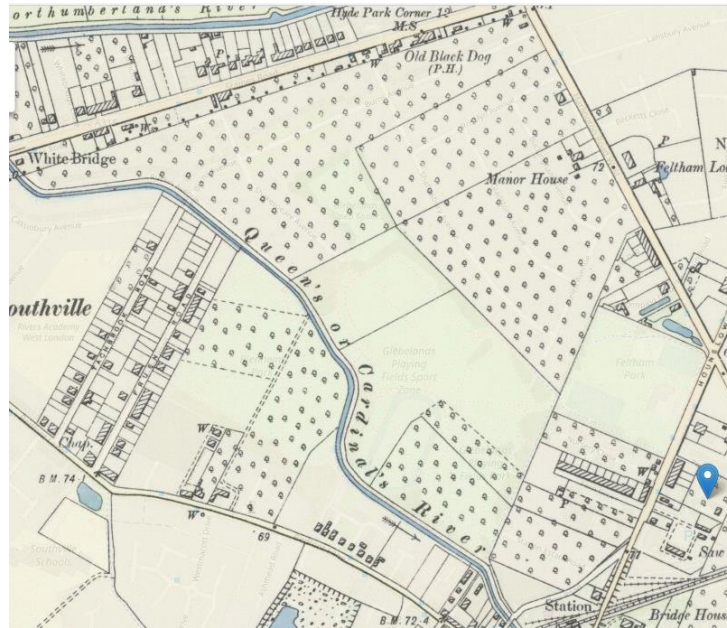


## *Feltham Common;*

a walk on and around the extents that once made up, or were part of, Feltham Common.

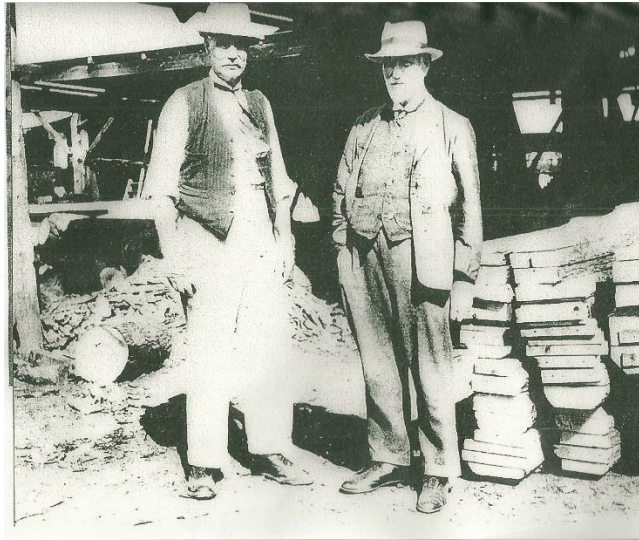
Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Although the weather had typical climatical foreboding we were subjected to just one short sharp shower - an attendance of 35 plus was realised



For those who are not familiar with Feltham 'it' like many other villages pre the local Enclosure Acts of that time (1802) had vast areas which were bucolic in the extreme; Feltham had a Common which would have also been recognised as part of the expanse of Hounslow Heath and prior to that the Forest of Staines – an ancient place

Mustering in the car park of Feltham Park attendees were appraised of acquisition of the land, or should that be the 'giving' of the land for a park by Miss Caroline Parker, daughter of the local timber merchant James Ashmead Parker, for all the people of Feltham



Mr Parker (here with his son Tom) was a long serving member of Feltham Council - Ashmead Road and its depot in Bedfont Lane are named after him. His yard(s) were in Fern Grove and where today's St Giles Hotel now stand.



(Acknowledgements to Mick Betts)

The 'setting out' of the park commenced in 1924, reference to it being a park is borne out by the very fact that apparatus for children and young people alike to enjoy themselves were provided –anywhere without such apparatus should rightly be referenced as an 'Open Space'



Within the Park was a cricket pitch, putting course, tennis courts, sand pit 'not recommended' and a drinking fountain which had a cup on a chain made of 'gun metal' (a type of bronze or an alloy of copper, tin, and zinc).

