

A History of St Stephen's Church Cambridge



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Ariel view

1. The History of St Stephen's Church, Cambridge

The Trustees of the Jesus Lane Sunday School built St Radegund's Hall in 1937 to provide accommodation for Sunday School work to be carried out by them. For other spiritual and church work the Hall was loaned to the Vicar of St Andrew-the-Less. This Vicar appointed a curate whose primary duty was the care of St Radegund's.

Progress was much hindered when the curate and church members became engaged in various forms of war service.

In spite of this the Vicar appointed a curate to be in sole charge in April 1944.

Morning and Evening Services were held. The curate took charge of the Sunday School, where new methods of teaching were introduced.

A committee of church workers appointed representatives to the Parochial Church Council, with two members as Warden's deputies.

Temporary accommodation was erected behind the Hall. This made possible the extension of Sunday School and weekday meetings.

The interior of the Hall was reorganised; the staging was altered and furnished, and became a dignified chancel. The pulpit, communion rails, and font came from the disused church of St John's Wellington Street.

Spiritual work in all branches increased. House-to-house, and sick visiting was carried out by the curate.

The St Radegund's Hall was dedicated by the Bishop of Ely, on the 2nd February 1944, as the Church of St Stephen.

The Vicar of St. Andrew-the-Less made himself responsible for the building of a parsonage. This has been a great help in furthering the church's work. The church was purchased from Jesus Lane Trustees by the Diocesan authorities.

Mid-week prayer and instruction meetings were held. Sunday School work was extended to the Priory district, but this has been given over to the care of Fen Ditton Parish.

The Sunday School work has been augmented by the formation of Junos and Girl Campaigners, and Boy Covenanters and, in the year , Girl Covenanters.

Throughout the life of the Church a strong Women's Meeting has been active, and this work has been extended by the formation of a branch of the Mother's Union and a Young Wives Group.

The Confirmation of many adults, as well as many young people, bears tribute to the evangelistic work of the ministers who have laboured in this church.

A Parish Magazine; a number of successful Annual Gift Days; and strong Support to various missions, bear testimony to a lively Church.

In 1948, St Stephen's became a Conventional District. Alterations in the City's planning made the creation of a separate parish impracticable, and in 1955 the District reverted to the ancient Parish of St Andrew-the-Less(I).

Names added by hand;

<i>Mrs V Norman,</i>	<i>G J Sweeney</i>	<i>W H Nicholson</i>
<i>Laura Dych</i>	<i>Lily Barnes</i>	<i>Lily E Newman</i>
<i>T N Newby</i>	<i>B G Andrews</i>	<i>Diane E Story</i>
<i>Denise J Law</i>	<i>B Nunn</i>	<i>H Cowles</i>
<i>June M Lane</i>	<i>S Nunn</i>	<i>E Holder</i>
<i>Joyce Newby</i>	<i>Mr A C Nunn</i>	<i>L Haslop</i>
<i>John Custerson</i>	<i>George Robinson</i>	<i>D R Edwards</i>
<i>M Mewa</i>	<i>E A Robinson</i>	<i>Susan Edwards</i>
<i>H Hawoeb</i>	<i>J Bath</i>	<i>S W Edwards</i>
<i>Bertha Twinn</i>	<i>P J Jeffery</i>	<i>F Jeffery</i>
<i>S Toenley Twinn</i>	<i>Shirley P Watts</i>	<i>Angela Jeffrey</i>
<i>Mrs V Haslop</i>	<i>Barbara Frost</i>	<i>P E Jeffrey</i>
<i>Miss E Medcalf</i>	<i>Ann Ford</i>	<i>G M Smith</i>
<i>Mrs Tomlin</i>	<i>Geoffrey Ford</i>	<i>L J Harper</i>
<i>Mrs D Alexander</i>	<i>Alan Story</i>	<i>L M Sweeney</i>
<i>N Cooper</i>	<i>Christine Newman</i>	

Note:

- (1) From two sheets of handwritten script and signed by many (members at the time?). Date unknown – assume 1955 or later.

