

# newsletter

No 171

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jan 1999

## A History of Kilburn

*Thurs 21 January, 7.30pm*

*Burgh House, New End Square NW3*

In January we are to hear, for the first time in the life of the Society, a history of Kilburn – our speaker is Jean Smith. Kilburn, of course, is not exclusively Camden, for it bestrides the old Roman road, now the Edgware/Kilburn High Road into Brent. Those who have read *Diary of a London Schoolboy* (originally published by the Society and recently re-issued in larger format by Historical Publications), will remember that the young John Pocock, in the 1820s, lived in what was regarded as Kilburn – a pleasant village not far from London's west end, with distant memories of Kilburn Priory and the spa at the Bell Inn.

## Housing is not Enough

*Thurs, 25 Feb, 7.30pm*

*Basil Jellicoe Hall, Drummond Crescent NW1*

This year the St Pancras Housing Association celebrates its 75th anniversary – it will be marked by a new history, written by Malcolm Holmes, to be published in March. Founded principally by Edith Neville and Basil Jellicoe, the Association has more than housing as its aim. It began at a time when slums were slums in St Pancras, and with some foresight the Association was convinced that rehousing was only part of the solution – the care and interest of the community was equally important. Thus, the Society has sponsored day nurseries, a farm and owns some pubs as part of its other activities.

The Association's leading light in its early days was Basil Jellicoe, a cousin of the famous admiral, who had been ordained and appointed head of a mission in Somers Town, with an assistant, Percy Maryon-Wilson, presumably of the family of the manorial lord of Hampstead. In the face of apathy by St Pancras Council the Association was the first organisation to do something about living conditions in Somers Town. But it was probably in Kentish Town, with the building of the Athlone Estate north of Prince of Wales Road, that the Association really made its mark and reputation, so much so that it was invited by the LMS railway to develop vacant land it owned by York Rise – that estate still exists today, and, for the time, its imaginative layout may be contrasted with the nearby block – Denyer House – put up by the Council, also on LMS land.

The history of this pioneering housing association is the subject of our February talk given, of course, by Malcolm Holmes himself. It will be held, appropriately, in Basil Jellicoe Hall in Drummond Crescent. This road is off Eversholt Street, two roads north of our earlier frequent venue at St Pancras Church House.

## Advance Notice

Please put the following dates in your diary:

*25th March:* Catherine Fuller on Jeremy Bentham. At Burgh House

*April:* still to be resolved

*20 May:* Dick Weindling on Hampstead Cemetery

*17 June:* AGM and talk on St Pancras New Church; at the church

## A WALL REAPPEARS

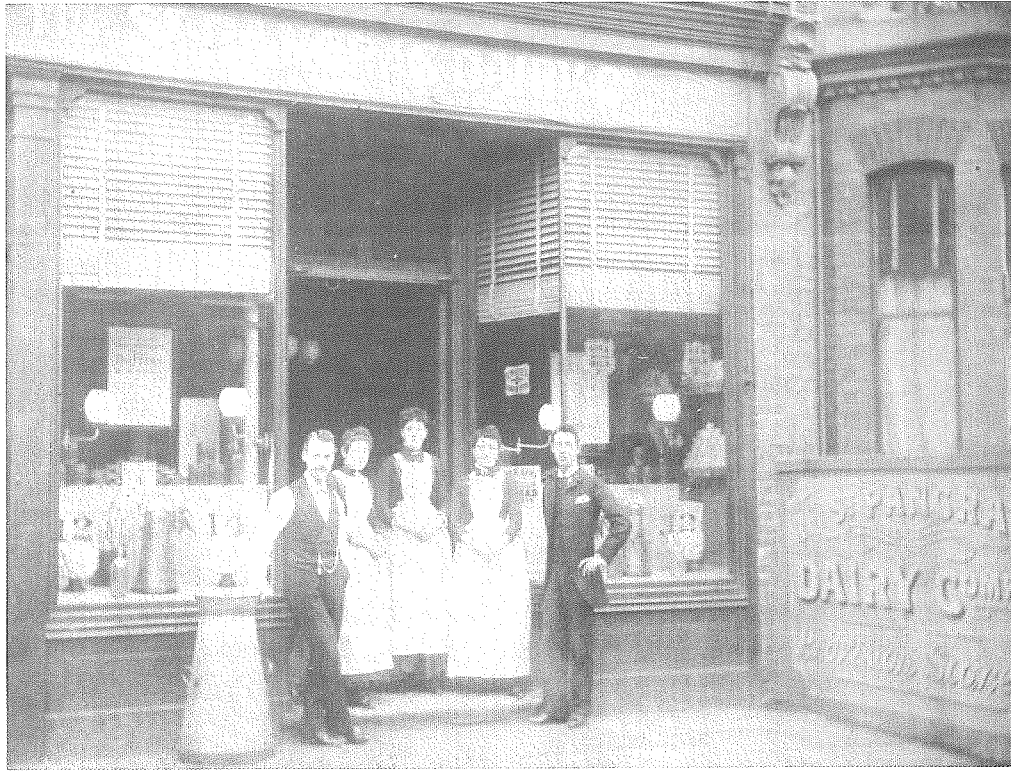
Ivy having been cut back between 14 and 16 Belsize Avenue, there is a partial end-on view of the wall that until 1853 surrounded Belsize House and its gardens and park. After a short curve the wall runs straight for about six yards to a large pillar (see *Newsletter* 59). Creeper still covers most of this relic but there is a distant view of the whole length (with the pillar on the right) from between 9 and 11 Belsize Park Gardens looking to the right of Avenue House.

**Roy Allen**

## WALKING ON THE HEATH

For those who enjoy Heath walking, or perhaps might be tempted as part of their new year resolutions, an excellent book of walks has recently been published. In the ten walks, the authors range over geology and ecology and cover a wide variety of subjects, such as where to find wild service trees, and what they signify; where to find 1,000 year-old boundary ditches; why Hampstead's washerwomen loved the gorse; what and where the 'iron pan' ponds are; why the Extension was added to the Heath and what it had been like in the previous 400 years.

This paperback of 176 pages is well produced on exceptionally glossy paper and is well worth the £6.99 retail price. It may be obtained from local bookshops or else post free direct from one of the book's co-authors, David McDowall, 31 Cambrian Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6JQ. Please make cheques payable to David McDowall.



## St Pancras Dairy

Miss S.M. Packham, who lives in Wombourne in Staffordshire, is trying to trace the location of the St Pancras Dairy Co. illustrated above. Members of her family are standing outside the shop and she guesses that the date of the picture is about 1880 onwards.

*Editor's Note.* The St Pancras Dairy Co. is listed at 58 Camden High Street in the 1892 street directory and then at 72 in the same street by 1895. No 58 is on the east side, just north of Plender Street, a site occupied today by Romany's. The numbering of the street began at the northern end and thus, if the picture is of

no 58, the building to the right (which still appears to be a house), was occupied by the Co-operative Boot Repairing Company. Alternatively, if the Dairy is at 72, which it was in 1895, then the building to the right was occupied by a tobacconist, the headquarters of the 17th North Middlesex Rifle Volunteers and a registry office for domestic servants. Then again, the Dairy which appears at these two addresses in Camden Town may be merely a branch of a St Pancras Dairy elsewhere – perhaps in St Pancras itself, but I do not have street directories to aid me in this. Can any member with a bit of research time help?

## TALES OF LA SAINTE UNION

La Sainte Union Convent School in Highgate Road is conducting research into the history of the school since its foundation in 1861. Sister Teresa Finn would be grateful if any members had information or materials, such as school magazines, photographs etc. She may be contacted at the school on 0171-428 4600 or, by post, at the school in NW5 1RP.

There are also bomb stories (eg on Gospel Oak School) and queues stories – long queues for unrationed food, such as rabbit, sausages and offal.

The pamphlet costs £2, including postage, and is available from Ms F. Hetherington, 22 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, NW3 2RL.

**Christopher Wade**

## 'WAR COMES TO SOUTH END GREEN'

In her latest pamphlet, entitled as above, Joyce Maxwell, already the author of two South End Green memoirs, concentrates on local life in World War Two.

She recalls Parliament Hill being closed to civilians because of its radio station – but reopened for a victory beacon on VE Day. Elsewhere on the Heath were AA guns, barrage balloons and diggers filling sandbags.

## MENTIONED IN PEVSNER

Christopher Wade notes that the Society and a number of its members are acknowledged for their research work in the new edition of Pevsner's architectural guide to north London in the Penguin *Buildings of England* series (ed. Bridget Cherry).

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## Silver Screen Camden

Danny Nissim writes:

A sequence in Alfred Hitchcock's 1956 film, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, was filmed in Camden. James Stewart is seen getting out of a taxi in Royal College Street, on the corner of Plender Street (easily identifiable by the distinctive gabled building in the background). He walks along the south side of Plender Street, and we have a good view of the terrace of houses which has since sadly been demolished. He then crosses a road, and goes into a taxidermist, where there is a wonderfully bizarre scene which ends with him being harried by a man wielding a swordfish. It was while looking through John Richardson's book, *Camden Town Past*, that I spotted the photograph of a taxidermist at work on an alligator in Edward Gerrard & Sons, at 61 College Place, in the mid 1950s. This must be where Hitchcock shot the sequence. The sequence is exactly right. Of course, that side of College Place has all been rebuilt, but the numbers on the north part of the road, which survives, pick up at 65, so 61 was just the other side of Plender Street, as it appears in the film. In the film the taxidermist is given the name 'Ambrose Chappell' for important plot reasons, and when Stewart looks him up in the phone book, it is listed as 61 Burdett Street, Camden Town. It was common to invent street names in movies, but interesting here that they kept the number.

I am not sure whether the interior was shot on location, or recreated in the studio. I believe the former, because the taxidermist's looks so authentic. In any event, it is a fascinating glimpse of Camden Town in the mid 1950s, and the wonderfully diverse kind of workshops it must have contained.

I wonder if any of your older members remember Hitchcock coming to Camden Town and filming the sequence? Is anyone from Edward Gerrard still around?

## Bombs on Holborn

John Winter-Lotimer writes:

I am writing re the article in the *Camden History Review* No 22, entitled 'Bombs on Holborn in the Second World War' by Keith Scholey. There are three matters on which I raise questions.

1. Page 12, col 4, line 15 "... the Blitz ... was a less intense experience than is often portrayed."
- Page 12, col 4, line 32 "... the vast bulk of the capital remained intact. ... This is at odds with the image we of the post-war generation were given of the Blitz ..."
- Page 13, col 1, line 14 "...the traditional image of the Blitz ... lies in post-war myth-making ..."
2. Page 13, col 1, line 3 "...during most raids it was possible (to go out sight-seeing in the bombing) with relative impunity."
3. Page 15, col 3, line 4 "Many people took unexploded incendiaries home as souvenirs."

Total bomb damage throughout the war may have been greater in Germany than in this country, but this does not mean that the loss of property and human casualties in London were of little account. The above quotations are to some extent contradicted by the author's own details of the bombing of Holborn, which was perhaps the smallest of the old Metropolitan boroughs. There was devastation in the docklands north and south of the Thames, in the Barbican area of the City, and in provincial cities including Liverpool, Coventry and Plymouth. There was indiscriminate bombing of residential districts; for instance, parachute bombs could not be aimed at precise targets.

It would be foolish to claim that members of the public never went out to watch searchlights at work, or dogfights between planes in daylight. Indeed, it is recorded that Churchill took some American visitors on to the Air Ministry roof to see what was going on. However, the author's suggestion that it was commonplace to walk amongst falling high explosive bombs and shrapnel is absurd.

I feel that Mr Scholey should be asked to quote the source of his information on this, also of his reference to people taking home unexploded incendiary bombs. The combustible magnesium in these burned at 1500° C, and his comparison with fireworks is scarcely appropriate. One account states that 150,000 incendiary and 890 tons of high explosive bombs fell on London during the greatest raid of all on 16 April 1941.

During the war everyone had his own bomb stories to tell, which could be very boring to others; I am sorry if those of the post-war generation were bored afterwards by the tales of those who suffered during the Blitz. However, I hope that revisionist material of this sort can be avoided in future publications of the Society.

A recent account of the air-raids that can be recommended is *The Night Blitz 1940-1941* by John Ray (Arms and Armour Press 1996).

## Camden anniversaries for 1999

*50 years ago:* St Paul's church, Camden Square, was mostly demolished after bomb damage.

*100 years ago:*

St Luke's, Kidderpore Avenue, consecrated.

The Hospital for Tropical Diseases was founded at the Albert Dock Hospital. It moved to Endsleigh Gardens in 1920 and became part of UCH in 1951, when it moved to St Pancras Way.

