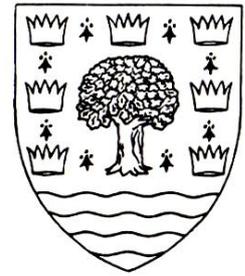


Ilford Historical Society

Newsletter No.113 December 2013

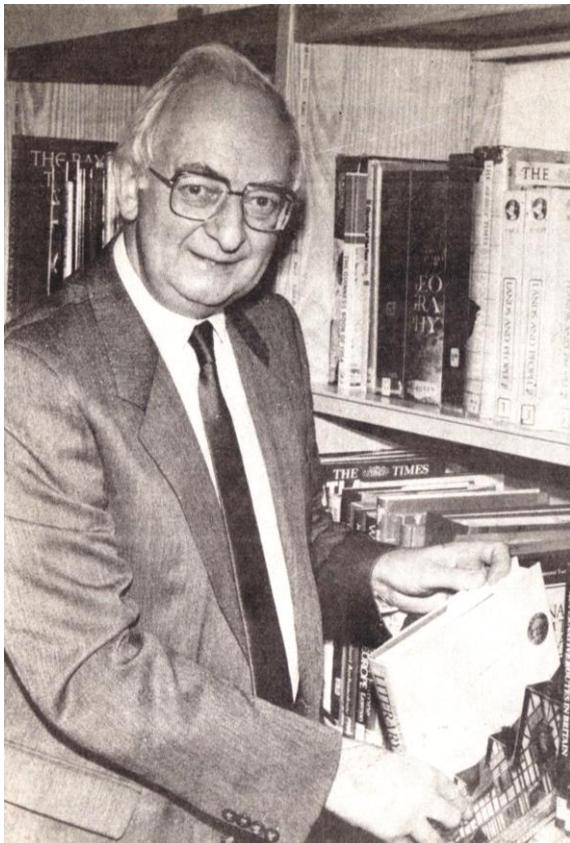


Editor: Georgina Green 020 8500 6045, georgina.green@btconnect.com

45 years of the Ilford Historical Society

In the April 2008 newsletter Doreen Weller mentioned that the Inaugural Meeting of Ilford Historical Society was held on 23rd Sept 1968, so I thought our 45th anniversary might be a good opportunity to look at the early days of the Society. I'm very grateful to Bernard George, a founder member, for providing valuable information to help with this.

The **Ilford and District Local Historical Society** was started by Peter Wright who was the Reference Librarian at the time, when in August 1968 he put out feelers to see what interest



there would be in a historical society. As he felt there was sufficient support he called an exploratory meeting on Monday 23rd September at 8.15pm at the Central Reference Library, 112b High Road, Ilford, which was described as "situated over Sainsbury's store, with its entrance in Cleveland Road."

A committee was formed with Hon Chairman – Mr George L Caunt, Hon Secretary – Mr P J Wright, and Hon Treasurer – Miss S Gomm. Mr H H Lockwood (Bert) was one of the six committee members. The first meeting of the fledgling society was held three weeks later, on Monday 14th October when photographic and other material from the Libraries Department, Local Collection was displayed. By this time the committee had met and drawn up a draft set of rules which were discussed by those present.

Peter Wright at the time of his retirement. From the *Wanstead and Woodford Guardian*, 3rd November 1989

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Further meetings were held on 11th November and 9th December when the speakers were Mr F. Sainsbury, Deputy Borough Librarian of Newham on “Old Ilford” and Mr F. B. Harvey, Chairman of the West Essex Archaeological Group, talked on “Local Archaeology”.

Meanwhile two members volunteered to take an active role by indexing gravestones and doing a photographic survey of Ilford.

On Monday 13th January 1969 the first Annual General Meeting of the **Ilford and District Historical Society** was held with 43 members present. By this time members paid £1. 0s. 0d. annual subscription, with additional members at the same address for 10/-. Students in full time education also paid just 10/- (50p). Details of the meetings in 1969 are not known, but they were held on the second Monday of the month from January to May and from September to December with a high calibre of speaker. The average attendance was 30 members. An outing was arranged to the Hospital Chapel on 12th July and there was a coach outing to Thaxted and Saffron Walden in October.

At the AGM in January 1970 it was reported that the Society’s funds were in a healthy state and it was agreed that the paper given by Mr. Lockwood would be the basis of the first transaction which it was hoped the Society would publish to a high standard. (See details at the end of this article) On page 7 you will find an article by Peter Wright which was one of a series on historical topics he wrote for publication in the local press in 1969-70.

Talks continued in 1970 with Major T. Hewitt on “The Barking Fishing Industry”, Miss Nancy Briggs on “Georgian Essex”, Mr L. Thomson on “Local Tramways” and Mr & Mrs J. Newland on “Genealogy”, two of the four being illustrated. It is interesting that all the topics given are just as relevant today. It also seems that each speaker was an expert on their subject and that they did not expect to be paid. The library venue was hired at a modest charge and the largest expense seems to have been on postage.

In October 1977 the Chairman, George Caunt, died suddenly and unexpectedly and Mr H H (Bert) Lockwood, who previously been elected Vice-Chairman, took over as Chairman and he continued until his death on 7th November 2004. At the AGM in May 1978 the membership had dropped to 32 and the financial situation was not so robust. At the AGM Peter Wright appealed for items towards a Local History Museum and Archive (see our August 2012 newsletter p.10-11).

When the new Central Library opened 25th February 1986 a Local History room was provided and under the guidance of Peter Wright and the first Local Studies Librarian, Peter Jackson, it flourished. The two Peters made a tremendous effort to raise the profile of local history in the borough. (see our December 2011 newsletter p.2-5 for more information about Local Studies and Archives) with “hands-on” study sessions held at the Local Studies Room. Also in the late 1980s excavations at the former Howards/Laporte site at Uphall revealed occupation artefacts dating back 3,000 years and interest in the history of Ilford increased.

Around this time two leading members from each of the four Redbridge local history societies met a few times to discuss what could be done to persuade the council to create a museum, stalls were held at events and interest in local history across the borough was probably at an all time high. Peter Jackson acted as the Society’s Hon Secretary from May 1989 and when he left the borough Jef Page took over in May 1994. He served as the Secretary for ten years but became the Chairman in December 2004 following the death of Bert Lockwood.

