

# newsletter

No 207

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jan 2005

## Eleanor Farjeon and Family in Hampstead

Thurs. 20 Jan, 7.30pm

Rossllyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Rossllyn Hill NW3

The Farjeons were well-known in Hampstead. Eleanor's father, Benjamin, was a novelist and she and her brothers and sisters were brought up in Belsize Park. Eleanor received, according to the *DNB*, no formal education but did have the run of her father's 8,000 volume library. These circumstances led to her being, again according to the *DNB*, out of touch with reality but in her twenties she shook this off and became a competent writer herself. Though she wrote a great deal, she is best remembered nowadays for her books for children. She settled at 20 Perrins Walk off Heath Street in 1920, and remained there until her death in 1965.

The talk on this interesting family will be given by Anne Harvey.

## The Making of the Foundling Museum

Thurs 17 Feb, 7.30pm

Education Centre, Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square WC1

The Foundling Museum together with its Education Centre opened only last year, dedicated to the achievements of the original Foundling Hospital and its successor's work with children. It has, of course, a renowned art collection, which originated with the custom in the 18th century of sympathetic artists, such as Hogarth, Gainsborough and Reynolds, donating canvasses to the institution. In this way the Foundling became an early art gallery.

Though in a 1930s' building these pictures and other mementoes of a laudable institution are displayed in interiors saved from the now demolished Foundling Hospital building in Coram's Fields.

Our speaker is Rhian Harris, Director of the Museum.

## Advance Notice

Please put these dates in your new diary:

*17 March:* London's Maddest Church? An appreciation of the architecture of E B Lamb. Speaker Anthony Edwards, at St Martin's, Gospel Oak.

*21 April:* Peter Baynes on John Passmore Edwards. Venue not yet fixed.

*19 May:* To mark 60 years since the end of the 2nd World War, Robin Woolven will be talking about the state of St Pancras in May 1945. Venue not yet fixed.

*16 June:* Annual General Meeting at Rossllyn Hill Unitarian Chapel. Speaker Ruth Rowntree on the 'Religious Devils of Hampstead'.

## LOCAL STUDIES – TEMPORARY OPENING TIMES

Holborn Library is being refurbished in January. As a result the Local Studies and Archives Centre will be open only by appointment from 4 January until 29 January. Normal opening hours will resume on 31 January.

To make an appointment telephone 7974 6342, or email on [localstudies@camden.gov.uk](mailto:localstudies@camden.gov.uk).

## AN AWARD FOR SOCIETY PUBLICATION

Our publication, *Victorian Seven Dials*, by David Hayes, was joint runner-up for the LAMAS Local History award. He received a certificate, and a cheque which will be shared between David and the designer, Ivor Kamlisch.

## BURGH HOUSE CHANGES

In receipt of lottery funding, the construction and renovation at Burgh House can now take place. From the 1st of March the ground floor rooms, the first floor office and the Hampstead Museum, will be closed for about ten weeks. During that time, the floor in the Music Room will be replaced, and a new accessible entry way into the Room from the courtyard will be built.

The house will reopen in May, though work will continue at the rear of the house. During the building work the Buttery will remain open.

# The Scattering

248pp, 245 x 185mm, 83 ills

By Gerry Harrison

ISBN 0 948667 99 0

Published by the London Irish Centre, price £12.95

Produced by Historical Publications.

## "In any case the libraries are better"

The above is perhaps the most unusual explanation given by one of the many thousands of young Irish people who could see no option but to "take the boat" to England in search of a better life after the Second World War. The majority of these were from a rural background and were completely unprepared for the cultural shock of London. Jobs, or at least jobs of a certain kind such as in construction work or hotels, may have been available but finding a roof over one's head was a real problem. It was not uncommon to see the sign *No Blacks, No Irish* in lodging house windows. To the people arriving at Euston at 5 o'clock in the morning the volunteers from the Legion of Mary handing out cards printed with the details of the Irish Centre in Camden Town would have seemed a god-send.

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the London Irish Centre, one of the very few organisations to take a lead in alleviating the desperate physical and indeed spiritual needs of these emigrants. The provision of hostel places and collating a register of lodging houses became a central aim of the organisation. The importance of finding jobs for the emigrants led to the setting up of an employment agency and the provision of bars and halls for cultural events provided a focal point for people to meet and counter the isolation so often felt by emigrant communities.

Gerry Harrison has made extensive use of surviving archives and conducted more than fifty first-hand interviews with many of the personalities involved. The result is a compelling and highly readable account of the struggles to bring the Irish Centre into existence and the challenges it continues to meet up to the present day.

The London Irish Centre at 52 Camden Square was formally opened by the Archbishop of Armagh on 27 September 1955. Whilst this book traces the history of the organisation, it is perhaps even more the story of a group of individuals who had and continue to have a vision. Alongside the concerted efforts of various Catholic priests such as the first Director of the Centre, Father Tom McNamara, can be placed the many professional workers and volunteers who have given so much over the years.

Although this book celebrates these and the many thousands of people helped by the Centre it is not just an eulogy. It is a warts and all story of human beings. Mistakes were undoubtedly made. Sometimes people were dealing with matters beyond their capabilities. At times crippling debts threatened to bring the Centre

down. Relations with their neighbours in the Square have not always been good. The book also deals with the particularly difficult times in the '70s and '80s when the conflict in Northern Ireland brought suspicion on the whole Irish community and the Centre was often raided by the police.

On a visit in 1999 the Irish President, Mary McAleese, summed up the huge contribution the Centre has made to the Irish community in London. She called it "...a place of belonging, of recognition where you can find a friend or get a helping hand, celebrate or get some advice ... it is a credit to its founders and to the generations who have sustained and developed it."

There is no doubt that the Irish Centre will continue adapting to the needs of the Irish in London for many years to come and this book does full justice to what has been and continues to be a remarkable organisation.

Aidan Flood

## VERSIONS OF BELSIZE HOUSE

Roy Allen writes:

It's a bit late in the day but, looking again at *Newsletters* 131 and 132, I realise that the opening paragraph of 132 does not make sense in the absence of a paragraph which went missing at the end of 131.

The missing paragraph is as follows: 'When was the house built? In the census of May 1811 there were only six people here but much of Everett's establishment might have been at his town house in Russell Square. The following winter, in a general review of rateable values, Belsize House stands out with an increase of 22%, soon raised to 28½%. It looks as if the date is 1811-12.'

## SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

The annual subscription of £10 is due on 1 March; if you do not pay by standing order or if you have not already paid in advance, please send your cheque to the membership secretary, Roger Cline, at Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH immediately. If you are not sure whether you have paid by standing order, please check your next bank statement and rectify any omission then.

## THE GOAD PLANS

The Goad Plans are very detailed plans of commercial premises made for insurance purposes. A number of Camden areas for the 1880s are shown on some of them. These have now been put onto microfiche and are available at the Local Studies and Archives Centre in Holborn.

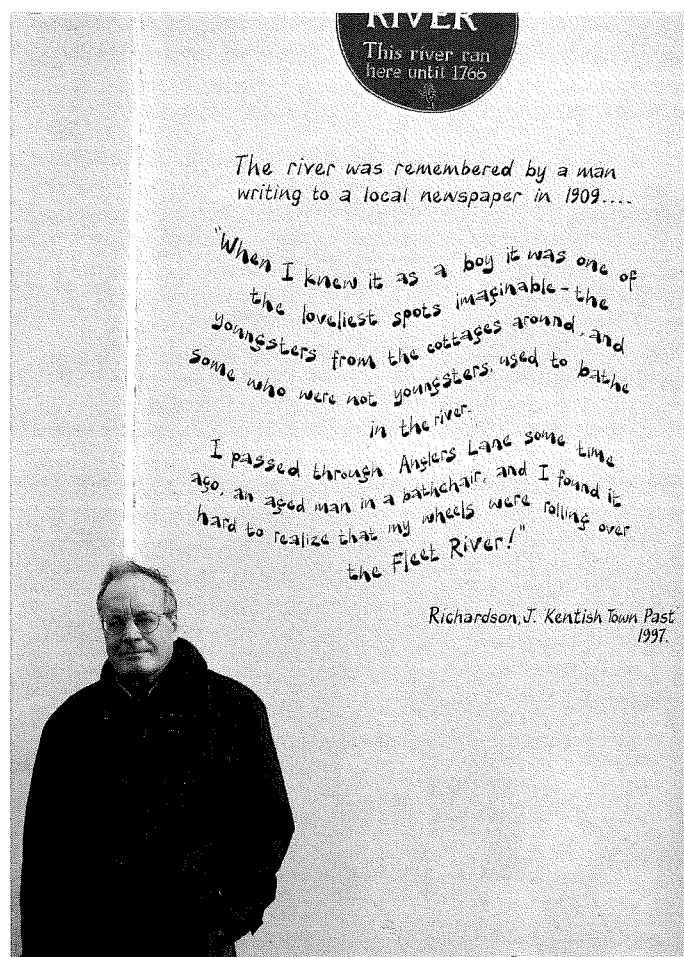
## Committed to stone

Many writers would like to see some of their immortal words engraved in stone. I had certainly not anticipated that this would occur in my own case, and indeed the surface only resembles stone, but something of the sort has happened. The engraving is also in a most unlikely location, on the side wall of Nando's restaurant in Kentish Town Road, where Anglers Lane joins it. The inscription, shown below, is taken from my book on Kentish Town and concerns itself with the reminiscence of an old resident who used to see young people swimming in the river Fleet where it went past Anglers Lane.

The inscription reads:

The river was remembered by a man writing to a local newspaper in 1909...

"When I knew it as a boy it was one of the loveliest spots imaginable – the youngsters from the cottages around and some who were not youngsters used to bathe in the river. I passed through Anglers Lane some time ago, an aged man in a bathchair and I found it hard to realise that my wheels were rolling over the Fleet River!"



I don't know who thought of doing this, and can only assume that it was done by the restaurant. But, it's a nice way of remembering the Fleet.

There were, incidentally, banners up during the summer in Farringdon Road where it joins Clerkenwell Road, drawing the attention of all and sundry that they were by the river Fleet.

**John Richardson**

## Saving the York & Albany

Enclosed with this *Newsletter* is an application to join that invaluable organisation, the Camden Civic Society. The Society has for some time led the campaign to save from irreparable alteration the long-empty York & Albany pub at the end of Parkway by Gloucester Gate.

