Welcome Carol Franklin

We give a warm welcome to Carol Franklin who I have known for many years and she takes over as Membership Secretary. Carol has in fact done similar work to assist Ilford Chess Club (with husband Ron). Carol is quick on the Ipad, an Arsenal supporter like me (of course), a dab hand at Google with wide historical knowledge and brings new ideas to the Society. Carol says she “is looking forward to taking the Society forward, expanding on what Sadie did for many years and building upon her work for the Society”.

Jef Page, Chairman, March 2013.

This edition of our newsletter has fewer articles than usual, but those included are by four different members, and each has considerable merit. Those of us who accompanied Janet Plimmer on her walk around the Romford Garden Suburb will not be surprised that she has written such an informative but enjoyable article - and Roger always comes up trumps! I know Jef has been studying two paintings by T R C Dibdin (1810-1893) for a long time and his article is a result of much research. It is unfortunate our finances can’t stretch to printing the pictures in colour!

My own article, with references to the Surman family of Valentines, was written for the newsletter of the Friends of Valentines Mansion but there was never enough space to include it and I hope you will agree it is a good example of how letters can put flesh on the bones of the past. More recently, I was delighted to ask Maureen Stiller, our speaker in January, about a connection between Sir Charles Raymond’s daughter, the poetess Lady Sophia Burell, and Jane Austen. She pointed me in the direction of a book Jane Austen’s Outlandish Cousin - the Life and Letters of Eliza de Feuillié as Eliza was a great friend of Sophia. This did not add significantly to my research but maybe I will have space to mention the book another time.

Georgina Green.
Romford Garden Suburb

The Garden City Movement, a method of urban planning, was initiated by Sir Ebenezer Howard in 1898. His aim was to combine Town and Country and provide the working classes with an alternative to working on farms or in crowded unhealthy cities. He wanted to limit the size of existing towns and to create small satellite towns, providing housing, employment and leisure areas.

The first was Letchworth Garden City in Hertfordshire in 1903, with Welwyn Garden City following in 1920. These were successful but proved too costly for blue collar workers, so that their populations came mainly to comprise skilled middle-class workers.

The ‘Garden City’ was followed by the idea of the ‘Garden Suburb’ which would be built on the outskirts of existing cities and depend on reliable transport allowing residents to commute to the city for work, but live and have their recreation in a green and pleasant environment. Several such developments came to be built: one of the best known must be Hampstead Garden Suburb (1907).

A small ‘Garden City’ was built around 1913 on land formerly belonging to the Valentines Mansion estate, with individual styles, from conventional Edwardian to those of the more progressive Arts and Crafts movement, and with pleasant vistas into the park. (Emerson Road, Bethell Avenue, Holcombe Road etc) This was designated a Conservation Area in 1974.

A Garden Suburb was proposed for Romford in 1910 and had two periods of construction, from 1911 to the mid 1920s and a later phase in the mid 1930s. It is not widely known, although many of the same architects who designed for the Hampstead Garden Suburb also worked on the Romford development. It is in the area that has become known as Gidea Park and is a good example of domestic architecture of the 20th century.

The Gidea Hall Estate has a long story of its own – with a house on the site since 1467. As mentioned in our December 2012 newsletter (page 7), it had been in the Benyon family in the second half of the 18th century. In 1871 the estate was put on the market with a view to development for housing. It was acquired by the Balfour Group but they failed to develop – I believe the company went bust around that time. (Balfour - see our August 2012 newsletter pages 6-8)

Gidea Hall and 480 acres was eventually bought in 1897 by Sir Herbert Raphael, but he did not live in the Hall. He was a lawyer, Liberal MP and member of the LCC and also the Essex County Council, and he had experience from the Hampstead Garden Suburb, being a shareholder in that development. He founded a company, Gidea Park Ltd, to build on 360 acres of the former Gidea Hall Estate. Much of this was between the present A12 Eastern Avenue and A118 Main Road, west of Gallows Corner, but with a further 60 acres south of Main Road, down to the railway line. He also donated land for a public park in 1904 which became Raphael Park. Another 90/100 acres within the suburb were designated as open spaces – golf course, tennis courts, reed pond walk, and town square etc.

In 1910 a new railway station opened on the main line from Liverpool Street even though at that time there were just 18 season ticket holders. It was named ‘Squirrels Heath & Gidea Park’— later, as Gidea Park expanded, the station was renamed ‘Gidea Park & Squirrels Heath’ much to the annoyance of local people who had lived there long before all those newcomers!

In 1911 the Suburb was launched by a competition and exhibition which was to “demonstrate to Town Planning Authorities, to Builders and the Public generally ... the revival of Arts &
Crafts and the progress of the Garden Suburb Movement, and by so doing, to assist in raising standards of housing not only in the outer metropolis but throughout Britain.”

The competition invited architects to design houses and cottages, with prizes in different categories – for the winning design there was a Gold Medal plus £250 prize money. The winning architect was Geoffrey Lucas whose design was for a £500 house, which was built in Parkway. A total of £1,000 in prize money was given for designs of properties of different sizes, some fully fitted and furnished.

