

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 123

Jan 1991

The Irish in Camden

Tues, 22 Jan, 7pm.
St Dominic's Priory, Southampton Road, NW5

Our talk in January is on The Irish in Camden, and it will be given by Aiden Flood, whose book on the subject has recently been published - it is on sale at Swiss Cottage and Holborn Local History libraries and will be available on the evening. There is no need to underline the importance of the Irish in the development of Camden but, curiously enough, not very much research has been done on the subject.

We are combining the talk with a visit to the interesting building of St Dominic's Priory in Southampton Road. We are being shown round the building at 7pm, and the talk begins at 7.30pm

Celebration of the Penny Post

Thurs, 21 Feb, 7.30pm
Bartrams Hostel (part of the Royal Free Hospital), Rowland Hill Street, Haverstock Hill, NW3. (Behind the George pub)

We are a few months late in celebrating the launch of Sir Rowland Hill's Penny Post in 1840. However, we are sure that members would still like to hear about the man and his project, especially as he retired, full of honours, to a house on the Royal Free site. Which explains the new venue for this month. Tony Gammons is our speaker on this unique British contribution to the history of communications. Perhaps he may shed light on why a first class letter now costs 55 old pence!

POTTER AT THE MUSEUM

Temporary exhibitions at the Museum of London include The Tale of London Past - Beatrix Potter's Archaeological Paintings (to 27 Jan), Images of London Blitz (to 5 May) and, from 5 Feb, Jewellery in London from Pre-Roman Times to the 1930s.

Advance Notice

Most of the talks and events for 1991 are now planned, and many you can put in your crisp, unbattered new diaries. They are:

Thurs, Mar 21, 7.30pm, at the Royal Veterinary College, Royal College Street, NW1. Talk on the 200th anniversary of the RVC.

April (date to be fixed) The Streets of Belsize. Symposium involving the researchers on the new Belsize publication of the CHS.

Wed, May 22nd, Heath Branch Library, Keats Grove, NW3, 7.30pm. Julian Pooley on 'A Publisher's Daughter in Hampstead'.

Mon, Jun 17, 6.30pm. Annual Meeting at the Architectural Association in Bedford Square. Talk on the history of Bedford Square by Andrew Byrne.

July. Talk and walk related to the 200th anniversary of Camden Town.

Sat, 3 August. Annual Outing to Burghley House and Georgian Stamford. Approx cost £11 per head including a cream tea. Booking form will be in the March Newsletter.

September. Gustav Milne on King Alfred's London. Conducted tours around the Soane Museum.

Tues, Oct 22, 7pm, Holborn Library. Margaret Richardson on Sir John Soane and his collection of drawings.

November. Penny Hatfield on the Eton Estate.

December, Burgh House. Literary Camden. A repeat of last year's successful readings featuring Camden in literature.

Camden Town 200

As reported in our September Newsletter the Society is acting as a catalyst to launch celebrations in 1991 for the 200th anniversary of the formation of Camden Town: the Mayor of Camden and the Marquess of Camden have kindly agreed to be patrons. An attractive logo has been designed, which we hope will soon be a familiar sight, and Lester May, who is co-ordinating the early work is now busy seeing various organisations to put together a programme of events. If any member wants to help, or has suggestions, please contact him at 24 Reachview Court, Baynes Street, NW1.

DIARY OF A LONDON SCHOOLBOY

Many members will be familiar with the Diary of a London Schoolboy, published by the Society some years back, which presented for the first time the diary of a young boy of the Pocock family, whose building developments stretched from Kilburn to Islington. Particularly involved in the transcription, editing and publishing of that book was Christina Gee. She will be giving a talk on the subject to the Willesden Local History Society (Willesden is featured in the Diary) on 20 February, 7.45pm at St Mary's Parish Church Centre, Neasden Lane. Members from our Society are welcome.

CONFERENCE OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The annual conference of London archaeologists will be held on Saturday, 23 March at the Museum of London Lecture Theatre. The crowded programme of talks covers the excavation of a Roman cemetery at West Smithfield, a Saxon excavation at Barking Abbey, and an excavation in Limehouse. Tickets (for non-members) are £3.50. Apply to the LAMAS Archaeological Conference, c/o Museum of London, London Wall, EC2Y 5HN

BURGH HOUSE EVENTS

Burgh House is holding an exhibition from Jan 2 to April 1 (Weds-Sundays, 12-5pm) of recent acquisitions at the Museum. On display will be the recent Allingham bequest.

Christopher Wade is giving three more talks with numerous slides on The Streets of Hampstead. These are on Fridays, Feb 8, 15, 22 at 2.30pm. Entry fee: 50p.

Save St Pancras

A strong leader in The Times on 29 December berated the management of the restoration of St Pancras Hotel. On our own doorstep one of Europe's finest buildings is being allowed to deteriorate as developers and borough council fail to agree. We quote:

'The need for emergency work to protect Britain's finest and saddest grade one listed building is tragic. Consultants have had to be called in to prevent winter doing further damage to the roof of the former St Pancras hotel in London, opened in 1873, closed in 1935, and completely empty for most of the past decade. Plans to re-create the building as a hotel in the grand style remain shelved, and with the downturn in the property market must be considered at risk.

'A masterpiece which in any other European capital would have been restored to its original glory (like the Gare d'Orsay in Paris, for example) stands dirty and decaying on a prominent site next to the proposed new European rail terminal.

'The treatment of St Pancras has been a fiasco, full of lessons for the conduct of Britain's public sector. The first fault lies with the owner, British Rail, who for years failed to allow the building to be used for commercial development in order to realise its value...The result, mercifully, was that conversion into an office block was postponed until developers became interested in restoring St Pancras as a hotel. But British Rail's property board delayed further, as differing railway interests impeded the efforts of the selected developer, Speyhawk, to carry out plans for a hotel...

'Then other villains entered the piece. The local council, Camden, used St Pancras as a weapon in its ideological war on enterprise. Little concerned with jobs or with conservation, it imposed new delaying conditions on the plans. St Pancras then became enmeshed, both financially and operationally, in the much bigger redevelopment of the King's Cross site, where it is now stuck...

'...Sir Gilbert Scott's great Gothic staircase, his splendid coffee room, the magnificent bedrooms, dining rooms and massive vaults must remain empty and forlorn: a memorial to what Britain cannot do, dating from a time when it could.'

Cobden and His Times

Cobden and his Kate, by Jean Scott Rogers. (£13.95, hardback, 200pp inc illustrations. ISBN 0 948667 11 7. Publ. by Historical Publications Ltd)

This is a biography using the text of letters mainly from Cobden to his wife Kate, but also letters written by Kate, over the twenty-five years of their marriage. Our ex-member, Jean Scott Rogers, keeps the commentary to a minimum, letting the letters speak for themselves, but I would have welcomed a longer introduction giving details of the research that went into the book and of things like the cross-written letters Kate occasionally writes.

Cobden was passionate about the repeal of the Corn Laws (which maintained the price of corn for the farmers at the expense of the labourers whose main food was bread) and about Free Trade. He travelled widely, leaving Kate on her own for much of the time, but wrote to her regularly so that his letters become a diary. His travelling meant that his business had to be left in the hands of his less able brother and his health and wealth suffered as a result. Kate's letters in particular worried about money, the cost of replacing clothes that her son, away at school, had lost. Even when Cobden's popularity enabled him to obtain a vast sum by public subscription, his investments were unwise and he needed a top-up subscription later in life. He quotes without comment a remark from a stranger that there was no more sense in raising a fund for the boxing champion Sayers (whose funeral procession to Highgate Cemetery brought Kentish Town to a halt for a day) than for Cobden merely because the latter had lost the money that was raised for him before.

The main subscription enabled Cobden to buy his old family home at Dunford near Midhurst (now used as a conference centre where your reviewer has spent several happy weekends), which he was persuaded to demolish and rebuild as a suburban villa complete with a Joseph Paxton designed conservatory. His popularity ensured a seat in Parliament for the rest of his life, although he refused high office and an honour offered in recognition of a treaty successfully negotiated with France.

Cobden died at 61, from a chill caught on Parliamentary duties. After his death Kate was unsuccessful in trying to

influence the nature of the Cobden memorial statue in Camden town, said to be the worst statue in London.

There is plenty to enjoy in the book, from accounts of family life among public but not very well-off people, building and running their new house, education and health matters, and of course the major political changes of the early Victorian period.

Roger Cline

Where was Brickfield Terrace?

Holloway has few modern claims to fame, but one of them, often quoted in social histories, is that it was the location of the residence of the Pooters in the famous book, Diary of a Nobody, by the Grossmith brothers. Robin Woolven now casts doubt on the real whereabouts of Brickfield Terrace:

George and Weedon Grossmith's Diary of a Nobody first appeared in Punch in short sections in the late 1880s and was first published in book form, with additions and illustrations by Weedon, in 1892. This Victorian classic, still in print today, purports to be the diary of City clerk Charles Pooter of The Laurels, 12 Brickfield Terrace, Upper Holloway. But the house described by the brothers George (1847-1912) and Weedon (1852-1919) shows some similarities to the Grossmith family home from 1857 to 1882 at Manor Lodge, 36 Haverstock Hill, where they lived as children. Both brothers wrote their autobiographies but although neither mentioned Charlie Pooter or The Laurels, both had fond memories of Manor Lodge and their garden, which is now covered by the asphalt of the Haverstock Secondary School and Adult Education Institute.

