



Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society
Founded 1932

Newsletter Spring 2017

Editorial

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As usual in the Spring Newsletter, may I wish you all a, somewhat belated, healthy and happy new year. I would also like to thank everyone for the support and good wishes which I have received during my indisposition this year. I have greatly appreciated your kindness.

Whilst it is my intention to send coloured copies of the newsletter by e-mail to all who have requested receipt in this way, I have also asked that, in this instance, printed black-and-white copies are forwarded to ALL members to ensure papers are received by the due date. Therefore, please find enclosed:

Spring Newsletter
Summer Visits Programme
Summer Visits Booking Forms
Minutes of the 2016 AGM
Notice of the 2017 AGM

The members of the Committee are very grateful to those who completed questionnaires offering help to the Society. This has enabled a new rota to be arranged to provide refreshments at meetings and contact with two members to offer a lift to meetings. We also have a group of members who have offered to fold and envelope papers for distribution. Please be assured that all offers of help were (and are) very welcome and your responses have been carefully filed for future reference.

May I also ask you to consider membership of the Committee, to help with arrangements behind the scenes to ensure the continuing success of the Society. It is certainly not necessary to be an historian, but to have enthusiasm for helping with organisation. We work as a team, sharing tasks, so you would not be working alone and plenty of help and advice is available from other Committee members who have many years of experience in the role. If you are interested, or feel you know of someone who would like to join us, please speak to a member of the Committee or simply forward the name and contact details to me (tel. 020 8505 3640). Members of the Committee would also be happy simply to provide further information in the first instance.

A very varied selection of summer visits has been arranged this year, which we hope you will find interesting. In the event of outings being over-subscribed a ballot for places will be held on 13th March, so please submit your applications as soon as possible. If you have a query about a specific trip, please contact the organiser who will be happy to help and provide further details.

Last, but by no means least, I would welcome articles for our newsletters. Your own memories of the area or information about a local subject of special interest to you are very welcome and ensure a varied publication can be prepared twice a year.

John Lovell

Correction re Madeira Grove article

In May last year, Hugh Moules wrote to us regarding an item in the Spring 2014 Edition of Woodford Times.

Mr Moules wrote:

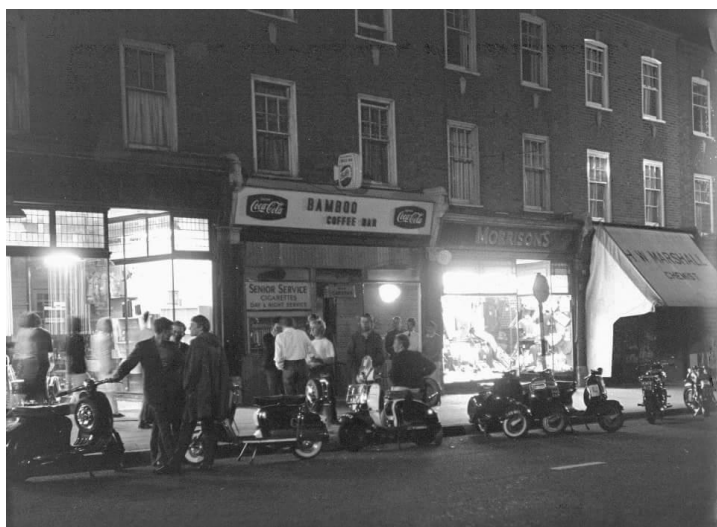
"Perusing the anonymous article online about Madeira Grove in the 1940s, I noticed that reference was made to the 'Electricity Board', which only came into existence on 1 April, 1948.

The authorised undertaking which started supplying electricity in Woodford from around 1926 was the 'County of London Electric Supply Company Limited', which had local showrooms at 8-9 Electric Parade, George Lane, E.18 and at 143 High Road, Loughton, Essex.

The head office of the "County Company" was situated at County House, 46-47 New Broad Street, London, E.C.2 and it had a local distribution substation at Grove Lodge, now adjacent to Waitrose in South Woodford. The Company was nationalised under the Electricity Act, 1947 and was vested into the 'London Electricity Board'.

