

A history of Frog Racing

Part 1

Roberts Brothers of Gloucester

With acknowledgements and thanks to Malcolm J. Watkins.
Author of - *Games-makers to the empire : Roberts Bros. of Gloucester, 1890 - 1957*

The Frog Race party game was invented by Charles Frederick England a shipowners agent who patented it on 14th February 1901, with approval being given in February 1902. (Figure 1). It was manufactured by Roberts Brothers at their factory in Upton Street, Gloucester (Figure 3) and sold under the name '*Jiggle Joggle*' (Figures 2 & 4) which I assume was a reference to the hand action required to propel the frogs forward. The game was on sale on or before 22nd November 1902 as can be seen from the advertisement in the Sheffield Daily Independent (Figure 2A).

The box lid design was changed circa 1914 as a result of the United States Tariff Act of 1890 (aka McKinley Tariff Act) which required imported goods to be labelled to indicate the country of their origin. Known as the Truth in Labelling Law, it was amended in 1914 to require all imports to say "Made in" in addition to including country of origin.

Hence, the Frog Game box was amended with the additional information from 1914/15 onwards. Interestingly though the Edwardian style of dress remained (Figure 5).

The next edition of the game was released in about 1920. The box lid retained name of Jiggle Joggle but the players attire was that of the 1920's. And the game was attributed to the "Glevum" Series (Figure 6). Additionally, there were changes to frog anatomy with webbed but rounded hands and feet (Figure 7).

The last time the game appeared in the Roberts Brothers Catalogue was 1939. With the declaration of war in September 1939 the factory was commandeered for war work, hence game production ceased.

After the war the company struggled to regain momentum, and the directors sought an amenable takeover by rivals Chad Valley in 1954. The factory closed in 1957 (Figure 8).

Shipley Times and Express

Friday 27 October 1905

N^o 3145



A.D. 1901

Date of Application, 14th Feb., 1901

Complete Specification Left, 18th Sept., 1901—Accepted, 13th Feb., 1902

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION.

“Improvements in Games.”

I, CHARLES FREDERICK ENGLAND 12 Deans Walk Gloucester Shipowner's Agent, do hereby declare the nature of this invention to be as follows:—

My invention relates to a new game of skill which can be played by one or more players.

FIGURE 1

THE FROG GAME : A CORRECTION.

In the description of this game, published in our column on April the 8th. we regret that, owing to a misunderstanding, it was stated that the game was invented by a famous artist, whereas we find that the game was patented in 1901, and is manufactured, under licence from the patentee by Messrs Roberts Bros., of Gloucester, by whom game is sold under the name Jiggle-Joggle, and to whom we are obliged for pointing out the error. Which gives us great pleasure to correct:—Ed.

FIGURE 2

Sheffield Daily Independent.

LONDON OFFICE: 47, FLEET STREET.

(Sheffield and Rotherham Independent.)

VOL. XLII—NO. 14,984.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1902.

TWELVE PAGES.

DAILY 1D.

IF DELIVERED
IN THE EVENING.

JOHN WALSH, LIMITED.

GRAND CHRISTMAS BAZAAR NOW OPEN.

CORDIAL INVITATION EXTENDED TO ALL PARENTS TO BRING THEIR CHILDREN TO VIEW THE GRAND COLLECTION OF TOYS, GAMES, ETC., NOW BEING SHOWN FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

DOLLS AND DOLLS' OUTFITS: A MORE EXTENSIVE STOCK THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS YEAR, INCLUDING EVERYTHING NEEDED IN A DOLL'S WARDROBE OR HOUSEHOLD.

MECHANICAL AND SCIENTIFIC TOYS AND MODELS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION, INCLUDING "THE CROUCHING LION," "THE PLUNGING PIKE," "THE SANTOS-DUMONT FLYING MACHINE," AND OTHERS.

NOAH'S ARKS, SKIN AND WOOL ANIMALS, HORSES, CARTS, ENGINES, SOLDIERS, CANNON, DRUMS, CLOCKWORK TRAINS, BICYCLES, TRICYCLES, ETC.

BAGATELLE, TABLE BILLIARDS, CHESS AND DRAUGHTS, **JIGGLE JOGGLE OR THE RACE OF THE FROGS,** MAGNETIC DANCERS, THE NEW PHONOGRAPH, ETC., ETC., AND MANY OTHER ARTICLES SUITABLE FOR

XMAS., NEW YEAR, AND COMPLIMENTARY GIFTS.

