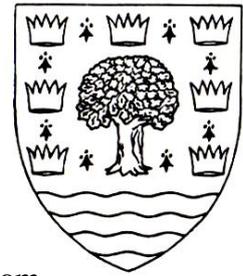


Ilford Historical Society

Newsletter No.136 August 2021



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

Learning to Live with Covid

Our April front page article mentioned the hope things would return to normality from 21 June but then the 'Delta variant' began to spread in this country and numbers with Covid rose again. This strain now accounts for approx. 90% of new Covid-19 cases in the UK. The government reluctantly delayed the easing of restrictions and instead initiated a drive to get all over 18-year-olds vaccinated. Large walk-in centres popped up and with the vast majority of the adult population now protected, measures were relaxed in a phased programme from 19 July.

Using research methods which they had already developed, Professor Sarah Gilbert (pictured) and her team at the Jenner Institute, Oxford University, created the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in a remarkably short time. Once it had been proved safe and effective it went into mass production and this, along with other vaccines produced by other countries, has been our weapon against the deadly virus.



The work of the NHS continues as they try to cope with the back-log of operations which had to be pushed aside at the height of the pandemic. Thankfully, because of the vaccine there are far fewer people who need to be treated in hospital after contracting Covid now. On 5 July HM the Queen awarded the National Health Services of the UK the George Cross "in recognition of 73 years of dedicated service, including for the courageous efforts of healthcare workers across the country battling the COVID-19 pandemic" and a special service of commemoration and thanksgiving for staff in the NHS was held at St Paul's Cathedral.

In August 2020 we expected to return to meeting in person for our October meeting, we did not expect the 'second wave' and another lockdown. In 2021 we are confident we can return to the Central Library for our meetings from September.



See the back page for our 2021-22 programme.

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High Street, Barkingside in 1947: a fishy business

Not all IHS members may be aware of Talking Pictures TV, a free-to-air independent archive film and television channel. It broadcasts 24 hours a day and features mainly older British films, both classics and B-movies, but its schedule also includes cinema shorts and period home movies of British locations. The channel also features films from the British Film Institute's (BFI) archives, including several significant documentaries, and quite a few 'public information' short films. One such film shown recently was shot in Barkingside shortly after the end of the Second World War.

Only 10 minutes long and entitled 'The Fishmonger', the TV channel's website stated: 'Filmed in 1947. A delightful educational short film set in Barkingside High Street, Ilford, Essex, about the Fishmonger and his working day including a trip to Billingsgate'.

The film opens with scenes at an unnamed school – this is Fairlop School in Fencepiece Road. Pupils there are setting off to interview local shopkeepers about their working day. The group followed in the film heads to Barkingside High Street where the pupils note the names and occupations of several shops, before interviewing the owner of J Gurr & Son, fishmonger, at 43 High Street (7 Clarence Terrace). I suspect the fishmonger was Mr Gurr himself – Clarence Terrace was begun in 1932 and Gurr's was there by 1935 if not earlier ('1932' date plaque visible above the shops today).

The film cuts to Mr Gurr leaving Barkingside in his lorry for Billingsgate where he purchases many boxes of fresh fish, and then back to his shop. At the shop we see backroom scenes of haddock hanging for smoking, and customers buying fish. The film ends with Mr Gurr pulling down the shutter at the front of his shop and the children setting off back to school.

Not shot on the highest quality film stock, the rather grainy film nevertheless includes several short glimpses of typical suburban shops in Barkingside's High Street. These include Peter Pan (was this a children's outfitter?), the Gas Light & Coke Company, Boots, Hepworth, and the Co-op. In 1939, shops in Clarence Terrace and the adjacent Parade included:

- Swainson & Sons, 31 High Street (1 The Parade/Clarence Terrace), confectioner
- William Phillip, 33 High Street (2 The Parade/Clarence Terrace), chemist
- Hiltons, 35 High Street (3 The Parade/Clarence Terrace), bootmaker
- J Hepworth, 37 High Street (4 The Parade/Clarence Terrace), outfitter
- Boots, 39 High Street (5 The Parade/Clarence Terrace), chemist
- Gas Light & Coke Company 41 High Street (6 The Parade/Clarence Terrace)
- J Gurr & Son, 43 High Street (7 The Parade/Clarence Terrace), fishmonger
- Green's Stores, 45 High Street (8 Clarence Terrace), grocer and post office
- A F Adlington, 47 High Street (9 Clarence Terrace), butcher
- Frederick Annis, 49 High Street (10 Clarence Terrace), draper
- A B Hemmings, 51 High Street (11 Clarence Terrace), baker
- Marments & Cooper, 53 High Street (12 Clarence Terrace), cycle agent
- Albert Smith, 55 High Street (13 Clarence Terrace), butcher
- Westminster Bank Ltd, 57 High Street (14 Clarence Terrace)
- Harry Lewis, 59 High Street (15 Clarence Terrace), tobacconist

Some of these had changed hands by the time the film was made in 1947, but Gurr's remained in the High Street until relatively recently; at least, I can remember the shop being there – when did it close? Today, the premises are occupied by the Abshar Punjabi Cuisine restaurant.

The film was directed by Gaston Charpentier. I have discovered little about his career beyond a list on the BFI website of 11 films with which he was involved. These run from his earliest 'Our

Country’ (1944, assistant director – ‘A panorama of Britain as seen through eyes of a merchant seaman returning after two years’) to his last ‘Kenwood Waste-away’ (1968, director – the last of a series of promotional shorts he made for Kenwood from 1960 onwards).

I have also found Gaston Charpentier listed as a director of Impact Productions Ltd, specialising in documentaries, public relations, and entertainment films; and of Impact Telefilms Ltd, working in TV, commercials and entertainment films. Both companies were registered at 44 Newman Street, London, W1. This list is undated, but from the telephone numbers given it would appear to be from the 1950s or early 1960s.

My thanks go to Colin Runeckles for information about the shops in Barkingside High Street in the 1930s.



Captions for photo montage (top left to bottom right)

1. Barkingside High Street. The pupils are outside Peter Pan.
2. Mr Gurr listens to the pupils explaining their task.
3. Mr Gurr sets off for Billingsgate Market. The premises of the Gas Light & Coke Company and Boots can be seen behind the lorry. Of all the shops in Barkingside’s High Street, Boots was the last of those there before the Second World War to survive; Boots closed in 2021.
4. Mr Gurr’s lorry recedes into the distance, passing Hepworth’s shop. In the background can be seen the Co-op’s large single-storey building. This had opened by 1935 and survived until the late 1970s, when the three-storey block now housing McDonald’s was constructed there.
5. Mr Gurr’s lorry returns from Billingsgate Market; one of his assistants waits outside the shop.
6. Checking on the haddocks hanging out the back at Gurr’s.

© Alan Simpson, 1 June 2021

The Ilford House Academy Revisited

The lockdown has provided me ample opportunities to trawl through the British Newspaper Archive for interesting snippets of information related to Ilford. One such was found in the *Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser* for 28 September 1883 where, in an article regarding lists of electors in Pitsea, the following caught my eye:

“Mr Allen said that Mr Bayley’s present address was 10, Brandon Terrace, Ilford. Mr Blackburn said he knew Ilford very well, but never heard of such a terrace. The Revising Barrister said there was a great deal of building going on there”

Two articles relating to the Ilford House Academy were written in this Newsletter over a decade ago.¹ How does this new information affect the conclusions reached over the dating of its demolition, and the building of Brandon Terrace (two rows of houses along Ilford Hill), and Brandon Grove (the road going north between them) on this piece of land?