I am grateful to Mr Moules for pointing out the error. **Editor**

Electric showrooms – by Janet Lovell



Close to Electric Parade, at the top of George Lane, in the 1960s (photo John Lovell)

In 1925, the County of London Electric Supply Co. opened a showroom at no.8 in the newly built shops at the corner of George Lane, known to this day as 'Electric Parade'. It was the first electricity showroom in the area, offering sales and advice. When no. 9 became vacant in 1934, the showroom was extended, decorated with oak panelling. Nationalisation of the industry saw continued use of the site and in 1956 the premises were again enlarged when no. 7 became a demonstration room, following the move of the Public Library from the building.

Following remodelling of the premises, planned and constructed by the Board's staff, a modernised, spacious showroom was opened in 1964 by Cllr D L'Estrange,

Mayor of Wanstead and Woodford, accompanied by the Mayoress. He was introduced by Mr H V Billing (District Manager) and a vote of thanks was provided by Mr D Irving (Chairman of the Board). Old fashioned features had been removed – the oak panelling and old-fashioned staircase, sections of dividing walls – and the floor of the whole premises levelled. The showroom was now decorated in pastel shades, lit by an illuminated ceiling and heated by storage heaters. Of particular note were the changes which had been made to the demonstration room with the inclusion of an area near the window to highlight 'laundry equipment'.

A news report at the time states that the view into the showroom was 'surmounted by an arresting and tastefully designed LONDON ELECTRICITY fascia sign, and cannot fail to be noticed by Eastbound travellers on the High Road (A.11).'

I was prompted to look at the Newsletter that Mr Moules referred to and in particular at the piece on Madeira Grove which had been languishing in our 'Text Bank' (now exhausted) for more than 10 years. The article ended with, "In the 1950s it was decided to make Hillside Avenue a through road to St Barnabas and Snakes Lane East. The residents of Claremont Grove lost part of their rear gardens by compulsory purchase to the Council, but, in reverse, the residents of Madeira Grove from no. 9 to 16/17 were offered a plot of land at the rear of their gardens at a cost of £100 per plot. The offers were taken up. The land between no.1 and no. 9 was used as public toilets in Hillside Avenue and the remaining ground was sold to a private purchaser who gained permission to build garages for letting."

Recently, those Garages have been demolished and replaced with private flats. **Editor**

Singing in the Wilderness by Georgina Green

There is a little piece of Epping Forest on the edge of London, at Buckhurst Hill, with the intriguing name of The Wilderness. A visit to this strip of woodland shows that, far from a tangle of over-hanging branches, this is similar to the rest of Epping Forest, with lopped hornbeam and oak trees standing amid holly and brambles. There are some fairly open grassy glades, and by one there is a small flight of stone steps which provide a clue to that unlikely name.

The Wilderness was, in fact, the name of a house which stood within this patch of forest. When the land around it came under the control of the City of London Corporation as the Conservators of Epping Forest in 1878, this was kept in private hands as a cottage and garden. However, the name was used for the whole area – and in later years it became well known in artistic and theatrical circles.

It was in 1929 that the house became the home of artist Walter Spradbery and his wife, singer Dorothy d'Orsay. Like most artists, however talented, Walter Spradbery could not make a living from his paintings alone, but he supplemented this income with work as a poster designer. He produced many posters of rural scenes for London Transport between 1911-1944, for example, and one poster entitled The Silent Pool at Aldbury was acclaimed as outstanding at the Royal Academy's Industrial Arts Exhibition in the 1930s. He also gained a considerable reputation for his lino-cuts. Walter Spradbery was a passionate and life-long pacifist, but he served in the First World War as a stretcher-bearer and received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for recovering wounded comrades under heavy fire. Many of the sketches he drew at that time are in the permanent collection of the Imperial War Museum.



Walter Spradbery (1889 -1969)



Dorothy D'Orsay (1898 – 1952)

Locally, Walter Spradbery was well known as an art teacher at the Greenleaf Road Educational Settlement, Walthamstow, where he held evening classes for nearly forty years. He was greatly involved with the Essex Art Club and had many outstanding artists as his friends. He was instrumental in the foundation of the William Morris Gallery, which uses Morris's childhood home in Forest Road, Walthamstow, to house a wonderful collection of works by Morris, Frank Brangwyn and other Pre-Raphaelites.

Dorothy d'Orsay was several years younger than her husband, but had already made her mark in the musical world when she gave up her career as a singer to take on that of a mother. She had a wonderful contralto voice, coupled with a gift for interpreting the roles she performed. In opera she preferred Verdi and Mozart, but often her talent was used on the concert platform and she sang in the first Proms under Sir Henry Wood. Dorothy was one of the first women to sing on the 'wireless' when it was at Savoy Hill, although her powerful voice was a challenge to the technicians of the time.