The cost of the dwellings ranged from £375 to £500 which did not include the cost of the land, the cost of a plot was upwards of £100. Finance arrangements were offered by the Company. Once purchased, a plot could be used as a garden, or trees planted, until the owner was ready to build.

Between June 1910 and June 1911, 121 architects designed for the competition, and about 150 houses and cottages were erected for the exhibition which ran from 1 June 1911 until September that year. It was widely promoted – and Romford is still being promoted as a good place to live, as it featured in the Metro newspaper property section a few weeks ago.

Janet Plimmer led a tour of the Romford Garden City for our members on 16 April 2013

Visitors to London for the Coronation of George V (on 22 June 1911) were encouraged to take the journey out to Gidea Park to view the new estate. Nearby Balgores House which predates the suburb was used as a refreshment venue during the exhibition. The exhibition catalogue was beautifully illustrated and the intention was not only to sell the houses but a complete lifestyle.

The Foundation Stone-laying Ceremony took place on 28 July 1910 at 16 Heath Drive (the stone is no longer visible as it is obscured by a later built garage) and building commenced on the north side of Main Road. At this occasion the Rt Hon John Burns MP, President of the Local Government Board, stated that the Romford Garden Suburb was ... “One of the most beautiful sites that I have been associated with in 25 years’ connection with Housing and
Town Planning ... the surroundings, formerly enjoyed in splendid isolation by the few, will be the envy of Bournemouth!” And indeed it must have developed into a lovely community for those who could afford it.

The ‘Gidea Park Club’ was founded in 1913 and offered many amenities. For an annual fee of 2 guineas per person (£2.10p) or 3 guineas per couple (£3.15), you could enjoy cricket, tennis, billiards and dancing, a Ratepayers Association, Debating Society, cheap coal, discounted insurance, concerts, dances, cinema, whist drives and a circulating library.

The construction of the suburb took almost a decade, building being frustrated by the First World War. Gidea Hall and Balgores House were used by the Ministry of War.

The second phase of development commenced in 1934 with the ‘Modern Homes Exhibition’ running from 31 July until 26 August. There was again an architectural competition for the design of dwellings in the Art Deco and Modernist Movement style. 35 houses, costing between £650 and £1475 were built to the extreme north of the suburb, towards and bordering the Southend Road (A12 Eastern Avenue) which had been constructed in 1925.

It was the stated intention of Gidea Park Limited that Gidea Hall and Gardens should remain prominent features of the suburb. But many outbuildings had disappeared by the mid 1920s and the Hall itself was demolished in 1930. However some of the features of the estate, and great cedar trees remain. The whole suburb was designated a Conservation Area in 1970.

With thanks to Havering Local Studies archive and Redbridge Local Studies archives for assistance with source material.

© Janet Plimmer, 22 April 2013

By popular demand, Janet has agreed to lead a second walk around the Romford Garden Suburb, this time to the south of Main Road. This will be on Tuesday 17 September, meeting as before at 11am by the Ship Inn in Main Road. Further information will be available at our September meeting, or phone Janet Seward on 07762 514 238. On the day please contact Janet Plimmer on 07814 569 731.

A grand day out?

Paid holidays were rare in Edwardian England. Many workers enjoyed a day out or “beano” instead. The custom goes back a long way. Best known local example in Redbridge is the Wapping boatbuilder Daniel Day who paid for his workers to travel in “Fairlop Boats” to a feast in the Forest.

Robert Noonan, writing as Robert Tressell, gives an unflattering view of one such beano in his book *The ragged trousered philanthropists*. His co-workers hired a waggonette and went on a pub crawl with a meal at the Queen Elizabeth paid for by the employer, Mr Rushton. To Robert Tressell it was an example of the hypocritical concern for workers’ welfare shown by employers, but also his dislike of alcohol as a way out of worker’s problems.

Some Ilford employers did the same. For example the developer W. P. Griggs paid for an annual dinner for his workforce, taking the opportunity in November 1904 for a speech complaining that buyers required more improvements and features to persuade them to buy at a time of a downturn in the housing market. ¹

The *Ilford Recorder* for July 1906 reports on many annual outings by staff and others, clearly considering these newsworthy. Style suggests someone in the party usually did the write-up.

By 1906 most outings reported used the railway. Given the good train service on the Great Eastern, it is not surprising some went to Southend. Saturday 6 July saw staff of Ilford’s Electricity Works head there. Whether this degenerated into an alcoholic haze remains unknown but the Recorder notes that after a look round, lunch was served at the Victoria Temperance Hotel of which it was said “all did ample justice, the ‘feeders’ and ‘distributors’ being fully taxed to keep pace with customers’ demands, but we are happy to say no ‘faults’ developed.”

