

*Map (figs. 30 & 31).*¹² The Edible Map is a guide for the food-flâneur to picture a very different landscape of psychogeographic food. Vegetable plots, orchards and beehives emerge from the grassed areas around housing estates, the corners of parks or the many flat rooftops of the Elephant & Castle. The Edible Map can be combined with quantitative results from the 191 ha. Elephant & Castle site. The research identified 21 ha. of grassed public space being used as park, square or grass amenity. Based on the decision not to disturb current patterns of leisure or recreation, 6 ha. of the 21 ha. were deemed suitable for food production, or 4.5% of the total 191 ha. In order to assess site yields, a basic unit for vegetable production was designed using yield data from the Royal Horticultural Society, which states that a food gardener should be able to produce 31 tonnes of vegetables a hectare.

At 31 tonnes a hectare, the yield from 6 ha. would be 186 tonnes. When this is combined with estimates from other land types within the site – for example allotments (100% productivity), private gardens (14%) – then the total figure for potential UA land rises to 9 ha. with a combined yield of 279 tonnes.

Based on combining a neighbourhood population of 16,245 persons within the 191 ha., with an average UK weekly vegetable consumption of 1,600g, it can be estimated that the UA yield of 279 tonnes would provide 26% of the average domestic vegetable requirements for each resident in the Elephant & Castle.

By combining historical and current research, this article recognises that food production is part of the heritage of London's open spaces and could potentially re-emerge. What academics currently refer to as 'Urban Agriculture' actually has its roots in gardening, horticulture and market gardening. The research also demonstrates that often fragmented urban land types can be given a real value by translating it into food-energy production. Furthermore, its (re)introduction could compliment current land use while providing us with a tool to adapt, through reducing greenhouse gases emissions associated with importing food to Londoners. This kind of research is essential if our grassed

public areas are going to adapt to a changing climate, while combining conservation, ornamentation and leisure with food productivity. (fig. 32)

'SOME APPENDAGES TO THE CITY':

A LOOK AT THREE OF LONDON'S LESS WELL-KNOWN GARDEN SUBURBS

By Sally Williams

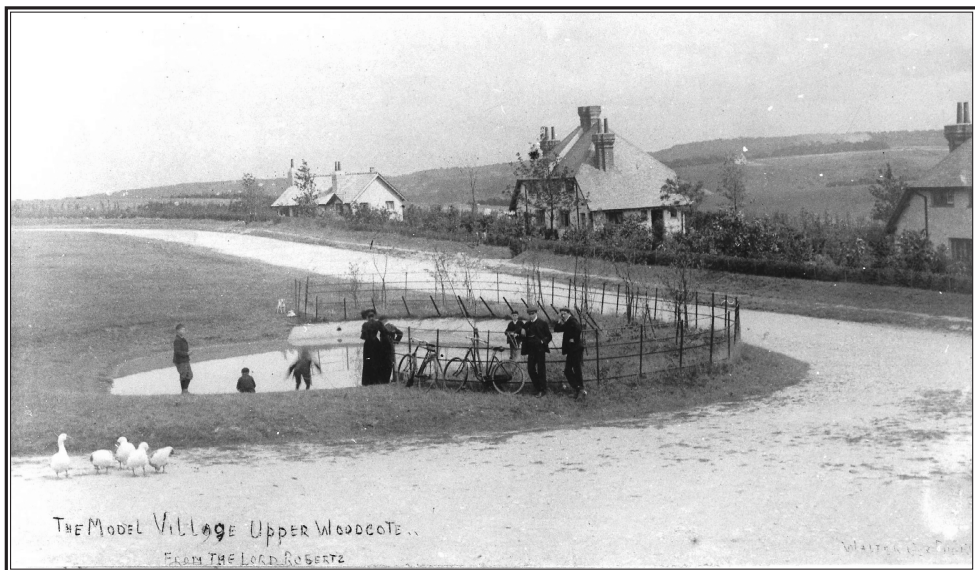
In October 2000 the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust's Autumn Conference focussed on 'London's Garden Suburbs: Community Landscape and the Urban Ideal' and included well-versed speakers approaching the subject from different perspectives: setting it in its historical context (Dr Brent Elliott); examining particular trends and aspirations (Elain Harwood, Alan Baxter); addressing conservation issues (Chris Sumner); exploring particular exemplars (John Scott: Bedford Park, Melissa Hay: Hampstead Garden Suburb, Ivor Cunningham: Span developments); and finally drawing attention to new, as yet unbuilt, approaches to high density housing (James Pickard).² The second day of the conference took delegates to see some of these garden suburbs, visiting Bedford Park Estate, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Span estates in Twickenham.

The Trust's *Inventory of Historic Green Spaces*, under review at that time, already included a number of these residential estates where landscaping played an integral part, but by no means all. More have been added since, and as time goes on it is hoped that the Inventory will be comprehensive in this regard, and, with the development of the Trust's website, *London Gardens Online*, that this information will be readily available to all those with an interest. For this article I have re-visited three less well-known pre-World War II garden suburbs in outer London, which demonstrate an interesting diversity in origination and approach, but some common themes emerge nonetheless. These are the

1. Andrew Saint, 'The Quality of the London Suburb' introduction to *London Suburbs* (London: Merrell Holberton Publishers in association with English Heritage), 1999, p.9.

2. Conference Proceedings, published March 2001, are available from the LPGT.

12. *The Edible Map* is downloadable from www.mikeytomkins.co.uk.



33. The stocks on Woodcote Village Green, Upper Woodcote Model Village, The Webb Estate, July 2008
(PHOTOGRAPH SALLY WILLIAMS)

34. Woodcote Village Green showing the pond, boys and geese, early 1900s
(COURTESY CROYDON LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY & ARCHIVES)



35. Silver Lane, The Webb Estate
(COURTESY CROYDON LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY & ARCHIVES)

Webb Estate in Purley, Croydon (1888-1925), *Brentham Garden Suburb* in Ealing (1901-15) and *Harrow Garden Village* at Rayners Lane, Harrow (1928-34).

Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) is generally recognised not only as the originator of the term 'Garden City' – used in his 'Garden Cities of To-Morrow' to denote a planning model that combined the best of town and country³ – but as the inspiration behind much subsequent suburban development and town planning, in Europe and the United States as well as in Britain, even though Howard did not actually write about garden suburbs *per se*. Of course the movement from town to country, and the origins of suburbia, pre-date this. In London, from the seventeenth century, particularly following the Great Plague (1665) and the Great Fire (1666), the better-off among the populace of the City increasingly sought to establish houses in the countryside beyond. In 1689 the King himself, William III, had set up home in then rural Kensington, purchasing Nottingham House and transforming it into Kensington Palace, in order to benefit from the country air outside the seat of government.⁴ As the eighteenth and then nineteenth centuries progressed, a growing bourgeoisie desired to escape the city that it found more and more overcrowded and squalid, and to find tranquillity in healthier surroundings. Hence the building of leafy squares in what is now the West End, but then largely open land belonging to great estates; and the erection of substantial villas in outlying villages like Richmond, Clapham and Hackney, in some cases establishing communities of influential, like-minded people – intellectuals, dissenters, reformers – who instigated social changes that resonate today. An important factor in the change of land use was that the large country estates around London began to be broken up and developed, often enabled by an Act of Parliament abolishing the manorial rights that had hitherto prevented the letting of plots for building. This acceleration of residential development in London's outlying areas in the

nineteenth century went hand in hand with the improvement of the capital's transport networks. The new suburbs gradually engulfed old hamlets and villages – themselves often established as a result of their position on an important route to and from the City, clustered around a coaching inn perhaps. Before the proliferation of the railway network, other forms of transport had begun to facilitate access to outlying areas, an example being George Shillibeer's omnibus service, which ran between London and Greenwich from 1829. Developers and builders took advantage of the improved accessibility, and their new housing consequently became more affordable to middle and lower classes. The second half of the century saw a huge increase in house building and in London's population, the latter rising from under 1 million in 1801 to 4.5 million in 1921 and 8.5 million in 1935.

From the late eighteenth century onwards, a number of the builders and architects of speculative residential schemes, among them John Nash (1752-1835), James Burton (1761-1837) and Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855), were well aware of the importance of landscaping, and exploited its potential to attract customers to their developments. An early example of a holistic scheme for residences set within a designed landscape can be found in Nash's original Regent's Park Plan of 1811, commissioned by the Prince Regent on land that had been owned by the Crown Estate since the time of Henry VIII and largely agricultural in the early nineteenth century. Nash's design envisaged a spacious landscaped park within which an extensive combination of terraced housing and detached villas was laid out, designed to attract the wealthier classes. Although his scheme was modified in the process of its execution, Regent's Park remains an important model for later schemes, such as the Bedford Park Estate in Chiswick, where development commenced in 1875 and which is widely described as Victorian London's 'first garden suburb'. Built on 24 acres of land purchased by cloth merchant turned property developer Jonathan T. Carr, the intention here was to attract the artistic middle classes. Wherever possible, existing trees were retained and the estate's garden character was the result of many of the roads being closed by views of

3. First published in 1898 as 'To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform', but re-issued in 1902 under the title 'Garden Cities of To-Morrow'.

4. See Jennifer Ledfors, 'Notes on the Early History of Kensington Palace Gardens' in *The London Gardener*, VOL.II, 2005-06.

trees. Carr was inspired by the booklet published in 1875 by Benjamin Ward Richardson, 'Hygiea: A City of Health' - which Ebenezer Howard is also known to have read - advocating an ideal community comprised of houses of a stipulated minimum size, with gardens and wide tree-lined streets.

