Milkwood Estate

The Story of a Lambeth Community

Commissioned by the Milkwood Residents Association

Researched and written
by the
Herne Hill Society Local History Group
John Brunton, Jeffrey Doorn, Brenda Jones,
Caroline Knapp and George Young
with help from
Robert Holden and Bernard Nurse

First published in 2009 for
The Herne Hill Society
PO Box 27845
London SE24 9XA
by
Local History Publications
316 Green Lane
Streatham
London SW16 3AS

ISBN 978 1 873 52074 1

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our grateful thanks go to the following for their help, advice and information:

John and Sylvia Auger, Ellen Barbett, John Brown, Bertha Burgess, Stephen Douthwaite, Judaline Goon of St Paul's Church Parish Office, Keith Holdaway, Jessop School, Kevin Kelly, Lydia King, Bill and Irene Kirby, Lambeth Archives, London Transport Museum Library, Laurence Marsh, Philip Norman, Peterborough Archives Service, Joe P Plant, Becca Thackray; and Damaris Dodds for the indexing.

For their kind permission to use illustrations: Alan Godfrey Maps, Don Bianco, the Dorothy Kerin Trust, Lambeth Archives, Bill Linskey, London Metropolitan Archives, London Transport Museum, Middleton Press, Ordnance Survey, the Southwark Collection.

We have made every effort to trace copyright ownership of illustrations: we apologise for any omissions.

grassroots grants

Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector

CAPITAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Building on your giving

Published with the support of
Grassroots Grants
and
Capital Community Foundation

Introduction

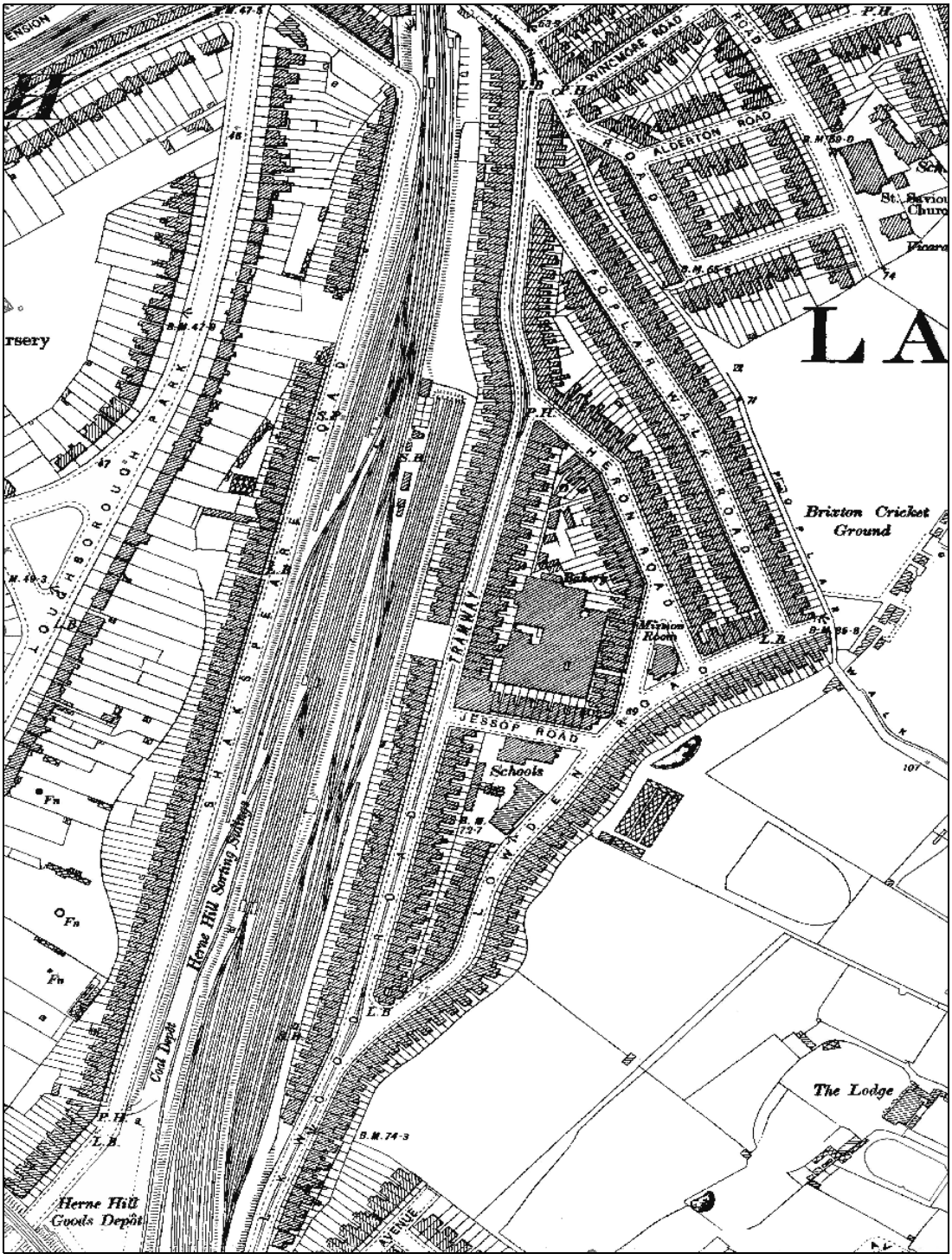
What makes a neighbourhood a community? 'Neighbour' comes from two Anglo-Saxon words, *neah*, near + *gebur*, dweller, while 'community' is from the Latin *communitas*, fellowship. That fellowship can derive from living together in a particular locality or from bonds such as race, religion, language, nationality, occupation, sexuality, common interests, history or heritage. There are thus elements of many communities in any area; but an overriding bond occurs whenever there are shared concerns.

In Herne Hill there is a strong sense of community; and nowhere is this more apparent than on the Milkwood Estate. This is exemplified in the Milkwood Residents Association (MRA), set up in 1992 to represent tenants in the neighbourhood. In 2000, MRA widened its focus from housing issues to other needs, especially those of children and young people. A major project was the transformation of the Milkwood Road Open Space. Originally created in 1969 when Nevill's Bakery at the heart of the estate was closed and demolished, the space had become run down and neglected. Working with Jessop and Willowfield schools, MRA drew up plans and raised funds to convert it into a quality park with play areas, sports facilities, meeting place, exercise trail and environmental area. Opened 19 June 2004, Milkwood Community Park went on to receive the Civic Trust Green Flag Award for three consecutive years.

In partnership with the Heron Community Trust, MRA is now working to build on that success by raising funds to redevelop St John's Hall on Heron Road adjacent to the park as a modern community facility.

When MRA commissioned the Herne Hill Society Local History Group to research and write a history of the Estate, the idea was to produce a pamphlet or small book. Once we began delving, however, we discovered a rich mine of material, both in archive records and living memories. Such a wealth of material has enabled us to produce this volume in its present form, a comprehensive view of all aspects of the Estate from its earliest beginnings to the present day and of the life and work of the people who lived there.

We trust this book will appeal not only to past, present and future residents of the Estate and those who live, work, study, visit or play in the neighbourhood, but also to all who have an interest in local history and the spirit of community.



Reproduced from 1894 Ordnance Survey map
courtesy Alan Godfrey Maps

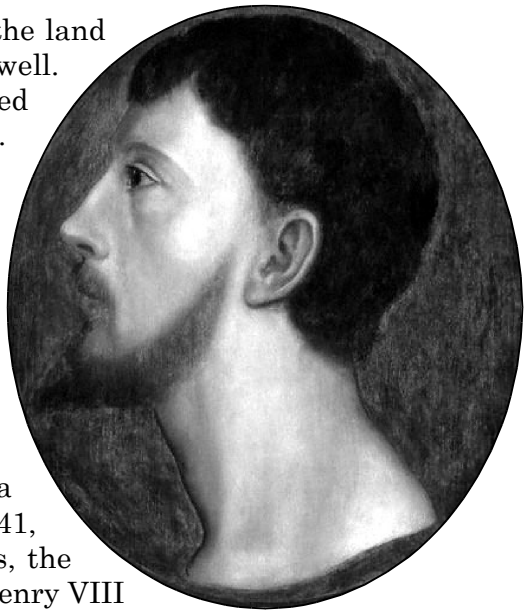
A History of the Milkwood Estate

The Milkwood Estate occupies a triangular area of some twelve hectares (30 acres), part of Herne Hill in south-east London. To the west it is bounded by the railway line from Herne Hill to Blackfriars; by Poplar Road, originally known as Poplar Walk Road, to the north-east; and by Lowden Road to the south-east. A fourth road, Heron Road, runs parallel to Poplar Road between Lowden and Milkwood Roads. At one time a fifth road, Jessop Road, also ran between Lowden and Milkwood Roads. However, this disappeared with the later expansion of Jessop School.

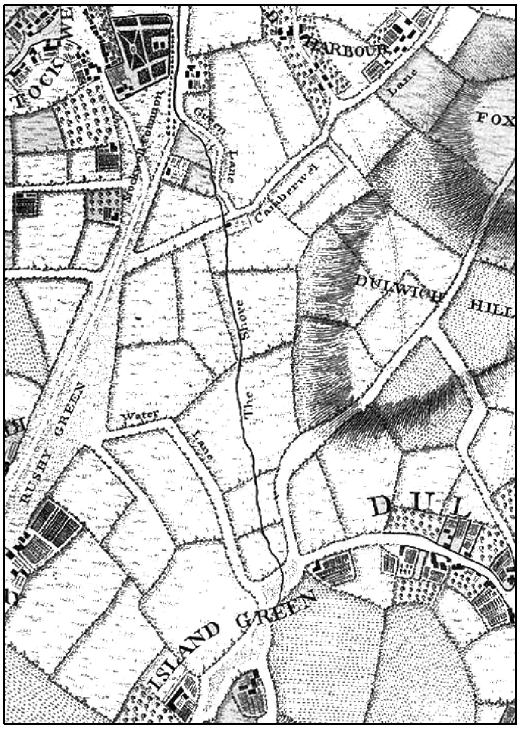
The original intention of the Estate's developers was to provide decent accommodation for the working classes; and much of the area is still housing. However, Nevill's - a large bakery, now gone - was built on part of the site, between Milkwood and Heron Roads. This was mainly on the land now used for the Milkwood Community Park. Post-war housing replaced properties lost to bombing during WW2. In the 1960s, nearly all the houses on the west side of Milkwood Road were demolished to make way for the Mahatma Gandhi, Dylan Road and Bessemer Park Industrial Estates. At about the same time, many of the properties along the eastern side of Milkwood Road were also demolished to make way for Willowfield School. However, much of the area still remains largely as it looked at the time Milkwood Estate was developed in the 1870s.

The Manor of Milkwell

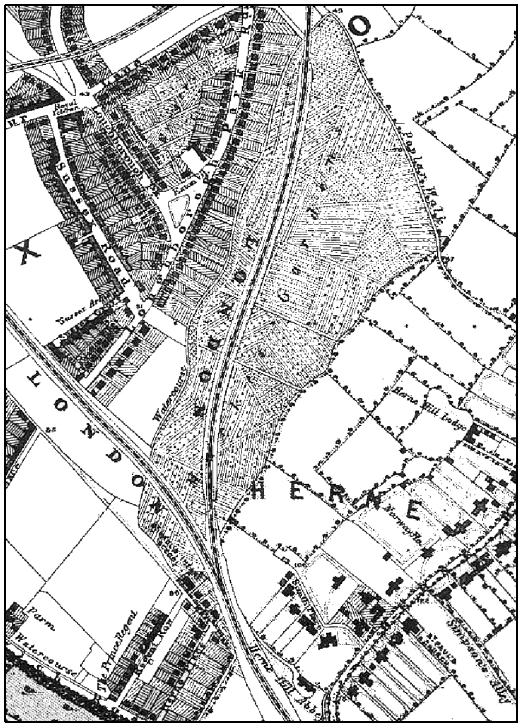
The Milkwood Estate occupies part of the land originally comprising the Manor of Milkwell. The name Milkwell may have originated from a mineral spring discovered there. As part of the Manor of Lambeth, the Manor of Milkwell would have become the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1197. However, the first actual reference to Milkwell was in 1291 when the Manor was recorded as belonging to the Hospital of St Thomas, Southwark. In 1305, King Edward I granted the Manor to the hospital of St Mary Overie Priory, at a yearly rent of ten shillings (50p). In 1541, after the dissolution of the monasteries, the Manor again came under the Crown. Henry VIII then granted it to Sir Thomas Wyatt (1521-54), soldier, courtier and rebel.



Sir Thomas Wyatt



Detail from Roque's 1746 map



Detail from Stanford's 1862 map showing market gardens on either side of the railway

The property included the 20 acre (eight hectare) 'Milkwelle Woodde'. However, ten years later Sir Thomas was beheaded by Queen Mary for high treason, for having led an insurrection against her.

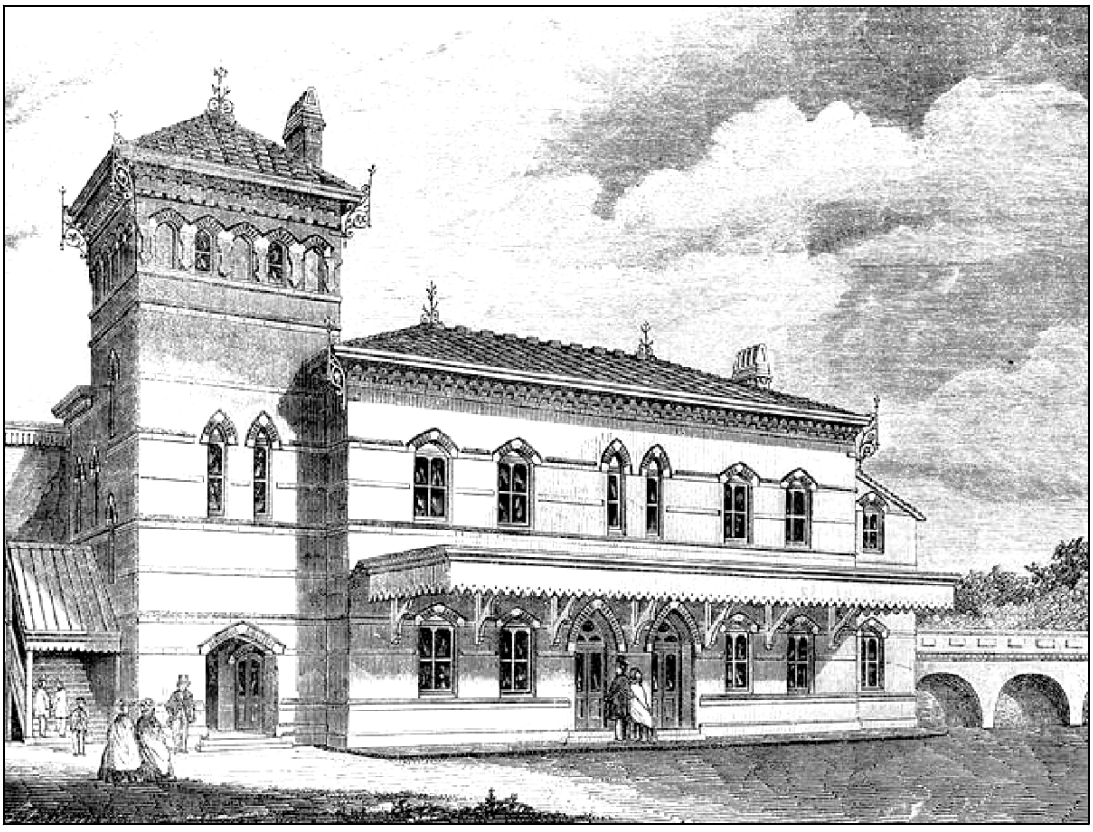
Under Elizabeth I the lease for the land was assigned to Gregory Raylton (d1561), one of the Clerks of the Signet to the Queen. It then went to a John Bower, and later came under the control of the Duke family. Edward Duke held a number of other Manors besides Milkwell. A 1606 description of his holdings in the area shows his property as including 370 acres (150 hectares) of land, meadow and pasture and 30 acres (12 hectares) of wood. This remained woodland until the Civil War, when Parliament seized the estates of the Archbishop of Canterbury and sold them off. The estates were returned to the new Archbishop following the 1660 Restoration. However, by then the trees in Milkwood had all been chopped down and sold for a quick profit and the land cleared.

After the Restoration the land was leased for successive terms of 21 years. In 1711 a lease was granted to William East of the Middle Temple (d1726), whose descendants continued as tenants until 1837, when the lease was surrendered to Sir Rice Richard Clayton (1797-1879), of Hedgerley Park, Buckinghamshire, who was for a time MP for Aylesbury.

During the 18th century, growing demand for agricultural produce brought significant changes to the area's economy. The land became market gardens, providing vegetables for London's markets. This was a two-way trade, the soil being fertilised by large quantities of 'night soil' brought from the capital. As well as providing food for the population, the area attracted wildlife. William Clarke described the market gardens as "much beloved by goldfinches and bullfinches, a fact not altogether unknown to bird catchers who used to find the place a very profitable hunting ground". Market gardening remained the main activity until the Milkwood Estate houses were built in the 1870s.

The Coming of the Railways

In 1862, administration of the lease was taken over by the Ecclesiastical (now Church) Commissioners. However, by this time the character of the whole area was changing with the arrival of the railway. The line from Herne Hill to the Elephant & Castle opened the same year. Two years later this was extended over the Thames to Blackfriars Station (then called Ludgate Hill). The line from Herne Hill to Victoria via Brixton was also opened in 1862, then extended the following year southwards to Dulwich, Beckenham and Bromley.



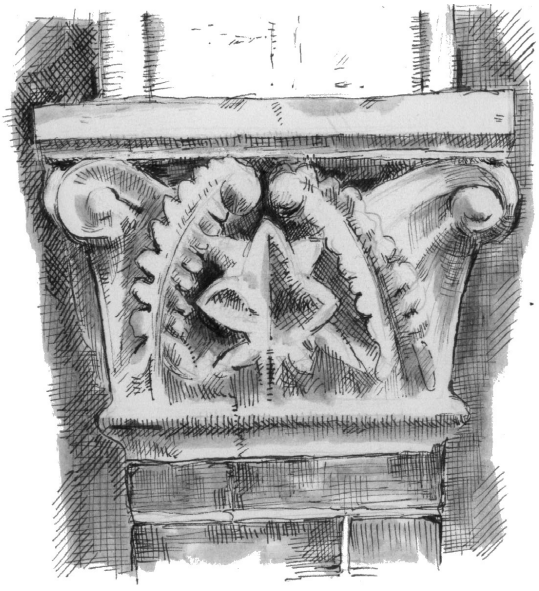
Herne Hill Station, 1863

Housing for the Working Classes

Between 1801 and 1861, the population of Greater London trebled from around a million to over three million people. From 1861 to 1881 it increased by a further 50% to nearly five million. South of the City, most of the expansion was in a ring between three to four miles from the centre. Housing development generally kept pace with the growing demand. However, periods of rapid growth fuelled by speculative building were followed by sharp decline when too many houses were left empty. In London the peak of the mid-Victorian boom was reached around 1876 and the next period of rapid expansion did not start until the 1890s.

The development of the Milkwood Estate took place during this mid-Victorian period of huge expansion. The wealthy moved to the most desirable locations such as Hampstead, Sydenham and the West End. The regularly employed working classes were able to pay higher rents and live in reasonable comfort. However, the poorest casual labourers remained in increasingly insanitary and overcrowded conditions in central London.

It was only later in the century that it was realised that poverty and high rents were the chief causes of overcrowding. Referring to the conditions of the time, in its 14 June 1862 issue *The Builder* stated that "'Overcrowding' means want of pure air and want of pure air means debility, continued fever, death, widowhood, orphanage, pauperism and money loss to the living. It should be needless now to give proof to its deadly doings".



Ornamental capital in Lowden Road

(The drawings of architectural details are by Laurence Marsh)

Earlier reformers were more concerned with improving the existing housing stock. By contrast, in the 1860s several philanthropic bodies were founded to build better housing for the working classes. One of the best known, the Peabody Trust, was set up in 1862 by the American philanthropist, George Peabody. It built large blocks of flats to provide "cheap, cleanly, well-drained and healthful dwellings for the poor". Others aimed to attract investment by offering a return of around 5% and some of these concentrated on building suburban estates. Among the most important was the Artisans, Labourers and General Dwellings Company founded in 1867, which built estates at Lavender Hill and Streatham Hill.

As their situation improved, many working class people were able to move to new and affordable housing developments away from the city centre. For the first time they could live beyond walking distance from where they worked. This was largely because of the cheap 'workmen's' fares that the railway companies (London, Chatham and Dover Railway in the case of the Milkwood Estate) were legally required to provide. The availability of these cheap fares was perhaps the most important factor in the development of working-class suburbs in the latter part of the 19th century.

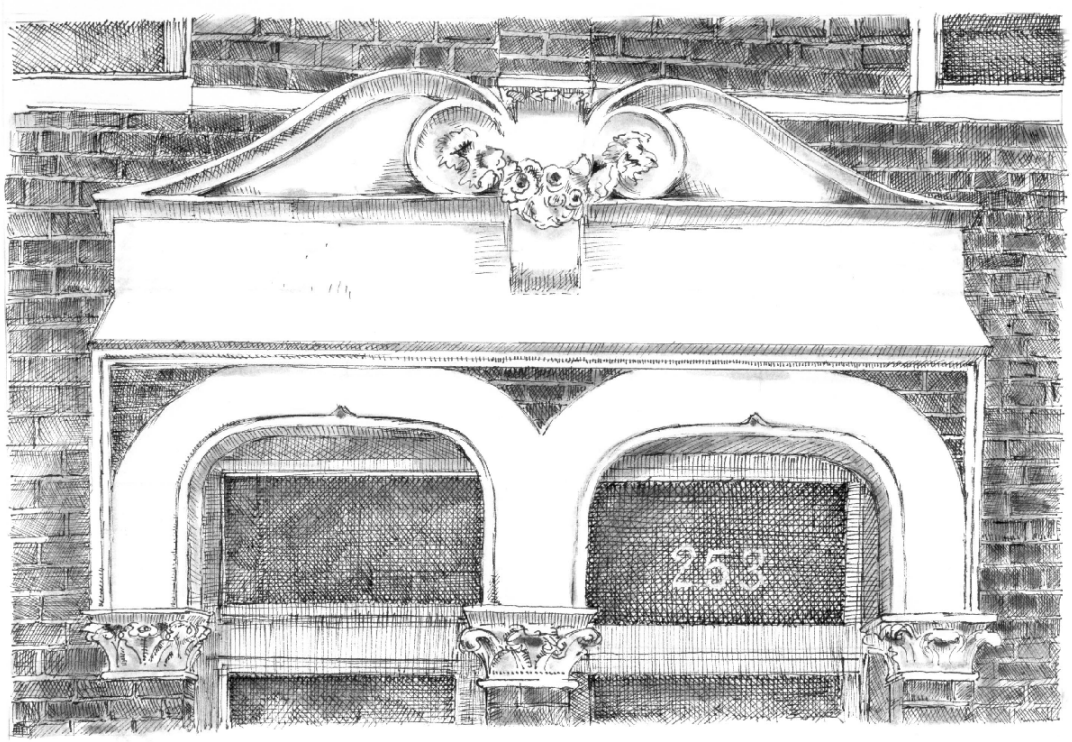
The Development of the Milkwood Estate

One of the organisations set up to provide decent accommodation for working people was the Suburban Village and General Dwellings Company. This limited liability company was established on 4 July 1866 with the aim of providing "at the most rapid rate possible, healthy, pleasant, and comfortable abodes, for the over-crowded population of the metropolis." Perhaps reflecting the founders' high ambitions, the company's nominal capital was set at £1 million, divided into 100,000 shares at £10 each. The founding subscribers were Edward Vigers (Timber Merchant), William Hardwicke MD, Brownlow Poulter (Barrister at Law), Joseph Searby (Financial Agent), Henry Samuel Hicks (Gentleman), Edmund John Brindell (Esquire), and Richard Reeves (Merchant). Each of the founders took five shares, except for Richard Reeves who had 20.

The company's plan was to buy estates in all the suburbs that were near to and had direct railway connexion with London, and to build complete villages there. Each house was to have from four to eight rooms with "every domestic convenience" and a piece of garden. Schools and some shops were also to be provided.

The new company started well and the site that was to become the Milkwood Estate was soon identified. It was described by the philanthropist Dr Jabez Burns as being "on an elevated position, surrounded by fine prospects and salubrious to the highest degree". With some earlier developments in mind, Dr Burns also expressed his satisfaction that the proposed village was not to comprise "unsightly barrack-looking blocks, or to build up dull monotonous ranges of inferior streets".

Within a year 1,249 shares had been taken up in the company - although in December 1867, calls on nearly a third of these were still unpaid. The original subscribers included over 360 working men (and one widow) who hoped to obtain one of the planned properties. With a few exceptions, all these subscribers took out a single share each. They came from a wide variety of trades, with the highest representation from postal workers (14%), carpentry/woodworking (12%), manufacturing/metal-working (8%) and porters/warehousemen (6%). As well as the original seven founders, subscribers included a number of



Decorative capitals and arches with ornamental keystones in Milkwood Road

businessmen and professionals and 15 described as 'Gentlemen', taking out between ten and a hundred shares each. Perhaps they saw this as a philanthropic gesture or perhaps hoped to acquire houses that they could let.[1]

Edward Vigers, who had been appointed Chairman of the Directors, applied to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to lease part of Milkwood on which to build houses. However, whilst this was going on, the Company Secretary spent nearly all the available funds and shareholders refused to subscribe any of the additional money needed to implement the scheme. As a result, all the Directors were deposed and a move made to wind up the company.

Fortunately the shareholders presented a petition to the court against winding up. In passing judgement, the Vice-Chancellor said there was no reason why the company should be wound up if another board of responsible Directors could be

[1] It appears that the Milkwood Estate was the only project carried out by the Suburban Village and General Dwellings Company and that it ceased operating once the Estate had been completed. In September 1882 the Companies Registration Office enquired whether the Company was still trading. A reminder the following month to the Company Secretary failed to produce a response. The Company was compulsorily wound up by the Registrar on 31 August 1883.

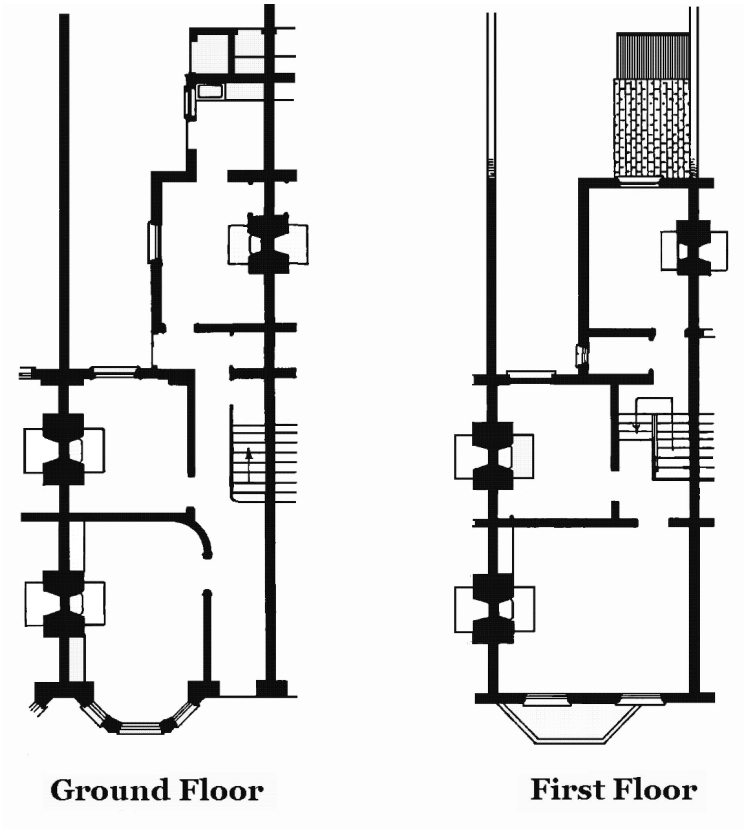
found to carry it on. The saviour came in the form of the architect William Gilbee Habershon. He was appointed Chairman and established a more energetic and economically minded Board to run the company. In 1868 the Church Commissioners granted a 99 year lease on what was then known as part of the 'Loughborough Park Estate'; and the company covenanted to build roads, sewers and between 480 and 650 houses. A surveyor was appointed and work quickly started on marking out the roads.

The firm of Habershon and Pite was given the task of developing the area in line with the company's objectives. Builders were attracted by the proximity of the estate to the new railway lines, and by promises of advances of up to 60 per cent on the cost of every house covered in. This helps explain why, once construction started, the houses went up so fast. The risk to builders was greatly reduced compared with more speculative building projects. Buyers were attracted by the cheap workmen's fares that the railway companies were required to provide. In December 1868, housing plots were allocated to one hundred applicants who had paid their necessary deposit or instalments. They would be able to take possession when their property was built, but still had to wait for another year before building work was to begin.

The Milkwood Estate development was inaugurated at a short ceremony held on Tuesday 30 March 1869. A memorial stone[2] was laid by Lord Shaftesbury, the noted social reformer and campaigner. He was accompanied by a number of distinguished guests and watched by a large crowd. In his address, Lord Shaftsbury spoke about the enormous benefits to "working men" from having "clean, well-ventilated, and wholesome dwellings" instead of being huddled together as they now were in crowded cities "the very atmosphere of which so depressed the vital system that drinking and all its hideous train of vices were almost forced upon the poor". He was "firmly convinced" that the people of England would never live in the condition in which he wished to see them until every family had a comfortable sitting-room and three bedrooms. To loud cheers he expressed his support for universal suffrage.

Lord Shaftesbury
© National Portrait Gallery, London

[2] *The original location of the memorial stone is unknown and no trace of it has been found.*



Plans of a typical Milkwood Estate house

By the end of 1870 the Estate had been laid out and the contract for constructing the sewers, drains and roads had been awarded to a Mr Bloomfield, whose price of £2,048 had been the lowest of the thirteen tenders submitted for the work. Originally six streets were planned. However, one of these, to be called Mudie Street, was never built. It was probably planned for what became the site of Nevill's Bakery and was intended to run parallel to Jessop Road, between Heron and Milkwood Roads.

To BUILDERS – Eligible GROUND, at Brixton, for workmen's cottages and small-class houses, TO BE LET, at low ground-rents, either in single plots, frontage or acreage as may be required. The land is within five minutes walk of three railway stations, having trains to Victoria, Ludgate-hill and King's-cross, occupying fifteen minutes either way. When buildings are covered in, advances of 60 per cent may be obtained, if required, by builders of unexceptionable references, under special arrangements. For further particulars, apply to W. G. HABERSHON & PITE, Architects, 28, Bloomsbury- square.

Classified advertisement in The Builder, *6 July 1872*

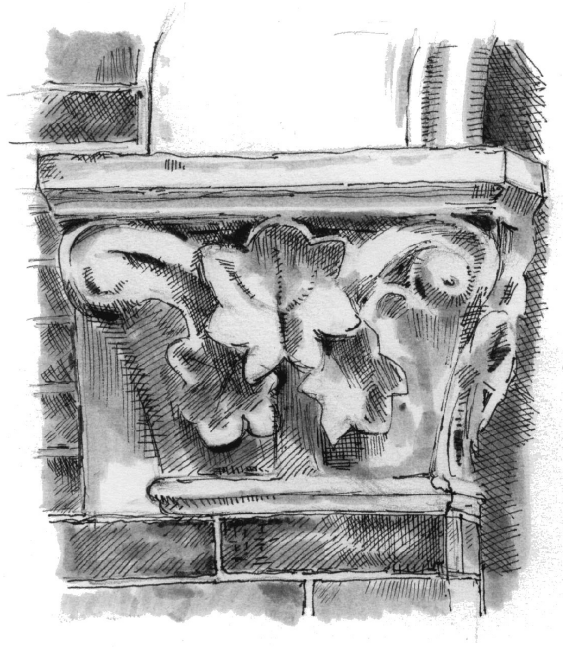
The houses each had their own rear garden and were described as "very pretty specimens of cottage dwellings in ornamental brick, and built in six, eight or ten rooms, exactly as the shareholder and intending occupier may wish". Prospective purchasers could buy outright or settle within one or two years. Alternatively they could pay a deposit and spread the payments over seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years. Paid for by instalments, a £200 house bought over 21 years would cost a total of £470, including ground rent. It was argued that this was about one third less than paying rent and that the purchaser would end up owning the house.

The cheapest houses were priced at £200. Number 28 Lowden Road cost £240. However, many properties were more expensive. Five houses built in Lowden Road in 1872 cost £1,739 (nearly £350 each); and four shops on Milkwood Road cost £2,559 (£640 each). Leases were granted for 95 years at a typical yearly ground rent of £5, payable quarterly. In 1879, 29 to 45 Lowden Road were sold on 95 year leases for £400 each, with £6 annual ground rent.

