



# Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society  
Founded 1932

## Newsletter Spring 2021

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### **Editorial and Chairman`s Annual Report**

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May I wish you all a Happy New Year. Let us hope that 2021 will be infinitely better than 2020. I think we are all desperate to have our freedom back again and have a break from the doom and gloom that has affected us all in 2020.

In my December letter I informed you all that Mike Ford our Treasurer is retiring. He has held this position since September 2007. He will be sorely missed as the contribution he has made to the Society has just not been looking after our finances but assisting in the day to day running of the Society. He will continue to help us when and where needed on an informal basis.

I cannot report on much else, as not a lot has happened. Nigel Pitt continues to answer the steady flow of enquiries that come through to our website. We have managed to answer most of these through the resources that I currently hold, looking up information on Google or using the knowledge that individuals have – our President, Peter Lawrence has been extremely helpful.

The other major occurrence since our last Newsletter has been the use of Zoom. Like many, before lockdown very few had heard of Zoom. It has now become a valuable tool for people to stay in contact with each other with the added benefit of being able to see each other and for societies and organisations to keep members and volunteers up to date with information and meetings. We are new to Zoom, and we are still in a learning curve, but each meeting has become easier. We will continue to use Zoom for our meetings until such times that we can return to the school, and as you know we have no idea when that will be.

We have booked the following Zoom talks:

- |                                 |                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021:  | London`s Liquid Highway, a talk by Peter Lawrence, retracing the barge trip taken by the Society around the East London section of London`s canal system. |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021: | The Museum of Mark Smith or a Nosy Parker`s evening. In his last talk to us Mark showed us artifacts from the 1 <sup>st</sup>                             |

World War and said he had lots more in his cupboards and offered to show us what he had, hence the title

15<sup>th</sup> March 2021: AGM to be followed by a talk from Peter Lawrence on the Blackwall Frigates – a History of the East India Company, their ships and those who sailed in them including some of those who lived in Woodford and the surrounding area.

19<sup>th</sup> April 2021: Agatha Christie, Queen of Crime, an illustrated talk by Nick Dobson on her life and career

17<sup>th</sup> May 2021: The Tithe Maps of Redbridge by Georgina Green

For the first time we will be holding our AGM via Zoom. This will be held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021, to be followed by a talk by Peter Lawrence.

The following documents are enclosed:

**Minutes of the 2019 AGM**

**Notice of the 2021 AGM & Agenda**

**Copy of the proposed Amendments to the Constitution**

**Voting Paper – this needs to be returned by... in the enclosed sae**

**Statement of Accounts 2019 (received earlier in the year) and 2020**

Membership form: (This will be sent with Autumn Newsletter) If you are on e-mail please can you write this on the form. Some members omitted to include it and wondered why they had not been notified about our Zoom talks.

Now for the bad news. We did not ask for subscriptions last year. We have sent out communications and with the introduction of Zoom which we pay for and payment to the speakers, we will be asking for subscriptions for 2021/22 from September. The cost will remain unchanged.

We would normally be sending out details of our Outings with this Newsletter, however until we get a better idea of how things emerge as the year moves forward, we will not be making any arrangements.

As always, I make my usual plea that if anyone would like to assist the Committee or put themselves forward to be on the Committee please come forward. You do not have to be an **historian** to be on the Committee, everyone has a skill that can be used. Nigel Pitt our web manager would be delighted to receive some help.

My thanks to all those who have contributed to this Newsletter and we are always pleased to receive articles. Contact [felicity.banks@btinternet.com](mailto:felicity.banks@btinternet.com) if you would like to send us something.

I would like to thank all the Committee for the work they have been undertaking during these difficult times and the support they have given me,

With best wishes and continue to take care.

Sue Ralph

## **Bits and Pieces**

**The Green, Woodford**

**Dick Walker**

Next time you walk across the southern half of Woodford Green, at about half way, you may now rest on a substantial wooden bench facing away from the road. We must thank Nicola and Nicolas Munday, former residents of Hurst House, for presenting us with this welcome facility

### **A Big Thank You**

As President of WHS I could not let Mike Ford's decision to step down as Treasurer to go forward without a personal thank you.

