

NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 Issue 18

Autumn 2007



Bow and Bromley Institute

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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.

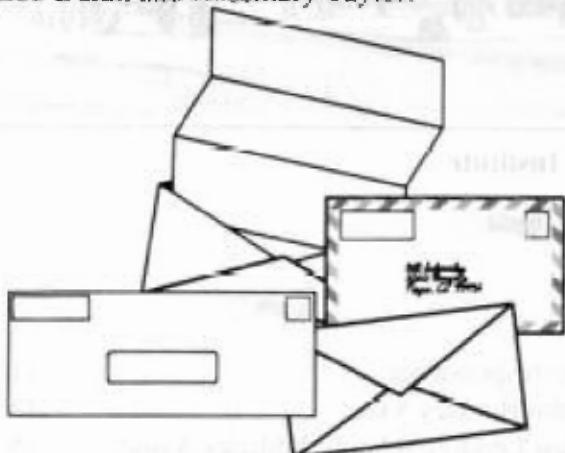
Our grateful thanks go to all the contributors of this edition of the newsletter. We have decided to put together another newsletter to incorporate the Programme for 2007-2008. Letters and articles on East End history and reminiscences are always welcome and we make every effort to publish suitable material. 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 Putaux 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.eastlondonhistory.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.



One of the chapels in Tower Hamlets Cemetery, damaged during the Second World War, and subsequently demolished.

Cover Picture: the Bow and Bromley Institute from a 1909 dated postcard. Note the Bryant & May fountain to the right. Only a few courses of brick survive at the rear of the current Enterprise Car Hire site.

East London History Society

Programme 2007-2008

Thursday 13 September 2007

East London Social History in Post Cards

Thursday 25 October 2007

**Seven Bow parishioners – aspects of Bow
Church and Parish**
Rev. Michael Peet

Thursday 29 November 2007

The Muvver Tongue – Cockney dialect

Thursday 13 December 2007

Some more Music Hall

Thursday 10 January 2008

Title to be confirmed

Thursday, 23 February 1995

To be continued

Thursday 6 March 2008

The History of the Co-operative movement in London

Thursday 10 April 2008

Quick Tongues & Big Hearts - some East End Women before the First War

Pat Francis

Thursday 11 May 2008

To be confirmed

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 do come along to the Open Evening in May, and meet David Behr, our Programme co-ordinator.

Alternatively, email our Chairman Philip Memick at phil@mernicks.com with your comments and suggestions.

Archive Awareness Campaign 2007

Guildhall Library Manuscripts Section is holding a series of free events as part of Archive Awareness Campaign 2007. The series aims to encourage the use of archives by family and local historians. Some sessions will include the opportunity for attendees to see examples of documents. Or you may book on a tour behind the scenes at Guildhall Library. These free events commence in the Guildhall Library Whittington Room at 2p.m. on the following days:

18th September 2007: "The records of St Paul's Cathedral", Stephen Freeth, Guildhall Library, followed by a visit to St Paul's Cathedral Library. Jo Wisdom, St Paul's Cathedral. (2hrs). 15 people maximum.

An introduction to the records of St Paul's Cathedral followed by an opportunity to visit the Cathedral Library. **NB:** access to St Paul's Cathedral Library is via the Geometric stairs (94 steps) and is not suitable for sufferers from vertigo.

17th October 2007: "John Newton: a monument of grace", Marylynn Rouse, The John Newton Project. (1hr). 20 people maximum.

John Newton's story is extraordinary - a sailor flogged for desertion, a slave, a slave trader and a slave abolitionist. Author of the famous hymn *Amazing Grace*, he was mentor to William Wilberforce for twenty years.

25th October 2007: Behind the scenes tour of the Manuscripts Section store and Conservation workshop. (1hr 15 minutes). 16 people maximum.

Come and see how the manuscripts are stored. Meet the conservators and see what projects they are working on. Discover how to care for your treasures.

7th November 2007: "A Place in the Sun: fire insurance records for local and family history". Brenda Griffith-Williams, A Place in the Sun. (1hr). 20 people maximum.

An introduction to fire insurance records as a source of information on London householders and

traders in the early 19th century (i.e. pre 1837), of interest to family, social and business historians.

27th November 2007: "City of London and Livery Company Freedom Records". Elizabeth Scudder, London Metropolitan Archives and Philippa Smith, Guildhall Library. (1hr 30 mins). 20 people maximum.

An introduction to the use and interpretation of the Freedom Records of the City of London and of City of London Livery Companies. The session will provide an opportunity to see examples of relevant documents and to discuss their content. You will find this seminar useful if: you are unfamiliar with the use of City of London and Livery Company Freedom Records and would like to know more; you are interested in family or social history; and you have an interest in the history of the City of London.

