

Leyton and Leytonstone pubs

The Hare & Hounds on the Lea Bridge Road

by
David Boote

Leyton & Leytonstone Historical Society

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Leyton & Leytonstone Historical Society

85 Forest Drive West

Leytonstone

London

E11 1JZ

Website : www.leytonhistorysociety.org.uk

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The Hare & Hounds on the Lea Bridge Road

The Hare & Hounds is a survivor. It opened when the Leyton and Walthamstow area was still countryside. Everything has changed around the pub since then. It is now well within the boundaries of London. The kinds of work people do are different, and so are the ways people spend their spare time. The kinds of people moving into the area keep changing, and so do the places they are coming from, but they all need somewhere to feel at home and relax.

This booklet aims to give an impression of how the world around the Hare & Hounds has altered.

Way back in time before the Lea Bridge Road was built, the Dagenham Brook was dug to drain the slightly higher land on its east side, leaving the area to the west, the Lea Valley, including the site of the Hare & Hounds, waterlogged in winter until large-scale drainage was undertaken. The flow of water through the Lea Valley was nevertheless to some extent controlled from Anglo-Saxon times onwards, and the land provided a summer hay crop and winter grazing. The marshes beside the Lea had a value and were carefully divided between the communities along each side of the valley. The boundary between Leyton and Walthamstow was fixed some time in the early Middle Ages and runs down to the Lea, parallel with what is now the Lea Bridge Road, but a little to the north.

The river itself was important for travel and transporting goods. Major developments came as the pace of economic change in Britain speeded up in the 18th century. A Turnpike Act of 1757 created the Lea Bridge Road. It linked Clapton, on the west side of the River Lea, to the Middlesex and Essex Turnpike Road at the Eagle Pond, Snaresbrook, which was on the ancient route between Stratford and Woodford. Until then the Lea had been crossed by ferry and a ford. To maximise toll income for the new road and bridge, the ferry and ford across the Lea were closed. Then in 1767 the Lea Navigation was constructed from Old Ford to just south of the Lea Bridge. Canal boats could be taken from Three Mills at Bromley-by-Bow, under Lea Bridge, and



Extract from a map published by William Faden in 1788 showing the Lea Bridge Road but omitting the Lea Navigation. The site of the Hare & Hounds is to the right, east, of the figure '4'.

northwards up the river, with its level now controlled by locks, through Waltham Abbey and its gunpowder works, to Ware with its large grain maltings.

In 1840 a railway line designed by Robert Stephenson was built up the Lea Valley from Stratford to Broxbourne, for extension to Cambridge. A station was built where the line crossed the Lea Bridge Road, serving Walthamstow and Leyton.

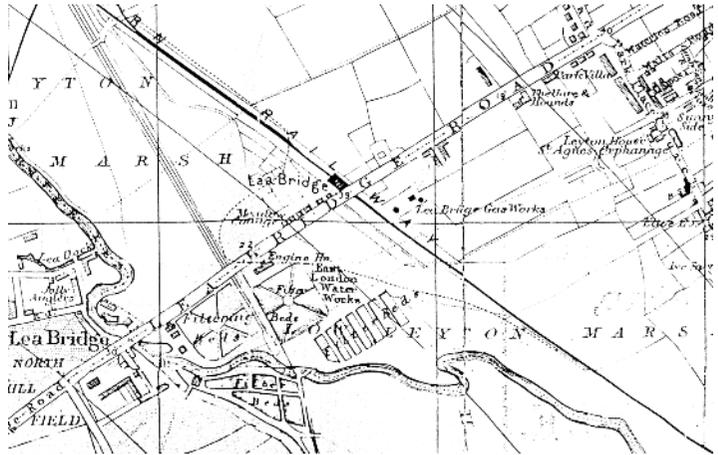


There was a pub by the route of the railway line from 1839 and this became the Greyhound.

A boom in house construction began in Walthamstow from 1850, and slightly later in Leyton. A landscape of fields was transformed in a few decades to an all-embracing townscape.

The Hare & Hounds appears in 1861, when it had an entry in White's Essex Directory, the same year as the first records for the Duke of Cambridge on Boundary Road to the north-east, and just before those for the Grenadier on

Part of a map from a late 19th century Kelly's street directory showing the Hare & Hounds and the water and gas works on the Lea Bridge Road.



Church Road to the south-east. William Bowden was the licensee of the Hare & Hounds in 1862 and he may well have been the first landlord.

He was a 'fly proprietor', the equivalent of a taxi business, probably providing a connection for passengers with the trains at Lea Bridge Station (photo on right). He must have kept horses to the rear of the pub. An early map shows a square pond, which may have refreshed a cow as well as horses.

