

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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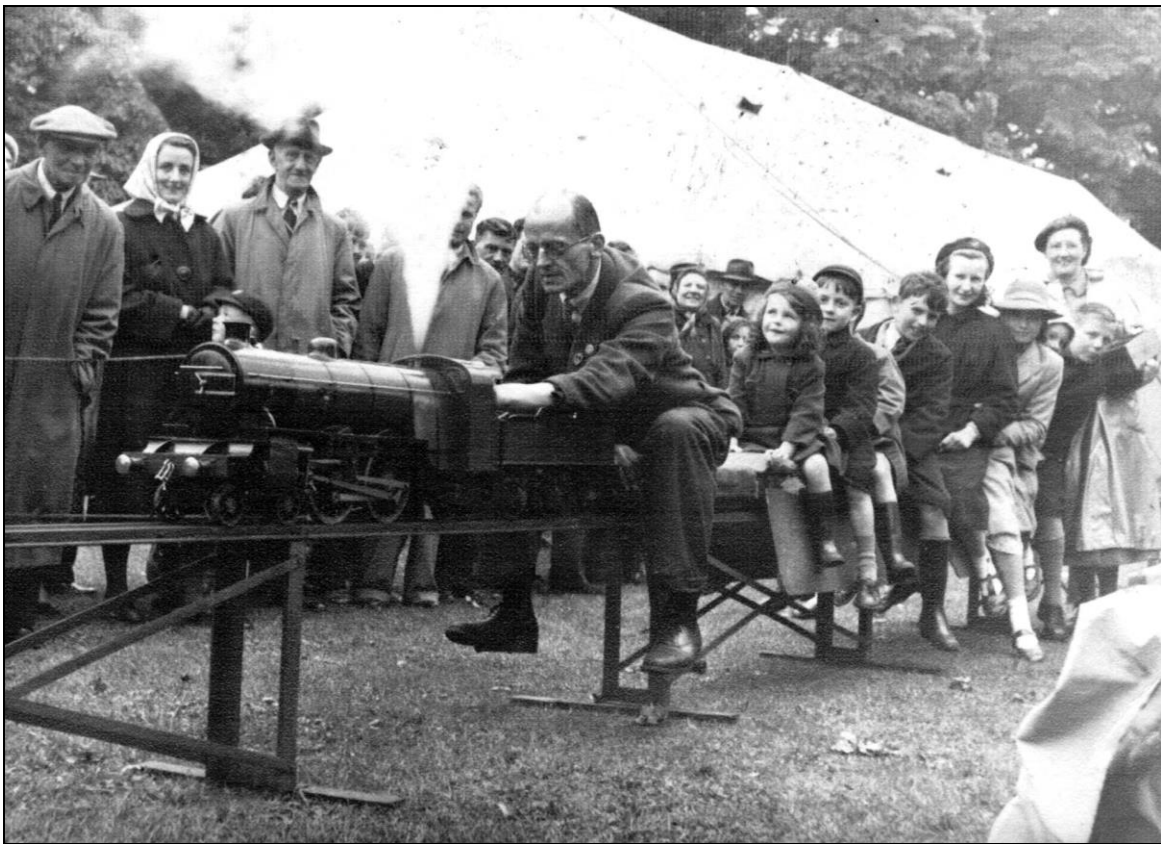
February 2012

CORONATION DAY

by David Berguer

This year marks the Queen's Diamond jubilee, so it is worth recalling what happened sixty years ago. In common with most other local authorities, Friern Barnet Urban District Council organised a programme of events to mark the Queen's coronation on Tuesday 2 June 1953. The Town Hall was bedecked with union flags and a banner across the front proclaiming *God Save the Queen Long May She Reign*. Finchley Council erected banners along Whetstone High Road, including, with permission, the part that came under Friern Barnet.

The main celebrations, however, centred around Friary Park where a number of events took place including performances from the Hornsey British Legion Silver Band and the Dagenham Girl Pipers as well as entertainment for children including a Punch & Judy show, pony rides, roundabouts, swings and side shows and a miniature railway at 2d per ride, courtesy of the North London Society of Model Engineers.



