

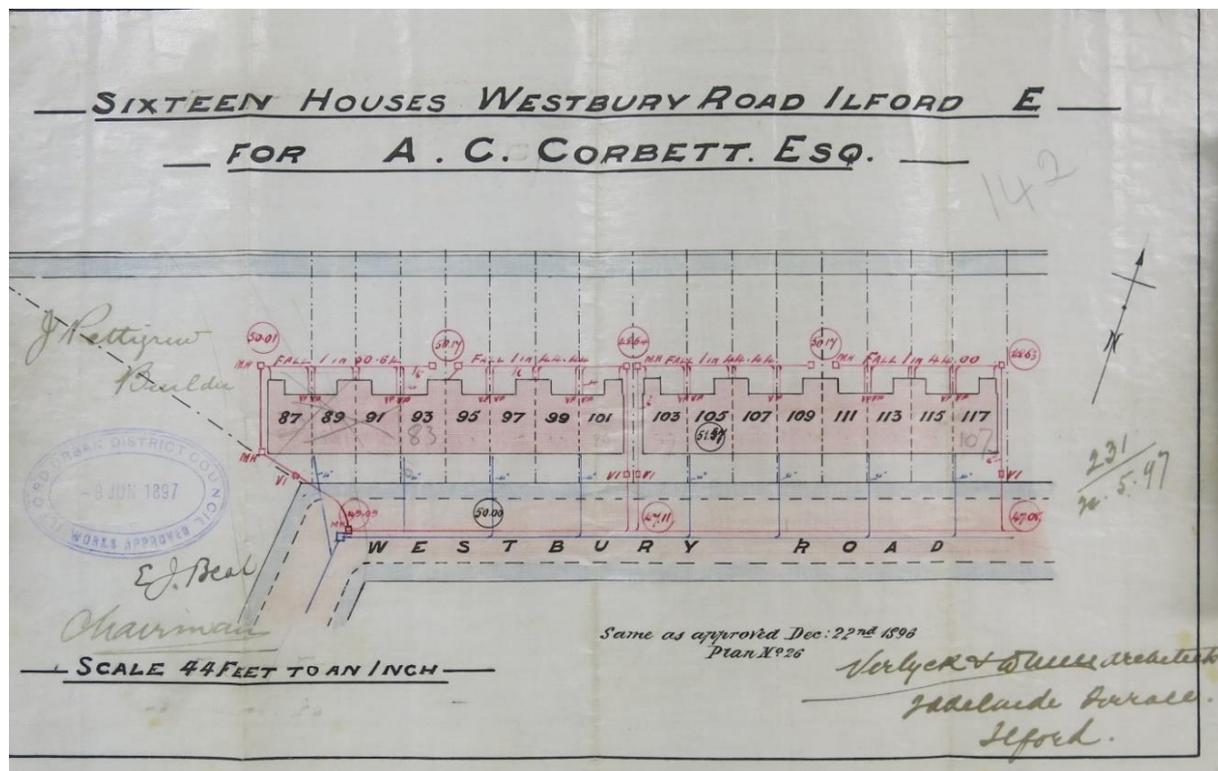
A Road on the edge of Two Estates

One of the most intriguing roads in Ilford is Westbury Road, tucked away between Northbrook Road and Empress Avenue. It sits at the very edge of the Grange Estate which, according to Tasker, A. Cameron Corbett purchased in January 1894. Corbett submitted plans for building on the estate almost immediately starting in Cranbrook Road itself, and in York Road and the roads leading from it. The first plans for what was to become Wanstead Park Road were submitted in October 1895. Further plans followed – usually covering one or two terraces – and reached what we now know as Westbury Road by 1897.

One aspect of Westbury Road that I would imagine most Historical Society members are aware of relates to the numbering which starts at the Wanstead Park Road end with numbers 83 on the north side, and 70 to the south. The reason for this is fairly simple – Westbury Road originally started life from York Road and this was only renamed Wanstead Park Road at some point in 1899.

But even before housebuilding could begin here and in the section of Northbrook Road leading up to Cranbrook Road, part of the landscape had to be dealt with. A plan from February 1897 shows the proposed diversion of the Cran Brook itself to slightly to the north and to the very edge of the two estates – the Grange and Cranbrook Park. The revised water course found itself behind the houses that Corbett built later that year.

That Westbury Road was not to go any further north at this point in time can be seen from this plan approved in June 1897:



The three houses on the extreme left are clearly in the way of the direction that was taken when the road continued northwards. If you look carefully, you can see those first three houses have been crossed through. So, what happened to change this? One possible reason could relate to the sale of the Cranbrook Estate to Peter Griggs - also in 1897. The first plan submitted is recorded as being approved in August 1897. It is possible then, that council

planning officers, knowing of Griggs' plans for the estate saw that Westbury Road could be extended northwards and blocked the building of those first three houses.

So, what about the houses in Westbury Road?

If you look carefully on the plan above you will notice that it says "Same as approved Dec 22nd 1896. Plan no. 26." This was quite a common occurrence since it allowed developers to specify where their houses would be built (the block plan) but only have to refer back to earlier plans for what the houses would look like (the ground plan). Plan number 26 relates to 62-72 Sunnyside Road.

Like those ones in Sunnyside Road (and in fact, many in neighbouring Grange Road) virtually all of the houses – save one terrace of eight – on the north and south sides of Westbury Road have no bay windows and very simple entrance doorways. Some have added porches subsequently but many of them are as they were built – including not having been painted which allows the original brickwork to be seen.

