



FROM THE EDITOR

I trust that everyone has enjoyed the fine summer as we look forward to our autumn talks and activities for the coming year.

Now with over 150 members, the society is working hard to bring you a diverse programme of talks on a wide variety of topics including those on Chingford and around. Thank you for your continued support - Gary Stone

Interact with us on the following platforms:



@Chingfordhist



Chingfordhistory.org.uk



@Chingfordhistorical



enquiries@chingfordhistory.org.uk



Chingford Historical Society



@ChingfordHistoricalSociety

Forthcoming Talks

See a full list at www.chingfordhistory.org.uk

21st September – **The River Roding** - *A look at glimpses of history along the banks of the River Roding from the establishment of Saxon settlements to the erection of World War 2 defence systems. Speaker: Janet Seward.*

19th October - **London's water supply** - *Find out how London has struggled over the centuries to supply its inhabitants with a reliable, clean water supply. Speaker: Nick Higham.*

16th November – **Historical Epping Forest**- *The talk will feature the work and responsibilities of an Epping Forest Verderer. Speaker: Paul Morris.*

14th December – **Acorn Films** - *Christmas special – Rare Chingford films from the Acorn archives. Speaker: Tim Emblem-English.*

The Oldest Fuchsia Nursery - by John Conen

The Brambles at 20 Chingford Mount Road was up for sale when I wrote this article and there were fears for the future of this characterful old building, which was locally listed in 2011. The Brambles was for many years home to a fuchsia nursery which was very well-known in the gardening world.

This account is partly based on a transcript of a speech given by the Rev Dr. Herbert A Brown (1905-1988) in Holland in the 1980s. He explained how after studying horticulture in Holland in 1921, he returned to England to work for the Castle Nurseries, a business that had been started by his father Herbert John Brown (1876-1949) on

land attached to their family home in South Chingford. Their home, The Brambles was probably built in the 1880s and had not previously been a nursery. The 'castle' which gave the nursery its name was a folly in the back garden of The Brambles. Herbert senior had previously worked in the GPO in Walthamstow.



In 1928 the nursery land was sold for building development. This meant that Herbert junior had to secure a source of income and through great enterprise he managed to acquire a small part of the nursery land and some greenhouses from the developer, enough for him to build up a specialist fuchsia cultivation business, the first in the UK. Over the next ten years this was so

successful that he was able to fund his further education to enable him to pursue missionary work overseas. He left for Papua New Guinea in 1938 and his father and sisters Edith and Margaret carried on the fuchsia work. The war brought difficulties for the business. Fuchsias are not hardy plants and most cultivars need warmth in the winter months. Fortunately, the Browns were able to secure fuel supplies as they were classified as specialist growers, but the other major problem was the shattering of all their greenhouse glass on a number of occasions as a result of bombs falling nearby!



Mrs. M. Slater W.M.H.
Vice President

Margaret D Brown, Herbert junior's sister, was born in 1924 and married James Slater in 1951. She was living at 20 Chingford Mount Road when she died in 1992 and her death might have brought the business to a close. Margaret was always active in the fuchsia world and was a member of the British Fuchsia Society for 46 years, serving as vice-president and president. She is even commemorated by a couple of fuchsia cultivars named after her. She wrote up the history (after her brother's departure in 1938) of their fuchsia business in the 1980s*. The business was highly respected although always a low-key affair locally, with the bulk of the sales done by post, although people came to

visit from all over the world.

The extensive garden behind today's 20 Chingford Mount Road which includes a (blocked-off) access from Frances Road seems to be the original land of Castle Nurseries that Herbert A Brown bought in 1928. The building development he refers to is Frances Road and the developers and builders were E J Honey; in 1939 they operated out of a building at 28 Chingford Mount Road on the corner of Frances Road.

The fuchsia business itself didn't seem to operate under the Castle Nurseries name and Castle Nurseries seems to have had a different ownership after 1928 and used other nursery land in south Chingford. In 1928 there was a dispute between Castle Nurseries and AG Tufton the builder regarding rainwater running off a nursery site behind Tufton Road into the gardens of houses built by Tufton.