There was a large Public Shelter adjacent the play apparatus and there were Toilets in the northwest corner



Images show the Shelter and the original Cricket Pavilion, the happy child is my Sister Lynne and with her friend Carol Cork. (Rice family archive)

Following general introduction we set out on a perambulation that would occupy two hours with the first point of interest being the junction where the Hounslow and Harlington Roads meet 'or cross' each other - pre 1945 it was referred to as Feltham Cross, this feature also gave its reference to the small 'open space' between The Drive and Durham Road '

Feltham Cross open space 'top left corner of image'



Removed c 2008, to make way for road widening, was a large concrete block which had a wrought iron spike protruding some six inches – it is thought this was part of war time directional point or Wardens Post.

This self-same point was generally the position of one of General Roy's base line markers 'Nr 22' – the base line was measured between Hampton Poor House, today's Roy Grove, to the Magpies Inn on the north side of Heathrow.

The south east and the north west points are marked today by the business end of cannons inverted.

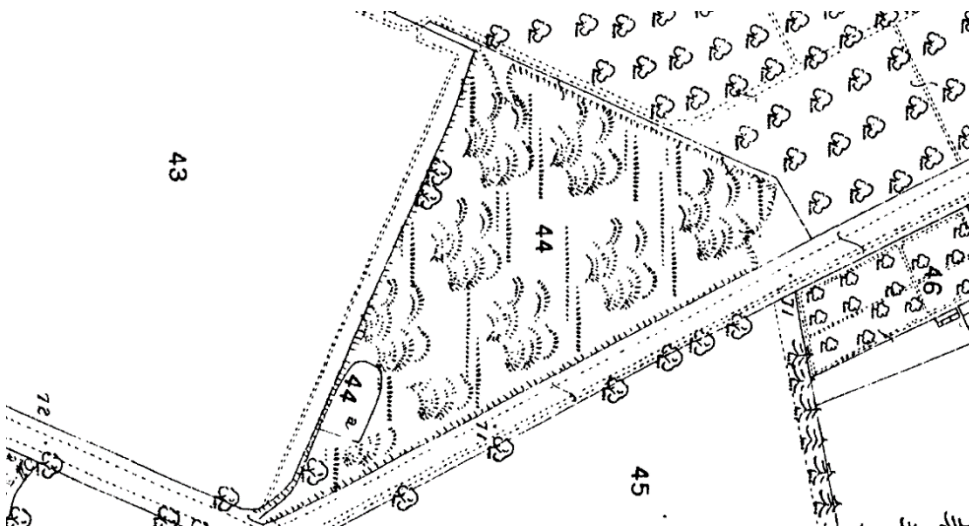
Here shown is history group member Dave Turvey and the V Chairman reading Roy's plaque





The walk then took in the Tennis Courts, Putting Course and Keepers Hut, where dear Albert Newberry (senior keeper) would dispense the necessary equipment and the 'ticket to play'.

Opposite the 'hut' and encompassing part of the pond, are remnants of 'Sherbornes concrete wall experiments, similar of which can be seen southside of Bedfont Green



We now come to Clymping Dene and its pond which was identified as a 'gravel pit' under the 1802 Enclosure Act, the gravel being used for repair of local roads – there were two other parish gravel pits 'both being at a place called Low Field 'generally behind' the Sawyers Arms. The 'pit' transitioned to a pond when the large house Clymping Dene was built c1860's 'a notable occupant of the house was 'Buster Lloyd Jones' a well known Veterinary who wrote books on the subject, his most read being 'The Animals Came In One By One' – this book provides information pertaining to Feltham leading up to and during WW11.



No images of his house, or the larger house called the Dell, have come to light, save as a background feature! The most recent desilting of the pond was undertaken in 2005. Here those in attendance walked around the pond and its semi picturesque area on tarmac [not gravel] pathways

