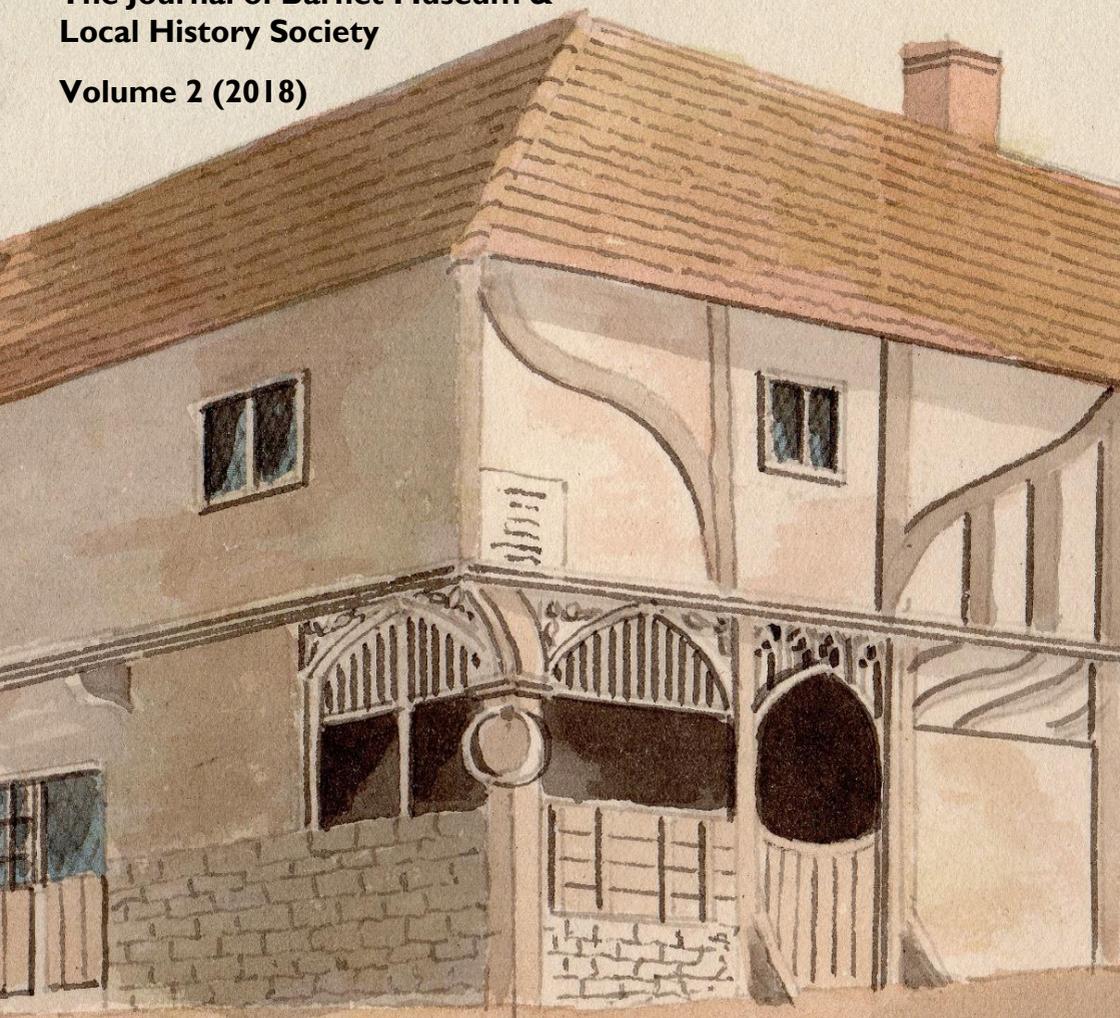


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Volume 2 (2018)



BARNET MUSEUM
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Inside Shenley chalk mine
(photo from WCMS / Andy Belcher) from article p10

In memory of Don Baker, who was a long-standing volunteer at Barnet Museum and regular contributor of articles to Museum newsletters and journals.

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

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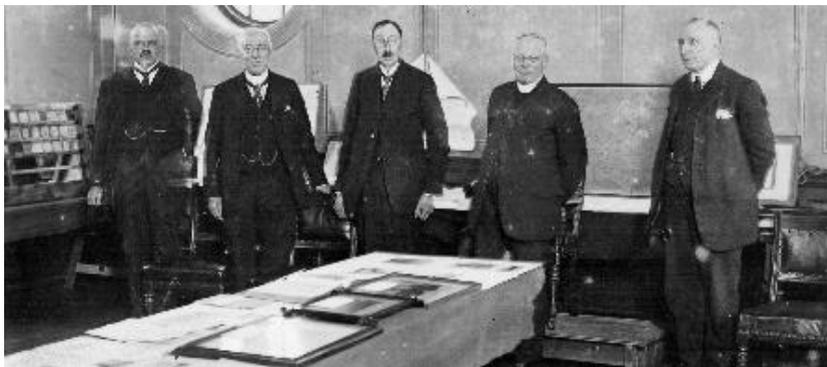
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Barnet 1938: Life in Barnet 80 Years Ago

Ken Sutherland Thomas

2018 is the eightieth anniversary of the opening of Barnet Museum. This article looks at that and other events that took place in Barnet 80 years ago.

In March 1938 Sir Joseph Priestley, Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council, received a golden key, with which he opened Barnet's first public museum, which was seen as a notable addition to the town's amenities. Barnet Record Society had been formed 11 years earlier to record Barnet's history. It began a collection of documents and objects, and its first exhibition was held in the Barnet Council Chamber. As the years passed, the collection grew to such an extent that it needed a permanent home, and Barnet Museum opened in March 1938.



