

**WHITECHAPEL LIBRARY 1892 -2005**

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## **Editorial Note:**

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The Newsletter is edited, typeset and produced by Rosemary Taylor with the assistance of an editorial team comprising Philip Mernick, Doreen Kendall, David Behr, and Doreen Osborne.

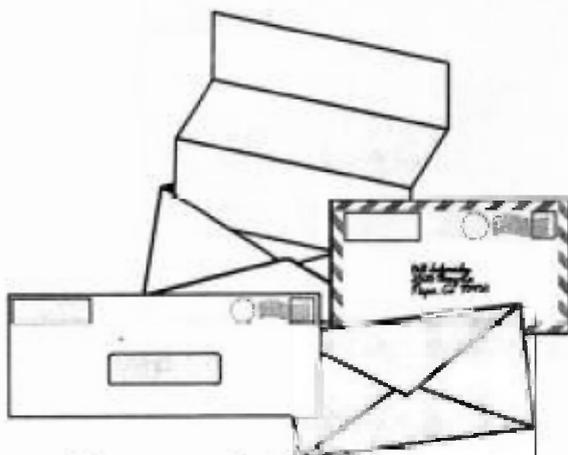
Our grateful thanks to all the contributors of this Winter 2005 edition. We have a wide variety of topics and we trust our members will enjoy reading it as much as I have, whilst compiling the newsletter. Letters and articles on East End history and reminiscences are always welcome and we make every effort to publish suitable material. Whilst hand-written articles are acceptable, items of interest that are typewritten or even better still, on disk will get priority!!

Enquiries to Doreen Kendall, 20 Puteaux House, Cranbrook Estate, Bethnal Green, London E2 0RF, Tel: 0208 981 7680, or Philip Mernick, email: [phil@mernicks.com](mailto:phil@mernicks.com)

All queries regarding membership should be addressed to Harold Mernick, 42 Campbell Road, Bow, London E3 4DT

Check out the History Society's website at [www.eastlondonhistory.org.uk](http://www.eastlondonhistory.org.uk).

The present committee are: Phillip Mernick, Chairman, Doreen Kendall, Secretary, Harold Mernick, Membership, David Behr, Programme, Ann Sansom, Doreen Osborne, Bob Dunn, and Rosemary Taylor.



**Season's Greetings!**

## **LONDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIZE 2006** Sponsored by the Standing Conference On London Archaeology in conjunction with **LONDON ARCHAEOLOGIST**

After the success of the 2004 London Archaeological Prize, SCOLA and *LONDON ARCHAEOLOGIST* have again agreed to sponsor an award for publications that appeared in 2004 and 2005. The award, of £250 plus a certificate, will be presented at a ceremony in October 2006. The publication must be in letterpress or digital form; broadcasts and the like will not be eligible. It must be related to the archaeology of Greater London. Any type of publication will be eligible it may be a book, a journal article or the proceedings of a conference. It may be a professional, commercial or amateur publication. There is no restriction on the target audience - scholars, the general public, or children. The judges will be looking for quality and excellence; they will want to know how well the publication succeeds in its aims.

**JUDGING** - Entries will be assessed by a panel of judges appointed by the Executive Committee of the Standing Conference on London Archaeology in conjunction with the Publications Committee of *London Archaeologist*.

**PROCEDURE** - Anyone, whether or not associated with the publication, may make a nomination. The nominator(s) should name the publication and give a brief explanation why they believe it is worthy of the prize. It would be helpful, but not essential, to use the standard nomination form. There is no need to provide copies of the publication at this stage. The judges will select a short list out of the publications nominated, and will then ask the publisher for copies of the publication; these copies will be returnable on request.

**NOMINATIONS** - Nomination forms are available from Peter Pickering, and should be returned to - Peter Pickering, Secretary, Standing Conference on London Archaeology, 3 Westbury Road, London N12 7NY  
Telephone 020-8445 2807  
e-mail [pe.pickering@virgin.net](mailto:pe.pickering@virgin.net)

**CLOSING DATE** for receipt of nominations:  
**20th May 2006.**

## **EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY PROGRAMME 2006**

### **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

#### **The Poplar Council Dispute 1921**

Speaker: Chris Sumner

### **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006**

#### **The Mercers Company, its Treasures, its East End Links and its East End Archivist**

Speaker: Gary Haines

### **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006**

#### **Kicking and Screaming: Early Football in East London**

Speaker: Colm Kerrigan

### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

#### **A History of the Blackwall Shipyard and a voyage to India on a Blackwall Frigate**

Speaker: Clive Chambers

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

#### **Coach trip to Coggeshall**

### **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

#### **Open Evening: On the subject of Food and Drink**

### **The Lectures**

The lectures are held on Thursday evenings at 7.30 pm in the Latimer Congregational Church Hall, Ernest Street, E1.

Ernest Street is between Harford Street and Whitehorse Lane, off Mile End Road (Opposite Queen Mary and Westfield College). The nearest Underground Stations are Mile End and Stepney Green. Bus No. 25.

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### **The Programme**

Suggestions and ideas for future topics and/or speakers for our Lecture Programme are always welcomed. If you can suggest someone or indeed if you would like to give a talk yourself, please do come along to the Open Evening in May, and meet David Behr, our Programme co-ordinator.

Alternatively, email our Chairman Philip Mernick at [phil@mernicks.com](mailto:phil@mernicks.com) with your comments and suggestions.

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### **Cover Picture**

Taken from the original drawing by the architects Potts Son & Hennings. The Whitechapel Public Library and Museum was officially opened by Lord Roseberry on October 25<sup>th</sup> 1892. The full cost of the structure was paid by John Passmore Edwards. With its reading rooms and collections of books in English and Yiddish it provided an essential resource for the local population. Superseded by the new Whitechapel Ideas Store, it closed in August. The intension is to restore the building and incorporate it into the adjacent Whitechapel Art Gallery.

## Correspondence Update

### FRANCES MARY BUSS & HER EAST LONDON CONNECTION

Following the email enquiry about Frances Mary Buss (FMB) in the Summer 05 edition of the ELHS Newsletter, I felt that the following might answer some of the questions raised. As a former pupil of the second of her two schools – the Camden School for Girls – I knew quite a lot about her pioneering work for women's education but little about her East End connections, so have been glad to learn more about this from my recent research.

#### **F.M.B. – her background, education and schools.**

She was born in 1827, in London, the eldest child of Robert Buss, a painter and etcher, and his wife, Frances. Of the ten children born to her parents she and her four brothers were the only ones to survive to adulthood. As a child she was set to several small private schools, the last of which was a 'more advanced' one in Hampstead; by the age of 14 she became a teacher there and by 16 was left in charge of it!

