Introduction

I was delighted when the Leader of the Council asked me, just after my election as a Councillor in May 2018, to become the Member Champion for the Historic Environment. I have been fascinated by History for as long as I can remember, culminating with my reading it at Southampton University. Having been born in Romford, raised in Hornchurch and Upminster, now living and working in Gidea Park, I have always taken a special interest in my local area.

I decided to spend my first year in my role as Member Champion “finding my feet”: revisiting the places of historical interest in the London Borough of Havering which I knew well and discovering more about the places of which I had less knowledge. Visits are most important, not just for historical interest, but to meet the people who are working to preserve our local history. This report focuses largely on the visits I have made.

Also, I have had regular meetings with Mr. James Rose (Parks Development Manager) and was fortunate to meet Mr. Nigel Oxley (Historic Buildings and Landscapes Officer) before his retirement. In future years, as I grow into the role, I may focus on particular projects, as well as continuing to overview the whole of Havering’s historical environment, depending on what is needed.

Rainham

One of the eleven Conservation Areas in Havering, Rainham Village has been described as “a hidden gem” and contains much of historical importance.

In the heart of the village is St. Helen and St. Giles Church (a dedication unique in the British Isles). Constructed in c. 1170, it is the oldest building in Havering and retains several of its original features. I revisited it with my class last year and it is
definitely worth a visit; the dedicated congregation members will happily take you around. In the next few months, the churchyard wall is to be repaired.

Rainham Hall is a fine example of a Queen Anne house, built in 1729 by merchant John Harle. It had over fifty owners and tenants before passing to the National Trust. In 2012, a conservation and renovation programme began and it opened fully to the public in October 2015. Since then, its role as a community hub with a dedicated band of volunteers continues to grow from strength to strength.

Within the last year, there has been an exhibition about the Day Nursery at Rainham Hall and the children in my class very much enjoyed the exhibition when I took them on a visit. From 29th June, the Hall will be holding an exhibition about the life of one
of its 1960s inhabitants, Anthony Denney. The gardens, nurtured by gardener Jesse, are a delight to behold and the Stables Café continues to be visited regularly. In May 2019, The Mayor of Havering Councillor Dilip Patel hosted his Garden Party at Rainham Hall and it played an integral part in the Rainham Village May Fayre. First Thursdays are a new innovation this year, when the Hall will be open some evenings.

The future of the old Rainham Library site opposite the Church remains uncertain. A planning application remains undecided and it is important that any new buildings should be in sympathetic style with the rest of the village centre. The amount of traffic using Rainham and Wennington Villages as cut-throughs to the A1306 needs to be monitored.

South Hornchurch

The Bretons site consists of Bretons Manor House, a Grade 2 Listed building dating back to the 1700s, a Tudor barn and various outbuildings.

Currently in use as an outdoor recreation centre, there are ongoing ideas for refurbishing the manor house, on the lines of a conference and wedding venue similar to Langtons in Hornchurch, with some small retail outlets. This is something which I believe could be a great asset in the south of the Borough, provided it is done sympathetically and with consideration to the community groups who use the centre. Unfortunately, the bid submitted for London Borough of Culture 2020 was unsuccessful. However, there is ongoing work around the Bretons project to develop the site, which is being led by Mr. Guy Selfe (Health and Wellbeing Manager).

Hornchurch

Dury Falls, the Grade 2 Listed Building on the crossroads of Wingletye Lane, Upminster Road and Hacton Lane (Doggetts Corner), just outside the St. Andrew’s Conservation Area, has been sympathetically converted into flats and is now inhabited.
As well as previously being a residential home for the elderly, Dury Falls used to be the Food Office during and after the Second World War.

**Langtons House and Gardens** are really the jewel in Hornchurch’s crown. The site has continued to benefit tremendously from the investment and improvement of the past few years. New signage has enhanced the beautiful gardens and Fielders Field (to the rear of the house).

