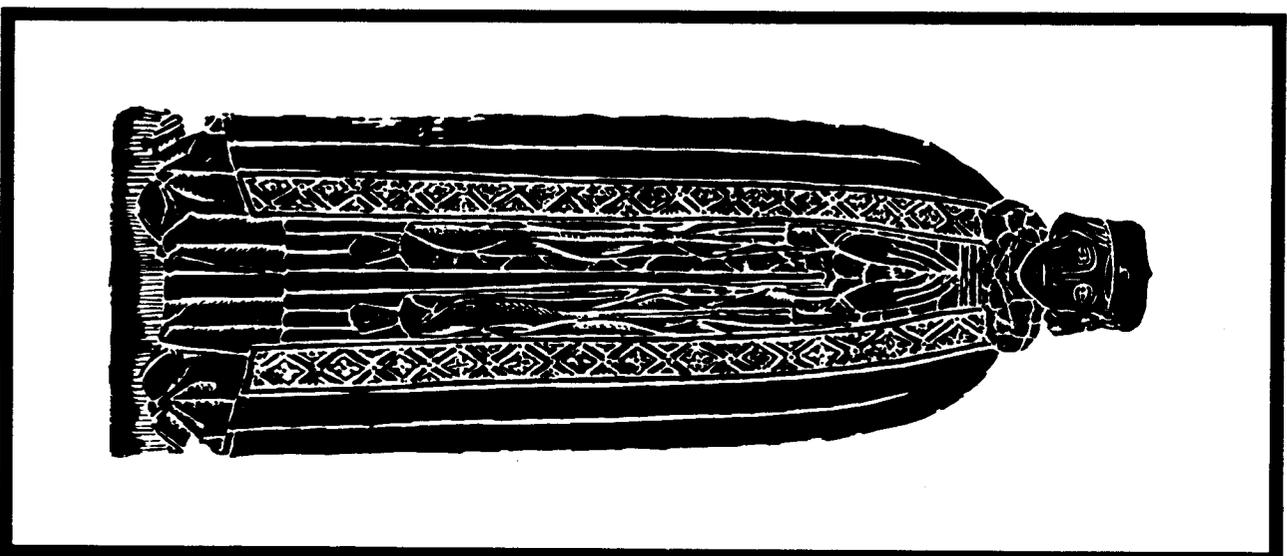
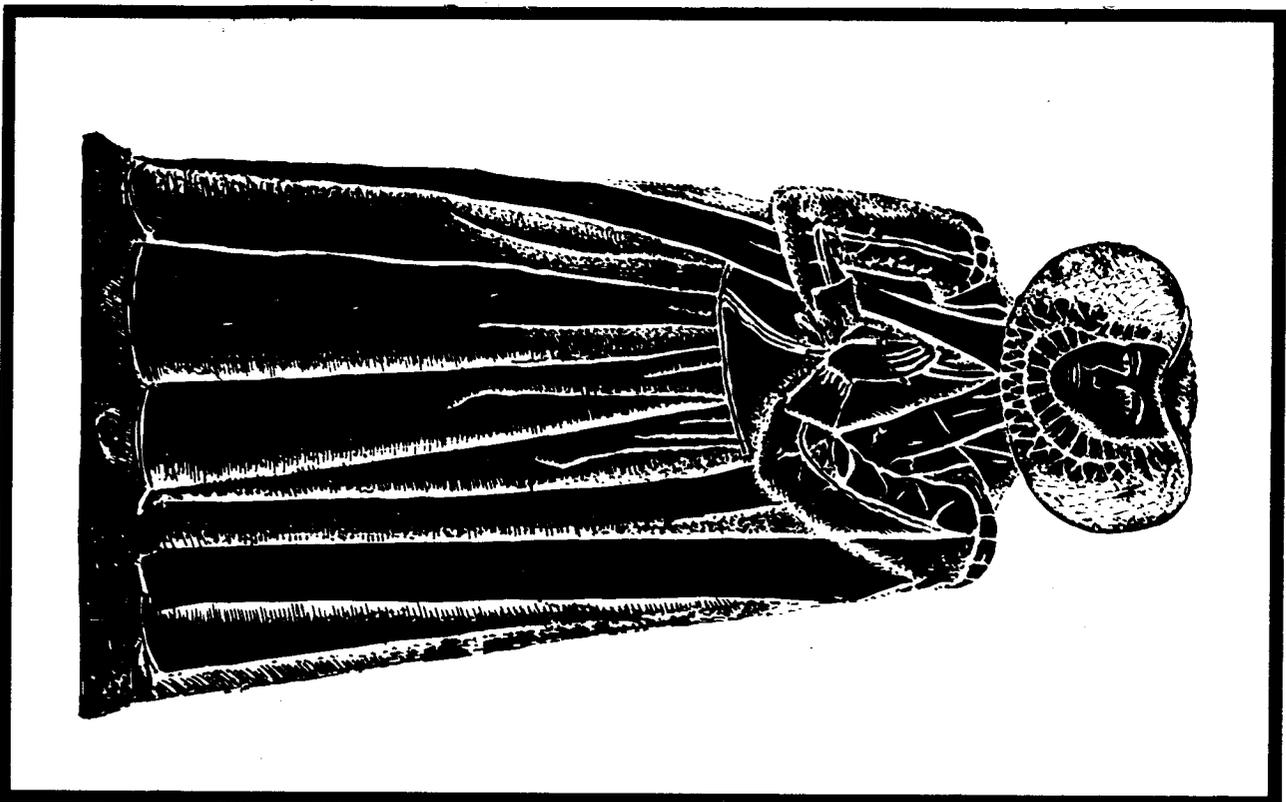


