

P. WILLSON

# Lamorbey & Sidcup

LOCAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2009



# LAMORBEY & SIDCUP LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

### CONTENTS

		Page
<b>Editorial</b>	Frances Percival	1
<b>Chairman's Report</b>	Philip Willson	2
<b>A Short History of Philip Willson</b>	Philip Willson	3
<b>Bess Dzielski 1925 – 2008</b>	Frances Percival	5
<b>Schooldays</b>	Doris Willson	7
<b>A Pen Portrait of John Charles</b>	Frances Percival	7
<b>Davies and His Papers at Sidcup</b>	Janet Woods	8
<b>Joan Stirling – Land Army Girl</b>	Frances Percival	9
<b>Walking to School in the 50's</b>	Liz Ellicott	10
<b>Outside Activities/Visits</b>		
Tallow Chandlers' Hall 12/2/2008	Liz Ellicott	13
Statue Walk 29/3/2008	Eileen/Roy Uncles	14
Eleanor of Castile (related article)	Gill Brown	15
Dengie Peninsular 3/5/2008	Jennifer Hetherington	16
Horniman Museum 22/11/2008	Eric Percival	17
<b>Guiding Thoughts</b>		
Spare a Thought for February 22nd	Janette Cunliffe	18
Sidcup Guiding Memories of World War 2	Cynthia Gillett	18
Guiding in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Mary Webb	20
<b>A Useful Tool in Research-Bishops' Transcripts</b>	Frances Percival	21
<b>The Story of Sam Snell in his own words</b>	Gill Brown	21

All the articles in this Newsletter have been written by members of the Society and friends.

Meetings take place at St. Lawrence's Community Centre on selected Tuesdays throughout the Autumn, Winter, Spring & early Summer.  
For further details please contact our Secretary Liz Ellicott on 020 8302 7820

(The editor is grateful to Dave Cunliffe for his help in formatting this newsletter)



## **EDITORIAL**

By Frances Percival

### LOCAL MATTERS

The year 2008 has not been without unhappiness due to two local youngsters being killed by knife crime. One was very local as the crime was perpetrated in Station Road, Sidcup. The victim, a Rose Bruford student had gained a foot into the acting world by playing a role in a Harry Potter film. What a waste of young lives. Eric & I attended a police meeting where the senior policeman for our borough was present, Councillors, GLA representative, the MP and others that sat on the top table. It was held in the New Generation Church in Station Road where the hall was bursting at the seams due to the heavy attendance of local residents. A ray of hope came from the meeting that all stops are being pulled out by several agencies to provide activities for teenagers. Also voluntary pastors are patrolling the streets at night in order to quell any difficult situations. We later attended a smaller meeting at Cleeve Park School where I said privately to a policeman that it was all rather frightening and he replied "SIDCUP IS STILL A NICE PLACE TO LIVE".

As I said above, Mr Conway was present at the larger meeting which I suppose in an ironic way it took courage for him to attend. He has now lost the Conservative whip and is sitting in the House of Commons as an Independent until he steps down at the General Election.

The saga of the Manor House being stripped of the Registrar's Office has for the time being quietened down, as the Councillors did not expect the vociferous outcry from residents for the Manor House being used for other purposes (it helped anyway!). In common with other Woolworth's stores our Sidcup Store has been closed down which leaves quite a gap in the High Street. The Blue Rose, which had been known previously as The Black Horse (one of the main mail coach stopping places on the way to Maidstone) is still boarded up, again diminishing the trade of the High Street. There has been much said and written lately about our local hospital, Queen Mary's, all of which bodes ill for the future. In the early part of the last century it was known throughout the world for pioneering plastic surgery, surgeons who pieced together the faces of the soldiers who suffered so much in the Great War.

Mrs Gertrude Nunns, the author of the definitive book on Footscray, died last May. She of course was the wife of Beverley Nunns who was the kingpin of our Society in the earlier years and known affectionately as "Mr Sidcup".

### SOCIETY MATTERS

2007 was the year when the Scout Movement celebrated the centenary of its founding by Robert Baden Powell, so our Newsletter had several articles on Scouting. Not to be outdone by the Boys, next year, the Guide Movement similarly celebrates its Centenary founded by Baden-Powell and his sister. Two of our members have submitted articles and one from a friend who remembers Guiding in Lamorbey, virtually half a century ago.

The Committee in its wisdom decided to offer Eric and myself the dual roles of Vice-Presidents of the Society. This was done officially at an Extra General Meeting on

18<sup>th</sup> February 2008 at which we both expressed our appreciation of the honour bestowed on us.

A new Chairman, John Charles, had been elected at the previous AGM but sadly for John he was told by the medical world that his heart needed attention. He immediately informed the Society Officers that he felt it right that although he wished to remain a committee member, he wished to resign from the Chairmanship.

This occasioned another EGM on 13<sup>th</sup> May so that Philip Willson could be elected Chairman. John Charles has made a marvellous recovery and has been attending meetings and able to take up some of his leisure activities.

Eric & Dave Cunliffe have started a group project entitled "Sidcup Caught in Time". They have enlisted the help of members who have been given streets or an area to photograph during March and April. The Society has spent money on a laptop for the photographs to be linked together and made into a DVD. I am sure that we all wish them good snapping on their project. I am sure that it will be much more professional than that.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

By Philip Willson

Welcome to the 2009 edition of the Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society's annual newsletter. As usual, Frances and her team have done a great job of putting together interesting articles from our members on a variety of topics.

If there is a theme, it is the up-coming centenary of the Guiding Movement, which started after girls barged in on a boys' event. Typical! They'll be wanting to play football next!

I hope that you continue to enjoy your membership of the Society and, in particular, you appreciate the speakers at our regular meetings. Denise is always seeking out new delights for us and the next season is already looking very promising.

On the other side of things, for a variety of reasons, our membership is in slow decline and we very much want to encourage new members into our midst. Also, as has been mentioned a few times, one or two new faces on the committee would be much appreciated. If you have any ideas on how to encourage new members or if you would like to join the committee then please contact one of us or have a chat at one of the meetings.

Sadly, only one of the three projects that the committee proposed, the photographic record of Sidcup in 2009, is going ahead. The other two suggestions did not find sufficient favour and no alternative ideas were received so we have gone back to the proverbial drawing board on the idea of Society projects – but suggestions would still be most welcome. On the bright side, the photographic project has drawn quite a few supporters so it is looking very promising.

We will always want to encourage our members to get involved in local or family history research. So, if you want to discuss anything or want some advice then I know that between us we do have a considerable amount of experience. It's worth a try and we would be happy to help.

So, now, please read on.....

## A SHORT HISTORY of PHILIP WILLSON

By himself

My parents, Doris and William Willson, were natives of Greenwich but moved to Catford when they married in 1948. I was born in Lewisham Hospital in February 1951 to be later followed by my brother, Alan, in 1954.

My primary education was at Torridon Road School, Catford (coincidentally the same school as Janette Cunliffe – see 2008 Newsletter) where I spent six or so very happy years. Following success at the 11-plus exam I then went to the Roan School for Boys in Maze Hill, Blackheath. In those days this was still a grammar school, with a history going back to 1677 when John Roan left a large endowment for the education of the poor children of Greenwich.

