

EDMONTON HUNDRED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1936 to promote and foster interest in local history in
Edmonton Enfield Potters Bar Southgate South Mimms Tottenham Wood Green Monken Hadley

E H H S
Exploring
Local
History

October 2022

Newsletter

Day Conference

Saturday 29th October

10am to 4.30pm at Jubilee Hall, 2 Parsonage Lane, Enfield, EN2 0AJ

Transport in the Edmonton Hundred



Enfield Local Studies & Archive ©

Lea Navigation at Ponders End c.1950

Our last Day Conference was in 2019 and at last we are able resume what had been an annual feature of our society for many years. This year's theme is transport - in, over and through the Edmonton Hundred. The idea stems from a bequest to the society from Pat Allbutt, a member for many years who seldom missed the Day Conference. Among her many interests were trains, WW1 aircraft and airships, and canal boats, hence the talks this year.

We have four familiar speakers with four interesting talks: David Cockle talks about trains (no surprise there), Ian Jones will tell us about local experience of WW1 Zeppelin and Gotha raids, Dr Roger Squires will cover the Lea Navigation, and finally our President Dr Jim Lewis will round off the day with an overview of our area's transport, including a few surprises.

The conference will be held as before at Jubilee Hall, from 10am to 4.30pm, for the very reasonable pre-Covid price of £10 per head including morning coffee and afternoon tea. You may bring your own lunch (the hall will remain open) or patronise one of the local hostelrys.

Booking has already started, with tickets requested by members who were given forms at our September meeting. Please feel free to ring me on 0734 1212 813 (for Day Conference only) if you are worried about the effects of the planned postal strikes. You can let me know "the cheque's in the post" and I'll ensure you have a place. Full details are on the booking form at the end of the Newsletter.

Rachael Macdonald

Diary Dates - live talks and events arranged by other organisations

Tuesday 11th October. 8pm. Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield, EN2 0AJ.
The Origin of Mass Society: Speech, Crime, Sex and Drink in Urbanising Britain 1780-1870.
Professor Peter Mandler *Historical Association*

Friday 14th October. 7pm. Online. A link to access will be emailed to members
10,000 Years of Brentford: the Early History of a Riverside Town
Jon Cotton *Enfield Archaeological Society*

Monday 17th October. 8pm. Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield, EN2 0AJ
A Walk with the Admiral – The history of a suburban road
Richard Thomas *The Enfield Society*

Tuesday 18th October. 2-4pm. Bruce Castle, Lordship Lane, Tottenham, N17 8NU
Reminiscence café. Style It Right – What hairstyle did you adopt when younger and what was your favourite product? Finding the right hair products for Afro hair was always difficult until there was Dyke & Dryden of West Green Rd. *Bruce Castle Museum*

Tuesday 18th October. 6pm. Online or in person. See Gresham College Website
Britain's Foreign Policy in a Fast Changing World.
Peter Ricketts *Gresham College*

Monday 31st October. 12 noon for 12.15pm Bruce Castle, Lordship Lane, Tottenham, N17 8NU
Munch & Listen. In Conversation with the Curators – Inspiring Migrant Stores of Entrepreneurship.
Aditi Anand, Deborah Hedgecock and Yianni Hadji. *Bruce Castle Museum*

EHHS talks programme to the end of the year

It was good to see members enjoying our summer social in July. Thanks to all who attended and thanks to those who were unable to make it but sent their best wishes, especially the member who commented it was a good initiative. Perhaps an annual feature in future? August was our holiday month. We hope some of you were able to take the holidays you'd had to forego during the previous two years. Our September talk by Kirsten Forrest on Dolly Shepherd, the pioneering Edwardian lady parachutist was both informative and enjoyable. There is no October evening talk, as we are finally able resume our custom of an annual Day Conference, not held since 2019. This year's theme is Transport in the Edmonton Hundred (see above and enclosed booking form) with four interesting talks by familiar speakers. November and December will both be afternoon talks at 2.30pm: November will see member Chris Whippe on the Enfield Fire Brigade, and December will be a festive meeting with drinks and mince pies, when Nick Dobson will give us a WW1 view of the season in his talk on Christmas in the Trenches.

