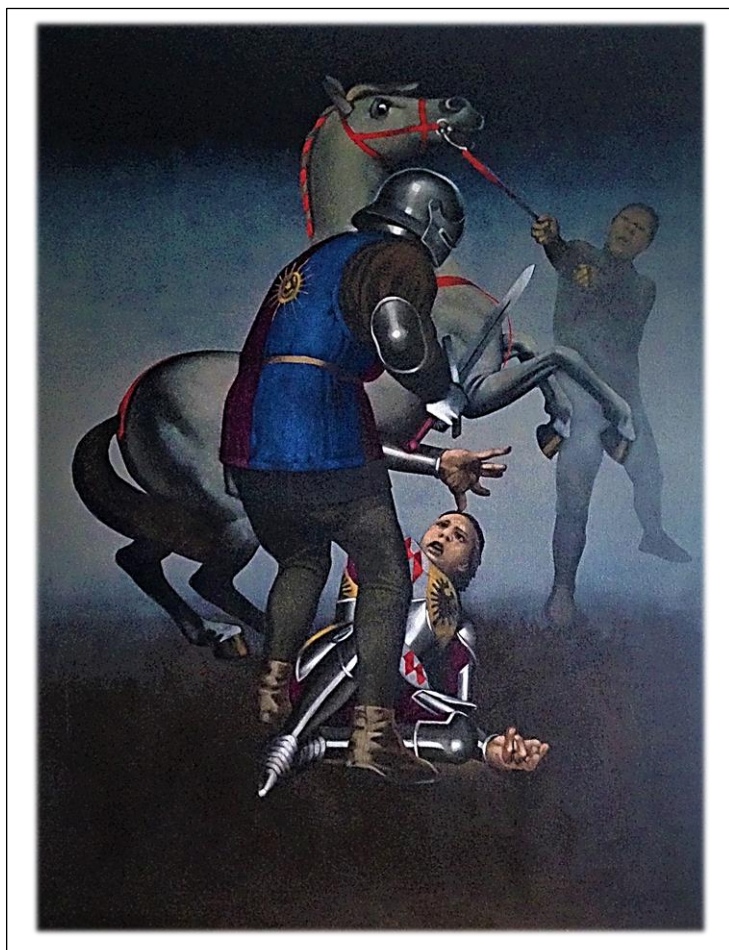


# BARNET HISTORY JOURNAL

The Journal of Barnet Museum &  
Local History Society

Volume 05 (2021)



**BARNET MUSEUM**  
**LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

# Barnet History Journal

**Volume 05 (2021)**

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Production: Mike Noronha, Brunswick Press

Thank you very much to all the other Barnet Museum volunteers who have helped in the production of this journal. Special thanks to all those who have contributed articles.

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# Foreword

By Mike Noronha

Once again I write this foreword in upsetting times. The Coronavirus is apparently under control, and we should be trying to return to some form of normality. We hope and we wait and we shall see.

The Museum has been closed to the public since early March 2020. In this period there has been quite a bit of activity. The focus has been largely on the 550<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Barnet, although other research and Museum administration has not been far behind.

For the 550<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Museum prepared a learning plan for Key Stage 2 pupils; handled the administration of hanging 77 banners on Barnet High Street; managed a temporary shop unit about the banners in The Spires; commissioned a play ('Fog of War' to be performed by the Bull Players in September 2021); wrote a book ('The Battle of Barnet – In Fact and Fiction'); produced a Commemorative 2021 Calendar; and finalised a long-term loan of Battle artefacts from the British Museum.

Research resulted in a book about the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chipping Barnet War Memorial as well as a number of the articles featured in this Journal.

In this edition we have two follow-up articles, one from our key researcher, Jeff Gale, updating last year's piece on the Drew Estate; and secondly, another article from Terence Atkins on a local postcard publisher, this time Samuel Hockett.

Jeff has also provided an interesting, and quite spooky, item tracing one of the fallen on the Chipping Barnet War Memorial. His major article this year, however, is about Basque refugees in Arkley - local history with an international twist. On an international theme, too, I have penned a piece on a US President visiting Barnet.

Dennis Bird has reprised his Barnet Society article on 'SPACES' on the 1911 Census.

In a slight departure, we have a couple of pieces with a biographical element, Scott Harrison has authored an item on his 99-year-old neighbour's Italian campaign in World War Two. Hilary Harrison has written a piece about Agnes Slocombe – a very popular local politician.

Hilary also gives us an insight into the British Museum loan of Battle of Barnet artifacts – a most significant moment in the story of Barnet Museum.

**I hope you enjoy reading this Journal. As ever, the Trustees, management and volunteers of Barnet Museum and Local History Society wish you and yours the very best.**

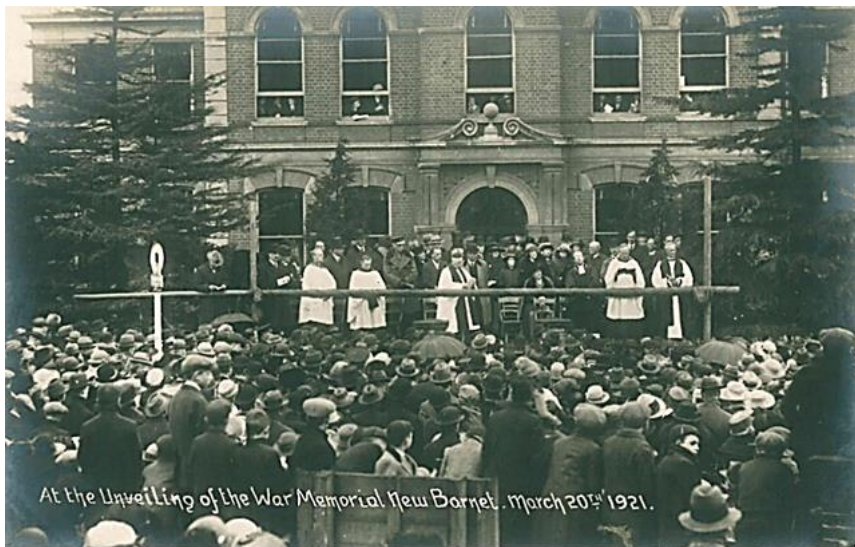
## Samuel Hockett of New Barnet

By Terence Atkins

The production of picture postcards in this country began as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth and took hold in earnest during the years leading up to the First World War. Barnet was blessed with a number of local postcard publishers, of which the best-known and most enduring name is Cowing. Another was Wilson of Wood Street, covered in the first article in this series, in *Journal* Volume 2 (2018).

Samuel Hockett was already an established commercial photographer in his mid-twenties well before the first tentative appearance of the picture postcard. He occupied premises on the north side of Potters Road, the site now covered by part of the flats known as Sheridan Lodge and immediately to the west of the long-gone Potters Road Mixed & Infant School. By the time house numbering was becoming universal in the thirties, his home was 38 and the studio next door 40. Amazingly, the business, which had begun in the late 1880s, continued until as late as 1951/2, always with Samuel Hockett at the helm. His death, at almost 90 in 1953, is recorded as being at 17 Wellhouse Lane, that is Barnet Hospital.

As you will see, Hockett's postcards are of a consistent and particularly fine photographic quality, with a distinctive and easily recognizable style of writing. The representative selection which follows shows that when setting off with his camera, he was just as likely to trek up the old steep footpath (now Meadway) into High Barnet as he was to saunter down into New and East Barnet.



The memorial is shown in all its glory, looking towards New Barnet station still with the distinctive canopy. Notice the two horse troughs, and also part of the drinking fountain, later removed to nearby Victoria Park. As with the one in Arkley, this memorial retains its original position.



This clearly shows that the New Barnet war memorial was unveiled a fortnight before Chipping Barnet's. The dignitaries are at the front of the former town hall and the crowds in Station Road.



This is arguably Hockett's most famous photograph, and rightly appears in the Museum's book commemorating the centenary of the Chipping Barnet war memorial. The ceremony was on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1921 and only a little over a week later this particular card was posted from 35 Moxon Street, including the message 'We are in the crowd'.



The new memorial is again on display. The well-turned-out young ladies striding purposefully across the traffic-free road may be homeward bound from one of the nearby private schools. Berrill's shop on the far right is curiously shown as 'stationer and hairdresser'. Victoria House next door no longer has its third floor. It is believed to be the site of the Red Lyon, praised by Pepys in his diary for 'some of the best cheesecakes that ever I ate in my life'.





This is undoubtedly my favourite Hockett postcard! The war memorial still gleams in its pristine condition. The tramcar is all set for another descent of Barnet Hill, but there are no takers for the upper deck, the open-air ride having perhaps lost its novelty after the initial thrills over the years since 1907. The backdrop of buildings remains essentially unchanged, including the impressive arrays of chimney pots. Clark's shop is still remembered with affection.



Another lively view from the same time (same afternoon?), with schoolboy cyclists and one motor vehicle, but with horse-drawn traffic still predominant. The well-known local draper A. Nunneley was linked by marriage to the rival firm of Clark & Son. Only the distinctive former Williams Bros building has endured, now an estate agent, and the various pubs are but memories.



Church Parade Folly Farm.

The delights of Hadley Wood and Common brought many excursionists to the area, and Samuel Hockett and his fellow postcard publishers were not slow to respond. Many cheap coloured postcards were produced, but Hockett maintained his high standard of good quality photographic cards. Middle class Edwardian children's clothing is nicely shown here.



Ravenscroft Park Barnet.

This scene is believed to date from the First World War. Folly Farm was just south of Hadley Wood and became a popular summer pleasure resort for a few years in the mid-twentieth century. The site is now occupied by Westbrook Crescent and the Jewish Community Secondary School.



Looking across to the north west corner of Ravenscroft Park, with the pair of houses that still dominate in Blenheim Road, this elegant scene with swans is a reminder of the large pond that eventually drained away and is now, usefully, grassed over.

Barnet Fair was a 'must' for any postcard publisher! Here again Samuel Hockett retained his fine standards amidst the competition. This characteristic view shows the funfair on the western slopes of Barnet Hill, with the relatively new houses of Bedford Avenue visible beyond.

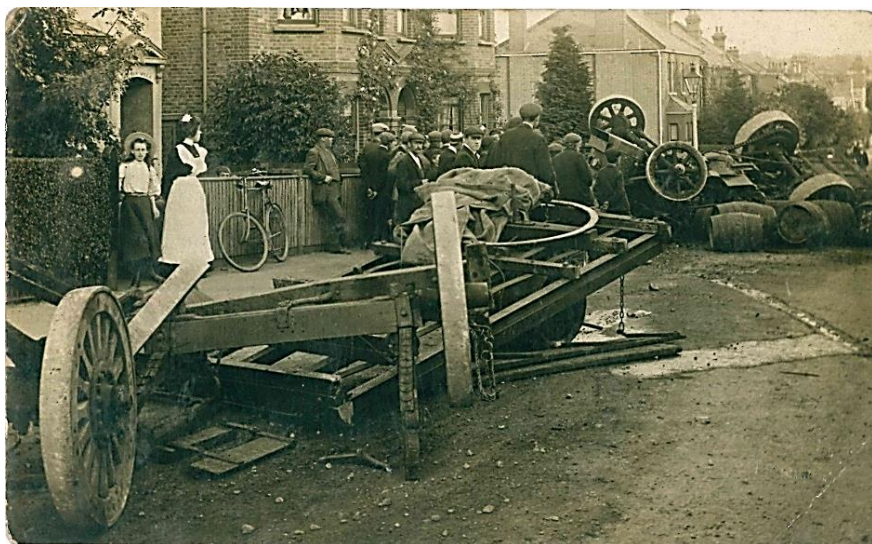


Hockett clearly intended to show some of the beautiful gardens of Wrotham Park, but otherwise this view speaks for itself.



Another view from pre-1914 halcyon days, this shows a young lady on Old Fold Manor golf course, with sheep in attendance and the telegraph poles of the St Albans Road in the distance.





The Conyers Park estate was built by East Barnet Urban District Council in the mid-1920s on the corner of Long Street (now Longmore Avenue) and East Barnet Road. Curiously, the name of the estate is now largely forgotten. Samuel Hockett captured the scene brilliantly, most likely from the nearby railway embankment. The spire of Cockfosters Church is visible on the horizon and housing now covers most of the fields. This is one of Hockett's rarest postcards and I must declare it as my second favourite!

It was quite expected for postcards to appear following local dramatic events such as this apparent collision between two brewery vehicles in Hadley Road, and Samuel Hockett from just down the way would have soon been on hand to capture the moment. The fully uniformed Edwardian housemaid knows to keep her distance from the crowd of equally curious men.



# **Past US President goes through Barnet!**

By Mike Noronha

A young researcher has found evidence that a past President and 'Founding Father' of the United States of America went through the town of Barnet.

Don't worry, however – it was NOT Donald Trump.

## **The Researcher**

Hannah Ryan, a former QE Girls pupil and still a Barnet resident, carried out this research as part of her postgraduate studies in American History.

## **The History**

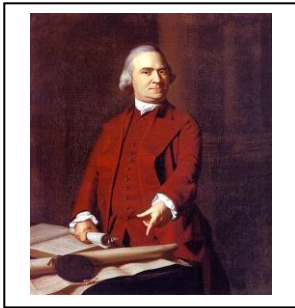
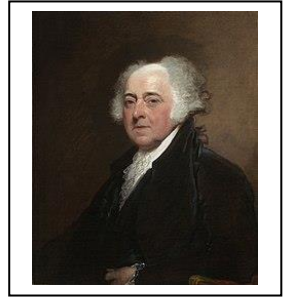
From 1765, thirteen colonies in North America rebelled against the mighty British Empire and, between 1775 and 1783, fought the War of Independence. The united colonies - united states - triumphed. Over the following years, the representatives of the states made a Declaration of Independence and created a Bill of Rights, a Constitution and Institutions that are largely still in force today.

These representatives became revered as the 'Founding Fathers' of the country now known as The United States of America. The eight (although this figure is often debated) key Founding Fathers were (alphabetically) John Adams, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington.



## The Founding Fathers

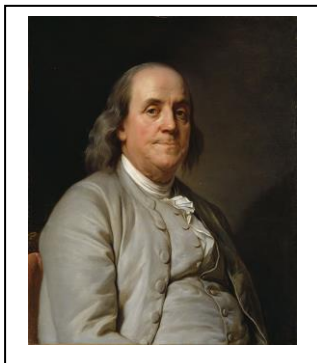
**John Adams** (1735-1826) became the Ambassador to Great Britain of the newly formed United States; he then served as the first US Vice President (1789 -1797) and then second U.S. President from 1797 to 1801.



