

Ilford Historical Society



Newsletter No.122 December 2016

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

The Development of Ilford

During a phone enquiry from a lady called Dorothy Delaney I discovered that she had been brought up at Hainault before the war and I asked her to write down what she remembered from that time. Dorothy suggested others who she knew as a child and their comments became quite an exciting journey of discovery. To put this in context I started to pull together some background material and so this issue of the newsletter includes several pages about how the area has developed from the small community by the Hospital Chapel to the large area we call Ilford today.

To start with I'd like to quote from an article in the *Local Government Journal* for Saturday 25th May 1901 which makes fascinating reading. I am very grateful to John Lovell, Chairman, Woodford Historical Society and a much respected, now retired, councillor (Mayor 1998-9) who gave me a copy of this article.



One of the most recent housing developments is the site of Kelvin Hughes at Hainault. Photo Oct 2016

Ilford: A Model Town of Today (1901)

– Some account of its progress during the past decade

“Today Mrs Weedon, wife of the ex-Chairman of the Ilford Urban Council, will switch on the electric light for the town, and during the next two months the Town Hall and Higher Grade School will be publicly opened. The population has increased during the past decade from 10,000 to 41,000, a proportion which, we believe, is unequalled by any other town in the country. The Urban Council and the School Board have not been idle. The former have bought and laid out four parks, costing over £50,000, have installed a complete system of

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electric lighting, are about to lay down electric tramways, which, with those of surrounding districts, will complete a network of lines for the whole of South-West Essex; are completing a comprehensive drainage system for this large parish of 8,000 acres; have built a new Town Hall, which will cost close on £30,000, and have, by vigorous administration of the Public Health Acts, reduced the death rate from 12 to 9. The School Board have built, or are building, six permanent and two temporary schools, including the Higher Grade School illustrated on another page. During this period the rateable value has increased from £37,000 to £209,000, and the rate in the pound has, with all these undertakings, gone no higher than it was in 1891."

The article covers four large pages and has many illustrations, though sadly my copy is not good enough for reproduction here. I may well return to it at a later date.

Ilford Town Centre: Past, Present & Future

Those who remember the great department stores of the 1960s and 1970s: Fairheads, Wests, Moultons, and Harrison Gibson miss them. But is this just nostalgia?

Great changes to Ilford occurred in the 1960s. Ilford Hill, which had been full of terrace houses, Miller's Garage and small businesses were the first to be swept away in the burst of post-war modernization on 'brownfield' sites in favour of high rise towers i.e. the BT Tower. Ilford South Ratepayers Association opposed the demolition of 'old' Ilford and building flats on green space. Changes in population, technology and new buying habits (i.e. Amazon) made it difficult for stores to survive as family businesses were bought out. Chinese, kebabs, and pizza takeaway fast-food shops all but swamp high streets. The biggest changes to Ilford occurred when the High Road closed to traffic in 1987 and The Exchange opened in 1991. With everyone wanting a car, car parks have flourished, not houses, as Ilford sought to revive our shopping experience and vie with Romford.

Two Ilford sites are up for development. They are Sainsburys beside Roden Street, and Harrison Gibson (both which plan to go skywards with residential tower block of flats) along the High Road. But currently its application has been stopped by the Council though many expect it to be revived and sent in again. The loss of the Pioneer Market in favour of the Pioneer Point (2012) along Ilford Lane upset many as the Market was popular and the architectural beauty of the Point is 'questionable'. Residents never feel good losing familiar landmarks and can Ilford can absorb more people and provide good council services? In 1923 Cranbrook Castle, built in 1765, was demolished so the Port of London Authority could build their sports ground beside The Drive. This was used by many local clubs, but was in turn sold to build the much needed Cranbrook Primary School. Trying to save the Oakfield 'greenfields' near Barkingside is important, as it was when developers licked their lips at the prospect of acquiring Valentines Mansion. Fortunately, Ilford's far-sighted councillors acquired the Park as an amenity for everyone. What attracted developers to Ilford 100 years ago is still relevant today when public protest, HLF and Redbridge grants saved Valentines from being taken over by a pub chain.

Can Ilford be made to look welcoming? Without a 'green' in the centre, as at Wanstead, making Ilford look attractive is difficult. The few scattered benches help, but...

