

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT 2019/20

Introduction

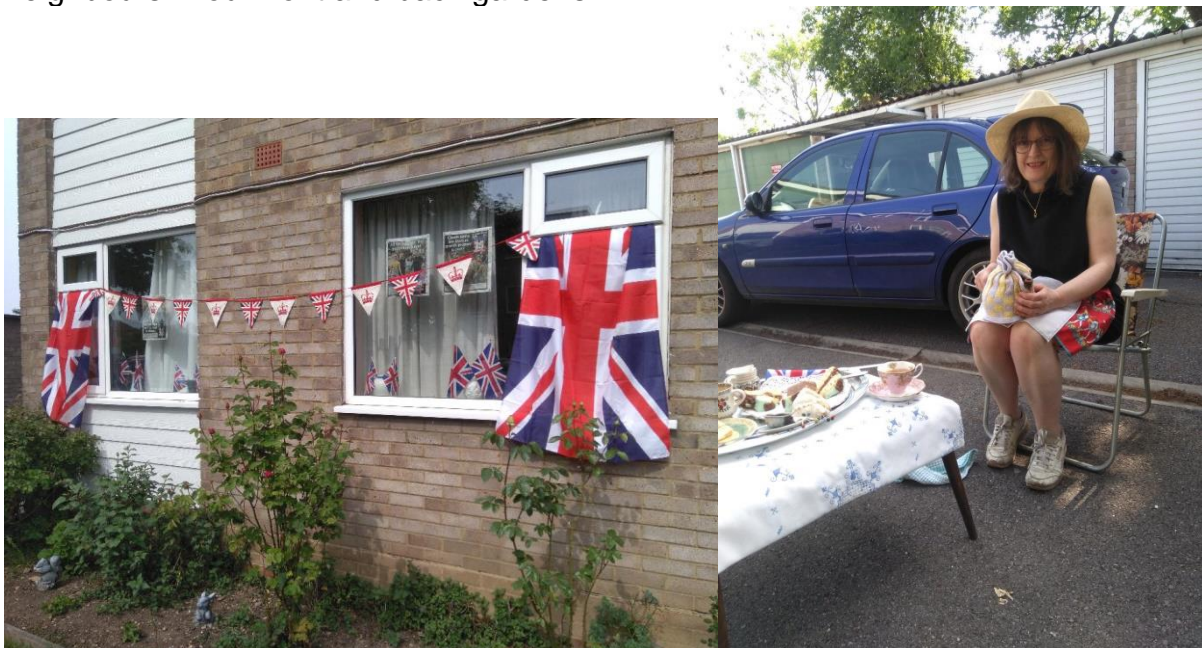
I have continued to relish my role as the Member Champion for the Historic Environment in the London Borough of Havering. It never ceases to fascinate me how much history there is to be found in this part of Essex and I am making new discoveries all the time.

Unfortunately, my second year in my role as Member Champion has been affected by the coronavirus. I did not achieve all I set out to do at the start of the municipal year. However, I did join some of the Friends Groups, took a close interest in local issues which affected the Historic Environment and continued to make visits. As I mentioned last year, visits are most important, not just for historical interest, but to meet the people who are working to preserve our local history.

I have continued to have regular meetings and correspondence with Mr. James Rose (Parks Development Manager). As we emerge from the COVID-19 restrictions, it would be interesting to find out how the local area responded to previous epidemics, such as the influenza directly after the First World War. Who knows, one day we may be reading the Leader's COVID-19 briefings as part of our historical archive!

