

# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 273

Jan 2016

## Dinosaurs in Crystal Palace Park

Thurs. 21 January, 7.30pm  
Camden Local Studies, 2nd Floor, Holborn Library,  
32-38 Theobalds Road WC1

An unusual subject for our January talk. The Crystal Palace dinosaur models were unveiled in 1854 and took the world by storm, starting the original Dinomania. Our speaker will explore how these models, still on display today, were important in shaping the public's perceptions of dinosaurs.

Our speaker is Professor Joe Cain, head of the Department of Science and Technology Studies at University College London. He is well-known to students as a charismatic teacher. He is also a historian of science and was co-curator of the *Strange Creatures* exhibition at UCL in June 2015.

## Treasures of the National Portrait Gallery

Thurs, 18 February, 7.30pm  
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

The National Portrait Gallery was once very overshadowed by its neighbour, the National Gallery: physically of course, it still is, but especially under the directorships of Roy Strong (1967-73) and Charles Saumarez Smith (1994-2002) it has shed its rather pedestrian and conservative nature.

The present building (excluding the Ondaatje wing), was the work of Ewan Christian, resident of 50 Well Walk in Hampstead, and a regular member of the congregation of St John's, Downshire Hill.

Our speaker in February is Susan Jenkinson, a Blue Badge guide, who will enlarge on various features of the Gallery.



### The Society's Website

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## Cuts Again

By the time you receive this *Newsletter* firm details *may* be available of the cuts to be made in Camden libraries in general, and in Local Studies in particular. Documents have been published by Camden, available online, which are not at all forthcoming as to detail. The proposals are due to be considered at a Cabinet meeting on 16 December. The Council apparently wants to achieve an immediate economy in the case of Holborn Library, including Local Studies, in the coming financial year, but overall in the next two or three years this will save about £100,000.

The documents are not at all clear as to how this is to be achieved. What is ominous is that there will be integration of the staff of Holborn lending library and that of the Local Studies Centre. This apparently means that librarians usually working in the former will sometimes be responsible for answering enquiries as one of the latter. And, presumably, vice versa in some circumstances. This is obviously absurd. It takes a considerable time for new staff at Local Studies to obtain and retain sufficient knowledge to answer the wide range of queries from members of the public. For example, a simple question, how do I find when my house was built? This could mean at least the use of rate books, directories or vestry minutes. Sometimes the street might have had a change of name – in which case, where to find the original name? This is just a simple enquiry but its answer needs experience gradually absorbed. Most queries are more complex than that.

Just as worrying, the proposals moot the possibility of 'open access' to the library at certain times. In other words the public can register their borrowings without the supervision of staff. How can this possibly be applied to Local Studies where most of the archives are of great value and scarcity? This again is simply not spelt out in the documents and the Cabinet meeting is therefore voting on an unspecified policy.

The Society was invited to attend a meeting with Sam Eastop, the Head of Libraries, to put forward our views on what was most important *not* to be cut. This was held before the documents were issued. We made the point that the number of staff was already the lowest it has been since Camden was formed, and it should go no lower. Our deputation of five committee members spelt out a number of priorities, but staffing was the main one.

Your chairman was subsequently invited to a meeting called by Cllr Hai, chairman of the Culture committee – again to obtain views. This was attended also by representatives of other library users' groups. The majority all spoke against the integration of staff as it affected Local Studies, insisting that staff there needed to be specialists. We have no idea since that meeting what is proposed as to staff levels, and where the savings are going to be made.

None of the documents deals with the imminent temporary move of Local Studies while Holborn Library is restructured. How are the bulk of the archives in Johns Mews to be accessed during that period without trained staff to retrieve them? And though we are promised eventually, once Cockpit Yard is developed, a brand new Local Studies unit, again, how is the massive task of relocating everything to be done without the necessary specialist staff.

And if staff in CLS is reduced how would it be possible for the Centre to achieve the level of outreach activity that the Council urges?

We are sending a deputation to the council's Cabinet meeting on the 16th. Its statement will include the following:

'The report recommends: Consolidate the staff structure between the Holborn Public library and Local Studies and Archives service, in advance of wider proposals to invest in a redeveloped library as part of the Cockpit Yard project.'

There were significant cuts to the staffing of the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre in 2010 and again in 2012 and we are greatly concerned about the impact that further staff cuts will have. We are particularly concerned at the proposal to consolidate the staff structure between the Holborn Public Library and the Local Studies and Archives service. As a borough-wide archive and local history service the Local Studies and Archives Centre offers a very different service to a local community library. We believe that this proposal would not only lead to an inadequate service being offered to users, but also the management of the unique and irreplaceable archives, illustrations, maps and plans, and printed materials will be in jeopardy. Camden's Local Studies and Archives is a beacon in London for the quality of its public service and its strong community links.

The Centre needs a dedicated team of specialist staff with an understanding of archives, local history materials and conservation, and with a knowledge of the collections and history of the borough. If the Local Studies and Archives staff were to be consolidated with the staff of the public library these vital skills and knowledge would be lost.

Researchers need to be supervised all the time that they are using the collections because of the unique and irreplaceable nature of the Centre's collections. The Centre needs to have sufficient staff so that this can be done.

The Centre performs a vital role for the Council in preserving its own archives and providing a service to Council officers. The Council also needs to ensure that it is able to fulfil its responsibilities under Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation and provide access to the archives.

**John Richardson**

## New Books

*Ivy-Mantled Tower. A history of the church and churchyard of St Mary Hornsey, Middlesex.* By Bridget Cherry, published by Hornsey Historical Society. ISBN 978-0-905794-53-2

Our friends in the Hornsey Historical Society have done more than justice to the history of its old parish church of St Mary. Sadly, only the tower remains of its medieval structure: that, too, was under some threat until an energetic Friends organisation made sure it was rendered safe for future generations.

The residents of Highgate Village on the north side of the High Street (i.e. non St Pancras people) were entitled to use St Mary as a parish church. It was, and is, a long walk from Highgate with ups and downs, and quite a few residents (on the St Pancras side of the village as well) began to use the chapel of Highgate School as a substitute.

The tower was erected c1500 but the body of the church was rebuilt in a larger form in 1832 but then demolished in 1927, leaving the old tower still standing within its gardens.

The book, a hardback and well produced, contains many illustrations of interest.

*Curious Camden Town*, by Martin Plaut and Andrew Whitehead, published by Five Leaves Publications, 106pp, £9.99. Softback, ISBN 978-1-010170-23-6.

This book follows on from *Curious Kentish Town*, which sold well. It deals with 29 relatively unknown Camden Town features, from the Cumberland Market Group to the Belgian Connection. Knowledgeable members will know what both of these are, but a great many people will not.

Amy Winehouse, who lived in Prowse Place and Camden Square, warrants an appearance, as does Arlington House and the pugilist Tom Sayers. The authors include Vinot Cars, which was new to me, George Orwell's funeral in Albany Street, the London Esperanto Club, which has of late met at the Irish Centre in Camden Square, and the Regent's Park Barracks.

A good Christmas present for a neighbour.

## EXHIBITION AT THE SOANE MUSEUM

An exhibition at the Soane Museum (until 26 March) is called *Death and Memory, Soane and the Architecture of Memory*. It is an interesting theme. The exhibition includes Soane's designs for the family tomb in St Pancras Gardens, and his design for a monument to the Duke of Wellington.

## Things to Come

Please put the following talks and events in your new diary.

*17 March:* Artistic symbolism in the Suffragette movement, by Irene Cockroft.

*21 April:* Roger Fry and the Omega Workshops by Frances Spalding.

*19 May:* An accident in Cat's Meat Square, by Ruth Richardson.

*26 May:* Extra event – visit to the library of the Zoological Society of London. Details to come.

*16 June:* AGM, and a talk on the first 50 years of Camden, by Tudor Allen.

*21 July:* The school of Oriental and African studies.

*August:* Annual Outing, to be announced

*15 Sept:* the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, by Victoria Cranna.

## SATURDAY OPENING HOURS AT CAMDEN LOCAL STUDIES

Until April 2016, the Saturday opening days at the Centre will be:

Jan 9, Jan 23, Feb 6, Feb 20, March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, April 30. The hours will be 9-1 and 2-5.

## Obituaries

We are sorry to hear of the death of Jean Rossiter, a good friend of the Society, but better known for her work in Primrose Hill. She was aged 88. As well as a former secretary of the Camden Civic Society, she was also chair of Primrose Hill Community Association. Later in her life she championed the cause of better facilities for the badly sighted.

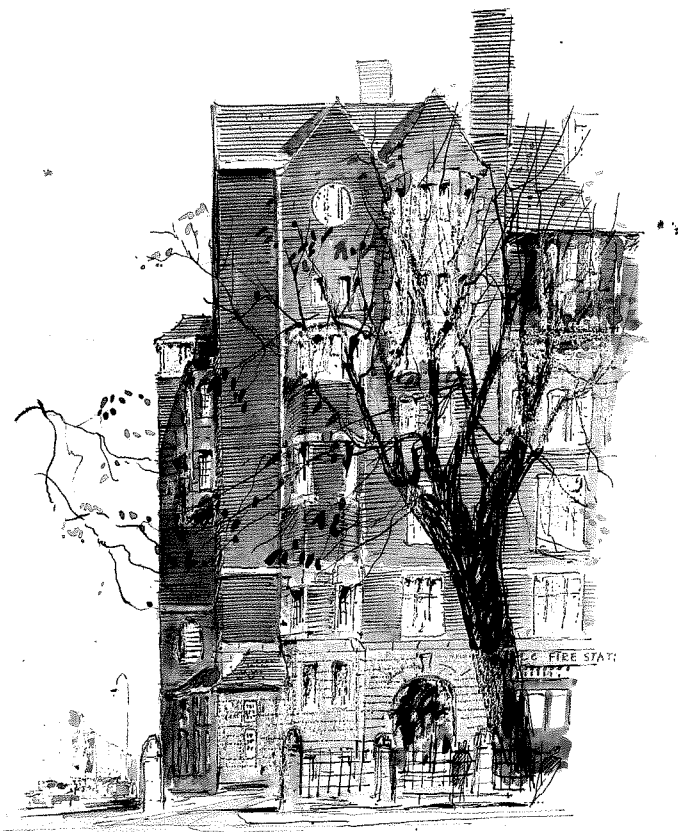
Ralph Hyde, known to everyone who used the once splendid Prints and Drawings part of the Guildhall Library, died suddenly on 5 June. He had a wide knowledge of London's maps and panoramas, and was made Keeper of the department in 1975. He was closely involved in the invaluable series of reprints of significant old London maps, produced in an A-Z format by the London Topographical Society.

