

NEWSLETTER 134

DECEMBER 1996

Price 20p, free to members

Society calendar

Epping's butter

According to an item in Mrs Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (c 1861) spotted by our member, Mrs Homer, 'Epping Butter is the kind most esteemed in London. There are three methods pursued in the manufacture of butter. In one, the cream is separated from the milk and in that state is converted into butter by churning, as is the practice about Epping.'

An idle thought about Loughton

Concern is often expressed about the threat to the 'character' of Loughton from developments which have taken place and those which are still planners' and developers' dreams. Do members of the Society who share an interest in local social history, sometimes wonder what their successors will make of today's Loughton, notable for its range of charity shops alongside its choice of innumerable eating places.

Still on the seasonal subject of charity and food

In 1901, at the Restaurant Lyonnais in Soho, an eatable meal could be had for as little as 8d (under 5p): 'Soupe, 1 viande, 2 legumes, dessert, cafe, pain a discretion', while Lieut-Col Newnham-Davies in his book *Dinners and Diners, Where and How to Dine in London* (1901), records that at the Comedy Restaurant, Panton Street for 2s 6d (12½p) he had:

Hors d'oeuvre varies	Lasagne al Sugo
Consomme Caroline, Crème à laReine	Bécassine Rôtie
Sole Colbert	Salade de Saison
Filet Mignon Chasseur	Glace au Chocolat
Dessert	

The author of *Plenty & Want; A Social History of Diet in England from 1815 to the Present Day*, John Burnett, comments 'To find snipe on the menu of a half-crown dinner, even in 1901, was somewhat rare'.

It would have been unimaginable to the families in Lambeth quoted in Maud Pember Reeves's book *Round about a Pound a Week* (Virago Press, £7.99), based on the daily budgets of 30 families in Lambeth living on that amount just before the 1914-18 war. For example, the wife of a printer's labourer, a 'careful' and 'very delicate man' in continuous employment, with an average weekly wage of twenty-four shillings (£1.20p) had just seven shillings (35p) a week for food to feed her six children, her husband and herself after budgeting eight shillings for rent and sums for burial insurance, boot club, soap, soda and blue, wood, gas and coal. Mrs P was 28 'and when she has time to look it, rather pretty'. She was 'clean, but untidy, very gentle in her manner', 'terrified of debt' and easily shocked if the visitor alluded to anything which shocked her. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, she was 'a little plaintive with her brood of six', and like other women interviewed 'seemed to have lost any spark of humour or desire for different surroundings'. Shades of Somerset Maugham's *Liza of Lambeth*. We can wonder whether Mrs P, like Liza, ever managed to make a trip to Epping Forest? A newly published and recommended book gives breadth to the picture - *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and*

Norman Charles Padfield, 1914–1996

How rare these days for a man to live his whole life in the house where he was born. Apart from two final years in nursing homes, Norman Padfield did just that. The last working farmer in Chigwell Row, his death marks the end of an era.

Norman was born at Brownings Farm, Gravel Lane, in 1914, the son of Dennis and Eleanor Padfield. (My father was the doctor who delivered him.) With brothers Will and Dennis, and sister Florence, Norman grew up in a busy farming household. He was not a healthy boy and had to wear splints on his legs. He attended Loughton School. When the others married, Norman stayed on at Brownings, carrying the farm, dairy and arable, through difficult years of depression and war, into a changed agricultural world. Peggy Smith, his faithful housekeeper, had worked at Brownings since before Norman was born. Toby Metson, his cowman, earned the special RABI medal for 50 years' continuous service on the farm.

Though a bachelor, Norman belonged to an enormous close-knit clan. Padfields moved up from Somerset to south-west Essex in the late 19th century and came to dominate the farming community. They still do. Just in the Epping Forest area, not too long ago, there was George at Chambers Manor, Steve at Lambourne Hall, Maurice at Great Tawney Hall, Ralph at Little Tawney Hall, 'Big' John at Hill Farm, Hugh at Piggotts, Alan at Hainault Farm, Will at Hayley's Manor (to be succeeded by Norman's nephew, Peter), nephew John at Great Gregories and Norman at Brownings.