The Italian Hospital, Queen Square, rebuilt

Whitefield's Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road, rebuilt.

*150 years ago:*

St Paul's, Camden Square, consecrated

Bedford College for Women inaugurated

The Great Hall of Euston Station was opened.

The Governesses Asylum, Prince of Wales Road, opened.

## Southwards from Swiss Cottage

An evocative book entitled as above, by Beatrice Curtis Brown (presumably of the literary agent's family) and published in 1947, gives many impressions of the Swiss Cottage area after the First World War when she grew up. Her family's house was in St John's Wood Park just south of Swiss Cottage.

'Our centre was Swiss Cottage itself, bustling and metropolitan, except that it had a Swiss chalet on one corner and a brown, impressively towered School for the Blind on the other. Many streets met together there, running from the quiet rural areas of the 'Belsize' quarter and St John's Wood quarter, and joined to make a great to-do with buses and hansom cabs and the new motor taxi cabs. There was a very particular smell at Swiss Cottage, where our road joined the throng, for a cab rank stood there with a green cabbies' shelter – a sort of large stationary caravan into which the drivers disappeared to eat their dinners between fares. The smell along this stretch was of boiling potato water and strong tea, with a suggestion of onions and also of sweat, and, of course, the smell of straw and horse. They stood outside the shelter on warmer days, and munched thick ham sandwiches, with a vigorous chomping sound that I used to try and imitate with my own bread and butter.

'Fitzjohn's Avenue played a considerable part in our lives, simply because we had to use it twice a day [to go to and from school]. Its crossroads marked stages on our journey: Maresfield Gardens, marked the first stage. Akenside Road was exciting because my schoolfellow Mabel came along from her house in the Belsizes to join us there; Prince Arthur Road was attractive because of its name, and because the Red and Green girls (their school colours were those) went to school in it. On the corner of Akenside Road, we used to linger for half an hour and gossip and gossip, still swinging our bags.

'...Our shops in Swiss Cottage were like village shops. There was a little sweet shop called The Nook, about large enough to swing a kitten in, where we went when we had a penny to spend – you could buy as little as a farthing's worth of chocolate drops there, but mostly we bought barley sugar in long spiral sticks. Then there was a draper's and a shoe mender's where the man worked right in the window, taking nails out of his mouth and hammering them into the soles – one never saw the nails go into his mouth. And a grocer's called Gibbs where biscuit boxes with glass lids were banked against the counter....

'...My most constant contact with the social world was at dancing class. Our class, in South Hampstead, was held at the Hampstead Conservatoire – a great gaunt red brick building at Swiss Cottage – later it became the Embassy Theatre. For this I wore my muslin and took my corduroy bag. Little girls trooped up the steps from the street decorously: it was a solemn affair. When we had changed our shoes we gathered in the high, chilly hall, our mothers and nurses ranked themselves on the platform behind the pianist. We were drilled by a fine grey-haired old lady in black silk who had the stature and poise of a duchess... I observed

very closely the get-up of my companions. There was a large colony of Jewish families in Hampstead (they lived in Fitzjohn's Avenue and off Finchley Road) and Jewish children outnumbered the rest at dancing class. How I envied their clothes! They were girt about with sashes, deeper fringed by far than mine. Their skipping ropes were of twined silk ribbon – mine was merely rope. And they all had pleated frocks which would stretch up to their shoulders when they held them out... My brother came once, in a white tunic and short trousers, but he disgraced me by standing in the front row and bawling.'

Later on, during her working life after the 1st World War, Miss Curtis Brown befriended a married couple who lived off Theobalds Road. 'It was one of those once beautiful smaller streets of Bloomsbury, now falling to its decay. Little had been altered either inside or outside since they were built two hundred years ago. The richly carved, heavy wooden porches over the doorways sagged a little: some of the small panes in the sashed windows were broken, but the neat brown facades remained pretty much as they had been when Swift might have called on a friend there.

'My friends lived in the basement of one of the less slummy houses. They had painted the walls themselves, scarlet and white. Their fireplace was an eighteenth-century grate, but no fire could mellow the eighteenth century damp. They were both pale, like creatures who live underground. We smoked a great many cigarettes and ate soup and French bread and a very good cheese....

'Another of my 'offices' was in the house of a writer who had discovered a square in the unknown murky region which lies between Rosebery Avenue and King's Cross. Here, between gaunt slums and dusty shops, behind the roaring and clanging highways where the trams took over from the buses, lay hidden a quadrangle of white houses. They were fantastic, dreamlike houses, joined each to each by arches, looking at first glance demure, straightforward and quaintly Regency, but on second glance hinting at a Gothic macabre. The square had no relation to its surroundings. To approach it, I passed a huge mediaeval pile of purple brick, which reared vast walls and parapets into the sky: a heroic, Wagnerian police barracks...

But the most eccentric and uncomfortable 'offices' – if they may be so called – were the British Museum and the Public Record Office. To the general public, British Museum may mean mummies. To us who were there, it means the high foggy, domed chamber of the Reading Room.

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 Society is a registered charity - number 261044

# newsletter

No 172

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Mar 1999

## Jeremy Bentham

*Thurs. 25 March, 7.30pm  
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3*

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) had an enormously varied range of interests. He opposed transportation as a criminal punishment and campaigned against imprisonment for debt. Unfortunately, his views on how convicts should be housed were to lead to much misery and even insanity in prisons. He was involved in movements for Parliamentary reform, for the improvement of the Poor Laws, for censuses, the registration of births, deaths and marriages, and reformed public health legislation. He is particularly associated with the foundation of University College, London, where his bizarre clothed skeleton and mummified head are housed. The College also possesses 200 boxes of his writings. However, though he gave his blessing and encouragement, he did not found the College, which opened its doors in 1828 when he was eighty years old.

Last year, to mark the 250th anniversary of his birth, a 'Bentham project' was at work at the College, and a member of this, Catherine Fuller, is our speaker in March on this most remarkable man.

## The Keats Triangle

*Thurs 22nd April, 7.30pm  
Heath Branch Library, Keats Grove, NW3*

Dr Sally Jeffery, an architectural historian working for the City of London, has been exploring the early development of the area around Keats House. Rocque's map of 1746 shows a settlement along 'Pound Street' and then just fields before the main Hampstead village begins. Late in the 18th century substantial development began there, encouraged by the continued popularity of the Hampstead Long Room and the healthy location next to the Heath. By the early 19th century there was a sufficient population for speculators to build a church – St John's, Downshire Hill – which was a proprietary chapel and therefore entirely dependent upon income from its congregation.

Dr Jeffery's examination of the development of the area now enclosed by Keats Grove, Downshire Hill and South End Green, will be fascinating to hear.

## Advance Notice

Please put these dates for future events in your diary:

*20 May:* Dick Weindling on Hampstead Cemetery. At Burgh House.

*17 June:* AGM and talk on St Pancras with special relevance to our venue, St Pancras New Church, Euston Road.

## The Annual Outing

This year's outing is to Sussex, with guided tours of both the Regency House at Hove, and the 15th century house known as St Mary's, Bramber. Booking forms will be distributed with the May Newsletter. Meanwhile, the date for your diary is Saturday, 14 August.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Annual subscriptions are due this month. A form for renewal is enclosed, to be returned by those members who do not have a banker's order in place. This last year the modest subscription has been rewarded by a programme of talks, six Newsletters, one Review and one free publication – a bargain! It makes the Treasurer's life much simpler if your subscription response is prompt.

## MUSICIANS IN HAMPSTEAD

Hampstead has long been associated with music and musicians. From the late 1890s it has been a home to a renaissance of British music.

An exhibition at Burgh House from 6 March to 27 June, will give an introduction and insight into some of the vibrant talent in Hampstead during that period. Local composers include Elgar, Bax, Walton and Bliss, and conductors Sir Henry Wood, Boult and Beecham. Singers featured include Clara Butt, Robeson, Schwarzkopf and Kathleen Ferrier, and instrumentalists, Denis Brain and Jacqueline du Pré. Original pictures and drawings by the late Gerard Hoffnung will also be on display.

Burgh House is open Wednesday-Sunday, 12-5pm.

## The end of Bower Cottage

Demolition is under way in Leighton Road, NW5. The last vestiges of Kentish Town's nineteenth-century Bower Cottage, Soup Kitchen and Casual Wards are going: by the time you are reading this they will have gone. Attempts over the years to get Bower Cottage, at least, listed and preserved as one of the oldest houses in the district, failed – the interior had long since lost its original features and the shell of this once-pleasant Regency house had become embedded like a fossil in later additions. For much of the present century, these relics of a previous age of local authority provision for the destitute had formed part of the St Margaret's Nursery complex, a Children's Home whose main block was opened in 1904. St Margaret's is all being demolished and will not be missed; it was architecturally undistinguished even in its heyday and has not been used for residential purposes for the best part of twenty years. But the neglected collection of buildings formed a palimpsest of Kentish Town's development over almost two centuries, and there is some inevitable regret at seeing the whole lot vanish from the face of the earth.

On the map of 1796, at Kentish Town High Road by the Assembly House pub, only a field path runs along the line of the future Leighton Road, but by 1804 a short length of this had been paved and christened Evans Place: detached villas were destined to follow. I do not know exactly when Bower Cottage was built, on land that had previously been part of the Assembly House's extensive gardens, but it was there by 1820 when other houses began to be laid out along the street – by then named Gloucester Place. Fifteen years later, the path leading to Bower Cottage was flanked by a terrace of houses to one side and a Wesleyan Methodist chapel to the other; Kentish Town was set on its gradual but inevitable course into urbanisation. By 1851, though Bower Cottage and other houses near by retained their spacious country-style gardens and the district was still considered a genteel one, the rural Assembly House with its tree-shaded yard and coaching stables was being rebuilt as a town pub. At that time Bower Cottage was occupied by the large Crane family, local builders who were themselves responsible for much of the new construction round about.

The real changes came in the mid 1860s, when the Midland Railway main line was cut through the heart of Kentish Town on its way to what would become St Pancras Station. A huge segment of land on the opposite side of the street from Gloucester Place (now extended and soon to be renamed Leighton Road) was acquired by the Midland for its shunting and goods yards. This permanently affected the shape of the district and its network of old paths but it also had a dramatic effect on its character, as rural views of elm trees and fields were replaced by brick arches, coaling bays and a pall of smoke and smuts.

Even without the railway, Kentish Town was destined to be swallowed up in London's nineteenth century immensity, but the trains accelerated the so-

cial decline. The professional classes and 'persons of independent means' moved on. The Census for 1871 shows far more houses in multi-occupation than before and a considerable rise in population all over the borough. It also shows that the Cranes had left Bower Cottage. In 1867 the St Pancras Board of Guardians had come into existence, and the parish was divided administratively into four districts, each with a Relief Station. Bower Cottage was District 1, and was occupied in 1871 by a resident Poor Law Officer.

In 1865 the Methodists had moved into a grand new church round the corner in Lady Margaret Road (today the RC Our Lady Help of Christians) and the old chapel was converted into a Mission Hall. That was probably when it was extended back to abut onto Bower Cottage, as it is shown in the first Ordnance Survey (1870s). The same map shows that a long, low building had also been constructed to the rear of Bower Cottage. I do not know just what sort of symbiosis existed from the late 1860s between the Relief Station (paid for out of the rates) and Mission Hall charity work, which would have been supported by voluntary contributions, but by the time a detailed Insurance map was made at the end of the century the Guardians had just acquired the Mission Hall as well and also the leasehold or freehold of five other terrace houses along the street front. This map shows that the garden of Bower Cottage had been paved over and that on the north side were large Casual Wards (overnight shelters). There were also sheds, presumably used for picking oakum or whatever the transient inmates were required to do, and the long building to the back of Bower Cottage is marked 'Kitchen' (i.e. soup kitchen), 'Hall' and 'Coach House'.

Circa 1900, the Guardians demolished the Casual Ward to build St Margaret's Reception Centre, which was conceived as a bright alternative to keeping children along with adults in the workhouse by St Pancras Old Church. The other buildings on the site were made over to this new use. In 1929 the successors to the Guardians, the LCC, demolished the two freehold houses acquired 30 years earlier (nos. 23 and 25 Leighton Road) to construct a wider driveway into the site and a nurses' home in a style best described as double-fronted suburban. The Mission Hall still survived alongside, since in 1944 it appears in a drainage report as Leighton Hall Restaurant – I suspect, a wartime 'British Restaurant': can anyone tell me? It disappeared sometime in the post-war period and then, if not before, the remaining terrace houses, 15, 17, 19 were demolished to give the Nursery a large garden.