First exhibition at Council Chamber

In April that same year Barnet Football Club were knocked out of the semi-final of the FA Amateur Cup by Bromley. Just 8 years later, in 1946, they went on to win the competition, led by one of their greatest players, captain Lester Finch.



Lester Finch with FA Amateur cup

In May Barnet Fire Brigade tested its new 1300 engine.



Essoldo Cinema (photo from Andrew Christie)

In July Gracie Fields attended the opening of the Dominion Cinema in East Barnet – she was given a great reception from a crowd of several thousand. The cinema later changed its name to the Essoldo, and closed in January 1967 with Audrey Hepburn in 'My Fair Lady'. Also in July 1938 the official opening of Barnet TA Centre took place.

In September a proposal by Barnet Council to convert Barnet Churchyard into a garden of remembrance was criticised by Barnet Ratepayers Association as being 'unduly extravagant'. September was the month for Barnet Fair, which lived on despite opposition from some quarters and difficulty in securing a suitable site.



*Barnet Horse Fair
(photo from Terence Atkins)*

Barnet people had lived through most of 1938 against the background of acute tension caused by the growing international crisis with Germany. When this reached its height, at the end of September, Barnet local ARP volunteers responded promptly. Gas masks were hurriedly assembled and local schoolchildren were fitted with them. On the last day of the month, news broke of the apparent 'success' of peace efforts at Munich.

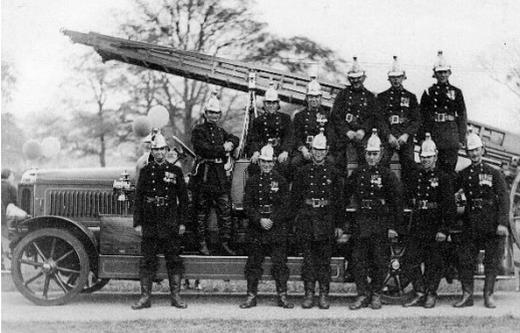
In November the Duchess of Kent visited Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School to open their new extension.

Christmas 1938 was heralded by snow and severe frost which caused damage to property and disorganised road transport. Also in December, the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Hollingsworth of Hadley, gave a concert at the Odeon Cinema in Barnet.

Auxiliary Fire Service: the Dark Days of 1940

Don Baker

During the run up to the Second World War, local authority fire brigades were supplemented by additional fire-fighting facilities under the name Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS). These units were vital during the blitz.



Regular fire brigade (East Barnet Urban District Council) in 1936

Barnet Museum is fortunate to have records of local incidents that occurred during the early stages of the blitz while records were still being maintained locally. From these records it is possible to feel the pressure that these units were suddenly put under.

The first set of reports occurs on the afternoon of 16th September 1940, with four individual reports of fires at private premises: 47 Windsor Drive, 21 Ridgeway Avenue, 29 Bohun Grove and 46 Ridgeway Avenue, and then a more general one reporting incendiary bomb fires at Ridgeway Avenue, Windsor Drive, Eton Avenue, 84 Daneland and 21 Windsor Drive and the playing fields of what is now East Barnet School.

Incendiary bombs were quite small, about 2 feet long. The Germans dropped containers carrying these bombs, which spun and opened at a set height, flinging the bombs out to cover a wide area, up to 600 bombs a container. Where I have mentioned a series of roads, this will be an area a quarter to half a mile across. When the bombs fell on paths or roadways they were easily seen, but when they broke through a roof and ignited in the loft area, they could start a fire which might be unseen until it was a major incident.

Reports of all these incidents came into the control centre within a few minutes of each other (between 14.18 hours and 14.21 hours). What an initiation for the new service! The damage in each case was mainly to roofs and first floors. The fires were extinguished using stirrup pumps and sand by the AFS and local people. Shortly afterwards a High Explosive (HE) bomb was dropped on Wymans Booksellers & Stationers in Greenhill Parade.

Another fell in the front garden of a house in Greenhill Park, but this was a small HE bomb and as no fire was involved it didn't get a report from this source. However I remember this incident myself, as a child growing up in the area. As it was all so new, we all dashed up to Greenhill Park after school to look at the modest damage suffered by the front of the house.

Two days later (18th Sept) at 22.04 hours there was another shower of incendiaries over East Barnet, the report mentioning 37 Alverstone Avenue, Russell Lane and Avondale Avenue. Thirty-five minutes later a more serious incident occurred in Victoria Road, New Barnet: one oil bomb and three HE's (in the caretaker's garden of Margaret Road School; adjacent to houses in Victoria Avenue; and on the tennis court at the back of the Alexandra pub).



Display of incendiary bombs at Barnet Museum, including cutaway devices showing the inner workings

The oil bomb fell on the back of 135 Victoria Road, and very quickly the whole upper house was ablaze. It required ten men and two trailer pumps to bring it under control. The damage was reported as four rooms and their contents mainly burned out, and the rest of house severely damaged by fire, water and breakage, and the roof off. The estimate of the damage was £400, which was close to the purchase price of a whole house at the time, and maybe more. The house was then occupied by a Mr Kipping, a Barnet Press reporter, and his wife. They escaped from the house unharmed.

Later the same night, reports of incendiary bombs falling came in from Chetwynd Avenue, three more from Haslemere Avenue and a couple from Derwent Avenue, but the reports say that all were extinguished by residents and wardens. Quite a night.

