

BARNET MUSEUM
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



A History of

Highlands Gardens

The story of a Quaker family,
their lost Victorian house and how
its landscaped gardens almost became
'The Garden of Peace'

By Jeff Gale

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THE HISTORY OF HIGHLANDS GARDENS

By Jeff Gale

Highlands Gardens is a 2.5 acre public park situated at the western end of Leicester Road, on the corner with Abbotts Road. Opened on 2nd May 1931 by the then East Barnet Urban Council, it once formed the grounds of 'The Highlands' - an imposing Victorian house. Later converted into flats, it was demolished in 1972 and replaced by the eponymous apartment block that now occupies the site.

Somewhat hidden away between the residential houses that now line Leicester, Abbotts, Prospect and Highlands Roads, the Gardens are today maintained by the London Borough of Barnet, assisted by the Friends of Highlands Gardens (www.highlandsgardens.org.uk)



The extract from the OS map of 1868 above shows what was then open land surrounding the (still extant) reservoir of the New Barnet Water Works in Potters Lane - with evidence of new houses approaching from the east along Leicester and New Barnet (now Station) Roads following the arrival of the railway there in August 1850.

The link from the smaller extract from a 1930s OS map shows the location where the house and gardens were built in about 1897. South facing and on relatively high ground, it would originally have commanded open views across Greenhill Park and the Dollis Valley towards Totteridge.

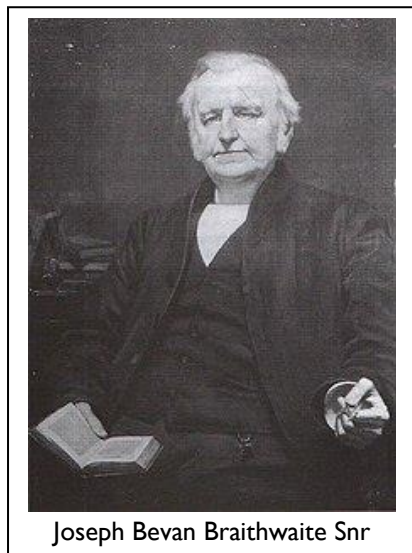
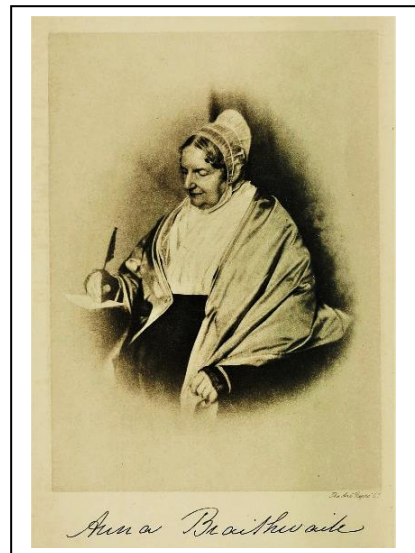


Compared with the 'History of' the nearby Greenhill Gardens (Barnet Museum : August 2023) where the former mansion saw over 368 years of successive occupations, The Highlands stood for a relatively brief time during which it was owned and occupied by members of the Braithwaite family until the house was sold in 1930 and the gardens came into public ownership. The house was finally demolished in 1972, so here we will explore a period of 'just' seventy five years in the life of the original property during which the gardens we see today were in the direct ownership of the family for half of that time.

THE BRAITHWAITE FAMILY

Joseph Bevan Braithwaite Jnr (1855-1934) - the man who built The Highlands - was born in St Pancras into a family with a strong Quaker heritage which he would himself continue. His grandmother was Anna Lloyd (1788-1859) who in 1808 married Isaac Braithwaite, a manufacturer from Kendal. Both hailed from Quaker dynasties and Anna, a prominent English Quaker minister, would make three visits to America between 1821 and 1827 seeking to counter the diverging doctrinal differences espoused there by Elias Hicks and William Forster.

They had nine children between 1809 and 1818, the youngest son being Joseph Bevan Braithwaite Snr (1818-1905).



Born in Kendal, Joseph Bevan Snr became a barrister in 1843 and as an evangelical English Quaker minister he drafted what would become known as the Richmond Declaration. Delivered by a group of ninety five Quaker representatives at a conference in Indiana in 1887 it further argued against the doctrine of 'Inner Light' espoused earlier by Hicks and Forster in America that his mother had previously challenged.

In 1851 he married Martha Gillett (1823-1895), also an acknowledged Quaker minister and daughter of banker Joseph Ashby Gillett of Banbury. They had three sons and six daughters, including William Charles (1862-1922) who became a historian specialising in the early history of the Quakers, and Joseph Bevan Jnr, who would later build The Highlands.

In 1854 Joseph Snr collated and published 'The Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney, with selections from his journal and correspondence'. Gurney (1788-1847) was a member of the Norwich banking family of that name and also an evangelical Quaker minister whose views and actions led to a schism among American Quakers who he considered had too thoroughly accepted the doctrine of Inner Light.

