

"Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society

Founded 1932

Newsletter Autumn 2010 (part 1)

EDITORIAL

As the evenings begin to draw in we can look forward to our Autumn Programme. However, we should not forget the tremendous amount of work that our Chairman and Committee do to try and ensure that everything runs smoothly and that we can enjoy an interesting and varied range of speakers and visits. In particular, over the Summer, Jill Hicks organised a number of visits which have been well supported. (One visit to HQS Wellington became two because of the level of interest!) I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of us in expressing a big THANK YOU to Jill and the other members of the Committee.

As you are aware, this is only the second edition of 'Woodford Times' that I have edited and I would welcome feedback and contributions. Please do contact me with your thoughts and suggestions (John Lovell –tel. 020 8505 3640, e-mail lovell.johnt@skv.com or see me at a meeting).

We have received some excellent contributions for our '80'h Anniversary Book' to be published in 2012 but we really do need your contributions. Please look at the piece entitled "WOODFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!" and start writing!

John Lovell

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S BOOK SHELF

As we get closer to 2012 and our Society's 80^h anniversary, I think it's a good idea to look back at some of the local history articles written over that period.

Volume two of the W.H.S. transactions, published in 1934, includes an article entitled "The Origin of the Roads in the Woodford District" by Arthur Ramsay, one of our founding members.

To set the scene, in the early part of the 19^h century two estates situated on the east side of Woodford Green were being consolidated by new owners, namely the Pearce's at Monkams and the Mellish's at Harts. Both families were making fortunes by trading with the East India Company and the West India Docks. William Mellish had already added a strip of the Green into his estate, thus pushing the footway we now call Warner's Path westward and taking the public further away from his newly rebuilt Harts House.

The Pearce's at Monkams wanted the original route of Snakes Lane taken out of their newly enlarged estate, at the same time as William Mellish wanted better access to his farmland situated in the area now occupied by Glengall Road. Here is the relevant part of Mr Ramsay's article:

"In the year 1823 an alteration was made to Snakes Lane, which resulted in the direct connection which exists today between the railway station and the High Road. A connection between Woodford Bridge and the main Epping Road had existed long prior to this date but by a somewhat roundabout route known as Snakes Lane and in the earliest records Sakes Lane, the origin of that name being unknown. Prior to 1823 the lower section of this lane, that portion nearest to Woodford Bridge, followed the same route as today, but just east of the present railway line, it took a sharp turn northwards for about 150 yards then it turned west, passing to the north of the site subsequently occupied by Monkams House. It joined Warner's Path, from which several tracks went across the Common (now the Green) to reach the Turnpike Road to Epping. Warner's Path was the name given to the path which at present runs along by the fence bounding the Harts Estate to the top of Monkams Avenue. From the junction of Warner's Path and the present Snakes Lane a track led across the Green to Woodford Wells which, although grass grown today, can still be seen close to All Saints' church. The upper end of today's Snakes Lane already existed for about three hundred yards eastwards from the High Road and known as Foules Lane. A map exists in the possession of the agents for the Charteris Estates which clearly shows the former route taken by Snakes Lane and the proposed alterations, whereby the upper part of Snakes Lane was diverted to the present site.

The map records the official reason for the alterations was the existence of four dangerous bends and narrow sections at times just twelve feet wide. When the alterations were made by order of Chelmsford Quarter Sessions and Foules Lane was joined to the lower section of Snakes Lane, the old upper section of Snakes Lane went out of public use, although a portion survived until a few years ago as the carriage drive to Monkams House. The road we now know as Johnston's Road, in memory of the late Andrew Johnston, was part of the 1823 alterations.

By the diversion of Snakes Lane in the manner described, the connection between Woodford Bridge and the Turnpike Road was shortened by 202 feet, and communications between Woodford Bridge, Woodford village and the Parish Church was shortened by one-third of a mile, whilst the elimination of four sharp corners rendered the road safer and easier of public use."

