

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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PUBS

by John Heathfield

Medieval wells produced drinking water that was decidedly unhealthy, so most people brewed and drank their own beer; the names 'beer' and 'ale' are alternative names for what is essentially the same product – the fermentation of a mixture of malt, barley and hops, which has the effect of killing germs. The remnants of the mash can be "twice brewed" to produce a weaker drink often called small beer. Because some people were better at brewing than others, they could sell their surplus and so beer shops or public houses sprang up; in Barnet for example the land tax returns for the late 1390s show 2 tavern keepers, 12 malt mongers and 15 brewers in a population of about 420. A publican merely sold drink, whereas an innkeeper had to provide accommodation and food for travellers.

Local parishes vetted brewers. In 1505 Mary Sanny was granted permission to be a "common brewer" for four pence. She lived on the site of what became The Griffin Inn in Whetstone. A common brewer sold ale to anyone who wished to buy it and often served more than one tavern. By about 1550 local parishes were required to appoint "ale tasters" to ensure that the beer sold was of good quality and action would be taken to maintain the quality. In 1606, when William Miller of Hadley was charged with selling beer that was "foul, loathsome and disgusting" he was fined four pence.



The Blue Anchor, one of the Whetstone's vanished pubs

Even earlier, in 1484, the ale taster for Finchley reported that "*Thomas Sanney and John Doget are commonly accustomed to put les hoppez in their ale*".

During the eighteenth century there was a fashion for "brown ale", a sweet beer, but a further duty on barley caused breweries to include more hops in their brews and this resulted in a "bitter beer". At the same period "pale ale" was produced, which when mixed with ordinary beer made "half and half". Early in the 1720s a more mellow beer was produced for "labouring fellows", and particular porters who drank it often at breakfast. It was a beer produced only in London and had various names like porter, stout, brown stout, London stout, entire ale and heavy wet.

Markets naturally attracted customers and in consequence many pubs were nearby – Barnet had 21 at one time. By 1890 East Finchley market place boasted *The George* and the *Windsor Castle*, while nearby were the *Black Bess*, *Green Man*, *Bald Faced Stag* and *White Lion* in the High Road and the *Manor Cottage Tavern* in East End Road. Some pubs had a blacksmith available. A horse that has lost a shoe has only three, hence the name *Three Horseshoes*.

Many pubs proclaimed the loyalty of their customers with names like *The Crown*, *The King's Head* or *The Queen's Arms*. Local dignitaries were honoured by the *Sebright Arms*, *The Clarendon Arms* or *The Duke of York*: *The Two Brewers* reminds us that the barrels were so heavy that they were carried on a pair of long poles by two delivery men. Back in Roman times a common sign for a tavern was a bush hung on a crooked billet of wood, hence *The Crooked Billet*. Another popular name was *Adam and Eve*; the pub at Mill Hill was locally called the rude pub because the sign carried a picture of Eve.

In 1665 some people of Totteridge stayed up all night praying and drawing up a petition to the Justices of the Peace saying that "*Never in the memory of man had any common ale house been allowed to be set up amongst them, there being no usual road through the village to any place or market. Nevertheless a licence hath recently been granted to one John Bemon to sell ale....he is by profession a tailor and clerk of the parish, and able to earn a competent living thereby if he would apply himself to his calling, his wife is a lusty woman also able to work for her living. The said ale house is of now other use than to debauch the neighbourhood and other servants of the parish, being a disorderly tipping house, receiving and entertaining idle persons and suffering them to continue and sit drinking there, not only on ordinary days, but on Sundays also, and many times at unreasonable hours in the night and is a harbour for vagrants and vagabonds*".

It was fairly common for pubs to change their names. *The Cardinal's Hat* in Barnet High Street became successively *The Antelope*, *The Red Lion* and *The Dandy Lion*. Similarly *The Mitre* has been the *Busshe*, *Rose and Crown*, *Rose and Man*. There has been a tavern on this site since before 1449, making it the oldest pub still in use in the area.

Class distinction was apparent in pubs. The Public Bar had sawdust on the floor and beer was a penny a pint cheaper than in the Saloon. The Private Bar was a small room selling at top prices. Gin was introduced into England from the Netherlands during the 1690s and it became so popular that by 1729 Londoners were drinking 8 million gallons a year. The Government steadily increased the

tax with the result that there were Gin Tax riots in 1743. In 1739 Judith Defour was charged with fetching her own child out of the workhouse so that she could murder it in order to sell its clothes for 1s 4d to buy gin. Hogarth's terrible Gin Alley is no exaggeration. Worried by the amount of binge drinking, the Government put up gin duty steeply in 1751. Many pubs responded by putting a black band around their signs or changing the name, for instance *The White Horse* in Whetstone became *The Black Horse*. At the same time licensing laws were introduced to control the sale of spirits and publicans had to be licensed by the local magistrate.

