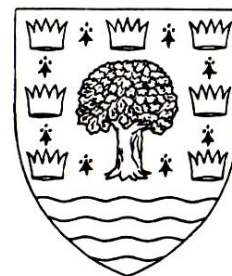


# Ilford Historical Society

## Newsletter No.111 April 2013

Editor: Georgina Green 020 8500 6045, [georgina.green@btconnect.com](mailto:georgina.green@btconnect.com)



### Sadie steps down!

After over 40 years as our Membership Secretary, Sadie Gomm has decided to let someone else have a go, and she will step down at our AGM.

Ilford Historical Society was formed in 1968 and Sadie has looked after our members since it began. A librarian with Ilford borough for many years, Sadie is a founding member and now a Vice President of the Society.

Quietly efficient with a dry sense of humour and a great advocate and supporter of our events, Sadie has always 'manned' the entry table at the Chapel taking visitor and

membership fees at our talks and special summer events. Sadie's effort, and the assurance that she brings, has added security to our evenings. Our last Committee meeting (we hold just 2 or 3 a year) was held at Sadie's home and she has often suggested topics for talks that have proved very popular.

Sadie keeps a list of members and visitors so we can keep track of how many attend our meetings and passes the money (woe betide anyone who tried to get passed her without paying!) onto Treasurer John Sharrock.

We now welcome Carol Franklin who takes over from September.

*Jef Page, Chairman, March 2013.*



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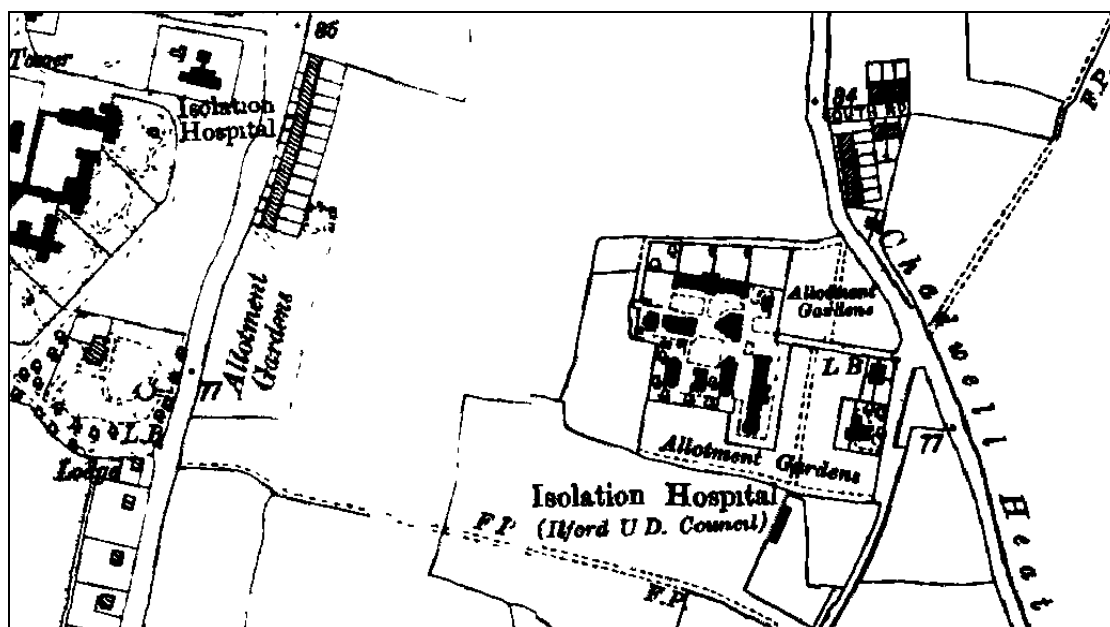
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## Ilford's Allotments

Since the turn of the century, allotments have, once again, been in demand all over the country and Ilford has been no exception. However, the allotment story is much more than a story about growing fruit and vegetables. As Ilford grew and developed, so allotments played their part in both shaping and being shaped by the landscape, the politics and its people.

In 1832, there were known to be two twenty-five acre sites, one at Barkingside (Maypole Plain) and another at Little Heath.<sup>1</sup> Ilford Council first provided allotment sites in 1889, although they did not get off to a very promising start. The Isolation Hospital (between Barley Lane and Chadwell Heath Lane) had three allotment sites attached to it, although there appeared to be little demand for plots. In September 1904, the Hospital Visiting Committee decided to use some of the allotments to dump 'manure and other refuse.'<sup>2</sup> A year later, the remaining allotments were grassed over because they were unused.<sup>3</sup> Whether the hospital staff, patients or local residents used the hospital allotments remains something of a mystery. The only known plot holder is Adolphus William Prudence, who lived and worked as a groom, servant and gardener at the hospital.

The movement really took off with the advent of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1907, which put county councils under a duty to provide allotments where demand existed. By 1910, Ilford had 24½ acres and 157 plot holders. By 1911, it had acquired another 14 acres and 90 more plot holders, paying around 6d. per rod per year.<sup>4</sup> Ilford's rents were quite cheap compared to other localities. Birmingham, for example, charged between 2s. 6d. – 3s. 1¾d. per rod per annum. The Seven Kings and Goodmayes Horticultural Society was the first society in the area to secure land for allotments for its members. From an initial holding of ninety plots circa 1909, it managed over nine hundred by 1925.



