



Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society
Founded 1932

Newsletter Spring 2012

EDITORIAL

May I wish a very happy and healthy New Year to those members I have not seen since the start of 2012.

There is plenty going on this year with our own 80th anniversary celebrations and an exciting and varied programme of speakers and visits as well as events such as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics.

In March we celebrate our own Anniversary and I hope that our principal guest will be His Worship the Mayor who (even more optimistically) will bring an artefact to the meeting and tell us something of its history.

The publication of our book of Memories of Woodford will be delayed until the autumn, due to my extended period of ill health and surgery last year – thankfully that is now behind me and apart from the restrictions on lifting (does that include shopping?) all is back to normal.

As always, members' comments, suggestions and contributions are most welcome.

John Lovell

My mother lived on the site of Trinity School

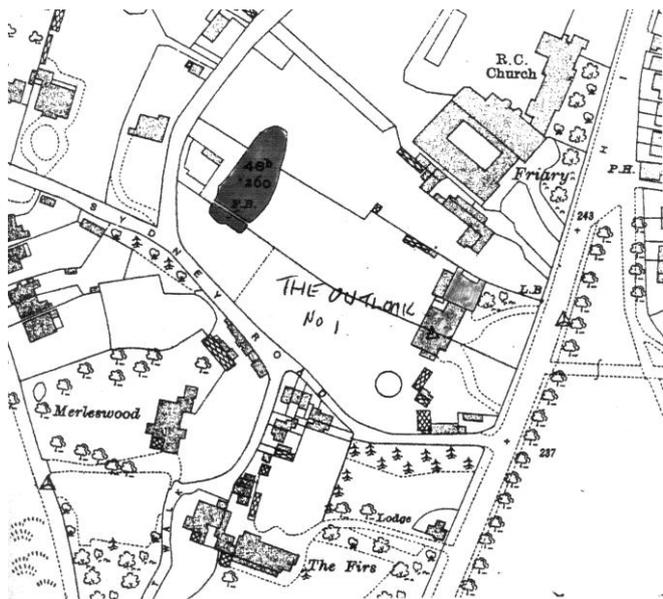
In 1912 Sir Percy and Lady Alden together with their four daughters, my mother Margaret, her sisters Elsa and twins Jeanette and Annette moved from Mansfield in Loughton to what my mother described as "part of a vast Edwardian house in Woodford Green". The house was Prospect House which stood on the site of Trinity School where the Woodford Historical Society now meets.



By the time that Sir Percy and family moved there it had been divided into two with the part nearer to Sydney Road being "The Outlook" and the other half, "Montclair". My mother lived in "The Outlook" with the family and two servants.

In a note in my possession she describes how, from the front wall of the garden, she watched "The Brakes" go by on the High Road. These were the coaches of the time taking their passengers to the "Annual ??????" my mother could not remember what. Perhaps someone can enlighten me. She also tells how she saw the first Zeppelin which was brought down at Cuffley.

What a sight that must have been. I remember seeing the ill-fated R101 and it made a similar impression on me.



There was a large garden with a lake at the far end which had a bridge over it. In the winter the girls could slide and skate on its frozen surface. But it also had its dangers as one of the twins fell in one day and had to be rescued from drowning.

In around 1918 the family moved to no. 19 Sunset Avenue which was also christened “The Outlook”. My first memory of my grandparents was visiting them there as a small boy after being picked up in Sunset Avenue in grandfather’s car. It was my first ever car ride.

By coincidence my parents together with me, my brother and another family moved into “Hurstwood” no. 20 Sunset Avenue at the end of World War II.

The lake at the first “Outlook” and the small wood surrounding it are now (in 2011) being restored after years of neglect by a team of pupils and local residents led by Mr Norman Kinch a biology teacher at the school and Francis Castro conservation officer from Redbridge. Pictures of Prospect House can be seen in “Woodford Then and Now” and a map showing the site in 1920 can be seen at the Redbridge Museum at the Central Library (*editor’s note – the Central Library is currently closed for refurbishment with a planned reopening in April 2012*). Mr Kinch has also found a remarkably early aerial photograph of the site in which the bridge over the pond can be clearly seen.

Sir Percy and Lady Alden were noteworthy people. Sir Percy was a noted philanthropist and Member of Parliament with Lady Alden being one of the very first women doctors who had to study in Switzerland as women were not trained as doctors in the UK at that time.