An interesting example of the way in which the Victorians produced virtue out of vice is the so-called "whisky money". The Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act of 1889 raised about £750,000 annually by taxing whisky and this money was distributed to local authorities and used to pay for police pensions, with any surplus being spent on Secondary Education. During the 1914 – 18 War pub opening hours were reduced to reduce the risk of drunken factory workers making mistakes when making munitions. Beer was also reduced in strength for the same reason.

Remarkable features of modern times are the switch from beer to lager and the serving of food as well as tea and coffee, with many pubs making more profit from the food than the drink side of the business. Certainly one attracts the other. The latest issue is the banning of smoking, with some pubs claiming that it will put them out of business, although this has not happened in Ireland where the pub is even more of an institution. In any case smoking is being banned in all public places in England from 1 July 2007.

WHERE DID THE ORANGES GO?

by Sylvia Stilts

During my childhood I was not allowed to read newspapers or listen to the radio. Some of my friends said there was going to be a war but I did not believe them and my parents changed the subject when I asked.

In August 1937 my brother and I spent the school holiday with relatives in Lancashire and one day my uncle took us round the factory he managed. Girls in green overalls and mob-caps sat at benches assembling gasmasks, which I assumed were for miners as there was gas in the pits. No mention was made that this was a preparation for war and I was too naïve to work it out. The smell of rubber was overpowering in the shed where thick clumps of bacon-coloured rubber hung in rows. A by-product was pale green and pink erasers and we were given some to take home for our pencil boxes.

In September 1938 I started at my new school and was delighted that the uniform included fawn lisle stockings instead of grey ankle-socks. I relished learning to play hockey, take part in netball matches, learn new subjects, make new friends, enjoy the class outings and, wow, there was a tuck shop at break! One Saturday before Christmas, the first-year girls gave a party for a coach load of exuberant girls from London's East End who opened the eyes of us staid little madams by teaching us to do the Lambeth Walk.

But then things changed. Silver barrage balloons appeared, bobbing in the sky with the sun glinting off them, searchlights combed the night sky and air-raid sirens installed on police station roofs practised the continuous note of the "all

clear". Early in 1939, everyone was issued with a Ration Book and a gasmask in a cardboard box on a long string so that it could be hung across the shoulder. Air-raid shelters of corrugated iron were erected around dug-outs in gardens and surrounded with sandbags. Householders put protective strips of sticky paper across window panes and hung thick curtains so that no chink of light would show in the street.

We lived in Friern Barnet, just outside the area where parents were told their children would be evacuated to the countryside in the event of war. I was rather disappointed not to be included because I imagined it would be a short-lived adventure and I didn't consider what it would mean to be separated from parents and family.

On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, on the Sunday morning, Dad and I were returning from his allotment with our box-on-wheels full of fruit and vegetables for the week, when the air-raid warning wailed. We sprinted along, runner beans jolting off the pile and Dad, white-faced and grim, said: "Leave them! This is it!" Arriving home, we shot indoors and joined Mum and David in the sitting room where we sat with gasmasks on our knees and apprehension on our faces. After a while, the "all-clear" sounded and we learned from the radio that an unidentified plane approaching from the south coast had prompted warnings. From 11am Britain had been at war and Mum had heard the news on her own.

I returned to school on the Tuesday to find the iron gates and railings had been removed "to make Spitfires", and the grass from hockey and football pitches was now mounded over underground shelters. There were steps down to a chilly and damp passage with a bench seat along both walls and a bucket behind a screen at the end. It must have been difficult for those teaching, especially when the lights failed and much giggling and scuffling ensued. There was absolute silence though, if a pupil ventured in the direction of the bucket! This was so intimidating that we kept our legs crossed for as long as possible and longed for the "all-clear".

The Senior History Master had abandoned us to run the secret Civil Defence operations in the cellar and one of the classrooms had been taken over as the intruders' Leisure Room. This meant that one class had their desks removed to a corridor to which they had to return between lessons to change their text books. Gradually most of the men teachers were called up, much to the girls' dismay, and several elderly women came out of retirement to help out, to our further dismay. The German teacher was interned and replaced by an older woman with a thick Irish accent which must have rubbed off, because when I later applied for a job requiring a knowledge of German, the interviewer was puzzled by my accent which he understood but could not place.