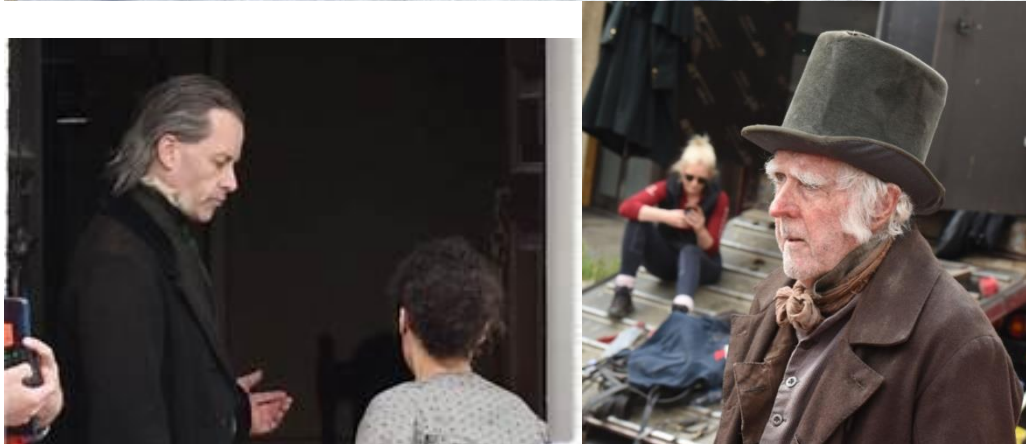
VE DAY 75

Perhaps most disappointingly, COVID-19 meant almost all the celebrations and commemorations planned to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in May had to be shelved. However, in best Essex and British tradition, many of us kept calm and carried on, holding socially-distanced afternoon teas with family, friends and neighbours in our front and back gardens.



Rainham

Rainham Hall was brought to national attention last year when it was used as the location for Scrooge's house in an adaption of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* starring Guy Pearce.



Filming took place in April and May last year, with the production being broadcast at Christmas.

From June 2019, the Hall held an exhibition, *The Denney Edition: Celebrating an Icon of 20th Style* about the life of Anthony Denney (1913-1990), a photographer, interior designer and art collector, who was hall tenant from 1964 till 1969. The Hall has been closed since March 2020 owing to COVID-19, but the gardens have now reopened, under the watchful care of gardener Mr. Jesse Lock.

Slow progress is being made with the planning application for the **old Rainham Library site** in The Broadway opposite St. Helen and St. Giles Church. CCTV is being considered to monitor the traffic using Rainham and Wennington Villages as cut-throughs to the A1306. An application was made by villagers to formally recognise the status of **Wennington Village Green**.

South Hornchurch

The **Bretons** site consists of Bretons Manor House, a Grade 2 Listed building dating back to the 1700s, a Tudor barn and various outbuildings.



The Bretons Phase 2 masterplan is due to be reported to Cabinet on 16th September, but this is still to be confirmed. The masterplan has four proposed phases, with the capital funding of £2.65 million earmarked for Phase 1 of the 4. This includes two 3G artificial turf football pitches, a pavilion to support sports use of the site and some immediate repairs to the Manor House identified with a condition survey. The £2.65 million will be used as match funding to lever-in external funding from organisations such as the Football Foundation.

Hornchurch

I revisited **Langtons House and Gardens** in January. I was shown around and updated by Mrs. Lisa Lock, the Langtons Gardens Activity Officer. The Langtons Gardens Forest School has reopened in the Fielders Field Woodland, where families can enjoy activities including a Birds and Bats Night.



I was most fascinated by an aerial photograph of the South Essex area on the wall of one of the offices in the house.

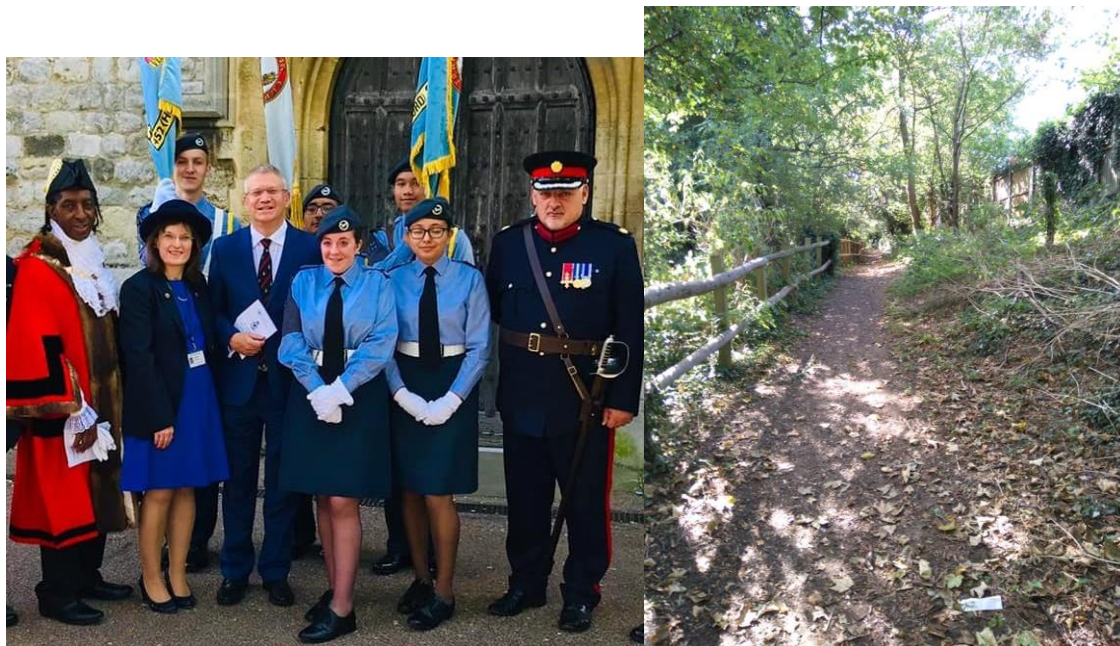
I was delighted to discover the old Romford Market Fountain in the grounds! A resident had asked me if anyone knew where it was (see later). I hope one day to see it reassembled.



