

FRIENDS OF BUSHEY MUSEUM

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THE JOURNAL OF THE

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Friends of Bushey Museum Journal*.

Three notable centenaries are being commemorated in Bushey this year. The first, and possibly the least well remembered event, was the commencement of the London General Omnibus Company's service 142 on 29th March 1914.

Two days later came the death of Hubert Herkomer. The last edition of the *Journal* included two items celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Bushey Museum Trust. Would there have been a Bushey Museum and Art Gallery if Herkomer had not chosen to live in Bushey?

Finally came the outbreak of the First World War. All three events have given

rise to articles in this edition of the *Journal*.

The item *Where are you now?* in the last issue brought back happy memories to Les Allen-Williams as he recounts in his article about the Swinging Sixties. Like Les I remember going to see *Boeing - Boeing* – in my case it was to see the version with the great Leslie Phillips at the Appollo – was it really fifty years ago?

As well as supplying the photographs for the article about the centenary of the 142, Ian Read has been helpful in finding photographs to illustrate the articles and Nick Overhead is responsible for the layout and design of the *Journal*. Thank you.

Thank you to all the contributors. Please keep the articles coming in: without your support there will be no *Journal*.
Janet Murphy

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The Dixey family of

Shirley Childs

My mother's aunt and uncle were Maud and Maurice Dixey who lived in Bushey Hall Road. Maud was my grandmother's sister. The Dixeys had butcher's and green-grocer's shops. My grandmother (Mitty Bond) and Maud grew up in Vale Road, Bushey and ran a laundry there.

Maurice and my grandfather (Bert Pratt) served a seven-year apprenticeship at Horton's shop in St Albans Road, near the bridge in Watford. It was still the Victorian era and the apprentices (several) lived-in above the shop and were looked after by Mrs Horton. That meant she cooked all their meals, did the washing and everything as she would for her own family.

These two young men met and married the Bond sisters. Maurice was very ambitious and soon changed his employer. He moved to a shop in Watford High Street, opposite Queen's Road. Later the Woolworths shop was on this site.

Maurice became the proprietor – and there is an interesting tale in the family as to how he managed it. It is said that the butcher murdered his wife and was held in the cells at the police station, which was at that time just round the corner in King Street. Whilst cooking the family dinner, Aunt Maud made extra, which was taken to the butcher as he waited in his cell to be charged. However, this family tale had no further details of a trial or the butcher's name. Maurice ran the shop for several years and I have a sepia photograph of that shop from early last century with Dixey's name very prominent.

After making a success there Maurice moved to larger premises further down the High Street on the other side, on the corner of Water Lane. This had a big yard and stables with an entrance in Water Lane. Butchers then did their own slaughtering and they needed space for the beasts.

By then the Dixeys had two sons and my grandparents had two daughters. Both couples had approximately nine



years between each child. The Dixeys boys were Maurice and Gordon and the Pratt's girls were Eva and Phyl (my mother). Both families spent a lot of time together and, as the Dixeys were busy in their business, the boys were often looked after by Mitty. When he was of senior school age, Maurice went away to a minor public school.

My mother had a memory of one of Maurice's school holidays when he was with his cronies in the family sitting-room above the shop. These young men would be the sons of some Watford businessmen, dressed in the latest fashion of striped blazers and boaters and strumming on their ukuleles (just like in the old films of that era). Phyl and Gordon had roller skates tied on with the best part of a ball of string each. After clomping up the back stairs and along passages and bursting into the sitting room several times, a furious Maurice called down the stairs and demanded that his mother removed these two nuisances before he did them a mischief! Another of her happy memories was at pantomime time when Aunt Maud took Phyl and Gordon to the

one at the London Palladium. She called out to Maurice: 'We're off now' as she took a large, white, five pound note out of the cash drawer – a fortune in those days. They had a lovely afternoon tea in London and then went to the matinée. Very good presents were thrown from the stage to their seats close to the front. Phyl said that it wasn't until she was grown up that she realised the reason the presents were thrown their way was because they were in the expensive seats.

In the early 1920s, when my mother and Gordon were about eight, Aunt Maud bought an orchard in Bushey Hall Road. She employed an architect who designed the house she wanted and the family moved in. She named the house Borlace after the public school the boys attended. Behind the house was an extremely big garden than opened even wider and had a grass tennis court, then a vegetable garden with two big, heated greenhouses and an orchard. Maud's granddaughter Jacqueline (Jackie) lived with them in my childhood and I often stayed there at weekends. I can remember on some dark nights going down the garden with Jackie and, with the aid of a

Bushey Hall Road



Maurice Dixey's first shop on Watford High Street

torch, we stoked up the boilers, which were outside the greenhouses (what a waste of heat!); although pipes ran into the greenhouses, these boilers sent warmth to the winter sky.

Ambitious Maurice acquired more shops: a butcher's, trading under the name Dracott's, and a greengrocer called Covent Garden Supply Stores No. 1. Both were side-by-side going down Stanmore Hill on the right. The butcher's shop had a manager – and sometimes Gordon when he was old enough. Gordon also went early mornings to Covent Garden for the two greengrocers' shops. Aunt Maud ran the second one on Rickmansworth High Street. Uncle Maurice ran another butcher's with the help of his brother Arthur in Capel Road, Oxhey. Arthur and his family lived behind and above the shop at Horton's in St Albans Road. Mitty still ran the laundry employing the local women. One night she was working very late and Bert had gone to bed. Obviously he didn't like this as married women who worked were against his principles. He flung the window open and called out: 'Are you ever coming to bed?' Soon

after that he came home from work and announced he had found somewhere to rent closer to his work and Mitty had to do just as she was told. She just left the laundry as the house was rented and I wonder if some other woman took it over. My grandmother had often employed neighbours, whose husbands were out of work, and they were glad of any money coming in during those hard times. Bert was never unemployed. He was an extremely hard worker going to work before the rest of the family was awake, and returning, as they were getting up, for his breakfast break. Some days he served in the shop, others he delivered meat by horse and cart out to the villages near Hunton Bridge and that area. There was also a regular delivery to The Grove, the estate of the Earl of Clarendon. Another duty was to collect the beasts from Watford Junction and drive them to the yard behind the shop for the killing days, which in those times was done by pole-axing the animals.

When he was in his early 60s, Bert went blind. He had been such an active man, growing all the family vegetables on an allotment between Queen's Road and Radlett Road (which was still part of Loates Lane in those days), that he became despondent and just took to his bed and never got up. It was a very sad end to a hard life.

During the second war the Dixey's sons were both serving overseas, Maurice in the RAF and Gordon in the army. American soldiers were stationed at Bushey Hall and two officers from the camp were billeted with my great-aunt and great-uncle. They did not have to give them any meals, but they enjoyed the company of these young men, especially Maurice, who appreciated the whisky they gave him. One of these men returned to America and married the film star Carol Landis. I can remember seeing the photograph of the wedding that he sent them – he was married in uniform and she wore a smart suit.

Uncle Maurice became badly crippled with arthritis and I only remember him struggling with two sticks in about 1950. Maud carried on working at her shop in Rickmansworth. She and Gordon and Maurice kept the other shops going. She died in 1959. Gordon and his wife Irene lived at Borlace and Irene continued to

live there for several years after Gordon died in 1974.

I remember that Gordon was once approached by a builder who wanted to buy a plot of land from the orchard end of the garden. He laughed about it and said that he wasn't that hard up for a packet of fags! This was in the mid-60s and as the sum mentioned (£5,000) was a very substantial sum then, and he was always dressed rather shabbily, it caused us some amusement, too. Some years later, Irene did sell the land and entrance was made from Bushey Grove Road to build several townhouses there.

The next house to Borlace, going up the road, was nearer the road than Borlace and the owner wanted Aunt Maud to sell him part of her land. She turned him down and soon after a plaque appeared on the side of his house which was visible from Aunt Maud's garden. It read 'A clenched fist gathers no flowers'. They took no notice of it but it always gave them a good laugh and it must have been at a considerable cost to him.

My mother left school and started work at 14, as was standard practice in the 1920s. One of the jobs for girls was at the new Kayser Bondor factory in the (then) country village of Borehamwood. It meant leaving home rather early, at about 6:30 am and meeting various friends at the bus stop in Lower High Street (below Queen's Road). This factory was next to the (infant) film studios now called Elstree Film Studios. Kayser Bondor made silk stockings so a perk for the girls was to be able to buy them at very low prices. Silk stockings would normally be expensive, but very glamorous; as she even wore them to work, she certainly bought them very cheaply. In their lunch hour they all went out into the fields for sunshine and a break in the fresh air. She can remember the film actors and extras doing the same but they were in full make-up and costumes all very primitive in those days of early films.

I have many happy memories of life at Borlace with Great-aunt Maud, Great-uncle Maurice, Maurice Jnr, Gordon, Irene and Jacqueline. I always loved the house with its leaded lights, big square hall, wide, oak staircase and spacious rooms.

HERKOMER

(Adapted by Hugh Lewis from his talk to the Friends of the Museum on 18 March 2014)

You are perhaps wondering why I should produce another article on Herkomer at this time. The reason is that this year we are commemorating the centenary of his death on 31st March 1914 at 65. He played such a significant part in the history of Bushey that the Museum is marking this centenary with a series of special exhibitions, listed at the end of this article, which is intended to serve as an introduction to those exhibitions.

I have called it *Herkomer - Man of Many Parts*, and I want to bring out all the many different activities of his life, which in most cases left their mark on Bushey, one way or another. We have his art itself, then several forms of graphic art, the Art School, Lululaund, theatricals and film-making, and finally, as an example of his fascination with modern technology, car-racing.