When the days grew dark early, we attended school only in the mornings so that we didn't have to go home in the blackout. Of course, we were given piles of homework to compensate, and it did get done because there were no distractions. Television had not generally arrived, very few cinemas remained open, and nobody threw a party. At weekends we couldn't go to the park in case there was an air-raid.

Oranges, bananas and pineapples disappeared from greengrocers, confectionery was rationed and there was no ice cream. I wondered how I would survive another summer without being able to stop the ice cream man on his tricycle and buy a snofrute!



Few people grumbled; they just shrugged and said: "There's a war on". I accepted this way of life which included sleeping and scrapping with my brother under the billiard table when there were raids at night, and collecting still warm jagged pieces of shrapnel from the pavement on the way to school. We played board games and listened to 78s on the gramophone and the highlight of the week was to listen to ITMA on the radio. We were resilient to the shock of people being killed when their house was bombed and we looked out toys and clothes for those who had lost all their possessions.

By the time the war ended, I had grown up, found a job, learned to make-do-and-mend, conjure up recipes, never waste anything, and always regard the glass as being half full. In fact, I still do!

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The seventh AGM of the Society took place on Wednesday 23 May. John Donovan resigned as Secretary and was replaced by Patricia Richardson and John Holtham was appointed as Membership Secretary. All the other members of the Committee were re-elected. As the finances of the Society were in a healthy state, it was agreed that it would not be necessary to increase the membership subscriptions for the year April 2008 – March 2009.

A copy of the approved Income and Expenditure Account for the year 1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007 is enclosed with this Newsletter.

WHERE PRAYER HAS BEEN VALID

by John Philpott

When I first read Izaak Walton's *Life of George Herbert*, I was surprised to find a reference to Friern Barnet:

"About one month before his death [1633], his friend Mr Ferrar....hearing of Mr Herbert's sickness, sent Mr Edmund Duncon (who is now rector of Fryer Barnet in the County of Middlesex) from his [Ferrar's] House of Gidden Hall, which is near Huntingdon, to see Mr Herbert.....and Mr Duncon was to return back to Gidden, with an account of Mr Herbert's condition. Mr Duncon found him weak...but on seeing Mr Duncon, he rais'd himself vigorously, saluted him and....inquir'd the health of his brother Ferrar?....and after some discourse....he said to Mr Duncon – Sir, I see by your habit that you are a Priest, and I desire you to pray with me....and Mr Duncon did so... The next morning Mr Duncon left him, and betook himself to a journey to Bath, but with a promise to return back to him within five days."

Ill health had forced Nicholas Ferrar to give up his medical studies at Cambridge and travel abroad. After his return, he became deputy treasurer of the Virginia Company and a Member of Parliament. He was offered a post as ambassador, but determined to retire to the country and found a household of prayer. He purchased the manor of Little Gidding and, after ordination as deacon in 1626 at the age of 33, he established a community there, initially with members of his family – his brother and sister and their families.

T.S. Eliot wrote his poem *Little Gidding* at the time of the air raids on London, when he spent his nights on a roof top as a fire watcher. Weariness, danger and destruction touch the sense of timelessness of the place of prayer:

You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.
Here the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

Little Gidding is no longer a community, but it is, once again, a house of prayer, a place for quiet days and retreats. There you feel that the church, the house and outbuildings must be much the same as when Ferrar, Herbert and Duncon knew them – and as King Charles found them when he came in 1642 and again as a fugitive seeking refuge in 1646, the "broken king" who "came at night".

George Herbert's family was related to the Earls of Pembroke; his brother was Lord Herbert of Cherbury. George had a brilliant academic career at Cambridge where he was a contemporary of Nicholas Ferrar, but, with the help of aristocratic patrons, left to become a courtier to King James I. He then felt a call to ordination. When discouraged in this by his friends, who thought it beneath him, he replied: *"It hath been formerly adjudged that the domestic servants of the King of heaven should be of the noblest families on earth; and though the iniquities of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities, to advance the glory of that God that gave them"*.