This handsome building was designed by Nash in 1824, but despite it being a rare survivor of his commercial buildings, it has inexplicably been allowed to lie empty for 20 years by its owners the Crown Estate which sought, over a number of planning applications, to increase the building's financial appeal.

In an article in *Cornerstone*, the magazine for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, not only does the Crown Estate come in for criticism but also English Heritage, which the author, architect Alan Chandler, claims has loosened its own guidelines as to what is suitable in converting a historic building.

A key event in the 'saving' of the York and Albany was the application in 2000 of Camden History Society member, Marion Kamlish, to have the building spot listed. Thereby, the building entered the Buildings at Risk register. The local amenity groups employed a nearby architectural firm, Arts Lettres Techniques, to prepare a rival scheme to the Crown Estate's which was viable and retained as much of the fabric as possible. In particular, the Art Lettres scheme avoided the demolition of interior walls, agreed by EH so as to allow open-plan use.

So far, so good, and Camden Council supports the local groups in opposing the Crown Estate scheme. However, the Estate is still resisting the rival scheme although it has been obliged to adopt much of it in its own revised plans. But there has been little advance recently and the building, still derelict, is still at risk. Bravo Crown Estate!

### KEEPING UP WITH OPEN HOUSE

The admirable Open House organisation now publishes an Architecture Bulletin ten times a year. This draws together the various architectural and related events, tours, talks and exhibitions with which they are involved.

Members who would like to receive the Bulletin can do so for a year's subscription of £12.50 (normally £14.50). Please telephone 020 7267 2070 and quote the name of your society.

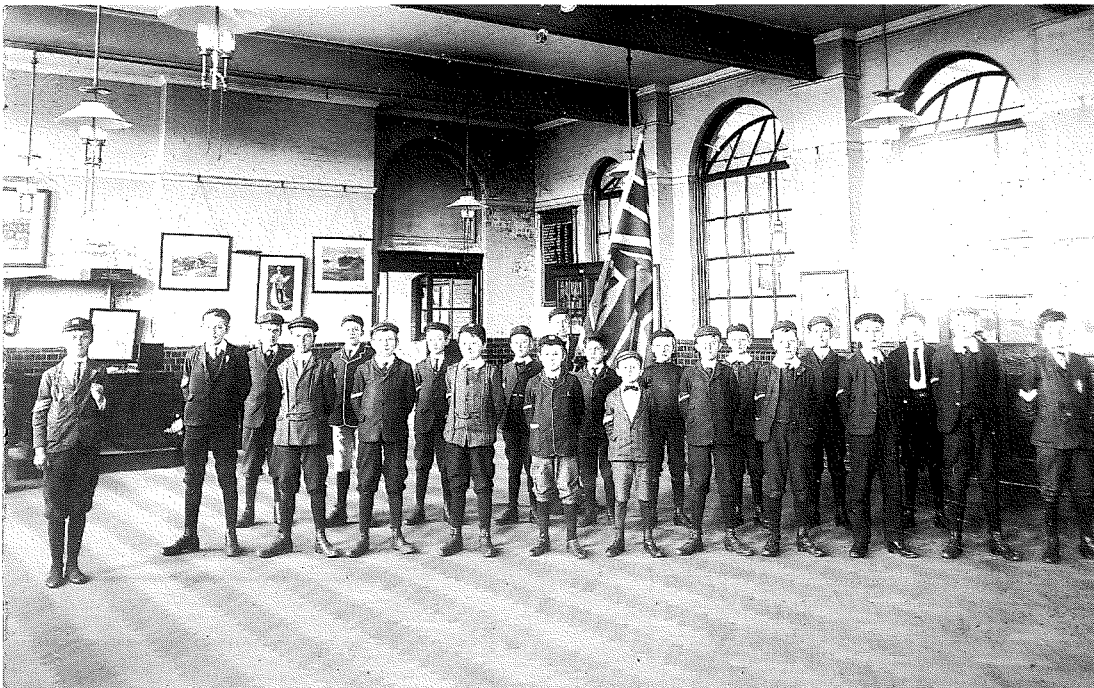
Their January events include an architectural tour of Bankside. It begins with the visionary residential projects of the old Wharfs. It takes you from the new City Hall, a string of Millennium projects including the famous bridge, to the modernism of the Royal Festival Hall. This is on 22 January. Telephone as above for details.

# Camden Postcards



*Two Camden postcards from the early part of the 20th century. Above is St Martin's Gardens in Camden Town, once a burial ground for St Martin's in the Fields. The view is about 1905.*

*Below is Gospel Oak School in Mansfield Road in 1910, showing a stand-at-ease group of boys, probably cadets, complete with Union Jack.*



This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

The Editor is John Richardson, 32 Ellington Street, N7 8PL (Tel: 7607 1628, Fax: 7609 6451, E-mail: richardson@historicalpublications.co.uk),  
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The Membership Secretary and Publications Secretary is Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH, (7388 9889)

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Our website: [www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs/](http://www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs/)

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 208

Mar 2005

## London's Maddest Church? An appreciation of the architecture of E B Lamb

Thurs. 17 March, 7.30pm

St Martin's church,  
Vicars Road, NW5

Undoubtedly one of the most unusual churches in Camden is St Martin's, Vicars Road, now tucked away and surrounded by a large housing estate in Gospel Oak. Pevsner describes it as the craziest of London's Victorian churches, though its exterior does not particularly hint at the eccentric interior.

It was built in 1864-5 by E. Buckton Lamb, who was able to rely on the generosity and wealth of glove manufacturer J D Allcroft. The building seated 1000 and was consecrated in December 1865. The area was fast growing and poor. The first vicar described it as being 'very similar to an East End parish ... The applications to myself for many purposes are almost ceaseless'.

Our speaker on this interesting building is architect Anthony Edwards, who has great enthusiasm for Lamb's work and was largely responsible for saving Berkhamstead's town hall (by Lamb) from demolition.

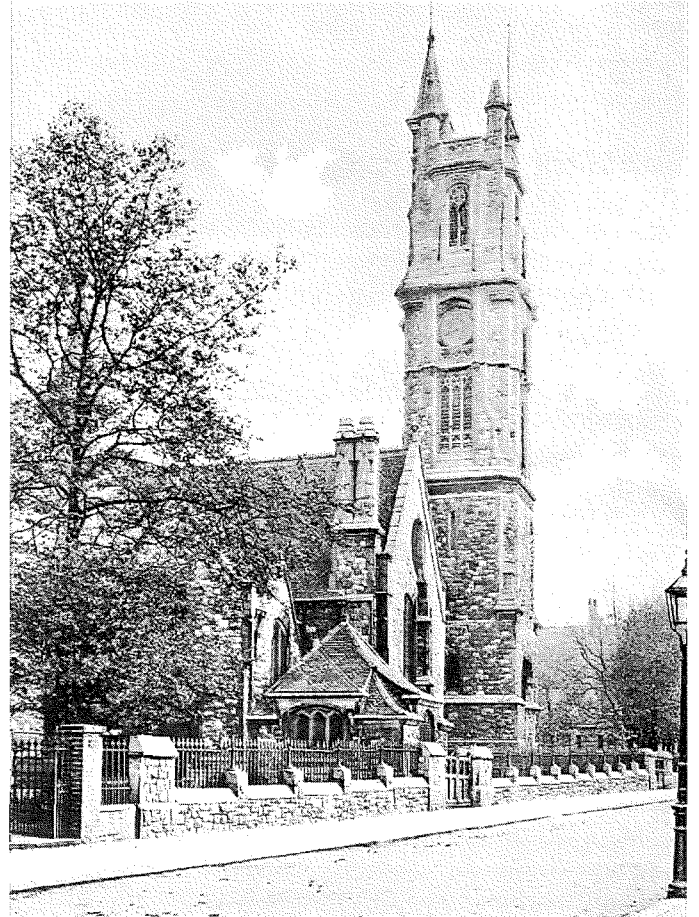
## Leigh Hunt

Thurs. 21 April, 7.30pm

Undercroft Hall

St John's, Downshire Hill, NW3

Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) lived a controversial life which ended rather tamely and in poor circumstances. Jailed for his portrayal of the Prince Regent, and always in hot water for his journalism, Hunt spent some of his life in the Vale of Health. A house there is named Hunt Cottage, but it is not certain which of the houses he lived in. *The Streets of Hampstead* says that he came to Hampstead in 1815 and probably stayed at Vale Lodge at the north end of the hamlet, here to recuperate after his release from prison. Keats first came to Hampstead to call on him here in 1816, and Shelley entertained his many children by sailing paper boats on the pond. The



St Martin's church, Vicars Road, NW5

Hunt family finally left the Vale in 1821 and joined the migration of poets to Italy.'

There have been some harsh judgements on Hunt. The artist Benjamin Haydon says that Hunt 'ruined Keats, he has injured me, he perverted Byron', and Keats called Hunt a 'self deluder'.

Our speaker on this mercurial journalist and poet is journalist, biographer and writer Anthony Holden whose book on Hunt, *The Wit in the Dungeon: a life of Leigh Hunt* has been recently published.



## Advance Notice

Please note the following – there have been some changes.

*May 19th:* The state of Camden on VE Day, May 1945. Speaker Robin Woolven to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the 2nd World War. At Territorial Headquarters in Handel Street, WC1

*June 16th:* AGM and Ruth Rowntree on 'Religious Devills of Hampstead'. At Rossllyn Hill Unitarian Chapel.

*July 21st:* Saving the York & Albany, by Marian Kamlish.

*August:* Annual outing, still to be fixed.

*September:* still to be arranged.

*October 20th:* Launch of *Streets of Kentish Town East*.

November 17: Mansion flats, by Isobel Watson.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

The subscription of £10 for 2005/6 is now due. If the label on your envelope has a coloured stripe on it, this means we are expecting you to pay by cheque. Please send it now to the Membership Secretary (address on back of *Newsletter*).

Payments for multiple years are acceptable at the rate of £10 p.a. If you wish to pay by standing order in future, please request a form when you send your cheque for this year.

## Take a Last Look

The Salvation Army hostel in the south-west corner of Hunter Street and Tavistock Place is being boarded up, possibly for demolition.

The shops and offices on the south side of High Holborn, between Chancery Lane and Southampton Buildings are ominously empty.

A new supermarket, rumoured to be Waitrose, is to be built at the north end of the courtyard of the Brunswick Centre, which is to be given a general face-lift.

Only the facade survives of the blocks of flats at the junction of Theobalds Road and Rosebery Avenue.