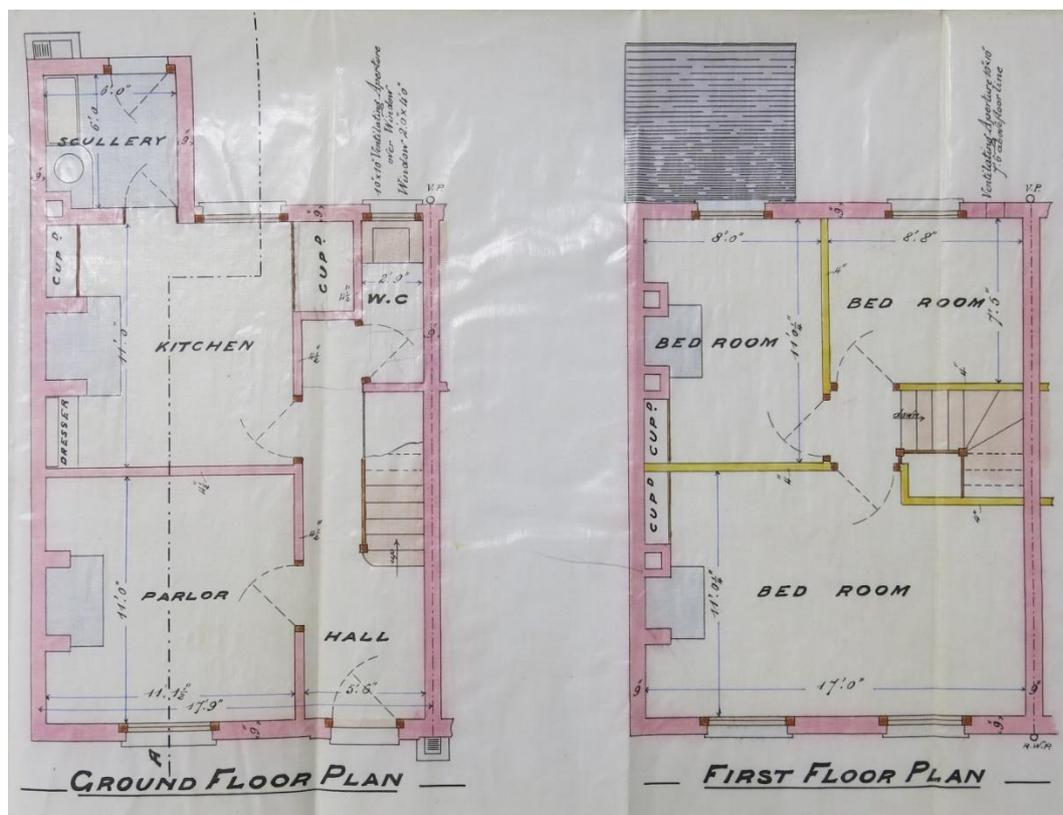


Houses in Westbury Road, photographed by the author

It remains a mystery as to why Corbett changed his mind and had one terrace built with a bay window to the ground floor. As far as I can see there is no separate plan for numbers 93-107 – these were included within the above plan but for the original type.

The ground plan for these houses is shown on page 4. Note that these houses have only one reception room and although they have three bedrooms, there is no upstairs bathroom; and the W.C. is situated downstairs. Their width too raises an interesting point. In Alan Jackson's *Semi-detached London* which features the growth of Ilford amongst other towns, he writes (p38) "*Corbett's houses had frontages ranging from 21 to 48 feet*"

I have a small booklet called *The Corbett Estates* dated November 1901 covering both the Downshall and Mayfield Estates as well as two estates in South London; and which gives details and plans of the different types of houses available. I am not sure whether there was a previous edition covering the Grange Estate. This booklet appears to be the source of Jackson's information regarding house size as these range from 21 to 48 feet in width. However, it clearly does not include the type of house under discussion here.



From this you might conclude that Corbett was aiming these at buyers – or renters - at the lower end of the market. The 1901 Census shows that householders had many and varied occupations at the time – clerks for solicitors and the GPO, a police sergeant, commercial travellers, a schoolmaster’s assistant; as well as bootmakers, carpenters, and a plumber. It had been thought that the houses were built by Peter Griggs for the labourers on the Cranbrook Estate to live in while they built houses there but this can be discounted as they were some of the final houses to be built by Corbett on the Grange Estate. However, there are similar small houses with a single bay window at the end of Empress Avenue which are Griggs-built; and a study of their occupants *might* reveal where Griggs’ labourers lived.

The other slight puzzle regarding Westbury Road relates to the nine houses in the section which joins Northbrook Road. At some point in the 1960s or 1970s these houses were “moved” from being in an entirely separate road called South View Gardens to being 131-147 Westbury Road. The puzzle is to why they were ever known as South View Gardens since the plan for them (462 – June 1898) shows them as being 125-141 Westbury Road (two more houses were built afterwards which accounts for the shift in numbers). At some point between the plan and the first Kelly’s Directory for Ilford in 1899-1900, South View Gardens came into existence.

So, to sum up. A road which needed a change in the landscape to even be built. A road which started out as the end of another and which eventually incorporated an entirely different road. A road built with houses outside the builder’s usual specifications. A road most definitely right on the edge of two estates.

Thanks to Madeline Seviour for sight of her title deeds dated in November 1897 – an indicator of how quickly these houses were built and sold.

Plans reproduced by kind permission of the Redbridge Heritage Centre.

© Colin Runeckles, 17th February 2018

Looking back at Ilford . . .

from our Vice-President Roger Backhouse who now lives in York,
home of the National Railway Museum

British Railways finally electrified the Liverpool Street to Southend line via Ilford after LNER plans were shelved due to the Second World War. In 1949 they introduced these 306 class electric units from an LNER design with air operated sliding doors for the stopping commuter services from Gidea Park to Liverpool Street. Some morning rush hour trains started from Platform 5 at Ilford for Liverpool Street. At first services operated on 1500 volts DC but power supplies were then changed to 25 kV AC with 6kV AC used in Liverpool Street because of limited clearances for the overhead wires. Later British Rail converted all to 25Kv and carried out a programme of works to improve clearances. These trains were replaced in the 1980s by the 315 units which are now being replaced with the new trains for Crossrail. The picture shows one of these units approaching Ilford from Liverpool Street en route to Gidea Park.. Photo taken on 24th January 1981.



Ilford's commuters would have been all too familiar with the interior of the 306 units for their daily journeys to Stratford or Liverpool Street. These were heavier trains and had a different sway from the later class 315 units. They lasted over thirty years in service and one set was preserved by the National Railway Museum though it is not normally on display.



In January 1980 British Rail renewed the slow line tracks through Ilford Station. All services were transferred to platforms 1 and 2. The picture was taken from platform 3 with the track there completely lifted and workmen offloading sand laid before ballast and track was replaced on top. A lighter coloured under-sheet of polythene or a geo textile is just visible. The sand train is headed towards Seven Kings on platform 4 and it is interesting to see that the work was being done by hand. Note that C&A then had the store that is now Wilko.



© Roger Backhouse, 8th January 2018

A Short History of Claybury

This article is largely material which I submitted to the Claybury Enquiry in January 1997 on behalf of the Woodford Historical Society. It was accepted as Core Evidence. It appeared in their newsletter in Spring 1997 but has some additional information here.