Early Life

Hubert Herkomer was born in Southern Bavaria in 1849, close to Landsberg, where they are marking the centenary as much as we are. His mother Josephine, an industrious lady, was a gifted pianist and music teacher. The family relied on her earnings as their sole source of income. His father, Lorenz, was a wood-carver, especially of religious images. For some unknown reason, he had fallen out of favour with the Bavarian church authorities, so in 1851 the family emigrated to America, following Herkomer's uncles, Anton, a weaver, and John, another carpenter and wood-carver. They continued to live on their mother's earnings.

By 1857, Hubert's father still had not acquired any work, which is hardly surprising, given his speciality was traditional church

images and there he was in the brave new world of America, so Hubert and his parents came back to England, from where they had embarked for America. After a short spell in London, where they were overwhelmed by the traffic noise, they returned to Southampton. The family still relied on his mother's earnings from music lessons and concerts, in which Hubert played piano, violin and zither. His energy and passion for work were undoubtedly inherited from his mother. He deeply loved and respected her to the end.

Hubert received little formal education. He was a sickly child; after six months his attendance at school terminated – remember there was no compulsory education then – and he was taught at home by his father, who saw it as his parental duty and devoted his life to it. He started to teach Hubert how to carve simple figures. Hubert copied engravings and filled them in by water-colouring. Herkomer described the scene where his father posed in the

nude, in the early morning, while waiting for the kettle to boil.

He had an astonishing capacity for learning. He made two attempts at attending art school; they left an indelible impression on him – he dismissed them as disastrous, their methods intolerable. When his father gained a commission in Germany for six religious statuettes, thanks to his brother John, Hubert accompanied his father to Munich, and attended the Munich Academy but only for a short time, because naturalised citizens were not allowed to stay longer than six months, and he and his father had both acquired British nationality.

In 1868, at 19, Hubert moved to rooms in Chelsea, and began submitting work to *The Graphic* magazine. Life in art had begun in earnest; from then on he never lacked work. *The Graphic* pictures were scenes of everyday life in England and Germany. Incidentally, his teacher in Munich thought that realism should be banished from art, so you can see that Herkomer was in many ways striking a different note. He felt very strongly about this, mainly, I think, because of his parents' humble origins and struggles. In 1871, he spent six months in the Bavarian Alps, sketching and painting Bavarian life. He enjoyed himself so much that he visited Bavaria regularly for the rest of his life.

In 1873, he produced his first major oil painting *After the Toil of the Day*. He sold it for £500 to Charles Mansel Lewis, who lived in Stradey Castle, on the outskirts of Llanelli in South Wales. That was a lot of money in those days to pay for a painting by an unknown artist. So what was a Welshman doing in Chelsea? He was arranging to have a tower added to his castle, and his builder's offices were next door to Herkomer's rooms in Chelsea. The builder had seen Herkomer's work in the window and felt his employer, who was also an artist, should see it. That coincidence was the start of a life-long friendship; they kept up a regular correspondence all their lives. They went on photography and painting expeditions in the mountains of North Wales.



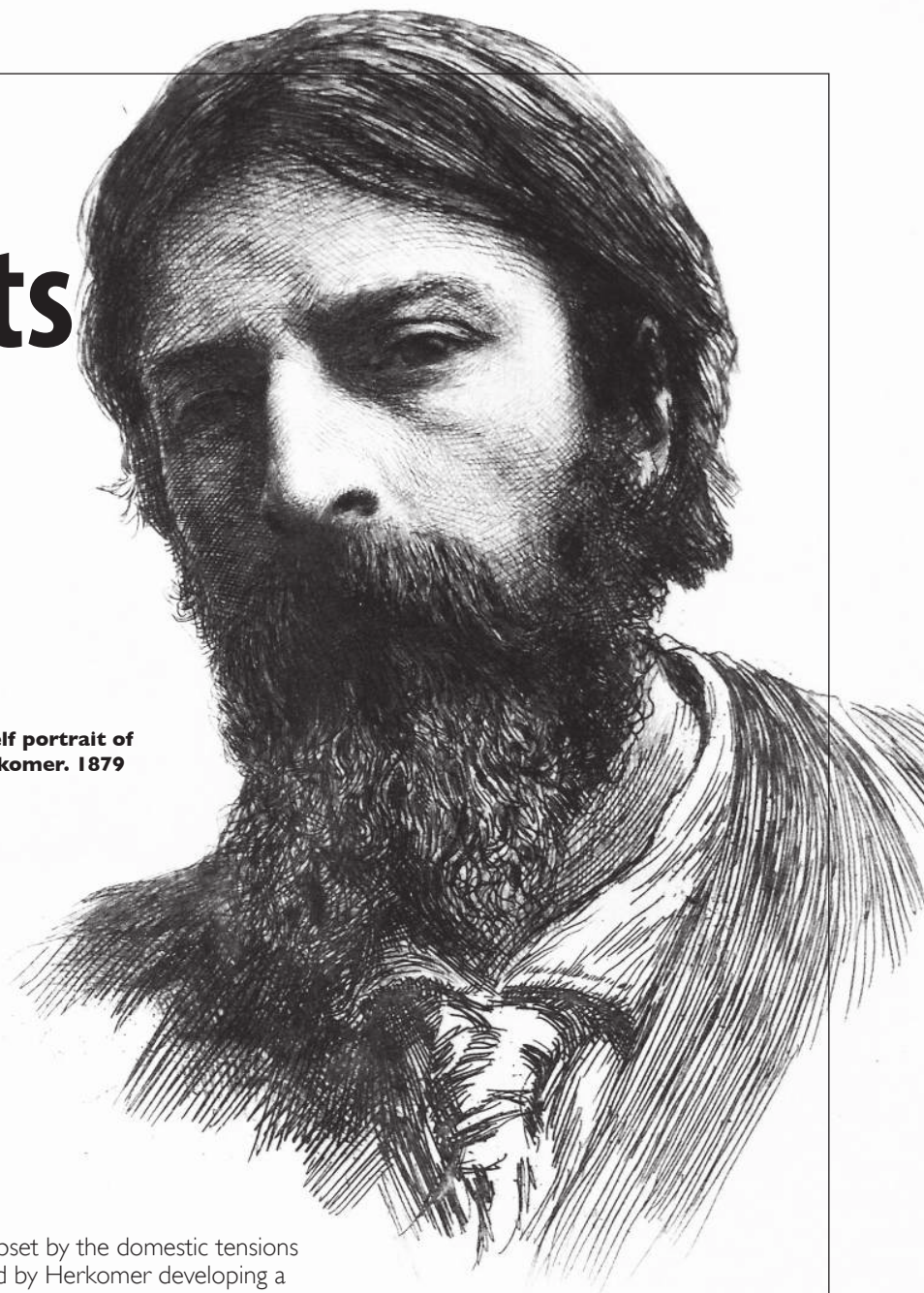
A pencil drawing of Lulu by Herkomer. 1885

Man of many parts

Herkomer used the £500 to buy a cottage in Bushey, where he lived for the rest of his life. Why did he choose Bushey? His first major patron, Charles Fry, lived on Chalk Hill. Herkomer walked up the hill into Bushey one day, having finished his business with Charles Fry, and fell in love with *'this sleepy, picturesque place'*. The cottage was on the left hand side of the main road running from the shops in Bushey High Street towards the corner of Melbourne Road. Needless to say it is not there now. He persuaded his parents to join him there. His father was now in his element, carving furniture for the home which Herkomer christened Dyreham, or My Home.

In 1873, he married Anna Weise, who was lodging in Fry's house. Their son, Siegfried (later Herkomer's secretary) was born in 1874, and their daughter, Elsa, in 1877. It was not a happy marriage, not helped by the introduction of two Welsh sisters, Lulu and Margaret Griffiths, into the household to help look after the children because his wife was more-or-less a permanent invalid. His mother

A self portrait of Herkomer. 1879

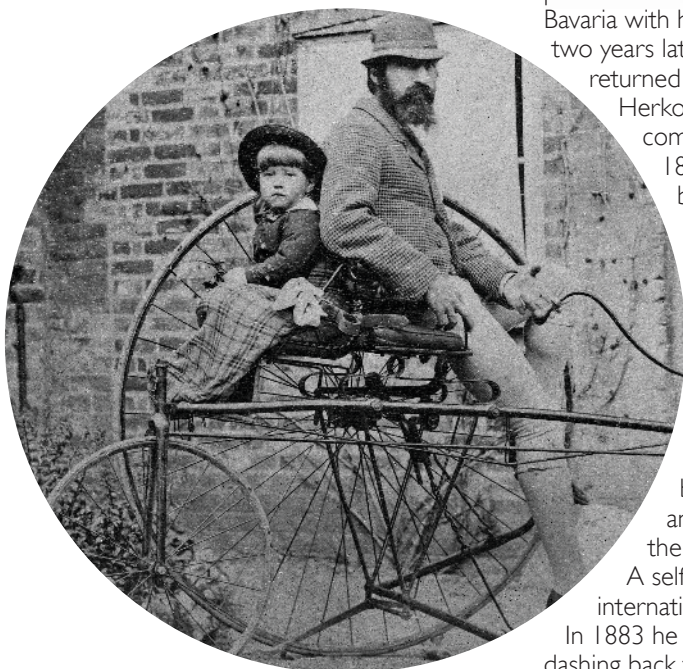


was upset by the domestic tensions caused by Herkomer developing a passion for Lulu, so she returned to Bavaria with his father. His mother died two years later, in 1879, and his father returned to England, becoming Herkomer's constant companion until his death in 1888. Herkomer was so upset by his mother's death that he built a memorial castle, the Mutterturm, or Mother's Tower, in her memory in Landsberg, which became his summer residence in Germany after its completion in 1885.

