Bromley’s tennis champions

The early history of Keston

Buses in the suburbs
Society officers
Chairman and Membership Secretary
Woodside, Old Perry Street, Chislehurst, BR7 6PP

Treasurer
68 Rolleston Ave, Petts Wood, BR5 1AL

Secretary
27 Commonside, Keston, BR2 6BP

Programme co-ordinator
29 Woodland Way West Wickham, BR4 9LR

Publicity and website
5 South View, Bromley, BR13DR

Publications
38 Sandilands Crescent, Hayes, BR2 7DR

Bromleag Editor
150 Worlds End Lane, Chelsfield, BR6 6AS

Minutes Secretary
9 Mayfield Road, Bickley BR1 2HB

Tony Allnutt
020 8467 3842
AJ.Allnutt@btinternet.com

Pam Robinson
020 8467 6385
pamrobinson@talktalk.net

Elaine Baker
01689 854408
lainey.l.baker@btinternet.com

Peter Leigh
020 8777 9244
pleigh@talktalk.net

Max Batten
020 8460 1284
max.batten@bigfoot.com

John Barnes
020 8462 2603
jcbarnes@waitrose.com

Christine Hellicar
01689 857214
chris.hellicar@btinternet.com

Valerie Stealey
020 8467 2988
valstealey@yahoo.com

BBLHS website  www.bblhs.org.uk

2 Bromleag June 2013
Annual General Meeting 2013

The 2013 AGM was presided over by the Mayor, Councillor Michael Turner, and it proved to be our usual brief and brisk affair. Two new officers were elected — Pam Robinson, who has taken over as treasurer, and Tudor Davies.

Chairman’s report: Tony Allnut

I am pleased to be able to report that the Society has had another successful year. Ten evening meetings were held, including our usual members’ event. This year we arranged an increased number of visits and guided walks and members were able to go to the iron-age fort at Holwood, High Elms, the Stone House at Lewisham and Jubilee Park. All proved popular.

The Society was represented at local events including Keston Countryside Day, at which our publications are always in demand.

Membership in 2012 was 183, one fewer than in the previous year.

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Bromleag is published four times a year. The editor welcomes articles along with illustrations and photographs. These can be e-mailed, on disk or a paper copy. Items remain the copyright of the authors and do not necessarily reflect Society views. Each contributor is responsible for the content of their article. Articles may be edited to meet the constraints of the journal. Articles are not always used immediately as we try to maintain a balance between research, reminiscences and news and features about — different subjects and parts of the borough.

Next journal deadline 15 July 2013
News

This year we have held our meetings in our new venue. Although we are a rather tight fit for the space available, we are learning to live with this disadvantage. On the positive side there is a very considerable saving on costs and we have secure storage for our projection equipment and book stocks, which is a great convenience. Nevertheless, your committee will keep this matter under review.

Our treasurer, Brian Reynolds, resigned earlier in the year when what was a serious, but routine, operation required a much longer spell in hospital than was expected. Brian has done a very great deal for the Society during his tenure as treasurer and, to mark this, your committee decided to appoint him a vice-president of the Society. I am sure you all approve of this action. A small presentation will also be made to him in due course.

Treasurer’s Report
The Chairman, Tony Allnutt who, with the help of the Secretary, Elaine Baker, had been acting as Treasurer since the ill-health and resignation of Brian Reynolds, presented the 2012 accounts.

He said the new Treasurer Pam Robinson would take over during 2013 and added that the accounts show the Society to be in a good financial position with an increased end-of-year balance of £5041.

Tony called attention to the generous bequest of £1000 from the estate of Patricia Knowlden which, he said, was earmarked for the support of the publishing activities of the Society, starting with Patricia’s own West Wickham Fields and Farmers which had now been published and would generate income in 2013 onwards.

In answer to a question from Peter Leigh, concerning the fact that no tax had been recovered through Gift Aid in 2012, Tony said he understood that it was not essential to make an application each year. [Note: It is expected that an application for any outstanding amount will be made during 2013].

Due to the inevitable delays caused by the interim arrangements it had not been possible to get the accounts audited by the time of the AGM. Tony asked that the accounts be approved subject to their being passed by the independent examiner in due course. This was agreed. [Note: The accounts have now been signed off by the independent examiner].

Bromley Museum
Roman Bathhouse Open Weekend, Poverest Road, St Mary Cray
Saturday/Sunday 13/14 July from 11am—4pm
Tours of the bathhouse and information and stalls on Cray Valley Roman history

4 Bromleag June 2013
Meetings are held at 7.45 pm on the first Tuesday of the month (unless otherwise stated), from September to July, at **Trinity United Reformed Church, Freeland Road, Bromley**. The hall has free on and off-street parking, good public transport links and facilities for the disabled. 

Non-members are welcome at meetings for a nominal charge of £1.

**Meetings**

2 July  **An armchair walk around Chislehurst** — Roy Hopper

No August meeting

3 Sept **Members’ Evening**

A chance for members to talk about their special interests and recent research, either informally or by giving short 10 - 15-minute talks.

*If you would like to take part please contact Peter Leigh on 020 8777 9244 or email pleigh@talktalk.net*

**Visits**

**Harcourt House, Grasmere Road**

19 June 2 pm – 4 pm

A guided tour of the Victorian House and award winning gardens. Meet at the house. Admission £5 to include tea and cakes.

**Shirley Windmill, Post Mill Close, Shirley**

16 July  11 am – 1 pm

The Tower Mill, built in 1854 by Richard Alwen, was one of the last windmills to be built in this country. It ceased working in 1890 but most of the original machinery, including its two pairs of millstones, is still in place. It has recently been restored.

*Please let Peter Leigh, see above, know if you wish to attend either visit.*

**Bromley Local Studies talks**

**Stories of Chislehurst Caves**

18 June, 6.30 – 7.30 pm at the Central Library, Large Hall, 4th Floor

Brian Williamson reveals stories of the Caves’ past from the Romans, Celts and Druids, through to the World Wars, with possibly the odd ghost story.

**Holwood, Darwin and Keston Common**

16 July, 7.15 – 8.30 pm **Guided Walk. Meeting point specified on ticket**

Retrace Darwin’s steps around Keston visiting various sites of historical interest including the Wilberforce Oak, Holwood Estate and the ancient village of Keston. Led by local historian Tudor Davies.

*Tickets, for both events, £3.50. Contact Bromley Local Studies 020 8461 7107*
New Bromley Heritage and Arts Group

Bromley Heritage and Arts Group (HAG) has been formed to help spread information between organisations and to generate borough-wide interest in events held by member organisations.

