

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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ROUTEMASTERS RETURN

by David Berguer

To commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the closing of Finchley bus depot in November 1993, nine privately owned Routemaster buses operated a free service on Sunday 25 November 2018 between Archway Station and Barnet Church (replicating the former route 104) and between Golders Green Station and Barnet Church (the former route 104A). Route 104 had replaced trolleybus route 609 which ceased operation on 7 November 1961.

Nine vehicles ran on the day, all of them RMLs which had 72 seats – eight more than the standard RM buses. This had been achieved by adding an extra bay in the centre of the bus measuring some 2.4 feet. Finchley Garage had been chosen in 1961 as the first garage to operate the new buses.

Finchley Depot had opened in June 1905, having been built on land acquired in 1904 by Metropolitan Electric Tramways (MET). A new road, Rosemont Avenue, was built



RML 897 heads south at Whetstone on Sunday 25 November 2018

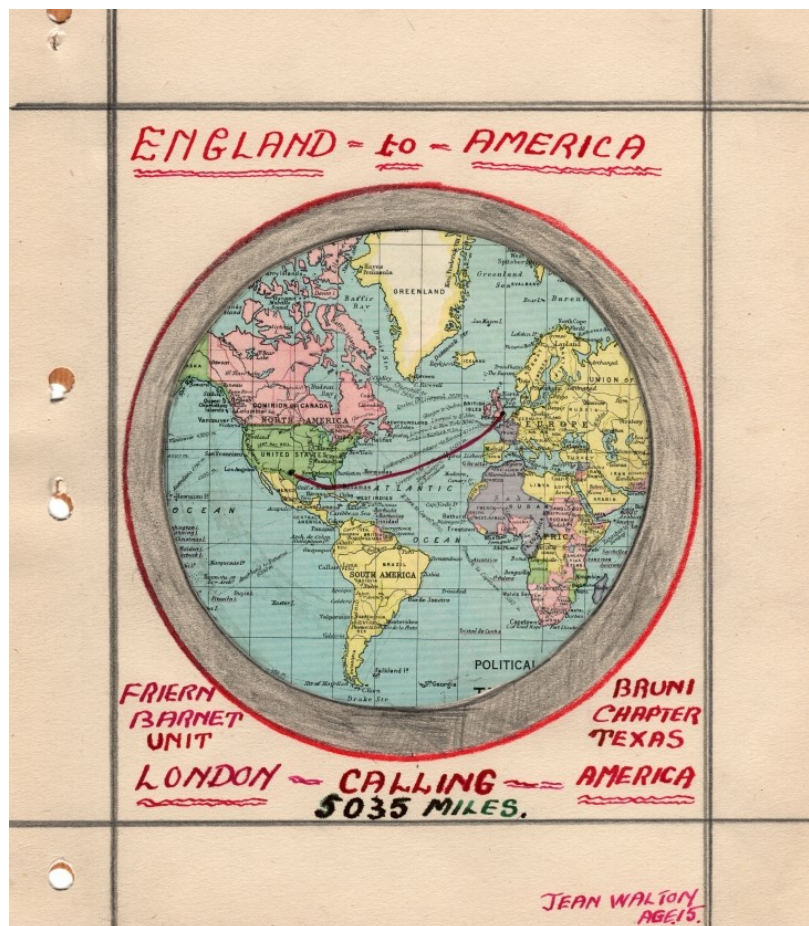
which gave access to it. It initially had room for 60 tramcars but was enlarged in 1912 and again in 1928 when a new modern and much larger tram, the Feltham, was introduced. When the trams were phased out and trolleybuses introduced in 1936 further changes took place. The capacity was for 108 vehicles but by 1950 only 79 trolleybuses were operating. The last trolleybuses ran 1962 but there was a time in November 1961 when the new Routemaster buses and trolleybuses were both operating at the same time.

A mix of minibuses, single deck and double deck buses (including the experimental RMLs) operated from the garage for some thirty years but when route 13 was allocated to two other garages – Holloway and Potters Bar – the operator, London Northern, decided that Finchley was redundant and the last bus moved out in early 1994. The depot was subsequently demolished and a new Homebase store was built on the site.

