THE ENFIELD SOCIETY

Enfield Society News

Summer 2026

From Chair to Champion

John West



Simon O'Connor / Enfield Council

Doug Wilson, Director of Health & Adult Social Care, with Dave Cockle and Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Transport and Waste

At the Society's AGM last year, Dave Cockle stood down after 12 years as Chair. Dave has successfully led the organisation and many of its activities and working groups. Dave has a particular interest in the environment, especially in relation to footpaths, walking, heritage, tree planting and conservation.

Dave has worked with the Council, ensuring that public footpaths are registered as rights of way and kept clear. He has worked on the Society's borough-wide footpaths map, organised working groups to plant trees, and helped clear neglected areas of undergrowth and rubbish. He has led Enfield Society walks and ensured that the Footpaths and Open Spaces Group, the Trees Group, and the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Group work successfully to help make Enfield cleaner and greener. During his time as Chair, he established a number of station groups, maintaining the environment and making them attractive to users. Dave leads the Enfield Chase Station Group, keeping the station clean and planting the flower beds and containers. He encourages other volunteers both here and at other stations. Under Dave's leadership, the Society has grown in membership with many more joining activities and following the Society's website.

As Chair, Dave has given many talks to local groups about the work of the Society and on transport matters. While he has stepped down as Chair, he remains a Trustee of the Society and active in the group activities that he helped to establish.

In recognition of his work, the Committee submitted an application for an Enfield Lifetime Achievement and Special Recognition Volunteer Award. We are pleased to report that this was successful. In March, Dave was presented with the award by Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Transport and Waste, and Doug Wilson, Director of Health and Adult Social Care.



Simon O'Connor / Enfield Council

The 36 Enfield volunteers honoured with the Lifetime Volunteer Award

Co-Chair's Column



John Cole and I were honoured to be appointed as Co-Chairs. Dave Cockle devoted so much time and energy to the role that he will be a hard act to follow. That's why it needs two of us to take on the task. This year is a particularly exciting time for the Society, celebrating 90 years as a civic society. During that time there have been many campaigns; protecting open spaces and historic buildings; preventing undesirable developments including a ring road that would have cut through the historic heart of Enfield and supporting schemes to improve the environment across the Borough. This year the newsletter has a series of articles recalling that history.

As we celebrate past achievements, we have two major issues to consider. The Enfield Local Plan is still to be determined. The Society put a vast amount of effort into the Examination of the Plan with Andrew Lack and myself representing the Society and giving evidence to the Planning Inspector. In the meantime, the Government's New Towns Commission has shortlisted Enfield as a potential site for an even larger housing development than is proposed in the Local Plan. We will be continuing to work with other groups to ensure that as much as possible of Enfield's countryside is protected.

Having worked in buildings project management for most of my career, my personal interests are historic buildings, good architecture and design and the natural environment. These are all areas where the Society is involved. As Co-Chair, I am keen that as many members as possible are actively engaged whether that is helping with campaigns, planting trees, litter collecting or exploring new areas with our walking group. We have a strong and committed Management Committee, but any organisation draws its strength from its members. If you are not already, please become involved in some of our activities, Enfield is a great place to live and work, help make it even better.

John West

Standing, left to right: Stan Lowen (Records), Gordon MacFarlane, Donald Potter (President), Alan Skilton (Chairman), Derek Needham, Wally Woodfield (Trees Group), Stuart Mills (Footpaths & Open Spaces Group).

Sitting, left to right: Irene Smith (Hon. Secretary), Priscilla Lowen (Hon. Treasurer), Christopher Jephcott (Architecture & Planning Group), Hilary Stone, Verma Byford (Social events).

Alan Skilton (1934–2026)

Andrew Lack



The Enfield Society

Alan Skilton in 1982

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Alan. A brief notice appeared in our last issue; this is a fuller tribute. We understand he had been unwell for some time, and our sympathies go to his family.

Alan was an early member of the reformed Enfield Preservation Society (EPS) in the 1960s and played a significant role in the Save Enfield Campaign, when the Council proposed a ring road around the Town Centre *(*further details on pages 4–5*)*. The campaign put forward an alternative, less destructive plan, and Alan created a detailed architectural model to demonstrate its merits. Enfield Town was ultimately saved when the Minister of Housing, Anthony Greenwood, rejected the scheme in May 1967. Until its most recent closure, the model was on display at the Museum of London.

Alan also designed a series of highly popular photographic exhibitions to mark EPS anniversaries at 40, 50 and 60 years: *Looking at Buildings, Pride of Place, and A Panorama of Preservation*. These exhibitions drew on contributions from local camera clubs and were held at the Forty Hall Museum.

In 1977, EPS published *Enfield's Architectural Heritage*, following the success of reprints of Cuthbert Whitaker's *History of Enfield*. The new book was designed by Alan, with assistance from Peter Perryman and Valerie Carter, and proved very successful.

Alan served as Chair of EPS from 1982–85 and again from 1990–93. He was later made a Vice-President in recognition of his long-standing contribution.



