

Angel Memorial in Poplar Recreation Park

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Editorial Note:

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.

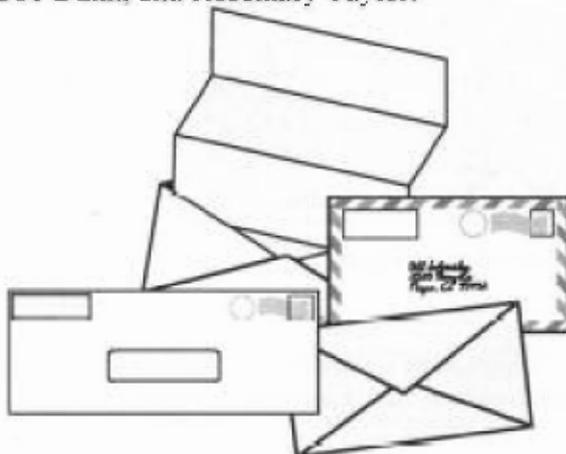
Our grateful thanks go to all the contributors of this edition of the newsletter. We have a wide variety of topics and we trust our members will enjoy reading it as much as I have, whilst compiling the newsletter. Letters and articles on East End history and reminiscences are always welcome and we make 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

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.castlondonhistory.org.uk.

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



MEMORIAL RESEARCH

Doreen and Diane Kendall, with Doreen Osborne and other volunteers continue their work in the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park 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, but would welcome any information that has been uncovered through personal searches. Meet them in the Park on the **2nd Sunday of every month at 2 pm.**

PROGRAMME 2007-2008

Our Programme Secretary, David Behr is busy putting together the 2007-2008 Lecture programme, which has yet to be finalised. The next season of lectures begins in September 2007. 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.

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 get in touch with David Behr, our Programme co-ordinator, either at one of our lectures or, alternatively, email our Chairman Philip Mernick with your comments and suggestions. Email: phil@mernicks.com

Menasseh ben Israel

There was a tiny exhibition at the British Library's Sir John Riblat Gallery in September and October to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the readmission of the Jews to England. Among the items featured was a picture of Menasseh Ben Israel, the man mainly responsible for the readmission, based on a portrait by Rembrandt. Other items included contemporary books and pamphlets relevant to the heated discussions that surrounded the issue. These valuable ephemera were of course behind glass, but informative captions explained their significance.

The book edited by Yosef Caplan and others, *Menasseh ben Israel and his World* (New York, 1989), reproduces the portrait. Surprisingly, in a book of essays that traces many controversies that engaged religious and political bodies in the seventeenth century and Menasseh ben Israel's part in many of them, there is no biographical essay. I therefore learned little about the man himself. Chapter 3 of David S. Katz's *The Jews in the History of England* (Oxford, 1994) relates the full story of the readmission and Cromwell's eventual agreement. And what a story it is! I recommend it to everyone with a taste for religious controversy. It begins with the reported discovery of tribes of Indians in South America who performed Jewish rituals and were supposed to have been descendants of the lost tribes of Reuben and Levi. This convinced Menasseh ben Israel that the advent of the Messianic Age would be hastened if Jews could be resettled in all countries in the world, including England. Some Christians, likewise awaiting the Millennium, agreed with him. The ideas of one of these, Henry Jessey, are treated at length in an essay in the Caplan book mentioned above.

The book *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel* (Philadelphia, 1934) would obviously contain the biographical information I am seeking.

However, I cannot find any reference to it on the British Library catalogue. Maybe some member of the ELHS has a copy?

The 'old' Jewish Burial Ground must have been one of the early consequences of the readmission, as, according to the book, *From Palace to College: An illustrated Account of Queen Mary College* by G.P. Moss and M.V. Saville (London, 1985), the first record in the register of burials was dated 1657. The caption to a photograph of a plaque on the wall of the burial ground, however, reproduced two pages further on in the same book, indicates that the wall was laid out in 1684. (Mike Saville, incidentally, was once a very active member of the ELHS). When the first burial ground was full, another was opened nearby in 1733. The inscription on the plaque in the mortuary of the New Burial Ground was translated from the Hebrew for the Moss' and Saville book by Raphael Loewe. The first three lines are worth quoting, highlighting as they do the transitory nature of our earthly existence:

Rich and poor, the just and wicked, all as one,
Cut off in God's good time must feel death's sting.

Within an ace of death their life did run.

Colm Kerrigan

(This item was submitted last year, but was unfortunately overlooked.)

Here and There

A Memorial called Stairway to Heaven to commemorate the victims of the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster will be constructed at the entrance to the underground station, at a cost of £250,000.

Monday 21st May: The news has just been broadcast of a devastating fire which has severely damaged the Cutty Sark which was under renovation in Greenwich.

Correspondence

**From Dr Dawn Nell, Research Officer,
AHRC Consumer Landscapes Project,
School of Management, University of
Surrey, Guildford GU2 7XH**

I am a research officer for a new Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research project on the impact of the supermarket on shopping habits in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. The project is being run jointly by the Universities of Surrey and Exeter.

We are trying to generate interest in our project, and ideally to get members of the public to fill in our questionnaires and possibly to take part in oral history interviews. We think it is the sort of thing that might be of interest to your members.

I was wondering if you might consider making an announcement about our project at the next meeting of your Society, or to mention our appeal in your next newsletter. Our questionnaire is available online, and also in hard copy.

Appeal:

Were you a shopper in the 1950s and 1960s? Then we would like to hear from you. Researchers at the Universities of Exeter and Surrey are working on a new project on consumers and the coming of the supermarket. We are looking for respondents to fill in our questionnaire, and possibly to take part in oral history interviews. If you think you might be able to help us, please contact Dawn Nell at the University of Surrey.

The questionnaire is available online at <http://www.sobe.ex.ac.uk/shopping>
Tel 01483 683109
Fax 01483 689511
Email: d.nell@surrey.ac.uk
www.som.surrey.ac.uk

Philip Mernick has compiled a selection of email correspondence he has been dealing with over the past few months.

Email from Linda Leighton, New Plymouth, Taranaki, New Zealand:

We have been into the site <http://www.mernick.co.uk/thhol/main.html> looking for old landmarks of Shadwell. We have a very old photo, taken around 1880ish. The subject is the family of Captain George Dawson TAYLOR. They are standing in front of an impressive building with a building off to one side, with what appears to be sand and grass in the foreground. Captain Taylor, on the 1881-1901 census, was a Dock Master/ Harbourmaster London Dock living at Shadwell Pier Head. Is there any way we could find out about the building in the photo, if say we sent a scanned copy.

