

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

Published by Friern Barnet & District Local History Society

Issue Number 74

September 2018

OF BACKSWORDS & FROZEN PIZZAS

by Nick McKie

Dear reader, you might have missed this advertisement from the *Public Advertiser* of 9 July 1757:

To be play'd for at Back-Sword on Monday
next, opposite the Orange Tree at Colney-Hatch,
A Laced Hat, and six Pair of Gloves ;
seven Middlesex Men against any seven Men, to play with
Hands down, and a Second on each Side. To begin play at One
o'Clock.

The attraction is scheduled for 'Monday next.....at one o'clock'. I must suppose that 11th July (yes, a Monday) was a holiday. From what I've learnt of backswording then and now, the occasion was meant to attract your working man and his family for a good day out and the prospect of friendly blood being spilled, so the 11th had to be a time when he was free on the day.

The 'play' was opposite *The Orange Tree*: I can imagine that the licensee set it up, placed the advertisement and offered appearance money to the seven 'Middlesex Men' who may have appeared regularly at other places, such as modern re-enactors do. The prizes, too – laced hat and gloves – would be to attract the seven local lads to chance their arm. Our licensee would hope to benefit from the general quenching of thirst.

But what of the neighbours? Colney Hatch was still a hamlet – no pauper lunatic asylum or railway yet – and in 1774 a John Chapman wrote that it was "a pleasant village". Even as late as the 1790s only 12 houses were recorded. In 1800 John Attfeld, auctioneer, thought that Colney Hatch was "a neighbourhood of very respectable number of families." These worthy neighbours would have had doubts if they could have seen the wood engraving dated 1859 on the next page. It's later, I know, but you get the picture.

So what was, or is, backswording? A backsword has only one sharp edge and is used for cutting rather than thrusting. An alternative weapon was a three-foot long wooden cudgel, called a single stick, which had a basket-like hilt. Both weapons were held with only one hand and the aim was to break the skin of the adversary's head and so draw



'Backswording' by Richard Doyle (1824-83). From www.victorianweb.org.

blood. Our advert cites "Hands down" which means that the rules, as adjudicated by the Second on each side, demanded that the players kept their left arm by their side or behind their back. Other versions allowed the left arm to be held high, sometimes padded, as a defence.

I've met the unlikely suggestion that the term 'stickler for the rules' refers to the Second, or referee, in a bout of backswording. Backswording still happens; it is heartening to hear cries of "Blood, blood" from fun-loving spectators on You Tube, even though masks covering the head and face are now used.

And what of the pizzas? Sad to relate that *The Orange Tree*, is now a Tesco Metro!

FATHERS AND SONS (PART TWO)

by John Philpott

When John Loughborough Pearson died in 1897 he left his son, Frank, his architectural practice, with two cathedrals and several churches to be completed. Following Frederick Hall's death five years later, his younger son, Edward, succeeded him as Rector of Friern Barnet, inheriting a partially built St John the Evangelist church and a substantial debt.

Frank was the only child of John and Jemima Pearson. After his mother's death, when he was just over a year old, he was brought up by an aunt, until, at the age of seven, he was sent away to school. When twelve years old, he went to Winchester College and had hoped to go on to Cambridge, but his father, with an increasing number of commissions, including Truro Cathedral, needed him in his practice. Frank acquiesced: in 1882, at the age of eighteen, he entered his father's office to train as an architect. In 1891, he married Cecilia Lyttelton and they had four daughters. In his desire to involve Frank in his work, John had foreseen the need for someone to complete his work in the future. When John died, Frank was appointed in his place to

complete Truro Cathedral. The building of Brisbane Cathedral was started under his direction in 1901 and continued long after his death in 1947; the western towers were completed in 2009.

There were two local churches among those left for Frank to complete: St Mark's, Barnet Vale, and our own St John the Evangelist. At John Pearson's death, only the eastern part of St John's had been completed. The first three bays of the nave were built between 1901 and 1902, with a temporary west wall. Two further bays were added in 1911, one bay more than originally planned; the westernmost bay, with its transepts and baptistry, is to Frank's design, but retaining his father's design for the vaulting. The pulpit, also designed by Frank, was dedicated in 1928. The tower and spire of the original plans, which should have risen above the choir vestry, were never built.