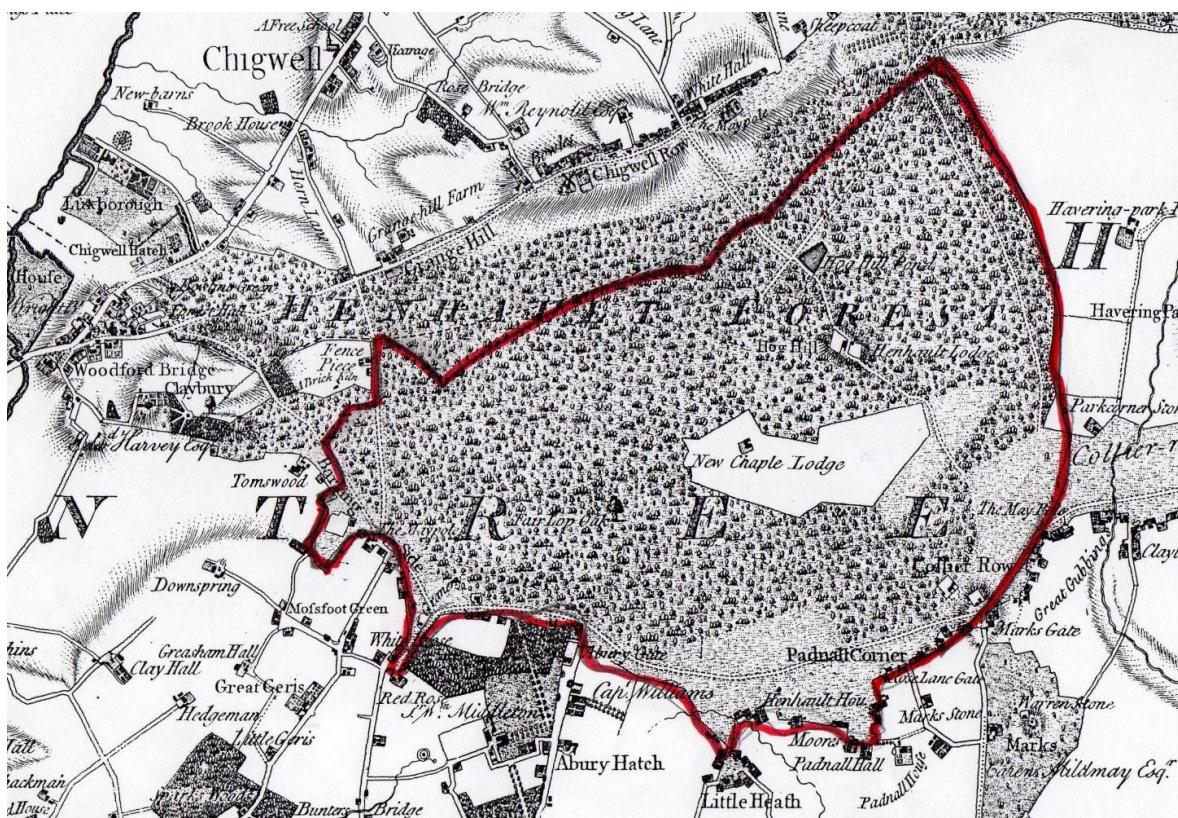
Jef Page, 13 October 2016

Focus on Hainault

The clearance of Hainault Forest

When we look at the map of Ilford today it is hard to remember that much of the land was covered in forest 165 years ago. This was not all tree cover, some of it was scrubland and open glades, but there were just a few dwellings scattered around the edges.

By 1849 the building of wooden warships was almost at an end and forest land was regarded as "waste" which could be put to better use. Parliament set up a Commission to investigate the legal situation in the New Forest and Waltham Forest (covering Epping and Hainault). This opened the way for the Act of Parliament in 1851 which enabled the destruction of the King's Woods which were the main bulk of Hainault Forest.



Map by John Chapman and Peter André, published in 1777. It has been marked to show the extent of the King's Woods in 1851. Note - there is still a pocket of woodland north of Brocket Way.

In 1851 a map was drawn up for the Commissioners appointed under the Act, to show the land holdings and entitlements of every person within the legal area. A copy of this is held at the Essex Record Office and is approximately 9ft. (3 metres) long by 6ft (2 metres) wide.

The King's Woods covered 2,842 acres. Of this 1,917 acres were allotted to the Crown, in compensation for the loss of forest rights, timber and other sources of revenue. The remainder was left as common land, the timber being sold to off-set the expenses incurred under the Act. It was estimated that 100,000 oak, hornbeam and other trees were grubbed out and sold by the Crown, realising £48,000. The Commissioners were empowered to set out roads over the Crown allotment and the map shows Forest Road (from Barkingside to Hog Hill) with Hainault Road leading due south from it, crossing the empty forest waste. Whether these roads had been built or were merely proposed at that time is not clear.

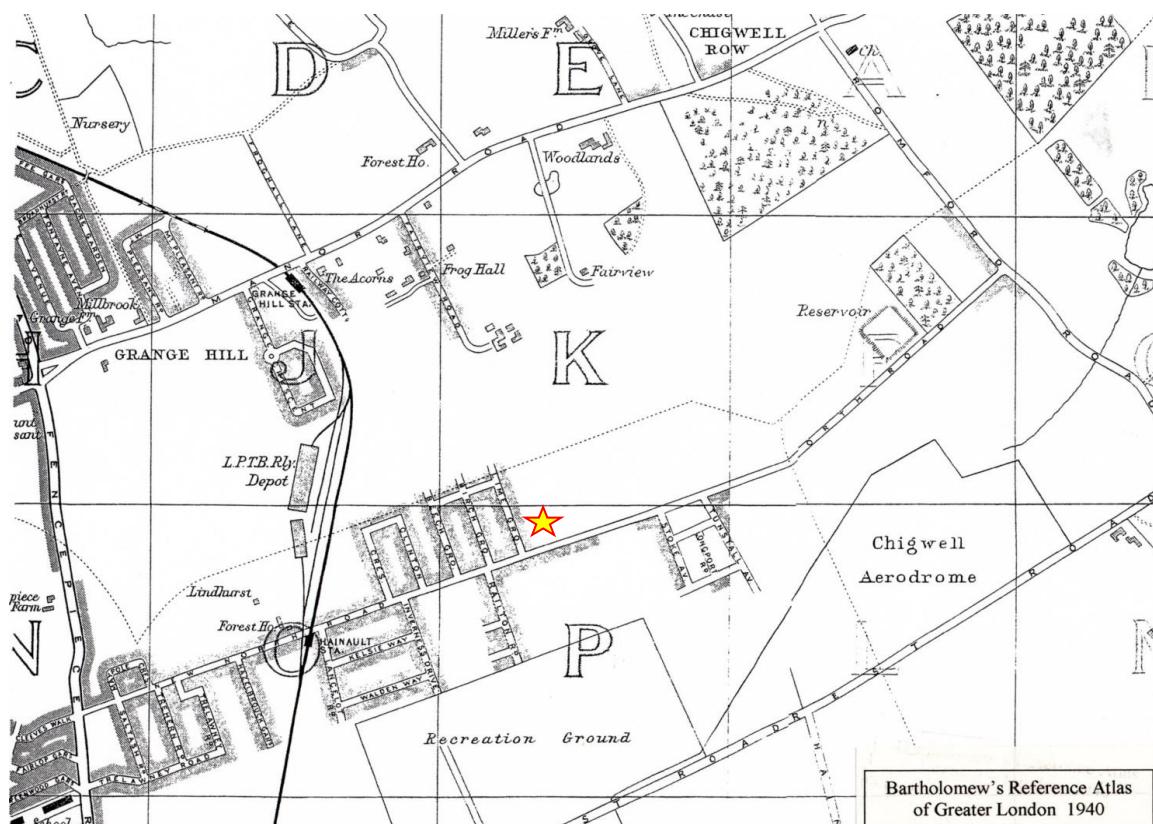
Edited from *The Story of Hainault Forest* by Georgina Green (published by LBR Libraries Service in 2002)

