

---

LOUGHTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
**NEWSLETTER**

No 158 OCTOBER 2003

Price 20p, free to members

---

## 'Odds and Ends'

The Society now has its own website up and running ([www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.loughtonhistoricalsociety.org)). The site is still being developed and, at the moment, has the programme for the forthcoming season, the contact details for officers and a publications list.

Whilst writing about websites, it is good to know that 40 images of historic pictures and objects connected with Epping Forest are now available online as the result of co-operation between the Conservators of Epping Forest, the Corporation of London and the Essex County Council. Museums across Essex have put some of their collections on the Internet to make them available to a wider audience. Log on to [www.essex-cc.gov.uk](http://www.essex-cc.gov.uk) in the museums section under Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge.

Those members who were unable to attend the AGM and last talk in May, will probably not know that the Society received an award at the Essex Book Awards 2003, sponsored by Essex County Libraries and the Friends of Historic Essex. We received the FHE award for the local society whose contribution towards publishing their work had been the most significant within the past three years. The Secretary attended the awards ceremony at the Essex Record Office in April, and received a cheque for £200 as the 'prize' for the Society's award.

At the AGM all the officers of the Society were re-elected, with the exception of Jim Youell, who has retired and is succeeded by John Howes as Vice-Chairman, and the addition of Sue Taylor who has joined the Committee.

The Society, in partnership with Essex County Libraries, has mounted an exhibition at Loughton Library to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the Epping Forest Act of 1878, under which the forest was saved for the people. Old posters of Public Meetings held in the 1870s in protest against the illegal enclosure of the Forest are shown together with a photographic display of the Forest today. Many old books about Epping Forest, from the library's collection, are displayed as is a map made in 1640 showing the Forest boundaries. The exhibition was one of the events to be held in Essex Libraries in September as part of National Archives Awareness Month. It started on 18 August and will continue until 13 October.

The London Borough of Barking has appointed Mrs Judith Etherton as Archivist based at Valence House. This is in addition to the excellent local history room supervised by Linda Rhodes. Valence House, in Becontree, of course houses the magnificent collection of portraits of the Fanshawe family, by such well known artists as Sir Peter Lely and Sir Godfrey Kneller, and is well worth a visit.

The Essex Record Office has recently published a book of essays, *Essex Harvest*, in memory of Arthur Brown, who in his later years taught history at the University of Essex. The essays are written by his former students, many of whom were studying for PhDs in local history, and include one by the late Raymond Cassidy on 'Waltham Abbey Parish and the Foundling Hospital'. This contains much about Lady Henrietta Conyers of Copped Hall, who sought homes for the founding children in the Waltham Abbey, Epping and Theydon Bois area in the second half of the eighteenth century. The book is priced at £9.99 and can be obtained from the ERO and local bookshops.

## Horace Newte, or the perils of authorship

CHRIS POND

In his article [*Newsletter* 157, Spring 2003] on the Wilson motor works in Forest Road, John Harrison mentions (as owning a Wilson bodied Panhard & Levassor car) ". . . Loughton authors, W W Jacobs, Arthur Morrison and Horace Newte".

This was quite an embarrassment to me, coming as it did in the week in which we published my *Buildings of Loughton and Notable People of the Town*. I must confess to never having heard of Horace Newte, and did not relish the idea that the book might have become deficient overnight!

So I set about doing some basic research, and found at first, to my relief, that Newte did not live in Loughton, but he did reside at Theydon Bois. In the 1901 census, he was living, as a lodger, with his wife, at No 1 The Parade, which I think, but am not sure, was the row of large Victorian semi-detached houses to the

west of the Victoria public-house. In the census, like people of a similar ilk in Loughton, he describes himself as an author and journalist. I began to think my researches on Loughton's notables had not been deficient after all. But then I found Newte listed in *Who's Who* for 1916, and his address is given as Alderton Hall, Loughton. He was not there in 1910, nor in or after 1917, but he obviously liked the area, and moved about a bit – I imagine he took yearly tenancies of suitable houses. So I had been wrong after all! However, I did have an excuse. When I checked *Kelly's Directory* for 1914, the tenant of Alderton Hall was given as *Canute, Horace Wykeham!* You can see from the paragraph below how it happened . . .