*Ordnance Survey map 1921 The Isolation Hospital Allotment Gardens*

<sup>1</sup> Pattenden, V., 2010 In J Burchardt and J. Cooper (eds.), *Breaking New Ground*, Milton Keynes: FACHRS Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Ilford Council Minutes 24<sup>th</sup> September 1904 p.811

<sup>3</sup> Ilford Council Minutes 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1905 p.749

<sup>4</sup> Donald, R. 1908; 1911; 1913, *The Municipal Year Book(s) of the United Kingdom*. London: Edward Lloyd

William Buck is the first-named plot holder in Ilford's Council Minutes and is recorded as taking over a plot from Harrison at the Hatch Lane site.<sup>5</sup> The 1901 census documents William Buck, as a florist, and his wife, a market gardener, living at 6 Florence Terrace, Birkbeck Road, which is near the Hatch Lane site. (Harrison, however, was not traceable through the census returns.) By 1911, Buck, who was then fifty-four years old, had become a gardener and moved to Perrymans Farm Road. It is not known if he maintained his allotment after the move. Buck was born in Stepney, East London and Phoebe was born in Norfolk.<sup>6</sup>

The plot holders held a range of jobs, including general labourers, 'fish carman' (mobile fish and chip sellers) to clerks, civil servants and a chartered secretary.<sup>7</sup> Historically, allotments have been associated with poverty but the majority of Ilford's new residents, as well as its plot holders, were not unskilled/unemployed men but home-owning, skilled manual or managerial/supervisory workers. Consequently, they probably grew-their-own as a hobby rather than a necessity.



*New North Road Allotment Site 2010*

The typical Ilford allotment holder lived less than a mile away from his allotment site, in a terraced house with a double-bay window, two reception rooms and three bedrooms.<sup>8</sup> In 1908, this type of house cost about £300 freehold or £220 leasehold. It appears that the allotment holders were all men, and on average, were thirty-nine years old and married with two children. Over two-thirds of plot holders were born outside of the district, which is not surprising given that the population of

Ilford more than doubled between 1900 and 1911. Many of these new residents were anxious to get to know their neighbours, make new friends and build social networks. Ilford's many clubs, societies and allotment sites offered just such an opportunity.

There were many advantages to having an allotment, not least of which was the relatively small rent paid for a plot, about ten shillings a year. Compared to the yearly subscription to Ilford golf club—seven guineas—an allotment was cheap and unlike a game of golf or tennis, there was no limit to the amount of time one could spend on the plot. Allotments also offered a social networking opportunity through the horticultural shows, competitions, outings, New Year's Eve dances, concerts and annual dinners organised by the societies. These events were a chance for plot holders to meet like-minded people and their families and also make friends.

During the 1930s, allotments were provided to help the unemployed feed themselves and occupy their time fruitfully. When WWII broke out, the Dig for Victory campaign turned

<sup>5</sup> Ilford Council Minutes 7<sup>th</sup> July 1908 p.493

<sup>6</sup> 1901 & 1911 census returns

<sup>7</sup> 1911 census returns

<sup>8</sup> 1911 census returns



every spare piece of land in Ilford into a growing space. The local allotment societies, including Seven Kings and Goodmayes Allotment Society, North Hainault Allotment Holders and Protection Society, Ilford Allotment Society and Barley Lane Allotment Society managed many of the thousands of wartime plots, including hundreds in the borough's parks. Even after the ending of hostilities, food shortages were so great that demand for allotments continued. In fact, some requisitioned land, such as the site at Doctor Barnardo's Village in Barkingside, was not released until 1953.<sup>9</sup>

The beginning of the 1950s saw the last of the seven Allotments Acts and a consultation between the Council and the societies about the future of their allotments. Several sites were identified as future potential allotments, including part of Ilford golf course, 3 acres east of Barkingside station, 2.5 acres in Chase Lane and 9 acres in Roding Lane West. However, before many of the new sites were developed, the government withdrew its support and grants for allotments and demand, which had been falling, continued to decline. In 1949, Ilford had 538 acres of allotments. By 1959, there were 289 acres and by 1961, only 80 acres remained. In 1965, when Ilford became part of Redbridge the new borough had a combined 180 acres of allotments, which provided about 2800 plots.<sup>10</sup>

There has always been a contention between land for development and land for allotments and over the last sixty years, Ilford's allotment holders have fought many battles to save their sites. Although a few battles were won, some sites, many of which had been under cultivation for years, such as the former Percival Garden site, were lost. Today, Redbridge has a vibrant allotment movement with a high demand for its 2000 plots scattered amongst its twenty-five allotment sites.

© Lesley Acton PhD, January 2013

*Allotments at Water Lane (Loxford) 1925  
(scale 6 inches to 1 mile)<sup>11</sup>*

***See back page for details of the  
Museum exhibition which includes a  
section on allotments***



<sup>9</sup> Ilford Council Minutes 9<sup>th</sup> March 1953 p.1567

<sup>10</sup> Borough Surveyor's Report for Redbridge Allotments Committee 1965

<sup>11</sup> Redbridge local studies archive

## Sources for local history : Magazines

Many specialist magazines can provide local information in their particular field.

Researchers looking into the history and people of the Great Eastern Railway can find a wealth of information in the **Great Eastern Railway magazine**, produced from 1911 to 1926. Though the former Eastern Counties Railway had been a somewhat ramshackle affair, undercapitalised and poorly run, by the end of the 19th century its successor the GER was well managed, profitable and forward looking. It ran one of the most intensive suburban rail services ever seen, using steam power alone, but was strangely resistant to electrification which did not reach Ilford until 1949.

From 1911 to 1926 (when it had been absorbed in the London and North Eastern Railway) the GER produced a staff magazine. Apart from articles about GER matters it also ran features on more general railway subjects such as one on railway authors appearing in 1913. For family historians there is information about staff changes, including deaths and marriages, though not births. One feature in 1913 covers the managerial staff of the Liverpool Street division, including the stationmaster at Ilford, Mr Unwin, whose photo appears. Perhaps he took over from George Pallant who died in 1906 and whose funeral was attended by over 2000 people.