The Enfield Society

Council of Management 1984, when Alan was chairman

Still Fighting for the Future

Bob Fowler

The TES 90th anniversary is here, and we hope that members will enjoy some of the activities taking place during the anniversary year from May 2026 to April 2027. We start with our mini touring exhibition, which will visit six local libraries and other community sites within the borough. The first location is Enfield Town Library, from 1st–22nd May, chosen for its proximity to historic Chase Green, the subject of the successful campaign to save it from becoming the site of the Town Hall, leading to the formation of the Society in 1936. The other libraries and dates are: Edmonton Green, 22 May–12 June; Ordnance Unity Centre, 12 June–6 July; Palmers Green, 6th–27th July; Ridge Avenue, 27 July–10 August; and Fore Street, Edmonton Living Library, 10 August–7 September. Various other locations are planned for later in the year.

Andrew Lack's second article, *A Short History of the Enfield Society*, is included in this issue.

A guided heritage walk around Ponders End to launch our ninth Heritage Walk leaflet will take place on two dates, to be announced for June/July. We are also planning to launch a photographic competition, "My Enfield", during May. This will be open to all, in age categories, and will invite entrants to submit a single photograph taken within the borough that represents what living, studying, working in, or visiting Enfield means to them. The winning entries will be selected by a judging panel and go on public display later in our anniversary year.

We are also working to extend our "Here Before Us" project, previously rolled out in Chase Side, Lancaster Road, Baker Street and the Town, to an East Enfield location—more on this in future issues. Another project we are progressing is a Family Treasure Trail, which will take place in the summer—more details to follow.

Departure (2026): Shaypress and the New Mural at Gordon Hill Station

John Cole



John Cole / Enfield Society



John Cole / Enfield Society



John Cole / Enfield Society



John Cole / Enfield Society

Over the Easter Bank Holiday, local artist Shaypress installed a new mural at Gordon Hill Station. Funded and curated by the Friends of Gordon Hill Station, it reflects their ongoing commitment to the community and travelling public.

Known for blending nostalgia with bold, colourful street art, Shaypress brings fresh meaning to everyday environments. Here, a previously unremarkable car park has been reimagined. His process begins with a digitally developed concept, realised through paste-up, spray paint, and hand-finishing. Rooted in storytelling, his work draws on 1950s imagery—echoing Norman Rockwell—alongside elements of popular culture and local identity.

Titled *The Departure*, the mural evokes mid-twentieth-century rail travel and post-war optimism, with subtle references to seaside holidays, uniformed staff, and the quiet charm of earlier journeys.

The work is well suited to Gordon Hill, where volunteers and partners have steadily improved the general environment at the station. Within this wider effort, the mural contributes to a growing sense of renewal and civic pride. Visually striking from a distance, it brings colour and energy to the space; up close, it reveals finer details, including the Four Hills Estate flats and familiar station signage, anchoring it firmly in its setting.

The result is both accessible and reflective, offering a moment of pause in the routine of travel and reinforcing the idea that stations are places with identity and history, rather than simply points of transit.

The mural forms part of *Painting Our Place–Community Art at Gordon Hill 2026*, a programme delivering several new artworks across the station. Plans include a trompe-l'œil fireplace in the 1910 waiting room by artist Sophie Newbery, further decorative interventions, and contributions from local schools.

It also builds on Shaypress's earlier work at Enfield Chase Station in 2024, where panels combined nostalgic railway scenes with local landmarks, including the Rendlesham Viaduct and Enfield War Memorial.

Together, these projects highlight the value of community-led art in enhancing everyday spaces, helping to create a welcoming station environment rooted in heritage while looking ahead.

A Short History of The Enfield Society

Andrew Lack



One of hundreds of mature trees cut down on GLC farms along the Ridgeway in the 1970s



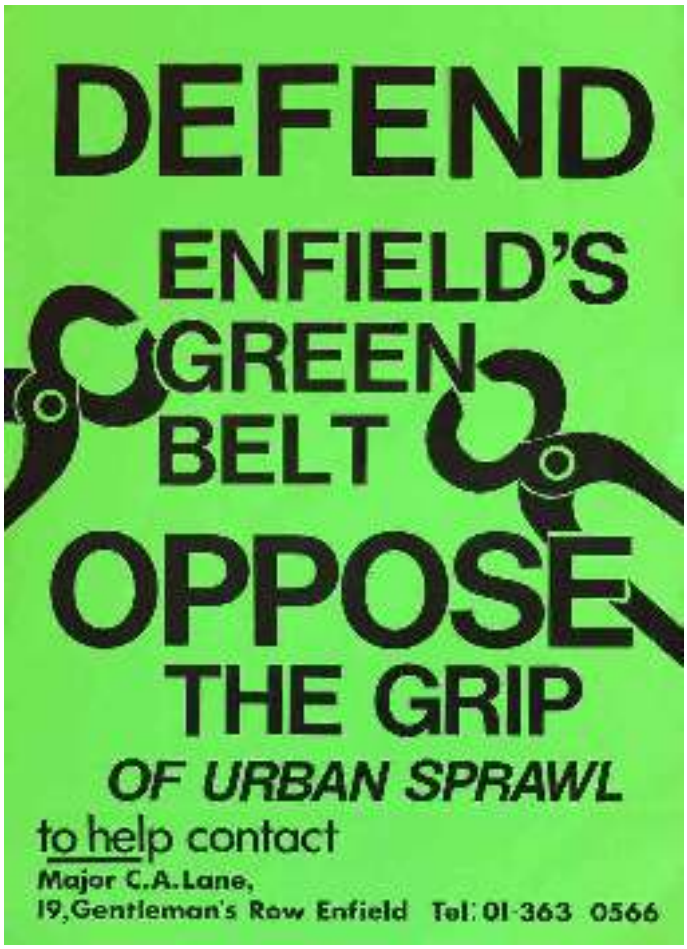
Alan Skilton is photographed beside one of the exhibition panels from the EPS 50th anniversary exhibition. The panel showed the extent of Enfield's Green Belt



