



Telling the Harringay Story

a (very) brief introduction

by Hugh Flouch

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i had an idea...

...i wanted to
tell a story





...our
story...

Harringay's story

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When I first looked in any detail at the history of Harringay, I found only bits and pieces here and there. Our story was told in fragments, if at all. In general it seemed to follow the historical boundaries of the old boroughs. So, certain elements of the story to the west of Green Lanes were picked up by the Hornsey Historical Society, whilst the history of the area to the east of Green Lanes tended to be covered as an afterword in histories of Tottenham.

For my part, I thought Harringay's history deserved better. So in 2007/2008 I used Wikipedia to develop the first ever history of the whole of Harringay. I chose to work online so that as many people as possible could have access to the information.

The story I've written is told over nine well researched and referenced articles. Although it's far from complete (in fact for the last couple of years it's been something of an 'opus interruptus'), and it needs a bit of wordsmithing, it does for the first time tell a coherent story of the whole of Harringay.

I haven't had much spare time since 2008. Nonetheless, the last two or three

¹ I'm thinking in particular of Alan Aris' excellent article on the development of the Ladder at the end of the nineteenth century, Hugh Hayes' work on Finsbury Park and Mike Ticher's work on the Stadium and Arena.

years have not been wasted. Along with other members of the neighbourhood website [Harringay Online](#), I have developed a significant online collection of historical materials. These include:

- nearly 700 historical images, including photos of all periods from 1830 onwards, shots of memorabilia, programmes, posters, in fact just about anything we could lay our hands on.
- almost thirty clips of old film footage including shots of Green Lanes in the 1920s, footage of a Harringay Ski slope from around the same period and film of Harringay's circuses held in the middle of the last century.



From the original by the North Middlesex Photographic Society

- just under 200 discussions, blogs and information postings in the History of Harringay group. These include first-hand recollections of members from as far away as Australia, sharing with us their memories going back as early as 1920 (including Arthur and his dancing bear). There's also lots of precious newspaper articles from the past 100 years and some collaborative mapping of bomb damage to our neighbourhood during two world wars.

- a collection of 'virtual blue plaques' for previously forgotten 'heroes' of the past who lived here, from one of the nineteenth century's most prolific novelists to the inventor of the Times Roman font and even Barbara Windsor.

This is a monumental amount of information that puts me and anyone else who is interested in a great position to understand our neighbourhood.

Through it, the Harringay of 100 years ago becomes a living place where you can see pictures of the Edwardian shops along with contemporary adverts and first hand memories of people who shopped there. You can likely find a picture of your road 100 years ago, probably find out who lived

there and what they might have done for a living. And, if you've a mind to, you can get a real sense of what a greyhound racing meeting at the Arena was like in 1930 – look at the programme, see the ticket, see a photo and perhaps even an old film clip.

Look further and you'll find a welath of fascinating titbits from the Harringay Arena. Did you know, for example, that Paul Robeson once sang in Harringay, that the Horse of the Year Show started here or that Alicia Markova began her career here?

Whilst I studied a history based course at university, my interest in helping to uncover Harringay's story has never been driven by a desire to win a historian's spurs; not at all. I've spent many hours, days and months using the ever-fruitful internet, talking to people and visiting archive sources around London with a view to uncovering Harringay's unique story and making it as widely accessible as possible.



Paul Robeson (image from Wikipedia)

Some of my passion comes from a real interest in history, but I'm driven in equal part by a belief that the stronger the understanding of our past, the stronger the sense of place; and the stronger the sense of place, the stronger the bonds to it and between the people who live here.

In my journey so far I've been really grateful to be joined for bits of it by some fellow travellers including Liz Ixer (and her general interest in the built historical environment and her acquisitions of material through the internet), Stephen Hartley (and his often transport-related historical photos and documents) and Angela Burge (and her enthusiastic and imaginative work in helping to build the family trees of the families who lived in Harringay House – she always seemed to find the bits I never could!).

I'm also grateful to Valerie Crosby, archivist at Bruce Castle, the ever helpful Joy Nicholl at the Hornsey Historical Society and the National Council of Archives who have recognised [Harringay Online as a community archive](#).

I realised not long ago that what I'd written on Wikipedia amounts to something like a 90 page book! So some while back, I started compiling it into something that I plan to publish as a free e-book. However, I'm keen to do justice to all the material that I and others have pulled together; I also want to try and tease out some meaning and understanding from it all beyond a simple statement of facts. So the e-book will be a while longer in the baking yet.