For Walter and Dorothy it was love at first sight, all they needed was a home and they found this in the Wilderness. It was originally a four-roomed cottage, but had been added to several times over the years so that its somewhat straggling appearance immediately won their hearts. The rooms were basically arranged in a square, but with the sloping ground necessitating steps here and there. In the centre was a single upstairs room with a veranda looking out towards Buckhurst Hill church. Adjoining the house at one corner was a large room 30 by 40 feet with windows nearly all the way round, which was ideal for use as a studio. Fortunately, they were able to take the house, after persuading a wealthy aunt to buy it and let them rent it from her until her death, when she left it to them.

It was during the Second World War that the studio really came into its own. Dorothy started The Wilderness Opera Group and Orchestra to perform rare operas in the open-air theatre which they made in their garden. The studio was used to rehearse the fifty-piece orchestra and to act out the scenes, or the floor was cleared so that Walter could paint the scenery and backcloths he had designed for the productions. The house would be full as the first performance drew nearer, with people trying on costumes in the bedrooms, the orchestra rehearsing in the studio, and soloists running through their parts in the study or on the porch.

By this time the Spradbery's two children were old enough to help paint the scenery, and their daughter Rima well remembers being made tea lady on rehearsal days. Providing tea and biscuits for over fifty people two or three times a week during the war-time rationing was no easy task, but friends were very generous and brought along tea and sugar, and coupons to help out. The productions must have been very much appreciated by the audiences who could escape from the reality of bombing to the peaceful woodland theatre. Here the colourful costumes and wonderful music, complemented by birdsong from the forest must have lifted many hearts in sore need of such enchantment.



Dido and Aeneas performed at the Wilderness. Picture Rima Ball

Dorothy was a marvellous conductor and did not usually sing in the operas herself, preferring to direct and conduct from the orchestra stand under the trees. She liked the English composers and produced some of their works at the Wilderness. One of her favourite operas was *Dido and Aeneas* which needed small cherubs, so children from a local drama school were enlisted to help with the show.

On another occasion *Sir John in Love* was performed, the last act of this taking place in a moonlit forest. The setting was ideal – but the performance was to be held in the afternoon. However, Walter solved this problem by designing some cardboard glasses with blue celluloid lenses for the audience to wear during the last act. He also came to the rescue of a production of *Acis and Galatea* which features a one-eyed giant. He had designed a splendid costume for this character, but the singer engaged for the part refused to wear it unless his fee was considerably increased. Dorothy was most annoyed, but time was as short as money, with the performance just two days off, so she persuaded Walter to act the part of the giant, while the singer performed through a microphone off-stage.

It was also during the Second World War that Dorothy's talented brother-in-law Dick Williams started to use the Wilderness theatre to stage plays performed by students from the Greenleaf Road Educational Settlement, including some promising youngsters like Michael Fishlock and Dennis Quilley. Shakespearean plays were often chosen, with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* being a favourite for this woodland setting. Puck was sometime brilliantly played by Dick Williams himself who, being small and agile, could appear from behind a bush at one side of the stage, and then rush through the trees and appear at the other side of the stage as if by magic. It has been



Twelfth Night, showing the stage used at The Wilderness. Picture Dick Williams



A Midsummer Night's Dream performed at the Wilderness in the late 1940s. Picture Dick Williams

suggested by the Shakespearean scholar A L Rowse that this play was written for the wedding of Sir Thomas Heneage to the Countess of Southampton, the mother of Shakespeare's patron. If so, it may well have been given its first performance at Copped Hall, near Epping, making this Epping Forest setting even more appropriate.

Dorothy d'Orsay died in 1952, leaving Walter heartbroken. Their house had received some war damage which had been made good, but the encroaching woodland started to cause problems, with tree roots undermining the foundations of the building. Walter was loath to sell the house, fearing that a block of flats would be built on the site, but happily an agreement was made whereby the land was bought and added to Epping Forest in compensation for land lost from the Forest in a road improvement scheme. Walter Spradbery died in 1969 and is buried with his wife in the churchyard at Buckhurst Hill which is almost adjacent to the Wilderness. Most appropriately, the inscription on their tombstone, taken from *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* reads 'and thou beside me singing in the wilderness, and wilderness is paradise enow'.

