

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 213

Jan 2006

Edward Irving: saint or fool?

Thurs 19 Jan, 7.30pm

The venue is Regent Square Church itself – not the church hall. The entrance is on the south side of Tavistock Place, which continues eastwards beyond Judd Street until it reaches Regent Square.

The charismatic preacher Edward Irving held an immense sway over churchgoers in the 19th century, and drew hundreds of worshippers to various churches, including the Presbyterian Church in Regent Square, close to King's Cross, which for a time was known as the National Scotch Church. However, his eventual fall from grace was spectacular. Barbara Waddington, the archivist of the present Regent Square Church (a post-war replacement of Irving's 1827 building, which was badly damaged by bombing late in the last war), has given her talk this provocative title.

The Warning Carriers: Walking through London c.1730

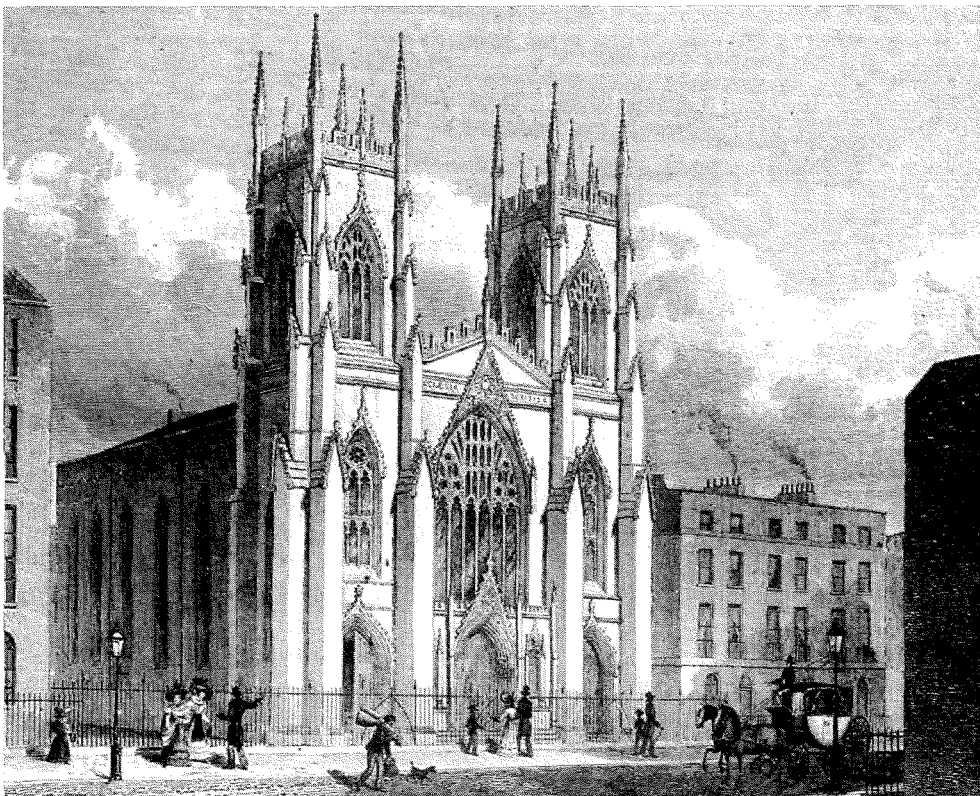
Thurs 16 Feb, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

In the 18th century the Goldsmiths' Company used messengers ('warning carriers') to bring news to luxury traders of valuable pieces that had recently been stolen. Judy Jowett has been studying for the first time a 1730 notebook found in the archives of the Company, and the Silver Society has very recently published her findings concerning craftsmen and luxury trades of London in the 1730s.

Though the talk begins as usual at 7.30, Burgh House will be open as from 6.45 for members to view the newly refurbished and reorganised Hampstead Museum on the first floor, ahead of the official opening in March.

The National Scotch Church on the south side of Regent Square, designed by W. Tite. Thomas Carlyle, a friend of Irving, was among those who attended the laying of the foundation stone on 1 July 1824. Services commenced in May 1827 and the congregation included Sir Robert Peel and Coleridge. When Irving was removed in 1832, 800 communicants left with him.



Tom Barker remembered

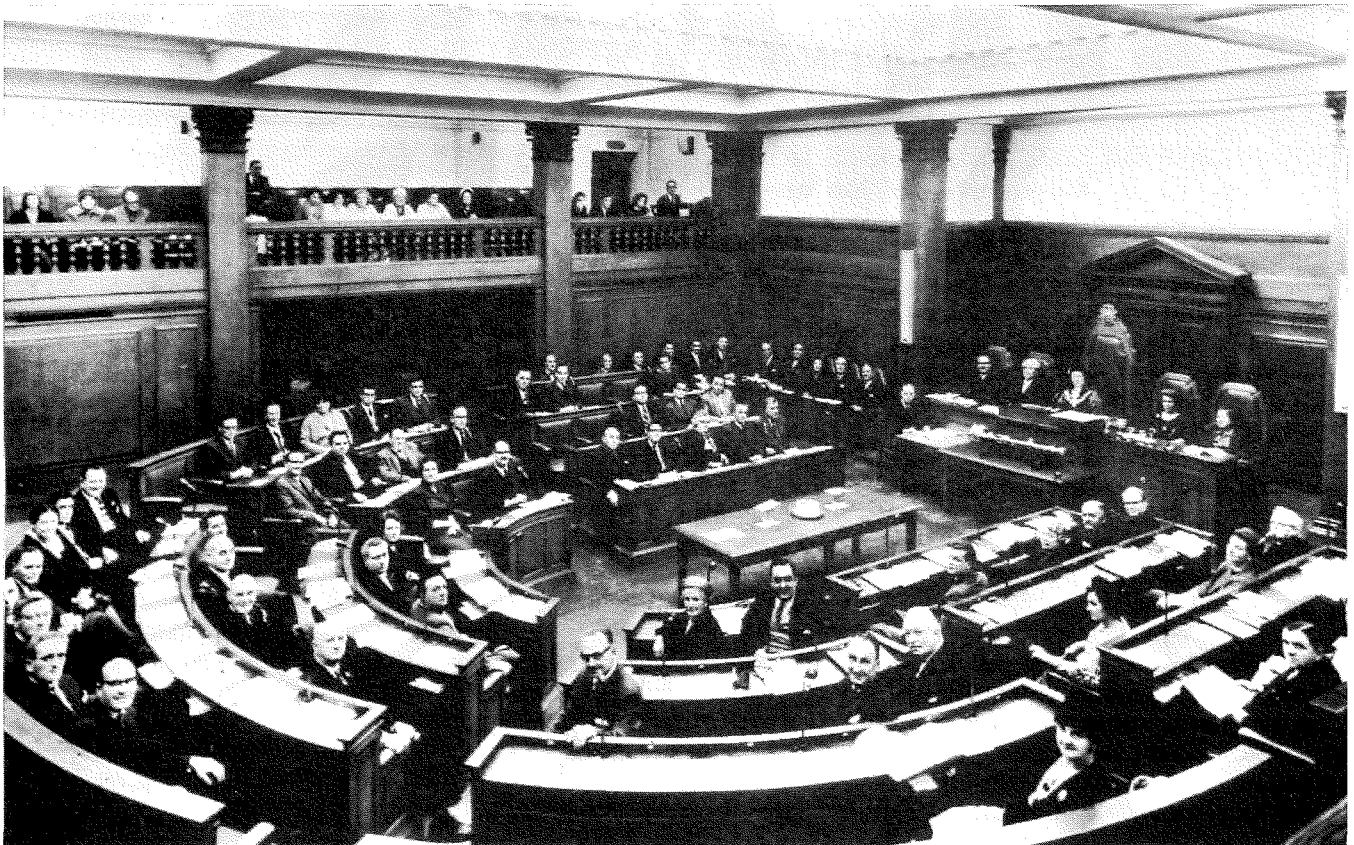
Further to our item in the last *Newsletter* re Tom Barker, former St Pancras and Camden councillor Martin Morton recounts the story of Tom and Bertha's fraternal visit to Communist Prague, at a time when Tom was mayor of St Pancras. They were accompanied by the Town Clerk, Mr Austin. On the overnight train, it was discovered that the Mayoral insignia, chain and mace, were not insured outside the country. Obviously very conspicuous in a train, there was every expectation that poor defenceless Tom would be stripped of the precious regalia, with no recompense for the ratepayers of St Pancras! In the end all was well, but poor old Austin was not a happy man for a few days.

David Hayes notes that Tom has been commemorated in the street name Barker Drive, which leads to Elm Village in St Pancras. Tom's last address was 83a Caversham Road, and his earlier address was nearby at 67 Patshull Road.

buildings and the archives which are held there. If you would like to attend please contact Jessica Silver, Archive Cataloguer, Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, WC2B 5AZ. Alternatively you can phone on 7395 9256 or book online on jsilver@freemasonry.london.museum.

The present impressive Freemasons' Hall was built in the 1930s and stands adjacent to the site of the first Hall designed by Thomas Sandby in 1776. The first Hall, built in response to the growing membership of the Society of Freemasons, was also hired out to non-Masonic organisations and groups for concerts, meetings and balls. It was later altered and expanded, most notably by Sir John Soane. Major redevelopment work was undertaken in the 1860s to the designs of Frederick Pepys Cockerell. Parts of the 1860s building remain today incorporated into the frontage of the New Connaught Rooms and the latter's Grand Banqueting Room.

The final meeting of St Pancras Council in 1966. Tom Barker is nearest to the camera in the second bench from the left.



Elegance and Splendour: The story of Freemasons' Hall

An exhibition relating to Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street will be shown at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library from 23 January to 13 April.

Coinciding with this there is to be a free study day at the Centre on 7 February, organised by the Library and Museum of Freemasonry. This will include talks on the history of the

A Book Bargain

The Society has been generously gifted a good number of copies of *Characters of Fitzrovia* by Mike Pentelow and Marsha Rowe. When published in 2001 it was priced at £25, but members are able to buy copies from the Society at £10.

