

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 291
Jan 2019

The Changing Face of Fitzrovia: 300 years of an urban village

Thurs 17 January, 7.30pm
Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre,
2nd floor, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road,
WC1.

Fitzroy Square is at the heart of a busy and congested 21st-century urban village, but it was once the Home Field of the Southampton-Fitzroy Estate. How did urban development take place and why did Fitzrovia become so diverse in its mix of people, commercial production and cultural and gastronomic heritage?

Nick Bailey, local author and Emeritus Professor of Urban Regeneration at the University of Westminster, will give an illustrated talk on how Fitzrovia evolved over three centuries as London's 'Bohemia', sandwiched between the great estates of the Duke of Bedford to the east and Cavendish-Harley to the west. Better known in the nineteenth century for furniture- and piano-making, its main role was as an area of cheap accommodation for successive waves of migrants from Europe.

Nick will conclude with a discussion of Arthur Beresford Pite's 19th-century architectural vision of the golden city created through a series of commissions in Fitzrovia.



*Fitzroy Square
(Courtesy Nick Bailey)*

The Campaigns to save Kenwood

Thurs. 7 February, 7.30 pm
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LS

While many people know about the famous forty-year battle to save Hampstead Heath, few are aware of the remarkable story of the two campaigns that saved Kenwood. Helen Lawrence, our speaker, focuses on the extraordinary casts of characters who battled it out, revealing how the two unsung heroes,

George Shaw Lefevre in the 1880s and Sir Arthur Crosfield in the 1920s, were supported by dozens of local residents. Lord Iveagh's role was just the icing – albeit the most delectable icing on the cake.

The research for this talk is taken from a new history of Hampstead Heath, which Helen has just finished to be published by the Camden History Society in 2019, the first for 30 years. It brings the story up to date covering, for the first time, events in the 20th and 21st centuries.

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!!



The saving of Kenwood House and its glorious grounds is the subject of our February talk - see p.1. (Courtesy English Heritage)

Things to Come

Please put these talks in your new diaries.

21 March: Suffrage, Settlements and Song: Camden's Women, by Rachel Kolsky.

16 May: Camden Town: a chronology of its construction and the lived experience, by Mark McCarthy.

18 July: AGM and 333 years of Great Ormond Street, by Alec Forshaw.

17 October: What can Phyllis Ford's childhood tell social historians?, by Cynthia Floud.

21 Nov: Holborn Viaduct at 150. by Lester Hillman

REMEMBERING.....

About 22,000 employees of the Midland Railway joined the armed forces during the First World War. Of these, 178 staff of St Pancras Station, hotel and goods yard did not return. A memorial to them, and to passengers killed in the bombing of the station, has been placed in St Pancras International Station. It is designed by Fabian Peake, and much of the research for the content of the memorial was conducted by CHS member, Steve Denford.

The most serious incident at the station was on 17 February 1918 when six 50kg bombs were dropped on the building, of which five exploded. One, in the entrance, killed 20 members of the public. These included 16-year-old Robert Coglin, sheltering at the station. He was the sole provider for his mother and four younger siblings.

The supervisor of the memorial project was Josie Murray, Senior Heritage Advisor for HS1, who gave a talk to the Society about the Station in September.

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This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

The Editor is John Richardson, 14 Saddleton Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4JD. Tel: 01227 272605.

E-mail: richardson@historicalpublications.co.uk, to whom all contributions should be sent.

Our Secretarial Assistant is Daniel Croughton, 46 Southbury Road, Enfield, Middx EN1 1YB (email: enfd9223@hotmail.com)

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Henry Fitzhugh, 56 Argyle Street WC1H 8ER (email: henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net)

The Publications Secretary is Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH, (7388 9889) email roger.cline13@gmail.com

The Publications Editor and the Editor of the *Camden History Review* is David Hayes, 62 Garrison Lane,

Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: davidhayes48@hotmail.co.uk

Our Meetings Co-ordinator is Ruth Hayes at 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: ruthhayes53@hotmail.co.uk

Our website: www.camdenhistorysociety.org

The Society is a registered charity - number 261044

Air Camden Town

Following the article in the last *Newsletter* re aircraft manufacture in Kilburn, Mark McCarthy has sent us this advertisement for Lane's British Aeroplanes, made in King Street, Camden Town – a road called Plender Street today. It is featured in *Grace's Guide to British Industrial History* which includes a 1910 advertisement for Lane's aeroplanes.

ALL - BRITISH AEROPLANES

FLYING GROUND NEAR LONDON.

MONOPLANES 25 h.p. MONOPLANES 50 h.p.

Early Deliveries.



STAND No. 78.

MACHINES BUILT TO CUSTOMERS' OWN DESIGNS. SPARE PARTS KEPT IN STOCK.

Send for Our Illustrated Catalogue.

Lane's British Aeroplanes, Limited,

Registered Office - 20, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER.
Works KING PLACE, KING STREET, CAMDEN TOWN, LONDON, N.

Address all business enquiries to
Garage and Offices - 31, FOLEY STREET, GREAT PORTLAND STREET, W.

At the March 1910 Aero Show at Olympia, Lane had 1- and 2-seater models priced at £500 and £800 respectively. But it was a short life – Grace also shows that the company was bankrupt in June the same year. Perhaps the offer of "machines built to customers' own designs" was ill-considered.

EXHIBITION EXTENDED

The exhibition on Highgate Cemetery at Camden Local Studies, has been extended to 28 February,

Anniversaries

Some Camden anniversaries in 2019:

400 YEARS AGO

In 1619, King James I, accompanied by his favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, stayed at a building in Hampstead called, for reasons unknown, The Chicken House. Possibly a former hunting lodge, it stood on the site of nos. 54-66 Rosslyn Hill. Later the house boasted a stained glass window depicting the King and Buckingham, together with a French inscription recording the King's visit (*see below*).

200 YEARS AGO

In 1819 St Pancras Open Vestry adopted the Select Vestries Act. By this the governance of the parish, previously carried out by open meetings of ratepaying residents, was instead transferred to a committee named and appointed in the Act. Subsequent vacancies were filled by co-option on the nomination of the existing Vestrymen, who could also reappoint fellow vestrymen whose term of office had expired. Thus, no public elections took place. In the case of St Pancras the Select Vestry was henceforth controlled by leading residents who remained in office for as long as they wished.

The last meeting of the Open Vestry was on 29 April at the Adam & Eve in Hampstead Road, and the Select Vestry met for the first time on 2 June at St Pancras Female Orphanage in Hampstead Road.

150 YEARS AGO

In 1869 the first fire station in Hampstead was opened on Haverstock Hill near the George Inn. Nearby, St Stephen's church, designed by Samuel Teulon, was consecrated, although it was not fully built until another three years.

St Pancras Infirmary in Highgate was built by the St Pancras Board of Guardians on a site bought from the Chester Estate. It was intended mainly for sick workhouse patients. In the same year its ownership passed to the Central London Sick Asylum District and gradually became a more general hospital. At the time the Asylum Board was chaired by Sidney Waterlow.

In Holborn the second Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street was finished. It was designed by Frederick Pepys Cockerell.

100 YEARS AGO

In 1919 Lord Mansfield announced that the Kenwood Estate was up for sale at £550,000. If it was to be saved for the public an urgent campaign to raise the money was needed. This was led by Sir Arthur Crosfield who owned and lived in the massive house at the top of Highgate West Hill later rebuilt as Witanhurst. He was the driving force in founding this year the Kenwood Preservation Council, with the help of Waley-Cohen of Caen Wood Towers, and Lawrence Chubb, founder of the Ramblers' Association. It was to take several years before the land was bought for the public.

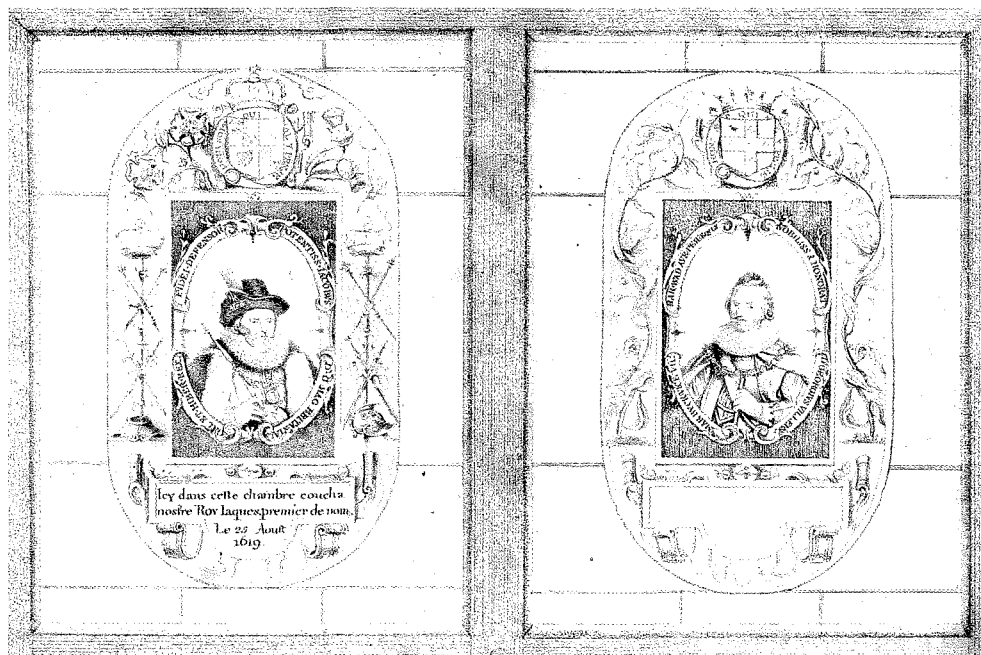
The Highgate 1919 Club was formed at the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution. It was intended as 'a social centre for the recreation and amusement of domestic servants'.

50 YEARS AGO

In 1969 the old Tollgate house on Spaniards Road, long an irritation to impatient drivers, was saved from demolition by the Hampstead Heath and Old Hampstead Protection Society.

A stained-glass window in The Chicken House, Hampstead, depicting King James I and the Duke of Buckingham in 1619.

From Records of the manor, parish and borough of Hampstead, by F.E Baines (1890)



Manor Court Rolls

Manor Court Rolls are among the earliest sources of local history for many parts of the country. Lords of each manor held periodic gatherings, called Courts, of relevant tenants to admit and record new tenants and sales of land and property. The Courts also regulated the inspection of ale and bread made and sold within the manor, appointed tenants to maintain waterways and highways, evicted disreputable or illegal settlers, and fined tenants who had come to blows with each other or let their animals out onto another tenant's land. In many cases the names of the fields and their location are given.

The minutes of these Courts confirmed for the tenants their right to hold their lands and properties. Often the tenant was given a copy of the appropriate part of the Court Roll, and so they became 'copyhold' tenants.

Court Rolls are difficult documents for the beginner. The minutes are usually written in Latin on rolls of delicate parchment, some of which may have been stained or torn over time. To be of modern use they have to be translated into English and then indexed. Camden History Society for some years has funded Mrs Pauline Sidell to transcribe the Court Rolls of Hampstead manor, and of Tottenhall Manor in the old parish of St Pancras.

Fortunately, the Court Rolls of another St Pancras manor, Canteloves, had already been transcribed in the 1930s by scholars Percy Lovell and William McB Marcham. Their transcriptions were the basis of their two *Survey of London* volumes. The first was *The Village of Highgate* (Vol XVII 1936) and the second *Old St Pancras and Kentish Town* (Vol XIX 1938). Canteloves manor extended from Highgate High Street to, roughly, Crowndale Road in Camden Town, always east of the main roads such as Highgate West Hill, Highgate Road and Kentish Town Road.

Once Lovell and Marcham had published their works they donated their unindexed transcriptions of the Canteloves Rolls to the Borough of St Pancras in the late 1930s. I came across these when I first became interested in local history in the early 1960s. They had gathered dust in the archives held in Highgate Library in Chester Road. The transcriptions had been loose-bound by ribbon, in five volumes, each with a cover of manilla board stencilled with their contents. I remember them well because I spent a year copying them.

