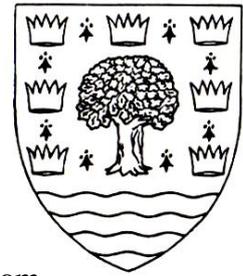


Ilford Historical Society

Newsletter No.137 December 2021



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

Saving the Human Race

Covid hasn't gone away but we are, supposedly, learning to live with it and very little restrictive legislation is in place as I write. Though people are requested to wear face masks in shops and on public transport there are not many that comply with this. Booster vaccinations are now available for older people and thankfully those who do get Covid are not so seriously ill. The recent graph for Redbridge shows we are not in the clear yet. Cases abroad, where double vaccination is not yet the norm, are still high and there have been riots against lockdown measures in some towns.

But there is another threat to our civilisation. Simon Barnes writing in the RSPB's *Nature's Home* magazine, Autumn/Winter 2021 p.65 said "Climate change is affecting us all, and it's caused by us all. We must accept that it's a far bigger crisis than Covid, and one for which there is no vaccination."

Those of us who got caught up in the flash floods on 25 July will agree with that statement. The sudden downpour brought more water than the drains could carry away and water was coming up everywhere. Once the road and kerbs are covered with water it is a terrifying experience to drive along a residential road when you don't know if there is a dip to cause deeper water. Far worse was the fact that



people's homes were flooded and part of Whipps Cross Hospital was under water. The news on 5 November mentioned that Ilford was one of the three worse areas of London where untreated effluent flowed into local waterways – in our case the River Roding. Although legislation allows for this in exceptional circumstances, south Ilford was affected for more than 30% of the year!

On 1 November world leaders, politicians, negotiators, policy makers, activists and environmental groups gathered in Glasgow for what could be the most important meeting of world leaders ever held: COP26. The planet will survive without us, but can we stop the seas rising? Can we preserve a way of life for humans which has some semblance of how we live now? As the Secretary General of the UN said "With fossil fuels we are digging our own grave."

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Our Programme, Spring 2022

In the last few weeks there have been a number of TV programmes showing us the threats we face as the ice caps and glaciers melt and as the temperatures rise in other parts of the world. There have also been a few programmes which highlight efforts made to reduce some of the threats – restoring fish stocks, renewing the coral reefs, tree planting schemes, converting emissions to productive use etc.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles and Prince William have for many years made their concern about the environment well known and this was continued in the Queen’s video message to COP26, which included: “It has sometimes been observed that what leaders do for their people today is government and politics, but what they do for the people of tomorrow – that is statesmanship. I hope that those involved can rise above the politics of the moment and achieve true statesmanship. . . . The time for words has now moved to a time for action. . . .”



A pledge has been signed by over 100 countries, including Brazil, Russia and Canada, to stop deforestation and start to reverse it by planting more trees and more greenery by 2030 by countries which cover about 85% of the world’s forests. It will be backed-up with £15 billion investment from governments, investors, private donors etc. Richer countries need to help poorer countries financially with the transition to a greener way of living. But much more is needed.

I was brought up by parents who loved Epping Forest, who took me birdwatching and who cared about nature. One of my earliest memories was going out very early to hear the dawn chorus. How many of the birds we heard then, could we hear now? My interest in history was an extension of that love of the Forest, seeing how humans have change our environment. Of 450 or so different species of flowering plant recorded in Epping Forest in the 1880s, one-third had disappeared 100 years later and this loss has escalated since then. I make no apology for having campaigned to stop some of the local motorways in my forties.

We still need to phase out petrol and diesel cars and the easing out of coal power across the world is essential. We may not like the new Ultra Emissions charges inside the A406 and that we may all have electric cars in the foreseeable future. We may not want to give up flying to warmer countries for a holiday. But if we want to preserve the world in which our grandchildren will live when they are in their 70s, we must act now. The clock is ticking . . .

How will historians of the future look back on these recent years with Brexit, Covid and climate change and judge our actions?

Georgina Green, 22 November 2021

Kathleen Lonsdale

Seven Kings isn’t an area that you would usually choose for spotting English Heritage blue plaques however since 1 April there has been one on 19 Colenso Road (off Benton Road) to commemorate Kathleen Lonsdale who lived there from eight to 24 years old during the period 1911-1927. It reads:

*Dame Kathleen Lonsdale 1903-1971
Crystallographer and peace campaigner
lived here in early life*

Kathleen was a pioneer in the use of X-rays to study crystals. Later in her career she became interested in the stones and minerals produced in the human body for example kidney stones and gall stones.

The 1911 census shows her living in Colenso Road with her mother Jessie Yardley and two elder sisters and a brother. Kathleen's mother describes herself as a 'wife' on the census form and her husband is described as the head of the family on the accompanying schedule but there were problems in the marriage and Jessie had left her husband and moved to Seven Kings with the children. Kathleen was born in Ireland and, although her father appears to have been absent for much of her life, she later claimed that it was from him that 'I inherited my passion for facts'.

Kathleen went to Downshall Elementary School in Aldborough Road South; there is still a primary school on the site today. She won a scholarship to Ilford County High School for Girls where she excelled in mathematics and science. She also attended classes for physics, chemistry and more advanced mathematics at Ilford County High School for Boys. She must have had a soft spot for her old school because Helen Gomm, a society member, remembers her returning to the girls' school in the early 60s to talk about her life. Helen recalls a lot of Kathleen's scientific life going over the heads of the younger girls but their interest was aroused by her reference to her stay in Holloway Prison – more of which later!