Unlike many parents in this period, hers encouraged the educational aims of their daughter as well as those of their sons, but due to the somewhat erratic career of her artist father, there were financial problems in the family. In order to augment their income her mother decided to open a small school, with FMB as her assistant. Here they decided to adopt the 'improved system of education based upon that of Pestalozzi, a method which renders the important duty of instruction interesting to the teacher and attractive to the pupils.' At the same time FMB attended evening lectures at Queen's College, Harley Street where the education she received 'gave new life to me, I mean intellectually.'

A strong influence on her life at this stage was Rev. David Laing, one of the College's

founders, who was also involved with the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, a 'refuge' for aged governesses, in Kentish Town. (The need for such a place illustrated the poverty and plight of many of these women who had been forced by family circumstances into the labour market: the Rev. Laing's aim was that better education be provided for such women, which would enable them to qualify as professional teachers.) This, of course, echoed some of FMB's experiences and the effort she had made to support the family finances and which enabled two of her brothers to attend college and then to enter the church as clergymen.

After leaving Queen's, aged 23, she began her life's work in earnest and, as her mother had by now retired from running her school, FMB decided on an 'ambitious and independent venture.' Thus, in April 1850, she established the North London Collegiate for Ladies, with 35 pupils, in the family home at 46 (now 12) Camden Street, Camden Town, and was its headmistress. The curriculum included: Scripture, English, History, Geography, Arithmetic, French, Latin, drawing, class singing, mild physical training (callisthenics), with Italian, German, music, dancing and painting as optional extras!

Her father taught drawing, science and elocution and his chemistry lessons were especially popular, with 'smells and explosions'! Her brother, Septimus, also taught drawing until his ordination, after which he took over the teaching of Scripture from Rev. Laing. Another brother, Alfred, took Latin and Arithmetic and, until her death in 1861, her mother taught the youngest pupils.

The school flourished, moving to Camden Road, under a Board of Trustees and with its name changed to North London Collegiate School for Girls, in 1870; later it moved to nearby Sandall Road, and then, in 1940, to its present location in Canons, Edgware. Thus the pattern for her educational ideas were set and,

in January 1871, she established a second school – the Camden School for Girls – whose first location was also at the family home. Her intention for this school was that it would create opportunities for a wider range of girls by charging lower fees. A Trust Deed was signed by which, at some financial loss to herself, she transferred to a Public Trust her private interest in the school and put herself, as headmistress, under its control. Another outcome of this was that she became the first woman to be summoned to give evidence before a Royal Commission to justify her claim that girls were as capable as boys of acquiring a good education! Originally a private school nurtured by its founder, it became a Public Endowed School, benefiting from an association with two great City Companies – the Worshipful Company of Brewers and the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers and, eventually with the L.C.C. (later G.L.C.) This school was also successful and, in 1878, moved to the remodelled premises of the former Governesses' Benevolent Institution, in Kentish Town, which, itself, had been the inspiration for the movement for the better education of women. It remained here until 1956 when it moved to its present location in the mainly rebuilt building once occupied by the North London Collegiate, in Sandall Road.

Frances Mary Buss died, aged 67, on Christmas Eve 1894. Although she had been in failing health for some time, she never actually resigned from involvement in her schools, but relied increasingly on her deputy and eventual successor, Sophie Bryant.

Her funeral service was held in Kentish Town but she was buried in the churchyard at Theydon Bois, Essex, near a small cottage in which she had often stayed. Pall-bearers included her brother, Septimus, Emily Davies, and Dorothea Beale, a friend and fellow-pioneer and headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies' College. Later a memorial window was placed in the church there.

### **FMB's brothers, East London connections, charity work and reform movements.**

As has already been seen, the Buss family was a close-knit one. Two of her brothers – Alfred (1830-1920) and Septimus (1836-1914) – became vicars and both taught at their sister's schools and became trustees of her second school. In addition they both served in East London parishes and, undoubtedly, much of the charity work undertaken and supported by FMB was channelled through them. Both were described as 'earnest and hardworking clergymen.' Alfred became curate of St. John the Evangelist, Limehouse, from 1854-56 and from 1858-61 was curate of St. Olave-by-the-Tower. In 1894 he returned to East London to become vicar of St James' Curtain Road, Shoreditch (1884-1904) and was also Patron of Shoreditch Church (St. Leonard's – architect: George Dance the Elder.)

Septimus became rector of St. John's Wapping (1873-81), vicar of Shoreditch Church (1881-99) and Rural Dean of Shoreditch from 1890-99. He was also Chaplain to the Ironmongers' Company from 1895. (N.B. The Ironmongers' Almshouses – now the Geffrye Museum – are located in nearby Kingsland Road.) He also kept a diary in which the main entries cover the years 1860-74. On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1873, he received a letter from the Bishop of London "telling me about the Rectory of St. John Wapping, asking me to go to see the place .... Was very excited about the letter and went home to tell Maria (his wife) and then to Fanny (his sister FMB) .... And Maria and I were so excited about the living that we hardly slept throughout the night." He took up the post in November 1873. He and FMB were very close and, later, he and his wife were buried in Theydon Bois. The headmistress, Sophie Bryant, described him as "a saint and a practical man... both spiritual and homely, savouring of holiness applied to every day." She also described his "boy-like gaiety and humorous banter."

FMB supported and contributed to a wide variety of charitable projects and social reform organisations. From the earliest period in the development of her schools she had introduced the element of a 'sound social service' and an example of this is the Dorcas Society, held on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month. Here the girls would be encouraged to knit and sew articles – flannel garments, blankets, shawls etc. – to distribute to the poor. At one stage an estimated 500-600 garments were produced per year and "with the Rev. Laing and the two Buss brothers to spur them on with true stories of poverty and want, at least the pupils had the satisfaction of knowing that the garments they laboured over were worn."<sup>1</sup> At the annual Founder's Day, a sale of work was held. Girls from the school and volunteers helped with the sale and with contributions, and the afternoon's takings were used to provide donations to such funds as the District Nursing Association and to finance holidays for poor children from Spitalfields, Deptford, Shoreditch etc. and from various missions, hospitals and workhouses. In the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, the scope of the Dorcas Society was extended and the Guild of Goodwill established. Collecting boxes were placed in each classroom, with contributions invited and school and sports' prizes were given up and the money saved added to the funds. Gifts of socks etc. for the armed forces were made, with donations to the Serbian Relief Fund, the Friends' War Victims Relief Society, and to the Belgian and English hospitals. Past pupils were also encouraged to take part in the social work which had its roots in the Dorcas Society and this culminated, some years after FMB's death, in the club for East End Londoners – the Frances Mary Buss House – opened in 1927. FMB was also known to have aided Septimus in his temperance work and she was involved in a variety of other reforming organisations. She believed in the importance of women taking a part in public life and shared an interest with Emily Davies in the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women. She was involved in the campaign to admit women to the medical profession, supporting Elizabeth

Garret (later Elizabeth Garret Anderson) in her fight to have her name entered on the British Medical Register. She attacked the government for restricting office clerkships to men; she was instrumental in setting up the Teachers' Guild in 1883 and was a force behind the creation of the Cambridge Training College for Teachers, in 1885, which became the University Dept of Education, "Hughes Hall". She also had connections with the Women's Peace Movement and was a member of the Central National Society for Women's Suffrage, seeing a link between "the difficulties encountered in securing satisfactory educational opportunities and their exclusion from Parliamentary franchise." In a women's magazine ('Women's Signal', 1896) she is quoted as remarking, "I should like to revisit the earth at the end of the twentieth century to see the result of the great revolution of the nineteenth – the Women's Rights Movement."

