Enfield Society News

Spring 2026

The Society Joins 'Action For Enfield's Future'

Andrew Lack and John West

A new campaign group has been formed to oppose the development of a New Town in Enfield based on Crews Hill and Vicarage Farm (see Newsletter 240, Winter 2025, page 2). Joining the Society are Better Homes for Enfield, Enfield Climate Action Forum (EnCAF), and Enfield RoadWatch. We have worked successfully with all these groups during 2025 on the Local Plan Examination.

The Group is currently formulating its key messages. Whilst opposing the development of housing on open countryside, the Group is not opposed to housing, nor do we want to be portrayed as "nimbys". Housing investment for affordable family housing is desperately needed, but this is more appropriate elsewhere in the Borough, away from open countryside.

In order to uncover more details of how the New Town proposals came about, Freedom of Information (FoI) requests have been made to the Council, the Greater London Authority (GLA), and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). All have come back essentially saying that nothing can be revealed at present due to "confidentiality". The GLA response, at four pages, uses three pages to justify why it cannot release any details. One significant detail was revealed by the FoI to the Council. In May 2025, during the Local Plan Examination, the Council was promoting the site to the Government's New Towns Task Force without this being disclosed to those taking part. Regrettably, the process set up by the DCLG has been surrounded by secrecy, which is a major cause for concern.

The Group is also calling on all residents to write to their MPs and the GLA Mayor to express concern over the plan. The Group's website has template letters and points that could be made in your letter.

Andrew Lack / Enfield Society



Looking across the Merryhills Valley towards Enfield Town—land identified for a New Town

Andrew Lack / Enfield Society



Vicarage Farm, looking south towards Jubilee Cottage on Enfield Road across the Merryhills Brook Valley.

Among the points listed as to why Crews Hill is not an appropriate site for a New Town are: a large area of "pristine countryside" will be lost; the Thamesmead site (the other London New Town) is a brownfield site and has transport investment agreed for the DLR; Meridian Water is awaiting immediate development; and there appears to be a disproportionate number of new towns in the south east (there are two in London). Similarly, Vicarage Farm is open countryside, crossed by well-used public footpaths, and forms valuable open space linked to Trent Country Park.

Of course, it isn't just Enfield that will be impacted by the New Town. With up to 21,000 homes proposed, there will be increased pressure on local roads and transport links. Whilst some new GP surgeries will be planned, there will be no new hospital, so this will impact North Middlesex, Chase Farm, and Barnet hospitals, all of which are under pressure at present.

You can find more information about the Action for Enfield Group on its website — `actionforenfieldsfuture.org.uk` — and you can sign up for newsletters to be kept informed of developments.

Co-Chair's Column



Enfield is often described as historic, but history here is not something we simply look back on. It is something we live with, shape and pass on. As The Enfield Society enters its 90th celebratory year, that idea feels more relevant than ever.

What has sustained the Society for nine decades is not nostalgia, but a belief that heritage is a living asset. Well-designed places, cared-for buildings, green spaces, and thoughtful details all contribute to thriving high streets, social life, and local economies. When heritage is understood as part of everyday life, it supports wellbeing, pride, and a sense of belonging.

Many of the improvements people notice across the Borough did not happen by accident. They happened because residents, volunteers and civic societies stayed involved, informed, and constructive. Community voice matters, especially when it is consistent, evidence-based and rooted in care for place. That has always been the Enfield Society's approach.

We also know that incremental change works. Not every success is a landmark scheme. Seating, planting, repairs, materials, and how spaces are connected all influence how people feel and behave. Small interventions, thoughtfully delivered, can transform how a place is used and valued.

Looking forward, we see significant challenges and opportunities that will shape Enfield's future.

One of the most important is the Enfield Local Plan. The Society has been constructively engaging with this process for the past five years, spending hundreds of volunteer hours preparing and coordinating submissions, consulting with members, and responding in detail to the Local Plan Inspector's questions. The Local Plan will guide development across the Borough for many years to come, affecting heritage, green space, transport, town centres, and neighbourhood character. Our aim has been to ensure that growth is well-designed, sustainable, and respectful of Enfield's distinctive places.

We are also closely monitoring emerging New Town proposals, with Government announcements expected later this year. Proposals affecting areas such as Crews Hill and Chase Park could have far-reaching implications for heritage, landscape, and the wider environment in north-west Enfield. The Society expects to be fully engaged as consultations emerge, ensuring that local knowledge and long-term stewardship are part of the conversation from the outset.

Alongside this strategic work, the Society continues its on-going programme of activities: guided footpath walks, heritage walks and talks, litter picks, visits, and events that connect people with Enfield's history, landscapes, and communities. These activities are at the heart of what we do – encouraging participation, learning and shared enjoyment of place.

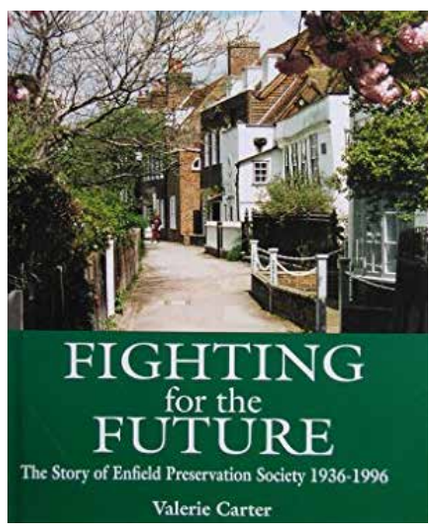
At its best, Enfield is somewhere people return to, even after they have moved away. That sense of belonging—rooted in memory, care, and civic pride—is something worth protecting and renewing.

