



Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society
Founded 1932

Newsletter Spring 2019

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Editorial

I am very pleased that the Spring Newsletter provides the opportunity for me to wish you all a happy and healthy New Year and to hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas.

I was delighted that our speaker was able to speak to the Society in December, as we had to cancel his talk in December 2017 due to a blizzard. Let's hope the rest of our 2018/19 programme of talks can also continue without interruption by the weather, although I must add the note that this editorial was written prior to the January meeting!

As is our usual practice, a coloured copy of the Newsletter will be distributed by e-mail to all who have requested to receive it in this way. The following printed documents will be available to all members in addressed envelopes for collection at the February meeting of the Society:

Summer Visits Programme
Summer Visits Booking Forms
Minutes of the 2018 AGM
Notice of the 2019 AGM

Members who prefer to receive printed black-and-white copies of the Newsletter will also find these included within the envelopes. If you are able to distribute any envelopes to friends, this would be very helpful, but please be assured that all envelopes remaining after the meeting will be posted to members.

It will come as no surprise to you that I am writing this, my final Editorial, with great regret. It has been my privilege to have edited the Newsletter since Spring 2010 and to be Chairman of Woodford Historical Society for the last eight years. Both my wife, Janet, and I had hoped (subject to annual election of course) to continue in our roles as Chairman and Secretary for many years to come. However, as we all know, life never follows a plan and my continuing ill health means that Janet and I will be unable to stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting on 18 March 2019. I would like to express my thanks to all who have supported me, by assisting with the organisation of the Society, which is rightly held in high regard. I have greatly enjoyed researching queries raised by members and non-members of the Society and, indeed, learning so much about our area. I have also particularly valued friendships which both Janet and I have made, both within the Society in Woodford and through contacts with 'old Woodfordians' who have left the area but provided many memories. These are particularly evident in the Society's 80th anniversary book published in 2012 and, of course, in our regular Newsletters.

The situation in which Janet and I find ourselves highlights the need for members to assist with various aspects of the Society. The committee would greatly value help, however limited, to provide additional cover for the various roles which are required. I do hope you will give very serious consideration as to how you might be able to assist, whether as a member of the

committee or in a more limited, but equally valued, role. Please speak to any member of the committee if, initially, you would just like further information. You will see from the AGM papers that already volunteers are coming forward – the more the merrier! There is absolutely no need to be ‘an Historian’, you would just need a willingness to help with an aspect of the organisation. The committee is grateful to those who responded to our previous questionnaire and offered to help with refreshments and ‘envelope stuffing’.

Needless to say, Janet and I will continue to help within our limitations and hope to be able to forward articles to be considered for publication in Newsletters etc. I very much hope to be able to attend the AGM to thank you personally for your past support, but in the meantime would just like to wish the Society the very best for the future. I am sure it will go from strength to strength.

John Lovell

From our President

I was delighted to be able to open Woodford Historical Society’s 2018-19 programme on 17 September, when I spoke about the ‘Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – Its History and Legacy’. Linda and I greatly enjoyed meeting up with our friends from the Society. It is difficult to believe that we have lived in Norfolk since 2011 and we greatly value opportunities to see you all.

As you know, our move to Norfolk necessitated we should hand over the positions of Chairman and Secretary, therefore we were delighted when you elected my old Redbridge Council colleague John and his wife Janet to take over the reins. I know they had hoped to continue in the roles for many years and are extremely disappointed that circumstances have dictated that they cannot stand for re-election this year. I know John had hoped that his health would improve sufficiently for him to continue, but unfortunately progress is extremely slow.

May I, on behalf of all members of the Society, take this opportunity to thank them for their work for the Society. John’s first editorial appeared in the Spring 2010 edition of the Newsletter and he was subsequently elected as Chairman, with the support of Janet as Secretary. Much work goes on behind the scenes of any society and I know they will be the first to thank members and committee members for their support, but I can assure you that they have worked tirelessly for the Society. It is fair to say that it is often a case of the swan gliding peacefully across the lake, whilst underneath there is an absolute flurry of activity!

You will see from the papers for the AGM that volunteers are beginning to come forward to offer help. To ensure the future success of the Society, it is vital that new volunteers work with our existing, long-standing committee members to cover the necessary roles and to provide back-up. Unfortunately, John’s unexpected health issues serve only to highlight this. If you do feel you might be able to help in any way (whether or not as a member of the committee) please do speak to any member of the committee, if only to gain further information.