Romans and Saxons

The story of the Claybury estate includes a number of small chapters which together reflect the much broader history of our country. The earliest reference to human activity on the Claybury estate is the construction of a road during the Roman period. This led from the Lea crossing at Old Ford in a straight line through Chigwell, Hobbs Cross, the Rodings and to join Stane Street at Dunmow. Roding Lane North lies on this route and the road was excavated by the West Essex Archaeological Group in 1965. They chose a site on the line of the road just west of the Egg Clump, where Roding Lane turns west, and were able to confirm that the Roman Road passed through the Claybury estate.

At this time it is likely that the banks of the River Roding had been cleared of trees and were under cultivation, but the main bulk of Hainault Forest probably stretched down to the site of Claybury. The Saxons would have continued to farm the cleared land and the two village greens at Woodford Bridge may, possibly, be remnants of their community. The earliest manor house was not far from here and a site up the hill, not far from the Roman road, seems likely.

When parish boundaries were drawn, the Claybury area was included in the parish of Barking and in c.1145 King Stephen confirmed a grant of land, "the assart in Estholte", to the newly established Ilford Hospital which was attached to Barking Abbey. The hospital chapel is the oldest remaining building in the borough, situated on Ilford Hill. It was this grant which led to the wood becoming known as Hospital Hill Wood long before the mental hospital was built. The assart, or clearing, was referred to in an agreement between the Abbess and the hospital in 1219 as "their own lands at the Clay".

Medieval and Elizabethan Times

Barking Abbey was a most important religious house and among the ladies who served as Abbess were many of noble birth, including three queens and two princesses. The ancient route from Barking Abbey to Claybury and Woodford Bridge was up Ilford Lane (passing the Hospital at Ilford), taking the line of present day Cranbrook Road and Beehive Lane and then turning left along Woodford Bridge Road before following the Roman Roding Lane. By 1200 the lord of the manor of Woodford had built a new manor house on the western side of the parish but the hamlet at Woodford Bridge continued as an agricultural community. More land was taken from Hainault Forest to the south of the Claybury estate with at least part of Dunspring Farm under the plough in the 14th century. Shakeman's Croft was recorded in 1323 and this is thought to be the origin of the name of Shackman's Farm. However it was not until 1851 that Hainault Forest was destroyed and the trees to the east of Tomswood Hill were cut down.

During the Medieval period the Claybury estate was leased out to a series of gentleman tenants who paid their rent to help finance the Ilford Hospital. When the Abbey was destroyed by Henry VIII in 1539 the Crown confiscated most of the lands and the Claybury estate became the home of City gentleman or courtiers. In 1560 Sir Thomas White, founder of St. John's College at Oxford, was living at Claybury. The house passed to Thomas Knyvett (or Knyvet), a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, who entertained Queen Elizabeth at Claybury in 1597.

Thomas Knyvett was the son of Sir Henry Knyvett of Charlton, Wiltshire, and was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge. He became a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Queen Elizabeth, and later the Queen's Keeper of the Palace. Elizabeth granted Knyvett premises in Westminster, rent free for life, and later James I extended this arrangement so that Knyvett's heirs could keep the property for sixty years after his death. The house was large and impressive, close to what was later to be called St. James's Park where Thomas and his wife, Elizabeth, could stroll in the fresh air. When the family eventually left, the site was acquired by a speculative builder called George Downing. The house he built on the site still stands and it is currently the home of Theresa May and her husband!



*Sir Thomas Knyvett and Lady Elizabeth Knyvett painted by Daniel Mytens.
from 'No.10 Downing Street : The Story of a House' by Christopher Jones (BBC 1985)*

But to return to Thomas Knyvett. He was knighted in 1603/4 but it was in his capacity as a Justice of the Peace for Westminster that he entered our history books. When the alarm was raised by Lord Salisbury and Lord Monteagle, it was Knyvett who made the search of the cellars under the Houses of Parliament on the night of 4/5th November 1605 and discovered Guy Fawkes with his barrels of gunpowder. It was to Knyvett that Fawkes made his confession. Soon after this he was appointed a Privy Councillor, Member of the Council of Queen Anne, and Warden of the Mint. On 4th July 1607 he became Baron Knyvett of Escrick, Yorkshire, and continued to take part in court life. He died on 27 July 1622 and his wife survived him by just a few weeks. They had been married for 25 years and a few days when Thomas died. I wonder how much of that time they spent at Claybury?

East Indian Influences

The house passed through the hands of a number of gentleman, through inheritance or marriage, and in the 1650s it was held by John Fowke, Lord Mayor of London. In 1692 the estate was sold to John Goodere of Wanstead. Documentation at the Essex Record Office indicates that he was helped financially by Sir Josiah Child of Wanstead House, Sir Stephen Evance, and others. The Wanstead parish register tells us that John Goodyear, widower, had married Esther Evance, widow, in 1686. Sir Stephen Evance was the brother of John Evance, Ester/Hester's first husband. We can assume that John and Hester lived at Claybury Hall with the children of their previous marriages. When John died in 1696/7 the estate was inherited by his younger son, John.

Hester had a daughter, Hester Evance, who married Sir Caesar Child on 1st December 1698. At the time of their marriage Hester was fifteen and Sir Caesar was about nineteen, so a special license had to be obtained. Sir Caesar Child had inherited the baronetcy on the death of his father when he was just twelve years old and the trustees of his financial affairs also had to give their consent to the marriage. His father, Sir John Child, had been an East India merchant and President of the Council at Surat, and seems to have spent much of his time in India and Persia. Both the young man's parents had died at sea by 1697 and we know that Sir Caesar Child was staying at Wanstead House with Sir Josiah Child in April 1698. (No direct relationship has been established between John & Josiah Child.)

