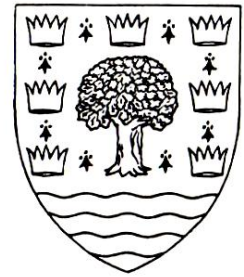


Ilford Historical Society

Newsletter No.120 April 2016



Editor: Georgina Green 020 8500 6045, georgina.green@btconnect.com

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

Edgar Kinghorne Myles, V C - Most Conspicuous Bravery

Local World War I Victoria Cross (VC) winners are rare, as is the award itself for bravery above and beyond the call of duty. However, Job H C Drain (Royal Field Artillery), born and lived in Barking, won a VC in 1914, where he has a statue.

Myles lived in Wanstead but is barely known there, virtually forgotten. But in 1995 Wanstead Historical Society authors Brian Page and Stephen Pewsey published a booklet recounting Myles's life and how he came to win his medals. In fact he would have won a deserved second VC if his commanding officer had been a bit more charitable, but he didn't want to 'set a precedent' of a double VC winner so Myles was only awarded a Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

Edgar Myles (1894-1977) and his family lived in East Ham where he went to school before they moved to Lake House Road, Wanstead in 1913, to a large semi-detached house with a view across Wanstead Flats. 20 years old in 1914 when the War began he joined up straight away enlisting as a Private in the Worcester Regiment on 20 August 1914. Why he joined them and not a local one (i.e. the Essex Regiment) is unknown but he may have had family or friends in the Bromsgrove area. Because he was well educated and had joined the Boys Brigade rising to the rank of Sergeant, he was picked out very early as "straight and true" (*East Ham Echo and Mail*) and marked for promotion. After training in France 1914 he rapidly rose through the ranks from Lance Corporal, and in November 1914 was made up to Temporary 2nd Lieutenant.



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Summer 2016

In 1915 a new 'theatre' of war opened up: Gallipoli, with the idea of quickly capturing Constantinople (Istanbul) and forcing the Turkish Ottoman Empire, Germany's ally, out of the war. But the landings and attack were a disaster and thousands of our troops died

including men from Australia and New Zealand (ANZACS), literally pinned down on the beaches. Myles and his men landed on 15 August at Suvla Bay where Ilford's Jack Gowan had been killed (see IHS Newsletter 111, April 2013). He was now a 'Bombing Officer', directing mortar fire and grenade teams on the Turkish hills. By November with mounting casualties and the attack going nowhere, General Sir Charles Munro



Australian and New Zealand troops mass on the beach at Gallipoli.

recommended an evacuation with a rearguard to be left to defend the beaches. Myles was amongst those 35,000 men and in January 1916 he received a permanent commission as a Lieutenant and transferred to the 8th Battalion, the Welsh Regiment. Though serving for the remainder of the war with the Welsh, it wasn't possible to win promotion from the ranks, so Myles was technically transferred to the Welsh to take up his new commission, but his service throughout the war was with the 9th Worcesters.

One of the last men to be evacuated, they left 'W' Beach at Cape Helles by boat but were now assaulted by a violent eight-hour storm which sent all their equipment into the water and he was posted as 'missing in action'. Finally rescued, he and his men were sent to Egypt and later India for some well earned rest and recuperation.

Another 'theatre' where there was fighting was in the middle east - Mesopotamia, again part of the Turkish empire and currently in the news: Iraq, Bagdad and the River Tigris. Protection of the oil fields was as vital then as it is now and Britain wanted the Arabs to rebel against the Turks which eventually became successful inspired by Lawrence of Arabia. My father served there in World War II and what he thought of Basra and Kirkuk is unprintable - just calling it 'fly-blown' is very polite.

As the Allied troops advanced northward in September 1916 from Basra to relieve a trapped garrison at Kut they were halted by Ottoman trenches at Sanna-i-Yat. Our soldiers did well reaching the enemy front line trenches but suffered casualties. As casualties and confusion grew men started to return and those lying wounded out in No Man's Land called out for help, Myles went out repeatedly and carried back wounded men, often himself under fire. He was hit but carried on, and on one occasion brought in a wounded officer. The citation mentioned his "conspicuous bravery" for which he was awarded the VC, and the crimson ribbon was presented to him by General Maude. Myles became a hero back in England. He was featured on National War Savings Committee stamps saving a wounded comrade from a shell hole, which boosted savings to be used by the government to buy arms. He was idolized in the *East Ham Echo and Mail* which ran a lengthy feature on him.

The relief force failed and Kut and the garrison was lost: 8,000 men were captured (2,000 Britons and 6,000 Indians - 3,000 of them died) - one of the most humiliating British surrenders of all time. Myles was wounded at least twice more as his men retreated. They were pulled out of the firing line and spent several more months recuperating in India at Simla but he declined the easy way out: he refused a safe staff job. The Worcesters were sent back to Mesopotamia and he was promoted to Captain in January 1917.

By this time it was planned to attack and capture the trenches to the west of the town bypassing Kut. Myles led a party of signallers forward to lay a telephone wire but the Turks howitzer fire was remorseless causing casualties so our men had to fall back yet again as their ammunition ran out. Myles was hit again but he continued to send back accurate information by phone to Battalion HQ on their precarious position. His steady courage saw General Maude award him a DSO - but not a deserved VC. Maude's army pressed on and Kut was finally captured in February and Bagdad in March 1917. Myles and his men were relieved and he spent more time in India. In September 1918 King George V presented him with the prestigious VC medal at Buckingham Palace, and he was in England when the Armistice was signed in November 1918. His active war was over and he starts to fade from history.