Three of the volumes were edited transcripts of the Rolls in chronological order from 1480 to 1750. The other two volumes were entirely about Highgate – the material from the Rolls (the south side of Highgate High Street was part of Canteloves, while the north side belonged to Hornsey), plus additional information taken from wills, Highgate School records etc. These were not arranged by date, but, usefully, by properties. Thus, if you were interested in Moreton

House in the Village, only the material for that house was featured, so that it was possible to follow its building history and occupants.

After many Saturdays in Highgate Library copying by hand the contents of these five volumes, and then typing them up when I got home, the Librarian took pity on me and I was allowed to take them home, one by one, so that I could type them directly at a time that suited me.

I also finished up with five volumes of typing and put them into loose leaf binders which I still have. But recently I discovered that the original transcriptions had gone missing from the Camden archives. They could, possibly, have disappeared at the time when St Pancras archives moved house on the establishment of Camden. But if they were missing it meant that all the scholarship of the original two transcribers was lost. Fortunately, I still had my own typed copy and I have retyped and indexed it. This copy is now placed on our website.

The website entry has two distinct parts – one contains the Canteloves Court Rolls; the second, The Highgate Records, details the ownership and building history of the principal older Highgate buildings, based on the Canteloves Rolls and material from other sources.

I am grateful to Lindsay Douglas for putting the two items so clearly on to our website. Just go into Google, type in camdenhistorysociety and then click on Research Room. You will also find there the Hampstead Court Rolls, which are still being added to.

John Richardson

Curious King's Cross

By Andrew Whitehead. Five Leaves Publications, £9.95

I do enjoy reading a publication where the author does not repeat some of the urban myths that exist locally but instead has carried out substantial research to achieve and provide correct information. Whitehead has also captured the very essence of the area and some of the unusual features past and present through his engaging and amusing style of writing.

If you think you know King's Cross you will still be surprised and interested by the stories he recounts and some of the places described. He has interviewed many of the people who had been involved in local events in the past and as a result added insights into some of the previous written accounts. The battle to save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson for example, is enhanced by the recollections of those involved in the fight. While the hospital was eventually closed he alerts readers to a fascinating small museum of the EGA on the ground floor of the Unison trade union building on its site in Euston Road which is free to visit.

The area has changed so much in recent times we do need to be reminded of some of the problems in the area like those on the Hillview Estate where residents had to cope with drug dealing and prostitution, together with some violent gang action. How this was eventually overcome is recounted by some of the active residents at the time. The problems of the red light district were also highlighted when a number of prostitutes occupied Holy Cross Church to publicise their need for better treatment by the police and others.

While many people know of the dreadful slum conditions of Somers Town few have ventured to see the delightful Gilbert Bayes ceramics he describes which were used to enhance the buildings that replaced many of the slums.

The 'Lighthouse' building at the junction of Gray's Inn Road and Pentonville Road has attracted many fanciful accounts as to its use but here Andrew has gathered the facts and presents a sensible account. Another urban myth laid to rest is the Hardy Tree in Old St Pancras Churchyard. While Thomas Hardy did help with the relocation of human remains disturbed by building the railway line into St Pancras Station, the ash tree around which tombstones are stacked is much younger and actually grew up through them. The tombstones had been relocated in the 1880s from the adjacent St Giles in the Fields Additional Burial Ground, not St Pancras, so Hardy clearly had nothing to do with this feature.

It is a publication to enjoy reading and discover corners that surprise you. I will find it difficult now to eat fish and chips in the North Sea Fish Restaurant in Leigh Street without thinking of the security services bugging it to listen to trade unionists discussing actions during the Miners' Strike 1984-5.

He praises the publications of the CHS which he found invaluable in his research. *Curious King's Cross* is available from all good local bookshops and also obtainable from the Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre in Holborn which stocks for sale the best collection of publications on Camden and many London books.

Malcolm Holmes

The Kilburn War Memorial Animal Dispensary

Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms have just placed an interesting story on their blog.

'The commemoration of the centenary of the end of the First World War is a reminder that animals too played a large and useful part in the conflict.

A memorial to 'animals in war' was unveiled in Park Lane in 2004, but Kilburn has a much earlier memorial to the animals who were part of the War.



The Animal Dispensary in Kilburn.

Horses, dogs and donkeys were the most commonly used animals - mainly for transport and haulage, but camels, elephants, pigeons, bullocks and goats were pressed into service. They suffered from exposure, lack of food and disease, dying alongside their human companions.

The Park Lane memorial was the fulfilment of an idea that dates back to the early 1920s when the RSPCA proposed a memorial. And then the project lapsed. In the meantime the RSPCA proposed a more practical commemoration in the form of the Animal War Memorial Dispensary in Kilburn where 'the sick, injured or unwanted animals of poor people could receive, free of charge, the best possible veterinary attention, or a painless death.'

It took some years to find premises, but at last a house was found at 10 Cambridge Avenue, Kilburn. It was then converted into a 'free dispensary for sick and injured animals'.

Thirty-one sculptors entered a competition for a memorial design for the main facade, and it was opened on 10 November 1932 by the Countess of Warwick. although the dispensary had been at work for over a year and had by then treated 6,000 animals. By the mid 1930s more than 50,000 animals and birds had received attention there. Facilities included glass-fronted kennels for cats and dogs, and also a loose box for a horse. There was also accommodation for a veterinary officer and assistant.

Sadly, the clinic was closed in 2016 as part of the RSPCA's reorganisation. The main door is flanked by two marble memorial panels which record that 484,143 animals were killed by enemy action, disease or accident during the War, and that 725,716 were treated by the RSPCA during the War. We now know that the animal mortality during the War was much higher.'

Anniversaries at Isokon

Lawn Road Flats, now better known as the 'Isokon' Flats, is a building which has divided opinion. Long regarded as an example of architectural modernism which made Wells Coates, its designer, world famous, it attracted a variety of progressive tenants into its minimalist and clever accommodation. In the early days many were artists, designers and architects themselves, including a number of refugees from Europe who were escaping the rise of Fascism. Among these were key members of the Bauhaus, more an institution than a school, which was developing a modernist style in Germany across the range of its work.

Its founder was Walter Gropius, who arrived at the Isokon building in October 1934, and with his wife he moved into Flat 15. He was followed by others from the school who included Marcel Breuer, who moved next door to Gropius, Laslo Moholy-Nagy, Naum Slutzky, Arthur Korn and Egon Riss. With neighbours who also included writers, artists, journalists, critics, BBC producers, academics and politicians, they had found a haven in a place that responded to their own progressive thinking. Shortly afterwards the building gained some notoriety as the home of secret agents and spies, even that of Arnold Deutsch, the man who recruited the Cambridge Five.

It was a lively environment, supported by a small restaurant known as the Isobar, where anti-Fascist and progressive views were loudly expressed. People from outside who were attracted to this conviviality included the sculptor Henry Moore, who lived a short distance away. Residents of the area were startled by this 'Bohemia' in their neighbourhood.

The formal opening of the building in 1934 had been celebrated by a party on its flat roof on 9th July. Eighty years later, the same date in 2014, saw the opening of the Isokon Gallery, a fascinating resource which occupies the former garage, which was founded by John Allan and Fiona Lamb of Avanti Architects. This firm had carried out a restoration and upgrade here, which ensured that the building won not only a precious Grade 1 Listing but also a RIBA Conservation Award. During the 80 years its fabric had severely deteriorated as a result of neglect, poor maintenance and vandalism. This had dismayed and angered some local residents.

On the same date again, in summer 2018, English Heritage finally installed a Blue Plaque on the building's facade, spruced-up for the occasion. Unusually displaying three names, the plaque commemorates the residence of Gropius, Breuer and Moholy-Nagy.

The plaque had been approved in 2003, before the refurbishments had been completed. The long delay was a result of design problems which related to the pioneering reinforced concrete used in the construction of the building. Another reason was reduced staffing within English Heritage and, consequently, little activity by the Blue Plaques team. It was not until early 2018 that an Application for Listed Building Consent to install the plaque was finally submitted to Camden Council. In itself this raised questions, particularly from an individual who objected on the spurious but futile grounds of physical impairment.

Monday 9th July 2018 was a memorable occasion. A large crowd gathered for the unveiling of the plaque, including many from outside the borough and a number of experts. The Master of Ceremonies was John Allan, who introduced speakers including a great-nephew of Gropius, a grandson of Jack Pritchard, who had owned the site and had boldly commissioned Wells Coates, a socialite, journalist, yachtsman but not strictly an architect, in the early 1930s. Other speakers included officials from English Heritage, representatives of the Hungarian and German Embassies, and the Notting Hill Housing Trust which now administers the building.

John Allan also paid tribute to the Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee which has fought long and hard to keep the value of Isokon and its sorry dilapidation in the public mind, and a former local councillor. Particular attention was made to Magnus Englund, an expert on modernism and in particular its influence on furniture design, who was then living in the building, and retains a strong connection as the Director of the Trustees of the Isokon Gallery.

He and Leyla Daybelge have collaborated in writing *Isokon and the Bauhaus in Britain*, a title which will add to a growing library, and will be published by Pavilion Books in March 2019. Two other books, *Bauhaus goes West* by Alan Powers and a biography of Walter Gropius by Fiona MacCarthy, will also be published at about this time. Together with the handsome Blue Plaque they will help to ensure that the centenary of the opening of the Bauhaus school in Weimar in eastern Germany will be remembered at its most appropriate site in London.

Camden must again be proud of the continuing interest in the Isokon and its unconventional inhabitants. Marcel Breuer, who was also a designer of furniture, was one. An example of his work, his celebrated 'Long Chair', conceived at Lawn Road and engineered from bent plywood, is now on display in the Hampstead Museum at Burgh House.

Gerry Harrison

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 292
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Suffrage, Settlements and Song: Camden's Women

Thurs. 21 March, 7.30pm

Second Floor, Camden Local Studies and Archives
Centre, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road,
WC1X 8PA

Join prize-winning Blue Badge Guide and author, Rachel Kolsky, for this entertaining virtual tour of the London Borough of Camden, inspired by her new book, *Women's London*. As she shares with you how the book took shape, you will 'meet' those who campaigned for and against women's suffrage, those who provided youth clubs and class rooms, and the 'mother of feminism', alongside stories of entertainers, the Bloomsberries and medical pioneers.



Elizabeth Garrett Anderson flanked by Emmeline Pankhurst – and a man!

MORE MEMBERS

Membership of the Society continues to grow. It now stands at 440. We have enrolled over 60 new members since the new website, designed by Lindsay Douglas, was installed in February 2017.

Curious King's Cross

Thurs. 11 April, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LS



*Gillian Bayes' Doultonware lunette of the Little Mermaid, in Sidney Street, Somers Town.
(Image: Brian Kelly).*

Sex, pubs and rock'n'roll – King's Cross has it all, and so much more ... from a fish-and-chip shop once bugged by MI5, to London's most enduring radical bookshop. Inside the main line station there's the magic of Platform 9¾ ... and just outside, the every bit as magical Keystone Crescent.

The locality has a lighthouse, a Welsh tabernacle where services are now conducted in Amharic, a canal-side well, built to store huge blocks of Norwegian ice, and a cruising club based in a water point which once supplied steam engines.

The area has been repeatedly rebranded ever since the 1820s, when the cinder-heaps of Battlebridge were given the more marketable name of King's Cross, replete with a royal statue which so 'grievously offended the eye of taste' it was pulled down after less than a decade.

Andrew Whitehead is the author of *Curious King's Cross*, which looks at thirty or so buildings and locations across 'the Cross' and the stories attached to them, offering a fresh take on one of London's most varied and surprising neighbourhoods

The Society's Website

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Things to Come

Please put these talks in your diaries.

16 May: Reclaiming Camden Town - character and sense of place, by Mark McCarthy

20 June: Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley in Somers Town, by Charlie Forman.

18 July: AGM and 333 years of Great Ormond Street, by Alec Forshaw.

17 October: What can Phyllis Ford's childhood tell social historians?, by Cynthia Floud.

21 Nov: Holborn Viaduct at 150, by Lester Hillman

CHANGING PLACES

When you move house PLEASE give notice of your new address to Henry Fitzhugh, our Treasurer and Membership Secretary (details on page 4). Trying to trace members who have moved seems to take more of our time these days. Most members living in Camden get their newsletters delivered by volunteers, so the Royal Mail redirection service will not pick up deliveries to an out-of-date address.