Roger Cline

## Altered Spaces Quiet Places

The above is the title of a photographic exhibition by Angela Inglis and Peter Herbert to be held at Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, Holborn Library from 24 March to 9 June. Its main theme is the older buildings around the St Pancras/King's Cross station development, including some that have been demolished such as the Victorian gasholders. St Pancras Old Church is also featured.

## London Past and Present

The Georgian Group is holding an exhibition in April entitled *London Past and Present*, displaying paintings and drawings of buildings in 17th and 18th century London from its own collection, together with photographs of the existing sites today.

It will be held at the Georgian Group's headquarters at 6 Fitzroy Square, from 9th April to 23 April. It is open Monday to Friday 10-5, Saturday 11-4. Admission is £5.

## 84 Charing Cross Road

One of the most poignant of stories, turned into a play and film, was Helene Hanff's *84 Charing Cross Road* (a shop that is in Camden). The story dealt with the increasingly close relationship between American Helene Hanff and Marks & Co, booksellers at no. 84, and in particular with the correspondence between the smart, noisy and emphatic writer and the strictly correct and mild-mannered Frank Doel, who answered her many requests for second-hand books. Sadly, by the time she was able to afford to come to London to see the shop and meet Doel, the shop was closed and he had died. She herself died in 1997.

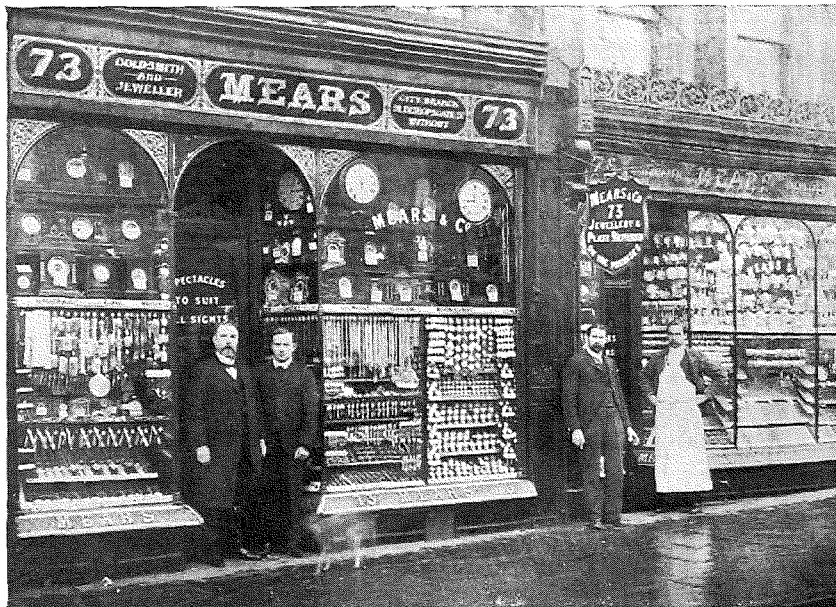
The story is one of great charm and is redolent of a different age of book selling. Many of us will remember the old shop, the people working there and the bargains to be had. Now Steve Maggs, who runs the website [www.84charingcrossroad.co.uk](http://www.84charingcrossroad.co.uk), is attempting to chronicle the history of the business. He is looking for additional material – anecdotes, and in particular local books and pamphlets that might be used on the website. If you have anything to offer him please email on [steve@maggs.co.uk](mailto:steve@maggs.co.uk).

## THE LAUF NEWSLETTER

The informative newsletter of the London Archive Users Forum for winter 2004/5 has much of interest for Society members.

One article deals with the release of material under the Freedom of Information Act, although there are dark hints abroad that a large volume of records is being destroyed so as to prevent their being released under the Act. To make an application for information, write, fax or email the authority concerned describing as specifically as possible the information you require. Answers should be supplied within 20 days and for the most part will be free of charge apart from the costs of postage and photocopying.

The Newsletter also tells us that records of Old Bailey Proceedings are now online for Jan 1800 to October 1834 – 48,000 trials. Already 1674 to 1799 are on the website. See [www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/#whatsnew](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/about/#whatsnew).



Series by the Scottish Photographic Touring and Pictorial Post Card Coy., Glasgow.

## STARTLING VALUE!

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## Mears, the jewellers

Kevin Mears has emailed to ask if any member has any information re the business of Mears at 73-5 Camden High Street. Alonzo Mears was the great grand uncle of Kevin Mears.

Any information please email him on kevin.mears@ntlworld.com.

## ORDNANCE MAPS

The Hornsey Historical Society has for disposal a large number of surplus Ordnance Survey maps. They include about 100 old style 1/2500 sheets, a number of later maps to this scale and some 1/1250 sheets and a few early 1/1056 sheets. They are mainly of north London and the Home Counties and include many from Hertfordshire, Essex and Middlesex although a few are as far afield as Lincolnshire. They date mostly from 1897 to 1936 with a few more recent ones. Among the more interesting sheets are those showing the inner Middlesex area before the inter-war development.

Further details can be obtained by writing to David Frith, The Old School House, 136 Tottenham Lane N8 7EL, enclosing a SAE.

## Russell Square

The story of this square is told in a small book recently published by the Faculty of Continuing Education. The authors are Richard Clarke, Elizabeth McKellar and Michael Symes. It is called *Russell Square: a lifelong resource for teaching and learning* and is an occasional paper under the auspices of Birkbeck. No details of price (if any) have been sent, or how to get hold of a copy, but presumably the Faculty at 26 Russell Square (7631 6649) can help.

It describes the building development by the Bedford family as from the early 19th century – following

rather belatedly from Bloomsbury Square. The reason for the delay in utilising the substantial brick earth of this area was that the 7th Duke of Bedford, who lived at Bedford House on the north side of Bloomsbury Square, wanted to retain his open views of the heights of Hampstead.

The Square was largely the work of Thomas Cubitt, with the gardens – the second largest garden square in London – by Humphry Repton. Interestingly, as the book notes, the plane trees were introduced in 1830 by Loudon, but they will not be replaced when they eventually die but will be superseded by limes.

Also featured are the cabbies' shelter on the north side, the statue of the the Duke of Bedford and the inroads made by the University. Russell Square did have a period of decline due mainly, it seems, to its neighbouring areas. In 1830, though, it was at the peak of its reputation. It was then described as 'a favourite residence of the highest legal characters; and here merchants and bankers have seated themselves and their families, the air and situation uniting to render it a pleasant retreat from the cares of business.'

All this, of course, was lost to the overbearing University developments and the hotels that invaded the area. The main hotels - the Russell and the Imperial – were at least of some style, but the Imperial's successor, the President, must be one of the ugliest in London. Furthermore we have that extraordinary plaque erected by the University which apologises for the building that it is fastened to and for its erection without consultation with the Bedford Estate. Then again, the Estate did want to put an underground car park there as per Bloomsbury Square.....

The book is a useful addition to our knowledge of that part of London, but it is a pity it is spoilt by poor reproduction and printing of the illustrations.

**John Richardson**

## Early Holly Lodge Estate

Below are two early postcards showing features of the Holly Lodge Estate in Highgate. There is no indication on either card, such as a postmark, as to their date. The top one is of gates which are on the south side of Holly Lodge Gardens which, Martin Morton informs us, are about to be renovated. The bottom plaque on each pillar reads: 'The above stone was removed from the north wall of the estate orchard to its present position by the Central London Building Co. Ltd in 1929. The stone above notes that it was erected by Miss Angela Georgina Burdett Coutts in 1839. The bottom postcard is of a fountain which still stands as a memorial to Alderman Davis – the developer of the estate – between Holly Lodge Mansions and Makepeace Mansions.



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of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

May 2005

## The State of Camden on VE Day, 8 May 1945

*Thurs, 19 May, 7.30pm*

*Athlone Room, TA Headquarters/University of London Officers Training Corps, Yeomanry House, Handel Street, WC1*

*(Turn right out of Hunter Street into Handel Street and on the right-hand side go to the further entrance, almost at the corner with Kenton Street (there is currently no entrance from the Brunswick Centre on the south side of the street because of building works).*

This May we are marking the end of the 2nd World War in Europe and Asia. Robin Woolven, who has made a special study of wartime Camden and has discovered much new material, will take us back to those heady, but worrying days at the end of the war, a time when losses were counted and hopes were raised. This fascinating subject is in a new venue – copious instructions above!

## The Annual Meeting and the 'Religious Devills of Hampstead'

*Thurs, 16 June, 6.30pm*

*Rossllyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Rossllyn Hill, NW3*

Our speaker on this occasion is Ruth Rowntree, author of a recent book of that title, about Dissenting ministers and congregations in Hampstead. The venue is appropriate as it was and still is the centre of Nonconformist worship in Hampstead.

There are refreshments at 6.30pm, the business meeting begins at 7pm, and the talk at 7.30pm.

If you have nominations for the officers and Council, please send them to the Secretary at the address on the back of the *Newsletter*. The present incumbents are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Prof. Christopher Elrington

VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Ann Saunders

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade

SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay

TREASURER: Angela Bowen

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: Dr Peter Woodford

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Roger Cline  
PUBLICATIONS (postal sales) Roger Cline  
PUBLICATIONS (bookstall sales) Sheila Ayres  
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Dr Peter Woodford  
PUBLICITY OFFICER: Joan Barraclough  
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes  
AUDITOR: Geoffrey Harris

Council members: Sheila Ayres, Caroline Cooper, Steve Denford, Ruth Hayes, Jeremy Noble, Michael Ogden, Sue Palmer, Dick Weindling, Robin Woolven.

## The August Outing

*Saturday, 6 August.*

This year's outing has distinct Camden connections. It will take us to the village of Seal, now a part of Sevenoaks. John Pratt, who as Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench later became Sir John Pratt, had bought the house and estate called Wildernesse in 1705 and lived there until his death in 1724; he also bought Bayham Abbey south of Tunbridge Wells. His third son, Charles, born in 1713 and also a lawyer, was knighted and became Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas in 1761 and Baron Camden in 1765, taking his title from his home, Camden Place in Chislehurst. After holding several Cabinet posts he was created Viscount Bayham of Bayham Abbey and Earl Camden in 1786 and died in 1794. He spent a fair amount of time at Wildernesse House and is buried in the churchyard at Seal. In the church there is a monument to him, with what is said to be a fair likeness engraved upon it, and several other monuments for members of the Pratt family, who continued to live at Wildernesse until 1860. We shall visit the church (entertained by a local resident Mr Peter Mountfield who, with other local residents, has been compiling a history of Seal) and go on to visit Wildernesse House, now renamed Dorton House and a school run by the Royal National Institute for the Blind. The house was, or was not (according to different sources), remodelled by Charles Dance the Younger in about 1800. A detailed history of the house and the Pratt family's occupation of it will be distributed on the coach.

