIEW

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto in the December issue of *History Today* says (referring to our publication *Continental Taste*) that the CHS has 'launched a series of Occasional Papers which are not only impeccably scholarly and delightfully original: but they are bright enough and svelte enough to sell.'

The Tate Gallery painting

A letter has appeared in *Art Quarterly* from Dr Gerald Levenson, proposing that the house depicted in the Jan Siberechts' painting (see previous *Newsletter*) was south of the river. He notes that 'When the painting was first acquired I wrote to the Tate to point out that the direction of the daylight in the painting could not be reconciled with the geography claimed. The lighting could, of course, have been an artistic fiction, but as it stands, with the house sunlit on the south side facing the viewer it indicates a view generally to the north and not to the south, as it would be from Highgate to Westminster. Changing the supposed location of the house to Belsize below Hampstead, as is now proposed, does not help. It would make more sense to seek a location south of the Thames, say somewhere on the high ground between Brixton and Dulwich, where a view towards Westminster would be north-facing.'

§ Due to an oversight, we omitted to say that the reproduction of John Grove's map of Belsize in the last *Newsletter* in connection with this painting, was by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey.

MR YATES AND THE DECIMAL WEIGHTS

Peter Barber sent in information about Mr J. Yates of the International Decimal Association, who had lent weights to the Science Museum in 1863 (see last *Newsletter*):

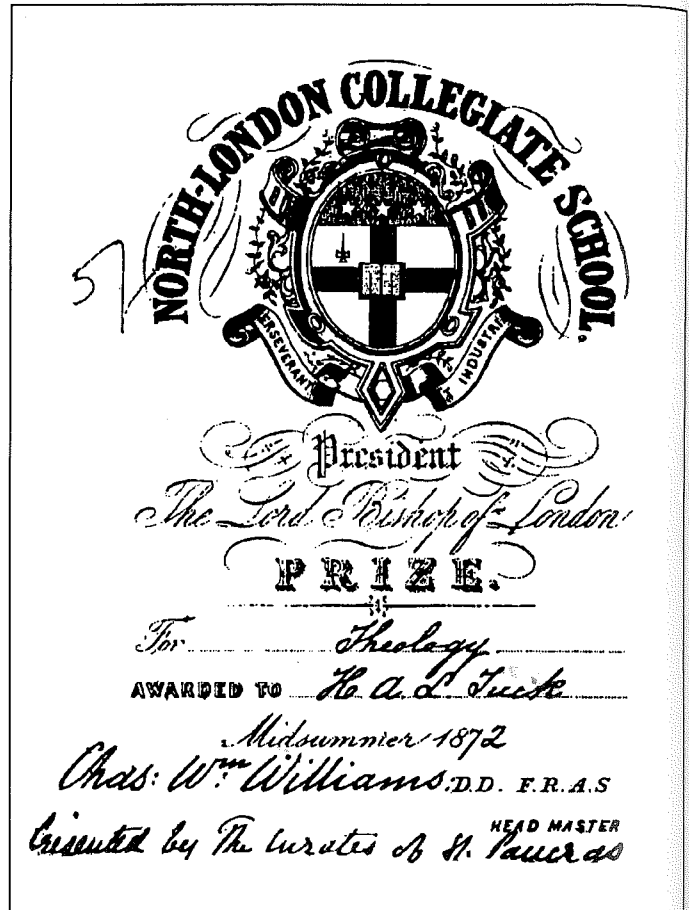
'James Yates FRS (1789-1871) was the last private occupant of Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill, where he lived between 1848 and 1871. A Scottish Unitarian Minister, he had wide interests which were reflected in the pamphlets which he wrote on temperance, archaeology and botany as well as decimalisation. He was well-known locally for the lavish 'archaeological parties, which he held in the grounds of Lauderdale House and served as vice-president of the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution in 1861. He had been influential in the formation of University College London in 1827, where he endowed a chair in geology and mineralogy and to which he bequeathed the bulk of his extensive library. Presumably UCL still has it - and it should contain material relating to the International Decimal Association. There is further information about Yates, including a photograph of him in old age, in the book *Lauderdale Revealed* by Oliver Cox, Michael Curwen and myself, published by the Lauderdale House Society in 1993 and still available (ISBN 0 9522479 0 9) from the House and all good bookshops.'

APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE EDITOR

We are please to announce that David Hayes has accepted our invitation to become Associate Editor of the *Camden History Review*. David not only indexed recently the first twenty editions of the *Review*, but has also been prominent in the research into the Bloomsbury publications.

Another local bookplate

Roy Hidson has sent in another local bookplate, this time from a volume entitled *The Land and the Book* by W.M. Thomson, an American missionary who ministered in Syria and Palestine between 1833 and 1876. As will be seen, the book was awarded for theology to H.A.L. Tuck at the North London Collegiate School, then in the Prince of Wales Road.



WARTIME MEMORIES

In *Newsletter* 163 we included some wartime memories of the wireless station at Parliament Hill during the last war, sent to us by George Morley.

He is interested to know when the station was built - he knows that it was occupied from the beginning of 1941. He has searched the LCC minutes from 1937, but all such activity is masked under the Air Raid Precautions Act 1937 when Herbert Morrison agreed to guns, balloons etc being placed there.

Previous to the station's occupation the unit operated from the BBC Swains Lane but moved over as an advantage listening post tracing the German Luftwaffe which used radio beams to bomb London. This subject was covered in a recent book by Laurie Brettingham called *The Beam Benders*.

If anyone has information for Mr Morley please contact him at 19 Palgrave House, Fleet Road NW3 2QJ (0171-586 1852).

Book Review

Kentish Town Past by John Richardson
Historical Publications, £14.95. 144pp, 161 ills.

Writing to the *Holborn and Bloomsbury Chronicle* in August 1869, 'Threescore and Ten' from 'Mud Island' complains of the state of the roads in Gospel Oak. He adds, despairingly, 'A wandering tribe, belonging it may be to the merry Zingaris, have established themselves in Nomansland with their caravans, basket-work and dirty progeny'.

This view of a forgotten, neglected and perhaps despised area was to die hard. Only with the publication in 1977 of Gillian Tindall's *The Fields Beneath* did the rehabilitation of Kentish Town begin.

Now, with the help of splendid illustrations from Camden's Archives and others, John Richardson has produced a definitive book which should do much to redeem Kentish Town's reputation. Using a well-tried formula we are treated to a detailed consideration of the basic activities of a mid-nineteenth century suburb whose pretensions had been shattered by the incursion of the Midland Railway, and then peopled for generations by its workforce. This is a world which fascinates, lying as it now does just beyond the grasp of our own or our parents' experience. Moreover, unlike the 'Unsettled neighbourhood' of Camden Town of which Charles Dickens complained, Kentish Town remained a stable community until, with the best of intentions, post-war rebuilding destroyed its social cohesion.

The Author does not shrink from reviewing the post-1945 record, criticising the opportunities which are, even now, being lost on the former railway lands. As a local councillor involved in many of the events of the 1960s, he is well placed to reflect soberly in the chapter 'Ideas and Actualities' - one that we should all take to heart. So, in spite of its title, this book looks forwards as well as backwards. In doing so, it avoids over-concentration on the immediate past, and reminds us that the history of our community is a continually changing process in which we all take part.

The septuagenarian correspondent from 'Mud Island' could look back to his youth when Kentish Town was a rural village. Refreshingly, almost half of this book deals with that pre-railway era, reminding us that this place, unlike its brasher neighbour down the road, does indeed have a past, and a long one. Research continues to enlighten the hidden years, and John Richardson sets out a convincing case for Kentish Town to be respected as a historic settlement of importance.

Had the inconvenient site of the Old St Pancras Church not been held in such respect, and had income not been available from the Church Lands for two churches, there can be little doubt that Kentish Town would have become the recognised legal as well as

physical centre of the parish as early as the fourteenth century. The consequential effect on the development of the area would have been immense, not just for what is now Camden, but for London as a whole.

Michael Ogden

More Revelations at the Opera

Even more has been happening deep in the Royal Opera House than the press has headlined. There has been an archaeological dig before the redevelopment of the site in pursuit of more evidence for *Lundenwic*, that Saxon London settlement in the Aldwych/Covent Garden area established after the departure of the Romans and the known resettlement of the walled City.

So far 1400 artefacts have been found. It is uncertain how many people were living there at any one time, but the excavations in the area show that there were a number of different plots with quite closely spaced buildings. More than 2000 shards of pottery have been found on the Opera House site, including fragments from cooking pots and jars, much of it what is called Ipswich ware, dating from the 7th and 8th centuries. Some glass was found, used in drinking vessels. Some pieces, finely decorated, probably originated in the Rhineland.

A large iron cauldron was found in a rubbish pit, dating from 730-750. This is the only such item of its date known in the whole of England. It has been X-rayed using a three-dimensional technique which produces a video rather than an X-ray plate.

Other items include part of a small bone spoon, iron knives and hones for sharpening them, and a bone handle with a runic inscription. Gaming pieces made of antler incised with decoration, probably used in a game similar to backgammon, were also found. These are similar to pieces found in Ribe, Denmark. Two metal finds include a copper alloy brooch with decoration, similar to Early Saxon brooches of the 5th and 6th centuries, and the second is a mount or brooch, found in the post-hole of an 8th century building.

As to industry, large amounts of slag were found on the site, indicating iron-smithing. Non-ferrous metal-working is conclusively represented for the first time in *Lundenwic* by ingots, waste, crucibles and two moulds.

A great deal of evidence needs to be evaluated to get a better idea of life in *Lundenwic*. Certainly it was trading substantially with the Continent. Imports included wine, glass and querns from Rhineland, stone from Norway, amber from the Baltic and pottery from a variety of sources.

From the Third Report on the Archaeological Investigations on the Royal Opera House site.

Anniversaries 1998

Camden anniversaries for this year include:

50 YEARS

With the establishment of the National Health Service, the Hampstead Provident Dispensary at New End closed.

The second Hampstead Wells building in Well Walk was demolished.

100 YEARS

The Haberdashers' Aske's School was moved out of the City into Westbere Road. It moved out again in 1961, but the school's coat-of-arms is still emblazoned on the building with an injunction to 'Serve and Obey'. Hampstead Comprehensive now occupies the site.

King Alfred School was established at 24 Ellerdale Road, Hampstead (it is now in North End Road). Housed in a residence called Briarlea, it advertised itself as a 'co-educational and open-air school' in which pupils would be encouraged to develop their talents without the aid of competitions, marks or religious instruction.

The bodies which had been lain to rest in the burial ground attached to Whitefield's Tabernacle church in Tottenham Court Road had long been subject to desecration. They were removed this year to Chingford Mount Cemetery. A small garden covers some of the site of the old ground.

The first play centre in the country was established at the Mary Ward Centre in Tavistock Place.

Golders Hill Park was opened to the public. The old estate was put up for auction in 1897 at a time when there was a boom in the construction of mansion flats. Fortunately, the reserve price was not reached and just before the second auction a local resident called a meeting to establish a fund which would guarantee a bid of £35,000. But this was not enough and it was left to Thomas Barratt, Hampstead resident and historian (and chairman of the Pears soap company), to carry on bidding on his own account to £38,000. He later resold the estate to the committee trusted with its conversion to a public amenity.

150 YEARS

The Pre-Raphaelite movement began when Dante Rossetti and Holman Hunt shared an apartment/studio in Cleveland Street this year.

1848 marked the high point of the Chartist movement. A large meeting was held at the Scientific and Literary Institution in Whitfield Street in support of the Chartists' proposals.