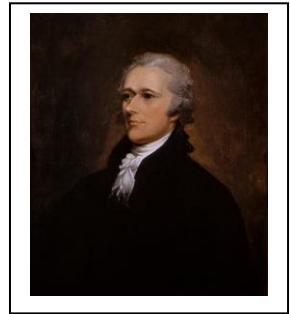
### **Samuel Adams**

(1722-1803) a political firebrand who (unlike many of the Founding Fathers) strongly opposed slavery. He is said to have played a leading part in the 'Boston Tea Party' of 1773.

**Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790) left formal education aged only 10. However, he became a statesman, author, publisher, scientist, inventor and diplomat. Franklin's inventions included a stove, the lightning conductor, bi-focal spectacles, a phonetic alphabet and a musical instrument. He was even inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame. His only surviving house is now a museum in Charing Cross in central London.

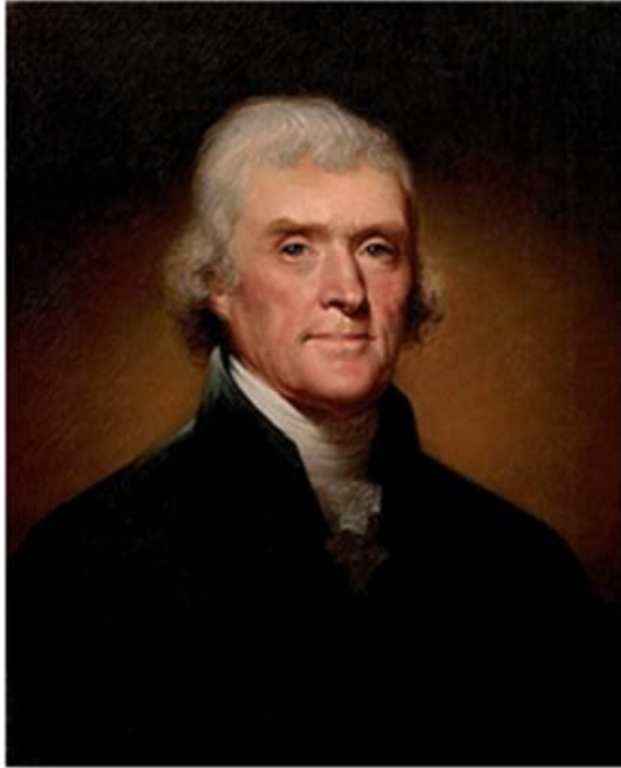


**Alexander Hamilton** (1755 or 1757 – 1804) was a poor, illegitimate orphan who came from the British West Indies to New York. He rose to prominence in the Revolutionary cause and became the first secretary of the Treasury. His career became mired in a sex and financial scandal. He was killed in a duel. His story is the basis of the musical, 'Hamilton'.



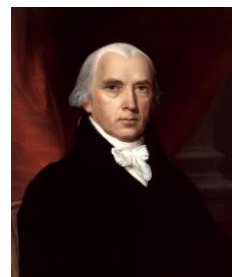
**John Jay** (1745-1829) helped to negotiate the peace treaty with Britain which ended the War of Independence. A lawyer, Jay became the first Chief Justice of The US Supreme Court. He went on to be appointed Governor of New York.

**Thomas Jefferson** (1743-1826) was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, the second US Vice President (1797-1801) and the third US President (1801 -1809). He was responsible for doubling the size of the United States by successfully brokering the 'Louisiana Purchase' from France (which included lands extending between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains and the Gulf of Mexico to present-day Canada). He became the US Ambassador to France (1785-1789). During this time, he visited John Adams in London. A remarkable coincidence is that both Jefferson and his friend and political rival, John Adams, both died on the same day 4<sup>th</sup> July (itself a notable date in US history) in 1826.



*Thomas Jefferson*

**James Madison** (1751-1836) became the fourth President of the US (1809-1817). He composed the first drafts of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights earning him the nickname 'Father of the Constitution'. Madison was a great friend of Jefferson and served as Secretary of State between 1801 and 1809.





**George Washington** (1732-1799) led the American forces in the War of Independence. His military and political acumen led to him being recalled after the War to attend the discussions on a new Constitution. His popularity saw him elected (unanimously, by the electoral college) in 1789 as the first President of the United States.

It has been argued that not all these men are 'Founding Fathers' and, on the other hand, that others should be included. What is not doubted is, that Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, friends and political rivals, both Vice Presidents and Presidents, are definitely 'Founding Fathers'.



*'Washington Crossing the Delaware'*  
by Emanuel Leutze

## **The US, Europe .....and Barnet**

In the late 1700s, the US was a very new country and the period saw great diplomatic efforts by the US leaders. In 1785, John Adams was appointed as US Minister (Ambassador) to Britain. The Treaty of Paris 1783 had formally ended the War of Independence, so Adams was arriving as Ambassador at a sensitive time. Jay was appointed Ambassador to Spain.

The negotiation of the Treaty of Paris was led by Franklin, Jay and Adams; a further treaty was negotiated by Jay preventing another war with Britain (until 1812). Thomas Jefferson was appointed Ambassador to France (following Franklin). There were rumblings of revolution in France, inspired by the US (whose triumph against Imperial Britain owed much to French support).

The United States National Archives keep extensive records of the activities and comings and goings of the Founding Fathers, such is the continued interest in all aspects of their lives. These records include Thomas Jefferson's Memorandum Books which list his many expenses. Hannah Ryan researched these records in detail.

Between March 12th and April 26th 1786, Thomas Jefferson made his first and only visit to London. During his trip he met up with John Adams. In late March/early April, they travelled north from London (Mayfair to be precise) to tour the British countryside and visit several of the Home Counties.

**According to Jefferson's Memorandum Books, he, probably accompanied by John Adams, paid 1/6 (1 shilling and 6 pence) for a 'postillion at Barnet'. This small entry is primary evidence that one (and possibly two) of the most important men in political history passed through the town of Barnet.**

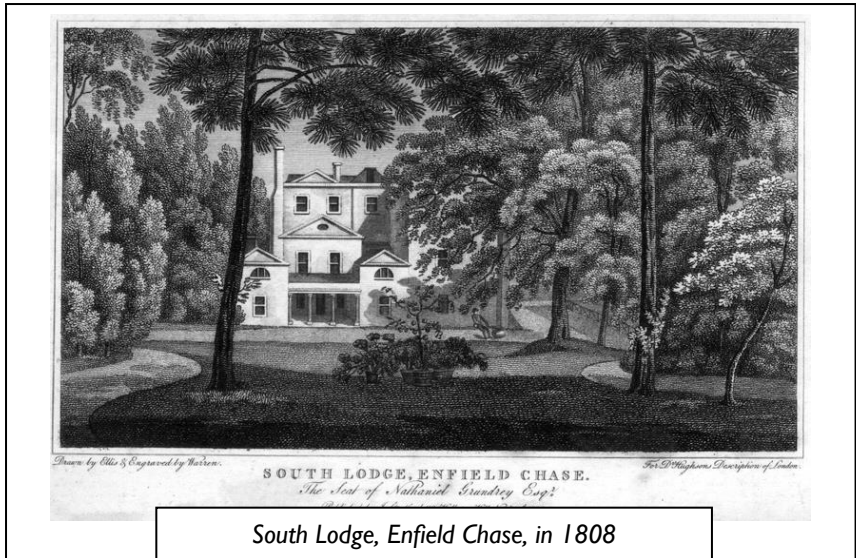
A postillion (or postilion) is someone who rides as a guide on the near horse of one of the pairs attached to a coach or carriage especially without a coachman. Using a postillion was considered somewhat of status symbol and afforded privacy to coach passengers. A postillion would be hired from a postmaster's house or a tavern.



*An extract from a print by Thomas Rowlandson showing a postillion guiding a post chaise with two sleeping passengers. c. 1789*

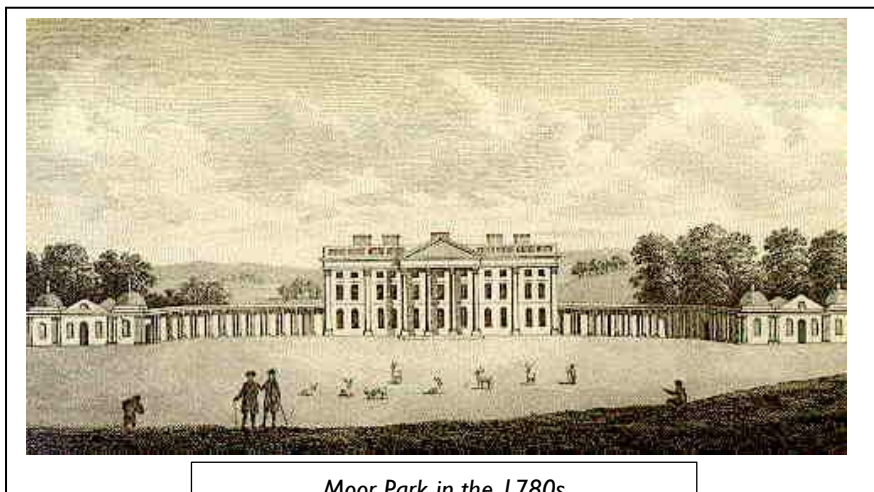
### **Where did they go next?**

It is known that on these trips to the countryside outside London, Adams and Jefferson visited two prominent estates, South Lodge in Enfield Chase, and Moor Park in Rickmansworth. South Lodge, formerly owned by William Pitt was laid out with splendid gardens. Similarly, Moor Park was famed for its grounds. Both estates inspired Jefferson, who was interested in architecture and garden design, when laying out the mansion and grounds of Monticello, his home in Charlottesville, Virginia.

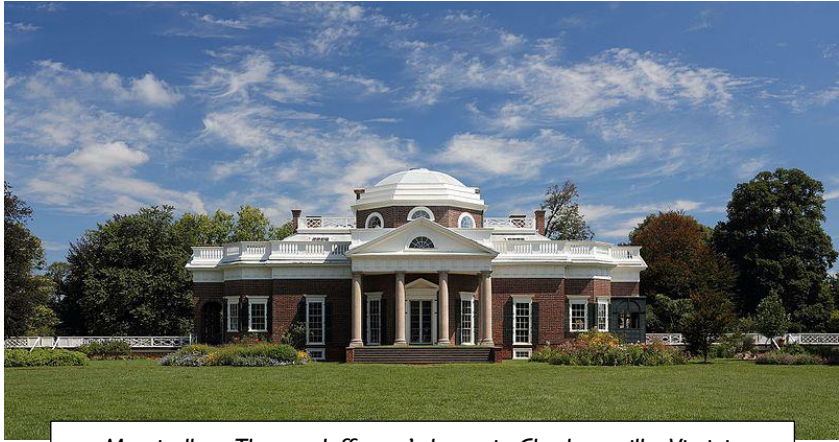


South Lodge was at the southern end of Enfield Chase; it was built over with housing in 1930s. A (reduced size) lake remains from Pitt's garden.

Moor Park can be reached by heading west from High Barnet along the



A411 (Wood Street), Arkley, through Elstree, Bushey Heath and Oxhey. The house is now a golf clubhouse; much of the garden survives.



*Monticello – Thomas Jefferson's home in Charlottesville, Virginia*

## **Conclusion**

Jefferson's writings show that his impressions of London were not entirely favourable. Its architecture was 'in the most wretched style I ever saw' and, of Britain in general he wrote, 'I traversed that country much, and both town & country fell short of my expectations'. One can only wonder what he thought about a small market town 10 miles north of London.





*Barnet Hill and High Street – a print by Thomas Rowlandson drawn around the time of Jefferson’s visit.*

## **A Postscript?**

It is probable that Jefferson’s exact stopping place in Barnet will never be known, although Hannah Ryan’s research continues. However, we do have an interesting possibility. James Ripley was the ostler (man who looked after horses) of the Red Lion in Barnet. He was also a postmaster, and postillions were often stationed at post offices. Ripley was a prolific letter writer; some of his letters were published in a small volume in 1781. Barnet Museum has a copy of a first edition of this book. One of his letters is a diatribe, aimed at the British Government, criticising the prosecution of the war in the American colonies. He claimed that it was an unnecessary sacrifice of English and Scottish soldiers and sailors and was motivated by avarice. Ripley’s book was published only five years before Jefferson’s journey through Barnet. Perhaps Jefferson sought out such a prominent dissident.



*J. Ripley, Ostler,  
at the Red Lion and Post Office Barnet.  
Published as the Act directs Dec. 3. 1781.*

Acknowledgement: Original research: Hannah Ryan, author of 'The Anglo-American Almanac' Blog. Additional research: Bob Turner. Pictures: Public Domain and Barnet Museum

# An Eventful Journey – David Hall’s Italian Campaign, 1944

By Scott Harrison

## Introduction

You may have seen David Hall in and around Barnet, proudly wearing his medals. At 99 years of age, he has been reflecting on his experiences in North Africa and Italy during the Second World War, and then in Palestine. This is his story of one incident reported in ‘The North London Press’ in 1944, and what happened afterwards.



David, born in 1922, lived in Highgate before moving to Barnet. At school he was particularly adept at technical drawing and went on to study at the Northampton Polytechnic Institute (now the City of London University) to become an Associate Member of Electrical Engineers. David recalls the Polytechnic as ‘a hive of military trainees from the Army, Navy, Airforce, WAAFs, WRENS, and other bodies all learning war trades as well as manufacturing components for the war effort’. After graduating, David took a job as a laboratory steward and, when the war started, he joined the Home Guard. In 1942, although in a reserved occupation, he volunteered and was assigned to the Royal Corps of Signals. His shooting skills were excellent and it was recommended he become a sniper: he then embarked from Liverpool for North Africa.

In the North African campaign and in Italy, David was stationed close to the front at Brigade Headquarters. His job, working with two radio operators, was to ensure that batteries were charged to power communications between brigade units and Divisional Command. In North Africa, at the time of the great battle at Alamein (Autumn 1942), David was part of the pincer movement advancing on Tunis, spending most of the time in the front line. From there, they were sent to Pantellaria (a small island off Sicily), then on to the Italian mainland.



*David, far right, was responsible for keeping the generator running so that communications could be maintained.*

### **Brothers in Arms**

Meanwhile, David's older brothers were also fighting. Peter was in the Fleet Air Arm flying a Swordfish from an aircraft carrier in the Far East; Roland was in the RAF and was fighting in Italy. They tried but failed to make contact with each other in North Africa. Then during the Italian campaign, their chance came.