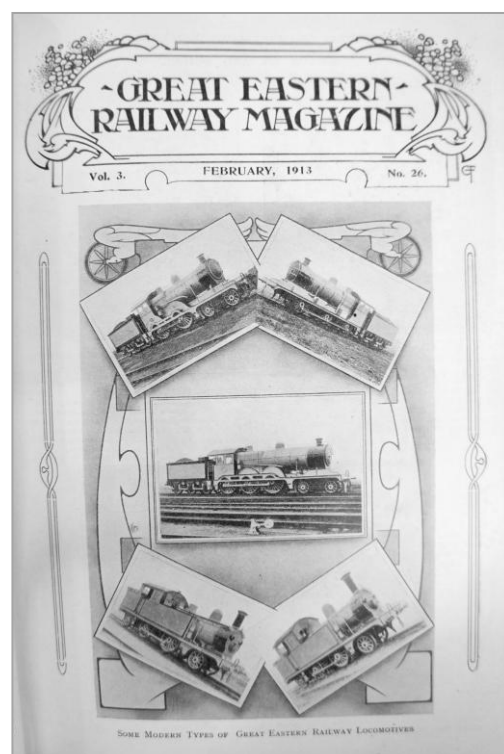
In a short browse in the 1913 bound volume I found details of the marriage of the shunter at Chadwell Heath and, just outside our area, information that the booking clerk at Maryland Point (as Maryland station was then called) was off to take up a post with Uganda Railway. His colleagues presented him with a Thermos flask!

Originals can be seen in the National Railway Museum at York where they are housed in the library (known as "Search Engine"). However, the Great Eastern Railway Society has produced them all on a double DVD at a cost of £15 which seems good value.



Great Eastern Railway Society website  
[www.gersociety.org.uk](http://www.gersociety.org.uk)

© Roger Backhouse, 8 February 2013





## Listed Building : Barnardo's at Tanners Lane, Barkingside

Thomas Barnardo came to London in 1866 and found children sleeping in the streets and being forced to beg for food. It was in 1867 that he set up the Ragged School and started helping the abused, vulnerable, forgotten and neglected children of East London. By the time he died in 1905, the charity he founded ran 96 homes caring for more than 8,500 children. Following his death his work continued and now Barnardo's helps more than 200,000 children, young people and their families every year. (<http://www.barnardos.org.uk>)

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings/>

DR BARNARDO'S MEMORIAL AT BARNARDO'S, **Grade: II\***

TWENTY-TWO COTTAGE HOMES AT BARNARDO'S, **Grade: II**

CAIRNS COTTAGE AT BARNARDO'S, **Grade: II**

FOUNTAIN ON THE GREEN AT BARNARDO'S, **Grade: II**

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AND LYCH GATE AT BARNARDO'S, **Grade: II**

LODGE AND BOUNDARY WALLS TO BARNARDO'S, **Grade: II**

Those of you who visit Barkingside from time to time must have noticed that major building work is taking place at Barnardo's site. For a start, they will have a new headquarters.

I obtained permission to photograph the listed structures at Barnardo's before it became a building site and I will include some of my photos in the following pages. I will be



pleased to give listing details of specific buildings to members on request. Or please see the website e.g. <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1081001>

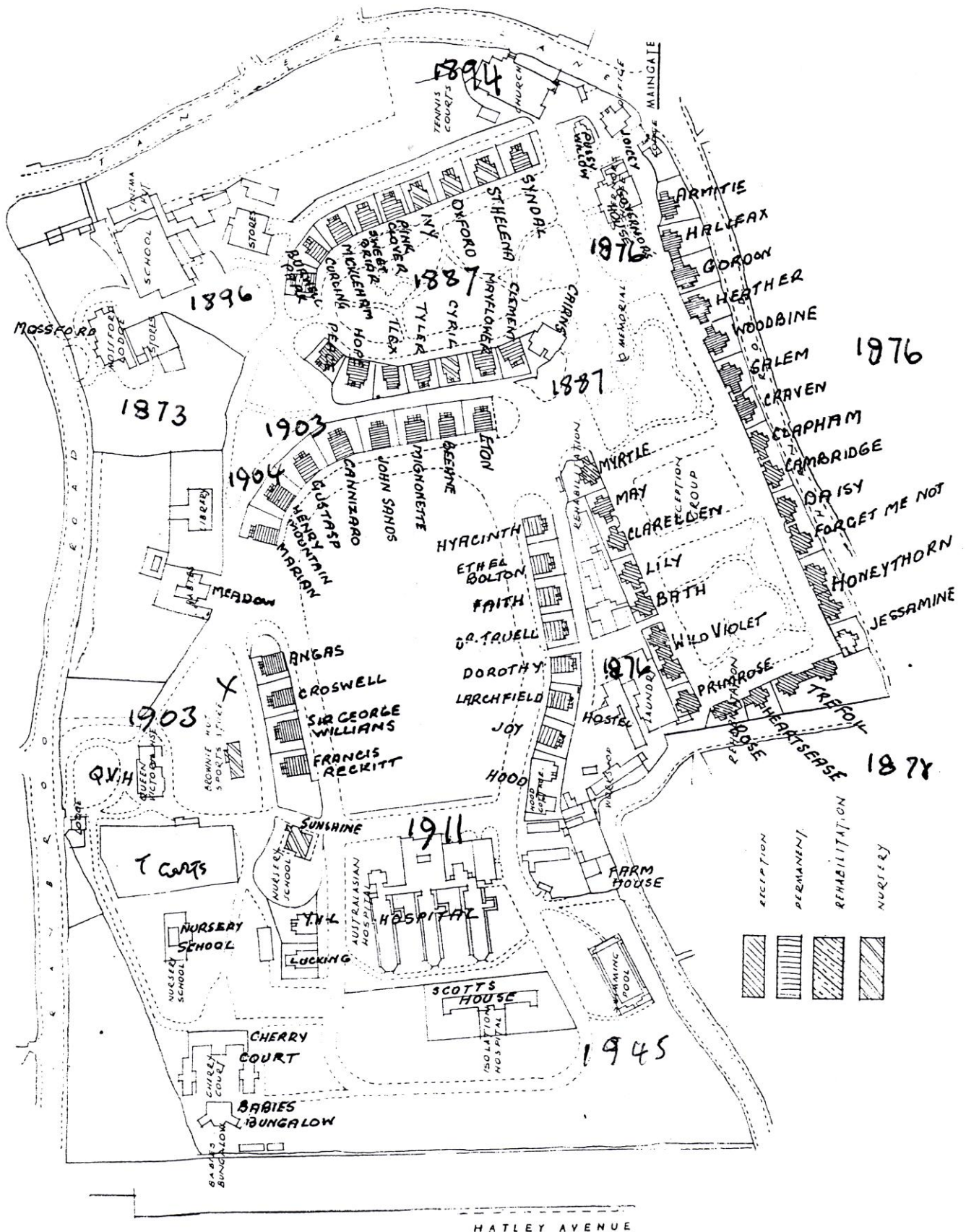
While taking photographs on 14 October 2011, I met David Woodward, Assistant Director, who told me a fair bit about the site and development proposals. They would demolish the admin block and build more accommodation there. They wanted to extend the Cottages on the north side of the green so that they appear to have two "fronts". This would give a more pleasing aspect from the roadway on that side, as they plan to open up the site to wider public access eventually. Much of this is now happening and the new HQ is growing every day.

