

University of the Third Age and Hornsey Historical Society

Shared Learning Project

ONCE UPON A TIME IN CROUCH END ... 1860 – 1980

This 6 month project brought together members of the Crouch End & District University of The Third Age (U3A) and the Hornsey Historical Society (HHS) who have an interest in the history of Crouch End but little or no experience of local history research. The group met monthly in the Hornsey Historical Society's Old Schoolhouse in Tottenham Lane under the supervision of John Hinshelwood (U3A) and Janet Owen (HHS). Ideas developed along several themes eventually concentrating on:

- People, working and living in Crouch End
- Transport, foot, bicycle, horse drawn and motorised
- Buildings, civic, commercial and religious.

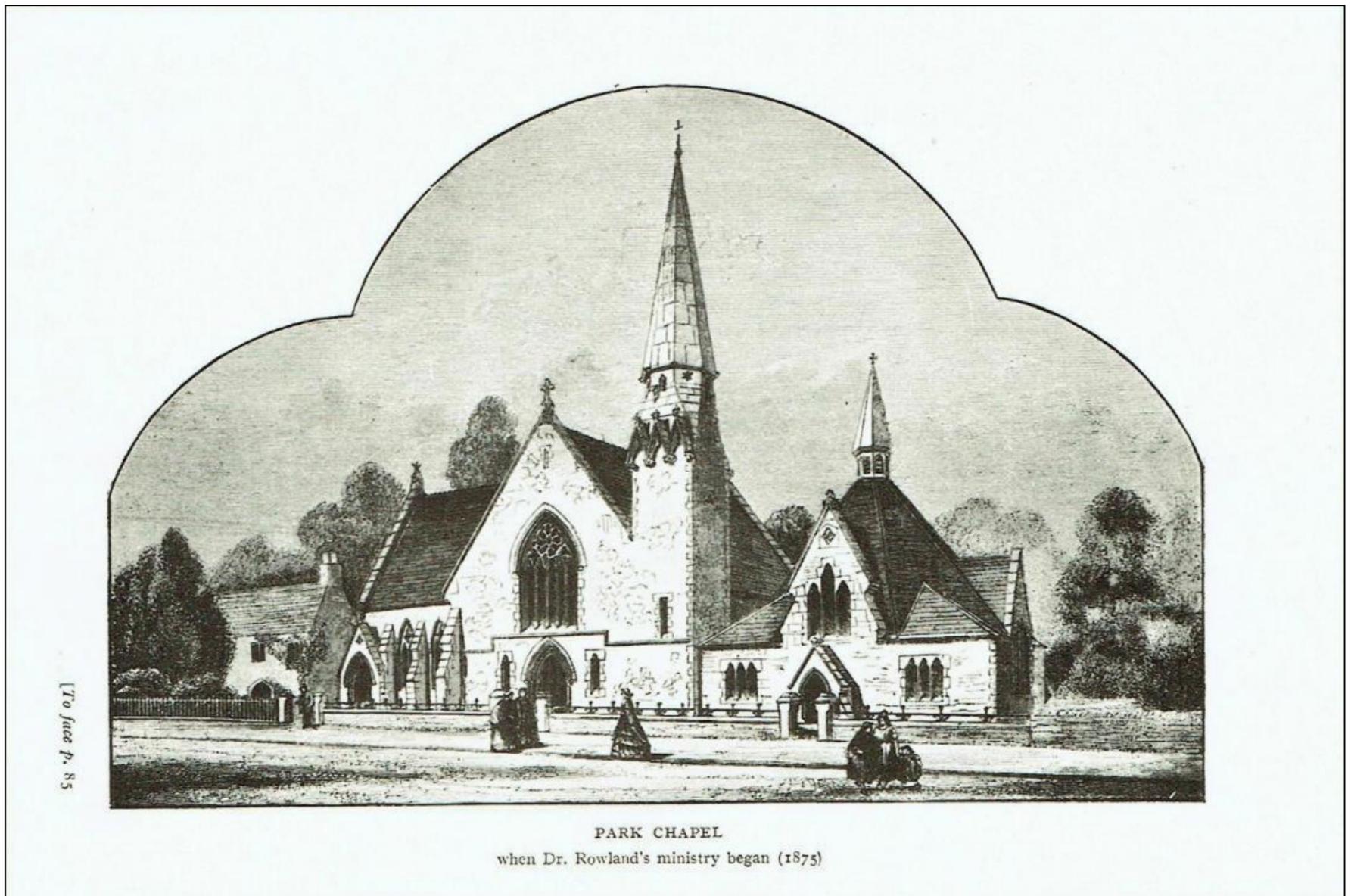
The project enabled six people, who had never met before, to research, discuss their ideas and put together this exhibition of images, from the extensive material in the Hornsey Historical Society Archive, and interpret them to tell this picture story of Crouch End.