Ken Bray

The History of Arthur James Borkett

An extract from Brenda Bray’s diary

It is now August 1999 and I thought it was time to write down memories, and other people’s memories of the Borkett family. Firstly I will try and write the history of Arthur James Borkett.

Arthur was born on 30th January 1877. He was born in the last cottage in Links Road, Woodford Green, Essex. It is still there and is the last cottage before the car park entrance to the Men’s Club. His father was Andrew John and his mother Miss? Perry. Andrew’s occupation was gardener/coachman at “Heathcotes” in Friday Hill – now known as Friday Hill House, Chingford E4. It is now a community centre. Arthur married Margaret Orange who came from Newcastle, and was a laundry maid for the Courtney-Warner family who lived at “Highams” – now Woodford County High School for Girls.

All I know of Arthur’s life before he married is that he had twin brothers – only one of whom survived – Bert. Sisters surviving were Nellie, Sissy and Daisy. He attended Woodford Green Primary School (as I did and my son Jonathan for one term) and left school at 13 to become a

telegraph boy. After a year at work, he went back to school for another year to further his education. Once again he worked at the Post Office and was soon promoted to postman.

Meanwhile brother Bert had a boot and shoe making and repairing shop in High Road, Woodford Green near the Castle Hotel. Later he moved to South Woodford and I remember his shop next door to the then Majestic Cinema.

Arthur was finally promoted to inspector of postmen at Woodford Green Post Office, Snakes Lane. There is a memorial there dated 18.7.20 dedicated to Rev Walker, All Saints Church, and the first postman to sign was Arthur! However Arthur had time on his hands, as he had an early start to his day and finished early. So he learnt how to make boots and shoes from a boot maker in Saville Row, Woodford Green. Next, he rented a shop, 23 Snakes Lane (it is now a private house) and employed Mr Gent as manager. During the First World War he had a dozen men working for him – repairing boots and shoes for the soldiers. After the war, he had amassed quite a lot of money and invested in property in Woodford Green. Two houses in Ingatestone Road, one in Prospect Road and 1 High Elms.

An interesting footnote here – whilst making boots and shoes, he made shoes for Lady Alden – (*Brenda's husband*) Ken's grandmother.

Before buying houses, Arthur lived with his family in a rented cottage in Snakes Lane, opposite Packfords Hotel.

During Arthur's first marriage, which lasted until 1926 when his wife died of kidney disease aged 51, he had the following children (Ella (died 9 years), Lily, Kathleen, Grace, Constance, Arthur John, Victor Maurice (born 1917).

How did my father a widower of 55 meet my mother aged 25? My brother Vic told me a very interesting tale!

Before the Woodford New Road (the one going from Woodford to the Napier Arms etc.) was built, there was just a path through the forest and on Sunday nights it was called "the monkey parade". Young people used to parade up and down flirting etc. with the opposite sex. One Sunday my mother and a friend (had she come all the way from Rainham, or was she staying with her older sister in Barkingside?). The two girls started laughing at Arthur and Ronald King (later to marry Kathleen) who were wearing shorts. One thing led to another and they started going out and dancing together at Latimers in Ilford.

Arthur married Florence May Hewitt, May 23rd maybe 1931. Vic remembers that she took him to buy his first long trousers and, soon after she came on the scene, he got his promised – but not delivered – bike for passing the scholarship to the Sir George Monoux Grammar School.

I was born 21st April 1936, when Vic was 19 years old. My mother died in 1958, when I was 22 and she was 51 (the same age as the first wife). Arthur had two silver wedding anniversaries.

Arthur was a very keen cyclist and he and Ronald took many trips together. Before re-marrying they took the coal collier boat from London to Newcastle and visited the first wife's family, before cycling back home.

He was also involved with the friendly society The Ancient Order of Foresters, which met at the Men's Club. He was the Chief Ranger/Treasurer. It was an early insurance company with small payments weekly.

Besides being involved with the Foresters, he was also a member of the Walthamstow Liberal Society. Before he retired from the Post Office (I cannot remember him ever working) he was the Union representative and used to go to summer conferences.

During my growing up years, I really only knew my father as a gardener. He had two allotments behind Woodford County High School/The White House, which were reached by an entrance near Highams Park Lake. All our fruit and vegetables were grown here. At home he had two greenhouses, one cool and one hot, in which he grew wonderful orchids etc. The hothouse was warmed from a boiler in the old stables (the horse boxes were still there and the storage loft upstairs).