Their father, George Grossmith snr (1820-80), was for 35 years, a lecturer and reporter with The Times. He was a friend of Charles Dickens and a founder member of the Savage Club, where he died of 'a bad apoplexy'. The family had a wide circle of artistic and stage friends and entertained both Kate and Ellen Terry at Manor Lodge. George jnr started his working life as a reporter then went on to the stage and spent 12 years as the lead singer with the D'Oyley Carte Opera Company. He recalled in the first part of his autobiography, 'A Society Clown - Reminiscences' (1888), that in 'about 1855 I was sent to a preparatory school kept by the Misses Hay at Massingham House, Haverstock Hill where I was a

boarder...I witnessed in 1856 from the lower part of Primrose Hill the fireworks in celebration of peace with Russia and...in 1857 my father took the little house now known as 36 Haverstock Hill. It was then known as 9 Powis Place...my school was only a few yards off so I became a day boarder. After leaving the prep school I was sent to the North London Collegiate School under Dr Williams...and walked to and from school with E.H. Dickens, who was a nephew of Charles Dickens and who living close to my home became a great friend of mine. The chief delight of the home on Haverstock Hill was the garden at the back. It was much prettier than the modern suburban garden. There used to be nine apple trees and two pear trees. My brother Weedon and I generally partook of this fruit...In the early days at Manor Lodge the garden was a mass of roses. As the demon builders began to surround the locality, so the roses began to die and blight began to kill the apple trees.'

George notes that he was 'still in short trousers when I met Emmeline Rosa the only daughter of Dr Noyce whose practice was in the neighbourhood [in fact at 1 Brecknock Terrace, Camden Town]...we danced almost every dance but then did not meet for three or four years but we married on the 14th May 1873.'

The younger brother Walter Weedon in his 1913 autobiography 'From Studio to Stage' recalled that 'when we left Bloomsbury my father had taken a little house at Haverstock Hill, Hampstead, with stables attached...nearly all houses in those days a few miles outside London, no matter how small, had stables and those who could afford it kept something in the shape of a pony and gig and our coach house was converted into a very comfortable breakfast room...when my brother and I boiled up a pint of turpentine or similar to make 'the new gas' there was an explosion and my father came out and said "blow your heads off as much as you like but don't blow up the house"...after I left my school kept by three ladies named Hay I went to NLCS in Camden Town and then to Mr John Simpson's school in Englands Lane, Belsize Park.' Weedon then relates the incident in the Englands Lane tuck shop when he was caught smashing the tops of cakes and then trying to buy them for half price,

for which he was reported to Mr Simpson and given six of the best. Having been caught smoking on a school walk on Hampstead Heath he was threatened with expulsion but saved only by the intervention of Mrs Simpson.

The elder George Grossmith and his wife lived at Manor Lodge until his death in 1880. Mrs Grossmith and Weedon stayed on until 1882, when the house was sold. Their prep school, run by the Misses Sarah, Eliza and Isabelle Hay, was at 4 Powis Place, just a few doors to the north, and although the houses in Powis Place did not include a 'Laurels' the directories show that neighbouring house names included a 'Limes', a 'Hawthorns', a 'Linden' and a 'Lawn'.

Turning to the opening chapter of 'Diary of a Nobody', Charles Pooter explains that The Laurels in Brickfield Terrace was 'a nice six roomed residence not counting basement with a front breakfast parlour. We have a little front garden with steps up the front door...and a nice little back garden' - all features of Manor Lodge but Weedon's illustration of 'The Laurels' bears only superficial resemblance to the photographs of the houses in Powis Place taken in 1906 (copies in Swiss Cottage Local History Library) - but the book does mention that the Pooters kept a cook and a housemaid, while the 1861 census return for Manor Lodge showed that the Grossmiths had two young live-in female servants.

The similarities between The Laurels, Brickfield Terrace and Manor Lodge, Haverstock Hill, are not striking but a comparison between the two may provide even more enjoyment when the Diary of a Nobody is again read.

Robin Woolven

(The E.H. Dickens mentioned was almost certainly the son of Dickens' younger brother, Alfred, a civil engineer, who lived in 1859 at 2 Elm Villas, later renumbered as 138 Haverstock Hill. Alfred died in Manchester and at the novelist's expense he was buried in Highgate Cemetery.)

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No 124

Mar 1991

Two Hundred Years of the Vets

Thurs, 21 Mar, 7.30pm
Royal Veterinary College, Royal College
Street, NW1.
(entrance by the northern door, the
Beaumont Hospital end)

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Royal Veterinary College - shown on the late-18th century map of St Pancras as a building all by itself in fields. A talk on the College's history will be given by Gary Clayton-Jones, veterinary surgeon and historian, who is also a beekeeper. There will also be a chance to see the library and, we hope, the bi-centenary exhibition there.

The College had an interesting early history and it is now, of course, the foremost veterinary college in the country. This talk will, we are sure, be an interesting start to mark the Camden Town 200 celebrations.

The Annual Outing to Stamford

The Society's Annual Outing is to Burghley House and Georgian Stamford. It will be on Saturday, 3rd August - a booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter. The approximate cost is £11 per head, which includes a cream tea in Capability Brown's orangery at Burghley House. But do bring a picnic lunch. A booking form will be included with the May Newsletter, but do book promptly - we had a full coach last year.

BARGAIN BACK NUMBERS

Back numbers of Camden History Review will henceforth be on sale to members at our meetings for £1 each...while copies last!

Streets of Belsize - the Meeting

Tues 30 April, 7.30pm
Belsize Library, Antrim Road, NW3

After two years of investigation and gestation by our Street History Group, the revised version of our More Streets of Hampstead, but now entitled The Streets of Belsize, is to be published on the 25th April.

At our meeting, members of the Group will be giving illustrated reports on some of their findings. Copies of the book will be on sale, and there will be an exhibition about Belsize Park, mounted by the Library. Members attending meetings up to and including the AGM may buy the book at the special cheap rate of £5 (the cover price is £5.95).

Streets of Belsize - the Book

'We did not find a street in the area that did not offer some interest,' we are happy to say in the introduction to our latest survey, The Streets of Belsize.

As our title suggests, we hope, this is not a study of Belsize Park only, though no one can clearly define that district, but of a wider area, ranging from Parliament Hill to Primrose Hill and from Fleet Road to Finchley Road. This embraces the Manor of Belsize, the Eton College Estate and a corner of Maryon Wilson country.

Much of our interest came from the architecture, though very few houses pre-dated 1800 and only a dozen or so were pre-Victorian. But look at Lawn Road, for instance, where we note 'an extraordinary diversity of style, from late Victorian semi-detached stucco, through Edwardian Willett-like villas, into 1930s two-storeys, the Modernist Isokon, a 1960s tower block and a brutal concrete Business Centre.' (The Isokon

COBDEN AND DUNSFORD

Our member, Geoffrey Palmer, has provided some more information about Cobden and his Kate, reviewed in the January Newsletter.

He points out that the present house incorporates the original cottage which Cobden acquired - it was not demolished. Its sitting room forms a small office off the present reception area.

Geoffrey has been associated with the YMCA for many years and it was his first boss there who persuaded the Cobden Trustees to give Dunsford and all its 270 acres to the YMCA after running it as a conference centre became too much for them in the early 1950s.

There are more Camden connections in that our Mornington Crescent artist Sickert briefly married one of the Cobden daughters and his painting of Dunsford is still at the house. Coincidentally, Cobden's statue is near Sickert's old house, outside Mornington Crescent tube station. Napoleon III, who put up much of the money for the statue, also gave Cobden a great vase at the end of the negotiations for a trade treaty between France and England - this object has survived many years of Dunsford conferences and graces one of the reception rooms.

Roger Cline

ARROBUS EXHIBITION

The Hampstead Museum's next exhibition is a tribute to the popular local artist, Sydney Arrobus, who died last June. Under the title Sydney Arrobus, a Celebration of Life, 1901-1990, the exhibition will include material about his life and work and there will be a few pictures for sale. The dates are April 7 to June 30.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Members are reminded that subscriptions fell due on March 1st and that a form for renewal is enclosed. This applies, of course, only to members who do not have covenants and standing orders.

It helps the Treasurer a great deal if members could respond promptly to this and it saves the Society postage if we don't have to send out renewals.

flats, we have duly recorded, won second prize in an Ugliest Building Competition in 1949.) The Willetts' contribution ranged, in fact, from the 'standard Italianate' Belsize Avenue to the highly decorative Eton Avenue and 'Elsworthy Village'. Other architectural pleasures included the artists' houses and studios built by Batterbury & Huxley, and all those added Victorian virtues - the stained glass, the bargeboards, the finials, the dragons, the window-sill pot-guards and much else.

And where the buildings were not so remarkable, there was often interest in the residents, past and present. The Freuds and the Huxleys kept cropping up and there were four Prime Ministers (Asquith, MacDonal, Perceval and Fukuda of Japan), three leading architects (Foster, Rogers, Stirling), two eminent Victorians (Strachey, Sir Rowland Hill) and hosts of artists, actors, writers and, oh yes, Elgar, Marx and Twiggy. There was also a horrifying number of murders.

Our Street History Group began meeting monthly in April 1989 and the regulars were Sheila Ayres, the Wades, Tatiana Wolff and Robin and Sonia Woolven. Valuable contributions also came from Roy Allen, Yvonne Melnick and John Wale. Our thanks to them all and to the builders and denizens of Belsize who made our researches so rewarding.

Christopher Wade

THE PEOPLING OF LONDON

The Museum of London is to hold a major exhibition entitled 'The Peopling of London' in September 1992. It will display the ethnic and cultural diversity within a long perspective. The last census revealed that 20% of the heads of households in London were not born in the UK. However, the exhibition will seek to show that significant immigration is not a recent phenomenon - it has been going on for 20,000 years.