This article appeared *The Lady*, 24 July 1986, and is included here without amendment.
© Georgina Green

Pictures:

Twelfth Night, showing the stage used at The Wilderness. Picture Dick Williams

Dorothy D'Orsay (1898 – 1952)

A Midsummer Night's Dream performed at The Wilderness in the late 1940s. (1948?) Picture Dick Williams

Walter Spradbery (1889 -1969)

Dido and Aeneas performed at the Wilderness. Picture Rima Ball



The steps at the Wilderness, now (8 July 1985) almost hidden by the undergrowth of Epping Forest. Picture Georgina Green

Also available Lino cut of The Wilderness by Walter Spradbery, not used in *The Lady* article.

Channel Air Bridge – by Joe Branson

In 1957 the practice of "hitch hiking" was extremely popular, as many young National Servicemen had learnt on their 48 hour pass weekends especially as public transport was expensive.

For the more adventurous the idea of "hitching" on the Continent also had some appeal as it proved to be, for my long suffering friend Michael and myself. We decided that for our two week summer holiday we would "hitch" to the South of France, and back, for the princely sum of £30 each. But this article is not about that memorable holiday but just how we commenced our trip and how different travel was 60 years ago.

For a start we were both aged a "mature" 23/24 having left school at sixteen, commenced work for two years and then completed two years as NSM before returning to work. At this time the Continent was "unknown" holiday territory for most of the population apart from day trips to Calais or Boulogne. These were the years before cheap flights and package holidays, so foreign travel was prohibitive except for the more wealthy. However though, France did offer good value thanks to the favourable exchange rate and the weather was virtually certain to be better.

In 1957 the personal foreign travel allowance was £100 per person, regardless of where you went in the world or how long you intended to stay. All expenditure abroad i.e. hotels, travel and entertainment had to come from your allowance, except that you could book your ship or aeroplane and pay for it in sterling in England before departure. The amount of money you took out of the UK was recorded in your passport. However, as with all comparisons to the "good old days" it is essential to be aware of the average weekly wage which in 1957 was just £16 per week or £832 p.a. and as you will see later, travel was expensive.

I had discovered that The Channel Air Bridge were operating the latest Bristol Freighters as a car ferry service from Southend Airport to Calais and Southend was just 30 miles from home and on a direct train service from London's Liverpool Street.

These aircraft were the Type 32s that could accommodate three family cars and 20 passengers (or two large cars). The good news was that they rarely had the full complement of passenger seats

and therefore all you had to do was turn up and you would be on the next plane.

The cost was £5 return per passenger and £10 for a family car and the flight time to Calais Marck Airport was just 28 minutes and the service hourly. Although this seems cheap it has now to be compared to the previously mentioned weekly wage as the return fare for the family car and four passengers would be £30. Cars had to be pre-booked and arrive 30 minutes before departure but, as mentioned foot passengers virtually turned up and boarded.

Accordingly, Michael and I decided on this initial part of our journey and then we would hitch hike to Paris and then onto Nice....or so we thought. The first part all went according to plan as our timing was right and we were soon on the tarmac at Calais Marck complete with rucksacks to the discovery that the airport was 4 miles from Calais!! We also now realised we had made our first mistake in waving goodbyes to our fellow passengers as they departed in their three, half empty cars, without thinking of asking for a lift to Calais Ville or beyond.

As the cars disappeared a complete silence descended on the area apart from the singing of a skylark....no traffic...no human beings just a bullock cart at work in an adjoining field. It seemed like another world and only 28 minutes from Southend but this was rural France in those days. It was 30 minutes later that, at last, the local Autobus hove into view, picked us up and took us to the centre of Calais from whence we set off on the road to Paris with our thumbs at the ready....

We did get to Nice and Cannes and finally back home 14 days later but that is another story. Needless to say though we never once got a lift anywhere but had to rely on trains and coaches but still just within our £30 budget and worth every penny.

Louise Jameson's memories – by John Lovell



Copyright Lisa Bowerman photographer

I know you will all recognise Louise, not least from when she came into our homes playing the girlfriend (Susan Young) of John Nettles as Jim Bergerac in the TV series 'Bergerac' set on the island of Jersey. But..... did you know she is a 'local girl'?

I am delighted that Louise replied to an e-mail which I sent to her website and to learn of her happy memories. She writes:

"I have wonderful memories of growing up in Woodford Green. The tennis club, the rugby club dances, the 'Loughton Crowd' as we used to call ourselves, about 30+ teenagers who'd meet every single weekend, without fail, for about two years from the age of 15-17, which is when I went off to RADA.