The change of name from Ilford and District Historical Society to **Ilford Historical Society** was made in 1995. By this time representatives of the society attended county wide events and were also included on the Conservation Advisory Committee of the council.

The newsletter started with the first issue in September 1986 under the editorship of Nigel A Roche. At this time the Chairman was Herbert Lockwood and Secretary was P J Wright. Nigel Roche's last issue, No.84, was in May 2003. There was then a break for two years until September 2005 when Doreen Weller took over and produced twenty one issues from Nos.85 in September 2005 to No.105 in March 2011.

Today the Society is again making efforts to increase our membership and raise the profile of history in Ilford. We have updated our logo and the newsletter style, and revised the constitution. Your committee has considered new sources for funding and several ideas for projects are under discussion. We need to encourage younger people to join us. Why not take one of our programme leaflets and ask your neighbours to come along to a meeting?

Georgina Green, 12 October 2013

Ilford Historical Society: List of Transactions

No. 1 *Sources and Developments of Local Historical Studies in the Barking and Ilford Area* by H. H. Lockwood (1973)

No.2 *Trams and trolleybuses in Ilford* by L.A. Thomson (1979)

No.3 *Long Ago and not so Far Away : A Miscellany of Local History* extracted from the newsletters of the Ilford and District Historical Society 1986-1991 (1991)

No.4 *Ilford Conservation Areas* (1992)

Lionel Edward Harvey, the manager who broke the rules and won by Ian Yearsley.

Reproduced by kind permission of the author from *Tramway Museum Society Journal* No 216, Oct. 2011.

Among London's municipal [tramway] managers, the received wisdom for many years was that success could be attained through collaboration with the London County Council in operating long through routes, using bogie cars with magnetic track brakes almost identical to those of the LCC. Bus competition, when it came, was fought by improving passenger comfort with better lighting and upholstered transverse seating, and also through legislation, using Restricted Street Orders under the London Traffic Act, 1924.

But there was one general manager who went in a different direction. He believed that trams were essentially short-stage vehicles, and so as early as 1913 he recommended his committee to avoid taking part in any through workings. It would in any case have been difficult, as his system had wheel and rail profiles different from the rest of London. After a series of experiments designed to avoid jazzing¹ and corrugation, he settled on flat-topped rails with

¹ "Jazzing" is a rapid side to side oscillation of the tramcar, common on four wheel non-bogie trams like most of Ilford's fleet. It led to an uncomfortable ride and additional wear on tramcar and track. "Corrugation" is a roller coaster effect on the rails, again leading to an uncomfortable ride.

Ilford tram rails had a flat top but other systems in London used one that was gently rounded. Tramcar wheels were profiled to match so Ilford cars did not run easily on other systems.

reverse one sixteenth of an inch conicity on the wheels, contrasting with the usual 1 in 20 outward cone.

In 1924 the Ministry of Transport had stated that no new cars would be approved unless they had provision for rheostatic braking. As the standard controller on his system was the BTH K10 which had no such provision, he always stressed that all the new cars had “reconditioned” equipment. He was a champion of roller bearings which he said gave 8 per cent saving in current consumption. And instead of rheostatic or magnetic brakes, he fitted Peckham disc brake gear of German origin.



London Transport tram no.26 on route 91 at the Chequers Terminus, Barkingside, c.1938. This tram was built in 1909 for Ilford Tramways Department.

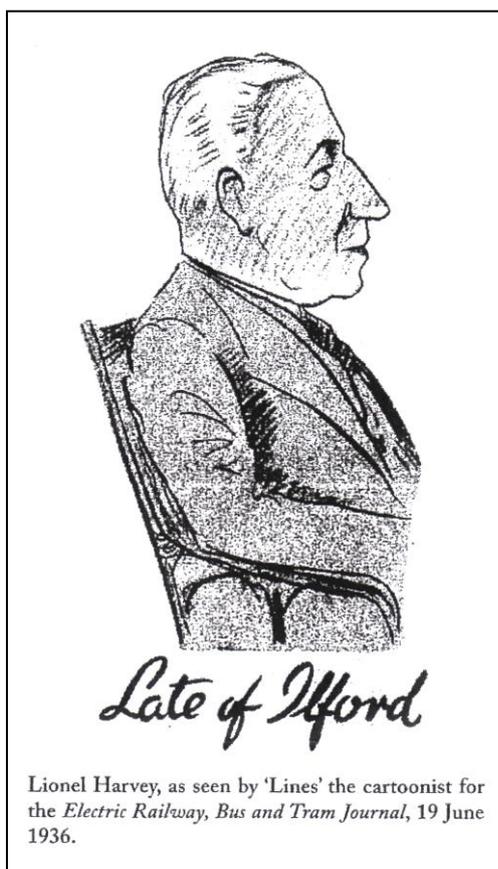
Reproduced courtesy of Redbridge Information and Heritage Service (Local Studies Library)

He believed that longitudinal seating gave easier circulation for passengers in the lower saloon and therefore avoided using transverse reversible seating there. But on the upper decks, he adopted thin-walled aluminium construction with horizontally-sliding glass windows. By eliminating wooden construction and the pockets for the window-sashes, he gave 5 inches more space both for seating and circulation. He did not favour windscreens on trams, but instead he designed a remarkable raincoat for drivers. Noting that seams were the point of leakage in both rubber and oilskin coats, he designed an oilskin garment based on a series of overlapping capes. No doubt it was effective, but must have looked quite fearsome, a cross between a Michelin man and a portable Christmas tree.

His cars themselves were distinctive in appearance, because he had changed their red livery to green during the 1914-18 war. His car designs were criticised for being conservative, and his policies were viewed as isolationist. Yet without having recourse to the Restricted Streets Orders under the 1924 London Traffic Act, he saw off the competition from the London General Omnibus Company and paid back his early loans.