Extensive research is being undertaken but gaps are still apparent. In particular, the Museum wants to hear from people who have specialist knowledge of the Chinese and Turkish communities, and also from anyone who has done research into an ethnic group in London who feels that he or she has significant material to contribute.

Members who can help should write to Nick Merriman at the Museum.

The Early Days of Rossllyn House

Charles Woodd, the last occupant of Rossllyn House (off Lyndhurst Road; demolished 1896), believed the place went back to the Armada, his evidence being a find of coins and a tree-ring count. He may well be right but the earliest documentary contact seems to be in 1674, when Widow Lester paid tax on four hearths; she was probably the Mrs Lister of William Gent's Survey of the Manor of Belsize in 1679.

On John Grove's map of 1714 the tenant is Mrs Mules, who was paying an 'improved' rent to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. She appears to have inspired one of the names of the house, Mulys.

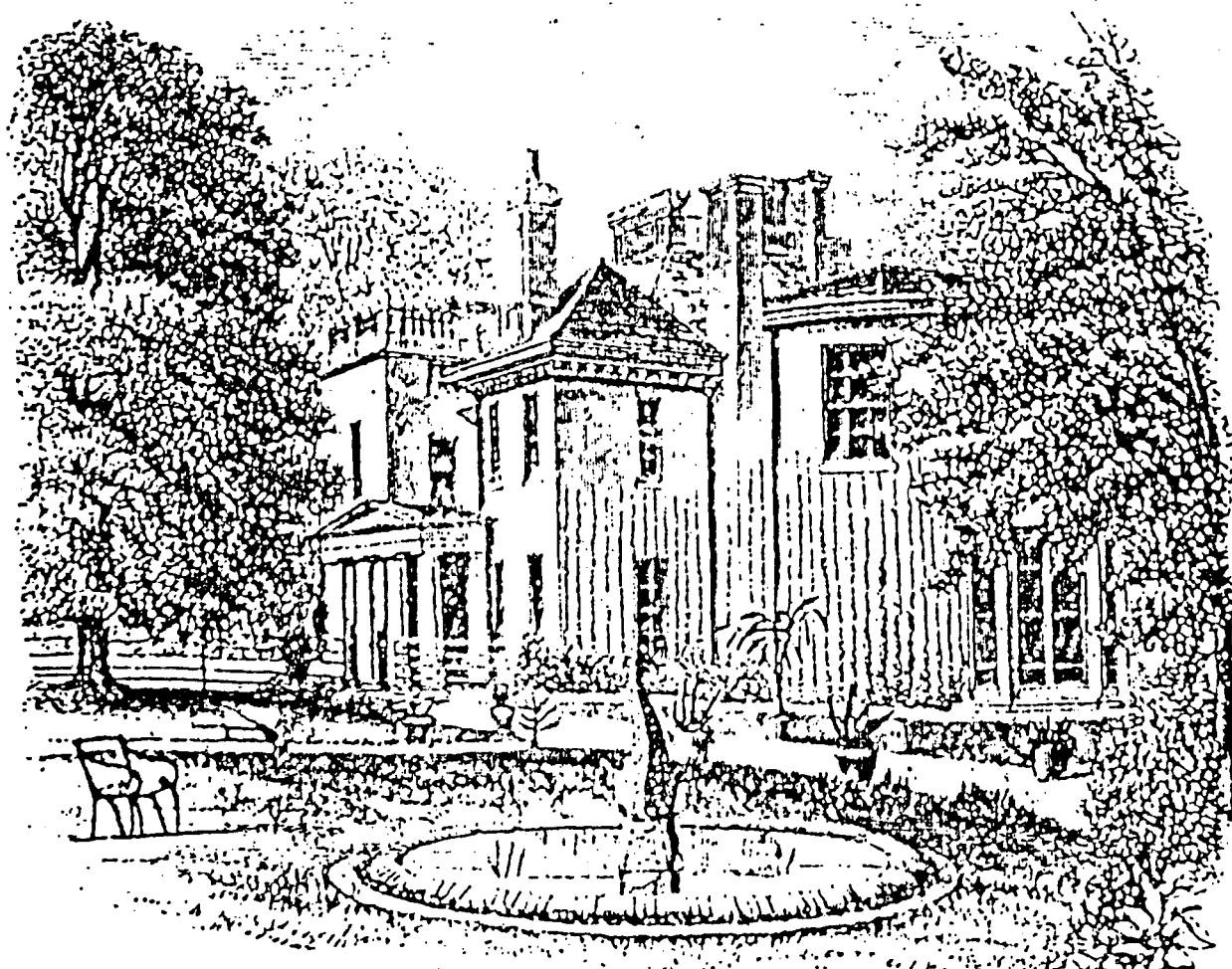
Continuity starts with John Rocque's map of 1746. This shows that the tenant was now Coulson Fellowes, a barrister; he had a seat at Ramsey Abbey and was MP for Hunts from 1741 to 1761. His elder son William was also an MP, for Ludlow from 1768 to 1774 and later for Andover.

A contemporary account by the Rev. John Jones, quoted by J. Nichols in Literary

Anecdotes I, 589 (1812), describes Coulson as 'one of the best politicians in this kingdom', his main fault being 'too much parsimoniousness'. Yet 'he is allowed by all to keep a good table, and to make generous entertainment to his friends (even 20 dishes at a time...), though he himself feeds only upon puddings, broths, herbs and water'.

The Rev. John Maryon, Lord of the Manor of Hampstead, died in November 1760. He left the manor to his niece Margaretta Maria Weller, a widow; and at a court leet and general court baron in May 1761 she was duly acknowledged as Lady. But by the end of June the manor had a Lord, William Fellowes in fact.

Mrs Weller was free to make Hampstead over to William but only for the term of her life. She probably did this, doubtless on trust, because she had also inherited the Manor of Charlton (east of Greenwich) from her uncle; and she was getting married again and intended to live at Charlton House, hitherto tenanted. William took his duties seriously. The Hampstead map of 1762 must have been



ROSSLYN HOUSE.

commissioned by him; it seems that, like his namesake who instigated the Domesday Survey, he wanted to know what was going on. He is not mentioned in the field book: this correctly observes that the estate is the property of Mrs Margaretta Maria Jones, as she now was. She died in 1777 and the manor passed to her daughter Jane, William having relinquished the lordship. Jane, who also inherited Charlton from her mother, had earlier married General Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson; and their son Thomas was the first Maryon Wilson.

Meanwhile Coulson had died in 1769 at his town house in Great James Street (perhaps no 5 or 6), near Holborn Library. His widow Urania, William's mother, stayed on in Belsize until her death in 1779. In her last years she was known as the Hon Mrs Fellowes, apparently a courtesy title: her late brother and her daughter, also Urania, were respectively the Earl of Powis and Lady Portsmouth.

The property passed through various hands until, as The Grove House, it was acquired leasehold in 1793 by the future Earl of Rosslyn (see Newsletter 108).

Roy Allen

A Slice of Camden Town

THE LADY IN THE VAN, by Alan Bennett
44pp paperback, London Review of Books,
1990, £3.50

'I ran into a snake this afternoon,' Miss Shepherd said. 'It was coming up Parkway. It was a long grey snake, a boa constrictor possibly, it looked poisonous. It was keeping close to the wall and seemed to know its way. I've a feeling it may well have been heading for the van.'

Miss Shepherd and her vans had descended outside (and after parking meters, inside) Alan Bennett's garden in Gloucester Crescent in 1971. His charitable gesture was to last until her death in 1989. It has given him marvellous material for his delight in the odd turn of phrase and strange behaviour.

'1974. Miss S has been explaining to me why the old Bedford (the van not the music-hall) ceased to go "possibly". She had put in some of her home-made petrol, based on a recipe for petrol substitute she read about some years ago in a newspaper. "It was a spoonful of petrol, a gallon of water and a pinch of something you could get in every High Street. Well, I got it into my head that it was bicarbonate of soda, only I think I was mistaken".

'She retired early and would complain if anyone called or left late at night. On one occasion Coral Browne was coming away from the house with her husband Vincent Price, and they were talking quietly. "Pipe down," snapped the voice from the van, "I'm trying to sleep." For someone who had brought terror to millions it was an unexpected taste of his own medicine.'

The interior of the van became progressively more obnoxious, although Bennett notes with admiration how the nurse, ambulance man and (after her death) the priest gave no sign of revulsion. Her funeral is slotted into the 10 o'clock mass with the server in an open neck shirt and a hymn obviously reworked from an unsuccessful entry for the Eurovision Song Contest. Bennett ruminates that the biggest sacrifice Newman made when he turned his back on the C of E was the social one.

Appropriately, in view of her lifelong love of the car (she was a driver in the Blitz), Miss S is being buried within sight and sound of the North Circular Road, one carriageway the other side of the hedge (in St Pancras Cemetery) with juggernauts drowning the words of the priest as he commits the body to the earth. 'He gives us each a go with his little plastic bottle of holy water, we throw some soil into the grave and then everybody leaves me to whatever solitary thoughts I might have, which are not many, before we are driven back to Camden Town, life reasserted when the undertaker drops us handily outside Sainsbury's.'

A nice piece of Local History, deserving a place on your bookshelf even though the price per page is high.

Roger Cline

newsletter

No 125

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

May 1991

The Annual Meeting

Mon 17 June, 7pm.
Architectural Association,
34 Bedford Square, WC1

The Annual Meeting this year begins with refreshments at 7pm, the business meeting at 7.30 and a talk on the creation of Bedford Square at 8pm. Our speaker is Andrew Byrne whose excellent book, Bedford Square, has recently been published.

