

newsletter

No 267

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Jan 2015

Pevsner in Hampstead and Bloomsbury

Thurs. 15 January, 7.30pm
Local Studies Library, 2nd floor, Holborn Library,
32-38 Theobalds Road, WC1

Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1983) became an unexpected National Treasure. He certainly, according to Stephen Games, had sympathy for the Nazi party before he himself had to leave Germany for being a Jew. He was an enthusiastic supporter of modernist architecture though eventually he spent many years recording and critically admiring England's array of inherited architecture. He was also the founder of the Victorian Society, and his support gave weight to those opposed to the demolition of the Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras.

As an architectural historian his greatest achievement was the establishment of the *Buildings of England* series, published by Penguin. The first volume appeared in 1951: Pevsner wrote 32 of the volumes himself and another ten with collaborators.

Susie Harries, who published a definitive biography of Pevsner in 2012, will provide some fascinating insights into the time he spent travelling between the Penguin office in Gower Street and his home at 2 Wildwood Terrace in Hampstead - he lived there from 1936 to 1983. Ms Harries will also reveal how many other tasks he undertook and endeavours like the Victorian Society he influenced.

Things to come

19 Mar: Lester Hillman on *Town planning in Camden*

16 Apr: Peter Darley on *Camden Goods Station through time*.

14 May: Dr David Burke on *Spies at the Isokon*.

18 Jun: AGM and Becky Haslam on *Archaeology of King's Cross Goods Yard*.

16 Jul: *History of St Michael's, Highgate*.

What happened to the Heath after 1871?

Thurs. 19 February, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

The battle to save Hampstead Heath from housing development was a long one between a pugnacious landowner and a determined early local group of conservationists, aided by a sympathetic Parliament. But all did not go smoothly once the Heath was safe in public hands.

The later history, after the death of the landowner, is the subject of Helen Marcus's talk in February. She has been closely associated with the Heath and (Old) Hampstead Society for many years, as chair, president and now vice-president, and is well acquainted with the many struggles over the uses and abuses of the Heath over the years. The principal controversy today is the proposal of the City of London, which now administers the Heath, to build huge and unsightly dams around the ponds to prevent the remarkably small chance of substantial flooding.

Diana Gurney

We are sorry to hear of the death of our oldest member, Diana Gurney: she was 97.

Much of her life was spent either involved in art at St Martin's College, or in local affairs close to her heart. She was especially known (and successful) in the campaigns to prevent the building of the motorway box, an horrendous road route crossing Hampstead and Camden Town, and for her unflagging efforts to, first of all, prevent the filling in of the Regent's Canal, and subsequently preserve and improve its features. She was also active in the Camden Civic Society and in the affairs of St Mark's church, Regent's Park.

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Forty Five years on...

On 27 November 1969 the beginnings of the Camden History Society took place. An invited audience attended a meeting in the Children's Library at Swiss Cottage, hosted by the Libraries and Arts Department of Camden Council, to consider a proposal made by one of its councillors that such a society should be founded for the study of the history of Camden, which would bring together people from disparate parts of the new borough.

This pre-formation gathering included some well-known names. Ian Norrie of the High Hill Bookshop was there, as were the transport historian, Charles Lee, Ann Saunders historian, Dr F M L Thompson historian, John Parkhurst former editor of the *Hampstead & Highgate Express*. There were also representatives from the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution, the Highgate Society, the Holborn Society, the London Appreciation Society, The Georgian Group, the Working Men's College and the Historical Association N W London. Also hoping to attend (but there is no record that they did) were John Lehmann and Miss Mercer, Archivist of the Greater London Council, and E G Brassington for the St Pancras Antiquarian Society.

Also there were a number of Council staff: Bill Maidment and Frank Cole from Libraries, Bruno Schlaffenburg head of Planning, Sydney Cook, Camden's Architect and designer of Holborn Library, plus 'Mr Holmes', presumably Malcolm, eventually Camden's archivist. There were 12 councillors, including Martin Morton, Geoffrey Finsberg and myself.

This all led to the appointment of a Steering Committee on 18 December 1969, which went on so long that it reconvened on 9th February 1970.

The first general meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday 14th April 1970, with a guest speaker - the topographical artist Geoffrey Fletcher. The first *Newsletter* appeared in May. It reported the demolition of Vane House in Hampstead, which had contained the Soldiers' Daughters' Home. Also it announced that Sir John Wolfenden had accepted our invitation to be our first President, and that Sir John Betjeman, Sir Colin Anderson, chairman of the Fine Art Commission, and also Sir James Brown, President of the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, had been appointed Vice-Presidents. The Mayor, at that time, Florence Cayford, became Patron of the Society.

One of those who attended our first meeting was the late Basil Leverton, a director of the well-known St Pancras firm of undertakers, Leverton's. That company was thought to be the oldest ratepayer in Camden, having been established in the 1780s.

John Richardson

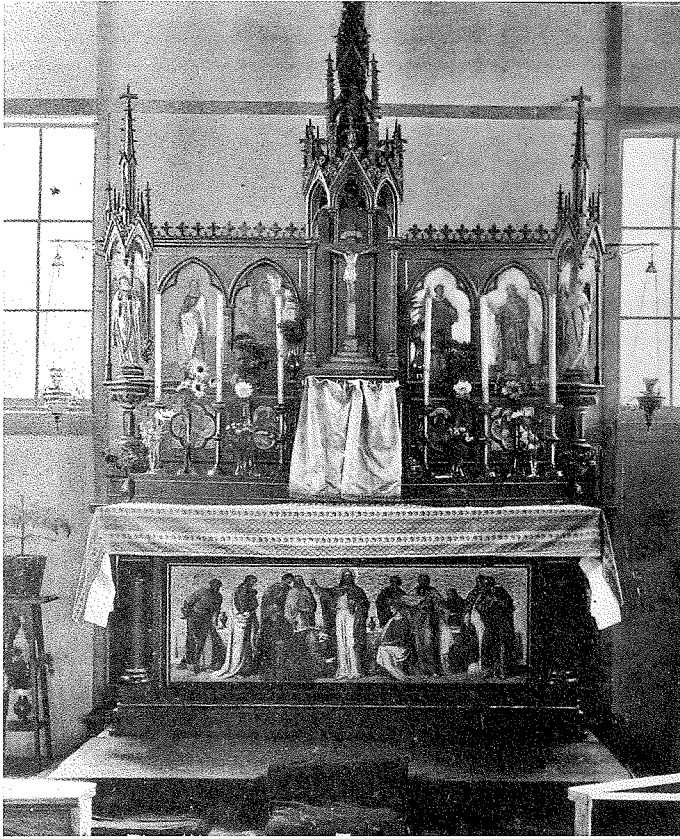
The Belgian Church in Camden Town

The Roman Catholic church, Our Lady of Hal, in Arlington Road is a little known place of worship, rather hidden away. Its origins lie in Belgium.

Belgium was a neutral country at the beginning of the First World War. It was obvious to Germany that their first task was to quickly capture Paris, but to do that entailed invading through the neutral countries of Belgium and Luxembourg. This was done, despite heroic Belgian resistance which endured many atrocities against defenders and civilians. 200,000 Belgians sought shelter in Britain, mainly in London, and numbers settled in the Camden Town area.

But why Hal? It was named from the wool town of Halle or Hal near Brussels whose church of St Martin contained a 13th-century statue of the Virgin Mary. This became a much-visited shrine. After the war missionary priests from this church sought to find a site in London to serve the many refugees who had remained in England and to expand their own activities. They settled on a piece of land opposite the present church. In what was not much more than a hut, the church opened in 1922. It was the only Catholic church in what had become an Irish area of Camden. In 1933 funds were available for a new building - the present one - opened in 1933, and designed by Wilfred Langan.





Administration of the church continued under the Belgian Fathers until 1982, when the priests were recalled to Belgium. The building then became the responsibility of the Catholic Diocese of Westminster.

New Books

A new book by our members Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling is welcome. Their new work, *Hampstead and Belsize Park Then and Now*, a 96-page paperback in colour which, as the title suggests consists of old photos and the present buildings on the site. This is a well-trying formula but of not much interest unless there is a good text with it. Generally with Then and Now books, the text is minimal, but in this instance the authors have added a substantial amount of local knowledge.

For example, the section on the Hampstead Subscription Library at Stanfield House notes that when the library allowed some free use, those who used this concession entered by a side door so that their lack of funds was not easily observed. The library closed in 1966 when Christian Scientists took over the buildings. Another interesting snippet is that the explorer Ernest Shackleton talked about his expedition to the Antarctic at what was then the Hampstead Conservatoire in Eton Avenue. In 1928 the building became the Embassy Theatre, and in 1956 the Central School of Speech and Drama, whose alumni included Olivier, Vanessa Redgrave, Judi Dench and Pinter.

So, plenty of reading material and, of course, plenty of pictures. Many of the older ones are familiar to us, although I hadn't seen before the splendid one of the

Vale of Health Hotel.

Published by History Press.

ISBN 978-0-7509-5288-0, £14.99.

Curious Kentish Town, by Martin Plaut and Andrew Whitehead, is an entertaining book – my only quibble is that the authors have, in the way of estate agents, extended the bounds of Kentish Town to Camden Town and Regent's Park. But no matter, there are good stories to be had. The book leads with an event of which I had no knowledge – a 1937 gathering of Mosley's Black Shirts in modest Islip Street, near Kentish Town station. 'Although there were probably 6,000 marchers assembled in Islip Street, *The Times* reported, their numbers were dwarfed by the crowd which collected in the locality. When Mosley arrived he was greeted with the fascist salute and cries of "Hail Mosley" from the fascist ranks.' The Mosleyites managed, with police help, to evade the hostile crowd and find their way to Trafalgar Square.

The authors note the Unity Folk Club (a spin-off from the old Unity Theatre) which meets at the Torriano Meeting House at 99 Torriano Avenue. They discuss an insignificant building at the corner of Highgate Road and Gordon House Road, painted an anonymous shade of brown with no handle or windows and without inscription. This they say is the entrance to a civil defence bunker set up in the early 1950s, and underneath were rooms to house St Pancras Borough Council if the going got tough. It included a conference room, a signals room, and another space for scientific advisors. The site was abandoned in the late 1960s and sealed off.

Then there is Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana, who in his younger and revolutionary days found lodgings at 60 Burghley Road. During a bout of pneumonia he was tended by a local doctor, Dr Hastings Banda, the future president of Malawi.