A WARTIME MEMENTO

by David Berguer

Following the article in the last Newsletter, here are more extracts from the album which was compiled by the girls of Finchley and Friern Barnet Red Cross:



“Our Unit of the British Junior Red Cross

I thought you would like to know something about our unit. We hold our meetings in a house which the Red Cross have taken over for the duration of the war. In this house we have every facility for learning First Aid and Home Nursing from a bed, to an artificial leg to practice on.

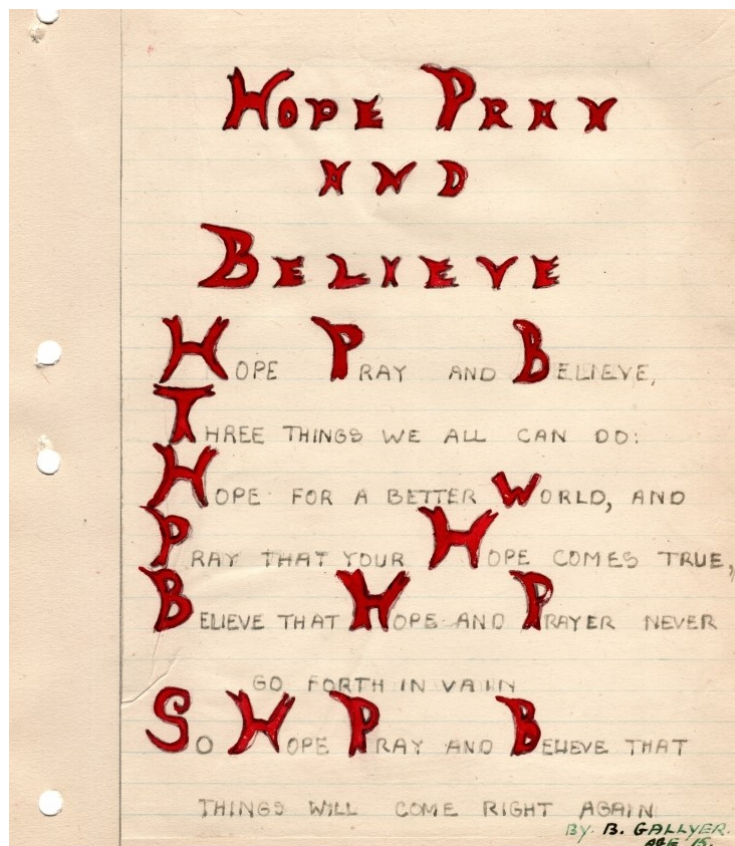
Sometimes we go to a Red Cross Sick Bay, called Kingswood. This Sick Bay is run like a hospital only they do not perform operations. There we learn a great deal, as we are allowed to take temperatures, pulses and respirations, to watch dressings and sometimes help a nurse with a blanket bath.

We meet every Friday at 6 o'clock and we have a lecture first, followed by practical work such as bandaging and bed making. If there is a film at a local cinema on the work of the Red Cross we go and collect money from the people there.

Last year, three girls from our unit had a wonderful experience for they went up to Buckingham Palace with their leader, Miss Mead, and were inspected by the Queen. Has anything like that ever happened to you yet? If so, please write and tell us all about it, as we will be most interested.

A few weeks ago we held our birthday for our unit was then two years old. We had a lovely iced cake with two candles on it, also plenty of other good things to eat. There were many games and several prizes given for competitions. How long has your Red Cross been open?

Iris Stacey
Age 15"



"Our Red Cross Work

There are about thirty six of us in our unit. I expect we do mostly the same things as you, bandaging, splinting and working up for exams but we do do other things besides as you will read later.

We are divided into three groups and each group has the name of a very famous nurse or doctor and for our three names we have chosen Florence Nightingale, Nurse Cavell and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. We hold our meetings in a fairly large house and each group has a corner of the room that overlooks the garden. It is very pleasant and we are quite happy there.