FIGURE 2A

**ROBERTS BROTHERS
GLEVUM WORKS
GLOUCESTER**

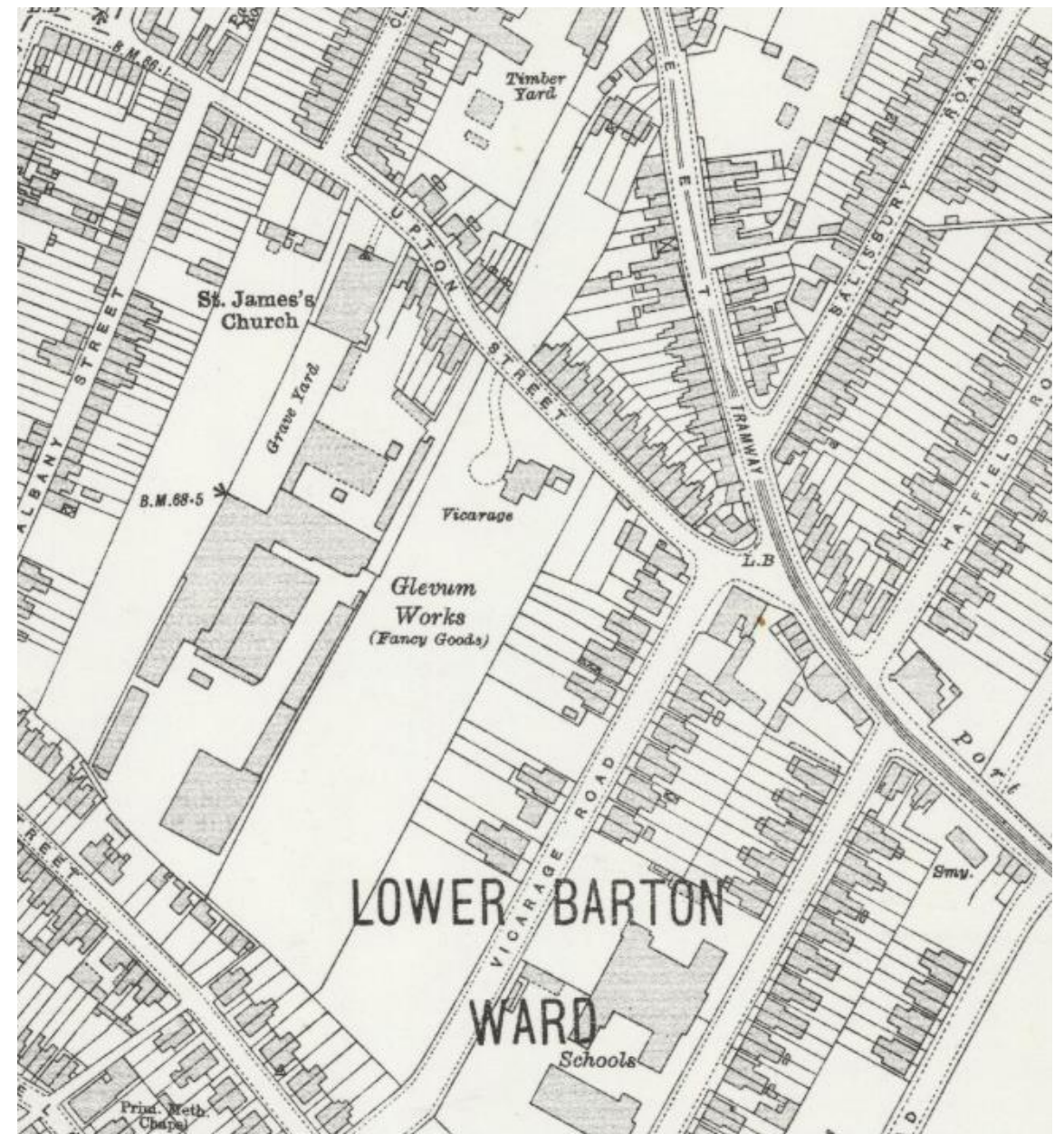


FIGURE 3



British Manufacture

Frog anatomy for the first edition of the game was pointed webbed hands and feet. The box lid design gave no indication as to who made the game (Roberts Brothers) and stated '*British Manufacture*'. The players being dressed in an Edwardian Fashion.