The original price was justified - it is a luxury production, full of illustrations and colour. It was described as 'A wonderful addition to the literature of the metropolis that shows, with admirable wit and scholarship, that if the streets of London may not be paved with gold, they resound to

something infinitely more valuable: the stories of the men and women who make the great city what it is.'

The book is hardback, 280 x 185mm, 262pp plus colour throwout showing where notable residents lived. You can buy this at our bookstall at meetings or contact Roger Cline on 7388 9889 who will tell you what the post and packing cost would be.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY

John Black writes to say that he is compiling a bibliography of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill in literature and music – members may wish to see it at www.regentsparklit.org.uk. If you have any additional references please contact Mr Black on johnhk31@hotmail.com.

ALBION ROAD

Tuz Morrison writes:

I am a History of Art and Architecture student researching material for my dissertation. As part of this I am doing a mini case study on a furniture screen held at the V & A Museum. This screen was given to the Victorian architect Richard Norman Shaw and his wife Agnes on the occasion of their marriage.

At that time they lived at 10 Albion Road, South Hampstead (since demolished and the street renamed Harben Road). Other members of the family lived at numbers 8, 16 and 14. I have found one photograph of Albion Road and I wonder if any others exist. Also, are there any photographs of the interior of this Shaw home?'

If anyone has any information or can suggest other sources to research, please contact Tuz Morrison on tuzm@btinternet.com.

HARINGEY'S HIDDEN STREAMS REVEALED

This book describes the now-hidden streams which once flowed openly across Haringey. It is based on research carried out by the late David Harrison who conducted walks along their original routes. Albert Pinching and David Dell have consolidated and extended this research through their own field work, photography and archives investigations.

There are almost 100 illustrations, featuring old maps, views from both past and present, and fourteen local views dating from the mid-19th to early 20th-century which have not been previously published. This is a comprehensive and pioneering account of a natural feature which is often overlooked, unless flooding or dampness draws it to our attention.

The book, published by the Hornsey Historical Society, may be purchased from the Sales Manager, HHS, The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL. The price is £9.95 plus £1.75 p&p.

Advance Notice

Please put the following in your diary:

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

3 Aug: Annual Outing

SOURCE BOOKS

Three books of particular use in London research are now available. The first is *Greater London History Sources, Vol. 2, Middlesex Part 1*. This is part of a series intended to be a guide to printed and visual materials, archives and manuscripts held in publicly-funded local record offices and local studies collections in and around London. When completed the series will cover the City of London and the 32 London Boroughs. Vol. 2 (price £11.95) covers 7 London boroughs in the former county of Middlesex: Barnet, Camden, Ealing, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon and Hounslow. Vol 1, covering the City of London has already been published and is still available for just £7.50 (formerly £9.95). Both volumes are on sale in the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre. The series editors are Richard Knight and Kathleen Shawcross and it is published by the Corporation of London in association with the Greater London Archives Network.

The third book is *Researching London's Houses*. Published by Historical Publications in association with the London Archives Users Forum, it is written by Colin Thom, a senior researcher for the *Survey of London* series. Its 192 pages are liberally illustrated with 124 pictures. The text contains an overall view of London's housing development, and then focuses on the different classes of records that are available for London. It finishes with several case histories dealing with different and typical kinds of houses.

This book, ISBN 1-905286-00-7, is for sale at £13.95 at bookshops or else at Camden Local Studies.

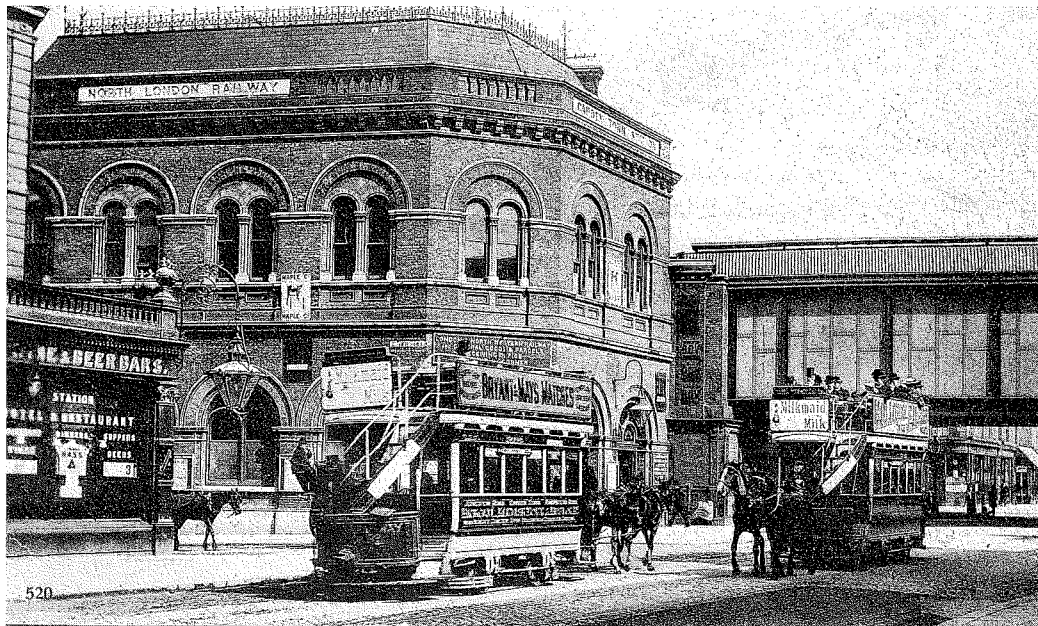
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIZE

The Standing Conference on London Archaeology in conjunction with *London Archaeologist* are offering a prize of £250 for excellence to any book or digital production in 2004 or 2005 related to the archaeology of Greater London. Nominations can be made by readers or anyone associated with the publication, to Peter Pickering, Secretary SCOLA, 3 Westbury Road N12 7NY.

If you wish to join SCOLA, which seeks to promote the practice, study and public awareness of Archaeology in London, then Mr Pickering should be contacted also. The website is www.scola.org.uk.

Old Station Views

Two postcards of Camden stations which survive virtually unaltered. The upper one is of the North London Railway station on Camden Road. Horse trams still ran, and the bridge over the road was as yet unadorned with advertising. The postmark is 1904.



The postcard below is of a pristine Belsize Park underground station. Tantalisingly, the postmark is fudged, but the view must be soon after the Northern Line opened in 1907. Russell's nursery garden is pictured to the left.



Tube Station - Haverstock Hill

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

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Our website: www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/chs/

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Mar 2006

The story of the Regent's Canal

Thurs. 16 March, 7.30pm

*Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre,
Holborn Library, Theobalds Road WC1*

The building of the Regent's Canal brought many problems. The management introduced an innovative lock system, which was tried out at Camden Town and was a failure. The administrator of the company, Thomas Homer, pilfered a great deal of money and absconded to the continent. The project was repeatedly delayed by the opposition of William Agar of Elm Lodge, a house to the east of St Pancras Way, whose grounds were on the route of the canal. Construction of the Islington tunnel inevitably brought complaints from residents of houses in Pentonville who sought compensation for damage to their properties. The tunnel, anyway, was a brave enterprise for it was being constructed not too long after the collapse of the Highgate Archway tunnel.

The reason for the canal was to extend the root of the Grand Union canal at Paddington Basin down to Limehouse and the Thames. This would enable goods from the Midlands and other areas to the north to go straight down to the London docks instead of being shipped on to boats on the Thames at Brentford, or else carted by road transport from Paddington. It seemed a straightforward and profitable investment when the Regent's Canal bill was passed in 1812, but unluckily for the investors it was to fall foul of the unforeseen railways twenty-five years later.

The story of this canal, now an ornament to the area and used for leisure activities, is to be told by Alan Faulkner, an acknowledged expert on its construction.

THE CRYPT PROJECT

An unusual theatrical event will take place in the crypt of St Andrew's church, Holborn from 13 March to 1 April. It will be a promenade performance through the various vaults in the crypt, from which, in 2002, 3000 bodies were exhumed. The performance, telling the stories of some of the people buried there, is devised by Gari Jones who has also worked at the National, Young Vic and the Almeida.

The cost is £13 (£11 conc.). Tel 0208 6699648

56, Argyle Street: Researching, writing and publishing your house's history

Thurs 27 April, 7.30pm

*The Education Centre on lower ground floor of the Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, WC1
(Go past the statue of Captain Coram at the end of the north side of Brunswick Square, through the gates leading to reserved car parking and round to the left).*

Dr Henry Fitzhugh has been researching the history of his house in Argyle Street for some years and will be telling us how he set about doing more than just that – writing and publishing his work.

The street, together with Argyle Square, was built on Battle Bridge Field round about 1824.

Advance Notice

Please put the following in your diary:

23 May: Highgate New Town in the 1920s, talk by Helen Day. At the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution. Please note, this talk is on a Tuesday, and begins at 8pm, though members are welcome to arrive at 7.15 if they would like to see over the Institution.

14 Jun: AGM at St Pancras Old Church. Michael Ogden to give talk on history of the church. Note: event is on a Wednesday.

20 July: Launch of Wartime St Pancras book. Venue to be announced.

3 August: Annual outing to Euston Hall.

21 Sep: Brunswick Centre talk.

19 Oct: Launch of book on Streets of Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town.

16 Nov: Possibly talk on London's statues

PICTURES OF CAMDEN TOWN

Mrs Sally Buchanan, whose husband owns the garage at the junction of St Pancras Way and Camden Road, is looking for old images of the area which at one time was called Camden Broadway. The garage site was once a florist's shop called Bourne and Underwood, and when Brecknock Crescent was first built there was a formal garden on the site.

If anyone has more information or pictures please telephone her on 0208 452 7945.

Memories of Prowse Place

Steve Denford, leader of the Society's Streets Research Team, writes:

In our researches into the history of Camden streets we try to be as thorough as possible but, perhaps inevitably, errors sometimes creep in. Local knowledge is a really useful supplement to research based on official records. This has certainly been the case with Prowse Place, a cobbled, mews-like street that runs behind and parallel to Camden Street. It is bisected by an impressive vaulted brick railway arch. The southern end, up to the arch, was dealt with in *Streets of Camden Town*, the northern end in our most recent book, *Streets of Kentish Town*. In reading the latter, a former resident of Prowse Place has pointed out a mistake but has also gone on to provide interesting further detail that brings the history of the street to life.

