



# Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society  
Founded 1932

**Newsletter Spring 2024**

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## **Editorial**

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Welcome to 2024 and I hope you are all well.

Woodford celebrates two anniversaries this year. One already mentioned in the Autumn 2023 Newsletter and that is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Churchfields School. The school is having an Open Day on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June, all are welcome from 11.00 a.m. The other is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Woodford Rugby Club. Richard de Berry, Club President, has written an article about its history.

We have been in contact with the Museum for an update on its opening. Gerard Greene has reported back, to say, that all the exhibits are installed, however he is still working on the text panels and the interactives are still under production. A possible revised opening date could be late March/early April. I will contact him around Easter for more news. Saima Qureshi, Heritage Assistant has let me know that they have finished the second phase of cataloguing the collection, with all the items now boxed and listed. The new collection has been catalogued temporarily, in the same way as the previous collection, so we are able to locate everything. The collection is now ready for access by any researcher and members of the Woodford Historical Society. They are hoping to start the third and final phase of this project (creating a full catalogue) at some point this year. The Society will publish the catalogue when completed, (probably attached to a Newsletter).

No visits have been planned for 2024. If any member would like to arrange a visit, we are more than happy to assist with the administration. Consideration must be given to the cost, numbers, access (bearing in mind that some of our members have mobility issues) and location. Ideas for visits are always welcome. Judith Roberts is busy booking the proposed talks for the 24/25 season, again ideas are always welcome. Judith does try to attend a talk given by the Speaker, prior to booking them.

Enclosed with this Newsletter are papers for the AGM:  
Minutes of the last AGM, Agenda, Constitution

There are proposed changes to be considered for an increase in the membership fees and the Constitution.

The remaining talks for the 23/24 season are:

14<sup>th</sup> March:           AGM and Digging into the Archives           Peter Lawrence

11<sup>th</sup> April:            Rebuilding London after 1666           Peter Smith

We have decided to include an additional talk for the 23/24 season, and this will be on:

8<sup>th</sup> May:               Spitalfields                               Jill Finch

I look forward to seeing you all.

Sue Ralph

Chair

## **POST CARD FROM THE PRESIDENT – SPRING 2024**

Dear Members

Another year often heralds new beginnings and has done so for Linda and I so this “postcard” is a bit shorter but more “newsy”.

Many of you will recall me saying that when calls for my talks began to increase within our newly adopted county of Norfolk, Linda decided to volunteer for “National Coastwatch”, a charity that, since the 1990s, has gradually replaced the visual coastguard stations around the shorelines of England and Wales. Linda started at Caister-on-sea, alongside the local lifeboat station. There she became the station manager. That was 10 years ago, she is now the Regional Trustee for the East of England and, amongst other duties, oversees visits by the Royal Patron, the Princess Royal. A few weeks ago, Linda escorted Princess Anne during her visit to Canvey Island. I now need to reveal that for several years I’ve been the non-operational Secretary of NCI Cromer Station, so together we have recently been involved in the planning of a visit by H.R.H. to our station. By the time you read this “postcard”, the visit would have taken place in January so I’m hoping by now we have returned to having more time to ourselves.

Covid changed several aspects of our lives. The use of video conferencing by many clubs and special interest groups, including history societies, has now become an accepted alternative to face-to-face meetings, especially during the winter. A very recent example for me has been a Zoom talk to Walthamstow History society in February. Another change has been the “take-over” of Facebook by people of a certain age, mainly over sixties, using the platform for reminiscing and sharing local history. Again, some will know that I’m quite active in groups local to Woodford and London. I especially enjoy linkups with past pupils from Churchfields, some now living in other countries. I’m sure that the interaction keeps my brain sharp and helps those who haven’t been associated with Woodford as long as others understand how Woodford has evolved. I’ve also picked up fresh illustrations of the area and I will be sharing some of them with you when we have the A.G.M. in March.

I’d better finish now and get back to helping with the local Royal visit, which will be water off a duck’s back for Linda. She has met Princess Anne so many times recently that NCI colleagues call H.R.H. “Linda’s new best friend” !!!

“Bye for now.....