He had a great deal of energy. I dealt with him a good number of times and enjoyed his mischievous sense of humour. A sad loss.

John Richardson

## OUT WEST

Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling have recently posted the history of Omni House, built by the London General Omnibus Company in 1892. It is on their website [kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.co.uk](http://kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.co.uk). Omni House is in Belsize Road opposite the Belsize Tavern. At parapet level you can still see signs for LGOC and the date 1892, when the stables were built. It was one of several main stables for the expanding horse-bus business. In the 1890s the company had about 10,000 horses in service.



By kind permission of Roger Cline, we publish a Hugh Casson depiction (probably 1960s) of the splendid fire station in Euston Road, happily, still functioning as such.

The CHS book *Streets of St Pancras* notes that it was built in 1901-2 by the LCC, using their much favoured red brick. It is a notable Arts and Crafts building, most probably designed by Charles Canning Winmill, head of the section of the LCC Architects' Department devoted to fire stations. Pevsner rated the design one of their most inventive enjoying its 'romantic composition of gables and chimneys'. The little balcony on the fifth floor was used as the quarters of the Divisional Officer, and was occupied between 1925 and 1933 by the aptly-named Commander Sir Aylmer Firebrace RN.

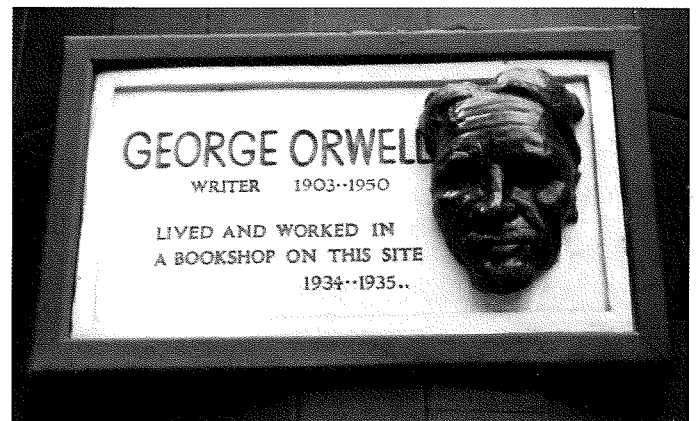
Would that local authorities were able to produce such a handsome and charming building today.



Lester May has alerted us to the showing in many cinemas of *The Lady in the Van*. This is a film based on the story by Alan Bennett of the lady who settled, at his invitation, in her van on the forecourt of his house at 23 Gloucester Crescent for a prolonged visit. She had previously been parked in the roadway for some time, but progressively hostile yellow lines obliged her to find another base. The film has got excellent reviews.

### CORRECTION

In Lorcan Greene's article on 'Orwell in Camden', in *Camden History Review* 39, figure 8b on page 28 depicts the wrong version of the Booklovers' Corner plaque at South End Green. It is not the 2015 plaque, with Orwell's head restored, but the 2001 version which later became 'defaced'. Apologies for this editorial error. Here below is the correct image, showing the latest plaque which, as Orwell's son Richard Blair suggested, does look 'a little cramped'.



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## Artistic symbolism and the suffragettes

Thurs. 17 March, 7.30pm

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There was often a literary or historic inference in Women's Suffrage propaganda imagery; for example, the formation of the WSPU by Emmeline Pankhurst was interpreted as Joan of Arc brandishing a purple, white and green pennant, climbing a cliff-face towards the 'new dawn of women's rights'. In the darkness behind the maid-in-shining-armor, loom the dark, satanic mills of industrial Manchester. Following her, in the distance, march the masses. Yes, all that – plus a lamp of enlightenment and demons of oppression – may be discerned in one A4 image!

*A Suffragette figurine. (Courtesy V. Irene Cockroft,  
photo copyright David Cockroft.*



Historian Irene Cockroft, whose great-aunt Ernestine Mills linked Arts & Crafts and Women's Suffrage movements, will explain. She is also an author of several books covering these subjects.

## Roger Fry and the Omega Workshops

Thurs 21 April, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Our speaker, Frances Spalding CBE was until recently Professor of Art History at Newcastle University, but is now the editor of the *Burlington Magazine*. She is the author of several books on 20th-century artists, including one (1980) on Roger Fry (1866-1934), founder of the Omega Workshops at 33 Fitzroy Square – the building now occupied by the London Foot Hospital. This talk celebrates the 150th anniversary of Fry's birth. By coincidence Fry was amongst the founders of the *Burlington Magazine*.

Roger Fry was very much a Camden man. He was born at 6 The Grove in Highgate Village, the son of Edward Fry, Lord Chief Justice. In 1874 the family moved next door to 5 The Grove. In 1918 Fry was at 18 Fitzroy Street and within a year appears to be at no. 21. At the time of his death he was living in Bernard Street.

Fry was an influential member of the Bloomsbury Group. He aimed to remove what he considered to be the false divisions between the decorative and fine arts. He founded the Omega Workshops in 1913 with this in mind. On sale were painted furniture, murals, mosaics, stained glass and textiles. However, a fellow member of the enterprise, Wyndham Lewis, broke away following a dispute with Fry and this led to Lewis forming the Rebel Art Centre and eventually the Vorticist movement.

The Omega enterprise suffered from poor financial management and conflicts between members, and was closed in 1920.

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## A Christmas Goose Chase

An article in *The Times* on 22 December set the search-engines humming. The article related how the corpse of one Thomas Craven, d.1636, had recently been discovered in a lead-lined coffin in Paris. A metal plaque in the coffin stated that Craven's father was the Lord Mayor of London and his brother was 'the Baron of Hampstead' - the latter was devastated by Thomas's death at the age of 18.

As this was the first that we had heard of a 'Baron of Hampstead', Peter Woodford and David Hayes began investigation. What promised to be a long, enjoyable and rewarding search was unfortunately solved at the click of a mouse by Wikipedia, which revealed that there was a Baron Craven of Hamstead Marshall (no 'p'), a village 4 miles west of Newbury in Berkshire. Although the village is now spelt Hamstead Marshall on maps and road signs, the official name of its parish is still Hampstead Marshall.

The trouble with the internet is that it knows too much and spoils a lot of fun!

## Pubs Online

When the brewers, Charrington, moved offices 25 years ago they dumped many of their records into a skip. These included more than 3,000 photographs of its many pubs. They were rescued by Robert Humphreys, an area manager, and taken to the Bass Museum in Burton upon-Trent.

The collection is now in the care of the National Brewery Heritage Trust which has a website.

## Duck or no Duck?

Despite being inanimate, statues often provoke stormy disputes. There has recently been the long-running hoo-hah about the Cecil Rhodes statue at Oriel College (Rhodes' family, by the way, were prominent farmers in Camden). Now comes the statue to mark the achievements of Sir Nigel Gresley whose Mallard locomotives for the London & North Eastern Railway prompt wistful sighs from transport buffs. The fastest speed of 126mph for a steam train was achieved by one of Gresley's locomotives.

The Gresley Society Trust has quietly perpetuated his memory for some time, but unexpectedly was left £500,000 by a member to be used to carry on the good work. A statue of Gresley by Hazel Reeves was approved by the Society and is scheduled to be unveiled at King's Cross station on 5 April. The statue of him is fine, BUT the artist playfully added a mallard duck at his feet. Contention has followed. Gresley's descendants protest that the mallard belittles the dignity of the engineer, while others maintain that it added charm and interest to the statue that would always be a talking point and of interest especially to younger people who would never have

heard of Gresley otherwise. It would be as notable a meeting point as the Paddington Bear at Paddington Station. However, the Society committee was then persuaded not to have the duck, but its members are now divided on the issue - and so are quite a few members of the public. A petition in favour of the mallard exists and gathers many signatures.

Gresley, of course, received even more publicity with the journey of his newly-restored Flying Scotsman from King's Cross to the Railway Museum at York on 25 February.

It's a splendid and very English controversy providing much comic material. One awaits with anticipation a similar dispute to arise in the Society for the Appreciation of Roundabouts.

## Visit to the library of the Zoological Society London

We are having an extra event on Thursday, 26 May. It is, however, restricted to 15 members. Those who want to visit the library of the Zoological Society are invited to send in their names on a first-come basis.

Ann Sylph, the librarian, and Michael Palmer, archivist, will display and discuss some of the items of particular interest in the history of the Zoo, which was founded in 1826 by Sir Stamford Raffles.

The ZSL building is on the Outer Circle, opposite the entrance to the Zoo itself and is most conveniently reached via a footpath from the 274 bus stop on Prince Albert Road. The visit is scheduled to start at 6.15 and will end by 8pm at the latest, when it will still be daylight.

Members intending to take advantage of this rare opportunity please send in their names plus contact details (including telephone number) by email to drswoodford@blueyonder.co.uk, or by adding these details to a list held by the chairperson at CHS talks on 17 March, 21 April or 19 May.

## Things to come

*19 May:* An accident in Cat's Meat Square, by Ruth Richardson.

*26 May:* Extra event - visit to the library of the Zoological Society of London. (See above)

*16 June:* AGM, and a talk on the first 50 years of Camden, by Tudor Allen.

*21 July:* The school of Oriental and African studies.

*August:* Annual Outing, to be announced

*15 Sept:* the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, by Victoria Cranna.

*20 Oct:* Fifty Years of the Highgate Society, by Richard Webber.

## Finding trenches

Our member, Robin Woolven, in association with the Royal Parks Office and the Friends of Regent's Park, has put in motion an archaeological excavation to find some trenches dug there before the Second World War broke out.

*Robin writes:*

Fearing an aerial bombardment 'knockout blow' by the German Air Force, during the September 1938 Munich Crisis, the government instructed London local authorities to use public works contractors to excavate extensive trench air raid shelters in public squares and parks. St Pancras Council dug trench shelters (to the approved Home Office model) for some 17,000 people, including 6,000 in Regent's Park and 2,000 on Primrose Hill. Although the crisis soon faded, the trenches were subsequently 'made permanent' by lining, roofing and flooring with five-inch thick concrete. The trenches were fitted with wooden benches, electric lighting, drinking water and chemical closets.