Who was this remarkable maverick? His name was Lionel Edward Harvey, he began his career in electrical engineering and worked on the construction of the Waterloo & City and the City & South London underground tube railways. Moving to tramways he joined R W Blackwell & Company and was in charge of overhead wiring construction at Halifax. In 1904 he became resident engineer at Sunderland and from 1908 became manager at South Shields. Then in 1912 he became General Manager of Ilford Council Tramways and remained there until 1933 when the London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) took over. The significance of his policies came to light when Ilford, along with other tramway undertakings, was offered compensation for the takeover of its tramways, and protested that it was being penalised for good management. Harvey himself had already give evidence on this to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the London Passenger Transport Bill in July 1931, when he strongly denied that there had been any arrangement with the London General to limit competition.

Systems taken over were valued on a “no profit, no loss” basis; the idea was that the previous owning authority should be no better off and no worse off after the deal than before it. With local authorities, the valuation often came close to the outstanding debt on loans, but Ilford had consistently paid its loans back early, so it rejected an initial offer of £69,000 based on outstanding debts of £62,901. Without being put to the arbitration procedure, LPTB almost trebled this amount to £161,550, paid in London Transport interest-bearing stocks.



Arbitration proceedings for other constituents of LPTB dragged on until 1936, but at the time the Ilford protest came up Harvey was already working for the new authority and the case had to be made by Ilford council representative. He was well-known in tramway circles nationally, particularly for his work on the trade associations' joint committee on overhead equipment. In a diplomatic move, he resigned from this committee in May 1933, but shortly afterwards was appointed Technical Investigation Officer, LPTB Tramways. His duties were extended in 1936 to include trolleybuses. He retired in 1940.

Meanwhile his last batch of cars, Ilford nos 33 to 40 of 1932 were sold to Sunderland in 1938 following trials with one car. Lower decks had been designed with 6ft 9in interior height and this was reduced in Sunderland; enclosed vestibules were also provided. By the time of their sale they along with all LPTB ex-Ilford cars had been given ex-LCC Westinghouse controllers and magnetic track brakes in an effort to speed up services. Was he involved in this? Another

change of equipment followed in Sunderland, but these Brush-built cars continued in service until 1954, two years after the last cars had run anywhere in London. But Harvey's real monument lies in the financial lessons he offered, often unheeded, to municipal tramway operators to pay back loans early and concentrate on trams as a form of local transport.

NOTES

Financial details are taken from the London Transport Finance paper in *Tramway London* edited by Martin Higginson, LRTA 1993.

General history of Ilford Tramways is in *The Tramways of East London* by Rodinglea, TLRS and LRTL, 1967.

Harvey was a contributor to several trade journals; as early as 1910 at South Shields he was reporting savings from car current meters. Many of his ideas are in a paper on tramcar equipment given to municipal tramway managers at Leicester on 29 May 1930 *Tramway & Railway World*, 17 July 1930.

© *Ian Yearsley*

With thanks to Roger Backhouse and Ashley Best (Society of Model and Experimental Engineers) for obtaining the article for us, and to Roger for adding explanatory footnotes.

Additional reading:

L.A. Thomson *Trams and trolleybuses in Ilford*.

Ilford and District Historical Society Transaction No 2 1979 (ISBN 0 904250 01 6)

Robert J. Harley *Ilford and Barking tramways*.
Middleton Press. 1995 (ISBN 1 873793 61 8)

Ley Street tramsheds (trolley bus depot) and offices

In August 2013 the Council applied for planning permission to erect a new primary school on the site of the tramshed and offices now used as part of the Council's Ley Street depot. This will mean demolition of almost the last relics of Ilford's tramway systems, opened in March 1903. English Heritage has refused to list the buildings, saying they are of insufficient architectural merit.



Ilford tramway offices and Ley Street tramsheds, both photographs by Roger Backhouse, October 2013

Editor's comment: They may not be of architectural merit, but surely they have a significance to the history of Ilford and of London and are worth saving.

See the letter on page 12 which challenges the merits of listing the Newbury Park bus shelter.

Planning Application Ref.1964/13 registered on 7 August 2013 for the demolition of existing building. Erection of four storey block to provide new 4FE (840 pupils) Primary School. Additional car parking on Seven Kings High School site (summary).

Approved, with conditions, 28 October 2013 <http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/Planning>

Remember Ilford's annual ploughing contest?

One of a series of articles written by our President, Peter Wright, published in 1970.

The earliest detailed account of farming in the area is that provided by the Domesday Book which was compiled in 1086, although that part which concerns us deals with the Hundred of Becontree, of which Barking, Dagenham and Ilford formed part, as the parish of Barking.

Even though the parish was still heavily wooded, it is obvious that sizeable portions had been converted to cultivation, and the survey shows that there was 100 acres of meadow. It was computed that the parish was able to support 1,000 pigs, although at that time there were only 150. Besides two horses, 30 head of cattle, 114 sheep and 18 goats, there were also 10 hives of bees.

The next references to Ilford occur in reports made in 1768 and 1813. Mr Arthur Young, writing in 1768, mentions that the landlord of the "Red Lion" was obviously a market gardener as well, for he stated that he had just sold three roods of potatoes for £9 – and this without the crop being lifted. It has been said that in former times Ilford was "all sky and turnips," and undoubtedly this vegetable was a strong favourite in the parish of Barking, where the soil was particularly suitable for its cultivation.

The report of 1813, which was also written by Mr Young (who was secretary to the Board of Agriculture) mentions this crop several times. However, there is no doubt the potato was king. The report continues, "At Ilford where I made inquiries concerning of potatoes for which this neighbourhood is famous, the favourite was formerly the red-nosed kidney. The champion is now generally preferred, which does not curl." Ilford was evidently lifted into the limelight on the shoulders of the humble potato.

The planting of the vegetable is outlined: "The man dibbles (after ploughing) followed by a woman who drops in the set (the seed potato)." Such a sight must have been common on the farms in Ilford – the bent figures moving over the fields – potato planting was indeed a back-breaking job. For this work, the wage of 150 years ago [200 years ago] was between 7s. and 8s. an acre, with both the man and the woman being paid the same rate. For hand hoeing the fields, the wage was 4s. per acre.