The *Streets* books record that Prowse Place is an early road, shown unnamed on Greenwood's 1827 map as running behind the gardens of Camden Terrace (as the houses north of Camden Road were known until renumbered as part of Camden Street in 1863). By 1849 buildings had appeared at the southern end and what had become Priory Mews, after adjoining Priory Street (now Ivor Road), which took its name from a connection with the landowner. Brecknock Priory in Wales was the home of Elizabeth Jeffreys, wife of the 1st Earl Camden. Priory Mews was renamed Priory Place in May 1882 and assumed its present name in July 1938 after Captain William Prowse, one of Nelson's fighting captains, who commanded the *Sirius* at Trafalgar and who died a rear admiral in 1826; he had lived in the parish of St Pancras on the New (now Euston) Road.

On the west side of the street is a bricked up rear entrance to what had started life as Camden House School, which the scientist Oliver Heaviside attended in his youth. This had previously been at No.160 Camden Street (earlier called No.8 Camden Terrace) but the house was pulled down when the railway line was widened in 1869-70. The school's owner, Frederick Cheshire ACP, moved to No.168 Camden Street and built school buildings in his garden. These were listed in 1874 as the Camden Lecture Hall (alongside a Baptist Chapel), and subsequently as an 'academy'. The Camden High School for Boys was here by 1883, and until the close of the Victorian period; soon after that the buildings were being used for cap making.

The old school building lies between No.17 and No.25. In *Streets of Kentish Town* we therefore labelled this as Nos.19-23. This was incorrect, as Barbara King, Secretary of the Kiln Place TRA in Gospel Oak, has now pointed out. Barbara's family lived in Prowse Place, which she knows intimately and I quote her:

'My family lived in this street from the 1920s (granny at No.5 and my parents at the now No.29). My mother was

still living at No.29 until her death in July 2005. To my knowledge Nos.21 and 23 have never existed. When my parents moved into No.29 in 1941 it did not have a number but a house name 'Camden Villa'. It remained thus until the 1950s or 1960s, when the tenant of the lower floor applied for a number and it was numbered 19. The house had been built in the garden of the second house along Camden Street – the first and third still having long gardens extending to the pavement in Prowse Place.

When the three houses in Camden Street were sold the buyer of the corner house built six garages fronting onto Jeffrey's Street in half the garden. Subsequently half the garden of the third house was sold to two young architects who built two studio houses (Nos.25 and 27). The house where we lived was then renumbered 29 – presumably the gap in numbers to allow for subsequent development, (albeit there was no space). However, Nos. 21 and 23 have never been used.

When I was young most of the ladies who lived in Prowse Place worked in the cap factory. My aunt retired at 83 when it closed down and she was one of the youngsters – it must have been the rarefied atmosphere!

Under the arches now used as a wood working factory used to be a billiard hall – I cannot remember if it was simultaneous with the taxi garage or the taxis moved in when the billiard hall closed. The arches next to No. 5 Prowse Place were for many years a brewery [*this was used by Locke & Smith, pale ale brewers, from 1871 until 1913, when its brewery in Great Berkhamstead was acquired by Benskin's and ceased to operate*]. My grandmother who lived at No. 5 for many years had just a back yard – not an inch of earth – but over the back wall grew a black grape vine which covered the back wall and a fig tree – so I imagine at some time there must have been a somewhat exotic garden on the site then occupied by the brewery.

On the corner of Jeffrey's Place and Prowse Place was a factory occupied by a woodworking firm, Mansfields, who were there for many years. The top floor of the building was occupied by a film company and was hit by an incendiary bomb during the war. Mansfields continued to carry on business minus the top of the building before it was subsequently rebuilt. The houses which replaced this factory were developed by our next door neighbours and it was a term of the planning permission they used old bricks. These were more expensive and they were somewhat miffed that Camden Council later built the new houses along the part of Jeffrey's Place where it turns into Jeffrey's Street with new bricks.

The character of the street has changed dramatically. When I was at school they were working class hovels – now bijou mews residences.'

I am very grateful to Barbara for this fascinating account of Prowse Place. It is much more comprehensive than we could hope to be in the *Streets* books.

A history of Kilburn Library

(Condensed from an article first printed in the Newsletter of the Heath and Hampstead Society in September 2005.)

In October 1894, Hampstead Vestry had opened a temporary library at 48 Priory Road to serve the Kilburn area. Two years later it was decided to build a permanent library, but a suitable site had to be found. At first a sub-committee consulted with Sir Spencer Maryon-Wilson, the Lord of the Manor, about the possibility of obtaining a piece of ground in Britannia fields (the name given to the area between Priory Road and Finchley Road). This proved impossible and the Vestry decided to make an offer for a portion of The Chimes estate on the corner of Quex Road and West End Lane.

In February 1897 the sub-committee recommended that the Vestry should purchase the land from the owner, Mr T. Yeo, for £1200. However they were unsuccessful, so in August 1898 they next attempted to buy a plot in Mazenod Avenue for £1000, but in September 1898 they were informed that the new owner had withdrawn the offer. Finally, in April 1899 the Vestry made enquiries about land in Cotleigh Road. It belonged to two separate owners but they were told that they could obtain the freehold for £1200 from a Mr Wright. In November 1899 they decided to go ahead, and to finance the purchase an application was made to the London County Council for a loan of £1200 to be repaid over 50 years.

A design commissioned

In May 1900 they looked at several designs for the building and accepted one prepared by Charles Lowe, the Hampstead Borough Surveyor, at an estimated cost of £2486, which included the counters but no other fittings. In August that year they asked the Local Government Board for permission to raise £3080 for the building. In July 1901 a letter was received from the LCC saying they were prepared to advance a loan of £2590 for the erection of the building, to be paid back within 30 years.

A tender was put out, and in May 1901 they received bids from ten builders. These ranged from £3047 to £2400. They decided to accept the lowest, which came from John Christie of Richmond Road, Uxbridge. In October they also accepted a bid of £250 from the North of England School Furnishing Company of Darlington to supply the fittings.

The new library is opened

The temporary library in Priory Road was closed on 31 December 1901. The Librarian was instructed to open the news room in the new Library on 6 February 1902. This was to be without public ceremony, as the formal opening was deferred until the completion of the lending department. Finally, the Mayor formally opened the Library on 9 July 1902.

Some historical background

A number of errors have crept into recent accounts of the library's history, in particular that it was built with funding from the Carnegie Foundation. That was in fact the case with Kensal Rise library in Bathurst Gardens, Brent, opened by Mark Twain in 1900 and extended in 1904 using a grant from Carnegie.

Supposedly the library was strategically built on the upward slope of Cotleigh Road to avoid any damage by flooding from the River Fleet. But the library opened some thirty years after the local Kilbourne stream had been diverted to run in an underground sewer. The original watercourse of the stream lay behind the houses and shops fronting Kilburn High road, a considerable distance away. The Fleet was nowhere near Cotleigh Road.

The future

In August 2002 Camden, against much protest, agreed to the relocation of the library to a new building at 12-22 Kilburn High Road. This is due to open in March 2006.

In the meantime, what is to happen to the beautiful Cotleigh Road building? There was a long campaign to keep it in community use and in July 2003 Colin Buchanan & Partners recommended that the West Hampstead Women's Centre was the preferred bidder for the use of the building. It was noted that it would require work totalling £210,000, that it had a current rental value of £32,000 pa, but that the value of the freehold at the market value was £820,000.

Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms

The London Maze

The annual celebration of London local history is on Saturday, 18 March at the Guildhall Art Gallery and adjoining buildings. It will be opened by Peter Ackroyd at about 11am. As usual there will be City walks, and innumerable stalls, including those of the Society and the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre.

There are also talks on the Buildings of the City, the Great Exhibition, the Ancient Port, Black residents of Victorian and Edwardian days, and on the early history of the London underground

There are inevitably restrictions on the numbers who might attend walks and talks, and you are advised to book in advance with John Garrod, 01784 252517.

A MEDIEVAL GALLERY

Members may not know that the Museum of London has recently opened a new medieval gallery, which features some of the finds from Lundenwic, the Saxon trading post in the Covent Garden area.

BURSARIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The Standing Conference on London Archaeology (SCOLA) is offering two bursaries, each of £150, to young students who wish to go on a training excavation in 2006. Recipients will need to be at least 17 years of age by the time they start on the excavation, and will need to live or study within Greater London. Preference will be given to people under 21, and to people studying or having been accepted to study archaeology or a related subject. Successful candidate will need to secure their own place on the excavation, and the money will be paid to the organisers of the excavation. Holders of bursaries will be expected to write a 200-300 word article for the SCOLA summer newsletter.

Applications should be made to Peter Pickering, Secretary of SCOLA, at 3 Westbury Road, Woodside Park N12 7NY (email pe.pickering@virgin.net, by 16th April 2006. Details should be given of the subjects currently being studied and of applications made to universities; the nature of the candidate's interest in archaeology, and which training dig has been applied to, if known.

THE MILES FAMILY OF WEST HAMPSTEAD

Rosemary Totton in Auckland, New Zealand writes: I am researching my forebear Grosvenor Miles (born Hampstead c.1822) and the Miles family who occupied West End House (later Hall) between about 1814 and 1889. The history of this particular family is also of interest to me because of the Miles association with the London book trades through a great uncle, Joseph Johnson, the radical/dissenter publisher of St Paul's Livery Yard. John Miles snr, along with a cousin Rowley Hunter, inherited the publishing business when Joseph Johnson died in 1809.

From information in *Kilburn and West Hampstead Past* it appears that Grosvenor Miles was very likely a member of this large family ... there are so many coincidences, in particular the family names Chater and Hamilton which have been passed down our family line here. There is a probable connection to the London firm of Grosvenor Chater & Co, papermakers and stationers of Cornhill, and also to the silver-smiths, Edward Barnard & Sons of London. We have some old family silver made by this company engraved with an eagle crest, handed down by our Miles forebears. The significance of this so far eludes our family.