The Webb Estate in Croydon⁵ had its origins only a few years later than Bedford Park, and it predated publication of Howard's 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow', the first Garden City of Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb.⁶ In 1888, Croydon-born estate agent William Webb (1862-1930) purchased around 260 acres of farmland near the village of Purley, formerly part of the once-extensive Beddington Estate, which originated in the fourteenth century. However, it was some time before houses appeared on Webb's land. The estate he developed was based on his theory that the first elements to be established should be the planting, landscaping and infrastructure; only then, when the hedges bordering the building plots, and the trees within them, were well-grown, did he begin to let them for house-building. Webb called his system *Garden First*:

The name Garden First means that the garden shall not only have prominence, but that partial garden construction shall be carried out before any buildings are erected, so that there may be pleasant shade of trees, and the shelter afforded by live hedges and matured shrubs, before houses are built. A distinctive attribute of Garden First development is the arrangement of the entire estate in such a way that the occupiers of houses not only have the enjoyment of their own premises in desirable seclusion, but that, both from their own upper windows and when passing along the roads, it may appear as though they are in one large garden of which their own holding is a part. Thus the individual obtains his share of, and supplies his quota to, the common fund of enjoyment.⁷

5. Information on the Webb Estate has been derived from the following sources: William Webb, *Garden First in Land Development*, 2ND edition (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1920; Vanda Bourri, *A Century of Garden First: Introducing the Webb Estate Conservation Area* (The Webb Estate Society, 1994) and information on the Webb Estate Society website www.webbestate.com.

6. Letchworth was initiated in 1903; Hampstead Garden Suburb was founded 1906.

7. Webb, *op.cit.*, p.11.

Webb set up a nursery to cultivate not only the privet for some 20 miles of hedging, but also to grow the ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers that were planted throughout the estate, and even the soil for verges and flowerbeds was carefully managed. There were to be no walls or wooden fences, and some roads were laid out with grass footpaths to evoke country lanes. Roads likely to suffer heavier traffic were suitably surfaced, and all the services for the estate were placed underground, including telephone wires, at the time the roads were made: 'The great feature from a Garden First aspect is the comfort of having a good clean road from the first, with the knowledge that it will never be broken up'⁸ - would that local councils heeded this today!

The first house to be erected was Upper Woodcote House, which Webb built for himself in 1903, reached by Birch Lane and Farm Drive, and the estate of 280 houses⁹ was completed by 1925. The houses were designed by various architects, working at the behest of the purchaser of the plot, although Webb provided a proportion himself, in his words, 'simple and restrained' in style in keeping with Garden First principles. He issued strict guidelines for both buildings and landscaping, which included stipulation of a minimum building cost to ensure a good standard of work. The house in its good-sized garden was to be set well back and Webb recommended fast-growing climbers to disguise the newness of the building. That each house was within a substantial plot - averaging nearly an acre - was 'an essential feature' of Garden First development:

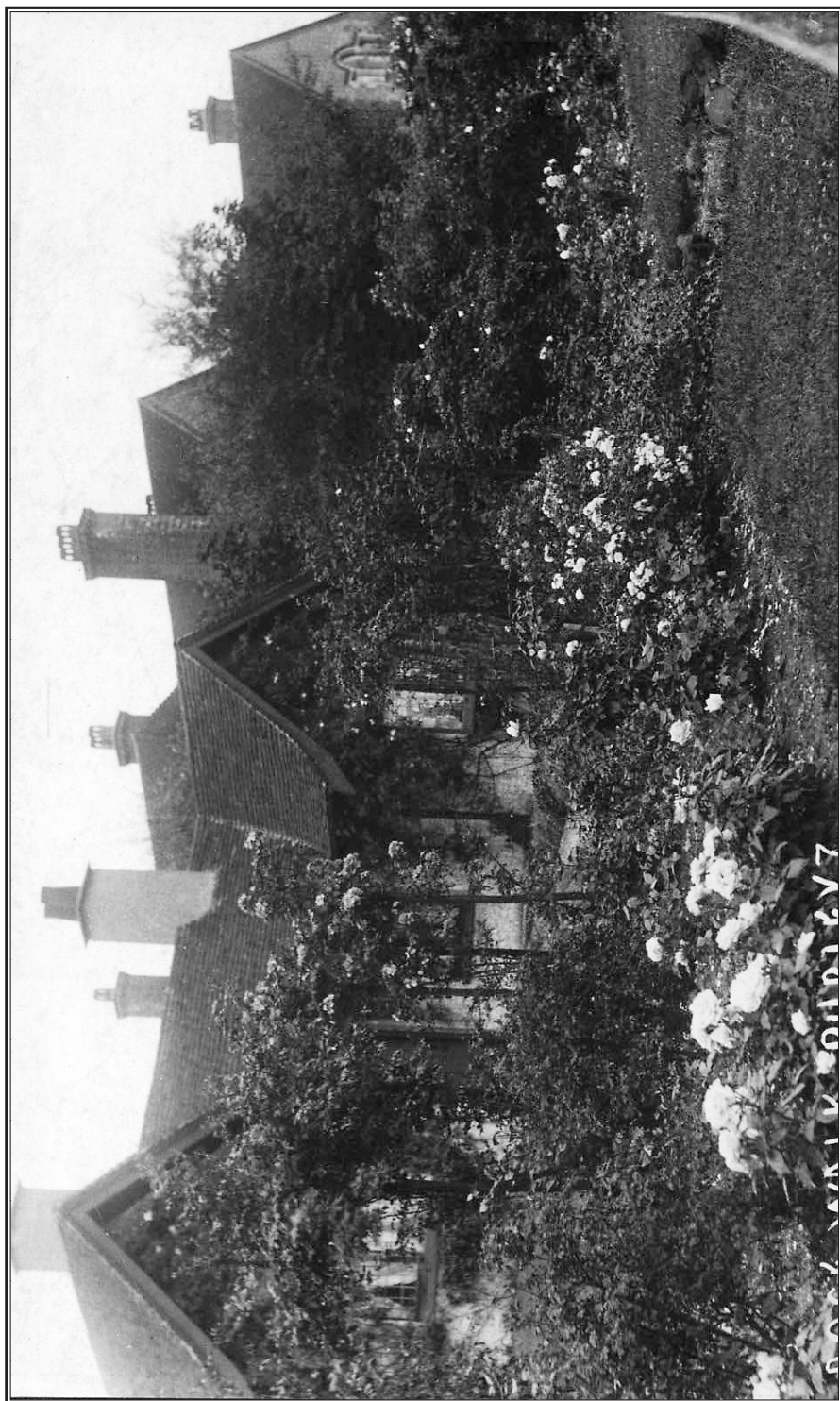
The larger the gardens are in proportion to the buildings the more thoroughly the spirit of the scheme is carried out, but it must not be forgotten that the intending resident has to consider the cost of upkeep, as well as the purchase price of the ground.¹⁰

The results of Webb's first 30 years of work are in his book, 'Garden First in Land Development', written in 1916 but not published until 1919 due to World War 1. In addition to expounding the principles of

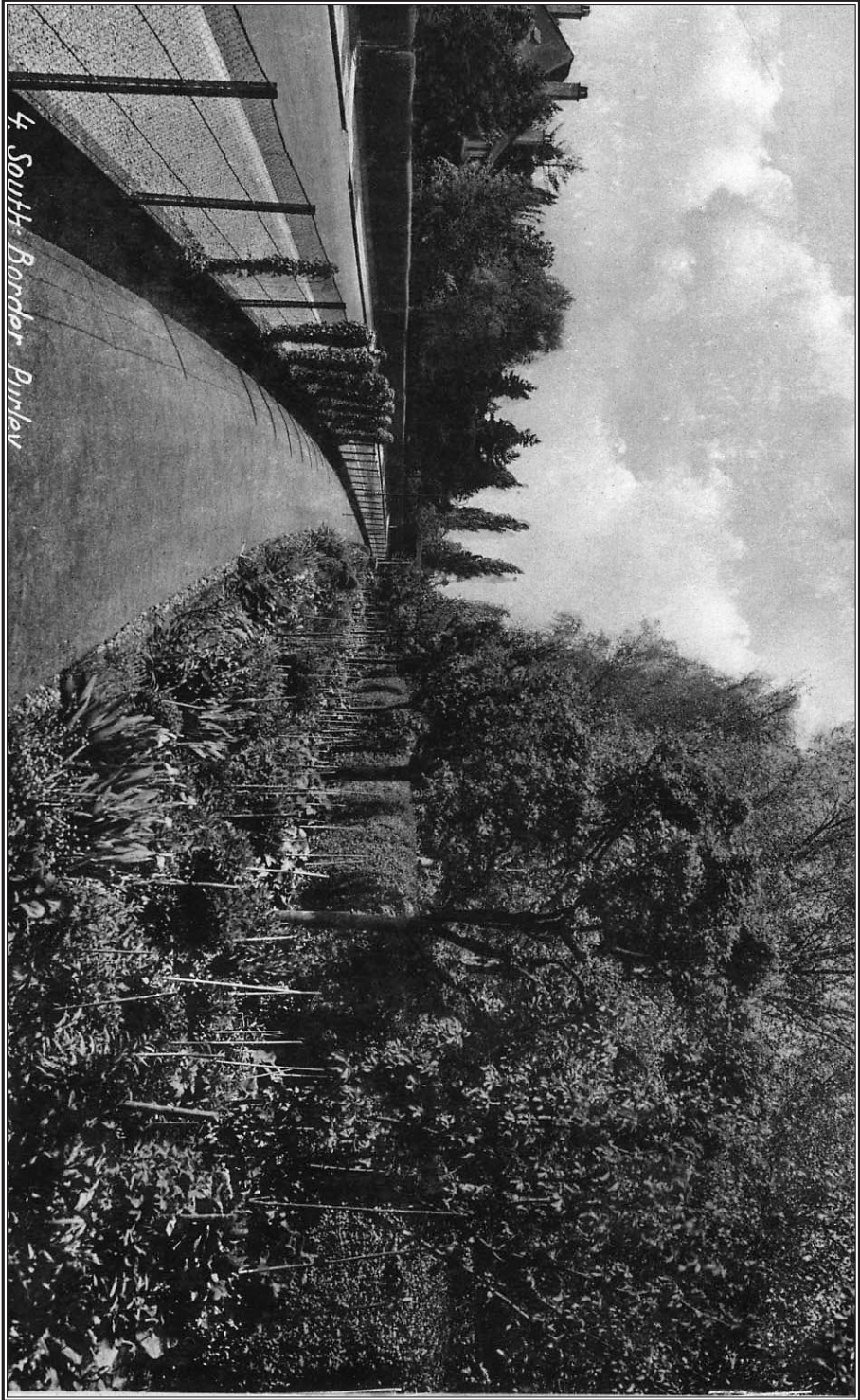
8. *Ibid.*, p.63.