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EAST LONDON HISTORY GROUP

BULLETIN NO. 11.

JUNE 1969.



BULLETIN No. 11.EDITORIAL

Perhaps the reference in the last Bulletin to the poor state of St. Anne's Church, Limehouse, bore some fruit. It is understood that arrangements are in hand to give it a face-lift. The parishioners of St. Peter's, Garford Street, are very much concerned as their church has been closed and the area placed within the orbit of St. Anne's. This brings to mind another church closure, that of St. Augustine's, Haggerston, which has been taken over by the 59 Club (a motor-cycle group) much to the regret of Father Ralph Wallace who has spent 39 years in London parishes.

After 99 years, Dr. Barnardo's Homes in Stepney Causeway have closed and moved to the country, to make way for a new GLC redevelopment scheme. East Londoners will long remember the "ever-open door" at No. 10 Stepney Causeway. Another closure is that of "Cockneyland" in Petticoat Lane (mentioned in Bulletin No. 7) which appears to have made a heavy loss.

The Bulletin pays tribute to Mr. A. S. Jasper (Jan Williams) of Hackney whose article in "East London Papers" was of great appeal. From a working-class background, over 60 years of age and with heart disease, he started writing memories of Hoxton which won him an award from the Arts Council. His book "A Hoxton Childhood" published by Barrie & Rockcliff is commended to all who have the history of East London at heart.

Dr. K. MacDonnell writes "Members of the E.L.G.G. will recall that at the last Annual General Meeting, Mr. S. A. Andrews opened a discussion on the derivation of the place-name 'Isle of Dogs'. His observations - and others by Dr. MacDonnell - to Professor E. G. Stanley (of the English Department of Queen Mary College and an Editor of 'Notes and Queries') and Mr. David Mills (of the same department and Assistant Honorary Secretary of the English Place-Name Society). In their opinion the term dog refers to the animal; some of the early references to the place-name (in the 16th and 17th centuries) clearly do so. The reason for connecting the peninsula with dogs remains, however, unknown; there may yet exist further documentary evidence which might help with the problem. We are grateful to Mr. Andrews for giving the subject an airing and for evoking, as he has done, considered responses of modern scholars".

The Committee have agreed, after considering a number of requests, to support the proposal to be raised at the Annual General Meeting in October, that the Group's title be changed to "The East London History Society". It is felt that this will meet more fully the widening sphere of the Group's activities.

The Group is sponsoring an "East London History Exhibition" in 1970 to be held at the Central Library, Bancroft Road, from the 8th June until the 10th July. The Exhibition will be supported by a programme of lectures, slides, demonstrations etc. It is hoped that the Exhibition will also be held for a week each in Newham and Hackney. The Editor would be grateful for the names of any who wish to assist in the work this Exhibition will involve.

