



Bulletin

Issued by the East London History Group.

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EDITORIAL.

The "Spotted Dog" in Upton Lane, West Ham, is being given a "face-lift". It is apparently to be enlarged (without defacing the original frontage) to provide meals for 100 people served by bow-tie waiters. The building is said to take its name from the Master of the Royal hounds when Henry VIII's kennels stood next door. During a London plague in 1603, the City merchants transacted their business here.

With a thousand other City motorists, I have often "snailed" my way along Abbey Lane to avoid Stratford Broadway, and frequently gazed at the old toll-gate post near the Canal bridge. Alas! the post has gone owing to essential road-works and we are unlikely to see it again. Incidentally, a group of enthusiasts in the West Ham area have formed a Society for preserving old implements and industrial equipment. When factories, workshops, etc. are due for demolition they try to secure any machinery or equipment of historical interest and are looking for accommodation to house their acquisitions.

So, after many years, the Lycett Mission in Mile End Road has been turned over to commercial use. The "Lycett" was widely esteemed in Methodist circles and names like C. Ensor Walters, Chudleigh and Percy Ineson, became well known in local evangelism.

A Roman foundation was uncovered a few weeks ago in Lower Thames S. Opposite the Custom House and only a few hundred yards from the Tower Hamlets border. This was during road-widening operations and it had to be buried as soon as pipe-work was completed, but archaeologists were given an opportunity to sift around the foundation. What was surprising was the geometrical accuracy of the brickwork and the depth below ground which must have been some 13-14'. Another interesting discovery within a stone's throw of our western border is the arch uncovered in Duke's Place off Aldgate High St. It is probably part of the Chapter House of the great Priory of Holy Trinity of which it was thought no remains existed.

Don't forget to send in your material for Bulletin No. 4!

A.H.F.

MANORIAL RECORDS

NEWHAM LIBRARIES have acquired the following :

Manor of West Ham. Ward of Stratford Langthorne.

Court rolls 17/5/1736 to 28/6/1802.

Court books 1808-11, 1812-15, 1816-24, 1824-41, 1842-67, 1867-1922.

Rental book of the Manors of Poplar, Bromley and West Ham.

Two bundles of 19th Century title deeds of C.J.C.Humphreys to the manors and rectory of West Ham respectively.

TOWER HAMLETS have acquired :

Manor of Bromley } - Court book, 23/8/1806 to 24/7/1893.
St.Leonard. }

Manor of Poplar - Court book 2/10/1810 to 14/7/1842.

" " 4/2/1840 to 9/9/1921 (with few further entries

C.J.C.Humphreys was Lord of all three manors in the 19th Century to 1932).

The Newham material is housed at Stratford Library, Water Lane, and the rental book contains material on Poplar and Bromley as well as West Ham.

SOME OLD AND CURIOUS STREET NAMES IN NEWHAM :

Some of the street names in the borough are much older than might be thought. Balaam Street, Plaistow, is first mentioned as Balostret in 1371. It has nothing to do with the Biblical Balaam, but is probably called after the family of Walter de Balame.

Several streets are called after old farms, for instance Hamfrith Road from Hamfrith Farm. The name appears as Hammefrith in 1285. Wood Grange from which Woodgrange Road takes its name, was a grange or farm of West Ham Abbey.

Pelly Road was once Palsey Lane, and Wakefield Street, East Ham, was once Dirty Lane. It is no surprise that the names were changed! Probably too, someone thought that Gipsy Lane for the upper half of Green Street was rather derogatory. The southern end has always been called Green Street. Green Street House which used to stand there was nicknamed "Anne Boleyn's Castle" and supposed by local legend to have a connection with Anne Boleyn. Unfortunately, this seems to have had no substance in it, though the oldest part of the House was of the right age. However, a little group of streets nearby were named after Henry VIII's wives - Arragon Rd. Cleves Rd. Boleyn Rd. Parr Rd. and Seymour Rd.

Maryland Point is so called because a house once stood there, built by a merchant who made a fortune in Maryland, America, in the early 18th Century.