6th December 2007: Behind the scenes tour of the Manuscripts Section store and Conservation workshop. (1hr 15 minutes). 16 people maximum.

Come and see how the manuscripts are stored. Meet the conservators and see what projects they are working on. Discover how to care for your treasures. Numbers are limited. Please book in advance by telephoning 020 7332 1863/2. You are welcome to come on the day and see if there are any places available.

The Manuscripts Section of Guildhall Library is the local record office for the City of London (the "Square Mile"), apart from the records of the City of London Corporation which are separately administered. Its holdings date from the 11th century and include ecclesiastical and probate records, records of City wards and parishes, and of around 80 of its livery companies. It also holds considerable business and commercial archives, including the London Stock Exchange, Lloyd's of London and the London Chamber of Commerce.

For further information contact:
Guildhall Library Manuscripts Section
Aldermanbury
London EC2V 7HH
Tel: 020 7332 1863/2
Textphone: 020 7332 3803
Email: manuscripts.guildhall@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Website: www.history.ac.uk/glh/

Twelvetrees

I guess it would be reasonable to assume that somewhere in the history of the Kent town of Sevenoaks there must have been at sometime Seven Oak Trees. As too I suppose with the village of Five Oak Green - also in Kent. So how about Twelvetrees in Bromley-By-Bow London E3, would the same criteria apply? Let me digress a little.

I was born in 1925 at Hawgood Street, Bow Common, London E3 in a two up two down type of house typical of that area; there were seven of us as a family living upstairs, with Aunt Lizzie and her brood downstairs. At sometime in 1926/7 we were re-housed in a recently built block of flats in Bromley, its postal address being 155a, St. Leonard's Street, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3. It was right next door to Bromley Gas Works with the Mulberry Tree pub sandwiched in between. Slum clearance was taking place and the demolition sites were our out of school playgrounds. Through my street wanderings of Poplar, Bow, and the fringes of Stepney and Stratford, there wasn't a street or road name that I didn't know. Then suddenly in the midst of all this, the flats we lived in were given a name - TWELVETREES HOUSE! The postal address now became 155a, Twelvetrees House, St. Leonard's Street, Bromley-by-Bow London E3. At the time there didn't appear to be any significance in this, the rent still had to be paid and the life we led remained much the same, but somebody had decided that the flats were worthy of a name and came up with Twelvetrees!

Today, in my reminiscent years, I began to ponder the reason for this, why Twelvetrees - had someone at the time found 12 trees in the grounds of the local gas-works, (whose gas-holders the flats looked out on), or perhaps it was to avoid the confusion with the buildings (Coventry Cross) that were in the stages of construction further down the road, but why Twelvetrees! Whatever the reason, the 'bug'

had bitten and I needed to find out. Then the question - where do I start? The flats themselves no longer exist - even though they survived the war - having been demolished to make way for the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road, but the name Twelvetrees Crescent has been given to one of its contributory roads as well as to an adjacent business park, but nothing further to satisfy my quest of wanting to know. Various sources via the internet seemed to bring me tantalisingly close but nothing positive to convince me that this was its reason, and then it happened. A phone call from the Essex Record Office told me that they did have a printed article that may be of interest to me, would I like it forwarded! Needless to say its arrival was eagerly awaited and when revealed gave me the gut feeling that this was it. Dated July 4th 1862 it came from the Essex Weekly News written as part of a series on Essex Commercial Enterprises. It began as follows: The former papers of this series have been devoted to illustrations of establishments within the boundaries of Essex, but the present one will be an exception to the rule and take the reader in imagination across the River Lea into the adjoining county of Middlesex. The mere width of the stream however separates the spot from our own county, so that we hardly feel it necessary to attempt an apology for over stepping it in order to visit the 'Manufactory of Mr Harper Twelvetrees, situated at Bromley-By-Bow'.

This had to be it, its reading showed too many coincidences for it to be otherwise. The mention of Three Mill Lane, Imperial Works along with other factors offered proof to that. So here I was looking at a surname rather than some other meaning.

I remembered there was a works in Imperial Street, and there was a Three Mill Lane, - - which we used as a shortcut to Stratford via the River Lea tow-path - but better remembered for its pawnshop at its junction with St. Leonard's Street. As for the name of Twelvetrees - never heard of it. Reading further into the article the reader is taken on a

tour of the premises and works by Mr. Harper Twelvetrees covering "nine acres of ground, that comprise manufactorys, workshops and stores in which 500 people are constantly occupied in the preparation of an almost endless variety of useful articles all adapted to economise time, labour and money in the homes of English people". So what were these products of such acclaim that appear to have had made the name Twelvetrees a household word. An advertisement in 1860 gives a list of over 13 laundry and household products from Soaps, Washing Powders, Black Lead, Inks, and Baking Soda. Even Wringers and Mangles, the list seems endless.