In the 1880s Herkomer branched out into lecturing and writing and remained in the public eye until his death. A self-publicist, he acquired an international reputation by touring. In 1883 he visited America twice, dashing back the first time because of Anna's illness – she died that year of consumption. In 1884, the next year, he

married Lulu. She suffered an accident while visiting the north of England, when she tripped badly on a kerb, and died three months after giving birth to a still born child. Herkomer returned to America devastated. He made it very clear that he never got over her death. She was in fact the love of his life; they were married for less than one year.

Then in 1888 he married Margaret, sister of Lulu, in Germany. In those days, you could not marry your dead wife's sister in England, so he had himself denaturalised, then took her to Landsberg, where he married her in the Mutterturm. Unbeknown to her, he had arranged for the wind instruments of the Landsberg theatre orchestra to burst into *The Bridal March* when they were pronounced man and wife. If she did not know by then the nature of man she had married, she must have done at that point. She bore him a son, Lawrence, and a daughter, Gwendydd.



Herkomer was a keen cyclist. Here he has Siegfried behind.

Paintings

Here I am going to turn aside from Herkomer's personal life to talk about some of his paintings, which, he said, were the anchor for all his other interests and enthusiasms. You will be struck by the astonishing diversity of subjects and themes he used. I have already talked about his genre paintings, that is, scenes from everyday life amongst all levels of society, in connection with the paintings printed by *The Graphic*.

In 1875 came his first critical success *The Last Muster*, exhibited at the Royal Academy, which was one of the most popular Victorian paintings. It illustrates the pathos of old age, death and patriotism. It was sold for £1,200 and is now in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, on the Wirral. Our Curators had hoped to borrow it for our Centenary Exhibition, but it proved too costly to bring it to Bushey, so they have settled for a digital reproduction – which is splendid.

In 1878 came *Eventide*, a scene in the Westminster Union, known then as a Workhouse. This is an example of Herkomer's social realism, or contemporary life in all its grimness. Wives are separated from their husbands and the faces of those in the foreground contrast severely with that of the fresh-complexioned woman in charge. He brings out vividly the bareness of the walls and the bleakness of the whole room. I don't think Herkomer consciously intended his social realism pictures to send out a political message – he left no record of his views on how to improve the lot of the poor. He felt very strongly that he was duty bound to document all aspects of contemporary life, some of them in grim realism.

Herkomer produced many portraits, which earned him vast sums of money. He once wrote '*Great indeed is the art that can satisfactorily portray History – making man*'. Again, he felt it was his duty to paint prominent Victorians. So the next year he painted John Ruskin, art critic and social thinker; Herkomer gave the portrait to the National Portrait Gallery without charging Ruskin a commission. Ruskin, incidentally, recommended Herkomer to succeed him as Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, a post Herkomer eventually held for no less than nine years. Think of all the lecturing that entailed.

In 1889 came *Our Village*, the best known and most popular of all his paintings from the point of view of the people of Bushey. This is an enormous painting now up in Aberdeen Gallery, and

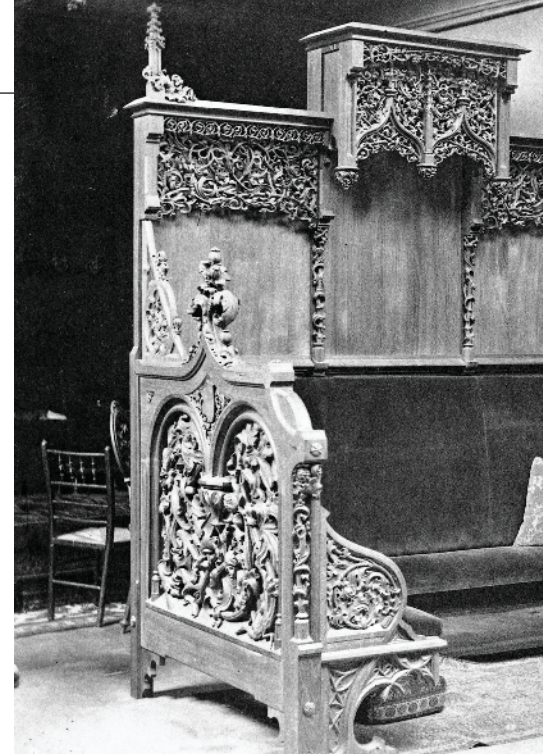
again our Art Curators had hoped to bring it down to Bushey for our Centenary Exhibition until the cost of doing so started climbing above £10,000. But not to worry, we have again arranged a digital reproduction, which is almost as large, and is absolutely splendid, to be displayed in our Centenary Exhibition.

In 1891, he painted *On Strike*, another compelling example of Herkomer's social realism, showing a family in difficulties as a result of the industrialisation of Britain. In 1892, *Our Village Nurse*, who was later known as a District Nurse, is shown waving goodbye to two of her patients in Herkomer Road, or Back Lane, as it was then, where it became Finch Lane around the foot of Falconer Road. Herkomer paid for this service to be provided.

Further examples of his portraits of eminent Victorians are Alfred Lord Tennyson, Archibald Forbes (a war correspondent), Lord Kitchener, Baden-Powell, and, at the Royal Family's request, Queen Victoria on her deathbed.

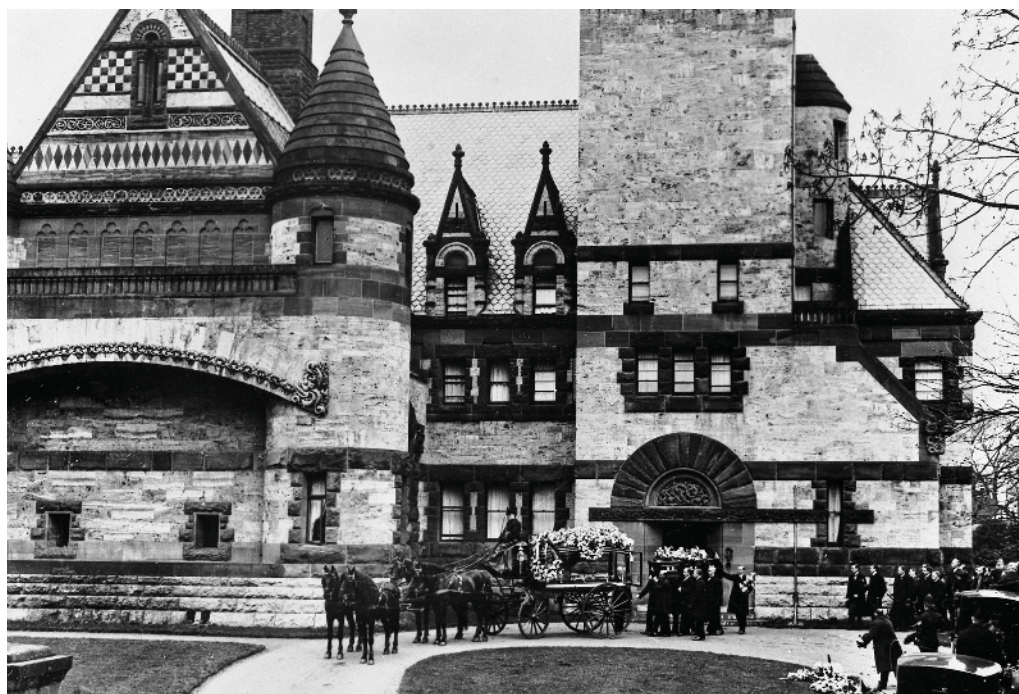
Graphic Art

Now we come on to some more of Herkomer's interests, starting with his experiments in graphic art. When he went with his friend Charles Mansel Lewis to North Wales to paint landscapes, he took with him not only his camera, but the equipment he needed to develop and print his photographs of the Snowdonian Mountains. Imagine standing in a tent up a mountain with all the paraphernalia of the developing process needed in those days.* He experimented with etching, even



carrying his etching kit with him to North Wales. Then he invented his own method of reproducing multiple prints which he called 'Herkomergravure'. While on the subject of his Welsh friend, Herkomer was persuaded by Charles Mansel Lewis to redesign the bardic regalia and robes for the Welsh National Eisteddfod, and the Archdruid's costume and Grand Sword, which is still used during the Eisteddfod ceremonials today.

Printmaking was a business venture, and he employed a printer to do it, setting him up in the neo-Bavarian house, Solon, which he built at the top of Melbourne Road, on the Clay Hill or Bushey Heath side. When his interest in printmaking died, he sold the business to his original art printer, Henry Thomas



Herkomer's funeral cortege leaves Lululaund



Cox and Company. It became one of the foremost art firms in Britain until the Cox family line ran out in 1972

Art School

Now I want to talk about Herkomer's Art School. Herkomer's neighbour, living in The Cloisters, which in those days was a very large house, and not to be confused with the building there today, which consists of several flats, asked Herkomer if he would teach the neighbour's ward to paint. Herkomer refused, saying he would only teach her in an art school, if the neighbour, whom Herkomer knew was a wealthy man, would pay for an art school to be built on part of Herkomer's estate on that same side of the main road. The neighbour readily agreed, and the school was built where the Rose Garden now is. Herkomer ran the art school there for 20 years from 1883 to 1904. It was, for those days, run on progressive lines, in that there was no segregation of the sexes, except for life classes. Herkomer very much encouraged students' own individuality. He attracted students not only from all over Britain, but from all over the world as well. He was a harsh teacher, but generous with his most talented, including students such as George Harcourt, Sir William Ashton, Sir William Nicholson, and, of course, Lucy Kemp-Welch. We do not know exactly how many students attended the school. We have the names of at least 600.