THE TEACHING OF LOCAL HISTORY IN THE SECONDARY
MODERN SCHOOL - A NOTABLE ADVANCE.

The Editor has kindly allowed me to express myself on the importance of teaching the subject of Local History in the schools, either as a special feature of interest, or as a subject for examination on leaving school.

I have long been concerned with the placing of this subject for regular teaching in the schools, mainly because of my experience in local politics which convinced me that we should achieve enlightened interest and participation in local (and national) government by confronting children of school age with the past history of their own area, and how its development has been guided and enriched by the public-spirited (and in most cases voluntary) efforts of their predecessors.

Apart then from its intrinsic value as a matter of absorbing interest, affording pleasure and extending knowledge, there was this highly ethical incentive of serving the community, 'pro bono publico'. In his address to the meeting of Education Officers (June 1968), the Minister for Education & Science emphasised the need for educating young people, even those still attending school, in the responsibilities of Citizenship, particularly in view of the eventuality of the vote being granted at the age of 18.

In the Minutes of the Stepney Borough Council (May 1901) appears a letter from the London School Board, conveying a Memorandum from the Board of Education addressed to the newly-established Borough Councils (London), asking for their co-operation in the provision at the expense of the Board, of a lecture to school children on the history of the Borough. - "The Scheme is approved by the Board of Education who have informed the School Board that they consider the experiment to be one that should prove of distinct value. The old custom of 'beating the bounds' is now impracticable but the School Board believe that the knowledge of local patriotism, which that custom helped to produce can be secured by the presence of each successive generation of school children at lectures on local history held, if possible, in the chief centre of local administration and amply illustrated by a magic lantern" etc.etc.

David Grannick's most interesting report of the Third Annual Local History Conference (see E.L.H.C. Bulletin No.9) refers to the statement of principal speaker, Mr. Whitting :-

"As School Development is in a stage of transformation this is a good time to introduce or widen the scope for the teaching of local history. But many schools and colleges were very much against the teaching of local history. In many the subject was not on their local curriculum. He was pressing for it to become a subject which should be taught in all schools and universities nationally".

Now comes the very welcome news in "Teaching History", a bulletin issued by the Historical Association (59 Kennington Park Road S.E.11) in May 1969, crammed full of interest to all students of history, and particularly to those who, like me (and I sincerely hope you also) are keen on the desire to accelerate the speed of this progress.

Also in that bulletin there is an article "Some recent trends in Teaching C.S.E. History" which tells of experimental surveys in the past two years of the possibilities of establishing the subject of local history in the Secondary School curriculum, particularly in the area of the South East Regional Examination Board. This is exhilarating news for a long-time warrior like myself, and I am indeed delighted to pass on the good news to members of the East London History Group who must be equally pleased.

C.S. Truman.

P.S.- The Editor is allowing me to make a personal appeal for help with urgent research studies in which I have been closely engaged during the past decade. These studies are all connected specifically with the Tower Hamlets district and I am in desperate need of help if these are to be completed under my personal guidance. Will all readers who may be interested in such studies and to co-operate in this venture kindly communicate with me at 7, Kennington Palace Court, London S.E.11, and state the hour and evening of the week most convenient for them to attend a meeting in the Mile End area, when the matter can be further considered.

C.S.T.

STEPNEY GREEN CLOCK TOWER

The many people who have occasion to walk through Stepney Green cannot fail to observe the Clock Tower, and among them many must be curious as to its history. In the first place, it originally stood in the centre of Burdett Road at the junction of Bow Common Lane, Canal Road and Coutts Road, where it was erected in 1913 as a memorial to Dr. Stanley B. Atkinson, a prominent social worker in the East End of London, particularly within the Borough of Stepney, and incidentally there is a bust statue of the Doctor in the Mile End Public Library in Bancroft Road.

The reason for the removal of the Tower to Stepney Green was that by 1933 it had become a danger on account of the enormously increasing volume of traffic. In those days there was a very frequent service of electric trams along the Burdett Road and, in consequence, the powers that be were compelled to come to the conclusion that the structure could not in the interest of public safety remain in its original position, particularly in respect of its danger to pedestrian traffic.

