



Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society
Founded 1932

Newsletter Autumn 2018

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Editorial

I am delighted to welcome you to our 2018-19 season and hope you have enjoyed our very sunny summer, during which, of course, we ran our programme of visits, several of which are described in articles within the newsletter. Our previous newsletter also prompted articles from Kate Poole and Nigel Pitt who have provided further information on Knighton Villas and Baggotts Book Shop respectively. My thanks to all who have forwarded articles and may I please remind you that contributions to the newsletter are always welcome.

Peter Lawrence, our President, will be opening our season of talks on Monday 17 September. It is possible only to include titles of talks within our small programme leaflet and therefore additional details are set out within the newsletter. I hope you will find the programme to be of interest.

After experiencing significant problems with our website, the decision has been made to cancel the arrangements with our current provider, as the present agreement shortly comes to an end. I am very grateful to Nigel Pitt who will be setting up and maintaining a completely new website for us. He has previously helped to set up a website for a small charity and maintained it for many years. He would, however, like to work with someone on this (no experience necessary). If you would like to help, please speak to any member of the committee or, of course, to Nigel himself.

Now, may I please ask you to seriously consider if you could volunteer to help/join the committee either immediately or at the next AGM on 18 March 2019. I had hoped that my health would improve greatly during the Society's summer break, but, to my disappointment this is not so and any improvement is proving to be extremely slow. Therefore, with great regret I must notify you that I will not be standing for re-election to the committee at the 2019 AGM, my wife Janet will also not be seeking re-election. We will, of course, continue to support the Society in the best way we can after March 2019 and, until that time, will work to produce the scheduled newsletter, trips documentation etc. I will also do my very best to attend meetings. During the year, Janet and I will be preparing a detailed handover file of information, together with a computer memory stick of templates, in case the new chairman and committee wish to continue to use the current formats.

I hope you will enjoy the newsletter and our planned programme for 2018-19 and I look forward to meeting you again at the meetings.

John Lovell

Memories – by Dick Walker

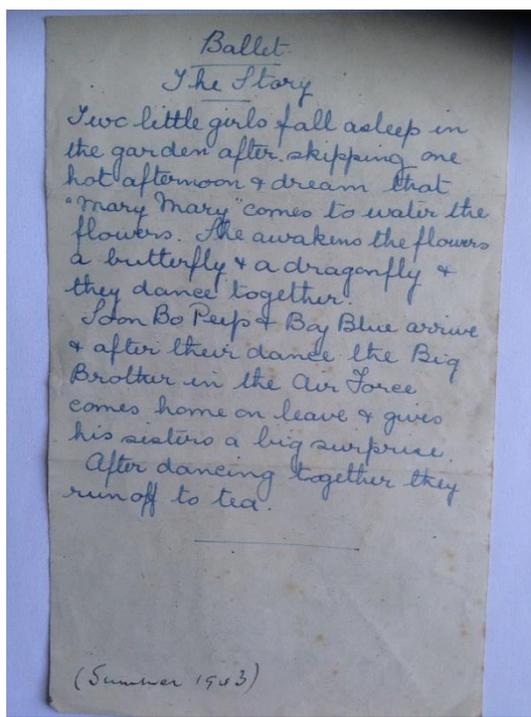
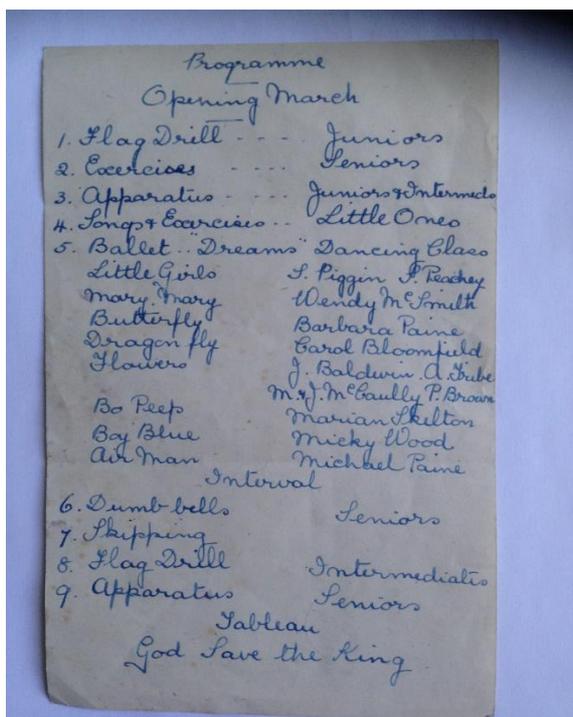
Our President Peter Lawrence, in his talk at the AGM, mentioned the ice house from old Woodford House which had still existed in the garden of a house in Buckingham Road. It reminded me of playing in the garden of an empty house at the end of Buckingham Road during the 1940s. There

was a strange dark building in the garden which we thought might have been a tomb and we were scared to go near it and investigate. It was possible however to get into the house. There was a panel in the bathroom above the bath which revealed the entrance to the roof space. From there it was possible to get out on to a flat section of the roof from which there was a good view. What would my mother have said had she known where I had been!