The train driver crouches over his steed as children of various ages prepare for a ride in the park. The weather on Coronation Day was cold and wet and everyone seems to have come well prepared
(Barnet Archives)

A Coronation oak tree was planted by the Chairman of the Council at 6.45pm and at 9 o'clock there was a relay of the Queen's broadcast speech followed by the lighting of a beacon, one of a national chain of beacons provided by the Boy Scouts Association. The day was rounded off by a firework display in the park.

The total cost of the festivities amounted to £1705. 12s 5d, of which £599.18s 3d was for decorations and the floodlighting of the Town Hall and Friary Park.



(Barnet Archives)

KARL RUGE 1912-2011

When Karl Ruge died on 19 December 2011, just five weeks short of his one hundredth birthday it was truly the end of an era.

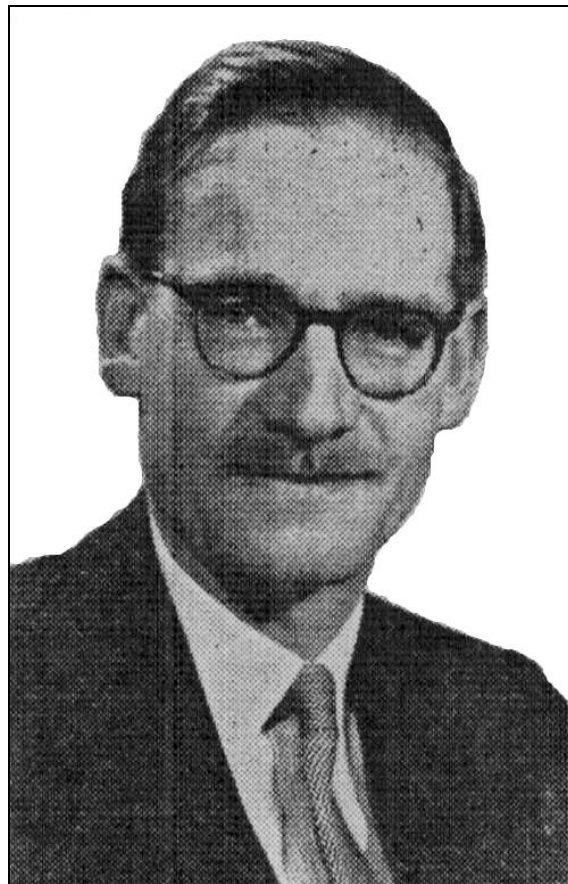
Karl was born on 27 January 1912 in Berlin and by the early 1930s he was a committed communist, largely because of the rise of fascism, and he used to go round lecturing on Marx and socialism, much to the disapproval of his father who was a Conservative. By 1933, when Hitler had come to power, Karl and his fellow architectural students knew he would be picked on. One day, when cycling back from his studies he saw a van parked outside his digs and the police were bringing out his papers. He always travelled with his passport and some money on him, so he turned his bike round and cycled out of Germany and through France into Spain where he stayed with an uncle who ran an oil importing company but while he was there he contracted amoebic dysentery which necessitated having a number of blood transfusions which in those days were done person to person which meant lying next to the donor. It was decided that he should leave Spain until he had fully recovered, so he came to England

He got himself a job in a merchant bank run by his great uncle and started studying at the London School of Economics. When the Spanish Civil War broke

out in 1936 he realised he could not go back there and as he was a fluent Spanish speaker he applied for a job in Mexico but it meant having to pay a deposit of £450 to the Mexican Embassy. As he did not have the money, he asked his great uncle if they could lend it to him. After consultation with the other partners they offered him a permanent job instead, which he accepted.

By this time Karl's political views were beginning to mellow and he joined the Liberal Party. In 1939 he got married to Deta who had come over from Spain a widow with a baby and, determined to do his bit to defeat Hitler, with the outbreak of War he applied to join the British Army. Life was not easy for aliens in those days and he and Deta spoke Spanish in public but despite that, he had his windows broken in the flat where they were living in Woodside Park. Karl was put in internment camps in the West Country and the Isle of Man before being released and allowed to join the Army where he joined the Intelligence Corps and was posted to North Africa in 1944.