Borough Engineer and Manager, Arthur H Shaw, spoke, noting that some staff had to stay behind in case of emergencies. He mentioned the forthcoming departure of W H Taylor, off to be assistant to Mr Spurr, tramways manager at Walthamstow. After a vote of thanks to Mr J Partington, the organiser, who’d been helped by an outings committee, the party set off at 9pm back arriving at Ilford 10.15pm “after a very enjoyable day”. ²

Their colleagues in Ilford Urban District Council’s Works Department were not to be outdone. Granted a day off by the Council, a hundred works staff set off for Great Yarmouth, sharing a special train with two hundred staff of Ilford Ltd. After setting off at 6.05am they arrived at “St Bloater” soon after 9. Lunch was served in two halls at Goode’s Hotel; quite a challenge for a caterer to feed 300.

According to reports the afternoon was spent in “free and easy fashion” as no programme had been arranged so presumably some might just have visited Yarmouth’s pubs. Leaving at 7.25 they arrived back in Ilford at 10.30pm, “after a most delightful day”.

Stratford Co-operative Society had branches in Ilford so their two special trains from Stratford called at Forest Gate, Ilford and Romford reaching Clacton at 10am. There is no mention of a meal provided, but as this was for employees and friends presumably some families went too.

Once at Clacton some trippers went to St Osyth, Walton and by steamer to Felixstowe. Other delights included a sham fight, “said to have been directed by Lord Methuen” but the real highlight was seeing the volunteer fire brigade called out to tackle a straw fire on a farm near Great Clacton. The Recorder notes that cab horses were requisitioned to haul the fire engine. Leaving at 8pm the train reached Stratford at 10.30, what happened to the other train is not recorded!

Excursions could involve an early start. Ilford Gas Company’s outing to Eastbourne began on the 5.23am train to Fenchurch Street, presumably with a walk to London Bridge to catch the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway’s train to Eastbourne. Trippers included staff of the engineer’s and secretary’s departments. The party of 80 split up, some going to Hastings

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² *Ilford Recorder* 13th July 1906
by steamer and others taking a drive to Beachy Head. According to the Recorder’s purple prose, “The weather was all that could be desired, the sun’s excessive rays being tempered by a delicious breeze”. Arriving back at London Bridge around 11pm they reached Ilford at midnight, “after a most enjoyable day”.

Although described by the paper as a “very enjoyable day” staff of Ilford’s Paper Mills had what sounds like the excursion to hell requiring a high level of stamina. On 7 July they set off at 5.17am from Ilford to join the 6.55 train from Holborn Viaduct to Margate, but the journey on the South Eastern and Chatham line was described as “of the most erratic description”, arriving at 10.30am instead of around 9am. The party were not downhearted, some visiting Broadstairs and Ramsgate by tram or boat. But then “we entrusted ourselves to the tender mercies of the South Eastern Railway Co”.

Deciphering the microfilm of the Recorder is not always easy. It appears they were due to depart at 8.25pm, but did not set off until 8.45 and then took 4 hours to cover 72 miles. They arrived at Holborn Viaduct with just 5 minutes to get to Liverpool Street. They missed the last train. “Finally; fifty weary travellers, male and female, tramping away through Aldgate, Mile End and Stratford” - a nine mile walk reaching Ilford at 3.30am on Sunday. Not surprisingly they resolved never to use the SER again. (The Great Eastern did not run trains through the night. Other press reports around this time suggest it was planning to introduce a 2am service out to Ilford which might have helped the weary paper mill staff. )

It wasn’t only workers who had an outing. St Clements’ Sunday school teachers are reported to have enjoyed a Saturday afternoon excursion to Loughton “to enjoy the beautiful countryside”. Setting off by train from Ilford they had tea “in a splendid garden” after which a photograph was taken and the party walked across to High Beach enjoying several Irish tales told by Mr Connell. The teachers admired village gardens with their wealth of roses and creepers, the party setting off back to Ilford at 8pm “after a happy day”.³

If Council employees enjoyed a day out so did their political masters. The Recorder notes that Councillor W. P. Griggs invited his Council and Education committee colleagues to join him in a drive to Kent one Thursday in June 1906. Two well loaded four in hand coaches set off from the Town Hall for the Woolwich Ferry and lunch at the Lion Hotel, Farningham. After tea the party set off for Ilford around 5pm. As was usual “Thanks were accorded to Councillor Griggs for his kindness and hospitality” ⁴.

³ Ilford Recorder 13th July 1906
⁴ Ilford Recorder 29th June 1906
Not only the Education Committee enjoyed a day out. Thursday 12 July 1906 saw the Urban District Council enjoying a trip on the steam launch *Royal Thames* on the river at Windsor. Such outings were noted as being an annual event, but had lapsed and restored by Councillor Bodger, Chairman of the Council, and organised by Mr Gowan, Council accountant. A party of forty two including councillors, friends, ex councillors and officers took part leaving Ilford at 7.54am for Paddington. They left Windsor at 8.15 and returned to Ilford by 11pm.

The *Recorder* noted the almost entire absence of speechmaking and mentioned that “Men grew to know each other better than they ever can through simply meeting round the Council table.” No doubt this was aided by “the agreeable accompaniment of suitable refreshments and ‘smokes’, a little harmony and first class chatter proved in the old days a first class tonic.”

