



# Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society

Founded 1932

## Newsletter Spring 2010

---

---

### Editorial

---

---

This edition of "Woodford Times" is the first that I have edited and it is therefore only right that the Society's thanks to Stella Joseph should be placed on record. Stella not only edited the Society's newsletter but also set up the excellent website which showcases the Society and its activities. It also provides the opportunity to share memories and photographs. The Committee would like to build on the success of the website by introducing new pages and regularly updating the content. Whilst the text is available, we need someone to act as Webmaster. Are there any volunteers out there? If you feel that you (or a member of your family or a friend) may be able to help in this respect, please contact me (John Lovell – tel. 020 8505 3640 or e-mail [lovell.john@sky.com](mailto:lovell.john@sky.com)).

Thanks are also due to our hardworking Committee Members who ensure that we have an interesting and varied range of speakers and an excellent programme of visits, which are enjoyed by our members.

Particular thanks are due to our Chairman, Peter Lawrence, who works tirelessly for the Society and is the stimulus for so many of our activities, providing us with his unparalleled local knowledge and good humour!

**John Lovell**

---

### A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A new decade brings us closer to 2012 when the World will focus on the Olympic Games at Stratford. The year 2012 also heralds the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our Society and to celebrate we hope to publish a book of memories entitled "Woodford – The Last Eighty Years". This is where you all can take part. I'm sure everybody has memories that stand out during their time living in Woodford. For example the changes in daily life, from shopping, going to school and what about the visual changes, the buildings and open spaces that have disappeared?

Please put your thinking caps on and contribute a couple of paragraphs of memories for posterity.

Thank you.

**Peter Lawrence**

*The Editor has provided contact details and a few ideas regarding the proposed book in the final item of this Newsletter.*



## **OLYMPIC PARK VISIT**

January saw 30 members take advantage of a guided tour around the 2012 Olympic Park construction site.



We were met at Stratford station by a locally employed guide who welcomed us onto the specially adapted coach where we watched a short video that reminded us of the successful bid to hold the Games in 2012. The tour began by travelling to the main north gates into the Park situated near Ruckholt Road and Hackney Marshes. We were informed that David Beckham learned his footballing skills on these playing fields (as did your Chairman).

Driving through the security systems, operated by former Gurkha soldiers, we were immediately impressed by the size of the site, which covers the area once occupied by the former G. E. Railway works and the huge Temple Mills railways sidings.

Passing by the emerging athletes' village, velodrome, aquatic centre, hockey stadium and of course the main Olympic stadium, you couldn't help being impressed by the constant activity, the number of vehicles and movement of workers through the site. Other buildings well on the way to completion were the Media Centre and the main power station, both will be used as important parts of the infrastructure for a new Stratford City after the games, planned in principle long before we knew that Britain would bid for the Olympics.

I think most of us left the site better informed and perhaps more positive about completion in time for the 2012 Olympics but also the fact that the legacy after the games, in principle, was already in place.

### **Peter Lawrence**

*If, like your Editor, you have yet to visit the site, you can book seats on the tour bus for weekends and selected weekdays by telephoning 0300 2012 001.*

---

## **TEMPERANCE**

Woodford Historical Society's first meeting was held in the Wilfrid Lawson Temperance Hotel in March 1932.

In 1883 Edward Walford, a noted Victorian historian and antiquarian was concerned to record the history and appearance of the hamlets, villages and market towns that made up the metropolitan area, before they were overtaken by the urban sprawl that was beginning to

take place. In his book that is simply titled 'Greater London' there are numerous references to Woodford and the surrounding area. He included this piece which referred to the Wilfrid Lawson Temperance Hotel.