The refurbished glass houses continue to shine and the tea room near the stable block is busy. When I visited the site last summer, I was most interested to see the old bath house behind the gazebo – I sat there often when I came as a child, little realising what lay behind it.
Inside Langtons House, the Blue Room (left side) has been refurbished.

Once again, both the House and Gardens played host to the Summer Concert by the Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra on the first weekend in June. I should like to congratulate all who have assisted with and work at Langtons.

Upminster
Atop the hill in St. Mary’s Lane, Upminster Windmill sits proudly. This smock mill, built in 1803 by James Nokes and a Grade 2 Listed Building, which is the symbol of Upminster, has been undergoing extensive refurbishment in the last three years.

I visited the Windmill last summer and met Willem Dijkstra, the Dutch millwright. I was allowed inside to see how the work had progressed. Basically, when the repairs to the Windmill began, it was discovered that the damage inside was far more extensive than first thought.

Much of the timber had been affected by decay or woodworm and required replacement or reinforcement. Some of the work was able to be carried out on site but some needed to be completed in the millwright’s workshop in Holland, with the repaired parts then being transported back to the UK. Certain cleaning and refurbishment work has been carried out by Upminster volunteers. [See Appendix A]
After several months under wraps, the Windmill has now been uncovered and the scaffolding removed.

The eight corner posts and connecting timbers of the smock tower, plus the floor boarding, have been repaired or replaced. The external weatherboarding has been applied and painted. The restored cap and new sails should be fitted later this year. The relandscaping of the mill field is due to start later in 2019, with the Windmill reopening to the public sometime in 2020.
The Visitor Centre and Gardens are already open at certain times. For further information, visit The Friends of Upminster Windmill website at www.upministerwindmill.org

Corbets Tey Village

Unfortunately, High House is in a poor state of repair, with broken windows and propped-up walls. Although it is a Grade 2 Listed Building, it is also a privately-owned residence, meaning the responsibility for its upkeep rests with its owners rather than the Council. Also within the Conservation Area and part of the old Gaynes Manor Estate, Parklands continues to be well-kept, with the help of a dedicated group of volunteers, three years after the restoration of its bridge. For further information, visit www.friendsofparklands.org.uk

I have also visited the Clockhouse (formerly Upminster Library) and its gardens – there is a problem with the extensive bird mess – plus The Grove Bridge, hidden away beneath the footpath between two bungalows, leading over to the fields beyond. The Old Chapel and Thames Chase in Cranham continue to hold regular community events such as concerts, talks, teas and exhibitions.

Harold Wood

The War Memorial in Harold Wood, a stone cross in front of the Library in Arundel Road, was unveiled in time for Remembrance Sunday last year.

Harold Hill

The large area which is Dagnam Park, incorporating The Manor Nature Reserve, is a remnant of the Dagnams Estate on which Harold Hill was built. When I visited last summer, I saw part of the excavations carried out by the Friends of Dagnam Park of the foundations of the old manor house which was demolished in the 1950s.
Most recently, the car park in Settle Road has been refurbished with the help of the Friends group ready for the visit of the London In Bloom judges. The Friends Group continue to hold regular working parties.

**Noak Hill**

It is disappointing to see so much litter on the roadsides of Noak Hill Road and Church Road in the approach to the old School House. I would concur with the view of the previous Member Champion about the possibility of Noak Hill becoming a Conservation Area.

For more details on Dagnam Park and Noak Hill (especially their history), visit [www.friendsofdagnampark.org.uk](http://www.friendsofdagnampark.org.uk)

**Havering-atte-Bower**

I visited Bedfords Park Walled Garden on a hot Sunday in May. Thanks to the dedication of Mrs. Lois Amos and the group of volunteers, the garden is looking beautiful, growing and selling flowers, fruit and vegetables. For updates and opening times, check Bedfords Park Walled Garden on Facebook.