Edward Gage Hall was ordained deacon in 1892 and priest in 1893, in St Paul's Cathedral. From 1892 he was curate of St John's Church, Walham Green, Fulham, until in 1902, at the age of thirty-three, he became Rector of Friern Barnet. His elder brother, Frederick Arthur Gage Hall, was also a priest, and the younger of his two sisters, Edith, married a priest. Edward did not marry; his sister Margaret continued to live at the Rectory, as did his mother, Mary Adelaide Julia Hall, until her death in 1916. In 1910, she laid the foundation stone at the west end for the extension that completed the church begun by her husband; it carries the inscription: "Thou hast given him his heart's desire."

Edward had to struggle to raise money to cover the debt already incurred in building St John's and for its extension. The debt to Barclays bank was finally cleared eight years after building finished, when Sidney Simmons, already a generous contributor, paid the last £80. Some of the problems of the time do not worry us today: In 1912, the Rector was exhorting those leaving after matins to do so by the south west door, to avoid congestion as the congregation for the next service entered through the north door. In the inter-war years, however, he is noting a decline in Sunday worship and "the ever-changing population of the Parish, so different from pre-1914 years". Other problems are still with us: the cost of heating – "if we trained ourselves to hardier living, our expenses would be considerably reduced"; then "failure of the heating apparatus during this abnormally cold weather", put right at a cost of £50, "money well spent, as the furnace under the supervision of Mr Churchwarden Munday, is, so far, working admirably". The gas lighting is also proving unsatisfactory, at both churches; in 1928, they are wired by the Electric Light Company.

The schools of the parish – St James's, St John's and the Grammar School – received, in the words of his churchwarden, the Rector's "unremitting devotion and care". He himself founded a sister school to the Boys; Grammar School founded by his father; the Girls' Grammar School in a house in Torrington Park, adjoining Friary Park (now demolished, with flats on the site), a self-supporting venture, with fees (according to age) from £1 to £2 10s per term (reductions for sisters). It opened in October 1912 with 24 girls and a graduate of Bedford College, London, as headmistress.

In February 1929 he began raising money for the building of a church hall; by May building was in progress; in October it was opened. The list of organisations using the hall gives us an insight into the parish activities of the time: two girls' clubs (one for schoolgirls over 11, the other for girls in business or domestic service), a boys' club, Old Grammar School Girls, Old Grammar School Boys, fortnightly teaching lectures, missionary lectures, "Parish Informals" (gatherings with no fixed programme, to enable

congregations to meet) and dances. (The building, in Friern Barnet Lane is now part of the Dwight Academy). Just three months after the hall opened, a new and unexpected expense was faced when the spire and roof of the Parish church was wrecked in a gale, requiring £600 to be raised for the repair.

With his incumbency of over 37 years, Edward Gage Hall is the longest serving Rector in the history of our parish. During that time, he saw the parish through one world war and into the outbreak of the second. Between 1914 and 1918, month by month he was reporting the death of parishioners, many of whom he had known as choirboys, as servers, as boys in the Grammar School; and bereavement of families, some of whom bore more than one loss, including the parish verger, Samuel Sherrington, who lost both his sons.

1939 brought greater disruption to parish life; the schools had to be closed until the air raid shelters could be dug; the church hall was requisitioned by the Air Raid Precaution authorities and parish activities moved to the Scout hut, Sunday Schools to parishioners' homes; St John's Church was designated (although not, in the event required) as temporary shelter for those rendered homeless; the area of the church between the vestries and choir was sandbagged to serve as an air raid shelter (the marks made by the sandbags can still be seen on the columns). The Rector wrote: "We are fighting for the recognition of God's supremacy in the world against the powers of evil. Our enemy is not the German people, but a principle of government wholly alien to the teaching of Christ". He did not live to see the full extent of that evil or the destruction it was to bring; In February 1940, he was taken to hospital and that month, at the age of seventy, he died.