Published by Five Leaves Publications,

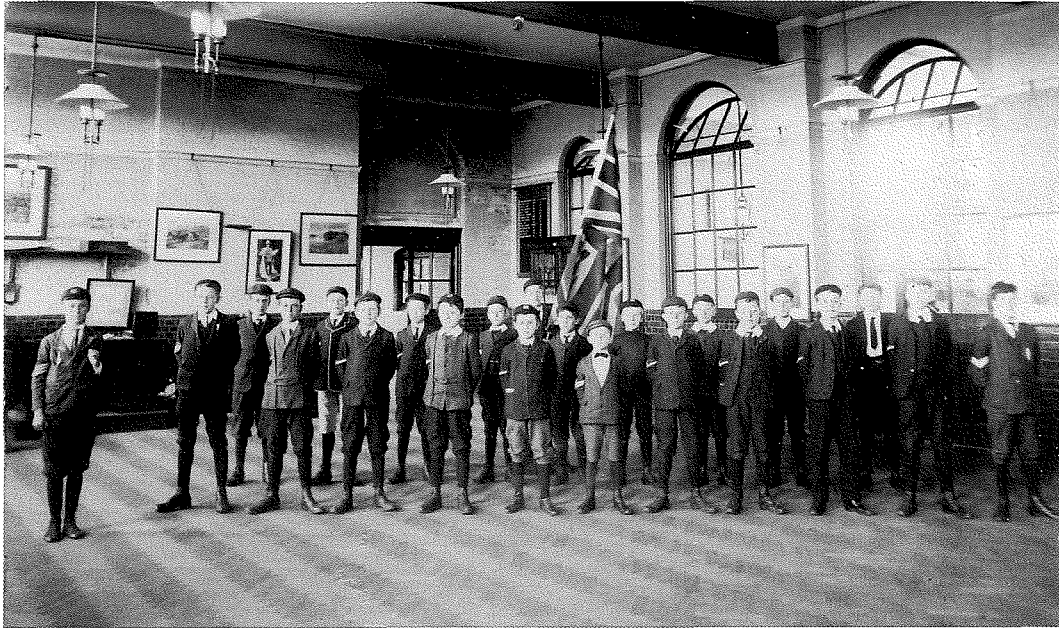
ISBN-1-910170-06-9, 92 pages, £7.95.

Freedom Pass London, by our member Mike Pentelow and Peter Arkell, is a handy guide to all sorts of places to see in the London area, reachable by the use of your(?) Freedom Pass. It has 25 special days out that travellers might consider. The book reveals wildlife hotspots, interesting pubs, notable landmarks. The 'London area' includes places like Carshalton and Great Missenden, so it is adventurous in its scope. The days out are not passive – most of them have an element of exercise and open air – very good for keeping over 61s fitter and healthier!

There is a long journey (over 4 hours – but there are numerous dropping-out points) which begins at Hampstead tube station and meanders down to Blackfriars. You just leave your bus for the time being to explore features on the way. There are numerous maps and the guide is easy to follow.

Published by Bradt Travel Guides, 244 pages, £12.99. ISBN 978-1-84162-565-2

John Richardson



Boys at Gospel Oak School in Mansfield Road, early 20th century. The school was destroyed by bombing in the last war and has since been replaced.



The former King's Cross police station in King's Cross Road, c1905.

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

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Our website: www.camdenhistorysociety.org

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newsletter

No 268

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Mar 2015

Town Planning in Camden

Thurs. 19 March, 7.30pm

Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, 32-38
Theobalds Road, WC1 (2nd floor of Holborn Library)

In a richly illustrated presentation Lester Hillman, a member of the Society, will explore Camden's fascinating planning heritage. The Planning School at University College London and the Royal Town Planning Institute both celebrated their centenaries over the last year. Two other anniversaries – the birth of Angela Burdett Coutts (1814) and that of Charles Pratt, 1st Earl of Camden (1714-1794) – are a notable part of Camden's planning heritage. Even the site of our venue this evening has an important part in the story.

Camden Goods Station through time

Thurs 16 April, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

Our speaker Peter Darley is well known to our members. He has worked tirelessly for several years uncovering the history of the Camden stations on the London-Birmingham line, Stephenson's pioneering railway, that initially had its terminus at Camden before the line was extended to Euston. Members have enjoyed previous talks by Peter on the stationary winding engines and the Victorian working horse. In April he turns his attention to the Goods Station and how it has changed over the years, decayed and then was regenerated to house many thriving enterprises that are in full swing today. His illustrated book on the subject will be available at the meeting.

The Camden Passenger Engine Shed, shown on the right here in a painting by Peter Green in 1938, was built in 1847 by Robert Dockray (with Robert Stephenson as professional advisor) as part of reconstruction works that included the Roundhouse. It stretched along Gloucester Avenue from the Pembroke Castle to well beyond the Landowne. The entrance footbridge was in Dumpton Place. From 1873 the Shed was mainly used by large express locomotives. In the centre is a Streamline Pacific 6220 Coronation Scot, in original blue and silver livery, passing a Stanier 2-6-4- tank hauling a local train. On the turntable is a Patriot Class Bunsen. To the left in the distance are the goods sidings, the main goods shed and the Interchange Warehouse against the skyline. The artist must have been perched looking over Regent's Park Road bridge.



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Subscriptions Due

Membership enquiries are handled by Dr Henry Fitzhugh (56 Argyle Street WC1H 8ER; tel 7837 9980, email: henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net)

Subscriptions are due on 1 March; members who do not pay by standing order should pay by cheque to the address above if they have received a subscription invoice with this *Newsletter*. We would be extremely grateful if anyone paying by cheque would fill out the Standing Order Mandate and the Gift Aid Declaration at the same time. The May *Newsletter* will only be sent if subscriptions have been received by 26 April.

Book Review

John Conen: *THE LITTLE BLITZ - the Luftwaffe's Last Attack on London*.

Fonthill (2014) 128 pp. Softback £14.99
ISBN 978-1-78155-308-4

The 'Little Blitz' – that final German manned-bomber offensive of the Second World War – was mounted between February and April 1944 and comprised some three dozen or so raids which saw heavier high explosive bombs dropped and a return to incendiary attack. It caused some 1,556 London deaths and damaged some West London parts of the metropolis, particularly Fulham, more severely than did the main 1940-41 Blitz. Author John Conen considers that this 'Little Blitz' has received too little attention as 'they were never really analysed and digested before D-Day and then the V-1 and V-2 attacks eclipsed it. He certainly succeeds in reminding us of the offensive.'

Quoting from the standard histories as well as (for readers seeking information on local damage and casualties) the many books published by London local history societies, John Conen details the air raids. Camden gets its fair share of mentions as not only are this Society's *Hampstead at War* and *Wartime St Pancras* mentioned, but the illustrations include three (Holborn) prints from the Camden Local Studies and Archives that were new to this reviewer. John Conen provides good coverage of the raids, casualties and damage but readers wishing to follow up the occasional more contentious assertion will find that no file references are given – but we can't have everything in only 128 pages – that probably is why it lacks an index.

One such assertion is the suggestion that the National Fire Service (NFS) felt that, in a report by the London Regional Commissioner, 'there had been an exaggeration of the value of the work of the street fire parties, and a lack of recognition that an important role was still being played by the professional fire brigades.' Although not quoted in the book, the report complained of stated (emphasis added) that 'The Fire Guard did excellent work in putting out incipient fires' ... (and) 'estimated that some 75% of

all the fires caused by enemy action have been extinguished by them without the assistance of the NFS.¹ This surely was possible when so many incendiary bombs were dealt with but the NFS sent an officer to visit all the fire forces involved to report on the 'alleged success of the fire parties' but we are not told of that officer's conclusions. The author notes the 'understatement of casualty figures' in the daily civil defence reports when compared with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission statistics. This difference was probably due to many of those initially recorded by the local authorities as 'seriously injured' later died in hospital, often long after the incident. The Metropolitan Police Casualty Books in the National Archives lists all civilian fatalities and serious injuries as well as amending the latter in manuscript when patients died of their injuries.

There are several mentions of 'Little Blitz' incidents in the three boroughs that now comprise Camden so the book would be useful for interested readers as it gives dates and locations.

Robin Woolven

¹ National Archives HO186/2352 Report to the Minister of Home Security
11 April 1944.

The Camden Town Poet

Irene Romilly (1915-1994) was aged three when her father was killed in France during the First World War. Her mother died soon afterwards and she was moved to Chase Farm orphanage in Enfield. Sent later to a convent to be trained for service, she ran away to London in 1929, aged 14. At first she slept rough in Regent's Park. The awfulness of war has dominated her extensive output of poems. She was also a political activist as well as a pacifist, and many of her poems protest (or sometimes rage) against the injustices in society. These poems are gathered together in a book entitled *The Camden Town Poet*. There is a foreword by Lady Roget-Romilly, a relative.

The names Romilly and Roget will no doubt be of much interest to members. Irene was also related to Sir William Job Collins, an ophthalmic surgeon and a well known Progressive councillor for St Pancras (1892-1904), who campaigned for municipalisation of services, a rate equalisation scheme in London, and the unification of the City with the surrounding boroughs in one authority. A school in St Pancras is named after him. Irene came from a Huguenot family which included Peter Roget of *Thesaurus* fame, and one close cousin who married Jessica Mitford. Irene met her husband through the famous and bizarre racing tipster, Prince Monolulu.

A number of poems deal with her neighbourhood, such as *The Flag of Peace* is set in Regent's Park, *A Penny a Time* is about the Tolmer Cinema. Irene left over 800 poems, which her daughter Mimi Romilly is editing.

A short poem about Camden Market is on page 40, called *I Hate Sundays*:

*I hate Sundays in Camden Town
All those so-called yuppies buying a new gown
Silver, antiques or something to please
Paying through the nose for coffee or teas
Whilst all around, homelessness and people freeze.*

The ^{*}Camden Town Poet is available from Barklem Print & Publishing, 166 Archway Road N6 5BB for £12.50. The ISBN is 978-0-9551162-2-3.

More News from Out West

Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling have been very active since we last reported by adding at least nine items to their two websites: www.westhampsteadlife.com and www.kilburnandwillesdenhistory.blogspot.co.uk.

On the West Hampstead site there is now a story about West End House and the Girls' Laundry Training School, another of the well known magician David Devant, who lived in Belsize Road, a third on St Mary's School, West End Lane.

The Kilburn site has added a feature on James Curtis, the pen-name of a well-known crime writer in the 1930s, the sensational Kilburn Salvation Army abduction, a local Victorian moneylender and his notable court cases, Suffragettes in Kilburn, the thief who pleaded that influenza had warped his judgement, and a music hall family from Kilburn.

A new Camden plaque

Mike Pentelow has written to say that we have a new plaque in Camden. It is at 27 Conway Street (off Fitzroy Square), and is dedicated to jazz pioneer Sidney Bechet (1897-1959, who lived there in 1922.

He is described as "New Orleans Jazz Pioneer. Saxophonist and Clarinetist". It was financed by the Nubian Jak Community Trust, and unveiled by his son, Daniel Bechet, a drummer and writer.

Sidney Bechet was a member of the West Indian jazz band, the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, which was the first black and jazz band to come to London in 1919. They played at the Rectors Club in Tottenham Court Road, and the Philharmonic Hall at 97 Great Portland Street.