The second of the two articles reviewed the evidence for the dating and suggested that “*Ilford House was demolished after 16 December 1882 and sufficiently before 31 December 1884 to allow time for the building of Brandon Terrace, the moving in of tenants to the new property, and the compilation of the electoral register.*”

Thus, the mention of a person living at 10 Brandon Terrace in September 1883 should mean that these dates can be revised. Furthermore, the same trawl through various newspapers of the time turned up advertisements for houses in Brandon Terrace (but not Brandon Grove), the earliest of which was in the *London Evening Standard* for 26 February 1883.



Newspaper image © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

Note that it did not specify how many are for sale or rent, implying that it might well relate to the whole terrace of eleven houses. Returning to the dates above, we now have to consider whether it was likely that these houses could have been built between 16 December 1882 when, according to the second article the lighting rate books had indicated that the Academy was empty, and 26 February 1883. I would suggest that this demolition date now looks unlikely and that a different explanation be found for what was in the rate books. The entry for what was assumed to be Ilford House covered lines 6-10 and had the narrative “House(s) owned by C.J. Bayliss, awarded a rate reduction because empty.” What if these lines did not relate to the old Ilford House but to five of the new houses of Brandon Terrace?



OS maps of 1863 and 1914-5 showing the position of Ilford House, and Brandon Terrace / Grove (Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

¹ J. Page “A Steep Learning Curve: Ilford’s Academy. A Class Act of 1869” in Issue 92 (April 2007); P. Heron “When was Ilford House demolished?” in Issue 96 (August 2008)

I also took the opportunity of compiling a list of proprietors or head teachers of the school which is shown below:

Year	Source	Name
1806	ERO Sale Catalogue - D/Dsa 1328/9	Mr Carpenter
1839	Pigot's Directory	William Godfrey – White House, Ilford John Hedger - Ilford
1841	Census	William Godfrey
1847	Tithe Index	Harvey George – owner William Hedger
1848	White's Directory	Jon. Ward Hedger
1851	Census Post Office Directory	Maria Hedger Mrs Mary Hedger
1861	Census	Maria Hedger
1862	Post Office Directory	William Henry Hedger
1863	White's Directory	William Henry Hedger
1867	Post Office Directory	James Hedger
1871	Census	James Hedger
1878	Post Office Directory	Rev. William Stepney
1881	Census	Rev. William Stepney
1882	Kelly's Directory	Rev. William Stepney

Note that in 1839 I have two names the second of which, John Hedger, was assumed to be the proprietor in the earlier IHS article. However, it is clear from the position of the entry and details for William Godfrey in the Census two years later, that he was the schoolteacher at the Academy at that time. But it is the name that was given to the building in 1839 – White House – which is also of interest. There were two auctions which included a building of that name in 1843-4, the catalogues for which are in the Essex Record Office.² It is clear from the maps in the auction catalogues that this is Ilford House. These auctions (maybe the first was unsuccessful in attracting a buyer?) are likely to be the ones mentioned in Victoria County History, where James Graves disposed of most of the land he owned south of the railway line.³

Returning to the 1880s, there are other documents held in the E.R.O. that throw more light on the uncertainty surrounding the dating under discussion. Document reference D/DU 1650/1 is a large bundle of leases related to the area on Ilford Hill including leases granted for houses in Brandon Terrace. The first was granted by W.R. Helmore to Mr C.J. Bayliss and relates to 7-11 Brandon Terrace. The lease was dated 23 December 1882 but was granted from 25 March 1882 for a period of 99 years. The second had the same lessor and lessee and relates to The Oriol (next to 11 Brandon Terrace and sometimes known as 12 Brandon Terrace). This was dated 24 February 1883 but again ran for 99 years from 25 March 1882. The third and final had the same lessor and lessee and had the same dates for 1-6 Brandon Terrace. The plan contained in the third lease shows a new road – eventually to be known as Brandon Grove - running north by the side of number 6.

² E.R.O. references D/DSa 1329/12 (Auction held 6-7 September 1843), D/DSa 1328/1 (Auction held 23 May 1844)

³ VCH vol V p210

Also relevant are the Ilford Burial Board Rate Books held by the Heritage Centre. There are five books detailing rates levied upon all land and buildings and show the owners and most occupiers of the property. The years covered by the books are 1882, 1883, 1889, 1890, and 1892. They were usually set out in a logical order for each road although the listing of terraces with no occupier (probably weekly tenants) shown separately is an issue. The rate for 1882 was set on 25 March. On the first page of the book, and immediately after the listing for Roding House and the paper mill owned by Thompson Bonar & Co, is an entry for a House & Premises, with the total area of just over an acre. The owner is shown as the Great Eastern Railway Co and the space for the occupier is blank. It is worth noting that the GER already owned a portion of this land since at least 1847 if not before.⁴ Although the rate levied is 9s 4d it is clear that it was not collected and shown as irrecoverable. Also, there is a comment in the column for Causes which states simply – “Pulled down.” A little further on up Ilford Hill in the lists are two houses occupied by Mr Stepney with rateable values of £16 and £40.⁵

It is fairly clear from these sources that the dates for the demolition of Ilford House and the construction of Brandon Terrace should be revised. According to the 1882 Rate Book, Ilford House had been pulled down although we can't be certain as to how long the rates took to be collected and when the entry was made.⁶ It is possible that building of the houses to the east were begun first to allow for the demolition of the Academy which lay to the west of the site. In addition, gardens at the rear of the houses to the west extend back into where Ilford House would have stood. Therefore, **demolition of Ilford House can be said to have taken place in the latter part of 1882 at the latest** to allow for 1-6 Brandon Terrace to be built and gardens laid out properly. The IBB Rate Book for 1883 shows that of the twelve houses built, five houses were occupied, six were empty, and one where the occupier had “gone to New York”.

The construction date for the houses in Brandon Grove is not so easy to determine. These appear not to have been advertised in the local or national press and occupiers are not listed in any of the pre-1900 Kelly's Directories. The Rate Books indicate that they were built at some point between 1883 and 1889 but probably before 1886 due to the absence of building plans held in the Heritage Centre.

Finally, I want to touch on a comment made by Tasker on page 73 of *Ilford Past and Present* regarding the Clock House which was on the opposite side of Ilford Hill just up the road from the Rose & Crown.

“A mention of the Clock House introduces “Ilford College.” About twenty-five years ago the Rev. W. Stepney started a school in the Clock House, and it is still carried on today by his son, Mr C. Wyndham-Stepney.”

Twenty-five years back from when Tasker was writing in 1900-01 was c.1875. From the table above, we know that Stepney was running the Ilford Academy in 1878. So, is Tasker confusing the Academy and the Clock House? Records show that there was a school at the Clock House back to at least 1871 run by Miss Emma Tuck but the 1878 Post Office Directory records a

⁴ The 1847 Tithe Index shows the GER as being the owner of field no. 1418a, an area of 36p – nearly a quarter of an acre.

⁵ The next entry is Samuel Hart's smithy and it is therefore possible that the house in question occupied by Stepney in March 1882 is the house pictured on p28 of *Ilford The Second Selection* (edd. I. Dowling and N. Harris, 1995), and known at one point as Norfolk House.