What Mr Ramsay was unaware of and subsequent research has revealed is the Pearce and Mellish families successfully offered Woodford Parish one thousand pounds for the purchase of the redundant section of Snakes Lane and assistance with the building of the new section but most of the money was deemed as a gift to assist with the purchase of a small estate to the north of the Parish to build a new workhouse, ironically that site is now occupied by Bancroft School.

Peter Lawrence

MEMORIES

At the March meeting, Mrs Hallett kindly let me borrow some postcards from a series produced in the 1980s by Pastime Postcards. Two of them are reproduced below- one of Woodford Bridge looking towards Chigwell (c. 1920) and one of Woodford Broadway looking towards the railway crossing at Snakes Lane (c. 1922).



© Pastime Postcards



© Pastime Postcards

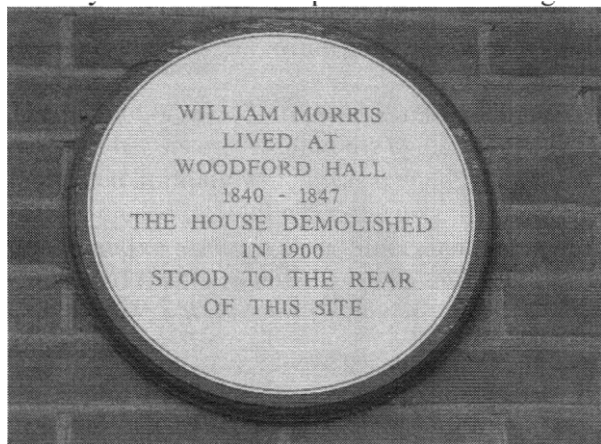
These postcards served to prompt both visual and olfactory memories- in the latter case I am referring to the smells, within Sainsbury's, of cheese, whole hams on the bone, sides of smoked bacon waiting to be sliced on the Berkel bacon slicing machine, butter waiting to be cut and patted into the required weight (and the luxury butter imprinted with an animal shape), sugar sold in brown paper bags with twisted "ears", biscuits all along the front of the counter in large deep tins with glass panels inset into the lids, the white gauze 'hair nets' worn by all staff!

The picture of Woodford Bridge reminded me of Audrey Gunton and the old cycle shop which she ran with her sister. Behind the cycle shop was the Mission Hall and behind that was an old pre-fabricated building which was owned by a tie manufacturer called Frank Theak and Roskilly. The factory closed in 1990 when the production of the last of the Company's London factories was transferred to South Wales. Since then, most of the production was moved to South Korea, then China and finally to Poland. In the last few years, the Company closed down all of its UK operations and the site at Woodford Bridge has now been developed for housing.

John Lovell

MANY THANKS TO OUR CHAIRMAN FOR 'GOING BACK TO BASICS'

On Tuesday 15th June a group from the Society met at Glebelands Avenue, South Woodford to meander slowly along the High Road, overlooking the M11 from the area of the old 'Gates Corner', to St Martin's Church. Peter provided fascinating descriptions of past inhabitants, buildings,



developments and memorials within the Churchyard, ending with a description of his work with the Society to gain permission to display a plaque at The Memorial Hall to commemorate the early life in the area of William Morris.

We are promised further walks in the local area and I, for one, can't wait! Having lived in Woodford for years, I am new to the Society and Peter's compelling commentary provides a fascinating insight to the history of the area. Janet Lovell

WEBSITES

Recently, I was looking at two websites which are developing rapidly – one is www.A2A (an acronym for 'access to archives') which can be searched in order to locate archived material. The other is www.AIM25 (archives in the M25!). On the AIM 25 site, I came across a link which has direct relevance to the Chairman's walk in South Woodford:

Conveyance (counterpart release) £8,000 ZBL 1/2/3/1 7 Nov 1735

These documents are held at North Yorkshire County Record Office

Contents:

- 1. Christopher Crowe, the elder, of Woodford Hall, Woodford, Essex, esq.*
- 2. William Hunt of London, merchant*