Rachael Macdonald

The Chairman Writes

As I write this there is one day left of the Open House this weekend. This year much was changed as a result of the death of our Monarch and many of you may have been disappointed to find that venues were not open. However, there were other problems. In the past both book and website were easy to use, but this year the book was hugely expensive and the website was poorly laid out, the illogical arrangement making it impossible to use. It also included a number of errors.

In our last newsletter the recollections of Joseph Rye made reference to the Washington family. These crop up in Mea Allen's book on Gussie Bowles for whom they worked until his death. The Scout Hall in Turkey Street was named after George as he was caretaker for them for a long time. Members may have heard of the difficulties the Lea Valley horticultural trade is going through. However, I was given a copy of *The Garden*, an RHS publication, only to find in it an article on the Kitchen Garden developed at the Spurs training ground in Whitewebbs Road. It is intended to provide organic produce for the staff.

Walking along Hertford Road near Turkey Street, I saw a notice on the bridge concerning the weight limit of traffic. It was put up by Middlesex County Council a century ago. Does anyone know of other surviving notices in the Hundred ?

Members may be interested to know that running until May next year the Bank of England has an exhibition "Slavery and the Bank". There are free lunchtime tours and entrance is free.

The last Enfield Archaeological Society newsletter had an article on Eagle House which stood on Ponders End High Street near the junction of Southbury and Nags Head Roads. I remember in my youth being told of an underground passage between the house and Durants Arbour. Untrue of course, as was the legend that Judge Jeffries had lived there and yet these stories persist despite the best efforts of local historians.

I look forward to seeing you at our Day Conference and don't forget to spread the word about our Society

Howard Whisker

September Meeting Report

Dolly Shepherd: Edwardian Lady Parachutist by Kirsten Forrest

Kirsten Forrest is clearly a fan of Dolly Shepherd. Who would not be an admirer of the Edwardian lady who fearlessly jumped from a hot air balloon and parachuted to earth in knickerbockers ? In fact there is a Dolly Shepherd Appreciation Society and it was through them that Kirsten tracked down an archive of material relating to Dolly upon which much of her talk was based.

Dolly was a local girl. She was born in Potters Bar in 1886, grew up in New Southgate and went to school in Wood Green. When she was 16, she began working for her aunt's feather emporium as a travelling saleswoman, an unusual occupation for a woman at that time especially as it involved travelling across London on her own. She loved to go to balloon shows and fireworks at Alexandra Palace. Unable to afford a concert by the American band leader Sousa, but still determined to go, she signed up as a waitress for the event. There, as it happened, she served refreshments to J.P. Sousa himself and his friends Samuel Cody and Auguste Gaudron.

Cody was first to ask Dolly if she would stand in for his injured wife in his Wild West shooting show. Dolly had not seen the act and did not know what to expect but she nonetheless agreed. It wasn't until Cody was blindfolded and an egg placed on her head that she realised what was going to happen. She remained calm and very very still.

Then Auguste Gaudron asked if she would go up in a balloon. Her parents, particularly her father, had encouraged her to do what she wanted in life, but they were not too keen on this. Aeronauts had a bad reputation for fatal accidents. But Dolly was not to be stopped and when she turned 18 she started jumping, travelling the country with Gaudron and performing parachute jumps.

She would jump from 2,000 feet, landing ideally but not always, in the showground. If winds were strong she could travel some distance away and Gaudron would have to take a horse and cart, find her and bring her back. On one occasion she had to go to a station to send him a telegram to let him know where she was. In 1908 she broke her back in a fall but was back up and jumping again in 3 months. She made her final jump in 1912 claiming to have heard a warning from the clouds that she would be killed if she jumped again.

She went on to be an army driver in the First World War and a mechanic and warden in the second. She died in 1983 aged 97. Her funeral was attended by the Red Devils and RAF's Falcons.

In a perfect end to her talk Kirsten played us a recording of Dolly herself being interview a few years before she died. Among the questions afterwards, a member of our audience asked if Dolly wore corsets under her jumping costume. A very good point - corsets would have made landing safely very difficult. We assumed that she did. It was a thoroughly enjoyable talk.

