

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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FRIERN BARNET – AN EARTHLY PARADISE?

The following appeared in in *Barnet Press* on 26 March 1910:

“TOWN PLANNING IN FRIERN BARNET

By Francis E Cox

The most enthusiastic local “patriot” will find it difficult to maintain that Friern Barnet resembles, in any marked degree, an earthly paradise. By comparison with other suburbs it may be regarded as tolerable. It is surrounded by good scenery, it has, especially since the munificent gift of Friary Park, enough open spaces to prevent its becoming a desert of bricks and mortar for some time to come. In short, its advantages are many. Yet candour compels us to admit that its best portions consist of unpicturesque rectangles of typical suburban houses, degenerating into dreary rows of tenements in Holly Park-road, and disgraceful areas in the Freehold and the Avenue districts. Everywhere our present chaotic method of forming “neighbourhoods” is evident. Holly Park-road, for example, instead of being continued into Goldsmith-road, and thus forming an alternative to Friern Barnet-road, ends abruptly in Glenthorne-road which again ends – nowhere. A resident in Beaconsfield-road (lower end) who wishes to reach Hemington-avenue has the option of walking along Holly Park-road, Glenthorne



Holly Park Road in 1915. A wide road but with no vehicles, apart from a solitary horse and cart.

-road, Friern Barnet-road, Stanford-road, Goldsmith-road, Friern-lane, and Hemington-avenue – a circular tour of exasperating length or of negotiating the morasses that form the only connecting links between Glenthorne-road and Goldsmith-road and Hemington-avenue. Culs-de-sac ought always to be avoided, yet of these we have Hemington-avenue, Glenthorne-road, Beaconsfield-road, the Avenue, and one or two more on the Freehold.

The latter place provides the most striking example of “how not to do things”. It can only be reached from Friern Barnet either by a footpath round the asylum or by traversing Friern Barnet-road, Colney Hatch-lane and Cromwell-road. As a necessary result, this neighbourhood has been deprived of the wholesome influence of a constant stream of people passing through it, and it is safe to assume that the average inhabitant of Friern Barnet Central Ward knows little or nothing of the lives of residents of the Freehold. Small wonder that the growth of a civic spirit has been hindered in such a scattered and ill-regulated district! It is perhaps unnecessary to say that no individual or group of individuals is responsible for this state of affairs. It is solely due to the anarchic methods by which the estates are developed, independently of one another, with little or no regard for the future, and without consideration of any but pecuniary results. It is by these methods that the new estates in Friern Barnet will be developed if steps are not taken at once to alter them.

The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 is happily a non-controversial measure. The evil has long been recognised, and the first serious attempt to develop towns on common-sense lines has received the approval of all political parties. It is safe to assume that, should the Friern Barnet Council adopt the Act in its entirety, a new era will begin and Friern Barnet will take a foremost place among urban areas about London. For in the Town Planning portion of the Act ample provisions are made whereby the local authority may determine the future development of the district under its charge and may see that all portions of the district are welded into one harmonious whole. The method of procedure should be as follows: -

- 1.- The Council forms a town planning committee.
2. – The town planning committee reports, and a prima facie case for a town planning scheme is presented to the Local Government Board.
3. – The Local Government Board authorises the preparation of a town planning scheme.
4. – The scheme is prepared, with the assistance of the various owners of property affected by the scheme, and approved by the Council.
5. – The scheme is approved by the Local Government Board after due notice has been given, and is then regarded as an Act.

The method of procedure gives ample opportunity for full discussion of all details of the scheme and ensures that no hardship is felt by anyone. Owners of property which is injuriously affected by the scheme are entitled to full compensation. On the other hand, if the value of any property is increased, the local authority is entitled to one-half of the increased value. Arrangements are also made in the Act whereby, if the Town Planning scheme include land situate in another district, the co-operation of the neighbouring authority is secured.

