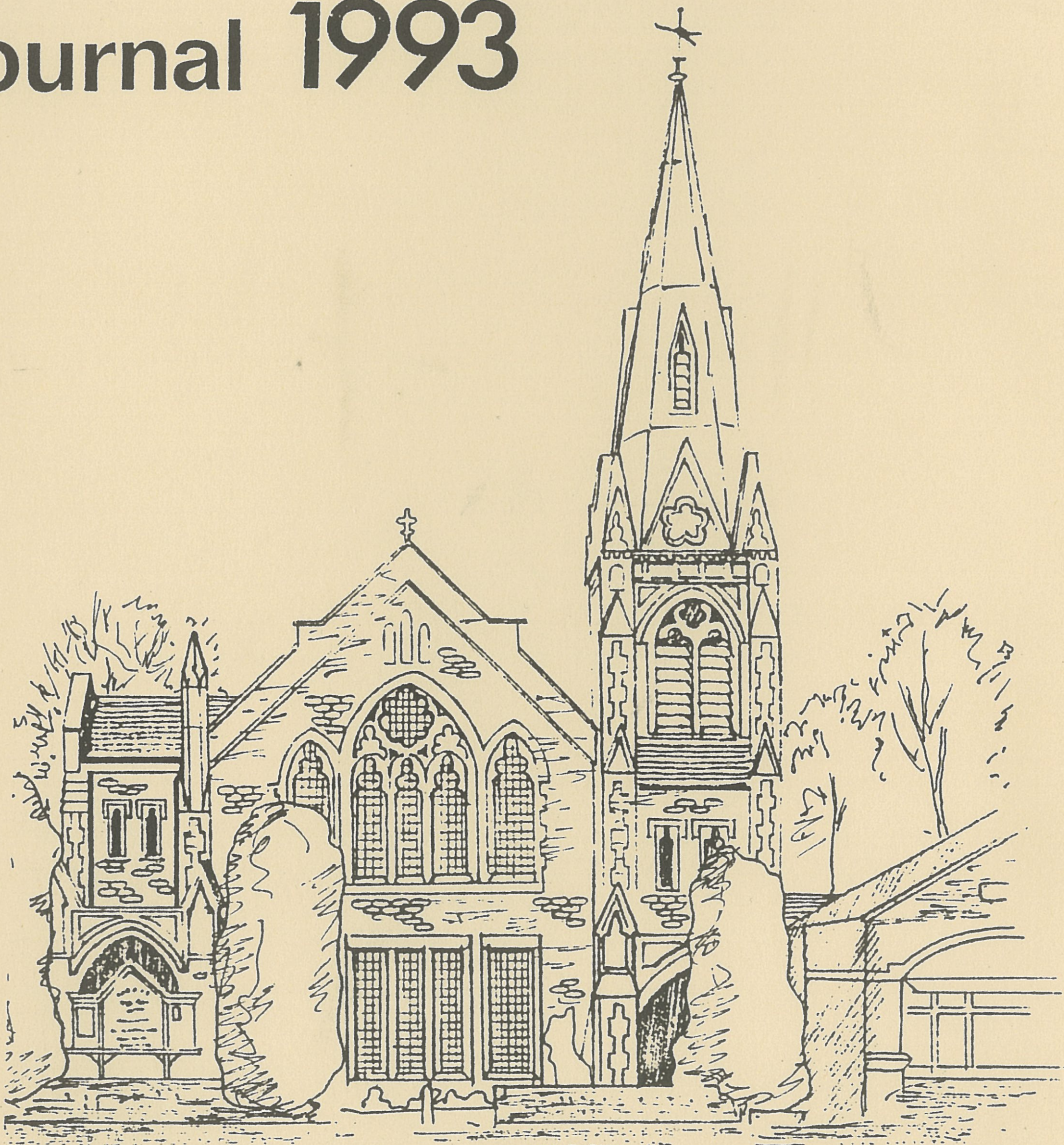


RUISLIP, NORTHWOOD  
AND EASTCOTE

# Local History Society

Journal 1993



Oaklands Gate Methodist Church, Northwood



# **The Journal of the Ruislip, Northwood & Eastcote Local History Society**

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# EDITORIAL

*Cheshire for men,  
Berkshire for dogs,  
Bedfordshire for naked flesh,  
And Lincolnshire for bogs.*

*Derbyshire for lead,  
Devonshire for tin,  
Wiltshire for hunting plumes,  
And Middlesex for sin.*

This was how some of the English Counties were characterised in *A Helpe to Discourse* published in 1631.

Just why Middlesex was thought to be particularly sinful is not clear, perhaps its high crime rate due to its proximity to London had something to do with it. It is also not clear whether the reference was intended as a condemnation or a commendation! In any event, I have not found anything especially sinful in my researches into 16th & 17th century Ruislip and the number of churches found by the Research Group, in preparing its latest exhibition in the Cow Byre suggests that, in more recent years at least, perhaps Ruislip lived up to its reputation as *The Goodliest Place in Middlesex*. This exhibition, on places of worship in Ruislip, was well attended and received many favourable comments from the visitors.

A book, *The Three R's in Ruislip*, containing the research carried out by The Research Group for the previous exhibition on schools in the Parish of Ruislip, has recently been published by the Society but for this latest exhibition, it was decided to include a series of articles on the local churches in the Journal. The first of these appeared in last year's Journal and further ones, on Methodist Churches, are to be found elsewhere in this issue.

At the moment, the Research Group is considering the society's next publication, which, it is hoped, will be of walks around the area with an emphasis on places of historic interest.

The Editors would like to thank all the contributors to this issue and hope that, with the variety of topics covered, there will be something to interest everyone. We are always looking for new contributors and would be pleased to hear if you have anything to say on the content of the Journal. Both congratulations and criticisms can be helpful in assessing what is of interest to members of the Society.



# THE RICKMANSWORTH-PINNER TURNPIKE ROAD

by Jim McBean

*"Werry queer life is a pike-keeper, sir."*

*"A what?" Said Mr Pickwick.*

*"The old 'un means a turnpike keeper gen'lm'n" observed Mr Samuel Weller in explanation.*

*"Oh", said Mr Pickwick "I see. Yes, very curious life, very uncomfortable."*

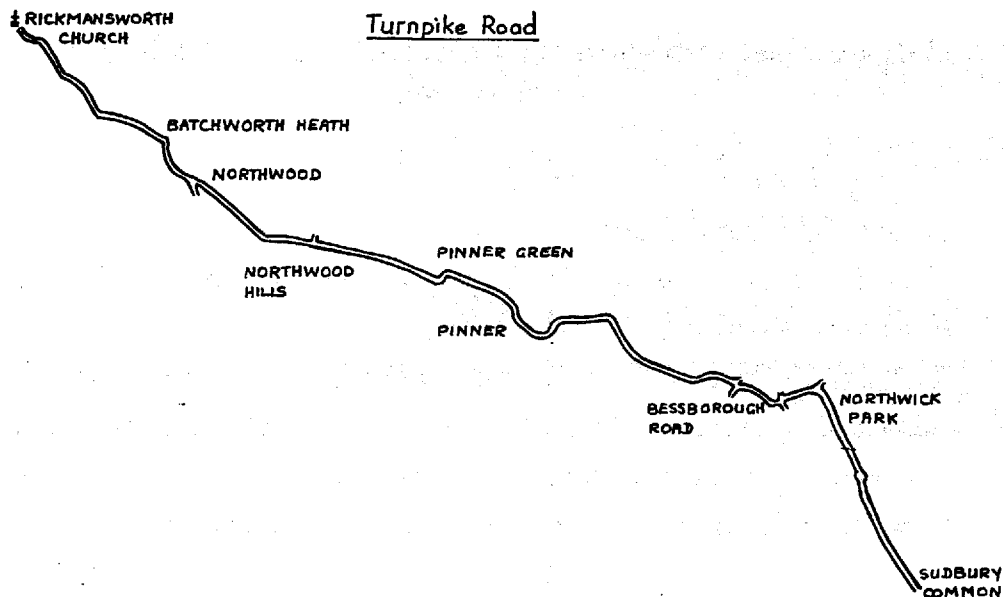
*"They're all of 'em men as has met with some disappointment in life .... in consequence of vich they retires from the world and shuts themselves up in pikes .... partly to revenge themselves on mankind by taking tolls ...."*

## GENERAL

Pinner Road, running from the boundary of the parish of Ruislip with Pinner (where there is a Hillingdon road sign) westwards via the roundabout at Northwood Hills, through Northwood and up the Rickmansworth Road to Mount Vernon Hospital and Batchworth Heath, was a turnpike road during the first part of the 19th century. This is the part of the road which lies within the parish of Ruislip. The route of the whole turnpike road started at the roundabout at Sudbury Common where there is a public house called *The Swan*, ran northwards along Watford Road to its junction with Kenton road between the playing fields and Northwick Park Hospital (the site of Sheepcote Farm) and where there was a toll bar, left into Harrow where there was a simple junction with Bessborough Road instead of the present tangle of traffic lights, one-way systems and the like and where there there was a second toll-bar (the Roxborough toll gate), along the Pinner Road to Pinner village via the church, down the hill and up again to Pinner Green where there was a turnpike next to *The Bell* public house at the junction with the Uxbridge Road from Stanmore, then through to Northwood Hills and Northwood via toll gates at Ruislip common and *The Gate* public house, to Batchworth Heath and then down the hill to the parish church at Rickmansworth. The whole length of this turnpike is officially given as 9 miles 6 furlongs & 35 yards of which 2 miles 3 furlongs is in the parish of Ruislip.

## TURNPIKE ROADS

In very early times, *road* meant a right of passage rather than a surface and it was the duty of every inhabitant to preserve a means of passage for the King and his subjects. Manorial Courts were involved in ensuring that roads were kept open, large landowners sometimes took on the responsibility and the monasteries especially had an interest in good communications between their widespread estates. The church encouraged people to consider a gift towards the maintenance of the highways as a pious and meritorious act and there are many instances of such gifts. This rather confused situation as to the responsibility for the roads was regularised in 1555 when the duty was placed firmly on the shoulders of the parish. Briefly the act of 1555 required that parishioners were to come together on four (Later six) days of the year with implements and carts to put the roads in order (i.e. statute & team labour, which was not abolished until the Highway Act



*Fig 1. The Turnpike Road*

1831), surveyors had to be appointed, fines and penalties were set out and the Justices were to supervise. The act had many faults but it was a great step forward in the history of the roads and was re-enacted many times in modified forms.

One of the disadvantages of the 1555 Act was that it put an unfair burden on those parishes through which passed busy, much used main roads. This inequality was acknowledged by Parliament in the case of the constant repairs needed to the much used road to the north passing through the counties of Hertford, Cambridge & Huntingdon and in 1663 these localities were authorised to put movable gates (turnpikes) across the road and collect a toll. Thus the first turnpike road came into being. Although this first attempt was not successful, it began to be realised that the turnpike system, which was to be administered by local trustees independent of the hard pressed parish and with authority to raise capital for the repair of the roads on the security of the tolls, would be likely to effect a considerable improvement on the dreadful state of the roads. As a result, local Turnpike Acts were passed and trusts set up in respect of through roads all over the country. Turnpikes were vehemently and even violently opposed over a long period by payers of tolls, toll bars & gates were burnt and their keepers attacked. It has to be said that there are no records of these exciting events occurring on the Rickmansworth- Pinner turnpike.

Although with many faults, the turnpike system did effect an improvement in the state of the roads and in 1840, the Report of the Commission on the Roads in England & Wales was able to report to parliament that in that year there were 1116 turnpike trusts, 7796 toll gates & bars, 3800 Turnpike Acts in force and so on.

One of the serious flaws in both the turnpike system and the parish system was that the vitally important post of surveyor was taken by laymen totally untrained in the skilled job of highway construction. It was not until the advent of men like Metcalf, Telford & Macadam that this problem was met.

## ACT OF PARLIAMENT

The act creating the Rickmansworth-Pinner turnpike is 49.Geo.IIIc.51, dated 12 May 1809.

The preamble to the act is as follows:-

*Whereas the High Road leading from the Town of Rickmersworth (sic) over Batchworth Heath in the county of Hertford and over Ruislip Common through the village of Pinner and Roxborough Fields by Harrow & Sheepcote Farm in the county of Mddx. to or near the Swan Public House at Sudbury Common ..... is in a ruinous Condition, narrow in many places, and incommodious to Passengers and cannot be effectually repaired, widened, turned, altered and kept in Repair, without the Aid of Parliament, may it therefore please your Majesty .....*

Ruislip Common was the expanse of waste between the boundary of the parish westward to Northwood. It had already been enclosed under the Ruislip Enclosure Act and a wide straight road (Pinner Road) had been set out. Conditions across the common prior to enclosure are described in *The Goodliest Place in Middlesex viz. :-*

*Previously travellers from Pinner to Rickmansworth ..... had to make the best way they could across unfenced common, muddy in winter and dusty and rutted in summer*

The Act gave authority for setting up of gates, turnpikes and toll houses; a scale of tolls was set out; tolls could be leased and *for the more speedy repairing of the road* the tolls could be mortgaged. Officers were to be appointed, the surveyor given powers to obtain stones and gravel without charge although any damage had to be paid for; the parishes were still required to provide statute labour or an equivalent payment and there were exemptions as well as penalties. The turnpike road was to be administered by trustees. Because of likely opposition it was policy to appoint a great many of the most influential local persons as trustees and in the case of our road no less than sixty one persons were named in the Act. Their first meeting was to be at *the house of John Ball known by the sign of the Queens Head at Pinner*. Ruislip trustees included Ralph Deane, Harry Edgell, John Rowe, Joseph Strutt, Francis Stubbs, George Woodruff and others.

The Turnpike acts were limited in time on the theory that the trustees would raise sufficient capital to put the road in repair and maintain it, meanwhile paying off the debt whereupon the toll bars and gates would be removed. Accordingly the Rickmansworth-Pinner Act expired after 21 years i.e. in 1830. However, the theory was not borne out in practice and almost all trusts, ours included, ended their term heavily in debt. The Act was therefore extended for a further 31 years (11 Geo.IV.c.113.) i.e. until 1861 when the preamble this time read:-

*whereas the trustees ..... have borrowed several considerable sums of money on the credit of the tolls .... which still remain due and owing ....*

The Ruislip trustees this time included Adam Clark D.D., Ralph Deane, James Mitchell, John Paul Rowe, Sir John Vangham and others. After 1861 the trustees operated from year to year under the Annual Contrivance Acts until 1868.

## EXPENDITURE

	£. s. d.
To Surveyors account of day labour between 29th Sept 1823 and 27th Sept 1824 for maintenance and repair of the road	328 . 14 . 8
To Surveyors account of team labour between 29th Sept 1823 and 27th Sept 1824	43 . 2 . 6
To Surveyors account for work executed by contract specifying the amount done and the rate of contract paid	23 . 17 . 6
To Surveyors account for repair or maintainance or Building of Houses Gates or Bridges	10 . 2 . 8½
To Suvoyors account for land puchased or damage done	
To Surveyors account for rent of quarries	
To saleries and other payments of Clerk, Surveyor & other officers	74 . 0 . 3
To printing, advertising and stationary	
To interest on Debt	2 . 10 . 0
To payment made by Treasurer for gravel and stones for road repairs	71 . 18 . 11
To incidental charges	32 . 10 . 7½
	<u>596 . 18 . 8</u>

## INCOME

By Balance in Treasurers hands on 29th September 1823	167 . 15 . 0
By amount of Rents received from the lessee of the tolls between the 29th Sept 1823 and 27th Sept 1824	470 . 0 . 0
By amount of statute labour between 29th Sept 1823 and 27th Sept 1824 as follows : From the parish of Ruislip £14 . 10 . 0	
From the parish of Pinner £21 . 15 . 0	36 . 5 . 0
By incidental receipts	7 . 6
	<u>674 . 8 . 0</u>

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DEBTS & CREDITS

An Account of the Amount of Debt bearing Interest	£ 2200 . 0 . 0
An Account of the Interest due	1349 . 0 . 0
	<u>3549 . 0 . 0</u>
The following sums are now due for Statute labour	
From the said parish of Ruislip	£ 14 . 10 . 0
From the said parish of Pinner	£ 21 . 15 . 0
	<u>35 . 5 . 0</u>

The above General Statement was examined, audited and allowed at a General Annual Meeting of the Trustees held at the Queens Head Inn, at Pinner 27th September 1824.