Mention of the house "The Roses" reminded me that as part of the "Dig for Victory" campaign during WW2 a small area of Forest land immediately behind The Roses was fenced off and turned into allotments. Our neighbour, Mr Pressman, had the one nearest The Roses and I remember him digging it two spits deep, putting the first spit with the turf in the bottom spit and the second spit on top. I think we were given some of the produce. I remember going into the house when the auction of its contents was taking place but no details of it. The bricks of the demolished house were dressed clean and used for the perimeter wall. A vague memory tells me the men working on the bricks were prisoners of war.

Were you there? – by John Lovell

My thanks to Joe Branson and Michael Paine for providing the information for this article.



Joe Branson and Michael Paine have been lifelong friends having lived opposite each other in Knighton Drive during their very early years, although they now live in Wimborne, Dorset and Cirencester respectively

Michael's father was a founder member of Woodford Historical Society as treasurer and I am delighted to report that both Michael and Joe have continued to support the Society by donating items and writing articles for the newsletter.

When meeting in April this year, Michael passed to Joe the handwritten programme shown above. Dated summer 1943, it is in the hand of Miss/Mrs Adams the founder of the Blue School and was the draft for the subsequently printed programme for the school summer fete held at All Saints'

Church. (Michael was subsequently able to donate to the Society a rather faint, printed copy of the programme. Perhaps one of our readers has a clearly printed copy in their possession.)

Joe was particularly interested in the names of the cast – Wendy Mackenzie Smith of Kings Avenue, whose father was also a pre-war member of Woodford Historical Society, S. Peachey a well-known Woodford family and known to Joe's two sons, Barbara Paine, Michael's sister and also Michael as 'airman'. Other pupils are not recognised, but Joe does know that the late Jamie McCann and his brother also attended.

Joe wonders if any of our readers remember this event/the school. If you would like to contact Joe, please let me know (tel: 020 8505 3640 e-mail: lovell.john@sky.com) and I will pass on your details.

7 Knighton Villas – by Kate Poole

I have lived at the former number 7 Knighton Villas with my sister since 1982. I found the article by Lynn Haseldine Jones about the Villas fascinating (*Woodford Times Newsletter Spring 2018 pages 8–14 - editor*) and can add some facts which may be of interest.

We have the deeds dating back to 1861, when Mr Richard Hallett of Kilburn built the row of ten semi-detached houses on what was then virgin forest land. They are all four storeys high, with two basement rooms, one large room on the ground floor, which can be cut in half by folding double doors – ours are beautifully hung and wonderfully easy to move, although they are so large. There are two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor and two attic rooms. These have no fireplaces, so presumably were meant for servants, which means that, oddly, for all their size, they are actually only two-bedroomed houses. Numbers one to six look larger than the others, because they have roofs with gables at the sides, whereas seven to ten have or had - ours is the only one left, of course – the gable at the front, so the top storey looks narrower, but they are, in fact, all the same size. Our house differs from the others in having a basement kitchen built on at the side. We assumed at first that it was a later addition, but on the earliest map we have found (1866), numbers seven to ten all have a 'bump' on the side, which one to six do not. We assume that the present kitchen was built as a scullery, as the back basement room has a very wide fireplace, obviously intended to hold a stove.

In 1862, Mr Hallett sold numbers five and six to Mrs Harriet Ashby, who took up residence in number six and presumably let number five. In 1881, when the houses were valued at £575 each, Mr Hallett made his will, leaving the eight remaining houses to his eight nieces and nephews. You would think that it would have been logical to leave one to each of them, but no, he left all eight houses to all eight heirs between them. This led to great complications later, as they all had to agree to any sale (particularly as one nephew, Stanley Hallett, had emigrated to Washington State, USA, which must have held things up considerably). The first complication happened in 1885. Running along the backs of the houses, between the forest and back gardens, was a forty-foot wide lane. Each house owned its own breadth, but all the occupiers had right-of-way along its length, because at the bottom of each garden was a stable and coach-house. Likewise, in the front gardens there was a carriage sweep, so that each pair of house owners could use each other's gate (you can't do a three-point-turn with a horse and carriage). Well, in 1885, Mrs Ashby, who owned numbers five and six, wanted the back lane to be halved in width. No reason is given on the documents, but it seems logical to assume that she had also acquired some forest land behind and wanted a bit more space to build houses. The dispute went on for some time, but eventually the lane was narrowed to its present twenty feet and the rest was sold to Mrs Ashby. There's still a puzzle, because the houses which back on to the lane were built in the 1920s or 30s, not in the 1880s. We shall probably never know what Mrs Ashby was up to. As you note, in 1871, number seven was occupied by John Conquest, his wife and two servants.