By the time the London blitz began in September 1940, better and more conveniently located local shelters had been provided, so the trenches were little used and they were demolished in 1946. Using heavy weights the contractors uncovered and broke up the concrete, pushing it into the trenches so that no concrete remained within two feet of the surface. The trenches were then filled with earth and the topsoil replaced and reseeded.

Using wartime RAF photographs and the discolouration of grass apparent on contemporary commercial satellite imagery, the probable location of one small (50m x 50m) section of the 1938 Primrose Hill trench system has been provisionally identified.

A one-day non-intrusive ground penetrating radar survey of this small area was due to be carried out on 29 February by Dr Gabriel Moshenska and Dr Kris Lockyear from University College London, along with members of the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group and students from UCL. The aim of the survey is (a) to determine if buried concrete can be detected and (b) confirm the layout of a small section of the 1938 Primrose Hill trench system.

## Towers over the Graveyard

Boris Johnson, in his capacity of Mayor of London, has recently 'called in' and approved two planning applications which had already been opposed by the local authorities concerned.

One is a plan for comprehensive development in the Folgate area of the City. The other is adjacent to the non-conformist burial ground, Bunhill Fields, in the City Road. The ground is within Islington, although owned and maintained by the City of London.

Our member Gerry Harrison tells us that the proposal

is to have four new buildings in the City Road, two of them skyscrapers of eleven and ten storeys, which will overshadow the burial ground. The action by the Mayor sets aside any local government views so that the decision in each of these cases rests entirely with him. The Mayor believes that more office space is needed. Gerry Harrison, on the other hand, feels that the intervention of the Mayor is arrogant and urges as many people as possible to sign the online petition. If you wish to join the opposition to the scheme, just tap in the words petition and Bunhill Fields.

## The Home Front Legacy in Camden

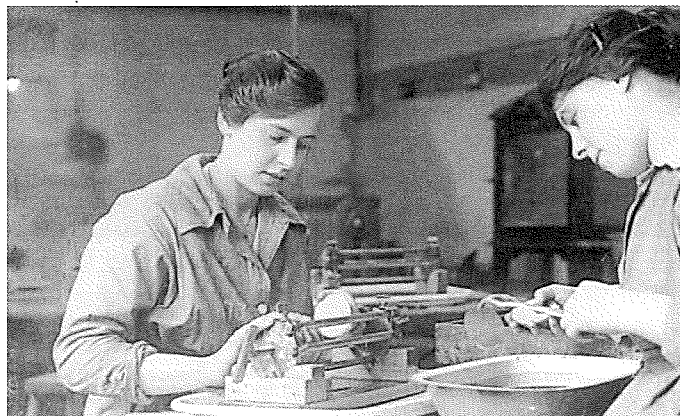
Sue Wright of the Council for British Archaeology has contacted us to establish the whereabouts of a factory in Camden that had a role in the First World War. It was called the Crowndale Works, makers of gas masks.

David Hayes has tracked it down. Almost every internet reference to the Crowndale Works says that it was "in Camden Town", but directories show no sign of it in Crowndale Road. However, one book accessible online - *Banning Chemical Weapons*, by Hugh D Crone (1992) - contains a photo dated 1916 of ladies polishing eye pieces there and the caption says "probable location is Charrington Street".

Researching in the 1917 rate book and a 1918 directory David found that Charrington Street at the time was wholly residential apart from the Conservative & Unionist Club and 3 doors away from it was the only factory at No. 93, the last building on the west side before the street (then) met Crowndale Road.

The directory gave one of the occupants as the Splinterless Anti-mist Glass Syndicate Ltd and the Life Saving Devices Syndicate Ltd. The former is mentioned in *Commercial Motor* magazine (14 Dec 1916), as set up to 'manufacture compound, safety, uncloudable, anti-mist and multi-glass goggles, and anti-gas appliances of all kinds'. So, though the factory is nowhere named as Crowndale Works we must surely have the right address.

*Doping splinterless glass to be used in gas masks at the Crowndale Works in 1918. From the Ministry of Information First World War Official Collection.*



## An early Hampstead delicatessen

Bryan Diamond has photographed the side fascia of an early delicatessen at 4 Heath Street (the Fitzjohn's Avenue end), while what used to be the Photocraft shop was recently converted to a beauty parlour. Work on the outer revealed the former business of Leonard, Continental Delicatessen.

Street directories show nos 2-4 vacant from 1952-54, then in 1955 'Leonard Delicatessen (S. Burford)' appears. Burford may be found as a resident of 76 The Avenue NW6. At no. 2, which appears from this picture to be around the corner in Perrins Lane, is listed as a second-hand bookseller.

Bryan found that in 1955 there were 56 delicatessens in the London Directory, including three others in NW3. He wonders when this sort of food trade began in London.

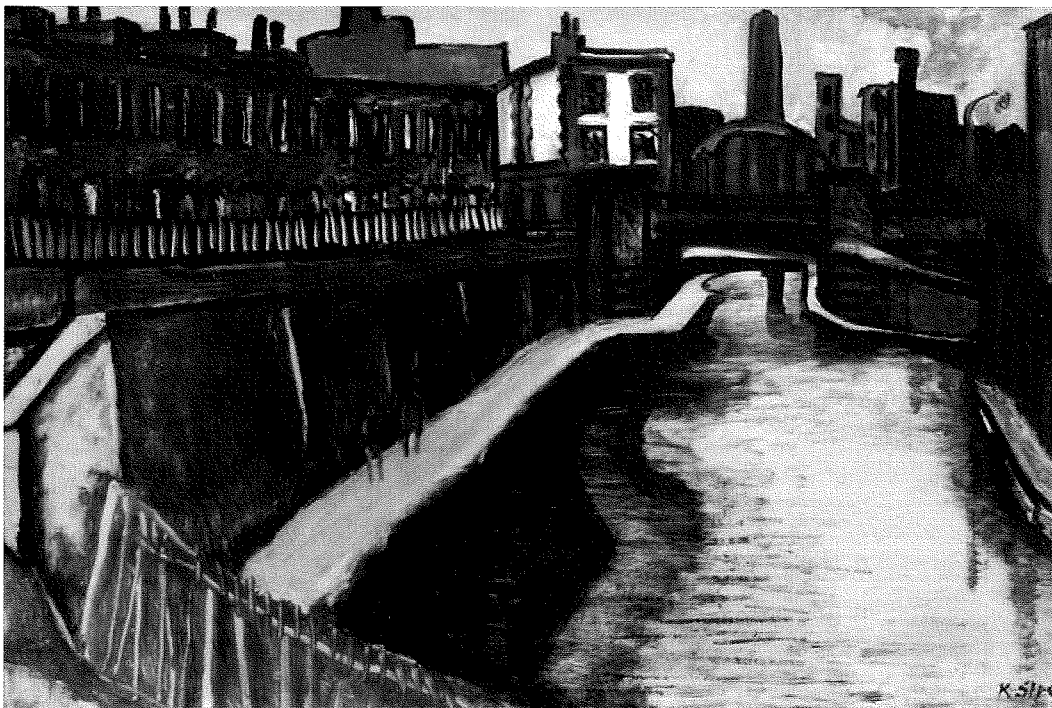
### The Regent's Canal in Camden Town

Lester May, who has a view of the canal from his flat hereabouts, discovered this painting by Käthe Strenitz online, but in fact it exists in the archives of Camden Local Studies. It shows an unglamorous stretch of the Regent's Canal as it goes beneath St Pancras Way. The



(Editor's note: I remember the bookshop in the 1970s. It was, seemingly, in Perrins Lane, run by a man who I felt would not have sold you a book if he didn't like the look of you. It was a cluttered store, with piles of books on the floor, but had an interesting stock. JR)

mid-19th century houses of Canal View (demolished c.1961) are to the left, and the Constitution public house is beyond Gray's Inn Bridge. The artist (b. 1923) was born in the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia and came as a refugee to London in 1939.



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The Society is a registered charity - number 261044



# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 275

May 2016

## An Accident in Cat's Meat Square

Thurs. 19 May, 7.30pm

Camden Local Studies and Archives

2nd floor Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road WC1.

Our speaker Ruth Richardson is a medical historian especially interested in finding unusual events in the less salubrious parts of Camden (she delighted CHS members last with her account of one of the Camden addresses for Charles Dickens near the workhouse in Cleveland Street which was probably the inspiration for the one in *Oliver Twist*). Now she has discovered an extraordinary pamphlet about an accident in the slum area in South St Pancras (below) that was described in lurid detail in our 2012 publication, *Cat's Meat Square*, by Stephen W Job. In this talk she will recount a sorry event within its social and historical context.

Ruth has also contributed an account of an alarming happening in St Pancras which resulted in an inquest into child murder in the parish. This is related elsewhere in this *Newsletter*.



## Fifty years of Camden and the Annual General Meeting

Thurs. 16 June, 6.30pm

Camden Local Studies and Archives

2nd floor Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road WC1

Just over fifty years ago, London's local government changed substantially. Gone were the old metropolitan boroughs and in came new Greater London Boroughs which not only necessitated the merging of old boroughs but extended London's governmental area further into the old home counties. Camden was formed from St Pancras, Hampstead and Holborn. Each had distinct but very different histories and characters. St Pancras had a stormy political history. But it was also an area that had been important in the world of transport, health care, education, shops, and piano manufacture. It had wealthy areas, but also a considerable number of slums. Hampstead was richer, had great open spaces, and was renowned for its artistic activities. Holborn boasted legal institutions, the Bloomsbury Set, a large number of commercial buildings – but had a much smaller population than either of its new partners.

Politically, Hampstead and Holborn had for the most part been overwhelmingly Conservative, but St Pancras was often militantly left-wing. Many thought the new borough would be politically dysfunctional. As it happened, the borough can claim to have been one of the success stories of the amalgamations.

Camden's unpredictable political nature avoided the dead hand of one-party control for much of the fifty years. There have been difficult periods, but Camden has established a reputation for innovation that is unusual in London.