He relocated to France in 1950 and died in Paris on his birthday.

BOOKS FOR SALE

Joy Fraser has a set of the 1972 reprinting of Barratt's *The Annals of Hampstead*. It consists of three volumes that were originally published for Barratt (see p.4 of this *Newsletter*) in 1912.

Members interested should ring Joy Fraser on 07779 032262

Things to Come

14 May: Dr David Burke on *Spies at the Isokon*.
18 Jun: AGM and Becky Haslam on *Archaeology of King's Cross Goods Yard*.
16 Jul: *History of St Michael's, Highgate*.
Aug: *Annual Outing - details to come*
17 Sep: Gillian Darley on *How Ian Nairn learned to love London*.

St Pancras Lectures

A new series of events at St Pancras Old Church has been announced. Tickets are £10 (including a drink) in aid of the fabric fund.

Sat: 18 April 6pm. Professor Carole Levin on *Can a Woman Rule? Can a Woman Rule Alone? A lecture on Elizabeth I*.

Frid, 15 May

Dan Cruikshank on *Rebuilding Lost Monuments* with particular relevance to the Euston Arch.

Thurs 4 Jun, Dr Julian Harrison on *Magna Carta: a Cause for Celebration?*

Wed. 1 July, 7.30pm

A musical evening with poetry by the London Gallery Quire.

Tickets £10 via www.sosstpancras.org or available at the door

OPENING HOURS AT CAMDEN LOCAL STUDIES

Future dates for Saturday opening hours at Camden Local Studies are as follows:

March - 7th and 21st

April - 4th and 18th

May - 2nd, 16th and 30th

June - 13th and 27th

July - 11th and 25th

Open 11 to 5.

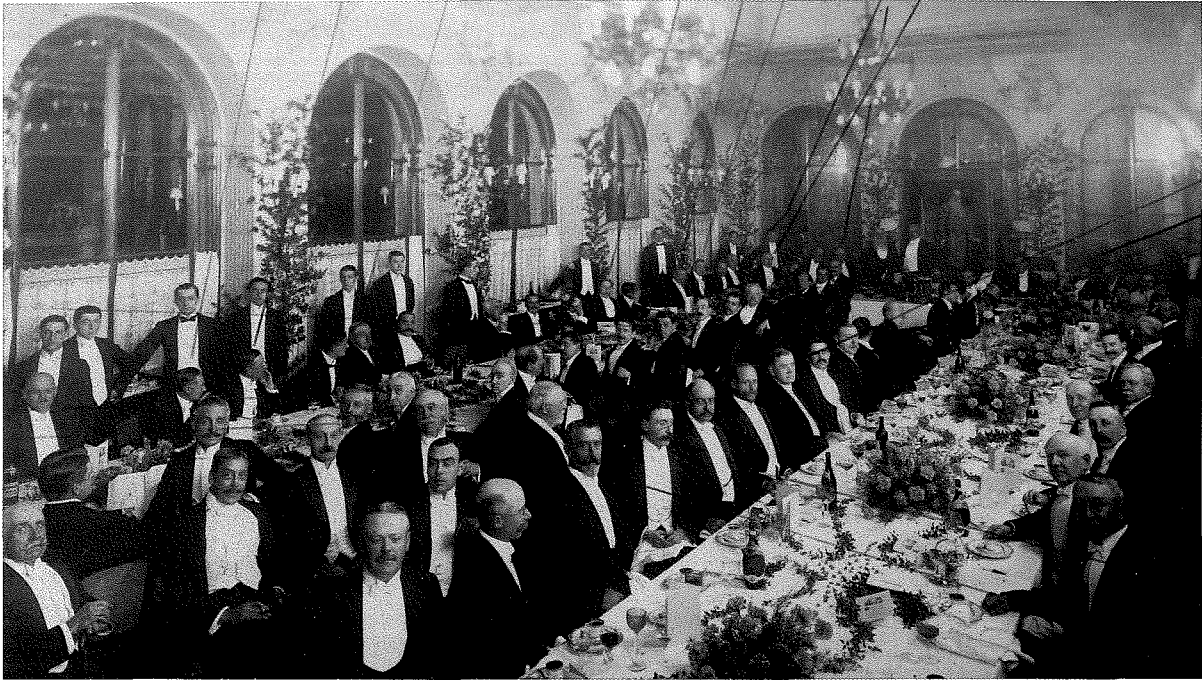
During the week the Centre is open Mon (10-6), Tues (10-6), Thurs (10-7); also Friday by appointment.

CORRECTION

In *Newsletter* 266 under the item entitled *More News from West Hampstead and Kilburn*, we wrongly said that Sickert lived in Broadhurst Avenue, whereas it should have said Broadhurst Gardens. Many thanks to John Walde in Australia for pointing that out.

KENTISH TOWN EXHIBITION

A Free Audiovisual Exhibition consisting of Kentish Town people interviewed by students of Acland Burghley School, is now on at Camden Local Studies & Archives. It closes on 18 April. There is also an exhibition created by local historians as part of a local history project entitled *Many Cultures One Community*.



A Dinner at the Savoy

Various photographs have recently been donated by Helen Woolnough to Camden Local Studies relating to Bellmoor, a large house at the top of Heath Street, opposite Whitestone Pond, now replaced by a block of flats of that name. It was once the home of Thomas J Barratt, chairman of the famous soap firm A & F Pears, and also author of the monumental and beautifully illustrated 3-volume history of Hampstead.

One of those photographs is of a presentation of a portrait to Barratt to mark his services to the company - this may just be seen at the back of the picture as indeed is he, with a fulsome beard. The event took place at the Savoy Hotel on 20 October 1913. A lengthy report appeared in the *Times* next day.

Barratt (1841-1914) was a remarkable man. He was born at 25 Tottenham Place in St Pancras. He had no university education but was a hard-working and innovative person. In 1864 he joined Pears as bookkeeper and swiftly married F Pears' eldest daughter the following year. He was made a partner and put in charge of sales in which he showed a remarkable flair for advertising, then an emerging part of business life. Using Millais' painting called '*Bubbles*', he devoted a large budget to advertising Pears in sometimes gimmicky ways. And sales went much higher as a result. Pears also introduced a yearly cyclopedia. When he joined Pears, advertising expenditure was just £80 per annum. When Barratt died, it was over £100,000.

The *Times* report tells us that guests included the formidable retailer and yachtsman, Thomas Lipton, T P O'Connor MP and leading Home Rule proponent, George Sims author of London books, and A W Gamage, owner of the famous Holborn store. The last named is pictured here amongst the gentlemen sitting on the inner side of the table on the right – he is distinctive, about halfway along, for being clean shaven. To *his* right, with the moustache and pointed beard, is William Burgess, private secretary to Barratt, and grandfather of Helen Woolnough.

Barratt had not much time to enjoy his portrait, for he died in April the following year. He is buried in St Pancras Cemetery at East Finchley.

Local Studies has a number of photographs featuring interior views of Bellmoor.

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May 2015

Spies at the Isokon

Thurs. 14 May, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Agatha Christie was not the only notable person who lived at the then new-architecture Isokon flats in Lawn Road, Hampstead. In fact, quite a few prominent people have had their home there. Less noticeable, but no less interesting, were Russian spies.

Dr David Burke, our speaker, published a book entitled *Lawn Road Flats: Spies, Writers and Artists* in which he explores what is now known about the spies who lived there and in nearby houses, as well as the oft-described artists and writers who also took up residence.

In our May talk he will focus on the spies (though not omitting all reference to the others), revealing much that will be new to our members. Copies of his book will be available for purchase for those wishing to read further.

The Isokon flats were commissioned by Jack Pritchard of the Isokon plywood firm. Using designs by Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius, Wells Coates built the flats. They were in concrete, in 'functional' style and recognised by Pevsner as "a milestone in the introduction of the modern idiom into London". Despite being voted second in *Horizon's* Ugliest Building Competition of 1946, the flats have remained popular with the public and architects ever since.

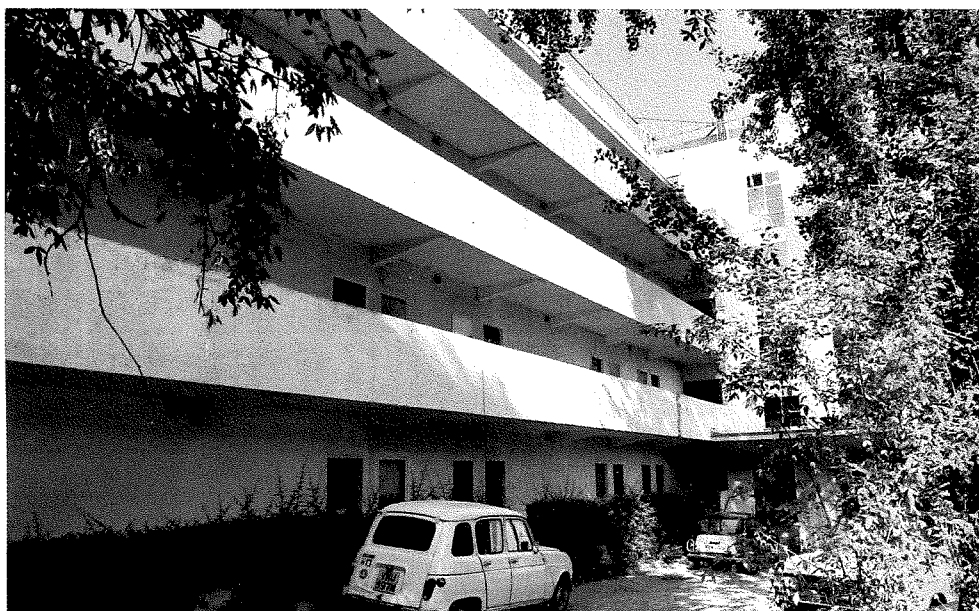
The AGM and the Archaeology of the King's Cross Goods Yard

Thurs 18 June, 6.30pm

Camden Local Studies & Archives, Holborn Library, 32-36 Theobalds Road WC1

The old King's Cross Goods Yard is now dominated by cranes necessary for the construction of offices and homes. Dereliction has been replaced by the seeming chaos of building projects. The land might

The Isokon flats in Lawn Road, Hampstead.



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well produce interesting archaeological items, for since its transformation from farmland to railway lands, little building work has disturbed it.

Our speaker in June, Becky Haslam has been studying the site from an archaeological and historical point of view, and she has come up with some interesting observations.

Light refreshments will be available at 6.30pm. The Annual Meeting will be at 7pm, and Becky Haslam's talk will begin at 7.30pm.

Nominations for Officers and Council of the Society are invited. They should be sent to our Acting Secretary, Jane Ramsay – her address is on page 4.