But what of the man himself? Well present day information seems very scant, but from what I have been able to glean he proves to have been a rather extraordinary man. He was one of 10 children born to William Twelvetrees and his wife Anna Harris in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, in the year 1823. His father, a carpenter in Biggleswade, is credited for the building of the Town Hall. Harper at the age of 14 apprenticed himself to a local printer/book seller who 2 years later died. Harper was then asked if he would take over the running of the business and although only aged 16, accepted. He spent many early morning hours studying hard from books of various subjects, coupling this alongside his learning's from the business. Full of confidence it seems he decided in 1845 to begin his own company and set up in business in another part of Bedfordshire. Sometime later he marries, and along with his wife Mary and son William comes to London to venture into the manufacturing of Laundry Products. It seems however that this venture really didn't get off the ground through financial restrictions in the way of government taxes. Sadly on 3rd of March 1849 his wife Mary dies.

The 1851 Census shows thus;--
 Harper Twelvetrees - Head - 27yrs - Widr - b
 Biggleswade - Wholesale Drysalterese
 William H - Son - 2 yrs - b Dunstable

Thirza Twelvetrees - Sister - 23 - unm - b
 Biggleswade
 Rosa Twelvetrees - Sister - 19 - unm - b
 Biggleswade
 Richd Twelvetrees - Brother - 17 - b -
 Biggleswade - Railway Agent GNR
 Frederic Twelvetrees - Brother - 15 - b -
 Biggleswade - Merchants Clerk
 Mary A Lane - Servant - 15 - b - Walworth -
 House Servant
 Norfolk Cottages, Peckham, Camberwell,
 Surrey.

Later, Harper remarries to a lady named Isabella Noble whose father had a printing business in Boston, Lincolnshire. Looking to retirement his father-in-law proposed that Harper joined his son in the company forming a family amalgamation, and this he did. But it seems Harpers first love of laundry products came to the fore and around the year 1855 decided to leave Boston and head for London where he took up residence in Hackney. Shortly after, he began manufacturing his laundry products in a factory in Goswell Road, Islington, London. Some 3 years later, the forever ambitious and enterprising Harper moved on, having found premises within a factory complex in Three Mill Lane Bromley-by-Bow, London E. a situation that permitted the Harper family to become resident within the company grounds.

The 1861 Census shows him thus;--
 Harper Twelvetrees - Head - 37yrs - Born Biggleswade - Manufacturing Chemicals - Employing 250 Work People.
 Isabella - Wife - 32yrs - b Boston
 William H - Son - 12 yrs - b Dunstable - Bedfordshire
 Walter N - Son - 3 yrs - b Boston - Lincolnshire
 Florence R - Dau - 2 yrs - b Hackney - Middlesex
 Along with a Brother-in-Law, Nephew, and 2 Servants. The address given as Three Mill Lane, Poplar, Middlesex.

My requests for research material from various sources had begun to filter through, and from their study I began to get a wider picture of this extraordinary man. We read that it wasn't long before visionary Harper had expanded the factory premises by taking over the buildings of 2 other companies that were on site when he first arrived, so he was now able to put a name to his manufacturing enterprise naming it Imperial Works.

During his time at Bromley, Harper began to exercise and reflect the intellect of his learning's. His early book studies made him a recognisable figure in the world of literature and the Street Directory of 1865 lists him as president of The East London Parliamentary Reform Association as well as president of Bromley Literary Association, his son William being Hon. Secretary. In this position, he was anxious to encourage the cultivation of literary tastes amongst his employees and members of the Bromley Literary Association, this in a metropolitan district which up to that time had been greatly neglected. He encouraged people to write and resolved to give prizes to the best of the essays, and these latter became known as 'The Bromley Prize Essays'.

As well as becoming a well known industrialist his benevolent side began to show through. He built a number of cottages for his workers and their families, and set up a lecture hall within the factory complex offering its use to the community as a whole. He began a book library and instituted evening classes for further education. All employees had to join the company sick scheme making their own contributions that would entitle them to agreed benefits when in need. Other initiatives were introduced such as a savings bank, clothing and boot club, this along with the encouragement to form social organisations in the field of sport and music.

An element of religious worship was also fostered, the lecture hall being used for the purpose with services conducted by ministers of all denominations. Harpers wife Isabella

was a member of the Dorcas society and encouraged the woman of the neighbourhood to attend sewing classes along with other women's activities. Prominent and distinguished speakers from all over the country were invited to give lectures and addresses within the hall, no doubt induced by Harper who at this time was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature with connections to many other notable associations. So not just an industrialist, but a philanthropist too and all this pre-dates the likes of Rowntree and Leverhulme by many years. On New Years Day in 1861 a social evening of his employees was attended by Harper and his family, unbeknown to him his manager, on behalf of his workers, presented Harper with a most elegant time piece as a token of their love and respect towards him. His wife Isabella was also presented with a beautiful ring set with Rubies as a tribute of thanks from those to whose wants and cares she had from time to time administered.