I would be grateful if any CHS member could help me further on research in this matter as it is difficult to carry out work from this distance.'

Ms Totton's email is krisstott@hotmail.com

VAGRANTS IN KENTISH TOWN

The usefulness of the internet in historical research cannot be denied. However, there is a lot of misleading information out there. Take the website of UK Travel Guide which, I think, is an American site:

'Kentish Town is very old. It used to be nearer Saint Pancras, but was very marshy then, and mainly inhabited by vagrants who would rob travellers on their way in and out of London. In those days, around the 14th century, it lay a long way outside the original city, on the roads to the North East. Then it moved to the North of Camden town, and started to grow to be the busy residential and shopping area it is now.'

GINNER IN HAMPSTEAD

Michael Lee, who is researching Charles Ginner's paintings and drawings of Flask Walk, is seeking information on the artist's life in Hampstead (c.1919 to 1938). As far as Mr Lee knows he had a residence or maybe only a studio at 61 High Street – there are plenty of artworks of that period from that address. But that is all he knows.

If you have information please contact Mr Lee at 37 Flask Walk, NW3 1HH or at michaelhanka@aol.com.

EXPLORING ARCHIVES

Archives for London are organising a visit to Dulwich College Archives on 16 March at 2.30pm. For information please telephone Nicola Avery on 020 7332 3816.

CHERRY LAVELL

Long standing members of the Society will remember Cherry Lavell, an active member who was responsible for our early interest in archaeology in the Camden area. We gather that she is fit and well and living and cycling in Cheltenham, much occupied with planet-saving activities.

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Highgate New Town in the 1920s

*Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution
South Grove, Highgate Village, N6
Tues, 23 May, 8pm*

Helen Day, granddaughter of the author of the recently republished book *London born*, will give a talk based on a walk around Highgate New Town in 2005, contrasting modern images with her grandfather's memories and including some audio extracts from interviews she did with him. She will also talk about the importance of oral history in finding out about the past.

The talk will be a joint meeting with members of the Institution. Because of this the day of the week and the time of the meeting are those prevailing in the Institution's own programme of talks. *Therefore, please note, the day of the talk is a Tuesday, and the time is 8pm*, although CHS members are invited to arrive as from 7.15 to look around the Institution if they wish, especially the library. The meeting will be chaired by Malcolm Stokes, chairman of the Institution's Archives Committee.

The AGM and St Pancras Old Church

*St Pancras Old Church, Pancras Road, NW1
Wednesday, 14 June, 6.30pm*

St Pancras Old Church, described by Norden as early as the 16th century, as 'all alone as utterly forsaken, old and wether-beaten', was the parish church of St Pancras until the Greek Revival church of St Pancras was erected in Euston Road in 1822. But even before that, in medieval times, the parochial importance of the Old Church had been substantially undermined by the establishment of a chapel-of-ease in Kentish Town. One reason for this was that the more affluent of the parish lived in Kentish Town. Another was that the Old Church was on the bank of the river Fleet and at times during the year the land in front of it, often called Pancras Wash, was almost impassable.

But the Old Church has somehow survived not only its parochial redundancy, its very limited size during the period when church-going was popular, the



Old St Pancras church at the beginning of the 20th century.

onslaught of railway lines which burrowed into its burial ground, and even the rather eccentric remodelling by Gough and Roumieu in Victorian times.

A great deal of history will be condensed by our two speakers on the evening, the Rev. Richard Bastable and Michael Ogden.

Please note that the meeting is on a *Wednesday*; Refreshments will be available at 6.30pm, the business meeting will be at 7pm, and the talks at 7.30pm.

You are invited to nominate for the officers and council of the Society. The present incumbents are:

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.

Any nominations should be sent to the Secretary, Jane Ramsay at the address on the back of the *Newsletter*.

The Annual Outing

This year's Outing will take place on a *Thursday*, namely the 3rd of August, and will include West Stow Medieval Village and Euston Hall, the home of the Duke of Grafton, whose Fitzroy family has provided the name for so many of Camden's streets and stations, in particular of course Euston station and Grafton Street. Both properties are in Suffolk. There will be a stop for morning coffee at Grantchester.

West Stow is a partially reconstructed *Saxon* village on a small site within West Stow Country Park. An interesting video introduces visitors to the site and to the evidence on which the thatched houses have been reconstructed. There is a pleasant restaurant there, but it is limited in size and scope, so it is recommended that members bring their own lunch to eat in the beautiful surroundings. However, sandwiches and hot drinks in the restaurant can be ordered in advance if desired.

Euston Hall is an imposing 17th-century mansion containing a collection of pictures of members of Charles II's court (by Van Dyck, Lely *et al.*); the park and river layout were designed by William Kent and completed by Capability Brown. The church on the estate, St Genevieve, is one of only four rural churches erected in the reign of Charles II. We shall be visiting the Hall in the afternoon on one of the Open Days (which happen only on Thursdays), so there will be no guided tour and members can walk through the house and grounds at their own pace, taking tea in the tea room if desired.

The cost will be £23 including the cost of coach hire, morning coffee and entrance fees; pickup times and places will be as usual, starting at 8.30am at Camden Town. Applications to Jean Archer please on the enclosed form.

Here is a Security Announcement....

On 20 July Robin Woolven will be introducing his new Occasional Paper relating to wartime St Pancras. The venue will be the University of London OTC headquarters in Handel Street, and because of security regulations there members expecting to attend

need to send their names and names of any guests to Peter Woodford, either at 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS or else email to drswoodford@blueyonder.co.uk.

The London Maze

This year's London Maze is now behind us. It took place at the Guildhall Art Gallery in March, just too late for a report in the last *Newsletter*. However, there were two references to Camden.

Dr Caroline Bresssey, speaking about black people in Victorian and Edwardian London, told of a little black girl who came to live in Hampstead. She was a protégé of Queen Victoria to whom she wrote as "your little loyal subject."

Stephen Halliday said much about the early, turbulent history of the London Underground railways. He mentioned several stations, which were closed, but used during the Second World War for War Cabinet meetings. Reminded of the one on Hampstead Heath, near Golders Hill Park, which was never opened, he said that it, too, was used for War Cabinet meetings. An astonished Home Guard was surprised to see a door open and Winston Churchill emerge. Was this his only visit or one of a very few to Hampstead? One has never heard of any other connection with the district.

Joan Barraclough

GRANT REFUSED

With the support of the Society Camden Local Studies and Archives recently applied for a lottery funded grant to catalogue the St Pancras Housing Association archives. Unfortunately, it was turned down – applications exceeded the available budget by six times.

Advance Notice

Please put the following in your diary:

20 July: Launch of Wartime St Pancras book by Robin Woolven. This will be at the University of London OTC Hall in Handel Street – see note about registration on this page.

3 August: Annual outing to Euston Hall.

21 Sep: John Betjeman, by Tim Heath. At Parliament Hill School.

19 Oct: Launch of book on Streets of Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town. Venue to be announced

16 Nov: The restoration of St George's, Bloomsbury by Kevin Rogers.

14 Dec: Susan Jenkinson on London statues.



The Shakesperian Theatre

Derek Barlow has sent us a photocopy of an advertising card for a Shakesperian Theatre which describes it as being opposite Midford Place, Tottenham Court Road. On Horwood's map of 1815 there is an unnamed yard which stood opposite, between 156 and 157, and this might possibly have housed the theatre.

Nothing can be found so far to enlarge on the card and it is not known of in Camden's archives. Mr Barlow suggests that it is conceivable it operated in private rooms and that at this time it was sponsored by a patron wishing to promote restoration of the use of Shakespeare's original texts in the theatre, but other than the Bard's muse appearing to have adopted much the same pose as Garrick in Gainsborough's 1769 portrait of him, the card itself conveys no other clue as to what inspired this venture.

Any suggestions? Mr Barlow is at Greywethers, 9 Braybrooke Road, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8DU (01189 404629).

SURVEY OF LONDON ONLINE

A major project has begun under the aegis of English Heritage and the Institute of Historical Research. This is to digitise the complete volumes of the *Survey of London*, the invaluable series that includes four volumes on St Pancras, two on St Giles, though none on Hampstead.

The first volumes digitised cover St James, Piccadilly, Soho and the Grosvenor Estate. The site may be accessed on <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/surveyoflondon>.

Other internet developments include another 3,700 photographs which have been added to the National Monuments Record online picture library on www.english-heritage.org.uk.uk/viewfinder

Dr Swiney

Jenny Woolf has sent us a cutting from the *Illustrated London News* of 3 Feb, 1844, re the death of George Swiney, in whose name an award is made jointly by the Royal Society and the Royal College of Physicians. Dr Swiney bequeathed money to the RSA for a prize to be given every fifth anniversary after his death to the author of the best published work on jurisprudence.

The *ILN* notes that he died at his residence, 9 Grove Street (now Arlington Road), Camden Town, where he had lived for fifteen years. "Strange stories are related of his birth, though he was acknowledged to be the son of the late Admiral Swiney. He was a relative of the great chemist, the late Sir Humphry Davy. His age was about fifty, and not having shaved for the last two years, his beard descending swept his aged breast. He lived in almost complete seclusion, his house having but another inmate, a female, his housekeeper. He went abroad not more than four or five times a year.

"The statement in the newspapers that he died of voluntary starvation, is incorrect; his disease was of the heart. Neither was Dr Swiney of miserly habits, as has been related; he lived in a respectable street, and his house had every appearance of decent and cleanly comfort, without ostentation. His eccentricity bordered on insanity, so that his will is likely to become a cause of immediate litigation.

"Dr Swiney died possessed of considerable property. He has willed £5,000 to the British Museum for the establishment of a lectureship on geology; and a similar sum to the Society of Arts, out of which the first freeholder, whether in England, Ireland and Scotland, that shall reclaim and bring into cultivation the largest amount of waste land, is to receive one hundred guineas.