Gradual Development

Looking at the sequence of Ordnance Survey maps it can be seen that 50 years later New North Road had been built but there had not been any significant house building. ‘Hope Farm’ is shown to the south of New North Road but by 1932 this was just ‘Hope Farm Cottage’. The site is shown as covered by Railton Road by 1940 – this is now called Penrith Road.

By 1901 ‘Forest House’ is shown on New North Road at the site now covered by Hainault Station which opened in 1903. This was part of a railway ‘loop’ line from Woodford to Ilford via Hainault which was intended to encourage urban development but Hainault Station closed on 1 October 1908 due to lack of custom and did not reopen until 1930. At this time the surface lines of the LNER ran out to Loughton, Epping and Ongar from Liverpool Street with the line branching off from just north of Woodford to Hainault via Chigwell and down to Seven Kings (The Hainault Loop). They were steam operated with a passenger service from Liverpool Street via Ilford. When air raids damaged track between Ilford and Stratford some trains were diverted round this route to reach Liverpool Street. The track now used by the Central line had not been opened when WWII broke out in 1939 and between March 1942 and the end of the war the underground tunnels at Gants Hill were used by Plessey for a munitions factory. The Central line from Leytonstone to Newbury Park was opened 14 December 1947.

With the reopening of Hainault Station in 1930 development did start. The houses from Clinton Crescent to Lime Grove were built to the east of the station on the north side of New North Road by the early 1930s, as was Hazelbrouck Gardens to the west of the station. This was soon followed by Trelawney Road, Trehearth Road and Saltash Road. Most of the bungalows in this part of New North Road were probably also built around then. Development around Grange Hill station started with Grange Crescent.



Bartholomew's Reference Atlas of Greater London, 1940, shows the roads built at that time.

Wartime 1939 - 1945

Wally Cole (born c.1911) wrote about Hainault at this time in his book *50 Years in the Hainault Churches 1940-1990*. "In September 1940 we moved to Newcastle Avenue, Hainault, [linking the ends of Tunstall Ave and Stoke Ave, not yet named on the map above] but on our first night sirens went, guns opened up, flares lit up the area and a landmine on a parachute dropped and landed at Lime Grove and Chestnut Grove and devastated the area. Our house in Newcastle Avenue was left without any windows, or doors, or ceilings and half the roof was off. Gangs of workmen moved around doing temporary repairs. Doors were nailed up and roofing felt was put over the windows. These were left, and repeatedly repaired like this, for the next five years. Ceilings, walls and floors were just left.

Fairlop School was the only school in the area and at the out-break of war all the children were evacuated to various parts of the country. As most men were conscripted for the Forces and war work, most mums went with their children. The small community around Hainault Station was almost deserted. However, after a while many families began to return home.

The Fairlop Airport (now Fairlop Waters) was a base aerodrome for Spitfires and Hurricane fighter planes which were roaring off and landing day and night. With a large squad of pilots, crew, mechanics, and women's auxiliary air-force based in huts and buildings in Forest Road, this was a great enemy target and danger to us all around. Night after night we sat on our door step watching the bombing of London, and the East End burning."

Dorothy Delaney (née Davies) was born in 1935 and spent the first 18 years of her life living at 4 Lime Grove in Hainault. This is a semi-detached bungalow which, with no.2, is the first building on the right side of the road. She writes "This was the last road on the North side of New North Road and until 1946 we backed on to a farm (Saville's) which extended to Romford Road and Hainault Forest. My parents bought the bungalow in 1933 for £325.00. [Editor's note – it was sold in May 2016 for £378,000]

Miss Halsey (at no.2) had a hole in the hedge and quite frequently cows would roam into her garden. Roy, my friend Eileen's brother, would shoo them back!

My father was in the Army. I did not see him for 3½ years as he did not return home from Burma until 1946. Before leaving he built an Anderson Shelter in the garden. My very first memory was in 1940 when we climbed out of the shelter when the 'all clear' signal could be heard. What we saw was an amazing sight! The land mine had blown the roof away, the



The devastation caused by a parachute mine in Lime-grove, September, 1940.

French doors and windows were on the lawn. Inside, the wardrobes and dressing tables were at various angles, all badly scratched. There was glass everywhere. Several neighbours had been killed and the bungalows from no.20 had to be demolished.

demolished. We moved out for about six weeks while our bungalow was repaired. Irish workmen did a good job - their stippling on the walls was very colourful.



Dorothy in the garden (around 1941)

My parent and I were keen cyclists. We would enjoy cycling up to Hog Hill and turning left towards Chigwell Row, Lambourne End and Abridge. During the war there was practically no traffic and a friend and I (of primary school age) would cycle to Hainault Forest by ourselves, enjoy a picnic, returning late afternoon for a cooked meal (which might be rabbit stew!)

Within a few weeks a Prisoner of War Camp replaced the bungalows at the top of the road. I

remember the most delightful young Italian men singing to us at the gate. Luigi was my favourite! Eileen still has the ring one of the men made for her out of a fork prong. I begged my mother to invite them in but she said it was against the law. They were not allowed to travel on public transport so they had a long walk to the Catholic Church.