Herkomer took no money from the school. He ploughed all the money paid as fees from the art tuition back into the running of the school. There was no live-in accommodation in the school building; the students were all lodged out in houses around Bushey, which meant a

A settle carved by Lorenz Herkomer for Dyreham, which was later transferred to Lululaund

handy income for some of the people of Bushey. Several of the students acquired studios around Bushey, particularly on the site of the present day flats in the area known as Meadowcroft, off the main road just beyond the top of Melbourne Road. One studio was moved a few years ago from the bottom of Glencoe Road to the rear of the Museum and is still used for art classes, thus maintaining the tradition of art tuition in Bushey.

Lululaund

I must now turn away temporarily from the art school to tell you about his other great project, which he started in 1886, while still running the art school. This was the building of his massive home, Lululaund, in Melbourne Road, from 1886 to 1894. Herkomer wrote that he and his father used to talk about a great house built by the family, back in Southampton when he was still a child, and that his father, Lorenz, started making furniture for it then. He engaged a foremost American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson, to design it for him, but I am sure there is as much Herkomer as there is Richardson in the design, if only because Richardson died before building began. Herkomer temporarily ran out of money when the tower was only half built, and decided that he liked it like that and abandoned the rest of the tower. Built on his 32 acre estate it was intended as a tribute to his second wife, Lulu, and it celebrated the traditions of his Bavarian origin. Stone was shipped from Bavaria. It was lit by electricity, powered by a generator on the site. There was no servants' accommodation in the house. Herkomer built four houses for them on the other side of Melbourne Road. The furniture and fittings for the house were all made by workers in what must have been a kind of art and crafts settlement in the grounds, supervised by his uncle John, whom Herkomer had persuaded to give up his business in America and come to England to supervise the work. Sadly his father saw it designed and planned but not built. The final cost was £75,000. Herkomer moved in 1894 and lived in the house for 20 years.

Rose Garden

In 1904, Herkomer decided he had had enough of teaching art, and handed the school building over to Lucy Kemp-Welch. She ran it as the Bushey School of Animal Painting until 1911, when Herkomer took the building back again and had it completely demolished –



The Rose Garden

which is why you cannot see any of the original building today. He then engaged a landscape gardener, Thomas Mawson, to lay out a rose garden for him on the site of the school. He paid for Mawson's work by painting his portrait. The Rose Garden was acquired by Bushey Urban District Council, when the Herkomer estate was broken up in 1934, and it was opened to the public. It was neglected by Hertsmeare Borough Council for several years after they took it over in 1974, but it was meticulously restored to the original design in 2010, and, as you well know, is open to the public again. The Rose Garden is the one Herkomer landmark still giving Bushey residents a great deal of pleasure today.

Theatricals and Film-Making

In 1912, Herkomer turned to two more art forms: theatricals and film-making. He bought a disused chapel on the Bushey High Street side of the top of Melbourne Road (on the other side from the house he built for his printers) and converted it into a theatre with 150 seats. He wrote three pictorial, musical plays, as he described them; he called it scenic art, where he wrote all the music, designed the costumes and scenery, and played the principal male parts himself in each play. He introduced several technical innovations, for example he abolished footlights, some of which were copied in the West End. The plays were *The Sorceress*, *The Spanish Gypsy*, in which his wife, Margaret, took the lead, and *An Idyll*. It was quite a costly venture, and he gave it up after these three plays.

He followed it by making films. He built a glass studio on top of the theatre, which still stands today on top of the building now owned by developers. It is possibly the oldest film studio in Europe. He shot scenes there and on location. In all he made seven films but no negatives survive. In one, the hero was supposed to rescue three damsels in distress from a burning house, but unfortunately things got out of hand and the house caught fire and they had to call the fire brigade.



Last Years

Herkomer was fascinated by new technology, and so he had to have a car. He was, in fact, the first person in Bushey to own a car. He was so interested that he initiated car racing in Germany. The first touring rally was held from Landsberg in 1899 and then rallies – not touring – were held in 1905-6-7. He designed a trophy, made of pure silver, which is used in Memorial rallies to this day. When you think how big car racing has become, it is amazing to realise it began with Herkomer's fascination and enthusiasm. In 1907, he was awarded a knighthood by Edward VII, which, with an earlier honour from the Prince Regent of Bavaria, made him Sir Hubert von Herkomer.

During the 1900s, Herkomer was undoubtedly feeling the effects of all this endless activity. There is a self-portrait, hanging in the Herkomer room at Bushey Museum, in which even he could not conceal their effect on his appearance. He was suffering from severe stomach ulcers and in 1912 underwent a serious stomach operation, but his health continued to decline. In 1914, he died aged 65, while convalescing in Budleigh Salterton. His body was brought back to Lululaund, where it lay in state until his funeral. On the day, the shops in Bushey were closed from 10:30am to 1:00pm in his honour. Six Royal Academicians carried his coffin to the church, and the Mayor of Landsberg was present.** He was buried in Bushey Churchyard. His grave carries the simple inscription *Painter and teacher – Artum Magister, teacher of art.*

You may feel that by engaging in so many varied activities, Herkomer – if you like, diffused his skills. Here is his self-justification for his versatility: *'In Germany versatility is written down to the credit of the artist. It was a real necessity that drove me to vary my work, to give free vent to the experimental side of my nature. Had I not done so, but listened to the cry of 'stick to your painting, and to that only', I should have died of inanition or emptiness'.* I think that will serve as my summing up.

Lululaund – the final chapter

We can perhaps finish the story of

Lululaund as a kind of postscript. When Herkomer died, his third wife, Margaret, went to Landsberg and was trapped there for the duration of the First World War. Margaret returned at the end of the war but Lululaund had been requisitioned during the war, and occupied by women from the Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps. It was in a dreadful state, having been neglected, and later vandalised; it was uninhabitable. So she moved to the other side of Melbourne Road, into one of the houses built by Herkomer for his servants.

Meanwhile Lululaund stood derelict until 1934, when it was acquired by a Watford businessman who offered it free to Bushey Urban District Council, on condition they maintained it as a museum and arts centre. But they had neither the money nor the resources to pay for its repair or upkeep.

There was also, by the late 1930s, a lot of anti-German feeling around, so the Council refused it and it was demolished except for the main doorway. It was used for several years by the British Legion as a clubhouse, but when their numbers dropped and the branch folded, they sold it to developers, who are currently building a block of flats behind. The remaining fragment is a Grade II listed building, so it should survive. The developers have an obligation to maintain it and we are promised that a board will stand in front to explain the fragment's origin.

Exhibitions

I promised at the start that I would set out the details of the Herkomer exhibitions in the Museum. Here they are:

26 April 2014 – 7 September:

Art Gallery – Drawings by Herkomer and students of the Herkomer Art School

29 June – 11 January, 2015:

Council Chamber – Bushey Museum's main Herkomer Centenary Exhibition, consisting of Herkomer's artwork.

13 September – 11 January 2015:

Art Gallery and Herkomer Room together: displaying items from Lululaund.

I hope I have managed to arouse your interest in Herkomer to tempt you to visit some, if not all, of these exhibitions.

*In *My School and My Gospel* Herkomer gave an account of his painting expeditions to Wales, which was included in the *Journal of the Friends of Bushey Museum* Winter 2010/2011

** Also present were Mr and Mrs Krupps von Bolen representing Krupps the German engineering and armaments company!

Memories of St James Church Youth Club The Swinging Sixties!

Les Allen-Williams

The 'Where are you now?' feature in the last issue of the Journal brought such happy memories back to Les that he kindly agreed to send more recollections.

The sixties were a great time to be in Bushey, especially for those of us in our late teens and early twenties who attended St James Church Youth Club. There was still a 'village community feeling' with several events during the year based on the many village societies. Also there were several youth clubs supported by Bushey Youth Council under the guiding hand of Frank Collins, which organised a large number of competitive events. Notably it ran a series of sporting competitions like a cross country, usually in the winter; and a football competition at Easter. I well remember our winning the Cross Country cup. We were the only full team of four to turn up on a freezing day with snow on the ground and a bitter wind. By the time Terry Sherwood and I reached the Finch Lane fields down Little Bushey Lane we were to say the least somewhat dejected, but there was George Hall standing by the style to cheer us on and get us back into action with a barrage of snowballs! And of course in the early summer there was the Bushey and South West Herts Drama Festival. All the Youth Council events were always hotly contested, with especial rivalry between the St James and Bushey Baptist Youth Clubs. It is a great pity that the Youth Council no longer exists to support and guide youth work in Bushey.



**The Youth Club trip to Kursaal Gardens
Amusements at Southend. Where are you now?**

St James Youth Club was noted for its social activities and after Evensong on Sunday we would all repair to the Falconer Hall. There a number of 'guests' would join us from as far away as Harrow to participate in an evening of records, indoor sports and of course drama readings on the stage. The Club was overseen by a management committee comprising of representatives from the PCC, the Curate and latterly Betty Goodison, but we had our own committee which organised the programme of events. This gave us an element of independence and of course introduced us to the problems of organising and running the events. During the winter the usual evening events were interspersed with films, which we hired direct from the Rank Organisation and showed on a rather temperamental 16mm projector; mini-shows and of course the inevitable Christmas Party held either at Nell-Jean Perkins Ballet School hall in Chestnut Rise or at the home of the Hemleys in Chiltern Avenue, who had a marvellous small hall at the bottom of their garden.