David was still designated as part of British North Africa Forces, so Roland would have had no inkling that David was anywhere nearby. David, on the other hand, knew that Roland was in the Central Mediterranean Forces and asked after him whenever he met someone in the RAF. One day, taking advantage of some spare time, David made his way from the base at Cerignola to Barletta, about 25 miles away. His hopes for an enjoyable evening were dashed when he encountered his sergeant, who told him he was needed for duty back at headquarters. By chance, David hitched a ride on an RAF lorry carrying bombs to Foggia. Shortly after leaving the town, he asked his driver if he knew the whereabouts of 204 AMES (Air Ministry Experimental Station), to which Roland was attached. To his astonishment and delight, the driver pointed at a red building coming up on the right, and said that it was the hotel where the 204 AMES was billeted. David approached a guard at the entrance to the hotel, who took one look at him and said, 'You must be Nobby Hall's brother'. David was directed upstairs, where he found Roland relaxing in a four-poster bed, writing a letter to his future wife, Evelyn. One can only imagine what they had to talk about for the twenty minutes available before David had to continue his journey back to base. But he promised to return and did so on the next day, using a motor bike borrowed from the dispatch riders.

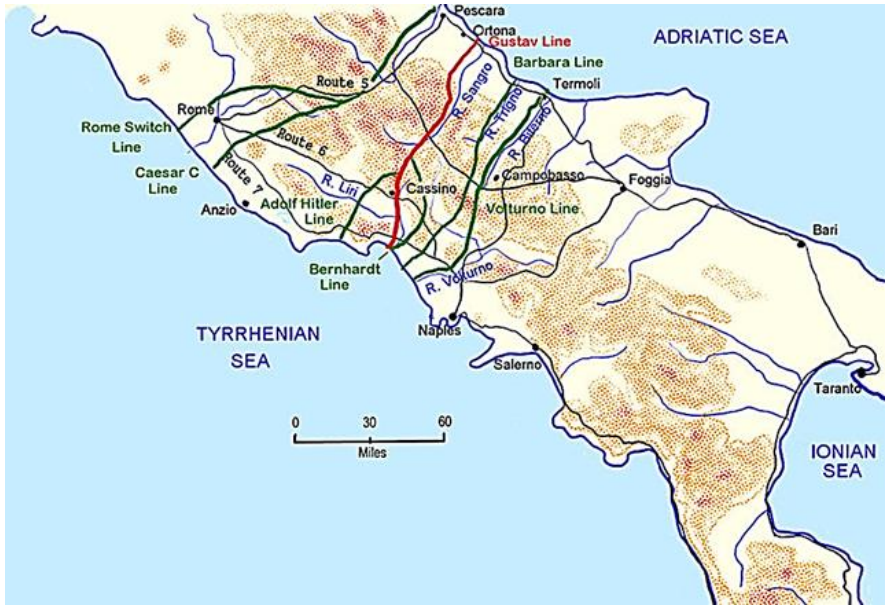
### **An arresting experience**

David promised further visits, but they were not to be. When he returned to camp, the First Division, with the insignia of the white triangle, was preparing to advance northwards to Termoli. David's truck took its place in a long line as the convoy prepared to depart. But when he pushed the starter button, nothing happened. The convoy trundled off without David and his crew. It took them until the following day to get the truck started, and they then gave chase all the way to Termoli without finding the First Division.



*David with his fellow crewmen and their communications truck*

At Termoli, some Canadians offered them shelter in a large greenhouse, but they were quick to evacuate when shelling started. They then retraced their steps and found themselves at the headquarters of the Eighth Army at Pagliata. There, they could find no information about the whereabouts of the First Division. Returning to Cerignola, they saw a jeep with the white triangle insignia. It was the divisional Padre, who informed them that the Division had diverted to the west. They went off in pursuit. Crossing the mountains proved to be hazardous, driving along terrible roads in blizzard conditions. At one point they were invited by an Italian family to take shelter, warming themselves at a charcoal fire.



Finally, they caught up with the Division, with its new headquarters at Sarno. It was not a happy arrival. They found to their horror that they had been listed as deserters: they were ignominiously arrested and locked up. However, they were released the next day when the full story came out. They went back to normal duties as the army prepared to move north towards the intense fighting at Monte Grande.

## Postscript

Meanwhile, David's mother had received news of the meeting and the story was published in the North London Press.

With the war still raging, the brothers each went their own way and were not to meet again until much later, after David's return from Palestine in 1949.

# BROTHERS' DRAMATIC MEETING ON ITALIAN SOIL

## Stories of Local Lads in Forces

PETER HALL, OF ISLINGTON, HAD ALWAYS LOOKED AFTER HIS TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS. HE HAD FELT IT HIS DUTY TO SEE THAT NO HARM BEFELL THEM. ROLAND AND DAVID, THE TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS, KNEW THIS. THEY LOOKED UP TO THEIR BIG BROTHER FOR PROTECTION.

THEN CAME THE WAR AND THE THREE WERE SEPARATED. PETER WENT TO THE FLEET AIR ARM, ROLAND TO THE R.A.F., AND DAVID TO THE ARMY. BUT PETER STILL TOOK A HAND IN THE PROTECTION OF HIS BROTHERS.

In Crete, for instance, Peter helped to provide air cover for the men "down below" who were being dive-bombed and blasted by enemy planes and tanks. He did not know until some time after that his brother, Roland, had been among those men "down below". Is it unreasonable to suppose that Roland's life was saved through his brother's protection?

The three brothers are all serving in the Middle East, and many times Mrs. Hall, at her home at Carlton-road, Funnell Park, has hoped that her three sons might meet while on active service. The three sons, too, have hoped that they might see one another during the course of their "travels."

At last, to the great joy of Mrs. Hall, the seemingly impossible has occurred. Roland and David met in Italy. Hopes of meeting when both were stationed in North Africa had been frustrated. In Italy, where they are now fighting, they spent much time trying to trace and contact each other. Eventually David obtained a car and drove the 20 odd miles to brother Roland's camp. Now, being so close to each other, they spend many



Lieut. Commander (A) Peter Hall



Driver David Hall



L.A.C. Roland Hall

## SAW VON ARNIM LOOKING LIKE "CIRCUS GENERAL"

"Men in the 8th Army who fought all through the North African campaign and then on to Italy leered Arabically and Italian during their travels," says Cnr. Herbert Lane, who is home at Poole's-park on leave from Italy. In his spare moments he is teaching both languages to his children, who had not seen him for three years.

After El Alamein there were times when Cnr. Lane and his comrades were unable to shave for a week, but they kept near to the retreating Germans, all our services working in close harmony. Advancing from the Libyan Desert into Tunisia was like entering a new world. After the heat, sand and flies of the desert, they found—and ate—oranges, grapes and fresh vegetables.

Cnr. Lane saw the Nazi general Von Arnim soon after his capture. He was close enough to touch him. The general's gold braid made him look like a man from a circus.

On their 2,000-mile journey our troops saw several famous people. At Tripoli they marched past the King, who was with General Montgomery, and other high Army officers. George Formby gave them a great show in a ruined place about a thousand years old.

Although our troops were thoroughly trained for the task, they found the landing at Salerno a tough job. Cnr. Lane was, in this story, the only one who had his hair shined.



Cnr. Herbert Lane

## DUNKIRK VETERAN ESCAPES FROM ITALY

The "Alert" sounded. A.A. guns thundered. Sitting dozing in his armchair in front of the dying embers of a fire at his home in St. James's, St. Paul, Devonport-street, South Devon, was 60-year-old George Brown. His wife was in bed. She, too, paid little attention

## BLITZ HERO'S WEDDING

Reception at A.R.P. Club

In September, 1940, at the height of the raids, men of the heavy rescue service were called out one night to Bryant-street, "Cally," where several bombs had fallen, causing considerable damage and starting many fires. When they arrived the bombs were still falling in the area and several houses had been completely demolished.

While one of them was extinguishing a young girl from the rubble he heard the muffled cries of boys shouting for help beneath the huge pile of wreckage.

The party leader asked for volunteers to tunnel their way to the trapped children. Two came forward, one of them being the man who had first heard the cries. Together they tunneled for about five hours. It was hard going and often large pieces of timber had to be sawn away before progress was possible.

At last they found the children, aged about seven and ten, trapped under piles of heavy debris. After some time the two managed to pull them out and they were found to be suffering from little more than shock.

The two heroes of this courageous act was Mr. McOill and Mr. Charles Edward Hollis, 30, of Duke's-avenue, Muswell Hill. The latter was presented with a certificate commending his bravery. Twelve days later, while in the hospital, he received two medals for his bravery. He was discharged in April of 1941 and reached his A.A. unit in Devonport.

On Monday he was married to Miss Rita Sheppard, 24, his daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sydney William Sheppard, of Redon-street, Holloway. The couple have received many presents and messages of congratulation.

The three brothers' story as told by the 'North London Press'

After the war, Peter moved to the Far East. Roland lived close by, near Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield. He died in 2020. David is now looking forward to his 100th birthday in 2022.



# Agnes Slocombe - Stalwart

By Hilary Harrison

'*Stalwart* is a word used to describe many councillors – but perhaps nobody deserves the title more than Agnes Slocombe.'

*Barnet Times*

'I was shocked, surprised, everything you can think of because I never realised people were thinking of me – when I got a letter from the palace that the Bishop of Edmonton nominated me, I couldn't believe it'. This was Agnes's reaction to the news that she was to receive the Maundy money from the Queen this year. However, to the many in Barnet who know Agnes Slocombe and have been helped and supported by her, it came as no surprise. She has lived a lifetime of service, first to her Church and then after 1982, (when she was first elected councillor), to the wider population of Barnet as well.



Agnes proudly shows her  
Maundy Money

The Bishop of Edmonton, the Rt Revd Rob Wickham, told us that the award had been given to Agnes in recognition of the 'dedication of her adult life to the needs of her fellow citizens in the best example of Christian ministry, and for her service to the community of West Hendon as their loved and trusted councillor.'

Agnes arrived in England from Barbados in February 1961. She had been planning to marry John Slocombe in Barbados but he made plans to come to England and she came too. They married later that year in St John the Evangelist Church. Agnes has remained a committed and active member of that church to this day - singing in the choir, acting as a server and being on



the PCC and getting involved, along with her family, in all the other activities of church life. The other organisation she joined in those early days, was the local Labour Party. A natural choice, she says, because she had been a member of the Labour Party in Barbados. For a long time, she attended meetings with her close friend, Doreen Neall who knew all about Agnes' ability to speak her mind and get things done; Doreen urged her to get more involved in the party. However, Agnes was working as a nurse and after her three children were born, she felt her responsibility was to them. For years, she was repeatedly asked to put herself forward as a councillor, but she vowed that she would not until 'her children reached a certain age'. She recalls, 'In life, you have to be very careful what you say. I refused many times while my children were growing up but finally I couldn't say no anymore'. She was elected to serve the West Hendon area in 1982, despite the fact that she was told that people would not vote for a black councillor. But they did, and she was re-elected again and again, remaining a dedicated, hardworking, popular councillor for 36 years. In 1982, it has to be emphasised, her election was a great achievement – a black woman councillor at a time when the commonly-held image of a councillor would have been of a white middle-aged man. Agnes opened the door for others to follow.

What did Doreen, Alan Williams (leader of the Labour group) and others see in Agnes that suggested that she could be a successful councillor? This is a hard question for a modest person to answer, but Agnes reflects that she is a happy, confident person and able to communicate effectively; 'not

shy and not rude, but interested in people- just as you see me, I am – church, politics, council’. She added that she’s always got a lot to say! As to why she wanted to become more involved, her answer was simple- to help the community: ‘I am a community woman – still am today’. She added, ‘I don’t judge but I like to know the reason why things happen.’ To her, justice, fairness and honesty are the most important qualities for those in public life. Her view is that public servants should say what they mean and not promise anything they can’t deliver. She has always been prepared to work with councillors from different parties to deliver what was best for the whole community. For example, she mentioned Caroline Stock as a councillor (and mayor) for whom she has great respect and a good working relationship. Caroline obviously feels the same about Agnes. She expresses this in these words, ‘I had the privilege of working with Agnes Slocombe during her last few years as a councillor. Agnes is one of a kind, and as a new councillor I learnt a very important lesson from her. Agnes will always listen to what is being said, she will think about it, analyse it, then respond! I know in all the work she does, it’s always looking out for those who are needy; her care for others is something very special and that’s why she is held in such high esteem and loved by so many people.’

Agnes recognises the significance of her election as a Barnet’s first black councillor, not so much as a personal achievement, but because it shows others, particularly children, what is possible. ‘It doesn’t matter whether they are black or white but this is an example that they can do it.’ During her time as councillor she had many priorities – particularly education and planning. She has been a governor of five schools in Barnet and singled out Whitefield School as an outstanding school with an inclusive, caring attitude where the teachers give their all for the students. On the other hand, she gave an example of a school where she had to fight the governing body who were covertly planning to sell off school land and pretending that it was a



*The Burroughs – Hendon Town Hall  
Offices of London Borough of Barnet*

council decision. Working out what to do caused her much anxiety, but she felt that she had to speak out. She feels she made the right decision. The governing body was forced to back down and the school kept its playing fields. This happened in the 1980s but she says that to this day she has grateful members of the school community, past and present, stopping her to express their thanks. She has served so many different sections of the community that people recognise her wherever she goes and want to greet her; she says she is often quite embarrassed by it – especially when she’s shopping in Waitrose and they call out to her across the shop! The other day, a man reminded her that some years previously, she had succeeded in making the council install a lift for his disabled father, which had made a really important difference to his quality of life and he still felt indebted to her.



Planning is another issue close to Agnes’ heart. She has been on the planning committee for most of the time she was councillor. She enjoyed working with others but says she always spoke her mind. For all of the thirty-six years on the council, people came to her surgery (third Saturday of the month) for many different kinds of help but particularly for advice on the planning laws. To this day, she has people knocking on her door or waiting for her after church to help them understand the laws or fill in forms. And she is happy to help - which is just as well because people she’s helped in the past have told others that Mrs Slocombe will know what to do and they seek her out!