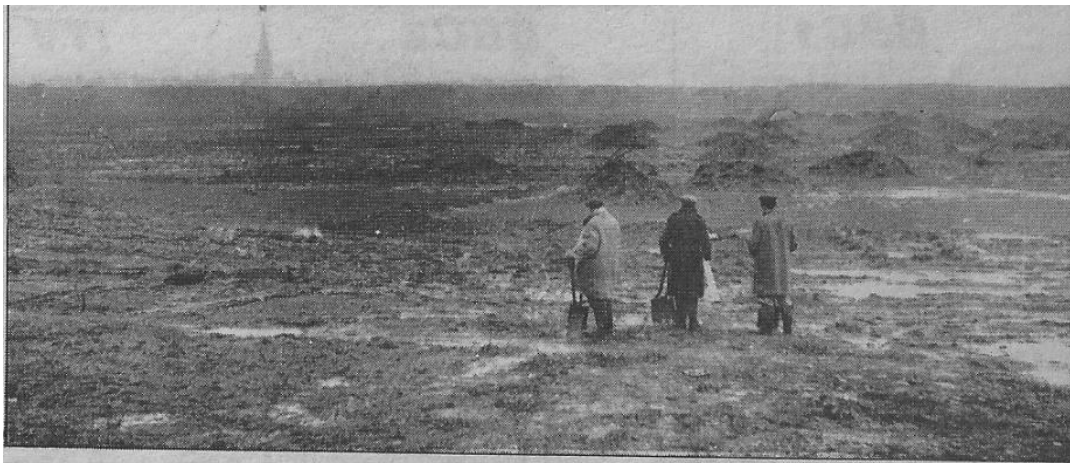
On exiting, and out into the park proper, the walk took a northly track to where there is a public right of way between the park and Helen Avenue – along this side, at one time, was a high brick wall – sections of which can be seen by visiting The Dell; the wall marked the southern boundary of Feltham Manor Lodge which stood in Harlington Road West

The walk continued along northern path and took in vestiges of the original Cricket Pavilion which was lost to a fire sometime around 1965. From this vantage point the 'new' Cricket Pavilion, and what remains of the Bowling Green, which was mainly paid for by Mr Harry Folly who had Folly's Sports shop in the old and new High Street, can be glimpsed. Here also many local School's held Sports Days.



'On' to the gate into the Glebe Lands; this estate of Glebe was acquired by the Feltham Urban District Council [mainly from the Church] as a public open space, it was originally approximated to contain 34 acres; the history is that Under a House of Commons LAND

ACQUISITION (FELTHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL) debate of 4th February 1938  
the purchase price was stated as £13,326; prior to purchase the land was agricultural and therefore *\*de-rated, i.e., to take account of its low productive use.*



**Workman levelling the site of the Feltham Arena in 1951 with the banking for a cycle track which was cut from the final plans. The spire of St Catherine's Church can just be seen the background**

The Glebe land was host to numerous sporting activities over the years, in addition to the many football teams and athletic disciplines was a Council initiative c1965 called Summer Play Leadership Scheme this continued for many years and was enjoyed by many young people – the lady who organised it still lives nearby.

Here, of recent times, the local authority has installed many a new paths [and lighting] which now give direct and safe passage to all corners of the Glebe Lands area.

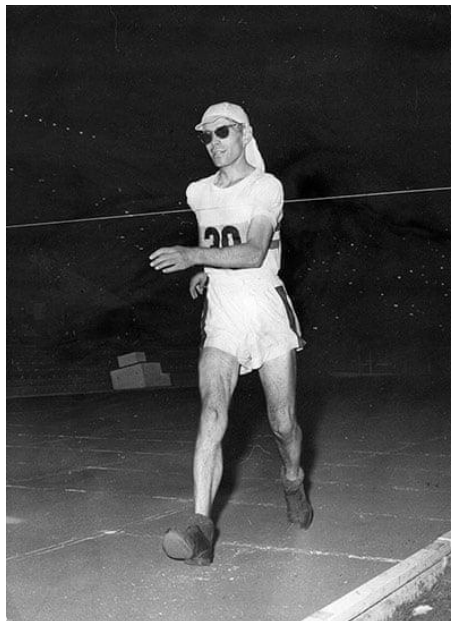
We now reach, via a new path, the foot of the arena mound; within this 'mound' were set out various athletic courses and disciplines, running track, long jump, high jump, discus circle, obstacle course to name but a few; the people of Feltham [at that time] had much to thank Cllr Ted Pauling for as he was instrumental in providing many a sporting activity and many educational initiatives. Its former glory may now not be evident, but I am sure Ted would not show disappointment because he was a positive man.