W. Boyd. Chairman

*Fig 2. Sample Account*

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Records of the turnpike road survive in the form of trustees' statements of account. Although the initiating Act was dated 1809, the first statement is not until September 1822, probably because trustees were not ordered to publish their accounts until that date. However, a search in the accounts of the Ruislip Parish Surveyor of Highways shows the entry:-

*June 23rd 1810. Paid to the Pinner Trust for pt. of the road from Norwood  
to Pinner Parish £7.5.0*

showing that the road was turnpiked immediately after the originating act. Of the 58 years of its existence as a turnpike road, 37 statements survive. In studying the accounts, it has to be remembered that they refer to the whole road from Rickmansworth to Sudbury, the Ruislip part is not separated. The statements are in the form of a balance sheet. A sample account for the period September 1823 to September 1824 is shown in Figure 2 to give an idea of the matters considered by the trustees.

## TOLLS.

The tolls were sometimes leased out and sometimes kept in hand by the trustees. The revenue from them see-sawed without obvious reason except for the final years when there was a marked increase. The lowest figure was £381 in 1849 and the highest £792 in 1866.

## HERIOT.

The following interesting entry appears in the 1859 accounts:-

*Heriot on death of Mr Thomas Fellows (a Trustee) as the last surviving  
tenant of the Manor of the Moor in respect of Toll House Premises at  
Batchworth holden of the Lord of such Manor - Fines and Admissions of  
his Devises in trust and on the Enfranchisement of the same premises.  
Fees and charges incident to the Admission Surrender and Deed of  
Enfranchisement = £81.5.7*

## SPECIAL CASE IN QUEENS BENCH.

An item of expenditure in the 1868 accounts is as follows:-

*Costs of appellant and respondent on Special Case in Queens Bench.  
Layard v Overy = £61.16.8.*

This brush with the local vicar is the only untoward event in the records of the Turnpike Road. The Rev. Layard, vicar of St John's Church, Sudbury refused to pay toll at the Sheepcote Turnpike in Harrow contending that he was journeying to visit a sick parishioner as part of his pastoral duties and was therefore exempt. He, incidentally, had his family with him in his carriage. The trustees' contention was that he was out for a jaunt with his family and that incidentally, he visited a sick parishioner. The Hendon Magistrates found for the trustees and the vicar was fined but he appealed to the High Court where the decision was reversed and he was awarded costs.

## AGGRIEVED PARISHIONERS.

The minutes of the Ruislip Vestry c.1825 has the following entry:-

*The inhabitants of the parish of Ruislip beg leave respectfully to represent*



*unto the Trustees of the Rickmansworth Road that they have experienced great inconvenience from the placing of certain chains by their lessees across the road within said parish many of the occupiers are thus prevented from passing without paying toll from one part of their farms to the other.*

They go on to request that the Trustees will have the goodness to put the matter right and remind them that the parishioners are already required by law to contribute to the repair of the road.

## **DEBTS.**

Full consideration of the accounts is hampered by the absence of records for the first 13 years and by other gaps. When records do start in 1822, they show a mortgage debt of £2,200, soon raised to £2,400. The revenue from the tolls was insufficient to keep the road in repair, pay expenses and pay the full interest on the loan as well and as a result the figure of interest due rose alarmingly until in 1845 there was owing by the trustees £2,400 plus the very large sum of £1,717 unpaid interest. However from then onwards, the figure of unpaid interest gradually reduced until in 1861, (the end of the period authorised by the second Act), the figure had been reduced to £81.11.8. It is difficult to suggest a reason for this more prudent housekeeping, but it may be more than a coincidence that it coincided with a change in the chairmanship of the trustees. A more persistent problem was the mortgage debt of £2400 raised on the security of the tolls. This figure appeared in the debt column year after year until 1860 by which time the continuance of the turnpike system was distinctly doubtful. The government, instead of seeking ways to assist the system, were beginning to consider its abolition both beneficial and, indeed, expedient. Faced with the prospect of leaving the turnpike with a large debt, the Trustees appear from the accounts, to have taken firm and resolute action. Revenue from the tolls increased substantially; much larger sums were set aside for the repayment of the mortgage debt aided by the sale of the Batchworth Toll House and its land and the sale of materials. The result of all this endeavour is shown in the parliamentary returns for the year 1868 which, in respect of the Rickmansworth-Pinner Turnpike Road was as follows:-

Bond or Mortgage Debt - nil

Floating Debt - nil

Unpaid Interest- nil

The Trustees had fulfilled their duty of keeping the road in repair for 59 years and relinquished their office leaving a clean sheet. It must have been gala night at the Queens Head when the final account was submitted. The road from Rickmansworth to Sudbury ceased to be a turnpike road on 31st December 1868 by virtue of the Annual Continuance Act (31 & 32 Vic. cap. 99) dated 31st July 1868.

## **SOURCES**

Eileen M. Bowlt: *The Goodliest Place in Middlesex*

W.T. Jackman: *The Development of Transportation in Modern England*

P.S. Bagwell: *The Transport Revolution from 1770*

Sir William Addison: *Old Roads of England*

GLRO: MR/UTT/A20; MR/UTT/27 (various); MR/UP/126 (for plan); DRO/19/G1.3 19/C1/2

Harrow Gazette: Nov/Dec 1867 (Harrow Library)

# GRAFFITI IN ST MARTIN'S CHURCH

by Derek Jacobs

## GENERAL

In his Book 'A History of the Bells of St. Martin's, Ruislip', Dr R.D. Andrews refers to graffiti carved in the old stone arch of the west window of the tower at a height between about eleven and fifteen feet.

The initials are stated to be:-

CB, IB, IRC, WC, IE, TE, KI, IN, IV, WS, HW, IW.

It was considered that the database of the Parish Registers might be used to identify the initials.

In addition to the christening, marriage & burial entries, the data base also has *parenting* entries. These are the christening entries turned *inside out*, that is they are indexed under the name of the father. This makes it easier to extract whole families and is suitable for the present search since fathers with the required initials can be easily extracted.

## INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before starting, the christening entries in the database were examined to determine the frequency of occurrence of the initial letters of forenames. Whilst doing this, it was also noted that all the names commencing with 'K' were female and that the only name commencing with 'I' was Isaac.

From the list of carved initials, it is seen that a large number have 'I' as the forename initial, whereas from the frequency table, it can be seen that 'I' has a very low probability of occurrence. The letters 'I' & 'J' were commonly used interchangeably and, as 'J' is approximately one hundred times more probable than 'I', it was considered that the letter 'J' should also be considered as an alternative to 'I'. Also, it was considered that, from the way it was cut, the initial HW could possibly be HN and this was included in the search.

It was assumed that the initials are of a bell ringer or musician (see R D A's book) and that as such he would probably have got married and fathered children in the parish at some time in his life. It was also decided to limit the search to men fathering more than one child in the parish. The reason for this was that it was thought possible that a single child may be the first child of a family not resident in the parish, (christening of a first child sometimes taking place in the mother's old parish). As such it was thought unlikely that the man would have been a bell ringer or musician in the parish.

A list was made of *parenting* entries with the relevant initials (i.e. the initials of the father), which resulted in 150 entries. From these, a cumulative frequency histogram was produced in respect of the lengths of the *parenting* period. From this histogram, it was found that 88% of the *parenting* periods were 20 years or less. It was therefore decided that this would be a reasonable period to assume as a maximum for search purposes. If a marriage age of 30 years is taken for men, then *parenting* could be assumed to extend to 50 years. If a bell ringer or musician is assumed to be within the age range 20-60, then this corresponds to a forty year period which comprises the typical *parenting* period plus a possible 10 year period either side. It must be stressed that these periods are only assumptions but are considered

reasonable from other studies of typical marriage and death ages

For initials where a date is given, this date is assumed to lie within this 40 year period. Two possibilities can occur, either the actual *parenting* period can be equal to or less than the assumed maximum of 20 years or, alternatively, it can be greater than 20 years. (In point of fact, only 10% of the dated entries had actual periods >20 years).

If the actual *parenting* period is 20 years or less, then, taking the limits of this period with respect to the typical *parenting* period, the given date was assumed to lie within the range  $y_2 - 30$  to  $y_1 + 30$  where  $y_1$  &  $y_2$  are the lower & upper limits of the actual *parenting* period. If the actual *parenting* period is greater than 20 years, then an equal period either side of this was assumed, that is the range in which the given date should lie was taken to be  $\{(y_1 + y_2)/2\} - 20$  to  $\{(y_1 + y_2)/2\} + 20$ .

For initials where no date is given, it was assumed that the initials were carved sometime in the period 1700-1810. ( This period was arbitrarily selected as one including all the carved dates, with a margin either side.) If a 10 year period is allowed either side of the *parenting* period as before, then all the entries found are possible and it does not seem that any of them can be excluded.

### MAKING SEARCH

A search was made through the database for all *parenting* entries with fathers having the initials:-

CB, JB, JC, WC, JE, TE, KI, KJ, HN, JN, WS, JV, HW, IW, JW.

These were then collected into family groups with the start & finish year of *parenting* and the number of children in the family. A flexible approach was adopted rather than adhering to hard and fast rules when deciding which entries constituted a single family. For example, a group of entries with the same father's name & mother's name were normally considered to be a single family, but where the *parenting* period was greater than 40 years, or where the children seemed to fall into two separate groups with a long gap between them, then they were deemed to be separate families. Similarly, where only the father's name was given, regular christenings were considered to constitute a single family, but again, a long gap was assumed to indicate the start of a further family. In some instances, it appeared that an entry with an unnamed mother formed part of a family with a named mother, or vice versa, and these were treated accordingly.

### RESULTS

The results of this exercise are shown in the following table. With the exception of the initial 'JB', there are seven or less probable names for each initial, in three instances only one. In several of these cases however there are more than one spouse associated with an individual male name. This could indicate more than one male with a particular name or subsequent marriages of the same male.

In the case of the initial 'JB' there are twelve probables but, in view of the inscription 'I Brigee', the most likely one is Joseph Briggs; his *parenting* period was 1776-1782, so that he could well be bell ringing in 1790 which is the date scratched adjacent this name.

## PROBABLE NAMES CORRESPONDING TO THE INITIALS

*List of abbreviations of forenames.*

*Chas=Charles; Chpr=Christopher; Hy=Henry; Jas=James; Jn=John; Jos=Joseph;  
Tho=Thomas; Wm=William.*

<i>Initial=CB</i>	Biggs Chpr; Bugbeard Chas; Baker Chas; Brill Chpr
<i>Initial=fB</i> <i>(date 1790)</i>	Biggs Jn; Bishop Jos; Bugbeard Jn; Bedford Jos; Bedford Jn; Bunce Jn; Bray Jas [2]; Bray Jn [3]; Briggs Jos; Bricket Jas; Barnaby Jos; Barringer Jas
<i>Initial=fC</i> <i>(date 1797)</i>	Churchill Jas; Churchill Jn; Carter Jn
<i>Initial=WC</i> <i>(date 1807)</i>	Cook Wm; Clayton Wm; Churchill Wm [3]; Carter Wm
<i>Initial=fE</i>	Evans Jn [2]; East Jn; Edmonds Jn; Elman Jn; Ewer Jas [2]
<i>Initial=TE</i>	Eales Tho
<i>Initial=fN</i>	Nightingale Jas; Nicholas Jn; Newton Jas; Nelham Jos; Nelham Jas; Newman Jas; Norland Jn
<i>Initial=WS</i>	Shuffle Wm; Shepard Wm; Saich Wm; Shackell Wm [2]; Scarsbrook Wm; Smith Wm [2]; Seymour Wm [2]
<i>Initial=fV</i>	Vincent Jn
<i>Initial=HW</i>	Webb Hy [3]; Weedon Hy
<i>Initial=IW</i>	Wilcox Isaac
<i>Initial=fW</i> <i>(date 1727)</i>	White Jn [2]; Weedon Jn; Whitemeal Jas; Weatherly Jas; Weatherly Jn [3]; Wright Jn
<i>No likely names with initials HN, KI, KJ</i>	



# STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

## A TRAGEDY AT THE BLACK HORSE, EASTCOTE

Eileen M. Bowlt

The Ruislip burial register for 30th August 1837 records the death of two children, John and James Bignell, aged eight and five, who were said to have been struck by lightning. No further details of the tragedy were given. Recently Mr Albert Shaw drew my attention to an article in a newspaper called *The Magnet* (totally unconnected with the boys' comic of the same name) for 4th September 1837, giving an account of the inquest.

### INQUEST EVIDENCE

According to the report, Mr & Mrs Bignell lived at The Black Horse, Eastcote and were sitting at the dinner table with their two youngest children, with a servant, Jane Webb in attendance, while a terrible *storm of thunder, lightning and rain was raging violently*. Mrs Bignell suddenly felt a blow which knocked her senseless and recovered to find the room filled with smoke, a great smell of sulphur in her nostrils and her children dead. She was probably unconscious for some considerable time because two *medical gentlemen* (unfortunately unnamed) were in attendance by the time she came round.

Mr Richard Yates, a farmer who was riding by

*heard a great noise like the explosion of a large cannon. Instantly after a vivid flash of lightning passed so near as to frighten the horse on which he was mounted. After recovering himself from the shock, he observed that most of the roof of Mr Bignell's house had been torn off, and two large trees in the road opposite shivered to pieces.*

Jane Webb called him in to help and he found the two children *blackened corpses on the floor*, their clothes burning. He extinguished the flames with water and noted that Mrs Bignell was senseless and greatly injured.

Mrs Bignell was still too seriously ill to be moved at the time of the inquest and her evidence was taken in her chamber. Her husband surmised that *the electric fluid, after destroying the roof of the house, passed down the chimney into the room where himself and family were assembled*. He had resided in that part of the country between 30 and 40 years and had never known so violent a storm. Jane Webb added that *the walls and furniture were shattered and the windows smashed to atoms*. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased youths were killed by lightning.

### THE BIGNELLS

Bignells appear in the Ruislip registers from the early part of the 18th century, but very little is known of them. The two unfortunate boys seem to have been the sons of John Bignell and his wife Jane. John had been baptised in 1802, but his marriage is not recorded in Ruislip. At the time of the tragedy they had three children living, according to the parish registers, John baptised in April 1829, James in April 1832 and Emma in December 1835. They had buried their first child, William at the age of five months in 1826. John was described as a labourer when their son John was baptised, which does not quite fit in with the story of them living at the Black Horse and having a servant.



Jane Bignell, who was pregnant, survived her terrible ordeal and gave birth to a daughter, who was baptised Phoebe on Christmas Eve 1837. Further tragedy struck in July 1840 when Emma died. By the time of the 1851 census they were living in a cottage at Field End and as well as Phoebe, had a four-year-old son called Thomas. Ten years on the parents were living in Frog Lane with only 14-year-old Thomas at home. They were then aged 59 and 58 and John still described himself as an agricultural labourer and Thomas was working as a gardener. The 1871 census makes no reference to the family, but the burial register<sup>1</sup> shows that Jane Bignell was buried on 26 October 1873, aged 71. John lived on until April 1897 and eventually died at the Church House (now the almshouses) at the advanced age of 95.<sup>2</sup>

There is a puzzle as to why this family was apparently living at the Black Horse in August 1837. The Rate Books<sup>3</sup> for that year show the occupier as Mary Gregory, who had been named as the licensed victualler nine years earlier, while John Bignell was occupying half a cottage belonging to Ralph Deane of Eastcote House. William Bignell, presumably his brother had the other half. It is just possible that they were lodging at the Black Horse, because of overcrowding and that Jane Webb was not their servant, but worked at the hostelry.

Also the newspaper account refers to the two boys as the younger children of the couple, whereas they were in fact the elder, but when one considers the errors that creep into the pages of the Gazette today, such a mistake can perhaps be accepted. However, it is just possible that the Mr & Mrs Bignell who suffered such a grievous loss were an entirely different couple who do not appear in the parish registers, but this is not likely as the dates of baptism and names of their sons fit the circumstances.

