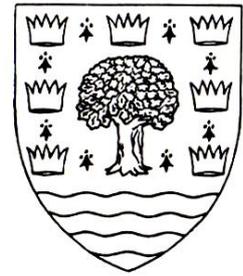


Ilford Historical Society

Newsletter No.134 December 2020



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

Society News – Our Talks under Covid Restrictions

We are nearly at the end of, what must surely be, the most difficult year in peacetime that any of us have experienced and we are now planning for 2021. We do so, with equal doses of optimism and pessimism. There are magnificent breakthroughs in vaccine development but London is still in Tier Two. In Redbridge, the number of people with coronavirus continues to be above the national average for England and, this, coupled with the knowledge that the virus affects older people more seriously, has led your committee to decide that we will not have face to face meetings until September 2021.



Ilford H S President, Jef Page

Our programme will be delivered via Zoom and details of our talks are at the back of this newsletter. They may change, as not all speakers are comfortable with Zoom or able to work with it, but we will keep you updated by email. I do understand that this means that those of you without access to the internet miss out and I am very sorry about that but we really have no option other than shutting down completely for ten months. To reflect our ‘reduced service’ we have only charged £10 subscription for this year. Because we haven’t met since March, we did not have our AGM in April and we do not want to miss another one so, we will have an AGM in April 2021 but it will be done remotely. Your committee have not worked out the finer details yet but we will contact you nearer the time. If you do not have internet access, you will be sent paper copies of the AGM documents. If you have any comments please contact our Secretary Janet Seward janetseward@aol.com

Seasons Greetings to all of you and here’s to a better 2021!

Jef Page President, 26 November 2020

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Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre update

I wanted to give members a fuller update as I know some of you have been asking when the Museum and particularly the Heritage Centre will reopen after the closure since late March caused by the restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19. As you are probably aware, some parts of the Central Library had reopened to collect books and for limited browsing but the study spaces including the Heritage Centre remain closed at this time. As Redbridge is one of London's hotspots for the virus this caution is understandable and follows the national guidance issued to public libraries.

Added to this are the limited working hours of the Heritage team. Since April all Museum & Heritage Centre staff except Gerard Greene (Manager) and Nishat Alam (Museum Officer) have been on furlough leave whereby staff salaries are met by the government. We had expected a limited return of staff in November but furlough has now been extended to at least 2 December. Gerard and Nishat are also now on reduced hours and during the current lock-down are working from home as they have mostly been doing since the pandemic struck.

The furlough scheme is set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial situation for Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure, the charitable trust which manages the Museum & Heritage Centre amongst many other culture and leisure facilities and services in the borough. As I am sure you are aware, the leisure, arts and culture sector has been particularly hit by the pandemic and has a long road to recovery ahead. During lockdown there was a complete loss of income normally generated by Vision through charging for things such as gym membership, halls lettings, sports pitch bookings, hire of Valentines Mansion, ticket sales, music lessons at Redbridge Music Service, allotment fees, park events etc. This income provides for nearly 50% of Vision's operating costs and while Redbridge Council has been supportive, its own finances have been severely stretched during the crisis by around £60 million.

At the same time and as part of a planned restructure across Vision to reduce costs, the Museum Assistant role was removed as a temporary contract came to an end. All staff were also asked if they wanted to take voluntary redundancy and Sue Page, the Heritage Development Librarian, opted to do so and she will leave on 18 December. The post she occupied in the Heritage Centre team will now be reviewed by senior management.

In addition, the Museum temporary exhibition space on the 1st floor of the Central Library was closed after 19 years' worth of exhibitions and will be repurposed as a hire space to generate income for the Library. I had a couple of months hard physical work with our Museum technician to clear this space and also our staff offices. There is still a lot of sorting to do but I've managed to find a new home for many of our resources in our stores. At some future stage we hope to run temporary exhibitions again, perhaps on the ground floor of the Library. These measures are being taken to ensure services can reopen at some point in the not too distant future and prevent the need for compulsory redundancies as far as possible.

As you can imagine all of this is less than ideal but over the next few months I will be working with the Library managers to decide on how best to ensure that the high quality of service that customers experience in the Heritage Centre can be maintained. Inevitably we will be balancing the competing demands of opening hours, an enquiries service, the public events programme and the vital work of cataloguing that goes on behind the scenes. However, I remain confident that we will rise to the challenge and ensure the Heritage Centre continues to thrive.

Members will know the Museum is currently undergoing development and it will now remain closed until this is completed later in 2021. I have applied to Arts Council England for a further grant to support the new displays and will hear about their decision by late December. I have been working up plans for the new displays with the Museum designer based on public feedback and our own knowledge and these are looking very exciting. At present we are requesting estimates from contractors for build and installation although our budget is very tight indeed. We may be looking for public donations next year to fund specific aspects of the new displays and I hope Ilford Historical Society members may be able to help. I hope to share designs for the new displays early next year.

Over the past 8 months myself and Nishat have continued to produce online content in the form of posts on social media, virtual exhibitions, a brand new 360 degree tour of the Museum, family activities and two films using our collections. The first was about Redbridge and the Second World War for the 75th anniversary of VE Day in May and the latest is based on the memories of people from the Caribbean who settled in Redbridge since the 1950s. Both films have been well received and can be seen on the Museum's youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH_YdI7N21KKrGM8c7GEc-A In addition, I have been answering heritage enquiries online and developing a new website about Woodford resident, suffragette, artist and campaigner, Sylvia Pankhurst which will be launched next spring. So, we've not been quite 'closed'!



Sue Page (along with Museum colleagues Nishat far left and Saima far right) after a local history session with the Ilford Muslim Women's Welfare Association, 2016

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue for all her hard work over the last 5 years that she has been the Heritage Development Librarian. Since Sue took on the role she completely transformed the public heritage programme with talks, walks, reminiscence and family events. During the creation of the new Heritage Centre in 2017 she overhauled the management of the local studies collections so that they are in a far better state than ever before (ably supported by her colleagues, Dawn, Paris and

Saima). Sue's calm, smiling presence is always a hit with customers and she has thrown herself into community heritage projects, school sessions and family craft activities so that she is now an expert at making exact scale models of historic structures from nothing but egg boxes and toilet rolls, vital skills on any CV! I'm not sure what we will do without her but I hope we can persuade her to be involved in some way in the future.