Dame Kathleen Lonsdale ©Britannica.

Kathleen entered Bedford College where she initially read mathematics and then switched to physics. In 1922 she came top in the University BSc examination with the highest marks achieved for ten years. She continued to earn scholarships and grants which allowed her to become a master in physics in 1924 and achieve a doctorate in 1929. She was one of the first two women admitted to the Royal Society in 1945. Her other firsts were the first woman professor at University College London, the first woman president of the International Union of Crystallography and the first woman president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. While progressing in her scientific career, she married a fellow academic and had three children, moved to Leeds for her husband's work and back to London. In order that she could return to work, she received a grant to hire a domestic helper. In 1949, as well as professor of chemistry, she became head of the department of crystallography. In 1956, she was made Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Kathleen became a Quaker in 1935 as, already a committed pacifist, she and her husband became attracted to the movement. She served a month in Holloway Prison during the Second World War because she refused to register for civil defence duties. Her time in prison had a great effect on her and she became a prison reform activist and joined the Howard League for Penal Reform. In 2003, to celebrate the centenary of her birth, Chemistry World featured an article on her life entitled *Woman of substance*, surely an apt title for a remarkable woman.

© Janet Seward, 6 November 2021

End of the road for ‘The Avenue’

Another of Ilford’s inter-war pubs has bitten the dust. Less than two years after ‘The Valentine’ in Perth Road at Gants Hill was demolished, the same fate has now befallen ‘The Avenue’ beside Eastern Avenue in Newbury Park.

From the little information I have to hand, it would appear that ‘The Avenue’ opened in 1939 – at the end of the ‘eighteen months’ mentioned in the February 1938 newspaper reports below.

The Essex Chronicle, 25 February 1938



Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 sheet TQ4588SW, surveyed in 1962, with ‘The Avenue’ shown as a hotel.

BECONTREE LICENSING

“BEER-WAGON SALESMEN”

Becontree Licensing Justices, R. M. Hewett, Esq., presiding, met at the Court House, Stratford, on Saturday, to continue the hearing of applications adjourned from the previous week. Among the few licences granted was one for a new house to be erected near Newbury Park Station.

ILFORD APPLICATION GRANTED.

H. D. Widdicombe and R. A. Wall applied for a full provisional licence for a site at the corner of Brook Road and Eastern Avenue, Ilford.

Mr. St John Hutchinson, K.C., for the applicants, said although there were 1,000 houses within a quarter-mile radius, there was not one licensed house. There were some 3,000 houses within the half-mile, and the only licensed premises were the Green Gate and two off-licences. The new house would be near Newbury Park Station, where 904,000 tickets were issued last year. The house would take about eighteen months to build, and before it was ready the railway there was to be electrified, and no doubt further development would take place. There was to be a car park for 100 cars, and, while it was not intended to build a road-house ¹, it was felt that some arrangement should be made to deal with the many travellers. The present off-licence building would be pulled down.

Mr. O. E. Sewell opposed on behalf of the Green Gate, which was 700 yards away, and was granted a full licence in 1935, with a monopoly value of over £5,000. There was also religious opposition, the Rev. J. W. Price stating that 90 per cent. of the people there did not want the house.

The Chairman: Are there all abstainers? – Mr. Price: I don’t know.

The licence was granted.

¹ British roadhouses were an inter-war phenomenon. They began in the mid-1920s as an exclusive and low-key offering for the wealthiest, grew to represent the height of fashion by about 1933, and were then imitated by both brewers and independent entrepreneurs, which widened their customer base until they became increasingly déclassé. Roadhouses were mostly put paid to by the impact of the Second World War.

The Essex Chronicle of 15 April 1938

ESSEX LICENCES

BIG BATCH OF APPLICATIONS

The annual meeting of the Essex Licensing Committee was held at the Shire Hall, Chelmsford, on Wednesday. Mr. H. L. Usborne was re-appointed as chairman.

ILFORD'S GROWTH

Henry D. Widdicombe and Robert Arthur Wall applied for a full and conditional licence in respect of premises to be erected at the corner of Eastern Avenue and Brook Road, Ilford.

Mr. St John Hutchinson and Mr. Barclay were for the applicants, and Mr. Christmas Humphreys opposed on behalf of the licensee and owners of the Green Gate Inn.

Mr. St John Hutchinson said some £18,000 would be spent on the new house, and the monopoly value was £6,400.

Mr. Christmas Humphreys² contended that the Green Gate met the needs. The brewers had spent about £25,000 in a few years upon improvements there, and the landlord had spent some £7,250, and bound himself to a considerable increase in rent. They said this application was premature.

The licence was confirmed.



The former pub and restaurant from the Eastern Avenue /Brook Road junction in April 2018. A used car dealership was still operating from the forecourt at that time.

In 1998, part of the building became an Indian restaurant named 'Masala 910' (the building's address was 902-910 Eastern Avenue); Trust Ford Motors subsequently occupied the western half of the site as a car showroom. By May 2017, the pub and restaurant had closed, but a used car dealership (Star Motors) was operating from the building's car park. At that time, the building was under threat of demolition, with the Southern Housing Group seeking planning permission for a complex of six- to twelve-storey flats on the site. Immediately adjacent to the west is

the seven-storey Newbury House, and to the south and east the existing buildings along Hertford Road and Brook Road are primarily single- and two-storey houses. Redbridge council rejected the scheme, partly because the site is not in one of the borough's tall building zones, making it a breach of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030.