### THE BLACK HORSE

The building which we see in Eastcote today looks like a mid-19th century house, but there are references to "the Black Horse" in 1725<sup>4</sup> and a house on that site belonged to John Robins in the mid-16th century<sup>5</sup>. Extensive storm damage in 1837 might be the reason for the rebuilding.

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. GLRO DRO 19 A1/21   | 2. GLRO DRO 19 A1/22 |
| 3. GLRO DRO 19 E2/25   | 4. GLRO Acc 249/1574 |
| 5. BOWLT Eileen M. <i>The Goodliest Place in Middlesex</i> (1989) p112 |                      |

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Derek Jacobs for information from his computer record of Ruislip Parish Registers.  
To Albert Shaw for giving me a photocopy of *The Magnet* 4th Sept 1837.



## **POWICK BRIDGE**

by Philip Toms

Last year the 350th anniversary of the start of the English Civil War was marked in numerous ways, from commemorative postage stamps to re-enactments of decisive battles. In September, members of the Society travelled by coach to Worcestershire to see what military action would have been like. About 1000 members of the Sealed Knot Society, the English Civil War Society and the Worcester Militia were re-enacting the first cavalry charge of the war. About 150 horses were deployed in the spectacle.

The skirmish occurred in meadows by the side of the River Teme about a mile from the centre of Worcester and the site was used for the re-enactment. It was here that the Royalists and Parliamentarians found themselves facing each other on 23rd September 1642. Both sides were taken unawares but it was Prince Rupert of the Rhine, leading the Royalists, who reacted first. He leapt on to his horse, shouted an order to his men and charged. His officers and men galloped behind him more or less in disarray but they reached the Parliamentarians before they could organise themselves and drove them backwards across the river at Powick Bridge. About fifty Roundheads lost their lives, many of them drowned as they tried to cross the river. Col. Sandys, one of their leaders, was captured and died of his wounds later.

Spectators at the re-enactment were shown various displays as well as cavalry charges. We were shown how cannon were prepared and fired, treated to displays of infantry drills as well as dragoon and cavalry tactics and were able to visit the living history encampment where some of the participants were demonstrating how soldiers and their families would have lived as they moved around the country. This provided an opportunity to meet the people taking part and see the uniforms and weapons they were using.

These re-enactments are based on much research and made as authentic as possible - from the events themselves through to the dress of those taking part. They are not without danger because nineteen of the 1000 people taking part were injured, some seriously enough to be taken to hospital. They are, however, an excellent way to learn more about some of the events which have shaped the history of our country.

The first action of the war is said to have lasted little more than fifteen minutes. It opened the military campaign in which more than 185,000 people were to lose their lives during the nine years to the Civil War's final battle on 3rd September 1651 which, coincidentally, was also at Worcester.



## HARRY EDGELL & HIS COMMEMORATIVE WINDOW IN ST MARTIN'S CHURCH

by Valery Cowley

In last year's Journal I described the two windows in the North aisle of St. Martin's which commemorate Cornelius Thompson and his wife, Fanny Rosina, who lived at Park House in Ruislip High Street in the later nineteenth century. There is another window, in the South aisle behind the Lady Chapel altar, which commemorates the earlier developer of the Park House Estate, Harry Edgell and his wife, Caroline. The inscription in yellow gothic letters along the lower edge has become disordered through restoration: the renewed *in remembrance* section which surely preceded *of Harry Edgell* has been inserted after those words and the year of his death is not entirely legible.

Harry must have been born around 1767 and, judging from the similarity of their coats of arms, he was related to the Edgells of Standerwick Court, a Queen Anne house near Beckington in Somerset. His mother's memorial stone was recovered from a fireplace at The Holt during the restoration of the former Almshouses in Eastcote Road and relocated in the bell-tower in 1979. It is inscribed:-

*As a token of gratitude and affection regard and veneration for an excellent and beloved parent this tablet is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Edgell, widow of Hippie Edgell by her surviving children. She died at Turnham Green in this county the xxii day of July MDCCCXXII, in the LXXXV year of her age, and was buried in the family vault in this church.*

From the family memorial tablet on the South wall, we know that Harry Edgell was Elizabeth and Hippie's eldest son and a bencher of Gray's Inn (i.e. a barrister). Around 1790 he acquired King's End Farm, which stood opposite *The White Bear*, between Ickenham Road and Sharp's Lane. Between then and 1827, he appears to have acquired land which he formed into his Park House Estate, two maps of which are given in Eileen Bowlt's article in the 1981 issue of the Journal.

At the 1802 Middlesex elections, Edgell voted for a reactionary magistrate and for a supporter of parliamentary reform. Five years later, he owned a house, an old enclosure and a new allotment, valued at £83-5s., apparently King's End Farm. In 1815 he was the highest window-tax payer in Westcote (24 windows) and he paid £1-3s-6d on hair powder and £2-8s on armorial bearings, illustrated on the wall tablet and in the 1979 article by Evelyn Wells.

There is no record in Ruislip of his marriage to Caroline Gosling, sister of Elizabeth who married Ralph Deane of Eastcote House. The Goslings were Huntingdonshire landowners. However, Harry and Caroline's son, William Charles was baptised here in 1813 and their second son, Francis, is buried in the south aisle, as the Edgell tablet records. He died on 11 April 1819 in his eighth year, at Montague Place, St George's Bloomsbury. Another son, Richard John, was baptised in Ruislip in 1823, the year after his paternal grandmother died.

In the 1820's Harry Edgell was Vice President of the Auxiliary Bible Society and in 1830 he subscribed to the Uxbridge Book Society, but before the 1832 Middlesex Electoral Roll was published and Park House sold to a linen draper, Orlando Stone, Harry had gone to live in

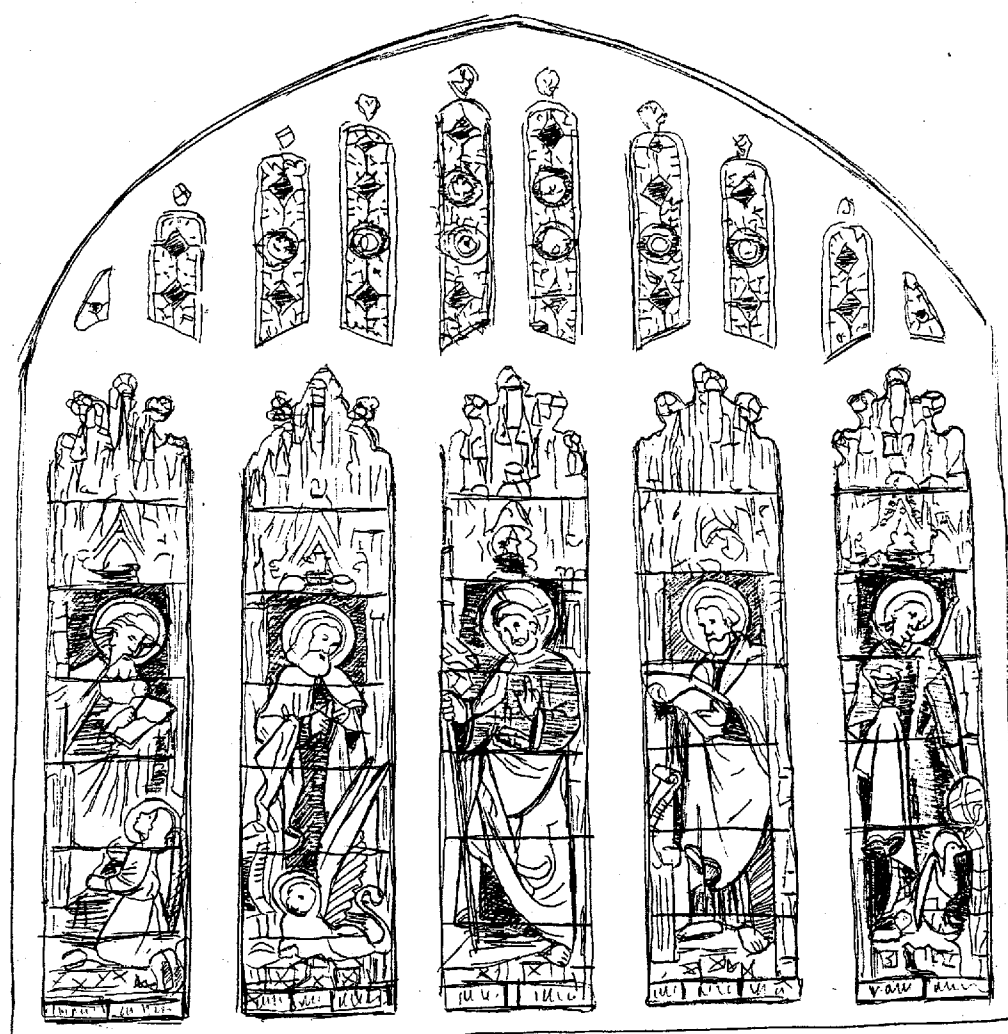
Iver. About 1826 he apparently extended and improved the house on the site of the present British Legion Club.

The 1838/9 Middlesex Poll record lists Harry as owning freehold and copyhold land in Ruislip tenanted by one Weedon and this probably refers to King's End Farm again. In 1842 he was Deputy Lieutenant for the Hundred of Elthorne.

On 9 March 1852 another Elizabeth Edgell, who, like Harry's mother, died at Turnham Green, was buried in Ruislip, aged 86 years - probably Harry's unmarried younger sister.

The wall tablet tells us that Harry Edgell died in Chelsea on 14 May 1863, aged 96 years and that Caroline died there on 11 October 1873, aged 89 years.

The East window of the Lady Chapel at Ruislip commemorating Harry and Caroline Edgell is set in Perpendicular tracery of about 1500. There are five cinquefoil-headed lights uniform with the South wall window (though these have three lights). The ten top East window lights carry red and blue lozenges with stylised foliage designs and six yellow roundels encircled



with red and blue alternately, containing fleurs-de-lys or rosettes; the two above Christ's pennant, however, are encircled with violet - a renewal, or intentionally the royal colour which can also signify mourning?

Red, blue and yellow are the key colours of the five larger lower lights. Their five figures are in niches lined alternately with blue and red, and they stand on pedestals which have black and white chequered surfaces. Except Matthew, the Evangelists have scrolls bearing their names. The central figure is Christ, in red robe with a white mantle, holding a white pennant with a gold cross to signify his conquest of death. He holds up his wounded left hand in blessing.

On Christ's right as we face the window stands St. Luke, in blue robe with white mantle, with his symbol, the ox crouched at his feet, because his Gospel, which he is reading, opens with Zacharias entering the Holy of Holies to make a sacrifice, thus emphasising the sacrifice of Christ. The four symbols of the Evangelists are called *Tetramorphs* and derive from Ezekiel's vision (1:4-9) and Revelations (4:1-7).

On Christ's left stands St. Mark in colours corresponding to to Luke's with his symbol, a golden lion with elegantly curved tail crouching at his feet; it is Mark's symbol possibly because Mark wrote of Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah or because the lion is the kingly symbol of strength and thus of the Resurrection with which Mark's Gospel ends. The Evangelist holds a knife with which he is sharpening his quill pen.

The extreme left-hand figure is St. Matthew actually writing his Gospel with a quill pen. His symbol, a haloed and winged angel carrying his pen holder and its lid and what may be a sandbox, is a variant on the man who appears as Matthew's symbol at times because his Gospel begins with Christ's human ancestry. Clearly visible are the angel's two right feet, which makes one suspicious that the window was made up of stock figures from an unidentified studio.

The extreme right figure, also in a red tunic against a blue niche, is St. John with his symbolic golden eagle, a bird which soars into the heavens, recalling the description of divine creation at the beginning of John's Gospel. The gold-edged white lining of the Evangelist's brown mantle falls over his right hand, which holds a chalice containing a coiled snake. The chalice is the attribute of St. John the Divine, author of Revelation, with whom the Evangelist has been identified: the former's enemies had tried to poison him but John neutralised the venom by making the sign of the cross over it. Typically of western tradition, the saint is depicted as a handsome young man, the beloved disciple of Jesus. St. John in the North aisle window described in my article in the 1992 issue of the *Journal* is a similarly conflated figure. According to tradition, John is supposed to have witnessed the Falling Asleep and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in representations of this he is shown holding a palm, the pagan symbol of victory adopted by early Christians to signify the triumph over death of the saints and martyrs, who would appear before Christ *clothed in white robes and in their hands palms* (Rev.7:9), gathered by angels from the trees in Paradise. Moreover, St. Micheal is said to have brought a palm to St. Mary to herald her approaching death and she handed it to St. John, who carried it before her bier. This and the fact that it is one of her attributes makes its appearance in what is now the Lady Chapel especially appropriate.



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## THE ROUMIEUS

by Karen Spink

I first became interested in the Rev. John Joseph Roumieu, curate of Ruislip from 1870 to 1878, when I found him in the 1871 Census living in one of the Field End Villas, Eastcote, with his wife and baby daughter. This was probably my own house, a rather insubstantial home for a man of his position and background, not providing much room for a household that also consisted of two servants. Moreover, as was discovered later, there was another baby on the way.

John Roumieu had an interest in not only the local community, but also its history, an interest which seemed to go beyond his parochial duties. Furthermore, his family connections with the area were wider spread than were first thought. The late Laurence Morris, local historian & church archivist, had learned from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) that the Gothic-style reredos in St. Martin's Church, Ruislip, had been designed by

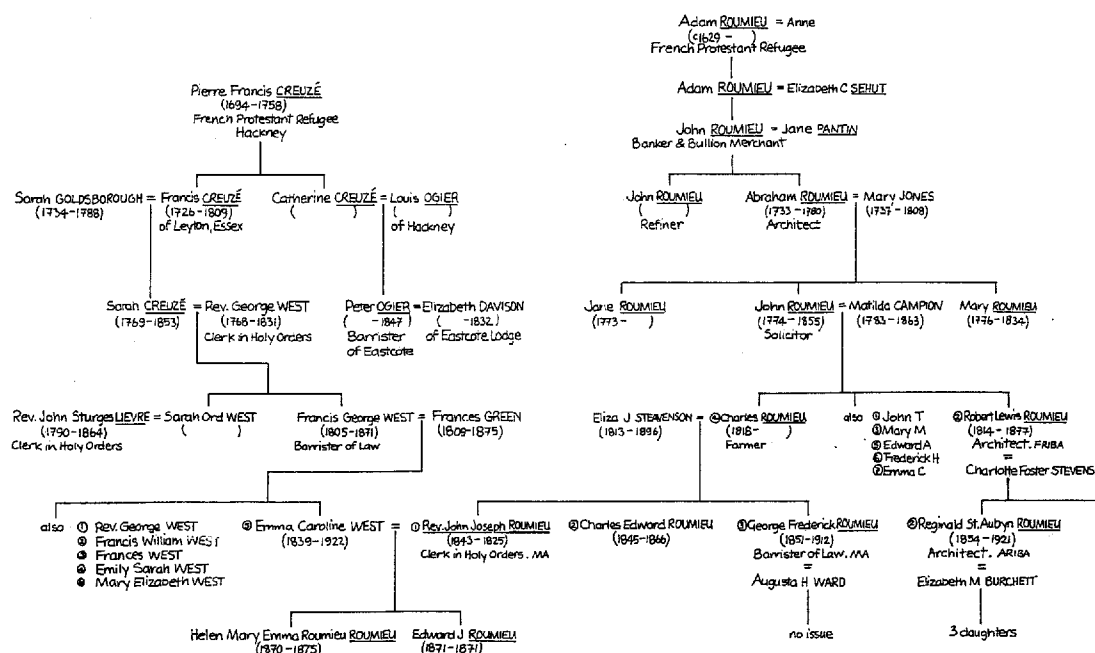


Fig. 1 Family Tree of the Roumieus

one Robert Lewis Roumieu. A name as unusual as this suggested that he had to be a relative of John Joseph. In finding out what that relationship was, and in broadening the field of research, other local architectural commissions by members of the Roumieu family were found. In one of those strange coincidences which make research so fascinating, it was found that Robert Lewis Roumieu had designed the houses in De Beauvoir Square, Hackney, where my brother lives.

