

The Journal of the Friends of Bushey Museum

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**FRIENDS OF
BUSHEY
MUSEUM**



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This issue of the Friends of Bushey Museum's *Journal* contains its usual collection of articles and illustrations on a wide range of topics.

If the articles invoke reminiscences, why not put pen to paper? Did you work for a local firm or shop? Has your family lived in Bushey for several generations? Have you researched the history of your house? Then let us know.

Without contributors the *Journal* would not

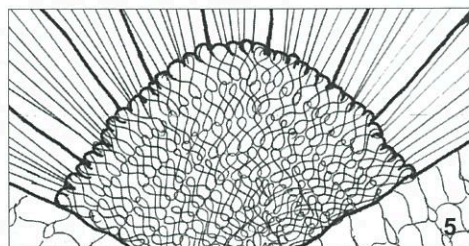
exist. Thank you to the people who have sent in contributions but more are always needed.

As ever my thanks go to Bryen Wood for delving into the Museum's collection of photographs and pointing out any local history inaccuracies. Thank you also to Michael Pritchard who has been responsible for the technical side of the production.

Good reading.

Janet Murphy

In this issue



Editorial 1

People are Dying to Get In 2
Barry Hyman relates the history of the Jewish cemetery and their burial customs

The Busy Bee, The Spider's Web and The Beehive 3

Burnt Farm 4
John Storey recalls the days of the farm before it became part of the Jewish cemetery

All Sorts, Shapes and Sizes 5
June Wood takes a look at some of the costume in the Museum collection

The Local History Recorder Scheme 6
A countywide project to record current history in local areas is reported on by *Jane Parker*

The Local Studies Centre 7
Audrey Adams reviews recent work

Field and Hemley Ltd 8
History about this local firm from *John* and the late *Harold Hemley*

The Manor House 9
This lost house described by *Janet Murphy*

Green Line Coach Services 11
Ian Read details the history of this well known coach service

Fifty and Twenty-Five Years Ago ... 13, 16

Poole Pottery and Rosary Priory 14
Chris Jordan on a plaque of local interest

Van Gogh and Herkomer 15
Bushey artist *Douglas Chowns* describes one artist's empathy with another

People are dying to get in

Barry Hyman

Disrespectful heading for an article about cemeteries? No. Jewish humour abounds with self-deprecation and an acknowledgement that death is to be followed, if one has traditional faith, by a life in the world to come. Indeed, without any irony, the Hebrew name for a cemetery is 'Bet Chayim' or 'House of Life', the life in question being the hoped-for one in Heaven. To that end it is incumbent on Jewish communities to provide both a House of Assembly (the translation of both the Greek 'Synagogue' and the Hebrew equivalent 'Bet Knesset') together with a place where the dead may be buried with dignity and due ceremony.

Membership of a congregation requires the payment of an annual subscription. This ensures the upkeep of the synagogue, the religious education of one's children, the guarantee of a seat for the High Holydays - which, like Christmas and Easter, is the one time the pews are full - and most importantly 'burial rights'. When a death occurs in a Jewish family, the synagogue Burial Society immediately takes responsibility for arranging the funeral, including purification and preparation of the body, thus relieving the family of the onerous and often painful duty of making arrangements with the undertakers.

Bushey Jewish Cemetery in Little Bushey Lane with its 30,000-plus graves is probably the largest working Jewish cemetery in Europe. It serves the Ashkenazi Jews (originating from Germany and Eastern Europe) of North

and North West London. The Sephardi Jews, whose families fled Spain and Portugal during the Inquisition, have their cemetery in Edgwarebury Lane which is shared with the Reform and Liberal Jewish communities' burial grounds. Earlier cemeteries were opened in the East End in the 1600s and 1700s and others followed, but as they were filled up land was sought further out.

An earlier scheme in Aldenham came to nought, and land was being acquired in Bushey from the 1920s, but it was in 1943 that matters became urgent as Willesden Cemetery was rapidly filling up. Due to wartime conditions a modified scheme began, involving the development of some 7.5 acres, with authority granted for the erection of temporary buildings. Even this simple scheme did not commence until 1945, with the buildings heated by slow combustion stoves and lit by oil lamps in the absence of electricity or gas.

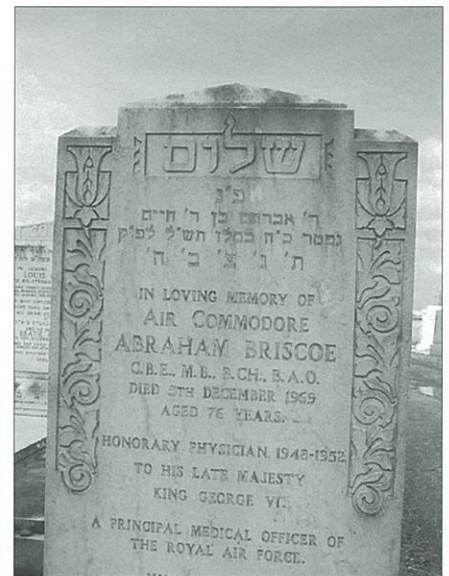
On 7 September 1947 the cemetery was opened by Sir Robert Waley Cohen KBE, President of the United Synagogue. As part of the ceremony a token burial of disused religious books took place; this is standard practice for all disused prayer books containing the Hebrew name of God which must be treated with respect and many burials still see prayer books being lowered into a grave on top of a coffin. The first burial, that of Karl Auerbach on 9 September 1947, is marked by an extra plaque on his grave placed there by the synagogue authorities.

Over the following half century more of the acquired land came into use and the original prayer hall was pulled down. Two modern ones are now in use. Psalms are recited on the way to the interment. Some of the graves are a fifteen minute walk from the prayer hall, necessitating the provision of a minibus to transport elderly or handicapped mourners to the graveside. Space remains for several thousand more burials and the cemetery will probably be in use for another three decades.

Jewish tradition dictates that one exits this life as one entered - in simplicity. Everyone, from a Rothschild to the humblest congregant, is buried in a plain wooden coffin, as soon after death as possible. Bushey, like most other Jewish cemeteries, contains plots set aside for the

burial of stillborns, infant deaths and deaths in childhood.

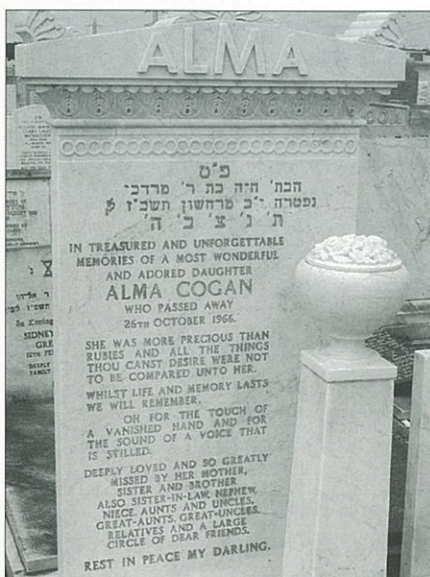
While cremation is accepted by progressive Judaism, traditional orthodoxy does not practise it. There have nonethe-



less been instances where the family of someone who has opted for cremation asks that they be buried in an orthodox cemetery. In such a case the ashes are put into a coffin for burial to take place.

Most people observe the custom for an official 'stone-setting' to take place on the first anniversary of the death, when family and friends assemble again for a short service of dedication of the tombstone. This also serves as the termination of a year's mourning.

Tombstones are to be found in a variety of materials, but nearly all are of a pattern, namely a flat stone covering the grave and an upright one at the head. This is the tradition of Ashkenazi Jews. Sephardi Jews are buried under just a flat stone. One explanation for this is the sunnier climes of Iberia where a flat stone could be read all the year round, whereas the snowy plains of Eastern Europe would



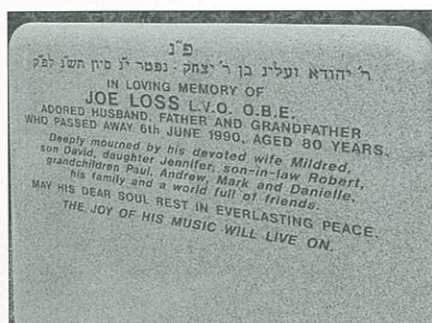
necessitate an upright one carrying the information. There are odd exceptions; for example an occasional family plot with one large stone at the back and individual smaller ones over each grave. Tombstones carry details in English and Hebrew, the Hebrew generally giving the person's Hebrew name, date of death according to the Jewish (lunar) calendar and the phrase 'May his/her soul be bound up in the bonds of eternal life'

As reported in an earlier Museum *Newsletter*, celebrities including band-leader Joe Loss and singers Alma Cogan and Frankie Vaughan are buried at Bushey. So too is Air Commodore Abraham Briscoe, Honorary Physician to King George VI, scientist and Nobel Prize winner, Sir Ernest Chain and journalist and MP, Maurice Edelman. Their graves stand in no special place of honour but are among the many thousands of ordinary people who rest here, like my wife's grandparents, my uncle and several friends.

