



Vine Tavern, Mile End Road, photo Boucas Brothers (see page 5)

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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.



Enjoy your Summer Holidays!

The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park are always seeking to augment their store of information on the burials in the cemetery, and any history related to the area.

If you have information or memorabilia you would like to share or allow the FTHCP to copy, please contact friendsthcp@yahoo.co.uk or contact Diane Kendall c/o The Soanes Centre Southern Grove London E3 4PX.

Join Doreen and Diane Kendall and assist in recording monumental inscriptions in Tower Hamlets Cemetery on the second Sunday of each month, from 2-4 pm.

All volunteers welcome.

Cover Picture

(See article on Boucas Brothers, by David Webb, page 4)

In October 1903, the historic Vine Tavern in Mile End was facing demolition, and Boucas Brothers, who had their studio at 120 Mile End Road were called on to take a number of photographs before it disappeared. Fortunately, these have survived, and show that Boucas lined up several dozen of the local inhabitants, including a large number of children for added interest.

East London History Society Lecture Programme

Our 2014/15 lecture series has ended and we are working on 2015/16. Details will be supplied in the next newsletter, in time for the September start.

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.
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ELHS Record and Newsletters. You can now download from our web site (no charge) PDFs of all issues of East London Record and the last three series of Newsletter (1992 to 2013). They can be found on our publications page together with indexes to aid selection. We have sold all hard copies of our Mile End and Wapping books but PDF copies can be supplied for £6 each – contact us for details. All of the PDFs can be searched for specific words. We also have older Newsletters (from 1962) scanned but the quality of printing means that the PDFs can not be searched. If you have any Newsletters from the 1950s or 1960s please let us know, I am sure we are missing some issues.

NOTES AND NEWS

Golden Anniversary

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets celebrated its 50th anniversary in style with the staff cutting a special cake designed by Cakes and Gateaux in Brick Lane. The council has invited residents to share photos, memories and views and views of the borough. To find out more or to send in pictures, works and words, visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/50

A Shameful Anniversary

While we are happy to celebrate the 50 years of Tower Hamlets (and Hackney and Newham) here is another less welcome anniversary. It is five years since the Queen Ann styled former Labour Exchange in Burdett Road, was demolished. With its unique character and George Lansbury connections, Tom Ridge fought a long battle with developers and Tower Hamlets planners to have it converted rather than demolished. However due to the developers claim that the site was urgently needed for housing, it was demolished. Guess what, five years later the empty site is still fenced off!

The Right Move

The Museum of London which is situated in the Barbican, is making plans to move to Smithfield, the empty General Market building, by 2021.

The move would increase the size of the museum from 17,000 square metres to more than 27,000 square metres, enabling them to display thousands of hitherto unseen relics and artefacts. Some of the more interesting items include a stone from AD160 with the first inscription of the word 'London', and a vest Charles I was believed to have been wearing when he was beheaded in 1649.

The museum is planning a fundraising drive for the estimated £70 million cost of the move, in collaborating with the City of London Corporation and the Greater London Authority.

The move will be great news for many visitors, who like me, spent hours searching for the entrance! Although I have made several visits to the museum and have worked closely with them on our project on the East London Suffragettes, it was always a challenge to find the right way into the museum!

The move will most certainly be welcomed by historians in East London, who are sure to take full advantage of the proximity of the museum.

Researching The East India Company

The community group Brick Lane Circle has been awarded a £47,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to research the impact the East India Company had on Asian and British lives over more than two centuries. The period they will be focusing on covers the years between 1600 and 1858.

the main focus of the project will be on the lives of people and institutions associated with the company's operations based on the East India Docks. The researchers hope to unearth stories based on the experiences of dock and warehouse workers, Asian seamen jumping ship to remain in the East End, and British women who set off in search of a suitable husband on the Indian sub-continent.

Some of the East India Company's records and collections are stored at the British Library,

National Maritime Museum, V& A Museum and the London Metropolitan Archives. Archivists at these museums will be on hand to guide the volunteers and direct them towards the relevant records.

The project will result in a book of short stories, information on a website, and a heritage literature festival at the London Metropolitan Archives, to celebrate the work.

For further information about the project, contact Brick Lane Circle on 07914 119282 or email bricklanecircle@yahoo.co.uk.

From Matthew Rosenberg:

I work for an arts and educational charity called digital-works. I am emailing to see if you might have some contacts, workers or volunteers who might like to help with an educational project we are running exploring, recording and celebrating the history of the Thames Lightermen.

Basically we are looking for older or retired lightermen who might like to come into schools and talk about their work lives to London primary school children. In addition to coming into the schools we have a boat trip planned on which lightermen will teach children the skills they used in work and talk about their history. We are working with the Museum of London, Docklands, the National Maritime Museum, Waterman's Hall and schools across London.

Eventually the children, with training from us, will also record interviews with the lightermen. These interviews will be edited into a oral history based documentary which will be shown in schools across London. There is more about the project here...

<http://www.thameslightermen.org.uk>

East End Photographers No 19 The Boucas brothers



The photographic studio at 120 Mile End Road changed hands several times in the last decades of the 19th century. Between the 1860s and the 1880s it was operated by Elias Gottheil (see number 8 in this series). In 1884 it was bought by Harry Carpenter, and he in turn sold it to the ‘bad boy’ of East End photography, Richard Stuart Lancaster (see number 16 in this series). Lancaster’s tenure was brief, and he closed it down suddenly in the summer of 1896, as usual one step ahead of the bailiffs. For several years the studio remained empty, before new tenants arrived in 1899 in the shape of the Boucas brothers, George and Eustace.



The Boucas brothers - there were originally three, including Costas who became a well-known poet – were natives of the Greek Aegean island of Lesbos, the family name being Bougioukas. Georgios (George) was born in Hagia Paraskevi, a town of Mytilene, in 1879, while his brother Stathis (Eustace) was a year younger. As teenagers, they became involved in the Greek –Ottoman war of 1897, and were forced to flee to London. Here, after shortening their name to the more pronounceable Boucas, they studied painting before turning to photography. The Mile End studio was opened in 1899, with a secondary studio in Ilford high Road, supervised on their behalf by Frederick Paget.