I had an e-mail from a resident in Collier Row, asking if there were any plans to excavate Havering Palace. Unfortunately, lack of finances would prevent this. However, signage to Havering Park has been put up by the entrances in Wellingtonia Avenue, St. John’s Road and Clockhouse Lane (past The Pinewood pub.)
Romford

Living and working in Gidea Park, another Conservation Area, I rejoined the Gidea Park Civic Society this year. I am a regular visitor to Raphael and Lodge Farm Parks with my class from Gidea Park College – in itself a building of historical interest with links to the First World War poet Wilfrid Owen – and should like to compliment the Council and the Friends Groups for keeping both parks in such excellent order.

Within Lodge Farm Park can be found the Romford Bowls Club and the newly-opened Lodge Farm Park Miniature Railway, both of which I have supported.
Founded in 1898, Romford Bowls Club is the oldest sports club in Havering and one of the oldest in Essex. For further information on these parks, see

friends of raphaelpark.org.uk

www.havering-miniature-railway.co.uk

www.romfordbowlsclub.co.uk

The draft plan for **Coronation Gardens** is enclosed [Appendix B]. More pathways are to be lain, paving stones are to be replaced and benches added. These will be welcome to the increasing numbers of townspeople who gather each year in the Gardens on Remembrance Sunday, Holocaust Memorial Day and other civic occasions. The conifers at the back of the gardens are to be removed but the old gravestones are to remain. Because the land belongs to St. Edward the Confessor Church, work has to be with the Church’s agreement, although the Council is responsible for carrying it out. The work is now unlikely to begin before Remembrance Sunday this year, although it may be earlier.

**Havering Museum** continues to collect and preserve artefacts which record the history of our local area. It continues to host exhibitions – those last year included the **Titanic** and Dagnam Park – and community events. It reminds us that, underneath, Havering is still Essex.

The annual report by Mr. Simon Donoghue of **The Local Studies Centre at Romford Library** is enclosed [Appendix C]. It is a fascinating place, full of newspapers, publications and other paper ephemera relating to the local area. I look forward to visiting again. I plan to ask if the work of the Museum and Local Studies Centre may be circulated on a regular basis to Councillors.
I have taken a very close interest in **Romford Market** this year, attending the monthly Romford Market Traders’ Meetings most months and supporting the Council’s programme of events in the Market.

Romford Market was granted its charter in 1247 so it is incredibly important that it is revitalised and adapts to the customer needs of today. I feel much more interest needs to be taken in the **Romford Conservation Area** – the crossroads by The Golden Lion – and this is something I should like to pursue next year.

I have called in a planning application at 22-44 North Street overlooking St. Edward the Confessor Churchyard which I believe would be unsympathetic with the Conservation Area.

I have supported the efforts of **Romford FC**, which has existed since 1876, to secure the Westland Playing Fields in London Road as a home ground. Also, I had an e-mail from a resident enquiring about the current location of the old Romford Market **fountain**, which I have passed on to an officer.

**Future Plans**

Next Municipal Year 2019-2020, as well as continuing my general overview of the Historic Environment, I plan to take a closer interest in the eleven Conservation Areas of Havering and their maintenance. Also, I should like to take an involvement with the Friends’ Groups who help the Council in looking after so many of the historic jewels in Havering’s crown. I cannot hope to know about or cover everything so please do contact me if there is any historical issue in any Ward about which I should know or with which I may assist.

**Councillor Judith Holt**  
**Member Champion for the Historic Environment**  
**June 2019**
Progress report on repairs to the windmill

1. On site (UK)

1. All of the main framing of the smock tower is now in place, incorporating the repaired corner post. Insertion of the intermediate wall studs and window framing will be a comparatively small job, particularly as this has all been pre-assembled in the workshop.
2. The next job was to investigate the extent of decay of the twelve ends of the six principal floor beams at second, third and fourth floor levels. Timber affected by decay and woodworm was cut back to sound wood, leaving the aged outer faces of the timbers in place wherever possible.

3. Steel rods were inserted through the excavated ends into the sound timber to provide reinforcement for the resin glue. The open ends of the timbers were then shuttered with plywood so the liquid glue could not escape.
4. The glue, a mixture of powder and a liquid hardener, was mechanically mixed in a large tub.