There was a time when "I'm off to Bushey" meant only one thing in the Jewish community - another funeral. Now the local synagogues number five; one in Bushey, two in Radlett and two in Elstree. This living Jewish community has for some time been playing its part in this corner of Hertsmere. Its rabbis - Jonathan Black, Alan Plancey, Meir Salasnik, Gideon Sylvester and Alexandra Wright (Reform synagogues acknowledge women as rabbis) are all involved in interfaith and intercommunal activity. The life of any community is more important than its bereavements, but dignity in death is the right of all. The rabbis, their lay help and sympathetic cemetery staff, both at Bushey and elsewhere, ensure that such dignity is accorded to us at our inevitable end.

Acknowledgement is gratefully made to Len Shear, Cemetery Superintendent at Bushey for help with research for this article.

Photographs by Barry Hyman.



The Busy Bee, The Beehive and The Spider's Web on the By-Pass



Now part of the folklore of Bushey, The Busy Bee on the Watford By-pass had an exciting or frightening reputation, depending whether you were young or old. In the 1950s, it was a useful transport café during the day, but at night it was transformed by the bikers, for whom it was an early gathering place. Despite its fame, or notoriety, it is proving very hard to find photographs of it and at present we only have one of the sign.

It was replaced about 1960 by the more upmarket Beehive and the Casa Miel restaurant. Again we have only the one photograph. Surely someone has more photographs and also stories about The Busy Bee and The Beehive, now in turn replaced by The Hilton Bushey, not Watford as they carelessly proclaim.

The roadhouse, The Spider's Web, was notorious in the 1930s for trysting weekends. It was burnt down in mysterious circumstances in the late 1950s. The Ramada Jarvis hotel now occupies the site. Again, does anyone have any photographs? Or reminiscences!

Bryan Wood



Burnt Farm

John Storey

Growing up in Bushey in those care-free days before World War Two, I would spend much of my time at Burnt Farm, since demolished to make way for the Jewish Cemetery (see page 2). The farmhouse, an adjoining cottage, the farm buildings and an orchard, occupied the triangle at the junction of Little Bushey Lane and Sandy Lane.

It was in the main a dairy farm. There was however a small area of arable on which kale was grown to supplement the winter feed for the cows. There was very little arable land in the district before the 'War Ag' (War Agricultural Committee) directed otherwise once the war started. Percy Dalton farmed the land as a satellite to his main operation at Edgwarebury House Farm at Elstree. Several different families occupied the farmhouse during the time I knew it, but the person I remember best was Bob Blackwood, a dour Scot, who lived there with his family and a nephew, Tommy Aitken, who assisted on the farm. The neighbouring cottage was occupied by George Barge, a Somerset man who was employed as a milk roundsman. Some years later he moved into Bushey where he went into the taxi business.

The system of working the farm was similar to that on other dairy farms in the district. The cows spent most of their time in the fields unless the weather was severe, being brought into the sheds at milking time. Each cow would have its own stall in the shed and it would amaze me that not only did they know which was theirs but also that they could obtain a supply of water by depressing the centre of the water container with their nose. The supply of food in the manger was supposed to relate to the milk yield but this was very much rule of thumb. Feed consisted of brewers' grains and cattle cake.

Milking was by hand into an open bucket which was then taken into the dairy where it was poured into a container covered with muslin to take out any solids. The milk then passed through a cooler into a churn. The milk was bottled at Elstree. Wide-topped glass bottles in three sizes, half pint, pint and quart were placed in metal crates and filled by a dipper, dipped into the churn by hand. The tops were sealed with a waxed cardboard disk also fitted by hand and pressed into

place by using both thumbs; too much pressure would cause the disk and the thumbs to go through into the milk. There was no pasteurisation, only the big retailers such as the Express Dairy did this. In fact it was a selling point that the milk was fresh and natural. I have heard George Barge using all sorts of arguments on the doorstep to convince a potential customer of this. It is true to say though that Percy Dalton was a progressive farmer and adopted improved methods as time went by.

It was not until 1941 that I first saw a milking parlour, an Alfa Lavel, at Meric Attenborough's Ilmer House Farm, near Princes Risborough. The cows were brought into the yard and let into the milking parlour two at a time. By pulling a lever, a regulated quantity of feed was released into a manger. The milking machine was attached and the milk passed through glass pipes into a large glass jar where it was weighed - all rather different to what I had seen before.

Hay making at Burnt Farm was different to that on other farms in the district. Hay was swept up into a stack by a sweep consisting of several tines mounted on the front of a tractor or some other vehicle. Some years Percy would buy an old American car to use with the sweep. At the haystack the elevator was driven by a stationary engine instead of a horse going round and round, a method used on a

nearby farm. I have heard it said that the use of the sweep, which reduced the labour necessary for carting the hay to the stack, was not so good for the hay but I don't know about that. This was of course before the days of the baler. The compressed hay was in due course cut out of the stack using a very large, sharp knife and fed to the cattle.

We always knew that the farm was to be used as a cemetery, in fact it was said that the land up to the Elstree Road roundabout had been acquired for this purpose. No doubt the War delayed the plan. I can recall some surveyors putting in a great many markers in the meadow below the farm. After they had served their purpose, the markers had to be collected and Kenneth, George Barge and I were asked if we cared to do this. It was a Saturday afternoon and the two young surveyors wanted to get away. They offered us half a crown each to do the job, a small fortune!

Little did I imagine, when I was cutting and carting kale, hay making or bringing in the cows, that these fields would be the final resting place for so many well-known names.

I believe Percy Dalton was still farming when I last saw him at Watford market in the 1950s.*

* *Editor's note. His daughter, Tessa Yates, is a steward at the Museum.*

Burnt Farm being demolished in the late 1950s. It stood at the junction of Little Bushey Lane and Sandy Lane. The site is now within the Jewish Cemetery (see page 2).

Photograph: Alan Hodge



All Sorts, Shapes and Sizes

June Wood

To me there is a fascination about the clothes worn in the distant and not too distant past. In the Museum we have the beginnings of a really comprehensive collection. So far we have nothing before the Victorian period, but who knows what tomorrow will bring?

How women's clothing changes! We have a Victorian crinoline, Edwardian tailored suits, a beaded flapper dress, cotton sun-dresses of the 1950s and a sack, mini style. There are wedding dresses too, including the famous one made in Bushey in 1910, with the Huguenot silver lace-edged train, which was recently on display at the Museum. By contrast there is a pink satin dress with matching full length veil and a wax flower headdress from the 1930s. They are so different but both are beautiful.

There is underwear too, some voluminous, some skimpy. The Mencap shop is a source from which Bryen has acquired some items (and some funny looks) - a pair of divided drawers with bodice attached caused the most hilarity.