⁶ The 1882 Rate Book was finally signed off by auditors on 13 September 1883.

school there run by Mrs Wagstaff and Miss Hardy. Miss Lena Hardy was to remain there until 1890-1 when she moved the school to what was then Parsonage House, and is now the Liberal Club in Balfour Road. The Clock House appears to be empty in the 1891 Census but a Rev. Dean Cowan is listed there in 1894-6. The only obvious connection with the Stepney family is that, as Tasker states, Charles Wyndham Stepney ran a school there for a few years from c.1899.

Rev Stepney himself left Ilford Hill and moved his school to 1&2 Ilford Terrace (roughly where Pure Gym is today) by 1891 but appears to have been forced to move from there due to a plan to convert these to shops in 1896.⁷ He is then recorded as living at 4 York Gardens (79 York Road) and it was from here that his daughter, Mrs Andrews, and her daughters, ran a girls' school for a few years.⁸ But by 1905 there is no sign of the Stepney family in York Road and the Clock House appears to be empty.

Conclusion

The use of the internet in local history research obviously relies upon the data that is loaded to various websites. We are, at the current time, fortunate that access to documents in the Essex Record Office has been made easier owing to an online catalogue; that the British Newspaper Archive has many newspaper articles related to our local area, and that Census records are more readily available. This allows us the opportunity to revisit articles written before such things were available and confirm or add to the evidence for their conclusions and, where necessary, revise them. To the question of when was Ilford House demolished and Brandon Terrace built, I have used sources that are now easily available but were previously hard to locate, to provide a new, and I hope, well-evidenced explanation for the changes in this area of Ilford Hill in the early-1880s.

© *Dr Colin Runeckles, 30 May 2021*

Cardinal John Carmel Heenan

Few men from Ilford reached the top of their chosen occupations. Fewer Ilford roads produced two leaders in their calling. Yet Ripley Road, Seven Kings, was the home of John Carmel Heenan, later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and Brian Foley, who became Bishop of Lancaster. The same road produced two other Catholic priests including John Carmel's brother Frank.

Fortunately Cardinal Heenan left two volumes of autobiography. *Not the whole truth* details his early life in Ilford, Barking and Manor Park up to his appointment as Bishop of Leeds and offers insights into Ilford life in the early 20th century. *Crown of thorns* tells of his time at Leeds and as Archbishop of Liverpool. They reveal an articulate, theologically confident and fully committed Catholic though perhaps not one to challenge Church orthodoxies.



33 Ripley Road, Ilford, where John Heenan grew up. (photo G. Green)

⁷ Plan OS 406 approved in March 1896, held in the Heritage Centre.

⁸ The Ilford Recorder of 31st January 1902 ran an advert for both the school in York Road as the Ilford College For Girls and the one at the Clock House as Ilford College.

Family

John Carmel Heenan's parents were both from Clareen in Ireland. John Heenan was an attendant at the Patent Office and in steady work though not particularly well paid. He came to London at the age of 19 to look for work but returned home to marry Annie Pilkington at Easter 1898. They then set off immediately for London living in Fulham for the first four years of their married life. There they had twins but sadly one died after childbirth.

The Heenans then moved to 2 Pretoria Terrace, Buckingham Road, Ilford. Ilford had expanded fast in the previous ten years so there would have been houses available. They made a further move in October 1904 to 33 Ripley Road, Seven Kings, where the family remained. John Carmel Heenan was born there on 26 January 1905.

Irish families in Ilford seem to have been concentrated in certain areas. The 1901 Census shows only one family from Ireland in Thorold Road. More Irish lived south of the High Road and particularly within walking distance of St Peter and St Paul church on Ilford High Road with the associated school opened in 1898.

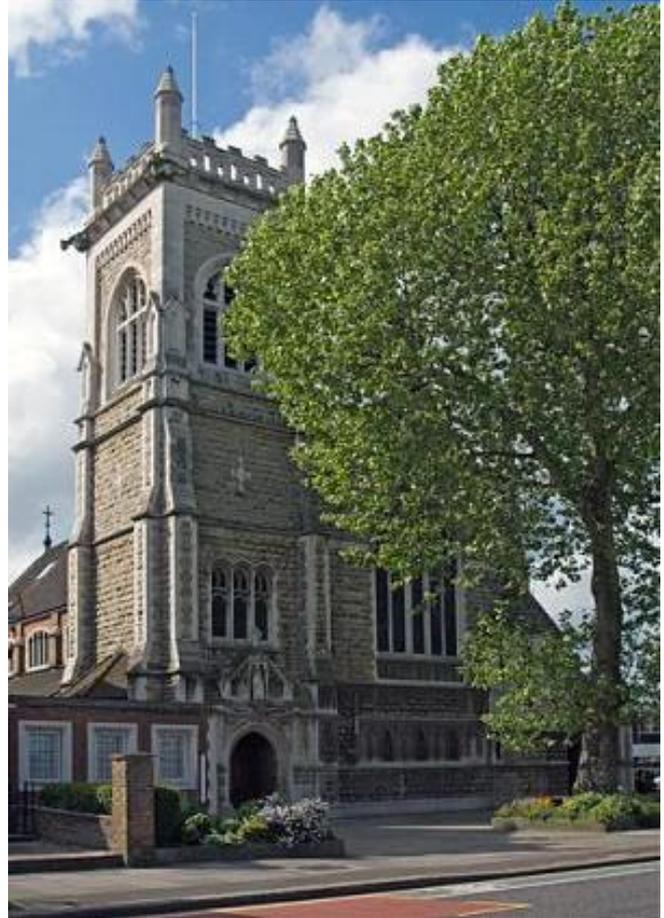
Childhood

John Carmel Heenan remembered a happy childhood in Ilford recalling cornfields less than 100 yards from the front door. He described locals as "unpretentious but respectable". On Sundays he said "we dressed uncomfortably" and like their Catholic neighbours the Foleys went to church twice. His friends included Ronnie Hughes, later tragically killed by a lorry, and Robin Aitken, son of a soldier.

He said later his greatest influence was Father Patrick Palmer, who gave his name to Palmer Catholic Academy, whom he described as "a man of quite outstanding talent," and "the best known man in the little town". He officiated at St Peter and St Paul Church and was an enterprising priest, who once booked a lady parachutist's descent from a balloon at the annual Whit Monday church fete.

Unusually for a Catholic priest of that time Father Palmer was on good terms with other ministers being a believer in Christian unity. He was also noted for encouraging Catholic converts. However, he was deeply hostile to mixed (i.e. Catholic-Protestant) marriages, a dislike that John Carmel Heenan did not share.

Early influences were teachers at St Peter and St Paul school like Mother Vincent of the Ursuline Order. After the Ursulines left the school he was in the hands of Charles Saurin and Miss Kelly, with whom he remained a lifelong friend. Another, Miss Moffat, taught geography and made a great impact as did other teachers. Unfortunately his attempts to learn the piano were not successful but he then took up the violin.



Catholic Church of SS Peter & Paul, Ilford
From their website <http://ssppilford.org.uk/wp2/>

The Dunmow Flich trial

One year Father Palmer persuaded John's father to take part in the Dunmow Flich trial "for the honour of the Parish". This comical event was revived in Ilford by Herbert Dunnico but organised this time as a stunt by Father Palmer. It attracted much attention and one year G.K. Chesterton was the judge. At the trial a married couple had to prove they had not had a cross word for a year and a day. If they succeeded they were awarded a flich of bacon!

John's father was a willing participant but not so his shy mother. He lied brazenly declaring that he and his wife had never had a cross word throughout their married life. Unfortunately his wife was asked at the trial "when did you last have a quarrel with your husband?" only for the reply "this morning when he told me that I had to go into this awful trial"! Although the jury wanted to award the flich to Mrs Heenan for her honesty the O'Mahony family won the flich "later sending half to the hungry Heenans".