There was no let up the next night with an unexploded bomb and hedge fire at Hadley Common reported at 01.25 hours. Both were attended by the AFS trailer pump and four men. Then at 03.21 hours another load of incendiary bombs were scattered over East Barnet, with Cat Hill, Cat Hill Cottages, north Oakhill Park, Church Hill Road and Ridgeway Avenue all specifically mentioned, but these were all extinguished by residents and wardens. At 03.23 hours an incendiary bomb fire was reported at 73 Potters Road, and at 03.31 hours a pump and 4 men attended 23 Bohun Grove, where a roof and bedroom were on fire. At 03.37 hours there was another incendiary bomb fire, this time at Williams Bros of Clockhouse Parade in East Barnet.

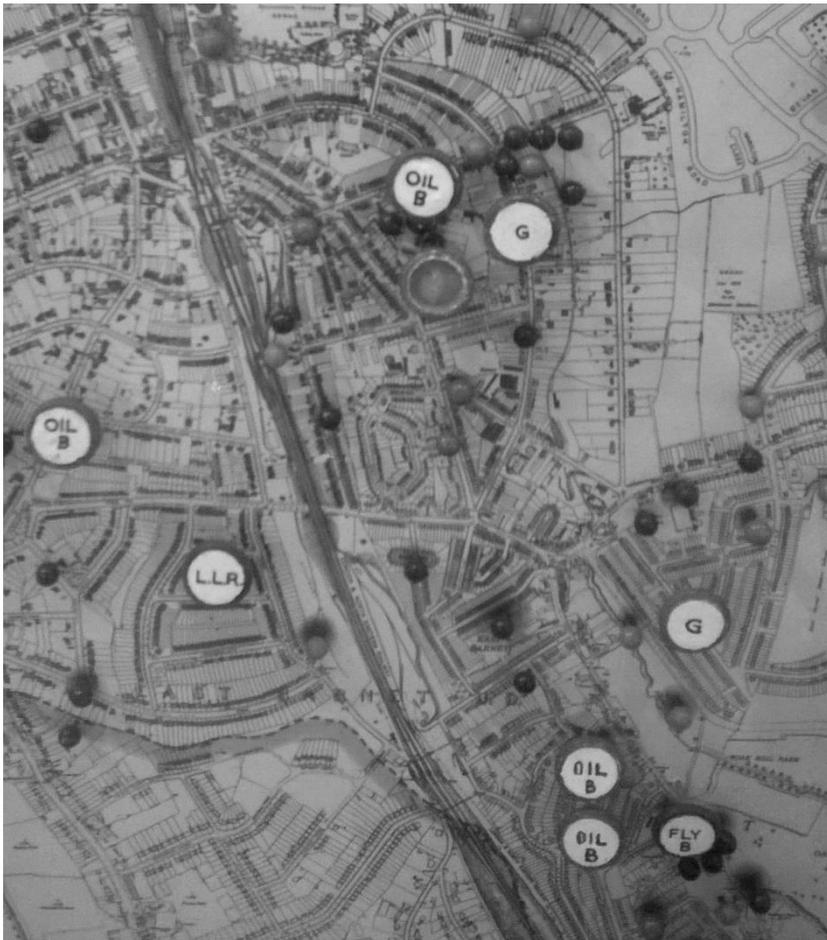
Probably the worst night so far occurred on 23rd September, when reports came in all over the district, including Park Road, Leicester Road, Hexham Road, Hadley Road, Bulwer Road, East Barnet Road, Victoria Road, the Russell Lane area, Brunswick Park Road area, Monkfrith Estate and Osidge Lane. The AFS also had to cope with some major incidents. A pump and trailer pump with ten men dealt with a fire at the Conservative Club in East Barnet Road, where the billiards room was severely damaged. At the same time another trailer pump and four men had to cope with a fire at a photographer's premises in Potters Road, where a developing room and contents were burned out.



Stirrup pump on display at Barnet Museum

At the same time crews were also out dealing with a fire in the roof of the Methodist Church in Station Road, and two pumps and ten men were needed to combat a fire at St Mary's Church in East Barnet,

where 8 foot of roof and rafters were destroyed. Another major house fire was at 75/77 Exeter Road where much of each house was destroyed. Finally, there were two fires in Lytton Road where a shed was destroyed and one of the front rooms badly damaged.



Detail from bomb map on display at Barnet Museum, showing New Barnet

I make no apology for including all the locations mentioned, as I believe it sums up the tremendous pressure the new fire teams were faced with.

The incidents continued unabated for the rest of that autumn (listed in full in the appendix). This was a prelude to the main winter blitz on central London. The onslaught of the blitz showed that there was need for more centralised control over fire services, which had until now been under local control, to enable resources to be directed to where they were most needed. It was also found that a lot of the equipment of the new Auxiliary and the existing Brigade was not compatible. In August 1941 the AFS was transformed into the National Fire Service (NFS).

It seems incredible to reflect on those days, living as we do now in a relatively peaceful time when all the streets are lit, and the services are there, a mobile phone call away. At that time some reports of incidents would come in by telephone, but many would come in by messengers on foot. It was amazing how efficient and reliable these fire crews were. As soon as there was an incident, even sometimes before you had gathered your wits, the Brigade was there, cheerful and helpful as ever, together with the Wardens and the Rescue teams. This was a great moral booster – the boys were on the job.