The Fifty Years of Camden is the subject of our June talk by Tudor Allen, Camden's archivist. It will feature many images of buildings and events of the past 50 years.

### The Society's Website

[www.camdenhistorysociety.org](http://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!!**

This will also be our AGM and therefore we will begin with refreshments at 6.30pm, followed by the AGM at 7pm and the talk at 7.30.

A list of current officers and council members is shown below. If you have nominations, can you please send them to our Acting-Secretary Jane Ramsay by 20th of May. Nominations may also, if necessary, be made on the evening.

*The present officers and members of the Council are:*

PRESIDENT: Prof. Caroline Barron

VICE PRESIDENTS: Malcolm Holmes, Dr Ann Saunders and Gillian Tindall

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Vacant

SECRETARY: Vacant (*Jane Ramsay, Acting Secretary*)

TREASURER: Dr Henry Fitzhugh

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: Dr Peter Woodford

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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, Lindsay Douglas, Emily Gee, Ruth Hayes, Paul Klein, Richard Knight, Lester May, Michael Ogden, Susan Palmer

## Visit to the library of the Zoological Society London

At the moment we have some spare spaces for this extra event on 26 May. As only a limited number can be conveniently received at the library, if you wish to go please contact Peter Woodford on [drswoodford@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:drswoodford@blueyonder.co.uk) (or 0207 435 2088) as soon as possible. Alternatively, please notify the chairman of our meeting on 19 May.

Ann Sylph, the librarian, and Michael Palmer, archivist, will display and discuss some of the items of particular interest in the history of the Zoo, which was founded in 1826 by Sir Stamford Raffles.

The ZSL building is on the Outer Circle, opposite the entrance to the Zoo itself and is most conveniently reached via a footpath from the 274 bus stop on Prince Albert Road. The visit is scheduled to start at 6.15 and will end by 8pm at the latest, when it will still be daylight.

## Things to come

26 May: Extra event – visit to the library of the Zoological Society of London. (*See left*)

21 July: The school of Oriental and African studies.

3 August: Annual Outing, to Quex Park.

15 Sept: The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, by Victoria Cranna.

20 Oct: To be arranged

17 Nov: Filmed in Camden, by Danny Nissim.

15 Dec: Images of Camden Past and Present, by Gillian Tindall and Richard Lansdown.

## Subscriptions Due

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

Subscriptions were 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. 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 July *Newsletter* will only be sent if subscriptions have been received by 31 May.

## Tales from Kilburn and West Hampstead

Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling have added more stories relating to their website devoted to Kilburn and West Hampstead.

One story deals with a murder trial in 1958. The victim was Horace Davidson who had once lived in Acol Court, Acol Road. He had been having an affair with the wife of Ernest Fantle. When Fantle discovered the liaison he was distraught and shot Davidson. Unusually, he escaped conviction of murder, which then might well have resulted in execution, and was given only a 3-year custodial sentence for manslaughter because of provocation.

Louis Wain who lived in Brondesbury Road in 1926, had an unhappy and mentally unstable life – he was diagnosed as schizophrenic. However, he was a well known painter of cats – samples of his work are on the website.

George Birt of 58, Compayne Gardens was the well-paid Chairman and Managing Director of the Millwall Docks Co. In 1899 it was discovered that he had been inflating the financial position of the Company and, on the run, he was arrested at 9 Thornhill Square in Barnsbury. He was sentenced to 3 months' hard labour.

The website is:

<http://kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.co.uk>

## An Inquest in St Pancras

The extraordinary early 19th-century print on the next page shows an inquest jury arriving to view a dead body, before their verdict on the cause of death. Contemporary newspapers often reported the official process of inspecting corpses by coroners' juries, but Georgian newspapers were not illustrated, and these events were seldom if ever shown elsewhere, which makes this a highly unusual image. The importance of inquest procedure in the history of medicine makes such a rare image significant. It comes from a sixpenny chapbook, published in London in 1829. Chapbooks were slender booklets made by printing on both sides of a large single sheet of paper that was then folded to form the pages. They were cheap to make and to buy. The chapbook that features this inquest image was produced by John Fairburn, who worked as a printer-publisher in London between the 1790s and the 1830s.

Fairburn published a wide array of affordable literature for adults and children. His output was often nautical in flavour, musical, radical, sentimental, or humorous; he issued some fine maps of London, clever caricatures and charming pocket volumes of sea songs, alphabets, reading primers, traditional tales, valentines, and drama. Fairburn also dealt in accurate coverage of important trials at the Old Bailey, and execution literature for the big public hangings which took place outside Newgate Prison, both institutions being just across Ludgate Hill from his shop.

Facing their title pages, Fairburn's chapbooks often featured fold-out images: sometimes plain in black and white, but others—like this one—bright with hand-applied colour, perhaps from a family workshop. The colours here remain vibrant, having been well-kept for many years in the archives of the Bishopsgate Institute in the City of London.

Fairburn's news images were often semi-documentary portraits or topography, but sometimes—though rooted in fact—sensational and imaginary, featuring the dramatic highpoint of a shipwreck, a crime, or an execution. Fairburn's image, *The Coroner's Jury viewing the murdered body of Margaret Howse*, centres on the girl's emaciated corpse, and portrays the shock of men confronted with evidence of mortal cruelty. The group represents the twelve men of the inquest jury arriving with the Coroner and his deputy to witness the body at the centre of a case that eventually involved the wretched deaths of three young workhouse apprentices from starvation, cruelty, neglect, and exposure.

Margaret Howse had been one of eight young girls bound as live-in apprentices to Esther Hibner senior, of 13 Platt Place, Battle Bridge. The site now lies under the great train shed of London's St Pancras Station. All were orphans, aged between 6 and 10 years, sent out from the workhouses of various Lon-

don parishes to learn the female trade of tambourwork, a specialised kind of embroidery.

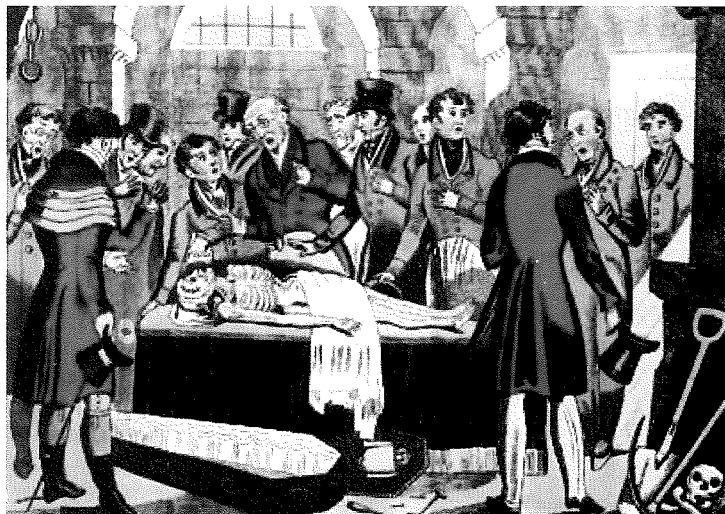
"Apprenticeship" was a misnomer for exploitation: the children were made to work standing at their tambourframes from before dawn to nearly midnight. They were fed on diluted milk and two boiled potatoes a day. Their bed was a bare floor with only two blankets between them even in midwinter. Their employers ate separately, and well.

Intimations that something was seriously wrong had come to light at Bow Street Magistrates' Court, two days before the event pictured. The grandmother of one of the apprentices, Frances Colpit, having been repeatedly turned away at the workshop, was told at last that the child had gone to visit her brother. By now seriously worried, the grandmother visited her grandson to confirm her suspicions, and went for help to the overseers of St Martin's-in-the-Fields, the parish from which Frances had been apprenticed. An overseer, Mr Blackman, went to investigate. He found the children "exceedingly ill", filthy, with hollow eyes, sunken cheeks, and death-like countenances: emaciation so extreme that their bones were "ready to start through the skin". He fetched the local beadles of St Pancras parish and took the children away.

Two were not expected to survive: the feet and arms of one were already mortified from exposure, and the other was in a "dangerous state". Seven girls were found in the house, although Mr Blackman knew there should be eight in all. The eighth, he was told, had gone into the country to visit an aunt. But once away from the Hibners, the children confessed that they had been browbeaten with the threat of flogging to deceive him. The missing child—Margaret Howse—had been dead a fortnight.

Like them, she had been starved and beaten, but she was additionally victimised. She never regained consciousness after being pushed down stairs because she had been too ill to stand at her loom. Her disposal was shrouded in secrecy. In London localities the task of washing the dead and laying out corpses was always traditionally undertaken by experienced adult women, but in this case two of the younger girls were instructed to perform this task. The local "searchers"—female officials employed in every central London district at that date to affirm cause of death and to compile mortality statistics—were not sent for before the coffin was nailed down and taken to be "privately" buried.

Mr Blackman laid charges of cruelty against the three adults: Mrs Hibner, her daughter, and Ann Robinson, the workshop forewoman. On February 16, 1829, Sir Richard Birnie, the magistrate at Bow Street, heard one of the starved apprentices, Eliza Loman, report that her employers "would not let such vermin as us lie in the beds to rot them", and that the children were so famished they were driven



to eat candle-ends and pig-swill. There was a sensation in the court when the witness reported the younger Hibner had forced one girl's nose and face into her own urine. The magistrate urged the parish authorities to prosecute for "abominable cruelty", and suggested the Middlesex Coroner be asked without delay for a warrant to disinter the body, to clarify if the charge should be murder.

In 1829, the date of these events, London had neither coroners' courts nor public mortuaries. Inquests were held and corpses stored in any convenient building near the death-scene, often in a public house. Margaret Howse's inquest took place on Feb 18 in The Elephant, a tavern near Old St Pancras Church, whose stone-vaulted crypt looks to be the setting for the image. In the print, the empty coffin, gravedigger's tools, human bones, and loose screws scattered on the floor, signify the exhumation. Exactly what the Hibners most wanted to hide – the corpse – occupies centre-stage. To serve on an inquest, jurymen had to be householders. These men are shown as well-dressed gentlemen confronted with a terrible and shocking sight. Their facial expressions, hand gestures, and postures reveal each one to be aghast in his own way. The tallest bespectacled figure standing over the body, placed centrally to the arched window above, may be intended for the Coroner, Thomas Stirling. Despite all he had witnessed in the course of his career, he seems as shocked as the rest.