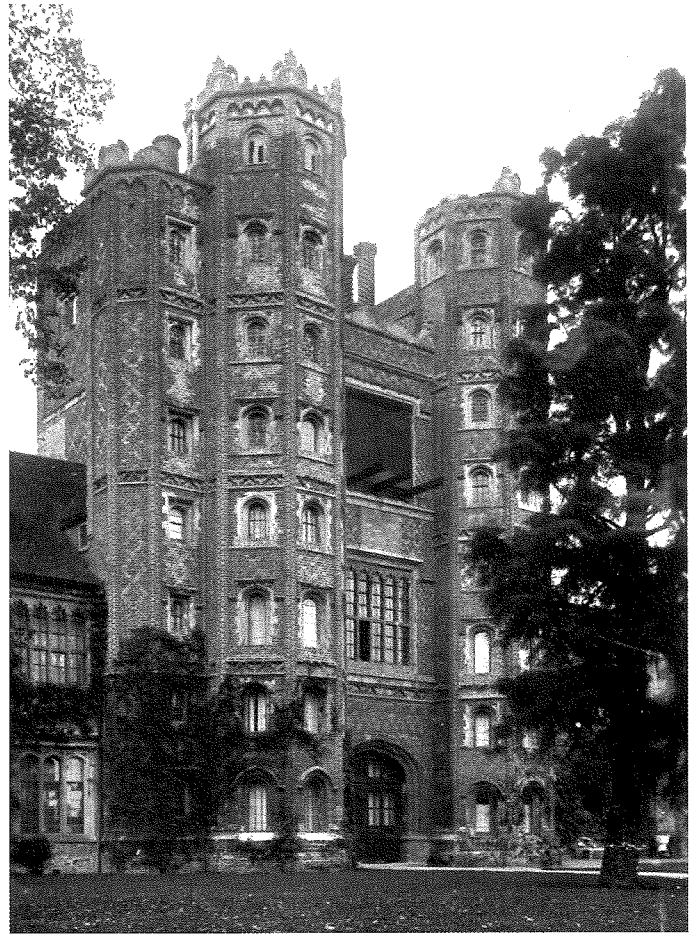
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VICE PRESIDENTS: Malcolm Holmes, Dr Ann Saunders and Gillian Tindall
CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: *Vacant*
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RESEARCH TEAM LEADER: Steven Denford
PUBLICATIONS (Postal sales) Roger Cline
PUBLICATIONS (bookstall etc) Sheila Ayres
MEETINGS CO-ORDINATOR: Dr Peter Woodford
PUBLICITY OFFICER: *Vacant*
LOCAL STUDIES LIAISON: Tudor Allen or his deputy
COUNCIL MEMBERS: Sheila Ayres, Steven Denford, Emily Gee, Ruth Hayes, Richard Knight, Lester May, Jeremy Noble, Michael Ogden, Susan Palmer.

Things to Come

16 Jul: History of St Michael's, Highgate.
27 Jul: Annual Outing – see opposite
17 Sep: Gillian Darley on How Ian Nairn learned to love London.
15 Oct: Frank Kelsall on The Building of Chalcot Square.
12 Nov: 50 Years of the Camden Arts Centre.

FUNDING FOR LAUDERDALE HOUSE

The management of Lauderdale House in Waterlow Park is venturing into a substantial refurbishment operation to transform the facilities there. It is appealing for funds from the public. The Camden History Society has already advanced £100, but if individual members wish to add to this please send a cheque payable to Lauderdale House Society to Lauderdale House, Highgate Hill, N6 5HG



Layer Marney Tower

The Annual Outing

This year's Outing will be to Essex on Monday 27 July. In the morning we will be visiting the small town of Maldon, where you can spend the time as you please, for example visiting the Maeldune Heritage Centre or going for a riverside walk. All Saints' Church is unique for its triangular tower, and has a memorial window to George Washington, whose great-great-grandfather is buried there. You may wish to bring a picnic lunch, but there is a reasonable variety of cafés, mostly in the High Street; also a few pubs. In the afternoon, we will be going to Layer Marney Tower; built of brick for Henry Marney in the 1520s, this historic house has the tallest Tudor gatehouse in the country. Marney was knighted by Henry VIII and also served as a privy councillor. A few months before he died in 1523, he was appointed Lord Privy Seal.

We will be having a guided tour of the house, including some rooms that aren't ordinarily shown, and then the chance of seeing its lovely gardens before having a cream tea. No particular Camden connection for either place, but they are otherwise difficult to get to by public transport.

Once again, Jean Archer is kindly in charge of the Outing. A booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter.



Blustons in 2006. (Photo: Richard Lansdowne)

Farewell Blustons

Who would have thought that the closure of a shop in Kentish Town High Street that advertised 'Classic Ladies Clothing' on its façade would have made the national press and the BBC! But Blustons, with its huge, walk-round plate glass windows full of serviceable pleated skirts, jumpers with sequinned motifs and woollen head-gear, has, in the last ten years of its eighty-four year life, become an iconic north London site. The polka-dot Marilyn Monroe-style dress, that graced its window for a long time, had buyers competing for it when final closure was announced in March, as did various other furbelowed 'gowns' catering to an interesting variety of tastes. More practically, its disappearance will be mourned by a generation of ageing local ladies, daughters and grand-daughters of the original customers, who patronised the shop in the 1940s and '50s when it represented mainstream fashion, and have continued to do so.

The owner, Michael Albert, is 67, and decided this spring, along with his wife Marilyn, that it is time to put up the shutters – not that the shop has any: it is too redolent of the modernity of 1931, when it was opened by Mr Albert's grandparents, Samuel and Jane Bluston, to have anything as old-fashioned as shutters. As its façade was Listed Grade II by English Heritage in 2008, it must remain the way it is, whatever business eventually takes it over. In his boyhood, Mr Albert did not nurture a dream of spending his working life in the family business, but his father died when he was sixteen; he came into the shop to help out his mother and stayed there, under the watchful photographs of the founders.

Lamentations are heard in the land, to the effect that the premises may become 'yet another coffee shop' – or, worse, a house agent. But the fact is that

Kentish Town's resilient old village high road has always been subject to time and change, as is demonstrated by the wonderfully complete set of London Transport photos that were taken when the Northern Line was being built in the first years of the twentieth century. Where are the dairies, coal merchants and corn dealers of yesteryear? And where should we be without mobile phone shops, takeaways, convenience stores and the lovely Owl Bookshop two doors down from Blustons, where once the local department store, Daniels, was the work-a-day master of the district?

Gillian Tindall

BAROQUE BELSIZE

The Belsize Baroque Orchestra will be performing at St Peter's Church, Belsize Park on 17 May, directed by Adrian Butterfield. The final programme isn't determined, but it will include the Bach Orchestral Suite no. 4. More information will appear on their website www.belsizebaroque.org.uk, although details of the event were not apparent on the website when we checked on 20 April.

VIEWING STRANGE CREATURES

The Crystal Palace dinosaur models were unveiled in 1854 and took the world by storm, starting the original Dinomania. Join historian of science and Strange Creatures, Professor Joe Cain, as he shows how these models, still on display today, were important in shaping the public's perceptions of dinosaurs. This event is followed by free drinks and a private view of the Strange Creatures exhibition on 23 June, 6.30-9pm at the JZ Young Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, UCL, Gower Street WC1.

Commemorating Mary Wollstonecraft

One of the new streets in the large redevelopment behind King's Cross Station is to be named after Mary Wollstonecraft, the feminist pioneer who wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Married to the philosopher William Godwin, she died soon after the birth of their second daughter, Mary, who as Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. Wollstonecraft was originally buried in Old St Pancras churchyard, but although her monument remains to the north-east of the church, her remains were removed in 1851 by her grandson, Percy Florence Shelley, to the family tomb in St Peter's church, Bournemouth

Ken Gay

We are sorry to hear of the death of Ken Gay. He was a stalwart and founding member of the Hornsey Historical Society, holding several offices and writing a number of their successful publications. He will be much missed.

MORE FROM OUT WEST

Two more stories have been put on their two websites dealing with West Hampstead and Kilburn, by Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling. One concerns the Hampstead Cricket Club which celebrates 150 years. That is on www.westhampsteadlife.com. The second story is about the rise and fall of a husband and wife partnership of opera singers. This is on:

www.kilburnandwillesdenhistory.blogspot.co.uk

One of the problems found by members of the Society when capturing a photographic record of every street in the borough in the year 2000, was that it was difficult many times to obtain an unobstructed view of houses because of parked cars. In some streets the flow of traffic also meant that the photographer quite often had to take the picture in a hurry before yet another vehicle passed in front of the camera. These problems did not affect the photographers taking pictures at the birth of the postcard era from 1904. They were able to compose their pictures at leisure, such as this one of Goldhurst Terrace in Hampstead, with only a horse and cart as traffic.



This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

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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.camdenhistorysociety.org

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 270

June 2015

History of St Michael's Church, Highgate

Thursday, 16 July, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square NW3

St Michael's had a controversial beginning. For centuries the observant Christians of Highgate had a long walk to a parish church. The village was and is spread over three local authorities. In the 19th century these were the parishes of St Pancras, Hornsey and Islington. But their parish churches were a considerable walk away from Highgate and in bad weather entailed unenviable journeys. A long time before St Michael's was built, many villagers used the chapel attached to Highgate School and their financial donations to that chapel became more important to the school governors than the expenditure on the charity school they were in existence to provide. So much so that the governors announced a plan to enlarge the school chapel. This provoked a great deal of opposition which led to Lord High Chancellor Eldon's decree in 1827 that the governors had no

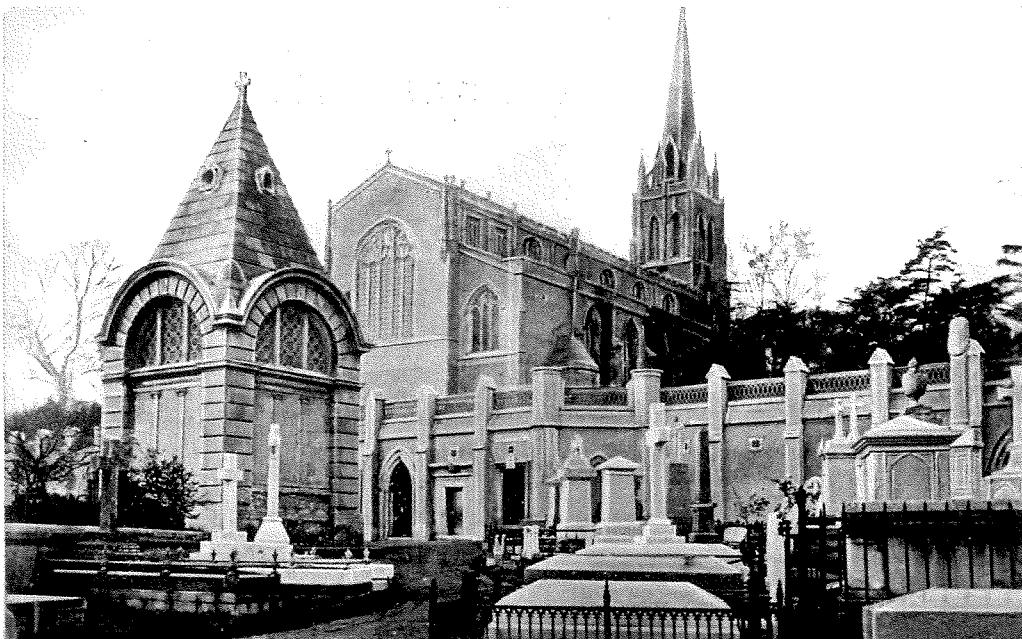
right to spend money on the chapel at the expense of the school. In any case there was insufficient room on the school site to erect a much larger chapel.