© **Gerard Greene, Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre Manager, 29 October 2020**

I'm sure I speak on behalf of all our members in saying that Sue Page will be very much missed when she leaves her post as the Heritage Development Librarian. She has been a most valuable member of the team, enthusiastic, helpful, friendly – a real asset to the borough. **Georgina Green**

Dr Summerskill, Tentori & Jones: an Everyday Story of Seven Kings Folk

at the Old Bailey 1906: Criminal Libel, a Social Disease, Abortion & Attempted Blackmail

In the Edwardian period of 1901-10 Dr William Summerskill of Seven Kings was a busy and not especially lucky man. In 1904 he had a spat with Ilford Medical Society and Councillor Robert Stroud complaining that they weren't doing enough to build a hospital as quickly as they should to protect Ilford and Seven Kings families from disease. An even busier year for him was 1905. He tried to be elected a local councilor – and failed. There was a trial over non-payment of his medical services bill and to his annoyance the judge reduced it from £19 13s. to £16. He was too touchy and litigious and in the same year sued a Lincolnshire hydro owner (health spa) over what he considered to be poor treatment, not up to the standard he expected, and lost that case. He wasn't doing too well though as a local GP his medical practice seems to have been prospering.

Finally in 1906 came the 'piece-de-resistance' - an Old Bailey trial: malicious defamation and libel of his character, an accusation of getting a woman patient pregnant and trying to carry out an illegal abortion on her and attempted blackmail where he was the intended victim. But was he just unlucky, accident prone or did he just attract trouble? He was a very blunt speaker (many would have said rude), too prepared to go to law and unafraid of using the newspapers to publicise his causes but in spite of his good motives he had the knack of rubbing people up the wrong way. He was no shrinking violet nor Dr Finlay of Tannochbrae.

He was often in the newspapers, made it into the Old Bailey witness box and his daughter Edith also became a doctor, a Labour MP and wrote her memoirs. The criminal libel trial at the Bailey lasted a week: from 11 -17 September 1906 and its closely typed, error-strewn transcript fills eleven solid pages. It was a very serious trial which if Summerskill had been found to have lied on oath would have ruined his career, life and most likely sent him to prison.

William Summerskill's (1866-1947) roots were in the north of England. He came from Leeds and qualified through Leeds Medical School and the Royal College of Physicians in 1886, and Royal College of Surgeons 1888, soon after unqualified doctors were prohibited from practicing. He had surgeries in Kingston Place, Leopold St and Meanwood Road, Leeds, covering his rural rounds visiting patients on horse-back. He let off "frequent diatribes against the authorities for not ensuring a higher standard of midwifery". His assistantship was in Grantham Cottage Hospital, Lincs, where he worked for a few years but back in Leeds in 1892 he achieved his pinnacle of fame patenting an anti-baldness hat! But it wasn't quite the medical success he hoped for (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 23 November 1892 front page! though I did wonder if it was a sort of 'April fools' joke) and, still single, he soon came south.

In 1896 a servant at his London home in Edgware Road admitted stealing a cash box containing £2 10s. and in 1899 he was called to attend a woman who died from carbonic oxide poisoning while preparing a bath. His surgery was then in Clerkenwell Road and newspapers in Morpeth, Nottingham and even Newcastle reported that fatality and his involvement as he was reluctant at first to issue a death certificate for accidental death.

While on a course at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, he met Edith (née Wilde) who came from a large Crystal Palace family. They married in 1896 at Paddington Registry Office and had three children including a daughter Edith, who was born in 1901, in their new Doughty Street London home.

The Summerskill's house in Pembroke Gardens



At some point c.1902 he and his wife decided that they'd had enough of London so the family moved into a new house in Essex's green fields around Pembroke Gardens, High Road, Seven Kings (a few minutes' walk from the station) which looked very tempting to them, "a rural paradise to our eyes after the streets of Bloomsbury" for what he hoped would be a new start in a new country suburb. But it didn't quite work out that way as his private life dogged him: summonses and writs seem to follow him around. A 'bastardy summons' was taken out against him and in 1904 a Harley Street specialist advised him he should give up work for six months ("I had a nervous ailment" he said) and he tried to sell his practice for £600. The buyer didn't complete so Summerskill issued a writ against him and so the early part of the 1900s wasn't exactly much fun for him and his family.

So we come to the Old Bailey trial for malicious defamation and libel of his character, an accusation of getting a woman patient pregnant and trying to carry out an illegal abortion on her and attempted blackmail where he was the intended victim. The action was brought by Dr William Summerskill against George Tentori. The trial and transcript of the case is extensively covered in the *Essex Guardian*, Saturday 22 September 1906.

On 11 September 1906 the trial opened in the presence of Judge Lumley-Smith and jury in court no.4 of the Old Bailey, presenting his evidence through his barrister C.W. Overend who didn't beat about the bush. Where George Tentori coyly mentioned 'confinement', Overend in his opening statement of what the trial was about bluntly called it 'pregnancy'. Summerskill accused George Tentori of defamation to his character which was criminal libel at that time and attempted blackmail. He was the accused defendant in the dock, out on bail from the police since July.

The trouble started around 1902 when Alice Jones went to see Summerskill in his new Seven Kings surgery which was also his home. He told the court of his qualifications but denied examining her. She told me she "had a discharge" and a man called Tentori who she lived with had the same problem and wanted Summerskill to visit him at home and examine him. He went there, examined him and saw that he did have the same condition. Tentori wanted him to treat them both and said he would pay for any medicine. Dr Summerskill attended them for two or three months until they were well but they didn't pay him for their treatment so Tentori made him an offer to do some free printing to which he agreed. However, after much printing, Tentori said

he'd done enough free work, so Summerskill told him from then on he'd have to pay cash for any medical care – which they did.