Houses in Milkwood Road c1871

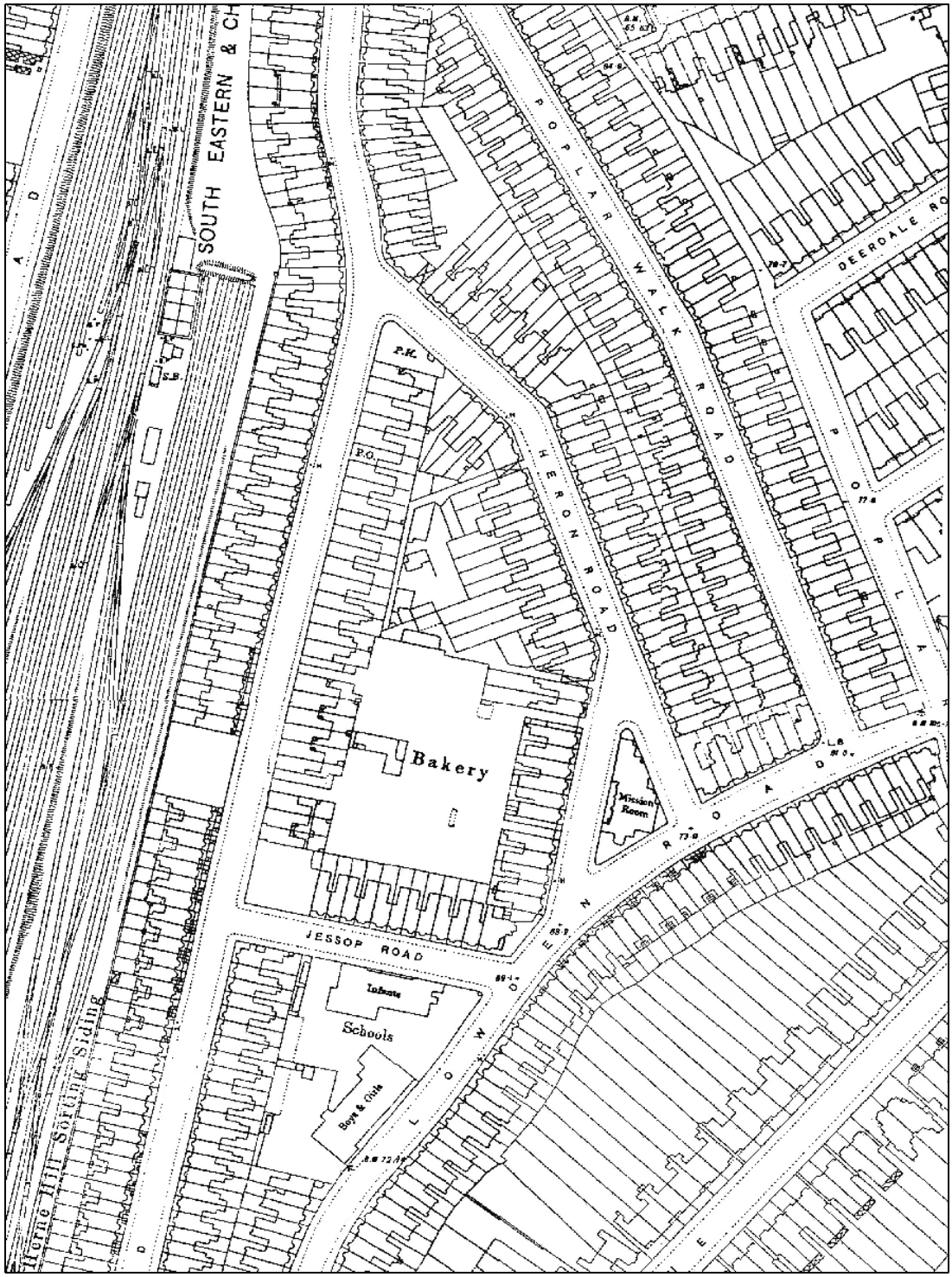
Most houses were of two storeys, although a few had three storeys and some of each type were raised on semi-basements. The majority were two first floor windows wide, with an arched doorway and bay window on the ground floor. Stone was generally used for lintels, arches and mullions, often with incised designs. Some mullions had cast-iron columns with enriched caps and a few houses had gables. Houses that were built later tended to have more gables, more red brick, square two-storey bay windows and ornamental terracotta. Overall they were clearly designed for those members of the working classes who were modestly prosperous.

The Estate Office was set up at number 72 Milkwood Road, with John Robert Manning MSA as Agent. Once started, house building went ahead rapidly. By the autumn of 1872, over 200 private houses and shops had been built and occupied, with many more in various stages of completion. In August the following year, *The Architect* was reporting that the area was covered with buildings and that over 3,000 people had already taken up residence on the Estate. The 21 September 1872 issue of *The Builder* magazine describes the Estate as "a striking instance of the new suburban neighbourhoods rising up in succession in different places around the metropolis". *The Builder* went on to say that "… the entire area has now been laid out in wide and spacious streets, all drained and paved, and provided with ample footpaths." The same report described Milkwood-street (*sic*) as "the principal street on the estate" and as being a "spacious thoroughfare … intended to be the main business thoroughfare of the locality".



Ornamental capital in Milkwood Road

The company's expectation that houses of up to eight rooms would be suitable for working class families proved unrealistic. Many soon came into multi-occupation, by division into separate flats. A lot of people took in lodgers to help make ends meet – see the table on page 20. Analysis of occupations suggests that the poorest members of the working class could not afford either to buy or to rent the houses. Also, home ownership may not have matched the developers' original expectations. Many properties were not owner-occupied, but had been bought by landlords and rented out. In 1878, more than 30 people each owned at least two houses on the Estate; some had a lot more.



Detail from 1920 Ordnance Survey Map

John Owen owned 25 houses and Thomas Edworthy ten houses, all in Milkwood Road. The Estate's architect Alfred Robert Pite owned nine properties in Lowden Road. W H Nevill, the baker, owned 16 houses in Heron Road and 17 houses in Milkwood Road, plus various other pieces of land.

By the end of the 1870s, the estate was complete. It comprised 568 houses and shops. There could have been more but for the area taken up by Nevill's Bakery. Contrary to the aims of its founders, the Estate did not become a distinct community because it merged directly into other built-up areas. However, housing on the Estate was generally of a higher standard than contemporary working class housing developments in the surrounding districts. In his 1881 book on London's suburbia, William Clarke described the majority of houses on the Estate as being "very attractive and neat looking" and gave the average annual rent as £30.

For the next sixty years, apart from the building of St John's Church in 1881 and the reconstruction of Jessop Road School at the end of the 1930s, the Estate experienced little change until the destruction brought about by the Second World War.

MILKWOOD ESTATE, BRIXTON.

Valuable long Leasehold Ground Rents, amounting to about £1,535 per annum, held direct from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of England for an unexpired term of 87 years, amply secured upon 419 private houses, 37 shops, and a large public-house, situate in Milkwood, Lowden, and Heron roads, and Poplar Walk, forming the Milkwood Estate, near the Loughborough Junction and Brixton railway stations, presenting to trustees, ladies, and others desirous of obtaining investments for various sums, whereby fixed income may be secured without risk or trouble, an opportunity seldom to be met with. The property is situate in an increasingly popular district of South London, and is easy of access from all parts by rail, tram, and omnibus conveyance. The letting will be arranged to meet the requirements and means of both large and small purchasers, giving profit rentals ranging from £24 to £106 per annum.

GLASIER & SONS have received instructions to prepare for the SALE of the above-mentioned LEASE-HOLD GROUND RENTS by AUCTION, at the Mart, on Thursday, May 29, in 34 lots.

Detailed particulars are in course of preparation, and may be obtained, when ready, at the Mart of John McMillin, Esq., Solicitor, of 39, Bloomsbury-square, W.C; and of the Auctioneers, 41, Charing Cross, S.W.

Advertisement in South London Press, *May 1879*

Gleanings from the Census

At the 1871 census there were just 18 occupied houses on the Milkwood Estate, located at the north end of Milkwood Road. Over the following few years a total of 568 houses designed by Habershon & Pite were completed. A combination of the effects of war-time bombing, the industrial estates, school expansion and other developments has resulted in only some 58% of the original houses surviving until the present day.

STREET	HOUSE Nos.	Houses built in the 1870s	Original houses remaining in 2009
Milkwood Road (east side)	1 to 267	130	86
Milkwood Road (west side)	2 to 276	134	12
Lowden Road (west side)	1 to 59	30	27
Lowden Road (east side)	2 to 146	73	63
Poplar Walk Road (west side)	1 to 101	51	51
Poplar Walk Road (east side)	2 to 136	68	65
Heron Road (east side)	1 to 71	36	26
Heron Road (west side)	2 to 70	35	0
Jessop Road (north side)	1 to 21	11	0
Total number of houses		568	330

The house numbers not used were 12 Heron Road, 123 to 129 and 142 to 148 Milkwood Road. The school caretaker's house, built in the late 1870s as part of Jessop Road School, has been excluded from the above table as have houses built to replace those destroyed by bombing in WW2. The houses in Milkwood Road south of Gubyon Avenue were built in the 1880s and are not part of the Estate. In the 1901 census one additional house, 123 Milkwood Road, suddenly appeared located at the corner with Jessop Road. A walk around the Estate today shows that most of the 330 original houses that remain still have their yellow-brick external front walls decorated with distinctive single or double course red-brick bands. Only about 25 houses have been rendered or painted over. Six houses (243 to 253 Milkwood Road) are semi-detached rather than terraced and nine (100 to 116 Milkwood Road) are of red brick.

CENSUS YEAR	1881	1891	1901
Number of houses	568	568	569
Unoccupied houses	48 (8.5%)	29 (5.1%)	14 (2.5%)
Houses with 2 or more families	185 (32.6%)	253 (44.5%)	304 (53.4%)
Total population	3,280	3,422	3,713
Live–in domestic servants	85	55	21

The presence of an unoccupied house in the census usually indicates that a family has recently left the property. It could also suggest that the landlord was dividing the house into two or more flats to accommodate additional families paying rent. Such conversions to multi-occupancy would have required a kitchen/scullery built in each new flat, a sink with water piping and a coal-fired cooker, or even gas piping (for lighting and cooking). By 1901 more than half the houses had been sub-divided. There was a noticeable decline in families with large numbers of children and families with four or less members were increasingly common. With better public health and the survival of more children at birth and during infancy, it seems that many parents opted to have fewer children.

By the 1890s more people had members of their extended family staying with them. These sisters, brothers-in-law, nephews, mothers, cousins and the like would no doubt have helped with rent and household chores. Also, by this time more and more families were taking in lodgers to make ends meet.

One consistent ratio in all of the three census years studied is that around 47% of the population were males and 53% females. It could be that some men were away, either finding work elsewhere, in the armed forces, in prison, or had emigrated.

'Live-in' domestic servants tended to be young girls in their teens or twenties. By 1901 their numbers on the Estate had fallen dramatically and they appeared only in houses on the eastern sides of Lowden Road and Milkwood Road. Nationally servant numbers were also in decline as young girls obtained more lucrative employment in shops, offices and factories, with shorter working hours and greater independence. No doubt there were still a few servants who came in each day but lived elsewhere. Some of those classed as servants were live-in shop assistants staying with the families who lived over the shops. These have not been included in the above table. The Milkwood Tavern similarly had live-in bar staff.

The Milkwood Estate in Wartime

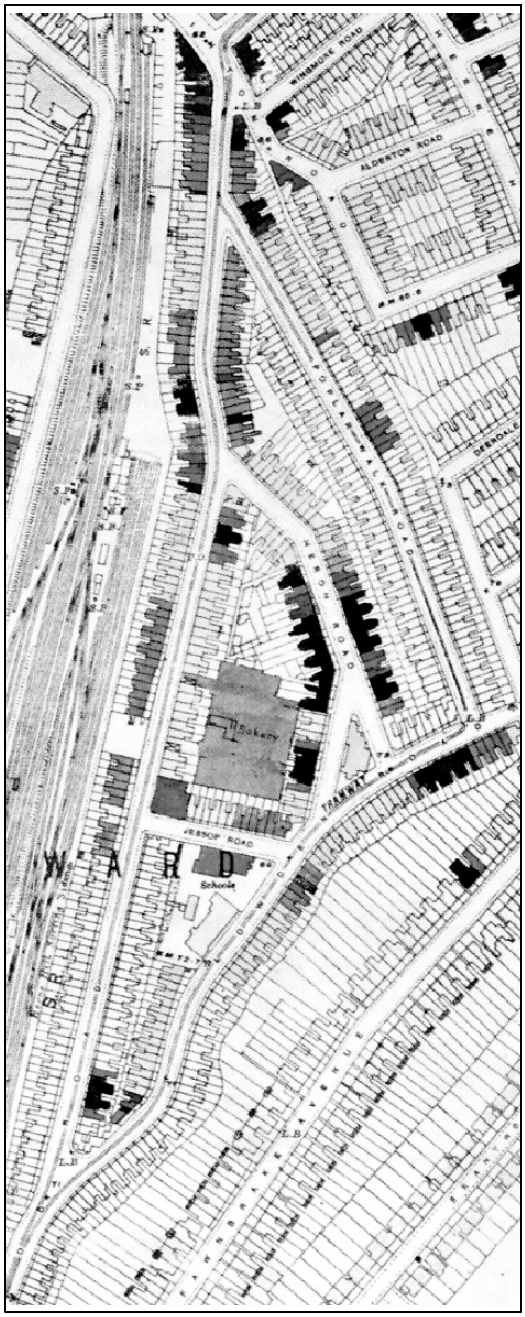
In WW1 the Milkwood Estate was unaffected by the Zeppelin raids on London. However, the situation was very different during WW2.

The London Blitz started on 7 September 1940. The first bombs fell on the Milkwood Estate the following day, hitting 69 Milkwood Road. The air raid killed one person and injured six others. One of the enemy's main aims was to disrupt lines of communication. Hence bridges, railway lines and sidings were particular targets. But many 'near misses' fell on Milkwood Road and the surrounding streets.

During the blitz, 36 bombing incidents on the Estate were reported, with 19 people killed by enemy action and a great many more injured. Perhaps the worst night was that of 16 April 1941 when, in a single raid, four houses in Milkwood Road were destroyed and ten seriously damaged; three were seriously damaged in Lowden Road and four more in Poplar Road. That night, four people were killed at 191 and 193 Milkwood Road, with another six injured, and one person killed at 11 Lowden Road.

The last major raid on London was on 10 May 1941, though the last bombs of the blitz had fallen on the Estate two days before, when the baker's shop at 67 Milkwood Road was destroyed killing two people and injuring two others.

After the blitz had ended, there were only two more reported incidents. On 3 January 1943, number 68 Poplar Road



Bomb damage on the Milkwood Estate marked by shading on the official London County Council Bomb Damage Map 1939-1945

was destroyed in a raid – there were no casualties. On 4 February 1944, an anti-aircraft shell fell on Nevill's Bakery. It exploded, injuring two people.

As well as the deaths and injuries, great damage was done to buildings and property. Well over 100 houses were destroyed or seriously damaged. Transport and daily life were seriously disrupted, with people made homeless, roads blocked, railway and tram lines destroyed, electricity and gas supplies disrupted.

The extent of the war damage was reflected in the reduction of the Estate's population as shown by the Electoral Rolls. Between 1939 and 1945, the number of registered voters declined by about a third, from around 1,800 to around 1,200. The biggest decline was in Heron Road, where the number of electors fell by 58%. In 1945, 32 out of 69 houses were recorded as unoccupied - eleven houses on the north-east side and 21 on the south-west side had been demolished or were uninhabitable.

During the post war years, the houses on the north-east side of Heron Road were repaired or rebuilt, while some of those on the south-west side were restored to a habitable condition. However, from the beginning of the 1970s, houses on the south-west side were gradually vacated, until by 1976 all the even numbered houses were empty and were demolished to make way for Willowfield School.

Post-war replacement houses in Heron Road

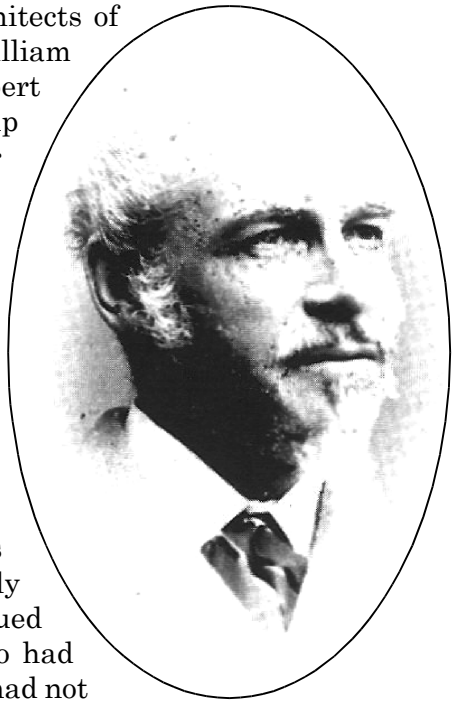
Although many damaged houses in other streets were eventually repaired, others were in such a ruined state or were so badly damaged that they were demolished. In Lowden Road and Heron Road, the demolished houses were temporarily replaced by prefabricated housing (prefabs). These can be seen in the aerial photographs at pages 42 and 52 . New properties were built on other sites. These were differently styled houses set in the 19th century terraces. Examples are at 41-53 and 61-65 Heron Road, 120-140 Lowden Road, 124-128 Poplar Road and 187-197 Milkwood Road.

Habershon and Pite, Architects

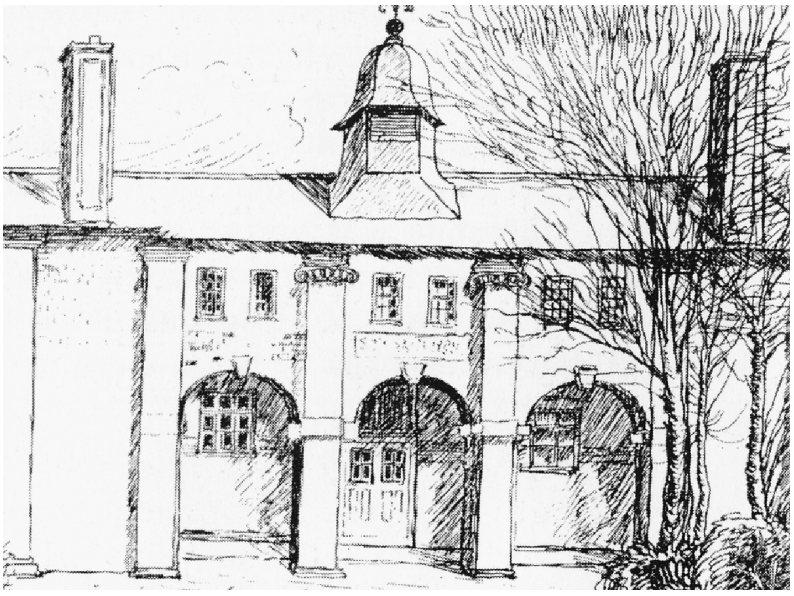
The partnership of Habershon and Pite, architects of the Milkwood Estate, was set up in 1863 by William Gilbee Habershon (1818-91) and Alfred Robert Pite (1832-1911). Habershon originally set up practice in St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, later moving to Monmouthshire then, in c1868, to London.

Pite was a former pupil of Habershon. He worked as architect to the Dom Pedro Railway in Brazil before returning to London to set up in partnership with his former tutor. The firm's offices were at 38 Bloomsbury Square.

Habershon and Pite enjoyed an extensive and varied practice, designing churches, chapels and domestic buildings. Pite retired relatively young in 1877. However, Habershon continued the practice with James Follet Fawkner who had been a partner since 1870, although his name had not appeared in the firm's title.



Alfred R Pite



St Saviour's Parish Hall c1914

William Pite (1860-1949), the son of Alfred and also an architect, designed the new King's College Hospital when it relocated to Denmark Hill in 1913.

Another son and architect, Arthur Beresford Pite (1861-1934), designed the 1914 St Saviour's Parish Hall in Herne Hill Road.

Streets and Street Names

In 1869 the Metropolitan Board of Works considered a report dated 7 January by the Superintending Architect on A R Pite's application for approval of a plan "for the formation of five new roads and the continuation and widening on the Loughborough Park Village Estate, Brixton, and of the names 'Heron-road', 'Lowden-road', 'Milkwood-road', 'Poplar Walk-road', 'Jessop-road' and 'Mudie-street' for the new roads." No note was made of the curious anomaly of five roads with six names. "It was resolved, on the motion of Mr Fowler, that the application be granted."

There is no conclusive evidence of the reasons these names were chosen.

The name Milkwood must hark back to the original Milkwell Manor and its long lost wood.

Heron presumably recalls the legends of herons around the River Effra and other local streams, which may have inspired the name Herne Hill.

Poplar Walk Road is of course the road built parallel to Poplar Walk, then a footpath; but where the walk derived its name is not clear. Further along Herne Hill from the end of Poplar Walk stood 'The Poplars', a large house dating back to c1820s. The house was very likely named with reference to poplar trees on its grounds, so poplar trees may have been quite common in the area. Once the ancient Poplar Walk was made up into a street and its name officially approved, 1894, confusion over the two similarly named streets grew. Poplar Walk Road was therefore re-designated Poplar Road in the 1970s.

Poplar Walk Road c1925 (later renamed Poplar Road). In the 2003 film Love Actually *it appeared as "... the longest street in the world"*

In *The Book of Herne Hill,* Patricia Jenkyns writes, "Lowden Road is thought to have derived its name from its low-lying position under the hill of Poplar Walk." However, Lowden could just as easily be a surname or a portmanteau word from two names containing Low and Den. We cannot cite the poem 'A Lowden Sabbath Morn' by R L Stevenson (1850-94) as it was not published until 1898.

As for Jessop Road, which gave its name to the school which survived it, none of the Jessops listed in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* seem likely candidates for commemoration, although the builders may have admired one William Jessop (1746-1814), a civil engineer whose cast-iron rails made a great advance in railway technology; his other works included land drainage projects and the West India Docks. Interestingly, there was a famous schoolmaster, Augustus Jessopp (1823-1914), who had once lived in Clapham and was renowned for his work at Norwich School. However, the variation in spelling and the fact that he was still alive and working make naming the street/school after him less likely.

MUDIE STREET

The final mystery is Mudie Street, which seems never to have appeared. Perhaps one side of the road that forked around the Mission Rooms (St John's Church) was the intended location. More likely, however, Mudie Street was planned to link across the land where Nevill's Bakery came to be built, but was abandoned in favour of the bakery. The name Mudie is well known from the chain of subscription libraries founded in 1842 by Charles Edward Mudie (1818-90) which preceded free public libraries as a means of borrowing books. It would be nice to think this is what the namers had in mind. By coincidence, a stationer and bookbinder later set up at 10 Milkwood Road and ran the Milkwood Road Circulating Library.

There were reading rooms nearby, in St John's Church, though the material seems to have consisted of newspapers, journals and maps rather than books. When in 1902 Andrew Carnegie offered Lambeth funds to build a library if a suitable site could be found, one of the options considered was Milkwood Road. C E Mudie was also on the London School Board for three years from its first meeting in 1870. Was he campaigning for a Board School for the site before taking up his appointment? Perhaps he was instrumental in planning Jessop Road School.

Decorative bay window in Lowden Road

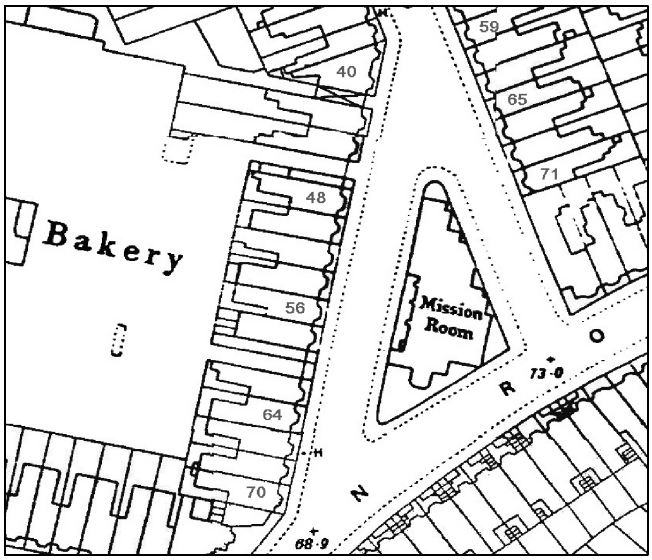
Street Numbering

The present numbering of the houses in Milkwood Road starts from Hinton Road, with odd numbers on the east side and even numbers on the west. Originally numbers had been allocated piecemeal as each row of houses was built. An attempt was made to rationalize the system by using odd numbers on the west side and even numbers on the east, but unfortunately some groups of houses on the same side were numbered consecutively.

London's haphazard street numbering had been a problem since the advent of postal deliveries in 1840. The Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW), the forerunner of the LCC, had the task of resolving the problem, and Milkwood Road numbering was finalised in 1879. Thus the Milkwood Tavern, 40 Milkwood Road, became 63 and Nevill's Bakery, 94 Milkwood Road, became 115.

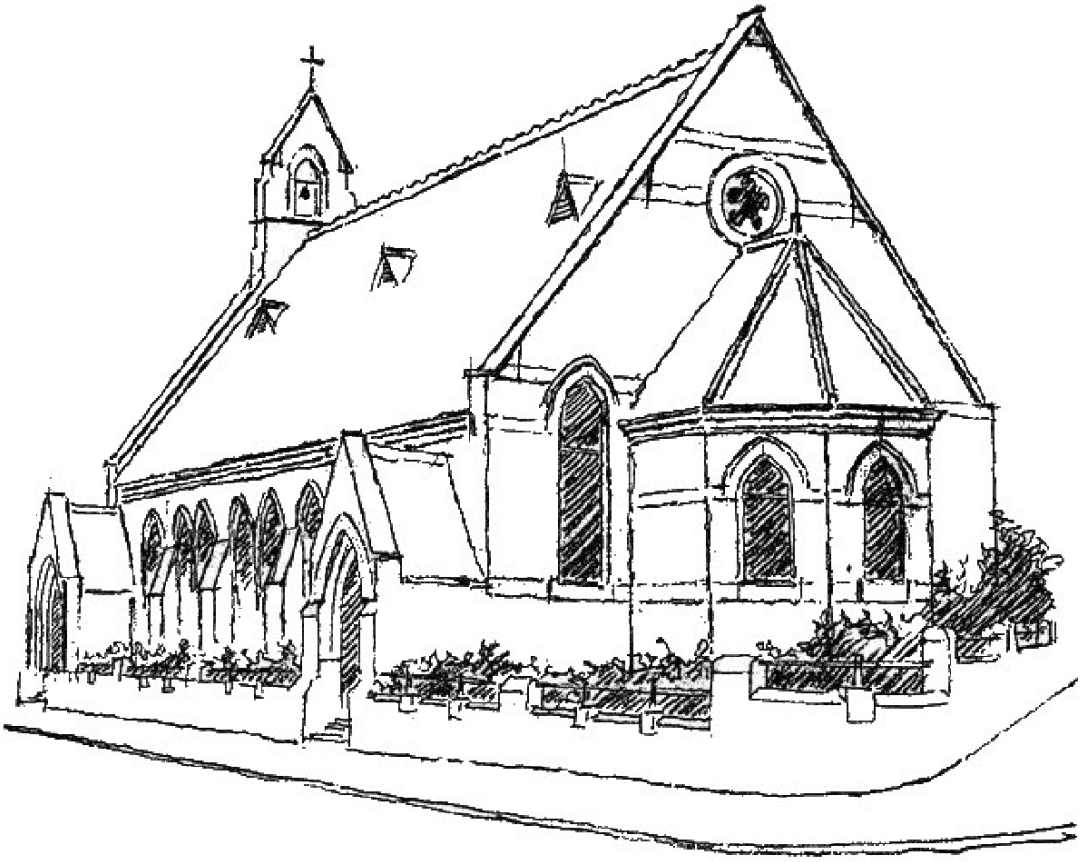
A similar problem occurred in Lowden Road. Here, dating from 1883, house numbers start from Milkwood Road with the odd numbers on the north side and even numbers on the south. This is the reverse of the original numbering which started from Poplar Walk with evens on the north and odds on the south.

Another curiosity is that Lowden Road originally ran either side of the island site of St John's Church. The MBW transferred these houses to Heron Road. The present 59 to 71 Heron Road were originally 30 to 18 Lowden Road. Originally numbers 40 to 70 Heron Road (demolished in the 1970s) were 42 to 72 Lowden Road and included the rear entrances to Nevill's Bakery (known as their 'Lowden Road' gates).



Detail from a 1930 Ordnance Survey map showing St John's on its island site and the houses that formerly backed onto Nevill's bakery.

St John's Church



St John's Church by Don Bianco

For over a hundred years, St John's Church, also known as the Mission Church of St John, was the centre of Anglican life on the Milkwood Estate. No longer a church, it has now taken on a new and important role as a centre for community activities.

The Parish of St Paul, Herne Hill

Before 1825, the area that was to form the Milkwood Estate came within the Parish of St Mary, Lambeth. When St Matthew's Church, Brixton, was built in 1825, it was transferred into that church's parish. In 1869, there was another move, this time to the Parish of St Jude, Dulwich Road.

The Milkwood Estate added 3,000 people to St Jude's parish. This caused problems for the then Vicar who was "much perplexed as to how to shepherd all these people, because of the distance from St Jude's and because of the awkward geographical position of the Estate". Cut off by the railway line, getting to St Jude's meant a rather long walk round under Herne Hill railway bridge and down Dulwich Road. However, the problem was solved in 1877 by another parish transfer, this time to St Paul's, Herne Hill.

In the 1870s, St Paul's was a small parish of about 1,000 people. Adding another 3,000 greatly increased the parish workload. But it took the Vicar, Rev. William Powell (1810-83), three years to persuade the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to grant him the £60 needed to employ a Curate. Rev. William Henry Western Casey took up the post in 1881, to help with the additional work of running the enlarged parish.

The New Church

Even with the additional support provided by Rev. Casey, the situation was unsatisfactory due to the lack of either a church or a hall on the Milkwood Estate. Parishioners still had a long walk either along Milkwood Road or Poplar Walk to reach St Paul's. As Gubyon, Kestrel and Fawnbrake Avenues had not yet been built, there was no opportunity for a short cut. Rev. Powell therefore decided that a church in the centre of the Milkwood Estate was needed.

In July 1879 an advertisement appeared in the magazine *Building News* announcing a competition to produce a design for this new church. There followed a series of letters to that magazine complaining about malpractice on the part of architects wishing to submit designs for the competition. It was suggested that, as the son of Rev. Powell was himself an architect, he would enjoy an unfair advantage over the other competitors, a claim vigorously denied. There were also indications that several competitors, being anxious to receive the commission, contrary to the RIBA Code of Practice offered to reduce or even waive their fee. Eventually a short list of six architects was selected to submit designs, five of whom did so. In the event none of these was chosen. This was much to the disgust of a *Building News* commentator who felt that any of the proposals submitted would have met the specified requirements for "a simple design with accommodation for not less than 400 people".

Although the competition had been announced some months earlier, it was not until December 1879 that, after some negotiation, arrangements were made to buy the land on which to build the church. This was the triangular plot on an island at the junction of Lowden and Heron Roads. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners contributed £300 towards the costs of acquiring the site and agreed to lease it to St Paul's for 99 years.

The site had previously been leased to the architect Alfred Robert Pite. He agreed to surrender his interest, but on a number of conditions. These were that he was paid £650, that the church was built within three years and that he would be employed as architect. He must have waived this last requirement as another firm, that of Edward Harnor and George Alfred Waters of 8 John Street, WC, was eventually commissioned to design the building.

THIS FOUNDATION STONE

WAS LAID BY

W. H. STONE ESQ.

PATRON OF THE PARISH OF HERNE HILL

———— • ————

THE REV. WILLIAM POWELL VICAR

JOSEPH HOLLAND ESQ}

} CHURCHWARDENS

EDWIN ASPINALL ESQ}

JUNE 22ND 1881

HARNOR & WATERS ARCHTS J HOOPER BUILDER

Text of the Foundation Stone in the east wall of St John's

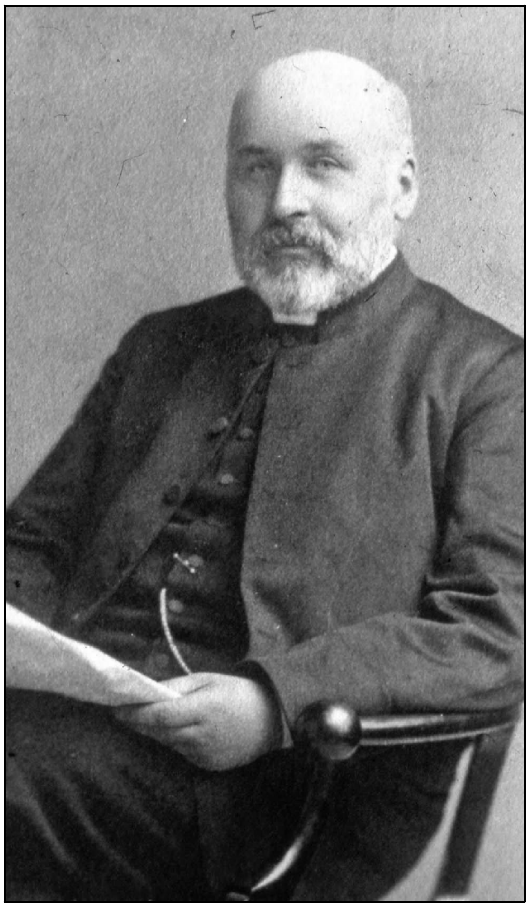
After much effort to raise the necessary funds, construction started in 1881. The foundation stone was laid on 22 June by William Henry Stone. A former resident of Casino House at 3 Herne Hill and one time MP for Portsmouth, Stone was a patron of St Paul's Church, Herne Hill.