Land and houses have their own destiny: it is clear that from the time the old chapel became a Mission Hall and Bower Cottage followed it into Poor Law use, the destiny of this 1-acre site was set for the next hundred and forty years. Indeed it is not over even now, for the new owners are the St Pancras Housing Association; later this year brick and slate roofed houses at subsidised rents will rise out of the ground.

Gillian Tindall

# Bombs Over Holborn

The last *Newsletter* included criticism by John Winter-Lotimer of the article in *Camden History Review* 22 by Keith Scholey, entitled 'Bombs on Holborn in the Second World War'. Below are two further letters on the same theme:

*From Raymond Nottage:*

I write to say how emphatically I agree with John Winter-Lotimer.

The author's purpose stated in the first paragraph was 'a study of bombing in the former Metropolitan Borough of Holborn'. Had he confined himself to that task by drawing on reliable factual sources he could have produced an article of historical – albeit limited – interest. But he decided to introduce what he terms 'post-war myth making' in order to infer that the winter 1940/41 Blitz was in reality little more than a series of jolly Guy Fawkes' nights (top of column 1, page 13).

May I suggest that contributions to the *Review* should in future be editorially precluded from entering into the fanciful realm of mythology, and especially so when they deal with subjects coming within the memory of the Society's members, or at any rate of some of them.

*From Robin Woolven:*

I am delighted to see a *Review* article generating correspondence. Mr Winter-Lotimer correctly points out that Mr Scholey's charge that 'the blitz ... was a less intense experience than is often portrayed' is 'to some extent contradicted by the author's own details of the bombing'. As statistics and semantics can often be used to distort the picture, I submit the following tables to support Mr Scholey's use of Basil Collier's figures in *The Defence of the United Kingdom* which cover only the period 7 October 1940 to 5 May 1941, thus excluding the September Blitz and the raids of early May 1941. They are taken from the regular monthly Intelligence Report, this for January 1942 and dated 11 February 1942, from the London Regional Commissioner (Sir Ernest Gowers) to the Minister of Home Security. They relate to the whole period of 'The Battle of London', Sep 1940 to June 1941.

## Areas where bombing was heaviest

### Weight of bombs (kg) per acre

Holborn 56  
Southwark 55  
Westminster 50  
Stepney 41  
Lambeth 36  
Finsbury 33

## Areas where casualties were greatest

### Casualties per 1000 of population

Westminster 30  
Bermondsey 30  
Chelsea 29  
Shoreditch 26  
Holborn 25  
Poplar 23  
Southwark 20

## Areas where destruction was greatest

### Houses demolished and seriously damaged per 1000 of population

West Ham 290  
Poplar 273  
Stepney 255  
Holborn 197  
Lambeth 178  
Westminster 170

Mr Scholey's statement that 'the vast bulk of the capital was intact' after the bombing really does lead to the overused remark of Cyril Joad (a well-known Hampstead resident) of 'it all depends what you mean by...', in this case 'intact'. The vast bulk of London was not left unblemished or untouched. Again using London Civil Defence region statistics, the figures appear to be that of the estimated number of houses in the LCC area in 1937 (790,224), by 18 December 1941 some 40,695 were 'demolished or beyond repair' and a further 628,802 were 'damaged but repairable'. This represents a total of some 85% of houses in the LCC area damaged in some way – so presumably only 15% of houses were 'intact' but many would have lost just glass or slates.

I have no useful comment to make on Mr Scholey's assertion on 'the image we of the post-war generation were given of the blitz' other than to point out that the official histories (published in the 1950s) and the HMSO booklets (such as Home Front 1940-41 of 1942) all admit that London took a real pasting during the war – not on the scale of the later allied raids on Germany but then surely nobody ever suggested that the general scale of attack on London was similar.

*Keith Scholey replies:*

The essential criticism is my conclusion that 'the Blitz ... was a less intense experience than is often portrayed'. Perhaps I have not been clear enough in my argument.

Holborn was undoubtedly among the worst bombed areas of London (as Mr Woolven's statistics show) and therefore an excellent example of what happened during the Blitz. Records show i) that casualties and damage were largely the result of just two intensive raids; ii) for the remainder of the Blitz bombing was sporadic – seldom more than three or four small (50kg) bombs per night. This is in line with my studies of other areas and does not I feel correspond with the *popular* image of the Blitz.

This familiar portrayal (the unrelenting rain of bombs, the shelters, whole areas laid waste etc) is typified by the Blitz Experience at the Imperial War Museum. It is not that this portrayal is unrealistic – it is an accurate reflection of the experience of some parts of London on some occasions. But it is *not* true to say that the *whole* of London suffered to this degree for the entire period of the Blitz. The extent of the destruction and the frequency of the raids have in other words become part of a 'post-war myth'.

In studying the Blitz we must take on board facts which at first seem 'absurd'. My statement was that sightseeing was 'possible' rather than commonplace – but it occurred (see page 37, *A Village in Piccadilly* by Robert Henrey, J.M. Dent, 1941). Taking home unexploded incendiary bombs – the remark comes from a Bomb Census Report (HO 198 class at the PRO) – happened. Incendiary bombs were not 'as harmless as fireworks' (the remark about burning-out 'like' fireworks comes from the borough's logbook) but 'in the West End women in evening dresses ... were seen kicking spluttering [incendiary] bombs into the gutter (p.137, *How We Lived Then*, Norman Longmate, Arrow, 1971). This sort of thing was foolhardy but that Londoners were able to be so blasé suggests that the Blitz was 'less intense' than popularly portrayed.

My words were that '*in any given raid ... the vast bulk of the capital remained intact*'. It could also be argued, according to Mr Woolven's own figures, that in 1945 the vast proportion of London would have *appeared* intact. That only 15% of the capital's housing remained completely undamaged is quite correct. However, one reliable estimate (in HO 192/1176) gives the extent of *severe* damage (temporarily uninhabitable buildings) as only 2.5 times that destroyed or irreparably damaged. So of the 80% damaged by far the largest proportion would have had simply window and slate damage.

Of course the Nazis showed contempt for human life by bombing targets in towns, but the popular view that raids were aimed at civilians must be refuted (see pp 23-24, *The Blitz, Then and Now* vol. 2, ed. W.G. Ramsey, 'After the Battle', 1988).

No offence is meant to victims or survivors of the Blitz. Being bombed was a terrifying experience and in 1941 London was the worst bombed city in the world. But we should use the facts to show what really happened rather than repeating long held assumptions. Viewing the Blitz this way can make it more real to those who have no personal experience of the era to draw upon.

Without the commentary my chronology of the bombing would indeed have been of 'historical – albeit limited – interest'. Precisely why it was included – the purpose of a historical study is, surely, to re-examine previous and current beliefs in the light of the facts.

## A MISSING HOUSE

Miss Beryl Shilton is trying to find a picture of a house that was destroyed in the last war. The address of the house was ? Sandy Lane, in Hampstead. She has visited the site and seen that nos 1-3 Hampstead Village exist there nowadays, on North End Road, opposite the Bull and Bush. Then there is a gap for about three properties before the remaining houses. Miss Shilton may be contacted at Crickets, Venlake, Uplyme, Devon L.R. DT7 3SE.

## THE CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING PLAQUES

Does any *Newsletter* reader know anything about the following two metal plaques? Both have vanished from sites quite recently, probably since Christmas – and of course I never got round to photographing them.

One was on the corner of Chalk Farm Road and Castlehaven Street, just about under the railway bridge, outside what is now a shoe shop and until recently was a rather trendy gift shop. It said something like 'Furniture was made in this shop' and dated from before the last war and possibly before the First World War.

The other was high up on the corner of Harmood House, itself on the corner of Harmood Street and the western part of Powlett Place which runs beside the Harmood Arms. Again I have no record of the exact wording but it was something like 'These flats were built by the St Pancras Housing Trust in ?1929-36'.

Anyone with any news of these should contact Shirley Neale, 64 Harmood Street NW1 8DP (0171-267 2782)

## JANE WELLER

An article on p72 of *the National Trust Magazine* for Spring 1999 by Oliver Garnett, describes the life-long interest in natural history shown by Jane Weller (1749-1816) of Charlton House, east of Greenwich, who married General Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson. In 1777 she inherited the Manor of Hampstead from her mother; in fact she, or rather her husband, took over the manor from William Fellowes of Rosslyn House (off Lyndhurst Road), to whom her mother had assigned the estate for the term of her own life (see *Newsletter* 124).

Sir Thomas died in 1798 and Dame Jane, as she was known, then travelled widely in Britain seeking rare minerals, shells and insects. Their son Thomas, the first Maryon Wilson, created a menagerie of wild animals, allowed to roam freely around Charlton House. Dame Jane's collection, including the remarkable porcupine fish (probably from the tropics) and with later additions, is on display at Wallington in Northumberland.

Roy Allen



## The St Pancras Dairy

In the last *Newsletter* a photograph of the St Pancras Dairy was printed and the question posed was, Where was it?

*David Hayes writes:*

As recorded by the LCC *Survey of London*, and noted briefly in *East of Bloomsbury*, an early 'St Pancras Dairy' existed near King's Cross. In 1832, a Golders Green dairyman named Lewis Raphael leased a triangular plot of land west of Argyle Street – unwanted by the promoters of the Panarmonion pleasure gardens – and there erected a brick-built cowshed 300 feet long. This dairy had passed by 1863 to Thomas Camp, a former Islington cowkeeper, who remained there until the site was required for the building of Argyle Street Board School in 1880.

There is no obvious connection between Camp's business and the later St Pancras Dairy *Company*, one of whose shops was pictured in *Newsletter* 171. Its first shop was at 15 Goldington Street in the north-east corner of Somers Town. Directories list successive occupiers of the dairy there as Alfred Shaw (1885), King & Hansford (1887), and Charles King (1891). By the following year King was proprietor of the St Pancras Dairy Company, the name of which first appears at this time. A second shop had by now been opened at 58 Camden High Street, to the north of Plender Street. By 1895, this had moved seven doors northward to no. 72, while a third shop had opened at 53 Chalk Farm Road.

Each of the latter three shops was a flat-roofed, single-storey extension built over the front garden of the original house behind. Detailed photographs of 1904 show that none of them resembled our mystery shop. In each case the building to the right was another similar one-storey shop, while in Miss Packham's photo it is a bay-windowed 'house' with at least a second storey.

The most likely (but uncertain) location of the pictured shop will therefore be 15 Goldington Street: as the company's first shop, and as the family home of Charles King (1891 Census), it was probably also the company HQ. It stood on the north-west corner of Chenies Place, a site now occupied by the modern Doreen Bazell Hall. To make sense, our photo would have to be of the shop's longer, Chenies Place frontage, the adjacent premises would then be 12 Chenies Place. The 1894 OS map suggests (and ratebooks confirm) that this was the side entrance of a large building to the north – the foundry of the St Pancras Iron Work Co. They specialised in stable fittings, and an advertisement of theirs was reproduced in *Newsletter* 104 (Nov 1987). To fit the picture, their side entrance would need to have been a converted bay-windowed house. No photos of pre-war Chenies Place have been traced.

The Company was short-lived, having disappeared

from directories by 1898. The Goldington Street and Chalk Farm shops both passed to other dairymen, while 72 High Street became a 'misfit clothier's'. Only 58 High Street and the Chalk Farm shop still stand.

*(Editor's note: David's conclusion is probably right. Unknown to him, because it was unfortunately omitted from the previous Newsletter, Miss Packham was searching for details of the King family, ancestors of hers.)*

## Hitchcock and the Taxidermist

Danny Nissim in the last *Newsletter* reported on Alfred Hitchcock's film *The Man who Knew Too Much*. In one scene James Stewart is shown going into a taxidermist's shop in the Plender Street area, and there was in fact a taxidermist at 61 College Place in the 1950s, called Edward Gerrard & Sons. Was this the shop in question, and was it actually used in the film, or was it a specially made setting?

Betty Greenwood, who now lives in Robert Street, writes to say that at the time of the making of the film she was living at 61 College Place. She was the daughter of the caretaker of the premises, Frederick Greenwood, who was himself a taxidermist and who is featured in the picture in John Richardson's book, *Camden Town and Primrose Hill Past*.

Miss Greenwood says that she met Stewart and Hitchcock. She was about fifteen years old at the time and Hitchcock asked her about her schooling. They drank tea and ate biscuits, sitting in the armchairs of their front room. She was invited to Central Hall to watch filming and meet Doris Day, but alas she did not turn up.

It is possible, she says, that there are two children surviving from the Gerrard family, Richard and Audrey, but she knows nothing of their whereabouts.

## MEMORIES WANTED

KLA Film and Video Communication, who made the much-praised video on the history of Alexandra Palace (see *Newsletter* 170) are proposing to make a new video entitled *North London at War*. They are particularly keen to obtain interviews with local people who had personal experience of the last war. They should be able to recount interesting reminiscences (not necessarily dramatic stories) in a clear and interesting manner and preferably with photos, memorabilia etc with which to illustrate the stories or at least to use as cutaways.

