

A STROLL THROUGH HISTORY IN CHADWELL HEATH AND MARKS GATE

Approaching Chadwell Heath from the west, the Tramway opened in 1903 and ran from Ilford to the borough boundary at Chadwell Heath Lane. It was replaced by trolleybuses in 1938 and by motorbuses in the late 1950s. The Greyhound pub, mentioned as early as 1592, on the south side of the High Road (opposite Grove Road) and now a Harvester Restaurant and pub, is the latest of several. There has been a Greyhound Inn on the site since Tudor times. A footpath beside the Greyhound leads to a footbridge over the railway, built in 1839, and continues south to Green Lane. At Essex Road the High Road was very narrow at one time and the few cottages there had to be pulled down and the road widened as vehicles kept crashing into them! Further along the High Road we pass the Chadwell Infants Board School opened in 1894 and replaced with a new building in 1933.

Continuing to Wangey Road and turning down there, we pass the site of the manor of Wangey, mentioned as Wanghou in 1254. Further along we reach Chadwell Heath station which opened in 1864 on the site of Wangey House, one of Dagenham's oldest buildings dating from 1250. Returning over the bridge and crossing Station Road we pass the site of Chadwell Heath Farm, part of the Wangey estate - later known as Broomfields. Continuing along Station Road to Chapel Lane we pass the site of the old school and chapel built in 1844 and moved to Wangey Road in 1928. A little further along we come to the site of the Gamecock off-licence on the corner of Back Lane. Across the road is the old Police Station, built on the site of the village stocks, and now replaced by a newer Police Station in Wangey Road. The "Eva Hart" pub now occupies the old police station.

On the corner of Station Road and High Road is the Coopers Arms, first mentioned in 1830. Turning down Back Lane we find on the left the only two cottages in the lane and these I believe to be the oldest surviving dwellings in Chadwell Heath, built in 1827. The old blacksmith used to live in one and horses' teeth have been found in the garden. Back Lane itself is probably the oldest road in Chadwell Heath and was once known as Post Office Lane. It is on the line of the old Roman Road from London to Colchester, of which Romford Road, High Road and London Road are all a part. If we walk through the alleyway further along on the left we come out into the High Road beside the original Post Office. The Fire Station once occupied the site of the post office, having previously been sited on the other side of the High Road on the corner of Japan Road. Tudor Parade, in which the present post office and Woolworths now stand, was built around 1938-39. There are flats on both sides of the High Road which were built at about the same time. Continuing east along the High Road we find the Baptist Church, built in 1905 to replace a chapel in Chadwell Heath Lane built in 1860. Alongside it, the present lunch and leisure centre used to be the Civic Restaurant during the 1939-1945 war.

Turning down St Chad's Road we find St Chad's parish church opened as a chapel of ease to Dagenham parish church in 1886 and established as a separate parish of St Chad's in 1895. There is a replica of St Chad's well (site in Billet Lane) built by local scouts here. There seems to

be no foundation for the belief in the connection with St Chad, the 7th century Christian missionary, to this district. The name Chadwell Heath probably derived from St Chad's well and the rough, boggy heath, a small clearing in Hainault Forest, known in 1440 as Black Heath and from the 17th century as Chadwell Heath. Returning to the High Road, the White Horse public house was recorded in 1602. There has been an inn on the site since the time of Elizabeth I.

The car showroom on the corner of Farrance Road stands on the site of the vicarage built in 1896 on a site given by Ind Coope - later vacated for the present vicarage in St Chad's Road. A school for infants and juniors in Bennett Road opened in 1907 and was bombed in 1940. Furze Infants School replaces it. If we turn down Whalebone Lane South we come to Whalebone Bridge (built in 1838/9 over the railway and rebuilt in 1936. Across the road is Crow Lane an ancient lane mentioned as Crawlond in 1356. Along the railway line by the boundary there is a Coal Dues Obelisk on the north side of the line - it cannot be reached safely now. Further down Whalebone Lane is Selinas Lane and the site of the Pines, an ancient house occupied by the Seabrook family, who farmed locally for hundreds of years. It was known earlier as Butlers Farm and was mentioned in 1243; it was demolished in 1956. Continuing along Selinas Lane - originally a footpath called Burley's Path in 1884 - used by local people to avoid the tollgate, we come to the site where a Bronze Age Palstave was found, thought to date from 1000 BC. Selinas Lane continues into Freshwater Road, built when the Becontree estate was developed. A footpath near here leads north to a footbridge built over the railway line in 1901 which connects with Heath Road. Returning to the Tollgate Inn junction, cross towards Romford and continue along to a Victorian neighbourhood pump restored in 1991. This stands near the original borough boundary - now moved in the latest boundary changes to include Coombewood Drive etc in Barking and Dagenham. Near the corner of Coombewood Drive is a Coal Dues Post dated 1861 also restored in 1991. Cross the London Road here to the Havering Stone - placed in 1641 and re-erected in 1909.