The Council at that time, however, were most anxious that if at all possible, the memorial should be preserved in the Borough and eventually in January 1934 the removal was made to its present site in Stepney Green.

The scheme for the removal was entrusted to the Borough Engineer and Surveyors Department who resolved to tackle the job by bodily transporting the Tower in "one piece" instead of demolishing and rebuilding it. The structure was built of brick walls with faience plinth etc. measuring about 8 feet x 8 feet and 35 feet in height, being hollow internally where the clock mechanism is (or was) housed and weighed about 30 tons.

For those interested in this somewhat ingenious operation

I will briefly relate the proceedings though I will be calling upon my memory of some 35 years ago.

To make this whole venture a reasonable possibility lay in the good fortune and knowledge that an eminent transport firm by the name of E.W.Rudd Ltd. of Poplar, E.14, owned a very special type of vehicle which they had designed for transporting at that time the largest of transformers and which was most suitable to cope with the removal of this structure.

The first stage was to sever the building from its conventional foundation, then temporarily cradle it externally, and strut internally with stout timbers with the object of preventing the whole thing from collapsing. This work together with the preparation of the new foundation at Stepney Green took about two to three weeks and was performed by the Council's Works Dept.

Having accomplished this much it fell to the Saturday night of 28th January 1934 to carry out the removal after the last trams had passed it at about 1 a.m. The height of the Tower ascended much above the height of the overhead tram power wires therefore these had to be temporarily taken down (current switched off) before being able to move away. In the meantime, the transport firm was busily carrying out the necessary jacking up and securing the Tower to the vehicle to support same in a perpendicular position. All being ready, it was in the light of acetylene flares and witnessed by hundreds of interested Stepney people who found the whole spectacle sufficiently attractive to keep them from their beds, lifted on to the vehicle and at about 6 a.m. on Sunday this most unusual 'cargo' moved off. The route was along Canal Road, Mile End Road (with heads popping out of bedroom windows to witness the somewhat strange sight) and on to Stepney Green which was safely reached at about 8 a.m.

There was some speculation as to how the load would behave when cornering the roads and traversing the bridge over the Regents Canal in Mile End Road, but fortunately with the aid and skill of the steam tractor driver these were negotiated successfully. Quite a large number of the spectators at Burdett Road followed the whole proceedings throughout to Stepney Green, and in conclusion, I can happily relate nothing fell apart, not even a speck of dust was lost.

Percy T. Palmer, L.R.I.B.A., M.of Inst.
R.A.
January 1969.

CENSUS RETURNS AND THEIR INDEXING

Since 1801, there have been official censuses of the population every ten years (apart from 1941). However, these censuses are confidential, and the full returns are not available until a hundred years have passed. Before 1841, the lists were summaries only; so this only leaves three completed available census returns, 1841, 1851 and 1861.

The 1841 list is rather less detailed, but the 1851 and 1861 census returns give us a complete list of the inhabitants of a place, with their occupations, ages, birthplaces, family relationships, etc.

At Stratford Library, we have had census returns for

1841 and 1851 in photostat copies for some time, and a simple index of names and occupations was completed. The 1861 census is in microfilm form, and being less easy to consult, and much longer, it has still not been completely indexed. These are for West Ham parish - recently we obtained photo-copies of the East Ham returns as well.

We have now started to analyse the 1861 West Ham returns, and those for East Ham in 1851, using a more elaborate method devised by Peter Tillott, of the University of Sheffield Extra-Mural Department. This involves making out a slip for every person named in the census return, giving name, address, age, occupation, birthplace, relationship to head of household, husband's wife's or father's age and occupation. On the head of household's form the numbers and ages of children, servants, lodgers and visitors, are also listed. When fully analysed, it will give information about such things as size of families, movements of population, sons following father's occupations (or not) etc.

Comparison between the censuses for different decades also shows the growth of industries, and the decline of others - in West Ham for instance, the old-established silk and cotton printing industry declines from 1841 to 1851, whilst the establishment of the Eastern Counties railway works at Stratford in 1847 brought a great increase in engine drivers, firemen, locomotive smiths, and so on.