George Tentori doesn't come across as an engaging character. His father Giuseppe was born in 1836 and may have come from Como, Italy. It's unknown when he arrived in England and he was a musician at first. He had a large family, with George born in 1868. Originally they lived in Great Titchfield Street, London, which was close to Summerskill's Doughty Street home. At some point Giuseppe's family moved out to Ilford and in 1901 they lived in Dalkeith Rd. He was employed as an Urban Council clerk but for which council isn't noted (Ilford?). George married in 1892 but his wife had left him and he isn't named in the 1901 Census so it's unclear if he was still living with his family but in 1906 he was living in Railway Street, Chadwell Heath. In the 1891 Census he was a letterset printer which was why he was able to offer Summerskill free printing. He moved to Brentwood and later back in Chadwell Heath where he set himself up in a shop as a master printer and had a domestic general servant, Alice Jones.

The next time Summerskill visited them was in May 1904 when George and Alice were sitting on the outside steps and Alice was covered in blood and had two back eyes. He brought her inside, "plugged her nose" and they paid him 2s. cash. An assault isn't mentioned in the trial as she claimed she was hit by a swing. Alice recovered and the next time he saw her was in November when she had another 'discharge' as before and he gave her some powder and medicine. Again she paid for the treatment and he told her that if she brought a neighbour to accompany her to the surgery as a chaperone he would examine her. She replied that she had no friends and didn't want anyone to know of her problem but he did examine her and told her that she was suffering from gonorrhoea. She called again in June 1905 and told him "I am getting no better", so he asked her, "Are you syringing yourself properly?" She clearly wasn't and told him that the syringe had perished and didn't have any money to get a new one from a chemist. She said Tentori didn't have any money either so Dr Summerskill gave her a syringe if she promised to pay for it which she agreed to and did so before the end of the month.

She was nearly well but was soon taken ill again and he told her "I cannot help that", but "the next morning Tentori called and asked me to put her right". He replied, "That is an illegal operation, I cannot do anything of that kind". Tentori demanded that he give her some medicine and if he refused he would "go to Stratford Magistrate's Court and get a summons and we will charge you with criminal assault". Summerskill again refused saying, "You can do what you like". A few days later they met again and Tentori told him, "We have decided to make you pay". Summerskill boldly replied, "Do what you like!" but it opened up a can of worms for him and he now knew he was in a very dangerous position.

Tentori got his solicitor to send a letter to Summerskill in March 1906 which accused him of admitting that he was responsible for "her confinement.. whose condition you admitted you were responsible". Tentori claimed he had placed the matter in the hands of the police, made a signed statement and that Miss Jones stated that Summerskill had "used instruments.. you used and the operation you performed on her" and so he had taken her to Dr Wright, Romford divisional police surgeon. In other words Dr Summerskill was accused of getting Alice pregnant and trying to perform an illegal abortion on her. Tentori closed the letter with: "any respectable doctor would inform the police.. it was a very serious matter.. and that he was sorry for his wife and children" but felt it was his "public duty for the sake of safety to do so. Yours etc, George Tentori". So noble. One of his brothers, Giuseppe, had worked in a solicitor's office so George knew something of how the law worked and where he could get some advice.

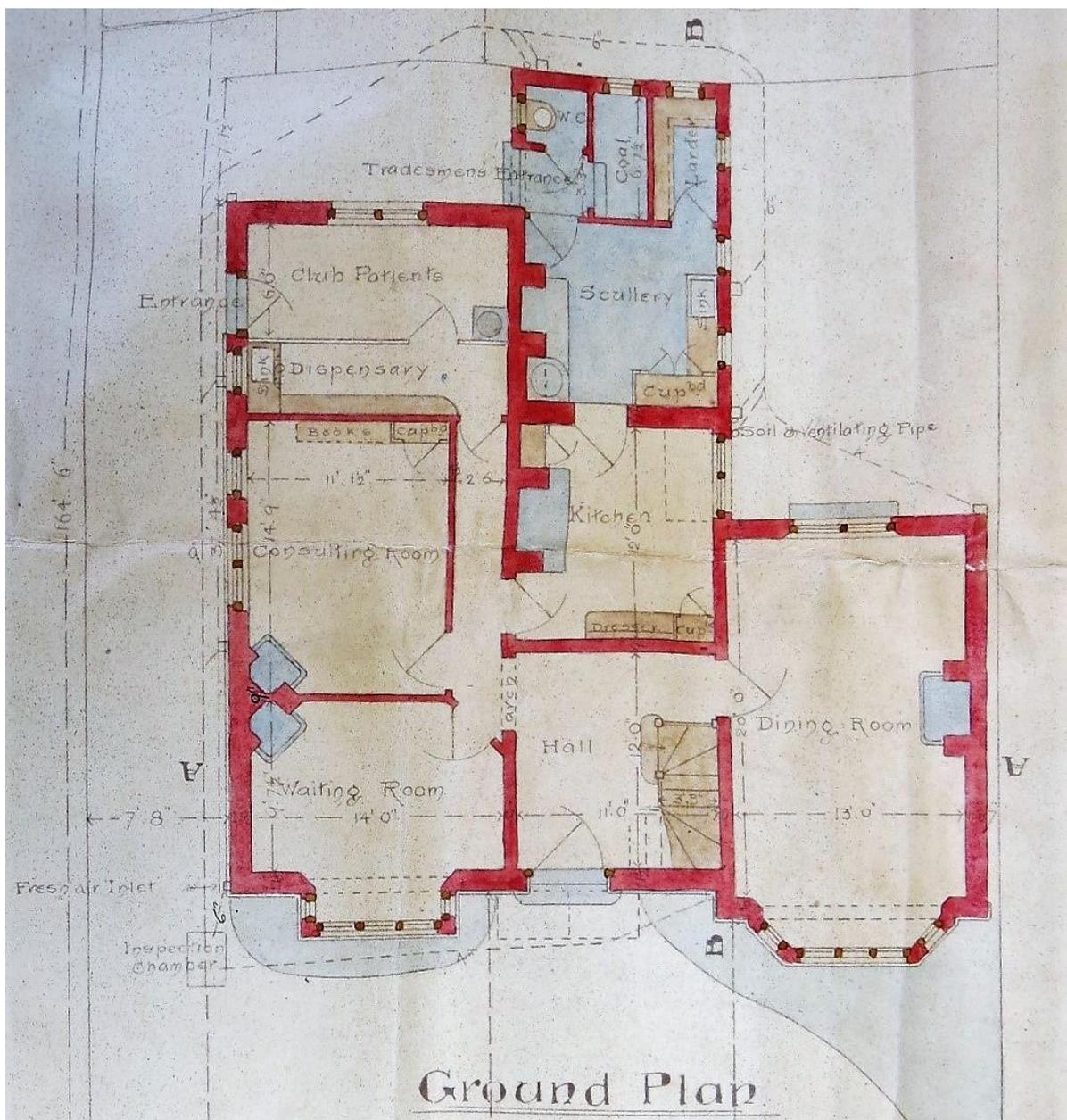
Dr Summerskill of course denied all these claims but he was away in Bournemouth and felt he couldn't do anything public until his wife Edith received a letter making the same claims about her husband. The letters weren't given in evidence but William told Edith to go to get some help and when he returned he went to Romford police station with the two letters. He told them, "Some proceedings must be taken to stop this man" and he contacted a new solicitor who advised him that "publication did not matter" which seems a bit off-hand. Probably to his surprise, the police told him that Tentori hadn't been to see them. But he learned "that some application for a warrant had been taken out against me for attempting to procure an abortion". The police had taken the powder and pills from Tentori but found that it wasn't for the purpose he stated so they were not about to take any action against Summerskill which must have been a relief to him, and they clearly thought that Tentori was wrong. It had been analysed by a Home Office expert and it was the medicine Summerskill had given her for her gonorrhoea. But Summerskill didn't have it all his own way.