Joseph Snr died in Islington and was interred in the Quaker burial ground in Winchmore Hill.

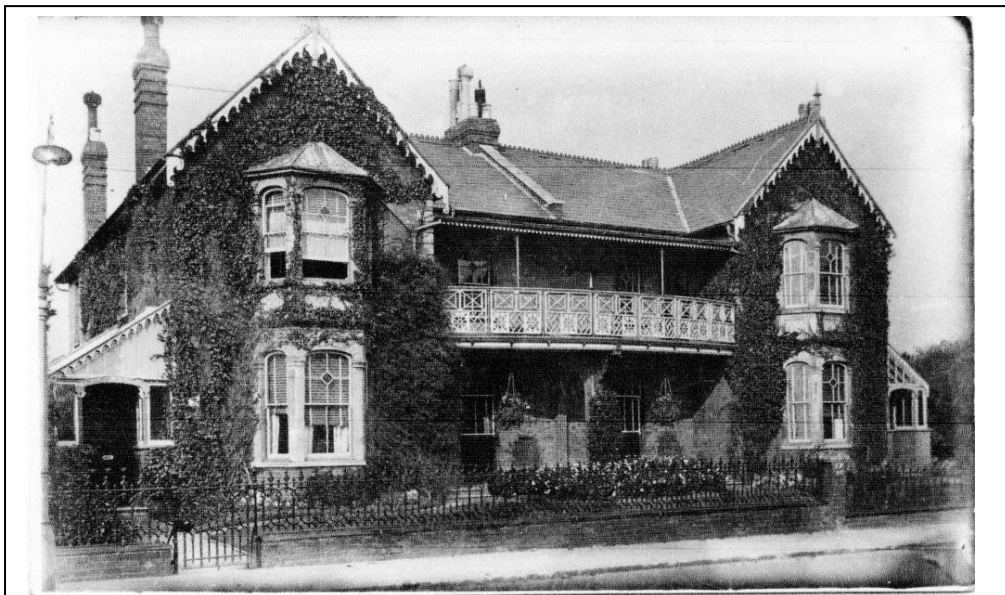
As we explore further, we will see that the beliefs and philosophies that were passed down to Joseph Bevan Braithwaite Jnr would remain a constant across a lifelong commitment to Quakerism as his business and family life evolved before, during and beyond his residence at The Highlands.

Joseph Jnr was born in 1855. The 1861 Census records him aged five living at the family home in Mornington Road, St Pancras. Ten years later he is recorded as a scholar at the Stramongate Quaker Boarding School in Kendal, the alma mater of his father before him.

The 1881 Census shows him back living with his parents, now in Camden Road, Lower Holloway, his occupation given as Stockbroker. Two visitors are present, a Minister and his wife, together with a cook and two housemaids. In July that year he married his cousin Anna Sophia Gillett (1855-1899) in Banbury, Oxfordshire, she being the only daughter of Quaker banker Jonathan Gillett.

Between 1883 and 1895 they would have six children, five sons and a daughter, each of whom we will meet in more detail later in this paper.

By 1891 he is recorded living at 18 Highbury New Park in Islington together with a cook and two housemaids. Anna Sophia is found living at 'Blencathra', a holiday home that Joseph had built for the family in Burnham on Sea, with their children, a visitor - Janette C Moscrip, and two nursemaids.



Blencathra, Burnham on Sea - reported to have been named after the Saddleback, a hill in Cumbria, the birth county of Joseph's father. (www.captureburnham.co.uk)

(By about 1897 Joseph's new family home - The Highlands in Abbotts Road - had been built to his specification. We shall learn more of this later).

Sadly, in October 1899 Anna Sophia died aged 44 soon after they had moved into The Highlands.

The 1901 Census was taken on 31st March and records Joseph, widowed, living in the new house together with his two youngest sons and his daughter, a governess, a cook, a housemaid, an under-housemaid, a nurse, a nursing maid and kitchen maid. A cottage in the grounds also records a chambermaid and her daughter, together with a coachman/electrical engineer and a gardener.

His other three sons are recorded as pupils boarding at Leighton Park Quaker School in Reading.

Joseph married again, on 15th June 1901, to Margaret Grace Moscrip (1866-1947) in Islington, Margaret being the sister of Janette C Moscrip - the visitor staying at Blencathra in 1891.

In 1911 the Census records Joseph and Margaret living at The Highlands. His youngest son is now a scholar at Bootham Quaker School in York and his other five children are no longer living at home. His sister-in-law, Janette, is now living with them. A parlourmaid, two housemaids, a kitchenmaid and a cook are also recorded living in the house.