KLA are also looking for contemporary illustrations and memorabilia, film footage and sound recordings.

Members interested should contact Stuart Little, 57 North View Road, N8 7LN (0181 348 6261).

## A broken-hearted gorilla

Patrick Langfier has sent us a story about a gorilla. He knows only some of the details, but would like to find out more. Mr Langfier is the grandson of Louis Langfier who had his main portrait studio at 343 Finchley Road (see *Camden History Review* 15), and his mother was a Cubitt. He was born at 3 Kingdon Road, West Hampstead on 27 April 1911.

'As a baby the gorilla was brought to London by a Mr Frank Wadham who, with his wife Fiona, brought up Max(?) in their London house/flat. Frequently the gorilla was taken to London Zoo in a taxi where it had tea for the entertainment of visitors to the zoo, long before the advent of the 'Chimps Tea Party'. At home the gorilla would sit at table at dinner time and eat with the family and guests (my late aunt, Miss Amy Elizabeth Cubitt was one of them).

Eventually the gorilla grew too big for this domestic life and was sold to an American circus and menagerie, perhaps Barnum's. Max was put on board a ship, which in those days must have taken six days or more to cross to the USA, but he began to pine for his human family and a cable message was sent to Wadham that he come as fast as possible. Very unhappily, the gorilla died 'of a broken heart' before reaching America.'

There must have been newspaper reports at the time of such a unique event and Mr Langfier wishes to find out the date and obtain a copy of them. He believes it was in the decade before the Great War. A Frank Wadham lived at 4 Upper Park Road, Hampstead in 1901. From 1909-14 he appears to have moved to 60 Minster Road, West Hampstead. He was a competent watercolourist.

## Ladies in Waiting

Sheila Wilson has been researching the history of Fenton House in Hampstead. She wonders if any member could help her with a query:

Thomas Barratt in his *Annals of Hampstead* (1912) is not very expansive about Fenton House. In Vol. 2, p252, he says that tenants included '... The Hon. Margaret Murray, afterwards Baroness Gray in her own right, and great aunt of the 6th Lord Mansfield. Lady Abercromby also resided in the mansion for a time. Both Baroness Gray and Lady Abercromby had been ladies-in-waiting to Queen Victoria and Her Majesty visited them on different occasions at Fenton House'. This is the kind of anecdote that visitors to the house love to hear. But is it true?

Thomas Turner sold Fenton House to Miss Mary Selwyn in 1860. He and his family had moved out of the house some time earlier when Turner was appointed Treasurer to Guy's Hospital, and he had let Fenton to a Miss Montgomery who, with her great-nephew, Hugh, continued to live there until 1863.

Miss Selwyn was one of the people who bought Fenton House as an investment. She never lived there and had a house of her own near Ledbury where she lived with her aunt. In 1863 Miss Selwyn granted a 21-year lease to Mrs Murray.

Margaret Murray, née Grant, was the widow of the Hon. David Murray, brother to the 4th Earl of Mansfield. Hence a connection with Kenwood and a possible reason for her returning to Hampstead. In 1869 Mrs Murray inherited the title of Baroness Gray from her aunt, Madalina Gray. This was one of those unusual titles that can be inherited through the female line. Baroness Gray appears to have left Fenton House about 1871 when the house was let to Henry Boswell Lee, a retired Liverpool silk merchant. In 1874 it was let again to Robert Adam Whytlaw, a dress manufacturer from Glasgow. In 1880 Miss Selwyn died and left the property to her aunt Amelia Murray.

Amelia Murray was by this time an old lady of 85 so it is unlikely that she ever had anything to do with the house itself. The Baroness's lease still having some years to run, nothing was done till the house was put up for auction in 1884 and was bought by George Trewby.

The Royal Archive in Windsor say that Baroness Gray was never a lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria. Lady Abercromby was, but never lived in Fenton House as a tenant though she might have visited it. She and the Baroness were both Scots, married to Scots and moved in the same circle in Scotland. The two ladies must have known each other but there was 18 years' difference in their ages. Lady Abercromby did not become a lady-in-waiting till 1874 by which time Baroness Gray had left Fenton House.

So where did Barratt get his information from? The implication that Queen Victoria took tea with her ladies-in-waiting at Fenton House cannot really be substantiated. Baroness Gray was not a lady-in-waiting and Lady Abercromby did not live there. The Baroness was only there from 1864-1871 and it is folk legend that Queen Victoria did not socialise after the death of Prince Albert in 1861.

Miss Watson would be grateful for any leads to resolve this. She may be contacted at Flat 25, 5 & 7 Belsize Grove, NW3 4UT (0171 586 9821).

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The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

# newsletter

No 173

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

May 1999

## The Hampstead Cemetery

*Thurs. 20 May, 7.30pm*

*Burgh House, New End Square, NW3*

For some time a group of enthusiastic, though by now rather tired, members of the CHS has been exploring and recording the monuments in Hampstead Cemetery. A CHS publication will be issued later this year which will include the results of their research.

In common with other London parishes, Hampstead was given power to acquire land for cemeteries as the parish burial grounds became full. Hampstead Cemetery on Fortune Green Road was laid out 1875/76 and consecrated the following year. CHS publication, *The Streets of West Hampstead*, lists a number of the more illustrious people buried there since. They include Kate Greenaway, Banister Fletcher, George Jealous (founder of the *Ham & High*), Lord Lister, the Grand Duke Michael of Russia, Marie Lloyd, Fred Terry, Clive Brook, Gladys Cooper, John Braine and Dennis Brain, Gilbert and Pamela Frankau and Nigel Balchin, not to mention Florence Upton the unsung creator of the golliwog.

The research group has discovered a great deal more and we look forward to the talk by Dick Weindling, one of the leaders of the team.

## The Annual Meeting

*Thurs, 17 June, 6.30pm*

*St Pancras New Church, Euston Road NW1*

This year's annual meeting will be in that Inwood masterpiece, St Pancras New Church, which stands virtually opposite Euston Station. As members may have noted, the building has had scaffolding around it for some time – that is now down – while a substantial restoration took place. This church was not built without controversy – in fact, very little was built in St Pancras at the time (1822) without controversy, because of the growing hostility between ratepayers in the Kentish Town area and those who lived south of the Euston Road.

The building was a strong neo-Grecian statement at a time when many architects were being seduced by the Gothic. Its tower resembles the Tower of the Winds in Athens, and much of the rest of it, including the

famous caryatides, is derived from the Erechtheion.

What more appropriate person to talk about it than our own Meetings Secretary and churchwarden at St Pancras, Michael Ogden, whose talk will touch on St Pancras parish as well.

As is normal with annual meetings, we begin at 6.30pm with refreshments, the business meeting is at 7pm, and the talk at 7.30pm.

Nominations for officers are welcomed. The present officers and committee 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: *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 Kamlisch, Sue Palmer, Barbara Scott (who does not wish to stand for this coming year), Dick Weindling, Robin Woolven.*

## The Annual Outing

*Saturday, 14 August*

Our outing this year is to the Regency House, Hove and to St Mary's, Bramber – it is being organised again by Ruth Hayes.

We have a slightly earlier start than usual, to arrive in time for our morning visit to the Regency House, which is situated on the very imposing Brunswick Square in Hove. Together with Brunswick Terrace, the Square was built by Wilds and Busby in 1825-27, financed by the Rev. Thomas Street. Of former residents of the Square, Robert Bevan, an artist of the Camden Town School, was born at no. 17. After our guided tour of the interior of the house, there will be time to have a picnic in the Square's pleasant garden, or for refreshment in nearby pubs or cafes, before we set off for Bramber in the afternoon.

The historic house of St Mary's was built in 1470 by Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, Provost of Eton College and founder of Magdalen College, Oxford. We will have a guided tour of the house, whose Library contains a collection of works by the poet, Thomas Hood. There are also gardens to see: optional (at nominal extra cost) is a visit to the 'Lost Gardens'; or you may prefer to look at the ruins of Bramber Castle. We will be having tea at St Mary's.

You will find a booking form with this issue of the *Newsletter*. Ruth Hayes may be contacted if necessary at home (0181-397 6752) or at the Centre for Policy on Ageing (0171-253 1787).



*Demolition in progress at Leighton Road.*

## Advance Notice

Dates for your diary:

15 July: The new edition of Pevsner's North London

14 Aug: Annual outing

23 Sep: Old Holborn – the launch of our new publication

Oct: still to be arranged

18 Nov: A Millennium symposium

9 Dec: The History of Patents, by Roger Cline.

## Camden Characters

It has been suggested that to mark the Millennium, or rather this century, that the CHS has an evening devoted to three or four short talks on lesser-known Camden Characters of the 20th century. In other words, we don't want H.G. Wells, but we would want, for example, the eponymous founder of Dillon's bookshop. Several suggestions have already been mooted, but we would like to throw this open to members – do you have a pet personality, and would you like to speak for twelve minutes on him or her? Please let our Secretary know. The date for this symposium is 18 November.

### THE END OF BOWER COTTAGE

The demolition of Bower Cottage and adjacent buildings in Leighton Road, Kentish Town, was reported by Gillian Tindall in *Newsletter* 172, together with a history of the site. Dr L. Goulding has written to say that there was indeed a British Restaurant there during the last war. He was living in Highgate Road in the 1940s and often ate there – it provided excellent war-time meals at very modest prices. (He also notes that he and his wife have read and enjoyed the *Newsletter* for 23 years!)

On 21 May, Gillian Tindall will be giving a talk at the Museum of London (1.10pm) which will deal extensively with the history of the site. The talk is entitled 'Land has its own destiny'. It will be looking at the present day use of two Poor Law sites (the other being in Holmes Road, Kentish Town).

We reproduce above a picture of demolition in progress, kindly supplied by Gillian.

### A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

It will come as no surprise to members that Camden's Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library has been declared a 'centre of excellence' and an example of best practice in a national survey of more than 100 archives services.

Camden won its accolade for its work in three areas:

- i) advice given by staff on the enquiry desk
- ii) the centre's in-house leaflets and guides
- iii) provision of reference works.

84% of those who filled in questionnaires in Camden rated the advice given by the staff as excellent.

### FIELD LANE RECORDS

The records of the Field Lane Foundation have just been listed by the London Metropolitan Archive. In addition to the main Holborn link, the Foundation also ran a girls' school at 9 Church Row in Hampstead and a boys' school in Hillfield Road, West Hampstead.

The Foundation began on 7 November 1841 as the Field Lane Sabbath School, accommodating 45 boys and girls crowded into a small room in Caroline Court, Holborn. The School was soon moved to Saffron Hill but was regarded with much suspicion and hostility. The teachers persisted and by 1842 the founder, Dr Provan, had a staff of seven voluntary teachers. In 1843 financial help was sought in an advertisement in *The Times*, which was noticed by Lord Shaftesbury, who served as President of the School until his death in 1885.

In 1847 the Field Lane Free School opened, with an average attendance of 40, rising quickly to 70. It soon moved to larger premises and activities were widened to assist poor mothers. There was also a Night Refuge giving accommodation for 100 and in 1857 a similar refuge for destitute women and girls in Hatton Garden. In 1865 a piece of land was purchased at Saffron Hill and a new building erected to accommodate all their activities.

The 1870 Education Act placed the Ragged School under the London School Board, but in 1871 Field Lane opened two Industrial Schools designed to educate and train orphans and destitute children. The schools later moved out to Hampstead. Since then a number of the Field Lane activities have been absorbed into state services, but the Foundation still provides such things as residential homes, community centres and services for old people.

## Book Reviews

*Sources for the History of London 1939-45. A Guide and Bibliography*, by Heather Creaton.

British Records Association 1998, 196pp illustrated, £12.50. ISBN 0 900222 12 3. (It is available from the Association, or from London Metropolitan Archive, 40 Northampton Road EC1R 0HB.)

Heather Creaton has written a very useful introduction to the vast range of published and archival sources available to the serious researcher of London in the Second World War. An essential first stop for any such researcher is a visit to their Local Studies Library to consult the range of published work and the local archives, but Heather Creaton warns that 'some of the published offerings constantly recycle the same material, rather than re-examining the original sources' and her guide reminds us of the enormous variety of those primary sources available. The author treats wartime London, the changes brought about by war, everyday wartime life and planned reconstruction etc. by topic (such as Air Raid Precautions, Evacuation, Morale, Health, Education etc) by describing the situation, its context and significant events, then mentions the more important national and local sources of information available. A particularly useful element is inclusion of the actual file classes, series and file numbers containing the relevant papers in the Public Record Office, London Metropolitan Archive, Imperial War Museum and local and many other archives.