9. This is the number given by Webb in *Garden First*, although the number of houses today is fewer.

10. Webb, *op.cit.*, p.47.



36. Rose Walk, The Webb Estate
(COURTESY CROYDON LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY & ARCHIVES)



37. The South Border, The Webb Estate
(COURTESY CROYDON LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY & ARCHIVES)

Garden First, it provided a considerable amount of practical, horticultural advice; Webb's love of nature is evident throughout the book, as he poetically evokes 'the lazy hum of insects' wings', 'the gentle rise and fall of music in the tree-leaves' or 'wild birds and shy beasts [that] still haunt the spot'.

His preface to the 2nd edition (1920) begins with the words: 'The need for co-operation between the Architect and the Gardener was probably never so urgent as it is at present'. By this Webb was issuing a salvo that the much-needed post-war reconstruction should not be undertaken with only cost in mind. However, although he acknowledged the urgent housing needs of those 'at the bottom of city social life', his Purley estate was aimed at another class of resident: the 'City men . . . [who] seek to spend their leisure time and bring up their families at the nearest spot to their work where they can find a comparatively country home; and, the more countrified such a district can be kept, the better it fulfils their requirements.' [...] 'Those who work their brains at full speed during business hours require more than the rest that is obtained from sleep at night; their minds and nerves require the refreshment that is derived from beautiful surroundings, and from sights, sounds and scents which by their nature and from association are restful'.¹¹

Upper Woodcote Model Village with Woodcote Village Green as its focal point was the first part of the estate to be developed. The nine mainly half-timbered houses surrounding the Green were intended for occupation by estate workmen. However, few of Webb's employees moved in, and according to a report in the local paper: '...the houses rejected by workmen at 10s. 0d. per week are now being clamoured for by bank managers, stockbrokers, and others at from £30 to £35 per annum.' Webb himself wrote that 'so popular did this village become, that it was found necessary to take steps to prevent it turning into a colony of week-enders'.¹²

To recreate the village idyll, the Green was provided with a whipping post and stocks (fig. 33), and a see-saw, made on the estate. A flock of geese was installed on a pond – itself created 'that boys might sail their toy boats' –

situated in the south-west corner (fig. 34) opposite the village smithy and the *Lord Robert*, a Temperance Inn and General Stores with post office, which opened in 1907. With the help of '18 men and some strong horses', Webb had a 25-year old chestnut tree transplanted onto the Green to shade the door of the forge, but like the pond and geese the tree has gone and the forge is now a private house. However, until 1914 the blacksmith undertook much of the metalwork needed for the estate, including gates for Rose Walk, Silver Lane and The South Border as well as components for the houses. Like many of London's park railings, much of the estate metalwork was later removed for the war effort, as were the trucks of the Garden First light railway that had been installed on the estate to aid building works. Planting on the Green was generally restricted to thorn and birch on rough grass, but there were specimen trees in private gardens of surrounding houses, with Cedars and Sequoiadendron dominating the skyline. In 1945 a War Memorial of unpolished granite was erected near the *Lord Robert*.

The rest of the estate was gradually developed once the planting had begun to mature, with Rose Walk laid out in 1907 and let for building from 1911, and The South Border laid out in 1912. All but one of the roads was curving, and some were specially designated as 'floral roads' for which Webb provided a specific planting scheme. He sets out a clear rationale for this:

The desire for privacy in one's garden is perfectly legitimate and natural, and so is the love of ownership; but the wish to possess objects of beauty without allowing others to see some of our possessions, when they could do so without disturbing our quietude or doing damage to our property, would be bad. The system of floral roads carried out under Garden First methods overcomes this difficulty to a very large extent. Flower-beds are formed on either side of the road, but protected from the public by a slight wire fence. These flower-beds are set out to be viewed as a whole decorative scheme by those using the footpaths or carriage-way...¹³

11. Webb, *op.cit.*, pp.2-3.
12. *Ibid.*, p.119.

13. *Ibid.*, p.68.

The road names reflected their character: Silver Lane had four rows of silver birch on each side (*fig. 35*); Rose Walk, with a gate at each end, was planted with 6,000 roses of 400 varieties in wide flower beds along its half-mile length (*fig. 36*). The South Border was named for the wide herbaceous border of over 50 varieties of plants that ran along the sunny northern side of its third of a mile extent, with mature hedges planted on the shadier, southern side (*fig. 37*). While planning the estate, Webb was also mindful of features of the earlier landscape. Briar Hill, which he laid out with a profusion of flowering trees,¹⁴ was deliberately routed through an existing clump of 40-year old Scotch firs and Austrian and Weymouth pines in such a way as to preserve the majority of them (*fig. 38*). Webb took care to achieve all year round interest in his planting schemes across the estate. A mass of spring bulbs flowered from Christmas onwards in Silver Lane, leading to its nickname the 'bulb road'; in summer the fine rose display soon attracted many visitors, among them Queen Mary; autumn colour was provided in The South Border; and Briar Hill's trees provided winter interest.

A unique feature found within the Webb Estate is its *Promenade de Verdun*, which Webb created in 1923 to commemorate French sacrifices on the Western Front, the soil brought over from France especially for the purpose. It extends a third of a mile and is the only straight road on the estate, with a wide grass verge almost the same width as the carriageway. Planted with a line of Lombardy poplars, the Promenade is terminated by a tall granite obelisk at its south-eastern end (*fig. 39*). Webb conceived the idea of creating an Anglo-French memorial as a tribute 'to our fallen neighbours', and hoped that the tribute would cement the friendship between the two nations. It is named after Verdun, the town where almost a million French and German soldiers were killed as the Germans made desperate attempts to reach Paris. About ten tons of French soil was transported to Purley from the 'Field of Explosion' near Armentières, so laden with shrapnel and bullets that to prevent the Lombardy poplars

being damaged by souvenir hunters the soil was sifted and two sacks of missiles extracted. Devastated by the gales of October 1987 like much of the estate, the damaged poplars were later replanted in 1989. Responsibility for the maintenance of the Promenade had been vested in Croydon Corporation in 1925 while the rest of the Webb Estate remains an exclusive and self-contained area of private roads.

Although the Webb Estate was a commercial rather than a philanthropic or social undertaking, Webb took into account the future well-being of the residents: 'Garden First is put forward as one [land development] which, given favourable conditions, may be undertaken as a business enterprise but with due regard to the public welfare.'¹⁵ By the time the houses were being built, Purley was already supplied with shops, banks and other facilities so there was no need to provide a full complement of such amenities on the Webb Estate, apart from those found in Upper Woodcote Village. However, Webb had proposed donating a site on the estate for a church – in the event an alternative site was selected for Purley's new parish church – and there are two schools, both on Woodcote Lane, Downside School for boys founded in 1914, and Commonweal Lodge for girls founded in 1916, the latter at Webb's direct instigation.

Today it remains the landscaping and planting of the Webb Estate that are of most interest – indeed some of the houses are distinctly ostentatious, even kitsch, and it is no surprise that there are no listed buildings here – and it is the estate as a whole that was designated a Conservation Area in 1983. This was largely the result of efforts of the newly formed Webb Estate Society, which continues to work to preserve the special character of the place. It is interesting to see that Croydon Council's *Conservation Area Policy Statement* (1984) delineates Webb's planting schemes along the different roads in some detail, and adjures residents to respect and maintain them.

Brentham Garden Suburb in the north of the West London borough of Ealing presents a quite different story to that of the Webb

14. See Webb, *op.cit.*, pp.82-4 for a full 'List of Trees and Shrubs for the New Flowering Tree Road at Garden First'.

15. Webb was an active member of the community of Purley, for example contributing to improvements in local transport and to the building of the new church of St Mark.



38. Briar Hill, The Webb Estate
(COURTESY CROYDON LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY & ARCHIVES)

39. The Promenade de Verdun, The Webb Estate, July 2008
(PHOTOGRAPH SALLY WILLIAMS)

Co-Partnership in Housing.



WOODFIELD AVENUE, EALING, W.
(LOOKING NORTH),

From a Photograph by S. J. MUIR, September, 1905.

THESE HOUSES ARE THE FREEHOLD PROPERTY OF THE **Ealing Tenants, Limited.**

A Society registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies' Acts,
and is known throughout the whole of the United Kingdom.

RENTS of HOUSES, from 10/6 per week (inclusive).

TO TENANTS AND INVESTORS, BEST RESULTS.

<u>A GOOD</u>	<u>INVESTMENT.</u>		Per Annum.
		SHARE CAPITAL (limit £200) ...	5 per cent.
		LOAN STOCK (no limit) ...	4 per cent.

INSPECT THE ESTATE, OR WRITE FOR PARTICULARS,

To SECRETARY,

ESTATE OFFICE, WOODFIELD ROAD,
PITSHANGER,

EALING, W.

Estate.¹⁶ It was designated a Conservation Area in 1969; in this case the formation of the residents' association followed Conservation Area status. Brentham's origins predate the more famous Hampstead Garden Suburb, and, much smaller than either Hampstead or the Webb Estate, Brentham covers just over 60 acres, with some 670 houses and flats, all but 70 built by 1915. The land here was open country, formerly part of Pitshanger Farm estate. Regarded as the pioneer co-partnership suburb, Brentham was developed by Ealing Tenants Ltd, which was founded in 1901 as the first co-operative tenants society.¹⁷ It aimed to provide improved housing for working people, and it became the model of over 30 other co-partnership housing developments around the country.¹⁸

The principles of collective ownership and co-partnership housing had been advocated by Howard as part of his concept of the Garden City, but the precursors of this philosophy can be found in the model communities set up for workers, notably inspired by Robert Owen (1771-1858), whose celebrated New Lanark Mills near Glasgow was developed in the early-nineteenth century not only to house his workers, but also to attend to their social welfare and education. Owen was followed by other pioneering industrialists. Saltaire, the industrial village in Yorkshire founded by Sir Titus Salt (1803-76) in 1851, provided housing and a full complement of amenities: wash-houses, schools, a hospital, village institute, almshouses, churches and a 14-acre public park. George Cadbury (1839-1922) developed his model village at Bourneville from 1895 (although the first workers' cottages had been erected in 1879), and, like W. H. Lever's Port Sunlight founded in 1888, Bourneville included

social, educational and recreational facilities. The importance of street trees, gardens and public parks was recognised, the latter providing the benefits of both recreation and food cultivation.¹⁹ In these and other such models, the notions of co-partnership and the sharing of prosperity were important ideals. At Bourneville ownership of the model village transferred from the Cadbury family to the Bourneville Village Trust in 1900, and the estate was thereafter managed by a village council elected by householders on the estate.