From Philip:

I would very much like to see a copy of your photograph. Although most of the Shadwell area has been redeveloped The Dockmasters House is still there it could be that.

(Note: I was at the time thinking about the Dockmasters house in Wapping)

From Linda:

Many thanks for your quick reply, have attached the photo mentioned in my email. This photo was among belongings of Harold LOCKWOOD (born 1868 son of Francis Day LOCKWOOD) and his wife Florence Madeline LOCKWOOD nee Taylor (born 1869). I should have mentioned that none of the photos were named, including those of family members although we were lucky in the fact that Harold LOCKWOOD, like many of his family, had talent for drawing. Our family have a few drawing done by Harold and his father. Most of these have been named, some tie in with photos.

(Philip's reply after Linda confirmed it was The Dockmasters House Shadwell, not Wapping)

Thanks very much, I am sure you are right. In fact that makes it a different Dock Master's House from the one I was thinking about. I suppose each dock required a house for its controller. It seems probable then that this building has gone - certainly the area has been redeveloped but sometimes old structures get incorporated. I will check it out and let you know.

From Philip:

I have now been down to Shadwell to have a look. I can confirm that the building in your photograph has gone. It was probably damaged during World War 2 - it was still there in 1937. My two photographs show what remains of the Shadwell Dock old entrance and the current river front view. "Your" house would have been on the site of the new apartment block. If you have any family information that would be of interest to our members and could be published in our newsletter I would be very interested to hear from you.



From Linda:

Many thanks for your email and the wonderful photos you attached. Our photo was found in the belongings of Harold LOCKWOOD, my husband's great grandfather. Harold LOCKWOOD was the son of Francis Day LOCKWOOD and Elizabeth Lavina

RIDLEY. Harold married Florence Madeline TAYLOR in Capetown, South Africa 15 May 1899. The Photo had Captain Robert Dawson TAYLOR in it. We think it could be a family photo. We have a number of photos of Captain Taylor, plus a drawing of his which was done by Harold.

Once again many thanks for your help, it is with the help of people like you that enables us, here in New Zealand to fill in some gaps. We thank you for the time and interest you have taken to help us out.

Email from Dr. John Scott, School of Social Science, UNE, Armidale NSW 2351:

I am hoping you may be able to assist with the following. I am seeking the current location of Leading Street which had been located in Shadwell, East London during the 19th century. The street appears not to exist any more, at least not under this name. Do you know the current name of this street?

Philip replied:

Leading Street was just to the south of High Street Shadwell, just above Shadwell New Dock. The area has been cleared for modern housing, so there may be no trace of the original street. If you look at the map reached by this link

<http://www.memick.co.uk/elhs/maps/images/s1882.jpg> you will find it (name abbreviated) immediately to the right of the cross marking Shadwell Church.

Via email from Teresa Breathnach (Message forwarded by East London Postcards (Steve Kentfield & Ray Newton):

I think you used to have a postcard online showing an illustration of a camel and which read "if you've got the hump come to Stepney". I wonder if it's possible to purchase a copy of this to download? It's for a family reunion. Many thanks

Philip replied:

East London Postcards have forwarded your message. Feel free to use the image from our web site - no charge.

Teresa responded:

This one is absolutely perfect – thank you so much. My mother was born in Stepney but moved to Ireland in the 1950s when she met my father here – she and her immediate family have all passed away, and I rarely get to hear anyone say “I’ve got the ‘ump” anymore, as its not a term used here. My grandfather was Joe McCarthy, a one time mayor of Stepney (the mid 50s) and you can still see the foundation stone he laid for the St. Mary and St. Michaels School on Sutton Street beside St. Mary and St. Michaels church, Commercial Road. His grandparents had been the first caretakers of the school when it was in Johnson Street. His brother Dinny was mace bearer.

We knew very little about my grandfather’s family until this year, when we began to research it. It’s been a tremendous journey and so much of their story is bound up with the history of the area. They originally came from West Cork in the post famine period (not unusual in Shadwell and Ratcliff, as we’ve discovered!), my great grandfather (Thomas) was a docker / stevedore as were his brother and father Cornelius and John (Jack). We think John was probably involved in the dockers strike. My grandfather was very insistent that Cardinal Manning was a “great man”, 100 years after the event itself!

This year we have been able to trace living descendents of all of my grandfather’s siblings and many of us will meet for the first time at this reunion.

My background is in design history, and if I can be of any help to your organisation, please don’t hesitate to ask. The Tower Hamlets local history archives have also been very helpful to us. Many Thanks again.

Email from Colin Harvey:

Your time and help would be much appreciated. Probably like many other people asking your assistance I am just one of many trying to go back in time looking how things were. I will give you the facts as I know them, anticipating you will be courteous enough to spare the time to reply to my search. My parents were married in Hackney in 1935. I have no map readings of my grandfather’s given address of the day making it difficult to move ahead with my search for 40 Essex street Hackney and 26 Homer Road Hackney, the two surnames being Harvey and Spall. Another address given is Rippoth Road Bow.

It is ironic to think that I moved from Poplar at 1 year old being born in St Andrews Hospital Bow, which I believe to be the old work house, and making me a true cockney, that until now at 57 I have just found the time to research. May I add that living all my life in South Wales I still shout for England when the rugby’s on but only when the rest is not looking.

Philip replied:

All the places you mention are quite close together near Victoria Park. Although Rippoth Road and Homer Road are in different boroughs they are only half a mile apart. St Andrews Hospital is currently going the way of most old buildings in East London, demolition and then “luxury flats”. I am afraid I am not clear exactly how you want us to help you. Can you please explain.

Colin replied:

Thank you for your kind reply. Sorry I went off the point. What I need to find out is any facts of my two grandparents living at these two addresses in 1935. All I know is at 40 Essex Street lived Alfred Harvey, no name for my grandmother, at 26 Homer Road Henry Vincent Spall, no name for my grandmother. All these facts came from a marriage certificate. I did look on the census with no luck because these two roads don’t register. Any thoughts or ideas are welcome. I do

intend coming up there to the nearby cemetery to search, until then I can't move forward, sorry, back! Thanks again Phil, hope you can pull some strings, best wishes,
Colin the Welsh cockney or English taffy apple.