Newte was born at Melksham, Wilts, in 1870, and rejoiced in the full names of Horace Wykeham Can Newte. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, then still in the City of London, and in 1898 married Vera Irene, a young woman of 18, the daughter of Baron Rasch. Newte lived also at Royal Avenue, Chelsea, so the local addresses were probably country retreats. He later seems to have bought a house at Osmington Mills, near Weymouth in Dorset.

He was the author of about 50 books, including *Sins of the Children*, *The Gentle Bigamist*, *He whom I Follow*, *Pillar of Salt – a story of married life*, *The Socialist Countess*, and *Ruth*. He was skilled, according to his obituary in *The Times*, at extracting the maximum emotional content from his characterisation, combining realism and romance. Newte was a right winger, deeply opposed to socialism, unlike many of his contemporaries in Loughton. His *Master Beast*, written in 1907 is a kind of prototype of Orwell's *1984*, and describes, largely set in Essex, a socialist society in 2020. It would be very interesting to know if George Orwell possessed a copy of Newte's book.

I do not know how long Newte lived in Theydon and Loughton, but he must finally have gone by 1920, when he was clearly permanently resident in London. He divorced his wife in 1916 on the grounds of her adultery with the driver of the Wilson-bodied Panhard Levassor mentioned by John! The two had spent six weeks together in a caravan, certainly not an acceptable proceeding for a married woman in 1916.

## Loughton's early history

RICHARD MORRIS

The earliest mention of Loughton is found in a Charter of Edward the Confessor in 1062 when it was called Luckinton. A quarter of a century later it appeared in the Domesday survey as Lochetuna or Lochintuna. There are no less than eight separate entries in Domesday, all of which relate to Loughton. The Canons of Waltham Abbey held the manors of Debden and Alderton with two others merely described as Loughton. Peter de Valoines held two more and Robert Gernon

held 44 acres. The King held 20 acres that appear to have been some sort of perk for the royal Reeve of Havering. The total area covered by these six manors and two extra-manorial holdings was over 17 hides or 2,040 acres.

It is in 1182 that the first reference to a church in Loughton appears. This would have been where St Nicholas's Church in Rectory Lane is today.

Several of today's roads are named after early Loughton landowners. In England's Lane there was a small freehold known as Marlcroft, which was rented by John Pyrle, who paid a half-yearly rent and three hens and a cock on St Stephen's Day. After a lapse of centuries, Pyrle's name was revived for the name of Pyrles Lane, although there was an interim period when the corrupt form of Poles Lane was used.

One of the first ancient tax rolls, written in 1320, tells us that there were nine taxpayers in Loughton: William Smith, John Traps, William Woodward, John Goldyng, Geoffrey Algor, Sewall Rentoit, Godfrey Bigge, Richard Brown and Stephen Shepherd, who among them contributed 23 shillings. Three of these villagers are remembered in the names of roads: Traps Hill, Algers Road and Goldings Hill. A few years later John de Hatfield's name appears.

The first poll-tax was granted in 1376 and about that time Loughton had a population of 44, made up of husbands, wives and widows, with John Ruddock being the only bachelor. Children were not included in the count. At the same time Chigwell had a population of 136.

It was in this century that the Abbot of Waltham got into trouble for erecting a windmill in the forest. Although there is no evidence today of where the mill existed, we are still able to say that it stood on Warren Hill at the southern end of the parish. There was also a water mill located near Loughton Bridge on the River Roding, and needless to say there were quarrels about the water. These disputes were settled in 1273, after a bit of a riot, when certain men came to the Abbot's bridge and millpond, broke both down and carried off the timber of the bridge!

The fifteenth century was to see further turbulence in our village. [*To be continued.*]

## Meeting Pevsner

JOHN HOWES

Last April James Bettley gave a talk on 'Revising Pevsner's Essex'. My wife and I were fortunate to meet Pevsner several times and, as the article below which is reprinted from the *Newsletter* of the Walthamstow Historical Society indicates, we found him not only erudite on all aspects of architecture but a modest and gentle man with a wry sense of humour, not a dry German academic.