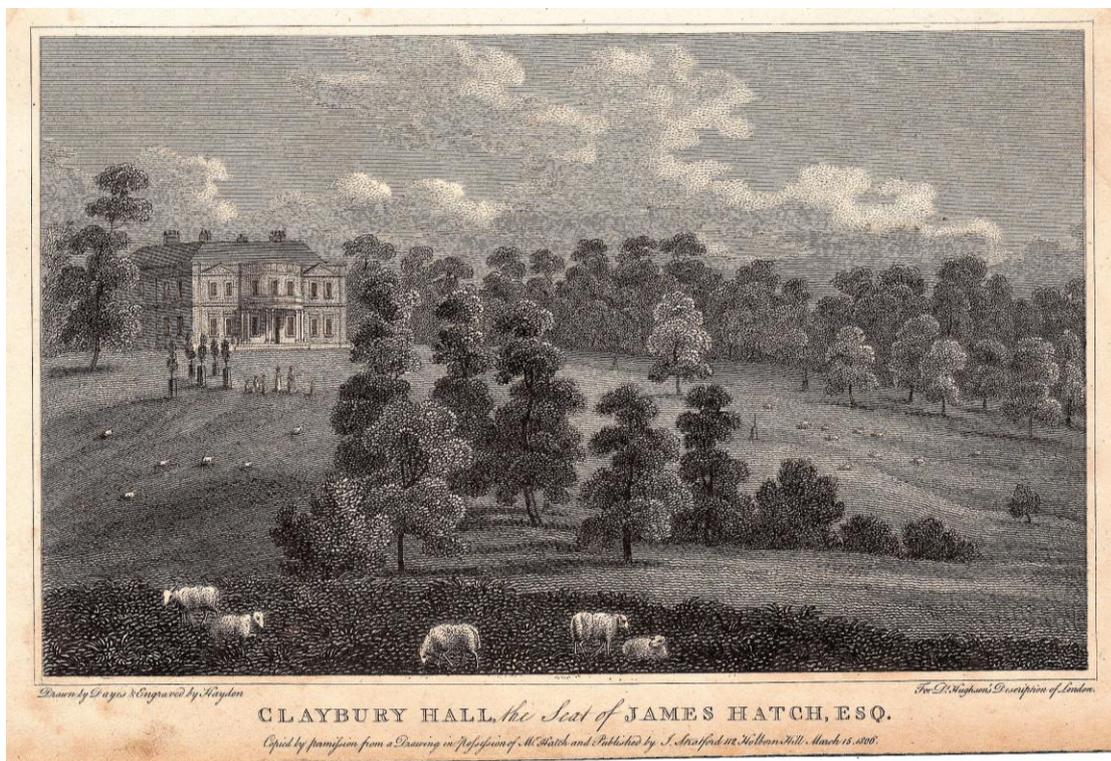
Sir Caesar's grandmother, Frances Goodyear, had a brother John Goodyear, who was Deputy Governor of Bombay. Although I have not been able to discover much about him, he was certainly prominent in India around 1670. It is not impossible that this is the man who married the widowed Hester Evance, albeit late in life. [I think Goodyear and Goodere are different spellings of the same name.]

Although John Goodere junior inherited the estate on the death of his father in 1696/7, Hester Goodere is recorded as farming most of the estate in 1703-9 while Sir Caesar Child and his family occupied Claybury Hall for over fifty years. Caesar and Hester had at least four children, but the baronetcy ceased with the death of their son, Caesar, in 1753. He was buried in the chapel at Layer Marney, the home of his sister, Frances, who had married Nicholas Corsellis of Gwynne House (now the Prince Regent Hotel). It seems he was lucky not to have died sooner. On 12th April 1735 his coach was attacked in Epping Forest by three highwaymen (one of whom may have been Dick Turpin). They robbed him of £25, having shot off the tip of his coachman's nose!

John Goodere, grandson of Hester's husband, sold the estate in 1767 to Eliab Harvey who was an uncle of the younger Admiral who shared his name. He had married Mary Benyon, daughter of Richard Benyon of Gidea Hall and Great Newbury and granddaughter of Richard Benyon who had been Governor of Fort St George (Madras) from 1735 until 1744.

The wealthy Gentleman Brewer

In 1786 the Claybury estate was purchased by James Hatch, a malt distiller from Bow. He was then aged about 36, but became a very wealthy man as a partner in the Four Mills distillery which was on the River Lea, south of the Three Mills (about where the Limehouse Cut crosses the approach road to the Blackwall Tunnel, south of Twelve Trees Crescent). If the Child family had made a fortune from the East India Company, James Hatch represents the wealth of the Industrial Revolution - in 1790 the four partners in the distillery had a capital of £100,000, by 1803 the capital was £160,000.



James Hatch only lived at Claybury in the summer months, but he gradually bought up other property in the district. At the time of his death in 1806 he owned Great Gales Farm at Woodford Bridge, the Monkams land in the parish of Chigwell and the manors of Chigwell and Luxborough. He also leased the manor of Clayhall. It seems that he had some innovative ideas about the use of manure on his farms and he had a correspondence about his theories with Arthur Young who was writing his *General View of Agriculture in Essex* published in 1807. It was during the last years of James Hatch's life that the local naturalist, Edward Forster (1765-1849), discovered the narrow-leaved woodrush which was later named after him. He had studied colonies of the plant in Hainault Forest and Claybury Woods and came to realise that this was a separate species of the woodrush family. The *Luzula forsteri* can still be seen growing in Claybury Woods today.

Humphry Repton

James Hatch had purchased an old gabled hall, but this was soon demolished and a new mansion was built to suit his status as a country gentleman/industrialist. It was designed by Jesse Gibson, a two-story building of gault brick, and is the hall we know today. In 1791 he commissioned Humphry Repton to advise on improving the house and grounds and his Red Book is now held at the Essex Record Office. He remarks that most of the estate needed little improvement and indeed the landscape we see on the southern side of the house is still recognisable as that shown in a line drawing of 1791. Repton's main change was to move the entrance from the portico at the south to a more sheltered door on the north of the building. One reason for this was that "it will be almost impossible for a lady to get into a coach on the south side when the wind blows very strong from the east or west".

James Hatch died at the end of 1806 and although there is a memorial to him in Chigwell Parish Church, he was buried at Little Ilford. In spite of many attempts to establish a connection with Little Ilford, quite why he was buried there remains a mystery. He left his extensive property to his three daughters, and his grandson, James Mills, became heir to two of them. When he died without issue in 1884, William John Rous, great grandson of James Hatch, inherited all the family property.

Claybury Hall seems to have remained a family home for Hatch's daughter, Caroline Abdy, and then his grandson, James Mills. The Tithe Maps of 1838/47 show Mills as owning a vast amount of land in Chigwell and Woodford, in addition to the Claybury Estate. He is listed as the occupier of Claybury Hall, its grounds and meadows, and he also retained the use of many copses on the estate, presumably for shooting. Claybury Farm near Roding Lane was leased out, as was the farmland by Tomswood Hill.

