



Woodford Times

Woodford Historical Society
Founded 1932

Newsletter Autumn 2011 (part 2)

Editorial

ROADS TO WOODFORD

Wherever we live there is a tendency to believe that the main roads that criss-cross our community have been there for centuries. Well as far as Woodford is concerned that is not so. The roads through Woodford have evolved through the best part of two millennia and consequently Woodford has evolved, reflecting the importance of these roads and their destinations.

The original Woodford settlement is thought to have begun beside the River Roding, hence the name and the wood referred to was the western section of Hainault Forest. The Chapman & Andre map of Essex published in 1777 clearly shows the wooded area coming right into Woodford Bridge. Here the Stratford to Dunmow Roman road ran along a line behind the "Crown & Crooked Billet" pub at Woodford Bridge. Part of the route survives as Roding Lane North and Chigwell High Street, where the King's Head public house is today.

The 11th century sees the Woodford Bridge settlement positioned on the medieval London to Norwich road, the route coming via Hermon Hill and Chigwell Road, crossing the Roding near the point we would recognise today.

By the 12th century it appears that the main Woodford settlement had moved to higher ground, the area around St Mary's church, South Woodford, perhaps not only to be on drier ground with meadow land below for agricultural use but also to service the needs of the Crown and the hunting grounds of Epping Forest. However the road that we now call High Road, Woodford was not recognized as an official King's Highway until the early 17th century and it was at this time that Royalty allowed a major new route from London to Norwich through the Forest joining Leytonstone, Snaresbrook, Woodford, Loughton and Epping together officially for the first time.

If you can remember cycling along this route, you'll remember that it is a continuous climb all the way as far as Loughton, via Salway Hill, Buckhurst Hill and Kings Head Hill. Those hills became an inconvenience for Royalty.

When in the early 19th century Buckingham Palace became the "headquarters" for our kings and queens, the Grosvenor family decided to develop a large parcel of land immediately to the west of the palace grounds. The land was known as The Five Fields and by 1826 it was well on the way to becoming Belgravia. To clear the site several institutions and barracks had to be relocated, including Tattersals Blood Stock Market. Tattersals was moved to Newmarket, where it remains today. That move meant more frequent visits by Royalty to Newmarket. They began using the new route from London, via Essex Road, Lea Bridge and joining the original route at the Spread Eagle coaching inn, Snaresbrook.

The climb as mentioned above did not please the Royal household, therefore plans were quickly produced by the road engineer James McAdam. He ignored all known local tracks and chose the highest point of the Epping ridge, which divides the Lea Valley from the Roding Valley, so the route through Woodford, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton was bypassed. The Woodford New Road,

opened in 1829, not only cut out the steep hills in those horse drawn days but also slightly shortened the route. The scheme was continued northwards and the Epping New Road was opened in 1834.

The 20th century brought the motor car and demands for better communication by road across the country. After the First World War a new route to Southend was being planned, thus joining London and the new emerging settlements in Essex to a popular seaside resort. The North Circular Road was planned to continue to Wanstead and join the Eastern Avenue but was only completed as far as the Waterworks at Walthamstow. It was therefore decided to continue the route eastward via the Woodford New Road into Grove Road, South Woodford, a Victorian residential street of fine houses which stopped at the “T” junction with the High Road. The route continued along a new road, under the LNER railway line, now the Central Line, then joined the southern section of a narrow Victorian residential street called Crescent Road. This was still called the “Narrow Way” in my lifetime. The use of this narrow residential street completed the route to what became the “Charlie Brown Roundabout” public house junction and the new Woodford Avenue towards Ilford. These new routes to Southend were built in the 1920s with our section, the Southend Road opened in 1925.

After World War Two Broadmead Road was completed, thus creating the second east/west main road across Woodford, George Lane being the original.