One of the earliest volumes of the *Buildings of England* series written by Nikolaus Pevsner, later Sir

Nikolaus, was *Essex*, first published in 1954. Pevsner used the 'historic' counties, so this volume included what is now Waltham Forest. Obviously he visited the area, as some of his very 'personal' descriptions of buildings show. However, during the 1970s he again visited Walthamstow several times, not in connection with his *Buildings of England*, but as a guest of the Borough at the William Morris Gallery.

Pevsner was a great admirer of William Morris and, in spite of heavy demands on his time, he was always willing to visit the Gallery. It was during these visits and, in particular, driving him back to his London home, that my wife and I soon found that he was not the dry German academic that has sometimes been portrayed, often I am sure by people who had never met him.

On one journey I asked him if any ice cream company had ever reciprocated the dedication in one of his books\* 'to the inventor of the iced lolly'? His reply was: 'I wonder what flavour it would be and what shape, possibly a fourteenth century crocketed pinnacle?' Sadly neither Lyons nor Walls ever responded!

His memory of the thousands of buildings he must have seen was astounding. However, the question from a rather parochial councillor: 'Would Sir Nikolaus agree that Leyton Town Hall was one of the country's finest buildings?' drew the reply that 'he could not remember that building'. Perhaps his encyclopaedic memory had not let him down, as he had previously described Leyton Town Hall and Library as 'both rather depressingly debased'. I suspect that he did not wish to give offence!

During the 1970s I was working on a none too serious guide to the 'Charms of Waltham Forest'. Someone must have mentioned this to him and, on one of the car journeys, he asked me to send him a draft copy. This I did and was rewarded with an excellent Preface, far more than the modest publication deserved. Another example of his generosity.

Later in his life he regretted that he had left out certain more mundane buildings from his guides. One such building he did however record was the 'Bull & Crown' at Chingford, describing it as 'Edwardian pomposity, brick with plenty of yellow terracotta in the wildest Loire style'. I took him to supper there before a lecture and he was delighted, but at that date most of the original interior fittings were still in place. A far more kindly appraisal than Leyton Town Hall! He also praised Walthamstow Central Library as being 'in the pretty, somewhat ornate mixed style of the day which was so often and successfully used for small municipal buildings'.

I am sure all who met him in Walthamstow will remember him with pleasure – an outstanding architectural historian, compiler of a unique survey of this country's buildings whose works give pleasure to all who enjoy looking at buildings. As proof of this statement, my wife and I were once leaving a church when a couple asked if it was worth visiting. Foolishly I said 'Yes, certainly, we have "Pevsner" in the car with us and he is full of praise for it'. 'How wonderful', said the lady,

'Could we possibly speak to him? I've always admired his books'!

\*Dedication in the *Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough* volume of *The Buildings of England*. Pevsner said iced lollies were ideal to quench his thirst when being driven around the country inspecting buildings.

## Loughton memories

EVE LOCKINGTON

As a child I had always liked Loughton and enjoyed walks in Epping Forest and the surrounding countryside which was, before the war, quite rural. In 1952 property was hard to find and we chased after several houses before we found one in Stonards Hill. Loughton was expanding rapidly at this time but not with private housing. The Debden Estate was being created by the London County Council to house people from East London, where so many houses had been destroyed in the war. It was a large estate, quite pleasantly planned with many open spaces, but of course my vision of Loughton had been the little village I had known and loved as a child. I also remember a walk Olwyn and I had together, before the building of the Debden estate had commenced, when we walked down Pudding Lane and looked over the Roding. At that time there was hardly a house to be seen. The same view today is unfortunately very different, with the Langthorne Industrial Estate much in evidence.

I was never truly happy in our house in Stonards Hill so we began to look round Loughton for somewhere else to live. The housing shortage had caused a boom in housebuilding and we noticed that new three-bedroomed semi-detached houses were being built in the Spring Grove area. This was right near Epping Forest and also near a bus stop and would be convenient for a young family. We studied the plans on display at the estate agents and, after the small rooms in Stonards Hill, the designs for the new houses seemed ideal. We discussed the matter with Tony's parents. Tony's father was a builder and he approved the plans. So we decided to apply for one of the new houses.