You are invited to make nominations for the officers and committee of the Society. Those elected last year were as follows:

PRESIDENT: Christopher Elrington
VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Anthony Cooper, Christina Gee, Dr Ann Saunders.

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay
TREASURER: Roger Cline
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: Diana Wade
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Horace Shooter
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes
PUBLICITY: Diana Rau
EDITOR OF CHS REVIEW: John Gage

Council Members:
Peter Barber, Eric Brassington, Philip Greenall, Ruth Hayes, Sue Palmer, Gillian Tindall, Robin Woolven.

Philip Greenall has given us notice that, regrettably, he is unable to put his name forward this year.

The Annual Outing

The last Newsletter was rather confusing about the Annual Outing - it stated that the application form was in that edition, and also that it was to be in this edition! However, it is definitely here this time. We are going to Burghley House and Stamford, two excellent venues.

A Publisher's Daughter in Hampstead

Wed 22 May, 7.30pm
Heath Branch Library, Keats Grove, NW3

The full title of our May talk is A Publisher's Daughter in Hampstead: The Diary of Mary Nichols 1823-1834 and our speaker is Julian Pooley.

The publisher's daughter was Mary Nichols, whose father, John Bowyer Nichols, was editor and publisher of the Gentleman's Magazine. Her diary, which our speaker discovered in a bookshop in 1982, covers her teenage years, and provides a fascinating account of the life and interests of a teenage girl growing up in a busy publisher's household in early nineteenth century London. The Nichols family lived in various parts of London during the period covered by the diary, but had close links with Hampstead. Mary's grandfather, John Baker, retired to Hampstead, and Mary was sent to school there, making friends who were to remain in contact with her throughout her life.

Diana Wade

We have lost a familiar friend. Diana Wade died, after a sudden and rapid illness, earlier this month, just a few days before the launch of the last CHS book with which she was involved.

Diana and Christopher Wade joined the Society very soon after its foundation and immediately their energy and ability became an asset. Diana was to be found researching streets, delivering things, scrutinising gravestones which resisted transcription and managing the distribution of our publications. And then both of them plunged into the founding of Burgh House and its museum.

All of us tended to refer to 'the Wades', which was not to imply that each of them did not have his or her specific talents,

enterprises and successes. It merely meant that, refreshingly, they enjoyed doing many things together (usually of benefit to other people) and, invariably, a friend of one of them became immediately a friend of the other. They were self-evidently a close and a happy marriage and the loss for Christopher at this time will be keenly felt also by those who knew her.

Images of Diana persist. She would appear, carrying what would seem an unhealthy load of publications, at meetings. And if the Society can be criticised (and justly) for not fashioning a better 'social' side at our meetings, then so much poorer would have been our performance without her input. She was the first person many prospective or new members met in the Society and furthermore, one that you always went and spoke to on subsequent occasions.

I can remember her, too, in the middle of compiling the Buried in Hampstead publication, with perhaps thousands of index slips stuck in shoe boxes. Somehow, out of that she produced accurate and detailed results, resisting the blandishments of family and people like me to invest in new-fangled things such as word processors and home computers.

It was Diana who organised, usually, the distribution of the Newsletter every two months. Sometimes I was very late indeed producing it, occasionally requiring the use of first-class stamps to get it to members on time. But she never had temper tantrums; instead she would make sure that my tardiness could be coped with and even compounded her patience with enthusiasm and congratulations when the Newsletter arrived on her doorstep for distribution.

Diana was that indefinable 'Hampstead person', but with that happy knack of connecting the various strands of the area she loved together. At Burgh House, where she met so many people, this genuine interest in others was to find its full expression.

Her last major work for the Society has been the new book, The Streets of Belsize, copies of which she saw just before her death. Christopher, the editor, is dedicating it to her.

We shall miss her very much and our deep sympathy goes out to Christopher at this bleak time.

A memorial service to Diana will be held at Hampstead Parish Church at 11.30am on 17 May.

John Richardson

THE SECRET ARCH

The new Bulletin from the Hornsey Historical Society features a wide variety of topics. The main article is a Highgate subject. The original plan was that the Archway Road should be tunnelled through the wedge of high land that carries Hornsey Lane. The tunnel fell through one night to the merriment and delight of sceptics and Highgate innholders and was made the theme of a burlesque operetta. Joan Schwitzer has been doing much research on the text of this entertainment, which was produced at the Lyceum in 1812.

Other articles take in the Pollards, father and son, the print-makers (they did a famous one of Highgate Archway bridge), Sunday trading in Highgate, Rabbits and Pheasants in Muswell Hill, Crouch End School, and John Hallifax, Victorian.

Copies of the Bulletin may be obtained from the HHS at The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL for £3 plus 35p postage.

A NEW CARPET AT KENWOOD

Robert Adam's library at Kenwood is the subject of a long-term restoration programme. It had remained intact until the sale of the house by the descendants of the 1st Earl of Mansfield in 1922, and when Lord Iveagh (who later bequeathed the house and its grounds to the public) bought it the only original objects remaining in the house were two large pier glasses, two curtain cornices, and a carpet, all in the library.

As recently as 1970 the same wall-to-wall carpet was cut up and reduced to form a rectangle and, threadbare and framed by a 1950s parquet floor, it was fragile and unfit for use. Moreover, it gave a misleading idea of the intended furnishing of the room.

Now a new carpet has been made, only the third there, and much research has, it is hoped, produced a design near to the original one installed by Adam.

THINGS PAST

Our March lecture was held at the Royal Veterinary College, marking its bicentenary. Gary Clayton-Jones gave a fascinating illustrated lecture on the early history of the College and we had the opportunity to visit the extensive exhibition marking the 200 years.

Before the beginning of veterinary education in Britain, animal doctoring was practised by farriers with little knowledge of anatomy and disease. In 1785 The Agricultural Society of Odiham agreed to collect funds to remedy this by sending two students to a veterinary school near Paris. A Frenchman, Charles de St. Bel, visited England in 1788 with plans for a veterinary school here. He was also interested in the anatomy of thoroughbred racehorses and when the famous horse, Eclipse, died in 1789 he supervised the autopsy. It was St. Bel who became the first principal of the Veterinary College in Camden Town, then a building with paddocks in front and behind in the Camden Town fields.

NEW NUMBER

As of now the new telephone number of the Local Studies Library at Swiss Cottage is 071-413 6522. As from mid May the Local Studies Library at Theobalds Road, Holborn will be 071-413 6342. Until that time it is on 405 2705 ext 337.

AN ARROBUS EXHIBITION AT BURGH HOUSE

The next exhibition at Burgh House, from 7 April to 30 June, is one of much local interest. It is entitled Sydney Arrobus: A Celebration of Life 1901-1990. He was a prolific and enthusiastic portrayer of Hampstead, an area he had spent most of his long life in. He was born in Cricklewood but soon was in Wadham Gardens and later in Haverstock Hill. For seven years he worked with his father in the ostrich feather business, before joining Heatherley's Art School. After war service his first artistic success came from work exhibited on the railings of the Embankment Gardens. Since then over 4,000 of his paintings have been sold.

In the Picture

Sir George Clausen's 'Spring Morning, Haverstock Hill' (1881) makes a splendid cover for the new Streets of Belsize but I do not think the viewpoint for the whole picture is outside the present Belsize Bookshop.

Certainly this position is in line with the church tower and the chimney flue on the side of No. 242 (Kentucky Fried Chicken); but the turning on the left looks too narrow for Belsize Avenue, whose entrance was rebuilt in 1871-72 (p64). The garden fence appears to continue right up to the corner, passing in front of the Town Hall; and at this point there is no sign of the large curved recess in the pavement, a feature since early times - see the view on p195 of Records of Hampstead (1890).

It seems to me that the picture is a composite work, the left-hand side being painted from near the uphill corner of Belsize Avenue; the artist had his back to the Town Hall. From here the perspective and lie of the land look more like that depicted by Clausen. The turning on the left is Ornan Road; and the house that can be glimpsed through the trees is Belmont. This (on the site of the Post House Hotel) was occupied in 1881 by W.J. Goode (the china and glass dealer in the West End); further details of Goode, and of his next home, are on p32 of The Streets of Hampstead (1984).

From this corner of Belsize Avenue there is a muddled oblique view across the shop fronts and it appears that Clausen preferred the less complicated aspect from the side, with the chimney flue a strong feature; and for this he went down to the bookshop.

Roy Allen

MUSEUM AT THE BANK

Some members may not be aware that the Bank of England has a fairly new, well founded and interesting new museum. It is situated behind the main building. The archives are very extensive and include huge ledgers of customer accounts, architectural plans, staff records, diaries etc.

It is open every weekday from 10am to 4.30pm. Researchers should make an appointment on 071-601 4889.

Hampstead and Highgate Memories

Miss R.M. Braithwaite, who now lives in Cholmeley Lodge, Highgate, has sent us some interesting memories of Hampstead and Highgate in the inter-war period.

'I was born just before World War I at Russell House, 71 South End Road, Hampstead, a house at the corner of Keats Grove, surrounded by a garden wall. My earliest recollections are of the air-raids in 1917, probably only two or three of them, but I remember the excitement of going down to the kitchen, in the semi-basement of the house, in the middle of the night and of having a biscuit before I went back to bed. I also recall looking out of an upstairs window after a daylight raid and seeing a boy scout standing on the running board of a car blowing the All Clear on a bugle.