Funded, at present, from the development grant for The Priory Museum regeneration project —now called The Priory Revisited — it is hoped that by stimulating interest in heritage and arts there will be more use of The Priory by Bromley organisations, bringing more awareness of the venue to the wider public. BBLHS and other history and heritage groups are participating in HAG as are many arts groups.

Exhibition on Priory Revisited proposals

An exhibition of the ideas for the preservation and improvement of The Priory is now on permanent display in the museum at Orpington alongside a history of how the building was used, and by whom, over the centuries.

Lubbock’s Legacy

Until 28 June there will also be an exhibition on the work of Sir John Lubbock, 1st Lord Avebury, who contributed to the beginnings of the heritage and conservation movement in Britain.

HLF grant to save and promote Chislehurst map

The Chislehurst Society has received £6,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to promote the legacy of William Willett. It focuses on the conservation of the 1893 sale document of the Camden Park Estate.

The document includes a large hand-painted map pinpointing the homes of Sir John Lubbock, Louis Napoleon III the exiled Emperor of France, and Sir Malcolm Campbell. It is signed by William Willett as the purchaser of the estate.

The project will tell the Victorian history of Chislehurst. Local residents will be able to see the restored map on display and take away specially-designed postcards explaining the stories behind it. There will be an exhibition in libraries and talks will be offered to local interest groups.

The restored map will form the centrepiece of a commemorative event in 2015 celebrating the legacy of William Willett. The parchment document, which was acquired by the Chislehurst Society, is torn in places and creased from being folded for a long time.
19th century Kent newspapers online

A free online digital archive of early Kent newspapers has been put on the web by the Kent Messenger Group at www.kentonline.co.uk/kentonline/digitalarchive.aspx

The South Eastern Gazette from 1852 to 1912 covered news in the whole of Kent and has a wealth of items about the towns and villages in the Bromley area, from court cases to flower shows. Once you have registered it is free to anyone living in the UK and the pages can be downloaded to your home computer.

A test search for two names — one of a vicar and the other a labourer known to have had a criminal past — threw up a range of articles and a host of new information.

There are also “special interest” articles ranging from unusual crime stories to landmark events. The KM Group is now working on the digitisation of editions from the First World War and Second World War years.

Other Kent newspapers are available to search online through the British Library database. The digitisation is an ongoing project and Kent newspapers so far available include the West Kent Guardian 1834-1856, Kentish Gazette 1768-1883, Kentish Chronicle 1859-1867 and, just added, the Kent and Sussex Courier 1834-1856.

Unfortunately, none of the Bromley specific newspapers have yet been digitised. It is also a paid-for archive either through the British Library site or via the commercial site Findmypast.

Dating Orpington Priory timbers

An analysis of oak timbers from The Priory in Orpington published by the Orpington & District Archaeological Society shows that the South Range of the building dates to 1521.

There is written evidence for a building on the site from 1270 and accounts for Christ Church, Canterbury — the then owner of the Manor — in 1393 record that three apartments were added to the Hall. Further improvements were made in 1471. But there are no written records to pinpoint when the South Range was added.

Assessment of the timbers for potential use in dendrochronological study was made last year, only a few timbers in the hall and solar were suitable but a high number were found in the South Range.

Dr Andy Moir of the Tree-Ring Service took 12 samples and five in the South Range date from between 1424 and 1520, with one precise felling date in the spring of 1521. His full report, is available from ODAS. www.odas.org.uk
A campaign to save Bromley’s Royal Bell and turn it into a community centre has been launched. The building has been empty for a number of years and is on the English Heritage “at risk” register.

The Bromley Arts and Community Initiative is fighting to preserve the building, to raise funds to buy the property and turn it into a social, recreational, cultural and educational centre.

At a well-attended public meeting, campaign organiser Amanda Hone asked for support for their plans to bid for Lottery Heritage funding to repair the Royal Bell, which internally is in “a considerable state of disrepair”.

Michael Rawcliffe, who attended the meeting for BBLHS, said: “It is an ambitious project and an important building for Bromley. The present owners, British Land, have not indicated they are going to do any work on the building. If the Bromley Arts and Community Initiative is successful, it could provide meeting rooms, an art gallery and theatre space and be a creative centre for Bromley.” The centre would be partly funded by using the ground floor as a community pub, coffee shop or restaurant.

Amanda Hone has set up a blog for the Bromley Arts and Community Initiative where people can get involved in the project at www.bromleyartsandcommunity.blogspot.co.uk

A Brief History of the Bell

There has been a Bell Inn in Bromley from at least the 17th century but the old building fell into such disrepair in the late 19th century that it had to be propped up to keep it from falling down.

So Ernest Newton, an important Arts and Crafts movement architect, whose houses can be seen in Chislehurst and Bickley, designed the present imposing building, incorporating a ballroom as well as stables to allow the Royal Bell — as it was by then — to continue as a coaching inn. But already its heyday as a coaching inn was over as the railway had arrived, at Bromley South in 1858 and Bromley North in 1878. Once two horse-drawn coaches ran daily to London from the Royal Bell and more well-heeled folk who had their own transport would stop there. It was well known and up-market enough for Jane Austen to have, in Pride and Prejudice, Lady Catherine de Bourgh recommend it to Elizabeth Bennett. “Where shall you change horses? Oh, Bromley, of course. If you mention my name at The Bell, you will be attended to.”

It was Royal because of its appointment as posting house to Queen Victoria. Horsburgh, writing about the older building, says: “Towards the end of the 18th
century the inn had attained to some notoriety due in all likelihood to the increase in posting and coaching consequent upon improvements in road-making. Later on, the widespread renown of James Scott, the eminent surgeon, whose house stood nearly opposite the Bell, certainly contributed to its fame and it is not unlikely that it was during this period that the Bell reached the zenith of its popularity and fortune.”

He goes on to recount the various influential men who either, ran, were related to, or were friends of those who owned the Bell. “There is little doubt that not a few of the plans and schemes relating to the progress and welfare of the town had their origin in the unofficial confabulations of those influential townsmen who were accustomed to assemble regularly in the Bell’s cosy and comfortable smoke room.”

Prime Location: The Royal Bell in the early 20th century

Boost for Rochester’s Huguenot Centre

The French Hospital has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Huguenot Heritage Centre in Rochester.

The project aims to tell the story of the Huguenots, a group of some 100,000 French Protestants who fled from religious persecution during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Centre will include resources for researching family history, as well as a programme of events and activities. For further information visit www.frenchhospital.org.uk/huguenot-heritage-centre
Society meeting

From Shillibeer to Bendy — the history of the London bus

Buses and transport have fascinated John Wagstaff all his life. So much so that he worked with London Transport and its successors for more than 40 years and now in retirement shares his enthusiasm and knowledge by giving talks on transport. John, who is a very active member of the Beckenham Historical Association and editor of their newsletter, joined us in February as our speaker on From Shillibeer to Bendy: A Social History of the London Bus.