The council subsequently approved a scheme for redevelopment on a slightly reduced scale, still in breach of the Local Plan, and with the developer stating that 'the scale and mass of the proposal marks a significant step forward in the densification of the local area'. 'The Avenue' pub and 'Masala 910' restaurant were demolished in July 2021.

© Alan Simpson, 9 August 2021

² Was this the same Christmas Humphreys (1901-1983) who, as Senior Treasury Counsel, led for the Crown in some of the most controversial court cases of the 1950s? These included the trials of Ruth Ellis, the last woman hanged in Britain, and Timothy Evans, hanged for a murder later found to have been carried out by John Christie.

Charlotte Rebecca Hall - *The life of a Victorian Ilford girl*

Amongst the least-known citizens of the parish of Ilford during the last third of the 1800s (undoubtedly because she was the daughter and wife of ordinary labourers) was a woman whose children ended up in Toronto, Canada.

Charlotte Rebecca Hall was born into Victorian England in 1867, the very year that Canada (which her children were to choose for their adulthoods) came into being as a nation. She was to spend her entire life in Ilford. Beyond the dry statistics of birth, marriage, children, and death, we know little of her other than that she was called “Rebecca”.

Did she go to school? If so, where? How long did she stay? How did she meet the boy, two years older than her, whom she was to marry? Did she enjoy life outside the small houses of her girlhood and marriage years? Was she able to read *Jane Eyre*? What caused her death at the young age of 33? If there are or ever were records of such things, few came to light before now.

Her parents were Edward Hall, from Northfleet, Kent, and Charlotte Woodhard, born in that area of north London called Kingsland. They were 24 and 23 when they married on March 26, 1865, in St. Mary’s Ilford, then some 34 years old. Rebecca was their second child and arrived on January 29, 1867.

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										[Page 27]
Civil Parish (or Rectory) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Village or Hamlet, &c., of	Local Board, or Improvement Commissioners District of	Ecological District of			
No. of Schedules	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. of NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES No. of Habitable (U.) or (D.)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION	AGE of Person	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	Whether 1. Deaf and Dumb 2. Blind 3. Imbecile or Idiot 4. Lunatic	
124	Ley Street		Charles Parsons	Head		21	Farmer	Ilford		
			Emma	Wife		20	Field Worker	Ilford		
			Ann	Daughter		7		Ilford		
			Ann	Daughter		7		Ilford		
			Ann	Daughter		11		Ilford		

1871 Census, Ilford, Ley Street, Sams Green

125	1	Edward Hall	Head	Mar		30	Farmer	Ilford		
		Charlotte	Wife			29	Landless	Ilford		
		Edward	Son			5	Scholar	Ilford		
		Charlotte	Daughter			4		Ilford		
		George	Son			2		Ilford		
126	1	Mary Cumbers	Widow			70	No Occupation	Coopersale		
127	1	John	Head	Mar		40	Farmer	Ilford		

The “Great” Ilford into which Rebecca was born was a village of perhaps 5,600 people, a population that slowly increased to 5,947 by the time of the 1871 Census. It lay on high ground,³ east of the River Roding.

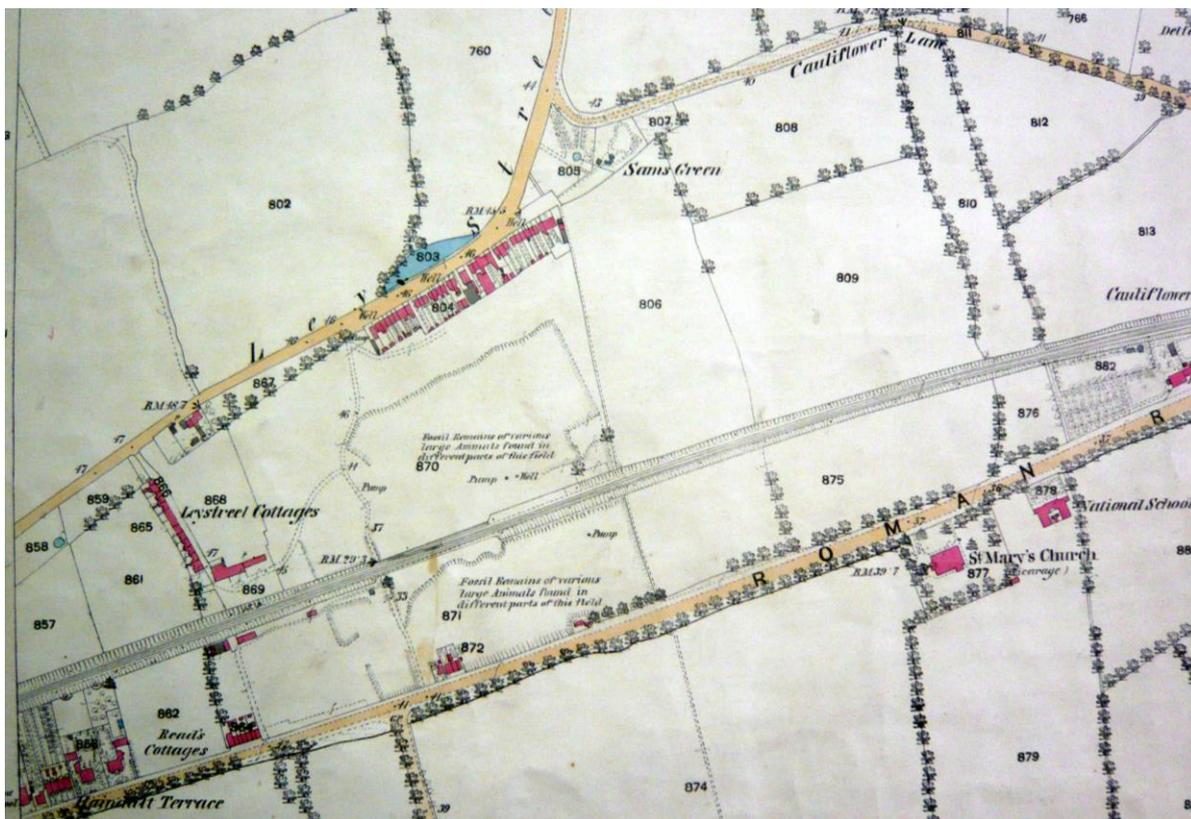
Up to the year 1890 there was scarcely a shop of any size in the village, ... [which] extended from the Roding to Ilford Hall in one long street, from which branched off numerous small alleys, chiefly on the north side of the road. ... It was here and in Ley Street that most of the villagers lived, while the shopkeepers did their trade in the High Street, on Broadway, and at the top of Barking Lane. ... The village north of the railway station and Ley Street, and south of the High Street, contained few inhabitants, for it was taken up by mansions and their grounds.⁴