"The Temperance cause was well supported in the Woodford area for, besides the Woodford Temperance Society and the George Lane Institute which were established "for the purpose of affording the working-men of the district the means of social intercourse, mental improvement, pleasant recreation, and non-intoxicating refreshments, there is on the Green, near Higham Hill, a very large and conspicuous Temperance Hotel or 'coffee tavern,' named after Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who opened it in May 1883. It was erected under the auspices of Mr. Andrew Johnston, late M.P. for South-Essex. This latest addition to the public institutions of Woodford has given rise to the following epigram:

All hops abandon ye who enter here:  
The wicked Wilfrid haunts this watery cavern;  
No wine, no whiskey, not e'en bitter beer  
Flows through the channels of the Coffee Tavern.  
The steaming coffee and the fragrant tea  
Are ready where each eye can plainly see 'em,  
'Tea-total' then let each incomer be,  
And while 'Tea Total' let him sing '*Te Deum.*' "

---

### **WILFRID LAWSON**

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, 11th Bt. was born at Clifton Hall, Westmorland, England. He was the son of Thomas Wyberg and Isabella Hartley and was baptised with the name of Wilfrid Wyberg. He succeeded to the title of 11th Baronet Lawson in 1831 and in the same year his name was legally changed to Wilfrid Lawson.

His son, Sir Wilfrid Lawson (4 September 1829 – 1 July 1906) succeeded his father to the Baronetcy of Brayton on his death in 1867. He was a British Liberal Party politician and a staunch advocate of temperance. He was a lifelong leader in the cause of total abstinence and, in Parliament, to which he was first elected in 1859 for Carlisle, he became its leading spokesman.

In 1864 he first introduced his Permissive Bill, giving to a two-thirds majority in any district a veto upon the granting of licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors; and though this principle failed to be embodied in any Act, he had the satisfaction of seeing a resolution, proposing similar powers, accepted by a majority in the House of Commons in 1880, 1881 and 1883.

Lawson lost his seat for Carlisle in 1865, but in 1868 was again returned as a supporter of Gladstone, and was an MP until 1885 when he was defeated in the new Cocker mouth division of Cumberland. He won that seat in 1886, and he held it until the election of 1900, when his violent opposition to the Second Boer War caused his defeat. In 1903 he was once again returned and on this occasion he represented the Camborne division of Cornwall. In the general election of 1906 he was once more elected for his old constituency in Cumberland.

During all these years he was the champion of the United Kingdom Alliance (founded in 1853), of which he became President. An extreme Radical, he also supported disestablishment, abolition of the House of Lords, and disarmament. Though violent in the expression of his opinions, Sir Wilfrid Lawson remained very popular for his own sake both in and out of the House of Commons.

Wilfrid Lawson became well known for his humorous vein and his ability to compose topical doggerel which frequently addressed questions of the day. Some of his verse was published with F C Gould in *Cartoons in Rhyme and Line* (1905) and *Crisps* (1907)

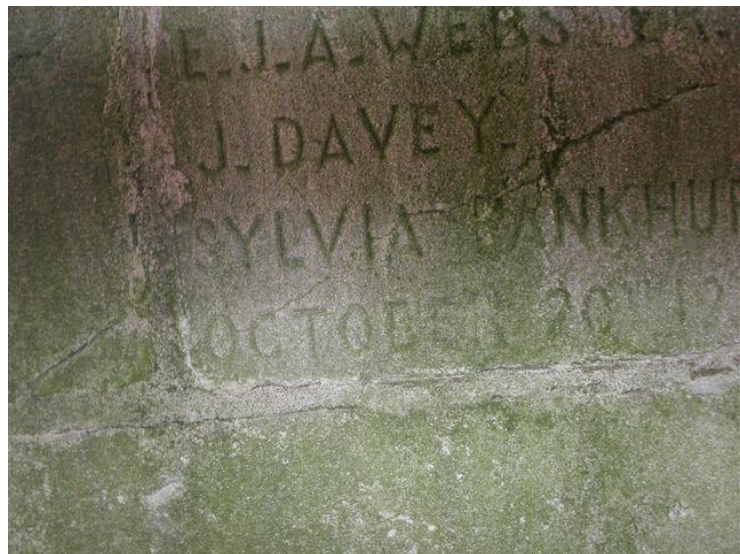
**John Lovell**

## SYLVIA PANKHURST

Our Thanks to Lynn Jones, a WHS member who visited Ethiopia in 2009 and provided these photographs of Sylvia Pankhurst's grave in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa.