Thomas Wakley, the founder of *The Lancet*, was elected as Coroner for West Middlesex after Stirling's death in 1839. Near the end of his life, Stirling referred to this case as among the worst he had ever experienced.

So it is the inquest – rather than the crime itself or the trial at the Old Bailey or Esther Hibner's execution at Newgate – which Fairburn chose for the chapbook illustration. Sadly, we have no indication of the artist's identity. Fairburn employed a number of well-known illustrators of the day, including the Cruikshank family, but not for this image. Fairburn himself or an artist within the family might be responsible, as it resembles other unsigned images under his imprint.

The moment the inquest jury came into the presence of the body certainly makes for a dramatic tableau, and provides a fair indication of the chapbook's content, soliciting as it does sorrow and pity for the child's terrible fate. It is not difficult to imagine her poor corpse left for reburial after the jury's return to The Elephant to reach their verdict – wilful murder.

**Ruth Richardson**

*(Article previously printed in The Lancet 19 Jan, 2013. Thanks are due to the Bishopsgate Institute Library, Camden Archives and the London Metropolitan Archives).*

## The London Foot Hospital

Member Veronika Chambers has emailed to say that the last *Newsletter* was in error in stating that the London Foot Hospital was still in residence at 33 Fitzroy Square, the former home of the Omega Workshops. In fact it closed there in 2003.

She has also kindly sent a synopsis of the history of the hospital taken from a website called *Lost Hospitals of London*.

The Pedic Hospital (forerunner of the Foot Hospital) opened in November 1913, at 1-3 Silver Street, Bloomsbury – the first of its kind in Britain. It was intended to serve poorer patients. Staff gave their services free, and therefore the hospital was open for patients only in the evenings so that staff could make a living elsewhere during the day.

In 1920 the Clinic moved to 98 Charlotte Street and, in 1924, was renamed the London Foot Hospital. It moved to Fitzroy Square in 1929. However, in 1994 the building was thought unsuitable for the work – lifts could not be installed and lame patients had to be carried up the stairs.

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

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# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 276

Jul 2016

## An appreciation of SOAS

Thursday, 21 July 2016, 7.30pm  
Camden Local Studies, 2nd floor, Holborn Library,  
32-38 Theobalds Road WC1X 8PA

Burzine Waghmar's talk will describe the history and growing pains of a very British institution, the School of Oriental and African Studies, which celebrates its centenary this year. Originally just the School of Oriental Studies (Africa was added in 1938), it is part of the University of London, based in Thornhaugh Street. It is now the only higher education institution in Europe to specialise in Africa, Asia and the Near and Middle East.

The contributions of this discipline to public life nationally and to scholarship internationally have often been misunderstood during the last quarter of the 20th century.

## The Annual Outing

As announced in the May *Newsletter*, this year's outing is to east Kent, specifically Quex Park and the Powell-Cotton Museum. In the Museum Heritage Awards 2014, it was named the UK's most inspiring museum for its natural history, ethnography and fine and decorative arts collections. Our visit offers the chance to find out why many roads in West Hampstead are named after places in Kent - such as Acol, Sarre and Minster - having been part of the Powell-Cotton family's London estate. Quex Park's archivist will try to arrange to have some material from the collection about this for us to see. Quex Park was a Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital during the First World War, and an exhibition, 'Welkom Friend', will tell us about the arrival of the Belgian soldiers who were the first patients there. Quex Park has fine gardens and woodland walks to explore, so you may wish to bring a packed lunch; otherwise there are cafés and a farm shop.

At the time of writing (early June), there are still seats available on the coach. The cost per person is £36.50 (or £34.50 concessions), which includes coach travel,

coffee and biscuits on arrival, admission charge and introductory talk, and cream tea. There will be three pick-up points, departing promptly at the times shown, as follows: Camden High Street, outside Marks & Spencer (8.30am); Hampstead High Street, outside Waterstones (8.40am); Swiss Cottage, outside Swiss Cottage Library (8.50am). The return time back in Camden is likely to be 7 to 7.30 pm.

The outing is being organised by Jean Archer; her phone number, in case of enquiries, is 020 7435 5490. Please complete the booking form in the last *Newsletter* (or write a letter giving name(s), address, telephone number, and where you wish to join the coach), and return it with your cheque, payable to Camden History Society, and a stamped addressed envelope, to Jean Archer, 91 Fitzjohn's Avenue, NW3 5NX.

## Camden in the Age of Shakespeare

As part of the celebrations this year to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, Camden Local Studies in Holborn Library have mounted an exhibition: *Elizabethan and Jacobean Holborn, Hampstead and St Pancras*. This will run until 29 July and is well worth seeing.

The Centre is open Mon and Tues 10-6, Thurs 10-7, Fri 10-5, and alternate Saturdays 11-5.

## Resurrecting the Shakespeare Hut

Before the First World War a campaign emerged to establish a Shakespeare Theatre in London to present his plays. The project was headed by Sir Oswald Stoll and Israel Gollancz, and a site was found in Keppel Street, Bloomsbury now occupied by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

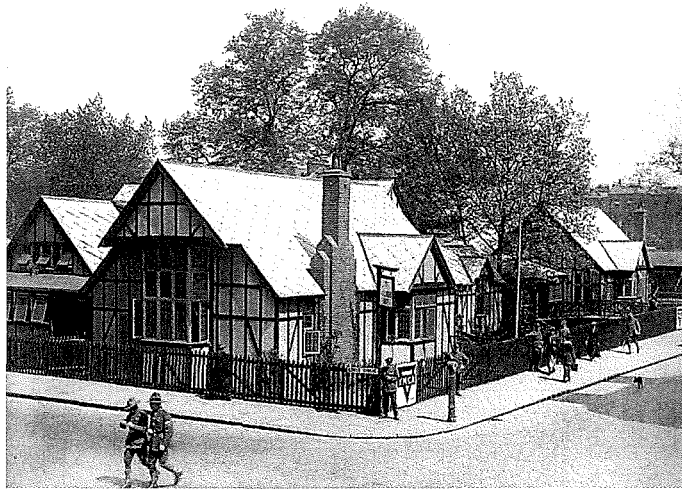
The project was halted by the advent of the war, but in 1916 the YMCA opened what was called the Shakespeare Hut on the site as a place for relaxation and recreation of troops when in London. Shake-

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*The Shakespeare Hut. YMCA images courtesy Cadbury Archives, University of Birmingham.*

Shakespeare's plays were staged and the troops were also allowed to sleep there – it was reported by *The Times* in 1918 that 2000 a week did just that. After the war the hut was used by Indian students, and any revenue held by the campaign was used to promote the building of the National Theatre instead. The site itself was taken by the School in 1929.

As part of the Shakespeare celebrations an audio-visual exhibition is to be staged by Digital Drama near the site of the Hut, and the organisers also plan to conduct oral histories with local residents in order to record, preserve and share their own family stories and memories about the War. Also, there will be a re-enactment of the opening of the Hut, to be staged on 11 August.

If you would like to volunteer in this project please contact Alison Ramsey on 07525 205148, or else Rebecca Tremain on Rebecca.Tremain@lshtm.ac.uk. You may also like to take part in the re-enactment!

## Things to come

*Please put the following talks in your diary:*

15 Sept: The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, by Victoria Cranna.

20 Oct: To be arranged

17 Nov: Filmed in Camden, by Danny Nissim.

15 Dec: Images of Camden Past and Present, by Gillian Tindall and Richard Lansdown.

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The National Trust is keen to enrol volunteers as Room Guides at their two properties in Hampstead. One is Fenton House, a 17th century townhouse with a splendid collection of ceramics, musical instruments and paintings. The other is the Modernist and iconic 2 Willow Road, designed by Erno Goldfinger in 1939.

If you would like to know more please contact Laura Callan on 0207 435 3471.

## Book Review

*The Lost Rivers of London* by Nicholas Barton and Stephen Myers, a revised and extended edition, Historical Publications ISBN 978-1-905286-51-5, 223 pages, hardback, £22.50. Obtainable from bookshops or else direct from Countryside Books 01635 43816.

Londoners have been fascinated by the subject of the Thames tributaries in their local area, even though those watercourses have long been hidden below ground for all or most of their length. In Camden in 1907, at the Auctioneers' Institute at 34 Russell Square, George Head gave a paper on the *Buried Rivers of London* and showed the courses of the northern tributaries through the north of centre suburbs in considerable detail. From the scope of the paper and of the discussion afterwards, it seems that the Auctioneers included surveyors and engineers, interested in subsidence and damp in buildings.

Nicholas Barton quoted from Head's paper in the first edition of this book based on a university thesis written in 1960 and the popularity of the subject ensured the book ran to three editions before the present one, with several reprints. The paucity of documentary evidence on southern tributaries meant that these earlier editions, like Head, concentrated on the northern ones, which is good for our local history. In the edition under review Barton has been joined by Stephen Myers, a Civil Engineer who has worked internationally concentrating on water supply; the sections on the southern tributaries have been expanded and a few coloured illustrations of modern views added, although most of the historic images are monochrome for which colour is inappropriate. The most significant improvement is the coloured maps from the familiar Geographers' Street Maps with the water courses clearly marked in blue and covering all the inner London boroughs. The number of pages has been increased by some 30%, so even if you do own an earlier edition, it is well worth investing in this revised and extended edition.

The book starts with a study of London's geology, explaining why Hampstead is the source of three hidden rivers, the Fleet, the Tyburn and the Westbourne, because water draining through the sandy soil of the Heath was forced to form surface rivers by the impervious London Clay. The two main tributaries of the Fleet were dammed over 300 years ago for water supply purposes, forming the Hampstead and Highgate ponds. The Tyburn has its source at the junction of Fitzjohn's Avenue and Akenside Road, formerly marked by a drinking fountain, and used to supply the Regent's Park lake before accounting for the winding courses of Marylebone Lane and South Molton Street before flowing past Buckingham Palace to reach the Thames at a point near the Palace of Westminster. The Westbourne drains the West Heath area and then goes off through Kilburn, Westbourne Park, the Serpentine, Sloane Street and in a pipe across Sloane Square station to reach the Thames by Chelsea Hospital grounds.



