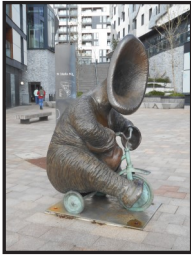




# Bromleag

*The journal of the Bromley Borough Local History Society*

Issue 61 March 2022



**High Society in Bromley**

**Elmers End —**

**a changing history**

**Problems with elephants**



**Farnborough — a country retreat  
and its eminent occupants**

# Bromleag

The journal of the Bromley Borough  
Local History Society



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**Bromleag** is published four times a year. The editor welcomes articles along with illustrations and photographs. These can be emailed or a paper copy.

Items remain the copyright of the authors and do not necessarily reflect Society views. Each contributor is responsible for the content of their article. Articles may be edited to meet the constraints of the journal. Articles are not always used immediately as we try to maintain a balance between research, reminiscences and news and features about different subjects and parts of the borough.

A full **INDEX** of articles in Bromleag 1974—2021 can be found at [www.bblhs.org.uk](http://www.bblhs.org.uk)

**Next journal deadline — 15 July 2022**

# BBLHS meetings

## Meetings April to July 2022

Meetings are held at 7.45 pm on the first Tuesday of the month (unless otherwise stated) from September to July in the Church Hall at

St George's Church in Bickley Park Road, BR1 2BE.

There is a small car park accessed via St George's Road and free street parking in the area. Buses 162 and 269 pass the door and Bickley station is a few minutes walk away. Access is on the flat and there are facilities for the disabled.

**Tuesday 3 May**

**The Richardsons of Ravensfell  
and Bromley House**

— **Vanessa Ashbee**

The story of two important Bromley High Street houses and the family who lived in them



*Ravensfell*

**Tuesday 7 June**

**The Cemeteries of South  
London**

— **Brian Parsons**

**Tuesday 5 July —**

**Hitting the Heights — Richard Watkins**

A History of the Crystal Palace area

## Do we have your latest email address?

During lockdown we updated our membership list and hopefully we now have everyone's latest email addresses. We contact members by email at least once a month, so if you have not been hearing from us (and wish to do so!), please let us know. A quick note to [admin@bblhs.org.uk](mailto:admin@bblhs.org.uk) will do the trick. **Max Batten**

# Who's Who on the BBLHS committee

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## Remembering and thanking

**It was with great sadness that we heard, in November, that our former chairman and then-current membership secretary Tony Allnutt had passed away.**

Many members of the Society were able to join his family for a celebration of his life at St Nicholas' Church, Chislehurst, shortly before Christmas. He is going to be greatly missed by friends and members of BBLHS. An appreciation appears on the following page.

Elaine Baker – who had only recently stepped down from a Society role as secretary – has volunteered to take on the job of membership secretary. Members who have sent their cheques and renewal forms to Tony may be assured that they are now with the new membership secretary.

If you have not yet renewed your membership it is not too late. Subscription rates are on the back page and cheques, along with your details, can be sent to Elaine Baker at 18 Shaftesbury Road Beckenham, BR3 3PW. Or, you can renew online at [bblhs.org.uk/application-form](http://bblhs.org.uk/application-form).

On a happier note, the December meeting was a good opportunity to acknowledge the contribution to the Society of our former chairman Tudor Davies and also Elaine Baker, who is our longest serving committee member.

Chairman David Hanrahan thanked both Elaine and Tudor *pictured right*, and presented them with wine and flowers respectively and garden vouchers.

Elaine joined the committee in the mid-1980s and has served as programme secretary, minutes secretary, secretary and — just when she was thinking of stepping down — has now become membership secretary. But her forte has always been for making sure that our meetings are welcoming to all members, especially newcomers. She is probably the best known committee member — always there at meetings to meet and greet and ensure that refreshments are available.

Tudor became chairman in 2015 and brought immense energy and enthusiasm to the role but, following a health scare, has had to cut back on his workload. As chairman he was keen that the Society should be involved in the wider borough scene — particularly with schools — and other like-minded organisations. His own researches into Keston and wider landscape history have resulted in several interesting talks and articles, which he assures us will continue. **CH**



# Tony Allnut, 1933 - 2021



**Tony Allnut was a founder committee member of Bromley Borough Local History Society and its longest serving chairman from 1999 until he stepped down in 2015.**

He recalled in *Bromleag* a few years ago how he came along to the inaugural meeting in 1974: “More than 100 people attended. A small steering committee had already produced a draft constitution, which was soon adopted.

“The chairman then called for nominations from the floor for membership of the committee. I had only gone to the meeting out of curiosity since, at that time, my

interests mainly concerned Eltham. Suddenly, someone pointed at me and shouted out a name that I knew but was not mine. By the time I had explained who I actually was, I had been elected.

“I had been teaching an adult education class on local history and shared the teaching with a friend. My proposer was a student in this class and he had got our names confused.” Just five years later Tony became vice-chair

When he took on the role of chairman in 1999 he wrote of his approach to the job: “As chairman I have always taken the view that small societies like ours should be allowed to evolve rather than be pushed in any particular direction. Targets are not for me. So far this, some would say lazy, policy has worked. Volunteers seem to spring up just when they are needed.” His approach worked and during his time we prospered when many similar societies were closing.

One of the things we came to expect with Tony at the helm was a witty introduction and conclusion to the meetings, always picking up on the subject of the talk and adding something relevant and amusing.

Tony’s working life was in a very different sphere to history. He was an engineer and scientist. He studied at University College, London, where he was offered a place at the age of 16 but had to wait two years before taking it up.

He went on to join de Havilland as an assistant engineer — a National Service reserved occupation — and from there moved to the British Scientific Instrument Research Association, SIRA, based in Chislehurst. He was to make his career there, meet his wife Ann there, and along the way discover the fascinating history of the house and its occupants — which brought him to the world of Chislehurst's local history. He wrote an outline of the history of SIRA and its occupants for Bromleag *The Teichmann family of Sitka*, March 2008. [available on the our website [bblhs.org.uk](http://bblhs.org.uk)]

Tony's original area interest in local history was Eltham — he was born in Sidcup — and Chislehurst but he was also knowledgeable on many aspects of the history of the borough, which were revealed when the Society hosted the Kent Federation conference in 2011 and Tony, then chairman, regaled a fascinated audience with Bromley's "famous five" — not the usual suspects such as Charles Darwin but colourful characters, a scientist, a tradesman, a prosperous merchant, an aristocrat and a tramp.

He was a great raconteur with a fund of anecdotes always told with enjoyment and compassion, but he was meticulous in ensuring that his stories were backed up by solid facts.

He also delved into the history of, and collected various items of, ephemera such as provincial bank notes and cheques, passports and token coins, which he brought along to several of our informal Members' Evenings.

A polymath, he also completed a maths PhD, a BA in law and became a fellow of the Gemmological Association. He became a Preliminary Examiner for the Gemmological Association in 1964 and was Chief Examiner from 2005 until he died.

A keen fell walker and runner in earlier years, he walked regularly around Scadbury, which was on his doorstep, until Parkinson's Disease, curtailed his activities. While in his garage sat his MG TC, a car he completely re-built over many years, with the help of his son.

He had combined the job of Chairman with that of Membership Secretary and he continued in that role, with his wife Ann's help. He always ensured that some of the long-standing members who had grown frail and sometimes moved into homes were kept in touch.

Tony is going to be missed for all the expertise and knowledge he brought to the Society and the sheer boyish joy he still brought to the subject. He could bring the bare bones of history to life. But above all we will miss Tony as a friend and colleague who cared as much about the people in the Society as the subject itself.

*Society meetings*

*The December meeting involved a little less talking and more socialising .  
There were two shorter talks, which allowed us to have a longer break to enjoy  
a coffee and mince pies and to include the presentation to Tudor and Elaine.*

## Tracing Bromley's lost footpaths

**Our first speaker, Max Batten, took us on a stroll down some of Bromley's lost footpaths. He told us that, with 90,000 miles of public pathways in England, it was inevitable that over time changes would be required.**

Laws to control such actions — usually by landowners and developers keen to close long-established routes now an inconvenience to their plans— were first introduced in 1835. He queried, however, just how effective this could have been, bearing in mind that the legislators, justices and council members were most likely landowners themselves and sympathetic to any proposals.

This was confirmed to an extent by some of the endorsements on the documents he had found which included Gerard Norman (of Oakley House) and former Bromley mayor, Sir Thomas Dewey. There was one safeguard as proposals had to be presented to the county court with descriptions and maps and these formed the basis of his talk.

The first footpath he explored, between South View and Murray Avenue, Bromley, had been removed in 1939 as the Palace Farm estate expanded. But even today trees mark the line of the old path so that, once you know it was there, it is quite obvious.