It is difficult to realise that in 1900 there were 46 farms in Ilford. Many of these were producing vegetables for the London market and although corn and cattle were part of the scene, they were not the predominant occupation of the area.

The Ilford Farmers' Association, formerly a flourishing body, used to hold an annual ploughing match, and if that held in October 1909 was typical, then the event was a spectacle worth watching. In that year the competition was held on land at Forest Farm, Barkingside.

The ploughing started at 8am, and no fewer than 69 ploughs were entered – and of these, all but nine came from within Ilford, which will give some idea of the strength of the farming community at that time. There were 149 horses employed to draw the ploughs, and 11 ploughs had three-horse teams. The ploughmen's ages ranged from a lad of 14 to a veteran of 70. Each competitor received a jersey before starting, and a lunch ticket on completing his work. Unfortunately there had been a heavy fall of rain the night before, which made the ground rather heavy, but in spite of this, some excellent work was turned out. The match attracted thousands of spectators.

With thanks to Sadie Gomm for passing on the press cutting of the article.

Listed Buildings in Ilford: White's Farm



*Whites Farm, Oaks Lane, Ilford.
Photographed January 2012 by Georgina Green*



*The extent of White's Farm as
shown on the 1847 tithe map*

This building is on the LB Redbridge Local List, as built c.1860. It is now used as the East London Christian Fellowship Centre.

However looking at old maps it is possible to see an earlier building on this site in 1777 (Chapman & Andre map) and on the 1847 tithe map.

Sources for local history : Tithe Maps

Local tithe maps have interested me for many years and from my work I was able to prove to the Claybury Inquiry that some of the land attached to the hospital had been linked to the owners of Claybury Hall for centuries. Bert Lockwood's interest is well known and his work on earlier tithe maps is invaluable. Some of you may remember the fascinating lecture by Prof R Kain given in Bert's memory on 11 February 2008. (see our newsletter no.97, Oct. 2008)

Our newsletter for April 2008 included an article I wrote about my finding from the Woodford Tithe map and I'll be happy to let anyone interested have a copy of that article.

To explain again briefly, the payment of tithes, that is the duty to give one tenth of one's produce to the local church, dates back to Medieval times when the parish churches became established. Some maps exist from early times and the book *Tithe & Other Records of Essex & Barking (to the mid-19th century)* by H H Lockwood (Bert) published by the Essex Record Office in 2006 is a wonderful guide to these documents for serious students.

By the nineteenth century, with the advance of industrialisation, it was becoming increasingly complicated to fulfil this obligation. In 1836 the Tithe Commutation Act was passed so that instead of giving produce, a rate could be levied based on property value. A commission was set up in London to control the change over and authenticate the information collected. This was submitted by assistant commissioners who visited each parish, held a public meeting and arranged for the survey to be carried out.

Under the 1836 Tithe Commutation Act each of the 11,800 tithe districts in which some tithes continued to be paid were required to produced three maps. After verification by the Tithe Commissioners and an opportunity for local objections to be heard, the maps were approved.

The original maps remained with the Tithe Commissioners and these are now held at the Public Record Office. The first copy was for the Diocesan Registry and the second was kept by the parish. This means that in Essex, the Record Office holds tithe maps for almost all of the parishes in the county. Tithe maps are the first nearly comprehensive large-scale maps of Essex, usually 26 or 13 inches to the mile, predating the Ordnance Survey 25 inch maps by some 30 years. In Essex (but not Ilford) most were drawn up before the railway arrived.

Ilford at that time was part of Barking parish. The Archives and Local Studies Centre at Valence House, Dagenham, has a black and white drawing of the whole map. The Local Studies and Archives at Ilford Library hold a better quality coloured copy of the map (made in 1900) but this is just for Ilford, not the entire Barking parish.

By comparing a present day map and the tithe map it is possible to identify buildings which remain from early Victorian times, to locate the site of buildings demolished long ago, to trace old field boundaries (often still visible as boundaries between properties or as hedgerows) and to recognise that alleyways and footpaths may be ancient tracks.

Accompanying each map was the apportionment or award which was usually hand-written on printed parchment folios which were then stitched and rolled for keeping with the map. The award is linked to the map by plot numbers and lists owners and occupiers, gives field names and land use, and property values, and records the monetary rent-charge agreed or awarded to tithe owners in lieu of tithe payments. With this detail of land ownership, management and use it is an invaluable source for the local historian. By putting the information onto a computer spreadsheet it is possible to sort it so that a great deal can be discovered about the local area.

The Woodford Tithe Map (1838) has approx 500 plots but Barking (1847) has over five times this number so I have not yet been able to put all the Barking information onto a spreadsheet for analysis. From what I have done so far, in the Ilford part of Barking parish 2065 acres were arable and 480 were pasture. Interestingly in Woodford it was quite different, probably due to the higher number of horses required for the carriages of the wealthy: 1120 acres was shown as pasture while 350 acres were arable land. **This is an incomplete set of figures**, but I think it illustrates how a tithe map can be used to produce surprising results.

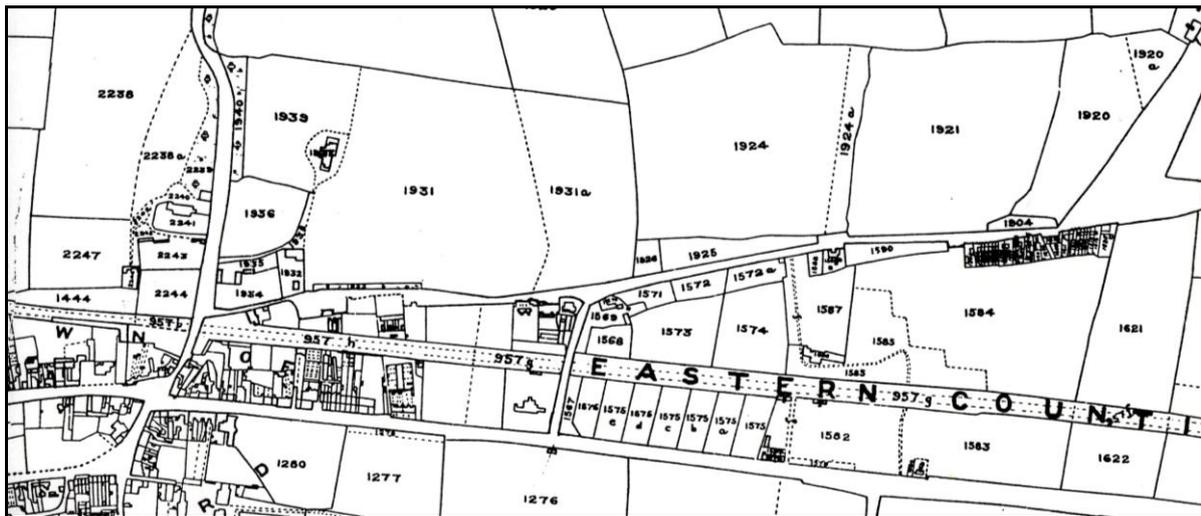
	Arable		Pasture	
Ilford	2065 acres	81%	480 acres	19%
Woodford	350 acres	24%	1120 acres	76%