In the 1939 Kelly's directory, Castle Nurseries (Henry J Ives) were listed at 24/26 Chingford Mount Road – next door to The Brambles.

Garry Saunders' book Bert Brown f Papua, (1965) is an account of Herbert junior's life as a missionary. I have not been able to find a copy but it could make interesting reading.

*These histories are on the vanished website of the Llanelli & District Fuchsia Group of the British Fuchsia Society, preserved on Irene's website <http://www.ideboda.nl>

Frederick James King (1884-1952) Chingford Councillor (1935-1947) - By John Frederick King

Frederick is my paternal grandfather. He was born on 28 August 1884 at 5 Shepherds Lane, Homerton, Hackney, Middlesex. His early life was a mystery. In the 1891 census he was not present with his mother and siblings. He was said to have been put in a home because his mother could not afford to feed him. Subsequent records describe his occupation as brass finisher, cloth shrinker, grocers' packer and china packer.

On 5 August 1906 he married Elizabeth Schneider (1884-1929) at St. Pauls Church, Homerton. They have their first child Henry James on 22 October 1906. Unfortunately he died on 8 March 1907 the cause of death being acute diarrhea over 3 days. On 28 November 1907 they have a son Victor James (1907-1921). In June 1911 Frederick left England for Canada sailing from Liverpool to Quebec then on to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. In September 1911 Elizabeth and Victor join him in Sault Ste. Marie. On 6 October 1914 they have a son Harold Stanley (1914-1972). Frederick's occupation is a labourer. In Toronto on 17 October 1916 they have a daughter Gladys Irene (1916-1995). Frederick's occupation is a hotel clerk.

On 25 July 1921, Victor died. At this time Frederick is the owner of a petrol station and as Victor is assisting him in his business he writes to his brother in law in England Albert Arthur White (1882-1967) offering him the opportunity to join him in the business. He assures him that he has the best paying petrol station in the City of Toronto so he can pay him better wages than he ever got himself when he was working for others. Albert and his family join Frederick in April 1922.

A tribute to former councillor *Mr. F. King*

The Mayor of Chingford, (Councillor J. W. R. Nation) paid tribute to the late Mr. Frederick James King, of 298, Old Church Road, Chingford, at the meeting of Chingford Council, on Tuesday.

He said that members would be sorry to hear of the sudden death of ex-Councillor King who served on the Council from 1935 until 1947.

"He was a hard working and loyal companion and I heard of his passing with deep regret."

Mr. King who was 67, died in the Mile End Hospital. A resident of Chingford for 21 years he was elected to the old Urban District Council as an Independent member in 1935.

He served on many of the Council committees and was for several years, chairman of the Allotment's Sub-Committee and the Hospital Board.

Mr. King also served on Chingford Food Control committee and although he retired from the Council in 1947 he remained a member until a few weeks before his death.

KEEN SPORTSMAN

A keen follower of all sports, Mr. King was a supporter and shareholder of the Leyton Orient Football Club and often helped the club committee at the home matches on Saturday afternoons as a steward.

During the war Mr. King joined the Chingford Horticultural Society and took a prominent part in all their functions.

Mr. King was a Civil Servant, employed by the Inland Revenue, until his retirement last December.

Before moving to Chingford he lived in Toronto, Canada, for twenty years where he owned a petrol station.

Mr. King is survived by a widow, a son and a daughter.

The cremation took place on Tuesday at Enfield Crematorium.

On 15 April 1929 Elizabeth died and Frederick invites a family friend in England to join him as housekeeper. Eleanor Annie Sharp (1889-1957) and her son Henry



Frederick (1917-2002) join Frederick in August 1929. On 5 July 1930 Frederick married Eleanor at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Calgary, Alberta. Then in October 1931 Frederick decides to retire and return to England. He and Eleanor and the 3 children take

up occupation of a house in Old Church Road, Chingford which was built by Frederick Ernest Chillingworth at a cost of £875. Now Frederick is back in England this gives him the opportunity to resume his support of Clapton Orient FC. The club later moved to Leyton and became Leyton Orient FC.