We became interested in the history of the house because, when we moved there were a few things we couldn't understand. Why were there so many coat hooks? One row in the hall – reasonable enough, but two long rows in the basement passage? Why were there so many ink splashes on the two bedroom floors? And why, with such thick walls, could we always smell cigarette smoke in the basement? The attached house, when we arrived was a retirement home housing thirteen elderly ladies and the night nurse's flat was in the basement. She was evidently a heavy smoker, but we couldn't think why the smell was filtering through bricks and plaster. And who laid our beautiful floors, patterned in various-coloured oak, stars and in the bedrooms and attics, and fanciful entwined squares on the ground floor? To try to solve these little mysteries I began to hunt through the census returns. The 1881 census solved three of the questions straight away. As numbers seven and eight had been the little boarding-school run by Laura Cunnington, there must have been a connecting door, now blocked, between the two houses, probably in the basement, hence the cigarette smell, finding its way through tiny gaps in the brickwork. The rows of coat hooks were also explained, as were the ink splashes in the bedrooms- they had obviously been the classrooms. And although we still didn't know who, we had found out that the lovely floors had been laid before 1881. I don't know whether Miss Cunnington's school was a failure and she had to close, or a success and she had to move to larger premises (or maybe she married a rich man and could retire – that would be nice), but by 1890 the school had gone. But the connecting door was not blocked and I eventually discovered why. In the 1898 Post Office Directory, number seven does not appear, but number eight is listed as 'The Woodford and Buckhurst Hill District Essex Field Club' and more bizarrely 'The Epping Forest School of the Science and Art Department, South Kensington'. The 1891 census does indeed list William Cole as the Head of the household – he is described as a County Council clerk, but there are also, under numbers seven and eight, four other Coles, including Henry Cole, an artist. The name Cole and the place South Kensington jogged my memory and I remembered that Sir Henry Cole was the founder and first Director of the Victoria and Albert museum (V&A), which, when it opened, was simply called the South Kensington Museum. I contacted a friend who worked at the V&A and discovered that Sir Henry had died in 1882, leaving several unmarried children. At numbers seven and eight lived, William, Frances, with her own income, Jane, a school art mistress, Benjamin, a barrister's clerk and Henry, an artist. I think the idea of their home being a branch of the South Kensington Museum was a family joke, which the Directory took seriously.

I don't know where all the Coles disappeared to, but by 1901 they had gone and number seven was occupied by James Keeves, a wholesale ironmonger, his wife and four children aged from thirteen to two years. By this time the doorway must have been blocked. But we were proved right, because last year, when our basement was being repaired after the dreadful damage done when our non-resident neighbour demolished the former number eight, when the plaster was taken off the basement walls, there was the suspected doorway, at the foot of the basement stairs. The wooden framework had simply been filled with rubble and plastered over. Wonderful Victorian craftsmanship! No wonder we could smell the cigarette smoke. The Keeves family were still here in 1911.

As for the later history of the house, in 1924, the surviving three Hallett nephews and nieces sold number seven to Albert Bowden of Middlesex Street (Petticoat Lane), Aldgate, an eating-house keeper. Were we coming down in the world? Mr Bowden was the owner until 1950, when he sold the house to Neville Charles Westwood of Southgate, a barrister (coming up again?) for £3,500. By this time the house was number 199 High Road. Mr Westwood in turn sold the house in 1959 to Francis Ernest Cameron and his wife Barbara for £4,350. There's a gap after this date, as the deeds are still lodged with the solicitor who dealt with our purchase in 1982 (must get them back again). We bought the house from Mr Peter Habib, who died not long after.

A few little odds and ends about the house. When we moved in, there was solid fuel heating, which was wonderfully simple – you lit a fire and the radiators heated up. The pipes were huge, like scaffolding poles, and ran through every room, which was just as well because someone (I suspect Mr Westwood) had replaced the original radiators with tiny 1950s or 60s ones, so the big pipes helped to keep the rooms warm. About ten years ago we decided that we were too old to carry buckets of coal around and replaced the old system with an eco-friendly modern one. The

