



Wickham's before and after 1927

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Editorial Note:

The Committee members are as follows:

Philip Mernick, Chairman, Doreen Kendall, Secretary, Harold Mernick, Membership, David Behr, Programme, Ann Sansom, Doreen Osborne, Howard Isenberg and Rosemary Taylor.

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

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Check out the History Society's website at www.eastlondonhistory.org.uk.

Our grateful thanks go to all the contributors of this edition of 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, and any queries can be emailed to Philip Mernick.

David Behr, our Programme Organiser, has finalised the lectures for 2011. We are indebted to David for the time and effort he puts into contacting potential lecturers, and arranging the programme.

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

Our Olympic Site images can be seen on the ELHS web site at: <http://www.mernick.org.uk/elhs/Stadium/Stadium.htma>



Seasons Greetings to all our Members

Dr. Gilda Ann O'Neill

Author and Historian

25 May 1951-24 September 2010

The untimely death of Gilda O'Neill, one of the best known and loved writers of books on and about the East End of London, has left a void that will take years to fill.

Gilda Griffiths, born and raised in Bethnal Green and Bow, spent her formative years in an East End where poverty was the norm. Having left school at 15 to work and earn her own keep, she returned to complete her education at the East London Polytechnic, and then the Open University. She knew she wanted to write and quickly realised that she had an inexhaustible fund of knowledge and information she could draw on, her own first hand experiences of growing up in the East End, and the stories she drew out of local pensioners, precious snippets of social history collected before they were lost.

Gilda O'Neill knew how to entertain too, and was a welcome Speaker at numerous Clubs, including our own. She lectured widely and her positive, bubbly personality and passion for local history was a major influence in changing people's stereotypical views of the East End. Hers was not an account of East End social history seen through rose coloured glasses, but a down to earth view of life, warts and all.

Gilda's literary output included several novels, too, all based firmly within the East End. She may not have been a Booker Prize contender, but her novels were eagerly sought after and read by those who knew best – the past and present residents of the East End of London.

The East London History Society offers its sincere condolences to the O'Neill and Griffiths families.

Rosemary Taylor

**East London History Society
Programme 2010 - 2011**

Thursday 9 December 2011

**FAIR SHARES FOR ALL-rationing in
Britain during and after the Second World
War**

Speaker: David Evans

Thursday 6 January 2011

**400 YEARS OF BENGALI HISTORY IN
LONDON**

**Speakers: Ansar Ahmed Ullah and John
Eversley**

Thursday 17 February 2011

**WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE:
Stories from the old and new Boundary
Estate**

Speakers: Jean Locker and Naseem Khan

Thursday 31 March 2011

**LIMEHOUSE, KING ALFRED AND THE
OLYMPICS**

Speaker: Jeremy Batch

Thursday 7 April 2011

**EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
WHITECHAPEL**

Speaker: Derek Morris

Thursday 12 May 2011

OPEN EVENING

**Ray Newton & John Tarby showing films
about East London.**

The lectures are usually 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

Cover picture - Wickhams

Wickham's department store, comprising 69 to 89 Mile End Road, but famously not 81. Views before and after their rebuild around 1927. Upper image from a postcard posted in 1906, the lower from an advertising card from the stone supplier, which states "built 1922", probably a printing error..

Starting in 1850 as Thomas Wickham, linen draper at 69 Mile End Road, they gradually expanded to become "Barkers of Mile End" but closed in the 1960s. The western end is now a Tesco Metro while the eastern end is a Blockbuster. There are outstanding planning applications for the mid section, including the, now vacant, Spiegelhalter/Carmel number 81.

Correspondence

**Alan R Armstrong Lomond, High Green,
Great Moulton, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 5
2HU:**

I was born in August 1929 in a disused, old coal-fired fish and chip shop at the southern end of Bath Street, Poplar next to, what was then, Shaws cooperage, where we lived until September 1939 and were evacuated to Chipping Campden with Millwall Central School.

My younger sister and I are both committing our childhood memories to paper for the benefit of our great grandchildren and those of our brothers and sisters in the United States and Canada to provide them with a glimpse of our happy childhood.

To assist us in this project I write to you to enquire if you, or any members of your society is able to supply us with copies of any of the following pictures, either from any collection that your society might hold or from any private collection in the hands of your members I am particularly anxious to obtain pictures, if any exist anywhere, of Ivy Cottages, a row of whitewashed cottages, that ran North/South located between the northern half of Bath Street and the back of Grove Villas. I am also seeking any pictures of the farriers located, I believe, on the corner of Newby Place and Beazley Street and which we passed each day on the way to school at Woolmore Street School. I will of course refund any cost incurred.

I thank you in anticipation of your kind attention and enclose herewith a stamped addressed envelope for your convenience of any reply which I look forward to with considerable interest since being housebound I am unable to make visits.

**Bethan Bide, Flat 2, 11 Chester Way
London, SE11 4UT**

I was wondering, if it is not too much of an imposition, whether you might be able to pass the following onto your members, or to any particular members you think might be interested in helping me with this project:

I am a postgraduate student, studying History at The London College of Fashion and Cambridge University. I am researching into the clothing of the period, and how people viewed fashion at the time and am looking to talk to people (particularly women) who lived in or near London during the Second World War. Anyone who might be willing to speak to me, either in person or by phone, at their convenience, or who would just like to find out more about the project, should contact me:

Bethan Bide
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**Roy Hayes, 1, Lodge Close, Coppins Road,
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 3HU**

I was interested in your piece, *Why go to the West End?*, in the Summer Newsletter. I remember~ very well, both Boardmans and Bearmans from pre and post war days respectively. The other name I seem to recall, from Stratford, was Roberts; a visit there in December was a highlight of our Christmas activity. It started with an after school train ride from Victoria Park Station to Stratford followed by the walk to the store which, to a six or seven years old, appeared to be enormous. Once inside we began the walk along carefully arranged corridors to the left of which was a series of animated, panoramic, scenes, full of light and colour which brought forth all the cries of wonderment from the small viewers and their parents - mothers, mostly, as the dads would all have been at work.. I believe Roberts suffered during the bombing and never re-opened under that

name. Subsequently, the premises were used by the Co-op.

I got to know Bearmans after the war, particularly as they had a good record department, but I had moved away from London prior to their demise. At the back of Bearmans there was a very good cinema, independent of the three major chains. The main entrance was in Church Lane, close to where Leytonstone Underground Station is now, although the station was not there in those days and you crossed the railway via a level crossing. The cinema could also be reached from inside the store, walking along a glassed aisle, or corridor. The fascinating feature of the cinema was its organ, which appeared to rise from the cellar to play during the interval.