FIGURE 4



British Manufacture

British Manufacture

Made in England

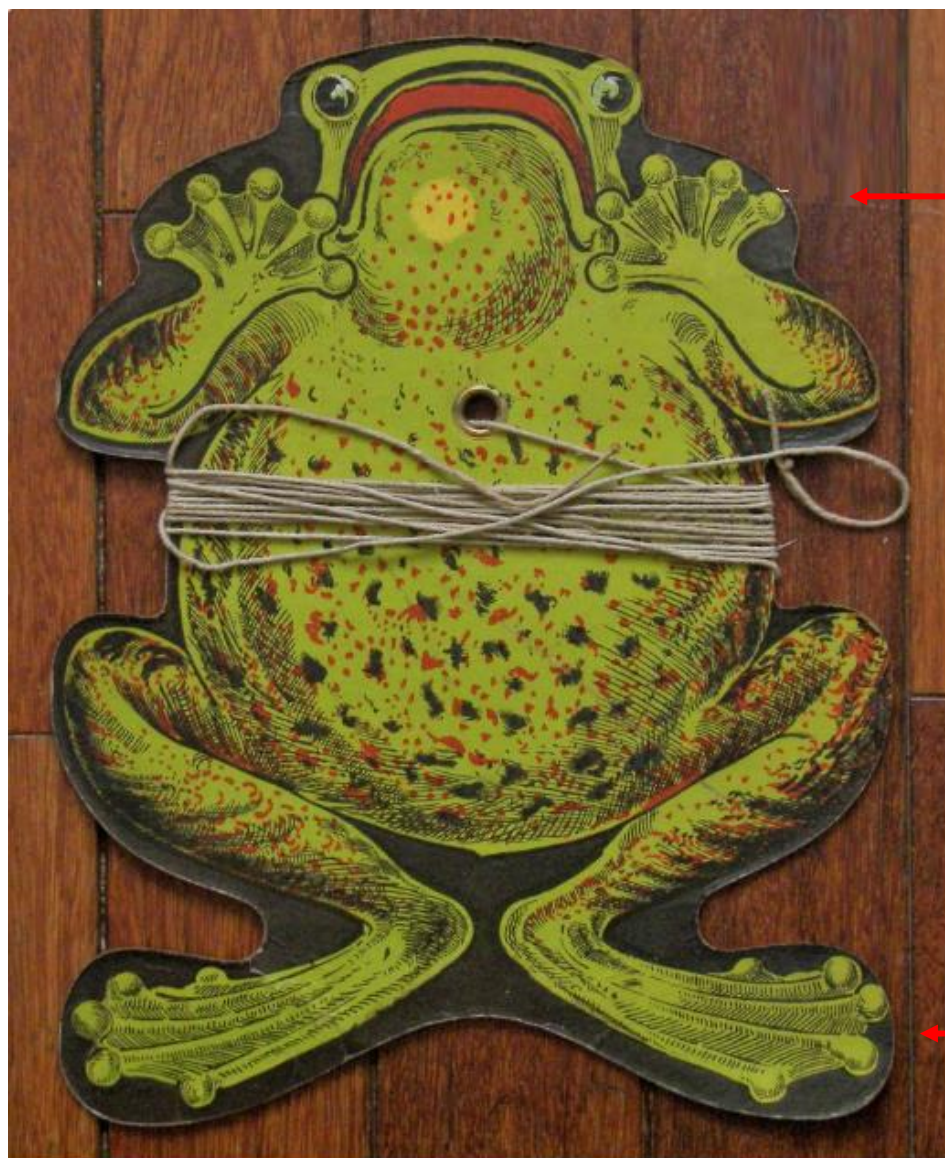
Made in England

Post 1914 Lid Design

FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6



rounded hands



rounded feet

FIGURE 7

SALES BY AUCTION

By Direction of Roberts Bros. (Gloucester)
Ltd.

ROBERTS' TOY FACTORY,

Glevum Works,

GLOUCESTER.

(Situate in Upton Street, close to
Lower Barton Street).

BRUTON, KNOWLES & CO.
will Sell by Auction **ON THE**
PREMISES on THURSDAY and FRIDAY
NEXT, 21st and 22nd March, at 12 noon
punctually each day.