Appendix

Summary of further incidents in the Barnet area (after these dates the record ceases, continued elsewhere):

- 26 Sep: Roof of 27 Knoll Drive damaged by falling nose-cap of anti-aircraft shell.
- 1 Oct: Oil bombs at 18 Albemarle Road and 2 Cedar Avenue seriously destroyed parts of the houses; and more general scatter of incendiary bomb fires at Russell Lane and Rosslyn Avenue and vicinity.
- 4 Oct: Day-light raid, HE at The Leys, Mount Pleasant, which started a fire and caused one death and several injuries.
- 5 Oct: Major drops of incendiary bombs at Dinsdale Gardens, Hadley Road, Tudor Road, Woodville Road and surrounding area, including Maws Factory, where staff dealt with the bombs. In East Barnet falls reported at Ferney Road, Cedar Rise, Arlington Road and in Oakhill Park and Monkfrith area. Serious fires developed at 68 and 110 Hadley Road and 43 Knoll Drive: all dealt with by trailer pumps and four men.

- 9 Oct: Shower of incendiary bombs affecting wide area, including fire in roof of Russell Lane School: 14 men with three trailer pumps needed.
- 13 Oct: Victoria Road oil bomb and three HE's: coal yard next door to Warwick Hotel (also caused damage to the rear of C. Whitta's Umbrella Factory), pavement outside 102 Victoria Road (setting the gas main alight) and garden of 94 Victoria Road.
- 14 Oct: Osidge Lane HE bomb required trailer pumps, motor pump, 14 men. 5 people rescued by L. Fireman Bracy and A/F Tustin. About the same time HE bombs fell in Cowper Road: trailer pump and four men.
- 20 Oct: Trailer pump and four men needed for roof fire at 27 Chase Way.
- 24 Oct: Two trailer pumps and eight men required for roof fire at 22 Bevan Road.
- 25 Oct: Incendiary bombs scattered in Church Hill Road area.
- 16 Nov: Roof and rafter fire at 16 Dinsdale Court; gas main ignited by bomb at Arnos Grove; landmine damage to several houses and gas main fire in Hampden Way; landmine at 69 Arlington Road causing fire in the ruins; twelve persons assisted by brigade to safety and one casualty removed to first aid post.
- 4 Dec: Roof fire at 'The Glebe' Camlet Way needed two pumps and eight men.
- 21 Jan: Trailer pump and five men for roof fire at 52 Weirdale Avenue. Same day trailer pump and five men called to roof and bedroom fire at 32 Beresford Avenue, but actually put out by Friern Barnet Brigade.
- 19 Mar: Trailer pump and six men for HE and delayed action bomb in Margaret Road.
- 10 May: HE bomb hit 'Glenthorne' and 'Crammond' in Brunswick Park Road, as well as damaging gas services which ignited debris of both houses. Motor pump and seven men as well as trailer pump and eleven men required.
- 11 May: Extensive damage to numbers 104-124 Woodfield Drive from HE bomb; two pumps and eleven men needed.
- 13 Aug: HE bomb at 146-148 Crescent Road smashed gas main. Three pumps and eleven men came; these teams were given the identities Z2, Y1 and X2.

Mines and Brickworks in Hertfordshire

Dennis Bird

A cursory glance at OS maps of South Hertfordshire shows many abandoned chalk pits, some of which were very large. Less well known is that the chalk was also mined – collapsed shafts in Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Hemel Hempstead in recent years graphically illustrate this lost history which lasted from around 1700 to around 1900.



Inside Shenley Chalk mine (photo from WCMS / Andy Belcher)

Until the early twentieth century itinerants were employed to extract the chalk, which was burnt to make lime. This was used in agriculture as a fertiliser spread over acid soils, and lime mortar was used for building and in the production of bricks, tiles and drainage pipes.

Most mines were small, but not in Shenley, where a vast mine is hidden and largely forgotten.¹ The 1865 6" OS map shows the site of a large brick works and also chalk pits, but not the chalk mine below the ground.²

The mines were usually started by digging an entry shaft from the surface down into the chalk. The miners worked their way down into the floor, deeper and deeper, creating a shape like a church vault in order to give stability. Horizontal tunnels were then created to extract the chalk.



Descending down the shaft into Shenley Chalk mine (photo from WCMS / Andy Belcher)

The Shenley mine was largely forgotten until 1996 when it was investigated on a trip by the Wealden Cave and Mine Society

(WCMS) and the Kent Underground Research Group. They found three entry shafts, and there are roughly 350 metres of tunnel up to 13 metres wide. According to WCMS, the vaults were emptied of around 23,000 tons of chalk and stand as firm today as when created. Records suggest chalk was extracted from around 1800 to 1912. One of the reasons the mines remained hidden is that the shafts were declared as ‘wells’ and that is how they are listed at Herts Record Office. Mines were taxed and wells are not; nothing new about tax evasion! The photographs show how vast the shafts were and it is thought that subsidence in adjacent fields means that other shafts have yet to be discovered. The mines are a breath-taking monument to labourers who spent their lives wielding pick axes and shovels by candlelight to extract chalk and flint.

There was a shocking end to the history of the mine. Graffiti on the wall of the newest tunnel records the last day of mining as April 17th 1912. There are several carvings on the wall showing the mining agent, who was not popular. It is thought that one of the last miners, William Rowson, set light to the agent’s house, killing him, his wife and two children and destroying all the records relating to the mine and brickworks. There is graffiti in the mine with an illustration of a burning house and a stick-limbed mining agent grimly waving his arms. Alongside are the initials WR.