Impact of War

John Carmel was nine when the First World War broke out, recalling they had gone by train that day for a family picnic in Epping Forest. As a child he said "we first experienced the evil of War on our stomachs" with sugar and potatoes in short supply. His father rented an allotment which John Carmel hated. After his day's work in the Patent Office, his father was also expected to help in other Civil Service departments.

Like other children he feared Zeppelin raids and later aircraft bombing. There were raids with warnings given by maroons. He recalled the only daylight raid when the teachers had no idea what precautions to take and there were no shelters. The headmaster said they should sing hymns to seek God's protection, which kept out the noise of the anti-aircraft guns. Fortunately there were no fatalities in Ilford but some damage was caused by shrapnel and unexploded anti-aircraft shells.

Education in Stamford Hill

At an all age parochial school the standard of education was not particularly high. Ambitious parents would seek other education for their children before the school leaving age, then fourteen. Scholarships for more advanced study were few and in 1917 John Carmel missed out to Ted Harding who became a noted Fleet Street journalist. By this time he'd decided he wanted to become a priest, sharing this secret with his mother. For this he'd need extended education.

He went for a scholarship at Westminster Cathedral Choir School but didn't pay attention during the audition and was unsuccessful. In Lent 1917 Ted Harding's parents withdrew him from St Ignatius' College, Stamford Hill (a grammar school) and after the intervention of Father Edmund Lester, a Jesuit preaching at St Peter and St Paul, John Carmel went there in April 1918. He described it later as "a fine school" where at that time most of the teachers were young Jesuits, though rather keen on corporal punishment using the ferula. Nevertheless many students went on to vocations to the priesthood.

Behaviour

These were the days of the great London fogs of which John Carmel was "particularly fond". He used Great Eastern trains from Seven Kings to Forest Gate and then the Midland from Wanstead Park to Stamford Hill. Due to fog he could easily miss a connection and arrive an hour late at school.

John Carmel later noted that St Ignatius students called to the priesthood were not always the best behaved. He recalled that the "local station master must have spent many hours writing letters of

complaint about train boys” and noted that he and others tried to annoy the stationmaster by smoking in the waiting room or, worse, changing compartments by climbing along the carriage running boards. Those were the days of slam door compartment carriages with no central locking. After helping serve mass on Saturday morning he arrived late at Seven Kings station and rushed to join the train just moving out of the station. He was stopped by the station master who took his name and complained to his father. The station master considered cancelling the season ticket making it impossible for him to continue studies but after his father’s intervention an apology to the stationmaster was considered appropriate.

Ushaw College

At 17 he left Stamford Hill for Ushaw College, County Durham, nominated by Brentwood’s Bishop Doubleday. This gave more advanced education to Catholic students in the hope some would opt for the priesthood. Ushaw was noted for poor food and his Ilford friend Dan Harvey who attended for five years died. His father, a senior civil servant, believed his death was caused by a variant of the nutritional disease beri-beri. He called for an enquiry, and food then improved.

At Ushaw John Carmel studied Latin, Greek, French and English. He particularly enjoyed logic, studying Bertrand Russell’s works, perhaps an unusual choice for a would be priest, later saying that Russell taught him to question everything. At one point he considered leaving Ushaw and his vocation but remained there.

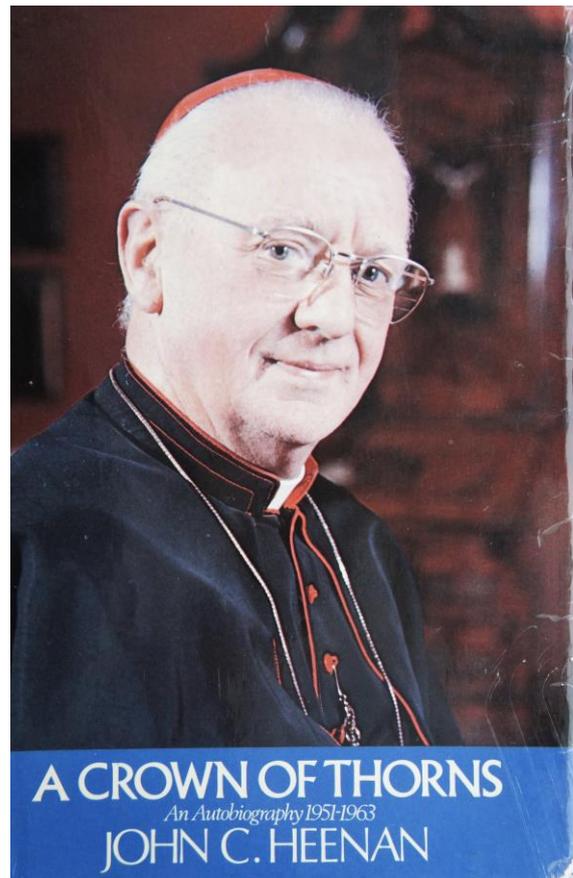
English College Rome

After Ushaw he went to the English College in Rome, offering degree level education for the priesthood. He came to know Monsignor Hinsley, the head of the College who was later Archbishop of Westminster. Here he was not above playing practical jokes on those he disliked.

Parish work

As was customary he was ordained as curate in his home parish, St Peter and St Paul, in July 1930 by Bishop Doubleday of Brentwood and then returned to Rome to complete studies for a doctorate. After a holiday in the USA, paid for by his cousin Annie Blyth, one of several trips abroad, he returned as curate at St Mary and St Ethelburga’s Barking.

This was a poor parish, with many parishioners unskilled Irish labourers. However, the priest carried great authority and as he wrote later “no clear marked boundaries between spiritual, moral and material welfare were discernible - paternalism had not yet found a place in sociological jargon”. So there was opportunity to provide both spiritual and material help in the parish. He narrowly avoided an attempt at blackmail by a parishioner when he conducted what appeared to have been an illegal deathbed marriage. During this time he began writing with his first book eventually published as *Priest and penitent*.



As curate he showed political skills, organising successfully to prevent Barking Council establishing a Marie Stopes birth control clinic. (Several London councils promoted birth control. For example Bethnal Green employed Marie Stopes to give lectures in the public library.)

Later work

Father Heenan was made parish priest of St Nicholas Manor Park at the unusually early age of 32. He served there till 1947, suffering bombing during the Blitz, then became Superior of the Catholic Missionary Society bringing new life to a near moribund organisation. In 1951 he was made Bishop of Leeds where again he applied his energy to building more churches, encouraging converts and reviving parishes.

He became Archbishop of Liverpool in 1957, attaining great popularity in a city then riven by Catholic - Protestant divisions. Here he chose a new design for the Metropolitan Cathedral, discarding the costly Lutyens plan. The cathedral was completed after his translation to become Archbishop of Westminster in 1963. In 1965 he became Cardinal. He died in 1975 and is buried in Westminster Cathedral.

Throughout his life he reflected Catholic orthodoxy of the day in his teaching showing skills in writing, debating and broadcasting that served him well. He was a much travelled and popular figure, if somewhat autocratic, nicknamed "Handbag Heenan" by less respectful clergy. It was a remarkable life for an Ilford boy from decidedly humble origins and it would surely be appropriate to see his Ilford home marked with a Blue Plaque.

Thanks to Bill Whiston and Neil Sayer (Archdiocesan Archivist, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral) for assistance with this article.