My mum, Marion Jameson, was an extremely active member of The Wanstead Players, as an actress and then later as a director. We put on I don't know how many shows, at The Hawkey Hall - my first introduction to 'proper' theatre, outside of Braeside, where I went to school. In my last term The Wanstead Players gave me the role of Viola in 'Twelfth Night' and a 50 year love affair with the Bard has ensued."

Louise's very successful career encompasses film, television and theatre. She has recently been awarded the Break a Leg Critics Choice Award 2016 for best actress on stage for a touring production of The Mousetrap.

Louise's projects at the start of 2017 are to direct a new play written by Nigel Fairs called 'Ebenezza and Me', which will receive its try-out at The Space, 269 Westferry Road, London (five performances only from 1-5 February) and to continue her role of Leela, Warrior of the Sevateem in Dr Who in the Big Finish audio productions.

Churchill's relationship with the United States is commemorated to this day

'The Few'
Churchill's speech to The House of Commons
August 20, 1940

"..... Presently we learned that anxiety was also felt in the United States about the air and naval defence of their Atlantic seaboard, and President Roosevelt has recently made it clear that he would like to discuss with us, and with the Dominion of Canada and with Newfoundland, the development of American naval and air facilities in Newfoundland and in the West Indies. There is, of course, no question of any transference of sovereignty - that has never been suggested - or of any action being taken without the consent or against the wishes of the various Colonies concerned; but for our part, His Majesty's Government are entirely willing to accord defence facilities to the United States on a 99 years' leasehold basis, and we feel sure that our interests no less than theirs, and the interests of the Colonies themselves and of Canada and Newfoundland, will be served thereby. These are important steps. Undoubtedly this process means that these two great organisations of the English-speaking democracies, the British Empire and the United States, will have to be somewhat mixed up together in some of their affairs for mutual and general advantage. For my own part, looking out upon the future, I do not view the process with any misgivings. I could not stop it if I wished; no one can stop it. Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on full flood, inexorable, irresistible, benignant, to broader lands and better days."

Hansard



Statue of Churchill in New Orleans – photograph by Terence Lovell - 2016

The Churchill Arms



Have you visited The Churchill Arms, 119 Kensington Church Street, London W8 7LN? Built in 1750, the establishment was frequented by the grandparents or parents (sources examined during research were unclear) of Winston Churchill in the 1800s which led to the re-naming of the pub after World War 2. It contains a dramatic collection of Churchill memorabilia within the pub and has award winning displays of window boxes and hanging baskets on the exterior in the summer.



My First School – by Joe Branson

By an amazing coincidence, Herr Hitler decided to commence the war on Sunday 3rd September 1939 without realising I was due to start school on Monday 4th September even though the school was called a 'Kindergarten'!!

I was just one month short of my 5th birthday and, unlike today, without any experience of a pre-school play group, so I had no idea what was going to be in store.

In actual fact, the school did not open on the Monday as the older children had already been evacuated from London to Berkshire. This was not to last however because it was deemed safe for the whole school to open in late October back in Woodford Green.

Our house was just one mile from the school and, accompanied by 'Susie', my mother's home help, I was walked to the kindergarten class by 9.00am each morning. At 12 noon, I was met again and walked back home for lunch and then returned from 2.00pm to 3.30pm. No cars of course and so my daily walk was a total of four miles for the next 5½ years until 1945. After two years, I was old enough to walk unescorted and take my younger sister who attended the same school. If the air raid siren should sound whilst we were walking, and it did, we had to run back home if we had not passed the half way point. If we had passed this point, we had to run to a large public shelter until the 'all clear' was sounded. The school did not have a shelter as such but only a heavy timber reinforced area.

The kindergarten section was ruled over by the very capable Miss B and you remained under her care for one year before moving into the 'preparatory' section of the school.

All of this was a great shock to me and, initially, I objected violently with crying and tantrums, but this was not unusual and Miss B knew how to gradually calm us all down and begin to learn our 'tables'. Every child had his, or her, individual progress chart affixed to the classroom wall which recorded arithmetic, spelling, discipline etc. so that all the class could see how you were doing and hopefully then spur you to greater efforts. All his time of course you were aware that an 'exciting' war was going with regular visits to the shelter.