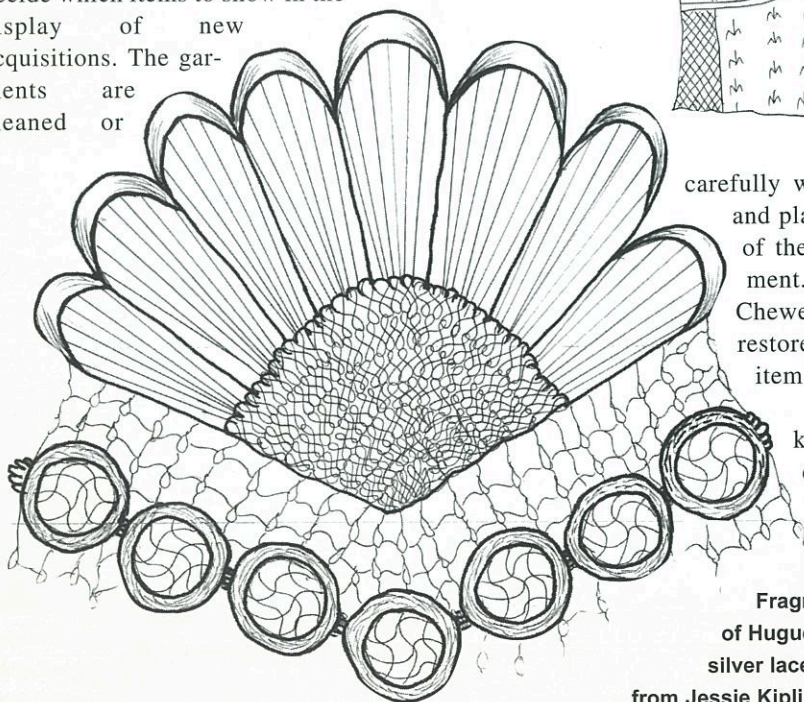
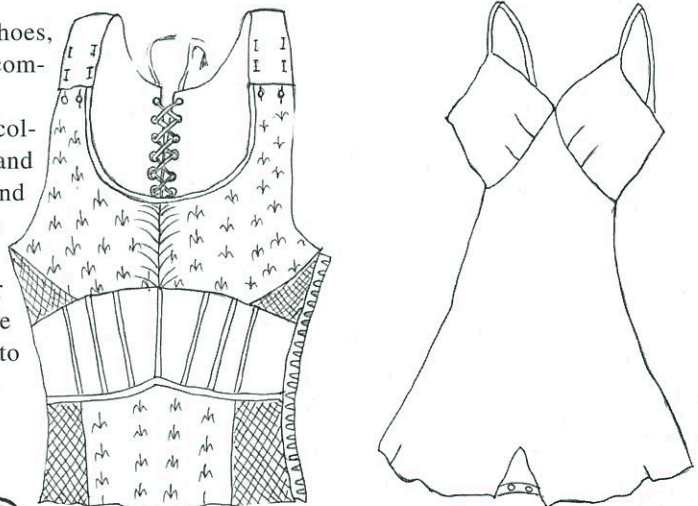
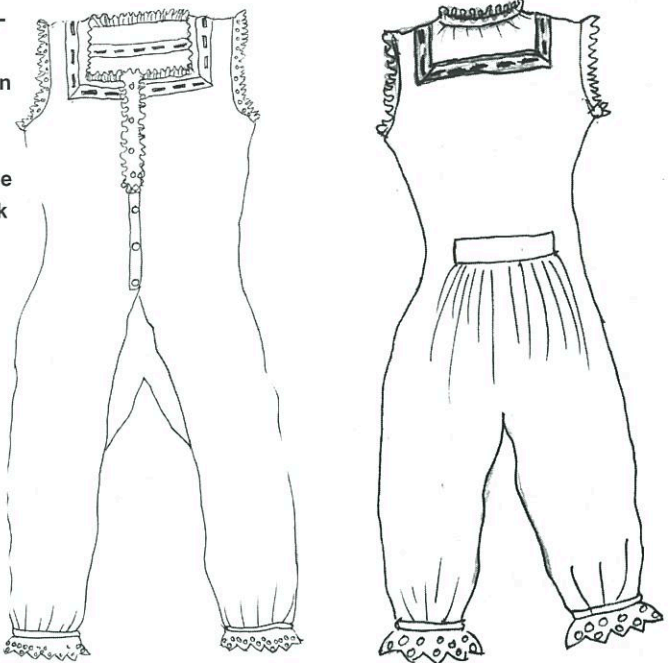
Accessories too are important. We have hats, gloves, shoes, shawls, fur tippets, fans and parasols, each of which can complete an outfit and not forgetting stockings and handbags.

Although women's clothing makes up the bulk of the collection, we have men's clothing, including a pith helmet and children's clothing. As with the ladies' underwear the hand stitching on some of these items has to be seen to be believed - sometimes you can hardly see any thread at all.

When an item is received it is given a unique number and a receipt issued. It is then shown to the Committee of the Friends of Bushey Museum who have regular meetings to decide which items to show in the display of new acquisitions. The garments are cleaned or

Top: Cotton combinations with open gusset, sometimes known as divided drawers. c1890

Below left: Formidable bust bodice with back lacing and hooked side. 1930s. **Below right:** Pink crêpe de chine cami-knickers. c1940.



Fragment of Huguenot silver lace from Jessie Kipling's wedding dress.

carefully washed if necessary, wrapped in archival tissue and placed in special boxes before being housed in one of the store-rooms. Some items require special treatment. The Victorian crinoline which featured in Albert Chewett's picture *Teasing* was carefully cleaned and restored by a textiles expert. I think this is my favourite item in the collection.

People have generously given these articles, knowing that they will be looked after and will be exhibited in the future. Building the collection is only one part of Museum life, but a very interesting and rewarding one. We just need endless space and time.

All line drawings by June Wood.

The Hertfordshire Association for Local History Recorder Scheme

Jane Parker

The Hertfordshire Council for Local History was initiated by W Branch Johnson. In 1991 its name was changed to the Hertfordshire Association for Local History. The Chair has been held by such well-known names in Hertfordshire history circles as Dr Doris Jones-Baker, Lionel Munby and Dr Kate Thompson. In 2000 Dr Gillian Gear took over the Chair. The Council and later the Association arranged talks, events and publications dealing with Hertfordshire history. *Hertfordshire History* had been published since 1991 and became the joint newsletter of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (formerly the County Record Office) and the Hertfordshire Association for Local History.

The Recorder Scheme was set up in 1983 by the members of the Hertfordshire Council for Local History. Throughout Hertfordshire volunteers were recruited for the Recorder Scheme to record the current history of their local areas for the use of future historians, in words and photographs. Parish Councils and local history societies were asked to nominate recorders for their area, the whole being co-ordinated by Gillian Gear. Guidelines were produced to help the volunteers in their task and workshops were held at which the recorders could exchange



The local scene is changing all the time. The White Horse public house on Clay Hill was closed and converted to houses quite recently. Margaret Bates photographed it just before closure.

Photograph: Margaret Bates

information and receive support. Recorders receive bi-annual newsletters and are encouraged to make annual reports on their area. Copies of the reports are deposited with Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.

At the beginning of 2000 there were sixty recorders at work in the county who

decided that they should do something special to mark the Millennium. A book was planned which would give an overview of the many and varied ways in which Hertfordshire residents would be celebrating the Millennium. Reports and photographs were collected from over sixty towns and villages all over Hertfordshire, including Bushey, Oxhey and Watford and they were edited by Gillian Gear. The article on Bushey includes an introduction by Bryen Wood, sections on the Millennium Embroidery, the Festival Photographic Competition, the Community Play-The Bushey Story and celebrations in Koh-I-Noor Avenue. The book was published in the Autumn of 2001 and copies are on sale in the Museum shop.

The collecting of archives, photographs, oral history and reports carries on and Bushey Museum contributes to this work whenever possible. Oral history records are regularly made by Barry Hyman and Patrick Forsyth and others take photographs but Bushey does not actually have its own recorder as part of the scheme. If anyone would like to volunteer or has useful material, they should contact Bushey Museum on 020 8420 4057 or Dr Gillian Gear at Nicholls Farmhouse, Lybury Lane, Redbourn, Herts AL3 1JH on 01582 792603.



The shingled barn in Melbourn Road built by Herkomer as a workshop when he was building Lululaund eventually became a sound stage for the film studios. It was scheduled for conversion into offices in the 1980s, but somehow was demolished and rebuilt as a pastiche of its former self. Michael O'Doherty photographed it in its last days as part of the Hertfordshire Recorder Scheme.

Photograph: Michael O'Doherty

The Local Studies Centre

Audrey Adams

The Local Studies Centre is to be found in the rather forbidding building at the rear and to the right of the Museum. It used to be based on the first floor of Church House, where a group of us gathered on Sunday afternoons to work on projects like the indexing of militia lists, census returns and so on. It gave me an early taste for the excitement of handling historic documents and becoming immersed in the stories they could tell. Later I used the facilities of the Centre for the local history component of my degree course.

The Local Studies Centre occupies three rooms. The first houses the archives of the Royal Caledonian School, which occupied the buildings now used by the Purcell School, and the Royal Masonic Schools together with the photographic archive of W H Hoather, which are kept in a temperature controlled protective environment. The other two rooms contain material of more general interest; local census returns from 1841 to 1901, copies of the parish registers of St James' Church dating back to 1684, admissions registers and log books from several local schools and a range of local directories from the 1860s right through to the 1970s. Bushey's artistic heritage is reflected in the files of artists' biographical material and books which are the province of Anne Blessley. We also have various books, maps and periodicals of local relevance



The slate reads: 'Bushey Board School Group II'. It was taken at Merry Hill School, perhaps on 30 April 1889.
Photograph: Courtesy of Stephen Fawcett

together with all manner of printed ephemera such as property auction catalogues. One of the perils - and pleasures - of working in a place like the Local Studies Centre is that one is always being side-tracked by new and interesting discoveries.