The famous Diorama in St Andrew's Place was closed this year. The 200-strong audience sat in an auditorium which could be rotated 73 degrees, viewing illusory and shifting scenes. The building was designed by Pugin the elder, built in four months and opened in 1823.

The first railway bookstall - W.H. Smith at Euston station - was opened.

The medieval Old St Pancras Church in Pancras Road

had suffered a remodelling by the architects Gough and Roumieu - much as we now see it today. The building was reopened to the public this year.

Two new churches were opened - the fine Bloomsbury Baptist Church in Shaftesbury Avenue (architect John Gibson) and the Congregational Chapel still in Kelly Street, Kentish Town. Park Chapel in Arlington Road, Camden Town, was burnt down.

200 YEARS

At a time when invasion by Napoleon was feared, the Loyal Hampstead Association was formed to provide an armed force.

300 YEARS

The Wells Charity in Hampstead was established to use the income from the fields which included the old Hampstead medicinal well. (A talk by Christopher Wade is to be given to the Society later this year on the subject.)

PEOPLE

Anniversaries of notable people associated with Camden include:

100 YEARS

Born: Gracie Fields, the entertainer (Church Row, Frogna Way), Henry Moore (Parkhill Road), Paul Robeson (Branch Hill), Alexander Waugh (Hillfield Road), Winifred Holtby (Doughty Street).

Died: Henry Bessemer, inventor of a highly successful steel-making process (Highgate Road and Pancras Road); William Dobson (Adelaide Road, Eldon Road); Samuel Plimsoll, politician commemorated in the loading line on ships for which he campaigned (Harrington Square, Hatton Garden); Edward Burne-Jones (Red Lion Square); Eleanor Marx (Great Russell Street, Gower Street); William Jenner (Albany Street).

150 YEARS

Born: Helen Allingham (Eldon Grove), Robert Macbeth (Parkhill Road, Englands Lane)

Died: Isaac D'Israeli, antiquarian and father of Benjamin (Theobalds Road, Bloomsbury Square)

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).

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

newsletter

No 166

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Mar 1998

Exploring the Thames foreshore

Thurs. 26 March, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square NW3

For two years archaeologists based at the Museum of London have been digging along the Thames foreshore as part of a three year project to investigate 120 kilometres of riverside. A good deal of the foreshore, notably where the Victorian embankments have largely destroyed evidence or blocked investigation, cannot be explored, but even so a great deal of territory has been covered. Our speaker, Michael Webber, has fascinating stories to tell of submerged prehistoric forests, Anglo Saxon fishtraps, jetties and wharves, and the remains of maritime vessels. This all makes for an interesting talk on early London

The Development of Cinemas

Thurs. 30 April, 7.30
Pax Lodge, Lyndhurst Road NW3

Our speaker, Richard Gray, will be covering a lot of ground. His talk will trace the history of cinema provision, with particular reference to the buildings, since the early days when moving pictures were first seen in fairgrounds, converted halls and run-down theatres. Between the wars the medium expanded greatly and we were rewarded with some splendid buildings, some of which survive, even in Camden where the number of cinemas has been reduced considerably.

You will notice that we are again using Pax Lodge for our venue. Those members who attended the talk on the Jews' Free School, when we used Pax Lodge for the first time, noted how comfortable it was. For those who are unfamiliar with the building and the road, Lyndhurst Road is opposite Pond Street and St Stephen's church, and Pax Lodge (the headquarters of the Girl Guides organisation) is the first building on the left after the old Lyndhurst Road chapel.

Advance Notice

Please put these dates in your diary:

21 May: talk to be announced

25 June: AGM at the Art Workers' Guild, Queen Square

ELUSIVE GOLDFISH

A recent article in the *Evening Standard* magazine featured the warehouse of artefacts which the Museum of London has in Hackney. Here the Museum hordes its reserve collection. Dr Simon Thurley the new director of the Museum is anxious that this facility is visited by researchers and members of the public. The varied collection contains a Victorian kosher distillery rescued from Fournier Street in Spitalfields; an old rules and regulations board from Holloway prison; a Totalisator machine from the old Haringay dog track, and the piano that belonged to W.S. Gilbert. It also contains what look like two fish tanks. 'These' said Thurley to the interviewer, 'are the glass cisterns from the Victorian public loos in High Holborn, which were dismantled at the end of the Seventies. When they were originally installed, the city fathers were keen to show how modern and hygienic the plumbing was, so they put goldfish in the cisterns, which lived quite happily in there for years, we believe'.

This nice story, like many others, is unfortunately not true. Malcolm Holmes has pointed out that the goldfish were invented by Geoffrey Fletcher in his book *The London Nobody Knows*, first published in 1962. Malcolm writes:

'When I first came to work for Holborn Council in the 1960s I had questioned the story myself especially as I seem to remember that the cistern completely emptied when flushed. I had also had the story ridiculed by a member of Camden's staff who, when he worked for Holborn Works Dept., had responsibility for it. Holborn built it, not the City. Finally, some years ago I did have the opportunity to raise the subject while in conversation with Geoffrey Fletcher and he admitted that he regretted he had ever made up the tale because so many people had queried it with him over the years.

'The story, incidentally, is not unique to Holborn. Over the years when I have mentioned the 'fish-tank' tale as one example of urban myths that get into print, other people have told me similar tales where glass tanks exist in other buildings. Indeed, in St Pancras Chambers (the old Midland Grand Hotel) where I do guided tours and enthuse over the marble clad gents loo complete with glass cistern, security guards have told me exactly the same tale, but when questioned the origins of the story are always obscure.'

Ups and Downs at St Pancras

In mid January there seemed some cause for optimism about the future of the semi-derelict Midland Grand Hotel, aka St Pancras Chambers. This Grade I listed building had been shamefully neglected for many years by British Rail and is now owned by London & Continental Railways as part of their project to construct a direct rail link from the Channel Tunnel via Stratford to St Pancras. There are mixed views as to the impact on St Pancras Station and the surrounding area, but most people agree that if the line was to be built (together with other routes, such as a fast line to Heathrow) then the old hotel would have a commercial future and would warrant large-scale investment. Anyone who has seen the inside of the building will know that it does need many millions spent on it.

L&CR announced in January that they had appointed the Chambers Group as developer of the building in a conversion to a hotel and apartments. This scheme involved Whitbreads (operators of the Marriott hotel brand in the UK), the Manhattan Loft Corporation, and Alan Baxter the civil engineers whose restoration work on important buildings has a high reputation.

But no sooner had L&CR issued their press release than it was announced that the company had failed to raise the necessary funds to finance the construction of the new line, let alone the development of the old hotel. Speculation had it that the line would either not be built at all, or else that it would be rerouted into the existing terminal at Waterloo. Either way it cast doubt over the scheme to restore St Pancras Chambers since the building would not have the commercial viability of being next to the Channel link. The latest news is that John Prescott has given L&CR a further month to raise the money.

A BUILDING IN FITZROY PARK

Many people will know Fitzroy Park as a pleasant private road running from the Highgate ponds up to Highgate Village where it joins The Grove. It contains a number of substantial houses built in the 20s and 30s, the modern residences developed in the grounds of Witanhurst, a few Georgian or early Victorian buildings, allotments and a number of expensive apartment blocks such as The Hexagon. It also contains a largish house with a sizeable garden built and once owned by the architect, Vincent Harris. Harris did a great deal of work for the old St Pancras Council and on his death marked his gratitude by bequeathing his house to the borough, but with strings attached. It had to be used for the benefit of St Pancras inhabitants and the uses could include the housing of articles of artistic or historical interest, the holding of civic receptions, or as a residence of the Mayor. There was no endowment fund.

In the event, Camden Council has used the house principally for a training centre, but not very intensively. It is remotely located and unsuitable for conversion into either an arts centre or museum.

Visitors would almost certainly come by car, which would undermine the essentially rural feel of the road and, of course, irritate the present residents in this private road. No mayor has wished to live there and nor is it particularly useful for training purposes.

Camden is therefore considering the disposal of the house and has asked interested parties for their views. The view of the Council of the Camden History Society was that given the location of the house it was unlikely that a viable community use could be devised for it. We were therefore in favour of selling the house (it would be sold subject to it being used as a single dwelling) and the proceeds directed to other organisations which satisfied the original wishes of Mr Harris. In particular, we thought that proceeds (the house would sell for well over £1 million) should be redirected to Lauderdale House and Burgh House as in our view these two establishments were doing the community work that Harris had in mind. This view we submitted to Camden Council.

THE KENWOOD LANDSCAPE

J. Tompson began his survey of St Pancras parish in 1792, producing in due course a large-scale plan in 1802 and a smaller scale plan in 1804. These plans are not identical however; some updating took place.

The Millfield estate (roughly the Parliament Hill Fields) was bought by the 1st Earl Mansfield in 1789 and the 1802 Tompson plan shows the six fields and the three pond fields as they were at purchase. The 1804 plan shows hedges removed but many hedgerow trees remaining.

The Wood Pond appears on the 1802 map with no island, but on the 1804 version there is one. The north edge of the pond is straight in 1802 and curved in 1804, showing the removal of earth for the island. This change may relate to the visit of Eames in 1785 ("Mr Eames excels in the laying out of water").

Kit Ikin

WRITING ON THE WALL

The Society's popular occasional paper, *Continental Taste*, which dealt with the Ticinese restaurants that were once a common feature of London and the provinces, mentioned the Pagani restaurant in Great Portland Street. In its 'Artists' Room' only the owner's personal guests were permitted. It was in any case very small, and contained only one table. But around the walls were to be found fourteen panels on which illustrious guests were persuaded to add their signatures. These panels were removed for safe-keeping in 1939 and thirteen still survive. Members will be interested to learn that the Museum of London has recently acquired five of them – no doubt they will reside in the reserve collection referred to on p.1 of this *Newsletter*.

The Ghost of Harwood Street

It isn't a human ghost, though. It's a mission hall. I call it a ghost because it's elusive, now you see it, now you don't. First it flits from 15 Harwood Street to 62. The 1893 Post Office Directory clearly records a London City Mission Room at no. 15, but in 1903, it is at 62 and no. 15 has gone. Bearing in mind that Harwood Street was renumbered in 1885, when odd numbers were settled on the west side and evens on the east, this appears to be a genuine change of location. Why, I wondered, till I discovered that by 1916 the Chalk Farm Bus Garage had destroyed no 15 and its neighbours.

The London City Mission began in 1835. It was at the height of its powers in the 1880s and 1890s with nearly 600 missionaries. In December 1884 one of these, George Green, was accepted into the mission (having been rejected by one of his four assessors the previous July). He was allocated to the Camden Town District. By 1900 rate books show Green at 62 Harwood Street, where the rateable value was 34 (in contrast to no. 64 next door, the same size, but without a mission hall attached, rated 26). The hall's exact date of construction is a mystery but it must have been between 1893 and 1900.

According to LCM records Green remained at the Harwood Street Mission for the rest of his missionary career of 38 years. His patch was part of the Camden Station District, and he had a succession of local superintendents who had 'esq.' after their names, though Green did not. George's patch was bounded by Ferdinand Place, Powlett Place, Torbay Street and Camden Goods Yard. It wasn't large and it wasn't a slum, but it did seethe with people and was no doubt filthy with soot from its numerous cross-cutting railways, and reeking from horse and human traffic. It certainly did not attract the affluent. For example, the 1891 records 2 couples, 4 children, one adult of an older generation and one 'nurse' aged 13 in number 64 Harwood Street, a house with six tiny rooms including one kitchen.