After these two visits the coach will take us on to Knole, birthplace of Vita Sackville-West with her well-known connections with the Bloomsbury Set. The visit to the house (unguided) has been arranged for 2.30pm; lunch may be taken either in the restaurant or with

members' own packed lunch in the extensive park-land there. Tea (cost not included) will also be at Knole. The cost per participant for the trip will be £24.

A booking form is enclosed with this *Newsletter*.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

*Please put the following meetings in your diary:*

21 July: 'How history saved the York & Albany', by Marian Kamlish, who will illustrate how close study of historical documents established that this hostelry was designed by John Nash and therefore should not be desecrated by inappropriate architectural changes.

September: to be arranged

20 October: Launch of *Streets of Kentish Town*. At Kentish Town Congregational Church, Kelly Street.

17 November: 'Many mansions: how Londoners took to living in flats', by Isobel Watson

15 December: 'Crime in Camden, 1600-1900', by Mark Aston.

## A New Guide to the Archives

Camden Local Studies and Archives have issued a new, well produced guide to their collections. It is entitled *Studying Camden: a students' guide to Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre*. It has 32 pages and is illustrated.

The Centre is already used by students for project work, many of whom are undertaking research for the first time. The guide introduces them to the range of sources available in the Centre and shows them how they can be used. It is primarily aimed at students in years 10-11 (Key Stage 4 – GCSE) and years 12-13 (AS and A Level). It will also be useful to students studying at colleges in Camden, as well as Key Stage 2 and 3 teachers who may need guidance in local studies sources. The guide is being sent free to all secondary schools in Camden and to year 6 teachers in the borough's primary schools.

## Brass Band Hunt

Gavin Holman is researching the history of brass bands in local communities, and would welcome information on extinct bands in Camden.

The late 18th and early 19th centuries were the golden age for these bands numbering, it is said, up to 40,000 distinct bands at their peak. Many of them were associated with local industries, often being a works band. Others provided a musical focus for many small towns and villages in the days before the gramophone and the wireless. Today, in contrast, only 1,500 or so are left active in the UK.

Sadly, many of the bands left little in the way of information about their existence, and what does exist is widely scattered with individuals, local archives and national collections.

Currently much of the information that Mr Holman has is available online, as a free source at [www.ibew.co.uk](http://www.ibew.co.uk). If you have any information please contact him at [gavin.holman@ntlworld.com](mailto:gavin.holman@ntlworld.com).

## The Fountain at Holly Lodge

Viv Morris writes:

I was very interested to see the photographs of Holly Lodge in the March issue of the *Newsletter* and thought you might be interested to see the enclosed picture which I took in July 1992.

The occasion was the 'unveiling' of the statue after it had been renovated. It had been in a very sorry state for some years and the fountain was not working. The then Tenants' Association took a hand in the matter and this was the result. Glenda Jackson agreed to do the 'unveiling' (but nobody could work out how to veil it in the first place, so she just declared it).

*The 'unveiling' of the renovated statue at Holly Lodge. Glenda Jackson is sitting with Wendy Gray who chaired the Tenants' Association at the time.*



## A Windmill on Parliament Hill

There was a time when England was dotted all over with windmills. Dating back to the Middle Ages, every manor had one kind or another and sometimes several. Where in counties small ownerships or peasant proprietor dominated, each holding had its individual mill. So did the Kenwood estate.

In June 1661 Mr Bill purchased the Kenwood Estate from Sir James Harrington, who had fled the country fearing the effects of the Restoration. It is described as consisting of 280 acres "well covered with large timber, a capital messuage of brick, wood and plaster, eight cottages, a farm house and windmill, fish ponds etc..."

At the Guildhall Library I found a small watercolour. Nothing much is known about it than the words "View across Hampstead Heath" with 1809 J R Bowring written on the back. It shows a view from higher ground looking down on to a windmill with damaged sails on top of a hill. To judge where it was positioned is helped by surveys of Hampstead Heath made in 1805, 1806 and 1807-8, finally published in 1822 as part of the first Ordnance Survey of SE England. Churches and windmills appear to have been consistently recorded. Windmills were shown by a symbol, which varied considerably. The name Millfield F appears on this first survey that covers an area to the edge of the ancient wood of Kenwood, from above South Meadow up to and including Parliament Hill.

On the published Ordnance Survey there is a mark of some sort of construction, a dot positioned on high ground above an area that today is called Millfields. There had been a water mill by the Highgate ponds and the place name of Millfields had come from this,

but as windmills were regarded as a supplement to the water mill, they tended to be built in areas where there was already an established watermill so that the windmill could take over if the watermill was out of action.

Earlier types of English windmills were Post Mills. The whole of the rectangular timber body contained the machinery and carried the sails, mounted on an upright post. The timber substructure supporting the post on which the mill turned was often enclosed by a thick round house, which protected it and acted as a useful storage space.

Professor Hales published papers in the nineteenth century in which he referred to two barrows situated to the north of Parliament Hill. The larger one, according to popular local tradition, was the grave of Queen Boadicea. John Lloyd in his book on Highgate, published in 1889, doubted the second barrow and considered it, by its inverted bowl shape and trench dug around, as probably the site of a windmill.

Sir Arthur Crosfield in his book *Reminiscences of Kenwood* thought that the windmill was to the top of Parliament Hill, since the top of that was apparently artificial.

The artist of the watercolour may well have been Sir John Bowring (1792-1872), who was aged 17 at the time. He became a politician and linguist, and his literary work was published in *The Examiner* when edited by Leigh Hunt. As a life-long Unitarian he would, if in the area in 1809, have probably sought out the Hampstead Unitarian meeting house, and may well have captured this scene of a broken windmill on the fringes of the Heath.

**Bernadette Starkey.**



## Back to the old names

*Martin Morton writes:*

You will be pleased to learn (following the change back to The Duke of St Alban's at Swains Lane) that the pub on the corner of Kentish Town Road and Islip Street has reverted to its old name of The Oxford, thereby reminding us that the area around was once owned by Christchurch College. It also appears to have given up on Thai menus.

However, the pub on the corner of Holmes Road and Kentish Town Road, the former Old Farm House, is still Reilly's Irish House, and that on the corner of Patshull Road and Kentish Town Road is still Auntie Annie's Porter House.

There is a worry about the departure of the former landlord/owners of the Bull and Gate in Highgate Road. Will there be a marketing experiment here as well?

## Dr Johnson – House and Dictionary

April saw the 250th anniversary of the publication of Dr Samuel Johnson's great Dictionary. Celebrations are already in progress at his house at 17 Gough Square, just off Fleet Street.

Until 31 May, there is a display in the garret of the house. This is on the designs for the new Johnson 50p piece commissioned by the Royal Mint. There will be an opportunity to meet the artist responsible for the design.

On 23 June at 7.30pm, there will be 'Johnson's Flea: Samuel Derrick and the Covent Garden Ladies'. Price is £8 and includes wine and a chance to view the house.

## A FENWICK PROBLEM

*Ian Ferguson writes:*

Over the years we have had a family enigma. This has tried the minds of several of my more elderly relatives who have one by one retired from the combat. The enigma is a so-called Fenwick. Everyone says he was Thomas and the most elderly insist that he was a doctor in Camden who was very well known. It has also been said that he was educated at Edinburgh University. I have checked with the BMA and also the

University and drawn a blank with both.

On the positive side I hold a birth certificate for a Phillis Hogarth Fenwick, born on 13 July 1846 at 22 Hawley Crescent to Jane and Thomas Fenwick. This at least proved that these people were not a figment of imagination. This particular Thomas is called a bottler, which possibly/probably means that he was in the drinks business. So one presumes it could be his father who was in medicine with a strong interest in vaccination.

Have any of your members any information to help track him down.?

(Mr Ferguson's address is Robins Roost, Windward Lane, Holcombe, Dawlish, EX7 0JQ.)

## LACK OF TALLANT

After the disbandment of the Countrywide Holiday Association, their meeting place at Fred Tallant Hall in Drummond Street has been demolished. Besides being the venue for CHA meetings, it was well known to transport enthusiasts as a central venue with the tradition that the latest person to arrive had to go down to the street door to let the next person in.

**Roger Cline.**

## SUBSCRIPTION LATE?

If you have not paid your 2005 subscription this will be your last *Newsletter* until you do. A reminder should be enclosed with this edition if we have not received your £10 – please check the envelope if you think you may not have paid.

## An Award for Quackery

We are delighted that one of our members, Shirley Neale, has won a British Association for Local History Publication Award for her article, 'Quackery at King's Cross', in *Camden History Review* 28. She will receive this on 4 June.

## OPEN HOUSE 2005

This year's event will be on 17/18 September. Last year an estimated 360,000 visits were made to buildings across the capital which included the newest building on the skyline – the Gherkin. This year, a kid's 'Architective Pack' will be available free to children to help them explore architecture during the weekend.

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The Membership Secretary and Publications Secretary is Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH, (7388 9889)

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Our website: [www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs/](http://www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs/)

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 210

Jul 2005

## How History saved the York & Albany

Thurs. 21 July, 7.30pm

Upper Room, 8 Greenland Street, NW1

Many members will have noticed that the pub at the Zoo end of Parkway, the old York & Albany, has been closed for many years. It has seemed extraordinary that such a valuable and handsome building should have been neglected for so long. This we must put down to the negligence and dilatory approach of the Crown Estate, whose property it is.