My father, W.J. Braithwaite, C.B., was a distinguished civil servant, working at that time in the Ministry of Food. He had an allotment at The Elms (later St Columba's Hospital) off Spaniards Road and I remember his pushing me part of the way over the Heath in his wheelbarrow and then letting me help on his patch in the kitchen garden there. We walked over to Highgate each Spring to see the wild daffodils (in the field which is now allotments) by Fitzroy Park. I have a clear memory of a man we saw on those occasions, selling brandy balls from a pram at the bottom of Merton Lane, where the path comes up from the Ponds. Then, when I was very young, there was the trauma of my brother's model yacht - the Vindex - getting stuck in the middle of the Sailing Pond. I believe it was eventually rescued by a dog, but much to my fury, I had been sent home to bed by then.

Our house was only a few hundred yards from the main Show Ground on Hampstead Heath in the days when the Fair attracted thousands of Londoners on Bank Holidays. I remember once being lifted back over our front garden wall because the crowd in the street was so dense that we could not get to our garden gate. There were pearly kings and queens, costers; girls wore big hats with plumes and long skirts of course, picking these up to dance to hurdy gurdies, teasing the men with 'ticklers', singing all the popular

tunes. There were Italian ice creams, lemonade in slop pails, coconuts galore, swing-boats, Fred Grey's roundabouts and so on.

I knew Kenwood very well before it was 'thrown into the Heath', as the expression was in those days. My mother was an enterprising woman and she approached Lord Iveagh's agent for permission to take her little girl into the wood for walks. In consequence, she was given a permit and loaned a key to what, for me, was a magic door in the wooden fence which enclosed the estate. An expedition to Kenwood became a major event in my life and we often took other children with us and picnicked by the lake. There were badgers and foxes there and I remember seeing the flash of a kingfisher in flight. Furthermore, I am probably now the only person alive who has ridden on the top of a hay-cart across the meadows below Kenwood House, up to the Home Farm by the dairy.

I was present when George V and Queen Mary 'threw Kenwood into the Heath', a ceremony performed from a platform just outside the wood on its western flank. At a later stage in my life I discovered the joys of the Highgate Ladies' Bathing Pond. In that period, too, I often saw Professor C.E.M. Joad playing mixed hockey on the Heath on Sundays.

Until the time I left Hampstead (1937), the Heath was a great barrier between Hampstead and Highgate. None of my family knew anybody in Highgate until, when I was at boarding school in Salisbury in 1927, I met Katherine Birks, grand-daughter of a long-serving President of the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, who lived at Everleigh, Broadlands Road, and Muriel Evans, who lived in Bisham Gardens and whose father had been killed in the War. The only Highgate events we heard about were the post-Wimbledon tennis parties at Witanhurst, in Sir Arthur and Lady Crosfield's day. On the whole, we despised Highgate as being remote and unenterprising, whereas in Hampstead there was always something going on and, in any event, it was full of distinguished literati, actors and artists - in fact, pretty well the centre of the universe.

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 126
Jul 1991

Camden Town 200 - the Talk

Tues, 16 July, 7.30pm
King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, NW1

Anyone who does not know that we are celebrating 200 years of Camden Town this year has not been reading this Newsletter - a note of some of the events planned is found elsewhere in this edition.

We are marking the year by a talk on the history of the area, given by Roger Cline. Needless to say this is a subject of interest to all members, and we have an entertaining speaker.

We shall be at a new venue. The King's Fund Centre, a 1976 building by a distinguished local architect, houses an organisation which seeks to promote improvement in health and social care.

CAMDEN IN LITERATURE PART TWO

Following the success of last year's 'Camden in Literature' evening, we plan to hold another series of our favourite Camden readings for our Christmas meeting. This will be on Thursday, 5th December at Burgh House.

Members who would like to read items that evening should contact Robin Woolven on 071-794 2382.

SENDING OUT THE NEWSLETTER

Every two months a small group of members meets to put the Newsletter into envelopes and send it out. It takes about two hours and, I gather, is a convivial afternoon. We need to enlist one or two more people to do this work - if you would like to help, please contact Jane Ramsay our Secretary, c/o Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3.

Advance Notice

We have two events in September, one of which will be detailed in the September Newsletter, since it takes place later in that month. However, the first event is on September 9th and it is probable that the next Newsletter may not have appeared in time to advertise it.

On 9th September we shall be at the Church of Scotland in Crown Court, off Russell Street, Covent Garden. This is a very interesting but little known building - well worth the visit. Our speaker, on the history of the church, is Dr Joan Huffman, Professor of History at the University of Macon, Georgia, USA.

A Church of Scotland community has worshipped here since the eighteenth century, though the present building, a fascinating Arts and Crafts structure, dates only from the turn of the present century. Much of the finance for it was raised by Lady Frances Balfour, daughter of the Duke of Argyll and a very redoubtable lady, who was the wife of the architect, Eustace Balfour, brother to the Prime Minister, A.J. Balfour.

The church is rather hidden away, and you should approach it via an alleyway - Crown Court - which is off Russell Street by the Fortune Theatre.

On Monday, September 23rd, Gustav Milne will be talking on 'King Alfred's London' at St Pancras Church Hall in Lancing Street, NW1 at 7.30pm.

A COACHLOAD

Unfortunately for latecomers, the coach for our Annual Outing, this year to Burleigh and Stamford, is full.

The Theatre Group

As members will know, we are keen to form a theatre research group with a view to publishing a comprehensive history of the theatres in Camden. We have been fortunate in securing the services of Jinny Schiele, a theatre researcher whose thesis subject included three Camden theatres, as the leader of this group.

There have been, and still are, a great many theatres in Camden. Though the group will need to research most of them it would be tedious, as well as voluminous, to deal with each individually in print. It has therefore been decided to arrange the publication thematically. Sections will include theatres still in operation such as the Shaftesbury and the Phoenix, those now defunct such as the Bedford and the Scala, fringe theatres, pub theatres, local authority theatres such as the Shaw and Jeanette Cochrane, drama schools such as that at the old Embassy theatre at Swiss Cottage, theatres which are now used for other purposes such as the Camden and the Dominion, and 'people's' theatres such as Unity.

Members of the group should be capable of researching both local and national archives and of producing a synopsis of their particular subject/s in a form which, under the general editorship of Jinny Schiele, can be published.

The publication will feature the buildings and the activities in them and we are confident that quite a few members will find this an attractive research project. Those interested should contact Jinny Schiele direct. She is at 41 Egmont Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JR (081-643 7766).

AN EVENING WITH TWO IRISHMEN

More exactly, an evening with Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. This is an entertainment at Keats House on Thursday, 18 July, beginning at 7.30, devised and presented by Neil Titley and Malcolm Wroe. It lasts just over two hours and tickets, which include wine, cost £6 each. They may be obtained from Keats House in advance on 435 2062.

Anthony Cooper and Philip Greenall

Two prominent members of the Society, familiar to most of you, have died recently. Anthony Cooper, a vice-President and author of our publication Primrose Hill to Euston Road had lived in the Regent's Park area ever since the war, when he bought a rather bomb damaged house in the Regent's Park Road. He was an architect by profession and brought a discerning eye to his observations on that part of Camden. He was a delightful committee member and, before his stroke some years back, a valued contributor to the work of the Society.

Philip Greenall was known to most of us for his numismatic interests and knowledge. He had a large collection of Camden trade tokens including one or two which were, in themselves, the only evidence we have of the existence of the businesses that had had them coined.

But he was also well known for other activities. He was an inveterate photographer and had, in his archive, many pictures of this Society at work or play over the years. He was also a familiar figure in Fabian and Labour Party circles.

Both Anthony and Philip will be much missed.

Diana Wade

Diana Wade loved the garden at Burgh House, and often said how pleasant it would be to have the sound of water among the plants. In her memory, therefore, a fountain is to be installed in the garden. Anyone who would like to contribute to the project can hand in donations to the office at Burgh House (Weds-Sats 12-5) or send them to The Administrator, Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LT.

THE ART OF KATE GREENAWAY

The work of one of Camden's best-known residents is the subject of a talk at Keats House on 16 July, beginning at 6.30pm. Ina Taylor will be talking about her new book 'The Art of Kate Greenaway'. Please ring 435 2062 for a ticket.

Camden Town 200

To mark the bicentenary of Camden Town the Local Studies Library has published a handsome book called Camden Town 1791-1991. It has been compiled by local history staff Valerie Hart, Richard Knight and Lesley Marshall.

Horace Walpole, writing in 1791, recognised that momentous changes were about to take place when he said 'There will soon be one street from London to Brentford, ay and from London to every village ten miles round. Lord Camden has just let ground at Kentish Town for building fourteen hundred houses.'

Those words signalled the beginning of this, now, inner London area and the book contains 74 illustrations of Camden Town through those two centuries. Particularly interesting are a watercolour by Grace Golden of Harrington Square in 1938 and, opposite, a splendid view of the Carreras factory before it was transformed quite unnecessarily into the anonymous pile of Greater London House. Other views include some famous Camden Town fires and the wonderful drawing by J.C. Bourne of the construction of the London & Birmingham Railway as it went beneath Parkway.

There is an endearing picture of the official opening of Goldington Court - the first council flats erected by St Pancras Council in 1904. Here are gathered the mayor and councillors and some wives adorned in the most extraordinary dresses and hats.

Portrayed here is a quieter and virtually traffic-free Camden Town. The book contains, within its captions, a great deal of precise information. The book's disadvantages lie in its landscape shape which fits few bookcases known to the literate world, and the irritating habit of inseting small illustrations into large ones, a design feature which harms both pictures.

Camden Town 1791-1991 may be obtained from bookshops and libraries for £4.50 or obtained by post from Camden Local Studies Library Swiss Cottage Library, 88 Avenue Road, NW3 3HA for £5.75 (cheques and postal orders payable to the London Borough of Camden).