³ This explained why wealthy people fleeing crowded London had built mansions on expansive grounds (called “estates”) around the tiny village centre during the preceding two centuries. “Little” Ilford, west of the river, and other lands nearby were lower, susceptible to flooding, and tended towards marshland.

⁴ Tasker, George, *Ilford Past and Present* (1901), Cromwell Press Ltd. (Redbridge Reprint No. 1, 1992), at pp. 21-22. Some of these High Street shops are mentioned in the last section, below.

Housing

At her birth, Rebecca's parents lived in one of the Ley Street Cottages;⁵ but, by the time of the 1871 Census, when Rebecca was 4, the family had moved to a 4-room dwelling in an outlying area of town. "Sams Green" was to be her address throughout most of her life.



1st edn. Ordnance Survey Map, 25 inch Sheet 74.1 (surveyed 1862, Zincographed 1881)
Photograph Georgina Green, with thanks to Redbridge Heritage Centre.

The housing of Sams Green no longer exists, but we know quite a lot about it. Located on the south side of Ley Street near the western end of Cauliflower (now Vicarage) Lane, these terrace houses were just north of the railway tracks and faced a pond across the road.

According to historian Robert Tombs:

*From the 1860s, all the main towns had by-laws laying down housing standards. ... The four- to six-room terraced house with front and back entrance and yard became standard working-class housing ... [Emphasis added.]*⁶

The Sams Green structures, however, are shown on the 1847 Barking tithe map 20 years before Rebecca was born and also appear on an 1838 map in the possession of the Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre. The earliest reference to the construction of this housing was in 1834. So, while we have no specific knowledge of how *old* this housing was during the 25 or so years that Rebecca lived there, it is clear that their construction long preceded passage of the *Public Health Act* of 1875 – and so these terrace houses most likely did not meet all the standards mandated by that *Act*.

⁵ For a few years around 1881, Edward again moved his family around the corner (closer to the town centre), back to the newer development called "Ley Street Cottages". This housing was owned by the Curtis family of Stratford, who also owned the brickyards in which Edward worked for a period of time when the demand for bricks accelerated as new houses were built to accommodate a growing population.

- with thanks to Dr. Colin A. Runeckles, Ilford Historical Society, in an e-mail to RJM dated June 28, 2021

⁶ *The English and their History* (2015: "a Borzoi book" published by Alfred A. Knopf), at p. 486

In 1884, a typhoid outbreak occurred in Sams Green. Resident Robert Sippet described the area and the age of the terraces (and the likely causes) in these words:⁷

Extending nearly along the whole length of Sams Green is a pool of stagnant water, which has been the receptacle for all the garbage from the cottages for sixty years, and which, at this season, exhales vapours anything but salubrious. There is also a sewer which the inhabitants some twenty or thirty years ago were compelled to drain into, and also to pay for by a special rate levied upon them. It was originally intended for waste water only, but I believe sewage matter now flows into it from some of the cottages. This sewer terminates in an open ditch, not many yards from the dwellings, and the gases emanating from this ditch, in hot weather, are most noxious and offensive.

The medical officer of health reported that 7 out of 10 water samples submitted were “bad and contaminated with sewage”. He recommended that the wells be closed and that water from the South Essex Company be laid on. The Ilford Parochial Sanitary Committee duly approved this means of proceeding in its meeting on November 12, the *Essex Newsman* reported.

The 1891 Census discloses that *all* of the Hall neighbours in Sams Green lived in 4-room “Houses” (of which the count was 42). This description does not reveal the use(s) for which each room was designed. By that year, when Rebecca had moved out, her parents’ home still contained eight of her siblings, the oldest 19, sharing the four rooms.



Early 18th century houses in Ley Street c.1910
from *Archive Photos, Ilford, a second selection*

At the time she was born, her father worked as a “farm labourer”, her mother as a laundress. Indeed, throughout his life Edward Hall worked with his hands, dependent on changing conditions: by 1881, he was a “brickmaker”; by 1891, a “general labourer”.