REMEMBERING GREAT LIVES

This *Newsletter* may be in time to tempt you to an event at Camden Local Studies at Holborn Library in Theobald's Road which consists of six short talks on notable people buried in Highgate Cemetery. The subjects are Robert Liston, who revolutionised modern surgery, Frances Dickens, the writer's musical sister, John Atcheler, 'horse slaughterer to Queen Victoria', Eleanor Marx, Adam Worth, American Civil War veteran, and Marguerite Radclyffe Hall, poet and author.

The event is on 26 February at 7.15. Admission free.

Bombers over Kilburn

On his blogspot, kilburnwesthampstead.com, Dick Weindling describes some of the local bombing towards the end of the First World War:

When the Germans stopped Zeppelin raids in 1917, they continued to attack using Gotha heavy bombers.

In a raid on 28/29 January 1918, a Gotha approaching from the north shortly before 10pm, dropped 3 bombs along Belsize Road close to the railway line. Two people were killed and two others were injured. 118 houses were damaged, and the Princess of Wales pub at 124 Abbey Road, on the corner of Belsize Road (today the site of the Lillie Langtry pub), was wrecked. Robert Hill, the landlord, survived and when the pub was repaired he carried on for ten years, when his son took over.

Three more bombs from the Gotha landed in St George's Road (now Priory Terrace), Mortimer Road and Greville Road. The Gotha was intercepted and shot down over Wickford, Essex.

Kilburn was hit again on 19/20 May, 1918. Three bombs were dropped about midnight, and a 300kg bomb destroyed the Carlton Tavern in Carlton Vale, killing the publican and his young son. The Gotha was brought down over Frinsted in Kent. The Carlton pub was rebuilt in 1920, but illegally taken down by a developer in 2015. Despite an order that it be rebuilt this has still not been accomplished.



The Boys' Home at 115-117 Regent's Park Road c.1905. Originally known as the Boys' Home for the Maintenance by their own Labour of Destitute Boys not Convicted of Crime. It moved here from Euston Road when St Pancras Station took over its site there. The Home was closed in 1920.

A bookbinder, and a wealthy slave owner, in Kentish Town

The extant Court Rolls of the St Pancras manor called Tottenham are written on fragile parchment and often in Latin. Inclusive of a large number of gaps, they run from 1306 to the 1730s. They have recently been transcribed into English for the Society by Mrs Pauline Sidell. Basically, they are minutes of manor court hearings, two or three times a year, arranged by the Lord of the manor's Steward. The courts recorded transfers of property and land, gave judgement in land disputes, dealt with trespass – especially illegal entry into land belonging to the Lord – and ensured that waterways were maintained and that bread and ale sold in the manor conformed to law.

Generally, the Rolls have not worn well but today they are in professional hands. Mainly they are held in London Metropolitan Archives, but others are in the Guildhall Library, the British Library and even in Bruce Castle in Haringey. (They are in Bruce Castle because at an unknown time some rolls were thought to relate to Tottenham rather than to Tottenham and are still now in Haringey's archive centre.)

Tottenham manor stretched from Highgate nearly to Oxford Street, generally keeping to the west of the central main roads of the parish, such as Hampstead Road and Tottenham Court Road.

By the 1330s the main settlement in Tottenham, and indeed in the whole parish of St Pancras, was the village of Kentish Town. Well before then the Vicar of the parish church of St Pancras, in what is now Pancras Road, and its congregation, had moved their place of worship north to a chapel-of-ease in Kentish Town. In doing so they left the old church abandoned to the frequent flooding of the river Fleet near its front door. In 1593, the historian John Norden could describe the old church as being "all alone, utterly forsaken".

While editing and typing out the Tottenham transcriptions I noticed in the 1330s several references to a land dispute involving a man called "John de Caunterbury, bookbinder." This seemed odd to me. Presumably, he was a former or present resident of Canterbury, but he was also a bookbinder. At a time when books, other than religious volumes, were rare – this was, after all, 140 years before Caxton invented the printing press – how did John make a living as a bookbinder? It suggests to me that he was a bookbinder, possibly in holy orders, at Canterbury Cathedral, but what was he doing in the remote village of Kentish Town?

Another name that caught my eye in the Rolls, in 1689, was Peter Beckford, owner of four houses and 62 acres in Kentish Town. I knew of the two famous William Beckfords – one was a celebrated Lord Mayor

of London, and the other a novelist and art collector who had built the ill-fated Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire. Could they be related to our Peter Beckford? Well yes, they were, and they were in heavy debt to his fortune.

In the Rolls, Peter Beckford (1643-1710) was described as of St Jago de la Vega, or Spanish Town, in Jamaica. He had emigrated to Jamaica in 1662, seven years after England had invaded the island. A lot of appropriated land was made available to white immigrants such as Beckford, and he made himself popular as a huntsman and horse-catcher. In 1669 he was granted 1,000 acres. He is noted as attending a Court meeting in Tottenham in 1700. By 1702 he was Acting Governor of Jamaica and Chief Justice the following year. He was known for his violent temper and rages, and indeed died after an angry argument. His death did not appear in the Rolls until 1712, when the Steward reported that Beckford had died "beyond the Sea", but the Steward did not know who was the heir to his Kentish Town estate. It was said of Beckford, owner by then of thousands of slaves and sugar canes, that at his death he was the largest owner of property real and personal of any European.

Peter Beckford had two sons – Peter and William. Peter jnr fathered a son in Jamaica called William (1709-1770) who, helped by his grandfather's immense fortune, became Lord Mayor of London in 1762 and 1769. He in turn had a son, another William (1760-1844), who inherited vast wealth and built the ill-fated Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire, designed by James Wyatt, and finished in 1807 after ten years' construction. It was within an estate of 524 acres surrounded by a 12-foot high wall.

In later life this William became a recluse who usually dined alone in his enormous house. Soon after he sold the house, it collapsed because of faulty construction. Well known for his prowess in hunting, his main claims to fame are his art collection and a gothic novel called *Vathek*.

Another Camden connection began with the novelist's cousin, Sir Peter Beckford (1740-1811). Spending part of a large inheritance in 1765 he went to Italy to study art but became impressed by the talent of a boy musician, Muzio Clementi (1752-1832). In an arrangement with the boy's father Beckford took Clementi to England to obtain a musical education. Clementi was a very talented harpsichordist and pianist, as well as a composer. Eventually he set up shop in the former 195 Tottenham Court Road, where he sold (and made) pianos, as well as musical scores.

I have been unable to identify where in Kentish Town were the properties owned by John de Caunterbury and Peter Beckford.

John Richardson



Copyright: The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.

A Street in Camden Town.

Mark McCarthy has spotted this 1948 painting entitled *Camden Town Street*, painted by Trevor Makinson, held by the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. Can any member identify the street? Mark suggests that we are looking at the Stag's Head at Hawley Road, but he welcomes suggestions from members who have longer memories.

Makinson (1926-1992) was born in Southport, but studied and lectured at the Slade and Glasgow School of Art.



Fishing in the Vale of Health. early 20th century.

Copy date for May Newsletter – April 17th

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

The Editor is John Richardson, 14 Saddleton Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4JD. Tel: 01227 272605.

E-mail: richardson@historicalpublications.co.uk, to whom all contributions should be sent.

Our Secretarial Assistant is Daniel Croughton, 46 Southbury Road, Enfield, Middx EN1 1YB (email: enfd9223@hotmail.com)

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Henry Fitzhugh, 56 Argyle Street WC1H 8ER (email: henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net)

The Publications Secretary is Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH, (7388 9889) email roger.cline13@gmail.com

The Publications Editor and the Editor of the *Camden History Review* is David Hayes, 62 Garrison Lane,

Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: davidhayes48@hotmail.co.uk

Our Meetings Co-ordinator is Ruth Hayes at 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: ruthhayes53@hotmail.co.uk

Our website: www.camdenhistorysociety.org

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 293
May 2019

Reclaiming Camden Town – character and sense of place

Thurs 16 May, 7.30pm

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

Camden Place, on the east side of the road to Hampstead – nowadays the stretch of Camden High Street between Greenland Road and Greenland Place – was the first terrace of the new town that Lord Camden established through an Act of Parliament in 1788. Our talk will trace the development of Camden Town across the Fleet valley to Maiden Lane (York Way), its Regency terraces and mews, squares and ornamental crescents, as well as the Regent's Canal and railways in the nineteenth century. The new town was attractive to both artisans and middle classes, as well as for trades and manufacturing.

Understanding Camden Town's character and sense of place can inform conservation and heritage for the Borough of Camden. Our speaker, Mark McCarthy, has been a post-graduate student at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London.



Mary Wollstonecraft's gravestone in St Pancras Gardens. (photo: Charlie Forman)

Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley in Somers Town

Thurs. 20 June, 7.30pm

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LS

Mary Wollstonecraft, the great early feminist, lived and died in Somers Town. Her daughter, Mary Shelley, the novelist, was born there. This talk explores the Somers Town they knew – a place of political exiles and refugees. Find out about the site of the home Wollstonecraft set up on radical principles with the proto-anarchist William Godwin, and discover the secret spot where that philanderer, Percy Bysshe Shelley, used to wait for his 16-year-old lover Mary. And 200 years after Frankenstein's monster first appeared, absorb some of the influences which shaped that most enduring and compelling character.



High Street, Camden Town, 1888.

Courtesy of Collage, London Metropolitan Archives.

Charlie Forman, our speaker, is a long-time Camden resident and a London tour guide.

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 Court Rolls • view sample pages from our publications

BARGAIN OFFERS FOR OUR PUBLICATIONS ARE ON OUR WEBSITE!!

Ann Saunders

We are sad to report that Ann Saunders, formerly President of the Camden History Society and latterly a vice-president, has died aged 88. She had also been for some time Editor for the London Topographical Society, overseeing the publication of nearly 60 books, maps and other items. In addition she edited the journal of the Costume Society from its first issue in 1967 until 2008.

As Ann Cox-Johnson she began work at the City of York Art Gallery, and then returned to London as Deputy Librarian at Lambeth Palace. She met and married Bruce Saunders, a friend of her brother, who was an engineer with an interest in sports cars. She later became Librarian and Archivist for St Marylebone borough, and obtained her PhD with a paper on Regent's Park, which later became a book.

Roger Cline writes: "I joined the London Topographical Society on the recommendation of Anthony Cooper for whom I had deputised in leading the research group generating the CHS book on the streets of Primrose Hill when Anthony had a stroke as we went to press. When he decided to retire as LTS Treasurer it was natural I should take over that role as well. That brought me in contact with Ann and she worked by offering generous hospitality after which you found that you had acquired a multiplicity of extra jobs – there is no such thing as a free dinner! Over the years, she organised my election as a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a freeman of the Worshipful Company of Horners and as a member of the Gresham Society.

Ann was the life and soul of the LTS AGMs. She baked oceans of cakes and organised sumptuous refreshments from other members in the days before hosts began insisting we had to use their designated

Ann Saunders

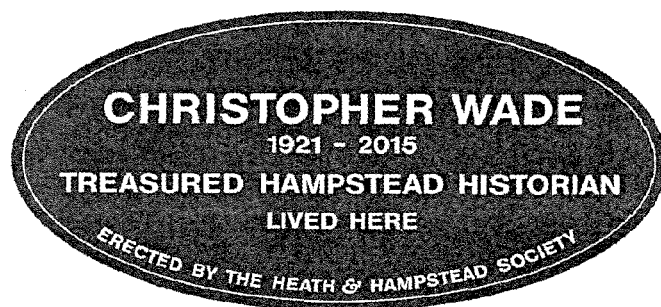
(Courtesy of London Topographical Society)



caterers. Ann told the members that they were going to enjoy themselves and they duly did. When the AGM was held in the The Banqueting House, she encouraged members that the best way to view the Rubens ceiling was to lie on the floor and gaze upwards. Of course, we all did!"

Ann gave numerous talks to our Society and was a regular speaker at our December meetings. As one of her colleagues has noted, "She spoke with captivating authority and regal presence." Even after an accident which incapacitated her she still gave us at least one talk while sitting in a wheelchair. Ann was always generous with her time and in her dealings. Many years before I had ever met her I had been the author of a less-than-enthusiastic review of one of her books. When I met her two years later, I apologised for being rather over the top in what I had written. She replied "Don't worry - I think you may have been right!"