We moved to 12 Faraday Avenue, Sidcup (telephone FOOTscray 7592) in March 1966 but Alan and I continued to travel to school in Blackheath every day. Back then the entrance to Sidcup Station was up the ramp from Station Road and I remember that the lighting on the ramp was still gas powered, which seemed remarkably old-fashioned at that time. I also remember travelling on the double-deck train quite frequently when it formed the 16.23 service from Lee. What a strange machine that was: it was banned from use in rush hours because it took too long to load and unload, and it was the only train on our line that still had a 'Ladies Only' compartment. (Please note that my fascination with all forms of land transport has been with me forever!)

Following school I worked for about three years in the City as a stockbroker's clerk but it wasn't really for me. I decided to follow a more technical career from then on and make good use of my other interest which was in electronics. I landed a job at Queen Mary College in Mile End in 1973 and have been there ever since, working successively in the the Audio Visual Aids, Computer Science and Electronic Engineering Departments. While there I studied part-time for an Open University degree in Electronics and Computing and graduated in 1981. However, I have to say that in amongst the technical stuff, possibly the most interesting course concerned the history of science and technology since the Industrial Revolution.

In 1976 I married Jennifer (nee Blows), who hailed from East Ham, and we lived for three years in Oxford Road before moving to our present house in The Grove, North Cray. Our daughter Jane was born in 1981 followed by our son Robert in 1984. Neither has followed their parents' career paths, Jane being a chartered librarian working in the Northamptonshire NHS and Robert is aiming to follow a musical career. At the time of writing he is playing keyboards and trumpet in a band in Zermatt, Switzerland for the ski season and is due to start a master's degree at Trinity Music College, Greenwich, in September.

continued.....



My hobby of preserving a 1958 Routemaster bus and a 1964 AEC coach is well known to many of you, and I still have my interest in railways as well.

In addition to this, I am very slowly rebuilding a 1970 Triumph Herald estate car, which I have owned since 1985 and dismantled 10 years ago!

From 1993 to 2000 I was the Herald technical secretary for the Triumph Sports Six Club (which had about 15,000 members at the time). That voluntary position involved giving information and advice and, not least, writing a monthly article for the journal.

After seven years (90 articles) I was just beginning to run out of fresh material and this would have meant going back to the beginning and repeating myself – and that is when I decided to hand over to someone else.

I have also been a radio ham, callsign G6GTC, since 1982. This was a natural progression from being a short wave listener back in the 60s and when I built my first short wave receiver.

To add to those long-standing interests, I have been researching my family history since 1992, although this has been a background activity in recent years. I have investigated my roots in all directions but over the last 250 years or so every one of my ancestors has come from England, Ireland or Wales. Scotland and the rest of the world have not figured at all, although some relatives have, of course, emigrated to the New World.

Before anybody asks, I don't know how I find the time and yet people say that it doesn't get any easier when you retire. Time will tell!

-----



## BESS DZIELSKI 1925 – 2008

By Frances Percival

Bess was a wordsmith par excellence, having been our publicity officer for many years and writing pen portraits of many of our members that were used in our previous newsletters. The pen portrait of her, will be her obituary.

There is so much to say about her – she was held in the greatest respect both in her working and church life. As with us all she had sad times within her family coping with an ailing mother and her husband, Stefan who had a stroke which at a young age incapacitated him, later becoming a resident of the Sue Ryder Home at Cavendish, Suffolk. Lady Ryder of Warsaw took an interest in Stefan as he was Polish, fighting with the British during the Second World War. So in the latter years of her life Bess did not have the joy of being part of a loving partnership. It did however lead to her being a volunteer in the Stroke Unit at Queen Mary's.

She was born in Poplar being christened with the name of Bessie and with her family name of West was wholly Anglo-Saxon. The family before the War moved over the



water to New Cross where she attended the Addy & Stanhope Grammar School. She was evacuated from this school to Burwash in Sussex and often fondly reminisced on this time. She obviously received a good education that stood her in good stead for the rest of her life. When she returned to London she found that Mum and Dad had moved from New Cross to then rural Sidcup from where her future really took hold. She studied, eventually becoming a Fellow of the Library Association never using the letters of FLA behind her name. Her first job was doing menial tasks in a Greenwich Library handling books that had not seen the light of day for many years. Eventually marrying Polish Stephan (she called him Steve) and had her only son Nicholas and joined the staff at Blackfen Library. She delved into the Polish language

so that she could converse with her new family when she visited them in Poland. These were the years before she had a car and was to be seen cycling the neighbourhood with Nicholas on the back of the bike. Bess's scholarship and leadership must have been in evidence then, as she was promoted to Senior Librarian and spent the rest of her working life there. Prior to the demolition of the Library a gathering was held in 2005 organised by the 'Friends' for a farewell reminiscence session. Bess wrote a piece for our newsletter so the following is an extract from that: -

"It was a morning of great pleasure meeting up with long lost colleagues, some retired, others on my Staff with whom I worked years ago now much higher in the hierarchy. And readers, many of whom I have known for so long that we could spend time discussing our grandchildren. We looked at each other's photographs and pored over the file on the library's history including the one of the staff at its opening in 1937. I was able to point out the assistant to whose job I succeeded when she left to marry. And I realised that I had spent 38 years of my life in that building"

The above is typical of her skill as a wordsmith conveying to us the scene on that memorable morning. It also illustrates the depth in which she was part of the locality over such a long period.



When the family arrived in Sidcup, Bess attended the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Days Lane where she was to become one of its most stable factors. She became Churchwarden being partnered over a period by four other wardens and also in this time there were three interregnums.

These were the times when one Vicar had been transferred and the waiting of the new one, the Bishop placing authority in the Wardens to run the church for the time being. Quite an undertaking. Bess was very fond particularly of Bishop David Say, as he had been helpful over a difficult part of church life.

Due to this empathy, on his death Bess sent her remembrance of him to the Diocesan Newsletter, which was printed. Following this article Bess was invited to be part of his memorial service at Rochester Cathedral being the only lay person in the sanctuary where with two clergymen she also paid tribute to the Bishop. The Cathedral was filled with the great and good of the Diocese including our own Deputy Mayor and Mayoress who thanked her for her words. I swelled with pride marvelling at our Bess's ability. One of the things she was famous for was that everywhere she went she was the raffle lady. This started at the Holy Redeemer, carried on at the Garden Parties of the Red House, the Quiz nights of the Civic Society and also Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society. She was always very persuasive and sold as many tickets as possible so that the net funds were useful to the various societies. Bess of course was a member of all of them.

At the Church she became part of the Merry Widows group year after year touring Europe and the UK in the last years staying in a café near the coach entreating her friends to explore and not to worry about her, having plenty of reading matter. She loved the Lady Magazine for which she wrote articles, the last one was on lip reading, exhorting lecturers to remember that there might be deaf people in the group and behave accordingly. Deafness had been part of her life for some years. Latterly she said how much satisfaction she got from completing the 'Ladygram'. Always very competitive as a member of our quiz team, but in her own right she appeared on the TV Show 15-1 compered by William G. Stewart and survived to the second round. Bess has lived on borrowed time from twelve years ago when she entered Queen Mary's Hospital for a minor operation. She spent the next six months in intensive care having fallen foul of the dreaded MRSA disease when we all thought that her life would be ended at that point. Bess being Bess still had her strong will, determined to resume her old activities which to a certain extent she did.