- **LEATRICE BAILEY:** I come from Glasgow, but have lived in Muswell Hill for over 50 years. Working on the project has taught me as much about Crouch End as researching into the past - and whetted my appetite to find out more.
- **NAOMI INWALD:** I joined this project as firstly, I am very interested in history and archaeology. Secondly because I live nearby, in the Highgate environs. Thirdly to meet and work with new people. It was quite fascinating resurrecting a quieter bygone age, so different from today.
- **QUENTIN PICKARD:** I am a retired architect, who has worked on many church buildings, and this project offered the opportunity to research a religious building in Crouch End. Park Chapel has a particular resonance for me because for several years in the 1980s I had an architectural practice in part of this chapel.
- **VIV PLANT:** I was delighted to join this project exploring the history of Crouch End. I was particularly interested in images depicting workers and their trade. With so many records in the HHS archive, discussion and collaboration was essential and the expert guidance from John and Janet was invaluable. A great learning experience!
- **PAT STOREY:** I moved to Hornsey in 2018. What a good way to feel rooted in a community - learn its history. I enjoyed discovering a story behind each of my images. As I did so they came alive. Local history isn't just dry facts. It's about people and places.
- **VAL WALKER:** I retired in 2019 having worked for over 40 years in the payroll industry. After a couple of months of taking it easy I found I needed a new challenge and applied to become part of the U3A/HHS project. What a time I have had, learning new skills and meeting new friends. If you ever have an opportunity to be a part of something like this 'Seize the day'

With their generous support the completed project is on public display during April and May in ArtHouse Cinema, 165 Tottenham Lane, N8 9BY and during June in The Haberdashery, 22 Middle Lane, N8 8PL.

Hornsey Historical Society <https://hornseyhistorical.org.uk/>

Crouch End & District U3A <https://cedu3a.org.uk/>



THE ORIGINAL PARK CHAPEL

Park Chapel on Crouch Hill was one of the first Congregational chapels in the area in 1855. This engraving is taken from 'The Builder' magazine, and shows the building layout soon after construction. The view is the east elevation, as seen from what was to become the corner of Crouch Hill and Haringey Park. The attractive spire, still largely unaltered today, is in the centre, with the main east window to the left. On the right-hand side is the schoolroom with an octagonal roof and spirelet, housing the Hornsey British School which accommodated about 177 children in 1873. The number of trees shown behind the chapel shows how rural Crouch End still was in the late 19th century – or maybe it is just artistic licence?



PARK CHAPEL, CROUCH END

This photograph was taken around the end of the 19th century, and shows the building as finally enlarged, and as still visible today. The view is looking northwards towards Crouch End Broadway. The spire is just visible in the middle distance. There has been considerable rebuilding since the earlier view – the schoolroom on the north side was replaced in 1892 by a larger structure known as the Corbin Hall. On the left-hand side, the earlier building has been replaced by a much larger double height nave. Nearest the camera is the main entrance to the chapel, with the chapel parlour (built 1866) at first floor level. Pevsner in his *Buildings of England* describes Park Chapel as ‘a crowded ragstone group with a flurry of gables’. Note also the variety of ridge cappings and roof finials etc., most of which seem to survive today. There was seating for a congregation of 1480, plus a school. As so often in Victorian photographs, the passers-by are posing for the photographer. The character 2nd from left appears to be carrying a basket on his head, while near him is a small delivery cart. There is the usual variety of hats, denoting the wearer’s position in society.