My father died aged 94 in 1970 – two years before my last child was born. Incidentally he was taken by his parents in 1882 to see Queen Victoria officially give Epping Forest to the people of London.

Brenda Bray

Her Majesty, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Our proximity to London can only be a bonus this year. You may have been lucky enough to secure tickets to the Olympics or Paralympics or even to the 'London Prepares' events, which provide an excellent opportunity to view the new Olympic buildings. Many special events and exhibitions are also being arranged to mark The Queen's Jubilee:

- A highlight of this year's opening of Buckingham Palace (30 July to 30 September) will be the display 'Diamonds: a Jubilee Celebration'
- The Crown Jewels will be re-presented from 29 March at the Tower of London. The central theme of the new exhibition will be the Coronation ceremony
- The exhibition 'Jubilee – a view from the Crowd' will open at Kensington Palace on 24 May, running until the end of October, providing an insight into the public's view of, and participation in, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897

Of course, we look forward to the Diamond Jubilee River Pageant and Gun Salute on 3 June. A 1000 boat flotilla will leave Battersea at 2.30 pm sailing down river towards the Tower of London for HMS President for disembarkation at 3.45 pm.

Slightly further afield, Windsor Castle will house the exhibition 'The Queen: Sixty Photographs for Sixty Years'.

This is a very special year.

Janet Lovell with thanks to Jill Hicks

Diamond Jubilee celebrations

Please may I ask for your help? Are you involved in the Woodford area with preparations for a street party or event to mark the Diamond Jubilee? If so, would you please take photographs, so that these can be printed in the next edition of the Society's newsletter. I am able to accept computerised images or prints, which I will then be able to scan and ensure their safe return. Please indicate the location and participants and, of course, if any children are in the photographs I will need the contact details of parents to enable me to obtain permission to print the pictures.

I look forward to hearing from you.

John Lovell

Murder Most Foul in Woodford – extract from the London Gazette Issue 16741 published on 15 June 1813. This item was also published in the Glasgow Herald.

Whitehall, June 10, 1813

Whereas it has been humbly represented unto His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, that on Monday morning last Martha Stephens, late of Woodford, in the county of Essex, Widow; was found upon the floor of her shop most inhumanly and barbarously murdered by some person or persons who had fractured the skull and cut the throat of the said Martha Stephens, and that this atrocious act was committed late at night on the Saturday preceding; and that a quantity of money had been taken from the till, and a plain metal gilt watch, maker's name Thomas Ridley, Woodford, No. 1544, which winds up in the face, and is a large and rather flat watch, and a very sharp case knife, are missing.

His Royal Highness, for the better apprehending and bringing to justice any person or persons who may have been aiding, assisting, or in any manner concerned in the perpetration of said murder, is hereby pleased, in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, to promise His Majesty's most gracious pardon to any such person or persons so aiding or assisting in the said murder (except the person or persons who actually committed the same), who shall discover his or their accomplice or accomplices therein, so that he, she, or they may be apprehended and convicted thereof.

And, as a further encouragement, a reward of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS is hereby offered to any person making such discovery as aforesaid (except as is before excepted), to be paid on the conviction of any one or more of the offenders by the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Woodford, in the said county of Essex

Admiralty-Office, June 5, 1813

'Stand and deliver' -- Dick Turpin and Epping Forest

Over the centuries Epping Forest has been associated with many famous and infamous people among whom one of the best known is the legendary highwayman Dick Turpin.



Dick Turpin was born on 21 September 1705 in Hempstead near Saffron Walden, Essex.

From his early career as a butcher's apprentice in Whitechapel and then as a butcher in Sewardstone near Waltham Abbey, where he had his own business and a wife, young Turpin began to obtain his meat supplies through rustling. This brought him to Waltham Abbey where he sold on the hides of butchered stolen cattle.

In 1734 these activities brought Turpin into contact with the notorious Gregory (or Essex) Gang, named after its leader Samuel Gregory, which operated in Epping Forest. This group of at least 21 young toughs started out as deer stealers who poached large numbers of deer from the great forest.

The gang's headquarters was in Sewardstone, right on Turpin's doorstep.