He was now 24, and whilst before the war he had been a clerk with the Port of London Authority, that probably didn't appeal to him now so he stayed in the army for a few years, partly to increase his seniority and probably pension rights. Little is known of his life in the inter-war years and afterwards. He served with the Royal Tank Corps and King's Regiment and was present in the 1921 Glasgow strike and over in Dublin, as Ireland struggled with independence. He retired from the army in 1928 aged just 33 after 14 years. Active in the ARP in Leyton where he was living (his father was no longer living at Wanstead) during World War II, he trained young men and women in the use of gas masks. He re-entered the army again in 1940 as a staff captain in York but he was considered too old for active service, and in 1945 he was stood down for the last time, aged 50.

He married Ellen Illingworth after the war but by now they had probably moved out of London and he was forgotten in Wanstead. They are not known to have had any children and to make ends meet Edgar sold his medals to a collector, then to Spink and onto the Worcester Regiment who believed he was dead. The Worcester Regiment Museum still hold all his medals.

In reality Edgar was living in a converted railway cattle truck with two dogs when he was found, refusing to leave, fearing he would be separated from his dogs. Finally in 1964 his old regiments rescued him, providing a final home for the old soldier in the Officers' Association Home in Bishopsteignton, Devon, where he died and was cremated in 1977.

Edgar was a handsome young man, deep set eyes, slim and wiry, very determined and "conspicuously brave" who led, commanded and rescued his men out in 'no man's land' in spite of all the dangers he and they faced. Well worthy of his Victoria Cross.

Thanks and Acknowledgements to:

Mark Galloway, Secretary, Wanstead Historical Society.

Most Conspicuous Bravery- The Life of Edgar Kinghorne Myles VC, A Forgotten War Hero. Brian J Page and Stephen Pewsey. Troy Novant Press, 1995. 41 pages, photos & maps.

'A forgotten hero' Alice Josephs, *Guardian and Gazette* Series article, January 31st 1997, p.8.

© **Jef Page, February 2016.**

2015 Ilford HS Questionnaire Results: We're doing OK.

In October 2015 I gave out questionnaires asking for views on the Society and I've now had enough returned (all bar 1 on paper, one by email- very good) to gauge some idea of what members want. I usually put out a questionnaire every two years and again there were few complaints, some new ideas, and members felt the Society was well run and organized, and that the newsletter is excellent and enjoyable- thanks to Georgina Green.

Of the topics there were few surprises. Most popular, and just retaining its top spot, was Local History with 66 points, just ahead of London with 65, Tudor with 63 and Essex history 62 pts. The Tudors surprisingly high place shows the success and appeal of *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel and the TV series. I've tended to avoid scheduling Tudor talks, partly because Henry VIII & Thomas Cromwell aren't my favourites and they're always on TV. Over the past few years I've concentrated on increasing our local history talks, but I will rethink this. These four topics were ahead of Victorian 59 which always scores high; Biographical and Georgian



history also made surprisingly high entries at 55. Art history made a good showing this time with 54 points.

The low scorers were no surprise: Political, Economic, Military, Scientific history etc. These topics aren't popular but can be given with a local or biographical approach. In future questionnaires I intend to ask about a greater range of topics as we should offer a wider choice of talks to encourage more diverse (& younger?) audiences.

Our most popular talk in the 2014-15 programme was *Ilford in the Great War* given by John Barfoot (though military history never scores high), just ahead of *Harrison Gibson* by Janet Plimmer, followed by *Explorers and Traders- the Essex Connection* by Georgina Green, *A Child in Wartime* by the Very Rev Canon Barnes (all local history of course), and *The Saxon Kingdom of Essex* by William Tyler. The Saxons scored OK in the most popular topics just ahead of the Vikings, but it did well in popular talks, probably helped by Tyler's skill and the fictional *The Last Kingdom* by Bernard Cornwell, bringing Alfred the Great to life on TV which is long overdue. I have long wanted to do a fun 'Who's the Greatest' debate: Alfred the Great v..? Anybody fancy taking me on?

Most members come from Redbridge but what did surprise me was how many arrived at meetings by bus, so the start and finish times on cold, dark, winter nights always has to be taken into consideration. There was no overwhelming call for afternoon meetings though some did suggest extra daytime meetings in winter, possibly even on Saturdays.

However, there was a stronger majority for more outside speakers, though it was pointed out that this could cost more (I have a limit of how much I can spend) and members are usually best at giving talks on Ilford's history.

Another suggestion was that meetings should conclude with notices/information, questions and refreshments all dealt with before we break up. This would stop the room being half empty for speakers as visitors drift away once the talk finishes, all visitors and members would hear the notices and new information, and allow the speaker to get away earlier if he or she wishes to. I agree with this.

Concerning the newsletters, there was a majority in favour of shorter local articles, but many didn't mind the mixture of longer and deeper articles as well.

Other suggestions included: 'Newsletters in libraries' - a good idea if we can afford it, more and better publicity leaflets/flyers especially in the libraries, 'make the society's profile higher', 'raise issues in the press', 'better quality tea', 'develop a presence on social media' and one member called for a change of venue as ours can be a touch cold in winter. Because of a change in Redbridge library policy, it is now more difficult, but not impossible, to publicize events in libraries. Our regular distribution of programmes, publicity and leaflets needs to be much improved.