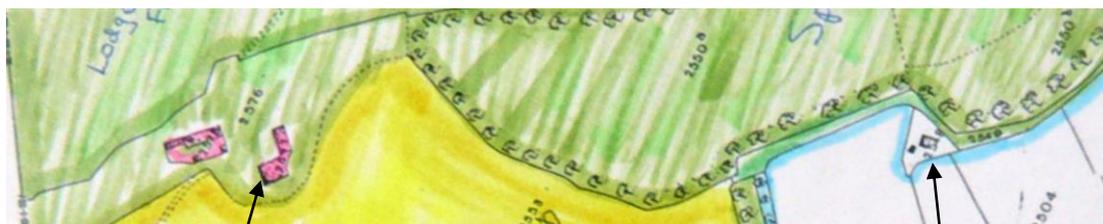
The Victorian Era

It seems that later the house was let to tenants: the 1851 census shows Richard Hodgson, a landed proprietor in his own right, aged 46, living at the house with his family and servants. Later census returns and directories show other occupants. However, in 1887 William Rous sold the estate for £36,000 to the Justices of the County of Middlesex for their lunatic asylum. The main buildings cover 20 acres and are constructed of 27,000,000 bricks. The asylum opened in 1893 with the intention of providing for 2,005 patients, but this has risen to 2,500 patients by the turn of the century.

© *Georgina Green, 2nd March 2018*

Repton's Red Book for Claybury : The labourer's cottage

...if a small gate for a path or bridle way into the forest were provided, it might frequently be an object of convenience, and if near this gate a rude picturesque cottage were erected in harmony with the scene, a labourers family might be so disposed as to give security to a place, which from its vicinity to the capital may not otherwise be safe for women, at a very late hour, if the charms of the forest should invite them beyond the boundary of this wood.



Extarct from the 1847 Barking Tithe Map (coloured for land use by G.Green)

Claybury Hall (2577)
Owned and occupied by James Mills

(2548) Cottage and garden
Owner James Mills
Occupier William Webb

When Claybury's landscape was under threat

Introduction

The year 2017 saw the sixtieth anniversary of the land that now forms Claybury Park gaining statutory protection; its status as part of London's Green Belt and its inclusion in Essex County Council's development plan was approved in 1957. Yet if railway proposals of the 1890s had been taken forward, or if some twentieth-century roads had been built as planned, Claybury Park would not exist – much of the Humphrey Repton-designed landscape and the farmland there would have disappeared under a suburban railway line or an eight-lane motorway.

The railway

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Ilford was one of the country's fastest-growing towns. However, with the exception of the somewhat isolated Birkbeck Estate at Newbury Park beside Horns Road over a mile to the north of the town, little development had spread more than half a mile from a railway station. The predominantly agricultural land around Barkingside lay well outside the catchment area of any of the local stations. In June 1891, *The Essex Chronicle* reported that residents George Gott¹ and George Ingram² intended to ask the Great Eastern Railway (GER) to construct a line from Ilford through Barkingside to connect with the company's railway at Woodford.

In early 1892, George Ingram and Wladislaw Lach-Szyrma³, vicar of Holy Trinity church at Barkingside, proposed a route: the line would leave the GER main line to the east of Ilford station and run north, parallel to Ley Street and Horns Road with a station provided for the Birkbeck Estate. It would then head for Barkingside and cross the High Street between the Post Office and the few buildings at Fullwell Hatch. A station would be provided, with a lot of traffic expected for the Dr Barnardo's Village Homes nearby. The line would then run south of Claybury hospital to Woodford Bridge with a station at Woodford Bridge Road (now Roding Lane North) and join the Loughton line between George Lane and Woodford stations. The line would be approximately five miles long and it was anticipated that the agricultural land could be purchased at a reasonable cost; it would be easy and inexpensive to build as there were no engineering difficulties. The promoters thought that the area possessed 'very great attractions for the rapid opening up of a suburban district being almost similar to that through which the Walthamstow and Chingford lines have been constructed'. The promoters also hoped that the GER would soon be able to obtain the necessary Act of Parliament.

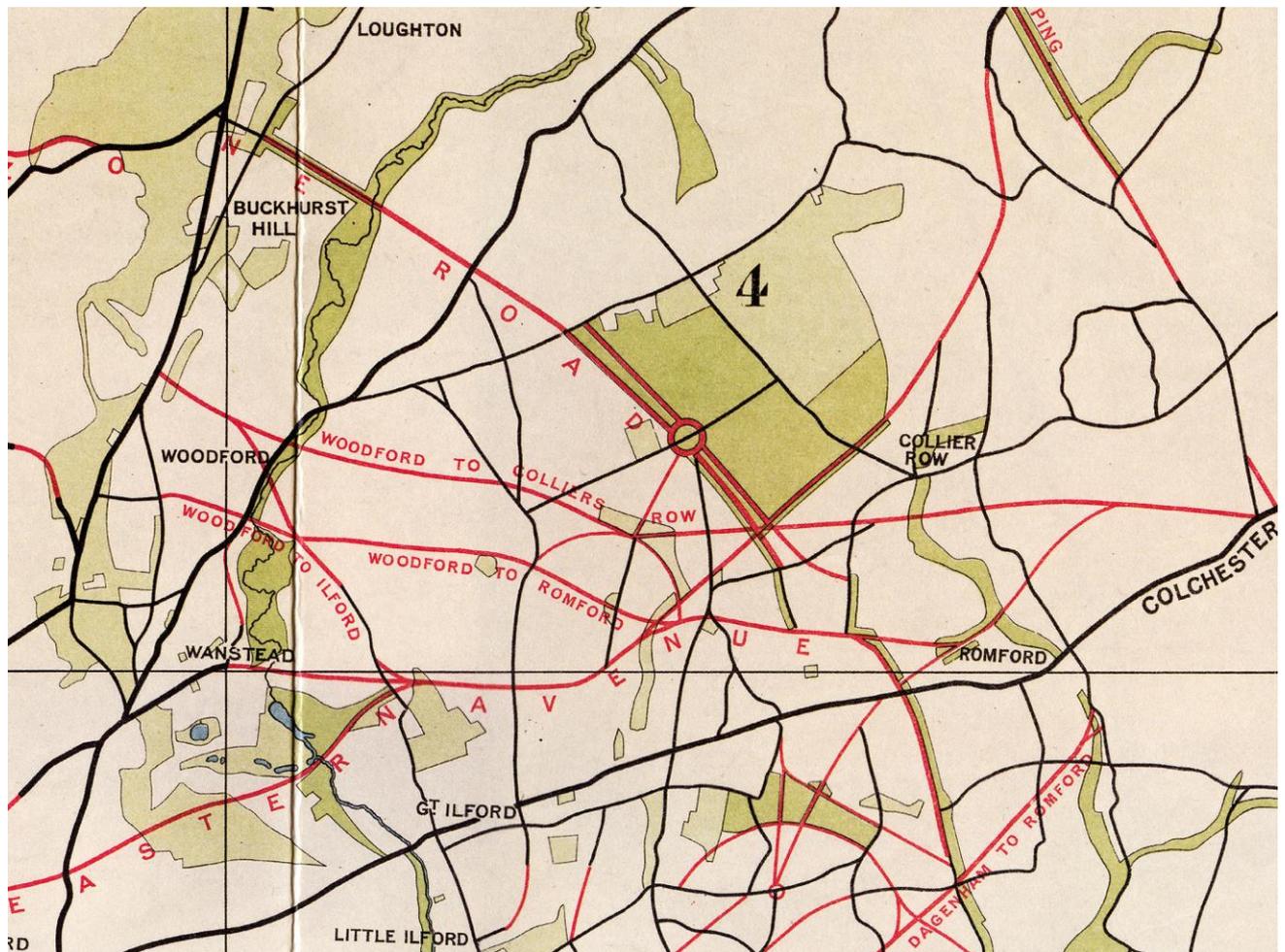
When the GER failed to respond to the proposals, residents put forward their own Bill for an Ilford, Barkingside & Chigwell Row Railway in 1895. This was a revised version of the 1892 route and would no longer link to Woodford or pass through the Claybury estate. On reaching Barkingside from Ilford, the line was to carry on northwards across Fairlop Plain, and then turn north-east towards Chigwell Row, terminating opposite All Saints' church there. A short