Green had his own private door to his mission hall from no. 62 and the public went in from Powlett Place, a pathway at right-angles to Harwood Street. A harmonium was in the hall and services were held twice a week on Wednesdays at 8pm and on Sundays at 7pm. No doubt his work included rescue visits to the Harwood Arms opposite. Most pubs saw mothers with babies bring vegetables in to prepare while they drank, and the men would follow them in after work. In 1901 the Metropolitan Commissioner of Police stated that in 1899, 8.469 per 100 of the population of London had been 'apprehended for drunkenness and drunk and disorderly conduct'.

George's flock would not have come from the grander church-going class, but his modest harmonium and the singing of hymns would attract locals. He was probably out on the streets as well, persuading them in. Missionaries could give limited practical help to the deserving poor and sick, and were known to make converts by attending fever victims no-one else would go near. George's obituary describes him as a 'quiet man, very studious' and remarks that 'he was beloved by the poor of the neighbourhood... His missionary outlook and catholic sympathies enabled him to work happily with all evangelical ministers and without severing his connexion with Methodism he worshipped mostly at St Martin's church, Gospel Oak... His mission services worked wonders in many lives, not least among the rough lads of the neighbourhood.'

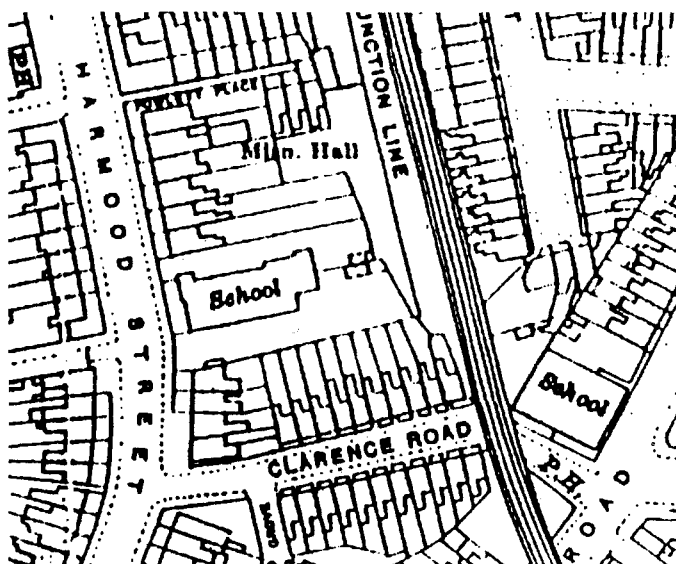
Apart from this eulogy nothing remains of George Green except the slightly wild-looking photograph that accompanies it. LCM missionaries had to write annual reports and occasionally items from these were incorporated in the main Annual Report, but nothing of George Green's appears and nor do his own reports survive. His official record states that he was married, that he retired ('on full salary') in September 1921 'completely broken in health' and died five years later, aged 71. The mission hall ceased to function as such, and the harmonium was sold for £16. 4s. 0d in 1922. George's patch was absorbed into Camden District and no longer had its own missionary. By 1918 the number of London City Missionaries was declining anyway and by 1938 there were only 265.

However, the hall remained and its ghost-like manifestations continue. To begin with, no-one seems to remember what it looked like. 'Rather pre-fab with a parquet floor' is one opinion, and 'sort of Victorian conservatory type, lots of glass' is another. The Salvation Army used it at one time for its brass band, but so far no picture have been found.

One glimpse came in the late 1950s when the timber yard behind the run of houses which includes nos. 62 and 64, put in a planning application for an access road. It was to be 18 feet wide and would run down part of Powlett Place and behind the houses where there was already a footpath. The plan shows a mission hall, now called a 'workshop'. However, local residents, and especially those in nos. 62 and 64, objected strongly to the road, especially as parts of their tiny gardens would be destroyed. The application was rejected.

Ten years or so later there was another glimpse. Camden started on a major redevelopment plan for a huge part of this area and there were many protests against the proposed demolition of the viable early Victorian houses in Harwood Street. Some of the houses were saved and Camden had to revise its plans. For example, part of the timber yard was added to the playground at Chalcot School. But land left which included the hall was an odd piece with no access to a road. In 1976 the Council decided it would make a communal garden, reached by the mission hall footpath from Powlett Place, but which entailed the 'demolition of a single-storey hall'.

Section of the 1913 map of Kentish Town showing the mission hall off Powlett Place



Again there were protests. A communal garden was not wanted, it would be vandalised, and the residents had gardens of their own except, it turned out, the occupier of no. 62. That resident wrote that 'When I moved into this house 38 years ago the small garden that was behind the mission hall was cut off by the then landlord and when I purchased this house 13 years ago the [whole] area including the hall was cut off and I was left with a back yard.' He wanted the garden back for his retirement.

In fact, the public garden never did happen. Instead an extra house was built in Powlett Place with the whole of the mission house land as its garden. The hall itself was partly demolished but the new garden walls are much as Camden had planned for the communal garden and use at least part of the old mission hall walls. No. 62 still has no garden and the door that once let George through to the hall is blocked for ever. But a strong reminder of the ghost of Harmood Street is the neat fireplace complete with flue and capped chimney in the end wall of the new house's garden.

Shirley Neale

(The author would like to thank staff at Camden's Local History Library and the London City Mission for their help in this article.

The Tate Gallery painting

Our last *Newsletter* summarised the contents of a letter by Dr Gerald Levenson in *Art Quarterly* regarding the Siberechts painting in the Tate, originally said by the gallery to be of a house in Highgate and subsequently, after representations by members of the CHS, to be a house at Belsize. We have now had a letter from Dr Levenson:

'The original description of the Siberechts painting as The Grove...was plainly wrong both for topographical reasons, and for the astronomical which I noticed even before checking with old Highgate maps. The Tate officials were unimpressed with my comments, so I was happy when I read in the autumn *Quarterly* that the site at Highgate had been abandoned after all.

'This left the matter of the lighting. A house facing due north as the house you recommend in Belsize also does, would be glancingly sunlit from the left on the north face only from sunrise to between 5.00 and 5.30am, sun time, within say four weeks each side of midsummer, but even then the length of the shadows would need to be at least 2½ to 3 times the height of the objects casting them. In Siberechts' day sundials were still important and shadows were more significant to people than they are now. Hence, if the distant habitation with the cathedral-like building (also sunlit on the facing side) was actually Westminster, the best sites for the house would be to the south of the river.

'The 1714 plan of the estate you have found in Belsize – a nice bit of research indeed – certainly matches the depiction by Siberechts quite closely. His viewpoint is a sort of bird's-eye one: in fact, the painting is made up, cunningly, of several viewpoints and scales. That for the road traffic is just high enough, say 10 feet, to

see something of the roof of the coach. The estate is then presented as it might be on the backdrop of a stage set, back off the road. The ground appears to recede in level but now the viewpoint is high enough to look down on the house, high over the roof, and clear to the presumed Abbey 4 miles away. For this the viewing is 'zoomed' to make the far building about four times larger than it should be as compared with the house at say 100 yards if the geometry of perspective were to be strictly obeyed.

For the purposes of the Tate's labelling, this estate [in Belsize] should suffice, especially because the land is said to have belonged to the distant Abbey. However, if a man were to be hanged on this evidence, or just as a matter of research fully done, I would like to be sure that there was no estate to the south of the river for which the contemporary plans would provide an equally good match. Gentlemen's seats of the period had certain features in common: an avenue, ornamental gardens with walkways, vegetable plots to the rear, a paddock and stables, a piece of water for fish, and so forth. As you have also noticed, the transverse path which quarters the garden between the house and the imposing front gates, and which is prominent in the 1696 painting, is missing from the plans published just 18 years later.

'The matter of the lighting still bugs me, and if you find out more in relation to the painting I would very much like to hear. (It was in Room 2 at the Tate when I saw it.)

G.W. Levenson

MARIE LLOYD IN HOLBORN

Mr Falkson of 20 Cranfield House, Southampton Row, WC1B 4HH is trying to find out where in Southampton Row the music-hall star, Marie Lloyd, lived with her husband Alec Hurley in 1900-01. In his biography of her, Dan Farson confirms that they did indeed take up residence in this street but fails to say precisely where. Mr Falkson has tried the usual avenues of research – electoral lists, street directories etc.

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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).

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

newsletter

No 167

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

May 1998

Tunnels under Hampstead

Thurs, 21st May, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Tunnels have an enduring fascination – more so than bridges. Freud would have something to say about that. Our May talk is about the tunnels relating to the main line railways beneath Hampstead built in the nineteenth century. Our speaker is Michael Ogden, who has made a special study of the subject. He says that the construction frightened the horses and inspired Charles Dickens, and the last great main line put the chimney sweeps out of work.

The AGM and East Bloomsbury

Thurs, 25th June, 6.30pm
Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, WC1

Our Annual Meeting this year is not only held in a building of considerable architectural interest, but coincides with the Society's publication on the area in which the building is located. We meet for refreshments at 6.30, have the business meeting at 7pm and then the talk/launch at 7.30. The publication is primarily the work of David Hayes who, with the support of Peter Woodford, will describe the research work that went into the publication and and the notable nuggets of information that came to light.

The area that forms the subject of the book is one that has been much neglected. Basically, it is what we are calling 'East Bloomsbury', east of Southampton Row/Woburn Place as far as the Camden border with Islington. Here today are a multitude of institutions and hospitals, but there are as well some interesting burial grounds, the remnants of the Foundling Hospital, reminders of Lamb's Conduit, lots of small businesses, early artisans' dwellings, the residences of a good number of the Bloomsbury Group, and much else besides.

The book, edited by Peter Woodford and designed by Ivor Kamlish, in the same format as the much acclaimed earlier volume on Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury, will be available to purchase on the evening.

Nominations for the Council and Officers should be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting. 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*
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: *Audrey Nottman*
Council Members: *Peter Barober, Ruth Hayes, Ivor Kamlish, Sue Palmer, Barbara Scott, Dick Weindling, Robin Woolven.*

Moving the (Acting) Treasurer

Roger Cline who officially resigned as Treasurer a year or so back, but still does the job until we find someone else, has moved home and at the same time has devised a new logo, based on the fact that he is in flat 13 at 13 Tavistock Place. This seems foolhardy to the superstitious, but he writes:

'Those avid readers who read the small print of this *Newsletter* right to the end will notice the address of the Treasurer has changed. Several members in sending their subscription to the double 13 address have remarked that it is just as well I am not superstitious. In fact the developer of this block and many other new developments has pandered to the superstitions of the majority of their tenants in that there is no flat 4 or flat 14 and there was a rush to get flat 8. In Hong Kong, whence most tenants of developments in London have come recently, number 8 is a lucky number, whereas 4 sounds like death. The tenant of flat 13 has to rely on his British stiff upper lip.'

An Outing to Wimpole Hall

Saturday, 8th August

This year our coach outing is to Wimpole Hall, described by Pevsner as 'the most spectacular country mansion of Cambridgeshire'. The interior features work by two architects with Camden connections – John Soane and Henry Flitcroft – and also James

Gibbs. Those of you who were at Ann Saunders' talk last December will have had your appetites whetted, having seen photographs of Wimpole Hall. In the morning, we will visit the Home Farm, a model farm built by Soane, with rare breeds: our visit coincides with a 'Sheep Weekend'. As well as the Hall, there will be time to explore the gardens and spectacular parkland designed by Bridgeman, 'Capability' Brown, and Repton. Also worth a visit is St Andrew's church, adjacent to the Hall, which Pevsner calls 'a storehouse of monuments'.