He then moved on to a path heading north-east from Sundridge Park Mansion Lodge, in Plaistow Lane, towards what is now Sundridge Park Tennis Club. This was closed in 1890 as Garden and Edward Roads were developed. Although it still appeared on a map 20 years later, there is no trace of it today.

The third path Max selected was the upper end of Love Lane, passing from the east side of the Bromley North railway line to Crescent Road and Plaistow Green. Unlike the previous two, the main effect of the changes in 1905 was the replacement of the direct route by a new footbridge (replaced in 2014) and a series of diagonal paths. This allowed house building in Babbacombe and Holligrave Roads to be extended while maintaining a route that is still open today.

Max also took the opportunity to look in more detail at the maps he was using, pointing out some of the long-disappeared buildings and changes to road names in the area. In particular, following the demolition of "Springhill", at the junction of Plaistow Lane and College Road, he drew attention to the decision to name the new link that completed the roundabout Paxton Way, instead of the obvious name, which has now disappeared into history.

# An intriguing journey of discovery

Patrick Hellicar's talk was inspired by an article headlined "A Moving Day", published by the tiny *Orpington Journal* newspaper in January 1928. The witty and amusing piece told of the trials and tribulations suffered by its author, identified only by the initials FHL, in moving home from Leytonstone (then in Essex) to Orpington.

Having hired a man with a van that proved smaller than really needed and a great deal less than reliable, the writer of the article described in graphic detail how he and the driver loaded all his worldly goods on to the lorry in a towering, tottering pyramid and progressed with many mishaps through east London and over the Thames, eventually reaching Orpington via Eltham and Chislehurst.

Patrick read out the whole article, highlighting the principal points of the journey with pictures from the 1920s of the places mentioned and several cartoons illustrating incidents that occurred along the way. He followed this with old photos of Orpington from the 1920s to set the scene that FHL and his wife would have found when they arrived at their new home.

Although the *Orpington Journal* article offered very few clues, Patrick showed how patient "detective work" using old maps, a diligent trawl through local directories and newspapers, together with a variety of online resources including censuses, electoral rolls and other records, had unlocked the story behind the story.



The probable author turned out to be Frank Henry Lucie – the only person with the initials FHL listed in Orpington directories of the time. Originally from

Stratford, east London (then Essex), he and his wife Ethel came to Orpington in 1927 – living just off Towncourt Lane (now regarded as part of Petts Wood) after serving in the Merchant Navy as a wireless operator and engineer. He set up a wireless shop called Orpington Radio at Orpington Station and advertised his business exclusively in the *Orpington Journal* for many years

Later, the Lucies lived in Glentrammon Road at Green Street Green. Patrick's research revealed the course of the couple's lives right up to their deaths – Ethel in 1947 and Frank in 1971 – and he even found a photograph of Frank as a young man!

**The "A Moving Day" article can be read in full in the March 2017 issue of *Bromleag* at [bblhs.org.uk/bromleag-magazines](http://bblhs.org.uk/bromleag-magazines)**

*Society meeting*

# Darwin's garden — a living laboratory

*We started the year's talks with a step into spring and into the mind of Charles Darwin when **Pam Temple**, a volunteer in the garden at Darwin's home Down House, took us on a walk around the garden*



**Darwin's garden at Down House in Downe village is a unique site. It is not just a lovely example of a Victorian family garden, complete with an extensive vegetable plot and stunning flower meadows, but is a site of huge importance in the history of science. People come from all over the world to see the house and garden.**

It was here where, over several decades, Darwin made observations and conducted experiments that underpinned his theory of evolution by natural selection. In the greenhouse and experiment bed Darwin explored plant fertilisation, growth habits, and, in the case of insectivorous plants, their eating habits! He studied bees and came to understand their behaviour, he studied earthworms and how they contributed to the shaping of the landscape. On the sandwalk — his “thinking path” through the quiet woodland — he synthesised his thoughts and developed his theory of how life evolved.

Darwin was a family man and involved his children, their governesses and his long-suffering butler Parslow in the study of the plants, insects and other creatures in the natural environment around Down House. He was a great observer and thinker and had formulated his theory by 1844, just two years after he and his wife Emma came to Downe.

He did not publish until 1859, and there has been much speculation as to why it

took him so long. He certainly wanted time to have the detail clearly documented, and he also wanted to establish his credentials in the scientific world. Evolution was a controversial subject, giving rise to heated debate and attacks on reputations, and Darwin hated conflict and confrontation. Emma's Christian beliefs may also have had something to do with his delay. It was receiving an essay from Alfred Russel Wallace, sketching out the same ideas, that prompted joint publication of the theory in 1858, followed by publication in 1859 of Darwin's "big species book" – *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

The garden has been renovated by English Heritage using information from Darwin's letters and documents to create an authentic experience. Planting is based on the Darwins' plans, and the vegetable varieties grown were all available in their time. The current management of the whole 36-acre estate seeks to support plants and wildlife in an ecological balance —even though the deer make this quite a challenge at times.

There is a lot more to see at Down House. Covid permitting, Pam gives tours of the garden on most Sundays in the summer.

For more information go to <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/home-of-charles-darwin-down-house/>

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## Tragedy that should have a memorial

**My December *Bromleag* has just arrived and I write to thank you for the Handcross article. Brilliantly presented, and a tragic tale, about which I had no prior knowledge.**

We have not met but I was born and bred in Bromley. Max Batten and I attended the same school —Bromley Grammar as was — though we were in different years and not acquainted then.

My father was what used to be called a "commercial traveller", a term I've not heard used for a long while. He sold china and glassware principally, and as a small boy in the late 1950s/early 60s I would often travel with him in his Ford Popular from Bromley to the Brighton area, where he had many customers in the hardware stores with proprietors in brown coats.

Your story has particular resonance because we would always visit a cafe in Handcross. I so clearly remember my father's reason, that a cup of tea cost only tuppence there.

How sad that there is no public memorial to this tragedy. **Geoffrey Holland**

## Shortlands emergency rest centre

Reading the latest *Bromleag*, I was interested to see the Red Cross Box. During my volunteer sessions at the Local Studies Library, one of the items I catalogued was as follows:

*An Agreement between Beckenham Urban Council and the contractor, dated 31 Aug 1950, and supporting documents for "Alteration and conversion" of 97 Bromley Road to an Emergency Rest Centre. The contract price was £1,085.*

I hope to be able to tie this up with council minutes to find out why this facility was needed near Shortlands Station, opposite Bishop Challoner School. I do know that the council had purchased several houses by compulsory purchase there in the late 1940s. One was owned by Mr and Mrs Bateman of Shortlands House Hotel.

I'll be interested to hear other members' comments. **Linda Baldwin**  
[linda.baldwin3@ntlworld.com](mailto:linda.baldwin3@ntlworld.com)

## A salubrious and tranquil address?

**Quite a number of people write to the website asking if we can help with Family History queries. We direct them to useful sources, usually on our website or at the Local Studies library, and occasionally members can help with their own knowledge.**

These queries sometimes throw up odd or amusing corners of our borough's history. One such came from Ann Mallory, whose ancestor lived in a most unusually-named property.

She wrote: "I have been transcribing the will of John Churcher, Boot and Shoe Maker of Market Place Bromley, who died in 1855. The will says he lately lived at 6 Salubrious Range. I haven't been able to locate this. Can you please throw any light on to this wonderful-sounding address?"

Indeed, it is a most interesting-sounding address.

However, some research in Horsburgh's book on Bromley showed the name "Salubrious" might have been rather fanciful: "The only houses along the western side of London Road were two small houses for persons employed on Colonel Long's estate [Bromley Hill House, now the Bromley Court Hotel], a row of sunken cottages known as Tranquil Place, built in the old parish gravel pit, where flints were formerly obtained for road-making, building, and the fashioning of flint locks for guns. There were also the Laurel Inn, the row of house adjoining it called Salubrious Range". The properties were just north of where the Bromley Workhouse stood until 1845.

On a far-from-tranquil or salubrious spot on today's A21, maybe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century these houses were in a more tranquil spot, but it does not sound like it.

# The wrong type of Bombers

**One of the old photos in the Mary Moore collection — which was given to the Society during lockdown and is now on our website — was the “appropriately named” Bombers Farm on the edge of Biggin Hill airport.**

Mary had taken photographs, pictured on Page14, of buildings that, in 1965, she thought might be in danger of demolition. She was right about many of the buildings, but not Bombers Farm. It is still there — and it turns out that its name has nothing to do with the airport or flying.

Roy Callow has owned the farm — now a private residence — since 1980. He bought Bombers from the estate of Hector Wayman who had lived there since 1948.



Roy told Max Batten: “The Waymans had run a sort of ‘hobby’ farm on 47 acres at Bombers with a cow, pigs, sheep etc. Mrs Wayman was an expert gardener and, so we were told, was a good friend of Constance Spry [the legendary floral designer of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century].”