Jews' Farm Lane in East Ham, is now prosaically renamed East Avenue. It is called after a farm which once stood there, called Jews' Farm, but how did it get its name?

Carpenters Road is so called because the Carpenters' Company has owned land in the neighbourhood since 1769. Many other streets are called after landlords or developers.

In Stratford Reference Library there is an index to street and other names and the origins have been given where they have been traced. This can be consulted by anyone who has an interest in street names. More origins have been found by work on a large number of deeds of council properties, which have recently come to the Library.

Education Records.

Some schoolchildren recently came into East Ham Library to trace the history of their school through the Education Committee minutes. This was easy to do in the more recent minutes, but we discovered that the minutes before 1920 had not been indexed, and this made research difficult. This is one example of the numerous jobs which remain to be done in our local collection. Another, which we are working on slowly, is to index the local newspapers.

Incidentally, the School Board minutes, which cover the period from 1870 to 1903, when the councils took over education, are also available for East and West Ham.

Anne J. C. Sansom.

E.L.H.G. POPULATION STUDY GROUP.

Due partly to lobbying by the Group, the Parish Registers of St. Dunstan's Stepney have been moved to the Greater London Council Record Office at County Hall (South side of Westminster Bridge). The Registers dated c.1710 - 1898 have been at County Hall for some time. Now all the registers of the Parish of St. Dunstan's, Stepney, are at County Hall and can be studied in comfort during office hours (Monday to Friday) and on Saturday morning by arrangement.

Five study sessions have been held. On prepared forms, we are noting the main details of those baptised, married and buried during the five-year period 1606-10. Soon we will be analysing our findings and preparing a report on the exercise which can be duplicated and distributed to all Group members.

It is too early to give any conclusions from the study, but the questions to be answered are :

1. The monthly rise and fall of the statistics with relation to climatic variation, disease, etc.
2. The comparative population of the hamlets in Stepney.
3. The comparative occupation structure of the hamlets.

The analysis can be done by arrangement at Bancroft Library on Saturday, or on one evening during the week. There is still a good deal of work to be done and any help would be very welcome. If you would like to help (no special skills required - just an ability to count) drop me a line to 2 Hargrave Park, London N. 19.

Michael J. Power.

"HERE", ONCE PEOPLE LIVED"

Watching the endless stream of traffic entering and leaving the wide vista of Blackwall Tunnel, it is hard to realise that just over a hundred years ago this was the most congested area of Poplar.

Here, in the narrow courts and alleys: Hanks Court, White Hart Place, Sun and Stars Alley, India Row (commonly called Irish Alley) and many others, dwelt the great mass of poor Irish Dock labourers.

The Dirty, sunless, foetid areas had an evil reputation. When shouts of "Murder" sounded, no one, 'unless they were one of ours' dared enter the vicinity. No policeman entered singly, but awaited reinforcements. To respectable citizens of Poplar it was known as 'Cut-throat Alley'.

So bad had living conditions become that Mr. Samuel K. Ellison, Medical Officer of Health, reported on April 1859 to the Board of Works :

"Gentlemen, I request that the Courts and Alleys be cleaned as it is impossible to keep them in a good sanitary condition by sweeping as it causes great holes by removing the gravel, wherein water and filth accumulate, and thereby causes the houses to be damp and unwholesome. They should be paved throughout. A pail of water thrown over the surface would do more good than all the sweeping,"

Without doubt, a good thunderstorm was a blessing to the area. However, there being no action taken we find the same perturbed man writing again to the Board on November 1859 :

"Gentlemen, I call your attention to eight houses on the south side of White Hart Place, Robin Hood Lane. Sixty-nine people occupy these houses. Each house has three rooms, one above the other - no ventilation - defective - no back premises - sickness and fever a constant occurrence amongst the inhabitants. Each room let out to separate families at 1/3d per week. No water, the inhabitants obliged to get it where they can. The cesspools overflow."

Hopefully, he concludes "I hope the Board will take steps to remedy the same".

