

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT 2021/22

Councillor Judith Holt

Introduction

This year's report is slightly shorter, being more of an update rather than reporting anything drastically new.

I should like to state my view again that Havering would benefit from re-employing a proper Heritage Officer, someone genuinely interested in the Borough's history, who would assist co-ordinating, overseeing and promoting Havering's heritage.

These three **Facebook** pages of local history continue to be of much interest:

Romford History

Upminster and Hornchurch History

Essex: Memories –Old Photos and Stories

The annual report by Mr. Simon Donoghue of **The Local Studies Centre at Romford Library** is enclosed [*Appendix A*].

I have continued my membership of **The Friends Groups** of Upminster Windmill and of The Old Chapel and the Havering Museum, plus of the **Gidea Park Civic Society** and the **Romford Bowls Club**. They are starting to meet again normally, which is encouraging. I still enjoy my visits to the riverside in **Rainham**.

Hornchurch

I was delighted to attend the official opening of the **RAF Hornchurch Heritage Centre** in Suttons House, Suttons Lane, on Sunday 19th September 2021. The transformation of this surviving building of RAF Hornchurch in a few years by Chairman Mr. Tony Philpot and the volunteers has been little short of remarkable.



Among the over 100 invited guests were The Mayor of Havering Councillor John Mylod, Sir Iain Duncan Smith M.P., Andrew Rosindell M.P. and local Councillors. All

present witnessed a full program of events, including a flypast by a Spitfire and Hurricane of the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the Formal Opening of the Ted Exall Education Suite and the Official Opening of the RAF Hornchurch Heritage Centre by Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon GCB CBE.



Our jewel in the crown **Langtons** hosted the Havering BME Forum Community Day in October 2021. And the Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra Concert is back this year - on Sunday 19th June 2022!



Does anyone know where these are in Hornchurch?



Upminster

The **Upminster Windmill** Visitor Centre Gardens won the Best Communal Garden in Havering in Bloom 2021. The Friends of Upminster Windmill won the 2021 British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM) Impact Award for the digital telemetry system to help people understand how the mill's cap and sails turn.



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

A new sign has this month been installed in front of the mill.



Upminster Windmill (outside only) will be **open** Easter Weekend 16th / 17th April, National Mills Weekend 7th / 8th May and Platinum Jubilee Weekend 4th/5th June 2022 from 11.00 a.m. till 4.00 p.m.

Romford

I was pleased to attend as normal the Remembrance Day Service in November 2021 and the Holocaust Memorial Service in January 2022 in the newly-refurbished **Coronation Gardens**. A new pathway has been laid leading up to the war memorial and around the gardens, with new benches. It was good to be back with the usual large, respectful crowds.