“Hector Wayman was a dentist in Bexleyheath and agent for the then MP for Bexley, Edward Heath, who apparently used to visit Bombers to play the grand piano.

“Mrs Wayman died circa 1975 and as he grew older Hector became less able to maintain the property, which deteriorated rapidly. At the time of our purchase the property was for all practical purposes uninhabitable.

“During our ownership we have restored the property and the outbuildings, stable yard etc as well as Shellem's Cottage which was a farm manager's cottage, occupied in 1980 by a couple who had cared for Hector in his final years.

“Original deeds going back to the 1660s can be found in the County Records Office in Maidstone ( we have copies). In those days it was known as Bumbast, subsequently Bumbar, Bomboze and finally Bombers.

One of the most prominent graves in Cudham churchyard is that of Richard and Elizabeth of Bomber (Surname Glover, date 1722)”.

# The final days of Farnborough Hospital

A series of photographs of Farnborough Hospital taken on New Year's Eve 1999 have been given to BBLHS by a nurse who worked there from 1970 until 1994.



*In the centre of the site some late Victorian buildings remained. Once a house, the building on the left was offices and the modern addition to the right was the staff canteen*



*Medway: the bleak early- 20th century block that housed the psychiatric unit was still standing in 2000*

Farnborough Hospital was originally the Bromley Union Workhouse, opened in 1844. Although by 1928 it was in effect a hospital rather than a workhouse, it was not until 1936 that it became formally titled "Farnborough County Hospital".

Over the decades, more and more buildings were added to the site. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century it was a hotch-potch of buildings. Some of the original late-Victorian properties, the major additions of 1910, huddled accommodation from the Second World War, a 1950s block which had replaced the earliest of the workhouse buildings, plus various extensions to buildings, Portakabin-type buildings and, in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, some new build.

By 1999 some buildings had already been demolished, including the huddled accommodation

which had been the medical wards. These were at the rear of the site backing on to Starts Hill Road. Areas at the back of the site were fenced off ready for the groundwork on the construction of the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) to begin.

A couple of the pictures are included here but the complete set is now on our website **[bblhs.org.uk/picture collections](http://bblhs.org.uk/picture_collections)**.

If anyone can add information to the website captions, or they need amending, please let me know.

A series of articles on the early years of the hospital can be found in the 2002/3 editions of *Bromleag*, also on our website. **Christine Hellicar**

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## Mission hall that has stood the test of time

**Thank you for a very interesting meeting . It was my first. My guests and I thoroughly enjoyed it.**

Since lockdown, I have been doing local history research and am particularly interested in the tin tabernacle on Bridge Road, St Mary Cray, now called Coronation Hall. It was built in 1892 and, apart from some local articles about the immediate area



that's all I really know. Maps record it as a Mission Room. There is also a Mission Room on older maps located on the corner of Poverest Road and Sevenoaks Way. If any member is able to help me with information or at the very least point towards a good source, I would be grateful.

**Sean Chapman**

**[seanchapman39@outlook.com](mailto:seanchapman39@outlook.com)**

*Not many of these old tin tabernacles survive. It would be interesting to know if any others around the borough have found a new lease of life or are still being used as places of worship.* **Editor**

# Tubbendence and some of its residents

Nick Reynolds

Leave Orpington railway station on the Orpington side, walk down Station Road to Crofton Road and there is the “Maxwell Arms” on the corner of Tubbenden Lane.

The Pub, *pictured right in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century*, is still recognisable today but the building beyond the pub no longer exists. Instead, this is now the small pub car park.

Tubbenden Lane leads to Farnborough Village about a mile distant. In Tubbenden Lane, immediately ahead of you is a bridge carrying the railway across the Lane. But even before you get to the bridge, on the left, you are by the grounds once belonging to a house called “Tubbendence”.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1871, *below*, shows both the “Maxwell Arms” and Tubbendence, either side of the newly-built railway bridge. The railway opened in 1868 as part of a new and more direct line from Lewisham to Tonbridge. There is some uncertainty about when the “Maxwell Arms” was built. Some sources state 1887, but the map shows it alongside the new railway and the census of 1871 lists a publican and other residents.

Confusingly, while “Tubbendence” was the correct spelling, on Ordnance Survey

maps it was called “Tubbenden” and other sources have it different again — “Tubbendens” and “Tubbendean”, for example.

It was a large house that stood in 170 acres of land and was just within the parish of Farnborough, the boundary of which today runs along Tubbenden Lane as far as the railway embankment.

However, the house



pre-dated the railway by at least two centuries and there was an earlier house on the same site, so the house probably gave its name to the road, rather than the reverse.

A small part of its land was taken when the railway was built, and the high embankment must have presented a



somewhat unwelcome intrusion into the easterly views from the house. The house was present on Ordnance Survey maps of 1948, but gone by 1960.

The estate may have been sold in two phases, as the houses at the back of the former lands, now the location for Maxwell Gardens, are older than those at the front alongside Tubbenden Lane where now lies Shelley Close. Both of these names reflect former owners of the house.

This account appears in *Village London*<sup>1</sup>.

“Tubbendens is another ancient seat in this district, the demesnes of which lie partly in this parish and partly in that of Orpington. In the twenty-first year of Edward I [13<sup>th</sup> century] it was possessed by owners of the same name, as it appears that Gilbert Saundre of Orpington, demised several parcels of land to John de Tubbendens, of Ferneborough, and his sons.

“According to Hasted: ‘In 1660 W Gee conveyed it to Thomas Brome, serjeant-at-law. He resided at Tubbendens and died in 1673, and was buried in Farnborough Church. He was succeeded by his son, William Brome, barrister-at-law, whose son, Colonel John Brome succeeded him. Both were buried in Farnborough Church.’

“Colonel John Brome married Elizabeth, only child of the Rev George Berkeley, Prebendary of Westminster, second son of George, first Earl of Berkeley. Their daughter Maria married a Mr John Hammond, of Chatham, who in right of his wife, became the owner of Tubbendens, of which he died possessed in 1774, leaving two daughters, one of whom, Anna Maria, married James Primrose Maxwell, whose grandson, Colonel George Shirley Maxwell, now owns the estate.

It will thus be seen that Tubbendens has passed from one generation to another, either in male or female descent, for upwards of 200 years. From an old

## Feature

book, entitled 'Stemmata Chicheleyana' it appears that through the Bromes and Berkeleys the present owner of Tubbendens is descended from the father of Archbishop Chicheley, who died in the year 1400.

The present house dates from the seventeenth century, but has of late years been partially rebuilt and modernised. The estate, comprising about 170 acres, has this much of interest attached to it: that it has remained the same in extent for centuries past, except when a small portion was taken by the South Eastern Railway to construct the chalk embankment on which stands the Orpington Station. At the entrance gate of Tubbendens is a milestone over a century old, marking fifteen miles from London Bridge."



The milestone, *pictured above*, and referred to in the previous account, can be seen just by the main drive, with the legend "London Bridge 15 (miles)". This was not actually on the main route of the turnpike road, but instead the branch leading to Orpington. It is dated 1779.

## Monuments in St Giles's church, Farnborough

**A number of the former owners or residents of "Tubbendence" have memorials in St. Giles's church, and many are buried either in the church itself, or in the graveyard.**

### George Dalton

Farnborough historian Fred Whyler recorded<sup>2</sup>: "George Dalton, a benefactor, was buried on 11 January 1566. In his will he left ten shillings to be paid for a sermon to be preached at Farnborough parish church, annually, and 3s-4d to be given to the poor of the parish for ever. The register does not say how he died, but there is a legend that he used to arrive at his house at 'Tubbendence' drunk. One night his wife refused to admit him. He wandered off, fell into a lake and was drowned.

"In my opinion, this sensational event in the village would have meant some comment in the register if true."

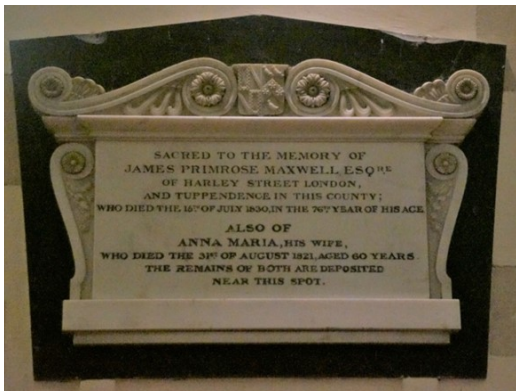
A painted board commemorates the Benefaction of George Dalton to the parish in 1566. To this day, the "Rush Sermon" is still preached on the appropriate day, the floor of the nave being strewn with cut flags (wild iris), leaves and other herbs.<sup>3</sup>

## Thomas Brome

Thomas Brome was made a serjeant-at-law in the year 1660 — his arms are in one of the windows of Gray's-Inn Hall. He died in 1673 and is commemorated by a tablet which was sculptured by Jasper Latham, one of Sir Christopher Wren's principal masons working on St Paul's Cathedral.