Sams Green

There is one little enclave on the 1847 tithe map - a row of small cottages on Ley Street, just north-east of Ilford, which has long intrigued me. The Ordnance Survey Map shows this area as Sams Green and Edward Tuck in his *A Sketch of Ancient Barking, its abbey, and Ilford* (1899) describes the area as follows (page 64)

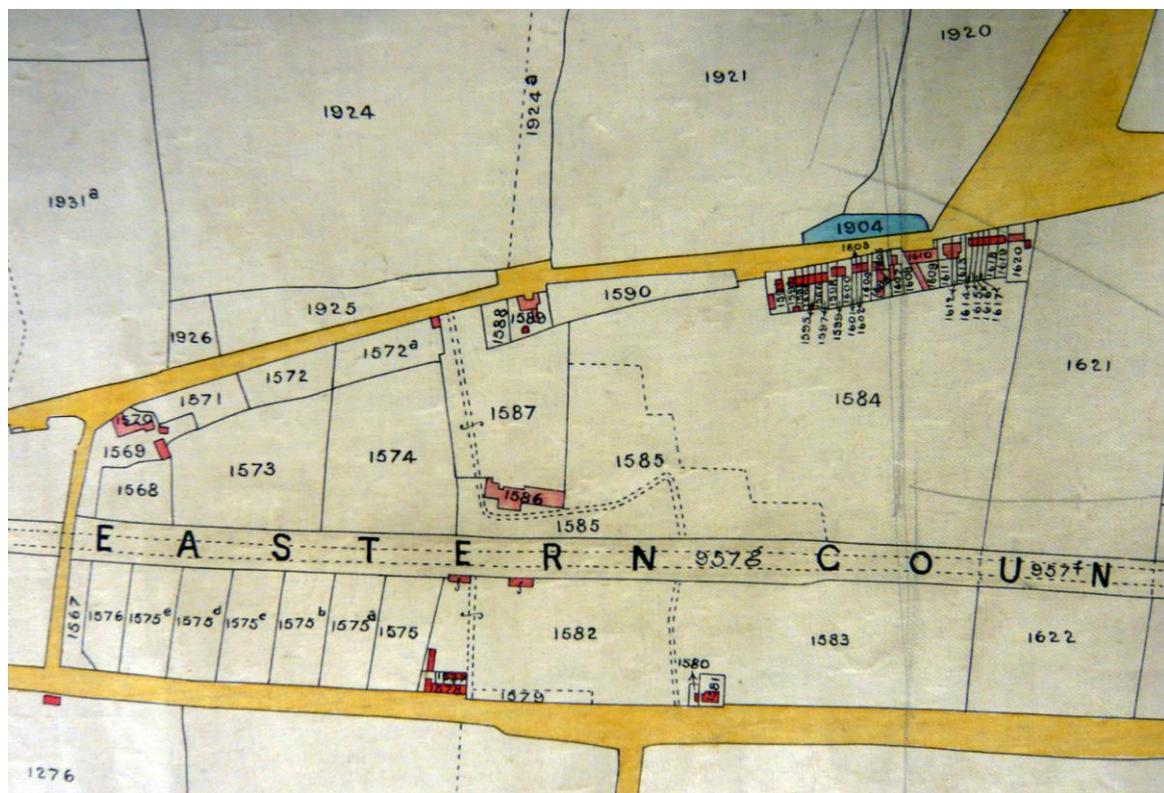
“There has been little change for years in this Hamlet on the south side of the main road, but on the north the aspect has undergone a marvellous transition. New roads, shops, and dwellings occupy the once open spaces. The large pond, at one time rather an important body of water, at last, through its impurity, forfeited its good reputation, and has justly been filled up and occupied for building purposes. The Green, looking back some 50 years, was a wide open space, but this, with other adjacent wayside lands are now enclosed and built upon.”

From this it appears the name had been given to a larger area, extending to the south of the High Road. Presumably when the railway cut through the name stayed with the northern part.



Above: Ilford village on the copy of the Barking Tithe Map from LBBB Archives at Valence House

Below: Sams Green on the Barking Tithe Map, courtesy of Redbridge Local Studies Library
 Photograph by Georgina Green (Plot 1904 is a pond)



By finding the names of the occupants of these cottages in 1847 and then locating some of them in the 1851 census, I have established that by that date: 18 heads of household were agricultural labourers, there were two shoemakers, a shopkeeper, a grocer and a beerseller (The Bell). Two census entries showed the head of the household as a needlewoman (one was a widow and the other unmarried) and two more widows were launderesses. There was a wheelwright, a blacksmith, a school master and a dealer in marine stores. There were also two brickfield workers. By the 1851 census Ley Street cottages, shown on the 1st edition OS opposite, were home to a brickmaker, a brick temperer and several brickfield labourers.