5. Once mixed, it was poured in to completely fill the voids. The addition of the floorboards on top will make the resin repairs virtually invisible.
6. This photo shows shuttering in place following the repair of two of the beam ends.

7. In parallel with the main contract works, Upminster volunteers have been busy refurbishing the mill's internal machinery in the new workshop attached to the visitor centre. This photograph shows one of the restored flour augers from the first floor, a technological innovation which saved the miller considerable time by filling several flour sacks simultaneously.
2. In the workshop (NL)

8. The fantail down shaft is put on a large lathe and the journals are machined true. This will ensure the gearing runs smoothly when it is back in position.

9. The weatherboards are initially cut to a rectangular section. Each board is then sliced longitudinally at an angle to produce feather-edged boards.
10. The cut boards are primed and undercoated on their outside faces and lower edge. This will leave an unpainted surface inside the mill.

11. The cut and painted boards packaged up and ready for transporting to the UK.
12. The cap roof and fantail frame under construction in the workshop. The framing of the front and rear gables is in position, with the repaired ridge piece set between them. The curved roof ribs (rafters) will be added next.
13. A detail view of the fantail frame assembly. Much of the existing timber has been retained and the side braces have been replaced at the correct angle. The re-machined down shaft is back in position.

3. Programme

The programme is slightly behind schedule, with work to complete the smock tower about to recommence on site (30th November 2018). A separate updated programme has been submitted.

As can be seen from the photographs, progress has continued on a number of fronts simultaneously, so it is hoped that the delay to site works will not impact too heavily on the overall programme.

END OF REPORT
In addition to assisting members of the public with local and family history research enquiries, assistance with Freedom of Information enquiries, providing images for Living from our collection, and responding to enquiries from other Council departments, in particular parks who have used images and research carried out for them. Some features of 2018/2019 include the following:

**From 23rd March Humphry Repton, Repton Cottage and the Romford District** – exhibition marking the bi-centenary of the famous landscape gardener’s death in 1818. Repton lived at Hare Street, now Main Road, Romford. Part of a nationwide campaign Celebrating Repton collated by the Gardens Trust.

**3rd April** Talk at Rainham Library Young at Heart group **“A Brief History of Havering”** - 16 attended

**18th April** Talk at Hornchurch Library **An Introduction to Havering Libraries’ Local History Collection** – 11 attended

**23rd May** School visit from Year 5 class at St Peters School, Romford to find out about **“The History of Romford”**. 30 Children

**April-May** Trained new volunteers for Local Studies with 3 x 2 hour sessions during April and May.
Appendix C

13th June  150 Years of Harold Wood major exhibition exploring the history of Harold Wood since the railway station opened in 1868. Running at Harold Wood Library from 13th June to 28th July.

11th July  Talk at The Old Chapel, Upminster An Introduction to Havering Libraries’ Local History Collection  20 attended

17th July  Talk at Raphael Park “Raphael Park-the making of Havering’s First Public Park” – 6 attended

July  Assembled photographs for viewing and selection by marketing staff at the Liberty Shopping Centre then scanned and organised copies of photographs and other information for the shopping centre that purchased images for a display during August to mark their 50th Anniversary. Also displayed in October for their official birthday party. A film is viewable via their Facebook page of people viewing the display which acknowledges Local Studies on each image. https://www.facebook.com/libertyromford/videos/2194547427226246/

18th August  Meeting with the new Langtons Gardens Activity Officer.

18th September  Meeting with Gidea Park Civic Society

19th September  2 x Year 6 classes from Mawney Foundation School for learning session about Second World War Havering – 60 children

Facebook post by Mawney Foundation School following their visit to Local Studies in September
21st September  Attended the launch of the Layers of London project organised by The Centre for Metropolitan History of The Institute of Historical Research at Senate House. This is an innovative, interactive online map of London which allows organisations and individuals to contribute historical information pinpointed on a map. Local Studies was asked to contribute in 2016 and have so far added over 50 images and other information from our collection to the map. So far these relate to Havering Public Houses and also Havering’s Libraries past and present. This highlights our collection in a broader London context and promotes what we have.