There were visits to London theatres to see a play or show and I can remember seeing an early production of the *Mousetrap*, *Boeing - Boeing* and one or two Whitehall farces with Brian Rix and Elsa Grey. Also, we would organise a trip to the sea-side each summer (possibly a follow-on from the

Ascension Day outings to the sea organised by the Parish), hiring a coach from Kirby's or Premier. The attached photo shows the club and some friends gathered outside the Kursaal Garden amusements at Southend - now long gone! These outings were very popular and drew a good response from members, but the organisation and cost meant that they ceased by the mid-sixties. The second photo was taken in Bushey High Street, when the Club had been invited to a Halloween Social at Holy Trinity and decided to walk there 'in style'. Borrowing most of the cassocks from St. James, we robed-up and carrying black candles and an illuminated 'goat's head' we walked along Falconer Road out onto the Aldenham Road and on to Holy Trinity, drawing a number of very surprised looks from passing motorists! The social proved a great success and was repeated, but without the procession.

All in all we were lucky to have such an active and well run youth club at a time when the austerity of the fifties was over and everyone was looking forward

to a bright future. Although several of our members went on to university, which now-a-days usually means the collapse of membership, we seemed to keep in contact and managed to run the Club until well on into the latter part of the sixties, when the Open St James Youth Club took over most of the activities under the excellent leadership of Betty and Robin Goodison. Those of us who remained in the Bushey area used to help out at the 'new' youth club. Eventually I joined their Management Committee and took the chair until the club closed due to lack of support and of course the deaths of Betty and Robin. Throughout the history of the Youth Clubs music and drama had been key elements and of course Robin and Betty were the leading lights of St James Music and Drama Society. I was really pleased when I attend the 150th anniversary of the Falconer Hall last year to see that the music and drama traditions continue and the stage which Robin, Phil Simmons, Gerry Swallow and I laboured so long to build is still being put to good use.

Even fifty years on I am still in contact with some of the original Youth Club and we do reminisce about the 'good old days' when we meet up. Unfortunately Bushey Youth Committee and Council suffered under the cuts to Youth and Community work in Hertsmere and at a time when it should have been leading youth work was disbanded. However, life seems to progress in a circular fashion and I feel sure that youth activities, which still exist in and around Bushey are likely to 're-invent' the Youth Council to organise a programme of inter-club competitions.



The Halloween procession.

© Les Allen-Williams

Bushey's First World War

Dianne Payne

When Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914, there was a conviction among many who volunteered for war service that it was their moral duty to defend 'gallant little Belgium', which had been invaded by Germany. As the German Army advanced through Belgium in August 1914, tens of thousands of civilian refugees left their homes to escape the war. Over 1 million fled the country and between April 1914 and May 1915 nearly a quarter of a million escaped to Britain. In many Hertfordshire towns and villages, Belgian refugees were welcomed into the local community.

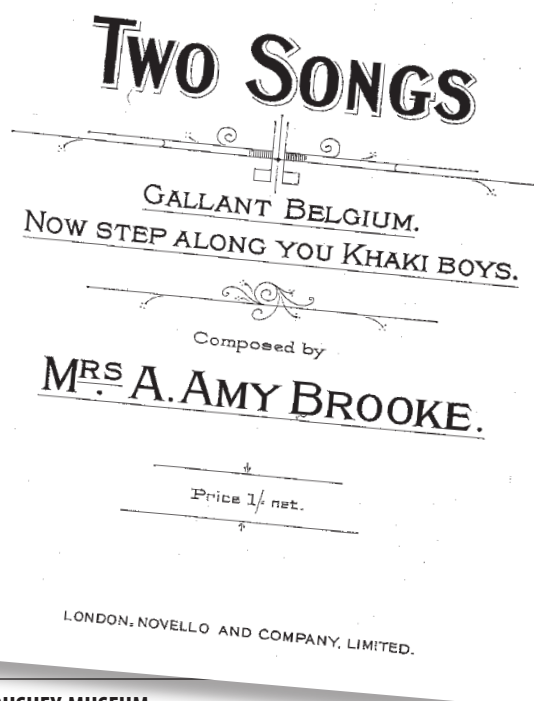
Their plight soon became a focus in Bushey and a group from Liege was billeted at Elmcote, a twenty-room house in Aldenham Road, where George Jaggard, a local builder, provided rent free accommodation for them. Hillendale, later called Powis Court, in The Rutts on Bushey Heath was also opened for them. Madame M. Van Wymeersch and her two children, from Ixelles near Brussels, were welcomed at Cleveland now part of St Hilda's School on the High Street, and at that time the home of Mrs Norah Kynaston, the widow of the former Rector of Bushey, and her two daughters. One Belgian lady staying in Bushey only knew for certain that her home had been destroyed by seeing an illustration of the ruins in a London newspaper.

In 1915 a recent newcomer to Bushey was inspired to write words and music for two recruitment songs. The first, entitled *Gallant Belgium* included words of encouragement for



Amy Bulley (Brooke) as a student

Part of two of the pages of music.



the Belgians and a call to arms for English volunteers:

**Courage, Belgium! See the host arrayed!
England's kindred rally to her aid:
Gladly daring, greatly caring thus to draw the blade.**

CHORUS:
Hail, Belgium, Lion-hearted! England stands by thee.

Recruitment Songs

This and the second song, *Now step along you Khaki boys*, with their stirring words and catchy tunes were sung with great success up and down the country. In the language of the day Amy Brooke caught the mood of 1915, encouraging young men to join the army or the navy.

*Now step along, you khaki boys, you gallant lads in blue,
You'll never think of hanging back,
your country's wanting you.
You're fighting for old England, for
your sweethearts and your wives,
'Tis freedom for your children you are
guarding with your lives!*

*D'you hear the bugle calling; d'you
hear the warning sound?
The Motherland's in danger, and the
word is passing round.
Throughout her wide dominions, from
her outposts round the world
Her sons are streaming forth to fight
with battle flags unfurled.*

*The Kaiser and his Ministers must
learn this lesson well,
That States must hold their honour
dear, whate'er the Prussians tell.
If he signs a scrap of paper
His Imperial Majesty
Has got to keep his written word like
simple you and me*

CHORUS:
*So cheerily we'll march along and
cheerily we'll sing,
Are we a bit downhearted? No!
We're fighting for the King.
We'll keep the flag a-flying boys
although it's far to go.
But we're bound to get there in the
end, we've told the Kaiser so.*

Mrs A Amy Brooke, who composed them, was a remarkable woman. Born Agnes Amy Bulley, she was one of four sons and ten daughters of a Cheshire cotton broker. The Bulleys had progressive views on women's education and sent three of their daughters, including Amy, to Cambridge. Amy Bulley and a fellow student, Mary Paley, were the first women to sit for the moral science tripos in 1874. Both were successful although at that time women did not receive degrees.

In 1876 Amy joined the staff of Manchester High School for Girls, one of the first schools in the country offering academic education for girls, and began a ten year active involvement with Higher Education for young women. She left the High School in 1885 and developed an interest in women's employment, which marked the beginning of a lifelong

attachment to the Labour Movement. Over the next twenty years she enjoyed a distinguished career in journalism.

On 26th October 1907, at the age of fifty-five, Amy Bulley married a cotton merchant named Joseph Brooke, the recently widowed husband of her sister, Mary, and withdrew from public work until his death in 1912. The following year she moved to Overland, Coldharbour Lane in Bushey. In the 1920s, still remarkably vigorous in mind and body, she helped to build the Labour Movement in Watford, and, although unsuccessful, stood for three consecutive years as the Labour candidate for Bushey Urban District Council. She was among the first women to be appointed as a JP in 1919 and sat on the Watford Bench from 1920 to 1937.

Born into a highly musical family, she wrote songs and served on the council of the Watford School of Music. She died on 16th November 1939, aged eighty-seven, at her second home in Bushey, 14 Nightingale Road.

Mrs A Amy Brooke's recruitment songs were written in 1915 but as the First World War fatalities mounted and conscription was introduced, the mood began to change. Her songs were

no longer relevant or appropriate and fell out of favour. Published by Novello priced 1/-, they have been out of print for nearly a hundred years but a copy was found recently in the British Library. Unique to Bushey, they encapsulate the mood of a significant period in 1915 and illustrate why so many young men went to war.

They will be/were sung by concert audiences during the Exhibition: *Bushey during the Great War: A Village Remembers* at The Bushey Academy In August 2014.



Belgian refugees in Bushey

Bushey and its Buses- 'Then and Now'

CLAY HILL 1930 and 2014



LGOC ST349 (GN 4660) climbing Clay Hill, Bushey c1930

HIGH STREET 1920 and 2014



LGOC B-type travels towards Watford approaching the White Hart



London Bus Museum STL2377 (EGO 426) on route 158 to Harrow Weald LT Garage

At first sight this view has changed little apart from the disappearance of the telegraph poles; the replacement of the street lamps by lighting columns, and the trees, which have grown considerably, but look more closely. The amount of street furniture has greatly increased – road markings, railings, footpath sign, litter bins, post box, traffic lights, bus stop signs, bus shelter and road sign (partly obscured by a tree).



Ensignbus RTL453 (KLB 648)

Again the telegraph poles are much in evidence. When the telegraph poles were first erected, there was much discussion as they were regarded

The last issue of the *Journal of the Friends of Bushey Museum* included an article by Ian Read on early motorbus services through Bushey.

The article concluded by saying that the centenary of the London General route 142, which had survived in its almost original form since 1924, was to be celebrated in 2014. The event organised by Ian, in conjunction with the Amersham & District Motorbus Society, to commemorate the 100th

anniversary the previous day of 'Bushey' bus route 142, was held on Monday March 31st. Heritage buses ran over routes 142, 158 and 306 through Bushey and over a number of other old Watford bus routes.

Ian arranged for various people to take shots of the vintage buses passing through Bushey on that day and managed to match up some (taken deliberately) with old images from the Bushey Museum collection.



© Bushey Museum Trust collection

HIGH STREET 1926 and 2014



LGOC S304 leaves Bushey High Street for Watford c1926.