In May that year, with the appointment of a new Rector, Edward's sister Margaret, moved from the Rectory which had been her home since their father had built it fifty-four years previously. She outlived the rest of her family and gave the west window of St John's in memory of her parents, her brother Frederick and Edward, and her sister Edith; an inscription beneath commemorates this. Margaret died in 1954 and was brought back to Friern Barnet to be buried in the churchyard with her parents and her brother Edward.

THE COST OF DYING

by David Berguer

In 1801 the population of London was around 818,000 but fifty years later it had risen to 1,887,000. This huge increase posed problems in various areas, including the burial industry. Churchyards and burial grounds in London were now becoming full and an urgent solution had to be found. Initially remains were removed and buried elsewhere, to make way for new bodies, but even this could not solve the problem. Cholera outbreaks in 1848 and 1849 made things even worse, with 14,000 dying from the disease.

It became apparent that new burial grounds had to be found outside the city and between 1837 and 1841 Parliament authorised the building of commercial cemeteries at Abney Park, Brompton, Highgate, Kensal Green, Nunhead, Tower Hamlets, Victoria Park and West Norwood. These new sites were, however, unaffordable for the poorer classes.

The Metropolitan Internments Act of 1850 called for 'Burial Grounds of sufficient Extent for the decent interment of the Bodies of all Persons dying within the District' and to provide mortuaries or reception houses for the safe keeping of bodies awaiting burial. The act also made provision for the carrying of bodies and mourners by railway. The Act was replaced by another act in 1852 and this led to the creation of a 500-acre cemetery in 1854 some 46 miles outside London at Brookwood in Surrey – at the time the largest cemetery in the world. The London Necropolis Railway made the cemetery accessible with a special station next to Waterloo which provided waiting rooms for mourners and a lift to carry the coffins up to the railway. There were three classes of burials at Brookwood, first class at £2 10s 0d, second class at £1, with pauper funerals being paid for by the parish. The railway ceased to run after being damaged in an air raid in 1941.

To cater for the area north of the capital the Great Northern Cemetery was opened in July 1861 at New Southgate. It covered some 150 acres and was reached by a dedicated rail line operated by the Great Northern Railway from a specially built cemetery station just north of King's Cross. The Colney Hatch Cemetery station was on the eastern side of the main line, just outside what was to become the STC factory. The cost of a burial was cheaper than at Brookwood, a mere six shillings to convey the coffin by train.

Great Northern Cemetery,
COLNEY HATCH.
150 Acres.

**Common interment, including use of Chapel
and all Cemetery charges** 0 11 0
Conveyance of Coffin by Railway 0 6 0
Mourners' return Tickets 1s. 6d. each.

NO EXTRA CHARGE ON SUNDAYS.

Great Northern Cemetery.
Private Railway Station, York-road, King's-cross. Mortuary for deposit of bodies *free of charge.*

Great Northern Cemetery.
Special Funeral Trains every Sunday at 3 p.m.
for the convenience of the Working Classes.
Entire expence of a Working Man's Funeral, including Coffin, *Funeral Carriage* } £2 5 0
from the House, sittings for 2 mourners,
pall, Undertaker's attendance, *grave,*
use of Chapel, and all Cemetery charges }

**Great Northern Cemetery and
FUNERAL COMPANY.**
The Company undertake Funerals of all classes by
Railway or Road, at fixed charges.
Great expence saved by the employment of this
Company for the entire Funeral.
List of prices and *Free Railway Tickets* to view
the Cemetery may be had at the
OFFICES, 122, HIGH HOLBORN.

Advertisement in North London News of 10 January 1863

Unlike Brookwood, the railway was not a success, mainly due to the fact that the cemetery was only seven miles from London and could be easily reached by road. Initially trains ran daily, but lack of patronage led to the service being reduced to three times a week, and then twice a week. The railway service was eventually withdrawn completely in 1871. There were two signal boxes at the site at New Southgate, the Down box was removed in the 1920s, but the Up box remained until 1973 when it was demolished when the line was electrified.

The following advertisement appeared in *St Michael's & All Angels Magazine* in July 1946 and gives us an idea of the cost of a funeral at that time. Today the average cost of a funeral is reckoned to be in the region of £3900.