Philip's reply:

I am afraid I don't have any real contacts at Hackney, mostly with Tower Hamlets. I would suggest you try the electoral register. Updated every year it should also have your grandmother's name (plus any adult children). Copies should be in Hackney Archives. <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/ca-archives>
You won't get any census information as 1901 has only recently been made available and 1911 won't be available for a year or so. 1931 will in theory have to wait until 2031 !!

Email from Simon Barker-Bentfield:

I am trying to find out what the successor name is/was of Execution Dock Stairs in Wapping, and its precise current location. The stairs are marked on John Rocque's 1746 map of London; on Greenwood's 1827 map, and on Cruchley's 1846 map. After that they seem to evaporate as the docks grew. The Rocque map shows the stairs as a continuation of Brewhouse Lane, just east of Gun Wharf, but modern maps show that the continuation section of Brewhouse Lane is Bridewell Place. Wapping Tube Station seems to be too far east.

If queries such as this one is not in your purview I would appreciate being referred to someone else.

Philip replied:

Execution Dock Stairs are still shown on Cross's 1853 New Plan of London but not on maps of the 1860s. A close examination of maps seems to indicate they were replaced by Tunnel Pier (none of my maps show both stairs and pier). This can still be seen on

modern maps, to the east of the police station.

From Simon BB:

Thank you so much for both your very speedy response and the information. Another question (and then I will stop pestering you)-- is Tunnel Pier the same as Wapping Pier ? (I'm looking at a Collins Bartholemew 2005 map)

Philip : Yes - it isn't named on my 2001 Collins atlas but is on a 2000 Phillips atlas, between the police station and Wapping Underground station.

Email from Roy Bond:

Can you help me please? Some of our ancestors came from Bethnal Green in the 18th and 19th centuries. Two of them had inquests into their deaths in the second half of the 1800s which may have been reported in local newspapers. If possible, I would like to examine such papers. Are there newspaper archives and how do I get hold of hem?

Philip's Reply:

Tower Hamlets Local History Library (Mile End) holds extensive microfilm copies of local newspapers.

(Jill and Aimee Macdonald have found another ancestral connection in Limehouse, and as it comes from the boxing world, we thought it would be of interest to some of our members.)

Email from Jill Macdonald:

A few details of the life of John Francis "Punch" Prill.

He was the husband of my grandmother's sister Martha Prill nee Rapp. John Prill was a popular chap - I understand my grandfather - his brother-in-law - was very close to John and often sparred with him. He was also very popular with the local boxing audiences and

undertook many, what seem to be, quite brutal boxing matches in the area. My father, born in 1914 never met him, but after he was killed in WW1 in 1916, his memory lasts on. My father's family never forgot him and often spoke of him. In a recent family reunion of all my cousins ALL of them knew of Punch Prill.

Trying to find out more about him I contacted, via email, the BBC site - on the boxing history page. To my amazement my query was transferred to Robert Elms on his BBC London programme - they contacted a Boxing Historian - Robert Alderman, a charming man - who knew all the recorded boxing history of Punch. I contacted him, and together with our research we have built up a short biography of him. The Boxing Historian also put me in contact with Punch's eldest grandson who now lives in Corby, Northamptonshire (I live in Surrey) and since then we have been in constant contact discussing all the aspects of the Prill family and the Rapp family (my grandmother's maiden name).

We recently contacted the Bancroft Road Library to ask if they had any photographs of St. Anne's Street. They kindly sent copies of the only two photographs they had. To our utter and complete amazement, when we opened the photograph there was my Grandmother, my Aunt and my cousin pictured in it - along with another sister of my Grandmother. It has been a wonderful experience for all my cousins and my Father (92) and Aunt (80) to look at. They have named all the people who lived in the houses there - we also have a copy of the page of the Electoral Register of 1918 showing the names of people living there. My Dad and my Aunt remember my grandfather building a wooden frame which had a "roll of honour" of all the people who took part in WW1 in the street. We had been told that there were flowers all around the "grotto" - as they called it. When the photograph of the street came - there it was, still fixed to the wall in 1940 when the photograph was taken. My cousin, the

grandson of John Prill was so delighted to see it - he'd heard so much about it.

John Prill was killed in France in WW1 in 1916 and one year after that, tragically on the same day, his brother Joseph Prill was killed also. Both of their names are on the stone memorial in the churchyard of St. Anne's Church. We visited St. Anne's Church, Limchouse earlier this year - with my father and my aunt - my Aunt remembers how this memorial was always bright and shining white and on Remembrance Day people gathered around, there were prayers and hymns sang and the memorial was covered in flowers and poppies.

The Apex of John "Punch" Prill's boxing career was when he fought a return fight with a Frenchman - a local MP put up a "belt" and a £10 purse for the winner of the return fight. John "Punch" won that fight and the belt is still in the possession of the Prill family. Photo enclosed. We have details of the MP who put up the belt, who apparently was an extremely popular figure in the East End and I could forward this information to you too, if you decide to use "Punch" as a subject for one of your newsletters.

During the war my father was stationed in Southwark Fire Station. He was a fireman and fought the fires in the City of London - along the docklands etc. He had borrowed from his parents a small memento of John "Punch" Prill - in boxing pose. It was a matchbox cover - probably made of celluloid - showing a photo of "Punch". Tragedy struck when the matchbox cover fell into the fire and was destroyed in the flames. My father never forgot that and regretted it for years - when we received from Harold Alderman, the boxing historian, the history of him and a photograph - my father was ecstatic he said he never thought he'd ever see a photograph of "Uncle Punch" again. I hope you find the attached of interest. My father never did get to meet "Uncle Punch" as he was born in 1914 and Punch was in France - but his memory has

been kept alive by the family - my father had a long interest in boxing and often in his youth visited local boxing venues such as Premierland etc.

John Francis "Punch" Prill

(1888-1916) a short biography



John Francis "Punch" Prill was born in 4 Sabbarton Street, Poplar, London on the 12th February 1888, to John and Alwine Prill, immigrants from Germany, probably Pomerania (on the borders of Germany and Poland) according to family research. He was baptised at Saint Saviour's Church, Poplar on 29th February 1888. Punch's mother died in 1893 when he was just five, and a year later his father married Margaret Blackwell who brought Punch and his siblings up.

John Francis married Martha in 1907 at St. Saviours in Poplar - the same church he had been baptised in. They had 5 children - Martha (aka Marsha), Jane, John, Claire (aka Clara) and William.