In her years in Sams Green, most of Rebecca’s neighbours were families. One unit in 1871 was a grocers shop run by Robert Smith and his wife, Martha. Over the years, the bachelor Robert Sippet occupied different units; with each Census his description of himself became more grandiose – from “tutor” to “Professor of English and Latin” to “Professor of Languages School”.⁸ Only one building has survived – *The Bell* public house which is now an Indian Restaurant called *Al-Qasr*.

In the period 1880-1910, the population of Ilford surged (by 400%, to 41,234, between 1891 and 1901) as the former estates were “broken up” to create housing, much of it intended primarily for the families of men who commuted to work in London. In the 1891

Census, however, the husbands of Sams Green (invariably the “Heads” of the households) described their occupations as “market gardener”, “sewer contractor”, “iron scoop maker”, “railway shunter”, most frequently (including Rebecca’s father) as “general labourer”; some wives identified as “laundresses”.

⁷ Letter to the editor of the *Essex Times* edition of August 20, 1884. For more on Mr. Sippet, see below.

⁸ Dr. Runeckles has unearthed that, when Sippet died in 1899, he left an estate of £7664, 6s, 2d – “a little over a million pounds in today’s money”.

Sams Green was and remained a working-class neighbourhood, not one where most of the inhabitants went daily to London. Preceding the building boom and the mandated standards of the last quarter of the century, quite literally on “the other side of the tracks”, it was most likely the poorest housing in town.

Education

Whatever the extent of Rebecca’s formal education, it is safe to surmise it was by modern standards dismal. When she was a girl, in the 1870s, no laws *obliged* children to receive education. During that era, according to Jef Page ⁹, boys “took precedence” for education; and attendance, as at all schools, required payment. (Most likely, only boys attended the Academy on Ilford Hill and the National School). At harvest time, children toiled in the fields, not on schoolwork.

Here is the description of Schools in Ilford for the generation *following* Rebecca’s:

A school board was formed for Ilford in 1893. There were then five elementary schools in the parish, of which four belonged to the Church of England and one to the Baptists. *Two* were in Ilford village, one at Barkingside, one at Aldborough Hatch, and the other in Beehive Lane. During the ten years of its existence the school board built seven elementary schools to serve the rapidly growing town, and also *a higher grade school, the first of its kind in Essex*. In the same period the Baptist school was closed and a Roman Catholic school opened. [*Emphasis added.*]

- www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp249-266#h3-0011

In 1901, George Tasker, a long-time resident, published *Ilford Past and Present*, a review of his town’s history and growth to that date. About schooling, he wrote:

There is perhaps no part of the training of the rising generation more essential than a sound and thorough education ... Nowadays, when Mr. W. E. Forster’s great *Education Act*, which made attendance at school compulsory, and the *Free Education Act*, which followed 21 years later, have placed a sufficient education within the reach of all, there is no excuse for anyone, not even the raggedest gamin of the street, to remain ignorant of the “three R’s” or of many another subject of almost equal importance which is now included within the curriculum of School Boards ...

Prior to 1893 the task of instructing the children of Ilford was confined to the Church Schools and private enterprise. ... ¹⁰

Alas for Rebecca, she did not live in Ilford “nowadays” nor benefit from the improvements in elementary instruction that marked the last 20 years of the 1800s. All her schooling took place in the 1870s. It wasn’t until the *Education Act* amendments in 1880 that schooling *until age 10* became compulsory. There was no money in the Hall family budget to send a daughter to a board school. What education would a girl need, after all, when she was destined for a life of domestic labour and would not have voting rights as an adult? ¹¹

This is not to say that Rebecca was necessarily illiterate. According to Robert Tombs:

... schooling “among all children” came about “notably later than in most of northern Europe”: The 1870 *Education Act* initiated a national system of Elementary schools, run by elected School Boards, and in 1880 attendance became compulsory, and, for the needy, free – though a sizeable minority did not attend regularly. ... Literacy had been rising steadily since the 1830s, especially for women, and did so very sharply from the 1850s (55 percent) to the 1890s (around 90 percent), catching up with ... Prussia, Scotland, and the Netherlands.¹²

⁹ President, Ilford Historical Society

¹⁰ Tasker, George, *op. cit.*, at p. 75

¹¹ In the 1871 Census, when Rebecca was 4, her year-older brother was listed as a “scholar”; she was not. In the 1881 Census, she was described as a “Spinner” while each of her four younger brothers (12, 9, 7, and 5) were designated “scholars”.

¹² Tombs, Robert, *op. cit.*, at p. 521

Even her wedding certificate, recently accessed, does not aid in discerning whether she could read or write. The “signatures” of bride and groom are so similar as to make one wonder whether different people actually signed them; more likely, the form was entirely filled out by the Registrar. The question of female literacy is not an idle one, however. Witness Emily Osborn simply placed an “x” as her “Mark”. And Rebecca’s mother did the same when she registered her daughter’s birth on March 2, 1867, 4½ weeks after the fact. Registrar Alfred Sherman signed the register and completed the form in his own hand-writing.

Courtship and marriage

Sometime in 1880, a 15-year-old boy moved into one of the terrace houses in Sams Green, just down Ley St. from Rebecca’s family. His father and step-mother had brought him and his six younger siblings from Hillingdon, Middlesex, on the opposite side of London. The boy was already done with school and helped with his family’s living expenses by seeking employment as a general labourer. He was still feeling the loss of his mother, Emily, who had died in early 1879 at age 32. His father had swiftly remarried, to one Harriet Aldwin, and she was already pregnant with their first child when the family came to Great Ilford. This boy was Charles Morris, who, unbeknownst then to Rebecca, was to become her husband and the father of her five children.