A great lady, whose energy, abilities and friendship will be missed by so many. She leaves Nicholas her son, Daughter in law Sue, and two Granddaughters.

## **SCHOOLDAYS**

by Doris Willson

I lived and was educated in Greenwich before World War Two. Apart from the academic side of my education, I well remember the practical side.

Just inside the school gate there was a small building. The ground floor consisted of a large laundry room where we were taught to wash, starch and iron, and how to deal with delicate articles like lace and silk.

The first floor was occupied by a furnished flat where we were taught to sweep, clean, polish and make beds.

We also heard how to bath a baby (a life-size doll was used for this purpose). We were shown how to put a nappy on a baby and had lessons in feeding and cleaning the bottle and teat.

Our cookery classes were held in the afternoon at a school on the other side of Greenwich and I well remember rushing home from school at midday, having lunch and racing to cookery in time to hear the register called at 1.50pm.

Of course, running a house and dealing with laundry is now very much updated, but I still remember some of things I was taught all those years ago.

*This article came from our School Memories Project. Apologies to Doris that this piece is one of the last to be printed – Editor*

## **A PEN PORTRAIT OF JOHN CHARLES**

By Frances Percival

John was born and brought up in Loughborough, Leicestershire, attending Loughborough Grammar School. It was founded in 1495 with a wool merchant's bequest. A very canny executor changed the priest's function from chantry to teaching thereby saving it from seizure by Henry V111. I think John's love of history in general must have been engendered from schooling at such an interesting place of learning.

His university years were spent at Trinity College, Dublin which he tells me was founded by Elizabeth the First, daughter of the King, who was almost disruptive to his Loughborough School. Whilst there he studied Economics and Politics and gained an MA.

So, having graduated, he spent the first 9 months as a trainee transport manager for British Rail Services. He then returned to his home town of Loughborough as an administrative assistant to the Department of Transport Technology at the University. A further move took him from 1971-1982 to Liverpool as the Academic Registrar of Liverpool Polytechnic.

In 1982 there was a further career move when he became Secretary of the Thames Polytechnic. The family moved from the Wirral to Sidcup in 1983, which meant that John for a whole year became a commuter to Sidcup travelling all those train miles week after week.

The Thames Polytechnic eventually emerged as the University of Greenwich and he says that the 80's and 90's were exciting times as three major Education Acts became law, which didn't leave him any time for local societies.

The University of Greenwich must have been aware of all the work these Acts involved, as on his retirement an Honorary Doctorate was bestowed on him. This

entitled him to be known as Doctor Charles a fact that emerged when I quizzed him for this article.

He has many interests such as walking in the countryside and mountains, theatre and further education being the Chairman of Governors at Bromley College of Further and Higher Education. He and his wife Jennie have been intrepid travellers setting off to some exotic place with only a few weeks or less notice. Usually they have returned with a depth of knowledge of the places visited. In his working life he moved around England and, again, on each new appointment he delved into the interesting local history facts of the area.

He and Jennie have two children, both of them born on Merseyside and both living and working in south-east London.

John has coped with his illness very well and is gradually taking up some of his old interests. We wish him well for the future.

### **DAVIES AND HIS PAPERS AT SIDCUP**

By Janet Woods

What is the connection between Sidcup and a Nobel Laureate? The answer is of course, "The Caretaker" – a play written in 1960 by the playwright, poet and actor, Harold Pinter. In his early career Harold Pinter's plays were described as "enigmatic", but as his reputation grew, it became common for his style of writing to be described as "Pinteresque". Nevertheless, as "The Caretaker" progresses, one matter on which the audience has no doubt, is the urgent need of Davies to get to Sidcup to get his papers.

There are three characters in the play: Davies, and the brothers Aston and Mick. Aston has rescued Davies from a fight and has brought him back to the brothers' junk filled flat. Davies is then offered accommodation and the role of caretaker. It soon becomes apparent that the brothers do not get on, and there is frequent bullying and intimidation between the two of them. In addition, Davies suffers from paranoia, which is centred on his need to get to Sidcup to get his papers. What these papers are and why Davies has such urgent need of them is never revealed, but the desperate need, with the frequent reference to the papers and their location (i.e. Sidcup) adds to the menace of the plot.

What has been a mystery among those of us who live on the edge of south east London, is why Sidcup? Why not Bexleyheath, or Chislehurst? Or why not north of London – say, Epping? I am pleased to say that on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2009, shortly after Harold Pinter's death, all was revealed. That Friday's edition of the "Bexley Times" informed its readers that Harold Pinter had been a keen cricketer. In the 1950s he was captain of a thespian cricket team and on several occasions brought his team to Sidcup to play the local team. Perhaps Harold Pinter particularly enjoyed his visits to Sidcup so the name stayed in his mind. Then, at the right time, Sidcup took on the role of a vital dramatic tool in one of his plays.

*(It is amazing how often Sidcup is mentioned in literature, I am sure we all remember H.E.Bates's books on the Larkin Family especially when they venture into France and for some reason Pa is called by the hotelier, M'Lud of Sidcup.*

*Gill Brown has actually been compiling a list of Sidcup 'Mentions' which I will highlight in the next Newsletter .Ed.)*

## JOAN STIRLING – LAND ARMY GIRL

By Frances Percival

I was most intrigued when I read in one of our local papers that our Joan many, many years ago had been a Land Girl being part of the Land Army during WW2. The article came about as the hunt was on by the authorities to find any ladies from that time, as they were to receive a badge as recognition of their war work. People not fighting at the Front such as these ladies “digging for victory”, the Bevin Boys who were conscripted to work in the mines and the evacuees who left homes to be taken into the unknown, arriving at a destination and taken to a hall that we in later years called a slave market. Over the last few years these groups have been recognised and allowed to march in the Remembrance Day Parade in Whitehall. Joan tells me that 100 Land Army girls were killed during the war so the Land Army has every right to be part of the Parade.



All the Land Army girls were volunteers and before being one of those volunteers Joan worked at the offices of the Peek Frean Biscuit Factory in Bermondsey. (Do you remember when on the train to London you knew you were approaching the factory due to the marvellous smell of the biscuits being cooked). So, at 18, she became part of the Land Army workforce being allocated to the Watlingbury, Kent area. A large house, Gransden, had been requisitioned so Joan and her special friend were not that far from home. From there each day a gang of 20 set off on a lorry or coach. One farm that she remembers in particular, is Ellingham Farm at Borough Green and also the Kitchen Garden at Mereworth. It was hard work, undertaking tasks as digging and sorting potatoes, picking strawberries, threshing and feeding geese. She

remembers that the first time she had to thin out carrots, etc. she spent the whole of the weekend at home lying down because she had mangled her back. The wages were not huge but she managed to buy things to take home to Mum & Dad. At the end of the War she went from the sublime to the ridiculous, working from 1947 to 51 in Harrods Store. This was in their offices on the top floor – she said that Harrods was a fantastic place to work.

Later on she went back to the Gransden house and reminisced with a lady there who turned out to be a member of Watlingbury Local History Society.

At the time of Joan & I liasing last September there were still more than 20, 000 ladies still to have their badges.