Layers of London – photograph and information about the first public library opened in Romford in 1930

1st October  For Black History Month a new exhibition “When Ghana Came to Romford 1951” about a football match between Romford Football Club and a Gold Coast XI was assembled and displayed in the Lending Library display area.

3rd October  Attended the Land of the Fanns conference at Thames Chase. “The Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership Scheme is a 5 year programme seeking to restore, discover and celebrate one of the last remaining landscapes of London as it once was.”

When Ghana Came to Romford 1951-poster

1st November  The joint exhibition by Havering Local Studies Library and Havering Museum “Home Front Havering” is displayed in the Local Studies display area from November 1st 2018 until January 2019.
**Appendix C**

13th November As part of the Havering Literary Festival the Local History Librarian gave a talk at Harold Hill Library with Don Tait about the history of Harold Hill and Noak Hill. There were 34 people in attendance and a number of people had to be turned away due to space constraints. To meet the demand, another talk will be organised in 2019.-34 attended

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**A LIVE TALK ON**

**LOCAL HISTORY**

*The story of Harold Hill and Noak Hill*

**HAROLD HILL LIBRARY**

**TUESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER**

**2:30PM £2.50**

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**21st November** The Local History Librarian gave an illustrated talk on **Home Front Havering- Local Life in the First World War** at the **WW1 Afternoon Tea** event in the Central Library, Romford as part of the Havering Literary Festival.

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Home Front Havering talk in the Central Library, Romford. The slide shows Lieutenant William-Leefe Robinson V.C. who shot down the first enemy aircraft over Britain. He was flying from RFC Suttons Farm, later known as RAF Hornchurch.

There was a small display in the Lending Library display area to coincide with the centenary of the First World War Armistice about the main town **War Memorials in the London Borough of Havering at Romford, Hornchurch, Upminster and Rainham**. A digital copy of this was provided to Havering Museum for them to run on their tv screen.
Assembled information about the closure of Romford Market to traffic in 1969 and the opening of the ring road for Living Magazine.

Completed an article for the East of London Family History Society’s journal Cockney Ancestor promoting Local Studies. It will be published over two issues in 2019.

An Introduction to Havering’s Local Studies Library by Simon Donohue, Local History Librarian - Non Member

Havering’s Local Studies Library is part of the Central Library Service and is situated on the first floor of the Central Library in Romford. If you are interested in Havering’s history, want to trace your family history, find an old newspaper or report information about your house or street in the past, or want a photograph or old illustration of Havering’s buildings, roads and historical events we may be able to help you.

The beginning of an historical collection in the district can be traced back to 1903 and a committee formed by Romford Urban District Council in response to a letter from Alfred Bennett BANFORD (1957–1939), the local artist and historian who suggested that an old Romford was disappearing at a very slow pace. The Council should be willing to receive views, portraits and maps of the old town and library, in hang to the Council Chamber and that he was quite willing not only to present some prints etc of old buildings that have passed away, to form the nucleus of a collection. A list of any Committee that might be formed to carry out the object.

The first public library in Romford was opened in 1930 and Romford donated a collection of his original watercolours and sketches to the library. In 1934, he gave a significant collection of books about Essex history to the Library and these form the basis of the Local Studies Library.

In Hornchurch, the first library was opened 12 October 1936. In September 1938, the donation of 35 photographs of Hornchurch by M. F. BUCKLEY of the Hornchurch Evening Institute Photographic Society was noted and it was agreed to appeal for books, illustrations, or other material relevant to the history of Hornchurch.

Hornchurch’s local history collection in Hornchurch was begun then and forms the other strand of our present collection.