THE WOODWORKING, TOY MAKING &
CARDBOARD BOX MAKING
MACHINERY.

Including Combined Band Re-Saw Dimen-
sion Saw Benches, Dowelling Machines,
Drills, Vickers 42in. Rotary Cutting and
Scoring Machines, S. & S. Box Wrapping
Machine, Cornering Machines, Corner
Staying Machines, Mono-Rails, Electric
Motors and Fans, Sawn Timber and Off-
cuts. **OFFICE FURNITURE** and
Equipment.

VIEW DAYS: To-morrow (Tuesday) and
Wednesday Next, 19th and 20th March,
from 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Catalogues (price 6d. each) may be had
of the Auctioneers, Albion Chambers, King
St., Gloucester. Telephone 21267 (4 lines).

Birmingham Daily Post - Monday 18 March 1957

FIGURE 8

Part 2

J. W. Spear's of Enfield



J. W. Spear and Sons was a manufacturer of board games during the 20th century. The company was founded by Jacob Wolf Spier (1832-1893) in Fürth, near Nuremberg, Germany in 1879.

In 1932, the company moved to England and set up a factory at Green Street, Brimsdown, Enfield (Figures 9, 10 & 11). With the rise to power of the Nazis and the Spier family being Jewish, some members of the family moved to Britain and anglicised their name to Spear.

Daily News (London) - Tuesday 10 May 1932

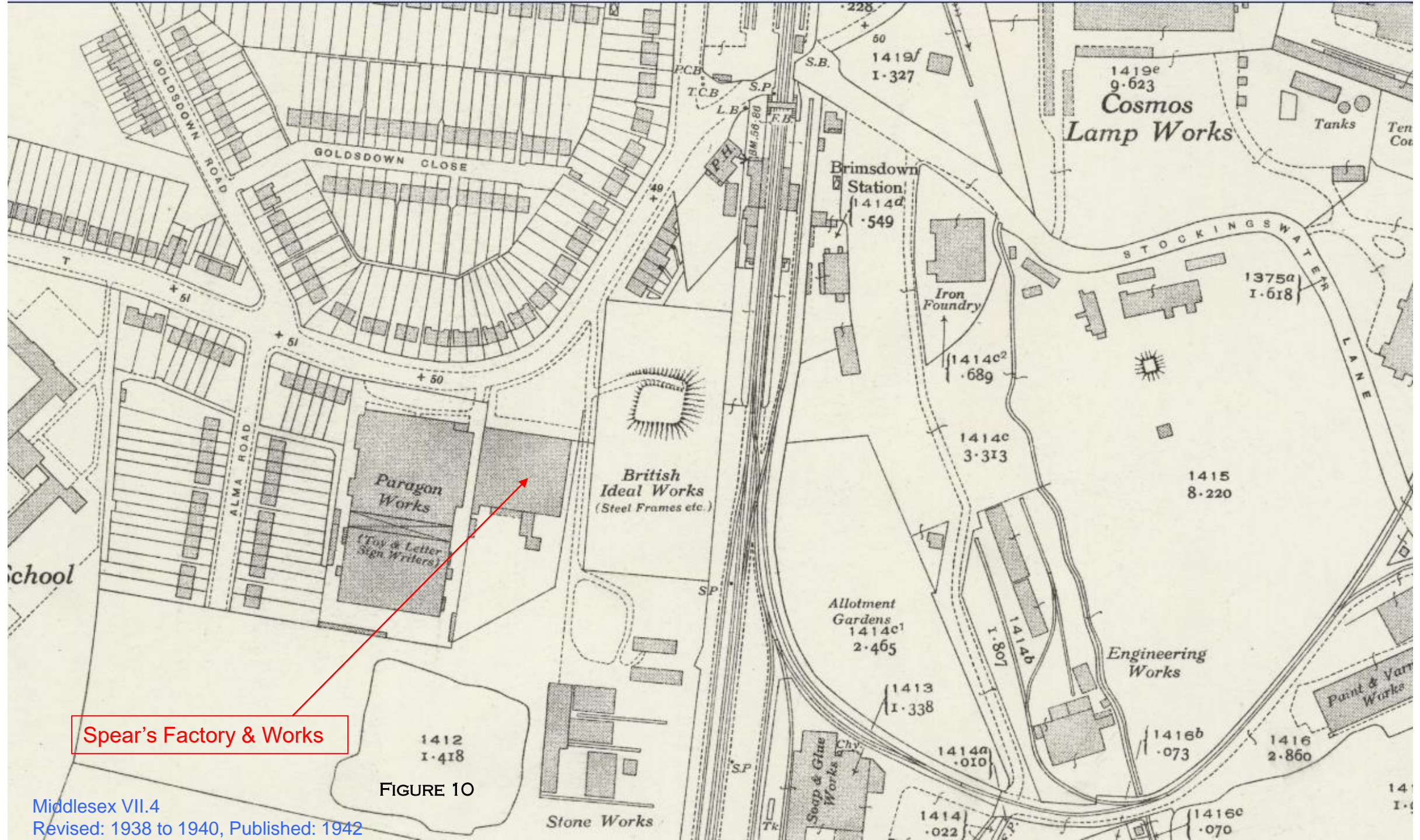
CARDBOARD Box Makers, experienced female bench hands required. Apply J. W. Spear & Sons Ltd.. Green-st. Brimsdown nr. Enfield, two minutes from L. N.E.R Station