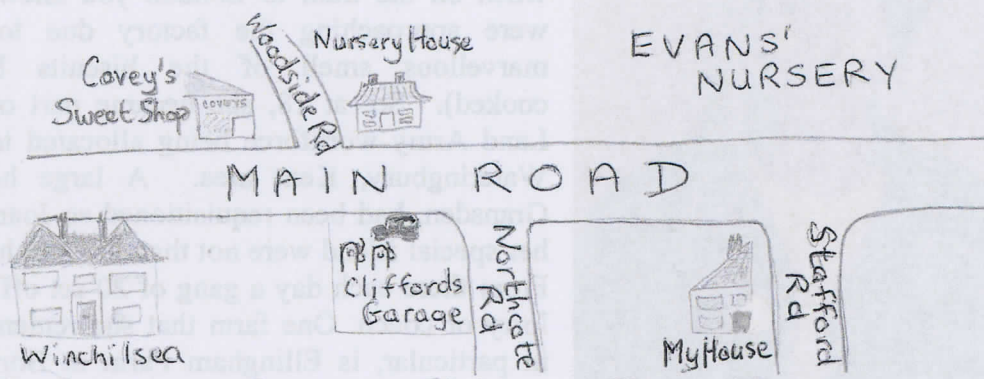
It was Joan and her mates that made sure that the Home Front did not go hungry!



## WALKING TO SCHOOL IN THE 50's

Article and artwork by Liz Ellicott

I lived in Stafford Road and first attended Miss Barter's kindergarten school at Winchilsea House in Main Road, Sidcup – a mere 200 yards from home. I was very happy there and remember being very good at spelling and grammar. We had to move up and down the benches according to whether we got the questions correct or incorrect. We had art and singing, both of which I enjoyed. I still have some old books filled with my first attempts at writing numbers and sketch books full of balloons painted in different colours. At break time we played in the garden when it was fine and it was here that I received my first marriage proposal at the age of 6. His name was Anthony and he gave me a grass engagement ring. I don't know what my father thought Anthony and I had got up to, but he was clearly worried about my chastity because I was immediately sent to St. Joseph's Convent in Hatherley Road where the boys and girls were strictly segregated. My Sister was already a pupil there, so perhaps I was meant to follow in her footsteps anyway- but not in the middle of a term I think!

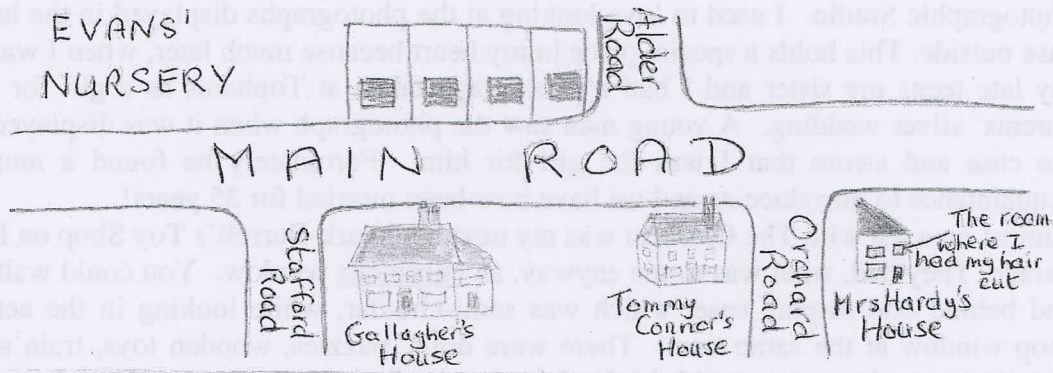


St. Joseph's was about a mile from home. Sometimes I walked and sometimes I went on a bus. In those days it was considered safe for me to walk that distance on my own, and to travel on buses too. I remember sitting next to a soldier and embarrassing him by grinning at him all the way to my bus stop. I was under strict instructions NOT to go on the top deck of the bus and my Mother used to smell my navy and gold 'flying saucer' hat to make sure I hadn't. I didn't stay at school for lunch so I made that journey four times a day.

There were certain landmarks, which I used to look out for when I walked to school. First of all there was Dr. Gallacher's house set back from the main road on the corner of Stafford Road. Their daughter Katy, was a good friend of mine and I spent hours at their house playing. It was the most beautiful house with expansive gardens that reached right up the back of the houses in Stafford Road-as far as No.21. All along the front garden, bordering on the main road, there was spotted laurel hedge. Once I found a dead blackbird under the hedge. I thought I could save it, but when it hadn't stirred by the time I got to The Crescent I thought I better get rid of it before I got to school and buried it there. The house was demolished and flats built on the land in the 60's.

My next landmark was the house on the corner of Orchard Road. This belonged to the songwriter Tommy Connor, of "I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus" fame- and

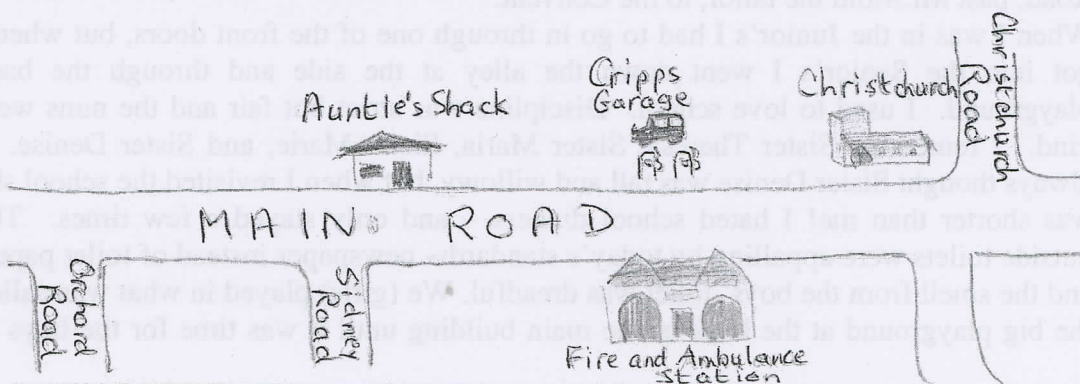
his son Tommy was also my friend. On the opposite corner of Orchard Road was a house belonging to a Mrs Hardy who operated a hairdressing business at her home. This was the scene of some dreadful behaviour on my part. I had long hair and my parents decided that it should be cut short (hygiene reasons? who knows). I was dreadfully upset about this and kicked and screamed all the time I was there. I used to run past her house- perhaps I was afraid of being dragged in there for some more torture.



On up the hill and across Sidney Road there on the opposite site of the main road was Auntie's Shack – a popular place with all the local children. Auntie sold sweets, and snacks. The houses on the corner of Appledore were built there later.

Past the fire and ambulance stations and opposite was Cripp's Garage. There is still a garage there now – Beadles. In between Cripps and Christchurch were some more large houses. In one of these lived the manager/owner of Cripps- Mr Ayres. I remember when he and his wife had their daughter Sarah. They had wanted children for years and were overwhelmed when they were finally successful.