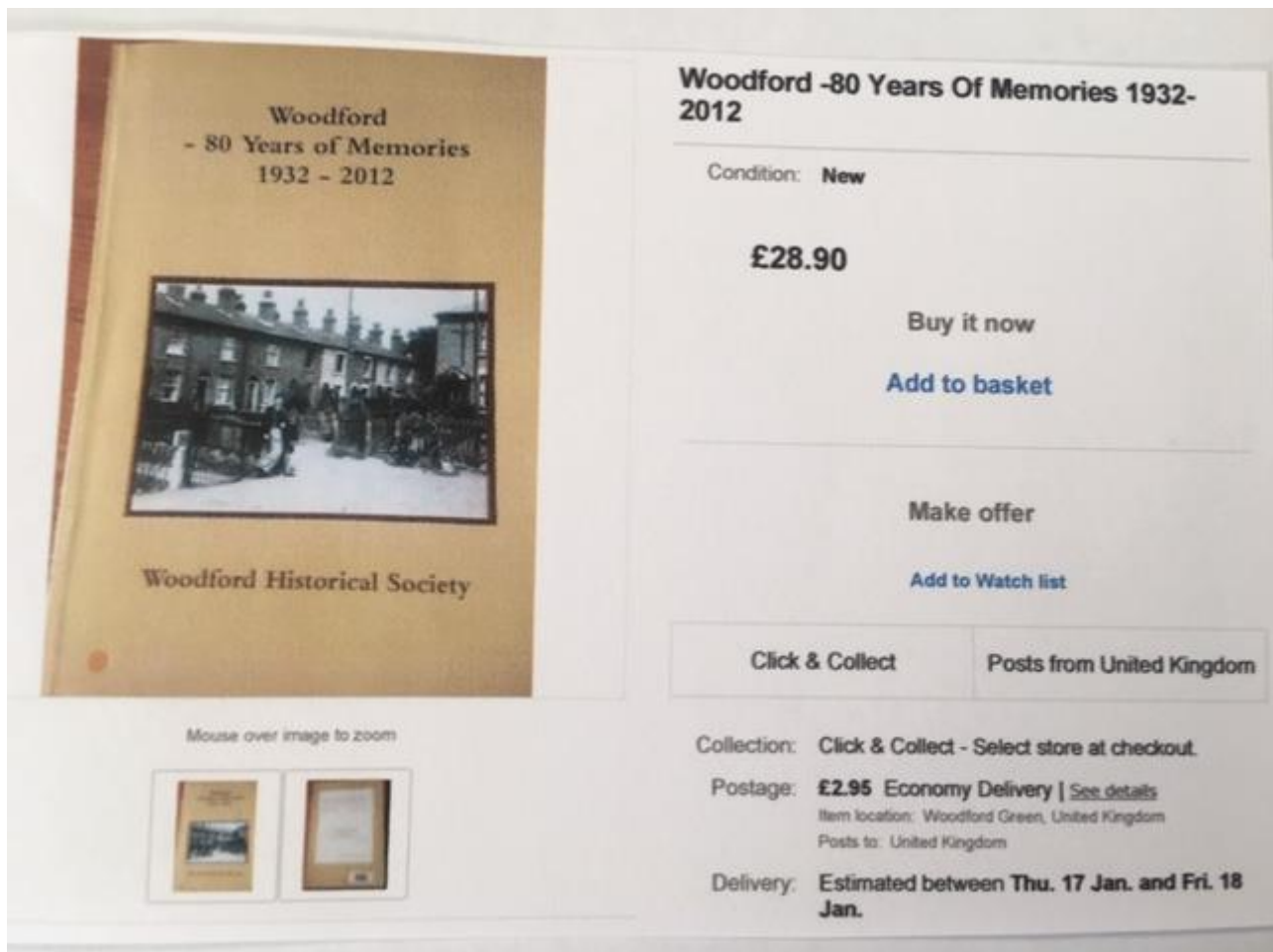
Woodford Historical Society has a wonderful history, well respected in the Essex and East London history circles and long may it continue, hopefully with members taking the Society forward to its centenary in 2032 and beyond.

Good wishes to you all for 2019 and I very much hope to meet up with you all again during your 2019-20 programme.

Peter Lawrence

Woodford – 80 Years of Memories 1932-2012 – by John Lovell

Many of you will have bought a copy of 'Woodford – 80 Years of Memories' and will be pleased to know that the book is now changing hands at £28.90 plus £2.95 postage on an internet website. That sounds like one of the best investments I have made in recent years!



The image shows a screenshot of an online marketplace listing for a book. On the left is a large image of the book cover, which is light brown with a black and white photograph of a street scene in Woodford. The text on the cover reads 'Woodford - 80 Years of Memories 1932 - 2012' and 'Woodford Historical Society'. Below the main image are two smaller thumbnail images with the text 'Mouse over image to zoom'. To the right of the book image is a white box containing the following information: 'Woodford -80 Years Of Memories 1932-2012', 'Condition: New', '£28.90', 'Buy it now', 'Add to basket', 'Make offer', and 'Add to Watch list'. Below this box are two buttons: 'Click & Collect' and 'Posts from United Kingdom'. At the bottom right, there is a section for 'Collection: Click & Collect - Select store at checkout.', 'Postage: £2.95 Economy Delivery | See details', 'Item location: Woodford Green, United Kingdom', 'Posts to: United Kingdom', and 'Delivery: Estimated between Thu. 17 Jan. and Fri. 18 Jan.'