Unfortunately, COVID-19 caused the cancellation of the annual Summer Concert by the Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra in June. I hope very much to see its return next year, along with all musical and theatrical activities across the Borough.

Hornchurch Mill Path

I am always happy to support services to commemorate historical events, such as the Battle of Britain Service at St. Andrew's Church in Hornchurch.



Leading from the church car park to Mill Park Avenue is the old mill path, which runs along beside the still-attractive remains of The Dell, near the site of Hornchurch Windmill, burnt down in the 1920s.

Hornchurch Aerodrome Historical Trust

Suttons House in Suttons Lane is one of the few remaining buildings from RAF Hornchurch. It now houses a large collection of historical artefacts, photographs and stories which relate to the former Hornchurch Aerodrome's illustrious past. A group of dedicated local amateur historians, led by Mr. Tony Philpot, are helping to preserve our valuable past for present and future generations to enjoy. Their members also tend the three Battle of Britain pilots' graves in the Military section of Hornchurch Cemetery. It is pleasing to see that the nearby senior school is to revert to the name Sanders Draper School, with the houses named after other war heroes from RAF Hornchurch.



All the collection of amassed artefacts will be used within the exhibitions and static displays at the RAF Hornchurch Heritage Centre at Suttons House, which is due to open in 2020, the date to be confirmed. I have visited a couple of times and find it fascinating. I look forward it being open. For more information, visit their Hornchurch Aerodrome Historical Trust Facebook Page.

Upminster

Atop the hill in St. Mary's Lane, **Upminster Windmill** waits patiently, sail-less, for the completion of its extensive refurbishment.



Unfortunately, since lock-down, no works on site have taken place as Willem Dijkstra, the Dutch millwright, has been at home. However, work has begun in Holland on constructing the first pair of sails.



The team is returning in August and expects to complete the restoration of the mill by November. Landscaping works will also take place in the autumn and the final phase just after the millwright has vacated the site. Therefore, the planned completion of the whole project is by the end of the calendar year – hopefully!

The mill will not be open to the public until April 2021 when an Activity Officer has been recruited who will work closely with the Friends of Upminster Windmill to deliver a programme of events and activities to promote and celebrate the mill.



I joined the Friends of Upminster Windmill this year and attended a talk on the windmill in Upminster Library.

For further information, visit The Friends of Upminster Windmill website at www.upminsterwindmill.org or check their Facebook page.

The **Old Chapel** opposite continued until lock-down to hold regular community events. I have joined the Friends Group and attended one of their monthly talks there in February.



Corbets Tey Village

Unfortunately, **High House** continues to be in a poor state of repair, with its broken windows and propped-up walls. Little responsibility for the upkeep of this Grade 2 Listed Building seems to be taken by its owners.

Noak Hill

Still, there is a tremendous amount of litter on the roadsides of Noak Hill Road and Church Road in the approach to the old School House. It is such a shame that some residents do not take care of their historic environment.

For more details on Dagnam Park and Noak Hill (especially their history), visit www.friendsofdagnampark.org.uk

Havering-atte-Bower

I paid a return visit to Bedfords Park Walled Garden last month. Mrs. Lois Amos and the group of volunteers were able to continue working in the garden during the lockdown and the fruits of their labours are evident to see. I came home with a selection of flowers, berries and runner beans. In February, I was pleased to write a letter of support for a grant application for the Garden to the Land of the Fanns Community Action Fund. For updates and opening times, check Bedfords Park Walled Garden on Facebook.