Kate Godfrey

Edmonton Girls' Charity School

Some of our members went along to the former Edmonton Girls' Charity School in September for a rare chance to see the building open, 'organised' by the Open House people. Were others as disillusioned, disappointed and frankly disgusted with the 'Festival' this year as I was? If so, complete their feedback form online and let them know. Luckily, this little event was well organised in Edmonton itself, with plans for the building on display, interesting information from John West of The Enfield Society, and refreshments from a friendly team of helpers. Best of all was the appearance of EHHS member Irene Money, caretaker of the school in the 1980s and 90s, and who actually lived in the adjoining cottage for 20 years. It was lovely to see and hear her there, though anyone hoping to hear her give one of the council's 'Untold Edmonton' talks will be disappointed to see that talk removed from the list on the website, as Irene (Moloney, as they billed her) - was out of the country on the day they chose. The photo shows her in the garden behind the school, with part of the school on the left, and Irene's kitchen window on the right. We look forward to being able to hold our Edmonton meetings in the old school in a couple of years' time.



Photo: Rachael Macdonald

Irene Money at the School

Rachael Macdonald

Stories of Enfield Touring Exhibition

Fourteen stories exploring elements of Enfield's heritage, history and identity - from river communities, stained glass windows and Bangladeshi migration through to London's only vineyard and Edmonton's boxing bishop.

11th October to 25th October. Palmers Green Broomfield Park

25th October to 15th November. Edmonton Green Shopping Centre

The Open Road - By Ian Jones

When you are next dodging potholes or waiting for temporary traffic lights to wake up you might like to recall that it has always been thus as these letters from the Observer in the 1860's and 1870's show.

Enfield, February 14th 1862. Sir,-I am anxious to know something about the geological formations of Enfield. Can you enlighten me? Is there no gravel in the neighbourhood? I must presume none, seeing the disgraceful state of many of the roads and footpaths, which, in wet weather, are simply next to impassable.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, **ENQUIRER.**

Just over a year later Enquirer surfaced again, still dissatisfied.

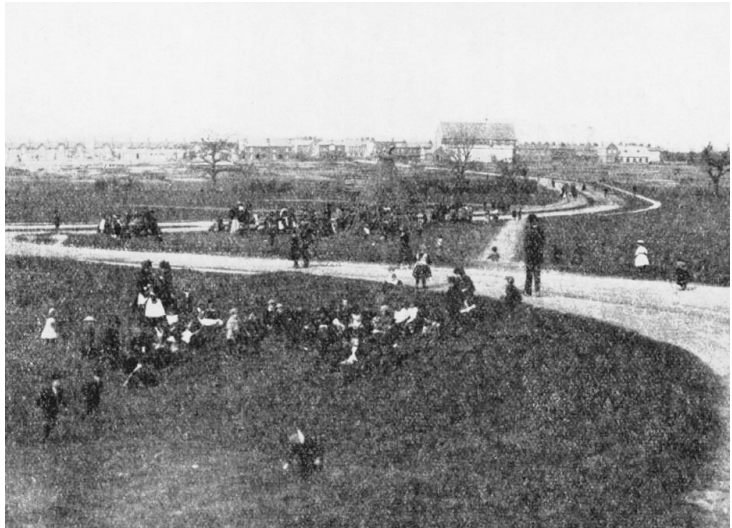
Sir,-Will you permit me to ask you if gravel is scarce in Enfield? In traversing some of the streets and lanes last week, I expected to be splashed up to my shoulders, and was literally not disappointed. Some of the pathways are very bad.

I am, etc. Feb. 32, 1863

*In the meantime, in May 1862 he had been joined by **WET THROUGH.***

Sir,-It is always good policy and better morality to mend the error of our ways. I am no geologist, as I suppose one of you correspondents is, who has

written to you on this subject, but I would seriously ask how it is that the paths in Tottenham, Edmonton, and Barnet are always drier and in firmer, better order than those in Enfield. Is gravel



St. Mark's Road, Bush Hill Park 1880

scarce or dear? I can assure you that it is no joke walking in the dark in some parts of the parish, for before you know where you are, your feet are soaked with wet, the effect of placing them in unnumbered puddles. And, in some places, the ground is so soft and yielding that there is no hold for the feet. Surely these things might be remedied without any very great expenditure of time, money or trouble. I venture to ask a place for this complaint in your Journal, in the hope that it may be remedied at no distant day.



