

facilities through disuse, accompanied by the loss of stabling arising from mechanisation. Nevertheless, a revival came in the inter-war period, based on the entry into the sport of moderately prosperous office workers living in the ever-expanding suburbs. New indoor riding schools were constructed in areas such as Clapham and Hampstead, and the lapsed riding facilities on Blackheath were revived. The expansion of the suburban riding community benefitted from the proximity of the outer Royal Parks – Richmond Park in particular became an extremely popular venue, necessitating the adoption of landscape management measures – and from the programme of conservation of Commons long since promoted by the City of London, which in 1878 had taken powers to acquire lands within twenty-five miles of its boundaries. The City's ownership of Epping Forest and of the (then) 'Kent and Surrey Commons' under individual Acts had conserved wide tracts of woodland, heathland and downland ideal for riding and enshrining many ancient trackways in what was to become the inner margins of the Green Belt.

The Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act of 1938 in turn enabled Home Counties authorities to purchase wide tracts of land with the aid of financial contributions from the London County Council. The advent of World War II delayed the realisation of the recreational potential of this land, but the historic landscapes of sites such as Oaks Park in Sutton and Trent Park in Enfield proved suitable to accommodate new recreational riding circuits in due course, whilst others, such as High Elms, contained tracks ranking as statutory bridleways.

Further loss of stabling, to urban renewal rather than lack of demand for riding, has been the most serious factor undermining the use of London's historic horse rides since World War II. The situation, however, has hopeful aspects, especially the enterprise of riders pursuing self-help solutions, as in the renovation of Hyde Park's riding facilities, and the willingness of relevant authorities to accept that maneges are a valuable recreational activity. Public 'riding rings' were pioneered in response to popular demand on Wimbledon Common; the former London County Council provided small jumps on Hampstead Heath Extension

as long ago as 1951; fenced maneges have been created in the Royal Parks and on Tooting Common, greatly aiding the training of riders, especially important in fostering riding as a major activity for disabled people.

Some of the traditional, long-established riding schools near the major riding areas have survived. Elsewhere, where such schools have been lost through wartime constraints or building development, the emergence of community-based stables and 'city farms' has provided the wherewithal for riding to continue, as has been the case at Hampstead Heath and Wormwood Scrubs.

The prospectus of the Clapham Park Riding Schools c.1938 informed its prospective clients that:

advanced pupils wishing to enjoy out-door riding may make up parties for hacking on Tooting Bec Common, a fine open space of 150 acres, offering a specially-prepared riding track shaded by fine old elms and chestnut trees.

The elms have long since fallen victim to Dutch Elm disease and the great gales of the 1980s accounted for many of the other trees which demarcated this particular ride. However, the London Borough of Wandsworth, by including the replanting of the riding avenue in its arboricultural programme, is preserving one of the most evocative elements of the Common's recreational landscape for future generations to enjoy, both as a tree-lined vista and a place to take the air on horseback.