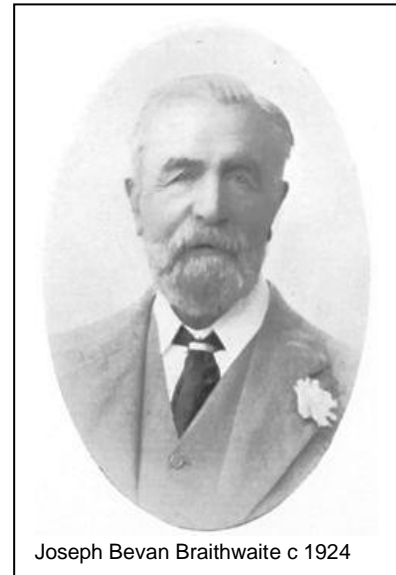
Adjacent Census listings record the Cottage where we find a coachman (Joseph Henry Wearing), his son (William Leonard aged 14) and a nurse (Annie Pollard - who in 1901 was listed as being the Braithwaite's chambermaid). Another listing now records a Rose Cottage where a chauffeur/mechanic and his wife and daughter are living, together with an assistant chauffeur.

Shipping passenger lists reveal that Joseph visited New York either side of WWI, first alone in 1916 and again in 1920, the second time with Margaret.

I have not been able to access the 1921 Census but, as we shall see, various other records available via the internet reveal that The Highlands would remain the family home until Joseph and Margaret moved to a new property called 'Lea Wood' in Woodside Avenue, Muswell Hill in about 1930. However, my research leads me to believe that at this time they may well be increasingly spending their time living in Burnham-on-Sea.

Joseph died aged 79 on 30th November 1934 at Blencathra in Burnham-on Sea. He was interred at the Quaker Burial Ground in Winchmore Hill, the same ground as his father back in 1905.

Margaret died aged 81 on 29th July 1947. She was then living at 97 Hampstead Way, Golders Green - probably with Joseph's eldest son, Joseph Gurney.



Joseph Bevan Braithwaite c 1924

THE HIGHLANDS : A VICTORIAN HOUSE AND ITS GARDENS - 1897-1930

Through his stockbroking firm, Foster and Braithwaite, Joseph had become known in business circles as a pioneer in the establishment of the electricity supply in Britain by the end of the 19th Century. He was pivotal in arranging the finance for the City of London Electric Lighting Company in 1890, and for the County of London Electric Lighting Company in 1891, of which he became chairman.

The Highlands was built to his design in 1897. Development of the garden followed and appears to have been completed by 1906 with the construction of the rock formations and water features that we can still see today.

A member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, as an amateur astronomer he became a member of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1930.

As can be seen from this picture of the house viewed from the south, his astral interests would see him incorporate a telescope capable of 360 degree rotation installed in a copper covered dome in the designs for the house.



A glimpse of the inside of the house can be gleaned from an article published on the Friends of Highlands Gardens website (link on page 2) which records the recollections of the daughter of George Percival Howe (1875-1967) - who bought the house from the Braithwaites in 1930. Crittal (steel) windows, leaded lights, an oak staircase, parquet and Terrazzo flooring and panelled walls featured, together with several cellars, one housing a sizeable boiler providing underfloor heating to the ground floor rooms. The early presence of electric lighting might also be presumed given Joseph's involvement in the early development of the utility and the presence of an employee at The Highlands of a 'coachman/electrical engineer' as recorded in the 1901 Census.

The detail from that Census also reveals that Joseph was early to adopt an interest in the motor car given the presence of two chauffeurs. A report from the proceedings of a meeting of the East Barnet Valley Urban District Council in 1904 noted in the Barnet Press of 5th March appear to confirm this - although it seems that building his motor house had pre-empted the required planning permission. Interestingly the decision to strictly enforce the regulations was underscored by Councillor Lancelot Hasluck - Joseph's neighbour who was then living at nearby Greenhill Park!

MR. J. B. BRAITHWAITE AND HIS MOTOR HOUSE.
 The surveyor submitted plans of a motor house erected by Mr J. B. Braithwaite, jun., the Highlands, New Barnet.—The Clerk said that the plans had been considered by the works committee, and it was found that they were not in accordance with the byelaws.—Cr. Plowright stated that in regard to building materials and the proximity of the structure to other buildings the plans were not in accordance with the byelaws.—The Chairman: Are we to serve notice on Mr Braithwaite to remove the house?—The Clerk: The surveyor will tell him that his plans are not in order, and matters will follow the usual course.—Cr. Hasluck: If the building is not in accordance with the byelaws it will have to be removed.—The decision of the works committee was approved.

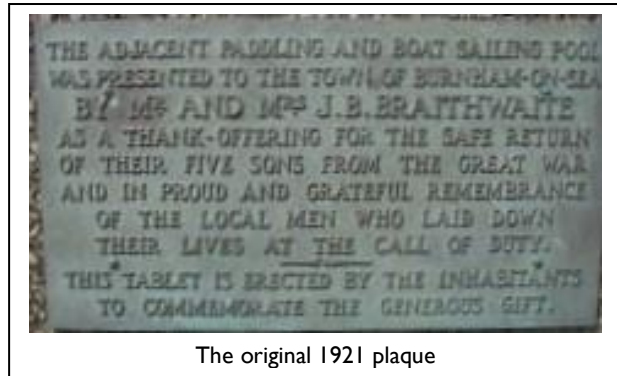
The 'Friends of' website also notes a letter from the grandson of Joseph Henry Wearing, the coachman recorded at The Highlands in 1911, which informs us that Mr Wearing would be required to *walk* the horses from the house to Paddington station for transportation to Burnham-on-Sea by train when the family were staying at Blencathra. However, the family were also using a motor car there in 1906 as the Press of 28th April that year carried a report of an accident that Easter when Joseph Braithwaite, travelling with two of his sons, 'lost control of his motor on descending a hill, and came to grief'. Badly hurt, his injuries included a fracture to the skull and an arm as well as a broken nose and a deep three inch wound to his face. His sons escaped injury despite the car having overturned.

THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW
 OF THE
East Barnet Valley Horticultural Society
 Will be held, by the kind permission of J. B. BRAITHWAITE, Jun., Esq., in his
GROUNDS AT THE HIGHLANDS,
 ON
SATURDAY, JULY 20th, 1901.
 H. MANSFIELD, Esq., will also kindly OPEN HIS GROUND to visitors.
 Entries for the Show must be sent to Mr Woods, 2, Elizabeth-villas, Victoria-road, New Barnet, by 15th inst.
 A BEE TENT, with Demonstrations by W. Herrod, Apian Specialist, Horticultural College, Swanley.

As we will see below, the Braithwaite family certainly left more visible and enduring evidence on Burnham-on-Sea during the time they spent at Blencathra than they did here when living at The Highlands.. However, Joseph is known to have occasionally opened the gardens to the public across the years - as is evidenced by this social announcement that appeared in the Barnet Press on 13th July 1901. He also played a role in the establishment of the Adult School in New Barnet.

Note that the event in July 1901 included 'A Bee Tent' - *not* A Beer Tent! Joseph would have been unlikely to have allowed the latter; the 'captureburnham' website (link on page 3) describes him as one of the town's 'Movers and Shakers' and records that when in 1894 he objected to the excessive drinking taking place at the local Masons Arms, he bought it from Holts the local brewers, demolished it and replaced it with a temperance café named The Lifeboat Hotel and Coffee Tavern.

Joseph was also responsible for the placing of a drinking fountain in the town to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897 and, after the local council rejected his offer to build a public swimming pool, in 1921 he built a boating and paddling pool on the beach in gratitude for his five sons surviving WWI. After weathering the tides of the Bristol Channel for ninety years the concrete structure was demolished in 2010 with one part of the wall relocated onto the sea front together with a new plaque.



The original 1921 plaque

The name 'Quaker' - members are also known as 'Friends' after they adopted the name Religious Society of Friends in the 17th Century - is derived from the nickname given to their founder George Fox (1624-1691) and his followers who shared his belief in the biblical passage saying that people should "Tremble at the Word of the Lord.". Early Quakers played a key role in both the abolition of slavery and the women's rights movements. They are also pacifists, although at times of war their beliefs would allow them to serve in non-combat roles such as medical and humanitarian activities or working in conscientious objector roles.....

It is widely acknowledged that Joseph Braithwaite's first son Sir Joseph Gurney (1895-1958) served as a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Navy Reserve in WWI - seeing action in the landing at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli and in Palestine. A stockbroker and company director, he also served as a Member of Parliament where he was active in matters related to the navy and ex-servicemen. In WW2 he helped organise convoys in the Thames area. Later knighted, in 1954 he was made Baronet of Burnham. He died living at 97 Hampstead Way, Golders Green in 1958.

I can also now record the roles played by Joseph Braithwaite's other five children during WWI:

Jonathan Frederick (1883-1962): He served in France with The Friends War Victims Relief Committee providing humanitarian relief for civilians affected by the war. Their work included helping with construction, medical aid and agriculture relief workers building homes to meet the urgent needs of those in the war zone. Operating in the city of Verdun and the departments of Meuse and Aisne, they also ran hospitals at Sermaize, Bettancourt and Samoëns providing dental, optical and maternity care, and set up a district nursing scheme.

A stockbroker, in 1911 he was living at Caerleon, Willenhall Park, Northumberland Road. The 1939 Register lists him living in Hoddesdon where he may have been a JP. He died there in 1962.

Sir John Bevan (1884-1973): He served with the 1st British Red Cross Ambulance Unit in Italy and received the British Red Cross and Order of St John medal. His name is included in a list of those associated with The Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU), a volunteer ambulance service, founded by individual members of the British Religious Society of Friends, in line with their Peace Testimony. It was independent of the Quakers' organisation and chiefly staffed by registered conscientious objectors. (<https://military-history.fandom.com>)

He was also a stockbroker, and was living in Hendon in both 1911 and 1939. He died living at 85 Hampstead Way, Golders Green in 1973.

Alfred Lloyd (1887-1967): He served in the RNVR as a Lieutenant in WWI and again in WW2.

Recorded in 1911 as a garage proprietor living in Westbourne Grove, London. In 1939 he was living in the village of Smallburgh Norfolk, his occupation shown as a yacht designer and owner. He was living in Milford-on-Sea, Hampshire when he died and was buried there in 1967.