#### **And finally ....**

- Early in his artistic career, FMB's father, Robert, had dealings with Dickens concerning illustrations for some of his books. Although this proved somewhat problematic, Robert never forgot and, shortly before his death, painted a large watercolour, "Dickens' Dream", showing the dozing writer seated in his study at Gad's Hill surrounded by characters from his books. This picture is now on show at the Dickens House Museum, Doughty Street. He also specialised in theatrical portraits, 'genre' and humorous pictures: the Art Gallery at Guildhall owns one.

- A small 'Frances Mary Buss' panel has been incorporated into the windows of a staircase at the Barbican Centre, overlooking the lake.

- There are two commemorative plaques at Shoreditch Church naming Septimus Buss. They record the installation of a new clock in the tower (1881) and the restoration of the porch (1883).

- An anonymous rhyme, written in the lifetime of both ladies records:

*"Miss Buss and Miss Beale  
Cupid's darts do not feel;  
How different from us  
Miss Beale and Miss Buss!"*

**Doreen Osborne**

**Selected References:**

*"How Different From Us: Biography of Miss Buss & Miss Beale."* (Josephine Kamm)  
*"Miss Buss' Second School"* (Doris Burchill)  
*"A London Girl of the 1880s"* (M.V. Hughes)  
*Crockford's Clerical Directories*  
*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004 edition)  
*Modern English Biography* (Fdk. Boase)  
*Article in Camden History Review, 2003 –*  
*"Septimus Buss and his sister Fanny (Shirley Neale)*



**John and Julia Scurr**

Further to the exchange of emails with **Jill Macdonald**, a descendent of **Julia Scurr**, the following was received from **Aimee Macdonald**, which sheds some new light on **John Scurr**:

I don't know if you or Mr Mernick would be interested, but I have been in contact with a lady in Yorkshire, **Sharon Buchanan**, who has been researching the Scurr name for 12 years. She picked up my record of John on the Genes Reunited website. She has told us that John's father was a **Louis (or Lewis) Rennie**, and that his aunt **Caroline** and her husband **John Scurr**, a **Master Mariner** (both born in **Poplar**), adopted him - they seem not to have been able to have children themselves. All other references we have found say that he was adopted by his uncle **John Scurr**, but to us this implied that his birth name would have been **Scurr**.

I'm so glad the information was of interest you. Just one thing, I hope you don't mind ... if the article you are going to publish includes the new info on **John Scurr's** ancestry, then I would be grateful if you would credit **Sharon Buchanan** as the source.

*Further to the above correspondence, and mindful that the year 2006 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union, (the Suffragettes) fighting for women's right to the vote, I have rewritten a brief biography of Julia Scurr, to include some of the information received from Aimee Macdonald, which I hope members will find of interest.*

**Julia Scurr** (nee **O'Sullivan**) was born in **Limehouse** in 1871, to **John O'Sullivan**, an immigrant from **Cork, Ireland**, and **Martha Rapp**, born in **London**. She married **John Scurr** in 1900, and they made a formidable partnership. First active in the **Irish movement**, she became particularly concerned with **women's rights** and the improvement of their conditions.

In 1905 Julia organised a deputation on unemployment of 1,000 women from Poplar to meet the Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour. In 1907 she was elected to the Poplar Board of Guardians, became well known in this capacity, and served as a Guardian until her death. Julia and her husband John were good friends of George Lansbury (Labour Politician, Mayor of Poplar and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament 1931-35), and Julia was renowned for having organised the feeding of 7,000 dockers' children throughout the 1912 dock strike. She also worked to improve the rights of the Irish community in the East End of London. Julia was Poor Law Guardian from 1907 to 1927, a member of Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum (later St Andrew's Hospital), and in 1925, was elected a member of the London County Council for Mile End.

In June 1912, Julia, as one of the Poplar Board of Guardians, presented a report criticising the lack of Day Rooms and recreational space at The Bow Infirmary. She stated that the residents stood around in unheated corridors and appeared depressed and unhappy. One man was refused discharge because he had no clothes. Julia reminded the governors that it was an infirmary, not a place of detention. Her male colleagues dismissed the report as being exaggerated.

Julia was a friend and colleague of Sylvia Pankhurst and an active member of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes, founded by Sylvia. A branch of the Women's Social and Political Union, Sylvia was at odds with her mother and sister over the line the WSPU was taking. She wanted an explicitly socialist organisation tackling wider issues than women's suffrage, aligned with the Independent Labour Party, and based among working class people in the East End of London. She also wanted to focus on collective workers' action, not individual attacks on property. These and other differences, including personal ones, led to Sylvia's expulsion, along with the East London

Federation, from the WSPU. In early 1914, they renamed themselves the East London Federation of Suffragettes (ELFS) and launched a newspaper, the *Women's Dreadnought*.

In June 1914, Julia led a deputation of East End women to see Prime Minister Asquith, over low wages paid to women. This crucial meeting was considered a turning point in the suffragette battle for votes for women. She asked him to consider the position of married women: "Any rise in the price of rents, foods and other household commodities affects us women vitally, and we need not point out that these are intimately bound up with the question of free trade versus protection, which bulks so largely in the political programme of today. .... We women of east London are much concerned with regard to social conditions in our district. There is very great poverty around us and rents are high. There is much unemployment amongst men and a very large proportion of the wives are the principal breadwinner, though they are both the childbearers and keepers of the home. The demand which we have come to make to you today is one that we believe has not hitherto been made by any women's suffrage deputation... It is the form of the franchise which you have declared your intention of establishing for men in the near future. It is the one for which your party is said to stand — a vote for every woman over 21."

Julia was a Poplar Councillor from 1919-1925 and was imprisoned as a result of her involvement in the Rates Strike in 1921. All Borough Councils were charged precepts to pay for cross-capital authorities - the London County Council; Metropolitan Police Authority; Metropolitan Asylum Board and the Water Board. Precepts were not based on the Borough's ability to pay; in effect Poplar was paying towards the costs of rich boroughs for certain common services, but not receiving similar pooling to help poor relief. Poplar in 1921 had a rateable value of £4m and 86,500 unemployed to support. By contrast West

London could call on a rateable value of £15m to support only 4,800 jobless. As the recession bit ever harder, Poplar's burden grew weightier. Its weekly 'outdoor relief' (dole) bill rose from £4,500 in June 1921 to £7,630 three months later.