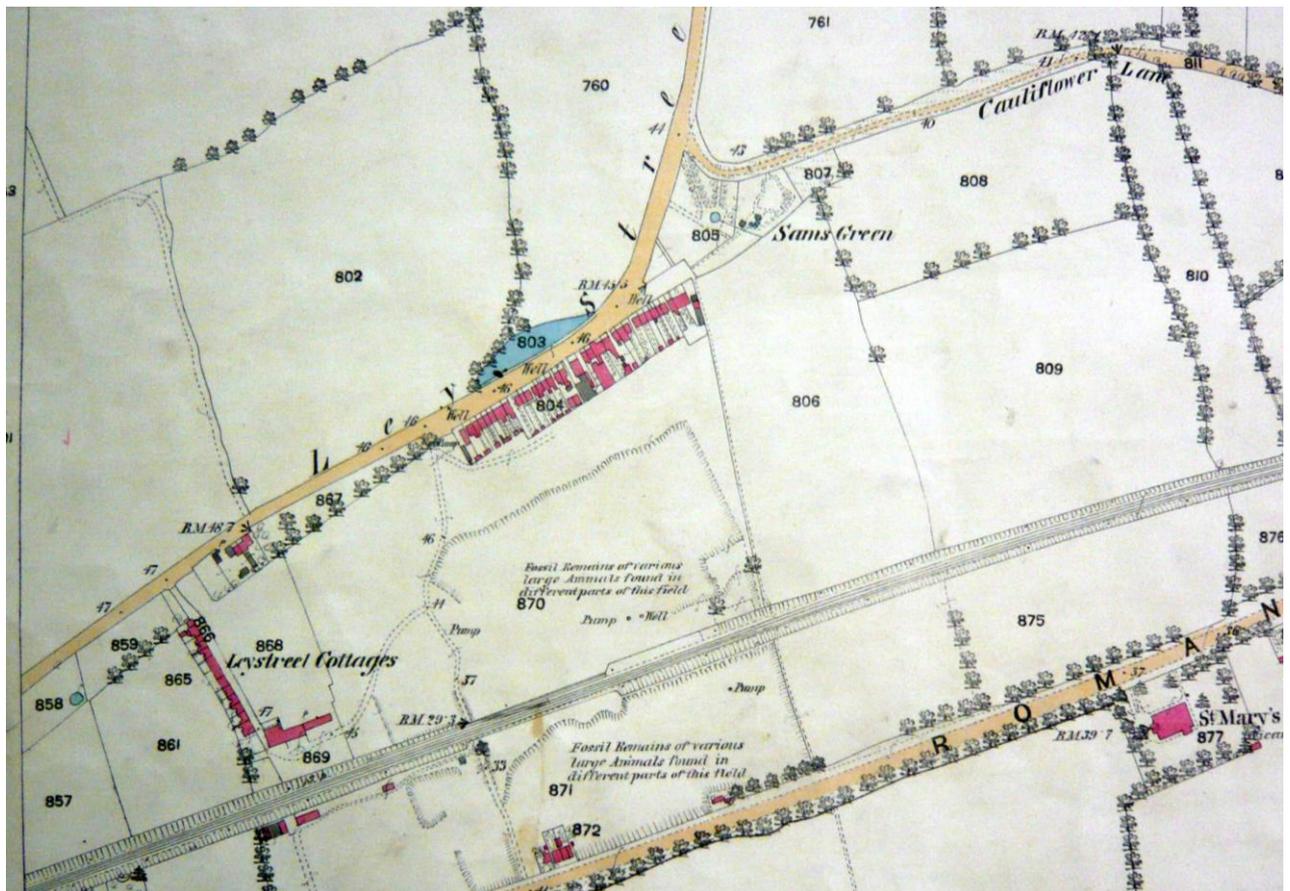
This last trade becomes much more important when you consider other property shown on the tithe map. Messrs Curtis owned and occupied a number of cottages in the area and also plots nos. 1582, 1583, 1584, 1585 and 1586 shown as brick field or brick yard and buildings. As the tithe map is from 1847 and the cottages were already built and occupied, this suggests the brickworks had been in operation some time. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (25 inch) shows “Fossil Remains of various large Animals found in different parts of this field” at the brickfields on both sides of the railway. I think most of our readers are aware of the vast number of fossils like the “Ilford Mammoth” from Uphall which were excavated by Sir Antonio Brady in the 1850s and later, but I was surprised to find details of a fossil discovery in Ilford in *The Times* of 8 May 1824.

More of this in the next newsletter.

To return to the cottages of Sams Green, I went to look at the buildings there now and there at least eleven houses which may be older than the (Edwardian?) houses opposite which have bay windows. The Bell was rebuilt in 1898 but could the cottages be those shown in 1847? Comparing the 1st edition OS map with an aerial photograph did not prove conclusive. Like so many problems with local history, there is no easy answer!



© Georgina Green 26 November 2013



1st edn. Ordnance Survey Map, 25 inch Sheet 74.1 (surveyed 1862, Zincographed 1881) courtesy of Redbridge Information and Heritage Service (Local Studies Library), photo G Green

Redbridge Museum exhibition : A History of Redbridge in Maps

Tuesday 22 October to Saturday 1 March

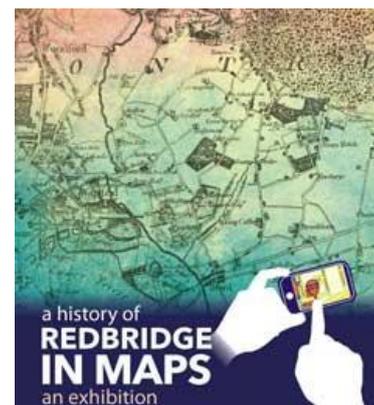
Time: Tuesday to Friday 10 am to 5 pm; Saturday 10 am to 4 pm

Using a range of beautiful maps, take a journey through space and time to discover over 2,000 years of local history in this Redbridge Museum exhibition.

From the earliest surveys of the 17th century to detailed Victorian maps and modern phone apps, explore how Ilford, Wanstead and Woodford transformed from small country villages to thriving London suburbs.

Visitors can uncover wartime bomb damage maps and local area plans as well as maps that are works of art in their own right.

Complimented by archive photographs, museum objects, oral history and film, the exhibition invites you to see Redbridge in a new light and is well worth a visit.