The Lea Bridge gasworks had been built in 1853 next to the railway line and the road, and this commercial enterprise supplied parts of Walthamstow and Leyton as they were developed. At the same time the East London Waterworks Co built filter beds to purify water taken from the river at Lea Bridge.

The Hare & Hounds was built some half century before the streets around it. The other pubs nearest to the Hare & Hounds other than the Greyhound were the Common Gate on Markhouse Road, the Lord Clyde on Capworth Street and the Bakers Arms to the east along the Lea Bridge Road. Developers ensured, by writing restrictive covenants into property conveyancing documents, that their chosen pubs did not get close competition.

In 1872 Henry Bowden is listed as the owner, though by this time many pubs were being purchased by breweries. Henry Bowden was based in Colchester, and might therefore be classed as an early example of a pub management

business. A William Bowden was listed in 1851 as an inn keeper at the Bull and Crown at Chingford, and could have been related.

Between then and the time Henry Bowden sold the pub in 1900 there was a succession of licensees, some of whom appeared to be at the Hare and Hounds for about year at a time. At the 1881 Census John and Elizabeth Cuthbertson lived at the pub with their one year old daughter, but also resident were Phoebe Mercer, aged 19 a general servant, Walter Carrington, 21 a barman and John Cook, 35 a potman. Most pubs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had live-in staff, often young single people. For Bowden the Hare and Hounds was an investment. The supplier of beer was changed from Truman Hanbury and Buxton to Charrington.

There were plans to build a railway line into Epping Forest and create housing estates there. The Corporation of the City of London intervened and in 1878 it purchased the Forest for preservation as public open space. Many visitors came by train to Chingford Station, opened the same year, but group outings by large horse-drawn vehicles, 'horse brakes', later 'charabancs', remained popular, with stops at pubs on the way out and back. The Hare & Hounds had a curved vehicle approach to entice this kind of passing custom.

The field in which the pub was built was used to play sports. In 1890 it was the venue for running and walking races. Until the 1930s the amateur teams at Leyton, Leytonstone and Walthamstow were the ones that were followed locally with many loyal and enthusiastic supporters, and they stayed popular long after that. Leyton Football Club's first game behind the Hare & Hounds was on 7th September 1901 (winning 4 - 0 against Hampstead). Leyton joined the London League Premier Division in 1904. New dressing rooms were erected at this time, and there is a reference to a 'large mound', which must have come from levelling the ground. In 1905 Leyton moved to a pitch by Osborne Road but it returned to the Hare & Hounds between 1919 and 1921.

By 1911 the Hare & Hounds had a verandah across the front and down the sides of the main pub building. This may have been for sportsmen to have a drink without changing into smart clothes.



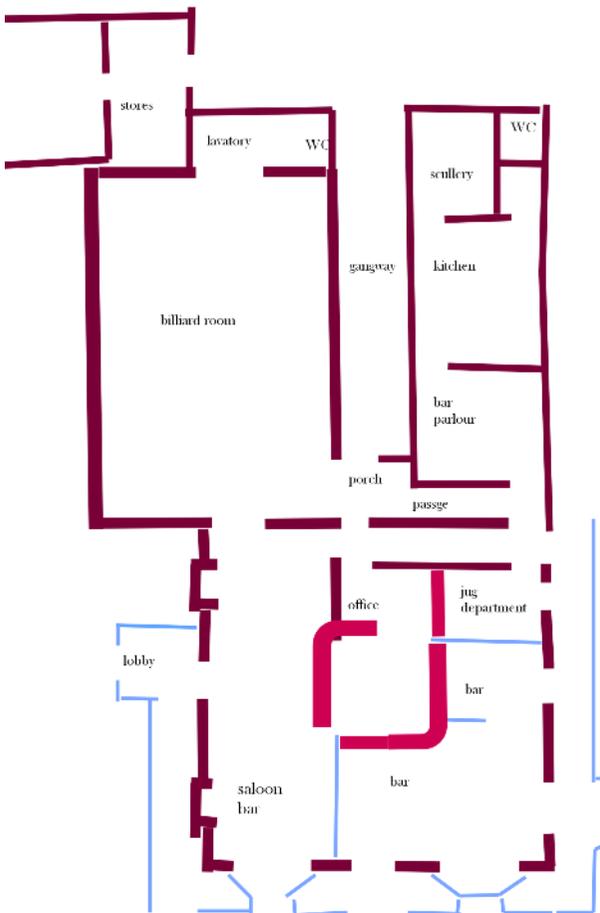
In 1900 there was some serious flooding of the Lea Bridge Road of which photographs survive.