Information from :

Brian Plumb, *Arundel to Zabi: A Biographical Dictionary of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales (Deceased) 1623-2000* (2006).

John Carmel Heenan *Not the whole truth*. (various editions including Hodder and Stoughton. pbk. 1973)

John Carmel Heenan *Crown of thorns; an autobiography 1951-1963*. (Hodder and Stoughton. hbk. 1974)

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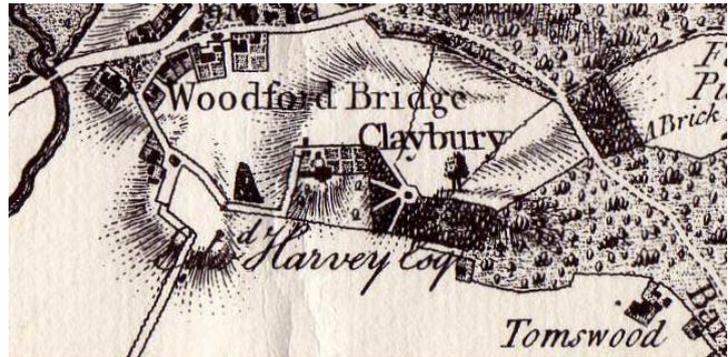
Wild Service Tree and The Chequers

In the discussion following Alan Simpson's fascinating talk on 10 May, showing old postcards views of Barkingside, mention was made of The Chequers pub getting its name from the wild service tree which grows in Claybury Wood.

The Wild Service (*Sorbus torminalis*) belongs to the same family as the Rowan or Mountain Ash tree and is one of 33 native trees which were growing here when the English Channel cut Britain away from the rest of Europe. It is generally accepted that any wood where it grows must be ancient and has never been ploughed land. Epping Forest has an unusually high percentage of these trees, many having suckered from parent trees. They also occur in some of the small local pockets of woodland like Ainslie Wood and Larks Wood at Chingford, which were part of the Forest thousands of years ago.

They are also found in Claybury Wood in significant numbers. This has a magnificent display of wood anemones, bluebells and wild garlic, and I have also found patches of yellow archangel, which also suggest it is ancient woodland. The wood became the property of Barking Abbey and when the Abbess Adelia (Adeliza) founded a hospice for 13 aged and infirm men at Ilford she

endowed it for the maintenance of the inmates. The grant was confirmed by King Stephen some time around 1135-54 and this is the origin of the name ‘Spittle Wood’ and later ‘Hospital Hill Wood’ - it has nothing to do with the Victorian asylum. It remained their property until the late 18th century when it was taken into the estate owned by James Hatch. The Chapman & André map of 1777 (right) clearly shows the formal estate around Claybury Hall and the woodland adjacent.⁹ The difference in the vegetation is quite marked on the ground for those who notice such things, though possibly not by the numerous dog-walkers and family groups who discovered the woods during the lock-down.



So why would the proximity of the Wild Service Tree give the name The Chequers to a Barkingside pub? Several sources say that the small brown fruit, known as chequers, was sold in the streets long ago. Apparently, if stored until it is almost rotten it has a delicious taste, similar to a date, which must have been amazing to someone not used to the exotic delicacies we can buy today. It was also made into a drink also called ‘chequers’ which is thought to explain why this name has been given to many pubs. We have to remember that long before Robinson’s Lemon Barley Water and Coca Cola, people wanted to flavour what they drank and many plants were used as an infusion. However the ‘chequers’ drink seems to have been used in much earlier times as a medicine. The *torminalis* part of the Latin name refers to a cure for the colic.



But how old is the pub at Barkingside? On the 1847 Tithe award the property is just recorded as a beer shop and garden, owned by John White, occupied by William Davison (plot no. 2057). Alan Simpson tells me that The Chequers was first licensed in March 1838, as a beer-house and for more than a century, it was run by a member of the Deveson family (1839-1960).



The Chequers in 2021 – having closed in October 2018 while the owners looked for a new landlord, the pub reopened in March 2019, closed for the pandemic, but is now back in business.

© Georgina Green, 27 May 2021

⁹ For a very detailed history of Claybury Woods see the article ‘Claybury and the survival of the Golden Woods’ by H H Lockwood in a compilation of articles called ‘Essex Heritage’ edited by Kenneth Neale (1992) pages 82-117.

The High Price of Life and Death: Health care in Seven Kings 1905

In 2016 I wrote a two-part article for Ilford Historical Society Newsletter: “Trust Me, I’m a Doctor”.¹⁰ Concentrating on medical care in 19th century Ilford and particularly Drs William Allison, Edward Sullivan and James Shimeld who interest me, I could find little on all doctors who have been largely ignored and missed out of our local history books. In May 2020 I was to give a talk on ‘Medical Health Care in Ilford: from 1800 to the NHS’ but it was postponed due to Covid-19. However, Sue Page of Redbridge Heritage had asked me to give the talk so I carried on researching and found more newspaper articles, medical information and numerous doctors stretching into the 20th century. But the first newspaper report which really caught my attention and interest wasn’t so much about ‘tlc’ and life-saving as being a crude courtroom drama over £’s, shillings, and pence. Dr William Summerskill, the plaintiff¹¹ sued defendant Mr Lewis for non-payment of his bill: £19-13sh for his and Dr Martin’s attendance to Lewis’s wife at her home and assistance at her operation.

On Saturday 27 May 1905 the *Essex Guardian* reported the court case and this article is based on the verbatim transcript. The civil law debt trial lasted one day, Monday 22 May, in Ilford County Court which was then held in South Street Romford offices two days a week. The transcript doesn’t record Mrs Lewis’s or Dr Martin’s Christian names or the judge’s name (Judge H Tindal Atkinson) and a jury was present. Without the original transcript it’s unknown if the Guardian’s report was cut and edited though I have amended the testimony to allow the narrative to flow. As a court report there is no editorial comment and as was common at the time there was no by-line: no journalist is credited with reporting the trial. I have leaned heavily on The British Newspaper Archive: a copy is held by Redbridge on microfiche but parts of it are difficult to read and interpret.

The case revolved around the cost of Mrs Lewis’s treatment as prior to the creation of the National Health Service 1948 there was no national free, professional, medical care. Many patients were treated and operated on at home by doctors which was far more common then as there were few local hospitals and Ilford didn’t have one. Having just previously been open farmland Seven Kings was a new brick and concrete suburb barely 10 years old and Summerskill’s Pembroke Gardens home and surgery was built c.1898 having previously been lived in by Drs Francis Rhodes and S Edin. Summerskill had bought into a partnership, possibly theirs. A photograph of the house taken c.1907 deposited in the London School of Economics shows a fine Edwardian double-fronted house. Seven Kings public services left a lot to be desired so the surgery’s continuation would be welcomed. He and his young family were newcomers to the area from London having only moved in c.1902, first to St Albans Gardens, and the “*more salubrious country air*” brought.. “*whoops of joy*”.. from the children.. “*a rural paradise to our eyes after the streets of Bloomsbury*”. Essex green fields and the countryside around them looked very tempting.