When the War ended Karl returned to the bank and in 1953 he moved from Woodside Park to a house in The Ridgeway, off Friern Barnet Lane, where he stayed for sixteen years until his three daughters moved out. He and Deta decided to downsize to a bungalow and one day they were visiting a friend who lived in Friern Barnet Lane and who was being posted abroad and was having to sell his large house which he was going to put on the market for £17,500. After having a survey done which showed up various defects, Karl offered £15,000 which was accepted and so they moved in, not to a bungalow, but a much larger property!



Karl at age 49

Karl got involved with local politics and stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate for Friern Barnet Urban District Council for several years before being elected to the East Ward in 1962. He was Chairman of Finance for one year and for another year was in Town Planning. Karl also became a JP, sitting on the bench at Highgate, a position he held for twenty years until 1982. Karl was also a member of Victim Support, Barnet, a member of the United Nations Association., Friern Barnet Ratepayers' Association, Friern Barnet and Totteridge Photographic Society, Friends of Friary Park, Local Agenda 21, The Finchley Society and the Incognito Theatre Group.

Karl always worked tirelessly for the people of Friern Barnet and was very proud of the efficient and democratic way that Friern Barnet was run. He was opposed to the merging of local authorities which took place in 1965 as he felt it was a retrograde step and smaller authorities could be more efficient and cost efficient. Karl remained active after his retirement and was particularly vigilant on planning matters and often spoke at planning hearings when he thought the Council were not taking local residents' feelings into account.

Karl was a great supporter of the Society and was the independent examiner of our annual accounts which he would examine with an eagle eye. We would often receive hand written letters from him politely thanking us for the work we were doing and also offering us reminiscences of life in Friern Barnet.

Karl was not only a gentleman, but also a gentle man. He will be greatly missed by everyone who was privileged to have known him.

DORIS COLE'S STORY – CONTINUED

Doris Cole's mother used to buy her bread from Harper's, on the corner of Totteridge Lane and the High Road, who would deliver it every day. On Saturdays Mrs Cole senior would go with Doris to see Mr Harper and pay him for the week - Doris always used to get a cake or a bar of chocolate. They would also go to Friday's, the butchers to get the cat's pieces – they just used to walk in and they were given them; they never had to pay for them. On Fridays Mrs Cole and her neighbour used to walk to Buckles in Finchley and then walk back. Doris's uncle ran a Christmas Club where people used to pay every week and in return they would get a turkey before Christmas. Doris's father used to truss and dress their turkey and it was always cooked at home, although some families used to take theirs to the baker to be cooked in their oven.

Doris recalled seeing the tram lines and the granite setts being laid in 1906 by gangs of Irish navvies who were renowned for the fights they used to have. In October 1916 a German Zeppelin was forced down over Cuffley and Doris recalls looking out of her bedroom window and seeing it go over the house. After the news had spread she later saw a tram heading to Barnet with a load of people on board all waving flags to celebrate. Her uncle Jack, who had a bicycle shop in the High Road, took her aunt up to Cuffley in his old motorcycle and sidecar to see it; she was having fits because he wasn't a very careful driver, but fortunately they got back safely.

A man called Timberlake used to drive a horse and cart down the High Road twice a week, laden with hay from farms in Hertfordshire. He would come back from London empty and would stay at the *Blue Anchor* before returning to

Harpenden. The *Blue Anchor* was situated at 1432 High Road, where Marks & Spencer's now stands, and was at one time run by two sisters, the Ferrys, who were known for their awful laughs which could be heard a mile off. Doris remembers creeping in to the back room of the pub where people were having bread and cheese round the fire. She was told: "*Out, you.*" Later the pub was taken over by an actor, Jack Stevens, his wife and their two sons. Jack and his wife taught Doris and her friend the Charleston and they went to Finchley Dance Hall and won first prize.

There were a lot of Romany gypsies in the area and Doris's mother became quite friendly with one of them. One Sunday she had a badly ulcerated leg and was confined to bed when the gypsy and her daughter came to the house and asked for her. Doris explained that she was upstairs but her mother overheard and invited them up. The woman only spoke Romany and the daughter translated for her. When she learned of the bad leg she told Doris's mother to put some scorched rag on the leg. There was a box in the bedroom with old sheets in it, including some scorched ones and these were torn up into squares and put on the wound which healed up. When their doctor, Dr Wingfield came back from his holiday he said: "*Well, Mrs Cartchpole, if you're going to take notice of what a gypsy tells you, then there is no need for me to call.*" She replied: "*Any doctor will come that I pay. You please yourself about that. If you don't like it, you know what you can do.*" Doris recalls that although the ulcer healed up, her mother was never the same woman afterwards and she reckoned that instead of coming out, the infection went into her body.