The building was completed later that same year. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners agreed that the new church should be named after St John the Evangelist. Credit must go to the Rev. Powell for so successfully conceiving and implementing the project. After his death in 1883, he was commemorated by a memorial tablet, still on the chancel wall in St Paul's Church.

The new church, more commonly known as the Mission Room, was not licensed for communion; nor could marriages be held there. However, it was used for other church services, for the Sunday School and as a venue for clubs and meetings.

It was soon felt that the building should have a sanctuary and an altar, so that communion could be celebrated. Hence the Rev. Stephen Frederick Bridge, Rev. Powell's successor, raised the £400 needed to build an extension on the east end.

The newly extended Mission Room re-opened on 19 December 1887, with a special service conducted by Rev. Bridge and his Assistant Curate, Rev. Frederick Ernest White. The first celebration of Holy Communion took place on 6 January 1888, with 35 communicants.



Rev. Stephen Frederick Bridge

William Henry Stone

The first baptisms were held on 8 January 1888, when six children were baptised. Marriages still took place only at St Paul's itself. There is a memorial tablet in St John's to Rev. Bridge, who was Vicar of the Parish for 22 years, from 1883 until his death in 1905.

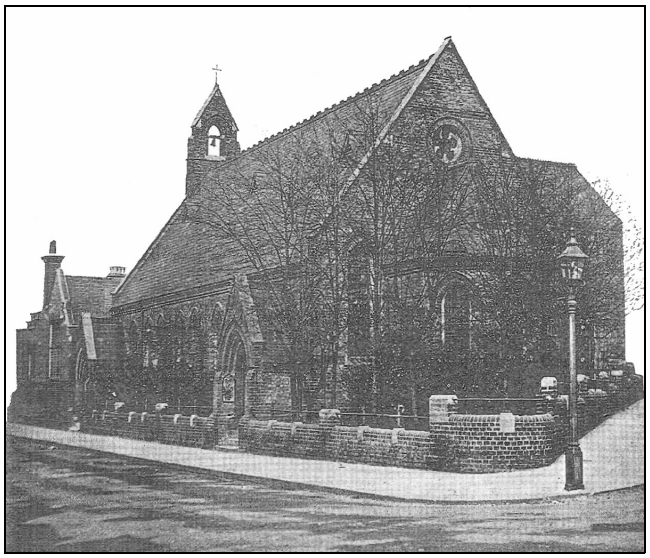
With two churches and a large and growing population, life for the vicar must have been quite busy. Twice, in 1898 and again in 1903, Rev. Bridge, applied unsuccessfully for the funds to provide additional support. He cited in particular the work needed to run the Mission Church in Lowden Road. His successor, Rev. Humphries Pearce Lindsay, did better. In 1909, the Church Commissioners agreed to grant £60 a year towards the costs of a second Curate. An application in 1911 for another £60 a year towards the costs of a third Curate was also successful.

Looking north along Heron Road from Lowden Road with St John's on the right c1905. The houses on the left were demolished in the 1970s. The space they occupied and this section of Heron Road are now part of the Milkwood Community Park.

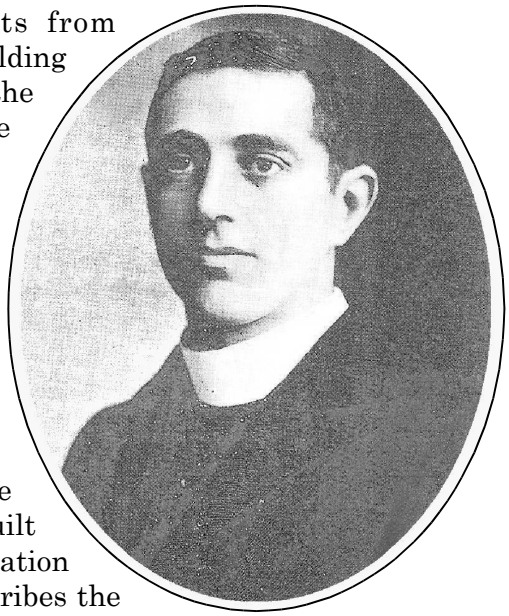
The First 60 Years

St John's became an integral part of the local community. As well as church services, the hall was used for other activities such as the Girls' Friendly Society, Boys Brigade and Women's Union. There was also a reading room, yearly membership costing a shilling (5p) for youths and 1/6d. (7½p) for men.

However St John's had its ups and downs and experienced some of the difficulties common to many churches.



St John's Church c1910



Rev. Christopher King Blencoe
Priest-in-Charge, St John's (1909-14)

Fairly early on there were complaints from members of the congregation that the building was very cold and that smoke escaped into the hall from the five coal fires that were the only form of heating. From 1909 there were also problems caused by noise from passing trams that went along Poplar and Lowden Roads. The heating improved in 1917 when gas radiators were installed. However, the noise from trams did not go away until they were phased out in 1952.

It seems that the numbers in the congregation never came up to the expectations of those who planned and built the church. The limited size of the congregation was a recurring theme; a 1920 report describes the numbers coming to services as getting "smaller and smaller". Income was consequently low and balancing the books proved an impossible task. Support from the congregation could not keep the church out of the red; it proved particularly hard to meet the costs of maintaining the building. For much of its life St John's relied on financial support from St Paul's.

Things did look up for a time with the arrival, in 1926, of Rev. Kenneth Crawford Scott as Priest-in-Charge. The congregation increased, there were more church-based activities and money was raised to repair the organ. The church continued to thrive for a time after Rev. Scott left in 1930, but the problem of the gap between income and expenditure was still not fully resolved.

Years of Change

During WW2 there was little or no curate support for St John's. By 1945 the then Vicar of St Paul's, Rev. Sydney Charles George Dyer, was lamenting the poor attendance, referring to "a faithful few who attend services". On the other hand, Sunday School attendances were good and both the Scouts and Boys' Club were thriving. However, the accounts for that year still showed that income came nowhere near to matching expenditure.

The post-war period was therefore marked by problems of finding a priest to look after the Mission Church, the difficulty in attracting a congregation and the Church's precarious financial position. The local population had declined. Bomb damage had rendered many of the surrounding houses uninhabitable. In

St John's interior, 1950s

addition, the 99 year house leases were coming to an end. This and the consequent neglect of properties led to many people moving away. The situation was not helped when, in 1957, St Paul's acquired its own parish hall to which were transferred some of the social activities previously held at St John's.

During the 1950s the level of activity did expand. The arrival of the Rev. Kenneth A Bristow as Assistant Curate brought some new life to St John's. Church attendances were more buoyant and the Sunday School remained active. A youth club was set up and money spent on improvements to the heating system, redecoration and an electric blower for the organ. £1,250 was spent on building repairs, although £4,000 was actually needed and there were real problems due to the increasing costs of building maintenance.

The accounts for 1960 showed St John's income as £467, whilst expenditure was £569. Consequently the future of the church was increasingly being debated. In 1959 the Bishop of Woolwich had written to the then Vicar, Rev. Frank Spencer Bull, to say that it would be better to concentrate on St Paul's rather than try to maintain St John's. In 1962, an article in the Parish magazine recognised that St John's had outlived its original purpose and no longer met the changing needs of the area. Various new uses were proposed, including as a youth centre, to help address the lack of facilities for young people in the area.

The building was now used also by a Pentecostal Church congregation. Grants were given by the Inner London Education Authority and the Ministry of Education and Science towards the costs of setting up a centre for youth work, as an addition to the Church's other activities. The parish had to find 25% of the £3,112 total cost. Work was completed and the church reopened in 1970.

Life at St John's still carried on, with Cubs, Beavers, the Heron Club (for over-60s), Scouts, youth club and luncheon club. The youth activities proved very successful, with an average of 50 young people attending each night; but shortage of helpers remained a serious problem. In 1981, the Department of Environment awarded a £31,050 grant to set up the Heron Community Centre. The money was used to install a new kitchen and toilets, repair the roof, install a new heating system and generally refurbish the building.

The Centre was run by its own committee, which also looked after the hall and managed lettings. It was designed to be self-financing, relying on income from hiring the hall. This was evidently successful as, for the first time in many years, the 1983 accounts did not show a deficit; and throughout the 80s and 90s income kept up with expenses. However, the building's age meant maintenance costs were high. It became increasingly dilapidated and suffered from vandalism, graffiti and broken windows. Once all the lead was stolen from the roof.

In May 1981 the 100th anniversary of the church's foundation was celebrated with special services and an exhibition. A specially written entertainment was given from the newly renovated stage. In the 1980s, the part of Heron Road behind the church was closed and taken up. Bushes and flowers were planted on the site, joining it to the recently improved open space on the site of the former Nevill's Bakery.

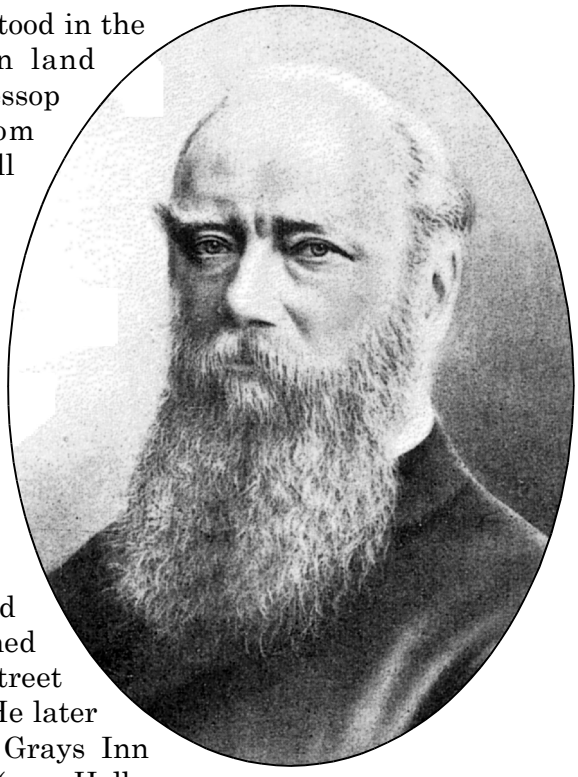
By 1983 services had been reduced to one communion service a week and, by early 1984, to one a month. Anglican services ceased to be held in mid 1986; however, the Pentecostal Church services carried on.

The hall continued to be used for community based activities. Keep fit and dancing classes were introduced and a day nursery was first opened in 1993. The Scout troop finally closed in 2002 and the Heron Club moved to St Saviour's in 2005. The day nursery continues. At the time of writing (2009) the Milkwood Residents Association is negotiating to buy St John's to set up a community centre and thus bring this valuable asset back into full use. There are many people in the area, particularly the older generation, who still look back with a lot of pleasure at the happy times spent there, at Harvest Festival suppers, concerts, tea dances, Scout shows etc. and to where their Christian worship began.

St John's from Milkwood Community Park

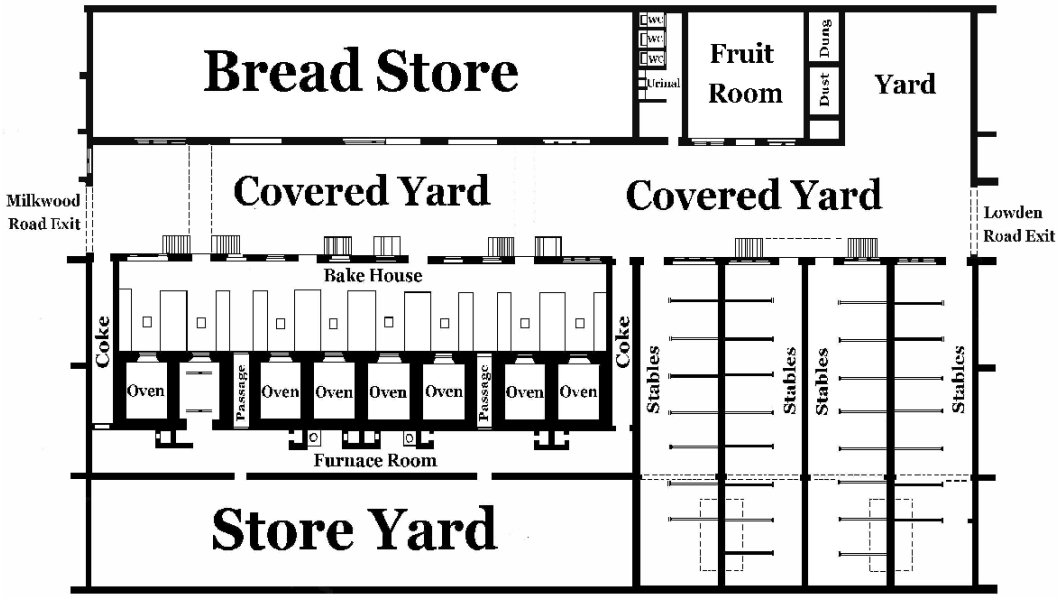
Nevill's Bakery

From 1872 to 1969 Nevill's bakery stood in the heart of the Milkwood Estate on land bounded by Milkwood, Heron and Jessop Roads. Employees came from surrounding neighbourhoods as well as the Estate to work there.



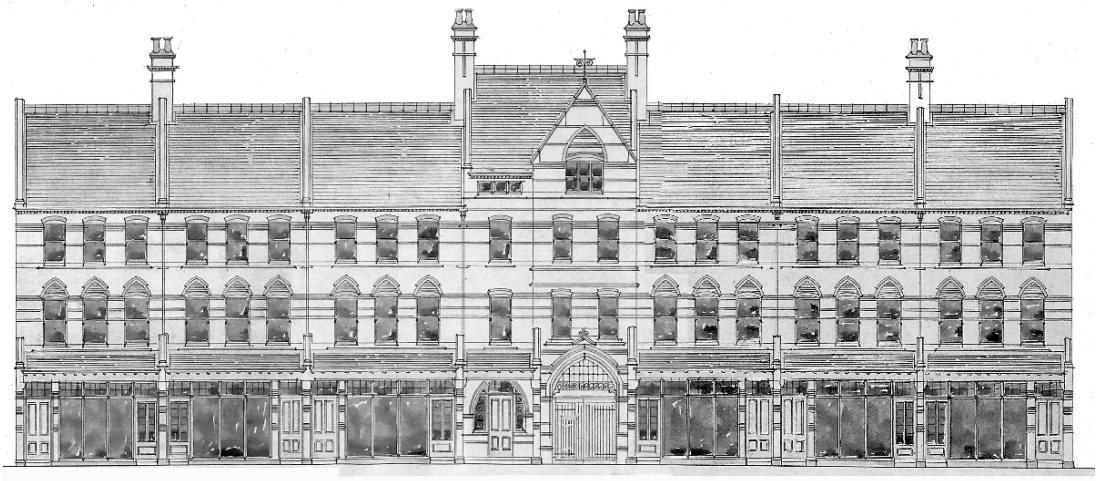
H W Nevill

Henry William Nevill (1819-89) started in business in 1840. He was born in Wherwell, Hampshire. Although the son of a farmer, he chose to learn the baking profession from an uncle who was a miller and baker. When his father started in business as a corn dealer in Grays Inn Road, the young Henry came to London to join him. However, baking was his passion, and on becoming a master baker he opened his first bakery at 23 Great Wild Street (now Wild Street) off Drury Lane. He later moved to 17 Sidmouth Street, off Grays Inn Road and then to 16 Holborn Hill (now Holborn and Holborn Viaduct).



Plan of Nevill's Bakery ground floor

In 1854 Henry, responding to the increasing popularity of his bread, opened a large bakery at Bingfield Road, north of King's Cross. This bakery became the cornerstone of four large bakeries in North, South, East and West London. Over time Henry closed his own shops and concentrated on supplying bread to other bakers and grocers. In 1872 he opened the Herne Hill bakery at Milkwood Road to serve south London. He also established the company head office there. Like the rest of the Estate, the building was designed by Habershon and Pite.



Nevill's Milkwood Road entrance, with shops on either side (Habershon & Pite, Architects, 1872)

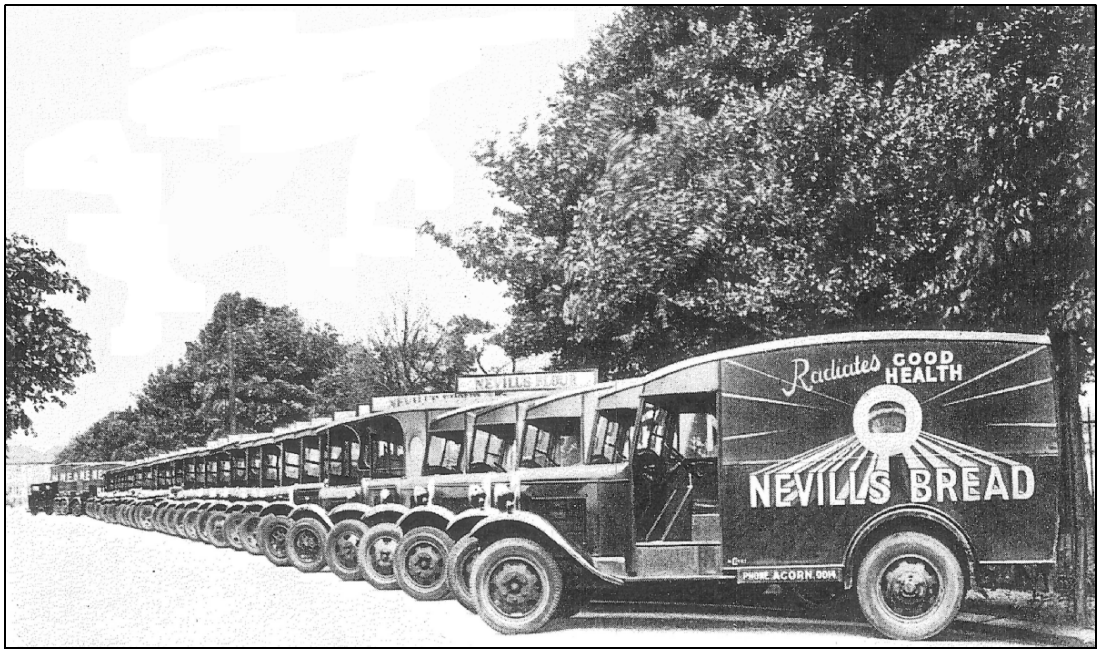
The bakery's main entrance was at 94 Milkwood Road (renumbered to 115 in 1883). There was also a rear entrance between 58 and 66 Lowden Road (renumbered and renamed 56 and 64 Heron Road in 1883). Nevill later opened more bakeries: in 1882 at Leytonstone (209 Harrow Road) and in 1885 at Acton (364 Acton Lane). The output from these bakeries could, if required, have supplied the whole of the County of London

The company always prided itself on making bread that was better than home-made. This was because they chose exactly those flours and flour mixtures best suited to making a perfect loaf. High-pressure steam baking ovens were a contributor to this claim. These were made by A M Perkins & Sons of Grays Inn Road. Perkins had first supplied Nevill's with ovens in c1851 and continued to do so for over a hundred years. In his 1968 book *The History of Baker Perkins* Augustus Muir states that "Mr Nevill, the largest baker in London, used nothing but Perkins stopped-end tube ovens, and he had then (in 1878) sixty-eight of them baking 5,000 sacks of flour every week".

Nevill's Lowden Road entrance (Habershon & Pite, Architects, 1872)

Henry William Nevill was a noted philanthropist. In 1883, the London Master Bakers Pension and Almshouse Society presented him with an illuminated address "in recognition of his forty years interest and active participation in its social work and to many other branches of charitable aims as well".

In the 1880s Henry was living at 14 Cranley Gardens, Kensington. He later retired to Ramsgate where he died, aged 69, on 18 August 1889. In an obituary, the magazine *The Miller* dated 2 September 1889, described him as "one of the most celebrated masters of baking craft the world has ever seen". For many Londoners, Nevill's Bread was a household word.

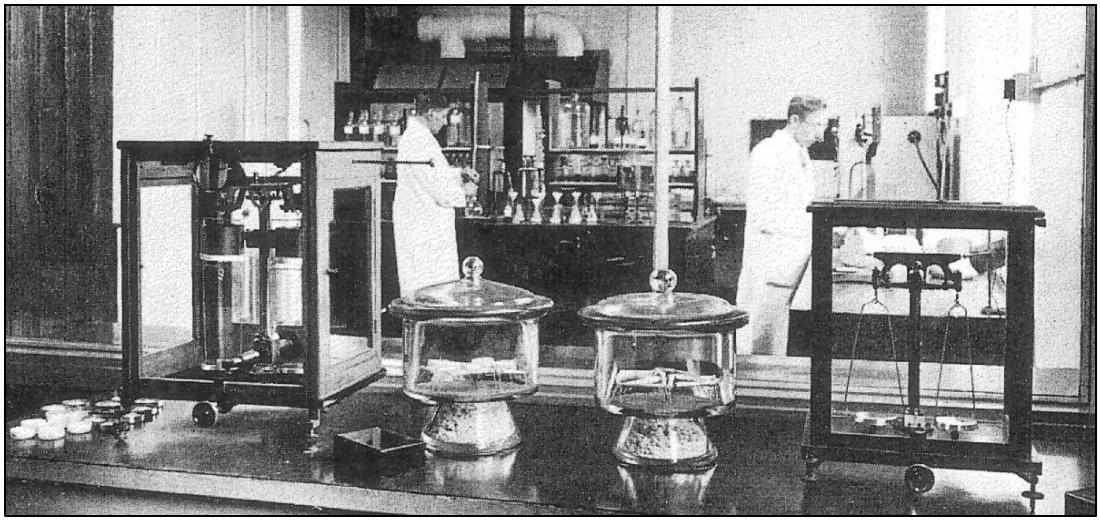


Part of Nevill's delivery van fleet

Henry's son Robert Nevill followed as head of the firm. In 1899 it was formed into a limited liability company, with Robert as the Governing Director. In 1919 Robert introduced a pension scheme so that "employees who have given so much of their lives and affection to the firm can pass their old age in ease and comfort".

In 1914, at the outbreak of the WW1 many of the firm's horses were commandeered by the Army. Nevill's hired motor vehicles to replace them. By 1940 the firm had 142 motor delivery vans and 34 horse-drawn vehicles, covering 250,000 miles a year. Throughout the war bread production never stopped. One bakery alone made 10,000 loaves an hour.

In 1925 Perkins (by then Baker Perkins Ltd of Peterborough) installed at Nevill's London's first fully automated



Bread purity testing laboratory

bread-baking and wrapping plant. This aroused great interest at the Wembley Exhibition of that year. In 1936 the Certificate of the Royal Institution of Public Health was awarded to Nevill's for its wrapped loaf.

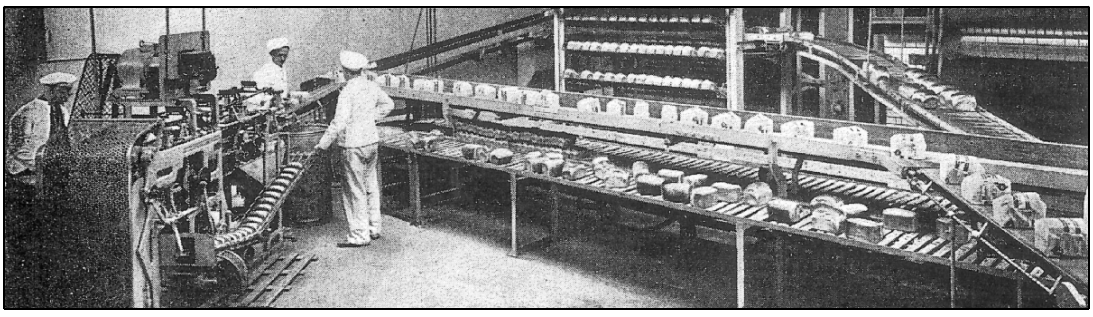
Bread production was supported by a fully equipped laboratory where scientists worked to maintain the quality of the loaves' texture and their pure creamy whiteness. The laboratory also carried out research into the nutritional values of white and brown bread. Nevill's fame spread far and wide attracting doctors, scientists and trade representatives from all over the world. In 1940 the bakeries had a workforce of over 400.

Nevill's stand at Olympia, 1938

The Milkwood Road bakery stood on land held on a 99 year lease from the Church Commissioners. Many nearby houses were leased by the company and rented to essential employees. In 1958 Nevill's owned 42-54 and 64-70 Heron Road, 19 Jessop Road, 43 Lowden Road and 101-113 and 117-123 Milkwood Road, all now gone.

A letter dated December 1960 from the company to Mr J W Mortimer, a despatch leader, states that "for the better performance of your duties … the company grants you licence and requires you to reside in the lower flat, 52 Heron Road SE24 as from the 26th day of December 1960". The weekly rent was £1 5s 7d (£1.28p), inclusive of rates and water rates. The company had the right of entry at all times. Mr Mortimer had to pay for gas, electricity and telephone (if any). The flat was for the sole use of Mr Mortimer, his wife and children. The letter goes on to state: "The Licence does not create any tenancy of the premises but that your residence therein is as a servant of the company".

After WW2 Nevill's became a part of Allied Bakeries Ltd. Their delivery service then also included bread from other bakeries in the group, such as, in the 1960s, Sunblest and bread from the Tip-Top Bakeries of Orpington.



Bread cooling and wrapping line

Aerial view of Nevill's Bakery c1950
(note the former Jessop Road on the right and post-war prefabs in Heron Road)

In 1950, as it had become too small to accommodate the larger automatic plant required to meet the increased demand and sales of wrapped bread, Nevill's tried to enlarge its King's Cross bakery or to find alternative premises. The LCC refused permission for the necessary alterations suggesting that the company move to the outskirts of London. Nevill's contended that this would involve excessive distances for distributing its bread to its central London retailers. As a result the King's Cross bakery was closed and the other branches met the demand, with expanded facilities at Acton and Leytonstone.

In c1960, a similar feasibility study was carried out for the redevelopment of the Milkwood Road bakery. Plans were made that involved moving the bakery frontage from Milkwood Road to Heron Road. This proposal fell through and Nevill's opened two more bakeries, at 260 High Street, Eltham and at Engate Street, Lewisham.

Nevill's closed its Herne Hill bakery in 1969 when the lease from the Church Commissioners ran out and the company decided not to renew. The lease had been valued at £60,000 in 1960. The existing site was too small to house the modern machinery required to keep up with its competitors such as Mothers Pride and there was no land available on which the company could expand. A few years later the other Nevill's bakeries also closed. The site of the Harrow Road bakery is now occupied by a small housing estate called Neville (*sic*) Close. That of the Acton bakery is also now occupied by a small housing scheme, more correctly called Nevill Close.

In c1970, Allied Bakeries Ltd. became part of Associated British Foods plc, which now produces Kingsmill, Burgen and Allison's bread. Its bakeries in south-east England are located at Walthamstow, Orpington, Stevenage and Reading. Other companies in the group include G. Costa, Ovaltine, Primark, Ryvita, Silver Spoon and Twinings.

Milkwood Road, northern entrance to Nevill's, c1967

Nevill Close, Acton W3

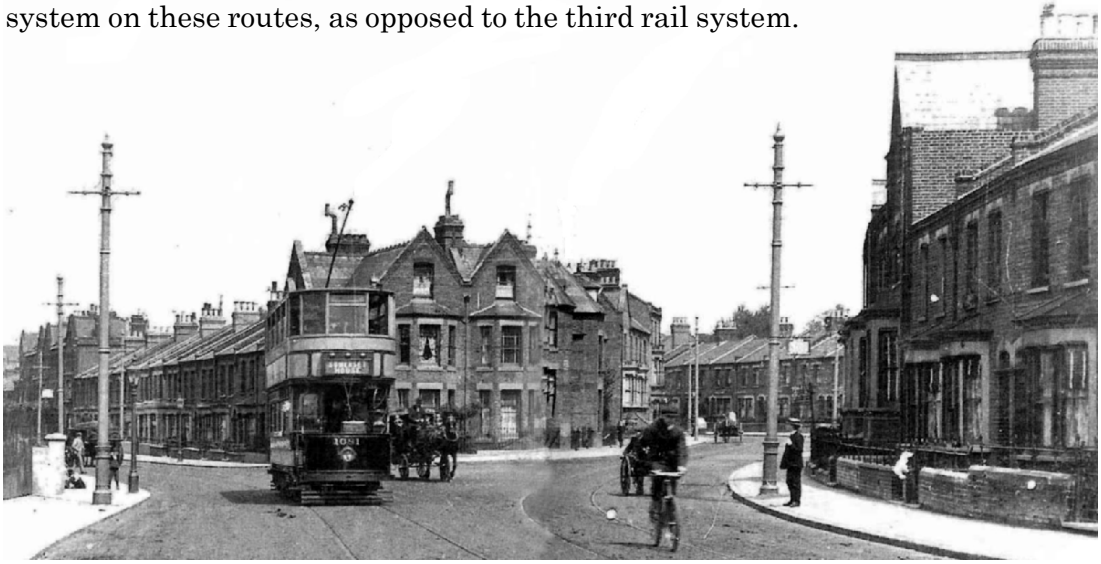
Transport

Trams

In 1884 a single-decker horse-drawn tram service began running from Camberwell to West Norwood via Coldharbour Lane, Hinton Road and Milkwood Road. A number of operators ran horse tramways in south-east London, the first setting up in 1870. In 1873 two small companies merged to form the London Tramways Company (LTC), which became the major operator. Four smaller horse tramway companies also served south-east London: the Southwark & Deptford (from 1880), the Woolwich & South East London (from 1881), the London Camberwell & Dulwich (from c1885) and the South Eastern Metropolitan (from 1890).

The London County Council (LCC) acquired the LTC on 1 January 1899 and, during the next five years, took over the systems of the other four companies. Under the LCC, tram workers enjoyed better pay and conditions, with a shorter working week of 60 hours; and the public benefitted from cheaper fares. Double-decker trams were introduced and, in 1904, the first electric tramway in south-east London began service.

In 1908, the Board of Trade gave approval for a tram route from Coldharbour Lane/Gresham Road to Norwood Road. Electric trams began running to Herne Hill station on 28 May 1909 and to St Luke's Church, West Norwood, two days later. Horse tram depots were closed. The electric trams used Camberwell depot and a new depot in Norwood Road, south of Tulse Hill station. Earlier opposition to overhead wires had declined, thus allowing the LCC to use this more efficient system on these routes, as opposed to the third rail system.



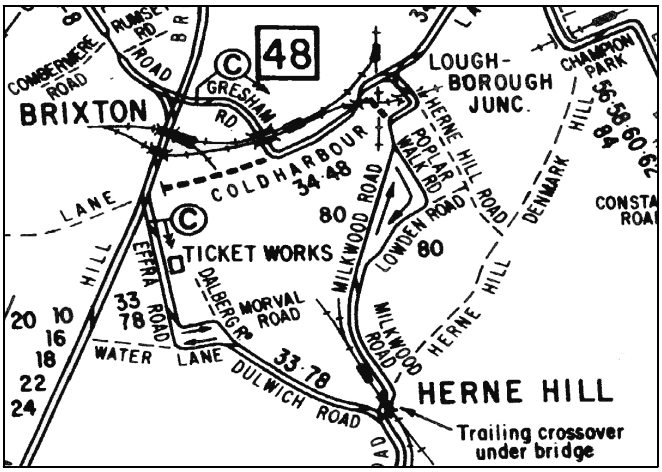
Number 82 tram going north along Milkwood Road at the junction with Lowden Road c1910 (Courtesy Middleton Press)

Number 48 tram going south along Lowden Road, at the junction with Milkwood Road c1946 (Courtesy Middleton Press)

While the horse-drawn tram had run along Hinton Road, electric trams were routed via Herne Hill Road and Wanless Road to avoid the low railway bridge. The LCC devised a one-way system for the No 80 using Poplar Walk Road and Lowden Road for the south-bound line, while the north-bound line continued along Milkwood Road.

WW1 generally put a stop to tramway extension; some services were temporarily withdrawn and others diverted. On 4 December 1915 women conductors were employed for the first time on LCC trams. They rendered valuable service throughout the rest of the war. Though bombing may not have damaged tram lines or services, lengthy delays were caused by government instructions to cut off current during the air-raids.