"The provisions for Dr Swiney's funeral were very eccentric. He was buried, according to his desire, in the cemetery of St Martin's, Pratt Street. [For his funeral procession] the girls were to be chosen as mourners by the chief executor; and to each of them was bequeathed a legacy of £20, besides a similar amount to buy dresses for the three...The coffin was covered with yellow cloth, studded with white nails. Immediately after the coffin came three young girls, the eldest about fourteen, and the other two about twelve. They were habited in white, with violet-coloured cloaks. Their head-dress consisted of straw bonnets trimmed with white satin ribbon. After these came the mutes and then the real mourners.

"At the conclusion of the ceremony, despite the efforts of the police, the mass of people round the chapel was so great, that the mourners were compelled to return in hired cabs to the late residence of the deceased."

Moving Pictures come to London: the first decades

An exhibition at Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre from 8 May to 22 July.

London was one of the first great cinema capitals and moving pictures launched a whole new industry. This new exhibition, organised by Ian Christie, focuses on the little-known early history of cinema before the First World War.

Londoners were mad about the new craze. Music halls and fairgrounds all had a 'bioscope' or 'cinematograph'. Queen Victoria's 1897 Jubilee became one of the first great state occasions in the world to be successfully filmed.

London was a centre of innovation. Robert Paul supplied the first projectors and cameras for Britain and the Empire, and established one of the world's first model studios at Muswell Hill. Other pioneers, such as American Charles Urban, made London the hub of international sales. Colour, sound and new forms of promotion were also features of this period. And there was a boom in building new cinemas.

The exhibition will include screenings of early London film digitally remastered, based on holdings of the British Film

Institute. On display also will be Colin Sorenson's pioneering exhibition 'London on film' originally seen at the Museum of London.

MA courses in Metropolitan history

We have received publicity from the Centre for Metropolitan History at Senate House relating to courses aimed at an MA in Metropolitan and Regional History. Bursaries worth £3,300 are also available.

If you would like to know more contact Dr James Moore, Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street WC1E 7HU. His email is james.moore@sas.ac.uk.

CLOSURE AT HOLBORN

The Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library will be closed on Monday 19 June so that the local studies staff can attend a libraries staff training day.

A postcard of a church long gone – St Andrew's in Malden Road, Kentish Town, c.1904.



This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

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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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The Editor of the *Camden History Review* is David Hayes, 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2LB (8397 6752)

Our website: www.casweb.org/camdenhistorysociety

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 216
Jul 2006

Wartime St Pancras

Thurs, 20 July, 7.30pm
University of London OTC Hall
Handel Street, WC1

July's talk, to be given by Robin Woolven, comes with a new Occasional Paper entitled *Wartime St Pancras: A London borough defends itself*. The paper and the talk are based on a document compiled by Cllr Charles Newbery, elected to St Pancras borough council in October 1937 at a time when that council was, politically, finely balanced between Municipal Reform (Conservatives) 33 seats and Labour (27 seats). Despite his limited experience on the council Cllr Newbery was chosen very quickly to chair the ARP committee – a politically sensitive post. There were members of the council who were pacifists and thought that some ARP measures, such as shelters, could be warmongering – a political view mirrored on post-war St Pancras council when left-wing members declined to build nuclear shelters. There were others who were quasi-Communists, led by Professor Haldane and Barbara Betts (later Castle), who wanted an extensive system of underground shelters, and others who felt that ratepayers' money should not be spent on them and that the government ought to fund them.

Newbery himself later became the ARP Officer and his account, skilfully edited by Robin Woolven, is an unusually detailed description of what went on in those anxious days in a borough with three main line stations that were bound to be attacked – this despite the view of the man initially nominated by the government as the council's ARP Officer who opined that "a well-organised civil population presents no attraction to enemy air attack – the risks are too great..."

All this promises to make for a fascinating talk and you will find that the publication itself, price £7.50 and available at the meeting, has a great deal to offer.

As mentioned in the last *Newsletter*, because of security measures at the venue, anyone wishing to attend the talk needs to register by contacting Peter Woodford either at 1 Akenside Road, NW3 5BS, or emailing him on drswoodford@blueyonder.co.uk. His telephone number is 020 7435 2088.

A few seats left

Thurs, 3 August

There has been a good uptake of tickets for this year's Annual Outing to West Stow Medieval Village and Euston Hall, the home of the Duke of Grafton. The Hall is an imposing 17th-century mansion containing a rich collection of pictures; and the park and river layout were designed by William Kent and Capability Brown. The church on the estate is one of only four rural churches built during the reign of Charles II. If you would like to go on the Outing and have not yet applied, please do so quickly. Use the form contained in the last *Newsletter*.

Advance Notice

Please put the following in your diary:

21 Sep: John Betjeman, by Tim Heath. At Parliament Hill School.

19 Oct: Launch of book on Streets of Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town. Venue to be announced.

16 Nov: The restoration of St George's Bloomsbury, by Kevin Rogers

14 Dec: Susan Jenkinson on London's statues. At Burgh House.

The Annual Meeting

A well attended Annual Meeting at Old St Pancras Church heard an interesting talk by Michael Ogden on the varied and sometimes troubled history of the church. During the business part of the meeting the Chairman announced that our Treasurer, Angela Bowen, was to step down during the forthcoming financial year as she is moving away from London. He appealed for nominations or a volunteer for the post.

Officers and Council were elected as follows:

PRESIDENT: Prof. Christopher Elrington

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Ann Saunders

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade

SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay

TREASURER: Angela Bowen

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: Dr Peter Woodford

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Roger Cline

RESEARCH TEAM LEADER: Steve Denford

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.

Thanks were expressed to Ivor Kamlsh for his great work in designing our publications, and to Geoffrey Harris, our Auditor.

Some well-known people

Christopher Wade writes:

Enjoying some armchair travel in our *Streets of Kentish Town*, I kept noticing famous names, past and present, who had lived or stayed in the area. There were many more than I expected in a district less notable for celebrity residents than, say, the heights of Hampstead and Highgate.

Among those still alive (but no longer in the area): Tariq Ali, Rowan Atkinson, Joan Bakewell and Harold Pinter, Mike Brearley, Windsor Davies, Chris Evans, Patricia Hewitt MP, Ken Loach, Sylvester McCoy, Deborah Moggach, Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Fay Weldon.

And among the dear departed: Kingsley Amis, Edmund Clerihew Bentley, John Betjeman, Mark Gertler, Emma Hamilton, Leigh Hunt, John Keats, Ronnie Lane, Ford Madox Brown, Horatio Nelson, Kwame Nkrumah, George Orwell, Paul Robeson, Walter Sickert, Dr Southwood Smith, AJP Taylor and Ellen Terry.

If you have the book you can find out who lived where. If not, buy one!

A Tour in Time

Just published by Camden Local Studies and Archives is *King's Cross, a tour in time*, a collection of historical pictures of the district around King's Cross and St Pancras stations. It is by Lesley Marshall and Mark Aston, both members of the Centre's staff. On sale there and local bookshops at £5.99.

Gilbert Bayes, Pancratian

The sculptor Gilbert Bayes (1872-1953), famed for his Queen of Time clock outside Selfridges, is best remembered in Camden for his fairy-tale roundels and washing-line-post finials on the Somers Town estates of the St Pancras Housing Association. The finials, lost over time through vandalism or theft, are being gradually reinstated in facsimile. Bayes' Somers Town connections were immortalised in song in the [Basil] Jellicoe musical staged at the Shaw Theatre in 2004.

Also in Camden is Bayes' splendid Art Through the

Ages, a bas-relief frieze in artificial stone on the façade of the former Saville Theatre (now Odeon Covent Garden) in Shaftesbury Avenue. The latter will feature in an article in the 2006 issue of *Camden History Review*. Research for this has revealed that Bayes' St Pancras connections ran deeper, and that he was indeed a native of the borough. Though the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* gives his birthplace as a non-existent Oval Road, St John's Wood it was actually in Oval Road, Camden Town that Gilbert was born.

The 1871 census shows living there at No. 6: Gilbert's father, Alfred Walter Bayes (1832-1909), a painter and "wood-draughtsman" (etcher), and his mother Emily, both hailing from Todmorden, Yorks; an older sister Emiline; a one-year-old brother Walter; and a 14-year-old servant, Catherine. Gilbert was as yet unborn, as was his sister Jessie (1878-1970), also a future artist. Nine people were living in 1871 at 6 Oval Road, which was shared with Theophilus Lewis (a 74-year-old engineer), his wife and two middle-aged daughters.

By 1883 the Bayeses had moved to Hampstead, and to 21 Adelaide Road. A decade later they were installed at 82 Fellows Road, which became a long-term family home, a 'Miss Bayes' was still listed there in 1937. The house was destroyed in World War II.

Gilbert's brother Walter John Bayes, a painter, was a founder member of the Camden Town Group, later becoming a distinguished art critic and serving (1918-34) as headmaster of Westminster School of Art. His successive homes were at 84 Abbey Road before WWI, 43 Goldhurst Terrace a decade later, and 54 Fitzjohns Avenue.

Gilbert Bayes was married in 1906 to Gertrude Smith, a fellow artist, who bore him two children. By then, having studied at the Royal Academy School, he was an established sculptor, and a member of the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square, of which he became Master in 1925. He was President of the Royal Society of British Sculptors from 1939-44. His philosophy was summed up in his 1945 statement that "It is up to the artist to serve the community and deserve well of it, not to make feeble things that won't function". Examples of his prolific sculptural output were to be found in the garden of his final home, at 4 Greville Place, Kilburn, outside Camden by a whisker, on the wrong (Westminster) side of the road.

David and Ruth Hayes

The Real Oliver Twist

by John Waller,

Icon Books, £16.99, ISBN 1 84046 542 05

This is the story of Robert Blincoe who spent approximately three years of his childhood in St Pancras Workhouse in Camden Town, on the site of today's underground station. In 1796, at the age of four, he was taken in a coach with an unknown woman and left there. Where he came from and who his parents were is not known, but it seems likely that he was illegitimate – a stigma made worse by his extreme poverty.