Last year we had a garden fete and it was so successful that we are having another one this year. We made practically all the things to sell ourselves such as little pots painted in various colours. Some made dolls, both black and white and also some decorations and little woolly rattles for the babies. It was all lots of fun, making and selling the goods and also it was very hot work. We were sure it was the hottest day in years, and we had our stall placed right in the way of the sun, so that at the end of the day we felt like one of the black dolls we had made, only much more dustier. Still we enjoyed ourselves very much. This year we have one of the princesses coming, and we are looking forward very much to seeing her. It was our anniversary on 13th April, and we celebrated it by having a party. We had many games and a lovely tea (thanks to our leader Miss Mead).

Please tell us more about your unit and the work you do, we are very interested.

Pamela Davey
Age 14"

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The following article appeared in *The Dundee Courier* of 20 December 1875:

"WOMEN'S RIGHT IN THE OLDEN TIME.

A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* writes:-

I for one am obliged to Mr Higson for letting us know of Sarah Schofield, flute player, and Ruth Walker, stone breaker. But I am a little surprised at his other enquiries. Female overseers were both and are; and I think that recent appointments of the kind are all recorded in the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, edited by Miss Lydia Becker. Note also that the appointment of Mrs Nassau senior as a workhouse inspector has already produced a society for the benefit of workhouse girls, which is managed, I believe, by ladies. As to female sextons, they are common enough, especially in towns where there is no graveyard. On the very next page to that on which Mr Higson's paragraph appears, it is stated in *N & Q* that the parish of Minster, in Kent, had a female sexton in 1873. I know of several such cases e.g. in churches in the City of London. One of the latest Orders in Council for uniting City benefices recites that all the three benefices which were to be united have female sextons, and provides that the union shall not prevent women from holding that office. In Wilson's *Wonderful Characters*, or some such book, there is an account of a famous female sexton at Isleworth, who for many years was gravedigger as well. I know of no female flute players, at least in Europe, nowadays; and perhaps that is as well, considering the ill reputation they had of old time. Female stonebreakers are much more interesting to those who care for honest labour. I have seen them at work by the roadside in Brittany, and I think, also here and there, in Italy. In the parish registers of Totteridge, Middlesex, under date March 2, 1802, is an entry of the burial of Mrs Elizabeth King, widow, "for forty-six years clerk of this parish, in

the ninety-first year of her age, who died at Whetstone, in the parish of Finchley, Middlesex, February 24.” Appended to this is the following curious note: “N.B. This old woman, as long as she was able to attend, did constantly, and read on the prayer days with great strength and pleasure to the hearers, though not in the clerk’s place, the desk being filled on the Sunday by her son-in-law. Benjamin Whithall, who did his best.”

The National Society for Women’s Suffrage was formed in 1872 and this was followed by National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies. The militant activities which were associated with the suffragettes began around 1906 by the Women’s Social and Political Union. After the end of the First World War in 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed which gave the vote to all men and to women over the age of 30 who were householders, the wives of householders, occupiers of properties with an annual rent of £5 and graduates of British universities. The reason why all women were not given the vote at this time was due to the large number of men who had been killed in the war (887,000) which meant that there were more women than men and it would have been a step too far to make women the majority of voters. In 1928 the Conservative government passed the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act gave the vote to all women over the age of 21 and made them equal with men.

Despite the enfranchisement of women, it was only in recent times that some organisations were forced to treat women as equals. In 1998 the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) allowed women to become members, the Royal Yacht Squadron in 2013 the Royal & Ancient Golf Club at St Andrews in 2014 and 2017 the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Muirfield in 2017 all followed suit.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TALES

In 1980 Hendon & District Local History Society (HADAS) published *Those Were the Days!*, a collection of transcripts of local histories conducted with local residents by Percy Reboul. Here are two extracts which give us a glimpse into conditions in the local building industry:

“THE TUNNEL-TIGER’S TALE

I was born in 1910 at Stepney. My father was a tunnel miner too, and when he worked on the Oakleigh Park and Wood Green tunnels we moved to Muswell Hill. I went to Cromwell Road school and left at 14.