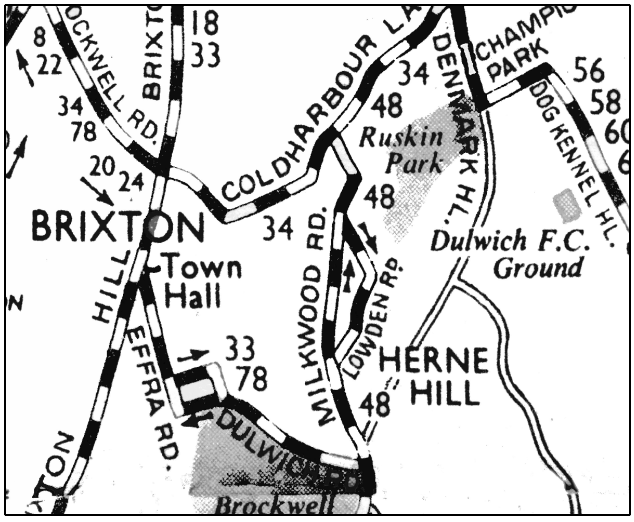
Number 48 trams in Milkwood Road near the corner with Poplar Road (Courtesy Middleton Press)



Detail from 1932 tram map (Courtesy London Transport Museum ©Transport for London)

A 1932 LCC Tramways map shows the No 80 going from West Norwood via Milkwood Road to Blackfriars. Two accidents were recorded the following year. On 20 March a motor car driven by Randolph Churchill (son of Sir Winston) collided with a No 80 tram in Milkwood Road. Then in May another No 80 was derailed under Herne Hill railway bridge and crashed into the United Dairies building.

By 1934 the No 80 appears to have been discontinued. From about that time the No 48 began running from West Norwood along Norwood, Milkwood, Wanless and Herne Hill Roads, Loughborough Junction, Coldharbour Lane, Camberwell Green, Elephant & Castle and Borough High Street to the City & Southwark terminus north of the river. However, after a damaging air raid c1940 when the north part of Southwark Bridge was wrecked, tram cars turned on the bridge itself.



Detail from 1950 tram map (Courtesy London Transport Museum ©Transport for London)

Air raids closer to home also affected the service. For example, on 13 September 1940, bomb damage caused Milkwood, Effra and Norwood Roads to be closed and the West Norwood depot isolated. However, Milkwood Road reopened the following week. Further disruptions were similarly overcome by speedy repair or rerouting.

No 48 tram at the corner of Poplar and Lowden Roads (Courtesy Middleton Press)

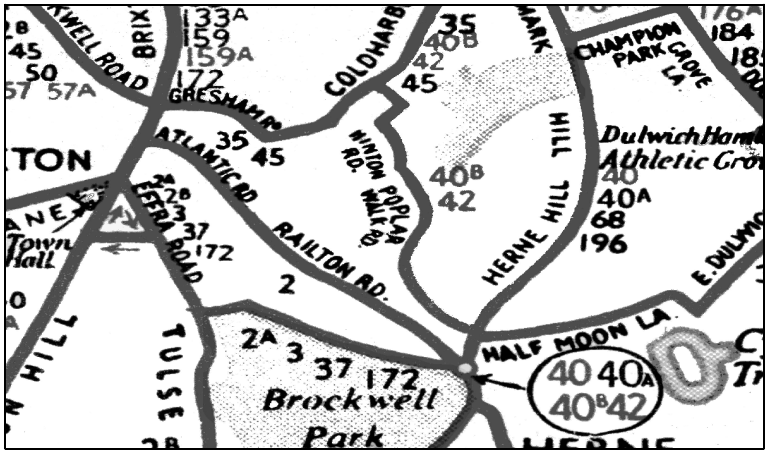
After the war, buses came to predominate and trams were phased out in London, the last service running on 5 July 1952.

Buses in Milkwood Road

Following the removal of the trams from London's roads, their routes were replaced by buses. Most tram routes were replaced by bus routes of a different number. Unusually the No 48 tram, which served the Milkwood Estate, was replaced by the No 48 bus.

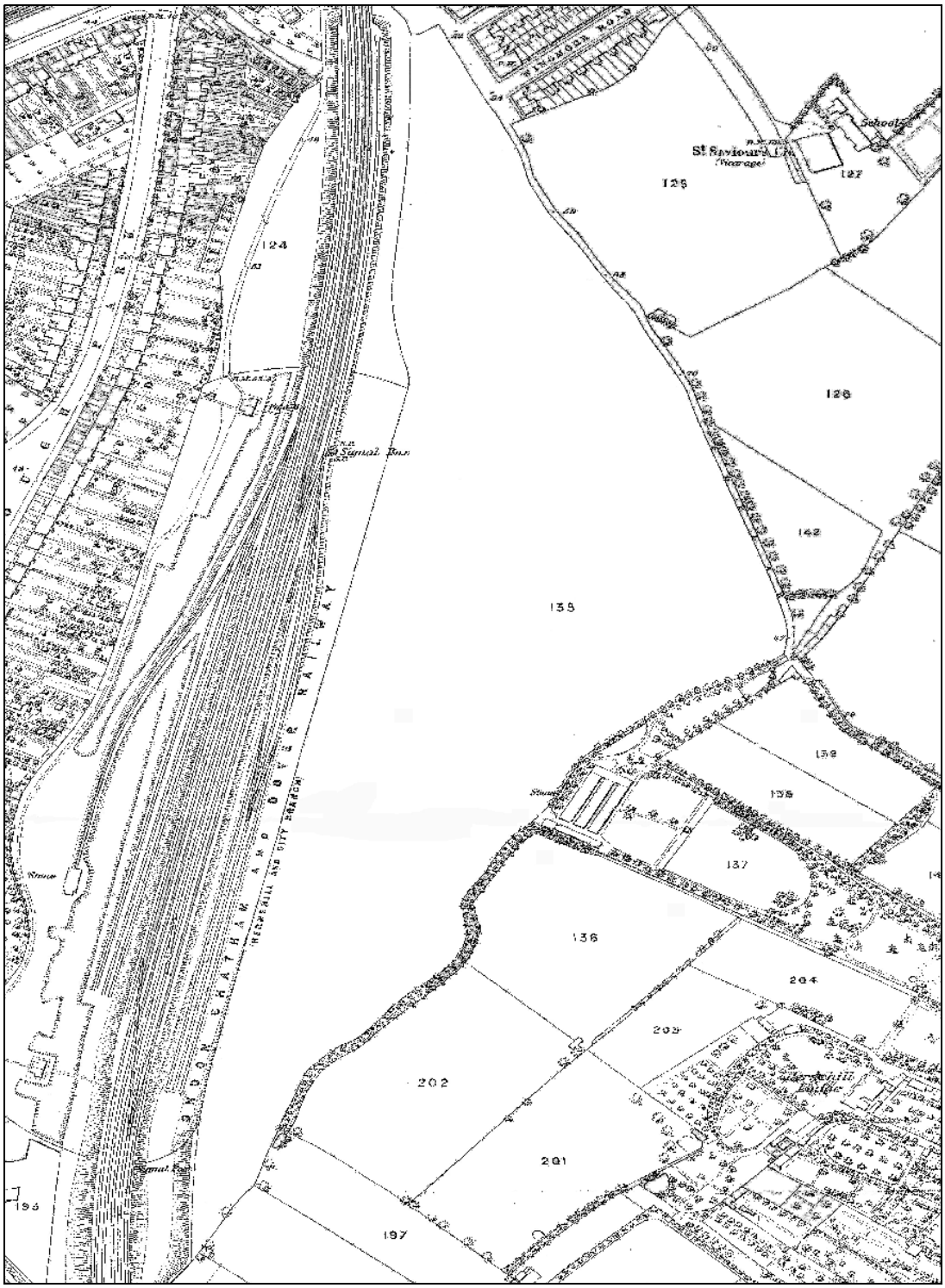
The No 48 bus took over the entire No 48 tram route, i.e. Cannon Street, Southwark Bridge, Borough, Elephant & Castle, Camberwell Green, Herne Hill and West Norwood. Unlike the tram, the bus route did not have to have one-way operation. It therefore ran from Wanless Road, along Milkwood, Poplar and Lowden Roads and Milkwood Road again to Herne Hill and West Norwood using exactly the same route on the return journey. After some years the No 48 ran only on Mondays to Fridays, with the No 42 bus, which ran from Aldgate, Tower Bridge, Old Kent Road, Albany Road to Camberwell Green, being extended along Coldharbour Lane, Milkwood Road to Herne Hill (The Half Moon pub) on Saturdays and Sundays.

In August 1958 the No 48 route was axed. It was replaced by a much reduced bus service comprising the No 42 on Monday to Friday rush-hours and the No 40B on Saturdays, excluding evenings. At other times, including Sundays, there was no service along Milkwood Road. The No 40B from Poplar, London Bridge and Camberwell Green also terminated at The Half Moon.



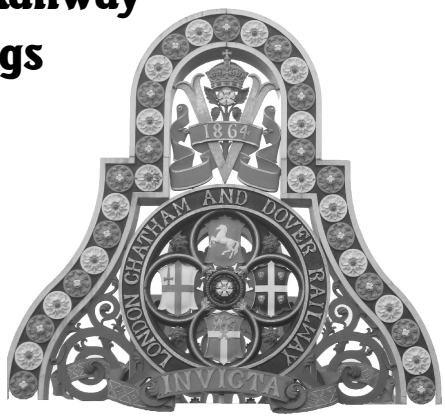
Detail from 1965 Bus Map (Courtesy the London Transport Museum ©Transport for London)

In December 1966 buses were finally withdrawn from Milkwood Road on the grounds that there was no longer sufficient demand to justify the service. Since c1975, the nearest bus has been the P4 along Herne Hill Road, a single deck bus running from Brixton to Lewisham.



OS Map of the Milkwood Estate, 1870 (Courtesy Alan Godfrey Maps)

The London, Chatham & Dover Railway and the Herne Hill Sorting Sidings



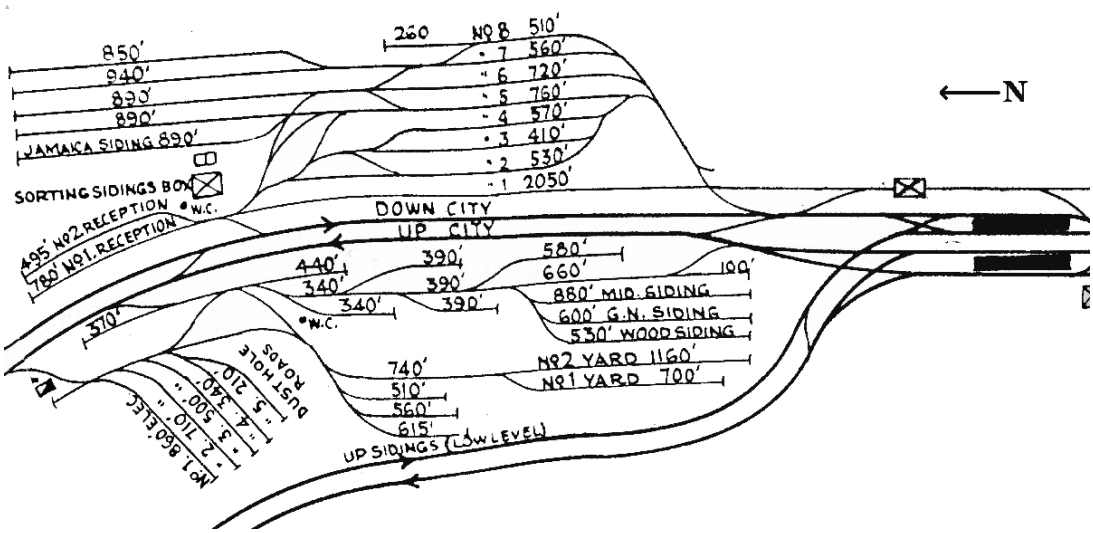
London Chatham & Dover Railway Crest at Blackfriars

In 1862, the London Chatham and Dover Railway (LCDR) built the line running parallel to Milkwood Road between Herne Hill in the south and the Elephant & Castle via Loughborough Junction to the north. The extension to Blackfriars was completed in 1864. The LCDR's main lines eventually ran from Victoria and Blackfriars to Bromley South, the Medway towns, Faversham, Canterbury and Dover, with a lengthy extension from Faversham to Margate and Ramsgate.

With the opening of the first Blackfriars railway bridge and the Snow Hill tunnel (now known as the Thameslink tunnel) to Farringdon in 1865, two more stations were opened at St Paul's and Ludgate Hill. When the line was extended beyond St Pancras in 1868, the Great Northern Railway and the Midland Railway were able to transport coal from the North of England directly to south London. In 1871 coal depots were established at the Elephant & Castle, Walworth Road and Knight's Hill (Rosendale Road). The Herne Hill sorting sidings first appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1870. Milkwood and other nearby roads were yet to be laid out.

The history of the sidings is entwined with the first Blackfriars Station, which was a terminus on the south side of the Thames and served both passengers and goods traffic. The sidings were originally designed as marshalling yards, laid out only to sort the LCDR goods trucks before they were loaded at Blackfriars. They were not intended to handle goods traffic. During the 19th century each railway company had its own goods depots close to the centre of London. Sorting sidings were usually located a few miles further out where land was cheaper. Other south London sorting sidings included Hither Green for the South Eastern Railway, Norwood for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and Feltham for the London and South Western Railway.

In 1885 a second Blackfriars railway bridge over the Thames and a new Blackfriars station on the north side were built, just for passengers. The south side Blackfriars Station was closed to passenger traffic and the whole site made over to freight working. Blackfriars was the only location in London where the LCDR could handle freight from the river traffic. It operated at two levels. Hydraulic hoists lowered the wagons from the brick viaduct down to street level and the riverside warehouses. However, the goods station was cramped for



Layout of Herne Hill Sorting Sidings - Herne Hill Station is on the right hand (south) side. (Courtesy Middleton Press)

space, there was no room for sorting wagons and the possibilities for expansion were limited. So the Herne Hill sidings were enlarged to accommodate the increased goods traffic at Blackfriars.

In the 1880s and 1890s all the railway companies' short distance passenger traffic into central London suffered acute competition with the coming of the tramways and the underground tube railways. The LCDR's line between Blackfriars and Herne Hill was severely hit. From 1899 a joint managing committee, known as the South Eastern and Chatham Railway, was established to run the LCDR and its largest rival, the South Eastern Railway. This was absorbed into the Southern Railway in 1923 and, in turn, into British Railways Southern Region in 1948.

The 20th century witnessed a gradual decline in rail goods traffic. The railways into central London became focused on passenger traffic and the majority of goods were routed around London. The former LCDR goods station at Blackfriars closed in 1964, making the Herne Hill sidings redundant. The inhabitants of the Milkwood Estate and Shakespeare Road were probably pleased not to hear any more of the constant banging and clunking of goods wagons at all times of the day and night.

The site of the Blackfriars goods station is opposite Doggett's public house and is now occupied by an office block known as Ludgate House, 245 Blackfriars Road, from where the *Daily Express* newspaper was produced. The Herne Hill sidings sites were developed in the 1990s. Housing has been built on the Shakespeare Road side and the industrial estates on the Milkwood Road side.

Sorting Sidings, looking north from the former Herne Hill signal box (Courtesy Middleton Press)

The use of domestic coal gradually ceased and the coal depots closed one by one - the Elephant & Castle in 1963, Knight's Hill in 1968 and Walworth Road in 1973. Snow Hill tunnel, which had shut for passengers in 1916, was closed for goods in 1969 and the rail tracks taken up. The first Blackfriars railway bridge, a lattice girder construction once known as the Alexandra Bridge, was closed to traffic in 1969 and the spans removed leaving the supporting columns still rising out of the Thames. The two magnificent LCDR crests remain on the southern abutments and make colourful features on the South Bank.

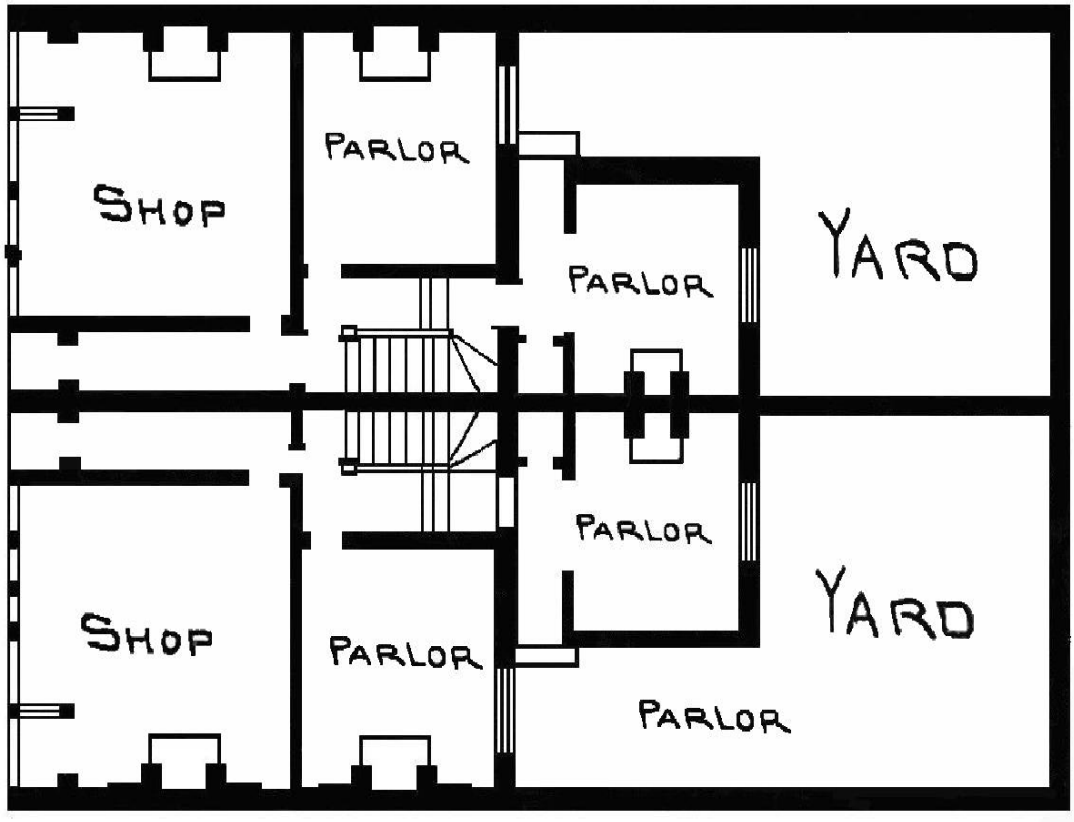
Aerial view of Nevill's Bakery c1950, showing the Milkwood Road railway sidings.

Trades, Traders and Professions

Shops

Most of the Estate's shops were in Milkwood Road, on both sides starting from just south of Jessop Road towards Loughborough Junction. There was a wide range: bakers, grocers and greengrocers, drapers, shoemakers, confectioners, china and glassware, newspapers, tobacconists, butchers and poultry sellers, fishmongers, corn chandlers and suppliers of lamp oil.

Local 1880s directories show the Loughborough Cooperative Store at 24 Milkwood Road, the Post and Money Order Office and Savings Bank at number 75, a doctor's surgery at 83 and, a little further down, a pharmacy at number 95. Other shops included hair dressers, a picture framer and a fish and chip shop; the Milkwood Tavern was at number 63. War damage and changing consumer patterns mean that only a small handful of shops, towards the north end of Milkwood Road, now remain in operation.



Ground floor plan of shops at 97 and 99 Milkwood Road, 1871

Occupations

In line with the original aims of the Estate's developers, to "provide decent accommodation for working people", those who came to live there were mainly artisans and their families - skilled and semi-skilled workers. The census returns of 1881 and 1891 show over 150 different types of occupation. However, the most common was that of clerk, with 139 people (17% of all in employment) giving this as their occupation. By 1891, the number of clerks had fallen to 124 (12% of an increased population), but it was still the most common job. The next most widespread was domestic servant, with 85 (10%) in 1881 stating they were in some form of service. After that came shop work, followed by tailoring, dressmaking and millinery. Another common occupation was commercial traveller. The printing industry also provided work for many people, as did gardening and trades allied to building, including carpentry, brick-laying, plumbing/gas fitting, stone masonry, painting and decorating. The popularity of the area for people employed in the printing industry may have been due to the ease of access by early morning trains to the newspapers in Fleet Street.

Very few people (three in 1881 and eight in 1891) described themselves as unemployed. It must have been only those in reasonably paid and relatively secure employment who could afford to buy or rent a house. Charles Booth's poverty map of London, 1898/99, shows all the houses on the Estate as being occupied by people whose living standards he classifies as "fairly comfortable, good ordinary earnings". By this Booth meant those on regular standard earnings receiving 22 shillings (£1.10) to 30 shillings (£1.50) a week, higher class labour and the best paid of the artisans earning in excess of 30 shillings per week.[3]

---

[3] *On Thursday 5 October 1899, two members of Booth's research team, Ernest Aves and Police Constable Young, walked the area bounded by Denmark Hill / Herne Hill, Milkwood Road and Coldharbour Lane. Their report includes the following observations on the houses and population of the Milkwood Estate:*

> *"**Milkwood Road.** The south end mainly of the local type* (of housing) *but the road includes some three-storey houses and has shops on the east side between the greater part of the space between Jessop Road and Heron Road and a little north of the latter point nearer Poplar Walk on both sides.*
>
> ***Jessop Road, Heron Road** and **Poplar Walk.** All of the local type.*
>
> ***General Remarks.** Much of the district is rather colourless and but few people, with hardly any men, are about in the daytime. We passed Nevill's bakery in Milkwood Road and this gives a certain amount of local employment but the chief field of employment for the people of the neighbourhood was, Young said, Brixton. It is emphatically one of the parts in which one walks and wonders what all the people do for a living, the district itself giving practically no clue."*

A report on a walk on 12 December 1899 by George Duckworth and Police Constable Jones stated:

> *"**Milkwood Road.** Houses less well tenanted* (occupied) *because the position so near the station and railway lines is less good."*

There were a relatively few people who could be described as being in the professions. Most of these were teachers (16 in 1881, 21 in 1891). However, in the 1880s there were two surgeons (Richard Garnham at 74 Lowden Road and John Bilham at 84 Milkwood Road). A doctor, George Hayes, lived at 44 Lowden Road; and a dentist, Felix Black, at 16 Poplar Road (then called Poplar Walk Road). Arthur Grenwood, at 56 Milkwood Road, described himself as a Physician and Surgeon. An accountant, Charles Dorrell, lived at 154 Milkwood Road and John Stevens, an architect, lived at 78 Poplar Road.

It was not uncommon for trades to run in families, sons following into their fathers' occupations. The 1891 census shows the father and three sons of the Baxter family at 94 Milkwood Road were all Printer-Compositors. Although tailoring was a male preserve, work in dressmaking and millinery appears to have been confined to women.

Amongst the more unusual occupations shown in the 1891 census were a Waterproofer's Assistant living in Lowden Road, a Truss Maker in Milkwood Road, two lady masseuses in Poplar Road, a Lady's Companion also in Milkwood Road, a Temperance Lecturer at 112 Poplar Road, and a Tipstaff at the Queen's Bench, Westminster, living at 58 Poplar Road. At 175 Milkwood Road, John R Houlding described himself as an Author on Moral and Social Subjects. At 76 Heron Road lived Mr Boudy Agulay, an Inventor and Patentee and at 41 lived a Gentleman's Gentleman.

Occupations for which there may be little call today were tarpaulin maker, oilman, coachman, amanuensis, errand boy, billiard marker, governess, sealskin finisher, and trunk finisher. New skills were also developing. Absent in 1881, but included in the 1891 census, were four electricians/electrical engineers, reflecting the development of the then new technology.

Specific trades and skills changed over the years. However, the general pattern of occupations remained substantially the same. A 1957 report by the Ministry of Education stated that nearly half the parents in Jessop School were unskilled workers and about 5% were professionals. The majority of mothers went out to work. The report also observed that there was a tendency amongst professional families to move out of the district.

Murder and Murderers

Alfred Arthur Rouse (1894-1931)

Alfred Arthur Rouse was born on 6 April 1894, at 242 Milkwood Road[4]. Alfred's parents were shopkeepers in the hosiery trade. When he was six, Alfred's parents separated and he was sent to live with an aunt.

Alfred Arthur Rouse aged 20

After leaving school and five years working for a West End soft furnishers, Alfred enlisted as a private in the army on 8 August 1914. On 29 November 1914 he married Lily May Watkins, a clerk. The following May he was posted to France. Ten days later, on 25 May, he was severely wounded in his head, thigh and leg by a shell burst. After treatment and a long convalescence he returned to England and in 1916 was discharged from the army as no longer fit for active service. As a result of his head wound Alfred's personality appears to have changed. It was said that he was never the same again.

Following his discharge from the army, Alfred had a variety of jobs before becoming a commercial traveller for a firm of braces and garter manufacturers. He took full advantage of the opportunity this gave him for seduction. It is said he had affairs with over 80 women. They readily fell victim to his handsome appearance, plausible tongue and ingratiating manners. He had no children with his wife but at least six by other women. One of these children lived with Alfred and his wife in a house they had bought in Finchley.

By 1930, the costs of keeping his Finchley home, paying child maintenance orders as well as the additional household expenses from at least one bigamous marriage meant that, on a weekly income of only eight pounds, Alfred's debts were out of control. He conceived a plan to fake his own death and start life again with all these problems behind him.

[4] *242 Milkwood Road was located opposite the end of Lowden Road. The house was demolished in the 1960s. The site now forms part of the present industrial estate.*

The burnt out car

Early in the morning of 6 November 1930, a burning car with a body inside was discovered on a road just east of Northampton. The car was identified as belonging to Alfred but the body was burnt beyond recognition. Unluckily for him, two men had spotted Alfred near the car. The following day he was seen in south Wales and recognised from newspaper photographs and descriptions. Alfred straight away went back to London where that same evening he was arrested. He told the police that he had picked up a hitchhiker and, when he had got out of the car to answer a call of nature, it had caught fire causing him to panic and run away.

Alfred was charged with the murder of an unknown man and brought to trial on 26 January 1931 at Northampton Assizes. The trial took six days. Technical evidence showed that the car's carburettor had been tampered with before the fire had started. A mallet belonging to Alfred – possibly the murder weapon – was found nearby, attached to which were hairs later identified as coming from the victim. The jury took just 75 minutes to return a guilty verdict. His appeal was dismissed and the Home Secretary having refused a reprieve, Alfred was hanged at Bedford prison on 10 March 1931. The identity of the victim remains unknown.

Daniel Stewart Gorrie (c1860-90)

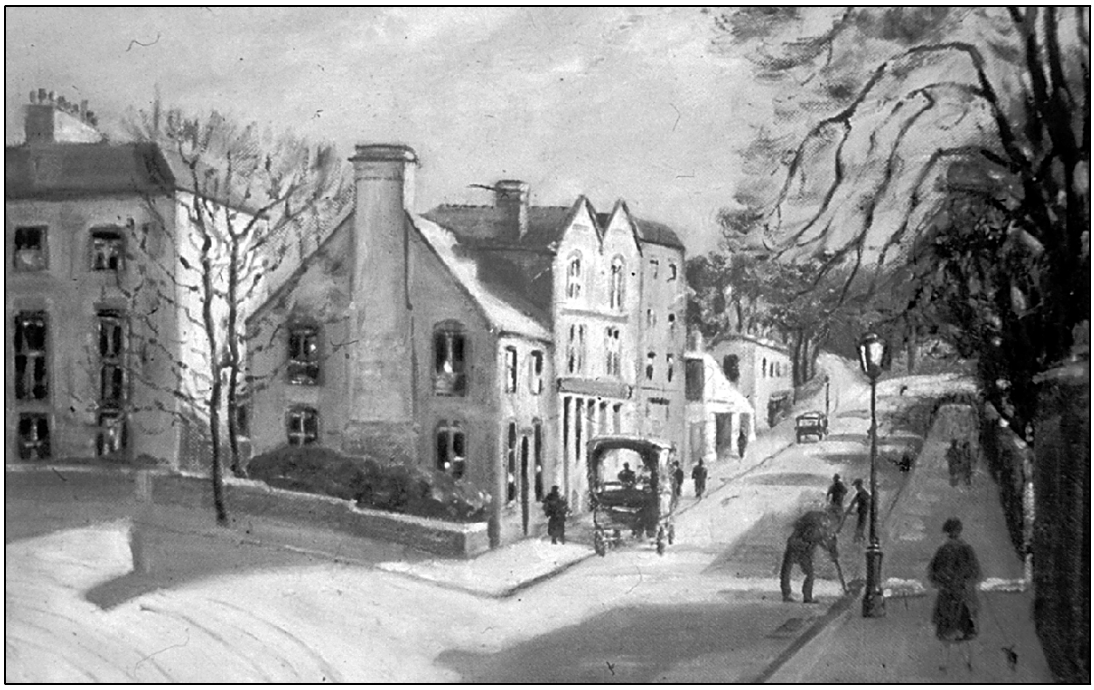
At 3.25pm on Saturday 12 April 1890, Thomas Furlonger, 60, a packer, was found dead in a pool of blood in No 1 furnace room at Nevill's bakery in Milkwood Road. He had been hit on the head four times with a sharp, heavy furnace bar. His hat was lying beside him with the brim showing two fresh cuts. That day, at 12.30pm, Thomas had been paid his weekly wage of £1 3s (£1.15) plus 1/3d (6p) overtime. However, this money was missing and his right-hand trouser pocket had been turned inside out. Since no strangers were allowed in the bakery, the police determined that the crime was carried out by a man employed on the premises (women were not employed there at that time).

The next day, Daniel Stewart Gorrie, 30, a baker at Nevill's bakery living at 9 Jessop Road, was taken to Peckham Police Station. After questioning by the local police and later by detectives from Scotland Yard, Gorrie was charged with the wilful murder of Thomas Furlonger.

On the evening of Tuesday 15 April 1890, Mr G P Wyatt, the coroner for Mid-Surrey, presided at the inquest held at the Milkwood Tavern. Evidence was given by Inspector John Tunbridge of Scotland Yard and by Nevill's employees who had seen Furlonger and Gorrie on the day the crime was committed. Gorrie's wife, Caroline, also gave evidence. It seems that Daniel Gorrie was seen in various parts of the bakery several times on the Saturday afternoon after finishing his work. Gorrie said he returned home between 2pm and 3pm and went to the Fox Tavern, Denmark Hill (then the Fox-under-the-Hill at the corner with Champion Park) instead of to his usual pub, the Milkwood Tavern. Gorrie's shirt collar was seen broken at the button-hole. However, he accounted for that by saying that he had a scuffle with a man who stopped him and asked for money. Gorrie also had a scratch on his hand which he claimed was nothing important.

Hearings took place at Lambeth Police Court (now Magistrates Court) on 15, 23, 28 and 29 April 1890. Here the same witnesses (and others) who had appeared at the Inquest gave evidence. The outcome of the hearings was Gorrie's committal for trial at the Central Criminal Court. The trial would have taken place in the former Old Bailey since the present building dates from 1907.

The trial on 22, 23 and 26 May 1890 was heard before Mr Justice Hawkins. Mr Charles Matthews and Mr C P Gill were counsel for the prosecution; Mr Geoghegan and Mr Arthur Hutton defended. The 31 witnesses included 21 fellow workers, five policemen, two doctors, two shop assistants and the landlord of the Milkwood Tavern. Daniel Gorrie did not give evidence.



The Fox-under-the-Hill (Courtesy the Southwark Collection)

It appeared that many bakery workers often borrowed small amounts of money from each other. These loans were usually repaid on Saturdays when the men received their wages. Some petty thieving had also been taking place at the bakery.

The Times reported that, following the judge's summing up on the last day of the trial, "The jury retired to consider their verdict, and, after a short absence, they returned into Court finding the prisoner guilty. The prisoner being asked whether he had anything to say replied 'I am not guilty'. Mr Justice Hawkins then sentenced the prisoner to death in the usual manner." The usual manner was for the judge to place a black cap over his wig and pronounce death by hanging.

The above information on this case is taken from reports in *The Times* and the *South London Press.* It was usual to detail just the basic facts as they had occurred. Over a century later, contemporary census records give us an insight into the people involved in the case and their way of life.

The murdered man lived with his wife Elizabeth, 51, two sons, 20 and 13, and one daughter, 18. Known to his fellow workers as Nabob, he had worked at Nevill's for about 18 years, almost since the bakery opened. He was also a little deaf. Furlonger was born in Cobham, Surrey and lived at 78 Tilson Road, Peckham, built in the 1870s, now on the site of the North Peckham Estate.

John Moorer, 16, found the murdered man and called for help. He worked as a yard boy at Nevill's and lived at 64 Daniels Road, Nunhead. His father was a bread packer, also at Nevill's.

Dr Richard Garnham (c1835-1906) was the doctor first called to attend the murdered man. He was a bachelor living at 273 Milkwood Road with his unmarried sister, Hannah. At the trials he confirmed the wounds found on the murdered man and stated that death was caused by the injuries received and by shock and haemorrhaging. The body had not been moved before he arrived at the scene of the crime.

Horrible Murder at Herne Hill.

Headline in the South London Press*, 19 April 1890*

Daniel Gorrie had been employed at Nevill's for most of his working life. He married Caroline Whitehead in 1881 and had a daughter, Catherine aged six and a son, Thomas aged three. Within a year of the event, Caroline moved to 94 Milkwood Road and worked as a dressmaker. She and her family remained living in the area, as did Gorrie's parents.

Daniel was born in Scotland, the eldest child of Daniel and Annie Gorrie and brother to three boys and five girls. The family came to London in c1870 living first at 8 Wingmore Road (the house still exists) and later at 128 Lowden Road.