Many of the big stores had interesting arrangements for a secure collection of payments, bearing in mind that transactions then were nearly all in cash. Some used vacuum tubes in which a capsule containing money and receipt were sucked away to the cashier's kiosk in the centre of the floor, change being returned in similar fashion. There is a picture of one of those in *Department Stores*, by Claire Masset, in the Shire Books range. The cash system I liked best, though, was the overhead, miniature, ski railway, where the 'buckets' were propelled by a pull on the handle which released a very high tension spring - again to the central cashier's point.

Incidentally, I am part way through reading *A Journey Through Ruins - the last days of London*, by Patrick Wright. Mainly about Hackney but well worth a read.

From Nigel Pitt:

I have recently moved to Wanstead having moved away from the area 30 years ago. I was brought up in Woodford Green and know the area from old, although much has changed in

the intervening years. One of which is of course the sad demise of Bearmans.

As you say, Bearmans was taken over by the co-op but this was not widely known and it continued to trade as Bearmans for many years. My grandmother, who was a snob, on finding this out marched in, closed her account and never set foot in the place again!

Leytonstone was a very good shopping centre with shops such as Russell & Bromley and a furriers (Puddicombes) where grandma's fur was stored in the summer. There was a Lyons teashop where I would be treated to lunch if I was lucky. The High Road was ruined by the traffic pouring through. When they put up railings and a footbridge that killed it.

Have you seen the old Bearmans poster that was discovered at Leytonstone Station, now covered with perspex "The store with the personal touch"? They also had a huge poster on the Eastbound platform which said something like 'London's finest suburban department store'.

The store struggled on but was eventually demolished in 1984 and the co-op built a supermarket on the site but this failed and Matalan is now there. McDonalds occupy the site of the Bearmans furniture and carpet store which was a later build (1950s?).

Adjacent to Bearmans and reached along an arcade from the High Road was the Rialto Cinema, originally a skating rink converted in 1911 and then named the Rink Cinema. Rialto from 1927. Granada managed it from 1928 but only acquired it fully in 1965 re-naming it Granada in 1967. It closed in 1974, demolished and this became a car park for Bearmans.

In Stratford, you can still see Boardmans first floor showroom windows. I can remember that store for the overhead cash carrying system. There is also the very good 1950s frontage of the LCS store (now Wilkinsons

and others). That was a huge store and I can remember my mother going there to get her dividend paid.

Hope this is of interest. When I get some time I will start some local research and if I find anything more I will be in touch. I did wonder whether the LCS archives in the Bishopsgate Institute might hold some information on Bearmans.

The Mystery of the 'Missing' Chinese Laundries.

Since retiring, I have taken more of an interest in my 'roots' which has meant amongst other activities, researching Chinese laundries. I was born and grew up in one in Liverpool. There were many in Liverpool and over 100 in the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s – after which time they began to decline drastically in number because of competition from launderettes and eventually home washing machines. Until the 1960s, the two largest centres for the Chinese community in the UK were London and Liverpool. I always believed that there were an almost equal number of Chinese laundries in London compared to Liverpool, if not more. This was in agreement in what I had read in articles on the early Chinese community in London. A radio programme said, 'there were dozens of Chinese laundries in the East End of London'. In an article by Douglas Jones in *New Community* in 1979, he writes, 'During the next ten years (after 1901) about thirty Chinese hand-laundries were established in East London, where Lee clansmen dominated the trade'.

Imagine my surprise, when last year, I spent a few hours at Bancroft Road, local studies library consulting the Kelly's commercial directories and found very few listed! In 1911 there were four, in 1919 there were five and in 1926 only three. In 1935 there were none! I am aware that some were probably not listed for various reasons and I have seen a

photograph of a laundry in Caster Street which does not seem to have been listed in Kelly's. But why should there have been such mass non inclusions in Kelly's? I can understand the non inclusion of maybe a small number, but not 'dozens!' I have been to many other towns and cities such as Sheffield, Stoke-on-Trent, Southampton and Newcastle-upon-Tyne where I know there were Chinese laundries – some of them operated by distant cousins and acquaintances of our family and have found fairly large numbers – more than I expected in some cases – but why so few in London? If any member of the East London History Society can shed some light on this issue, or would like to make any comments, they are welcome to get in touch with me.

Walter Fung

Walter.fung888@btinternet.com

Tour Guide opportunities for Newham residents.

I hope the following would be of course and employment opportunities will be of interest to your members.

Talk-Tourism has signed a contract with a major tour operator that requires us to recruit a minimum of fifteen people to become self employed tour guides for East London and Newham. We will start interviewing in January 2011. We would look favourably on recruiting candidates taking the following course. Details of the course are attached.

We are working in partnership with Birkbeck College who will provide a part time two term course starting in January. The course timings likely to be of 2hr session one evening per week and one practical session 4hr session at weekend. These timing may change.

The first year course will provide a Higher National Certificate of Education with the option to continue in second year to complete a BA for the History of East London. The one

year course cost £250 with Birkbeck stating that depending on personal circumstances there maybe some financial support. A taster session for the course will take place at Boardman House from 5pm on Wednesday 8th December 2010.

We are promoting the course in local press educational, and Libraries throughout East London. The 5 Olympic Boroughs are aware of this initiative and I am asking them to recognise the Certificate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need more information. Any potential candidates wishing to attend the session on 8th December should contact me our Mike Berlin at Birkbeck.

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Bancroft Library Phase 1 building works Project update

The Phase I building works are now well underway. It is anticipated that the majority of the works will, as planned, be complete by the end of November. This includes the new fire alarm system and the new emergency lighting system as well as the new disabled accessible w/c to the ground floor and all the fire compartmentation upgrade works.

An interesting discovery was made whilst undertaking the latter works. Two art-deco style grilles were uncovered behind partitioning at the top of the staircase at first floor level. The grilles were in excellent condition and the background and surrounds to the grilles are being refurbished to enhance the impact that the grilles will have.

The completion of the remaining work, namely to the external steps / ramp will not be complete until early in 2011. This is because whilst the planning condition has now been cleared regarding the choice of materials, the Portland Stone is on a long delivery and is not expected to arrive on site until the middle of December. Consequently, this element of the works will not be completed until the middle of January 2011.