He mentioned that Lord Cairns and Lord Stradbroke were both generous to Dr Barnardo, and both later went to Australia which gave them the idea of sending children there.

Following on from contacts made at that time, I include below an article based on notes made by Derek Wills for a talk. He first worked at the Village as a House Parent, then as a Group Leader at the residential home and school for disabled children, and finally as an After Care Officer, visiting those who had previously been in Barnardo's care.

***Georgina Green, 1 March 2013***

# PLAN OF DR. BARNARDO'S VILLAGE HOME — c.1957





## The Girls' Village Home at Barkingside

When Dr Thomas John Barnardo opened his home for homeless boys in Stepney, under the banner "No destitute child ever refused admission" his main effort was towards the care of boys, getting them off the streets and trying to teach them a trade so that they would become responsible men in the future.

On his marriage in 1873 to Syrie Elmslie, Thomas Barnardo was given Mossford Lodge as a wedding present by Sir John Sands, chairman of the London Stock Exchange, on the understanding that a work for girls should also begin. The new Mrs Barnardo shared her husband's Christian faith and his enthusiasm for the work that he was doing amongst the boys. Mossford Lodge, a large rambling house, was much too large for two people and so the opportunity to start his work for girls was conceived: the rear of Mossford Lodge was converted to take 60 girls. This was soon full and it was evident that this was a work which was very necessary in the East End of London.

By the middle of 1875 enough money had been raised to build 14 cottages, each costing between £500 - £600. In 1876 the Governor's House and laundry were built. By 1879 there were 24 cottages in place, each housing 15 – 20 girls with a housemother to look after them. All these cottages were built around three greens. Perhaps the most notable of those surrounding the green is Cairns with its iconic clock tower. Designed in 1887 the building was larger than the other cottages and was in effect two semi-detached units. The distinctive octagonal clock tower houses the four clock faces within dormers protruding from the spire. The whole is topped by a weather vane with the name 'Cairns' fretted into its tail. The clock mechanism is by Thwaites & Reed of Clerkenwell and is contemporary with the building. It was hand wound and chimed the hour. It was restored in 1995 (with an automatic winding mechanism) and in 2005 the familiar 'Westminster' quarter chimes were brought back into service. Previously it took an hour to climb to the roof and up the tower and wind the clock, a process needed twice a week in all weathers.



In 1894 the children's church at the Village was completed. The architect chosen for the job was a well known London architect, Ebenezer Gregg. On Sunday 25 June 1892 a group of dignitaries and supporters gathered to watch a memorial stone being put in place by the generous lady donor who requested that she remain anonymous. This stone, which can be seen in the entrance porch, reads "This church is dedicated to the glory of God. In loving memory of her father and mother by their daughter." The completed children's church was dedicated for worship in April 1894 by the Bishop of Colchester. The children attended three times a week, at



10.30am and 6.30pm on a Sunday and at 7.30pm on Wednesdays for bible study. There was also a Tuesday lunchtime devotional service for staff, a tradition which continues to this day. When the church was built, a space was left for an organ to be added, but it was not until 1935 that the present electric organ was made by 'Spurden Rutt', a company in Leyton.

In 1896 Mossford School was put in place for children with disabilities.

In 1903 seven more cottages were built on the main green where Tesco now stands, and Queen Victoria House was built to prepare the girls who were being sent abroad. This later became a nurses training centre and is now used as the local Registry for Births, Deaths and Marriages. Also in 1903 Barkingside Station opened, at that time it was for steam trains from Liverpool Street to Barkingside, via Ilford.

By 1905 the village covered 60 acres with a total of 64 cottages for 1,300 girls.