In the month of April 1861 there was a vacancy for the representation of the borough of Marylebone of a parliamentary candidate; Mr Harper put himself forward as a Liberal. On a show of hands, the returning officer ultimately declared in his opponents favour, although there was an element of doubt if this was so. Amidst of all this achievement and success, Harper must have shocked the world - he puts his business up for sale! One can only speculate the reason, health perhaps? Hardly retirement for he was only 42. The complete establishment was sold to a limited company - General Trading Company - for close on £54,000.

In the year of 1865, the company went into liquidation and as a consequence Harper was declared a bankrupt only having received one payment of £791-5s-0d of the agreed purchasing price. His own personal solutions to the turmoil were rejected by the liquidators. Typical of the man, he battled back and with the aid of his friends was eventually discharged. The judge on granting the order

commented that: "The Bankrupt was entitled to great sympathy on account of his severe losses and that it must always be a matter of great regret to find a person who, from a position of affluence, had fallen through his connection with Public Companies".

The stigma of being a Bankrupt would not have gone down well with Harper, particularly as he was the innocent party, a victim of circumstance, and in selling the business he would have made some provision within the agreement for the welfare of his employees, so for it to revolve into this mess must have been sickening to him. So making sure there were no legal infringements he set up another factory under the title of - Harper Twelvetrees and Son, Cordova Works, Grove Road, Bow London E. Sole manufacturers of Harper Twelvetrees original patent GLYCERINE SOAP POWDER. In circulating his price list he added; "We respectfully inform our Wholesale and Export customers, that having considerably enlarged our Manufacturing Premises, we now possess unequalled facilities for the execution of orders, for a continuance of which we will feel greatly honoured and obliged".

There is very little evidence at this stage of Harpers forthcoming industrial life, although the 1871 Census shows him to be 'Retired' and Living at, 9, Shore Road Hackney London, along with 'Wife Isabella, Daughter Florence and Sons William, Edwin and Herbert.' Some 10 years later on the 1881 Census they have moved again to 223, Evering Roud, London. Middx, with Harper listed as a Laundry Engineer, aged 57. Wife Isabella is still with him (52) as are Florence (22), Edwin (18) and Herbert (15) and one servant/cook. William (32) seems to have flown the nest. However, from the research paperwork we begin to sense that at the age of 57 years, Harpers health is beginning to fail him. In October 1881 he drafts his will and in November dies - the registration being December, Hackney. The obtaining of his death certificate shows that he had not been a well man for a number of years, his death

being attributed to 'Chronic Bronchitis (15-20 years) - Heart Disease.' A legacy perhaps from his early days of producing powdery products at his Bromley-by-Bow factory, coupled with living in London and its sulphur laden wintry fogs. He was buried in the grounds of the Old Meeting Baptist Church at Biggleswade where his first wife was also buried.

Around 1968 the church was demolished to make way for a new telephone exchange and the graves 'removed' to permit building work. This was a civil proceeding and it appears no registration of their further settlement was kept. Not a very distinguished ending for such a proven gentleman. Isabella his wife survived for some 16 years longer, her death being registered in Wandsworth in June 1897.



Mangle made by Harper Twelvetrees Co.

At sometime in his industrial life, Harper produced and published a 'hand-book' titled "The Science of Washing". It wasn't a large book and contained 'The directions for economical and expeditious washing - teaching how to accomplish a family six week wash before breakfast for less than sixpence - without a washerwoman, making washing days (the dread of married men) as quiet as other days and warranted not to injure fabric'. Within the book were written letters and

extracts of letters addressed to Harper testifying to the excellence of his washing directions. The book is now housed in the Rare Book Section of the British Library and is not available for loan.

There was another book that Harper became famed for, and that was the story of 'John Anderson - The Runaway Slave'. (Prepared at the request of the John Anderson committee by Mr. Harper Twelvetrees, MA and John Anderson himself).

Harper, along with other notable gentry became a member of the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and in particular Chairman of the John Anderson Committee. John Anderson, as a slave in America's south, 'escaped' his captors and as a fugitive made his way to Canada - then a British colony. Making friends with the Anti-Slavery movement he avoids extradition by many deputations being presented to the Governor General on his behalf.

He decides to come to England and on his arrival, one of the largest meetings ever held in the metropolis assembled in Exeter Hall for the purpose of expressing it's sympathy with John Anderson and offering him a cordial welcome. Harper occupied the chairmanship, the platform being presented by other respected gentleman. Upon John Anderson's appearance on the platform - leaning on the arm of Harper - he was received with "loud and prolonged cheering." The Chairman (Harper) reminded the assembly "that they were there for a philanthropic object, not for any political or factious purpose, not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the present crisis, they had met there that night - as he understood - to do honour to their principles as Philanthropists and Christians". After a lengthy speech embracing all his literary skills he resumed his seat amidst lengthy and enthusiastic applause.