On their marriage certificate John is noted as being a Timber Porter, but he regularly boxed. He was an accomplished boxer, winning 35 out of 58 traced bouts, and he was also extremely popular with the fraternity. In fact Martha's sister, Elizabeth had a match-box cover, probably made of celluloid which displayed a photograph of Punch - in boxing post - confirming the popularity of him as a boxer.

In April 1914, towards the end of his boxing history - he won a Silver Belt which had been donated by a local parliamentarian, Robertson Kerr-Clark, for the re-match of a fight with a French boxer named Francis Gervill. This belt came with a purse of £10, a good deal of money at that time. The Belt is still in the possession of the Prill family, with Marian, Punch's granddaughter by John junior.

John served in World War I (1914-18), as a private in the 11th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. He was killed in action in Flanders on 13th February 1916. His older brother Joseph (a Rifleman in the Rifle Brigade of the 16th Battalion) was killed in action exactly one year later in Flanders on 13th February 1917.

We have been told that his daughter Jane never believed her father had died and always thought he would come back. (memory of his nephew Bill Williams)

Robert Williams - husband of Elizabeth Emily (Martha's sister), was a good friend of Punch Prill and, it is believed, did occasionally spa with him. (a family memory of Bill and Alice Williams who were not born when Punch was alive)

Martha, widowed, later married Edward White. They had one child, a son Edward (Teddy). He was the victim of a terrible accident aged 7, when he was run over by a bus. His leg was amputated in the hope of preserving his life, but gangrene set in and he eventually died.

Both of Punch's sons, William (Billy) and John (Johnny), were amateur boxers but, it seems, did not follow their father's success in the ring.

We would like to express our enormous thanks to Harold Alderman, Boxing Historian, for supplying an immensely detailed record of Punch's professional boxing career, and thus bringing his colourful history alive for us.

Also, thanks to Alan Savage, Punch's grandson, for all the wonderful photos, historical records and family anecdotes.

Blondie over the Back

The New Year came in for me, in my wartime childhood, with two sounds: one was of all the hooters on ships in the Albert Docks; the other was of Blondie over the Back, furiously swinging her speedway or football rattle and screeching 'Happy New Year'! Sometimes a voice from a neighbouring garden would shout back a greeting, but mostly it was a solo performance. If there were any parties going on to celebrate the advent of another year of war, they couldn't spill out into the gardens in the black-out.

Blondie lived upstairs in a room or two of a little terrace house in Plaistow, not the one directly behind ours, but behind the one next door. Consequently we did not know Blondie to talk to much. I never knew her true name. My mother called her Blondie over the Back because of her peroxidized hair, kept bright at a time when hair colouring was not nearly as common as it is now. The hair was scraggy, and piled up in front in the fashionable 'sweeps'.

Blondie was slightly built and painfully thin. Her teeth were blackened with decay, but her face was bright with colour – over-rouged cheeks, and scarlet lips. If you met her out shopping, you usually first heard her feet

scurrying along with tiny steps slurring on the ground in ill-fitting high-heeled shoes, as she tottered by clutching her fake leopard-skin coat around her. Blondie's husband was away in the forces, so she lived alone in her upstairs room; we used to see her cooking by the window. Clearly a sociable and fun-loving woman, she must have had friends, but to me she was always a solitary figure.

One night we all had a strange experience. The planes that came over sounded different. Then the engines stopped. There was an eerie silence, then the blast of a bomb. The next morning, Blondie called over the back fence to our next-door neighbours, who passed the news on. Blondie had said that 'they' were sending over planes with no pilots in them. We went indoors and laughed to think anyone could believe anything so silly; as if a plane could move without a pilot, let alone find its target – us, round the docks. How Blondie got to know about V.I.s overnight I'll never know. Perhaps she did war-work at a place where news went round quickly.

I don't know what happened to Blondie over the Back. I hope her husband came home safely and they got a house, filled with the new austerity furniture that looked so modern. I never spoke to her, never knew her name, but every New Year, I miss her.

Pat Francis

The Night the Roof Fell In

When we remember the past, impressions can be vivid, but time unsure. Sometimes memories don't seem to tally with records of the past, sometimes the memories themselves conflict. Perhaps one forgotten detail would clear it all up, if only we could recapture it. In my case, for example, windows are the puzzle.

My memories of the day we first had glass windows again after the war are clearer than the glass put in them, semi-opaque and rough

to the touch as it was, hastily made to bring back a little light into all the war-darkened rooms in West Ham. I know we had tarpaulin in our windows throughout most of the war. There is a hazier memory that after the windows were blown out once in the blitz, they were replaced with glass, but the next time they all broke, tarpaulin went in, and stayed in for the rest of the war. And yet a glass window figures in one memory from the middle of the war, the main details of which are still fresh in my mind.

My brother was in the Merchant Navy, and I know he made his first trip to sea in late 1942, at first, I believe, on oil-tankers, and later on food runs to Australia. During the war, of course, there was no advance notice of when a ship would put into dock, and so it was always with a delighted surprise that we saw him come in, the kitbag on his back holding trinkets for me, and sometimes, an almost unbelievable treat in wartime, bananas. So it was, in the excitement of one home-coming, that when the air-raid warning sounded soon after he had burst through the door, my mother and I ignored the siren and sat talking to him in the kitchen (as we called the main living-room) instead of retreating straight away to the Anderson shelter in the garden.

There was a little anti-aircraft fire, I seem to remember, but no bombing nearby. Then one solitary plane came over, getting uncomfortably close. The engine seemed to stall a few times, I believe, then the noise of its engine changed to a thin whine going higher and higher, a sound like a plane gaining height in order to dive-bomb. Sure enough, when the whine had become almost too faint to hear, the unmistakable roar of a descending aeroplane thundered towards us. We threw ourselves to the ground, covering our heads with our hands. The blast that followed shook the walls and the floor.

It is at this point that I have my contradictory memory of the noise of shattering glass from the window as it was blown onto the mat in

front of the fire, where I knew my brother had thrown himself.

Total silence followed the explosion, an uncanny silence after we had listened so intently to the engine and then had our ears shattered by the blast. I looked up between my hands. I saw flames from the fire reaching far across the room, over my brother as he lay before the hearth. The vacuum caused by the explosion held us in this silent world for, I suppose, seconds, although it seemed endless. I believe my brother said 'keep down', but his voice seemed distant, almost inaudible in the thin air. Then the world started tumbling down, in a prolonged rumble. I was afraid to look up, convinced my beloved brother had been sliced by fragments of glass, or burned by the fire.