We put our names down on a list and did not really know which house we were going to get. Then we waited, and waited. It seemed to take ages for those houses to be built. Gradually they took shape and when it became obvious that a house would shortly become available for us, we put the house in Stonards Hill on the market. Then the problems started. We were in negative equity. We had bought that house when prices were at their peak and now more houses were being built and Stonards Hill was not in the best part of Loughton. When we moved there, we had not realised that, in previous times, the houses below the railway line, whatever their shape or size, were considered inferior to those above the line and to a certain extent that attitude still prevailed. In the end we lost £300 on the

sale of our Stonards Hill house. It sounds a small amount now but at that time it was a considerable sum.

I had now become pregnant with my second child. This pregnancy had not been so difficult. I suppose I knew what to expect. However, I was pregnant, had a little boy of two years old and Tony and I had to organise the removal from Stonards Hill. It became all the more difficult because the buyers of the Stonards Hill house wanted to move in and the Spring Grove house was still in the last stages of being built.

We moved in to our new house in November 1955. The woodwork was still being painted. The drive had not been laid and the removal men had to bring the furniture in over planks. During the first few days in our new home we had the builders all around us but it did not matter. Our new home seemed right and we felt it would, this time, become a real home for our new young family.

The Loughton I knew when I first married was very different from the Loughton of today. There were no supermarkets. The shops were mainly on the small side and the owners and staff knew their stock and could advise their customers what to buy. I used to buy my meat at Bells the Butcher. I knew the staff and they knew me. One Christmas when I had ordered a chicken for our Christmas meal, I had forgotten to collect it and Mr Bell brought it round to our house on Christmas eve. Such was the individual service of those days.

I had had a large, well-sprung, pram for Robin which would take both baby and shopping and I used the same pram for Timothy. I suppose it was a rather cumbersome object but gave comfortable rides to the baby and there was plenty of room underneath to store the shopping. I got into the habit of having one big shopping expedition a week as, even when we had moved to Spring Grove, the distance to the shops was considerable and it was tiring pushing a pram and looking after a toddler.

At this time Tony used to give me £6 a week for food and for most of the clothes the children needed. I used to buy our groceries from Williams Brothers in Loughton High Road. Williams used to give a dividend and over a period of months this would accumulate until I had a sizeable sum to use for shoes or any other necessities. That dividend was greatly appreciated. However in time the supermarkets pushed out Williams Brothers. No doubt that was considered progress, but the staff in Williams knew me and I always got good personal service which I missed when the shop disappeared.

In those days Loughton had character, it was not a

suburb and people used to talk of going to the village. It even had a cinema, only a little one, but the children liked it.

For a while there was a green oasis in the middle of Loughton which was swallowed up by shops and the first of the supermarkets. Gradually the individual shops disappeared and Loughton developed into the suburb of today. In one or two places there are reminders of its past, perhaps, especially, around the Lopping Hall area.

## Thoughts on a visit to Loughton

MORRIS MYERS <sup>1</sup>

Today, there are few children who go without annual holidays, and who have not travelled to other countries. But it has not always been like that. So poor were many working-class families, that when benefactors in Loughton offered their children a day's outing in the Essex countryside, they accepted with delight.

The slums<sup>2</sup> these children came from had to be seen to be believed. They were vermin-ridden, unhygienic and prone to the diseases that filth and dirt bring in their wake.

The ordinary people of Loughton knew this and protested strongly, but to no avail. The schoolchildren who descended upon them from the London slums appreciated their reception. Loughtonians were well fed in comfortable surroundings. However, many of the children would perhaps have preferred to have had a day in the countryside with their impoverished families, but the authorities no doubt assumed that the lower working-classes would abuse and take advantage of any charitable disposition by the authorities.

Still, whatever beliefs and prejudices were held by all parties concerned, the children benefited, although few were unaware that they were unwanted by the Loughton community. In the minds of many of the more intelligent schoolchildren, there grew a sense of inferiority. After all, they were visitors to a people more 'civilised' than they were. More basically British<sup>3</sup> and intellectually<sup>4</sup> their superiors. In other words, the people who were their hosts were also the people who governed them and were for that reason their 'betters'.

<sup>1</sup> Born 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Myers lived in Bethnal Green.

<sup>3</sup> Many of the children, including Mr Myers, came from migrant families.

<sup>4</sup> It was thought that the people of Loughton were intellectually superior to the East Enders because they and their children were better educated.