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 1905 Dr Thomas John Barnardo passed peacefully away at his home in Surbiton, South London. His body was brought by special train for a funeral on 27<sup>th</sup> September. After lying in state in the children's church for friends to show their respects, Dr Barnardo was cremated and his remains laid to rest on 4<sup>th</sup> October at a spot in the grounds he had chosen himself. In June 1908 the 18 foot high memorial to Dr Barnardo, sculpted by Sir George Frampton was unveiled by HRH The Duchess of Albany (widow of Prince Leopold, Queen Victoria's youngest daughter-in-law).



During the 1930s boys were admitted to the Village for the first time, which meant that brothers and sisters were no longer split up. 1,500 children were evacuated from the Village during World War II.

In 1945 the swimming pool was built, using Irish labour. It was filled using cold water from the mains. The only problem was that every time it needed to be refilled the residents of Ashurst Drive needed to be told in advance that their water pressure would be reduced!

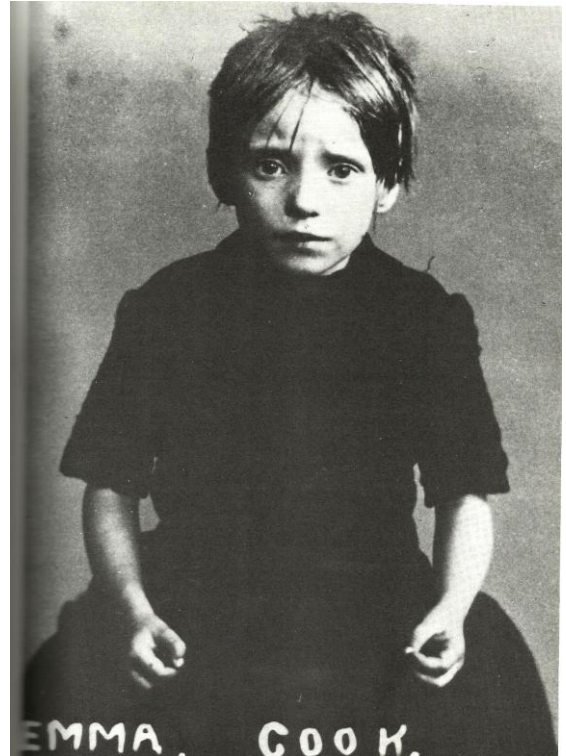
In the 1960s plans were agreed to reduce the number of children living at the Village so that smaller family groups could be nurtured. In 1965 Mossford Lodge was vacated and the Magistrates Court was later built on the site. In 1967 the orchard was cleared and new headquarters were built there after 99 years in Stepney. The new building was officially opened in March 1969. Also in 1969 Barnardo's sold 30 acres to Redbridge Borough Council who planned to develop a civic centre on the site. Fulwell Schools were built next to Queen Victoria House and other land was later sold on by the council to Tesco. The three remaining cottages became local authority children's homes.

New Mossford residential school for young people with disabilities was opened in 1975 on Barnardo's land behind the memorial. This has a medical centre and a hydrotherapy pool. Long term care at the Barkingside Village ceased in 1979 but with the new headquarters the site will continue as the home of one of the country's leading charities, helping young people.

© **Derek Wills, January 2012**

## Emma Cook: A little girl rescued

To illustrate a lecture I gave concerning Ilford 100 years ago I used a photo of six year old Emma Cook. It's a posed one taken by Dr Barnardo's in 1887 for their records and used by them to pull the heart strings of wealthy patrons to encourage them to make donations (preferably large) to the children's charity and homes. Emma stares out at us confused and frightened, with wide bulging eyes, hands half-clenched. Barnardo's archive of photos are extensive: 55,000 images were taken between 1874-1905 showing young children; those in desperate need of care, photographed by Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone. The photo of Emma appears in "*Oscar Wilde's London*" and the short caption tells us that Emma was one of a family of six children whose father had died and whose mother- "a respectable woman" - couldn't cope due to her poor health. So at the tender age of six and a half, she was taken into care at Dr Barnardo's to join two sisters already there. As I finalised my talk I began to realise that Emma must have come and stayed in the Barkingside cottages, so I decided to try to find out all I could about her. What makes Emma so rare - and important - is that she is identified: not just a nameless, sad little face in a book.



At Barnardo's successful 22<sup>nd</sup> AGM held at Exeter Hall on The Strand on 23 June 1888 (*The Times* 24 and 25 June 1888), Dr Thomas Barnardo told his distinguished audience that since their founding in 1866 they had rescued over 10,000 boys and girls and in the last year 3,381 children had been admitted to his homes - a frighteningly large number of children in need. They were now responsible for 34 institutions (19 for the maintenance of destitute children), 19 new cottages had been opened at Ilford and an infirmary for sick children. It had been a harsh winter and they had distributed 18,000 free meals and thousands of clothes for those living rough on the streets or in their care. 1,000 children had been sent out to 'situations' (taken jobs in domestic service where they were highly prized as well-trained), or restored to their families.

On the darker side, children had died in their care and a large number of babies had died at the "Babies Castle" (he reported 100, one cause being overcrowding. This was at Hawkhurst Castle, Kent which officially opened in 1886, closed 1965), although the next day he immediately wrote to *The Times* to reduce this to the lower figure of 46. 406 children had emigrated - sent to start a new life in the colonies - but not always a happy one - whatever they were told.

Finances were running into problems. Even though it was clear that Barnardo's were doing vital and invaluable work not everyone approved and expenditure was up to £100,000 a year and debts were running at £7,000. But Barnardo's offered compassion, care, and shelter when few other organisations did. The Foundling Hospital (north of Great Ormond Street) cared for foundlings - orphan babies left on their steps, and the Salvation Army cared for destitute adults. Emma Cook was just one sad little case amongst thousands.