The *Recorder* advertise our meetings, as do Redbridge CVS, and take the reports I send them. The *Recorder* will also use photographs for the Club's news page provided by Alan Banner, and have been put on our website- thanks to Christine Black. But I want to increase the publicity via BBC Radio Essex etc, and the 'freebie' local magazines. Another resource the Society provides is our website which is working well, up-to-date, and I receive enquiries about Ilford and family history. I hope you have looked at the website. It's long overdue that the Society opened a Facebook page.

'Raising the Society's profile' is difficult as it means more members should take part in events i.e. historical fairs etc, but this can attract visitors and new members to us and I give local history talks to residents on behalf of Ilford HS and Redbridge libraries.

As the smallest of the three historical societies in Redbridge we have to work harder to attract more members and visitors. But only a few of our members belong to another historical society so they will support and remain loyal to our Society- if we serve you well.



Jef Page, January 2016.

Jef Page giving a talk.

What would we do without our hard-working Chairman?

Mystery Photo no.2: Beehive Church School Outing

Name those faces & that game?

In our December 2015 Newsletter (no.119) I wrote an article about a mystery photo asking if anyone could identify the Ilford women in the Ladies Floral Band c.1890-1900. I had already taken a punt and contacted the BBC Magazine *Who Do You Think You Are* about another group photo hoping that they might publish it and get a reader to identify anyone. However, after acknowledging my request, nothing happened and I forgot about it. I now offer our readers the WDYTIA photo, hoping to make more progress. It was generously given to me

by one of our Vice Presidents, Dorothy Lockwood, (her husband Herbert 'Bert' Lockwood, previously President of Ilford HS) but this time some of the people looking out at us can be easily identified. It shows a group of adults and a child looking seriously at the camera, in true Victorian-Edwardian style, c.1900-10.



But their clothes are interesting and we know at least two or three of the people because in Ian Dowling's and Nick Harris' book *ILFORD The Old Photographs Series* p.37, they published a school photo including the two teachers.

Around 1900 the Beehive Church School was run by headmaster Ernest Jago with his wife Lucy. They were both born in 1857 and married in 1878: Lucy Ann Jago (nee Hugo) came from Bodmin and Ernest's family came from Egloshayle (!) north Cornwall. In the 1901 Census they were living in Canewdon, Rochford, Essex and in the 1890s some of their children were born there. Lucy was the school mistress and Ernest, an Insurance Agent. They may have come to Ilford recently as they only appear in Beehive Lane in the 1911 Census with a son Harold, though they were there in 1906. The address in 1911 is: The Schools, Beehive Lane, Barkingside, which is how the area was described then.

Some of their own children- they had five- maybe in the '*Old Photographs*' p.37, and the Jagos flank the young violinists. The photo shows the school strings section, 11 violin playing boys and girls, looking glum, bored and cheesed-off at the cameraman. It's clear they weren't enamoured about this high flown culture and having to pay attention to the camera.

The original school building (along Beehive Lane beside Ethelbert Avenue) dated from 1827 and was rebuilt c.1870 by Mrs Sarah Ingleby of Valentines Mansion for the children of her estate workers. In 1908 it was taken over by the Ilford Education Committee and renamed Valentines School which closed 1936-37. In Dowling and Harris's second volume they

published another photo, c.1918/19, just of children of the now renamed Beehive Lane School, but no adults are in that photo. The caption states that the children are standing outside the cottages in the Silver Street hamlet. The roof line of the building on the extreme right is described as 'Beehive Mission Hall'. But in B Piggott and B J Page's booklet *Ilford Old and New* Vol. 5 p.8, it states that they are standing outside Primrose Villas, Beehive Lane (junction now of Radnor Crescent). They provided a good photo of the school in 1986 (p.9) which was used as a school clinic before demolition.

In my mystery photo Ernest Jago can be easily identified sitting in the centre beside his wife on his right, with a young girl (daughter?) on his left. He is wearing a Norfolk jacket ("popular and connected to the pastime of cycling" c.1907, Alison Toplis) sitting with his arms folded across his chest looking respectable and comfortably-off, but bored. Beside him Lucy looks happier, smiling gently at the cameraman, a large corsage of flowers pinned to her blouse. Most of the females have their right hands covering their left hand, implying they are still single (?), whilst Lucy shows her left hand and wedding ring. Her dress is less fashionable, in the older Victorian style. The ladies hats are fashionably enormous in true Edwardian style whilst the straw boater worn by the lady on the right in a dark-coloured dress looks positively restrained and simple by comparison. The man standing behind her, wearing a high-necked detachable collar, might be her husband, and he too looks fed up with this thumbs stuck in his trouser pockets. Moustaches on the men's lips are now fashionably short and clipped, not the enormous mutton-chop side whiskers of the late Victorians. The group are standing and sitting in the school's courtyard entrance (see photo BJ Page). Perhaps they were all fed up having to sit still with the time it was taking the cameraman to take the photo.