Many of our members share John’s transport enthusiasms, but he pointed out that “This is not a talk for bus anoraks” and there was plenty to interest and amuse non-transport historians in a talk that covered nearly 190 years of large, small and some decidedly odd buses.

The marvellous selection of slides used to illustrate the talk, most courtesy of London Transport, showed what an uncomfortable ride bus passengers must have had — no suspension, wooden seats, open top decks and, in the early days, fares that were beyond the reach of many people.

Anyone with connections to London knows Ken Livingstone’s bendy bus, but who was Shillibeer?

It turned out that he was a Frenchman and Mr Shillibeer’s bus, travelled from Paddington in 1829 [before the railway station] to Bank in the City, taking advantage of the new roads that by-passed villages. There were no tickets, they did not arrive until the 1880s, and double deckers — very precarious by the look of them — made an appearance in the early 1850s, around the time of the Great Exhibition.

Shillibeer introduced not just the concept of the omnibus, — the abbreviation bus did not appear until well into the 20th century — but also the word to the English language. He was a coachbuilder who had seen the Paris omnibus routes in 1828. The difference from other coach routes was no advance booking, fixed routes and boarding and alighting at will.

John told us: “Stanislas Baudry had originated the concept in Nantes. The town terminus was outside Monsieur Omnes’ greengrocer’s shop called Omnes Omnibus. The word omnibus gradually transferred from the shop to the vehicle. Shillibeer would have preferred the word ‘economist’.”

But Shillibeer did not last long in the “bus” trade. The idea of the bus quickly caught on and other operators soon started up on the same roads as well as other routes into London. Shillibeer was a victim of his own success and competition led to his
bankruptcy. Among those competitors was Thomas Tilling, who was a major operator in South London and whose family lived in Bromley [see Bromleag September 2008].

John’s slides took us through the development of the bus from a single-deck horse-drawn vehicle to early petrol buses, with an almost identical body style, through to more comfortable and reliable vehicles with pneumatic tyres in the 1920s and, 10 years later, a leap forward in design to a shape we recognise as the “modern” bus leading to everybody’s favourite, the Routemaster, which ran from 1956 to 2005. It can still be seen on London streets on special routes.

In 1855, numbers for routes were introduced and the No12 centred on Peckham was the first. It still runs along part of the same route. Many other buses have kept their routes but they are all now a lot shorter than even the mid-20th century.

Motorbuses were on the roads by 1905 but still with open tops. It was not until 1920 that people on the top deck were given shelter from the elements.
“In social terms,” said John, “The London bus gradually increased in popularity to a peak in 1948, thence a steady decline until 1981. But in London since 1986 there has been a steady rise back to 1948 levels.”

But whatever their role in public transport in the future, there is no doubt that many enthusiasts, including John, will keep the history and the memory of the London bus going strong. CH

In 1832 a Bus Code of Conduct was published in The Times. This was the first year in which buses, as opposed to short-stages, were first permitted by law to pick up and set down within “the stones” — the paved area — of Inner London. Some will make us laugh but others are still relevant today. Below are a few examples taken from the full list that appears in A History of London Transport by TC Barker and Michael Robbins.

- Keep your feet off the seats
- Do not get into a snug corner yourself, and then open widows to admit a North-Wester upon the neck of your neighbour.
- Do not impose on the conductor the necessity of finding you change. He is not a banker.
- Behave respectfully to females and put not an unprotected lass to the blush, because she cannot escape from your brutality.
- Do not introduce large parcels — an omnibus is not a van.
- Reserve bickering and disputes for the open field. The sound of your own voice may be music to your own ears — not so perhaps, to those of your companions.
- Refrain from affectation and conceited airs.

Bromley and the Second World War

When he introduced his talk, Brian Williamson explained that speaking about Bromley in the Second World War with its one obvious military target — Biggin Hill Airfield — would largely be a catalogue of the bombs and rockets that fell in the town. For this information he referred the audience to the book by Lewis Blake Bromley in the Front Line, copies of which are in the libraries.

Therefore, to begin with he outlined the developments that led to the creation of the Radio Direction Finding Network — later RADAR — and the setting-up of a cohesive operation which included the establishment of hundreds of reporting points manned by the Royal Observer Corps. This was only achieved by August 1939, so
Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s “piece of paper” bought the extra year which was needed to get the country ready.

Brian did, however, go on to highlight one particular raid, the night of the 16/17th April 1941. This was an attack on south and central London by some 700 bombers and they dropped about 900 tons of high explosives and 150,000 incendiaries, causing 1200 deaths and 2000 serious injuries.

Among the hundreds of incidents in Bromley was the total destruction of the Parish Church, with the death of its schoolgirl fire-watcher, the nearby Dunns furniture store in Market Square and Church House, also nearby.

Church House was, in fact, being used as the local headquarters of the Royal Observer Corps. The duty crew had to leave to go to their emergency alternative centre, only to find that it too was on fire. However, they soon managed to douse the flames and were soon back up and running.

Although the town had many casualties, with hundreds killed or seriously injured, many were protected by their family shelters, particularly at that time the corrugated iron Anderson shelter. Half-buried in back gardens and prone to flooding they were nonetheless protection against almost anything other than a direct hit.

At that time the lack of municipal shelters was explained by the fact that Bromley was regarded as a relatively safe area, although the proximity to Biggin Hill Airfield rather belied this. It was soon realised that the nearby Chislehurst Caves, empty, abandoned and locked up, offered protection. They were therefore broken into and used by people from all over south-east London. Although conditions were primitive to start with, eventually lighting, sanitation and some mechanical ventilation was installed. There was also a hospital, primarily for children, although one baby — named appropriately Cavena — was born there, and in recent times she returned for a celebration of the caves’ history.

Later in the war, when it was thought that the threat from bombing was over, there came death and destruction from flying bombs — “doodle bugs” or V1s, followed by V2 rockets — against the latter of which there was no defence. So once again the caves were in regular use, including at this time some of the WAAFs from Biggin Hill, one of whom, A Phillips, left a carved reminder dated 15 July 1944.

As a postscript, Brian mentioned that the Royal Observer Corps passed into history at the end of the war in 1945 only to be reborn as part of the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation tasked with detecting and reporting nuclear blasts in the Cold War. They worked from tiny underground rooms all over the country. Bromley’s HQ was under a house on the edge of Beckenham Place Park, but that, as they say, is another story.

John Barnes
Letters

The fate of the Bromley Bull

The article in March *Bromleag* about the painted panels from the Bull Inn in Bromley prompted Marie Edwards to get in touch.