There remain a number of enigmas concerning Rev. J.J. Roumieu, but here are the findings about him and his family so far.

### **Rev. John Joseph Roumieu**

John Joseph was descended from Adam and Ann Roumieu, Huguenots who fled from Marseilles with their children in the late seventeenth century and became naturalised British citizens in 1688. The name *Roumieu* derives from the Provençal or Catalan word meaning pilgrim.

John Joseph was born on 28 December 1843, though it is still not certain where. His birth is not recorded in the General Record Office. The 1871 Census shows him being born at Bovington, Herts, where his father was a gentleman farmer, but the Alumni Cantabrigienses has his birthplace as Ightham, Kent, not far from Sevenoaks where he went to school. John was the eldest of three children. His brother, Charles Edward, died at the age of 21, and his youngest brother, George Frederick, became a barrister and well-known cattle-judge. From Sevenoaks School, with the help of the Holmden Bequest and the Lady Boswell Exhibition, he went up to Jesus College, Cambridge in 1863. In the first year, there is mention of him rowing for the college boat club, but after this he apparently concentrated on his reading and graduated in 1867. He was ordained deacon in Rochester in the following year and became curate of Thaxted, Essex.

In taking up this position he was following in the footsteps of Rev. George West of Horham Hall, Thaxted. George's father was the barrister Francis George West of West House Pinner (part of which house can still be seen in Pinner Memorial Park), who had bought Horham Hall in 1855. Possibly it was here that Rev. J.J. Roumieu met George's sister, Emma Caroline, who was to become his wife. It is also possible that the couple could have met earlier in Farnham Surry, as both Emma's mother and Roumieu's father had lived there. In any case, their friendship flourished and on Tuesday 18 January 1870, the 26 year-old John Joseph married Emma Caroline West, aged 30 years. Having been ordained a priest in 1869, John was now curate at St. Jude's, Southsea, Portsmouth and the marriage took place after banns, at St Mary's Chapel, in the parish of St. Mary's in the Castle, Hastings, Sussex. Emma's brother, Rev. George West, officiated and two of the witnesses were George Frederick Roumieu (brother) and Mary Elizabeth West (sister).

In that same year, Roumieu came to Ruislip to take up his next post as curate, and by the end of it his wife had given birth to their first child, Helen Mary Emma Roumieu Roumieu. The 1871 Census shows them living in one of the Field End Villas at Field End in Eastcote with two servants: Julia Collins of Ruislip and Elizabeth Levy of Pinner. At the end of 1871, Emma gave birth to their second child, Edward J. Roumieu, but sadly he did not live. Helen lived to be only four, dying suddenly of diphtheria in 1875.

Roumieu's predecessor as curate at Ruislip was the Rev. A.A. Harland, who moved from Eastcote to Harefield to become Vicar. He had lived in Eastcote Cottage in Wilcher (Wiltshire) Lane and by 1874, Roumieu had moved from Field End Villas to this same address. In 1870, the Vicar of Ruislip, Rev. Christopher Packe, was 78 years old and in failing health, so that the new curate's role was to be a very active one.

Roumieu apparently took it on with enthusiasm. Apart from his necessary church duties, in 1874 he started to publish *The Pinner and Ruislip Parish Magazine*. This appeared monthly, priced one old penny, and was obtainable from Mr Bryant, Ruislip, or delivered free of charge if ordered. It gave details of church services at Pinner, at All Saints, Woodridings in Hatch End (the chapel of ease to Pinner Church) and at Ruislip; it also listed baptisms, confirmations, weddings and burials; and it reported local events such as Sunday School treats, church choir cricket matches and flower & vegetable shows. (Rev. J.J. Roumieu in July 1876 won first prize at Barrow Point Hill House, Pinner for *Twelve Round Potatoes*. Most of the prizes were won *as usual* by Mr L.J. Baker and Police-Sergeant Bromfield.) The magazine also gave the train times of the London & Northwestern Railway (trains ran every hour from Pinner to Euston, and took 39 minutes), and was supported by advertisements of local traders, notably from Ruislip: John Howard, Tailor & Clothier (*Gentlemen waited on at their residences*) and Daniel Long (*Supplies Lemonade, Ginger Beer & Seltzer Water and all Bottled Ales & Stout, Wholesale & Retail*). There was a series of unusual articles on *Simple Chemistry* - one of which was on the science of brewing tea! More interesting were the articles on St. Martin's Church, which were reworked and published by Roumieu on Saturday 11 September 1875 in his little book called *Ruislip. A History of the Parish and Church*. This was advertised in the magazine as containing *55 Pages of Letter Press, descriptions of the Parish, Manor, Church, Living and Charities with a Photograph of the Church as a Frontis-piece*. What a pity no original copy of this book still exists.

St. Martin's Church, like so many parish churches in the last century, was restored by Sir Gilbert Scott. This work was carried out in 1869-70 at a cost of about £2,300. In his book, Roumieu writes:-

....the result is that Ruislip Church will bear comparison with any other in the neighbourhood. It has since been further embellished by the munificence of a Churchwarden, who has erected a reredos, built a porch to the west door and thoroughly warmed the building by Bacon's hot water apparatus.

This is the only reference by Roumieu to the new reredos, constructed in 1872, which has been found so far. However, he must have played a major part in its commission for it was designed by his uncle, Robert Lewis Roumieu, who had several commissions in the Harrow area. The identity of the churchwarden is not known, but may be L.J. Baker.

Roumieu took an active part in local events - no less than would have been expected of a young curate of his social standing. He was on the committee for the National School, Ruislip, becoming Secretary in 1875 and often taking the chair and his wife was on the ladies' committee which inspected needlework and such like at the school. He was also President of the Ruislip Temperance Society. His name always figured prominently in public subscriptions, eg coal and clothing clubs for the poor, and church outings.

So it is something of a surprise that when in 1878 the Vicar of Ruislip died, Rev. J.J. Roumieu did not stay on. The Buckinghamshire Advertiser commented:-

*The Rev. J.J. Roumieu the curate has had sole charge for some years due to the Rev. Packe's illness, and his appointment to the post would be generally approved.*

But this was not to be. Lady Hume-Campbell of Highgrove, Eastcote sent a letter of recommendation to the Dean and Canons of Windsor who were responsible for the appointment, but a Mr Kingsmill, manager of the British Linen Bank, wrote twice opposing Roumieu's application implying that he was disliked by the labouring classes(1). (In 1877 an A. Kingsmill had been on the National School committee with Roumieu and Mrs Kingsmill had been on the ladies' committee.) Whatever the reason, the appointment went to Thomas Marsh-Everett, a minor canon, which Roumieu was not.

Roumieu consequently decided to move on, and on 18 September 1878 a sale was held for him at Field End Lodge, Eastcote, comprising:-

*the whole of modern household furniture including: chairs, a table, a pianoforte, bookcases, books, bed, etc., wardrobes and chests, garden tools, a phaeton, saddle and bridle.*

When he left Ruislip, Roumieu took with him a silver salver and coffee pot, presented to him by L.J. Baker after a public subscription had collected £73.3s.1d from a total of 225 contributors. This suggests a greater popularity than perhaps Mr Kingsmill would have cared to admit.

From Ruislip, Roumieu moved to Waddingham, Lincolnshire, where he stayed till 1880 as curate. He then moved to Culford, Suffolk (near Bury St. Edmunds), where he was curate for three years before becoming, in 1883, at the age of 39, the Rector of Culford with Ingham and Timworth. Here he stayed, leading a quiet life with his wife, if the lack of accounts is anything to go by, till he retired in 1898, at the early age of 55.

Ann Goldsmith No. 315.	Ingham	Feb 16 1897	80 years	J.J. Roumieu Rector.
Eleanor Folkard No. 316.	Ingham	Nov 24 1897	74 years	J.J. Roumieu Rector.

Fig. 2 Ingham Parish Register Entry

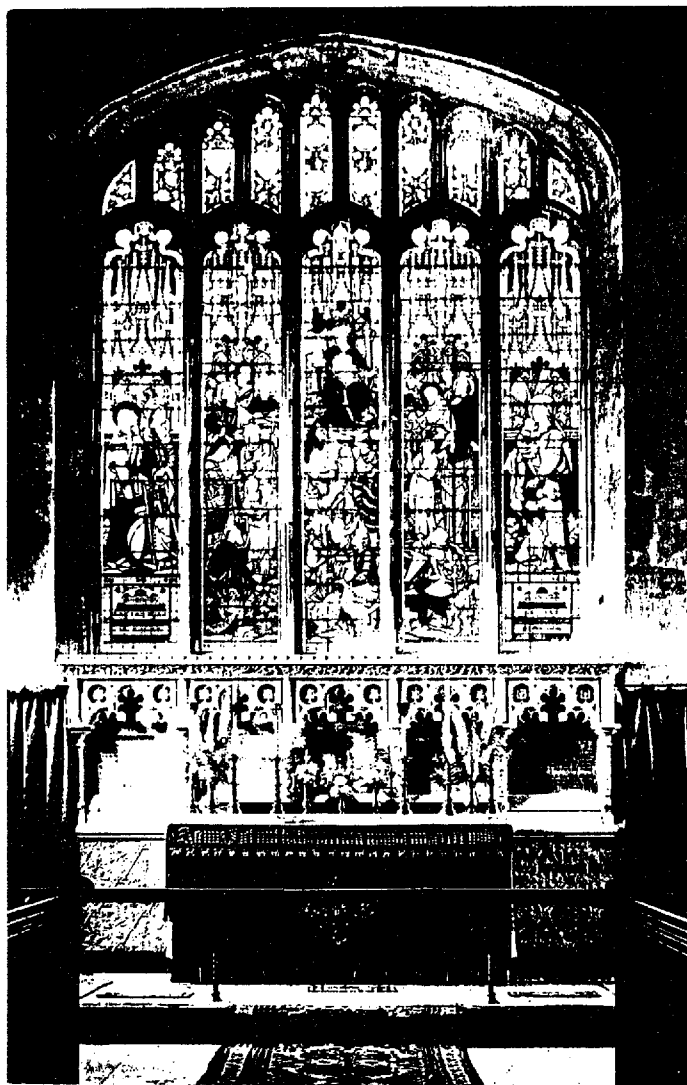
He and his wife spent their long retirement in Reigate, Surrey. The Kelly Survey directory shows them living at Hill Grange, Reigate from 1904 and the design of this large attractive house suggests that it was newly built when the Roumieus moved there. Perhaps it was

designed by his architect cousin, Reginald Roumieu. Mrs Roumieu died in 1922, aged 82 and Rev. J.J. Roumieu lived to be 81. He died in 1925 on 30 September and the funeral was at St. Mark's Church, Reigate.

Roumieu died a rich man. In his will he left nearly £42,000 net and amongst several legacies he left £400 each to the Clergy Orphan Corporation, St. John's Foundation School, Leatherhead and The Governesses' Benevolent Institution. He also bequeathed £1000 to Jesus College, Cambridge, for a scholarship for the sons of clergymen of the Church of England - possibly in memory of his son - and if the college was taken by surprise by this benefaction at the time, the Roumieu Scholarship still survives today.

### **Robert Lewis Roumieu**

Robert Lewis Roumieu FRIBA, the second son of John Roumieu, a solicitor (see family tree), designed much in London and Middlesex. He was articled to Benjamin D. Wyatt, the superintendent of the Duke of York's column, London and from 1836 to 1848 he worked in partnership with Alexander Dick Gough, ten years his senior, who had also been a pupil of Benjamin Wyatt. Their joint commissioned work was mostly in the Islington and St. Pancras area. These included: The Literary & Scientific Institute, Islington, 1835-7 (now the Almeida Theatre); De Beauvoir Square, Hackney, c1841; Free Church and National School, Clere Street St. Pancras, 1842 (now demolished); Milner Square, Islington, 1842/3; alterations and additions to Sir Charles Barry's St. Peter's Church, Islington, 1842-4; and enlargements to the Old Parish Church of St. Pancras 1847/8.



*Fig. 3 Reredos in St. Martin's Church*

(Ruislip Local History Collection)

In 1843, A.D. Gough paid his partner the compliment of christening his son Hugh Roumieu Gough. But in 1848 the partnership split up and the families apparently had nothing more to do with each other(2). Whether it is significant or not, the following year, on 7 July 1849, Robert Roumieu was to marry Charlotte Foster Stevens the daughter-in-law of Thomas Blackwell, joint founder of Crosse & Blackwell. This brought some of his work closer to our



area. In 1868 he designed The Cedars, at the east end of Uxbridge Road, Hatch End (now demolished) for Thomas Blackwell. This was an enlargement of the house formerly known as the Clock House. For Bertha Blackwell he designed Hillside, Brookshill, Harrow Weald (now locally listed) in a gothic style described by Pevsner as *of the gloomy dark brick kind so frequent amongst Harrow School buildings*.

One of Roumieu's last designs before his death, was in 1872 for the reredos in the parish church of Ruislip where his nephew, John Joseph, was curate. On 11 January 1873, the Buckinghamshire Advertiser reported that:-

*.... the lath and plaster wall at the east end of the church has been covered by a handsome Reredos extending the entire width of the chancel and divided into five compartments ....*

The wooden panels are painted with the Lord's Prayer, a chalice, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed and the stone base is carved with a pattern of flowers, branches and leaves. This reredos replaced an earlier wooden one, but as it is now hidden by a curtain, permission is required to view it. There is also a pen and watercolour in the RIBA drawings collection, which shows how Roumieu perceived it below the perpendicular east window.

Robert Lewis Roumieu died on 28 June 1877 at The Cedars, then the home of Thomas Francis Blackwell son of Thomas Blackwell(3). His practice was continued by his son Reginald St. Aubyn Roumieu ARIBA.

### **Reginald St Aubyn Roumieu**

One of Reginald's early designs was 148 High Street, Uxbridge (now demolished), in neo-Georgian style for the Uxbridge and District Electrical Supply Co. Ltd. In 1879 he produced designs for a new church in Wealdstone, Harrow to be funded by leading local residents, including Thomas Blackwell and his son Thomas Francis. The new church of Holy Trinity, situated at the corner of Headstone Drive and High Street, Wealdstone was consecrated by the Bishop of London in June 1881. The architects, Roumieu & Aitchison described the style as Early English and charged £224.

In 1892, Reginald Roumieu produced some designs of houses for Thomas Francis Blackwell for a development on his land at Westfield Park, Hatch End, adjacent to Pinner & Hatch End Station. The site was over eleven acres, on which about fifteen houses were built, three of them on one acre plots. The houses were of several designs with gabled roofs, decorated tile-hanging and stained glass windows, but most have now been pulled down and replaced with blocks of flats and new houses. Westfield and Westfield Point, which has a large cupola feature, still stand and are locally listed.

After this time, there seem to be only two designs by Reginald. One was for the Grosvenor Hospital for Women & Children, Vincent Square, Westminster, opened by Princess Louise on 22 July 1897 and the other a house called *Englewood* in Nugent's Park, Hatch End, in 1905 for Robert Arthur Blackwell.

Reginald Roumieu was married to Elizabeth Burchett and died in 1921. He is buried in All Saints' churchyard, Harrow Weald.



*Fig. 4 Westfield, Hatch End*

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## METHODISM

by Alison Akerman

The Methodist movement was originally made up of two main diverse branches of Primitive Methodism - which began with a great open-air meeting in 1807 on top of a hill near the Potteries, called Mow Cop, whose members had a great influence on the early Trade Union and Labour movements - and Wesleyanism which was founded prior to the Primitive Movement by John Wesley in 1738 with the simple aim of spreading *spiritual holiness* throughout the land.

John and his brother Charles were both Church of England clergymen who gathered round them a group of people of like mind. Because they took their religion so seriously and ordered their lives so methodically they were nick-named *Methodists*.

Up until 1738 Wesley had been a High Church man, but on a visit to Georgia, USA he was impressed by a group's work. John first *saw the light* at a small service in Aldersgate, London and from hereon all Wesley's energies were devoted to the single object of saving souls. This led to him organising the Methodist Movement - arranged in "Societies" which were united

into *Circuits* under a Minister, with local Lay Preachers also employed. The Circuits were formed into *Districts* and all knitted together into a single Conference of Ministers which has met annually since 1744.