Now cross examined he went through his early life and medical experience, his private life was raked over, and he denied being married twice and having fathered two children outside of his marriage to Edith! He denied contemplating fleeing the country to South Africa though he had thought of visiting it. Clearly Tentori's counsel and detectives had been active uncovering Summerskill's private life. He admitted visiting a Harley Street specialist who "advised him to stop work for six months.. as he had a nervous complaint". He would have taken that advice but his practice partner in Seven Kings wouldn't cover him for six months with a locum. He sold half the practice to him for £600 but he then declined to complete so now there was a legal action against his partner (Dr Martin?) which was still to be completed.

He now also admitted that a "bastardy summons" had been issued against him in May which was only served a few days ago. He had met the person that issued it in July but it had then been withdrawn as the child couldn't be produced – as there was no child. However, he had agreed that if the child was produced he would pay the mother £1 a month. "I do not deny I had intercourse with the mother of that child.. but.. there were no other children that I am paying for". He claimed that no child had been born in "Leeds of which he was the alleged father, it was an absolute lie", and that he never performed an operation on a woman at the Hammond Hotel, Euston Road, London. With these open court admissions he was getting into ever deeper water as to his character and respectability. His barrister objected to the admission about the Hammond Hotel revelation as not being relevant to this case, but the cross examination had skewered him and continued.

Summerskill now began to recall his examinations of Alice Jones through notes he had made in his notebook- presumably a diary. On 30 November 1904 he saw her but denied "that I locked the door and had connection with her.., that they had sex in a chair, that he had told not to tell.. or that in January 1905 he had examined her breasts and private parts, her periods had not come on.. or that she was in trouble through what I had done". He denied acting improperly or trying to insert an instrument to procure an abortion or that it was necessary to "grease the passage". He called it "all ridiculous nonsense.. and the only time he ever examined Alice he had used a speculum" and denied many more claims about what he had done or said to Alice. He finished his testimony and cross examination by saying that threats had been made against him, that his front door was never locked during surgery hours and if a woman had ever been assaulted and screamed she would have been heard by everyone in the ground floor waiting room and house where his family lived. Probably exhausted, it must have been very harrowing for him.

Next to speak was **Edith Summerskill** who clearly stood by her husband. She supported what he said: that she had received a letter from Tentori claiming that William had got Alice pregnant, that the matter was now with the police and his solicitor, that William had left for South Africa (which of course was nonsense), that he would inform the Royal Colleges of Physicians, and Surgeons that William had ruined Alice and that “This matter must be very unpleasant and I assure you have my sincere sympathy.” Such nobility again. Edith succinctly replied that of course William hadn’t fled to South Africa, that she was aware his “attempts at blackmail” would get nowhere, so she had the “pleasure in returning your sincere sympathy for the poor wife whom this person Jones had supplanted..” Cross examined, she maintained her composure and support. Edith recalled her early life with William, their three children and that Tentori’s solicitor had phoned them with threats that if he didn’t pay up warrants would be issued against him and ruin him. She mentioned hearing that George Tentori’s wife had left him 10 or 12 years before and that he had tried to commit suicide by shooting himself.



The plan of the house is a way of showing how, if Alice Jones had called out, she would have been heard by people in the waiting room & rest of the family home etc.

Three others gave evidence but were little help to Tentori. Dr Thomas Barton of Chadwell Heath advised him to go to the police when told of the abortion attempt; Miss Maud Hills, Alice's friend, tried to show that the sleeping arrangements in Tentori's house were respectable; and Mr Fish, who in 1904 was Secretary of a Home for Fallen Women, said he knew an Alice Camp. However, the judge immediately ruled his evidence out as having nothing to do with the case.

Now heard was **Alice Jones** (b. Leytonstone 1878) who said she knew Tentori's family in Ilford and that he was married but that his wife had left him years before. Alice had lived with him for 9½ years, described herself as his respectable housekeeper and that she didn't sleep with him but by herself in a back bedroom. She continued to claim that Dr Summerskill had had sex with her in his surgery, that it wasn't consensual and that he had tried to abort the child after she had become pregnant. She told the court that after going before the Romford Guardians in June she was confined in Romford Workhouse and Infirmary (it had over 400 inmates) as Tentori couldn't or wouldn't support her. Alice had worked in Ilford, claimed she didn't catch gonorrhoea from a man there and maintained she never had sex with Tentori and given it to him. She claimed that the pills made her sick and that an errant playground swing had given her the black eyes and cut lip; that Summerskill continued to take liberties and had sex with her against her will at least three times and used a large speculum on her which had hurt her, and he had tried to get rid of the fetus. She admitted she had threatened to kill herself in his surgery, and admitted never screaming out for help as she was too scared or tried the surgery door to see if it was locked to try and get away if it really was that bad. Alice said that Tentori had offered to find her a safe place to have her baby but he had no money for that so she had ended up in the workhouse. However all this good testimony was then ruined when she then made some damaging comments about herself admitting knowing a Forest Gate or Ilford man years before who had given her gonorrhoea and when working for Tentori he had only paid her 1s 6d a week. She concluded her evidence by saying that when they went to see the magistrates in Stratford it was Tentori who had virtually instructed her in what to say and claim in her statement. Near the end of the trial she called him "her master". A very mean and miserable tale, it must have been a very miserable and distressing time for her but she is heard of no more in the trial.