Enfield Council's solution to Enfield's traffic problems was a ring road, shown here



This delightful row of Victorian terraced cottages in Church Lane was pulled down for the road. After the scheme was cancelled the site became a car park!



Oppose the Grip EPS poster from the 1973 campaign



Even in 1946 traffic and parking in Enfield Town was becoming a problem. This was the scene outside The George. Note the ***striking range of car colours*** available at the time

Part 2 – Green Belt and Enfield Town

The Green Belt

When the Enfield Preservation Society (EPS and our name before 2007) was formed in 1936, the Green Belt, as a planning term, did not exist—that was created by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. So, when the EPS reformed in 1959 Defending the Green Belt became one of our charitable aims and the Society has been involved many times since trying to uphold that.

Much of the present Green Belt was created in the 1930s by a far-sighted Middlesex County Council (MCC). In 1936 it purchased 2,005 acres mostly from the Duchy of Lancaster which consisted of 7 farms and a golf course. Enfield Urban District Council (UDC) was asked to contribute, but refused, with the Town Clerk saying "in view of their financial position and the fact that with the acquisition of the Duchy lands, one-fifth of Enfield will consist of permanent open spaces, and that as it is necessary to consider the production of rateable value, the Council did not see their way to agree" However, Enfield UDC did purchase Crews Hill Golf Course.

Trinity College held 586 acres and were also willing to sell at a very reasonable price to allow the creation of a comprehensive area. Again, the UDC refused to contribute and eventually the MCC persuaded Trinity College to permit development on 95 acres to sweeten the deal for Enfield's UDC.

First Threats

The first threat to the Green Belt in which The Society was involved came in 1970 at Forty Hill. Councillor Barry Lewis had visited De Efteling in Holland and came back to Enfield with the idea to turn the area into a theme park. The Society, The Enfield Gazette and the Council were inundated with letters of protest. Though a feasibility study was prepared, the idea was dropped later the same year.

Throughout the 1970s the EPS was continually in dialogue with both Enfield Council and the GLC over the removal of trees and hedgerows on farms along the Ridgeway. This began in 1969 with an anonymous caller reporting the felling of 80 trees. Despite an agreement between the GLC and Enfield Council that future felling would be done in consultation with the Council, felling continued.

In 1973 the EPS again raised the issue with the GLC and MPs. A notable hedgerow had been lost at East Lodge Lane. After more pressure, the GLC's land agent agreed to planting 300 quickthorns and saplings to screen farm buildings.

In 1976 the Council published a Green Belt Study, made in preparation for the new Development Plan. The EPS produced a 10-page response, some of which was published by the Gazette. In it the Society warned of inappropriate recreation facilities being expanded and the risk to diluting the rural character of Whitewebbs, Forty Hill and Trent Park.

Fairview

In June 1972 Fairview made a planning application for building on 5.7 acres to the west of the Ridgeway extending into Green Belt land. The Council failed to make a decision in the statutory 8-week period, so Fairview appealed to the Secretary of State. A month later the Council then announced it would refuse it and blamed the delay on a shortage of staff.

No enquiry was held but parties were invited to submit representations, which the EPS duly did. It came as a shock when the Secretary for State, Geoffrey Rippon agreed to the development, as just a year earlier he had refused Fairview permission to build on just ½ acre at 58 The Ridgeway.

Crews Hill

In 1972 Wates planned to build 405 homes on 40 acres of nursery land in Cattlegate Road. Several local pressure groups including EPS banded together to oppose. Soon EPS campaign day-glo green posters began to appear all over the area in people's windows and cars. The development stretched down Cattlegate Road but didn't include Woldens or The Plough. The Plans included shops with flats above. The application was rejected by the Council.

Wates appealed the decision. Before the appeal was heard, Geoffrey Rippon (Environment Secretary) had issued a White Paper proposing 2,000 acres of Green Belt development in London. The EPS lead a group of 23 local organisation to oppose the appeal.

The Wates' QC claimed the nursery sites served no Green Belt purpose, was not open countryside and was not visually attractive. Enfield Council's Planning Officer said that "what Wates appear to be advocating is a commuter village centred on Crews Hill station and unrelated to the rest of the Borough".

The Inspector refused the appeal and said, "I am in no doubt that this proposal, if allowed, would generate strong pressure, extremely difficult to resist, for release of more nursery land... and lead to the coalescence of Crews Hill with Enfield".

