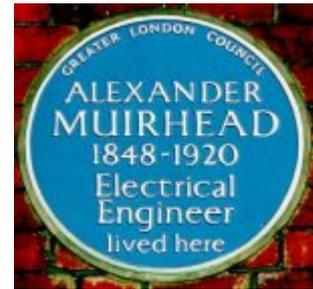

Blue Plaques in Bromley

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Alexander Muirhead (1848-1920)

20 Church Road, Shortlands, BR2 0EG

Alexander Muirhead founded Messrs Muirhead and Company in 1894. Muirhead established the technological supremacy of the company in the fields of telegraphy and was the first man to make a recording of a human heart beat. Muirhead and Co. went on to supply the first X-rays to Beckenham Hospital at the turn of the century.



Muirhead was a highly skilled electrical engineer, and his laboratory in Downe had an international reputation for the design and construction of telegraphic instruments of the very highest quality.

The collection of all Muirhead's electrical instruments from the Elmers End electrical works was acquired by the Science Museum in 1989.

Muirhead lived at Church Road from 1893 - 1920.

Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins (1807-1889)

'Fossil Villa', 22 Belvedere Road, Anerley

Creator of the famous prehistoric 'monsters', designed as part of the geological gardens within Crystal Palace Park. They represent the few remaining artefacts of the great exhibition, which moved from Hyde Park to Penge Place in 1854.



Hawkins was an artist and sculptor famed for his depiction of natural history subjects. Exhibited at the Royal Academy and the British Institute between 1832 and 1849, his studies in bronze were presented as gifts from Queen Victoria to the Zoological Society and from the Society to the Emperor of Russia in 1849.

Commissioned to build 'antediluvian animals' for the newly formed Crystal Palace Company in 1852, he had originally planned to produce sculptures of the larger mammals such as Mastodon, but included reptiles from the Mesozoic period as well.

He was drawn to the developing area around the parkland and moved with his family to 'Fossil Villa', 22 Belvedere Road, Anerley, living there between 1856 and 1872.

Hawkins's work represents an ingenious approach to large design structures. The standing Iguanodon is composed of 4 iron columns, 600 bricks, 650 five inch half round drain tiles, 900 plain tiles, 38 casks of cement, 90 casks of broken stone, 100ft of iron hooping and 20ft of cube inch bar.

Brass Crosby (1725-1793)

Court Lodge, Church Road, Chelsfield, Kent

Brass Crosby was born in Stockton-on Tees in 1725. He qualified in law and came to London to practise his chosen profession. In 1758 he was elected to the City Council and appointed Sheriff in 1764. In 1765 Crosby was appointed an Alderman and in 1768 he became Parliamentary member for Honiton. In 1770 he was elected Lord Mayor of London.



In February 1772 he married Mrs Mary Tattersall, widow, daughter of James Maud and his sole heiress, from whom she inherited Court Lodge in Chelsfield. During the 21 years of their marriage they spent half the year in the City and half at Court Lodge. Both Brass and Mary are buried in the parish church of St Martin of Tours in Chelsfield. There is an obelisk to Brass Crosby in St Georges Circus in the City.

As Chief Magistrate one of his first acts was to refuse to support the issuing of warrants for `press gangs` and he ordered constables to be positioned "at all avenues" of the City to prevent the seizure of men. He also had a famous battle with the House of Commons over publishing Parliamentary debates. In 1771 he had brought before him a printer who dared publish reports of Parliamentary proceedings. He released the man, but was subsequently ordered to appear before the House to explain his actions. Crosby was committed to the Tower of London, but when brought to trial several judges refused to hear the case and after protests from the public Crosby was released. No further attempts have ever been made to prevent the publication of debates now known as Hansard.

The encounter with the House of Commons resulted in the saying, "as bold as brass". Brass Crosby lived at Court Lodge for 21 years. The plaque is fixed to an oak post on a grass verge in Church Road, fronting the Coach House with Court Lodge behind.

Charles Keeping (1924-1988)

16 Church Road, Shortlands, BR2

Charles William James Keeping was born in Lambeth Walk, South London on 22nd September 1924. On leaving school at the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to the printing trade followed by service in the Royal Navy between 1942 to 1946. After the war he studied at the Regent Street Polytechnic where he obtained a National Diploma in Art and Design in 1949. He was a teacher of lithography at Croydon College from 1963 to 1978; and a visiting lecturer in Printmaking at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts from 1979.