John Richardson

There are numerous events planned to mark Camden Town 200. Some of those associated with its history which occur before the next Newsletter are as follows:

Walks:

16 July, 13 Aug, 1 Sep: Inland Waterways guided walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden Town underground station to Paddington. Tel 071-586 2510 for times

23 July, 4 Aug, 20 Aug: Inland Waterways guided walk along the Regent's Canal from Camden Town underground station to Islington. Tel 071-586 2510 for times

19 Sep: A walk around Camden Town with Bob Carpenter, beginning at 6.30pm. Tel Camden Town Library 071-387 1976 for details.

Exhibition

Camden Town 200 Exhibition opens at Camden Lock on 2 August. It is here until 31 August and then reopens at the Crowndale Centre on 3 September until 28 September.

Talks

6 Sep: Malcolm Holmes on Camden Town 1791-1991 at Camden Town Library, 7pm.

Things Past

The Annual Meeting at the Architectural Association headquarters in Bedford Square in June was well attended and much enjoyed.

The following officers were elected for the following year:

PRESIDENT: Christopher Elrington
VICE PRESIDENTS: Frank Cole, Christina Gee, Dr Ann Saunders

CHAIRMAN: John Richardson
VICE CHAIRMAN: Christopher Wade
SECRETARY: Jane Ramsay
TREASURER: Roger Cline
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER: Christopher Wade
MEETINGS SECRETARY: Horace Shooter
ARCHIVIST: Malcolm Holmes
PUBLICITY: Diana Rau
EDITOR OF CHS REVIEW: John Gage

Council Members:

Peter Barber, Eric Brassington, Philip Greenall, Ruth Hayes, Sue Palmer, Gillian Tindall, Robin Woolven.

The Queen and the Tollgate

An old story has it that Queen Victoria, on her way to inspect Rosslyn House as a possible nursery for the royal children, was called upon to pay toll in Belsize Lane by a small girl who had been left in charge of the gate. The tale seems to be first recorded by Edward Walford in Old and New London V, p490 (c1880). It may be worth trying to determine when the incident could have taken place.

The tollgate in question had a short life. Finchley Road, opened about 1830, eventually brought traffic to Belsize Lane, the western part of which was still in private hands (see Newsletter 120). It belonged to Belsize House and the occupant decided to levy toll on horses and carriages. This was collected at a gate just west of Daleham Mews.

By January 1842 a toll house had been built, on the south side of the lane. Barratt has a view (in fact of 1859) in his Annals of Hampstead I, 229; the barn is part of Belsize Farm, on the other side of the road. The gate itself, or rather the gateway, is shown (from the west) on the trade card of William Ivor Thomas, 'Cow-keeper and Dairyman', of the farm and what is now No 12 Belsize Terrace. (The illustration appears on p91 of Hampstead Past by Christopher Wade.) A man on horseback has apparently just paid toll to a woman but this harks back to earlier times: the card (at Swiss Cottage) can be dated to 1866-69, long after the toll had ceased.

Victoria presumably came at a time when (a) Rosslyn was available and (b) her children were reasonably numerous and of an age when they could make good use of a country house with large grounds in which to run wild. These conditions were met for a brief period shortly after May 1853. Henry Davidson, a West India merchant, moved out after occupying the house for ten years; and the Queen and Prince Albert, married in 1840, now had eight children, the eldest (the Princess Royal) being twelve.

In the census of 1851 the toll house was occupied by William White, a gardener. He and his wife Eliza had an infant son and two daughters, Eliza (six) and Lorna (four). It could be young Eliza, now eight, who immortalised herself (if anonymously) by demanding toll from the Queen.

The summer of 1853 was the last possible date. A few months later Rosslyn was in the throes of a major rebuild, Belsize House and the wall round the park were being demolished, and the toll had probably been abandoned.

Roy Allen

Talking and Walking Belsize

Over 1000 copies of our new publication The Streets of Belsize have already been sold in to outlets - a very good result. Copies can be bought at most local bookshops, libraries and newsagents - if unsuccessful, ring Christopher Wade on 794 2752.

From 6 July to 29 September there is an exhibition at Burgh House, Beautiful Belsize. Belsize or, as it once was, Bel Assis, means 'beautifully situated', and not only the hilly site but the tree-lined streets and varied Victorian architecture justify the title of the exhibition.

Using original watercolours, oils and prints, the exhibition illustrates much of the material recently published in the book. Pictures include some of the vanished stately homes of the area, the farmhouse in Belsize Lane and other rural scenes. There are some curious exhibits, such as the iron bedstead, one of 9,000 in the deep shelter under Haverstock Hill, and there are some horror stories - the Hampstead Heath Station disaster and the corpse in Crossfield Road.

Burgh House is open Weds-Suns, 12-5.

Then, on July 18, there is a second hearing of the talk on Belsize given by our research group in April. This is at 8pm at Burgh House, admission £1.

On July 24 there is a walk around the Eton College Estate which begins at Chalk Farm tube station at 6.30pm. Your guide is Christopher Wade and the fee is £1.

Then, on 3 Sep, there is a walk around the Belsize Village area, starting at 6.30pm from Belsize Park Station. Your guides will be Tania Wolfe and Robin Woolven.

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 127

Sep 1991

King Alfred's London

Mond, 23 September, 7.30pm
St Pancras Church Hall
Lancing Street, NW1
(opposite eastern entrance to
Euston Station)

Much has been revealed of Anglo-Saxon London in the last few years, mainly due to the energetic work of the archaeological division of the Museum of London - a part of the Museum's activities now radically reduced because of lack of funding and the sudden reduction of new office developments which paid for many excavations. However, the recent heyday of the department has made possible a new look at early and late Saxon London.

Gustav Milne, our speaker, is familiar to the Society - he gave a memorable talk on the Great Fire of London some years back, describing that event in relation to recent archaeological finds. He has been active in a good number of the important excavations in London during the last few years and his subject promises to be a fascinating one.

Advance Notice

Our November meeting has not yet been finalised. We are hoping to have a talk on the history of the Eton Estate.

5 December: Burgh House, 7pm. Camden in Literature. A miscellany of readings featuring Camden, chaired by Robin Woolven.

21 January: George Godwin and the Builder magazine, by Ruth Richardson.

Sir John Soane's Drawings

Tues, 22 October, 7pm
Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road
WC1

Many members will already have sampled the delights of the Soane Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The building is now being extensively renovated and the Society is hoping to arrange, in the New Year, a tour of the Museum in its new clothes. As in most museums there is far more out of sight than on show. This evening our subject is Sir John Soane's Collection of Drawings, some 30,000 items, summarised in a talk by Margaret Richardson who is Assistant Curator and Inspectress of the Museum.

The treasures of this collection include not only the thousands of items from the Soane architectural office, but drawings made by such architects as Wren, the Adam Brothers and George Dance.

Please note the earlier starting time.

POSTER PERSON WANTED

We need someone who, on a regular basis, could concoct the fairly simple posters the Society displays to advertise its lectures. Anyone with a little time and aptitude to spare for this please contact Jane Ramsay, Secretary CHS, c/o Swiss Cottage Library, Avenue Road, NW3

A NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

New telephone numbers for our Secretary, Jane Ramsay, are as follows:

Mon, Tues, Thurs (work) 071-278 4444 (ext 3782)

Home number: 071-586 4436

Stanley Spencer - a Hampstead Vision

This is the centenary year of the often visionary artist Sir Stanley Spencer RA (1891-1959) and an exhibition at Burgh House will examine and illustrate his many Hampstead connections.

Though mainly associated with his birthplace, Cookham, Spencer spent much time in Hampstead from his Slade days onwards. He was a close friend of Henry Lamb in the Vale of Health and of the Carline family at 47 Downshire Hill. In 1925 he married Hilda Carline and moved into a studio on top of the Vale of Health Tavern (on the site of the present Spencer House). Here their first daughter Shirin was born and here Spencer created one of his masterpieces The Cookham Resurrection, which was immediately bought by the Tate Gallery. The picture was so large that a window had to be removed to lower it to the ground.

In 1938 Spencer had a room at 188 Adelaide Road and soon became a frequent visitor to Daphne and George Charlton at 40 New End Square (opposite the gates of Burgh House). Daphne, whose famous portrait by Spencer is also at the Tate, remained one of what he called his 'hand-holders' until his death in 1959.

The exhibition at Burgh House will include original family portraits, photographs and mementoes of 47 Downshire Hill, lent by the Spencers' younger daughter, Unity; some of the artist's rarely seen 'scrapbook drawings', with Hampstead backgrounds, from Lord Astor's collection; original oils of Hampstead scenes by Daphne and George Charlton; a wartime poster and a piece of wallpaper from 40 New End Square painted jointly by Daphne and Stanley; and a reproduction of Spencer's Tate portrait of Daphne, together with some of the actual accessories used in the picture, notably the little black hat specially chosen by Stanley and Daphne in Bond Street.

The exhibition is open 5 October - 19 December (Weds-Sundays 12-5pm). Additionally on 3 November at 8pm there will be an entertainment presented by the Very Hampstead Troupe called Stanley Spencer's 100th Birthday. Tickets £3.50 inc. wine.

Camden Town 200

The Camden Town birthday celebrations have been a great success. A large number of events have been put together under the umbrella and we should congratulate Lester May, who has organised this single-handedly, on its success. The historic exhibition is still at the Crowndale Centre in Crowndale Road until the end of September. On 25th November Lester will be giving a talk on the history of the area at the Museum of London, beginning at 1.10pm. There is also to be a Walk through Camden Town on the 26th September, beginning at 2pm. Details of this Walk may be obtained from the Education Dept of the Museum on 071-600 3699 (ext 200),

In November Camden Town Past, by John Richardson, will be published - more details in the next Newsletter.