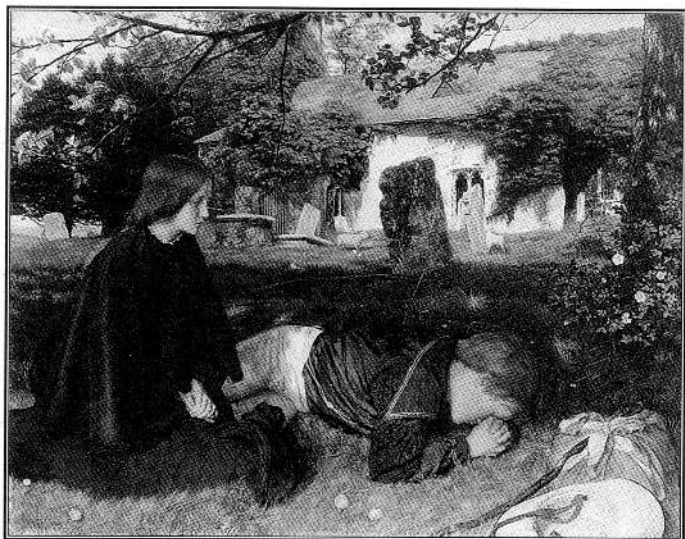
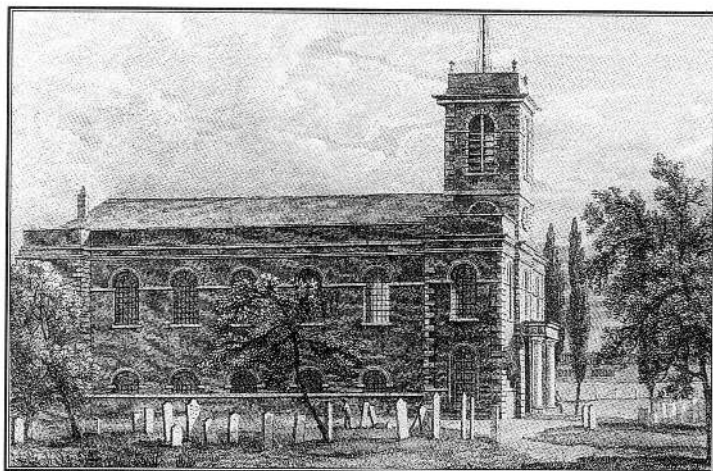
BRINGING OUT THE DEAD

By Sally Williams

In the early afternoon of 23rd March 1995, the funeral cortege of Ronnie Kray – former Colonel of the East End underworld – began its stately progress from W. English & Son's funeral parlour in Bethnal Green Road to St Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green, (fig. 34) the procession passing close to the site of the Kray Twins' former childhood home in Vallance Road, Whitechapel, on its way.

The church was packed with mourners, including 'former villains such as Frankie Fraser, a member of the South London Richardson gang, Freddie Forman and ex-Kray Firm member Tony Lambrianou', who, with brothers Reggie and Charlie, came to pay

BRINGING OUT THE DEAD



34. Ronnie Kray's funeral (1995)
(PHOTOGRAPH BY PRU CLEMENTS)

35. 'St Matthew Bethnal Green' by G. Shepherd & etched by W. Angus for *The Architectural Series of London Churches* (1818)
(COURTESY TOWER HAMLETS LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY)

36. All Saints' Churchyard, Chingford shown in Arthur Hughes *Home from Sea* (1862)
(COURTESY OF THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD)



37. Detail of *A Map of the County of Essex* by Chapman and André showing Merry Hill, Chingford (1777)
(BY KIND PERMISSION OF PHILLIMORE & CO. LTD, SHOPWYKE MANOR BARN, CHICHESTER)

38. Chingford Mount Cemetery (MARCH 2000)
(PHOTOGRAPH BY SALLY WILLIAMS)

39. Wanstead Friends Burial Ground (MARCH 2000)
(PHOTOGRAPH BY SALLY WILLIAMS)

their last respects. The service began with a recording of Frank Sinatra's *My Way* – one of the deceased's favourite tunes – and was concluded with Whitney Houston's *I Will Always Love You*. The coffin, 'of dark oak with gold handles', was then conveyed to a 'Victorian glass-sided hearse, drawn by six black-plumed horses' and, accompanied by twenty-seven Daimlers, travelled through Bethnal Green and Bow to Chingford Mount Cemetery some ten miles away. Seven thousand strong 'lined the street and rooftops to catch a glimpse of the impressive funeral cortege'.¹

Londoners, and perhaps particularly East Enders, are proud of their longstanding traditions, not least their celebration of death – a celebration which is conventional, if somewhat garishly sentimental. Ronnie Kray, like many before him, aspired to 'a traditional East End funeral'. His elder brother Charlie remarked that 'Ron had always said he wanted the horses and plumes. We wanted him to have the best'. Now, some five years later, Charlie has made the same journey.