Dorothy Anna (1889-1974): Recorded as an enrolled midwife under the 1918 Second Midwives Act she was probably acting in the profession during time of WWI, and was still listed as such in 1926 records. In 1927 an outward steam sailing record heading for Botwood in Newfoundland gives her address as 14 Belsize Lane Hampstead, her occupation shown as 'Missioner'. When she returned on 22nd September the same year her occupation was given as Private Secretary, her address then shown as 12 Belsize Lane. In 1939 she was recorded as a Chiropodist living in Amersham, Buckinghamshire. She was living in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire when she died in 1974.

Harold Wilson (1890-1990): He served with the British Red Cross in WWI and, like his brother John, received the British Red Cross and Order of St John medal.

In 1939 he was living in Welwyn Garden City, his occupation a Motor Car Driving Instructor. He was living in Woodside Grange Road, Woodside Park when he died in 1990.

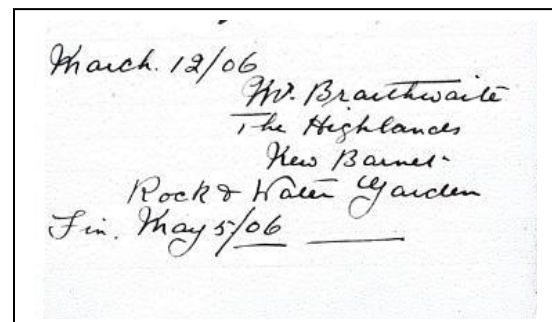
(All of Joseph's children were born and registered in Islington except Joseph Gurney who was born in Burnham-on-sea).

Returning to The Highlands, we have already seen that by 1901 Joseph was making the gardens there available for use by hosting public events, although from information gleaned from the 'Friends of Highlands Gardens' website it appears that the rock structures and water features that remain today were not completed until mid-1906.

They were constructed by the firm of James Pulham and Son, a renowned Victorian landscape gardeners and terracotta manufacturers which exhibited and won medals at London's Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace and at the Great London Exhibition of 1862 in South Kensington. A family enterprise operating across many years, it declined due to the economic situation following WWI and finally closed in 1939.

Best known for the construction of rock gardens, follies and grottoes using both natural stone and their own invention, Pulhamite artificial rock, they also manufactured a wide range of terracotta and Pulhamite garden ornaments, originally at their works in Tottenham, but after 1840 at Broxbourne in Hertfordshire. Granted a Royal Warrant by the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, in 1895, some of their work survives at Sandringham House and Buckingham Palace.

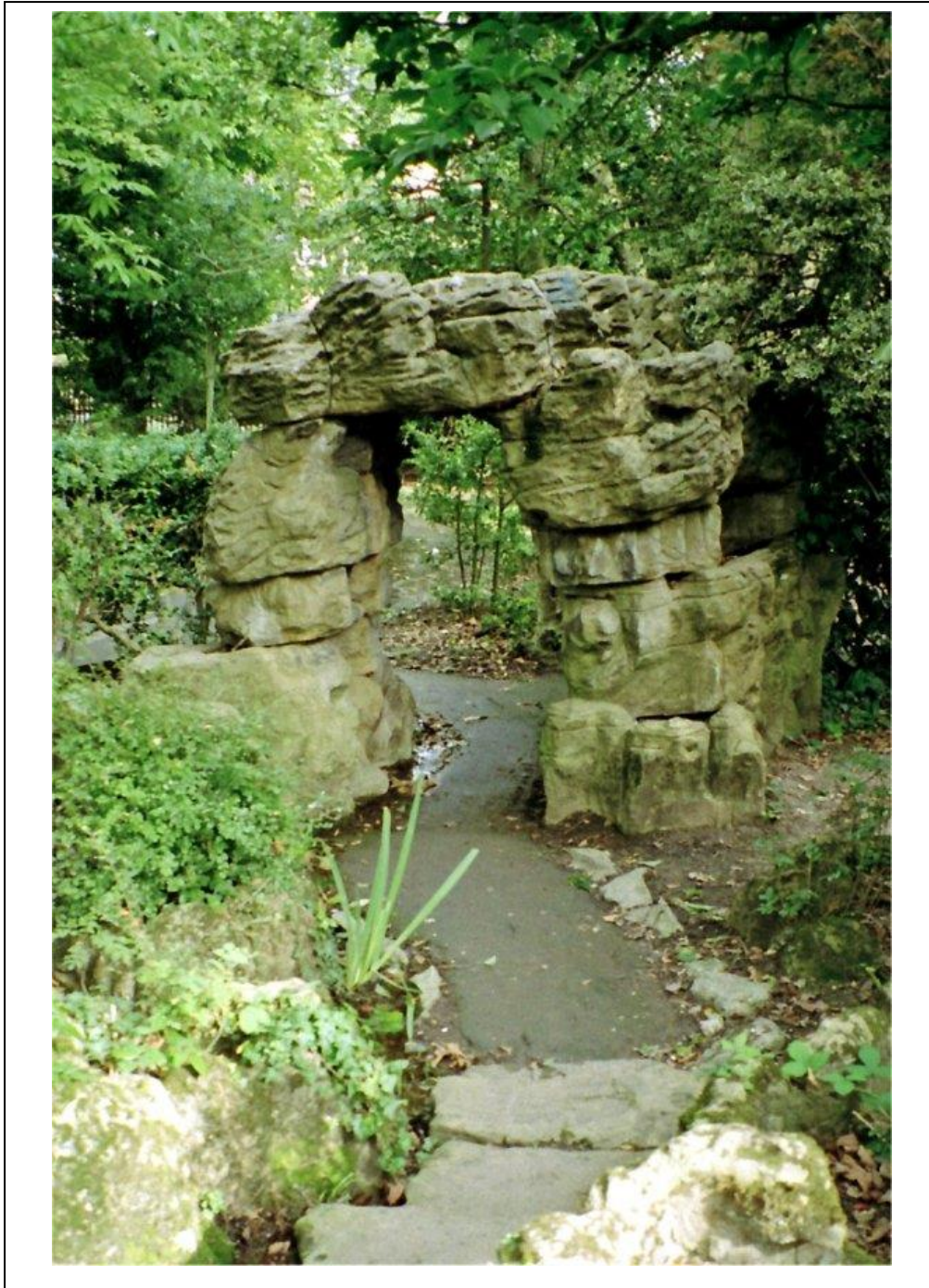
A history of the company can be viewed online at <https://pulham.org.uk/> including a copy of the diary kept between 1898-1930 by their employee, a foreman, Fred Rickett detailing the projects he worked on. The extract here reveals his entry regarding their work at The Highlands and confirms it was undertaken between March and May 1906.