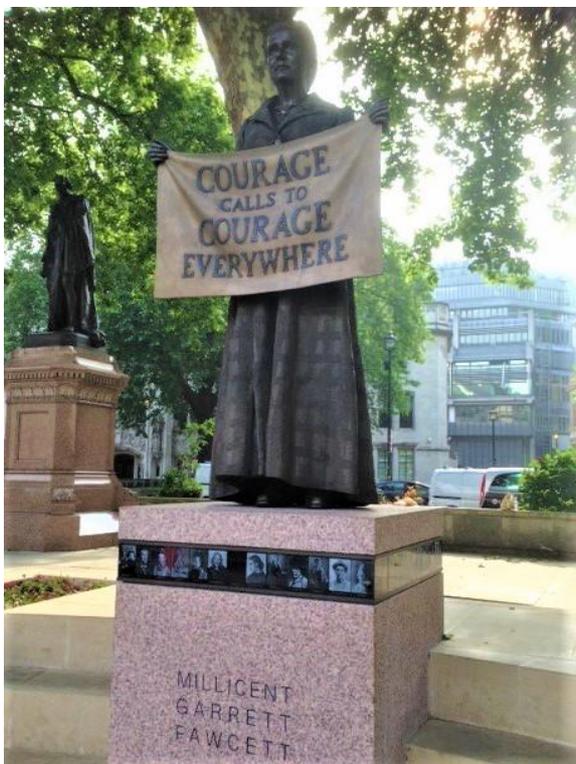
young man who did most of the work told us that the central heating had been built in to the house in 1861! The toilet on the ground floor also has its original cistern and a plumber employed several years ago, when there was a minor problem, said that he had heard of cisterns like that, but had never seen one. Our most spectacular possession is the bath, also, we think, original. It is huge, and has a choice of three options – Plunge (a normal bath), Shower (there's a large porcelain shower head above which makes you feel rather as though you are standing under Niagara) and Spray, which is exactly that – there are four upright brass poses at the foot end, pierced with tiny holes, which spray you with water from all four directions. There are glass panels surrounding the shower and spray.

There were some interesting finds in the garden too. My sister dug up a Louis XIV of France bronze coin (how did that get there?) and when we excavated and removed a nasty concrete path, we found the strangest collection of Victorian odds and ends – medicine bottles, cream pots, ink bottles, a tiny bell of the kind that hung over the doors of shops and a child's broken mug with a moral rhyme about good behaviour.

Admittedly our front garden does not look its best, after nearly three years of serious rebuilding and repair work, involving a shipping container, a portaloo, at least two skips, concrete trucks, cement mixers and various piles of sand, gravel and other building materials. However, it was a front garden and, with a bit of luck and patience (the builders still haven't finished) it will be again.

Women to the fore – by Janet Lovell

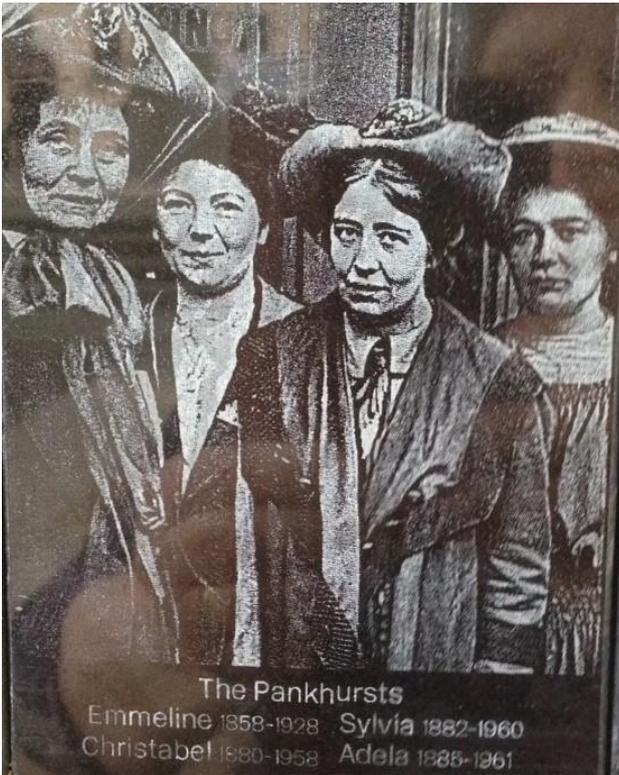
2018 marks the centenary of the Representation of the People Act, which granted voting rights to some women for the first time.



Tuesday, 24 April 2018 was a significant day in Parliament Square. The statue of Millicent Fawcett, the suffragist was unveiled – the first statue of a woman in the Square and the first statue in the Square to be created by a woman. The artist was 1997 Turner Prize winner Gillian Wearing OBE. The ceremony was attended by leading politicians including, Theresa May, Sadiq Khan and Jeremy Corbyn.

The day marked the culmination of a two-year campaign. The petition calling for recognition of the suffrage campaign by the creation of a statue was signed by almost 85,000 people.

The statue is 8ft 4 in tall and around the plinth of the statue are portraits of 59 women and men who were involved with the campaign for women's suffrage. The words on the banner are taken from a speech made by Millicent Fawcett in response to Emily Davison's death in June 1913 when she ran onto the Epsom Derby course and was killed under the hooves of King George V's Horse.



Located on the plinth to the right hand side of the photograph of the main statue (previous page) are the portraits of the Pankhursts. – Emmeline, Christabel, Sylvia and Adela.

As members of the Society will be aware, Sylvia has significant links with Woodford, as can be seen in the name of the Green in Woodford Broadway. In addition, Sylvia's home in Woodford, 'Red Cottage', was on the site of recently constructed Highbeam House in Woodford High Road. The Anti-Air War Memorial which she commissioned remains just outside the development and was refurbished as part of the recent building work and unveiled on 24 October 2014.