1997 was one of the most exciting and rewarding times of Agnes' service. She became Mayor of Barnet. She says she 'just loved it'. Her main interest was in meeting all the different communities in Barnet. Agnes commented, 'It doesn't matter about the politics – you meet people, listen to what they have to say.' I was trained to think and act in that way. We have so many lovely communities in Barnet. I learned so much about them and I respected them. It was a great experience. I like people and it is a joy to get involved in the diverse faith and ethnic communities.' She chose to support the Alzheimer's Society as her special mayoral charity, and this has remained close to her heart ever since.



*Agnes during her time as mayor pictured with her daughter who acted as mayoress.*



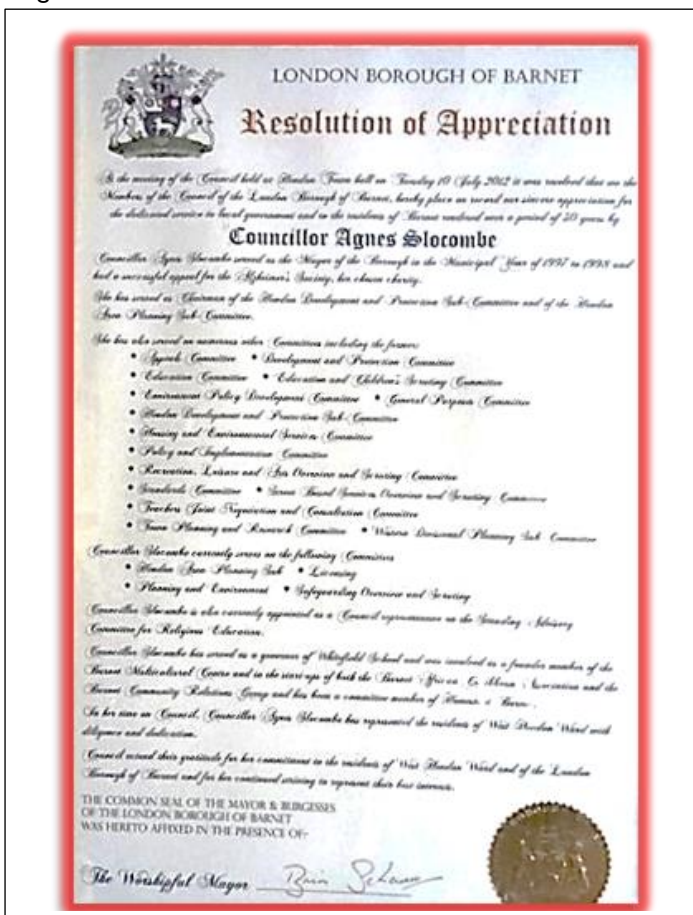
*Agnes outside in her garden*

Along the way, Agnes has reached out to many different communities in Barnet. Here are some examples but there are many more. She founded the African-Caribbean Centre in Algernon Road, in Hendon. She belongs to the Sisterhood at the Baptist Church and helps out with the Sickle Cell charity. She is also a member of the Hendon Garden Club – her green fingers are obvious from the delightful garden she has at the front and back of her house. During lockdown, she has extended her ethos of service by phoning to have a friendly word and to check on people, most especially the vulnerable. This is inspired by her view

of life that, 'God put us on Earth to serve and not to be served.'

The final words go to the vicar at St John's who sums up why Agnes was such a well-respected, inclusive and effective councillor as well as illustrating her a life of service to the Church and the community at large.

*'Agnes is a stalwart of St John's, West Hendon, a lady who has given her all to serve God and people. Her faith is the driving force of her life and she exemplifies the call to 'love God with heart, soul, strength and mind and love your neighbour as yourself.' As a leader of the church, Agnes has ensured that we remain faithful to our calling and she has been a great ambassador as she has shown great hospitality and love to all peoples. We are grateful for her ministry and thank God for the blessing she has been.'*



Resolution of Appreciation from Barnet Council

# **‘SPACES’ in the 1911 Census**

By Dennis Bird

Family and social historians are eagerly awaiting the publication of the 1921 census (due to be released in January 2022) and 2021 itself is a census year.

We have to go back to 1911 to see the last published census as a 100-year rule applies before publication. The 1911 census was held on Sunday 2 April. For the first time, the head of the household completed the schedule and not an enumerator. This was usually a male. It included more information than on previous censuses, and all the schedules are available to read online.

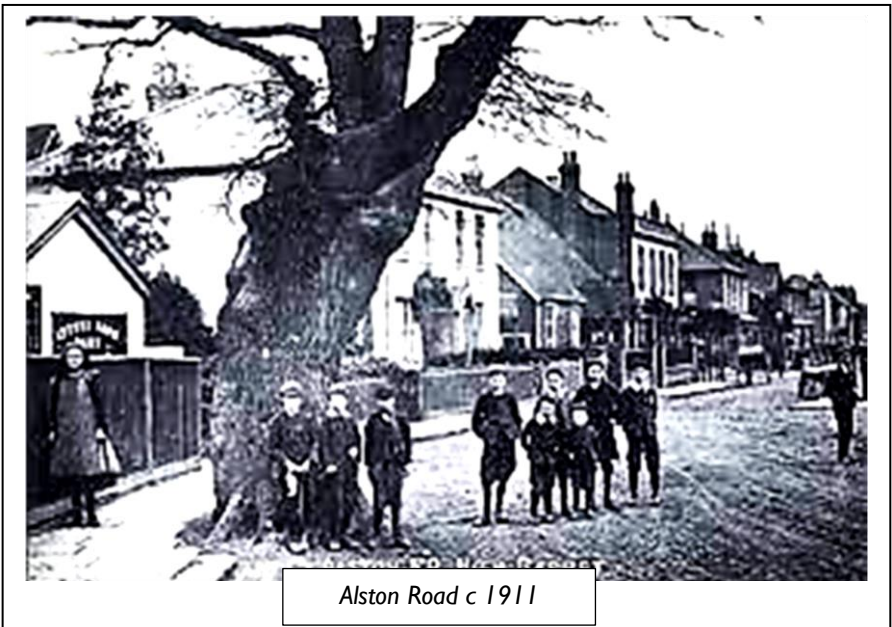
Barnet expanded rapidly in the latter part of the nineteenth century, particularly after the railway reached the town in 1872. Swains photo-printing works in Bath Place and the Dental Factory in Alston Road were the biggest employers but certainly there were many others.

The fields on the west side of the High Street, where the land is reasonably level, were gradually built over. The roads now known as SPACES (Sebright, Puller, Alston and Calvert - named after 19<sup>th</sup> Century Hertfordshire MPs) were built up after about 1870. Development was piecemeal and generally of a lower standard than the rest of the town. As a former resident of the area, I decided to research what the census revealed about life in 1911.

Remember, there was no tarmac, no electricity, tap water a recent arrival, tin baths, outside privies, coal fires, school leaving age 14, no NHS, lots of children and an average working week of 55 hours, but no car parking wars! The Dental Factory in Alston Road was established in 1890 and their works football team, Dental Alston, were the forerunners of Barnet FC (known in their early years as ‘The Dentals’). Five hours work on Saturday morning and a 3pm kick off!

I looked at the census schedules for the area, and I found:

There were 324 households in the area and 308 returned schedules. The total population was 1,680 including 562 children aged 0 – 14 (not including several 14-year-olds already at work). There were two well established elementary schools locally, Christchurch and Elizabeth Allen. Foulds (Byng Road School) opened in 1910. There was no evidence that any child was educated beyond age 14; the grammar schools were for those who could pay. There were 832 males and 848 females so it does not appear that the women here took much notice of the call from suffragettes who urged non-participation with the cry ‘...if women don’t count neither shall they be counted.’



The 1870 Education Act meant that elementary education was compulsory for all children. It was fascinating to see 1911 handwriting from copper plate to barely legible. Obviously many male household heads were not used to writing, and spelling could be eccentric, eg ‘Baernet’ and ‘Hearts’. There were 328 residents, mainly adult, born outside the London and South Herts



area. Many came from Inner London Boroughs. Clearly Barnet was attracting many incomers but not immigrants from overseas. There were only 5 people born in Ireland, plus a Belgian hairdresser and a German optician. One wonders what happened to him in 1914. Only 14 married women admitted to paid employment outside the home, which is surely an understatement. This is a problem with the 1911 census which shows the social expectation of the time. Married women were supposed to run the home, have children and not go out to work. Women who worked in the public sector were required to leave when they got married (which explains why women teachers are still called 'Miss'). However, married women would surely have been helping husbands who worked on their own account, for example, shopkeepers. We will never know the extent of the hidden economy.

There were only two households with a servant: one at the only pub, The Sebright Arms, and secondly, a teacher and his wife, who surely must have had a private income.

It is reasonable to assume this was a solid respectable working-class area. Some of the main areas of work are as follows: Dental 68, Printing/Photography 41, Building Trades about 45 (including 22 painters), Laundresses 34, Gardeners 24, Policemen 16 (none born locally), Teachers 11 (no doubt living cheek by jowl with their pupils), Farm Workers 11. There were also carmen, brewery trades, railwaymen, coalmen, milkmen, bakers, milliners, nurserymen, parlour maids, a butler, servants, chimneysweeps and many more. The totals cannot be entirely accurate, eg where does a 'labourer' work? Only one person admitted to being 'unemployed' as it was conventional in 1911 for unemployed workers to state their previous occupation in the census. One house was a Salvation Army Centre which probably added to the respectability of the area along with 3 clergymen householders.

Clearly, work was local and commuting something for the future. There were only two obvious commuters, a father and a son, who were House of Commons Doorkeepers. A train ride was a rare treat. 16 shopkeepers completed schedules, though it is unlikely they all traded in the SPACES area. There was, however, a local butcher, fishmonger, baker, grocer, confectioner, dairy, bootmaker and Post Office (that included a telephone).

There is some evidence of overcrowding. Large families were normal with 4-6 children and there were 75 'boarders'. Most dwellings had 2 to 3 bedrooms. A third bedroom was a good opportunity to have a boarder! There was little or no owner occupation; renting was the norm.

The saddest part of this interesting exercise was recognising many names of young men (about 25) whose names are on the Barnet War Memorial. Of every 20 British servicemen in the First World War, on average 3 were killed and 6 wounded.

Note: To access the 1911 Census online you will probably have to pay. You can look for no charge at Barnet Museum when we are open again.



*The author visits the SPACES roads*

*The author visits the former Alston Dental Factory*

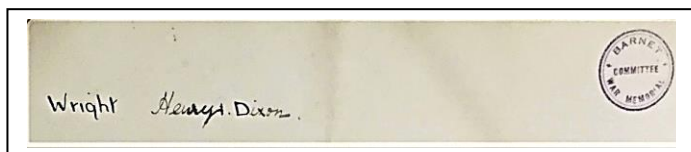


# A World War One Memorial Mystery Solved by a Ghost Story!

By Jeff Gale

When the museum published the results from their research into the names of the fallen in the two World Wars as they appear on the Chipping Barnet war memorial, there were nine from WW1 and four from WW2 that could not be accurately identified. A serendipitous - if spooky! - series of posts spotted on a Facebook page in January 2021 has at last allowed one of the unidentified WW1 fallen to be confirmed with some certainty.

The name in question, as recorded on the memorial standing in the Garden of Remembrance alongside the church of St John the Baptist in Barnet, reads simply 'H D Wright'. The museum holds the original manuscript list of names that were to be recorded as prepared by the War Memorial Committee in 1919 and, as the extract below shows, this provided further information regarding the individual's full name - Henry Dixon Wright.



Reference to the Ancestry UK and the Commonwealth War Graves (CWG) websites during the original research revealed only one potential candidate - Royal Navy Chaplain, The Reverend Henry Dixon Dixon-Wright, a Member of the Royal Victorian Order, who died on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1916 aged 46 from wounds sustained whilst serving on HMS Barham during the Battle of Jutland.

However, CWG records show him to have been the son of Henry Wright, of Wallington, Surrey, the husband of A. Louisa Dixon-Wright, of 24, Stanley St., Southsea, Portsmouth, and his burial place as Lyness Royal Navy Cemetery in the Orkney.



*HMS Barham  
At Scapa Flow  
following repair after  
the Battle of Jutland*

No clear reference to any local association with Chipping Barnet could be found, although, a form of link to the name on the memorial was also established in that it was discovered that Henry Dixon Dixon-Wright had changed his name from Henry Dixon Wright in 1911.

The closest - tenuous - link to the town that was found for him amongst the wealth of information available about his academic, ecclesiastical, and Royal Naval careers was the discovery that he attended Highgate School, and is remembered there on the school's Roll of Honour.

It may be said that no research project is ever fully complete, with further information may be unearthed much later, especially as new leads continue to become available via the internet.

A Facebook post in January 2021 related the first-hand experience of a young couple who, in 1958, together with their baby son, were renting a flat in a large house in Ravenscroft Park. A series of disturbing, and at first inexplicable, occurrences were recorded that would serve to provide critical evidence in the identification of the H D Wright who is remembered on the Barnet memorial.

Soon after they had moved in, they discovered that the door to their son's bedroom had been locked from the inside, requiring them to break in via the window to unlock the door. The baby was found safe and still lying in his cot.

On another occasion, shortly after retiring for the night, the baby's mother awoke screaming having sensed that someone was standing at the end of the bed. She described the unwelcome visitor as being 'a reverend gentleman'.

Later, a relative was staying with them, sleeping in the lounge. A further unexplained event occurred, when she reported that, during the night, she had heard the sound of books being shuffled in the bookcase. Not wishing to disturb the family, she had retreated under the bedcovers until the next morning - but because of the experience, she refused to sleep in the house for another night.

Still later, the Curate of Christ Church and his wife took the flat above the couple. Soon after they arrived his wife asked the baby's mother whether there might be a ghost in the house as she had heard noises and footsteps when she was alone in the house. Suspicion of 'a presence' was confirmed, with the comment that the ghost appeared to be harmless.

(By now, readers may, like myself at first, be feeling somewhat sceptical about the probable veracity of this tale - but the next piece of information soon changed my view as to the likelihood that it holds true.)

When other tenants moved out, the baby's mother would assist the owner of the house to clean the vacant flat. One day she was asked if she knew what was in a storage box in the hall. She did not know - and when the box was opened they discovered a brown paper parcel tied up with string....

When the parcel was opened they found a stained rug together with a note saying:

**'In this rug died The Reverend Dixon Wright at the Battle of  
Jutland June 1916'.**

The stains were assumed to be of his dried blood. The owner removed the rug to her house in Finchley and there the story relating to the Ravenscroft Park ghost came to an end.....

Thus, there is a link between Dixon-Wright and Barnet. However, there still remained a question regarding just how and why Reverend Dixon-Wright might have any direct connection with the house in Ravenscroft Park.