The roads that I have mentioned took hundreds of years to evolve and I don't need to tell you what has happened locally in the last forty years, but let us add it up. The London to Norwich route through and by Woodford, the old A11, was succeeded by the M11. That meant rerouting the River Roding, so there are now two bridges at Woodford Bridge, the original bridge crossing now just goes over a hole in the ground beside the gates to Ashton Playing Fields. The Woodford section of the Southend Road has been replaced by the “canyon”, the new North Circular route to the huge “Charlie Brown's Interchange” with the M11 and finally the High Road has become a street of a “thousand” traffic lights. I won't try and prophecy the future.

Peter Lawrence

LONDON'S GATES

Tudor London was defined by its walls and gates. London wall was 30 feet high and castellations had been added to the Roman Wall which had seven gateways – Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Moorgate, Cripplegate, Aldersgate (rebuilt in the fifteenth century with a bequest of Sir Richard Whittington) Newgate and Ludgate. Using a modern map, Aldgate enters into Whitechapel Road, Bishopsgate into Shoreditch High Street, Moorgate into City Road, Cripplegate from Wood Street, Aldersgate towards Goswell Road; Newgate into Holborn and Ludgate into Fleet Street.

John Lovell

ROCHESTER AND MARITIME CHATHAM – a Society visit on 9 July 2011

Three groups meeting at the Hawkey Hall car park at 8.30am for different trips, whilst resulting in pleasant conversation, did not lead to confusion! The members of Woodford Historical Society boarded our coach at the allotted time and had a trouble free drive to Rochester in excellent weather.

Walking from the coach and crossing the High Street brought us to the magnificent Cathedral – the second oldest in England. A Saxon Cathedral was built here in 604, but the building we see today was begun in 1083 with the construction of the Nave.

The Cathedral boasts stunning Norman architecture, one of the finest Romanesque facades in England and good examples of later Gothic styles. The latest major restoration was undertaken in 1872, but the stunning John the Baptist's Fresco by Sergei Fyodorov (Russian iconographer) was dedicated in 2004. Created by painting onto wet plaster as it is applied, a fresco becomes part of the wall, rather than decoration and this example was the first to be painted in an English Cathedral for more than 800 years.

The Cathedral's beautifully decorated organ includes pipes dating back to 1791, however the instrument has been developed over the intervening years leading to a major rebuilding in 1989 and improvements to the electronics in 2006.

Visitors to the Cathedral are able to climb the Pilgrim Steps, following in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims visiting the shrine of William of Perth. William, a Scottish baker, was murdered nearby. His body was taken to the Cathedral and miracles were reported at his shrine. Today, no shrine remains, but candles can be lit at the William of Perth prayer-station.



Rochester Cathedral – the organ



Rochester Castle

Leaving the Cathedral, Rochester Castle is visible. Climbing the slope to the castle walls provides a view of the River Medway and the Esplanade. The Romans built the first fort in the area and in 1087 the building of the present castle was begun, making use of the remnants of the Roman city walls. The keep, the tallest in the country, is 113 feet high and 70 feet square and, in places, the walls are 12 feet thick. It was built by William de Corbeil, who, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was granted custody of Rochester Castle in 1127 by Henry 1. The Castle has one round tower, which was built following the destruction of the fourth square tower by King John in 1215. It was considered that a round tower would provide better defence against attack and undermining. Today, events are held in the gardens around the Castle.

Of course, a major attraction is the link of Rochester with Charles Dickens. The Tourist Office offers a leaflet detailing a self-guided walking tour entitled 'In Dickens' Footsteps' and there are plaques on many buildings explaining their incorporation within his stories. He also chose names for many of his characters from inscriptions in local graveyards. Whilst Dickens would recognise many of the buildings in today's Rochester, the shopping centre offers modern speciality shops, whilst no major chain stores are present, adding charm to this fascinating insight into a different era.