Peter Fox

From Malcolm Barr-Hamilton:

Regrettably, the Bancroft Library building will not reopen to the public until the new year. Unforeseen delays have been experienced in the Phase I essential health & safety works currently under way, including a long wait to receive the necessary planning approvals for the type of Portland stone and London brick to be used. The relocation of stock within the building, cleaning of the collection storage areas and reconfiguration of the reading room is also likely to take longer than planned. We apologise for the inconvenience this extended closure will cause to our users. We expect to re-open in mid-January 2011 and will keep you updated. We continue to offer a limited remote enquiry service by phone and email during the closure - call 020 7364 1290 or email localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk

WARMINSTER, WAPPING, SHADWELL AND RUSSIA

Introduction

In our book *Wapping 1600-1800* Ken Cozens and I drew the reader's attention to the trading links with Russia and the Baltic states but we have now discovered a family that links Warminster to Wapping, Shadwell and St Petersburg in Russia, and which needs further research.

William Hubbard, the son of a Dissenting Minister in Mile End Old Town, went to Russia about 1770 and established there a strong merchant family group that survived for over a century. In turn this has led to the following discoveries on the family's connections with Wiltshire, and London's riverside parishes.

The men involved are Ebenezer Butler of Warminster, John Thompson and William Hubbard of Shadwell and Wapping, Thomas Walters of Portsea, and Gregory Seale. Together they are an excellent example of an eighteenth century merchant group firmly based on trusted family links in which they all prospered greatly. The mystery remains of why were the daughters of Ebenezer Butler of Warminster so popular with these East London-based merchants?

The centre of their commercial activities was the Thames waterfront in the parishes of Wapping and Shadwell, and especially New Crane Stairs, and their religious centre was the Stepney Meeting House in Bull Lane.

The Butler Family of Warminster

'The 18th century was a prosperous time in Warminster: the malting and woollen trades and the market all flourished. In 1751 it was described as a 'Populous place with good inns' and by 1781 the town had about 2,600 inhabitants. We also know that many West Country clothiers insured their stock in the

London warehouses of George Whitehead, a Blackwell Hall factor, who was based in Basinghall Street.

Ebenezer Butler of Warminster married Mary Bayley in 1729 and three of their daughters married London merchants, who became well established in the commercial life of Wapping and Shadwell.

On 20 February 1753 at St Denys, Warminster, Rachel Butler married Captain John Thompson of London and Shadwell.

On 5 December 1765 at St Denys, Warminster, Susanna Butler married William Hubbard, widower of Wapping. This was Hubbard's third marriage.

On 23 June 1767 Gregory Seale married Jane Butler, at Sutton Veny, near Warminster, Wiltshire.

In turn on 23 May 1780 at St Paul's Shadwell, Thomas Walters, born at Portsea in 1756, married Anne the daughter of Rachel and John Thompson.

The subsequent developments of these four interlinked families are described below.

Captain John Thompson

Captain Thompson is described as being from Yorkshire and at some time to have been Commander of H. M. Transports. He was very firmly based in Shadwell from 1763 and possibly earlier until he moved in 1781 to the more 'middling sort' hamlet of Mile End Old Town, where he died in 1787. He lived at the very large Fitzhugh house, on the south side of the Mile End Road. He had a prosperous ropemaking business in Shadwell, which was subsequently run by his son, also John, as well as being a member of the Russia Company.

We know that in 1781 that Thompsons, father and son, insured their joint property in Shadwell for the considerable sum of £2,100.

This covered a wheel-house, a rigging house, stable and twine warehouses plus the rope house and stocks of hemp and tar.

William Hubbard

He was baptised the 31 January 1733, at the Bull Lane Meeting House, Stepney, the son of John and Sarah, and in 1748 was apprenticed to Benjamin Finch, Citizen and a member of Wax Chandlers' Company. The 'consideration' of £110, indicates both the wealth of the Hubbard family and the prestigious position in the City's mercantile life of Benjamin Finch. London Directories show Finch in 1749 in Cheapside, and he can be traced until 1754. He [or someone with the same name] then re-appears in 1761 and is described as a 'merchant of Bishopsgate Street Within' and by 1767 he was at 21 Poultry.

William Hubbard appears in the land tax for Wapping in 1760. The £11 rent of his first property on the north side of Wapping Dock Street indicates a modest house but his 'personal estate' of £100 already indicates a merchant of some substance. His neighbours included Edward Staple and Zephaniah Eade, both prominent merchants. He then moved in 1765 to a large property on the Thames waterfront, which he rented from Joseph Curtis, with a rent of £42. His personal estate was still evaluated at £100.

In the Directories from 1765 he is described as 'hosier, draper, near Execution Dock'. By 1769 Hubbard is described as of "near Wapping Dock, Broderer broker", which indicates his increasingly wide range of businesses. In 1767, William Hubbard "draper near Execution Dock insured his stock for £2700." The total insurance was for £3,000. This amount of stock confirms that he was now a man of some substance, comparable to that of his brother-in-law John Thompson.

Other references to Hubbard can be found in the Freemason's Archives, London, which

record that in 1767 he was Secretary to a branch of the Freemasons in Wapping. It is thus clear that by 1767 Hubbard was a well-established Wapping merchant, integrated into the local society, but then a decision was made to emigrate to Russia. Part of the preparations for this change occurred on 20 April 1769 when in the Broderers' Company records, appears:

" William Hubbard linen draper, Wapping Dock, made free by order of Lord Mayor".

This is just before he moved to Russia and he probably needed to be free of a London livery company to be acceptable to the merchants he was going to work with in St Petersburg. He became free of the Russia Company on 5 November 1771.

But why did Hubbard decide to up root his family on the Thames's waterfront for the frigid delights of Russia?

Russia

Whilst the production of linen in Russia had developed in the 17th century it was not until the mid-18th century that cotton manufacturing made an appearance, following the granting in 1753 of a monopoly in cotton-weaving given to two English industrialists - Chamberlain and Cozzens. From the beginning the Russian industry relied on the imports of English cotton yarn and it was not until the 1840s that imports of raw-cotton were greater than imports of cotton yarn. So Hubbard and his commercial partners entered the market at the beginning of a period of great growth with many opportunities to develop their businesses.

It is well known that in the last half of the 18th century that raw cotton became a very important element in Britain's import trade and in the re-export trade to Russia, Europe and North and South America. 'Its contribution to national income increasing

from less than ½% in the 1770s to 4-5% in 1802.'

It was not until 1808 that the first privately owned cotton-spinning mill was established in Russia, and by 1812 Moscow alone had 12 spinning mills, including 780 spinning machines.