It's no easy task getting information and help out of Barnardo's. Numerous phone calls and enquiries just got me the run-around but my persistence paid off when grudgingly I was referred to the University of Liverpool where they hold Barnardo's archives. The Archivist dug out the relevant file and a few facts about Emma trickled out.

Emma Cook, daughter of Matilda and Joseph Cook labourer, was born at 59 Duckett Street, Mile End Old Town on 6th January 1881. She was rescued (Barnardo's term) in June 1887 and admitted to the girls' village in Barkingside in December 1887. Their archives are held by the University. Emma is in the 1887 Casebook, Admission Register no.2, file no.D239/02.1/2, but the first thing the Archivist told me was that the entry had been deleted, as if Emma had immediately left Barnardo's. But it seems she stayed till March 1892 at which time (aged 11) she returned to the care of her mother.

Emma was described as having sandy-coloured hair, a fair complexion and blue eyes. None of this emerges from the photo because, of course, it's a standard black and white Victorian one. She was poorly dressed but clean and had been vaccinated (against what?). She was only 3ft-4ins tall which seems small for her age but perhaps she was undernourished. Barnardo's methods of photography were extensive, as is their archive, and they took photos of the children at the time they were rescued, and again after they had been cleaned up and made to look respectable and presentable for the camera, i.e. in new clothes, to encourage public donations. A photographer was first engaged in 1874 and between 1874-1905 Thomas Barnes and his successor Roderick Johnstone took over 55,000 images.

And that's about all I've been able to prize out of Barnardo's. I still don't know what happened to Emma as an adult and whether she and her family were OK. We look forward to a more liberal and helpful policy of openness. I'd been thinking about this for a long time, trying to think of ways to follow up Emma's life but I always got stuck when confronting Barnardo's and their unhelpful, stone-walling tactics. However, with more Census records available on-line and having an ace family historian researcher in the family, my sister Madeleine, I asked her to see what she could find out. This inched us forward a bit.

A public meeting was held at Dr Barnardo's church in September 2011 to recall their history and outline future plans for the site. One cottage was recently open as a museum for Open House along with guided tours of the site (which I and my wife went on - it was very good) which will still be owned by Barnardo's. The cottages are to be preserved and offered for housing along with the church and green which are to be saved. The massive head-quarters office block in Tanners Lane Barkingside will be demolished (a shame - I don't think) and rebuilt as a two-wing three-storey one. New houses and flats are to be built along Horns Road.

Great Thanks to Madeleine Janes.

*Oscar Wilde's London* by Von Eckhardt, Gilman, & Chamberlin, pp154-155, Michael O'Mara Ltd, 1987. This is a very good general history of London in the late Victorian period, well illustrated with numerous b&w photos including ones of Barnardo and Emma.

Peter Ackroyd in "*Dickens London*" uses many children's photos but he doesn't caption or identify them- maybe he wasn't allowed to. That's why the photo of Emma is so rare - she is identified in the text as an individual - not just a nameless face.

Blake Morrison "*The Doctor's Children*", *The Independent*, Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 1995. An excellent article on the large photographic archive, identifying some children by name though not with accompanying photographs, and looking at some of the problems and accusations Barnardo faced.



*“The Camera and Dr Barnardo”*, 1975 (based on a 1974 National Portrait Gallery exhibition). No author is credited but there are excellent archive photos of the children, and essays by Gillian Wagner and Valerie Lloyd.

© *Jef Page, 28 February 2013.*

## Visit Reports

**Sutton House, 2 and 4 Homerton High Street, Hackney, E9 6JQ Tel: 020 8986 2264**

Our outing to Sutton House on 30 November was a runaway success, in terms of numbers (fifteen), and because we all made it, even though there was no handy tube station and we each arrived with a different traveller’s tale!

Sutton House, due to its size and location, must be one of the National Trust’s least regarded properties but it certainly has a story to tell. It was originally built by Ralph Sadleir, who was brought up in the household of Thomas Cromwell and was a courtier of Henry VIII, but has progressively been a merchant’s house, a school, a church community centre, a fire warden’s post, a squat and the renovated property that it is today. The Tudor panelling and original fire places are particularly interesting because fixtures and fittings of this time, belonging to the middle classes, are rare.

Sutton House is the oldest surviving domestic building in Hackney and the second oldest in East London (the oldest being the near derelict Bromley Hall near the Blackwall Tunnel). With the adjacent street, Sutton Place, it forms a charming corner of Hackney. Sutton Place was built between 1790 and 1806 and links Homerton High Street with St John’s Church Gardens which lead into Mare Street.

**National Army Museum,**

**Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HT Tel: 020 7881 6606**

It was freezing cold when we visited Sutton House but we didn’t have the snow and ice which we had to contend with at the National Army Museum. As a result, only a hardy few got there!

We started with a talk on ‘Fighting Words’ explaining how some of the words and phrases that we use today originated in the army. The speaker, who seemed a bit brusque until he warmed to our group’s charms, appeared with a rifle! He used it to illustrate such terms as ‘lock, stock and barrel’ (parts of the gun) and, ‘flash in the pan’ (the failure of a gun to fire although a small amount of gunpowder has ignited in the priming pan). He took us to India for ‘gymkhana’, ‘pyjama’, ‘bungalow’ and Doolally Tap (a corruption of Deolali, a British Army transit camp, where men developed ‘camp fever’ waiting for ships back to ‘Blighty’). He also mentioned clothing terms that owe their origin to the army such as cardigan, raglan and wellington.