In 1787, nine years earlier, St Pancras vestry was told that the workhouse was overcrowded and that perhaps a shed should be built in the garden to provide more accommodation, and at its next meeting it was said that five and six were obliged to sleep in each bed. The plan for a cheap extension went ahead. There was also a dread of putrid fever breaking out amongst the inmates. "Under such conditions, where every hygienic precaution was conspicuous by its absence, it is only natural to suppose that vermin of all descriptions increased and multiplied to an alarming extent." This was not a new problem because we find in the Overseers' accounts on May 30, 1776, that the sum of 11s 2d was paid to Thomas Eades for "Druggs to kill Buggs at 4 sevl times".

In 1796, the year Blincoe arrived in the workhouse, the Vestry was told that the number of poor exceeded that of the previous year and the amount of the poor rate would have to rise by 25%. Only in 1800 when the number continued to rise did the Vestry begin to consider building a new workhouse.

Even as late as 1809, as the Vestry was preparing to move inmates to a new workhouse in Pancras Road, the minutes record that "on examining the bedsteads [at Camden Town], the number is 224, 52 of which are single and 97 double bedstead, all of which may be fit for use if they be cleansed from vermin". The remaining 75 were declared to be useless.

Blincoe recalled later some of his life at the workhouse and how, so desperate was he to leave the place, he had indeed welcomed the chance of becoming a chimney sweep boy but, to his chagrin, was turned down. It is difficult to know if his life as a chimney boy would have been worse than in the industrial life he was about to experience.

At the age of seven Robert Blincoe was shipped off by the St Pancras Vestry authorities to the appalling life of virtually slave labour in the Manchester textile mills. He was not able to escape the terms of his indenture for another fourteen years.

In the frenetic race for profits by mill owners and other industrialists, and with a surfeit of cheap labour to call on, the lives of any industrial worker were

blunt and short. By the 1830s the average life-span of a working-class male in Manchester was 17 years.

In 1832 the movement to bring in an Act limiting child labour to ten hours a day was at its height in Manchester. It coincided with a pamphlet published entitled *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, An Orphan Boy; sent from the workhouse of St Pancras, London, at seven years of age, to endure the Horrors of a Cotton-Mill, through his infancy and youth, with a minute detail of his sufferings, being the first memoir of the kind published.*

The author of this pamphlet was one, John Brown, who had encountered Blincoe in Lancashire and fired by the obvious waste of life and cruelty to so many young people in the textile industry, used Blincoe's arduous experiences to illustrate thousands of others.

The first part of John Waller's book concerns itself with Blincoe's life in St Pancras Workhouse in Camden Town. He was there at the time when Lord Camden's estate to the east of the High Street was just developing and so the surrounding area would have been one of brickmaking and construction.

The rest of the book is concerned with Blincoe's life in Manchester, and how he became an iconic figure in the struggle of the oppressed workers to escape from industrial slavery. It also deals with Blincoe's later life, his fight against the industrialists, his particular wish that his own children eventually should not have to be involved in it – indeed his son, also Robert, became a clergyman, an extraordinary jump into the middle classes for the family.

It is a fascinating read and well worth the buy, though it's a pity the publishers did not use better paper for all the illustrations

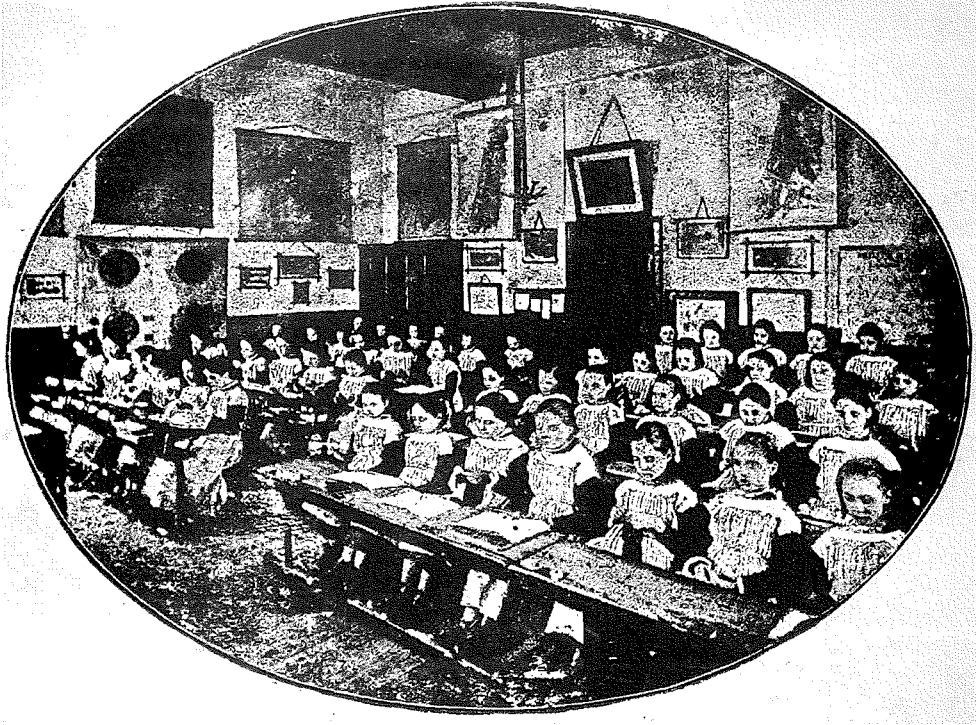
John Richardson

ITALIANS IN LONDON

Acli Enaip, London, has put together a travelling photographic exhibition that illustrates the life histories of people who migrated to this country from Emilia-Romagna and Sicily to work in the food industry from the 1950s. The exhibition makes use of personal stories and photographs of people from these communities.

People from Emilia Romagna came over to London thanks to relatives that had settled here during the inter-war years and they opened up the first classic cafés and snack bars in post-war London; they introduced Italian food to the British public such as spaghetti and ciabatta bread. The first Sicilian settlers came to fill the employment gap in the greenhouses of Hertfordshire and Essex.

The exhibition will be at the Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library from 31 July to 4 September.



Gillian Tindall in her article in *Newsletter* 212 told the story of some children who, by necessity after a Thames accident in 1878, were placed in the Orphan Working School at the southern end of Haverstock Hill. This picture of some rather glum girls in their schoolroom there is contained in a fund-raising advertisement (undated).

An interesting picture of the northern end of Chalk Farm Road taken from just outside the Roundhouse. In the background it looks like the building work to construct Chalk Farm station on the Northern Line, opened in 1907. The Adelaide pub to the left was demolished about twenty years ago.



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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 217

Sep 2006

Celebrating John Betjeman

Thurs. 21st Sept, 7.30pm

Parliament Hill School for Girls, Highgate Road, NW5

The Society is joining in the current Betjemanian in marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of John Betjeman. He was born in 1906 in Lissenden Mansions, just around the corner from our venue, and at the age of one, he moved with his family to 31 Highgate West Hill, where they remained for ten years. During that time Betjeman was a pupil at Highgate School, where he was occasionally taught by T S Eliot.

In *Summoned by Bells*, Betjeman sums up the class distinctions of his locality:

*Mysterious gravel drives to hidden wealth
Wound between laurels – mighty Caenwood Towers
And Grand Duke Michael's house and Holly Lodge.
But what of us in our small villa row
Who gazed into the Burdett-Coutts estate?
I knew we were a lower, lesser world
Than that remote one of the carriage-folk
Who left their cedars and brown garden walls
In care of servants. I could also tell
That we were slightly richer than my friends,
The family next door; we owned a brougham
And they would envy us our holidays.*

Our evening of Betjeman, entitled *John Betjeman and Camden: poetry and prose*, will be presented by actor Tim

Heath, who members may have heard in 2004 when he presented for us Lytton Strachey's *Ermyntrude and Esmeralda*.

Please arrive in time for the 7.30 start.

Launching Gospel Oak

Thurs. 19 October, 7.30pm

Gospel Oak Methodist church, Agincourt Road
(near Fleet Road), NW3

The Society is launching in October what is probably the first book on Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town. It is part of our Streets series and will, no doubt, be as packed with information as previous volumes. The research group, led by Steve Denford, has gradually worked up from Holborn over the years, and now just has the Camden part of Highgate to do.

Members of the group will present papers on different aspects of their research into this historically neglected area and it is appropriate that we meet in one of the many non-conformist churches that served, at least in its previous building, the enormously overcrowded houses in the area.

There isn't much of the old Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town left nowadays – most of it was demolished in a Brave New World policy of demolition post-war. Even more important than that the area's history is rescued at this time.

*The venue for our October meeting is the new Gospel Oak Methodist church.
This is the former building, c.1905, which was demolished in 1971.*



A long day and a happy one

(Report on the Society's August outing)

It was a long day for Camden History Society members on their latest outing. However, it was one of the most interesting excursions ever organised.

There were three stops. The first was for coffee at the Orchard, Grantchester. This has had a tea-room since some undergraduates asked for tea in the orchard instead of on the lawn of the main house. Later, a young man called Rupert Brooke moved out there. He loved it and immortalised it in two lines of one of his most famous poems. Remember:

*Stands the church clock at ten to three;
And is there honey still for tea?*

A small museum contains documents and portraits of those in the Rupert Brooke circle.

The next stop was Stow, not the school but an Anglo-Saxon village. It was excavated through the efforts of Mr Stanley West. He found a burial ground and felt sure people must once have lived there. He was right. Today, the restored village stands as a memorial to his good work. Only about four families lived in the village, their thatched wooden huts surrounded by the land they farmed. There seemed to be no village street and Christianity was yet to come – no church. The feature that seemed to attract most attention from visitors was a sty full of little spotted pigs. A well-lit and designed visitor centre under cover offered a commentary and cases of various objects. There were tools and pieces of jewellery. The harder and solid objects survived better than the textiles, which were mostly lost.

The third, last and longest stop was at Euston Hall. This is the home of the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, whose name comes up so often in Camden. The house dates from the 17th century and is attractive if not perhaps as magnificent as some later Georgian mansions. It has been much altered since its first days, owing to disastrous fires and some essential modernisation.