My first job was with my father. He was working on the Post Office Tube Railway which runs from Paddington to Mount Pleasant and that was my first time underground. My grandfather was also a tunnel miner and he was what they called the “walking ganger” or the walking boss on the Oakleigh Park and Wood Green tunnel and my father worked with him as a leading miner.

I started off as a tea boy for about a year and gradually went down the tunnels with my father driving a little cart pulling out the muck as the miners got it out. In those days we did about 5 feet of tunnel a day. We worked two 12-hour shifts, one on day and one on night – 6.30 in the morning or 6.30 at night – six days a week. We worked a week of days and a week of nights. Pay was a guinea a shift but when I started I got 15/- a week.

The work is as dangerous and as hard as coal mining although they work in a smaller space. Average tunnels are 12 ft 3 in: the first one that was done was 10 feet on the old City and South London – what they called the “tuppenny tube”. I worked on enlarging that original tunnel.

In my early days there was no protective clothing. In some places, if you were in bad ground and had to have compressed air put in (to keep back the water) you could be working in a temperature of 80-90° F but come outside the airlock and it would be freezing. You came out every 8 hours if you are working in compressed air. We worked by candle light. The candles were put in a metal holder with a spike which you stuck in the ground. The gang would be given a packet of candles as they went down and you lit as many as was necessary to see the job. Many times you had to walk to work. My father walked from Muswell Hill to Hackney Wick every day just to get to work. He would get up about 4am. There was no transport then as there is today.

The miners were generally fit men. I've never had a serious illness. You were not allowed to work in compressed air if you had a cold. You had to go before a doctor before you went into the tunnel and the doctor would say “not today” and you had to go home. You could take cigarettes into work and occasionally they might take a bottle of beer.

On tunneling you had to have 8 men in the gang: one leading miner, three miners and four back-fillers who load the muck into skips which are pushed on rails out of the pit. I was an Inspector on part of the Central Line tunnels and one of my jobs was to check the line and level of the tunnels. This was done by two plumb-lines fitted by the civil engineers. One line is on the face of the tunnel and one back about 20 feet. You line up and a good miner never goes wrong.

About 1934/35 I worked for Charles Brand on the Finsbury Park to Cockfosters Piccadilly Line underground tunnel. We were paid a guinea a shift. The tunnel runs from Finsbury Park through Wood Green and runs into the open at Arnos Grove. I was leading miner at Wood Green. Just beyond the station is what they call a cross-over road where the train changes direction. It's a telescope tunnel which gets gradually bigger starting at 12 feet then through 14 feet and 16 feet until it gets 27 feet.

I was an Inspector on the Liverpool Street to Newbury Park on the Central Line. I was employed by the Consulting Engineers and we were down 70 feet in the London clay which was good ground. I had to make out a report every night on the nature of the ground or strata.

Tunnel miners are proud of the Mersey Tunnel, it being the largest under-water tunnel in the world: 44 feet in diameter. For a start we dug 3 ordinary tunnels right through – a bottom one to take surplus water coming through the crevices in the rocks. At one point we were only 3ft below the bed of the river. We built the first 100 “rings” by hand, no machinery. My father was in charge of that. He was the ganger. My father, my 2 brothers and myself each had a Gang – 24 people to the gang. A lot of them were Irish (being Liverpool) and we were picked men. I was on the top of the tunnel bolting on a metal segment when the spanner slipped and I fell face-first on the rock below. We had 3 or 4 people killed. The Labour Exchange sent 30 men to the shaft, every shift every day, in case anyone regular didn't turn up for work.

Tunnel tigers (a popular name for a tunnel miner) are a particular breed of men. It's in the blood. My father was classed as the finest clay miner in London although he did say he thought I was better. You're all a happy gang together, laughing and singing as you work. Now they have a transistor radio. Today it's all mechanical work - a lot easier. I've come on a morning with my flannel shirt so soaked in sweat that you can wring it out. Most miners wore flannel shirts for warmth and for soaking up the sweat. We were more content in the good old days"

"THE BRICKLAYER'S TALE

I was born in January 1910 and went to All Saints' School at Oakleigh Road, Whetstone and later to St James's, Friern Barnet Lane. I left school at 14 and went to work with my father who at that time was building man-holes for Sir Thomas Adam of Wood Green in Netherlands Road, East Barnet.