In October 1734 the gang had progressed from deer stealing to robbery, with their first victim being Peter Split a grocer in Woodford, from here the gang widened its actions across South Essex and into Kent and Surrey in an orgy of house breaking which continued until February 1735. Accounts show that this lawless gang were deeply involved in robbery with extreme violence. Armed with guns, and primed for violence, the Gregory gang mounted a series of raids on substantial farmhouses in and around London, stuffing their pockets with other people's cash, jewellery and much-loved belongings. Desecration seems to have been positively part of the thrill; what could not be carried off was burnt, drunk or raped.

One such attack took place at Loughton in Essex where Turpin raided the house of an old widow, holding her over a fire until she surrendered her belongings to him.

Following the break-up of the Gregory gang and the imprisonment and execution of many of its members, Turpin began operating again in the Epping area, this time as a highwayman. During this period Turpin and his partner Mathew King established their base between the Loughton Road and Kings Oak Road, which in legend becomes known as 'Turpin's cave'. Here in May 1737 Turpin graduated to murder, with the slaying of Thomas Morris, a servant of Mr Thompson one of the keepers of Epping Forest, who was trying to prevent Turpin from stealing a horse. This event took place close to what is now 'The Robin Hood' pub.

Turpin fled, eventually to Yorkshire where in April 1739 he was hanged at York for 'Crimes against His Majesty's Highways'.

At his execution Turpin played the role of the reckless criminal, he smiled and swaggered, gave hatbands and other favours to the crowd, caused a delicious stir by presenting a gold ring to a married woman, and then threw himself off the hanging platform and "expired directly".

So ended the career of Epping Forest's most celebrated villain.

©A O'Connor, Epping Forest District Museum

Epping Forest District Museum

On 16 January, we enjoyed an illustrated talk by Tony O'Connor on 'Epping through Old Photographs'. Tony is District Museum Officer, Epping Forest District Council and author of the above article, on Dick Turpin. Tony also invited us to visit the Museum at 39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey (tel: 01992 716882 for opening times). The building itself dates back to 1520!

The current exhibition is:

'Celebrating 30 Years', marking the museum's 30th anniversary (until 3 March)

to be followed by:

'Peelers Progress' (17 March – 23 June), tracing a nostalgic look at policing, drawn from local police archives

The museum also hosts many family events and works extensively with the local community.

Janet Lovell

FOR SALE – Extract from the London Gazette Issue 7752 published on 7 November 1738

TO be sold, In pursuance of a Decree of the High Court of Chancery, before John Bennett, Esq; one of the Masters of the said Court, at his House in Chancery-lane, A Freehold modern-built Brick Messuage -or Tenement four Rooms on a Floor, and large light Closets, with Coach house and Stables for Seven Horses; a large Garden well planted, and a Close of Pasture Ground adjoining of about two Acres, situate at Woodford, in the County of Essex, and was, late the Estate of the Rev. Mr Michael Jackson, Clerk, deceased. Particulars whereof may be had at the said Master's House.

Arnold Hills of Monkham

It was thirty years ago that Bill Shankly said football isn't a matter of life and death, it's much more serious than that. Many supporters of his old club, Liverpool, and our local West Ham, had similar sentiments when the two teams met in the cup final on 13th May, 2006.

West Ham United F C was originally founded in 1895 as a football team for employees of the Thames Ironworks Company, one of the country's leading ship builders. This was based in Canning Town, and employed a great many men. One of the foremen, Dave Taylor, was a local football referee and it was his idea. He approached the Chairman, Arnold Hills, and with his support an announcement was made in the company journal asking for members. Two teams were formed which played in friendly matches before joining a league.



Arnold Hills (1857 – 1927) was a sportsman himself, had played football at Oxford University, and was keen to promote the relatively new sport of cycling. He was also the first President of the London Vegetarian Society, founded in 1888. He headed a very successful company, as the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company had launched around 900 vessels from its shipyard at Bow Creek since its foundation fifty years earlier. This included HMS Warrior (now at Portsmouth, under the management of the HMS Warrior Preservation Trust – Registered Charity No. 256756). When she was launched in 1860 she was the most advanced warship afloat with an ironclad hull making her almost invincible. Hills took a genuine interest in the well-being of his employees and encouraged temperance. The football team was sometimes referred to as 'the Teetotallers' in the early days. The

more familiar names of the 'Irons' and the 'Hammers' refer to the fact that the players were iron-workers and have nothing to do with their ground at West Ham.