INVITATION TO THE LAST WALK

The last in our series of walks around the Streets of Belsize starts from Shepherds Well (for those who haven't bought the book, that is at the junction of Fitzjohn's Avenue and Akenside Road) on Sunday 29 September at 11am. Sheila Ayres and Christopher Wade will take you round the delights of the Fitzjohns area.

Camden in Literature

Robin Woolven has already had offers of contributions to our 'Camden in Literature' evening on Thursday, December 5th at Burgh House, but still needs more. The evening will consist of short readings selected by members of passages relating to Camden from published literature. If you have a favourite piece of local colour you would like to share, please ring Robin on 071-794 2382.

THE LAMAS CONFERENCE

This year's LAMAS Local History Conference at the Museum of London is on Saturday, 16 November, beginning at 11am. Its theme is Education in London. There are various talks on the history of education in the capital and the buildings which resulted from its development.

Tickets are £3.50 each and may be obtained from the Local History Conference, c/o 30a Wood Lane, Ruislip, Middx HA4 6EX. Please enclose a SAE.

Things Past

Joan Barraclough was on the coach which took us to Burghley House and Stamford in August:

'A strenuous day, but a happy one, was divided between the Georgian delights of Stamford and the splendour of Burghley House. Shortage of time for all there was to see could be the only criticism of what was a splendidly planned and happy day out - good as ever.

First to Stamford, once a coaching town on the Great North Road. CHS members were issued with a Georgian trail actually noting three walks. Time really only allowed for two of them. Stamford's Georgian must be some of the best preserved anywhere. The beauty of the style is wonderfully interpreted in the pale local stone. Even better, everything seems effortless. There is no self-conscious museum atmosphere in what seems a cheerful working town. Perhaps the trails were a little hard to follow but having to rush could have accounted for this.

Next to Burghley House, one of the most magnificent of stately homes - E-shaped as a compliment to the first Queen Elizabeth, whom Mr Secretary Cecil served so loyally - somewhere there was a portrait of poor Mary Queen of Scots, whom he considerately got beheaded.

Eighteen of the 240 rooms are shown to the public by first-class guides. Their magnificence in decoration with profusion of pictures, ornaments, silver, embroideries could be overwhelming. Again, time was short, while for obvious security reasons, no one could be left to browse. Possibly the sidelights should be noted: Queen Victoria's bed in the drawing room because on her first visit as a thirteen-year-old, she had to be next door to her mother (chamber-pot coyly under the bed); the needlework on another bed being transferred with wonderful skill to new silk; the story of the Italian painter, Verrio, at work on amazing walls and ceilings, while arguing over money all the time. He finally left the work unfinished and bills unpaid locally when departing...

Portraits, of course, innumerable, everyone having a story attached; a silver wine cooler nearly the size of a bath; the perfect oil-painting of a rose in a glass - all things CHS members would notice, plus the silver fireplaces, and

the notices in the huge kitchen and in the stables re nobody hanging about in the said kitchen unnecessarily and fire practice. Animal lovers might mourn the poor little turtles whose heads were mounted over the fireplace.

There's just space to note the lovely china shown above the gift shop and the cream tea provided as usual. Then it was home in a comfortable coach with a charming driver and Robin the capable organiser (working away on Christmas plans already). Nobody grudged anyone else a nap on the way home through undemanding scenery.'

AN OLD CHESTNUT

Noting with sorrow that the new edition of The Streets of Belsize repeats the old chestnut that Barrow Hill by Primrose Hill signifies an old burial mound, despite my note in Newsletter 10 of many years ago, may I offer the following piece of doggerel to help fix it in people's minds?:

Bearu

The 'Barrow' close to Primrose Hill
Was but an ancient wood
Where pallid primrose glimmered low
And giant oak once stood.

Beorg

But when you stroll on Hampstead Heath
And see the tree-grown mound
You may believe that here indeed
A Bronze Age grave you've found.

Sorry about that! It all hinges on an old confusion between the Anglo-Saxon words for 'grove' and 'barrow'. All clear now?

Cherry Lavell

THE KING'S CROSS LIGHTHOUSE

David Thomas has sent an interesting photocopy (unfortunately not good enough for reproduction) of a building at Walthamstow which bears a strong resemblance to the well-known 'lighthouse' building at King's Cross.

He tells us that the Walthamstow building is still in use as a Methodist mission house - the lantern is lit at service times. He conjectures that this may have been the original use of the the King's Cross building as well.

Book Review

Ten authors present their research on various aspects of London's history and archaeology in this work, Volume X in the British Archaeological Association's Conference Transactions. Several of the papers are likely to be of interest to CHS members, though it is only fair to say that the conference took place in 1984, seven years ago now, and it is not immediately clear whether all the papers were revised before publication. The first one clearly was, since Ralph Merrifield (ex-Museum of London) writes on 'The contribution of archaeology to our understanding of pre-Norman London, 1973-88', a period which saw an enormous increase in rescue archaeology which transformed our ideas on prehistoric, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon London in particular.

John Schofield's work will be known to some for his book on the building of medieval London and his edition for the London Topographical Society of the Ralph Treswell surveys. Here he contributes what he calls 'an almost aerial viewpoint' of 'Medieval and Tudor domestic buildings in the City of London'. A chapter that will fascinate almost everyone is Derek Keene's on 'Shops and shopping in medieval London', which treats the Cheapside area - medieval London's shopping centre - from the 12th to the 17th century, using the extremely detailed histories which have been worked out for all the properties. Here is the real flavour of medieval London.

Strictly for architectural enthusiasts are the next three chapters, all on Old St Paul's Cathedral (ie the pre-Fire building): its Romanesque and its 13th-century phases are unravelled as nearly as possible for such sparse and difficult evidence. Next come papers on restorations of the Temple Church; on illustrated manuscripts; and on the famous medieval English style of embroidery known as opus Anglicanum, which was so popular that even in Rome examples of it outnumbered those from any other country. The last paper is by our Finsbury Park neighbour Bridget Cherry on some new types of late medieval tombs in the London area.

The volume is edited by Lindy Grant and is available, though at alarming cost (£28.50 pb, £38 hb), from W.S. Maney &

Son Ltd, Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7DL. Let's hope Malcolm Holmes can afford it for the library, because we would all benefit from reading this work.

Cherry Lavell

The Theatre Group

Following our note in the last Newsletter it has been possible to form a group of members interested in Camden theatre research. A preliminary meeting has been fixed. At the time of going to press the date of that first meeting is having to be changed and the new date is unavailable. However, Jinny Schiele, the leader of the Group, will be informing all those who have responded so far with the new date. Any other members who would like to join are invited to write to her at 41 Egmont Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JR or else telephone her on 081-643 7766.

THE CAMDEN GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

Camden has a flourishing Greek Cypriot community. A short study on the history of their settlement in Camden and their present activities is contained in a booklet, obtainable at the Local Studies Libraries, entitled The Greek Cypriot Community in Camden, by Anna Hassiotis.

She tells us that the first group of Greek Cypriot immigrants came to Britain in the 1930s to escape the poverty of Cyprus - they were, of course, British colonial subjects at that time. These first Cypriots settled mainly in Soho and Camden Town and worked in the kitchens of the Italian restaurants and hotels in the West End. They sent whatever they could back to Cyprus to pay off debts, support parents and help with the payment of sisters' dowries. This first group of immigrants consisted almost entirely of men.

The next wave came, mostly, in the late 1950s and early 1960s and they consisted mainly of young couples. Another group came after the war of 1974, when Turkish troops invaded the northern part of Cyprus.

newsletter

of the CAMDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

No 128

Nov 1991

The Eton College Estate

7pm, Tues, Nov 19
St Saviour's Church, Eton Road, NW3

It seems extraordinary that in all the years of the Society we have never had a talk on the Eton College Estate, one of the principal landholdings in the borough. We are remedying this in November with a talk by Penny Hadfield, archivist to Eton College. But first we meet at 7pm for a look at St Saviour's Church, and the actual talk begins at 7.30.

THEATRE GROUP BEGINS WORK

The Theatre Group has begun work researching the rather large list of theatres which have existed in Camden. At least 40 have been noted and these have been divided into themes, such as theatres now demolished, fringe theatres, theatres owned by local authorities etc. The aim is to publish a complete survey of them and their activities.

Other members who would like to join the research group are invited to contact Jinnie Schiele at 41 Egmont Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5JR (081-643 7766).

We have received the programme of talks to be given by the Society for Theatre Research. It includes lectures on theatre in the country house, Big Business and the Music Halls, and the love-hate relationship between theatre and religion. All enquiries for membership should be sent to the Society, c/o The Theatre Museum, 1e Tavistock Street, WC2E 7PA.

The Christmas Meeting

7pm, Thurs 5 December
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Robin Woolven is again organising a Camden in Literature evening for our Christmas meeting. It takes the form of members reading pieces which include Camden scenes or events. It was highly successful last year and with Robin again as master of ceremonies it will be at least as enjoyable this time.

Refreshments are at 7pm and the readings are at 7.45.

Druids on Primrose Hill

Cherry Lavell notes [in Newsletter 127] that the 'old chestnut' that Barrow Hill marks a burial mound had been repeated in the new 'Streets of Belsize'. Alas, it is not the only inaccuracy. The booklet also claims that "in recent years" Primrose Hill has become the venue for Druids' rites "at midsummer".