Further reference to the 1911 Census records on Ancestry revealed that the Ravenscroft Park house was then occupied by Hugh DeBock Porter, Solicitor to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, his wife Dorothy and their two servants. Hugh was born in 1870 (the same year as Henry Dixon Wright, as he was then known) and he was still living in the house when he died in November 1940.

Describing him as a 'revered citizen' of Barnet and Finchley, his lengthy obituary which appeared in the Barnet Press on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1940 provided two further pieces of information that help to confirm that the name on the memorial is almost certain to have been placed there in remembrance of The Reverend Henry Dixon Dixon-Wright.

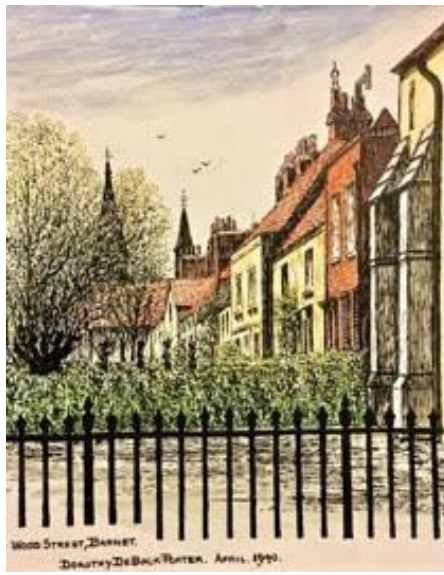
First, it noted that Hugh DeBock Porter had also attended Highgate School. Given that both men were born in the same year it is extremely likely that they would have become acquainted during their time there.

Further, included in the list of the many mourners that attended his funeral was the name of the niece of his wife - who later became the owner of the house in Ravenscroft Park that was reputed to be haunted by the ghost of The Reverend and Royal Naval Chaplain Henry Dixon Dixon-Wright who died in the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

It may therefore be assumed that his friendship with Hugh DeBock Porter continued and grew beyond their schooldays in Highgate with both men destined to pursue, admittedly different, careers with a connection to the church. Hugh had in fact followed his father, Sir Alfred DeBock Porter, in working for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and it seems possible that The Reverend Henry may well have become an established friend of Hugh's wider family across the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and probably a visitor to his house in Barnet between the many postings he undertook during his extensive church and naval careers.

A final clue to help cement the link to the Chipping Barnet war memorial is a discovery amongst the original docketts held by Barnet Museum recording the names of those who subscribed to the cost of raising the memorial in 1919. One dockett was completed by Hugh's mother, Lady Catherine DeBock Porter.

The DeBock family appears to have been determined to see their friend whom they regarded with fondness, namely Henry Dixon Wright, featured on the local war memorial, despite his only rather occasional links with the town of Barnet.



*Painting of Wood Street, Barnet  
by Dorothy DeBock Porter (wife of  
Hugh) April 1940*

The search for information about the remaining twelve unidentified names on the memorial (see below) continues.

If readers have any information that might help with this quest please contact the museum....

World War I

BARRATT J

BRUCECOOK G (Possibly Geoffrey Bruce Cook....)

GAYLER N (Possibly Richard - incorrect initial)

HAMSON G J (Duplicates Gilbert Joseph Harrison)

HOLT P (Percy)

PATEMAN C (Charles)

SCHLENCKER F (Frank)

THORNTON E (Ernest)

Word War 2

GREAVES A

ROBBINS D E

SMITH A J (Possibly incorrect initials)

WILLIAMS D W



# The Basque Children in Arkley - 1937-42

By Jeff Gale

## BACKGROUND

It is early 1937. In Britain significant events such as the coronation of King George VI takes place in Westminster Abbey, the first testing of Frank Whittle's innovative jet engine takes place at Rugby, and the new twelve-sided 'threepenny bit' coin is introduced. In Germany, the Nazi government continues its programme of re-armament, and the possibility of another major war looms ever more likely.

In Spain, the Civil War that had begun in July 1936 between the Republican and Nationalist forces continues to rage. Britain, along with 26 other nations, adopts a neutral stance to the conflict. Support for the Nationalists (who would eventually gain victory in April 1939) came with supporting forces deployed from countries such as Portugal and Italy - and from Germany, with Adolf Hitler assigning the Condor Legion, a unit consisting of personnel from both the German army and, significantly, their air force.

In an action considered later to be a dress rehearsal for 'terror bombing' against civilians in a wider conflict, aircraft from the Condor Legion attacked the town of Guernica in the Basque region of northern Spain on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1937 killing many civilians and causing major damage to property. It was met with shock and international disapproval.

Despite her neutrality, many from Britain chose to fight in the Civil War - a well-known combatant was George Orwell. In August 1937 the Barnet Press reported that a Barnet man aged 23 had been killed in the fighting, a former scholar at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.

## THE EFFECTS OF THE GUERNICA BOMBING



*Picasso's iconic painting 'Guernica'*

The Basque government immediately launched a request to other nations to assist them by facilitating the evacuation of their children to safety overseas, but the British government were initially reluctant to offer help in view of the neutral stance they had taken to the war.

Nevertheless, action was taken here by the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR), a voluntary association that had been formed at the end of 1936 to co-ordinate relief efforts to victims of the Spanish Civil War. Successful lobbying, led by their President, Katharine Marjory Stewart-Murray, the Duchess of Atholl, eventually secured the agreement of the government for some of the children - 'Los Ninos' - to be allowed to come to Britain.

But this was not without certain conditions. To comply with membership of the international non-intervention pact, the government would not provide any financial support for the programme; instead, the NJCSR were required to set up a new Basque Children's Committee to organise the funding and care required for the children, stipulating that they must commit to raising at least 10-shillings per week for each child to support their welfare and education.

Britain thus, reluctantly, joined countries such as France, Russia, Belgium, Mexico, Switzerland and Denmark in receiving refugee children from an embattled Spain. Nearly 4,000 came to Britain, some soon arriving in Arkley....

## THE CHILDREN ARRIVE IN BRITAIN

Much is written about the history of the arrival of the children at Southampton on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1937 aboard the aging steamship the SS Habana - built to carry 800 passengers but now carrying more than 3860 children, 95 teachers, 120 helpers, 15 Catholic priests and 2 British doctors.

Most of the children were accompanied by their siblings, but around 500 were recorded as having travelled alone into an uncertain new existence in a strange country.

On arrival they were placed in temporary tented accommodation at nearby North Stoneham, where initially conditions were probably as bad as those experienced on the two-day journey across the Bay of Biscay, escorted for safety by HMS Royal Oak and HMS Forrester. Just days before their arrival only 2000 were expected; hasty arrangements had been needed to cater for the actual number that arrived.

The Basque Children's Committee would now work with organisations such as the Salvation Army and the Catholic Church at both national and local levels to affect the transfer of the children into 'colonies' of various sizes across Britain.

Of direct relevance to the creation of the Basque Children's colony at Arkley is a letter (see next page) published in the Barnet Press in late May. Written by Mrs Florence E Tewson, a local resident and wife of Mr (later Sir) Harold Vincent Tewson, the vice-chairman of the ('entirely non-political') National Committee for the care of Basque Children.

Having personally witnessed the arrival of the children at Southampton, she invited 'prominent local citizens and organisations' to attend a meeting to discuss how the town might provide assistance in housing and funding them locally.

With the permission of the British Legion, the meeting was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> May at the Jellicoe Hall in Moxon Street. Agreement was reached on the creation of a local Executive Committee with the remit to seek suitable premises for a group of up to 50 of the children, and to consider how funds, estimated to be between £30 and £50 per week, might be raised to support the children and meet the costs of rent and supervision.

By 19<sup>th</sup> June the Barnet Press was able to report that 'negotiations have this week developed rapidly for the renting of suitable premises at Arkley, and an early conclusion of details is anticipated'. Suitability was endorsed by them 'being in ideal surroundings, with facilities provided that will greatly assist in the efficient and economical administration of the home'.

The report also included confirmation that several local organisations and individuals had now offered to 'adopt' - ie sponsor - individual children at the home by undertaking to provide 10-shillings per week to clothe and feed them.

The following week the Press carried a letter from the Executive Committee signed by Lord Plumer (Chairman), Mr E Stanmore Lewis (Hon Treasurer), and Mrs Florence E Tewson (Hon Secretary) which confirmed that the arrangements were now almost complete for Rowley Lodge, a sizable property in Arkley, to be used as the home. An appeal was included for help to meet the need for items such as single bedsteads and bedding, cutlery, crockery and small items of furniture such as chairs and rugs etc.

**HELP FOR SPANISH CHILDREN.**

SIR.—Almost everyone will have read in the Press of the great welcome given at Southampton on Sunday last to the Basque children. The national committee which is responsible for the arrangements is representative of very wide interests. Members include the Duchess of Atholl, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., Dame Rachel Cowdray, the three M.P.s, who went to Spain on the all-party deputation, representatives of the Archbishop of Westminster, the Quakers, the Save the Children Fund, the T.U.C. and other bodies.

I had the pleasure of going to Southampton, and I saw the children on the boat, disembarking, and in the temporary camp erected for their reception. I found scores of private individuals and nearly every organisation in the city co-operating in what impressed me as being a really wonderful humanitarian task. I had the privilege of giving some help, and have come home with the deep conviction that, if the people of Barnet could have seen those dear little children, nearly all of whom were in the terrible bombing of Guernica or Bilbao, they would want to do something to help.

Through the kindness of Mr Mays and the British Legion, a room has been placed at my disposal at the Jellicoe Hall, Moxon-street, Barnet, and I have asked many prominent citizens and representatives of nearly all organisations in Barnet to attend a meeting there on Friday Night (May 28th), at 8.30 p.m.

Time prevents me writing personally to the many people who would be intensely interested in this matter. May I, therefore, make this appeal to Barnet townfolk to attend the meeting to give their help in determining how we can help these children and by doing so comfort their anxious mothers in a time of great danger and anxiety.—Yours, etc.

FLORENCE E. TEWSON.  
73, Chesterfield-road, Barnet.

Preparations clearly continued apace, for on 10<sup>th</sup> July the Press carried the news that on the previous Saturday:

**THE BASQUE CHILDREN  
ARRIVE.**

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**And How They Welcomed a Bed !**

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**HERTFORD JOINS THE BARNETS  
AS FOSTER-PARENTS.**

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On Saturday, at 5 p.m., a red double-decked bus of the London Transport service lumbered up the narrow road leading to Rowley Lodge, Arkley. Overhanging trees had to be negotiated with care. Inquisitive branches peeped in at the bus windows, front, rear, and side. No wonder. They had never seen a double-decker bus before.

In the bus were children. The trees had seen children before, but had never heard such strange chatter. No wonder the branches clambered round inquisitively and had to be pushed aside. Barnet's big adopted family of Basque children had arrived at their new home at Rowley Lodge.

Rowley Lodge was always called their 'home', not a 'colony'. It also appears that just forty children would be housed there.



## THE EARLY DAYS AT ROWLEY LODGE

As the Barnet Press picture below serves to confirm, the new arrivals certainly appeared to be well and happy by the time they reached their new home. The presence in the back row of two gentlemen wearing white topped caps suggest that they may have been the driver and conductor of the bus that had brought them to Rowley Lodge - meaning that the picture was probably taken very soon after they had arrived.



No doubt also in the picture would be the Matron, Mrs Geary and her assistant Mrs Holliday, together with Mr and Mrs Tewson and other members of the organising committee. The press report of the arrival also indicated that members of a committee that had been established in Hertford were present, noting that 'they were to co-operate in what is now to be regarded as a Hertfordshire scheme' to provide care for further groups of the children.

(It noted that contacts had been established with interests in Welwyn, Berkhamsted and Hoddesdon, although it appears that these did not result in the creation of colonies there).

The Arkley children were extremely fortunate to have been re-homed just six weeks after their arrival in Britain. The last of the children would not leave the North Stoneham camp until September 1937.

From this local reporting it would appear that the Arkley home benefited greatly from having the association, dedication and organisational capabilities of Mr and Mrs Tewson so closely involved in its speedy creation.

The picture taken at Rowley Lodge so soon after the children arrived may well have been taken to serve as publicity rather than 'just' to record the event locally. The presence of the Hertford committee members suggests that they may also have been seeking to publicise, promote and perhaps even assist with the creation of further homes in the surrounding areas.

Despite any such possible aspirations, reference to lists of the colonies suggest it is probable that the only other Hertfordshire home which was established for the children was located at St Dominic's Priory, Ponsbourne Park, near Hertford Heath.

For further information see the very detailed Basque Children of '37 Association's website [www.basquechildren.org](http://www.basquechildren.org)

What is certainly evident from the reports regarding Rowley Lodge that appeared in the Barnet Press across the following months is that local organisations and many individuals were keen to welcome and provide support for the children.

The home welcomed many visitors at weekend 'open days', when the children would provide entertainment by singing and dancing, often dressed in traditional Basque clothing.

Invitations were also made for them to join in with events being organised for local children in the area. One example was a summer outing by coach organised by the Playing Fields Estates Association (funded by public donations totalling over £79) soon after they arrived at the Lodge.



**THREE CHEERS FOR EVERYBODY**, including the "Barnet Free" photographer, when he arrived to take a picture of some of the 300 orated children and 138 adults, who, on Wednesday, enjoyed an outing arranged by Barnet Playing Fields Ladies Association. The party, which included 37 of the Basque children from Rowley Lodge, Aylesbury, spent a memorable day at California, near Woburnham, Berks. The photograph was taken a few minutes before the start from Fairfields-way.

There was however also evidence that a few of the children may not have settled so well into their new existence in Britain, although any problems appear to have been less evident at Rowley Lodge than with other homes elsewhere.

Here, a strong defence was tabled by Lord Plumer on behalf of the local committee in a letter published in the Press on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1937 (see extract right).

In regard to the behaviour of the children, it does seem un-British to attempt to brand 4,000 for the sins of 40 or 50. Of course, they are all children, and one expects difficulties to arise. Even at the Barnet home some of the older boys were rather difficult to handle amongst younger children, and were moved to Camberley—a home for older boys—where they are very popular.

How many parents, with two or three children, might smile sympathetically at the inevitable difficulties with a family of 40 children?

Then there has been the manufactured scare that the children are likely to spread disease. No case is known where this has happened.

Again, Barnet has not been without its crop of rumours about the Basque children having terrible skin and other diseases. All quite unfounded. Dr Stewart and Dr Cuff, the medical officers, are delighted with the health of the children.