Visitors and enquirers are another very welcome distraction. The Centre is generally open on Thursday afternoons from 2pm to 5pm and everyone is welcome, though it is helpful if intending visitors ring the Museum in advance (020 8420 4057). The most popular area of enquiry is family history, especially since

the advent of the 1901 census earlier this year. Readers may be aware of the problems that ensued when the Public Records Office published the census via the internet; for anyone wishing to research a Bushey or Aldenham address or family, salvation is here at the at the Local Studies Centre, where the local returns are available on microfiche. Other recent areas of research include First World War memorials, Maxine Elliot (an American actress who owned Hartsbourne Manor), the history of Bushey House, Bentley Priory, Dr Edward Wilson (the Antarctic explorer) and the history of parkland in Hertfordshire. There was also an enquiry about Bushey victims of the Willesden train crash of 1910. Although I had never heard of this incident, evidence was found in the St James' Register of Burials for November 1910, where the names of four young men 'killed in railway accident at Willesden' are listed.

Sometimes researchers are able to provide new information in return for what we are able to tell them. One gentleman wrote from Somerset requesting information about his grandmother and her family, some of whom attended Bushey Heath Infants' School and Bushey Village Board School (later renamed Merry Hill Board School) in the 1880s. He later sent two very evocative photographs of Bushey school groups from around that date, which he had unearthed whilst going through his



Taken between 1881 and 1884, this photograph is probably of children at the Bushey Girls' and Infants' Temporary Board School at the Congregational Church Hall in the High Street. It is now the oldest Bushey school photograph in the Museum collection.

Photograph: Courtesy of Stephen Fawcett

mother's papers. He was able to identify three of the children, but could tell us nothing further. The photographs were previously unknown to the Museum and offered an excellent excuse for some detective work using the school admissions registers and log books. One includes Emma Louisa Tucker and her younger sister Rose who were both at Bushey Board School between 27 February 1888 (when Rose was admitted) and 1 September 1890 (when Emma left). Possibly it was taken on 30 April 1889, when the Infants' and Girls' Schools were amalgamated for prize-giving.

A smaller picture, with three rows of children, includes Alice Tucker, born 1872, in the back row. She is not mentioned in the Bushey Village Board School admissions register (which only starts in 1884) but the log book goes back to 1879, and Alice is first mentioned on 3 June 1881. There are further references in 1882 and 1883 but on 27 February 1885 Alice is omitted from the list of donors towards a teapot being presented to the retiring headmistress, suggesting that she had left by then. The brickwork in this photograph is much older than in the other photograph, but the log book offers an explanation for this as well. In March 1883: 'it is hoped that the new premises will be begun soon', and on 26 March 1885: 'Commenced work in the New School in Merry Hill Lane'. So it is possible that the photograph is of the Bushey Girls' (Temporary) Board School, which was originally housed alongside the old Congregational Church (now the United Reformed Church) before it moved to Merry Hill Lane (now School Lane). If the reasoning is correct it is one of the oldest, if not *the* oldest, school photograph in the Museum's collection.

The find of the photographs is timely as a history of Merry Hill School 1827-1972 has just been published. The authors conducted much of their research at the Museum and copies of the book are available from the Museum Shop. We have also discovered that one of the named pupils sat for Helen Cridland, a Herkomer student. Of course not all researches are so rewarding but such serendipitous possibilities make the more routine work worthwhile.

Field and Hemley Ltd John Hemley and the late Harold Hemley

This article is based on the oral reminiscences of John Hemley, an interview with Harold Hemley which appeared in *Bushey Eyewitness*, originally published in the early 1970s by Bushey Meads School, and the company's archives.

The firm was established by James Field who was a carpenter working for an American financier called John Pierpoint Morgan who lived at Wall Hall. Sometime before 1850 he started on his own as a jobbing builder at Round Bush, Aldenham working in a shed behind the pub. In 1853 he moved to Park Road in Bushey which had been newly opened up. At that time the yard ran from Park Road through to Bournehall Road. Shortly afterwards he also undertook the business of undertaker.

He was followed by his son John Field who had no children. Harry Hemley was at the British Boys' School (now Ashfield) where he became Head Boy. The main function of the Head Boy seemed to be that he was allowed to wind the grandfather clock once a week. John Field was a trustee of the school and he looked around to find someone to train in his business. He looked for a lad who would make a likely office boy, carpenter or bricklayer and chose Harry Hemley who began work for him in 1889 working 5½ days a week for 3s 6d (17½p) a week. After about four years when he asked for an increase, John Field said "*Good Lord no Harry. If I give it to you, you'll go and get married.*"

John Field and Harry Hemley went into partnership and four years later in 1914 Harry Hemley bought out John Field. He had to borrow all the money from various sources in very difficult times. Nevertheless all the money was repaid over the next five years. The name Field and Hemley was retained although there was no longer any member of the Field family connected with the business.

Early entries in the firm's ledgers give some idea of working life at the time. Just prior to the First World War, the firm employed twenty-one workmen and three clerks (including Harry

Hemley). Most of the men worked upwards of 55 hours a week. F Barnett took home £1 9s 6d (£1.45) for a 55½ hour week. During Christmas week, his hours fell to 32 and his pay to 16s 9½d (85p) - no paid holidays in those days! Occasionally the men were able to supplement their pay by acting as pall bearers and grave diggers. Although the firm did not make the arrangements for Herkomer's funeral in April 1914, they assisted at Bushey and four fortunate men each took home £1 instead of the more usual 2s-3s. Funerals varied from the very simple - the only charges made for the funeral of a four month old child were 15s for a horse drawn brougham and 16s 8d burial fee - to the more complex. The funeral of Mrs Burchell-Herne in 1917 necessitated the hire of a best open car and pair, two mourning coaches and pairs and three broughams and pairs all from different firms. When Mrs Simm of Holmbury was buried, three broughams and pairs were hired from Lucketts to convey mourners to and from Bushey Station. Perhaps because he had spent some time in America, the funeral of John Herkomer (uncle of Hubert) was rather different. His body was taken by motor hearse to Golders Green for cremation.

Harry Hemley had two sons, Harold and John. In 1931 Harold left school and studied building at the London Polytechnic for two years before joining the firm. In those days sons were expected to enter the family business and anyway in the 1930s with millions unemployed, Harold felt that he would have been stupid not to. John joined the firm two years later. Both brothers left the firm for war service returning after the war. Their father died in 1959 aged 82. Harold ran Field & Hemley Ltd. Builders, John was responsible for the financial affairs together with Hemley Funeral Services Ltd.

Most of the building work was done under the direction of architects, building individual houses rather than estates. An early job was the Parish Hall in 1888. In the 1930s they built a house for A E Matthews, the actor, in Little Bushey Lane. Built in the Elizabethan style,

every single brick and all the timber used in its construction came from the Earl of Essex's house in Cassiobury Park. It was called the 'Four Tubs' because it had four bathrooms. Matty liked it but his wife hated it and they lived opposite until he died. All the carving for the Lych Gate (destroyed by a bomb in World War Two) was done in the firm's workshops. They also erected the arches in the village for the celebrations for the King George V Silver Jubilee and the Coronations of George VI and Queen Elizabeth II.

Harold died suddenly in 1974. During his working life the nature of the work changed. In the 1930s the village had several large houses with big estates, and the firm had a staff of men working on these estates. The house would be decorated from top to bottom every four years whilst the owners moved out. By the time he died this no longer happened and more work was done for public bodies and industry. They normally had a staff of 30-35, mainly craftsmen but the numbers could go up to 100 during the summer holidays when they were redecorating a school.

After Harold's death John was left running the two companies. Having little practical experience of building, after three years he sold Field & Hemley Ltd to Phil Healy, who initially traded under the same name. John's wife Peggy joined him in the running of Hemley Funeral Services Ltd, which had expanded in 1960 when they purchased McLean's undertakers of Lowestoft Road, Watford. He found the business very satisfying as Bushey was then still little more than a village and he knew virtually everyone and was therefore better able to help them. He wasn't always able to anticipate their wishes however. When a second member of a family was cremated, it was customary to ask if their ashes should be placed near those of the first to be cremated. On one occasion this brought the response, "*Good God no - they rowed all their lives - put them as far apart as possible!*"

On John's retirement in 1987 the firm finally passed out of the family's hands. One of the first entries in the firm's ledgers for the 1850s gave the cost for a funeral with a horse hearse and two two-horse broughams as £19. When John retired, a simple funeral with a hearse and one car cost £450 and under the new management the cost rose to £950! The residents of Bushey have a lot to thank the Hemleys for.