Sylvia (born 1882) lived in two addresses in Woodford. The first was a house in George Lane called Frithmans, where she sheltered Belgian refugees during World War 1. The house was demolished in the early 1930s to make way for the shops that included the old Woolworths store. The second address was in Charteris Road, the site now occupied by the flats in Tamar Square. She also occupied a small timber framed house in High Road, Woodford Wells called "Red Cottage", from which she used to sell refreshments to bus crews and travellers. The site is now occupied by the house behind the memorial (illustrated below). The memorial is listed grade II. My thanks to Peter Lawrence for the information and pictures of the memorial







**Vine Cottage painting**

### **A BIT OF OLD SOUTH WOODFORD**

Before the arrival of the railway to Woodford in 1856 the whole length of George Lane was bounded, in the main, by two estates. Frithmans was on the south side and The Rookery was on the north side. Rookery House stood where the Post Office is today. Some of the Rookery domestic buildings still stand. For instance the sheds behind Woodford Motorcycles were farm buildings.

Local suburban development near the railway began in the 1860s, with the laying out of Victoria, Albert and Woodville Roads. A bend had to be put into Woodville Road as an existing estate cottage made laying a straight road impossible. Although extended and converted into flats in the 1980s, the property originally called "Vine Cottage" is still there.

A former member of the Woodford Historical Society, Robert Puffett, informed me years ago that his family had owned the cottage from the 1930s up until about 1970 and now that he has passed on, some interesting pieces of paper have been given to me which shed some light on the way Woodford was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The correspondence includes a bill, hand written in 1892 by the Surveyor's Department of The Woodford Local Board. It is addressed to the then owner of the cottage, a Mr C Robinson Esq for "work done in kerbing and making up the road and path fronting the premises in Woodville Road". The amount came to £16.18.0, being the cost of materials used to make up the 140 foot frontage, plus cartage and labour. In 1892 the cost of a horse cart and man for one day was 7/6d and the "men's time" was 2/6d per day.

Another item in the bundle of papers was a printed auction bill, dated 1901, for the sale of "Albert Cottage, Albert Road, George Lane, Woodford". The property was sold, with a tenancy which realized £15.14.6 per year, for £175 to a Mr C Harding of Churchfields House, Churchfields, Woodford. Churchfields House stood where the council flats are at the junction with the High Road. How times have changed !

### **Peter Lawrence**



**Vine Cottage 1986**



**Vine Cottage today**

## A WOODFORD STREET

Woodford has been blessed with several famous sons through the centuries and perhaps it's time that some were brought to the fore:



George Edmund Street was born in Woodford on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1824, the third son of Thomas Street, a solicitor practising in Philpot Lane, Eastcheap. It appears the family moved away whilst George was quite young as he was educated in Mitcham and later at Camberwell Collegiate College, Surrey. Although he began with law, at his father's death the family moved to Exeter and by 1849 he was practising architectural design. His good fortune began when he was employed as an "Improver" at the offices of the already famous Victorian architect, George Gilbert Scott.

G E Street became famous for his Gothic revival designs and his commissions included Christchurch, Dublin; St Mary Magdeline, Paddington; Saint James, Sussex Gardens and St James the Less in the Vauxhall

Bridge Road. From his practice and influence emerged major figures like Phillip Webb, Norman Shaw and the designer William Morris, born in Walthamstow and who also lived for some time in Woodford.