On the right beside the woman in a black (?) dress is a nurse wearing a very distinctive hat, in uniform. She was probably employed by Mrs Ingleby (1823-1906) to look after the Beehive district and some of the adults in the front row may be school staff as well as family members. We may be able to identify the nurse (she isn't on the 1901 census at Valentines although she was there c.1905-6). I hope we can find her name from the 1911 census and what happened to her after Mrs Ingleby died. One staff member we know of was Margaret Hope Lockwood, Bert's mother, which of course is how the photo came to belong to him and Dorothy. When she first moved to Ilford, Margaret lodged in nearby Limes Cottage, Beehive Lane, and taught at the school and I think she is the woman sitting on the front row, left.

But what is also interesting about the photo, and what I wrote to WDYTYA about was: what sort of sporting clothes are those worn by the seven men standing at the back? Knowing this might also help us identify the occasion - why are they all assembled outside the school - to celebrate what event? I did wonder if the sportsmen were a tennis, bowls, or even part of a cricket team, though none of the men are wearing the usual distinctive cricket club caps. Perhaps it was quoits which was very popular in Ilford in this period. Is the man standing on the left the team's manager or the husband of the woman on the left? Alison Toplis pointed out that some of the sportsmen are wearing 'snake belts' and matching trousers which were promoted by the Army and Navy stores catalogue for 1907 as 'Ordinary cricket and lawn tennis belts', whilst the cummerbunds and Norfolk jacket worn by Ernest Jago were popular with cyclists. So have the group all assembled outside to go out for the day and take part in, and watch, a major, popular, local event: the Woodford Cycle Meet, possibly in 1907 or 1908, after the school had become part of the Ilford Education Committee?

In the photo's background, behind the screen of trees, is a building (possibly the Beehive Mission Hall - the roof line is the same as that mentioned above) and alongside it some sort of tower. For water? Homeheather House, Beehive Lane is now on the site in of the school.

The photographer was H Robinson of Barking and on the back is a pencil annotation by Bert telling us that it was Peter Wright who made the original identification of the Jagos in 1977. It's just a pity Bert didn't know what the occasion was.

Having sent the photo in to WDYTYA, it was very pleasing and a great surprise to have it published in the magazine (February 2016, p.39) in an item by their writer Alison Toplis. In fact I we received the February issue in mid-January and even before the end of the month I'd received an enquiry about the photo!

Any ideas who the men, women and sportsmen are- and what game they played?

Thanks and acknowledgements to:

Madeleine Janes, Dorothy Lockwood, "Who DO You Think You Are" and Alison Toplis.

Sue Page and Georgina Green for the information about the nurse who covered Beehive and lived-in at Valentines Mansion (*Ilford Guardian*, 5 January 1906)

Peter Wright: former Redbridge Reference Librarian, and past President, as was Bert, of Ilford Historical Society.

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Mrs Ingleby's letter

When Janet Plimmer attended a lecture about Postal History, given by Stephanos Mastoris at the Guildhall last November, she was amazed to see an illustration on the screen showing an envelope addressed to a Mrs Clement Ingleby. It was designed by the artist Mulready and is an early example of an envelope with a printed design which has postage pre-paid. Janet mentioned it to me and I was fascinated to follow this up.

The envelope was dated 1840 and addressed to Mrs Clement Ingleby, Mr Gosling's Esq, **Warwick Street**, Leamington Priors, Warwickshire.

This address immediately rang a bell with me as it crops up in the Ingleby family letters donated by Henry

Stevens in 2011 and now held in the Redbridge Archives.* However the date means that the lady to whom the envelope was address was not Mrs Ingleby of Valentines. Sarah Oakes married Clement Mansfield Ingleby in 1850, so that must be her mother-in-law.

The new edition of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB) says:

Ingleby, Clement Mansfield (1823–1886), literary scholar, was born on 29 October 1823 at Edgbaston, Birmingham, the only son of Clement Ingleby (1786–1859), a solicitor of Birmingham, and his wife, Elizabeth (d. 1877), daughter of John Jukes of Birmingham. . . . On 3 October 1850 he married Sarah Oakes (d. 1906), only daughter of Robert Oakes, a magistrate of Gravesend, Kent.



The illustration is from Arthur Blair's book *Christmas Cards for the Collector* (Batsford, 1986, p.15)

I have always been puzzled by a comment in the entry for Clement Mansfield Ingleby (CMI) in the original Victorian DNB that “he married the only child of Robert Oakes of Gravesend, J.P, and a distant connection of his own.” As this was written while his wife was still alive it is surprising that it is omitted in the new edition.

To say his wife was a distant connection implied to me that they were distantly related. We know that Sarah was brought up by her aunt and uncle Holcombe (after 1838 at Valentines Mansion) because her mother died when Sarah was very young. The family correspondence donated by Henry Stevens includes two letters: one dated 13 June 1836 from CMI (aged 13) to Mrs Holcombe, **Warwick Street**, Leamington, in clearly affectionate terms; the other four years later from Mrs Margaret Holcombe at Valentines to Clement which shows that he had recently stayed at Valentines. It mentions that Sarah will be returning from school tomorrow so she and Clement must have been acquainted at least ten years before they married.

Margaret Holcombe also refers to Alfred Jukes and Frederick Jukes who were brothers of CMI’s mother Elizabeth. I wondered if she was also a sibling but I have ruled that out. Their parents were John Jukes and Elizabeth Mansfield, who married in 1782 at Bushbury, Staffs.

