KINGSWOOD HOUSE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research was produced as part of a collaboration between the Dulwich Society Local History Group and Kingswood Arts, the community group that runs Kingswood House in Dulwich. We researched the servants who worked in Kingswood House when it was a private home and a community artist then made an exhibition to share the stories, which now hangs in the café at Kingswood House. If you are related to one of the families who served the house please get in touch, the Dulwich Society would love to hear from you. Email history@dulwichsociety.com
For details of the house and the other servants who worked and lived there please go to https://www.dulwichsociety.com/local-history/kingswood-house-who-worked-in-a-house-like-this

LANGFORD family at Kingswood Lodge

Narrative for Robert Langford, coachman at Kingswood House
The Langfords lived at Kingswood Stables for 10 years when Robert was the coachman there.

Robert Langford was born in 1855 in Kent, the son of William and Sophia. William was an ostler (the man who looks after horses at an inn) who late got his own pub and became a publican. Robert came to London and worked as a groom.

In 1879 he married Mary Ann Wheatley, the daughter of a gardener, and they set up home at Kingswood Stables where Robert had recently become coachman. The following year they had their first baby and in their first six years they had five daughters and a son. The children all attended Salters Hill School (now Kingswood Primary).

After ten years or so a Kingswood the family moved to Gipsy Rd. Their daughter Jane died aged 15 but the other children lived long lives. Charlotte, Mary Ann, and Edith had various jobs such as book folder, hotel switchboard operator or housekeeper; they never married. Adelaide was a maid before she married George English, a joiner. They lived in Upper Norwood before moving to Shirley. Robert went to live with his father's family in Kent and became a farm worker. In 1912 he married Lilian Carpenter and they moved to Caterham where Robert became a gardener. Lilian died in 1921 aged just 37, leaving their two daughters - Gwenna, their youngest, was just four years old.

Robert later became a gardener at the Royal College for the Blind's school in Upper Norwood (now Westow Park) and lived nearby. He worked as a gardener until his death in 1929 aged 67.

Research names in red lived at Kingswood Stables

1855 Robert Langford born in Kingsdown, Kent, the son of William, an ostler, and Sophia Wise. William later became the publican of the Rising Sun in Wrotham.
1859 Mary Ann Wheatley born in Putney
1879 Robert married Mary Ann Wheatley from Roehampton, he was a groom and she was the daughter of a gardener. They married in Wandsworth and set up home at Kingswood Stables; they began their family the following year.
1880 June Baptism Charlotte Sophia daughter of Robert & Mary Ann Langford Kingswood coachman. She was variously a book folder, a clerk at a Bermondsey leather manufacturer

and a switchboard operator at a hotel on the Cromwell Rd. She lived in Upper Norwood and never married. She died in 1959 aged 79 and left her money to her sister Adelaide.

1881 Census Kingswood Stables

Robert Langford	Head	26	1855	Coachman	Kingsdown, Kent
Mary Ann Langford	Wife	22	1859	-	Roehampton
Charlotte Langford	Daughter	1	1880	-	Dulwich
Mary A Langford	Daughter	0	1881	-	Brighton
Joseph Ashford	-	25	1856	Groom	Kilby, Lincolnshire

1881 Baptism Mary Ann daughter of Robert & Mary Ann Langford Kingswood Stables coachman. Cannot find her in the records.
1882 Baptism Jane daughter of Robert & Mary Ann Langford Kingswood Stables coachman. She was a paper folder in 1901
1883 Baptism Edith Charlotte daughter of Robert & Mary Ann Langford Kingswood Stables coachman. She became a housekeeper and never married.
1884 Adelaide Florence born in Dulwich. By the age of 16 she was a maid of all work for a family in Thornton Heath, who lived above their greengrocers. But within a couple of years she was backing living at home on Beulah Hill and in 1905 she married George English, a joiner, at All Saints, Upper Norwood. They moved to Queen's Rd, Upper Norwood and then to Addison's Close in Shirley. They had a son and daughter. Adelaide died in 1966 aged 82.
1886 Robert Thomas born in Dulwich. He went to live with his father's family in Kent and became a farm worker. In 1912 he married Lilian Carpenter and they moved to Caterham where Robert became a gardener. Lilian died in 1921 aged 37, Gwenna, their youngest, was just four years old.

The children went to Salters Hill School (now known as Kingswood Primary).

1890 they were all living at Kingswood Stables (address given for children's school).
1891 whole family living at 10 Rommany Villas, [aka 127] Gipsy Rd
1901-5 Robert and Mary Ann living at 110 Spa Hill, Norwood, Robert is a horsekeeper/groom. None of the children at home?
1901 Charlotte, Jane and Edith are all 'boarders' at 3 Layard Rd, Upper Norwood, with George Essex, a compositor and his wife Mary Ann, a book seller. The girls are all paper folders.
1911 Robert is living in one room at 31 Westow Hill, a boarder and a garden labourer possibly at the Royal College for the Blind in Upper Norwood (see below). He shares the one room with Leonard Farrer, a butcher's assistant. He describes himself as married. Cannot find Mary Ann on the 1911.
1911 daughters Jane and Edith are living with their 'stepfather' George Essex, widower, a press compositor, in Thornton Heath. Jane is a wardrobe dealer and Edith is a stationer's forewoman. Cannot see that a Mary Ann Wheatley Langford married George Essex and anyway his Mary Ann is 10 years too old and born in Bethnal Green.
1921 Robert is living in one room in Thornton Heath and is a gardener at the Royal College for the Blind in Upper Norwood (now Westow Park). He is 67 years old but is still working.
1927 Mary Ann died?
1929 Robert died