CREMATION AT ENFIELD

4½ Guineas INCLUDES CLERGYMAN'S FEE
AND THE SCATTERING OF
ASHES in BEAUTIFUL GARDENS

MEMORIAL TREES AND SHRUBS
MAY BE PLANTED

INSPECTION INVITED

For further particulars apply to the Clerk to the

TOTTENHAM AND WOOD GREEN BURIAL BOARD.

Head Office Phone: **Tott. 4944-5.**

Crematorium: **Enfield 0226**

WE GET PRAISE....AND INFORMATION

We received this in an email from Yvonne Ruge:

“Your newsletters always make compulsive reading, but the latest one (issue number 73) is an absolute cracker. Sister Chris had just been enthusing over it as well, so here is a big combined thank you from us to you and John H, John P and Nick.

Incidentally, did you know that Dr Garrow from Barnet who stood up to a footpad on Finchley Common in May 1770 is very probably the priest of Hadley Church and father of the then 10-year-old William Garrow who became Attorney General and is credited with being the driving force in introducing our adversarial court system? That's the Garrow of the popular TV drama series 'Garrow's Law'. (He also attended his father's school, the Hadley School which is still there, though, one hopes, in updated buildings!”)

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

by David Berguer

From time to time we get requests for information from individuals researching their family history and we do our best to help them, or to refer them to someone who can. In October 2017 we had an email from a company, Wall to Wall Media Ltd, who are a leading production company producing such programmes as *Long Lost Family* and *The World's Most Extreme Homes*. They advised us that they were working on a new series of *Who Do you Think You Are?* for the BBC and one of the subjects had a Jewish relative who had been a patient in Friern Hospital between 1936 and 1950. I was able to help them with some aspects of the hospital and its history. At that stage they would not reveal who the subject was, but in early August they advised me that the programme to be broadcast on BBC 1 on Monday 13 August would feature Robert Rinder (of *Judge Rinder* and *Strictly Come Dancing* fame, and also a north London resident).

The programme proved to be one of the most interesting and harrowing as it featured Robert's family, some of whom had been lost in the Holocaust, and in particular, his maternal great grandfather, Israel Medalyer, who was the patient at Friern. It transpired that Israel had witnessed a pogrom in his native Latvia when he was 14 or 15 and this had affected his mental health. His family had emigrated to Britain and he had joined the British Army, being discharged in 1919. His mental health deteriorated and in 1936 he was admitted to Friern with 'melancholia' (which today would be called acute depression) and paranoia (he thought his wife was being unfaithful).

The researchers had managed to track down Israel's medical notes which are kept at the London Metropolitan Archives. On admission he was described as deluded and hallucinated and complained that his neighbours had been persecuting him for years and did everything possible to make his life miserable. He also claimed his wife was having a series of affairs. He had periods of excitement and restlessness and was abusive towards the staff. It appeared that the doctors at Friern eventually gave up on him as he was not responding to treatment and he died in 1950 at the hospital, having been there for 24 years. This was obviously a shock to Robert whose family had never mentioned this.

I was able to tell the researcher at Wall to Wall that the Jewish patients at Friern around that time accounted for some 35%, many of whom, like Israel, had come from the East End of London which was part of the hospital's catchment area.

It is likely that there are many similar sad stories in the archives, but this one was particularly moving. If you get a chance to see the programme *via* BBC iPlayer, or a repeat, do watch it.

THE 1831 CENSUS

by John Heathfield

The first national census was taken in 1801 in an attempt to find out how many people lived where in Great Britain. It was simply a head count which was repeated every ten years. In 1841 names of residents were included as well as numbers.

The Census taker for 1831 in the parish of Friern Barnet was Richard Attfield, the parish clerk. He was meticulous in his recording and in order to show that nobody was omitted, he wrote down the names of everyone whom he had counted.

The number of names recorded is 120 and this represents the Heads of Household. To arrive at a population figure it is probably fair to assume three persons per household, so the population of the parish of Friern Barnet could have been around 360.

