

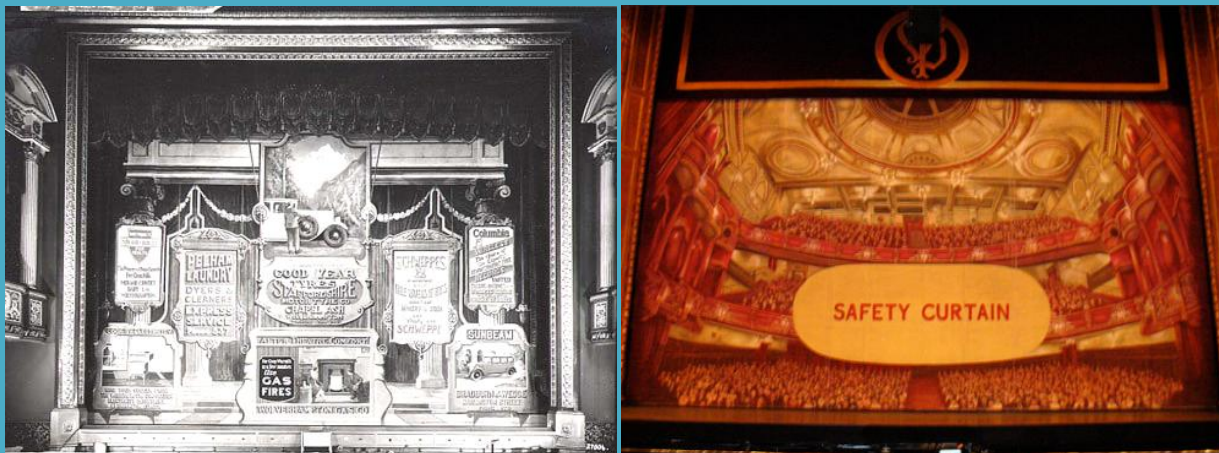
# Hammond & Champness Of Walthamstow



## The Early Years

In 1901, Ernest Hammond, a twenty two year old engineer, entered into a partnership with E & E Taylor of Alfreton Street, Southwark. This was a company who were manufacturers of 'safety curtains' for theatres.

## The 'Iron'



Above left: 1930's theatre safety curtain and on the right, a modern safety curtain. To comply with Health & Safety regulations they have to be lowered and raised to ensure they are working during a live performance and this is usually done during the interval.

Although the term 'safety curtain' conjures up a vision of heavy drape material across a stage, in the theatre a 'safety curtain' is a fire safety precaution used in large theatres and at that time was a heavy iron curtain located immediately behind the proscenium arch. Indeed, the 'safety curtain' is sometimes referred to as an **iron** in British theatres, regardless of the actual construction material.

The 'safety curtains' were usually painted with decorative scenes or used as advertising boards and because they are extremely heavy they had a dedicated operating mechanism. This explains why Ernest Hammond joined the company because the lifting of heavy materials was Ernest Hammond's particular area of engineering expertise.

## A New Company

Mr Taylor left the business in 1905 and Ernest Hammond invited his cousin, Harold Champness, who was also an engineer, to join the business. The company was then renamed as Hammond & Champness. In 1910, building on their mechanical and hydraulic engineering expertise, they began to make electric lifts. Later, in 1917, his older brother - Leonard Hammond joined the company. It was again renamed, this time as Hammond Brothers & Champness.

## A Brilliant Engineer & Inventor

Both Ernest Hammond and Harold Champness were sanitation engineers who specialised in water powered hydraulic systems. By 1917, Ernest was a member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and he was a designer and inventor who developed innovative ways of using water hydraulics for lifts and cranes.

Amongst his inventions was a new steam pattern Fire Brigade engine, electric rams for steel companies, improved hydraulic cranes, a compressed air driven lift and the design of new munition tools during WWI.



## Bankruptcy & Takeover

**HAMMOND BROS. & CHAMPNESS Limited.**  
Extraordinary Resolution (pursuant to Companies Act, 1929, ss. 117 (1) and 225 (1) (c)) passed 23rd January, 1933.

**A**T an Extraordinary General Meeting of the above named Company, duly convened, and held at Anderson's Hotel, Fleet Street, London, E.C., on the 23rd day of January, 1933, the subjoined Extraordinary Resolution was duly passed:

"That it has been proved to the satisfaction of this Meeting that the Company cannot, by reason of its liabilities, continue its business, and that it is advisable to wind up the same, and accordingly that the Company be wound up voluntarily; and that Albert Edward Quaife, of 104, High Holborn, London, W.C.1, Incorporated Accountant, be and he is hereby appointed Liquidator for the purposes of such winding-up."