Also with strong links to Dickens, our next stop was at Maritime Chatham. Dickens' father worked at the Royal Navy pay office and Dickens lived at Chatham for seven years from the age of five. The dockyard was originally constructed by King Henry VIII. The site now covers 80 acres and includes Georgian and Victorian architecture. Members of the group toured the

site independently until meeting for a guided tour of the Victorian Ropery. Attractions included:

- 'The Wooden Walls of England' – a walking tour through sights and sounds telling us how wooden warships were built at the time of HMS Victory
- The RNLI Historic Lifeboat Collection
- The Big Space – exhibits from the Royal Engineers and an amazing wooden roof
- Historic Warships – the Victorian Sloop HMS Gannet, the World War II destroyer and memorial ship HMS Cavalier and the submarine Ocelot
- The Royal Dockyard Museum covering 400 years of history from sail to the Falklands War
- The exhibitions at No.1 Smithery, including an extensive collection of ship and maritime models and the current very popular exhibition 'Titanic Honour and Glory', including items from the ship and props and costumes from the film



The Big Space – wooden roof



Part of the Victorian Ropery Building

The group's tour of the Victorian Ropery began by 'travelling' back to the days of rope making in 1875 and learning of the development of the processes to obtain the raw material and twist the rope. There was then the opportunity for members of the group to make a piece of rope. (The Society is now the proud owner of a sample of the rope which was made!) Rope has been made at Chatham since 1618 and we viewed the ¼ mile long rope walk, although unfortunately rope was not being made on the day of our tour. A film of rope making at Chatham can be found via a Google search. Search on the words 'bbc rope making' and go to the item 'BBC – Objects which changed the making of rope and film'.

The two tour stops provided a fascinating day trip. Thanks go to Peter Lawrence for making the initial arrangements although, unfortunately, he was unable to join us on the day.

Janet Lovell

TOUR OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND THE JEWEL TOWER – A SOCIETY VISIT ON 3 JUNE 2011



Pat Smith had arranged this very popular tour for the Society. (Two tour guides were required to accommodate the number of members attending.)



Westminster Hall

Having passed through security, we met in Westminster Hall. It is the oldest building still standing within the complex and is the only place in the Palace of Westminster where members of the public are permitted to take photographs. The Hall was founded by King William II (Rufus) in 1097 and is used today for state occasions and ceremonies.

We then followed the tour of the House of Lords, mounting the Royal Staircase to the Norman Porch, walking in the footsteps of the Queen as she enters the House of Lords for the State Opening of Parliament. We entered the sumptuous Robing Room, where the monarch puts on the ceremonial robes and the Imperial State Crown before processing to the House of Lords. The Chair of State within the room dates from 1866 and bears the initials of Queen Victoria. As an aside, In 1941, the House of Commons was destroyed by

enemy action and, having permitted the Commons to meet in the House of Lords, the Lords met in the Robing Room – an arrangement which continued for nine years.

Leaving the Robing Room we proceeded to the Royal Gallery. Whilst this vast room is used as a workplace for Members of the House of Lords, it is also used for important occasions, for example speeches by foreign Heads of State to Parliament.

Continuing through the Princes Chamber, we entered the House of Lords from behind the Throne, designed by Sir Charles Barry in the mid 19th Century. Television coverage of the State Opening of Parliament and debates has made this Chamber of red benches familiar to all. Having been the highest court in the United Kingdom for over 600 years, in 2009 a separate Supreme Court for the UK was established, as directed by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. The new Court is located opposite the Palace of Westminster. Whilst steeped in history, it was here that we noticed the adoption of modern technology by our Government. In addition to cameras and microphones, television screens (annunciators) are present throughout the buildings, which display information about the business of both Houses, including the calling of divisions. The screens were installed in 1968, but there have been annunciators on site since 1894.

We passed through the brass gates to the Peers' lobby. The gates each of about $\frac{3}{4}$ ton are decorated with roses, thistles and shamrocks.

We progressed along Peers' Corridor to Central Lobby. To mark the importance of this location, stunning mosaics depicting the four Patron Saints of the United Kingdom have been placed above the four archways. In addition, a magnificent chandelier designed by Sir Charles Barry is located in this area. It is linked to a winch mechanism to enable it to be lowered for cleaning. New techniques at the time (1856) also resulted in the spire above the Lobby being designed to ventilate the area. Within the Lobby is located the Post Office, which can be used by Lord, MPs, staff and visitors.