John Richardson



A Plaque for Christopher

Christopher Wade (1921-2015) was an early member of the Camden History Society, and was the founder of our publications programme. It was he who began our *Streets of...* series of books that have sold so well. Christopher's main interests were Hampstead, a part of Camden which he championed and wrote about, and musicals. He was involved in persuading the Council to allow Burgh House to be used by the community and he and his wife, Diana, were early enthusiasts and helpers in the establishment of the Hampstead Museum there.

He was, of course, also much involved in the work of the Heath & Hampstead Society, and that organisation unveiled, on 25 March, a commemorative plaque in his honour at his old home in Hampstead, 28 Willoughby Road.

A Daring Diver

A book, *Characters of Fitzrovia*, by Mike Pentelow and Marsha Rowe (2001), describes the extraordinary feats of diving of a woman who described herself as 'The Human Seal'. Her performances in the 1920s took place in the Luna Park Fairground, on the site of today's Dominion Theatre at the southern end of Tottenham Court Road near the junction with New Oxford Street. Dressed in a bright spangled costume and a Neptune helmet, she climbed above the merry-go-round and the fairground stalls, to a diving board. There, she wrapped herself in cotton wool and set light to it. She then dived into a tank of water on the ground.

This story is told among many others illustrating the social life of Fitzrovia which was then a hub of hard drinkers, anarchists and communists - Lenin visited the Communist Club there in 1902 and 1910.

The book (well printed and generously illustrated) can still be bought in both hardback and paperback on the 'abe books uk' site on the internet at moderate prices.

An old pub - now a casualty

Returns of Licensed Victuallers began in the St Pancras area in 1721. Kentish Town had a large number of pubs - by 1802, 33 had been recorded, though some were very short-lived. The Anglers by Anglers Lane is noted in 1721. Others listed soon after then are The Castle, The Bull and Gate, the Assembly House (then called The Bull), Black Lion, Bull and Last, Castle and Star, China Bowl, Cross Keys, Flying Post, Oxford Arms, Nag's Head, Red Cow, Red Lion, The Swan, the Three Tuns and The Vine. Another was The Black Horse at the junction of Royal College Street and Kentish Town Road, a site generally referred to as the entrance to Kentish Town. This pub was on the list in 1723. Below is a c1800 drawing, with Kentish Town Road to the right.

The Black Horse in recent years has become one of the many closed public houses, and is now converted for residential use.

The Annual Outing

This year's Outing on 6 August takes us to Long Melford in Suffolk. On the way, we will visit the picturesque town of Saffron Walden, and the chance of going to the Tuesday Market, or finding mid-morning refreshment. Beyond the Market Place, there is plenty to explore: St Mary's church, the largest parish church in Essex; and buildings, some timber-framed or with fine examples of elaborate moulded plasterwork known as pargetting. Saffron Walden Museum, one of the oldest purpose-built museums in the country, should be open.

The Clopton family came to the Manor of Kentwell in 1385, rebuilt Long Melford Church in the 15th century, and developed the present Kentwell Hall with its moat between 1500 and 1578. Sir Simonds D'Ewes, possibly England's first antiquary, married into the family in the 17th century. Later owners include St Thomas Robinson (Knight Prothonotary of the Common Pleas (d. 1683); the heirs of Sir John Moore (a rich merchant and Lord Mayor of London 1681-82)); and Robert Hart Logan (who remodelled the house under architect Thomas Hopper). From the late 19th century and for the next 50 years, the Hall was let to tenants including Sir Connop Guthrie, whose wife re-formed the gardens. In WWII, the Hall was requisitioned as an army transition camp. In 1971, Patrick Phillips bought the Hall, which he and his family have been restoring ever since.

The gardens have much of interest: Pied Piper topiary designed and shaped by Judith Phillips; walled and sunken gardens; and more than 70 varieties of fruit trees. A rare-breed farm includes a flock of Norfolk Horn sheep.

The Stableyard Tea Room offers light lunches and afternoon teas. There is also a picnic area for those who bring their own food.

As ever, we are grateful to Jean Archer for organising this Outing; her phone number is 020 7435 5490, in case of enquiries. **The booking form enclosed with this Newsletter details pick-up points.**



The Black Horse, c.1800. Courtesy Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre

A new Membership fee

Dear Members

In the face of ever increasing costs since 2004 when the CHS subscription was last set at £10, the Society has decided, with some reluctance, to increase the subscription to £15 per year. This will not take effect until 1 March, 2020 for members who have just renewed, but will increase for new members joining via the Web from 1 June 2019.

Most of our members pay by Standing Order, so we will be asking for these to be changed to £15, to be paid on 1 March 2020. If you make the change now with your bank, you will not risk missing it next year.

We would like to correspond with as many members as possible via email, as most do now. For this we need your current correct email address. If you have been receiving monthly emails about our Talks, then we already have your current email. If you have not been receiving any of these monthly notices, then we would be grateful if you would send a message to henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net from which we will pick up your email address.

Many thanks,

Henry Fitzhugh, Membership Secretary.

Things to Come

Please put the following in your diary:

18 July: AGM and 333 years of Great Ormond Street, by Alec Forshaw

6 August: Visit to Saffron Walden and Kentwell, organised by Jean Archer

19 Sept: to be announced

17 Oct: What can Phyllis Ford's childhood tell social historians, by Cynthia Floud

21 Nov: The Holborn Viaduct at 150, by Lester Hillman.

Locations will be included in the appropriate *Newsletter* together with an introduction to the talks.

FEEDBACK

Member Julie Berk has sent us a report of the talk by Rachel Kolsky in March.

Rachel Kolsky was warmly welcomed to our meeting for a talk entitled *Suffrage, Settlements and Song: Camden's Women*. There was some mention of the venue (Holborn Library) as it features in *Quartet in Autumn* by Barbara Pym, one of Rachel's favourite books. (It was also mentioned later by Lester Hillman as the office of the Hampstead Garden Suburb committee, which was relevant because Rachel talked about Henrietta and Samuel Barnett, founders of the Suburb, and their contributions to London.)

Rachel began with how her book, *Women's London*, came about. She said it was a team effort stemming from her being a Blue Badge Guide. She had responded to walkers urging her to put her walks into print. Notable women included Sylvia Pankhurst,

Minnie Lansbury, Octavia Hill and Angela Burdett-Coutts. Less familiar names included artist Ethel Gabain, an official war artist in WW2, who lived at 10 Hampstead Square, and Amelia Edwards, a bust of whom is at the Petrie Museum at UCL, where she left her collection of Egyptian artefacts and endowed the first Chair of Egyptology.

The Somers Town mural was shown and led to a discussion of Edith Neville and the cottages bearing her name which, sadly, are to be demolished to make way for HS2

Statues, plaques and street names are additional reminders of women who have distinguished themselves. Rachel's enthusiasm is infectious and she ranged over Barbara Hulanicki, Mary Branson and Amy Winehouse.

Rachel's book, *Women's London*, is available from bookshops at £14.99, and from Amazon.

The early railway at Camden Town

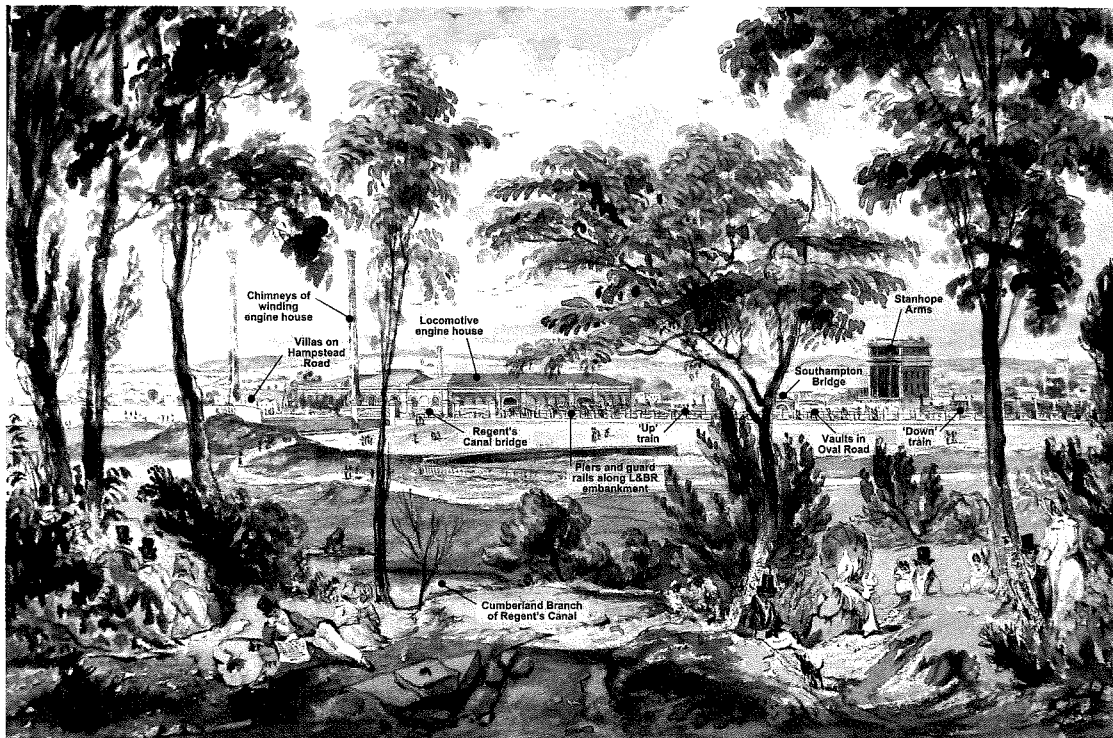
Peter Darley writes:

Robert Blemmell Schnebbelie (1781-1847) was an English painter and illustrator who produced numerous paintings and drawings of London during the first half of the 19th century. He died in severe poverty in Camden Town. Several of his watercolours are held by Camden Local Studies & Archives, including two of the London & Birmingham Railway (L&BR). One is of Hampstead Road bridge at the opening of the London-Boxmoor section on 20 July 1837. The second, a watercolour of 1837, shown here, from Regent's Park looking towards Camden Goods Station. I included it in my book on Camden Goods Station.

The artist has drawn this scene from what is now the west end of the Zoo car park, looking north-east over the Cumberland branch of the Regent's Canal to the L&BR main line to Euston and the goods station under construction beyond. The Cumberland branch continues in a southerly direction to Cumberland Market, passing between Park Village East and West.

The leisured classes, all colour and costume as they recline for a picnic in the park, contrast with the industrial activity beyond. People can be seen approaching the top of the embankment to view the passing trains, while others are already pressed against the railings to observe this new phenomenon.

The painting shows both an 'up' and a 'down' train on the main line from Euston to Camden, each pulled by a steam locomotive. The picture therefore post-dates the opening of the main line in July 1837 but predates the commissioning of the winding engines in October. The winding engines were Robert Stephenson's response to powerful landowners who did not want the noise and smoke of locomotives on



*View of railway works at Camden Town, 1837. Watercolour by R B Schnebbelie.
Courtesy of Camden Local Studies and Archives.*

the steep incline between Euston and Camden lowering property values. Trains at Euston were attached to an endless rope and pulled up the gradient to meet their locomotive at Camden Goods Station.

The main line is here on an embankment, the tracks raised up to 15 feet to pass over the Regent's Canal railway bridge which is seen in front of the locomotive engine shed in the middle distance. Beyond the bridge and through the chimneys of the winding engine house, the raised embankment becomes the general level of the goods depot.

In the middle distance, on the left of the painting, the villas on the west side of Hampstead (now Chalk Farm) Road, later to be incorporated into the goods depot, can be seen.

Beyond the railway embankment, on the right side, lies Oval Road. The L&BR alignment had removed the west side of what had been planned as an oval, and the architect, Henry Bassett, was in discussion with Robert Stephenson, the railway's engineer and Lord Southampton, the landowner, concerning what remained of the Oval development, including Gloucester Crescent. Oval Road became the road entrance to the goods station, partly raised on vaults up to railway level to cross Southampton Bridge. We can see from the painting that the vaults were in place, as was Southampton Bridge, the red brick arched structure at the north end of Oval Road over which the road would pass.