Charles was two years older than Rebecca, and it is unknown how quickly they first met or when he began wooing her. What seems clear is that a poor teenage girl from Great Ilford would never have encountered a boy from Hillingdon had his family not moved to her district. In any event, by late 1886, the wedding plans were set and the parish church, St. Mary’s Ilford, the same church in which her parents had been wed, was chosen as the venue. On Christmas Day, 1886, a month shy of 19, Rebecca married Charles there. Their first child (the first of four sons) arrived in 1888.



Rebecca’s widower, Charles Morris (seated), and three of their four sons (see footnote 13)

The 1891 Census, effective as of April 5 of that year, records that Charles and Rebecca had by then settled into their own dwelling within Sams Green – most likely as tenants, although the Census does not say. At that time, Rebecca was pregnant again; the second boy arrived later that year. Her life as a wife and mother continued much as it had as a girl.

¹³ Rebecca’s widower, Charles Morris (seated), and three of their four sons (l.-r.) Charles Alfred Morris (b. in Ilford, 1893) Edward (“Ted”) Morris (b. in Ilford, 1888), and Henry Robert Morris (b. in Ilford, September 27, 1895).

All the sons are wearing their Great War (Canadian) military uniforms. I cannot date the portrait, but it must have been taken in late 1915 (around the time that Charles was married on Christmas Day), the first quarter of 1916, or in late 1918 (after Armistice Day). (Charles enlisted in the summer of 1915 and Henry later that autumn; Henry shipped out in May 1916.)

During the course of the 1890s, Charles and Rebecca moved with their growing family to a 5-room dwelling identified as 30 Derby Road, in Little Ilford (Manor Park), about 3 miles west of St. Mary's Ilford.

That was where the family resided when Rebecca died there early in the morning of June 4, 1900, at just 33. Her husband Charles signed the death certificate, which was registered the same day, as "present at the death". One C. B. Townshend, L.R.C.P.¹⁴, certified the cause of death as "Mitral Dilatation of Heart Hypertrophy Cardiac Dropsy". [That unpunctuated string of words perhaps described different contributing factors.] Her only daughter had not yet turned 3; one can imagine that Emily, too, was in the house when her mother died. Vicar A.G. Evans officiated at the funeral and signed the burial register; Rebecca was buried in the Churchyard at St. Mary's Ilford on June 6.¹⁵

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Romford</i>									
Registrar's Sub-District <i>Ilford</i>									
18 1900 DEATHS in the Sub-District of <i>Ilford</i> in the County of <i>Middlesex</i>									
No.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When registered.	Signature of Registrar.
208	<i>Fourth June 1900 30 Derby Road Ilford W.2</i>	<i>Charlotte Rebecca Morris</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>33 years</i>	<i>Wife of Charles Morris General Labourer</i>	<i>Mitral Dilatation of Heart Hypertrophy Cardiac Dropsy Certified by C. B. Townshend L.R.C.P.</i>	<i>C. Morris Widower of deceased present at the death 30 Derby Road Ilford</i>	<i>Fourth June 1900</i>	<i>L. H. Sherman Registrar</i>

Rebecca preceded her parents in death, for both of their names appear in the Census nearly a year later. Charles and his five children still lived at 30 Derby Road when the 1901 Census was taken, effective March 31.

In 1907, Charles married a second time, to one Emily Barrows. The two of them began having children, producing three by 1910. One imagines that much of what had belonged to Rebecca was cleared from the house and from her husband's life, and from the lives of her children. The break became clean when the family emigrated to Toronto in 1912.

Daily life

That is all that is known about Rebecca. We have no pictures of her, no writing of hers, no descriptions of her or her personality. We don't know whether she lived a happy life or one of drudgery. Indeed, we have no direct evidence of her experiences.

But we do have a first-person reminiscence of what daily life in Great Ilford was like during the last 15 years of the 1800s. Writing from Montreal in 1939, a Great War veteran shared tales of his time growing up in Ilford. In a letter published in the *Ilford Recorder*,¹⁶ Percy Wright wondered whether any of his long-ago chums shared the memories he set out. Although a dozen years younger than Rebecca, he lived in Ilford precisely when she did and, indeed, resided scarcely 250 yards from her (also between Ley Street and the railway tracks).

Addressing "the boys of Ilford National School around 1889", he asked if they too recalled

¹⁴ Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians. Charles Townsend, 47, from Ireland, lived in Ilford from about 1896 to about 1905. He set up his practice at his home, 7 Queen's Terrace (later 273 High Road). - details supplied by Dr. Runeckles [fns 3, 6], in an e-mail to RJM dated August 13, 2021

¹⁵ E-mails from Michael Mann (Churchyard inquiries, St. Mary's Ilford) to RJM, April 25 and 26, 2021

¹⁶ I am indebted to Jef Page for supplying copies of the letter and for his article in a 2009 edition of this *Newsletter*, from which sources the following passages are derived.

the culvert under the [High] road from the girls' school, ... that we would dare each other to crawl through, Reynolds orchard opposite [and] the apples and strawberries from which some of us sampled ...

Other happy memories - Mrs. Auger's sticky toffee shop, and "Fishy Freds" (next to Queen's Terrace), who kept his donkey in the parlour, and Mrs. Carter, next to the *Havelock*, notable for her half-penny turnovers. Do you remember ... Professor Baldwin's balloon ascent and parachute descent from Adam's field, opposite the *Havelock*?