A leaflet is enclosed with this *Newsletter* for you to make your booking. Once again, Ruth Hayes is organising the outing.

THE ELUSIVE GOLDFISH

Malcolm Holmes in our last edition wrote of the legendary goldfish in the lavatory cistern in Holborn. However, John Brandon-Jones has another story:

'While I cannot vouch for the goldfish in any particular tank in Holborn, I can assure you that goldfish were kept in the tanks of some London lavatories. I remember them well from my childhood visits to my grandfather, then Dr Williams' Librarian in Gordon Square. My impression is that the tanks were never completely empty, two or three inches of water remained and the tank was refilled immediately with fresh bubbling water which made the spectacle even more entertaining to a small boy.'

The Tate Gallery painting

We printed in the last *Newsletter* a letter from G.W. Levenson which suggested that the painting by Siberechts at the Tate (which has now been relabelled as a house at Belsize after evidence produced by CHS member Roy Allen) might possibly be of a house south of the river. Roy Allen writes again:

'It is an interesting suggestion that we should look south of the Thames for the house painted by Siberechts in 1696, but there seems little doubt that the distant panorama in the picture is a view from the north, with London (and its smoke) on the left. This is confirmed by the main buildings of Westminster, their east-west sequence being shown from left to right.

On the left is a good view of Westminster Hall, at the angle that might be expected when looking from Rosslyn Hill. Next comes the tower of St Margaret's church and then, on the right, Westminster Abbey. From Belsize there is only an oblique view of the west front, where the familiar twin towers were not built until about 1739; on the other hand the elaborate north entrance is seen to advantage.

In some reproductions these buildings, at one time overlooked even in the original, are hardly visible; they are above the prominent field shaped like a squat triangle, the apex pointing to the north-west corner of the abbey.'

A pub crawl with Karl Marx

A drinking spree in London and Karl Marx do not, at first, seem reconcilable, but Mike Pentelow writes:

'This year being the 150th anniversary of the publication of the Communist Manifesto, brings to mind the day Karl Marx went on a pub crawl in Tottenham Court Road in the early 1850s.

He was joined by fellow German revolutionaries, Wilhelm Liebknecht (who recalled the occasion in his 1901 biography of Marx) and Edgar Bauer.

In one of the pubs Bauer ridiculed some 'English snobs' on the matter of patriotism. Marx then sang the praises of German music which he said was much superior to English music. Liebknecht added the view that Germans surpassed the English in political intelligence. When Bauer referred to English 'cant' it was too much for the native boozers. They raised their fists and denounced the 'damned foreigners'. Marx and his comrades decided to beat 'a passably dignified retreat'. On the way home at about 2am they smashed the street gas lamps with stones until a policeman gave chase.

Street directories of the time reveal there were then 18 pubs in Tottenham Court Road, of which six survive. These were the Blue Posts at no. 6 (demolished March this year to make way for a new Tesco store), the Black Horse at 19, the Rising Sun which still exists at 46, the Rose & Crown at 62, the Talbot at 64, the Kings Arms at 82, the Bull's Head at 101, the Roebuck at 108 (which is now called the Flintlock & Firkin), the Northumberland Arms which still exists at 119, the Southampton Arms at 141, the Plasterers Arms at 157, the Mortimer Arms which still exists at 174, the New Inn at 186 which is now called Ye Olde Surgeon and has expanded into 183, the Apollo at 191, the White Hart at 199, the Italian at 236 (now called the Jack Horner), the Fox & Hounds at 264 and the Horseshoe at 267.

CHERRY LAVELL

Cherry Lavell has moved from London to Cheltenham – she will be much missed by those who have known her for years, for she was indeed one of the earliest members of the Society when it was formed in 1970. Cherry, who worked for the Council for British Archaeology, was our advisor on matters archaeological for many years and was quick to remind us whenever we went too long without a talk on her own specialisation. She writes:

'As to moving out of London: well, I've always been a country girl and have only ever tolerated London for the last 31 years because my job, and then since retirement the materials for my book, were here. Access to theatre and ballet has of course been nice, and I shall in future have to rely mainly on trips to Birmingham and Bristol for those fixes, with occasional London matinees for extra special things. Symbolically, perhaps, what I shall miss most is the Ad-

elaide nature reserve by the Primrose Hill railway tunnels; its subtle delights captured my heart about three years ago and I've poured a lot of thought and energy into it ever since.'

BURGH HOUSE HAPPENINGS

The current exhibition at Burgh House is entitled 'A Nest of Gentle Artists'. It illustrates the expansion of artists' studios in Belsize Park and Hampstead from 1870 onwards, and the work of artists like Clausen, Rackham and Nevinson who lived in them.

In the 1930s the Mall Studios, off Tasker Road, housed an internationally known group of artists – Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore and the art critic and writer Sir Herbert Read. Their good friends Paul Nash, Mondrian and Naum Gabo lived around the corner.

"It was a 'nest' of gentle artists" wrote Read. "The War came and destroyed it all...but English art had come of age." The exhibition runs until 19 June.

On Rogation Sunday, incidentally, (17 May) Deborah Wolton, landscape historian, is leading a walk of the boundaries of the Heath. Leaving Burgh House at 2.30. Price £1.

The beginnings of St Michael, Camden Town

The following is reprinted from the December 1959 parish magazine of St Michael, Camden Town. (The church is in Camden Road, next to Sainsbury's).

'On 23 October, 1876, a new ecclesiastical district was formed in St Pancras out of the parishes of All Saints (then known as St Stephen's) Camden Town, St Matthew's, Oakley Square, and Holy Trinity Haverstock Hill. On 15 November the first incumbent – the Rev. E.B. Penfold – was licensed; he had been on the staff of Christ Church, Albany Street. When he arrived he had no church or building of any kind, no site on which one could be erected, and no money with which to erect one. But he secured a shop at 5a Camden Road. This he fitted up as a temporary church and the first services were held on 25 February, 1877. The following year the Rev. A.G. Hunter joined him as the first assistant priest.

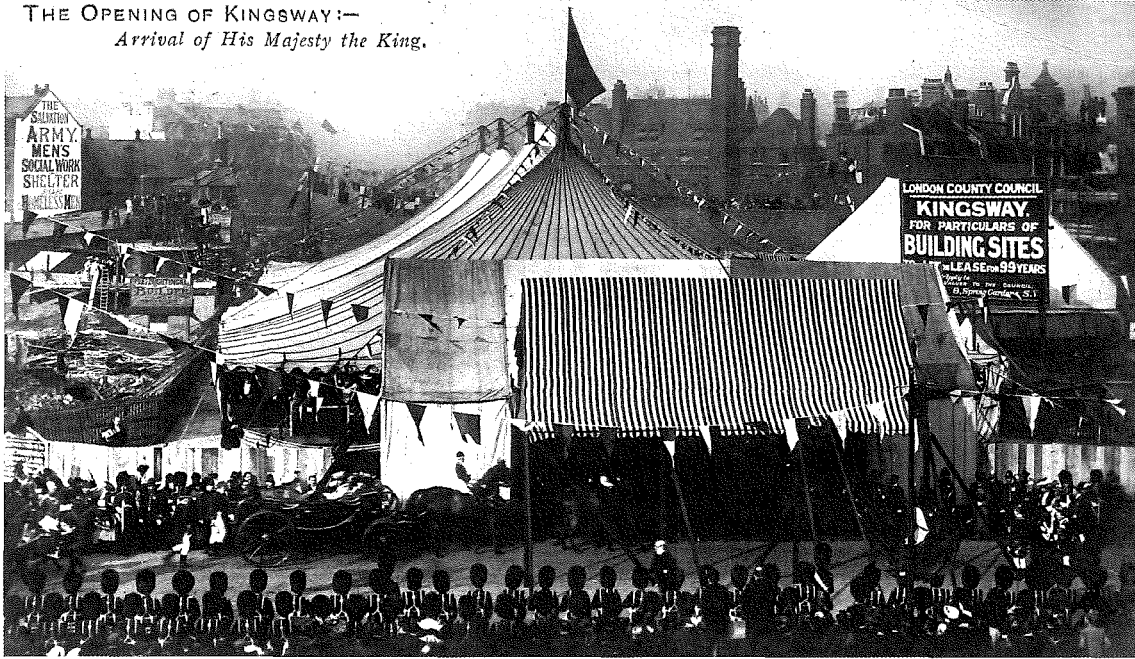
On 23 June 1879, the two houses, 11 and 13 Camden Road, with long gardens at the back, were secured as the site of a permanent church. A large part of the purchase money was obtained from the sale of land in the City of London on which the demolished church of St Michael, Queenhithe had stood. For this reason it was decided to dedicate the new church in Camden Town to St Michael.

A temporary church was built on the portion of the site where the present chancel stands, and on 24 August 1879 the congregation migrated thither from 5a Camden Road. In the meantime, plans for a permanent church were being prepared by the architects, Bodley and Garner, and the cornerstone was laid by the Marquess of Camden (then a boy of eight) on 5 June 1880. The building was finished in the following year and the church was consecrated by Bishop Walsham (then suffragan in the diocese of London) on 29 September 1881.



This postcard of c1906 shows St Michael's church in Camden Road and (probably) the morning rush hour to the west end. It also depicts the buildings which were there before the ABC building on the site of Sainsbury's. These housed a number of artists' studios, though no prominent artists have so far been discovered as residents there.

THE OPENING OF KINGSWAY:—
Arrival of His Majesty the King.



The opening of Kingsway by Edward VII in 1905.

At that time the church did not include the present chancel, chapel or vestries. On 24 June 1893, Viscount Halifax laid the foundation stone of the chancel and chapel, and this portion of the church was consecrated by the Bishop of London (William Temple) on 13 October 1894. The vestries were added some years later. Thus all the original plans were carried out except the porch and tower. Whether they will ever be built the future alone can show.'

New Publications

Hidden Histories is a handsomely produced folder detailing the location of plaques to women who have lived in Camden. These range from the better known, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Christina Rossetti to Maggie Richardson, who sold flowers in Hampstead High Street for over sixty years. This interesting (and free) publication may be obtained from public libraries (once they are open again!).

Bulletin 39 of the Hornsey Historical Society has articles on the hundred years of Campsbourne School; the 'Hornsey Halfpenny' – a token issued during the official coinage shortage of 1797; memories of Crouch End early this century; and Westbury House. There is also a long article on what used to be a schoolboy's favourite shop in Muswell Hill. This was run by Hubert Lansley, known as 'Meccano Man' but who had achieved some earlier fame at school by running his own magazine called *Stamp Monthly* with, eventually, a circulation of 1200 copies printed by a wax process he had invented himself. Gradually Meccano took over much of the space in the stamp magazine and to his delight he was taken on by Hornby, the manufacturers of Meccano when he left school. In 1930 he set up shop in Fortis Green Road, where he also sold Hornby trains as well. The window display included trains running into tunnels.

The Bulletin may be obtained from the Hornsey Historical Society price £2.50 plus 50p postage from The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL. Also available now is a book of photographs on Hornsey and Crouch End, edited by Ken Gay, and published by Chalford Publishing in their Archive Photographs series. This costs £9.99 plus £1 postage and packing.