Baggotts Book Shop – by Nigel Pitt

You may remember that in our Spring 2018 Newsletter, members were asked if they had any memories of Baggotts Book Shop in The Broadway, Woodford Green. The old shop sign had been on view when the shop was recently refurbished.

Many thanks to Nigel Pitt for providing the following information - **Editor**



In addition to books, stationery and greetings cards were sold at Baggotts Book Shop, which also housed the Post Office counter at the far end of the shop. Gwen was the Sub Postmistress for many years. The queue for the Post Office could stretch the length of the shop on pension day! There was also a telephone kiosk in the shop, which my mother had to use when we first moved to our new house in 1957 as there was a long wait for a telephone in those days, even when installed one had to share a 'party line' with a neighbour. Baggotts not only sold books but ran a lending library as well. They also sold Dinky Toys and Hornby trains which were displayed in glass showcases on the left hand wall.

Note:

*Nigel lived in Glen Crescent as a child and the Glen Rise houses were built on the site of the stables of the grand Victorian Houses which stood on the area of the present town house estate in Snakes Lane West. He recalls that the derelict houses were their playground. Also in Woodford Broadway, he remembers that the present day Co-Op store opened as Bishops in 1970. The store was opened by Ted Ray and Nigel was the first customer through the checkouts. He also remembers the library opening. It was so modern! (See article on pages 9 and 10) **Editor***

The 1918 Roll of Honour at the Village Rest, Woodford Bridge by Georgina Green

(Extracts from an article in the *Woodford Times*, Friday 27th September 1918)

A very large crowd assembled on Sunday afternoon (22nd September 1918) for the unveiling of the war shrine which had been fixed on the front outside wall of the Village Rest. It is of oak, with a hinged glass front, through which could be seen the names of nearly 300 men from Woodford Bridge and district, who had gone to fight for their country. A cross was placed against 39 names to signify those who had given up their lives already. The shrine was designed and made by Messrs. A R Mowbray & Co Ltd, 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus.

The ceremony was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev E C Waller, MA, and was attended by many local councillors, members of the Woodford Fire Brigade in full uniform, special constables, local boy scouts, a number of Barnardo Boys from the Garden City and many villagers. Also present were members of the War Shrine Committee who had raised £57 1s 11d of which £11 9s 3d had been spent on the Roll of Honour. It was hoped that the remainder, and additional funds yet to be raised, could pay for a memorial to those brave men who had given up their lives in a great cause. The Roll of Honour was unveiled by Councillor Hooper, a local teacher who had taught many of the young soldiers.



The proceedings were conducted while the war was still in progress and it is interesting to read the accounts of different speakers. Below are a few extracts:

- In the name of all that is good and right and true we must fight for victory.
- We must support to the full our brave men who have been fighting for great and noble ideals . . . – justice, humanity, unselfishness and freedom. The fight is not for the suppression of the German nation, but the suppression of the spirit which would dominate mankind and would not allow us to call our souls our own.
- Most of those on the list would never write home the true facts of what they were going through. . . . We have had some rough times and some dark ones, but the darkest have now gone.
- Some amusement was caused when a speaker related how when the Yanks first came over, some of them would swank to the Britishers that they had come over to finish off the war for them, and how these same Yanks after a few days at the front said “How you fellows have stuck it for four years we don’t know!” Our soldiers were fighting to keep old England as it was, with lovely green fields and beautiful trees, our villages and churches.

The ceremony closed with the singing of three verses of the National Anthem.

The Village Rest was erected in 1883 by voluntary contributions and seems to have been a popular centre for the local community. Kelly's Directories of 1890 and 1898 refer to it as a coffee tavern managed by Robert Comben. On page 50 of the Woodford Historical Society's publication *A Century of Woodford Memories* (Transactions XV, 1986) Ronald Ledgerton recalls that in the 1920s and 30s "The Village Rest was very well known as a tea-room, and a welcome break for members of the Cyclists' Touring Club and other cyclists. It also contained a large room which was used for meetings and social functions."

The Village Rest was still thriving in 1993 when Douglas Smallbone instigated a new Roll of Honour

to replace the old one which, after 75 years, had deteriorated so that the names were no longer legible. This was again made possible by public donations. A Service of Dedication of the new Roll of Honour for Woodford Bridge was held on Sunday 26th September 1993 at 3pm at the Village Rest. The Vicar, Revd Rodney Matthews presided, Councillor Geoffrey Brewer performed the actual unveiling and music was provided by the Fairlop Brass Band. Douglas Smallbone kindly donated a copy of the Order of Service to the Woodford Historical Society collection held at Ilford Central Library, along with a photocopy of a cutting from the *Woodford Times* 27 Sept. 1918 relating to the unveiling of the original memorial which I have quoted from above.



The Village Rest is a far larger building than is obvious from the frontage on Manor Road and the location at the heart of the village makes it a valuable site. When I photographed it (previous page) on 21st March 2017 I was sad to see it was no longer open as a café and the windows were covered over with newspaper from the inside. However, the function hall was still advertised for hire with a phone number for anyone interested to call. At the time of writing nothing has changed so far as can be seen, except the number to contact has now gone.