Luckily I was not evacuated. For a time Fairlop School was closed so Mrs Westwood (a smart young teacher wearing high heels) came next door and about a dozen of us sat round the table having individual tuition. I remember it being enjoyable. John Bramston School was built in 1944 so we left Fairlop and went to a brand new school ‘on our doorstep’.

When Germany surrendered in May 1945 we had a street party in Cypress Grove. Settees and armchairs were placed outside, trestle tables were weighed down with food, we sang songs and a made a guy of Hitler including moustache, then had a bonfire!

Very soon, it was amazing how efficiently houses sprang up, well designed temporary prefabs replaced cows at the bottom of our garden! More permanent housing was constructed at Manford Way and a very good range of shops appeared (including Sainsbury’s), buses ran frequently, in fact the population increased enormously!

Although the newcomers appreciated their homes and gardens, many of them were home-sick for the East End. Families had been dispersed - it was a sad situation. There were no pubs, community centres, cinemas or churches built for several years.

At that time the German prisoners of war came in truck loads and worked very hard digging the roads for the Manford Way estate. I couldn’t bear to hear German spoken nor could I make eye contact with these young men as I had opened the *Picture Post* and seen photographs of British soldiers opening up Belsen Concentration Camp. Those images will live with me for ever.

I went to Hainault Baptist Church - first of all we had services in Limehouse Cricket Pavilion, then in 1948 our own church was built near Hainault Station. We had Boys and Girls Brigades and a thriving Youth Group. I am still friendly with those young people though, of course, we’re in our eighties now!

Times were hard, rationing of food and clothes continued for years. Bombs had made a mess of so much of Ilford and London and we were poor! I very much appreciated my seven years at Loughton High School. Later, we enjoyed going to the cinema and to Lyons Tea Shops, also dancing at Ilford Town Hall, Cranbrook Hall and Manor Hall at Grange Hill. Gants Hill and Cranbrook Road in Ilford were our Mecca! I must admit that young people of today would not have enjoyed the way we lived in our early twenties. We returned home in the evening about 11pm – the very time today’s young people are going out!”

Another contact, **David Teager**, caused considerable interest when he commented “We lived in Thurlow Gardens [between Franklin Gardens and the station] following evacuation from Stratford to avoid the London blitz. I went to Fairlop School and later Walthamstow Tech. During the war years I well remember the American base set up in the Hainault Railway sidings and depot. The entrance was in Thurlow Gardens and the children gathered around the entrance guard house with the question to every passing soldier, ‘Got any gum, chum?’”

Dorothy Delaney also remembered there were frequently American soldiers by Hainault Station. I wondered why, but this does not appear to have been recorded in our local archives. A search revealed there is a document in the Transport for London Archives (as yet unseen). However, the story has been documented in an American publication which I quote below. It is amazing to think they were making equipment for the invasion of Normandy!

Joseph Bykofsky and Harold Larson *The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas* [United States Army in World War II: The Technical Services], Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, DC, 1990, extracts from pp. 130-1.

“Shortly after its creation, the Motor Transport Division began to prepare for the invasion of Normandy. Plans were worked out . . . regarding the number of troop units and the number and types of equipment to be used . . .

After consultation with the theater, by 1 September 1942 the War Department had drawn up a program for the shipment of 29,000 railway cars to the United Kingdom. All the railway cars were to be fabricated in the zone of interior and shipped knocked-down for assembly overseas. Shipment was to be at the rate of 2,500 cars per month, beginning in October 1942.

During the winter of 1942-3 the Transportation Corps in the United Kingdom negotiated with the British to obtain the Hainault railway sheds and sidings near London as a plant for the erection of the knocked-down, American-built freight cars. Originally planned to serve the London subway but never completed, the site was deemed the most desirable for this project despite some danger of air attack.

Initially, two railway tracks were to be constructed, one for assembly and erection, and the other for storage. Although the Transportation Corps had completed plans to use the facilities at Hainault in March 1943, the installation was not formally activated as a Transportation Corps depot until mid-July. Up to that time only 356 knocked-down cars had been received.

The activity at Hainault afforded valuable training.

Assembling a 20-ton boxcar, for instance, took place in eleven stages, ending with the touch-up paint and the stencil that identified the car as a unit of the U.S. Army

Transportation Corps. From July to September 1943 a detachment of the 729th Railway Operating Battalion, consisting of mechanics recruited from U.S. railroads, pioneered in the assembly work at Hainault. Thereafter, the 756th Railway Shop Battalion under Lt. Col. Howard U Bates rolled up an impressive record. The heaviest production was attained in June 1944 when 1,147 cars were erected.

In addition to the Hainault facilities, other installations were set up to handle Transportation Corps equipment, spare parts, and supplies for use in the United Kingdom and on the Continent. . . . By 30 May 1944 a total of 20,351 wagons or cars

UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II

The Technical Services

THE TRANSPORTATION CORPS:
OPERATIONS OVERSEAS

by

Joseph Bykofsky

and

Harold Larson



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
UNITED STATES ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 2003

of all types had reached the theater, including 9,270 20-ton boxcars, 5,050 20-ton gondolas, 2,891 40-ton gondolas, 1,530 56-ton flat cars, and smaller numbers of 20-ton caboose, 40-ton tank, and refrigerator cars. Most of the 7,106 erected units had been assembled at Hainault, but appreciable numbers were set up at Sudbury-Egginton and Moreton-on-Lugg."

I am extremely grateful to **David Nicholas** who moved the Hainault in 1958 but has given me considerable assistance with this section, particularly as he found the book quoted above. He also explained how the prisoners of war dug out the road from underneath the railway line at Hainault station so that it was possible for buses to pass on the road underneath once people started to live on the Manford Way estate. Before that New North Road had not been served by a bus route.