In the Central Lobby, grilles originally attached to the windows of the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons can be seen. On 28 October 1908 two members of the Women's Freedom League chained themselves to the grille at its original location. The police could not undo the chain and removed the grille in order to be able to also remove the women, who were still attached.

The tour progressed towards the House of Commons, passing through the Commons Corridor and Members' Lobby. Statues of 20th Century Prime Ministers are located around the Lobby and one foot of the statue of Winston Churchill and of the statue Lloyd George are shiny. When an MP is to make a maiden speech in the Chamber, he/she will rub the feet of these orators to bring good luck. .

We walked towards the Judas window. Having slammed the door of the House of Commons as Black Rod approaches during the ceremony of the State Opening of Parliament, the Serjeant at Arms looks through the grille to be sure that Black Rod only is approaching and that he is not accompanied by soldiers. This dates back to the entrance of King Charles I with soldiers to try to arrest five MPs.

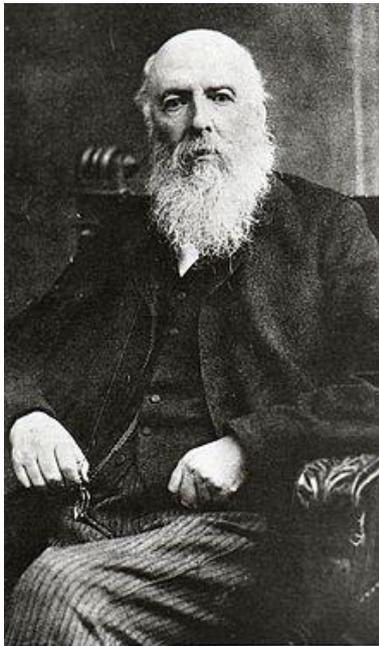
The Churchill Arch in the Lobby, leading towards the House, is constructed of rubble salvaged from the ruins of the bombed Chamber. Churchill wished this to be a monument to the ordeal of war and the strength of the people.

We turned to the right into the long corridor of the Noes lobby and the welcome sight of green benches, denoting the area as part of the Commons, on which we were permitted to sit. MPs receive eight minutes' notice of a vote, after which the doors are locked. It would

be interesting to see the activity in the lobby at that time, as during our tour the area was so peaceful.

Our final destination was the House of Commons Chamber – another area familiar to all from television coverage. The Speaker's Chair, which was a gift from Australia, following the destruction of the Chamber in World War II, has a brass hook at the back from which hangs the Petition bag. When the House is working, MPs present petitions from the public by putting them in the bag. The chair was originally designed as a toilet, as debates could not continue if the Speaker had to leave. To quote a description from publicity provided by the House of Commons Information Office "A curtain was pulled around the Chair and MPs would stamp their feet and generally make lots of noise to cover up the sound of the speaker relieving himself!" Of course, during our visit the mace was not present as the business of the House had finished, but we saw the despatch boxes, containing religious texts and noted the red lines on the carpet which are 2½ sword lengths apart. Any member stepping over the line is called to order by the Speaker and must 'toe the line'.

We returned to Westminster Hall, with the opportunity for refreshment in the restaurant or a walk in the sun before touring the Jewel Tower, situated opposite the Houses of Parliament and administered by English Heritage.



Wilfred Lawson MP

The tower was constructed in approximately 1365 to house Edward III's treasures and features a 14th century ribbed vault. A spiral staircase leads from the small shop and café to two floors housing very interesting exhibitions on the history of the building, the history of Parliament and the history of weights and measures.

A fascinating day was had by all and our thanks to Pat for making the arrangements to enable us to have such an enjoyable visit.

One final note, it is interesting to see on the Houses of Parliament website that there is an illustration of an example of a visitor's pass from July 1877. This has been signed by Wilfred Lawson MP, member for Carlisle and a leading spokesman for temperance, who lent his name to the Wilfred Lawson Temperance Hotel in Woodford Green.