2. St Stephen New District

Chapter 1

The Church in Barnwell

The parish of Barnwell is one of the two original parishes of Cambridge. Dr. Peck writing in the Centenary of Christ Church says, "The history of the Church of God in the parish of Barnwell, otherwise known as St Andrew the Less, Cambridge, falls naturally into three main periods, which may be conveniently distinguished by considering the status during each of them of one of the oldest Church buildings now standing in the Parish. This church has in recent times been erroneously called the "Abbey" Church, a name which is doubly wrong, first because the Convent at Barnwell was not an Abbey but a Priory, and secondly because this actual Church was not the Convent Church at all, but was provided by the Convent for the inhabitants of the hamlet of Barnwell for their own Parish services; indeed, it was this which enabled it to escape destruction when the Convent itself fell on evil days in the sixteenth century."

Dr. Peck thinks that this ancient church was built towards the end of the thirteenth century. Apart from the Priory, Barnwell was a very small place and until the end of the eighteenth century the population seems never to have exceeded 300, but the parish covered a very wide area.

In 1807 Royal Assent was given to an Act for enclosing the open fields of Barnwell Parish, whereby the land was made available for private ownership and development quickly followed. There was swift increase in population making necessary new Church developments which culminated in the building of Christ Church in 1839 to become the new Parish Church. Between 1821 and 1881 the population of the parish rose by 1000%. Still more churches were built, and assigned Parishes of their own, cut out of the original Parish of St Andrew, Barnwell.

St. Paul's	church built 1843	parish constituted 1845
St. Matthew's	" 1866	" 1870
St. Barnabas	" 1869-1888	" 1888
St. Philip's	" 1889-1891	" 1903

St. John's Church in Wellington Street was licensed for use as a children's mission Church of 26th May 1873.

Chapter 2

Jesus Lane Sunday School

From its conception the work has been closely associated with Barnwell and the original trust deed tells us that the Sunday School was formed to teach the Gospel "to

the barbarians of Barnwell". Dr. Peck has the following concise record of this organisation:- "In 1827 on a Sunday morning in spring a number of undergraduates decided that their spare time on Sundays could profitably be spent by instructing the children in the growing district of Barnwell; and as a result they initiated a Sunday School, which to begin with was held in a Meeting House of the Society of Friends in Jesus Lane – hence the name which has since become famous. In 1833 the work was transferred to some School premises in King Street, in 1867 a new building in Paradise Street was erected and opened, and when it appeared that the usefulness of the school in this position was over, the Trustees sold the building." Although this is not the end of this story it will be best understood as it is woven into the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

St. Radegund Hall

After the 1914-18 war another large addition to the parochial population took place on the land between the railway and Brooks Road. On this estate there are now between 3000 and 4000 people. In 1936 the Bishop of Ely, Dr. Heywood, bought a piece of land at the corner of Brooks Road out of a bequest left by Dr. Bouchier. The trustees of Jesus Lane Sunday School having sold their premises in Paradise Street carried a temporary work in St. Andrew's Parish, Chesterton but in 1937 they erected a Diocesan Site at the corner of Brooks Road the present St. Radegund Hall which was opened and licenced for use as a Church and Sunday School on 14th October 1937.

The development of the work in this area has proved to be a very slow and except for two years under the Rev. H. D. Woolcott it has lacked the very necessary pastoral leadership. In October 1943 the present incumbent was instituted to the benefice of St Andrew the Less and in April 1944 he appointed the Rev. G. J. C. Marchant to be curate-in-charge of St. Radegund's Mission. Mr. Marchant took over the Sunday School from the Jesus Lane Trustees and has since developed it as integral part of the parochial organisation.

Under an agreement between the aforesaid trustees and the Diocese, the parish has the right to purchase St. Radegund Hall and its contents within 10 years of its building at the original building price, and in 1944 it was decided that this option should be made use of. The building cost £1,694 and contents £160. The Diocesan Board of Finance have agreed to purchase on behalf of the Parochial Church Council and to allow the Council to repay the sum over a period of years on terms to be arranged. The lengthy process of negotiation for this transaction is still proceeding.

In the spring of 1946 the Bishop of Ely, Dr. Wynn, set in motion the wheels of organisation for creating a new conventional district, and in response to the overtures of the incumbent graciously agreed that the patronage of the new parish, when formed, should be vested in the Church Trust Fund. A deed of agreement properly drawn up has been sealed by the Bishop and is now in the hands of the Trustees.