It will thus be seen that this Act is of far-reaching importance to such an expanding neighbourhood as ours. Surely the most indifferent of residents would prefer to see Friern Barnet enlarged under such conditions as these, rather than for it to become still more chaotic and scattered. Forethought is one of the elements of success, and if we have suffered in the past for our neglect, we can at least see that we do not fail now in our efforts to secure a brighter and happier future. With an awakening sense of civic responsibility, and a fixed belief in man's capability to improve his surroundings, great things are possible, and Friern Barnet, instead of being the despair of earnest reformers, will lead the way in the battle against one, at least, of our social evils.

Every voter will have the opportunity of siding with this good work. Within a week or two he will be electing men to represent him on the District Council, and on his judgement, will depend the future of town planning in Friern Barnet. If every voter makes it his business to see that the candidate or candidates which he favours are heart and soul in sympathy with the idea, he will have proved himself a friend not only to this generation, but to posterity. If he neglects his duty, he cannot complain if Friern Barnet remains stagnant, a "sleeping place" for men who work in the City, sneered at by the inhabitants of more fortunate neighbours."

Footnote

The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 was a ground-breaking piece of legislation that made it illegal to build "back-to-back" housing which had been common in the Victorian era. The Act encouraged local authorities to adopt the principles which had been established in the garden city movement and which had led to the building of Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

A SAD STORY

The *Barnet Press* of 6 February 1909 reported the following:

"A sad story.
Wife steals to get food.

At Highgate, on Thursday, Mary Ann Malcombe, Sidney-terrace, New Southgate, was charged with stealing a quantity of linen, value 15s, from Mrs Salter, 13 Sidney-terrace. Mrs Salter said she hung out a quantity of clothes on a line in her back garden to dry, and they were stolen. She suspected the prisoner, and later noticed an apron of hers on prisoner's line. She went and fetched it, and they "had words" over it, and she charged the prisoner with the theft of her washing. Detective White arrested prisoner, who said at first she knew nothing about the linen, but afterwards admitted the theft. The woman, her husband and three children lived in the room, and were poverty stricken. The man was a plasterer, but was lazy, and did not try to get work. He had not done any for a year and was chiefly engaged in lounging around the public houses. The prisoner did some charing.

Prisoner told the Magistrates that she took the clothes to get food. She pawned them for 2s 6d. She was remanded."

OUR WEBSITE

by David Berguer

Back in the 1980s and 1990s Percy Reboul conducted a number of interviews with local people, many of whom were born in the early years of the 20th century. The tapes were transcribed by our Patricia Cleland and they include memories of a tram driver in the 1920s; a soldier who fought in the First World War; a lady jazz drummer who lived in *The Orange Tree* at Friern Barnet; and the man who was Finchley's Town Clerk in the Second World War and was responsible for civil defence operations. When I was researching material for *The Friern Hospital Story*, I interviewed a former manager; a former chaplain; and the man who was one of the DJs on Radio Friern and who now does the loudspeaker announcements at Spurs' home games. There are fourteen of these oral histories and they can be found by clicking on 'Our Archives' and then 'Oral Histories'.

During 2017 Nick McKie spent countless hours at the British Library where he trawled through national and local newspapers from the 18th and 19th centuries looking for references to events and people in our area. He came up with a huge amount of information which has helped to give us a picture of what life was like then. Articles, reports of court cases and property advertisements threw up some fascinating snippets including reference to a bare-knuckle boxing match in Whetstone between two midgets in 1828, and another in 1833 where the man who was beating an Irish boxer was set upon by the latter's supporters and so badly injured that he later died from his injuries. Court cases included details of local youths who committed crimes and were sentenced to be birched, and serious criminals were given hard labour. There are also cases of people who committed crimes due to their families suffering from starvation. To see these articles, the earliest of which dates from 1727, click on 'Our Archives' and then 'Newspaper Articles'.

MEDIEVAL DIET

by John Heathfield

I started wondering what we ate before potatoes were introduced from America.

According to researchers, apparently, we would have needed about 392 calories to sleep for 8 hours, 1437 for a day walking about, women needed an additional 1742 for housework, 1960 for carrying water from the well and 2613 for animal care, say a total of about 3300 calories, depending on the day's activities. For men, the figures are: forking hay - 3848, digging ditches - 3701 and heavy work like sawing wood - 7403, possibly a daily average of 6500. The average working day varied with the season and was often 12 hours or more in summer and only 8 hours in winter, ending at sunset.