Charles Thomas Holcombe of St Paul’s Deptford, bachelor, married Margaret Cummings spinster of the parish of Milton next Gravesend on 10 January 1820 at St Paul, Deptford, Kent. Witnesses were Mary Burnsted (her step-mother’s relative, see below) and William Tunnard. A note in the correspondence given to the borough by Henry Stevens explains that C T Holcombe was an orphan and he came of age almost the day the Battle of Waterloo was fought. During his minority he had a guardian named William Tunnard.

Joseph Pegler Cummings bachelor of St Botolph, Bishopsgate married Ann Gosling, spinster on 18 May 1783 at St Peter Le Poer. I traced three children baptised at the same church Mary, 20 May 1785, Ann, 16 December 1788, and Margaret, 7 August 1792 (born 16 June) The tombstone inscription records Margaret, wife of Charles Thomas Holcombe, died 25th April 1860 in the 68th year of her age, so I am confident this is the right baptism.

The parents of Sarah (wife of CMI) Robert Oakes and Sarah Cummings were married on 20 April 1819 at St Peter and St Paul, Milton by Gravesend, Kent.

I did not find a baptism for Sarah, but Joseph Pegler Cummings, widower, married Eliza Bella Burnsted spinster on 8 June 1797 at St.John’s Hackney. Sarah née Cummings, died some time after 1824 but I have not been able to trace her burial and do not know her age at death. Sarah (who married CMI) had a brother who died before she was born but no other siblings and it is thought her mother died when she was very young. Robert Oaks remarried on 13 August 1835, a lady called Ann Bacon.

Maybe as more family record centres make their births, deaths and marriages available through websites like ‘Ancestry’ and ‘Find my Past’ we will be able to add to the picture but, after visits to LMA and the archive centre at Maidstone, I decided to call a halt here. So far, I can only *guess* that a possible connection between the Inglebys and C. T. Holcombe was brass. The Inglebys in Cheadle were partners in the Cheadle Brass Co.; and C. T. Holcombe had a brass foundry at Greenwich.

© **Georgina Green, 5 March 2016.**

* Henry Stevens was a grandson of Clement Ingleby, who had kept some of the family correspondence bound together by his father, Holcombe Ingleby, (Henry’s great-grandfather) I arranged for this to be given to the borough. Clement wrote a most interesting memoir of his grandmother, Sarah Ingleby.

Trust Me, I'm a Doctor

Medical Health Care in Ilford 1800 – 1900

Part 1: Ilford, the London Hospital and Infectious Diseases

Trying to find out how people obtained local health care over 150 years ago isn't easy.

Because all professional care was private and costly and hospitals few and far between, only those who could afford to pay saw doctors. In the small village of Ilford perhaps the few doctors who lived here were more generous as everyone knew everybody else, most people



were cared for at home, and they relied heavily on each other's family, friends and neighbours to help out as Ilford didn't get a local hospital till 1912. Mrs Tatum, who lived at Barkingside until the 1920s, doubled as the midwife (sometimes known as a "goodwife" or "handywoman") and laid out the dead for a fee and no doubt neighbours were pleased to have her services, qualified or not. The nearest hospitals were the London at Whitechapel and Oldchurch in Romford - not very near for an emergency whilst births took place at home. Chemists could advise on what pills and medicines worked and there were 'wise' men who might know of age-old cures. But there were serious outbreaks of infectious diseases, especially diphtheria, scarlet fever, and smallpox for which the only known remedies were to isolate patients. Cholera usually killed too quickly for quarantine!

Little has been written about Ilford's doctors.

Newspaper reports do mention Ilford but they are small and lack detail. Perhaps editors were afraid to frighten

the population (or reporters none too keen, naturally, to visit plague spots) and market towns like Romford or Chelmsford never wanted to be identified as infectious as it scared off trade.

E J Erith in his excellent study of Woodford wrote: "Probably the poor received the best attention when they managed to get into the big London hospitals". In 1820 there were terrible outbreaks of smallpox in Essex and Bancrofts school Woodford was built on the site of a 'pest house'. Inoculation was new and possible. In 1788 a Barking doctor received 10s 6d (52.5p) per person: very expensive and exceptional. In 1808 its vestry ordered that as many people as possible be vaccinated: 492 were treated at 5s 3d (26p) per patient. Prevention was being taken seriously, at a price, to the local ratepayers. What might have hindered Ilford's development of local health care was that it was still administratively under the control of Barking's vestry and overseers whilst Romford's workhouse 'cared for' Ilford's poor.

But there were health clubs that benefitted Ilford, generously assisted by Miss Eleanor Thompson of Clements estate. Eleanor funded the Thompson Rooms along the High Road giving the village a library in 1858 and supported the Clothing Club, Coal Club, Lying-in Charity, Medical Club and the Marie Celeste Samaritan Society (it still exists) which provided travel funds and a sort of social security to those attending the London Hospital.

In *Oldchurch and the Workhouse Story* Ilford's Dr Allison was one of the men who drew up the workhouse rules. To benefit from the Medical Club you had to be a labourer or in a trade earning less than £1 a week and women could join. A pregnant woman could benefit if she or the husband had paid up to 10s 6d (52.5p) "before her confinement", and it was (probably) not just for the benefit of respectable married women.

There was clearly a strong link between the Thompson family and the London Hospital as both Eleanor and her brother John became Governors. Both paid 31 guineas (£32.55) as 30 guineas (£31.50) was the minimum donation and John was elected a Life Governor in 1827, twice serving as "steward to the Hospital annual feast" - a fund raising event. Eleanor was elected a Life Governor in 1840. How far Ilford's population benefitted from having governors in the village isn't known but a personal recommendation to get a medical consultation and perhaps a bed always helped.