During the summer of 1946 two huts were acquired and erected as additional buildings for parochial purposes at a total cost of £250 and by the enterprise and energy of the men of St. Radegund's congregation the stage in the Hall has been lowered to form a chancel at a cost for materials of £30.

Following the suggestion of the Bishop and with his approval it has been decided to change the name of the district and Church and his Lordship will pay his first official visit on Sunday, 29th December, to dedicate the Hall to the honoured name of St. Stephen, the first Christian Martyr.

The Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty have agreed to the erection of a Parsonage House on the site for the sum of almost £2,000 and plans and negotiations are already in hand. No application can be made to the Borough Housing Committee for a licence to build until the name of the person or body responsible for the £2,000 above mentioned can be quoted, but the provision of a dwelling for the curate-in-charge in the midst of his work is of vital importance.

Chapter 4

The Future

Looking ahead the first landmark is the Bishop's visit on 29th December and we hope not too far distant the erection of the Parsonage House. The building of a Parish Church is a matter for the further future and endowment of the new benefice to bring in an income not less than £500 per annum is a necessary preliminary to the formation of a new and separate parish. With the security of an Evangelical future the work has immense possibilities and a good foundation has been laid upon which it should be possible to build the sound structure of a robust Christian Church life.

A Financial Summary

Sums already spend or pending
With negotiations

Hall and Furniture	£2,000
Additional temporary buildings	£ 250
Parsonage House	£1,800

	£4,050

Sums to be spent on future
Projects

St.Stephens's Church	£20,000
Endowment of Benefice	£20,000

	£44,050

Except on the first two items amounting to £2,250 it is reasonable to anticipate that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be prepared to make grants and in the case of deeds of gift they have been known to give £1 for £1.

The locality itself cannot be expected to produce more than a very small contribution towards this vast sum so that the Scheme is dependant on the generosity of outside friends. It is reasonable to think that the Bishop will look to the Evangelical section of the Church to carry the responsibility of a new parish which he has so willingly consigned to evangelical patronage.

6th November, 1946

Notes:

(1) From typed document with date as shown (6th Nov 1946)

Hand comments added on (2);

** by Dr Bouchier*

** ref incumbent Oct 1944 as Canon Rev Sibson*

3. History & Chronology of St.Stephen's Site in Cambridge

On 12th October 1936 the Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF) purchased from The Corporation of Cambridge, a parcel of land measuring approx. 1 acre, located at the corner of Brooks Road and Coldhams Lane in the Parish of St.Andrew the Less(or Barnwell) in Cambridge, for the sum of £500. The piece of land has a curved frontage to Brooks Road and Coldhams Lane totalling about 400 ft in length. (See Drawing No.1). We understand that the then Bishop of Ely, Dr.Heywood agreed the purchase using money from a bequest by a Dr. Bouchier.

Included in the sale agreement was a restrictive covenant effectively requiring that any buildings erected on the site may be used *only* for "ecclesiastical purposes".

In 1937, the trustees of The Jesus Lane Sunday School Trust having sold their own premises in Paradise Street, Cambridge, erected a building on the site which became known as St.Radegund Hall and this was opened and licensed for use as a Church and Sunday School on 14th October 1937.

On 1st November 1940 the EDBF sold a portion of the St.Stephen's site measuring approx 0.3 of an acre to The Trustees of Jesus Lane Sunday Schools for £70. Contained within the conveyance was an option to repurchase the land (and any building(s) erected thereon) in the future at 1 years notice. The amount to be paid in the event of this option being exercised was the land sale price of £70, together with the costs incurred by the Trustees in erecting any buildings, discounted according to the time elapsed since building costs incurred. At the time of the sale, the St. Radegund Hall had of course already been erected on this piece of land

In the mid 1940's it seems that the EDBF decided to repurchase the land and buildings but this was not concluded until the conveyance dated 5th April 1949. We have a 1946 document which talks about the DBOF "agreeing to purchase on behalf of the PCC". We also have a copy of a letter from Rev. Edward Sibson, Vicar of St.Andrew the Less, dated 16th February 1949, which refers again to this purchase by the DBOF and says they will "present it to the Parish free of debt on condition that the patrons (Church Trust Fund Trust) provide the sum of £2,000 for the erection of a Parsonage House"; I refer to this latter point later in this document.