FIGURE 9A

Daily News (London) - Saturday 20 August 1932

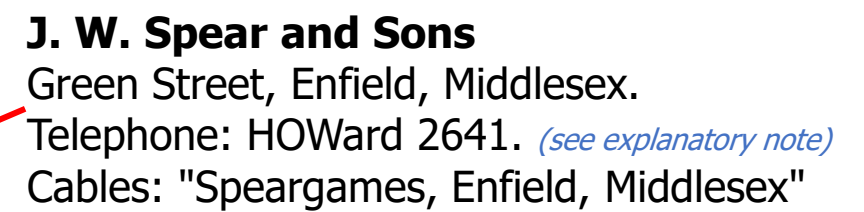
CARDBOARD Box Cutter (guillotine and rotary): experienced man only wanted. J. W. Spear & Sons Ltd.. Green-st. Brimsdown (near Enfield) ; 2 mins from L. and N.E.R Station

FIGURE 9B



Spear's Factory & Works

FIGURE 10



1

SPEAR'S FROG GAME

In late 1973 J W Spear & Sons Ltd of Enfield relaunched the Frog Race game as a household party game consisting of four numbered frogs of different colours made of cardboard (Figure 12 & 13).

The game proved so popular that social clubs and fund raisers (Figures 14 A & B) adopted it and held frog racing events. Due to the heavier usage they made plywood or mdf (medium density fibreboard) versions of the frogs which were obviously more substantial. The cardboard and wooden versions being identical in there operation.

SPEAR'S FROG GAME

The 1973 version of Spear's Frog Race Game retailed at 60 pence!

As shown in the advertisement from the Sunday Mirror.

9 Spear's Frog Race Frogs are fun in this hilarious party game where the whole family can join in. For any numbers of players from the age of 6 to adult. £0.60.

Sunday Mirror - Sunday 09 December 1973

CHEERS FOR SPEAR'S

1 **HOME FARM** VICTORY
WOODEN 310 SAN PUZZLE

2 **WILD LIFE**

3 **Flutter**
WINNING STRATEGY GAME

4 **CROCHET**
FOR BEGINNERS

5 **REVERSI**

6 **SCRABBLE**
DE LUXE
SPECIAL FEATURES

7 **SPELL MASTER**

8 **COPPIT**
A TOP-THINKING TO-DO GAME
FOR 2-6 PLAYERS AGES 6 TO ADULT

9 **FROG RACE**

10 **Alice in Wonderland**

11 **Painting on Wood**

12 **CHUNKY**
FOR 2-4 YEAR OLDS

More Spear's games this year than ever to make your Christmas even merrier! Bringing endless hours of enjoyment for all the family. Spear's games are available where good toys and games are sold.