1 to 2

Mansion house with appurtenances called Woodford Hall (previously occupied by Dame Elianor Rowe, widow, then by Sir Richard Child, Bt., now Earl Tilney), site of the mansion (6ac.) together with a piece of ground planted with trees and railed in before the house and the pond upon the waste adjoining the Great Yard belonging to the house, and several closes

in Woodford; Homefield (formerly 32ac. - 6 lately sold to Richard Brown, 26 remaining form 3 inc/osures), Middlefield or Millfield (20ac.), Latchetts (46ac.), 4ac. of pasture now inc/osed being half of Dayry Close, The Warren or Tilekills (10ac.), parcel of ground, lately staked out of Hallgrove Wood, now called Little Tuffe SSW of house (Sac.), messuage called Millhouse on Woodford Row with a parcel of land, formerly belonging to the Windmill (tenant formerly John Field now churchwardens and overseers of Woodford), coppice on the backside of the house called Hallgrove (16ac.), messuage called 'White Hart Inn' with yard, garden or orchard (tenant formerly Martin Butt, now James Rayner)
Above property purchased by 1 from Sir Richard Child by lease and release and enrolled bargain and sale of 28/29 November 1717 and a fine of Michaelmas Term 1717 East/and Mead (13ac.), Sac. of meadow in the common field of Woodford viz. 3r. abutting on Ox/ease Close to the East, on Roundmead and the Fifteen Acres to the

16 years earlier, the same Christopher Crowe, the elder, entered into a post nuptial marriage agreement!

Marriage Settlement (post-nuptial, by lease and release) ZBL 11/1-2 20/21 Ju/1719

These documents are held at [North Yorkshire County Record Office](#)

Contents:

1. The Hon. Christopher Crowe, the elder, of Woodford Hall, Woodford, Essex, esq., and Rt. Hon. Charlotte, Lady Baltimore, his wife
2. Sir John Shadwell of St. James, Kt., and William Knight of Dover St., St. James, Westminster, esq.
3. Christopher Crowe, the younger, son and heir of 1

Due to 1's marriage, to make settlement on CB and love of CC the elder to 3
1 to 2

Woodford Hall, Woodford, Essex, with site (6ac.), ground planted with trees, pond, waste adjoining the great yard, Homefield Close (32ac.), now divided into 3; Middlefield or Mil/field (20ac.); Latchett Close (46ac.); piece of pasture ground-}; of old Dairy Close - and the Warren or Tikehills (10ac.); New Inc/osure or Great Tuff (8ac.); Little Tuffe, sometime part of wood called Hall Grove, lying SSW of the Hall (Sac.); messuage and land formerly part of the Windmill (tenant John Field); messuage called the White Hart; land (tenant Martin Butt); wood on backside of the Hall, called Hall Grove (16ac.); wood called East Grove {14ac.}; East/and Meade (13ac.); Hilly Field (4ac.); 2 inclosed meadow closes (6ac.) called Garlick Mead and Wood Peckles; Sac. in Woodford common fields

In trust to use of CC the elder, for life, then to CB for life, then to 3 for life and his heirs

John Lovell

VIEW THE AMAZING IMAGE COLLECTIONS HELD BY THE CITY OF LONDON

The website www.collection.cityoflondon.gov.uk hosts an image database containing over 20,000 works of art from The City of London Libraries, Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery.

John Lovell

GUILTY. COW MISSING IN WOODFORD BRIDGE. MAN CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO TRANSPORTATION.

Another online resource which is of more use than is often thought is www.oldbaileyonline - not only can it help in identifying your ancestors with a criminal past but it may also reveal those who were victims of crime or who appeared in trials as a witness and identify cases with links to Woodford.

Robert George, Theft > animal theft, 8th September 1731.

Reference Number: t17310908-48

Offence: [Theft](#) > [animal theft](#)

Verdict: [Guilty](#)

Punishment: [Transportation](#)

Related Material: [Associated Records](#)

UserWiki: [Corrections](#): [Add Information](#)

Robert George, of St. Sepulchre's, was indicted for feloniously stealing a Cow, value 3 l. 5 s. the Property of Brice Norton, the 16th of July last.

Brice Norton depos'd, the Cow was missing out of his Field near Woodford-Bridge and he heard of her by Mr. Heather.