The daily calorific value of the diet might have been – 3 eggs 197; 2 bowls of oats (porridge) 300 each; 3 pints of ale 580; 6 ounces of cheese 700; wholemeal bread 750; cabbage 45; beans 1400, a total of some 2000-2500 a day, which is quite insufficient for a labouring man.

In comparison, my cereal packet says that women need about 2000 calories a day and men about 2500. The result of this malnourishment is that people were smaller, say 5 feet to 5 feet 3 inches tall (try walking through an old doorway without banging your head, or putting on medieval armour). They died much younger – Shakespeare talks about: "Good old folk of 60".

Obviously, their food intake varied from season to season. The simple food was oats, which was stewed to make pottage. Sometimes beans and peas were added or root crops like parsnips and turnips. Leek pottage was especially popular. Barley was grown for beer or ale which was mainly drunk, as the water was usually undrinkable. Some peasants had a pig which could find its own food, and most would have kept chickens; only a few would have had a cow. Goats do not like the cold and although they eat almost anything, they are not easy to keep. There were windmills at Totteridge and Barnet where corn was ground to make flour, although the Lord of the Manor who owned the mill would charge a fee or percentage. I have no record of a mill at Friern Barnet. Meat and fish were rare.

In our district, the local landowner put a fence round his rabbits to keep the peasants out or to keep the rabbits in. A gate in the fence is a "hatch" and rabbits are "conies" so that could explain the origin of the name Colney Hatch. In Totteridge, the peasants had the right of free warren (that is to catch wild rabbits) so could supplement their stockpot. Wild pigs and deer were reserved for the Lord of the Manor.

Firewood was used for cooking and lighting so the story about Little Red Riding Hood picking up sticks is based on fact; in the days before matches, if you let the fire go out there was real trouble. There are no documentary sources about diet in old Friern Barnet, but there are a few about Totteridge which was broadly similar. We can guess a population of a couple of dozen families

A recent survey by IronmongeryDirect claims that builders have the healthiest jobs in Britain. They are typically active for seven hours a day, burning 2500 calories, while IT workers are active for only 24 minutes, burning under 100. A Big Mac has 600 calories, a large fries 500 and a fizzy drink about 310. Today, far from being undernourished, some 20% of the population of the UK is obese and a survey by the University of Birmingham has shown that in that city, 25% of the population is obese. So today, instead of dying from malnutrition, like our ancestors, we are more likely to suffer from diabetes or heart attacks. Even in the 1950s housewives were significantly slimmer, thanks to the amount of housework they did.

FATHERS AND SONS

by John Philpott

The church of St John the Evangelist is the result of the vision of two men: the Rev Frederick Hall, Rector, and John Loughborough Pearson R.A, architect. Neither lived to see its completion; this was left to their sons, the Rev Edward Gage Hall and Frank Pearson.

Frederick Hall was born in Bloomsbury in 1840, son of John, a solicitor, and Harriet, née Gardiner. He graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1862, and that same year married Mary Adelaide Julia Purdon. He was ordained deacon in Lichfield Cathedral in 1863 and priest the following year. His first parish was St Mary, Wolverhampton, where he served as curate until 1865. He then move south to Egham, where he served as a curate for another five years. During his time at Egham, their first three children were born: Frederick (1867). Margaret (1868) and Edward (1869). In 1870 the family moved to Kilburn, where he was appointed chaplain of St Peter's Home, house of an Anglican sisterhood who undertook missionary and nursing work among the poor and provided a convalescent home for patients discharged from hospital. The year of the Hall family's arrival in Kilburn saw the start of the building of the church of St Augustine, to the design of John Loughborough Pearson, his largest

church, with seating for a congregation of one thousand, considered by Pevsner “one of the best churches of its date in the whole of England”. In 1872, with building still in progress – it was not completed until 1880 – Frederick became curate at St Augustine, where he remained for ten years. Frederick and Mary’s second daughter, Edith, was born during this time.