© Georgina Green, 20 October 2017.

Francis Henry Freeland, owner of "Freeland's Stores", 69 George Lane, Woodford – by Joan Freeland

My grandfather, Francis Henry Freeland, known as Frank, was born in Lewes, Sussex in 1877. His father, Alfred, was the Pattern Maker for the Phoenix Iron Foundry in Lewes (Everys). Alfred paid for his son to be apprenticed to an architect, but the architect died and he couldn't afford to pay for another apprenticeship, so Frank started up as a barrow boy with a cousin.



I am not sure of his movements then, but he opened his grocery store in Woodford in about 1900. In 1902 he married Sarah Ann Lay (born 1878) from Wantage in Oxfordshire (now moved to Berkshire). They lived over the shop at 69, George Lane in Woodford. They had one child, my father, Francis Leslie, known as Leslie, born in 1905. There was always some friendly competition with another branch of the family, the Harrisons, who also had a shop (in Wanstead, I think) My grandfather, Frank, was an Independent Local Councillor and he was friendly with the photographer, W.L.F.Wastell – I have one of his photographs of a lion (at London Zoo, I think). I do not know what Frank did in WW1, but I have a stamp with “Sgt F.H.Freeland” on it, so he must have been in the army at some point. I think Frank knew Winston Churchill as he was M.P. for Wanstead and Woodford.

My Dad, F. Leslie Freeland, started school at Churchfields School, where he met Ernest Sumner and they became friends. Dad met Ernest's younger sister, Vera Alice, whom he married in 1936 and moved away to a new estate in Eltham. My Dad was sent away to a “healthier” area at age seven – Sevenoaks School and later to St Albans. The Sumners, however, are well known at Bancrofts – I know my cousins Bryan and Martin went there. Martin lived in Woodford until a few years ago when he retired to Suffolk. My mother lived with her family (the Sumners) at 42 Eastwood Road (knocked down in the early 70s to make way for flats). I believe the houses in Eastfield Road were built by my Great Grandfather, John Boase, who was a builder. He and his wife lived next door to my mother's family. Prior to that the family lived in Walthamstow – my Grandmother, Cecilia Mary Boase, was born in the REAL Albert Square. The Boases came from Cornwall and the Sumners from Norwich and they all met in the East End.

Sadly, my Grandfather Frank died in 1942, the year before I was born. My Grandmother lived on until 1960 and she lived in a flat at 9, The Shrubberies. The shop was managed until my parents sold it in the 1970s.

Woodford Library – by Nigel Pitt

The present Woodford Library in Snakes Lane opened on 6th October 1961. It replaced the old library at 4 Rex Parade, Lower Snakes Lane. By coincidence, next door at 3 Rex Parade was Bishops Food Stores who were to open opposite the library in 1970 (now the Co-Op).

It had taken a long time for the new library to be built. Essex County Council started negotiating to buy the land in 1949 but only acquired it in 1952. There were apparently a variety of conflicting interests in the site. There were then restrictions on capital expenditure until 1958 but building finally commenced in 1959. Quite why it then took so long to build is not known to me. It was designed by the County Architect H. Connolly CBE FRIBA, the builder was Geo. Hudson (Builders) Ltd. of Woodford. It cost £23,000 (today approximately £500,000) and opened with 15,000 books.

The site was originally a lake which had been drained when The Broadway shops were built, they follow the edge of the lake. As shown in the picture, originally the windows at the front were glazed to the floor (as they still are at the back) which was aesthetically more pleasing than the replacement glazing. The building was very modern at the time and such an improvement on the old library. For the first time there was a dedicated children's library and a seating area to read the newspapers and enjoy the view of the surrounding trees. Sadly, no photographs of the original interior survive, the local papers merely reported the opening.

The day before the public opening, there was an 'At Home' inspection by invitation only. A souvenir programme was produced by Essex Education Committee – County Library and the following descriptions are taken from it.

"it is entered through a portico which provides covered parking space for prams and bicycles"

"the main architectural features are the clean lines and good proportions of the rooms"

"natural materials were used where possible to give a feeling of richness. The main entrance doors are polished West African mahogany and the ceiling polished Western Hemlock"

"The site was chosen for the library because it is close to the railway station, the shops and the junction of the main traffic arteries of the area"

The last quote should be remembered when they next attempt to re-locate the library to Sir James Hawkey Hall; where none of those criteria apply!



Photo –
©REDBRIDGE MUSEUM & HERITAGE CENTRE
Courtesy of REDBRIDGE MUSEUM & HERITAGE CENTRE

During the summer months, members of the Society have visited places of interest in London and the local area. We are very grateful to Felicity Banks, Jill Hicks, Janet Lovell, and Pat Smith who have arranged the trips, a selection of which are described below – **Editor**

Visit to the Thames River Police Museum at Wapping - organiser Pat Smith

- article by Felicity Banks

We met outside the museum and were welcomed by our guide, who told us of the origins of the River Police and some of its gruesome history!