His lithographs have been exhibited in London, Italy, Australia and USA, including the International Exhibition of Lithography at Cincinnati in 1958. He also has prints in many collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum. Charles Keeping won awards for illustrations particularly in children's books.

Charles Keeping eventually turned to writing as well as illustrating his own books. He grew up in the dock and market area of South London and his work was mainly concerned with the people in the work streets of London.

Charles Keeping was married to Renate Meyer (an artist) on 20th September, 1952. They had four children. From 1961 until his death on 16th May 1988, Charles Keeping lived at 16 Church Road, Shortlands. His widow, Renate Meyer, still lives in the house.

Illustrations from Charles Keeping's books and work in watercolour, textiles and prints can be seen at The Keeping Gallery. Conducted tours take place on Thursdays, other times negotiable.

For tours please e-mail: renate@thekeepinggallery.co.uk

Further information is available at www.thekeepinggallery.co.uk

Enid Blyton (1897-1968)

83 Shortlands Road, Shortlands, BR2 0JG

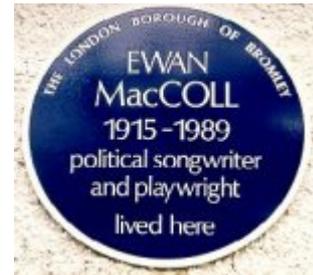
Enid Blyton was an author of children's books, including the Secret Seven and Famous Five series, and of course the Noddy stories. She was a prolific writer, completing over 600 books and many songs, poems and plays. She remains one of the best known children's authors today. Born in East Dulwich, she spent her childhood in several houses in Beckenham, and after a time training in Ipswich she returned to the borough and taught at Bickley Park School. Between 1925 and 1929 she lived at 31 Shortlands Road, Shortlands which she named "Elfin Cottage".



Ewan MacColl (1915-1989)

35 Stanley Avenue, Beckenham, BR3 2PU

Ewan MacColl was born as James Miller in Auchterarder, Perthshire, in 1915, moving to Salford, Greater Manchester, in the 1920`s. He became involved with theatre groups and wrote his first script for the BBC at 15.



MacColl founded the influential Theatre Workshop with Joan Littlewood, his second wife. He was now working on radio documentaries, recording traditional songs for the BBC archives. He changed his name to Ewan MacColl in 1945 when his post war theatrical and play writing career flourished in London. MacColl began a remarkable partnership with Bert Lloyd, Alan Lomax and Peggy Seeger (his third wife) which began The Great Folk Revival. His Ballads and Blues Club at the Theatre Royal introduced traditional singers into its programmes.

MacColl shunned the pop business, but one of his songs "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" was an international hit for Roberta Flack in 1972. He wrote one of the greatest songs of all time that was the theme music for the film "Play Misty for Me".

Ewan MacColl died on 22nd October 1989. His wife, Peggy Seeger, still lives in Stanley Avenue, Beckenham, which they moved into between 1959 and 1963

Frank Bourne (1855-1945)

16 Kings Hall Road, Beckenham, Kent

Frank Edward Bourne was a man of his time, an Englishman who held dearly to Queen and Country. The attributes of honour, loyalty, bravery, dedication and self sacrifice were part of Frank Bourne's nature and these are also what he endeavoured to instil into those he commanded from a corporal to that of Lieutenant Colonel.



Frank was born in Balcombe, Sussex in 1854. He enlisted into the army on 18th December 1872 at the age of 18 years and 8 months. Frank was not a tall man, being only 5`6" in height, but what he lacked in physical height he made up for with courage and determination. Within three years of enlisting he was made Corporal and three years later promoted to Colour Sergeant. At the age of 24 this young Colour Sergeant was the most senior Non Commissioned Officer at Rorke`s Drift. The resemblance between the action Nigel Green, who portrayed Colour Sergeant, Frank Bourne in the film ZULU, and the real Frank Bourne could not have been more dissimilar. While Nigel was tall and of mature years, Frank Bourne was young and small in stature.

The battle of Rorke`s Drift took place in January 1879. This resulted in Frank being awarded Distinguished Conduct Medal. After Rorke`s Drift Frank was offered an immediate commission, which he declined.

Frank Bourne went on to serve in India and Burma. He was commissioned as a Quartermaster in 1890. In 1893 he was promoted Adjutant of the School of Musketry at Hythe. He retired from the Army in 1907. During the First World War, when 60 years of age, he rejoined the forces to become Adjutant of the School of Musketry in Dublin.