As mentioned in a previous *Newsletter* (207), the Estate wanted, amongst other proposals over the years, to alter the building in such a way to increase its rentable value, but they have been fought every inch of the way by the Camden Civic Society, and in particular by one of their members (she is also a member of the CHS), Marion Kamlish. Delving into the records she has

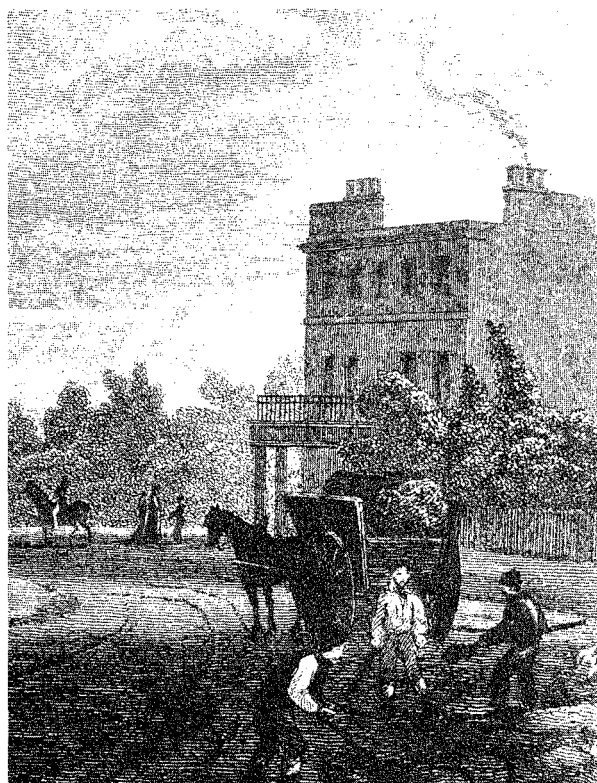
established that the building was indeed designed by John Nash, and armed with this information she was able to have the building spot listed. The Estate has since caved in, recognising that it was then dealing with, architecturally speaking, an important building.

Our talk in July is by Marion, who will be describing the blow-by-blow tale of research and persistence which led to a successful conclusion—though it should be added that the building is still boarded up as though awaiting a decision!

## The Annual Outing

Saturday, 6 August

There are still some seats available for our coach outing to Seal, visiting the church and Wildernes House, and to Sevenoaks for Knole Park. Full details and a booking form were given in the last *Newsletter*, but if you have lost your copy, please contact the Organiser, Jean Archer, on 7435 5490 for more information and to book a seat.



A view of the York & Albany by Thomas H Shepherd, 1829.



# The Annual Meeting

Officers and Council members elected at the AGM in June are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Prof. Christopher Elrington  
VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Ann Saunders  
CHAIRMAN: John Richardson  
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade  
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay  
TREASURER: Angela Bowen  
PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: Dr Peter Woodford  
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Roger Cline  
PUBLICATIONS (postal sales) Roger Cline  
PUBLICATIONS (bookstall sales) Sheila Ayres  
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Dr Peter Woodford  
PUBLICITY OFFICER: Joan Barraclough  
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes  
AUDITOR: Geoffrey Harris

Council members: Sheila Ayres, Caroline Cooper, Steve Denford, Ruth Hayes, Jeremy Noble, Michael Ogden, Sue Palmer, Dick Weindling, Robin Woolven.

The Chairman proposed a particular vote of thanks to David Hayes, whose name does not appear in any capacity in the list above. He is not only the editor of the *Camden History Review*, but also supervises our website and is a long-standing contributor to our series of Street guides.

## Notable Asians in Camden

An exhibition has opened at Camden Local Studies and Archives which explores the interconnected lives of a number of people of Asian descent who came to Camden to live, study and work over the past 200 years. Each of them went on to make a tremendous impact on the lives of others, both in Britain and also

in India and Pakistan in the fields of arts, politics, medicine and law. They also contributed a startling number of 'firsts' – Noor Inayat Khan, the first female radio operator to be sent to work in France for the Special Operations Executive; Cornelia Sorabji, the first Asian woman to study law at a British University; Dr Chunilal Katial, the first Asian mayor in Britain; and Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Asian Member of Parliament – he is commemorated just over the border in Islington, by a street name.

The Exhibition, which runs until 27 August, is produced by Camden Arts and Tourism and was researched by local historian Mimi Romilly. Mimi started by exploring her mother's family and discovered that she was descended from Sir Samuel Romilly (1757-1818), the lawyer and law reformer. Later, when she read an article in a local newspaper about the unveiling of a plaque to Ali Mohammed Abbas – her father – whom she had not seen since she was 6 years old, she began to research his history too. During this she became fascinated by connections and similarities between her father and other notable Asian figures she encountered along the way.

## A LAMAS RESEARCH FUND

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society is to set up a Research Fund related to archaeology and history of London and Middlesex. It will be worth between £3,000 and £5,000 per annum. Any full individual members of the Society may apply. The Fund can be used to support specific projects, reports of which will be published in the Society's *Transactions*. The Council must receive applications no later than 30 September each year.

For further details contact Jackie Keily, Hon Secretary, Museum of London, London Wall, EC2Y 5HN (7814 5734), or [jkeily@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:jkeily@museumoflondon.org.uk).



The unveiling of a plaque in Tavistock Square in June 1987 to Ali Mohammed Abbas, by Pakistani ambassador, Shaharyar Khan, accompanied by Camden's Mayor, Jerry Williams. Ali Mohammed Abbas was a barrister for 30 years before his death in 1979, and one of the moving forces behind the creation of Pakistan.

## ADVANCE NOTICE

Please put the following meetings in your diary:

15 September: *A History of Islington*, by John Richardson (venue to be arranged)

20 October: Launch of *Streets of Kentish Town*. At Kentish Town Congregational Church, Kelly Street.

17 November: 'Many mansions: how Londoners took to living in flats', by Isobel Watson

15 December: 'Crime in Camden, 1600-1900', by Mark Aston.

## Fringe Theatre in Camden

Camden has been the home of a good number of important fringe theatres. Two in particular are the subject of Jinni Schiele's new book *Off-centre stages*.

Before 1960 the notion that theatre might happen in any space where people could gather had hardly been explored. Working with Peter Brook, the maverick American playwright/director Charles Marowitz presented the Royal Shakespeare Company's 'Theatre of Cruelty' season in 1962 and helped to kick-start the alternative theatre movement, later to be called 'the Fringe'. In partnership with the actress and producer Thelma Holt, Marowitz went on to found the Open Space in a basement in London's Tottenham Court Road. By contrast, Camden's Round House, originally developed as a theatre and arts centre by the political playwright Arnold Wesker, was a disused Victorian engine shed. Thelma Holt played an important role there too, after moving on from Open Space.

Jinni Schiele's book is illustrated with rare photographs of productions, and contains a full listing of plays and events staged at the two venues. It can be obtained from the University of Hertfordshire Press, Learning & Information Services, College Lane, Hatfield AL10 9AB (Tel: 01707 284654). The ISBN for the hardback is 1 902806 42 5, and the price is £18.99 plus £1 p+p, and paperback 1 902806 43 3 @ £12.99 plus £1 p+p.

## Finds in South London

The Museum of London Archaeological Service has been very active recently in South London. One dig concentrated on the site of a Southwark Bear Garden. Bear baiting was revived after the restoration of Charles II. In 1662, one James Davies, 'Master of His Majesty's said Game', paid £2,000 to build a 'theatre, dwelling house with stable, a Barne and other places fitt for Beares, Bulls, Doggs and other conveniences'. Last August, with the refurbishment of a small factory (itself a Listed Building) in Park Street, Southwark, the opportunity came to confirm the position of Davies's Bear Garden, the last of several such arenas to have stood on Bankside.

Parts of both the north and south inner walls of the arena, each around 5m long, were discovered. Constructed of brick, they were just 48cm wide and 38cm

high, surmounted by a row of tiles to support a timber gallery. The distance separating these walls, some 19m, gives an approximate diameter for the arena. Gallery included, the Bear Garden probably measured around 27m across overall, but the outer walls have not yet been located.

The Bear Garden had many notable visitors, including Pepys, who watched a fencing bout there in 1667. Just as one of the fighters was getting the upper hand, the supporters waded in, "knocking down and cutting many of each side". Pepys found it "pleasant to see" but a little scary. The arena was pulled down in 1682, and a glassworks was later built on the site.

Over in Lant Street archaeologists have also been busy. Five years ago fewer than a hundred Roman cremations or inhumations from south of the Thames were known in contrast to well over a thousand from the north. Now, thanks to the discovery of several important cemeteries, the number of known Roman burials in Southwark has quadrupled, to nearly four hundred.

During the recent excavations at 52-6 Lant Street, approximately 88 inhumations and two cremations were discovered. The majority of the burials were within coffins, the iron nails of which survived. A number of high status burials were found. Most notable of these was an adult female in a chalk-packed coffin. A most unusual discovery, probably unique in Britain, was a cat buried in its own grave. Other grave goods found on the site included gold earrings, copper alloy jewellery, jet, coral and glass bead necklaces, hobnails, several complete ceramic vessels and coins.

## TITTLBATS

From Stephen Jarvis:

I am currently doing some research on the origins of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and, as you may be aware, on the opening page of the book, Mr Pickwick is referred to as having presented a paper entitled 'Speculations on the source of the Hampstead Ponds, with Some Observations on the Theory of Tittlebats'. (Tittlebat being a dialect word for Stickleback.)

I would like to clarify precisely what Dickens is poking fun at here: is he referring to a source of the water (from a natural spring) and the attempt to find it, in the same way as one might try to find the source of the Nile, or does he mean source in the sense of the engineering work involved in the digging of the ponds? More specifically, do you know where in the early 19th century there were any antiquarians or researchers who concerned themselves with such issues – that is, was there any mystery about the Hampstead Ponds which someone might have attempted to solve? (And is there any particular reason for the sticklebacks to be mentioned?)



## A Hampstead Farm

Sarah Hobrough of Lowell Libson Ltd of 3 Clifford Street W1S 2LF is trying to find the location of a Hampstead farm pictured in a watercolour by Cornelius Varley (shown above). It is similar to one in *Images of Hampstead*, numbered 483 by NE Green, and which is entitled 'Near Hampstead'. If you have any ideas please telephone her on 7734 8686.

## 6 Ellerdale Road

In an interesting article on Richard Norman Shaw's house at 6 Ellerdale Road, printed in the January edition of the Heath & Hampstead Society *Newsletter*, Joseph Rykwert tells us that the house was sold by the family in the 1920s and turned into a hotel called Hampstead Towers. The polished panelling and wainscoting were painted green and many of the larger spaces split up. After the war the hotel did not prosper and in 1955 it was sold to the Institute of St Marcellina, an Italian teaching order, which still owns the house but is in no financial position to restore it.