John Cole

The Society's 90th Anniversary Still Fighting for the Future

Bob Fowler

On the 30th April 2026, the Enfield Society reaches its 90th anniversary since the foundation meeting held on that date in 1936. We have plans to celebrate this important milestone with a number of activities within the anniversary year from 1st May 2026 to 30th April 2027. This will include articles on the history of the Society in the Newsletter, a series of displays about the society that will visit some Enfield Libraries and other community locations within the Borough, a guided walk around Ponders End to launch the publication of our ninth Heritage Walk leaflet, a family Treasure Trail, a photographic competition and more. The strapline for this anniversary is taken from Valerie Carter's 1997 book *Fighting for the Future* published in 1997 following the celebration of our 60th anniversary. The book traced our history up until that time but is sadly now out of print. We will, however, be including a series of articles in the Newsletter on the history of the society.



Looking back ten years to our 80th anniversary, it is interesting to record some of the actions and achievements that have occurred in that interval: **Three new groups were formed**, Cleaner Neighbourhoods, Gordon Hill Station, and Conservation and Heritage, and several **new publications** were produced, including an updated and expanded Footpath Map, an updated edition of *The Enfield Book*, four new Heritage Walk leaflets covering Clay Hill and Whitewebbs, Southgate, Winchmore Hill and Palmers Green, *A History of Enfield Chase*, and *A Week on the Hertford Loop in Photographs*. The **Local Heritage List** was published jointly by the Council and the Society following a major review by Society volunteers, and the Society took **action to support key heritage projects** at The Charity School in Edmonton, Broomfield House, and Lavender Hill Cemetery Chapel. This period also saw a **two year education sponsorship** at Forty Hall, the installation of **three historical murals** at Enfield Chase station, and the **promotion and co-ordination of responses to the Enfield Local Plan** consultations, as well as the awarding of **a number of grants** to other bodies for activities that support TES objectives.

In addition to the above we continue our regular programme of around 25 to 30 guided footpath walks each year, an ongoing and well attended programme of talks, quarterly issues of the Newsletter and a monthly email news update to members, regular updating of the Society website and information on several social media sites. There are also monthly meetings of the Management Committee, ongoing action by all Society groups and quarterly meetings with the Leader and Council Officers.

The society is entirely run by volunteers and considering our broad range of action and activities we always welcome new volunteers. If you are interested in getting involved, or would like to keep in touch, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Meeting With The Leader of the Council

John Cole and John West

Kaya Emin / Enfield Society



A view of Ponders End Park

John Cole and John West met the Leader, Councillor Ergin Erbil and Brett Leahy, Strategic Director of Planning, Growth and Infrastructure during January.

We discussed a range of strategic issues and matters that have been drawn to our attention by our members. We are grateful to the Leader for making time available to meet us on a regular basis. While we will not agree on every issue, there are many matters where we work in partnership with the Council–litter picking, signage and information (New River Path, New River Loop etc.), tree planting in Enfield Chase and parks, the ENLab project with schools (a heritage project based at Forty Hall and in local parks), supporting initiatives with Journeys and Places such as Devonshire Square etc. The Society is also represented on the Enfield Town Steering Group.

On the **New Town proposals**, the Council's leadership are well aware of the Society's position. We support the provision of new, affordable homes, but we do not believe that the Green Belt is the appropriate location. The Council is waiting to know what decisions the Government will take on the New Town proposal. We explained that the Society is considering a public meeting at an appropriate time and will invite Councillors to take part. The Leader said that he would be happy to attend but not take part formally, to hear the views expressed.

We probed the timescales for dealing with both **Planning and Enforcement** issues and raised some long outstanding enforcement actions. We were assured that both teams are now fully staffed and that there is no longer any backlog. There are problems in resolving some enforcement matters, but these result from delays in the court system and a shortage of judges who can deal with these matters.

On **Vicarage Farm** we expressed concern about the destruction of ancient hedgerows on the farmland. We noted that members had received a weak and rather ambiguous response from the Enforcement Team. We believe that the removed hedgerow is within a designated Site of Nature Conservation and protected. The Council have agreed to look at this again.

20mph speed limits these can be controversial and are opposed by some drivers, but many Society members support them. Further 20 mph areas are being introduced in several areas including Edmonton and Palmers Green, but there are still residential roads where the limit will not apply. We suggested that the Council should impose a blanket 20mph on all residential roads (as seen in Haringey, Bristol, and many other cities). This is easier to enforce and simpler for motorists to understand. We understand that this is a Council aim, but consultation is continuing.

In terms of **fly tipping**, this continues to be a problem in some locations. While the Council usually acts quickly when concerns are reported and there have been some successful prosecutions, we believe these needs to be a campaign with more publicity about the legal action that is taken. The Leader explained that the Council has a large number of fixed CCTV cameras and mobile cameras that are used in hot spots. We suggested that Turkey Street west of the A10 should be targeted.

The Council has recently agreed to fund **public liability insurance for Friends of Parks Groups** for the next 3 years. We were assured that the intention is for this to continue after the three years also. In addition, £13M has been made available to support Friends Groups and improvements in parks.

We have previously offered to support initiatives in **Ponders End Park** possibly as part of our 90th celebrations this year. We were pleased to hear that improvements to the landscaping are taking place with bulb planting and improvements around the entrance and bandstand to prevent any anti-social behaviour. The Leader suggested that we could help in supporting developments in the park such as a music festival and we expressed a willingness to make contact with local groups. Similarly, we expressed a desire to support new endeavours such as footpaths and walking routes in Meridian Water and other Journeys and Places initiatives etc. We are currently producing a Heritage Walk Guide to Ponders End and are keen to increase our work in the east of the Borough where our membership numbers are lower than in the west.

The Council will write to us regarding heritage at risk and options for the **Millennium Sundial** in Chase Green Gardens.

Kaya Emin / Enfield Society



The Millennium Sundial

Be Part of Our Living History

Hilary Morris

This year promises to be an eventful one for the Enfield Society as it continues its mission of caring for Enfield's heritage and environment. Not only are we celebrating 90 years of our work in the Borough, but we are starting a new project celebrating the individuals who have contributed to the work of the Society.