George Lansbury proposed that the Council stop collecting the rates for outside, cross-London bodies. This was agreed, and on 31 March 1921, Poplar Council set a rate of 4s4d instead of 6s10d. In response the Government on 7 July 1921 obtained an instruction by the Court to the Council to carry out its legal duties and collect the money.

On 29 July, the Councillors were summoned to Court. They met outside Poplar Town Hall and marched to the Court with 2000 of their supporters. In court impassioned pleadings were made explaining why it was impossible to pay the precepts. The Court granted an absolute rule of attachment meaning that the Poplar Councillors had to pay the rates or go to prison.

On Sunday 28 August, a demonstration in Tower Hill brought 4,000 people from Poplar together with contingents from neighbouring areas Stepney, Bethnal Green and Shoreditch. The banner at the front of the march declared that 'Poplar Borough Councillors are still determined to go to prison to secure equalisation of rates for the poor Boroughs'. George Lansbury appealed to protesters to step up the action with a rent strike should the Councillors go to jail. 31<sup>st</sup> August saw the last Council meeting before prison. 6,000 people attended a mass meeting outside Poplar Town Hall. Arrests began the next day. Five women Councillors, including Julia, were sent to Holloway prison; twenty five men to Brixton.

Prison conditions were appalling, but outraged protests soon yielded improvements, and on 11th September the Councillors were given permission to meet in prison. They did so a total of 32 times, with, from 27 September, the women Councillors brought from Holloway to Brixton to join the meetings. They discussed

prison conditions, Borough business and winning their release. Demonstrations were held outside the two prisons on most evenings. On 21 September, public pressure led the Government to release Nellie Cressall, who was six months pregnant. Rather than acting as a deterrent to other like minded councils, several Metropolitan Borough Councils announced their intention to follow Poplar's example. Faced with Poplar's intransigence and big public support, the Government and the London County Council were desperate to find a way to back down and arrange the Councillors' release. They found a way. They called a conference to discuss the issue, and allowed the court to release the prisoners to attend it. On 12 October, the Councillors were set free. The Councillors' release was celebrated enthusiastically in Poplar. A women's meeting at the Town Hall on 12 October, originally called to campaign for the prisoners' release, went ahead with the (unexpected) attendance of some of the freed Councillors.

There are several mentions of Julia Scurr in Sylvia Pankhurst's writings, and according to her, Julia was admitted to Bromley Infirmary in the last years of her life as she was deteriorating mentally. She died in 1927, at the age of 57, six years after her imprisonment. George Lansbury wrote that he had no doubt that the period of imprisonment, and the treatment she received, was directly responsible for her early death.

John Scurr was one of the Poplar Councillors sent to Prison in September 1921. He was elected MP for Mile End 1923-32. John had obviously fallen on hard times towards the end of his life because Father Bernard Whelan of Westminster Cathedral appealed for donations towards his medical costs in *The Times* shortly before his death. John died in July 1932 after a long illness, according to his obituary in *The Times*.

**Rosemary Taylor**

## Young Lives Lost

As an eleven year old boy during the summer school holidays of 1952, I enjoyed playing with my friends on the bombsites at Richard Street, Stepney. A narrow alley at the top of the street connected Jane Street where I lived. Jane Street comprised 64 houses, none of which suffered any serious damage from the blitz of 1940/1; unlike Richard Street which received a stick of bombs resulting in 30 houses being destroyed.

On the night of May 10<sup>th</sup> 1941, approximately 350 Luftwaffe planes repeatedly bombed London. This attack was the last big raid on the capital before the Germans eased off their bombing campaign; the aircraft were needed for the invasion of Russia that would begin the following June. For five moonlight hours on that fateful May night the German pilots brought death and destruction on a massive scale to the streets of London; 1,436 civilians were killed and 1,792 were injured. These figures were the highest casualty rates for a single raid. Victims included my mother's cousin, 46 year old Elizabeth Hogg and her three daughters Annie 20, Emily 16, and Hilda 6. They were killed alongside 16 other people when the railway arch they were sheltering under at Stepney Station was struck by a massive parachute mine; the mine failed to explode but the impact of it landing on the railway line caused the arch to collapse onto the shelterers below.

There were casualties in Richard Street too. Residents who lost their lives were Benjamin Issacson 47, Joseph Morgan 52, Arthur Skeels 17, Ernest Walker 53, his wife Katherine 54 and their daughter Lillian 17. Besides the 1,436 people who died that night, many public buildings were struck by high explosive bombs and incendiaries. The House of Commons Chamber was destroyed. Westminster Abbey was damaged; so were the War Office, the British Museum, the Law Courts, Mansion House, the Tower of London, St. Pancras Station and the Royal Mint. Five Livery companies, including the prestigious Mercers'

Company lost their great halls. St. Clements Danes was one of many famous churches that were badly burnt.

Where the 30 destroyed houses in Richard Street once stood, the debris had been removed; the levelled site was covered by thick grass, bushes and buddleia that had grown in abundance, especially at the rear of the two large wartime emergency water tanks that were built in late 1941. There were dozens of these tanks on East End bombsites. If underground water mains were destroyed or breached by aerial bombardment; firemen could make use of the tanks as stand-by water supplies.

Amongst the bushes on Richard Street's bombsites, us boys would play cowboys and indians, use our home made bows and arrows and aim catapults at old tin cans placed on top of each other. Sitting on top of the seven foot high brick walls of the tanks we could fish for stickleback and gudgeon. It did not seem to concern us if we fell into the five foot deep water, we were all strong swimmers. Just as we were about to launch our poorly made raft into one of the tanks the police arrived and marched us off the bombsite. The inspector warned us of the danger of using a raft on the water; he pointed out that several children had drowned in emergency water tanks but we would ignore his warning, the moment the police car left Richard Street, we returned to the bombsite and successfully launched our raft.

Water tanks fascinated me; I knew of at least a dozen of them that were scattered around Stepney. A particular favourite of mine was the tank on a large bombsite just outside the southern entrance of St. George's in the East churchyard adjacent to the Highway. Easily accessible and the water only two feet deep, our gang would punt our tacky floats and become fierce pirates. Another tank that I visited from time to time was situated in Fordham Street. This large tank was identical to others in the East End; it had been built

around the cellars of several bombed-out properties. Once the cellars were made watertight they were filled with thousands of gallons of water. Seven foot high brick walls were constructed around the tanks, designed to prevent children from falling into the water but the walls were no deterrent; all a determined child had to do, was place some junk from a bombsite against the wall and he could haul himself up.

The Fordham Street tank was the only one that I knew which was permanently drained. Sometimes my friends and I would use old rope and lower ourselves to its base and kick a ball around. I once spotted two cats that were stranded in this tank; accompanied by my school friend Lenny Hurley we descended into the tank with the intention of rescuing the cats. It took us some time to entice one of the cats into a cardboard box; getting it to stay there was extremely difficult but we persevered and in due course were able to hoist it up. Once safely on the pavement, the cat jumped out of the box, bolted across the road and disappeared into the bushes on the bombsite opposite. Lenny and I were unable to rescue the second cat. It was just too wild and ferocious. When we peered into the tank at a later date, the cat's rotting corpse was lying across a dustbin lid.