The Druids - or to give them their proper title, the British Circle of the Universal Bond - first met on Primrose Hill not "in recent years" but in 1792!, and not in "midsummer" but for the Autumn Equinox. A little after the 2nd World War the ceremony was revived and is held regularly on Primrose Hill each year at the Autumn Equinox. Normally the summer solstice is celebrated at Stonehenge but just occasionally when the police have prevented access to Stonehenge because of the separate hippy gathering there the Druids have additionally celebrated the summer solstice on Primrose Hill.

It is sad to see a local History Society getting things 200 years wrong (and confusing midsummer with the autumn equinox) - particularly when the facts can so readily be checked.

Valerie Colin-Russ

The Delights of Camden Town Past

Camden Town and Primrose Hill Past, by John Richardson. Publ. by Historical Publications, 144pp, 153 ill's, £12.95.

This book is a delight - plenty of pictures and a wide range of subjects covered in the text. There is no modern street map, but for a local readership this is hardly necessary. The pictures are not the same old ones which appear in all the publications - John Richardson has gone to great trouble to obtain illustrations from many sources, so that these alone provide a widely ranging picture of Camden Town, past and only just past. On the whole the reproduction is good, in fact I had to look at the original of one of my own to be sure it was the same one, the book version was so clear.

The text basically serves to accompany the pictures. It is a summary of most subjects, often leaving you turning the page expecting to find more, but a full-scale history would have taken much longer to research and write and probably would not have been a commercial proposition to publish. The chapter on shops is full, thanks to many of our family traders with good memories and interesting memorabilia. The chapter on railways is also a good coverage, although I do quibble with the statement that an 1838 map shows the western side of Mornington Terrace was never developed - it may show it wasn't by 1838, but Stanford's map of 1862 shows semi-detached villas there with gardens stretching down the much narrower railway cutting than we have today, and the balloon view of 1851 actually illustrates the villas, very different in style from the still surviving terraces on the eastern side.

On the less fully covered subjects, the summaries we do have are admirable starting points for our own research - right members, take a subject of your choice from the book and provide a full account for John Gage to publish in the next Review - or we might put them together for a full-scale history as a future Society publication.

In a review of a previous Historical Publications book, I complained about wide margins only used for captions. Possibly the publishers actually took notice, because we have full use of paper

here, with conventional margins for text and illustrations often extending right to the page edge - a book jam-packed with fascination and just the thing for local Christmas presents.

Roger Cline

Please note: This book will not be available in the shops until the end of November.

A History of the Institution

The Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution celebrated 150 years in 1989. It is publishing this month a history of those years. The book is packed with detail including an article of painstaking research by John Pateman on the history of the site, which throws new light on the comings and goings of buildings there.

The book, Heart of a London Village, has a title which sums up fairly the nature of the Institution. It is the only organisation of its kind to survive in London - there were once many of them, including others in Camden. It has survived partly because the right personality was there to save it at critical times, partly because it provides a good library, partly due to the energetic programme of lectures which has been pursued over the years and, inevitably, the immense number of hours put in by local residents.

The Institution is, at the moment, in the middle of substantial renovation though, unhappily, not all that needs to be done can be done. But no-one can doubt that it will still be thriving in the new century.

The book, 80pp paperback plus cover, costs £9.95 and may be obtained from the Institution. There is probably a postal cost as well, so please telephone first if you are ordering by post. Proceeds go to the Institution's rebuilding fund.

Advance Notice

Dates for your diary:

21 January, 7.30pm (venue to be announced)
Ruth Richardson on George Godwin, famous editor of *The Builder*, and architect.

17 March (time and place to be announced)
on the Gatti family, restaurateurs and famous makers of ice cream.

Victoria and the tollgate

Roy Allen's article re Queen Victoria paying a penny at the Belsize Lane tollbooth was much enjoyed by Alison Venning, who has just joined the Society.

'I was really thrilled to see the Queen and the tollgate article because it mentions my great-great-grandfather, Henry Davidson, who lived with his wife Caroline (nee Blake) and three children at Rosslyn House.

'I was brought up in South Hill Park and we didn't know then that my father's grandfather had lived at Rosslyn House as a child. My twin brother and I went to nursery school at the church on the corner of Haverstock Hill and Lyndhurst, my brother later going to school in Lyndhurst Road. So, without knowing, we must have played in the same places as our greatgrandfather and his sisters.'

Stella Greenall has kindly sent us this picture of her late husband, Philip, and our former Vice President, Stephen Wilson, taken at an annual meeting at Sarum Chase in Hampstead. Members who were there will recall that it was a splendid day and a very good AGM. It is nice to be reminded of that day and of two of our faithful members who are now, alas, no longer with us.



KEATS IN WESLEYAN PLACE

Polly and John Fowler have written to ask if the Society is able to do anything to remedy the sad condition of the short-term homes of Leigh Hunt and John Keats in Mortimer Terrace and Wesleyan Place - these diminutive roads are near the junction of Highgate Road and Gordon House Road.

There are not powers to require owners to refurbish houses which are not listed, unless the structures are actually dangerous. It is also unlikely that English Heritage could be persuaded to put blue plaques on the houses - we understand that an effort was made some years back regarding the house which Keats stayed in. A blue plaque might perhaps galvanise owners to take the premises more seriously even if commercial gain was the only motive.

Perhaps members may be able to suggest other ways?

FAMILY MATTERS

Janet Jones writes from 4 Lockswood, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey, asking if any member knows the whereabouts of 'Muddy Lane' which her mother recalls was in the Gospel Oak area. She also wants more information on William Harrison, a gilder, and one of his sons, Ernest Harrison, a piano maker, who lived in Hadley Street in the early 1900s.

Roberta Harlow of 9 Trevoise Gardens, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3FU is after information on John George Hall, architect, married to Mary Ann Handley and their son, George Byndloss Hall, born to them on 22 January 1858 at 5 St Thomas's Gardens, Haverstock Hill. She has a complex story to tell of a fostered child, too long to summarise in this Newsletter, but if any member has any information to give or else is prepared to dig up at local level she would be grateful and could exchange for any research wanted in Nottingham.

Francis Byrne is researching the life of the sculptor, John Henry Foley, R.A. Foley lived in Osnaburgh Street and at The Priory, Hampstead and he wonders if any information about his life at those addresses has turned up. He wonders, too, if a blue plaque might be sought for the Hampstead address, now a block of flats. His address is 69 Warwick Gardens, W14, 8PL.

A Bend in the Road

The sharp angle in Belsize Lane at Hunters Lodge is not shown on the Newton map of 1814, which instead has a modest bend a short distance to the west; but the lane was diverted soon after the map was made.

In 1810-11 George Todd, a Baltic merchant, built the villa that was finally known as Belsize Court (demolished 1937), facing east across the lane from just below the bend. He then pulled down the previous dwelling on the site, known in 1714 as The White House. Before long he seems to have found that his new front door was unpleasantly close to the lane, probably already becoming a 'resort of vagabonds' and a place of 'nuisances' (see Newsletter 120).

Todd's solution was to move the lane away from the house. He held the lease of fields on the far side and in 1816 his landlords, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, agreed to an eastward diversion of the stretch between Hunters Lodge and the future Belsize Village. The job was done by 1820 and it gave today's sharp bend at the Lodge; but the greatest displacement, sixty yards, was at the present junction with Ornan Road.

Much of the old lane, now well inside Todd's grounds, survived as an ornamental walk and this is clearly shown on large-scale OS maps of 1866, when the villa was confusingly known as Belsize House (and Hunters Lodge was Belsize Cottage). The start of the new lane, with recent walling and little vegetation, may be seen in the view at p61 in The Streets of Belsize.

Roy Allen

(The most flagrant local road alteration to suit a householder was the realignment of Hampstead Lane so that it did not go past the front door of Kenwood House. This 18th century diversion explains the large arc which is now a feature of the road in that area. Ed.)

SECRECY AT THE CORAM FOUNDATION

Cherry Lavell has sent a cutting from the Observer's Pendennis column on 18th August. It relates that Francoise Barret-Ducrocq has recently published 'Love in the Time of Victoria', which had used archives of the Thomas Coram Foundation. Since her researches those archives have been sealed. The Foundation has confirmed that what was once a 100-year embargo has now been extended to 150 years. 'We have to protect people who are over 100 years old' said a spokesman.

Absurd and excessive.

A WALK ABOUT HACKNEY

The Friends of Hackney Archives have come up with an excellent walk folder taking us on a circular tour from Hackney Central Station. The starting point explains the lavishness of the production - it is in full colour and well designed - because it was funded by Network SouthEast. All the proceeds go to the Friends of Hackney Archives. This arrangement might provide food for thought to such organisations as Friends of Keats House, Burgh House etc.

Members who like looking at buildings will find this walk packed with interest. Hackney has many architectural gems, including the restored Hackney Empire, and the not quite restored Sutton House. There is an informative text by David Mander and Zoe Croag, which is edited by Isobel Watson.

Copies may be obtained for £1.20 (£1.50 by post) from Friends of Hackney Archives, 29 Stepney Green, E1 3JX. Cheques payable to the Friends please.

AN EARTHQUAKE IN DALEHAM GARDENS

Mary Henderson, then a child living in Daleham Gardens, recorded in her diary on 7 June 1931 the following happening:

'About half past one I woke up and found the bed shaking as if a burglar was under it. I called to A to know if she was awake and her bed was wobbling and she said yes then it subsided. The others thought it was a lorry...' [In the afternoon we went to tea with our grandmother]. 'When we were coming home we saw posters of 'London Earthquake' and on listening to the news on the wireless we heard that it was an earthquake, the worst since 18-something.

The study clock stopped at 1.26.'

Do other members recall this event?