Some things strike the eye as general impressions, which more thorough analysis might bring out - for instance, the number of children who went to school, even in poor families, they are marked as "scholar" on the census. If we can trust the returns in this, there do not seem to be many cases of children going to work at a very early age - before twelve or thirteen though perhaps more in rural East Ham than in more industrial West Ham. There were certainly a fair number of schools and school teachers in West Ham by 1851 - 49 teachers, not counting governesses, music teachers etc. There were a number of small boarding schools, including one in which many of the pupils came from the West Indies - I think they were born there of British parents, not early examples of Commonwealth immigrants!

Another rather strange connection with the West Indies an agricultural labourer living in East Ham, born no farther away than Laindon - you might think he had never travelled any farther than this, had his son not been born "on the sea near Barbadoes". People certainly seemed to move about a good deal - sometimes the birthplaces of a large family allow us to trace the movements of their parents. Thus, a railway worker born in County Durham had come to Stratford by way of Swindon. This is just an example of the odd little things which strike one when doing this work, like the sugar boilers of West Ham nearly all from Hanover. It is, of course, a long job, but when completed it will give us a mine of information.

A. J. C. Sansom.

What do you know about Roman East London? or the ropemakers of East London? come and learn more at the East London History Exhibition - June/July 1970.

A VICTORIAN COMMERCIAL

Most people today are hardened to the slushy, over-sentimental tone of many Television commercials. Modern advertising may have become more slick, but the fundamentals still exist and the basic approach has not changed from the days of the Elizabethan mountebank. How the following advertisement from Simpson's Directory of Poplar (1866) must have brought tears of relief to many a Victorian parent!

"CUBITT'S ELIXER OF STRENGTH

Many a pale faced girl has had the bloom of health brought back to her. This medicine comes to the Mother as she weeps over her pale, sickly child. It bids her sigh no more, for the little one, now delicate, shall soon be as strong as ever. If sorrow has brought you low, then here is the antidote. Are you a total abstainer, who from principle will not take strong drink? Then if weakness comes upon you, here is the remedy that will strengthen without making you break your pledge.

It comes to the consumptive, the asthmatic, the scrofulous and the cancerous, and whispers hope even to them.

11/s - 4/6d - 2/9d - 1/1½d. "

S.A. Andrews, 2/68.

HOW TO FIND OUT II.USING DIRECTORIES (Cont. from Bulletin No. 8).

Lists of places of worship are helpful in dating, and an entry such as "Dalstar Philanthropic Institution" may summarise adequately the objects of the charity as well as those associated with it. Parish statistics and accounts will be of interest to the local historian and, to those with some interest in transport, a list of omnibuses (horse-drawn of course), their routes and frequency can be absorbing. Lists of J.P.'s again may be useful in dating a document or even in checking a tentative transcription of the signature, and a list of police courts with the boundaries of their jurisdiction may often provide some useful note such as "until the erection of the new Police Court House at----". Finally, a few pages of advertisement are not to be despised either as sociological material or to build a picture of an individual. Quite recently, an enquirer in America was delighted to receive information as to the occupation of her ancestor, a boot and shoe manufacturer in Shore-ditch. "At last" she wrote, "after knowing where he lived for so many years, we now know what his business was".

The Borough of Hackney Directory for 1872 represented the new school of efficiency. Published by Charles W. Brabner, a newspaper proprietor in Kingsland Road, it created an immediately favourable impression with a Table of Contents. A very full list of Churches & Chapels includes name of minister, Services, Hymnal, Organist, and, in the case of Anglican churches, adds date of consecration, architect, seating, choirmaster and patron of the living. Who would normally turn to a local directory for a consecration date! The date of thirty years earlier is presented under

similar headings, but in greater detail and an alphabetical list of residents is given under two headings, private and commercial (thus frequently affording two addresses for a tradesman). The streets section has added entries in the form (e.g.) "Havelock Villas - see Lansdowne Road".