We then walked around the exhibits which show scenes from the army’s long history. We saw a diorama of the Battle of Waterloo, were harangued by a World War I recruiting sergeant and saw the sophisticated remedy for shock handed out to troops with minor injuries during D Day, a cup of hot sweet tea!

A small friendly museum, if you don’t mind a rifle-toting speaker, and the shoppers’ paradise of King’s Road for you to explore afterwards – the perfect day!

**Janet Seward, 15 March 2013**

## **More on Balfour Road** (See our August 2012 newsletter, No.109, pages 6-7)

Further evidence of the origin of Balfour Road comes in the Ilford Recorder of 20 April 1906. This mentioned the release of Jabez Balfour from Parkhurst Prison at the end of his prison sentence for fraud. He was met by his son.

The Recorder states that “his name is perpetrated in Balfour Road”. It is odd that the origin of the name then became lost.

Thanks to research by Morna Daniels (Chingford Historical Society) we now know that the Balfour group also bought land in North Chingford for development but in this case did not appear to use names associated with directors.

*Roger Backhouse, February 2013*

## **From the Museum: Churchill Memorabilia**

In 1996, when I was Secretary of the Woodford Historical Society, I was introduced to a delightful lady called Vera Wilson who had been the Secretary of the Wanstead and Woodford Conservative Association for many years during the time that Sir Winston Churchill was the Member of Parliament for the constituency. I spent an enjoyable couple of evenings with her, recording her memories, which were written up as an article in the Woodford Historical Society Spring 1997 newsletter.

Extracts from this appear below.

Following on from this I was able to suggest to Vera that she might consider leaving some of her Churchill memorabilia to the Redbridge Museum, as she had no children. I was delighted that she accepted my suggestion, and in fact she agreed to donate some items to the Museum without delay. Vicky Knapman (later DeWit), who was then setting up the Museum, invited her to a formal hand-over ceremony and the museum now holds a good number of items such as the campaign poster opposite, a letter from Sir Winston Churchill and some Christmas cards with his own watercolour paintings reproduced, photographs, letters and telegrams from Winston’s wife Clementina, and an order of service for Winston’s funeral, most of which is displayed in the museum.

*Georgina Green, March 2013*



Sir Winston Churchill was Member of Parliament for the people of Wanstead and Woodford for over 35 years. He retired in 1964 aged 89. In 1959 a statue of Churchill was erected on Woodford Green as a tribute to his service to the Borough. This poster shows the distinctive profile of Churchill and would have been placed in the window of a supporter’s house. His profile was so famous, the poster did not need any words to get its message across.

*Reproduced courtesy of Redbridge Information and Heritage Service*

## **Memories of Sir Winston Church by Vera Wilson**

I was born in 1906 at Painswick in the Cotswolds and came to live at Wanstead when I got married in 1933. We had a flat in Blake Hall Road during the war years and came to Cheyne Avenue in 1958. However, the Churchills didn’t have a home in the constituency. When they

were not at no.10 they had a flat at Hyde Park Gate, and of course there was Chartwell. Being Prime Minister, Churchill didn't visit the constituency all that much, but he came whenever he could and Mrs.Churchill used to come a lot. All through the Blitz, if places had been badly bombed she used to come and talk to people - very sweet she was.

The first time I met Lady Churchill was in the time of the doodlebugs (V1 rockets), though of course she was just Mrs.Churchill then. I had a part-time clerical job at a firm which made spare parts for planes and submarines, and I was also a part-time ARP warden at Post 40 in Tennyson Avenue. One Thursday afternoon (13 July 1944), while I was at work, a doodlebug came over and hit the Bostock's house in Tennyson Avenue. It destroyed the house, but none of the family was hurt. (Mr.Bostock was a fellow ARP warden on Post 40.) On the Saturday afternoon "Bossie" got his two brothers to help him and they were going through the rubble when another doodlebug hit the same spot. They said it must have been from the same ramp, with the same wind, and it hit the house again and all three brothers were killed. Their parents lived opposite in Tennyson Avenue and they were devastated. We were all shocked. I remember the Chief Warden asked me to phone someone, but I just couldn't speak. The WRVS were on the scene in no time and gave me a cup of tea, but it was so sweet I couldn't drink it.

Sir James Hawkey was the Mayor and he informed Mrs.Churchill of the terrible "incident", and she came to see everyone and conveyed her sympathy to the family. I remember Mrs.Palmer lived down the road and she had given up her lawn for a chicken run because eggs were like gold dust in the war. Anyway, she came and presented Mrs.Churchill with a pretty box lined with cotton wool and with four eggs in it "for Mr.Churchill's breakfast". She was very amused as Mrs.Palmer had written the names of each of the hens on the eggs, and one was called "Henrietta".

When I first knew Churchill, for the first election after the war (held on 16 July 1945), Fred Mummery was the agent. He lived in Byron Avenue. We had Snaresbrook Hall near the Eagle, where the Lustys used to live, as a committee room and we had a switchboard there. I was on duty one day, manning the phones, when a secretary rang up with Mr.Churchill to speak to Mr.Mummery. So I said "I'll put you through." Churchill immediately started by asking Fred a question - I can't remember what it was, and Fred started to answer "I think..." when a voice came booming down the line "I don't want to know what you are thinking, I want to know what you are doing!" it was such a furious voice. Poor old Fred had gastric trouble and I do think that election half killed him, as he didn't live very long after that.

I remember meeting Mrs.Churchill during the run up to the first election after the war, when she came round all the committee rooms and met the people. It's the women who do most of the work during an election, organise things, writing things up and a lot of the canvassing. I got to know her better when I took over as secretary of the Wanstead Branch in 1952. We used to have a yearly Whist Drive for the women and Lady Churchill would come and present the prizes.