The draining of the Fordham Street tank was probably due to a tragedy that occurred there in August 1946. Seven year old Terence Evans, who lived at nearby Settle Street had fallen into the deep water; his playmates alerted Terence's father, who aided by his neighbour Arthur Jones dived into the water. They eventually brought the little boy to the surface but it was too late, he had drowned. Other East End children lost their lives in emergency water tanks. Probably the first recorded tragic incident happened at Mile End in May 1943. Norman Henry Sumner a non-swimming, seven year old, somehow climbed the wall of a tank in Longnor Road; he lost his balance and fell into the water; a young girl who witnessed Norman falling, raced to the

boy's home at Bradwell Street just 50 yards away and informed his parents. Norman's father quickly arrived at the tank, when he saw his son just below the surface; he immediately dived in and managed to reach his lifeless body but after a few minutes the father became exhausted and passed out; some pedestrians climbed into the tank and brought out father and son. The rescuers applied artificial respiration; they were able to revive Mr Sumner but not young Norman.

At Poplar Coroner Court a week later, a verdict of accidental death was recorded. The heartless Deputy Coroner, summing up, said of the seven year old victim "It was the boy's own fault and no blame could be attached to the local authorities."

At a meeting of the London County Council in July 1943, two months after the Longnor Road tragedy, Councillor Mrs Runge asked the chairman of the Civil Defence committee "What steps were taken to ensure the safety of children in connection with static water tanks, and whether he was satisfied that such steps were adequate?" Lord Latham replied "It will be appreciated that the Council is no longer responsible for static water tanks, which are now in the charge of the National Fire service. Acting as agents for the work, the Council has participated in the construction, to the Regional Commissioners' specification of devices to prevent children meeting with accidents but the Council is not responsible for the protective arrangements, which are matters solely for the commissioners and the Home Office." Lord Latham added "The Council has, however, as the local education authority, co-operated with the Commissioners by issuing frequent notices to teachers urging them to use all means in their power to impress on children the necessity for keeping away from the tanks in their immediate neighbourhood. Head teachers and teachers-in-charge may also invite officers of the Fire Brigade to address children on the subject." Councillor Mrs Runge wanted to know if the chairman would make representation to the

Home Office, calling their attention to the Council's deep concern about the dangers of the tanks to children. Lord Latham assured the Councillor he would consider any further steps.

No doubt, parents, teachers, policeman and fireman were constantly reminding young children of the dangers of climbing up the walls of emergency water tanks but reminding and lecturing young children was far from satisfactory. Practical devices were needed to prevent children gaining access. Curious and energetic children will always climb and be attracted to water; I know I was, as were most of my school friends; we climbed everywhere, up trees, lampposts, brick walls, wooden fences and even onto the roofs of bomb damaged abandoned houses. We were aware of the dangers but felt confident that we would come to no harm. In hindsight it is easy to suggest that fixing heavy iron grills over the top of the tanks would still have allowed rain water and pumped water to be stored and would have prevented an inquisitive child falling in. Perhaps the idea was suggested but rejected because of a lack of wartime materials, manpower and the cost involved.

The next little boy to lose his life in an emergency water tank occurred on the 2th July 1944. William Charles Law was just five years old; he lived with his parents at Great Eastern Buildings, Whitechapel. The tank situated in Wilkes Street near his home was unusual; it had a door built into its wall. The bolt to the door had become loose. Apparently young William had opened the door and stumbled into the water. A patrolling policeman was told that a child was in the water. The policeman managed to haul the boy out of the tank but tragically it was too late, William had expired. At Poplar Coroner Court a few days later, the Coroner Mr. W.R.H. Heddy, a more humane man than his deputy said "This was one of those sad cases that come up from time to time. The door of the tank had been loosened, enabling the child to get in"

In April 1945 the emergency water tanks of the East End would claim more young lives. On April 16th, 13 year old Henry Macdonald and his friend Peter Whittaker 11, both of Canton Street, Poplar used a tree stump to climb the wall of a tank which had been constructed on a bombsite just yards from their home. The two boys lowered themselves onto an old wooden door and attempted to float around; the door soon capsized and both boys were thrown into the water. Mr Minoru Komatsu, a Japanese resident of Canton Street was alerted by the shouting and commotion of children on the bombsite. When told there were two boys in the water, he climbed the wall of the tank. Though there was no sign of Henry or Peter, he jumped into the tank and spent the next twenty minutes diving under the water trying to locate the boys. Mr Komatsu's daughter Minnie, also jumped into the tank but the water was so dirty she eventually abandoned her efforts. When the Fire Brigade arrived, officers had to use hooks to recover the boys' bodies.

Incredibly just two days after this double tragedy a third Poplar boy was drowned. Five year old William James Bourne lived in Grundy Street just a minute walk from Canton Street. The boy's mother had often warned him to stay away from water tanks. Her fears must have been heightened knowing that two local boys had just died. On Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> April, William left school, accompanied with some older boys, they made their way to the water tank at Blair Street just north of Poplar Hospital. The boys were able to climb the wall of the tank by standing on an old metal drum. William who could not swim wanted to paddle in the water; his friends advised him not to do so. The little boy ignored their warning and lowered himself into the water. When his friends noticed him out of his depth and struggling they sought assistance from some workman in the street; the men quickly pulled the boy out of the water but tragically, it was too late to save him. Of course I was too young to be aware of these wartime tragedies but I was aware of a

near-tragedy that occurred in Whitechapel on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1955.

A decade after the Second World War ended the majority of Stepney's emergency water tanks had yet to be emptied by the Fire Brigade. These tanks, so easily accessible for children, would remain potential death traps. Ten year old twins Edward and Peggy Brown who lived at Hanbury Street, Whitechapel, fell into a tank at Scarborough Street just a short distance from their home. Fortunately help was at hand. Though not a strong swimmer, a passer-by dived into the water and was able to rescue the children. An ambulance quickly arrived and took the twins to the London Hospital where they were treated for shock. The rescuer left Scarborough Street without leaving his name and address with the police. Eventually the man was traced; he was John George Wells the licensee of the "Scarborough Arms" at nearby St. Mark Street. For his courageous act, Mr Wells would receive a Royal Humane Certificate for bravery.

The Richard Street tanks were not demolished until about 1960; by that time the waters had become a putrid, dark orange, coloured swamp. Both tanks were filled with old prams, bedsteads, rubber tyres, rotting wood and bloated bodies of various animals: no fish could survive in the mire.

**Alfred Gardner**

#### Pictures wanted

Do you have any pictures of wartime water tanks, they are surprisingly hard to find. If you have one Alfred Gardner would be pleased to hear from you!