In those days bricks cost 16s per thousand, sand was 6s per yard and cement 1s 6d for a 1 cwt sack. We bought our materials from local suppliers such as Knowles at Totteridge Station and they were delivered by horse and cart.

My father specialised in the building of man-holes and sewers and he arranged contracts for work. I think the price for manhole brickwork was 6s 6d per rising foot – that is about 250 bricks. I got paid 6d per hour. We worked irregular hours, sometimes until nine or ten o'clock at night until the job was done. Funnily enough, Monday afternoon was often taken off by builders doing piecework and many of them met together at the Griffin Inn, Whetstone.

In those days, the man-holes were dug by the "navvies". There were no mechanical diggers. All the wheelbarrows were wood with iron-rimmed wheels and the navies wore straps around their knees into which they tucked their "little old man" – a small scraper used to clean their grafting tool. A lot of them wore mole-skin trousers. They came from all over the country and got about 1s 2½d per hour. There was also the "timber man" who shored-up the trenches – he was the most important member of the team because your life could depend on him.

When I was about 15½ years of age, I worked with my dad building houses in Oakleigh Avenue, Whetstone. As it was summer, work started at 7am and at 9am it was my job to collect from home the breakfasts that my mother had cooked for the men. About 9.30am I was told by my father to take the haversack containing six quart bottles to a back door in the Griffin Inn to be filled with beer. This was drunk up to midday. In the afternoon they drunk tea. In those days it was all green fields. Mr Floyd, a dairyman, kept his cows in fields where the new Whetstone Police Station now stands at the top of Friern Barnet Lane. I used to milk a friendly cow direct into an empty milk bottle but in the end Floyd "tumbled" to it.

Sir Thomas Adam, the engineer, was a funny old man. He would come to the site on pay-day (Friday). I remember a terrible storm one pay day and heard Adam say to his foreman: "Mr Chalkley, please shut the door (of the site office), the lightning may strike the notes!" One week my father earned the colossal sum of £20 and Adam offered to escort him home!

Monday morning was "sub-day". Things were so hard in those days, particularly if the weather was bad, you might not even have your rent money. So, on Monday you could draw, say, 15s, which was deducted at the end of the week. You had to "sub" to live in

those days; it was standard practice but mostly the sub went on buying beer and you might need another sub on Wednesday. The men were a good crowd, good at their jobs. The worst years were 1926 and 1928 but just before the war it was really good - plenty of work.

I remember building man-holes in Hendon around the Welsh Harp – Mount Road and that area. They were about 105 ft deep. Bricks were lowered by crane and it was 18 ins brickwork at the bottom, reinforced with concrete and iron bars. At certain hours of the day, the sewers, which we were repairing and enlarging, and which were closed when we were working on them, were opened and the water rushed through at about 60 mph.

I was one of the first bricklayers on the Ideal Home Estate which is Gallants Farm and all around there. The purchaser could pick his own site for his bungalow – they were £675. When finished, Jelks of Finchley, the furniture people, invited you to see their show house. There was such a rush for these houses that within months they went up to £1000.

They were built in sand and cement (not the old-fashioned lime mortar) and Belgian bricks were used. They were extremely hard bricks, hard on the hands to lay but ask anyone on that estate how hard it is to drill a hole in their walls.

The head of Ideal Homes was Mr Mayer. He said to us: “You’ve got the best of materials that money can buy. I want no shoddy work”. But we had trainees on the site with only 6 weeks training behind them so you couldn’t help but have bad work in some places. The late 30s was the time of the jerry-builder but the estate, on the whole, was well built. We would lay about 1000 bricks a day and were paid 2s 6d per hour, which was good money.