John Loughborough Pearson was born in Brussels in 1817, son of William, an artist, and Nancy, née Loughborough. He was brought up in Durham, the family’s home town, and started his architectural training there at the age of fourteen. In 1841 he moved to London, which from then on was his home, and became principal assistant to the architect Philip Hardwick, who commissioned him to complete and execute the designs of for the hall and library at Lincoln’s Inn. In 1843 came his first church commission: Canon Townsend, in whose Sunday school John had served in Durham, asked him to rebuild a Yorkshire chapel in the new Gothic revival style. Many more commissions followed, enabling Pearson to set up his own practice. His output in a career of little over fifty years was prolific. He built or rebuilt thirty-five parish churches and restored or enlarged many others. He was the architect of two cathedrals, Truro and Brisbane, and for the restoration of the tower of Peterborough Cathedral and the north transept of Westminster Abbey. He also built a number of houses and schools. In 1862 John Loughborough married Jemma Christian. Frank, their only child, was born in 1864. Jemma died of typhoid the following year.

In 1882 the Hall family moved to Friern Barnet. On 28 October in the parish church, Frederick was inducted as Rector by the Archdeacon of Middlesex. Present at the service were the vicar and curates from St Augustine’s, Robert Morris, rector for the previous thirty-two years, and Henry Miles, vicar-designate at All Saints’ Church.

All Saints’, newly built to serve the growing population at the northern end of Friern Barnet, was about to become a separate parish; at the other end Morris had built a mission school/church to serve “The Freehold”, the populated area at the south of Bounds Green Brook. In between, at the geographical centre of the parish, was the other area of population growth, around Friern Barnet Road, near the railway station and the County Asylum; Frederick Hall had determined to make this the centre of his work.

Friern Barnet had never had a rectory. Rectors, where they had been resident in the parish, had lived at various addresses; in 1851 Robert Morris was living in Friern Park, in 1861 in Colney Hatch (the hamlet around *The Orange Tree* cross roads), in 1881 in “Friern Lane”. Frederick Hall had resolved to build a rectory in Friern Barnet Road, behind the site he proposed for a new church. Meanwhile in 1883 he built a temporary “iron church” on the opposite side of the road. In 1888 he built St John’s School, for girls and infants, nearby in Stanford Road. The parish church and existing school were barely a mile away, but in a still rural part of the parish. He also founded Friern Barnet Grammar School, for “sons of middle class parents”, on the site now incorporated into the Dwight Academy

Frederick Hall chose as architect for his new church John Loughborough Pearson, whose work he was familiar with from his old parish at Kilburn. The foundation stone was laid in 1890 and the first part, the chancel, consecrated in 1892. The design of St John’s is similar to that of Pearson’s larger church of St Michael of All Angels, Croydon (built 1880-85), but is enhanced by the use of stone facing for the walls, whereas those of St Michael are of dark brick. For the stained glass he employed the firm of Clayton

and Bell, also responsible for that at St Augustine's. The first three bays of the nave were completed and consecrated in 1902. Neither architect nor Rector was present at the consecration. John Loughborough Pearson had died in 1897; he is buried in Westminster Abbey. Frederick Hall was lying, fatally ill, nearby.

The site of the church and the rectory had been given by George Knights Smith, a local landowner, who also contributed financially, and support came from St Augustine's parish, but Frederick Hall had to press on with his project in the face of discouragement from those who thought the task too great, and bore a substantial part of the cost himself. Shortly before his death, he complained that "no one has ever offered to share the burden with me". His concern for the building did not diminish his care for the parish and, in particular, for its schools. "Friern Lane" (St James's) School, St Peter's in The Freehold, and the two he himself had founded. He was described as "an earnest and thoughtful preacher" and "a true friend to the sick and those in distress". His concern for education extended beyond the parish; he was a member of the Technical Instruction Committee of the London County Council and of the London Diocesan Board of Education. In 1901 he was appointed Rural (Area) Dean of the newly formed Deanery of Hornsey and made a prebendary of St Paul's.

