



The Ancient Lanes of East Finchley

By Hugh Petrie

I gave this as a talk at East Finchley Library in December and was asked to write it down. Sorry no Roman roads; but with all their straight utility, they lack the charm of East Finchley's old lanes. In John Rocque's survey of the County of Middlesex (1754), much is recognisable. East End Road, Long Lane, Fortis Green, Church Lane, and even King Street. I believe that the first two were part of an older pre-1700s route north, but what follows is considered speculation.

East End Road (or Manor Road,) was a communication between the manor house (c1240), and the Barnet Road (at Muswell Hill). A new route (c1300s), cut through the Bishop of London's Hornsey Park, at Highgate, forded Mutton Brook, and turned eastward. Wheeled vehicles would have had difficulty traversing the side of East Finchley's ridge, so they went up the old path behind Holy Trinity old school. The Causeway was possibly used by travellers on horse and foot.

The Walks

Following the ridge round, the Bishop's Road (so named in the 1500s) forked away from East End Road, at Stanley Road,

passed the door of the Five Bells (c1750), and joined Long Lane (Ferrous Lane c1430s) near New Oak Lane. Waste land either side of these broad lanes created Hunts Green (c1430s). By the 1480s the wood as far east as the walks had been cleared, and small holdings established around Hunts Green. When the woods were further cleared during the 16th century, and Finchley Wood became a Common, travellers were provided with a short cut around the edge of these estates, along what we call The Walks. At the junction of Church Lane and The Walks, was a bull field, which gave its name to the lane which led to Hunts Green, only becoming Church Lane in the 1880s.



East End from John Rocque's map of 1754. Courtesy of Barnet Archive.

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Visitors always welcome



The National Neurological Hospital - Photo by Erini Rodis

The National Hospital in East Finchley

Part 1, 1870-1898

By Alison Stein

In 1860 a group of philanthropists, led by the two Chandler sisters from St Pancras, and their brother Edward, founded the first specialist hospital for sufferers from 'nervous diseases', the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, in Queen Square, London. At the time, epileptics were virtually excluded from any kind of paid employment.

Such was the popular fear of 'fits' that until the Poor Law was amended in 1868, epileptics and the paralysed were regularly consigned to the 'insane wards' of workhouses. Even in the late 1890s, letters to the Lancet debated the question "Should epileptics marry?" Not one convalescent home in the kingdom would accept patients suffering from 'nervous diseases'.

By 1870 the National Hospital had grown in size and in reputation, and decided to establish its own convalescent home, or 'Country Branch'. East Finchley was an ideal choice, since it was within easy reach of London, but still set in open, attractive countryside. Appeals raised the £3,000 needed to buy and adapt two semi-detached villas 'within a short walk of the railway-station' to house twenty female epileptic patients. We have not been able so far to discover the exact location of 'The Elms, East-End, Finchley', but the Home certainly flourished here up to 1897.

Care in the country

On a sunny day in July 1871 guests assembled for the opening ceremony, followed by an informal tea-party on the lawn. Prominent among them were Miss Johanna Chandler, and her brother Edward, who had been given free rein to lavish his artistic talents on fitting out the new Home. As well as being homelike, bright and welcoming, it was furnished in the latest style, as the National Hospital fervently believed that the quality of their environment contributed to the patients' recovery.

To conclude the afternoon's festivities, Edward Chandler

had hired a 'ladies' band' from an agency. The 'Blondinettes', wearing identical blond wigs and skimpy blue dresses, leapt from the shrubbery, and started to play for the bewildered guests. Thus the association of the National Hospital with East

Finchley began on an unconventional note; it would continue, but on a somewhat larger scale, in a new building next to the Railway Station. And this time the opening ceremony would be graced not by a bevy of Blondinettes, but by a Duchess.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Ain't it Great when a Dream Comes Together?

I had a dream, and in this weird and wonderful world of dog eat dog, everyone has to have dreams. My dream was of proper supermarkets with proper car parks and proper service.

I dreamed, not of Jeanie, or Genies, but of multi-storey car parks, deli counters, sun dried tomatoes, exotic fruit and veg and shelf upon shelf of fine wines, beers and spirits. I dreamed of something better than 'the world's worst supermarket'. And I dreamed of the perfect location - opposite the station. Back in the late 90s I wrote about my dream and the gods of shopping have smiled kindly and well, ain't it great when a dream comes together!

Back then the 'not in my backwater brigade' did what the complaining classes always do. The small-minded scribblers ranted about the impact on the value of their houses and the danger that people might actually want to shop in East Finchley. Not that they do: have expensive car, will travel to Sainsbury's, Tesco or Waitrose. No doubt the Ground Glass and Vitriol Company is already working overtime to keep up with demand and Whinging Over Waitrose has probably placed a bulk order. Even this paper is starting to sound like the 'voice of middle class anxiety' and I was starting to wonder if I am the only one who wants decent supermarkets selling decent food.

Follow that dream

It's about time someone spoke up for all those people who aren't members of 'Whinge'. It might be a dirty job but someone's got to do it. So, if you want to walk out of the tube station, cross the road and get good food from a good supermarket or shop locally rather than drive or get the bus to find a decent store, now is the time to speak up. Not just for the supermarket, but also for the new hi-tech library with its e-mail and Internet and bigger book stack. Yes, now that the dream might come true we've got to defend it. Now is the time for a new pressure group - Backing Advanced Shopping Technology And Retail Development, be a B.A.S.T.A.R.D., sign up today, the dream must not die!