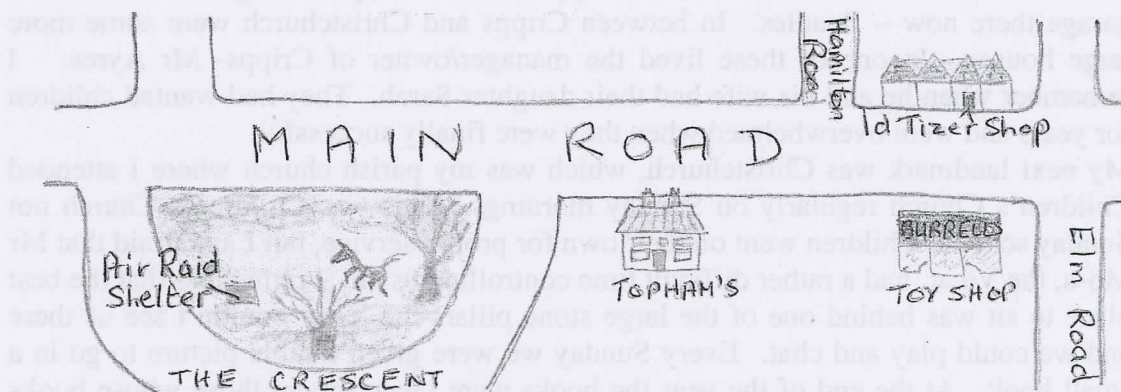
My next landmark was Christchurch, which was my parish church where I attended Children's Church regularly on Sunday mornings. This was Children's Church not Sunday school. Children went on their own for proper service, but I am afraid that Mr Moss, the Vicar, had a rather difficult time controlling us all. I remember that the best place to sit was behind one of the large stone pillars-the Vicar couldn't see us there and we could play and chat. Every Sunday we were given a bible picture to go in a small book. At the end of the year the books were taken in and those whose books were completed got a book prize. The system wasn't foolproof though - I remember buying the previous week's stickers if I happened to miss church for some reason! I was very proud to be called up for my prize but rather deflated when Mr Moss said "Oh, I thought it was your sister- you might find this book rather hard". Fortunately I was a good reader and it was very satisfying to know that I could read a book chosen for someone four years older than myself!



Best of all was The Crescent with the enchanting wilderness in the centre. Thick hedges grew all around but if you were brave enough you could find a way through to the centre, which opened out, into a grassy area. Once I hid in the bushes and watched someone schooling a sleek black colt there on a leading rein. The other bit of fun we used to have was jumping off the roof of an air raid shelter. It was terrifying but we just HAD to do it!

All the way along the road from Christchurch Road to St.Lawrence's Church there were grand Victorian houses and on the opposite side at no.129 was Topham's photographic Studio. I used to love looking at the photographs displayed in the large case outside. This holds a special place in my heart because much later, when I was in my late teens my sister and I had a photograph taken at Tophams as a gift for our parents' silver wedding. A young man saw the photograph when it was displayed in the case and swore that I was the girl for him. Fortunately he found a mutual acquaintance to introduce us and we have now been married for 35 years!

Almost on a par with The Crescent was my next landmark-Burrell's Toy Shop on Elm Parade. They had, what was to me anyway, an enormous window. You could walk in and behind one display case, which was semi-circular, while looking in the actual shop window at the same time. There were dolls, puzzles, wooden toys, train sets, prams – everything you could think of. Opposite Burrells was a small confectioner and newsagents where you could buy a penny drink of Tizer- something I often did on my way home. I can still remember the echoey sound of wooden floor, the slightly seedy proprietor and the fizz of the Tizer striking my nose.



Now I was in the High Street and the next shop I looked out for was Cardy's. I built my whole collection of Observer books and I-Spy books from purchases made in Cardy's. It was the place to buy ink, pens, stationery and books. It smelled wonderful- a mixture of new paper and ink.

Outside Morris's the outfitters I would wait to cross the road to go down Hatherley Road, past Mr.Mold the tailor, to the Convent.

When I was in the Junior's I had to go in through one of the front doors, but when I got into the Senior's I went down the alley at the side and through the back playground. I used to love school. Discipline was strict but fair and the nuns were kind. I remember Sister Theresa, Sister Maria, Sister Marie, and Sister Denise. I always thought Sister Denise was tall and willowy, but when I revisited the school she was shorter than me! I hated school dinners – and only stayed a few times. The outside toilets were appalling by today's standards- newspaper instead of toilet paper- and the smell from the boys' toilet was dreadful. We (girls) played in what was called the big playground at the back of the main building until it was time for the boys to



come out to play. Then a whistle was blown and we all fled to the small playground at the back- we didn't want to get caught by those boys! Also at the back there was a wonderfully peaceful orchard and two tennis courts.

I made that journey every school day for five years. When I was eleven I was heartbroken to be told that I had to take the 11+. Most of my friends stayed at the Convent but I went on to Chislehurst and Sidcup Girls' Grammar School-on the site now inhabited by Beaverwood School-in Beaverwood Road, Chislehurst. But that's another journey and another story!

## VISIT TO TALLOW CHANDLERS' HALL, 12<sup>TH</sup> FEB.2008

By Liz Ellicott

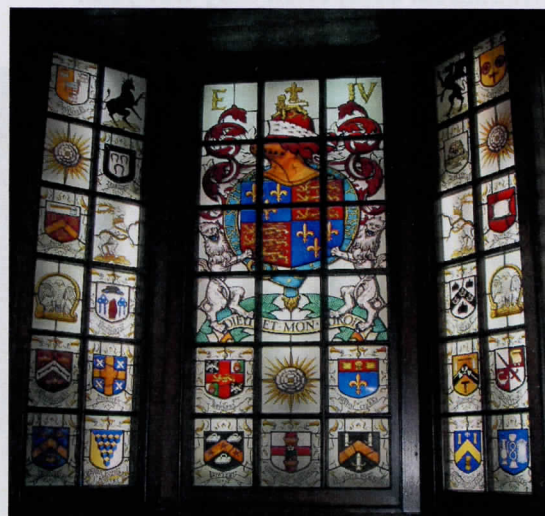
Our Outings Secretary, Frances Percival, has always said that it's worthwhile cultivating acquaintances. It was this maxim which led to our guided tour of the Tallow Chandlers' Hall in the City of London. When she found herself sitting opposite a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers it was too good an opportunity to miss, and so we found ourselves on a beautiful spring day approaching the imposing entrance on Dowgate Hill.



We entered the impressive courtyard, which we later learned was built after the Great Fire, behind where a row of medieval shops used to stand. We were greeted by the Clerk, Brigadier R Wilde and Mr John Harrington who was Master a few years back. After leaving our coats and bags in the cloakroom we started a very comprehensive tour of the building. In the entrance hall there was a pane; depicting the Company's Armorial Bearings, and the names of Masters from

1462 and Clerks from 1530. As we ascended the stairs we had a look in the display cabinet where there was a candlestick dating from 1380. Many more treats were in store: beautiful leather wall panel, the silver beadle's staff from 1682 and many valuable examples of silverware. The most important treasures of all are the ancient documents on display in the parlour. They show incredible beauty, skill and delicacy of design, particularly the Grant of Arms dated 1456. The earliest documents are the title deeds of the Hall itself; the first being dated 1335.

From the parlour we progressed up another floor to the Court Room. We sat around the wall benches while the Brigadier told us the history of candle making. The court has been in existence since 1476 and met every week until 1820. We finished our tour in the Banqueting Hall which has an inspiring ornamental ceiling, an incredible array of silverware and a majestic stained glass window donated by members of the Freemen of the City of London who use the Hall as their Headquarters.