## MEMORIAL RESEARCH

Don't forget, Doreen and Diane Kendall, with Doreen Osborne and a dedicated group of volunteers are in the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park on the second Sunday of every month at 2 pm, meticulously researching graves and recording memorial inscriptions. They would welcome any help members can offer. This labour of love has grown into a project of enormous proportions and complexity, with an impressive database of graves researched, with illustrations attached. Unfortunately, due to the pressure of work, Doreen and Diane cannot undertake any research on behalf of individuals seeking their ancestors in the cemetery, but would welcome any information that has been uncovered through personal searches. Owing to a hiccup on the Cemetery website, they were inundated over the Spring and Summer with requests – one week alone they had over fifty, many with long lists of names!

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Not quite East End but I thought this was a nice space filler.

#### 100 years ago

#### BLACK CAT SUMMONED

Whilst on duty in the vicinity of the Old Bailey a police-constable observed a "black cat" driving an open carriage containing another black cat holding an open umbrella on which there was an advertisement. In consequence of this the black cat otherwise Henry Nash, disguised, of Solon-road, Brixton, was summoned at the City Summons Court for conducting an advertisement that had not been approved of by the Commissioner of the City Police, A fine of 1s. and costs was imposed.

The Evening News, Tuesday June 20<sup>th</sup> 1905  
(Black Cat Cigarettes?)

## BOOK SHELF

**Please check Eastside Bookshop  
Whitechapel, or Newham Bookshop,  
Plaistow for copies:**

**East End Neighbourhoods**, Brian Girling,  
Tempus, 2005, £12.99.  
ISBN 0 7524 3519 1. 128 pages and 184  
illustrations.

Another in the Tempus Images of London series, and only released this July. The author has concentrated on parts of the borough that have completely changed in character, and it is nice to see Bow and Mile End featuring as well as the more eastern end of the borough. I have only had the book two days so haven't read it in detail but I am sure I saw a picture of Canning Town, how did that get in Brian! There is a higher emphasis than usual, on photographs here rather than postcards, from both private and public collections and I think the book benefits from it. I have lost track of how many books the author has already published on the East End, but I think this is one of the best.

**Philip Mernick**

**Henrietta Barnett in Whitechapel (1851-1936). Her first fifty years.** Micky Watkins. ISBN No. 0-9459798-0-X, size A5, 160 pages, price £9.00

The author has been working for the last 15 years at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Archive which holds original letters and diaries of Henrietta Barnett. At the age of 21, Henrietta Rowland married Samuel Barnett on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1873. He obtained a living as the Vicar of St Jude's Whitechapel, where together they worked with courage in a parish of courts and alleys, of three storey rundown, rat infested houses, where many tenants shared a water standpipe and poor sanitation. Within a year they had started child and adult education

classes, concerts, a choir and flower show. Samuel was appointed a Poor Law Guardian in Whitechapel and obtained permission for his wife to visit the workhouse. Henrietta worked hard to improve the lives of girls separated from their babies, and started the work of fostering. Her energy led her to becoming a Guardian of the District's school at Forest Gate in 1875 and for the rest of her life tried hard to improve their lives with a library, toys, games and days out.

Two photographs show how soulless this Barrack School was. 34 junior girls with shorn hair, dressed in shapeless shift dresses stare out of the photo. The other is of a long line of junior boys in a corridor, shorn hair, dressed in shirts, trousers and boots, with not a smile between them. No first names were ever used, you were just called 'child'. This is the school where the terrible fire broke out on New Year's Eve 1889 with the deaths of 26 children\*

The Barnetts circle of friends who worked to improve the social conditions of the area, often with hilarious results included Octavia Hill, John Ruskin, Walter Crane, Beatrice Webb, Arnold Toynbee and Herbert Spencer.

Henrietta attended many committee meetings, wrote articles in newspapers, and was a founder member of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, Toynbee Hall and the Children's Country Holiday Fund.

This book with a detailed source index is very welcome at this time, as the Whitechapel Art Gallery has moved to new ownership, one which promises to uphold the ideals and aims of art for all, as envisaged by Henrietta Barnett.

*\*East London History Newsletter Volume 2  
Issue 10 Winter 2004*

**Doreen Kendall**

### **The Bus We Loved**

#### **London's Affair with the Routemaster.**

Travis Elborough. Published by Grants Books. ISBN 10 1-86207-794-0 Size A5, Pages 204. Price £12.00

The Times newspaper announced on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 1956 that a prototype of a new London bus called a Routemaster with a capacity for 64 passengers 'will go into public service next Wednesday on Route No. 2 between Golders Green and Crystal Palace.'

London Transport had announced in 1952 that it was planning a bus built in Chiswick, London, suitable for London roads and its people. Incorporated would be the technology developed by the aircraft industry in the Second World War. A double decker bus of integral metal construction and light alloys with aircraft type brakes, coil spring suspension and rear axle power assisted steering. Painted bright red, the driver's cab fitted with a sliding door. The inside of the bus would have a cubby hole for the conductor under the stairs, quarter drop down winding windows, with dark red and yellow tartan seats, slate green window surrounds and yellow ceilings. The buses would need overhauling every four years and repainted every seven years.

The Routemaster became part of the London scene with 7,000 built with 72 seats. By 1990 the Routemaster had dwindled to 600, with those on routes No. 15, 11 and 23 closing in 2003. The last journey of a Routemaster in London is scheduled on route No. 159, Marble Arch to Streatham on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005. They have been replaced by conductor-less 'bendy' buses and Oyster cards, which according to the London Assembly are 'fully accessible'. Tourist have bought postcards of the red Routemaster buses, little boys have collected Corgi/Dinky toy buses, films and art have portrayed London with the red Routemaster as their back drop. No more will we hear the ding-ding of the bell or hear the conductor shouting out 'move along' 'only eight standing' 'room on top', cracking jokes

with the passengers or serenading us with the latest pop song.

The author Travis Elborough has researched this book in great detail and it will appeal to the bus enthusiast as well as those like me – a passenger with happy memories.

### **Doreen Kendall**

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#### **Books worth a mention:**

Barbara Nadel's latest book, **Last Rights**, is a crime novel set in the East End of the Blitz. The author grew up in East London and spent much of her time in Shipman Road, Custom House. She now lives in Southend. The book, priced at £18.99 is published by Headline.

Roberta Taylor, better known to many as Inspector Gold in the police drama series *The Bill*, has published the story of her early life and the extended family that brought her up. Set in the East End of London and Stratford, **Too Many Mothers** is a frank account of a family life that encompassed petty crime, tender romance, illegitimacy, adoption and even murder! The book is published by Atlantic Books, price £16.99.