The governors and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were able instead to purchase the magnificent site at the top of Highgate West Hill formerly occupied by Ashurst House, built by Sir William Ashurst, a Lord Mayor of London, in 1696: the house was demolished in 1830 to make way for the church.

St Michael's, designed by Lewis Vulliamy and consecrated in 1832, stands higher than any church in London and once could claim a view all the way to the Isle of Sheppey. This is quoted by Roger Sainsbury, our speaker, in his recent book - *St Michael's Highgate; A History*. According to him rubble from the demolished Ashurst House still lies in the undercroft of the church.

The church has been fortunate in its biographer, who has published an enormous amount of new material. His talk this month will be of great interest.

A view of St Michael's church from Highgate Cemetery.



The Society's Website

www.camdenhistorysociety.org

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BARGAIN OFFERS FOR OUR PUBLICATIONS ARE ON OUR WEBSITE!!

The Annual Outing

As reported in the last *Newsletter*, the Annual Outing this year will be on Monday, 27 July to the Essex town of Maldon and then on to the remarkable Layer Marney Tower, which is Tudor in origin. Appropriately, detective work has now established a Camden connection – the crime writer Margery Allingham had a London base at 91 Great Russell Street in the 1930s but preferred to live in the Essex countryside. Two of her books have Layer Marney Tower as a setting.

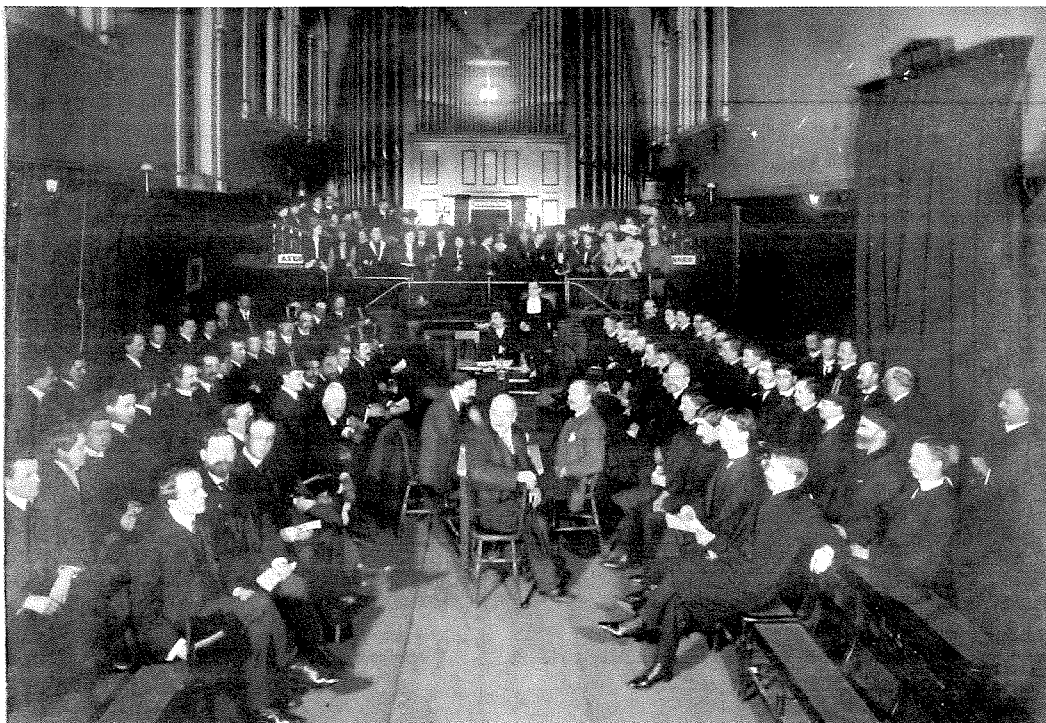
There are still seats available on the coach. Please see the details and booking form in the May *Newsletter*, or phone the organiser Jean Archer on 0207 435 5490.

The Hampstead Parliament

The Hampstead Parliament was founded in 1883 and at one time had 500 members. It had meetings once a month and debated matters of the day in a similar fashion to that followed in the House of Commons. It was dissolved in about 1960.

Towards the end of its existence its secretary was former Hampstead and Camden councillor, the late Julian Tobin. His widow, Jocelyne, has kindly sent us the minute book (as from 1933) which was part of Julian's possessions. We have passed it on to Camden Local Studies to be archived. Below is a rather murky picture of the Parliament in session at Hampstead Town Hall in 1933. You will see that it was an entirely male assembly, although by then women did sit in the House of Commons. Constance Markievicz was the first woman to be elected to Parliament in 1918, but as she represented Sinn Fein she did not take up her seat. Nancy Astor was the first woman to be elected and to take her seat, in 1919.

Hampstead Parliament in 1933.



A trip round the Goods Yard

Most members will be aware of the building frenzy now consuming the old King's Cross Goods Yard. Fortunately a great deal of archaeological work was done by Pre-Construct, whose leader on that occasion was Becky Haslam, the speaker at our AGM in June.

She has kindly offered to take a party of members around the site on Sunday 9 August, beginning at 11am. She suggests that the meeting place shall be beside the adult-sized swing that can be found at the southern end of Pancras Road outside King's Cross Station. The swing is quite a landmark and thus hard to miss.

The fee for the tour will be £5.

Things to Come

17 Sep: Gillian Darley on *How Ian Nairn learned to love London*.

15 Oct: Frank Kelsall on *The Building of Chalcot Square*.

12 Nov: Jenni Lomax on *50 Years of the Camden Arts Centre*.

17 Dec: Ian Dungavell on *Highgate Cemetery: Past and Future*

Difficulties to Come

We understand that due to further government cuts, Camden Council proposes to cut a further £800,000 from the Library Service. A consultation process has not yet formally begun

Two Hundred Years of Kentish Town Schooling

Many people, walking along Islip Street just south of Kentish Town tube station, must have noticed that the Church of England Primary School there is an old building. It is not one of those high playground-on-the-roof blocks that were the post 1870 London School Board contribution to the townscape. Its cottagey, gable style (appropriately extended in recent years) is more like that of a parish school in a country village, for long ago that is what it was.

When it went up in 1849, on a one-acre green field site obtained from the Christchurch estate which was then otherwise entirely unbuilt, Kentish Town was in its last era as a populous village. Its High Street was becoming ribbon-developed with short terraces interspersed with shops, but the back-lands were all pasture, and there were still country-style inns and also farm houses. The National School Society's decision to build a substantial new premises, planned for 150 boys, 150 girls and 150 infants, was a harbinger of change that was soon coming.

The school celebrating its bicentenary this year may surprise, but Headmaster James Humphries has got it right. The National Schools (a C-of-E organisation, while the British Schools were non-conformist) founded their first school in Kentish Town in 1815. The decorative map, that was made after swathes of Paddington, Marylebone and St Pancras came into the jurisdiction of London in 1832, shows this first school clearly, near the top of what is today Royal College Street, by Reeds Place. When the Trustees decided that Kentish Town's expanding population required something bigger, they sold this old school to a local builder. He, my guess is, sold it on to some other educational outfit, for a hundred years later a neo-Queen Anne edifice was on the site and functioned there for the best part of the twentieth century as the RC Sir Richard of Chichester School. (The block is now private flats.)

The new National school that opened in 1849 in Islip Street had the blessing of the Bishop of London and a celebratory beef-and-plum pudding dinner for all the children. As originally planned, it had just three big classrooms, one for each category of child – individual attention being a luxury the elementary schools did not attempt – and two spacious separate playgrounds, one for Boys and the other for Girls and Infants. Fifteen years later, in a world that was changing out of all recognition, with the rest of the Christchurch estate now laid out in streets, the Midland railway carved a great chasm through Kentish Town, taking away a good half of both playgrounds. Illicit games in haystacks gave way to misbehaviour on street corners, and the school log-books, some of which survive, recorded increasing 'insolence', 'impertinence' and generally 'low' behaviour.

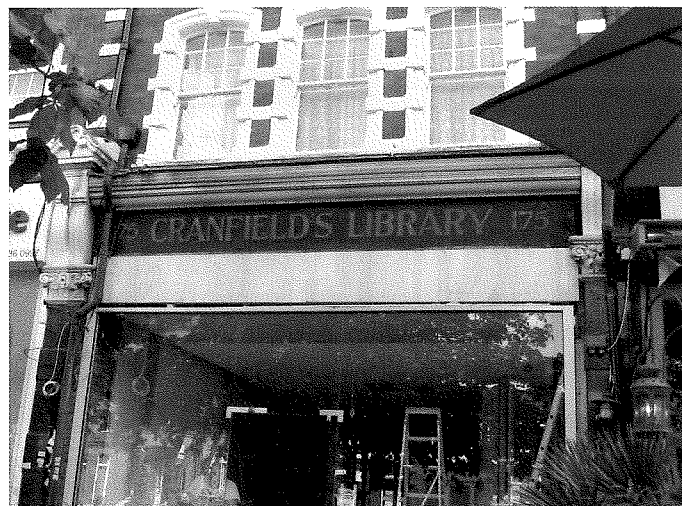
Today, transformed into a bright, friendly place full of evidence of history projects, the school will welcome another Bishop of London on the 8th of July. The Year-6 play performed on the 14th and 15th will be an evocation of three past periods – 1965, 1849 and 1815. Pinafores and breeches at the ready.

Gillian Tindall

A MYSTERY FASCIA

Eagle-eyed member Gene Adams recently spotted this old shop fascia, briefly exposed during building work, which she wisely photographed before it was soon again covered over. The inscription is puzzling. Directories show that the shop, near Belsize Park Station – at 175 Haverstock Hill (originally numbered 6 Belsize Parade) – was occupied in 1920 by one, Ernest Charles Cranfield, a tobacconist. Half a century later, in 1970, it was still listed as 'Cranfield's tobacconist'. It subsequently became a branch of Finlay's. Does any reader have memories of the shop that would explain its perplexing signage as a 'Library'?

David Hayes



CORRECTION

Thankyou to Aziz Rattansi for pointing out an error in the last *Newsletter*. The correct title of Mary Wollstonecraft's famous book is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, not *Women*.