One of my most vivid memories is of 1926 when I went with my father to Marylebone Cemetery to build a vault for a Mr Salmon. After the mourners had left the Superintendent nipped down the vault and took all tapestries off the coffin just before they rolled the stone over. My father said: “Now you’ve seen people with money buried, I’ll show you how people with no money are buried.” We went to the far side of the cemetery and I saw a deep hole with about 6 or 7 coffins on top of each other and finished off with about 6 babies’ coffins. It was then filled in and grassed over and that was the end of them.”

MORE HOUSING CHANGES

by David Berguer

In the September 2017 issue of the *Newsletter* we reported on the large number of new dwellings being built in the area. Since then more have been added:

	Houses	Flats	Total
<u>Friern Barnet</u>			
150-152 Colney Hatch Lane		5	5
173 Friern Barnet Lane (was 1 dwelling, now 2)		1	1
20 Queens Parade,		2	2

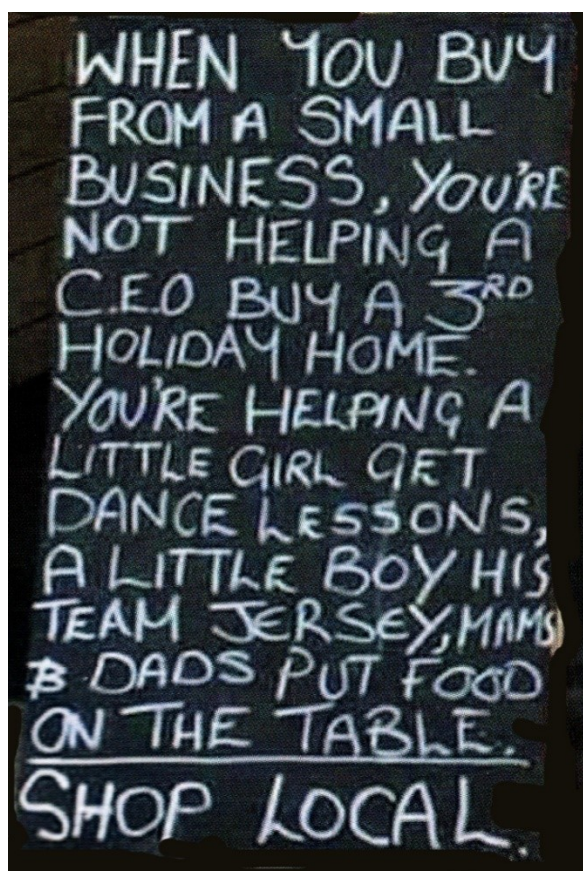
Friern Barnet Road <i>(formerly a shop)</i>			
54-62 Sutton Road, N10 <i>(formerly Sutton Road Garage)</i>		5	5
150 Sydney Road		6	6
<u>New Southgate</u>			
22 Friern Barnet Road <i>(HMO - House in Multiple Occupation)</i>		9 people	9
34a Friern Barnet Road <i>(HMO - House in Multiple Occupation)</i>		11 people	11
Brunswick Park Gardens	4		
115c Brunswick Park Road <i>(was an office)</i>		8	8
36-38 Station Road (rear of) <i>(formerly Bankers Draft pub)</i>		6	6
109 Station Road		44	44
<u>North Finchley</u>			
289-297 Ballards Lane <i>(Rowlandson House)</i>		47	47
707 High Road <i>(Finchley House)</i>		72	72
744 High Road <i>(was Autumn House bar)</i>		8	8
<u>Whetstone</u>			
Bookbinders Homes, Bawtry Road <i>(replacing 12 flats)</i>		17	17
837-839 High Road <i>(was North London Hospice shop)</i>		7	7
1060a -1072 High Road <i>(was Myddelton Tennis Club)</i>	10	46	56
1323 High Road <i>(was HSBC)</i>		5	5
1335-1337 High Road <i>(Walsingham House)</i>		15	15

Totals**14****317****331**

Working on the basis of 2 persons per property, that is a further 662 people possibly wanting access to doctor's surgeries and schools, but there is no sign of these being provided. Barnet is set to overtake Croydon as London's largest borough with a population of over 400,000 – larger than cities like Bristol, Cardiff, Nottingham and Newcastle!

