

## ANNUAL REPORT BY THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT 2020/21

**Councillor Judith Holt**

### Introduction

Reading through my report for last year, despite being written toward the end of the first lockdown, I notice how optimistic and cheerful I sound. Clearly, I could never have imagined what lay ahead in the winter months: a second lockdown and the resulting unhappiness, including for me the death of my mother; the end of an era.

However, work has continued, albeit more slowly. I think that Havering would benefit from re-employing a proper Heritage Officer, someone genuinely interested in the Borough's history; the last retired in 2018, and having one would help with the co-ordination in overseeing and promoting Havering's heritage. There are success stories – for example, Upminster Windmill, more on which later. Mr. Andrew Rosindell M.P. for Romford and local resident Mr. Adam Wilkinson have become involved as they are both keen in their desire to promote Havering's heritage.

There are three **Facebook** pages of local history which I follow and may be of interest:

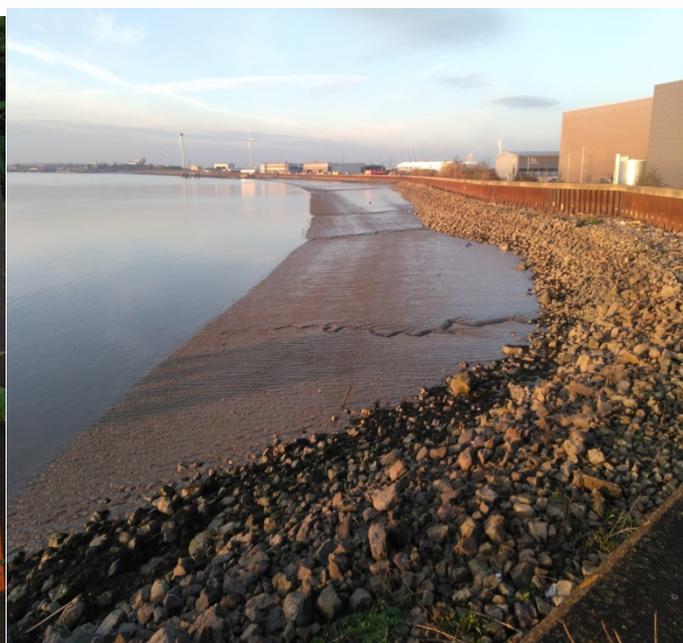
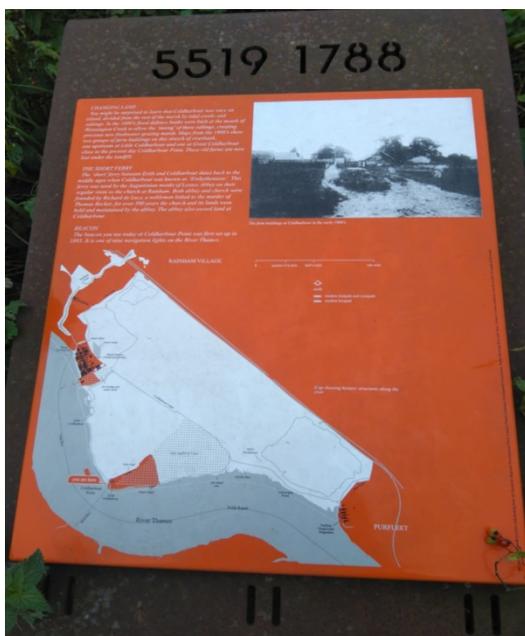
Romford History

Upminster and Hornchurch History

Essex: Memories –Old Photos and Stories

### Rainham

During the last eight months or so, I have rediscovered Rainham Creek. The history of this section of the River Thames is fascinating and is brought to life by the orange information boards featured at intervals along the river path.



In the photograph above, the river wall runs along Three Crowns, looking towards the site of the old Three Crowns Inn and the Rainham Ferry which ran across to Erith. The inn was eventually subsumed within the Murex Factory before being demolished in 1972. Murex Limited, which specialised in metallurgy, remained in Rainham for over seventy years and at their peak had around 600 employees. The warehouses on the right are on the former Murex site. An episode of "Softly Softly Task Force" starring Stratford Johns and Frank Windsor was filmed at the Murex Factory in the early 1970s.



The Tilda Rice Factory stands beside the jetties and the concrete barges. The sixteen concrete barges, built in the Second World War, were abandoned at Rainham in 1953 as flood defences. One can walk up to and over them, but beware the marshy silt and rising tide!





## Hornchurch

I have started taking regular walks with a friend in **Langtons House and Gardens**. Meeting by the café by the old stables (now offices) then strolling along past the Orangery, Fielder's Field towards the fake bridge, beside the lake with all the ducks, geese and swans, past the bath house and back to the entrance.