Very best wishes

Peter

## Woodford Rugby Club

## Richard De Berry

It all started, perhaps in 1924, with a conversation amongst a group of young men who worked in the City of London, having recently left separate public schools. They would travel to work on the old steam train that took them from Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Woodford into Liverpool Street. Invariably they shared the same compartment and played bridge.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have a rugby club, for instance in Woodford" they thought but how could they go about it. Somehow their wishes reached the ears of Frank Ellerton, who was an insurance broker living in Broomhill Road, Woodford Green. Known to one and all as "FE", he moved with speed and purpose. "FE" had been a player at Clifton, near Bristol before the First World War and he was keen to set up a rugby club in Woodford. He held a meeting involving several young men and Lt. Col Colley (Headmaster of St Aubyns School). He announced to all that he had acquired a suitable ground in a meadow, beside the Woodford Wells Cricket Club in Monkams Lane. They were then up and running. "FE"'s drive and authority cannot be underestimated in the years that followed.

The first fixture vs an old Haileyburyans XV was on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1924. "FE" went on to secure a full fixture list, for the first season. Membership increased rapidly as did the standard of play. Facilities for changing, baths and refreshments were arranged at the Men's Club at Woodford Green. Alcoholic refreshments were taken at The Castle Hotel, a hundred yards away.

The next big step was to acquire a permanent pitch at Highams – the club remains there to this day. The opening match was on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1928, between two near international sides, captained by Wavell Wakefield and David McMyn, who were captains respectively of England and Scotland. Nearly 3000 attended this match.

One of the England team was unavailable so a young man by the name of Douglas Kendrew, who played for Woodford was brought in. Following his debut, he quickly got an England trial, received an England Cap and in the same year was in the party that toured New Zealand. He achieved two caps whilst at Woodford and then went on to join Leicester, achieving ten England caps in all. He was a soldier by profession, He rose to the rank of Major-General gaining four D.S.O's. He became Governor General of Western Australia.

The 1930s saw increasing successes for Woodford, playing against elite sides such as Saracens and Wasps. Membership continued to grow and on occasions six sides were being fielded.

In 1938 as war was looming, the project to build a clubhouse at Highams, was completed. It was possibly the best season ever as out of 26 matches, only 6 were lost. Then came the "Great Gap" as war was declared and soon 95% of the young men in the Club were in the Armed Forces. This meant that all fixtures were cancelled until further notice. Guy Hepburn, an outstanding player, had been captain in 1938-1939 and despite the interruption of war he remained captain until 1946 when fixtures resumed. Sadly, his playing days were over as he had been injured fighting the Japanese in the Far East. His brother Peter then took over for 2 years to be followed by another brother Pat for 2 years. Peter was an excellent fly-half who had a full season playing as an international for Scotland between 1948-1949 and winning 9 caps. Woodford never did make it into first class rugby. Things might have been so different had it not been for the War.

By 1947 the Club was running three teams and continued to rebuild the playing sides. Several players were provided to Eastern Counties. Alan Birrell's captaincy

between 1956 and 1961 was important. He had been injured in the Korean War sustaining an ankle injury, but he continued to play. He was one of the longest serving captains in the Club. He was one of those people who had a genuine interest in how the lower sides of the Club were doing. This was appreciated by all those who played and supported these teams as a new era was approached.

On 5<sup>th</sup> October 1949, Woodford celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They played a game against "the rest of the Eastern Counties", which attracted a large crowd. To commemorate what "FE" had achieved for the Club, a magnificent oil painting was commissioned by the world renowned, artist Frank Salisbury.

Playing fortunes dipped slightly in the early 50`s but recovered in time for the opening of a further extension to the club house in 1954.



"Sadly "FE"'s health was poor in 1955, he spent time in London Hospital and he sadly died shortly afterwards at home on the 7<sup>th</sup> December. It was the end of an era, as he had given so much to the Club. His ashes were scattered on the pitch and matches went ahead, as this is what he would have wanted.

There were no further internationals from the club up until the present day. Those players who wished to further their playing careers have tried their luck at first class clubs, The "sons of

Woodford" who did well were as follows.