John Wesley felt called by God to be an apostle to the whole nation and for 50 years he travelled all over England, Wales and Ireland *offering Christ* to all who would listen. When the churches were closed to him he preached in the open air. During this time he covered more than 200,000 miles and preached over 40,000 sermons. He made religion a live force to many ignorant folk of humble station. He started the Sunday School scheme and increased the use of music - his brother Charles wrote over 5,500 hymns.

John Wesley did not plan separation from the Anglican Church - the Chapel services were meant to be supplementary but the Society found little sympathy for its *enthusiasm* in the Established Church. Wesley died in 1791 and Methodism became a totally separate movement in 1811, which is why the earliest Methodist Chapels were only built about 160 years ago - i.e. from 1830 onwards.

### EASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

Dr. Adam Clarke was the founder of Methodism in Eastcote. He was a profound admirer of John Wesley (the founder of the whole movement), a remarkably popular preacher and a most assiduous scholar, holding an M.A. and a Doctor of Law Degree of Aberdeen University. Adam Clarke was born in 1760 in Londonderry. He was a striking figure - as a young man he had shoulder-length red hair! He met John Wesley who quickly recognised his talent and appointed him to Kingswood School in Bristol at the age of 22 years. He became one of the great scholars among Wesley's contemporaries, knowing Latin, Greek, Hebrew and German. He became a member of many learned societies and was a prolific writer. His Commentary and Critical Summary of the Bible which occupies six weighty volumes took him forty years to complete. Such was the man who came to live at Haydon Hall for eight years - from 1824 until his death in 1832 and brought Methodism to Eastcote. Amongst Dr. Clarke's many acquaintances of high-standing was the Countess of Derby. A previous Countess of Derby once lived at Haydon Hall and it's thought fair to conjecture this may have been one reason why he came to live here.

Dr. Clarke wanted to establish a place of worship near his home and in 1826 he started a class that met in a cottage on land belonging to his Estate, opposite the Hall at the bottom of Joel Street, called Redbournes (in later years called *The Laurels*). This elicited an immediate response from the poor people of Eastcote who filled it to overflowing. By March 1827 a stable and coach-house had been converted into a chapel. Dr. Clarke wrote in a letter to one of his daughters, Mary Ann, dated 5th March 1827, just after the first service:

*the place was completely thronged, every corner was filled, yet all was perfectly quiet, all appeared as if they had come to hear ..... several of our most respectable neighbours attended, and there was a good sprinkling of the farmers, besides a considerable number of decently-dressed elderly men and women. I began the service with reading the prayers .... I preached for an hour: all listened with rivetted attention, and the word was with power. At the conclusion I gave out that hymn:*

*"Come let us join our cheerful songs  
With angels round the throne"*

*which two or three of our friends who had come to the opening sung to the Old Hundreth tune; the effect was indeed noble, for its majestic notes were skilfully applied to this appropriate hymn. I then announced our design to open the place for a Sunday School .....*

He established a Sunday School which was held in Haydon Hall stables, where reading was taught as well (Wesley being the instigator of the idea of Sunday Schools) - there are reports of Dr. Clarke having his Sunday School class to tea on the lawn. The cottage was soon found to be too small to hold all those who came to hear his preaching.

In the safe in the vestry of the new church are some unpublished letters that Adam Clarke wrote to his wife, Mary. One written at 5.00am on 20th June, 1832 ends:

*We hear that the cholera is got to London. Wherever it may be there is God,  
and perhaps both you and I are immortal till our work is done.  
With love to all at home, I am, my very dear Mary  
Your very affectionate, Adam Clarke.*

But his work was almost done, for he died of that same cholera two months later. He was buried in a soldered coffin at Wesley's chapel next to his greatly loved leader.

Clarke's son John died while still young in 1840. John's widow, Elizabeth, remarried in 1841 and her new husband, John Harnett, turned the Methodists out of their meeting place as he wished to live in the cottage, and for some time they had to meet where they could.

Miss Cordelia Winter of Field End House Farm was reported as saying to another villager that she wished she could do something for the Eastcote Wesleyans. *You could* was the reply, *you could build them a chapel. And so I will* said Miss Winter. She was as good as her word, giving a small corner of Hog Field Meadow in Field End Road for the chapel to be built on, and providing funds for the building. The chapel opened on Monday 8th May 1848 and this part of Field End Road became known as Chapel Hill. Cordelia Winter died not long after the chapel was built but her heir, William Lawrence continued to support the Methodist cause. (There is a stone plaque now set in the wall in the corridor at the rear of the new church, but which was originally displayed in the chapel in memory of:

*William Lawrence Esq.  
Field End House, Eastcote*

*Born November 25th 1805  
Died November 9th 1880*

In the 1861 Census the chapel was oddly recorded as "To Let". The chapel was first lit with tallow candles which had to be snuffed, then composite ones were used. After that came paraffin lamps and then gas. The hymns were pitched with a tuning fork. The chapel became the centre for many village activities in the 19th Century. As well as religious and missionary

meetings, there were Sunday School treats with plum cake, bread and butter and tea for the children and evening concerts with songs and readings for their elders.

The names of Lavender, Gregory and White figured prominently among the Trustees for 100 years and tablets in the chapel recorded their devoted service. A plaque, now in the vestibule of the new church records grateful remembrance of Reuben and Amelia Lavender who were lifelong and devoted members of the church. There was a plaque in memory of Mrs. White who built the Sunday School. George Lavender was the first Superintendent of the Sunday School - his brother and then nephew following him. A plaque, now found on the wall just before the door to the rear of the new church, remembers George Lavender who died age 76 on 6th March 1900. *He filled almost every office in connection with this church and was for 47 years Superintendent of the Sunday School.* The Lavender family's involvement with the church lives on to this day - Eva Lavender runs the Women's Fellowship Group.

A female member of the Gregory family was the first infant to be baptised in the chapel in 1849.

It must be said that the area around the chapel became the unofficial meeting place of some of the rowdier elements of local youth - however, PC Mitchelson, living at No. 2 Field End Villas, was usually on hand!

In the early days the nearest station was Hatch End and Ministers who came to conduct services had to walk long distances. In 1904 came the extension of the railway from Harrow to Uxbridge, with, later in 1906, a Halt at Eastcote. More people came to live in what was advertised as *The most beautiful village in Middlesex.*

The community of the little chapel took on a new lease of life - the old building was refurnished - the old square pews were taken out and replaced by ones which lasted until just before the 2nd World War. The high pulpit was replaced by a rostrum so that a platform could be accommodated for missionary meetings etc. The vestry, which was a tiny cubicle, was extended at the expense of the Sunday School to make it possible for the Stewards and the Preacher to enter it together. And so on..... but the building in earnest had not yet begun in Eastcote and therefore no pressure existed as yet making the building of a more capacious, new chapel essential.

Chapel life continued with large congregations, Band of Hope meetings, Guild evenings and concerts. Then came the 1914-18 War and after that disillusionment and a falling-away of church membership, but many were won back through the ministry of the Rev. Eric Dixon, a former Chaplain to the Forces and who had a distinguished war record. The cause prospered in its quiet way until in 1924 *the full blast of speculative building turned to Eastcote.* Anglicanism arrived with a tin church, now St. Lawrence's Hall, and drew away some of the congregation. But still the people came and the time came when the chapel could not house them all.

It became obvious a new chapel must be built and the Trustees began to seek for a site. Several were considered - and rejected - one because it was subject to flooding, one because it was too near to Ruislip, and so on. A school of thought developed which considered that the future centre of Eastcote would be near to the station and that the church should be built there. But development taking place on Estates lying near Joel Street and Eastcote High

Road was foreseen and through Comben and Wakeling Ltd., who had bought and were developing the parkland opposite the existing chapel, the new site (now on the corner of Pamela Gardens) was made available and the Trustees acquired it in 1935.

In spite of difficulties, grants were available and the new church was designed by the architects George Baines and Son - the designers of many attractive Methodist churches. Quantities were extracted, tenders sought and received and all was ready for building to begin when war broke out in 1939. The times were difficult - it was not easy for the Trustees to know what to do, for heavy bombing was expected and materials were likely to be unobtainable. The tenders were returned and the matter was left in abeyance with the hope that a short and victorious war would enable it to be taken up again without any great delay.

However, with the hope of a short war being dashed the centenary of the chapel in 1948 saw worship still continuing in the old chapel. During the war evening services were held during daylight hours and for a period in 1940 services were held in the Ideal Cinema. In 1949 the church's main committee, which had the responsibility of dividing Ministry of Works Licences among the different denominations granted one of £8,000 to Eastcote. The Trustees as once decided that a third of the new church, the part which now forms the transept, should be erected in the style and design agreed to in 1939. The stonelaying service was held on 14th October 1950 with Edith Lavender performing the task. The stone, which can be seen on the outside wall of the church, at the side of the building adjacent to the car parking area, was engraved with the words:

*This stone was laid to the glory of God on the 14th of October 1950*

Many difficulties remained but a debt of £2,000 was in time cleared and the funds necessary to complete the church grew amazingly. The new church was at last completed in its original design (extensions to the front and rear) and a stone was laid at the entrance to the rear of the hall to initiate the final stage on 31st October 1959 noting that the Architects were George Baines & Syborn, Westminster and the Builders A.T. Rowley Ltd., Tottenham.

On 1st October 1960 the completed church was opened by the Secretary of the Methodist Church in a great religious service which was attended by many distinguished Ministers and visitors, including the Chairman of the County Council, the High Sheriff of Middlesex and the Chairman and Members of the Ruislip-Northwood Council.

The original chapel opposite was demolished in 1962 and subsequently two flats were built on the site for retired Methodist Ministers. The Rev. Max Woodward, at one time Minister of Wesley's Chapel in London, Secretary of the World Methodist Council, and who preached in the church when it was just the chancel, and his wife Kathleen were the first inhabitants of one of the flats (14 years ago) and still live there. Digging in their small garden at the rear has produced brass hinges, 29 milk bottles, chair castors, heaps of china (the crockery for tea parties in the Chapel presumably broken and thrown out) and parts of Communion cups.

In 1979 a small addition was made to the rear of the building (stone laid with the words Paul G Barlett Lane 24th November 1979) thus completing the final phase of the Adam Clarke Memorial Church. A brass tablet dated 1916 reset in the vestibule wall in 1960 from the demolished old chapel bears the words:

*To the memory of Adam Clarke MA LLD*

*Born 1760 Died 1832*

*A great preacher, a profound scholar, theologian, commentator, author.*

*Three times President of the Wesleyan Conference*

*Resided at Haydon Hall, Eastcote 1824 - 1832*

*This tablet is erected by the Trustees of Eastcote Chapel and Friends in the  
Watford Circuit*

*June 1916*

As Mr. Kemp wrote in his book *The History of Eastcote* .....

*From a lowly beginning has grown a church of dignity and grace of which  
Eastcote may be proud. It is the thriving centre of many organisations to  
meet the spiritual and social needs of children and men and women of all  
ages, a live church worthily carrying on the witness maintained by the  
small band of worshippers of over 100 years ago.*

The next home of Methodism in this area was at Ruislip Common.

#### **RUISLIP COMMON "THE LITTLE CHAPEL SET IN HISTORY"**

By the efforts of hay dealers, a corn merchant, a farmer, watchmaker and labourer and largely due to the energies of Mr. Charles Henwood, the Clerk of a timber wharf, a chapel was constructed in Ducks Hill for the use of *Protestant Evangelical Dissenters* in 1852 and was licensed in 1854. The 1851 Census describes Mr. Henwood as living with his wife and 5 children in one of King's End Cottages, next to the White Bear. He obviously left the area as he and his family were not mentioned in later censuses, but he maintained links with the chapel and returned to join the celebration of its anniversary in later years. Another of the founding group was Mr Edward Bray who died on 5th December 1896, aged 71. The building cost £300 and had seating - on forms - for 200 people. When Temperance Meetings were held it was filled with local people. The strong evils of drink and the virtues of total abstinence were stressed and people were exhorted to *take the pledge*.

In a document dated 29th December, 1855 the land was leased to the Trustees at a yearly rental of one shilling. The lease was to be renewed annually for ninety nine years but after ownership of the land had changed more than once, it was finally sold, copyhold, to the Trustees on 3rd October, 1882 for £2. The Primitive Methodists took over the chapel in 1882. (In April 1922 the copyhold was altered to freehold.)

Mists hide several of the years, for no Minute Books seem to have survived. Not until 1900 does another document appear which carries the fine flourishing signature of the enthusiastic Rev. Harvey Roe, Superintendent of the Watford Circuit, whose zeal seems to throb through the ink. The Chapel was then part of the Watford Primitive Methodist Circuit, and so associated with meeting places at Northwood, Croxley Green, Watford, Bushey Heath and Aldenham. Membership was only twelve although the average congregation was thirty at ordinary services and even reached seventy on special occasions. Finance was a problem.



Total collections at services averaged about £6.8s annually and a balance of £42 had to be raised by special efforts. In 1901 a new circuit was formed which became Harrow and Northwood Mission. The Minister in Charge - Rev. A Sayer - had a stipend of £18 every three months. For a number of years membership fluctuated. Once it was as low as eight and in 1916 as high as twenty five. Then the work of the Chapel flourished again under the inspiration and virile leadership of the beloved Rev. Ernest Smith.

In 1922 a room was built for the Sunday School and other meetings at a cost of £700. It was called the Wallis Memorial Hall - in memory of Mary Wallis (wife of John Wallis) a Sunday School teacher under Superintendent John Neal. Mr. & Mrs. William Lavender were particularly instrumental in and very keen for the erection of the Memorial Hall (their names are remembered in the stone tablets set in the wall at the entrance of the hall). Mr & Mrs. W E and Mr & Mrs. A Lavender, Mr. & Mrs John Neal, Mr. & Mrs. Bysh and Mr & Mrs. E Stent - were all also great workers to whom the cause owed so much. From 1938 the hall was let to the Local Authority to house a new school called Ruislip Common JM, which became Whiteheath in 1947. Today the hall is partitioned off at the rear to provide an area for the Vestry and the hall is regularly used by the Women's Fellowship which meets on Tuesdays.

In March 1952 the first wedding at the church took place, that is after it had been built for nearly 100 years! It was the marriage of Mr. William Jack Hurcomb of St. Albans and Miss Beryl Margaret Tapping, eldest daughter of Mr & Mrs G W Tapping of 4 Morford Close, Eastcote. The Rev. R F Robbins, Minister, officiated.

The whole interior of the church was redecorated in 1954 in contemporary style, in time for the Centenary celebrations on Saturday 3rd May, when a buffet tea and a public meeting were held. In the Centenary leaflet there was an appeal for donations for exterior renovation work - costing about £300. Over £100 had already been subscribed by local residents.

Originally the chapel had nearly twice as much land in front as it does now (the frontage used to extend to the middle of the road). In the 1950's Ducks Hill Road was widened and it was at this time that the War Memorial was moved as it used to stand on the chapel's original front boundary. The Memorial is now positioned against the front wall of the chapel.

By 1971 the membership of the church was eleven (with the average congregation of five or six) and there was no Sunday School. Alfred Cockett shouldered the responsibility of five official positions - Society Steward, Trustees' Secretary, Trustees' Treasurer, Chapel Steward and Organist. When the Cockett family first moved into the area from Walthamstow in 1938 they seem to have got fully involved in the Ruislip Common Primitive Church. Mr. A J Cockett Snr. held most offices and his son became the organist. On the death of his father Alfred took over and has continued as the bulwark of the church.

In 1979 an eight foot cross made by Alfred Cockett was placed on the gable, as the finishing touch to three months' re-decorating. The cross was actually put on the gable by the Rev. Ernest Goodridge, Minister. The chapel had been in need of redecoration for some time but although the congregation had been saving money, there was still not enough to have the church painted professionally. So, under the direction of Alfred Cockett they decided to do it themselves, with some help from a few Northwood Methodist Church members. The interior was redecorated some months after, in January 1980, when some major re-plastering work

was carried out by a local man. Many cracks had appeared - legacy from major damage caused to the ceiling when a bomb fell during World War 2 in a field in Ducks Hill Road.