In the meantime, on the following few pages, I've added an outline of all the key articles I've written on Wikipedia about Harringay's History. (Once online you'll find even more than I list here. I ended up adding other articles that have come out of my Harringay work, such as a piece on John Cathles Hill, who built up the Gardens and on Henry Harvey Vivian, one-time Harringay resident who was a leader of the cooperative housing movement. I've also done pieces on organisations linked to Harringay like the Greyhound Racing Association and the Home and Colonial Stores. No idea where I used to find the time!)

And, don't forget, in addition to the Wikipedia material, there are all the materials on Harringay Online.

Overview

The history of Harringay tells the story of the development of Harringay, a district of London 5 miles from its centre, affected by, but not always part of the great city's history.

1. [Etymology](#)
2. [Prehistory to 1750](#)
3. [1750 to 1880](#)
4. [1880 - present day](#)
5. [Harringay and entertainment](#)
6. [Economic history](#)
7. [Transport & communications history](#)

Prehistory - 1750

During this period Harringay emerged from the mist of prehistory as a thickly forested area of southern England. By 1750 most of the forest had been cleared for agriculture, although settlement was still sparse.

1. [Prehistory to Domesday](#)
2. [Domesday to 1750](#)
 - 2.1. [Characteristics of the landscape and land use](#)
 - 2.2. [Settlement](#)
 - 2.3. [Other development](#)
 - 2.4. [Land ownership](#)
 - 2.5. [Communications](#)

1750 - 1880

This significant period in Harringay's history witnessed the transition from a purely pastoral society and set the stage for the upheavals of the late 19th century.

1. [A period of change](#)
2. [Harringay – 18th & 19th century leisure destination](#)
 - 2.1 [Hornsey Wood House](#)
 - 2.2 [Finsbury Park](#)
 - 2.3 [Alexandra Palace](#)
 - 2.4 [Queen's Head](#)
3. [Settlement](#)
 - 3.1 [Harringay House](#)
 - 3.2 [Other settlements](#)
 - 3.3 [Northumberland House](#)
4. [Economic history](#)
 - 4.1 [Tile kilns](#)
5. [Transport](#)
 - 5.1 [Railways](#)
 - 5.2 [Roads](#)
6. [Summary](#)

1880 - Present

The advance of late Victorian urbanisation during the last twenty years of the 19th century swept away the eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses, their grounds and the farmland. By 1900 Harringay was completely urbanised.

1. [Urbanisation & change](#)
2. [1880 to 1940](#)
 - 2.1. [The development of West Harringay](#)
 - 2.1.1. [A community establishes itself](#)
3. [Harringay during the Second World War](#)
4. [1945 to the present day](#)
5. [Entertainment](#)
 - 5.1. [The Stadium and Arena](#)
 - 5.2. [Cinemas](#)
 - 5.3. [Other](#)
6. [Transport & communications history](#)
 - 6.1. [Roadways](#)
 - 6.2. [Rail](#)
 - 6.2.1. [Great Northern Railway](#)
 - 6.2.2. [Tottenham & Hampstead Junction Railway](#)
 - 6.2.3. [Palace Gates Line](#)
 - 6.2.4. [Great Northern & City Railway](#)
 - 6.3. [The Tube](#)

Harringay Station

[History](#)

Harringay Green Lanes Station

[History](#)

Former cinemas in Harringay

In its days as an entertainment centre for London, Harringay in North London also provided more locally directed entertainment in the shape of four cinemas. The earliest was opened in 1910 and was operating as a cinema until January 2003.

1. [Earliest film shows in Harringay](#)
2. [The Premier Electric](#)
3. [The Electric Coliseum](#)
4. [Grand Picture Palace](#)
5. [The Ritz](#)

Harringay Stadium

Harringay Stadium was a major greyhound racing and speedway venue in Harringay, North London. It was built and opened in 1927 and closed in 1987.

1. [Construction](#)
2. [Greyhound Racing](#)
 - 2.1. [Cheetah Racing at Harringay](#)
3. [Speedway](#)
4. [Stock car racing](#)
5. [Other uses](#)
6. [Historical Notes](#)
7. [Closure & demolition](#)

Harringay Arena

Harringay Arena was a sporting and events venue on Green Lanes in Harringay, North London, England. Built in 1936, it lasted as a venue until 1958.

1. [Construction](#)
2. [Sports venue](#)
3. [Entertainment venue](#)
 - 3.1. [Classical music and ballet](#)
 - 3.2. [Circuses](#)
 - 3.3. [Other events](#)
4. [Decline and fall](#)

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Harringay's History: History by Harringay people free to Harringay people, for Harringay People

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