At the end of the First World War, he was given the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and appointed OBE.

Frank Bourne died on VE Day, 8th May 1945 at the age of 90, he is buried with his wife Eliza in the Elmers End Cemetery. Frank was the last defender of Rorke`s Drift to die.

Harold Bride (1890-1956)

58 Ravensbourne Avenue, Shortlands

After leaving school Bride trained as a Marconi operator, completing his training in July 1911. Against his parents wishes he went to sea soon after receiving his Certificate of Wireless Technology. His first ship was the Haverford, but he later sailed as a radio operator on the Beaverford, Lusitania and LaFrance.



Titanic left Southampton on her maiden voyage on 10 April 1912 carrying more than 2,200 passengers. Designed and manufactured by the White Star Company, the huge British luxury liner weighed approximately 46,000 tons. Built originally with enough lifeboat capacity for everyone on the ship, the boat deck seemed overcrowded so half were removed.

While the great ship was speeding towards New York, it struck an iceberg about 153km south of the great banks of Newfoundland, minutes before midnight on 14 April. Bride relayed messages to Captain Smith on the bridge regarding the progress of the Carpathia and other ships in the vicinity, while his colleague 'Jack' Phillips worked the key. One of the boats being lowered by passengers turned over as it hit the water. Bride and others managed to cling on to the hull of the upturned boat. Phillips died of exposure before rescue came.

The ship sank in less than 3 hours. People panicked and boats were not filled due to concerns about overcrowding. The result was that 1513 passengers perished in the freezing Atlantic Ocean waters. The California was relatively close, but did not respond to distress calls because the radio operator was off duty, asleep.

Harold Bride survived but suffered badly frozen and crushed feet. After a spell in hospital he returned to England in May a local hero. During the First World War he served on the steamer Mona's Isle. Bride disliked discussing his Titanic experiences. In 1922 Bride left the family home at 58 Ravensbourne Avenue, Shortlands and moved to Scotland.

Heddle Nash (1895-1961)

49 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood

An outstanding oratorio singer, acknowledged as one of the England's finest ever tenors, Heddle Nash became an internationally renowned singer in the inter-war years. He studied in Milan before making his debut there in 'The Barber of Saville'. He sang in many Italian opera houses before returning to England to sing the Duke in 'Rigoletto' at the Old Vic in 1925.



That same year he began recording for Columbia and later for HMV. In 1926 he joined the British National Opera under Sir Thomas Beecham. He became a firm favourite with Promenade Concert audiences from 1927 to 1952, singing first at the Queens Hall and then the Royal Albert Hall.

His debut at Covent Garden was at the International Season of 1929, singing Don Ottavio in 'Don Giovanni' to great acclaim. His last performance there was on his Silver Wedding Anniversary, 7 April 1948, singing David in 'Die Meistersinger'. Between he had sung most of the leading tenor roles.

In 1931 he was chosen by Sir Edward Elgar to sing the part of Gerontius in 'The Dream of Gerontius', which Elgar conducted at Croydon. Nash became particularly famous in the role. On his tombstone in Chislehurst Cemetery are carved the opening words of part two of Gerontius; "I went to sleep and now I am refreshed".

In his latter years he was appointed Professor of Singing at the Royal College of Music both in London and Manchester.

Heddle Nash worked hard, travelling the length and breadth of Britain for operas, concerts, recitals, broadcasts, recordings and oratorios. He was particularly noted for his sweetness of tone, clarity and diction, being able to communicate directly with his audience. Heddle Hash sang his last Messiah only a few weeks before his death from lung cancer on 13 August 1961. His death at the relatively young age of 67 could well be attributed to the privations he suffered fighting in Palestine, Egypt, Gallipoli and France during the First World War. He lived with his family at 49 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood for over 30 years.

Little Tich (Harry Relph) (1867-1928)

The Blacksmith Arms, Cudham

Little Tich" (real name Harry Relph) was a music hall entertainer whose career spanned over 40 years. His trademarks were his height - he was only 4 feet 6 inches, and his 6 digits on each hand. He became well known in music halls for his act involving a pair of 28 inch boots, and later appeared in pantomimes such as Humpty Dumpty and Hop o` my Thumb. Harry Relph was the sixteenth child of a landlord of The Blacksmiths Arms, Cudham and lived there until the age of seven. English Heritage have erected a plaque to him on a house in Hendon.