### **Book Update**

#### **From Geo. Donovan. 12 Branksome Close Stanford-le-Hope SS17 8BA**

The reading of Allan Young's book 'The East End I Knew' could easily be re-titled 'The East End I Also Knew' for in many many ways it runs parallel with my life as an East End street wchin. He hails from Stepney. I from Poplar, Bromley and Bow. I knew his territory fairly well for my father worked for Durrells at Globe Wharf in Mile End and originated from 17, Ernest Street. Nan died there in 1936. Stepney and the surrounding areas would often be spoken of around the dinner table, coupled with the frequent Sunday

morning walks where I would accompany my dad on his ritual route marches—he my Blue Badge Guide of learning. He seemed to know everything.

There were a few mentions within the book that had me scratching my head, the purchasing of the tins of sweets/chocolates that his father made from Moores the confectioners (I remember my sister working there as a shop assistant), I thought they would have been out of the reach of someone working as a Docker. As for me, the only chocolates I ever saw of that calibre were displayed in the shop window of the confectioners on the corner of Three Mill Lane—which I learned in latter life were dummies anyway. A possible Black Magic might have come my way through one of my sisters, via her current boy friend of the time. Another source perhaps was from the penny Nestlé's chocolate machine that stood in the ticket hall of Bromley station, fraudulently obtained with a flattened out dust washer from my roller-skates. So yes, on the whole his early days were mine too.

But further reading in to the book seemed even more coincidental, particularly when he mentions that his father bought a bungalow in Laindon, an area close to where I now live. This had to be explored. I do my Blackberry picking around Laindon and often visit what is known as the Plotlands where in the 30s plots of land were sold off and many Londoners purchased. Was this where his father made his? A trip to the local library soon had me engrossed in the book 'Basildon Plotlands' (Deanna Walker) and its history began to unfold. Today, the Essex Wild Life Trust have managed to preserve a early construction of the sort of thing that was built, complete with the interior as would have been, along with a Anderson shelter out back. But what caught my eye in the book was the mention of a Labour Colony administered by the Poplar Board of Guardians located close by—in fact just down the road. Pages 83-84 quote: "There was another period of Plotland history when the Dunton area was constantly making the

news with reports of criminal activities, when the Poplar Labour Colony existed on what is now Dunton Hills Caravan Park"—and also "The Essex Chronicle regularly reported on the trials of men who had absconded from the colony with the clothes that belonged to the workhouse. They were usually fined or given a period of hard labour"

This all began to get me more and more involved. Here I was quietly reading of the days of my youth, and at the same time innocently being drawn into a period that I was totally unaware of—but not for long, this really had got my feathers up, I needed to know more.

We had a Workhouse in Bromley, on the corner of St. Leonard's Street and Talwin Street and I often saw the elderly gentlemen slouching along the pavements in their institutional grey suits, looking for 'Fag' ends in the gutter. In fact on my Sunday walks with dad we would return that way home for dad to give them the ends from his Woodhines that he had accumulated over the week, and maybe a copper or two. Thank the Lord those Workhouses and Casual Wards no longer exist. But back to my quest for knowledge. A couple of phone calls soon brought the postman to my door with the eagerly awaited archive material that had been promised, and what interesting reading it made. Initially I had visions of this being some sort of open prison but soon realised from the reading that it was more a labour camp—"It was decided that the men should work for an average of eight hours per day, that after work they should be at liberty to leave the premises or occupy their leisure time as they thought fit". There appears to be many valid reasons given for its creation, one being that it would take men out of the workhouse and placing them in an environment where they could work and learn skills that would make them fit to go upon any farm or to emigrate to the colonies. All the material made powerful reading and a real insight as to how things were in those dismal days.

So what had began as a stroll through memory lane took me to other places that I now had no knowledge of—and just down the road from where I now live. Thanks Allan Young.

At the back of Allan's book there's a condensed biography telling that he now lives in Tonbridge—an area that I know very well. My mother lived in the High Street during WW2 and my sister married in the parish church. So again a close attachment by coincidence.

#### **From Roy Hayes:**

Shortly before reading the correspondence with Mrs. Angela O'Donnell I had come across, quite by chance in my local Essex County library, **BEHIND THE BLUE LAMP - Policing North and East London**. It lists hundreds of past and present Police Stations, Offices and Section Houses, with many photographs, and it could be worth Mrs. O'Donnell asking for it in her own library. First published in 2003, the ISBN is 0-9546534-0-8. There are several pages about Arbour Square Station and Police Court as well as Limehouse. The co-authors are David Swinden and Peter Kennison, both former police officers.

The book could, of course, be of interest to others of our members. Still on the subject of books - there is a new one, just out, to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of Lancelot Andrewes's first appointment as a bishop (Chichester) on 3rd November, 1605. **Lancelot Andrewes, A Perennial Preacher**, by Marian Dorman, is of a rather specialised nature, concentrating mainly on his sermons. It does, however, give a brief resumé of his life.

I am sure that, as an Old Cooperian, you know he attended the school in Ratcliffe (from 1563-65) before going on to Merchant Taylors'. In spite of being at Coopers' for only two years he always remembered the Head, Dr. Ward, and, many years later, was instrumental in

appointing Ward's son to a parish in Hampshire.

Published in America, the ISBN is 1-58736-341-0 and I obtained my copy through the Southwark Cathedral Bookshop, price £11.99 plus £0.71 for post and packing.

Finally, has any member been to visit the newly restored St. Paul's Church, in St. Stephen's Road? Closed for ten years, the Grade II listed building was unsafe for use. A £3-million project began in 2003 and was completed in May 2004 and, from pictures I have seen, it is quite spectacular. A café was also opened in April this year (8.30 a.m. until mid-afternoon, including cooked lunches) and I am sure the Revd. Phillipa Boardman would welcome visitors from the Society, whatever their denomination. Incidentally, the Revd. Boardman is also responsible for St. Mark's Church, Victoria Park, featured on page 60 of your 1996 book.

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#### **1908, then in 1948, next 2012!**

**EAST LONDON AND THE 'HOME' OLYMPICS** - *Roy Hayes looks at two previous Games held in London.*

Negotiations to bring the Olympic Games to London for a third time have, already, been going on for a long time and it will be almost another seven years before they actually arrive. Much of the activity will be centred around Stratford, East London, and estimated figures for the costs, at nearly £5 billion, are almost certain to be exceeded. London has already staged two successful Olympic celebrations, with much less warning and, certainly, at a fraction of to-day's costs. From both 1908 and 1948, although none of the events was in our part of London, there are supplementary stories involving people from, or places in, East London.

The 1908 Games had, originally, been allotted to Rome but the Italians decided they could not cope and, with only two years notice,

London agreed to take them on. A new venue was already planned, in Shepherd's Bush, for the Franco-British Exhibition, due to run from May until October, and the stadium for the Games was incorporated in the overall plan. What eventually became the White City Stadium accommodated swimming, athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics and wrestling. For many years after the Games the grounds and buildings were derelict and it was not until 1932 that the Amateur Athletic Association moved its championships there.

