

In and Out at Blackfen

As sleepy lanes to Lamorbey
Give way to Beans' great plan
The Waggoners leave Blackfen
Farewell to the skilled woodman

As farm and agricultural land
Are courted by the Homestead team
Green fields are lost to tarmac roads
Farewell gentle country scene

As Westland and the Great Estate
See the Old Ways etched in stone
Migrant Londoners buy £5 plots
Farewell peaceful hamlet home

People came from London Town
Building bungalows, houses and shops
Landing bowed to community life
Farewell woods and farming lots

Public house and public park
Watch change without an end
Pubs stay the hubs of social life
Parks the boundaries of rural Blackfen

In they came from Deptford and Dulwich
From Wandsworth, Peckham and Woolwich
High hopes from suburb to country retreat
A welcome home south east of Greenwich

In also the Plaza Picture House
Rex and Odeon came and went
While the old Woodman Pub was rebuilt
A new welcome on a corner in Kent



The Post Office and Learning Library
Carved their place in community lives
As a gathering storm threatened England
Unwelcome in the Blackfen skies

Despite fears families began to grow
Churches and schools took in their stock
Days Lane and Blackfen primaries
And welcome clergy for the local flock

Wartime brought shelling and shelters
Darkness during Blitz air raids
Alongside the greenhouse and vegetable patch
Unwelcome memories which never fade

Peacetime life brings good things in
A competition demanding a name
For a new pub on the Blackfen Road
Welcome The Jolly Fenman of local fame

Trading still bustled along the Shuttle
As the A2 speeds up in '69
Taking commuters from country to suburb
And marking the changing times

With the cinema slope still visible
The supermarket begins to take hold
From Safeway to Somerfield to Co-op
As the old post office and library are sold

A well known haunt in modern Blackfen
'George Staples at Sidcup' appears
Yet George was a woodman from Bridgen
He built the first pub and brought in the beers



Today open land is still being lost
A high price for housing space
And car lots replace the local shops
As city commuting sets the pace

Now the Greenbelt is disappearing
Environmental battles often fought
Gone the Blackfen country life
Those early locals sought

Once they migrated from suburb to country
Causing country to suburb commutes
Now housing growth and the motor car
Bring busy suburb to suburb routes

Blackfen's tranquility was of its time
When district boundaries were not so caught
In such an ever expanding Metropolis
A Penny for your thoughts

S.A.M. Hawkes