Clearly the intention by the mid 1940's was that St.Radegund's would eventually become a parish in its own right rather than just a mission church; before this a new Parsonage house would need to be constructed to house the curate in charge, Rev G.Marchant who had been appointed in 1944 by Rev Edward Sibson, Vicar of St.Andrew the Less. Later it was intended, that the existing church building erected in 1937 would become the Church Hall, that and that a brand new Church should be constructed. The intention also by 1946, was that the patronage of the new Parish would be vested in the Church Trust Fund Trust from where it was hoped and assumed would come the money to fund the proposed new Parsonage house. A legal agreement was apparently drawn up in 1946 confirming that the Church Trust Fund Trust would become patrons of the new Parish when formed.

In 1946 at the suggestion and approval of the Bishop, St.Radegund's name was changed to St.Stephen's and a service of dedication was conducted by the Bishop on 29th December 1946. Also in 1946 the Bishop set in motion a plan to give St.Stephen's the status of a Conventional District, and this came into being in 1948.

The new Parsonage was duly completed in late 1948 at a cost of around £2,500 and the new Curate in Charge, Rev. Peter Street, took occupation. However there was a major shortfall in funds to settle the builders account amounting to around £1,000. Although it had been assumed that the Church Trust Fund Trust would provide the funds to build the Parsonage House, there clearly was some kind of misunderstanding and in the event the only money forthcoming from the Trust was £900 from a single trustee. Other fundraising including public subscription raised about £600 leaving a balance of almost £1,000.

The old correspondence from that time clearly shows that much stress and angst was caused by the parsonage debt and many including the Bishop felt let down by the Church Trust Fund Trust.

Eventually a loan was taken out from Barclays Bank of around £800 which enabled the contractor's account to be settled and this loan remained a millstone around the neck of the church for many years certainly at least into the mid 1950's. Records do not exist to show how the Bank Loan was eventually paid off but I believe it was 'slowly' through members' gifts.

The status of St. Stephen's as a Conventional District ceased we believe in 1954/5 or so and it then reverted to the Parish of St. Andrew the Less. Just as the Bishop felt disappointed that the Church Trust Fund Trust (CTFT) did not come up with all the money to fund the Parsonage construction, so it was clear that the Trust felt let down that St. Stephen's was not going to achieve Parish status. The CTFT vented their annoyance because they said that the money that they had provided (£900) was only on the assumption of their being awarded Patronage of the new Parish.

The present St. Stephen's church was erected in the early 1960s and Dedicated by the Bishop of Ely on 24th November 1962. The previous building (now the church hall) had therefore served as the church for a full 25 years. We understand that the funding for the new church came from the New Churches Trust. We also understand that St. Stephens has never been consecrated.

In approx 1982, following the Sheffield Report, St. Stephen's was merged with St. Philip's and in 1986 following the departure of John Fitzgerald as Curate in Charge it became clear that St. Stephen's was unlikely ever again to have a full time minister in its own right. The question of what to do with the empty Parsonage house became a thorny issue for the PCC, or DCC as it was at the time, not least because the house was in need of some updating and renovation. Derek and Margaret Rawlings long time members of the church offered to sell their own house and take occupation provided that certain improvements were carried out. Improvements were duly carried out with the help of a Diocesan loan and the Rawlings took occupation on the understanding that they could remain as tenants as long as they wished subject only to any future appointment of a full time minister for St. Stephen's.

The new tenancy was granted in recognition of the pastoral contribution of Derek and Margaret to the life of the church and on the understanding that the house could be used for certain church purposes including meetings and that Derek would act as an unofficial verger for St. Stephen's. From correspondence with Douglas White, Secretary of the Board in 1986, it would appear that the Board were going to draw up a tenancy agreement with their "Trustee's hat on" but this was never effected. Despite the absence of a formal tenancy agreement there is no doubt that Derek and Margaret have security of tenure and the PCC would not wish to challenge this.

The rent for the property was initially set at a level that was sufficient merely to service the Diocesan loan (£150 per month) and unfortunately no mechanism for increase was put in place. The level of rent was never intended to be commercial by the DCC of 1986, when making their decisions.