¹ George William Marshall Gott (1850—1913) was a Justice of the Peace for Essex and served as an Ilford councillor for 22 years from 1891. He was elected Chairman of the Works Committee in 1897, a position he held until his retirement in 1913. In 1903, he was also Chairman of Ilford Urban District Council.

² George Henry Ingram was one of several generations of the Ingram family who were substantial landowners in the Barkingside area.

³ Wladislaw Somerville Lach-Szyrma (1841—1915) became vicar at Barkingside in 1890. He was also a historian and writer of science fiction, and is sometimes credited as the first author to use the word 'Martian' as a noun.

branch would run from near Fullwell Hatch and terminate at Tomswood Hill, just inside the grounds of Claybury hospital. The GER opposed this idea, but instead promoted and built its own line between Ilford and Woodford, routed to the north of Claybury, which opened in 1903.



Development Plan of Greater London

This enlargement of part of the key map accompanying the London Society's Development Plan of Greater London in 1919 shows the route of a new major road from Woodford to Collier Row projected across the Claybury estate. (Source: Development Plan of Greater London (London Society))

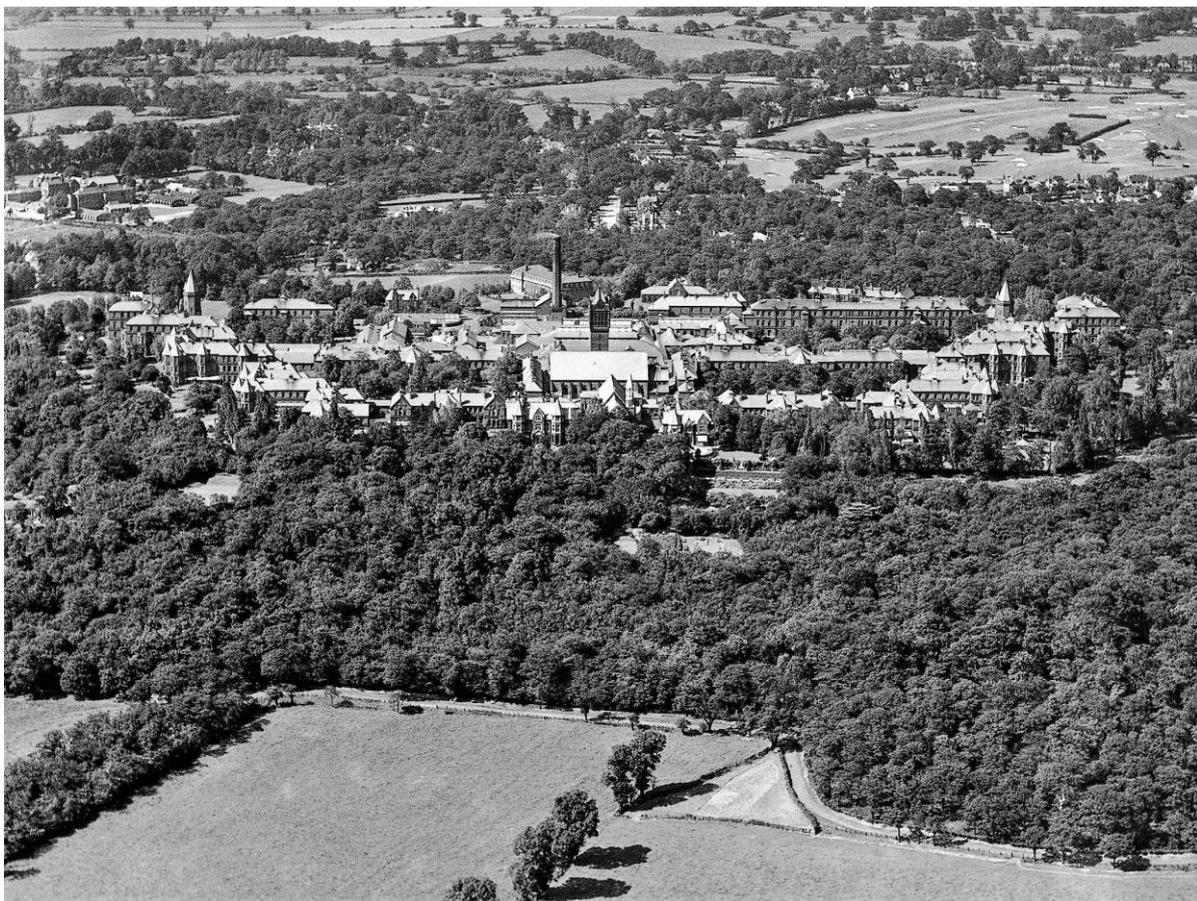
Apologies to those seeing this in black & white on the printed copy.

Early road proposals

In April 1919, the London Society published its *Development Plan of Greater London*⁴. One of the Plan's features was its proposals for major new roads. That same year the Ministry of Transport (MoT) was created and it began to put some of the proposals into effect. In the area to the north of Ilford, these included what would become Eastern Avenue, Woodford Avenue and the North Circular Road. Other roads proposed in the Plan, but which were not built, included one from Woodford to Collier Row passing through the Claybury estate along a route that would feature several more times in the coming decades; and an orbital 'Zone Road' passing through Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell then across Fairlop Plain to Romford.