I thought I knew all the series in the PRO covering my particular area of interest but the book led me to several useful papers which were new to me. Outside the usual national and local records the book reminds one of the range of commercial and Business Archives (e.g. J. Lyons & Co., or the High Street banks) which are available to researchers. Finally Heather Creaton includes a well organised and indexed 963-item bibliography, then an eight-page list of useful addresses covering national, local and special interest archives. Any work that attempts to summarise such a vast range of subjects runs the risk of making minor errors and specialist readers may find the odd very minor misrepresentation but overall this is an invaluable guide and is well illustrated with three dozen photographs and reproductions of selected official papers and manuscript records. Such is the volume of material available that the author does not claim her guide to be comprehensive but it is practical and useful to almost anyone researching (or just has an interest in) aspects of London during the war.

**Robin Woolven**

*Hornsey Historical Bulletin* 40

When our friends in the Hornsey Historical Society (founded in 1971) began to publish regular *Bulletins* in 1973, they were typed, duplicated and stapled A4 sheets. By the 1980s the publication was being printed, but in 1989 the Society switched to a rather limiting A5 size, which tends to restrict the display of pictures and maps.

The new *Bulletin*, no 40, reverts to A4, and is admirably designed (rather like our own *CHS Review* to be honest), and takes advantage of the facilities available today to small publishers. With page-make up systems easily obtainable, and not too difficult to use, there is no excuse now for publications that look as though they have been designed either by the printer or by no-one at all.

The new edition includes a further article in the Lost Houses of Hornsey series, this time La Brabançome in Wood Green; it also includes essays on two Hornsey schools and that well-known landmark, the dairy at the junction of Hanley Road and Crouch Hill (the building is now a restaurant). Joan Schwitzer has written a very valuable article on John Cathles Hill, an enterprising builder who developed a good deal of the Hornsey area – he built the splendid Queens Hotel in Crouch End.

Copies of the *Bulletin*, price £2.50, may be obtained from the Society at The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL. Please telephone them on 0181-348 8429 beforehand to ascertain postage and packing.

*The Growth of Camden Town: 1800-2000*

by Jack Whitehead, £11.95. Obtainable from the author at 55 Parliament Hill, NW3 2TB (add £1.50 postage and packing).

It has been heartening over the years to see the development of Jack Whitehead's series of books on various parts of north London. There had been *The Growth of Stoke Newington* and *The Growth of St Marylebone & Paddington*, both well-illustrated and well researched books dealing mainly with the physical expansion of those areas, with plenty of drawings to illustrate the author's texts.

Then in 1995 came *The Growth of Muswell Hill*. The format changed from A5 to a comfortable large octavo, and the number of pages increased, as did the detail of his copy. Now comes a similar book on Camden Town which devotes many pages to the industrialised part of his area, around Camden Lock and the old railway lands – but it is also up-to-date enough to include the new Glass Building in James-town Road. To my mind, the chapter on the development of the railway yards is its strongest point. He notes, interestingly, that at the time that rail carriages were being hauled by cable from the yard up and down to Euston Station, the future transport engineer Hallidie, who built the cable car network in San Fran-



*Two rare Camden postcards. At the top is what was probably a first communion procession, at the church of St Silas the Martyr, Shipton Place, NW5. Below is Parke's pharmacy at 173 Camden High Street. The dates of both pictures are unknown.*

cisco, was living as a child in Camden Town. On p.45 he discusses that large yellow brick wall along Chalk Farm Road. He reveals, which I didn't know, that it is 4' 6" thick so as to support the raised marshalling yards, which were high above the road.

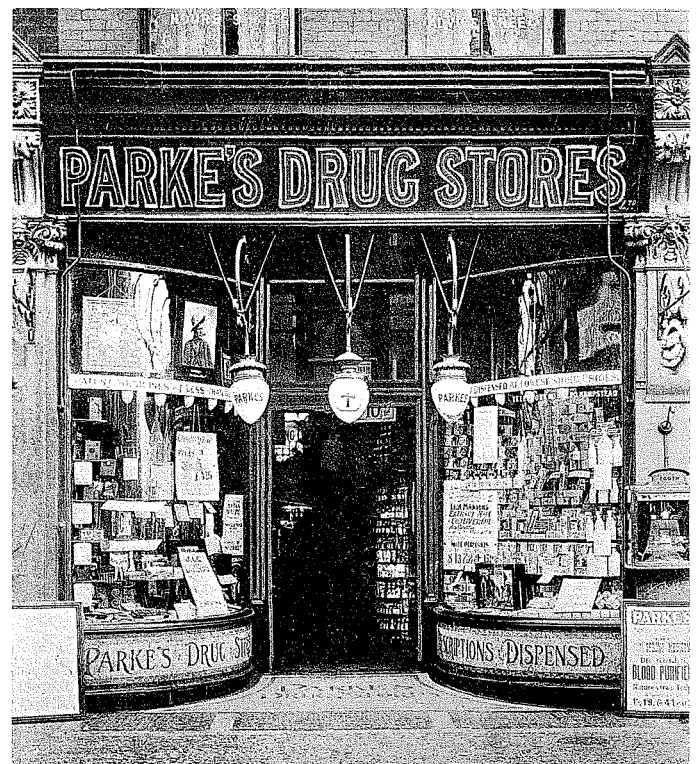
There is an excellent description of the business life of Gilbey's, the gin distillers whose warehouses so dominated the area. Later chapters include an examination of Moy's, the engineers in Bayham Street, and early film making in Camden Town. All this is happily mixed in with descriptions of house styles, the Roundhouse, schools and the canal. A book not to be missed.

**John Richardson**

### **FRIENDS OF KENSAL GREEN**

Kensal Green Cemetery is the last resting-place of many Camden characters, some well-known, some leading unrecorded lives, but contributing much to the borough. The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery have compiled some information on its preservation and on events taking place in the near future. Leaflets are at the Local Studies Centre, Holborn Library or may be obtained from Robert Stephenson, PO Box 1035, London W2 6ZX.

Much work has been done on the Dissenters' chapel, built in 1837, but allowed to decay after the last war. It has since been restored by the Friends, English Heritage and other bodies and is now available for hire, while meetings, exhibitions etc also take place there.



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# newsletter

No 174

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jul 1999

## The Growth of Camden Town

Thurs, 15th July, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

For some years now our July speaker, Jack Whitehead, has been publishing with increasing polish a series of books on the growth of various areas – Stoke Newington, St Marylebone, Muswell Hill etc. This year he has moved on to Camden territory (he is himself a Camden resident) and has produced a book on Camden Town and in particular its industrial history. It is a fascinating contribution to local history literature and we are fortunate to have him as our speaker to elaborate on an area which he obviously enjoys.

## The Annual Outing

Saturday, 14th August

Ruth Hayes says that there are still some seats left on the coach to take us to the Regency House at Hove and to St Mary's Bramber. Those who wish to go are advised to book soon using the form enclosed in last month's *Newsletter*.

## Advance Notice

Talks to put in your diary:

23 Sep: Old Holborn – the launch of our new publication.

21 Oct: David Cross on George Romney

18 Nov: A Millennium Symposium

9 Dec: The Patent Office by Roger Cline

## The Millennium Project

Those members who were at the Annual Meeting or who have read the latest *Ham & High* will know that the Society has received a substantial grant from Camden Council to carry out an innovative research project. It consists of three main strands. One is of academic research into a large number of topics which both the Society and the Local History Library would like to see covered. A list of these is included with this *Newsletter*, together with a tear-off slip. We hope that a large number of members will commit themselves to producing a paper on one of these topics by September 2000.

The second strand is more difficult to describe, but it

consists of encouraging members of the public to record their memories of specific things. It could be the firm or shop etc that they worked for, perhaps businesses long gone. It could be old societies and clubs they belonged to, political activity, a church they attended, a significant event they witnessed. In this the Society would like to have the help of a number of interviewers who would compile the appropriate questions, write down the answers and then write up as an article which would be of use to future generations. The aim of this project is that all of the research and interviews should be worthwhile and of use to scholars and the curious of the future.

The third strand is photographic. We aim to photograph as many Camden streets as possible in one week in the late spring of the year 2000. We hope to obtain from this a substantial and very useful archive of Camden as it is at one time. This will be housed in the Local History Archives at Holborn Library as a special archive.

We hope to have a few exhibitions. One will be a large one featuring items from the Local History Collection and held at a large venue. Others will be smaller, perhaps at branch libraries, depicting items of local interest and particularly any contributions produced by the second strand noted above.

To do all this we need a paid co-ordinator – the bulk of Camden's grant will be spent on a fee for such a person. It may well be that a person to cover the several strands will not emerge and that we will have to split the post. We shall see. In any case, if you know of anyone who might be interested please ask him or her to write for a Job Description. Address: The Secretary, Camden History Society, Garden flat, 62 Fellows Road, London NW3 3LJ.

## BLACK PEOPLES IN CAMDEN

Marika Sherwood, Secretary of the Black and Asian Studies Association, writes:

Our Association is attempting to aid the documentation of the presence of Black peoples in London which, to judge by parish register entries, and Elizabeth I's edicts, dates back to the sixteenth century. She would be grateful to learn of any reference to them that members come across in records, or on gravestones. The Association will shortly be applying for funding to put such nationwide data onto a database. She may be reached c/o ICS, 28 Russell Square, WC1B 5DS.

## Camden Characters

A number of suggestions have been made for short talks for our evening to mark the Millennium on 18th November. We are still interested in more subjects so as to have a choice. Any member who has a particular name in mind, and could give a fifteen-minute talk on him or her, should write to our Secretary, Jane Ramsay as soon as possible.

## Booking your seat for Old Holborn

As you will see from our paragraph headed Advance Notice, on 23 September (7.30pm) we are launching our latest publication *Streets of Old Holborn*. We are doing this at a new venue which we think will interest members very much. It is the officers' mess of the Inns of Court and City Yeomanry off Chancery Lane (though the official address is 10 Stone Buildings within Lincoln's Inn). More details of how to find it will be in the next *Newsletter*, but in the meantime we do need to know, for security reasons there, who is coming. Only those members who have given in their names beforehand will be admitted!

So, if you intend coming, please notify Dr Peter Woodford at 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS or leave a message on his answerphone (0171 435 2088). Please note: there are two stone flights of stairs up to the mess.

## The Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting was held in the splendour of St Pancras New Church in Euston Road, our speaker our own Membership Secretary, Michael Ogden, who is also a churchwarden at the church.

During the business part of the meeting the following 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: *Marion Bennathan*  
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, Roger Cline, Ruth Hayes, Ivor Kamlish, Sue Palmer, Dick Weindling, Robin Woolven.*

Cllr Julian Tobin, one of Camden's two deputy mayors this year, addressed the meeting, reminding us that 1999 marks the 100th anniversary of the creation

of the boroughs of Hampstead, Holborn and St Pancras. A particular vote of thanks was made to Roger Cline our Treasurer (and latterly Acting Treasurer) for many years. We welcome Marion Bennathan as our new Treasurer.

## An MBE for Tina Gee

A well deserved MBE has been awarded to one of our Vice-Presidents, Tina Gee, marking her retirement from the curatorship of Keats House. Tina has been a member of the Society since its foundation in 1970, but had been archivist and assistant curator at Keats House since 1965 and before that was a member of the staff of Camden's Libraries and Arts Department.

She remarked to the *Ham & High* that a number of people had congratulated her since the Birthday Honours List was published. "I didn't realise that so many people look at the small print in the honours'.

## A Gift from Christopher Oxford

An old friend of the Society (alas, we hardly see him for he moved to Cheshire many years back) is Christopher Oxford. He telephoned recently to say that he and his wife were to celebrate 60 years of marriage and that he would like to donate £400 to the Society to mark it. We wish them both well and many congratulations and also, of course, many thanks for their generosity. We would like to spend the money on something specific, rather than put it into the general fund. When we have something appropriate we will, of course, announce it in the *Newsletter*.

## TOURING ST PANCRAS CHAMBERS

Seeing the principal rooms of the Midland Grand Hotel (today's St Pancras Chambers) is possible on Open Day weekend. But if you prefer to have a guided tour at a less frenetic time, you may wish to book yourself on a tour run by the present owners of the building (LCSP).

These tours are usually conducted between 10.30am and 15.30pm and are subject to a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 people. Tours last up to two hours and cost £7.50 per person, payable prior to the visit. (Please note that unfortunately there are no facilities for the disabled and no working lifts, and the flights to the top of the stairs are rather strenuous.) For further information, please contact Lynda Nolan at LCSP on 0171-304 3900 or fill in a form which you can get at St Pancras Chambers during the daytime, or from LCSP, Barlow House, St Pancras Station, Euston Road, London NW1 2QP.