In 1995, the rent was reset at £215 per month and the PCC agreed that there should be annual increases according to RPI; this results in the present monthly rent of £275.79. The PCC are fully aware that the commercial rent for this property is probably around £1,000 per month. Derek is about 74 and Margaret about 65 and they are of course retired. The house is quite big for 2 people and has a large garden. Clearly the time is not too far off when Derek and Margaret will want something smaller, but finance will be a big issue because they have been used to a low rent and Derek has only a small pension. Notwithstanding the low rent being paid for the house, Derek and Margaret have been wonderful servants of the church for almost 40 years and continue to make a huge contribution in many pastoral and practical respects.

A.J.Griffiths 15th June 2004 (Extract)

PS

27th July 2005 the land was registered

2nd March 2010 the whole site was sold to Cambridge Community Church (C3)

4. Dates from above and other sources;

- 1936 Oct 12th Land bought by Ely Diocese (EDBoF) Bishop Dr Heywood
1937 St Radegund Hall built
Licensed on 14th Oct as a Church and Sunday School
1944 Feb 2nd Dedicated by Bishop of Ely as the Church of St Stephen (or 29 Dec)
Rev G J C Marchant, Curate-in-Charge
1946 Bishop of Ely Dr Wynn set wheels in motion for a Conventional District
Two huts erected
1946-51 Rev Peter Street
1948 Nov 28th Became a Conventional District (picture 4 page 15)
1949 Presented to PCC free of debt by Diocese
Interregnum
1953-55/6 Rev Edward C Lendon
1955 Reverted to Parish of St Andrew-the-Less
1956-59 Rev Denis J V Lane
1959-64 Rev H Gerald Harrison
1962 Nov 24th New 'Church' build alongside the Hall, Dedicated by Bishop of Ely
1964 Interregnum
1965-68 Rev Arthur Davis
1968-75 Rev Peter Beale
1975-79 Rev Fred Kilner
1978 Re-applied to become separate Parish (this was turned down)
1979-86 Rev John Fitzgerald, Priest-in-Charge
1982-3 Added to Parish of St Philip
1983-90 Rev Ray(mond) Smith Priest-in-Charge/Vicar (from 1986)
1991 - Rev Stewart Taylor, Vicar
2005 Site land registered
2010 Mar 2nd Sold to Cambridge Community Church

Plans;

- A. Proposed Church of St Stephen at junction of Coldhams Lane and Brooks Road
Cambridge by Cecil J Bourne Dip. Arc., A. R. I. B. A.. Chartered Architect,
Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridge. No date [see picture 3 page 15]
Shows Bell tower, Gallery, Chancel & Vestry (Rd side)
B. Proposed Vestry at the Church of St Stephen, Brooks Road, Cambridge.
By Cecil J Bourne as above - June 1967

5. On-line data retrieved wrt St Stephen;

www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66618#s6

Modern Parish Churches.

The growth of population in 19th- and 20th-century Cambridge has caused the addition of new churches and the creation of new ecclesiastical parishes. In the old parish of St. Andrew the Less: *CHRIST CHURCH*, Newmarket Road, built 1839, architect Ambrose Poynter, became the parish church 1846, patron trustees; *ST. PAUL*, Hills Road, built 1842 through the efforts of Charles Perry, the first vicar; ([fn. 226](#)) architect Ambrose Poynter, distinct parish in 1845, patron Church Trust Fund; *ST. MATTHEW*, near East Road, built 1866, architect R. R. Rowe, distinct parish 1870; patron Vicar of St. Andrew the Less; *ST. BARNABAS*, Mill Road, built 1869–88, architect William Smith, distinct parish 1888, patron Vicar of St. Paul. Will proved 1919 left £2,000 in trust for the benefice and parish work; *ST. PHILIP*, Mill Road, built 1891 by William Wade of St. Neots, distinct parish 1902, patron Perry Trustees. £2,000 left to endowment in 1919; *ST. JOHN* mission church, Wellington Street, built 1874, closed between 1933 and 1950.

In St. Giles' parish: *ST. MARK*, Barton Road, built 1901, patron Diocesan Board of Patronage; £100 left in 1936 with income to augment living.

In Chesterton parish: *ST. LUKE*, Victoria Road, built 1874, architect William Smith, distinct parish 1876, patron the Bishop of Ely; *ST. GEORGE*, Chesterfield Road, built c. 1937, architect T. H. Lyon, distinct parish 1939; patron the Bishop of Ely.