Save Enfield Town Campaign

In January 1961 Enfield Council launched proposals for a traffic-free Enfield Town centre together with a Palace Garden precinct. The Borough Engineer, Mr Deryck Peake, attended the February Management Committee of the Society to explain the plan. It involved a major new road to the North of St Andrew's Church, demolishing much of the historic character of the Town. No sooner had he left the meeting, the Society resolved to oppose the plan and so began a six-year fight. In reporting the Plan, The Gazette said, "down will come over 400 houses, scores of shops, two cinemas, three public houses—a campaign that even The Luftwaffe could not achieve."

The EPS formed a campaign group with 20 other local organisations. A petition attracted 7,000 signatories, but in November the Council agreed to the scheme which would cost £2M. In 1964 the MCC approved the plan and set a date of January 1965 for objections. The EPS responded on behalf of its (now over) 1,000 members.

In an effort to address the very real traffic problem in Enfield, the EPS put forward an alternate scheme and member Alan Skilton made an architectural model. This seems to have prompted the Council to amend their proposals by sinking the ring-road between St Andrew's Church and Holly Walk 5ft below ground level.

In July 1966 the newly formed GLC approved the Plan and a planning enquiry announced. This was expected to need £2,000 for representation, but the EPS only had £641. But before frantic fund-raising had begun, the Minister for Housing, Anthony Greenwood unexpectedly announced the cancellation of the scheme on 19th May 1967. Unfortunately, the news came too late for a delightful terrace of Victorian cottages in Church Lane—now a car park.

Fifty years on

A number of points are striking when looking back at the past battles over the Green Belt. Chief amongst these is how our local authority has switched sides from protecting the Green Belt to being a promoter of its demise. In the 1970s Green Belt land was owned by the GLC. When the GLC was abolished in 1986 ownership of Green Belt passed to Enfield Council, so it now stands to gain significantly from any development at the same time as acting as the Planning Authority. In any other situation this would be termed a conflict of interest.

And how prophetic were the words of Enfield's Planning Officer at the 1972 Wates Appeal!

Part 3 will cover The New River, Cleaning up the Borough and Heritage at Risk.

Society News

Memberships

We welcome the following new members to the Society:

L & S Allwork, M Beauchamp, J & B Cole, A Crome, J Donovan, P Dunkley, K Emin, D Haywood, L Heywood, K Hollingsworth, C & C Johnson, V Joshi, R Keeley, D Kiplagat, S Klimt, M Lanjri, H Moulinos, D & J Oxley, H Paine, D Tang, S Venamore, C Walker, A White, J Wilstead, K Worrall

Alec Tyler

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 (doors open 10.30am).

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.

Monday 8th June (Evening)
Wonders of Woodcroft Wildspace by Bob Ladelle

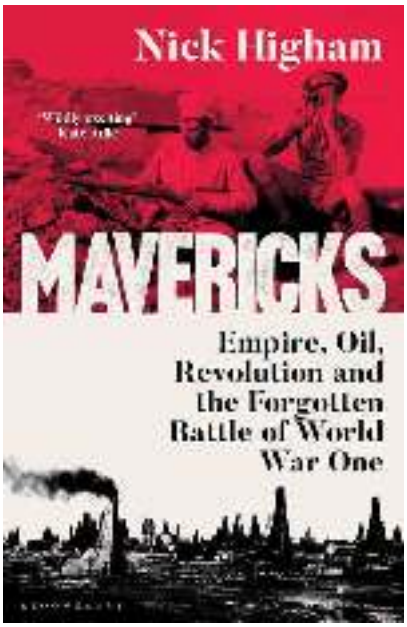
Come and hear Bob Ladelle talking about the Woodcroft Wildspace—an educational wildspace for the benefit of the whole of Enfield.

(woodcroft.org.uk)

Woodcroft Wildspace started life in 2003 with the formation of the Friends of Woodcroft with about a dozen people. Since then, we have grown to over 1000 and still growing. Woodcroft Wildspace is in Winchmore Hill, but it is not just for the benefit of residents of that area. The wildspace is for everyone to enjoy. It is a place where people can bring their children to learn about nature—insects, birds, small mammals, pond life, plants and trees in a natural habitat. This is especially beneficial for those who do not have the luxury of their own garden. Everyone is invited to come along, and both help the series of projects we have in action as well as to see the wildspace.

The Enfield Society is hoping to arrange a visit to the Woodcroft Wildspace in the summer. Watch this space!

Tuesday 14th July (Morning)
Mavericks: Empire, Oil, Revolution and the Forgotten Battle of World War One by Nick Higham



Come and meet ex-BBC journalist Nick Higham talking about his new book.

When Russia crashed out of the First World War following the Revolution in 1917, Britain was desperate to prevent its German and Turkish enemies seizing the oil-rich port of Baku on the Caspian Sea. But the country had few soldiers to spare, and Baku was hundreds of miles from the nearest British army. So, a ramshackle plan was hastily thrown together by officials with little local knowledge to block the Turks, and a small group of enterprising, fearless and often reckless men were tasked with implementing it. Nick Higham's talk is based on his new book "Mavericks". The Times calls it "thoroughly gripping" and "cinematic", the Telegraph calls it "stimulating" and "an entertaining account of how empires can be fatally weakened by arrogance" and the Spectator calls it "thrilling and sardonic by turns", while Kate Adie thought it "wildly exciting" and Louis de Bernieres said it was "beautifully written".