Gidea Park

The lock-down made me realise how lucky I am to live in such an attractive Conservation Area as **Gidea Park**, with its local shops and close community. I continue to belong to the Gidea Park Civic Society. I am a regular visitor to Raphael and Lodge Farm Parks. I joined other Councillors and the Friends Group for litter picks at both parks. Thank-you to the Parks Department and the Friends Groups for continuing to keep both parks in such excellent order.





The Romford Bowls Club and the Lodge Farm Park Miniature Railway have reopened after lock-down. I have lobbied for free car parking in the park in favour of club members. Also, I registered an objection to a proposed adventure golf course by the café in Raphael Park.

For further information on these parks and clubs, see their Facebook pages or [friends of \[raphaelpark.org.uk\]\(https://www.facebook.com/friends.of.raphaelpark.org.uk\)](https://www.facebook.com/friends.of.raphaelpark.org.uk) www.havering-miniature-railway.co.uk

www.romfordbowlsclub.co.uk

Walking down Main Road, Gidea Park, near the junction with Severn Avenue, one passes two small records of local history: the neighbourhood pump restored in 1991 (does it need another clean?) and the memorial at the site of the First World War Artists Rifles Officer Training Camp, unveiled in July 2019.



Romford

Permission was granted by the Diocese of Chelmsford for the plans for **Coronation Gardens**. The Council is putting the works out to tender. However, further funding applications may be required to progress the works, subject to ongoing discussions with Veolia Maintenance Trust about the existing grant. Like so much else, COVID-19 has caused delays.



I have joined the Friends of **Havering Museum** and was pleased to attend a social afternoon in January. Sadly, the Museum has been closed since March but has a provisional reopening day of 2nd October and I hope very much this goes ahead. The Museum's 10th anniversary of opening would have been celebrated on 26th May 2020.

The planning application at **22-44 North Street** overlooking St. Edward the Confessor Churchyard near the Conservation Area was considered at a Strategic Planning Meeting in February, as a result of my calling-in the application. I spoke at the meeting, expressing my concerns that the proposed blocks of flats were too high, their appearance did not blend in and there was insufficient parking. The application was subsequently approved, but only after much discussion by the Committee. I shall be keeping a close watch to see the plans are adhered to, although COVID-19 has caused a delay in the commencement of the development.

The annual report by Mr. Simon Donoghue of **The Local Studies Library at Romford Library** is enclosed [Appendix A]. He helped me find copies of *The Romford Recorder* from October 1969 to display at my 50th Birthday Party last year, plus the thread of a local story from 1977. During lock-down, Havering Libraries Facebook page has been featuring photographs of old buildings and scenes in Havering, such as Gidea Hall, Upminster Common and Havering-atte-Bower Green. The Local Studies Centre reopened on Friday 14th August.

I have said before that becoming Member Champion has opened my eyes wider to aspects of our local history. I never knew that 215-217 North Street was **Vine Cottage**, an 18th century Grade 2 Listed Building. Planning permission to carry out maintenance works and refurbishment of Vine Cottage and its outbuildings has been obtained so I shall be interested to watch the progress.



Saving the best till last....I have continued to take a very close interest in **Romford Market** this year and was delighted with the news that a Sunday Market was to be introduced. I was pleased to attend the inaugural day on Sunday 19th July.



I go down to the market to shop quite regularly now and enjoy browsing among its variety of stalls. Romford Market was granted its charter in 1247 so it is incredibly important that it is revitalised and adapts to the customer needs of today – and that we support it. Hopefully, the introduction of the Sunday market and the addition of the stalls from the old Dagenham Market will make that happen!

The old Romford Market **fountain** has been found, by the storage sheds in Langtons Gardens (see also above). No plans have been made about its future as yet, but it would be great to see it put somewhere where all may see it.



Future Plans

Next Municipal Year 2020-2021, as well as continuing my general overview of the Historic Environment, I hope to follow through with my plans to take a closer interest in the eleven Conservation Areas of Havering and their maintenance. My grateful thanks to all those residents who help the Council in looking after all these many historic jewels in Havering's crown. As I have mentioned before, please do contact me if there is any historical issue in any Ward about which I should know or with which I may assist.

Councillor Judith Holt
Member Champion for the Historic Environment