He has given me a long and interesting account of the wartime experiences of Evelyn Baudin (née Shacklady) written in 1989. She was born in Stratford in 1931 and did not have a happy experience when evacuated to a small village outside Ipswich at the start of the war.

Thankfully her parents realised she was not being treated well and took her back home after nine months. But when one night in 1941 a bomb fell on the house next door and did not explode, her father packed the family into the car and came to live at Beech Grove, Hainault. She became a nurse and emigrated to Canada in the 1950s. I will be happy to let anyone interested read this, and will eventually give it to the Local Studies Library.

David Bregula who has also lived in the area for a long time has been researching the developments after the war. He has kindly given me the newspaper cuttings below.

HOUSES TO BE REBUILT

Bungalows in Lime-grove, Hainault were demolished during the blitz, and wooden huts erected on the site, to house Italian prisoners of war. Owners of the former bungalows—some demobbed Servicemen—wanted their houses rebuilt, so they approached the Hainault Residents' Association, who approached the Ministry of Works. They also wrote to Mrs. Riddelagh, M.P., who said she would see the Minister in person. The residents have now received a reply from the Minister, saying that the huts are being dismantled, and the site cleared by August 21st, so that builders can start re-erecting the bungalows. Over a dozen homes are involved.

Ilford Recorder, 25th July 1946

HAINAULT ARMY CAMP

FAIRLOP may be deserted with, as yet, no sign of communal, civilian activity, but growing resentment is felt by homeless or badly-housed folk in the Hainault area at the daily sight of a well-situated ex-American Army camp, opposite Hainault station—deserted except for the watchmen who, night and day, patrol it. One of the watchmen explained to me: "We've had dozens of homeless people here in the past few weeks, giving the place the once over."

"Last week, engineers from the Ilford Council severed the main electricity cable nearby, cutting off the camp's power supplies.

Undated Continues...

"The two large brick buildings in the camp—at present consisting of unused drying rooms, wash-houses and a boiler house—have now been locked up and the keys handed to us watchmen with strict instructions 'not to hand them over to anybody.'

"Since this camp was left derelict by the Army early this year, floor-boards have been removed and transported away on lorries. Before that, the camp seemed perfectly suitable for family occupation. Water and sewerage systems are installed throughout the camp, and there is a communal cook-house. We watchmen work three day-and-night shifts—7 p.m.—3 a.m., 3 a.m.—11 a.m., 11 a.m.—7 p.m." Meanwhile, the camp rots.

David Teager also mentioned "When my brother, Norman Teager, left the air force with experience in radar he was immediately snapped up by Kelvin Hughes/ Smiths Industries who were developing that side of their business in marine navigation apparatus."

Kelvin Hughes first purchased the land which the company occupied until recently in 1915, as the then Henry Hughes and Sons. In these early days the company was manufacturing compasses and optical equipment. Their first radars were not produced at the site until 1947. I hope to write a proper account of that company in our newsletter next year.

LCC Development, 1947-53

In 1943 London County Council acquired land for a new estate which was an arrangement of roughly parallel roads with an area at the south reserved for industry to prevent the estate becoming a dormitory satellite for London. A mixture of housing was originally planned, partly to encourage higher income families to the estate. However, of the 2,779 houses built the majority were of permanent prefabricated construction. Many had a steel-frame with pressed-steel-sheet cladding on the upper floors. Different colours were used to make it less monotonous. Manford Way shopping centre was begun in 1949 near the church and community centre.

Information from *The Buildings of England: London 5: East*, Edited by Bridget Cherry, Charles O'Brien and Nikolaus Pevsner (2005) page 334 which has more details



Ordnance Survey map, 2½ inch, Sheet TD 49, partial revision 1954-5, Published 1959

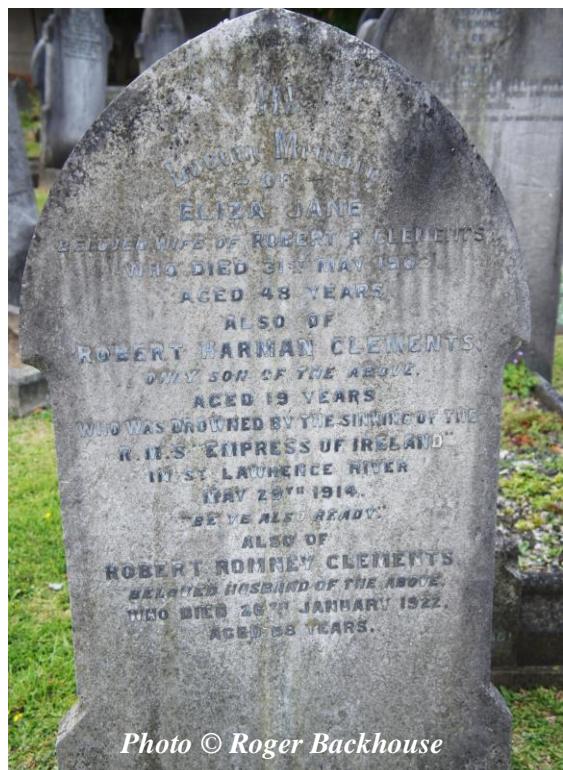
After the second World War, there was a national shortage of housing for both returning soldiers and bombed out families from London and so in 1944 Winston Churchill announced the 'Temporary Housing programme'. The idea was to design houses that could be mass produced and prefabricated (made off site) with the aim of providing a large number of houses both quickly and economically in the factories that had once manufactured aircrafts for the war effort.

A prototype of a steel-framed prefab was displayed at the Tate Gallery London in May 1944 and the prefabricated design was a triumph. Production started in 1946 and by 1949 over 156,000 had been built, including those erected on the junction of Elmbridge Road and Forest Road in Hainault.

<http://hainaultprefabs.blogspot.co.uk/>

A Missing Tragedy?