TO THE EDITOR
MADAM,

I READ your article on Newbury Park Station & Bus Shelter – Listed Buildings in Ilford (Newsletter 112, August 2013) with interest and respect your editorial right to promote local architectural wonders and highlight them to the community. But why-o-why does a large, upturned, half a concrete pipe or open-ended Nissan hut deserve listed status just because it was designed in 1937 and erected after the War? Whilst I accept that your article is factual, pointing out its Grade II status since 1981, it doesn't comment on the design and merit of the building. Probably very wise as there isn't any.

English Heritage have the right to nominate old buildings for protection so there's no reason why Redbridge shouldn't do the same. EH have listed outstanding architectural examples of palaces, workhouses, terrace houses and lately even a signal box as outstanding examples worth preserving.

Just because the bus station is an example of Oliver Hill's (1887-1968) work doesn't make it worth listing. Hill was a modernist 1930s architect who favoured curving lines and clearly they were popular. But Hogarth's curved line of beauty the bus station ain't. Fullwell Cross Library designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd is circular but far superior in architectural style and pleasant to the eye- Grade II listed in 1987 (built 1968).

And just out of curiosity, on what grounds was the bus station given listed status, and what happened to the occupants of the houses that were on the site? The same question can be asked about the occupants of the houses that were cleared when Ilford station was built in 1839.

Recently Redbridge Central Library's Victorian Society's exhibition asked us to support their campaign to save Victorian buildings. Yet most of Ilford's oldest buildings have gone- there's been little council support for them except Ilford Hospital Chapel and Valentines Mansion. Whilst we should try and preserve the few outstanding examples of old buildings that remain standing, we should make comments on the architectural and design merits.

In years to come will we really go "wow, ooh, aah" at the design, sight and merit of Pioneer Point? If it was threatened with demolition would we mount a campaign to save it, miss it if it was gone? And will the materials used in its construction stand the test of time as well- I think not.

Yours Sincerely

The Chingford Carbuncle.

The purpose of the series on Listed Buildings is to show readers the wide variety of listed buildings in Ilford – different types, built at different times and in different parts of the borough.

I do not write an article, I just include a photograph and the most relevant parts of the listing information.

I do not consider myself sufficiently knowledgeable about architecture to comment on the merits of the buildings I feature. Neither do I want to spend time investigating whether or not each building was on a "green field" site and, if not, the fate of people displaced. Perhaps the Chingford Carbuncle would like to write about some Victorian buildings particularly worthy of saving?

Georgina Green

Captain William Webber (1713 – 1779)

When you look at Ilford on the Map of Essex by John Chapman & Peter André, (surveyed 1772-4, published in 1777) you may notice the name of William Webber Esq shown living at Highlands. The research I have been doing into the life of his neighbour Charles Raymond at Valentines has enabled me to discover quite a lot about Webber. In fact I have proved that while Ilford in the 18th century has, until now, been considered a poor relation of the affluent communities with prestigious houses in Woodford and Wanstead, there were several just as wealthy men in Ilford at that time.



William Webber was born in Devon. He was christened on 30 January 1713 at Clyst Honiton (near Exeter) where the parish register records him as the son of Francis Webber, Vicar of this parish. Unfortunately there is no mention of his mother's name. I was able to confirm this as the correct record because he mentions some of his siblings in his will and they are also recorded in the same way. This is a great pity as I have a feeling his mother may have been a sister of Charles Raymond's mother but I have not been able to confirm a marriage for Francis Webber as it is a very common surname in that part of the world. Charles Raymond was born at Withycombe Raleigh, just a few miles away, about 3 months later. Whether or not they were cousins it seems likely they knew one another as children.

The next time I have come across Webber is when he was signed up as third mate on an East Indiaman, the *Wager*, in India on 21 January 1738/9.² There is no record of how he came to be in the vicinity of Calcutta but the records show him being paid as the third mate from that date. The previous day the second mate had jumped ship and the captain had wasted no time in filling the vacancy. The captain was Charles Raymond and the most likely explanation is that Webber had travelled on the ship as an unrecorded guest of the captain, in the hope that he could be taken on as an officer, as indeed happened. Presumably he had been observing what went on and learning about seamanship on the outward journey. Having served as third mate he could then expect to be employed at this rank from the start of his next voyage. As the Principal Managing Owner (PMO) who was in charge of the next voyage of the *Wager* 1740/1, under Captain Charles Raymond, was his cousin John Raymond perhaps it is not surprising that William Webber was signed on as third mate for the whole of that voyage.

They returned home in September 1742 and on 22 January 1743 Charles Raymond married Sarah Webster at the beautiful Wren church of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, in the City of London. Webber was one of five trustees mentioned in the legal documentation who would ensure that Sarah's inheritance from her father was protected under the marriage settlement.³

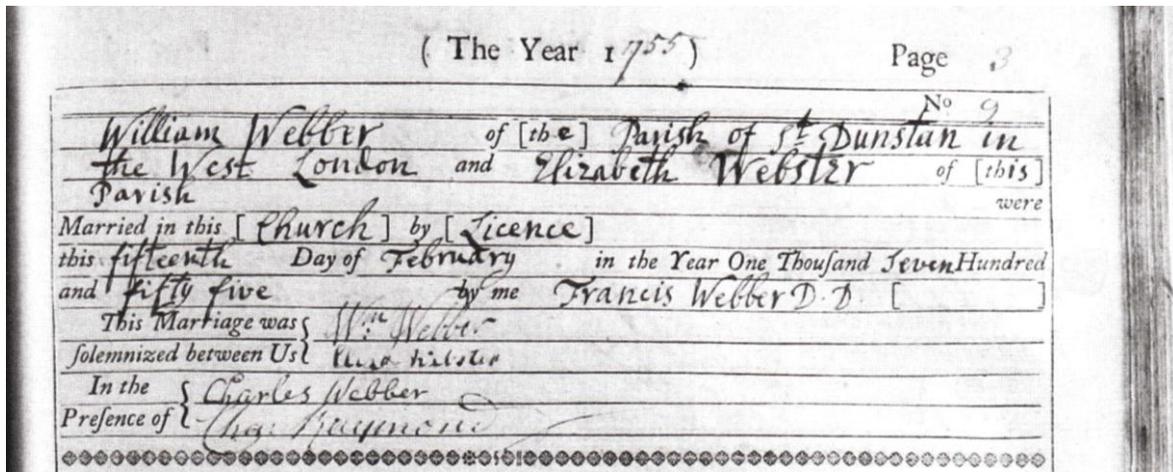
William Webber next served as first mate on *Prince William (2)* 1743/4 but when the captain died on 29 December 1744 Webber took over command. He was then engaged as captain of *Prince William (2)* for her 1746/7 voyage. This was delayed and by the time he returned to