I was secretary of the Wanstead Branch of the Conservative Association from 1952 for about eight years, until they asked me to take over the Women's section (for the whole constituency) and then I gave up it as I couldn't do both. (I was also on Essex County Council as well.) I ran the Women's section for about six years. I used to enjoy that. It was a lot of work but we had a wonderful agent, Col.Barlow-Wheeler who was so helpful.



Lady Churchill often came to the garden party, or one of the daughters would come. I remember Randolph came once too. One year when Sir Winston came, I think it was in 1956, I was busy sorting things out around lunch time, getting things ready, and one of the secretaries rang me up and said "Is there a television set at the club?" So I said "Yes I think so", and she said "Well can you get it down into that big room, where you receive people. Sir Winston's horse (Le Pretendant, his name was) is running in the 2.30. I know he's suppose to open it at 2.30 but do you think you could postpone the opening just a bit and let him watch the race." So I rang the club and they bought the television down. Well Lady Churchill and Sir Winston arrived and we received them - my husband was the Treasurer of Wanstead at that time, and we all went in and watched it, and the horse won! There was great excitement.



He was really boyish, laughing and giggling over it, and he won £14,000. So he said "Now Clemmy, you can go out and spend a nice lot of money on the stalls." He was great fun like that.

The statue of Sir Winston on the Green was unveiled on a Saturday (31 October 1959) and on the previous Thursday we had our annual women's Whist Drive and Lady Churchill came to present the prizes. So she said "I suppose you haven't seen the statue?" and I said "No, it's all wrapped up. None of us will see it till Saturday." Well, she hardly ever wore a hat you know, she used to wear pretty little net things over her hair. So she said "Oh well, I suppose somebody'll have to go down to Chartwell and fetch my best hat! I'd better wear a hat, hadn't I." She didn't like the statue when she saw it. She said it was a good thing it was in the forest because it was very like a

cow. That's what she said to me. I don't know whether Winston liked it or not. He just looked at it, but didn't say a thing. I think it's quite alright.

Every year they had a big garden party at Chartwell for the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) and always, the day before when everything was nicely arranged, I was invited to take forty women workers from the constituency. Of course, Churchill wasn't always there, but then sometimes we would see him and Lord Montgomery might be there too. We had tables set out on the lawn and we always had a beautiful tea with gorgeous raspberries and cream. They were the nicest raspberries you ever saw, grown in the garden. I used to sit at his table with Col. Barlow-Wheeler and one of the secretaries and he was very charming. I remember on one occasion a waiter came round with a tray of cakes and we were talking about something, so I just took a cake, and Sir Winston said "You didn't choose that, you just took one. Put it back and choose something that's nicer."

I used to love going to the garden parties at Chartwell, seeing all the fish, and there was a poodle they used to have. There was a studio with all his paintings - I didn't like all of them,

but some of them were very nice. I remember in the drawing room there was a Victorian cabinet on legs, Lady Churchill said it had belonged to her mother, and it had a workbox on top for needles and cottons. When you opened the top it had a mirror there. Well, she'd had the box-part lined with zinc or something like that and she used it for flowers. It looked absolutely beautiful because the flowers were reflected in the mirror as well. When we were there, in the summertime, it was nearly always full of sweet peas. Across the kitchen garden they used to grow the most beautiful sweet peas and the gardener used to do it with very dark ones in the middle and then they faded away to almost white at the end of the rows - he must have sown the seeds all separately.

When Churchill died Patrick (Jenkin) organised it for several of us to go to the lying in state. We didn't have to queue like so many did. I went to the funeral with Bob (Mitchell), who was chairman of the constituency at the time, and Hugh Barlow-Wheeler and his wife, and the treasurer. Everything was wonderfully organised. You drove up and there were soldiers waiting to take your car away and have it back when you were ready to go home. Everything went without a hitch. It was a great occasion. The Queen and other members of the royal family there. I remember thinking that the Queen looked terribly upset. I know she was very fond of him and I think she had been crying.

*This article is edited from one in the Woodford Historical Society newsletter, Spring 1997*

**Redbridge Museum is open Tuesday – Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm and  
Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm. Admission Free. Closed Sunday & Monday.**

There is a new exhibition on "Great Gardens" which runs until 22 June. This is on the first floor of the library and covers a wide range of topics of local interest including Wanstead and Valentines gardens and parks, Harts at Woodford, Claybury, Hainault Forest, Fairlop Fair, William Morris, farms, parks, allotments and private gardens.

Redbridge Museum, Central Library, Clements Road, Ilford, IG1 1EA Phone 020 8708 2432  
[www.redbridge.gov.uk/museum](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/museum)

A companion exhibition on the gardens is also on display at **Valentines Mansion** but please note this is no longer open regularly on a Wednesday. Until November it will be open every Tuesday and Sunday, on Bank Holiday Mondays, and Monday to Thursday during school holidays. Please check their website [www.valentinesmansion.com](http://www.valentinesmansion.com) or phone 020 8708 8100 for exact times and details of events organised by LB Redbridge at Valentines Mansion and in the Park.

## **Forthcoming Events**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30pm **1953: The Coronation and Ilford**

with talks by Janet Seward: *1953: Elizabeth II's Coronation* and Jef Page: *Ilford in 1953* at Valentines Mansion. Tickets £3 to include light refreshments.

**The next newsletter will be posted to our members in August 2013.**

Our new season will kick off with a talk on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30pm  
**Essex Traditional Farm Buildings** by Anne Padfield