We can also see the Stanhope Arms under construction. Located on the corner of Oval Road and James Street (now Jamestown Road) the Stanhope Arms may originally have been intended as the terminus

hotel for Camden Station, only to be scaled back when the Euston extension was approved in 1835. If so, it remained a substantial structure with four floors above the street front and basement. There were stables and out-buildings at basement level at the back. The painting shows the basement exposed, as Oval Road was still to be raised.

The Stanhope Arms is the only building shown on Oval Road in summer 1837, apart from the adjoining building on the north side, still at an earlier stage of construction. The purpose of this building is not known, but it became a bottle warehouse leased to W & A Gilbey in about 1870, part of their gin distillery. Camden Flour Mills and other buildings on the east side of Oval Road had yet to be constructed. These buildings may well have awaited the completion of the goods station in 1839. There is tantalisingly little information on the Flour Mills until leased by Gilbeys in 1871, also to become part of their gin distillery.

Flying in a Zeppelin

Dick Weindling in his History of Kilburn and West Hampstead website, reveals that the first woman to fly around the world in a Zeppelin airship was Lady Grace Drummond-Hay who was brought up in West Hampstead. Her family lived in Kingdon Road, Lyford Road and at 14 Avenue Mansions, Finchley Road. As a journalist employed by Hearst Newspapers, in 1928 she reported from the first world-wide flight from New Jersey in America with stops in Germany, Tokyo and Los Angeles. In 1936 she was on the maiden flight from Germany to America of the Hindenburg airship.



The Vale of Health Hotel

In the last *Newsletter* we published a postcard picture of the former Vale of Health Hotel c.1905. Our member, John Hauxwell, has sent a different but similar image.

He writes: "My mother, Margaret Rowney, painted this picture, left, almost exactly, in 1934. The hotel was also a pub. There is to be an exhibition at Burgh House from the 17th April to the 8th September, at which this painting will be on show. This is to be called *Margaret Rowney: the art of drawing and printmaking*." Much of the content will be loaned by Mr Hauxwell and his family, together with archival material from Burgh House.

Many members (but hardly any tourists) will know that the Vale's name is a bit of a fraud. It is claimed that it derives from the Great Plague era, when London citizens escaped to this spot to stay healthy. In fact, at that time the Vale was a swamp and remained so until the Hampstead Water Company drained it in 1777. The name Vale of Health appears only about 1801. The Hotel was built in 1863. It was not a success, but it attracted the artists Henry Lamb from 1912-24 and Stanley Spencer from 1925-27.

This editor can vouch for the Vale being rather unhealthy in the 1950s. Then, I rented a room in Heath Villas, in a house later to be the residence of John Freeman, the politician and noted broadcaster of Face to Face, in which he interviewed notables in a robust way. The house was very, very damp. On the other hand, my weekly rent was only £2.50. JR



Kentish Town tollgate in 1849. It stood across Kentish Town Road near Holmes Road. The illustration comes from an undated, limited edition 2-volume work entitled Turnpikes and Toll-bars by Mark Searle

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This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

The Editor is John Richardson, 14 Saddleton Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4JD. Tel: 01227 272605.

E-mail: richardson@historicalpublications.co.uk, to whom all contributions should be sent.

Our Secretarial Assistant is Daniel Croughton, 46 Southbury Road, Enfield, Middx EN1 1YB (email: enf9223@hotmail.com)

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Henry Fitzhugh, 56 Argyle Street WC1H 8ER (email: henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net)

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 294
Jul 2019

333 Years of Great Ormond Street, and the AGM

Thurs. 18 July.

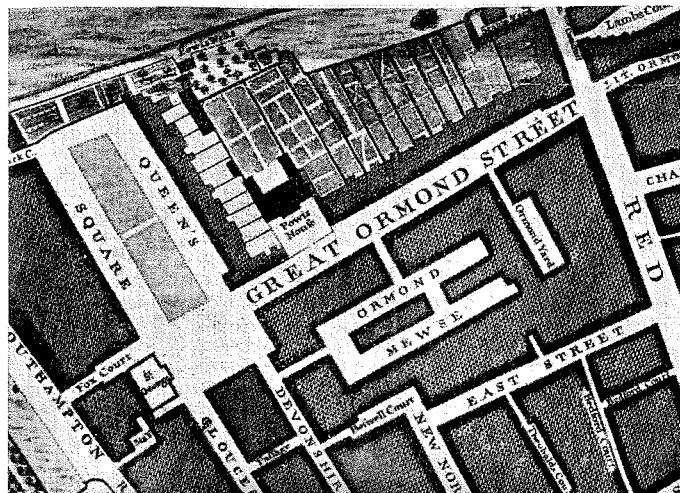
Refreshments 6.30pm, AGM 7pm, and talk at 7.30pm
Camden Local Studies, 2nd Floor, Holborn Library,
32-38 Theobalds Road, WC1X 8PA

Laid out by Nicholas Barbon in 1686 as a new street running east-west to connect the north section of Red Lion Street (Lamb's Conduit Street), with a proposed new square (Queen Square), Great Ormond Street is 333 years old in 2019.

Our speaker, Alec Forshaw, a resident for over 25 years of No. 49, built in 1686, and author of *An Address in Bloomsbury*, will talk about the extraordinary developments and changes that this famous street has witnessed. He will cover the many institutions that have come and gone and those that still thrive, together with the influential people who have lived and worked there.

Mr Forshaw was, for twenty years, Conservation Officer for Islington and has written numerous books on London's history.

As usual at the Annual General Meeting, the evening is divided into three – refreshments at 6.30, the AGM at 7, and if all goes well, the talk at 7.30.



From Rocque's map of London, 1746.

The August Outing

There are still some available seats on the coach for our Outing on 6 August. This takes us to the attractive town of Saffron Walden and then Kentwell Hall in Long Melford.

The house was built between 1500 and 1578 and has attractive gardens. More details were in the last *Newsletter* together with a booking form. If you have mislaid that, and have queries, please contact the organiser of the trip, Jean Archer, on 020 7435 5490.

The house is shown below.



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A new Bookshop!

English Heritage plans to open a high-quality second-hand bookshop at Kenwood House. It invites the public to donate books. Especially welcome will be good condition books on art, architecture, gardening and also antiquarian volumes. It would also welcome volunteers to help in the bookshop. If any member is interested please email the Properties Curator at kristian.kaminski@english-heritage.org.uk.

Things to Come

Please put the following in your diary:

19 Sept: *Medieval Camden* by Dr Ellie Pridgeon.

17 Oct: *What can Phyllis Ford's childhood tell social historians?*, by Cynthia Floud

21 Nov: *The Holborn Viaduct at 150*, by Lester Hillman.

12 Dec: *E H Dixon (1821-1884) – landscape artist and social historian*, by Peter Darley.

Locations will be announced in the appropriate *Newsletter* together with an introduction to the talks.

The Annual General Meeting

Nominations by the Council for Officers and members of the Council committee will be made at the AGM. Members are also able to nominate on that evening or in writing beforehand to our Secretarial Assistant, Daniel Croughton (details on page 4). We would also welcome members putting themselves forward to be on the committee. This meets about every six weeks at Camden Local Studies and mainly discusses talks and publications.

How Hampstead Heath was saved

A new CHS book has just been published. *How Hampstead Heath was saved, a Story of People Power*, by Helen Lawrence. It deals with the long battle to prevent development on the Heath culminating in the acquisition for the public of the first part of the Heath in 1871. It was followed over the years by purchases of other key parts such as Parliament Hill, the Kenwood estate and the Heath extension. The author then takes the story later to the many resistances to further development intrusions.

The saving of the Heath was a forerunner and inspiration of many campaigns in the London area to save open spaces.

The book has 264 pages, and thanks to generous support from the Heath & Hampstead Society, it is at the bargain price of £14.95. A review will follow in the next *Newsletter*. In the meantime it may be obtained via the Camden History Society's website or else from Camden Local Studies in Holborn Library, and at local bookshops.

A plot to down an aeroplane

Dick Weindling has recorded on his Kilburn/West Hampstead blog that thirty-three years ago a resident of Kilburn was involved in a plot to bring down an Israeli El Al aeroplane. It resulted in a notorious court case.

The innocent person chosen to blow up El Al Flight 016 was also an intended victim. She was Ann Marie Murphy who was, in 1986, living in a terrace house in Mazenod Avenue, Kilburn, which the 32-year-old shared with two friends. Ann was born into a large Irish family that lived in Dun Laoghaire, a small coastal town about eight miles south of Dublin. She left school at the age of 14 and worked in a stocking factory.

In October 1984 she and her friend Therese Leonard came to London and got jobs as chambermaids at the Hilton Hotel in Park Lane. They met and dated Jordanian Khaled Hasi and his flatmate Nezar Nawaf al-Mansur Hindawi. Nezar was Ann's first serious relationship. He was 35 years old, a charismatic man with a shadowy background.

Nezar told Ann that he was a journalist and travelled abroad for long periods. He also admitted that he was married and visited his wife and child in Poland, but he was getting a divorce. Ann became pregnant but had a miscarriage. In September 1985 Ann moved to the house in Mazenod Road near the large Catholic church in Quex Road. In January 1986 she became pregnant again and refused to have an abortion. Nezar disappeared for a time.

Nezar was born in Jordan to Palestinian parents who had left Israel in 1948. It was believed that he joined the Palestine Liberation Organisation as a teenager during the first Arab-Israeli war in 1967. He came to London in 1979 to study at a Kensington language school, and met and married Barbara Litwiniec, a Polish fellow student. He was unable to find work in journalism.

In 1985 Nezar was trained for two months at a camp run by the Abu Nidal Organisation near Dahir, east of Damascus. He became part of a plan to bring down an El Al plane, but was told to use a woman as the bomb carrier. He was given an initial payment of \$15,000 and promised a further \$250,000 if he succeeded. In April 1986 he arrived back in London using a passport provided by Syrians and posing as a foreign ministry accountant. He stayed at the Royal Garden Hotel, which was used by the crews of Syrian Arab Airlines. The following day he was given a bag containing the explosive which had been smuggled in by a SAA crew member. It consisted of 1.5 kg of the Czech-made plastic explosive, Semtex.

Unexpectedly, he arrived at Ann's flat in Mazenod Avenue on April 7, 1986 and told her they were to get married in Jordan. He gave her £100 to buy new

clothes, and on the 15th they went to a travel agent in Regent Street where Ann bought an El Al ticket to Tel Aviv, again using money from Nezar. He told her that as a Jordanian he was not allowed to travel on an El Al flight and he was booked on a different airline. They would meet up in Jordan to see his parents. The next evening he arrived at her flat, nervously smoking his pipe. He gave Ann a small wheeled suitcase, saying that he did not want her to have to lift anything in her pregnant condition. He packed a calculator in the case, which he told her was a present to a friend.

At 7.30am the next day the couple took a taxi to Heathrow and Nezar kissed Ann goodbye. She went through security and the bag was X-rayed without problems. But when she arrived at Gate 23 she was questioned by an El Al security officer. Security staff were on high alert after recent terrorist attacks at Rome and Vienna airports. They became suspicious when Ann said that her fiancé had helped her to pack the bag but was travelling on another flight. After the bag was emptied it still felt heavy and the Semtex was found in a hidden compartment. Ann was astonished and she was taken away by police for questioning.

A Heathrow bomb disposal expert, Peter Gurney, could not find a detonator until he discovered the calculator had been modified with a circuit and small charge. This was placed close to the bomb and had been set by Nezar to explode in five hours, when the plane would have been over Austria. It would have killed 355 passengers including, of course, Ann and their unborn child.

After leaving Ann at the airport, Nezar travelled back to the Royal Garden Hotel and then boarded the SAA bus disguised as a crew member to catch the 2pm flight to Damascus. When his picture was that day shown on the news, officials at the Syrian embassy in Belgrave Square sent a car to intercept the bus and bring him back. The ambassador phoned Damascus for instructions and Nezar was taken to a safe house in West Kensington, where his hair was cut and dyed. The following day he was driven back to the embassy but believing the Syrians were going to kill him, Nezar gave them the slip and went to the London Visitors Hotel in Kensington where he knew the owner. He was persuaded to give himself up. The jury did not believe his claim that he thought the bag contained drugs and he was sentenced to 45 years, the longest fixed-term prison sentence in British legal history.