It was now finally time for **George Tentori** to be heard. He left the dock, entered the witness box, took the oath to give his side of the story and first confirmed his address in Railway Street, Chadwell Heath, and that his age was 30. He had married 14 years before (1892) but his wife had left him after just 3½ years. He had been a grocer earning 30s to £2 a week which was OK but not too good so set himself up as a typesetter printer. He claimed he had been prosperous until February 1906 but the case was ruining him with solicitor expenses. He admitted meeting Dr Summerskill soon after he arrived in Seven Kings about 4½ years ago (1902), claimed he only met him to discuss some printing needs for his 'sick club' and he had paid cash. It had nothing to do with him contracting gonorrhoea or doing free work for him, he was prepared to be medically examined to prove he had never had it and denied much of Summerskill's testimony or saying to him: "I will make you pay".

But now it got difficult for him as he told the court that after visiting Stratford Magistrate's Court with the statements and accusations against Summerskill in March, an arrest warrant for him wasn't granted and now he was caught in a police web as they were clearly unhappy with his evidence. In June Romford C.I.D. had contacted the Public Prosecutor and they were unconvinced and the police took from him two bottles of medicine and a box of pills which were sent to the Home Office for analysis. The police told him to put the matter before the Medical

Council but instead of them confronting the doctor, he now found himself charged with malicious defamation. He was allowed bail and claimed he was only doing all this out of the kindness of his heart on behalf of Miss Jones after being advised by his solicitor.

The final witness to give testimony on 17 September was **Detective Sergeant George Seringeour** of K Division Romford C.I.D. which covered Chadwell Heath and Ilford etc. The warrants that Tentori applied for against Summerskill had been refused and the statements he'd made couldn't be found even though they had been left at the court. He told the court very succinctly that the medicine and pills submitted to the Home Office had been analysed and that they were "perfectly harmless unless administered in large quantities". This was a disaster for Tentori which proved that Summerskill clearly hadn't seriously tried to abort Alice's pregnancy nor was it likely that they had made her ill if she had followed the correct dosage. With this last testimony the trial came to a swift end and the jury was sent out to decide their verdict. It didn't take them long. They were soon back in around just 20 minutes- quite a long time as earlier juries often only took seven minutes, and they found Tentori Guilty.

Judge Lumley Smith summed up even more quickly telling George Tentori that the documents and his claims were libelous, very serious, completely and "thoroughly unjustified". He sentenced him to three months imprisonment and from the newspaper we learn it was with 'hard labour' i.e. the dreaded treadmill. His offer to be medically examined to prove he never had gonorrhoea was, of course, never seriously put to the test nor was it really investigated who was the father of Alice's child, though clearly the jury thought it was George or perhaps a friend of hers. The court believed in Summerskill, an upstanding respectable Edwardian gentleman and doctor: that he had never forced himself upon her nor tried to abort her baby. The blackmail attempt was quietly dropped.

No doubt to William and Edith's relief they walked from the court with their heads held high though they probably felt pretty sick after seven draining days. This was probably the final straw which made it clear to them that it was time to leave delightful, fun-loving Seven Kings, the allure having gone and try for pastures new and start afresh which they did in 1909 when the family moved to Westgate-on-Sea, Kent.

Any new information or photos of doctors or chemists would be gratefully appreciated.

We know that George Tentori (1868-1927) married Alice Jones in 1917.

Sadly I have been unable to locate a photo of Dr Summerskill. This article is linked to another one **The High Price of Life and Death: Health Care in Seven Kings 1905** which will be placed on Ilford Historical Society's website. Also about him (the trial mentioned on page 1, paragraph 1) it carries full acknowledgements and footnotes:

Great thanks for all their help to: Sue Page, Madeleine Janes, Gerard Greene, Dr Colin Runeckles, Alan Simpson, Roger Backhouse, Georgina Green, Dr Dawn Crouch, Carol Franklin, Paris Sydes, Martin Fairhurst & Janet Seward.

Old Bailey Proceedings 11 September 1906. George Tentori, Breaking Peace: Libel trial, t19060911-123.

British Newspaper Archive, and Census information.

A Woman's World, Edith Summerskill. Heinemann Ltd, London 1967, pp 5-15.

Essex Guardian, 22 September 1906, and many other newspapers.

© *Jef Page, 31 October 2020*

Illness in Victorian Times

I recently watched a DVD of the BBC production of *Wives and Daughters* by Elizabeth Gaskell (published in 1866), filmed over 20 years ago. It had an amazing cast with several actors still



familiar today. It was five hours long and in true tradition it took until 4 hours 50 minutes for 'him' to propose to 'her'. When the moment came, and she said yes, the camera showed them 2 metres apart as they had scarlet fever in the house – and that could be fatal!

In 1832 William Storrs Fry (the second son of prison reformer Elizabeth Fry), married Juliana Pelly, daughter of Sir John Henry Pelly

of Upton, who was a Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and had been a captain in the East India Company. Her mother, Emma née Boulton, was a granddaughter of Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines. They both came from affluent families but this was no safeguard against illness.

In the early summer of 1844 scarlet fever swept through their home at the Manor House at Plashet, claiming as its victims William (aged 38), four of his children and at least five of the servants. Sir Henry and Lady Pelly (Juliana's parents) were with their daughter until the doctors decided that the atmosphere of the house was too dangerous and moved some of the children out to an empty cottage on the estate. Others were moved elsewhere and the servants went to the Fever Hospital. William died and lay in his coffin in an empty house - it was as though the plague had struck. In spite of all the doctors' effort, two of the little girls, Julia and Emma, were very seriously ill too. "Leeches were applied to their throats but all to no avail. Their breathing became more and more difficult, and they too left us, their deaths only a few days apart."