Between 1935 and 1947 Frederick was a Chingford Councillor and served on various committees including the one responsible for the opening of Larkswood Swimming Pool on 28 July 1936. As a child I recall that in the entrance to the pool there was a plaque on the wall commemorating the opening and naming the committee members including that of my grandfather. He also served on the Waltham Joint Hospital Board which opened the isolation hospital in Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey on 3 July 1937. Frederick also served on the Allotments Sub-Committee, the Food Control Committee and on the committee of the Medical Officer of Health Reports for the years 1939, 1940 and 1941. He also signed up for The Register of Personnel for the Air Raid Precautions Organisation.



Frederick died age 67 on 29 January 1952 at the Mile End Hospital, Stepney. He was cremated at the Enfield Crematorium.

A Gothic fantasy Born From A Coffee Shop- by Jonathan Dwelley



Let's face it Chingford has its fair share of beautiful churches...our neighbourhood is peppered with them, but I always make a point of walking past the United Reformed church in Buxton road, because the remarkable Edwardian forms of the church and adjacent Victorian Spicer hall always feels me with joy: the whole ensemble of the church roofline, gothic style tracery of the windows and flamboyant turrets are a wonder to behold. I like to see the church at dusk when the outlines emerge from the gloom, and you half expect to see bats flitting about the copper clad spire. At sunset the last rays of light shine on the brick and stone of the

buildings that burn a deep orange colour that look spectacular when set against an azure sky – all rather captivating. I have a fond memory from last winter, after a heavy snow fall the church looked like a picture post card with its gothic forms protruding from a blanket of snow – there's nothing quite like it in Chingford.

The history of this church goes back to 1888 when a group of non-conformist Christians met in a hired room with the purpose of forming a Congregational church. James Spicer



purchased a plot of land for the building of the church; before the church was built, these Christians met at the Victoria Coffee Palace in Station road, as they had no permanent home. A temporary tin church was built on the site in Buxton road, and the hall was built in 1890 and named in the memory of James Spicer. Spicer Hall is a handsome red brick building, with pointed gothic windows and doorways and a fairy tale wooden turret. It was designed by the architect, Rowland Plumbe; it had prime, multi-functional importance in the community,

and even Miss Snell's school was located here – at that time in Chingford, the only other school was the National School in Kings Road. The hall was sold by the church and converted into accommodation in 2004.

James Spicer was pivotal in the history of the Chingford Congregational church, a major benefactor, and apparently, he was quite a character. He was a successful



Spicer Hall

businessman, involved in politics, very active in the church affairs, conducted bible studies and was superintendent of the Sunday school. He died before the actual building of the present church. In his funeral address, the Rev Joshua C Harrison said that James Spicer was full of energy, push and bright spirited – his death in 1888 seems to have certainly been mourned by the community and was a big loss.

The foundation stone for the present church was laid in 1909 by James Spicer's oldest daughter, according to the notes left by Miss Randall, under the stone were left copies of the Times, Congregational newspapers, records of the building and some coins. The church was built by

the architect John Diggle Mould and his brother Samuel in the gothic Perpendicular style. It has a square nave that becomes octagonal in shape and is rather airy and impressive.

In 1972 the Congregational church became the United Reformed Church. What endears me about the history of this church in Chingford is that it was conceived and built by a group of committed Christians without a permanent home... they worked hard and persevered to build their church: And they succeeded. Today Chingford United Reformed church lays testimony to this – whenever I walk past it, I always admire this Gothic fantasy... literally born from a coffee shop.