The custom of an annual outing persisted into recent times. When I worked in Tower Hamlets Libraries in the late 1970s the Council granted a day off for an outing ever year. All departments closed for the day. Staff went off in various directions, and returned in differing stages of sobriety. Library staff managed outings to Brighton and Margate. Others went further afield, even reaching France. Eventually this outing day became merged with annual leave and the universal service shut down ceased.

© Roger Backhouse, February 2013

HIGH SPEED 1: The Train Now Arriving.. Destination Ilford?

View of the Construction of the Eastern Counties Railway near Ilford, 1838

By T R C DIBDIN. National Railway Museum, York

13¼" by 9¼" on stiff paper. Signed T C Dibdin in opposite corners. Watercolour sketches.

The arrival of the steam age and railway was “like nothing the neighbourhood had ever seen much less imagined”. In *Dombey and Son*, Dickens described it as like “the first shock of a great earthquake”. This is hardly surprising as the line northwest out of Euston obliterated the Camden Town area he grew up in as a child, clipping a school playground he’d played in. The railway changed England’s landscape forever but Dibdn’s pictures show none of that trauma.

I’m interested in re-discovered paintings, photos and prints that show aspects of Ilford - but particularly local paintings. Searching Arthur Waterslow’s(1) fine collection of slides in Redbridge (Information & Heritage Team- IHT, formerly Local Studies Library) I found one entitled “Construction of the Great Eastern Railway near Ilford” 1838 by Dibdin.

Photographed by Arthur, the slide is annotated by Ilford Historical Society’s late President Herbert Lockwood. Bert noted that the picture was in the National Railway Museum’s collection York (NRM), and there are many pictures and paintings of Ilford and Essex scattered all over England, little known in Redbridge.

The new Eastern Counties Railway line (ECR) was first proposed in 1834, plans and surveys were completed by November 1835, and finally construction, obtained on a 999 year lease, began in November 1837 as the ECR tried to get to Ipswich via Colchester. But beset by engineering and financial problems the line was truncated at Romford in 1839, then onto Brentwood in 1840. It wasn’t built to the wider and more comfortable 7ft-¼” broad gauge

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5 Ilford Recorder 13th July 1906
which, if more expensive, was favoured by Brunel but to the rarer 5ft gauge reduced to 4ft-8½″ in 1844. The original London terminus was Shoreditch, renamed Bishopsgate in 1847, with an earlier temporary one at Devonshire Street, Mile End. George Stephenson’s “Rocket” had only taken to the rails between Liverpool and Manchester in 1830 so the ECR were new kids on the block.

Ilford station officially opened on 30 June 1839 (special trains ran and tested the line before then). Sixty houses were demolished to make way for it and in March 1839 a special train pulling two carriages made the journey to Ilford on a trial run- the train being named the “Ilford”. So the 1838 date was clearly when the line was being laid down and built. A very late and delayed railway advertisement from the Chelmsford Chronicle 14 June 1839 stated “The Departure of Trains will be shortly announced”.

At first, Third Class passengers had to travel in open wagons, engines were very slow- just as well as they had no brakes! There were few trains to worry about- just seven a day on the ECR (two in the morning, five in the afternoon) and no timetables. The service was irregular and perhaps the first free-lance drivers on some lines had to supply their own coke. To London from Ilford on the ECR cost 1/6d 1st class, 1/- 2nd class, 9d 3rd class.

What I didn’t know until the NRM informed me, was that their collection held two pictures by Dibdin with exactly the same title. I assumed they were just variants of the same scene: a tree added here, a figure moved there. But it’s not as simple as that as these are separate distinct pictures, possibly of the same stretch of line. The problem is to identify the settings of the views with few identifying features and here we really do run into problems as they are picturesque, almost pastoral scenes that could be anywhere, but both watercolours are entitled: “near Ilford”.

The first picture (the slide) shows a scene during a sunny day with a group of navvies and a dog resting beside the tracks, open railway wagons with two men sitting in them- perhaps they’re all at lunch. A train with a tall thin chimney steams towards them under the bridge through the deep cutting. A thatched-roofed house is on the left, but dominating the picture’s centre is a new road bridge with walkers on it who have stopped to curiously stare down over the parapet at the dawn of the new railway age. The inter-city stage coach era was passing away before their eyes and much farmland was lost as the railway company bought up land to lay down track and sidings. Through the bridge’s arch in the distance a second bridge can be seen, perhaps half a mile away. If the scene is along the ECR, where near Ilford are there bridges so close together? The setting looks rural and placid as the artist has taken a low viewpoint close to the tracks, not showing any real work or transport revolution, possibly not even painting-in other houses, whilst the low-class navvies were painted in this way to make them look harmless which would have encouraged sales for the artist. The picture is lightly signed and dated 1838 in the bottom left corner.

The second watercolour looks as if the artist walked up the track under the bridges and took up a position looking back to where he’d just come from, but taking a more ‘off-side’ viewpoint. We’ll never know which view he painted first and if they really do reveal the same stretch of line, which seems unlikely.