MONEY MATTERS

At the Annual General Meeting, our Treasurer, Dr Henry Fitzhugh, presented his accounts. They show that at the end of February our funds amounted to £26,592, as against £28,722 the previous year. But as the Treasurer pointed out, the dip in available funds was because we had spent £5945 on research in the year as against £1615 the previous year. The 'research' was the continuation of the programme to transcribe Hampstead's Court Rolls, and also the grant of £3000 we made to Camden Local Studies to digitise 3000 slides, so that these are more easily available to public and researchers alike. Without the latter expenditure we would in fact have more in funds than last year.

The AGM

A very good talk on the archaeology of King's Cross Goods Yard by Becky Haslam was the highlight of our 45th Annual General Meeting on the 18th of June.

Officers and Council were elected as follows:

PRESIDENT: Prof. Caroline Barron
VICE-PRESIDENTS: Dr Ann Saunders, Gillian Tindall, Malcolm Holmes
CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay (acting)
TREASURER: Dr Henry Fitzhugh
PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: Dr Peter Woodford
MEETINGS CO-ORDINATOR: Dr Peter Woodford
PUBLICATIONS (postal sales): Roger Cline
PUBLICATIONS (bookstall sales): Sheila Ayres
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Dr Henry Fitzhugh
LOCAL STUDIES LIAISON: Tudor Allen (or his deputy)
RESEARCH TEAM LEADER: Steven Denford
PUBLICITY OFFICER: vacant
COUNCIL MEMBERS: Sheila Ayres, Steven Denford, Emily Gee, Ruth Hayes, Richard Knight, Lester May, Michael Ogden, Susan Palmer
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Roger Cline

The Chairman, John Richardson, reported that the £3000 donated by the Society to fund the digitisation of 3000 slides held by Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre had now been spent satisfactorily. The Council has recently voted to provide an additional and similar sum of money for an extension of the digitisation of additional material.

He and Gillian Tindall underlined the need to have new members of the Council to augment the efforts of the present members.

More from Kilburn and West Hampstead

Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms continue to expand the pages on their two historical websites. These include four new and unusual stories posted on www.kilburnandwillesdenhistory.blogspot.co.uk. They deal with a mysterious Dr du Brange; the

1950s gangland murder of Tommy Smithson; the interesting artist Horace Brodzky, who lived in Kilburn for many years; and a home for Homeless Infants.

On westhampsteadlife.com is a story about the navies and the building of the railway through West End.

The piano industry in Camden

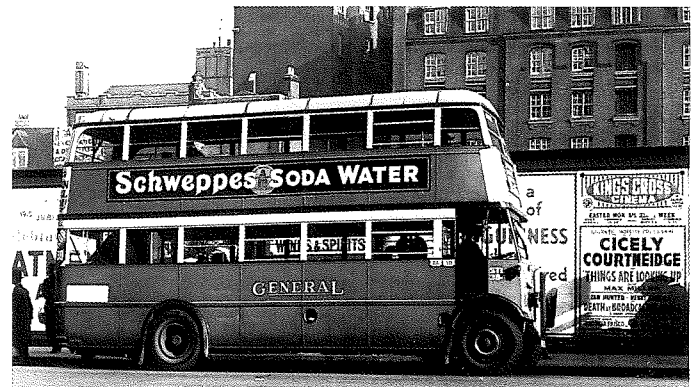
Jeremy Noble has alerted us to the publication of a 60page article by Marie Kent in the *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* on the piano industry, based on information in the 1881 Census. From that source 6,500 workers in the piano trade have been identified. Kentish and Camden Towns were the centre of that industry.

The author relates that men, women and children worked in approximately 400 piano-related occupations across 42 English counties, the majority based in London.

This article may be obtained online, but it costs £25, unless you belong to an organisation that has free access. Further information may be obtained from the Royal Musical Association website.

A number 18 bus

Mr P Holdner, who lives in Stanmore, has asked if a member may be able to establish the location of this no 18 bus, in the King's Cross area, in April 1935. The bus ran between Harrow Weald and London Bridge and went through Hampstead Road, Euston Road, stopping at King's Cross Station. Please send any suggestions to the Editor.



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Our website: www.camdenhistorysociety.org

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 271
Sep 2015

How Ian Nairn learned to love London

Thurs. 10 September, 7.30pm

Camden Local Studies, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road WC1X 8PA

Ian Nairn (1930-1983) was a popular and passionate architectural critic. He collaborated with Nikolaus Pevsner on *Buildings of England*, and he coined the word 'subtopia' to denote the bland, repetitive and charmless spread of housing around the country. The book which made him famous was *Nairn's London* (1966), a title which brings us to the subject of tonight's talk.

Our speaker is Gillian Darley, currently chairman of the Twentieth Century Society and an authority on the work of many 20th-century architects, including Nairn. This talk may, amongst its other virtues, be considered a pendant to Susie Harries' recent talk on Pevsner. Ms Darley has published several biographies including (with David McKie) *Ian Nairn: Words in Place* (2014).

Please note: This talk has been brought forward from the date previously published.

The building of Chalcot Square

Thurs. 15 October, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LT

Chalcot Square was begun in the late 1850s. It is an irregular square, formerly known as St George's Square. (Across Regent's Park Road is St George's Terrace, built slightly earlier.)

Frank Kelsall, our speaker this evening, will discuss what happened after the fragmentation of the Southampton estate. Chalcot Square is completely ignored by the *Survey of London* – perhaps itself an illuminating comment on what was thought of that sort of architecture at the time the relevant volumes were published.

Frank Kelsall retired from English Heritage in 1998, becoming casework adviser to the Ancient Monuments Society, and in 1999 established the Architectural History Practice, of which he is the Executive Director. He has wide experience in building conservation and cites planning among his particular interests. He is a past-president of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.



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Book Reviews

At Home with the Soanes: Upstairs, Downstairs in 19th-century London, by Susan Palmer
Pimpernel Press in association with Sir John Soane's Museum, paperback, £12.95.

This is a new pocket-size edition of Susan Palmer's 1997 book *The Soanes at Home*, published by the Museum alone using a bigger page size. The opportunity has been taken to include a number of discoveries made during the extensive restoration work done to the Museum in the meantime, but large chunks of the text are exact copies of the original edition. Presumably the earlier edition is now out of print, but it is certainly the more pleasurable to read and handle. The new edition with its small page size uses a small font and the illustrations are less easy to decipher. Both editions use colour for the appropriate illustrations and the new edition has some additional colour photographs of the rooms today.

As the titles suggest, the book is a social history with a description of the infrastructure of the House and the Household, the Servants, how the family kept clean and occupied their time in the house and on holiday, with a full account of the food they ate and how and where it was bought. Soane's architectural work is only mentioned in passing.

To give an example, we learn that the Soanes had separate bedrooms as was the custom, they were helped to wash and dress by the footman and housemaid (who would carry in the hot water). Toilet paper was not yet invented; soap and hair dressing were perfumed and John had a wig which was powdered. Powder was also used for tooth cleaning with a brush; John eventually had a partial set of dentures which gave him trouble. His undergarments were of flannel or linen, suits and coats came from the tailor, but shirts were made by 'penitent prostitutes' or schoolchildren. Mrs Soane enjoyed her dresses, some of which she made herself using paper patterns, and her diaries show the interest she took in dressing to the fashions of the time.

The book gives an insight into prosperous family life in Camden two hundred years ago. The old-fashioned written format of the diaries and the retained invoices have enabled Susan, who is the Archivist at the Museum, to produce this interesting account. One wonders how archivists of the future are going to research our purchases on eBay and Amazon.

Roger Cline

Two early panoramas of the Regent's Park. The panoramas of Richard Morris and John Mortimer, by Geoffrey Tyack. Hardback, 46pp (34 in colour), ISBN 978-0-902087-64-4.

Each year the august London Topographical Society publishes at least one book which is given to each member in return for a modest subscription. This year

the Society has generously published two works – both pleasing to the eye and to the intellect. Apart from the splendid reproductions of two 19th-century panoramas of Regent's Park, the Society also issued Volume 31 of the *London Topographical Record* which appears every five years. This contains, as always, essays and illustrations which contribute something to our knowledge of London's past. Dr Ann Saunders, one of our Vice Presidents and a long standing member of the Camden History Society, has been responsible for editing both publications, sharing the editing work on the Regent's Park book with our member Roger Cline.

The Regent's Park book is a pleasure to own. The panoramas of John Mortimer (pub. 1828-29), here reproduced for the first time, and that of Richard Morris (pub. 1831), portray the Park in its early days – it was completed in 1828. Preceding the colour spreads is a commentary by Doctor Geoffrey Tyack, the architectural historian.

In a clockwise direction from the north, approximately the site of today's Winfield House, each spread shows two versions of the same stretch of buildings. The Morris panorama is in full colour, and Mortimer's drawings are monochromatic. We are also given, to help us be clear as to the boundaries of the Park, a reproduction of the area and the Regent's Canal extracted from Benjamin Davies's *Topographical Survey of the Borough of Marylebone* of 1834.

I strongly recommend this book. Non-members of the LTS can buy it for £15 post free from Roger Cline at Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH. Better still, also become a member of the London Topographical Society for £20 and get next year's offering free of charge!

John Richardson

Name suggestions please

Cllr Julian Fulbrook has asked if we have any suggestions for names for two new blocks in the Tybald Close regeneration scheme in Holborn. To be precise one of them is actually a row of mews houses and will be very likely used as short-term accommodation for families with children as patients in Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, so a J M Barrie connection might be suitable. The other development is a more substantial block and because two recent blocks on the Bourne Estate were named after men, perhaps this Tybald block could be named after a woman. Cllr Fulbrook would be happy with Beatrice Webb but is open to suggestions.

If you have any proposals please send them to Camden's Archivist, Tudor Allen, at Camden Local Studies, or else send them by email to Tudor.Allen@camden.gov.uk

That No 18 bus

The picture in the last *Newsletter* of the No. 18 bus, parked in an unknown location by some hoardings, has aroused quite a bit of interest. It has led us to another two very interesting pictures. Incidentally, we apologise to the gentleman who sent in the query in the first place, whom we identified as P Holdner, having misread his signature. He is in fact P Hotchin. The first reply to his query as to location came from Gerry Zierier. He agrees that it is a No. 18 bus, and thought that it was probably laying over in Pancras Road. However Steve Job was the first to suggest the correct answer, that it was taken in Euston Road with the Midland Hotel to the photographer's rear and opposite the site of the present Camden Town Hall, with Queen Alexandra Mansions in Bidborough Street in the background. Next up was David Hayes, who said that the date of the photograph was 1935 – deduced from the cinema poster by Kate Broly of Camden Local Studies. He went on to say that a similar photo existed in Local Studies, taken from slightly higher up so that a view of a fairground behind the hoardings was possible. The fairground was there after demolition of the existing properties and before construction of the then St Pancras Town Hall began.