In 1892 Henry Ford Barclay died and Arnold Hills purchased Monkham at Woodford which had been Barclay's home since 1864. The estate covered a very large area from The Green near All Saints church (built on land given by Henry Ford Barclay) round the Harts estate to Woodford Station and northwards to Beresford Drive and Monkham Lane. Arnold Hills embellished the grounds by installing elaborate fountains lit by electric light. (200 yard of brick-lined tunnels was constructed for the water and engineering, six feet high and three feet wide, with larger "rooms" beneath the fountains. They were used as air-raid shelters during the last war.)



However by the turn of the century things were not going well. Both his health and the business were failing and in 1903 he sold Monkham. The estate was bought by James Twentyman who sold off some of the land and started building Monkham Avenue, Monkham Drive and part of King's Avenue.

The Thames is a relatively narrow river which in Victorian times was busy with shipping, so the Thames Ironworks was starting to find it hard to compete with the bigger yards on Tyneside, the Clyde and at Belfast. However, a terrible disaster when HMS Albion was launched in 1898 damaged the reputation of the company beyond repair. This resulted in the deaths of 38 people who had joined the crowd of 30,000 gathered to watch the launch. The Guildhall in London has the accounts of the firm of bankers approached by Arnold Hills to assist in his financial difficulties. It appears Hills was more concerned to provide good conditions for his workforce than show a massive profit and this was also part of his downfall. He was a gentleman before he was a business man.

© Georgina Green

Changes to Woodford Broadway



The old Sainsbury's in the Broadway closed down many years ago.

The area of shops near Woodford Station, called The Broadway, is always changing. Paving slabs are changed, trees replaced and shops change hands and use, but the change of use of Grays the hardware shop to Sainsbury's caused great concern. Despite petitions, the work began -- all very boring until suddenly everyone



started smiling and pointing. Why? Because the workman had uncovered the old shop signs. The Broadway Fishery and A E Pope and we were all engaged in the lovely pastime of "the good old days" and our reverie was enhanced by a small exhibition at the library to mark their 50th anniversary and a list of 1960's events, people and popular songs really got us going.

Everyone was talking to everyone, even people they didn't know. It was lovely, just like Christmas with the sun shining, but I still don't know, what did A E Pope sell? *Editor: Nigel Pitt tells me that A E Pope was an ironmonger.*

Mary Willis

Broadway Fisheries and A E Pope's shops became Gray Bros Trading Ltd. and Gray Bros has now been replaced by a Sainsbury's Local. So, Sainsbury's has returned to the Broadway.



A POSTCARD FROM NORFOLK

This “postcard” begins by relating a visit to the east Norfolk coast last December. Linda and I were visiting a beach known as Horsey Gap. People visit this stretch of beach between December and January each year to witness the birth of grey seal cubs. The colony this time was over one thousand strong with in excess of four hundred new cubs recorded. It was a wonderful sight. I noticed that the land we were crossing was part of a private estate. We then left the beach and as “one does” visited Horsey church, a pretty medieval building with a well-kept churchyard. I noticed a familiar name on memorials. The name was Buxton. Some of you can imagine that I wouldn’t let that rest, so we returned home via the beautiful “Horsey Windpump”, managed by the National Trust and I began some research. Many of you will be aware that the Buxton family evolved from family bases at Earls Colne, Coggeshall, Upshire, Leytonstone, Theydon Bois and the Knighton Estate at Woodford. Edward North Buxton (d.1924) of Knighton was well known for his efforts to save open spaces for the enjoyment of all, places such as Epping, Hainault and Hatfield Forests. Edward North and his wife Emily had seven children, the last was a son named Anthony. Anthony became an Essex J.P. He achieved the rank of Major in the Essex Yeomanry and in the First World War was mentioned in dispatches, wounded and received the D.S.O. in 1916. He married and in 1929 bought the Horsey Hall estate in Norfolk, which included Horsey Windpump. He died in 1970. His son, John Buxton, M.B.E. is the present occupier of Horsey Hall and is a renown naturalist, specializing on the study of cranes in Britain. Over the last 150 years other branches of the Buxton family have made their way to Norfolk, sometimes just to visit another part of their esteemed family, as Edward North Buxton’s mother was Catherine Gurney of the great Norfolk banking family and like the Buxtons, they moved closer to London, taking a beautiful country house estate at West Ham. The huge granite Samuel Gurney memorial in Stratford Broadway reminds us of this fact. Locally we must not forget the Gurney Fowlers of Glebelands, South Woodford and again through marriage, the Barclays of Monkams. Money definitely did follow money in those days.