In 1904 Summerskill went into print via the Ilford Recorder – a cardinal sin. He had a spat with the fledgling Ilford Medical Society and Councillor Robert Stroud when he complained about their lack of progress funding and opening a local hospital and Seven Kings evil-smelling manure

¹⁰ Ilford HS Newsletters: part 1, no:120 April 2016; part 2, no:121 August 2016

¹¹ Dr William Summerskill (1866-1947) from Leeds qualified as a physician LRCP 1886, surgeon MRCS 1888. In 1906 he and his wife Edith had success when they organised a masked ball in Seven Kings to raise money to build an emergency hospital for Ilford. Perhaps 120 attended as Edith organised many successful ‘Cantata’ musical evenings. A bit of light relief for them. Annoyingly I have been unable to identify or locate Dr Martin.

heaps attracting stink and flies which could spread disease. As an experienced doctor though his motives were good but he had the knack of speaking bluntly, was a bit too touchy and went quickly to law: he was no shrinking violet nor Dr Finlay of Tannochbrae.

Getting nowhere, he put himself up for the Seven Kings ward of Ilford council. His heart was clearly on the side of radical politics for public health and women's medical care and as a Gladstone (Liberal) supporter entered the race, probably as an independent candidate. Many of his colleagues and friends were against him entering politics and locals disregarded his one-issue campaign as he took up arms against flies and his joke-names: 'Summey-e-kill' and 'Summey-e-don't' didn't help. In a low turn-out by-election he came third out of three and wasn't elected.

Hospitals weren't often trusted so people who could afford private care naturally preferred to be treated at home in their own bed by doctors they knew well and trusted. Hospitals were viewed as places where only poor people were sent: to die. Not till the 20th century did real professional care begin when institutions i.e. Royal Colleges of Physicians, and Surgeons, enhanced their reputations as new medical discoveries were made and surgical techniques improved.

Consultations were expensive, health care was private and everything had to be paid for: doctors, nurses, medicine, the time spent with patients, operations and even the bandages.

On 24 February 1905 Mr Walter Lewis of 157 Pembroke Road Seven Kings called in his local doctor, Dr Martin, because his wife Emma- 46 years old and an auctioneer's clerk- was very ill with severe abdominal pain. At first Martin hoped that with treatment her pain would ease but after many visits he prescribed morphia to relieve her obvious distress.

Dr Summerskill opened the trial with his testimony; I mentioned him in my 2016 article. He said that a few days later Dr Martin, then his assistant but now his partner at 8 Pembroke Gardens, High Road Seven Kings, told Mr Lewis that Emma needed to be operated on at once, at the nearest main hospital- the London, but Lewis disagreed so Martin reluctantly accepted the decision. However, Summerskill warned Lewis that home visits and care, an operation at home and treatment would be very expensive. He advised that Dr Cornelius Stovin ¹² Ilford's Medical Officer of Health, be called in for a second experienced opinion before a London Hospital surgeon was engaged to perform the difficult operation. Lewis went and brought him in so Summerskill, Martin and Stovin had a discussion as to the seriousness of the operation, that Emma's abdomen had to be opened up and that it was a last resort. Dr Stovin told Walter that if he couldn't afford the high cost the patient could still be taken to the London but Lewis still insisted that he wanted the operation carried out at home. So it was agreed that Dr Harold L Barnard ¹³ a well respected top London Hospital surgeon, would be contacted to carry out the operation so Martin immediately went to Dr Barnard's London residence and surgery in Upper Wimpole Street, Marylebone. He was asked in the trial why he hadn't just telephoned Barnard and replied that it was thought a personal, face to face request, was best.

¹² Dr Cornelius F Stovin (followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a local doctor) was born in Mildenhall Suffolk 1863, qualified in 1888 and in 1901 was Ilford's Acting Medical Officer of Health (taking over from Dr Shimeld). He lived at 1 Cranbrook Gdns, Cranbrook Rd with his wife and two children. In 1902 he became Medical Superintendent of the new Chadwell Heath Isolation Hospital (opened 1898) and was MOH till 1912 by which time he lived at Wanstead Park Gate. But in 1913 he was suspended from his post though we don't know why yet.

¹³ Dr Harold L Barnard (1868-1908, FRCS, LRCP 1895) worked at the London Hospital where famous surgeon Sir Frederick Treves preceded him and they developed the safe removal of the appendix. A very dangerous operation to the patient, they both improved its quicker and safer removal to aid recovery. Sadly Barnard's life was cut short at just 40. (Royal College of Surgeons obituary).

However, he wasn't there so Martin went back to the London Hospital in Whitechapel Road where he found him and they returned to Seven Kings around 5pm accompanied by, presumably decided by Barnard- two nurses and an anaesthetist. The expense was growing. Many visits had already been made by Martin to see Mrs Lewis, often several a day, and numerous more were needed including the nurses and Martin sitting with her all night. Barnard had a private practice but this would be an emergency private operation away from it and the hospital. I assume that Stovin knew Barnard and his expertise and possibly Barnard paid the nurses and anaesthetist for their time away from the hospital. Just before the operation Dr Summerskill spoke to Emma (with Mr Lewis present?) who told him: ***"I have helped him to make his money. Whatever maybe the expense. Do your best as it is only right that I should be properly looked after."*** So Lewis gave him carte blanche to do whatever was needed to be done. The operation, led by Dr Barnard at which Summerskill assisted, took place that evening 28 February at 9pm.

Over the next few days Dr Martin attended conscientiously, on 1 March he visited seven times- each visit charged at 2/- and consulted with Dr Barnard back in London. Martin charged up to one guinea (£1-1sh, £1-5p) for long visits to the house and two guineas for each of the three nights he stayed with Emma- his usual fee he said. Two guineas per night was very expensive but it reflected the gravity of the illness, operation and Martin's concern and care for his patient, but was this his or Summerskill's usual charge? Emma sadly died on 3 March, her death certified by Dr Summerskill, but therein lies another mystery.¹⁴ At no time during the trial was the professional competence or expertise of the doctors questioned. Now memories began to diverge as to who said what and when the full costs were discussed, and how much.

Mr Stuart Bevan, acting for Lewis, handed Dr Martin the bill and asked him if he thought it was reasonable and he replied that it seemed **"remarkably moderate"**. Martin then moved on comparing his moderate bill of £19-13sh to Barnard's- which was a whopping 50 guineas. Mr Lewis sent a £10 cheque which was soon stopped whilst Barnard issued a writ, no doubt to stay out of the trial but show his interest in getting his money. Dr Martin said that his usual charge was a reasonable 2/- per visit, with or without medicine, and also admitted that a good many of his patients paid even less, i.e. 6d.¹⁵ There was a lot of squabbling between Bevan and Martin as to when the costs were discussed and how much. It was put to Martin that he told Lewis that the cost would be between £20-£25 but he denied this, saying that he thought that might be the price and that Barnard's fee might be even higher ie 50 guineas, or even an astronomical, eye-watering 100 guineas and that he had mentioned all this before the operation- not afterwards. Martin was asked directly how much he thought a surgeon could charge and he answered- up to 100 guineas!¹⁶ Bevan claimed that Lewis wasn't rich and only paid 10/- weekly rent but Dr Martin replied that

¹⁴ When Emma's death certificate was completed in June (she died in March), Registrar John Farrow added a note to it. The cause of death, given by Summerskill, was entered as 'Volvulus Caecum', a very severe blockage of the lower abdomen which could only be operated on successfully if caught early. However, the real mystery is the entry for the wife: "Emma Lewis otherwise Clarke" and her husband was "Henry G Clarke, otherwise Walter Lewis.. statutory declaration made by Henry Clarke and Arthur Charrington". A new name hiding an old secret?

¹⁵ Asquith's Liberal government passed the first National Insurance Act 1911: men earning under £2 a week could receive free medical care for tb or go to a state funded 'six penny doctor'.