NAZI SPY IN WOODFORD? – by Dick Walker



Josef Jakobs - National Archives
(catalogue reference: KV2-26)

In 1941 Josef Jakobs, a German Intelligence Agent, was parachuted into Britain carrying approx. £500 in British currency, a radio transmitter and an identity card bearing the name James Rymer, address 33 Abbotsford Gardens, Woodford Green!

But no, he was never there. That was only one of a number of false identity papers and unfortunately for him he broke a leg on landing and was captured. He was court martialled in the Tower of London and executed there by a firing squad. He was the last person to be executed in the Tower.

(Information from "Inside the Tower of London", Channel 5, 11 November 2018)

The image shows two identical copies of a National Registration Identity Card. The top section contains the title 'NATIONAL REGISTRATION' and a grid with the numbers '656', '301', and '29'. Below this is a box with the name 'James Rymer' written in cursive. The left copy includes four numbered instructions: 1. This Identity Card must be carefully preserved. You may need it under conditions of national emergency for important purposes. You must not lose it or allow it to be stolen. If, nevertheless, it is stolen or completely lost, you must report the fact in person at any local National Registration Office. 2. You may have to show your Identity Card to persons who are authorised by law to ask you to produce it. 3. You must not allow your Identity Card to pass into the hands of unauthorised persons or strangers. Every grown up person should be responsible for the keeping of his or her Identity Card. The Identity Card of a child should be kept by the parent or guardian or person in charge of the child for the time being. 4. Anyone finding this Card must hand it in at a Police Station or National Registration Office. The right copy has the text 'DO NOTHING WITH THIS PART UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD' and 'Full Postal Address of Above Person :-'. The address is written as 'London', '33 Abbotsford Gardens', and 'Woodford Green'. It is signed 'James Rymer' and dated '4th June 42'.

ID card in the name of James Rymer – National Archives (catalogue reference: KV 2-27 ID)

Additional information by Janet Lovell

Josef Jakobs had been found near Ramsey in Cambridgeshire on 1 February 1941. The information from the National Archives indicates that he had broken his ankle when landing from his parachute jump. His possessions, described above, included a secret code wheel which he had torn up. The Home Guard were called, then the police, but as he was wearing civilian clothes, he was handed over to MI5 for interrogation.

It was ascertained that Jakobs was 42 years old, a German national who had been born in Luxembourg. Trained by German intelligence, he was to transmit weather reports from the London area.

Jakobs could not be interrogated again until April 1941, due to hospital treatment for his serious injuries. By the time of further questioning, Jakobs had changed his story, saying that he had just wished to come to England and had no intention of spying. He named a person he wished to contact in London, Lily Knips, but when she was contacted, her account of his pre-war activities indicated that far from helping Jews to emigrate from Germany, as he had now stated, he had preyed on them.

A military court martial of under two days followed, opening on 4 August 1941. A number of witnesses were heard and Jakobs was cross examined. A 'guilty' verdict followed. As this had been a military trial, the execution was by firing squad. The execution took place on 15 August 1941 at 7.15am.

Sir Robert Preston (1740-1834) of Woodford and Valleyfield – by Georgina Green

Robert Preston was born in Scotland, the fifth son of Sir George Preston of Valleyfield, west of Dunfirmline. His mother was Anne Cochrane, sister of Thomas, 8th Earl of Dundonald. He started his career with the East India Company at the age of 18 by serving as Fifth Mate on the *Streatham* (3), which left Portsmouth on 24 July 1758, bound for Bombay, Madras and Bengal. This, and that of the Purser, were positions likely to be given to a young man with an education and a position in society, so that he could learn about the sea and find out if he was suited to the life. This first voyage gave him quite an adventure as the *Streatham* ran aground in the Hugli River downstream from Calcutta. It was eventually abandoned in the mud but Preston transferred to the *Duke of Dorset* (2) which had been ordered by the Council of the East India Company to make a stand against seven Dutch ships which were blockading Calcutta. The ship was joined by two other East Indiamen and they went into battle.

After firing their guns and engaging the enemy ships for two hours the Dutch Commander hoisted a Flag of Truce, and after a further ten minutes of close fire, all the Dutch ships surrendered. English officers were sent on board to secure their magazines, spike their cannons and divide their prisoners between the three English ships. It was reported that the English killed and wounded on the *Duke of Dorset* was 'inconsiderable to that of the enemy' and 'the crew behaved with great bravery and resolution.'¹

Robert Preston was not put off by his first, rather eventful, experience of the East Indies. His next voyage was as Third Mate on the *Clive* 1761/2, which sailed under the management of Charles Raymond of Valentines, Ilford. On the next voyage of the *Clive*, again managed by Raymond, Robert Preston was Second Mate. Then between 1767 and 1776 Preston made three voyages as a Captain, twice on the *Asia* and then on the *Hillsborough*, each voyage under the management of Charles Foulis of Woodford.² Foulis had been a captain for the East India Company himself and an avuncular relationship developed with Preston.