One muses whether Rebecca's four sons went to the National School themselves early in the new century. Perhaps they, too, enjoyed the sticky toffee and the turnovers. And dared to crawl through the culvert.

Percy reeled off many other events lodged in his memory, some 50 years after the fact, including the Infants School; the Reading Rooms and the penny readings of Dickens' works there; Drill Hall; "the gas lamps, with Duffy Fry, lamplighter"; the Queen's Jubilee treat; the graveyard near "Froggy" Tillet's tobacco store; "Oak-apple day, with the full-rigged ship, drawn by eight horses".

Other landmarks: – Channel (draper), Poston (butcher), ... Barnes (ironmonger), Benton (chemist), J. Butcher's (barber shop) and his canaries (1d. shave. and 1½d. hair cut), Gilderson's carriage works, Spencer (dairy), ... Ilford station, with entrance next to the Red Lion ... The chestnut trees in Cranbrook Road, Sams Green Pond, and Jacob's Ladder ...

Do you recall the church parades to Barkingside Church every Palm Sunday, and the refreshments after? ... Romford Market days, on Wednesdays, when the droves of cattle and sheep would pass through Ilford, and the Colchester mail four-in-hand that came through at 10 p.m.?

Rebecca surely shared many of these locations, incidents, and events. She must have taken her youngsters to Central [later Valentines] Park when it opened in 1899. She witnessed the Jubilee Fountain and the new buildings downtown, including the start of construction of City Hall.

Percy obviously had memories both strong and pleasant of his years in Ilford that overlapped with Rebecca's. I, grandson of Rebecca's fourth son Henry (see footnote 13), would like to think that her time there was happy, too.

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With much gratitude for the questions answered and additional research supplied by Michael Mann, Jef Page, Dr. Colin Runeckles, and Georgina Green, all of Ilford, Essex

The Griggs Family and The Drive

It is fairly common knowledge that it was W.P. – later Sir Peter – Griggs that purchased the Cranbrook Hall Estate in 1897 and set about building houses on it. Also fairly well-known is that he made his home at number 7 The Drive and lived there until his death in 1920. But the extended Griggs family had far more involvement in The Drive than just the building of the two estates.

Sir Peter Griggs (1849-1920)

Our story starts with Peter and the building on the Cranbrook Hall estate. The building plan for 1-15 The Drive – up to the corner of Mayfair Avenue - was approved in August 1897. It cannot be ascertained with any certainty as to when number 7 was first occupied but an advert offering houses for sale on the Cranbrook Park Estate was inserted into the *Tower Hamlets Independent and East London Advertiser* on 31 December 1898, with enquiries to W.P. Griggs & Co, Estate Office, The Drive. In 1900 a further building plan was submitted for an extension to the house

which thereafter served as the Estate Office.¹⁷ The rather grand porch which is still there was a 1908 addition.

On the opposite corner of Empress Avenue was no. 5 The Drive, occupied until c.1908 by Griggs' business associate, William Garbutt Key who, after he left Ilford, moved to Hall Lane, Upminster to work on his and Griggs next house-building project.

Knighted in 1916, Sir Peter Griggs lived at 7 The Drive until his death in 1920.

Emma Griggs (c.1852-1913)

In The Drive, there were only two houses built with two side extensions – number 7 as above, and number 37. The 1905 issue of Kelly's Directory simply records the occupant as Mrs Griggs but the 1901 Census has her full name of Emma L(ydia) Griggs. Emma was the sister-in-law of W.P. Griggs, her by then late husband being Philip Edward, brother to Peter. The 1891 Census records the family living at 208 Brick Lane as cheesemongers but Philip's death in 1895 seems to have resulted in them having to eventually move house and Emma and children arrived in Ilford c.1900. The building plan for number 37, known as The Poplars, was approved in September 1899. In the 1901 Census Emma is listed with her three sons, Albert, John, and Horace; and daughter Edith; together with two servants, Beatrice Green and Alice Squire. Beatrice was a local girl from Barkingside but Alice had come all the way from Taunton, Somerset.

By the time of the 1911 Census, sons Albert and John had moved out but Emma herself was not there for much longer as she died in January 1913.

Albert Griggs (1879-1953)

As noted above Albert Griggs was the son of Emma and Philip Griggs and therefore the nephew of W.P. Griggs. Already in the 1901 Census he is listed as a builder (partner) by profession and as an employer. Albert married Catherine Maria Smith in September 1904 and they set up home at 87 The Drive, a house sited rather awkwardly between Sackville and Highlands Gardens. The account of the wedding at St Chad's Parish Church in Chadwell Heath in the *Ilford Recorder* under the heading of "Fashionable Weddings" is of interest since it lists some of the presents the



happy couple received including from contractors, the plasterers and their labourers on the Cranbrook Park estate but more significantly "a freehold dwelling-house from the bridegroom's mother."¹⁸ This is almost certainly 87

The Drive since Albert Griggs is listed as occupying that house in the 1905 Kelly's Directory. Incidentally,

the name it was given – St. Georges – can still be seen in the glass above the door. It is also worth noting the Gothic-style stained-glass window on the side of the porch.



Photos of 87 The Drive by the author

¹⁷ This is now 7A The Drive, although the entrance is round the corner in Empress Avenue.