Having established a successful business William Hubbard returned from Russia and re-established himself in Mile End Old Town, where he lived from 1779 until his death in 1783. The rent of £20 indicated a substantial house and it was located on the east side of Stepney Green. This was a new house built in 1776 and the first occupant was Captain Zachariah Norman, whose child was baptised at Bull Lane, so he probably knew the Hubbards socially.

Hubbard's widow Susannah continued to live in this house until 1786. Then in 1787 she moved to a better house in Assembly Row, on the south side of the Mile End Road. Her rent had now increased to £24 and she can be traced here until 1798 but after that date the land tax registers are not complete.

Susannah Hubbard was a close neighbour of Elizabeth Cook, the widow of Captain James Cook, who for a year or so lived only six doors away in Assembly Row.

Thomas Walters

Thomas Walters was born in Portsea in 1756, and as a young boy came up to Wapping in 1770 as an apprentice in the ship chandlers business run by Nathaniel Eade and James Wilton. He was a well-read young man and several of his letters describing conditions in Wapping have survived. He was made a livery member of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1783 and Warden in 1795-96.

In 1776 he was involved in a business venture in West Florida, USA, but he returned to England a few years later and was married in

Shadwell in 1780 to Anna, the daughter of John Thompson.

The Sun Fire Office insurance policies describe him as a 'biscuit baker', and thus he was probably a major supplier of sea biscuits to the Victualling Office of the Royal Navy, based on the east side of Tower Hill. This was an important part of business activities in the riverside parishes.

In 1780 he is at a house 'over-looking Pennington Street' in the parish of St George-in-the-East, but in 1781 and 1782 he is at 201 and 202 New Crane, Shadwell, which was at the bottom of New Gravel Lane. He appears to have been in partnership with George Seale, and their stock in Seale's bake house was insured for £700. This link between the families is confirmed by the baptism 16 November 1797 of Gregory Seale, son of Thomas and Anna Walters, who later entered Abel Gower's a merchant banker in London.

Thomas Walters has been traced in the Shadwell land tax from 1780 until 1818 for property in New Crane, where his neighbours were John Thompson and Gregory Seale, his brothers-in-law, and Ralph Keddey, another member of the Russia Company and a member of the Stepney Meeting House.

By 1787 he was rated for two adjacent properties on New Crane Stairs, one had belonged to Gregory Seale and the other Ralph Keddey, and the total rents of £34 and his personal estate of £100, are indicative of his prosperity.

In due course Thomas Walters moved to Hackney and was sometime a Deputy Lieutenant of Middlesex, but he maintained his business links in Shadwell.

Gregory Seale

Gregory Seale married Jane Butler, the daughter of Ebenezer and Mary on 23 June 1767. He then appears in the land tax for

Shadwell from 1770, and possibly earlier, until 1786 and his trade was that of a baker and his links to Walters have been described above.

Speculation

It looks increasingly likely that the link between William Hubbard, Warminster and St Petersburg was the clothing trade and the export of cotton and linen. William is described in the London Directories as a 'linen draper' and his rents, personal estate and insurances all indicate his increasing success.

The fact that he established himself in the riverside parish of Wapping might reflect the influence of his brother-in-law Captain John Thompson, who was already well established in the neighbouring parish of Shadwell. It also means that he was not receiving woollen goods directly from Warminster, as these would have been brought by carriers to London and stored in warehouses near the Blackwell Hall, the centre for this trade on the west side of Basinghall Street in the City of London.

To have warehouses by the Thames demonstrates that Hubbard was probably involved in both the export and import of raw materials, such as wool and cotton, clothing and textiles, given his experience as a linen draper, and possible links with the woollen merchants and clothiers of Warminster.

Hubbard's brothers-in-law were wealthy men involved in the Russia trade, ropemaking, biscuit baking and probably shipping, so they were always on the look out for new business opportunities.

Through the Stepney Meeting House there were well-established contacts with Ralph Keddey of Mile End, who in 1775 and 1778 was trading in St Petersburg and Riga. He, and his son Thomas Keddey, were both free of the Russia Company and had a warehouse on New Crane Stairs.

We also know that Hubbard's premises in Wapping were rented from Joseph Curtis, one of the important local merchant families. So Hubbard was working and socialising with other merchants who were involved in the import of sugar, rum, tar, timber, from the Caribbean, North America and Scandinavia and the infamous triangular trade between England, Africa and the West Indies.

I speculate that Hubbard and his brothers-in-law realised that there would be an important opportunity to export cotton and linen products to Russia, and this led to the decision for William to move to St Petersburg about 1770.

So the Hubbard's 'English Shop' in St Petersburg was probably a centre for the importation of cotton and woollen goods from England.

But given the well-developed recognition that merchants needed to diversify their business activities, Hubbard and his business partners were also looking at, and possibly invested in, timber, tar, hemp and iron exports to England, thus making profitable use of the available return shipping.

By the 1890s the Hubbard Company owned over one million trees in the forests of north-east Finland but then ran into financial difficulties.

Derek Morris

Acknowledgements:

I am very grateful to Mrs M. Wilton-Pett who brought the marriages of the Butler sisters to my attention, to Shirley Gaunt in Australia, one of the descendants of the Russian branch of the Hubbard family, and to Alwyn Hardy, Hon. Curator, Warminster Dewey Museum.

Further Reading

P. I. Lyashchenko: History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution, 1970

D. Morris: Fitzhugh House, Mile End Old Town, Stepney, 1738 - 1849, Newsletter, No. 48, May 1999, London Topographical Society.

D. Morris & K. Cozens: Wapping 1600-1800, A social history of an Early Modern London Maritime Suburb, 2009

DNB: John Gellibrand Hubbard, first baron Addington, (1805-1889)

Victoria County History, Wiltshire, vol. 8, Warminster, Westbury and Whorwellsdown Hundreds, 1965

F. Walters: The Family of Walters: Dorset: Hants, 1907, Guildhall Library

Wiltshire FHS: Wiltshire Marriages, vol. 20, Warminster 1587-1837

Sporting Trail

With the Olympics in mind, Doreen and Diane are hoping to put together a walk around Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park highlighting graves or memorials with a sporting connection. To date they have come up with six, but they need a lot more to make this a viable project.

If any members have information on anyone with a sporting connection buried or connected to the cemetery, please email them at amyod03-thcp@yahoo.co.uk or write to Doreen Kendall, address at the front of the newsletter.