She says an Inn stood on the Market Square site — where the Bull was situated — since the Middle Ages and that in earlier times while The Bell, round the corner in London Road, served the gentry it was the Bull that provided the liquid refreshment for their servants. Later the Bull moved upmarket and became a hotel with its assembly rooms providing an entertainment venue for the people of Bromley.

But it was clearly not too successful. According to Horsburgh the inn was called The Queen’s Head in 1717 and it ceased to be an inn in 1773, but he throws no further light on its origins. Marie said the building was then divided into two and that the ironmongers Isard and Son had one half and Skilton the butchers the other.

Marie, who now lives in Sussex, grew up in Bromley and was part of a wider family who traded and lived in and around Market Square. She remembers: “There was an alleyway beside the Bull and another near The Bell leading to a multitude of cottages and yards in the middle. This led into Walters Yard where my uncle Frank, my mother’s brother, had a place.” It was in this area, Marie was told, that bear-baiting had once taken place.

The Bull was demolished in the 1960s, replaced by a very uninspiring building, and became Cators supermarket. Today the building is home to Lloyds TSB and clothing chain Bon Marche. The buildings to the left of the Bull are still there – or at least the facades remain.

The Bull pictured in the late 19th century still with it’ imposing portico alongside Isard’s awnings.

Photo courtesy of Bromley Local Studies Library
Information wanted on Sir Joseph Swan ...

I am the heritage rep for the Chislehurst Society and I very much enjoy reading the articles in your magazine when I am in the Local Studies Library. I saw you had an enquiry about Bickley Hall. I do have a contact who knows something about The Hall c 1917 so I can put the two together.

I also saw mention of Sir Robert Laidlaw in reference to The Warren. Sir Robert lived in Chislehurst in 1900 and there is a story about him on our website if your readers are interested www.chislehurst-society.org.uk/Pages/About/People/Laidlaw_Robert.html

I have a question of your group myself. Has anyone done any research into J W Swan of Lauriston, Bickley? He was famous for electric light. Why was he living in Bromley? The article on him in the Bromley Record for December 1894 tantalises me but I must concentrate on Chislehurst for my own research!

Joanna Friel, email: joanna.friel@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07850898535

... and on Eric Broadley and Andy Green

I am looking for information relating to the early life of Eric Broadley, born 1928 in Bromley. He started Lola Cars at what is now the Rashbrook and Amos garage Bromley Common. This year is the 50th year of the Ford GT40, a car developed from a Lola design.

Also Andy Green, born 1962, who is current World Land Speed Record holder and attempting the 1,000mph record this year. I understand he went to St Olave's Grammar School.

Michael Lewis, email: Lmichael701@aol.com or via the editor

Website queries — can you help?

Some interesting queries are coming into our website. If you have any information that will help any of the following researchers please log on to www.bblhs.org.uk and reply at the Seeking Information page. Or, if you prefer, get in touch with Bromleag’s editor, contact details on the inside cover.

Pioneer Health Farm, Bromley Common

I am seeking information about the Pioneer Health Centre Farm, also known as the Peckham Experiment. The farm was at Oakley House, Bromley Common, Kent. Is any information available about how the farm was run and what local people thought of it? I would be very grateful for any information for my MA project on horticulture and health in the first half of the 20th century. Sophie Greenway
Allotments for First World War soldiers
I am trying to find out information about allotments in Bromley and how First World War soldiers suffering from shellshock worked the allotments as a form of rehabilitation and how herbs and honey were used to aid healing. Any information or pictures would be appreciated. Sandra Eder

Lance-Corporal John Stent
I am researching the history of a group of First World War British soldiers who became detached from their units during the retreat from Mons to the Marne in August 1914. They were taken in by villagers in Iron, Aisne where they were sheltered for four months before being betrayed and shot by the Germans on 25 February 1915.

One of the soldiers was a Bromley man, Lance-Corporal John Stent. Before enlisting he lived with his father, John, mother, Elizabeth and sister, Edith at 86a High Street, Bromley. His father was a gardener; his sister Edith worked as school teacher. Edith married once, possibly twice. Hedley Malloch

Eleanor Marx’s short stay in Green Street Green
Karl Marx’s daughter, Eleanor, was resident for a while in Green Street Green but details about where she lived are sketchy. Letters written to her sister, Laura, from September 1895 give her address as Green Street Green, Orpington, but no further details.

In October she tells Laura “We are still house-hunting ... we find that all the nice houses are either let or too dear and the “noble residences” we go to see are more often than not in some unspeakable slum. Rents here are something fearful.” She was advised, she says, to buy rather than rent. By December she had bought a house in Jews Walk, Sydenham.

Michael Rawcliffe believes she came to the Orpington area because her publisher lived nearby. But who was the publisher and where exactly did she live. If you can shed any light on Eleanor’s stay in Green Street Green, the editor would be delighted to hear from you.
The mysterious Knewleave Bridge

Travellers between New Beckenham and Lower Sydenham stations have been intrigued by an old stone bridge crossing the river Pool, which had become visible when trees were felled for the building of a new estate off Copers Cope Road. Beckenham historian Pat Manning wondered if it was Knewleave Bridge: “It could be over 230 years old and take us back to when the Cators first came to Beckenham.

“An image of the bridge from Ian Muir of the beckenhamhistory.co.uk website shows the Midland Bank pavilion on the left which indicates that, if the bridge were there before the railway, it would have been on the path between the two farms of Copers Cope and Kent House.”

Cartographer, William Faden, 1749-1836, produced maps of the 25 miles round London in 1788 which were an amalgam of county maps from the 1760s. The local map appeared to show Knewleave Bridge just where the old bridge was revealed. The rivers Beck and Chaffinch joined to form the Pool shortly before the bridge.

But Pat decided a little more evidence was required and consulted the 1953 OS map and other sources at Bromley Library. “The map shows two footbridges, the one over the Pool River at 36507079 and the one that is being seen from the train at 368708, that I think is in what was the garden centre of the Clarke nurseries.

“I looked up the Tookey news cutting in the Beckenham Journal of 16 March 1957 where the designer H N Ginns decided to call his new block of flats in Copers Cope Road Knewleave House in memory of the bridge which had disappeared from the Pool River by the allotments just west of Kent House Road. The position of the Knewleave Bridge on the old maps like Andrews, Herbert and Dury 1768 is anything but clear but if it crossed the river Pool it cannot be the bridge that is being seen today from the train.

“I'm now trying to locate any members of the Clarke nursery family to see if the bridge belonged to them, but I may have to leave it there. I've also asked the Copers Cope Residents Association. I have to thank the librarians of the Bromley Local Studies for their help.”