Like the Webb Estate, Brentham Garden Suburb owes much to the endeavours of one man, although with an essentially different motivation. One of the founders and first chairman of Ealing Tenants Ltd was Henry Vivian (1868-1930), a carpenter and trade unionist, and Liberal MP for Birkenhead from 1906-1910. He was a passionate and influential advocate of the co-partnership movement and from 1890 was Secretary of the Labour Association for Promoting Co-operative Production Amongst the Workforce, set up in 1884. In 1891 he established the co-operative building firm, General Builders Ltd, which later had numerous branches including one in Ealing and undertook much of the early work at Brentham.²⁰ In February 1901 Vivian was invited by a group of men in Ealing to meet and advise them on establishing a co-partnership housing scheme. Later referred to as the 'pioneers', many of them were in building trades and working for General Builders. Three months later Ealing Tenants Ltd was set up with Vivian as Chair and had purchased building plots on Lower Wood Field and an adjacent field in the north of the borough owned by the Mallard family of Pitshanger Farm estate. The Mallards had already begun to lay out streets here – Woodfield Road, Avenue and Crescent – and

16. Information on Brentham Garden Suburb has been derived from the following sources: Margaret Tims, *Ealing Tenants Ltd. Pioneers of Co-Partnership* (Ealing Local History Society, Members' Papers no. 8, 1966); Aileen Reid, *Brentham: A history of the pioneer garden suburb* (Brentham Heritage Society, 2000) and information on the Brentham Society website www.brentham.com.

17. 1901 was also the year that Ealing was incorporated as the first municipal borough in Middlesex.

18. Co-partnership, providing a contract between workers and employers and guaranteeing the former a financial and organisational stake in the business they worked for, grew out of the co-operative movement of the 1840s pioneered in Rochdale, among whose aims were co-operative building of houses. Other firm principles included the importance of education and restriction to 5% of profit to investors. Co-partnership societies began to actively engage in house building after 1888 when Tenant Co-operatives Limited was formed.

19. Cadbury pre-planted the private gardens of the rustic-style houses of Bourneville and tenants received 8 apple and pear trees, 12 gooseberry bushes and a Victorian plum tree as well as creepers to grow round the houses. At Port Sunlight tenants were provided with large gardens for the houses and also allotments, but the Company actually planted and maintained the front gardens. Both Cadbury and Lever were later vice-presidents of the Garden City Association, founded in 1899, whose first Chairman was Ralph Neville, former chairman of the Labour Association.

20. Initially called the Co-operative Building Society, then the General Building Co-operative Society, it was set up with two objectives: 'to provide employment of its members connected with the building trade on a co-operative basis' and 'to take contracts, and provide houses to suit the requirements of its members'; the capital was raised by £1 shares.

two houses had been built by 1900, surrounded by farmland. Ealing Tenants' first nine houses, built for themselves, were named Vivian Terrace after Henry Vivian, later becoming Nos. 71-87 Woodfield Road (*fig. 40*). Unlike William Webb, Vivian never lived on the estate. Most other roads on the completed garden suburb were named after pioneers of co-partnership and other like-minded thinkers and social reformers.²¹ By 1905 50 houses had been completed but in a relatively piecemeal fashion; in the early years the Tenants experienced financial and other problems but by 1903 were on a more secure footing. It was the next phase of building from 1906/7 that determined the place of Brentham as a garden suburb of considerable note.

The decision had been taken to expand the estate, and to promote it as a model co-partnership housing scheme, particularly aimed to attract skilled artisans like themselves. In 1906 and 1907 a further 31 acres of land were purchased freehold, thus giving the Tenants control over its layout.²² In 1906 they engaged architects Ray Unwin (1863-1940) and Barry Parker (1867-1947) to plan the overall layout of the enlarged estate. The name 'Brentham' first appeared in minutes of January 1907, and by 1910 'Brentham Garden Suburb' was commonly used. Particularly under the guidance of Vivian, the Tenants were keen to adopt the 'garden city' principles²³ that were quickly gaining currency among progressive town planners. Unwin and Parker's clear vision was already recognised, which they had put into practice at New Earswick near York, Letchworth Garden City and Hampstead Garden Suburb.²⁴ Their design ethos sought to provide variety in street and roof lines, long and short vistas, hedge-lined streets, treatment of corners that avoided bland

end-of-terrace walls, retention of trees and respect for existing landscape features, provision of open spaces for recreation, and large gardens, achieved through limiting the number of houses per acre. Henry Vivian's writing frequently echoed these principles: 'Houses accommodating to the trees and not the trees cut down for the houses' ... 'Gardens are regarded as essential to the happy life of the Co-partnership tenants'.

Unwin and Parker's first plan for what was to become Brentham Garden Suburb was made in 1906 and demonstrated these principles;²⁵ from that time the importance of Ealing Tenants Ltd and its new co-partnership housing scheme were being recognised. Vivian was already involved in Hampstead Garden Suburb and links between Brentham and Hampstead were soon established. Vivian's central role in the co-partnership movement continued: when Co-Partnership Tenants Ltd was formed as an umbrella organisation in 1907 – its central aims to offer advice, raise money, and pool orders for wholesale materials – he advised most of the other societies federated all over the country. Among the streets laid out between 1907-11 were Winscombe Crescent, with Unwin and Parker themselves designing Nos. 1-7 as well as Widecombe in Brentham Way. The remainder were largely designed by Frederic Cavendish Pearson (1882-1963) who was appointed estate architect by the Tenants in 1907. His houses are characterised by their profusion of Arts and Crafts detailing. In 1909 the final piece of land for the suburb was purchased to the west, again from the Mallards, and here Holyoake Walk, Denison Road and North View were later built to Pearson's layout. He was succeeded in 1910 by George Lister Sutcliffe (1864-1915) who, like Pearson,²⁶ followed Unwin's plan in principle (*fig. 41*). By now Ealing Tenants Ltd were affiliated to Co-Partnership Tenants Ltd and architectural design was largely centralised, with Sutcliffe taken on as main architect. Sutcliffe's houses for Brentham are those of

21. For example: John Ruskin, Frederick Denison Maurice, George Jacob Holyoake, J. M. Ludlow, Ralph Neville.

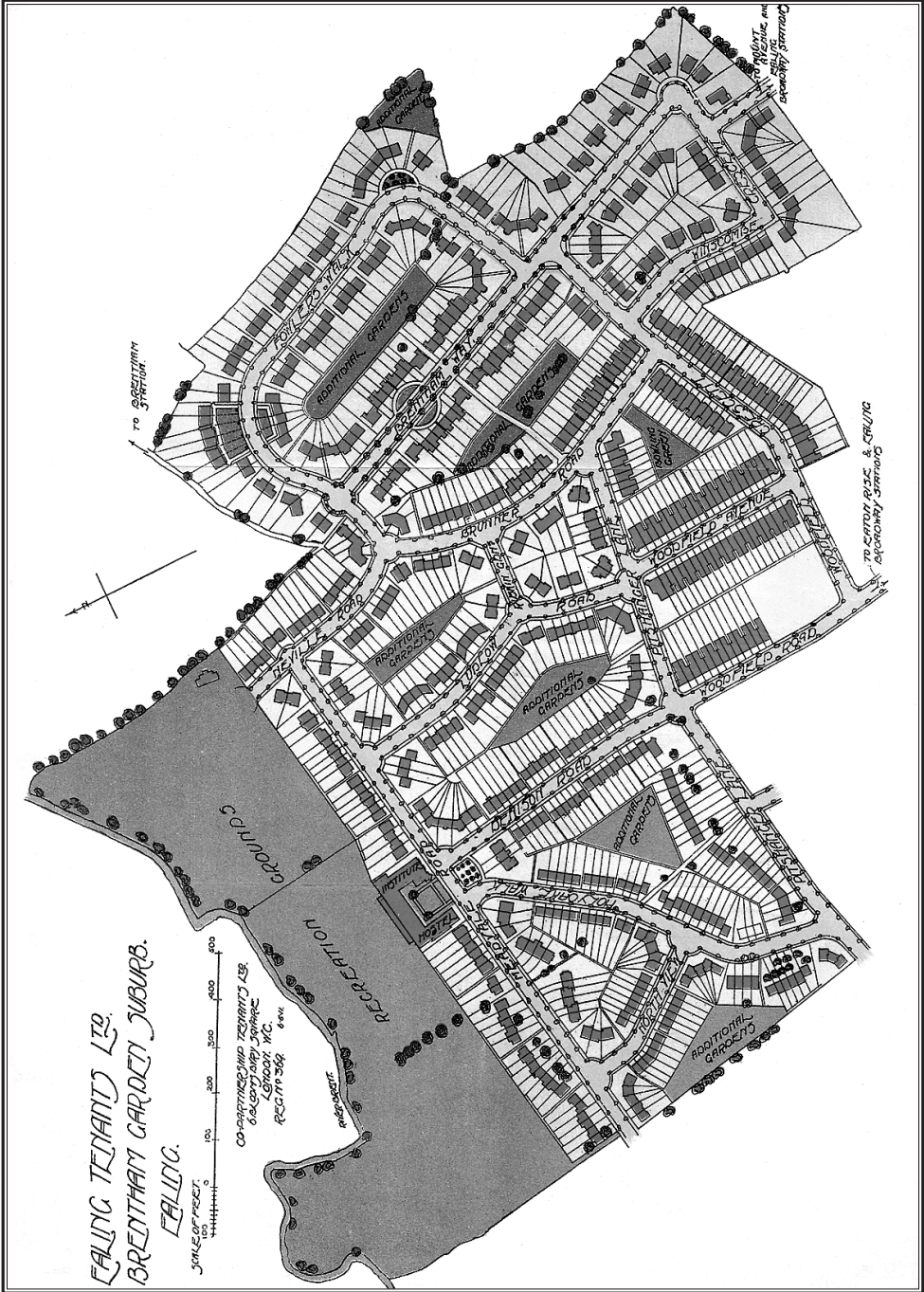
22. This comprised 15 acres of Fowler's Hill estate purchased in 1906 from the Mallards to the east; 16 acres of Pitshanger estate in 1907, and 2 small plots on the south side.

