

EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY

WINTER NEWSLETTER : JANUARY, 1984

PROGRAMME : On Thursday, January 19th 1984, we have a talk by Mr. John Archer on "Some little-known aspects of the Anti-Fascist Movement in the 1930's". The talk is not intensely political but is based on various incidents which came to light during his work on a larger study of the Left in Britain in the period, which he found astonishing and not quite in accord with the accepted tradition. Rosemary Weinstein of the Museum of London will be talking about Sir John Leman who is remembered in East London by Leman Street. Phillip Daniell will be enlightening us on 'London's Waterways' on the 22nd March, while Tony Fincham, a member of our Committee, will be discussing the East London Sailors Homes and their re-development, on the 19th April. This will be in the Nelson Room of the former Sailors' Home at the junction of Burdett Road and West India Dock Rd. Miss Wait, the Assistant Hackney Archivist, will be taking us on a walk on the 23rd May when we shall meet at 6.30 p.m. at the old Church tower so well known in Hackney. The season will finish on the 14th June with a talk by Sue Laurence on "The Politics of Housing in Hackney 1880-1914" at the Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road.

2. COACH OUTING : As there was quite a loss on the last outing, we would like to know if there is enough support for an outing next Spring. We need to have at least 30 people before it becomes economic to hire a coach. Please fill in the slip below and return it to Miss Sansom (18 Hawkdene, Chingford, E.4) if you would support an outing.

The suggested date is Saturday, 12th May, and the place to be visited is Castle Hedingham, a village in North Essex. It is a very attractive place and has several places of interest to visit. ~~There is a handloom, silk weavers, a pottery, a very fine church, a Norman castle, and a steam railway.~~ Teas can be had in an old railway carriage or in a craft shop, and lunches in a pub or a restaurant. The cost would be about £5.

3. HACKNEY ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT hopes to have a number of exhibitions on its premises in 1984. The major one will be celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Business Archives Council, and the centenary of the incorporation of Bryant & May Ltd. The records of this Company are held at the Department, and their deposit was arranged by the Business Archives Council.

The Bryant & May Exhibition will be in the summer. Before that, there will be an exhibition of the records of the British Xylonite Company Ltd. (described in the latest issue of the "Record") and an exhibition of photographs from the Department's collection.

4. "HISTORY GROUP'S LIVELY START" ("Hackney Gazette" 6/10/52).

An East London History Group sprung into being last week but thus far, it has no official name, no elected officers, no constitution, and no rules. Even the geographical area of activity has not been determined, but indications are that its work may range from Aldgate to Stratford and from Hackney to Shadwell.

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COACH OUTING : MAY 1984.

I/We would support the proposed trip.

Name..... Address.....

No. of seats required.....

Like many other useful developments in the modern life of London, the new History Group was born at Toynbee Hall. Professor Bindoff, of Queen Mary College, Mr. B. Lewis, of the Mile End Library, the Stepney Council, and Mr. W. J. Evans, Sub-Warden of Toynbee Hall, the sponsors of the movement which led to the formation of the Group and the veteran Dr. J. J. Mallon, C.H., J.P., Warden of Toynbee Hall, it his blessing. Dr. Mallon recalled that there used to be an East London branch of the Historical Association with a large and notable membership.

"When I came down here, being professionally interested in the past, I discovered that there was a great deal of the past lying about. There were people who had done something about it, and also a number of people interested who might be persuaded to do something about it if brought together and encouraged." said Professor Bindoff. He knew a survey of the historical materials of East London would be greatly welcomed by national authorities.

After brief statements by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Evans, the meeting was thrown open to discussion. Those who spoke included Miss Millicent, authoress of a recently published book on East London's history, and representatives of the Library services in Stepney, Poplar, Bethnal Green and West Ham.

The official life of Hackney seemed to be without a representative at the meeting, but the Rev. Ernest W. Dawe, B.D., minister of Dalston Congregational Church, was present. Shoreditch appeared to be unrepresented. "

## 5. OLD MANOR HOUSES

The Bishops of London remained Lords of Stepney Manor until the 16th century, and traces of the Manor Houses in which they lived could be found up to a century or so ago. There was one at Bethnal Green, Bishop's Hall, just by Victoria Park. There Bishops lived and some of them died, but there was no mention of any ecclesiastic living there after the 14th century, so they must have gone elsewhere. The Bethnal Green Manor House was rebuilt from time to time and was not pulled down until 1844, at the time of making an approach to Victoria Park. It was a pleasant spot, lightly wooded on good gravel soil, of which most of Stepney land is made; there was good hunting. At the end of the 13th century, one Bishop of London wanted to enclose the whole area as a deer park for himself, and applied for a free Warrant to the King. Had this been granted Stepney might never have developed in the way it has done. But the citizens of London had rights of hunting in the manor too, and became alarmed at the Bishop's proposal to take so much for his own park. They met and protested, and their views can be found in the City Records; they claimed the right of hunting in the woods, and asked for protection from the Bishop. Anyhow, they must have brought pressure to bear in the proper quarter, for the scheme was dropped and the citizens' rights, whatever they were, remained.

~~Stow gave a pretty picture of the City Fathers enjoying themselves in the Bethnal Green woods on May Day. There was also a manor house at Poplar, also at Bow and Bromley. A number of the great City merchants built substantial houses in the vicinity of the Manor Houses from time to time.~~