There was a horse tram service along Lea Bridge Road between 1883 and 1885, restarted about 1889 and reaching as far as the Rising Sun in Epping Forest. Leyton District Council took control in 1905 and installed electric power 1906-07. Public transport was offering the Hare & Hounds more passing custom.

In 1900 the Hare & Hounds was purchased by the City of London Brewery of the Hour Glass Brewery in Upper Thames Street. A new licensee, Thomas Noseworthy, was installed. The Noseworthy name appears at this time in a number of pubs including the Greyhound further down Lea Bridge Road, The Essex Arms in Walthamstow, the Duke of Cambridge on Boundary Road and the Travellers Friend at Woodford. The City of London Brewery made alterations to the Hare & Hounds in 1910-11. The pub had its saloon bar on the lefthand side, with a billiard room behind it with large windows and roof-lights, and the public bar was to the right. Behind the public bar was another small bar, behind that the 'jug department' selling drink to take away, behind that a passageway and then a 'bar parlour' and kitchen as staff areas.

The low-lying land along the Lea Bridge Road was developed late, and it was the largest local property business, Warner Estates, which took on the challenge. House construction began on Harris Street and Hibbert Road in

1901, Wetherden Street in 1902, Blyth Road in 1906, Hitcham and Seymour Roads in 1907, Clementina, Kettlebaston and Perth Roads in 1908, and Bloxhall and Morieux Roads in 1910. Some of the street names come from members of the Warner family (Blyth, Clementina, Harris, Perth and Seymour) some (Bloxhall, Hitcham, Kettlebaston, Morieux and Wetherden) from places in the part of Suffolk where the property development arm of the family bought a country estate. International trade and London docks entrepreneur Mr Hibbert married into the Warner family and rebuilt the Markhouse mansion. Theydon Street, entirely in Walthamstow, was built from 1904 and also gets its name from the Warner family.

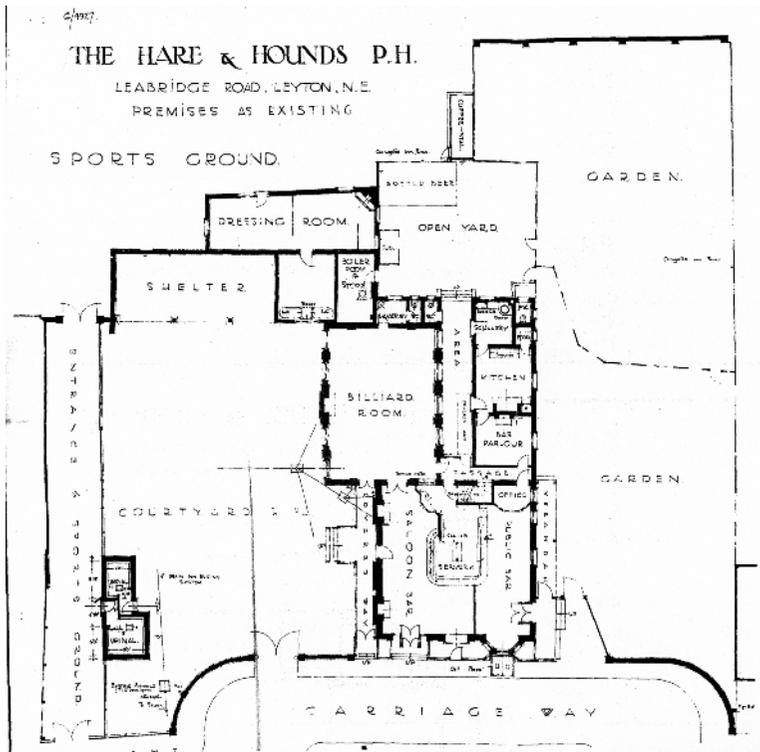


Ground floor plan of 1911

In 1915 the City of London Brewery sold the Hare & Hounds to Hoare & Co Brewery of Smithfield. Its trademark was the Toby jug, which passed to Bass & Co after it took over Hoare's in 1933.

At this time betting away from race courses was illegal. Unlawful bookmakers had 'runners' who collected bets in pubs. In June 1920 the licensee of the Hare & Hounds was in court for allowing betting on his premises. He was fined £10 with 10 guineas costs, and probably lost his license.

Further alterations were made to the Hare & Hounds in 1920, 1933 and 1937. The partition between saloon and public bars was moved to the west enlarging the saloon, and the jug department was replaced with a small office area entered from the passage. The City of London Brewery ceased business in the 1920s.