The first Duke was an illegitimate son of Charles II. He was well-provided for and later his family acquired property in London. This included Euston Grove, which gave its name to that Euston station into which Mr Robert Stephenson brought the first main-line train to enter London from the north. The Duke and Duchess now have no property in London, most of it having been sold to the London to Birmingham Railway Company, which became the London & North Western. However, they do have eleven thousand acres of land at Euston Hall. Most of it is farmland, but some has been laid out as a park. William Kent and Capability Brown worked there once. There is also a tradition that Christopher Wren did some work on the church near the house. This is not certain as he seldom left London. Another tradition has it that a woman architect did some refurbishing at a time when a woman's place was considered very definitely to be in the home.

Indoors, there is real splendour, with many fine paintings, including one Van Dyke of Charles I and his first six children.

The dining-room must be one of the most beautiful rooms anywhere. Upstairs are a bedroom and a nursery. The latter has a rocking horse, something of a rarity nowadays.

Finally came tea. No cream teas were served but who does the baking for the Duke and Duchess? Someone described the shortbread as something to die for and the fruit cake was wonderful. Very generous portions were served.

Joan Barraclough

(The Outing was arranged by Jean Archer, to whom we owe many thanks)

Advance Notice

Please put the following talks in your diary:

16 Nov: History and Restoration of St George's church, Bloomsbury. Speaker Kevin Rogers.

14 Dec: Susan Jenkinson on London's statues of the famous and forgotten. At Burgh House.

25 Jan: Professor Michael Port on A Church Revived: The 1818 Church Building Commissioners in North London. At Burgh House.

15 Feb: Stephen Games on Nikolaus Pevsner's broadcasts. At Burgh House.

15 Mar: Gillian Tindall on People who lived on Bankside.

The new Review

With this *Newsletter* is enclosed *Camden History Review* 30, edited by David Hayes and designed by Ivor Kamlisch.

John Waller has condensed his book, *The Real Oliver Twist*, reviewed in the last *Newsletter*, to tell us the life story of Robert Blincoe, who was young when he, an illegitimate child, found himself in St Pancras Workhouse and then for many years cheap labour in Lancashire cotton mills. His experiences at St Pancras in the late 1700s demonstrate the callous nature of vestry care in those days – not, of course, peculiar to St Pancras. In order to reduce the cost on the rates children were 'apprenticed' to the most brutal employment. Master sweeps were invited to attend the workhouse to view the young boys to judge if they were suitable material for their hazardous employment.

There is an unusual item by Ruth Jackson about a lesser-known artist, Frederick Tatham, friend of William Blake, who lived in a modest-sized house in Gospel Oak. By then Tatham was working as an evangelist minister in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Kentish Town.

Gerry Harrison tells us the history of the splendid Kentish Town Baths in Prince of Wales Road, which have recently been under threat. The building has long been spoiled by civic updating, particularly in the 1950s by the Borough Engineer of St Pancras, whose crass modifications are still apparent. An ex-Camden councillor himself, Gerry is able to tell us in

this article quite a bit about the politics of the recent proposal to close the baths.

David Hayes deals with two remarkable pioneers of steam vehicles in his article. They both functioned from what had been built by Nash in Albany Street as an Ophthalmic Hospital for treatment of soldiers returned from campaigns in Egypt. The most famous of the pioneers was Goldsworthy Gurney, who built a steam carriage with which he took on the incline of Highgate West Hill. He did indeed manage that, but there was a mechanical problem on the way down.

David Laing, the subject of an article by Shirley Neale, was once a very prominent personage in St Pancras parish. Not only did he build Holy Trinity church in Clarence Road from scratch and make it notable beyond its own area, but he was prominent in the affairs of the Governesses' Institution in Prince of Wales Road and considerably helped Frances Mary Buss establish the North London Collegiate School and its successor the Camden School for Girls.

Robin Woolven follows up his talk on Wartime Camden with an article which examines how the successful way in which local boroughs in London performed during the last war delayed proposals for their abolition post-war. In the event, it was not until 1965 that the old boroughs were abolished and larger units of government formed.

Ruth Hayes writes about the Saville Theatre (now a cinema) in the upper part of Shaftesbury Avenue. It was built by Highgate architect, T P Bennett. Two features of the building are still noticeable to the casual passer-by. One is the large arched entrance and the other is the remarkable bas-relief frieze by Bayes running along its length.

A BLOOMSBURY GROUP BUILDING

No 33 Fitzroy Square, of recent years part of the London Foot Hospital, is about to become a private house again. It was built by Robert Adam and was once the headquarters of the the Middlesex Rifle Volunteers, and then by a part of the Royal Fusiliers. More famously, in 1913 it was the home of the artist Roger Fry when it became the base of the Omega Group, a commune of artists.

Omega was a democratic group. The artists were paid a fixed wage and were not allowed to put a personal signature on their work. They produced ceramics, painted furniture, textiles, glass and jewellery. A number of their products may be viewed at Charleston, the group's country house near Lewes.

OPEN HOUSE IN LONDON

The annual Open House of interesting buildings in London is on 16/17 September. Near at home are some unusual places, such as Philip Hughes' house in Rochester Place, complete with art gallery. Or 35c Fairhazel Gardens, a prize-winning modern house, and a conversion of a Victorian house to a 21st-century abode at 17 Lady Margaret Road.

You can also see the new Haverstock School on Haverstock Hill or, at 164c on the same road, the Garden House. There are the more usual established buildings in the borough open as well. Over the border, the Pollard Thomas Edwards architects' office at Diespeker Wharf in Graham Street is well worth seeing – a great view over the Regent's Canal.

The Argyle Square Sound Trail

The King's Cross Voices Oral History Project has recently launched this Trail which takes the listener on a voyage of discovery around one of the most residential, and least documented, historic quarters of King's Cross.

The listener is armed with an illustrated map and background text, and follows a trail compiled with the aid of local interviewees. It weaves in and around the adjoining side streets before settling in Argyle Square.

Until very recently the Square, built in the 1830s, was associated with seediness and sleaze. By the early 1900s the square had begun to give way to hotels for London visitors – and there are still many hotels there.

The Trail is accessible by either downloading it from the King's Cross Voices website, www.kingscrossvoices.org.uk, or by picking up a CD and map from the St Pancras Library in Argyle Street or at The (German) Gymnasium in Pancras Road.

CAMDEN NEW TOWN HISTORY

Camden New Town is east of Camden Town proper, and was developed by the Camden family as from the 1840s. It centred upon Camden Square and its church and was much more up-market than the first Camden development between the High Street and St Pancras Way.

Anyone researching Camden New Town will find the website www.camdennewtown.info of great use. It contains the names of inhabitants of Camden Square from 1850-1901, the 1881 census data for 14 local streets and a review of all the traders in Murray Street between 1850 and 1961.

NEW ARRIVALS

We are pleased to announce that the writer and local historian, Gillian Tindall, is to become a Vice President of the Society.

Also, we welcome Dr Henry FitzHugh as a new member of the Council. Members will remember that he gave an interesting talk recently on researching the history of his house in Argyle Street.

A bit of High Holborn

Roger Cline has recently acquired a sale prospectus for 319-323a High Holborn and 47 Southampton Buildings in 1958. These buildings no longer exist and therefore the photograph contained in the prospectus is of historical interest.



THE LAMAS CONFERENCE

This year's Local History Conference organised by the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society is on Saturday 18 November at the Museum of London Lecture Theatre. The theme is Lost London, and the speakers include our own member, David Hayes, on *Lost Vibrancy and Squalor: Victorian Seven Dials*.

The cost is £7, which includes afternoon tea. Tickets may be obtained from Local History Conference, 24 Orchard Close, Ruislip, Middx HA4 7LS (cheques payable to the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, and send sae)

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

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Nov 2006

St George's Restored

Thurs. 16 November, 7.30pm

St George's church, Bloomsbury Way, WC1

(entrance via steps at the bottom of the tower to the west)

At the beginning of the 18th century residents of the newly fashionable north of St Giles-in-the-Fields parish had to go through one of the more unsavoury parts of London – a famous rookery near today's junction of Tottenham Court Road and New Oxford Street – to get to their parish church. Thus, when the famous 'Fifty new churches' Act of 1711 was passed residents petitioned for a new church east of the rookery so that a walk there was one without embarrassment. On a tiny site Nicholas Hawksmoor designed one of the more ingenious and interesting parish churches in London. Apart from the imposing Corinthian portico there is a remarkable tower modelled on a free rendering of Pliny's description of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. Loyally, at the top, is George I in Roman attire, a statue donated by a local brewer, above a stepped pyramid. This gave rise to a popular epigram:

'When Henry the Eighth left the Pope in the lurch
The protestants made him the head of the church;
But George's good subjects, the Bloomsbury people
Instead of the Church, made him head of the steeple.

The church was consecrated in January 1731, but the cramped site determined that it could accommodate only 447 worshippers. However, in 1781 another 337 seats were squeezed in by changing the orientation of the church.

The building has recently been restored (and cleaned!) and our speaker in November, Kevin Rogers, was the prime mover in this operation. He will talk about the history of the church and the restoration of the original orientation.

London Statues of the Famous and Forgotten

Thurs. 14 December

7pm for mince pies and wine etc, 7.30 for the talk.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3.

We walk past many London statues and sometimes hardly bother to identify them. And many would be



*St George's, Bloomsbury Way. Watercolour c.1920
by H E Tidmarsh.*

hard put to it to say where some of them are. Where is Lord Curzon? Where is James Greathead, whose invention made tunnelling for the first tube railway possible?

Our talk in December is by Susan Jenkinson, a Blue Badge Guide. She will explore not only the background to statues of famous people but also those celebrating more humble members of society who risk being forgotten, tucked away in shady gardens or railway stations.

We will also see how attitudes to the great and the good have sometimes changed. The persons depicted may no longer be regarded with the same reverence but they are part of our history.

Advance Notice

Please put the following talks in your diary:

25 January: Professor Michael Port, *A Church Revived: The 1818 Church Building Commissioners in North London*. At Burgh House.

15 February: Stephen Games, *Nikolaus Pevsner's broadcasts*. At Burgh House.

15 March: Gillian Tindall. *A window on the Thames: an account of the oldest house in London*. At Burgh House.

19 April: Richard Lines, on *The Swedenborg Society in Camden*. At Swedenborg House, 20 Bloomsbury Way.

17 May: Nigel Watson, *From Gower Street to Frognal* – the centenary of University College School. At the School in Frognal.