Londoners have always shifted from place to place – living in one place, perhaps dying in another, buried in another still, sometimes re-interred in yet another. The sheer density of population in the metropolis has meant that it is overlaid – or underlaid – with a vast necropolis. These burial grounds, cemeteries and churchyards inevitably contain layers of London's history, threaded with connections and narratives.

St Matthew's Church used to be surrounded by its own graveyard (fig. 35) but since the end of the nineteenth century this has been a public garden. Discussions about the need for a separate parish of Bethnal Green began in the 1690s and St Matthew's Church is a Nicholas Hawksmoor-might-have-been, as his designs were prepared for a new church to be built through the auspices of the Fifty New Churches Commissioners. Apparently the fact that Hawksmoor's *Basilica after the Primitive Christians* was not built at that time was greeted with relief by some in the area. The Rector of Stepney was fearful of lost income from tithes if Bethnal Green became a separate parish, and local people were anxious about the expense of a large, new church and

its incumbent clergy. However, the matter was only held in abeyance, and in 1742 Bethnal Green Parish was created by Act of Parliament and a local rate imposed for the building of the new church of St Matthew, which was designed by George Dance the Elder and consecrated in 1746. The early congregation would have included a good proportion of the Huguenot weavers and textile workers who had settled in the area after fleeing anti-Protestant France in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

St Matthew's Churchyard appears to have been a place of more than burial from the outset, and its history provides an insight into past social mores of a distinctly macabre nature. Dog- and bullock-baiting, attended by large crowds, took place on land adjacent to the churchyard in the mid-eighteenth century, once leading to an interruption in the Sunday Service caused by the arrival of a fleeing animal seeking refuge, following a chase through the churchyard. Like others at that time, the churchyard was subject to the attentions of body snatchers, a situation which led to the erection of a Watch House in 1754, a building which was later expanded to house the parish fire engine and which remains in one corner of the site today. According to the Vestry Minutes of 1792, the watchman was to be issued with 'blunderbuss and rattle', and a reward of two guineas was offered to anyone apprehending a body snatcher. Underworld connections accrued to the parish church well before the era of the Kray Twins: in the early nineteenth century, churchwarden and licensing magistrate Joseph Merceron was imprisoned for – among other crimes – running a protection racket, operating a string of brothels, and appropriating parish poor funds. Notwithstanding his term in prison, Merceron later returned to his former offices and lived to an old age. The Merceron tomb can be seen in the churchyard still, and the name also appears as a local street. Iniquitous associations aside, the church has other more worthy connections. John Wesley is known to have preached at St Matthew's in November 1775, delivering, in his own words, 'a charity sermon for the widows and orphans of the soldiers that were killed in America'. Septimus Hansard, Rector between 1864 and 1895, was known for his socialist ideals and his curate Stewart

1. *East London Advertiser*, 30 March 1995.

Headlam (at St Matthew's from 1873 to 1878) founded an early socialist group, the Guild of St Matthew, in 1877.

In 1896 the churchyard was turned into a public garden and is now maintained by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It is quite pleasantly laid out with grass, rose gardens and other formal beds, paths and seating, and with few signs of the burials that took place here aside from the two railed tombs near the church. Bombed in 1940, the present building largely dates from 1961; the exterior shell was restored according to Dance's original designs while the interior is modern.