23. Henry Vivian referred to Brentham in May 1905 as 'a little garden city venture on the outskirts of London'.

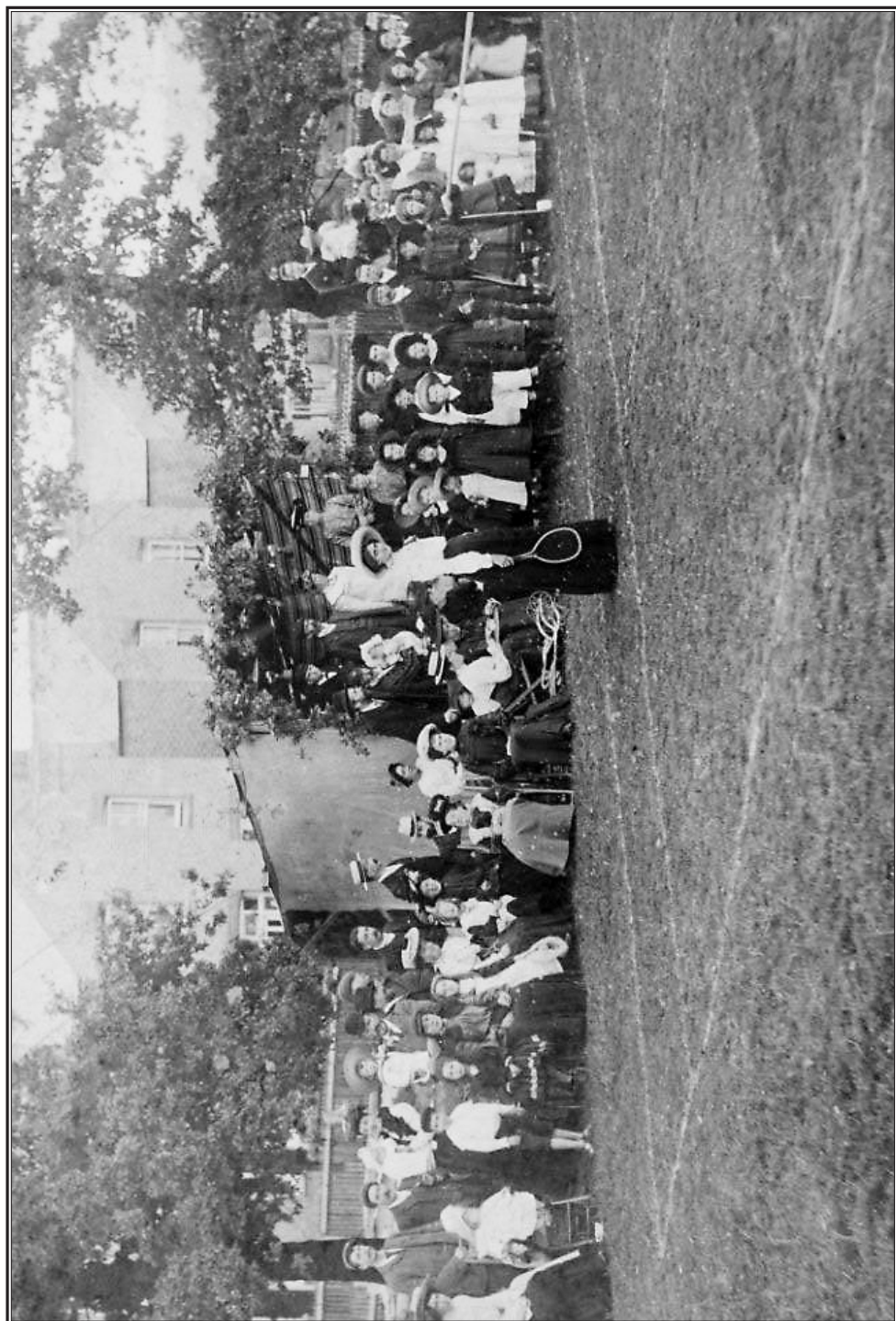
24. In 1901 Unwin had given a lecture at the GDA on 'Building of Houses in the Garden City'. New Earswick, founded in 1902, an industrial village built for Joseph Rowntree's chocolate workers, was Unwin and Parker's first opportunity to design a whole estate. In 1903/4 they won the limited architectural competition to design the first Garden City at Letchworth. In 1903 Henrietta Barnett purchased land for Hampstead Garden Suburb, for which Unwin produced the first plan in 1905. Unwin and Parker applied to working class housing the Arts & Crafts notion of 'form fitting function' advocated by William Morris (1834-90) and others.

25. Unwin's new plan for Ealing Tenants' estate was included in 'Garden Suburbs, Villages and Homes: All About Co-Partnership Houses', 1906.

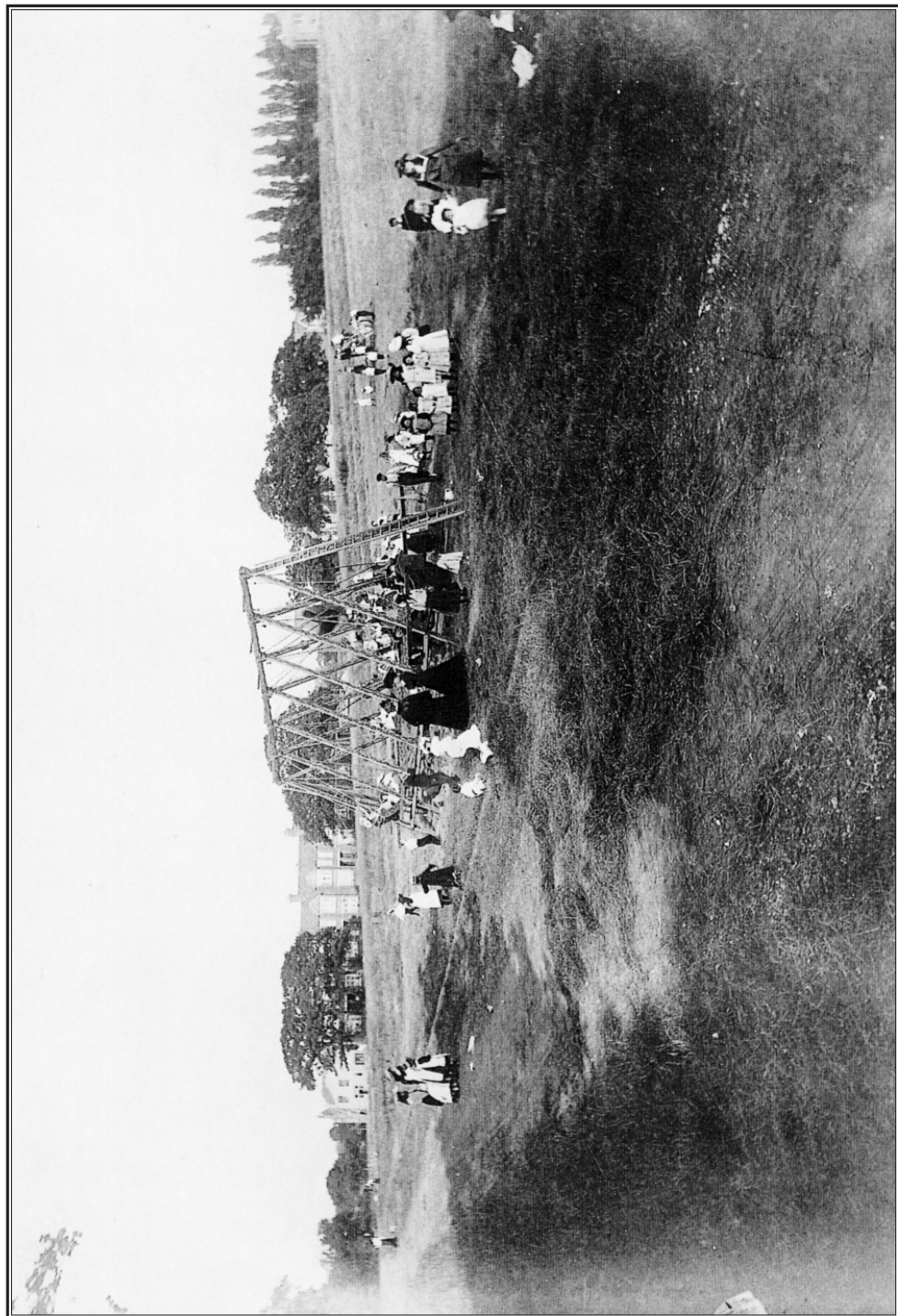
26. Pearson was then involved in planning Sutton Garden Suburb, another co-partnership scheme, but due to World War 1 only three streets were built. He later worked for the LCC and was involved in St Helier and Becontree Estates, both influenced by Garden City principles.