Road repairs Powys Lane 1897

Mind you, you had to do more than watch where you put your feet as you were faced with a variety of obstacles to smooth travel both illegal and otherwise.

Observer, 1st March 1862. Sarah Saunders, of Brigadier Hill, Enfield, was summoned for turning loose two pigs in the public thoroughfare; the Bench dismissed the case on her promising to keep her pigs in for the future.

Today the contentious topic of road pricing has reared its head again but tolls have always been seen as a means of raising money to pay for road maintenance from users who have been equally keen to avoid paying them if possible. Today you can do no more than shout at the machine as it swallows your money or mutter at the attendant, safe in his booth; but things could be very different as shown by this case heard by the local magistrates on June 30th, 1865.

George Callow, of Granby Street, Bethnal-green, was summoned by Alfred Collins, toll collector at Enfield turnpike, for assaulting him on the 20th ult. Complainant said, about 9 o'clock the night in question, saw defendant with three others in a dog-cart; they were driving very fast towards the gate; held up his hands, but they drove through the gate without paying the toll; he ran back and took hold of the horse, which then fell down, and the whole of the party were thrown out; defendant, assisted by the others, then struck him; he retreated to the toll house; they followed him, using most abusive words; sent a messenger for a policeman, who came, and the party then went away; they paid the toll. Defendant called a witness, and endeavoured to show that complainant was to blame; the Bench thought otherwise, and convicted the defendant in a penalty of 5s and costs 13s 6d.

People whose family position in Society suggests they should have known better could be equally troublesome as the Observer reported on September 3rd 1869.

Edward Prescott Williams, of Hendon Vicarage, son of the vicar, and George Wilkinson, his coachman, were summoned for assaulting Samuel Hill, toll collector, at the Enfield turnpike gate. Complainant deposed that on Sunday night, the 12th ult., defendants drove up to the gate. Asked for the ticket; Mr. Williams produced half a ticket, (Hill) looked at it and said, "all right," and wished them goodnight. Mr. Williams then said, "drive over him," which the coachman attempted to do, and not succeeding in that, lashed him with the whip. Defendants were at length stopped, and their names etc., taken. Mr. Barry of Bush Hill Park, who came up at the time, confirmed the above evidence. Defendants were fined £5 each with costs.



St Mary Magdalene from Old Park Road c.1900

Road repairs continued to occupy the attention of the Local Board of Health and it is clear from this and other instances that, just like today with potholes, patching up the roads here and there was the best they could do, usually in response to specific complaints.



Fords Grove, Winchmore Hill early 20th century

Observer, September 16th 1876. At a meeting of the Board of Health it was ordered that 11 trucks of gravel from Wheathampstead be used to repair the road near West Lodge.

Observer, April 1st 1867. Road between the Windmill and Chase cottage. Read a letter from Mrs. Edwin Walker, calling the attention of the Board to the ratty state of the road between Chase cottage and Enfield. Resolved, "That the Surveyor be directed to repair the road, and that a letter be written to Mr. Nott, to enquire the terms on which he could supply 100 yards of gravel for the purpose."

As there was no further reference to this matter in future Board meetings, it was presumably carried out. Problems with the roads refused to go away and a letter in the Observer of January 16th 1875 returns to the subject of mud yet again.

Observer, Letter dated January 11th, 1875. Sir, Having ventured lately to recommend Enfield to some friends as a place of residence, I was asked to descant on the attractions of the place. I got on very well till we came to the question of mud, and there perforce I stuck. I was obliged to confess that a road sweeper or a crossing sweeper was as hard to find as a dead donkey* or a Quaker's baby*; and being hard pressed, I was fain to own that the state of the roads and paths was simply disgraceful. Will you then, Mr, Editor, use your influence, and suggest that either more asphalt be put down, or, that in all events, good crossings be made, and the mud occasionally taken away instead of becoming merely a resting place for unwary pedestrians, and we may yet live to see Enfielders going to London with clean boots.

I am, sir, yours habitually, **STICK-IN-THE-MUD.**

P.S. I hasten to mention (and enclose my name as a pledge of good faith) that I have just actually seen a man scraping the road, but alas! He was alone and decrepit, and evidently aware of the partiality of the authorities for the article in question.