By 1933 there was a proper sports ground to the rear of the Hare & Hounds, entered down a long passageway to the left of a large pub yard. Urinals had been built in the yard but entered only from the sports ground passage. The sports ground changing rooms were an extension to an extension to the pub billiard room. The licensee was responsible for the upkeep of the ground.

The Clapton Orient football club moved across the Lea to near the Greyhound in 1930, and on to Brisbane Road in 1937. The professional league team Leyton Orient came into being in October 1945. Leyton (non-professional) Football Club came back to the Hare & Hounds during the Second World War. A high standard of game attracted a knowledgeable crowd to the Sunday fixtures in the 1950s, including professional players.

There was serious flooding from the Dagenham Brook and the River Lea in 1947, with water reaching as far as the Bakers Arms junction. This problem was solved in the 1950s by construction of the Lea Flood Relief Channel.

Increasing levels of motor traffic led to widening of the Lea Bridge Road.

In 1977 Leyton FC's clubhouse was destroyed by fire. The team survived by merging with Wingate Football Club ("The Blues") which had been founded in 1946 by four Jewish sportsmen after returning from wartime service in the British armed forces. Leyton Wingate FC won the Athenian League twice, going through a whole season undefeated, it gained promotion to the Ryman Premier League, and reached the first round of the FA Cup.

The CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) Good Beer Guide reported in 1986 and 1991 that pool and darts were very popular at the Hare & Hounds. Trophies won by the pools, darts and whist teams are still in a display cabinet.

In 1980s the Bass Charrington brewery owners started alterations in mistaken anticipation of an insurance company office opening a large administrative office opposite. A suspended ceiling was created round the front of the seating area for air conditioning which was not in the end installed. The site opposite became the B & Q DIY products store, busy but as a low-staffed car-based business little help to the Hare & Hounds.



A sporting pub : landlady Jean and landlord Roger photographed with former champion boxer Terry Downes to the left of Jean, and to the couple's right a young Ray Winstone who was a successful boxer before his acting career, and Alan Hubbard



A community pub : the landlady Jean photographed with the Mayoress of Waltham Forest

In 1991 CAMRA said that it had the reputation of being better than most pubs in the area.

Leyton Wingate FC split in 1992, the Wingate part merging with Finchley FC, and the Leyton part in 1995 with Walthamstow Pennant. Leyton Pennant's ground was Wadham Lodge. Leyton FC was then resurrected to play matches behind the Hare & Hounds but having no connection with the pub. The football pitch was sold off by the Charringtons brewery.

For much of the 20th century most pubs were owned by a small number of large breweries but the arrangement was regarded as anti-competitive and was ended in the 1990s. Ownership of the Hare & Hounds passed to Enterprise Inns. In 1999 Malcolm Durrant and Rita Acharya took over the running of the pub. In 2002 CAMRA described the Hare & Hounds as a family pub.

List of licensees to 1925

1862 to at least 1870	William Bowden licensee and fly proprietor (in 1862)
7/12/1872	Henry Bowden, Colchester, owner. Henry Nicholls to Harriet Nichols (one and two l s in names) Alehouse
11/1873	Nichols licensee. Loaned £1,300 from Trumans. Pub went to Charringtons 7 butts
6/12/1873	To Thomas Miller Siggins
14/8/1875	To Robert Batchelor
8/9/1876	To Wm George Lewis
13/1/1877	To James Hobbs
13/7/1878	To William Mills
1878	William George Jarvis
1881	John C Cuthbertson 36 licensed victualler, wife and 1 daughter, Phoebe Mercer 19 general servant, Walter Carrington 21 barman. John Cook 35 potman.
1882	Joseph Mills
21/8/1883	To Henry Kemp
1886	Henry Kemp
1897	Lease put back then agreed
5/8/1899	To Henry Hawes
17/2/1900	To Thos Robson Noseworthy, temporary
31/3/1900	To Thomas Robert Noseworthy. Owner Henry Bowden, High Street, Colchester to City of London Brewery Upper Thames Street. EC.
25/2/1910	Building alterations application, also 8/4/1910 and 22/4/1910. William John Parsons owner, Harvey Dyball 35 Buckelbury EC architect. Slight alterations to plans approved 25/11/1911.
1912	William John Parsons
6/11/1915	Owners City of London Brewery. Lower (sic) Thames Street, EC to Hoare & Co London Brewery. Godfrey William Smythe and Thomas James Croker
1917	William Henry White
1925	Thomas James Croker