This was an educational and enjoyable outing. Not only did we learn many new things about London and the Guilds, but also about the modern day work of Livery Companies like the Tallow Chandlers who are actively engaged in charity work and educational programmes. Our thanks to Frances for 'speaking up'!

### STATUE WALK - SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008

By Eileen and Roy Uncles

The majority of the group assembled at Sidcup Station in time to catch the first available "Freedom Pass" train to Charing Cross. The bright sunny morning was nevertheless cool in the shade.

Our group complete, Gill, our guide for the walk, led us straight to the Eleanor Cross\* in the station forecourt. Not the original – Cromwell saw to that! Down Villiers Street past one of Kipling's numerous addresses we turned into Embankment Gardens. The triumphal arch at Watergate built for the Duke of Buckingham showed just how far the river Thames had been pushed back.

The Embankment Gardens were virtually deserted at this time on a Saturday morning which enabled us to see the multitude of statues and the glorious early spring flowers usually hidden by the hundreds of office workers taking their breaks.

Robert Burns was close to Major Cecil Brown of the Camel Corps. Lord Cheylesmore was near the more familiar Sir Wilfred Lawson the great warrior against the evils of alcohol and war. The Postmaster General, Henry Fawcett, vied for attention with Robert Raikes, founder of the Sunday school in Sooty Alley.

In front of the Savoy Hotel, now undergoing renovation, we saw not a statue but a small garden dedicated to Richard D'Oyly Carte who built the hotel from the profits of his Savoy theatre.

The Savoy Theatre thrived on the light operas of Sullivan, the musician, whose statue is in the gardens and Gilbert, the librettist, who only warranted a commemorative plaque on the Embankment wall.

We strolled past Faraday, Cleopatra's Needle, and Samuel Plimsoll of Plimsoll Line fame. Most appropriately we stopped at a plaque to Sir Joseph Bazalgette, creator of the Embankment and tamer of the "great stink". (We were to hear more of this at the next week's lecture.)

We saw the familiar RAF memorial and the new and spectacular Battle of Britain Monument completed only last year.



Across the road many statues of the great names of the First and Second World Wars stand silently in front of the Ministry of Defence.

On Westminster Bridge we speculated was it Boadicea or Boadica?

Those more stalwart than we continued on

to the Palace of Westminster where we saw the statue of Oliver Cromwell and Richard the Lionheart and other famous statues of our Parliamentary past. One in particular was that of the great suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst. In Parliament Square there was the statue of our WW2 Premier, Sir Winston Churchill. Everyone appreciated Gill's fascinating walk and the commentary, which really brought these statues alive. Thank you Gill for reminding us of our wonderful heritage.

*\*It was felt that there was a story behind the Eleanor Cross that was the first memorial we looked at on our Statue Walk, Gill Brown researched the history and came up with the following interesting article.*

### **ELEANOR OF CASTILE**

By Gill Brown

We are all familiar with the memorial outside Charing Cross Station and I suppose assume that it is a replacement for the one erected by Edward I as a memorial to his beloved wife. This isn't quite the case, there was a memorial at Charing Cross to Queen Eleanor erected just after her death. It was sited near to where the statue of King Charles I is now. However, the current Cross was more to advertise the newly built Charing Cross Hotel than commemorate a Queen.

The original Cross was taken down and destroyed on the order of Oliver Cromwell. The stone was used either to be part of a pavement or to make knife handles depending on which book you read.

Eleanor was the daughter of Fernando III, King of Castile and Leon and his second wife, Jeanne, Countess of Ponthieu. She was probably born in the year 1241. Eleanor married Edward when she was only 13 in November 1254. The marriage took place at a Monastery in Burgos, Northern Spain.

Eleanor and Edward were devoted to one another. They were rarely apart; she accompanied him on military campaigns and gave birth to a son, Edward, in a temporary dwelling in the construction site of Caernarfon Castle. She bore Edward 14 children and of the five sons only one survived childhood.

The Queen died at the age of 49, having been married for 36 years. She was on her way to join her husband at Clipstone, but died of a fever on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1290, near Lincoln.

Her body was taken on the long journey to Westminster Abbey for burial. The journey took twelve days. The King had crosses erected at each place that the procession stopped. These were Lincoln, Grantham, Stamford, Geddington, Northampton, Stony Stratford, Woburn, Dunstable, St. Albans, Waltham, Cheapside and Charing.

The journey covered a distance of 140 miles. Only three of the original crosses remain – those at Geddington (once a Royal Manor) Northampton and Waltham.

## OUTING TO THE DENGIE PENINSULAR, ESSEX – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008

By Jennifer Hetherington

On a beautiful sunny Saturday morning, welcome after the days of rain, we set off for the Dengie Peninsular under the careful eyes of Frances & Eric. This was the first trip I had been on organised by the dynamic duo and it lived up to all the comments I had heard about how good the trips were with Lamorbey & Sidcup LHS.

Apart from the annoying noise that occurred because one of the coach doors wouldn't stay completely closed, (later rectified by our driver), the journey before our first stop passed with various books and leaflets being passed around and commentary on what delights there were in store for us from Frances.

We made our first stop at the Crouch Valley Lodge at Latchingdon. It was an inspired location for Frances to use. The owner made us most welcome with lovely coffee and biscuits and to cater for our comfort he opened up several of his rooms. These were lovely and clean and made us all think what a good place it would be to come and stay in that part of Essex. While we had our coffee and biscuits the driver, Jim, fixed the door so no more noise!

From Latchingdon we travelled on to Bradwell with some roads so narrow that we took up the whole road and I was glad I wasn't driving. Frances had arranged for the Vicar and his wife (also a Vicar) to meet us when we arrived.



We had a 15 to 20 minute walk to the little church. It was called St.Peters on the Wall. It was built by St.Cedd. He had been sent by Columba from Lindisfarne in 653AD and had landed at Bradwell where he found the ruins of an old deserted Roman fort. As there was so much stone from the ruins of the fort lying around he decided to build a permanent

church. The church was modelled on the style of churches in Egypt and Syria. The church had been used in many different ways over the years as it was gradually allowed to fall in disrepair. The chancel had been knocked down and for a time the nave was used as a barn! The interior had a lovely feel to it and the vicar surprised us by saying that at Christmas he has over 150 in the congregation. We wondered how they could all fit in.

After a brisk walk back to the coach we were all ready for our lunch stop in Burnham on Crouch. Several pubs or restaurants had been recommended. We all filed off the coach with Frances's instructions to be back for our tour at 2,15pm.

We met our Guide at the appointed time and he took us off to the quay beside the River Crouch. He explained that the river had been classed as private in 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>

centuries, and owned at one time by The Lord of the Manor, Walter Fitzwalter. He had made a lot of money in rents and licences from the fishermen; they in turn became wealthy exporting oysters to London and beyond. Some lovely houses were built on the quayside. Some of the frontages were newer than the backs of the buildings; even those built in the 1500's. Burnham has become a popular place for weekend activities and many people have yachts moored on the river.

Our guide's voice was not very loud so Frances kept us all together by saying, "huddle closer". We did get some strange looks from the locals! We wandered along several streets, jumping out of the way when cars decided to use the roads. We saw a set of houses built as an investment by a local man called John Smith. Apparently he was the "del boy" (as in Only Fools and Horses) of his day! The cottages were amazing in that they had been built as one continuous construction with one roof beam extending the length of the 24 cottages, one long loft! Naturally they are now in a conservation area. The whole tour took over an hour and a half with too many interesting things to comment on here.