*The Priory in Upper Terrace, NW3 c.1905. It was then the Hampstead Free Church Women's Council Residential Club.*

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# newsletter

No 211

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Sep 2005

## Islington

Thurs. 15 September, 7.30pm

The Upper Room, 8 Greenland Street, NW1

The reputation of Islington today is both different from what it was fifty years ago, and from what it is in reality. It is lampooned by journalists of small talent as the home of the left-wing chattering classes, and of gentrification personified. The fact that, gentry aside, it is one of the most deprived boroughs in London with perhaps the smallest amount of open space in the capital, is hardly mentioned.

In earlier times it was a village at the beginning (or end) of the Great North Road along which herds of animals and flocks of birds were driven down to Smithfield. Thus the High Street acquired many pubs, and the fields around were used for grazing to fatten up animals before the last mile to probable slaughter. Then came the rush to cover Islington with houses and it became a large town in the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th century it was mainly a slum – and remained so until the 1960s.

The history of this near neighbour is the subject of John Richardson's talk in September. Members may also like to know that Mary Cosh has recently published 'A History of Islington' (352pp, £18.95).

## The Streets of Kentish Town

Thurs. 20 October, 7.30pm

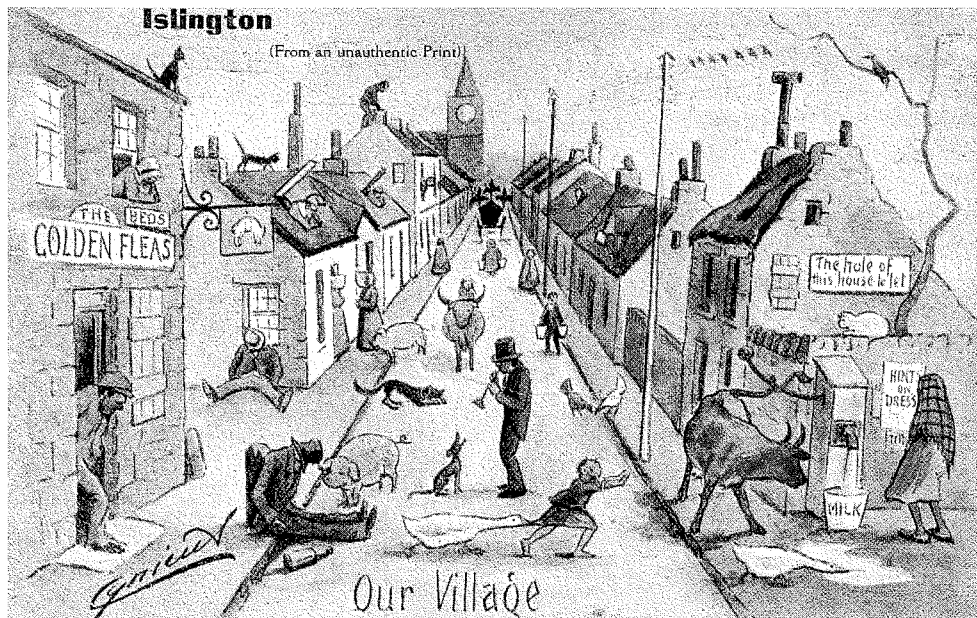
Kentish Town Congregational Church, Kelly St, NW5

Our dedicated streets research group has now got as far north as Kentish Town and here the subject was too large to put into one volume. Therefore the *Streets of Kentish Town* covers the main road through the town up to but not including Swains Lane, and everything to the east of it to the Camden border. Some parts to the west of the main road will also be included, but the next volume, on which the group is already working, will cover Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town.

Kentish Town became the political and ecclesiastical centre of the parish of St Pancras for a long period after the building of medieval Kentish Town Chapel, which largely superseded Old St Pancras church. As the parish to the south of Euston Road became built up and prosperous, Kentish Town lost its influence in the Vestry, and the glut of railways through the area did nothing to enhance its attractions. Despite the grandish terraces to the east of the main road, the area deteriorated badly.

The launch of our new publication will be conducted by the research team, and will be introduced by the writer, Gillian Tindall, whose book on Kentish Town, *The Fields Beneath*, is well known to all of us.

*A scurrilous postcard depicting a down-at-heel Islington. It is completely inaccurate topographically, but perhaps is realistic about Islington's reputation in the early 1900s.*



## Camden Out of Town

It was south of the river for the Camden History Society this year. However, the destination was Seal where the Pratt family, who eventually became Marquesses of Camden, owned the Wildernesse estate from 1705 to 1860. The family history is complex, but suffice to say they were prominent as lawyers and cabinet ministers. One of them became Baron Camden (before the family acquired the Marquisate) and married Elizabeth Jeffreys, who had property in Kentish Town. This led to the development of Camden Town. The name came from the Pratt's seat called Camden Place in Chislehurst, which itself derived from the historian William Camden (1551-1623), who had lived there. Another Pratt property was Bayham Abbey, and Miss Jeffreys came from Brecknock Priory.

The family much enlarged Wildernesse House. Members heard that it was later sold to the Mills family, who sold it on in the 1920s. It is now called Dorton House, and is a school for the blind which, coincidentally, originated in the School for the Blind at Swiss Cottage. All the fine paintings and furnishings have gone, but even with the austere school desks and tables, it is easy to realise its magnificence. Another school down the road is still known as Wildernesse.

From the house it was to the parish church. Here, a local historian showed us around the very fine monuments in a building part of which dates from Norman times. There was also information on the Pratt family's relationship with the villages of Seal and nearby Kemsing. One head of the family did not get on with the vicar. However, they all built schools and provided very good housing for those working on the estates.

From Seal it was on to Knole. This vast building has a Camden connection through Vita Sackville-West, the novelist, who spent much of her girlhood here. She was very much part of the Bloomsbury set. It was not mentioned at the time, but one of her novels, *All Passion Spent*, is set in Church Row, Hampstead. The better-known *The Edwardians* has a country house, which is obviously Knole, as its setting.

There was ample time to visit the parts of the house open to the public. There are fine paintings and furniture. Notable is the History Gallery with portraits of historic figures. Many seemed to be Tudor with an abundance of beards and ruffs. Perhaps the highlight was a King's bedroom, wonderfully restored and preserved. The huge four-poster was said to have been occupied by James I. The hangings and covers were certainly fit for a king. Outside, the grounds are extensive, being noted as one of only two deer parks remaining in the south of England. The deer, many of which are white, are tame.

The route home was via Tower Bridge, an important landmark and an appropriate crossing point for a history society outing.

Joan Barraclough

## Advance Notice

Please put these dates in your diary:

17 Nov: *Many mansions: how Londoners took to living in flats*, by Isobel Watson. At Netherhall House, Nutley Terrace, NW3

15 Dec: *Foul deeds in Camden 1700-1900*, by Mark Aston, at the Upper Room, 8 Greenland Street, NW1

19 Jan: *Rev. Dr Edward Irving: saint or fool?* by Barbara Waddington at the Regent Square Church

16 Feb: *The Warning Carriers: Walking through London c.1740*, by Judy Jowett, at Burgh House.

16 Mar: *The story of the Regent's Canal*, by Alan Faulkner, at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre.

27 Apr: *Argyle Street: Researching, writing and publishing your house's history*, by Dr Henry Fitzhugh. At the Foundling Museum Education Centre.

## Foul Deeds

To mark the publication of Mark Aston's book *Foul Deeds and Suspicious Deaths in Hampstead, Holborn and St Pancras*, the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre will stage an exhibition on the subject as from 10 October.

Nothing grips the darker side of our imagination more than grisly tales of past murder and malice. The book and the exhibition chronicle a felonious past with an assortment of well-known and some not so well-known crimes spanning a period of 350 years to 1955. These events include alleged witchcraft and the murders of the first Metropolitan Police officers.

The book, to be published at the end of October, will be reviewed in the next *Newsletter*. As you will see under Advance Notice above, it is the subject of Mark's talk to us in December.

## Archives for London

A new body was formed in July called Archives for London, and at the same time the London Archives Users Forum, which has bravely fought for better access to, and care of, archives over the years, has disbanded.

The new organisation is intended to provide a single focal point for both practitioners and users of archives in London. It will build on present good practice, information sharing and archive campaigns established by LAUF and other organisations which are represented in the new committee.



## A Virtual Library - for free

Free online access to various useful, normally chargeable, websites is now available to Camden Library Service cardholders. The sites involved include Britannic Online, Grove Music, Grove Art, Gale Literary, KnowUK, xreferplus, Oxford Reference and the OED.

Of particular interest to local historians are the Times Digital Archive 1785-1985, and the online Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Each of these allows searching not only by personal name but also by place. For example, a DNB search for 'Hampstead' provides a magnificent 1373 hits and leads to a wealth of detail about many notable, but now little-known, local residents.

Did you know, for instance, that the pioneer cookery writer Eliza Acton, wrote *The English Bread Book* (1857) at Snowden House in Keats Grove? Or that Suffragette and businesswoman Gertrude Ansell was born in 1861 in Vernon Place, just 2 minutes' walk from Holborn tube station, where in 1913 she was rearrested for selling *The Suffragette* after her release from prison under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act?

For free access to this cornucopia, you need only be a Camden Library member and to have your card number handy. Anybody may enrol on presentation of proof of name and address. The Virtual Library can be used on PCs in libraries, or over the internet from home or elsewhere – go to [www.camden.gov.uk/librarycatalogue](http://www.camden.gov.uk/librarycatalogue) or [www.camden.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.camden.gov.uk/libraries), then click on 'Virtual Library'.

David Hayes

### CONCERN IN ORIEL PLACE

Gordon Cadden writes to say that he has unconfirmed information that the green space in Oriel Place, Hampstead, is to be sold by the Council to the Three Horse-shoes pub to be used as a beer garden. This public house has recently applied for an extension to opening hours to 2.30am.

This open space was once owned by the Wells Trust, but for many years has been in the hands of the borough council. If the news is true, it is a sad day for the centre of Hampstead.

### GANG SHOW MEMORIES

You can find, as many of you know, almost anything on the Internet. I came across this by chance. It is an unbearably jolly website devoted to Gang Shows directed by Ralph Reader. It does, however, have some Camden material. It seems that the Boy Scout Gang Show troop, one specially set up to perform the shows, met each Thursday evening from 1932 at the Chenies Street drill hall. Early shows were given at the Scala Theatre nearby.

John Richardson

## The Review

At the time of going to press it is not certain if *Camden History Review 29* will be sent out with this *Newsletter* or with the November edition.