41. G. L. Sutcliffe, *Plan of Brentham Garden Suburb*, 1911
(COURTESY BRENTHAM ARCHIVE: ARCHIVE@BRENTHAM.COM)



42. A tennis match on the first court laid out to the east of Woodfield Avenue, c.1905
(COURTESY BRENTHAM ARCHIVE: ARCHIVE@BRENTHAM.COM)



43. Children playing on temporary swings set up in Dog Kennel Field, 1903-04.
Vivian Terrace can be seen in the background
(COURTESY BRENTHAM ARCHIVE: ARCHIVE@BRENTHAM.COM)



44. Bowls and tennis played at Brentham, c.1938.
The Brentham Institute can be seen in the background
(COURTESY EALING LOCAL STUDIES)

1911-15, more restrained in style than Pearson's. He designed the social centre, Brentham Institute, which was built in Meadvale Road in 1910-11 and represented an important development in Brentham's social, educational and recreational provision. He also designed Holyoake House, 24 flats for single and elderly people, set around a communal garden. Although Unwin and Parker had included amenities such as shops in their plan for Brentham, these were not realised; in any event there was already a branch of Ealing Co-operative Stores on Pitshanger Lane by 1902.²⁷ However, a church was provided to serve the suburb when St. Barnabas Church, designed by Ernest C. Shearman in 1914, was consecrated in 1916, replacing a temporary church. There were some additions to the suburb after Sutcliffe's death in 1915 although there was a lull in building as a result of World War I until 1923/4.

Brentham Garden Suburb was intended to create the impression of a garden estate, achieved through the use of low hedges and trees, together with the playing fields and recreation grounds, particularly north of the Institute. An important feature was the provision of allotment gardens behind some of the larger groups of houses, connected to the streets by a network of footpaths lined by hawthorn hedges. The first three allotments were provided in early 1909 as temporary sites, later built over by 2-12 Winscombe Crescent, but by the end of 1909 nine more were provided between Ludlow and Neville Roads, and in 1910 there were a further 20 between Ludlow and Denison Roads, and Brunner Road and Brentham Way. Ludlow Denison Green had actually been designated as open space on Unwin and Parker's plan and now, after providing allotments for many years, has been returned to open space for the shared use of houses that back onto it. It contains a large oak that was an old field tree once reputedly the focus of Druidic ceremonies. Within the estate are other trees that predated the garden suburb, including a line of trees in the back gardens of Woodfield Avenue that once divided the two original fields leased for building to the Tenants. As early as 1902 trees

had been supplied for front gardens, with trees for back gardens also provided in 1903, probably fruit trees such as apples, some of which survive today. Garden competitions among the tenants were held from 1903 – there were 22 gardens at that time – and a Horticultural Society was set up in 1904. There was later a Brentham School of Gardening and Brentham's roses and its Rose Shows became famous locally.

Sporting activities were also an early feature of life in the suburb; by 1904 cricket and tennis clubs were established and the area between Woodfield Avenue and Brunner Road was used for tennis courts (*fig. 42*) and then a bowling green before it became an allotment site in World War I, 'The Brenthamite'²⁸ describing the transformation with the words:

Where once the bowls so lively sped,

The cabbage plant will raise its head.

Land for the recreation ground adjacent to the River Brent was identified in 1907, and it was laid out and opened in 1908, and later expanded in 1909 when more land was purchased (*fig. 43*). From 1908 it was used for a variety of social and sporting activities. By 1913 there were 12 tennis courts, flourishing tennis and cricket clubs, a popular bowling green, golf and croquet (*fig. 44*). Among those enjoying the facilities were people who went on to greater fame, notably tennis champion Fred Perry (1909-95) whose family lived at Brentham and who played here as a boy.

The strong communal spirit among the residents of Brentham had been established very early on, with well-organised social and educational events, and this perpetuates today. Plans for a permanent institute dated from 1905 and initially No. 33 Woodfield Crescent was built with this in mind, adjacent to which was a bowling green. Numerous Arts and Crafts classes were organised from 1909 and events included lectures, debates and concerts. Brentham Institute was opened in May 1911 by Queen Victoria's youngest son, the Duke of Connaught and his wife the Duchess. It was from the first designed to provide educational as well as social activities, something of great importance among proponents of co-partnership.

27. Before Ealing Co-operative Stores opened, the 'pioneers' ran a co-op grocery out of their offices in Woodfield Road.

28. Produced as the magazine for the estate between 1916-25.



45. Brentham Garden Suburb's first Maypole plaiting took place on 5 June 1906 as part of the 5th anniversary celebrations, held at the old Institute in 33 Woodfield Crescent
(COURTESY BRENTHAM ARCHIVE: ARCHIVE@BRENTHAM.COM)
46. View down Brunner Road to its junction with Neville Road, c.1920s. These houses were designed by F. L. Pearson
(COURTESY BRENTHAM ARCHIVE: ARCHIVE@BRENTHAM.COM)

Brentham's May Day celebrations, one of only two in London of such long standing, have taken place almost without a break since 1919,²⁹ although dancing around the maypole took place in June 1906 to celebrate the suburb's 5TH anniversary (*fig. 45*), and on other occasions such as 1908 and 1911 when the recreation ground and Brentham Institute, respectively, were opened. At first primarily a children's event, in the 1920s May Day became a great occasion for the adults of Brentham too, whose fancy dress became more and more exuberant, and the celebrations also featured a procession around the garden suburb.

By the time Henry Vivian died in 1930, the co-partnership housing movement was declining as other schemes gained ground, including profit-sharing and municipal housing schemes. At Brentham the co-partnership ideal had been superseded by the new strategy of Ealing Tenants Ltd, now part of Co-Partnership Tenants, to construct houses for sale to private purchasers, often larger and more expensive properties such as those on Brentham Way. Another departure was that resident tenants were now able to buy their houses. In 1936 Brentham Garden Suburb was sold to Liverpool Trust Ltd and the remaining tenanted houses were purchased in 1940 by Bradford Property Trust. In 1947 Brentham Club and Institute was purchased by its members.

Despite the departure from its co-partnership origins, Brentham Garden Suburb today presents a coherent identity and the suburb maintains its garden aspect (*figs. 46 & 47*). The houses are largely hedge-fronted, the network of snickets lead to tucked-away allotments and green spaces, and the streets remain lined with trees - although nearly 70 were lost in the gales of October 1987 they were replanted through sponsorship by the residents themselves. After it gained Conservation Area status, residents formed the Brentham Society in 1970 to promote and preserve it, with Brentham Heritage Society, its charitable offshoot, established in 1999; the two are now merged. On 22 September 2001, Brentham Green was renamed Vivian Green and Henry's daughter Barbara Norrice unveiled a plaque inscribed with the words: Not "*this house is mine*" but "*this estate is ours*".

The importance of the transport network for the growth of London's outer suburbs is well-documented. The success of Brentham was certainly encouraged by the Brentham Halt provided in 1911 by the Great Western Railway, which had opened its first stations at Ealing and Hanwell in 1838.³⁰ William Webb, in his guidelines for a successful Garden First development, had advised that 'a reasonable distance from a railway that offers a short ride to London or some other city is of the first importance',³¹ and the arrival of the Croydon Municipal Tramways to Purley in 1901 was undoubtedly significant for the Webb Estate.

However, what is interesting about *Harrow Garden Village* is that it was directly undertaken under the auspices of a rail operator, the Metropolitan Railway Company (MRC), which instigated a number of residential estates along its route running north-west out of London. As a result, the MRC can be counted among the many other speculative developers in the interwar housing boom who contributed to the utter transformation of London's outlying areas, in particular the county of Middlesex, which up till then was undeveloped and largely rural, with scattered villages. The rapidity of the change of land-use was heralded by some but deplored by others. In 1933 Frank Green and Dr Sidney Wolff wrote that: 'these suburbs form a charming hem to a great fabric'³² but Dr W. A. Robson, giving evidence to the *Royal Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population* in June 1938 was highly critical of 'the devastating onrush of the speculative builder, aided and abetted in one notorious instance by a railway company turned landowner'.³³

The MRC had opened its first underground line in January 1863 between Bayswater and Holborn, which soon became well-used. The line was extended north-west from Baker Street from the late 1860s, largely

29. Apart from 1927-30 and during World War II.

30. Brentham Halt, later called 'Brentham (for North Ealing)' closed between 1915-20 and was eventually closed permanently in 1947 when the Central line was extended and a new station, Hanger Lane, opened to the east.

31. Webb, *op. cit.*, Chapter VII 'Finance and Law', p.94.

32. Frank Green & Dr Sidney Wolff, *London & Suburbs Old & New, Useful Knowledge for Health & Home* (Souvenir Magazines Ltd, London) 25 August 1933, p.82.

33. Quoted in Alan A Jackson, *London's Metro-land A unique British railway enterprise* (Capital History, 2006).



47. Junction of Denison Road and Meadvale Road, Brentham Garden Suburb, July 2008
(PHOTOGRAPH SALLY WILLIAMS)

SKETCH MAP SHOWING LAY-OUT of the HARROW GARDEN VILLAGE ESTATE

HARROW GARDEN VILLAGE ESTATE

THIS beautifully laid out and well-timbered Estate of over 213 acres, with 16 acres of permanent open spaces, recreation grounds and tennis courts, adjoins Rayners Lane Station, and is within 11 miles of Baker Street, which is served by over 200 trains daily, and a mile from Pinner and 1½ miles from Harrow.

Some five miles of Roads are now being constructed, and before any were actually completed over 19,500 feet frontage of land was disposed of.

Freehold Building Sites, in small or large sections, are now available at the price from £5 per foot frontage for the erection of Detached or Semi-detached Houses and for Shops, Business Premises, Banking, Cinema, Hotel, etc., from £20 per foot frontage.

For further particulars and plan, apply to—
H. GIBSON, The Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Ltd.,
Baker Street Station, N.W. 1. Welbeck—6688.

HARROW GARDEN

that their selection on this Estate provides them with something different from 99 per cent. of their friends and relatives. Furthermore, this particular **variety of types** must certainly create a much more lasting value.

In developing E. S. Reid's Estate **profit has not been the first consideration**. The first object has been to produce an area which will not be a blot on the landscape and a district where purchasers may **feel proud** of their own Estate.

In purchasing a house there are certain main considerations to be taken into account. The first and most important of all is the re-selling value. Second consideration is amenity. With regard to the first consideration one of the most obvious tests is stability and with regard to the second one looks for variety and the maintenance of all rural features such as trees, &c. If you link all these possibilities together you can form your own opinion as to re-selling value. On E. S. Reid's Estate the stability of the houses is assured and in this respect you are invited to seek the advice

Continued on page 123.