Monday 10th August (Evening)
The Archer's Paradox by Desmond Holloway



What is the archer's paradox? A brief history of archery and archery bows from different parts of the world, and a basic introduction to the anatomy of a bow and arrow.

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 8th May
Bermondsey Square: Prehistoric and Roman settlement, Medieval Abbey and Post-Medieval Mansion by Alistair Douglas of Pre Construct Archaeology

Friday 12th June
The Ancient Near East by Mark Altaweel *(This talk is to be confirmed at the time of writing this newsletter)*

Friday 11th December
Maritime Archaeology in Palestine by Georgia Andreou (via Zoom)

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 12th May
The Feminine Touch in the late Roman Republic: The Women of Mark Antony 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 30th April
Henri Matisse; cut up, cut down and cut outs! by Alan Silman

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

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

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

Thursday 24th September
How symphonies were born in a London pub by Robert Samuels

Thursday 29th October
Paintings inspired by Poems by Raymond Warburton

Thursday 26th November
The car in art and the car as art by Julian Richards

Visit to the Tudor Room

Avril Nanton



Enfield Local Studies & Library

We are delighted to offer members the opportunity to visit the Tudor Room at Little Park in Gentlemen's Row, Enfield. This is an extremely interesting room, as it contains original items rescued in 1928 when Enfield Palace was demolished.

The wall panelling, plaster ceiling, and fireplace all date to the sixteenth century and have a direct connection to Elizabeth I. The room survives thanks to one of the previous owners of Little Park – the Leggat brothers – who purchased the Palace building (more correctly known as Enfield Manor) in 1918.

Thanks to the generosity of the present owners, Adrian and Anne Birchall, we have arranged two separate evening visits to view the

continued on back page...

Opening Night At The Woodman

Avril Nanton

On Tuesday 3 February, members were invited to the re-opening of the Woodman pub in Bourne Hill, Southgate. The pub had been closed for some time, and the new owners, Heartwood Inns, requested our presence to showcase their new interior.

The evening introduced all attendees to the delights of the pub; free nibbles were available for all, as well as a glass of wine or a beer. Representatives of Heartwood Inns showed everyone around the pub, including the kitchens, and the evening concluded with welcome speeches. Later, some of us sat down to a delicious dinner and dessert.

Since the opening, one member has returned several times to see if the service lives up to the standard set on the opening night, and was pleased to report that it did.

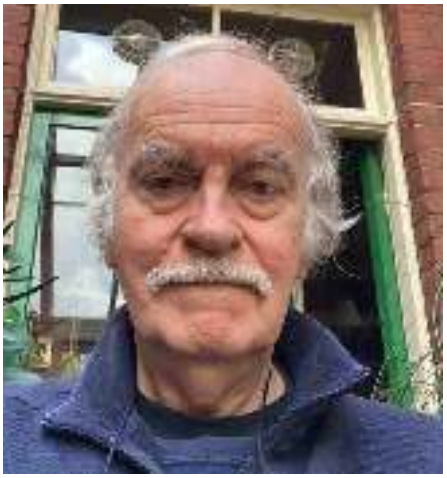
The Woodman pub can be found at 128 Bourne Hill, London, N13 4BD. Tel: 020 4613 0800.



Avril Nanton / Enfield Society

Avril Nanton & John West of The Enfield Society

Spotlight on a Trustee – Richard Stones



I was born and brought up in Glasgow before coming south to attend university. After graduating, I worked for a few years as a lecturer in ancient history before changing careers to become a solicitor at a law firm in the City of London.

My father was a history professor, so as a boy I became used to scrambling over medieval ruins and exploring Roman remains. This probably explains my interest in heritage and why I joined the Enfield Society in 1990, after my family and I moved into the borough. In 2008, I became the Society's Secretary. Since then, I have been responsible for its general administration and for keeping it on the right side of the (ever more complicated) law.

Apart from my Society activities and helping with grandchild care, I try to improve my Italian and my piano playing (the former with a great deal more success than the latter). I also act as administrator of the charitable trust that owns the Edmonton Charity School, and I used to sing in my church choir until, sadly, it was disbanded. I have always had a love of trains and trams, which manifests itself in a model railway in my garden (where leaves on the line really are a problem) and in periodic visits to North Wales, where I am the honorary legal adviser to the charitable trust that owns the majority of the shares in the Festiniog Railway.

Ponders End

Stephen Gilburt

Ponders End is thought to take its name from the end of the parish of Enfield in which John Ponder lived in 1373. Ponders Ende is shown on Norden's 1593 map and John Speed's 1610 map.

"I had thought in a green old age… to have retired to Ponders End – emblematic name how beautiful!... toddling about between it and Cheshunt". (Charles Lamb wrote this in 1822 to William Wordsworth, when Lamb was still working for the East India Company and living in Islington.)

At the beginning of the 19th century Ponders End was a large hamlet. It extended from Red Lane (now Lincoln Road) in the south along the High Street to Farm Lane (now Southbury Road) with houses also in South Street and Scotland Green. A report of 1850 revealed that many of the older cottages were overcrowded and insanitary and that the area suffered from poor drainage. Between 1855 and the 1890s additional houses were built in Alma Road, Napier Road, Derby Road, Lincoln Road, Durants Road and Nags Head Road. However even in 1914 Ponders End was still separated by open country from Enfield Highway to the north, Edmonton to the south and Enfield Town to the west. It was not until 1939 that the gaps had been closed with further housing and industrial development. Since then tower blocks of flats have been built in Alma Road and at the eastern end of South Street.