It was hoped that the cross would make the chapel more noticeable to the public. 630 leaflets were delivered to the immediate neighbourhood to encourage more people to go along. The Rev. Goodridge said *It would be nice if the church was used for the community. If somebody was having a birthday party and wanted somewhere larger to have it, they could use the chapel.*

The circulation of leaflets has not had any effect on the level of membership - currently, 1992, this is officially five, although seven to twelve people usually attend on most occasions.

## **NORTHWOOD METHODIST CHURCHES**

When Northwood began to develop after 1887, the chapels at Eastcote and Ruislip Common could not meet the needs of the newcomers to Northwood who soon formed groups with others of similar beliefs to hold religious meetings and make plans for a chapel of their own. In fact the two main branches of Methodist worshippers existed in Northwood at this time - the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists.

### **High Street Primitive Methodist Church**

Began with Methodist services taking place in the cottage home of Mr. & Mrs. Pennell - *Elthorne* in Half Mile Lane (present Northwood High Street). A request was sent to Rev. Harvey Roe, the Superintendent of the Watford Circuit, to attend. He conducted the evening service held on Wednesday 6th May, 1896. At this meeting 10 names were enrolled and they became the nucleus of the church. Mr. H J C Brudenell was appointed Class Leader and Mr. A R Pennell Trust Secretary. At this meeting it was decided to buy a plot of land at the corner of Northwood High Street and Hallowell Road.

At a quarterly meeting of the Society held at Croxley Green on 3rd June 1896 the purchase of this land for the sum of £120 and the building of a School Chapel to seat 250 people was sanctioned. The cost, inclusive of the land, was limited to £1,000. The next day the Trustees met to decide upon the builders. The foundation stone was laid on 8th July, 1896 with tea being served and a public meeting being held in Mr. Park's field (now the High Street). Thus started the building of the Assembly Hall, Church and Sunday School. The congregations consisted of all denominations and grew apace.

In 1897 a cottage for the caretaker was erected at a cost of £200.

At a Trustees Meeting on 27th November, 1902 it was resolved to build a new church on the adjoining site (with a frontage on Half Mile Lane) to seat 250 and so complete the original scheme - the cost to be £2,080.

The stone-laying ceremony took place on 10th December 1902 with the official opening on 1st July, 1903. At the end of the year the financial statement showed that the entire property cost about £4,000 leaving a total debt only of £1,300, which was soon cleared owing to the splendid work of the first minister, Rev. Harvey Roe, and a band of faithful men and women. The church had high choir stalls and a speaker's platform.

The church was reconstructed in 1952 to make it more spacious and dignified. A pulpit was provided for the first time - given in memory of Mrs. Kemp-Calvert who devoted long years

of service to the church and for many years was President of the Women's Own. The Rev. Gordon Kemp, her son, dedicated the work and the pulpit.

In 1953 the church celebrated its Golden Jubilee.

### **Oaklands Gate Wesleyan Methodist Church**

The Wesleyan Methodists also first met in private houses and in 1896 they too applied for permission to build a chapel. The earliest Minutes in the Trustees Minutes Book dated from March 11th 1896 and are those of a sub-committee appointed by the Watford Circuit Quarterly Meeting *to make enquiries as to a suitable site for the erection of a chapel at Northwood*. Most of the committee members lived in Watford, including Mr. A Trewin, a name still familiar to those who shop there. The members of the sub-committee visited Northwood on 13th June 1896 and viewed several sites including one at the corner of Green Lane and Hallowell Road. They unanimously preferred the site on the corner of Murray Road and Maxwell Road (now the Police Station!). Following the visit, the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund, was asked to contribute £600 towards the purchase of the plot, the remainder to be raised locally.

The minutes of a meeting held three months later reveal the first of many difficulties. The contract for the purchase of the land had been signed on 15th August 1896 but legal difficulties had arisen and shortly after the Methodists were threatened with legal action by Mr. Simmons, the landowner, for their failure to complete the purchase.

The nature of the problems is referred to in the Minutes of a meeting held on 30th January 1897 which mentions *the pronounced objection of many residents to the erection of the chapel at Northwood*. These residents were later to object even more strongly to the proposal to build a police station on the site, a battle they eventually lost after a High Court ruling.

By the beginning of June 1897 agreement had been reached to cancel the contract. The £50 deposit was forfeited and a further £15 paid to Mr. Simmons to cover the legal costs. The £600 loan had been repaid to the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund with £12 interest. Thus, the Methodists found themselves fifteen months after their first meeting still without a plot of land and out of pocket. Some three months later, however, new negotiations had taken place with a Mr. Allen who had a plot of land in Hallowell Road which was free from restrictions and which he was prepared to sell for £325. During this period the Society continued to meet in the home of Mr. Sage in Kewferry Road.

The site of 100' x 230' at the lower end of Hallowell Road was formally purchased in August 1897 for £700 and a corrugated iron building was erected costing £1,250 with seating for 200 people, opening in October, 1905. It became affectionately known as the *Tin Tabernacle*. In August 1905 the Secretary was instructed to order 200 chairs at 3s 9d each from Messrs. Glenister & Co. of High Wycombe, who offered a 2.5% discount for cash within 14 days and delivery at a cost of 2d per chair. By September 300 hymn sheets had been ordered for the opening service; stoves, gas fittings and notice boards installed and the offer from one of the Trustees of carpet and linoleum at cost price was gratefully accepted. The Trustees' meeting of 30th September was held in the new iron building, nine years after the first meeting.

The organ was purchased and installed by January of the following year and new Trustees

were appointed, including such Northwood men as George Sage, Herbert Gerner and Dr. Walter Kinton. Dr. Kinton worked at the newly-opened Mount Vernon Hospital and was the first choir master. The families of Fanshawe (who still retain close links with the church), Woolley, Doubleday, Almond, Proctor, Courtney, Grimes, Cooper, Pratt, Mitchell and Collins were closely associated with the work of the church. The Rev. Harvey Roe was the first minister (1896 - 1901) and then again from 1902 - 1909.

During the war years (1914-18) repair and decoration of the building and repair of the organ and piano were frequently discussed but action deferred. Despite the difficult times, the debt was finally paid off in 1919. This was the year that Mr. John Fielding moved to Northwood and the Methodists owed much to his generosity. His name first appeared in a minute of the meeting on 8th March 1919 to the effect that Messrs. Collins, Fielding, Gerner and the Chapel Steward, Mr. Satchell, be invited to serve on the committee to make enquiries as to a site suitable for a permanent church.

In December 1919 Mr. Fielding was appointed Treasurer of the newly-formed Chapel Building Fund. Even while plans were being made for a permanent church, conditions in the iron building were still the subject of much discussion. In 1920 for example, the Trustees agreed to replace the existing gas lighting by a system of electric lighting at an approximate cost of £30. However, action was deferred and the gas lighting remained.

In November 1920 Mr. Fielding, by now Treasurer to the Trustees, reported that he had purchased the house *Sandy Hook* in Dene Road with adjoining ground extending to the railway and that he was prepared to hand-over as a gift a portion of the land as a site for a permanent Wesleyan Church. Needless to say this offer was accepted *with cordial expressions of gratitude to Mr. Fielding for his generosity*. Thus at last, after 24 years, a site for a permanent church was obtained. The modern Manse near the church bears the name *Fielding* - a tribute to the man without whom the Methodists might have had to wait even longer for a chapel of their own. The Rev. Atherton Hart was the first Minister to occupy the Manse.

In 1921 the church was transferred from Watford to the Harrow circuit.

The laying of the foundation stones for the Northwood Wesleyan Church at Oaklands Gate Church was on 3rd October 1923, the ceremony being performed by 15 people - including Mr. Fielding and Mrs Fanshawe - and on behalf of the Choir, The Ladies Sewing Meeting and The Sunday School and by Representatives of Wesleyan Churches at Harrow, Eastcote, Harefield, Pinner, Rickmansworth, Ruislip and Wealdstone. This occasion is commemorated on a brass plaque which is displayed on the interior wall at the rear of the church. The foundation stone laid by Mr Fielding is set in the wall at the left of the church's main entrance. The inscription on the right of the entrance is now barely legible but formerly indicated that the architect was William May Weir, F.R.I.B.A., of Westminster. The church was opened with its first service on 14th June 1924. The Tin Tabernacle was moved from Hallowell Road and erected at the side of the Oaklands Gate church and was used as the Youth Hall. As the work amongst young people grew - Sunday School, Scouts and Guides, Cubs and Brownies, Youth Fellowship - the old *Tin Tabernacle* was found to be quite inadequate and plans were put in motion to raise money for a new hall. After a lot of hard work the present main hall was opened in 1962 with the Tin Tabernacle having been

demolished (nearly 60 years old) in order to make way for the new hall.

The site vacated by the Tin Tabernacle in Hallowell Road is now occupied by the Parish Hall of St. Matthews Catholic Church.

The Rev. A H Bomford (father of the present Mrs. Eileen Fanshawe) was a beloved Minister for 8 years (1935 - 1943) after which he retired.

The two separate branches of Methodism - Primitive and Wesleyan - joined forces in 1944 but the two Northwood churches remained separate, although in the same circuit. Although with effect from January 1947 the Minister appointed to the Oaklands Gate Church took over responsibility for the Primitive Church in Hallowell Road too. The Rev. Dr. R Scott Frayn B. A., B.D., Ph.D was the first such Minister. However, in 1965, after much thought, heartsearching and prayer, under the guidance of the Rev. Wilfred Jones, they decided to join together to become Northwood Methodist Church, Oaklands Gate and *to witness and worship together*. The first service of the unionised Northwood Methodist Church at Oaklands Gate was held in September, 1965.

The Primitive Methodist Church in Hallowell Road was taken over by the Council and leased for use as the Jewish Synagogue (prior to the building of the new Synagogue in Oaklands Gate). After that it was demolished and the land is now occupied by Old Peoples' Sheltered Housing *James Court*.

The on-going growth of youth work necessitated a purpose-built youth hall and this was opened on 23rd October, 1976 by Cyril K Grimes.

On 26th April 1989, an article in The Gazette notes that work on a £136,000 facelift was underway. This work included the provision of new chairs, a centre aisle and a new vestibule. The windows at the front of the church were lowered to improve lighting and there was a roof for the new entrance. More than £82,000 was raised by the parishioners, with the rest of the money coming from grants.

The Church was re-opened and rededicated after alterations at a service held on Saturday 23rd September 1989 followed by tea. In addition to refurbishment in the *New Look* church itself (new heating system, chairs instead of pews, a raised sanctuary with new movable pulpit and communion rail), the alterations encompassed a vestibule with a coffee bar, a new entrance leading into an *Oasis* lounge/refreshment area, a toilet for the disabled and an adaptable meeting room.

The current Minister (with effect from 1984) is The Rev. William Murphy.

This is a beautiful lofty church with an upper floor choir pediment over the front entrance, a timbered ceiling, wood panelling and lovely marble columns. Three stained glass windows on the right-hand side are worthy of attention, which I believe must have originally been in the Primitive Church. They depict Florence Nightingale, the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth Fry and are inscribed:-

*In thanksgiving to God and in loving memory of Elizabeth Alice Kemp-Calvert, widow of William Kemp. Died March 6th, 1942 and erected by her sons.*

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Rev. Max Woodward, retired

Rev. Sandy Williams M.A., MEd., Minister Eastcote Methodist Church

C Cox *A Quiet and Secluded Spot*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

W A G Kemp *The Story of Northwood*

C Cox *Early Years of Wesleyan Methodism in Northwood*, Journal RNELHS

Mrs. Eileen Fanshawe

Mr. Alfred Cockett



## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

### NORTHWOOD HILLS IN THE 1930's & 40's

by Pearl Gardner

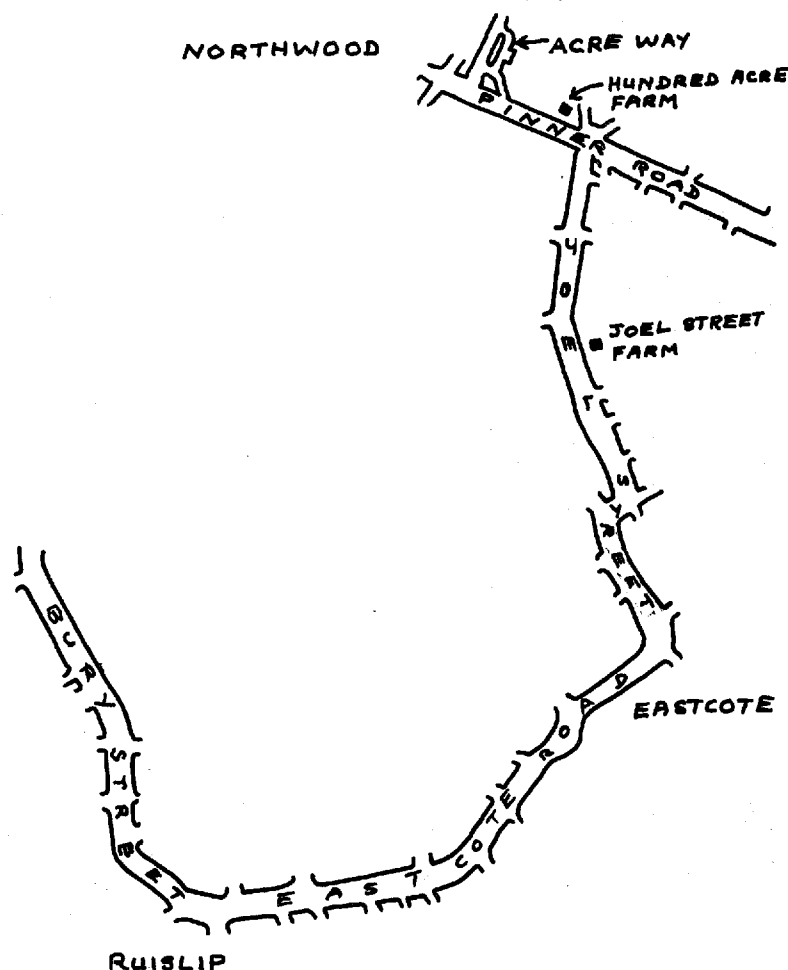


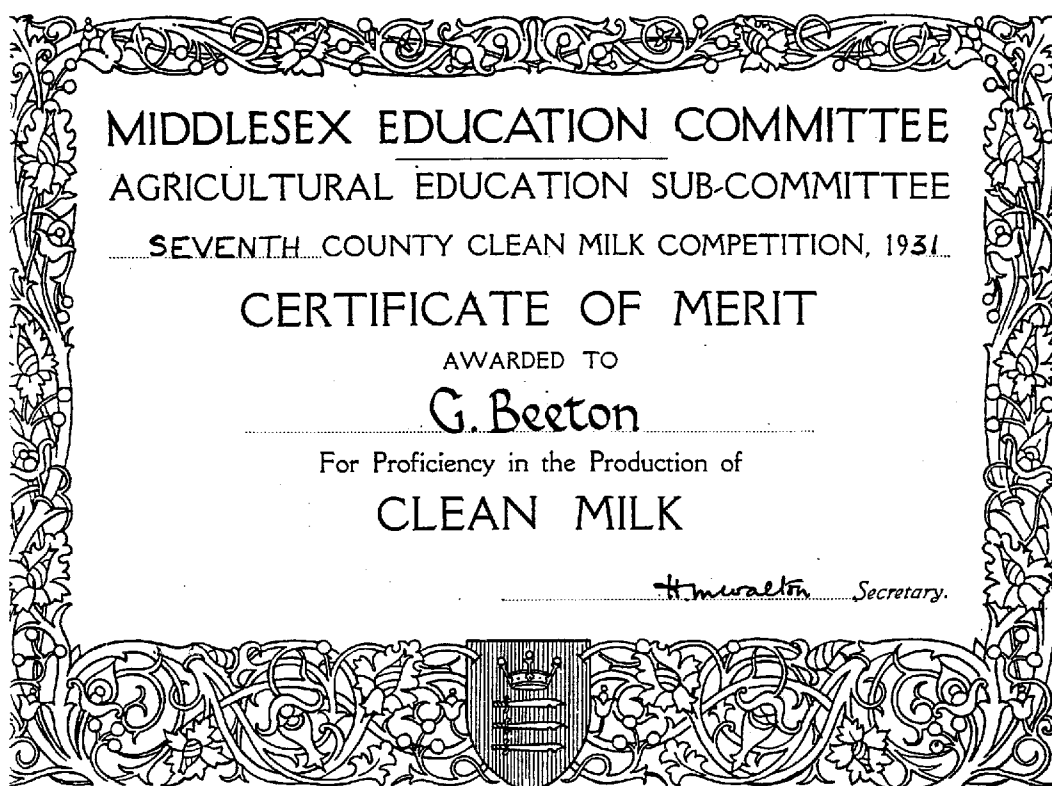
Fig. 1 Map of Northwood Hills Area

My name is Pearl May Gardner *nee* Beeton. I was born on a Tuesday, 18th August 1931 at 6pm in my Grandmother's house, 40 Acre Way, Northwood. It was a new council estate then and Granny had originally lived further down the road. My parents were living in Barters Cottage, Bury Street, Ruislip but Mum had come to Granny's for the birth.