Other London Hospital Ilford governors included: Mrs Elizabeth Grafton Hall-Dare of Cranbrook Hall, Harold and Spencer Charrington of Great Gearies Barkingside, Rev John Gooding- Barkingside, Miss Elizabeth Daines of Hill House Chigwell, Miss L Fry of Park Villas Ilford, John Mitchel- Newburys, Mrs Francis Whitbourn of Loxford Hall (the Whitbourn's later moved to Little Gearies, Barkingside), John C Davies of Little Gearies, Robert Lodge of Loxford Hall in a gift of F Whitbourn, Arthur Ingleby of Valentines gifted by his son Holcombe, and George Brown of Gaysham Hall - part of a massive donation paid for by Edward N Buxton and his family. The Buxton's made many large donations to the hospital through a Special Fund and this one was for £5,000! Woodford's residents favoured St Thomas's Hospital to be governors: was St Thomas's considered superior?

George Caunt gives the only description of Ilford's village doctors: Allison, Sullivan and Shimeld, whilst Norman Gunby noted a serious cholera outbreak in 1849 but not what happened though he did mention that many died. There were terrible outbreaks of cholera in London during 1848-49 and 1853-54 when thousands died. The autumn 1849 outbreak was mentioned by the *Essex Standard* and the *Chelmsford Chronicle*, in little more than extended paragraphs. The "dreadful pestilence" was passing through and had caused suffering and death in nearby east end districts i.e. Barking, Bromley, Bow, East and West Ham, Leyton, Stratford, Forest Gate and Ilford. A collection raised £50 in St John's Church, Stratford, where it had been full to overflowing for prayers, but around Maryland Point "the poorer Irish" seemed to have suffered less. Was the outbreak being played down so not to alarm the public who always feared infectious diseases breaking out in overcrowded working class districts? The miasma theory- that smell and "atmospheric influences" were the most likely cause in 1849 is evident- not infected and polluted water.

An 1866 cholera epidemic caused 60 Ilford deaths. "The health of the prisoners in Ilford goal was good - not the slightest sign of sickness" but in the village near whole families died. A medical officer (probably Dr Sullivan) was noted working hard day and night, but sadly not named. 60 deaths would have been massive misery and very frightening but it seems to have passed by with little comment, almost routine? Research is needed to try to identify who died and if Allison was working here in 1849 or whether he was brought in especially after that cholera outbreak.

An outbreak of Scarlatina is noted and it made the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) in April and the *Medical Times* (MT) in May 1880. The epidemic broke out in January at Barnardos in Barkingside amongst the girls lasting into February and affected 159 children out of 440. The

report, written very quickly by Dr R T Thorne, makes no mention of Dr Barnardo but clearly the epidemic was considered exceptional enough to make the BMJ and MT. It was thought the illness was brought into the children's home by infected clothes parcels in December 1879 (Christmas donations?) and a woman developed scarlet fever. The Governor's (not named, but in 1878 it was George Saltau) children became ill and although it was thought to be trivial, they developed scarlet fever. They weren't subject to quarantine and were allowed to "move freely around the estate" though probably not into Barkingside. In old literature scarlet fever was referred to as scarlatina but fortunately the outbreak was noted for its mildness and no child died. Its symptoms are a bacterial infection, fever, rash, sore throat and a red tongue with a "strawberry appearance". Dr Thorne Thorne's report noted "the specially excellent circumstances of the children's existence" and good sanitary and laundry conditions. How or why Thorne was brought in isn't clear but the MT stated that the Local Government Board wanted an outside expert to report on its cause. By this time scarlet fever may have been a notifiable infection like cholera, smallpox, typhoid etc though notification wasn't made compulsory until the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act was passed in 1890 (Dr Richard Thorne Thorne [1841-89], a respected expert on public health, fevers and quarantine issues).

Dr Thomas Barnardo (1845-1905) came from Ireland and trained in the London Hospital in 1867 but "never qualified as a surgeon until 1876-77. However he never formally qualified as a doctor" (GP) and never practiced as a doctor in Barkingside - a bit of a shame. There was an Irish connection with all of Ilford's doctors.

It wasn't until 1890 that Dr James Shimeld (b. Leeds 1845-1905) was finally appointed Ilford's first Medical Officer of Health and Public Vaccinator (MOH, 4th district Romford Union) at the miserly salary of £50 pa. A bit mean- the salary hadn't risen in over 20 years, but presumably this was a 'consultant' position in addition to his other paid work. Arriving in 1875 to assist Dr Sullivan, he married Winifred Sullivan (Sullivan's daughter?) and they had a housekeeper and two servants. In his early years he was always smartly turned out wearing "white ducks" and was divisional surgeon to Ilford's police for 30 years till his death. His surgery was in Salisbury House near where the Nat West Bank is in The Broadway. Sullivan had succeeded Dr William Jeremiah Allison MRCSL (1794-1870) who practiced in Ilford in 1850 but we don't know on what basis. Allison arrived in Ilford, salary £50, from Darlington Dispensary and took on a number of posts: Surgeon to the Ilford House of Correction (on the Romford Road at the Three Rabbits) and K Division of Ilford Police, and ran the Independent Dispensary to the Ilford and Chadwell Wards of the Romford Union and its workhouse. In the 1851 census he was successful, living in Barking (now Ilford) Lane with his wife Jane, four children and three servants. By 1861 he was living in Hampstead, probably retired, so did Sullivan join him first to assist, and then as a partner to take over the practice? Dr Edward W Sullivan was born in 1826 in Ireland, also a surgeon (a higher status) MRCSL and he lived with Allison's family. Kelly's Directory of Essex 1890 lists Shimeld as LRCP (Edinburgh) for Great Ilford. These are the only Ilford 19th century doctors we know something about.