### **Old Club House**

In the mid 60`s, Gerry Janes spent 4 seasons with Wasps, Johnnie Baker 2 seasons with London Welsh, before returning to Woodford. Ian Palmer at St Luke`s College, Exeter and Wasps to be followed by an outstanding career as a coach; Andy Saull who progressed through from the Minis to gain under 16 and under 20 level caps, then had a first-class career notably at Saracens; Barry Carter who played several seasons for Wasps; Malcolm Myers played for Blackheath.

A regular feature has been the Easter tour from the late 50s until the present day. It takes place in the south of England, Ireland and France.

The 70s saw the introduction of mini and youth rugby, kick started by Harold Colley and Charlie Price. The 80s saw the introduction of League rugby, which made County matches not so significant. The Club continued with its successes winning 2 Essex Cups, 4 Essex Sevens Tournaments and appearing in the finals of the Middlesex Sevens at Twickenham.

The Club has continued to maintain its financial viability. The Donkey Derby, from the late Seventies to the mid Eighties attracted over 4000 people, the Police were required to manage the crowds. An enormous beer tent was set up, at the time alcohol was not normally available all day.

In 1994 the long awaited, new Club house was opened, providing modern facilities, for the players, social members, and spectators. A magnificent balcony was included maximising the views and beautiful location of the Club.

Today Woodford is an all-embracing club, welcoming female players, three regular senior teams, eight mini teams and seven youth teams and the wider community of Woodford and visitors. The club and its location, with vistas over Epping Forest has proved popular for a variety of events such as private hire, business meetings, a creche and clubs.

### New Club House



### GHOST SIGNS

Sue Ralph

Ghost signs are reminders of a bygone age of advertising. They can be found on the sides of old building or on shop signs. They advertised the business that was undertaken in the building. It could have been a grocer, a brewer, tailors, cafe, the list is endless. They were used from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and hand painted

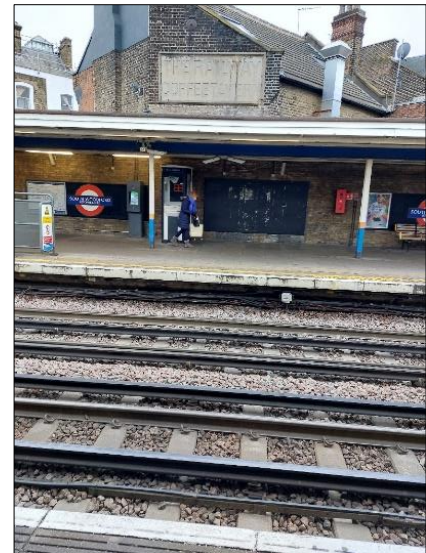
Local signs include:

Station Passage, George Lane



69 George Lane

Locally the sign seen by many each day, is the one to be found on the wall of the building that faces onto the platforms of South Woodford station, advertising the Coffee Shop.



A faded sign of Yager's Costumes to Measure in Stamford Hill, London.

In Stoke Newington Church Street, there are several signs that advertise the Westminster Gazette, Criterion Matches, Gillette Razors and Fount Pens Repaired.

If you would like to upload more examples of ghost signs, details of how to do this can be found at [Historic England](http://Historic England).

If on your travels locally, you see any ghost signs, we would love for you to take a photograph and forward it to [felicity.banks@btinternet.com](mailto:felicity.banks@btinternet.com) or [sue@theralphs.me.uk](mailto:sue@theralphs.me.uk) so we include them in our Archives.

I would like to thank Judith and Mick Roberts who provided the local photographs.

## Churchfields School from 1874 to Now

Churchfields School first opened to the children of Woodford, and the surrounding area, on the 5th January 1874. Originally, Churchfields consisted of two Schools – the Boys and a combined Girls' and Infants'. In the first week, the Girls and Infants admitted 36 pupils with spellings, grammar and tables set as homework, and the Boys admitted 63 pupils.

Fees of around 1d to 9d a week (equivalent to around £2 a week) were payable until the introduction of free education in 1891. The school's first government inspection report noted **"This school is instructed and ordered with much care and promises to be most efficient. The buildings are excellent."**

In 1878, the Infants became a separate department. Churchfields continued in the form of a 3-department school with the leaving age raised to 14 in line with the Education Act 1918.