¹⁶ £100 in 1900 is today worth an incredible £12,372.21p! When Dr Shimeld was appointed Ilford's MOH in 1890 his salary was a measly £50pa.

Hackney's eccentric and popular Dr Henry Jelley (1866-1946 "*the threepenny doctor*") charged all his patients 3d a consultation and his diagnosis were usually right.

Along Ilford High Street Dr William Best built a house c.1895 as a private home and surgery. His front door was for paying private patients but it had a back-door (beside the trades- man's entrance) for "club patients". It may have been for members of Ilford's Medical Club, the Lying-in Charity and even the Marie Celeste

(he knew?) Lewis owned several properties and that Emma told him that ***“they could well afford to pay for the operation. Do what you think is proper, regardless of the expense, and save my life.”*** After more desultory arguments between Bevan and Dr Martin the jury now spoke up to say that they had heard enough (a rare occurrence?). However, Judge Atkinson curtly reminded them that they had only heard one side so they were discharged, he would adjudicate on the judgement himself and now it was time for Lewis to reply.

Lewis was examined and said that he lived in a small house just around the corner from the doctor and he thought that Summerskill’s bill was ***“ridiculous”***. Lewis said that he might agree to £20-£25 but ***“not a word”*** was mentioned of the bill from Barnard going as high as £100 before the operation, only afterwards. Lewis said that after his wife had died after the operation, Barnard told him that ***“his wife had no chance”*** and only then was the higher amount mentioned.

Dr Percy J Drought ¹⁷ of Balfour Road Ilford was then called to give evidence on behalf of Lewis and his opinion as to the fee. He had been a doctor in Ilford for about eight years and considered 2/- per visit for Dr Summerskill’s services fair, perhaps 10 guineas in all, and ***“one guinea for an assistant to stay all night with a patient.”***

Dr Watts of Sunnyside Road had been an Ilford GP for about seven years and reported that he charged 2/6d per visit and agreed that he would take 10 guineas for the services that Summerskill rendered, and one guinea a night for an assistant.

Judge Atkinson had clearly heard enough and even though he seems to have been annoyed with the jury not being present he made his decision and ruling. He considered that two guineas a night for the assistant was far too high and so his judgement was that the bill be reduced from £19-13sh to £16. I think that this was a bit mean as Mr Lewis had virtually agreed to £20-£25. I don’t know what happened about Barnard’s fee and the writ he issued or why he wasn’t called to give evidence but I presume he wanted to remain an interested party to the case but didn’t fancy getting involved in a public trial especially as the dispute was primarily between Lewis and Summerskill and nothing (?) to do with him.

In 1901 Lewis (worked for an insurance company) lived in Lansdowne Road, Ilford but by the 1911 Census he’d moved away from Pembroke Rd. By then he wasn’t on Summerskill’s patient list nor Christmas card list I presume. I’m sure he was furious and upset that his bill had been reduced by the judge as it was public rebuke. The good doctor had the knack of rubbing people up the wrong way but throughout his career he lobbied and argued for better health care provision especially for women, the poor and a local hospital. Though he had the best of motives, he also committed the grave sin of going public through the press. No doubt by 1909 he’d had more than enough of Seven Kings so he and the family moved on again to pastures new. ¹⁸

Samaritan Society etc. There were health care insurance clubs attached to companies which a man could join where he worked which could also cover his wife.

¹⁷ Dr Percy J Drought was Ilford divisional police surgeon in 1922 when Frederick Bywaters murdered Percy Thompson in Ilford. Edith Thompson and Freddy were having an affair; both were executed.

¹⁸ In 1909 Summerskill and his family moved to Westgate-on-Sea, Kent where he opened a surgery and a tb clinic in Margate, was interested in a specialist tb treatment hospital, and the new discovery and use of X-Rays. He became known as: *‘the Shilling Doctor’* as his charges were lower than other Westgate GPs, undercutting them. But he couldn’t settle there (possibly because of his politics) and they moved back to London c.1912/13. His daughter Edith had been born 1901 in the family home at 46 Doughty Street London near her father’s Bloomsbury “working class general practice”. As a student doctor she accompanied him on his rounds, and became a GP and Labour MP. Her memoirs: *“A Woman’s World”* provides some background on her father (Baroness Edith Summerskill obituary).

How common the above case was is unclear- though trials about recovering debts were common enough- but it does show the vital importance of a 'free for all' NHS and the value of a local emergency hospital for which Summerskill and his wife Edith raised money for it to be founded and opened in Ilford in 1912.

Any info/photos on Redbridge's doctors or chemists? I would be happy to receive them.

This article is linked to a follow-up one in our December 2020 Newsletter (pages 4 -10, Dr Summerskill, George Tentori & Alice Jones: An Everyday Story of Seven Kings Folk 1906) relating to the darker side of Seven Kings & Summerskill's life. Did he attract trouble?

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

Sue, Gerard & Paris are, or were, part of Vision & Redbridge Museum and Heritage/Archive services. Madeleine Janes is a family history expert; Dr Dawn Crouch was Curator of Westgate Heritage Centre.

© *Jef Page, 2 June 2021*

Ilford railway exhibition, 1934

Deep in the archives of Warwick University is a diary written in the 1930s by east Londoner Tom Flinn (see <https://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/NCA/1/18>). One of the many activities recorded there is a visit Tom made to a railway exhibition of engines and rolling stock in Ilford's goods yard on Saturday 2 June 1934. He wrote:

It was a very good show. They had the latest types of passenger coaches, including a rail motor, a Pullman, a third-class tourist coach, the 'Flying Scotsman' dining and sleeping cars and others. Among the locomotives were the L.N.E.R's latest, the 'Cock-of-the-North' which has 1,000 lbs greater tractive effort than the G.W.R. 'King' class; also the 'Flying Scotsman', 'Claud Hamilton', and some others.

The 'Cock-of-the-North' was only there for today (the exhib. is open to-morrow, too) and judging by the dust that had accumulated everywhere, I should say he'll want some cleaning up to-night before he departs. Among the other interesting exhibits were a couple of long bogie wagons, a refrigerator and meat van and milk tank, a transformer trolley truck and a girder truck (which two last I should say took some getting round the narrow curves of the Great Eastern).

I was very interested in the signalling demonstration van and asked a lot of questions about interlocking so much so, indeed, that one of the chaps asked me if I was really interested in interlocking apparatus and, when I replied 'yes', took my name and address and said he would look up some books on the subject and let me have them for which I was truly thankful. He also threw out a hint about an introduction if possible to a man at Ilford who was an authority on mechanical signalling and who might be able to take me over the east and west signal boxes at Liverpool Street Station.

Intrigued by exhibition and diarist, I attempted to discover more about both. With physical archives closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, this became an exercise in making the best use of material I already had on my own shelves and computer, plus whatever else I could find online. Ideally, I would have liked to consult *The Ilford Recorder* to see what was said locally about the exhibition, but the online British Newspaper Archive has digitised only the first few years of that newspaper. However, newspapers elsewhere covered the event and from reports in *The Leeds Mercury*, *The Yorkshire Post*, and *The Sheffield Independent* I was able to find further details of the weekend.

The exhibition was organised by the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) and took place over the weekend of 2 and 3 June 1934. It was held in the Ilford goods yard, a cramped site beside the main railway line east of Ilford station. Entry was from the High Road, between Oaklands Park Avenue and Francis Street (opposite Connaught Road). The always publicity-minded LNER arranged a number of similar exhibitions around its territory. The Ilford location, as with others, was probably selected on the basis of a large population draw. With easy rail transport and ready and safe access to such sites, goods yards, also being road-connected, were obvious choices.