The Mile End studio was an immediate success, no doubt helped by the fact that their only rival Henry Turner had his studio at the far end of the road. In 1901, Boucas was invited to take the official photograph of the first Mayor of Stepney, Sir Edward Mann (1854 – 1953), the chairman of the brewers Mann Crossman & Paulin. Boucas’ photograph was admired to such an extent that the following year, an enlarged and coloured copy was specially framed and presented to the mayor by the council. It hung in the town hall for many decades, though its present

whereabouts are unknown – it is not, apparently, lurking in some forgotten basement at Bancroft Road archives and it seems possible that it may have been destroyed in the wartime bombing of the area.

In 1902 Boucas became involved in a copyright dispute over studio photograph. In January 1902, Boucas was visited by Claude Hanbury Cooke, known as the ‘boy preacher’, a sort of teenage version of Billy Graham, who harangued the crowds on street corners with his hellfire and brimstone sermons. Cooke, usually known as ‘Jack’, was carefully stage managed by his parents, who decided that silver prints of his photograph should be produced for a pamphlet biography to be handed out among the congregation at the Great Mission Hall in the Mile End Road. The copyright would belong to Boucas, but if he subsequently received several thousand orders for copies, the copyright would be assigned to Cooke. The arrangement collapsed when the various parties could not agree on the price to be charged. It was then discovered that Cooke's handlers had entered into a private agreement with a local printer named Reynolds for the printing of 20,000 copies. Boucas sued for breach of copyright and on December 8, won his case with damages of £20, and an injunction against the printers, with all remaining copies to be surrendered.

In October 1903, the historic Vine Tavern in Mile End was facing demolition, and Boucas was called on to take a number of photographs before it disappeared. Fortunately, these have survived, and show that Boucas lined up several dozen of the local inhabitants, including a large number of children for added interest.

The situation in Greece had stabilised by the end of the 1900s, and George Boucas' returned to Athens, subsequently opening a studio in Smyrna in 1912. Barely 2 years later, the start of the Great War forced its closure, and Boucas then opened a studio in the centre of Athens, opposite the Anglican church.

Although he had married an English girl he never returned to England. After the war, Boucas' studio became one of the chief venues for the intellectual and political life of Athens, and in the 1930s Boucas became the official photographer of the Greek Royal family and court.

During his frequent trips to Greece, the London studio was supervised by an assistant, Spyros Meletzis. In 1909, Boucas formally made over the Mile End studio to his brother Eustace, but the arrangement only lasted a year before it was disposed of to an agency named Photas. Paget took over the Ilford studio in his own name at the same time. Interestingly, Boucas had to contest another copyright violation over a portrait of the Indian philosopher Krishnamurti shortly before the studio closure. Eustace Boucas and his wife emigrated to the USA after the war, where he opened a studio in Lynn, Massachusetts latterly assisted by his son Pericles Boucas (1912 to 75). Eustace Boucas died in Swampscott, Maine in 1965.

George Boucas died in Athens in 1941, during the upheavals of the Nazi occupation of Greece. Sadly his photographs are difficult to find nowadays, since after his death his second wife sold much of his archive to a workshop which used the negative plates to produce mirrors! A selection of his best work was published in Athens in 1996 by Alkis Xanthakis under the title ‘George Boucas: the great portraitist of the interwar period’. Unfortunately, it did not include any of his East End material and only Boucas' cartes have survived in any quantity.

DAVID WEBB

Sir John James Baddeley



This photograph shows Sir John James Baddeley, Baronet – known colloquially as ‘JJ’ – taking a Sunday morning walk with his wife through the empty City of London in 1922, when he was Lord Mayor and residing at the Mansion House.

With his top hat, cane and Edwardian beard, the eighty-year-old gentleman looks the epitome of self-confident respectability and worldly success, yet there is a poignancy in his excursion through the deserted streets, when the hubbub of the week was stilled, pausing to gaze into the windows of the shabby little printshops that competed to supply letterheads and engraved stationery to the banks, stock-brokers and insurance companies of the City.

In those days, all transactions and share issues required elaborately-engraved forms and there was a legal obligation to list all the directors on business notepaper which needed constant reprinting and adjustment of the dies whenever there were staff changes. Consequently, the City of London teemed with small highly-specialised companies eager to fulfil the constant demand for all this printed paper.

At the time of these photographs, nearly sixty years had passed since, at the age of twenty-three in October 1865, JJ had set up independently as a die sinker in a shared workshop in Little Bell Alley at the back of

the Bank of England under entirely inauspicious circumstances. The eldest of thirteen children, JJ had already acquired plenty of experience of the long hours of labour required to scrape a modest living in the trade of die-sinking and engraving when he was apprenticed to his father at fourteen years old in Hackney.

Even by the standards of nineteenth century fiction, it was an extraordinary story of personal advancement. JJ oversaw the transformation of his business from an artisan trade to an industrialised process employing hundreds in a single factory. Born into an ever-increasing family that struggled to keep themselves, he inherited a powerful work ethos and a burning desire to overcome the injustice his father had suffered. JJ can only have been a driven man, the eldest brother who set his own modest industry in motion and then drew in his younger siblings to assist with spectacular results.

“In January 1857, I started my business life with my father in his workshop in Hackney at the back of the house at the Triangle in Mare St where I first donned a white apron, turned up my shirt sleeves and did all sorts of jobs,” he wrote of his apprenticeship in the trade of die sinking, *“sweeping up and lighting the forge fire, warming the dies and later forging them on the anvil, then annealing them and afterwards filing them to shape and, when engraved, hardening them and tempering them.”*

“During the whole time there, I was the errand boy, taking the dies and stamps to the few customers that my father had, Jarrett at No 3 Poultry being the chief one,” he recalled at the end of his life, *“Many a time have I trudged – in winter with my feet crippled with chilblains – to the Poultry and at night to his other shop in Regent St. During the time I was at work with my father I had very good health, but we were all poorly-clad and none of the children had overcoats.”*

In 1851, Griffith Jarrett exhibited his popular embossing press at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, ordering the dies from JJ's father who took on a larger house for his growing family and more apprentices on the basis of this seemingly-endless new source of income. Yet Griffith Jarrett exploited the situation mercilessly, inducing JJ's father to make dies for him alone, then driving the prices down and eventually turning JJ's father into a mere journeyman who worked like a slave and found he had little left after he had paid his production costs, impoverishing the family. When, as a boy, JJ walked through the snow at night to deliver the dies for his father to Griffith Jarrett's Regent St shop at 8pm or 10pm, Jarrett sometimes gave JJ tuppence to ride part of the way home. It was an offence of meagre omission that JJ never forgot. *"These two pennies were the beginnings of my savings which enabled me to set up in business for myself and to defy the man who for more than twenty years had my father in his clutches,"* admitted JJ in later years.