Charles Foulis (widower) had married Elizabeth Crichton on 27 April 1745 at St George, Botolph Lane. His wife was the sister of Mrs Andrew Moffatt of Cranbrook House in Ilford. Moffatt was another man closely involved with the East India Company both through managing ships and with their insurance. Foulis's sister, Margaret, was married to William George Freeman, a Director of the East India Company in 1769, 1774-76 and 1778-81.³

No children have been traced for Foulis and his first wife, Jennell Shiels, who he had married on 12 March 1741 at St Mary Aldermanbury. However, Elizabeth had a son christened Charles on 29 November 1749 at St Andrew Undershaft, City of London. This appears to have been their only child but no trace has been found of him as an adult. Maybe he was the man shown as 'Charles Fowle, Purser' on the East Indiaman *Anson* (3) which sailed in 1769 under the management of Charles Foulis? If so he 'ran' at Madras in April 1770. Perhaps he wasn't cut out for the life at sea, knew he would be a disappointment to his father and decided to build a new life in India.

By the time he retired from the sea late in 1776, Robert Preston had accumulated enough wealth to establish himself in the financial world of the City of London. Within a year he can be seen in the records of the East India Company as the second signature on the charterparty agreements for the management of *Hillsborough* (1) and the *Southampton*, both sailing early in 1778.⁴ The first

¹ British Library, OIR/L/MAR/B/605J Journal of *Streatham* (3) 1757/8; OIR/L/MAR/B/612H Journal of *Duke of Dorset* (2) 1758/9; Georgina Green *Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines and the East India Company* (2015) p.62-4

² Anthony Farrington *A Biographical Index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers 1600-1834* (London, 1999)

³ J G Parker *The Directors of the East India Company, 1754-1790* (PhD thesis, Univ. of Edinburgh, 1977)

⁴ British Library, IOR/B/93 EIC Court Book p.379 30 October 1777 and p.416 26 November 1777

signature was Charles Foulis who was apparently training his protégé in the next stage of his career. The signatures show the two men as taking responsibility for the voyages, both financial and practical. They represented the group of investors, employed the crew and ensured the ship was ready for the voyage with all the provisions necessary. (The East India Co did not own any of the ships which carried their cargo. They were chartered from the owner of the ship and the charterparty agreement gave the details such as the dates of sailing, and penalties if this was not adhered to, on both sides.)

After acting as second signature to Foulis on two more voyages, Robert Preston started to take over as the Principal Managing Owner (first signature) of several ships for the East India Company, the first being *Ganges* (1 voyage, 1781/2). Preston had two new ships built for the 1782/3 season *General Elliott* and *Lord Macartney*, both ships having 6 voyages. Preston must have been commissioning his next ship just as his mentor died in 1783. *Foulis* first sailed in the 1783/4 season but it was lost on the third voyage after leaving Madras in 1791. *Hillsborough* (2) was also built for Preston and first sailed in the 1783/4 season completing 6 voyages. This ship replaced the first *Hillsborough* which was managed by Foulis & Preston and was captured along with four other East Indiamen by the combined Franco-Spanish on 27 July 1780. The *Hillsborough's* captain, Pitt Collett, who also lived near Harts in Woodford, died at this time.

After Foulis died, Preston also took over management of *Pigot* (2) for its last 3 voyages (1785/6 – 92/3) along with *Southampton* (1 voyage, 1785/6). Preston then commissioned two more new East Indiamen *William Pitt* (1) which did 6 voyages between 1785 – 1800, and *Woodford* (1) (6 voyages, 1790/1 – 1802/3).⁵ He became a significant force in the East India Company and for a time served as chairman of the Committee of Managing Owners of Shipping. Preston was also an Elder Brother of Trinity House from 1781 – 1803 and a Deputy Master from 1796 – 1803.



Robert Preston Esq M.P
Deputy Master of the Corporation of Trinity House
© Trinity House



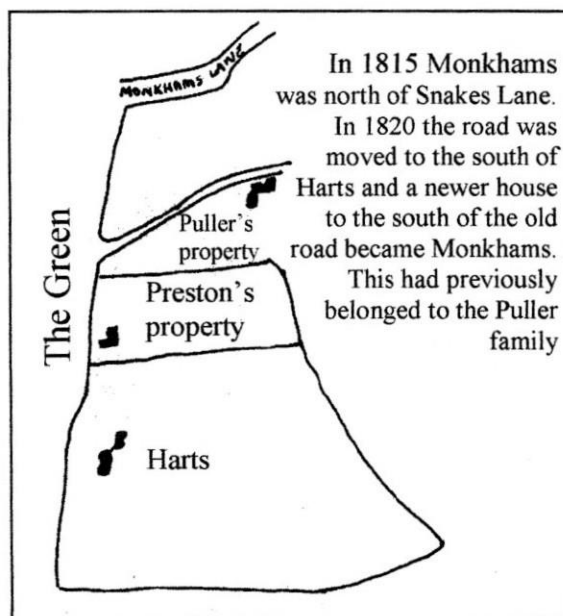
Window at Trinity House © Trinity House

⁵ Anthony Farrington *A Catalogue of East India Company Ships' Journals and Logs 1660-1834* (London 1999) p.775