Mike and I go back to our teenage years in the Scouts and the Gang Shows at the Memorial Hall and later the Sir James Hawkey Hall, therefore I was so pleased when he and his now dearly departed Sheila, joined our Society. As a retired Barclays Bank manager he was ideally suited to become our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, a position he has held with distinction. I say that as he bravely carried on through serious illness and then the untimely loss of Sheila.

I am sure you will join me in thanking Mike for so many years of voluntary service in an important role and keeping a tight rein on the purse strings.

Thanks Mike.....

Peter Lawrence,  
President

### **Postcard from the President – Peter Lawrence**

**CROMER – A VICTORIAN RESORT - PART 2**

Linda and I hope you are bearing up and getting through this extraordinary period and hopefully it will not be too long before life gets back to a "new normality".

You will recall in the last newsletter I put together the Buxton, Gurney, Barclay, et al, family connections between South West Essex and the part of Norfolk where we are now living. I included the impact these families had on the north Norfolk coastal resorts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A legacy that continues, with several descendants of Edward North Buxton of Knighton in Woodford that are now our neighbours.



As a member of “Remembering Woodford (Essex)” on Facebook, I recently included a postcard of George Lane showing a drinking fountain that was halfway along the island gardens that divide The Shrubberies from George Lane. The fountain was a gift from the Gurney-Fowler family that lived in nearby Glebelands House and reminded me of yet another branch that joined the rest of this enormous extended family that holidayed in

North Norfolk. Two male generations of Gurney-Fowlers were councillors on the Woodford Urban District Council and successfully persuaded the Council to improve the surface of the High Road when they had a test section of the road laid out with Tarmac at their own expense.

I have a collection of books published in the 1960s and 1970s by members of the Buxton family, including those late of Leytonstone and Knighton House, Woodford, with several branches surviving today in Norfolk, including those near to us at Horsey and Hoveton Halls. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one family member, a 12 year old Ellen Buxton, daughter of Thomas Fowell Buxton, wrote a diary illustrated with pencil sketches between 1860 and 1864. Their family home was Leytonstone House until 1867, when they moved to a new red brick country house that her father had built in Hertfordshire. Leytonstone House survives today beside the Green Man Interchange but now owned by Tescos !!

I'll conclude with a few of Ellen's published entries from September 1861 that highlights their holiday trips, before the railway had reached Cromer:

*“At Stratford Station the horses, ponies and carriages were put onto the train. About nine o'clock a fly arrived to take Eleanor, Sarah, Taffy, Timmie, Barclay and Janet (Ellen's brothers and sisters) to Stratford. We got a later train and enjoyed a nice journey with lunch to Norwich. When we had finished lunch, we tied bread etc that we did not eat into parcels and gave them to some little boys. We took Bully (a greenfinch) to Northrepps in his cage and he seemed to enjoy it. At Norwich station Grandmamma's carriage was waiting, as was a postillion with post-horses and with Mama and Papa, we drove to Northrepps. This afternoon we all went to Beeston Bog to pick wild flowers, some of us rode, others went by carriage. Later the new donkey cart arrived.*

*Sunday: Grandmamma's 78<sup>th</sup> birthday. We walked to Northrepps church where Mr Law gave a sermon. In the afternoon we had a nice sermon from a Mr Govette about the Jews, we then had a collection for them.*

*Thursday: A great many of us took our luncheon and had a picnic on the Runton Hills. A great many of us rode and all the rest came in four carriages and smaller pony-chairs. It was a pretty sight with riders in front and the carriages behind”.*

In later entries Ellen mentions her new baby brother, Barclay, being baptised at Northrepps Church by her cousin, Rev. Edward Hoare (Hoare's Bank family) and there was a confirmation at Cromer church. Other entries highlight how simple the children's birthday and Christmas presents were, also at Christmas time, Ellen and her siblings would go into Epping Forest and collect dead wood which they bundled up and

distributed to the elderly in Leytonstone village. Ellen lived a full life as mother, grandmother and great grandmother. When she died in 1919, no less than 100 direct family members survived her.