Tony Gee of 8 Berkeley Close, Potters Bar EN6 2LG has written to us about his proposed book entitled *Up to Scratch*, which details the history of pugilism in north London, particularly in Barnet, Whetstone and Finchley, but also Clare Market in Holborn, St Giles, Somers Town and Camden Town. Mr Gee is soliciting advance orders so that the book can be published. It will contain approximately 200 pages with 32 illustrations, together with a foreword by Henry Cooper. The price will be £14.99, which will be invoiced only upon publication.

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newsletter

No 168

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jul 1998

Discovering Teulon

*Thurs, 16th July, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square NW3*

S.S. Teulon is best known to us as the architect of the striking, but now derelict, St Stephen's church on Haverstock Hill, consecrated in 1869. He was an architect of considerable merit, especially of churches in that heyday of ecclesiastical aspirations. Locally he built St Paul's in Avenue Road, St Thomas in Wrotham Road, Camden Town (now demolished), and St Silas in Penton Street, Islington. But it is for St Stephen's that he is remembered and we can only sit and wonder in despair just why it is taking so long to find an appropriate new use for the building so as to prevent further deterioration.

Our speaker on the life and times of Teulon is Matthew Saunders, Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society.

The Outing to Wimpole Hall

Saturday, 8th August

Those of you who have already sent a booking should have received your tickets by the time you read this. There are still a few seats available for the outing - details and a form were sent out with the previous *Newsletter*. Enquiries to Ruth Hayes (0171-253 1787 office or 0181-397 6752 home). Cheques, made payable to the Camden History Society should be sent as soon as possible to her at her home address, 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2LB. At the very latest by 31 July, but preferably before that please!

Open House

19th and 20th September

Many members have enjoyed in previous years the chance to enter buildings not normally open to the public on 'Open House' weekend. Last year 400 buildings were open and over 200,000 visits were made. This year about 450 buildings will be available. Notable local buildings participating this year include St Pancras Chambers, Grays Inn, the Diorama, Islington Town Hall and a new house in Fairhazel Gardens. You can also see Lancaster House, the Hoover build-

Please Note:

Due to pressure of work on the part of the Editor, this Newsletter is a week late and, as luck would have it, our July talk is early in the month. Therefore, the notice for our July 16th talk is short. We apologise for that, but hope that everyone will get their Newsletter before the date.

ing, Rudolph Steiner House, the Prudential Building and the Midland Bank headquarters in the City.

Information may be obtained from the Open House hotline on 0891 600 061 (39p per min cheap rate, 49p per minute at other times). Or else you can buy the *Guardian* on Saturday 8th August where the full programme will be printed in The Guide.

CHRISTINA GEE TO LEAVE KEATS HOUSE

An era comes to a close in November when Christina Gee retires as Curator at Keats House. She will remain as a Vice-President of the CHS but will be moving out of London.

Tina has been Curator during many vicissitudes at Keats House. The building was, at various times, badly neglected by Camden who felt unable to cope with the financial support that the structure needed. It has recently been transferred to the City of London, and we must hope for better years. Despite the problems, there is no doubt that under Tina the House has become a mecca for numerous scholars and visitors, especially from abroad. It is a highlight on any intelligent tourist's agenda. We, Keats House and innumerable friends of Keats House will miss her.

'Appy 'Ampstead Day

On Sunday 26 July there will be a day devoted to local history and family history research at Christ Church, Christchurch Hill, Hampstead. Attractions include a help desk manned by leading authorities on London family history and talks on tracing ancestors. There will also be a talk on Kentish Town given by John Richardson. Admission is £5, proceeds towards the church fabric appeal.

The Bleeding Stone of Kilburn

Parry Thornton writes:

'I have a copy in manuscript with the attribution: *William Atkinson, The Bleeding Stone of Kilburn, London: 1817*. I am unsure whether it is a draft for publication or a copy of an already published work. I have enquired of the British Library and of Camden Local Studies, but neither has any reference to it, published or unpublished. However, I was referred by Camden to a 'published manuscript' *The Priory of Kilburn* by Lady Herbert (1882) which I understand (I have yet to see the text) contains the story of the stone, and to Sir Walter Scott's poem *The Muckle Stair, or the Bleeding Stone of Kilburn*.

I wonder if any member of the CHS has an additional information?

The story it tells is of the murder of Sir Gervase de Merton by his brother Stephen at Whitby in the early part of the 13th century and the subsequent building of a shrine at Kilburn Priory which contained the 'bleeding stone' – the latter being reportedly extant at the date of the manuscript (1817). I have not found any other reference locally to this story, which would undoubtedly be of interest if it could be authenticated.

I should indeed be grateful for any light that could be thrown on the matter. In particular any information re William Atkinson (who gives an address at Grove End, St John's Wood. The 'printer' of his manuscript is noted as B. McMillon, Bow Street, Covent Garden. And what of the survival or more recent history of the shrine and stone and its (presumed) disappearance?

(Mr Thornton may be contacted at 3 Church Street, Whitby, Nth Yorks YO22 4AE (01947 601709), though we would also like to hear of any interesting information for the *Newsletter*.)

GAMAGES

Jennifer Worrall of St Catharine's College, Cambridge is researching into the still lamented Gamages Department Store in High Holborn. She is interested in any information about the store, and would welcome photographs, articles etc or even the memories of its customers. Please write to her at 53 Kings Drive, Littleover, Derby DE23 6EX

East of Bloomsbury

The latest CHS publication is out. Written almost entirely by David Hayes, it is the second part of the 'Holborn' trilogy – we had Bloomsbury & Fitzrovia last year. This volume covers the area east of Southampton Row as far as Kings Cross Road (the old St Pancras and now Camden border), and north-south from Euston Road to around High Holborn.

East of Bloomsbury includes that very mixed area between Grays Inn Road and Kings Cross Road, where the evidence of interesting old businesses survive. Such as, on the corner of Leeke Street, a wine bar occupying part of the old stables of the London General Omnibus Company, which later were taken by Thomas Tilling. Also in the street is the printing works of John Vail, founded in 1832, and which specialised for many years in concert programmes and posters. Included also is the history of the London Panarmonion near Kings Cross. It's all fascinating stuff.

The book, designed so well as always by Ivor Kamlish, is packed with new material put together in a scholarly yet entertaining way. Congratulations are in order to all concerned, but more importantly please buy a copy at £5.95 at our meetings bookstall.

The Annual General Meeting

There was a good attendance at the AGM in the attractive building of the Art Workers' Guild. Apart from the usual business, we discussed how best we might make our views known on the matter of Malcolm Holmes. If you have been reading your *Ham & High*, you will know that in the restructuring of the Libraries and Local History Department, he was downgraded albeit retaining his previous salary. The Society holds Malcolm in high regard and feels that he has not been treated well by Camden. The meeting agreed that a letter should be sent to the new Director of Leisure reaffirming our support for him.

The Chairman also reported that the meeting marked the 20th anniversary of Jane Ramsay's election as Secretary of the Society and the meeting endorsed his thanks to her.

The following officers and Council were elected:

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: Vacant

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: *Dr Peter Woodford*

PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: *Sheila Ayres*

MEETINGS SECRETARY: *Michael Ogden*

PUBLICITY OFFICER: *Joan Barraclough*

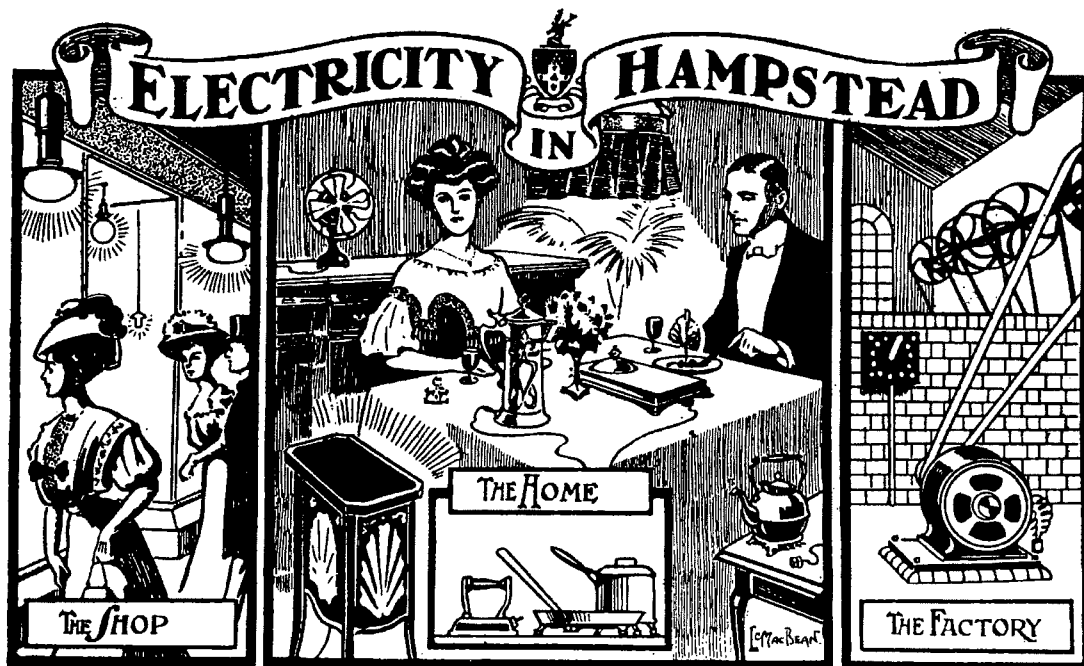
ARCHIVIST: *Malcolm Holmes*

HON. AUDITOR: *Audrey Nottman*

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

As may be seen above, we do not have a Treasurer. Roger Cline has kindly been 'Acting' Treasurer for the past two years, but we hope that his good nature will not be imposed upon for much longer. If any member wishes to volunteer or has a suggestion for a candidate, do let our Secretary know.

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Power Struggle in Hampstead

In 1891 several companies were competing to be allowed to supply electric light to the residents of Hampstead. The Vestry, however, opposed them all for at that time it was politically correct for local authorities to supply their own power to their own residents. The site chosen for a generator was the old stone yard off Finchley Road, called Lithos Road. A chimney 140ft high was built, and the latest generators from Siemens were bought. The power station was opened in 1894. It was, as Professor Thompson points out in his book *Hampstead: Building a Borough 1650-1964* (1974) unusual in London for a vestry to supply electricity – St Pancras also did.

A useful little book entitled *Fifty Years of Progress in Hampstead (1860-1910)* by E.E. Newton, a fastidious Hampstead historian, notes that while the Vestry were waiting for their Board of Trade approval to set up the power station, an enterprising chemist of Heath Street and Mill Lane, 'resolved to light his premises himself, by means of this illuminant', without waiting for the Vestry. 'This action on his part caused much interest to the dwellers in the respective neighbourhoods, the lamps being carbon or arc lights, hung outside his shops.'

It was, however, an expensive undertaking, though demand increased all the time. By 1914 Hampstead had committed over £500,000 towards expenditure on its electricity supply system and in return the consumers had a cheap and efficient supply. But it did not make much of a profit.

On this page is an unusual postcard, issued by the Borough of Hampstead, as an advertising card for its service. The date of posting is 1909. The central

picture is splendid, with an electric fan, kettle, light, hot plate and coffee pot. No doubt a servant hovers offstage to bring in the next course of a meal cooked electrically.

MORE PROGRESS ON TOTTEHALL ROLLS

We have received a further generous donation from the Arthur Andersen Foundation so that we can continue employing a professional to transcribe the very early court rolls of the manor of Tottenham. As in previous years, the Society is making a matching grant. The early rolls are about land transactions, but also relate long-running disputes in the village of Kentish Town. They have also provided information about a previously unknown 'Cross' at Kentish Town by Green Street, no doubt roughly where the Bull and Gate pub is, and also the earliest known reference to the name of Canteloves manor across the other side of the road – Tottenham is to the west of Kentish Town Road. As the rolls go on, hopefully they will become more detailed about the location of fields so that it will be possible to back track to the earlier rolls and make sense of the field names in them.