March. 12/06
Mr. Braithwaite
The Highlands
New Barnet
Rock & Water Gardens
Fin. May 5/06

Oddly the Pulham website also includes reference to work carried out by them at 'Highland Gardens (sic) in New Barnet' in 1871... 'to construct a 'Rocky bank, forming cliff, with Dropping Well. For Ferns, Alpines and Shrubs' for a Mr T Higgs. I have not been able to verify whether this relates to 'The Highlands'. It pre-dates Joseph's building of the house by several years, I have not been able to trace a Mr T Higgs living in the Barnet area around that time via Ancestry, and no sign of any property is shown on the actual site of the house and gardens on the OS map of 1868. There is also no evidence that an earlier house was replaced in 1897....

Whatever, the company certainly have an impressive catalogue of prestigious locations where they worked - as well as at Buckingham Palace and Sandringham House - so the structures that survive in Highlands Gardens today can clearly be considered to have a significant pedigree.



This picture shows the 'Pulhamite' archway in Highlands Gardens on which many children (including myself - as a youngster!) once ventured to climb on over the years.

Such fun is now of course discouraged by the H&S railings that surround it.

(This is one of many illustrations depicting the works of James Pulham and Son as detailed on 'The Pulham Legacy' website).

THE HOUSE AND GARDENS AFTER 1930

When Joseph Braithwaite and his wife Margaret moved to Muswell Hill in 1929-30 the house and the gardens were sold separately to new owners.

The house was purchased by George Percival Howe (1875-1967) who owned several properties in the area and moved to The Highlands from Willenhall Lodge on the Great North Road. A Wesleyan and a keen motorcyclist, his obituary in the Barnet Press of 8th December 1967 reveals that although he and his brother were the fourth generation of stained glass artists working at a studio in Muswell Hill, shortly before WWI he had moved to the manufacture of ladies' handbags at premises in Finsbury Park. He continued in that business until 1952, although production was switched to making component parts for munitions during WW2.

Soon after purchasing the house he converted it into eight flats for which he charged tenants rents of approximately 15/- to £1 per week including rates and repairs. During WW2 the copper dome on the observatory was painted black to avoid any possibility that it might be used as a navigation aid for enemy planes, and the lawn was cultivated for vegetables as part of the 'Dig for Victory' effort. From 1951 it again became a family home when he, together with wife Kathleen, his children and grandchildren, moved into the flats as they became vacated.

George Howe was still living in Flat 2 at The Highlands when he died in 1967, as was his wife when she died in 1970. Possibly beginning after his death, the house became run down and it was demolished in 1972 - to be replaced by a new block of flats that today continue to bear the name of The Highlands.

The Gardens, separated from the House in 1930, were destined for a much different future...

The Barnet Press of 19th April 1930 recorded that the East Barnet Urban District Council had 'decided to acquire two-and-a-half acres of ornamental gardens on the Highlands Estate, Barnet Vale, for the purpose of an open space'. On 28th June they reported that the Council had, 'on the recommendation of the recreation grounds committee, decided to apply to the Ministry of Health for sanction to borrow the money required to purchase the gardens', and on 15th November they recorded at length the official MoH enquiry that would lead to the eventual approval for purchase.