We had had enough of walking by the time we returned to the coach and were very pleased to see Jim and the coach waiting for us. So we were then on the last leg of the tour, driving via Maldon for Heybridge for the much-promised Cream Tea. (The tea did not come up to the expectation as promised when booking. Frances) However, the tea and scones were most welcome with many people having more than one cup of tea.

Sadly, our trip came to an end at 6.30pm when we arrived at Sidcup Station.

For myself and every one of us on the trip, it had been a successful and rewarding day and I can't wait for Frances & Co. to plan another trip. My name will be the first on the list!

## **HORNIMAN MUSEUM**

By Eric Percival

The twenty second of November saw thirteen members of the Society meeting at Lewisham station on a cold and windy day. We were off to visit one of the gems of South London, the Hornimans Museum, founded in 1901 by Victorian tea merchant, Frederick Horniman. The museum has recently had a major redevelopment and was reopened in 2002, one hundred years after its foundation. For the majority of our party the first stop was the café where a welcome coffee was available. At this stage we all went our separate ways, exploring the treasures on show. The Natural history gallery was well displayed and I think was one of the few parts of the old museum without too many alterations. Two highlights I would recommend are the "India Recycled" gallery where you can follow the chain of British donated clothing from charity shops to the markets of Northern India, Indian produced saris and textiles are recycled as western fashion items. But by far the best show is the new Aquarium, where the brilliant design enables you to feel so close to the fish, this part of the museum proving very popular with visiting children. Back to the café for lunch, followed by what was going to be a walk to the highest point of the adjacent park, however having to walk three paces forward and two back due to the wind Frances and I turned around heading for the nearest bus stop.

## SPARE A THOUGHT FOR FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>

By Janette Cunliffe

Does this date ring a bell? If so you are probably a current or ex member of The Scout Association or The Guide Association.

Each year on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February Scouts celebrate Founder's Day and Guides celebrate World Thinking Day. A joint service is held in Westminster Abbey on the closest Saturday, for members from around the world, during which wreaths are laid on the Baden-Powell memorial stone.

February 22<sup>nd</sup> was chosen, as it was the birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement. By coincidence it was also the birthday of his wife Lady Olave Baden-Powell who was the World Chief Guide.

On World Thinking Day every member of the Guide Association, from the smallest Rainbow, through Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Guiders, thinks about the World Guide Family and renews their Promise.

Many Guiding units hold a ceremony where coins are laid on a map of the world. The money raised is sent to the World Thinking Day Fund, which is used to help develop



Guiding worldwide and to fund vital community projects.

The World Thinking Day symbol was introduced in 1975 for use in World Thinking Day Celebrations.

At the centre, the World Trefoil represents the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

The arrows pointing towards the Trefoil signify action and give direction to that action, showing how guides everywhere can work together. The circular shape of the design represents the world of guiding

## SIDCUP GUIDING MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR TWO

By Cynthia Gillett nee Oakley

Cycling messages to Sherwood Park Post for ARP Wardens (no mobile phones in those days), mixing the Wardens' night-time cocoa (a lengthy task as it always went lumpy), helping clear up at the Marlborough Park Ambulance Station, picking up shrapnel round the streets, collecting waste paper and tidying pig bins. I was so proud to gain my Guide War Service Badge. We practised lighting a fire with only two matches at the Marlborough Ambulance Station. Two of the Hancock sisters were Guiders and one is recorded at the Imperial War Museum as being killed as a driver on active service when the Station received a direct bomb hit. Her sister, Margaret, went on to become a Guide Commissioner and organised the new idea of Cadet Guiders and she masterminded the Guides Festival of Britain Pageant at Sidcup Place. Today I always think of the drilling and display marching when I pass by. I remember how good Marjorie Tippett was with our badge work and, later, with Brownie Revels in Lady North's garden in North Cray.



I was a Patrol Leader and then a Brownie Guider with Brown Owl, Kath Smith, at Holy Trinity Lamorbey. She used to make us large jugs of powdered lemonade as we practised Morse Code and Semaphore in her garden, we knew signallers would be required if the invasion came. We also knew we would be messengers so we learned how to use public telephones and

send coded messages, I had Eileen Peterson for this, she is still a friend, now a great grandmother and a school governor.

I stayed friends with Kath until she died in her 90's, cared for by her American daughter-in-law, Virginia, she was always telling her of the happy times when we ran the Brownies. When I became Brown Owl, the Pack, with Kathleen Randall as Tawny won the National Prayer Book Competition and put Sidcup on the map. I also wrote for many years in the Guide and Brownie Magazines.

Mary Scott was also a close friend and when her aunt, Margaret Hancock, died there were many old Guides at the Sidcup memorial service. Mary returned a tablecloth I'd embroidered for Margaret and said, "I thought you'd like this back as a memory of so many happy years Guiding".

At the 1<sup>st</sup> Lamorbey, Margaret Walton was the Guide Captain and Gwen Forder the Lieutenant. Margaret was a great friend and inspiration to me, helping me with my career. I lived with her and her family in Halfway Street, her two daughters, Sheila and Hilary, both stars in Brownie shows, are now retired and write regularly to me remembering their mother and all our camps, hikes and picnics on Chislehurst Common.

When Guider, Sue Ryder, later Baroness Warsaw, asked the Guides to give a penny of their pocket money to finance trek carts she took into Displaced Persons camps in Germany in 1944/45, Sidcup Guides were enthusiastic. We organised collections and worked to raise money and Sue Ryder organised pen friends in the camps. I was linked to a Polish Girl Guide, Jadwiga, we could not write or send things to the camps direct, but Polish Scouts attached to the British Army volunteered to be go-betweens.

I wrote to Scout Jerzy via the Forces post and he took my letters and gifts to the camp to Jadwiga in his off duty time. He sent me photos and letters back, which I still use today when I give talks on children in World War Two. I also joined the British Polish Guide and Scouts Friends, we met in London and had camps and hikes. I still have the handbook with its motto 'Look for Friends'. Now 64 years later, Jadwiga, now living in Australia, we are still friends writing to each other every Christmas.

Sidcup Guides also had fun in the War, visiting the bomb crater at the Oval to guess the depth, organising competitions to see who had the biggest shrapnel collection, running tramps suppers with the Scouts and putting on Shows.

We also had romances, as there were a lot of charming, handsome Scouts at the 4<sup>th</sup> Sidcup (Holy Trinity). I married one and our next Wedding Anniversary is our 54<sup>th</sup>.  
Happy Guiding Memories.

## GUIDING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

By Mary Webb

Many of you will have been brownies or guides in your youth and for most of you this was an enjoyable experience. For girls joining nowadays it is also great fun but you might notice some differences and you may not realise that there are brownies and guides around you as their uniform has changed a great deal. As a brownie you would have worn a brown cotton dress with a yellow tie, leather belt & woolly hat or beret. Nowadays to keep up with the modern image the girls have a choice of T-shirt, hooded zip jacket, leggings, shorts, trousers, long sleeved T-shirt and gilet so they no longer look 'uniform' apart from the fact that brown and yellow are the main colours. Similarly guides can choose from a varied selection of navy blue wear which can be worn with trousers, leggings, skirts, jeans or shorts. None of you would have been a rainbow. Rainbows, for the 5-7 year olds have just celebrated their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. They originally wore a tabard but now have a choice of items similar to brownies but in red.