At the end of the 18th Century merchants were losing about £50 million (in today's money) of stolen cargo annually from the ships on the River Thames. The men who unloaded the ships were called Lumpers. They were not paid and considered any goods they could take were "perks" of the job. They wore large clothing with deep pockets for concealing the goods.

Two men got together in 1797 to see what they could do to change things, Patrick Colquhoun was born in Scotland and spent some years in Virginia before moving to Glasgow. He then moved to London. John Harriott was a Master Mariner and Essex Justice of the Peace. He had been in the Royal Navy and a Lieutenant in the East India Company's Army. The situation got so bad that a

plan was made by Patrick Colquhoun to persuade the West India companies to fund a new force and to pay the Lumpers. They agreed to a one year trial and on 2nd July 1798 after receiving Government permission, the Thames River Police began operating with Colquhoun as Chief Magistrate and Harriott the Resident Magistrate.

At first the river police patrolled the river by day and night. They intercepted those suspected of carrying stolen goods, The Lumpers were no longer allowed to wear any clothing that would hide the stolen cargo. Other traders benefitted from the police, especially the East India Company who had "lost" much of its tea cargo.

The police were not welcomed by the Lumpers and dock-workers who did not wish to lose their income. In October 1798 a mob of about 2,000 attempted to burn down the police station with the police inside. A man called Charles Eyres had been convicted of stealing coal and fined 40 shillings. His brother, James, started a riot hoping to get the money back. Paving stones were hurled through the windows of the Police Office. In reply the police fired warning shots outside in an effort to dispel the rioters. Colquhoun went outside and read the Riot Act. In the attack, shots were fired and Gabriel Franks, a former Lumper attached to the Police Office was wounded and died a few days later. – the first Thames Officer killed in action. James Eyres was tried for the murder of Gabriel Franks, as he was the one who had started the riot. He was convicted and sentenced to be hanged. It became known as the Wapping Coal Riot.

By the end of the first year Colquhoun reported that the force was a success, and that the police had saved £122,000 worth of cargo as well as rescuing several people from the Thames. Colquhoun wrote a book about the formation of the River Police.

The newly formed river police had many gruesome crimes to deal with. In 1811, two murders took place in Wapping known as the Ratcliffe Highway Murders. The first attack took place on December 7th 1811 at 29 Ratcliffe Highway, in the home of Timothy Marr, behind a linen draper's shop. The victims were Timothy Marr, his wife Celia, their three year old son and their shop-boy. They were all bludgeoned to death and had their throats cut. A servant-girl who had been sent out to buy oysters escaped the same fate. Twelve days later, the second murder was at the nearby King's Arms. The victims of the second murders were a publican, his wife and family. They suffered a similar fate. The lodger discovered the murders and, realising the murderer was still in the house, leapt out of a window. A suspect in the murders, John Williams, lived nearby. He had held a grievance against Marr from when they were shipmates. The reason for the King's arms murders was not known. Williams was arrested but committed suicide by hanging himself. His body was dragged through the streets on a cart. His body was tossed in a hole and a stake driven through his heart. Many years later his skeleton was found (with a stake through it) by some gas men who were digging a trench.

The Princess Alice Disaster - On the evening of 3rd September 1878, the Princess Alice pleasure paddle steamer was making its way up the Thames. The passengers had enjoyed a day trip to the Kent coast. Around 7.30pm when the Princess Alice was going towards the North Woolwich Pier on the journey home, the passengers and crew saw the Bywell Castle coming towards them. The Bywell Castle had been in dock to be repainted, It was on its way to Newcastle to pick up coal to take to Egypt. It was too late to avert disaster and the two boats collided. The Bywell Castle hit the Princess Alice near the starboard paddle area. The Princess Alice broke into three parts and sank. Many of the passengers were trapped on the boat and drowned, others drowned in the Thames. Some were lucky and were saved. The water in the stretch where the disaster took place was full of sewage from the sewer tanks which were discharged into the Thames near Barking Reach. The heavily polluted water is thought to have contributed to the many deaths. The Princess Alice's master William Grinstead died in the accident. The exact number of people on board the Princess Alice isn't known but it is estimated over 600. It is the worst inland waterway disaster in Britain. Both vessels were blamed for the collision. At that time no one was responsible for marine safety in the Thames. After the disaster, the River Police were equipped with steam launches, to replace their rowing boats, making it quicker to carry out their duties and rescues.

In modern times the London Docks do not cater for large cargo boats or freight vessels. There are still tourist boats and piers operating along the Thames. The River Police patrol 24 hours per day and the Wapping Police site is still their HQ. The River Police are used to fight river crime and terrorism. Rescue work is shared with RLNI.

The building next to the police station contains many items from the history of the Thames or Marine Police Force.



Visit to the Museum of Brands at Lancaster Road – by Felicity Banks

Just a short walk from Ladbrooke Grove Station in Lancaster Road is the Museum of Brands. It is the inspiration of Robert Opie.