The Records and Research Group will be conducting **Oral Archival interviews** recording the memories and recollections of people who have given time to the Society over the years. These audio recordings will be archived as a permanent record of what individuals did over the years to add to our record of the past work of the Society. Have you spent time on a project, in a group or helping the Society in any way over the years – or are you especially appreciative of another member's contribution either currently or in the past? We would love to hear from you. We are looking for people who can offer us an hour or two to sit and talk about their experiences.



If you want to participate, please contact the Records and Research Group at records.research@enfieldsociety.org.uk or ring our Jubilee Hall number and leave us a message and we will be in touch.

A Short History of The Enfield Society

Andrew Lack

To mark the ninetieth year of The Enfield Society, we are presenting some examples of past work in the four newsletters planned for 2026. These articles are based on an expanded history of The Society by Valerie Carter and published in 1997 to mark the Enfield Preservation Society's sixtieth year.

Part 1 – Beginnings and Footpaths

Our name

Until the AGM in 2007, The Society was known as the Enfield Preservation Society (EPS). A change of name became possible when Enfield Mencap gave up using the name on incorporation. The name "Enfield Civic Society" had been considered but rejected as it was not liked by some members.

Our beginnings

The origins of the EPS go back to 1935 when Enfield Urban District Council wanted to build a new Town Hall on Chase Green — a surviving piece of the ancient hunting ground within Enfield Town. In February 1935 posters appeared informing locals of a public meeting to SAVE CHASE GREEN! This was followed by a petition which was supported by 1,000 signatures. In March 1935, the Rev. Daisley, vicar of St Andrew's Church, raised the idea of establishing a preservation society modelled along the lines of a recently established one in Cambridge. Thus, in December 1935, a meeting took place in the Tudor Room in Little Park which elected the Rev Daisley as Chair. The fledgling Group was advised that £40 would be needed to start a Society (£2,500 today). A number of the local Good and the Great were invited, including the Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex and the Chairman of the Urban District Council. Only one woman was invited but declined.

The first formal meeting of the Enfield Preservation Society was held on the 9th of March 1936, and the body was registered on 26th March. The first annual subscription was 10s 6d (about £60 today).

That Town Hall

In 1937 the Council confirmed its plan to build on Chase Green, so the newly formed EPS sprang into action with deputations and letters, resulting in January 1937 with the Council agreeing to drop the idea. However, in August that year it announced a plan to build on Library Green instead, so the process was repeated. The Council then tried to do a deal with the EPS, offering to drop plans for Library Green if the EPS accepted Chase Green. The EPS refused. The problem was only solved when Fir Tree House in Silver Street was purchased, where the Civic Centre now stands.

Early successes

Before WWII, the EPS has a number of successes beyond the town hall. Perhaps to us today the most striking is that the Council wanted to demolish White Lodge in Silver Street (now Grade II listed) to widen the road. The EPS sorted that one out!

WWII

The intervention of the war in 1939 stopped many organisations from functioning, including the EPS, though it did save the railings outside the Old Vestry House in The Town.

The Society is reborn

In 1959 Carinthia Arbuthnot Lane noticed marks on several trees near Gentleman's Row indicating that felling was planned. She wrote to the Gazette suggesting that the EPS was needed again. On 8th December, a meeting took place at the offices of Vanderpump and Sykes and the EPS was reformed. No longer were the Great and the Good invited and the EPS embarked on a recruitment campaign with the annual subscription set at 2s 6s (about £3.50). By March 1960 over 200 had joined.

Opening the countryside

One of the first to join in 1960 was Don Gresswell, a local bookseller. In 1962 he suggested the Society should clear the untidy corner at the junction of Forty Hill and Clay Hill which had once been part of Gough Park, but which was then owned and neglected by the Council. A volunteer group was formed and their work 'discovered' a carriageway which extended to Whitewebbs following the old course of the New River. Over 19 freezing weekends in 62–63 (a very severe winter) the group cleared a path. The work was one of the first schemes in the country of practical cooperation between a civic society and a local authority.

But much more was to follow. Don was a self-confessed footpath addict, and he quickly set up a Footpaths Group to research and open as many of the old paths in the Borough as possible, perhaps as many as 100 — most of which had been lost during WWII when food production was paramount. The work had the full support of the Council. In March 1964, the Evening News reported that volunteers were constructing a mile-long footpath from Cattlegate Road. This was opened in January 1966 as Footpath No. 1.

To promote use of these new paths, the EPS published its first Footpaths Map in 1964, price 1s, and this remains today our most popular publication.

Other work included a new footpath alongside Whitewebbs Lane as an alternative to the Council's plan to straighten the road; a footbridge over the A10 to give access to Forty Hill from Eastern Enfield (now part of the London LOOP) and the lobbying of the Department of Transport to maintain footpaths over the planned M25.

Perhaps the greatest achievement came in 1975 when, after a lengthy delay, the GLC finally agreed to a new 1½-mile path from the Ridgeway to Hadley Road which had been proposed by Don in the early 1960s. However, though agreed, there was no funding for the construction, so the Footpaths Group toiled for three years to fence the entire route, build two stiles; divert two streams and construct a bridge over Salmon's Brook. The EPS named it the Jubilee Path and a concrete marker near the Ridgeway records the Society's contribution.

Don received an MBE in 1983 'for many years of dynamic conservation work' recognising his huge contribution to the EPS. It was also partly given for his work in founding the Chiltern Society. Earlier, in 1980 Don received a Queen Mother's Birthday Award for 'a high level of achievement in the field of environmental improvement and litter abatement and particularly for his work with the Enfield Lock Campaign' (to be covered in a later article).