Spicer Hall

Hawkwood – now and then—by Brian Oakaby

Hawkwood is an area of Epping Forest, between Yardley Hill and Pole Hill that slopes down from Chingford golf course towards the Lea Valley. The short road past the Scout Hall (St Francis Hall), at the top of Hawkwood Crescent, leads into Hawkwood. On the way you pass the entrances to OrganicLea and the Hawkwood Nature Reserve.



Both OrganicLea and the Nature Reserve are located in what were once the grounds of Hawkwood House, a grand Victorian residence that stood on the site for almost a hundred years. The house was demolished in 1951, and in later years from 1979 – 2007 much of that site was used as Waltham Forest Council's plant growing nursery.

For hundreds of years the area around Hawkwood was part of the manor of Chingford St Paul. Ownership of the manors passed between royalty and wealthy families over time and with it any rights that commoners had to use the land.

In the 18th century large areas of common land became enclosed by Acts of Parliament, and many wealthy landowners sought to restrict use of woodlands, which previously had provided food, wood and grazing for local people. Laws were passed with severe penalties for offences such as poaching. This was clearly a considerable injustice and there was understandable outrage from those affected.

Land enclosures continued into the 19th Century and in 1844, almost 300 acres of woodlands around Hawkwood were sold at auction to banker Richard Hodgson. With the purchase of the land came the title of Lord of the Manor. Hodgson set about creating an estate on the site, including the building of Hawkwood House

and farm and it was here that he was able to pursue his interest in astronomy and photography.

Hawkwood House and Lodge were built in 1854. They occupied a site of about 19 acres. In later years the area around the house was laid out with pleasure grounds, a kitchen garden, tennis court, and parkland with ornamental pond. The farm was located on 275 acres of Hawkwood, the area that is now Chingford Golf Course.

Hodgson died in 1872. After the death of his wife in 1880, the farm was sold to the City of London. Epping Forest was opened by Queen Victoria in 1882 and Hawkwood became incorporated into the forest. The golf course was established in 1888, and in 1901 the City of London took over its running.

In 1886, Hawkwood House was purchased by Sidney Cooper, who in later years went on to purchase a number of fields between Sewardstone Road and Hawkwood. In the 1930s it was this land that was developed for housing to build Hawkwood Crescent, Drysdale Avenue and the neighbouring streets. Yardley



School was built on the northern edge of this land in 1939, likewise St Francis Church, which opened in 1951. Also nearby was Yardley House and grounds, another grand residence dating from 1750, which was demolished and sold in the 1930s, making way for the building of the Yardley estate.

In 1924 Hawkwood House was sold to Charles Nokes, a butcher from Walthamstow. In 1937 Nokes's widow conveyed the estate to Chingford Urban District Council, with a covenant that it be preserved as open space, and as a memorial to King George V. 18 acres of land nearby at Pole Hill had earlier been

saved as open space and included within Epping Forest, following the conveyancing of that site by TE Lawrence to the Corporation of London in 1930.

Following the outbreak of war in September 1939, Hawkwood House was requisitioned by the army, but during that time it suffered from bomb damage and vandalism. In 1951 the house was declared unsafe and demolished.

In 1965 Chingford was incorporated into the London Borough of Waltham Forest. In 1969 the Council built a school for deaf children in the northern end of the Hawkwood site. In 2004 this was to become the Hawkwood Primary Referral Unit, a school which continues to operate today.



During the 1970s issues arose with local people regarding the Council's use and development of the Hawkwood House site, and continued public access to it, which had been in place since the 1937 Covenant. In the period leading to the opening of the Council nursery in 1979, land was fenced and trees cleared from site. This provoked some strong opposition from the local community and was a factor in the formation of the Drysdale & District Residents Association.

In 1981 a Field Study Centre for secondary school children was opened in the Lodge, the building which originally stood at the end of the drive leading up to Hawkwood House. This included the pond that was previously a feature in the grounds of the estate. The Lodge is now a listed building, and houses the Chingford Forest Day Nursery and Preschool.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the issue of public access and care of the pond area continued to be a matter of concern for the local community. Groups such as British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, DADRA, Waltham Forest Wildlife Group and Friends of Epping Forest came together in 1986 to clean up and make improvements to the site. During the 1990s the Field Study Centre worked to maintain the pond area, so that it could be experienced by pupils, teachers and

local community, but it is clear there were challenges at this time, regarding ongoing care and management of the site.