Chingford Mount Cemetery, the destination of the Kray funeral procession, is located in a quite different environment from Bethnal Green's inner city. Opposite one entrance to the cemetery at the crest of Old Church Road is Chingford's old parish church of All Saints with its picturesque small churchyard. This church became decorously ivy-clad in the second half of the nineteenth century and, while too dilapidated for church usage, it became the inspiration of such Pre-Raphaelite artists as Arthur Hughes, whose *Home from Sea* (1862) depicts 'The Green Church' beyond the tearful sailor. (fig. 36) You could still be in the heart of a country parish here were it not for the distant sight of Canary Wharf and the constant hum of traffic. Across the road, Chingford Mount Cemetery is a large undulating site of nearly 17ha. which stands on the location of an estate known as Caroline Mount or the Mount Caroline Estate after the wife of the Admiral who lived here. The non-conformist Abney Park Cemetery Company purchased the Mount Caroline Estate in 1884 when their cemetery in Hackney was becoming overcrowded. Chapman and André's *A Map of the County of Essex of 1777* is marked 'Merry Hill' here and shows a house with gardens across from the parish church. (fig. 37) The old house was demolished to make way for the new cemetery but it had been one of the oldest and largest in the parish, with 'a nice garden at the back'. Where it stood became the location of one of the cemetery's two red-brick entrance lodges. When the cemetery was laid out, elements of the former estate lands were retained; the avenue of trees marked behind the house on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1870 follows the same line as the top road on

the northern border of the cemetery on the 1897 edition. Other roads and pathways traversing the cemetery trace earlier marked paths through the grounds, and areas of water which appear on the 1870 map can still be found today. (fig. 38)

Like Abney Park Cemetery, Chingford Mount Cemetery was set up to 'provide Christian burials for all'. Not only did individual interments take place here, but the cemetery was the recipient of the contents of two redundant burial grounds from other parts of London. The first consignment arrived in 1898 when '200 lead coffins, numerous wood coffins and one iron coffin' were conveyed from the non-conformist burial ground on land adjacent to Whitefield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road. This burial ground was contemporary with the church which had been erected in 1756 by George Whitefield - a famous evangelist in his day and a peer of John and Charles Wesley.² It is not known why that burial ground was closed in 1853, but the transfer was necessitated when the owner of the land commenced building works, causing desecration of the graves and the unearthing of coffins.

In 1933 the second consignment of mortal remains was transferred to Chingford Mount Cemetery, this time the source being the burial ground of Ram's Chapel in Homerton, East London. The chapel had been built by banker Stephen Ram in 1723 when he was unable to secure an exclusive pew for his family in Hackney Parish Church; although Ram's Chapel had flourished for many years, by 1933 it had fallen into disuse.

Among those buried at Chingford Mount are the sculptor John Bacon (d.1799) whose Chatham Memorial can be found in Westminster Abbey; his memorials in St Paul's include that of Samuel Johnson. Benjamin Pollock (d.1937), the toy theatre maker who set up Pollock's Toy Shop in Hoxton, is also buried here; coincidentally, Pollock's Toy Museum can today be found on Whitfield Street, very near the site of Whitefield's Tabernacle.

In 1975 new owners of Chingford Mount Cemetery wished to build housing on part of

2. Although Whitefield died and was buried in America, his wife Elizabeth was buried in the Tabernacle ground in 1768 and her grave is now in Chingford Mount Cemetery.

the unused land but this proposal was opposed and the cemetery subsequently became neglected, its two red-brick lodges gutted and the ragstone chapel burnt down, destroying most of its records. The cemetery was acquired in 1976 by the London Borough of Waltham Forest and it is now designated a site of local nature conservation importance, having many fine trees among the graves and tombs. The gates and red-brick and stone piers on the western main entrance on Old Church Road survive from the nineteenth-century layout, with a new lodge building.