## The Maxwells

A plaque commemorates James Primrose Maxwell, and his wife Anna Maria. She died in 1832, aged 60, and her husband seven years later aged 76. James was recorded as 'Gentleman', and his address as Harley Street, London. The wording on the plaque implies that the



remains of both were deposited in the church, presumably under the floor.

It would seem from the historical account earlier that the house passed to James Primrose Maxwell through marriage. Not much is known about James Primrose Maxwell, although as his main address is given as Harley Street in London it can possibly be assumed that he had a medical background.

James and Anna Maria had three children, Eliza Maxwell 1785 - 1853; Captain George Berkeley Maxwell, 1791 - 1854, and Emily, whose details are not recorded, so may have died in childhood.

George had a distinguished naval career, but did not retain a local connection. However Eliza Maxwell married Thomas Young and they in turn became the owners of "Tubpendence."

## Thomas Young

Thomas Young had a very distinguished life. He made notable contributions to the fields of vision, light, solid mechanics, energy, physiology, language, musical harmony, and Egyptology. The St Giles plaque is to Thomas and Eliza Young.

There are many biographical accounts of his life and achievements online. His Wikipedia entry reveals that while he was praised by many, including Sir John Herschel and Albert Einstein, he sometimes had difficulty in communicating his knowledge.

It was said by one of his contemporaries that his words were not those in familiar use, and the arrangement of his ideas seldom the same as those he conversed with.

## Feature

“He was therefore worse calculated than any man I ever knew for the communication of knowledge.”

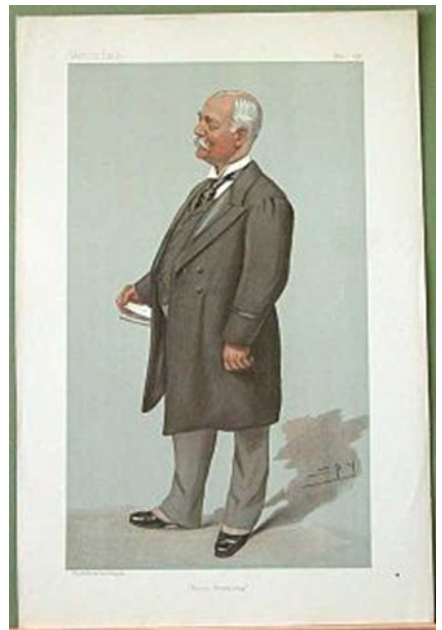
His life was recorded in an earlier *Bromleage*, “He was described as a man eminent in almost every department of human learning and regarded as the most learned man of his generation. He was born at Milverton, Somerset, on 13 June 1773; the eldest son of Thomas Young. On 14 June 1804, when he was 31 years of age, Thomas Young married Eliza, who was then 19 and the second daughter of James Penrose Maxwell, who had a residence at ‘Tubbendens’, near Farnborough. This was a branch of the family of Sir William Maxwell of Calderwood Castle in Lanarkshire.

“Thomas Young has a memorial in Westminster Abbey, where he is described as being endowed with the faculty of intuitive perception, and bringing an equal mastery to the most abstruse investigations of letters and science. His theory of the wave motion of light influenced the current thought of mathematical physics during the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He helped in the preparation of early editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and the then editor said ‘the work was largely indebted in almost every respect which it embraced, to his profound and accurate knowledge, rare erudition and other various attainments’.

“Young was a Fellow and Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society and a member of the National Institute of France. He set his ingenious mind to solve the riddle of the Rosetta Stone. He was convinced that the three sets of hieroglyphics on the stone contained the same message, and after four years study he determined nearly one hundred of the characters and thus helped his French friend Champollion to determine twice as many more, so solving the great riddle of the stone and the obscurity which for centuries had veiled the writings of the ancient Egyptians.

“Thomas Young’s marriage was a particularly happy one and he attached himself to his wife’s family with great affection. His wife had three sisters, Maria Emily and Caroline, and the Maxwell family were described as being accomplished and agreeable. Young and his wife spent much of their time with the family at ‘Tubbendens’.

“He died at his home at Park Square, London, on 10 May 1829 about a month before his 56<sup>th</sup> birthday. He left no issue. His wife lived a further 30 years and died in 1859.”<sup>4</sup>



## Sir Francis Henry Evans

Francis was born on 29 August 1840. He adopted the engineering profession and obtained his practical training with Sir James Brunlees, under whom he was employed on railway construction at home and in South America. After spending some time in the United States, he returned home and decided to relinquish the pursuit of engineering and devote his attention to banking. His firm was known as Melville, Evans and Company, and its operations were largely between this country and America.

In 1872 he married Marie de Grasse, daughter of the late Hon. Samuel Stevens, of Albany, USA, and widow of Mr Irving Van Wart. They had three sons and two daughters.

In 1880 he took a prominent place in shipping circles as deputy-chairman of the Union Steamship Company, under Mr Alfred Giles, Past-President of The Institution, whom he subsequently succeeded as chairman, becoming also managing director of the company. When in 1900 the Union Steamship Company was amalgamated with the Castle Line, it was Sir Francis Evans who carried through the difficult and important financial details of the transaction on behalf of the Union Company, Sir Donald Currie representing the Castle Line.

On its completion, Sir Francis Evans joined the firm of Donald Currie and Company, the managers of the Union-Castle Line, and remained a member of it until his death. He was also a director of the International Sleeping Car Company, the Thames and Mersey Marine Insurance Company, and chairman of the Ely & Palace Hotel in Paris.

For services rendered to the government of Newfoundland in connection with the fishery dispute with France, and for other colonial services, he was made a KCMG in 1893. In 1902 he was created a baronet. In politics he was a Liberal, and was elected four times to represent the constituency of Southampton in Parliament. In 1900 he was returned at a by-election for Maidstone, which he continued to represent until the general election of 1906.

He died of angina pectoris, aged 66 on 22 January 1906 at his London residence, 40 Grosvenor Place. However, as his main residence was "Tubbendence", he is buried in the churchyard at St Giles's, Farnborough, along with his wife Marie, who passed away in 1920.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup> Chapter X111 of 'Village London' Vol 2, published by The Alderman Press March 1984 but first published 1883-4 by Cassell & Co Ltd., under the title 'Greater London'

<sup>2</sup> Fred Whyler, part of 'Farnborough Parish Registers 1538 – 1652', (BBLHS 1997)

<sup>3</sup> St Giles's church website, taken from the original St Giles Guidebook:

<sup>4</sup> *Bromleag* January. 1976. Anonymous but possibly by Fred Whyler, BBLHS founder member.

# Living Through the Great War at Home

## How the People of Bromley Faced the Challenges of War

**There have been many books addressing all aspects the First World War, especially in the years of its centenary.**

But there are always new perspectives to be found and **Pam Preedy** [a BBLHS member] has focused on the story of Bromley in those years and undertaken the demanding research required to write an in-depth appraisal of our borough's response to the Great War.

At 400 pages, organised in 15 chapters, this is a truly formidable task and quite an achievement.

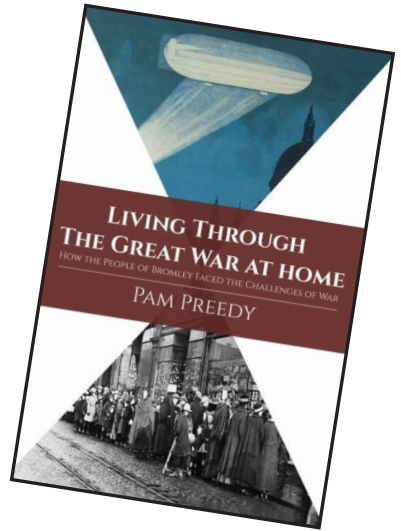
Having stated her aim clearly in the introduction, she has identified the main local newspaper of the day *The Bromley and District Times* as the basis for her text. As she explains, there are dangers inherent when writing any history so much dependent on one source. Newspapers are known to reflect the views of their owners and editors and to some degree their readers who, in Bromley, were described as predominantly middle class.

In addition, reporters are not always accurate. As the author's mother pointed out: *"If you had attended an event or knew something of what was reported you almost always found the reporter had made mistakes."*

Reporting in wartime creates yet more obstacles to accuracy. Governments everywhere censor information, and demand reports reflecting their military and political policies. The Defence of the Realm Act [DORA] was the British government's means of achieving this.