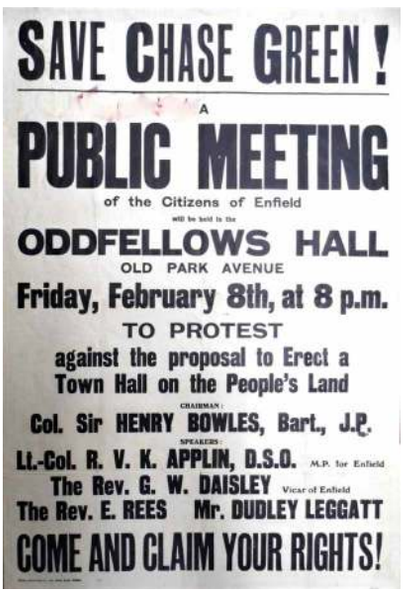
In a final act of generosity to the EPS Don Gresswell gave the current Hall and the freehold in March 1986 to mark the Society's fiftieth year. The building required 4,000 man-hours of work by volunteers over two years to turn it into our present headquarters, together with £7,500 of investment. Sadly, Don died before it was formally opened in March 1988 and the opening ceremony fell to Eileen, Don's wife.

Legacy sixty years on

The threats to our Borough are probably greater today than in 1935 and the need for a strong civic voice is evident. The extraordinary work undertaken by the Footpaths Group in the 60s and 70s laid the foundation of the rights of way network we enjoy today. Sadly, the legacy is under threat from a general neglect with the maintenance of the paths (see Stuart Mills' article in Newsletter 240, Winter 2025, page 8) as well as the Council's propensity to create new paths as 'permissive' rather than rights of way.

Part 2 will cover how the EPS dealt with threats to the Green Belt and Enfield Town centre.

Part 1



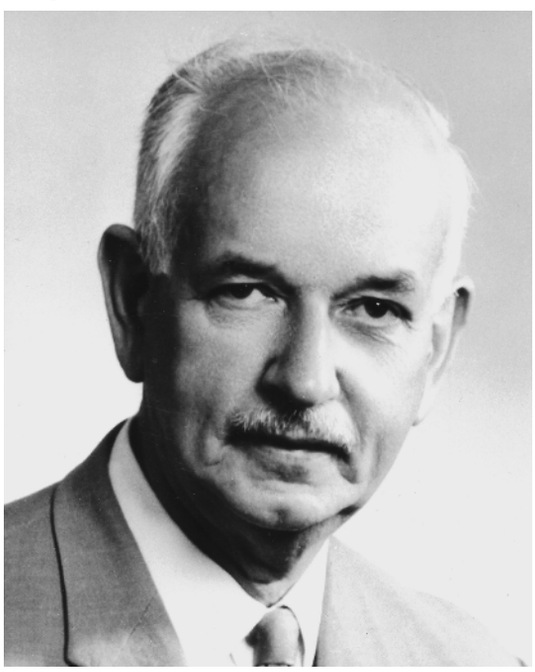
SAVE CHASE GREEN poster



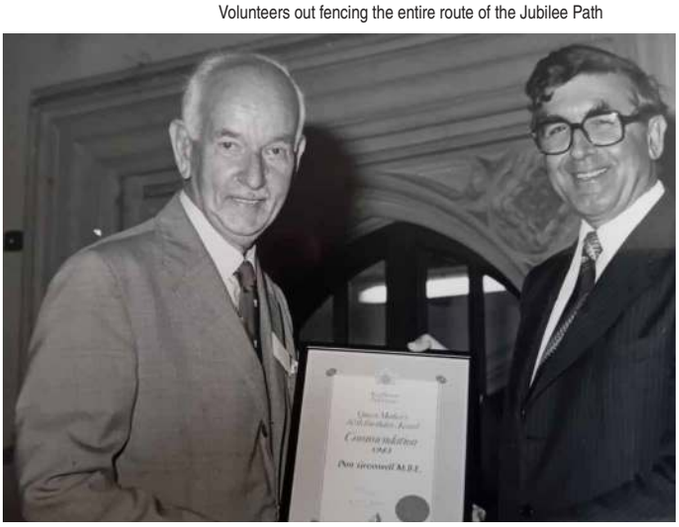
Clearing the 'discovered' carriageway between Gough Park and Whitewebbs in the bitter winter of 1962–3



Volunteers out fencing the entire route of the Jubilee Path



Don Gresswell



In 1980 Don Gresswell was recommended by Keep Britain Tidy for a Queen Mother's 80th Birthday Honour for his work with the Enfield Preservation Society



The official hand-over of Jubilee Hall to EPS Chair Valerie Carter in March 1986. Don Gresswell is standing to the right of Valerie

Society News

Publications



A new addition to our online store focuses on the building of private houses in the North London suburbs between the wars. Produced by MoDA – the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture - Little Palaces looks at these houses, inside and out, and the way of life of the people who lived in them. It contains evocative photographs and illustrations and provides a fascinating and informative introduction to the suburban semi.
Price £6.00 plus postage from our online store or buy at Enfield Society talks at Jubilee Hall.

Alison Parker

In Memoriam

Since our last newsletter, we are very sorry to report the loss of four people closely connected to our Society. Our President, Colin Pointer, lost his wife, Gill, at the end of last year. More recently, Sue Grayson Ford, a former member of the Management Committee and a well-known heritage walks leader, lost her husband, Colin Ford. Our Vice President, Alan Skilton, and his wife, Sylvia, have also both passed away. Many members will recall that Sylvia worked at Jubilee Hall, organising and supporting meetings and talks. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families and friends

John West

Memberships

We finished the year with 1,544 members which was just over a 100 down on last year. Thanks to all of those that have renewed so far. We have included a renewal form with this newsletter for any of you who hadn't renewed at the time of sending the newsletter to print and we would appreciate your continued support in a big year for Enfield. Many of our new members are from friend referrals so keep spreading the word…

We welcome the following new members to the Society:

L Allman, L and A Bonomi, B Bohn, R Brush, B Byrne, M Carter, L Crosthwait, J Ennis, C Finebaum, I Fisher, M and A Folan, E and G Galilee, M Hawker, M James, M Janczur, D and R Keane, E Khandker, D Kirby, N Kubilay, T Martin, B Palmer, O Palos, T and L Pearson, A Sadlier, N Selim, M Sells, S Shepherd, D Smyth, A Spiteri, P and Y Theobald, L Van Keulen, M Wallace, A and L Welsh

Alec Tyler

HELP WANTED

The Society is run entirely by volunteers and we always need more help. We need people to run the Society and people to work on our projects and campaigns. For example:

- We are looking for a **Publicity Officer** to co-ordinate our work to promote the Society.
- It would be good to have volunteers to **"adopt" heritage buildings**—to monitor them and co-ordinate our efforts to rescue/restore/improve them.
- We would welcome assistance in **administering the Society**.