But the flames had been sucked back safely into the grate, we were all three alive, and the room was still standing. We didn't know what to expect beyond it. We scrambled up. It was now dark; the mains must have been severed. We groped our way to the front door, which had come off its hinges and become wedged in the space. Anxious neighbours were calling to us, because the blocked doorway had held us back, and because, as we later learned, our roof was flattened, and they could see nothing but the sky where our roof should have been. Blast can be capricious. A few houses near the New City Road had been destroyed, but several were still standing between them and us, and yet ours was the only house in the street to lose its roof entirely.

People stood at their gates in the dark, half-numb with shock, calling reassurance to one another, counting heads to see all neighbours in our immediate neighbourhood had appeared. Then we went back inside, and slept in the confusion. There was nothing to be done until daylight.

In the morning we found the blast had hurled things around in sometimes bizarre ways. A day or two before, my mother had won a

bottle of brown sauce in a raffle, the only thing she had ever won, or so she claimed. The shock waves that night had lifted the sauce bottle off the shelf. The lid must have flown off the flour-bin on the shelf below, the sauce bottle fell in, breaking on the way down, and the lid slammed back down onto the bin, all in a matter of seconds. It seems almost incredible, but that is the only explanation for the mess my mother found. In cleaning up the cupboard, she went to straighten the lid of the flour-bin, but peeped inside first, no doubt to check whether the flour was contaminated by the dirt that coated everything. Inside was her prize, and her precious supply of flour thick with broken glass and brown sauce. It wasn't only the house that needed cleaning, I was booked to go for a music exam on the piano the next day, and my mother often recalled sending me off for it with my skin still blackened with the soot she had been unable to scrub off entirely. My music lessons stopped soon after, to my secret relief, as my mother was afraid I would be caught in an air-raid on the way.

Neighbours argued for a little while about the cause of the damage. It didn't seem quite like a bomb, so some said it was a landmine, while others said a mine would have caused far greater damage. Eventually, we agreed it must have been a landmine that got caught on telephone wires, thus breaking its fall. Having settled this point, we almost forgot there had ever been any doubt. In time, new people who had been bombed out of their homes in Canning Town came and settled in the prefabricated houses erected on the site where the 'landmine' had fallen.

I feel sure this must have all happened in 1943, possibly even later, but not before, and I know we were still accustomed to hurrying to the shelter whenever the siren went, yet history books frequently assert categorically that the blitz ended in May 1941.

It was only quite recently that I saw in Newham Public Library a map showing war-

damage in West Ham. It revealed that the site in Haig Road that was hit had been obliterated by a crashed plane. To this day I don't know if the plane was English or German.

We were encouraged to leave London at the time – whether by the government or the local authority or both, again I don't know – but we didn't go. We were told that the house would be pulled down after the war, as the foundations were damaged – perhaps an honest opinion, perhaps a ploy to get us to leave. But the house stayed up, and looked very spruce when I went to look recently, its walls painted, a new door in front of what was our porch. In time the prefabs were taken down, and the block of flats now standing in the middle of Haig Road went up, where our 'landmine' fell.

Pat Francis

We Remember:

Cyril Demarne, former fire chief of West Ham, passed away in February 2007, just ten days short of his 102nd birthday. Cyril was born in Abbotts Road, Poplar in 1905, and witnessed the Zeppelin raids on London in 1915. He joined West Ham Fire Brigade in 1925 and was stationed in several areas of London, before returning to the East End during the Blitz. He recorded his experiences in a book – *The London Blitz – A Fireman's Tale*. After his various postings around London during and after the War, Cyril retired in 1955. He moved to Australia to become the senior instructor of the Fire Service Training School at Sydney Airport. He then set up and ran the Civil Aviation Safety Centre at Beirut Airport, Lebanon until his final retirement in 1967. He published his memoirs in 1980, and also contributed to several television documentaries. He was an invaluable source of information and advice during the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and was a major contributor to the volume *The East End, Then and Now*, edited by Winston Ramsey. Cyril was awarded an OBE in 1953.

The Bombing of Upper North Street School – 13 June 1917

The Background

The onset of the First World War in August 1914 was to give the East End of London its first experience of aerial bombardment. Zeppelins were used to drop bombs over London by night, but by October 1916, these Zeppelin air ships, which had been manned by the German Navy had been countered by the defences of London. The capital had nine peaceful months. In December 1916, because of heavy losses suffered by the army during the Battle of the Somme, the government decided to send five squadrons of fighter aircraft to France. These aircraft were the original Zeppelin fighters deployed in the defence of London, but it was now decided that they were needed elsewhere. Six weeks later, half of the new AA guns ordered for the defence of London were diverted to the Merchant Navy for defence against submarine attacks. A large number of AA gunners and searchlight operators were also sent to France. Against this background, the German High Command, who had also suffered heavy losses on the Somme, and Verdun, decided to relieve the pressure on the German army by launching a two pronged attack, namely, unrestricted submarine warfare i.e. attack all ships on sight, and secondly, bombing London, (the seat of government and financial centre) by long range aircraft in broad daylight. This, they believed, would strike terror into the civil population, who would then demand 'peace at any price.'

The weapon selected for the attack on London was the Gotha bomber, manned by the army. To reach London these bombers would have to use airfields close to the Belgian coast. This would still mean a five hour flight, most of it over water. To achieve this, weather conditions had to be perfect, clear skies with no cloud, for navigational purposes, no headwind, because this would cause the

aircraft to use extra fuel, which they did not have.

That fateful day, 13th June 1917, the weather conditions were as perfect as they could wish for. German army meteorologists had forecast exceptional flying weather for the 13th-14th period, with clear skies over the target area. Take off time would be 9 am. This would put them over London about mid-day, thus increasing the terror effect on the civil population. It would also get them back to their base before darkness set in.

1917 was a very bad year for weather over England, there had been very few days of sun, but lots of wind, cloud, and rainstorms. The German squadron commander, Hauptmann Ernst Brandenburg was determined to make the most of this lucky break in the weather. Twenty two Gothas took off from their Belgian airfield and set course for the Essex coast. By the time they crossed that coast there were only fourteen Gothas left. The rest had turned back with mechanical problems.

A light-ship anchored off the coast had spotted the flight and had radioed a warning to the War Office, who alerted all police stations and fire brigades, but no general warning was given to the public. One reason given for this was that they feared that many people, on hearing the air raid warning would rush out into the streets to watch 'the sights'.