This bridge now has a passing overloaded hay cart on it: a haywain. The new bridge is in the centre of the picture but dominating the right-hand half of it, close-by its approach and overshadowing it, is an elegant, double-chimneyed, almost olde-worlde house. Alongside it is a small cottage and a group of men talking beside a white horse and cart. One horse is being
led towards us by a man in blue on a rather temporary, wobbly-looking siding on slightly higher ground. The cottage has smoke curling out of the chimney so someone is at home. Is this the rustic, old, Elizabethan cottage a wing of Wangey House that was demolished as being too close to the new line? It’s been suggested that the house or cottage was a toll-house
but I’ve been unable to locate and identify them or the bridges. There’s no train to be seen—no mud, grime, or black sooty smuts to get on clean washing as it hangs on the line. There are buildings stretching into the distance that can be seen through the bridge’s arch on the left hand side of the picture, but we have little to fear here from progress, change or the future as the colours in both pictures are soft and warm. They are lightly painted sketches with areas of the paper left unfinished and indistinct. This picture is lightly signed 1838 in the bottom right-hand corner and the paintings are a pair.

If the pictures portray new local bridges, where is this? There’s quite a choice!

There are twin road bridges over the railway at Seven Kings and alongside the Cauliflower pub at Aldborough Road South; over The Broadway and at Hainault Street but these pictures hardly look like the centre of Ilford; at Station Road and Rabbitts Road Manor Park (the original spelling of Rabbitts double’t’) and at Whalebone Lane and Station Road Chadwell Heath (formerly Chitty’s Lane), on the way to Romford. Peter Gwilliam dates the Romford bridges to being built c.1840 (Dibdin painted them in 1838) describing them as “humped-backed, just wide enough for two carts to pass each other”.

Could the two bridges be down as far as Stratford at Maryland Point? One choice is the view from Manor Park (bridge no.73, the station didn’t open till 1873) looking westwards to Station Road onto Stratford (bridge no.72). Roger Backhouse, Bill King and Andy Rush offered these ideas, but another choice is the Maryland Point bridge at The Grove with the arch in the distance possibly being at Angel Lane where the ECR crossed the Northern and Eastern Railway (N&ER) which went to Blackwall. There were depots and engineering workshops at Angel Lane, Ilford and Whalebone Lane.

What of the artist: can we place him in Essex in 1838?

The artist was Thomas Robert Colman (or Coleman) Dibdin (1810-1893) illustrator and watercolour artist. If not quite in the premier league with John Constable, Dibdin was a noted painter also with strong Essex connections. Born in Bletchworth, Surrey, he lived in New Bond Street, Fitzroy Square, Somers Town London (as had Dickens), and Banstead Surrey and he died in Sydenham. He started work as a Post Office clerk aged 17 but 11 years later aged 28 left the PO to become a full-time professional artist. Travelling widely through Europe visiting Belgium, France and Germany he painted old towns and attractive buildings. A prolific artist and exhibitor he displayed work in the Royal Academy, British Institution, Society of Watercolour Artists, and he has work in the British Museum and V&A Museum as well as at York. Sadly his career ended in 1883 when he went blind. So Thomas got around a lot, spending some time in Essex painting views of old houses. In 1834 he married Ann Alice Jones who lived in Saffron Walden, completing a watercolour of the church there in 1841.

Therefore we can locate him in Essex, but I still can’t place him near Ilford or along the new railway line.

I don’t know the full provenance of the pictures which were bought from an individual by the Museum of British Transport at Clapham in 1957 (Clapham Museum, closed 1973), superseded by the NRM which acquired by them in 1975 (nos. 1975: 8622, 8762). Clearly Bert was one of the few who knew about their existence. How they got their present, “near Ilford” titles is unknown as they didn’t arrive at the NRM with that one. A curator there gave them their titles, but on what basis or information I have been unable to find out (was Bert asked for his opinion?). It’s possible that these are just idealised views of the new line being built, particularly of the house which could have been moved closer to the bridge to create a
more dramatic picture but the bridges must be real enough. Peter Gwilliam\(^{2}\) gives the example of Mr Wroughton living in Wangey House, Chadwell Heath who had “part of his home demolished to make way for the new station, opened 1864, and had the privacy of his garden destroyed”. Tony Clifford’s excellent 1992 booklet *Barking and Dagenham Buildings* (p.67) has a photo of Wangey House. The station is just seen behind it and the caption states: “In about 1840 (according to Frogley) Henry Bosanquet, Chairman of the ECR, purchased land and caused the present railway to be cut through it... destroying its nice garden causing a portion of the Manor House to be demolished” - probably the old Elizabethan wing. An Ordnance Survey map of 1884 shows the Wangey House-Chadwell Heath station area and how close the line passed by the house but there are few buildings along the north side of the railway as can be seen in the watercolour. It wouldn’t take much for a skilful artist to adjust the perspective of his painting to make it appear as if the house was directly on the bridge’s approach.