The view of Langtons House from the other side of the lake is stunning. Langtons is an example of our local heritage at its best.



The old Romford Market Fountain is still in the grounds and I really hope it can be reassembled. We may have to resort to private funding if none is forthcoming from the Council. At least, it has come to no harm in the last year.



Unfortunately, COVID-19 caused again the cancellation of the annual Summer Concert by the Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra in June. Hopefully, next year.... The Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch and the Brookside Theatre in Romford have reopened.

## Upminster

It was a great day on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 when the cap and sails were replaced on top of **Upminster Windmill** !



On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, the new sails turned for the first time! They are operating from time-to-time so keep a look-out when you go past. Grateful thanks to Willem Dijkstra, the Dutch millwright, for all his work in restoring Upminster Windmill to its full glory.



Good progress was made with the landscaping around the mill earlier this year. Once levelled, the area will be returned to grass whilst the steam mill foundation will be outlined with timber sleepers.



Some areas of the field will remain fenced off until the new grass has established and the remaining works on the mill have been completed. After this, the rest of the field behind the mill will be opened up again. A system has recently been implemented for digital monitoring of the cap positioning. A sensor in the cap measures its orientation which is relayed live to a website.

For further information, visit The Friends of Upminster Windmill website at [www.upminsterwindmill.org](http://www.upminsterwindmill.org) or check their Facebook page, where you can watch clips of the sails turning.

I have continued my membership of The Friends of Upminster Windmill and of **The Old Chapel**. The Chapel Friends plan to restart their monthly “Teas and Talks” in September.



## **Gidea Park**

The Romford Bowling Club in Lodge Farm Park in **Gidea Park** took the opportunity to undertake a complete refurbishment this year before its grand reopening in May. We look forward to returning to its newly-renovated club house when restrictions



relax. I have renewed my membership of the Gidea Park Civic Society for this year. For further information on this club and society, see the Club's Facebook page and

It is pleasing to see, finally, the commencement of the refurbishment of **Coronation Gardens**. A new pathway has been laid leading up to the war memorial and around the gardens, with new benches.



The conifers at the rear remain, though have been pruned right back, and a path has also been laid by the gravestones, some of which have been moved – presumably temporarily – to make room for the path.

Coronation Gardens was built on land originally purchased as the site for the new Romford Parish Church. In 1849, the church was rebuilt on its original site in Market Place and only the parish burial ground with a chapel was constructed here. In 1953, the Council and Church authorities re-landscaped the area as public gardens to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.



Although the coronavirus restrictions prevented the usual services of commemoration, I attended a Service of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday with Andrew Rosindell M.P., veterans and residents. In January, Mr. Tariq Mahmood and Mrs. Sidra Naeem of the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre and myself laid flowers as individuals at the Holocaust Memorial in January. I am always happy to attend services and commemorations of historical events.



I have been concerned to see the untidy state and graffiti on the **old Havering Oak and Durham Arms**, these two former pubs in South Street and Brentwood Road. I contacted Planning Enforcement who requested the land owners keep the sites tidy. The trees and bushes hanging from the old Durham Arms pub garden over into Albert Road and blocking the pavement have now been cut back.



Planning permission for flats was granted in 2019 for the old Havering Oak. The future of the old Durham Arms remains uncertain; an application for a supermarket has been appealed. As both buildings are on the “Local List”, they would not be demolished. However, I would like to see them put back into use and hope something suitable can be found.

Two former schools, **The Bridge** in Albert Road, Romford, and **Raphael Independent School** in Park Lane, Hornchurch, are now lying empty. As of yet, no plans have been made for their future. I have requested that at least the plaque on the old Albert Road School (on the Local List) be retained.



I mentioned some Facebook pages early on in this report. They have some fascinating pictures of old Romford, Hornchurch, Upminster and other local places. It is sad to see how much of Romford Town Centre has simply disappeared in the last fifty years or so, to be replaced by roads or vastly inferior buildings.

However, I have been delighted to make the acquaintance of **Mr. Adam Wilkinson** of Lower Mawneys in Romford. He is very interested in heritage and has put together his own list of further buildings of historic importance in Romford which might merit inclusion on the “Local List”.



We have been informed by Council officers that there is a very convoluted approach to putting new buildings on to this list, this can't be done until the local plan has been adopted, it requires setting criteria, carrying out identification, assessment, gaining approval etc. The aim would be for this to happen straight after the local elections in May 2022. Nonetheless, I plan to work with Mr. Wilkinson on the new list he has made and I am most grateful to him for his interest.



Examples of buildings or structures in Romford to join the Local List might be Goodchild House (Romford Royal British Legion HQ), the Bandstand in Raphael Park, houses in Alexandra Road and Margaret Thatcher House in Western Road.

