



# Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society  
Founded 1932

## Newsletter Autumn 2026

**ALL ITEMS IN THE SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTERS ARE COPYRIGHT WOODFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY/THE AUTHOR/THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT.**

---

### Editorial

---

Welcome everyone to the 2026-2027 season of Woodford Historical Society.

As I write this, we are going through yet another heatwave. I for one, am looking forward to the colder weather. At times it has been a real effort to get motivated. You may be interested to know that there is a service offered by Water Companies to customers over the age of 65 who may be affected by drought regulations – look up the Google Priority Services Register. They do respond very quickly.

Sadly, our past Chairman, John Lovell passed away in June. He had been poorly for some time. He, with his wife Janet (Committee Secretary) worked tirelessly for the Society until he had to relinquish his post due to ill-health.

We have good news from the Museum. The cataloguing of the Archives is complete. Included in this Newsletter is a Summary of the Society's Collection, a Quick Guide to using the Society's catalogue. The Archive Tree and the Catalogue can be viewed on the Society's Website. ([www.woodfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.woodfordhistoricalsociety.org)).

Appointments to view items or enquiries should be made through the:

### **Redbridge Heritage Centre**

Email address: [Info.Heritage@visionrcl.org.uk](mailto:Info.Heritage@visionrcl.org.uk)

Telephone number: 020 8708 2422

Website: [visionrcl.org.uk/heritage](http://visionrcl.org.uk/heritage)

Address:

Redbridge Heritage Centre

2nd floor, Redbridge Central Library

Clements Road, Ilford IG1 1EA

Opening hours: 10.30am to 4pm; Tuesday to Friday and every other Saturday

Nishat Alam and her team have worked tirelessly in putting the Archives together and the Society is indebted to them. Our thanks also go to Arran Hall who has been able to put all this information on to the website

During the past few months, Judith Roberts has been putting together our programme for the 2026- 2027 season. The talks and speakers are listed below.

### **2026**

|                             |                                         |               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------|
| 10 <sup>th</sup> September: | Lanes, Courts and Alleyways of the City | Jill Finch    |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> October:    | Winston Churchill – The Finest Hour     | Nigel Coleman |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> November:  | Christmas – the Curious History of Food | Peter Ross    |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> December:  | Wood Street Murder                      | Neil Houghton |

### **2027**

|                           |                                                        |                     |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 14 <sup>th</sup> January  | Copped Hall                                            | Anne Arbuthnot      |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> February | Women of note of Woodford and Wanstead                 | Lyn Haseldine Jones |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> March    | AGM and London`s Liquid Highway - The East London Ring | Peter Lawrence      |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> April     | Days of Dolly Blue and Izal                            | Brian Carline       |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> May      | Men of Bad Character c 1829 Captain Swing Riots        | Jef Page            |

As usual, if there is any member who feels they can assist the Committee with the running of the Society or has ideas for future talks please contact us, do not be shy, your help will be warmly received. We also welcome contributions for the Newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you all at our September meeting.

Sue Ralph

Chair

## **John Lovell – Chair of Woodford Historical Society**

**June 1950 – June 2026**

John was born in the Borough of Redbridge in 1950 and lived his entire life in the Borough. He attended the William Torbitt School and then Ilford County High School for Boys, he later became Chair of the Governors.

In 1970 he met his wife Janet and they would be married for nearly 52 years. In 1981 he and Janet welcomed their son Terence into their lives. He was an avid fan of Formula One. He and Janet travelled extensively, including Europe, the Caribbean, Hawaii, Alaska, Israel and Egypt.

John dedicated much of his life to service. In the 1970s he joined the Council and served over 25 years in the Aldborough and Clayhall Wards. He was leader of the Council and played an instrumental role in the modernisation of Ilford town centre. He served as Mayor of Redbridge from 1998 – 1999. In this role he worked to raise many thousands to support the young people of the Borough. His other roles have included Chair of the Kenneth More Theatre, Forest Housing Association, Loxford Youth Centre. He was also a Freeman of the City of London.

In 2009 John joined the Committee of the Woodford Historical Society and at the AGM in 2011 he was elected Chair, following the move of our current President to Norfolk.

In 2012 he edited 'Woodford 80 years of memories' to mark the Society's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He served as Chairman until 2019, when he sadly had to step down due to ill-health. He, together with Janet were committed to and worked tirelessly for the Society.



## POSTCARD FROM THE PRESIDENT – AUTUMN 2026

Hello Everyone

I hope that you've all survived the extreme weather we've all experienced this summer, perhaps now looking forward to some respite in the autumn. I remember back in my Scotland Yard days in the 1980s, one of my Embassy contacts, representing a country near to the Equator commenting, "Mr. Lawrence, you haven't got a climate in this country, you just have weather".