CROUCH END BROADWAY

I wanted to look at Crouch End before it had the traffic problem it has now. In particular I wanted to look at buses. This photograph, looking south from the Clock Tower, was taken around 1900. In 1897 Crouch End got tarmac and its first horse-drawn omnibus. It ran between Crouch End Rise and the Hope and Anchor, possibly in Islington. Horse-drawn buses appeared on some London streets as early as 1829, five years after Manchester got its first horse bus. All transport in this image is horse-drawn. But the archive has a photograph from 1898, of a local couple in a very early Peugeot car. Today air pollution from traffic fumes is a huge problem. But even 2 horse-power vehicles caused pollution, not in the air but on the road, as can clearly be seen here.



CROUCH END HILL LOOKING TOWARDS CHRIST CHURCH

This postcard shows the spire of Christ Church at the top of the hill. This fine Church of England building, designed by Arthur Blomfield, was consecrated on Friday 27 June 1862. On the right hand side of the photo is the public house called The Kings Head, built in 1892, it is interesting to note that a public house has been on this site since 1662. In the 19th century it was known informally as the "yard of pork". The building was typical of its period, and is the oldest pub in the area. The upper storeys are still intact, although the ground floor windows have been altered. It is now also home to one of the oldest comedy clubs in Britain. The people waiting outside the pub are clothed in what was considered proper at that time. Opposite the Kings Head, further up Crouch End Hill on the left, Charles Brataby, a farrier, had the local smithy. He was be the last farrier in Crouch End as his forge was acquired for development in 1895. The horse and carriage on left hand side of the road, waiting patiently outside the corn merchants, was soon to be replaced by motorised transport.



COOK BROTHER'S DELIVERY BOY

This photograph showing a typical Crouch End street, with houses that may easily be recognised today, is a copy of a glass plate held by the Bishopgate Library as part of the early London and Middlesex Archaeology Society collection. Cook Brothers (Hornsey) was registered as a Limited company, in 1911, as a fishmongers at 57 Broadway Crouch End, with other branches at Queens Parade, Muswell Hill, Rathcoole Parade, Tottenham Lane and The Façade Archway Road. The early closing day was Thursday when deliveries were possible. The fish this delivery boy – or is it a girl – was also selling fish at 4d per pound, which would cost about £4.90 at today's prices. In 1900, the Board of Education wanted all children to stay on at school until the age of 14, but they still allowed the majority to leave at 13 or even 12 to start manual labouring jobs under local byelaws. The delivery boy had a responsible job for one who appears so young; driving a horse and cart on a public road, handling and accounting for sales and satisfying customer requirements, and was probably aged 14 or 15 years of age. Richard Cook and his brother of William, went on to become directors of Mac Fisheries Ltd by the 1930s.



THE SALVATION ARMY CITADEL

This building, converted to the ArtHouse cinema in March 2014, originally started life in the 1912s for the Salvation Army. In the 1970s the Citadel became The Hustlers Snooker Hall. The ArtHouse came together through an alliance between an actor, George Georgiou, a director, Sam Neophytou, and a former teacher at Rokesly Junior School, Jenny Hansford. The Citadel is a highly representative example of the Salvation Army style which aimed to translate the objectives of the Army into bricks and mortar. The building makes a valuable contribution to the urban landscape, through the fact of its survival. This stretch of Tottenham Lane was until recently characterised by early twentieth century buildings, which no longer exist. Historical interest is also evident through the association, on date stones, with Silas Kitto Hocking, famous in his day but now largely forgotten, an author of 50 best-selling ‘pulp Methodism’ novels from the 1870s to the 1910s. Comparing with the traffic of today, the road looks empty, bicycles and people outnumber the two motor vehicles, What were the people looking at?