If you would like to join Doreen and Diane, and other volunteers of the East London History Society in the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, on the second Sunday of every month, recording memorials off gravestones, you would be most welcome, but be warned – it can become addictive!. Every memorial yields clues to the family interred such as relationships and careers. With modern technology it is possible to call up at the L.M.A. all leading newspapers till 1900. The thrill of discovering another fascinating nugget of information and uncovering yet another facet of history hidden within the walls of the cemetery keeps our members working away. A recent discovery was the grave of the grandparents of Stanley Holloway, and a descendant of Oliver Cromwell.

West Ham 1928 to 1945 Reflections and Memories, Part Two

As soon as I had completed my memories of West Ham and read the draft, another group formed in my mind, taking me back to those drab little streets that lead on to the more colourful areas that abounded with shops and businesses of all kinds. One such oasis was almost on our doorstep and that was Vicarage Lane. It ran from the fringe of West Ham Church at the Portway end to Romford Road at the other where the magnificent showrooms/offices of the Electricity Board were located. (Windows smashed during the unemployed workers demonstrations referred to in part one). Vicarage Lane was used to walk to Deanery Road School; no cars or transport in those days. The range of shops was diverse: Cats Meat, Cooked Meats, Butchers, Slaughter House adjacent, Bakers, Grocers, Cheap Sweets, Bicycle and Radios, Drapers and so forth. You could buy 120V batteries and acid accumulators with recharging service (radios were known as wirelesses and used both rather than mains electricity) my memory takes me to the so called Cats Meat Shop, run by a one-armed man; he wore a collarless shirt of a flannel like material and always looked the same. Huge legs etc of horse meat hung on hooks and effused a very distinctive odour. We were led to believe that the Belgium people eat such meat but it was not for the British. (Little did we know that we would be facing whale meat in the war years to come.) This one armed man would strap down a slab of this meat on to a wooden block with chain and locking device, then pick up a fearsome carving knife and slice away. It was wrapped in old newspaper and this was his sole means of making a living; what a lesson for today's people.

The Butchers Shop backed on to the slaughter house and livestock were driven up the side entrance to appear on a hook in the butchers shop; not for the squeamish.

An example of this cycle was when a flock of sheep bolted from this alley to death, and ran in every direction. The round up took hours with one young lad finding out that sheep could leap and butt when cornered. Life in our streets was exciting and varied.

All these trades, skills and enterprises, so much activity and the ritual of the daily shop; it was the era of the housewife. Little did we know that the war would come and change all that as women began to fill the workshops and become a permanent feature of our way of life today.

Throughout the maze of streets many pubs existed supplied by Brewers drays; usually drawn by a team of shire horses. Wooden barrels were slid down into the cellar of the pub as the empties came up. Beer bottles were returnable and had a refund value of 2d. and 3d. each. A useful addition to a lad's pocket money if such bottles were found. These pubs would discharge their clientele after 10 pm, closing time by law, and they would wend their way home singing all the way. Fried Fish shops were everywhere and kept open to match the pub closing time. A portion of fish and chips wrapped in yesterday's newspaper cost 2d. or 3d. Those who worked in the fish and chip shops tended to reek of cooking oil.

Saturday night was late shopping hours with meat being sold on open stalls or from a 'hole in the wall' for as little as 1d a pound! Massive long shallow crates of eggs were brought on to the shops forecourt and sold off by the dozen, everything that was perishable had to go for Sunday was holy and literally a complete shutdown except for the odd corner shop. Sunday and Good Friday were solemn days; days of rest, except for vital services. These were the days when you put on clean clothes and went for a walk in the park or to Wanstead Flats, the so called Sand Hills at Manor Park. Street games were suspended and so forth.

Other shops that existed/thrived were the cooked meat butchers, live eels, and the so

called Oil shop. The latter was an Aladdin's Cave where hundreds of household products filled the shelves, hung down on long strings with a counter somewhere in the midst of all this merchandise. A bank of bundles of firewood was usually stacked in front of the counter. The source of this firewood was disused railway sleepers; they had been impregnated with creosote so the whole shop had a strong coal tar aroma, (definitely a No No today with the Health and Safety Acts), that blended with the smell of paraffin. Paraffin was sold from the drum into your own container. Close by, large earthen jars with a large open top contained mustard and other pickles that were sold loose into your container (usually a pudding basin). I cannot recall any hand washing or fire precautions or No Smoking notices with this mixture of wares.

The semi-detached house at 88 Gladstone had a side way that was bordered by a wall that separate us from two businesses. One was a rag trader plus a greengrocer. It had its own yard, cart, storage cellar, horse, stable, shop for fruit and veg., plus tinned jams. The other was a sweet shop, café and coal merchant, with its yard, coal stocks, stable, horses and dung heap. Across the road we had the typical grocers shop that also stocked firewood, paraffin and loose pickles together with a Vantas soft drink dispenser – a fascinating contraption. It had a large glass bulblike vessel full of water that bubbled as it shot in gas; this fizzing water was then discharged into a bottle with a flavour of your choice.

Another delight was the cooked meat shop where saveloys were pulled out of a plated metal steamer in a string, shiny and hot, and the required number were cut off. Also, you took a pudding basin for hot faggots with as much gravy as you wished. Then hot salted beef and boiled pork joints sat on china stand for carving off the required slices. The only other item sold was pease pudding from a huge steam heated vat.

Ice cream was sold mainly from mobile sources: bicycle carts or stationary barrows. The tricycles were company brands such as Walls, Eldorado and Larkins. 'Stop me and Buy One' was a typical caption on the cart sides. The barrow had two metal containers sunk into ice; one was vanilla flavour, the other was lemon ice. The favourite was a mixed wafer, the device for making up the wafer being dunked into a basin of water for cleansing, although the water got cloudier as the day proceeded. One half of the wafer was vanilla and the other half lemon ice. You could have a standard thickness or by a click of a catch in the handle, have twice the thickness. It was all labour intensive with many traders selling their wares, but then labour was cheap and the dark cloud of unemployment lurked in people's minds.

Winter time and it was hot roasted chestnut barrows, with their glowing coke stove that came on to the street corners or in the busy market areas. How we fumbled to get the skin off those burning hot chestnuts! Another attraction was the coke brazier of the night watchman sitting in his canvas covered shelter guarding the tools and equipment of a road repairing task. As lads, we would gather around this glowing device and the weak light from the hurricane lamps. I think the night watchmen enjoyed our company; they always seemed to be very old or crippled, more of a symbol than a deterrent. Such simple pleasures and reassures of childhood in Stratford E15.