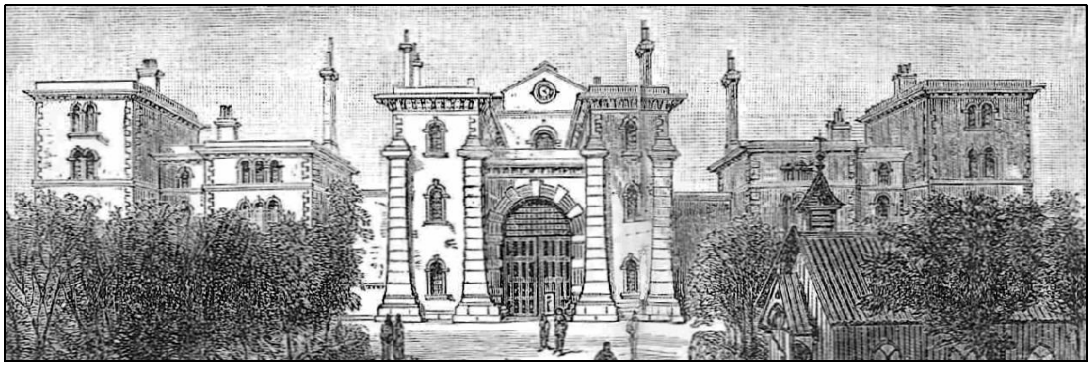
Daniel senior worked as a journalist and newspaper editor. By 1891 Daniel senior was blind and the whole family lived at 163 Milkwood Road (a three-storey property also still existing).

William Samuel Harding, 46, the bakery manager, lived at the bakery. He was a widower, with a daughter 13, and son seven. At the trial he confirmed that he had known Furlonger for about 16 years and that Furlonger's duties included sweeping up and replacing dirty towels. Packers would leave at 1.30pm and the bakers would leave earlier. There were two dressing rooms and it was normal for the men to wash and change their clothing before leaving. He stated that the men had lockers or boxes in which to put their things. It was the factory's practice to pay wages at midday on Saturdays after which some men went home and some stayed another hour to finish their work. There were three bake houses at the bakery. Gorrie worked in No 2, and Furlonger in No 1.

Policeman John George had made a large-scale plan of the bakery and also a plan of the roads in the immediate neighbourhood. To check Gorrie's alibi, he estimated the distance from the bakery to the Fox-under-the-Hill was one mile and 157 yards and would take about 21 minutes to walk. Another policeman, Thomas Burnett, was patrolling the area at the time of the murder and had seen no beggar or tramp. Finally Rowland Hill, the landlord of the Fox-under-the-Hill, stated he had not seen Gorrie in the pub.

The most detailed questioning was to Inspector Tunbridge of Scotland Yard about the statements taken by the witnesses and the lengthy statement from Daniel Gorrie.

Although the murder was not witnessed, many of the workers at the bakery had seen Gorrie at the bakery between 12.30 and 2pm. He had finished work at about 11am and should have left by noon. He lived close by and had no reason to remain on the premises, but did not reach home until 2.15pm. Gorrie was always short of money and borrowed from his work-mates. He usually paid back these loans on Saturdays, after receiving his wages. He also usually gave his wife 33s (£1.65). At the time of his arrest Gorrie had about £1 over and above his wages.



Wandsworth Prison in 1851 rebuilt in the 1970s

Charles Howard, of 196 Railton Road, was the foreman of No 6 gang in which Gorrie worked. He paid Gorrie his overtime money in addition to his weekly wage. Commonly known as Punch, Edward Collins of 87 Milkwood Road was an oilman, working with his father. It seems that Collins also had an unofficial business as a local money lender. He went to the bakery between noon and 1pm to find people who owed him money. Gorrie was one of those people and Collins knew him very well. Gorrie repaid him 3/3d (16p) at about 12.55pm.

William Jago of Wingmore Road, a bricklayer's labourer, passed through No 1 bake house at 12.55pm and saw Gorrie on his way to the furnace room. Alfred Daniels of Hardess Street, a washer at the bakery, saw Gorrie in the dressing room reading a newspaper. Gorrie was washed and dressed. Daniels said, "Dan, I am surprised at your being up here, considering the things that have been lost. If anything is gone, they would blame you for it."

James Hoyles, a baker, of 26 Dean's Buildings, Flint Street, Walworth, was loading bread in No 1 bake house when he saw Gorrie. Hoyles said, "Hullo, what are you doing here now? I thought you would have been home and had your dinner by this time." Gorrie replied, "I have come back for my tobacco pouch."

Henry Tubbs of 43 Hinton Road, the horse keeper at the bakery, said Furlonger paid him the 3d (1½p) he owed, at 12.45pm. Tubbs then saw Gorrie at No 2 bake house, clean and dressed in his ordinary clothes. Gorrie had said that he had come for his basin.

Thomas Ball of Crowther Road, a packer, saw Gorrie carrying something like a small basin wrapped up in a handkerchief.

Other witnesses who had seen Daniel Gorrie lurking about the bakery at that time included David Wilson of Regent Road, Frank Sharvell, a packer, of Lordship Lane, Frederick Goodyear of Regent Road and John Hitching, a jobber at Nevill's.

The Court of Criminal Appeal was not established until the Criminal Appeal Act of 1907 after a serious miscarriage of justice which occurred that year. Before that date the right of convicted persons to challenge decisions in criminal cases was very limited. After repeatedly asserting his innocence, Daniel Gorrie's only course was to petition the Secretary of State. There was no response and Gorrie was executed on Tuesday 10 June 1890 at Wandsworth Prison. To quote *The Times:* "Berry was the executioner, and death was instantaneous".

James Berry (1853-1913), executioner at Wandsworth Prison (1884-91)

A Milkwood Miracle

Dorothy Kerin (1889-1963)

In about 1900, aged eleven and following the death of her father William, a Ship Cargo Superintendent, Dorothy Kerin moved with her mother Emily from their home in Dawlish Road, Leyton to 204 Milkwood Road[5].

Dorothy as a young woman, courtesy the Dorothy Kerin Trust

Dorothy's is the story of 'The Miracle of Herne Hill'. From childhood she suffered for many years from tubercular meningitis, then a serious and intractable illness. On 18 February 1912, having lost consciousness and been pronounced on the verge of death, she made an immediate and unexplained recovery. At 9.15 in the evening she suddenly sat up and said, "Do you not hear? I am well, I must get up and walk." She then put on her dressing gown, went downstairs and helped herself to a meal of meat and pickles. Sixteen people are said to have witnessed the event. This recovery, it is said, was accompanied by visions and the voices of angels singing that were heard throughout the house. The following morning Dorothy was examined by a doctor. He could find nothing wrong with her. Later blood tests and X-rays confirmed the doctor's findings – there were no traces of the lesions and other symptoms of her illness.

Dorothy Kerin

As a result of extensive local and national press coverage, Dorothy became famous. She continued to hear voices and see visions; and she later noted that stigmata appeared. Media interest was so great that she had to leave Milkwood Road to avoid the crowds round her home.

Dorothy gained a reputation as a healer and, in 1929, she opened her first Home of Healing, St

[5] *204 Milkwood Road was immediately opposite 169 Milkwood Road and near what is now the Milkwood Community Park. The house was demolished in the 1960s; the site now forms part of the present industrial estate.*

Dorothy with her adopted children, early 1950s, courtesy Dorothy Kerin Trust

Raphael's, in Ealing. The following year, thanks to a gift from a friend, she was able to renovate and open a second property. These were the first of seven such houses she owned by the end of WW2. Dorothy also found the time during this period to adopt nine children.

After the war and needing to find room for her family, Dorothy moved to Spelhurst in Kent. In 1948 she raised the money to buy and restore Burrswood near Tunbridge Wells and to establish it as a Christian healing centre that is still functioning today.

Dorothy died on 26 January 1963 and was buried in St John's Churchyard, Groombridge, Kent.

Burrswood is now an independent, fully-registered Christian Hospital, which brings together mainstream medicine and Christian healing, a model Dorothy pioneered. Burrswood welcomes people of all faiths and none, to its 220-acre estate, to the hospital as well as to the Outpatient Department for physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and counselling; they may also visit the Church of Christ the Healer, bookshop, gift shop, tea room and grounds.

Burrswood today, courtesy Dorothy Kerin Trust

Education

Private Schools

It seems likely that the first schools on the Milkwood Estate were privately run establishments catering for a limited number of students whose parents could afford the fees. Many of these schools seem to have been rather short lived. Electoral rolls and directories of the time show:

1880: Emma and Martha Brooks ran a preparatory school at 43 Heron Road and Mrs Thomas Yeats ran a Ladies School at 91 Lowden Road.

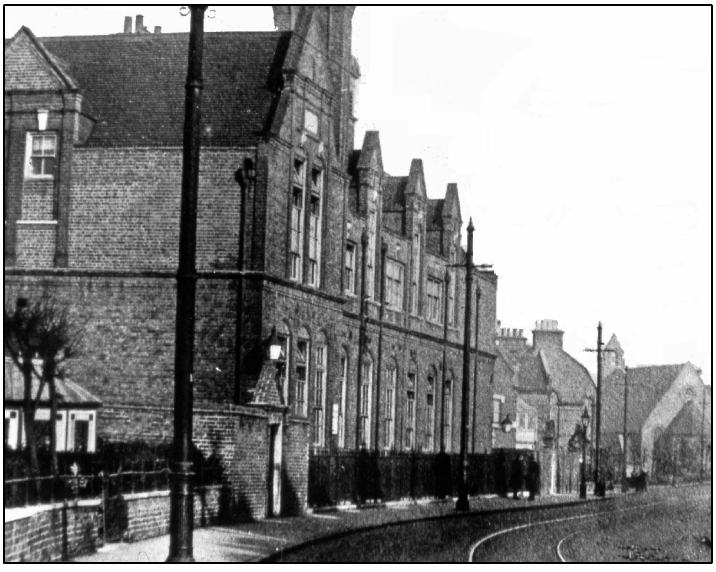
1884: Mrs Hobbs was running a preparatory school at 41 Heron Road and Miss Durban ran a school at 134 Milkwood Road.

1896: Mrs Crouch and her two daughters had a School for Girls at 62 Heron Road. Ebenezer Robinson BA ran a School at 203 Milkwood Road. Here there were classes for young boys preparing for public schools such as Dulwich College. Pupils were given individual attention, with classes in English, music, art, drill, French and German. End of term concerts were given at the nearby St John's Church.

1903: Misses Fanny and Elizabeth Crouch still had their school, but had moved to 252 Milkwood Road. It was still there in 1909.

By the start of the WW1, these private schools had all disappeared.

Jessop School



Jessop Road School from Lowden Road, c1900

Renamed Jessop School in 1951, Jessop Road School was opened by the School Board for London in 1876. Built at a cost of £6,108, the school was originally designed to accommodate 552 children (176 boys, 176 girls and 200 infants). The design allowed nine square feet ($0.8m^2$) for each child and eight square feet ($0.7m^2$) for an infant. It was one of the first Board Schools to be opened in the area.

With an eventual capacity, after enlargement, of over 800 children, Jessop Road School was far bigger than the three nearby church schools - St Saviour's, St Matthew's and St Jude's. There were infants and junior schools, with separate departments for boys and girls, each with their own entrances and floors. A shelter stood in the school grounds for use in wet weather. Toilets were also in the playground.

Information about life in the school comes mainly from log books. Unfortunately only four of these survive: two remaining with the School and another two at the London Metropolitan Archives. The earliest entries are mainly about the girls' Department, and there is very little said about the infants' and boys'.

1891

The first diary entry in the school log book, in copperplate handwriting: "Sep 19th: Average attendance 331.1 84.6%. 170 girls out of 363 attended perfectly."

Attendance percentages and mistakes in the registers were strictly logged, with medals and class banners awarded as incentives to the children. The weather is often mentioned, especially when it is wet.

One reads of scholarships, treats, formal visitors and inspections, marks, recitations, new subjects to be taught, and many needlework and art reports from the girls' classes. A scholarship to Mary Datchelor School is noted, as is a new class in laundry work for Standard V.

Frequent visits by the vicar, Rev. S F Bridge of St Paul's Herne Hill, are also recorded. After going through the registers, he might speak to "the irregular and unpunctual girls", with notes to be sent to the two School Visitors respecting this.

Recruiting a new assistant caused problems in October. There had been no response to the original request for someone to help with a large and overcrowded class and its absent teacher, so a supply teacher had to be found.

Only four days' notice was given that the Board Inspector would visit the school on 18 November to examine Scripture and to inspect other subject material.

Exams were regularly taken throughout the school year. They were both oral and written and included hymn singing.

1892

There was an inspection of needlework and preparation of poetry "for approval". The poetry was: 32 lines of 'Mouse and the Cake'; 40 lines of 'The Sailor-boy's Gossip'; 'The Night of the Armada' by Lord Macauley; and some lines from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The top Standard always learnt lines from Shakespeare. Geography included a study of Asia, maps of India, Palestine (as it then was) and the Indian Ocean.

In February, a boy and a girl successfully gained scholarships to Christ's Hospital and a half day holiday was given to the school. A science curriculum was

introduced. Standard I had "30 lessons on Common Objects". These included: the postage stamp, wheat, bread, salt, the post, money, milk, a knife, butter, making earthenware, a train, materials and tools used in building a house.

Some named children were clearly not up to standard and had to be put down a class. This was either for irregular or late attendance, long absence, "delicate health" or even "mental handicap". Reading and writing tests identified, as well as the failures, eleven "weak readers". Spelling was found "very weak, two only without error". In some cases composition was "very good", in others "perfectly useless - no notice taken of story".

By the summer, and possibly reflecting better weather and health, academic standards were clearly rising, especially in Geography. Optional cookery lessons had to be taken some distance away at Stockwell Road. Laundry classes were taken at Sussex Road School by girls in Standard V and above.

September reports included familiar phrases for teachers of any era, such as: "much forgotten in holidays". Several children were still away "in the country" for several weeks after the beginning of term. Many families were probably picking hops in Kent. Likewise, towards the end of each summer term, there would also be a drop in attendance when strawberries were in season.

Over the years staff absences were meticulously documented, along with cases of scarlet fever, bronchial catarrh and influenza amongst the pupils. In April, one member of staff was unable to return after the Easter holidays because he was "suffering from the effects of tooth extraction".

1895

In February, comments made about needlework classes included: "hemming stitches should be larger throughout the school"; and "the conditions of the new code with regard to cutting out must be strictly observed in the coming year". There is nothing to tell us what these conditions might have been.

Each year, grants were given for materials which would be cut out in preparation for garments to be made by each class. These were then exhibited and put on sale in the summer, the proceeds of which would be recorded in the log book and kept for the school.

1898

The record observes that "a little grammar is taken in each standard Form 2, combined with the reading lesson." Three children were presented with Domestic Economy scholarships for Norwood Polytechnic at West Norwood.

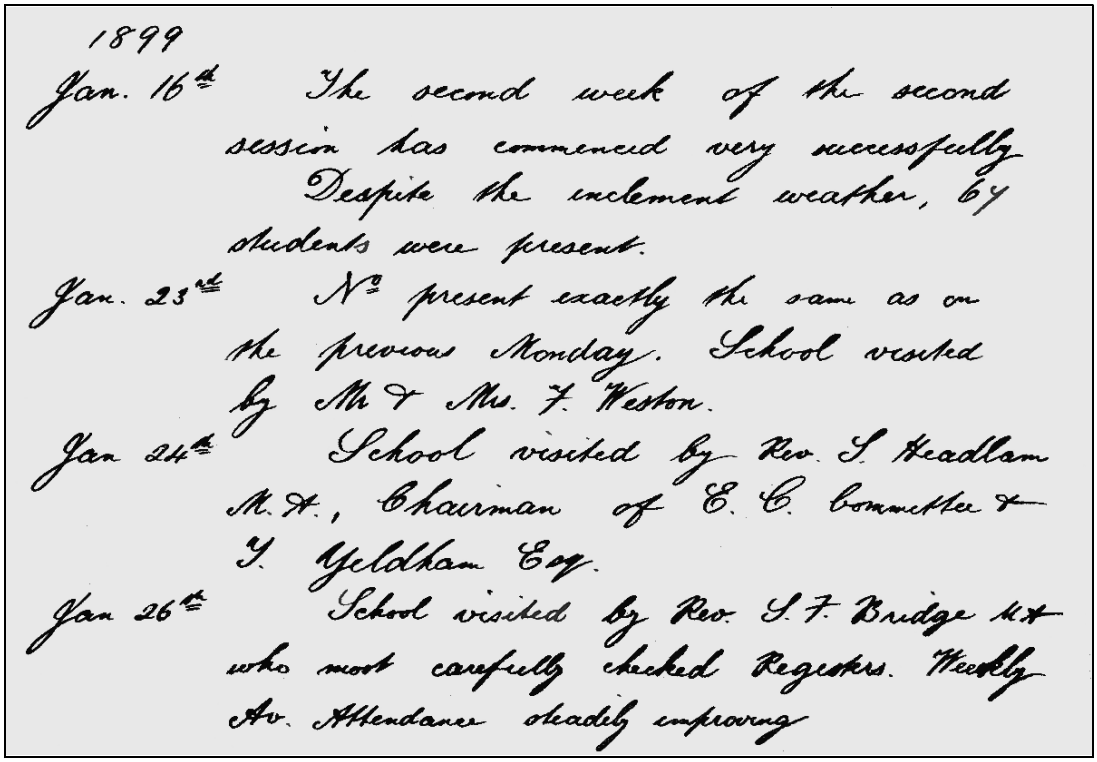
Accidents within the school, illnesses such as scarlet fever, diphtheria, influenza and bereavements were all logged and commented on. If mothers were ill, it often meant that their children did not go to school. Even "intensely hot" or wet weather might be reason enough for some children to be absent.

On 13 December a notice was issued that "fire drill should be practised in every department".

1899

The first school drill took place in March. "A signal was given, (a bell was rung in the corridor at 4pm) and all classes ceased work, formed files and, led by teachers, marched into the playground - all in double file - passed out at the girls' gate, entered by the infants' and returned to places. The time occupied in getting every child out was 3 minutes." But the drill took a minute longer when the boys joined in.

Annual temperance lectures were delivered to Standards V to VII by an outside speaker. Lessons missed had to be made up in the following days. Ten shillings was allowed by the London Schools Dinner Association "to provide dinners for a few necessitous children." Sadly the death from diphtheria of a child from Milkwood Road is recorded and two children had to be put in quarantine.



1899

Jan. 16th The second week of the second session has commenced very successfully Despite the inclement weather, 64 students were present.

Jan. 23rd No present exactly the same as on the previous Monday. School visited by Mr & Mrs. F. Weston.

Jan 24th School visited by Rev. S. Headlam M.A., Chairman of E.C. committee & J. Yeldham Esq.

Jan 26th School visited by Rev. S.F. Bridge M.A who most carefully checked Registers. Weekly Av. Attendance steadily improving

Extract from school log, January 1899

In May the school was granted a half-day holiday to celebrate Queen Victoria's 80th birthday, but not before the older girls had assembled in the playground to sing 'God Save the Queen'. The following morning 27 girls were treated to a visit to St Paul's Cathedral, free of charge. Other treats followed, such as Sunday school outings, more half day holidays and promotions to new classes before the end of the summer. School Prizes were distributed at a Triennial Fete at the Crystal Palace.

Jessop School from Lowden Road, 1937

1900

Overcrowding in one of the classrooms meant that 48 children, including "a few very backward young girls" had somehow to be accommodated. The Board Inspector's attention was drawn to the matter and it was shortly set right. There had previously been only 44 girls in the class!

On 2 February, "by the kindness and generosity of the staff and children a parcel containing 36 pairs of woollen socks (knitted by the girls), 72 handkerchiefs, three balaclava caps and twelve doyleys was sent for the use of our soldiers now fighting in South Africa".

1901

A very bitter, snowy winter was recorded, with several teachers off sick. Then came a piece, bordered in black ink and taking up half a page:

> "Sacred to the Memory of Our Most Gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria, who passed away January 22 1901".

The school was closed on the afternoon of the following day "as an act of respect to the memory of the Late Queen".

History was taught to the lower Standards and America was included in Geography studies for the older girls. Pupil teachers presented their work to the managers, but one Irene Cussell was found lacking. "The managers expressed dissatisfaction with the marks she had gained for her studies - the Rev. S F Bridge interviewed her on Friday and urged her to put forth more strenuous efforts."

On 24 October, lessons were given throughout the school on the life of King Alfred in commemoration of his millennium. In November a terrible week of fog was noted and more cases of measles were recorded. Illness cropped up throughout the winter months, one teacher suffering from "debility" following a vaccination. The teachers appeared to be exhausted by the strain of the work and large classes. Requests for Supply Teachers were not always granted.

1902

An eleven year old "crippled child", suffering from a "hip disease" was admitted, having been unable to attend school for over four years. She was provided with a suitable seat and, a month later, an invalid chair and table.

In March, following a letter from the Mayor, a conference of Head Teachers discussed the guests to be admitted to King Edward VII's Coronation Dinner.

At this time Penny Banks were instituted in many Board Schools, to encourage children to save. Jessop Road School was no exception and the account was logged each week. Pen friends were made during the summer when "a packet of interesting letters was received from a school in Tasmania which the girls had much pleasure in answering."

Small groups of girls were treated to summer term outings. In September, at least three afternoon outings to the Horniman Museum were recorded. Other visits were made to The Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. The latter visit was sanctioned by His Majesty's Inspector, and 25 girls were "personally conducted around by the Reverend Bishop Wellden".

1903

The girls' school received an excellent end-of-year report: "Work and discipline deserve very high praise." Elsie Davis gained a scholarship worth £20 plus two years' full tuition at Mary Datchelor School, but there seems to have been no half day holiday to celebrate.

1904

In 1904, responsibility for education was transferred from the School Board for London to the London County Council (LCC).

Instructions were received from the Head Office that "the sight of all the children be tested by the Head Teacher before March 25th." A supply teacher was drafted in for two weeks and her "discipline was admirable and the work painstaking."

In May Daisy Harvey, aged ten, returned to school "after an absence of over 2 years owing to ringworm… she cannot read or write now." In July, a full day's holiday was granted for the Drill Exhibition at the Albert Hall.

Children were rewarded with medals if they attended school regularly. The daily register needed to be kept accurately and disputes were taken very seriously. One pupil, Nellie Newark, disputed a black mark in the registers. She won her point when it was found that "the school bell was not being rung as it was out of repair."

Unfortunately the report for the year was merely "satisfactory" and "mistress and teachers would do well to expect a higher standard of attainments from the girls."

Jessop School from Jessop Road, 1937

The girls' school 1937

1905

Summer outings included visits to Greenwich by LCC steamer from Westminster, to see the Painted Hall and naval exhibits and a visit to the National Portrait Gallery.

Pupils were encouraged to donate money towards the Children's Country Holiday Fund to allow the needier children an annual holiday, under escort, during the summer term. A school nurse was appointed and each child was inspected before going on such holidays. A lower pupil attendance was described as "most deplorable".

Empire Day, in May, was usually celebrated as an Open Day for the parents. Games, drill and patriotic songs were "indulged in" and the flag saluted by the girls before an appreciative audience. In October there was a holiday to celebrate the opening of Kingsway, running from the Aldwych to Holborn, by Edward VII.

In May the school received three visits from an LCC nurse, to carry out the "cleansing scheme". This was an inspection for head lice and ringworm. Infected children were excluded from school until they were "clean". A mother complains that blood poisoning had set in when her daughter got a splinter down her nail, so the case was duly reported to the Executive Officer. We shall never know the outcome.

A Christmas treat for six "poor children" was an invitation and tickets to a Christmas party by a kindly visitor to the school.

1906

A medical examination took place, when cards of admission for three named children were sent to Sussex Road Special School. The school was quoted as a "mentally deficient centre", heaping even more humiliation onto these children with learning disabilities and their families. The Head escorted the three children to the doctor, who declared two of them "deficient" and that they were to "attend the Centre from Monday next". The third child was to be re-examined in six months' time.

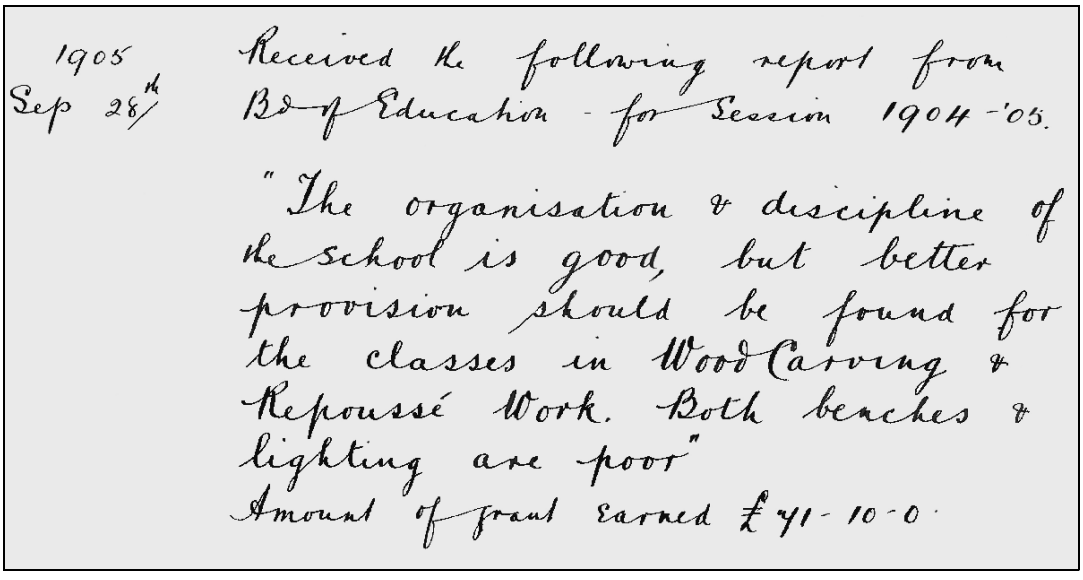
In December a rather contentious issue arose, when the Head Teacher was called as a witness in a school attendance summons at Lambeth Police Court. The pupil in question was the very same who had been passed the previous October by the Council Medical Officer as "fit to receive instruction in a special school". The parents had refused to send her, although she had been excluded from Jessop Road School and her name removed from the roll.

A case of a child swallowing a small magnifying glass turned out to be less alarming than it sounds. The doctor "anticipated no serious results".

1908

There was a holiday in April to celebrate the opening by the Prince and Princess of Wales of the new Lambeth Town Hall.

Around this time the LCC introduced a policy that no classroom in a public elementary school should have capacity to hold more than 60 children. During the Easter holidays the size of one of the classrooms in the Girls' Department was reduced to conform to this requirement.



1905
Sep 28th

Received the following report from Bd of Education - for Session 1904-'05.

"The organisation & discipline of the school is good, but better provision should be found for the classes in Wood Carving & Repoussé Work. Both benches & lighting are poor"

Amount of grant earned £41-10-0.

Extract from school log, 28 September 1905

1909

The Tower of London was added to the list of excursions. Those unable to afford the 2d (1p) fare on the trams were paid for out of a £1 Council grant.

The school nurse left "a card of advice" regarding a child whom she found "rather neglected". Other euphemisms, "afflicted" and "weakly", are used to describe cases of poor health.

Eight children were fed by the Children's Care Committee. "Several pairs of new strong boots have been obtained at half price from the Ragged School Union and will be sold to parents who find difficulty in getting boots."

Following the sudden death of Edward VII in May 1910, a special school assembly was held with "suitable references to the sad event".

In June there must have been great excitement when the school closed early for a Royal visit to the area. Princess Victoria visited the bazaar at St Faith's. The school closed for a whole day "in honour of the visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen to lay the foundation stone of the new King's College Hospital".

1911

The year began with the medical inspection of children. For the first time, parents were encouraged to attend. Weighing and measuring were also instituted.

"160 children were taken to College Road to see the King's Procession to open the Festival of Empire at Crystal Palace".

Weekly sessions of outdoor or organised games were instituted (weather permitting). Games included tennis, rounders and ball games, all under supervision. Later, basketball apparatus was installed in the playground.

In June, a week's holiday was taken by the school to celebrate George V's Coronation, after which there was a Coronation Fete at Crystal Palace and presentation of King's beakers.

Towards the end of the school year, we read of the hope "that in time, when we are able to provide each girl throughout the school with scissors that cutting out material as well as paper may be taught". This is yet another reference to the importance attached to sewing classes, not only as a good, practical skill, but also the need to sell the children's products to profit the school. The needlework report in October reads: "The scheme cannot be regarded as entirely fulfilling its purpose until the making of a flannel garment and a blouse is included in it. It is to be regretted that a few doll's garments are being made in the first standard." Poor lighting was also a problem, and the timetable had to be changed in winter so that sewing classes could take place earlier in the afternoon.

1912

Brockwell Park was used for organised games. But "as the ground is so seldom fit", it was decided not to avail the girls of this privilege in winter. Both Brockwell and Ruskin Parks were used for geography and nature study. Nature study rambles were organised around this time, either to St Mary Cray or St Paul's Cray.

There is little information available on events and activities at the school for the 23 years after 1912. However …

1912-1915

Plans were put forward to rebuild the school to offer around a thousand places. This required expanding onto plots occupied by houses in Milkwood Road. Lambeth Council took out Compulsory Purchase Orders and bought 131 to 145 Milkwood Road. They were to be demolished to provide space on which the school could expand. However, these plans were never carried out and the eight houses remain standing.

1924

Concerns had long been expressed about the lack of facilities at the school, in particular that there was no hall that could be used for school assemblies and PE. A redundant iron building had been identified at Honeywell Road School in Battersea. This building was moved to Jessop Road School, at a cost of £648 to serve as a school hall.

1927

Although some years earlier the LCC had introduced a policy that class sizes should not exceed 40 children, it was not until 1927 that the school was able to conform to this requirement.

Jessop School Classroom c1927

Jessop School infants class, 1937

1935

Boys and girls are now taught together. In May, the Mayor of Lambeth presented George V Jubilee souvenirs to school children – a knife for each of the boys and a spoon for the girls.

For many years comments had been made about the unsuitability of the school's accommodation and disturbance from street noise – presumably much of this coming from passing trams. Proposals were now put forward for complete rebuilding of the school to accommodate 264 junior mixed and 218 infants. The total cost was estimated at £23,209, including £1,100 for furniture and accommodation for the school-keeper. The scheme was designed to provide three infants classrooms, five classrooms for juniors plus two craft rooms. Each Department was to have its own hall. After some modifications had been agreed, the LCC gave its approval for the project. The new buildings were opened on 26 April 1938.

1936

"Pending the demolition of the Infants' Department, preparatory to the re-building of the school, this department was moved during the Christmas holidays to the 1st floor, to make way for the infants on the ground floor."

1937

The school's modernisation programme began during the Easter holidays. The LCC funded a new building to replace the old Infants' Department. "Barricades were erected and the boys' playground divided to give a section for junior boys and one for the junior girls and infants. New offices had to be erected and these were by no means completed when school opened, so that conditions were rather bad."

At the start of the summer term "the lavatory accommodation for the children was not in readiness and for the first week, this has caused much inconvenience."

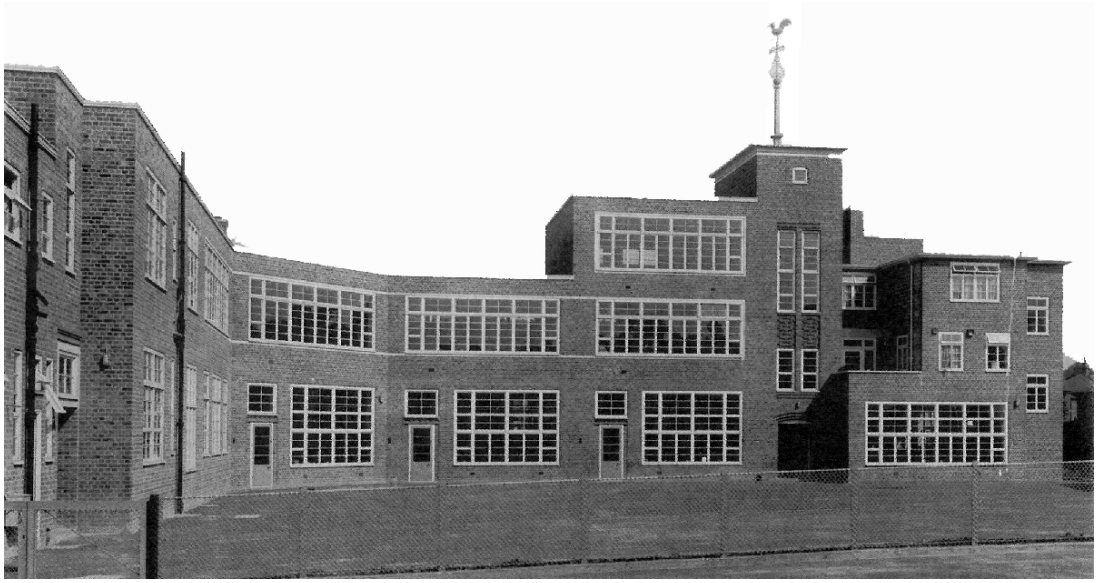
The Whitsun Holiday included a week off for the coronation of George VI.