Whether you are keen to be involved in conserving Enfield's heritage and environment, or you would simply like to use or develop your technical or administrative skills, we should be able to find things for you to do. Please contact us at

info@enfieldsociety.org.uk

Society Talks

All our talks take place at **Jubilee Hall**. Please note that the talks alternate between evening and morning times. Evening talks normally start at 7.30pm (doors open 7pm), and morning talks at 11am.

There is no meeting in April, as the usual date would fall on Easter Monday

Tuesday 10th March (Morning)
South Lodge by Ian Jones

The South Lodge of Enfield Chase was probably established in the early 15th century but we have few details about it, apart from repairs in 1583, until after the Civil War. These are mainly notes about various owners like the Earl of Chatham. For some of the 19th century it was a school and a prospectus published probably in the early 1900's gives us our only interior pictures to go with various 18th and 19th century exterior views. It closed in 1935, was rapidly demolished and work started on the Laing estate which was partly finished by 1939. After 1945 part was compulsorily purchased for Council housing, the rest being finished by Laing in the late 1950's. All that survives today is the cottage of the Home Farm together with the lake alongside Bramley Road plus Boxers Lake at the bottom of Lowther Drive and two of the original chain of 4 lakes.

Tuesday 12th May (Morning)
Discovering MacDonald Gill: Architect, Artist and Mapmaker by Caroline Walker

MacDonald 'Max' Gill, younger brother of the controversial sculptor Eric Gill, was an architect, letterer, and graphic artist of the first half of the twentieth century. He was famed for his whimsical map posters for the London Underground and magnificent painted map panels for landmark buildings such as the Palace of Westminster.



His architectural legacy lives on in the arts and crafts cottages he designed in rural Sussex and Dorset while the alphabet he created for the British military headstone is familiar to all. This wonderfully illustrated talk by Max Gill's great-niece gives fascinating insights into the life and work of this remarkable but little-known artist.

Caroline is a regular speaker for The Arts Society and has curated several exhibitions of Gill's work around the country.

Talks and activities of other Societies and Groups

Enfield Archaeological Society

Talks in person take place at Jubilee Hall at 7.30pm (doors open from 7pm). Open to non-members for a fee of £1.50 each payable at the door. For Zoom access details, please visit enfarchsoc.org

Friday 13th March
AGM and Summary of last years excavations by Ian Jones and Martin Dearne

Friday 10th April
Recent finds from Roman Vindolanda and Magna (via Zoom)

For details of any further talks, see the society's website at `enfarchsoc.org`

Historical Association (North London Branch)

Talks take place at Jubilee Hall at 8pm. Non-members are welcome to attend for a fee of £2 each, payable at the door.

Tuesday 10th March
Discovering Charles I by Professor Richard Cust (University of Birmingham)

Thursday 16th April
The Sun King and the Merry Monarch by Dr Jonathan Spangler (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Tuesday 12th May
The Feminine Touch in the late Roman Republic: The Women of Mark Anthony and Octavian by Dr. Carey Fleiner (University of Winchester)

The Arts Society Enfield

Meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month at Revival Christian Church, 47 London Road, Enfield EN2. Lectures start promptly at 10.40am (doors open from 10am). We are always pleased to welcome new members and visitors. The visitors fee for a single meeting is £10.

Thursday 26th February
London City of Scientific Discovery by Aaron Hunter

Thursday 26th March
The Queen Mother at the Castle of Mey by Jeremy Mainwaring-Burton.

Thursday 30th April 2026
Henri Matisse; cut up, cut down and cut outs! by Alan Silman

Thursday 28th May 2026
Crowds and Clouds of Angels by Imogen Corrigan

Thursday 25th June 2026
Norman Rockwell: Great American Artist or mere Illustrator? by John Ericson

Thursday 30th July 2026
Doors to Manual – the evolution of flying: from absolute luxury to modern day economy by Roger Mendham

There will also be a **Special Interest day on Wednesday 18th March**, consisting of a three-lecture day on *The Rise and Fall of Napoleon and Josephine* by speaker Stephen Duffy. Coffee & biscuits and lunch are included with a total cost of £40 for non-members of the Arts Society. Doors open at 10am. Please book by phoning 020 8367 7374 or email `jntmcqn@gmail.com`

Community-led improvements at Enfield Chase

John Cole



Great Northan

Community collaboration at Enfield Chase is helping to set a new benchmark for station improvements across the rail network.

Through close partnership working between Great Northern, local station partners and the Enfield Society, Enfield Chase has become the first pilot of Govia Thameslink Railway's Model Stations programme, with passenger satisfaction rising to an impressive 93%.

In parallel, Great Northern has undertaken significant station improvements, including clearer layouts, improved signage, new touch-screen information points, refurbished facilities, and brighter internal spaces, with platform repainting planned shortly. Station staff have also completed enhanced customer service training to further improve the passenger experience.


Great Northern

Central to this achievement has been sustained community involvement. Over recent years, Enfield Society members Dave Cockle and John Cole have worked alongside station partners, Kremena Dimitrova, Shaypress, and others to deliver striking platform artwork and to restore the three historic mosaics at the station entrance. Together, these features celebrate Enfield's rich heritage, reinforcing pride of place and creating a strong sense of welcome and arrival for passengers.



Great Northern

On the 9th of January, John Cole addressed an audience of around 40 invited guests on the importance of Community Rail, alongside GTR Chief Customer Officer Louis Rambaud and GTR Chief Executive Officer Angie Doll.


John Cole


Great Northern

The success at Enfield Chase will inform future improvements at other stations across the network, demonstrating the lasting value of collaboration between communities, heritage organisations, and rail operators.