Doris recalled going to Barnet Fair each year and she remembered the horses racing along the road past their house; they kept their front gate firmly closed. After the First World War was over there was a big party in the middle of the High Road. They had a band and one of the boys, Percy Cooper, brought a gramophone out and they all danced in the middle of the road.

Doris's husband was a fanatical gardener and every year they never had a holiday because it was always Flower Show time. He used to win prizes and one year took 21 first prizes and the man that gave the prizes, a Major Cadogan, refused to shake hands with him and told him not to compete any more!

WHERE WERE YOU IN '62?

A couple of our members have given us their memories of things as they were fifty years ago.

Keith Martin recalls:

"In 1962 I was living in Brussels until 31 May working for Peat, Marwick, Mitchell, Chartered Accountants. Then I came back to share a bachelor flat in West Hampstead. We had a poster on the wall saying: *What can one person do about the bomb? Join the March from Aldermaston.* This I did in Easter 1963 – fifty miles. Back in November 1962 I went to a public debate organised by *La Gauche on Défendre Cuba Socialiste.* Crowded with smoke, beards and keenness.

My work in London was as Chief Accountant with Macdonald & Co, publishers, in Maddox Street just off Regent Street. Very civilised people

and they sometimes gave me the odd book in French to ask my opinion on whether it would suit their list. One was about a trip in a VW Beetle around the world in eighty days, like Jules Verne. And I bought a Beetle secondhand, which I kept until the arrival of our first daughter in 1967 which rendered it less suitable for travelling with a carry cot. I joined the London International Choir, a wonderful mix of au pairs from Germany, Holland and elsewhere and good socially. London was exciting: Arnold Wesker's *Chips with Everything* at the Vaudeville Theatre, Brecht at the Royal Court, Oistrakh at the RFH. A seat at the National Film Theatre for five shillings. Hampstead Theatre opened as a 160 seater prefabricated shell with *The Seagull* and *Cider with Rosie*. I was lucky to be there and in the thick of it."

Our member in Warminster, Julia Davey remembers her schooldays:

"1962 was a year of change for me. I became eleven that January and my one year old brother and my parents, Ralph and Sally Bass, were living in Alexandra Park Road, opposite St Saviour's Church. I still remember with nostalgia that house and garden and of our happy times.

The school I was attending was Rhodes Avenue Juniors. We had a very kind teacher called Mrs Pushkin who could control the class without having to raise her voice. The headmistress, Miss Cathy, was very kind too. I was her tea monitor at morning break and would carry her drink into her office. Disappointingly for my parents, I failed the Eleven Plus so my new school was Cecil Rhodes Secondary Modern. I think I was quite relieved, as it was near my previous school and not too far to walk. Our tutor was Mr Woods and most of us girls had a crush on him. The head was Mr Page.

At home I spent a lot of time reading any book that came my way and I visited the library too. The radio was a big interest – television did not feature much in my life – and I particularly remember *Around the Horne* and *The Clitheroe Kid*.

It was also the year when I left the Brownies and became a Guide, our leader being Mrs Loyn. Some weeks I went to Saturday morning pictures at Wood Green and most weekends Dad and I would go before breakfast to Alexandra Park with my bike or my skates. By the time we arrived home our breakfast would be cooked. Then there was often a fair in the grounds of Ally Pally – roundabouts, bumper cars, shove-halfpenny, Hook the Duck, shooting gallery, lucky dips and swing boats and, best of all, Choose a Cork. If you chose one with the right number you won a goldfish. Occasionally we visited Albert Road Rec which was near Durnsford Road Swimming Baths. There were swings and plenty of room for ball games.

Trips out were generally by bus or train and would be to woods – Highgate, Queens or Coldfall and occasionally Hadley. At least once a year we visited my grandfather who was a Chelsea Pensioner at the Royal Hospital. We also visited Dad at work and went to the museums, Science and Natural History being my favourites.