This is just an insight into a different world that carried on and evolved well into the twentieth century, until the families became more fragmented after World War Two. Next time you venture up to Cromer, arrive via Northrepps or Overstrand, past the Golf Links or wander the local lanes, observe the number of large houses, many now residential homes, hotels or country pubs. A hundred years ago many of these were occupied by a handful of connected wealthy families who were at the forefront of anti-slavery, prison reform, drinking fountain charities and the saving of large open spaces from development, including Epping Forest and Hainault Country Park. They also held positions of high office, both public and ceremonial in London, Essex, Norfolk and elsewhere that continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## THE RAILWAY BELL, GEORGE LANE

**Peter Lawrence, President.**



One of my earliest memories as a toddler in the 1940s was being taken down George Lane, South Woodford and watching a steam train pass between the level crossing gates. I believe the year was 1947 therefore the level crossing gates might already have been permanently shut as electric trains were running on what became the “Central Line”, with a full service in 1949. Goods services drawn by steam trains

continued to use the line well into the 1950s. I used the station daily during the 1950s, commuting to school in London and remember the smoke deflectors still in place under the footbridge. The war had interrupted the electrification of the line. A wartime photograph shows the pedestrian subway partly constructed and the late 1940s saw the viaduct road bridge completed, the crossing gates removed and replaced by the brick walls. Similar alterations had taken place at Woodford Station, including the Broadmead Road bridge, which again had been completed before the war took hold and each end of the bridge served as air raid shelters.

The original branch line from Stratford to Loughton arrived in 1856 and the two Woodford stations were named “George Lane” and “Woodford”. At Woodford, land had been compulsory purchased from the “Monkhams House” estate and at George Lane, where the whole lane was dominated by just two country house estates, namely “Frithmans” and “The Rookery”, both estates were cut in two by the railway line.

As with “Woodford” station, the area around “George Lane” station began to be developed. Apart from shops, coffee houses and tea rooms appeared, as the station quickly became the hub of the local community. Along with the main station ticket office building, a signalman and crossing keeper’s cottage was built beside the level crossing on the Maybank Road side of the railway line. The signalman’s duties included ringing a bell announcing the arrival of a train and he would then close the level crossing gates. Apparently, the bell was “rescued” by a WHS member when the level crossing was removed, although it might have been earlier as the line received a hit from a

bomb during the war, badly damaging the area, including the keeper's cottage. The bell was last displayed in 2007 as part of the WHS seventy fifth anniversary meeting. The obviously reminder of the bell is the nearby "Railway Bell" public house. The building was completed in 1869 but the local "Brewster Sessions" of the licensing authority would not allow a liquor licence as the justices considered there was no need for a new public house in the area. This decision was reversed in 1878.

The station and "Railway Bell" continued to be a focus of South Woodford life, with some incidents recalled in the local press, here are some examples:

A letter to the editor of the Woodford Mail, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1897:

"Dear Sir, If you can spare me space for a few lines in your paper this week, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that after a train has left the station, the porter is supposed to open the gates for vehicles to pass across the line. The other night I had to wait 10 minutes in my cart whilst the porter in question was sweet hearting around the corner. I understand that at certain times during the evening this is the usual practice. I hope the publicity this letter will give to the matter will stop what is an intolerant nuisance".

Editor's note: "We are sure that the porter in question, whoever he is, will take the vows of celibacy on reading the above".

Woodford Mail 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1897, an editorial comment, concerned about assaults on police by the "lower classes" in George Lane:

"PC Bland is endowed with peculiar strength of muscle. The first indication the assailant had of this fact came in the form of a contused eye. Lovers of pluck cannot but admire the drastic methods used by this officer in dealing with this ruffian".

Woodford Mail 27<sup>th</sup> November 1897 reports:

PC Bryant at 8pm, was standing outside the Railway Bell noticed a James Webster, a labourer aged 21, of Winifred Terrace, Lower Road (Chigwell Road) throwing haddocks at passersby. "They were throwing them at me, so I threw them back. I had been thrown out of the Butcher's Arms (Hermon Hill) for singing". He was bound over to keep the peace and discharged.