Being interested in Local History is not just about research into the past, it's also about our memories that connect with that past. Earlier this summer, we had a visit from one of our now adult grandchildren who wanted to visit Great Yarmouth and walk along the Prom., as he had done with us years ago. As we walk along the sea front, we passed a pub called the "Barking Smack". After explaining the story behind the name, it took me back thirty years, to my early days teaching local history at several locations, including Eastbury Manor House at Barking with its story of the Hewett family who owned the largest single fleet of fishing boats in the Country, called "Barking Smacks", and based at Barking Quay. However, with the coming of the railways and a terrible storm in the 1880s, when several vessels were lost, the Hewetts decided to relocate their "Short Blue" fleet to Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. If you walk down Gorleston High Street today, you will find the "Short Blue" pub.

I have similar lovely memories of Woodford Historical Society outings and perhaps one of the most enjoyable was a visit in the 1990s to the now lost "Little Monkham's", where we were made so welcome, crawling all over what was the oldest timber framed building in Redbridge. Also, I recently recalled in a "Woodford" Facebook group, my memory in the early 1950s, going to Gates Corner on a



summer's Sunday evening with Mum and Dad to watch the old pre-war cars, coming back from a day out at Southend, trying to do a hill start at the traffic lights. With no MOT testing back then, dodgy handbrakes and burnt out clutches meant you might count three or four cars bumping backwards into each other. A simple "pleasure" before the coming of twenty-four-hour TV, computers and mobile phones.

Enjoy the new programme of talks and, all being well, I'll see many of you again at the next AGM in March.

Best wishes

Peter

## **Summary of Woodford Historical Society Collection**

This document is a summary of the Woodford Historical Society collection (Redbridge Heritage Centre accession 90/103). It includes the archive history, the system of arrangement, and scope and content of the archive, along with useful notes about the collection.

### **Archive history**

This collection comprises of material compiled by the Woodford Historical Society during the course of its history. Many items have been donated to the Society by members or by the public, unknown sources, while other items were created or collected by the Society.

Due to the size of the collection and the nature in which it was created, there was no apparent original order by which to arrange the collection.

The records were deposited at Redbridge Heritage Centre by the Society in three parts:

- Deed of Gift 2022/42 (comprising of material deposited pre-2008)
- Deed of Gift 2022/43 (further material deposited in 2022)
- Deed of Gift 2025/7 (additional material deposited in 2026)

Each deposit was listed and boxed by topic or type of archive.

The full catalogue was completed by Redbridge Heritage Centre from 2025 to 2026.

### **System of arrangement**

In the absence of an apparent original arrangement or order, records were arranged in

the sub-fonds detailed below.

### **Scope and content**

#### **A. Woodford Historical Society**

This series contains material relating to the organisation of the Woodford Historical Society.

#### **B. Woodford Neighbourhoods**

This series comprises of the four main areas of Woodford (South Woodford, Woodford Bridge, Woodford Green, Woodford Wells) as well as material pertaining to the Borough of Wanstead and Woodford.

#### C. General material relating to Woodford

This series contains groups of material by general topic or type of archive.

#### D. Houses and Estates

Material relating to houses and estates in Woodford.

#### E. Institutions

Material relating to institutions in Woodford.

#### F. Churches

Material relating to churches in Woodford.

#### G. Schools

Material relating to schools in Woodford.

#### H. People

Material relating to notable people from or living in Woodford.

#### I. Miscellaneous

This series contains material that does not relate directly to Woodford. Includes the wider Redbridge area, London and Essex, as well as any other topics. Miscellaneous material relating to Woodford can be found in series C.

#### Notes

##### Descriptions of photographic material

- Much of the photographic material within the collection is made up of photocopied reproductions and prints rather than 'originals'.
- The Title field describes the photograph. This may be the accompanying title or caption, or if absent, with a description written by the cataloguers.
- The Summary text field specifies if it is an original or reproduction, and sometimes a physical description e.g. 'Laminated reproduction print'.

- Archive unit field describes what type of item it is. 'Bundle' refers to a bundle of either mixed or same material e.g. a stack of papers or collection of photographic prints that have been arranged together rather than separately.
- Some photographs are actually postcards – these are described as photographs under Archive type but specified as 'Photographic postcard' in Summary text.

## Dates

- Square brackets refer to date estimates.
- Creation dates refer to when the physical item was created. Content dates refer to the contents of the item itself e.g. a book about the First World War published in 2015 will have different creation and content dates (2015 and 1914-1918 respectively).
- For photographs, content dates have been added to the Title field e.g. 'Photo of Woodford Green, 1928' to avoid confusion as the majority of photographs are later reproductions of originals.
- Material is generally ordered chronologically by creation date within a File. However, photographs have been ordered by content date rather than creation date as is the case for all other material. This should make it easier for researchers to access the collection chronologically.
- Content dates for all laminated items are dated [1990s] – [2000s].

## Duplicate material

- Certain duplicate items have been retained and can be identified by the same reference number with (a) or (b). These are sometimes exact duplicates or copies with minimal differences (often stated under Summary text).
- The exception is with duplicate photographs – many of these are poor-quality laminated photocopies with originals deemed better to retain.
- In some instances, these have been retained e.g. if a copy showed a part of a photograph missing from the other.
- Duplicates of photographs have been disposed as per instruction of the Committee of the WHS, July 2026.