His hopes were unfounded for later we find him writing more forcefully; concluding his repetition of previous complaints with the following note of despair :-

"Young children from their very infancy are made familiar with the worst scenes of dissipation and immorality. I recommend a general cleaning and whitewashing of all the rooms - they are not fit for human habitation. I have presented to your notice sufficient facts to vindicate the necessity for your interference in this matter and for the adoption of some means whereby the habits of the poor may be more healthfully regulated."

The persistence of Mr. Ellison paid off, for in the Minutes of the Board of Works for May 15th 1860, we find the following :-

"India Row and surroundings now in good condition - water laid on, which is a great boon to the inhabitants they not having had any water in the place for years."

So happened one more step in the alleviation of human misery.

S.Andrews.

WHERE IS THE GELDART CHALICE ?

Stratford Reference Library recently had an enquiry from the Victoria and Albert Museum regarding the whereabouts of a chalice made by the Rev. Ernest Geldart for St. Dunstan's House, Plaistow.

St. Dunstan's was otherwise called "Ivy House" and it was founded in 1876 by 'Brother George', otherwise George Charles Edward Malin, a bank clerk by day and a missionary in the evenings, as an Anglo-Catholic Mission. A large hall was built as a Club house in the garden, but after a few years the Mission came to an end about 1882.

Despite enquiries at local churches, and to the Diocesan Authorities, the chalice cannot now be traced. It is not listed in "The Church plate of Essex". Where might it be ?

A. J. C. Sansom.

MEATH GARDENS, BETHNAL GREEN.

These grounds, in Bethnal Green, were opened as a private cemetery in 1845 and it was called Victoria Park Cemetery. The owners specialised in cheap burials for children due to the high infantile mortality rate of the area.

Millicent Rose writes : "The little coffins were interred in layers, in common graves that held each about 20 bodies, and the number of funerals was estimated at 100 on an average day and 130 on Sundays. Many of the bereaved parents were weavers of Huguenot descent, and a custom arose of commemorating the lost child, and at the same time expressing a strongly felt personal grief..... by decorating the graves in a touching manner that was perhaps more French than English".

"The Builder" on September 1st 1860 described the graves "On many are large shells..... there are also chimney piece ornaments of value which had probably been familiar playthings.... mugs with names on them, china figures, dolls, little china basins and vases in which flowers are sown or planted".

The condition of the cemetery in the latter sixties became mutilated and derelict due to vandalism and only sympathetic action by the Metropolitan Gardens Association and the London County Council saved it from being used as a fairground.

At the end of the century, it was laid out as part garden and part recreation ground, the unbroken tombstones being set against the wall. It was named after Lord Meath, Chairman of the Metropolitan Gardens Association, and became a refreshing oasis in a congested and oppressive area.

A.H.F.

? Where were Knockfergus, Tenters and Paynters Rents ?
Watch out for Michael Power's Report on Population Studies later in the year.

"IDLE NOTES OF A BED-RIDDEN FELLOW"

(With apologies to Jerome K. Jerome)

If Stepney Meeting House still remains standing in Garden Street, on Stepney Green, it is good to recall that here it was that Richard Mead, the renowned physician, was born in the year 1673, son of the Reverend Matthew Mead, a leading Puritan Minister.

His early upbringing was at the hands of his father in the home at Stepney Green, and because of the prevailing religious discrimination, Richard was unable to study at the English Universities; he went instead, first to Utrecht and then to Leyden (in Holland) and finally completed his studies in general education and medicine, at Padua (in Italy).

He returned to practice at home, here in Stepney, as a physician, and rose to fame with the publication of his first book in 1702, "A Mechanical Account of Poisons", and he became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1703, the year he was appointed to St. Thomas's Hospital, as leading physician.

His reputation brought powerful friends, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and Alexander Pope, amongst the many.

It is interesting to note his devotion to the poor and destitute patients at St. Thomas's, and his deep concern for the wider learning is illustrated in the anecdote of his refusal to prescribe for the all-powerful Sir Robert Walpole, until his patient had signed an order for the release from the Tower of London, of Doctor Freind, for a seditious speech. The worthy Doctor Freind used his freedom to complete "The History of Physick from the time of Galen to the beginning of the Sixteenth Century".