⁶ Will of Charles Foulis, Gentleman of Woodford, Essex, 14 July 1783 PROB 11/1106

Charles Foulis Esq died on 9 July 1783, aged 69 years and was buried at Woodford on 16 July 1783 with his wife, who had died seven months earlier. Robert Preston benefited significantly as his residuary legatee and executor, inheriting the house at Woodford.⁶ He erected a beautiful memorial to Charles and Elizabeth Foulis 'as a testimony of gratitude to the deceased'. It was by John Bacon (1740-99) who had trained in the Wedgwood Company and went on to become much sought after for portrait busts and sepulchral monuments. The memorial can still be seen inside St Mary's church.

So by the later 1780s Robert Preston was living in a substantial house in Woodford which was next to Harts. The property was purchased by Robert Graham in 1814 when it was described in a survey of the property of William Long Wellesley as 'All that Customary or Copyhold Mansion House, Dwelling House, Messuage or Tenement, with Offices, Outhouses, Coach house, Stables, Court yards, Pleasure Grounds, Gardens, Fish Ponds, & all other the Appurts. whatsoever, thereto belonging, late the residence of **Sir Robert Preston Baronet**, containing in the whole by measurement 3a 1r 38p lying within & holden of the said Manor of which have been built, erected, planted, laid out, & made upon, & comprise the Site of certain Copyhold Premises heretofore the Estate of **Charles Foulis Esq.** deceased.' The map shown here is based on that by John Doyley.⁷ There may have been additional property which was not held by copyhold so was not included in this description.



Charles Foulis served as a manager of the Sun Fire Office from 1764-83 and Robert Preston took up this role from 1795-1809.⁸ Preston insured the property he owned when he was described as 'of No.50 Lime Street, Merchant'. This must have been his City home, close to East India House, insured for £300 in 1783. He also insured extensive property at Blackwall for a total of £6,500, including a dozen houses rented out to mariners, a shipwright, etc, wharfs, tenement and warehouses, cranes, privies, and the Artichoke Tavern & pleasure rooms adjoining the River. It also included a 'new warehouse, counting house, warehouse and pleasure rooms all communicating in his own tenure'.⁹ This shows the luxury of his home at Woodford which was insured for a total of £12,800.

MS 11936/324 policy no. 497675 22 October 1784

Robert Preston of Woodford in Essex Esq

on his now dwelling house only situate as aforesaid Brick & Tiled

not exceeding four thousand pounds	£4000
Household goods therein only not exceeding ...	£4300
Printed books therein only not exceeding...	£ 300
China and glass therein not exceeding...	£1000
Outhouses adjoining each other Brick & tiled not exceeding...	£1000
Farmhouse only in Gravel Lane near Woodford Row Woodford	
aforesaid Timber & tiled not exceeding...	£1500
Outhouses adjoining each other Timber & tiled not exceeding	£ 700

£12,800

⁷ Essex Record Office D/DCy P2B Book accompanying Estate Map by John Doyley (1815) p.196-7 Copyholder: Robert Graham Esq 1st February 1814, map p.253

⁸ P G M Dickson *The Sun Insurance Office 1710 – 1960* (OUP 1960) p.278

⁹ MS 11936/256 policy no.384699 & MS 11936/314 policy no.481781 (Lime Street), MS 11936/314 policy no.482719 (1783 Blackwall)

Robert Preston married Elizabeth, daughter of George Brown of Stockton on 27 April 1790 at Spring Garden Chapel, St Martin in the Fields, London. Interestingly he had already fathered a child – Robert Foules Preston was born 15 March 1782 and baptised on 20 May 1782 at St Leonards, Shoreditch where the baptismal entry shows the mother as Margaret. He died on 16 May 1817, aged 33, while commander of HM Ship *Euphrates*.

On the death of his (unmarried) brother on 23 March 1800, Robert Preston succeeded to the baronetcy and Valleyfield, the family estate in Scotland. Having seen so much of Humphry Repton's work locally, Preston wasted no time in inviting him to propose improvements to the estate at Valleyfield. The 'Red Book' (c.1801) is now held by Manchester Metropolitan University and an illustration of Valleyfield using Repton's drawing is included on the diary page for September in Peacock's *Polite Repository*, 1802.