## Belsize House – the last version

An extra-illustrated copy of Lysons' *Environs of London* II, 3 (1811), in the Museum of London library, contains (after p350) two unsigned and undated maps of estates in Belsize. One, the more interesting, also lacks a title but it shows the last Belsize House and its grounds, stretching from Haverstock Hill to College Crescent; it is drawn on map cloth at forty inches to the mile, with colour for structures, ponds and the estate boundary. This might be the 'Plan of the Belsize Estate, Hampstead' listed by Barratt at *Annals* III, 342. It was probably made in 1852 on the departure of the final tenant, the retired wine merchant Sebastian Gonzalez Martinez. Demolition followed in the autumn of 1853.

This version of Belsize House, on a new site and apparently built in 1811-12, is illustrated in *Newsletters* 134 and 140, with a side view at p65 of *The Streets of Belsize*. Other maps had suggested (see *Newsletter* 131) that the house lay just south of the roadway of Belsize Avenue, successor to the drive from Haverstock Hill; but the museum map has the main front on the axis of a straight drive on the present line. This front, facing the main road, would therefore straddle the avenue alongside No. 10, some 44 yards NE of the centre of the crossroads below Belsize village.

Just before reaching the house, the drive divides and leads to separate entrances, one on either side of the main front; each *Newsletter* view is taken cross the south drive. Doubtless the gates were kept shut: the twin drives were crossed at this point by the footpath known as Cut-throat Alley.

The main feature of the map is the familiar pentagon of the 1400-yard wall enclosing house, gardens and park. This is conveniently displayed, with the historic mansion of c1663-1750 (the other side of the crossroads), on p20 of John Richardson's *Hampstead One Thousand*. Apart from a late realignment, the only change called for by the present map is in the position of the west corner. The wall, elsewhere high, was low and crenellated in front of the 1811-12 house (see *Newsletter* views).

Working clockwise round the pentagon from the south side of Belsize Avenue, between Nos 14 and 16 there is one end of a short surviving length of the high wall, a useful landmark (see *Newsletter* 171). Further on, the east and SE corners can be identified on the 25" OS map of 1866. Then the present map confirms that the SW corner was at 9 Buckland Crescent, in the back garden if the angle at the corner is correct.

Contrary to maps of 1814 (Newton) and 1835 (Cruchley), the west corner did not rest on Belsize Lane, the estate boundary: it was set back a short distance. In 1841 Martinez built his toll house (see *Newsletter* 126) on the line of the wall close to the

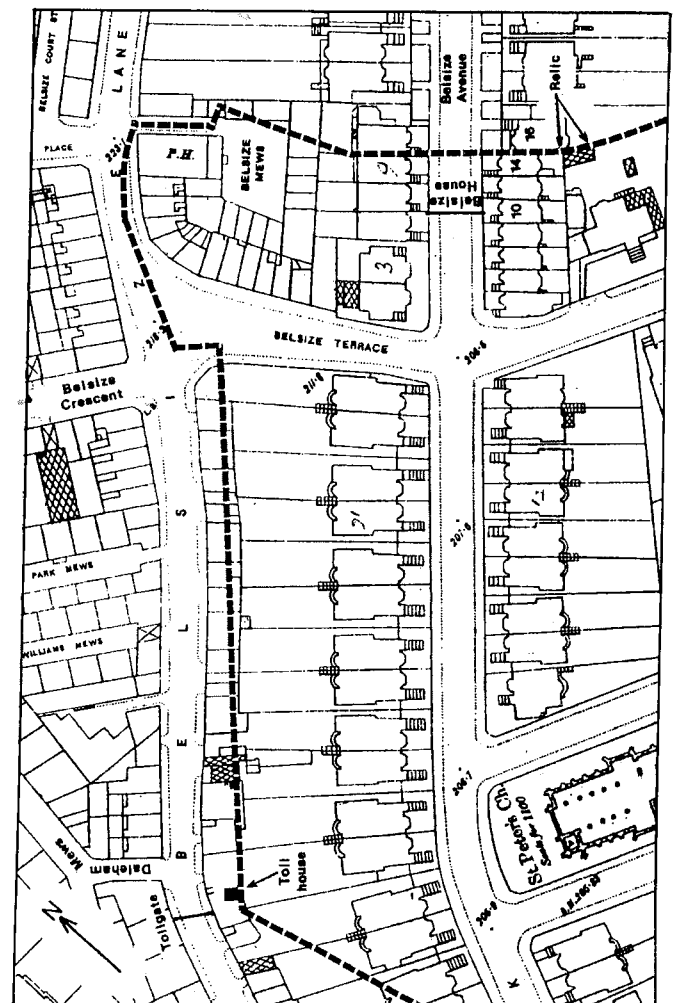
corner. This was the only building to escape the demolition of 1853, which it survived by seven years. From it, other structures extended along the wall; presumably these were sheds, the gate-keeper being a gardener. The nearby tollgate marks the point (just west of Daleham Mews) where the estate boundary, coming from the east, crossed from the south side of the lane to the north.

From the toll house, the wall ran below the lane in a straight line towards the original north corner of the pentagon, in Belsize Mews; but the map reveals that, for the last seventy yards (across Belsize Village), the gardens had been extended by moving the wall up to the lane, creating a new north corner. This realignment is not shown on the 1814 and 1835 maps.

In the first part of the NE wall, above Belsize Avenue, there are two kinks towards Haverstock Hill. These invite discussion but, to summarise, the first (22 yards inside Belsize Mews) appears to be the original north corner, although it is at an angle to the line of the wall from the toll house. The second (between mews and avenue) is suspect, possibly a device to correct a faulty alignment.

Ignoring the second kink, an attempt is made on the plan shown here (based on the 60" OS map of 1916) to plot the final course of the wall in and around Belsize Village. The surviving bit of wall is marked "Relic".

Roy Allen



## Listed Graves

As a postscript to our *Buried in Hampstead*, members may like to know which graves in Hampstead Parish Churchyard have been listed by English Heritage in their latest survey (1998).

There are now twenty graves, compared with the four previously listed, which were those of Sir Walter Besant, John Constable, George du Maurier and John 'Longitude' Harrison.

Newly included are the monuments of Rev. Thomas Ainger, Joanna Baillie, Nathaniel Booth, William & Robert Brooke, Carey & Hart, Zachariah Darby, Thomas Gardner, Eve Hammersley, John Hodgson, Arthur Llewelyn Davies & family (Barrie's Lost Boys), Temple Moore, Lady Elizabeth Norton, William Purton, George Gilbert Scott jnr, Gillam Scott and Norman Shaw.

All are graded II, except for Constable and Carey/Hart, which are II\*. Most of them are illustrated in *Buried*.

Two surprising (to me) omissions are Eric Gill's slate ledger for A.R. Orage and Reynolds Stone's headstone for Kay Kendall, both masterly designs.

**Christopher Wade.**

## A FESTIVAL IN SOMERS TOWN

The Society has a stall at the forthcoming Somers Town Street Festival on 18<sup>th</sup> July, from noon to 8pm. The Festival, organised by the St Pancras Housing Association, will be held at Chalton Street.

## PARLIAMENT HILL IN WARTIME

J. Russon, formerly Corporal of Royal Air Force 80-Wing writes:

I have been told by my old RAF friend and colleague, George F. Morley, that your local history society has been informed [in Joyce Maxwell's book reviewed in January's *Newsletter*] that the civilian population was prevented from using Parliament Hill during the last war. This is incorrect. I served at the Royal Air Force wireless station which was located on the Hill, along with Cpl George Morley, in 1942 and 1943, and I can categorically state that the general public at large was not excluded at any time. The only out-of-bounds section was inside the compound of the wireless station which at all times was guarded by armed personnel.

## A PLAQUE FOR SYLVIA PLATH

English Heritage are to erect a plaque to Sylvia Plath in Chalk Farm. It will not, however, be at her last address - 23 Fitzroy Road, the house once also occupied by W.B. Yeats - but after consultation with her family, it will be at 3 Chalcot Square. The inscription will be: Sylvia Plath/1932-1963/Poet/lived here/1960-1961.

## John Brandon Jones

We were sorry indeed to hear of the death of John Brandon Jones, an old friend of the Society. He died on May Day at the age of 90.

As an architect, he was brought up within the arts-and-crafts movement, though he did not care to belong to any particular 'school'. He was, however, much influenced by Voysey (about whom he gave a lecture to the Society), and he was not fond of the modernism of Le Corbusier. He had a substantial hand in several public buildings, such as the town halls for Worthing, Watford and Staines. His masterpiece was the Hampshire County Council buildings in Winchester, a building which Pevsner was sniffy about.

Just as importantly he was prominent in the foundation of the Victorian Society, and was a valued member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Art Workers' Guild. Since 1952 he and his family had lived in a house in Hampstead that he much admired, designed by Philip Webb.

## A HORNSEY GIFT

The Hornsey Historical Society have been given a number of watercolours of Hornsey, painted in the 1920s by Percy Marks (1866-1955). Marks had a failed career in the Stock Exchange and was later to be found, during the First World War, in the censorship department of the War Office where he worked in twelve languages. After the war he went to Upper Silesia as secretary to the liaison officer during the Plebiscite to decide whether the area should be German or Polish.

From 1920 he lived at 3 Cranley Gardens, Muswell Hill Road (now renumbered 49 Muswell Hill Road) where, from his top floor window, he gained a good view eastwards over Hornsey.

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

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 175

Sep 1999

## The Streets of Old Holborn

7.30pm, Thurs 23rd September

Officers' Mess of the Inns of Court and City Yeomanry,  
Chancery Lane WC2.

The Society is about to launch yet another publication – this time *Streets of Old Holborn*. This book, in the same format as previous 'Streets' publications, is primarily the work of Steven Denford and David Hellings, but with major contributions from Ruth and David Hayes. It deals mainly with the parish of St Andrew above the Bars, in other words, the part of St Andrew Holborn that was not included within the City boundaries in medieval times. The book encompasses Ely House, Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, various Inns of Chancery, just to name a few of the grander establishments, but Holborn had a darker side which is covered in this meticulously researched addition to the series.

The authors of the book will be talking about the area in September and, without spoiling your appetite for a copy, recounting some of the nuggets of information they found.

We are meeting for the first time in the Officers' Mess of the Inns of Court and City Yeomanry. The official entrance to this is 10 Stone Buildings in Lincoln's Inn, but for this talk we are using the entrance in Chancery Lane. It is about 50 yards down Chancery Lane from High Holborn, on the right hand side. It is a stone faced building, set behind railings, and there is a plaque outside identifying it. It is before you get to an entrance to Lincoln's Inn and is opposite Chancery House (nos. 51-64). And if that isn't clear enough, we shall hope to have someone posted outside the door.

Please note: Because of security requirements, we need to know who is coming to this talk. Those members who have not already telephoned Dr Peter Woodford (435 2088) to indicate that they are, should let him know well *before* the meeting otherwise entry could be very problematical.

## George Romney

7.30pm, Thurs 21st October

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

David Cross, author of a recent book on Romney, is our speaker in October. Romney settled in Hampstead Village in 1796, buying an old house and stable in Holly Bush Hill, and adding extra land in the next two years on which he built a studio. However, the project nearly bankrupted him. According to Barratt, it all cost him £3,000 but he was able to sell it for only £357 when he left in 1799. While works were going on Romney himself lived in a house on The Mount. The story of this part of the artist's life is one of much hope and great disappointment.

## The Millennium Project

As reported in the last *Newsletter*, the Society is to embark on a Millennium Project despite some reservations about celebrating the millennium at all. We have been granted £22,000 for the purposes of research into the history of Camden. We have divided the project into three strands. One will be devoted to 'academic' research – detailed work on about 70 topics that we think need writing up. The second will be, for want of a better description, a reminiscence project. In this we are aiming to involve as many people as possible in remembering particular things in the past – workplace, school, church, society, an event etc. We will hope to enlist the aid of unpaid interviewers to do this work and write up the material. The third strand is photographic. We aim to photograph every street in Camden in one week in the year 2000. All this material will eventually be archived in the Local Studies and Archives Centre.

We recently interviewed applicants for the post of the Project's Co-ordinator, whose fee will be paid for by the Council grant. We realised as we went along that the task of supervising the second two strands of activity, as outlined above, will be very time consuming and so it was with much relief and gratitude that we heard that our Publications Editor, Dr Peter Woodford, was prepared to oversee the first strand in an honorary capacity. This is a very generous contribution to the Project.