Kit Ikin

C.W. Ikin, almost invariably known as Kit, local historian, defender of the Heath and Hampstead's many treasures, and member of this Society, recently died. We print below, with kind permission, part of David Sullivan's appreciation of him from the May edition of the *Newsletter* of the Heath & Hampstead Society:

'With the death of Kit Ikin, Hampstead has lost a warrior. The Heath, and Burgh House, have each lost one of their most stalwart defenders. The cause of history has also suffered. More than that, many of us have lost a close and steadfast friend. There were of course other sides and virtues to Kit as well, but I can speak only of those which I came to know.

The loss for his family must be incalculable. But for me, his spare, upright, figure, in a traditional trench coat, will always be present upon the Heath. There, in old memories, he will continue to march, observant and sceptical – around the South Meadow, over Dr Joad's hockey field or across Sandy Heath on his way home, always with his two small black dogs, short of leg and breath, rootling somewhere in the undergrowth or panting along behind him.

He will continue to be known for his two great contributions to the history of both the Heath and the Garden Suburb. His booklet *Hampstead Heath. How the Heath was saved for the public*, quickly became (as long ago as the centenary year, 1971) the pithy source for all discussion about the winning and the subsequent growth of this, one of London's greatest assets. His larger book *Hampstead Garden Suburb* revealed his own characteristic thoughts, in the jolt which its subtitle *Dreams and Realities* seemed designed to give.

When the Burgh House row began in 1977, Kit was of course there again, one of the original group of seven. His skills helped in early days to form the Burgh House Trust, and he became a trustee and remained one for the next twenty years, almost to the day of his death.

But behind his public roles there was the person. An old-style gentleman, inclined to the military in bearing and manner, he was popular with the ladies and had a twinkle in his eye. I have heard him called 'a lovely man'. His style of speech and writing was direct, sometimes staccato, if not elliptical, and often witty or ironic. He thought incessantly about the byways of history, the unasked or unanswered questions, and from time to time he flooded me with documents and researches. On the last occasion when I spoke to him, he was deep into the history of the 'bulwarks' or forts which apparently were built on the hills round the north of London during the Civil War. Clearly, a new explanation for Jack Straw's Castle was already within his sights. In memory, I would like to leave him there, a keen-eyed sharpshooter aiming to hit yet another of his elusive targets.'



A reminder of the days before pre-packaged meat. The shop of P.N. Brazil at 178 Camden High Street in 1906.

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, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH. The Editor of the *Camden History Review* is Peter Woodford, 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS (0171-435 2088).

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

newsletter

No 169

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Sep 1998

'My friend Tremlett'

Thurs. 24 Sept, 7.30

Pax Lodge, Lyndhurst Road NW3

The Rev. Francis Tremlett was vicar of St Peter's, Belsize Square from 1860 to 1913. This longevity in office is not his main claim to fame, for in the 1860s his parsonage was the rendezvous of Confederate spies, envoys, agents and naval personnel involved in the American Civil War. His home was also the base of the Society for Obtaining the Cessation of Hostilities in America, of which he was secretary. He was acknowledged as one of the leading supporters of the Southern cause during the Civil War and afterwards was a personal friend of Jefferson Davis.

This extraordinary episode in the heart of respectable Hampstead in the 1860s is the subject of Michael Hammerson's talk in September and it should prove fascinating.

(Pax Lodge, part of the headquarters of the Girl Guides Association), is just past the old Lyndhurst Road Chapel, on the left. The nearest Underground station is Belsize Park.)

Gresham College

Thurs. 15 October, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Our vice-president, Dr Ann Saunders, has already given a lecture to the Society on the foundation of the Royal Exchange by Sir Thomas Gresham. In October she is to talk on the other famous foundation connected with him, Gresham College, in the City of London. Gresham gave the Exchange to the City and the Mercers' Company on condition that they institute a series of lectures on Divinity, Law, Astronomy, Music, Geometry, Rhetoric and Physics. These began in 1597, after his death, in his house in Bishopsgate Street and it was from these lectures that the Royal Society developed.

Gresham's house was demolished in 1768, but the lectures continued in the Royal Exchange itself. A new College was built in Gresham Street in 1843 and replaced by the present building in 1911-13. The College is still very much part of higher education. Its long history has recently been published in a book by Dr Saunders.

Things to Come

Talks for the remainder of the year are as follows:

Thurs, 19 Nov at Pax Lodge: Dr Elizabeth McKellar will talk about the growth of London in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, concentrating on the old borough of Holborn.

Thurs, 17 Dec at Burgh House: Christopher Wade on 300 years of the Wells and Campden Trust

Publications to Come

Members will have a bumper return for their subscription! With the November issue of the *Newsletter* they will receive their free copy of the *Camden History Review*. Members will also receive, in January, a free copy of Christopher Wade's history of the Wells and Campden Trust which celebrates 300 years since the Wells part of the charity was founded.

THE ROWNEY FAMILY AND HAMPSTEAD

The Rowney family has been associated with the Hampstead area since the late eighteenth century when it set up a business manufacturing inks and quills for the legal profession. George Rowney & Co was formed later for the production of watercolour and oil paints and other artists' materials such as paper and brushes – their large factory in Kentish Town is illustrated in John Richardson's *Kentish Town Past*.

An exhibition at Burgh House will focus on three members of the Rowney family who lived and worked in Hampstead during this century. Walter Rowney ran the business for the first forty years and was himself a fluent watercolourist – he lived in Hampstead. His daughter Margaret, also an artist, studied at the Slade and his youngest son, Tom, was educated at University College School and eventually took over the management of the factory.

On view – apart from Rowney family paintings – will be early Rowney products including a large box of watercolours exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The exhibition runs from 26 September to 20 December.

A Bloomsbury Book

Roger Cline has found an unusual publication among his vast collection of books:

The following is an extract from *The Bloomsbury Book*, published in 1926 by the *Arts & Crafts Quarterly* of 24 Great Russell Street. The extract describes a street which features in the newly published Camden History Society book, *East of Bloomsbury*, but whose shops do not. See if you can identify the street and then turn to the back page of this *Newsletter* where the advertisements reproduced from the book may confirm your guess.

'A slummy-looking place enough at first glance; but the Londoner knows its secrets. It is unlikely that the visitor finding himself or herself in the adjoining streets would turn aside to penetrate it. Children play vociferously on its sidewalks, strange 'types' prop the lintels at its street doors or hang from the windows. The houses, even the most dilapidated of them, show the grace of the Regency architecture in their proportions and in sudden unexpected beauty of door or fanlight. There are some gems of this variety in all the lesser-known streets of Bloomsbury, and the discerning eye will be continually charmed by some obviously Queen Anne or early Georgian touch, some reminder of the days when the Adams [*sic*] brothers dominated architectural taste and built so much of Bloomsbury. The doors of adjacent turnings are a study in themselves, whilst those of us who know the interiors of the house could tell of delightful things in panelling, and ceilings, and of powder-closets and balustrades redolent of an earlier grace.

In this street there are three or four shops which claim our attention as typical Bloomsbury products; and perhaps others, for this note on the joy of Bloomsbury shopping cannot pretend for one moment to be exhaustive, and indeed, aims only at indicating by the mention of a few typical examples the characteristics which have made the local shops so pleasantly individual. I doubt whether there is another street in all London which could boast such pleasant places of call as the Poetry Shop, the Peasant Shop, Muriel Tarrant's Weaving Studio at No. 42, and the Woodwork Shop. Their very names indicate exactly the type of thing one finds, and two of them at least are already institutions to the knowing Londoner.

The Poetry Shop, owned and managed by one of the foremost English Poets, Mr Harold Munro, is a rendezvous for everybody interested in poetry. It has the most complete possible stock of volumes of verse, of books about verse, of plays and critical books on drama; it publishes many of these itself, including the Georgian books, those representative anthologies of contemporary verse; and it publishes, too, a fascinating series of rhyme-sheets. Where else but in Bloomsbury does the Rhyme-sheet – that present day version of the old broadside – flourish? The Poetry Bookshop prints of this kind are notorious; the best

modern poets and the best modern artists come together to produce them. At this old house in the Street are held occasionally readings of poetry often by the authors themselves; but almost any time one can find the lesser or greater lions of modern poetry gathered about the proprietor.

Now the Poetry Shop is moving, but the existence apart from Bloomsbury is inconceivable and it is crossing over to the more stylish Great Russell Street, there to carry on at No. 38 its individual work.

The Peasant Shop is another of Bloomsbury's institutions. It is a clearing house for craftwork of all kinds; pottery, jewellery, needle-craft, leatherwork and all the other forms which demand applied art. Because it has long since achieved a reputation both among craft-workers and among buyers it has almost the pick of handcraft wares and everything in it has real individuality.

The Woodwork Shop is a newer arrival among Bloomsbury houses, but it bids fair to establishing itself among the institutions. There are many fascinating things among there reflecting the modern cult of coloured woodwork.

Miss Tarrant's Weaving Studio at 42 is a typical Bloomsbury establishment. Weaving has always been among the great English crafts and I can think of no more pleasant memento of a visit there than a piece of such work as you will find in this studio.'

MISSION DECOMMISSIONED

My article on the London Cabmen's Mission at King's Cross in *Camden History Review* 21 was necessarily vague about the date of its closure: c.1910 was the best I could offer. A recent chance discovery suggests that the mission had already closed at least a year earlier. Minutes of St Pancras Borough Council, dated 17 March 1909, refer to a letter received from the Charity Commissioners, advising that the mission land and building were to be vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands. The lease was to be sold, and the proceeds 'paid to a Society having as its object the benefit of Cabmen'. While the minutes shed no light on the circumstances of the mission's demise, it is pleasing to note that, despite the earlier (alleged) machinations of the Rev. John Dupee, justice finally prevailed.

David Hayes.

FURTHER RESEARCH. PURR-HAPS

There are plans to form a Feline History Group. It is the idea of Mr H. Bourne, 14 Ruskin House, Erasmus Street SW1P 4HU. Cat lovers who may be interested should contact him there.

Wimpole Hall and Hampstead Links

Wimpole Street – dentists, the Barretts – these come to mind. For Camden History Society members, however, on their annual outing, it was the Hampstead links that were of interest.

The eighteenth-century house had many owners, including Lord Harley, Earl of Oxford. It finally came into the hands of Mrs Elsie Bambridge, née Kipling, once of Burgh House. She and her husband restored it when it was very dilapidated, finally bequeathing it to the National Trust.

CHS members found the lovely interior, complete with bath house and servants' quarters, matched by the gardens, on which Capability Brown of Kenwood fame worked, plus the farm and rare breeds centre. Sheep, goats, poultry and pigs were described by capable guides, though it was probably the lovely Shire horses that were most admired. A ride behind them was not always possible with so much else to see and – Camden liking good food – the best of scones ever to enjoy with the traditional cream tea.

Joan Barraclough

One-off Society Publications Sale!