1. Cut-out puzzle - Home Farm over 60 pieces hand-cut from thick plywood with 12 stand-up models including a farm tractor. Age group 4-8 £0.75.
2. Wild Life! This thrilling game takes you through the world capturing and buying wild animals for your Zoo. For 3-6 players. Ages 10 to adult. £2.50.
3. Flutter. The game that gives you all the thrills of the Stock Exchange with none of the risks! For 2-10 players. Ages 10 to adult. £2.00.
4. Crochet for Beginners featuring the "Whistle" Starter to get girls started easily and quickly on the five basic stitches. With 12 mixed pattern back and front for one model. Girls of 8 and upwards. £0.60.
5. Spear's Reversi! A real "turn-up" of a game for two. Fun, fast and furious as you capture your opponent's pieces and reverse them for your own. Ages 8 to adult. £0.75.
6. New Scrabble De Luxe. A new luxury version with extra money to buy and with a range of beautiful and "glittered" so letter this story is place. Scoring table, lettering and booklet. £4.00. Also Standard Edition £2.00. Scrabble for Junior £1.00. Tablet Scrabble £1.00. Tablet Scrabble De Luxe £2.00.
7. Spell Master. An exciting spelling game for young children. 100 words, three spaces for plus to letter them. Only five cards to learn. £1.00.
8. Coppit! "Con on Dad, he's been a bit!" That's the way it is with Coppit - an exciting game of catching and releasing prisoners. For 2-6 players. Ages 6 to adult. £0.75.
9. Spear's Frog Race! Frogs are fun! It's a hilarious party game where the whole family can join in. For 2-6 players. Ages 6 to adult. £0.60.
10. Alice in Wonderland. An exciting board game with Lewis Carroll's original characters who speak and grand fun. 2-6 players. 6 years on. £0.60.
11. Painting on Wood. Seven lovely things including a letter or paper tray in a block ready-made for you to decorate in different colours everything provided. For ages 6 to adult. £1.00.
12. Chunky puzzle - Music Lesson. 12 huge, thick hand-cut wooden interlocking puzzle pieces. For two 2-4 years. £0.99.