By the exercise of this magnanimity, for Dr. Freind was a political opponent of his, Mead secured the survival of the first history of medicine written in English. It was under the influence of Richard Mead, likewise, that Thomas Guy was led to found Guy's Hospital, as a complementary service to that already given by St. Thomas.

S.Truman.

(Note: We are pleased that Mr. Truman is no longer "bed-ridden" but is now actively back with us. - Ed.)

THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL IN HACKNEY.

Because of the unsuccessful race against the clock at our February Meeting at Shoreditch, it was not possible to read that part of the paper which related to Hackney School and it is accordingly set out below to complete the East London picture. -

./-

(The Parochial School in Hackney, cont)-

As in most parishes, the earliest pattern in Hackney was probably that of a limited education for the few by the Church rather than secularly.

In 1613 a Schoolmaster was appointed by the Vestry to teach grammar, writing and accounts to the (selected ?) children of the parish. He was to take no more than fourpence weekly from them, or twopence for English grammar only.

In 1616 MRS. MARGARET AUDLEY, by her will, left £700 to the Skinners Company on condition that they paid an annuity of £35 to the Hackney Church Wardens of which £20 was towards the expenses of a Schoolmaster to keep a School for the education of twelve poor boys - their age is not known. The Schoolmaster was to be appointed by the Vicar and Churchwardens with the consent of twelve "most substantial householders". What, in fact, happened is not clear but it appears that the two Schoolmasters taught separately at the Vicarage (Urswick's House) until 1771, when it became necessary to remove to Plough Lane in Homerton. (See Nathaniel Shute's "Corona Charitatis", 1625, and Lyson's "Environs" 1794). It was intended originally that they should be qualified for the learned professions, but it was no longer insisted on when the salary was thought inadequate to that purpose.

In the subsequent fifty years it must remain speculative that the affairs of the Parochial and the Charity School proceeded evenly. The next record tells us that in 1665 "Shingle the Schoolmaster was dismissed for not having qualified any of the scholars for the university, Inns of Court, or other good employment".

The increase of population, possibly due in part to the natural attractions of Hackney Village and in part also to the migration from the City and its environs consequent upon the Plague and the Fire doubtless increased the demand for schools at every level of the social strata. Defoe stated that wealthy residents of Hackney "kept between them near one hundred coaches" and we know from Pepys that Hackney was famous also for its Boarding Schools for young ladies at this period. Pepys himself attended a school at Kingsland. By the century's end more concern was being evidenced for the education of the poorer classes also. Typical of this concern was a pamphlet of 1648 by Sir William Petty who suggested the foundation of "literary workhouses where all children over seven might learn not only to read and write but something towards their living", and went on to make his imperishable observation that "some now holding the plough might have been made fit to steer the ship of state".

By the early eighteenth century the population in Hackney had reached towards ten thousand. No news of Mrs. Audley's Free School and the Parochial School both of which were now at Homerton, appears to have survived but it may well have been that both had fallen upon difficult times for, in 1714 the Parochial Charity School was founded "by the pious liberality of the inhabitants". It was to be supported by annual subscriptions, benefactions and half-yearly collections in the Parish Church. The minimum subscription was fixed at two pounds per annum - many residents gave five pounds - and every subscriber was entitled to a voice on the Committee which sat monthly with a quorum of five. Thirty boys and twenty girls were to be admitted, educated and clothed (but apparently not boarded) and their parents were to have settlement in the parish.

Some extracts from the Minutes during these early years may be of interest :
Schoomaster: George TOPPING appointed at £30 p.a. House to be rent free and two chaldrons of coals for the use of the schoolroom. Appointment to be terminated at three months notice. A house in the churchyard to be taken for him at £9 p.a.

(19 April 1714) ./-

(The Parochial School in Hackney, cont)-

Schoolmistress: Appointed during the following week from three applicants was HANNAH WADE. "Her election was deferred till past 12 o'clock in hopes to have the company of the Justices who were at the Mermaid". Salary £20 p.a.

Clothes: "Agreed to furnish the boys and girls with clothes" (22 May 1714).