The Chemists Shop in the Portway near Amity Road – large glass decanter shaped flasks stood on a high shelf in the window filled with red, green and blue fluids; the sign of the Apothecary? The interior had rows of china vessels, many wooden drawers all labelled, with a glass screened area for compounding and dispensing. How I dreaded those sulphur tablets that were meant to purify the blood. Another horror was brimstone and treacle dispensed in a conical carton. Why did we use so much sulphur?

There were no limitations on sales, and being interested in chemistry, I found the composition of gunpowder and the chemicals or substances to colour the flames of my homemade fireworks. I was able and permitted to purchase saltpetre, sulphur, barium sulphide etc without question as all these substances were available quite freely. (N.B. Poisons were controlled, however). My fireworks were pretty but I never managed an explosion, thank God.

At the back of this chemist's shop a Gents Hairdresser carried out his trade. The norm was a short back and sides for 3d.

So, this was the West Ham I knew, many skilled men everywhere. Green Street, by Upton Park Station, had a furniture shop with the craftsmen working in the window. Churches, cinemas, Music Halls, shop upon shop, noise, and bustle. Friday night at the Kinema West Ham Lane was amateur night as well as a B film, cartoons, news, main film, organ with sing along and amateurs. Cost about 6d but a long queue in the clod, there are many more such memories, but no matter. What mattered were the spirit and the vibrant, honest and hardworking scenario of those days, when your town hall produced a record of proud achievement of a borough of 50 years existence and its residents were proud to be part of it.

So, to complete this scrap book of reflections and memories, I recall the periods that followed the major onslaught on London when several intensive raids were followed by sudden smaller raid when you least expected them. A major night raid occurred when heavy bombs dropped on Caister Park Road and its junction with Plaistow Road and Bull Road. After the raid my father and I went to view the scene, the damage was so complete at the Plaistow Road site that I asked my father, 'Where is it?' The four corners that had shops were sloping heaps of rubble with raging fires rising from the heaps, a skeletal frame burning fiercely was all that remained of a trolley bus,

and the power lines just hung in great loops over the scene. We walked back, recalling how each bomb whistled down louder and louder until we thought: 'This one is ours.' But the nearest shook the floor of the Anderson Shelter violently, but did not explode. The next day the area was cordoned off as it was an unexploded bomb that had gone through the roof and floors of a nearby house. We had walked past it twice that night. The bomb squad removed it the next day. In another episode, I was visiting a bombed out, rehoused friend at the West Ham Station area known as the Buildings, when the siren sounded. We took cover in a surface shelter and grovelled as a string of bombs fell, getting nearer, then past us; the same awful experience that this one is yours. We emerged to find a huge crater close by with wisps of smoke and huge bomb splinters the size of saucers lying about. The string had straddled the railway lines and Berks chemical works. I was to spend time at this site later on as it was converted to a Home Guard Anti-aircraft Rocket Establishment and I had to man one of these Heath Robinson contraptions: two 3.5 rockets of 2 metres length per launcher and 32 launchers per site.

Although I was working 64 hours per week, I was made to become a Home Guard, train one evening and man a launcher another night for a 12 hour shift, and go straight to work after an army style breakfast with roll call at six in the morning. We slept in blister shelters on top of a stack of the rockets. I never fired the launcher but did track an aircraft, so it was a nearly. I wonder how many such sites existed in West Ham as it was in the direct firing line of so many raids, on the docks, railways network and industries.

The devastation at Plaistow Road described above was cleared up and boarded up windows fitted, and the traders restarted their activities and trading resumed. By this time my apprenticeship had been served and I was conscripted into the RAF in 1944. Ten weeks basic training in how to fire weapons various, throw a grenade, drill, march, unarmed

combat, and I was on embarkation leave! My beloved and I got married before I left for India and Singapore and our floral items came from one of those boarded up shops in Plaistow Road, when flowers were almost verboten to the war effort. It was February 18th, 1945, and the wartime restrictions were at a peak. Greenhouse flowers were nonexistent but that poor little shop made up bouquets etc., of snowdrops and violets.

I never returned to live in West Ham but as you can see, that book of 50 Years a Borough had an impact on my life (I wonder if there are any copies in existence?)

Will West Ham rise again to its former place in the East End of London with the Olympic venture?

Eric R Percival

The East of London family History Society will once again be holding the AGM and Fair in January 2011, at Stratford Town Hall. Check with your local library for details, or contact Doreen Kendall.

There will also be a Family History Fair at the Barbican on Sunday 29th May 2011, in which all the Family History Societies will be participating.

Ship to Shore – Histories of Tower Hamlets through the lives of its people commemorated in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. ISBN 978-0-9564779-0-3 A5 booklet. Price £3.50.

This booklet has been produced by The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park and features research by Doreen and Diane Kendall, and Bradley Snooks. Email: thcemeterypark@yahoo.co.uk for information, or write to The Secretary, The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, The Soanes Centre, Southern Grove, London E3 4PX.

The East End (Site Only)

Since joining the East London History Society, I've thoroughly enjoyed receiving the Newsletters, and learning so much about the district I had the good fortune to grow up in.

I've particularly enjoyed reading Rosemary Taylor's book: Exploring the East End, and can only imagine what a labour of love it must have been to plan out so many fascinating walks and uncover so many historical facts.

One rather poignant thing that comes across in the book, however, is the number of 'Site Only' references there are, along with the many Blue Plaques to be found on numerous walls.

Of course it's very important to note the names of the great and the good who once lived in the area, because in no small extent, it was their input that made the East End the colourful place it evolved into. But I think it would be rather sad if we skipped over the indigenous population that also gave the East End its character and colour.

I speak of the many hundreds of 'ordinary' people who lived in the 'ordinary' terraced houses with no bathrooms, and a Loo in the backyard.

Having been born in Poplar before the outbreak of WW2, and living there for many years, I remember those people as honest and unassuming people, who what you saw was what you got, as the saying goes.

My grandparents had lived Hind Grove for the whole of their married lives, bringing up six boys in quick succession. (Boys, incidentally who managed to survive the German bomb that dropped on Upper North Street School on 13th June 1917.) One of those boys was to become a professional boxer, often training at the Mile End Arena.

My grandparents was an ex-marine, and his dignified bearing showed that in every respect. He was well known throughout Poplar, and for many years served as a commissionaire at The Queens Theatre in Poplar High Street.

Around and about I had uncles and aunts, as did all of my street pals. All the houses were rented, and as each generation grew up and married, they rented a couple of rooms from a relative or neighbour until a house of their own became available. Thus it was that the community had survived for generations.