Lord Ted Willis (1918-1992)

5 Shepherds Green, Chislehurst, BR7 6PB

The playwright, politician and author, Lord Ted Willis, was born Edward Henry Willis, in Tottenham (1918).



Ted Willis married Audrey Hale in 1944 and they had a son and a daughter. They moved to Chislehurst and the family still reside there today.

In 1949, in collaboration with an Australian, Willis sent an unpublished play about the London Police to Ealing Studios. It was called `The Blue Lamp` and introduced the character of Constable Dixon. In the film Dixon was killed half way through, but he was resurrected for `Dixon of Dock Green` on television. The series became a British institution. It started in 1953 and ran for 22 years and 430 editions.

Lord Ted Willis of Chislehurst died on 22nd September 1992 at the age of 74.

Prince Pyotr (Peter) Alekseyevich Kropotkin (1842-1921)

6 Crescent Road, Bromley, BR1

He was a Russian geographer, who was the foremost theorist of the anarchist movement.



Born in Moscow on December 21, 1842, Kropotkin was educated in St. Petersburg and served in the army from 1862 to 1867. During this time he conducted two successive exploratory expeditions in Siberia and Manchuria, which produced some valuable geographic information. In 1867 Kropotkin returned to St. Petersburg, where he was appointed an official of the Russian Geographic Society. On behalf of the society he explored the glaciers of Finland and Sweden between 1871 and 1873. While thus engaged, Kropotkin also studied the writings of the leading political theorists and eventually adopted socialist revolutionary views. He later became a vociferous exponent of the radical doctrine of anarchism.

Returning to Russia, he began to disseminate anarchist propaganda and in 1874 was arrested and imprisoned. He escaped two years later and joined an international anarchist society, the Jurassic Federation. He subsequently settled in France and in 1883 was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment for anarchistic activities. He was released after three years and thereafter lived and worked in England for 30 years. He lived at 6 Crescent Road, Bromley between 1886 and 1914.

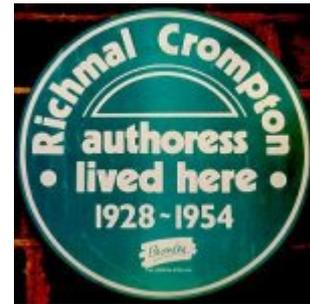
After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, he returned to his homeland, settling near Moscow, but he took no active part in Soviet political life. He died at Dimitrov near Moscow on February 8, 1921.

The central theme of Kropotkin's numerous writings is the abolition of all forms of government in favour of a communistic society operating solely on the principle of mutual aid and co-operation, rather than through governmental institutions. Kropotkin wrote in both French and English; his writings include "Memoirs of a Revolutionary" (1885), "Fields, Factories and Workshops" (1899); "Terror in Russia" (1909); and "Ethics, Origin and Development" (1924).

Richmal Crompton (1890-1969)

'The Glebe', Oakley Road, Bromley Common, BR2 8HQ

Richmal Crompton, authoress of the well known "Just William" books and television series screened on the BBC.



The first 9 books were written in 9 Cherry Orchard Road where she lived with her mother from 1917 until 1928 when she moved to The Glebe in Oakley Road nearby.

Sir Geraint Evans (1922-1992)

34 Birchwood Road, Petts Wood, BR5 1NZ

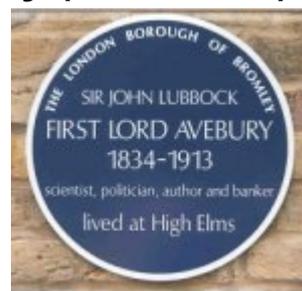
The Welsh baritone, Sir Geraint Evans, was born in Pontypridd on 16th February 1922. He studied with Theo Hermann in Hamburg and later with Fernando Carpi in Geneva and at the Guildhall School of Music, London. He joined the Covent Garden company in 1948, making his debut as the Night watchman (Meistersinger Von Nurnberg) and continued to make regular appearances at Covent Garden until the 1970s, steadily building a reputation there, as well as at Glyndebourne Festival 1950-61. International debuts quickly followed.