Is this why the house was so prominently portrayed in 1838 by Dibdin: because the ECR was purchasing it? Of course the watercolour and the photos don’t match up and the house looks almost too fanciful and picturesque to be true, whilst the chimney stacks in both the picture and the photo aren’t the same. A monochrome picture by local artist A B Bamford of 1901 (Valence House archive) shows Wangey House with two sets of very plain chimney stacks and a flag-pole observation tower on a steeply-pitched roof. The railway line is close by in the foreground and Bamford only painted in one track, but because of the close-up viewpoint no bridge can be seen.

Possibly Dibdin travelled out to Essex near Ilford on a painting holiday (as Turner did during 1825) or visited friends or relatives near where the line was being laid down. I still haven’t found a good reason for him being in the area and if these paintings were done for his personal enjoyment or if they were commissioned by the new railway company to portray their progress to share-holders, the elegant architecture of the new bridges, and the house they were buying. Perhaps he knew the tenant of Wangey House- if this is it? There is a connection between Dibdin and Wroughton who both have the same first and middle names- probably just a coincidence.

These pictures are early representations of the permanent way and an object worthy of curiosity by all manner of passers-by. Trains rarely featured in paintings, though bridges and viaducts, usually over water, often did. J M W Turner’s famous ‘Rain, Steam and Speed’ wasn’t painted till 1844. It shows a train, possibly the Great Western Railway’s “Greyhound” (he held shares in the GWR) in a storm crossing Brunel’s new bridge over the Thames at Maidenhead chasing a hare it will never catch along the track (the “Speed” in title refers to the hare). A successful painting, it showed the power of nature still almost capable of overwhelming the new industrial steam age.

In Dibdin’s picture, speed isn’t the motive but a quieter, relaxed atmosphere as the train approaches the bridge and the itinerant navvies laze around, relegated to a supporting role. It’s only a sketch but it’s a rare scene for the age. There’s no hint of the hard drinking, brawling Irishmen- painted to look unthreatening who were often accused, probably with some justification, of poaching forest deer. The middle-class admired these tough, rootless workers but seemed unaware of the hardships they suffered. In these pictures hard graft or the heroic working-class labourer aren’t the central themes as they were in Ford Maddox Brown’s later wonderful painting, “Work”.

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*Ilford Historical Society Newsletter, No.112 August 2013 - 11 -*
In Stratford Archives is a: “View of the River Lea Bridge and Stratford Viaduct as now constructing for the Eastern Counties Railway Company”, 1837, by George Harley. (3) (The date is amazingly early. Stratford viaduct was completed in March 1838). This is also a delicate, picturesque, panoramic landscape: a fisherman is in the foreground watched by a friend, a bridge is on the left, a windmill (Abbey Mill?) and viaduct with six arches is on the right, and on the distant horizon trains puff along. In the centre a train pulls four First or Second Class carriages and two Third Class open wagons possibly heading to London. On the far right a train pulls five open wagons. All the carriages and wagons are packed with passengers but the trains are relegated to the background.

Are these the same trains as in another picture by Dibdin: “Viaduct for the Blackwall Railway” also owned by the NRM? Clearly he liked painting bridges and viaducts. So did he and Harley ever work together along the ECR in their ‘railway phase”? Another problem of this speculation essay is the dating of his pictures to 1837/1838. Construction of the line began in March 1837: the bridges and viaduct must have been erected before the line arrived. As the line didn’t officially open till June 1839 were special trains running along the line as early as 1837? The ECR must have got the bridges up very quickly for artists to have painted them in 1837 and 1838.

On Tuesday 22 June 1839 the Railway Times proudly reported “The Grand Opening of the Eastern Counties Railway” telling readers that “the line immediately to the east of Ilford is in a very unfinished state being in fact a mere gullet (gulley?) while on another portion contiguous to Romford only one line of rails has been laid”. So construction of the line was way behind schedule right up to its opening. So should the paintings be retitled? Perhaps the contrasting architecture is Dibdin’s theme: the old house under threat from the new line and bridges - tradition clashing with progress.

I managed to get up to the NRM York in September 2012 and viewed all three of Dibdin’s pictures. In the same month I visited Stratford archives and their staff also got out the picture by Harley and maps to try to check the location of the railway and the elusive viaduct. Thanks to all the staff for their generous help and assistance. The title of his ‘Ilford’ pictures is questionable - but what to call them? Perhaps it was chosen because Dibdin knew a station was to be built there, and there was little else to distinguish other areas.

(1) Arthur Waterslow was an excellent photographer of Essex churches, countryside and prints etc for Bert Lockwood, Peter Foley and myself.


(3) Norman Gunby A Potted History of Ilford, 2nd ed, 1977. Harley’s picture, published by Rudolph Ackermann, is reprinted in Norman’s book. The artist’s viewpoint is unclear. Surely the track is running over the viaduct on the right- but I have been unable to conclusively pin down this location either! On the left are three buildings and a chimney. Three Mills at Stratford or a chemical/bleaching works?