In January 1932 an enquiry from a reader to the deputy head librarian of Poplar Library -

Mr W B Thorne - gave cause for him to take up the request that led him to an area of knowledge that at the time he must have felt had local historical interest. It concerned the now defunct "Bow and Bromley Institute" and the individual most active in promoting its work - Harper Twelvetrees. Perhaps with the aid of a telephone and trade directory he came across a company in London under the heading of "Harper Twelvetrees Ltd. Makers of the 'Villa' washing and mangle machine, the address being City Road, Finsbury Square, London. EC. Through correspondence he learned through the director of the company - Kingston Smith - that it was believed that indeed Harper Twelvetrees was the founder of the company but was no longer associated with it so he was unable to further any other information than that. He did however suggest that a Mr. W. Noble Twelvetrees of Bedford Hill (believed to be Harpers son) would be able to be of more help.

A reply to a letter in that direction came back confirming that this Mr. W. Noble Twelvetrees was indeed Harper's son and held the position of being the present editor of a technical magazine. Letters behind his name suggested that he was an educated man. Encouraged by this reply, the librarian plied many questions to the gentleman who readily gave a greater insight to those days of his youth and his memories of the company and the associates of his father.

He describes Eversley House (the home of the Twelvetrees family when in Bromley-by-Bow) the lecture hall and mentions the names of those that gave lectures there. He speaks of standing on the railway bridge in St. Leonard's Street and looking right across common land to Bow Common stretching without interruption to Limehouse Church. He makes reference to Eversley House and of the Lefevre's - a Huguenot refugee family - the occupiers prior to his father.

The correspondence after many letters appears to have ceased with a final word from Mr.

Noble Twelvetrees saying: "I think I have now been pumped quite dry, but if anything else should occur to you that I can help you with, please do not hesitate to write. It has been quiet a pleasure to recall old times and I am looking forward to a visit to view your historical collection some day this spring. Yours very Truly W. Noble Twelvetrees" Noble was the maiden name of Harper's wife Isabella.

Of another son, William Harper Twelvetrees - Harper's eldest b. 1848 - went on to become a mining engineer serving most of his industrial life overseas. After leaving university he worked in Eastern Russia for 9 years and in 1882 he went to Lidjezsi silver-lead mines in Asia Minor where in 2 years he became general manager. He remained in that position until 1891 when he emigrated to Tasmania. After working in Launceston for 8 years he secured the position of Government Geologist and Chief Inspector of Mines with the Tasmania mines department at the age of 51. He held the position of Government Geologist until his death. His works were published in Russian and German scientific journals bringing him high recognition. He became a Fellow of the Royal Geological Society London, and of the Royal Society of Tasmania. He was awarded The Society of NSW Clarke Medal for research in Natural Science, and was regarded as one of Tasmania's eminent geologists. He died at Launceston in November 1919 aged 71.

I am finding it very difficult to bring this article to an end for I feel there is so much more about Harper Twelvetrees life and achievements that needs to be known - perhaps in later years someone will do that. The local council of Tower Hamlets felt his name worthy of posterity by naming a road after him, as well as a nearby industrial estate sited on or close by to Harpers past Imperial Works. So at least some historical remembrance.

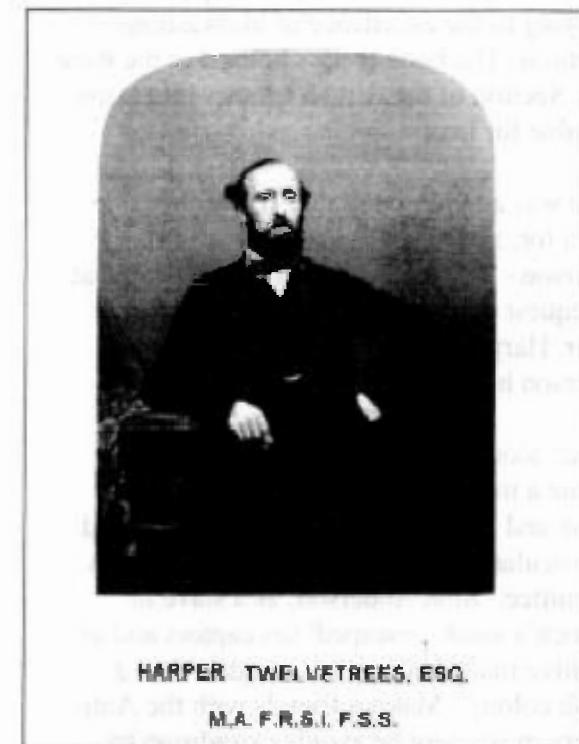


Image from *The Drawing Room Gallery of Eminent Personages*

Footnote - Harpers death certificate under the heading 'Occupation' states Gentleman - as indeed he was.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude to Cathy Young of the USA and Maurice Twelvetrees here in the UK for generously allowing me to use extracts from their writings. Essex Record Office and Bancroft Road Archives for being so co-operative. And any others (and I apologise) that I may have proved a nuisance to.