Gradually the other patients recovered, but by this time the infection had spread to other relatives, cousins and their servants, although thankfully without fatal results. It was not until December that the poor widowed Juliana and her surviving children returned to the Manor House, after William's sister had washed all the furniture to prevent further infection.¹

To the Victorians scarlet fever was just one of many diseases which could be fatal. Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786 - 1845) (later created a baronet for his work on the 1833 Act to abolish slavery) and wife Hannah lost four children in 1820. Their eldest son died from whooping cough aged 10, and within five weeks three young daughters died of measles.²

Today the NHS website says, 'Scarlet fever is a contagious infection that mostly affects young children. It's easily treated with antibiotics.' Whooping cough and measles are included in the vaccinations routinely given to young babies. Smallpox was another devastating disease killing 3 out of every 10 people who caught it but on May 8, 1980, the 33rd World Health Assembly officially declared the world free of this disease.

With the recent news that several vaccinations for the current strain of Covid-19 should soon become available for a roll out across our population, let us hope that life will return to normal during 2021.

© *Georgina Green, 14 November 2020*

¹ *Katharine Fry's Book* edited by Jane Vansittart p.144-5

² Hannah Buxton (née Gurney) was the sister of Elizabeth Fry. Her journal was printed for private circulation.

Joseph Pates – ‘Ilford’s Grand Old Man’

When I was researching my talk on the sale of the Clements Estate in 1879, the name of Joseph Pates came up as an occupant of an early house in Stanley Road. I noticed that there was a small paragraph in Norman Gunby’s *A Potted History of Ilford* but having found out more about him (thanks to a new subscription to the British Newspaper Archive) I felt it was time to give him more attention.

Contrary to the date given in Gunby, Joseph Pates was not born in 1858 but on the 24th April 1853 to James and Eliza who ran a long-established bakery at what was then 11 High Street - roughly where Boots Chemist (opposite Clements Road) is today.³ I think the discrepancy arises from a misreading of Pates’ age in the 1871 Census where it looks like it is 23 rather than the 28 it actually is. Like other children of Ilford men, young Joseph went to school at Ilford Academy on Ilford Hill.⁴ Joseph is said to have left school and gained employment in the City. In the 1871 Census, aged 18 and still living in the High Street, he is listed as a Clerk but on 1st April 1875 he was appointed as Parish Clerk in Ilford.

The major change to Joseph’s life came early in 1878 when his father James died. His mother Eliza took over the running of the bakery and she is listed like that in the Post Office Directory for the same year. In an article in the *Essex Guardian* in 1905 the business was given up two years after his father’s death. There is an as yet unanswered question about whether Joseph is the Mr Pates recorded as living at Yew Tree Villas in Green Lane in 1879 in the Auction catalogue for the sale of the Clements Estate. It was that sale which brought about a major change in his life – that of owning his own home. The other major change in his life at this time was the occasion of Joseph’s marriage to Emily Souter on 18th December 1880 held, of course, at St Mary’s Church and presided over by the then Vicar of Ilford, the Hon & Rev Henry Bertie. According to a later report on the couple’s silver wedding anniversary, this was the last to be solemnised by Bertie before he left Ilford the following week.

By 1881 then, the recently married Joseph and Emily had moved into a small detached cottage called Waterloo Villa in Stanley Road which, when numbered, became 17 Stanley Road. Also living there at the time of the Census was Joseph’s mother Eliza. It’s worth noting that Joseph’s sister Elizabeth is still carrying on a trade as a dressmaker in the High Street. Besides the laying out of many streets on the old Clements Estate, the other consequence of



Waterloo Villa, 17 Stanley Road.
Photograph by the author

the sale was the opportunity afforded for the town to establish the Ilford Burial Board (IBB) who then purchased land behind St Mary’s Church as a cemetery. Sadly, I am unable to access the

³ There is a bakery listed under Joseph Pates – uncle of my subject – in the 1839 Pigot’s Directory of Essex

⁴ There are good articles on the Ilford Academy in IHS Newsletters 92 and 96

IBB minute book at present but from text accompanying the photo of him in 1935, it would appear that he was appointed as Cemetery Superintendent in 1885.

The 1891 Census records the family still living in Stanley Road and they now have three children and a live-in servant. Joseph is listed as a postman – a job he began when Ilford was not much more than a village, and something he continued for 22 years until he resigned. Incidentally, by resigning he found that he was not entitled to superannuation. By 1901 the family has grown in size and they now had five children but possibly due to lack of space, this meant that the servant was dispensed with. This lack of space was addressed by moving house. The *Ilford Recorder* of 3rd June 1904 records that the family had moved to 29 Clements Road. In December 1905 Joseph and Emily celebrated their silver wedding anniversary – an occasion marked by a piece in the *Ilford Recorder*. Remarkably, the report manages not to mention either his wife or her name!

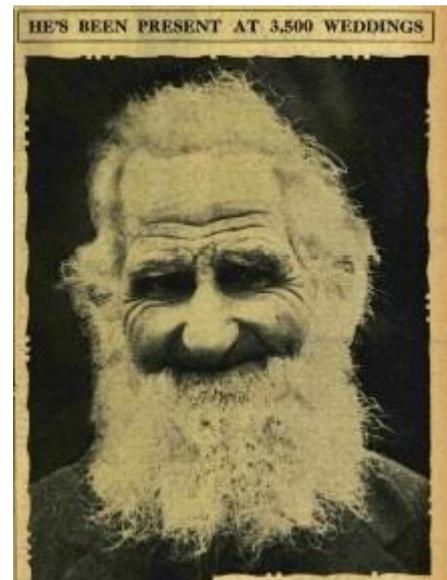
The 1911 Census records two Joseph Pates – father and son. Joseph Pates is still living in Clements Road with his wife and three children; while Joseph Thomas Pates is back in Waterloo Villa, 17 Stanley Road with his wife and two young children. The younger Pates is also listed as Assistant Cemetery Superintendent, following in his father's footsteps.