To co-ordinate the second two parts of the project we interviewed six applicants and appointed Robert Leon

who, fortuitously, is also a member of the Society. His address is 21 Acol Court, Acol Road, NW6 3AE. His telephone number is 0171-372 5784 and fax 0171-372 2368. Robert will need all the help and contacts that he can get in this. So, if you have ideas, or some time to interview people and write up the interviews, please contact him.

## A day near the seaside

Camden History Society's outing this year visited two fascinating houses of very different kinds. First came no. 13 Brunswick Square, Hove. Here the local Regency project is restoring the house to its original state. It will then be open to the public full time. Nick Tyson described the work in hand, much helped by some original sketches made by a lady residing in the house in Regency times.

Mr Tyson also touched on the development of the square by a Mr Busby. This gifted architect died young or he might have been more widely known. Features common to most of his houses were described. He liked bathrooms, but most buyers preferred to bath in a tub in front of the fire. He also favoured piped water. However, with water coming down from the chalk downs above, residents often preferred to sink wells. There was a picture of a pump in the back yard from which staff conveyed water to various parts of the house.

The lives of the staff – men and women – were described and revealed. Because the basement of no. 13 is to be offices and storerooms, that of no. 10 is to be as it was in the time of George IV as Prince of Wales. First on a brief tour of no. 10 came the housekeeper's room, then the deep and dark wine cellar. There was a kitchen with the dreadful cupboard beds to accommodate anyone for whom room could not be found in the attics.

In those days keeping perishables fresh in warm weather was a problem. In no. 10, there were enormous meat safes, almost small rooms. They are believed to have been among the few to have survived. Lasting valuables were stored with the wine, and sealing was being used on the locks in the absence of house owner or butler.

Everything ran a little late, cutting the lunch interval. There was little time to find café or pub and those picnicking had to do so in one of those sea-fret windy showers which can spoil a visit to the coast. It was, however, soon on to St Mary's Bramber. This is not a church but a former monastic hostel for pilgrims, neglected with one wing burnt down, then restored. It is now occupied by the Linton and Thorogood families, being lived in and loved, as well as filled with treasures. Camden connections are close. First, the original hostel was established by Bishop of Winchester, founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, from which came the Rev. Basil Jellicoe to his wonderful work in Somers Town. The lordship of the Manor was

in the hands of the Calthorpe family, who had much property along and near Gray's Inn Road.

Mary, our guide, showed everyone the remains of the arch through which pilgrims came, the table made with wood from one of Nelson's ships, the wonderful embroidered Jacobean bedspread, a magnificent clock, the historic books and a collection of dolls. These were figures of kings and queens from medieval to Victorian times. They were made by a husband and wife, he making the dolls, she dressing them.

Tea was in the music room, containing several historic pianos. Peter Thorogood played for everyone on one of these. Then he spoke of his interest in the poet, Thomas Hood, on which he is an authority. He also told everyone about his plans to extend the already beautiful gardens, which have been reduced in size over the ages. Models and plans were available to everyone before time came for the drive home. Feminists were pleased to have a capable woman driver.

## WARTIME ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Dr L. Goulding writes re 'Parliament Hill in Wartime' in *Newsletter* 174:

I can confirm that the greater part of Parliament Hill was open to the public during the last war. From 1940-44 I worked at the National Institute for Medical Research in Holly Hill, Hampstead and each day I cycled across Parliament Hill from my home which was then in Highgate Road. Occasionally I met a Bren gun carrier, generally in the region of the Hampstead Ponds, but the encounter was always amicable with no suggestion that I was trespassing.

Joyce Maxwell also writes to say that in her publication she had no intention of implying that the whole of Parliament Hill was cut off from civilians during the last war. A large part of the lower slopes was dug up for allotments and therefore the question did not arise.

## THE LAMAS CONFERENCE

This year's Local History Conference organised by LAMAS is on Saturday, 20 November, 10am-5pm at the Museum of London. The theme this year is 'The Effect of Tudor and Stuart Royalty on the Greater London Area'. Talks on politics, buildings and open spaces are included.

Tickets are £4, including tea. Applications should be sent to Local History Conference, 36 Church Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7PX.

## Book Review

*Housing is not Enough*

by Malcolm J. Holmes. Published by the St Pancras Housing Association, St Richard's House, 110 Eversholt Street, NW1 1BS (Tel 0171 209 9222). Hardback, 117pp, £12.95 plus £1.50 postage.

The St Pancras Housing Association is one of the oldest and best-known housing associations in the country. Established in 1924, its original good works were in the slums of Somers Town where its founder, Fr Basil Jellicoe, was head of a mission from Magdalen College, Oxford. Aided by the organising ability of Edith Neville and Irene Barclay, and with a flare for attracting celebrities to its fund raising, the Association transformed swathes of Somers Town and Kentish Town.

Malcolm Holmes, Camden's archivist, is the author of this book which not only recounts the housing work of the Association but also gives us a lot more detail of non-housing activities, for therein lies the title of the book – the people who founded the Association knew and intended, well before social services departments were formed, that housing was only one part of the operation. The creation of communities, the provision of such things as nurseries and care for the elderly, are part and parcel of the Association's work. It also ran two public houses.

There is a very useful summary of the estates and individual properties erected by the Association, as well as numerous illustrations, ranging from slums to schools. It is a handsome publication, well designed by Ivor Kamlish. My only criticism was the use of bold type each time the initials SPH (St Pancras Housing) appeared – they appear quite a lot.

John Richardson

## Somers Town and St Mary's Church

An historical exhibition featuring Somers Town and St Mary's church in Eversholt Street runs at the Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library, Theobalds Road from 2 September to 9 October.

The life of the community is dramatically captured in photographs and prints, many of which record what was once one of the worst slum areas in the country. The exhibition coincides with the publication of *Housing is not Enough* by Malcolm Holmes (which celebrates the 75th year of the St Pancras Housing Association) and features much of the work of the Association.

St Mary's was originally called Somers Town Chapel. It was built as a chapel-of-ease to St Pancras New Church and became a parish church itself in 1968. Charles Dickens, who lived nearby 1824-28, attended services here soon after the church opened. The

architects were William and Henry William Inwood, who also built the better-known classical St Pancras New Church in Euston Road, where the Society held its annual meeting earlier this year.

For further details, telephone 0171 413 6342.

## A great architect remembered

Sir John Soane is, for the general public, now remembered for his marvellous house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. But he was also one of England's greatest architects – visible works today include Dulwich Picture Gallery, St Peter's Walworth, Holy Trinity, Marylebone Road and Pitshanger Manor in Ealing and, of course, his own house which he fashioned to contain his amazing collection of architectural and archaeological items, and his thousands of architectural drawings. Soane was buried in the burial ground of St Giles-in-the-Fields next to St Pancras Old Church, where the two burial grounds are now a public garden. The Soane monument there and the Karl Marx monument in Highgate Cemetery are the only two tombs in London to be listed Grade I.

The story of Soane's life and work is the subject of a major exhibition at the Royal Academy from 11 September – 3 December. It includes a 70% recreation of one of the finest of the banking halls he designed for his famous Bank of England building, which was demolished in favour of the present building.

## EDUCATIONAL COURSES

The University of North London in Holloway Road has a number of BA courses on history. These include studies of London, Empire and European history, social history in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. In September they are holding Open Evenings at which potential applicants are welcome to attend. These are on Thursdays, 5pm to 8pm at the Learning Centre, which is opposite Holloway Road tube station.

Also, Geoff Saul is trying to get a WEA course together to study London's water supply. Unfortunately, it will be in Elstree, but if any member is interested he can be contacted on 01923 774998. Interestingly, Mr Saul has had access to thousands of water company records, some dating back to 1600. These include those for the Hampstead Water Company, New River Company and the West Middlesex Waterworks.

## RUBBISHING A MYTH

There are several Camden myths: the Vale of Health was a refuge during the Great Plague; Holly Village was built by the Baroness Coutts for her retainers or staff; and Queen Boudicca is buried beneath King's Cross station. The third one has recently resurfaced in a review in *The Independent* of Douglas Greenwood's book, *Who's Buried Where in England*. The author suggests that the crucial battle with the Romans took place at this site and that she is buried there. Fortunately, David Hayes was able to get a letter published to refute it:



A scene c.1905, easily recognisable today as the Camden Town, North London station, at the junction of Royal College Street and Camden Road.

'Douglas Greenwood rehearses the commonly held myth of an imagined battle at 'King's Cross', probably dreamed up by Victorian antiquarians. According to Tacitus, the British horde first sacked London, then swept northward to ravage Verulamium (St Albans). Suetonius, meanwhile, retreated north along Watling Street to join the Roman infantry on its return south-eastward from northern Wales.

Historians generally agree that the engagement leading to the defeat of the British, and Boudicca's subsequent death by self-poisoning, took place at an unknown spot in the Midlands, on the line of the A5. The name of London's Battle Bridge (now King's Cross) is thought to be, prosaically, a corruption of an earlier 'Bradford' (or broad ford).'

Thankyou David, but it is unlikely to make any difference!

### A LONDON PARISH MAP

The remarkable publications of the London Topographical Society include this year a map of the Ecclesiastical Divisions within the County of London in 1903. By that date most of the sub-divisions of parishes had occurred, so the map is a very useful visual record for historians of London. It is reproduced in colour and is folded up into an A5ish size. Copies may be obtained from Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock place WC1H 9SH, price £5 plus £1 post.

### Advance notice

Please note these dates in your diary:

*Nov 18* at Pax Lodge: Camden Characters. This consists of short talks which remember lesser known but notable residents of Camden in the past 100 years. Subjects so far include Una Dillon, Peggy Duff, Barbara Castle, Rayner Heppinstall, Ernest Claremont and Sir George Williams.

*9 Dec* at Burgh House: Roger Cline on the History of Patents.

### TALKS AT THE CANAL MUSEUM

The London Canal Museum is situated just over the border in New Wharf Road, Islington, and contains a large ice-well as well as many relics of the Regent's Canal. It also has a lively series of lectures. On 7 October there is a talk about the renovation of the Paddington Basin; on 4 November, Brian Collings of the Guild of Waterway Artists, will be talking on 'Roses, Castles and Canvas' and on 2 Dec 'Brindley's Legacy' will be Dr Roger Squires' subject. Lectures commence at 7.30pm, and admission at the door is £2.50 (£1.25 concessions).

### BECOME A FRIEND OF ST PETER'S

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square has a building fund and there is a Friends of St Peter's group which is energetically fund-raising. The church was consecrated in 1859 and occupies part of the site of Belsize House.

The church has been offered £102,500 by the Lottery fund, and has had matching funding of £35,000 from the Diocese, but needs £450,000 in all. If you want to become a Friend or make a donation please contact the Vicar, the Rev. Jack Harris at St Peter's Vicarage, 53 Belsize Square NW3 4HY (0171-794 4020).

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The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 176

Nov 1999

## Camden Characters

Thurs. Nov 18th, 7.30pm  
Pax Lodge, Lyndhurst Road, NW3

Our November meeting is devoted to some notable Camden people of this last century. There are six talks of about ten minutes, given by members of the Society. The subjects and speakers are Una Dillon by Ian Norrie, Barbara Castle by Robin Woolven, Rayner Heppinstall by Jean Tsushima, Ernest Claremont by Christopher Nottage, Sir George Williams by Geoffrey Palmer and Peggy Duff by John Richardson.

Una Dillon, of course, founded Dillon's Bookshop in Gower Street; sadly her name is now erased from the shop front and it is now called Waterstone's. Barbara Castle needs no introduction. She has been in the forefront of national politics for many years, but as Barbara Betts, she was a St Pancras borough councillor - Robin Woolven has been interviewing her about those days. Rayner Heppinstall was a BBC luminary and Ernest Claremont was a business partner of the car manufacturer, Henry Royce. Sir George Williams was the founder of the YMCA and Peggy Duff was not only a local councillor but the general secretary of, first the campaign to abolish capital punishment, and then of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

*(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.)*

## Reminiscences of a Patent Agent

Thurs 9 Dec, 7.30pm  
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3.

The mysterious world of patent agents is the subject of Roger Cline's talk in December. Until his recent retirement, Roger (our former Treasurer) was himself a partner in a patent agents. He will also tell us something of the history and development of this very important part of business and invention.

## Catching the Past

The CHS Millennium History Project funded by Camden Council now has a name -

*Catching the Past:*

*Camden's Millennium History Project*

Robert Leon, the co-ordinator of the part of the project which will record people's memories, has been busy gathering contacts since his appointment in September. He would welcome CHS members who could do a few interviews and he would also like to hear of people who could be persuaded to write their own remembrance of a past event, organisation, business etc without the presence of an interviewer. He is sure that there are in the Society's membership people who have something to record that would be of interest to local historians a hundred years ahead. Or else members may know of people who would be interested in joining in. Please give Robert a ring on 0171-372 5784.