The other aspects of the use of directories is illustrated by their value in geographical enquiry, particularly for economic geography. Extensive collections are housed in London in the British Museum, Guildhall Library, Bishopsgate Institute to name a few - and as an introduction to this branch of local research two books are particularly helpful, one on London and one excluding the capital :

GOSS, C.W.F. - The London Directories, 1677-1855 (1932).

NORTON J.E. - Guide to the National & Provincial Directories of England & Wales, excluding London, published before 1856. (1950).

In general, the Post Office Directories are superior to their local counterparts for they are consistent. The first was published in 1800 and editions were frequently named after H.M. Inspector of Letter Carriers of the day. Hence, Festus Frederick Kelly (1803-83) held the post (no pun intended!) from 1836 but after one year he resigned, considering it unethical that private profit should be gained from an official pursuit, and from this action grew Kelly's Post Office London Directory (1845) followed by directories for the counties until their cessation in 1940. These, together with Kelly's Directory of Merchants, manufacturers and Shippers (from 1877) and to special trade directories e.g. cabinet-making, are invaluable source material for tracing the history of business undertakings and industrial migration and a great part of the fabric of our local history in the 19th Century and after may be woven from them.

S. C. Tongue.

QUARTERLY SPOTLIGHT..... Mininotes on People & Places.

The next time you are within the Bow Road locality, take time off to wander down Coburn Road (whose junction with Bow Road is opposite St. Clement's Hospital) and look at the terrace of houses, Nos. 15 to 41.

These properties, which are all listed as Grade III, are early 19th Century buildings built in pairs under a pediment, with linking blocks, all of two storeys. Note the treatment of the windows on the main blocks, the upper and lower windows being united in a vertical stuccoed design set under a depressed arch in a shallow recess of the facade brickwork. The ground floor window is flanked by Tuscan pilasters supporting an abbreviated entablature on which stands an arch formed of a grooved band, enclosing the first floor window and the stuccoed panel below it.

This motif is unique to this group of houses and having regard to the particular interest of their facades and the general interest of the group as representatives of the "block and link" or conjoined villa approach to terrace design, these properties warrant a higher grade than their present status as Grade III

buildings would imply. Examples of buildings such as these are comparatively rare, but they made a distinctive contribution to London terrace-building of the early 19th Century.

I have recently been looking at the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority's "Report on the Development of the Regional Park with Plan of the Proposals" (pub. March 1969 at £2.2.0). From these proposals, I have extracted those which are of particular interest to the E.L.H.G. The Abbey Mills Pumping Station, an excellent example of 19th Century engineering, is the subject of a long-term proposal for the structure to be preserved as a nucleus for a Museum of Industrial Archaeology when the building becomes surplus to pumping requirements. It is also hoped to include the island site into the Museum area by filling in an existing waterway known as 'Abbey Creek'. Other proposals affect the future of the Three Mills, Bromley by Bow, which are in fact situated on the Newham bank of the River Lea. Of the two existing watermills, the Clock Mill and the House Mill, it is the intention of the Authority to demolish the House Mill but the Clock Mill is to be used for accommodating the proposed Arts Complex at Three Mills.

The site of the Church of St. Mary, Bromley St. Leonard and part of St. Mary's Churchyard, Bromley High Street, is affected by redevelopment. The existing remains are to be re-interred. As a consequence of this announcement by the G.L.C. I re-read Dunstan's "History of Bromley St. Leonard" and noted that "On the first day of January 1856, the Churchyard was closed against all burials, whether in graves or vaults, by Order of Her Majesty in Council..." Now, 113 years later, its eradication has begun by formal notice published in the local press. Our respect for life is echoed in our respect for the dead - the remains of those who trod the streets of Bromley Parish over a hundred years ago will be carefully removed and again laid to rest in consecrated land at East London Cemetery in the London Borough of Newham.

You may have read in the newspaper of the recent discovery of a stone coffin (believed to be of the Roman period) on a building site abutting Parnell Road, north of Roman Road, Bow. This discovery is being investigated by the professional experts and I hope to give more details of their findings in a subsequent issue of the Bulletin.

I am being greatly encouraged by those members who are beginning to look around with the "ever-seeing eye". My grateful thanks to Mrs. Bennett who took the trouble to write to me about an interesting gravestone in St. Mary's Churchyard, Stoke Newington (now London Borough of Hackney), and to David Grannick who has been spotting insurance plaques on buildings within our area.