Most Padfields become churchwardens. Norman and I were fellow wardens at All Saints' in the 1960s when Harold Furneaux was Rector. After Archdeacons' Visitations we would have tea with brother Willie, churchwarden of Epping Upland, and put the Church to rights. Norman was a traditional Anglican, generous in quiet ways. The milk churn would arrive for bazaar teas, along with trays of Peggy's delicious fairy cakes. For Harvest Festival there would be sheaves of corn and a plaited loaf for the altar. The Brownings tractor and drain rods were available for emergencies. Norman's last gift to All Saints' was the beautiful altar frontal in red, for Whitsuntide.

In the late 1970s, as Norman's health deteriorated, 'Great Gregories' John joined him in active partnership to modernise the farm: buildings, methods, machinery and the land. New drains were laid, hedges grubbed out. One winter so much snow blew off the enlarged fields that Pudding Lane was blocked for a week. Eventually the cows were sold. Now there are horses at Brownings Farm and livery stables.

Norman was a heavy man. Although he had two hip replacements his lameness increased and he became housebound. In the village we missed seeing him in his Land Rover, his dog beside him; he always sported a pork-pie hat. After Peggy died, Bert and Joyce Peakall had come to housekeep at Brownings. Latterly, Norman enjoyed the friendship of Jim and Queenie Ilott, who had moved to a flat in the house. Always there was the loving support of John and Jill Padfield. But when Norman suffered a series of strokes, and could no longer walk, the permanent move to a nursing home was inevitable. The farmhouse was cleared and sold. John bought a 'popemobile' to take Norman for drives in his wheelchair. Jim Ilott was with Norman when he died peacefully in the Macris Home on 3 July, his heart still at Brownings.

At Norman's funeral, the red frontal glowed from the altar. Old neighbours gathered (Harms, Metson, Potter, Eves . . .), along with the Padfields. We sang 'We plough the fields' and remembered a quiet, brave man and a bygone Chigwell Row. RJP

[With thanks to *The King's Well*, Parish Magazine, for Chigwell and Chigwell Row.]

Vic Russell adds: 'Brownings Farmhouse has a very complex architectural history. It is of late medieval origin, c 1469. The central section of the house was rebuilt in the 16th century and was further extended around 1800. It is typical of Essex in its timber-framed and plastered construction.'

Victorian home entertainment

It is often said that before the advent of broadcasting people made their own entertainment at home, always supposing they had the leisure time available. Christmas and New Year are the traditional season for family gatherings and one way of passing the time could be a dramatic presentation of some kind, perhaps tending towards pantomime to amuse the younger members. One might not expect to find such events taking place in a cottage, but the residence of the lord of the manor is a more likely venue – in the case of Loughton Hall a few documents give an insight into some performances there in the late 19th century.

The present building dates from 1877–78, and a large handwritten ‘poster’ tells us that, on Wednesday evening, 1 January 1879, ‘By Special Desire, the Loughton Branch of the Celebrated ADC will give a Grand Performance of the Thrilling Extravaganza entitled *Princess Brighteyes or the Jealous Queen*’. It goes on to say that the Manager (unnamed) has been fortunate to secure the services of seven talented and Favourite Performers, and lists the Dramatis Personae:

<i>Quakeinafunko, Monarch of Happyland</i>	Mr W W Maitland
<i>Rumbustious, The Chamberlain</i>	Mr Fort
<i>Prince Lollipop, a Sweet young Dandy</i>	Mr Albert Chambers
<i>Spindle, a good little man</i>	Mr Salvin
<i>Queen Stickup, a jealous Lady</i>	Miss W Maitland
<i>Princess Brighteyes, Such a dear</i>	Miss E Maitland
<i>Tulipa, The Queen's waiting maid</i>	Miss F Tower

Doors open at 7.30 (but to be closed immediately to keep out the draught); Performance to commence at 8 o'clock, Admission Free.

