

## British Legion, Nork Branch

*Hon. Sec.:* J. BALLANTYNE, 2 Buckles Way, Banstead.  
(B.H. 3826)

In accordance with the decision reported in these notes last year, the social functions of the Branch were cut down to a minimum this winter.

The only two functions held were a dance in December and the annual Re-union in March, both of which were extremely successful.

Well over a hundred tickets were sold for the dance and everyone agreed it was the best dance we had had for a very long time.

The Re-union, which is always a popular evening, was well attended, and those who were not playing darts, table-tennis, shove ha'penny or solo were busy swapping reminiscences over the "odd spot".

The Branch has recently been presented with a Gestetner duplicating machine. Anyone requiring letters or circulars duplicated for a small charge should communicate with Mr. Matthews, 74 Roundwood Way, Banstead (B.H. 5834). Any profits made on this duplicating will go to a disabled ex-Serviceman.

Will any member who has not paid a subscription since last October be kind enough to send 4/- to the Membership Secretary, Mr. Matthews, at the above address, or to his road steward.

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## “ Beechholme ”

The Story of the Children's Home in Fir Tree Road, Banstead, began at Marlesford Lodge, Hammersmith, for it was there that “deprived” children who were later to live at Banstead, were accommodated.

On 1st August, 1880, the Kensington and Chelsea Children's Home in Fir Tree Road was officially opened. The name was derived from the fact that the boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea were responsible for the erection of the Home, and during the first year of its existence, it was only from those two London boroughs that children were admitted. In later years, children were received from Stenning, Guildford and Horsham.

The Kensington and Chelsea Children's Home covered 28 acres of land, 10 acres of which were laid out as playing fields. In addition, 40 acres of farm land lying directly north of the home were leased from the Cement Marketing Company.

The Home consisted of 22 large houses, a church, school,

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sick bay, band-room, laundry, swimming bath, bakery, needlestores, and workshops for the tailor, bootmaker, carpenter, painter, blacksmith and plumber. Each of these tradesmen, including the baker and the bandmaster, as well as carrying on his trade, was a housefather, responsible for a boys' "cottage" and each of these boys' cottages housed from 35 to 40 boys of 8 to 16 years. The remaining 14 "cottages" were in charge of housemothers and accommodated girls and boys up to the age of 7 or 8 years.

With Mr. Robert Barkeley as its first Superintendent, assisted by Mr. Walter Eagles as his assistant-Superintendent, and with Mr. Walter Bassett as the first headmaster of the school, the Kensington and Chelsea Children's Home was soon catering for the physical, educational and spiritual needs of the 640 "deprived" children who lived within its boundaries.

In 1890, ten years after the official opening, two more "cottages" were completed—one for boys and a second for girls—and the number of children in the home increased to 696.

Education was provided in the school for all children between the ages of 3 and 16. On leaving the school practically all the boys went into the workshops of their choice and were taught a trade. Many of those boys were premium and indentured apprentices. It would appear from the records that most of the girls entered domestic service. Most of the work on the 40 acres of farmland was done by the boys.

In 1916, consequent upon the closure of another home, the home in Fir Tree Road became the Kensington, Chelsea and

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St. Marylebone Children's Home (one window in the school Church commemorates the boys from St. Marylebone who fell in the first world war).

By now the bandroom had been enlarged and fitted up as a gymnasium and in 1919, a new bandroom was erected, for the band had been a prominent feature of the home. After 1919, the number of children in the home rose to 720.

Consequent upon the acceptance by the Local Authorities, of the national 48-hour week, the tradesmen-housefathers gradually relinquished their duties as housefathers between 1920 and 1922. They were replaced in the Cottages by housemothers, some of whom gave long and devoted service and a few of whom are still actively engaged in the business of caring for these children, who, for a variety of reasons, are deprived of normal home life.

By an Act of Parliament in 1929, the Boards of Guardians, on whom had rested the responsibility of ensuring that homes such as this were conducted satisfactorily, were abolished and the London County Council took over the administration in 1930 and the Education Officer was now responsible to his Committee for the smooth and efficient running of what now became known as the Banstead Residential School. This was now only one of six similar residential schools administered by the L.C.C.

As a result of the Curtis Report, each local authority appointed a Children's Officer who was responsible to a Children's Committee for the problem of dealing with children

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deprived of a normal home life.

So now, the home and the school, recently renamed "Beechholme" are separately administered. The position now is that the number of children in the home is 456 and that all children of infant and primary school age are educated at the school on the premises and all children of 11+ attend local Surrey County Council Secondary Schools as indeed they have done since 1935.

#### SUPERINTENDENTS.

Robert Barkeley	1880-1884	George Langley	... 1902-1919
Frederick Walter	... 1884-1888	George Hattersley	... 1925-1935
Frederick Harstow	... 1888-1902	Cyril L. G. Rayner	1935 1-12-1953

On her husband's death, Mrs. Langley continued as Matron/Superintendent, till 1925.

#### HEADMASTERS.

Walter Bassett	... 1880-1894	Christopher Campbell	1904-1933
Arthur Warren	... 1895-1904	Cyril L. G. Rayner	1933-1953

#### DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENTS.

Walter Eagles	... 1880-1907	Walter Twaites	... 1915-1921
John Apted	... 1908-1915	Douglas G. Smith	... 1922-1933

#### PRESENT STAFF.

1 Superintendent and 1 matron	3 Nurses
1 Headmaster and 1 asst. matron	3 Administrative staff
23 Housemothers	1 Cook
3 Housefathers	4 Cook-generals
45 Assistant housemothers	2 Nursing wardens
2 Resident domestic assistants	Approx. 50 non-resident staff
	9 Teachers.

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## The Good Old Days

Contributed by MR. J. H. BEADLE

For many years, the majority of the residents of Banstead have used public transport to travel to and from their jobs each day.

I have not attempted to trace their journeys so far back as the period covered by the writer of that excellent "Glimpse of Our Local History" which was published in the October edition of the "Nork Quarterly", but from the L.B. and S.C.R. Company's timetable of 1854, it is possible to obtain a glimpse of the peak hour train service of one hundred years ago.

In 1854, there was no railway from Sutton to Epsom Downs, but from Epsom to London Bridge (the only route was via Croydon), the first trains of the day were:

Epsom Depart a.m.	London Bridge Arrive a.m.	Calling at
7.35 8.0	8.35 9.0	Ewell, Cheam, Sutton, Carshalton (since renamed Wallington), West Croydon, etc.
8.40	9.20	
9.10	10.0	Sutton, "Carshalton", West Croydon and Sydenham.
9.45	10.20	All Stations (Carshalton Beeches, Waddon, Peuge West, Honor Oak Park and Brockley did not exist).
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