One reference book on my shelves is the massive *Chronicle of the Twentieth Century*, a month by month listing of events. May 1914 lists a supertax increase, suffragette raids, Balkan atrocities, strikes and an Italian earthquake among other significant happenings.



A chance discovery at Ilford's Buckingham Road cemetery shows this is not the last word in accuracy. While looking in the wrong place for the grave of George Pallant, stationmaster of Ilford, I found a memorial stone for the Clements family referring to the death of Robert Harman Clements, aged 19, in the sinking of the *Empress of Ireland* on 29th May 1914. He was the only son of Robert Romney and Eliza Jane Clements.

In *Wikipedia* there's a wealth of information about the tragedy, but nothing in the *Chronicle*. It's strange the tragedy is ignored, for it was one of the worst peacetime maritime tragedies and the worst in Canadian waters. Of 1477 on board, 1012 died compared to the 1517 lives lost on the *Titanic*.

The *Empress of Ireland* was built at Fairfield's yard on the Clyde in 1906 for the Canadian

Pacific Steamship Co. This was claimed to be part of the "World's Greatest Transportation System" with the sister company the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Setting sail from Quebec for Liverpool on 28th May 1914 it was the ship's 96th voyage. Henry George Kendall was captain; his first voyage in charge. It was reported that the ship's cat 'Emmy' refused to join the ship so the more superstitious saw this as a bad omen, but only after the sinking.

After disembarking the pilot the ship sailed down the St Lawrence River. In the early hours of 29th May the liner's crew saw a Norwegian collier, the *Storstad*, on a slightly different course about six miles away. Unfortunately fog descended quickly, as often happened in the St Lawrence. Both ships sounded whistles and slowed down. It appears both captains intended to pass starboard to starboard.

Accounts of what happened differ. Cynics observed afterwards that if the Captains were to be believed both ships were stationary with engines stopped at the time of the collision! However, around 2am the *Storstad* rammed into the side of the *Empress of Ireland* making a massive hole. Some reports say portholes were open in defiance of regulations because of stifling conditions below. Water rushed in and the liner listed badly so lifeboats could not be launched on one side. It capsized and sank in 130 feet of water.

Though the *Storstad* lowered boats and saved some passengers and crew, it was nothing like enough. Of 138 children on the liner only four survived. Most bodies were recovered and buried at the town of Rimouski, where there are two memorials.

Being on the upper decks first and second class passengers were more likely to escape (as happened on the *Titanic*). Captain Kendall was thrown into the water but survived and helped rescue operations. As a third class passenger, Robert Clements had little chance.

At the ensuing Inquiry the captain of the *Storstad* was blamed for the collision and Canadian Pacific Steamships won damages against the owners. However, more recent research suggests Captain Kendall may have altered course unexpectedly trying to keep to schedule mindful of the Company's reputation for rapid passages.

The liner's design was flawed. Longitudinal watertight bulkheads made it more likely the ship would list if holed, making it difficult to launch lifeboats. Also the *Storstad* had a "reverse slanting" prow protruding below the water line worsening the impact of any end on collision. Ship redesigns followed.

A total of 167 members of a Salvation Army party died while travelling to a world conference of Salvationists in England. They included the Canadian Staff Band, among their members Thomas Jones whose death and funeral received prominent attention in the *Ilford Recorder*.

According to the *Ilford Recorder* (5th June 1914) Thomas "Tom" Jones had emigrated to Canada in 1912 having previously lived in Ilford for 9 years. He'd worked at Creed's ironmongers in Seven Kings for 8 years and was a bandsman in the Ilford Salvation Army Corps. In 1913 he married a fellow Salvationist in Toronto, Lily Hodgson, who was expecting their first child at the time of the sinking. His parents lived at 86 Ley Street, Ilford and his wife's family had lived in Ilford before moving to West Green.

The *Recorder* published a separate report from a fellow Salvationist, Ernest Green, saying he and Tom Jones were in the water assisting a lady. Ernest and the lady were rescued but Tom Jones was lost. However, there is no mention of Robert Clements who does not appear to have been a Salvationist. Perhaps this was reported later.

The Salvation Army held a memorial service at Ilford's Town Hall, reported in detail by the *Recorder*. (12th June 1914) The hall was packed and many hundreds were turned away. With Mrs "Colonel" Jeffries leading the service the *Recorder* listed hymns sung including *Servant of God, well done* and *Rock of Ages* and detailed the addresses by leading Salvationists, Colonel Jeffries saying that those who died had died well, because they had lived well.

However the *Recorder* admitted a wry note adding "...the vast audience, still kneeling sang with deep fervour *Abide with Me* the weird wailings of a concertina played by Col. Jackson, mingling strangely with the band accompaniment". Despite this the service clearly moved the congregation.

One of Ilford's leading clergymen, the Rev Harry Vine, preached at the Congregational Church on moral issues raised by the sinking. Again the *Recorder* gave a detailed report (5th June 1914) showing that the Rev Vine managed heavy theological issues in a presumably well attended church.

The Lord Mayor of London set up a disaster fund and a concert in support was held at the Cauliflower Hotel, though in the Masonic Hall rather than the gardens due to wet weather. Directed by Mr Dick Lewis "his usual place" at the piano was taken by Mr C Chudleigh Candish with numerous artists appearing, the *Recorder* confidently predicting that a good sum would be handed over. (19th June 1914)

The Salvation Army still holds a memorial service annually in Toronto. Canadian TV made programmes about the sinking and commemorative stamps and a coin were issued in 2014.



Photo © Roger Backhouse

long before the joys of the Internet and international phone calls.

And though browsing in cemeteries is perhaps an acquired and slightly macabre taste you never know what fascinating stories may emerge!