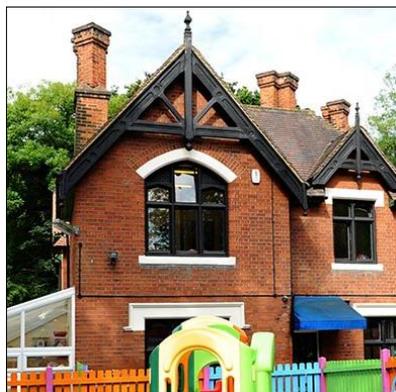
The "Woodford Mail" was published on Saturdays between 1897 and 1907 by the Woodford Printing Company in nearby Victoria Road, South Woodford.

As a retired police officer, I will refrain from any comment regarding the above press cuttings, however I hope readers will agree there is so much local history to be gleaned, even from something as simple as a bell.

## Hawkwood, Sewardstone

Frances Morgan (nee Stokes)

In the early 1920's my paternal grandfather, George Nokes, who was a butcher in Walthamstow, bought a large house which was set in 30 acres of farmland adjacent to Epping Forest, beside what is now Chingford Golf Course. The access road was Yardley Lane, off the Sewardstone Road, and the farm Lodge is still there, now a Nursery school. The road parallel to Yardley Lane is called Hawkwood Crescent. The land was used for beef cattle and sheep, with the sheep also often grazing beside the George Vth reservoir.



The family lived there until my grandfather's premature death in the 1930's. My grandmother had to sell

Hawkwood, to the Council, with the caveat that the land was not to be built on. I understand there were plans to use the house as a school but this didn't happen as it was requisitioned during the war. Our family is proud of our grandmother's foresight in including the caveat and, apart from a few acres of Lnd which are now a Forest Warden's house and an Organic Nursery, it has been honoured.

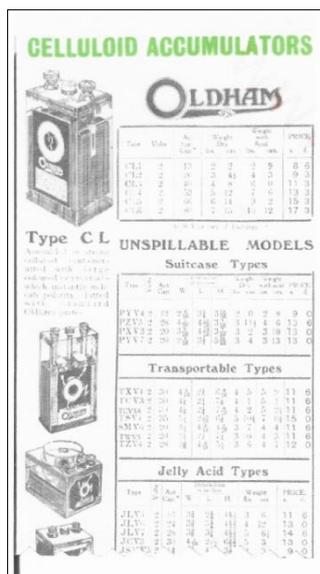
My grandmother moved back to Walthamstow with her 5 teenage children and lived above their butcher's shop in Hoe Street, and all through the war while her 4 sons joined the armed forces and all returned thankfully and all became butchers! I never heard her make a single comment about leaving Hawkwood with its two staircases and billiard room and lovely location beside Epping Forest.

## Accumulators 1940 / 1950s Radios

Joe Branson

With the recent sad passing of Vera Lynn attention has been drawn to people including myself who were listening to her during the dark days of the war "thanks to my radio and accumulators". Although I am now well past 85 it was not until recently that I became aware of what these accumulators were for, even though I first became involved with, and had seen them in the early 1940s.

Today it is rare but not impossible to find a property without electricity or gas but in the 1930's this was extremely common and even as close as a row of early Victorian cottages just a quarter of a mile from where we lived at Woodford Wells in Essex and just 10 miles from the middle of London. My parents had made friends with a middle-aged couple and their two daughters who occupied the first cottage. Their main problem was that although they had most of the 'essentials' they did not have electricity. The majority, of the Nation owned a radio. For some in the late 1930's this meant the very latest crystal sets and headphones. For the majority you simply purchased a 'battery powered radio' as you would today. For many who were renting or buying the radio by HP this was expensive enough, but the cost of the battery was preventive, but there was an answer - The Accumulator. These were in fact batteries of 2 volts, just sufficient to power the radio but if you possessed two and they were recharged every week you could survive.