In March 2013 he was granted parole, but was still imprisoned pending deportation or subject to appeals against his release. By that date he had served 26 years and was aged 57.

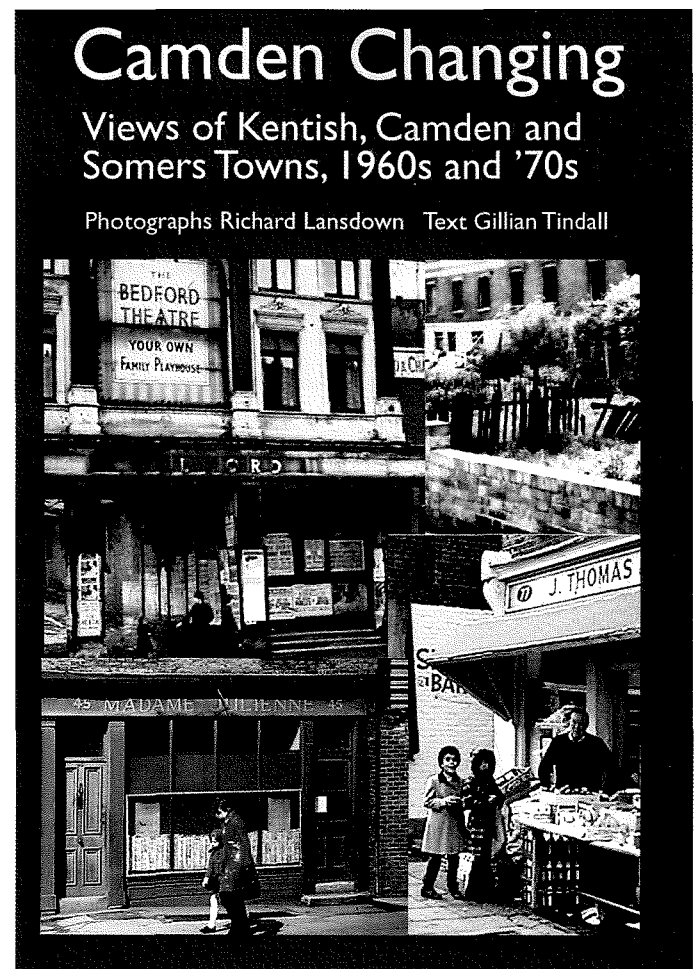
(kilburnwesthampstead.blogspot.com)

Camden Changing

Our new Society publication, *Camden Changing*, is selling well. It is a photographic journey through Kentish, Camden and Somers Towns in the 1960s and 1970s. When it was decided in 1963 that three London boroughs should be merged into a larger one, to be called 'Camden', after Camden Town at its centre, much of the area was still scheduled for demolition under a post-war plan. Yet already its old houses were increasing in value and Camden Lock Market was on the point of invention.

Richard Lansdown's photographs in this book, some of them taken over fifty years ago, document an era of contest and change, yet many buildings and street views that are apparent in these pictures are still, bar a few differences, recognisable. The text is by the writer and a Vice-President of the Society, Gillian Tindall.

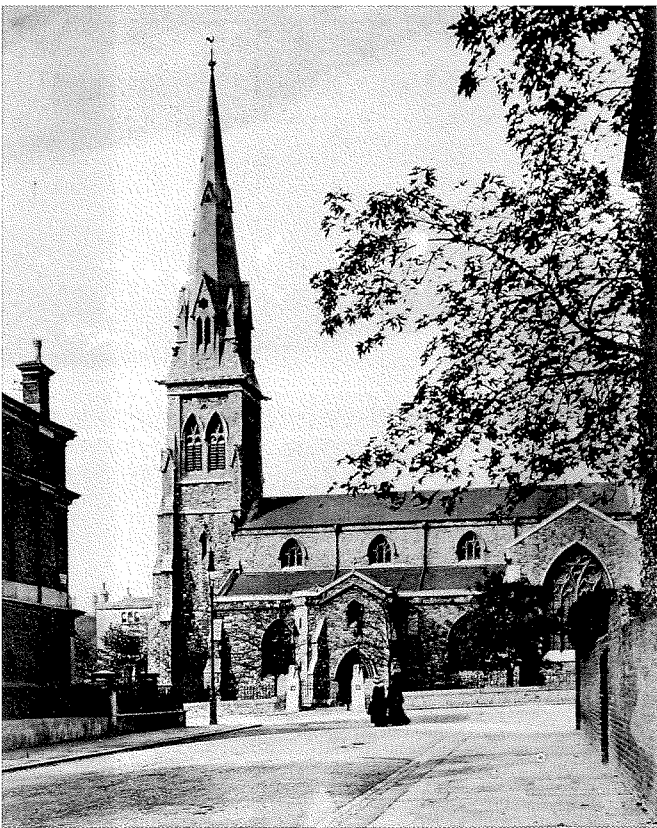
The book may be obtained via our website, or at Camden Local Studies in Holborn Library, or else in local bookshops. The price is £7.50.





Canteloves Road, near Camden Square, c1904.

The picture is taken from near the junction of Agar Grove and York Way, looking north-west to Camden Square where stood St Paul's Church.



St Paul's Church in Camden Square

This church, one of the earlier buildings in Camden Square, no doubt to attract a middle-class settlement for much of Camden New Town, was consecrated in 1849. The architects were Frederick Ordish and John Johnson.

The church suffered damage during the last war. Because of that and subsidence it was demolished in 1956. The congregation was merged with that of St Luke, Oseney Crescent. However when St Luke's was made redundant in the 1990s the old St Paul's parish was re-established in the rather dispiriting former St Paul's church hall in Camden Square.

(Source: Streets of Camden Town (2003), Steven Denford and F Peter Woodford.)

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

The Editor is John Richardson, 14 Saddleton Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4JD. Tel: 01227 272605.

E-mail: richardson@historicalpublications.co.uk, to whom all contributions should be sent.

Our Secretarial Assistant is Daniel Croughton, 46 Southbury Road, Enfield, Middx EN1 1YB (email: enfd9223@hotmail.com)

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Henry Fitzhugh, 56 Argyle Street WC1H 8ER (email: henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net)

The Publications Secretary is Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, WC1H 9SH, (7388 9889) email roger.cline13@gmail.com

The Publications Editor and the Editor of the *Camden History Review* is David Hayes, 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: davidhayes48@hotmail.co.uk

Our Meetings Co-ordinator is Ruth Hayes at 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: ruthhayes53@hotmail.co.uk

Our website: www.camdenhistorysociety.org

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 295
Sep 2019

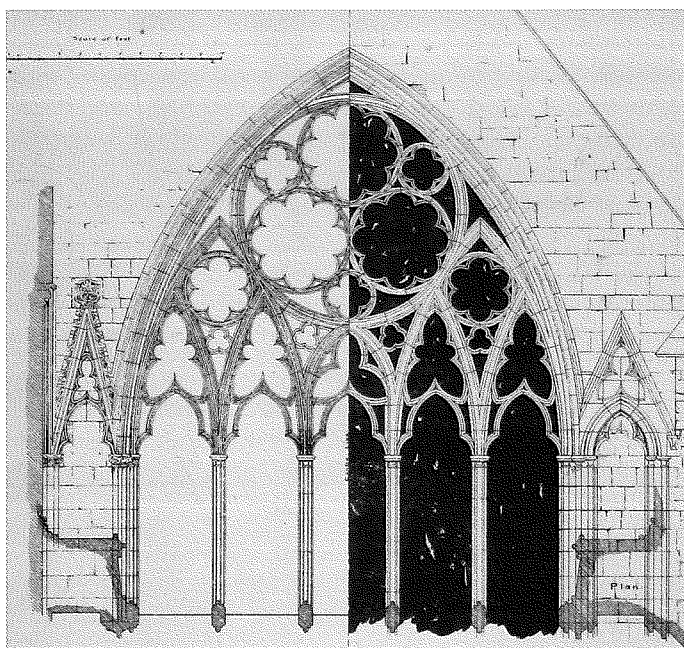
Medieval Camden

Thurs. 19 September, 7.30pm
Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre
2nd Floor, Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobald's Road,
WC1X 8PA

This talk will focus on the medieval art and architecture of Camden, and reconstruct some of the most significant religious and secular buildings. Key sites to be examined include the former Palace of the Bishops of Ely and chapel of St Etheldreda at Ely Place, the hospital and chapel of St Giles-in-the-Fields, and St Pancras Old Church.

Our speaker, Dr Ellie Pridgeon FSA, is an archive consultant, undertaking work most recently for Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre. She also teaches art history and architecture at the Universities of Leicester, Oxford and Cambridge, and has published widely on medieval material culture in England.

The West Window of St Etheldreda's church
(Image: Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre)



What can Phyllis Ford's childhood tell social historians?

Thurs. 17 October, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LS

Phyllis Ford was born in Hampstead in 1886 into a family whose income did not match their self-perception of their position in society. Looking back over her childhood from the distance of middle age, she recounts in unusual detail and with a critical eye, the customs and lifestyle of the upper middle classes in her youth. She does not shy away from indecent exposure, sexual coercion and the constraints of courtship; she turns her sardonic gaze onto decor, dance cards and doctoring; she moves from the social rules of women's cycling to riding on horse buses. Her catastrophic education does not dim her enthusiasms for art, tennis and swimming, while her eventual social success leads her to meet many local luminaries.

Our speaker, Cynthia Floud, is the editor of *A dysfunctional Hampstead childhood 1886-1911: the memoir of Phyllis Allen Floud, née Ford*, published by Camden History Society (2018)

Phyllis Ford with Mrs Margaret Wynne Nevinson in the Fords' back garden at 2 Eldon Road, now Eldon Grove, Hampstead. (Image Cynthia Floud)



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St Pancras Searchers

At a St Pancras Vestry meeting in Kentish Town Chapel in 1774, it was agreed to appoint a Mrs Scott and a Mrs Weddle to be the Parish Searchers. The Vestry made similar appointments over the years until 1830.

What was a Searcher, when and why did the post originate, and what were a Searcher's duties?

If we accept a statement in the Vestry minutes of 15 October 1828, the post appears to have originated in the reign of James I: "There is an Act 1, James 1, Clause 32 [1603]. It is entitled An Act for the Charitable Relief and ordering of persons infected with the plague on authority for Justices, Mayors and other Head Offices as therein mentioned to appoint within their several limits searchers, watchers, examiners, keepers and buriers...." 1603 was not only when James I came to the throne, but was also a plague year. Over 33,000 deaths were registered in the Bills of Mortality. At that time doctors or relatives were under no obligation to report a death or illness from plague. In fact, for an anxious or bereaved family, there was every incentive to keep things quiet. If infection in their house was revealed, they might well find themselves shut up in their own house, in effect quarantined, while the epidemic continued. This was to prevent the remaining family members infecting people outside, but of course this left them in grave danger of being affected themselves.

With this new legislation local authorities now had the power to search homes for infected people. But how were they to be found? The appointment of Searchers was the answer.

In St Pancras and elsewhere the Searchers were usually married women or widows. They had no medical training, though some of them may also have been local midwives. Yet they were expected to confirm if death had definitely occurred and to express an opinion as to its cause. The parish sexton was not allowed to proceed with a burial without a certificate of death from a Searcher. It is possible that a Searcher earned extra money by laying out the victim for burial, but this wasn't a part of their duties. Walter Bell, in his comprehensive account of the disastrous events of 1665, *The Great Plague in London* (1924), stated that Searchers "were women who fulfilled the gruesome office, and those so employed were illiterate, without knowledge of disease, usually aged, and circumstances made them habitually dishonest."

But Bell admired their courage, for in plague times "they lived as outcasts from the community, performing duties hazardous to themselves as to others. They were required to lodge at a place appointed, not going abroad more than was necessary, and only in execution of their duty. They were to absent themselves from their families, and always to avoid the

society of others." In their walk, they were told, "they should keep as far distant from others as might be, carrying in the hand a white wand by which pedestrians should know and avoid them." They received a small fee. St Pancras Vestry in September 1828 heard that their usual payment was 8d per body, but sometimes, the Searchers claimed, they got no fee at all. Occasionally 'respectable' people gave them half a crown. They told the Vestry that they examined ten bodies a week. They did not do so in the workhouse as they received no fee. The Vestry minutes also give details of rates of pay in other London parishes.