1938

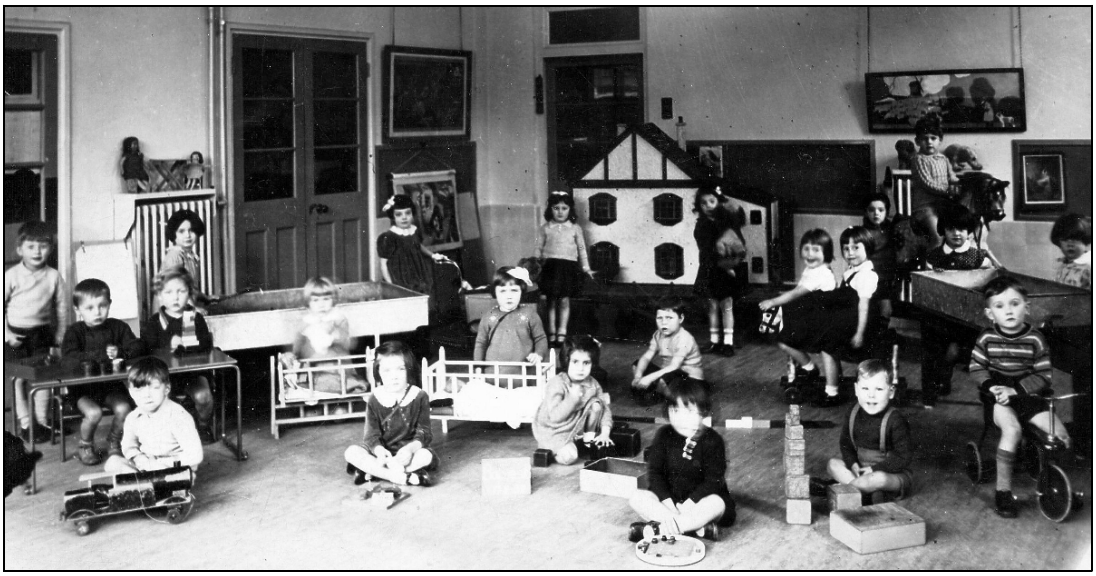
A break-in is reported, both in the school-keeper's diary and to the police. It took place during the night of 16/17 March, when a desk was broken open. However, there is no mention of what might have been stolen.

Early the following month, the school closed until the summer term for demolition to take place. Three weeks later, neither the new building nor the demolition work had been completed. For another month it was "very noisy".

In September the school requested assistance for preparation in case of evacuation. The buildings were used as a gas mask centre during the Munich Crisis. Two wardens came to test gas masks followed by an air raid drill. When the crisis was over a thanksgiving for peace was held in lieu of the Harvest Festival.



New Jessop School buildings, south elevation c1938



Jessop School infants class, 1939

Wartime

By September 1939 Jessop Road School had been evacuated, partly to Colgate, near Horsham and partly to Ifield, near Crawley. During the war an Auxiliary Fire Station used part of the school.

Jessop became an emergency school in February 1940. However, it closed again soon after, when a bomb exploded in the neighbourhood. In October the school re-opened.

On 8 March 1941 "Bomb on school" was written in the log book – "Some firemen killed and also our highly-esteemed school-keeper." The school buildings were so badly damaged by this bomb that one could not walk from one end of the inside corridor to the other. As a result the school closed until 5 May 1943, when it re-opened with one Junior Mixed and one Infants class. By February 1944, six classes were operating.

The flying bombs that began in June 1944 caused attendance to decrease. Many of the families in the bomb damaged areas were relocated or the children were evacuated. Refugees from Europe moved into the district. Dinners were taken in shelters, (protected ground floor rooms) and, when alerts became very frequent, classes worked in shelters all the time. Only 41 children were present on 28 July; although this did increase after the summer holiday.

Ellen Barbett, who moved to Milkwood Road in 1939, aged five, remembers her wartime education at Jessop: "Patchy and interrupted it may have been, but somehow our teachers managed to maintain a sense of continuity, and looking back, we had a very high standard of education."

Post-War Years

After the war, pupil numbers took a long time to recover. Many leases of houses in the area had lapsed and relocated families did not return to their former homes. A nursery school was built on the former school playground from which children transferred to the main school.

In January 1949, a new dining room was built on the roof of the old bombed portion of the school.

Outings to the cinema were organised for Juniors and the Top Infants' Class. They saw *The Queen is Crowned,* in June 1953, at the Astoria in Brixton; and a hundred children from the juniors were taken to see the Everest film the following December.

Jessop School playground, 1962

The present school building, in Lowden Road, was enlarged in the 1960s, using the space formerly occupied by Jessop Road.

In 1965, responsibility for education was transferred from the LCC to the Inner London Education Authority and in 1990 to the relevant London Borough.

During the 1970s, the South Lambeth Institute ran evening classes at the school. Subjects included dressmaking, dog training, keep fit, old time dancing and table tennis.

In 1988, the 50th anniversary of Jessop's new buildings was celebrated by staff, parents and pupils, with old-style lessons, clothing and a typical 1930s midday meal. A tree was planted in the school grounds and the day ended with a celebratory tea in the dining room.

The school remains active and takes children from three to eleven years; the current roll is about 200. In addition to standard curriculum there is a thriving Children's Centre with daily activities for parents. These include drop-in sessions for advice and support, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, women's healthy lifestyle group, family singing workshop and 'Book Start' visits by the Early Years Literacy Adviser.

There is a brand new playground; and the school football team benefits from coaching by a professional footballer from Fulham FC.

Jessop School music lesson c1962

Becca Thackray, School Nurse at Jessop School, 2004-2007:

Even if children remained essentially the same, Jessop Primary towards the end of the 20th century had adapted to the expectations of a different society.

The economics of running a school were fine-tuned. Schools no longer had caretakers, they had Premises Officers. One of these, Frank Townley, installed new windows to conserve heat, researched solar panels for the south-facing roof and ordered materials for the new nursery.

Jessop was the largest school building in the area, though looked old-fashioned compared with some of the other newer, bright, flexible school buildings in Lambeth. The birth rate had fallen and with just one entry form in each year Jessop found an asset in its three floors of large classrooms. The Milkwood Residents Association occupied the former caretaker's flat and the prefabs in the playground became art rooms.

The school was no longer just a hive of activity from 9am to 3.30pm, the day was extended with an After School Club, serving St Saviour's Primary School too. There were play schemes in the holidays for the pupils and safer cycling courses. For the parents there was computer training to keep pace with their children, an NVQ accredited course by the Family Planning Association, Chinese classes and encouragement to come into school to help.

The role of the School Nurse also reflected the changes. Since the 1960s she (it was invariably a woman) received a wad of files from a Health Visitor over the summer holidays. In September she would interview parents to check that their five-year-old had received MMR (Measles Mumps and Rubella) immunisations and a pre-school booster. A check was made of the child's height, weight, hearing and vision and any particular medical condition. Throughout the child's education, the School Nurse would keep an eye on children she was concerned about and be available for advice on outbreaks of chicken pox, ringworm and, famously, of lice.

By the 1990s there were more cases of asthma, eczema and allergies identified. Jessop had First Aiders who kept a child's prescribed inhaler in the school office along with an anaphylaxis pack as there were always one or two pupils who had severe reactions. The convention of cakes and biscuits being brought in by a child on their birthday was fraught with anxiety for teachers in case a classmate was allergic to nuts.

Jessop appointed a Special Needs Co-coordinator, Shirley Hardy, who decided with the School Nurse which children were "failing to thrive" and who might be nominated for the termly session with the visiting School Doctor. Jessop became adept at applying for a Statement of Special Needs for pupils who needed help in the classroom.

When the Government talked about 'partnership', Jessop was entirely in step. Clinical Psychologists provided support for teachers and specific pupils with, for instance, dyslexia.

Jessop School, part of today's school buildings

Jessop worked with parents over referrals to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) where a Clinical Psychiatrist would assess a child for symptoms of the autistic spectrum, obsessive compulsive disorder or ADHD (attendance deficit hyperactivity disorder).

Jessop staff responded well to the notion of continual professional development. Schools Meals Supervisors adapted to the advent of the lunch box and its varied contents dictated by the vast array of cultural and dietary differences.

The Police Community Support Team held pupils spellbound in their Question and Answer sessions and Mel Clarke, the Head Teacher (to 2007), involved the school in Walk to School Week and visits to the Horniman Museum.

Seeing a need to support single fathers, Denis O'Bierne, the Learning Mentor advertised coffee mornings for dads. He also recognised the absence of a male role model for some boys and provided anger management sessions.

Jessop, in line with other schools, had a Newsletter. Teachers communicated with parents about what they were teaching that term and acknowledged the help they got from parents on swimming trips.

When lice appeared, some parents were nostalgic for 'Nitty Nora'. But respecting privacy and evidence-based learning dictated that lining children up to comb through dry hair was ineffective at best and humiliating at worst.

What parents dreaded most was the Child Protection Conference where representatives of police, education, health and social service would sit around a huge table in Brixton with family members present to discuss concerns. Safeguarding children became the chief priority of professionals and consequently a whole network of people in the child's life would often emerge to support him or her through childhood.

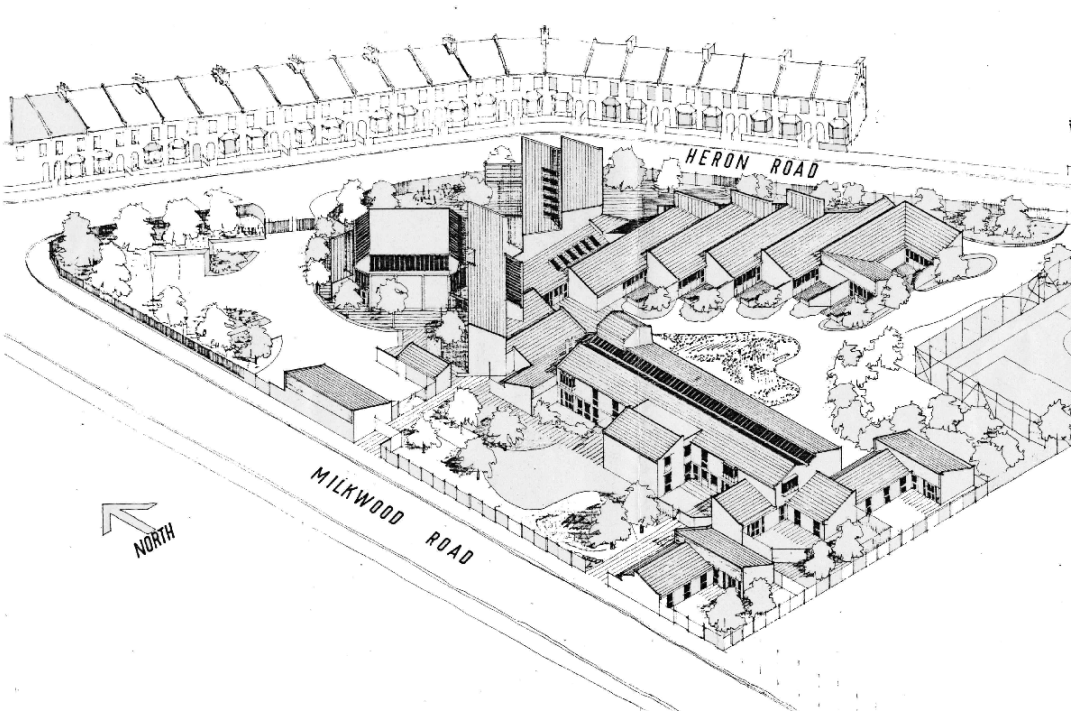
Jessop invited me in to lead sessions on mental health, sex and drug education as part of their PSHCE (Personal, Social, and Health and Citizenship Education) lessons. Beneath the outward sophistication of Jessop's ten year olds were children hungry for reassurance and practical answers to the messages they see on television, hear from friends or experience personally. Mostly, they find the sessions enormous fun. There is nothing children enjoy more than talking about subjects which might be taboo outside the classroom, especially when it is all about themselves.

Since 2007 the new the Head Teacher, Janet Mulholland, manages Jessop and Stockwell Park Secondary School. Jessop became one of the new 'Community Schools'. This was a natural transition from the ethos already created, that of having a school at the hub of community life. There have been many initiatives, such as the funds raised for the Tsunami Flood – I don't know of any Lambeth School who either tried or succeeded in galvanising such a response. And the school uses outside agencies really well, including Educational Psychologists, governors, medical staff, Health Education Link and myself as the School Nurse. Very few schools in Lambeth can claim such an energetic response to outside input.

Stephen Douthwaite, a parent:

From my brief involvement, I found it a pleasant school catering for a multicultural bunch of kids who seemed to enjoy their individual school experiences. The staff were extremely kind, courteous and motivated towards the children's needs. A fantastic outdoor sporting facility was under construction when Joshua was attending Jessop. There was also a good level of parent support for fund raising and social events.

I understand there to be a fascinating history of the area, from unexploded bombs to the old trams and the loss of part of a thriving community to be replaced with that of a more industrial one, still in the making. I very much like the area and wish to remain involved in all the local community projects.



Architect's drawing of Willowfield School

Willowfield and Michael Tippett Schools

The original Willowfield School was founded by the LCC in 1961 as a small special day school for boys and girls of junior and secondary school age with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The children were described at that time as being "maladjusted". The school was first housed at the Caldecott School in Bessemer Road, next to King's College Hospital and was one of about ten such schools in the inner London area.

A new school building was opened about 1976 on a site between Milkwood Road and Heron Road. It was designed for around 50 boys aged 11 to 16 years who had special needs. Pupils came from a wide area, some using taxis. There were 20 places for children who boarded in the school hostel. In July 1987 the hostel closed and the school became a day school for boys and girls, all with special needs.

Michael Tippett School

Willowfield closed in 2005 and was demolished the following year. It has been replaced by a new school built on the site, the Michael Tippett School, designed by the architects of the London Eye, Marks Barfield. Taking its first students on 25 February 2008, it is both the first school in London and the first special education needs school in the country to be completely rebuilt under the Government's Building Schools for the Future programme.

The school is designed for up to 80 students aged from 11 to 19. Students follow the same National Curriculum as other children in England, although adapted to take account of their needs. The new site, with its full range of specialist teaching and learning resources, offers both staff and parents the opportunity to help students achieve their full potential.

Michael Tippett School

The Herne Hill Harriers

by Kevin Kelly, author of
Herne Hill Harriers into the Millennium: A History of the Herne Hill Harriers.

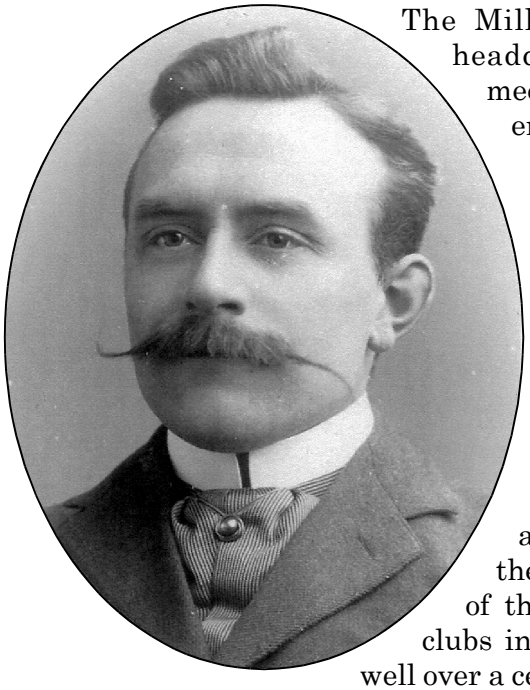
The famous athletics club Herne Hill Harriers has a strong connection with the Milkwood Road triangle in that they were founded there in 1889.

In the late 1880s a number of young local lads would while away their winter evenings playing dominos, cards and draughts in the parlour of a confectionery shop owned by Mr and Mrs Pickford at 99 Milkwood Road, which was next to the Nevill's Bakery northern site entrance. Having organised a number of successful paper-chases in 1888, they decided to formally establish the Herne Hill Harriers during the winter of 1888-89.

99 Milkwood Road (arrowed)

Harry Otway

It is possible that some of them were pupils, or former pupils, of the Jessop Road School and in the summer some of them played cricket together with the Brixton Comets. Many of the early Herne Hill Harriers lived locally. Brothers Charles and Harry Otway lived at Gordon Grove, near Loughborough Junction. Subsequently Charles lived at 154 Milkwood Road. Another set of brothers, Arthur and Ernest Davall, lived at 35 Cambria Road with Harry Death close by at number 26. Harry Simpson, Fred Woodham, John Jefferies, George Grieve and Will Suffield were the other founder members. After a short period it was necessary to elect a club Treasurer. Thomas Blane of 72 Lowden Road took on the task.

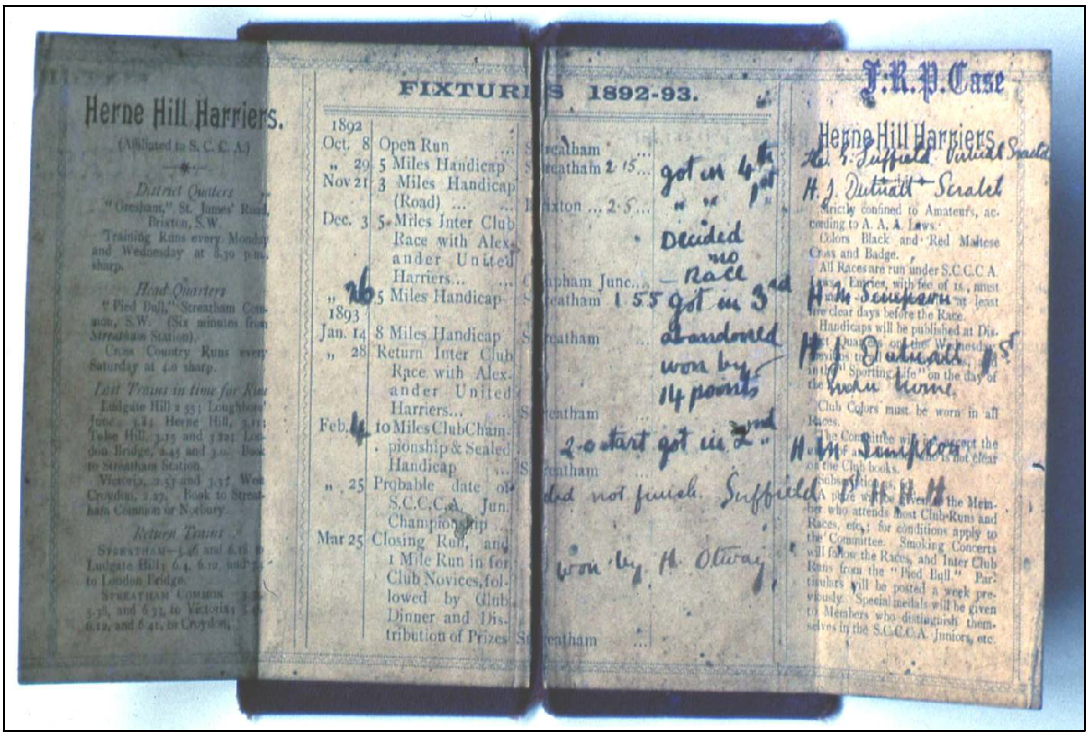


Thomas Blane

The Milkwood Tavern became an early club headquarters and was used for committee meetings, AGMs and social events until the end of the 19th century.

The club continued to use various pubs in the area including the Lilford in Lilford Road, the Fox-under-the-Hill at Denmark Hill and the Half Moon, still there in Half Moon Lane. The club continued using the Herne Hill Stadium track off Burbage Road until 1939.

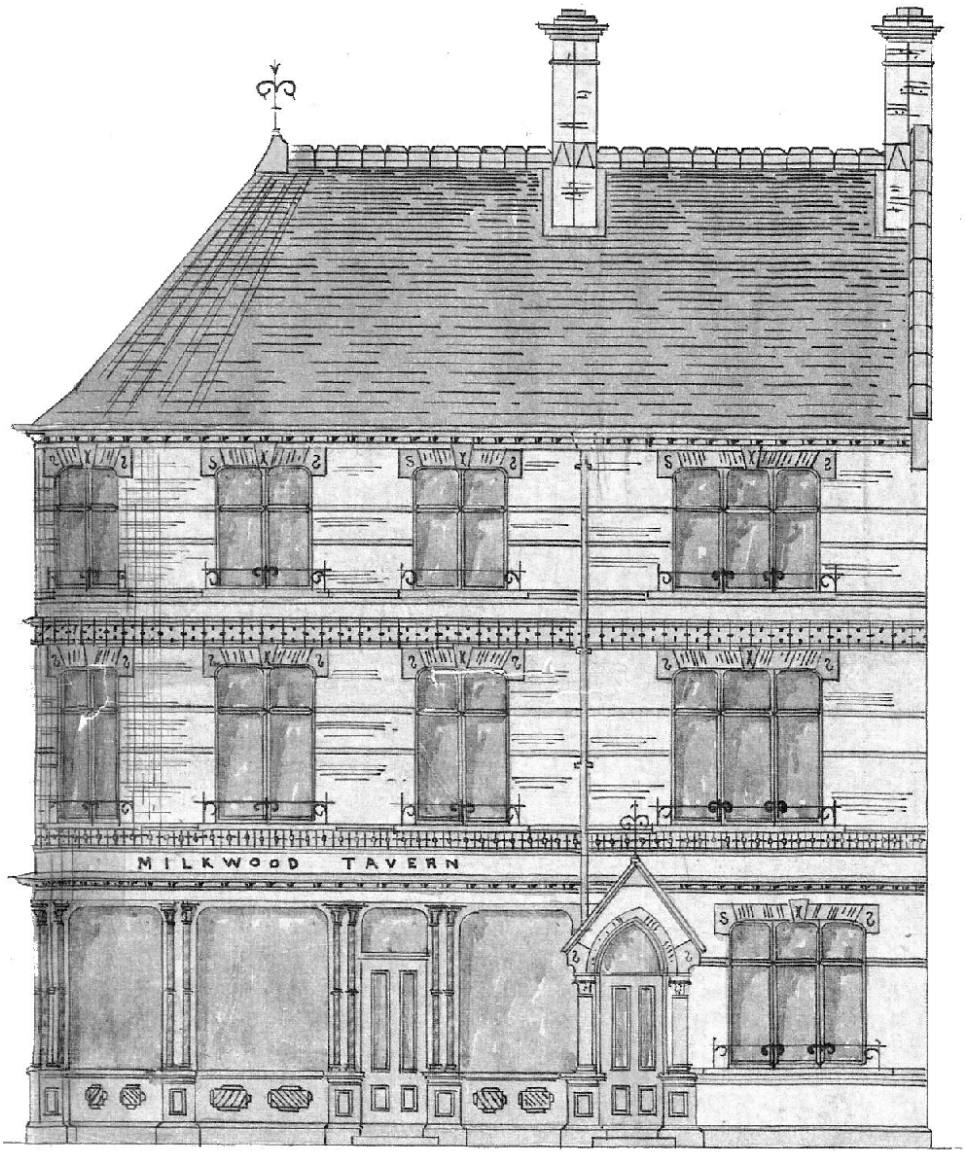
The tavern, the bakery and the confectionery shop were all demolished about 1970. However, the area in which they stood remains as the birthplace of one of the most famous and successful athletics clubs in the country, which is still going strong well over a century later.



Herne Hill Harriers Fixture Card 1892-93

The Milkwood Tavern

The only public house on the Milkwood Estate was the Milkwood Tavern, at 63 Milkwood Road, on the corner with Heron Road. In 1867, a 99 year lease for this piece of land, dated 24 June, was granted by the Church Commissioners to William Gilbee Habershon, Alfred Robert Pite and James Havill. The Milkwood Tavern was built to plans drawn up some eight years later, in 1875, by Habershon and Pite.

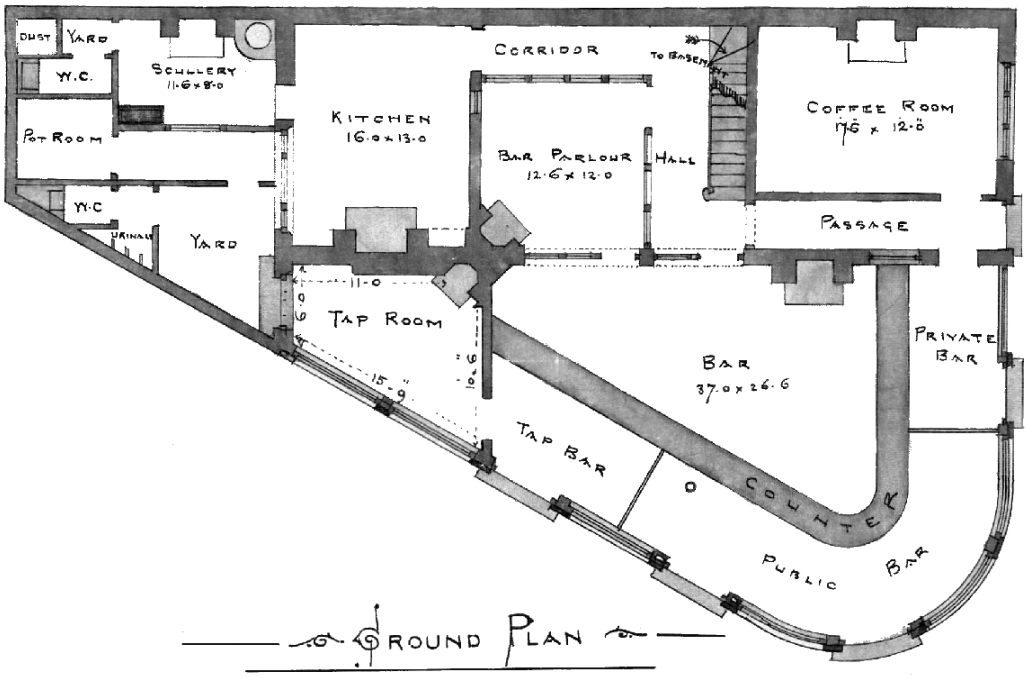


Milkwood Tavern, Milkwood Road elevation.

Milkwood Tavern, Heron Road elevation.

The following year (1876) the pub opened for business under its first landlord, James Havill. It originally sold beer from the Bow Brewery in the Bow Road, Stepney, but later converted to Taylor Walker's beer when the Bow Brewery was taken over by that company in 1927.

The Milkwood Tavern was a true local and centre of the community used by the families who lived around. The upstairs rooms were used for many social activities, including wedding receptions. Another social activity of the 1930s centring on the pub was the popular charabanc outings. After the war these were revived.



Milkwood Tavern, ground floor plan.

The Milkwood Tavern c1910 from Milkwood Road

The first landlady and last licensee of the Milkwood Tavern was Rose Rawlinson, who took over from her husband Harry in 1960. Harry had run the pub for the previous four years. Rose, "a delightful lady", continued to run the pub until it closed in 1966. The building was then demolished, along with much of that side of Milkwood Road, to make way for the Willowfield School.

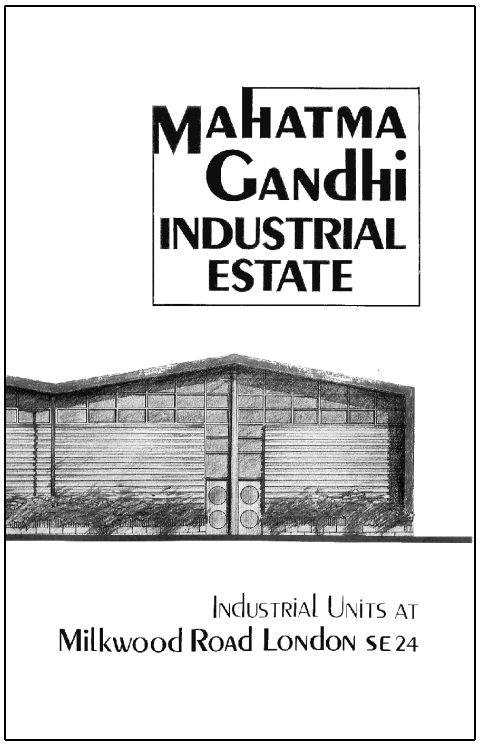
Milkwood Road Industrial Estates

The end of WW2 left many Milkwood Estate houses destroyed or derelict. Milkwood Road was particularly badly affected. In 1945 around a quarter of the houses along the railway (western) side had disappeared or were uninhabited. By 1972, even those houses that remained were judged unfit for habitation and uneconomic to bring up to a reasonable standard. An offer from the London Housing Trust to rehabilitate the properties was refused by Lambeth Housing Committee. Nearly all the properties between Milkwood Road and the railway were then demolished as part of a more general slum clearance programme. The residents were re-housed in West Norwood, Loughborough Junction and at Stockwell, in a tower block close by the tube station. By the 1980s the area was fronted by 780 metres of corrugated iron, hiding 3.4 hectares (8.3 acres) of derelict land. The site had become a wildlife sanctuary - but to the local residents, it was an eyesore.

In July 1977 Lambeth had first formally identified the site as being suitable for industrial use. A development of single storey factories and workshops was planned, with a one-way access road running through the site to limit the amount of traffic using Milkwood Road. It was hoped the development would create 500 new jobs. However, when in 1982 Lambeth Council advertised the whole site for industrial development, there was no interest. Various reasons were put forward for this. The site is hemmed in by railway bridges - at the northern end there is only 4.5m headroom - and there were the notorious traffic hold-ups at the Herne Hill end. The site may have been too large for a single developer to be willing to take the risk. The market for industrial properties was at a low ebb and preference then was towards housing developments. The long and rather narrow shape of the site cannot have helped – it was only some 55 metres at its widest point. Neither can the three way split with British Rail owning the 1.9 hectare (4.6 acres) strip along the railway (the site of the former sidings); the Greater London Council (GLC) owning the 1.4 hectares (3.5 acres) fronting the road, and Lambeth the remaining 0.1 hectares (0.25 acres). There was also a problem of coal dust contamination from the days when the site had been used as a railway coal yard.

At the beginning of 1983 Lambeth Council bought the British Rail owned land with a £750,000 grant from the Environment Department. Talks about building starter units on the site were held with a prospective developer and with the GLC. In November 1983 the Council submitted a plan to build 42 industrial warehouse units with ancillary offices and parking for 161 vehicles. This proposed that, initially, 25 small workshop units would be built. There was some local opposition. Residents in Shardcroft, Gubyon and Kestrel Avenues were concerned about the likely increase in the amount of traffic, including industrial vehicles. They suggested that a limit should be put on the site operating hours, to reduce the environmental impact.

In January 1984 planning permission was given for the development to go ahead. The site was divided into three sections. At the northern end Lambeth was to develop the area that eventually became the Mahatma Gandhi Estate. Lambeth was also to develop the infrastructure for the central area, that was to become the Dylan Road Estate. There were plans for a community based restaurant and social facility on the site; however, these never materialised. The GLC, who owned the most southerly site, was to provide finance for the infrastructure and market the plots there. The small triangular area at the southern end was excluded and still remains undeveloped. The project was intended to attract companies involved in technology and light industry as well as offices. There was to be no restriction on the hours the site would operate because of the needs of the new technology firms in particular.



Cover of marketing leaflet

Concern was expressed about the lack of Lambeth Council control over GLC property. With prescient foresight the question was raised as to what would happen if the GLC were to be abolished. This actually happened only two years later on 1 April 1986. No traffic assessment had been undertaken, despite the expectation that the site would be used by articulated lorries of up to 15m in length. Residents were worried about parking their cars in front of their homes and set up a small committee to monitor the progress of the development.

On 12 December 1986, at a colourful ceremony, the Mahatma Gandhi Estate was opened by His Excellency Dr P C Alexander, the High Commissioner for India. The Herne Hill Society Newsletter described the occasion:

"The curry and punch were hot, which is more than can be said for the industrial unit where we assembled for the official opening by His Excellency Dr PC Alexander, the High Commissioner for India. After speeches by the Mayor of Lambeth, the leader of the Council and the vice-chairman of the Economic Activity and Employment Committee and His Excellency, the blue curtain was duly drawn from the plaque, an excellent buffet was provided and later guests were invited to look around this first stage of the industrial estate".

At its opening, the estate was only partially completed with four units occupied out of a first phase of 24. Units for the second phase were reserved for manufacturing industries and were proving more difficult to fill.

Bessemer Park Industrial Estate

It was not until 1988 that Lambeth, forced by the Government to dispose of its surplus land, started to build an access road into the middle site and provide main services to the two medium sized industrial plots planned there. Work to develop the southern site, long in doubt because of Government funding restrictions and the demise of the GLC, finally began in 1990 when funding from Greater London Enterprise became available. In April 1991, this site was named the Bessemer Park Industrial Estate, to commemorate one of Herne Hill's most illustrious former residents.

Today, working from north to south, the Mahatma Ghandi Industrial Estate comprises some 41 units. Activities there include bicycle sales, transport services, joinery, car washing and food products. The main occupier of the Dylan Road Estate is Redwing, the private hire coach company. The remainder of that site is occupied by a car repairers and a Jaguar car dealership. The Bessemer Park Industrial Estate is divided into 24 units. As well as the Brixton Ambulance Station, businesses cover areas as diverse as plastics, catering, catering supplies, packaging, food supply, storage equipment and window manufacture.

Various plans have been put forward for the small triangular area at the end of the site. These have included proposals for a garden centre and housing. However, none of these has come to anything and the site remains undeveloped and a home for various species of trees and wildlife.