## Amendments

- Owing to the scale of the cataloguing project, it is possible that some typographical or historical discrepancies may remain in the catalogue. Some details may also have been omitted by accident.
- Any necessary amendments should be reported to the Collections Officer (i.e. dates and historic details rather than typos or formatting discrepancies).
- An external version of the catalogue will be uploaded to the Woodford Historical Society website for reference, which may be re-uploaded if any amendments are to be made. Society members should avoid circulating the electronic file by email etc so that only the most recent version is available to researchers.

#### Missing material

- The whereabouts of some items remain unknown. This has been stated in the Notes field but as per ISAD guidelines they remain listed and will be updated if found.

#### Further deposits

- Further deposits of newsletter and minute archives can be added to the archive.
- Any donations made by members of the public through the Society should be discussed with the Museum & Heritage Centre Manager and Collections Officer – it may be simpler to encourage donors to get in touch directly with RHC and donate to our collections rather than through WHS.

## **Quick guide: Using the Woodford Historical Society catalogue**

1. Open the archive tree which is on the Website

The archive is arranged in a hierarchy of sections within the overarching collection 'Woodford Historical Society'.

The collection is broken up into Sub-fonds, then Series, File, and finally Item level. You can see these as headings at the top of each column on the tree, apart from Item which appears on the catalogue itself.

2. Identify your area of research within the tree under the 'Sub-fonds' column. Look at the 'Series' and 'File' columns to see more specific groupings of the material.

3. To see a list of the items we hold within each File, open the archive catalogue.

Note the headings on the first row. You may freeze this row (View>Freeze

Panes>Freeze top row) so that you can still see the headings as you scroll down.

The archive hierarchy described above appear as varying hues of purple. (Fonds: darkest purple; Sub-fonds: dark purple; Series: mid-purple; Sub-series: light purple; File: lightest purple)

Items appear as white rows on the spreadsheet.

4. Scroll down to the Series you are interested in viewing. Alternatively conduct a keyword search (Home>Find & Select>Find OR keyboard shortcut Ctrl+F).

Check the headings for summary text and creation/content dates to help narrow down your search.

5. Once you have identified the items you would like to view, make a note of the reference numbers in the very first column e.g. 90/103/A1/A1/1. Don't worry if you don't know what this means – we will!

6. Contact Redbridge Heritage Centre (details below), quoting the reference numbers, to book a session to view the material.

## Useful notes on the catalogue

### Descriptions of photographic material

- Much of the photographic material within the collection is made up of photocopied reproductions and prints rather than 'originals'.
- The Title field describes the photograph. This may be the accompanying title or caption, or if absent, with a description written by the cataloguers.
- The Summary text field specifies if it is an original or reproduction, and sometimes a physical description e.g. 'Laminated reproduction print'.
- Archive unit field describes what type of item it is. 'Bundle' refers to a bundle of either mixed or same material e.g. a stack of papers or collection of photographic prints that have been arranged together rather than separately.
- Some photographs are actually postcards – these are described as photographs under Archive type but specified as 'Photographic postcard' in Summary text.

### Dates

- Square brackets refer to date estimates.
- Creation dates refer to when the physical item was created. Content dates refer to the contents of the item itself e.g. a book about the First World War published in 2015 will have different creation and content dates (2015 and 1914-1918 respectively).
- For photographs, content dates have been added to the Title field e.g. 'Photo of Woodford Green, 1928' to avoid confusion as the majority of photographs are later reproductions of originals.
- Material is generally ordered chronologically by creation date within a File. However, photographs have been ordered by content date rather than creation date as is the case for all other material. This should make it easier for researchers to access the collection chronologically.
- Content dates for all laminated items are dated [1990s] – [2000s].

### Amendments

- Owing to the scale of the cataloguing project, it is possible that some typographical or historical discrepancies may remain in the catalogue. Some details may also have been omitted by accident.
- Any necessary amendments should be reported to Redbridge Heritage Centre (i.e. dates and historic details rather than typos or formatting discrepancies).
- An external version of the catalogue will be uploaded to the Woodford Historical

Society website for reference, which may be re-uploaded if any amendments are to be made. Society members should avoid circulating the electronic file by email etc so that only the most recent version is available to researchers.

#### Missing material

- Some items were not located during the cataloguing process. This has been stated in the Notes field.

#### **Redbridge Heritage Centre**

Please contact Redbridge Heritage Centre for enquiries or to view material from the collection.

Email address: [Info.Heritage@visionrcl.org.uk](mailto:Info.Heritage@visionrcl.org.uk)

Telephone number: 020 8708 2422

Website: [visionrcl.org.uk/heritage](http://visionrcl.org.uk/heritage)

Address:

Redbridge Heritage Centre

2nd floor, Redbridge Central Library

Clements Road

Ilford

IG1 1EA

Opening hours:

10.30am to 4pm

Tuesday to Friday and every other Saturday