There was a half-hour coach service to London until a railway was constructed along the Lea Valley in 1840 with a station at Ponders End. What is now Southbury station opened in 1891, when the Southbury loop was constructed.

In 1905 the Metropolitan Electric Tramway electrified the 1881 horse drawn tram route north from Tottenham to a depot at Tramway Avenue in Edmonton. The route was extended through Ponders End to Freezywater in 1906 and Waltham Cross in 1908. A branch along Southbury Road to Enfield Town was opened in 1911. The tram route along Ponders End High Street was converted to trolley bus in 1938 and then to motor bus in 1961.

The next article by Stephen will be about Ponders End industry.



The Enfield Society

Picture 1. Ponders End fire station, at the junction of Nags Head Road with the High Street, operated between 1891 and 1966. It was subsequently an ambulance station. Following demolition in 1987, Vincent House was built on the site.



Enfield Local Studies & Archive

Picture 2. An open-top electric tram can be seen on the left in this photograph of the High Street, just south of the junction with Nags Head Road. It dates from about 1907. On the right is the White Hart inn. The first inn on this site is recorded in 1627 making it the earliest in Ponders End. Until the early 20th century there was a brewery next to the inn.



Enfield Local Studies & Archive

Picture 3. The first place of worship in Ponders End was an Independent chapel built in 1757 on the High Street, just north of the junction with Lincoln Road. This brick structure was later covered with Portland cement which was marked out to imitate stone, as shown in this view from around 1904. As Ponders End Congregational Church it was badly damaged by the bomb which fell on the nearby Two Brewers in 1940. It was subsequently demolished and replaced by what is now Ponders End United Reformed Church in College Court in 1959.
The United Reformed Church was formed in 1972 from a union of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in England and Wales.

Picture 4. The locally listed Picture Palace Electric Theatre opened in 1913 at the junction of the High Street with Lincoln Road. Seats were three pence and six pence. It was later refitted for sound films and renamed The Plaza in 1938 but closed in 1939. Damaged by the nearby bomb in 1940, it remained unused until bought by Enfield Council in the 1950s. It served as a dance hall and community centre known as Howard Hall. I remember going there to hear piano recitals by pupils of Eleanor Franklin Pike. In 2001 it became the Picture Palace public house and more recently a restaurant.



Enfield Local Studies & Archive

For more information, see the publications: *The Buildings of England 4: North* by Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner 1998 | *Britain in Old Photographs: The London Borough of Enfield* by Alan Dumayne 1996 | *Images of England Enfield compiled* by Stephen Sellick 2001 | *A History of Enfield* by David Pam EPS Volume 1 (before 1837) 1990, Volume 2 (1837–1914) 1992 and Volume 3 (1914–1939) 1994 | *Enfield Past* by Graham Dalling 1999 | *The Enfield Book* by Graham Dalling 2007 | *Local Heritage List* by Enfield Council 2024 | *Theatres, Music Halls and Cinemas in the London Borough of Enfield* by Geoffrey Gillam 1986 | *Ponders End United Reformed Church: A Short History* by Peter Cowley 2006 | *A Brief History of Methodists in Ponders End* by Paul Charters 1993.

Enfield Local Studies & Archive



Picture 5. The Two Brewers public house, on the corner of the High Street with South Street on the right, is first recorded in 1716 as The Royal Oak. This view from around 1910, with an electric tram on the left, shows it after rebuilding in 1896. It was wrecked by a high explosive bomb, just before closing time, on 30 September 1940. 20 people were killed. The site was not redeveloped and in 2014 a memorial garden, now locally listed, was opened.

Enfield Local Studies & Archive



Picture 6. Although St James' Enfield Highway opened in 1831, Ponders End did not have its own Anglican church until 1888 when the nave and north aisle of St Matthew's opened in South Street. The architect was H. J. Paull. The chancel and Lady chapel by J. E. K. and J. P. Cutts were added in 1900. The exterior is of Kentish ragstone with limestone dressings and geometric tracery. It is not currently used for Sunday services.

Ponders End National Infants School to the right opened in 1838. It later became St Matthew's Church of England Primary School. Both church and school are locally listed.

A chapel in Alma Road was used by the Roman Catholics before the locally listed St Mary's Church in Nags Head Road was built in 1921. Today there are also places of worship for other denominations and religions, including a mosque on the High Street.

Enfield Local Studies & Archive



Picture 7. This photograph from around 1909 shows South Street, east of the junction with Scotland Green Road. Most of the buildings in this view have since been demolished.

The Enfield Society



Picture 8. This photograph from around 1922 shows a charabanc outing for ladies from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in South Street. The church was originally built for the Baptists in 1891, but was sold to the Methodists in 1895. The building was sold again when the Methodists moved to a new church on the High Street in 1931. The South Street building was eventually demolished in 1969. The Primitive Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists and United Methodists joined together to form the Methodist Church in 1932.