High Street, Southgate

Stephen Gilburt

Southgate is first recorded in 1373 when it was in the western part of the parish and manor of Edmonton. The name refers to the south gate of Enfield Chase. This became a royal hunting ground, but it was enclosed following an Act of Parliament in 1777.

The High Street links Southgate Green (see Newsletter 219, Autumn 2020) to Southgate Circus (see Newsletter 209, Spring 2018). The Southgate Green conservation area extends into the High Street. It still has some Georgian houses, including Southgate House (see Newsletter 230, Summer 2023). There are however many later developments including the terracotta trimmed semi-circle of shops at the entrance to the Meadway estate which was built in the 1920s and 1930s (see Newsletter 196, Winter 2014).

The Enfield Society



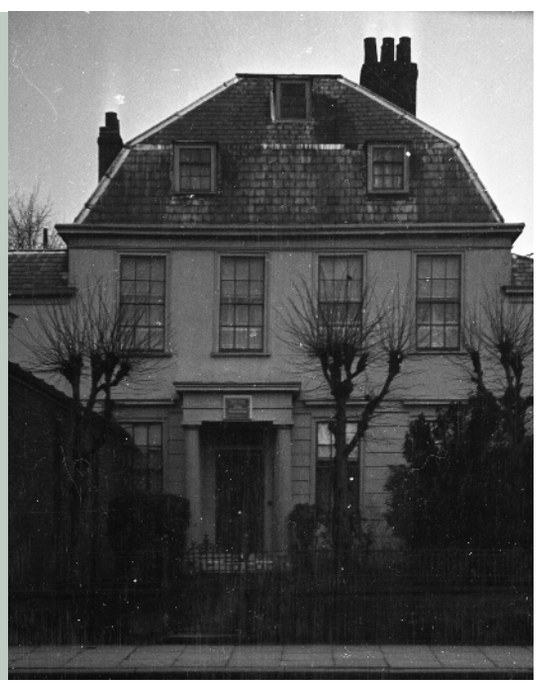
Picture 1. Locally listed 5 and 7 High Street are a pair of 18th century cottages. The roof is tiled and the walls are rough cast. The sash windows to No 7 have decorative gothic arch glazing bars to the upper sash.

Picture 2. The preacher Isaac Hunt lived at Eagle Hall from about 1783 and established a school in the house. He was also employed by the Duke of Chandos, who lived at nearby Minchenden House, as tutor to his nephew Mr. Leigh. Eagle Hall was extended and repaired in 1829 and the school continued in existence until about 1870. Following bomb damage in 1941 the 200-year-old building was demolished, and Southgate Reform Synagogue was later built on the site. There is now a plaque on the High Street.

Isaac Hunt's son the poet, novelist, playwright, essayist, and critic James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) was born at Eagle Hall and lived there until he went to Christ's Hospital Bluecoat school at the age of eight. He left at the age of 15, by which time his parents had moved away from Eagle Hall. In his 1850 autobiography Leigh Hunt wrote: "It is a pleasure to me to know that I was born in so sweet a village as Southgate… a scene of trees and meadows, of 'greenery' and nestling cottages… It is a place lying out of the way of innovation, therefore it has the pure sweet air of antiquity about it".

Charles Dickens based the unlovable character of Harold Skimpole in Bleak House on Leigh Hunt, but later apologised to him. Henry Crabb Robinson wrote: "He loves everything, he catches the sunny side of everything and, except that he has a few polemical antipathies, finds everything beautiful."

Leigh Hunt's publications included Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries (1828), Christianism (1833), and Poetical works (1844). *Jenny Kissed Me* is his best known poem.



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Picture 3. The Eagle stood opposite the entrance to what became Meadway. It was originally a cottage before becoming a beer house in 1865. In 1894 the licencee was George Pizzey. He added a single storey frontage with two entrances and flowers on the flat roof. This view shows George Pizzey at the entrance in 1911. The building later became a shop.

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Picture 4. The Woolpack on the east side of the High Street is first recorded in 1707. It included a long room, back room, tap room, back parlour, front parlour, wash house, cellar, and bar. In 1833 there was also a pastry cookshop, stables, outhouses, and gardens. This picture shows the Woolpack in 1908 before it was rebuilt in 1909. The new three storey building had a bay on the ground floor with a bottle and jug room, two public bars, saloon, tap room and skittle alley. Various alterations were made in 1929, 1947, 1953, 1961, 1965 and 1984.

For more information, see the publications: *Southgate and Edmonton Past* by Graham Dalling 1996 | *Treasures of Enfield, Discovering the Buildings of a London Borough* edited by Valerie Carter EPS 2000 | *A-Z of Enfield Pubs Part 2* by Gary Boudier 2002 | *The Buildings of England, London 4 North* by Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner 1998 | *Britain in old photographs The Old Borough of Southgate* by Alan Dumayne 1998 | *Southgate a glimpse into the past* by Alan Dumayne 1987

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Picture 5. Grade II listed 18th century 107 and 109 High Street is an altered three storey, five bay building of stock brick with blind central windows and a hipped slate roof. The sash windows are late 19th century. The stuccoed ground floor has 19th century bay windows. Both houses have several extensions.

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Picture 6. Grade II listed Croft Cottage No. 111 Holcombe House. No. 113 together with Avington No. 115 (not illustrated) were built around 1800 in stock brick. The central three storey block and two storey side blocks have sash windows with glazing bars, parapet fronts, and hipped roofs. No. 111 has old pantiles, No 113 modern pantiles and No. 115 modern tiles. The reeded door cases have cornice hoods.

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Picture 7. Grade II listed 19th century Avington Cottage No. 117 is a two storey weatherboarded structure which may have been a stable block. The left section has a low pitched hipped roof. The first floor sash windows have glazing bars.

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Picture 8. In 1949 Middlesex County Council proposed to build Southgate Technical College, seen here in a model, on the site of 107–117 High Street. However, those buildings were spared, and it was eventually built further north in 1962–3 and set back from the High Street so that it does not dominate the older buildings. It was extended in 1969–71.