While Chingford Mount received the full complement of bodily remains and funerary monuments, other London burial grounds only received consignments of the latter. In this way two Quaker burial grounds – one in Barking and the other in Wanstead – are associated with the famous prison reformer Elizabeth Fry. The Barking Meeting of the Society of Friends was formed in the late 1650s and the burial ground there was established in 1672. Fry had close connections in this area of London, in the 1820s spending holidays with her family in two cottages at Dagenham Breach. She died in 1845 and was buried at the Quaker Burial Ground in Barking. In 1980 the ground became a small public garden under the auspices of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and all headstones and monuments were removed; that of Elizabeth Fry was taken to Wanstead Friends Burial Ground. The only evidence that the Barking garden was once a burial ground is its old name plaque which remains next to the iron gate on North Street, and inside the garden a Council board proclaims 'QUAKER BURIAL GARDEN - A GARDEN OF PEACE AND REST, PLEASE RESPECT THIS HISTORIC SITE. NO BALL GAMES'. Sadly, what I visited was a bleak little patch of mown grass, surrounded by a motley run of nineteenth and twentieth-century railings, a partially collapsed brick wall and some hedging, through gaps in which the garden was quite accessible at all times, and showed signs of vandalism. Notwithstanding its state of neglect, any peaceful meditations would be shattered by the busy A124 Barking Northern Relief Road nearby. Across North Street from the erstwhile burial ground, the former Society of Friends Meeting House is now a Sikh Temple.

The Quaker Burial Ground at Wanstead, where Elizabeth Fry's headstone was transferred in the mid-1980s, has quite another ambience – it is a delightfully tranquil discovery just beyond the major traffic interchange of The Green Man Roundabout, which somehow ceased to be audible such was the effect of this place. The Wanstead Society of Friends leased land from Epping Forest in 1871 in order to establish a Meeting House and Burial Ground here. It was formerly the site of Becontree Archery, a nineteenth-century archery ground where Charles Dickens is reputed to have given readings. Becontree Archery Lodge was demolished in 1967 and replaced with the new Wanstead Quaker Meeting House, itself now being refurbished. The first burials behind the Meeting House took place in 1881. Entering this area through an unobtrusive side gateway, you are presented with a meadow-like central green with the simple, uniform headstones arranged in three or four neat rows each side. (fig. 39) Bordered by old red-brick walls, the Burial Ground is wooded at its far end and has fine mature trees including oak, horse chestnut, and ash with holly and rhododendron shrubs among the greenery surrounding the central open space.

Given Fry's connection with Dagenham, she may well have visited St Peter's and St Paul's, the old parish church of Dagenham Village. The structure dates back to the early thirteenth century although all that remains of the mediaeval building are the chancel and fifteenth-century north chapel. Inside the church is an altar tomb to Sir Thomas Urswyck (d.1479) who was instrumental in Edward IV's accession to the throne. After the collapse of the church tower in 1800 which also destroyed the nave and south aisle, the church was largely rebuilt in 1800-05 by the architect William Mason in Strawberry Hill Gothic style, including a spire which was then removed in 1921. The church and nearby vicarage, built in 1665 with a large garden, together with the fifteenth-century *Cross Keys* pub are all that remain of Dagenham Village, which was one of the earliest Saxon settlements in Essex.

Dagenham Parish Churchyard was still in use as a graveyard into the 1950s, and, despite now being entirely surrounded by twentieth-century housing, with pylons, railway lines,

and major roads close by, it is a peaceful place managed by the London Wildlife Trust where a Great Spotted Woodpecker or small tortoiseshell butterfly may be seen among the ivy and grasses of the graveyard.

Sally Williams is currently working as researcher on the review of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust's *Inventory of Public Parks, Gardens, Squares, Cemeteries and Churchyards of Local Historic Interest*.

THE FÊTE of ABRAHAM GOLDSMID:

A REGENCY GARDEN TRAGEDY

by Katie Fretwell¹

In the first decade of the nineteenth century the small but elaborate Regency estate of Morden Lodge, a site now part of the National Trust's Morden Hall property in South London, briefly gained first fame and then notoriety due to two extraordinary events: a festivity and then a tragedy. Although the house has since been rebuilt and the grounds have been considerably altered, contemporary newspaper accounts of these incidents tell us much about the architecture, furnishings and garden layout of Morden Lodge, as well as about its unfortunate proprietor, his social circle and his business affairs.