In Cherry Hinton parish: *ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST*, Hills Road, built 1896, architects Gordon, Lowthers and Gunton, distinct parish, 1897, patron the Bishop of Ely; *ST. STEPHEN*, Coldham's Lane, church district 1948, patron Church Trust Fund.

<http://www.srcf.ucam.org/cuc/churchguide>

Cambridge Presbyterian Church

In our worship we sing hymns and psalms, old and new, reflecting our commitment to worship that is biblical, historic and contemporary. We seek to hold to the evangelical and Reformed faith in our preaching and congregational life.

Sunday services: 10.30am *St. Stephen's Church*, Coldham's Lane/Brooks Road; 6pm Resurrection Lutheran Church, Huntingdon Road

Other activities: Bible Study/Prayer Meeting, Children's group, Youth group, Student events, Women's group.

Contacts: www.cambridgepres.org.uk; 01223 212370.

Minister: Revd Ian Hamilton.

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/CAM/Cambridge/>

St Philip's mission church, Mill road, Romsey town erected in 1890 at a cost, including site, of £2,500 as a chapel of ease to St. Barnabas, is an edifice of red brick, consisting of chancel, nave and western porch.

The Rev. Charles Howard, M.A. of Corpus Christi College, has been curate in charge since 1897. The population of St. Barnabas ecclesiastical parish is now (1900) 8,700.

St. John the Evangelist's mission church in Wellington Street, erected in 1874, is a plain edifice of brick, consisting only of nave and a belfry with one bell: there are 200 sittings: the services are conducted by the vicar and curates of Christ Church.

St Philip: Ecclesiastical parish formed from St Barnabas in 1903. Registers are in the Cambridge Record Office for baptisms 1903-1949, marriages 1903-1948 and banns 1903-1964. All other registers are at the church.

St Stephen: Conventional district formed from St Andrew the Less, 1948, abolished 1955; added to the parish of St Philip in 1982-83. Registers at the church for baptisms 1948, and marriages 1951.

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39996>

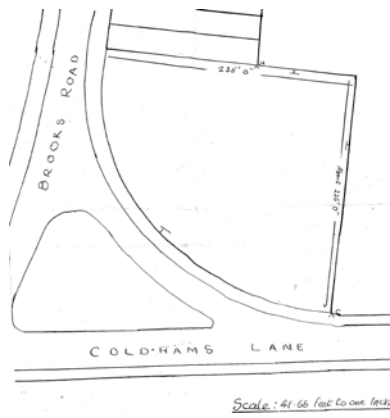
HOUSES OF BENEDICTINE NUNS

3. THE PRIORY OF ST. RADEGUND, CAMBRIDGE

6. Pictures on next page;

- 1 Original site plan for purchase
2. Radegund Hall inside as place of worship
3. Plan for new worship building (Church)
4. Conventional District boundary
5. New building under construction
6. New St Stephen's inside

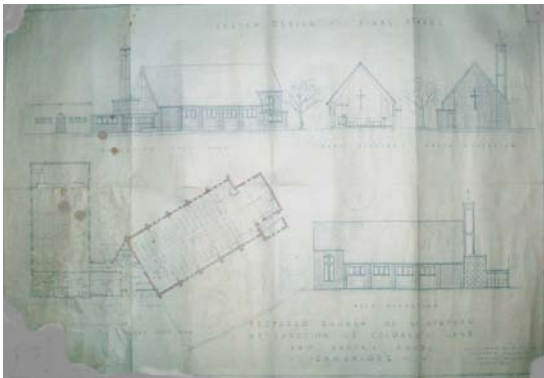
St Stephen's Church - History



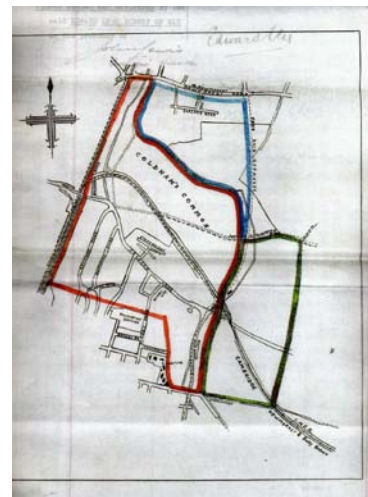
1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



New Identity, new life

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