Richard Heather depos'd, That he being in Smithfield, a Butcher came to him, and told him, there was a Man who had offer'd him a Cow to Sale, which he suspected was stolen; that he went to the Prisoner, and bought the Cow of him for 3 l. 5 s. but did not pay him till he procured some Persons to Vouch her, which he not being able to do, he sent the Cow to the Green-yard; and sending his Servant to enquire about Essex, found that the Prosecutor had lost a Cow; upon which he went to the Green-yard, and owned her. The Fact being prov'd, the Jury found him guilty of the Indictment.

LILQIJ2R9Ili:Jd9 1J,2?:£L?11QJD}§L'LJ

The original document can be viewed online.

John Lovell

VISIT TO CHELSEA HOSPITAL

"For the succour and relief of veterans broken by Age and War founded by Charles II enlarged by James II and completed by William and Mary in the Year of Our Lord 1692"

20th July dawned fine and sunny- an excellent day for a trip to the Chelsea Hospital.

Ken Alsini was our guide- a In-Pensioner dressed in his very smart uniform, including the famous red coat, in spite of the hot weather. He led us around the beautiful grounds and buildings linking fascinating historical and current information with good humour.

The building was designed by Sir Christopher Wren for Charles II, initially to be formed of a single quadrangle (Figure Court). However, during construction, enlargement was deemed necessary, as James II was

strengthening the forces.

Wren therefore incorporated Light Horse and College Courts. (Most

of the additional buildings, designed by Wren during the reign of William and Mary have been demolished.)

Robert Adam made alterations, mainly inside the Officers' apartments, during his time as Clerk of Works 1765-92 and Sir John Sloane was responsible for additional 19th century buildings. A modern infirmary, of sympathetic design, was opened in 1961.

The In-pensioners (currently 300 male and three female) are organised on military lines. When they enter the hospital, the pensioners surrender their army pensions, for which they



receive board, lodging, clothing and medical care. The regime must be very successful as Ken assured us that the average age of the In-pensioners is 87 years! The majority of the pensioners live in Long Wards, each having a nine ft. square 'berth', which the publicity material indicates "Wren would instantly recognise were he to return." Each berth now has a bed, table, chair, wardrobe, chest of drawers, bedside light, radio and television point. Fundraising is ongoing to renovate this living accommodation.

We were privileged to visit the Courts, Octagon (supporting the cupola and lantern), Chapel, Great Hall and museum (which includes a reconstruction of a berth), learning more about the Hospital as we progressed.

The Chapel, completed in 1687 was also designed by Sir Christopher Wren with carving by William Emmett, Master Carver before Grinling Gibbons and William Morgan. The painting of the Resurrection (1714) is by the artist Sebastiano Ricci, with assistance from his nephew Marco.



The Great Hall has now returned to its original use as a dining room. Ken informed us that the Duke of Wellington's body lay in state here in 1852. On the table used for this purpose now stand two, extremely heavy, five gallon "blackjacks" (leather jugs) previously used for ale from the beer cellar.

The visit ended with very welcome refreshments. Many thanks to Jill for organising yet another very popular and successful trip.

Janet Lovell

MILESTONES

Bombing, of course, provided the site for the Sir James Hawkey Hall, which hosts Woodford's pantomime, but another pantomime within our Borough of Redbridge was devastated by wartime action. In fact, recently, two important milestones in the history of theatre in the London Borough of Redbridge were passed. The first of Ilford's two professional theatres, the Ilford Hippodrome had opened 100 years earlier, in late 1909. It survived for 35 years and two months and the Kenneth More Theatre reached a milestone in local history.

The Ilford Hippodrome opened its doors on 8th November 1909, and presented its first pantomime "Dick Whittington" a month later. During the 1920s through to the mid 1940s many of the country's top stars appeared here. Flanagan and Allen, Gracie Fields, Max Miller and Vera Lynn all entertained during the war years, with a bill that changed weekly, ending each year with pantomime.



Views of the Hippodrome Theatre in Ilford - before it was bombed!