To overcome this problem, Pam has made copious use of newspaper reports and articles selecting as wide a range as possible to reflect differing views quoting speeches and letters verbatim. The breadth of material employed and the number and length of quotations draws heavily on articles printed in the local newspaper. In an effort to make sense of this kaleidoscope of information, Pam has organised the contents in 15 distinct chapters, most with sub sections, as a way of presenting the complex story.

Organising the writing in this way frequently creates problems in focusing material



specific to the chapter heading, with the result the story is sometimes retold.

The theme of the book is maintained by referencing the national experience, which places the local details in a wider context, but the number and length of references will encourage browsing rather than concentrated reading.

Every chapter brings to life the events and experiences of the people of Bromley at home and abroad while not forgetting the soldiers on the Western Front and elsewhere in the world. As would be expected, many surprising items and insights appear throughout the book.

The first chapter, covering the months prior to August 1914, describes Edwardian Bromley, with the newspaper reports dominated by sport, the magistrates' court and the excitement engendered by the preparations for war.

In the second chapter the young men from the present -day borough who volunteered in their thousands are described, while chapter three examines the process and progress of raising an army from scratch. Fascinating snippets appear, such as the raw recruits being shipped to India in order to release experienced Indian troops for deployment to France and the fact that many recruits increased weight and height on being given army rations.

The fourth chapter considers the contrasting reactions of those at home, describing the inevitable scare stories of spies and widespread fear of foreigners, especially those with connections to Germany. Fear from another source is considered in chapter five when the threat of Zeppelins and naval bombardment is reported from Bromley and other parts of the country.

The next two chapters examine the impact caused by the presence of soldiers billeted in the borough in large numbers and finding themselves in a strange town under military regulations. Again the contradictory reaction among the residents is clearly illustrated, while at the same time outstanding efforts were made to support them in their feelings of dislocation.

Not until chapter eight do we read of the Belgian refugees and a long account of their journey and reception in Bromley. The following two chapters address the issues surrounding the care of the wounded and the role of women in the social and economic upheaval. Chapter 11, with five subsections outlines the food shortages and the impact of rationing while chapter 12 relates the real threat of starvation facing the country by 1917. In describing the problems surrounding the costs of the War and how to finance it in chapter 13, the author draws heavily on the national story.

The final chapters "Aftermath" and "Epilogue" aim to bring the whole story to a conclusion with discussion on the nature of memorials to the dead. Even in

## *Book reviews*

discussing this topic, agreement was not entirely united.

Insights into so many aspects of the war are found throughout the book. One of the most telling elements is the failure on the part of almost everyone to appreciate the immensity of the task they faced. The book has many examples of our dependence on volunteers, many of whom brought patriotic enthusiasm but often little knowledge or skills for the task confronting them.

Class division and the paternalistic nature of our society had aroused bitterness before the war and continued to rumble on because of the dire state in which many people found themselves.

Placing of the many visual images at the end of each chapter sometimes makes it difficult to relate them to the text and the number of chapters and subsections can lead to some confusion. Despite this the book contains so much of interest to the local reader and prompts us to appreciate the sacrifice of Bromley residents of those years. **Tudor Davies**

*Living Through the Great War at Home* is published by Austin Macauley and is available through Pam's website [bromleyhistoricaltimes.co.uk](http://bromleyhistoricaltimes.co.uk) and online bookshops £13.99

## A village past reflected in the present

**Crockenhill is a small village lying just over the Kent border from Orpington. It is home to BBLHS member Susan Pittman and she has written about the history of the village in several books chronicling the families who have lived and farmed in the area for generations.**

Crockenhill means "the hill where stands a pottery kiln" and this little industry supported a small community from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Then in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the hamlet begins to expand enough to sustain its own churches, first Baptist and then Church of England.

It was the century in which Crockenhill came into its own with the market garden boom and its history is often tied up with that of its neighbours Orpington and St Mary Cray, through the farming dynasties who worked the land across the valleys. The hamlet was also part of the vast tract of land from Orpington to Eynsford owned, from the dissolution of the monasteries by the Hart-Dyke family, who still own and reside in Lullingstone Castle.

In her new publication *Crockenhill – Past and Present*, Susan takes a look at the village as a whole and illustrates its changes through "then and now" pictures. This is a tried and tested formula for local histories but very few in this format have the

depth of knowledge that Susan brings to her captions.

A good example is along Eynsford Road, where we see Past: the Lee's family home, Victorian Bower Villa replaced by Present: 1970s houses. But the caption directs us to the roof of another building at the edge of the first picture. This was the roof of a rescued Wealden House which the Lees have subsequently incorporated into a new house elsewhere in the village.

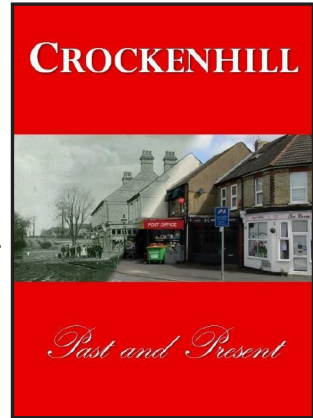
Always we learn the "why" of change. A pond is drained for new housing, old houses already condemned when they burn down, an open space where houses had to be demolished because of underground cavities and — my favourite — why one side West View is numbered 1-8 and the other 89-104.

[You will have to read the book to find out why!] She even corrects some captions that the original photographers wrote across the bottom of their photographs before turning them into postcards.

In tightly-written prose Susan gives us a detailed history as we "walk" the village streets. This book whets the appetite for taking a look at this village which, because it is a little off the beaten track, is still essentially rural and has retained a lot of its individuality despite having its fair share of 20<sup>th</sup> century change and expansion.

**Christine Hellicar**

Available from: Susan Pittman — 27 Old Chapel Road, Crockenhill BR8 8LL — 01322 669923. £10 plus p&p £2 Paperback, 240x170mm, 88 pages



## Medieval Canterbury weekend

Canterbury Christ Church University Centre for Kent history and heritage are holding their seventh history weekend from 29 April - 1 May. They are holding over 20 events—some live and others online— along with guided tours to showcase recent research on the Middle Ages.

Tickets for each event cost between £7 and £10 and the subjects covered are social history, war and politics, Kings and Queens, the Church and books and manuscripts.

For more information: [canterbury.ac.uk/medieval-canterbury](https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/medieval-canterbury)

## When the circus came to town

The arrival of the circus in town was a major event in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and for many years it was Lord George Sanger who brought the circus to Bromley.

“Lord” George Sanger (1825 - 1911) was born to a showman father and grew up working in travelling peep shows. With his brother John he successfully ran shows and circuses throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Late that century they had two circus venues in London at the Royal Agricultural Hall at Islington and Astley’s New Royal Amphitheatre. Sanger retired in 1905 and was murdered by a disgruntled employee in 1911.

His circus travelling road train was said to be two miles long and reputedly had around 10 wagons to carry the tent and seating, a lamp wagon, eight or ten living carriages, a foal wagon, 10 wild animal wagons, a harness wagon, a portable blacksmith’s forge, property wagons, wardrobe and dressing wagons, a band carriage and at least six great tableau parade cars.

The picture below shows the camels processing through Market Square in September 1898. The *Bromley Chronicle* declared it was “... dear to the hearts of the younger generation”. This greatest and grandest exhibition included lady clowns, camels and elephants. The latter entertained the public by playing football against the clowns. Entrance cost between sixpence and three shillings.



# Elephant tales from Bromley and Beckenham



In 2019 – not really historical, I know – an elephant on a tricycle with what appeared to be a huge ear rather than a head appeared at the Westmoreland Road entrance to the new St Mark’s Square. It has baffled shoppers ever since.

Six years earlier, for a short while, a parade of colourful elephant statues appeared in The Glades.

All very tame compared with 120 years ago when real elephants made a much greater impact in the borough — in one case at Beckenham, quite literally.

But before we go there, hurt pride was the main casualty of a Bromley elephant incident in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Lord George Sanger’s circus arrived for its annual visit.

When travelling showmen visited towns they had their post sent *Poste Restante* to the local post office. Some time around the turn of the century, when Lord George Sanger’s Circus arrived in Bromley, a young man called Peter Smith — who later became the Postmaster in West Wickham — had the job of handing out the mail.

Frederick Marcus Arman recalled in a very early edition of *Bromleag*: “Lord George sent his courier to collect the letters from the Post Office and Peter was offered six free tickets for the show if he could raise a Post Office team to ride the elephant round the sawdust ring.

“The matter was soon arranged and six young Post Office men took their reserved seats in the Big Top and awaited the ringmaster’s call. It came soon enough; the Elephant was bigger than they expected and the Ringmaster introduced the intrepid Post Office riders. Up they got and took their seats one behind the other. As the last man took his seat by the animal’s tail Jumbo reared up on his hind legs and the Post Office team slipped to the ground in an untidy pile, to the great delight of the audience.