**E. N. HAMMOND,**  
Chairman of the Meeting.

(068)

In 1930, the company went bankrupt and was taken over by the successful shopfitting company, E Pollard & Co. Ltd. Who, In 1930, merged with Samuel Haskins & Bros. Ltd, shopfitters and roller-shutter manufacturers

## Pollard Shopfitters

Pollard's, was a very successful shopfitting company that was founded in 1895 by Edward Pollard in Kingsland Road. It moved, in 1906, to No. 29 Clerkenwell Road, which was the firm's 'City' showrooms. About 1919, a second factory making jewellers' sundries, was built in Highbury, and during the 1920s and 30s Pollards continued to expand, opening West End showrooms at No. 299 Oxford Street, and establishing branches in Bristol, Manchester, Glasgow and Dublin. By the mid 1920s the firm could claim '12 acres of workshops'.

The company held the English patents for 'invisible glass' an American invention, that is used in shopfronts. This employs steeply curved concave glass to deflect light towards matt black 'baffles' so that no reflections show in the window. These were installed in several important London stores, including Simpsons of Piccadilly (now Waterstones), where they remain intact today. They also built up a business in the manufacture of architectural metalwork, particularly bronze doors. Amongst other work they fitted out ocean going liners for John Brown's shipyard at Clydebank.



In 1967 the Pollard Group relocated to Basingstoke and the business continues today as Pollards Fyrespan and Pollard Hansen now in Lincoln Way, Enfield and carries out building work for small units. The former Clerkenwell works are now used as offices and small-business workshops.

However, although Hammond & Champness was now owned by E Pollard & Co Ltd, it was run as a separate company under the Hammond & Champness name and manufactured lifts. From the early 1930's, it was based at their purpose built factory premises at Gnome House, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow.

# Gnome House, 7, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow

The building was purpose built in 1930 and its architecture very much reflects the period. It was named Gnome House because in WWI, the Peter Hooker company that previously occupied the site, made Gnome rotary aircraft engines that were fitted to Sopwith Camel airplanes..



Dave Buchan tells us On the *Walthamstow Times* Facebook site:

“I used to work at Hammonds and for a while we had the original plans in our office. Gnome house was built for Hammond & Champness in the 1930's The terrace of cottages to the north of the frontage were much older, their tiny back gardens were flat, then there was a step down to the open yard form memory. But then the level of the factory floor was a good 8 ft below that so maybe the clay was removed to make bricks but normally brickwork take up a lot of clay to be cost effective & I cannot visualise huge volumes of bricks coming from the changes in ground levels.

The Architectural Review August 1967

**Electric lifts**

Fully automatic passenger and goods lifts with speeds up to 700 feet per minute. Ad. 942/60

**Olddraulic lifts**

For medium travel installations—no overhead motor room, balance weight, or winding gear required. Ad. 675/63

send for required catalogue list numbers are quoted against headings

**Hammond & Champness Ltd.**

**H&C LIFTS**

Gnome House  
Blackhorse Lane  
Walthamstow, London E17  
Phone: Larkwood 3822/1071

**Shepard home lift**

A domestic lift with 7.2 floor travel for aged or infirm. No motor room, lift shaft or pit required. Hoisting mechanism housed within enclosure on 1st or 2nd floor. Ad. 770/63

**The Escalift**

The most climbing chair. Safe, easy to install and considerably priced. Operates on normal house current. Ad. 870/68

**Lifts for old peoples homes**

With speeds not exceeding 50 feet per minute, essential floor levelling is assured without aid of costly mechanism. Simple automatic control. Ad. 836/56

**Electric service lifts**

Unit construction lift to provide Multi Floor Service at price considerably below that for a similar kind of purpose-made installation. Ad. 804/64

## Products

The company made electric and hydraulic lifts for both domestic and industrial use and these included: automatic, passenger and specialist lifts for many purposes. Over the next nearly seventy years, Hammond

& Champness lifts became a synonym for best quality reliable British lifts.

## *Globalisation*

Like many Walthamstow based companies, the Hammond & Champness company became part of the globalisation process that gobbles up small companies and incorporates them into world-wide trading conglomerates.

In 1967, the company took over the Aldous & Campbell Hydraulic Lift company that specialized in railway station lifts. However, 1971, the company was taken over by the Dover Corporation of the United States. This is a major US industrial company that has roots in the manufacture of elevators. They were looking for a means of entering the British lift market and Hammond & Champness from the mid-1970s onward effectively was the brand for Dover Corporation equipment installed in the UK.

During the 1980's they manufactured three different lift models. These were: The Warden (for residential use ),The Balmoral (for office buildings) and The Windsor.

Pictures below by are the courtesy of Walthamstow Times Facebook site at :  
<https://www.facebook.com/walthamstow.times.7>





Top – Work Entrance. Bottom – Paint Shop



Top – Wood Shop, Bottom – Office

In 1999, Hammon & Champness effectively was absorbed into ThyssenKrupp along with the rest of the Dover Corporation elevator business. ThyssenKrupp is a German multinational conglomerate corporation based in Duisburg and Essen, Germany. The corporation consists of 670 companies worldwide. While ThyssenKrupp is one of the world's largest steel producers, the company also provides components and systems for the automotive industry, elevators, escalators, material trading and industrial services.