George Donovan

Correspondence

Ernest Glynn, of Woodford Green, wrote commenting on the previous Newsletter:
"I refer to your correspondent Simon Barker Benfield, page 7, vol 2 issue 17, on the subject of The Execution Dock. Wapping Station now covers the site. There are some interesting photographs on pages 15-19 in the book London's east end by Geoffrey House, published by Wharncliffe Books"

Mr M. Stocks of Billericay, wrote when ordering a copy of "The Poplars":
"My interest in the Poplar & Stepney Battalion is through my great uncle Ernest Thomas Walduck who served with them and was killed in action on the 15th September 1916"

David Foster wrote from Roquesfort, France, when ordering a copy of The Poplars:

"I notice on the Society's web site that there was an article in a Newsletter about St James (Santiago de Compostella). I'm fascinated by coincidences - my mother was baptised and married in the church of St James the Great, Bethnal Green Road and from my window as I type this I can see one of the hostels used by present day pilgrims: Roquesfort is on one of the traditional pilgrimage routes to Compostella. Is there any chance of getting hold of a copy? (It was emailed to Mr Foster.)

Note: We have all of the Records and Newsletters scanned so if you want a copy of an article it can be supplied (easiest and quickest by email).

Mrs Beatrice Stocks, of Rawtenstall, Lancashire, wrote when joining the ELHS:
"I should like to thank your society for providing the series of East End maps on the Web, which have been so useful to me when researching my ancestors. I should be interested to know whether any of your members has information about silk weaving in Bethnal Green. Two of my family names,

Cecil and Wensley, were involved with the silk weaving, (tassel trimming or button making etc). The other names Bausor (baking) and Sanderson (or Haywood) were involved with other activities common in the area in the 19th century, such as boot making."

Mrs Stocks has sent a stamped envelope in the event that anyone can provide any information.

Mr T. Pierce, of Croydon, wrote when ordering a copy of Mile End Old Town:
"My 3 x great grandfather attended Richard Bland's school at Bromley St Leonard, probably from 1777 until 1784, so I am particularly interested in finding out as much as I can about life in Bromley-by-Bow at this period and who lived there"

A few queries via email

31st July - Gill Levy asked:

We are trying to find out more about Bancroft Lodge at Mile End Old Town. One of our relatives died there in 1921, and we would like to know whether it was a Poor Law infirmary at the time.

Philip replied

Dear Gill, Bancroft Lodge WAS a euphemism for Mile End Workhouse. In the 20th century it became customary to disguise the fact that people were born or died in the workhouse. The workhouse infirmary still survives in the form of Mile End Hospital.

16th July - Joan Paparo asked:

Please can you help me, researching my family. I found most of them lived in Poplar, my Great grand parents, were sent to prison in Aug 1880, this information from the workhouse entry for the children. I was told maybe their crimes were recorded in the local newspaper of the time, would you know of any newspaper serving Poplar and where would I find it.

Reply: We advised that Tower Hamlets Local history Library has copies of these local newspapers on microfilm
East London Advertiser - 1866 on-
Eastern Argus - 1877 - 1912
Eastern Post - 1868 - 1938
Eastern Times - 1859 - 1864

21st June - Melissa Grainger asked

I happened across your web page while doing research for a book I'm writing and hope you can help me with a question. Could you tell me how busy Victoria Park would have been on any given night in the 1880s? If someone were walking through the park at say, ten-thirty, would there be many people around or would the park be almost deserted? Hope this isn't too odd a question and that you can help answer it.

Philip replied: I would have thought that the park would have been empty apart from the lit cross paths that were public rights of way. The gates would have been closed and there would have been more park keepers (some of them resident in the lodges).

Joan Soole is trying to get a blue plaque to **John Buckley VC** (mentioned in Every Stone Tells a Story) put on the house he lived in. Philip Mernick has confirmed for her that the building survives, and he took a picture of it. He was amazed it was still there, as very little survives of EIDR). Philip also checked the Directories at the Bishopsgate Institute, and found John Buckley recorded at 213 East India Dock Road between 1869 and 1876.

Philip wrote: In 1877 the house is occupied by Mrs Susan Buckley, presumably his widow. He may have been there before 1869 (definitely not in 1865) but they don't have 1866-8, I can confirm that the 1876 number 213 is the same location as the present 213 and I was pleasantly surprised to see that the building still survives (restaurant building with agents sign on wall) - see attachment.