So what was to change all this? Well, in no small part, the outbreak of war, and Hitler's bombers wiped out whole swathes of property, leaving many wide-open spaces for a decade or so to come. Many people died in those raid, whilst others were evacuated to somewhere safer. For the most part however, the remaining population accepted the situation with the typical staunch defiance that has become legendary, coming to accept those open spaces as an 'added facility' to their way of life, rather than an encumbrance. For the local kids, the debris became their playground, for others, they became ideal place to use as allotments to grow much needed vegetables.

I can remember as a boy, being able to stand in Hind Grove and see across the open spaces of four streets; Gough Grove, Canton Street, Peking Street and Swale Street; only the beautiful church of St Stephens at the corner of Upper North Street prevented me seeing East India Dock Road beyond. St Stephens Church had been blasted early in the blitz but remained structurally sound throughout the war, until ironically struck by a V2 rocket in 1945.

I remember watching with schoolboy fascination as huge diggers excavated a hole the size of a football pitch in the open space between Gough Grove and Canton Street to make a reservoir for fire-fighting purposes during raids. The earth they removed was then dumped on the open space between Canton

Street and Peking Street, where it became known thereafter as 'The Hills'. Those 'hills' were set to become the playground for local kids to play 'Cowboys and Indians' and a place for adults to walk the dog for years to come.

Crime as I recall, was virtually, at least amongst local residents, mainly because there was nothing to steal! Everyone knew everyone else, and had watched each generation grow up from the cradle. Almost every family was known by name in the street to which they belonged, and when walking further afield to Chrisp Street for the weekly shopping, many more nameless faces were recognisable with nods and grins as they passed by. Such was their confidence in their security, that most housewives poked a cocoanut mat under their front doors to 'keep them ajar' when they wet shopping. This was to save fumbling for a key on their return with two heavy shopping bags.

Very few streets were without a public house, where residents met occasionally for chat and a 'sing-song' whilst someone played the piano. It's also difficult now to recall the numerous little shops that lined the roads, catering for just about anything the housewife might need. Roads such as Upper North Street and Stainsby Road were virtual High Streets, with rows of shops on either side.

So what became of this indigenous community? A community that two world wars failed to dislodge! Ironically it was not to be war that dispersed them, but the drawing boards of the peacetime Planners. To be fair, it has to be said that the Planners were faced with a dilemma of alarming proportions after the war. With hundreds of troops returning after demob, the demand for housing was enormous, and somehow there had to be an instant solution..

For a while this 'instant solution' was to be in the form of prefabricated houses, which suddenly began to appear on every open space available. But by the government's own

admission, they were just a temporary stopgap, and a more permanent long-term plan had to be decided upon, and the options were limited.

Were they to infill the open spaces created by Hitler with updated versions of modern terraced houses? Should they fill the larger spaces with high-rise blocks of flats? (which they tried with only semi-success). Or should they simply bulldoze the whole area and start again?

Sadly, in my view, it was the third option that was decided upon, and a new phrase came into being throughout the area, a phrase that was on everyone's lips for years to come: Slum Clearance. Sadly, too, no thought was given to the preservation of the indigenous community already existing there, the priority it seems was to disperse the existing people to the four winds, and focus on a complete rebuild.

Thus it was that whole streets were despatched to Harlow, Dagenham and Becontree an other such places, never to be heard of again, whilst the bulldozers were let loose on the houses they left behind; houses, where generations of memories were bulldozed away with the dust. In hindsight, if challenged about their decisions, the Planner would argue that there was no other choice, and that this was 'progress'. I would counter that argument however by suggesting that with so many derelict streets lying empty, such as Peking Street, Swale Street, Canton Street, along with many others in the area, whole new rows of modern terraced houses could have been built, replacing those that had previously existed. Tenants of adjacent streets could then have been transferred into those new houses, whilst their previous homes fell to the bulldozers. Thus the indigenous community would have been preserved for generations to come. But as a pundit once said: 'Hindsight is an exact science!' On recent visits to Poplar I see new build everywhere, and concede that all residential properties now have bathrooms and inside toilets. But I also see around me high-rise blank brick walls, having a claustrophobic

aura. The colour has gone, along with the indigenous people that lived there. Walking along what remains of Hind Grove, I see high brick walls on both sides, and not a soul in the street. This is because the dwellings are accessed by high-level walkways overhead that cast a shadow over the street below; a street once fronted by doors with familiar faces peering out.

The Victoria Public House (site only) no longer exists, nor does the tinkling of the piano from within. Further along, the rear entrance to the Waterloo Hero Pub (site only) is just a blank wall. At the top of the street the once impressive Farrance Street School (later to become Sir Humphrey Gilberts) has been obliterated by high rise additions, and now masquerades as 'luxury dwellings'. Piggot Street, where once the number 86 bus trundled down at the end of its long trek from Upminster, doing a tight turn into Stainsby Road before parking outside the Poplar Hippodrome (site only), is now blanked off.

If I circumvent the high buildings that now exist, I come to the junction of Burdett Road and East India Dock Road, where once I could have looked up at the beautiful St Annes Church towering majestically over that junction, as it had done for generations. Sadly, the church has now been obliterated by a high rise building, where once Russells the hardware shop once stood. St Annes is now relegated behind the surrounding buildings, and must be approached more closely before it can be adequately appreciated. I suppose people of my age group who remember how things had once been must tug their forelocks respectfully, and accept that this is 'progress'. I wouldn't presume to challenge the expertise of the architects who sit at their drawing boards designing piles of bricks. Their skills are unquestionable. But their knowledge of Societies and Communities leaves much to be desired.

Bill Langworth

"GOOD CLEAN SOOT, LADY"

"Chimney smoking again? It's the poor quality coal, the soot builds up so quickly. You need a small boy to climb up there and sweep it out."

That was before 1875; in that year the exploitation of 'climbing boys' finally ceased. But it had taken many injuries and deaths among the boys, a long campaign and a number of Acts of Parliament. More than a century earlier the philanthropist, Jonas Hanway, had spoken out about the conditions under which the boys worked. Hanway was an established social reformer on behalf of the less fortunate members of society, being a governor of the Foundling Hospital and pioneer of the Marine Society, encouraging boys to consider careers in the Royal or Merchant Navies. Of lasting benefit to many of us was his popularisation of the umbrella.