21 June (AGM): Roger Cline on the centenary of *The Hampstead Tube*, at the Crowndale Centre, Camden Town.

Take a tour round King's Cross

No area in London is changing more than King's Cross and soon a new generation will be unfamiliar with the landmarks and the social make-up brought about by the first railway revolution. You can be reminded of what is there and what is about to disappear by an exhibition at Camden Local Studies and Archives at Holborn Library, which shows many images from a best-selling book by Mark Aston and Lesley Marshall. The book, entitled *King's Cross: a tour in time*, includes over ninety images – many previously unpublished. It is on sale at the Centre for £5.99, and at other Camden libraries as well as local bookshops.

The exhibition runs until 4 February (but closed 4-9 December).

THE ANNUAL CLOSURE WEEK

The Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre at Holborn Library will be closed from Monday 4 December until Saturday 9 December inclusive to enable staff to undertake a number of tasks that can't be done while the Centre is open, including sorting and listing archives and other collections in the strongrooms.

Otherwise the Centre will be open at the normal hours. The Centre, by the way, has a very large selection of local books – especially suitable for Christmas presents. New titles include the *City of London Book* by Richard Tames (£14.50), *Crime and Criminals of Victorian London* by Adrian Gray, *House Histories for Beginners* by Colin and O-Ian Style (15.99) and, in the same theme, *Researching London's Houses* by Colin Thom (£13.95).

CHANGE OF PLAN

In the last *Newsletter*, in our mention of the forthcoming LAMAS Conference on 18 November, we said that David Hayes would be speaking on *Lost Vibrancy and Squalor: Victorian Seven Dials*. Unfortunately, David has had to withdraw from that event.

The Primrose Hill Shops

Camden History Society member, Caroline Cooper, has self-published an enormous labour of love. Entitled *Windows on the Past*, it is a history of the shops in Primrose Hill since the first ones opened in 1855.

Each shop has its own comprehensive history. For example, 75 Regent's Park Road was built c. 1846 as a pub called the Primrose Tavern, which closed in 1853, surprisingly just as its nearest rival, the Chalk Farm Tavern was completely demolished for rebuilding.

In 1857-60 the premises were occupied by a cowkeeper George Camp and this sort of business continued under different owners until 1870 at least. In 1875 the cows had gone but the West London Dairy Company was in business. Then, surprisingly, in 1885 part of the premises was taken by St Mary's School, presumably connected to the church in Primrose Hill Road, consecrated that year.

In 1910 Angelo Romano, a greengrocer set up shop, to be followed by another Italian, Guiseppe Anastasio in 1915. Another change of use occurred in 1920 when furniture dealers and then window blind makers were there, and from 1940-65 the shop was a confectioner's. More recently, from 1972 Primrose Hill Antiques were there, then women's fashions from 1980.

Such variation in use is prevalent for most of the entries. There are photographs of the premises at different times. These include a picture of the opening of the first Chalk Farm library which, like virtually all the libraries of St Pancras Council, was in converted premises. This one, before the present building in Sharpleshall Street was opened, was in a former confectioner's shop at 109 Regent's Park Road.

Pubs are included, such as the Princess of Wales at 22 Chalcot Road. This was not recently named after Princess Diana, but probably from Princess Alexandra who married the future Edward VII in 1863. This had a very up-market name change c. 1994 when it became 'The Swans at Coole', an allusion to a poem by former local resident W B Yeats. It reverted to plain Princess of Wales in 1997.

No. 73 Regent's Park Road became the first 'proper' restaurant in the area when Mustoe's bistro opened in 1970. This popular, modestly priced, place lasted until 2004. It is now an antiques shop.

Caroline's book is obtainable direct from her (tel: 020 7586 2523) or from Chalk Farm Library at £10. It is paperback, 129 leaves, A4 size.

One Square Mile

Published by the Public Relations Dept of the City of London, Guildhall EC2P 2EJ. (Tel: 7332 3099) It is a free publication.

This pocket size guide to the attractions of the City contains 124 pages of information and colour. It is divided into themes, though it must be said that it stretches the City somewhat by including places rather outside the Square Mile – for example the Geffrye Museum is featured, as indeed are Sadler's Wells, the Oxo Tower and Holborn Library. However, it is a handy booklet and well worth having around.

Leisure and Moving Pictures

Two exhibitions at the Hampstead Museum at Burgh House will interest members. Until 12 November *For all seasons* deals with fun and leisure on Hampstead Heath, including fun fairs, kite flying, fishing, walking, skating and even skiing.

From 19 November until mid January an exhibition focuses on the little known early history of 'moving pictures' in London before the First World War. This exhibition has been researched and produced by Birkbeck University of London.

TALKS AT HOLBORN LIBRARY

The Holborn Library Users Group has an interesting programme of talks for the winter.

On Tuesday, 21 November at 6.30pm, is *Holborn vs Napoleon – Dad's Army in the 18th century*. Speaker: Fred Wilkinson.

On Tuesday, 12 December at 7pm, *An Academy for architecture: Sir John Soane's Museum*. Speaker Jane Monahan

On 9 January at 6.30pm, *Coram's Fields: The Heart of Holborn*. Speaker Sandy Wynn.

Admission free.

A Wallpaper Trove

A recent edition of *Heritage Today*, the magazine of English Heritage, reveals that high in the attics of Kenwood House is a room containing an entire compendium of English wallpaper. It includes more than 1000 samples of early papers, all rescued from long vanished interiors of London houses.

Wallpaper made an appearance in the late seventeenth century to replace the expensive imported tapestries, silks and velvets which were used in affluent homes. The papers were made from 20 x 23 inch rectangular sheets at first, and they were mainly floral designs printed by wooden blocks. The paper was produced from old rags and apart from the danger to workers processing these, the dyes used to print often contained arsenic and white lead. Continuous reels of paper appeared in the early part of the 19th century. By the 1830s one wallpaper factory in Marylebone employed 600 people.

This collection at Kenwood is open only for research purposes, by appointment with the curator, Treve Rosoman (treve.rosoman@english-heritage.org.uk)

First and Last Loves *John Betjeman and Architecture*

Until 30 December there is an exhibition at Sir John Soane's Museum, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, devoted to Betjeman's delight in architecture. It brings together rare archive material, photographs and film footage as well as original art work from Betjeman's friends and contemporaries such as John Piper, in a celebration of Betjeman's life-long passion for architecture.

From his bicycle tours of Victorian North Oxford as a young student, to his hard-fought campaigns to save endangered masterpieces such as St Pancras Station hotel in the 1960s, architecture remained Betjeman's great love. Following a spell at the *Architectural Review* in the 1930s, he went on to edit the iconic Shell Guides and, after the war, became increasingly well known for his television work.

As well as encouraging a better understanding of Britain's greatest towns and buildings he was a tireless promoter of the marginal, the overlooked and the obscure. He was a founder member of the Victorian Society in 1958, and he was a passionate defender of Britain's railway architecture.

A major new catalogue, featuring contributions by Dan Cruickshank, Alan Powers, Ruth Guilding, Mark Girouard, Anthony Symondson, Gavin Stamp and Ptolemy Dean, is published to accompany the exhibition.

Admission is free.

100 Years of Highgate Library

St Pancras Vestry and Borough Council were not in the forefront of public library provision. In fact they persistently delayed the inevitable and were behind Hornsey parish, a much poorer and smaller authority, in taking the plunge. Local referendums of ratepayers (who made up the minority of the population) in 1894 and 1898 turned down the proposal to adopt the Libraries Act of 1892. However, when St Pancras became a metropolitan borough in 1900 it was no longer necessary to hold a referendum – if the council said yes, then yes it would be. As it happened the council in that first year had a majority for the Progressive Party (Liberals), and it decided to implement the Act.

During this period, Andrew Carnegie, self-made millionaire in America (but of Scottish origins), set about establishing libraries in this country with gifts to many local authorities so that they would be persuaded to open them. St Pancras solicited such a gift and his offer to them was that a 1d rate should be levied for running expenses and that a free site could be found. He would then pay for the building. He stipulated that the 1d rate was not to be used on rent to the detriment of book purchasing or staffing. This condition led to the absurd situation that the first public library in St Pancras was placed not in the populous south of the borough but way up in the north, on a site provided free by the Duke of Bedford – and it was not easy to get to either.

With self-congratulatory speeches the Highgate Library in Chester Road was opened on 18 October, 1906. However,

a local resident the following April complained that although there were 7,500 volumes in stock it was not possible to borrow any of them as the catalogue was not ready. There was, in any case, no open access to books – customers chose from a catalogue.

Chester Road was the only purpose-built library in St Pancras Borough until the 1960s when a large programme of new buildings began. It is surprising that this modest building has managed to get to its centenary – congratulations all round!

MARGARET FOUNTAINE

Members who heard her talk some years back in a 'Camden Characters' evening will remember Dr Dulcie Groves speak about Margaret Fountaine, a well-known butterfly collector who led a remarkable life of travel and adventure. From 1906 she maintained a studio in West Hampstead and in 1924 bought a studio at 100a Fellows Road and the next door, which was an occasional home until her death in 1940.

Her life story has recently been published in *Wild and Fearless: the life of Margaret Fountaine*, by Natashe Scott-Stokes, published by Peter Owen, £19.95.

A NEW BLOOMSBURY GROUP

A project to 'analyse the emergence of Bloomsbury in the nineteenth century as a significant location in the intellectual and cultural life of London and the nation' has been initiated and is applying for funding. This is not just about the famous Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists, but will include the influence of the many educational institutions in the area, plus the hospitals and, of course, the presence of the British Museum. The brief will also include the Foundling Hospital, the Mary Ward Settlement plus, of course, famous residents such as Dickens, Darwin, Millais, Elisabeth Reid and Trollope. Also, the significant activities of Bentham and Brougham will be investigated.

Much of the national cultural life was represented in Bloomsbury and the project has taken on a formidable subject.

The Bin Men

Via Lester May has come this illustration of a waste food collection lorry in St Pancras. The date is unknown. Sorry about the low resolution.



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