Who were these talented performers? The Maitlands were children of the Reverend John Whitaker Maitland: William Whitaker aged 13½, Winifred aged 15½ and Eleanor aged 10¾. Messrs Chambers and Salvin were probably their cousins and Miss Flora Tower certainly was; Mr Fort may have been a son of the Rev Richard Fort of Theydon Garnon. The audience no doubt consisted of their parents and family friends.

By 1885 the company had grown to 20 for a production by ‘The Irrepressibles’ of *Little Red Riding Hood or Harlequin Jack and Jill and the Babes in the Wood* as a Grand Christmas Pantomime, written ‘expressly for the occasion’ by T B Cusack Smith Esq.

ON BOXING NIGHT AT 7 O'CLOCK		
PERFORMED BY THE FAMOUS BURLESQUE TROUPE		
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY		
AS PERFORMED BY THE TROUPE OF THE L. B. CUSACK SMITH		
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY		
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY	IBERIA	MISS E. W. MAITLAND
PRINCESS	MISS A. B. TOWER	MISS F. TOWER
CURRY	MISS A. B. TOWER	MISS K. ADAM
SHERRY	MISS A. B. TOWER	MISS B. MAITLAND
DUSTY	MISS A. B. TOWER	MISS C. MAITLAND
PLASTER	SCULLIONS	MISS G. MAITLAND
BUSTER		MISS W. MAITLAND
GUSTY		MISS CUSACK SMITH
BARON SERRA SERRA	THE PRINCE	MR CUSACK SMITH
OLD BAWLEY	OF BAWLEY	MISS A. B. TOWER
DON WHITNEY	MR APPROVED	MR A. B. TOWER
ROBBER	MR CUSACK SMITH	MR D. MAITLAND
CHAMBERY	MR CUSACK SMITH	MR CUSACK SMITH
- CHARACTERS IN THE DREAM -		
FATHER CHRISTMAS		MR CUSACK SMITH
GRANDFATHER		MR B. MAITLAND
GRANDMOTHER		MISS G. MAITLAND
SPRIT OF HOPE		MISS CUSACK SMITH
ACT I. OLD BAWLEY WHOSE THE SLEEPING BEAUTY - ACT II. GRANDFATHER OF THE DREAM		

The performance was on Friday, 2 January, with Miss Winifred Maitland as Red Riding Hood and Mr T B Cusack Smith as Lupino. They may have been engaged at this time, as their marriage was in April 1886. Mr W Maitland played Jack Robinson, Miss Ellinor [*sic*] Pelsatilla; their younger brothers Reavely and Digby, and sisters Blanche, Cicely and Gwen, were cast as Bill Smith, Fred Brown, Molly, Folly and Jolly, respectively. Reavely was nearly 14 while Gwen was about seven years old. Squire and Flora Primrose, the Babes aged 21 and 17, were played by Mr W M and Miss Flora Tower, while Mr Twopenny Tower took the role of Arry Iggins. Miss Sybil Salvin was Queen Gossamer, Misses Heloise and Viola Salvin were Dolly and Polly which suggests they were younger sisters. Miss Alberta Chambers was Violincella. Four members of the Abdy family made up the remaining characters: Miss G as Dame Skoolbord, Miss K as Gelatine and Misses D and T as Amelia and Clara the Babes' Aunts. Scene I was set in the Cave of the Weird Wolf and Scene II on the Village Green at Happydale.

We can only imagine the plot from the names of the characters, but Thomas Berry Cusack Smith was actively involved with the Primrose League and political satire should not be ruled out. He entered the diplomatic service and was appointed Her Britannic Majesty's Consul in Samoa, where similar private theatricals were staged in 1891; by 1903 as Sir Berry Cusack-Smith, KCMG, he was Consul-General for Chile. His travels influenced at least one other pantomime burlesque for a family performance as shown by the playbill on the right.

IAN STRUGNELL

Birds Hill, Loughton

Stephen Pewsey rediscovers a place-name

Having recently bought a house in Wroths Path, Loughton, I followed the 'Redfern Principle' [*in Newsletter 129 John Redfern urged the retention of old names in naming properties and housing developments*], and sought out an appropriate name for my new acquisition, which is, it must be said, an exceedingly ugly box-shaped town house built c 1969, though with impeccable local connections as it was built by Sapsford Developments of Old Station Road, Loughton, and sold to me by Higgins Developments, whose managing director, Mr D J Higgins, is a direct descendant of William Higgins (1842–70), nephew of old Thomas Willingale and jailed in 1866 for exercising his right to lop.