COVID-19 continues to cause a delay in the commencement of the development at **22-44 North Street** overlooking St. Edward the Confessor Churchyard near the Conservation Area. There are plans in the pipeline to develop **6-14 High Street** so I shall be keeping a close watch on both sites.

I have continued my membership of the Friends of **Havering Museum**. After a few, false starts, the Museum should be reopening on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June. Excitingly, there are plans for the Havering Hoard to be exhibited in 2022.



The annual report by Mr. Simon Donoghue of **The Local Studies Centre at Romford Library** is enclosed [*Appendix A*]. I have not been able to visit the Centre this year as it has been closed for much of the time. The Local Studies Centre has reopened, but by appointment only.

Finally....it is pleasing that the Local Government Boundary Commission has taken into account historical names and communities in its **review** of the Ward Boundaries this year. New wards in Romford include St. Edward's, St. Alban's, Marshalls and Rise Park, Rush Green and Crowlands, and Havering-atte-Bower.



## **Future Plans**

Who knows what next Municipal Year 2021-2022 will bring? Already, there is a return to some kind of normality. Perhaps COVID-19 has taught us that things will always change and move on, but we should never let go of certain values. All the more reason that we should preserve and commemorate our heritage and history.

Once again, my grateful thanks to all those Friends Groups, societies and residents who voluntarily help the Council in looking after all these many historic jewels in Havering's crown. Without them, I fear the Borough's heritage would be completely neglected. 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**  
**June 2021**

## **Havering Libraries- Havering Local Studies Library 2020-2021**

Havering Local Studies is part of the Havering Library Service and in normal circumstances is open to the public 21 hours per week and an additional 6 hours on the second Saturday of each month.

During 2020/2021, the Local Studies service has been maintained in different ways throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns. In July, an enhanced enquiry service with the Local History Librarian researching in our collection to assist enquirers was started and this continued until the end of December 2020. From August to the end of October, and from April 2021, appointments for access to the Local Studies Library were restored for those researchers able and confident enough to visit. The Local History Librarian has facilitated these in a controlled Covid-19 safety compliant setting

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Local History Librarian has responded to email and Facebook enquiries, providing information available in digital form or from books, and researching enquiries when possible, as well as referring enquirers to alternative sources of information online - direct enquirers to useful sources of information available digitally from other archives and libraries (this has included directing enquirers to special arrangements by national organisation such as The National Archives allowing free access to wills, or free access to academic publications provided by J.I.S.C.).

Local Studies has continued to advise other parts of Havering Council and has maintained links with other local heritage organisations, in particular, the Havering Museum.

### **Staffing**

There is one full time member of staff in Local Studies. Ordinarily there are an average of 14 volunteers who help sort, repackage, digitise and catalogue images in our collection to make them available online. Some of the volunteers support the Local History Librarian working with members of the public. It has not been possible for volunteers to continue their role in Local Studies during 2020/2021. The Local History Librarian has maintained contact with volunteers and there remains a commitment among volunteers to return when it is safe to do so. One volunteer has spent time during this period researching Havering's military war dead 1939-1945 and has completed research up to 1943.

### **Family History**

Thanks to Find My Past and Proquest, library users have had home access to online family history databases FindMyPast and Ancestry, usually only accessible in the library, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Local History Librarian has liaised with members of the public to assist them in accessing the service and with enquiries about the various data sets available.

### **Havering Libraries Facebook**

Local Studies has maintained a strong digital presence through the Havering Libraries' Facebook page. Whilst libraries have been closed there has been a local history post every day, often with new research and detailed summaries of buildings, organisations and individuals, this has changed to alternate days when Local Studies has been able to open for appointments.

This has afforded an opportunity to promote our local history collection in a way which would have been impossible to do in such detail in ordinary circumstances. In this way, in excess of 1,000

photographs, prints, paintings maps, documents, news-cuttings and other ephemera from our local history collection have been shared.

Members of the public have been able to maintain and pursue new interests and research and to have opportunities to view and respond to unique images and stories of the Borough as part of their normal enjoyment of the library service but also as a distraction and a means of sharing communal memories and experiences. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, a number of similar comments to those below have been received

*“This is one of my favourite Facebook accounts to follow. Thanks for bringing the history to life in bite size chunks 😊”*

*“Thank you Havering Libraries you are a wealth of trusted information. Such lovely historic info”*

#### Post Details

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

**Havering Libraries**  
18 May · 🌐

Mardyke Estate, South Hornchurch 1964

A show flat on the first floor of Templar House, furnished by the Grays Co-Operative Society opened for viewing by the public from 7th to the 22nd August 1964 from 2pm to 8pm Monday to Saturday and Hornchurch Urban District Council invited applicants on the housing waiting list, and existing tenants of Council houses in Hornchurch.