It has a wide range of subjects. The Hampstead life of Sir Henry Cole, that man of many parts, is described by Anthony Burton. Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms have two articles, one on omissions from the *Good Grave Guide to Hampstead Cemetery*, and another on the Boydell family of West Hampstead. Gene Adams tells us about Olaudah Equiano, a black slave who lived in Camden. Joan Barraclough and David Hayes survey Camden's naval past, and David also has an article which features Robert Stephenson.

Incidentally, back numbers of the *Review* are available as follows:

Vol 28 at £3.00 plus £1 postage

Vols 3-27 at £1 each plus £1 postage

Vol. 2 at £5.95 plus £1 postage.

All available back issues, £35 plus postage on application. Contact Roger Cline at Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place WC1H 9SH.

There is a master index to the *Review* (and also to the *Newsletter*) on our website: [www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs](http://www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs).

## The Hampstead Farm

In the last *Newsletter* we pictured a Hampstead farm building, the location of which was unknown.

David Sullivan writes:

Christopher Wade has pointed out to me certain features in the watercolour picture which do resemble those of Wyldes at North End. But for a number of reasons I am fairly sure that it is not Wyldes, in spite of its position overlooking (at its back) a valley view. The same farm was often painted or drawn in the 19th century and is certainly the same as that shown in *Images of Hampstead*, Prints 483 and 484 and perhaps 482. There is at least one other watercolour of it, also by Cornelius Varley, in the Camden collections and I believe that the farm was said to be at Child's Hill near the Finchley Road. That is no doubt the reason why *Images* lists those print numbers under 'Telegraph Hill and Child's Hill'.

If one wishes to give the farm a name, I would suggest that it is probably the 19th- or 18th-century farmhouse on the site of the early medieval farm, Cowhouse Farm, which lay at Child's Hill near the present day Finchley Road. It later became known as Dickers Farm and finally Avenue Farm, before being lost in suburban development: see my book *The Westminster Corridor* p95 and notes 41 and 42.

Incidentally, a book correlating the watercolour paintings in the Camden collection with the prints in *Images of Hampstead* has long been needed. It would help identifications like this.

## Images of England

Anthony Rau is a volunteer photographer for the Images of England project run by the National Monuments Record, which has as an object the creation of a website that allows people to research listed buildings. Already about 200,000 images may be viewed by visiting [www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk).

He was particularly interested therefore in our illustration in the last *Newsletter* of 6 Ellerdale Road, a building he was asked to photograph, and if you want to see that on the website look under LBS\_UID number 477167, click on 'show without image' and up should come the details.

At the moment the project has about 700 volunteer photographers covering buildings and lesser-known structures such as milestones, telephone boxes, lamp posts and gravestones. The site can also be used in classrooms for students to learn about historic buildings in their locality.

## Recipes and Remedies

Camden Local Studies and Archives have just published an unusual booklet called *Recipes & Remedies 1784-1809*. It is based on a small leather-bound manuscript in the collection once owned by Martin Brooke of 50 Red Lion Street, Holborn, and dated 6 April 1784, although on the cover are the words 'Receipts 1809'.

The manuscript was written in two hands. The first is very clear and neat, the second looser and more difficult to decipher. Many of the recipes are credited to other people such as Mrs Bradley. It doesn't appear to have been a working cook-book, because there are no food splashes on the pages. Many of the ingredients are quite exotic and indicate just how much of the world was open to international trade at that time. There are spices from India and the West Indies, herbs from the Americas, and fruit and wines from Spain. As a personal cookbook, these recipes would be more representative of the food people in a well-to-do household actually ate than those that appeared in the published cookbooks of the time.

Illustrations by Rachel Dilworth entice us to try walnut catchup, 'Dutch Bleaumonge' and gooseberry vinegar. But there are also recipes for concoctions

that are not for eating, such as blacking for boots, something for disturbed bowels, or else for shortness of breath or for rheumatism, and even a balm to alleviate a viper's bite.

This fascinating book, with text transcribed by Aidan Flood, and with layout by Mark Aston, is available for £3.95 from Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library.

## ARCHIVE AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

The Guildhall Library Manuscripts Section is holding a series of free events as part of the Archive Awareness Campaign. The series aims to encourage the use of archives by family and local historians. The talks will allow an opportunity for attendees to see examples of manuscripts and to tour behind the scenes at the Library.

*13 Oct:* Behind the scenes tour of the Manuscripts Section store and Conservation workshop

*25 Oct:* *Heroes are worth more than Saints:* Bravery Awards at Guildhall Library

*17 Nov:* Four early maps of London

*29 Nov:* Business records for family historians, followed by a visit to the Bank of England Museum

*18 Jan:* As per 13 October

*16 Feb:* Marriage licence records and the St Katharine-by-the-Tower indexing project.

Please book in advance by telephoning 7332 1863 - there are 20 places available for each talk and 16 places for the tours.

## RESEARCHING MUNSTER SQUARE

Pat Tucker would like to know if anyone has researched what was York Square, but now known as Munster Square. Ms Tucker, who is secretary of the Launton Historical Society near Bicester, is particularly interested in the life of a Miss Mary Browne, a parishioner of Launton, who rented 36 York Square in the late 1830s. She would like to know something about the nature of the Square in those days. The Square was built in the early 19th century and was badly damaged in the last war.

If anyone can help, Ms Tucker's address is Salamanca, Launton, Bicester OX26 5DQ.

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# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 212

Nov 2005

## Many Mansions: how Londoners took to living in flats

Thurs 17 Nov, 7.30pm  
Netherhall House, Nutley Terrace, NW3  
(on the corner with Maresfield Gardens; nearest tube  
Finchley Road, or 46 bus along Fitzjohns Avenue)

Between the wars 'flats' became a common sight and were both fashionable and desirable. The public perception of them had been somewhat dimmed earlier by the buildings put up as artisans' blocks in the 19th century, which, perhaps, fostered the impression that only poor working class people lived in blocks of flats.

Our speaker in November, Isobel Watson, has been researching the emergence of 'mansion flats' for some time and this should be an interesting talk and discussion. We have many types of flats in Camden, such as the Greenhill group in Hampstead, the Lady Workers' flats on the Holly Lodge, and the Brookfield blocks, some of which look out towards Parliament Hill.

## Crime in Camden

Thurs 15 Dec, 7.30pm  
Upper Room, 8 Greenland Street, NW1

As noted in the last *Newsletter*, Mark Aston has recently published what is, in his words, a trip down Felony Lane, a book detailing many of the notable crimes in Camden since the 17th century. (An exhibition devoted to this is at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre until 14 January.) Hampstead, of course, was synonymous with highway robbery, and in modern times with Ruth Ellis's murder of her boyfriend at the Magdala pub. Holborn had coiners, fraudsters and a notorious public hangman who very nearly swung at the end of his own rope.

Mark will be giving an illustrated talk on the subject for our December meeting – and to fortify you there will be wine and mince pies before and after the talk!

## ANNUAL CLOSURE WEEK

The Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library will be closed from 5 December until the 10th inclusive.

## Advance Notice

Please put these dates in your diary:

19 Jan: *Rev. Dr Edward Irving: saint or fool?* by Barbara Waddington at the Regent Square Church

16 Feb: *The Warning Carriers: Walking through London c.1740*, by Judy Jowett, at Burgh House.

16 Mar: *The story of the Regent's Canal*, by Alan Faulkner, at Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre.

27 Apr: *Argyle Street: Researching, writing and publishing your house's history*, by Dr Henry Fitzhugh. At the Foundling Museum Education Centre.

23 May: *Highgate New Town in the 1920s*. At the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution.

15 June: AGM at Old St Pancras Church

## THE LAMAS CONFERENCE

This year's conference has the theme of London in 1855, to mark the 150th anniversary of LAMAS. The papers include Exploring Victorian London and Middlesex: early LAMAS outings; Antiquarian Work in London 1855-6; London Museums of the 1850s; London Life in the 1850s and 1860s as depicted in the *Illustrated London News*; Mayhew's London; and Architecture in London, 1855.

The conference will be on Saturday, 19 November, 10-5 – as usual it will be held at the Museum of London. The fee for non members is £5, which includes afternoon tea. Tickets may be had from Local History Conference, 36 Church Road, West Drayton, Middx UB7 7PX.

## HAMPSTEAD MUSEUM TO REOPEN

The refurbished Hampstead Museum at Burgh House is due to reopen at the end of October. We are promised that it will be far more accessible, colourful and logical in its planning. Hampstead's history will start in the corridor and visitors can follow it through the Wells Room into the Heath Room where the story is updated to the present day.

Meanwhile serious work has begun on updating Burgh House itself and it is hoped that this will be finished early in the New Year.

## Kentish Town family in river tragedy

*The Titanic* went down with many people who were already well known, but most famous disasters affect people who, till that moment, have lived their lives in peaceable obscurity. Hugh Burns was a railway clerk from Peckwater Street, Kentish Town. In 1878 he and his wife Selina had five children, ranging from Kate, who was twelve, to Albert Edward aged nineteen months. On Sunday 3 September that year the couple had what was probably a rare treat, a day out just for the two of them: they took a trip from London Bridge to Gravesend on the *Princess Alice*.

On the return journey the paddle steamer had reached Gallions Reach, just below Woolwich and the sewage outfall, when she collided in mid-stream with a huge Newcastle collier. She split in two and sank within five minutes, leaving hundreds of men, women and children struggling in the filthy water. More than 650 bodies were eventually recovered, and among them were those of Hugh and Selina Burns. They were buried in Highgate Cemetery.