In 1937, it was decided that children over 11 would be transferred to the new South Woodford Secondary School – St Barnabas – now called Woodbridge High School. The Boy's and Girls' Departments were amalgamated to form a Junior Mixed School in 1937, the Infants' retaining their independence except for a short period during the Second World War.



### **The Land and School Buildings**

The land on which the Churchfields School was built was part of the Woodford Hall Estate and was offered for sale by auction in 1871. The School Board bought 4 of the 34 plots for a total of £420. The road known now as Churchfields was then called Chelmsford Road East. It is not known why the school was called Churchfields.

In 1885 a new Infants' School was opened. A further 2 plots were bought in 1888

The new Girls' School was built in 1891 to the north-west of the original building.

The Hall was built in 1908 and shared by the Infants' and Girls' School. An area of land had already been bought from A. Lister-Harrison's family before 1921 when two more sections of field were purchased for playing fields by the Essex Education Committee.

Another piece of land, east of the original plots, was bought in 1949 for the construction of the Dining Hall and Canteen – hatted classrooms and the New Hall also stood on this land.

The new Infants School was constructed close by and opened in 1974 followed by a nursery school in 1975.

Design and construction of a new Junior School building was approved in 2004 and construction delayed until 2009. The old Junior School building was demolished in 2011.



The nearby Redbridge Drama Centre is sited in the building that was part of the school.

## An Outstanding School

The school was graded *Outstanding* in its last Ofsted inspection.

In 2022, the school was featured as a case study of good practice in *The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education* by the Department for Education.

An Open day is to be held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June from 11.00 a.m.

Copied from Churchfields web site with their permission.

## The Great Wooden Spoon of Ilford

Ilana Barnett

If you have ever walked up Cranbrook Road in Ilford, you are bound to have seen Wetherspoon's *Great Spoon of Ilford* pub. Now, although I wouldn't recommend it for a meal, I would suggest that you pop in, buy a drink, and take a look around. As with all Wetherspoon's, it pays homage to the history of the local area, and in this case, its pictures and statue honours a man called William Kempe, to whom we owe the only written record of a drinking vessel known as the Great Spoon of Ilford.



Who Was Will Kempe?



*Will Kempe by Allan Sly*

Not much is known about Will Kempe's background. Guesses for his date of birth range widely from the 1540s to the 1560s. Some researchers have speculated that he had strong links to Norwich, others that he was related to the Kempes of Olantigh in Kent.

During most of his life, Kempe was a popular comedic actor; beloved by his public and held in high esteem by his peers. He was also for a time the 'clown' of choice for William Shakespeare, performing in several of his plays at the Rose theatre. Kempe's name appears as one of 26 actors listed as performers in the first folio of Shakespeare's plays, and it's believed that Shakespeare created the characters Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Peter in *Romeo and Juliet* specifically for Kempe. Unfortunately, for some unknown reason, Kempe eventually parted ways with Shakespeare and fell on to hard times. This may have been the reason, why he came up with one of the most brilliant acts of self-promotion to ever be attempted and for one month, Kempe's name was on the tip of everyone's tongue and his star which was beginning to fade, blazed brightly.



## An Unusual Wager

Kempe's wager was simple, there was no time limit, and he was allowed to rest and recover for any number of days, but he had to dance the entire way to Norwich. George Spratt was engaged as an overseer to ensure that Kempe did not cheat. Kempe himself laid down a sum of money before he left on condition that he would receive 3x the amount when he completed the challenge.

Kempe's started his dance in London, leaving from the Lord Mayor's house on the 11th February 1600 in Whitechapel surrounded by onlookers who gave him bowed sixpences and groats and warm wishes. A woodcut on the front of Kempe's published account of his journey show him wearing an elaborate costume possibly similar to that worn by clowns and fools. As well as Spratt, Kempe was attended by Thomas Slye, a taberer and William Bee, a servant.