The following week a letter in response, from a correspondent living in East Barnet, was published endorsing Lord Plumer's comment regarding not allowing the behaviour of the few to taint the majority, but then moving on to question the wisdom of having brought the children to Britain rather than, say, spreading them over the French Pyrenean provinces where 'not only are the climate and feeding similar to their own, but also.... it is possible to travel from Biarritz to Cerbares (sic) speaking Spanish only'.

The correspondent also referred to the many questions and possible difficulties that would arise when the time came to repatriate the children to their parents who, it was also stated, may have fled the fighting in Spain or may even be unwilling to take them back 'having abandoned them in their hour of need'.

It might also be the case that parents may have been killed in the fighting back at home, and this and other letters that the Press published demonstrate that not every member of the public (both locally and nationally) was entirely in favour of the children having come to Britain at all. Concerns were also aired regarding the current and possibly long-term requirement for the public to continue to provide both practical and financial support for the children.

Notwithstanding such expressions of concern - which were certainly far fewer locally than the many supportive letters and positive reports of developments at the Lodge - it is clear from analysis of the Barnet Press coverage that the home was well run, well supported, and that the children were generally happy and being well cared for there.

Confirmation of the last paragraph is evidenced by the Press item copied in full below - a summary (anonymous) of the first three months that Rowley Lodge had been in operation:

## THE BASQUE CHILDREN/

### The Happy Family at Rowley Lodge.

(Contributed.)

It is three months since the Basque children came to Barnet.

Lord Plumer, in a letter to the "Press" last week, referred to the spirit which pervades the home. It has often been repeated that the home is not run on ordinary institutional lines. Those in immediate contact with the home are highly satisfied with the progress from several points of view.

In the first place, the health of the children has materially improved. Whilst they had a clean bill of health on their arrival, it was evident that many of the children were still suffering from the effects of their experiences in their own country, although they had had several weeks' recuperation in the camp at Southampton. There was a general "nerviness"; isolated cases of mild hysteria occurred when letters arrived. Some of the children shed tears of joy; others who had heard nothing, and were fearful of the fate of their parents, were very dejected. Nervous twitchings could be observed. One of the youngest children who had gone through terrible trials was considered by Dr. Cuff to need special rest and care.

There has been a general increase in weight. Grim shadows of the past are further in the background, and the health generally is remarkably good. The tiny tot who had to rest and was considered to be suffering from shock is now one of the brightest children. Care, attention, and good food have played their part in the physical well-being of the children. Emotionally, the children have progressed. Peaceful surroundings have contributed to this, but to the keen observer there has been another great contributing factor. These are the words of an interested visitor who has great experience in children's homes, including many of those in the country caring for Basque children:

"Well, you have no such a large house as at —; you have not the furniture and carpets which they have at —; but you have something which transcends all those things. There is love in this home."

This is indeed a tribute to the great-hearted but shrewd matron, Mrs. Holliday, and her staff. This is the great factor which has brought about the happy family spirit, which has calmed war-shattered nerves and brought peace and warmth to the hearts of children who might otherwise have been starved of a semblance of mother-love.

The children find it difficult to express their appreciation in words, but several times I have seen a child go to the matron for the sheer love of being near her, and say: "Mother one (putting up one finger)—France; mother two (up go two fingers)—Mrs. Holliday." And what a couple of patient and tactful big brothers are Mr. Hortal and Mr. Gifford!

If the spirit of the home can be appreciated even to some extent, more and more people will accord their material support. More money is needed. Blankets are needed for the colder weather that is coming. A representative circle of individuals and organisations are responding manfully to needs which have to be met. The circle must be widened, and it will be when there is a greater realisation of what is being accomplished in the cause of children away from their homes and parents.

An interesting example of the kindly thoughts, combined with practical help, which make the work possible, is the gift of fruit, vegetables, and bread from the Congregational Church, Wood-street, after their harvest festival.

This week end the National Committee for the care of Basque children is holding a conference in London, at which representatives of the various homes will talk over common problems. Representatives of the Barnet committee will be in attendance.

Barnet Press 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1937

In November 1937, the Press carried an item recording a courtroom challenge on behalf of Mrs Harriet M Geary, the initial Matron to the home at Rowley Lodge, against the Basque Children's Committee for wrongful dismissal soon after the children had arrived there. The case rested on whether notice and pay should have been given for one-month rather than the one-week that had been applied. The former was deemed applicable, Mrs Geary's 'excellent references' were taken into consideration, the Committee paid £10 into the court as compensation, and with the judge's consent the case was settled between Counsel.

Although a relatively trivial matter it is noted here because it appears to explain how the Assistant Matron, Mrs Holliday, became the Matron and served with acknowledged distinction throughout the time that Rowley Lodge was operational. Indeed, one child thought of her as their second mother according to the review on the previous page.

In December an appeal was issued for help with raising more funds to allow the purchase of extra food at the Lodge so that the children might 'have the sort of Christmas which will be enjoyed by our own children throughout this country on Christmas Day'. The public were also invited to join a party that would assemble at the bus terminus at the Arkley Hotel on Christmas morning to deliver presents to the children.

The appeal included a quote from a visitor to the Lodge:

'Only those with hearts of stone could refuse to help these innocent youngsters'.

One can only hope that the response was good and that the children ended their first six-months in Arkley, well-fed and happy as they, unknowingly, faced what was to become a lengthy stay for many of them.

## 1938 AND BEYOND - TO LATE 1942

A letter from the Basque Children's Committee in London that appeared on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1938 summarised the steps that were already being taken to reunite the Basque children with parents either still in Spain or scattered as refugees themselves in other countries for safety.

Some 800 applications had been received requesting repatriation, but the chaos left by the fighting made it hard to verify the validity of many that were possibly of a dubious status. Legal advice had been taken but it had not been until November that a request for the Committee to visit Spain for verification had been approved and had finally taken place.

As a result, most of the initial applications had now been verified and approved, and in all a total of 956 children had now been sent to re-join their parents in Spain, and 46 to parents in other countries. Most of the original refugees, now confirmed to have totalled 3826, therefore remained in homes such as Rowley Lodge around Britain.

It would not be until 1945 that the remaining children left the homes, although, as we shall see later, our research indicates that the last of the children at Rowley Lodge would have left some time during late 1942. Some it seems would move to another home locally until their future could be decided, no doubt with at least some of the older children joining others who across the years had chosen to begin new lives for themselves by remaining in Britain into adulthood.

## 1939-1942

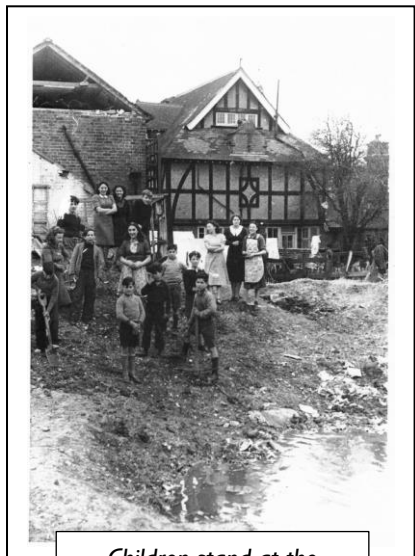
The Basque children who were sent to Britain in 1937 to escape a conflict were about to experience another when on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 Britain declared war with Germany...

The Spanish Civil War ended in April 1939, and the Basque Children of '37 Association's website notes that many of the children in Britain had been repatriated by that September. A number remained in Britain, including

many at Rowley Lodge - where it appears that its sound reputation\* may well have made it an attractive option for the relocation of children that remained when other homes needed to close.

\*Readers might wish to refer to an interview with a former Rowley Lodge resident on the University of Southampton website which recalls an incident that might rather belie this generalisation - see: [Basque\\_stories\\_6d.pdf \(southampton.ac.uk\)](http://southampton.ac.uk). It also indicates that the children may have been relocated for a while (to the Oddfellows Hall in Barnet?) after the bombing, from where they may have witnessed another major local incident - the land mine which fell on the Oakmead Guest House in Bells Hill on 15<sup>th</sup> November.

It was not without irony that the aerial conflict from which the children had escaped in May 1937 would become a reality again when the German Blitz on London began in September 1940. Although Barnet was unlikely to have been a primary target, on 21<sup>st</sup> September the Barnet Press carried a report that several bombs had fallen in the town - one of them damaging Rowley Lodge, but mercifully only slightly injuring one of the children.



*Children stand at the crater after the bomb fell.*

In June 1941 the Press carried a report on the Lodge's annual garden party, noting that over £35 had been raised to help fund the repairs needed after the bombing. Later the same month they advised readers of the following news:

## **MRS ROOSEVELT'S BOY**

### **President's Wife Adopts Barnet Schoolboy**

The boy that she had 'adopted' was eleven-year-old Kerman Mirena Irondo, one of the children living at Rowley Lodge with his two older brothers. The arrangement was made under the Foster-Parents Plan for War Children, a scheme set up in Britain in 1937 to assist the Basque refugees which by 1939 had become a largely American group providing funds to support children overseas.

In October 1942, the First Lady visited Britain and during her stay made time to meet Kerman, and two other children she had adopted, at the Basque children's home at Hertford Heath.



The picture here shows them both, together with Jamina Dybowska of Poland and young Tommy Maloney, an orphan from the bombing on London's East End.

A short newsreel film of her visit can be viewed online at:

<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/mrs-roosevelts-adopted-children/query/Ladies>

As the war continued the Basque Children's Committee worked on to facilitate the process of securing repatriation for the children that remained under their care in Britain. By Autumn 1942 few would be left staying at Rowley Lodge.

The Press of 19<sup>th</sup> September 1942 carried a letter from the Honorary Secretary of the Hertfordshire and District Basque Children's Committee, Miss W B Attenborough, announcing that the committee, which had overseen the running of Rowley Lodge, had now been wound up.

The Matron, Mrs Holliday, and a Mr Walters, the only remaining members of staff caring for the reducing numbers of children there, were leaving and appreciation was expressed for all the support provided for the home by the staff and the public since it was opened over five-years earlier. However, she also advised that the National Committee were planning to continue to run the Lodge for a further few months until smaller premises could be obtained.

Further thanks were given for this support in a letter published on 3<sup>rd</sup> October from the acting Honorary Secretary of the National Committee, E Dorothea Layton, which also acknowledged the 'untiring energy' of Mrs Holliday which had 'been an inspiration to us all'.

She urged continued public support be made via her committee for all the Basque children still remaining in Britain. She ended her letter by stating that, as the days of Rowley Lodge came to an end, care would still be needed for a dozen children of school age as well as several others who, although working in the district, some in war factories, were not earning enough to be self-supporting.

As this exploration into the history of the Basques at Rowley Lodge between July 1937 and late 1942 ends we can observe that the people of Arkley, Barnet and the wider local area could be proud of their contribution to the care and maintenance of the many refugees that spent time there. We conclude with a brief look into 1943 and beyond....

## 1943 TO 1945

For six months following the publication in the Barnet Press of the autumn 1942 letters detailing the closure of Rowley Lodge nothing further was reported regarding the Basque children still being at, or leaving, the Lodge. However, insight into the wider - and Arkley specific - gradual closure of the colonies between 1940 and 1945 is given in Adrian Bell's hugely informative book 'Only for Three Months' (a reference to the time it was

originally envisaged that the children would be exiled) in which he records the history of the evacuation of the children and their time in many of the colonies across Britain.

‘It was in these colonies, the last survivors of the 70 or so that had been operating at one time or another in 1937, that some of the youngest children were looked after during the [Second World] war. One by one, they too were to close: there were six in 1940, three by 1943 and only two by 1944. Soon after the end of the war, all that remained was the colony at Carshalton.... and the vestige of the Barnet colony, reduced to a hostel in Finchley for a few of the older boys and girls who were then working in London’.

His book also describes Rowley Lodge as being ‘a mock-Elizabethan mansion set in three acres’ which in 1937 ‘had been offered to the [local] committee by three elderly sisters’.

My research suggests that they were Wilhelmina Rose, Marian Violet and Evelyn May Aitken, daughters of the Rev William Hay MacDowall Hunter Aitken, Canon Residentiary of Norwich Cathedral (1900-1927). Reverend Aitken was involved in 19<sup>th</sup> Century evangelical work with two prominent Barnet figures, Reverend W Pennefather and Reverend John Trotter.

Wilhelmina was a portrait painter, and Marian is recorded as having been an active member of the suffragette movement in 1912. Their brother, the Reverend Wilfred Hay MacDowall Aitken, an Army Chaplain in WWI, was resident at Rowley Lodge when he died in 1960.

The Lodge has now been rebuilt retaining the exact exterior detail of the original building and in June 2010 played host to a nostalgic reunion of a small group of former resident ‘Ninos’ and their families. Organised by the Basque Children of ’37 Association, a report of the event in their November 2010 Newsletter records the many happy memories of the time they had spent at Rowley Lodge even after seventy years or more had passed.



## CONCLUSION

Thanks are due to Adrian Bell for permission to include the above quotation from 'Only for Three Months' (Mousehold Press) and for offering comments on this article which serve to confirm and extend assumptions drawn at the local level from reports and correspondence in the Barnet Press.

The first confirmed that the committee behind Rowley Lodge did indeed bring into play a wealth of experience and good connections which ensured it benefited from high quality organisation and administration from the start. Some other colonies varied in the quality of care provided, not least due to the amount of money their committees were able to raise.

He also emphasised that the National Committee always sought to stress that supporting the children - 'innocent victims of war' - was a humanitarian endeavour rather than a political one. Local committees were indeed therefore required to seek cooperation and support from as wide a range of other organisations, churches, voluntary bodies etc as possible – *not* just from left-wing organisations and political parties that might be the most obvious supporters.

As Adrian Bell records in his book, Sir Vincent Tewson, a Trade Union leader, and the Labour movement's representative on the National Committee, consistently impressed on its members the official view that the Basque children were best served by a broad base of support. In doing so he would cite the case of his wife Florence who, as Secretary of the Barnet Committee, had drawn in some 40 organisations including 'three churches, each political party, the Oddfellows, the British Legion and several others'. Sir Vincent Tewson, a Yorkshireman by birth, who died in Letchworth in 1981, became the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) between 1946 and 1960.