Evans was made a CBE in 1959 and knighted in 1969. He was Patron of the Churchill Theatre in 1978 and has lived at 34 Birchwood Road, Petts Wood (original still exists 1961). In 1984 he made his farewell appearance at Covent Garden and in the same year his autobiography, 'A Knight at the Opera', was published. Above all it was for his resourceful and genial wit that he was admired. His own success helped to gain prestige for British singers abroad from the 1960s. Geraint Evans died in Aberystwyth 19 September 1992.

Sir John Lubbock, the First Lord Avebury (1834-1913)

High Elms Estate, Shire Lane, Farnborough, BR6 7JH



Bromley's links with the Lubbock family dates back to 1808 when the original estate was bought and the estate was gradually enlarged and building works commenced. Originally the estate was used for sheep rearing but later greater emphasis was on dairy cattle and cereal crops. In the mid 19th century High Elms House and gardens were laid out as a Country Estate and had 30 employees. The estate was sold to Kent County Council in 1938 and was used as a nurses training centre. The estate then passed to Bromley Council in 1965 and has been preserved as Green Belt land available to all the public to enjoy the nature, animal habitats and to pursue leisure activities - this, we believe, would have been in keeping with the ideals of the first Lord Avebury.

Sir John Lubbock was born in 1834 and was a man who contributed much locally and nationally. He was a banker, Member of Parliament (that had later family links with the Borough through the election of Eric Lubbock, the grandson, as Liberal MP for Orpington), author and scientist. He was president of no less than 25 learned societies and an equal number of commercial organisations. In recognition he received honorary degrees from Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Dublin, St Andrews and Wurzburg.

Sir John Lubbock was raised to the peerage in 1900.

Charles Darwin, a near neighbour to High Elms, influenced the young John Lubbock and persuaded his father to give his son a microscope. It was through his contact with Charles Darwin that he acquired his love and respect of nature and science.

He was elected as the Liberal MP for Maidstone in 1870 and held his seat for 10 years. His stated aim in parliament was:

"To promote the study of science, both in secondary and primary schools, to quicken the repayment of the National Debt, and to secure some additional holidays and shorten the hours of labour in the shops"

His first success was in 1871 when the Bank Holiday Act was passed, this granted the August Bank Holiday. Some suggested that it should be called St Lubbock's day - he became one of the most popular figures in England!

He later played a significant role in the Shops Hours Regulation Act - this limited the hours worked by person under eighteen to 74 hours per week - this was considered a major breakthrough in working conditions at the time.

A range of similar Acts followed - Seats for Shop Assistants, Shop Hours Early Closing and Shops Sunday Closing.

On the sciences and commercial concerns he also introduced 30 Private Members Bills which included Bankers Books Evidence Act, Open Spaces Act, Wild Birds Protection Act and Public Libraries Act.

He also enjoyed writing and was considered a first class author. He had published some 27 books mainly relating to the natural sciences; many translated into the world's major languages. One of the major commentators of the time said that one of the greatest services which John Lubbock rendered by his publications was to make plain to the layman the aims and conclusions of specialists.

His life was also involved in banking, geology, archaeology, anthropology and botany.

The Sir John Lubbock was keen to support the local community and even in his busy schedules he always found time to support local organisations and hosting local events at High Elms. He did scientific research at High Elms and surrounding area - he actually found the remains of a dinosaur at Green Street Green.

Sir John Lubbock, later the first Lord Avebury, was a man of vision, humanity and in search of knowledge and sharing knowledge. He lived life to the full.

The High Elms house, which he loved, was destroyed by fire on August Bank Holiday Monday in 1967. The Blue Plaque on the High Elms estate to Sir John Lubbock, the first Lord Avebury, is a permanent reminder of his many achievements and as a benefactor to those in need and extending knowledge to all in our nation.

Sir Malcolm Campbell (1885-1948)

Bonchester, Bonchester Close, Off Camden Park Road, Chislehurst, Kent

Malcolm Campbell was born on 11 March 1885. The son of a diamond merchant, he soon developed an interest in speed. In 1924 he held the land speed record of 146.16 mph (miles per hour) achieved in an early Bluebird at Pendine Sands, Pembrokeshire. Bluebird became the name given to his machines for attempts on land and water, a tradition carried on in later years by his son Donald. In 1925 the record was raised to 150mph. Over the next ten years rivalry between Malcolm Campbell and Henry Seagrave meant the land speed world record swapped between the two. Malcolm Campbell became the first man to exceed 300mph on 3 September 1935 on Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah.