Peter Woodford, who is in charge of the 'academic' part of the project has a list of 70 topics to research (which has already been sent to members). He reports a very good response - about twenty papers are in progress so far. His telephone number is 0171-435 2088.

'Click Week', a week in the year 2000 in which the borough will be photographed by societies, schools, individuals etc, will have a date in the near future. As to exhibitions, there is a good chance of an historical Camden display in St Pancras Chambers in June of next year. A possible theme is 'Camden Firsts' which will depict fields in which, within the old areas of Camden, we were first and foremost in London or the country. This can include transport, the fight for open spaces, artisan housing, the University etc.

Another strand of the whole project is the encouragement of street scrapbooks. This will be organised by the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*. The idea is to encourage as many residents as possible to join together to compile their own street scrapbook, with text and photographs, both old and new, so as to give some idea of the flavour and appearance of their street in the year 2000.

Lastly, we understand that Melvyn Bragg has agreed, via the good offices of Cllr Gerry Harrison, to be patron of the project.

## Beneath the Streets of Belsize

One of the perils and pleasures of doing amateur local history is to go off at tangents. Weeks of research can happily be devoted to a mere footnote. What follows is only a glorified caption to the illustration on p.12 of my article in *Camden History Review* 23, but even this has its own copious references which, rather than clog up the *Newsletter*, I can supply to anyone who asks.

For two months in the year 1845, Hampstead was the focus of London attention; hardly a day passed without it being mentioned in the newspapers, and visitors increased in their thousands. The event which caused such a sensation was the murder of James Delarue by Thomas Hocker. Both young men were teachers of music and both were in love with the same Hampstead girl. The newspapers spare no detail of the murder, inquest, trial, imprisonment and execution. Column after column, even whole pages, are densely packed with verbatim reports in tiny type. Here I will concentrate on the conduct of the early Victorian public, and on establishing the exact location.

On 21 February, a night of intense frost and intermittent moonlight, Delarue was attacked by Hocker in the fields near Belsize House. Repeated screams of "Murder!" were heard by a baker delivering to no. 6 Haverstock Terrace (now 28 Belsize Grove) and, over half a mile away across the fields to the south-west, by people near the Swiss Cottage and on Avenue Road. (The terrain is well shown on the map on p.29 of *CHR* 22.) It emerged that Delarue was bludgeoned about the head, struggled, fell several times and "died very hard". The illustration in *CHR* 23, using the imaginative device of simultaneous depiction, shows Hocker stepping back to survey his victim's body which is, at the same moment, being discovered by Sergeant Fletcher and Constable Abbott. Another newspaper illustrates the scene after the event (Fig. 1 below) empty of figures, but giving more emphasis to the buildings in the background, which I believe to be

Regent Villas about three fields away, exactly as the Avenue Road witness described.

Whenever the crime was referred to in print in later years, it was said to have taken place by the north-east wall of Belsize House, on a path which came to be known as Cut Throat Lane. While some of the contemporary evidence does hint at this location, most of the descriptions and measurements given by witnesses at the inquest and trial point to a different site: somewhere in the triangle of ground now bordered by Lancaster Grove, Eton Avenue and Strathray Gardens. Such was the notoriety of the lonely Belsize footpaths, that it is not improbable that someone did (unlike Delarue) have his throat cut north-east of the house, and that two or more stories have been conflated over the years.

Delarue's body was taken straight away to the usual place for inquests, the Yorkshire Grey Tavern at Hampstead (Fig. 2). A week later "the excitement created by this tragical occurrence has not abated and the eagerness manifested even among the higher class of residents to hear the evidence may be imagined from the fact that premiums were offered to secure admission to the inquest room." Police reinforcements were called in, windows got broken in the rush and the large yard in front of the Yorkshire Grey "presented the appearance of a fair". As Hocker was bundled into the omnibus taking him to prison, "he was loudly groaned at by the multitude who were assembled." It was reported that "the whole of Hampstead and its environs present a scene of the greatest animation and excitement; thousands of persons pouring in from various points in the metropolis in order to gratify their morbid taste for the horrible." "The curiosity of the public... seems to increase day by day. The numbers who visited... were not confined to persons of the lower classes of society. Several carriages, containing ladies, drove up to the field, and gentlemen on horseback, attended by their grooms, rode across to view the place. Not content with seeing, many brought away boughs and twigs from the surrounding trees, and chips from the fence against which the unfortu-



1. Scene of the recent murder at Hampstead. *The Pictorial Times*, 1 March 1845.





2. *The Yorkshire Grey Tavern, Hampstead, photographed in 1880, a few years before its demolition for the southern extension of Heath Street. (Camden Local Studies and Archives)*

nate man fell after he was struck, and whereon the marks of the bloody fingers of the murderer were imprinted... It may be remembered that after the murder of Weare by Thurtell, the rage for collecting relics was so great that... the water in the pond in which the body was thrown was diminished by the bottles-full carried away to be stored in the museums of private collections."

According to *The Times*, three weeks after the murder, "the scene had been visited by thousands of persons, notwithstanding that the field have been covered with a thick layer of manure in order to renovate the trodden down grass. Hundreds of the fairer sex were seen wending their way up to their ankles in mire, to gratify their morbid curiosity."

In preparation for the spectacle of Hocker's execution at 8am on 28 April, extra barriers were put up around the scaffold outside Newgate. "The parties holding houses in the Old Bailey are anticipating a rich harvest," observed *The Times*. As Calcraft the hangman stepped forward to pinion Hocker's arms, the wretched man fainted, so "by artificial means the unhappy criminal was resuscitated from a state resembling death only to undergo death in its reality." *The Illustrated London News* complained that "Some of the newspapers have pandered to a very vitiated taste by giving doubtful but disgusting details of incidents concerned with the murder and with Hocker's career... There is a growing disposition on the part of a few journalists to engraft a mass of fiction upon a very small foundation of fact." So the *ILN* must presumably be believed when it reports on another page that at least 12,000 watched as Hocker was launched into eternity.

Delarue's own funeral at Hampstead parish church was attended by hundreds of people, and his burial in the as yet unidentified 'third ground'.

**Hazel Brothers**

## New Camden Books

A crowded audience in September heard David and Ruth Hayes, and Steve Denford describe some aspects of Holborn's history, elaborating on parts of the new CHS publication, *Streets of Old Holborn*, which they helped to compile. This book, splendidly designed as usual by Ivor Kamlish, and edited by Peter Woodford, is now on sale, price £5.95.

Holborn, a borough concocted in 1900, was a complicated mix. It contained part of the parish of St Andrew's Holborn (the other part had been annexed by the City of London, together with the parish church itself, in the 12th century), the liberties of Saffron Hill and Ely Rents, the small parishes of Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn, together with Furnival's Inn, and the parish of St George the Martyr. It is this part of Holborn with which *Streets of Old Holborn* is concerned. To the west was the parish of St Giles in the Fields and its breakaway parish, St George's Bloomsbury, some of which has already been dealt with, with St Giles still to come.

Two books are to be published by Historical Publications Ltd in the latter part of November. One is *A History of Camden: Hampstead, Holborn, St Pancras*, by John Richardson (£15.50), and *Kilburn and West Hampstead Past* by Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms (£14.95). Both volumes are well illustrated. *A History of Camden* is the first to compress the already crowded histories of the three component boroughs that made up Camden, into one volume. It is being produced in association with the London Borough of Camden to mark the Millennium. The author's view is that Camden is *the* microcosm of London's history, involved in and affected by almost all the experiences and innovations that have improved or beset the capital. He is also aware that there are now generations of local people who have no idea that Camden is a new creation and that three older areas are at its base.

Society members, Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms are well known for their enthusiasm for their locality. They have been particularly active in the Friends of Hampstead Cemetery, and their new book which combines Kilburn and West Hampstead, will fill a large gap in local history publishing.

### THE CANAL MUSEUM

The London Canal Museum is run by the Canal Museum Trust, a registered charity. The Trust is a membership organisation and is open to members of the public. The usual membership rate is £25 but the Museum is inviting CHS members who have been a member for one year, to join the Trust at the introductory rate of £5. A membership form may be obtained from our Secretary, Jane Ramsay, Garden Flat, 62 Fellows Road, NW3 3LJ.

## Listed graves at Hampstead Cemetery

In *Newsletter* 174 we noted various listed graves in Hampstead churchyard. Marianne Colloms writes to say that English Heritage has also listed 18 tombs and monuments in Hampstead Cemetery, Fortune Green. These are for Jacob Arnhold; Charles Barritt; Mattie Bianchi; Sir William Kendal Cremer, politician and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize; Eleanor Adgey Edgar; Banister Fletcher and Sir Banister Flight Fletcher, both eminent architects; Arthur Frankau, businessman; Julia Frankau (who wrote as Frank Danby); Gilbert Frankau, writer; Sir William Goscombe John, sculptor; Mordaunt Allen Gwynne; Lord Lister, pioneer of antiseptic surgery; Marie Lloyd, music hall star; Joseph Maas, tenor; Joan Moggridge; the Rider family; Ardath de Sales Stean; George Adolphus Storey, painter; Arnold Stuart (an unusual memorial by Voysey); James Wilson Pasha, engineer.

To become a Friend of Hampstead Cemetery contact the group at 69 Fortune Green Road, NW6 1DR.

## BURGH HOUSE HAPPENINGS

Until 16th January Hampstead Museum at Burgh House is staging an exhibition to celebrate the beginning of its Hampstead collection twenty years ago. It aims at introducing various acquisitions to the public which either have been selected as representing a particular theme in the collection or else because of an interesting story behind their acquisition. The Constable Room will be hung with twenty or so framed pictures which rarely emerge from storage, while more objects will be displayed in the Wells Room. Christopher Wade who, together with his wife Diana, began the Museum in 1979, relates in the latest Burgh House bulletin that while most museums begin with something, even if only stuffed birds, at Burgh House they began with nothing but a bare room. Since then the Museum has received over 2000 gifts and loans and many people have welcomed a place in which to deposit some souvenir of Hampstead. Since 1979 there have been well over 100 exhibitions.

Readers of the local press will also know that the twentieth anniversary of the opening to the public of Burgh House as a community centre, was also celebrated in September. Congratulations to all those who have seen it through its difficult years.

## HEATHER ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Peter Woodford writes:

Volunteers calling themselves 'Heath Hands' have this month been planting a bank of heather on Hampstead Heath, saying they are restoring what was there in previous centuries. Would any member wish to challenge the assertion that it was visibly present up until World War I – one theory that is currently being touted? No prizes except a place in the guidebooks if you can come up with firm evidence either way. Answers to the *Newsletter* or to Bobby de Joia, chair of

the steering committee overseeing 'Heath Hands', at Greenmoor, Vale of Health, NW3 1AZ

## HAMPSTEAD FUNERAL PARLOURS

Jenny Woolf is after information about Hampstead's undertakers in Victorian times. In the late 1850s, did any specialist funeral parlours exist in Hampstead, and if so, what were they called, and where were they? If there were no specialist funeral parlours, what kind of arrangements would have been made to bury a small tradesman of modest means, at that time? Please write to her at 17 Canfield Gardens, NW6 3JP, with a copy to the *Newsletter* please.

## THE OLD DAIRY AT CROUCH HILL

One of the delights of Crouch Hill is the old dairy building at the corner of Hanley Road, with its exterior decorative panels. Though the business is long gone, seven panels still adorn the façade, depicting dairy scenes in the 19th century, using a plastering technique called sgraffito which was revived in this country in the 1870s at the National Art School in Kensington. The business was that of Friern Manor Dairy Farm which began in Peckham.

The interesting story of the business and of the buildings at Crouch Hill, is told in a new publication of the Hornsey Historical Society by John Hinshelwood. It is an illustrated 16pp booklet which may be obtained from the Society at The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL, price £2.50 plus 35p postage & packing.

## SHOP GOODS

Roy Allen writes:

What is now a delicatessen at 56 Rosslyn Hill used to display, in a series of panels round the inside walls, a list of the goods once on offer. The panels have disappeared but in 1975 the following was recorded: Selected China, India and Ceylon Teas; Coffees, Colonial and Foreign Produce; Bass's Ale and Guinness Stout; W. & A. Gilbey's Wines, Spirits and Liquers; Brooms, Brushes, Mats and Household Requisites; Table Jellies, Dessert Fruits; Mineral Waters; Choicest English and Foreign Butters; Pickled and Smoked Tongues; Wiltshire Bacon, York Hams, Bath Chaps.

Presumably this was a relic of Dudman's Hampstead Borough Stores, whose name may still be seen high up on the shop front with the date 1890.

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