The Manor House

Janet Murphy

The Manor House stood at the junction of Falconer Road and London Road until it was demolished in about 1923 to make way for the Royal Masonic Junior School, but it had not always been on this site.

The original Manor House for the Manor of Bushey stood near to a water mill on the River Colne. Traces of its moat can be found at Bushey Hall Farm. In 1428 the Earl of Salisbury began a magnificent house known as Bushey Hall probably on the demesne of the Manor of Bushey (the part of a manor which was reserved for the lord's own use). In the middle of the sixteenth century the Bushey Hall Estate was separated from the rest of the Manor of Bushey. Residents of later houses on the site included Sir Walter Walker (advocate to Charles II's wife Catherine of Braganza) and Robert Marsham. The last house was sold about 1772 for £350 and demolished.

Possibly a new Manor House was established in the village about the time that the Bushey Hall Estate was formed. An estate plan of 1600-1620 shows a Manor House with an acreage and field names similar to that occupied by Sir William Parkyns in the late seventeenth century. Despite the execution of Sir William for treason, his son succeeded to the Manor and the estate which was sold in 1719 to Richard Capper. Richard was succeeded by his son Francis, a member of Lincoln's Inn and Commissioner for Hackney carriages from 1722-1758. Francis had three sons, Richard, another lawyer who succeeded him, Francis, who entered the church and James who was a member of the East India Company and an eminent meteorologist. Richard's son Robert sold the Manor in 1814 to Frederick Nathaniel Walker. A sale catalogue described the Manor House as having eight rooms downstairs, five principal rooms on the first floor and five principal rooms on the second floor together with wine, ale and beer cellaring.¹

Frederick Nathaniel Walker was succeeded by, in turn, his son Edward Walter and grandson Frederick William Edward. There was a family tradition that they were descended from the Sir Walter Walker who had lived at Bushey Hall, but there is some doubt about this. All three reached high rank in the army. Frederick Nathaniel appeared in the census of 1841. Ten years later the house was empty and after that it was let to various tenants including the Copelands, who were merchants and the Callard family. Edward Walter was there in 1881, having returned home from service in the Crimea to become a prominent local resident, magistrate and director of the Colne Valley Water Company. Following his death later that year, his son promptly let the house and sold all the furniture including the full-sized billiard table, the organ with five stops and the seven octave cottage pianoforte. Frederick William saw almost continuous service in Africa from 1873-1901 and from 1905 until his death in 1910 he was the Governor and Commander in Chief of Gibraltar so that it is unlikely that he spent much time in Bushey. The new ten-



Bushey Manor House about 1910 with the extension that incorporated a new entrance and a billiard room.

Bushey Museum Archive

ant was the exotic sounding Elim H D'Avigdor. His daughter Estelle was one of Herkomer's students.

Next came William Mott Harford, his wife and nine children. They soon entered the artistic and social life of the village. Beatrice, who painted in oils and made silver enamel jewellery, and Alice, who painted water colours, particularly of flowers, and gave violin recitals, became students of Herkomer. Gertrude carved wood and worked with embossed leather. Even their father became an artist. Mary however became indispensable as the rector's secretary and the sons worked for the Cardinal and Harford carpet importers, although Herbert found time to play cricket for Bushey and Hertfordshire and golf at the West Herts Golf Club. His father offered Bushey Cricket Club a new home on the site later occupied by the swimming pool. The annual cricket week was a highlight of the social calendar; the grounds were illuminated by lanterns in the evenings and Watford Town Band played promenade concerts. By 1907 the family had moved to Merry Hill House.

They were replaced by the Gabain family, returning to England after living in France for twenty-five years. There were five daughters, including Ethel a talented artist, and one son, William. Charles Edward Gabain was soon elected to the Bushey Urban District Council. Having signed a twenty year lease, it must have come as something as a shock to the family when the Manor House Estate was put up for sale by the son of General Frederick William Forestier Walker in March 1914, following his father's death.

The description of the house differed somewhat from the description of the house one hundred years earlier even allowing for internal alterations. The five principal rooms on the second

floor in 1814 had become a large bedroom, apple room and box room in 1914 and instead of the five principal rooms on the first floor there were twelve bedrooms and three bathrooms.² Even though some belonged to the servants, the description is so different from that of the earlier house that it appears that one of the earlier Walkers must have added an extension - the lower building in the surviving photographs - with a billiard room and large sitting room on the ground floor and bedrooms above.

The brick built house was lit by gas. A boiler house supplied hot water to the house and heated radiators on the ground floor and part of the first floor. In the grounds there were three greenhouses, a lean-to vinery, two tennis lawns, two fish ponds and several specimen trees.

The potential of the estate for development was emphasised by the advertisements and this is possibly what attracted Mr D M Gant, the well known turf accountant to purchase it and the manorial rights for £13,350. The annual cricket week went ahead but the final match between Bushey and Bushey Heath was overshadowed by the outbreak of the First World War. One of the first people to leave Bushey for France was William Gabain, a fluent French speaker with a knowledge of German, who was soon on his way to become a motor cycle despatch rider. As if that wasn't enough for the family to worry about, they (and therefore also Bushey Cricket Club) were given notice to quit by the end of September 1916. The war put an end to speculative building development and September 1916 came and went with the Gabains still in occupation. Bushey Cricket Club remained in existence but with most of its potential members in the forces it had severe financial problems. In June 1917 it was

reported to a meeting of four members and a chairman that the Club was £47 10s 9d in debt. Bushey Urban District Council came to the rescue, purchasing the Club pavilion and turning it into a communal kitchen with Beatrice Harford as manageress. The war ground on and in 1918 came the sad news that William Gabain had been killed. Eventually the armistice was declared and life slowly returned to normal. Mr Gabain resigned from the Urban District Council having served as chairman throughout the war and Bushey Cricket Club discovered that it would cost them £3,250 to purchase the cricket ground from the new owners and get it ready for cricket - they were therefore homeless.

At a meeting of the Quarterly Court of the Royal Masonic Institution on 10 October 1919 'it was unanimously resolved to purchase the Manor Estate, Bushey for the purpose of erecting a Junior School when practicable, and when an adequate building fund had been raised.'³ The Gabain family left about 1921, the house was demolished and on 8 June 1926 HRH the Most Worshipful Grand Master laid the foundation stone of the new Junior School. Today only a few specimen trees remain of the Manor House estate.

Acknowledgement is made to Grant Longman for help with the research for this article.

Notes

1. Sale of Bushey Manor 1814. Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies. HCRO 54447.
2. Sale Catalogue for the Manor House and Estate 29 April 1914. Bushey Museum.
3. A Short History of the Institution 1798-1938. The Royal Masonic Institution for Boys. p. 14.

Guests at the Manor House annual cricket week held in the field at the junction of Falconer Road and Finch Lane, circa 1900.



Green Line Coach Services through Bushey during the Second World War

Ian Read

In 1929 the London General Omnibus Company (LGOC) began to establish a large network of express coach services radiating out from Central London into the Home Counties on all sides of London. This was done partly to compete with the main line railway services but mainly to counter competition from independent bus and coach operators. More reliable and comfortable motor buses and coaches running on pneumatic tyres had led to the emergence of a large number of small competitors to the LGOC on central London routes. It was anxious for similar competition on routes into London from outlying towns and villages to be stifled in favour of its own operations. Bushey was on the route of the first such express service, a predecessor of the legendary 'Green Line'.

By June 1933 all coach services through Bushey were being operated by Green Line Coaches Ltd, this wholly owned subsidiary of the LGOC having taken over the only remaining independent competitor, Bucks' Express, in February 1932.

London Transport (LT) was formed on 1 July 1933 to create a publicly-owned monopoly of all local 'stage carriage' i.e. short distance passenger road services in an area of approximately 35 miles radius around London, including Bushey and Watford. In addition it inherited the train services operated by the Underground and

the Metropolitan/District railway companies. Contract and private hire bus and coach operations remained with private operators.

Green Line services in 1939

LT was the sole provider of local scheduled bus and coach services by the time war was declared on Sunday 3 September 1939. All the services in this area were operated by the Country Bus and Green Line Coach Department (green bus) except for routes 142 and 158 which ran from the Central Bus Department (red bus) territories of Kilburn and Harrow respectively. This came about because of the way in which the dominant LGOC had opened up motor-bus routes throughout London and the Home Counties in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Agreements had been made in which subservient agents actually operated the routes which ran outside the Metropolitan Police area. One effect of these arrangements was the higher rate of pay enjoyed by red bus crews over their green Country cousins, a distinction that remained until well into the 1980s.