Turning from records on land, he took the world water speed record in 1937 with a speed of 129.5mph, which he increased in 1938. Finally on 19 August 1939, at Coniston Water in the Lake District, he achieved a speed of 141.7mph, a record he still held when he died on 31 December 1948, in Reigate.

He was born in `Rossmore` on Chislehurst Common where he lived until 1894. Between 1895 and 1908 he lived at `Norwood` in Manor Park Road, Chislehurst. The commemorative plaque is on `Bonchester`, a house in Bonchester Close, off Camden Park Road, Chislehurst, where he lived between 1909 and 1922.

Sir Victor Shephard (1893-1989)

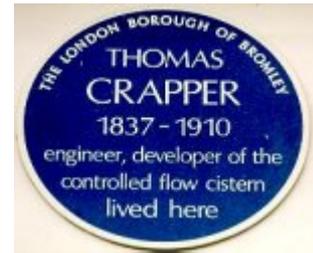
Manor Place, Manor Park, Chislehurst

Sir Victor Shephard was an eminent naval architect who prospered in his profession for over 50 years. His career reached its peak in 1951 when he was appointed Director of Naval Construction to the Royal Navy. He is probably best known for his design of the Royal Yacht Britannia. During construction of Britannia he was frequently consulted by King George VI, the present Queen and Prince Phillip, all of whom had strong ideas about its design. He lived at Manor Place, Manor Park, Chislehurst from 1957 until his death in 1989.



Thomas Crapper (1837-1910)

Thomas Crapper was one of several eminent sanitary engineers of his era to develop and market the flush toilet. His major innovation was a method of controlling the water flow from the cistern. He was well thought of in his field, and even drew the attention of the royal family, installing the sanitation at Sandringham when it became a royal residence. He lived at 12 Thornsett Road between circa 1897 and 1910.



W G Grace (1848 - 1915)

Fairmount, Mottingham Lane, Mottingham, SE9

Cricketer for Gloucestershire, London County and England, he was a dominant player and personality of his era, with an extraordinary record of achievements.

Born at Bristol, he qualified as a doctor and was a member of a remarkably gifted cricketing family (his brothers Edward and George Frederick were also Test players). He began his first-class career in 1865, played for 43 years and made his last Test appearance aged 50. A large, bearded man, Grace was the finest all-rounder in an age of many notable cricketers. He was also an excellent all-round athlete. When not playing cricket he practised as a doctor. He played in the first Test match ever held in England against Australia at the Oval in 1880 and made 152, the first Test century by an English batsman. Grace played in 22 Tests, captained England in 13 of them, scored 1,098 runs, hit 2 centuries, took 9 wickets and made 39 catches.



W.G. Grace was also a fine lawn bowls player and in 1903 became the first president of the English Bowling Association.

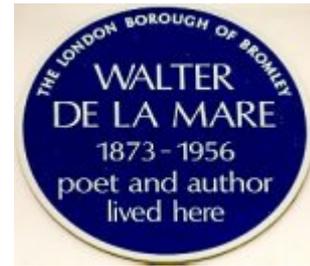
W.G. Grace lived in Mottingham from 1902-1915.

He is buried in Elmers End cemetery. The W G Grace Inn was named after him at Elmers End Road, Anerley.

Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

195 Mackenzie Road, Beckenham BR3 4SE

Walter de la Mare was a poet and author who wrote for both adults and children. He is best known for his poems such as "The Traveller" and "The Listener".



Walter de la Mare spent much of his early writing life in Beckenham and Anerley. He actually lived in 3 houses in the Borough; at 195 Mackenzie Road (1899 - 1908), where he wrote his first novel, "Henry Brockden"; 5 Worbeck Road (1908 - 1912), and at 14 Thornsett Road (1912-1925). It was during the 11 years he spent at this last address that he became more well known and gained some literary acclaim.

William Willett (1856-1915)

The Cedars, Camden Park Road, Chislehurst

William Willett's passion was `daylight saving` - an idea which apparently came to him whilst riding on Chislehurst Common one summer morning in 1905.

`The Cedars`, on Camden Park Road, Chislehurst, was designed for him by the architect Ernest Newton, and Willett lived there between 1894 and 1915. Whilst he lived there he campaigned strongly for daylight saving measures to be introduced, and wrote his pamphlet. "The Waste of Daylight". The idea of moving time caused a great deal of controversy at the time and only became law one year after Willett's death in the Summertime Act of 1916.