*One of the illustrations in the book. the River Fleet near the Brill in Somers Town.  
The original is in Camden Local Studies, which sells large reproductions of it.*

The City is well covered and Myers has added the fruits of his research into the sources of the Walbrook way up in Islington which were used by City institutions for water supply and so did not appear on early maps as surface rivers. The Walbrook has recently been brought again to our notice by the finding of early Roman tablets in the silt beneath the river containing writings from the first decades of the Roman invasion and the first use of the name 'London'.

The lower Walbrook is described as flowing under Cloak Lane (but the book does not mention Mayor Whittington's gift to the City of a fourteen-seater loo conveniently continuously flushed by the Walbrook flowing below). Mayor Boris has left us the Barclays/Santander bicycles - what will Mayor Sadiq Khan leave, I wonder?

**Roger Cline**

## **NEWS FROM OUT WEST**

The blogspot compiled by Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling featuring the history of Kilburn and West Hampstead contains three new stories. One concerns the bombing of some of the area by V1s and V2s during the last war. It also details, for the first time, where these bombs dropped in the area.

The first incident occurred on 20 June 1944 when a V1 destroyed 3 houses in West End Lane and severely damaged other houses in the vicinity. 18 people were killed and 100 were wounded. After the war Sidney Boyd Court was built on the site.

Another bomb dropped on Mortimer Crescent on 29 June 1944. George Orwell, who was living in a flat at 10a Mortimer Crescent, was obliged to use a wheelbarrow and shovel to retrieve the only manuscript

copy of *Animal Farm* from the rubble - the book was published in 1945.

The death of Arthur Johnstone in the Battle of Jutland in 1916 is noted. He was born in Alexandra Road. Over 6000 British sailors lost their lives in that conflict.

Another story concerns a forger of banknotes who chose to avoid arrest by jumping from a fourth floor window in Sandwell Mansions.

See <http://kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.co.uk>

## **Digging up Primrose Hill**

In Newsletter 264 (May) we reported on a project to excavate air raid shelter trenches that were dug in Regent's Park and Primrose Hill in the last War.

Robin Woolven reports on progress:

The ground penetrating radar survey of the site of some of the 1938 concrete-lined air raid shelter trenches at the base of Primrose Hill (close to the Fitzroy Gate) was carried out by staff and students of the University College Department of Archaeology on 29 February. It proved 'inconclusive', probably due to the water content of the thick London clay. It is hoped to repeat the survey of a smaller area and with different (resistivity/magnetometer) equipment in the future, but no date has been set.

This is understandable as not only did the contractors break the underground drainage pipes when the trenches were excavated (subsequently replaced) during the Munich crisis, but even with wood duckboards fitted the wet trenches caused problems for wartime shelterers and their complaints made the national press.

## Rowton Houses

The barrack-like Rowton House in King's Cross Road, pictured here, was superseded some years back by a particularly unattractive hotel. The older building was the work of the architect H B Measures, who was also employed by the government of the day to build barracks. He was the architect for the original Central Line stations, and had also been in-house architect for William Willett, prominent in the development of Belsize Park. Another Rowton House, the only one remaining and still housing homeless people, was in Arlington Road, Camden Town. At times it had housed George Orwell and Brendan Behan. This is now called Arlington House.

Many efforts were made in the second part of the 19th century to improve the accommodation available for poorer people. Various organisations such as the Guinness Trust, Improved Industrial Dwellings Company and Peabody made inroads into the provision of low-rent housing for respectable, but penurious artizan Londoners. There had been frequent scandals of slum housing. In particular, overcrowded lodging houses attracted harsh criticisms. It was noted in one survey that in an 18 x 10ft room 27 men and women, and 31 children, plus dogs, were living nightly, such was the desperation and poverty of thousands of people.

In 1851 Lord Ashley piloted the Lodging House Bill through Parliament which aimed at improving standards. Local authorities were given powers to inspect, but rarely did.

In the 1880s, Lord Iveagh, encouraged an old friend, Lord Rowton (1838-1903), to conduct an investigation into lodging houses. Rowton, who when plain Mr Montagu Lowry-Corry, had been private secretary to Disraeli, set to with much industry. He himself was wealthy, with a house in Berkeley Square. He put up £30,000 of his own money to build the first lodging house that would provide accommodation for a modest price, with a clean bed and facilities for bathing and for cooking food. This first building, with 484 beds, was opened on 31 December 1892, in Bondway, Vauxhall. It was an immediate success.

Rowton then went on to build more hostels - his last was in Camden Town (1905). His second building was the one pictured in King's Cross Road, which opened in 1896. It was originally planned that the hostels should house residents in dormitories, but this was changed, so that they were instead given cubicles for greater privacy, with their own window. This explains the repetitive fenestration of Rowton Houses, as shown in the King's Cross building and in Arlington House.

The King's Cross hostel featured in the investigation of the notorious serial killer, John Christie. Shortly before his arrest he had left his home in Rillington Place and stayed a few nights here, occasionally playing snooker.

Arlington House now contains hostel accommodation, business units, artists' studios and conference facilities.

**John Richardson**



*Rowton House, King's Cross Road, c1905.*

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

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Our website: [www.camdenhistorysociety.org](http://www.camdenhistorysociety.org)

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# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 277

Sep 2016

## The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Thurs. 15 September, 7.30pm

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

The London School of Tropical Medicine was founded in 1899 and was originally located in the Albert Docks in the East End. The object was not only to acquaint students with tropical diseases and how to treat them but also to train them to study them. The School moved to Endsleigh Gardens (now Gordon Square) to a former hotel which had been used as a hospital during the First World War. In 1924 the School became the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and in 1929 their art deco building in Keppel Street was opened. It remains the headquarters of the School. In 2010 the Tavistock Place building was opened which houses the Faculty of Public Health and Policy.

Our speaker, Victoria Cranna, is the School's archivist. Her talk will cover the history of the School and its buildings.

## Things to Come

Please put these talks in your present and new diaries:

17 Nov: Filmed in Camden, by Danny Nissim.

15 Dec: Images of Camden Past and Present, by Gillian Tindall and Richard Lansdown.

Jan: to be announced

16 Feb: Sport and Recreation in Camden, by Simon Inglis

16 March: The launch, including talks, of our new publication *The Streets of Bloomsbury*.

## When Sigismund came to dine

Thurs. 20 October, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

It is not often we have cause to commemorate an extraordinary event that occurred 600 years ago. It took place in Kentish Town, at a house probably off today's St Pancras Way, very near Agar Grove.

The event was a feast attended by, and in honour of, Sigismund (1368-1437) the future Holy Roman Emperor (1433-37). The host was William Bruges (c.1375-1450), a Kentish Town resident who features in the 15th-century Canteloves manor rolls and who became the first Garter King of Arms (c.1415), a post that involved the regulation of heraldic matters and the suppression of misuse of titles and coats of arms. It is a position that still exists today.

*William Bruges (right) with St George.*



### The Society's Website

[www.camdenhistorysociety.org](http://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

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Sigismund was active in European politics, and especially in trying to resolve the Papal Schism in which competing popes claimed legitimacy. He was himself king of Hungary, Croatia, Germany, Bohemia and Italy, and was much involved in the turmoil of that period. After England won the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, Sigismund sealed an alliance with England against the French, consolidated by the Treaty of Canterbury in 1416, hence his presence in London that year.

William Bruges was in the employ of Henry IV from 1407-10 and was sent on several missions abroad. In the following years he was still involved in diplomatic affairs and visited Sigismund in Europe. Bruges, therefore, had the honour of hosting Sigismund during his visit to London.

It was a lavish junket. The Lord Mayor, aldermen, Henry V's trumpeters, esquires and knights, the Bishop of Ely, the Prince of Hungary and the dukes of Briga and Holland, together with Sigismund, were received at the northern end of Gray's Inn Road. The food consisted of nine pigs, hundreds of pullets, sheep, hares, rabbits, eels, oysters, wild boars and deer. No doubt there was plentiful beer and wine. Some guests, probably unable to move, and their retainers, stayed the night at the house or in the fields.

Our speaker on this interesting subject is Professor Lester Hillman, who specialises in this period.

## The AGM

It was not possible in the last *Newsletter* to report on the AGM, held in June.

The following officers and Council members were elected:

PRESIDENT: Prof. Caroline Barron

VICE PRESIDENTS: Ann Saunders, Gillian Tindall, Malcolm Holmes

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson

VICE CHAIRMAN: Roger Cline

SECRETARIAL ASSISTANT: Daniel Crougton

TREASURER: Henry Fitzhugh

MEETINGS CO-ORDINATOR: Ruth Hayes

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: David Hayes

PUBLICITY OFFICER: Lindsay Douglas

PUBLICATIONS (postal sales) Roger Cline

PUBLICATIONS (bookstall sales) Sheila Ayres

LOCAL STUDIES LIAISON: Tudor Allen or his deputy

RESEARCH TEAM LEADER: Steven Denford

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Sheila Ayres, Steven Denford, Lindsay Douglas, Emily Gee, Paul Klein, Richard Knight, Lester May, Susan Palmer and Peter Woodford.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Vacant

For health reasons, Dr. Peter Woodford stood down from his position of both Meetings Co-ordinator and Publications Editor. His programme of events over

the years has been both imaginative and entertaining, and our publications during his editorship have earned the Society many awards as well as admiration for their standard and scholarship. They are, enhanced by the design contribution of Ivor Kamlish, by far the best looking in the field. The Society presented Peter with a cheque to go towards the rehabilitation of his much-loved piano.

We are pleased that Ruth Hayes agreed to take on the job of Meetings Co-ordinator, and her husband David that of Publications Editor. David is already the Editor of the *Camden History Review*.

We have appointed Daniel Crougton as our Secretarial Assistant on a fee basis. His address details are given on page 4 of this *Newsletter*.

The meeting concluded with a very enjoyable talk by Tudor Allen on aspects of the first fifty years of the borough of Camden. Tudor's own 50th birthday had occurred the day before his talk and Lindsay Douglas kindly cooked the appropriate cake. He is repeating his talk at the Primrose Hill Community Centre in Hopkinson Place, Fitzroy Road NW1 on 7 Sep, 2pm.

## The Visit to Quex Park

*Ruth Hayes reports:*

For our annual August Outing 22 of us went to Quex Park and the Powell Cotton Museum in Kent. We had a wonderful time and saw far more of the Museum than we can recall of our previous visit in the late 1980s.