⁴ The *Development Plan of Greater London* covered an area administered by London County Council and a host of surrounding district councils, each of which had the power to prepare and promote its own planning scheme. The purpose of the Plan was to persuade those concerned to plan for the wider metropolitan region.

A quarter of a century later, in Patrick Abercrombie's *Greater London Plan 1944*⁵, the Claybury route again featured, and this time as Express Arterial Road 7. This major road would have passed between Wanstead and Woodford, cut across the Claybury hospital land on the south side of Hospital Hill Wood and Claybury Wood, crossed Tomswood Hill and Fencepiece Road, and then proceeded to the north of Forest Road to reach a proposed Express Arterial 'D' Ring at Hog Hill. Both these roads would have been the equivalent of a modern motorway and interrupted only by a small number of fully grade-separated junctions. In the event, the economic climate in Britain during the post-war era did not allow for major infrastructure development on the scale proposed. However, the route of Express Arterial Road 7 would be closely followed by that planned for the abortive M12 several decades later.



Claybury estate

Taken on 22 June 1935, this aerial photograph shows Claybury Asylum behind the trees of Claybury Wood and Hospital Hill Wood. All the proposed railway and road routes would have passed across the land below the woods. (Source: Historic England. Ref: Britain from Above EPR000649)

(See map on p.9 which shows the triangular plot in the foreground as the site of a labourer's cottage)

⁵ Sir Patrick Leslie Abercrombie (1879—1957) was an influential town planner and Professor of Planning at London University. He had a long-standing interest in the complexities of planning for the capital, and in regional planning too – he was directly involved in 18 key inter-war regional plans. He was also involved in the founding of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. His *Greater London Plan 1944* looked at the future of an area stretching out to about 30 miles from the centre of London and covering more than 2,500 square miles. This was an attempt to control the haphazard growth of the capital and sought to introduce a measure of decentralisation and to introduce post-war controlled development of housing, industry and communications.

Brentwood route

In 1963-66, the MoT carried out a traffic study and preliminary site investigations for a South Woodford-Brentwood motorway, initially known as Radial Route 7 and later as the M12 (the former name being a hangover from Abercrombie's earlier proposal). The original idea was for the road to head north from Eastern Avenue near Redbridge station close to Roding Lane South and Roding Lane North, before turning sharply east onto the Claybury estate at Claybury Farm.

On 12 October 1965, the MoT issued a press notice with more details of the planned road. It was to be about eight miles long and would now run from the A406 at South Woodford (at that time Woodford Avenue was the A406, but it has since been renumbered as the A1400) to Gallows Corner, by-passing Eastern Avenue (the A12). It was planned to relieve the congested junction at Gants Hill and so avoid building a complex and expensive flyover in that area. The new route would cost £8 million to construct and it was hoped that work would start in 1969. The period 1966-67 saw work progress on finalising the preferred route. This took some considerable time and a start date was pushed back to 'the early seventies'. Tom Iremonger, Arnold Shaw and Patrick Jenkin, Redbridge's three MPs, all asked Parliamentary questions about the delay.

At the same time as the MoT was planning Radial Route 7 (by now better known as the M12), the Conservative-controlled Greater London Council (GLC) was proposing a network of urban motorways to serve the capital. This comprised four ring roads, known as Ringways (of which Ringway 2 was to be a much-improved North Circular Road), and these would intersect the MoT's radial routes. Here the numbering gets confusing because what was to become the M12 route shared the Radial Route 7 title with the later proposed route of the M11 through Wanstead to Hackney Wick⁶. In the earliest plans, the M11 was to take a route down the Lea Valley and it was the western end of an extended M12 that would run to Hackney Wick. The M11 line was later revised to head up the Roding Valley in one direction and towards Hackney Wick in the other, leaving the M12 starting at South Woodford instead.

The M12 would have begun on the M11/Ringway 2 (North Circular Road) interchange at South Woodford, near Charlie Brown's Roundabout⁷. It would then have closely followed the course of Abercrombie's Express Arterial Road 7, running east through the Claybury hospital farmland to the south of Hospital Hill Wood and Claybury Wood. In 1972, it was anticipated in *The Wanstead & Woodford Independent* that Claybury Hall would become a landmark for motorway traffic on the M12, 'a real monument' that would 'show Redbridge to motorists'. After crossing Tomswood Hill and Fencepiece Road, carving through the grounds of Fairlop primary school in the process, the motorway would then have taken a route to the north of Forest Road through Oakfield Playing Fields and all the other sports facilities there, crossing the A1112 near Dog Kennel Hill, then gradually arcing around to the north of Havering-atte-Bower and heading off towards Ringway 3 (now the M25 in part) and the Brentwood by-pass.

⁶ This road eventually opened in 1999, not as a motorway, but as an extension of the A12 and known locally as the 'M11 Link Road'.

⁷ The unknowing driver at this junction today might wonder why in several places the M11 and North Circular Road are carried up high over large areas of empty space (some now opened up as the Roding Valley Park). This is the legacy of plans for the M12, for the interchange here was designed to accommodate Ringway 2, the M11 and the M12 plus their inter-connecting slip roads. In the event, all that was built of the M12 was a couple of very short stubs – see the photographs at <http://pathetic.org.uk/unbuilt/m12/photos/>.

The inner Ringways became one of the major political issues in London and, when the Labour Party regained control of the GLC in 1973, the plans were scrapped. The following year saw Labour back at national level and Anthony Crosland, the new Secretary of State for the Environment, endorsed the GLC action thus killing off the inner Ringways scheme. The problem then became one of what to do about the outer Ringways, parts of which were about to start construction. The outcome was a plan to join them together into one London orbital road – today's M25 – comprising halves of two different ring roads, with bits tacked on to join the two. And by this time, another destination for the M12 was on the horizon ...

Maplin Airport route

In April 1971, Edward Heath's Conservative Government announced that preparations for building a third major London airport should begin, and that the airport would be on Maplin Sands, just off the Essex coast, 50 miles from central London down the Thames estuary. The project would also include a deep-water harbour suitable for the container ships then coming into use, an oil terminal and a new town for the accommodation of the thousands of workers who would be required. Preparations went ahead and, during 1972–73, much work was done at the administrative and planning level.

The routes of potential transport links to the airport were not immediately divulged. It is possible that fixing the routes was intended to be delayed until after work on the new airport had begun, thereby making it more difficult for objectors to prove that the routes were unnecessary. Several routes were proposed, and when they were made public it was seen that one option for road access would have taken the form of a revised M12 – a dual four-lane motorway, with a parallel four-track high-speed railway line. This would have used the earlier Brentwood route across the Claybury estate and then run alongside the planned M25 before heading east once more to terminate at Maplin. No final route was ever selected and, in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis, the airport project was dropped in 1974 by the incoming Labour Government. Stansted was subsequently selected as the site of London's third airport and the focus shifted onto the M11 instead.