In the book *Silver by the Ton* about Ilford Limited which made film, there is mention of Dr Shimeld. In 1895 Alfred Harman, the company's founder (then known as the Britannia Works Co.), wanted to buy land to expand and build an institute at Uphall to provide recreation, meeting rooms and instruction for his employees. Gambling was barred and he was none too pleased when a full sized billiard table was requested. However, the proposed new extension plans were put on hold by an outbreak of smallpox in 1894 and some of the employees became infected. The board decided that its employees would all be inoculated at the company's expense and Shimeld was engaged on a retainer to vaccinate them. Simple enough as his surgery was just along the road at Salisbury House and he agreed to use only calf lymph vaccine and not vaccine prepared from infected children. After his success in halting the infection Harman agreed to buy land from him for the new institute not exceeding £2,000 on the east side (?) of Ilford Lane and it opened at the end of 1895. In the book is a photo showing top-hatted staff walking along Roden Street back into Ilford with the caption: "the wall on the left is of St Mary's Hospital". The author probably means Ilford Hospital Chapel as of course the Chapel was originally for lepers or hospice, but not a hospital. Alongside Ilford Limited was another successful international chemical company, Howards, which made quinine and later aspirins.

One doctor per generation seems small as Ilford's population rose from 4,500 in 1850 to 7,645 in 1881 but by 1901 it had soared to 41,234 with an influx of homeowner families, new estates and houses. For much of this period Ilford only had one chemist: Edmund Beal. Cheapness of land, the growing population, new ideas in mental health care, and a shortage of hospitals encouraged the London County Council to build and open Claybury Hospital in 1893 (known as Claybury Lunatic Asylum), and in 1898 the Isolation Hospital at Chadwell Heath, originally for "pauper lunatics". It only had 20 beds "quite insufficient for the number of cases" (wrote Shimeld), whilst other patients were sent to Oldchurch Hospital. Paupers declared as lunatics were treated appallingly in a way that was intended to bring shame and did not help them. Those who obtained parish relief had their names published on church doors and the prevailing custom was to care for them as far away as possible. Ilford used Brentwood whilst those living in Waltham Forest were sent to Claybury.

Goodmayes Hospital, first known as West Ham Borough Lunatic Asylum, opened in 1901. Planned since 1886 it was built on Blue House Farm along Barley Lane and had 17 wards: eight for 350 men "overcrowding threatened the male side" and nine female wards for 450 women. The lack of an Ilford general hospital was scandalous and not remedied till the Emergency Hospital opened at Newbury Park in 1912 after a long campaign to gather public support and fund raising donations.

What drew me to start this research was coming across a female doctor living in Ilford in 1902. Doctor Miss Elizabeth Dunn (born Portsmouth 1866-1961) registered in 1901 and is listed in Kelly's Directory of Ilford 1902 living in Melcombe Lodge (where Pioneer Point is) and later at Belgrave Road with her father. Elizabeth qualified through the London Society of Apothecaries (a brother was a chemist's assistant) and when the 1901 census was taken she was named as a student so she must have qualified very soon afterwards. I think she trained in Dublin and it was a personal connection and an Irish one that brought her to Ilford. It must have seemed different and strange to be examined by a female doctor. Very new and progressive for Ilford in a new century. Dunn emigrated to New Zealand and when she returned to Croydon in the 1920s I know nothing more of her.

To be continued...

Select abridged bibliography

EJ Erith *Woodford Essex 1600-1836. A Story of Local Government in a Residential Parish.* Woodford Historical Society, 1950.

N Gunby *A Potted History of Ilford*, 1997 (In the Timeline, the 1849 cholera outbreak is noted but not the 1866 one).

RJ Hercock & CA Jones *Silver by the Ton* The History of Ilford Limited 1878-1979.

IS Moore *Oldchurch the Workhouse Story-* how it all began.

JR Smith *The Speckled Monster.* Smallpox in England 1670-1970 with particular reference to Essex. Essex Record Office, 1997.

This is an abridged version of a longer study. In Part 2, I will look at Ilford's Medical Officer of Health's reports for 1900 etc.

Any information/photos on 19th century doctors, illnesses or patients would be appreciated.

Photographs taken at Blists Hill Victorian Town, one of the ten Ironbridge Gorge Museums, which was used for the filming of the Victorian Pharmacy series on BBC2 in 2010.

<https://www.rpharms.com/museum-pdfs/ppjuly2010-victorianpharmacy.pdf>

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Only a game? Baseball in Ilford

Looking through back issues of the *Ilford Recorder* it's easy to see the importance of sport in Edwardian Ilford. Though football dominated, with dozens of clubs mentioned, so does cricket in summer months. Ilford Golf Club opened in 1907 catering for a well heeled minority with annual fees of 7 guineas a year. Hainault Angling Club held meetings in the 'General Havelock'. There were hockey clubs, tennis clubs like Little Heath and Goodmayes Lawn Tennis Club and several rifle clubs extensively reported.