"I began work by doing simple dies for my father at journeyman prices and began making traces, stops, commas, letter punches and other small tools. By the end of the year, I managed to get a few orders for dies from Messrs John Simmons & Sons who had a warehouse in Norton Folgate," he recorded, looking back on his small beginnings in the light of his big success, *"I turned out my work quicker than my competitors and gave better personal attention to my customers, trusting to this rather than obtaining orders by quoting lower prices."*

"These were very strenuous and hard working times, I commenced work at nine and seldom leaving before ten o'clock at night," he confessed – but twenty years later, in 1885, the company occupied a six storey factory at the corner of Moor Lane and employed more than three hundred people. It was an astonishing outcome.

Yet, while embracing the potential of technological progress so effectively, JJ possessed an equal passion for craft and tradition – especially the history of Cripplegate where he became a Warden.

"In 1889, an attempt to take down the St Giles Church Tower, after a good fight I saved it," he wrote with succinct satisfaction. Later, devoting a year of his life to writing an authoritative history of Cripplegate, he prefaced it with the words – *"Let us never live where there is nothing ancient, nothing to connect us with our forefathers."*

No wonder then that, as an old man, John James Baddeley chose to stroll through the empty streets of London on Sunday mornings, pausing to look into old print shop windows, and consider his own place in the long history of printing and the City.

(Article reproduced with the kind permission of Charles Pertwee. First appeared in Spitalfields Life, edited by The Gentle Author.)

Cardboard Citizens

Join Cardboard Citizens, a charity for the homeless based in Whitechapel, on The Big Tramp, an all-night guided walk through London mapping the history of homelessness. Starting at midnight, you'll walk until dawn on Summer Solstice, discovering London's hidden secrets and enjoying immersive pop-up theatre performances from Cardboard Citizens' talented members (who have all had experienced homelessness themselves) along the way. The event registration fee is just £39 (£30 for concessions) and participants are also asked to raise £250 for the charity. To find out more and book your place visit this webpage: <http://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/events/big-tramp#> or contact Molly on molly@cardboardcitizens.org.uk or 020 73778948.

Bethnal Green Library and Bethnal Green Gardens Refurbishment and Development Plans

Bethnal Green Library will be closed until the end of September 2015, to replace the boiler and to implement other refurbishment. Part of the refurbishment will include upgrading the adult reading space, children's library, surfing space and free WIFI.

Other works in the area include conversion of the Public shelter and Kiosk in Bethnal Green Gardens into a cafe.

Tom Ridge has objected to some of the proposals for refurbishment in a letter to the Planning Office, partially reproduced below:

I am pleased to see that the kiosk's original/existing doors, crittall window frames and inserted steel panels are to be retained and refurbished. However, I also note and object to the proposed removal of the original/existing built-in teak benches, and the partial demolition of the kiosk's original/existing brick walls to create two large openings. I also object to the proposed insertion of a kitchen and disabled WC (in connection with the proposed privately-run cafe in the public shelter part of the single -storey building.

I have already objected to the proposed insertion of steel shutter boxes for external security shutters on both sides of the open-sided public shelter part of the building. The amendment to provide the outer face of each box with a white PVC steel fascia to match the white underside of the thin flat concrete roof (and its central supporting beam) would not mitigate the fact that the proposed suspended shutter boxes would prevent the thin flat concrete roof being seen above the shelter's 'see through' space with its slim circular metal posts, which appear to support the thin roof. The relationship of thin flat roof 'see-through' space and metal posts is probably the most characteristic and important part of this unique example of Art Deco architecture. The Design

Access and Impact Statement states that the 'oversailing slender concrete roof will remain with the proposed glazed screens being recessed to allow this light an elegant feature to be read.' This is simply not true as there would be deep shutter boxes between the upper parts of the glazed screens and the underside of the 'slender concrete roof', so that only its outer edges could be read. The carefully-designed relationship between the three Art Deco elements would be completely destroyed by the shutter boxes.

The proposed shutter boxes, rolldown external security shutters and proposed glazing, together with the loss of external historic fabric in the kiosk part of the building would cause substantial harm to the architectural and historic significance of the unique Art Deco building. This was probably designed c. 1939 by Charles Holden and/or his assistant and successor, Stanley Heaps, and built c. 1951 to serve the tube station and the public in Bethnal Green Gardens, and it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area.

The substantial harm to the unique Art Deco building and the Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area, (which includes the adjacent Grade II listed Bethnal Green Library) would not be outweighed by the alleged public benefits as there will shortly be a larger privately-run cafe with public toilets (one disabled WC, four ordinary WCs and two urinals) in the disused toilet block in nearby Museum Gardens, next to the northern entrance to the tube station (to be converted by the successful leaseholder, using Council plans giving planning permission in October 1913.) There is therefore no need for a small less-commercially viable cafe with only one non-public WC on the other side of Roman Road in the north-east corner of Bethnal Green Gardens.

Should this planning application be approved and the unique Art Deco building converted to an unnecessary privately-run cafe, the people

of Bethnal Green and visitors would be denied the right to freely access the only public shelter in Bethnal Green Gardens, Museum Gardens and Paradise Gardens. Bethnal Green gardens and Paradise Gardens were opened in 1895 by the London County Council as a permanent '*recreation ground accessible to the inhabitants*' of Bethnal Green. Museum Gardens was opened in 1875 by the Government and '*dedicated to the public forever.*'

Tower Hamlets Council can and should use the funding from permitted developments to properly repair and reinstate the public shelter as a legitimate amenity ancillary to the enjoyment of three public parks, and to properly repair, reinstate and lease the kiosk for the sale of refreshments. (Oral evidence indicates that the kiosk was open throughout the 1950s and possibly the 1960s for the sale of ice cream, probably in the summer, and the sale of tea, probably in the winter.