An inscription on the step to the Lady Chapel, of a cross and "Vale F.H.", marks the spot where Frederick Hall had last knelt in his church. He died in August 1902, two months after the consecration of the nave. After the funeral service in St John's, there was a procession, with the route lined by children of the schools in his care, to the parish churchyard, where he is buried. On the floor of the sanctuary of St John's is a memorial brass to one who "with great faith laboured for the building of this church to the glory of God and the extension of His Kingdom".

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE: A LOCAL HERO

by John Philpott

He was not a physically impressive man: 5 feet 3 inches tall, 5 stone in weight, with poor eyesight, a deformity of the spine and with recurring intestinal problems yet despite this he had a happy disposition, made friends readily, and, when he spoke, could hold an audience in thrall for hours.

William Wilberforce was born in Hull on 24 August 1759 and at the age of 17 went up to St John's College, Cambridge. In 1777, he inherited a fortune from his grandfather and uncle and did not then take his studies seriously but was still awarded a BA in 1781 and an MA in 1788. While at Cambridge he became friends with a man who was to play an important part of his later life, William Pitt. It was Pitt who encouraged him to take an interest in politics and in September 1780 he became the MP for Hull at the earliest possible age of 21.

The first legal challenge to slavery was made when Wilberforce was still a child. Dr William Sharp, surgeon to the King, held free surgeries for the poor at his home in the City of London. One day in 1765, Granville Sharp, on a visit to his brother, was horrified at the injuries of a man waiting in the queue to be treated by the doctor, injuries inflicted on the man, Jonathan Strong, by his "owner", a lawyer, David Lisle, who had bought him as a slave from Barbados. The brothers befriended Jonathan, arranging hospital treatment and work with an apothecary when he had recovered. Then, when Lisle tried to recover his "property", Granville thwarted him in a case heard before the Lord Mayor. In 1772 Granville Sharp, now committed to the cause of Abolition, brought a more

decisive action on behalf of another slave, James Somerset, in a case heard before the Lord Chief Justice, the Earl of Mansfield, in Westminster Hall. Lord Mansfield was a local resident, being the owner of Kenwood House in Highgate.

Lord and Lady Mansfield had living with them at Kenwood as wards, two great nieces, Elizabeth, daughter of David Murray, heir to the earldom, and Dido, the daughter of

TO BE SOLD & LET
BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
 On **MONDAY the 18th of MAY, 1829,**
 UNDER THE TREES,
FOR SALE,
THE THREE FOLLOWING
SLAVES,
 viz.
HANNIBAL, about 30 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.
WILLIAM, about 35 Years old, a Labourer.
NANCY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.
 THE MEN belonging to "LEICESTER SQUARE" and the WOMAN to MISS B. BENTY.

TO BE LET,
 On the usual conditions of the Hire finding them in Food, Clo' &c. and Medical
 The residence of
MALE and FEMALE
SLAVES,
 as under specified

ROBERT BAGLEY, about 29 Years old, a good House Servant.
WILLIAM BAGLEY, about 19 Years old, a Labourer.
JOHN ARMS, about 15 Years old.
JACK ANTONIA, about 40 Years old, a Labourer.
PHILIP, an Excellent Cookman.
HARRY, about 27 Years old, a good House Servant.
LEUCY, a Young Woman of good Character, used to House Work and the Nursery.
ELIZA, an Excellent Washerwoman.
CLARA, an Excellent Washerwoman.
FANNY, about 14 Years old, House Servant.
SARAH, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

Also for Sale, at Eleven o'Clock,
Fine Rice, Gram, Paddy, Books, Muslins,
Needles, Pins, Ribbons &c. &c.
AT ONE O'CLOCK, THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE
BLUCHER,
 ADDISON, TRINITY, GOVERNMENT.



another nephew, Captain James Lindsay. Dido's mother was Maria Bell, a slave. It is unlikely that Lord Mansfield's family circumstances affected the case, but he found for James Somerset, and his judgement had the effect of making slavery illegal in England.