Inspection: "This night the boys and girls of these Schools were called in and were commended or reprov'd according as they deserved" (31 July 1714).

Outing: "Agreed that fifty children should be sent to Fleet Street to see His Majesty passing through the said Cities (of London & Westminster) and that they should be paid for at ten pence halfpenny each" (21 Aug 1714).

Shoes: "Agreed that shoes should be provided for the children at two shillings a pair for the boys and one and tenpence for the girls" (19 Feb 1714/15).

"Also Linen for shifting and shirting".

False Complaint: "Mrs. Spurling appeared and made several complaints against the Master which appeared to be false and groundless, upon which she has received a reprimand (16 May 1715).

Writing: "Agreed that the girls shall be taught writing and addition for the last six months (of their schooling) " (7 May 1716).

Runaway: "John Hide.... having run away.... is discharged" (2 Feb 1716/17).

It appears from a fuller reading that this was not the first time.

Apprentice : "Agreed that Thomas Smith apprenticed to (a Broad Hill silk weaver) shall have his bond cancelled because of his sweatty hand and shall instead go upon trial to William Welch, glover" (6 April 1717).

In April 1718 there was a change of Master for a reason unspecified and WILLIAM ROWLANDS was appointed from Midsummer but the Schoolmistress, Hannah Wade, continued until 1723 when we learn that Mistress Deborah French is to be appointed. In this year also, it was decided that the qualification for admission should be extended (beyond those having legal settlement) in extra-ordinary cases. This may be some indication that if a subscriber was willing to pay an additional sum he would be encouraged to nominate a child from outside the Parish because in September of 1724 a Committee was appointed to enquire into the state of the Schools. The Treasurer resigned - subscriptions were found to be in arrears and the accounts badly kept with Revenue shown as £94 p.a. and Expenditure at £170. Shades of Mr. Micawber. The state of the children's clothing was found to be bad and numerous complaints were to be heard concerning the behaviour of the boys. The decay and ill-state of the School was attributed to insufficient support and a collector of subscriptions was appointed to pursue those residents who were in arrears. For this duty one Sadler was to receive £5 p.a.

Thus the Parochial Charity pursued its uneven course and, doubtless, like the Duke of York's supporters "when they were up they were up and when they were down they were down". The Minutes are contained in two substantial and rewarding volumes.

(To be concluded in next Bulletin).

S. C. Tongue.

PROGRAMME NOTES

There will not be another Bulletin before our last meeting of the present season which, as you should know, is to be on TUESDAY 18 JULY at the Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, Shoreditch, at 6.30 p.m. It behoves me now therefore, to thank you for your support during 1966/67 and to express the hope that you have derived both pleasure and information from the meetings which you have been able to attend. It is always pleasant, I think, to meet old acquaintances and to greet new ones also and for my own part I value this function of our meetings as highly as their intrinsic content.

The provisional arrangements for the new session are as follows :

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| October | Annual General Meeting and Members' Evening |
| November | Annual Lecture at Stepney in association with Tower Hamlets Library |
| November | J.L.OLIVER on The East London Furniture Industry |
| December | will thus be left free for other seasonal pre-Occupations. |
| January | J.H.BOYES on London's Canals |
| February | To be arranged |
| March | WILLIAM ADDISON on Epping Forest |
| April | To be arranged |
| May | GORDON BARNES on Poplar churches |
| June | COL. WILLIAMS, Salvation Army on Congress Hall and its predecessors. |
| July | To be arranged |

It is intended also to arrange some Saturday meetings which will include:

- A motorcade around the Bethnal Green churches
- A Poplar walk
- Visit to Sutton Place, Hackney, and the Old Tower.
- Visit to a Record Office

It is never particularly easy to compile a programme which strikes a precise balance and I am very conscious that one hundred per cent of our members will not attend the same percentage of meetings but I have walked the tightrope of popular appeal as best I can. I hope, therefore, that we shall be spared the embarrassment of introducing a speaker to thirteen per cent of our members and wish you all a Happy New E.L.H.G. Year.

S.C.T.