**The Tewsons were true local players on a national - and international - stage.**

# The Drew Estate in Chipping Barnet Part Two

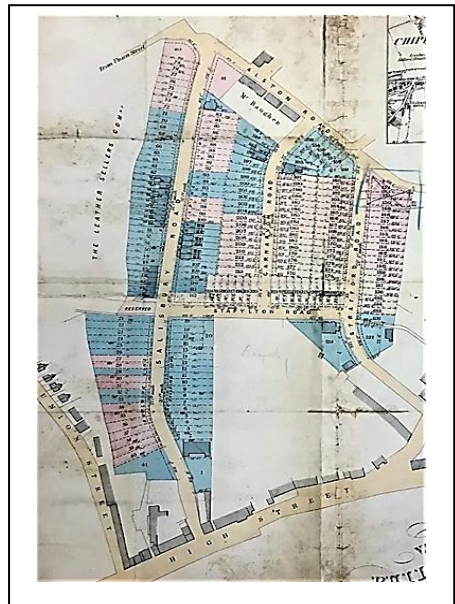
By Jeff Gale

The September 2020 edition of the Journal explored the history of the development of an area, known locally as 'The Drew Estate', which was to the west of Barnet's High Street and was owned by Beriah and Elizabeth Drew of Streatham.

Beriah died in 1878, and by the following year, Elizabeth had begun the process of selling plots of the land to developers for the purpose of constructing new properties that were clearly intended for occupation by the 'middle-classes'. This aim was achieved by the inclusion of a stipulation in the title deeds that only houses of a value of £250 (for semi-detached) or £300 (for detached) could be built on any plot.

An 1882 sales plan (right) showed that the area covered by the disposal included 213 individual plots on which properties could be constructed along the newly created Salisbury, Alston, Strafford, Stapylton and Carnarvon Roads

Much of the 2020 article was focussed on exploring the subsequent development of the properties, particularly that situated at No 18 Salisbury Road, now occupied by a Barnet Museum volunteer.



Interestingly, another Museum volunteer, Dennis Bird, had carried out his own very detailed research into the ownership history of his former house in Alston Road, part of the Drew Estate. His research had stalled as it was difficult to identify Elizabeth Drew who had sold the land on which it was built back in the late 1800s using local or Census records. His article on the SPACES roads in 1911 is earlier in this Journal.

Meanwhile, continued attempts were made to ascertain the earlier ownership of the area of land that was soon to be developed on the Drew Estate.

Fortunately there was a hand-drawn diagram of the ownership of land to the west of the High Street, described as being 'Mimms Side' held by the Museum - see Figure 1 on next page. Three areas are attributed the 'Drews' (sic) numbered 778 and 788, the largest with a size of 15 acres, 0 roods and 2 perches. Included are 'houses and gardens' adjoining the High Street. This matches the 1882 sales plan, but frustratingly the source and date of the information was not recorded on the diagram by the author, Helen Baker.

However, the note at the top of the diagram suggests that it might possibly have been drawn from Manorial records (although in retrospect it might well have been from the 1840 parish tithe map), and this in turn suggested that reference back to the extensive analysis of the 1818 Enclosure Award maps and schedules for Barnet, published in 2016 by the Hertfordshire Record Society, might prove a valuable source of further information.

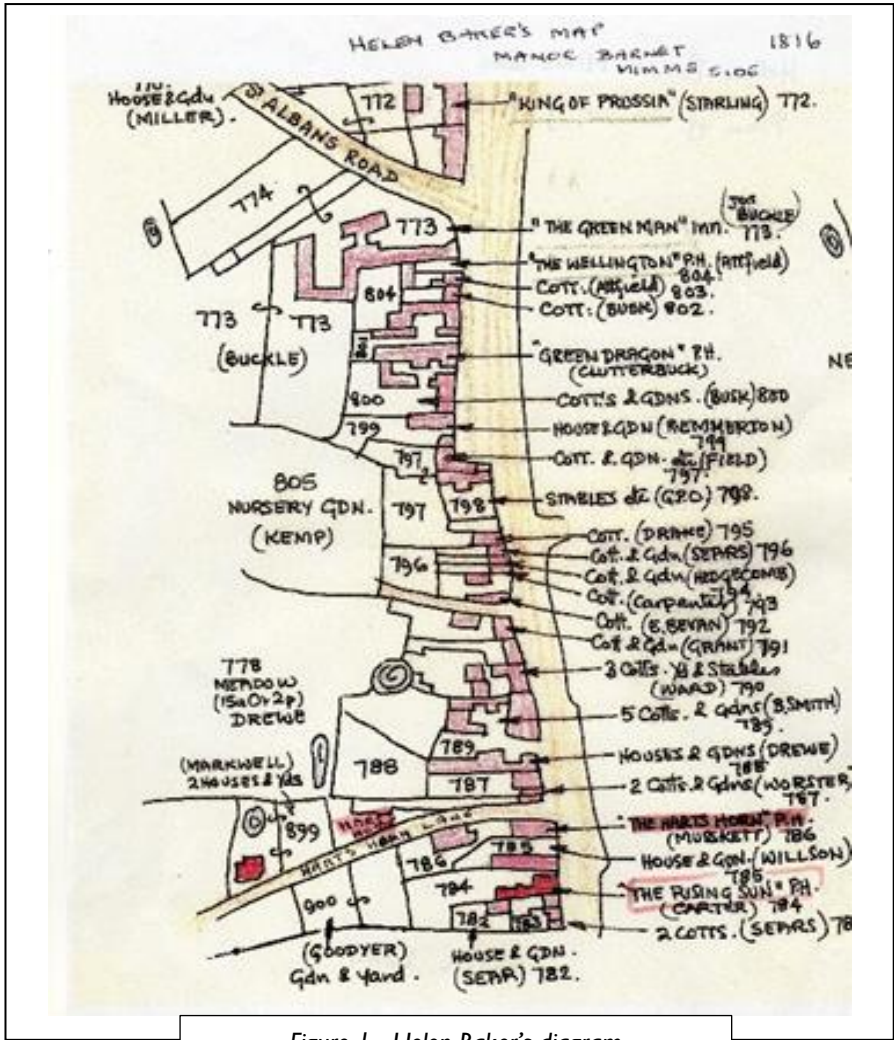


Figure 1 - Helen Baker's diagram

This did indeed prove to be the case. As can be seen in Figure 2, Plot number 130 closely mirrors the area delineated in the 1882 sales plan, with the adjacent Plot 166 leading to the High Street almost certainly having provided part of the road access to the development from the High Street that would become Salisbury Road.

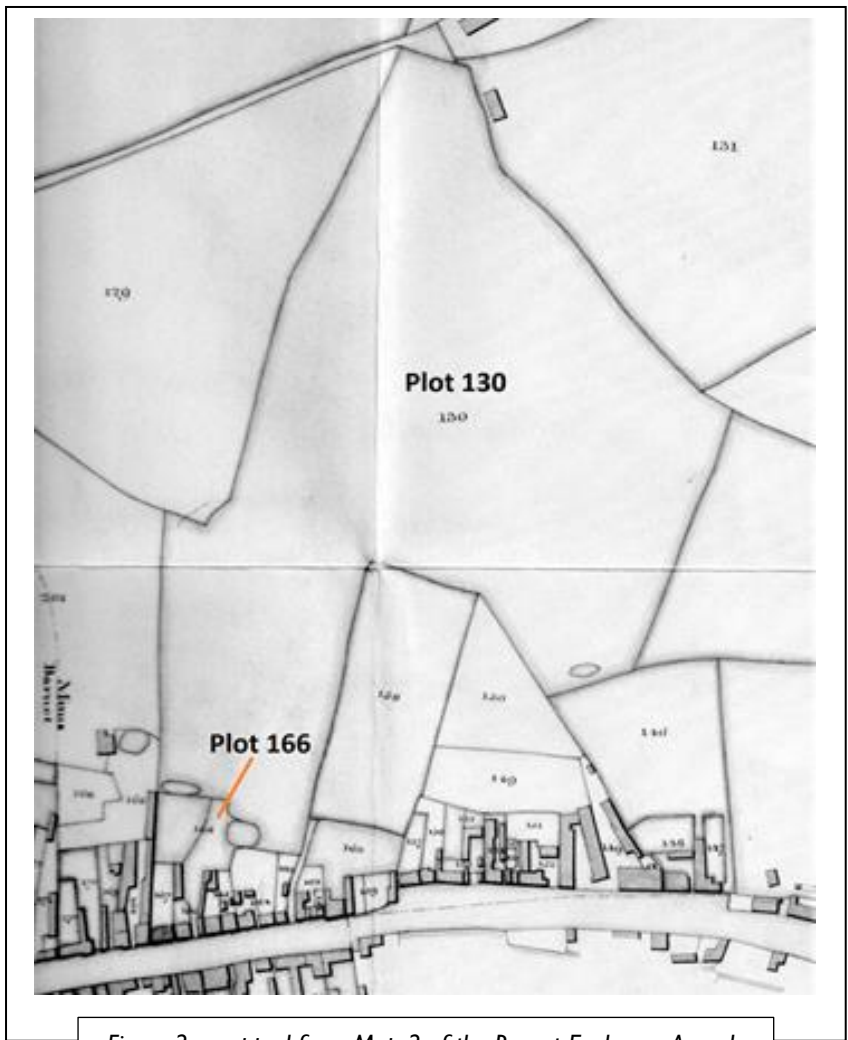


Figure 2 - cropped from Map 2 of the Barnet Enclosure Awards

Reference to the Schedule listing the owners of Enclosure Plots reveals that Plot 130, described as an 'Old Inclosure', and 166, 'Two Houses &c', were then owned by a gentleman by the name of Benjamin Hanson English Esq.

This in turn provided a link to the Drew Estate as the name of Benjamin Hanson English appears on the title deeds held by the owners of No 18 Salisbury, which includes a Schedule which contains reference to:

*'INDENTURES of Lease and Release [dated 6th and 7th November 1835 respectively] the latter made between John Alfred Wigan, Benjamin Hanson English & Benjamin Lewis of the one part & Thomas Keeton of the other part'.*

It can therefore be deduced that at some time between 1818 and 1835 Benjamin English had put the land into joint-ownership with himself, John Wigan and Benjamin Lewis - and that by the same date Thomas Keeton also had assumed some form of interest, possibly as leaseholder but more probably as a holder of the title to the land.

Ancestry research reveals that none of these gentlemen seem to have had any direct family links with Barnet and would therefore appear to be what are now known as 'absentee landlords'. This coincidentally chimes with the initial ownership of the house at No 18 (and No 16) Salisbury Road by Joseph and Sarah Glenn. Long after they were built in the late 1800s, both, together with many other houses in the area, were rented out to a range of local tenants.

Apart from Benjamin English, the names of the other two landowners, and that of Thomas Keeton, do not appear in the Index of Names in the 1818 Enclosure Award documents. It would therefore appear that they were 'gentlemen of means' with money to invest in land purchases and/or lease, as would again be the case with the Glenns.

Interestingly, Thomas Keeton (1785-1837) was a close associate and relative of the Drew family. A one-time market gardener, and a granary owner in Bermondsey when he died, his will was witnessed by an A B Drew and he bequeathed his granary premises jointly to his son-in-law George Drew and his friend Michael Drew - the brothers of Beriah Drew.

His will, available via Ancestry, makes no specific mention of any property in Chipping Barnet. Although by no means a certain assumption, it appears possible that he may have sold it to Beriah Drew shortly after acquiring the land when the 'Lease and Release' Indentures of 1835 were executed. Also, as his will was made on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1836, it might also be inferred that he may have been suffering from some form of illness at that time and was seeking to rationalise his affairs and property interests before he feared that he might pass.

We may now therefore draw the following conclusions regarding the earlier ownership of the Drew Estate

**Pre 1818** Enclosure Awards - land in and around Chipping Barnet would have been owned by the **Lord of The Manor**,

Passing in **1818** to **Benjamin Hanson English**,

Then sometime before **1835** English seems to have held shared title with **John Alfred Wigan** and **Benjamin Lewis**,

Who (probably) sold the land to **Thomas Keeton** in **1835**,

Who in turn (probably) sold the land to **Beriah Drew** in or around **1836** prior to his death in **1837**.

# **They're Coming Home!**

## **'Serendipity Moment' bears fruit after three years**

By Hilary Harrison

From late 2016, Barnet Museum, Barnet Society and The Battlefields Trust were the lead players in the Battle of Barnet Project. The project board comprised Mike Noronha (Barnet Museum), Nick Jones (Barnet Society) and Howard Simmons (The Battlefields Trust).

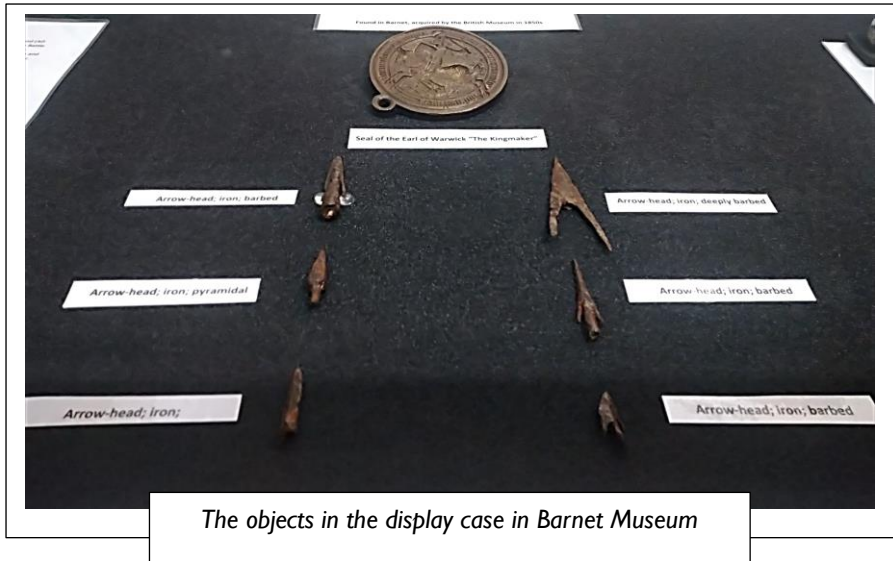
It was nearing the end of a Battle of Barnet project meeting in early 2018, when Howard dropped his serendipitous bombshell. He had just returned from Canada where he had visited the National History Museum in Ottawa and he had interesting news. Coincidentally, at the time, there was, he told us, a special British Museum travelling exhibition entitled 'Medieval Europe: Power and Legacy' and even more coincidentally, the Battle of Barnet had been chosen to illustrate the Medieval warfare section. And amazingly, the stars of the show were a seal of the Earl of Warwick and six arrowheads from the Battle of Barnet! Everyone around the table was stunned. This was a complete revelation. We had no idea such objects existed. And neither it turned out, did any of the historians and archaeologists, who have been researching and investigating the battle for decades. It had taken a chance visit by Howard, to a country thousands of miles away to reveal their existence. Iron degrades very easily so their preservation is a miracle in itself. We set out to see if by any chance they could come back to Barnet.