At some point between 1917 and 1926 (available sources do not allow me to be more specific), Joseph Pates moved to 52 Albert Road, next to what was then St Alban's Church Hall. Pates is recorded as living there until his death.

In 1935 Pates retired as Cemetery Superintendent – the longevity of his tenure even attracted the attention of the national press. The *Daily Mirror*'s front page for April 3rd of that year has a photograph of him with a caption that reads as follows:

“Old Joe, otherwise Joseph Pates, photographed yesterday, when he retired, after being for fifty years cemetery superintendent at Ilford. He has tolled the bell at 16,000 funerals and assisted at 3,500 weddings. He is now eighty-two years old and feels that he has earned a rest. He will go on living in Ilford”

Daily Mirror 2nd April 1935⁵



And so he did until war broke out in September 1939, whereupon he was evacuated to the south coast where, sadly, he died on 6th October 1939 aged 86. Obituaries in the local press and the *Essex Chronicle* noted that he had been reappointed Parish Clerk the previous April making his tenure an extraordinary 64 years. He was buried in the churchyard at St Mary's where his family gravestone can still be seen.

Villages and towns needed people like Joseph Pates who kept the wheels of civic and parish life turning; and in his lifetime, he saw Ilford expand from just a village on the Romford Road to a major town. How Ilford changed can be attested by the following from the *Essex Guardian* article from 1905, where Joseph once “wielded the willow in a game of cricket in the Ilford Broadway, and drove the leather past the watching policeman towards the one or two shops opposite.” It's not advisable to try and repeat this today!

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⁵ Accessed via British Newspaper Archive. Copyright remains with Reach plc

The route and history of The Cran Brook

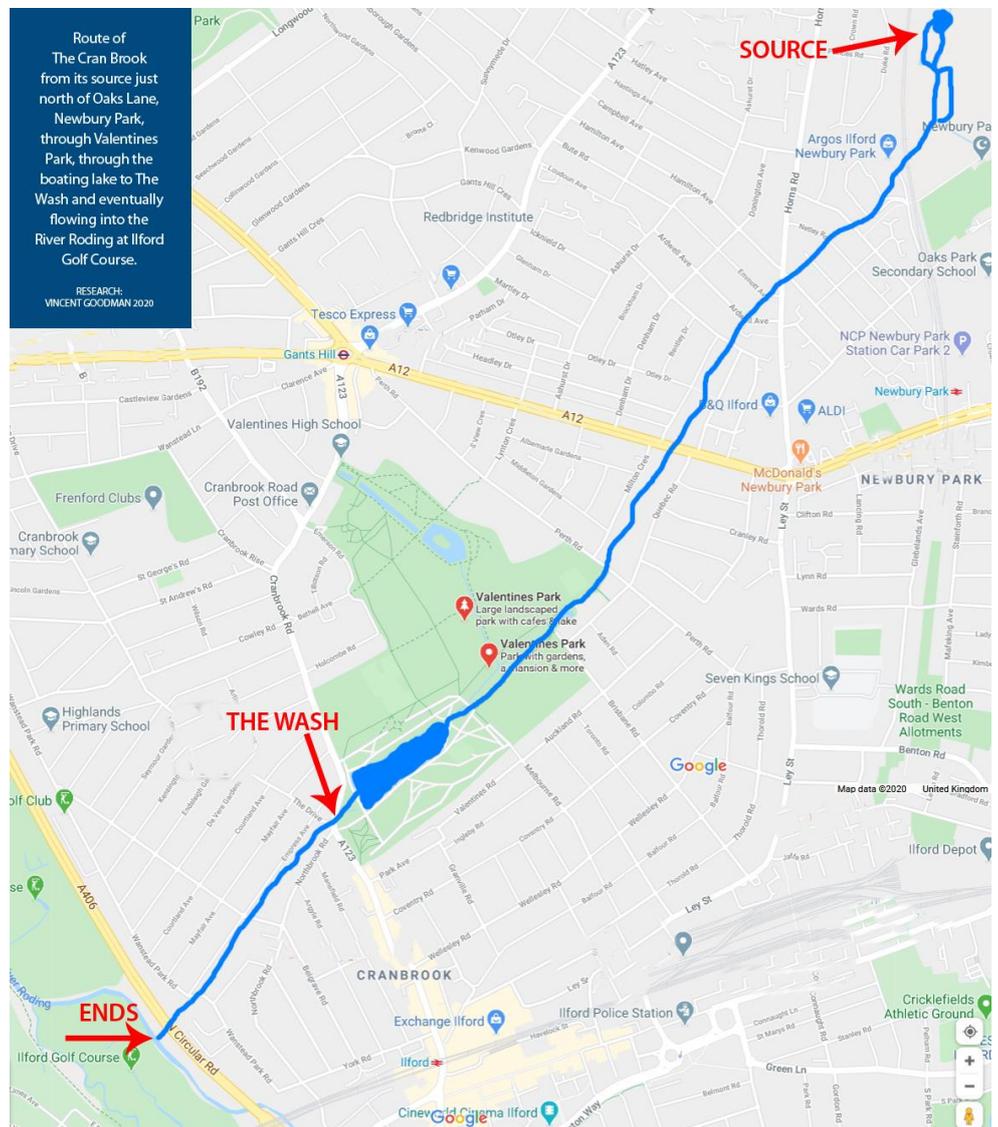
The name Cranbrook was first recorded in 1233 as Cranebroc, deriving from a tributary of the River Roding, the Cran Brook which runs from north to south through Ilford.



Following extensive research during lockdown, I have concluded the source of this stream lies to the right of the railway track between Barkingside and Newbury Park stations, just south of the site of Redbridge United FC. I took a wander through the fields from Oaks Lane, Newbury Park, and finally found what I was looking for; a small, murky pond from which the spring below provides the source water for the brook. Although it was a dry, sunny day, the land around the very beginnings of the brook was very boggy, and yours truly managed to lose his footing

and fall into the muddy abyss. With a ruined pair of trainers and jeans, I was undeterred, and took the obligatory photos of the source.