Boxing had only been introduced into the modern Olympic programme in 1904, when seven weights were contended and all the medals went to the host nation, the U.S.A. It was different in 1908: five titles were at stake and Great Britain's boxers filled the first three places in every one except Middle-weight, where Reginald Baker, of Australia, was runner-up. One of the most outstanding gold-medallists was Fred Grace, from the Eton Mission Men's Amateur Boxing Club, Hackney Wick. At the time Grace was not even British champion but, in the quarter-finals, he eliminated the Light-weight favourite, Matt Wells, who had been A.B.A. champion in 1904, 1905, 1906 and 1907, and was destined to win the British professional title in 1910. Grace's win over Wells installed him as the new favourite and he went through to the final, where he beat another of his fellow-countryman to bring the gold medal home to East London.

Fred Grace had a long career in amateur boxing. Following his Olympic victory he took the A.B.A. Light-weight title in 1909 and 1913 then, when the Championships resumed after the war, he won again in 1919 and 1920, reflecting great credit on Jerry Driscoll, the Eton Mission boxing instructor. The intensity of the competition in the Light-weight division was highlighted when Fred travelled to Edinburgh, in March 1911, as clear favourite to win the Scottish A.B.A. title but suffered a shock defeat when the crown went to R. Buchan, of Leith.

The man who beat Baker, the Australian, for the Olympic Middle-weight gold was another East Londoner. J.W.H.T. 'Johnny' Douglas was born in Clapton, E.5., and established himself as an all-round sportsman whilst at Felsted School. In 1905 he won the A.B.A. Middle-weight championship and was chosen for the G.B. Olympic team of 1908 although, by then, he had moved to Wanstead. He played first-class cricket for the Essex County Club from 1901, when home games were mostly at Leyton, and was captain from 1911 until 1928, also fitting in an amateur soccer international for England against Bohemia. Having missed two Olympiads, in 1940 and 1944, the International Olympic Committee was eager to get back on schedule with the XIV celebration in 1948 and, once more, London came to the rescue. In early 1946 the announcement was made and, with a little over two years notice a team, consisting mainly of dedicated and knowledgeable amateurs, was assembled to plan the Games. Sir Arthur Elvin, proprietor of Wembley, was quick to spot the potential and offered the use of the Stadium and Arena as well as guaranteeing £100,000 towards the cost. A new running-track was laid by EN-TOUT-CAS, access to the area was improved and, with the majority of competitors housed in service establishments, the total cost is said to have been £170,000 - compare that with the projection for 2012!

Once more East Londoners were involved, although not as competitors. Les Golding, Honorary Secretary of Eton Manor A.C., was among the escort for the Olympic Flame as it approached the Stadium from outer London and Fred Mallin, from Hackney Wick, was an Honorary Trainer for the British Boxing team which finished with two silver medals. Fred, himself, had been A.B.A. Middle-weight Champion in 1928-29-30-31-32 and Empire Champion in 1930. (His elder brother, Harry, had also won five A.B.A. titles as well as Olympic gold in 1920 and 1924 - but that is another story as this article concentrates on Olympiads in London.)

After the 1948 Games Wembley Stadium reverted to regular staging of Greyhound Racing and Speedway, with the occasional soccer match, and the nearly new running track was surplus to requirements. That was not the end, however, for it was to live on for many years after being re-laid at Temple Mills, very close to the site planned for 2012. As the home of Eton Manor A.C. it hosted athletics at all levels and, in May 1951, put on the first meeting held under lights in London, starting the annual series of Leyton Floodlit Meetings.

### Roy Hayes

### Lest We Forget

#### Stepney Boys Home, North Stifford

Property Developer Persimmon Homes Essex has been building on the site of the former Stepney Boys Home in North Stifford, and rescued a dilapidated World War One memorial to the men from the Home, who died on the battlefield. Research into the names found on the memorial revealed that they were Canadian or Australian orphans, and were transported to the UK and the Home, from 1901. Their ages ranged from 18 to 36 years. The memorial was rededicated on Sunday October 16, and Persimmon has paid tribute to the men by naming the streets and roads on the new estate after the men listed, who include: George Allabush, Thomas Birchfield, Robert Bennett, George Clark, William Dominy, Joseph Elvin, William Fox, Albert Gunn, Thomas Harrington, Arthur Hosier, Arthur Legon, George Legon, Peter Luderman, LtB W Devas and WJE Vincent.

#### Abbey Road Depot, Stratford

A plaque of remembrance has been placed at the site of Abbey Road Depot in Bridge Road, Stratford, as a memorial to the 13 men who died there on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1940, 'Black Saturday'. The depot was being used as an air raid precautions cleansing and ambulance station during the Second World War. Among the guests attending the unveiling of the

plaque was 100 year old Cyril Demarne OBE, former sub-officer with the National Fire Service, who went to the bomb site on that fateful day.

The plaque commemorates ARP personnel Alf Bridgeman, Fred Chilvers, Ted Dunn, Matthew Fenwick, Fred Jones, Sid Lowings, George Odell, Wally Porter, Frank Swift, Bill Willis, and AFS staff Hugh Dicken, Bill Long and Wally Turley.



War memorial on empty building.

This war memorial to the employees of John Kidd & Company Ltd can still be seen on the exterior wall of their old factory at 419 Old Ford Road. The company manufactured printing inks and were on that site from before 1864 until 1954 when they would appear to have been taken over by Manders Ltd. This large site running down to the River Lea is subject to the Olympics 2012 Compulsory Purchase Order. The future of the memorial must be doubtful.



# SPRING COACH TRIP

SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006  
**TO COGGESHALL, ESSEX**  
VISITING COGGESHALL ABBEY & PAYCOCKES

The Abbey buildings (now a private house) are examples of fine early brickwork. Opposite the Abbey there is a Great Barn (separately open, National Trust).

Paycockes is a lovely example of a timber framed house of about 1500, with splendid carved decorations. It also, is National Trust.

Entrance fees to the Abbey are £5\* per person, guided tour included, £1\* extra for tea or coffee.

The Barn & Paycockes are free to National Trust members. Entrance for non-members is £3.50\* for a joint ticket or £2.40\* for Paycockes alone. These fees will have to be paid individually as there is no party rate. I will collect entrances to the Abbey on the coach.

\* 2005 prices

The coach has been booked but the price is not yet available due to the current uncertainty over fuel costs.

The pick up will be the bus pull in on Grove Road, near Mile End Station, probably at 9.30. If you wish to reserve a place on the coach please send your booking on the slip below.

Please fill in the booking slip below and send to me, Ann Sansom, 18 Hawkdene, London E4 7PF. Tel. 020 8524 4506. (Photocopy it if you don't wish to spoil your newsletter.)



**SPRING TRIP**  
**Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup> 2006**

I/We would like to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ Ticket/s for the coach trip to Coggeshall.

NAME/S \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TEL NO. \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL TRUST MEMBERSHIP (IMPORTANT)

YES      NO      Some of us (please give number)