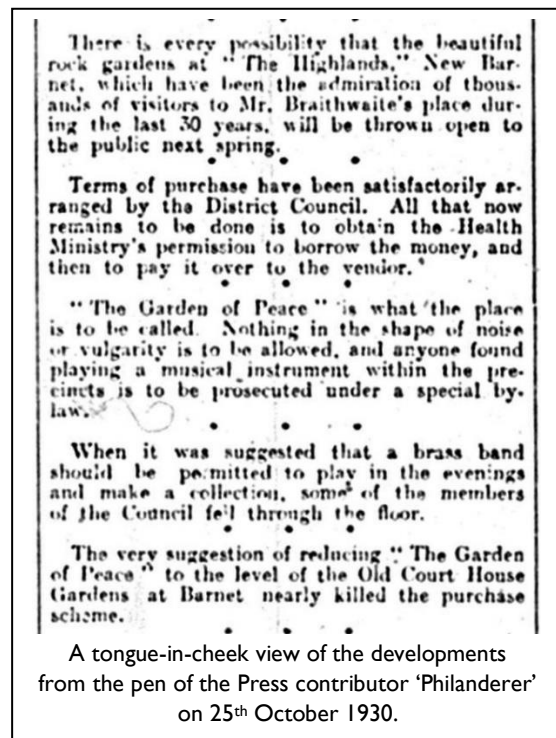
From that report we learn the Council were proposing to pay £2,600 to purchase the land and to invest £1,500 to meet the cost of laying out the land and other incidentals. The inspector was informed that the gardens were already well known to many residents as the owner had frequently thrown the grounds open for social functions and, although he had left the district, he continued to take an interest in it and had made it possible for the Council to acquire the property on terms which 'by no stretch of the imagination could be described as onerous'. Urged to do all he could to get the application pushed through to approval as soon as possible, the Inspector agreed to do everything in his power to expedite matters.

Approval was clearly sanctioned, as on 21st March 1931 we learn from the Press that, 'recently purchased, the ornamental waters are to be fenced, and the waterfall to be put into working order'. The costs had however varied a little as we can tell from the Press 18th April when they recorded the events at an enquiry into another approach to the MoH - for approval to borrow £25,000 to purchase 60 acres of land on the Oakhill Estate that would become Oakhill Park.

Part of the case made in respect of the Oakhill purchase included a summary of wider Council spending proposals which revealed that the purchase price of Highlands was now stated as being £2,200, with the cost of laying out and the purchase of buildings being £1,900.

Things now began to move forward extremely quickly - not just regarding these purchases, but also in respect of another important local development - completion of a long required upgrade to the junction where Lyonsdown Road and Long Street met which had been made possible following the sale and subsequent development of the Greenhill Park estate. Greenhill mansion stood close to the site but had been demolished by September 1930 and works started on the new housing estate that included a new residential road that linked into the junction.

Called eponymously Greenhill Gardens (today the link is severed with traffic diverted along Hasluck Gardens), the opportunity was also taken to straighten Lyonsdown Road where it formerly ran on a curve past the entrance to the mansion. The road still straddles a small area of trees where the graves of three of the dogs owned by the Hasluck family who once owned the estate can be seen.



Improvement works to upgrade and widen Long Street as it leads downhill to East Barnet were also nearing completion, and it was soon to be renamed as Longmore Avenue in memory of Sir Charles Elton Longmore KCB who was well known to East Barnet councillors from his roles as Clerk to both Hertfordshire County Council and the County Lieutenancy until he died in February 1930.

By April 1931 a committee were actively advancing to plan for a visit, on 2nd May, by Lord Hampden, the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, to formally open Highlands Gardens and the newly named road - rather grandly given the epithet for the occasion, though seemingly short lived, of the 'Great Western Gateway'.

The idea of renaming the grounds at Highlands as 'The Gardens of Peace' also appears to have rapidly disappeared from the plans, although the planning committee hoped that Lord Hampden would also be able to include a visit to view the site of the planned Oakhill Park public space.

The visit duly took place and the following week the Press of 9th May 1931 carried a full report of the events of the day. It included a long and detailed list of those attending, including civic worthies from the County and East Barnet as well as leading representatives from all the neighbouring councils, local Resident's and Ratepayer's Associations, Barnet Rotary Club, the Local Trade Association, and members of the East Barnet United Services Club.

Others present were Lord Strafford, members of the local clergy including Bishop Gerard Lander, the Vicar of Holy Trinity New Barnet, and a number of leading public names of the day including Joseph Braithwaite and Lancelot Gerald Hasluck JP. One might hope that any lasting rancour from the planning issues regarding the former's motor house back in 1904 were by now forgotten or, if not, that the two gentlemen managed to avoid each other as the day's events proceeded.

The report also recorded that 'In many cases the wives were present with their husbands'.

Lord and Lady Hampden were welcomed on arrival by Councillor A Beauchamp Vialou JP CC and his wife and daughter, who presented Lady Hampden with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Council. A guard of honour was formed 'on the beflagged highway' by members of the British Legion, the East Barnet Fire Brigade, parties from the Boys' Brigade, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides ('and kindred organisations') and was inspected by the Lord.