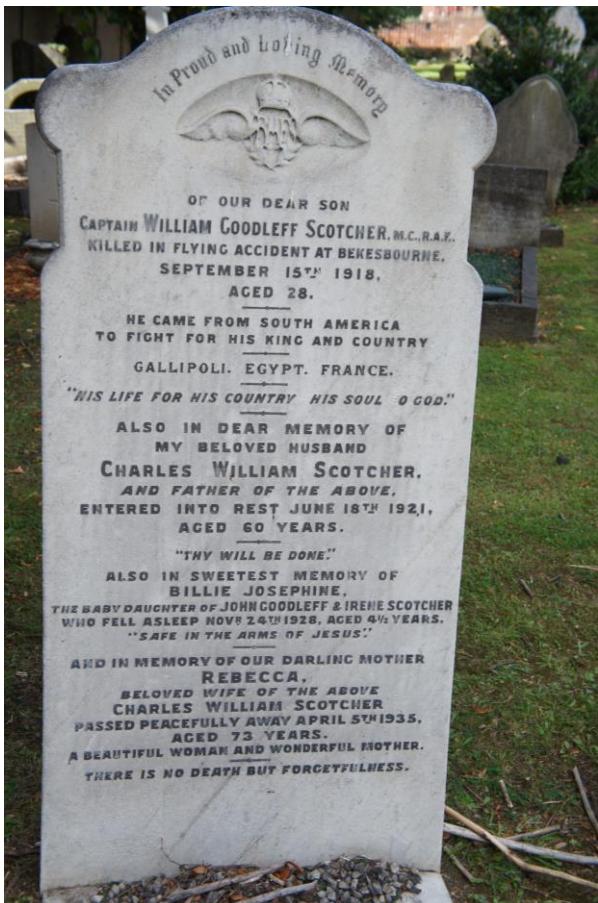
© Roger Backhouse, 31st October 2016

Creeds ironmongers closed recently but the Salvation Army retains a presence in Ilford, if not of its former strength. The memorial stone remains in the cemetery, an unexpected reference to a near forgotten tragedy.

What does this show? First, apparently authoritative reference books may be highly selective and overlook major events. A major catastrophe like the *Titanic* loss and soon, the First World War overshadowed other tragedies.

From this, and other references in the local press, that though Ilford was still growing rapidly it also sent many young people abroad. Britain and London in particular had many immigrants from East Europe in the previous forty years but migration is rarely one way.

Non-government organisations like the Salvation Army were clearly operating on an international scale



Roger also sent this photo which illustrates his point. The tombstone at Buckingham Road cemetery tells a remarkable story.

Captain William Goodliff Scotcher, M.C. R.A.F., Son of Charles William Scotcher (died 18 June 1921, aged 60) was killed in a flying accident at Bekesbourne, September 15th 1918, aged 28.

He came from South America to fight for his king and country in Gallipoli, Egypt, France.

The Redbridge Museum website has a picture of Captain Scotcher at <http://www.redbridgefirstworldwar.org.uk/the-war-dead/william-goodliff-scotcher>

Museum Manager, Gerard Greene, has kindly sent me his entry in the Ilford War Memorial Gazette and I will include this in another newsletter.



Sir Charles Raymond and Stow Maries

Sir Charles Raymond died a very wealthy man in 1788. Initially his money came from his time at sea, working for the East India Company, but once he retired from that life he started to invest in property. He purchased Valentines in 1754 and the *Victoria County History* records other property transactions in the Ilford area. The estates of Wyfields, Highlands and Cranbrook were bought and sold on, as were other smaller properties. He also owned property in the City and at Blackwall.

However, I am grateful to Linda Rhodes who is Local Studies Librarian at Valence House, and who in 2008 contacted me about a document she found in their archives: an Abstract of Title for Edwards Hall describing owners/lessees from 1659 to 1787. She noticed that Sir Charles Raymond “of Valentines” in 1772 and “of Highlands” in 1787 purchased the property, and was involved in some complicated transactions relating to it. After some delving I discovered that he acquired the property while he was a Director of the Sun Insurance Office - it was land they obtained in lieu of a payment. It was almost certainly an investment and I doubt Raymond actually visited the area in person.

I discovered a map of this property at the Essex Record Office. It was dated 1771 and showed estates at Woodham Ferrers, Stow Maries and Cold Norton ‘Champions Manor and the farms called Champions, Hamberds, Edwards-Hall, Prentices, Flamberds and Whitnams, belonging to Charles Raymond Esqr, by Thomas Pride’. (ERO D/DGe P15) The estate was in the region of 1900 acres. Most of these locations are also shown on the Chapman & André Map of Essex (1777) sheet XVIII.

Having studied photographs of the map, I visited the area. I couldn’t see much of Edwin’s Hall because of trees but the house, built c.1576, still appeared to be a private residence with extensive grounds. I later discovered that Edwards-Hall was sold at auction by the executors of Sir Charles Raymond in February 1794. The lease paid the owner £200 per annum.

I was amazed to discover that approximately half of the estate (Champions Manor) is now covered by South Woodham Ferrers, while the remainder to the north appears to be farmland. Flambird’s, Hamberds, Prentices and Whitnams were still working farms and that area has not changed much for many years. However, I was interested to see the airfield which features in the following item.

© Georgina Green, 6th November 2016



Flambirds Farm, 27 August 2008 © Georgina Green

Stow Maries Airfield and Royal Flying Corps

When the War Office took over control of London’s air defences in February 1916, it created a new organization, Home Defence, with a spread of 30 airfields and 11 squadrons from Dover to Edinburgh. Home Defence squadrons included a number of experienced pilots from France who were home on ‘rest’ or between operational periods, occasionally ‘war weary’ and in urgent need of a break. Sometimes whole squadrons were sent back from France when

increased German incursions over England made this necessary. Among the Home Defence airfields was a handful in south-west Essex: Hainault Farm, Suttons Farm and North Weald; further out into Essex were Rochford, Stow Maries and Goldhanger. Of all the Home Defence airfields, Stow Maries is the only one still largely intact and it is one of very few near-complete First World War airfields anywhere in Europe.