Pat Manning, email: ben-ja@ntlworld.com or via the editor
I am a descendent of the Dunn family of Bromley who used to have a furniture business in Market Square from the 18th century up until the business was sold to Heals in the 1960s. I have been doing research into the (short) military careers of my great uncles who died in the Battle of the Somme and have now come up against a brick wall and wonder if a member of your society might be able to give me a new lead.

My father died at the age of 96 last year and among his papers I found artefacts relating to Frederick Charles Robert Dunn – (Great Uncle Charlie) — after whom he had been named. These included a silver cigarette box given on his 21st birthday and also the cards which my great grandparents had printed advising of the deaths of their sons, which included extracts of the letters of condolence sent by the battalion commanders and chaplains.

As a result of the interest that this aroused, my wife and I visited the Somme region to find the grave of Harman Dunn and the name of Charlie on the Thiepval Monument. Probably, we were the first family members to do so since their deaths. While we were in the Thiepval Visitor Centre, we found that there were computer terminals through which one could look up the history of the people whose names were carved on the memorial. There was nothing for Uncle Charlie so we submitted information.

Frederick Charles Robert Dunn (FCRD) was born in Bromley, Kent, on 8 April 1893, the eighth child and third son of Herbert and Louisa Dunn. He was baptised at Bromley Parish Church, where his father was a churchwarden for over 30 years.

In the 1911 census he is listed as an accountant’s clerk working for the family business, Dunns of Bromley. With the outbreak of war in 1914, he volunteered in response to Lord Kitchener’s appeal for men to join the “New Armies”. He enrolled for a three-year Short Service as a Private in the 18th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. Charlie was awarded a commission on 14 December 1914 and as part of the 74th Brigade moved to France in September 1915.

The Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916 and on 9 July the 74th Brigade was sent to the area of Ovillers-La Boiselle. Its organisation seems to have been a shambles. It reported itself on a certain line but was actually in advance of that line. The official diary records: “Officers in this Brigade did not appear capable of reading their maps”. The GOC of this brigade also had not been up to view the situation and had no clear understanding of the real situation in the ground. This was put down principally to inexperience.

JRR Tolkien (author of the Lord of the Rings trilogy) was in the same platoon as
FCRD as signals officer. He wrote home to his mother that, if you were an officer, the odds seemed stacked against you. Twenty-three year-old FCRD, the Captain of “A” Company, he reported, had been shot through the head. In fact, FCRD was only a Second Lieutenant, but such had been the carnage of the few days they had been in the trenches, that he had been given command of the company as he was the most senior officer still alive – but not for long. It has recently been discovered that the Germans were listening to the telephone conversations of the British troops in the La Boiselle area, so knew in advance when an attack was planned.

The Battalion was then moved out of the line on 10 July to Bouzincourt and then Senlis to rest and regroup. The battle around continued, though, and it was impossible to recover the bodies of the dead until much later. The intense shelling made it all but impossible to identify the bodies and thus FCRD has no known grave and is, instead, commemorated on the great memorial at Thiepval.

These conditions on the battlefield also had an effect on the extraordinary delay in the War Office advising FCRD’s parents of his death. In fact, they learned of it from the local paper, which had found out that a Lt Dunn had lost his life. But it did not know which Lt. Dunn. Imagine the anguish of his parents. Eventually, after an exchange of correspondence with the War Office, they received confirmation that it was Charlie and not Harman Dunn. But their relief that Harman was alive did not last more than a couple of weeks.

Harman, the oldest of the Dunn brothers, born in 1882, also worked in the family business, but had joined the West Kent Yeomanry in 1899. At this time the regiment, which was mounted, was part of the forerunner of the Territorial Army. Originally, at the outbreak of war, he served with the Royal West Kent Regiment but he was promoted to First Lieutenant in February 1916 and moved to the 12th Bn. King’s Liverpool Rifles. He was killed just 23 days after his younger brother, while fighting in the Morval area. He is buried at Serre Road 2 cemetery.

Last month, out of the blue, I received an email from Andrew Mackay of Burnley, Lancs, telling me that he was writing a history of the 11th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers
and had got in touch via the information that I had given to the Thiepval Visitor Centre. He had information about a battle at Vimy Ridge that Uncle Charlie had been involved in and of which I was unaware. That was exciting enough, but he had also just bought on eBay a piece of trench art, pictured on the previous page, with the name of FCR Dunn on it referring to the action at Vimy Ridge and also giving the date and place of his death. It is in the form of a paperknife whose handle is a German Mauser bullet. Very kindly, he has sold it to me so that it is back in the family.

None of the living Dunn descendents ever remember seeing it before. Uncle Charlie’s sister Felicia Dunn never had it in her house in Murray Avenue, Bromley, although I do remember seeing his medals there. So who made it, or who had it made? And where has it been for the best part of a century? The most likely place is Bromley, so has anyone in your Society ever seen it? This is a mystery I would dearly love to solve!

John Waters, Abbotsgate, 41a Powderham Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 1HD
jw@waters-online.com

How many names can a village have?

In the March edition of Bromleag Judith Everett was curious about the spelling of the name Knockholt — the village sits just outside the Bromley border and has always had close connections with Orpington.

At the time Marie Louise Kerr, curator at Bromley Museum, had the most beautiful Georgian silk map The Environs of Counties Twenty Miles Round London by Thomas Kitchin on display, which showed an early spelling. “We haven’t an exact date for the map, but Kitchin’s dates are 1719–1784 and many of his maps appear to date 1750–70. On our silk map the name is Nockholt.”

But it seems Knockholt has had an ever-changing spelling. Geoffrey Copus referred Judith to Warlow’s History of Knockholt. Warlow says: “The letter “K” in Knockholt is of comparatively recent date. It appeared on a print of 1798 but it did not become general in the Parish Registers till about 1824.”

He lists 20 different ways the name has been spelt. The earliest is Ockholte (1197) and it then morphs over the centuries in various documents into Ocolte; Okehole; Hokolt; Nokelte; Nocolte; Nokholte; Okolt; Noccolt; Nokholt; Nokoltd; Nokeholde; Nockhoulte.

There are other variations that take in the name Scots — such as Scottes-okholte and Scottesnocolte — called after the founder of Knockholt Church, Ralph Scot.

Twenty different names has to be a record. Or do you know any of Bromley’s villages that have been so inventive in their spellings?
The Baddeley twins — from Bromley to Wimbledon and beyond

As the world gets ready for another multi-million pound tennis championship at Wimbledon this month David Green looks back at the career of the Baddeley brothers, particularly Wilfred who was Wimbledon champion in the 1890s

On 11 January 1872 twin boys, Wilfrid and Herbert, were born at 28 Widmore Road, Bromley, to Frederick Piper Baddeley, solicitor, and his wife Catherine Eliza (née Vine). At the time both Frederick and Catherine were 30 years of age and they already had two girls, Hilda, aged three, and Ann, aged two.