SPEAR'S GAMES
VICTORY
J.W. Spear & Sons Ltd
Green Street, Exeter, Devon

Spears 1973 Game

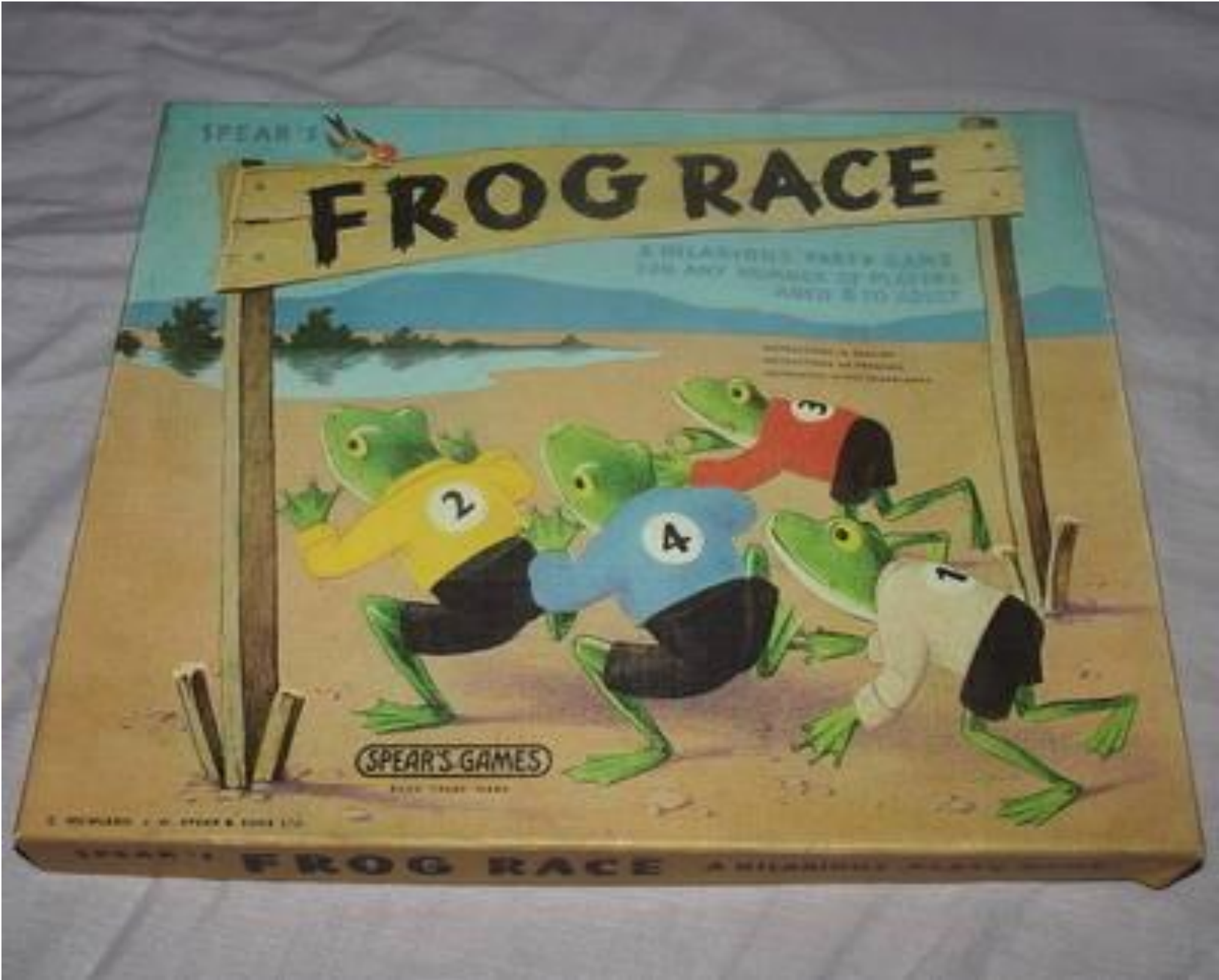


FIGURE 12

Note

The anatomy of the Spears frog was a cross between the 1901 original Roberts Brothers design and their 1920 version, having rounded webbed hands and pointed feet.



FIGURE 13

Timberland

DARBY AND JOAN Club members had their annual party in Timberland village hall on Tuesday, starting with a tea, given and served by the tea hostesses. Games were organised by Mrs J. Turpin and Mrs J. Harwood, the winners were:— Frog race: Mr Wrigley. Hat race: Mrs W. Spencer, Mrs C. Hare. Man's race: Mrs Woodhead. Mrs Dowse and Mr Atkin. Each member chose a present from a wide variety. The party ended with a concert given by Mrs Maclean and her Merry Mascots from Lincoln. Mr Atkin gave a vote of thanks. Supper was given to the concert party after the show.

FIGURE 14A

Sale helps the clock

A JUMBLE sale at St John the Evangelist Church, Copthorne, raised £63 towards mending the church clock.

About £200 is needed and with £136 already collected from a barbeque in July, the repairs are well on the way.

Mrs Maisie Pallett, chairman of the fund-raising committee, said a frog race and a barn dance were being arranged to raise money for concreting the church car park.

FIGURE 14B

EXPLANATORY NOTE (REGARDING HOWARD TELEPHONE EXCHANGE)



Between 1927 and 1966 the telephone numbering scheme for London (known as the Director System) was that each telephone was assigned a seven-digit telephone number.

The first three digits being that of the letters of the local exchange name, where;

1 (unused), **2** ABC, **3** DEF, **4** GHI, **5** JKL, **6** MN, **7** PRS, **8** TUV, **9** WXY, **0** OQ.

The reason for O and Q being aligned to **0** was to eliminate the possibility of a person misdialling as a result of misreading a number. Hence, the code for CROydon would be 270.

The last four digits being the number within that exchange.

Convention was that the first three letters would be in upper case and the remainder of the exchange name in lower case to avoid confusion, for example, WEMbley 3456.

In 1937 the Telephone Exchange serving Ponders End area was opened. However, the standard sequence of using the first three letters of the exchange name PONders End (706) would be the same as ROMford which already existed. Obviously, they could not be the same. Unfortunately, there were suitable no local names or landmarks (e.g. TABard after the Tabard Inn in Fleet Street, TATe Gallery, CLOcktower in East Ham).

Hence, Ponders End Telephone Exchange became HOWard based on an extremely tenuous link to John Howard (1726 - 1790) the renown prison reformer who might have been born in the Enfield area and that his father may have lived in the area for a number of years.

When the three letters/four numbers scheme was replaced in 1966/7 Ponders End changed from 409 (HOWard) to 804 as the British Telecom Phone Book 1975 shows.

Spear J.W.& Sons Ltd, Mfrs of Games—		
Bovril Ho, Southbury Rd, Enfield	01-366	0261
(Regd Off & Wks), Green St, Enfield Highway	01-804	2641