Construction of the M12 remained a possibility, however, and the projected route continued to be shown on some maps. In August 1976, the Secretary of State for the Environment predicted a start date of 1983; by February and March 1977, the Secretary of State for Transport was stating that no start date had been determined. About the same time, Redbridge Council was noting that the M12 would affect the landscape and ecology of the borough, although stating that the project was particularly long-term in the light of recent financial cut-backs.

In June 1985, following a review of the country's roads programme, the Government published *National Roads England 1985*, which announced the withdrawal of the M12 project and, in February 1986, the Department of Transport ended the safeguarding of the route for the M12 within the M25⁸.

Claybury Park

Meanwhile, apart from the digging of a few test boreholes, the land at Claybury remained undisturbed. Although the health authority had sold off the hospital farm's (Asylum Farm) dairy herd in 1955, pigs and poultry kept the patients working there for a further 11 years

⁸ A third M12 project was included in the *Roads for Prosperity* White Paper of 1989. This would have run from the M25 out to the Chelmsford by-pass. The route would not have come anywhere near Claybury and the project was cancelled in 1994.

before the farm closed in September 1966. The farm buildings were demolished in 1971, but much of the land remained under arable cultivation by contracting local farmers well into the 1990s.

In the early 1980s, the GLC identified the Claybury estate as an important wildlife site potentially under threat and, from 1987, the London Wildlife Trust began managing the woodlands, ponds and orchard there. At the end of the decade, when drawing up its borough-wide development plan, Redbridge Council stated that the Claybury Ridge, the highest point in the borough and defined as the area of the hospital and immediately adjoining land, 'has a significance that extends well beyond this borough, although it is also important on a more local level, forming a backdrop to Clayhall and Barkingside in particular and providing a valuable reservoir for wildlife'. Recognizing the importance of retaining the area of ancient woodland, the council declared that 'a significant proportion of the current open space must form part of a new District Park'.

When Claybury hospital closed in 1997, the hospital estate was sold to Crest Nicholson to be partly redeveloped as housing. However, an important aspect of the development was for the woods, the former farmland and the Repton parkland to be re-united with a southern section of open land from which they had been split more than a century earlier; this would then form a new 176-acre 'district park' – Claybury Park. The old farmland was re-landscaped to create an area of undulating open grassland, scattered trees, water features and permanent paths. The southern section, long owned by Redbridge Council and its predecessors, was amalgamated with the new parkland and was also subject to some landscaping. Claybury Park was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester in September 2010, after ownership of the land had been transferred from Crest Nicholson to Redbridge. The Duke unveiled a memorial plaque – a spiral timeline of the history of the Claybury estate – sited at a viewpoint below Claybury Hall.



In addition to the protection the former Claybury estate now enjoys as a public park, it also has several further levels of protection⁹. The land is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt and has enjoyed statutory protection since its inclusion in Essex County Council's development plan was approved in 1957; subsequent development plans produced by Redbridge Borough Council have maintained that protection, although the council has recently consulted on removing Green Belt status from several pockets where building has taken place – on the sites of hospital staff accommodation and Asylum Farm. The whole area is designated as Metropolitan Open Land, a Conservation Area and an Archaeological Priority Zone. Most of the area is also a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, and the woods (now known collectively as Claybury Woods) have been classified as Ancient Woodland. Claybury Park was awarded Green Flag status for 2016–17; the Green Flag Award recognises and rewards Britain's very best green spaces.

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⁹ A level of protection that the land does not have is inclusion in Historic England's *Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*. The landscape was assessed in 1996 to determine whether it merited inclusion in the Register, but despite the Repton connection the conclusion was that the area was not of sufficient interest.

Reading this newsletter

Some of you may have noticed that the type size and spacing of the text is not consistent across this issue. (No, it isn't your eye-sight failing!) Obviously closer text in a smaller size takes up less space and allows us to include more in the 16 pages. When I took over the newsletter in August 2011 cost was not a factor and I settled on something which I felt was easy on the eye. If you have had difficulty in reading any articles, or have any comments to make on this, please contact me at georgina.green@btconnect.com (020 8500 6045) **Georgina Green** (Editor)

IHS PROGRAMME 2018

Our regular monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, September – May from 7.30 – 9.30 pm. Visitors welcome, £3 per meeting, with free refreshments
Membership of the society costs £15 per year which includes 3 newsletters

14 May 2018 Local History Month *On the Street Where You Live. Walking down Ilford's streets can tell us a lot about its development and houses.* by Colin Runeckles, IHS member. This talk will be held 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 nearby at Ilford Station. (Wheelchair access via the rear entrance)

Additional Summer talks

Tuesday 5 June 2018 at 7.30pm Celebrating Indian Independence
The Independence & Partition of British India 1947 and its legacy

Speakers: Drs Shabnum Tehani & Eleanor Newbigin, Senior Lecturers, History of Modern South Asia, SOAS, University of London

This talk will be held at the Gloucester Room, Ilford Central Library, Clements Road, Ilford IG1 1EA. Ticket price: £3 visitors, IHS members £2, to include refreshments

For further information please contact Jef.Page100@talktalk.net

Monday 3 September 2018 at 7.30pm *The Man Who Built the Houses- A C Corbett.*

Archibald Cameron Corbett MP (1856-1933) bought land to develop and build new estates in Ilford from 1894 (3,000 houses- Grange, Downshall & Mayfield estates) and gave local people land for parks: Westwood Recreation Ground, South Park and Goodmayes Park. This is a free film show which will be held in the Gloucester Room, Ilford Central Library

IHS Regular meetings in the Autumn

These talks will also be held in the Gloucester Room at Ilford Central Library,

10 September 2018 *70 Years of the NHS 1948-2018- In Good Health? Trust me, I'm a Doctor.* By Jef Page, President Ilford HS.

8 October 2018 Poetry month. *Poets of Redbridge, past & present: John Clare, Peter Foley, Jane Grell, Denise Levertov, Kathleen Raine etc.*

12 November 2018 *1918- celebrations after World War I*

By Gerard Greene, Redbridge Museum Manager.

10 December 2018 Christmas Social Evening. *Votes for Women!* a talk by Jef Page, President Ilford HS, followed by *Mince Pies and a Quiz.*

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.