¹⁸ *Ilford Recorder* 16th September 1904

Edith Griggs (1883-1951)

The final link of those generations of the Griggs family to The Drive is Edith, the only daughter of Emma and Philip Griggs, and listed in the Censuses of 1901 and 1911 as living at 37 The Drive. The final residential buildings to be erected in The Drive by Albert Griggs were those in the section between Lincoln and Gloucester Gardens. In addition to two large detached houses, four blocks of maisonettes were built and known as 1-4 Lincoln Court and 1-4 Gloucester Court.¹⁹ The building closest to Lincoln Gardens is slightly different from the other three in that there are two ground floor flats, one of which (141 The Drive) served as the estate office after the temporary building had been removed. Emma Griggs is listed in the 1939 Kelly's Directory as living at 149 (flat 3) [i.e.3 Gloucester Court] The Drive. Emma lived there until her death in 1951.

St Andrew's Church

Although an iron church had existed on The Drive since 1906-7, a permanent building made entirely of red brick was built at cost by Albert Griggs to a design of Sir Herbert Baker's in 1923-4.²⁰ The main point of interest so far as the Griggs family is concerned, is the North Chapel which was built to the memory of Mr & Mrs P.E. Griggs i.e. Albert Griggs' parents, and given by their family.²¹ Inside are many fine memorials to members of the Griggs family including three windows to the memory of H.E. (Horace) Griggs who was killed while on active service in France in 1915.



Memorial to Albert Griggs in the North Chapel of St Andrew's Church, The Drive, photo by the author

Summary

Both Sir Peter Griggs and Albert Griggs were prominent in the civic life of Ilford and this aspect of their lives has been well-documented.²² The extent to which The Drive and surrounding roads was their doing – all houses to the east up to Clarendon, and to the west up to Wanstead Lane – cannot be overstated. But as you can see from this article, they not only built the houses on The Drive, they lived there as well. Unlike the other major builder of the period, Cameron Corbett, they were or became Ilford men and lived amongst other Ilford men.

© *Dr Colin Runeckles, 21 October 2021*

¹⁹ All of the building plans were approved between June 1934 and January 1937 and are held in the Heritage Centre at Redbridge Central Library.

²⁰ See Cherry, O'Brien and Pevsner *Buildings of England London 5: East* (2005) pp336-7

²¹ *Handbook of St Andrew's Church* (1933)

²² For which see the short biographies in Gunby's *A Potted History of Ilford* (1997, 2nd ed) pp277-8. Note that Gunby mentions Albert's house in Cranbrook Rise but not his previous homes in The Drive.

Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre, an update on progress

Much has happened over the last twelve months. We were finally able to re-open the Heritage Centre in May after the second lockdown. Our new booking system is working well and there have been a steady number of enquiries on a wide range of topics. Staff are making good progress on cataloguing duties, while we were pleased to welcome back volunteers who also undertake this valuable work 'behind the scenes'.

Despite all the challenges of lockdown, good progress has been made on the project to redevelop the Museum's permanent exhibition. During March (while much of the Library was closed) the first-stage strip-out of the displays were undertaken in which I carefully removed exhibits and transferred them to storage. This was followed by the removal and disposal of redundant display furniture by contractors and the construction of a new entrance formed by cutting through a wall next to the Heritage Centre.

Based on exhibit lists, content ideas and initial designs that I had produced, the exhibition designer produced detailed drawings and a comprehensive tender document which will be sent to contractors to submit estimates for the construction of the new displays. These will be developed over the next few months in a series of co-design workshops with local residents and groups. The first one took place in October with none other than members of Ilford Historical Society! We hope that building work will commence in spring followed by the opening of the new Museum in autumn 2022.

I've spent much of my time writing funding applications to ensure we can achieve all our ambitious plans. We were therefore delighted that we secured £24,128 from Arts Council England in May; £15,000 from the Art Fund in September; £3000 from Museum Development London in October; and generous support from the Friends of Valentines Mansion.

Despite being closed, the Museum has managed to deliver online education sessions to 1300 pupils. These are delivered live but we intend to record short sessions to download at any time to support the in-person schools programme as this returns, as well as visiting schools.

We have continued to collect material relating to the Covid-19 pandemic in Redbridge which will be a fascinating archive for the future. Objects include PPE equipment, a hand-sanitiser dispenser unit that stood on the pavement on Clements Road, and perhaps most special of all a Covid vaccine vial. We have also filmed interviews with staff at a Covid-testing site and several local groups that have supported those in need.

Finally, by a strange coincidence, two of our long-term projects have just reached key milestones within a few weeks of each other. In October, we launched www.sylviapankhurst.com, a new website about Sylvia Pankhurst, the long-term Woodford resident and political campaigner. The website, funded through the Heritage Fund, is the final part of 'Wonder Women', a project with Woodford County High School to celebrate the centenary of the women's vote.

In November, Ilford Football Club and the Museum launched an exhibition about the history of the Club which is celebrating its 140th anniversary this season. For much of its life, Ilford FC was one of the top amateur sides in the country and while this is no longer the case, the Club hopes the exhibition and accompanying book will increase its profile. The exhibition can be seen on matchdays at Cricklefield Stadium and the book can be bought in the Heritage Centre. Next year promises to be an exciting one so it just remains to thank the Society for its support this year and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

© *Gerard Greene, Manager, Redbridge Museum & Heritage Centre, 10 November 2021*

IHS Programme for Spring 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 9.00pm.

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.

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 and the world - 100 Years of the BBC*

by Madeline Seviour, Ilford HS member

Bush House, home of the World Service 1941-2012

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



Summer Talk

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 April meeting.



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