Rifle Clubs

Before the coming of the Golf Club there was a rifle range on the wash lands of the Roding near Wanstead Park. Ilford Rifle Club was affiliated to the National Rifle Association. Ilford's Hon President was Lord Rayleigh and President was W. P. Griggs, the Ilford property developer and councillor.

Another society was the 1st Volunteer Battalion (Ilford Detachment) Morris Tube Rifle Club. The club provided rifles and ranges. Among other events it held a meeting on 27th August 1906. Drills were carried out on the Gordon Club Field with a range of 200 feet. Their Annual Prize Firing was held at North Weald Range, with other Essex Clubs, but they still managed a church parade to St Clement's assembling at 10.30 in the Drill Hall to march to the church, no doubt a sight for Ilford's patriotic citizens. The Hon Treasurer was David Robb of 37 Mayfair Avenue, Ilford.

Sporting novelty?

But Ilford's 1906 sporting novelty was baseball. The *Recorder* helpfully printed a diagram of a baseball pitch and explained some subtleties of the game.¹ The Ilford team, the "Nondescripts", clearly did well, for later it reported on the "historic struggle" between the

¹ Ilford Recorder 22nd June 1906

“Nondescripts” (soon nicknamed the “Dandies”) and The Spurs for the British Baseball Cup competition, claimed, inaccurately, to be the first time this had been held.

Though probably originating in England baseball was re-introduced to the UK in 1890 by Francis Ley of Derby who established Derby County Baseball Club which also won the first championship that year. (Derby County Football Club continued to play at the Baseball Ground until 1997.)

Though the game had started late in the 1906 season for Ilford, their matches held at Newbury Park attracted growing numbers of spectators. The *Recorder* noted that for the Spurs team attendance was never less than 1,500 per game for the season and it noted “an abundance of interest in the game”.

It seems that professional football club managers promoted baseball, probably trying to generate income in the summer when football ceased. The *Recorder* noted the work of John Cameron, “famous Manager of the Spurs Football Club” who was also the first Hon. Secretary of the British Baseball Association. The paper reported “he prognosticates an almost universal turnover to baseball by the leading league football clubs at the end of the football season”.

During the season Ilford played at Woolwich Arsenal and Clapton Orient (later Leyton Orient) both better known for soccer, suggesting other football managers also showed a keen interest in promoting baseball.

On the day of the big match the Nondescripts lost 5:16 to Spurs despite heroic pitching by Woolrich who had an injured arm in what the *Recorder* described as “a wonderful instance of pluck”. Of the Spurs side Burton was noted as being the Tottenham half back in the football season, one of six footballers who’d turned to baseball for the summer.²



*John Cameron (1872 -1935)
Player-manager at Tottenham Hotspur*

The final was well attended by over 4,000 spectators including some American students in British universities. The paper predicted the match “practically assured the popularity of the game for the next season” and anticipated the same summer popularity of baseball as football in winter.

Spurs won again in 1908, and Clapton Orient went on to win the Championship in 1907 and 1909, and, as Leyton, in 1911. No championship matches were held from 1912 to 1934, suggesting the game’s popularity soon faded. However, there was a revival in the late 1930s when Great Britain beat the USA in the first Baseball World Cup.

Alas, recovery was unsustainable. Though baseball retained some devotees, oddly surviving longer in Newport and Cardiff, it never acquired the cult status of cricket and baseball faded from the *Ilford Recorder’s* pages.

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² Ilford Recorder 31st August 1906

IHS PROGRAMME Spring and Summer 2016

Our regular monthly meetings are held at Ilford Hospital Chapel, The Broadway, Ilford Hill, Ilford, IG1 2AT from 7.30 - 9.30 pm. Visitors welcome, £2 per meeting, with free refreshments. Limited parking is available at the rear of the chapel and many buses stop nearby at Ilford Station. (Wheelchair access via the rear entrance)

Membership of the society costs £12 per year which includes 3 newsletters

9 May 2016 Local History Month: *Valentines Mansion & Estate: Dilapidation, Trepidation & Restoration* by Nigel Burch.

Additional talks and walks are held during summer months but are not included in the membership and may be charged.

Wednesday 20 April, at 2pm. *Protest, Riot & Rebellion in Ilford and Essex*: from Boudicca and the Peasants Revolt, to the Riot Act being read in Ilford and the Rock Around the Clock riot. To be held at Fullwell Cross Library, Barkingside.

This talk by Jef Page is in conjunction with the City Read and is organised by Vision and Redbridge library service. Admission price £1.50

Thursday 9 June, at 7.30pm *Ilford since 1945* by Jef Page, to be held in the Gloucester Room at Redbridge Central Library in Ilford.



This talk is a special event to celebrate the lives of Peter Wright and Sadie Gomm who were both founder members and long-time officers of our society, and who died in May & June last year. The talk will look at how the borough changed during their working lives which for both of them was largely spent in the borough's library service.



Light refreshments will be provided and admission will be free. All are welcome.

IHS REGULAR PROGRAMME resumes in September:

Monday 12 September *Shakespeare - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* by Janet Seward

The full programme will be in our next newsletter which will be posted out to members early in August or will be available from the editor (details on page 1) after 15th August.