For all the above reasons, I strongly object to the proposed alterations and change of use of the existing single-storey Art Deco building to a cafe (use Class A3) with a kitchen and disabled WC.

Letters and Research

**From Geoffrey Twist
Having taken time off from fighting evil landlords (for reporters that is another story) have done the following update on search for lost Shoreditch civilian war memorial.**

Again visited New Southgate cemetery, using the coordinates provided by Alan Brooks led me, as expected, to the site of the modern cross memorial to those who had been buried in the public graves (now overfilled and being reused) a wreath was laid not just to the victims of the Columbia market tragedy, but to all the occupants (at no expense to any group) this is on the edge of plot AJ. I was setting off

but thought to try and spot the structure shown in the picture from Alan's book (London at War), which I had with me. This led me a little further down from the corner of AJ (heading from the cemetery entrance side), and if Mr Brooks can confirm that the memorial should actually be in area C, I believe I found the site- although not everything fits. From the photos, there is a large white structure to the right of the memorial - the only structure this could be was correctly placed. What I found was a large area of concrete which may have been the base of the memorial in disrepair. I also noted that at the end of the adjacent grave (this is one bit that does not fit) was a small headstone of the type I know to have been used to mark the public graves in the post war austerity days. Unfortunately I could not clearly read the names- but unlike the surrounding Turkish graves, the names appeared to be non Turkish- so I suggest this was placed by relatives near the memorial when they could not find the plot in the public grave area. If Mr Brooks could confirm the memorial to have been in area C, then I believe we know where it should be. The question remains where are its remains.

Marian Webb (New Southgate), Cemetery and Crematorium Manager

Sorry for the delay in replying, as you can imagine this has been a busy time at the cemetery for us.

We have looked into the memorial, and it is no longer there. The roads were all redone here a number of years ago, and we think that at that time as the memorial was falling apart it was removed. There are only graves in that area.

I'm sorry I can be of more help, as I cannot trace what would have happened to it. I can only imagine that if it was in a very poor state that it would have been disposed of. If I can find out any more I will keep you informed.

Mayor Jules Pipe - Mayor of Hackney

Thank you for your email which was received on 8 April 2015. I apologise for the delay in

responding and was interested to hear of the online petition you have launched. I am responding to you directly but would be content for you to post this response on the change.org website.

I note with interest your wish to erect a war memorial to the civilian dead from the Second World War in Shoreditch. The area that now forms the London Borough of Hackney suffered enormously from aerial bombing and 'V' rocket attacks during that War and many local people died. The Council is committed to keeping their memory alive.

As I am sure you are aware, three metropolitan boroughs existing between 1900 and 1965 were joined together to become the London Borough of Hackney. Within the Metropolitan Borough of Shoreditch, 220 civilians were killed as a result of the War. Since there was no burial ground open within Shoreditch during that period (the St Leonard's churchyard had closed in 1858), the dead were buried in a number of cemeteries in North and East London. I understand the greatest number were buried in a mass grave in the New Metropolitan Cemetery (now New Southgate Cemetery) where 168 people were interred. Others were buried elsewhere, particularly at Abney Park and Manor Park Cemeteries.

There was no single memorial which listed the names of all of the Shoreditch dead, but at New Southgate a memorial was erected with Government funding. Elsewhere other memorials also commemorated some of those killed, for example there is a memorial plaque at Holy Trinity Shoreditch listing 42 civilians who died in the war. The situation for the other two constituent metropolitan boroughs is similarly complex. However, Hackney Archives holds complete lists of all those civilians killed during the war for each area and this can be consulted by the public – the reference for the documents is S/A/27.

I am afraid that unfortunately, the Council is unable to fund a memorial for those who died.

Unprecedented reductions to local authority funding by central government have meant that resources are now very scarce, and the Council's funds must be directed into supporting key services for residents.

However, there may be other means by which members of the public could attract the necessary funding – you may well be aware of the Stairway to Heaven memorial to those who died in the Bethnal Green tube station disaster at a time when the station was in use as an air raid shelter. This project was led by a specially formed charitable organisation and was successful in gaining funding from the local community and Heritage Lottery Fund. This may be a route to providing a physical memorial, although you should bear in mind that this could represent a great deal of work and I would urge you to speak to the relevant authorities including the parish of St Leonard's, Shoreditch, before considering a scheme. A more modest scheme might be to raise funds to restore one of the existing memorials around the borough.

I appreciate that this is not the response for which you were hoping but I trust that it clarifies the situation.

From: Simon Bakewell
Subject: Church Street

I currently live in Yorkshire but my ancestors came from the Bethnal Green area. They owned a hatters shop in the 1840s along Church Street. There appears to be some confusion as some sources say this is now Redchurch Street and others say it is Bethnal Green Road. Are you able to shed some light on this?

I am visiting the area in 2 weeks' time and would like to have a look around. Do you think if I join your group, I will be able to gain more information about the area?
Thank you in advance for your time.

From: Philip Mernick, Chairman ELHS

The rather less than simple answer is that it was both! This is what Mike Elliston's (unpublished) Topography of Tower Hamlets has to say about it.

Church Street ran from Shoreditch High Street towards the new church of St Matthews and thence to Bethnal Green. East of St Matthew's Church in Church Row it was no more than a rough track which was not made up until the second half of the 18th century whence it became Bethnal Green Road east of the turnpike. "Church Street, Bethnal Green. At 64 Shoreditch, where there are Nos. 1 and 192. It extends to the turnpike [in] Bethnal Green Road." Lockie, 1813. Lockie's Church Street is the present Redchurch Street until about Swanfield Street and then the present Bethnal Green Road eastwards until just east of St Matthews Row. The section of Church Street (presently Redchurch Street) from Shoreditch High Street to the present Swanfield Street was numbered as 1-99 & 2-96 Bethnal Green Road 1/01/1869, Plan 838 and the then name of Church Street abolished (so that Bethnal Green Road ran from Shoreditch High Street near Boundary Street to Bethnal Green). This was before the present, more modern south-western end of Bethnal Green Road was constructed across Swan Street, Bacon Street and Club Row in 1878/79. The original "Church Street" was renamed back as Church Street 25/04/1879 and the name Bethnal Green Road was assigned to the newly built south-western extension instead. The boundary between Shoreditch and Bethnal Green was adjusted here at the formation of the Metropolitan Boroughs 1899/1900. Nos. 3, 5, 7 (o) and 2-26 (e) were in Shoreditch and 15-97 (o) & 28-92 (e) in Bethnal Green (1899-1965).