My father, George Beeton, came to Northwood from Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire with his parents about 1926. Granddad, Charles Beeton, was employed as a cowman by Mr C.M. Robarts and Dad worked with him, also as a cowman. They lived at Hundred Acre Farm in Pinner Road, where Granddad built the original building at the right of the farm. Granddad left the Robarts in 1928, but Dad continued working for them at their Joel Street Farm until the 1940's.

In 1933 we moved to Asp Cottage, Joel Street which was nearer to the farm and we lived there until I was six years old. This cottage was one of a pair owned by the Wiles family who lived in the other which was called Poplar Cottage. Asp Cottage had one large living room with a kitchen and two bedrooms, mine only large enough for a single bed. There was no electricity; gas was used for cooking and the only lighting we had was a large brass oil lamp and candles. I can always remember when we had an orange we placed half skins upside down in the hearth and in no time at all they were black with ants. If we came in after dark, the floor would be covered with black beetles!

Asp Cottage was the first home that I can remember. We were surrounded by fields, some used for grazing cattle and others for growing hay. Mr Covington was the head cowman and lived in the farm house. It was all fields then, Dad used to be haymaking in the field opposite and the cows were grazed in other fields around the farm. Dad had to be up early in the



*Fig. 2 George Beeton's Certificate for Clean Milk*



morning for milking and then would come home for breakfast. When they were haymaking, he would work late into the evening. I loved to play in the hay while Dad was working! If cows were calving he would sometimes be up all night with them. Milk was pasteurised at Joel Street and I used to like watching the milk run through the pasteuriser, which, to me, looked like a large scrubbing board. Dad held certificates for dry hand milking for the years 1931-38.

Asp Cottage was not very big and was very damp. I was always having a bad throat and chest and Dr Dale did all he could to enable us to get a council house. So, in 1937, we moved to 52 Acre Way not far from where I was born, although my grandparents had by now moved to 181 Pinner Road. The house in Acre Way was much larger with a kitchen, living room, three bedrooms, bathroom and a flush toilet just outside the back door. When we first moved in, we had gas lighting in the kitchen and bathroom. Water was heated by a large copper in the bathroom with a coal fire underneath. The water had to be scooped out to fill the bath. The kitchen had a concrete floor which Mum had to scrub to keep clean. The other floors were covered with lino, with slip mats here and there.

In those days, the summers alway seemed to be hot and sunny and the winters cold with snow. The only heating we had was a coal fire in the living room. The fireplaces in the bedrooms were only used if you were ill! We went to bed dressed in bedsocks, pyjamas or nightdresses, cardigans and dressing gowns. On top of the bed we laid our coats for extra warmth and Mum would heat a house brick in the oven, wrap it in an old towel, then put it in the bed to act as a hot water bottle.

We spent winter evenings playing games like *House* or *Lotto* or *I Spy*. When I went to my friend Rita's house, we used to sing while her Grandmother played the piano. In the summer, we spent a lot of time up the Hog's Back, this was a small hill at the rear of our house. We built dens in the hedgerows and could play there in complete safety. Mum could see us most of the time from the end of the back garden and if she called us in for tea or dinner we could hear her (although there were times when we didn't choose to). There was a small length of field at the end of our garden belonging to the local hospital and this was another favourite play area. Later this piece of land was used for allotments and each house rented the piece at the end of its garden to grow vegetables for the war effort. We had two apple trees in our garden and a variety of soft fruit. We also kept chickens and a rabbit. Granny didn't live too far away in Pinner Road and if Mum wasn't in we always knew where to find her. Christmas was always spent at Granny's with all the rest of Mum's family.

We were never well off, but I can't remember feeling deprived in any way. A lot of my clothes were *hand-me-downs* from my Mum's youngest sister Olive and Granny, who was a dressmaker, used to alter things to fit me. Mum always tried to buy us new leather shoes, but Dad repaired them himself and he always put good thick soles on them so that we didn't wear them out too quickly. I can remember one new dress that I wore to school. I was supposed to change into old clothes to go out to play, but one afternoon I was in too much of a hurry and tore it on some barbed wire. I came home and darned it in the the hope that Mum wouldn't find out. She did of course, but was so proud of the darning that I had done, that she wasn't cross with me.

Most Sundays Auntie Ruby came for tea and we always went for a walk in the afternoon, usually past Tappins the sweet shop, this was a little shop in someone's front room where sweets were always kept in large jars. Mum and Dad always managed to buy some for the walk home. Whenever Mum went shopping to Northwood Hills I had a penny bar of Nestle's chocolate from the slot machine outside the station, we would also go to the farm shop by the side of the house on Hundred Acre Farm, as it was then called, in Pinner Road. My Grandparents had lived there for a while when Granddad Beeton was cowman. The shop sold tubs of cream for 2d (0.8p) which Mum bought to go with mashed banana for my tea.

I started school when I was nearly six years old and I hated it. Dad would take me on his bike, I would sit on his cross bar, and he would fetch me again at dinner time as there were no school dinners then. My Mum's youngest sister Olive was still at school and she used to look after me and stop me from running home at playtime. My first school was Pinner Road and I went there until I was eleven years old. I didn't pass my *Eleven Plus*, probably because I lost so much schooling when I had Scarlet Fever. But when I went to Potter Street, I stayed in an A Class. During the War, schooling was a bit erratic. We spent a lot of time down in the shelters and for a time only attended school part-time. While in the shelters, we used to knit or crochet or play games like *I Spy*, but after a while the teachers realised we could do something like spelling or mental arithmetic.

I broke my leg while at Potter Street. There was a large fete in the school playing fields and I fell off a rolling horse. It meant a lot of time off school as the Headmaster wouldn't allow me back until I could walk unaided because of the air raids. There were teachers we didn't like, mostly because they were very strict and were older because the young ones had gone into the forces.

My best friend at school was Rita Wyrill who lived opposite us. I knew everyone in the street, nearly every house had children the same age as us. We used to run concerts in aid of the local hospital; all the children took part, some of them singing or dancing. Rita and I also ran a library service, we collected all the books we could and took them round from door to door. Surprisingly most people were glad to have books from us and pay a small amount which we also gave to the hospital. We were Brownies and later Guides and considered these our good deeds.

I think our favourite game outside was hopscotch. It was played constantly, during lunch breaks, after school and in the evenings until it was too dark to see the stones. The stones were very special, they were thought to be lucky if they had a hole in them. Match boxes were used for a variety of things; we made dolls house furniture with them and used them for keeping our treasures in. Tops and whips were another favourite game and we decorated the tops with crayon so that they looked pretty when they spun round. We collected all sorts of things, stones from old rings, foil from sweet wrappings and fluff from our woollies, these were pressed in our bibles. Five Stones or Jacks was another favourite, Mum would play this with us. In fact it was not unusual for my Aunts to join in when we were at Granny's. Skipping ropes were a must for every little girl and marbles kept us occupied for hours; some you never risked losing because they were too beautiful. Marbles had to be played in the gutter. Cats Cradle was played in the evenings and in the shelters; we would play for ages. Numerous ball games were played as were Rounders, Cricket, Piggy in the Middle and

Donkey. We also had skates, yo-yos and stilts. I had a desk and chair, a Tansad pram, just like Mum's, for my doll and a dropsided wooden cot. I still have the remnants of my dolls teaset!

When war was declared in 1939, Dad was one of the first to be called up as he was in the Territorial Army. I shall always remember the day war was declared. I was at Sunday School when the sirens went and we were told to run home as we would all be killed. I was terrified and didn't stop running until I arrived home nearly in a state of collapse. My Dad was furious that I had been frightened like that. I hated my Dad having to go away and money was short. We never had newspapers and Mum wouldn't listen to the news on the radio as she didn't want to know what was happening.

The war years were a mixture of good and bad; we lived in an area that wasn't evacuated and although the sirens went we did not suffer too much bombing. A *doodle bug* did fall in Addison Way practically opposite our house which was very frightening; people were killed and about six houses were demolished. At the time of the bomb, I had another baby sister Ruth and we were all sick with chicken pox. Mum was bathing Ruth in front of the fire when it dropped but, apart from my having a small cut from flying glass, no-one else in our house was hurt fortunately. Dad was given compassionate leave and we went to live with Dad's sister Eva at Milton for about six months so that Mum could be nearer to Dad. However, we weren't well and Mum did not get on with Auntie Eva, so we came back home again. When war first broke out, we slept in the shelter that Dad had put up in the garden, but after a while we slept in our beds again, coming down stairs under our large table when the sirens went. The sky was lit up at night with searchlights and also by the fires when London was being bombed. Mum let our front bedroom to two ladies from London for a while so that they would have somewhere to go to if their home was bombed. For a time we had a Land Girl to feed, I believe Mum was allowed extra rations for her and as she was a vegetarian, we did very well out of this. We managed quite well on our rations, but I don't think Mum ever ate butter; she gave it all to us. We grew a lot of vegetables and had fruit trees in the garden. I think money was shorter than food.



100 Acre Farm House Pinner Road 1970

# **A REDISCOVERED SAND MINE IN NORTHWOOD**

by Eileen M. Bowlt

## **THE HOLE**

During the Christmas holidays of 1992 a resident of Highfield Crescent was amazed and somewhat upset to discover that a deep, cylindrical hole, had appeared in his garden. He wondered what it could be and contacted RNELHS.

The soil which had fallen into the hole was a dark brown/black loam, somewhat crumbly in texture and that remaining sticking to the sides had pieces of pottery emerging from it. As the pottery looked relatively modern and the soil was certainly not the clay or sand of the Reading Beds, which might have been expected, it was assumed that the hole was a shaft of some kind and the views of members of the West London Archaeological Field Group were sought. They agreed that it was likely to be a shaft and took measurements, but the help of pot-holers, Don Chisholm and Ray Krystophiac was needed to explore further, as a wall, a decorative feature of the steeply rising garden, was suspended across the hole in a crazy fashion, making proper safety equipment necessary.

The shaft turned out to be lined with red bricks from 5 feet below the garden surface downwards. It was 20 feet deep to the top of the debris which had fallen in and 7 feet in diameter. The walls were vertical. Pieces of pottery, bottles and one of the lining bricks were brought to the surface. The Milk of Magnesia bottles and other artefacts from the debris dated from the early part of this century, which would be consistent with the shaft having been covered at a time when building was being contemplated. The brick was frogged and seemed typical of the soft red facing bricks being made locally during the first half of the 19th century.

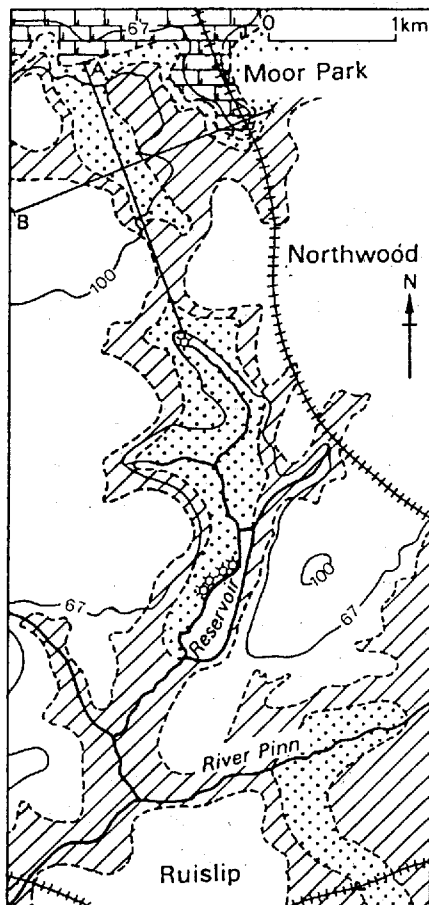
## **PURPOSE OF THE SHAFT**

What was the purpose of the shaft? It could have simply been a well; or the entrance to one of the chalk mines, which are fairly common features of the Northwood landscape; or more unusually a sand mine, to which there are references in parish rate books, but which has never been found. Harry Pearman of the Chelsea Speliological Society who keeps a national database of such holes in the ground, went down this one and thought that the wide diameter made it unlikely to have been a well, but was consistent with it being a mine shaft for chalk or sand <sup>1</sup>.

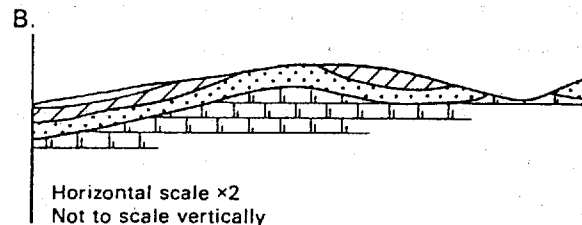
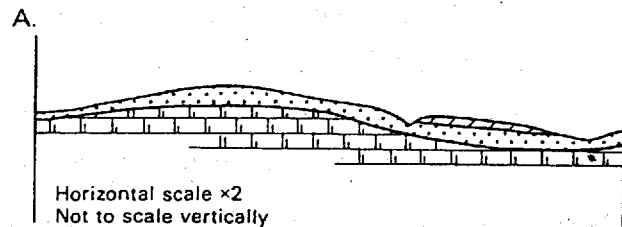
## **HISTORY OF THE LAND**

Before 1608 the Pinner Road/Rickmansworth Road was simply a track meandering through the Great Common Wood of Ruislip from Pinner and joining the other track which came over Ducks Hill to go on to Batchworth Heath and beyond. Already the house, now called Kiln Farm, had been built on the north side of the way in a clearing in the woodland and was referred to as *The Tile Place* in the King's College Terrier of 1565 <sup>2</sup>. Two other tile houses were described nearby, one on the site of Park Farm and one a little to the south of it <sup>3</sup>. S.W. Hester, a geologist who worked for the Geological Survey believed that the tile kilns were sited near the basement bed of the London Clay and Reading Beds and that it was the blue plastic Reading Clay that was most suitable for tilemaking.



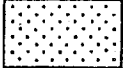
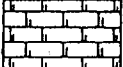
## Geological Map of Northwood area



Revised Geological Map  
heights in metres



### KEY

	London Clay	
	Mottled Clay	} Reading Beds
	Sand and Bottom Bed	
	Upper Chalk	

The 1st Earl of Salisbury, lessee of the Manor of Ruislip, cleared 568 acres of the Common Wood in 1608<sup>4</sup>, leaving Copse Wood fully timbered and all the rest of the land lying as open common until the Enclosure of the Common Fields and Wastes of Ruislip between 1804-6. The Enclosure Commissioners allocated 5 acres 2 roods 18 poles, labelled New Enclosure 37, to Edward Hilliard senior<sup>5</sup>. It lay on the south side of Rickmansworth Road, just to the east of Hills Lane, and Highfield Crescent was built on the eastern edge of that plot of land c 1929.

### REFERENCES TO SAND MINES & SAND MINERS

A Terrier of Ruislip made in 1837 gives the first reference to a sand mine in this area. Ralph Deane of Eastcote House owned New Enclosure 37, the size being given as 5a 2r 18p and it was described as wood, pasture and a sand mine<sup>6</sup>. The April 1838 Rate Book gives the rateable value as £40 for the sand mine and £3 18s 6d for the *pasturage of surface*<sup>7</sup>.