Attfield not only recorded people's names, he also made a note of their occupation and this has provided us with a snapshot of life in Friern Barnet 186 years ago. Over a quarter (26%) of the residents were labourers and 15% worked with horses as horse keepers, blacksmiths, coachmen, harness makers or wheelmen. 13% worked on the land, either as farmers or gardeners, 10% were in the retail trade (baker, butcher, linen draper, shoemakers and shopkeepers) while 7.7% were publicans or beer sellers (pubs included *The Orange Tree*, *Three Horseshoes*, *The Griffin Inn*, *The Green Man*, *The Blue Anchor* and *The Black Bull*). 12% had no occupation and were described as 'gentlemen' or of 'independent means'. In contrast, seven people were described as paupers and would have been looked after by the parish.

To see the full list of names, visit our website, www.friern-barnethistory.org.uk, click on 'The Area' and then on 'Censuses'. There you will find a PDF of 'The 1831 Census'.

OAKLEIGH ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB

by Brian Lee

Oakleigh Rovers Football Club was formed in 1957 with one team and grew over the years ending up with four teams playing on both Saturdays and Sundays. The club first played in the Finchley League, About 1964-65 the Finchley and Barnet Leagues amalgamated to form the North London Combination.

The 'clubhouse' was in Russell Lane, Whetstone, at the home of Mr & Mrs John Main. John, or 'Pop', became the club's President. Their son, also John Main, and his friend John Catlin were instrumental in steering many local lads into playing and enjoying football plus being involved in comradeship that would last a lifetime. Len Wildman chaired Wednesday evening meetings, was manager of the Second Team and Dinner Dance organiser. These events were very popular and on one occasion Ralph Coates and John Gorman of Tottenham Hotspur presented the club awards.

The team mainly played in red shirts and green shorts but over the years, and with four teams, the colours varied. Money was often the major factor and if the regular supplier had kit he wanted to offload, John was happy to ring the changes. My wife, Gillian, was one of several of the footballers' wives who washed the team kit - with the grass and mud being washed off in the bath before the first wash in the twin tub!

Oakleigh Rovers had considerable success in their day and several players, including myself, represented the North London Combination Inter-League team. The club also had ladies' netball and football teams.

In 1966 the two John Mains, President and Founder of Oakleigh Rovers attended a reception at Hendon Town Hall on the occasion of the visit of the triumphant English football team after their World cup victory. Games were played in many parts of north London but home matches were played at Bethune Park and Brook Farm Open Space. There are no football pitches there now but fifty years ago it was a very different matter, as this recent conversation between ex-Oakleigh Players testifies:

Brian Lee: "I was saying there's no football pitches at Brook Farm at all now."

Bobby Smith: "No!"

Brian: "How many did there used to be down there?"

Bobby: "There were eight, weren't there?"

John Catlin: "Nine."

Brian: "When you think, when you first drove in there the top two pitches before the railway, and then you went down and there was one on the plateau, then there were another two."

John: "And number eight was like that" (indicates slope).

Brian: "And there were four on the other side of the brook, there must have been nine pitches there."

Bobby: "The one at the top, Whitefield, was a small pitch, that was a flat pitch. I remember playing on it, but the penalty area and the touchline were about a yard apart."

John: "Oh, yes, when you got over there you'd think – 'please let us have pitch five', it was the only one that was flat."

Bobby: "Some of it was easy. I can remember 'Olden' saying, if we were struggling a bit, 'Kick it in the brook, kick it in the brook.'"

John Main: "I said to Martin (his son). I put it in my will that I wanted to have my ashes on pitch six."

Martin Main: "So there's no football pitches over there now?"

Brian: "No."

Bobby: "Talking of grounds, is Stirling Corner still going?"

Brian: "No, they have blocked up all the entrances, all rubbish around."

Bobby: "It was lovely coming up those steps onto the pitch. Brian, you went down once when it was snowing."

Brian: "I wasn't the only one, we were pleading with the ref, there were no other games on."

John Main: "It was unbelievable."

Brian: "John Caitlin went and got teas for us all and we were shaking, it was awful."