The story opens on the evening of 22nd August 1806, when Mr Abraham Goldsmid, a well-known and successful City financier, threw a magnificent house-warming celebration.² (fig. 40) Morden Lodge, his exquisite Grecian-style villa in Morden village, south of London, was just finished. Newspapers, both local and national, ran breathlessly enthusiastic reviews of the event. Under the headline 'Fête of Abraham Goldsmid Esq.', *Bills Weekly Messenger* reported that:

Friday Mr Goldsmid was honoured at his newly-erected Villa at Morden, with the presence of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, his Royal Brothers, the Lord Chancellor of England, and a select assembly of the first persons of distinction. This illustrious party

honoured him with their company to dinner, and in the evening there was a numerous assembly of his friends to a concert. This was the first entertainment since the house was finished, which is unique in its character.

Mr Groves has the merit, and great it is, of planning and designing the whole of it. Messrs Crace, whose abilities have been so successful at Brighton, completed the decorative part, and Mr Files of Lamb's Conduit-street, has displayed his taste in the furniture.

The PRINCE arrived at about seven o'clock, accompanied by Earl MOIRA, Major BLOOMFIELD, Mr SHERIDAN, &c and the Dukes of KENT and CAMBRIDGE arrived in their barouches immediately after. They were introduced into the saloon, and about eight o'clock they sat down to a most sumptuous dinner in the eating room. On the removal of the cloth the company retired to the saloon. There was a most superb des[s]ert and viands set out.

On Mr A GOLDSMID giving the health of the PRINCE, he rose, and in a very animated speech of a quarter of an hour concluded by giving the Messrs Goldsmid, with three times three, which Mr B GOLDSMID answered in a short and neat speech, expressing how much they felt the honour done them. After the des[s]ert there was a Concert, in which BRAHAM, Signora STORACE, Mr W PORTER &c assisted. The band was led by ATTWOOD, assisted by SALOMONS. MATHEWS, the Comedian, gave his imitations of the different Actors &c. The gardens were illuminated by 3000 or 4000 lamps, which had a very elegant effect on the water. There was a pleasure boat illuminated, with the Prince's feathers &c and had a very singular and beautiful effect. The grounds were completely lighted, with various devices. The whole of the illuminations &c were by Messrs Parker & Perry. Among the company present, besides those already mentioned, were

Lord BERKELEY	Mr & Mrs B GOLDSMID
Sir Robert BURNET	Mr & Mrs A GOLDSMID
Colonel Mc MAHON	Mr & Mrs N SALOMON
& about 300 fashionables. ³	

The Courier described 'Mr Goldsmid's Superb Fête' in lavish detail:

A more picturesque and romantic place in point of rural scenery cannot be imagined. Before the house is a beautiful lawn, diversified with orange and lemon trees, aloes, and the various exotics of the most luxuriant

1. This article is based on original research by E. N. Montague, Judith Goodman and William Rudd. Additional research was carried out by Katie Fretwell.

2. Jewish financier, Abraham Goldsmid (c.1756-1810) arrived in England from Amsterdam with his family as a child. Around 1777 he and his brother Benjamin set up together as bill brokers; their wealth rapidly increased after 1792 through their dealings with the British Government. Benjamin, who lived at Elm Grove, Roehampton, was like Abraham a generous benefactor, founding the Royal Naval Asylum. He committed suicide in 1808.

3. The architect was John Thomas GROVES (c.1765-1811), for a time Clerk of Works at Whitehall, Westminster; he was also responsible for the design of some elegant late Georgian houses. Records show that Groves owned Morden Grove from c.1780 to 1789, erecting a new house on the site in c.1782. The CRACE dynasty of interior decorators flourished from c.1750 to 1809. Frederick Crace was among the most fashionable interior decorators of the day, from about 1802 responsible for transforming the Brighton Pavilion in the oriental style for the Prince Regent.