Moving on to the top entrance of the new Lyonsdown Road the party were met by a silken cord stretched across the road and Lord Hampden asked 'What do I do now?'. Presented with a pair of gold scissors by Connie Watson, a member of the 3rd New Barnet Girl Guides, the formal opening was duly conducted.

Briefing for the event seems to have been lacking, and Councillor Vialou hastily reminded the Lord that as the gift of a cutting instrument was from a girl, an ancient custom made it necessary for him to 'propitiate the gods' by giving her a copper in exchange for the scissors! Failing to find one after searching his pockets, his wife produced 'a well-worn penny from her capacious handbag' which saved the day!



Speeches duly followed to mark the opening of the new road, and a cavalcade of some thirty cars then conveyed the party to what appears to have been a high spot overlooking the Oakhill estate near to St Mary's church.

According to the Press report 'a willow wren was singing by the brook, goldfinches were busy among the reeds and a couple of titmice looked down from a neighbouring oak tree onto the entourage' as the Lord inspected the view, congratulated the Council on their impending purchase and the Council took the opportunity to mutually congratulate themselves for their wisdom in doing so.

On then to Highlands Gardens where members of the East Barnet Fire Brigade had gathered to form a guard of honour for the arrival of the Lord next to a newly constructed entrance gateway, designed by the Council's Deputy Surveyor P J Neville in a form resembling a lychgate. After brief speeches, Lord Hampden formally opened the gates and he and his wife made a tour of the gardens during which Lady Hampden admired the flowers on the terraces and 'climbed to reach the waterfalls' - seemingly at the time named the 'Inversnaid Falls' after their resemblance in design to those that tumble into Loch Lomond in Scotland.



After presenting long service medals to several members of the fire brigade, invited guests were received by Lord Hampden at the Council offices in Station Road which was 'brightly adorned with flowers, palms, flags and bunting'. A lengthy round of speeches followed during which planning and funding for the three developments that had featured in the day's tour were discussed and lauded as part of the Council's planning to ensure that a growing populace would have access to green open spaces when most remaining local open land was rapidly being developed into new housing estates.

During these speeches, acknowledgement was prominently given to Joseph Bevan Braithwaite for having most generously co-operated by enabling the Council to acquire the Gardens on very favourable terms which provided 'a place for peaceful recreation... that in the days to come will give an opportunity for many to enjoy the beauties of nature'.

Those opportunities still exist for us all today thanks to that generosity.

POSTSCRIPT

As well as being more noticeably remembered in Burnham-on-Sea than in Barnet, the name of Joseph Bevan Braithwaite Jnr also lives on, oddly majestically, in London's Bunhill Row....

The Bunhill Fields Meeting House website (<https://bunhillquakers.org.uk>) reveals that after some 12,000 interments had taken place at the burial site established by the Quakers at Bunhill Fields in 1661, by 1885 it became one of many London cemeteries that were overcrowded and so were closed for public health reasons.

The Quaker practice of leaving their graves unadorned had long allowed those living nearby to graze cattle and dry their washing on the site and, following long debate on alternative uses for the site, a Gospel Tent capable of seating 300 people was erected in 1874, followed a year later by a larger 'Iron Room'. An Adult School followed in rooms rented nearby, established by two young Quakers - J Allan Baker and J. B. Braithwaite, Jnr (who was then just into his early twenties).

Joseph's continuing association with further development of the site also sees him described as one of the founders of the Mission Hall erected there in 1881.

Leaping on to the 1960s, part of the area was destined to become social housing which included the construction of a 19-storey residential tower block as part of the Banner Street development. Built to enable relocation of residents from the depressed areas of East End of London, it was named Braithwaite House, acknowledging the earlier association of Joseph Bevan Braithwaite Jnr.

Ironically, the tower keeps the Braithwaite name alive in a manner completely alien to the pacifist views of Quakerism. On 8th May 1968 the Kray twins, notorious London gangsters, were arrested there staying in the ninth floor flat to which their parents Violet and Charles had moved in 1967.

POSTSCRIPT 2

Mention of another, much earlier, local link with Quakerism may also be of interest - discovered in 'Barnet and its Personalities' by J Alford Davies, published by E Cowing & Son in 1913*...

"...In the Journal of George Fox (1624-1691), founder of the Society of Friends, we read:- I went (from Newport Pagnell) unto Barnet and came thither in the fourth month called June, in the year 1644. Now, during the time that I was at Barnet, a strong temptation to despair came upon me, . . . and sometimes I kept myself retired in my chamber, and often walked solitary in the Chace there to wait upon the Lord."

The ' Chace ' was what is now called Hadley Woods. Thus, one has said, Quakerism seems to have been first suggested in the peaceful rest of Hadley Woods as George Fox strode up and down there in solitude."

* Read in full online at: <https://explore.qecollections.co.uk/b-004>