Frederick Baddeley was a partner in the family firm of Thomas Baddeley and Sons, solicitors, which is believed to have been founded in the City in the latter part of the 18th century. In the Law List of 1790 there is a reference to Thomas Baddeley, attorney, with an office in Lincolns Inn Fields serving on the King’s Bench.

The twins were later to achieve fame for their prowess on the tennis courts and won both singles and doubles championships at Wimbledon.

Patricia Knowlden describes a row of Georgian town houses in Widmore Road, lying to the east of the old Congregational chapel. One of these might have been No 28, which would have stood approximately where Sharps showroom now stands. The upper floors of No 27, still visible above the present Bromley Bike Company’s shop on the north side of Widmore Road, may well reflect the style of No 28, where, apart from family members, there were two live-in servants.

The 1881 Census shows the family were then resident at 6 Hope Park, and had been enlarged by the addition of three more children — Evelyn, then age seven, Frederick C, age five, and Muriel, age two. The household was supplemented by a cook, a housemaid and a nursery maid. The 1891 census shows that the family had moved yet again, this time to Streatham, although their mother, Catherine Baddeley, is not listed on the census form.

Horsburgh tells us that the twins “encouraged by a wise father, and with a good grass court in their own garden, began to develop, almost from infancy, their aptitude for the game (i.e. tennis) ... as pupils at Quernmore School they had the advantage of a hard court”. The fact that the twins won their first prizes in an open tournament at Lowestoft when only 12, shows their precocious talent.

After a brief spell at the Hope Park Tennis Club, the twins joined the Bromley Lawn Tennis Club in 1886 and remained there until 1890, when the family moved to...
Streatham. The Bromley Club was then located at the foot of South Hill Park beyond Bromley South Station. Horsburgh gives the following description of the club’s status at the time: “Bromley Lawn Tennis Club established its reputation as certainly the strongest club in the County of Kent, with very considerable claims, for several years, to be considered the strongest club in the world.”

Horsburgh’s hyperbole may not be unconnected with the fact that for a time he was secretary of the club and was a member of the team of which the Baddeley twins were the leading players. Nevertheless, the records, such as exist, suggest that the Bromley club was defeating all comers and it can be no coincidence that the brothers were playing for the club at the time.

In the Bromley Lawn Tennis Club’s 120th anniversary brochure W Baddeley is listed as Men’s Challenge Cup holder for the years 1888, 1889 and 1899.

In 1877, when the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club initiated the tennis championships, only the Gentlemen’s Singles was played. In that year there were 22 entrants and a mere 200 spectators who paid one shilling each to see the final. In 1844 Gentlemen’s Doubles and Ladies’ Singles were introduced.

From 1877 until 1922 the tournament was in two parts — the All Comers in which, just as today, players battled their way through successive rounds, and the Championship, in which the previous year’s champion played the winner of the All Comers. This seems to give the champion an unfair advantage but appears to have been the accepted procedure. From 1922 the All Comers format has been adopted for all major tournaments.

Wilfred Baddeley made his debut at Wimbledon in 1890, when he lost in the quarter finals. He returned in 1891 to win the final in four sets against Joshua Pim and in
doing so became —at 19— the youngest player to hold the Championship until Boris Becker won the Wimbledon singles title in 1985. In 1891 he is reported to have defeated Renshaw in the semi-final by 6-0, 6-1, 6-1 in half an hour; if this is so, it must be the fastest five-setter of all time, but timing records of the period are often vague.

Wilfred won the championship the following year, beating Pim again in four sets. The tables were turned in 1893 when Pim won in the Challenge Round and again in 1894 when Wilfred made it through the preliminary rounds only to be beaten by him in straight sets in the final.

Baddeley regained the title in 1895, when he received a walkover in the semi-final as his brother, Herbert, withdrew, because of their compact never to play each other in competition. In the final of 1896 Wilfred lost to Harold Mahoney in five sets and so ended his singles finals record at the All England Championships with three wins and three runners-up.

It is indicative of Wilfred Baddeley’s detailed analysis of the game that early in the 1890s he was able to produce a short booklet entitled Lawn Tennis full of advice about how to play the game. While considered relevant in its day, it is now outdated.

In addition to his successes at Wimbledon, Wilfred Baddeley won the Irish Championship in 1896, where he would probably have met his old rival Joshua Pim playing on his home ground, the Northern Championships, singles and doubles, in 1894 and 1897, the South of England Singles Championship and the Sussex Singles Championship.

George Hillyard, who has been described as one of the foremost men’s players of the international circuit between 1886 and 1914, reaching the quarter-finals of the singles at Wimbledon in 1889, winning the doubles in 1889 and 1890 as well as the Olympic doubles in 1908, has given the following appreciation of Wilfred Baddeley: “W Baddeley was a fine all-round player. He had no weak point anywhere. His game, however, just lacked that little extra sting and power which the superman must possess. For accuracy and judgement he has seldom been equalled, never surpassed, certainly not in the first-named attribute ... his quickness on his feet was also remarkable. Very small and very light, had he possessed more physical power and weight, it is quite possible he might have been the greatest player the world has ever seen.”

In an article in the sports magazine Pastime of 1891 the writer commented that apart from playing with wonderful accuracy, Baddeley kept his head well at the most critical times and had a facility to place the ball even when running at full speed.

Although Wilfred was the better player, Herbert was no mean performer. Together the brothers made a formidable pair and won the Gentlemen’s Doubles title at the All England Club on four occasions, in 1891, 1894, 1895 and 1896, in addition to being
runners-up in 1892 and 1897. Herbert also partnered his brother in other tournaments throughout the country.

The Doubles finals at the All England Club of 1892 and 1894 must have provoked some local rivalry. In the 1892 final the Baddeleys were beaten by HS Barlow and EW Lewis, Barlow had been holder of the Men’s Challenge Cup at the Bromley Lawn Tennis Club in 1885 three years before Wilfred Baddeley. The Baddeleys took their revenge in 1894, beating the same pair of Barlow and Lewis, but only scraping through by winning the fifth set 8-6.

It must be remembered that it was not until 1968 that the All England Championships entered the professional era, so the Baddeley brothers would have had to be financially self-supporting during their tennis careers. Indicative of the "remuneration" which amateur players received, a finalist at Wimbledon in 1938 received a £5 voucher to Mappin & Webb. By comparison, in 2012 the All England Club paid £1.15 million to the winner of the Gentlemen’s Singles.