I have been given a copy of the text of Repton's Red Book for Valleyfield ¹⁰ and he refers a couple of times to Woodford, comparing the situation of the ancient family seat overlooking the Firth of Forth to the villa of a merchant near London. It is suggested this is because Repton was also working at Woodford Hall in 1801 but possibly Preston had been discussing changes at his own Woodford property with Repton before he inherited Valleyfield. Repton's account book shows payment by Richard Puller of Woodford in August and December 1790 and this was presumably for work at the property he inherited on the death of his father, Christopher Puller, on 11th December 1789. This was adjacent to Preston's property (see map above). Preston would also have seen Repton's work at Highams where the lake was created in the late 1790s.

In 2010 I was contacted by John Campbell from Broomhall near Dunfirmline, asking for information about Preston's time in Woodford because the local community was pressing to restore some of the Repton landscape at Valleyfield. I was able to pass on quite a lot about his career with the East India Company etc. In return he told me that "Valleyfield is a small mining village in West Fife, 7 miles west of Dunfermline. Valleyfield House had entries in two parishes - either Culross parish, then classified as Perthshire (but now Fife) or Torryburn, Fife. The boundary was the Bluther Burn. The village is built on land that belonged to Sir Robert. It was built for the miners who mined coal from land sold by Sir Robert Preston to the Fife Coal Company (i.e. Valleyfield Colliery – now closed / demolished.)"

From an internet search I can add the following: Valleyfield Woodland Park was opened in 1990. It lies to the northeast of Culross and is traversed by the Bluther Burn which forms part of a designed landscape created in 1802 for Sir Robert Preston of Valleyfield House. It was the only commission of its kind in Scotland to be carried out by Humphry Repton (1752 - 1818) the famous English landscape gardener. Although Repton never visited, he sent his sons to conduct a survey. As a result of this survey, Repton prepared plans and presented Preston with one of his famous red books, which contained illustrations of his intentions along with explanatory text. The resulting landscape, which is known to have been painted by Alexander Nasmyth (1758 - 1840), is still regarded as of outstanding historical importance. Although the mansion was demolished and much of Repton's landscape was lost



¹⁰ A A Tait *The Landscape Garden in Scotland*, extract kindly provided by Alison Moller

¹¹ <http://www.scottish-places.info/features/featurefirst30.html>

¹² *The botanist's repository* vol.3 Plate CXCIX

<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/109216#page/110/mode/1up>; *Two Hundred years of Camellias* by Andrew MacHugh (article in Hortus 24, Winter 1992, page 2)

after the estate was taken over by the East Fife Coal Co. in 1907, there are still remains of the walled flower garden, ice-house, ornamental pond, beech avenue and ha-ha. The park is now owned and managed by Fife Council.¹¹

Like several other retired captains who were neighbours in the Redbridge area, Preston was interested in plants. According to the *Botanist's Repository* (Vol.3 c.1800) the 'Double Red Camellia *Camellia japonica*, var. *flore rubro pleno*' was introduced 'about the year 1794 from China, by R. Preston, Esq of Woodford, Essex'. Between 1817 and 1820, the noted plant-hunter David Douglas (1799 - 1834) was a gardener at Valleyfield, helping maintain Repton's work. While there, he was able to use Preston's extensive library to further his botanical education.¹²

Just as I had helped John Cambell with information about Preston's career with the East India Company, he helped me by passing on that "the Bruces / Elgins were neighbours up here with Sir Robert Preston. Right next door to Valleyfield is Culross (a lovely wee village on the River Forth), the home of the Bruce's. The eldest Bruce son still [in 2011] lives there with his family, whilst Lord Elgin lives just about 6 miles away at Broomhall, about 1 mile from my home." This brings in a further point of interest as Martha Whyte, half-sister of Andrew Moffatt of Cranbrook, had married her brother's great friend, Charles Bruce, 5th Earl of Elgin. He was responsible for the removal of the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon in Athens, 1803-1812.¹³ There was obviously a lot of contact between the various Scottish families with branches in London, many of them involved with the East India Company.

Preston was elected MP for Dover 1784 – 1790 and then for Cirencester 1792 – 1806, taking an active part in parliamentary affairs. For a full description of this please see <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/preston-robert-1740-1834> Preston's entry ends by saying that Lord Stowell described him to Lord Sidmouth, 31 Aug. 1821, when he was 81 years old, as 'a plain, unaffected man, very friendly and thoroughly well affected', who 'lives in a style of great hospitality'. John Campbell also mentioned that Robert Preston purchased 'an excellent house' in Downing Street from Lady Martha Bruce. It would have been very convenient for him when he was undertaking parliamentary duties. This was purchased from him by the government and was converted (at that time) into the Colonial Office. This is confirmed on the website link above.

John Cambell also told me that Preston was related to James Boswell, they were first cousins once removed. Boswell mentions having breakfast with Captain Preston and Mr & Mrs Foulis on 22 or 23 March 1781. The parliamentary website also says that on 9 August 1790 Preston's friend James Boswell visited him at Woodford 'I was entertained heartily, and the strong common sense and prosperity of Preston drove away low spirits ... I perceived in Preston a kind of sound understanding better than talents.'