Many of you will remember the accumulator section of the local shop, with row upon row of metal and wood trestles supporting some 2/300 accumulators all bubbling away and fumes. Once experienced it was never

Being glass any faults on the could be spotted and re-plated Accumulators worked and they would power at just 2 volts to heat the radio a limited radio service over a week.

Once more though today we are even batteries and chargers as part of our



supporting some 2/300 emitting awful acrid forgotten.

accumulator plates however at a cost. have sufficient valves and maintain

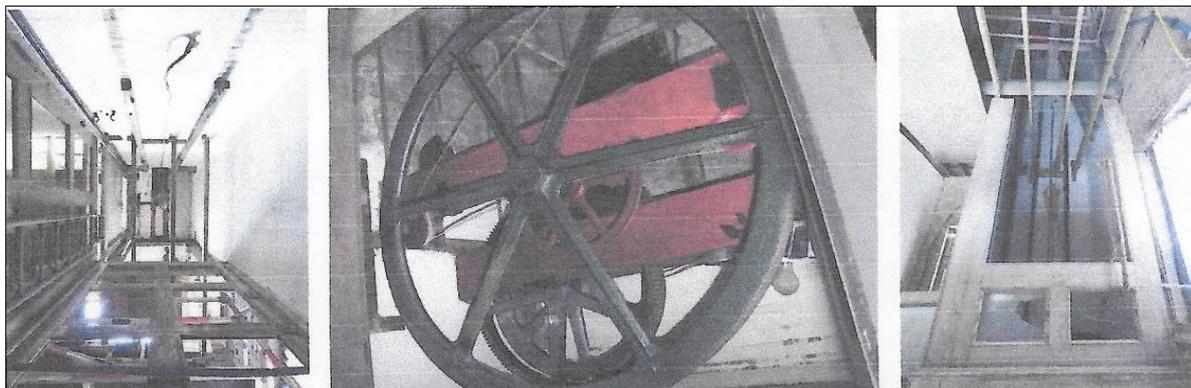
speaking about daily lives.

## The Gordon Brown Copped Hall

## Memorial Lift –

Many of you will remember Gordon Brown, one of our members, recently deceased. Gordon was a trustee of Copped Hall and for many years helped with many tasks involved in the restoration process of the Hall. However, his abiding passion was the mechanical lift in the Hall.

The lift was installed in 1895, when the wing was built by the then owner, the railway magnate, Mr E J Wythes. It was one of the few private houses of that era to have its own lift. The lift is counter balanced like a large dumb-waiter. It is likely that had it not been for the fire of 1917 it would have been fitted with electricity as this was installed in the house in 1895. As it is, the lift and its mechanism were left in their original hand operated form, which is quite rare if not unique. The purpose of the lift was to carry laundry between the bedrooms and the laundry room to the north, as well as to bring coal to the many fireplaces on all the floors.



The lift remained on the second floor for a long time after the wing was stripped out of all its floors and roof around 1950. It finally crashed down the shaft, around 1980. As the floors surrounding the lift had been removed no-one could gain access to the mechanism at the top which was left untouched. The upside-down gravity fed bottles still in position. Much restoration work has been carried out to date including the rebuilding of the top of the lift shaft, the fitting of the lift guides and the restoration of the car. The timber lift shaft at the ground and first floor till needs reinstatement. A specialist firm has been engaged to restore the mechanical workings of the lift.

Woodford Historical Society made a donation, of £150.00 to the Trust to assist in the completion of the work and to remember Gordon. If any member would like more information about the work being undertaken they can contact Dick Speller on 07774 1644407 or [SPELLER643@BTINTERNET.COM](mailto:SPELLER643@BTINTERNET.COM) or write to him at The Copped Hall Trust, The Stables Courtyard, Copped Hall, Crown Hill, Epping, CM16 5HS

Sue Ralph

## **More on Grove Hall – Job Mathew (1741 – 1802)**

When I wrote about the Monins family who owned Grove Hall in the last newsletter I mentioned that the family did not live at Grove Hall after 1777 and it was let to various tenants until it was sold to Mr Washington Single in 1854. He bought the house which had been home to Daniel Mildred, a wealthy banker.