We were met by Stephanie who told us about the founding of the museum by Robert Opie. As a boy Robert collected stamps and matchbox toys and was encouraged by his parents. Some years later when travelling he was eating a Munchie Bar and noticed that the packaging had changed. It was a “light-bulb” moment! He realised that there was no record of the history of packaging and that began his passion for collecting jars, tins and boxes that showed the changes in marketing and advertising for different consumer products, as well as other things such as toys, games, magazines and wirelesses.

In 1975 he had his first exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was called ‘The Pack Age’. By 1984 he had enough items to open a museum in Gloucester. It was very popular and as the collection grew Robert decided to move it to London. First to Colville Mews in 2005 and then to Lancaster Road, Notting Hill in 2015. The Museum is in the former Lighthouse Building which was once part of the Terrence Higgins Trust. The memorial gardens are retained for people to sit in. There are many more exhibits stored in a huge warehouse which are regularly exchanged to reflect dates and events.

Two stories from the history of the Brands:

Birds Custard Powder - Mrs Bird could not eat custard with her desserts because it was made with eggs and she was allergic to them. Mr Alfred Bird, who had a chemist shop, set about making a

custard recipe without eggs and created a powder which is still used today. The colours on the packaging have changed very little and only the lettering has become bolder and clearer.

Robertson's Marmalade - Mr James Robertson was a grocer. One day he saw a Spanish orange seller who was not doing very well. No one wanted his oranges as they were sour. Mr Robertson felt sorry for him and bought them all and gave them to his wife. Mrs Robertson was not pleased but decided to make them into marmalade. The marmalade was delicious and customers began to ask for more. Gradually an industry grew up. At first the marmalade was sold in pottery jars, though now in glass jars so that the marmalade can be seen. The design and colour of the labels are almost the same.

After the talk it was time to look round the museum. It was designed as a time-tunnel. Comments began – "I've heard of that" or "I've seen pictures of that". As the dates got to the 40s and 50s in more recent times the comments changed – "I remember that" and "I've got one of those in my attic /garage!" A trip down memory lane and an hour or two of nostalgia.

Visit to The Charterhouse – by Janet Lovell



My thanks to Felicity Banks for providing the photograph.

There have been significant changes to the visitor experience at The Charterhouse. In January 2017 the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh officially opened the new museum, the light and spacious learning centre and the renovated square, through which we walked to reach the entrance.

Victims of the Black Death were buried in the area and, in fact, a 14th century plague pit was unearthed during the excavations for Crossrail. The Carthusian monastery itself was built in 1371 and flourished until the dissolution of the monasteries when it became a mansion and hosted royalty. Queen Elizabeth 1 was present in the days prior to her coronation (1558) and 130 Barons were created by James 1 before his coronation.

In 1611 Thomas Sutton became the owner and created his Foundation. In his will he provided for 80 men, who had fallen on hard times, to be known as 'Brothers' and also for Charterhouse School. The school moved to Godalming in 1872 but the Brothers remain and, in fact, women were admitted as 'Brothers' in 2018.

Our fascinating guided tour followed an introductory talk and encompassed the garden area, the main building with beautiful fireplaces and ceilings, the quadrangles enclosed by the Brothers' accommodation and the cloisters. One original doorway to a monk's cell remains and we were told of the ball games played by the school's pupils in the cloisters.

Before and after the guided tour, the group was able to visit the Jacobean chapel and museum. The next door café was also on the schedule of many!

PROGRAMME 2018-19

DATE	TITLE	SPEAKER
17 September 2018	Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: Its History and Legacy	Peter Lawrence <i>We are delighted that our President will open our series of talks this year</i>
15 October 2018	Epping Forest 140 Years: Passion, Preservation, Pollards and the 1878 Epping Forest Act	Sophie Lillington <i>Museum and Heritage Manager, Epping Forest</i>
19 November 2018	Some Old Houses of Snaresbrook	Lynn Haseldine Jones <i>A new talk from Lynn who is investigating the topic during the summer</i>
10 December 2018 (note – second Monday in the month)	Behind the Blue Lamp	David Swinden <i>Retired Police Superintendent (formerly New Scotland Yard) speaking on the history of the Police. (David's talk in 2017 was cancelled due to snow)</i>
21 January 2019	Five Years as a Dockyard Apprentice	Len Taphouse <i>Len served an apprenticeship as an engineer with Harland & Wolf at North Woolwich between 1956 and 1961 and relates stories of events and characters</i>
18 February 2019	The History and Work of the PDSA	Keri Harty <i>From the PDSA</i>
18 March 2019	AGM followed by: The Buxtons – an old Essex Family	Georgina Green <i>Who needs no introduction</i>
29 April 2019 (note – fifth Monday in the month due to school's Easter Holidays)	Hearts of Oak – The VC Story Part 2	Mark Smith <i>A return of Mark, who is well known as an Arms and Militaria expert on 'Antiques Roadshow'. A specialist on military medals.</i>