## Aftermath

Ernest Noel Hammond, the engineering brain of the company retired to Douglas Road, Chingford and died at Chingford Hospital in 1958. He left his effects of £5,456-8s-10d (Worth approximately £110,000 at present day value) to a family member.

## Empty Property

The premises have been derelict for many years and are now in the process of being converted for a new purpose. You can watch a fascinating video of the interior of the building at <http://vimeo.com/103216523>



## The Rebirth of Gnome House

According to the developers, Gnome House will be a new community and creative space in Walthamstow and is expected to open in winter/spring 2015. The development is part of a whole raft of works that are presently being carried out in different parts of

Walthamstow and reflect that the Borough is now seen as 'Awesomestow' an 'up and coming' development and investment area.

## A New Gnome House



The above, is an artist's impression of what the new Gnome House will look like. It is described as a new community and creative space and the ground floor will comprise artists' studios, a cafe, a meeting room and a large community creative space available for hire. This space is being run as a community interest company with volunteer directors from the local area.

The picture below is a plan of the building with a key as to the functions.



The picture below is a plan of the building with a key as to the functions.

1. This will be an outdoor seating area for the cafe and the new main entrance for Gnome House.
2. The meeting room - available for hire.
3. Community creative space - available for hire.

4. Community creative space - available for hire. In the future we hope to have a folding door system so the community creative space can be divided into two spaces (as shown).

5. Kitchen / cafe with disabled toilet and disabled lift into community space. We will be putting the cafe out to tender - please sign up to our mailing list (on our home-page) for more information.

Bill Bayliss

November 2014

## Some resources used in this article:

<http://beno.org.uk/lift/hammondchampness.html>  
<http://www.thyssenkruppelevator.co.uk/>  
<http://www.thyssenkruppelevator.co.uk/company/history/>  
[http://elevation.wikia.com/wiki/Hammond %26 Champness](http://elevation.wikia.com/wiki/Hammond_%26_Champness)  
<http://edithsstreets.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/waterworks-river-blackhorse-lane.html>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJJJQuCr39o>  
<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-703-1/dissemihttps://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/33906/page/613/data.pdf>  
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[http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/E\\_Pollard\\_and\\_Co](http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/E_Pollard_and_Co)  
[://medhttp://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=119418](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=119418)  
[ia.corporate-ir.net/media\\_files/nys/dov/reports/dov\\_acqpm00wedit/11.htm](http://www.corporate-ir.net/media_files/nys/dov/reports/dov_acqpm00wedit/11.htm)  
<https://www.facebook.com/walthamstow.times.7>  
[http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/3149/40837\\_1831101883\\_04100206/38582?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.co.uk%2fcgibin%2fsse.dll%3fnew%3d1%26gsfn%3dERNEST%2bNOEL%26gsln%3dHAMMOND%26rank%3d1%26gss%3dangsg%26sbo%3d1%26pcat%3dROOT\\_CATEGORY%26h%3d38582%26recoff%3d3%2b4%2b5%26db%3dUKMechanical%26indiv%3d1%26ml\\_rpos%3d9&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnRecord#?imageId=40837\\_1831101883\\_0415-00206](http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/3149/40837_1831101883_04100206/38582?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.co.uk%2fcgibin%2fsse.dll%3fnew%3d1%26gsfn%3dERNEST%2bNOEL%26gsln%3dHAMMOND%26rank%3d1%26gss%3dangsg%26sbo%3d1%26pcat%3dROOT_CATEGORY%26h%3d38582%26recoff%3d3%2b4%2b5%26db%3dUKMechanical%26indiv%3d1%26ml_rpos%3d9&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnRecord#?imageId=40837_1831101883_0415-00206)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safety\\_curtain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safety_curtain)  
<http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/metropolitan-fire-brigade.asp>  
[http://www.guardianseries.co.uk/news/10670923\\_Urban\\_village\\_approved\\_despite\\_plans\\_error/?action=complain&cid=11981829](http://www.guardianseries.co.uk/news/10670923_Urban_village_approved_despite_plans_error/?action=complain&cid=11981829)  
<https://twitter.com/gnomehousecic>  
<http://vimeo.com/103216523>

Various images from the internet.

**HAMMOND BROS. & CHAMPNESS Limited.**  
Extraordinary Resolution (pursuant to Companies Act, 1929, ss. 117 (1) and 225 (1) (c)) passed 23rd January, 1933.

**A**T an Extraordinary General Meeting of the above named Company, duly convened, and held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, London, E.C., on the 23rd day of January, 1933, the subjoined Extraordinary Resolution was duly passed:

"That it has been proved to the satisfaction of this Meeting that the Company cannot, by reason of its liabilities, continue its business, and that it is advisable to wind up the same, and accordingly that the Company be wound up voluntarily; and that Albert Edward Quaife, of 104, High Holborn, London, W.C.1, Incorporated Accountant, be and he is hereby appointed Liquidator for the purposes of such winding-up."

**E. N. HAMMOND,**  
(068) Chairman of the Meeting.