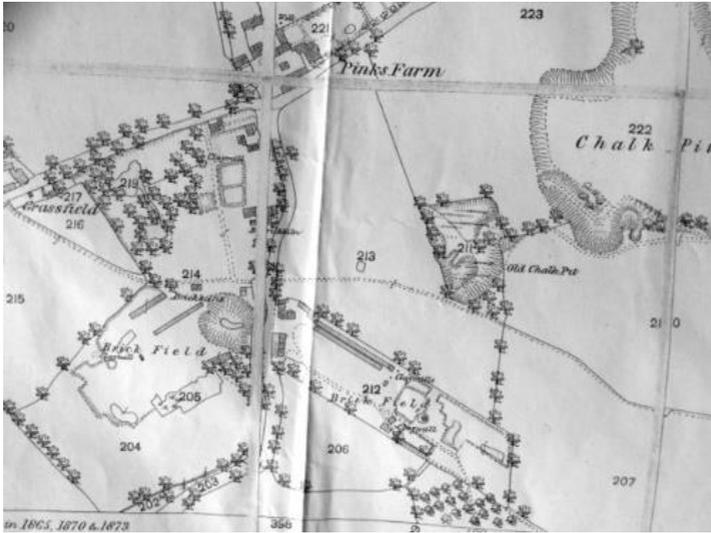


*Graffiti from Shenley chalk mine
(photo from WCMS / Andy Belcher)*

Nowadays the mine has an unexpected new function as home to two rare species of bat – Natter and Daubenton. Herts & Middlesex Bat Group spent £6,600 improving air circulation by clearing debris from the shafts.

There was also a large brickworks on this site (clearly seen on the 1865 6” to the mile OS map²). In the nineteenth century the number of brickyards in England mushroomed. The spreading London suburbs mainly used bricks produced locally. There were several brickworks in the Barnet area, including one at Arkley. The brickworks at Shenley

must have been one of the largest in the area and illustrate that the soil there was particularly suitable for making bricks, with plenty of London clay and loess. When the glaciers retreated, windblown rock (loess) was deposited over Hertfordshire with some layers over a metre thick. This reddish clay, known as 'brickearth', easily formed into bricks.



1865 OS map showing Shenley Brickworks

Clay was dug by hand in the autumn, and stockpiled in the winter for the frost and rain to break it down and wash out any soluble materials (sousing). From spring to autumn the bricks were made. Clay from the stockpile was mixed into a dough-like consistency (wetting and pugging). Moulds dusted with sand shaped the clay into bricks which are a mix of clay, sand, water and up to 25% lime. The bricks were fired for at least 24 hours at a temperature greater than 900°C. A skilled brickmaker could produce up to 1500 per day. Some of the old brickwork buildings are still used as outhouses.

The 1911 census for Ridge and Shenley graphically illustrates the rural economy of the area, listing occupations such as mole catchers, gardeners, carpenters, cowmen, grooms, farm labourers and gamekeepers and, of course, chalk miners and brickmen. The working women were mainly servants, and some laundresses.

Just to add another layer of history, the modern bridle path running from north to south through the site is an old drove road, judging by the wide verges. One of the cottages there is still called 'Drovers Cottage' or Rest.



'Drovers Cottage' (photo from author)

The Ridge and Shenley area is lovely countryside and there are many well marked footpaths. It is very easy to visit this evocative place.



Shenley Brickworks remains (photo from author)

¹ Explorer OS 203013

² There is a copy of the 1865 OS map in Barnet Museum

Photographs of Shenley chalk mine used with kind permission of Wealden Cave & Mine Society, taken by Andy Belcher. WCMS are involved in all forms of underground exploration in the North Surrey area and beyond. wcms.org.uk

Did the London ‘Great Plague’ of 1665 affect Barnet?

Carla Herrmann

Many historians believed that the Great Plague of 1665 in London did not get as far out into the countryside as Barnet, but with panicked people fleeing out of the city in every direction this seems highly unlikely. Some hastily improvised road blocks were probably set up to try and stop them but at least a few desperate people seem to have evaded these, reached Barnet and infected the town.

There are several indications that Barnet was ‘visited’ and for a time normal life and social contacts broke down. In 1665 a larger than usual number of deaths was recorded, although it is not known how many of these were plague victims, and not all deaths would have been formally noted in the chaos and panic caused by a plague visitation. According to the Churchwardens Accounts of the Plague year various precautionary measures were taken. A ‘searcher’ Eleanor Boyes was employed to investigate deaths of potential plague victims, and paid a total of 2s 4d. At the usual rate of a few pennies paid per search this represents several suspicious deaths. A searcher had the unpleasant task of viewing corpses to decide what they had died from, and more particularly she – it was usually a poor and elderly woman who was beholden to the parish – had to check for any signs of plague as payment for her parish relief. 1665 is the only year that Barnet recorded making payments to a searcher.

A man called simply ‘Goodman’ was brought home, probably from London or another infected area, by an anonymous surgeon who may have been attending him and was paid 2s 2d by the parish. It is quite likely that Goodman or the surgeon could have brought the epidemic into Barnet because both Goodman and his wife died soon afterwards. Records show that entire households perished which would seem to indicate an epidemic, and that it had spread to particular neighbourhoods. These plague victims included the Ballards, their child and nameless maid, and the Laytons and their two children; they were all buried on their own properties rather than in the churchyard which suggests that no one wanted to run the risk of

providing a church burial. They were not buried by the sexton but by an interesting character called Mary Profett who apparently was initially paid in wine but later received the very large sum of £2 for burying Balle and his sister, and £1 0s 8d for unspecified work, which might have involved burying strangers to the parish. Plainly this was work that no-one else wanted to take on and there is also an element of coercion here since Barnet also paid 6d for a lock for her! Possibly she had to be kept locked up in case she became infected or ran away from her unpleasant tasks. She then vanished from the records and may have died.