Original chain of correspondence

Joan Soole wrote: I have heard from Kenneth Greenway that he has sent all the e-mails from me to him, to yourselves concerning the grave of the above that lies unmarked in Tower Hamlets Cemetery. I would like to come along and look at this grave some time if it can be arranged. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Indian Mutiny and, as a member of the Victoria Cross Society, I would like to do something about having the grave marked in some way.

Also John Buckley lived at, I think either 113 or 114 East India Dock Road. I am writing to English Heritage to see if they could put a blue plaque up, if the house or even house number is still there.

Philip replied: I would be happy to help but when did he live in East India Dock Road? Many roads were renumbered in the 19th century and the current numbers may not be an accurate locator. I have had no communication from Mr Greenway since February 2005. Are you sure that he sent it to THHOL and not to Diane or Doreen Kendall?

Joan's response: The names you mention doing a hell but I have had no reply back. Is there anything you can do about John Buckley's grave? As you live nearer to the East India Dock Road than I do, I live in Colchester, if I give you the correct address could you see if his house or a building is still there. I am writing to English Heritage to see if a Plaque could be put up. Colchester has two Victoria Cross holders to its name but I was told by English Heritage that neither were of sufficient enough merit to warrant a Blue Plaque. Apparently there is a "pecking order" in Victoria Crosses.

I do not think that John Buckley falls into that category though. The only plaque to John Buckley is one at Stalybridge in Cheshire where he lived. John Buckley was one of the survivors of the blowing up of the Delhi Magazine to stop it falling into the hands of

the Mutineers. All his family was killed in the mutiny.

I have written to English Heritage regarding the Blue Plaque for John Buckley. Apparently he lived at 213 East India Dock Road. Could you let me have your address so as I can send you a copy of the letter to English Heritage and also some information I have received on him. If there is anything else you have managed to find out on him I should be pleased to receive it.



213 East India Dock Road

Slightly later research showed that John Buckley was first recorded at 213 in 1868, in 1866/7 it was occupied by a Miss Buckley, possibly an unmarried sister. East India Dock Road was only sequentially numbered in 1867 and the house does not appear to have been there before 1866 although the roof line appears to be earlier.



John Buckley VC 1813 - 1876

John Buckley was born in May 1813 at Cocker Hill in Stalybridge, Cheshire. His early employment was in the textile industry and he worked at Harrison's Mill and then Bayley's Mill. At the age of 18 Buckley, in search of a more adventurous life, joined the Bengal Artillery at Manchester. Shortly afterwards, in June 1832 he was posted to India as a gunner.

In India, Buckley now aged 22, met and married fourteen year old Mary Ann Broadway in 1835. The couple lived in Calcutta with their three children but illness struck repeatedly and by 1845 Mary Ann and two of the children had died. Buckley remarried in 1846 but in 1852 he lost the surviving child of his first marriage and in 1853 two sons by his second marriage also died.

In 1857 Buckley, his wife and three surviving children moved to Delhi where he became Deputy Assistant Commissary of Ordnance at the Delhi Magazine (storehouse for guns and ammunition). It was whilst at the Magazine that his conduct merited the award of the Victoria Cross. The citation reads simply as follows : '**For gallant defence of the magazine at Delhi**'

In May 1857 the Indian Mutiny broke out. The causes of the mutiny were many and varied, but the new ammunition that had been issued to the Indian Sepoys has been cited as the main cause. Supplied by the Woolwich Arsenal for use on the new Lee Enfield rifles, the cartridges had been greased with tallow,

made of beef and pork fat. The sepoy's were told they had to bite off the ends of the cartridges before using them, an action equally abhorrent to both Hindu and Muslim, who saw in this order an attempt to humiliate them.

Unrest broke out in various places in Bengal initially, but the main revolts occurred in northern and central India. From Cawnpore, (Kanpur), Lucknow, Ambala and Meerut the uprising gathered pace, until it reached Delhi, where Conductor Buckley and his fellow eight soldiers defending the magazine were vastly outnumbered. Rather than let the ammunition fall into rebel hands they decided to blow up the building and themselves. Five of the defenders, along with, it is claimed, 1000 rebels, were killed.

Miraculously four soldiers, Willoughby, Forrest, Raynor and Buckley, survived. Willoughby and Forrest joined a party of Europeans at the Main Guard at Delhi, so blackened as to be almost unrecognizable. Willoughby was later killed in an encounter with the rebels in a village on the way to Kurnaul. Buckley was captured and then learnt that his entire family had been murdered by the rebels. It is said that he begged his captors to put an end to his life but they refused to kill him on account of his bravery at the magazine. Buckley later escaped and rejoined the British army, volunteering for all kinds of dangerous missions with a total disregard for his own safety.