Brownies still have sixes but they can choose to be either elves, gnomes, etc or animals. Similarly they can still have Brown Owl or an animal name for their Guider. The programme is not as structured as it was and the girls are expected to take much more part in the planning of what they do in their unit, the community and the wider world. They are encouraged to work together in small groups and share experiences and responsibility. Brownie holidays are very much part of the programme and many girls spend their first night away from home on such a weekend. The whole programme is more multicultural and multifaith to fit in with the changes in our population today. Rainbows follow a programme based on a Rainbow Jigsaw where they 'Look, learn, love and laugh'. They make their choices during 'Rainbow Chat' and pick items from a series of resources called 'Roundabouts' – the latest one being 'Roundabout Global Adventure'. The guide programme is based on 'Go for it' – a series of challenges on different topics for the patrols to choose and carry out with hopefully minimal adult supervision. Games, badges, camps and holidays are all part of the choices for the modern girl. The Senior Section covers the 14 to 26 age range and includes Rangers, Young Leaders (who help in units) and young Guiders. Their programme is very wide but teamwork, taking responsibility and sharing experiences form the basis of it and can include DofE and Queen's Guide.

September 2009 sees the start of the Centenary celebrations – 100 years since the Crystal Palace Rally when girls followed the Boy Scouts and asked Baden-Powell to start a movement for them. That happened in 1910 and quickly spread world-wide so 2010 will be a busy and important year for all members of the Guide Association.

-----



## A USEFUL TOOL IN RESEARCH – BISHOPS' TRANSCRIPTS

By Frances Percival

Whether you are researching local history or family history the Transcripts can be helpful in your quest. Whilst in the Local Studies at Townley Road, I happened to come upon the Footscray transcripts for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The local clergymen sent the transcripts to their Diocesan Bishop each Easter detailing the Baptisms, Marriages and Burials over the last year.

The first entry made me feel quite sad - Burials – Oct.13<sup>th</sup> 1801 A Stranger – name unknown & who died by accident.

Baptism - June 16<sup>th</sup> 1805 Sophia Eliza - Born May 6 1805

Daughter of Benjamin and Sophia Harenc

Aug.24<sup>th</sup> 1806 Maria Sarah - same parentage

Dec.4<sup>th</sup> 1808 Charlotte Elizabeth – Born Nov.7<sup>th</sup> 1808

Daughter of Joseph Berens & Charlotte

Sept 11<sup>th</sup> 1810 Charles Joseph Harenc - Born Aug.3<sup>rd</sup> 1810

Burials - Nov.7<sup>th</sup> 1810 Sarah Harenc. Wife of Benjamin Harenc of  
Footscray Place.

Apr.23<sup>rd</sup> 1812 Benjamin Harenc of Footscray Place.

Recurring names were also interesting with Wallace heading the entries, plus Martin, Hayes, Tinsley, Plummer and Burnett. These were the ordinary people that made up the village of Footscray.

### THE STORY OF SAM SNELL – IN HIS OWN WORDS

*Sam was a near neighbour of my Mother-in-law when she lived in Bracknell. He happened to mention one day that he had lived for a while in the Sidcup Homes(The Hollies) and I asked him if he would allow me to record his memories. He agreed and I have about an hour and a half of him on tape. I have written down his own words because I did try to reorganise the article but, as I am not a journalist, without success. Only the punctuation is mine. GILL BROWN*

I was born in 1903 on the 8<sup>th</sup> May in Greenwich, South East London and I am now 5months into my 90<sup>th</sup> year. I was the eldest of three, my brother being about 14 months younger and a sister about the same, younger than him. When my father died I was, well, six and a half to seven years old. My Mother being badly affected by rheumatic fever was unable to work to keep us. So my Mother went to live with her parents with my younger sister. My brother and myself were put into the Sidcup Homes, as I knew it then, through the Greenwich Board of Guardians.

We stayed about a fortnight in the Lodge of the Sidcup Homes. I understand that this period was necessary to reorganise one or two of the boys so that my brother and myself could be kept together in the same house. We were housed in the Limes. I don't remember the names of the house father and mother, I do remember one nurse,

the name of Nurse Gee. I think we were about ten or twelve in a bedroom – it was a very large room, I think so, I may be wrong. We were taught to do as much for ourselves as possible. I was taught to darn and sew buttons on my clothes. We used to empty our own chamber pots and clean them in the morning. We also in the common room had to keep the floors clean.

I remember that in some cases there was bed-wetting and if a boy had wet his bed he was stood in the main hall of the house with a sheet over his head in the corner. I remember that very well. When I was first admitted to the Homes I was introduced to the swimming bath. I was caught up, taken under the armpits and thrown into the shallow end and they made sure you went right under and someone was there to pick you up but from then on I was always scared of water. I didn't learn to swim 'til I was about 19 or 20.

We had some good times and some not so good times. I remember we used to have some good cricket matches there. We had our cricket field. There was someone known as the Squire there - I don't remember anything about that. We went to church regularly on Sunday and we used to have to walk through a small wood – all in the grounds to attend church. I think that's where I learnt most of my hymns.

As I said I was housed in a house called The Limes and I remember that year that I was there (I was there for about a year and two months) I remember during that time The Limes won the swimming competition – no help from me, no. I was really dead scared of water, honestly I was.


But, in the summer we used to go picnicking. The large laundry baskets were filled with sandwiches and tuck, which was carried by the bigger boys. Also big urns of tea all wrapped up also carried by the bigger boys and I remember that on two occasions we went from Sidcup Homes and walked into what is now known as Avery Hill Park. It was known in those days as Colonel North's Estate – so we went there and other places for our picnics.

My Mother, I think, was only allowed to visit us once a month. She visited regularly. My late father's brother was in the catering trade running a working men's café in Deptford. Uncle used to supply us – giving my Mother a very large cake. It was about 14 inches long like they used in the catering trade. Do you know the long split tin loaf – about as big as that? It was cut in slices that were shared amongst the whole of the boys. I don't know how many boys. It was all boys in our houses. Four big houses and they were all boys just spread around the estate. The main entrance at the bottom of Halfway Street, just inside there were smaller cottages either side of the drive – there they had the girls.

If you lived in Deptford as my Uncle did you knew everyone else in Southeast London - one of the girls now living locally here at Bursgrove certainly does and do you know what she gave me this week? A local paper, her son had taken the Kentish Mercury. It's a local paper like the Bracknell News is for Greenwich, Deptford and New Cross area and he brought it in for my neighbour Dolly. Dolly said I'll read it and give it on to Sam. She gave it to me when I saw her on Thursday. I've yet to read through it but I did notice some of the prices of houses in the Forest Hill and Sydenham area where we lived!!!

*Mr Snell has since passed away at the ripe old age of 93. A lesson for family historians as Gill has managed to capture Sam's memories during his lifetime.*



 Lamorbey  
& Sidcup  
LOCAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY

Founded 1952

Affiliated to Kent History Federation • Kent Archaeological Society • Bexley Civic Society