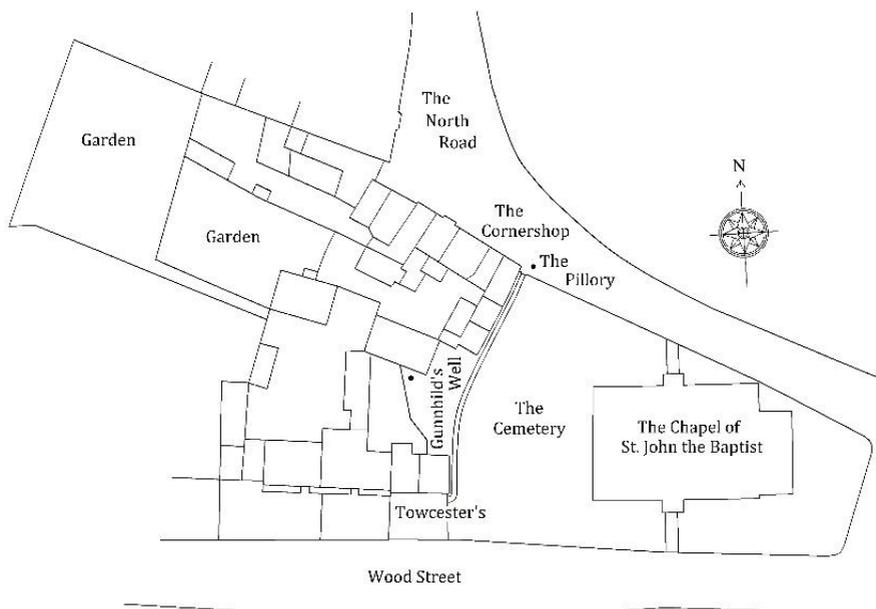
Only one woman, Susan Bell, was officially recorded as having been 'visited' which meant that she had developed visible symptoms of plague. It is not clear if she was medically examined or perhaps Eleanor Boyes was called in. Surprisingly she was not, as usually happened, sealed into her home. Perhaps she was destitute and did not have one. Barnet adopted an ingenious if cruel solution to the problems she posed by building a kind of 'isolation' hut which was then somehow man-handled or pulled to the wasteland of Barnet Common. Barnet paid £1 for constructing the hut and 4s to a former Constable for dragging it. Susan, who seemingly had no family or friends, was then abandoned, presumably locked in, with 3 trusses of straw for bedding and a pint of Muscardine – sweet grape or pear wine. There was no mention of any food or water being provided so perhaps she was regarded as too far gone to need any and was expected to drink herself into oblivion.

After 1665 there were no more 'visitations' of plague but other epidemics such as smallpox and later Asian cholera were also much feared and killed large numbers of Barnet people over the centuries.

Discovering some Lost Properties in Medieval Barnet

Philip Bailey

In Barnet Museum there is a plan from 1818 drawn in relation to the enlargement of the Churchyard of St. John the Baptist Church and the re-siting of a path across the Churchyard to the position where Church Passage now runs. The plan shows a whole nest of properties in what is now the grassed area where the trees and War Memorial stand. The medieval ground level would probably have been at the same level as Church Passage, as the higher modern ground level of the grassed area is probably a result of the spoil from the 1875 extension of the Church being deposited there. This plan, along with Barnet's medieval Manorial Court Rolls, can help us to make sense of some of the properties and landmarks in that area in medieval times.



Plan of medieval Barnet properties (redrawn by the author)

Towcester's

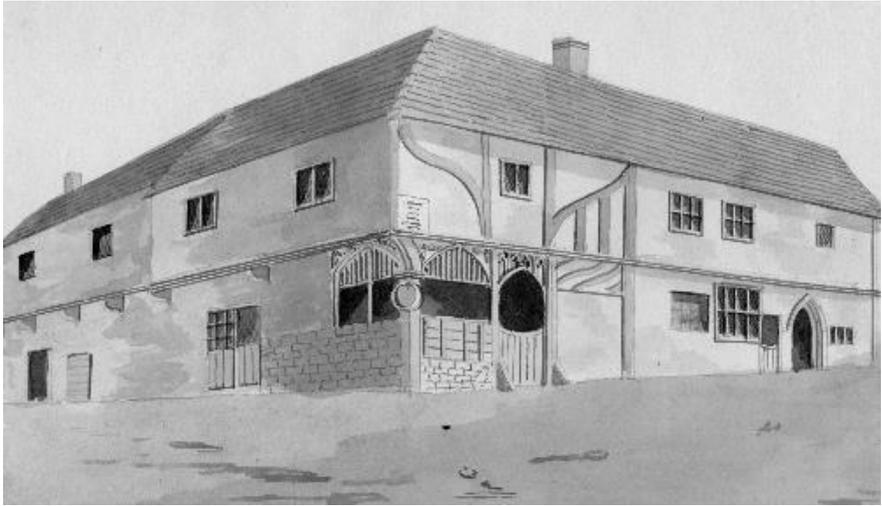
This was a house that stood directly next to the Cemetery and seems most of the time to have been partitioned into two dwellings. In 1349 the holder Richard de Wedon had died of the Black Death and then in 1359 Beatrice de Wedon was given custody of the house and the heir Agnes, who was Richard's daughter. Agnes subsequently married Richard Pounz and they took possession of the house in 1370.