He was ordained priest in 1630 at the age of 37 and became Rector of the rural parish of Bemerton in the diocese of Salisbury, where he served his people faithfully until his death just three years later. It was to Bemerton that Edmund Duncon made the journey from Huntingdonshire to visit Herbert. Samuel Taylor Coleridge described him as "a true poet....the merits of whose poems will never be felt without a sympathy with the mind and character of the man". We still sing his hymns: *Let All The World in Every Corner Sing, My God and King; King of Glory, King of Peace, I Will Love Thee; The God of Love My Shepherd Is and Teach Me my God and King in All Things Thee to See.*

Edmund Duncan was Rector of Friern Barnet from 1663 to 1673. His gravestone, brought indoors from the churchyard in 1974 to protect it from further weathering, is affixed to the north wall of St James's Church. The inscription, placed by his son John, who succeeded him as Rector is translated:

In Sacred Memory of Edmund Duncon not so long ago Rector of this Parish who returned his soul to the source of his inspiration in the 72nd year of his age and in the 1673rd year of our own salvation on 4 October. In this tomb he sleeps, a faithful shepherd of Jesus, whose death taught him to live and whose life taught him to die.

The Exeter Diocesan archives record that Edmund Duncon, Rector of Aveton Gifford, subscribed to the oath of allegiance on 26 July 1662. Perhaps this is our Edmund Duncon, and that he came to Friern Barnet from this south Devon village. I know nothing more of him; but from Izaak Walton we learn that he returned to Bemerton as promised and that George Herbert then entrusted to him a book of his poems and other writings to convey to Nicholas Ferrar, for publication if he thought fit; so perhaps English literature and the English church owe to a rector of Friern Barnet the continuation of Herbert's poems and hymns.

GAUMONT NORTH FINCHLEY

by David Berguer

In our January 2007 Newsletter we appealed for your memories of the Gaumont cinema at Tally Ho Corner and so far we have received 18 replies – a response rate of about 11%. While we are very happy with this, I can't help wondering if there aren't more of you who remember the cinema and maybe think that what they can recall is not important. Well, it is! We are hoping to publish a brief history of the cinema and people's memories will play an important part in it, even though they will be published anonymously. In particular I would welcome your descriptions of the décor of the cinema – this is very important as it will help to paint an accurate picture of what it was like. Also, can you recall the prices you paid and the dates. Everyone talks about the one-and-nines at the pictures, but when were these prices current and how long did they last?

So, please put pen to paper and send your memories to me at my new address: 19a Palace Gates Road, Alexandra Park, N22 7BW or you can phone me on 020 8292 7328 or email at: friernbarnethistory@hotmail.co.uk. Who knows, you could be a star!

THE SUMMER SHOW

This year's Friern Barnet Summer Show will take place on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 August in Friary Park. We shall have our usual stall there where we will not only be raising funds by selling valuable once-loved items but also

chatting to people and answering questions about local history. We normally have a lot of fun, so why not come along and share it with us?

If you have any items that you would care to donate will you please contact Janet Liversidge on 020 8368 3927 and she will arrange for one of the Committee to collect them.

MEDICINE

by John Heathfield

By 1750 the best chance of medical care was in a poor house. Each parish paid a doctor a set sum each year for care of the poor, for example in 1782 Finchley Parish "Paid Philip Roberts of Barnet to be doctor to the Workhouse £10. 0s 0d" Friern Barnet records include: "Paid John Taylor of Whetstone £12. 0s 0d for medical care for the poor and all accidents and casualties." The kind of treatments in use at the time bear little relationship to current medicine:

1744	For treacle, brimstone, copper & hogs tar for Sarah Turner	1s 0d
	Gratuity for man that broke his leg	10s 6d
	Paid Mr Wilkinson for a horse and cart to Carry John Kay to Edmonton to see the doctor, he being insane	7s 0d
	For burying the woman that was found hanging on Finchley Common and a box for putting in	£1. 4s 0d
4 Sep 1768	Blood letting for the poor	3s 0d
1771	Milk, meat & beer for the poor	£1. 8s 2½d

Remedies for common ailments were interesting: "To cure a putrid fever, make an infusion of rue, sage, mint, rosemary and wormwood in strong vinegar, mix with camphor dissolved in spirits of wine; this mixture to be wiped over the face and loins." Other recommendations are completely contrary to modern advice: "Avoid green vegetables lest they cause the flux", "Smoaking (sic) tobacco ought to be encouraged particularly in cold wet weather as it will prevent infectious diseases." Even as late as 1817 a Mrs Arrowsmith of Totteridge was being told that smoking strong tobacco will cure piles.