“Retribution followed. On the next day Peter Smith and his colleagues were arraigned before the frock-coated Postmaster and disciplined for ‘letting down the

## *Feature*

dignity of the Public Service'!"

But not all elephant tales ended with merely a loss of dignity. In Crystal Palace museum is the rib of an elephant called Charlie who was shot dead at Crystal Palace in February 1900 after killing circus worker Emmanuel Cook Baker, who had mistreated him.

At the inquest witnesses said they had seen Baker pick up a lance used in the Sudan and said he was going to "pay Charlie for striking him." He lunged at Charlie who, becoming infuriated, burst away from his chain, seized Baker with his trunk, threw him to the ground then trampled on him.

Circus owner Lord George Sanger told the inquest he had discharged the man but had re-employed him as a labourer 16 months later. A keeper who wrote from his hospital bed said Baker had "got no more than he deserved" – to cries of 'Hear, Hear!' from the jury.

Charlie was stuffed. Four skilled butchers spent six hours skinning his carcass. He was given to the Crystal Palace Company and displayed in the Palace's natural history section where he perished in the fire of 1936.

On the night of Baker's death another elephant called Archie also broke free of his chains. While Charlie stayed put, actually in the south nave of Crystal Palace, Archie started out on a journey of destruction across Sydenham, then moved into Beckenham along Copers Cope Road where, in the early hours of the morning, he rested while watched over by a circus worker. Naturally, a crowd gathered and a councillor offered to shoot him

The *Beckenham Journal* of 24 February 1900 reported: "He did not appear vicious and would probably have done less damage had he not been hunted. Many continued to take part in the hunt until two or three in the morning."

Archie moved on to breakfast at a Haystack at Marshall's farm in Hayes and was eventually brought back to Crystal Palace after the keepers brought four elephants to Hayes to help lure him out of the Barnett Wood. **Christine Hellicar**

Jerry Green's detailed account of Archie's night out and trail of destruction starting inside the Crystal Palace, through the gardens of private residences and the grounds of the Horniman Museum, is well worth reading

<https://newsfromcrystalpalace.wordpress.com/2013/06/03/the-day-archie-the-elephant-packed-his-trunk-and-said-goodbye-to-the-circus-but-another-elephant-named-charlie-met-a-tragic-end/>

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/nfca/collections/sangercircus>

# The Making of an Urban Landscape, South Hill Park, Bromley

*This is the second article by **Tudor Davies** on the development of South Hill Park, the area between Bromley South and Pickhurst Lane, and adjoining developments. In December he charted how the land ownership changed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, setting the stage for urban development.*

**W**hat determines the nature of an urban landscape and why do they differ so dramatically? Professional landscape historians number six major factors that govern the features of our towns. They are well understood by anyone who has bought a property: physical features, drainage pattern, owners' decisions, access, past and current use.

The building of South Hill Park and its main road artery, Westmoreland Road, between 1867 and 1921 illustrates all the features. The first and fundamental factor is the natural topography, the hills, valleys and drainage pattern of the area, clearly understood by house agents of Biggin Hill who make a point of identifying the area by using the descriptors "Biggin Hill top" as opposed to "the Valley".

Similarly, 19<sup>th</sup> century agents often praised the gravel soils of Bromley and its height above the London basin, two features then considered essential for a healthy location. Immediately entering Westmoreland Road from the bottom of Masons Hill, the land slopes gently down to the River Ravensbourne with its wet meadows long known to local residents as liable to flooding.

When the land agents sold Bell Meadow to John White in 1865 they stated baldly, "sometimes under water". This problem faced Charles Devas when he planned to build Newbury and Avebury Roads on his land. Devas was one of several new land owners who were developing the area.

An additional disadvantage faced by owners of land close to the railway was the noisy, noxious steam engines that trundled past with ever-increasing regularity as the years progressed. Public transport hubs feature as both beneficial and detrimental when assessing the value of land and its potential for successful development.

The disadvantages were recognised by Charles Devas and the British Land Company when developing their sites adjacent to the railway line. They chose to build semi-detached and terraced housing on small plots for lease to housebuilders, skilled and semi-skilled artisans.

The opening of Bromley South Station had proved a magnet for developers and

## *Feature*

buyers but not when in close proximity to the station. Agents for Francis White's estate – which extended just under a mile from Cromwell Road on Masons Hill to Tootswood on Hayes Lane, Beckenham — noted the quality of building by their neighbours' and adopted the classic builder's answer — build cheaper properties near the less-prestigious locations and build ever-more-expensive properties with increasing distance.

Stand today at the entrance to Newbury Road [at the bottom of Westmoreland Road opposite St Mark's Church] and see this characteristic development on Westmoreland Road, which starts with semi-detached homes of better quality than those of their immediate neighbours. They become detached within a few yards, with larger houses on Queen Anne Avenue.

Beyond the wet meadows the gently sloping, well-drained land displayed the natural beauty of unspoiled rural farmland with copses and established trees — what today is described as a greenfield site. In their literature the land agents proclaimed the virtues of South Hill Park: "There is no more delightful a location to be found anywhere in Bromley ... ideally suited for gentleman's residences." However, in 1865, there was no road direct from Bromley South to Pickhurst, West Wickham and Langley Park. Footpaths through the fields were suitable only for walkers.

Charles Devas had a problem with access to his new development of Newbury and Aylesbury Road There was no direct access from his land to Bromley South without passing through other people's property. His solution was to buy a building plot from another developer on Westmoreland Road for use as an access road.

Owners of two other estates abutting South Hill Park took the same action to provide direct access from their estates to Bromley South, namely Emmanuel Goodhart of Langley Park and Charles Lloyd Norman of The Rookery, Bromley Common. At the far end of Westmoreland Road, Emmanuel Goodhart bought a field with permission to build a road connecting Hayes Lane to the new estate and Charles Lloyd Norman did the same along the banks of the Ravensbourne, constructing Hayes Road.

The agents set about surveying and building Westmoreland Road as the main artery between Bromley South and the new estate. They seem to have planned the road pattern based largely on field boundaries but other than Westmoreland Road they placed responsibility on each purchaser to build the highway fronting their property and maintain it, until adopted by the local authority. This covenant is only one of many attached to all plot sales and together they are crucially significant in creating the urban features of South Hill Park.

Francis White and his agents established rigorous restrictive covenants on all plots and thus made clear their intentions for individual properties and the nature of the

entire South Hill Park estate: no hotels, taverns, beer houses, entertainment venues, brickworks, noxious activities, liveries, mining, quarrying and — surprisingly — no churches.

Terraced housing was not allowed and a minimum cost of building each house was required, exclusive of stables and any other outbuilding. Buyers of plots had to fence their property with oak palings to the front and wire to the neighbours.

When purchasing land for Aylesbury School the buyers were required to erect an eight-foot brick wall on the boundary with Queen Anne Avenue. If the land was not used for education purposes, any houses must cost a minimum of £400 except for teacher, caretaker or other employee.

The building costs demanded reflected the perceived appeal and marketability of the site. On Queen Anne Avenue in 1892 the minimum costs were £400 for detached and £700 for semidetached houses. On more-attractive sites and bigger plots the figures rose to £1,200 and £1,800 respectively.

Plot sizes were all of generous proportion, up to an acre and sometimes more, with consequent house sizes being larger than normal for Bromley. The majority comprised three floors of high building specifications and most were architect-designed.

The reasons for covenants can be understood after identifying some purchasers. James Nichols was recorded in censuses of the time as a “developer”. He bought four plots totalling 32 acres between 1886 and 1889, for which he paid £13,250-15 shillings and chose one plot on which to build his own home, “Woodside”. Given that he chose to live there it is unlikely he would opt for densely-built housing, but it was not unknown and without strict covenants monetary rewards could well persuade him otherwise.

LOT 5.

THE WELL SITUATED AND VALUABLE BRICK-BUILT AND TILED  
**DETACHED RESIDENCE.**  
(WITH POSSESSION)  
KNOWN AS  
**“BLENHEIM,”**  
SOUTH HILL ROAD,  
STANDING IN GROUNDS OF NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF AN ACRE.  
... The Residence ...

is approached by a Carriage Sweep, with Capital Lawn, Flower Beds and well planted Shrubbery, thence to a Pretty Tiled Porch, and has the following accommodation:

ON THE SECOND FLOOR.—FOUR GOOD BEDROOMS, fitted with register stoves. Boot Cupboard, cistern room, with linen cupboard therein, linen cupboard, and small cupboard.

ON THE FIRST FLOOR.—FOUR LARGE BEDROOMS, with register stoves and marble mantelpieces. DRESSING ROOM. BOUDOIR, leading to Verandah. BATH ROOM (hand c.). PRINCIPAL AND BACK STAIRCASES.