© Victoria Nunny 30 March 2014



Ensignbus RTL453 (KLB 648)

as unsightly and were a positive danger on a dark night in the absence of street lights: more than one person received a painful reminder of their presence.

As indicated by the destination board the 142 originally ran between Watford Junction and Kilburn High Road via Bushey; Stanmore; Edgware; Colindale; West Hendon; Cricklewood and Kilburn High Road.

The Bushey Fire Brigade

Janet Murphy

In November 1867, the Watford and Bushey Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed. The following March the Brigade met in uniform at Watford Station to receive their engine. When it arrived a portion of the Brigade took their seats on the engine and others, who acted as pioneers, were mounted on horseback. According to the *Watford Observer*.

After passing through the town they paid a visit to Cassiobury Park, but unfortunately the Earl of Essex was away. The engine was then put to work and, although it is evident that the members will require some amount of drill before they are perfect, yet everything passed off very satisfactorily. The engine was built by Shand, Mason & Co., of London. It was described as being of the London brigade pattern to be worked by thirty men, and is capable of delivering 140 gallons per minute to a height of 130 feet, and it is especially adapted for this district on account of its lightness and high wheels for rapid travelling; it has a very handsome appearance, and has written on each side in gold letters, 'Watford and Bushey Volunteers' with the name 'Vesta' in front.

An auxiliary brigade was established for Bushey about 1876.

A major handicap for the service to Bushey was the inadequate water supply which came from a well by the St James's Church; a spring on Clay Hill; a pump by the side of Elstree Road or the



Firemen to the rear of the then Council Offices in Rudolph Road with the second-hand car used to transport them and the manual pump to fires in 1919.

Picture: D. Andrews

pond on Stanmore Common. The arrival of a piped water supply, following the opening of the Colne Valley Waterworks, meant that hydrants could be established. On a Saturday afternoon in January 1881, two were opened in the centre of the village. Every member of the Fire Brigade turned out in full uniform and, headed by the Fife and Drum Band of the Watford Good Templars and some boys from the British Boys' School, they marched to the nearest hydrant where a stand pipe was erected and a hose attached; one of the boys turned on the water supply and another directed the jet. The boys then sang a few appropriate songs including *The Fire Brigade* and the band played a few popular airs before the procession marched off to the other hydrant where the water was turned on by a young lady. Refreshments were provided for the band at the coffee tavern and for the boys at the reading room. In the evening the brigade sat down to supper at the Robin Hood. The following April a separate Bushey Fire Brigade was inaugurated. This time the celebratory supper was held at The Bell. The captain of the brigade for many years was George Lake. He paid for the equipment, which was stored at Bushey House. It consisted of a hand engine; eleven coils of hose and a reel; a number of unions; a cart; and

a fully equipped tool box. There was a horse ready, and men (most of whom were employed by George Lake) could be available within five minutes. Money for additional hydrants was donated by wealthy benefactors, but there was not always water to put out the fire. On one occasion there were no hydrants nearby, and on another the hydrants froze solid and had to be thawed out with hot water. The brigade was funded by voluntary contributions, and money was raised at a concert in order to provide the firemen with waterproof suits.

In 1900 George Lake left the district and John Middleton, who had been captain, retired as he had never recovered from a severe cold caught when attending a fire the previous December. When a disastrous fire broke out early one morning at Merry Hill House the alarm was passed via Bushey Police Station to the council fire brigade in Watford, which was on the scene half an hour later; and the private brigade from Sedgwick's Brewery, which arrived soon afterwards. Water had to be obtained from a nearby pond. Although this incident should have given urgency to the Council's discussions, it was not until the final meeting in December that it was established that the Parish Council was



The burnt house of Herkomer's film.

responsible for providing the fire brigade and it was decided that Bushey should provide its own brigade and not rely on those of Watford and Stanmore; and that tenders should be put out for a new station to be erected on Clay Hill. The new captain of the brigade was Mr Somers.

The lack of telegraphic communication was a handicap for the service until 1900 when the first direct telegraphic link between Watford and Bushey was established: prior to that messages had to be transmitted via London. In 1901 the Fire Brigade Committee recommended that £6 10s be spent in placing all the members of the brigade in telephonic communication; that the Fire Brigade Station should have the name of the brigade painted on the door; and that six hydrants be placed in the village at selected points. A year later a second-hand manual pump was purchased for £90. The yards and stables of the White Horse were partly used for the Bushey

Fire Brigade equipment theoretically making it possible to reach Bushey Village and Bushey Heath equally quickly. Unfortunately the horses used to draw the pump were kept elsewhere. Also it proved so difficult to get the manual in and out of its store so it was eventually moved to the stables of Mr Somers at nearby Sparrows Herne. A 'Lower Brigade' was formed in Bushey Grove. The 'Upper Brigade' covered Bushey and Bushey Heath.

Following the formation of Bushey Urban District Council in 1906, the old voluntary supported brigade was placed under the control of the UDC. In 1908 there was a terrible fire on Bushey Heath. Mr Scully planned to put a coat of tar on his hen house and put the tar in an old bucket to heat up on the stove. While his attention was distracted, the tar caught fire and in the ensuing panic his wife and three children were trapped upstairs and suffocated by the smoke. After several attempts to save his family, Mr Scully fell unconscious; he was dragged clear by a neighbor, and taken to Bushey Hospital where he was treated for severe burns.

The shortcomings of the service were further highlighted by a fire in 1912

which severely damaged Kelmscott, the home of Mr Jaggard, a local builder, in Coldharbour Lane. The fire started about 11.30 pm and the alarm was given to the police at Clay Hill 15 minutes later. A constable went to unlock the doors of the fire station, alert the members of the Brigade and summon the horses from the contractor. Unfortunately either the alarm bell did not ring or the contractor slept through it and no horses arrived. Eventually Mr Somers's chauffeur, a member of the brigade, took the men, six lengths of hose and a standpipe to the fire in his car. As the street lights had been turned out at 11 pm they had difficulty in locating the hydrants.

Following this fire Captain Somers made suggestions for bringing the fire service up to date. He wanted fire hydrants to Metropolitan brigade standard on the footpath instead of in the road, a properly equipped fire station, a new fire-alarm system with six public call boxes and a motor fire-engine. He also tendered his resignation. The district surveyor, Mr Ernest Ryder, replaced him. Just before the outbreak of the Great War the Council had discussed the building of a new fire station on Rudolph Road, to replace the one on Clay Hill. Residents of Bushey Heath were concerned about this; they felt that their homes were in greater danger from fire as the water pressure on the Heath was inadequate. Although the opening of the new reservoir on Bushey Heath by the Colne Valley Water Company overcame this problem, the war put the scheme on hold. During the war many of the regular firemen were away on War Service and the brigade was manned by 'Auxiliary Members' who included the Revd Montague Hall and the Revd H.C Richardson.

After the war the Chief Fire Officer, Mr Ryder, reported on the inadequacy of the arrangements and tendered his resignation together with that of his second officer. In 1920 the Urban District Council applied to borrow £3,000 for the erection of a fire station adjacent to the Council Offices in Rudolph Road, and for the purchase of a fire-engine.

The area for which the Council was responsible for included three large institutions (the schools) and factories

such as the Cobra works and Ellams Duplicators. To provide protection they had a manual pump which was kept 1,300 yards away from the horses and anyway the contract for the horses had been terminated and could not be renewed. In 1918 the Council had purchased a second-hand car to get the men and the appliance to fires but this had proved unsatisfactory. There was also a small sub-station in Bushey Hall Road, adjacent to the pumping station, with one man on duty during the day and two at night, but the old manual appliance they had there was useless. Representatives of the schools and factories all supported the application. The only voices against were from people who felt that the expense was too great when the housing situation was so desperate. The application was approved, the new station built, and in August 1921 the Bushey Fire Brigade took delivery of its new engine - a Merryweather christened Frederic in honour of both the Chairman of the Council and his son who had died as a result of injuries received during the war. Mr Ryder remained as captain of the brigade.

A new engine, a Bedford, was purchased in the 1930s. It was christened Dorothy Frances after Mrs Mellor, wife of the Chairman of the Council. During the Second World War the service became part of the National Fire Service and men from Bushey spent much time helping the London Fire Brigade. In 1947 it became part of the Hertfordshire Fire Service and later the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The station continued to operate as a part time station until it closed on March 31st 2014.



An interested audience views the new fire-engine christened Dorothy Frances in the 1930s.

Bushey Heath Christmas

Mollie Thomas

The little fir tree spent most of the year in a large flowerpot at the end of the garden. Now and then my sister and I would poke among its needles to see if there were any traces of tinsel which had once decorated it. Occasionally we found a scrap and, for just a moment, the excitement flared and we half remembered Christmas. Nowadays Christmas seems to occur every few weeks, but I'm told that's because I'm old, and for some obscure reason the elderly have a different idea of time. Well, maybe.

Perhaps our first inkling that Christmas really was coming occurred after November 5th, which used to be the **only** day when bonfires blazed and fireworks were let off in gardens. We enjoyed the bonfire, clearing the garden of rubbish before winter set in, but my sister and I hated fireworks and would scamper indoors, watching from the kitchen window with our fingers over our ears, as our father let off the few sparklers, Catherine wheels, golden rain and Roman candles. Not surprisingly, the fireworks were soon a thing of the past. 'Saw enough bangers in France,' was my father's wry comment.