I think it was Job Mathew who moved into Grove Hall after 1777 as he is shown as at Woodford c.1784 in the parish records<sup>1</sup> and living at this location on the Cary map of 1790. It was a very prestigious home so must have been occupied by a person of wealth and standing. The Woodford Highway Rate of 1797 shows Job Mathew as paying the second highest amount (John Goddard at Woodford Hall was charged more) and when the parish conducted an 'Eye Survey' in 1804 for rating purposes Mrs Mathew is shown as living in a "Capital Mansion replete with every out offices, buildings, lawn shrubbery, pleasure grounds, walled gardens, orchards, yards etc."

Job Mathew was the eldest son of Job Mathew and his wife Mary née Pelly, the sister of Captain John Pelly (1711-62). He and Sir Charles Raymond<sup>3</sup> who owned Valentines had sailed as Captains for the East India Company and were neighbours at Upton in their younger days. Job was baptised 7 Oct 1741 at St Mary Whitechapel, Stepney, and was brought up in considerable affluence. He was a Director of the Bank of England from 1784 most years until he became Deputy Governor for a two-year term in April 1799 and then served as Governor from 1801 until his death in 1802.<sup>2</sup> Over the years he attended meetings with a number of people he knew including Thomas Raikes (brother of his brother-in-law William Raikes), John Pearse (1759-1836) from the Monkams family and Jeremiah Harman who at that time lived at The Hermitage, north of the Eagle Pond at Snaresbrook. He was the brother of Elizabeth Mildred who later lived at Grove Hall.

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<sup>1</sup> E J Erith *Woodford, Essex, 1600-1836, a study of Local Government...* WHS Transaction Pt.10 p.83 (1950)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/archive/directors-annual-lists-1694-1950>

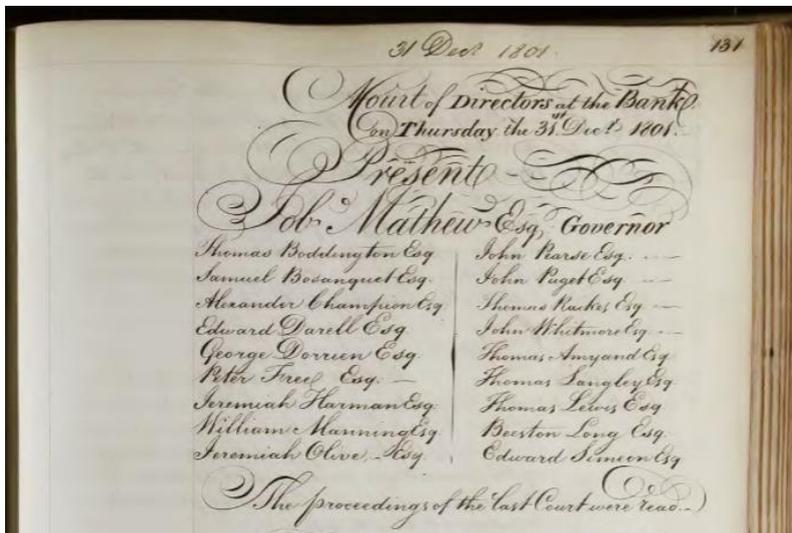
Job Mathew died on 21 April 1802 and was buried at St Mary's, Woodford. He is



Raikes Memorial photograph by Georgina Green, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

and was buried at St Mary's, Woodford. He is commemorated on the Raikes Memorial, a large structure of Portland Stone which is Grade II\* Listed, along with his sister who was the wife of William Raikes Esq (1737-1800)<sup>3</sup>. The memorial says "Job Mathew Esq, brother to Martha Pelly Raikes, Governor of the Bank of England and one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this county, who died the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1802 aged 61. His temperate judgement, consistency of character, high probity and honour well qualified him for discharge of his public duties: and whilst his unceasing endeavours to promote the happiness of others secured the cordial esteem of a number of acquaintances, the affectionate steadiness of his attachments endeared him as a husband, relation and friend."