THE BUS FROM CROUCH END TO FINSBURY PARK

This is a lovely image of the 111 bus near the top of Crouch Hill, with a view down to Park Chapel and Crouch End. This postcard is not dated but it would not be earlier than 1914. The 111 bus route was introduced in April of that year, by the London General Omnibus Company. The destination board clearly shows Finsbury Park, Muswell Hill, Crouch End and Stroud Green. To the right of the bus is the ever familiar ‘For Sale’ sign. Less familiar to us today is the low volume of traffic. When this route began there were no fixed bus stops. Buses stopped wherever they were needed and there was no concept of ‘the bus queue’. Gradually, designated bus stops were established and welcomed. The bus queue as we know it was born. By 1931 the 111 ran every two minutes to serve tube-less Crouch End. It lived up to its title here of ‘Small but Convenient’. This same route is now served by the W7.



CROUCH END CLOCK TOWER

By the time of this postcard dated 7 March 1921, the combustion engine had well and truly arrived. It was welcomed to solve the problem of pollution from horse manure - a real issue because of the sheer number of working horses on the streets. Here we see an early motorbus. There don't appear to be any cars in this shot, but the archive has several images including a huge model from 1907. In size it would rival any 4x4. But at that time there was more room on the roads. The streets here are busy with pedestrians easily able to cross the un-congested roads. The Clock Tower, built in 1895, had been the stopping place for the old horse omnibus. It was the focal point then as now. Sited at the heart of Crouch End, this Grade II listed building has remained an integral part of the local landscape. The clock shows five minutes to five - a wonderful snapshot in time.



THE NEW TOWN HALL

A jam factory', 'a blooming gaol', and 'just like Turnpike Lane Tube Station' were some local reactions to Hornsey Town Hall when it was opened on November 4 1935. But its modernistic design won the RIBA Bronze Medal for 1933-35 and in spite - or perhaps because of- its simplicity it became greatly loved.

The land was bought by the Borough of Hornsey for £4625 in the 1920s, but because of high building costs and the 1929 Depression it lay unused until 1934, when both labour and loan rates were cheaper.

In a competition the £150 prize for designing the Town Hall was won by 27 year old New Zealander, Reginald H Uren, and it cost £100,000 to build.

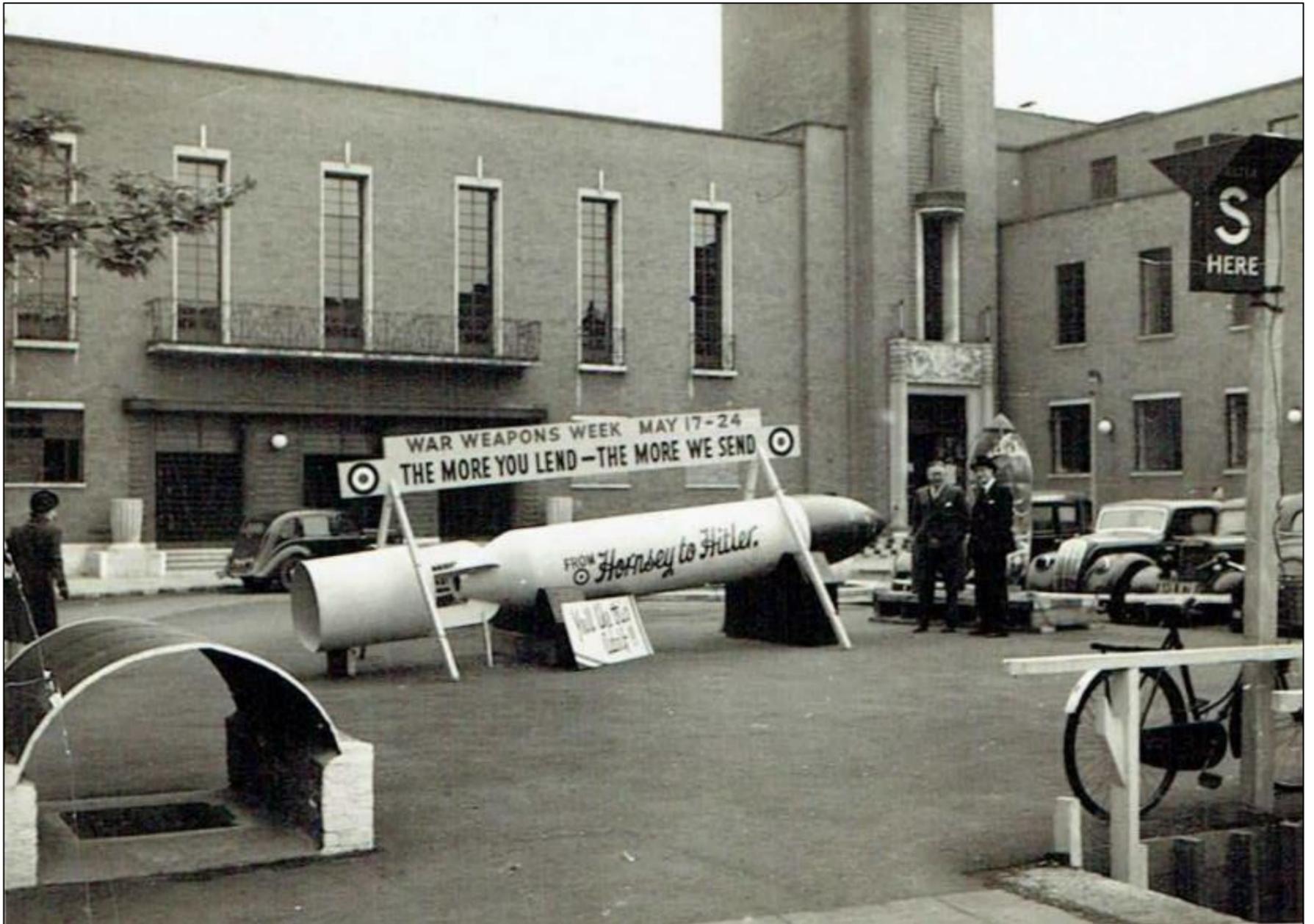
Currently, the Town Hall together with its grounds are undergoing restoration and redevelopment. Completion of the work is scheduled for the third quarter of 2021 and will include an arts centre and hotel, an improved public square and a collection of studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments.