The action by community groups and individuals to work for the preservation of, access to and future stewardship of the pond area was hugely important. It was the effort of local volunteers who were instrumental in establishing the Hawkwood Nature Reserve, a resource which continues to be open for all to enjoy.



The example of Hawkwood, is a snapshot of how land has been owned and controlled, bought, sold and used over hundreds of years. The lessons from the past show that the foresight of enlightened landowners and authorities, and the concerted efforts of local people to campaign for the conservation and care of important heritage and environmentally sensitive sites and resist uncontrolled or inappropriate development is hugely significant. Such actions bring real benefits to communities, now and into the future.

‘Source material:

- ‘Hawkwood and Yardley’ Teacher’s background notes; Hawkwood Lodge Field Study Centre
- ‘A squandered inheritance ? – The past, present and future of Hawkwood Estate. Waltham Forest Civic Society 2001
- Scene through the lens of its history – Hawkwood past and present, and development of nursery. OrganicLea 2010
- Hawkwood – a brief history in time. Article in Friends of Epping Forest Newsletter. Peter Read 2009
- Hawkwood, London – Wikipedia
- Hawkwood House. Feature in Chingford Historical Society Newsletter Spring 2020

Thanks to Mike Freeman and Peter Read, Chair and Vice Chair of Friends of Hawkwood Nature Reserve; Peter Heatherley, Chair of Drysdale and District Residents Association; Gary Stone, Chair of Chingford Historical.

Oral History interview with Betty Kaye - By David Boote, edited by Betty Kayne.

Betty came into the CHS Heritage room at Chingford Hub earlier this year for an oral history interview with David Boote.

Our Society was privileged to hear memories of Chingford stretching back to the 1950s. Our interviewee BK was born in Hendon. She lived for a period including most of the Second World War in Blackpool (which she loved) until she was 15 years old. At a ballroom dance in the Royal, Tottenham she met her future husband. The couple would go for days out in Epping Forest. A mortgage loan from the Abbey National allowed them to buy a house in Marmion Avenue, Chingford, and that is where our interviewee BK still lives. “The house cost £1,760, and the houses in my road were selling for £ 2,000, but the house that we bought, during the War people had made a flat upstairs, and the small box room was the kitchen, and we had to have that . . . re-plastered, because it wasn’t in a good state, but it was something we could afford.” Marmion Avenue, and part of Middleton Avenue, and part of Hall Lane on one side of the road, were built in 1930, and were the last houses in the area with mullions (posts in the windows).

At each end of Marmion Avenue there are houses to a noticeably different design. People told BK this was because the builders went bust.

BK and her husband had a son who grew up in Chingford. She told us of deliveries by a bakers' push cart. The milkman used a horse-drawn cart. One winter he knocked at BK's door, knowing she had a little boy, and asked "can I borrow your sledge because the horse can't go up the hill" and he used her son's snow sledge to take his load of milk bottles up the hill. "I remember that very, very well."

There was a stonemason at the bottom of Chingford Mount hill, and on the other side of the road, before Churchill Terrace was built, the houses on the hill had their street doors straight onto the pavement, very close to the road, which BK had never seen before.

BK remembers the shopping centre at the bottom of Chingford Mount hill as serving the people's needs very well. She remembers many babies in prams, as she had, and the pavement being very wide; two prams on one side could pass two on the other side.