His will illustrates his wealth and mentions many of the relatives also shown on the Raikes Memorial. He made ample provision for his 'dear wife Mary Mathew' but there is no mention of children. Mary died on 21 January 1811 and is also buried with her husband.

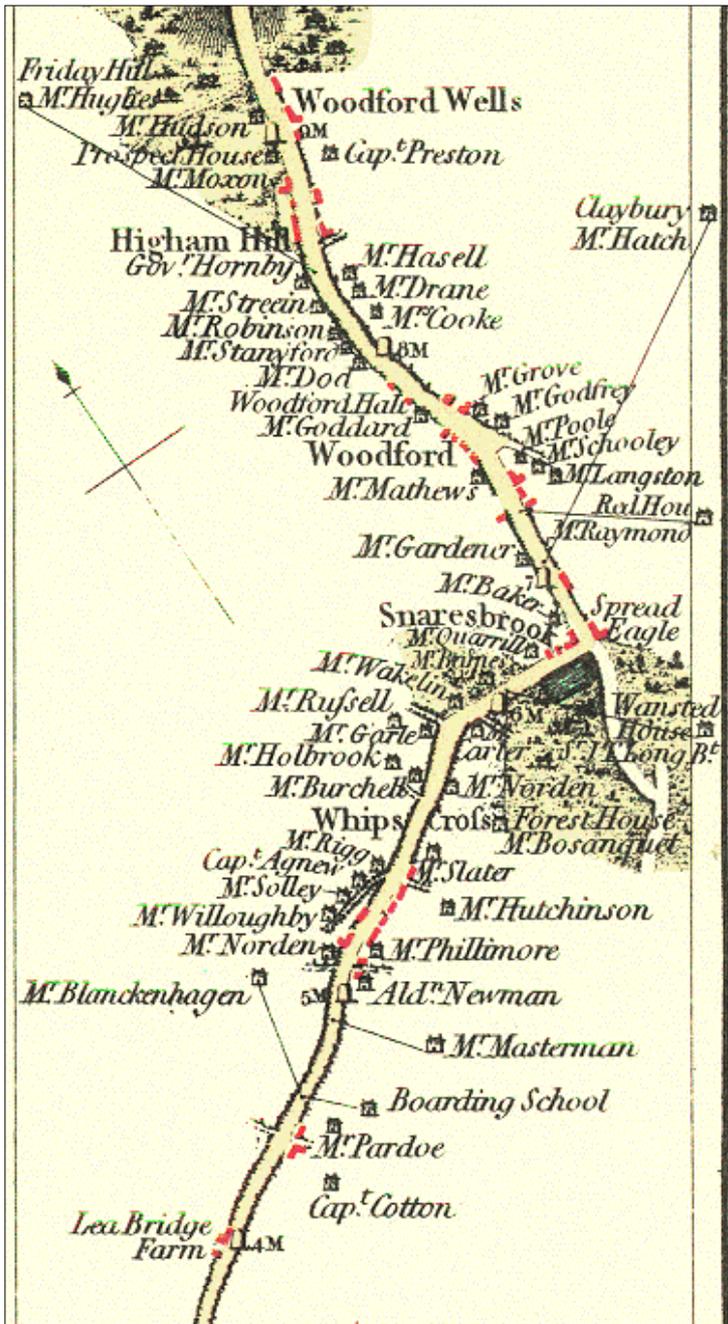


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Bank Court book – see website

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/minutes/1800-1900/1801/court-march-1801-may-1802.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> For more about William Raikes see the Woodford Historical Society Newsletter, Autumn 1993, p.6. He lived at Valentines for some years from 1783/4 as the tenant of Sir Charles Raymond and later Donald Cameron, but he was registered as the owner of The Rookery in George Lane, Woodford by late 1795 which explains why he was buried at Woodford.



Part of the  
London to Bishops Stortford  
Map published by John Cary,  
1 July 1790

Georgina Green Woodford HS  
Articles 2017 + Mathewfor WHS Nov  
2020