Church Street was then renamed Redchurch Street 19/07/1937 w.e.f. 1/07/1938 keeping the numbers 1-99 & 2-96 assigned in 1869. The LCC records in the 1937 Origin of Names that Redchurch is "the name of a local church". This name was suggested by MB Bethnal

Green for St Matthew's church is built in red stock bricks.

We always welcome new members who have an interest in east London and our annual subscription is only £5. However membership is not required for me to answer questions!

From: Simon Bakewell

Thank you so much for your time and help. The 1841 and 1851 census shows them at 150/151 Church Street, Shoreditch. (Hatters and Haberdashery business) They also appear to be in a family grave at Abney Park. I am sharing this info with some 2nd and 3rd cousins who will also be very interested. Thank you once again.

William Brandon

William Brandon is my 2 x great grand uncle. He was born 10th August 1840 at Collingwood Court Bethnal Green. William was the first born of 15 children to William Brandon [born 1819 Shoreditch] and Mary Ann George [born 1822 Shoreditch]. Both parents were baptised at St Leonard's Shoreditch, but William was baptised at St Matthew Bethnal Green on 27th September 1840.

In the 1841 census the family are living at Mount Street, part of the Old Nichol and William senior was a Horse Hair Dresser, by 1851 they are living at 5 Castle Court and William aged 11 is an Errand Boy.

On 3rd September 1860 aged 20 years William marries Matilda Jane Burns [born 1843 Bishopsgate] at St Peter Bethnal Green, where his occupation is now shown as a Confectioner. By 1881 census the family are living at Virginia Row and William's occupation is listed as a Green Grocer. William and Matilda have nine children, Matilda Jane [born 1861] Mary Ann Sarah [born 1863] William Henry [born 1866] Ann Sarah [born 1869 died 1869],

Ann Sarah [born 1870 died 1871] Sarah Susannah [born 1872] Henry Thomas [born 1874] John Frederick [born 1879] and Eliza Emily [born 1882].

It is my connection through an ancestry website that linked me with the great granddaughter of William Henry Brandon [born 1866]. The lady's name is Laura Richardson and we are distant cousins. Laura's grandmother is Ada Matilda Brandon [born 1890 Bethnal Green]. It is through this connection that I have been able to copy the wonderful photograph of William Brandon senior. Interestingly although I can find nine children for William and Matilda, not many of their children went on to have children themselves. Matilda married late and therefore had no children. Others either died young or died childless. Mary Ann married Henry George Embleton and had two children Florence and George who survived until adulthood. And William Henry who has three children, Emily died aged two years, and a son William John who died 1917 in Flanders, the only child to survive was Ada Matilda, grandmother of Laura Richardson.

My own 2 x great grandmother Elizabeth Brandon [born 1846] [sister to William Brandon] married Mark Nuckley 1866 at St James the Great Bethnal Green. They go on to have sixteen children, only eight of whom go on to adulthood. Their daughter Eliza Nuckley is my great grandmother and was born in 32 Pearl Street Spitalfields. Imagine my delight at seeing the wonderful Spitalfields Nippers photographs! My 2 x great grandfather Mark Nuckley being born in Gt Pearl Street Spitalfields in 1846, two generations in the same street! Elizabeth and Mark Nuckley [nee Brandon] spent many times in and out of the workhouse. They must have had a life of abject poverty and my 2 x gt grandfather's occupation of a Shoe Maker could not have coped with raising all those children. How interesting it was for me to find out that at least one of the family, my 2 x great grand uncle William Brandon actually had a business!

So different from all the workhouse records I had found in regard to my direct line of Brandon.

William Brandon was living in Virginia Row/Road from 1881 until his death 23rd July 1905. He was a Mineral Water Manufacturer and after he died the business was in the name of his widow Matilda.



Brandon and workers outside his establishment.

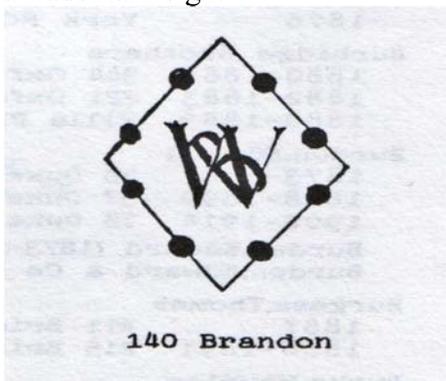


Photograph hanging on the exterior wall. Detail from the Brandon photograph.

For me, one of the most amazing things about this wonderful photograph is the large framed photographs hanging on the outside of the building at 112-114 Virginia Road. I have spoken to more than one person who knows about East End history, to ask if they have ever seen this before, and so far as I know, nobody has. The photo in the centre looks like

it could be an advertisement as it looks like it says 'W. Brandon'. You can even make out 'Brandon' stamped on the crates under the table in the large photo.

The detail below is from a book that I found on Mineral Water Manufacturers. This is from the same book, which says this is the trademark of William Brandon. Although if you look at the sign at top of photograph it shows a picture of a bow tie and I believe this too is a trademark sign.



Amazingly I was able to purchase a William Brandon bottle from a clever man called Steve Thorpe from Ebay. Steve says it was dug up at the Olympic Park in Stratford, apparently it was a Victorian dumping ground. The second photograph shows the bow tie trademark.



The following is the probate record for William Brandon:- William Brandon of 112-114 Virginia Road, Middlesex died 23rd July 1905. Probate London 26th August 1905 to Matilda Jane Brandon Widow & Henry Thomas Brandon mineral water manufacturer. Effects £2343 18s 11d.