It was first referred to by name as Tawceters in 1429, while a Robert de Toucestre was recorded in 1309, and a William Toucestre in 1349. The last record of the property I have found is in 1614 when two different people held a moiety (half) each.

The Cornershop

A shop called 'le Cornershope' was recorded in the Court Rolls in 1369 and 1376 as being situated next to the Pillory. It is first referred to in 1350 as being 'a shop in the town of Chepingbarnet opposite the Pillorie'. A shop appears on the corner of a block facing the Churchyard of St. John's in numerous prints and paintings of 19th century Barnet.

There is also an 18th century painting which shows the building in a more rustic form and with a wooden cross shown just in front of it. The cross was said to mark the place where the protestant martyr William Hale was burned at the stake in 1555, and this event might well have taken place at the site of the Pillory. As well as The Cornershop, in 1445 a shop called 'le Longshoppe' was said to be situated 'next to Cemetery of the Chapel of St. John' and in the same reference, another nearby shop is called 'le Clothe Shoppe'.



The Cornershop

The Cemetery

It is recorded in the Court Rolls that the Cemetery was enlarged and then built upon sometime prior to 1305 when the new tenant of a shop was informed that his 'place was granted in the time of pestilence for enlargement of the Cemetery' and that the tenants of tenements in that area had a shared obligation of 12 pence rent due to this fact. In 1353 three men agreed to take responsibility for an 'annual rent of 12 pence for a certain plot of land taken from the ground of the lord [of the manor] for enlargement of the Cemetery'. Presumably the area set aside for enlargement of the Cemetery was not actually used for burials and so was free to build upon.

Interestingly in 1445 it is stated that 'upon that same Cemetery [of St. John's], the shop of Isabelle Barbour was lately built'. This seems to indicate that the group of buildings shown on the plan of 1818 may have been built on ground that was formerly part of the Churchyard, and so it is interesting that this area was returned to being part of the Churchyard by the demolition of these buildings in the 19th century.

The Pillory

The first record I have found of the Pillory in Barnet is from 1264 when Robert de Agate was said to have 'at some time raised a hedge in the water next to the Pillory (Latin: *Pillorium*) to the injury of the town'. In 1350, 1369 and 1376 it was mentioned in relation to The Cornershop and spelt Pillorie/le Pelorye/le Pillorye. It is likely that this was sited in the middle of the town to act as much as anything as a deterrent to any would-be mischief-makers. It is also to be noted that there was probably at some stage a gallows sited on the corner of Galley Lane (Galo Lane 1475, Gallow Lane c.1700) and Wood Street, on what was one of the main approaches to the town, presumably to act in a similar way as a deterrent to anyone with law-breaking in mind.

Gunnhild's Well

On the plan of 1818 a small portion of the Churchyard continues behind some of the buildings. This extra area creates a boundary between the churchyard and back yards of the buildings that seems to deviate around an obstacle, creating a nook. It is likely that this is where Gunnhild's Well was located. It is first recorded in the Court Rolls in 1275 as 'Gunnildewelle'. In 1305, one house was described as being between another tenement and Gunnildewelle and 'abutting next to the Cemetery'. Later that year the same house is described as being 'beside the customary well'. Other examples I have found of it being recorded by name are Gunnildewelle (1350) and Gunnyldewell (1368). In two references (1451 and 1518) a property next to Towcester's was said to have 'an easement to the well in the garden of the tenement', which probably also refers to Gunnhild's Well.

In the footsteps of General Booth

John Hall

General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, lived in Hadley Wood from 1889 until his death in 1912. He moved there at the age of 60, but his life continued to be one of constant work and travel. Each year he toured by train, road and steamship the far flung outposts of the Salvation Army. By the time of his death the General had visited every continent, and the Salvation Army was active in no less than 58 countries.



General Booth addressing a gathering at Barnet Market, c.1908

Here is a look at his life in Hadley Wood, through the places that were significant to him.

Hadley Wood station (pictured in a 1905 photo on the next page) opened in 1885 and, with excellent transport links to Kings Cross, was an important reason why General Booth and his wife, Catherine, moved to Hadley Wood from Stamford Hill in 1889. Another was Catherine's poor health and the belief in the restorative effects of plenty of fresh air and rural surroundings.



Station Parade, 1905 (photo from Hadley Wood Association)

During the 1890s and early 1900s the General was a distinctive figure on the station platform, often seen pacing up and down with his notepad in hand and accompanied by his Personal Secretary and other uniformed officers.

On one occasion in June 1904 he records taking the 09:45 train to Kings Cross for a private audience with King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra with whom he struck up a close relationship. Before the audience Booth visited the Strand Hall where he washed his hands in a humble workman's bucket, before taking a cab to Buckingham Palace and shaking hands with the King. That was one of the General's favourite stories...



General Booth (public domain)

From Hadley Wood station, William Booth established a network of contacts among the famous. He frequently travelled to Westminster to lobby the political elite of the day, among them Herbert Asquith, David Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour and Winston Churchill. Prison reform was high on the agenda for his meetings with Churchill,

whereas the setting up of an overseas colony in Rhodesia for the destitute was the focus of his lobbying of Asquith, Lloyd George and Balfour.

Further afield the General travelled to meet two Presidents of the USA, William McKinley and Teddy Roosevelt, and many other heads of state and international leaders, including the Kings of Norway and Denmark, the Queen of Sweden, the Dowager Empress of Russia and the Emperor of Japan. It is said that Booth treated every person, whatever their position in life, exactly the same.