When the London Borough of Havering was created in 1965, the new Central Library merged Romford’s collection with that established by Horncastle Librarians. The collection has grown over time. In the 1980s and 1990s improvements were made to the facilities available for family researchers with a substantial collection of microfilm records such as Census returns and copies of some Parish records. The refurbishment of the Central Library in Romford in 2010 included a designated Local Studies and Family History Centre. This article offers an overview of the collection and its usefulness to local and family historians.

BOOKS

The Local Studies Library offers access to a wide-ranging collection of books about Havering and the wider Essex area.

These include early Essex county histories such as Richard MORANT’s two volume History and Antiquities of The County of Essex first published in 1768 and Elizabeth OGROBNETH’s The History of Essex from the earliest period to the present time published in 1814. The first published history about a place in Havering, Sketches of Upminster in the County of Essex (1856) by Thomas Lewis WILSON begins the exploration of Havering’s history beyond the church and the manor houses, recording the farms and early industries. Wilson published a revised edition with photographs and other illustrations in 1881. Other local histories followed his early example including George TERRY’s Memorials of Old Romford and other places within the Royal Liberty of Havering-atte-Bower (1880), Charles PERCEY’s The Old Village of Hornchurch (1917) and Harold SMITH’s History of the Parish of Havering-atte-Bower (1929).

The collection includes modern histories of Havering’s towns and villages along with studies of local subjects from pubs and sport to architecture, literature and geology. Works of local notables such as William DERRIAN, Francis QUARLES and Humphrey REPTON, along with biographies of Hornchurch, Flamstead and Upminster.
Appendix C

Extract from part one of the article in Cockney Ancestor

18th January and 13th February Met with representatives of Upminster Camera Club to discuss the eventual transfer of photographs taken for *Upminster’s People 2018* to the Local Studies Library.

30th January Regional representatives of The National Archives visited to find out about the Local Studies Library and the collection held by Havering Libraries.

11th February Friends of Upminster Windmill visited to carry out research in our collection and to consult Havering Council deeds which it was organised with Legal Services for them to view in Local Studies.

Throughout this period work has continued on the *Home Front Havering* online diary

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**4th May** The Essex Times reported the news that Private John Francis Williams, Artists’ Rifles had been taken as a prisoner of war in Germany on March 23rd. Before the war Private Williams carried on business in Romford as a grocer and provision merchant. His mother, Mrs A Williams of 56, North Street, Romford was keeping the business going in his absence.

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**8th May** Private Sidney Edward Abraham was the eldest of five children of Sidney and Florence Rose Abraham died as a prisoner of war, having been captured sometime between March 21st and April 2nd 1918. He was 21 years old when he died. Sidney was born in Upminster and went to school in Cranham. He joined the Norfolk Regiment on May 1st 1917 and after training went to France and was subsequently transferred to the 12th Battalion, King’s (Liverpool Regiment).

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**Page from May 1918 Home Front Havering online diary**

New items added to the collection in this period include the following accessions:

**2018/10** Two large framed Romford Intermediate School photographs from 1931,


**2018/13** Betterwear Company Limited, North Street, Romford 1948-1978 – photograph album, company brochures and journals

**2018/15** Thomas England papers – collection of papers, documents and land deeds from the estate of former councillor and Chairman of Romford Urban District Council Thomas England

**2018/16** "Dym Breeden Collection"- Sir John Smith, Bower House, Havering-atte-Bower- includes a photograph album of The Bower House. (Sir John Smith was at the Bower House from 1914 until the 1940s. The photographs are probably pre-1927 when he was knighted).
Appendix C

2019/1 Reeve Burrell Collection of photographs, postcards and two letters. A number of items in the collection relate to the Gay family in particular Isaac Matthews Gay farm bailiff of Great Sunnings, Corbets Tey, Upminster b. 1834, m. 1880 to Anne Catherine Taylor d. 1913

Volunteers

I train, organise and direct the work of volunteers who have assisted with digitisation, cataloguing, enquiry research and on occasion opening the service to the public in my absence.

Volunteer hours April 1st to 9th March 2019

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