At home relatives would visit us. Cousins from Botley and Potters Bar and my grandma from Basildon. She had also lived in Alexandra Park Road, from about 1930-1960, and had been an active member of the Townswomen's Guild and the WI.

Our holiday that year was probably typical of the time. We did not have a car, so every holiday my parents hired a Ford Popular from RK Motors in Wood Green. We had a camping holiday in the orchard of a friend's farm in Gloucestershire. Fruit trees, geese and cows, quite an adventure! That was when most of the farm buildings were almost original and the only inhabitants of the barn were swifts and swallows. Our week in Jaywick was good too, although there was no running water, the toilet outside was emptied once a week and the water pipe was a short walk away. Heaven for children. Those were the days!"

SHOPS SURVEY

The changes in local pubs continue unabated. *The Triumph* in Summers Lane closed in March 2010 and is still empty although there is a planning application for it to be turned into a House in Multiple Occupation. The former *Bull & Butcher* at 1277 High Road, Whetstone has undergone several changes since 2007 when it became the *New Two Butchers Bar & Restaurant*. In 2009 it changed to the *i Bar* which subsequently closed in October 2011. It is now *The Stone Marquee*. In Cromwell Road, N10 *The Alexandra Arms* has been converted into flats

THE ORANGE TREE & MAMIE PALACE

by David Berquer

In December 2011 *The Orange Tree* in Friern Barnet Lane became a Tesco Express, one of a number of pubs that Tesco has been buying and converting, including the former *Rising Sun* in Oakleigh Road North. Under the planning laws the change from licensed premises to a retail outlet is not deemed as a change of use, hence no planning permission is required and local residents have no opportunity to raise objections. There is, of course, already a huge Tesco Metro store just a half a mile away in Colney Hatch Lane.

The Orange Tree started life as *The Crown* in 1595 but changed its name around 1675 when it had become the haunt of Nell Gwynn, who earned her fame by selling oranges, and her notoriety by being mistress of Charles II. The pub was remodelled in 1909 and was rebuilt in 1923.

Percy Reboul interviewed a former licensee of *The Orange Tree*, Mamie Palace, in 1982 and she had some fascinating stories to tell. Her father had taken over the pub in 1919 when Mamie was ten years old. They had been living in Willesden Lane where he had the *Prince of Wales* pub and Mamie recalled that in those days you had to book up a removal van about five years in advance but fortunately their Irish barman knew a man who had a horse and cart and between them they managed to move their belongings to Friern Barnet, although it took them five hours. Mamie and her mother had taken the tram and were already waiting there for them.

In those days the pub had three bars on the ground floor, a Public Bar, a Private Bar and a Saloon Bar, each with its own entrance from outside. There was a gentlemen's double urinal and a lavatory but no ladies toilet – ladies didn't use

pubs in those days. At the back there was a skittle alley and a Billiards Room with two tables but these could only be used by people who had joined the Skittles Club. On the second floor there was a bathroom and toilet, two bedrooms, a lounge and a dining room. There was also a 'spirit room' which had a high counter and was where draft spirits were sold. On the third floor were six or seven



The old Orange Tree photographed in 1911

(Percy Reboul Collection)

bedrooms and a loft. On the side of the pub were a garage and stables which were used by a man called Jovey Finch, who lived on The Freehold and was a greengrocer. Part of the stables was also used by a firm of commercial photographers, Blackmoor and Emmerton.

The brewery when the Palaces arrived was Huggins but they sold out to Watneys. All the beer was on draught, there was no bottled beer, and it included Ordinary Burton, Best Burton, Bitter and Best Bitter and also Imperial Stout and Guinness. Beer was delivered by horse and cart and there was always a cold meal for the draymen when they had finished their delivery.

Mamie had always been interested in music and she had her husband both played the accordion and at one time she played drums in a trio called *The Brooklyn Ladies Syncopators* who used to play gigs at various pubs and Masonics. When her father died in 1940, Mamie and her mother took over the pub and she organised jam sessions and among the jazz musicians taking part was the young blind pianist George Shearing who subsequently emigrated to America where he found fame and fortune. Mamie continued in *The Orange Tree* until 1954.

The pub underwent a couple of changes of name, *The Grove* from 1987 and then, when it was fashionable to give pubs silly names, *Big Hand Mo's*, but it then reverted to its proper name. The pub closed its doors for the last time in November 2010 and remained empty and forlorn until Tesco took it over.