Then came a letter from Anton Obrist, writing from Switzerland, enclosing a photocopy of the illustration David had in mind This is reproduced here, showing the fairground with Queen Alexandra Mansions in the background and to their left the Dolphin pub. But Tudor Allen found another picture in the archives with a view of the fairground looking the other way, towards St Pancras Station. Lastly came a letter from the Mayor of Camden, no less, Cllr Lorraine Revah, who was of the same opinion as Anton Obrist. Thankyou to everyone for solving that one!



The above shows a bus by the hoardings in Euston Road which hid the site of the St Pancras Town Hall, to be built in 1937. This image is reproduced from a photocopy as unfortunately the original photo is elusive at the moment. Below, the fairground is shown from the other direction, with the Midland Hotel on the north side of the road.



The Young Kenneth Williams

The Mayor of Camden, Cllr Lorraine Levah, has kindly sent us an item she spotted published in the *St Pancras Gazette* in 1935. It is about a St Pancras child performing at the Manchester Street Junior School in a play '*The Road and the Ring*'. The school, now the Argyle Primary School, can be seen in the top illustration on the previous page.

The reviewer notes: '*Kenneth Williams with his mincing step and comical demeanour as Princess Angelica was a firm favourite with the audience to whom his snobbish and pet vivacity made great appeal.*' And continued to do so of course!

Mr Obrist (also see previous page) noted in his letter that he lived in what is now called Birkenhead Street and attended that school from 1932 to 1936. Kenneth Williams was a year ahead of him.

The 'Library' at Belsize Park

In the last *Newsletter* we published a photograph from Gene Adams showing an old shop fascia recently uncovered at 175 Haverstock Hill, previously known as 6 Belsize Parade, claiming to be a library.

Frances Johnson at Camden Local Studies has done some delving in local directories:

In the Hampstead electoral register for 1910-11 there is an Ernest Charles Cranfield living there. There is no mention of him in the 1914-15 and 1920 electoral registers.

In Kelly's *London Directory* of 1925 there is a Cranfield's Tobacconist at 175 Haverstock Hill.

In *Hampstead and Child's Hill Commercial Directory* from 1930 to 1940. In 1936 Cranfield's advert states that they are opposite Belsize Park tube station and that they are also stationers and hairdressers.

For the years 1930 to '40 they are listed in Kelly's *London directories*, simply as tobacconist.

Cranfield's appears in the 1945, 1950, 1955 and 1956 Kelly's directory.

They are still there in the 1970 Post Office telephone directory and in the 1973 and 1974 Kelly directory. By 1975 the shop was a branch of Finlay's tobacconists.

Dick Weindling also informs us that it is mentioned in *The Publisher* 1915 as Cranfield's Library, Belsize Parade; and it is in *Clegg's International Directory of the World Book Trade*, 1950 as Cranfield's Library, Haverstock Hill.

Consultation on Public Libraries in Camden

It seems only recently that Camden Council was obliged to make swingeing cuts to services because of a reduction in government contribution. This, of course, affected our public libraries. It also affected Camden Local Studies and Archives, and our Society presented our case to protect what is not a major expenditure from too severe a cut. The Council, now in a similar financial position, wishes to get the views of Camden library users as to how money may be saved, and has launched a consultation on the future of public libraries. We strongly encourage members to be involved in this. A questionnaire is available in each public library which you can complete – these must arrive with the Council **before 7 October**. Alternatively, there is an online version of this with a site name so long you may wish you had gone out to your library instead. However, here it is:

<https://consultations.wearecamden.org/culture-environment/camden-future-libraries-formal-consultation>

We are told that you can also get to it merely by tapping in www.camden.gov.uk/futurelibraries

Probably more effectively, you can also write to Sam Eastop, Head of Libraries and Registration Services, 5 Pancras Square N1C 4AG, expressing your views, but do include a filled-in questionnaire.

Things to Come

12 Nov: Jenni Lomax on *50 Years of the Camden Arts Centre*.

17 Dec: Ian Dungavell on *Highgate Cemetery: Past and Future*

A TOUR OF SENATE HOUSE LIBRARY

Senate House Library is offering a free guided tour of its new exhibition entitled *London: power, progress and pleasure*. The tour will also offer a brief walk through some of the building's historical spaces. This will be on Thursday, 10 September at 1pm. To book a place please email: shl.officeadmin@london.ac.uk or telephone 0207 862 8411.

THE KING'S PLACE FESTIVAL

Members are invited to go to events in this festival on 11-13 September. It gives a good opportunity to explore the new buildings and adaptations of old buildings on the King's Cross Goods Lands. The programme is on www.kingsplace.co.uk/festival

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 272

Nov 2015

Camden Arts Centre at 50

Thurs. 12 November, 7.30pm

*Camden Local Studies, 2nd floor, Holborn Library, 32-38
Theobalds Road, WC1X 8PA*

For a long time, before the merging of Hampstead into Camden in 1964-5, the flourishing Hampstead Artists' Council campaigned for an arts centre to be established in Hampstead. A real chance came in 1964, when a new Central Library opened at Swiss Cottage. This freed up the old Central Library at the corner of Finchley Road and Arkwright Road. The fledgling Camden Council quickly agreed that this could be a visual arts centre: this opened in 1965.

With plenty of room available the HAC was able to open a school in the building - this was supported by the education authority and the galleries were funded by Camden.

In the Centre's fifty years there have been only three



directors. In November, Jenni Lomax, who is celebrating 25 years in the post, will be our speaker on the history of the Centre and its many exhibitions of traditional and modern art.

The Centre is looking for volunteers to take part in a project to improve the care and management of its archive and to digitise its contents. The project aims to safeguard the archive's future and make it available to the public. If you want to volunteer contact Stephanie Sutton on 0207 472 5500, or by email on stephanie.sutton@camdenartscentre.org.

Highgate Cemetery – Past and Future

Thurs. 17 December, 7.0pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

By the early 19th century the squalor of the overcrowded parish burial grounds in cities was a well-known scandal. One remedy – before local authority cemeteries became common – was to allow private companies to open cemeteries outside of central London. One of these, in 1839, was Highgate Cemetery. In the same period Nunhead and Kensal Green cemeteries were founded. Though used by local families, they were mainly intended for Londoners generally. Highgate, more accessible from the metropolis, became fashionable and the resting place of many notable people, but also of the affluent London middle classes – quite a few fictional Forsytes were buried there by Galsworthy.

The past and the future of the cemetery is the subject of Ian Dungavell's talk at our Christmas meeting. Mr Dungavell, formerly Director of the Victorian Society, is now Executive Director of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery, the charity which owns the cemetery.

As it is our Christmas meeting, drinks and light refreshments are available at 7pm, the talk is at 7.30pm.

The Society's Website

www.camdenhistorysociety.org

buy our publications online • check on events to come and past • download currently out-of-print publications • consult index to our Review and Newsletter • access to Hampstead Court Rolls • view sample pages from our publications

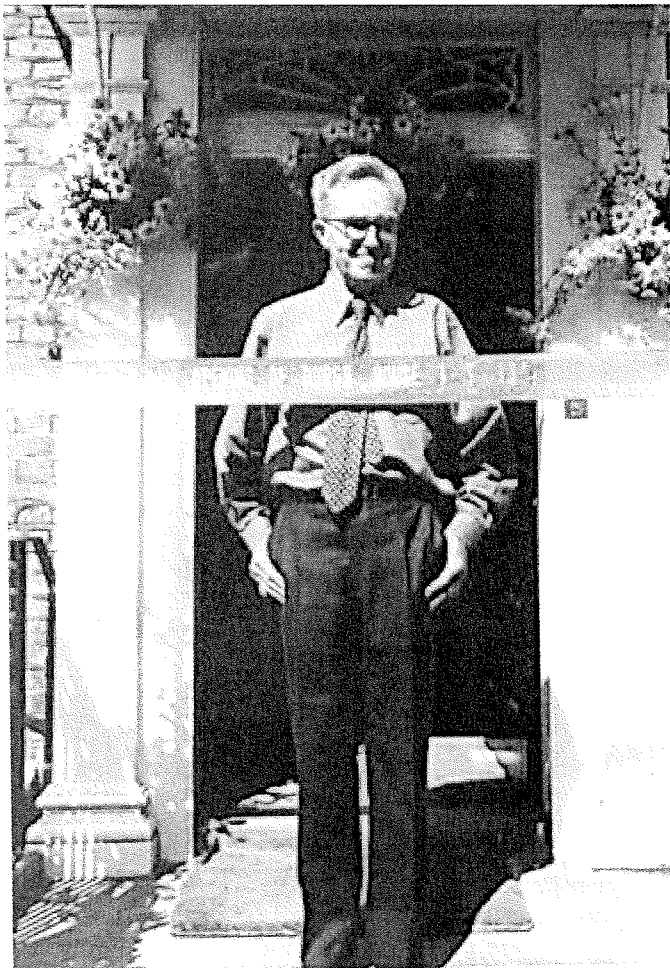
BARGAIN OFFERS FOR OUR PUBLICATIONS ARE ON OUR WEBSITE!!

Christopher Wade

Many members will know from the local press that our Vice-Chairman, Christopher Wade, died on 24th August, aged 94. He joined the Society in 1970, soon after its foundation and made his presence felt when he took charge of publications. It was he who founded our annual *Review*, and, with the valuable assistance of Ian Norrie of the High Hill Bookshop, he began our 'Streets' series of guides to all the areas of Camden. The latter, of course, began with *Streets of Hampstead* - part 1, the village itself. This was an instant success, and it was followed by books on Belsize and West Hampstead. These were important publications for the Society, but probably Christopher's most enduring contribution to Hampstead was his part in the campaign to save Burgh House as a community centre and a museum. Christopher and his wife, Diana, became the first curators of the Museum and continued their support and help to that until their respective deaths. A fountain was placed outside the front door of Burgh House to mark Diana's contribution to the House.

Christopher was born on 18 May 1921, the youngest of three sons born to Eileen and Henry Oswald Wade. Henry was a solicitor and Territorial Army colonel who served in the First World War and was awarded the DSO. Christopher was sent to a prep. school in Margate and thence to Shrewsbury. The

Christopher Wade in 1979 when Burgh House was opened to the public.



latter was not a happy experience, but he was happier at Trinity College, Cambridge where he read modern languages.

During the war he was in the RAF as a Flight Lieutenant but didn't fly due to poor eyesight. He was sent instead to Sierra Leone in West Africa to help run a landing strip there. He was in Brussels on VE day and did some useful work rescuing relevant documents before the Russians got to them, and debriefing German airmen.

Post-war he joined the BBC World Service in Bush House, London, where his fluent German was useful. It was here that he met Diana, who was his secretary. They married in 1956, and for a home they had a choice of spending £5000 on a Victorian house in Downshire Hill, or else on a smaller new-build in Willoughby Road. They chose the latter and never moved from there.