So what became of the five orphans? Hugh's family were far away in Scotland. Selina's were Kentish Town bootmakers, and it may tell one something about the relative hardness of life then, even among this respectable artisan class, that none of them adopted any of the children. There is a family tale that they did, however, take over the family belongings. Kate and the baby apparently stayed with them for the time being, as she was considered too old for an orphanage and Albert Edward too young, but the other girl and the two other little boys shortly found themselves in the Orphan Working School just off Haverstock Hill. Twenty-one other orphans of the *Princess Alice* disaster were also admitted that winter, by special arrangement with the Lord Mayor's disaster fund: places at the School normally had to be competed for, since the education it offered was better and more extensive than that available in the new London School Board elementary

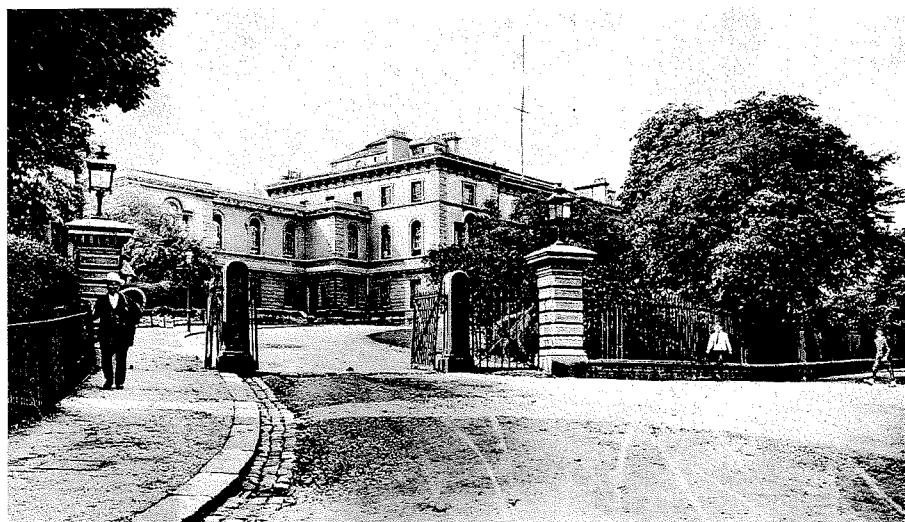
schools. Orphan School lists over the years, giving the occupations of the dead fathers, contain a good sprinkling of lower-middle-class clerking jobs and even a clergyman or two. The children had to be legitimate, vaccinated, free of tuberculosis and provided with suitable clothes.

Standards of care do not seem to have been too bad; at any rate the Burns children, in later life, had some fairly happy memories of the place as well as unpleasant ones of inadequate bedclothes and disgusting stews – but many of the boarding schools to which the rich sent their offspring at that period produced similar memories. But when you think that Albert Edward was dispatched to join his brothers there when he was not yet four (Kate at fourteen, went to train as a nurse), and that the three boys rarely saw the young sister because the Boys' and Girls' quarters were separate, it seems bleak indeed. The menus, heavy with meat, potato, bread-and-treacle and watered milk, with no green vegetables let alone fruit, strike one as horribly unhealthy – but then again, so does the ordinary middle-class food of the period. The Burns boys learnt their lessons well, played cricket, were taken to Lords' as a treat, and sang in a School choir that used to perform at City dinners. One was afterwards apprenticed to a firm of tobacco importers, another as an engineer, and the girl as a nursery governess, while Albert Edward became a dispensing chemist, later a Poor Law administrator, and a captain in the RAMC during the First World War. All married, and all but one had children.

It is thanks to one of Albert Edward's daughters, and to a couple of her cousins and their descendants, that the fate of the Burns orphans has been rescued from oblivion. Olive Burns, who is ninety-two this year, had a fine career as a hospital nurse, a Sister Tutor and then a science teacher. She wrote a booklet about the Burns' tragedy in 1989 and, now living in Sheltered Housing in the West Midlands, energizes her fellow tenants into recording the distant events and people with which their memories are stored.

**Gillian Tindall**

*The Orphan Working School off Haverstock Hill, c.1904.*





*Girls at regimented play at the Orphan Working School*

## Tom Barker in Camden

An email has been received from Mark Derby in New Zealand regarding the municipal career in St Pancras and Camden of Tom Barker, who previously had made a name for himself in trade union affairs in both Australia and New Zealand. According to Mr Derby, Tom "was one of the most militant strike leaders, as the local leader of the syndicalist organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)". Tom knew Lenin personally. Mr Derby is curating an exhibition for the Museum of Wellington City and Sea, which deals with the nationwide general strike which struck port cities such as Wellington in 1913. An important element of the exhibition will describe its historical consequences. Several strike leaders later became leading NZ politicians including two of the most popular Labour Prime Ministers. Information on Tom's London career would be very useful for the exhibition.

*Malcolm Holmes* has kindly supplied information on Tom Barker's term as a councillor of St Pancras and then Camden. He was first elected to the former in May 1949 to represent Ward 3, later reorganised as Camden Town ward. He was elected to Camden Council in 1964 and remained on this until 1968. He was Mayor of St Pancras 1958/9; he died 2 April 1970.

He was also a member of the London Electricity Board Consultative Council (North West District) and North West Post Office Advisory Committee and was on the governing body of the Working Men's College. It was his suggestion in 1958 (before he would have been elected as mayor) that the Red Flag should be flown from the St Pancras Town Hall on May Day. At 7.15am John Lawrence, the Council Leader, and seven other councillors climbed onto the roof, where the flag had been guarded overnight by some supporters, and ran up the flag at 7.23am. Tom also suggested that the 1300 staff should have May Day off, but Malcolm doesn't think that happened at the time. Camden Archives, he says, do not have a picture of the last meeting of St Pancras Council, which would have featured Tom, though they do for Holborn and Hampstead.

*John Richardson writes:* For once, my archives are more complete than Camden's, for I do have a picture of St

Pancras Council at its last meeting. We shall reproduce this in the next *Newsletter*. (I have to say that I can't, for the moment, lay my hands on the original, but it was printed in the first local history publication I ever compiled, in 1965, to mark the end of St Pancras Council, in a booklet entitled *The End of One Story*.) I also have an obit leaflet which gives his date of death as the 6th of April.

I was on the Council, a colleague of his, at the same time as Tom, as indeed was CHS member Martin Morton, though on the opposite side of the Council chamber. I shall always remember Tom's delivery. He stood bolt upright, his voice, though quavering in the later years, had no need of amplification at all, and his remarks were almost invariably directed at the mayor. He led the campaign also for the Council to buy the Bartholomew estate in Kentish Town which, as Gillian Tindall mentioned at the launch of the Kentish Town streets guide last month, narrowly escaped demolition in the Council's hands. Tom himself, I seem to remember, lived in Caversham Road.

His wife, Bertha, was tiny and a former Russian ballerina. She was also blind, but Tom and she travelled together everywhere. When Tom was made mayor at the height of the John Lawrence period of militant rule, it was decided that the Council as a gesture of equality should get rid of the mayoral car and have the mayor travel by bus. This decision was approved of by Tom, despite the difficulty it presented in taking a blind wife to many social and official functions. I came across them both on a bus one evening, wearing their chains of office, accompanied by a slightly embarrassed council mace-bearer and eyed by a rather bemused number of passengers.

Tom was a passionate proponent of trade unions, his conviction arising from (and maintained by) memories of life in Australia and New Zealand.

(Mr Derby notes that there is a biographical account of Tom Barker at [www.iww.org.au/history/tombarker/intro.html](http://www.iww.org.au/history/tombarker/intro.html).) If anyone has more information we should be happy to pass it on to him.



## The Streets of Kentish Town

Our October talk launched our new publication *Streets of Kentish Town*, which is now available (excellent Christmas present) at £8.50. Led by Steven Denford, the research team consisted of Sheila Ayres, David Hayes, Michael Ogden and Mimi Romilly. They have done us proud, for this volume (which is to be followed by another on West Kentish Town) is the largest of our street guides to be published – 160 pages. It is, as ever, immaculately designed by Ivor Kamlish who, with his work on all our publications, has set the standard for design in local history publishing.

The new book consists of ten walks around a village that was transformed as from the 1830s, when its rural aspect began to disappear. In fact, its fate was worse than that, for the railways came in force – hence the vast hinterland of railway land to the west of Highgate Road, and the lowering in social status of the area. But up until the 19th century Kentish Town had been, in effect, the influential centre of the old parish of St Pancras, since Old St Pancras church had been sidelined, first by the old Kentish Town chapel and then by the new Kentish Town parish church at the northern end of the main thoroughfare.

The book is immensely detailed, full of information not previously published and of observations by the sharp-eyed research group. We learn, for example, much about the famous art supply firm, Winsor & Newton, which operated from Spring Place as from 1844. At first, colours were ground by hand, then spread out for partial drying on stone slabs. Eventually they built a larger, purpose-designed steam-powered works nearby in the same road – a building which still stands. Their first factory building at No. 1 became a warehouse used by Walton, Hassell & Port, described as 'Italian warehousemen'.

### A USER DAY AT FREEMASONS' HALL

On 8 December Jessica Silver will be organising a 'users' day' at the Hall where over 1500 documents, plans and volumes relating to the history of the first and second Halls (1776 and 1860s) have become available. Talks will be on the history of the Halls and about the archival records, and there will be tours of the remnants of the 1860s building as well as of the present edifice. A sandwich lunch will be provided. For more details telephone Jessica on 7395 9256.

## Dido after Kenwood

The new *Camden History Review*, which is distributed with this *Newsletter*, contains an article on Olaudah Equiano, a slave in Camden. This contains some information about another black personality, Dido, who was at Kenwood.

Since the article went to press, Gene Adams has discovered more information on Dido's life in London after she married and left Kenwood in about 1794. Registry entries have now been found with precise dates and places, where she moved to in another part of London, rounding off the story of her childhood and early adulthood. Researchers are hoping to create an authenticated film for television (8 minutes duration) telling the story of Dido's life, which they hope to show in early 2006 in commemoration of the current news items on the abolition of slavery and Black history.

### A FLASK WALK NEIGHBOURHOOD MAP 1700-2005

The Flask Walk Association has just published a neighbourhood map (in colour) which points out notable buildings in the area. It also contains a brief history of the area and its features. Copies may be obtained from Michael Lee, 37 Flask Walk, NW3 1HH (Tel 7794 9659) It costs £1.40 including postage. Alternatively it is available at the bookstall at Burgh House.

### A TALK ON CAMDEN TOWN

The active Primrose Hill Community Association has been having talks on neighbouring areas. On 6 December the subject is Camden Town, to be given by Jack Whitehead who will describe its fast growth, Marielies Jackson who will talk about its artistic life, and Luisa Auletta who will be forecasting its future. The talk will be at the Community Association headquarters at 29 Hopkinsons Place, off Fitzroy Road, NW1, at 7.30 pm.

### A PARISH BOY MADE GOOD

John Waller has recently published *The Real Oliver Twist: Robert Blincoe – A Life that Illuminates an Age* (Icon Books, £16.99), which tells the story of a boy who entered St Pancras workhouse at the age of four, but after a brutal apprenticeship in the cotton industry, managed to go to Cambridge University and become a preacher. A more detailed notice of this book will appear in the next *Newsletter* – we are short of space this month.

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