But something else was afoot. Hints were made and shopping trips planned, mainly to Mr Asbery's grocer's shop on the Heath. We watched wide-eyed as our mother reeled off what seemed an endless stream of requests for sugar, dried fruit, nuts, candied peel, etc., etc., Mr Asbery, or his lady assistant would go back and forth to the store room behind the shop, weighing out these exciting things and putting them in blue paper bags. Then the fun began. There was mincemeat to be made, that strange mix of dried fruit and shredded suet, which was packed into jam-jars and sealed away for later use in mince pies. Next came the pudding, another blend of fruit, fat, eggs and nuts, and best of all, shiny silver three-penny bits, which we called 'joeys'. This mixture was spooned into a large basin, given a top-knot of greaseproof

paper and a cotton cover which we called its bonnet. Then into the largest saucepan it went, to be steamed for hours. The smell filled the house and lingered for days, and all the windows were smeary from the steam, and the magic word Christmas was increasingly heard.

But the seasonal masterpiece was yet to come, the Christmas cake. My sister and I were given clean pinafores to wear, and sent to wash our hands. Then we were allowed to help prepare the fruit and nuts, blanched almonds, taking the stones out of the large raisins, and best of all, chopping up the crystallised fruits. I never see them now, those half citrus fruits with their solid chunks of sugar. Once again, as with the pudding, there was the family ritual of stirring and wishing, before the cake, in its special tin, and carefully protected from burning by layers of greaseproof and brown paper, was placed in the oven for its long, slow cook. Once again the house was filled with the promise of Christmas. Later, the cake would be covered with a generous layer of marzipan, the real thing made with almonds, and when that had time to set, my father would mix up the royal icing, perhaps adding a touch of colour from little bottles which spent the rest of the year on the top shelf of the kitchen cupboard. He had a steady hand, and the cake was a glory to behold, with whorls and scrolls, but my sister and I always insisted that the little china models of a church, a snowman, and Father Christmas were part of the decorations too. It looked too good to eat, and could last well into the New Year.

During my teaching career, I realised that the second half of the Autumn term had to be given over to preparations for Christmas: plays, concerts, carols, making cards, calendars, and decorations. Our own early primary school days had little of this, and certainly not until the end of term was in sight. *Jingle Bells* and *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* had not appeared on the scene, and I suppose the words of the adult carols were considered too much for us to cope with, though *Away in a manger* and *While shepherds watched their flocks by night* – with variations –



Pictures Bushey Museum Archive

were very popular. But a lot of stress was placed on Advent, and we were well prepared for the Christmas story. We learned passages from *The Bible* which no doubt we remembered all our lives.

But changes were on the way, and at Merry Hill School in Bushey, two seasonal events stand out in my memory. We had a huge Christmas tree, decorated by the teachers, and every child was given a specially chosen present before we settled down to a tea of jam sandwiches, buns and orange squash. Then it became the custom for each class to make its own Christmas cake, and we contributed ingredients, helped our teacher prepare the monster cake – after all, it had to feed 40 plus children, and then she would bake it at home and ice it, and bring it back for us all to have a slice. That was back in the 1930s, so I think it was quite remarkable for its time.

I cannot remember that there were the same frantic preparations which now seem to begin when the summer holidays end. Everything seemed to take its place in the proper season. But at last the great day came when my parents would rummage in the cupboard under the stairs and get out what was always known as The Christmas Box. It was placed on the kitchen table, and my sister and I watched breathlessly as the well known loved treasures emerged, the tinsel, the baubles, little candlesticks and

Remembered



candles, the two shiny glass birds, slightly chipped and the worse for wear; but then, best of all, the star. Then the little tree would be brought in from the garden, its pot sponged clean and swathed in red crepe paper. Then it replaced the aspidistra on the front room table. We had been making paper chains for some days, strips of coloured paper glued into a long chain with the aid of a 2d bottle of gum from Mr Anthony's shop. We helped add the tinsel and other trimmings to the tree, standing in awe of this transformation. Christmas was nearly here. Then it was up to bed, snuggling down with our stone 'pig' hot-water bottles and whispering to each other about the glories of our own Christmas tree, tiny and simple though it was.

The buying of Christmas presents was never made much of, though obviously it went on. After all, it wasn't supposed to be happening was it? Someone else was said to be responsible for all that. Most shops had some decorations but not a lot. The main department stores in Watford usually had a Christmas grotto, and occasionally a Father Christmas in residence, but there was nothing like that on the Heath.

We did enjoy choosing Christmas cards. In those days they did not come in cellophane packs of 5 or 10. In Anthony's paper shop there were wooden trays and you could choose cards costing 1d

or 2d (that's less than 1p today) or even more for special ones. Then Mr or Mrs Anthony or daughter Renee would give you a suitable envelope. Once written and addressed, the cards could be posted for a half-penny or 1d, and amazingly, those posted on Christmas Eve would be delivered on Christmas Day. It was considered bad form to send your cards too early, because it looked as though you were expecting one back! Advent calendars did not exist. The first one I saw was during the war, when two of the German refugees at the Girls' Grammar School brought them to show us. We were enchanted and I have loved them ever since, as do my children and grand-children.

It came at last, Christmas Day, and at a suitable time, my sister and I rummaged in the pillowcases at the end of our beds. Downstairs my parents would be making breakfast and lighting a fire in the front room. We only had a fire in the front room on special days and there was nothing more special than Christmas. My mother was already busy in the kitchen, after we had done our usual chores, we were dispatched to the front room to enjoy our new toys and possessions. The old lady next door always gave us new slippers and we trolled about feeling very smart.

It was the custom in the three cottages down the lane for the residents to join together for a Christmas morning drink and they would sample the latest brew of dandelion, rhubarb, or parsnip wine. My sister and I were allowed a tiny sip as a treat. We thought it was horrible, which was a pity as we had picked most of the dandelions during the summer.

Then we went back home for Christmas dinner. Few people had poultry; pork was more of a favourite, and there would be masses of vegetables, home grown either in the garden or at the allotment on Windmill Lane. All followed by a helping of the Christmas pudding which had been steaming away for another couple of hours. It was a pity after so much anticipation that I never really enjoyed the meal, but the rule in most families

in those days was that you had to have clean plate before you could ask to leave the table. We were told that lots of poor little children would be glad to have our good food. Well, I'd have been quite happy to send them my sprouts, parsnips, swede, and Christmas pudding, all things which I now enjoy. At teatime we had a piece of bread and butter (no jam) followed by a slice of cake. I hated marzipan and my sister hated icing, which she said made her teeth ache, so we did crafty swaps. No doubt our parents knew what we were doing, but after all, it was Christmas, so we got away with it.

There was little public transport on Christmas Day and few people had cars, so there wasn't much visiting beyond walking distance. The bus services began mid-morning and finished in mid-afternoon. I cannot recall any public displeasure over this, and I believe that for many years if Boxing Day fell on a Sunday, it was a case of back to work on Monday. Neither was New Year's Day a public holiday. The present two-week standstill is a fairly recent phenomenon. Public houses opened on Christmas Day but for limited hours, probably from eleven in the morning until 2pm, when they closed for the rest of the day. Woe betide the chap who turned up late at home for his Christmas dinner.

Because of the transport situation, we were very surprised one Christmas afternoon, just as it was getting dark, to hear the sounds of carols outside the cottage. On opening the front door we found some relations who had walked all the way from Stanmore in the snow carrying their portable gramophone which they perched on our gate while they hid behind the garden wall.

In the afternoon we listened respectfully to The King's Speech, amazed that this important person could find time to talk to us on Christmas Day. Afterwards we stood for the *National Anthem*.

For a comparatively small village, there was quite a lot of seasonal entertainment, with Guides and other organisations putting on plays and concerts in the Parish Hall. It was a pleasant mix of religious and secular events which were always well attended. Members of the Church put on a nativity play which involved both young and old. Regulars were the

Rogers brothers and their father, Major Rogers, who lived in a lovely old house called The Retreat, in The Rutts. The Major always took the role of a prophet or someone equally important, and the brothers were shepherds, barefoot in sandals, wearing their dressing gowns and with tea-towels on their heads. Some of the Sunday School children were cast in the unfamiliar role of angels, complete with wings, haloes and stage make-up which they brazenly wore to school the next day. No acting skill was required, just the ability to shout: 'Behold' at the right moment and flap your wings without knocking the scenery over. How we loved it.

The Guides combined the secular with the sacred, putting on a brief nativity play and other features such as how not to camp. My friend Audrey Hinton (whose father was the local bobby) and I always represented the bad campers and how we hammed it up! Her sister Rosemary and my sister were always the good campers, which really didn't bode too well for seasonal goodwill, but raised a laugh. A favourite item was Backward Drill, where we wore our uniforms back to front, covered the backs of our heads with masks with

hideous faces painted on them, and did exercises to *Blake Grand March*, thumped out on the parish hall piano. One year I had to sing a verse in the nativity play, but with last minute stage fright, locked myself in the lavatory. I soon came out when it was made clear that my seasonal prospects were not good, should I fail to do so.

Those were our amateur village entertainments, but for sheer class you could not beat the pantomime at The Palace Theatre down in Watford. My mother and her friend Ada Payne (a dead ringer for Suzette Tarry!) took us to see *Cinderella*. It was absolute enchantment, and all for 1/6, or one shilling (5p). My sister and I fell in love with Buttons and resolved to join the Majorie Chater School of Dancing as soon as we could. Sadly there was no future in either situation, but for weeks we played Cinderella and danced about until even our parents said: 'That's enough. Pack it up'. A song we both liked was *10 Pretty Girls* I can still sing it but guess the dancing is beyond me now.

Christmas always ended strictly on 12th Night, and all the decorations were put away. I began my story with the

little fir tree and sadly I end with it. The candles in their pretty tin candlesticks were real, and the wax dripped onto the branches. In these days of Health & Safety awareness, such a thing could never have happened, but it did. The little tree caught fire; my father seized it, pot and all, and hurled it into the snow in the front garden. There was nothing left to put back into the Christmas Box, and with the Second World War about to start we never had another Christmas tree until my son was born in 1951.