Our negotiations with the British Museum began. It transpired that the arrowheads had been given to the Museum in 1851 by an unknown donor and had been kept in the collection stores until they were taken to Canada to be displayed (the seal had been donated earlier). By the time of Howard's revelation, the exhibits had returned to the Museum store, so we contacted



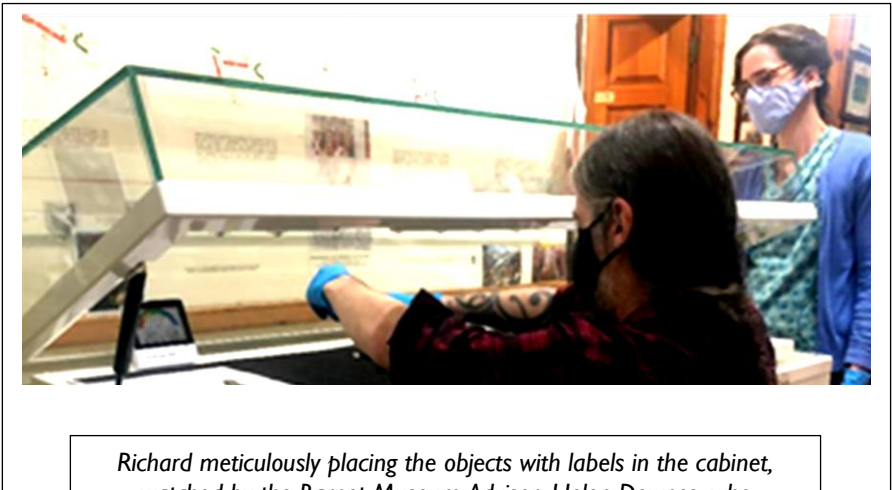
Naomi Speakman, Curator, Medieval Collections in the Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory, who was really helpful and encouraging. A visit to the British Museum was now essential. We booked to view the objects in the visitors' room and were very excited about the possibility of a loan to display them in Barnet Museum. After that, many emails and letters whizzed back and forth; we waited and waited while various committees met and made decisions. This was a rigorous process to satisfy the British Museum that our museum could display the objects securely and maintain the correct environment. Meanwhile, in anticipation, a new temperature and humidity-controlled cabinet together with a dehumidifier were purchased for the museum room. Deadlines came and went – and then the pandemic hit. Everything was put on hold. We waited: at times not thinking it would ever happen. Humidity levels were assiduously recorded. Light levels were checked. Insurance details were verified. All kinds of forms were filled in. It had taken nearly three years, but the email finally arrived. The British Museum had granted us a long-term loan of the artefacts for three years: the arrival date was set for Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Early that morning, Richard Wakeman, (the British Museum's Assistant Collection Manager: Care and Access) arrived with a huge box. Our curatorial team stood around in awe, as he decanted the objects and with Helen Downes, our Museum Advisor looking on with equal concentration, carefully examined them one by one to confirm and record their condition. Richard began with the arrowheads which appeared quite fragile but getting up close it was possible to see the marks of the smith who forged them, as well as fragments of wood from the shafts still embedded in them. Amazing and very atmospheric. Five hundred-and-fifty years ago, these very arrowheads had been fired close to where we were standing round the table. From the Lancastrian or the Yorkist side – we will never know but it didn't take much imagination to conjure up a mind-picture of the terrifying, thrilling and barbarous action as the battle was waged that foggy morning 'in a field of battle near Barnet' (Shakespeare, *Henry VI, part 3*).



These arrowheads, we feel, represent the role of the ‘common man’ in the battle. Conversely, the seal of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick is hugely significant at the other end of the rigid social hierarchy. The machinations of this most over-mighty of warring nobles from the Wars of the Roses were arguably the chief reason for the battle – and Warwick’s death, the most significant event of the battle. His demise enabled Edward IV to ‘mop up’ the remaining Lancastrian forces led by Margaret of Anjou and the Earl of Somerset, at the Battle of Tewkesbury on 4<sup>th</sup> May. The seal reflects the power that Warwick the Kingmaker wanted to impress on those with whom he came into contact. His influence, underpinned by his incredible wealth rivalled the kings he ‘made’ - Edward IV and Henry VI - and he wanted this broadcast. Something to ponder as we regarded this beautiful object. One of the last times it might have been used could have been to seal the famous letter from Warwick (with a postscript in his own hand) to Henry Vernon in April 1471 exhorting him to come to fight for the Lancastrians in the forthcoming struggle against the Yorkists.

Richard Wakeman then installed the seal and the arrowheads alongside our other precious artefacts from the Battle of Barnet - three golf ball-sized lead cannonballs (bashed and dented from impact), a purse-bar, a coin from the reign of Edward IV, dated 1468 and a strap end, inscribed with the wheel of St Catherine. The display looked splendid and finally the cabinet was locked – not to be opened again unless a British Museum official was present. A very satisfying outcome and we felt honoured to be entrusted with these unique objects which were such an intrinsic part of this significant battle.



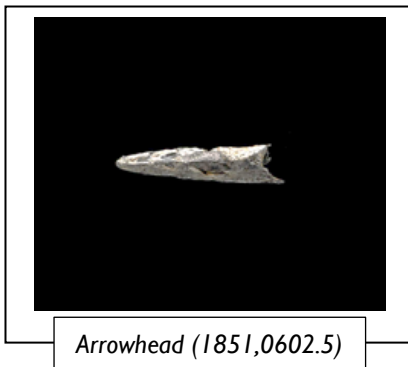
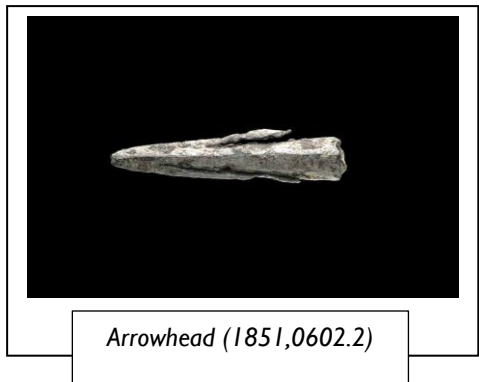
*Richard meticulously placing the objects with labels in the cabinet, watched by the Barnet Museum Advisor, Helen Downes, who managed the loans negotiations.*

## Notes about the arrowheads

Painted in neat white letters on each arrowhead are the date of the donation and another number indicating the place in the order of receiving objects ie on the informal report from the Royal Armouries, the last number indicates that the arrowhead in the first picture was the second object received by the museum that day. (This was the cataloguing system in 1851)

These are some helpful comments from an expert at the Royal Armouries taken from an informal report on four of the arrowheads.

This is a military arrowhead despite being barbed, of a type used in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. It fits into Jessop's typology 'M' group in having narrow barbs. This makes this type suitable for warfare but they may have been used for hunting as well. This example is closely comparable to one from Chester (Poulton) which was actually found within the body cavity of a human skeleton



This also appears to have very close-set short barbs which would place it in the same category as the previous example – Type 15s/16s vary considerably due to the different craftsmen involved in their production. This example is probably most closely comparable to the one from Westminster Abbey which has similar short barbs. These smaller arrowheads were suitable for warfare

because needing less metal to produce, they were cheaper - relatively few could be recovered from the battlefield for reuse.

Following on from the above remarks, this type of more expensive arrowhead with very large broad barbs is categorised by Jessop as 'H' 3 or broadhead. It was more commonly used by foresters and huntsmen – but was sometimes used in warfare. The large cutting surface provided by the barbs actually made them ideally suited to hunting game such



Arrowhead (1851,0602.1)

as deer; they caused significant tissue damage and blood loss whilst remaining in the body as the animal attempted to flee. A very nasty description when the effect on a man is imagined.



Arrowhead (1851,0602.3)

Although this is barbed, it is almost certainly a military arrowhead on the basis that it contains little metal. It belongs to the 'M' group, classed as a Type 16 despite having outward flaring barbs. It is similar to the example from Chester but can be most closely compared to the depictions of arrows in the hands of English archers shown in Froissart's 15<sup>th</sup>

century painting of the Battle of Poitiers (1356) from the Bibliotheque Nationale and as such is sometimes known as a 'Poitier arrowhead'.



*Froissart's 15<sup>th</sup> century depiction of the Battle of Poitiers (1356)*

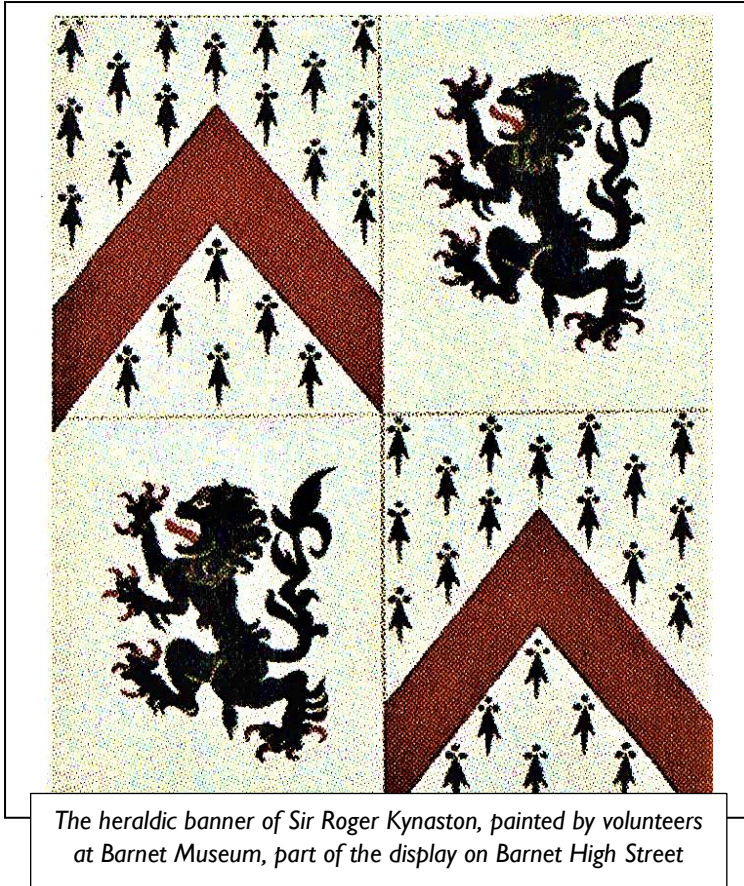


*English longbow, made of yew, 6'6" (1.98m) long, 105lbf draw force.*



*The Seal of the Earl of Warwick 'The Kingmaker'*

We conducted some research into the history of the seal using the British Museum catalogue. This revealed another dimension to the backstory. The seal had originally been donated to the British Library in 1774, then to the British Museum in the 1830s. However, the really interesting part is that the donor was Mrs Victoria Kynaston. Her husband's ancestor was Sir Roger Kynaston of Hordley, Shropshire, (1430-1495). Kynaston had a very colourful and successful career in the service of the House of York (see the British Museum Catalogue and the Street Banners of Tewkesbury for further details). His heraldic banner is currently displayed in Barnet High Street to commemorate the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Barnet: Sir Roger participated in this battle fighting for Edward IV and apparently, it was he, who took the seal from the body of Earl of Warwick as he lay dead in the closing stages of the battle. It had been in the possession of his family until it was given to the British Library; it has survived in very good condition. Sir Roger, himself, went on from Barnet to fight at the Battle of Tewkesbury on 4<sup>th</sup> May where he was again knighted by King Edward IV.



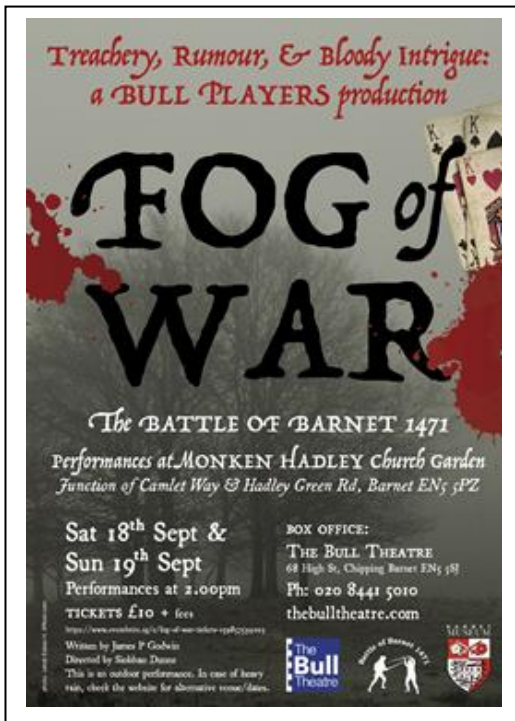
The author would like to thank the following for their help: Howard Simmons; Naomi Speakman; Richard Wakeman; Pierre Fragoso and the British Museum Loans Committee. Artefact Pictures copyright Trustees of the British Museum.



# The Smell of Greasepaint The Roar of the Crowd

By Mike Noronha

It is unusual, probably unheard of, for Barnet Museum to be involved in the theatre. However, these are unusual times, and the Museum has commissioned a play to help to promote interest in the Battle of Barnet.



The Bull Players are engaging, enthusiastic, entertaining – and local. This amateur repertory company directed by Siobhan Dunne and supported by the Bull Theatre are going to perform a play, ‘Fog of War’, written by James Godwin. The play imagines the lives of ordinary women of Barnet, as kings, nobles and their private armies swirl in battle around them.

The play is due to be performed in Monken Hadley Church Garden at 2pm on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September and Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Ticketing details: <https://www.eventbrite.sg/e/fog-of-war-tickets-159857539203>



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Images are from Barnet Museum's collection, unless stated.

Front cover illustration: *'Death of The Kingmaker'* by Keith West

*The death of Earl of Warwick 'The Kingmaker' was probably the most significant event of The Battle of Barnet 1471.*

Back cover illustration: *The Seal of The Earl Warwick*

*The seal is currently on loan to Barnet Museum from the collection of The British Museum.*

We are grateful to all the contributors to Barnet History Journal. The views and opinions expressed in this journal do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the publishers.

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