Living in Lowden Road: 1908 to 1952

by Bertha Burgess
who celebrated her one hundredth birthday on 18 September 2008

I was born Bertha Wadey at 21 Lowden Road on 18 September 1908. Apart from the war years living in Bath and for seven weeks after I first got married, when I lived in Grove Lane, Camberwell, this was my home until 1952. I had three older brothers, Arthur, Walter and Reginald. Perhaps my parents, Arthur and Emily (the last of sixteen children), kept trying until they had a girl; or perhaps, as money was always tight, they decided four was all they could afford. Whatever the reason, I was their last child.

My father was a coach-builder and wheelwright with a small business in Blackheath. The journey by tram must have taken quite a long time and he wanted the family to move there. But my mother always insisted on staying in Lowden Road.

Heating was by coal fire and oil heaters. Many other houses had gas lighting, but Father refused to have gas or, later, electricity. My earliest memory is of the oil lamps being filled. In winter, with the early nights, this had to be done twice a day. All this oil burning produced an awful lot of soot and made the rooms very damp. Cooking was done on a stove heated by the fire in the kitchen. We kept coal in a shed in the back garden, as there was no cellar.

From left to right: Father, Arthur, Walter, me, Mother and Reg (the naughty one)

The Salvation Army outside 21 Lowden Road, Easter 1905 (Note the milk cart on the left and the cast-iron railings that were removed in WW2)

Me aged three years

Every evening the lamplighter would come round to light the gas lamps in the street. I also remember the Nevill's Bakery hooter, each morning at around five o'clock, to wake the workers for the early shift. The postman always knocked on the door when he delivered letters. This practice stopped in the Second World War so as not to wake up night workers. There were lots of little shops close by – all gone now – a newsagent where you could buy comics, drapers, hairdressers and my particular favourite, the sweet shop called Esselmont.

I had rather a sheltered upbringing. Mother wouldn't let me play in the street, so most of the time I stayed at home with my best friend, Dolly. We played board games and played ball in the garden. I had my dolls of which I was very fond. I also played shops 'selling' woollen articles I had knitted or watches from pictures cut out of catalogues.

I never went to the cinema or theatre as my parents felt these were wicked places. Even though Mother disapproved, I did just once go to a dance at St John's Mission Hall. We eventually had a radio, though. My brother Walter built a crystal set (using a 'cat's whisker') that you had to listen to through earphones.

Mr and Mrs Dann lived opposite and kept chickens in their garden. Mrs Dann ran a clothing club. People made weekly payments until they had enough credit to buy what they wanted. Every so often she held a lottery and the winner could buy clothes on credit, even if they hadn't yet paid in enough to meet the cost.

Although we never had much money, my father was able to purchase 21 Lowden Road. We therefore had the whole house to ourselves and there was enough to afford one week's annual holiday to Worthing with my mother. Many other houses in the area were shared by two families, one living on the ground floor and the other having the upstairs. With our 'grained' front door and its brass knocker that one of my brothers had to polish every week, I felt rather superior to our neighbours.

Our doctor was at 74 Herne Hill – the surgery is still there! If we fell ill, a visit to the doctor cost five shillings (25p). A home visit cost seven shillings and six pence (37½p). When I went out to work, I was able to pay weekly (by deduction from my wages) to the 'panel doctor', which meant that visits were free. We never went to an optician. If my father needed glasses he bought a pair from Woolworths, price sixpence (2½p). My parents were totally against inoculations, so I never had any. I did get measles, but fortunately avoided mumps, diphtheria and chicken pox.

Decorative capitals with arches and ornamental keystones in Lowden Road

My brothers all went to Jessop Road School. This was probably a good thing as Mother could keep a close eye on my youngest brother, Reginald (Reg). Reg was a little terror, always up to something. One time he set fire to the clothes under our bedridden Grandmother's bed. He was fond of riding on the 'cowcatchers' on the front of the trams. There was once quite a fuss when a policeman caught him doing this and threatened to take him in charge. In the end Reg settled down, and leaving school at 14, took a job with Lloyds Register where he stayed until he retired.

When I was five I went to Mrs Maddocks' private school in Gubyon Avenue. I liked it there, but my mother decided that I was being crammed too much. So after a year she sent me to Dulwich Hamlet School – she didn't like Jessop Road School even though most children on the Estate went there. I had to walk there and back twice a day, coming home for lunch. Sometimes when coming home from school, I bought a 'prize packet' from the Village sweetshop called Nighs. This consisted of sweets and a small toy and cost a farthing. I liked the school and my first teacher, Miss Winch. But we thought the Head Teacher, Miss Wilkes, was a real so-and-so. Relationships with her can't have been helped after an accident in the playground. I broke my nose and my mother swathed it in ZAMBUK antiseptic ointment. However, I went to school without the ointment as my mother did not want me to get grease on my Friday test paper. Miss Wilkes wrote to my mother saying that she thought she did not take care of me properly. My mother would have replied very strongly but I did not see what she wrote.

There was a baker's shop in Milkwood Road that was owned by a German. When the First World War was declared, people broke into the shop, took the loaves and kicked them along the road. However, I don't remember any further trouble after that.

Munnich's bakery with broken windows, 1914

Every Christmas the school sent a parcel to the troops. All we could afford to contribute was a small tin of Vaseline. But we had a letter from Private Hignett saying that it had helped with his chapped hands as he had been in a flooded trench on a bitterly cold night. Fortunately he survived the war and was later commissioned as a Lieutenant. When the Armistice was signed we were all sent home from school and given the day off. I remember that people put fairy lights in their porches – night lights in coloured glasses. They made a very pretty sight.

When I was ten, I changed to Goodrich Road Higher Grade School in East Dulwich. This was further away and I took a number 37 bus to Townley Road and walked the rest of the way. After three years I got a scholarship to Mary Datchelor School in Camberwell. My father bought me a Raleigh bicycle and I used this to cycle there. I don't know how he managed to afford it with four children to raise. The bike with its steel frame was very heavy and quite hard work, especially on the hills. Sadly it was lost in the Blitz.

My favourite subject was music. We had a piano at home and I'd already taken lessons. At Mary Datchelor I was encouraged by Miss Bird the music teacher to take piano examinations to quite a high standard and have played all my life.

In our final year, most of us girls were given office training. After leaving school I became a shorthand typist at a company called British Sulphate of Copper, with offices next to Victoria Station. After a year I thought it was time I had more pay. However, the rise they offered was so small I left for a job in Tooley Street. This was not a good move as the new office was terrible. There was no light and we had to ask for the key to the toilet. I lasted there only three weeks, and then got a job at the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses. This was much better and I stayed for about 15 years, until I got married.

I met my husband Percy Burgess at Herne Hill Baptist Church in Half Moon Lane. He worked in the wool trade, but after the Second World War started he became a Civil Servant and went to work for the Admiralty in Bath. We married on 27 June 1940 at Denmark Place Baptist Church. As we didn't have much money, there was no reception. My brother Arthur gave us tea at his house. I went to live in Grove Lane, Camberwell. One night seven weeks later the house was bombed to the ground. Fortunately I wasn't there or I might have been killed. My office had been evacuated to Guildford and that night I'd decided to stay there and not come home.

I then moved to Bath to be with Percy. We lived there until 1945 when we came back to Lowden Road to be with my father. The house had been damaged in the blitz; but it was repaired and, despite my father's earlier objections, we had electricity and gas installed. We stayed there until 1952 when we moved to live in Pickwick Road, Dulwich, Percy's former home which had been in his family since 1911, almost since it was built.

Memories of the Milkwood Estate

by Ellen Barbett

My parents moved into 177 Milkwood Road in 1939. I was aged five and had two brothers and a baby sister.

The Shops in Milkwood Road

The following memories, of the shops, shopkeepers and businesses in Milkwood Road, should be read in the context of the period. It was war time; after dark there was complete blackout. Windows of houses and shops had thick paper pasted on them to reduce the spread of broken glass should a bomb blast occur. Some shops kept a small patch uncovered so that people could look into the shop window. Often the only 'merchandise' consisted of fading and dusty empty cigarette, custard or gravy cartons. Austerity was evident all around. Shelves were empty and the very precious and hard to come by items were kept not on show but 'under the counter'. This was the narrow, commercial world that we children grew up in, a world of shortages and SORRY NO…., of little choice or variety; and we could only wonder at heavy metal slot machines that had once dispensed bars of chocolate.

It was a world of children and old and elderly people. Most of the younger ones were away in the services. Our playgrounds were often the 'ruins' and our toys home-made - carts built from old pram wheels and, in the severe winter of 1947, home-made toboggans to sledge on the frozen bomb-sites. We became immune to the sight of buildings with their sides sheared off, leaving only the outline of a fireplace to show that people had lived and possibly died there. Shopping was not the glitzy, spoilt-for-choice expedition it is today.

Despite the fears and dangers associated with the bombing and the war, to live in Milkwood Road then was a lot safer for young children than it is today. Few if any residents had cars. People walked up and down the road and nearly everyone knew everyone else, at least by sight. There was always someone around and through traffic was very light.

Running errands for your mother or a neighbour was a part of childhood and growing up. We children knew nearly all the people in the local shops along our stretch of Milkwood Road.

On the western side of Milkwood Road, about a hundred yards from the junction with Gubyon Avenue, a row of little used lock-up garages backed on to the railway. At the end of this row, nearly opposite where Lowden Road emerges, stood a row of about eight houses of an age and style entirely different from all the 19th century buildings around. They were probably 'affordable' Edwardian houses. They had wooden feather-edged fences at the front, whereas all the older houses had had, at one time, iron railings.

The ground floor of the first of these was a 'little handy shop', which would have sold everything, had anything been available. The notice SORRY, NO CIGARETTES was a permanent fixture. The earliest shopkeeper I remember was a large, elderly lady called Miss Redfern, later a gentleman and then, the last I remember, a widow lady Mrs Wearn, with one son Peter.

Outside the little shop was a notice which stated YOU MAY TELEPHONE FROM HERE and inside, behind the door, a pay telephone. You put a couple of old pennies in, pressed button A when the caller responded and button B to get your money back if there was no answer. This was very useful as few people had telephones and the nearest public call boxes were in Poplar Walk. My mother would send me to the little shop to telephone messages to my aunt at South Norwood. Once a week I would be despatched to buy "a packet of Drene Shampoo please". This was in powder form and you mixed it with warm water; that had to do for my mother, my sister and myself. Above the little shop was a flat in which lived a Greek Cypriot couple with their daughter, Irene Michaels, who went to Jessop.

Towards Loughborough Junction, the shops began on the eastern side of the road, at a point just past Jessop Road, where Nevill's houses and offices finished. The first shop was Jackson's that sold sweets and cigarettes and hair slides and clips on cards. Mr Jackson had two daughters, Stella and Doreen, but they were much older than me and I don't know if they ever went to Jessop Road School.

Looking north along Milkwood Road c1910. Nevill's southern entrance is just beyond the first pole on the right. The shops are beyond the second pole on the right.

Next to Jackson's was Lewis's Dairy. Mr Lewis was a small, thin, balding man with a lot of wispy white hair, rather in the likeness of the late Lord Longford. He could be seen in the streets around, wrapped in a canvas apron, bent almost double between two long handles and pulling a little covered barrow. He was delivering milk in bottles with LEWIS'S DAIRY stencilled on them in brown paint. When he had finished his rounds, Mr Lewis would come into the shop and haul the metal crates of empty bottles through and out to the back, but he never had much to say.

Mrs Lewis, on the other hand, was a large buxom grey haired lady, with the most enormous arms and dimpled elbows. Mrs Lewis was a friendly, pleasant soul, but she moved around behind the counter at the slowest pace I have ever seen. She would lean her ample bosom across the counter, look at your list, heave herself up, and make her way slowly around to the packets of butter on the marble slab. Then the half pound of butter, or lard, or margarine, must often be cut in half - another slow walk to where the greaseproof paper was kept, back to the butter and cover the open end with paper. Sugar was poured into blue bags; eggs were put into paper bags. Biscuits, when available, meant a slow walk to the other end of the counter, a slow walk round to the large glass containers and a slow, slow walk back. After every task, Mrs Lewis leaned across the counter again, and having licked a small stub of pencil, crossed out that you had taken your due rations for that week. The waiting customers sat in patient silence, on empty crates and boxes around the room; they were 'registered' at Lewis's and that was that. As a child who waited frequently, it was Mrs Lewis's elbows that held my gaze.

My mother knew that it was important, because of the scarcity of food, to be registered and establish oneself as a 'regular customer'. But, apart from the occasional visit, it was always we children who were sent to Mrs Lewis's. My mother insisted that she'd scream if she had to watch all that slow motion too often.

Next door to Lewis's Dairy was the upholstery business of Mr Rowe, who was in his mid-forties. He repaired and re-covered furniture. I remember my parents having two easy chairs re-covered in something called Rexine. His children were Iris, Eric and Brenda, all pupils at Jessop Road School

Then, I'm pretty certain, came the establishment of the Messrs Bloss, newsagents and stationers, and I think, a tobacconist, possibly pipe tobacco. Like many of the shops in Milkwood Road at that time the business took up the 'front room'. The room behind was a little parlour with a half glazed door covered with a net curtain. On Mr Bloss's lino-covered counter was a push bell with a very loud buzz. But anyone could be seen entering the shop; business was never good enough to linger at the counter awaiting the next customer. A favourite lark of some naughty boys was to enter the shop, press that buzzer and run off before Mr Bloss came through the parlour door.

Mr Bloss and his brother were very, very elderly, and very thin. They wore suits threadbare and as elderly as themselves. But a suit indicated status and was one up on an apron or brown overall. Twice a day Mr Bloss would lift a large, square shoulder bag onto his frail frame and go out to deliver morning or evening papers to his customers.

I later heard that, sadly, Mr Bloss had been knocked down and fatally injured by a passing car while delivering his papers.

There was a Billiard Table Maker in Milkwood Road, certainly in the 1940s. As billiard tables were never on Mum's shopping list, we never had cause to go in there.

Alce's Oil Shop was fascinating. For one thing, the combined smells of candles, paraffin, wood and polish was lovely. I only have to go into an old fashioned oil shop, perhaps out in the provinces and one sniff and I am back with the Alce's in Milkwood Road.

Mr and Mrs Alce were a tall slim couple, in their early fifties, as alike as the Lewises were unalike. They were well groomed, as neat as two pins and their brown overall coats were always immaculate. Most of their merchandise was not 'on ration' so there was more of it, but not a wide choice. Long before the days of DIY, their shelves bore paint brushes and tins of paint in about three colours: cream, brown and sea-green. They also sold something in tins called 'enamel'. We had an enamel bowl and jugs at home, and I could never understand why anyone wanted to buy a small tin of jug chippings.

The Alces sold candles, invaluable for when the electricity meter ran out and you didn't have a penny or a shilling to hand. They sold mantles, which were little muslin things necessary for the gas lighting that was still quite common in the houses around. They sold paraffin, firelighters, matches and they had piles of neat little bundles of firewood. Alce's oil shop was my favourite, it was so neat and tidy.

Then came a shop that was not a shop. The front windows were covered over and everything was painted green. This was a doctor's surgery. A plate on the front announced Dr Winifred Proctor and Dr Kathleen Shelton and gave the times of their surgeries. They were always referred to as "The Lady Doctors". As they were not our doctors I never got to know them. But they could be seen from time to time, leaving the premises and getting into their car. I am not certain but I think it was a small car like an Austin Ruby.

About here there was the Post Office and general store. A Mr Harris was the Post-Master and he had two daughters at Jessop Road, Maureen and Pat.

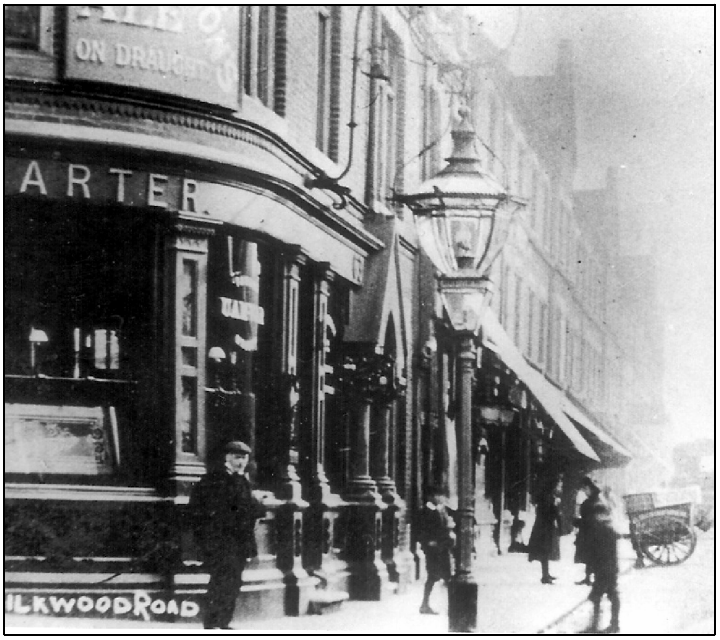
Next to the Post Office was an empty site that had been bombed very early in the war. Then we come to the last three establishments before the junction with Heron Road. Higgins the butcher - I didn't know much about him as Mum shopped for meat elsewhere.

Looking north along Milkwood Road c1912. Heron Road is to the right.

The last shop was Whelan's sweet shop, much larger than the earlier ones I have mentioned. Mrs Whelan was a small, elegant, grey haired martinet of an old lady. She wore rimless glasses and dark dresses with lace collars. In the parlour behind was another little lady, maybe a sister, who rarely put in an appearance. As you opened the door, the bell jangled loudly and, as you got to the counter, Mrs Whelan uttered just one word: "Well?". Silently she forbade you to dither while you were making your choice. Loose sweets were weighed, money taken, change given wordlessly and she glared at you until you were off the premises.

The Milkwood Tavern

The Milkwood Tavern was a family pub, a Victorian 'gin palace', with a respectable, working class clientele, mostly local from Heron, Milkwood, Lowden and Jessop Roads. But I remember a few who came down from Fawnbrake Avenue. Most of the ladies wore hats and gloves, while some men sported trilby hats, flat caps and the occasional 'Anthony Eden'.



The Milkwood Tavern c1900

The customers included many local families, people who had been at Jessop Road School together and who stayed friends as they grew up.

The occupations of the men included dockers, print workers, lorry drivers, market traders, factory workers, milkmen and delivery drivers. Most of the women were housewives; those who worked were usually part time shop assistants, daily helps, school cleaners and dinner ladies.

Rose and Harry Rawlinson were the licensees from about 1950. Where Harry was a serious rather humourless man for a publican, Rose was a charming, dignified woman and fortunately, a very talented and willing pianist, little other music being available. When I was married in 1956, the wedding reception was held in the large function rooms upstairs at the Milkwood, supervised by Rose.

The Milkwood Tavern ran a loan club. On one night a week, two gentlemen customers of good character, the Secretary and the Treasurer, would sit at a little round table with their ledgers and account books. Customers would hand over their payment card and a regular sum each week, the amount recorded and a receipt given for their cash. The money was repaid to savers just in time for Christmas. This facility relied upon the honesty and good character of the Loan Club officials. It was not unknown for Loan Club Secretaries to abscond with the savings, but I never heard of this happening at the Milkwood.

The annual 'Beanos' were a great favourite with the customers - one for the ladies, one for the gentlemen, on different days. A charabanc would be hired, drinks and sandwiches would be loaded on and off they would go to the seaside, usually Margate. If they were lucky, one of the trippers might bring a piano accordion to help the singing along. For many at this time, this outing was the only day out they would have all year.

Charabanc outing 1945.

Note the accordion player seated on the front row, ready to lead the singing.

The Milkwood Tavern had its share of tragedy and drama. A friend of my brother, John Hansen aged 19, whose family lived in Heron Road two doors from the Milkwood, was on National Service in Malaya, during the emergency, and was killed in an accident caused by an electricity cable. The whole pub mourned for him and his family.

In April 1951, during the Korean War, one customer had a brother who served with the 'Glorious Gloucesters'; The Gloucestershire Regiment was fighting in the battle of the Imjin River and at that time surrounded by the enemy. Everyone in the Milkwood shared the family's anxiety as they waited for news and celebrated with them when, eventually, Freddie Devine arrived home safely.

The Milkwood Tavern was a pub of its time. Originally owned by Taylor Walker, it later became a PELICAN house. Barrels of beer were delivered by draymen, who opened the wooden flaps in the pavement and rolled the barrels down into the cellar. Gentlemen had to come out into the street and then enter the lavatory next door to the pub. The only food available was Smith's crisps with the salt inside the packet in a little screw of blue paper.

Looking east down Jessop Road c1960. Jessop School is on the right.

Jessop Road School

Jessop was our primary school. The head mistress was Miss House, then later Miss Stobart. On the school wall was the proud emblem of the London County Council.

The cane was still in use. There was only one male teacher during my time at Jessop. Sadly, I do not have any photographs. Cameras were something we could not afford then, war or no war.

Lessons : Because of the Second World War, our education was somewhat patchy. From time to time, depending on the news, many of the pupils would be whisked off to various parts of the country as evacuees, to return weeks or months later. At the same time, new arrivals would appear, as 'bombed out' families were re-housed in the local streets, or refugees from the war in Europe moved into the district

Patchy and interrupted it may have been; somehow our teachers managed to maintain a sense of continuity and, looking back, we had a very high standard of education. We knew stories from Kipling, and we leaned by heart speeches and passages from Shakespeare. Multiplication tables were learned by rote, and our arithmetic was of the highest standard. We knew long division, geometry, fractions.

Handwriting, grammar and punctuation, spelling and compositions received great emphasis and attention. I remember one afternoon when the class was set to punctuate a piece written on the blackboard. One point had been overlooked. Miss Layfield folded her arms and said "No one is going home until someone spots it". She meant it. We all sat there, racking our brains; we knew we should know it. Eventually, thankfully, one boy did. It was the full stop after 'Mr.'!

As in most of the other lessons, the lack of materials meant that art consisted mainly of working with pastels. We drew geometric designs and coloured them in. One boy, called Derek Chevalier, was an expert at pastel colouring and produced work resembling suede.

We leaned to knit scarves and to sew, within the limited resources available to us, potholders. Handicrafts consisted of making decorated 'spill holders' from cardboard tubes. Every piece of newspaper had to be recycled for the war effort, so even papier mâché work was denied us. My younger sister remembers when she was at Jessop a radio programme for schools *Music and Movement for Schools* with Ann Driver. Ann Driver was the sister of Betty Driver who still appears in *Coronation Street.*

Once a week we were taken by bus for a swimming lesson at Camberwell Baths. It was very small and the changing cubicles were along the walls overlooking the pool.

The school provided black plimsolls - no one had their own. The girls got the job of sewing the shoe sizes onto the sides of the plimsolls.

There was a religious assembly at least once a week and singing, with Miss Collet at the piano, was very popular. From *The National Song Book* we sang old English folk songs: 'Barbara Allen', 'Sweet Polly Oliver', 'Linden Lea' and 'The Ash Grove'.

Milk was provided to drink in the mornings. It was delivered in small bottles, one third of a pint. They were wide-necked and the lid was formed from a circle of thick paper with a small middle circle that you could push in for your straw. Mrs Miles who lived in Jessop Road, came across and opened all the bottles ready for us. The girls would use the circular lids, minus the centre piece, to wind with wool (from unpicked garments) and make bobbles, which became our jewellery. Nothing was wasted.

We also had school dinners, mostly mashed potato with carrots one day and perhaps cheese another – rarely any meat. Puddings were sometimes jam sponge, rhubarb and custard, sago or the hated tapioca. The portions were tiny, but sometimes there were seconds. Dinner money was charged according to how many children in the family. With three of us there, at one time my mother paid 5d, 4d, and 3d (2p, 1½p and 1p).

Jessop School from Lowden Road, c1938

Playground Games : In the playground, there was absolutely nothing in the way of equipment. Boys played games like 'British Bulldog' in which they folded their arms and jumped from a squatting position trying to knock each other over. If someone had a football, or a cricket bat and ball, they would chalk the goal posts or the wicket onto the school wall, to have a game. 'Stone Scissors Paper' was played, but called 'EE PA VU'.

The girls loved skipping. Sometimes one girl, skipping alone with her own rope, would 'call' another girl in – "I'm a girl guide dressed in blue", "teddy bear, teddy bear", "jelly on a plate". But the favourite skipping game, when someone was able to bring an old washing line from somewhere, involved two rope turners, one at each end, and the girls would line up, awaiting their turn to run into the rope. "Vote Vote Vote …." or a whole crowd would skip in the rope together "Ally in together girls, never mind the weather girls, I saw Esau sitting on a see saw, shoot bang fire".

Ball playing was another playground activity. Sometimes, girls managed to acquire one or two bald, grey, old tennis balls, treasured like gold, and these were bounced against a wall, usually in a game with actions and rhymes. Hop Scotch was very popular, because you could always find a lump of chalk in the street to draw the grid with.

The Education System : Primary education at Jessop Road School in those war and post-war years led to 'the scholarship'. If you were considered able enough, you sat the scholarship and you passed or you failed. I do not know if there was any opportunity to appeal. If you failed, you might have stayed on at Jessop until you were 14, or gone to other local senior schools in the area, such as Sussex Road School or Loughborough Central School. Boys of 14+ could go to Brixton School of Building.

For those Jessop pupils who passed the scholarship, there was a plentiful supply of good, old-established Grammar Schools across south London to apply to and some independent fee paying schools that offered free places. Among those for boys there were: The Strand School, Archbishop Tennyson's, Archbishop Temple, Wilson's Grammar School at Camberwell, City of London Boys School, Haberdasher Askes, St Olave's, Alleyn's, Dulwich College, and St Dunstan's.

Among those for girls there were: Notre Dame, Aylwen's Grammar, St Martin's, Clapham County, St Olave's, Mary Datchelor, City of London Girls School, Prendergast, Sydenham High, James Allen's, Charles Edward Brooke and La Retraite Convent.

Outside : At the far end of the playground against the wall of Milkwood Road back yards, stood a large static water tank, kept there for emergencies, and huge gates into Lowden Road to allow fire engines access.

The angle of the school buildings had been badly damaged by some kind of bomb or incendiary attack during one air raid, which meant that inside it was not possible to walk from one end of the corridor to the other.

Pupils in the left hand portion of the building were infants on the ground floor and up to 10+ on the first. Pupils 11-14 were in the right hand part. Although we shared the same Headmistress and used the same playground, I don't ever remember any joint activities between the upper and lower parts of the school. In those days, children left school at 14.

The caretaker, Mr Adams, lived in the house at the end of the school building. Outside of school times, games in the street included 'Kerb or Wall', which was a racing game across the pavements and the street. Of course there was hardly any traffic about. Another street racing game was 'Round the Block' in which two racers started off in opposite directions round the block, first one home being the winner.

Nevill's Bakery

During our wartime childhood, we children used to scare each other with tales about the bread slicing machines that, we had heard, were housed inside the blacked-out building. Nevill's vans continued to enter the bakery through wide doors in Heron Road and the unmistakeable smell of baking bread permeated the area.

Nevill's also owned a row of tall, plain, flat-fronted houses, with brown woodwork, in Milkwood Road, to the north of Jessop Road. There were iron grids in the pavement allowing light to basement/cellars below. On the western side of Milkwood Road, facing these Nevill's properties, was a wide gap between the houses. Across this gap was a high metal fence either side of two pillars and a locked and padlocked pair of gates. We children just knew it as 'The Secret Garden', but I never remember seeing anyone go in or out of the gates, or indeed, over the fence.

A Wartime Childhood in Milkwood Road

Who were they, these children of wartime Milkwood Road? Their fathers were servicemen, lorry drivers, tram drivers, postmen, coalmen, railwaymen, newspaper workers, house painters, shop assistants, factory workers and one or two taxi drivers.

Many families were just passing through. Bombed-out and homeless, or refugees, they stayed for a while in overcrowded accommodation, attended Jessop Road School and then moved on.

Nearly all the houses were in multi-occupation. The basement flat was considered the best; it had its own front door and a bit of a garden at the back. The attics at the top of the very tall houses, with a sink and cooker on the landing, were considered the worst - all those stairs down to the front door and the shared lavatory. The half-houses were mostly one-bedroomed. It was a common and accepted situation that the children would share the bedroom, sometimes 'top to toe' while the parents slept on a 'Put U Up' in the living room. The lavatory facilities were shared and there were few bathrooms. No wonder the children liked to be out on the street. Our family was lucky in that we rented the whole house and did not share with anyone. Often the houses would be damaged by bomb blast and flying debris. Yet somehow, the children arrived at school each day clean and tidy and mostly well cared for.

Evacuation

The outstanding memory of the early forties was evacuation. When the news was worrying, my mother took us all off to Exeter for a few weeks, but later my brother and I went to Folkestone in an organised party. There the children waited in a long 'crocodile', luggage labels pinned to our coats and gas masks over our shoulders, while the organisers knocked on doors to see if a billet might be found for them. A few days later my mother decided "better a devil you know" and sent my father to bring us home.

Late in 1940 my brother and I went to a village in Oxfordshire, where we spent many happy months. In the tiny village school, my brother (a Jessop Road boy) sat the LCC Scholarship and was awarded a place at a public school. Towards the

end of the war, when the 'doodle-bugs' arrived, my mother moved us all out of London to 'safety', to a farm cottage in Kent. From there, we could not only hear the unmanned rockets approaching, then their engines cut out, but could watch them land in nearby fields! Next morning we would scramble into the fields to examine the crater. At this period, my younger brother and I walked two miles to yet another tiny village school and two miles home, stopping on the way to chat to Land Army Girls.

In between all these trips away, we returned to Jessop Road School, met up with old pals, and resumed our lessons. Once I came back from somewhere to rejoin my class, who had been learning about someone called Charlemagne. I was asked to stand up and read aloud and I pronounced it "Charlemaggny", much to the hilarious amusement of my fellow pupils.

Traders and Rounds-Men

On the western side of Milkwood Road, where the trading estate is now located, once stood a row of tall, four-storey houses. The basement entrances and the attic rooms indicated that these were once the residences of well-to-do families able to employ at least one or two servants. These families would have been served by traders who pushed or drove their delivery carts around the streets. By the 1940s they were still doing so but with a limited offering of provisions

Price's Bakery, a large concern that stood along Coldharbour Lane, delivered their bread in covered horse-drawn wagons in the elegant Price's livery. Mr Lewis from Lewis's Dairy pushed and pulled his way around, his hand cart loaded with milk bottles. Later, a man called Eddie Camplin ran his dairy round from Heron Road in an area called the Castle Yard. A castellated folly stood here until the area was cleared in the 1960s. Mr Camplin used a hand cart at first but later changed up to an open-backed van.

A little old man, 'Old Bill', with a pony cart came round selling vegetables. On Sundays could be heard the cry of the shrimps and winkles man, pushing his wide hand cart and measuring his goods out in metal pint pots as people went out to buy them and sticks of celery, for Sunday tea. The coal lorry was a regular sight. People would buy one sack of coal at a time and the coalman would carry it on his back into the house and tip it into the coal cellar under the staircase.

Insurance collectors were a regular sight in Milkwood Road and often became family friends. People paid for life insurance policies, 21st birthday and endowment policies for children. Amounts were just a few pennies, but the collector came weekly and took care to see that customers did not fall in arrears. They also encouraged many families and children into the habit of saving.

There was a 'take away' of course. This was the rag-and-bone man, with his horse and cart, who was looking for old clothes, furniture or "any old iron". He would take almost anything away.

On the Ruins

Despite frequent trips away for evacuation, the returning children grew used to the ever present reminders of wartime: the bombed and derelict buildings, the hanging wallpaper, the broken fireplaces and boarded up houses. It was the cleared bombed site which became the adventure playground of the Milkwood Road children. Our 'playground' lay just past 185 Milkwood Road, and spread through to Lowden Road. After the war, army married quarters were built on the site. A neighbour of ours remembered the night those houses were bombed and the young mother who came back day after day, crying for her missing baby.

Our mother did not like us playing on the ruins because the rubble damaged our boots and shoes; but they were irresistible. The boys found planks to make walkways and see-saws, camps were erected and ball games played. A pair of wheels and some rope soon became a cart. The girls made little 'homes' using stones and slates for their china. It was a world where your imagination could take you anywhere. In the severe winter of 1947 we sledged down the frozen slopes of the ruins, using the lid of a discarded piano as our toboggan. As we played, we were quite oblivious to the loud rattle of the number 48 trams in roads either side of us and to the loud clunking and clanking of the railway trucks in the marshalling yards behind the houses.

The morning after an air raid, the boys would be out on the streets picking up *shrapnel*. This was only one of the new words we learned: *blitz, Luftwaffe* were others and my young brother knew the names of nearly all the aircraft, British and German.

Some boys went a step too far in their search for adventure. A Milkwood Road boy of 12 called Jimmy Turner was tragically killed when he fell while climbing on the roof of Nevill's bakery. The sight of funerals was not uncommon, many passing through on their way to Norwood Cemetery.