Like Granville Sharp, Wilberforce seems to have come almost by accident to the Abolition cause; both, once involved, dedicated their lives to it. In 1784, four years after becoming MP, Wilberforce campaigned in support of his friend and contemporary at Cambridge, the Prime Minister, William Pitt, for parliamentary reform, but the following year he was seriously thinking of giving up his parliamentary career; he had been moved to take Christianity seriously and felt that his way of life was inconsistent with it. Pitt, and another friend, John Newton, former slave trader and now Rector of St Mary Woolnorth, persuaded him that he could serve best by remaining a parliamentarian.

Wilberforce had yet to find a cause, but this was provided by Sir Charles Middleton, Comptroller of the Navy who, as captain of *HMS Arundel*, had recaptured from the French a Bristol slave ship; he and his surgeon were appalled by what they found aboard. Sir Charles sought a member of parliament to take up the Abolition cause, one who was eloquent and able and not burdened with office. He wrote to Wilberforce and Wilberforce accepted.

Wilberforce's first motion on the slave trade was introduced in 1789. He was supported by powerful people, including William Pitt, Charles James Fox, leader of the opposition, and Edmund Burke. But there were many opponents: those who feared their own ruin or the ruin of the country, those who regarded property rights as sacrosanct; those who

regarded abolition of the slave trade as a step towards revolution. From then on, he introduced a motion almost yearly but each time it was defeated in the Commons or the Lords. In 1806 Wilberforce's friend Pitt died. In 1807, the motion, introduced by the new Prime Minister, Lord Grenville, was passed in the Lords. It then went to the Commons where it was passed by 283 votes to 16, and the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade became law. As the house cheered him, Wilberforce wept.

The struggle continued; slavery itself had not been abolished – Wilberforce had realised that to have any hope of success he must proceed one step at a time. In 1825, now well into his sixties and suffering chronic ill health, he found Thomas Buxton (Elizabeth Fry's brother-in-law) one to whom he entrusted the leadership of the campaign in Parliament. Wilberforce retired from Parliament and looked for a home in the countryside but within easy reach of London, for he would continue his anti-slavery work, and found such a place in Hendon Park on Highwood Hill in Mill Hill, within the parish of Hendon.

His retirement was not peaceful. Mill Hill was some three miles from the parish of Hendon St Mary, by poor roads made nearly impassable in winter, and he resolved to build a chapel there. Bishop Blomfield of London approved and wanted to assign it an ecclesiastical district, in effect separating off part of the Hendon parish. Theodore Williams, vicar of Hendon, objected, perhaps because of loss of income from tithes and pew rents, perhaps from dislike of the "enthusiastic" brand of Christianity that Wilberforce espoused. There followed an acrimonious dispute between bishop and vicar, carried out publicly in the pages of the press. Eventually, with a change in the law, the bishop got his way and, three years after its completion, St Pauls' Church, Mill Hill, was consecrated in 1833.