VILLAGE ESTATE

TYPE "E." Attractive four-bedroom residence with inter-communicating dining room and drawing room aggregating 332 square feet of floor space. Weekly repayments 42s. 2d. Deposit £100.
PRICE £1,350 FREEHOLD

TYPE "G." Distinctive four-bedroom residence. Contains a host of exclusive features including a living room measuring 20 feet by 15 feet 3 inches. Weekly repayments 38s. 9d. Deposit £100.
PRICE £1,250 FREEHOLD

TYPE "H." One of the most original residences on the Estate. Contains living room measuring 28 feet by 12 feet 6 inches; breakfast nook; verandah, etc. Weekly repayments 40s. 6d. Deposit £150.
PRICE £1,350 FREEHOLD

TYPE "J." A semi-detached type that proved an instant success. Distinctive in elevation; ideal in internal arrangement and outstanding in value. Weekly repayments 32s. 3d. Deposit £50.
PRICE £1,000 FREEHOLD

E. S. REID

SAY YOU SAW IT IN "METRO-LAND."

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STATION ESTATE OFFICE

HARROW GARDEN VILLAGE

RAYNERS LANE STATION, MIDDLESEX

SAY YOU SAW IT IN "METRO-LAND."

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STATION ESTATE OFFICE

48. Sketch Map of Harrow Garden Village Estate, *Metro-land*, 1930 issue
(COURTESY LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY, HARROW LIBRARIES)

49. E. S. Reid Houses, Harrow Garden Village Estate, advertised in *Metro-land*, 1932 issue
(COURTESY LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY, HARROW LIBRARIES)



TYPICAL RESIDENCES AT HARROW GARDEN VILLAGE

50. Houses in Oakington Avenue were much like these 'Typical Residences', *Metro-land*, 1931 issue
(COURTESY LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY, HARROW LIBRARIES)



AT HARROW GARDEN VILLAGE.

RAYNERS LANE

Baker Street 11 Miles.

NOWHERE in the whole perimeter of London has more remarkable development taken place during the past year than at Rayners Lane, the station for Harrow Garden Village. It repays a visit at short intervals to see it grow.

The new township is rising fast, and there will be no occasion here to lament in the future a failure of foresight in town-planning. The progress is most rapid on the north side of the railway.

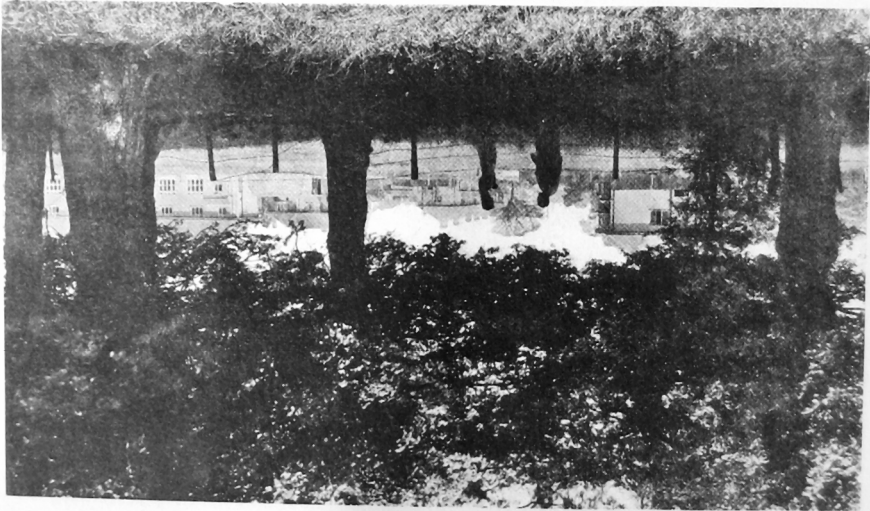
The axis is not the line of old Rayners Lane, but rather the splendid new arterial road which is being laid out straight from the station to North Harrow Station on the main Metropolitan line. It will be linked with Northolt and Ealing on the one side and with Wealdstone on the other.

The aggregate frontage disposed of already exceeds 25,000 feet and sales of houses of all types and at all prices are being effected in increasing volume.

Shops and schools have already made their appearance. Churches and a cinema are to follow.

West Harrow, North Harrow and Harrow Garden Village are already in touch, and the new Pinner Village is beckoning at short range to Harrow Garden Village at the other end of Rayners Lane.

If the quiet rustic beauty of old Rayners Lane is now a memory of the past, like the picturesque farm-house, the broad streets of the new suburb are being beautified by the planting of trees.



TYPICAL SCENE AT HARROW GARDEN VILLAGE.

51. The progress of the Harrow Garden Village development at Rayners Lane described in *Metro-land*, 1932 issue
(COURTESY LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY, HARROW LIBRARIES)

running overground, reaching Willesden Green in 1879, Harrow-on-the-Hill in 1880, Pinner in 1885 and later Chesham and beyond.³⁴ The spur to expanding in this direction was the aspiration of the Chairman, Sir Edward Watkin, to link up with the railway network in the Midlands. To this end, the MRC purchased considerable tracts of land along its intended route, as this was deemed to be more economical than buying the land piecemeal, but this represented over and above what was needed for the track, locomotive sheds and other railway operations. It is this 'surplus' land that was significant in the creation of what became known as *Metro-land*. The initial impetus for house-building arose in the early 1880s when the MRC needed to provide for its employees working in the then rural area around Neasden, where it had purchased 400 acres of land owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and others. The land surplus to railway requirements was used to build housing and other amenities for the workers, and by 1882 there were 112 houses and 10 shops at Neasden.

The MRC had got round the Land Clauses Act of 1845, which stipulated that the railway company could not hold on to land it did not require for railway use for more than 10 years, by separating its ordinary stock into two parts – railway stock and surplus stock, and this was authorised by an Act of 1885. The Metropolitan Railway Act of 1898 then enabled the MRC's Surplus Lands Committee 'to improve, develop and lay out for building any of its lands, including those acquired 'hereafter'.³⁵ A number of housing estates were built through the auspices of the Surplus Lands Committee, for example at Pinner and Willesden Green.³⁶ House-building proving to be a successful venture, further land was

purchased. From the early years of the twentieth century, landowners and developers had begun to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new railway line and to build over the rural areas it served, in some cases adopting 'Garden City' principles, an example being at Ruislip Manor on land owned by King's College. In 1919, the MRC set up *Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Ltd.* (MRCE) to focus exclusively on this lucrative element of its business. Although a separate entity, the new company maintained close ties with the MRC until the latter's demise in 1933, after which MRCE continued to operate as a land-developer. A key figure in the venture was Robert H. Selbie (1868-1930), who became a Director of MRCE in 1919 but who, as General Manager of MRC from 1908, had been responsible for steering the company's new direction into house-building.

From the 1900s onwards, the MRC had increasingly produced illustrated guides and booklets, as well as posters and postcards, to promote its line and the delights of the countryside encountered. Such methods of publicity were to prove invaluable for promoting the MRCE's residential developments: 'Metro-land' was first used as the title for the annual railway guide in 1915, which continued publication until 1932. As well as providing practical information on trains and timetables, *Metro-land* rejoiced in hyperbolic prose and evocative illustrations to impart the treasures to be found in the areas served, and it was soon specifically aimed at attracting potential house-buyers to the new estates that the MRCE and others were building. The MRC continued to use all manner of marketing ploys to carry its message in different ways, and even a song entitled 'My Little Metro-land Home' appeared in 1920, the refrain to which goes as follows:

There's a little wife, The joy of my life -
In a trim little bungalow.
There's a little dot In a little cot In a little spot
A little spot that I know;
To the hum of bees, And whisper of trees -
At twilight together we roam.
It's happiness crowned, It is Paradise found
Is my little Metro-land home.³⁷

37. With words by Boyle Lawrence and music by Henry Thraile, this was published by Herman Darewski Music Publishing Company at a cost of 2 shillings.

34. The company was set up in early 1853 as the *Bayswater, Paddington and Holborn Bridge Railway*, later that year re-named the *North Metropolitan Railway*, before it dropped the 'North'. It was the first underground railway in the world and the first railway in London offering cheaper fares for workers. The Great Western Railway was involved at the outset and owned and operated the trains in the *Met*'s first year until MRC had its own rolling stock. On 30 June 1933 the MRC ceased to exist when it was taken over by the new London Passenger Transport Board.

35. Alan A. Jackson, *op.cit.*, p.11.

36. The Wembley Park Estate of 280 acres was purchased in 1890, part of which was used to lay out Tower Park, the brain-child of MRC Chairman Sir Edward Watkin, which was planned as London's premier sports, exhibition and leisure centre with its own 'Eiffel Tower' and served by a Metropolitan line station. This proved a failure and the land was later sold for the British Empire Exhibition of 1924/5.

According to a free booklet issued by the MRC in 1923, the 'particular charm of Metro-land' could be summed up thus:

It is not "violently lovely," as Byron said of one of his early loves, but like her, it "steals upon the spirit like a May-day breaking." Its charms are many and varied. Middlesex, where it still contrives to escape the fast-spreading tide of London, wears a pleasant homely face. The elms grow tall in its fields and pastures and in the broad plain that stretches below Harrow's airy ridge towards Uxbridge. [...] Metro-land – the land which the Metropolitan Railway is proud to serve – is a strip of England at its fairest, a gracious district formed by nature for the homes of a healthy, happy race.