Sir Robert Preston died at Valleyfield on 7 May 1834, aged 94 and a very wealthy man, and was buried with his wife in Culross Abbey Church. Reading about his adventures at sea, his friendships in our area, his City and Parliamentary exploits and his life in Scotland, I do wish I could have met him.

© Georgina Green, 7 January 2019

¹³ Correspondence from Sarah Bellwood of California in 2003 who was researching her family, the Moffats;
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146639661>.

¹³ Correspondence from Sarah Bellwood of California in 2003 who was researching her family, the Moffats;
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146639661>.

Georgina also forwarded this picture in relation to the article, which readers may find of interest.



The photograph by John Campbell shows part of a 'drive' that Repton designed with the Bluther Burn running beside it.

Wonder Women: 100 Years of Women's Lives in Redbridge – an exhibition not to be missed – Editor

Redbridge Museum, working with Woodford County High School, is staging an exhibition, until 27 April 2019, to celebrate 100 years since the first women were permitted to vote in the United Kingdom. It tells the story of the lives of women in the local area of Ilford, Wanstead and Woodford in their own words.

From the years before the First World War, where we see the residents in new large houses employing domestic servants, through the days of the suffragettes, including, of course, Sylvia Pankhurst who lived in Woodford for many years and nurses working at The Wanstead and Woodford Military Hospital at Highams – now Woodford County High School –, the exhibition moves to more modern times. Many readers may remember Woodford Women's Institute, which is also included in the exhibition. (Following its closure, the archive is now housed at Redbridge Museum.) Were you a member of 'Wanstead and Woodford Women for Peace', who attended peace demonstrations in the 1980s? There is also a 'vox pop' film of recent times in the area.

The exhibition provides a fascinating insight into an era of amazing change and work on the project to further interest in local history is continuing, not least to celebrate Woodford County High School's centenary later this year.

Redbridge Library (tel. no. 020 8708 2317) is housed in:

Redbridge Central Library
Clements Road
Ilford IG1 1EA

near Redbridge Town Hall, in Ilford High Road

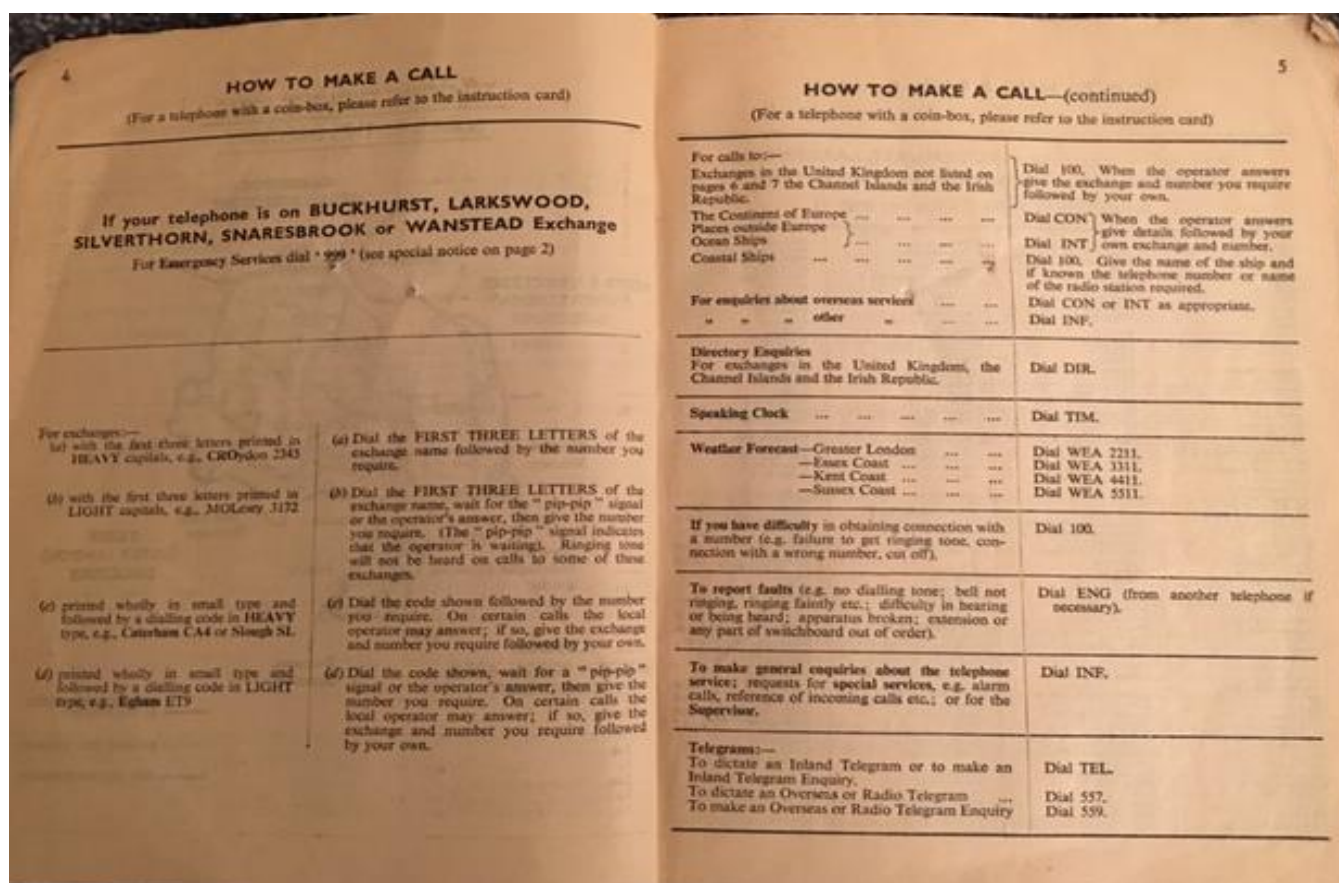
The talk which sparked memories – by Philip Ralls (former resident of Woodford/Loughton and now Pershore, Worcestershire)