For Two Months ONLY
(in time for Christmas presents)

Several copies of early publications by the Camden History Society have come to light with the Treasurer's move to new quarters, and partly in order to clear some storage space, partly to give members of the Society the opportunity to look back into our own history, the Publications Manager is offering some of the stock TO MEMBERS ONLY at the following bargain prices:

<i>From Primrose Hill to Euston Road</i>	£2
<i>Hampstead Weather</i>	20p
<i>Hampstead Town Trail</i>	20p
<i>Kentish Town (1979)</i>	20p
<i>Hampstead & Highgate Directory 1885</i>	£1
<i>Pubs of Kentish Town</i>	10p
<i>Map of Highgate 1800 (A2 size)</i>	£1
<i>Somers Town (Malcolm Holmes)</i>	50p
<i>Memories of Holborn</i>	50p
<i>Wartime Camden</i>	50p
<i>Camden Town Walk</i>	5p

<i>Camden History Reviews</i>	
Set (vols 1-20)	£18
Any one of volumes 1 to 20	£1
Index, vols 1-20 (David Hayes)	£1

From now until the time of the 19 November talk, these publications may be ordered at the above prices and either collected in person (strong preference!) at one of the talks (24 September or 19 November at Pax

Lodge, 15 October at Burgh House) or sent to you by mail (in the latter case please add £1 for postage and packing, whatever the size of your order).

Place your order with Sheila Ayres, Flat 1, 22 Daleham Gardens NW3 5DA (Tel: 0171-794 1735), and your packet will await you at the meeting.

THE BLEEDING STONE OF KILBURN

Malcolm Tucker writes re the item in the last *Newsletter*:

'The note in the *Newsletter* set me wondering why there should have been a 'Bleeding Stone' erected in the middle of clay-bound Middlesex. My road atlas shows a Kilburn in Yorkshire, between Byland Abbey and Thirsk (and there's another just north of Derby). The Walter Scott title, and the celtic character of the name itself, suggest a Scottish derivation. So what is the origin of the name 'Kilburn' in London?

The Kenwood Ladies' Pond

The Kenwood Ladies' Pond is both a source of pleasure and prurient curiosity. How did this arcadian facility come into being? This is explained, and its subsequent history told, in a new book by Ann Griswold.

This part of the Kenwood estate came into public ownership in 1925 and in 1926 a ladies' pond was promised. In the early years there was a Kenwood Regulars' Swimming Club in which the women members wore brightly coloured wool costumes they had knitted themselves. The secretary of the club was the presciently-named Laura Toplis.

Certainly, many of the members swam all through the winter rather like the hardy men today in the men's pool further south.

The book contains many anecdotes and revelations on the customs of the times, all entertaining. There is no price on the book nor address of the publishers. But enclosed is a compliment slip from Margaret Hepburn on 0171-435 4382, who I imagine would be able to help if you want to buy a copy.

John Richardson

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WHY COITY ROAD?

Tucked away in the depths of West Kentish Town is the strangely-named Coity Road. Peter Woodford has received a letter from Dorothea Alcock, who now lives in France, regarding its origin. She says that there is a mountain called Coity outside Blaenavon near the Brecon Beacons.

As the name is so unusual, this seems likely, especially as another Welsh name, Rhyl Street, is just around the corner. And indeed, but this is stretching a point, Raglan Street (Monmouthshire) is nearby. However, that was named along with the other 'Crimea' streets and therefore only had a tenuous connection with Wales.

This street name derivation ought to be solvable, since it was renamed as Coity Road in 1967. Suggestions please.

ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST

An exhibition called *Enlightened Self-Interest: The Foundling Hospital and William Hogarth*, previously on view at the Coram Foundation, is to be shown at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library in Theobalds Road. The exhibition explores Hogarth's association with London's first home for

abandoned children. His involvement was not sparked just by charitable interest, for through the Foundling Hospital he was able to promote both himself and British art.

Hogarth is most frequently associated with incisive social satire and his devotion to the Foundling may seem surprising. This exhibition examines the little known charitable aspect of Hogarth's character. He was involved as a Governor from the beginning, he designed the children's uniforms and the Hospital's seal, and he and his wife Jane, who were childless, fostered foundling children.

The exhibition runs from 28 September to 15 December. The library is not open on Wednesdays and on Friday afternoons.

A VISIT TO THE NEWBURY CIVIL WAR SITE


The St Pancras Antiquarian Society is visiting the site of the Newbury Civil War battle on 26 September, with tea at the Carpenters Arms at Burghclere. They will be guided by Civil War expert, Dave Stubbs. Anyone who would like to go should telephone the Society's secretary, Robert Hatch on 0171-435 5490. The visit and tea will cost £15.50.

Advertisements for the Peasant Shop and for Muriel Tarrant's Weaving Shop, as featured in the article on p2. They were in Devonshire Street, which nowadays is called Boswell Street.

THE

Peasant Shop

41 & 42, DEVONSHIRE STREET,
THEOBALD'S ROAD, W.C.1.
(Close to Southampton Row)



Pottery
Hand-thrown peasant pottery—plain - coloured or decorated—beautiful old shapes

Garments
Old English shepherd smocks, children's smocks, and frocks, embroidered jerkins, and dresses.

Rugs and Slippers
The slippers are very comfortable and the rugs charming—all brightly coloured plaited felt.

Also Toys, Brooches, Neck-chains, Raffia and Leatherwork, Painted Wooden Articles, Jewellery, Decorated Bowls, and Boxes.

A CAFE IS NOW ATTACHED
Catalogue Free Museum 7902



Muriel I. Tarrant

HAND WEAVING AND SPINNING
The Weaving Studios, 42, Devonshire Street, Theobald's Road, W.C.1.

QHand-woven Tweeds in suit and dress lengths.
Fadeless cottons for curtains, upholstery & cushions.
Silk dresses, shawls & scarves, fast & original colourings.
Linen, dresses, towels, & runners.
Botany wool, coats, dresses & scarves.
Children's frocks & coats, smocks, etc.

ALL MATERIALS BY THE YARD AND WOVEN TO CUSTOMER'S DESIGN
LOOMS, ETC. SUPPLIED. WEAVING & SPINNING LESSONS. SILK POCHETTES

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 170

Nov 1998

The Birth of Modern London, 1660-1720

Thurs, 19 Nov, 7.30pm
Pax Lodge, Lyndhurst Road, NW3

Our November lecture is by Dr Elizabeth McKellar, Lecturer in the History of Art at Birkbeck College. With the aid of comprehensive visual examples her subject is the growth of London after the Great Fire made rebuilding necessary. The City was not only reconstructed but expansion took place to the west and to the north. She will pay particular attention to Holborn, that part of Camden most affected by the surge of developers and speculators.

300 years of the Wells

Thurs, 17 Dec, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Christopher Wade has written a book to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the foundation of the Wells part of the Wells and Campden Charity – a body that still does many good works in the Hampstead area. His book, officially published by the Charity, but in fact brought to print by the Camden History Society team of Peter Woodford and Ivor Kamlish, together with Christopher, will be distributed free to members with the January *Newsletter*. Christopher's talk will give members a foretaste, so to speak, of the history of this charity, formed in the days when Hampstead was a village and when its income was obtained from the exploitation of the chalybeate well in what became Well Road.

The present Charity has earlier beginnings, since Lady Campden in her will of 1642 directed that trustees buy land to the value of £10 per annum. This bequest was topped up by others and land in Childs Hill was bought. Its income helped the poor of Hampstead and the apprenticing of poor boys. The work was continued, with some modifications, until 1874 when the charity was amalgamated with the Wells Charity, which had been formed in 1698. This latter body was established by the Earl of Gainsborough (hence Gainsborough Gardens) using the proceeds of 'six acres of waste' lying on Hampstead Heath. It is the story of this piece of land and the Charity which it supported, that is the subject of Christopher's talk.

The new Review

Camden History Review 22 appears with this *Newsletter*, once again edited by Peter Woodford and designed by Ivor Kamlish. Contributors include another member of the Kamlish family – Marian – who has investigated the not-so-well documented west side of Camden High Street before the area across the road was developed by the Marquess of Camden. Ghosts of long gone retail outlets are explored in an interesting article by A.D. Harvey, who has been 'collecting' those trade announcements painted on the walls of buildings. Old pictures confirm that the Victorians used the upper levels of premises for advertisements much more frequently than we do today – perhaps to catch the eye of those riding on the top deck of open top omnibuses. Many of these, by now quaint, commercial messages are today protected by law. There are still quite a few which are not but survive simply because it would be too expensive to be rid of them. It is to be hoped that the remaining advertisements could be saved even if they pose some problems in relation to the present business use. Old shop fascias are a more difficult problem. A very nice undertaker's sign in Kentish Town Road disappeared when Leverton's bought up the business, but it is difficult to think what else the new owners could have done if they wanted to advertise to the world that they now ran the business. In Islington Upper Street an attractive fascia for Schram and Scheddle (business unknown) still exists simply because its present owners sell kitsch items and this ornate reminder of former years is an asset.

Peter Woodford himself contributes an article in this edition on the unusual subject of the coats-of-arms and regalia of the three former parts of the London Borough of Camden. The editor of this *Newsletter* has a particular interest in this, in that he was chairman of the committee which commissioned and approved the present Camden logo of hands intertwined. Unfortunately, the Council of the time decided it was too expensive to allow the consultants to do their job properly and so after the logo and a few things like stationery were designed, council staff adapted the logo for most other things. Often it has appeared badly related to the location, and is often at odds with the type around it. In particular the street name plates were completely wrong in this respect, and the Camden orange colour was certainly not intended to go on everything – however, that is another story!

Marianne Colloms tells us about a family of sculptors in the Finchley Road in an account that contains much new information. And also on the Finchley Road, Simon Morris has encapsulated his interesting talk on the formation of that road into an article. The southern part of the borough is highlighted in a detailed article by Keith Scholey on the bombing of Holborn in the last war, and for those who missed his talk (and book!) Gerry Black tells us something of the history of the Jews' Free School in Camden Town.

Altogether, a fascinating and well presented *Review*.

The Bleeding Stone of Kilburn – The Mystery solved?

Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms of the CHS, and Parry Thornton of Whitby have attempted to resolve the mystery of the 'Bleeding Stone of Kilburn' which has appeared in recent editions of the Newsletter.

This started when Parry Thornton found a document in Whitby entitled *The Bleeding Stone of Kilburn*, written in 1817 by William Atkinson of Grove End, St John's Wood. This said that a stone was still to be seen at a place called 'Red Barn' near St John's Wood, which is 'connected with the records of Kilburn Priory by a wild and singular legend of superstition'. 'This stone is reported to have been brought, with others, at a remote period to this place, from the shores of Whitby in Yorkshire, by order of Stephen de Merton, for the purpose of erecting a shrine'. Atkinson then describes the large stone which has a dark reddish stain on one side and recounts a medieval story which tells of the murder of Sir Gervase de Merton by his brother Stephen for the love of Gervase's wife. The bloody deed takes place on the shores of Whitby and stains the stone. Stephen returned to Kilburn and unable to subdue the Lady, has her thrown into a dungeon where she dies. Later, racked with guilt, he has the remains of his brother exhumed from Whitby and buried with his wife in Kilburn, where he erects a costly shrine from stones brought from Whitby, including (apparently by chance!) the Bleeding Stone on which his brother died. When he 'saw the bloody mark flow afresh and heard a groan' he fled and confessed to Gilbert, Bishop of London. He then left all his lands and wealth to Kilburn Priory and assumed the Palmer's habit. Atkinson attaches what he calls 'an old Ballad upon the subject, but evidently of a much later date, [which] testifies the existence of the legend'. This is a 29-verse poem about the story.