THE FRIARY PARK CLOCK

As we reported in the April 2011 *Newsletter*, the clock on Friary House was reinstated thanks to financial help from ourselves and other societies. We designed a plaque which has been fixed to the wall of the house alongside the former front door:

FRIARY HOUSE

Friary Park opened to the public on Saturday 7th May 1910 after Sydney Simmons, JP, local resident and founder of the Patent Steam Carpet Beating Company Ltd. reimbursed Friern Barnet Urban District Council with the purchase cost of £7500.

There has been a house on this site since around 1551 and it was occupied by, amongst others, John Popham, Lord Chief Justice who presided at the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh in 1603 and Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators in 1605. Guests at the house included Queen Elizabeth I and, in the early 1700s, Queen Anne.

The house and estate were bought in 1800 by John Bacon when there were only 55 houses in Friern Barnet and 33 in the hamlet of Colney Hatch, where Friern Barnet Lane and Friern Barnet Road meet.

The old house was demolished around 1871 and the present house was built by Edmund William Richardson, the Company Secretary of the Planet Building Society, who lived in it until his death in 1908.

The house was extensively renovated in 2010 by Barnet Council for the use of local organisations.

The restoration of the clock on the house was made possible by generous donations from:

Friends of Friary Park
Friern Barnet & District Local History Society
(in memory of their founder, John Donovan)
Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association
T & B Builders
The Whetstone Society

APRIL 2011

HOLIDAYS

by John Heathfield

The idea of holidays with pay would have been inconceivable to men who were living at a subsistence level.

Holidays were originally Holy Days or Saints Days on which one was required not to work but to attend church. By the middle of the eighteenth century there were about forty of them, although not all were observed to the same extent in every part of the country.

By 1801 the population of our district was beginning to grow. In Finchley, for example, to 1503 and Totteridge to 280. Apart from a few rich landowners and merchants most people scraped a living as best they could as day labourers. Women worked at home often plaiting straw. Even the children worked. A day's holiday meant a day's loss of earnings.

At this time it was rare to work on Sunday as attendance at church was obligatory. That's why our parish churches are about three miles apart – a convenient walking distance. An Act of 1834 decreed that the Bank of England would be closed on Good Friday, the first of May, the first of November and Christmas Day. Obviously these were called Bank Holidays.

Holidays with pay were introduced gradually at about the same time as railways began to appear. Banks gave their staff a week's holiday, though only to 'white collar' staff. Jobs with the council or civil service had a week's paid leave by 1901, largely as a result of pressure from trades unions. Jobs like postmen or railway staff were eagerly sought for that reason. Builders and other tradesmen rarely had regular employment and were paid on piece work rates so that paid holidays were impossible. It was not until 1938 that legislation was passed requiring employers to grant paid holidays of one week a year plus Bank Holidays. The first fifty years of the last century were the heyday of the charabanc outing and the railway excursion. It is noteworthy that the men went on pub outings leaving the women and children behind. A particular favourite was Folly Farm at Hadley where Eli Frusher kept pigs during the summer and roundabouts during the winter. It was chosen venue for Sunday School excursions from King's Cross to New Barnet. The visitors would then walk along the line path (which is still there) to be entertained with roundabouts, swings and coconut shies. Ginger Beer, made by the Hadley Brewery, was a speciality.



*A jolly group of men pose outside the Black Bull in Whetstone before leaving for a day out without their wives
(Percy Rebol Collection)*

A popular holiday in the 1930s was to go and stay with relatives – easy because rail travel was relatively cheap. Butlin’s holiday camps began at Skegness on 11 April 1936. All food and entertainment was on site and was advertised as being free, although they were included in the price. Holiday camps remained popular until package holidays came along and people were able to sample the delights of foreign destinations with relative ease.

A SURPRISE FAMILY BOX OF DELIGHTS

by Colin Barratt

Back in 2006, on a sunny September Saturday morning, a group assembled at New Southgate cemetery. However, this wasn’t for a funeral, but for the unveiling of an information board, created to tell visitors about the area of flat vaults in front of it, known as the Queen Victoria Vaults, or Savoy Vaults, which contain the remains of 236 people who had been re-interred here from the burial ground of the German Lutheran Chapel, Savoy Precinct, London in 1875, due to the area being required for the building of the new Victoria Embankment.