Since the employment of Searchers continued long after the plague years, it seems likely that the legislation passed in 1603 under the threat of plague, was extended, or else was considered, to allow the use of Searchers in any case of death.

Searchers were employed in St Pancras until 1833. In that year a resolution to discontinue the post was discussed by the Vestry. It was passed 22 against 21. This was a contentious matter and a week later a motion to cancel the decision was discussed but was lost. This was not the end of the matter because a month later the Vestry was informed that two of the Searchers were continuing with their work at 8d a body, presumably charging the families of the deceased.

Things then took a new turn. At a later Vestry meeting the two Searchers involved claimed they were advised that their discharge was illegal as the post was a Common Law Office, and that they were appointed for life. The Vestry instructed the sexton not to give them any more details regarding future burials and they were threatened with legal action if they continued their intrusion. At the next meeting a motion to retain the Searchers was lost 32-19. This was almost the end of the matter and only one more meeting discussed it, this time to hear that a Vestryman had been pestered for a fee at a relative's funeral by a woman calling herself a Searcher.

The process of registering deaths (and births and marriages) was included in the Registration Act of 1836 which, among other things, made Searchers superfluous.

John Richardson

A reminder

In *Newsletter 293*, and at the Annual General Meeting, members were informed that the membership fee, unchanged since 2004, was to increase as from 1 March 2020, from £10 to £15. Many of our members pay by standing order and the Treasurer asks if members could remember to alter their order – preferably before the payment date so that you will not forget and miss out on talks and our publications.

Martin Morton

We are sorry to hear of the death at 87 of CHS member Martin Morton. More prominently, Martin had been a leading St Pancras and, since then, Camden councillor. He was also until recently, a long-time chairman of the Camden Civic Society.

I first met Martin in the late 1950s. This happened after his wife, Joyce, struck up a friendship with my former wife. He and I were both intending councillors for St Pancras, he for the Conservative Party and I for Labour. We were both elected in 1959. Happily, this did not affect our relationship – in fact it was a bit of a joke between us.

Martin continued to be a Camden councillor for three notable terms. He was a gifted and knowledgeable speaker, fair in what he said. He did not indulge in sloppy criticism – his points were taken seriously by us on the other side of the chamber.

Roger Cline, who helped the Civic Society's Treasurer to claim Gift Aid, often encountered Martin, and remembers particularly the annual parties of the Civic Society in Martin and Joyce's garden in Highgate. In the *Camden New Journal* Ricci de Freitas, formerly chairman of the Marchmont Association, recalled that Martin had been very helpful to him in writing his book on Brunswick Square. Martin's great uncle, Dr James O'Donnell, was previously medical officer of health in the Brunswick area, with a surgery at 28 Brunswick Square: one of the present Brunswick blocks, O'Donnell Court, is named after him. Before the surgery was cleared for the Brunswick construction Martin managed to rescue his uncle's brass plate from the doorway.

John Richardson

The Outing to Saffron Walden and Kentwell Hall

A fine, pleasant warm day for this year's Outing on 6 August, was my first visit to Saffron Walden, and a chance to look for examples of pargetting for which the town is renowned, and an attractive mix of buildings, including an enormous parish church and a public library housed in the former Corn Exchange. During the two hours or so we were there I spotted two of the town's six blue plaques, one commemorating designer, printmaker and illustrator Edward Bawden, the other for Henry Winstanley, inventor who built the first Eddystone Lighthouse. I could have spent more time in the Museum with its varied range of local and natural history, ceramics, glass, textiles and ethnographic exhibits. But a visit to the delightful Tuesday Market beckoned, and judging by what was carried back to the coach, it looked as if we'd all made purchases.

At Kentwell Hall, Judith Phillips explained with some passion how she and her husband had gone

about restoring their home since the 1970s, refusing grants (which stipulated particular courses of action), but grateful for advice from the late 11th Duke of Grafton (of Euston Hall). Looking around the house we imagined rooms like the kitchen to be as in Tudor times, whereas one of the larger rooms had a decidedly Buddhist themed decor (an interest of a Phillips daughter). We looked at stained-glass windows with representations of coats of arms of families from other local estates. An upstairs window gave us a bird's eye view of the vast walled garden, just one part of the extensive grounds to explore. There was just enough time for a lovely tea in the café, and a quick look at the chickens and Tamworth pigs, before our return home.

As well as thanking Jean Archer for her usual efficient organising, credit must also be given to Hazel Brothers for suggesting both places. I welcome ideas (with or without a Camden connection) for next year's Outing.

Ruth Hayes

The Annual General Meeting

The 49th Annual Meeting of the Society was held at Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre on July 18th.

The following Officers and Council members were elected:

PRESIDENT: Professor Caroline Barron
VICE PRESIDENTS: Gillian Tindall, John Richardson
CHAIRMAN: Malcolm Holmes
TREASURER: Dr Henry Fitzhugh
MEETINGS CO-ORDINATOR: Ruth Hayes
PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: David Hayes
PUBLICITY OFFICER: Lindsay Douglas
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Dr Henry Fitzhugh
LOCAL STUDIES LIAISON: Tudor Allen or his deputy
RESEARCH TEAM LEADER: Steven Denford
COUNCIL MEMBERS: Catherine Dille, Emily Gee, Paul Klein, Richard Knight and Susan Palmer
SECRETARIAL ASSISTANT: Daniel Croughton
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Douglas Parkin

John Richardson stood down as Chairman after 49 years and was appointed a Vice President. He will also continue to edit the *Newsletter*. The Society presented him with a generous book token. In his final report he said that the Society was thriving, with an increasing membership, an energetic committee and a robust programme of talks and publications. He was pleased that Malcolm Holmes, a former Senior Camden archivist and known to many members, had accepted the nomination to be the new Chairman. John also noted that since the Society was founded in 1970, over 500 talks had been given, most of which had featured a Camden aspect.

The meeting, attended by about 90 members, concluded with an excellent talk by Alec Forshaw on the 333-year history of Great Ormond Street.

Things to Come

21 Nov: *The Holborn Viaduct at 150*, by Lester Hillman.

12 Dec: *E H Dixon (1821-1884)* - north London watercolour landscapes, by Peter Darley.

16 January: to be announced

20 February: Camden's parish maps, by Simon Morris.

Locations will be announced in the appropriate *Newsletter* together with an introduction to the talks.

*Ely Place, Holborn, in the early 1930s, home to St Etheldreda's Church
(see talk on page 1)*



Broomsleigh Street, near Mill Lane, West Hampstead, c.1905.



Copy date for November Newsletter - 11 October

This Newsletter is published by the Camden History Society.

The Editor is John Richardson, 14 Saddleton Road, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4JD. Tel: 01227 272605.

E-mail: richardson@historicalpublications.co.uk, to whom all contributions should be sent.

Our Secretarial Assistant is Daniel Croughton, 46 Southbury Road, Enfield, Middx EN1 1YB (email: enfd9223@hotmail.com)

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Henry Fitzhugh, 56 Argyle Street WC1H 8ER (email: henryfitzhugh@talktalk.net)

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The Publications Editor and the Editor of the *Camden History Review* is David Hayes, 62 Garrison Lane,

Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: davidhayes48@hotmail.co.uk

Our Meetings Co-ordinator is Ruth Hayes at 62 Garrison Lane, Chessington KT9 2LB (0208 397 6752); email: ruthhayes53@hotmail.co.uk

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newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 296
Nov 2019

Holborn Viaduct at 150

Thurs 21 November, 7.30pm
Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, 2nd floor,
Holborn Library, 32-38 Theobalds Road WC1X 8PA

The City of London's gateway to Camden had its royal opening on 6 November 1869. To mark the Holborn Viaduct's 150th birthday, Lester Hillman will explore the political engineering, transport, commercial/literary and human dramas of this infrastructure masterpiece. This presentation comes as Crossrail and the proposed new home for the Museum of London on Camden's doorstep bring wholly new dimensions to the locality.

Our Speaker, Lester Hillman, has been involved in major infrastructure planning since the 1970s.

Detail of Holborn Viaduct, looking northwards to Camden. (Photo: Lester Hillman). Below (c.1906) the Viaduct looking towards Newgate Street.



Dixon's 1837 painting of the Great Dust Heap at King's Cross, Battle Bridge. (Courtesy Wellcome Collection)

E H Dixon (1821-1884) and north London watercolour landscape topography

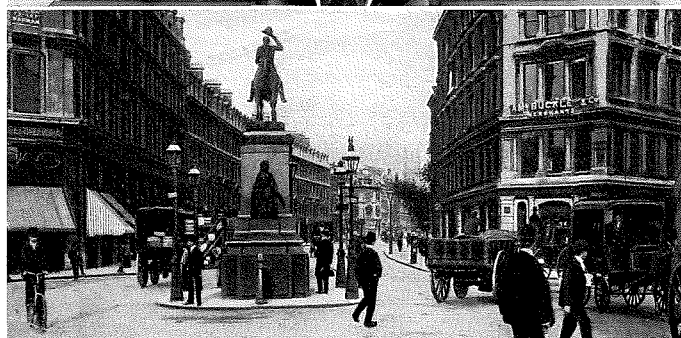
Thurs. 19 December, 7.30pm
Burgh House, New End Square NW3 1LT.

Edward Henry Dixon painted watercolour landscapes of north London, from Holborn to Hampstead and from Somers Town to Tottenham. Prosaic rather than elegiac, his paintings, alongside those of similar artists, represent an important social history at a time when landscapes were being dramatically transformed by the march of bricks and mortar.

Yet his paintings raise questions about the pitfalls in using such images as evidence of historical landscape – a subject little dealt with in any depth. What motivated his choice of views; how does his representation reflect the prejudices of the artist or his clients; and how reliable are the stated dates and captions? We shall try to answer these questions in the talk, while enjoying his landscape paintings.

Our speaker, Peter Darley, is secretary of the Camden Railway Heritage Trust, which he founded in 2007.

Please note: Because of the General Election we have had to change the date of this talk from Dec 12 to Dec 19. The venue is still Burgh House.



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Black Lane Station

An enquiry via the CHS website prompted me to research the significance of 'Black Lane Station', shown on Creighton's 1834 map of London on the Islington side of Maiden Lane (now York Way). As Peter Darley promptly pointed out, the location is similarly marked on Greenwood's earlier map of 1827. The adjacent cul-de-sac, on the line of today's Randell's Road, is labelled 'Back Lane' on the later Davies' map of 1843. Too early to be a railway station, Black Lane Station transpires to have been one of the country's very first triangulation stations.

Known as 'the Father of the Ordnance Survey', William Roy was born in Lanarkshire in 1726. In the wake of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, he was engaged to produce a ground-breaking military map of the Scottish Highlands. He later saw active service in the Seven Years' War. As a surveyor and engineer, he rose through the ranks in the Royal Engineers, and was promoted to Major General in 1781. He had settled in London in 1763. His proposal that year, that the whole of Great Britain be surveyed and mapped at public expense, came to nothing. Pursuing his scientific interests in his spare time, and also an expert on Roman military remains, he was elected a Fellow of both the Royal Society (RS) and the Society of Antiquaries. Roy's subsequent surveying activity is reported in three long technical papers he delivered to the RS. In one of them he describes how in 1783,

'... and official business having detained me in or near town during the whole of that summer, I embraced the opportunity, for my own private amusement, to measure a base of 7744.3 feet, across the fields between the Jew's-Harp, near Marybone, and Black-Lane near Pancras; as a foundation for a series of triangles, carried on at the same time, for determining the relative situations of the most remarkable steeples, and other places in and about the Capital, with regard to each other, and the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.'

Roy hoped that his survey would aid astronomers, and also serve as a 'hint to the public, for the revival of the now almost forgotten scheme of 1763'.