The 1866 25 inch Ordnance Survey map marks a *sandpit shaft* on the rough land of Northwood Farm which adjoins the 5½ acres.

William Whitaker in *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of England and Wales Vol IV* (1872) writes about the geological formations along the Rickmansworth Road. He mentions the 15th milestone, which used to stand near the top of Hills Lane and continues:-

*On the common to the south shafts have been sunk through the London Clay to the Reading Beds, in order to get the white sand of the latter; a plastic clay is found as well, most likely above the sand. The white sand is also got by open pits on a lower part of the common (to the west), where however it is part covered by a drifted loam.*

He also mentions many pits along the northern edges of Copse Wood and probably in the Gravel Pits area, some having been sunk through to the chalk, while others yielded light coloured sand. The William Hammond who was paying rates for *the Sand Pit House* in 1771, may have been living near Park Farm <sup>9</sup>.

Peche in his booklet about Northwood called *From Hamlet to Suburb* mentions that a gallery once used for mining sand was revealed in the 1920s, when the main road was widened near the top of Hills Lane. The area was long ago known as Sand Pit Hill and Hills Lane used to be called Sand Pit Lane. Sand Pit Hill Flats now remind us of the old name. However, sand pits are readily understandable as a means of obtaining sand when it lies fairly close to the surface; sand mines sound like a much more dangerous proposition, as there seems to be no easy way of supporting galleries. A sand mine could, however, have been bell shaped, enabling miners to dig out sand around the base of the shaft, only as far as they felt safe.

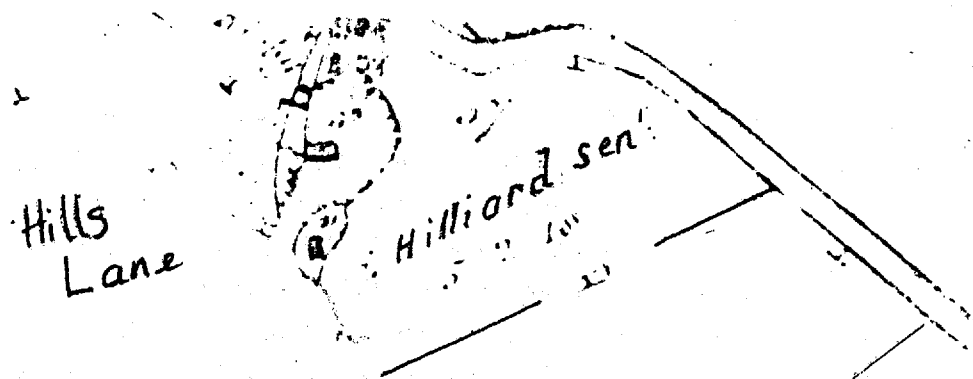
Nevertheless there were sandminers in Northwood in the 19th century. Two appear in the 1851 census returns, Alfred Woodman living in one of the two 19th century cottages that lie back from the road west of the True Lovers' Knot and Edward Kirby at Kiln Farm. Ten years later Mr Kirby was a grocer as well as a sand digger and he had two teenage sons working as sandminers and Thomas Crawley of Hill Corner, Wiltshire Lane was one too.

These references show that there was a sand mine, with a shaft in the 5½ acres between Hills Lane and Highfield Crescent in the late 1830s and that sandmining was being undertaken somewhere nearby in the 1850s and as late as 1861. Sand mining may have been abandoned because the miners had taken out all the sand as far as the chalk. Whitaker remarks that pits which reached to the chalk had filled up with water to within a few feet of the top of that rock in February 1862 <sup>9</sup>.

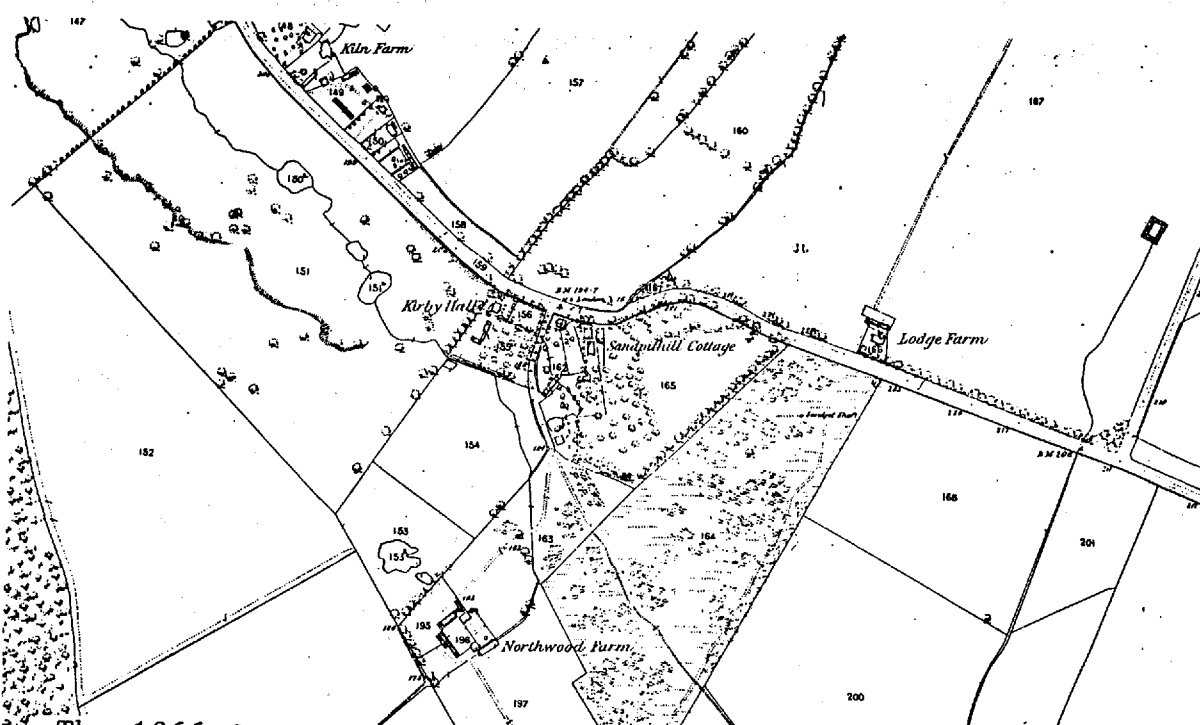
The evidence suggests that the Highfield Crescent shaft is the sand mine mentioned in the 1837 Terrier and Rate Books, but it is not conclusive and only further excavation could prove the shaft's purpose beyond doubt. This would require the digging out and raising in buckets of all the debris that has fallen into the shaft just to get to the base and would be a major undertaking, unlikely to be carried out in the near future, if ever.

## USES OF THE SAND

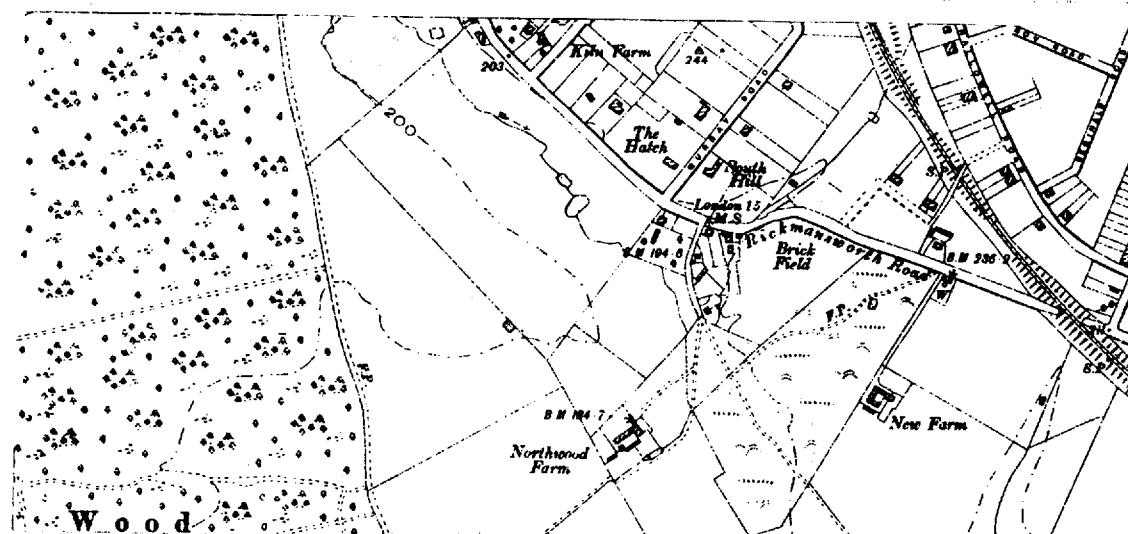
W.A.G. Kemp in his *Story of Northwood & Northwood Hills* says that the sharp white sand found at the bottom of the Reading Beds was particularly useful for cleaning pewter and silver and was sold in London for this purpose in the 16th century. This story has never been substantiated, but he goes on to say that it was also used for sanding floors. S.W. Hester agreed that it was much used in London houses during the 19th century <sup>10</sup> and this is probably why so much trouble was taken to obtain it. Although the sand mining seems to have come to an end, sand went on being dug in Northwood, because it was also used in brickmaking. Thomas Elkington who owned a brickfield on the 5½ acres around the turn of



The Enclosure Map 1806 showing New Enclosure 37



The 1866 O.S. Map showing William Taylor's cottage & the sandpitt shaft.



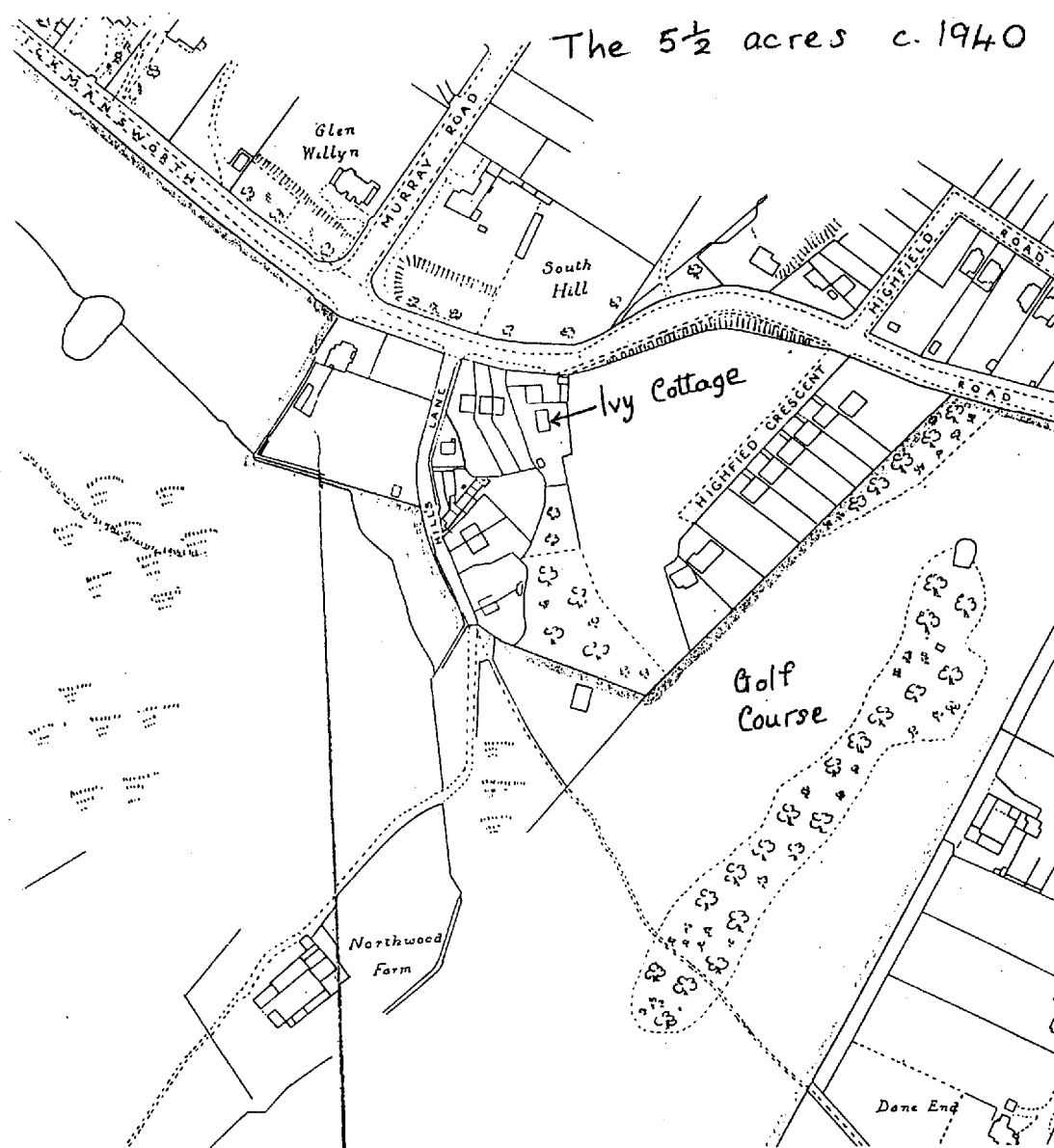
The 1897 O.S. Map showing the Brickfield.



the century also had a *sand and chalk pit* in 1902, probably situated on the north side of the main road 11.

### THE BRICKFIELD

By 1863, George Taylor had retired from Kewferry Farm and seems to have bought the whole 5a 2r 18p from the Deanes and to have built Sandpit Hill Cottage there, later called Ivy Cottage<sup>12</sup>. The land became a brickfield, which was owned by the Northwood Brick Company in 1886<sup>13</sup>. Later it was known as Elkington's Brickfield. The 1881 census returns show that William Prince was the foreman and his son, William worked there as a labourer. The bricks for the railway bridge which crossed Pinner Road were made there in 1886. (Young William Prince lived to see the bricks which he had made broken up when the iron bridge replaced it in August 1961.)<sup>14</sup> Some letters from Thomas Ellement, written in the 1950s to L.E. Morris, say that Thomas Elkington made London stock bricks there and had a lime kiln on the opposite side of the main road at the turn of the century and that sand was then being obtained through an underground tunnel<sup>15</sup>. The exact date when the brickfield closed down, has so far proved elusive, but it must have been before the First World War. The 1915 O.S. six inch map shows the whole area as *old clay pits*.



Houses were erected around the edge of the 5½ acres, some on the main road in 1927 and Highfield Crescent about 1929. No sign of any capping materials, such as railway sleepers were found among the debris, but the shaft must surely have been capped or at least fenced off when it became waterlogged, and top soil was perhaps dumped on top when the houses were built and the gardens laid out about 1930. It has lain hidden and forgotten ever since, until its dramatic collapse in December 1992.

## REFERENCES

1. Report by Harry Pearman - private communication
2. King's College R 36
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Greater London Record Office: MR/DE RUI (copies at Ruislip Library)
6. GLRO: DRO 19 E3/2
7. GLRO: DRO 19 E2/25
8. GLRO: DRO 19 E2/1
9. Whitaker *Memoirs of Geological Survey of Gt Britain*, Vol IV, pt 1.
10. Ruislip Library: File G1
11. Uxbridge Library: Ruislip Parish Rate Books
12. GLRO: DRO 19 E2/48-9
13. Uxbridge Library: Ruislip Parish Rate Books
14. Uxbridge Library: Advertiser & Gazette Aug 1961
15. Ruislip Library: File G1



### Summer Outings 1993

Sun 25 Apr	Coach Outing to Bank of England Museum and the Howard Carter Exhibition at the British Museum. Depart St. Martins Approach 10.00am.
Sat 22 May	Coach Outing to Saffron Walden & Audley End House. Depart St. Martins Approach 9.00 am.
Mon 14 June	Walk around Ruislip (3-4 miles). Meet St. Martins Approach 7.30 pm.
Sat 19 June	Coach Outing to Warwick Castle & Warwick Town. Depart St. Martins Approach 8.30 am.
Sat 10 July	Coach Outing to Worcester City & Witley Court. Depart St. Martins Approach 9.00 am.