ON GROUND FLOOR.—DRAWING ROOM (24ft. by 16ft.), with bay window, fitted with register stove, tiled hearth and marble mantelpiece. DINING ROOM (24ft. by 16ft.), fitted with register stove, tiled hearth and marble mantelpiece, and having French casement window leading to SMALL AND LARGE CONSERVATORIES. MORNING ROOM (15ft. 6in. by 14ft.), with registered stove and tiled hearth. W.C. Lavatory (h. and c.).


THE DOMESTIC OFFICES include KITCHEN, fitted with Kiloheater, Dresser, and Cupboard. Store Cupboard, fitted with shelves. SULLERY, fitted with sink (h. and c.), Copper and Shelves. Housemaids' Pantry, W.C. Good Cellarage in Basement. TRADESMEN'S ENTRANCE.

Gas and Water are laid on and Electric Bells fitted throughout.

⊗ Excellent Garden ⊗

COMPRISING LARGE LAWN, SHRUBBERY, FLOWER BEDS AND GRAVEL WALKS.

The Property is of the estimated rental value of  
Per **£150 Ann.**



*Very few of these grand houses now remain. They provide a dramatic contrast with the “two-up-two-down” houses on Newbury Road.*

## *Feature*

Unlike the contrasting urban styles seen at Bromley South, Charles Lloyd Norman and Emmanuel Goodhart employed the style and scale of building displayed on South Hill Park. Thus houses on the Norman estate on Hayes, Beadon, Stone and Cameron Roads and on Langley Park, on Tootswood, Kingswood, Broadoaks and Pickhurst Roads display a seamless link with those on South Hill Park. The same is not true for Queen Anne Avenue and Durham Road, both of which enter land belonging to other owners and were built some years later.

## The Park's High Society 1901 - 1911

**Who were the first residents of this new suburb of Bromley called South Hill Park? Where did they come from and how had they achieved their wealth and social status?**

To answer some of these questions I will focus on the residents of Westmoreland Road, occasionally taking examples from elsewhere on the estate. The houses and their occupants on this road displayed Edwardian grandeur, social inequality, a measure of Britain's international commerce and British Imperial past.

The north side of the road from the bottom of Masons Hill for the first 100 yards down to the river Ravensbourne displayed the houses and the commercial premises of the Edwardian working class. Simpsons Road and Hawksworth Road were built for skilled and semi-skilled artisans and were occupied by builders, plumbers, painters, domestic servants, railway workers, postmen, policemen, lamplighters and a selection of service trades, butcher, coffee-house keeper, grocer, cabman and



*From Edwardian Queen Anne Avenue to semi-detached suburbia.*

*Hidden behind the garden fence in the photograph above right is a footpath that once connected Ringers Road and the High Street to Pickhurst and West Wickham.*

*Part still exists and is used by commuters living in these streets.*

furniture dealer, one of whom described his profession in 1911 as “wardrobe purchaser”.

Bromley and London were the birthplaces of about one-third of the residents, another third came from parishes in Kent and a third from counties across England. After Simpsons Road and Newbury Road the built landscape changed dramatically. A glance at the houses immediately beyond these two roads shows a transition in architecture from modest semi-detached villas to larger detached houses on bigger plots, becoming very evident when arriving at Queen Anne Avenue.

James Ponsford’s four-acre nursery, first leased in 1880, had by 1900 already been reduced to one acre and this was soon to disappear. On the south side of Westmoreland Road, the plot currently under development remained a green space.

On passing Sandford Road, the first building was the newly-built St Mark’s Church followed by Hayes Road and Bromley Lawn Tennis Club before arriving at the remaining ground surrounding New Farm. From here to Hayes Lane, Beckenham, the road was lined with large three-story architect-designed houses of high quality, many with semicircular drives on plots of up to an acre, sometimes more.

Some readers will recall these imposing homes, many of which survived into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. I remember being amazed in the 1960s seeing a miniature railway built in the front garden of one house.

Three residents illustrate the top of the social ladder, all knights of the realm:

Sir Gainsford Bruce QC, *pictured left*;  
Sir Thomas Dewey, *whose house still stands and is  
pictured on the back page of this Bromleag*;  
and Sir Henry Fischer CMG.



*Sir Gainsford Bruce QC in his judge’s regalia. In 1929 his son Robert Bruce, also a lawyer and knighted, was living at 3 Durham Avenue*

Gainsford Bruce had been born in Newcastle and studied law at Glasgow, rising to become a QC, High Court judge and President of the Bromley Naturalists Society [not nudity!]. For some years in 1890s he was MP for Finsbury. His household comprised his wife two children and five “live in” servants occupying a house with 13 rooms.

Thomas Dewey rose to become chairman of the Prudential Insurance Company, Charter Mayor of Bromley and a major benefactor to the town. His home was set in two acres, incorporating some of the ancient trees of Toots Wood. The house is now private apartments and much of the original garden design forms the attractive public South Hill Park. He his wife and four daughters enjoyed the domestic comfort afforded by six servants.

*Feature*

Sir Henry Fischer, of German birth, celebrated his knighthood in Queen Victoria's birthday honours list of 1898 with his family of three and three servants. He helped establish, and was the first Controller of, the Central Telegraph Office for the British Telegraph Service. He represented Britain at international conferences in St Petersburg, New York and Paris. He assisted in reorganising the Office, the training and employment of telegraphists and engineers and oversaw the construction of telegraph links between London and Paris and London and Germany.

Other residents could compete in terms of wealth and status. James Llewellyn Mathews of "Plas Newydd" [no prizes for guessing his origins] was a solicitor, Commissioner for administering oaths in the Supreme Court of Judicature and Perpetual Commissioner for taking acknowledgements of married women, who still had no independent status in law. In the grounds of his home stood the coachman's cottage with a family of five and the gardener's cottage with two occupants.

Seven households are recorded as "living on own means", including three widows. Mrs Elenia Backie, with one daughter, could keep four servants. Mrs Peyton Dashwood lived with a companion and two servants while Mrs Janet Burniss, with three children, all born in Hong Kong, employed three servants.

All three partners of Baxter, Payne and Lepper, the land agents acting for Francis White, bought plots on the Estate at various times. John H Lepper bought two plots and Frederick Payne bought New Farm with outbuildings and grounds and lived there for some years.

Other than Sir Henry Fischer, there were two families of German origin living on Westmoreland Road — Frederick Zimmerman, druggist, and Friedlander Holderman, merchant. Elsewhere on the estate the head or partner of the family is recorded as born in USA, Denmark, India, Australia or South Africa. The typical house had 12 rooms and three servants. In addition, some had accommodation for gardeners and grooms while others employed jobbing gardeners.

**Occupations given in approximate percentages for residents of  
Westmoreland Road in 1901**

<b>Financial</b> — broker, company clerk, insurance, banker	10%
<b>Legal</b> — barrister, solicitor, legal secretary	11%
<b>International Trade</b> — colonial trade, import/export, produce broker	15%
<b>Living on own means</b> — private means, annuities, pensions	15%
<b>Business</b> — director, dealer in fruit, straw goods, pianos, bullion, publisher	20%
<b>Other professions</b> — land agent, doctor, journalist(3), artist, engineer	30%

# Developments in Elmers End history

Mal Mitchell

**T**he Society has recently put the *History of Elmers End*, written by Len Hevey and published by BBLHS back in the 1990s, on the BBLHS website. So it is timely to review some aspects of the area's history.

Elmers End's history is somewhat confused because various landlords in Beckenham held land which was often intermingled with each other's holdings, so it is difficult to regard Elmers End as entirely separate from the rest of Beckenham.

There is also an historical blind spot between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as the record is vague from the time of the Aylmers, who are recorded in early documents. After the Aylmers in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the land was split under different owners until Thomas Motley became the owner in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Len Hevey notes Thomas Motley's presence in Elmers End and earlier records pertaining to the Aylmers, after whom the area is named, sometimes give Eylmer and later Elmer. He goes on to show a map demonstrating the land in the possession of the Rev Stewart Foster and the Rev John Collison in 1836. Possibly he mis-transcribed the name Foster and it should be Forster, as per a property transfer (in Bromley Archives) for Thayers Farm [which is in the Clock House area].

He leaves a gap between 1736 and 1836, understandably as records are obscure. The effort involved in transcribing maps and his research has to be acknowledged as Len did not enjoy the access afforded by the internet and digital photography.

But today we can fill in gaps from wills, births, deaths and marriages via genealogy websites and some map evidence from the Burrell estate map of 1809.

## The Elmers End land owners

The Burrells owned part of the land and as they had purchased land in Beckenham — Kelsey from the Brograves in 1688. Presumably the Brograves previously owned the Elmers End land. Other bits of Elmers End were part of Beckenham Manor, which belonged to the St Johns and descended to them from the Bruyns. Then Cator bought Beckenham Manor land in 1773.