The group at the ceremony were made up of members of our Society, plus some from the Anglo-German Family History Society and the Cemetery Manager. This was the culmination of four year’s work, attempting to get this board agreed and installed, and I reported on the event in the April 2007 *Newsletter*. (The board is still there, as good as new. Go and have a look at it!). Previously to this, we had recorded all the engraved information on the vaults (names, dates of death, age) and provided a copy to the cemetery office. Coincidentally, just three days after the unveiling, the office was contacted by a lady, Henrietta Morgan, enquiring if they knew about this group of re-interred burials. She was a direct descendant of one of the families (who were named Poland). The manager forwarded her email to me and I was able to give her the details of seven of the Poland family who were shown together on one vault. I also sent her photos of the vaults and the information board, plus a copy of the graphics. In turn she sent me copies of painted portraits of Peter Raymond Poland and his wife, both of whom are buried there, plus other documents relating to the vaults, confirming Queen Victoria’s involvement, which I wish I had seen before preparing the board graphics, as it would have added some more interesting details.

I heard nothing more from this lady after this brief correspondence. Then, just a few days before Christmas 2011, I had a phone call out of the blue from a man, Peter Rauner, who lived in Southfields, Wimbledon, and worked in the house clearance business. He had recently cleared a council flat in Camden, with the support of the police, as it was being lived in by drug addict squatters, and had been left trashed, with needles everywhere. Somewhere in this mayhem a box of old family documents had survived, which Peter kindly saved from being dumped, as he thought they would be of interest to a descendant of the family, and he wanted to pass it on to them – if he could find anyone.

One of the main names mentioned in the documents was Peter Raymond Poland, and putting this into Google he came across my article in the *Southgate District Civic Trust Newsletter* on Henrietta Morgan’s information about the Poland family. He rang me, hoping that I could put him in touch with a Poland family member, which I promised to try and do. Fortunately, I still had Henrietta’s email address, which I hoped was still current, and sent her a message, to see if she was interested. She replied immediately: “My Goodness, AM I INTERESTED!”

By another amazing coincidence, Henrietta said that she was presently surrounded by Poland family documents, including the ones I had sent her nearly five years ago, in preparation for a big family reunion the following day (22 December) in Russell Square. She lives in the New Forest area of Hampshire, but was coming to London that day, staying with her children in Croydon. As the box of documents was at Peter Rauner's house in Wimbledon (another stroke of luck that he was so close), Henrietta hoped to be able to pick up the box on her way home from the reunion on 23 December.

The family reunion was very successful and Henrietta duly arranged to collect the box on the way home. The family were dying to know what was in it. Peter Rauner had obviously been fascinated by the box and its contents, and when she arrived to pick it up, he and Henrietta had a long conversation about it before she finally loaded the box into her car, which was already full of people, suitcases and Christmas presents!

Peter Raymond Poland was a successful fur trader in London, and the papers in the box go back nearly 200 years, including a long and detailed bill from his coachmaker, financial details of the settlement of his estate after his death in 1827 and lots of cheques and receipts showing the enormous cash flow of his business. There were also details about his descendant and namesake, Peter Raymond Poland junior, who ran the business until it folded, only dying in 1984.

Henrietta was so excited about this, as various members of the family had been trying to locate the papers, and Peter junior's two children, for some time, only to find they had both died, the elder one in Italy, and they concluded that the papers had probably ended up on an Italian rubbish tip. However, it seems that the papers were in the care of the older one, who lived in the council flat in Camden, until she died of cancer early in 2011. Her flat had been taken over by squatters, as mentioned above, but the papers were saved.

Henrietta said that it was incredibly good fortune that these absolutely irreplaceable documents have been returned to her, as they had come within a hair's breadth of oblivion for ever, but for Peter Rauner's curiosity and concern. When they met he told her he was moving to Australia at the end of January, so she was very grateful to get the box now. Mission accomplished!

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

A reminder that your subscription expires on 31 March 2012. If you wish to renew for another year (April 2012 - March 2013), and we sincerely that hope you do, please complete the Membership Form with this Newsletter. The subscription rates remain at £7 for a single person and £12 for a couple.

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