Philip spotted the title of our talk on 15 October 2018 – Epping Forest 140 Years: Passion, Preservation, Pollards and the 1878 Epping Forest Act – which prompted him to forward this article to the Society – Editor

When the Epping Forest Conservation Centre at High Beech was opened by the Duke of Gloucester's late brother, I was a Police Traffic Patrol Officer based at Leyton Garage. I was tasked as a Police Motor Cyclist to go to Abridge (Passingford) Airport to escort the Duke to the new centre. He was a keen pilot and had flown his own aircraft in. Sadly, sometime after this he was killed when taking off from Kidlington Airport near Oxford. I had special authority to escort in the Essex Constabulary area in which Abridge is situated and, although in those days we policed High Beech, nowadays that too is policed by Essex.

We always had a good relationship with Essex Police and also the Forest Keepers who used to ride red Velocette Motor Cycles which were identical to the grey Police 'Noddy' bikes used by the Met.

My thanks to Joan Freeland for sending to the Society the Woodford and District telephone directory for 1959. How technology has changed! - Editor



Readers will remember Joan Freeland's article in our Autumn 2018 Newsletter about her grandfather's shop 'Freeland's Stores' in George Lane.

Blackmore village - by Georgina Green

Georgina Green very kindly offered to arrange a visit to the pretty Essex village of Blackmore for the Society this summer but the committee decided against this because of the practicalities of transport etc. However if any of you feel inclined to make the journey on your own Georgina will be happy to send you a copy of the notes she made for a tour some twenty years ago, which she will update. Please contact her by email at georgina.green@btconnect.com

The village is between Ongar, Brentwood and Chelmsford, 30 - 40 minutes' drive from Woodford depending on whether you use the M11 or the prettier country route. There was one manor at Blackmore in the Domesday survey but in c.1152-62 a priory of Augustinian Canons was founded and in 1232 Henry III granted the canons a fair at their house on the eve, day and morrow of the feast of St. Laurence (10th August), to whom the priory was dedicated. The Priory was dissolved on 10th February 1525 by an agent of Cardinal Wolsey but the church was allowed to remain and is well worth a visit. It dates back to the mid-12th century, was altered in the 14th and 16th centuries and restored at the end of the 19th century. The tower is one of the most impressive wooden towers in the country, recently tree-ring dated and built c.1400. Today the church is very much at the centre of village life and is used for events as diverse as the Harvest 'Hoe-down', a screening of the Last Night of the Proms, flower festivals and local history lectures.



The village itself is very attractive with a duck pond at the far side of the green by the Chelmsford – Ingatestone Road. Note here the Barge Garage which dates back to 1584 and has been the site of various businesses including an ale house, sweet shop, and today a garage. There are quite a number of interesting old buildings scattered around, including Jericho Cottage which was associated with the priory but now sells antiques and serves tea and cake. There is also a nice teashop by Horse Fayre Green, near the Leather Bottle pub. There are several seats around the village to give you time to enjoy your surroundings.

Church Street leading, as you can guess, to the church also has some interesting old buildings, some dating back to the 14th century. The building which some may remember as The Bull pub is now a private residence. It is well over 600 years old and has been the subject of a fight by the local community to prevent conversion to apartments so that it might be returned to its proper use as a pub and meeting place for everyone to enjoy.

You might like to know that Blackmore church will be open for 'Teas in the Tower' on the first Sunday each month from May to October (inclusive) 2019 from 2.30 – 4.30pm. The cakes are homemade with tea, coffee and soft drinks available. Quite often someone is playing the organ while you look round the church with its Norman architecture and admire the magnificent wooden structure of the tower.