The Green Line coach services through Bushey at the outbreak of war ran under the following route letters:

- E. Tring - Victoria - Chelsham every hour with alternate coaches starting from Aylesbury. At weekends and on Bank Holidays all coaches ran to and from Aylesbury.

- F. Hemel Hempstead - Victoria - Edenbridge or Tatsfield hourly.
 - I. Watford (Leavesden Road garage) - Oxford Circus - Crawley or Redhill, every half hour with alternate coaches starting from Abbots Langley.
 - J. Watford (Leavesden Road garage) - Oxford Circus - Reigate every half hour.
- These four services ran over a common route between Watford town centre and central London via Bushey Arches, London Road, Bushey Heath, Stanmore, Canons Park and Edgware Road.
- T. Watford (Leavesden Road garage) - Golders Green Station via London Road, Elstree Road and the Watford By-pass. It was a half hourly service with connections and through fares via the Underground to Central London.

All routes ran daily.

Green Line catered for the more upmarket passenger. The first coach from Bushey to central London was as late as 7.31am with a coach to Golders Green at 7.27am. Thereafter a ten minute service over the common route operated for commuters and shoppers with the last coach towards London at 10.58pm. Theatregoers could enjoy an after show supper and catch the last bus from Marble Arch at 11.34pm or from Oxford Circus at 12.23am back to Bushey. The journey to central London from Bushey took 48 minutes, a time which did not vary throughout the day and evening, an indication of traffic conditions in those days.

Timetables and fares

Short distance fares were high in order to discourage use of coaches for local journeys. Fares from Bushey (Red Lion) to Oxford Circus, Marble Arch or Victoria were 1s 3d single or 2s 1d return. Holders of Green line coach return tickets could use the LMS service from Euston to Bushey on Saturdays and Sundays after 4pm. This may have been introduced to counter complaints that the scheduled coaches could not cope with the number of passengers wishing to use them for journeys home after a day in town. Duplicate coaches were operated at busy times such as Sundays and Bank Holidays but there were not always sufficient vehicles or crews available to cope with such peak loads.



A Green Line coach toils up Clay Hill in the 1930s. The destination board reads Godstone, which is near Reigate, so it was presumably a variation on Route J. Reginald Spencer's grocery shop which also housed Sparrows Herne Post Office is on the left.



An RF Green Line coach on Route 706 bound for Aylesbury passes St Peter's parish church Bushey Heath in the 1960s.

The pre-war passenger could board the vehicle at any point by hailing the driver, and signal when they wished to alight by pulling the bell cord inside the vehicle. By 1939 Watford Council had imposed compulsory boarding and alighting stops in order to reduce traffic congestion in the High Street.

In order to maintain reasonable journey times, Green Line Coaches adopted a policy of fixed stops (compulsory or by request) over most of the roads served. In the Bushey area these were at Chalk Hill/Aldenham Road, Red Lion, Melbourne Road, Police Station, Three Crowns and The Alpine. Route T diverged from the others at the Three Crowns and stopped at Caldecote Gardens and Heathbourne Road.

Vehicles

LT, like its predecessor the LGOC, was always at the forefront of vehicle development and was renowned for undertaking the complete design and manufacture of buses and coaches for its own use, in conjunction with its close associate AEC which built the vehicle chassis. Green Line coaches were no exception and, having divested itself of the various non-standard vehicles which were inherited from the

independent operators it had taken over, LT set about providing first-class vehicles for its Green Line passengers.

In March 1936 a second generation of AEC Regal coaches had been introduced to routes I and J, replacing the original purpose built vehicles of 1930. The new vehicles were of the traditional 'half-cab' layout i.e. with the engine positioned alongside the driver at the front but powered by diesel instead of petrol as on the earlier vehicles. They had semi-streamlined bodies built by Weymann Ltd of Addlestone, Surrey with the doorway situated just behind the front wheels and had seats for thirty passengers. The sliding door was operated by the conductor who had to stand at the front when not collecting fares. These coaches were classified 9T9 under LT's coding system.

In July 1938 an improved version of the 9T9 with a bigger engine, the 10T10, was introduced on routes E and F. These had a more streamlined external style in the fashion of the day, and had bodies built in LT's own factory at Chiswick.

The operation of the four Edgware Road routes required 39 vehicles daily. To achieve this 43 coaches were kept at the Chelsham, Crawley and Reigate garages to the south of London and Hemel Hempstead, Tring and Watford (Leavesden Road) to the north. This allowed up to four vehicles to be under maintenance daily.

The Watford - Golders Green route T was operated entirely from Watford (Leavesden Road) and required four vehicles daily. Originally this route was operated by the standard first-generation Regal T-type coaches. By June 1938 increased demand elsewhere for these vehicles led to the use of buses on route T instead of coaches. The vehicles used were of the unusual AEC Q-type built in 1935, which had the engine placed just behind the driver and underneath the first bench seat on that side. They had thirty-five seats with the doorway set back along the side of the bus, which had a 'full front'. This allowed the placing of a pair of seats alongside the driver in the front as in a car.

The Phoney War

It had been confidently expected that the Luftwaffe would unleash a continuous

heavy bombardment on London and other major cities on the outbreak of war. The Government privately expected very heavy casualties and emergency evacuation plans had been drawn up.

By 7pm on Thursday 31 August 1939, after the homeward commuter journeys had been completed, all Green Line coaches were withdrawn from service. Overnight and through the next day they were converted into ambulances capable of carrying eight or ten stretcher cases together with accompanying staff in a prepared plan for the evacuation of patients from the central London hospitals.

Passengers normally carried by Green Line were forced to use local bus or train services. No alternative services were made available and as far as is known, no extra buses were provided on local routes 142, 158 or 306 to compensate. Journeys must have been tedious and uncomfortable.

Many businesses and Government departments had been evacuated to surrounding, less vulnerable towns, such as Watford, so the demand for transport into London was probably severely depleted as people who would normally be travelling for work, shopping or recreation were engaged locally or away on HM affairs.

The expected bombardments did not materialise and by early spring 1940 there was an increasing air of optimism that life could return to normal. Many of those evacuated returned to their homes and jobs in London. After pressure from commuters who had suffered at the hands of the hard pressed railway companies, limited Green Line coach services were resumed.

On 13 March 1940 routes E and F started to run again between Aylesbury/Hemel Hempstead and Victoria, providing a half hourly service through Bushey in each direction. They operated to pre-war journey times (which was remarkable under blackout conditions) using reconverted single-deck coaches supplemented by double-deck buses at peak times. Full Green Line services could not be resumed because of fuel rationing and shortage of crews caused by LT staff being called for service in the armed forces.

From the evening of 3 September 1939, the entire country had been subjected to blackout regulations. These made driving conditions extremely hazardous. There was no street lighting, windows of buildings were completely covered and traffic lights switched off or covered with metal plates to show a small cross. Vehicles were fitted with headlamp masks which provided little or no illumination. To compensate, vehicle wings and bumpers were painted

white and kerbs and roadside obstructions such as trees gained white stripes or rings. Buses and coaches had white circles on the rear to reduce the risk of shunts. Window glass was treated with anti-blast netting with small apertures provided through which passengers were expected to keep track of their surroundings. The interior lighting on vehicles was severely reduced by heavy shades making journeys more tedious as passengers could not see to read. Conductors found it nearly impossible to issue correct tickets or change.

Unfamiliar obstructions such as air raid shelters were constructed in roadways and the driving of vehicles even over familiar territory was a hazardous experience. Journey times after dark became a hit and

miss affair, literally, as road accidents climbed at an alarming rate, a fact understandably played down by Churchill's morale-conscious government. It was best not to venture out after dark but many people were forced to do so as they were working long hours.

The Blitz

In September 1940, the Luftwaffe unleashed its heavy bombardment of London and provincial towns and cities. Although Bushey suffered a number of such incidents, no references have been found of buses or coaches being damaged by enemy action in this area. It was common practice for vehicles to be abandoned if caught in an air raid and for passengers

and crew to seek shelter where they could. London's transport system was severely disrupted by damage to roads and railway tracks. The diversion of coaches round these obstacles added to the already lengthy journey times.

From 4 December 1940 coach routes were renumbered. Routes E and F became 40 and 40A respectively. A route 40B was planned between Watford (Leavesden Road garage) and Victoria but for some unknown reason this was not put into practice. The combined schedules provided a fifteen minute service with the first London bound service at 7.07am and the last out of London at 10.25pm. Journey times were extended to allow for blackout driving conditions and Bushey to Marble Arch was

Fifty Years Ago...