I found this all so fascinating! Especially in the knowledge that William Brandon, my 2 x gt grand uncle, a self made man, lived all his life on the edge of the Old Nichol. He must have had a good life compared to most other people living there, especially my 2nd gt grandmother Elizabeth Nuckley nee Brandon. Of course this amazing photograph is such a rare picture of life on the edge of the Old Nichol, where very few photographs exist, and nothing to this quality! A friend of mine Neil Bell who has just written a book on Victorian policemen, has told me that the photo must have been taken before 1895 as there are no pockets on the policeman's coat. He also says that he thinks the policeman was in the Metropolitan Police probably H Division. So maybe photo was taken at the time of the 1887 Golden Jubilee, or possibly 1897 with an out of date coat?

I only found one mention of William Brandon's funeral in a newspaper, it said 'William Brandon, who was a mineral water manufacturer of note' and that his funeral 'was of an imposing character'.

He was buried at City of London and I visited the plot but could find no memorial. Apparently it was on a slope that in winter became quite mossy and was therefore a hazard [health and safety and all that!] and had been covered with earth many years ago. The wonderful people at City of London had the turf taken up for me so that I could go and visit and take photographs! So I took the photographs and the memorial is now buried again under turf.

Christine Osborne

HECTOR GAVIN IN BETHNAL GREEN



Lodging house in Field Lane from “Sanitary Rambles in Bethnal Green”.

I am more and more convinced that the sum of wretchedness, of misery, of destitution, of slow corroding care, of wasting disease, and early death, which they endure through a neglect of cleanliness – a neglect cruelly attributed to them, but which might be thrown back as a bitter taunt to those who really cause it, namely the middle and upper classes ...

Sanitary Ramblings: Being Sketches and Illustrations of Bethnal Green, p 79

Hector Gavin was born in Edinburgh, in 1815, the eldest of eight children. His father was an engraver, but Hector chose medicine as his profession, so his father paid a premium of £118 and apprenticed him to the Royal College of Surgeons when the boy was 16. Hector did well, and was fully qualified as a doctor by 1836. One of his main areas of expertise was in methods of recognising malingerers in the armed forces, although apparently he favoured a humane and lenient way of treating those who were found out. He married the year after being awarded his MD degree, and in 1838 became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. That same year he left for London.

The 22-year-old Gavin settled in Bethnal Green. He purchased a practice for £1,500, and for just over £300 bought a house nearby on the Hackney Road. An energetic man with a social conscience, he put himself forward for essential, but presumably not fashionable, work in the neighbourhood, becoming surgeon to the London Orphan Asylum, the British Penitent Female Refuge, and the Bethnal Green Workhouse. In addition to these responsibilities, Gavin gave lectures on forensic medicine at Charing Cross Hospital, where he introduced public hygiene into the curriculum.

By the early 1840s sanitary reform was urgently promoted by leading politicians; it was sadly needed in over-crowded industrial towns, Bethnal Green above all. The population was growing fast and moving into the towns. It must be remembered that transport, of both people and goods, was mostly by horse; dung, useful in the fields, was a pollutant in city streets, and the air above was contaminated by industrial waste and the smoke of coal-fires. Main roads were paved and cleansed, but side-roads were often neglected, and the alleys and courts where the poorest lived were left untouched. Scrap metal and other refuse, even nightsoil, was collected and kept in huge heaps to be sold; it was piled in yards in the narrow back-streets. Inadequate, to say the least, provision of dustbins meant that residue from the street-selling of food also lay about until it sank into the mud.

But the worst nuisances of all came from sewage, and poor water management. Few roads in Bethnal Green had pipes laid to connect them to a sewer. Cesspits were emptied and the contents transported by horse and cart, but this cost money that working families could not afford themselves, and landlords were reluctant to spend. Water was provided by numerous bodies, and again, landlords had to pay.

Hector Gavin was firmly convinced that central organisation was necessary to co-ordinate sanitary arrangements; he became a leading member of the Health of Towns Association, and of similar local bodies. All too frequently they met an obstinate refusal to change.

Outside the walls of the City, London in 1847 was a tangle of overlapping jurisdiction and conflicting authorities. Some three hundred local bodies – including seven Commissioners or Sewers, 172 vestries, and nearly a hundred paving, lighting, and cleansing boards – jostled and frustrated each other, each clinging with determination to its minute segment of power and dignity ...(Edwin Chadwick and the Public Health Movement 1832-1854, R A Lewis, 1952)

At this time, it was believed that ill-health came from impure air; John Snow's discovery that cholera, for instance, was water-borne was not to come until a few years later, but the need for space and air and cleanliness, along with good food, was well understood.

In 1848 Hector Gavin published *Sanitary Ramblings: Being Sketches and Illustrations of Bethnal Green*, based on meticulous notes made as he trudged street after street. His relentless exposure of conditions in byways and houses he had inspected with his own eyes was meant to spur to action the private landlords and public bodies responsible for the filth he saw everywhere. He never blamed the poor themselves, and from time to time reported their bitter complaints and efforts to mend matters.

He divided Bethnal Green into five districts based loosely on the medical relief districts used by the Guardians of the Poor. District 1, covering the Green, had open space and was partly a middle-class area where streets were cleaned. Nevertheless, there was squalor enough. Paradise Dairy was immediately behind a decent house where a man had recently died of typhus. Sixteen cows and

twenty pigs were kept there. 'The animal remains and decomposing vegetable refuse were piled up a considerable height' wrote Gavin.

District 2 was called Church district. Gavin described this as containing very few good houses, the great majority being 'those a little about the poor, and the poor following every variety of occupation.' Most of the inhabitants were weavers. A few yards of Bethnal Green Road had a sewer, but otherwise 'this street, forming the main road in the parish for 1,700 yards is altogether without a sewer.'

District 3, or Town district, was the oldest part of the parish, consisting of streets of houses with several stories, Gavin tells us, built to accommodate weavers. Many of the buildings had lower floors two feet below the level of the pathway. They were damp, and rheumatism prevailed. As home handloom weaving was being squeezed out by mechanisation and factory work these insalubrious houses were packed with near-starving families; six to nine people per moderately-sized room was about average living space, but sometimes as many as 14 people slept in a room.