I'd managed to pre-arrange for us to view in two groups some items relating to the Powell Cotton lands in West Hampstead. These turned out to be indentures relating to leases for Kingsgate Lodge, plus a map of the Powell Cotton Estate showing properties as and when freeholds had been sold. All this was under the expert guidance of Eileen Mount a long-term volunteer at the Museum who has been cataloguing them - she'd been a history teacher before she retired. She is author of some of the items on the Quex Park Blog\*.

As is the case each year, we are indebted to Jean Archer for organising the Outing.

\* <http://www.quexpark.co.uk/pcm-blog/>

## ANOTHER 50th ANNIVERSARY

In October The Roundhouse will be celebrating 50 years as an arts venue. To mark this they are creating a digital history of the Roundhouse and its arts activities. They would certainly like to hear from people who were there at the time. They would like your memories of the earlier years, photographs etc. If you have anything of interest, please get in touch with Charlotte Livingstone. Her email address is: [charlotte.livingstone@roundhouse.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.livingstone@roundhouse.org.uk)

## A Rowton House that never was

Our article on the Rowton House in King's Cross Road in the last *Newsletter* has encouraged two new items. The first is from Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling:

'In 1960, the local press reported that Hampstead almost got its own Rowton House when Mount Grove, then 102 Fitzjohns Avenue, was up for sale. A very large property with an attractive Italianate-style tower, it stood in 1.3 acres of grounds on the corner of Prince Arthur Road.

The person selling the property was architect Howard Sugden, a Hampstead councillor for the Adelaide ward and Chair of the Planning Committee. In the 1930s he was responsible for several houses in nearby Prince Arthur Road, Ellerdale Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue. He was living at no. 3 Prince Arthur Road at the time of his death in 1965.

The reporter noted Sugden had almost closed a deal with Rowton Houses, saying they had gone so far as to submit plans and get outline permission from the LCC for a hostel for 120 people. But the fact that the application was for a hostel for young girls, whereas men only were accommodated in Rowton Houses, indicates the reporter probably got his facts mixed up. Sugden had personally applied to build 16 three-storey houses on the site, but eventually he sold to Hampstead Council for £70,000, equivalent to around £1.44 million today. The house was divided into flats but Sugden guaranteed vacant possession, a plus point for the Council as it meant there was no re-housing obligation. The Council's intention was to build 'homes for old people' and in 1966, Henderson Court opened on the site.'

### OTHER EVENTS

There are some interesting events at Camden Local Studies at Holborn Library in the near future.

On 27 September (7.15pm), Jane Palm-Gold will be giving an illustrated historical talk entitled *Industry and Idleness in the St Giles Rookery*.

On 29 September at 12.30pm, Mike Brown from the London, Westminster and Middlesex Family History Society, will talk about *A Child's War - Growing up in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*.

The exhibition *Camden in the Age of Shakespeare: Elizabethan and Jacobean Holborn, Hampstead and St Pancras*, has been extended to the 30th of September.

At St Pancras Old Church in Pancras Road, they are celebrating the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley penning her most famous work - *Frankenstein*. Her poetry is the subject of a talk by Dr Giuseppe Albano, Curator and Director of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome, on Sunday, 18th September at 6pm.



Jocelyne Tobin has sent us a Vanity Fair caricature by Spy (1879) showing a sturdy Montague Lowry-Corry (Lord Rowton) carefully holding on to his friend, the aged Disraeli.

### TUNNELLING THROUGH HISTORY

The opening of Crossrail is, at the moment, scheduled for December 2018. It will link Reading and Heathrow in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east - over 40km. Camden's nearest station will be Tottenham Court Road. Crossrail (what a pity this original and memorable name has been changed to the bland Elizabeth Line) goes through central London and in doing so its construction has provided many archaeological finds.

Our Vice President, the writer Gillian Tindall, has just published a book called *The Tunnel Through Time: a New Route for an Old London Journey*. She follows the route historically, and particularly at ticket halls in key places such as Farringdon and Liverpool Street, where sad reminders of plague and executions have been found. She weaves London history into the long journey.

The book, published by Chatto & Windus, is a 320 page hardback, price £20. The ISBN is 978 07011 88658. We hope to include a review of the book in a later edition of this *Newsletter*.

## MORE NEWS FROM OUT WEST

Marianne Colloms and Dick Weindling have been seeking out more news stories relating to West Hampstead and Kilburn.

On <http://westhampsteadlife.com/features/history>, you will find a history of the Hampstead Power Station in Lithos Road (named after Hampstead's old stone yard).

On <http://kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.co.uk> there is a long article on those local soldiers killed in the Battle of the Somme. This awful conflict, on 1 July 1916, led to more than a million deaths. On the first day alone 19,240 of the British Army were killed and there were thousands more casualties.

## THE SHAKESPEARE HUT

In the last *Newsletter* we noted that this year the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (see page 1 featuring our talk in September) are celebrating the 100th anniversary of 'The Shakespeare Hut', a temporary building erected in 1916 by the YMCA in which servicemen could relax and be entertained. As it was also the 300th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare, the Bard featured prominently in a programme of productions, and the Hut itself was named after him. An installation at the Manson Foyer of the LSHTM in Keppel Street, now open to the public, is a replica room of the Hut from a photograph taken from inside the original building. Rarely seen images show the Hut in action. Entrance is free, 9-5, until 23 September.

## A peaceful road

The illustration below of about 1905 indicates just how empty of traffic streets were. Shown here is the west side of Highgate West Hill, looking north to Highgate Village, just below the brim of the hill.

The house on the left with pillars is No. 37, West Hill Lodge. Unfortunately the house itself is not featured in the picture, but it did once house William and Mary Howitt, poets and writers; they were visited here by Florence Nightingale. The house was rebuilt in 1973. To the right of it is Cintra Cottage, and then Sutton House. The hanging sign is probably for the Fox & Crown, which had already been demolished. A member of its staff heroically halted a carriage containing the young Queen Victoria, in July 1837, soon into her reign, as the horses bolted down the hill. For his bravery the pub was awarded a coat of arms, which today is lodged at the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution. He ought to get a mention in the new ITV drama.



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# newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 278

Nov 2016

## Filmed in Camden

Thurs 17 November, 7.30pm

Camden Local Studies, 2nd floor, Holborn Library,  
32-38 Theobalds Road WC1

In November's talk, film buff Danny Nissim will be looking at some films shot on location in Camden in the decade after the Second World War. In Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man who knew too much* we see James Stewart tussling with a taxidermist in Camden Town. In the much-loved Ealing black comedy, *The Ladykillers* (1955), starring Alec Guinness, Cecil Parker, Peter Sellers and Jack Warner, we see how a house poised precariously next to the Copenhagen railway tunnel suddenly seems to shift location a mile or so south.

In the plot a gang of men, intent on robbing a mail van at King's Cross station, inveigle themselves into a tiny house by the station, pretending to be a string quintet needing rehearsal space. In this they have to deceive a harmless old landlady (Katie Johnson) who in the end, after the deaths of the villains, is left with the loot with the blessing of the police. We trace the getaway route from the robbery through streets

*Katie Johnson as the landlady in The Ladykillers.*



between St Pancras and King's Cross which no longer exist. In *Train of Events*, a lesser known Ealing drama, Jack Warner plays a station master who lives in a terraced house on St Pancras Way, long since demolished. We'll see how these locations have changed - some almost beyond recognition - in the intervening decades.

Get here early to get the cheap seats at the front! And bring your own popcorn.

## Images of Camden Past and Present

Thurs 15 December 7pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Over fifty years ago, Gillian Tindall and her husband Richard Lansdown began taking pictures of places in and around the newly-invented borough of Camden, especially in Kentish Town (where they had just bought a house in which they still live), and also in Camden Town and around King's Cross. They photographed old houses and small shops that struck them as prone to new-development. By and by they also photographed new phenomena, such as cafés, photocopying shops, discount stores. In twenty years they amassed several hundred pictures.

The photos (all transparent slides) slept in a dark cupboard for a further 30 years till the Lansdowns decided that something *Must Be Done* about them. They had always intended the pictures as an archival record, so with considerable labour and the aid of an ancient slide projector, they sorted them, keeping about 200. Gillian then spent weeks identifying the exact places, recording changes in shops and so forth, and now the whole has been given to Camden Local Studies, where they have been digitalised.

The couple retained images of some 30 slides, Richard took a few more pictures of especially interesting sites to create a 'Then and Now' record, which will be presented in this talk by Gillian.

Plus Christmas drinks at 7pm!

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## Fees at Camden Local Studies

*Peter Darley writes:* I have just made my seventh visit this summer to National Archives, Kew, where I am researching King's Cross. Typically, I can last about six hours before my brain is addled, and take up to 200 photographs of minute book pages, selected elements of which can then be transcribed at leisure at my desk at home. There is no charge for camera use. Nor is there any paperwork.

At the London Metropolitan Archive one pays a modest £5 for using a camera, but there is then no limit on how many images can be taken. This fee is perfectly acceptable. There is minimal paperwork.

Such an approach is not possible at Camden Local Studies at Holborn Library. A £5 camera fee entitles one to take ten photos, each of which one is expected to list on the application form. It would cost £100 to obtain 200 images, quite apart from the fact that one would also have to complete endless paperwork. The archive at Holborn is truly wonderful, but the pressure to earn a few peanuts means that it does not appear to serve those, such as myself, who are conducting extensive research. It seems that we are expected instead to sit there with the archives and transcribe onto paper longhand or directly onto a digital device. It would be interesting to know how much the Centre earns in camera fees.

I am perfectly at ease with paying reproduction fees, or fees for creating high resolution images (both NA and LMA have such fees), but consider the camera charges both unreasonable and counter-productive as they hinder my visiting the Centre, each such visit giving a poor return on the time spent there. Has the Centre partially lost sight of whom it is there to serve? Without the full support of researchers such as myself, and vulnerable to further cuts in local government funding, I wonder if it is not promoting its own downfall. I am struck by comparing the footfall at the NA and LMA with the relative emptiness of CLSAC.

This is a debate we need to open up.