The most famous structures that Street designed are the Law Courts in the Strand. The complex is a fine collection of French and English style of Gothic. However like so many of his time, he was completely absorbed in his work, which eventually took its toll. He had already designed the memorial above the burial vault of his mentor George Gilbert Scott in Westminster Abbey and in 1881 he joined Scott in the Abbey, expiring just as his most famous building was being completed.

## Peter Lawrence

---

## CHURCHILL STATUE VOTED FAVOURITE LANDMARK

Towards the end of last year (2009), Redbridge residents voted to feature the statue of Winston Churchill in a set of celebratory pin badges for the 2012 Olympic Games.

Redbridge Council teamed up with the London 2012 Organising Committee to offer residents the opportunity to vote for their favourite local landmark to be featured in a set of London 2012 'Landmark London' pin badges.



A landmark from each London Borough will be included in the set of 33 pin badges which are expected to go on sale later this year.

Residents chose between four of the Borough's "iconic landmarks": Valentines Mansion, The Winston Churchill Statue, Redbridge Cycling Centre and Redbridge Town Hall.

## John Lovell

## **FOR SALE**

The Society is producing a range of postcards depicting Woodford in days gone by – these will be on sale at meetings for 50p each. All profits go to the Society

It is also planned to reprint an A3 sized (approximately 12" x 16") map showing '*Where the bombs fell in Woodford.*' This should be available by April and will be sold at meetings and events such as the Essex History Fair which is to be held on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June at Waltham Abbey (10.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.). The maps will be sold at £1 and, again, all profits will go to the Society.

---

## **VESTRY HOUSE MUSEUM**

The Vestry House Museum presents the history of Waltham Forest. It is located in the Grade II listed Vestry House which is in the historic Walthamstow Village. Originally built as a workhouse in 1730, Vestry House has since been a police station and a private house, before it opened as a Museum in 1931. It is well worth a visit for those who are not familiar with the Museum which is open Wednesday to Sunday between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Groups can arrange (pre-booked) visits on Tuesdays.

From 13 March - 23 May 2010 the Museum will be hosting an exhibition as part of their 'Tudor history'. The Tudor and early Stuart age was a period of great change and development, not only in religion, but also in the arts, sciences, politics and fashion. This exhibition will explore the aspects of this legacy by featuring a number of important local history connections such as the magnificent houses of Hill Hall and Copped Hall, as well as telling the histories of a number of influential individuals. For more information, you may visit Vestry House's website:

Vestry House Museum  
Vestry Road, London E17 9NH  
Tel: 020 8496 4391  
Email: [vhm.enquiries@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:vhm.enquiries@walthamforest.gov.uk)  
[www.walthamforest.gov.uk/vestry-house](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/vestry-house)

## **John Lovell**

---

### **“LOCAL COUNCILLOR RISKS LIFE AND BEST SUIT TO REACH HOME”**

From memory that was the tongue in cheek headline from a local newspaper that greeted me after my experiences of getting home on the night the River Roding burst its banks on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

I left for a meeting at the Town Hall, Ilford with the rainwater and river continuing to rise. At about 8.30 p.m. I received a message from my wife that I had better get back quickly. I drove to the Charlie Brown roundabout to find the Chigwell Road blocked so I drove up to the High Road Woodford and down Broadmead Road to get as close as possible to my house in the Chigwell Road. I was greeted with an unnatural silence but the street lights were still working. All I could see was this inky black water rushing down what had been the Chigwell Road and to give an idea of depth, you could not see the “keep left” bollards at the junction with Broadmead Road. I walked through an alleyway and climbed onto a wall and looked across to my house, which was safe but the water was licking around my garden gate. I saw my wife with other people in my garden. There were plates of sandwiches and bottles of wine on my garden wall. Two policemen from “Thames Division” rowed past me

saying that they couldn't help as they were on their way to rescue an old lady. So in a pathetic quest for ideas I shouted across to my wife "What shall I do?" and she answered back, raising a glass of wine at the same time, "It's up to you Darling"