Do I look back on those years with an un-necessary degree of nostalgia? I think not. Emerging from World War I, and from a recession, times were hard for most people, but there was a degree of neighbourliness and concern which somehow is missing now. I look at my family, my children and grandchildren, with their exciting successful careers, their blasé attitude to travel all over the world (I have never owned a passport), and their familiarity with modern technology and gadgetry. I suspect they see the years of my childhood as rough, tough and hard. They were, but I look back on them with deep affection and gratitude for all they taught me, and not just about Christmas remembered.

The Flying Bomb

Mollie Thomas

Yes, I remember the flying-bomb incident very well: perhaps it is one of my most vivid wartime memories, although the night a bomber crashed on Bentley Priory when my father was on duty with the Air Ministry Constabulary, comes a close second. We did not know whether or not he had survived until his shift ended the following morning and he came cycling down the lane on his rickety old bike, wanting his breakfast.

To return to the flying-bomb: I was in the Lower VIth at Watford Girls' Grammar School, and we had been dismissed after the mid-morning Assembly, as was the custom at the start of a half-term holiday. Several of us boarded a 142 bus in the High Street, all very cheerful at the prospect

of a few days freedom. Some got off at Melbourne Road in Bushey, and I got off at Windmill Lane in Bushey Heath and walked down The Rutts. There was no air raid alert at the time and one certainly could not have missed the sound of Moaning Minnie, which was on the roof of Bushey Police Station. But as I walked down The Rutts and turned into the lane by the Guide Hut where our cottage was, I was aware of an unmistakeable noise, and as I looked up, I saw the flying bomb. The chugging suddenly stopped: I knew what that meant!

I was still too far from our cottage to reach it safely, and in any case I knew the door would be locked as my mother would be out at work. I threw myself and my satchel into the hedge, covered my head with my hands and waited. I cannot adequately describe what happened next, but the memory never leaves me. At last I got up, dusted myself down, rescued my satchel and school beret and staggered

towards out cottage. I found the key in its usual place, went indoors and crawled into the Morrison shelter which had dominated our front room for several months.

After the pandemonium, silence, and I became aware that pictures and ornaments had fallen from walls and shelves. I did not know that a bedroom ceiling had also fallen down. At last my mother came home. We looked at each other and asked the same question: 'Are you all right?' Then she began to cook the dinner and I unpacked my satchel. That was war; we were safe, and life went on: no time for histrionics. Sadly my father had died of cancer in a London hospital a few weeks earlier, during a flying bomb raid. And my friends in Bushey? They were furious that their cricket pitch had been utterly destroyed.



Today's Jewish Community in Bushey

Barry Hyman

Following Dianne Payne's article, *The Beginnings of the local Jewish Community* in the last *Journal*, I thought readers might be interested in what followed.

Few people are aware that the total Jewish population of the UK is around 300,000, less than half of one percent of the total population. Schoolchildren – and their teachers too – who visit the synagogue generally guess at about 10 million and are amazed to hear the real figure. This compares incidentally with a Muslim population of around 2 million. Originally to be found in lots of towns, most Jews are now in the principal cities, but some 75% live in the Greater London area.

So why does a tiny community centre itself on specific areas? Well, as a committed Christian you can live pretty well anywhere, safe in the knowledge that there will be a Church, Chapel or some form of established religious establishment where you can worship, learn, and gather for social intercourse with co-religionists. There aren't too many synagogues around the UK, so Jews will gather where they can do what their neighbours of other faiths can do, that is attend an established synagogue or build one. (One of our Sabbath prayers is for *'... those who build synagogues as well as those who pray in them.'*)

Jews, having been welcomed to Britain by William the Conqueror in 1066, were expelled in 1290 by Edward I, after all their belonging had been conveniently confiscated. They were readmitted to England by Cromwell circa 1656, but the community swelled only in the late 19th/early 20th century with the arrival of Russian and Polish Jews fleeing the pogroms of the Cossacks and the anti-semitism of the Catholic Church.

As with all immigrant communities, from the Huguenots, via the Jews, to the Caribbean and Asian arrivals, it takes about three generations for 'foreigners' to become assimilated while retaining their religious / cultural connections.

So why Bushey? As Dianne pointed out, Jewish families continued their progress along the North-West frontier from the East End, Hackney, Clapton, Golders Green, Hendon, Edgware, to Stanmore, and then crossing the border from London into Hertfordshire.

My family arrived in 1973, so 40 years on we almost feel like lifers! My children know no other family home. Two of the three with their families have settled in the area. One has emigrated ... to Shepherds Bush! [Well ... Bush? Bushey? Almost the same, no?]

There were two Bushey synagogue communities at first in the early 70s; Bushey United Synagogue, led for 30 years by the charismatic Rabbi Meir Salasnik remains, while the other, the Radlett & Bushey Reform Synagogue of which I am President, has moved down the road. As there are different practices among various Christian denominations, so there are with Judaism.

Bushey is an orthodox synagogue (the majority movement in the UK) where prayers, other than the sermon and the Prayer for the Royal Family, are all in Hebrew. Women, as in Islam, sit separately and cannot lead prayer or become rabbis. My Reform community is completely egalitarian. Families sit together. Many rabbis are women. Girls celebrate their batmitzvah alongside boys' barmitzvah. Choirs are mixed. Driving on the Sabbath is not regarded as forbidden.

Both movements have had, as in Christianity and Islam, times of conflict, but currently, with a new Chief Rabbi in charge of the United Synagogue, and a learned woman Rabbi acting as spokesperson for the Reform Movement (we do not have a 'chief' rabbi) relations are good.

So why Radlett & Bushey? It started as Bushey & District, founded in 1971 by 16 families. We arrived in 1973 as family 25. Gatherings were held in members' houses, frequently ours and, having first squeezed into the Scout Hut, courtesy

of a welcoming Christian community in Bushey United Reform Church. 'Can we borrow your Church Hall?' we asked. 'Why not use the Church?' said the Vicar. 'We don't need it on Saturdays and there are no images which might conflict with your beliefs.' I was sad to see it finally close last year due to falling membership. The nuns of Rosary Priory generously allowed us to use their classrooms for our religion school and their hall for High Holyday services and the traditional communal Passover meal.

During my Chairmanship, 1979 – 1982, we had grown, acquired a Rabbi and longed for a home of our own, when a church in Radlett became redundant due to a merger. A long negotiation followed but on my very last day as Chairman I got the deeds to take to our AGM. We became Radlett & Bushey, with the original Bushey members threatening fire and brimstone if the word 'Bushey' was dropped!

As we don't look questioningly at people driving to synagogue, our members come from a wide area, from Edgware out to Shenley, Hemel, Knebworth and St. Albans. With 1000 adult members (who fortunately don't all turn up every Saturday!) and 500 children to educate in religion, Jewish history and culture, and reading Hebrew, our needs involve applying for an extension to our current limited premises. Relations with the local Christian community are still excellent. We participate in the Council of Christians and Jews, pitch our High Holyday tent on Christ Church's lawn and are visited each New Year by Sister Thekla and Sister Glory of The Evangelical Sisters of Mary from Darmstadt and Radlett.

In our Bushey Heath road there are Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus and people of no particular faith. After 40 years here, we don't want to be anywhere else. When we came, my Aunt said: 'Why are you going out there?' And at that time if you were Jewish you tended to go to Bushey on a one-way trip – to the cemetery in Little Bushey Lane! We came, we saw, we were conquered!

Where are you now?

Ian and Jane Read were able to supply some of the names in the first photograph but, not surprisingly, Les Allen-Williams recognised them all. He says the top picture was taken during the Bushey Horticultural Show Parade in 1966 – perhaps their Centenary? We were representing St James Youth Club and were dressed up as part of the 'Fancy Dress Float' competition. Frank Collins awarded us a prize for our entry, although we were not quite a 'float'!! I believe that Eric and Edith were married, as were Pat Hemley and Barry Mitchell. The 1938 Austin 7 tourer was my first car (lemon yellow/black), a present from my father, who owned a garage at Barnet.

Standing left to right

Eric—, Alan Hemley, Chris Schultz, Bob Barker and John Hall

Seated left to right

Edith Lawrence, Les Allen-Williams, Pat Hemley and Barry Mitchell



St James Youth Club on the way to camp – Bank Holiday 1966.



St James Youth Club – Canoe Camp at Fairthorne Manor – Summer 1972

Where are you now?

In September 1995 Betty Goodison MBE wrote her *Memoirs of Fifty Years of Youth Work*, which was published by Hertfordshire Youth and Community Service.

In it she recounted her experiences with the London Road Youth Club and the St James' Youth Club. The latter began in 1966 and had its origins in the Church Youth Group at St James Church. The Church Youth Group required its members to attend church services and members could not bring along non-churchgoing friends. This caused difficulties but eventually concerned parents managed to persuade the Parochial Church Council that a Youth Club, open to all regardless of sex or religious persuasion, meeting in the Parish Hall, would better suit the youngsters' needs. Unfortunately the Parish Hall was almost derelict and un-insurable, but with the aid of a substantial grant from the Youth and Community Services, and a lot of hard work, a new St James' Youth Club was able to open in Falconer Hall.

The *Memoir* includes several photographs these are just two of them. Unfortunately there is no indication who took the photographs. Is anyone able to identify the people on the photographs?

Standing left to right

Betty Goodison, —, Mick Hewitt, David Thickett

Unfortunately although I recognise most of the faces in this second photo, the only names I recall are those someone has already recorded. It is possible that the lad in the side car is John Gillett, who went on to do great work with the Moatfield Football Club – Bushey Rangers and sadly died a few decades ago.