The brothers retired from tournament play in 1897 at the relatively early age of 25. Even while competing at the highest level they were studying to become solicitors. The Times of 10 November 1888 lists the twins among the The Baddeley brothers with Wilfred right
candidates who had passed the preliminary examination of the Law Society.
They passed their final exams in 1894 and were admitted as qualified solicitors in 1895, at which point they joined their father and uncle in the family firm of solicitors with offices in Leadenhall Street in the City of London.
The brothers retired from the family firm in 1919, when their cousin Cyril Laud Baddeley took over as senior partner and was joined by David Christian Wardlaw.
In 1908 the brothers revived the semi-defunct Bee Badminton Club in London and for a couple of seasons both were enthusiastic players. It is probable that the qualities that had made them so successful at lawn tennis might have enabled them to be equally successful at badminton, but unfortunately they were obliged to give up all active participation due to ill health.
Wilfred served on the All England Lawn Tennis Club Committee for several years. He was a Vice President of the Lawn Tennis Association and between 1913 and 1919 was President of the Badminton Association. He married in 1899 and lived at 144, Cromwell Road, Kensington, until 1920 and died in Mentone, France, on 24 January 1929 at the age of 57. He was survived by his wife but had no children.
Herbert married in 1901 and lived first at 31 Hoyards Road, Kensington, and later in Ealing. He died on 20 July 1931 in Cannes, leaving a wife and one daughter.
Apart from their sporting activities, another accomplishment of the twins was their talent as amateur actors. One can detect a hint of humour and a twinkle in the eye of Wilfred Baddeley in the photograph of him in his early 40s. They founded and organised a group named *The Follies* which, unfortunately, became so successful that the brothers found it took more time than they could afford. However, the impresario, HG Pelissier, saw its possibilities and took it over, turning it into a successful professional concern.

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There is considerable archaeological evidence to provide us with a picture of Keston in the days prior to written records. The remaining embankments of the Iron Age fort constructed at Holwood in the second and third centuries BC remain an impressive sight even in the 21st century. The bank and ditch crossing the common and built at the same time, although not as spectacular is still clearly visible.

The Roman villa site at Warbank has supplied a wealth of information on the life and times of the people living there in the years between 43 and 410 AD but the following 1000 years offers historians very little evidence to help piece together a convincing story of the hamlet of Keston and the common.

The first written records mentioning Keston are found in four Anglo Saxon charters issued between AD 862 and 987 when there was a dispute over the ownership of the manor of Bromleage. The parish due south of Bromleage is named as Cyssestan with the parish boundary following the same line as it does today, roughly along the route of the Croydon Road.

The Domesday Book supplies a valuable overview. It describes Keston in these words: “The same Gilbert (Maminot) holds of the bishop (of Liesieux) Cheston. It is taxed at 1 sulung of the arable land. In the demesne there is 1 carucate and 4 villains with 1 carucate. There is wood for pannage of 5 hogs. In the time of King Edward the confessor and after it was worth 60 shillings and now 40 shillings.”

This account does suggest some decline in the fortunes of Keston between 1066 and the collated evidence presented to William the Conqueror at Winchester in 1086. The record poses another question. Why did the woods support so few hogs? Five is a lot fewer than was recorded in other areas of similar size in Kent. Perhaps the area of suitable woodland was much less than we imagine. This possibility is given some support as evidenced in the Wickham manor rolls of 1485, which record that 102 acres or only 8.8% of the manor was woodland. However, when interpreting the figures it must be remembered that most of the heathland would be wood pasture with trees growing at varying densities.

There are two documents of the 13th century which mention Keston. The first one of 1257/58 describes a grant by Nicholas Pessun to William and Aveline Pessun of his manor of North Keston which contained “pasture, waters, ponds, mills”. The exact location of the mill is not described. The second document describes a property and its value following the death of Alexander de Cheyne in 1296. He is described as the owner of the manor of North Keston and states: “There is one mill there which for want of millstones stands empty and is worth nothing.”.
Henry Heydon’s survey, 1485

A new Lord of the Manor, Henry Heydon, arrived at Wickham Court in 1460. Henry was conscious of the need to provide himself with documented proof of ownership and details of the tenancies for every piece of land on his property. His steward signed the survey document, “an extent” giving a detailed account of his newly acquired manor, on 21 June 1485, just two months before the battle of Bosworth. This was Henry’s own Domesday Book, which was regularly updated by the later Lords of the manor who continued to hold Court Baron for recording all changes to property well into the 19th century.

From the survey of 1485 we know he held virtually all the parish of Keston, including what is described as the Lord’s “hethe”. The summary of land use for the manor gives the following details.

Manor in land    733 acres 2.5 roods
Woodlands       102 acres 1.5 roods
Heathland       329 acres

By 1500 the entire estate extended to over 3000 acres and held land in Wickham, Baston, as well as Keston North Court and Keston South Court. The survey names all tenants and often the previous tenant along with the form of payment and obligations they owed to the Lord of the Manor. What is clear and confirms the usual practice widely adopted in Kent was the commutation of payments from feudal labour obligations to money payment or rent.

Each croft is carefully measured in acres, roods and perches and whether there is a “messuage” (dwelling). Sometimes, special features of the property are recorded, such as a spring or chalk pit. Subsequent entries on the manor rolls recorded every change of ownership or alterations to the area of the holding and its boundaries. This was essential protection for the Lord when collecting rents or fines and for the peasant, who received a copy of the roll stating his or her payments and obligations. The copyholder tenant was by this time legally protected in much the same way as a modern householder with a lease. A transcript of manor rolls describing the boundaries of the hethe was made by Bernard F Davis in 1932.

It begins: “All the hethe extends from the north east corner of the Lord’s land at Tilathfield with Oldbury at the south east of the wood called Holwood.” We know precisely where this spot is located as Oldbury is the medieval name for the Iron Age fort and Tilathfield is marked on Holwood estate maps as late as the 19th century.

However, the following description is more difficult to interpret: “Then north on the west side to the northwest corner of the South Wood going east to the north end of the South Wood to the separate heath of Baston lying in Farnborough.”

The South Wood remains open woodland extending to Ninham’s Wood, which is in the parish of Farnborough. From the account, this land was held by Baston Manor,
which was a secondary manor of Wickham Court.

The writer goes on to describe the boundary as “then turning and going north on the west side of the heath to the boundary of the township of Brymley to the separate heath of Alan Nayssh at Padmyll and then going south of this heath to the heath of William Causton and the Lords grove and close of Henry Bethill to the common way leading from Keston to Bromley which way divides the heath of Baston and then going south on the east side of the said way to the Lords closes and tenements at Keston and then going east on the north side of the closes to the pasture of the Lord called Tillathfield with Oldbury and then going on the west side to
the pasture aforesaid east corner thereof at the end of Holwoode which heath aforesaid in all profits is separate to the Lord”.