We are now at the time of the year when those members who have a camera should be getting out and about recording the local scene and items of interest. Just a few suggestions: street scenes, individual buildings, river scenes, lamp posts, street names, shop-fronts, signs, bollards etc.etc. Please be sure to record full details at time of taking. Two areas in special need of photographic recording - Three Mills Lane, off St. Leonard's Street, Bromley-by-Bow, and the Angel Lane, off Stratford Broadway. Good Hunting!

K. R. Royden.

VANDALISM OR PRESERVATION ?

The replanning of the East End of London and its consequent rebuilding, brings in its train a number of minor problems which could hardly have been visualised by the planners as they pored over their drawing-beards, draughting a new environment for East Londoners, new houses and flats, new parks and gardens, new streets etc. Whole sections of East London have changed under redevelopment.

One of the minor casualties as a result of this large-scale rebuilding, is the complete disappearance of streets and lanes, with the resulting loss of many street names with long and historic connections. Additionally, there is the loss of many quaintly-titled alleys which abounded in East London, forming a connecting-link between Georgian and Victorian urban development and its rural past.

A few examples in Stepney, now threatened by the onslaught of the bulldozer would not go amiss :

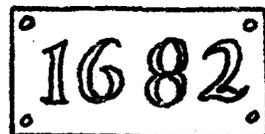
Radcliffe Orchard
Redmead Lane
Greenbank
Artichoke Hill

These have been chosen at random from among many now threatened with extinction. We can only hope that some of these names will be retained when the new streets are built.

But a more serious casualty and one which I find very disturbing and wish to bring to the attention of the History Group as a matter of the utmost urgency, is the disappearance of a number of metal plaques and boundary signs which have taken place within the past few months. Some of these have historic connections of importance.

Whether it is the local Councils, the City of London Corporation or the G.L.C. who have taken them down, or they have been stolen by so-called 'antique dealers' (a new and cheap source of supply?) or souvenir hunters, I have been unable to ascertain.

One of the most well-known of these boundary marks (which has disappeared within the last few weeks) much illustrated in books of local history and which has a special write-up in the L.C.C. Survey of London, Vol.27 "Spitalfields & Mile End Old Town" Page 30. This mark indicated the western boundary of the Artillery Ground in Spitalfields and was situated above No.9 Brushfield Street, a quaint reminder of early times. The base of this sign was a lead plate with superimposed lead figures, giving the date 1682. Above it was a broad arrow sign in iron, (this has not been removed) possibly an early example of the arrow widely used to denote military property.



A foot to the left of the Artillery sign, was a small cast-iron boundary plaque of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, - this has also gone.

Another of these boundary plaques which has gone within the past year is an oblong cast-iron sign in high relief of St. Botolph's, Aldgate, dated 1782. This was in St. Katherine's Way, almost at the river entrance to St. Katherine's Dock. Unfortunately (for those interested in local history) this plaque was at eye level height, easy for souvenir hunters or vandals to steal.



A further loss, this time in Dallow Street, between Cable Street and the Highway (Ratcliff Highway) on the playground wall of a demolished school (behind which a new block of G.L.C. flats is now going up) was a late 18th Century Boundary Plaque of St. George in the East, when that parish was in Middlesex. This again was within easy reach of an average person and easily removed.

One disappearance, less easily understood, concerns a plaque similar to the one depicted here, from Wapping High Street. This was on the front wall of a Wharf, a few hundred yards east of the River Police Headquarters. But this little shield was between 15 and 20 feet above the ground and could not possibly have been reached other than with a ladder.



Questions which inevitably arise, who has taken down these plaques and why? Is it the local Authorities or have they been stolen? This is a serious problem and one that should be tackled with a sense of urgency.

I am sure the Group Committee would like to hear of any other examples of vanishing signs and plaques in East London. A little probing may produce some answers or explanations.

The aim of the East London History Group should be to ensure that Local Authorities remove these items for safety whilst an area is being rebuilt, and to secure their replacement as near as possible to their original site on completion.

This would blend some character into modern development and give a historical continuity to the area.

David Granick.