## A Stopover in Ilford

From Whitechapel, Kempe danced his way to Mile End and from there to Stratford and then on to Ilford. In Ilford he stopped at a local tavern and was entreated to take some refreshment there. Ilford was famous for its unique measure of ale which was known as a 'Great Spoon'. A spoon is the equivalent nowadays of two pints and so a great spoon would have been much larger. The exact amount is unknown, although there is some speculation that the ale was poured into a large wooden utensil possibly in the shape of a spoon from which customers could quench their thirst.



During his 'dance' it was said that Kempe abstained from alcohol as he believed that it wasn't good for his health, but in his own account (*Kempe's nine daies wonder performed in a daunce from London to Norwich*) he gives a different reason for his refusal of the Great Spoon. He wrote that '*but being afrayde of the olde Proverbe (He had need of a long spoone that eats with the deuill), I soberly gave my boone companys the slip*'.

## Journey's End

On the 8 March 1600, Kempe arrived in Norwich to the sound of fanfare and the cheers and shouts of a noisy and excited throng of spectators. Kempe's extraordinary dancing feat turned out to be his swan song and little was heard from him afterwards. It is believed that he died in poverty and obscurity, not long afterwards, possibly during a plague outbreak in 1603. This date would tie in with an entry in St Saviour in Southwark Parish which simply mentions the death of "Kempe, a man". Whether this is the jiggling, eccentric, flamboyant, larger than life William Kempe, dancer extraordinaire, is unclear but it does seem that the man that once lit up the Elizabethan theatre, left his final stage with barely a flicker. As to the Great Spoon of Ilford sadly nothing more is known. However, the memory of the Great Spoon and Will Kempe are kept alive by none other than a Wetherspoon's pub.

Images: Photo of the Great Spoon of Ilford Pub and the Statue are mine.  
The image of the Will Kempe the Clown is Public Domain.

## A Book Review

by Georgina Green

Sir William Addison, Kt, JP, DL, FSA (1905-1992)

Author, Historian, Jurist and Verderer of Epping Forest, An Essex Worthy

by Richard Morris, OBE



Sir William Addison was born in 1905 in Yorkshire but spent much of his life in Loughton and Epping before he died in 1992. Like the author of this biography, he was a respected local historian who some members may remember. I was lucky enough to meet him on a number of occasions and I visited his house to interview him as part of an oral history project in 1984. However, this book has opened my eyes to much I did not know about his life.

Sir William had a good education until the age of 15 but he earned the respect of many by his hard work and intelligence. In 1936 he moved south, to take over a bookshop in Loughton with his wife, Phoebe, and began a life-long interest in the local area and the whole county of Essex. Between 1945 – 55 he wrote ten books which were well received and established his reputation as an author of works which were both scholarly and entertaining. Eight more books were published between 1973 and his death. The book includes a chapter about the Essex coast from an unfinished manuscript. Richard Morris details how each book came to be written and in doing so will probably have awakened a new interest in Addison's writing. In exploring Addison's literary output, Morris includes many of the sources used by Addison in his research and this is a useful tool for others interested in the subjects covered.

The book covers many aspects of Addison's life including his work as a Justice of the Peace for over 25 years, when he became involved in many facets of the Magistrate's wider role. A knighthood was conferred on Addison in the New Year Honours List for 1974 in recognition of his work in the magistracy and other areas of public life. He became an influential figure in several historical organisations, both local history societies and Essex bodies.

Addison served as a Verderer of Epping Forest 1957 – 1984 and given that Richard Morris served in that capacity for nearly twenty years himself, it is no surprise that a third of the book focuses on aspects of the Forest. Morris looks in detail at the work he was involved with and the books which he wrote about the Forest. He was able to access the original manuscript of *A Portrait of Epping Forest*, published in 1977 but omitting some 10,000 words which were more controversial about issues facing the Conservators at that time. These passages were transcribed by Morris in 2006 and published by the Loughton & District Historical Society. They make interesting reading after 30 years have passed. Some passages are also included in this book where relevant to make a point, for example when looking at the chapter on the Woodford Green avenue of Poplars.