The river runs pretty much underground from this point, crossing Horns Road and the A12 Eastern Avenue, where it runs between the back gardens of Milton Crescent and Quebec Road. It then joins Valentines Park at Perth Road, and the canalised stream with stepped concrete revetments, works its way into the magnificent boating pond, which is one of the centrepieces of the park. At the top end of the lake is the Clock Tower which was built by W P Griggs in 1899. To the west of this is a garden area known as The Wash, with The Cran Brook flowing through banks planted with willows, maples and other trees. An ornamental fountain is situated in the centre of the stream, which used



to be crossed by rustic wooden bridges, but these were deemed unsafe, and were replaced by a modern footbridge in the 1980s.

The Wash takes its name from Wash Lodge, which was the wash keeper's cottage at the junction of Cranbrook Road and The Drive. The wash keeper collected monies from travellers for



permission to wash their horses and carts in the ford, which in turn became known as The Wash.

The brook continues to run the entire length of Empress Avenue, and finally makes its confluence with the River Roding under the A406 North Circular at Ilford Golf Club. I found this exact point by crossing the bridge over the A406 by the entrance to the golf club and walking along the River Roding at the perimeter of the golf course, until the small opening came into view.

I grew up in Cranbrook Road, and have had a business here since the 1980s. With my

inquisitive nature, unfolding the story behind the name Cranbrook has given me a window to the history of the brook which has been a most rewarding experience.

© Vincent Goodman, 27 July 2020

Colin Runeckles sent the item right which shows how sometimes new information can be found quite by chance:

“While I was searching a newspaper archive I came across this notice for an auction of farm stock from Ilford Lodge Farm in Sept 1834. When I checked Georgina’s article in our April 2019 newsletter (no.129), I realised Robert Westley Hall died in April of that same year. I wonder whether this indicates that the son didn’t fancy running the estate as a farm and so sold everything?”

Of course, confirming the truth of this suggestion is quite another matter!

ILFORD LODGE FARM.

Live and Dead Farming Stock, Corn, Hay, &c.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
 BY T. HARVEY,
 On Tuesday, September 23rd, 1834, at Eleven o’Clock,
 on the Premises, at Ilford Lodge Farm, Ilford,
 Essex, by Order of the Proprietor ;

COMPRISING

SEVEN superior young Cart Horses, 3 prime Milch cows, 13 ewes and 5 lambs, 4 store pigs, 2 six-inch wheel iron-arm loading carts, 2 iron-arm tumbrel carts, 3 foot ploughs, 2 sets of harrows, an ox harrow, a 2-horse land roll, a 1-horse ditto, a scarifier, a moulding-up plough, cart and plough harness, a stack cloth, with pullies, ropes, poles, and blocks, complete ; 3 stack ladders, a dressing machine, 2 barn fans, 7 barn sieves, &c. ; corn and potatoe sacks, a sheep rack, 4 sheep troughs, a loading cloth and effects, a stack of prime old meadow hay, a stack of meadow hay, a stack of first-cut clover hay, a stack of second-cut clover hay, a stack of tare hay, 2 stacks of wheat, the produce of about 26 acres ; bay of barley, about 13 acres ; part of a bay of oats, bay of wheat, and part of a bay of ditto, about 9 acres ; and a ditto of oats.

May be viewed on the morning of sale, and Catalogues had on the Premises ; at the various Inns in the Neighbourhood ; Red Lion, Whitechapel ; and of T. Harvey, Auctioneer, Ilford, Essex.

IHS Programme for Spring 2021

While we are all under Covid-19 restrictions we plan to present our talks by ZOOM, a free computer programme. Please contact the society's secretary, janetseward@aol.com for further information. We are happy to help you install Zoom if you do not already have it.

Please check our website: <http://ilfordhistoricalsociety.weebly.com/> for updates.

SPRING 2021 ZOOM PROGRAMME:

11 January 2021 *Domestic Service in an Essex Town, Ilford 1850-1914.*

by Rev John Brown, St Lukes church, Ilford.

8 February 2021 *Local Essex Archaeology*

by Les Capon

8 March 2021 *1930s East End Artists*

East End Group of London artists portrayed a part of the capital often overlooked

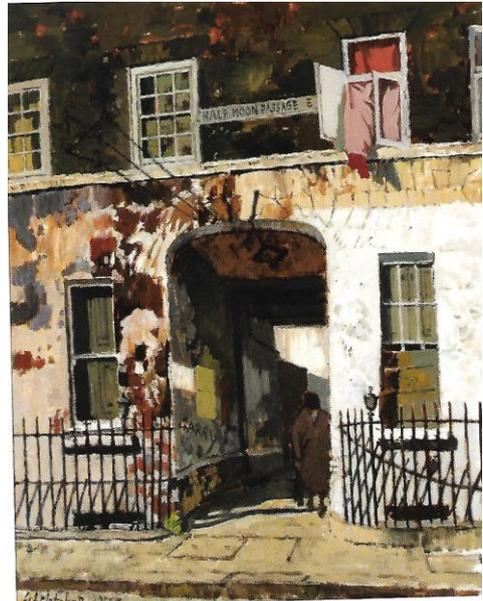
by Jef Page, President, Ilford HS

12 April 2021 **AGM at 7.15pm**, followed by *The Wesleyan Church in Cranbrook Road*

by Michael Potter

10 May TBA

Please see the front page for the latest update.



Under normal circumstances, our regular monthly meetings are held in the Gloucester Room, Ilford Central Library, Clements Road, Ilford IG1 1EA on the second Monday of each month, September – May. There are often walks for members in the summer.

Refreshments are served from 7pm and we start our talks at 7.30pm, finishing at 9pm.

Visitors welcome, £3 per meeting, with free refreshments.

Membership of the society costs £10 this year which includes 3 newsletters.

We are very sorry that those members without internet at home are unable to watch our talks by Zoom. It was pleasing, however, that someone from another society was able to watch and said "I liked the friendly atmosphere of Colin Runeckles' talk to Ilford Historical, something which isn't very easy to create using the Zoom system. It was extremely impressive."

We will endeavour to pass on details of Zoom talks given by other societies to you by email.

The next newsletter will be posted out in April



Follow us on twitter
Ilford Historical Society@IlfordHistory
You can follow us on Facebook too.