Walking back along the High Road we pass the site of Whalebone House, destroyed by enemy action in April 1941, revealing its Tudor origins. The whalebones flanking the gates, rescued by an ARP warden, were re-erected at Valence House Museum. Further along, the site of the old Whalebone Library, opened in 1931, stood on the site of Elgin and Wallace Lodges which had been built on part of the Whalebone House estate. We now have a new library completed in January 1999, and its car park occupies the site of the old library. Across Whalebone Lane is the Tollgate Inn which was the site of the ancient 10th milestone (from London) purported to have been "lost" by the borough council! It was also of course the site of the ancient Toll Gate. Continuing along the High Road to Ashton Gardens we reach the site of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel built in 1907, closed and sold in 1939. The site is now occupied by the clinic. Continuing up Ashton Gardens to Mill Lane we find the house and shop on the corner of Whalebone Lane where Henry Gillard Glindoni, a painter in oils and watercolour, had his home and studio from 1891 until 1931. Across Whalebone Lane is the site of Ford's Endowed School founded by trustees of the will of William Ford, a local farmer who died in 1825. It closed in 1935 and was demolished in 1961. Walking north along Whalebone Lane we find Warren Comprehensive School opened in 1935. Crossing back over Whalebone Lane, the site of Paulatim Lodge, a Georgian mansion built about 1830, lies between Pemberton Gardens and Lansbury Avenue. Returning down Mill Lane we find the United Reformed Church dated 1911, which is a replacement for the Congregational Church built in 1887. Continuing along Mill Lane

to Alexandra Road we reach the site of the three windmills after which Mill Lane is named. They were 18th century mills by the junctions of Edward and Alexandra Roads with Mayfair Avenue (formerly Alice Road). The last windmill was demolished in 1906.

Walk on into the High Road and along to Japan Road where at no. 2A Eva Hart, the famous survivor of the "*Titanic*" disaster in 1912 lived until her death in February 1996. On the other side of JOB Superstore an alley leads to St Chad's County School which opened in 1883 and was enlarged in 1897 and 1907. It is still in use by local organisations but not as a day school any more. Carrying on along the High Road cross Chadwell Heath Lane; near the bus stop there is an unusual Post Box cast with no protuberances so that it would roll (without going round in circles) in the workshop and in transit! It is an EIRR box.

Opposite Belfairs Drive, where a block of flats now stands, there were eight weatherboarded cottages which were reputed to be 150 years old when pulled down in 1965. Further along the High Road just beyond Reynolds Avenue is the site of Grove Farm, now occupied by Halfords Store. Along near the end of Grove Road is still a row of shops and cottages - Farm Terrace. The other side of Grove Road was the hamlet of Chadwell Street and the 9-mile post. It was part of the ecclesiastical parish of Barking until 1830. Turn up Grove Road to Gresham Drive - a short way along on the right hand side is an old pumping station, now used as club premises. Return to Grove Road and continue to the junction with Chadwell Heath Lane where we see Chadwell Heath Hospital, originally Ilford Isolation Hospital, opened in 1898 and enlarged in 1924. Continuing along Chadwell Heath Lane, near South Road on the right we see West View Cottages, built at the turn of the century. Carrying on through Chadwell Heath Lane and turning left along Little Heath there was an old pump in the garden of a bungalow in Barley Lane. This has now disappeared along with other properties demolished to build a new estate.

Continue over Eastern Avenue, which was opened in 1925, to the site of St James's Church on the left, built in the 1860s and demolished to make way for the new road. Turn right at Billet Lane to the site of St Chad's Well - a medicinal well commemorated by a plaque and thought to have given Chadwell Heath its name. As already mentioned a replica stands in St Chad's Church grounds. Close by is the site of Hainault (or Henhault) House mentioned in 1777. Continue along Billet Lane to the Crooked Billet at the corner of Padnall Road. There has been a Crooked Billet on this site since 1850. Further along to the end of Rose Lane is the site of Rose Lane Gate mentioned in 1777. A short way along Rose Lane is the site of Rose Lane Farm which had existed since the 14th century. Go back to Billet Lane and continue to the location of a 4th century Roman burial site. To the north of Billet Lane is the site of Furze House, a Georgian farmhouse first mentioned in 1794. Across Whalebone Lane is the site of Marks Gate mentioned in 1777. Turning south down Whalebone Lane North we pass the site of an old windmill, and further south we pass the site of the pre-14th century Marks manor house, attacked by Royalist troops in the Civil War in 1648. Continuing south we come to Warren Farm, shown on maps in 1844, with its 18th century red brick barn.

Here we end our stroll, though I am sure there are many more places of historical interest which I would be most grateful to hear about. This information has been gleaned from old maps - in particular the Godfrey edition of the old Ordnance Survey (Chadwell Heath 1914 - Essex New Series sheet 79.09, with notes by Tony Clifford). Many items were contributed by the late Eric

Dinnes, a local historian. I am also grateful to Mrs J Burt and Mr T Richardson, and contributions from Florrie Woolmer and Peggy Maloney. I am particularly indebted to Christine Wagg for all her help in this presentation. I am aware that some of the information may be incorrect or in the wrong place; many old maps had very conflicting data. If you know of more definite sitings or have any additional information I would be happy to make additions and corrections.

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