In two groups the squadron of Gothas flew on over Essex. At 11.20 am the right wing passed over Brentwood, the left wing over Upminster. By this time every gun in the path of the raiders opened fire. Barking was the first to feel the weight of bombs, next East Ham, where five people were killed, and fifteen injured. The Royal Docks were next, with eight dockers killed and many injured.

The two wings now came together and headed for the City of London. The AA guns at Blackwall fired five rounds, but then jammed, and the Gothas flew on unscathed. Below

them, the whole of London was basking in warm sunshine. Seventy-five bombs were dropped within a radius of one mile of the City. Three bombs hit Liverpool Street station, causing a train to catch fire. Fifteen people were killed, many injured by flying glass from the glass roof of the station. One bomb landed in Fenchurch Street, where fifteen people were killed. The Royal Mint was hit and many of its workers injured. A bomb landed on the pavement in Aldgate High Street, killing twelve and injuring a further twenty people. A school in Hoxton received a direct hit from a bomb which penetrated three floors of the building, before coming to rest in the basement, where it failed to explode. The school was full of children at the time, a very lucky escape indeed. Many of the victims in Fenchurch Street were killed when they ran out into the street to watch the gunfire. The buildings from which they emerged were not damaged. Most of the victims at Aldgate were on a passing bus, one of whom was an inmate of Bow Institution, having a day out. The victims at the Royal Mint were standing on the roof of the Mint watching the raiders when it was hit.

After bombing the Liverpool Street area the squadron split into two groups. Six Gothas flew across the Thames near Tower Bridge and attacked the railway stations in the Southwark district. The warehouses along the river took the brunt of the bomb blasts, setting them on fire, and heavy smoke was seen rising into the clear skies.

The second wing of Gothas headed north to attack rail targets in Dalston, then turned south again to join the others. As they neared the Thames, the planes passed over Poplar. In this borough one 110 pound bomb struck the Upper North Street School, where around 600 pupils were attending lessons. The bomb, falling from the south east, struck a corner of the roof of the Girls Department, causing it to break into two. It did not explode immediately, but killed one pupil, and cut off the foot of another, on its path downwards. It then passed

through one of the boys' classrooms into the Infants Department, where it exploded.

The Infants classroom E was divided by a partition into two sections. At the time of the raid fifty four children were present in the combined rooms being supervised by two teachers, Miss Watkins and Mrs Middleton. Fortunately, the strength of the partition saved the lives of those in Miss Watkins section, but all the children in Mrs Middleton's class were fatally injured. Mrs Middleton, who happened to be standing in a corner of the room, survived. Mrs Watkins stated that there were two hundred and sixty children on the Infants School roll. She said they heard the sound of the bombs, but they continued with their work, until there was a terrific noise, sudden darkness, and strong fumes and a lot of white powder which floated about the room. She thought the school was collapsing, but on seeing a gleam of light from the corridor, managed to escort all her children out. All were injured and needed attention. She then assisted Mrs Middleton, carrying out four children, and helping three boys who had fallen from the floor above into the crater.

Mrs Ely, another teacher spoke of the courage and devotion of the teachers, and especially of the school-keeper, Mr Batt, who had the terrible experience of discovering his own son, aged six, among the debris. She said she found the children coming out covered in soot and red powder. There were fifty four scholars in Room E, and only two had not been accounted for. Another teacher Miss Tiejn stated that the Attendance register was blown out of the window by the rush of air, and was found subsequently on the roof of a neighbouring shed. Unfortunately, this register does not appear to have survived, and seems to have been inadvertently destroyed.

Kaiser Wilhelm II was so pleased with the success of this raid on London that he commanded the two leaders of the flight to be presented to him at his headquarters in southern Germany. On the day after the attack,

Squadron Commander Hauptmann Ernst Brandenburg, and Von Trotha, his chief pilot, took off in a small plane enroute to the Kaiser's Headquarters, with Von Trotha as pilot. Brandenburg gave the Kaiser a detailed report of the attack, explaining that it had been a complete success and that a number of military targets had been hit including docks and railways. The Kaiser then awarded Brandenburg the 'Pour Le Merite' (The Blue Max). At dawn the next morning the two men took off on their return flight to their base in Belgium. At a height of 300 feet the engine failed, and the plane crashed, killing Von Trotha and leaving Brandenburg so badly injured that he never flew again. After the War, Brandenburg was one of the founders of Lufthansa, which in the 1920s was used as cover to train military pilots for the Luftwaffe. Brandenburg died in Berlin in 1952.

When the British government protested about the bombing of women and children, the German government replied that they held the British government responsible for their deaths, as the Germans regarded London as a fortress containing munitions works, military installations and defended by heavy guns. It was also the nerve centre of the war against Germany. They advised the British government to remove all civilians from London.

The Children

William Thomas Challen, aged 5 years
Vera M Clayson, aged 5 years
Elizabeth Taylor, aged 5 years
Louisa Ann Acampora, aged 5 years
Grace Jones, aged 5 years
Robert Stimson, aged 5 years
William Hollis, aged 4 years
George E Morris, aged 6 years
George Albert Hyde, aged 5 years
Alice Maude Cross, aged 5 years
Alfred E Batt, aged 5 years
Leonard Charles Barford, aged 5 years
Rose Tuffin, aged 5 years
Edwin Powell, aged 12 years

Frank Wingfield, aged 5 years
Rose Marlin, aged 10 years
Florence Lilian Woods, aged 5 years
John Percy Brennan, aged 5 years.

Of the eighteen children who died as a result of the bomb, five died instantly from skull fractures, eleven children were pronounced dead on 14th June, their injuries being mainly fractured skulls or crush injuries, and two children were pronounced dead on 15th June, as it took some time for all the children to be extricated from the rubble.

One little girl Rose Symmons was rescued three days after the explosion. Her brother Jimmy refused to leave the school or give up his search for his sister. She was eventually found alive, though badly injured, and made a good recovery.

The funeral service for the children was held at All Saints Church on 20th June 1917. Fifteen children were buried in a common grave in East London cemetery, Plaistow, and a sixteenth coffin with unidentified remains was also buried with them. Three of the children were buried privately, including John Percy Brennan. Three years later, on 13th June 1920 a memorial was unveiled in Poplar Recreation Park by the Mayor, Alderman Sam March. It stand there, in the grounds of the park, a mute reminder of the tragedy.

(From notes compiled by John Harris 1992)

(I am indebted to John for his enthusiastic and exhaustive research into the background of the bombing of Upper North Street School. We had in mind a publication, and were collecting source material, photographs and interviews with Poplar residents. Unfortunately, other projects were given precedence, and sadly John's untimely death caused the project to be shelved.)