The coming of the railways had 'erased a great number of streets and alleys of the worst possible description', but at the same time 'had produced considerable sources of disease in the filth and dirt which are permitted to accumulate around the bases of most of the arches.' The usual presence of cows, horses and pigs are noted. He describes Collier Court, Little George Street:

The inhabitants of this little court take great pains and bestow much labour in attempting to keep it clean; but the loss of time and the labour necessary to keep it clean are greatly complained of. There is one privy, one tap, and one dust-bin common to the three houses, which are two-roomed. Rent 3s. a week. Busby Court was one of the places where low-lying houses were damp.

One tap supplies five houses; there is a privy to each house which is emptied once a year. The inhabitants think this an unexampled instance of cleanliness, and consider "they would be very well off, if things were always as comfortable managed."

District 4 was bounded on the east by Shoreditch and, Gavin says, 'consists of the worst part of the Hackney-road division, and a part of the Town district,' beginning his detailed description: 'This district exceeds all those which have gone before it in filth, disease, mortality, poverty, and wretchedness.' It was inhabited by weavers and shoe-makers, but also by hawkers, toy-makers and cabinet-makers; women wound silk and cotton. Despite all the squalor they endured, 'The poor inhabitants generally prefer any kind of abode to the workhouse.'

In Greengate Gardens some of the houses had two ground-floor rooms let at 3s 6d a week, others were let at 2s 6d a week; the average earnings were 6s a week. 'One stand-pipe, beside a dung-heap, is the only means by which 30 houses are supplied with water; of course quarrels for precedence and to ensure a supply are common.' The quarrelling would have been occasioned by a supply of water which often only ran for a few hours a day.

In Old Castle Court, where families suffered similar problems, 'The inhabitants complained loudly, deeply and bitterly, of the state of their court, and would willingly contribute 4d. per week for relief.' In Collingwood Place Gavin found a family sleeping on bare boards because the bed in the room was occupied by a dangerously ill woman; the rent was 1s 6d. The man's trade was failing, so he only earned 1s a week, and they were all starving.

Frequently there were no dustbins provided for the houses, and the water-supply throughout Bethnal Green was intermittent; shared taps often lacked a stopcock, so when the water was turned on it flowed into their low-lying rooms. He quotes a resident of Half-Nichol

Street as saying 'the people in it never died a natural death, but were murdered by the fever.' In Shacklewell Street, he maintains, 'meat becomes speedily tainted, and leather becomes covered with a green mould, even in one night.'

Of District 5 Gavin says 'This district is by far the most respectable.' It contained the main road and the streets branching from it. 'The unhealthiest parts are Cambridge Circus, Chapman's-gardens, Bath-street, and part of Old Bethnal Green-road.' He added, however, that great complaints had arisen because part of the main road lacked a sewer. 'Several of the parties residing in this unsewered part of the road, were Commissioners of Sewers, but could never induce that obstructive, overbearing body to attend to their wants.' Gavin spoke his mind. On the removal of nuisances he let fly:

The laws which imprison and transport for petty theft, view with calm indifference this wholesale, barefaced, and violent robbery of the health of communities. People, helpless and impotent, cry out in puerile indignation against such abominable and pestilential conservations of refuse; but, the sordid gainers, firm and entrenched in the strongholds of legal quirks, and laxity, and the astounding indifference of governmental and local authorities, set their feeble cries of suffering and despair at defiance.

One of the less salubrious parts of District 5 was Teale Street, behind which was a hollow left by the excavation of clay for brick-making: into this hole all the drains of the neighbourhood lead; every kind of refuse is thrown into it, eight privies empty their contents into it, and dead animals putrefy there.

One of the saddest aspects of this decline of what had only recently been a semi-rural area with a population of artisans was the fate of the little plots of land where weavers and other workers could cultivate a few flowers and vegetables. Whisker's Gardens, for instance,

in District 1, had been laid out in neat plots. 'The love of the beautiful, and the sense of order which are readily accorded to the artisan, or weaver, in his neat garden ... are denied to him when visited in his filthy, dirty street.' Wooden tool-sheds had been built in these gardens, but despite their shaky construction and lack of foundations or drainage, they were being taken over as housing. Water was obtainable from wells dug into the soil close by other holes being dug to dispose of the contents of privies.

In 1851 Hector Gavin was invited to become one of three Medical Commissioners to be sent to the West Indies. Despite misgivings about leaving his responsibilities at home, he accepted, and sailed in January 1851. He worked there for two years. Although he frequently came into contact with diseases rife in Great Britain and elsewhere – cholera, typhoid fever, typhus – he seems to have stayed clear of them, but succumbed to yellow fever in Barbados. On his return to England he was sent north to try to control outbreaks of cholera in the slums of Tyneside and Dundee. Conditions in, for example, Newcastle sound worse than those in Bethnal Green; Sandgate had 4,600 inhabitants and only seven privies. Gavin's forthright manner brought him into conflict with some of the medical establishment and Guardians of the Poor responsible for this environment.

In 1854 Gavin was appointed Sanitary Commissioner to the Army in the Crimea. He reached Istanbul on 6th March, and immediately inspected encampments at Scutari and the hospital on the Bosphorus. Despite differences of opinion with Gavin about the causes of fever, Florence Nightingale wrote to Lord Shaftesbury at some point 'That Commission saved the British Army.' One of Gavin's brothers, William, was serving as a vet with a Scottish regiment. Hector Gavin's pistol was of a type that could be unreliable, and so he attempted to exchange it with one of his brother's guns. At the moment when both men had their fingers on the pistol,

it exploded, and the bullet passed through Hector Gavin – some reports say in the abdomen, some say the groin. He lay in agony until 7.30 the next morning, April 21 1855, when he died. His distraught brother lived not much more than a week, and then succumbed to cholera.

Hector Gavin was buried at Baclava; he was only 39 years old. He had devoted all his short life to health and welfare, making his death seem all the sadder. His will bequeathed his fortune, £1,500, to his young son; his wife Margaret was left virtually penniless until awarded a small state pension.

Gavin lived in Bethnal Green during its darkest days. By 1870 the area had elementary schools for the children, and had benefited enormously from the construction of sewers designed by Bazalgette. Gavin had played no small part in the advances towards civilisation there.