William Atkinson was an architect who built a number of country houses, including Sir Walter Scott's 'Abbotsford'. Through the favour of Lord Mulgrave he was appointed to the Board of Ordnance from 1813 to 1828 and worked on the Tower of London and Woolwich Arsenal. He invented Atkinson's Cement, the raw materials of which were shipped to his wharf in Westminster from Lord Mulgrave's estates near Whitby. About 1817 Atkinson moved to a house in

Grove End, St John's Wood near Lord's Cricket Ground. He lived there until about 1830, when he moved to a large estate at Silvermere near Cobham in Surrey, where he died in 1839. The house in Grove End was close to Sir Edwin Landseer's house, which had been built in 1824 on the site of a property previously called Punkers Barn, or Red Barn, at the crossroads of what is now St John's Wood Road and Grove End Road.

The *Athenaeum* journal (date unknown, but between 1839 and 1882) published a poem by Sir Walter Scott entitled, 'The Muckle Stain or the Bleeding Stone of Kilburn Priory' which is reproduced in *The Priory of Kilburn* by Lady Herbert (1882). This is a slightly shorter version of the poem quoted by Atkinson in 1817, with some minor differences. What is extremely revealing is the introductory note from the unnamed correspondent attached to the poem:

'My late father was a friend of Scott, and helped him in the decoration and finishings of Abbotsford. Scott would often dine with my father when in London, and was greatly interested in the garden. In one corner there was some rockwork, in which were inserted some fragments of stone ornaments from the ruins of Kilburn Priory: and crowning all, was a large irregularly shaped stone, having a deep red stain, no doubt of ferruginous origin. This stone was sent to my father by Lord Mulgrave in one of his cement vessels, my father having been struck with its appearance on the shore at Whitby: and from these simple really unconnected facts, Scott made out the following story, in verses, which might be regarded as a kind of friendly offering in return for the services rendered.'

A later version of the murder story, where the reference to Whitby is dropped, appears in Timbs *Romance of London* (1865?) and is repeated in Walford's *Old and New London* (1872-8).

What can we conclude from all this? We have established that there is a link between William Atkinson, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Mulgrave at Whitby, and Kilburn Priory. After its establishment about 1130 and the dissolution of the minor monasteries in 1536, the Priory eventually became part of Abbey Farm. The buildings fell into disuse and only one remained standing in 1790 which is shown on a sketch map in the British Library. This is the building which was drawn in 1722 and appears as an illustration in various books (e.g. Park's *History...*, 1814, and Jenkins and Ditchburn's *Images of Hampstead*, 1982). Daniel Lysons, writing in 1811, says that there are now no remains, but the site is very plainly seen in Abbey field, near the tea-drinking house called 'Kilbourn Wells'.

It seems that Atkinson, a keen geologist, took parts of the ruins for the garden of his new house in Grove End about 1817. He also installed a large stone with a red stain which he had shipped from Whitby by Lord Mulgrave. Atkinson showed these stones to Scott who wrote the poem about Stephen and Gervase de

Merton. After the deaths of Scott in 1832 and Atkinson in 1839, the poem was sent for publication in the *Athenaeum* by one of Atkinson's sons. The story was later repeated by various authors.

I can find no trace of Stephen and Gervase de Merton in any medieval references. From what we have discovered, I can only conclude that Scott and Atkinson created the story and that it has no historical foundation at all. It would, however, be fascinating if the stone has survived in the gardens of one of the houses near Grove End Road, and I would like to hear from anyone who knows of its whereabouts.

Dick Weindling

(David Thomas writes to say that there is a village by the name of Kilburn, along with nearby High Kilburn, Kilburn Grange, Kilburn Park, Kilburn Thicket and the 1857-carved White Horse of Kilburn, all only some 35 miles south-south-east inland from Whitby, and in an area which was well known to Sir Walter Scott and in which there are ruins of several great abbeys. It may be that, after all, Mr Thornton, who comes from Whitby, should try sources closer to home to find the 'bleeding stone'.)

Rave Review

There is a particularly enthusiastic review of the Society's publication *Continental Taste*, by Peter Barber and Peter Jacomelli, in the recently published edition of the *London Journal*. Written by Lucio Sponza, it remarks that 'This study offers many stimulating insights. Not only does it provide an excellent example of micro-history, it does so with scholarly rigour (one-third of the overall text consists of informative notes based on the fullest range of sources) and elegance (through fine illustrations). It is a remarkable, enchanting celebration of the Ticinese immigrants and their labour of love and profit.'

The publication, which deals with the history of the Ticinese immigrants and restaurants in this country (made famous by Carlo Gatti) is obtainable from the bookstall at CHS meetings for £5.95 or, plus 70p postage, from our Publications Secretary, Sheila Ayres, Flat 1, 22 Daleham Gardens NW3 5DA.

THE ONE-OFF SALE

Sheila Ayres reports that the offer made in the last *Newletter* of very cheap prices for some older CHS publications was very successful. In fact, she has sold out of all the titles other than the *Camden History Reviews*.

WHY COITY ROAD?

The reason why Camden, in 1967, named a street in West Kentish Town, Coity Road is still not known, but David Thomas writes to say that as well as the mountain between Blaenavon and Abertillery, there is a well-known village of the same name near Bridgend

which has castle ruins. There is also a Raglan Castle, but the 'castle' link is not sustained in Kentish Town because Rhyll Street is named from a town without one. However, all three 'Welsh' streets are within spitting distance of Prince of Wales Road.

A SCHOOL IN CAMDEN TOWN

In researching for her article on Camden Town in the new *Review*, Marian Kamlish came across the following (undated) advertisement in the Heal Collection in the Local Studies Centre at Holborn Library:

'Miss Morgan's Boarding School, No. 4 Delancey Place, Camden Town, Hampstead Road, recommences on the 23rd instant. Young ladies are Boarded and Educated on a liberal plan, carefully instructed in all the elegant, as well as useful parts of Education and the strictest attention is paid to the health manners and morals of the pupils. The situation is extremely healthy, and very pleasant. Stages to and from various parts of Town are continually passing and repassing; the terms are reasonable and respectable references will (if required) be given...

Wanted to exchange with the Master of an Academy not far from London, two Young Gentlemen for two Young Ladies.'

ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST: THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL AND WILLIAM HOGARTH

An exhibition on the relationship between Hogarth and the Foundling Hospital is now at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road. Members are invited to a talk there on the subject at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 1 December (admission free). It will be given by Jane King of the Foundling Museum. The exhibition runs until 15th December.

POLITICS IN HAMPSTEAD

Wendy Trewin has sent us an item about the novelist, Winifred Holtby, who was born a 100 years ago this year. Holtby worked indefatigably on behalf of the League of Nations Union. She gave lectures and spread the word as far afield as South Africa. One day, in June 1922, she wrote to Jean McWilliam with whom she had served in the WAACs in Normandy:

'On Friday I held an open-air meeting outside Hampstead Tube Station for the League of Nations. That was killing, because I had to collect my own crowd. I stood on the pavement at the street corner and shouted to the empty air, two workmen, a motor-van, the policeman at the cross-roads, and a dog catching fleas on the curb. The policeman wanted me to move on, but after the two ladies supporting me declared the nobility of our intentions, he let us stay! He said the League of Nations was 'interesting'.

'I got a nice crowd in the end, and we had 10-minute lectures - from me, and a W.E.H. Woking, Oxford-voiced, ex-officer-suited young man with two volumes of Yeats under his arm, and a girl just back from nursing typhus in Russia. The two last just came out

of the audience, and we asked them to address the meeting. We had a debate, too, on Communist Internationalism *v.* the League of Nations. Altogether very interesting. Hampstead crowds are full of unexpected elements. Bohemians in sandals, Church-and-State, gentlemen in frock coats, who declare that one is 'undermining the prestige of the British Empire', workmen in overalls, small children in ditto, fierce Socialists in red ties, and fiercer journalists in no ties at all. The policemen is conscientious but polite. It is all very funny. Incidentally highly instructive - to the lecturers, if not to the lectured'

Winifred Holtby was at the time sharing a studio flat in Doughty Street with Vera Brittain, who later wrote a biography of her, *Testament of Friendship*. Holtby's best-selling novel, *South Riding*, was published after her death in 1935. Alexander Korda made a film version which was released in 1938.

A Palace for the People

There can be few buildings in London with such a bizarre past as Alexandra Palace. Bankruptcies and two major fires feature prominently after the project was conceived following the success of the Crystal Palace in 1851 and its removal to Sydenham. Why not build a similar building for north London and where better than on a height in Muswell Hill? To this end a large slice of Tottenham Wood was bought to serve as parkland and a site for the Palace.

The story of the Palace's heydays and troughs of disaster is attractively told in a video (details below) which includes a good number of photographs, prints, footage of film, all concisely put together. The first building was opened in May 1873 and burnt down in less than three weeks. Such was the building speed of the Victorians that a new colossus was opened in 1875. It contained, amongst many other attractions, the famous Willis organ. The interior was of an elegance that modern architects can scarcely match and outside there were several ornamental lakes as well as a village on stilts in the middle of a lake.

It was immensely popular but the owning company still went bankrupt. They were by no means the last, for a succession of hopefuls burnt their fingers until at the instigation of Hornsey Council the Palace and park were bought for the public in 1900. Though the outdoor events such as fireworks and ballooning were spectacular there was little money available for maintenance. The Palace's fortunes were severely damaged by both wars. In particular the plan to extend the Underground railway there was abandoned in 1939 and was not revived. This was probably the last chance to save the Palace's fortunes. It soldiered on aided by the BBC's use of one wing for TV transmission, but once that ended the writing was very much on the wall. But such was the attachment to this unprofitable building that even after the disastrous fire of 1980, it was largely rebuilt. Its future is still uncertain.

All this and much more about railways, tramways, horse-racing, the organ and spectacular events are in this entertaining video. *A Palace for the People* may be obtained from Waterstones in Hampstead, Prospero Books in Crouch End, the Hornsey Historical Society and direct from the makers, KLA, 4 Alexandra Avenue, N22 7XE. The video costs £14.99 and postage and packing are £1.49.

THE GHOST OF HARMOOD STREET

John Hillman writes regarding the article on Harmoood Street in *Newsletter* 166. He encloses an advertisement (date unknown) for the Railway Tavern in Chalk Farm Road at the junction with Harmoood Street. It was a Charrington pub and the landlords between August 1939 until the late 1960s were Arthur and Albert Bevis who were cousins of Mr Hillman's mother. The pub, during that time, still had some of the original mirrors, glass and bar fittings and also decorative ceilings. He believes that some of these fittings were damaged by a bomb which hit the first building in Harmoood Street. Mr Bevis once told Mr Hillman that it was traditional to wash the marble fronts of pubs in Chalk Farm every Good Friday morning.

THE ODD SPOT

Startling Announcement.

New Catering Prices!

Everything ½d.

FOOD & DRINK.

Nothing to do with the Fiscal Policy.

Beef Sandwiches	-	-	½d.
Mutton "	-	-	½d.
Pork Sausage Sandwiches	-	-	½d.
Beer	-	-	½d.
Small Glass Gieger Beer	-	-	½d.
" " Shandy	-	-	½d.
" " Porter	-	-	½d.
" " Ale	-	-	½d.
Cup of Tea	-	-	½d.
Small Glass Milk	-	-	½d.
Tobacco	-	-	½d.
Cigars	-	-	½d.

No ½d. drink sold without food.

The Popular Caterer

Railway Tavern,
CHALK FARM RD., N.W.

Printed by Houschals & Co., 250, 1 High Street, Camden Town, N.W.

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