It goes without saying that the MRCE's Metro-land estates were built to bring revenue and profit to the railway by encouraging use of the new railway line, aimed at season-ticket-holding commuters during the week and, at weekends, their families visiting 'town' or day trippers to the 'country'. As an added inducement the MRC offered free first class tickets to prospective purchasers until its demise in 1933. By 1925 *Metro-land* noted that MRCE's residential estates covered some 630 acres. Although the 'glorious countryside' that the advertisements offered to the home-seekers was swiftly being swallowed up, the layout of these estates paid attention to provision of street trees, gardens and open space, and some legacy of the pioneers of the garden suburb movement is therefore observable. William Webb's aspirations for his Purley estate find an echo here: 'On return from work in the city, by electric railway, the commuter would come to a self-contained community, to an estate designed with green verges, open spaces, trees and recreation grounds.'³⁸

In 1928 the MRCE began to plan what was to become Harrow Garden Village near Rayners Lane, which became a flagship residential development. Rayner's Lane was an old roadway through medieval fields to Pinner, once called Bourne Lane but renamed after

the nineteenth-century Rayner family whose house was on the corner of what became Farm Avenue. There had been a Halt at Rayners Lane since 1906, but in the 1920s it was still described as a quiet spot, 'unfriended, unvisited and untrod'.³⁹ In 1928 the MRCE initially bought 187 acres for its new estate with a loan from the MRC in recognition of the benefits that would accrue to the railway, purchasing more land subsequently; in 1932 the estate covered 213 acres and by the time it was completed in 1934 it was some 230 acres. The name it was given indicates the company's aspirations; a poster in 1929 showing houses on a chessboard proclaimed:

A Good Move – to Harrow Garden Village. 21 minutes from Baker Street. Houses of varying type built by well-known builders available at popular prices. Liberal open spaces, tennis courts, etc. Excellent sites for houses and shop plots in commanding positions.

In fact the MRC had tried to get the station renamed 'Harrow Garden Village' in 1928 but Hendon Rural District Council did not consider this to be appropriate so 'Rayners Lane' it remained;⁴⁰ it was locally nicknamed *Pneumonia Junction* for the winds that blew down from the Chilterns.⁴¹

The pages of the 1929 issue of *Metro-land* made first mention of the MRCE's plans for Harrow Garden Village, referring to the 1,000 houses and 240 shops to be built on a layout of 'wide avenues, generous circles, closes and open spaces'. The 1930 issue updated this, describing 'this beautifully laid out and well timbered Estate of over 213 acres, with 16 acres of permanent open spaces, recreation grounds and tennis courts'; a sketch map showed the layout of the '5 miles of Roads' mainly north of the railway line, and sites were marked for open spaces, 2 churches and a school (*fig. 48*). It was being built 'on the latest principles', and another publication⁴² commented that: Every care is being bestowed on the development to permanently assure its natural beauty and to render it delightful for all time from all aspects, whilst measured in time, the Estate is

39. *Metro-land*, 1929 edition.

40. HRDC Highways & Planning Committee Minutes of 4 October 1928.

41. Donald Strachan, 'Middlesex on Line', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 28 November 2004.

42. Green & Wolff, *op.cit.*, p.106.

38. Elizabeth Cooper, 'A Metroland Walk: Harrow Garden Village', *Harrow Strolls & Ambles* (J N & H Lock, Harrow, 1983), p.6.



52. The Close, Rayners Lane, August 1934
(COURTESY LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARY, HARROW LIBRARIES)

53. The Close, September 2008
(PHOTOGRAPH SALLY WILLIAMS)

but 20 minutes from Town.' Although eventually some 25 builders provided houses on the estate, the principal builder was E. S. Reid, who had worked for Harrow Council as Deputy Engineer until 1928, when he resigned to begin building houses near North Harrow Station. The 1929 *Metro-land* carried advertisements for his 'Fresh and Refreshing' houses at both North Harrow and Harrow Garden Village, and the 1930 issue had 4 pages advertising six 'Types' of Reid House at Harrow Garden Village, both detached and semi-detached (*fig. 49*), and the opportunity to send for a free booklet, 'Houses by E. S. Reid'. By 1932, *Metro-land* had 6 pages of Reid ads with 16 Types of house to choose from as well as a personal statement from Mr Reid, which conveys succinctly the aspirations for Harrow Garden Village and the type of house-holder sought:

From the accompanying plan it will be seen that E. S. Reid's estate has the particular advantage of being **self-contained** and wherever you choose a house on this Estate you may rest assured that you will be surrounded by other of E. S. Reid's houses, and by this it is intended to convey that you may be sure that you will not have a nasty cheap mass production house anywhere near you to lower the value of your own property. [...]
In developing E. S. Reid's Estate **profit has not been the first consideration**. The first object has been to produce an area which will not be a blot on the landscape and a district where purchasers may **feel proud** of their own Estate. [...] On this Estate proof is offered of cases where houses are moved to retain trees and hedges **not** as is usually the case trees and hedges moved to make room for a few extra houses. This point emphasises the statement before mentioned that **profit is not the first consideration**.

It is interesting to note that Reid actually lived on the estate in one of his own houses on Oakington Avenue (*fig. 50*). Although the layout of roads was not of his making, there is some justification in its description as 'E. S. Reid's Estate'. While he was building here he paid the MRC to provide a private siding so that his building materials could be transported more easily, without disrupting the roads, and the 'exclusive yet

accessible' estate is described in his book in words echoing *Metro-land*'s own copywriters: 'On all sides are green fields and rural lanes; the air clean and refreshing'. The estate soon had a shopping parade – Station Parade – which included 4 estate agents, one of course that of E. S. Reid, a ladies' hairdresser, draper, corsetiere, newsagent, post office and bank. As the estate grew up, *Metro-land* of 1931 dwelt less on the rural ambience and more on 'the rise of a township' that 'has every promise of developing into a popular and pleasant suburb', where 'there will be no occasion here to lament in future a failure of foresight in town planning'. It also referred to the 'splendid new arterial road' to be provided – Imperial Drive, completed in 1934, linking Rayners Lane station to North Harrow and other suburban development. 'If the quiet rustic beauty of Rayners Lane is now a memory of the past, like the picturesque farmhouse, the broad streets of the new subub are being beautified by the planting of trees.' While photographs of country lanes still illustrated the environs of Rayners Lane, there were also pictures of the spanking new houses and their flower-filled gardens (*fig. 51*). By 1930 the first residents had moved into what have been dubbed the 'Tudorbethan semis', which had names inspired by its rural heritage like 'Two Acres' and 'Elm Close', although 'Staiput' also made an appearance. By 1935 Longfield School on Dukes Avenue served children of Harrow Garden Village, while not actually situated on the estate; Rayners Lane Baptist Church was built in 1935 at the junction of Vicarage Way and Imperial Way, one of the plots designated for a church on the original estate plan.⁴³

Harrow Garden Village was certainly laid out with attention to landscaping and much of this remains in evidence. Rayners Lane, originally lined with elm trees, still has a number of fine mature oak trees, and as it progresses towards Pinner there are a number of shallow crescents of houses set back behind communal gardens, planted with shrubs, trees and ornamental conifers: The Gardens, The Greenway, The Croft and The Close (*figs. 52 & 53*). One writer in 2004⁴⁴ waxed lyrical about

43. The church was built in memory of Janet Ireland Hoare (1903–30), medical missionary and daughter of the minister of South Harrow Baptist Church.

44. Strachan, *op.cit.*

the latter: 'reminiscent of an idealised village green with its picture-perfect village hall, missing only a weeping willow and a duck pond'. Some of the grass verges remain on roadside borders, and a proportion of houses retain their low boundary walls and neat gardens. At the angle of Whittington Way and Rayners Lane is an area of landscaping through which the Yeading Brook runs. Within the estate off Park Drive and Imperial Drive is a small recreation ground evocatively called Rayners Mead, with landscaping in the same style as the communal gardens with shrubberies, winding paths, formal beds and tennis courts, but when I visited in 2008 this was sadly less than picturesque.

Harrow Garden Village was very soon part of a more or less continuously built-up area. To the south of the railway line another large residential estate, the 250-acre Tithe Farm Estate, was also being developed from 1932-38 by T. F. Nash Ltd. of Harrow, whose first residential scheme had been at Kenton in 1925. Nash's estate is within a Conservation Area, while Harrow Garden Village is not, although this has been considered by Harrow Council in recent years. Nonetheless, although - unlike the Webb Estate and Brentham Garden Suburb - at first glance Harrow Garden Village is almost indistinguishable as a separate designed entity among the streets around Rayners Lane, a closer look shows that it does retain much of its former character and deserves recognition as one of London's 'appendages'.

These three residential schemes all demonstrate in their varying ways the respect accorded to landscape (pre-existing and new), planting and place-making that was a component of so much suburban development up until and beyond World War II. The importance of individuality, such as that expressed through the house-holder's tending of his or her own garden or allotment, is a recurring motif. With a greater or lesser degree of nostalgia they hark back to simpler times, to rural pleasures and even communal life around the village green, striving to counteract the impersonality of the vast metropolis that London had become.

FONTES FODINA: THE GARDENS OF ISLINGTON'S NEW RIVER

By David Adshead

Islington is justly celebrated for the elegance of its surviving late Georgian terraces, arranged along the borough's streets and around pocket-sized squares, a number of which boast attractive gardens. Amongst these Claremont Square is something of a curiosity; behind unusually high and firmly locked railings a steep, uniformly sloping bank, grassed and planted with trees, rises on all four sides to a low brick wall set high against the sky. For the garden fancier in search of a green retreat from London's streets it is no more than a tease, for the centre of the square houses a massive covered reservoir built in 1856 in satisfaction of the requirements of the Metropolis Water Act of 1852. An illustration made at the time reveals the impressive, 3.5 million gallon engineering structure that lies beneath this odd, mounded garden square (*fig. 54*).

There are other, curiously shaped, green spaces in Islington whose placement and geometry are indebted to the legacy of the 'New River', the extraordinary aqueduct created in the early seventeenth century, which brought clean water to the burgeoning city from springs at Chadwell and Amwell, in Hertfordshire, a meandering forty miles to the north. These spaces, open to the public, daily until dusk - Duncan Terrace Gardens, Colebrooke Row Gardens, Astey's Row Rock Garden, and the gardens of Canonbury Grove and Douglas Road - can all be found within a mile and a half's walk of Claremont Square and the site of the former terminal buildings, the New River Head, which lies a matter of yards to the south.

The story of the New River has been told on many occasions.¹ In essence it is as follows. Encouraged initially by Elizabeth I, it seems, and subsequently with the benefit of a Royal Charter granted by James I, in 1604 Edmund Colthurst began the construction of a canal, six feet wide, whose purpose was to bring much needed fresh water to London, both for drinking (for which a charge would be made) and for the cleaning of streets and

1. For the most recent and comprehensive account see Robert Ward, *London's New River* (London, 2003).