Officially opened by Ilford's mayor, Alderman Pitt, the exhibition ran for 12 hours each day – from 9.00 am to 9.00 pm. Admission cost 6d for adults and 3d for children under 16, with the funds raised going to Ilford's King George Hospital Tuberculosis Care Association and to railway charities. A handbill for the exhibition proclaimed that the display would include 'Engines of the Corridor Pacific, Sandringham and Claud Hamilton classes; the latest Electric Cooking Restaurant, Sleeping, Pullman and Buffet Cars. Various types of Goods Train Wagons and Cartage Vehicles'. There would also be a signalling demonstration van (containing a complete signalling system), enginemens' instruction vans (containing working models), and a chemical and physical apparatus van (containing laboratory testing instruments for analysis and research). Visitors would be permitted to climb aboard the various locomotives' footplates and also enter the passenger coaches. A prize would be given to whoever correctly guessed the number of visitors attending. By the end of proceedings, the exhibition had been a great success, with the LNER reporting that nearly 30,000 people had visited the locomotives and rolling stock over the weekend.



Photograph by Ernest Wethersett showing P2 No 2001 'Cock o' the North' on the left and A1 No 4472 'Flying Scotsman' with its train headboard in the centre.

A great attraction at the exhibition was the LNER's new passenger locomotive, streamlined class P2 No 2001 'Cock o' the North'¹⁹. Designed by Nigel Gresley and built at Doncaster, the P2 2-8-2s were the most powerful express locomotives to operate in the UK. 'Cock o' the North' had first been seen by the public at Doncaster's own railway exhibition the previous weekend. It then

¹⁹ Only six class P2 locomotives were built and all had been scrapped by 1961 – No 2001 'Cock o' the North' was withdrawn in January 1960 and cut up in the following month. But another P2 will soon emerge from Doncaster again. The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust is building a brand new P2, No 2007 to be named 'Prince of Wales'. Details of the project can be found at www.p2steam.com.

travelled to London and was on display at Ilford on the Saturday only before making what one newspaper called 'a kind of royal tour throughout its prospective working territory, Scotland'. Civic receptions would be given at Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and the locomotive would be at Newcastle on the Monday night. 'Cock o' the North' would then return to Doncaster at the end of the week. Prior to going on display at Ilford, 'Cock o' the North' had travelled to Kings Cross station in London, where it was viewed by railway officials and journalists. One of the latter reported 'I crossed a maze of metals and then climbed high into the driver's cab. The effect was almost equivalent to standing on a ship's bridge, so far removed one seemed from the little people in the vicinity'.

One visitor to the Ilford exhibition keen to get into the cab of 'Cock o' the North' was five-year-old Alan Golton. Eighty-three years later he recalled:

On a hot summer's day in June 1934 I was taken by my father and a friend of his to the London & North Eastern Railway's open day in the station goods yard at Ilford, Essex. The sun was beating down and the railway yard was full of fine locomotives and teak carriages. The already-famous No 4472 'Flying Scotsman' was there, standing close by to No 8900 'Claud Hamilton', which was sporting a dazzling white cab roof and highly burnished steel rimmed smokebox door.

A brand-new apple-green apparition, with a sleek streamlined front end, complete with a novel sloping smokebox door, was receiving a lot of attention from the crowds. The locomotive was, of course, the first of Sir Nigel Gresley's class P2 2-8-2 'Mikado' locomotives, No 2001 'Cock o' the North'. No 2001 was brand new, only a matter of a couple of weeks out of Doncaster works, and was destined to be the most powerful express passenger locomotive in the country.

Visitors could go into the cabs of most of the locomotives and we queued alongside the large 6ft 2in driving wheels of 'Cock o' the North' eager to cab the P2. But I never got my opportunity to cab No 2001 – overcome by heat exhaustion I fainted by the locomotive and was taken to a medical tent to be revived by smelling salts before being taken home.

Another visitor was Ernest Richard Wethersett (1893-1987), who lived near Willesden and worked at the Royal Courts of Justice. He was an active railway photographer, attracted to the latest and most powerful locomotives. On the day of Tom Flinn's visit he took several photographs of the Ilford exhibition, including 'Cock o' the North', 'Flying Scotsman' and 'Claud Hamilton', one of which is reproduced opposite.

And what of diarist Tom Flinn? Much information about him can be found on the Warwick University archives website. Sydney Thomas Albert Flinn was born in 1911 and lived with his parents in Plaistow. He had an office job in Marylebone and, as well as being a keen cyclist, was also a radio and railway enthusiast. His diaries begin in 1932 and contain entries for most days. They include descriptions of his day cycle rides, usually on Sundays and sometimes totalling over 100 miles, to parts of Essex and other counties within reach of his home; his more extensive cycle tours to other parts of the country; mechanical details about his bicycles; his home life; his interest in the technical aspects of radio and in railways; outings with his family and friends, including cinema, theatre, concert and museum visits; his reading and radio-listening habits; his attendance at night school classes in French, mathematics, English and construction; the weather; and commuting by public transport. Dubbed 'The Pepys of Plaistow', apart from being a prolific diarist and a Londoner, Tom Flinn did not really have much in common with Samuel Pepys. However, in leaving behind a detailed and engaging record of a life being lived to the full, he can perhaps be seen in the same broad tradition as his more illustrious predecessor.

© Alan Simpson, 1 June 2021

IHS Programme for 2021 - 2022

Our regular monthly meetings will be held in Studio 2, 1st floor, Ilford Central Library, Clements Road, Ilford IG1 1EA on the second Monday of each month, September – May.

Masks will be optional and we will provide hand sanitizer for those who want to use it.

Free refreshments will be served from 7pm and our talks start at 7.30pm; we finish by 9.30pm.

Visitors are welcome, £3 per meeting. There are often walks for members in the summer.

Membership of the society for 2021-22 is reduced to £10 (payable from September)

This includes 3 newsletters available at our meetings, or by email on request.

If there is a return of Covid restrictions our talks will be available via Zoom.

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

13 September 2021 *The Huguenots in Britain*

by Kathleen Chater, from the Huguenot Society

11 October 2021 *The Haywain, 1821, by John Constable* Our most famous landscape painting was completed and displayed 200 years ago, entering the National Gallery in 1886 - a star picture ever since.

by Jef Page, President of Ilford HS.

8 November 2021 *A Policeman's Lot in Ilford 1850-1914*

by Reverend Dr John Brown, St Luke's Church, Ilford

13 December 2021 Christmas Social Evening. *Highams, in Walthamstow*

by Georgina Green, a Vice-President of Ilford HS, followed by *Mince Pies and a Quiz*

10 January 2022 *An Underground Guide to London in the Roaring Twenties*

by Nick Dobson, retired librarian and professional speaker

14 February 2022 *Talking to the Nation- 100 Years of the BBC*

by Madeline Seviour, Ilford HS member

14 March 2022 *The Way We Were 1952-2022*

by Janet Seward, Secretary of Ilford HS

11 April 2022 AGM at 7.15pm, followed by *The Road from Ilford to Barking*. The transformation of a quiet country lane to a bustling suburban street.

by Dr Colin Runeckles, Ilford HS Committee member

9 May 2022 *Loughton Air Park- Abridge Aerodrome*

by Alan Simpson, Ilford HS Committee member

6 June 2022 *Ilford's Medical Health from 1800 to the NHS*

by Jef Page, President of Ilford HS

The next newsletter will be available at our December meeting.



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