Turning left out of the station is Crescent East, and number 30 (now called 'White Gables') is the house, forming part of the Beech Hill estate, where William and Catherine moved in early 1889. But their residence here was short lived. By August Catherine's health had deteriorated, and so they retired to Clacton to spend her remaining days by the sea. There she died in 1890, leaving William a grieving widower. Catherine was a driving force behind her husband and the earthly love of his life.



Homestead (photo from Terence Atkins/Barnet Museum)

In 1891 Booth moved back to Hadley Wood to live in 'Homestead', 19 Crescent East, across the road from No 30. This was a fine large house (then a single dwelling) which had a long garden with an orchard. The General must have rattled around a bit with only his Personal Secretary and domestic servants for company. From this house General Booth launched his best-selling book 'In Darkest England' which sold almost 250,000 copies and became a talking point among Victorian politicians, church leaders and philanthropists.

In 1894 the General moved out, and 'Homestead' became the long term home of his eldest son and Chief-of-Staff, Bramwell, and his large family. His wife, Florence, continued to live there until 1949. General Booth moved to 32 Crescent East (at one time the Parsonage of St Paul's Church), where he lived until 1903. Today No 32 is recognisably the same house with a handsome portico and balustrade, but in Booth's day would have been appreciably smaller.



This was a very busy time for Booth as he fought off opposition and prejudice, preached the Christian Gospel message, and extended the work of the Salvation Army among the poor, homeless and forgotten.

32 Crescent East (photo from The Victorian Web)

In 1903 William Booth moved to 'Rookstone', where he lived until his death in 1912. 'Rookstone' is a pebble-dash and red brick villa, which now has an English Heritage blue plaque to the right of the porch. This house was built for the General by the Salvation Army at the bottom of the garden of his son, Bramwell, and, although extended and no longer a single dwelling, it has retained many of its original features.



Rookstone (photo from Terence Atkins/Barnet Museum)

From there the General embarked on six lengthy motor tours across the length and breadth of the country, using the latest Darracq motor car to take him to preach the Gospel. This was in addition to his overseas travels, lobbying, countless speaking engagements and tireless work for the destitute.

After the General died, 150,000 people filed past his casket at a three-day lying in state, 40,000 attended his funeral at Olympia, massive crowds packed the streets of London, and 'Rookstone' became a place of pilgrimage until the outbreak of war in 1914. The New York Times paid this fitting tribute to Hadley Wood's most distinguished resident: "No man of his time did more for the benefit of the people than William Booth."

This article is based on the talk 'God's General' given on 16 March 2018 at St Paul's Church, Hadley Wood. A video of the talk is available at <https://vimeo.com/282363781>

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BARNET'S LOCAL POSTCARD PUBLISHERS: NO. 1

William Wilson of Wood Street

Terence Atkins

British picture postcards gradually began to appear from the mid-1890s, but the Golden Age was in the early years of the twentieth century up to the First World War. Postcards of Barnet with a Victorian stamp and postmark are extremely rare indeed. The 'big names' in postcard production soon became well-known, such as Bells of Leigh on Sea and the still extant Francis Frith, but Barnet was fortunate to have a number of local photographers who also took to postcard publishing. Among the names were Cowing and Hockett, but my personal favourite is William Wilson, listed in the Kelly directories as 'commercial & fancy stationer & photographer' of 87 Wood Street. Today the shop is known as Griffiths.

William Wilson produced vast numbers of postcards of local scenes and events for over a decade, until his business was handed over to Cowings in 1916. The mere handful illustrated here give only a glimpse of the sheer variety of his postcards. The picture below shows his shop profusely decorated for the Coronation of George V in 1911 and displaying a wide range of souvenirs for sale.



The next-door draper's and post office has suffered some damage (vandalism?). William Wilson's shop is to the right and his notice for his Ravenscroft pen is clearly visible, next to his promotion of 'Stephen's Inks for all temperatures' at the top of the thermometer on the wall.



Opposite the shop, the Wood Street entrance to Ravenscroft Park is recognisable in this view of what appears to be the start of a family excursion by horse-drawn carriage.



This view of Alston Road was proudly sent to the aunt of one of the boys lined up (in the road!) for the photographer. It was taken at the junction with Puller Road.



An evocative scene of around 1912, showing that uniformed servants were not uncommon in the kind of households occupying the relatively new housing in Bedford Avenue.





This card and the one below capture two unexpected events of 1908. The snowfall was at the end of Easter week and how fortunate we are that William Wilson recorded the scene in Ravenscroft Park, just across the road from his Wood Street premises.



The disastrous High Street fire started in the early hours and completely destroyed three shops. Barclay's bank miraculously survived, seen to the right next to Salisbury Road.



Barnet Steam Laundry was at the top end of Queens Road, long before any of the housing.



Wilson's business expanded to acquire The Fancy Shop, shown here to the left of the butcher's at the junction of Bulwer and Plantagenet Roads. William Wilson continued to confine his postcards mostly to High Barnet and Arkley, with the occasional foray further afield, but surprisingly he seems to have generally left Barnet Fair to his fellow postcard publishers.

Images in this article all from the author.

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Rookstone, home of General Booth (Terence Atkins/Barnet Museum) from article p20

All images are from Barnet Museum's collection, unless stated.

Front cover illustration: The Cornershop, from article p16

Back cover illustration: 32 Crescent East, General Booth's house (photo from The Victorian Web), from article p20

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