My own recollections of 'having the chimney swept' date from the 1930s when the fireplace was the main point of heating, and, often in winter, cooking as well. The coal touted around the streets was offered in two varieties - 'nuts' and 'best', the latter being something of a misnomer. A few adventurous souls attempted to clear the soot by setting fire to the chimney - not popular with the landlord. The more circumspect employed a chimney sweep, for a fee of about 6d. (2½p.), to do the job for them. We usually called on Mr. Meggs or Mr. Reynolds, the starting time being fixed for around 6.00 a.m. The action really began, however, the night before, when the room was emptied of everything that moved. That, in itself, was quite a feat considering there was hardly ever any spare space in the average East London home. Anything that could not be moved was covered over as well as possible.

Promptly on the big day the sweep arrived. One of those we used carried his brushes on a handcart, along with a sack for the soot. If he had come from an earlier job, the sack would already contain a good quantity of soot but it was dropped, unceremoniously, on the floor

with the comment "All good clean soot, lady" which, before the operation had really started, ensured a thin film of grime was distributed over walls and floors. A tatty sheet was hung in front of the fireplace, ostensibly to prevent too much finding its way into the room, although, by then, it really did not matter. Gradually, the rods were screwed to the brush which was eased, slowly, up the chimney, negotiating a few bends on the way.

Unsurprisingly, I was banned from the centre of operations but lurked outside the closed door awaiting the call that I should go into the garden and watch the brush emerge from the chimney pot. To a small boy, it was a grand sight as, first, a large quantity of soot was expelled, followed by the triumphant exit of the brush head. Undeterred by the soot descending on the garden, and on me in particular, I watched the two or three oscillations, carried out to ensure all was clear, and then ran back indoors to report. The sweep gathered up some of the soot piled in the fireplace, put it in his sack, tied his rods together, collected his fee and departed. That left us with the job of clearing up and replacing the room contents although I was tidied-up, washed off, and sent along to Gainsborough Road School, where my teacher probably mused that 'climbing boys' had been re-instated.

When WW2 finished there were signs the traditional chimney sweep was nearly finished. The 'brush and bag' men were gradually being replaced by operators toting a portable vacuum cleaner, said to be more efficient than a brush, for dislodging the soot from the chimney walls. The method was also said to be cleaner, obviating the need for the preparation carried out on the eve of the appointment. Diehards still swore by the old methods - if you could find the right man. The knock-out blow came with the Clean Air Act, passed in 1956, after over 3,500 lost their lives in the polluted air of 1952 and local authorities had powers to set up smoke-free zones. The domestic use of coal in London had already been diminishing as more

and more people switched to gas or electric heating, or full central heating, and the choking 'smogs' disappeared. We are now left with only the Sherlock Holmes films, and similar Victorian dramas, to remind us of how it was.

Roy Hayes

BOOKSHELF

The Little Book of the East End, Dee Gordon, The History Press, 2010, ISBN 978-0-7524-5715-8, 186 pages £9.99

This small format (135 x 205mm), hardbound book will fit into a man's jacket pocket or a lady's bag which is very convenient as you won't want to leave it behind. Absolutely full of fascinating facts about the East End (correctly defined in my opinion as ending at the River Lea); classified under 12 headings such as "Leisure Time", "Earning Dosh" and "Cockney Culture". I could disagree with a few of the facts, but this is not meant to be a scholarly exposition. Highly recommended and would make a great present.

St. Nicholas' Industrial School & Chapel, with a short history of Manor Park & Manor House by Shea Lolin.

The Manor House and St. Nicholas' church are two stunning Victorian buildings that stand proud alongside other properties built in the 1990s on Gladding Road, Manor Park. Until now, little was known about these buildings and the history of the seven acre site around Gladding, Whitta and Capel Roads. A book has been written by a local, Shea Lolin who retraces the history of the Manor House and St. Nicholas' Industrial School and Chapel, placing the buildings in their nineteenth-century context and their relation to other key buildings. It surveys the use of the Manor House in its bicentenary year.

1810–2010 Bicentenary of Manor House

This free event is open to all and will be a chance to view an exhibition of photographs of the area spanning 150 years and a presentation from the author of this new publication.

Books will be on sale at this event, priced at £10.

The exhibition will then continue throughout December (each Saturday from 19:00). For alternative opening hours and details to order the book via post, please contact Shea Lolin on 020 8553 4973 or mail@shealolin.co.uk

Stratford Another East End, John Gorman. Five Leaves Publications. ISBN 978-1-907869-06-8. 24 pages, A5, card covers, £2.25. Available from the publisher: email info@fiveleaves.co.uk

Originally published as an essay in *Outsiders & Outcasts*, a series of articles in honour of Bill Fishman. John Gorman (1930-1996) was born and brought up in Stratford. His father was a carpenter from Devon and his mother a domestic servant born in South Shields. He became a silk screen printer and joined the Communist Party in 1949 while in the RAF. He left the CP following the Hungarian uprising but remained politically on the left. He published an autobiography *Knocking down Ginger* (1995) but his most influential work was *Banner Bright* (1973). This essay describes in vivid detail pre-war life in Stratford. The poor quality housing, struggle to make a living but staunch determination to maintain working class solidarity will probably bring back many memories for many of our members.

Jack London Photographer, Jeanne Campbell Reesman, Saraa S. Hodson & Philip Adam. University of Georgia Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8203-2967-3, 272 pages, hard bound, £49.99

This magnificent book came as a revelation to me. I knew (and have) Jack London's *People of the Abyss* (1903). Jack London (1876-1916)'s first hand account of poverty and low life in the East End of London with its many photographic illustrations. I have also read several of his books of life on the Alaskan frontier, as experienced through the eyes of dogs, such as *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906). I knew he was a life long Socialist, but I didn't know he was a very keen photographer. The Huntingdon Library, San Marino California has his photograph albums with 12,000 prints and the California State Parks system has his negatives. These were used by Philip Adam to produce new prints suitable for publication. The book comprises six chapters covering his various expeditions. *The People of the Abyss*, *The Russo-Japanese War*, *The San Francisco Earthquake*, *The Cruise of the Snark*, *The Voyage of the Dirigo*, and *The Mexican Revolution*.

There were more than 70 photographic illustrations in *People of the Abyss* but those in *Jack London Photographer* (a different set, I think) are not restricted by the small size of the original book. Here full advantage can be taken of the large (by modern standards) size negatives taken by London's (mostly Kodak?) cameras.

London was at his California ranch when the 18th April 1906 earthquake devastated San Francisco. He and his wife rode horses and then took a ferry to get to the shattered city in the afternoon. They watched as it burned. The photographs he took could be mistaken for being post a nuclear attack.