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Picture 9. In the 1850s and 1860s Mayfield House was the home of Sir Robert Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and later Viscount Sherbrooke the Home Secretary. From 1896 his sisters ran a "high class exclusive school for young ladies that gained a high reputation." It was demolished in 1920 and replaced by buildings in Mayfield Avenue and The Close.

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Picture 10. Southgate Village Hall was built in 1881 to a design by Arthur Barker. It was paid for by Anna Baird wife of the local vicar Rev James Baird. It was demolished in 1958.

Enfield Local Studies & Archive



Picture 11. This 1910 view shows Southgate smithy which was in existence for 300 years. Frederick G. Cain was described on the board as a 'farrier tyre and general smith horses "shod on the improved principle"'. It was demolished in 1931 for the construction of Southgate underground station.

Spotlight on a Trustee – Alec Tyler

I joined the Enfield Society in 2019 as a joint member with my wife. We both have an interest in our local environment and its history and wanted to support an organisation that has both a history and a future objective to do this. I moved to Palmers Green in 1972 and went to both Bowes and Minchenden Schools. I trained in IT at the age of 18 and worked in Enfield for seven years on the old Pickfords site (now B&Q) on the Great Cambridge Road.

With ancestors on the Tyler side who lived in Enfield, there has always been a close affinity with the area, even though I now live on the borders in Barnet.

When I retired during COVID after 40 years in IT, I wanted to take on a couple of voluntary roles and, as a result, became the Membership Secretary for the Society in late 2021. The role keeps my mind active and has its busy periods. I thought cheques were a thing of the past until I took the role and it's nice to see more traffic through the website for renewals!



I now chair the Membership and Publicity Group and was asked to be a trustee in 2024. I also volunteer with Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, covering a variety of roles including driving, IT, gardening, and home support for families.

My hobbies include football and watching Tottenham as a long-time season ticket holder, watching and listening to music and playing golf. I like walking and have completed the North Downs Way and the Ridgeway and am now walking the Hertfordshire Way.

Whitewebbs Barn & the Gunpowder Plot

John West

The Society's Conservation and Heritage Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis. It brings together Conservation Area Groups, Council Officers and other interested parties. The group concentrates on Listed Buildings on the Historic England 'At Risk Register' and developments with our 22 Conservation Areas. Progress on restoring Listed Buildings is often slow involving Heritage Lottery bids, such as at Broomfield House or pressing private owners to act as at Southgate House. One of the 'At Risk' buildings is Whitewebbs Barn. This Grade II Listed timber framed barn, north of Whitewebbs Lane was originally linked to the old Whitewebbs House – long since demolished and rebuilt south of Whitewebbs Lane.

The barn has been passed through various owners in recent years; each has tried to restore it and turn it into a private residence. To date, little has happened and each owner has sold it on.

The current owner has appointed a well-known heritage design team and is seeking to take the project forward. They have carried out timber analysis with samples taken from 24 oak timbers. The analysis indicates tree growth in a period from around 1390–1560. Interpretation of surviving sapwood indicates that felling of the timber used in the barn took place around 1566, with construction following shortly after. Some of the timber used in the lean-to animal stalls were also felled at the same time. As we believe that the barn and original Whitewebbs House were both used by aristocrats involved in the 1605 gunpowder plot, the barn was clearly well established by that date.



Alison Arnold / Historic England

The Founder of the Enfield Society

Kaya Emin

Every institution has an origin story. For The Enfield Society, that story begins 90 years ago, with a moment of crisis on the edge of Chase Green and the determination of one man: the Reverend Ebenezer Rees.

Rees was born in Wales in 1869 and grew up in a community where the local chapel was central to everyday life. As the son of a Nonconformist minister, he was taught from an early age that faith carried a responsibility to serve the wider community and to stand firm when something important was under threat. These early lessons shaped his strong belief that protecting a town's character was a duty, not a personal choice.

He arrived in Enfield in 1916 to become minister at Christ Church. From the beginning, Rees believed his work went far beyond the church itself. At a time of war and social pressure, he involved himself fully in the life of the town, convinced that a strong community depended on education, culture, charity, and service.



Reverend Ebenezer Rees
(1870-1966)

Over the next twenty years, he became a well-known and respected public figure. He served as Chairman of the Governors of Enfield Grammar School, helped to found the Enfield Rotary Club and became its first President, set up the Enfield Literary Union, and worked as an Enfield Charity Trustee. Together, these roles gave him the trust of the community and a strong voice in local affairs.

That trust was tested in 1936, when Enfield Council announced plans to build new municipal offices on the open fields of Chase Green. To the Council, it was a practical decision. To Rees, it was a serious threat to one of Enfield's most valued green spaces and to the character of the town.

At the age of 66, Rees stepped forward to lead the opposition. Using his experience, his speaking skills, and the respect he had earned over many years, he organised public resistance and called a meeting on 8th February at the Oddfellows Hall in Old Park Avenue. Local leaders, the Vicar of Enfield, and residents came together in support. The campaign was successful, and the Council dropped its plans.

Rees knew that one victory was not enough. To protect Enfield in the long term, he helped to form the Enfield Preservation Society and became its first Chairman. What began as a protest became a permanent organisation dedicated to protecting the town.

His legacy can still be seen today in the preserved open space of Chase Green Gardens and in the ongoing work of The Enfield Society. Above all, he left a lasting lesson: that Enfield is worth protecting.

Coach Trip to Piccotts End and St Albans 20/06

Janet McQueen

This year we are making a local trip to enjoy two destinations.

On **Saturday, 20th June**, leaving Enfield at 9.15am, we will first head to St Albans and drop off half of the group to enjoy all the attractions of this town, including the Saturday market, Verulamium and other museums and galleries, shops, and the cathedral. The rest of the group will go to Piccotts End for a visit lasting about two hours, with coffee and biscuits available on arrival. The groups will then swap over after rejoining each other in St Albans for lunch.