John Main: "It was really bad conditions, sometimes those pitches used to freeze and the ball would go where the frozen ruts took it."

These pals were in conversation together more than sixty years after their club was formed. Their friendships, and those of their families, were firmly rooted in amateur and professional football clubs. Their common interest was football wherever and however it was played. John Main was involved with the club for over 30 years.

John Main moved to Hastings, Bobby Smith to Holland on Sea and Brian Lee still lives in Barnet. Sadly, John Catlin died in November 2017.

Does anyone else remember playing football for – or against – Oakleigh Rovers at Bethune Park or Brook Farm Open Space or that freezing pitch at Stirling Corner?

Have You Applied

FOR YOUR

Telephone Yet ?

The Interest that has been aroused by the novel proposal to place every Householder in Finchley and District on the Telephone has abated in no way during the past week.

During the past week there has been no abatement in the extraordinary demand for fuller particulars of the novel monthly rental telephone plan, which was first announced to readers of the "Finchley Press" two weeks ago to-day, and which has met with such an astounding reception from the readers of this paper.

And, after all, the wonderful acclamation with which this most attractive proposal has been received by the people of Finchley is hardly to be wondered at—rather the reverse.



It is quite evident that the time has now come when the Telephone is every bit as necessary in the home as it is in the Office or Factory.

The people of Finchley have been quick to appreciate this fact—to grasp the real live service to be obtained from the possession of a Telephone—and have apparently decided in their own minds the title

"PHONY FINCHLEY."

It is proposed to place every householder in the Finchley district on the telephone, and to arrange for the necessary subscription to be paid every month in precisely the same way as householders have hitherto been accustomed to pay their ordinary monthly accounts. This means that every housewife in Finchley can now have a telephone of her own at home, at a monthly cost, that works out at considerably less than the wages of an ordinary domestic servant—she can have a telephone installed right away and pay for it every month out of her ordinary house-keeping allowance.

THE HOUSEHOLD MESSENGER.

The value of a telephone in the home can hardly be over-estimated, and it is only now that the "Woman in the Home" is beginning to foresee the wonderful service it can render her personally. Here, ready at hand, is a quick and accurate means

of communicating with friends—the most reliable of household messengers ready, day and night, to do her bidding.

All the shopping can be conducted through it—in cases of emergency, the doctor, the fire brigade, or even the police can be summoned in two minutes—engagements or appointments can be made and cancelled at any moment, even on Sunday when the next quickest and much more expensive mode of communication, the telegraph, is not available.

The unexpected guest loses all its terrors to the housewife who is on the telephone—all the extra provision necessary can be made in five minutes.

YOU MUST HAVE A TELEPHONE.

The time has now arrived when you cannot possibly afford to remain outside the wonderful circle of telephone users, and to-day you are given the opportunity of becoming a subscriber on a monthly subscription basis that puts the service well within your reach.



The whole subject is dealt with, and the various points gone into and discussed thoroughly in a wonderfully interesting manner in the prospectus which has been prepared for free distribution by the Telephone System Company, 244 High Holborn, and which will be forwarded post free and gratis to every householder in Finchley applying to above address, and mentioning the "Finchley Press."

In order that enquiries may be answered as promptly as possible, it has been arranged to reserve two of the Company's instruments—1115 City and 5340 Central—for this purpose. By ringing up the Exchange and asking for either of these two numbers, existing subscribers to the service can have full particulars given them at once, together with an explanation of how this novel monthly subscription system can be applied to their own case.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the eighteenth AGM held on 23 May at North Middlesex Golf Club, it was agreed that the annual subscription fees for 2019-20 would remain at the current level unless unforeseen circumstances arose.

A copy of the Accounts for 2017-18 is enclosed with this Newsletter.

BY TUBE TO NORTH FINCHLEY?

The following appeared in *Barnet Press* on 18 February 1922:

“Replying to a letter from Mr R Mann. Secretary to the Finchley Ratepayers’ Defence League, Lord Ashfield, chairman of the Electric Railway Company, writes:-

“I have received your letter of the 20th January in which you suggest an extension of our railway from Highgate to North Finchley. I agree with the suggestion that an extension of this kind is desirable and would be very beneficial to the district to be served by this extension, and I am glad to know that such an extension would have the support of the residents in the district concerned.