Rosemary Taylor

Eye Witness - The Bombing of Upper North Street School

**Interview with Agnes Hill (aged 88) –
Wednesday 20th May 1992:**

The whole thing is very clear in my mind when it happened, the whole hour that it took place, is very clear in my mind. I was thirteen, (I was almost thirteen – I went in for the board of trade test and left school the day I was thirteen, and the bombing was just about three weeks before that. So I left school soon after that. The war was on, so I left school and got a job which was my idea of helping in those days.

We lived in Suffolk Street, a turning off Upper North Street. It was the shortest street in the area. There were six shops which made the length of the street.

But from the actual bombing period, I can't ever forget that. Often at night when I'm awake it comes back to my mind. I think the memory and the horrible shock attached to it makes a mark that never goes away. My sister went into a terrible turn, she got St Vitus's Dance, you see she was actually in the room when it was bombed, blown up, bounced up, she wasn't injured but within five days she got St Vitus's Dance which lasted for over a year.

We'd gone swimming that Wednesday, and we'd come back and we hadn't been back ten minutes or a quarter of an hour when we heard three bang-bang-bangs going up in the sky and before you knew where you were this crash of our ceiling, that's what it sounded like, right through the building. You heard the shrieks of the smaller children, the girls were on the top you see, below them were the youngest of each group. They were the five year olds, and then the nine year olds, I don't think there was anyone over eleven years old that was killed.

In those days the church that was in the main road had a very nice garden that led on to the back of our school, so we had a nice view. I can visualize it all the time, nothing will ever

go away from me. Me and another girl, we had been swimming and when we came back, they had had a painting lesson, and I suppose they were a bit fed up that we had been swimming. So the teacher said: Take them paint things and wash them all up and bring them back. And then pop, pop, pop, and then Bang! They were funny little things in the sky, three little planes in the sky, they were a bit different from ours. We were in the cloakroom and the bomb dropped on that side, and we hadn't realised that the bomb had gone off, and we heard the crash and the children scream. We were between two classrooms, where the cloakrooms were. We could see it, because it was all glass. It was a very old fashioned school. There was only glass between the classrooms. When we tried to get out we could look down and see all these children screaming, and these great big pieces of glass hanging about, it was an eerie feeling. Washing paint pots and then all at once all these bits of glass floating in the air, then broke away.

Of course, we didn't stop that long. We ran out to find our teachers, and the teachers were carrying the children out of their classes. One girl's father was manager of Lusty's Stores, her foot was taken off up to there (indicates knee), my boyfriend was killed, Billy Powell, he was killed. Several of the boys and infants, of course we didn't know the infants. The church gardens were at the back of the school, there was only a pathway about three feet wide and then the church grounds. And of course every teacher was saying: Go away, go down the stairs, go down the stairs, and we wanted to go in and see what had happened.

The horror of it and the unbelief, that's what I was trying to think of. The unbelief. It couldn't be, you know that class was there and then it wasn't. And the next day they had put tarpaulin sheets over it. I don't know what any other child felt like but I felt it was wrong to go there and see. There wasn't such a bad crash on the top, you see it came through the roof, at an angle through the boys school, and

then exploded in the infants class in the bottom. Some of them were three years old. The horror is gone now, but the memory still remains.

Mrs Prevost, she was in that class. Because of the war they had kept her on, you see the men had all gone and the women teachers were kept on. Mrs Cunningham, Mrs Mead and another teacher, a big stout lady. She was the teacher who carried, picked up the girl that had her foot, half her foot blown off. We had a first aid box in the other room and we ran and got the first aid box. And we got her into a classroom and tied her leg up as tightly as we could to stop the bleeding, but they had to take her away. Her father was the manager of Lusty's Sawmills. I hear she did very well in the education world later on. She took up teaching, because they could fit an artificial leg. I don't know much about it, because I had to leave school later that month. I had passed the board of education exam, and I went back to school the next day, then on the Friday I had to go up for my leaving certificate. I was finished with the school. In a way I was thankful I didn't have to go back to the school. My sister was nearly a year in and out of hospital before she went back to school, and there were several other children who also got St. Vitus's Dance.

The gas was downstairs in the children's room. They said the children turned a funny colour, but I don't know, I never saw anything, all I could see was mothers cuddling their children and crying their eyes out. I never saw their faces to know whether they were bloodstained or gas burned. As the police were getting them out and giving them to the mothers who were in a covered area in the playground which had seats all around it. You see, there were no ambulances or anything there for at least half an hour. At least, that's what it seemed like to me, but it might have been the shock, it may not have been that long but it seemed like that to me.

After a bit they were taking a roll call for the girls as they went down the stairs. One of the teachers stood there. We were on the top floor. Nearly all the girls' classes were on the top floor. There were five classes, on the ground floor, first floor and second floor. The infants, then the boys and then the girls on top. There was a playground on the top but the boys were not allowed there. There was only a railing on the top, and any adventurous boy could have cocked his leg over the top. You see it never had a hall. Every school now has a hall, but that glass between the two classes, it folded back in three, so for any ceremony at the school they opened the glass back, it took two or three men to open it, for any big function. But when they rebuilt it they rebuilt it the same. They told me that it was the same, with the fold-up walls. Just occasionally once or twice it was opened up in my time. Like Empire Day. For drill and things like that we went out into the playground.

It was horrible when we got there to see what they were dragging out. They were lying them down in rows, and any woman that was there was trying to see if it was her child, looking at it. There was twenty-one not actually killed on the spot, but died within a day or two from injuries. (Note: officially, 18 died and were buried a week later). But it was said that by the end of the year there wasn't one child from the babies class or the next class that was still alive. I suppose there would have been about twenty in each class.

I suppose it must have been a year by the time they got it built up again. Then you couldn't see any ruins or anything. But by the cloakrooms where we used to wash all the paintpots, that was where the classroom was bombed. But I think some of the children used to wonder if any of the children were still lying there underneath the rubble. Children think funny things, but I never said anything to anyone. I often wondered, you know, what happened to this one and that one. I wonder if they found him, or what they looked like. Funny things came into your mind years after,

because you didn't see it. I think it was worse, not letting us see anything, because not letting us see a tragedy was worse for us. If you don't work it out of your system it's there for years after. I didn't see what they looked like. The only one I'd seen was Annie Pittard, with her foot blown off. When I was younger, I found I would wake up in the morning wondering what so and so looked like, those who were killed in the bombing. It's not fair to children not to let us look at them, just to see two or three in their coffins. I mean, they were in the school, and some of them were found in the front of the church so it must have been a big explosion, they were found in the church grounds. Somehow, you're a coward at heart, and you don't want to go against things. But I did used to go to the park regularly and read all the names on the memorial. And remember them. It's something that if you are in it, you have to live with it until it subsides.