In 1940 a terrible landmine descended at night and exploded in the grounds of a hospital just 400 yards from our school and so we experienced our war damage first hand. The shock to all of us six year olds was quite dramatic and I can still remember clearly the tears when we saw our cloakroom the following morning. All our shoe bags were scattered and our rows of coloured pegs

hanging from the wall, glass everywhere and sections of the ceiling lying on the floor. However, thankfully, as it was at night nobody was injured.

The next incident did have a humorous side, but at the time was treated very seriously as follows. The lavatories in kindergarten were the usual cubicles for both boys and girls. There was a gap beneath the doors and likewise the partitions that divided each cubicle. We were not encouraged to use these lavatories during class but to wait until the break time. On this occasion, I was in one cubicle when I became aware that somebody had arrived 'next door' which was not unusual because it would be another pupil. However, I decided to 'check it out' as they say nowadays and crawled under the partition..... the incumbent next door and 'on the throne' was Miss B herself!! She had the presence of mind not to get up and, likewise, I had the same presence of mind to crawl back from whence I came, rapidly, and then await my fate. Nothing was said, but when Susie came to collect me she was given an envelope addressed to my mother which did not bode well. It was a request for her to meet Miss B on the morrow to discuss Joseph's 'disgusting' behaviour! However, in the end my mother got away with a stern warning, so relief all round. In any case the teacher knew that the children were always crawling under the partitions and I just happened to pick the wrong occupant. I use the word 'lavatories' because that is what they were.... in my opinion 'toilets' is incorrect and would never have been used in 1940.

I progressed from class to class up the school in what, for us boys, were very exciting times. In 1944 when I would have been nearly 10, two of my friends, led by one who later became a well-known international designer of oil refineries, decided to make our own gunpowder to his own formula!! Accordingly, the three of us walked to the local chemist one lunchtime and, unbelievably today, purchased small packets of flowers of sulphur, saltpetre and iron filings. These were all rammed into a cardboard tube together with a waxed wick from a candle. On ignition, we did not get the anticipated 'Big Bang' but more like 'snap, crackle, pop' plus a cloud of smoke. This was just as well as all this took place in the playground surrounded by a mass of spectators.

At this time, the Government encouraged schools to keep rabbits to ease the meat crisis and our school immediately obtained 25 and, thanks to parents, home-made hutches and outdoor cages. Certain 'volunteers' who included me, were co-opted to look after these rabbits which meant daily hutch cleaning. I never knew what happened to the meat, but we did notice that all the lady teachers suddenly sported warm rabbit fur mittens.

As mentioned, one large schoolroom did incorporate heavy timber reinforcement to serve as an air raid shelter when needed. However, the main interest during a raid was the large box marked EFS (Emergency Food Supplies) which we knew contained not only tinned fruit but also bars of chocolate and boiled sweets, items we had hardly seen for two years. After a long raid, some of these were distributed to our great joy.

During the war the school, thankfully, did not receive a direct hit, but at the later stages suffered not one, but two V2 rockets. One exploded in the road about 300 yards away with major damage to housing and the other one hit the large church which stood at the entrance to the school driveway. Again, the damage was severe. Both explosions were in daylight in the afternoon and, tragically there were some casualties. My main memory though was the excitement of breaking into the wreckage, in spite of the 'Keep Out' notices, of the battered church hall. The building was in ruins and flooded to a depth of two foot with polluted water. I can still clearly remember the shock of seeing all the Sunday School books and Bibles floating amidst a forest of smashed wooden panelling. I did 'rescue' one Indian club as a souvenir. For us 10 year old boys, this episode was just one of many dubious attractions of the war.

As also mentioned earlier, if the siren went when we had passed that halfway mark to school then we had to run to the nearby public shelter and this did happen on three occasions. The shelter was underground and large, having been quickly constructed in 1939 by the 'cut and cover' method, one never forgets the smell of fresh and dusty new concrete. We had to sit on iron bunk beds and could not move out until the 'All Clear'. Fortunately, none of these raids lasted more than

30 minutes but it was worrying for the mothers at home who knew a raid had taken place. No such thing as mobile phones and the school could not afford to re-assure every parent.