So encouraged by a couple of "likely lads" from the Broadmead Estate, I lowered myself into the cold fast flowing water and started across with my briefcase above my head. I'm six foot four inches tall and the level was up to my chest. Remembering certain training I had experienced years ago I slowly walked diagonally across and against the flow, my legs were getting numb, nasty things were floating past me and I suddenly thought about manhole covers that I knew were in this section of the Chigwell Road. Had they been blown? This slowed my progress even more but I reached the other side and after a quick hug from my wife and neighbours I got straight under the shower, changed, went back to my front garden to see the two policemen, who had been sent on a false alarm, tying their boat up to my front garden gate and tucking into my sandwiches and coffee !!

**Peter Lawrence**

---

### **THE LONDON GAZETTE – a fascinating insight into the past and its links to the present**

The London Gazette owes its creation to two major events – the Great Plague and the decision of King Charles II to move his court to Oxford. Initially called the Oxford Gazette, the publication changed its title to The London Gazette within a few months.



The London Gazette provided authoritative news, received from British embassies in times of peace and from British generals at time of war. The Times reported news of Wellington's victory at Waterloo by reprinting the despatch initially published as a Gazette Extraordinary.

Back issues of the Gazette provide fascinating reading and a full set is held at the Guildhall Library in the City. Here you can find, for example, information about the railway building boom of 1845, from 1870 notice of civil service recruitment and examinations, from 1843 rank and file soldiers mentioned by name in British commanders' despatches. Other notices include the award of medals and honours, section 652 applications (used to have a company struck off the Companies House Register and dissolved), bankruptcies and apprenticeships. The publications are fully indexed and much information can be accessed on-line at [www.london-gazette.co.uk](http://www.london-gazette.co.uk)

Searching on-line for 'Epping Forest', a touch of a button (well, maybe two!) provides information tracing the development of, for example, the Epping Forest Act 1878. Original documents can be viewed on computer as in issue no. 27025 dated 22 November 1898 through to more modern developments in relation to the Act – issue 56324 dated 6 September 2001 – confirmation of byelaws for the regulation of horse riding in the Forest.

As Britain's oldest continuously-published newspaper, The London Gazette has changed over time, but it continues to have a significant role in publishing official information and thereby providing a valuable source of information for historians and family historians.

**John Lovell**

---



## NEW GALLERIES

The Museum of London opens its new £20 million “**Galleries of Modern London**” on 28<sup>th</sup> May. The Galleries will tell the story of London and its people from 1666 to the present day. The collection on display will include 7,000 objects, interactive displays, specially designed family exhibits, film and changing displays. The pre-opening publicity says that the exhibitions “will transport you through the capital’s tumultuous history, rich with drama, triumph and near disaster!”

**John Lovell**

---

## WOODFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

As Peter has mentioned above, 2012 heralds not only the Olympic Games in London but also the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of Woodford Historical Society. To mark the occasion, the Committee would like to produce a book which will reprise the last eighty years through individual memories of events and day to day life, comment on some of the major changes that have taken place and place each decade into a wider context of national and World events.

In order to put together a Commemorative book we need your contributions regarding both your own family life and your recollections of people, places and events. In an attempt to stimulate some thoughts, I have listed a few ideas that might serve as a catalyst to reawaken memories. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

Coronations, Royal Silver and Golden Jubilees, Woodford during the War, Epping Forest, Barnardos, Police Boxes, the Great Storm of 1987, clubs and societies, Scouting, the Girl Guides, local schools, local Churches, local “characters”, Guide Dogs for the Blind, developments .....

Please contact John Lovell (020 8505 3640 or [lovell.john@sky.com](mailto:lovell.john@sky.com)) about your contributions (which in many cases may be only a brief paragraph). If you have any photographs which we might use, these can be sent digitally or we can scan prints and return them safely to you.

If you do not feel that you are able to put your contributions in writing, we can arrange for someone to see you, either at a meeting or at home, to record your memories.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**John Lovell**