On the Monday morning I went and got a job in Nestles Chocolate factory. It was almost on the river bank, well down. It was a big factory, the biggest one in London. They turned out hundreds of chocolates. Later I got into St Andrews and trained as a nurse for two years. Then I got to work in Poplar Workhouse as an assistant nurse, for 4shillings and sixpence a week. Some of the finest nursing was done in my day. I was there for five years, before I went to St Matthews in the City. I did forty years of nursing.

Interview taped by Rosemary Taylor

Eye Witness (2) Frederick Pepper (Neil Pepper's father):

I was born in Cotton Street, Poplar and my family moved to South East Row, a row of cottages in Upper North Street, Poplar, facing Pekin Street.

At the outbreak of the First World War my father went to France as he was a Militia Man.

I was 7 years old, my brother Albert 3 years, Alex 1 year old. My Aunt Lizzie lived in the same row of cottages with my cousins Elizabeth and Maggie. My Mother and my Aunt went to work at wine vaults at the Minories at Aldgate. Times were very hard. My Mother and Aunt went to work at 7 am.

I used to take Albert to school at Upper North Street Poplar. You could start school at 3 years at that time. My younger brother and cousin were looked after by a neighbour. Food was not rationed and I would have to go out at 5 am and queue for sometimes 3 hours or longer to buy 2 lb potatoes, sometimes at Chrisp Street or Salmon Lane for 1d of condensed milk or pennyworth of plum jam in a cup, sometimes 7 lb of coal at Mrs Long's at the corner of Grundy Street. I used to go and get a loaf of bread for tuppence at John Blunts (?) the German baker at Canton Street, and he always gave a piece of mince or a crust as overweight. A couple of weeks after the outbreak of the war the police took the German people away. The people started to smash the windows and doors of their shops and looted their furniture. I and other children watched. When the Zeppelins started dropping their bombs, the Maroons would fire and the police would ride around on their bikes with a board hung on them telling people to take cover and blow their whistles. The guns would fire and the searchlights would sometimes get the Zeppelins in their beams. My Mother, Aunt, brothers and cousins would all get under the stairs. Later the people were told it was safer to go into church vaults or the Blackwall Tunnel under the river section.

At first we went into the Board of Guardians building at Gough Street. I remember the Mayor of Poplar, Sam March, Will Crooks and George Lansbury coming to visit the people and children and talk to them. During the night sometimes the welfare workers would give us a cup of cocoa or soup. In the mornings other boys and myself would go and dig pieces of shrapnel out of the wooden blocks and swap at school for other things. In

1916 my brother Alex and Cousin Lizzie started school.

On Wednesday 13th June 1917 we went to school. I was in Mr Denman's class (the Headmaster). At about ten to twelve we heard the air raid warning and the sound of the German planes. Suddenly there was a terrible explosion and dust everywhere. It seemed to be coloured. I climbed over some desks to get out. I knew my brothers and my cousin were in the ground floor classroom. When I got out into the playground people and police were getting the children together. I found Albert and Alex but could not find Lizzie. A policeman took us home and my Mother and Aunt Lizzie came home. I heard somebody say workmen were clearing the debris to get the infants out.

The next morning everybody had to go to the school for a roll call to find out if any more children were missing. Lots of children and myself were all coloured orange. The doctors told me it was the TNT in the bomb and it would wear off. My Mother told me that night that Lizzie had got killed and she and the neighbours asked me how I got out and what I remembered. I told them I saw the Headmaster standing up and calling us to stay where we were and then this crash came. I saw his white waistcoat he wore covered in red. I thought it was blood but I knew afterwards it was red ink from the inkwell that he used to mark our papers with. Where my school friend used to sit there was a large hole. I told them when I got out of the classroom I got into the service lift and lowered myself down to the ground floor. It was hand operated, and that's how I was able to find my brothers. It was in later years I was told my Headmaster took his own life. It could have been because of the loss of his pupils.

In the August after the bombing we were sent to a house at Bridport for a holiday. This was also a place where they used to serve tea and cakes. I remembered being told that the cakes were going missing and one day I found Alex

behind the sofa eating some. After that we were not allowed near the shop part of the house.

Information supplied by Jane Recce, in a letter to Rosemary Taylor dated 18th January 1992:

I am sending you the enclosed photo and information on my mother's brother John Percy Brennan, killed in the 1917 bombing of Upper North Street School. The family lived at 4 Nankin Street. My mother Mary Alice Brennan was 17 at the time of the school bombing, and she told me the following story. Their mother had given little Johnnie a penny to take to school, but told him to spend only half. When he was found he had the half penny in his pocket. My mother said Johnnie had been sitting next to an Italian girl and that when the bomb hit, the desk was imbedded in the ground. It was some time before his body was found.



John Percy Brennan

Request for information: Pauline Rees asked for information on fighters from the Mile End Boxing Booth. One fighter Morris (Spike) Noble was her Great Uncle.



AUTUMN COACH TRIP

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 29th

CANTERBURY

There are numerous places to visit, apart from the marvelous cathedral. They include the Canterbury Tales Visitor Attraction, a reconstruction of Chaucer's England and the pilgrimage to Canterbury. There are also several museums, other historic buildings, attractive streets and parts of the city walls to walk.

Entrance to the cathedral is £5.00 or so, and to the Canterbury Tales about £6.00. I will enquire about party rates: see the question on the booking form. On the trip I will prepare a guide to the main attractions.

There are numerous places to get refreshments, so I will leave this to personal choice.

The coach fare will be £9.75 per person.

The pick-up will be at the bus pull-in in Grove Road, round the corner from Mile End Station, at 9.30 am.

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



AUTUMN COACH TRIP
Saturday 29th September 2007

I/We would like to reserve _____ Ticket/s for the coach trip.

NAME/S _____

ADDRESS _____

TEL NO. _____

(Cheques to be made payable to the East London History Society.)

Would you be interested in a party visit to:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 1. The Cathedral | YES / NO |
| 2. "The Canterbury Tales" | YES / NO |