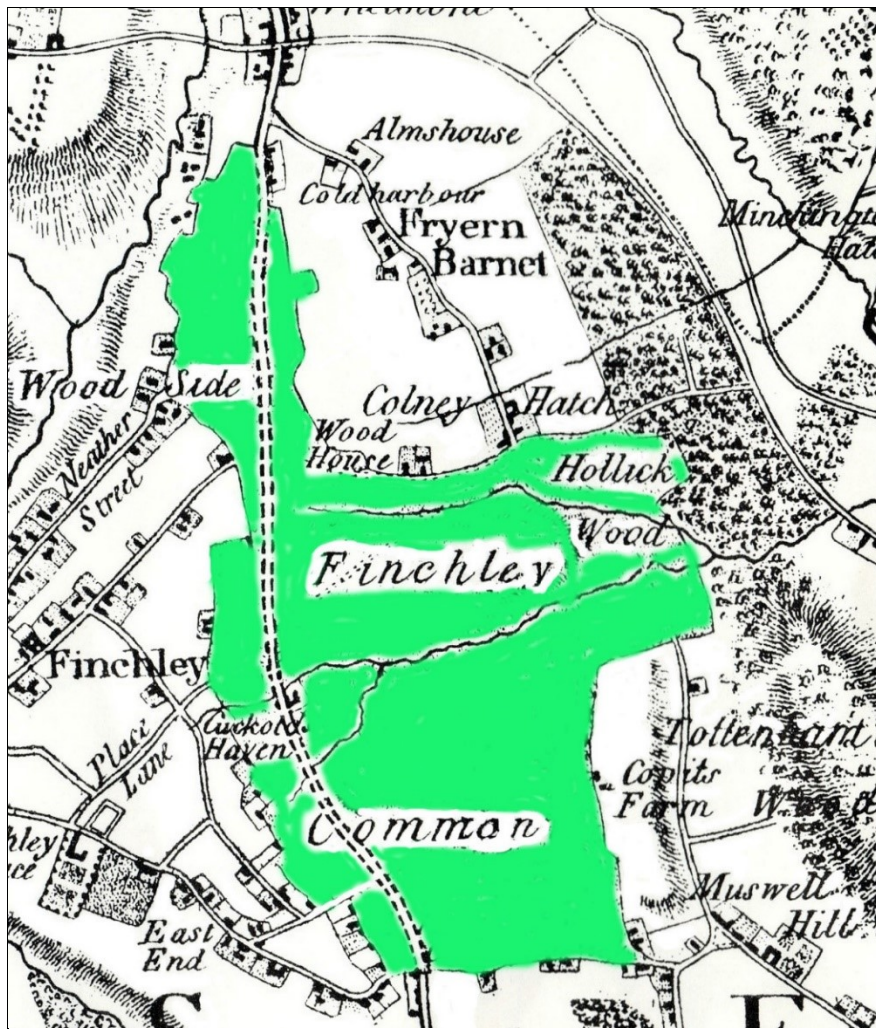
There were, however, financial problems. Wilberforce's eldest son, also William, ran the farm at Hendon Hall, incurring losses which were compounded by a venture into a dairy business in St John's Wood. Wilberforce resolved to underwrite his son's debts. His inherited wealth had been large, but had been greatly reduced by his philanthropy and hospitality and support of his family, so, to raise the money had to sell ancestral property in Hull and Hendon Hall, and went to live with his second son, Samuel, the future Bishop of Oxford.

William Wilberforce died in 1833, before the consecration of his church, but just after hearing of the culmination of his life's work, the passing of the Act for the Abolition of Slavery. He had requested that he be buried in Stoke Newington, with his sister and his daughter, but leading members of both Houses of Parliament persuaded the family that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey. On 3 August 1833 he was interred in the north transept close to his friend William Pitt. As a mark of respect both houses suspended business for the day.

FINCHLEY COMMON

by David Berguer

Finchley Common covered some 2000 acres and ran from approximately where East Finchley station now is, as far north as Totteridge Lane, and from Dollis Brook in the west to Muswell Hill in the east. It was owned by the Bishop of London and was described as 'waste and uncultivated land, disgraceful to the economy of the country.' Parts of the common were used by tenants for the grazing of their sheep, cattle and pigs, payment being made to the Lord of the Manor. There are many examples in the



Finchley Common in 1800

Court Rolls of tenants using land that was not theirs, of removing gravel, turf or wood without permission, and even erecting houses or other premises illegally. The common also attracted various groups of travelers and gypsies who would pitch their tents wherever they pleased.

Because of the amount of wild and uncultivated land, Finchley Common was the haunt of footpads and highwaymen, in fact it became notorious, and although Dick Turpin is usually associated with it, there are no written records that he was ever active there. However, other criminals were, as this report in *The General Evening Post* of 12 May 1770 shows:

'On Saturday night, about twelve o'clock, as Dr Garrow, of Barnet, was returning from Colney-hatch in a poft-chaife, where he had been on a vifit to a patient, he was attacked in the hollow way below the fign of the Cherry-tree, leading to Whetttone, by a fingle highwayman, well mounted, who called out to the poft-boy feveral times to ftop; but the boy, willing to evade him, continued to drive on whereupon he attempted to fire at the doctor. The piftol miffing fire, the doctor got out of the chaife, and attempted to take him. The highwayman then rode about twenty yards off, and turning about prepared again to fire, which the doctor perceiving, he ran at him with the utmoft eagernefs to take him. This putting the highwayman into confufion, he turned his horfe about and rode off

towards Whetstone with the utmost precipitation. The doctor followed him with the chaise as fast as the horses could go, but he got off. It being bright moonlight, the doctor and poft-boy had both a full view of him, and he appeared to be a stout man, dressed in brown, his hat flapped, and mounted on a dark brown horse, about fifteen hands high.'