Unfortunately, the high costs of construction, and the great difficulty which would be experienced in raising the large sums of money necessary for this improvement, make it impossible for me to give favourable consideration to your suggestion at this particular time. I hope that when the situation changes, and money can more easily be raised and the works executed at a lower cost I may be able to take a more favourable view of the matter. In the meanwhile, I will not neglect to bear in mind the suggestion which you have made.”

It is difficult to see where a station at North Finchley could have been sited, as the Northern line runs in a straight line to the west of North Finchley, via Finchley Central, West Finchley and Woodside Park.

A LITERARY QUOTE

“The way from Southgate to Colney Hatch through the unfrequentedest blackberry paths that ever concealed their coy bunches from a truant citizen, we have accidentally fallen upon”

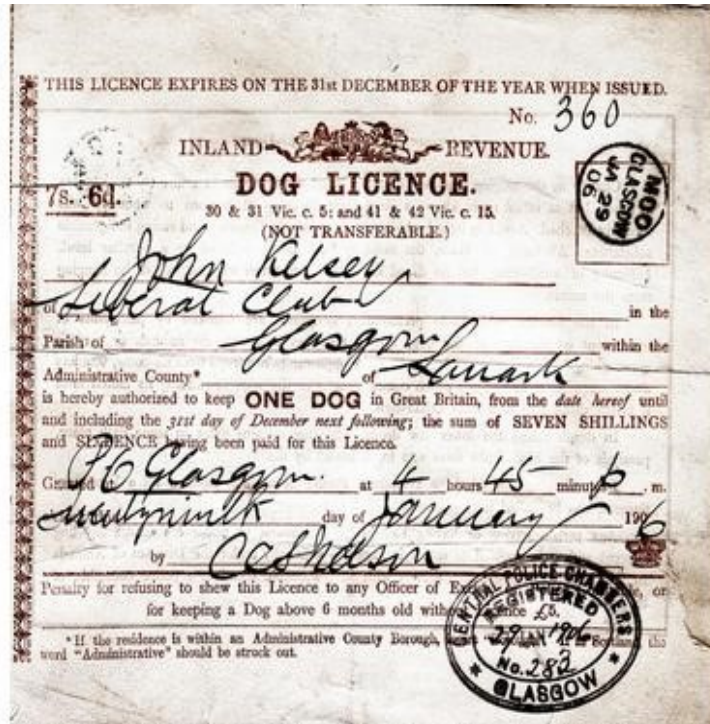
Charles Lamb (1775-1834)

TAX THAT DOG!

The following appeared in *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper* of 3 May 1874:

“George Pope, Felton-corner, Finchley; Henry Williams of Fortis-green; John Thomas, Oakleigh-road, Friern Barnet; Joseph Smith of Whetstone (who did not appear); and James Blyth of Church-end Finchley, were charged on summonses with keeping dogs without licences. Formal evidence in support of the various summonses was given by Robert Webb Haines, officer of Inland

Revenue, as to seeing dogs on defendants' premises on certain days during March and April, and to licences not being taken out until afterwards. The defendant Blyth, who was alleged to have two dogs while he only paid licence for one, said that the second one was under age at the time for which he was summoned, and had been drowned before it was six months old. He called witnesses to prove this. The Bench adjourned this case for a fortnight for further evidence for the defence. In all other cases they inflicted the minimum penalty of 25s, the full penalty being £5. Mr Bodkin expressed a wish that the Excise would take more notice of unlicensed dogs. Mr Claxton, supervisor of Excise,



said that he had a hundred cases in hand, and was paying special attention to these matters, as there were so many mad dogs about."

Footnote:

Dog licences were abolished in 1987 when the rate was 37p. Before decimalisation it had been 7/6d for years and the money went to local authorities. It was reckoned that only about half the dog owners actually bothered to buy a licence, and the revenue raised was less than the cost of collecting it. From 2016 it became mandatory to microchip dogs.

**Friern Barnet & District
Local History Society**
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