The most interesting change is at 20 Queens Parade, Friern Barnet Road where a former shop is to be converted into a dwelling. With the dramatic changes taking place throughout the country's high streets and the loss of retailers such as British Home Stores, House of Fraser, Maplin, Patisserie Valerie, Toys R Us, Store Twenty One, Woolworths, and downsizing by the likes of Carpetright, Clarks, Debenhams, Homebase, M&S Mothercare and Tesco perhaps we shall see more examples like this. It would, of course, be better to have more residential units in the high streets rather than boarded up empty shops.

I came across the following photo in a magazine which sums up the situation:



Your local shops – use them or lose them!

THE VICAR AND THE LAUNDRESS

The following appeared in the *Bristol Mercury* of 29 November 1893:

“Ellen Pountney, a poor, sickly-looking woman, who was allowed to be seated, and who cried a good deal during the process of the case, of 23 Doncaster Terrace, Friern Barnet, was summoned at Highgate Police Court, for illegally pawning six shirts, the property of the Rev H S Miles, vicar of All Saints’, Friern Barnet.

The prosecutor, who is also vice-chairman of the Barnet Board of Guardians, stated that defendant was employed by him as washer-woman, and had pawned six of his shirts at Messrs Knights, Southgate.

Defendant said she was very sorry, but it was through sheer starvation. A written statement was put in which the defendant said her family were starving.

Mr Miles stated that he lent money to defendant’s husband, which had to be repaid by the defendant in washing.

Mr Bodkin: She is a poor person.

Defendant: My husband broke his shoulder.

Mr Bodkin: She says her children were crying for food and were without boots. Is that one of the causes?

Mr Miles (hesitatingly): Yes, I do not wish her punished.

Mr Homan (one of the magistrates): It would have been better to have relieved the poor woman.

Defendant: There is £1 1s 8d owing to me.

Mr Miles said it was not a case for relief. All had been done that could be, and he only wanted to protect the property of others, as it seemed easy to get rid of property. The money he lent to defendant’s husband he had repaid.

Mr Bodkin: Probably you have never had children crying for food, and do not know what the temptation may be under those circumstances, though I do not justify it.

Defendant: I have worked for Mr Homan’s daughter.

Mr Bodkin said the charge must be dismissed and the property given up.

The Clerk said that could not be done. She could not be sentenced to one day either and the property given up; so in the end she was fined 1s, and the goods ordered to be given up.

Mr Bodkin said it was a case a clergyman should look into.

Mr Miles said that it had been done.”

Henry Miles was, of course, the first vicar of All Saints' Church and was widely respected in the community, so his actions regarding Mrs Pountney seem completely out of character.

INDECENT ASSAULT

This appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* on 20 Feb 1845:

“Mr Samuel Stoke, a gentleman of independent fortune, residing at Whetstone, Hertfordshire, was placed in the felon's dock, charged into conversation with indecently assaulting John Thornton.

The evidence was to this effect:-

That the prosecutor, a smart intelligent lad, about 17, one of the toll-collectors at Holloway-gate, was standing there between seven and eight o'clock on the previous evening, when the prisoner came up. The prisoner fell into conversation with him, gave him an orange, and asked him to walk along the road with him for awhile. The prosecutor not being on duty consented. They had not proceeded far when the prisoner's observations startled the boy, who however, bore with them; at length the prisoner, seizing him, proceeded to treat him in a manner too shocking to be mentioned. A police constable came up, and the prosecutor gave him into custody. The constable swore that when he came up the boy's dress was much disordered.

The prisoner, in defence, said that the statement was partly true and partly false; but made no attempt to distinguish the one from the other.

Mr Combe decided upon committing him for trial and told him he could not accept of less bail than two sureties in £100 each, and himself in £200.

Prisoner: Oh, I shall easily find that.

They were not forthcoming, however, and he was locked up.”

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Your subscription runs out on 31 March 2019. If you wish to renew for a further year, from 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020, please complete the enclosed form and return it with your cheque.

We are pleased to say that the rates remain the same - £8 for a single person and £14 for a couple or group.

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