Gavin, Hector, Sanitary Ramblings: being Sketches and Illustrations of Bethnal Green, London: John Churchill, 1848; 'The late Dr. Hector Gavin' in Assn. Medical Journal, 3, 125, May 1855, 481; The British Medical Journal, 2, 28, July 1857; Spriggs, Edmund Anthony, 'Hector Gavin, MD, FRCSE (1815-1855), his life, his work for the sanitary movement and his accidental death in the Crimea' in Medical History, 28, 1984, 283-292; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

PAT FRANCIS

Book Shelf

The Match Girl and the Heiress by Seth Koven. Published by Princeton Press, ISBN 978 0 691 158501. Price £19.96

It is not often that one comes upon something as original as this piece of local history, and I believe that it will be of great interest to all the thousands, young and not so young, who were associated with Kingsley Hall in Bromley by Bow. The Settlement was one of many which sprang up in the East End of London, funded by wealthy men and women, whose sole aim was to alleviate the sufferings of those struggling to survive in the harsh, unforgiving climate of Industrial England.

Doris and Muriel Lester were the daughters of a wealthy industrialist, Henry Lester, a devout Baptist. The sisters decided to spend their inheritance in the service of the poor. They began their good deeds by providing a holiday home for East End children at Rose Cottage in Loughton. By the early part of the twentieth century the two sisters began running a nursery at Bruce Road, Bow. Later, the two sisters bought an old chapel and developed the building into a multi-purpose centre with a nursery, women's clubs, and lunches for factory girls. It was named Kingsley Hall in memory of their youngest brother Kingsley.

Muriel Lester met Nellie Dowell on one of her visits to a match factory in Bow, and two young women struck up a friendship that was to last a lifetime. In 1909 Nellie became ill with rheumatic fever, which left her severely weakened and unable to continue working. She was taken into the care of the sisters, who were setting up Kingsley Hall, and Nellie and Muriel became inseparable, working in pursuit of a vision of economic and social justice, pacifism and reconciliation. They devoted themselves to the work at the Hall, and while much is known and has been written about the two sisters, Nellie Dowell has remained a

shadowy figure. She died in 1923, aged 47, and Muriel wrote a brief account of her life, based on her reminiscences, which highlighted the depth of her feeling towards Nellie. Yet, in her autobiography, Nellie is mentioned only in a single phrase, simply as 'our ex factory girl helper.' A bundle of letters from Nellie turned up in Muriel's possessions after her death, which perhaps give us a greater insight into their friendship.

Former Kingsley Hall residents recall both Muriel and Doris Lester with great affection - they loved Doris, but admired Muriel. Nellie has vanished from memory. But the work of Kingsley Hall continued, with a fascinating chequered history, a great many highs and lows, near obliteration, and then a resurrection.

But Kingsley Hall is just the backdrop in which these two extraordinary women lived out their lives, and Seth Koven has done a remarkable job in shining a light on a hitherto hidden aspect of the multi-faceted story of the main protagonists.

Rosemary Taylor

Terraces, Tenements and Tower Blocks - A self-guided walk around the housing heritage of Bethnal Green.

This beautifully presented pamphlet is published by Walk East, 2014.
www.bethnalgreeninfocus.org, coordinators
Graham Barker and Natalie Clarke.

In essence it is a walk around Bethnal Green with the focus on the architectural heritage of the many and varied nineteenth and twentieth century dwellings. It is an excellent way to familiarise yourself with the neighbourhood and admire the buildings, from elegant Georgian terraces, Victorian philanthropic housing to post-war estates and tower blocks. If you want any further information, contact graham@walkeast.org.

Why not have a go and explore your favourite area - and learn something of the hidden history of the area. The website is www.inmyfootsteps.org. A not-for-profit organisation called **Manifesta**, headed by Marion Vargaftig, has developed an app with support of the Heritage Lottery, Tate Britain and its Arts Map initiative, the Museum of London Docklands, Toynbee Hall, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, and local community organisations. The app is available via your iPhone or can be accessed via the website. You can now journey around the East End of London from the comfort of your armchair!

Click to open the app or the website and up comes a map of the East End marked with coloured dots. Each dot opens a trail, developed by various volunteers, of different areas of the East End, exploring a variety of features. There is an audio tour with pictures, relating the history of that particular little section, which can be followed either on your phone, or on your computer at home.

George Lansbury At the Heart of Old Labour Dr John Shepherd

**444 pages | 16pp halftones | 234x156mm
978-0-19-820164-9 | Hardback | 19
September 2002
Also available as: Paperback | eBook
Price: £89.00**

The only modern biography of George Lansbury, based on a wide range of public and private sources that have only become available since 1951. The book has the full support of the Lansbury family, including Oscar-nominated Angela Lansbury.

'The most lovable figure in modern politics' was how A.J.P Taylor described the Christian pacifist, George Lansbury. At 73 he took over the helm of the Labour Party of only 46 MPs in the Depression years of the 1930s. Throughout a remarkable life, Lansbury

remained an extraordinary politician of the people, associated with a multitude of crusades for social justice. He resigned from Parliament to support 'Votes for Women', and for the next ten years edited the fiery Daily Herald. In 1921 Lansbury led the 'Poplar Rates Rebellion' - when thirty Labour councillors went willingly to prison in defiance of the government, the courts and their own party leadership.

As Labour leader, Lansbury was known universally as a committed socialist and implacable opponent of capitalism and imperialism. He never sought personal wealth, travelled everywhere by public transport, and made his home in impoverished East London. His final years were spent in a tireless international peace crusade to prevent the drift towards another world war.

In this major new biography, John Shepherd draws on an impressive range of research to reconstruct the life of a charismatic Labour pioneer. He reaffirms George Lansbury's standing at the heart of Old Labour and his importance to British politics as a whole.

ELHS Website

We now have a facility on the ELHS web site for posting old East End related pictures. Harold Mernick has set this up, so we invite our members and the general public who have any interesting images that they think is relevant and of general interest to help expand this excellent resource. Include a short explanatory text with your submission.

We look forward with anticipation to an exciting new chapter in our website development and expansion.