At the BBC Christopher became Head of the Script Unit whose job it was to sift through scripts and to find writers for existing productions such as *Z-Cars*. He was proud to have helped develop the careers of Dennis Potter and Jack Rosenthal.

He was enabled to retire at the age of 54 in 1975 and embarked on his second career as a Hampstead historian. Apart from his work with the Camden History Society and Burgh House, he was also involved in setting up the Hampstead Community Centre.

He was not particularly a 'Camden' person: he was passionate about Hampstead and was happy to let others explore or protect other parts of the borough.

Diana died in 1991, aged only 61. Christopher was fortunate to have many long-standing close friends, neighbours and family to see him through his loss.

He wrote other books including one on the Wells Charity, and also *Hampstead Past*. He gave many talks on Hampstead subjects at Burgh House.

Christopher died having contracted pneumonia after a fall.

We shall miss him very much. For almost all of the Society's existence he was a good friend, a valued contributor and was much admired for his dedication to Hampstead.

John Richardson

BELSIZE BAROQUE

The Belsize Baroque Orchestra will be giving a concert at St Peter's Church, Belsize Square on Sunday 29 November, at 6.30pm. The programme includes music by Gluck, Bach and Haydn.

Tickets are £12. Telephone 07711 666270 to reserve.

David Sullivan

Sadly, another Hampstead stalwart and Chairman of the group that saved Burgh House for public use, David Sullivan, also died recently, on 9th July, at the age of 89.

David was born in Kenya in April 1926, where his father was a farm manager. He was educated at Haileybury School and Christ Church, Oxford where he read Classics. He chose the Law for a career – he became a QC – making his name as a contract lawyer, representing among others The Beatles and Frank Zappa, and played a prominent part in the 1968 thalidomide compensation case.

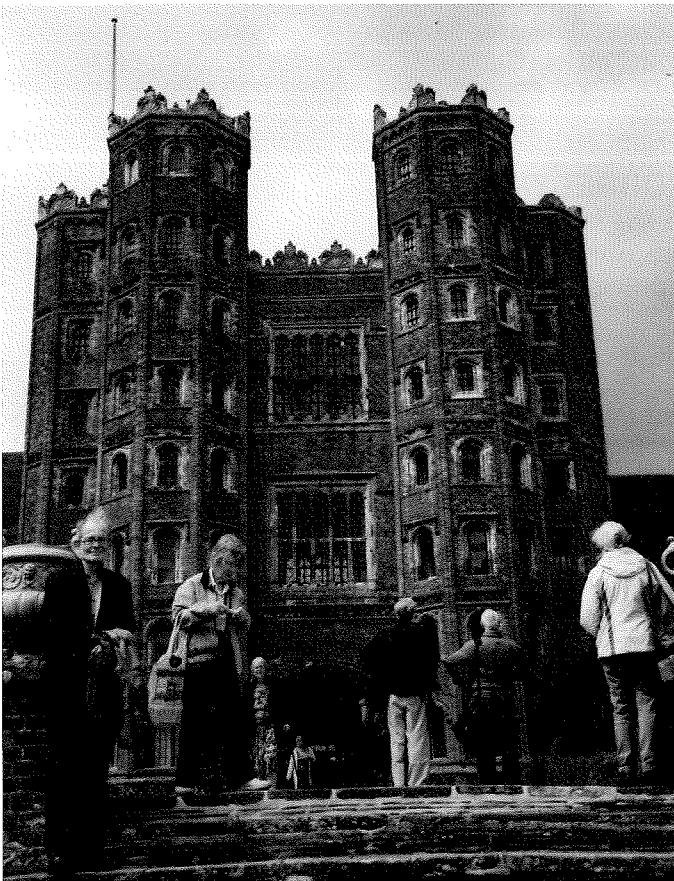
At one time he lived in Wylde's, later moving to Well Road and latterly Greenhill.

He wrote a number of articles about Hampstead and indeed contributed one on Wylde's to a recent edition of *Camden History Review*. He was particularly proud of his two comprehensive books on the early history of Westminster Abbey and its estates, which I had the pleasure of publishing.

John Richardson

MEMBERS AT LAYER MARNEY

Below is a picture of members of the Society at their enjoyable recent visit to Layer Marney Tower in Essex. It is a remarkable Tudor gatehouse attached to an incomplete manor house. The gatehouse is 80ft tall.



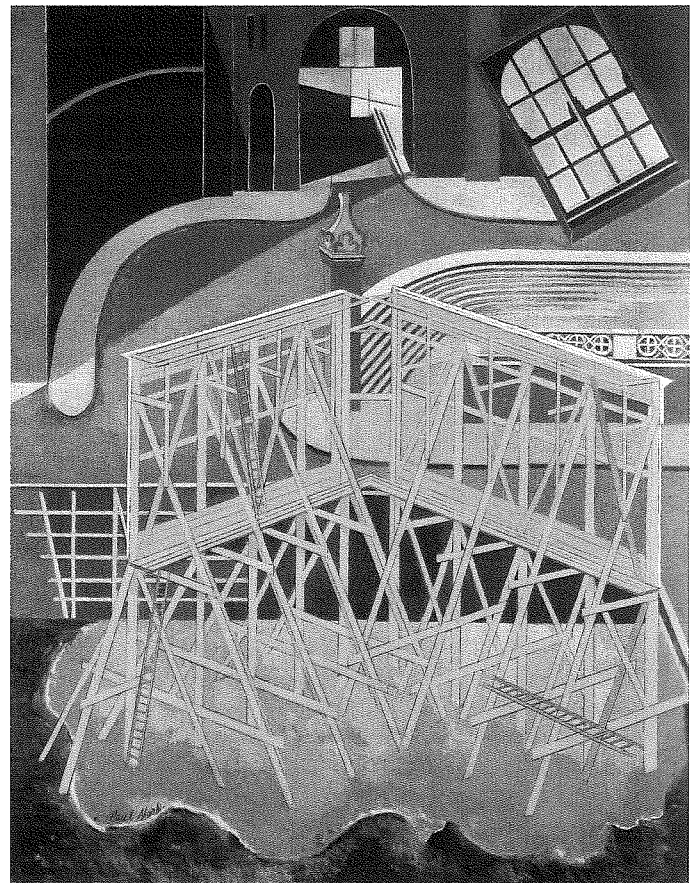
That No. 18 bus (again)

The seemingly ordinary query from a member as to the location of a No. 18 bus parked at King's Cross in 1935 has already prompted the publication of two excellent pictures (see *Newsletter 271*) of a fairground perched on the site of St Pancras (Camden) Town Hall before it was built.

Now, another unlikely picture of the fairground has come to light, but this time a painting noticed by member Robert Smith at Aberdeen Art Gallery. He supplies the following information. The surrealist artist was Paul Nash (1889-1946), who painted the fairground, with the Midland Hotel in the background, in 1929. This was Nash's view from his fourth-floor flat in Queen Alexandra Mansions, where he and his wife, Margaret Odeh, a campaigner for Woman's Suffrage, resided from 1914 until 1936. There is now a blue plaque to him on the Bidborough Street façade of the block. The flats were completed in 1913 by the London Housing Society Ltd.

Other well-known residents included Lance Sieveking, a prominent BBC radio drama producer, Eric Maschwitz, writer, actor and Head of BBC Television Light Entertainment, who famously wrote the lyrics to *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*, Stanley Baxter, the novelist Wendy Holden and, of course, Kenneth Williams.

Northern Adventure by Paul Nash (1929). © Tate Gallery London 2015. Courtesy of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections.



Things to Come

Please make a note in your new diary:

21 Jan: Professor Joe Cain on Dinosaurs in Crystal Palace Park.

18 Feb: Susan Jenkinson on the National Portrait Gallery.

The King's Cross Fraudster – a Supplement

Readers of *The King's Cross Fraudster* by David Hayes and Marian Kamlish, published by the Society in 2013, may wish to know that a short supplement has now been produced. Based on fresh information supplied by a descendant of one of Leopold Redpath's uncles, it sheds new light on various aspects of the fraudster's story, and particularly on some of his family and friends. Entitled *Kith & Kin*, the 8-page postscript is downloadable (free) from the downloads page of the CHS website.

David Hayes

Blogspot

Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling continue to search out stories of people and events in Kilburn and West Hampstead. Two new ones are to be found on kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.co.uk.

One concerns Joe Parkin Mayall (1839-1922), photographer, whose studio was at 209 Kilburn High Road - now a butcher's called Hillman's. Mayall was himself a son of a more famous photographer John Jabez Mayall who in the 1850s was the most successful photographer in the country. In the 1860s he made an astonishing £35,000 from royalties of his pictures of the royal family.

In the run up to the last war at 94 Cambridge Road, near Carlton Vale, a butcher's shop was run by Cornelius Goebbels - no relation to the famous one. As war began his name was a considerable disadvantage and he changed it to Bradley.

FASHION 1939 TO 1955

Carmen Whiteley is researching the clothing of women between the dates above. She is interested in how people viewed fashion at the time and would like particularly to talk to women who were living during the last war. Her mobile is 07596 400193.

Choose your time

Recently we have been discussing if we should change the starting time for our monthly talks. Some feel that 7.30pm, the present time, is too early to be able to have a meal beforehand, but too late to eat after the talk. 6.30 is suggested, but that would not be possible because of the opening hours at Local Studies. 8pm is perhaps too late for people, especially those who have a longish journey afterwards, and 7pm possibly comes into the same trap as 7.30.

So, we are having straw polls at the next two meetings to pose the question, but please get in touch with either the Editor of the *Newsletter*, or the Acting Secretary (details below) to express your preference.

The LAMAS Conference

The theme of this year's conference hosted by the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society is Middlesex: Our Lost County.

Middlesex lost a large amount of its territory as London absorbed some of its area, particularly in 1965 when much was transferred to the new London boroughs and the remaining parts to other adjoining counties. The talks on the county include:

Middlesex from first reference to Domesday Book, Ceramic manufacture from the Middle Ages to the 18th century, John Wilkes and elections in Middlesex, by Robin Eagles, and Middlesex County Council 1889-1965

The conference is on 21 November, 10-30-5pm at the Weston Theatre, Museum of London. Tickets £15 from Patricia Clarke, 22 Malpas Drive, Pinner, Middx HA5 1DQ. Cheques payable to LAMAS.

CORRECTIONS

In the last *Newsletter*, under the item on the No. 18 bus, our member Gerry Zierler was misspelt as Zierier. Apologies.

On page 4 in the snippet about Kenneth Williams, the play he appeared in should have been *The Rose and the Ring*, not *The Road and the Ring*. This was spotted by Andrew Tucker and Patricia Hutton. The latter notes that it was adapted for the stage in 1922 by Harris Deans, and there was a musical production in 1952-53 by San Diego Junior Theatre!

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