Bills of Mortality were published weekly showing the number of deaths in each parish. In 1801 the most common causes of death in London were:

Consumption (TB)	4,078
Convulsions	3,503
Fevers	2,210
Smallpox	1,579
Old Age	1,452
Whooping cough	1,004
Dropsy	845
Asthma	639

Of the total of 19,198 deaths in that year, 8,304 (43%) were of children under the age of 5. Of the adults, 10 were attributed to excessive drinking, 1 to fighting, 1 killed by a bull, 1 killed by a madman, 112 to drowning and 412 suicides. One was killed "eating an immoderate quantity of nuts on his birthday."

A MYSTERY SOLVED

by David Berguer

In the September 2005 issue of *Heritage Today*, the magazine for members of English Heritage, there was an article entitled *Identity Crisis* which explained that today's towns and cities are gradually losing their identities, particularly when local councils try and clean up an area. Old road name signs disappear and are replaced by soulless ones with stick-on letters, stone buildings are cleaned so thoroughly that they lose the patina that time has given them, and street furniture is all bought from the same catalogue.

Accompanying the article was a montage of small pictures illustrating the kind of things that were worth preserving. Some of these are shown below:



You've probably already spotted the one that caught my eye. Try as I might I could not recall having seen the word **FRIERN** incised in brick anywhere in the area, and neither could anyone else. In desperation, I wrote to the Editor of *Heritage Today* and asked where the picture had been taken. After a wait of a few weeks, back came the answer: Crouch End! The building is on Crouch Hill, on the corner of Hanley Road, and was once owned by the Friern Manor Dairy Company, but it is now a bar/restaurant called The Old Dairy. The Edwardian building is noted for its wonderful terracotta murals showing dairying over the centuries and is well worth a visit.

A CLARIFICATION

by John Heathfield

In my article in the April 2007 Newsletter, I used the term *corrody holder* and I should have explained the meaning, as the word *corrody* does not appear in most dictionaries. Corrody is an allowance of accommodation, food, drink and clothing provided by a religious house for the sustenance of such of the King's servants as he may desire to receive it. The King had exempted the Hospitallers, and therefore the residents of Friern Barnet, from paying taxes so that the

Hospitallers could spend all their money fighting the heathen. He gained some recompense by sending his elderly servants to live free of charge at the Hospitallers' headquarters at Clerkenwell, or perhaps even at Friern Barnet. Is it too far fetched to imagine pensioners sitting in Friary Park enjoying the sunshine on a south-facing slope in the year 1300? Is that where the bowls club started?

The article also refers to the *boon works* which the residents of Friern Barnet had to undertake for the Hospitallers in 1189. The record of exactly what they had to do has been lost, however the duties at Totteridge have survived and they include: "He will plough twice a year with what team he has, the lord supplying him with food, to wit, bread, porridge, two dishes of fish or meat, and ale to drink. At the ninth hour when he is having his dinner, he shall have food for his horse and a handful of oats. At the *bingdingbene* (the binding of stooks of hay or corn after the harvest has been allowed to dry) he shall have two meals a day, receiving two dishes of meat or fish, cheese and ale."

My guess is that the food the lord supplied was a good deal more generous than what the peasants usually ate - on the other hand they did live on a farm. Incidentally, the first record that I can find of a hospital specifically to help deal with madness was built by the nuns of Clerkenwell in the twelfth century. They had land bordering on Colney Hatch Lane!

FRIERN BARNET IN PHOTOGRAPHS

by David Berguer

At our meeting on 23 May we officially launched our first professionally printed book, *Friern Barnet in Photographs*. For those of you who were not at the meeting and did not have a chance to buy a copy, the enclosed leaflet will explain what it is about. We shall be selling it at all our future meetings until supplies run out and as the print run was only 250, this may not be too long!

The price is £5 to members plus postage and packing in a hard backed envelope of 86p, total £5.86. Incidentally, the book would make an excellent gift for friends or family who used to live in the area and who are not members of the Society. Shop early for Christmas!

You can contact me by phone 020 8292 7328, email me at friernbarnethistory@hotmail.co.uk, or write to me at 19a Palace Gates Road, Alexandra Park, London N22 7BW.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

We have now heard from Hugh Petrie that the subject of his talk at our 26 September meeting will be "Friern Barnet and *The Times* Online".

We hope to see you there, but in the meantime, have a lovely summer.

**Friern Barnet & District
Local History Society ©**

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