Bibliography & Great Thanks to:

Roger Backhouse- emails.

Val Bryant and Ian Dowling: Redbridge Information & Heritage Team have prints of the pictures (Y567).

Richard Durack, Adults, Community & Leisure Directorate, and Sue Gosling, Interim Collections Officer, London Borough of Newham. They provided Harley’s picture and maps for me to view.


Excellent articles on the ECR’s formation and history.


Martin Fairhurst- emails, and he provided Tomlinson’s Presidential address.


Madeleine Janes: Census information, emails.

Bill King, Chairman, Great Eastern Railway Society, & Andy Rush, provided excellent specialist knowledge on railway history via email.

Herbert (Bert) H Lockwood, late-President of Ilford Historical Society.

Claire Sexton, Assistant Archivist, Heritage Services, Local Studies Centre, London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.

Victoria Shaw and Dawn Whitehead: Search Engine Visitor Services Assistants, National Railway Museum, York. They provided Dibdin’s pictures for me and Moffat’s book to view at the NRM.

Joseph Tomlinson, Presidential Address to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, May 1890, recalled early railway memories and history.

Victoria County History for Essex, Vol 5: Barking.

Ms L Williams, Assistant Archivist, Bank of England Archive.

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Listed Buildings in Ilford

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

NEWBURY PARK STATION BUS SHELTER, EASTERN AVENUE

Grade: II  Date first listed: 19-Mar-1981

Date of most recent amendment: 23-Sep-1982

Designed by Oliver Hill 1937. Erected after the war.

High arched open structure with copper clad barrel vault roof 150 ft long and 30 ft high with 7 concrete arches spanning 60 ft. A plaque records that it received a 1951 Festival of Britain Award. Country Life, 11.11.1949

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.
Sources for local history : Letters

Frances Glanville, The Honourable Mrs Boscawen (1719 – 1805)

Extracts from “Admiral’s Wife: being the life and letters of the Hon Mrs Edward Boscawen from 1719-1761”. See also “Admiral’s Widow…. 1761-1805” published in 1940 and 1942, both edited by Cecil Faber Aspinall Oglander.

There were two reasons why I hoped the letters of Fanny Boscawen (1719 – 1805) would have some mention of Valentines, as you will see. She was the only child of William Evelyn, MP and High Sheriff of Kent, and his wife Frances Glanville who died at the age of 22 when her daughter was born. On their marriage William had taken his wife’s name, along with her fortune, but after a time he married again. His second wife was Bridget Raymond, daughter of Hugh Raymond, and cousin of (Sir) Charles Raymond, who bought Valentines in 1754. It was Hugh who sponsored Charles on his rapid rise up the ladder of seamanship to become a captain with the East India Company in 1734. Later Hugh’s son, Jones Raymond, (Bridget’s brother) became a director of the East India Company. Bridget gave William a second family, and perhaps for this reason young Fanny spent much of her early life with other relatives. One member of the family had married Mary Boscawen, a daughter of Hugh Boscawen, 1st Viscount Falmouth, and it was while staying with them that Fanny met her future husband, the Hon. Edward Boscawen (1711-1761), third son of Lord Falmouth. He was a promising captain in the navy who later became a distinguish Admiral. They were married in 1742 and took up residence in a small house in George Street, south of Hanover Square.

While her husband was away at sea Fanny wrote to him regularly and as she was related to the diarist John Evelyn, and had inherited some of his literary skills, her letters are well worth reading. They are not the formal letters of polite society but the jottings of a young wife and mother. She wrote to fulfil her own need to talk to her husband, and to keep him up to date with home life. Naturally, there are a number of references to her step-mother who is often called “Madame”. Somehow I get the feeling this is Fanny’s in-joke with her husband and that while fond of Mrs.Glanville, perhaps her step-mother could be rather pompous and patronising. I enjoyed Fanny’s account in January 1748 “imagine to yourself the sensation made by my step-mother in her new sedan with yellow tassels, and her three servants which, with the two chairman, made five men all in new liveries!” Unfortunately Fanny doesn’t mention Charles Raymond in any of the published letters.

In 1748 Edward was away in India for a long period, and towards the end of the year Fanny tells him about the forthcoming marriage of his brother Jack, fourth son of Lord Falmouth. Jack was more properly Colonel John Boscawen, an Equerry to the Duke of Cumberland, and a Colonel in the First Guards. His fiancée was Miss Thomasin Surman of Valentine House. (A)