Bushey Museum Archive

Bushey Urban District Council

*To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty,
The Loyal and Dutiful Address of the
Bushey Urban District Council.*

May it please your Majesty,

We beg most humbly to express the profound sorrow with which the sad intelligence of the death of our Most Gracious Sovereign King George has been received by the inhabitants of the Urban District of Bushey and most respectfully to tender to your Majesty and to Her Majesty the Queen Mother and to all the Members of the Royal Family our sincere sympathy. We desire most humbly to assure your Majesty of our devoted attachment and allegiance.

We earnestly pray that Almighty God will be pleased in His Mercy and goodness to bless your Majesty with a Long and Happy Reign.

*Envoyn under the Common Seal of the
Bushey Urban District Council
this Twelfth day of February
in the year of our Lord 1952.*

J. Harle
Chairman of the Council.

C. G. Everatt
Clerk of the Council.



Bushey Museum Archive

Despite predictions of lack of interest by local authorities, the major national and social event of this year was the Golden Jubilee of the accession of HM the Queen. Fifty years ago attitudes and responses were very different. There was genuine national grief when George VI died on 6 February 1952. Some of this was reflected when his wife, the Queen Mother died early this year.

In Bushey on 7 February 1952, C G Everatt, Clerk of the Council wrote to all the Councillors on behalf of the Chairman of Bushey Urban District Council to summon them to a special meeting on 12 February to pass a resolution of condolence to the new Queen and to affix the Common Seal of the Council to a Loyal and Dutiful Address to her. Meanwhile the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Sir William Acland Bart MC, AFC had announced his intention to come to Bushey at 12.30pm on Saturday 9 February to Proclaim the Accession. Hasty arrangements were made and a large crowd gathered in Rudolph Road at the appointed time. The Proclamation was to be read from the steps of the Council Offices, now our Museum of course. A guard of honour was provided by Royal Masonic School Army Cadets and Bushey RAF Cadets. There were detachments of the Bushey British Legion, Scouts and Guides, the Fire Service and representatives from all the Bushey Schools.

A fanfare by trumpeters of the Herts Regiment started the proceedings and the High Sheriff emerged accompanied by the Under Sheriff, the Deputy Sheriff and his Officer, his Chaplain and his Clerk. He was welcomed by the Chairman of the Council, Councillor John Harle, the Clerk and all the Bushey Councillors and Justices of the Peace. After the High Sheriff had read the Proclamation there was another fanfare, the National Anthem and then three rousing cheers for Her Most Excellent Majesty. The bells of St James' parish church rang out while all the dignitaries repaired to the Council Chamber for a restorative sherry. The High Sheriff particularly mentioned the sherry in his letter of thanks to the Council Chairman, which he sent from Hertford the following week.

Bryen Wood

scheduled to take 53 minutes.

The purpose-built Green Line coaches had been again taken out of service to assist with the transport of refugees, evacuees and wounded servicemen after the evacuation from Dunkirk. Both red and green double-deck buses were used on Green Line routes. By 9 April 1941, when the Summer schedules were introduced, these two services were being operated with a total of 15 STL-type double-deckers (9 from Tring garage and 6 from Hemel Hempstead).

By mid-1942 military losses in the Middle East cut off the supply of rubber for tyres and the U-boat blockade necessitated the supply of petrol on 'absolute need only' basis. As a result of the worsening situation LT was ordered by the government to make stringent cut-backs and, after 29 September 1942, all Green Line services were withdrawn and not reinstated until after the war.

The Rebirth of the Green Line

With the favourable outcome of the war in Europe reasonably expected by mid-1944, plans for peacetime operation of bus and coach services were being prepared. In

October 1944, LT submitted detailed plans to the authorities for revitalised coach services, which included routes through Watford and Bushey.

Planning criteria required that each route should be capable of operation by double-deck vehicles and that if two or more routes ran parallel out of London on one side then they must do so on the other. The pre-war Route T would not be reintroduced because it would parallel the proposed extension of the Underground's Northern Line from Golders Green to Bushey Heath.

The new routes were to be given numbers instead of the pre-war letters and were initially planned to operate as follows:

- 706 Hemel Hempstead - Westerham
- 707 Hemel Hempstead - Oxted
- 708 Aylesbury - East Grinstead

The timetables would be integrated as before with the complete services running via Marble Arch and Victoria rather than some via Oxford Circus as before the war.

By November 1945 revisions to the plans allowed for a much amplified service through Bushey based on more optimistic

passenger estimates. Government planning for post-war housing envisaged a far greater population in this area than was subsequently allowed under Green Belt legislation. Three further routes were proposed:

- 709 Watford - Caterham
- 710 Watford - Crawley
- 711 Watford - Reigate

The proposed 709/710/711 grouping was initially to run from a temporary terminus at Portland Place. This was because increases in local works services in the Watford area had caused a shortage of garage space. The Traffic Commissioner, who strictly controlled the licensing of bus and coach routes was not in favour of this arrangement and consequently only the 706/707/708 group went into operation.

The government had imposed restrictions on the reintroduction of coach services into London, mindful that priority should be given to operating local bus services. Coach services could only be restarted if it could be done without causing a labour shortage. In addition, wasteful competition with parallel railway services was to be avoided. However these restrictions were eased from February 1946 and LT set about putting the Green Line coaches back on the road. Route 708 Hemel Hempstead - East Grinstead began running every 30 minutes from 1 May 1946 and routes 706/707 Aylesbury - Westerham/Oxted every 30 minutes from 26 June 1946.

The AEC 10T10-type coaches, which had been used during the war for ambulance and evacuation duties, were rehabilitated and made ready for the re-opening of the Green Line network. A large number had been converted to 'Clubmobiles' for the American Red Cross and served as mobile tea and food bars for American troops stationed in the UK.

Green Line routes 706, 707 and 708 continued to serve the villagers of Bushey for commuting, shopping and leisure trips to and from London largely unchanged until the mid-eighties. They were joined in 1956 by the 719 route Hemel Hempstead - Victoria via Kingsbury and Neasden. Increasing traffic congestion and the electrification of the main-line railway through Hemel Hempstead, Watford and Bushey in the mid 1960s gradually eroded passenger demand for the Green Line.

The last services ran in 1987 thus removing the common-place sight of a Green Line coach running through Bushey High Street, a link which reached back to the late 1920s.

Poole Pottery and Rosary Priory

Chris Jordan visited the Poole Pottery Museum on the quayside at Poole before the factory's removal to a different part of the town and the redevelopment of the site...

The gallery offered a most informative film show on the business side of the pottery as well as an excellent display of ceramics produced over the years in Poole. It included this faience panel, its design commissioned as a gift for the new school buildings at Rosary Priory, Bushey Heath by their architect W J Gregory. Two identical examples were given, one being put over the entrance door to the High School and the other over the door to the Preparatory School.



The further information adjacent to the example displayed at Poole noted that the design was modelled by Ron Goodwin and taken from a painting, by the artist Sassoferrata of the Madonna and child with St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena. This was commissioned for the basilica S. Sabina, Rome, completed in 1643.

Curator's note. The acting curator told me that it would be included in the new Poole Pottery Museum when it opened; unfortunately it was not available for loan in the meantime. Bryen Wood.

Madonna and Child with St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena, approx. 30 x 18 inches, Poole Pottery

Photograph: Chris Jordan

Vincent van Gogh and Herkomer

Douglas Chowns, a Bushey Artist in New Zealand

Our place on this planet, the times we live in and those with whom we come in contact are what we artists are all about.

Experiences and influences such as growing up in wartime Bushey, Art School, artist colleagues in a Mayfair studio, RAF service, marriage, the 8.16 from Aylesbury sharing a compartment with producer Mike Orram, Lord Clem and a dancing Dame, residence in Portugal, Spain and the Dominican Republic, a brief pass with the Czech occupation, Greek artist Dimitri Perdikidis in Madrid, a larger than life American writer, my father mentor the local pueblo Alcade, his Aztec wife my colleague, the internationals and intellectuals who visited of a Sunday ritual all show through in my own art as does my life here in New Zealand.

My interest in van Gogh as a social realist similar to Herkomer, Millais and Frank Holl sharpened when in 1989, as senior art tutor at Northland Polytechnic School of Art, I organised and led a second year study tour to New York, Madrid, Barcelona, Paris and Provence. Memorably I lectured in the olive groves with the mistral through my hair, the leaves and twigs flying, one hundred years after van Gogh had faced the same season with canvas and wet oils.

In a letter to his brother from the Hague dated July 1882 van Gogh wrote: "For me one of the highest and noblest expressions of art is always that of the English, for instance Millais and Herkomer and Frank Holl ... What I mean in regard to the difference between the old masters and the modern ones is - perhaps the modern ones are the deeper thinkers."