The teachers were all female apart from the headmistress's aged father who took the boys for Cubs after school, but as the war progressed, this activity was curtailed. The actual teaching was harsh and fools were not suffered gladly, leading in some cases to expulsion. You had to have mastered arithmetic, writing, composition, spelling, literature, history and geography before being moved upwards each year, failure meant being switched to the 'Lower Class....' The most important subject by far was the arithmetic which had to embrace fractions as we were non-decimal and all currency, weights and measures etc. called for fractions of a base number, once learnt never forgotten in my case. A simple subject like 'Spelling' could also prove a minefield for error. The teacher would read an article which you would follow from your textbook so far so good... but for your homework you had to memorise the spelling of the major words as the following morning's test would be to write them out without reference to the book. Imagine my horror on one particular day in fourth year (aged 9) when two medical words were as follows....Ipecacuanha and Mecuricome. These were not in common use but that was not the point as your task was to remember the spelling and that particular incident is still live.

Everyone had to take part in all the class and school plays culminating in the main Christmas offering. No pupil, however shy, would be excused and the older pupils had to perform some serious acting.

The physical side of our education was, for the boys, cricket from March to October, plus athletics in high summer and PT (Physical Training) indoors and outdoors. For the girls, it was netball and rounders in place of cricket. Football was not on the curriculum mainly due to lack of space.

In the spring of 1945, my final year, we had to sit the vital '11 Plus exams' in spite of the rocket attacks including one that actually took place during an exam. However, I did manage to pass which enabled me to attend an excellent grammar school for the next five years until the summer of 1950 when I commenced work.

Looking back it was a dramatic 'baptism of fire' for a five year old at the start of his education but I appreciate now that we were lucky as so many others, even in the same area, did not enjoy that luck.

Architectural Wonders – by Janet Lovell

The Woodford Historical Society summer visits programme has recently included a theme. In 2015, we toured St Paul's Cathedral, in 2016 Westminster Cathedral and in 2017 we are offering a tour of Westminster Abbey. The guides who lead our private tours are both very informative and enthusiastic about the places they love and provide fascinating insights which are not available on general visits or even on hand-held video guides.

Westminster Cathedral, the Mother Church for Roman Catholics in England and Wales is perhaps a little less well known than the London beacons of the Church of England, but situated near Victoria Station, the Tower is a landmark of the area. The foundation stone was laid as recently as 1895, with the building taking a further eight years until completion. Internal decoration is ongoing to this day.

The site of the Cathedral was originally part of the marsh in the area. This was reclaimed by the Benedictine monks who built and owned Westminster Abbey and was subsequently used as a market and fairground. After the Reformation the ground was generally a waste area, although used for various forms of entertainment. This changed in the 1600s when part was used for a prison. The Catholic Church acquired the site in 1884.

The Cathedral was designed by the architect John Francis Bentley in the Early Christian Byzantine style, although his death in 1902 meant that he would not see the opening of the building. The design was highly praised by the Royal Institute of British Architects and plans of the building are on display within the Cathedral.



The interior of the Cathedral is richly decorated with fine mosaics, rich marble and the renowned 'Stations of the Cross' by Eric Gill. To this day, mosaics are being added and the completion was reported on 22 December 2016 of a new mosaic of St Alban near St George's Chapel. This was designed by the sculptor Christopher Hobbs and worked by Tessa Hunkin, one of Britain's leading mosaicists from the Mosaic Workshop. I was privileged to hear a talk by Tessa, who explained that whilst much of the mosaic is produced within the studio, the gold tesserae must be placed on site to ensure the best reflection of light in the specific area. William Brindle was responsible for the beautiful marble features within the Cathedral. His work may also be seen on The Albert Memorial. A marble merchant, his business was 'just across the river' from the site of the Cathedral, but he had also travelled to Europe, Africa and Asia to locate old disused Roman quarries to source exquisitely coloured marbles and in addition had purchased ancient marble. 29 structural columns were required for the nave and these were produced by turning on lathes with steel blades, grinding with sand and polishing with tin oxide. The Cathedral reports that 'The white Carrara capital for the top of each column was roughly shaped at the works and received its detailed carving after installation, two of Brindley's stonemasons taking up to three months to carve each one'. In addition, marble cladding for the chapels was required.

A tour of the Cathedral is not complete without a trip (by lift) to the Tower Viewing Gallery, which is 210 feet above street level. Clear descriptions placed at each viewing point enable recognition of places of interest in the magnificent view across London. If you are in the area on a day of good weather, but short of time, it is possible to enter the Cathedral (entrance is free) just to take the Tower Lift, for a very reasonable charge.