This written description demonstrates the great difficulty faced by estate stewards attempting to define an area of land and its boundaries in the days before the availability of maps. It also becomes apparent from the survey that the area described as “hethe” was not related in any way to the land which might be designated as common.

The Croydon road from Locks Bottom to West Wickham follows very closely the parish boundary between Bromley and Keston. Almost certainly this is the boundary referred to in the survey.

The commonway referred to might well be Commonside, which connects the Croydon road with Keston Village. The site of the Lord’s tenements is difficult to place but from the description the cottages could be located around the hill known today as Fox Lane. On the south of the hethe there are a number of named crofts sited on the land sloping down from Oldbury (Holwood fort) to Shire Lane while at the north end, along the Croydon road, other holdings are identified.

Henry Botyler is recorded as holding two acres one rood of land lying at Holwood for which he paid five and half pence in rent. Alan Nayssh is said to have a separate piece of heath along the boundary with Bromley. William Causton has a neighbouring holding which might have been situated along the river Ravensbourne at Padmall Wood. William held another 18 acres of land in Keston on which he paid rent of 22 and a half pence and one hen. William Causton was a copyholder of some substance but the Causton family’s main landholdings and messuage was in Wickham parish where they lived for many generations.

**Copyholders and Gavelkinders**

The traditional system of landholding widely used in Kent was based on the ancient Anglo Saxon custom of Gavelkind. Under this code the peasants’ obligations due to the lord were relatively few and not onerous, often being just a few days’ ploughing per year, and even these were commuted to a money payment by the 13th century. In other words, there were no villains with heavy feudal obligations as found in some regions of England.

When Henry Heydon first acquired Wickham Court in about 1460 he attempted to re-establish labour services but failed against determined opposition from copyholders. As late as 1774, in the records of the Court Baron at Wickham, the steward wrote that the three sons of the deceased Robert Wilson came as “coheirs in gavelkind”.

In the Centre for Kentish Studies there exists a manuscript dated 1577 by which Sir Henry Lennard granted a copyhold to James Lange, one of his copyholders. James’s
holding is named as Pipers Land and with it came the right to use common land at Leaves Green. Both Leaves Green and Keston Common were part of Sir Henry’s manor and almost certainly followed the similar practices.

The common rights declared the copyholder could “keep upon any part of the common not enfolded, one horse or mare, two hoggges, two gottes, and twelve geese”. The copyhold went on to say that the rights were granted with “full power freedom and libertie unto the aforementioned his heirs and assigns forever”. Some interesting features are found in the contents of this document. It confirmed specific rights to a named copyholder that would not be applicable to others. However, it is almost certain such copyholds followed ancient practice and employed standard wording, always with possible exceptions. The reference “to any part not enfolded” suggests some parts of the common were fenced, possibly to “fold” animals. This practice was a method for fertilising farm fields but was this true for common land or was the Lord of the Manor recording an enclosure?

Enfolding was normally arranged for a specified time, but might such fences become permanent? Enclosure was a costly process and therefore permanent, except in those years when the Plague decimated the population and cultivated land would return to rough pasture.

As long as John Lange paid his rent regularly and any feudal heriot, he was free to assign his land as he saw fit. The heriot was a fee paid on inheriting a copyhold or other landholding. It usually meant the payment of the best beast for every property inherited. When George Ward Norman inherited The Rookery in 1871, the steward acting for the Duchy of Lancaster requested the payment of a heriot for every single property. The Duchy had been granted the status of Tenant in Chief over many manors early in the 15th century when Henry IV had ennobled his son, John of Gaunt.

Included in the Duchy lands were Farnborough, Wickham, Keston, St Pauls Cray and Lullingstone. As paramount tenant under the King, the Duchy held rights of warren, hunting, fishing, harvesting timber, financial compensation on all enclosures as well as heriot on newly inherited land. Despite the long survival of feudal customs relating to land, George W Norman chose to ignore the request, insisting that such customs no longer held legal power.

For the peasant a copyhold document was vitally important as proof of tenancy to a specified holding, much as the lease on a home is for a tenant today. It was equally important for the lord to ensure the full payment of rents and the good husbandry of his land.

The relatively small area given over to common land was carefully managed by the manorial courts, where the commoners formed the majority and where rights of common could be revised. Any changes to the customary rights or the boundaries of
the common land required the agreement of everyone with a copyhold granting them rights which were essential to the prosperity — even the survival — of many peasant farmers.

Among these rights was *pannage* the right to take pigs into woodland in the autumn to fatten on acorns and beech mast before slaughter. The Lord received one pig in every 10 for this right. *Turbary* gave peasants the right to take soils such as gravel, chalk (marl) and peat from commons where it was to be found. The commoners of Keston continued to use this right into the first decade of the 20th century, as evidenced by the number and size of the quarries that can be seen on the common.

When William Pitt wished to extend his estate and improve the seclusion of his house, he requested permission to enclose 30 acres of The Bulwarks on Keston Common. To do this he needed permission from the Lord of the Manor and all villagers with rights of common. A special vestry meeting was called at Keston Church on 6 July 1790 at which all present agreed to accept this proposal. By this agreement the villagers gave up all right of “commonage, turbary, way and passage whatsoever”. Pitt compensated the village for the loss of common land by pledging that he and his heirs “shall and will forever hereafter annually pay or cause to be paid unto the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the said parish of Keston, the full and clear sum of ten pounds’.

*Estovers* allowed the gathering of underwood for fuel but not the taking of timber which was possessed by the Lord. Until the 1950s the villagers of Great Wishford in Hampshire celebrated their right to gather wood from the Royal forest at Grovely by dancing six miles to Salisbury every year on Oak Apple Day. Their charter of 1603 stated their rights were held from “time immemorial” and allowed villagers to gather as much “dead or snapping woode, boughs and stickes as can be carried in a handcart”.

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Bromley Local History Society
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History is continually being made and at the same time destroyed, buildings are altered or demolished, memories fade and people pass away, records get destroyed or thrown in the bin.

BBLHS was formed in 1974 so that those with an interest in the history of any part of the borough could meet to exchange information and learn more about Bromley’s history.

We aim, in co-operation with the local history library, museums and other relevant organisations, to make sure at least some of this history is preserved for future generations.

We hold regular meetings and produce a newsletter and occasional publications where members can publish their research.

The society covers all those areas that are within the present day London Borough of Bromley and includes:
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- Coney Hall
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- Keston
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