There were, of course, many other problems apart from mud as these two letters to the Board of Health reported in the Observer on August 30th 1879 make clear.

State of Road in Green Street. A memorial was received, signed by the Rev. C.H. Roberts and others, complaining of the danger to the public occasioned by the footpath in that part of Green Street from the High Road, being 2 foot 4 inches above the level of the road. It was resolved that Mr. Gilsenan be requested to report on the above subject at the next meeting.

Raleigh Road. A memorial signed by Mr. J.H. Sanders and others was received, directing attention to the necessity of a surface drain to prevent the flooding of Raleigh Road in times of Rain. It was resolved that Mr. Gilsenan be instructed to report on the above subject at the next meeting.

To be fair, the Board were trying their best to keep up with the problems and the costs of highways work took up a considerable amount of each year's budget as is shown by this example from the annual estimates published in the paper on June 7th 1879. If you include the feed for the horses in with the other labour costs, that element alone takes up nearly one third of the budget. Note that new technology does not yet feature, but that was soon to change as towards the end of the year, as reported on the 6th of December, they approached the Tottenham Local Board of Health with a view to hiring their steam roller.

PURPOSES (HIGHWAY).					
Labour	...	...	...	600	0 0
Gravel and Stones...	...	...	...	600	0 0
Granite and Material	...	...	...	600	0 0
Team Work :—					
Rent of stables	...	15	0 0		
Forage of five horses	300	0 0			
Farrier and Veterin- ary Surgeon	...	40	0 0		
Harness	...	15	0 0		
Carts and repairs, in- cluding wear and tear of horses	...	175	0 0		
Carters' wages, &c....	250	0 0			
				795	0 0
Surface water drains and pumps				150	0 0
Implements and gatings	...	...		50	0 0
Improvements of Highways	...	...		100	0 0
Incidentals	...	...		50	0 0
				<u>2,945</u>	<u>0 0</u>

Road repair estimates 7th June 1879

Steam Roller. The following letter from the Clerk to the Tottenham Local Board of Health was read;- "Your letter of the 17th instant was submitted to my Board at their meeting yesterday, and in reply I am directed to inform you that they are willing to allow the Enfield Local Board the use of their steam roller upon the following terms, viz.:-At a charge of £1 1s per day, for any period less than a month, for hire, in addition to all expenses in connection with the same during the period of hire. These expenses will include wages of the engine driver, at £2 per week, and the wages of the flagman and assistant at 24s per week, together with the cost of the necessary fuel and water for the engine."

As early 20th century postcards show this or other machines had an effect.

* **Dead Donkey** is journalistic jargon for an insignificant and often humorous story used as a page filler if there was nothing of more importance to be put in. The only reference I can find to a **Quaker's Baby** has to do with the Quaker breed of parrot whose name derived from the resemblance of its feather pattern to 19th century Quaker dress. This breed was a good mimic and a popular household pet.

Observer references courtesy of Enfield Local Studies archive.

St Marks Road, Bush Hill Park, 1880, Local Studies
Road repairs, Powys Lane, 1897, Local Studies
St Mary Magdalen from Old Park Road, c.1900, Author
Fords Grove, Winchmore Hill, Early C.20th, Author

Ian K. Jones, 26th. August 2022

One Hundred Years Ago in the Edmonton Hundred

New Telephone Exchange

The Postmaster-General informed the Council that his department wanted to obtain a piece of land in Sarnesfield Road for the erection of a telephone exchange. The land was at present under cultivation as allotments, and the owner (Mr Graham) had informed the Postmaster-General that the land had been taken by the local authority, and that no arrangements had been made nor anything paid.

The Clerk said the tenants of the land in question had notice to quit by March 25th and the tenants had availed themselves of the privilege of remaining in occupation until that date. The Council would not apply to renew its powers over the land after that date.

Enfield Gazette 13th October 1922

Arterial Road Progress

The new arterial road through Enfield has progressed towards completion as far as Bury Street. The photograph shows the stretch where it impinges upon the Enfield-Edmonton road. It has a surface of cement.

Enfield Gazette 6th October 1922



The Great Cambridge Road in 1922

Enfield Local Studies & Archive ©

Graham Frost

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