It took more than one year before the rebellion was brought to a close, and dreadful atrocities were committed by both sides, too many to detail here. The British reprisals were harsh and often extreme. Buckley himself was given the task of overseeing the execution of one hundred and fifty rebels who were strapped to the muzzle of a cannon and blown apart.

In 1858 Buckley was promoted to Lieutenant but shortly afterwards fell ill and was given two years leave. Back in England he received his Victoria Cross from Queen Victoria. He

lived for a short while in Stalybridge, Cheshire before returning to India as a Major in October 1861.

The final years of his life were spent in London. A search of the London Directories has found John Buckley recorded as residing at 213 East India Dock Road, Poplar, between 1867 and 1876. In 1877 the house is occupied by Mrs Susan Buckley, presumably his widow. He may have been there before 1867 (definitely not in 1865). Buckley died in July 1876 and he was buried in an unmarked grave in Tower Hamlets Cemetery.

In 1993 ELHS Member Bradley Snooks, whilst researching the records of the Cemetery, discovered the information that Buckley had been buried there, but despite a detailed search, was unable to locate the grave. Bradley, too, was keen on getting some local recognition for John Buckley.

The last three survivors, Raynor, Forrest and Buckley were awarded the Victoria Cross for their courage. A memorial tablet at the Delhi Magazine bears testimony to the bravery and courage of the men. Buckley's Victoria Cross is at the Royal Army Ordnance Corps Museum in Camberley.

A blue plaque to commemorate the life of John Buckley is sited at the Travellers Call Public House, Wakefield Road, Stalybridge.

Note:

The British Magazine, Delhi is situated in the middle of the Lothian Road. The exact position is in front of the General Post Office, Old Delhi. The Kashmiri Gate railway station (Old Delhi) is very close to the remains of the original building which used to store the British arms and ammunitions.

The gateways of the building has small cannon located on it. The Magazine, or ammunition store house was blown up on 11th May 1857, during the Indian Mutiny, also known as the first war of Indian Independence, on the orders

THE INDIAN MUTINY COACH TRIP

of the officer in-charge, Lieutenant Willoughby. He did this to prevent the Indian troops who had risen in revolt, from using the ammunition stored in the magazine. The northern gateway has an original marble plaque, which mentions the name of the soldiers who defended the magazine from the enemy.

The plaque reads: *'On 11 May 1857, Nine resolute Englishmen, George Dubree Willoughby, Bengal Artillery, in Command, Lieut. William Ravnor, Lieut. George Forrest, Conductor G. William Shaw, Conductor John Buckley, Conductor John Scully, Sub-Conductor William Crow, Sergt. Bryan Edwards, Sergt. Peter Stewart, defended the Magazine of Delhi for more than five hours against large numbers of rebels and mutineers, until, the walls being scaled, and all hope of succour gone, these brave men fired the Magazine. Five of the gallant band perished in the explosion, which at the same time destroyed many of the enemy. This tablet, marking the former entrance gate to the Magazine, is placed here by the Government of India.'*

Later another plaque was added that points out that these 'enemies' were actually freedom fighters who fought for India's independence. Now, the present day building also commemorates the Indian soldiers who lost their lives in the explosion.

(Compiled by Rosemary Taylor from information provided on Joan Soole's website, various Internet websites on the Indian Mutiny, and the Oxford History of India by Vincent A Smith.)

East London Schools Athletics Association

On 27 May Peter Carr asked
Can you help?

A friend of mine, Mr John Miller attended school in Bow during the 1950's he recently discovered a school jacket bearing a breast pocket badge. John was awarded the badge for representing East London at football. Can you supply details as to the background to the badge and the significance of the emblems.

The badge is divided into four quarters.
Top left: a turret type tower with an archway entrance, the turret appears to be part of a wall and could be a gateway.

Top right: a two masted sailing ship upon water.

Bottom left: a "hump back bridge" with a single arch beneath.

Bottom right: Two trees behind a 3 bar gate and fence.

The script on the scroll at the bottom of the badge reads EAST LONDON S.A.A.
Your help would be much appreciated.

Philip replied

Dear Peter

I haven't seen a cloth badge but I have seen a number of silver badges with that design issued in connection with various East London school sports activities. The initials stand for East London Schools Athletic Association.

The individual panels represent different parts of East London. The tower with entrance is the old dock entrance into The West India Docks and was part of the arms of Poplar. The sailing ship was also part of the Poplar arms but may also represent Stepney (through the maritime connections of St Dunstan's parish church). The bridge is Bow Bridge again part of the Poplar Borough coat of arms and the trees and fence are from The Borough of Bethnal Green's arms, which depicts the blind beggar of BG by a field gate.



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 7PE. 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 |