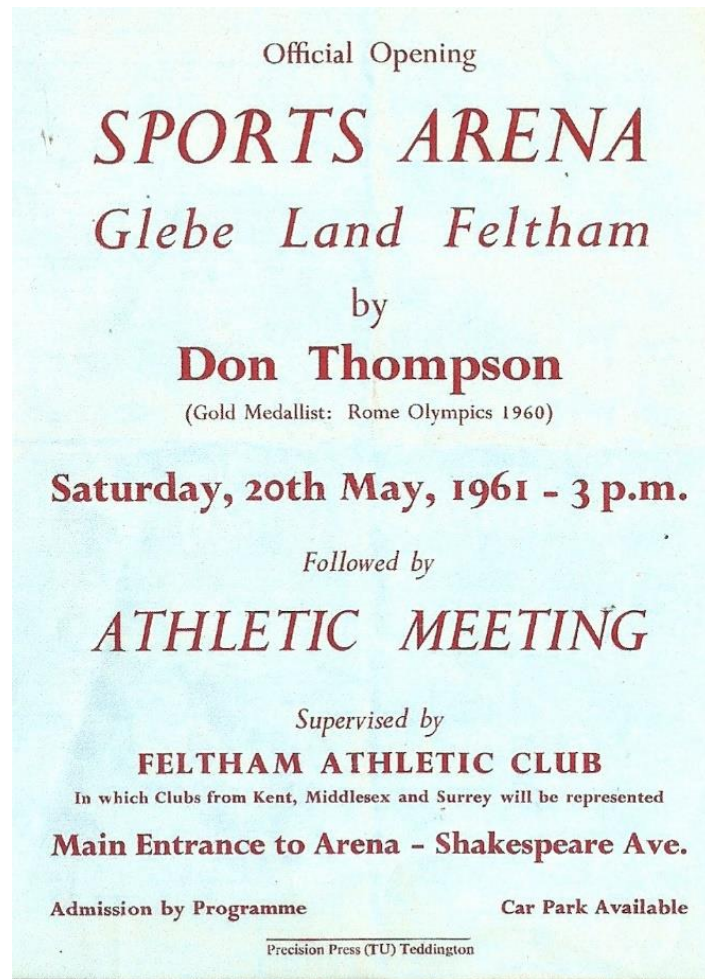


● Council Chairman Ted Pauling and our own Eddie Menday, President of Feltham Road Club, mark the centenary of Boys Brigade founder Sir William Smith back in 1954.

Here within the Arena Feltham's senior Football team, Feltham FC and Feltham Athletic Club had attendances that numbered in their hundreds if not thousands.

The official opening being made by non-other than Britain's 1960 Gold Medal (Race Walking) winner Don Thompson.





Walking north 'on the mound' and to where the entrance to the Grandstand was we come to a little known area called the Poor's land this also has its roots in the Feltham Enclosure Act of 1802; specifically identified for use of the poor. Here of later years was a cycle track where a fledgling local cycle club held race days.

We now trek over to the Longford River and view Blenheim Farm cum Open Space; the area of Blenheim O/S was in the main included with Feltham Common at Enclosure although some areas were acquired for private enterprise 'farming' following enclosure. The entrance to the Open Space was via Bedfont Lane, today it bears the name of United Drive for some spurious reason. It is now not possible to enter Blenheim Open Space via the ancient rout! This 'blocking up' some would say had the knock on effect of rendering Feltham and Bedfont Carnival extinct

Walking south along the banks of the Longford one can only 'recall' in one's mind's eye, the footballing activities that would take place every Saturday and Sunday, and not forgetting the Wednesday afternoon 'Airport league' Also here is the 'new' running track which holds another sad page in the Glebe lands contentious history!

Along this stretch opposite Hawkes Road and Manor Place two new footbridges/cycle ways over the river are being constructed which will enable better entry and increase the use of the Glebe. A commendable initiative.

The river side path here continues towards New Road but sadly the hedgerow of some antiquity (6 differing species of flora and home to dozens of specie of fauna) has been laid waste, so much for combatting global warming



Horses grazing c1961 'note chestnut paling enclosing the area'

(Acknowledgements to Mick Betts)

The penultimate section of our Sunday afternoon sortie took in the Showman's yard; occupation of which dates to at least 1889, this fact borne out by an entry in the statutory required Burial Register for Feltham Cemetery.



Finally, and with our eyes and senses alert to anything untoward, we progressed along a 'shadowy' (flats crowding the path) and concerning path back to our point of departure - perhaps we should have determined our walk to an anticlockwise orientation to at least exit into the light!

As can be seen we have covered a fair portion of Feltham Common but just a little of the local history of Feltham.

Feltham History Group thank all those who made perambulation of an area that, because of its original church status, 'Glebe' has 'in the main' remained free of modern day yclept exigencies.

Honorary Secretary

9<sup>th</sup> August 2021