### A MISSING NAME

In the previous *Newsletter*, the list of members who were elected at the Annual Meeting to the Society's Council should have included Jane Ramsay. Apologies.

### MORE FROM OUT WEST

The website managed by Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms, <http://westhampsteadlife.com> includes a new item, of murder, prison escape and a mistaken police shooting, centred on a house in West End Lane, in 1982.

## Things to Come

*19 Jan:* Twenty extraordinary buildings on Primrose Hill, by Martin Sheppard.

*16 Feb:* Played in Camden – the sporting and recreational heritage of the borough, by Simon Inglis.

*16 March:* The launch, including talks by the researchers, of our new publications *The Streets of Bloomsbury*, and *The Streets of Fitzrovia*.

*20 July:* Air Camden: a century (and more) of aviation heritage in Camden, by Lester Hillman.

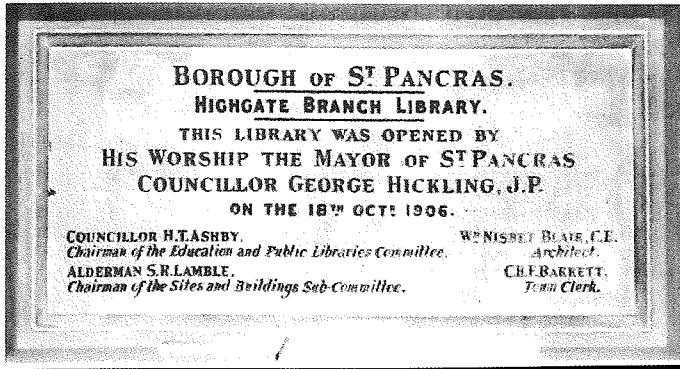
## 110 not out – Highgate Branch Library

Camden History Society members were well represented at a party in October to celebrate 110 years of the Highgate Branch Library, the first public library in the then borough of St Pancras.

The Borough Archivist, Tudor Allen, recounted the early history at the beginning of the twentieth century, the building being paid for by the US philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and the land bought for £500, that sum being donated to the project by Herbrand Russell, Duke of Bedford (whose other claim to fame is the introduction of the grey squirrel to England after being released on the Woburn estate). The library has a central main hall for the lending section with rooms on either side for newspapers (for which you had to stand up at high desks to read!) and the reference section. A children's library with a separate entrance was at the rear.

I subsequently found that the first librarian was a Mr Bond who went on to work in Portsmouth during WW1. An air raid warden investigating library lights in the blackout came in to find Mr Bond *in flagrante* with an assistant, and the Portsmouth council found that Mr Bond had also been running a fraud with a local bookseller causing the council to pay for non-supplied books. This was the end of Mr Bond's library career.

A later employee in the 1960s was our CHS member Malcolm Holmes, just before the formation of the borough of Camden in 1964. With all the redevelopment of Highgate New Town, another Camden department was supposed to take pictures for the Archives of the Victorian terraces then considered to be unfit before demolishing them, but did not do so. There was trouble when a Highgate New Town *Then and Now* exhibition found no 'Then' pictures to display. Malcolm had taken some slides of his own and donated them to the Library Friends at the end of his talk. Various unexecuted projects included replacing the library by a joint venture with the adjacent Islington on Dartmouth Park Road, and then a borough reference library on the Euston Road. Malcolm ended up running the borough archives, first in the Swiss Cottage library and then at Theobalds Road.



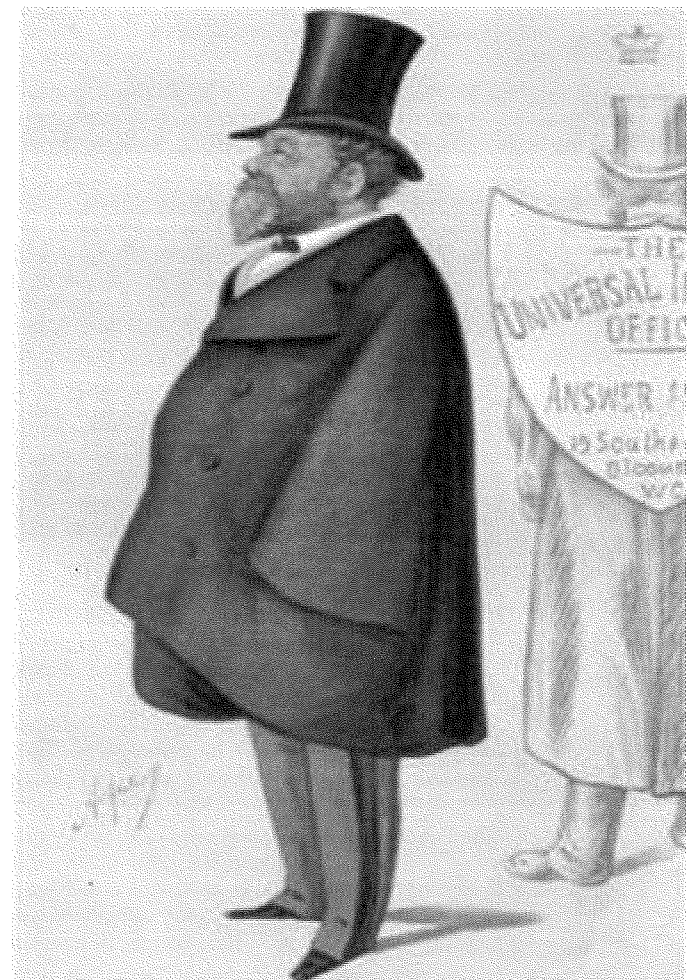
## Universal Knowledge

The summer of 2016 saw the opening at 6 Pancras Square, King's Cross of the new headquarters of Google UK. Interestingly, likewise based in Camden, 120 years ago, was what might well be regarded as a Victorian precursor. Established in January 1884, the Universal Knowledge and Information Office was located in a Georgian house at 19 Southampton Street (now Southampton Place), Bloomsbury. It was the brainchild of Lord Truro who, as reported in the press, set it up:

'with the double object of benefiting the public and providing a new opening for the employment of women. [His idea was] to found a central office, where any person could have any question answered without delay, where researches into literature, science and art could be conducted, where all languages could be written or transposed, calculations be made, and statistics be kept available...

The system of arrangement is simple. Correspondents have been appointed in every town throughout the world. Its interior working is divided into departments, each comprising a range of subjects, from agriculture to Hindustani and from literature to engineering. A large staff, comprising over 30 persons, is kept on the premises, and among them are linguists capable of writing and translating every tongue from Welsh to Japanese, and from Portu-

*Lord Truro*



John Collier (Collyer?) was a local councillor from about 1970 and told us of his fights at the Town Hall, with varied success, to protect the library staff and facilities – but at least the library is still there, now with flourishing Friends to keep services going.

Our member Fabian Watkinson gave us the more recent history. Local architect John Winter had built himself two homes in Camden, a brick and concrete one in Regal Lane and a Cortan steel one in Swains Lane. Cortan weathers to a rust finish and being next door to Highgate Cemetery a wag suggested he should call the house 'Rust in Peace'. John Winter had been brought in around 1980 to modernise the library, cutting down the very tall bookstacks and providing very stylish lighting. By the time Fabian arrived in the area 14 years later the cut-down stacks had all disappeared, replaced with utilitarian ones and the lighting in the newspaper room, used now for the children's library, had been replaced by ugly strip lights – John Winter had not been consulted about these changes.

The evening ended with an account of the recent history and the formation of the Friends. Long may they continue to keep the library going.

**Roger Cline**

*P.S. Tudor Allen thinks that the blame for introducing the grey squirrel should be shared by others. Google tells us that it was first introduced in 1876 at Henbury Park, Cheshire. At that time Herbrand was only 18. However. Google also informs us that the most important incursion of the lovable rodent was indeed at Russell's home patch, Woburn Abbey, in 1890, when 10 of them were imported there. Russell then proceeded to send pairs to other aristocratic estate owners, and to Regent's Park.*

### NEWS FROM AN OLD FRIEND

The Editor has recently received a letter from Deirdre Le Faye, who was a prominent member in the earlier days of the CHS. It was, she writes, her membership of the Society that set her off to research the life of Jane Austen. Christopher Wade pointed out the grave in Hampstead churchyard of Jane's aunt.

Deirdre lives now in Portishead, and is still writing about Jane Austen – she has written at least 6 books about her.

guesse to Greek. One is a practical chemist, another an engineer, while among the rest are artists, designers, ladies well up in the various kinds of fine work, tapestry & c., and gentlemen of liberal education and literary knowledge for general research. Besides these, some 200 others are employed on various errands. A large staff is kept making researches at the British Museum, another at the Guildhall Library..

Lord Truro personally superintends the bureau every day. Several hundred letters are received every morning, and more continue to pour in throughout the day. Every letter is at once attended to, and put into the hands of the lady or gentleman in whose department the inquiry may be. The questions ... comprise every subject, known or unknown. Languages [need] to be translated into English, and back again, and ... a very large number of queries come from abroad. The payment for these foreign questions is generally made in money or stamps of the country from which the letters come, and in this way Lord Truro has acquired a large and curious collection of foreign money and stamps.'

Small ads in *The Times* reveal that the minimum fee for an enquiry was a shilling (5p), plus postage; and

that the Office also employed outdoor staff called 'Desk Bearers', stationed in Oxford Street, Regent Street, Bond Street, Piccadilly and the Strand to accept queries from passers-by. Their alfresco customers were instructed 'Pay no money. Simply write your question, which will be posted at once by the bearer.'

The flourishing Universal Knowledge Office was, sadly, short-lived and seemingly closed on the death of the childless Lord Truro in 1891. Its Grade-II\*-listed premises in Southampton Place still survives.

David Hayes

### A HAMPSTEAD DOCTOR

Mr R M Healey recently wrote that he had an oil portrait of Thomas Goodwin, 'the Hampstead surgeon who in 1804 published *An Account of a Neutral Mineral Spring lately discovered in Hampstead*'. Is there any more information on him? Our member Steve Denford replied that around 1800 Pond Street accommodated so many doctors it was known as the Harley Street of Hampstead. Among those was Dr Thomas Goodwin, who discovered some local 'Neutral Saline Springs' and promoted yet another spa.

*The Camden Theatre in Camden High Street, photographed c1904. The building is still there, nowadays a night club.*



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