The Enfield Society



Picture 9. The Railway inn in South Street is first recorded in 1841 next to Ponders End railway station, which opened in 1840. It originally consisted of many buildings and included bar areas, a tap room, clubroom, stables, kennels and sheds. Behind was Foresters Music Hall with a stage, lobby area, bar and seating for 250-300 people.

The Enfield Society



Picture 10. The corrugated iron Alma Road Mission was used by Protestant nonconformists up to the late 20th century. A former railway carriage, added to the far side, was used by the Sunday school. In recent years the buildings fell into ruin. Other iron churches were built by the Baptists in Napier Road in 1878 and the Wesleyan Methodists in Alma Road in 1880

Palace Gardens & Palace Exchange Shopping Centre

John West

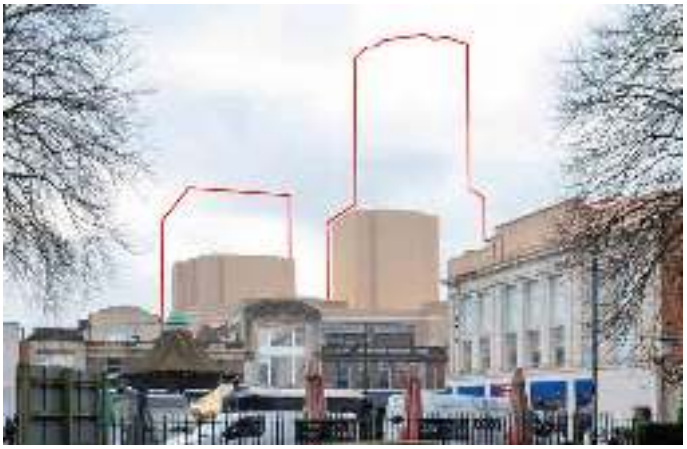
In the spring, the developers of Palace Gardens launched the next stage of their consultation. The plans show six blocks of flats with heights up to 45 metres (around 15 floors). In the proposals, the developer notes that the visual impact of these on the surrounding Conservation Area is reduced compared to the 26-storey tower that was suggested in the 2020 plans. Enfield's draft Local Plan, which is still awaiting the Inspector's report, seeks to provide guidance for developers on building height. In Enfield Town, the suggested maximum height is 39m (around 13 floors).

However, the Local Plan's reference to 39 metres is contradicted by a reference elsewhere in the Plan to a "limited harm" option of 24m, which then concludes with a suggested height of 27m (9 storeys).

The Society highlighted the inconsistency between the Council's evidence and the policy in its submission to the Inspector. At the Local Plan hearing, the Council stated that it wished to confirm the reference to 39m.

The Society considers that any scheme must take into account the impact on the Conservation Area and the historic Market Square. As part of its Local Plan submission, the Society commissioned consultants Archaeology Southeast to produce a Heritage Impact Assessment of the Local Plan proposals in relation to Enfield Town. The assessment examined both the 39m height and the lower height of 27m, and considered the impact on nearby listed buildings. The report concludes that tall buildings of 39m and above would have a substantial impact on the conservation area. A lower height of 27m would still have an impact, but it would be less than substantial. The Society will continue to press for an absolute maximum height of 27m.

Palace Gardens Shopping Centre, consultants to Deutsche Bank



Proposed redevelopment massing study showing the projected scale of new buildings in the town (the red building outline is the original proposal).



Palace Gardens Shopping Centre, consultants to Deutsche Bank

The town centre site plan showing designated zones for a proposed redevelopment project.

Back-to-Back Gold for Gordon Hill Volunteers

John Cole

John Cole



While we didn't win "Best in Class" at the Community Rail Awards 2026 in Derby, TES-sponsored Friends of Gordon Hill Station (FOGHS) were delighted to have secured Gold once again in It's Your Station—sponsored by Merseyrail—matching last year's achievement.

It was a wonderful evening, with train operators including Great Northern and this year's main sponsor, East Midlands Railway. The annual awards are organised by the Community Rail Network. Many station adopters and Community Rail Partnerships from around the UK celebrated together on Thursday 12 March. FOGHS were represented by John and Gill Cole.

If you are interested in community and railways, there are active groups at many of the Hertford Loop stations, including Cuffley, Gordon Hill, Enfield Chase, Grange Park, Winchmore Hill, Palmers Green, and Bowes Park. Contact TES if you are interested in getting involved. Greater Anglia is also looking for volunteer station adopters at Brimsdown and Enfield Lock. Anyone interested in adopting these stations should contact alan.neville@greateranglia.co.uk

Hedgerow removal at Vicarage Farm "unfounded" say the Council

Andrew Lack

We reported the loss of a substantial hedgerow at Vicarage Farm in October 2025 in the Winter Newsletter (page 3). The matter was reported by one of our members to Planning Enforcement, who investigated the incident and concluded that the claim was "unfounded." The member was baffled by this reply—and, frankly, so were we. The Society therefore issued a Freedom of Information (FoI) request in early December, asking for all the files relating to the original complaint and its investigation.

In early January, the Council provided the information, which revealed a number of interesting aspects to the case. Firstly, the Council interpreted the original planning complaint as referring to a "hedgerow," and the Hedgerow Regulations state that a hedgerow can be no more than 5m wide. The removed vegetation at Vicarage Farm was wider than this, so the Council concluded that the original "hedgerow" claim was false ("unfounded"). The case was closed by the Council on 28 October.