A small amount of land belonging to the Tolsons and Tillys of Foxgrove Manor is also found around Elmers End. This would ultimately find its way into the hands of the Burrells or Cator.

Thomas Motley's land was mainly to the north of Croydon Road and Burrell land mostly to the south. The 1736 map (*See page 36*) was drawn up for Thomas Motley by William Brasier.<sup>1</sup> Motley owned Elmers End Old and New Farms as well as Thayers Farm and a house called the Mead in Beckenham High Street with grounds on what

## Feature



*Elmers End in 1736: the map drawn up for Thomas Motley by William Brasier*  
Courtesy of Kent Archive ©

is now Thornton's Corner. The map shows the Elmers End land as one farm but the legend divides the fields into Old and New sections under their respective tenants Nicholas and Daniel Hodges.

The shaded areas are Motley's land and the unshaded parts belonged to Peter Burrell II of Kelsey (the Wildes), Lancelot Tolson Tilly of Foxgrove Manor and the Honourable John St John of Beckenham Manor. Some surrounding land belongs to Henry Batt of Penge, St John Humphry's and other owners of smaller properties.

A house close to Elmers End Green is called Little Mead, which appears to be twinned with The Mead, which Motley occupies in Beckenham village.

### **Elmers End Green**

The map reveals that Elmers End Green was not on the site of the current roundabout

but on the junction of what is now Eden Park Avenue. So the remains of Elmers End Green is the rather large road island by the junction with Eden Park Avenue. The current roundabout green appears to be in the grounds of what was "Little Mead". Eden Park Avenue used to be called Bricklers Lane (Bricklayers?) and was a driveway into Eden Park which prior to the lease to the Eden family was called Bune Gate, part of the Kelsey estate, and was occupied by some of the Burrell family.

Looking at the map in detail, and the annotation, could give clues to past ownership. The various field names may relate to previous occupiers or owners. The fields to the west of Elmers End Road which are now mostly in South Norwood Country Park, and technically in Croydon, are called Little and Great Pickingtons. The Pickingtons and Olivers Mead are annotated as being a moietie undivided between Thomas Motley and William Busk (shared ownership).

There are three fields called "The La Motes", with one enclosing a moated site whose footprint is still visible on aerial photos. The La Motes tempts me to speculate that La Mote is a family name, possibly derived from some ancient owner or occupier.

Another peculiarity is the field called Blundell which mostly belongs to Lancelot Tolson Tilly but has stakes identifying strips belonging to Burrell, Tilly and St John. The Chaffinch Brook runs through the field and I have speculated whether this might denote something like watercress beds or even an archery range.

On the part of the map showing Thayer's Farm, William Lethieullier is identified as an owner of a small piece of land on Backs Lane and the site of Clockhouse. He was also in possession of Kent House Farm at this time. Backs Lane seems to have been named after a small landowner, sometimes spelt Baxe's and later becoming Becks Lane and Churchfields Road. It is just one of the many spelling variations of names that occurs over time.

## **Thomas Motley**

I haven't been able to pin down a date for when Motley acquired the land. But records in Bromley Archives show Motley was associated with Beckenham, with property at The Ridge (Village Place) as early as 1721.<sup>2</sup> Motley is described as coming from Wapping and some records imply he may have been from Poplar. His will refers to land in Dagenham and other places.

His will mentions his late wife buried at St George's and this would appear to be Margaret Motley, who died in 1741 aged 44 (b 1697?). His daughter Anne married in 1746 and most likely is the daughter Anne, baptised in 1719 at St Mary Whitechapel. I have to make some assumptions about Thomas Motley's age and marriage date. A child, William Motley is buried in 1727 whom I assume to be

Thomas Motley's son, but this requires confirmation. Surprisingly, Thomas Motley is a common name as far as marriage records go, and it's possible that his wife used two first names, Anne and Margaret.

Motley had no direct male heir. His daughter Anne married Francis Austin and it looks as if Anne (nee Motley) died in childbirth or shortly afterwards. Austin inherited Motley's land in Beckenham. There was a grandson, Francis Motley Austin, who was christened at St George's in 1747 but there is no record of any substantial period of residence in Beckenham, perhaps only visits to the grandfather Thomas Motley.

Two Thomas Motleys are buried at St George's, one being a nephew and a Thomas Motley, landlord of Elmers End farms, who died in 1758. Francis Austen died in 1791 and Francis Motley Austin in 1815.

The Elmers End property would have been leased to tenant farmers etc, but records are scarce. Perhaps the tenants under Motley continued in occupation under Austin, ie Nicholas Hodges at Elmers End Old Farm and Daniel Hodges at the New Farm. St George's burial records for Hodges show two Nicholases and two Daniels between 1729 and 1824.

### **New owners and occupants**

How or why the Elmers End farms passed from Francis Motley Austin to the next owners, The Rev Stewart Foster (Forster) and The Rev John Collison in 1836 is unclear but believed to be through family bequests. I would appreciate any information on this

An 1809 Peter Burrell/Baron Gwydir estate map (British Library) shows Francis Motley Austin holding a block of land which included some parts of the Elmers End which, on the 1783 map, had been owned by Lancelot Tolson Tilly and St John. The Burrell land occupants and leaseholders around Elmers End can be traced via a book which accompanied the map.

Other Tilly/St John land had been purchased by John Cator or the Burrell/Raymond families in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century so we can assume some land sales or exchanges to consolidate estates — as happened between Cator and Burrell/Raymond in 1759, 1777 and 1793 — happened during this period between Tilly/St John and Motley or Austin.

Unfortunately, Len Hevey did not give an archive catalogue reference for the 1836 Foster/Collison map and I have not so far traced the original. But his transcription of the map shows the Burrell land in the possession of Major Maberley (hence Maberley Road, Penge). A lot of Beckenham land was bought up by George Wythes of Bickley<sup>3</sup> who was a developer. Perhaps the Forster/Collison

map ended up in his collection of material which is in Bromley Archives.

Although we know that Thayer's Farm was brought into the Cator estate in 1837 by Albemarle Cator, both Cator estate maps of 1833 and 1864 (updated to 1889) show the Elmers End farms are not part of Cator holdings. So we have to look for Foster/Forster and Collison and their successors to find out what happened after 1836. Bromley Archives have very few records pertaining to Elmers End. The Thayers Farm conveyance to Albemarle Cator Bromley<sup>4</sup> mentions the Forsters and Collison connection. Further research may discover the Forster/Collison link, if any, to the Austins.

As Len Hevey stated, the tithe map and returns for 1838 lists Ambrose Austin as owner of Elmers End farms and Peter Pagett as occupant. I can't find any link between Ambrose Austin and Francis Motley Austin and Austin seems to be quite a common name for Beckenham. Some records, such as census returns for 1841 and 1851 indicate that Ambrose Austin was an agricultural labourer and most likely living in modest or lowly property at Cage Place or 181 Village and that begs the question whether he was the Elmers End landlord or some other Ambrose Austin was an absentee landlord.

We have further archives and maps to explore and needless to say (I'll say it anyway) the more we scratch the surface, the more is revealed

*This article goes alongside my article regarding Thayers Farm in Bromleag of March 2021 and should also be read alongside Len Hevey's Elmers End book, which can be found at*

**<https://www.bblhs.org.uk/old-books#Local>**

*A more detailed account of the records and interconnections between Elmers End and other Beckenham properties held by landowners over this period can be found at*

**<http://www.beckenhamplaceparkfriends.org.uk/beckenhamhistoryls.pdf>**

<sup>1</sup> Len Hevey transcribed the 1736 map drawn up for Thomas Motley by William Brasier.

<sup>2</sup> This record at Bromley Archives identifies Motley as being of the parish of Whitechapel. June 1721 Lease, release and fine in relation to a capital messuage lately erected in Beckenham and lands known as The Ridge and Bunhill, between William Davies of the parish of St John Wappin, Middlesex, surgeon; Thomas Davies of the parish of St Dionis, Backchurch, Fenchurch Street, London, gentleman; Thomas Motley of the parish of St Mary Matsdon alias Whitechapel, Middlesex, gentleman and Joseph Butt of the parish of St John Wappin, brewer. In consideration of the sum of £1500 paid by Motley and Butt to William Davies, he conveys the property to them in trust for Motley. Fine is in Latin. Ref 853/1/1/1/8, 8/9

<sup>3</sup> An article on George Wythes appeared in the September 2021 issue of *Bromleag*

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*www.bblhs.org.uk*



***Sir Thomas Dewey's home, built in 1889 .  
The only grand house remaining  
on Westmoreland Road. See Page 29***

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