Janet Lovell

APOTHECARIES' HALL – A SOCIETY VISIT ON 20 MAY 2011

Amongst the back streets to the south west of St Paul's Cathedral, immediately facing the pavement is a gem! Apothecaries' Hall provides a fascinating insight into a history which affects us all. Our thanks go to Jill Hicks who arranged this very successful guided tour and talk for members of the Society.



The word 'apothecary' derives from 'apotheca' – a place where wines, spices and herbs were stored. Thus, initially, London apothecaries were members of the Grocers' Livery Company. By the middle of the 16th century, apothecaries could be likened to today's pharmacists, however the College of Physicians held authority in relation to medical practice until losing the Rose Case in 1704 in the House of Lords, when, on appeal, it was decreed that apothecaries could prescribe and dispense medicines. From this decision, evolved the General Practitioner of today. The Apothecaries' Act of 1815 led to the introduction by the Society of a Court of Examiners to conduct examinations, to grant licences for the practice of medicine in England and Wales and to regulate the practice until the advent of the General Medical Council in 1858. The Examinations Department continues to offer diplomas, developing in response to requirements e.g. Botany as an examination subject was discontinued in 1894 but the current post-graduate diploma 'the Medical Care of Catastrophes' was introduced in response to an approach by the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy also runs an annual programme of lectures.

The Society of Apothecaries received its Royal Charter in 1617 when Members had the right to a hall in the City, but lack of finance meant that a property was not purchased until 1632. The property chosen, at a price of £1,800 had originally been the guesthouse of the Dominican Priory of the Black Friars. The Hall was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, but rebuilding work was completed in 1672, including an 'Elaboratory' for the production of drugs on a large-scale. Prior to this time, the manufacture of drugs had been very much a small-scale business. The 1780s saw further building works and restoration of the building. The colonnade in the courtyard was enclosed in 1929. Major redevelopment took place in the 1980s, but externally it has changed little since the late 1700s. Publicity states, "It is the oldest extant livery company Hall in the City, with the first-floor structure and arrangement of the Great Hall, Court Room and Parlour remaining as re-built between 1668 and 1670."

In 1673, the Society founded the Chelsea Physic Garden. This is now an independent charity, but a representative of the Society serves on the Advisory Committee of the Board.

We met our guide in the courtyard, although it has to be said that many met prior to this in the excellent Italian café conveniently located on the opposite side of the road! We walked to the main staircase, constructed in 1670 at the top of which we entered the Parlour, which connects to the Court room. Seated around the Parlour we received an excellent introductory talk (see paragraphs above) and then had time to view the exhibits, including the Society's drug jar collection, extending in cabinets along the complete length of one wall, pestles and mortars, tools for making pills etc.

We then entered the oak panelled Court Room, containing large stained glass windows of the Society's Coat of Arms and the Stuart Royal Arms. Portraits were displayed around the room, including, above the fireplace, a likeness of Gideon de Laune, presented to the Society in 1641. He was Royal Apothecary to Queen Anne and also founder of the Society. The magnificent Great Hall (1671) is also oak panelled and is of a size suitable to seat 130 for formal dinners.

As we walked around the building we were jostling with history. The poet John Keats qualified as a Licentiate of the Society in July 1816, Elizabeth Garrett (Anderson) gained her licence as a doctor in 1865, becoming the first woman to qualify in Britain.

Clearly, the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries has influenced us all by the development of the concept of General Practitioners, but there is a further link with Woodford. Following the establishment of the 'Elaboratory' to mass produce drugs, the Society's market increased. Clients had been members of Society, but their customer base developed to include the Navy, the Army, Crown Colonies and the East India Company, with which Woodford had such strong links.