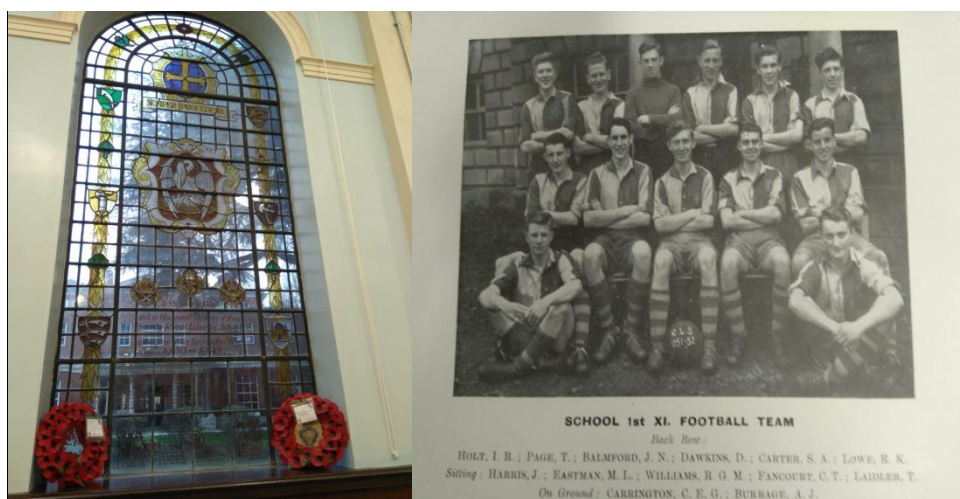




Not much progress has been made with the “**Local List**”. As mentioned last year, there is a very convoluted approach to putting new buildings on to this list, this can't be done until the local plan has been adopted, it requires setting criteria, carrying out identification, assessment, gaining approval etc. The aim was for this to happen straight after the local elections in May 2022.....watch this space! I have been working with **Romford BID** to create Pocket Parks within the Town Centre with a heritage flavour. I attended a Heritage Day which they organised in September last year in conjunction with St. Edward's Anglican Church and I have supported St. Edward's RC Church with their development plans.

Gidea Park

I was honoured to attend the Centenary Celebrations at The Royal Liberty School for Boys on 13th November 2021. Not only is it a former grammar school with a heritage and history of which to be proud, my late father attended from 1946 to 1954 and cherished his time there. (He is standing furthest left).



St. Alban's Ward

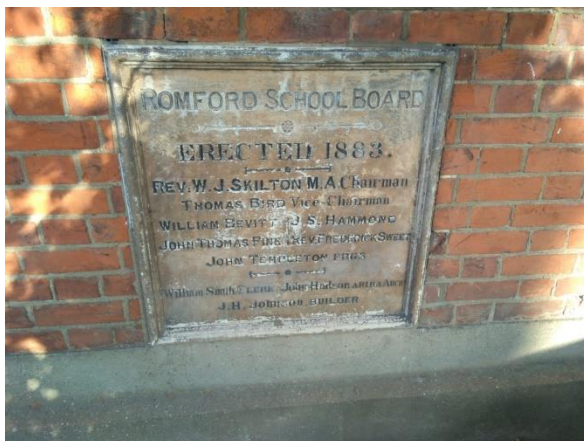
Within the new **St. Alban's Ward** where I am Councillor. Mr. Aaron Young and myself were appalled to see the continual deterioration of the **old Durham Arms Pub** on the corner of Brentwood Road and Albert Road. By escalating the matter high up within Havering Council, we finally had the mess cleared. The latest plan is to convert the upper part of the building into an HMO (House of Multiple Occupation) and we delivered a petition to local residents asking their opinions.



Planning permission for flats was granted in 2019 for the **old Havering Oak** and we are pleased to see sympathetic conversion work has started.



The two former schools, **The Bridge** in Albert Road, Romford, and **Raphael Independent School** in Park Lane, Hornchurch, are still lying empty. As of yet, still no plans have been made for their future. We have requested updates from and have reported any on-site mess quickly to Havering Council.



Local **footpaths** are the responsibility of Havering Council. We take particular care of these in our Ward, namely Footpath 133 leading from Victoria Road to the railway, Footpath 156 leading from Allandale Road to Kyme Road, Footpath 157 leading behind Park Lane and Douglas Road plus the Old Mill Path to Victoria Road. It is interesting to think how the footpaths looked before all the houses were built and where they led originally. We have tried to stop the demolition of Victoria Villa.



Speaking of railways.....we were pleased to join the fight to “**Save the Trees!**” Attempts by Network Rail to cut down unnecessarily over 400 trees along the much-loved historic Romford to Upminster push-and-pull railway line were thwarted as a result of a concerted effort by local residents and elected representatives.



Finally....**Where in the Ward?** This is a feature we introduced in the St. Alban's Ward Newsletter last year, which shows a photograph from an unusual angle of an object or place usually of heritage interest in the Ward for readers to guess. Here are some examples:



Future Plans

This Municipal Year 2021-2022 brings to an end my four-year term as Member Champion for the Historic Environment. I have learned much and extended my knowledge of our heritage and history in this part of Essex; there is always a new stone to turn over.

As I have already indicated, I feel Havering Council would benefit from redeploying a Heritage Officer to champion, co-ordinate and promote all the Borough's history. We should be proud of it! As this report indicates, there are many groups and individuals doing excellent work - but they need the Council's support.

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 and treasures in Havering's Crown – so especially appropriate in this year of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee!

Councillor Judith Holt
Member Champion for the Historic Environment
March 2022