Outside Activities

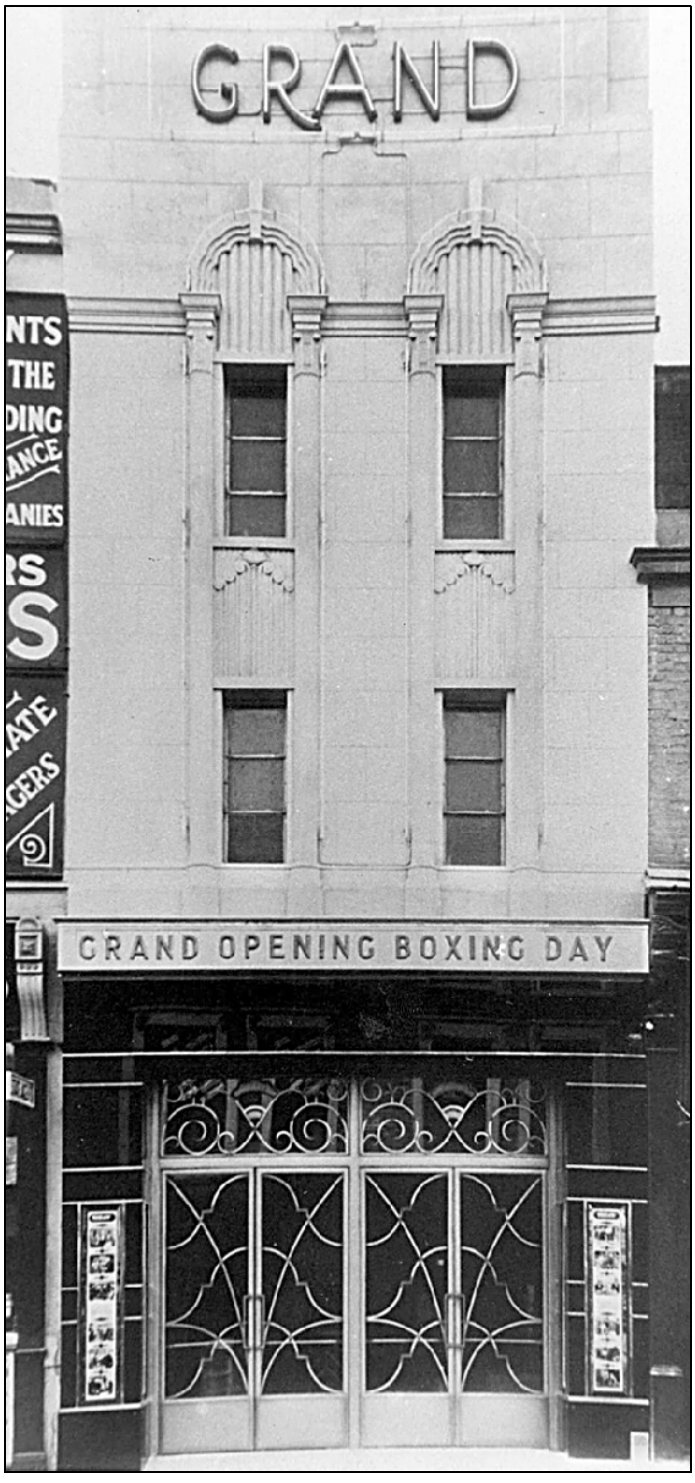
Outside activities included Brownies and Cubs, Guides and Scouts, in St John's Church Hall, known locally as 'The Mission'. Some boys played in the Salvation Army Band. On the corner of Herne Hill Road and Coldharbour Lane, there was a church (Loughborough Park Congregational Chapel) that held a thriving gymnastics club.

One or two girls, only the children from more comfortably off families, went to dancing classes at the Phyllis Yvonne Academy in Norwood Road. But the glamour of the theatre touched Milkwood Road, in the form of 'Terry's Juveniles', a troupe of tap dancing youngsters who were living in digs in one of the big houses backing on to the railway. Every morning we would see them emerge from the basement in their red and navy outfits and make their way, with their escort, to the Brixton Empress.

There were pantomimes at the Empress Brixton and the Camberwell Palace. As we grew into our teens, we enjoyed the repertory company at the Camberwell Palace, George and Margaret, and actors like Hugh Williams, Mavis Pugh and Hugh Paddick. Sadly, the demise of the rep was followed by doubtful productions of nude shows with titles like *Christmas Eves without their Leaves* and *Pick-Up Girl.* It was not long before the Palace closed down.

The Herne Hill Cycle Track was a favourite with some boys, especially the Good Friday meet. There was always a picture in the national paper of the hundreds of bikes left outside in Burbage Road while their riders enjoyed the action inside.

In winter, older children used the indoor swimming pool at Artichoke Place in Camberwell, and later the Herne Hill Lido. On hot summer weekends or bank holidays, the queue for the Lido stretched from the entrance steps, down to the gates and along Dulwich Road. On the byelaws board outside the Lido, more new words: "only bona fide bathers



The refurbished Cinema Grand, 1932

admitted". On colder days, the swim was followed by a trip to the Union Jack Café in Dulwich Road, where 'Syd' sold slices of bread and dripping for a penny.

Some boys formed their own football team and they did odd jobs and saved money to buy their kit. Their meetings were held, and teams picked, in the waiting room on Herne Hill station, which at that time still boasted a long art deco light oak table and chairs.

The great treat was the cinema, the Grand in Railton Road. Films were classified only as 'A' and 'U'. 'A' films admitted children only when accompanied by an adult. Some children would stand outside and ask approaching cinemagoers to take them in! A favourite trick was for a gang to share the cost of one entrance ticket, once inside go round the back to the exit doors and let the others in. Then the uniformed attendant would descend and ask to see their tickets. Those without soon found themselves out in the alleyway again.

The Grand was a dreary place inside with rough-cast walls painted dark red. On the screen, pure escapism: gingham dresses and satin hair bows; *State Fair, Meet Me in St Louis,* and Jeanne Crain in *Home in Indiana* - breathtaking Technicolor, emerald grass, white picket fences, brilliant blue skies - and then the rude awakening as the audience poured out into the chill greyness of Railton Road. It was not until we were older that we could go unaccompanied to the wonderful Babylonian garden that was the Regal, West Norwood.

Milkwood Road children did not go ice skating at Streatham, but at Brixton there was the roller skating rink, where skates could be hired. It was cheap, noisy and oh, so dirty.

In Heron Road, facing the entrance to 'The Mission', was Mr Miller's riding stables. Mr Miller, immaculate in his ginger tweed jacket, polished boots and pork pie hat, led horses and riders in the direction of Poplar Walk, and on, we presumed, to Dulwich Park. The local children, fascinated, could only stand and watch. Children whose parents grew roses brought buckets and shovels for the horse droppings.

Some activities were cheap. In those dangerous, but safer times, youngsters could buy a child's ticket to ride on the buses to places like South Norwood, Stockwell, Clapham Junction, and for the very adventurous, on the number 35 from Loughborough Junction to Shoreditch. Now that <u>was</u> foreign travel. The best of all rides was on the 37 bus which, once upon a time, went as far as Richmond and was handy for travelling to the Boat Race.

Children's Tasks

It was not all school and play; children had their tasks to carry out. Taking and collecting the bagwash meant carrying a large white sack of washing to or from the bagwash shop, almost opposite Poplar Walk Road. This had once been a tiny Express Dairy and inside the tiles could still be seen. The unopened sack and its contents were put into an industrial washing machine.

Sunlight Laundry, Railton Road c1950

I did not have this task as my mother always did her own washing (for years we had a large mangle in the back yard). She did have sheets and tablecloths laundered by the Sunlight Laundry, which was half way down Railton Road. They did not collect and deliver to Milkwood Road; how I hated carrying that bundle, walking up to Herne Hill Station, through the tunnel and down to the Sunlight, and the reverse journey homewards with the clean laundry that I did not dare to crease.

Taking the accumulator to be charged: the accumulator was a rechargeable electric cell on which the radio worked. There were always children taking the empty one down to Standivans' bicycle shop and bringing the charged accumulator.

Collecting tarry blocks: when, in the early fifties, the trams were being done away with, teams of men would come and take up the metal rails, leaving piles of the wooden blocks behind. Tarred on at least one surface, they were known as

tarry blocks and were collected, often by children, for use as fuel. They cost nothing, and saved the coal, but behind the fireguard they hissed and spat so that you could not sit too near.

Taking back the empties: finding and returning empty beer and lemonade bottles to the off-licence could earn two or three pence a bottle, and if you were lucky enough to find a discarded soda siphon, it was more like ten pence. There weren't many of those in Milkwood Road, but it was worth taking a stroll to look at the dustbins in Gubyon and Fawnbrake Avenues.

Health Care

Cod liver oil and malt, spooned out of large brown jars, and a regular spoonful of California syrup of figs was the usual health care regime at home. There was a doctors' surgery in Milkwood Road. But, prior to 1948 when the National Health Service was introduced, most childhood ailments were taken to the Outpatients Department of King's College Hospital. Impetigo was very common in the children, and treated by a humiliating application of gentian violet antiseptic. There were district nurses, a free dental surgery in Newark House, Loughborough Road, and a small sum was paid to young 'guinea pigs' by the trainee dentists at King's.

Many babies were born at home and expectant mothers were looked after by nurses in a clinic close to Myatts Park. In preparation for the home birth, they were given a huge lightweight cardboard box containing sterile materials. As they carried this home along Milkwood Road, their secret was out, and the children would know whose mother was expecting.

Home Life

Radio was the main home entertainment and families listened in together.

Comedy shows like *Much Binding in the Marsh, Ray's a Laugh, The Charlie Chester Show* and, of course, *ITMA*. The Milkwood Road children knew all the catch phrases. My mother liked *Have a Go,* an early quiz show with Wilfred Pickles. On Sunday evenings we listened to *Variety Bandbox,* broadcast from the Camberwell Palace, with a nervous new comedian called Frankie Howerd. Radio drama was popular in our house. You could sit around the table, play cards or board games, knit or sew, and listen to the play at the same time. There was *Children's Hour* with Uncle Mac, but, during the Jessop Road years, *Just William,* a radio series based on the Richmal Crompton stories, was the most popular programme for children. We knew all the characters: William Brown, Ginger, the dreaded Hubert (played by a young Charles Hawtrey before he found fame in the Carry On films), Violet Elizabeth Bott who threatened to "scream and scream and scream till I'm sick!"

Comics were treasured; *The Beano, The Dandy, Film Fun* and *Radio Fun* were shared, swapped or sold on for a penny or so. The readers sat on kerbstones, or on broken walls or just on a pile of bricks on the ruins. *Desperate Dan, Ronny Roy the Rubber Boy, Lord Snooty and his Pals, Pansy Potter the Strong Man's Daughter:* we loved them all.

Ruskin Park

Closer than Brockwell Park, where the swing enclosure was located right across on the Tulse Hill side, Ruskin Park was the natural habitat of the Milkwood Road children. By the Finsen Road entrance was a tiny sweet shop with nothing much to sell but a few sherbet sweets and a drink of lemonade. Inside the park gate was a grubby, but empty, paddling pool.

The swings in Ruskin Park were wonderful. Heavy, iron structures, all of them painted very dark green: fast sturdy roundabouts, an 'umbrella' that swung to and fro and sideways, and a high, gleaming slide. Ah, but the swing-boats … for these you always had to wait your turn. A high, heavy frame supported these 'boats' which had rounded metal 'tractor' seats. A child at each end worked a metal bar in front of them, backwards and forwards and pushing their feet down until the boat flew higher and higher. No safety belts for us, we just hung on for dear life.

It was the most exhilarating experience that Milkwood Road children could enjoy for free, and the hard, gravely ground beneath was a risk that had to be taken. LCC Park Keepers wore brown hairy suits and large-brimmed hats, and the children were in awe of them. "Ignorance of the bye-laws is no excuse for breaking them", the Park Keepers would intone, solemnly, to miscreants.

Post-War Heron Road

By Joe P Plant

The Locality

Early in May 1945 our family arrived back in London. We had been evacuated to Bamber Bridge near Preston and had only witnessed a couple of Doodle Bugs landing in the countryside. I was unaware of the amount of bombs that had landed on London. My sister Margaret, Mum and me arrived at Euston about half past six in the morning. The underground took us to Stockwell where we got out. I remember the clock tower at Stockwell and the clanking trams full of early morning work people.

We met Dad and brother Michael at my Aunt's, who lived in Old South Lambeth Road. Soon we were on our way to our new accommodation, this time by the 34 tram, from Stockwell to Loughborough Junction - another memorable journey. In all the side streets tons of rubble were piled up high on either side. At Loughborough Junction we walked past the Green Man Pub and up Milkwood Road. We had not been walking more than three minutes before we came to the first big bomb-site on our right. Directly opposite were another three.

Dad (Jack) and Mum (Sarah) outside number 56, July 1945. Dad, in his 'blues' was an RQMS in the Royal Artillery.

The first shop was a bakery where Dad joined the queue to buy bread. There must have been a dozen different shops, a row of houses, and then a black painted wall embossed with a large white painted criss-cross. The opening had no doors; it was empty. In the middle, shallow waters filled with a rubble of household effects: prams, tin baths, even doors floating aimlessly about.

We crossed over by the Milkwood Tavern and turned into Heron Road. At the far end, where Heron Road split, stood the Mission Hall. On the upper leg there was a small riding school and a sweet shop. The lower road sloped down to a row of large terraced houses next to Nevill's Bakery. Opposite the Mission Hall was Number 56.

The Houses

The houses in Heron Road were old Victorian-style buildings. Out of the sixty or more houses formerly in Heron Road, seventeen remained on one side and eighteen on the other. The houses in between numbers 10 and 46 were flattened, creating one large bombsite. Immediately opposite, another large group was flattened, two standing, another bombsite, then three more houses.

I was nine years old when we moved into 56 Heron Road. Dad led us into its dim, semi-dark interior. Immediately the smell of dampness corroded the air. At the rear was a tiny yard and an outside toilet. There was a small scullery with a brick boiling-tub, a sink and a small gas oven. The kitchen had a couple of cupboards, a cooking range and a window which looked out onto the dividing wall of Nevill's. The outside hallway had a larder. A door under the stairs led down to the coal cellar and there were two more rooms on the right. Upstairs was another kitchen and an inside toilet. A flight of four steps led up to two bedrooms and another two flights led to one very large bedroom. In each room was a hearth and gas mantles for lighting. All the walls showed areas that had been patched up. Our furniture arrived by lorry about an hour later, unloaded and put in situ. This was going to be our home and the environment we grew up in.

By January 1947 there were eight of us living at number 56: Mum, Dad, brothers Jackie (back from the Far East) and Michael, sisters Mary, Kaye, Margaret and me. Mary had come back from a sanatorium and Kaye had been working in the US Air Force base at Bamber Bridge - she then became a WPC at Gresham Road Police Station.

Heron Road was where the dustcarts would be exchanged, one full one for an empty. In those days, still drawn by big dray horses, it was quite a palaver. We would sit on the kerbside to watch the proceedings. The empty one would arrive on a low loader, be rolled off and the horses swapped over. While this was going on, the low loader would manoeuvre its way around the full one and hand winch it onto the back before driving away. Milk was also delivered by a horse-drawn milk float. The only other horses I can remember were in the stables, where four horses were kept.

Education

Jessop Road School was just around the corner from us and was where all the local children went. However, being a Catholic family, Mum insisted we had a Catholic education. So she took us to meet the Headmaster, Mr Brennan, of St Joseph's, about three miles away. My sister Margaret was to attend the Fidelis Convent on Salter's Hill.

School wasn't too bad. The lessons were all learnt in a sing-song fashion, in unison, repeated over and over again: the times table, the alphabet, word structures and opposite meanings and, of course, the Catechism. Discipline was paramount. I had cause to be sent into the corridor and wait outside Mr Brennan's room. He was a kind Irishman, who first talked to you. The talk was "Don't do it again" before taking his cane to your backside.

I scraped through my Eleven Plus and then went to St Joseph's in Camberwell. There the lessons were different and discipline stricter. I then also scraped through my entrance exam to the Borough Beaufoy Technical College, where I was to spend three years studying engineering. I became an Altar Boy at the local Catholic Church of St Philip and St James in Poplar Walk, where I learnt and spoke Latin at Mass.

Transport

The only public transport serving Heron Road was the 48 tram. This came from Loughborough Junction into Milkwood Road, diverted up Poplar Road and down Lowden Road to rejoin the Milkwood Road where it was wide enough for both trams to pass. The 'down' tram ran along Milkwood road, stopping at the Milkwood Tavern opposite Heron Road. Our journey to school took us on the 48 to West Norwood. We would then catch a number 2 bus to Norwood Park. It was a long journey.

There were few cars in the street. Nobody owned one in Heron Road, except the taxi driver at number ten. Even he was not in much demand.

Rationing

The whole of the country was still in the grip of enforced wartime rationing. Food was rationed and scarce. Mum was a good provider of different meals and made the most of what we could get, although the variety and quantity allowed per person was very limited. She searched the shops in Milkwood Road, Loughborough Junction, Herne Hill, Tulse Hill and West Norwood, to find out where you could buy specific goods. My sister and I, armed with the ration books, did the shopping on our way home from school.

Someone told Mum that at eight o'clock on Saturday mornings, Kennedy's shop near Herne Hill Station would be selling half a pound of sausages per family. This was something definitely for my sister and me. The first Saturday we joined

the end of the queue in Milkwood Road; but the queue was that long that, by the time we had reached the Railway Bridge the sausages had been sold out. Returning home empty handed, we received a clout for dawdling on the way there. The next Saturday Mum got us up at 6.30. We were out of the door by seven o'clock, with strict instructions not to talk to each other on the way. Catching the 48 tram, we were first in the queue at twenty past seven and were served half a pound each. From then on, we were always the first.

After a time the butcher began to sell off-ration cartons of fish paste, one per family. They were a treat, a slice of bread smeared with fish paste instead of jam. Walking everywhere in hail, rain or sunshine, errands became never-ending, tedious chores. We waited in long queues at Thurtles for horse flesh and Mac Fisheries for whale meat - Yuk!

Heating and Lighting

The winter of 1946-47 was a bad one. Heavy falls of snow caused chaos and strikes meant no gas or electricity. It was candlelight only. To run the radios, another weekly chore was taking the Leclanché wet battery down to the local bike shop to be replaced by a recharged one. In the 'pea-souper' smogs you could not see your outstretched hand and you coughed and spluttered in the sulphur-laden atmosphere.

We would play out in the dark and keep any night-watchmen company. One of them was my friend Maurice's granddad, 'Ole Bill', who always smoked his pipe upside down. They were in charge of tools and such-like things, where the tramlines were being repaired. His brazier attracted us like flies, primarily to keep warm and to collect discarded tarry blocks. These were great burners for the fire back home. The tar sticking to them would ooze all over the place, so they were disliked.

I found an old battered pram on a bombsite; its wheels had no rubber tyres and it was never a silent runner. With my chariot I made many trips into Brixton, collecting old wooden orange crates or boxes, stacking them up as high as possible with bits of string holding them on. It was not very secure for the long two mile push home. I would unload them and take them down into the coal cellar, leaving my chariot in the back yard.

Because of the shortage of coal, I had to push my chariot all the way through the snow and ice to Vauxhall Gas Works, where I would join the long queue snaking up Vauxhall Bridge, all for one hundredweight of coke. This was a family's quota for the week, not enough. My cousin Tommy, who lived in Vauxhall, with his mates provided a back-up to obtain an extra hundredweight. Then I had to push it all the way back.

Even in the deep snow, we still had to shop for food. Queuing up was most unpleasant. I, like others, had chapped knees, cold wet feet and hands. Our noses dripped all the time and we would 'cuff' them, as it was known.

Entertainment

Bombsites became our playgrounds, until they began erecting the prefabs. It wasn't long before they filled all the local sites. Still, the streets, bare of parked cars, provided ample room to play our games. The list of street games we played was endless – Kiss Chase, Ally Gobs, Five Stones, Fag Cards, Cannon, Knock Down Ginger, Tin Can Tommy. Games went on until one side began winning all the time and the other side did not want to play. A glut of ball-bearing races appeared from somewhere. Go-carts were made from odd planks of wood and boxes. These were pushed, at great speed along pavements and woe betide anyone who got in our way. The games changed. But we always finished up with the two sides in combat against each other: it had been inbred into us.

When the Oxford and Cambridge boat race came round we wore either dark or light blue rosettes to show who we wanted to win. We also wore red or blue rosettes for elections, depending which party the family supported; but we had no idea what it was all about.

We all joined the Oddfellows who held their meetings in Jessop Road School. It was mostly a sports club run by a few ex-servicemen for our benefit. They had football, athletic and cricket teams and some gymnastic activities. It kept us off the street for at least two nights of the week, and it was good fun. Apart from outdoor games, our social life was mainly reading. We joined the Carnegie Library up on the hill. Wartime paper shortages meant that English comics had virtually disappeared. Instead, American comics were favourites and were always swapped.

The Oddfellows sports club, 1949. I'm on the bottom row, fourth from the left, with the cup I won for the hundred yards.

The arrival of a new programme on the steam radio captured every kid's imagination. On 7 October 1946, *Dick Barton Special Agent* began at precisely 6.45pm. It was an action-packed fifteen minutes of sheer breath-taking excitement. Monday to Friday nights, the streets became silent, devoid of whooping kids. By 7.00pm. the kids were back out in the street, re-enacting what had happened to Dick, Jock and Snowy. Swinging their fists in the air, it was "Take that you swine", "Aah!" and "Ooh!". They even made films about Dick Barton. We also listened to *Children's Hour, Just William, Jennings at School* and Valentine Dyall *(The Man in Black: Tales of Horror)* and the Saturday football.

Yet another added attraction was to join the Saturday morning pictures, either at the Odeon or the ABC in Camberwell. Entrance was 6d (2½p). When it was your birthday, you were allowed up into the circle seats, with one friend - real luxury picture watching.

The summer of 1946 was very hot and the Lido at Brockwell Park was a big attraction for everyone. A bunch of us kids would wear our 'cossies' under our short trousers, with a towel knotted at one end to whack each other. We bunked in over the wall, leaving our trousers and plimsolls beside the wall. The freezing cold water was fit to shrivel even the cockles of your heart. Colder still was the large water fountain that we used to climb. After the allowed 20 minute session, the attendant would urge everyone out. On the way home we bought a one penny slice of bread and dripping from the café opposite.

The End of a Memorable Stay

Mary, one of my sisters, died from TB in November 1947. She had contracted the disease in the bomb shelters in 1940 and had spent the war years in sanatoria. On that fateful day, one of the saddest for all the family, my sister Kaye woke up my other sister Margaret and me for school. She told us that Mary was dying, but we would see her after we came back from school - we never did. Mary, the leader of our tribe, was only 25. After her demise the bedroom was sealed off and fumigated, which left a deep impression in my mind.

Because of family health problems that occurred since Mary's death, in the autumn of 1949 Lambeth Council provided us with a brand new maisonette. It was number 17 Evans House in Fount Street, right next to the Wandsworth Road Granada.

We left Heron Road, a street where everyone knew everyone else and there were never any arguments or fights. All the families were very friendly and it was a happy community. I said cheerio to all the Heron Road Gang who I had grown up with over the previous four happy years: Maurice and Bernard Towner, Peter and John Reading, Phillip and Martin Hook, Maurice and John Wallace, and not forgetting Ernie Norris, an Indian boy.

Mary, June 1946

Life in Heron Road, 1963 to 2007

by Lydia King

I first moved to Heron Road in 1963, number 67, a bed-sit to be precise. I remember it well as it was in wintertime and very fog-laden. The neighbourhood was not only friendly, but everyone looked out for each other as we still do today.

A lot of people lived in Heron Road at the time. There were houses, shops, bakeries and a pub, not forgetting a church which was there and still is. Nevertheless developments were taking place in the area. We watched the demolition of most of the houses and premises on the even number side of my road. The buildings earmarked for demolition were not suitable for habitation or for business.

Soon after I moved in, Lambeth took control on my side of the road (the odd numbers). Numbers 1 to 39 were houses. Then from 39 to 59 were the prefab residences. Numbers 55 to 59 were houses, then more prefabs, finishing up with houses from 69 to the end of the road.

Milkwood Road on the corner with Jessop Road, 1960s

Living in Heron Road was very quiet and peaceful, hardly any trouble at all. When I first moved to Heron Road, there were a policeman and his family living in one of the prefabs. He and his family were amongst the first people I got to know; but they soon moved away never to be seen again.

In 1972 I moved from my bed-sit to a flat at number 52. I was overjoyed, as I no longer had to share the facilities.

One night whilst watching *77 Sunset Strip* on television, I heard this extremely loud bang and an earthquake-like tremor. I immediately ran out of my flat to investigate. I saw this gentleman, who lived in one of the prefabs opposite, standing outside. I then saw two other men, and smoke billowing out from the first gentleman's home. I ran back into my flat and fetched two buckets filled with water to assist. As time passed, a lot of people started to gather. I eventually found out that an accident of some sort had taken place. All the emergency services turned up but thank God there were no casualties.

I found living in Heron Road quite pleasant, but residents as well as myself once had to fight Lambeth. Where houses and premises had been demolished, Lambeth announced plans to turn the entire area into a refuse depot. We battled with them: we won! The final outcome was Milkwood Community Park. I am very happy about this.

Saturday 19 June 2004: Lambeth's Mayor Cllr Irene Kimm and Maud Estwick open the newly completed Milkwood Community Park

Milkwood Estate: Time Line

1197 .....The Manor of Milkwell becomes the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

1291 .....First reference to Milkwell shows it as belonging to the Hospital of St Thomas, Southwark.

1305 .....Edward I grants the Manor of Milkwell to the hospital of St Mary Overie Priory.

1541 .....Henry VIII grants the Manor of Milkwood to Sir Thomas Wyatt.

1554 .....Sir Thomas Wyatt executed.

1560s-1590s .Lease for the Manor assigned to Gregory Raylton, then to John Bower.

Later the Manor comes under the control of the Duke family.

1640s .....Parliament seizes and sells off the Archbishop of Canterbury's estates.

Trees on Milkwell Manor removed and sold.

1660 .....Estates returned to the new Archbishop following the Restoration.

1660-1711 ....Land of Milkwell Manor leased for successive terms of 21 years.

1711-1837 ....Lease held by William East and his descendants.

Market gardening developed.

1825 .....Area comes within the parish of St Matthew's Church, Brixton.

1837 .....Lease surrendered to Sir Rice Richard Clayton.

1862 .....Administration of the lease taken over by the Ecclesiastical (now Church) Commissioners.

Railway line from Herne Hill to the Elephant & Castle opens.

1866 .....Suburban Village and General Dwellings Company established.

c1868 .....Railway sidings developed along what is now Milkwood Road.

1869 .....Area transferred to the Parish of St Jude, Dulwich Road.

Metropolitan Board of Works approves application for the Estate's five new roads.

Milkwood Estate development inaugurated with laying of foundation stone by Lord Shaftesbury on 30 March.

1870 .....Estate laid out and contract awarded for roads, drains and sewers.

1872 .....Nevill's Bakery opens.

Over 200 houses completed.

1876 .....Jessop Road School opens.

Milkwood Tavern opens.

1877 .....Area transferred to parish of St Paul's, Herne Hill.

1879 .....Final building work completed comprising 568 houses and shops.

1881 .....St John's Church built in Lowden Road.

1883 .....Suburban Village and General Dwellings Company compulsorily wound up.

1884 .....Horse-drawn tram service inaugurated along Milkwood Road.

1889 .....Herne Hill Harriers founded at 99 Milkwood Road.

1909 .....Electric tram services introduced along Milkwood, Poplar Walk Road and Lowden Road.

1938 .....Jessop Road School rebuilding programme completed.

1940 .....First bombs fall on the Milkwood Estate on 7 September.

1951 .....Jessop Road School renamed Jessop School

1952 .....Buses replace tram services.

1961 .....Willowfield School founded

1964 .....Milkwood Road railway sidings close.

1966 .....Bus services withdrawn from the Estate.

Milkwood Tavern closes.

1969 .....Nevill's Bakery closes.

1976 .....Willowfield School moves to site on Milkwood Road/Heron Road.

1986 .....Formal opening of the Mahatma Gandhi Estate on 12 December.

1991 .....Bessemer Park Industrial Estate opens.

2004 .....Milkwood Community Park opens.

2005 .....Willowfield School closes and buildings demolished (2006).

2008 .....Michael Tippett School opens on site of former Willowfield School.

2009 .....Publication of Milkwood Estate – The story of a Lambeth community.

Sources

Books

Brown, Joe: *London Railway Atlas* (Ian Allan, 2006)

Burnett, John: *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985* (Methuen, 1986)

Clarke, William Spencer: *The Suburban Homes of London* (Chatto & Windus, 1881)

Davies, R and Grant, M D: *London and its Railways* (David & Charles, 1983)

Dyos, H J: *Victorian Suburb: a study of the growth of Camberwell* (Leicester University Press, 1961)

Ernest, Johanna: *The Life of Dorothy Kerin* (The Dorothy Kerin Trust, 1983)

Gray, Adrian: *The London, Chatham & Dover Railway* (Meresborough, 1984)

Harley, Robert J: *Camberwell and West Norwood Tramways* (Middleton Press, 1993)

Harvie, K G: *The Tramways of South London and Croydon 1899-1949* (London Borough of Lewisham, 1975, (5th edition))

Herne Hill Society: *Herne Hill Heritage Trail* (2003)

Herne Hill Society: *Herne Hill Personalities* (2006)

Inner London Education Authority: *Education Service Information* (1970, 1972, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1987)

Jenkyns, Patricia: *The Book of Herne Hill* (Halsgrove, 2003)

Kelly, Kevin: *Herne Hill Harriers into the Millennium* (Herne Hill Harriers, 2002)

Leese, L E S: *The Story of St Paul's Church, Herne Hill, 1844-1944* (1944)

London County Council: *Education Service Information* (1961, 1962, 1964)

London County Council: *Names of Streets and Places in the Administrative County of London* (1955)

Manning, Owen and Bray, William: *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (1814) (Republished by EP Publishing Ltd, 1974)

Mitchell, Vic and Smith, Keith, in association with Leslie and Philip Davis: *London Suburban Railways: Holborn Viaduct to Lewisham* (Middleton Press, 1990)

Mitchell, Vic and Smith, Keith: *Southern Main Lines: Victoria to Bromley South* (Middleton Press, 1992)

Muir, Augustus: *The History of Baker Perkins* (Heffer and Sons, 1968)

Nevill Ltd: *Nevill's Century of Health, 100 years of bread baking progress 1840-1940* (H W Nevill Ltd)

Normanton, Helena: *The Trial of Arthur Rouse* (W Hodge & Co, 1931)

Olsen, Donald J: *The Growth of Victorian London* (Batsford, 1976)

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2004)

Piper, Alan: *A History of Brixton* (The Brixton Society, 1996)

Reilly, Leonard and Marshall, Geoff: *The Story of Bankside* (London Borough of Southwark, 2001)

Roebuck, Janet: *Urban Development in 19th Century London: Lambeth, Battersea and Wandsworth 1838-1888* (Phillimore, 1979)

Survey of London, vol. 26 part 2, St Mary Lambeth, Southern Area (LCC 1956)

Tarn, John Nelson: *Five Per Cent Philanthropy* (Cambridge University Press, 1974)

Willoughby, D W and Oakley, E R: *Trams in South-East London* (1977)

Other Publications

Applications under Building etc Acts, published by the Metropolitan Board of Works, 1860

The Architect: 3 April 1869, p184; 23 August 1873, p95

Building News: 23 March 1866, p193; 23 October 1868, p727; 18 December 1868, p867; 14 February 1911, p294

Herne Hill Society Newsletters: 1982 to 2007

South London Press: 3 April 1869; 19, 26 April, 31 May 1890

The Builder: 14 June 1862; 30 March 1867, p231; 10 April 1869, p284; 30 December 1871, p1036; 6 July 1872, p536; 21 September 1872, p743

The Heron, St Paul's Herne Hill Parish Magazine, 1958 to 1993

The Times: 31 March 1869; 14, 15, 23, 29, 30 April; 23, 26 May; 11 June 1890

INDEX

The Herne Hill Society

Founded in 1982, the Herne Hill Society is a registered charity working to enhance and maintain the quality of the amenities, facilities and environment of the Herne Hill area for the benefit of residents, visitors and traders. Our aims are to encourage high standards of local planning, architecture, transport and other facilities; to explore the area's geography, history and natural history; and to encourage the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest.

For more information about the Society, please log on to our website at:

www.hernehillsociety.org.uk

or contact us at:

The Herne Hill Society
P 0 Box 27845
London SE24 9XA

Milkwood Residents Association

Founded in 1992, the MRA is a community organisation dedicated to responding to local social and community needs in its part of Herne Hill. Working with and on behalf of the local community, the MRA has a strong track record of successfully completing regeneration projects. In 2004 they raised £500,000 of capital funding to regenerate and develop a derelict open space which now serves as a local park and play area. The MRA's achievements have been recognised through being nominated for a number of national awards.

The Milkwood Community Park received Lambeth's first Green Flag award, and retained it for two further years. The MRA Chair, Maude Estwick, has received a Civic Award and a Good Neighbour Award.

Heron Trinity Community Trust has now been set up by MRA as a charitable company to acquire the lease of St John's Church Hall. The vision is to redesign and refurbish the building, creating a flexible space for multi-purpose activities for the use and benefit of the community.

For more information about the MRA, please contact: *m.r.assoc@ntlworld.com* or telephone 020 7207 9530.