Richard Morris has produced an excellent account of Sir William Addison's life and work. It includes many reference sources and my only reservation is the omission of an index which would have greatly assisted the reader in finding particular points of interest. The book is 99 pages, plus a coloured insert of illustrations, with a soft laminated cover. It was published by Loughton & District Historical Society late last year and costs £7.50 ISBN 987-1-905269-38-9 Copies can be obtained from Loughton Book Shop, 150 High Road, Loughton, or from the Epping Forest Visitor Centres at Chingford and High Beach or email [verdmorris@btinternet.com](mailto:verdmorris@btinternet.com) for further information.

Georgina Green, 14 January 2024

## SPANNA

Rowena Rudkin.

In October 2023 SPANA, the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad, celebrated its centenary at St Ethelberga's centre in Bishopsgate.

Why should this be of interest to the Woodford History Society, you may ask? It is of interest because Jeremy Hulme, the Chief Executive Officer, from 1989 to 2016 and his wife, Diana nee Rendell, were both local people. Jeremy was a pupil at Chigwell School while Diana attended the Red School as it was then, where one of her classmates and friend was Christine Daniels, younger sister of the late Maureen Hoskins, a former Mayor of Redbridge and a member of this Society.



SPANNA was founded by Kate Hosali, one of those redoubtable people who just do things. Moved to compassion by the sight of working animals suffering in North Africa she went into a market place in Algeria with medical equipment and tended the wounds on a donkey's back. Other wounded donkeys appeared and, she said, she hardly had time to look at anything but donkeys' wounds that day.

The Society, originally the Society for the Protection of Animals in North Africa, was founded on the 2nd October 1927 and Kate Hosali never lived in Britain again. As a woman alone she visited the souks and stable yards of 58 towns in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia becoming known as "Toubiha" the lady doctor. She not only treated the animals but helped their owners, and particularly the owners' children, to learn how to treat them and care for those animals themselves.

Meanwhile her daughter, Nina, co-ordinated the Society's activities from London. The first veterinary clinic was opened in 1927, others followed and in 1930 a converted Ford van became the first mobile clinic going into souks. There are now 28 clinics and 34 mobile clinics.



World War II restricted development but did not stop it. Since 1945 the work has been confirmed and expanded into other countries, which is why its name needed to be changed to Society for Protection of Animals Abroad. Such was its renown that, when the University of Abbas Addaba wanted to open a veterinary school in 2003, it sought SPANA's advice. Ten years later, Jeremy was the guest of honour at their celebration of the event and several members of the Society, including myself, went for that occasion which Jeremy combined with a Supporters' Tour.

These Supporters Tours which Jeremy started, were an opportunity for members to see the work of the Society for themselves. At first, I had intended to go on one; it seemed wrong to spend the money on more than one rather than giving it to the Society. However, when I saw how much it heartened vets and other staff members such as farriers and saddlers in some very poor parts of the world, that people would go and see them and recognise the work they were doing, I changed my mind and went on other tours. Particularly rewarding on these tours were visits to the souks where farmers brought their animals, not only for treatment but for vaccination. One did not need veterinary knowledge to see which animals had been brought regularly, had been vaccinated and those which were brought because they were suffering. Nor is it only the animals who benefit. Many families rely on their working animals for their livelihoods: a sick animal or the loss of an animal adversely affects the welfare of an entire family.



Today, SPANA operates in over 50 countries, its motto has become, "Treat, train, teach". However, because of the recent droughts that have afflicted so much of Africa much of the funding has been spent on fodder as well as on the medical supplies.



Working animals – especially Morocco's mountain mules – have been crucial to the rescue effort.

Since I started this article, Morocco has been hit by a violent earthquake. Some of SPANA's clinics were affected but the staff happily survived and have played their part in search for people and animals buried in that disaster and also in getting food and medicine to villagers inaccessible by motor transport on mules. The professor of the Veterinary School of Rabat University was at the Centenary celebration and gave us a vivid,

illustrated, account of this work.

Kate Hosali died in 1944, Nina who continued her mother's work, was awarded an MBE in 1976 and died in 1987 aged 89. Jeremy and Diana Hulme retired in 2016 and, sadly, Diana died most unexpectedly the following year, so Jeremy, although the father of a loving family, has spent his retirement alone. He is artistically gifted, paints and sculpts, the proceeds of his work going to charity. He and Diana are Woodfordians to be proud of and a hard act to follow.