Lord Jenkin of Roding
Born 7 September 1926
Died 20 December 2016



Wanstead & Woodford Election Result 1964

Conservative hold

CP Jenkin	Conservative	19,580	55.31%
JE Lockwood	Liberal	8,901	25.15%
JG Morrell	Labour	6,917	19.54%

Electorate: 44,612; Turnout: 79.35%;
Majority: 10,679 (30.17%)

Patrick Jenkin succeeded Sir Winston Churchill as MP for Woodford in 1964, with the seat eventually becoming Wanstead and Woodford. He served his constituency until June 1987 and moved to the House of Lords on 3 November 1987.

He held many Government positions, including:

Secretary of State for Health and Social Security from May 1979 – September 1981
Secretary of State for Industry from September 1981 – June 1983
Secretary of State for Environment from June 1983 – September 1985

He was admitted to the Roll of Honorary Freemen of the London Borough of Redbridge on 4 May 1988

He was appointed to the Chair of Forest Healthcare Trust in 1991.

Patrick was born in Edinburgh, joined the Cameron Highlanders in 1945 and attended Jesus College, Cambridge. He achieved a First Class Honours Degree in Law and was called to the Bar in 1952, practising at the Chancery and tax bar until 1957 when he became secretary to the

chemicals division of the Distillers' Company. He became a Local Councillor for Hornsey and was subsequently selected as the Parliamentary Candidate for Woodford.

After 50 years in Parliament, Lord Jenkin took advantage of the 2014 legislation which enabled Peers to retire from the House of Lords, as he felt he had "done what he could offer". He felt that older Peers should make way for younger people with suitable, up-to-date experience. Although not the first to resign, he was the first to make a valedictory speech, which was permitted under the legislation. On the 16 December 2014 his short speech included.....

"I am sometimes asked what legacy one can point to. I am not sure that I am the right person to do that, but I offer two suggestions. In the other place I became Secretary of State for Industry and inherited six very major state-owned nationalised industries. As a former Chief Secretary, I could tell their chairmen and chief executives that there was no way they were going to get their investment requirements funded by the Treasury. I started with British Telecom and told the chairman that, if he wanted to have his £28 billion investment programme or whatever it was, he would have to go to the market and have 51% from the private sector. I look back at that decision: I was able to persuade first the Prime Minister and then the Cabinet that BT should be privatised. Other noble Lords were responsible for subsequent stages, but the decision to publish the White Paper and introduce the Bill was when I was Secretary of State. I look back on that with some pride. Nobody has ever suggested that that one should be reversed and I think it set a pattern.

What about this House? Some have pointed to the Science and Technology Select Committee report Science and Society of 1999. It was this report that convinced the scientific community—not just in the UK but across the world—that, if you wanted the public to support and understand, you had to engage with the public and not just preach down to them, and not just on the public understanding of science. It took a while for the message to get across, but there are very few national scientific bodies in this country or anywhere else that do not have their science and society activity, of which, quite rightly, they are very proud. Ten years after that report was published, the British Council organised a conference in London to celebrate the report. It was attended by the representatives of more than 55 different countries. As someone who never did any science at school or university at all, I felt rather pleased with that. It has not stopped: only last week at a gathering downstairs, to which I had been invited but did not attend, my son accepted an award for what is called "outstanding contribution to science". It was meant for me. I am completely flabbergasted. However, there it is.

I am over my time. I must end by thanking all those who have made these 50 years possible, including my former constituents in Wanstead and Woodford, the clerks and staff of both Houses, and all the people who keep the wheels turning over and make it possible for us to do our job in the way that we do: the Library staff, the catering staff, the security staff, the police, the doorkeepers, the Printed Paper Office and many others. I offer to them all my heartfelt thanks. Above all, I thank my colleagues for their friendship and forbearance, and for their patience in listening to me this evening. My Lords, I will miss you all dreadfully."

House of Lords Library Note – House of Lords: Maiden and valedictory speeches, 2010-2015

Following the speech, the House broke with tradition with a round of applause.

Lord Jenkin formally left the House of Lords on 6 January 2015, but retained his title.

An abiding personal memory I have of the self-deprecating nature of the man was at a garden party at Buckingham Palace. I was privileged to attend as a representative of Redbridge with several others. Patrick Jenkin, as he then was, greeting us by doffing his top hat. However, when the hat was raised, to his great amusement, the narrow leather band (sweatband) inside became detached from the hat and remained on his head. This was not an embarrassing moment, but one for great mirth.

Janet Lovell