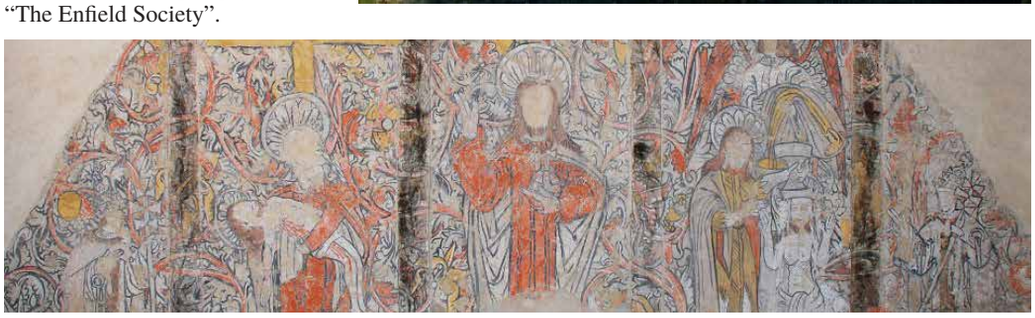
Piccotts End is a grade one listed cottage just outside Hemel Hempstead. It is rarely open to the public and contains a well preserved and unique cycle of pre-reformation paintings. Karen Murphy, one of the Charity Trustees, has done extensive research on these and will give us a talk lasting about 50 minutes on the paintings and property. There will then be time to explore and visit the sales table before returning to St Albans for lunch and the rest of the afternoon.

The other half of the group will go to Piccotts End in the afternoon, for the visit, talk and refreshments before leaving to return to Enfield about 5.30pm with those who have spent the afternoon at St Albans.

Cost of the trip will be £30 to include the talk, visit and refreshments at Piccotts End as well as the coach travel.

To book please contact Janet McQueen by email `visits@enfieldsociety.org.uk` or send a SAE to Coach trip, Jubilee Hall, 2 Parsonage Lane, Enfield, EN2 0AN with a cheque payable to "The Enfield Society".





Society Directory

President: Colin Pointer

Vice Presidents: Stephen Gilburt, Janet McQueen, Matthew Saunders MBE

Joint Chairs: John Cole, John West

Hon. Secretary: Richard Stones

Hon. Treasurer: Tony Foster

Management Committee (Trustees): Dave Cockle, John Cole, Tony Foster, Robert Fowler, Andrew Lack, Jan Metcalfe, Stuart Mills, Hilary Morris, Avril Nanton, Helen Osman, Alison Parker, Richard Stones, Alec Tyler, John West.

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Messages left on this number will be dealt with as promptly as possible.

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How to contact us
To contact our specialist groups, either use the contact details given below or use our general enquiries e-mail:
info@enfieldsociety.org.uk

Architecture and Planning: John West, 020 8886 6080

Cleaner Neighbourhoods Group: Alison Yates

Conservation and Heritage Group: John West

East Enfield and Edmonton: Dave Cockle

Footpaths and Open Spaces: Stuart Mills

Green Belt: Dave Cockle, 020 8366 2242

IT Admin: Andrew Lack

Jubilee Hall bookings: Janet McQueen

Membership Secretary: Alec Tyler

Publications: Alison Parker

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Gordon Hill: John Cole

Trees: John West

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Society Activities – Please join in!



Alison Yates

Our first litter pick of 2026 at Boundary Stream Park, Ponders End

Cleaner Neighbourhoods

Saturday 11th April 2026
Litter pick at the footpath adjacent to the David Lloyd Centre between Carterhatch Lane and Ladysmith Road.
Meeting point: start of the footpath next to 251 Ladysmith Road, Enfield EN1 3AQ (What3Words: ///cafe.survey.sharp). Take the 191 bus and alight at Linwood Crescent/ Ladysmith Road, then follow the footpath next to the allotments to the meeting point.

Saturday 23rd May 2026
Litter pick in Palmers Green on the Pymmes Brook Trail just south of the North Circular Road.
Meeting point: start of footpath next to Birchwood Court N13 6BW (What3Words: ///edgy.gone.beast).
Bus routes 34 and 102 serve the North Circular; alight at Melville Gardens stop.

For both litter picks
Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.
Equipment provided; bring gloves.

Walks

Throughout the year the Society has around 25 to 30 guided walks. As well as excellent exercise, the walks have a social element providing an opportunity to meet people with similar interests. These walks include country walks in Hertfordshire, Essex and Kent, local walks in Enfield and the surrounding area, walks throughout London and heritage walks in areas with historic interest. Walks are open to all members. No need to book, just turn up on the day. Details of walks are given on the Society's calendar list of events on its website, and in our monthly enews mailing to members. Members can also join John West's "walkers email list", which provides details of walks and can also give notice of last-minute alterations. To join John's list, please email him on j.west@enfieldsociety.org.uk

Grants

Thanks to the generosity of members and others who have left us legacies or made donations, we are able to make modest grants to third-party organisations for projects which we believe will further our objectives.
In 2025 we offered and/or paid the following grants:

- **Lavender Hill Cemetery Non-conformist Chapel** — a contribution to the cost of preparing an appraisal of the options for re-use of the chapel
- **Heritage Education Project (ENLab)** — match funding for a NLHF-funded Council project to provide local schools with heritage education, working from Forty Hall and local parks
- **St Aldhelm's roof** — Contribution to the cost of roof repairs at St Aldhelm's church, Edmonton (see Newsletter 240, Winter 2025)
- **Enfield Voluntary Action** — match funding for "Enfield Our Stories", an NLHF-funded scheme to encourage local groups to develop projects celebrating their heritage
- **St Johns Church, Clay Hill** — a contribution to charges for assessing the cost of repair work.

Details of our Grant scheme can be found on our website.

Join The Enfield Society

Become a member of the Society from as little as £5 per person. Members receive quarterly Newsletters and can participate in walks, talks and other activities. Non-members are welcome to come along to talks for a charge of £1 before deciding whether to join. Why not give membership as a gift? You can join or renew membership via our website:
enfieldsociety.org.uk/join, or scan the QR code.