Only four years younger than

Herkomer, van Gogh arrived in London the year before Herkomer became resident in Bushey. Vincent van Gogh was a bright young man, good at his job, who knew London and the international art scene well. Not yet the artist we know, he had been apprenticed four years before to Goupil & Cie, art dealers, where he

Europe's cities and London's East End. Possibly he was also touched by Herkomer's illustrations of 1871 in *The Graphic* of the *Chelsea Pensioner* - a magazine no doubt regularly read at Goupil's.

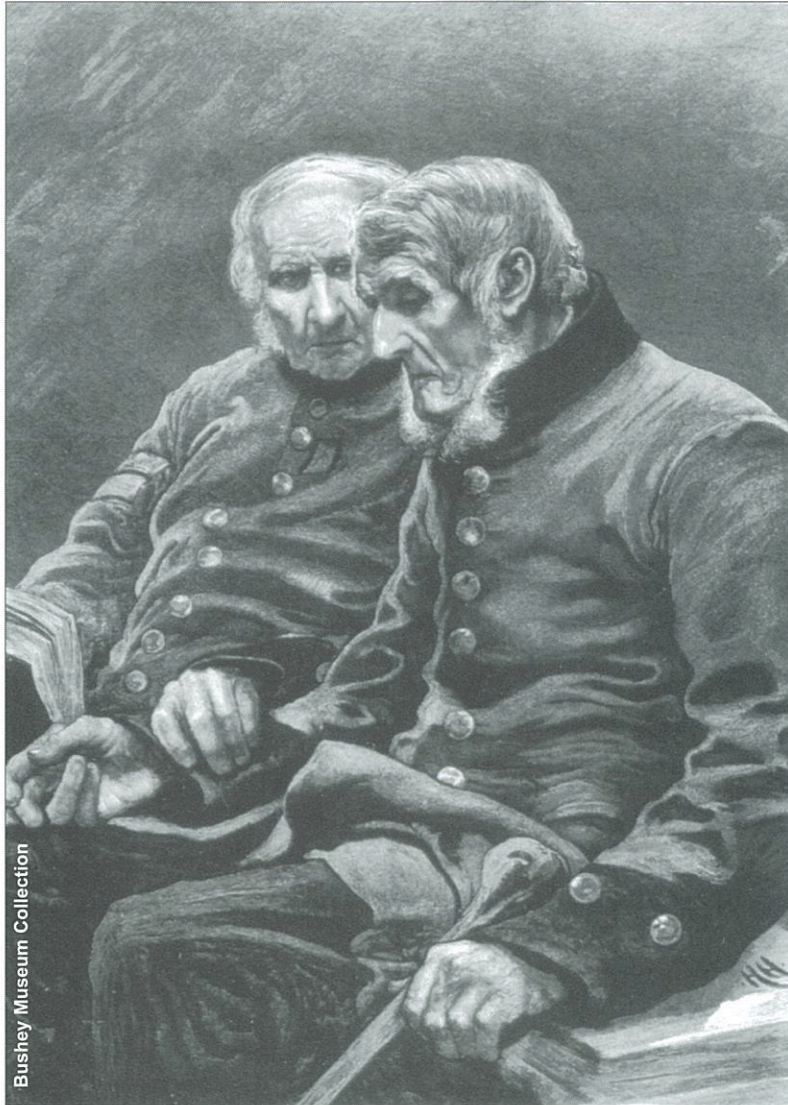
Herkomer's *At Death's Door* and *After the Toil of the Day* in 1873 were followed by *The Last Muster* in 1875, which van Gogh may have seen in London or at the Paris salon. Goupil's may have dealt with Herkomer, van Gogh would have known the reputation of Herkomer and probably would have attended the same art functions. Herkomer's *Western Union* in 1877 and *Eventide* in 1878 followed and would have been known by art dealers of which van Gogh was one.

Rejection of marriage by van Gogh's landlady's daughter, Ursula Loyer, in favour of another fellow lodger broke his heart. He became a depressive. His work with Goupil's deteriorated and he had to leave - as good as sacked.

Aware of the poverty and social inequality which Herkomer illustrated and painted and because of his talent for speaking several languages, van Gogh's idea was to become a social

worker. He wished to help the poor and aged, especially migrants in the workhouses and slums of the East End of London.

Depressed, he returned to his parents but in April 1876 he returned to England as assistant teacher at a boys' school in Ramsgate for its last two months by the sea before it returned to London. In June he walked to friends in London and then on to the village of Welwyn near Hatfield



Wood engraving of two of the main figures of *Chelsea Pensioners* in *The Last Muster* by Hubert Herkomer, published in *The Graphic* on 15 May 1875.

worked in The Hague and Brussels before being sent to their London office in Southampton Street, off the Strand. He insisted on wearing a fashionable hat of the day to walk to work each morning. He was well thought of and enjoyed his assignment.

It occurs to me that among his travels and influences he would be very aware of the rural poor of his father's congregations and the slums and workhouses of

to see his sister Anna who taught French at a private school.

Vincent walked through Barnet on the way and afterwards returned to the school, now at Twickenham Road, Isleworth. He must have passed through Harrow or even Bushey, where Herkomer had been living for a year. We don't know, but being very religious and with prospects of being "a sort of curate" he may well have taken a look at St Albans Abbey and cut across country to Harrow and Heston to Isleworth. It's interesting to think that he might have wandered from Aldenham over Merry Hill and on to Harrow.

Personally I find his close presence at this time fascinating, but I am a bit of a romantic.

It was not until he regained his position with Mr Jones at the school in Isleworth that he began to take sermons for the first time at Austin Friars Church by the Thames. His confidence restored he sketched the church and completed immature sketches of the chapels at Turnham Green and Petersham before disastrous religious self infliction, hopeless academic study and his return to the continent. His drawing and painting skills improved vastly with well drawn houses and powerful figures of miners and poor exhausted people. Drawing had become important and serious art beginnings were starting to churn in the man face to face with the realities of life.

Millais had shown his *Chill October*, Herkomer *Pressing to the West* - the New York emigrants and Holl *Irish Emigrants*; all powerful social realist works which Vincent no doubt saw or was aware of.

"I wonder what [Herkomer] would say today of the works that I personally believe he influenced in the younger and mad Dutchman on the edge of reason"

Vincent's direction was taking place. In 1879 he drew *The Man with the Shovel* and *Worn Out*, an old sick farmer sitting on a chair by the hearth with his head in his hands and his elbows on his knees. From 1881 the subjects are close to Herkomer's own heart. At this time Vincent comments about Herkomer, Millais and Holl to his brother Theo in July 1882.

His *The Field* in 1883 speaks of the lot of the farm labourer in Nuenen, a lot not so very different from those labouring in Bushey of whom Herkomer was aware. Interestingly Herkomer began life poor whereas van Gogh began frugally but reasonably well off. At this time they were moving in opposite financial directions. Herkomer was enjoying his school, society, fame and fortune while Vincent was wallowing in the mud of life, a nonentity who by art standards of the day was sometimes incredibly rough in his spontaneous technique. In 1885, the same year as Herkomer's *Hard Times*, Vincent produced *The Potato Eaters*.

The next five years saw Herkomer ever upward and opulent in his life style and his school his joy. Painting in heart never far away from his impoverished beginnings that provided the pathos and

subjects to make the heart weep. Meanwhile the madman gave way, ignored convention and painted from the heart in frenzied abandon, producing a wealth of works which are mostly the treasures by which we remember him today. Vincent Willem van Gogh aged 37 was dead by the end of July at the time *Our Village* was painted.

Herkomer, unaware of the talent or works of the crazy Dutchman, would most likely have not been impressed. My guess is that while Herkomer drew from the wrist, van Gogh drew from the shoulder - but this is an artist's and tutor's comment. It makes for a different state of mind, perhaps a greater power to the drawing for one who wishes to communicate the force of the subjects.

I wonder what the professor would have said had he met Vincent in St Remy in 1889. I wonder what he would say today of the works that I personally believe he influenced in the younger and mad Dutchman on the edge of reason.

Editor's note

Chris Jordan also drew attention to the links between van Gogh and Herkomer in the Journal of the Friends of Bushey Museum Trust Summer 1992.

Twenty-Five Years Ago...



There were many celebrations of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in Bushey in 1977. Remarkably we have only one photograph of any of these celebrations in the Museum Archive. It is of the street party in Mead Way, North Bushey published by the Echo & Post Ltd. Please let us have or lend us any photographs you may have.

Bryen Wood
Photograph: Echo & Post Ltd