So 2012 has arrived and I hope it will be a special year for us all to enjoy. This year will bring the greatest show on earth to the south west corner of historic Essex. The main events of the London Olympics are being held on the site of the Great Eastern Railway Works. Stratford saw trains leaving its depots from 1839 and from 1856 locomotives were bringing travellers out to Epping Forest with stations at George Lane and Woodford. The arrival of the railway saw the gradual change of Woodford from an Essex village to today’s London suburb. To start with development was slow with some development around the High Road, South Woodford and both sides of Snakes Lane, Woodford Green. It was the twentieth century that saw the greatest changes with the Monkams, Knighton, Elmhurst, Salway, Frithmans and other estates built over. The speediest changes were in the 1920s and 1930s and it was during this period of development that many Woodfordians got together to form the Woodford and District Antiquarian Society that not only concerned itself with what was going on in the area but also decided that some of the past needed to be preserved for the future enjoyment of others. During 1931 and 1932 the Woodford Times newspaper, owned and edited by the Courtenay-Jones family, published a series of articles concerning Woodford’s past. Following on from that series, “Fifty Pictures of Old Woodford” was published and Woodford Historical Society (as we are now called) was established. As we look to celebrate the 80th anniversary I thought it would be interesting to publish some readers’ responses during March 1932:

Sir – A sister has been sending me clips of the Woodford of Fifty years ago. They are of much interest and bring back recollections of boyhood. Leaving Woodford in 1890 at the age of 20, I rather fancy there would be few people now in the village that I would fraternize, so conclude it would be best to remain in sunny New South Wales. I remember Mr Ted Palmer, a member of Woodford Wells Cricket Club when it was located in what was known as Sykes Field and subsequently Buxton’s Field. Thanking you for publishing the sketches of the Woodford houses of the past. C. B. Spring, Rylstone, N.S.W.

Sir – I well remember my father telling me Johnston’s Pond was a gift and should never be filled in or enclosed. The water was free to all-comers and in his young days it was the chief source of supply to Woodford Wells. I believe the old platform still remains near the path from where the water was

dipped. There were good fish in the pond. I have caught some good carp and roach there. A Read Wilkinson, Whitehall Lane.

Finally as we, as a history society, look back over the past 80 years I thought it would be appropriate to include a short extract from the memories of one of the earlier members of our Society, Roy McKenzie-Smith (d.1997) who was a pupil at Bancroft's School during and after World War I:

“Bancroft's school cadet corps was commanded by my form-master, Vivien Richards, who was an unconventional teacher for his time. His form room had a carpenter's bench on one side with a huge crystal set standing on it. It was from this set we heard the first (radio) broadcast from Chelmsford (Marconi) with a blanket draped over us to keep out any other sound. Richard's wooden hut on Pole Hill, Chingford burned down in the hot summer of 1921. He was very despondent as he was uninsured but his old university friend, T. E. Lawrence – Lawrence of Arabia, came to the rescue and a new hut was built. About this time the school corps had a permanent camp in the grounds of Knighton, opposite the school and on many occasions Lawrence sat around the camp-fire with us, drinking tea, eating sausages and telling us episodes of the Arab revolt in which he played such a prominent part.”

Let us hope that 2012 will be a year full of great memories for us all.

Peter Lawrence

City of London

The Woodford area has close links with the City of London and I am aware that many members of the Society take a keen interest in City History. From 22 June to 23 September this year, the Guildhall Art Gallery will host an exhibition of Livery Company treasures and artefacts entitled:

‘The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick-Maker – 850 years of London Livery Company Treasures’

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the City of London Festival during June and July. In addition to the many and varied musical events and entertainment, a series of special Gresham lectures will be held in collaboration with the Festival during these months. Details are posted on-line in due course: www.colf.org and www.gresham.ac.uk

If you do not have access to a computer and would like further details, please speak to me at one of our meetings.

Janet Lovell – with thanks to Jill Hicks

Woodford Historical Society Trips

Whilst we are planning a programme of outings for 2012 (see details included with this Newsletter) as announced at a recent meeting, with regret your Committee has decided not to include a day coach trip. I know this will be a disappointment to some of you, for which I apologise, but unfortunately over recent years the day trips have not been popular and it has been necessary to work very hard to gain support from other organisation to make the day trips viable.

It may be that we can make information about other day trips available to you. If you are interested, please let me know.

John Lovell