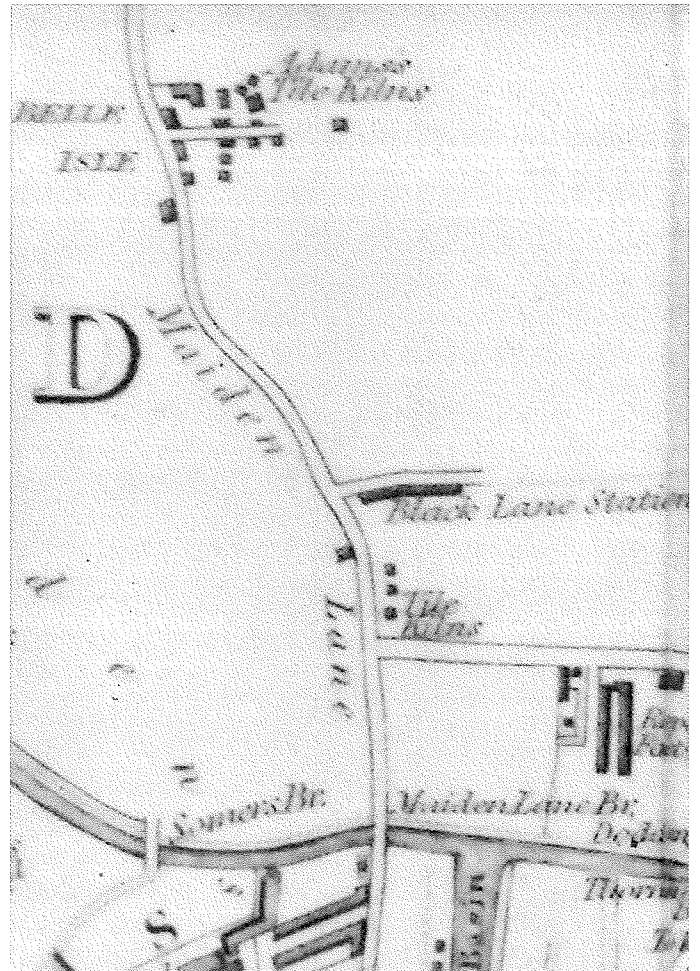
The Jew's Harp tavern and tea gardens were in the fields that became Regent's Park. In measuring his very first baseline of nearly 1° miles across the meadows of St Pancras, Roy probably used rods of deal about 20ft long. The two end stations would need to be accessible, and visible from the third point of his intended first triangle - his home and observatory at 12 (now 10) Argyll Street, near what became Oxford Circus and today marked by a GLC blue plaque. I suspect that Roy chose the precise line he did in order to achieve a right-angled triangle. As recorded in his detailed tabulations of trigonometric data, the Jew's Harp angle, measured with his quadrant, was $89^{\circ} 56' 55.9''$. Using Roy's measurements, one can trace the route of his baseline, running on a modern map from the north side of Regent's Park's

Inner Circle, clipping Albany Street Barracks, Mornington Crescent and St Pancras Hospital, and ending exactly at the junction of Randell's Road and York Way. Although Roy says nothing about the arrangements at Jew's Harp and Black Lane, his detailed descriptions of later operations elsewhere suggest that he must at least have erected a flagstaff at each, to provide the distant observer with a clear and exact target.

Roy's initiative was quickly overtaken by events. The British Government received a suggestion from the Paris observatory, that south-east England be triangulated from London to the Kent coast, and the results connected to the long-completed nationwide French triangulation. This might help resolve a dispute over the longitudes of the Greenwich and Paris observatories. The idea was accepted, and the task taken on by the Royal Society, with the aid of army personnel and a subsidy from King George III towards the £2,000 cost. Joseph Banks, the RS president, recommended that his friend William Roy should supervise the work.

For the more ambitious survey, a new baseline about 5 miles long was measured in 1784, between Hounslow Heath and Hampton Poorhouse in West Middlesex. The triangulation was delayed until 1787, while a new surveying instrument, combining a theodolite and telescope, was manufactured. Using steel chains

A section of Creighton's map of 1834 showing Black Lane Station.



and glass tubes in place of the unreliable deal rods, the project was completed in 1789.

Roy's final paper, read to the RS in February 1790, contains tables precisely locating many 'Objects' in London, with their distance in feet from the dome of St Paul's. Those within modern-day Camden are the parish churches of St Giles, St George's Bloomsbury, St Pancras and Hampstead; Whitefield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road; the Fitzroy and Percy Chapels in Fitzrovia; the 'Wind Vane' of the British Museum; and the Small Pox Hospital at Battle Bridge. Roy's original London 'stations' had been subsumed into the larger scheme, and in 1788 another was added, on Primrose Hill. On Roy's diagram of his London-area 'secondary triangles, his Jew's Harp-Black Lane baseline stands out, boldly labelled 'Base of 1783'. My guess is that Greenwood and Creighton marked the Black Lane Station on their later maps as a reminder of its historical importance in the mapping of London.

On 1 July 1790, the unmarried William Roy died very suddenly at his Argyll Street home. Six days later he was buried - just one eighth of a mile south of his seminal baseline - in the new Hampstead Road burial ground of St James's Piccadilly (the future, now destroyed, St James's Gardens). His remains will now be at the mercy of the archaeologists of High Speed 2. In his last paper, Roy had written that 'the trigonometrical operation, so successfully begun, should certainly be continued, and gradually extended over the whole island. Compared with the greatness of the object, the annual expense to the public would be a mere trifle'. It was a matter of national honour. Established eleven months after Roy's death was the body that came to be known as the Ordnance Survey, and in due course his dying wish would be fulfilled.

Main sources: ODNB; Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, vol. 75 (1785) & vol. 80 (1790)

David Hayes

Things to Come

Please put these talks in your 2020 diary (if you have one at this time of year!)

16 Jan: *The National Sunday League*, by Sam Perrin

20 Feb: *Camden Parish Maps 1720-1900*, by Simon Morris.

More Talks

Two interesting talks by Tudor Allen, Camden's Senior Archivist, are to be given in November as part of the talks programme of Camden's Local Studies & Archives Centre. They are:

20 November, 1.15pm

at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue WC2H 8EP.

The Place Names of Camden and the history behind them.

This talk is for over 55s.

29 November, 7.30, West Hampstead Community Centre, 17 Dornfell Street NW6 1QN, 7.30pm

An illustrated talk on the history of West Hampstead.

Standing Down

I'd like to highlight some of the achievements of our outgoing Chairman, John Richardson who is standing down after 49 years. The skills of a chair are to encourage others with different skills to join and work together to contribute: from my perspective John has, in his 49 years as chair, exemplified these skills, with diplomacy and good humour. A flourishing CHS is partly due to his contribution in that role.

As a newly qualified librarian returning to the new London Borough of Camden in December 1966 my first post was at Highgate Library in charge of the reference collection and the St Pancras Local History Collection. John Richardson was the first Camden Councillor I got to know - first, he visited regularly to research in the local history collection, then somewhat disorganised. John knew vastly more than I did about the area and was already compiling invaluable research resources and thinking of the need for new publications.

The amalgamation of St Pancras, Hampstead and Holborn boroughs into Camden (under the London Government Act) met resistance in many quarters where people identified with their former boroughs. John was very favourably disposed to the amalgamation seeing serious benefit from bigger financial resources to provide services to the people of those boroughs. There were local societies which had a historical content to much of their activities such as the Holborn Society, Heath and Hampstead Society and the St Pancras Antiquarian Society although the latter seemed to visit more buildings outside the borough than in it, although I took their members on several tours of Highgate Cemetery. There were local Civic Societies too and their role was very much more in promoting conservation. None of them was publishing new work on the history of the area.

As also Chairman of Camden's Libraries and Arts Committee, John met monthly with the Chief Librarian, Bill Maidment and his Deputy, Leonard Marcus to discuss library affairs. Inevitably, they discussed ways to establish a Camden identity. He suggested to the Librarians that a Camden History Society would encourage research into the whole of Camden and also act as a way to persuade residents to 'think Camden'.

With Camden Libraries' encouragement a Steering Committee met on 18 December 1969 and the first General Meeting of the CHS was on 14 April 1970. The first committee members were Mr G D Gregory, a Camden librarian, as Secretary, Wilfred Meadows as Treasurer, and Ian Norrie, proprietor of the High Hill Bookshop, as Publications Secretary. John was

Chairman. Also on the committee were Charles Lee, a prominent transport historian, John Parkhurst former editor of the *Ham and High*, and Richard Henwood from the Heath and Old Hampstead Society. The CHS received a grant from Camden Council to cover expenses and for publicity.

The first *Newsletter*, edited by John, appeared in May 1970 and has appeared every two months since. Its first headline noted the recent demolition of Vane House, on Rossllyn Hill, built in the 17th century by Sir Henry Vane who, in the turbulent years of that century, was executed at Tower Hill.

By September 1970 the membership was 290 and by January 1971 it had risen to 339. In April 1971 the Society staged its first Exhibition to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Hampstead Heath becoming public property. The first *Camden History Review* appeared in 1973, edited by Christopher Wade. Christopher was also responsible for the first publication, *Streets of Hampstead*, in 1972, published under the auspices of Ian Norrie's High Hill Press. It was an instant best seller and several editions of that book have appeared since. It was followed by the rest of our 12 'Streets' books, a notable achievement of the Society, and many other useful, well-produced publications.

The Society has always had a largish membership, and has enjoyed a good income from subscriptions and the sales of publications. In its 49 years the Society has held over 500 talks, almost all of which have had a Camden aspect. One of the strengths of the CHS has been a close relationship with Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre where I worked most of my life. With the huge growth in interest in local history of London and this most remarkable area of it, the CHS reliably helped us cope with the demand by its useful accurate and informative publications produced by the CHS. Quite separately John set up his own publishing company, Historical Publications, beginning with *The Local Historian's Encyclopedia* (based on his understanding of the appetite he and others had to know of the resources available). He then went on to commission or write himself 112 books featuring London topics, some of which focus on this most interesting borough.

John has agreed to continue editing the CHS *Newsletter* which he has done since the CHS foundation and his role in the Society continues in an important way. We owe much to his enduring interest in Camden and his hard work over many years.

Malcolm Holmes

**Copy date for January Newsletter -
15 December**

Ivor Kamlish

Just as we were going to press, we heard the very sad news that Ivor Kamlish had died on October 30th in hospital soon after an operation. Ivor designed all our publications for many years - they are the best looking on the market, and we have been very fortunate to have had his work and talent. He was a generous, professional and hard working member and friend. We send our sincere condolences to Marian, his wife. An Obituary will appear in the January *Newsletter*.

MEMORIES OF ELY PLACE

Our photo of Ely Place in the 1930s in the last *Newsletter*, stirred memories for member Bryan Diamond. It was in this old street that he had his first job as a trainee patent agent in 1960-62, in Audrey House at the end of Ely Place. The gate to the road was kept closed, and there was a stern gatekeeper in the kiosk who controlled vehicles. Recently Bryan heard a BBC call-in programme in which a listener recalled that the church had a pub called The Mitre in its basement. Bryan says surely this is wrong, and he must have been referring to Ye Olde Mitre, in Ely Court, an alleyway off Ely Place. It is certainly not in the basement of the church!

Archaeology at the workhouse

Ruth Richardson tells us that there has been an archaeological investigation at the Middlesex Hospital Annex and former Strand Union Workhouse site in Fitzrovia. The search has recovered 55 intact human burials dating from 1780 to 1853 from three trenches dug into the ground.

Many members will recall the fascinating talk that Ruth gave to the Society regarding the relationship between Charles Dickens and this workhouse.

The Osborne Murals

In *Newsletter* 287 (May 2018) we featured three panels of local scenes painted by Cecil Osborne (1909-96) in the 1950s, commissioned by St Pancras Council. They used to decorate rooms in St Pancras (now Camden) Town Hall. At some time, they disappeared from the Town Hall - Malcolm Holmes remembered them still in place in the 1990s.

However, as reported in *Newsletter* 287, they were bought by Dr Kaori O'Connor in a weekly sale in the 1990s at an auction in the old Phillips auction rooms in Bayswater, where they were thrown in with furniture and oddments.

Ruth Richardson sent us the information that the panels were being auctioned again, in a West Norwood auction house, on 24 September. We informed Tudor Allen and he in turn urged Camden to bid for them. He talked to the appropriate Council officer and the panels were bought by Camden. According to the *Camden New Journal*, the Council paid £1809 for three 6ft x 6ft panels, which will be housed in Council premises once the panels have been renovated. Well done everyone!