29th November. “Your brother Jack brought his lady to breakfast with me and to see a house which he and I had pitched upon, after having spent two mornings in the disagreeable employment of house-hunting. This house is in Prince’s Street, Hanover Square, next door to that which Lord Stair lived in. I need not add then, “tis a bad house.” Vous le comprenez assez. A one-eyed room and several other faults it has, but then £100 a year, a pretty garden, stables for 6 horses, and 2 coachhouses, are you’ll grant, perfections. In short, the young lady approved, so ’tis taken and I have been busied in adding some little ornaments and directing the furniture, etc. Methinks I hear you whisper “je me moque,” but I assure you I am grown a woman of business. Taste I always pretended to and must own I shall be greatly disappointed if you do not approve that which I have displayed in Audley Street. But to return to Mrs. John. After this taking of the house, I went to wait on her in Mark Lane. That is, Jack carried me in the landau, and because these lovers should not wish me hanged, I chose an evening when there was business to be done between Mr.Surman and Charles Frederick (B) (who is Jack’s trustee). Of course the latter must otherwise have been absent from his lady, who seemed much pleased with my visit, as did her father, who is very clever and a very polite man. So that I might be polite too, I invited him and his daughters to dinner, gave them a very elegant one, our company being only Jack, the 3

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Surmans and Charles Frederick and wife, which, with myself made 7 - just the number I choose at table. I won’t trouble you with my bill of fare in the exact order it was. Let it suffice that I had soup, fine dish of fish, salmon and smelts, turkey, brawn, oysters, etc., partridge ragout, fricassee, asparagus, mushrooms, mince pies, blanc manges, jellies, fruit, etc., etc. Everything extremely good of its kind, well dressed and well served. Everybody praising it, and, what pleased me better, eating very heartily. In the evening some company, and I had two tables at cards.

I like Miss Surman extremely. In short, I think Jack’s a very happy fellow. I suppose he’ll think himself still happier this day se’enight when he may enjoy this fair lady’s company of nights as well as days. So much for the marriage of your brother….

Fanny clearly missed her husband over the Christmas period. “Last night, being Christmas Eve, we dined with Lord and Lady Falmouth. Judge whether we did not wish for another of the family to grace the feast. I’m sure I did, and heartily joined in the first toast, which was “Success and a safe return to the Admiral.” Fanny was disappointed that she had not been able to obtain some hams for her husband but instead sent him three immense cheeses. “I wish they may be acceptable – and that they may meet you coming home. If I did not think that possible I should be too unhappy.”

Three days later Fanny writes:

28th December. “Jack has been here this morning, and I have taken leave of a free man. Your brother Nick, who is to tie this durable knot, came with him. Both dine in the City to-day, and to-morrow repair to some church there (I don’t know which); and as soon as the mystical ceremony is over they all go down to Mr. Surman’s house in Essex, where the nuptials are to be celebrated. Sir Charles and Mrs. Frederick go down to visit them the next day. Jack presses me to go; but I’m sure I won’t till after Saturday, which is the day I send this letter to Portsmouth.”

(A) Robert Surman owned Valentine House from 1724-54. By 1748 his wife had died and he lived there with his two daughters. It was the eldest, Thomasina, who was married.

(B) Sir Charles Frederick, Bart, was married to her husband’s sister Lucy (“Mrs Frederick”)

(C) This was her husband’s brother Hugh, 2nd Viscount Falmouth.

Extract from a Map of London by John Rocque, 1769

Planning the area which includes Hanover Square was started soon after the accession of the Elector of Hanover, George I, in 1714. Princes Street was named after his son, while the son of George III was later commemorated by Nash when he built Regent Street to replace Great Swallow Street. New Bond Street was an extension of Old Bond Street, named after Sir Thomas Bond. He led the development of the land owned by the Duke of Albemarle, north of Piccadilly, until he died in 1685.

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Our 2013-14 Programme

Ilford Historical Society meetings are held 7.30 – 9.30 pm on the 2nd Monday of the month, at Ilford Hospital Chapel, The Broadway, Ilford Hill, Ilford, IG1 2AT
Limited parking is available at the rear of the chapel and many buses stop at nearby Ilford Station.
Visitors welcome, £2 per meeting Free refreshments

9th September 2013
*Traditional Essex Farm Buildings*  
by Anne Padfield

14th October 2013
*The Arrival of the Church in Ilford and how local newspapers reported it*  
by Rev John Brown, St.Lukes Church, Ilford

11th November 2013
*1963 : Just 50 Years Before Yesterday.* Kennedy, The Great Train Robbery, Profumo, Dartford Tunnel  by Jef Page, IHS Chairman

9th December 2013
*London Markets* by Pam Williams
Followed by a *Christmas Social and Quiz.*

13th January 2014
*Scandals at Sea : Sad tales of Barking’s fishing apprentices*  
by Linda Rhodes, Local Studies Librarian, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

10th February 2014
*Problems of Policing London in the Early 1800s*  
by Dave Swinden

10th March 2014
*When our Buses went to War* How London buses were used at the Front during the First World War  by Janet Seward, IHS Secretary

14th April 2014
7pm Annual General Meeting, followed by  
*Clement Ingleby of Valentines and Shakespeare* to mark the 450th anniversary of William Shakespeare’s birth  by Georgina Green, IHS Vice-President

12th May 2014
*From the City to the Abbey* A “virtual” walk from London to Barking.  
by Martin Fairhurst

Our website can be found at:  http://ilfordhistoricalsociety.weebly.com/

The next newsletter will be available at our December meeting,  
or from the editor (details on page 1) after 9th December.