² British Library: East India Company L/MAR/B/592H (2) *Wager* 1737/8 pay book

³ Essex Record Office: D/DU 539/1 Abstract of the title of Charles Thomas Holcombe Esq to the Freehold Estate called Valentines situate in the Parish of Barking in the County of Essex p.22/3

England in August 1750 Charles Raymond had retired from the sea and had already become PMO for several voyages. He had built a new ship called the *Harcourt* for his friend and Webber served as captain of the *Harcourt* for three voyages until he also retired from the sea. I have not examined his career at sea in detail but it appears the voyages were fairly routine.

Between the first and second of these three voyages, on 15 February 1755, William Webber married Elizabeth Webster, sister of Mrs Sarah Raymond at St Mary Le Bow church in the City of London. The ceremony was performed by his brother Francis, with another brother Charles Webber and his friend Charles Raymond as witnesses. William was aged 42 and Elizabeth not quite 30. Sadly it does not appear they had any children.



It was the privilege of senior officers sailing for the East India Company that they were allowed to trade privately while abroad and the success of this depended on the capital they had available to invest. I have not trawled the records to establish how lucrative Webber's voyages were, but it seems highly likely that he retired from the sea in September 1761 a very wealthy man.⁴

Exactly when he and his wife moved into High lands is not known but they are shown paying the rates by 1765.⁵ The estate had been purchased by Charles Raymond who then sold on some of the land but seems to have built a new house around 1764 which he leased to the Webbers. Meanwhile William Webber became a director of the East India Company, serving from 1762-5. He then became PMO for a ship called *Egmont* (2) for three voyages, 1766/7, 1769/70 and 1772/3.

Webber was now becoming an established figure in the City and in 1764 he became a manager of the Sun Fire Office (insurance), a position he held until his death. Charles Raymond became a banker in 1771 founding Raymond, Williams, Vere, Lowe and Fletcher which eventually became Williams Deacon's Bank. In 1778 he resigned and established another bank, Raymond, Harley, Webber & Co., which included William Webber as a partner.⁶ This continued until Webber died on 25 April 1779. He was buried at St. Margaret's, Barking, which was at that time the parish church for Ilford.

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⁴ British Library: East India Company Court Book B/77 p.151

⁵ Barking Parish Rate Books held at the Local Studies Library, Valence House (LBBD)

⁶ F G H PRICE. *A Handbook of London Bankers; with some account of ... the early Goldsmiths. Together with lists of bankers, from ... 1677 to ... 1876* pages 79, 177

Mike Gapes, MP for Ilford South, first elected 21 years ago!

In 1992 I was press officer for Ilford South Labour Party. It wasn't a job involving much effort as Mike Gapes, then prospective Labour candidate, sent out his own press releases. He was standing against Neil Thorne, who had been Conservative MP since 1979.

In the April 1992 General Election the local Labour Party worked hard and replaced a Conservative majority of 4,572 with a Labour majority of 402, marginal but enough to win the seat. However, Labour failed to win nationally, and John Major remained Prime Minister.

As the Labour Party had canvassed extensively I suggested that a celebration was in order and proposed an open top bus to take the newly elected Mike Gapes to the House of Commons for his first day there. Mike liked jazz, particularly blues, so having a jazz band along seemed appropriate. My inspiration was the Hogarth print of "Chairing the Member" a characteristically satirical print showing a crowd of drunken supporters carrying an uneasy looking MP on his chair through a boisterous crowd. Thankfully our trip was nothing like that, being entirely sober.

Rather to my surprise the Constituency Treasurer and others agreed this was a good idea and released party funds. I asked London Transport buses if they could supply an open top bus, but they refused, unwilling to do anything that seemed "political". I went to one of the private firms in Essex, who were pleased to oblige. (Later I heard that union members at West Ham garage had complained we'd used the private sector instead of London Transport. You can't win sometimes.) For the band I contacted the local secretary of the Musician's Union, Barbara White, (now a councillor) who agreed to put together a suitable 8 piece band who occupied the rear of the top deck. We paid them for the trip. They did an excellent job playing various Dixieland standards and other jazz all the way to Westminster, a good hour's ride.

Parliament returned after the election on 27th April 1992. We assembled that day outside the old Labour Hall in the High Road (now the site of the Sikh Temple) where various members decorated the bus with the Ilford South Labour Party banner and balloons. Several councillors came with us including Liz Pearce, as did Carol Tongue, then MEP for East London. Although my suggestion of a tour down Gyllingdune Gardens (where Neil Thorne lived) was vetoed by Mike Gapes, who was never triumphalist, we went down several constituency roads before setting off for Westminster.

It was a dull day and quite cold, but we drove through the City with lots of office workers coming to windows to see us pass through. On arrival at Westminster we set down Mike Gapes at the Houses of Parliament, to our cheers. After a brief stop on Embankment to use toilets we set off for home. By this time it had started to rain, so at least the weather held out for the journey up.

At the time I thought lots of constituencies would have done the same thing for their new MPs, but Mike was the only one so treated. Mike's arrival was filmed by TV crews and later that day a clip appeared on BBC London news. It isn't every MP who appears on television for his first day at the House, probably my only great success as a political press officer!

Mike Gapes has remained MP, increasing his majority, and making Ilford South a safe Labour seat. However, it is noticeable how turnout has fallen since the 1980s and 1990s. And I left the Labour Party several years ago, so as they say, "my vote must remain a secret between me and the Returning Officer".

© *Roger Backhouse, 21 October 2013*



Mike Gapes M.P. on his journey to take up his seat in Parliament on 27th April 1992, photo Roger Backhouse

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

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 April meeting,
or from the editor (details on page 1) after 15th April.