In 1803 the Board of Agriculture decided that common land should be enclosed; in Middlesex it was estimated that there were some 17,000 acres of common land, including Hounslow Heath and Finchley Common. Initially Inclosure Acts were unpopular:

'It's very wrong for man or woman,
To steal a goose from off the Common;
But who shall plead that man's excuse
Who steals the Common from the goose?'

Finchley Common was enclosed in 1816 and from then onwards land was bought privately and developed; prior to that tenant farmers would have had only small strips of land which were unproductive – these would, in time, be amalgamated into larger, more profitable, holdings. By 1841 there were 1769 acres of meadow or pasture; 124 acres of woodland; 86 acres of arable land; 86 acres of cultivated land and 7 acres of orchard. The development of the Common meant that there was now nowhere for highwaymen to hide and they disappeared, much to the relief of travelers along the Great North Road.

In the 17th and 18th centuries duels, particularly among military officers, were ways of settling differences, or satisfying a person's honour. Initially they were conducted with swords, usually rapiers, but in the 19th century pistols were the weapons of choice. *The Morning Post* of 14 December 1823 carried the following report of a duel on Finchley Common:

"AFFAIR OF HONOUR. On Monday morning, a meeting took place on Finchley Common, betwixt Capt F, of the Royal Marines, and Mr R, a Gentleman of the Scotch Bar. The parties agreed to fire by signal. And both Gentlemen discharged their pistols without effect; the second fire was, however, more fatal, as Mr R received his antagonist's ball between the second and third ribs of the right side, and, passing in an oblique direction, it perforated the abdomen; the unfortunate Gentleman fell, and was raised by his second, and another friend, apparently lifeless. The first use he made of speech was to exchange forgiveness with his antagonist, and entreated Captain F to keep out of the way until his fate should be decided, at the same time generously exculpating that Gentleman or his friend from all blame. Mr R was removed to town immediately after, and the ball was extracted. Last night but faint hopes were entertained of his recovery. Captain F, though perfectly sensible of the noble and disinterested motives which induced Mr R's advice, did not act upon it, but will abide the issue."

If you want to get an idea of what Finchley Common was like, visit the Glebeland Nature Reserve (commonly known as the 'rough lots') or Coldfall Wood, which are the only parts of the common still remaining.

Footnote: In the January 2008 issue of the *Newsletter*, there is an article by John Heathfield on *Riots on Finchley Common*.

IMPORTANT
General Data Protection Regulation effective 25 May 2018

In order to comply with a new EU data protection law designed to protect people's rights to privacy, we are now required to seek your permission before we can send you items through the post (including the *Newsletter*) or to contact you by phone or email.

For those of you who have not yet agreed to this, with this issue of the *Newsletter* you will find a form that we would ask you to complete and send back to us. This will ensure that we can continue to send you the *Newsletter*, or to contact you direct (for example, to advise you of last-minute cancellation of meetings).

You will have the right to see what information we hold on you. You will also have the right to ask us to delete any information we hold on you.

The Society will not divulge the information we hold on you to any third party without your permission.

In addition, if you cease to be a member of the Society, we are required to remove all your details from our database.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 18th AGM will take place on Wednesday 23 May, before the talk on 'The Regent's Canal' and we hope to see you there. An invitation, together with a copy of last year's accounts, is attached.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

For those of you who have not yet renewed your subscriptions for the year commencing 1 April 2018, a further copy of the Membership Renewal Form is enclosed. If you have not renewed by 1 June, you will no longer receive copies of the *Newsletter*.

Friern Barnet & District
Local History Society©
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