On Wednesday, 25th November, 1964, the formal handing over ceremony of Chantry House, one of the Mardyke Hou...  
[Continue reading](#)



#### Performance for your post

**24,449** People Reached

**477** Reactions, comments & shares 📊

<b>262</b> Like	<b>51</b> On post	<b>211</b> On shares
<b>20</b> Love	<b>4</b> On post	<b>16</b> On shares
<b>1</b> Haha	<b>0</b> On post	<b>1</b> On shares
<b>6</b> Wow	<b>2</b> On post	<b>4</b> On shares
<b>134</b> Comments	<b>39</b> On Post	<b>95</b> On Shares
<b>54</b> Shares	<b>54</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares

**4,269** Post Clicks

<b>1,556</b> Photo views	<b>0</b> Link clicks	<b>2,713</b> Other Clicks 📊
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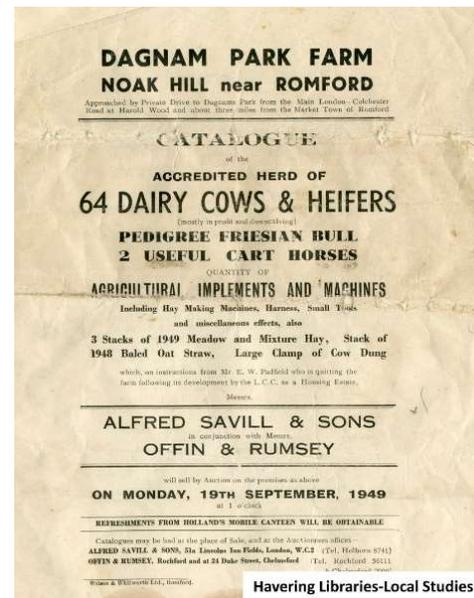
A recent post about the Mardyke Estate in South Hornchurch proved particularly popular with a reach of over 24,000 and 54 shares.

## Accessions 2020/2021

Despite the library being closed for much of the past eighteen months, a number of new collections or individual items have been added to the Local Studies Library. Highlights include

**2020/9 Dagnam Park Farm, Noak Hill, Romford Catalogue of Sale of accredited herd of 64 Dairy Cows and Heifers etc. 19<sup>th</sup> September 1949** – final sale as the farm was part of the compulsory purchase which saw the development of Harold Hill by the LCC

Dagnam Park Farm sale catalogue 1949



**2020/13 Hornchurch Afternoon Townswomen's Guild**-collection of photographs, programmes, certificates, newscuttings and booklets



**2021/3 Legal documents relating to Upminster** – 1783 indenture for Bush, Chafford Heath and Snows & Elders farms and a 1935 Agreement of sale on the Springfield Estate, Upminster to the London Baptist Property Board (Upminster Baptist Church site)

Indenture 18<sup>th</sup> January 1783 Mrs Elizabeth Theobald to Sir James Esdaile

**2021/5 Maylands Gold Club** – Annual Report 1953/1954 and Annual Dinner and Dance programmes 1948-1962

**2021/6 The Sportsman's Gazette** – four issues of the publication for the Sportsman's Battalions 1915 and 1916. The battalions were at Grey Towers, Hornchurch and Hare Hall, Romford

Sportsman's Gazette April 1915 - advertisements

**2021/7 Debenham's Romford Store - L.F. Stone and Sons Ltd 1960-1973** – collection of scrapbooks, photographs etc. given by the manager of Debenhams in Romford on its closure in May 2021.



*Scrapbooks and photographs relating to Stones Store and Debenhams, Romford 1960-1973*



Having Libraries-Local Studies

*Having Summer Theatre - Romford Civil Defence Players, Romford Children's Theatre MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR CAST Raphael Park 1966*

**2021/8 Romford Children's Theatre and Romford Summer Theatre 1946-2005-35** volumes of photographs, programmes and newspaper cuttings. In addition there is an annotated index to the four volumes which detail the Romford Children's Theatre, subsequently, in 1975, the Romford Theatre which continued until 1998 and the death of its founder Edwin Rudd.

**2021/10 "Arthur Holdbrook Collection"** - Collection of 5 albums of photographs of the London Borough of Havering taken by Arthur Holdbrook, mostly in 1986 and 1987, often mounted next to an historical view. They are accompanied by 9 files of newspaper cuttings with articles about, and images of, Havering and its history.

*St Mary's Church of England School, Church Lane, North Ockendon March 1987 by A. Holdbrook*



*Arthur Holdbrook Collection*

Having Libraries-Local Studies