OPENING OF THE TOWN HALL

On the left is a photograph of Edward, Duke of Kent, whose role was to open the new Town Hall. Up to 3000 local people lined the streets to see him meet civic dignitaries and talk to ex-military personnel. This was followed by the Duke inspecting the guard of honour formed by the Muswell Hill branch of the Royal British Legion. Upon entering the Town Hall the Duke was greeted by a huge number of local school children occupying the balcony rather than the many local dignitaries.

Later in the day the dignitaries did attend a reception hosted by the Borough of Hornsey Mayor and Lady Mayoress, The photograph on the right shows The Lady Mayoress (Mrs William Grimshaw) posing resplendently in a beige frilly chiffon evening gown with matching jacket, carrying a bouquet of pink Sylvia roses.



HORNSEY TO HITLER

The Town Hall housed many events, from (sometimes) dour Council meetings to dances with music being played by the latest dance bands.

The photograph above highlights just how central the Town Hall was to the community. Around 1941, Hornsey played its part in the war effort in War Weapons Week, when areas were encouraged to buy National Savings bonds, and adopt a specific ship or aeroplane. Churches, schools and charities knitted socks, gloves and balaclavas and sent letters and cards to the crew. National Savings bonds bought between 1939-45 were often small amounts saved by ordinary people. The sum saved nationally, amounting to £100 million, equivalent to £5.4 billion now, was used to make and purchase armaments that the country so desperately needed.



MODERN PARK CHAPEL

This photograph by Ken Gay of Hornsey Historical Society was taken in 1988. It is interesting to see how few changes to the exterior of the building have occurred since the late 19th century photograph. The stonework and spire have survived in remarkably good condition, and the elevation as a whole has a good variety of architectural modelling, although perhaps too close to the road to be easily visible. To the left of the chapel, the car spares shop – part of Arthur Williams garage – is visible (the garage closed several years' ago). Once part of a flourishing Congregational community, Park Chapel closed as a Congregational chapel in the late 1970s when the congregation moved to new premises at Union Church in Weston Park, and became part of the United Reform Church. The building now has a variety of uses, including as an evangelical church and music studio. Notable also is the lack of traffic on Crouch Hill.