In pursuit of an appropriate local name, I scoured W C Waller's *Loughton in Essex* unsuccessfully for inspiration, getting lost in a forest of copyholders, rods, poles and perches. Eventually I noted that according to Chris Johnson in *Loughon Street Names*, Wroths Path was known as Birds Hill around the turn of the century. Old Tom Willingale himself lived here according to Winston Ramsey in *Epping Forest Then and Now*, the site of his little cottage now marked by an unlovely block of garages. Some (Victorian?) weatherboarded cottages do survive, however, flanked by Edwardian brick houses, beyond which lie several functional 1960s town houses, slightly relieved by mock-Georgian flourishes on a later, 1980s, group of town houses. These stand on the site of Madderton's (locally known as 'The Paint Factory'), artists' colourmen; parts of Madderton's brick boundary wall survive behind 45 Wroths Path.

So, Birds Hill House was settled on for the name. I mentally patted myself on the back for reviving an old and defunct local place-name. However, when my neighbour heard of the choice, she added some fresh information. Running behind my house is a narrow alley, connecting to a footpath which links Wroths Path to Baldwins Hill, and continuing a short distance on the other side of the footpath. This alley, it turns out, is still known locally as Birds Alley. Now no more than a service path, it must have once performed a different function, perhaps as a short cut to Madderton's.

I have begun researching the history of Wroths Path in detail, but it is interesting to know that Birds Hill lives on, though now only applied to a humble alley. Chris Johnson speculated that it was applied as a nickname because the area was so full of bird life, and I can't help agreeing with him. In our (small) garden there is a noisy and voracious daily throng of birds ranging in size from goldfinches, robins, and blue tits up to carrion

crows, and including many species which I have always thought rare in urban surroundings, such as nuthatches and jays, but relatively common here on the edge of the forest.

A Pictorial Review of Claybury Hospital

The water tower of Claybury Hospital is a prominent landmark overlooking the Roding valley and the use of the building for its original purpose has come to a close after just over a century. A substantial book, *Claybury: A Century of Caring*, was published in 1993 to mark the centenary of its opening, but it is now out of print, and this smaller volume, *A Pictorial Review of Claybury Hospital*, covers the history of the hospital with some 80 photographs. The emphasis is very much on people – patients and staff – associated with what was a major institution.

The author of both books, Eric Pryor, started as a Student Nurse at Claybury in 1948 and spent almost all of his career there in increasingly senior positions. During that time many changes took place in the methods of treatment, continuing a process in which the hospital had played a leading role since it opened. It may come as a surprise that the initial choice of site was Birch Hill Estate at Theydon Bois, but this was found to be unsuitable in size and situation. The site eventually chosen required some major earthworks to level the top of the hill, carried out by a Loughton contractor.

Copies of the books are in local libraries, and the *Pictorial Review* **only** may be obtained from the author, Eric H Pryor, 25 Grosvenor Gardens, Woodford Bridge, Essex IG8 0BE, price £6 including postage (cheques payable to Eric H.Pryor). IAN STRUGNELL

LOUGHTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Registered Charity No 287274

President: J I Besent, OBE, FRICS, MRAC

Chairman: Dr Chris Pond, Forest Villa, Staples Road, Loughton IG10 1HP (0181-508 2361)

Secretary: John Howes, 97 Staples Road, Loughton IG10 1HR (0181-508 0776)

Treasurer: Dr Donald Pohl, 32 Queens Road, Loughton IG10 1RS (0181-281 1534)

Membership Secretary: Mrs Emelie Buckner, 88 Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton IG10 3HD (0181-508 0427)

Editor: Edwin Dare, 21 Ibbetson Path, Loughton IG10 2AS (0181-508 6250)

All rights reserved. © 1996 Loughton & District Historical Society