After the end of the First World War, the site operated as part of a farm until 2009 when it was purchased by a small commercial company building and maintaining high-performance sports cars, run by Russell Savory, a former motor racing engineer. Seeing the potential to return Stow Maries to its Great War heyday, Russell encouraged the formation of the Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome Trust, which in 2013 purchased the site and began a major conservation project backed by Lottery and local council funding.

A new flagship museum has recently opened on the site. Housed in the old workshop building, the museum starts with an introduction to the First World War in the air, with a particular emphasis on the defence of London and its eastern approaches. This sets the scene and explains the reason for Stow Maries (and Hainault Farm's) existence. It clearly outlines the threat from the various types of airship and aircraft, and culminates in a tableau showing a life-sized section of a German Gotha, complete with crew, flying over London.

In parallel to the 'bigger picture' story, the museum also tells how Stow Maries was established, with background on its personnel and their roles. These include aircrew, ground crew and female personnel. There is also a section on aircraft design and construction, which graphically illustrates just how flimsy and dangerous aircraft from the First World War were.

Elsewhere on the site more than 20 other buildings (all Grade II* listed) have been, or are being, restored, in order gradually to bring the whole place back to life. The airmen's mess is

now resplendent in its wartime glory and serves refreshments for visitors. The squadron offices tell the story of No 37 Squadron, and more buildings are in the process of being stabilised and restored. The other big draw at Stow Maries is its flying days, when vintage and replica First World War aircraft take off, fly over and land again at the airfield.

More information is available on the airfield's



Sopwith Snipe photographed at Stow Maries © Alan Simpson

website - <http://www.stowmaries.org.uk/> - and in its guidebook (*Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome*, by A R Pluck, Friends of Stow Maries Aerodrome, 2014). Details of the listed buildings are on Historic England's website at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1406155>.

© Alan Simpson, 26 September 2016

RFC and Hornchurch Country Park

Alan's article in our last newsletter, 'Ilford and the Zeppelins' on pages 5-14, prompted me to make a visit to the site of the airfield at Suttons Farm where the Essex Wildlife Trust opened a Visitor Centre on 3rd October 2015. This is open seven days a week, 9am – 5pm, and has a display about both the natural aspects of the country park and the airfield's history in both World Wars. It also has a very pleasant café with a good choice of food at a reasonable price.

The site is now covered by Hornchurch Country Park, nearly 120 hectares, owned by the London Borough of Havering. It is a mixture of open grassy glades and areas of woodland with a large lake and views over the reedbeds and marshes of the Ingrebourne valley. It has a large free car park and a network of wide tarmac paths so is ideal for a country walk in any weather. There are many benches along the way and several places to picnic. Hornchurch underground station is within walking distance and no.252 buses pass nearby.

The park is of considerable interest to naturalists both because of the wildlife it attracts and also because it is part of a natural corridor between Rainham Marshes and the open areas to the north. It has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. However, evidence of the history of the site has not been obliterated and you do not have to walk far to see pillboxes and Tett turrets from the WW2 airfield. It was from Suttons Farm WWI airfield that 2nd Lieutenant William Leefe Robinson took off on the night of 2nd /3rd September 1916 to be the first to bring down an enemy Zeppelin, Shütte-Lanz SL11 (which crashed at Cuffley). In WW2 the expanded airfield became RAF Hornchurch and fighter squadrons based here played a vital role in the Battle of France over Dunkirk and in the Battle of Britain. Both phases in its history are fully explained by displays and exhibits in the Visitor Centre and summarised in the leaflet 'People, Wildlife and Heritage' which is freely available there.

Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre at Hornchurch Country Park is off Squadrons Approach, Hornchurch RM12 6DF (phone 01708 520364) It is well worth a visit.

© Georgina Green, 27th September 2016



One of the pillboxes at Hornchurch Country Park, photograph © Simon Ives, 10 October 2016

Redbridge Museum and Library Service update



The Museum has a stunning new exhibition **India's Gateway: Gujarat, Mumbai & Britain** exploring the links between Gujarat, Britain and Redbridge. It runs until 28th January 2017 when the museum is open: Tuesday – Friday 10am – 5pm and Saturday 10am – 4pm

Do you have a couple of hours a week to spare? Central Library Heritage Section are looking for volunteers. They are currently updating their building plan index to make it available online. If you would like to volunteer to help with this project please contact Sue Page 0208 708 2032 sue.page@visionrcl.org.uk

IHS PROGRAMME Spring 2017

Our regular monthly meetings are held on a Monday 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)

9th January 2017 Stepney in the 18th Century

by Derek Morris, author.

13th February 2017 Folklore & Traditions: particularly related to Essex

by Mark Lewis, author.

13th March 2017 International Women's Month **Elizabeth I – the last of the Tudors**: the sun around which her courtiers warily orbited: Burghley, Drake, Essex, Hatton, Leicester, & Walsingham by Jef Page, IHS President.

10th April 2017 at 7pm AGM

followed by **The Solace and Inspiration of Nature** including John Clare, Edward Thomas and other poets connected with Epping Forest. by Georgina Green, IHS Vice-President.

8th May 2017 The First Day of the Battle of the Somme: 1st July 1916

by Jef Page, IHS President.

Wednesday 14th June 2017 at 7.30pm **From John of Gaunt to Gants Hill: history of Gants Hill area**. This talk by Jef Page is in addition to our normal programme and will be held in the Hainault Room at Fullwell Cross Library.

Admission price members £2, visitors £3 (tbc), which will include light refreshments.

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

The next newsletter will be available at our April meeting, or from the editor (details on page 1) after 10th April.