"The manager of Sainsbury's at the time was a very little man, and he had a white apron with a button by his shirt collar, a long white apron, he used to stand there, and I think his name was Mr Fletcher, and when you bought anything in there, they put the money in a little round cup, and pulled a handle, and it shot right across to the top of the back where the cash was. It was villagey, you know, it wasn't like other areas on the outskirts of London, it was still, stood still." "Everything was at a leisurely pace. . . . people had no fear. "the shops provided a service. The whole thing was different" compared with south Chingford shops now. "we had individual shops that catered for every age group, and now, it's not like that. . . . We had Burton's, we had the Fifty Shilling Tailors, we had Faceys [256 Chingford Mount Road]. "When you went to Chingford Mount, whatever you wanted, you could get. We had a furniture shop, Lewcos[??] . . . whatever you wanted you could buy in Chingford, but not now. I mean, there was ladies' wear shops, very big Burton's tailors, and there was a photographer's, where everybody from the baby clinic. . . would have a

photograph of the baby. It was lively, all along that stretch of shops. There was the Post Office . . .“I can remember all the names of the shops that have gone. They are now eateries, of all different kinds.”



“the worst thing that they did was take the toilets away, because there was always toilets at the bus terminus, and they were underground. Where the buses go round, at the Crescent, where they’ve got those boxes with the flowers, and the people sitting there, the toilets

were there. [down some steps] When they did away with those they built ones at street level, and they were only 7 years old when they took them away.”

If people “came to Chingford for the day, and they thought ‘do a bit of shopping before we go’, or take something for a picnic, everything you could buy, whatever you wanted in Chingford”

“And if I came up to north Chingford, that had a different feel completely, from Chingford Mount. To begin with, in the winter it was much colder. I didn’t realise how cold it was up there.”



“People used to go to Chingford for the day out. They used to stay at Larkwood [open air] Pool all day. It was cheap to go in. You could have refreshments there. I was young then. Who thought about cold? all you thought about was enjoying yourself ! And the mothers of children used to say ‘get your shoulders wet first’.”

There was a wonderful shop in north Chingford, I think it was called Winnie Bassett’s. You could go in there. It was a corner bit where you stood – if you

were pregnant, you couldn't get in [squeeze into the space], and if you asked her for a shoelace or a corset lace, she knew which parcel it was in. Do you remember that shop? It was fantastic! If you wanted a girdle or men's pajamas, you know, any little thing, she had it." There was "a little department store in north Chingford as well, called Uglows".

BK remembered the old police station in Chingford. "They had two policemen there, and it was a double house. I remember that very well. . . . I remember taking my son in there. We found, I found, a necklace, and we took it up there" The policeman was friendly towards her son.

BK remembered something that was unpleasant. "There was a very nasty thing on the reservoir, you know, the reservoir on Waltham Way, and there used to be a very nasty chap that used to expose himself. Very nasty, and eventually they caught him, and he was a man from Tottenham. And I can remember we were all frightened, because I

live right near the reservoir, at that end of Marmion Avenue, and we had notes put through the door by the police 'don't open a door to anybody', and I can remember there was a rat-a-tat on my door, and I could, fortunately, the houses with the mullions have got a window like that, I could see from the window who



Old Police Station



Winnie Bassett

was at the door. It was the biggest policeman I have ever seen. And I didn't open the door! And he went like that [BK made the 'thumbs up' gesture the policeman made to acknowledge she was aware of the warning about not opening the door]. People used to walk along an alleyway at the back of those houses in Waltham Way which was beside the reservoir.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

19th November 2023 at Chingford Hub – Chingford Line 150. A celebration of The Great Eastern Railway (GER) train line coming to Chingford (Bull Lane). Further event announcements to be made.

President – Peter Uglow
Chairman – Gary Stone
Vice Chairman – Joanna Moncrieff
Secretary – Lawrie Curtis
Treasurer – Simon Goulter
Membership – Frances Pick
Committee Member – Angela Wagstaff
Committee Member – Alison Goulter
Committee Member – David Boote
Committee Member – Marion Fox
Committee Member – Stephen Pick
Committee Member – Alan White
Committee Member – Patrick Smith

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter or have any historical material to donate or share, please contact Gary Stone on 07970 524553 or enquiries@chingfordhistory.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 281623