Janet Lovell

THE GLOBE THEATRE – A SOCIETY VISIT ON 9 MAY 2011

Crossing the Millennium Bridge from St Paul's towards Tate Modern, look to the left and you will see the only thatched roof permitted in London since the Great Fire of 1666, albeit with a coating of fire-protective liquid. You are looking at The Globe Theatre, built a few hundred yards from its original site.

Publicity states that *'The reconstruction is as faithful to the original as modern scholarship and traditional craftsmanship can make it, but for the time being this Globe is – and is likely to remain – neither more nor less than the 'best guess' at Shakespeare's theatre'*.



The Globe theatre – thatched roof and exposed timbers



The stage

The Shakespeare Globe Trust and International Shakespeare Globe Centre were founded in 1970 by Sam Wanamaker. The museum was also established. Queen Elizabeth II opened the Theatre in June 1997 – 3½ years after Sam Wanamaker's death, but he knew his dream would be achieved as two sections of the Globe were formally unveiled in June 1992.

The Theatre was constructed using historically accurate techniques including, for example, the construction of the roof (Norfolk reed thatch) following the finding of remains during excavations, 'green' oak cut and worked as in the 16th century, lime plaster prepared as at that time and the covering of the walls in a white lime wash. Our guide told us that, unlike the historically accurate finish to the walls of Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge in Chingford, the exposed wood at the Theatre is dark in colour (the popular image of Tudor and Elizabethan buildings) to enable the building to be easily recognised by the many tourists in the area. These days, there must be a balance between accuracy and marketing!

Our guide, having taken the group outside to provide details of the building of the outer walls, took us into the auditorium. The Theatre was planned for an audience of 700 standing 'groundlings' in the open-air yard/pit and 900 sitting in the galleries. The stage, extending into the audience and with a trapdoor for special effects, includes two huge 'Herculean' pillars. The originals would have been single tree trunks. The pillars support a roof of Heavens – sun, moon and zodiac - and are themselves painted to resemble marble. However, during our visit they had been covered in blue fabric as part of the staging for the current production. The upper boxes near the stage contain wall decorations as would have been expected in the 16th century. Vast numbers of walnut shells had been found during excavations, indicating that these were a favourite snack during performances and the shells would have covered the cobbled floor. Today it has been necessary to install a concrete floor to meet current requirements. Our guide, who had performed at the Theatre, explained that, of course, during performances the actors can see the audience. When the reconstructed Theatre had opened, there was concern at playing in such a different environment, but to everyone's delight the audience had participated, for example joining the cast in cheering the victor at appropriate points.

We next moved to an area which appeared to be familiar to us all. To be as faithful as possible to the design of a building from this time, the staircase at the Globe is copied from that at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. We ascended the stairs to the seating area in the Theatre, providing a wonderful view of the auditorium and learning more fascinating facts about the Theatre. For example, the 'groundlings' would have paid 1d to join the audience, which represented approximately 10% of a day's wages. In 1613, during a performance, wadding from a stage cannon set the thatched roof alight and the Theatre was burnt down, to be speedily rebuilt with a tiled roof. All theatres were closed by the Puritan administration in 1642 and the Globe was demolished in 1644.

We walked to the area of the Museum and our tour guide left us at this point to explore the history of the Theatre, costumes, special effects... the list goes on. There are traditional displays, interactive exhibits and fascinating live demonstrations. We were present for the dressing of a female character, but there are also regular sword-fighting demonstrations.



Dressing for the part!

The tour of The Globe is a fascinating and informative experience, worthy of recommendation and I would like to thank Jill Hicks for making the arrangements for the Society's visit.

Janet Lovell

WOODFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed pieces for the Anniversary Book to be produced next year and a particular thank you to the readers of the Village Gazette who have provided some fascinating material and photographs.

There is still time for you to submit your memories and photographs. Our request is repeated below.

2012 heralds not only the Olympic Games in London but also the 80th 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 (YOUR 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, organisations and events.

Please contact John Lovell (020 8505 3640 or 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.

Please also do not forget, your contributions for Woodford Times are always welcome.

I look forward to hearing from you.

John Lovell