Secondly, this information was not provided to our member. In fact, the FoI revealed that the Council made no official response to the member, who had to email the Council in November asking for a reply. This is poor communication and reflects badly on the Council, which had investigated promptly when the complaint was made.

As this newsletter was being prepared, the Society was considering making a formal complaint about the way the Council investigated the removed vegetation.



Sarah Banbury

Enfield Chase - view to Fairview Road entrance



Conservation & Heritage Group

John West

The Society's Conservation and Heritage Group meets quarterly to review the Borough's buildings at risk, as defined by Historic England. We also consider matters relating to Listed Buildings in all 22 conservation areas. We are joined by Enfield office from the Conservation and Heritage Team, who are working with us to secure funding and encourage private owners to maintain and improve historic buildings. Progress is often slow because of the cost and complexity of dealing with Listed Buildings.



John West

Trent Park House

One very positive development is that work at Trent Park House is nearing completion. As part of the refurbishment by Berkeley Homes, the Trent Park House Museum opens this summer. The precise date has not been confirmed at the time of writing, but the Society is in contact with the new Director, Giuseppe Albano, and we will inform members by email. I am sure that many members of the Society are looking forward to visiting this historic building, which has a fascinating history. I last visited the building when it was still part of the University, and it certainly needed some work. The Museum has provided us with the following update:

Trent Park House of Secrets is a new museum opening in the heart of Trent Park this summer. One of England's great country houses, the House witnessed some of the most pivotal events of the 20th century. Visitors will journey through magnificently restored and furnished rooms that were the backdrop to Sir Philip Sassoon's social and political world, where he hosted some of the most influential statesmen, journalists, royalty, and politicians in the 1930s.

Following Sassoon's death in 1939, Trent Park House began its second chapter as a wartime surveillance centre. The new museum will unveil the extraordinary story of the 'Secret Listeners'—intelligence operators hidden in the basement—whose eavesdropping on senior German prisoners led to some of the most important intelligence breakthroughs of WWII. The museum and café will open this summer.

Find out more at `trentparkhouse.org.uk`, where you can sign up for their regular newsletter.

If you are interested in speaking to the team at Trent Park House about collaborations or opportunities, please feel free to contact their communications lead at `lauren.gildersleve@trentparkhouse.org.uk`

Society Directory

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Joint Chairs: John Cole, John West

Hon. Secretary: Richard Stones

Hon. Treasurer: Tony Foster

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Conservation and Heritage Group: John West

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Society Activities – Please join in!

continued from page 7... ↓

room and learn more about its history. These will take place on **Tuesday 21 July** and **Thursday 23 July**, both starting at **7pm**. Trustee Avril Nanton will be your guide on both occasions. Visits are **limited to 25 people** on each evening. Booking is essential and is free to members, limited to two places per application.

To book a place, please email visits@enfieldsociety.org.uk and include your full name and preferred date. You may also apply by post to the Enfield Society, 2 Parsonage Lane, Enfield EN1 0AJ, including a phone number and SAE.

We will contact you a few days before the first visit to confirm the details of your booking.

Cleaner Neighbourhoods

From 13–29 of March, Keep Britain Tidy ran the 11th year of The Great British Spring Clean where people are encouraged to clear litter in their area. Our Litter Heroes started a little early on March 7 when 14 TES volunteers picked 38 bags of litter on the Salmon's Brook Path. Our two pictures show a completely litter free path after our hard work.

Alison Yates





Alison Yates

Our next two litter picks are scheduled for July and August. There is no litter pick in September.

Saturday 4 July 2026 - 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.
Litter pick in Oakwood at the junction of Lowther Drive and Enfield Road, EN2 7HX (What3Words: ///wide.secret.energetic). Bus routes 121 and 307 serve the area; alight at the Lakeside stop.

Saturday 22 August 2026 - 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.
Litter pick along Cemetery Walk in Edmonton.
Meeting point: footpath entrance on Plevna Road, N9 0BX (What3Words: ///priced.undulation.loud). The Weaver Overground line serves Edmonton Green; alternatively, bus routes W6, W8, 102, 144, 149, 191, 192, 259, 279, 349 and 491 serve Edmonton Green bus station. Walk south along Hertford Road and take West Mall to its end at Plevna Road; the footpath is on the opposite side of the road.

Equipment provided; bring gloves, participation is at your own risk.

The Black History of Brixton Walk

Trustee Avril Nanton will be leading this walk.
This walk looks at the tumultuous history of Brixton, south London.
Taking in Windrush Square, the famous market, the murals, the sculptures, the food, and the Black Cultural Archives (BCA), this 2-hour walk looks at all aspects of Brixton life, including:

- The memorial dedicated to the woman that sparked the 1981 Brixton riots
- Some of the amazing murals in the area
- The Black Cultural Archives
- The memorial to the 116 children killed in Soweto, South Africa 1976
- and much more!

Date of walk: Tuesday 23 June, Walk start time: 11 am, Meeting point: outside Brixton Underground Station at 10:45 am, Maximum group size: 15 people.
To book a place, please email visits@enfieldsociety.org.uk

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.