



Christmas at Shadwell Children's Hospital

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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, Diane Kendall and David Behr.



The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

A Date for your Diary:

Saturday 11th March at 2.30. - Wives and Relicts, a grave interest. Free Walk around Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park to celebrate Tower Hamlets International Women's Week

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

The cover picture shows Father Christmas at The East London Childrens' Hospital, Shadwell about 100 years ago. The hospital was founded by Dr Nathaniel Heckford in 1868 and was originally housed in a warehouse in Ratcliffe. It was the first hospital in London to admit children under two years of age. A new, much larger, hospital was opened in 1877 but Dr Heckford did not live to see it as he died of consumption in 1871 at the age of only 29. In 1942 the hospital was merged with the Queen's Hospital, Hackney Road to form the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children. It closed in 1963 and the building was demolished in 1967. The picture is taken from a post card that reads on the back "My mother worked here"

**East London History Society
Lecture Programme 2017**

Thursday January 26

The Silvertown Explosion

A talk by Graham Hill

Thursday February 16

Recent Research on Sailortown

A talk by Derek Morris

Thursday March 16

**Stories of Tower Hamlets Lesser Known
Canal – Duckett's**

A talk by Carolyn Clark

Thursday April 20

Bloody British History: East End

A talk by Samantha L. Bird

Thursday May 25

**The Life and Death of a Burial Ground:
Archaeological Investigations of the New
Churchyard, Bethlehem. (South West of
Liverpool Street Station)**

A talk by Robert Hartle

Unless otherwise advised the lectures are held on Thursday evenings at 7.30 pm in the Latimer Congregational Church Hall, Ernest Street, E1. Ernest Street is between Harford Street and Whitehorse Lane, off Mile End Road (Opposite Queen Mary and Westfield College). The nearest Underground Stations are Mile End and Stepney Green. Buses No. 25, 205.

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

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 cannot be searched. If you have any Newsletters from the 1950s or 1960s please let us know, I am sure we are missing some issues.

Nature abhors a vacuum and so do I, so I have put a photograph into a gap on page 8. A merchant marine officer (from a foreign ship?) taken in the East India Dock Road studio of William Bartier. He was probably off a newly docked ship. 1880s?

Emails and Letters

From David Tilbrooke, South Australia

Newsletter arrived in good health and has been downloaded. No problems this time. Thank you very much.

Have not read it all yet but the photograph of the old Poplar Baths takes me back. All the Poplar Tech (STS) boys had to learn to swim so if, like me, you couldn't when you came to the school, they taught you - at Poplar Baths. The school sports were built around swimming, so the all Technical Schools swimming gala was held at Poplar Baths every year. We, of course, usually carried off the cup! But that is another story. As you can tell, I am still proud of my old school - 'Artificum neutarum qui nutrix'.

Several of we STS boys used to go swimming, after school, at the baths and my girlfriend (now my wife) and I swam at the baths on several occasions a year or two later. With many houses having rather primitive bathing facilities, including ours, we often went to the baths for a 'proper' bath at the week end. At least we kept clean!

The statue of George Green outside the baths reminds me of Poplar Tech too, as George Green was a partner in the engineering/shipbuilding firm of Green and Siley Weir and they donated the hall in the College - or so I was lead to believe. I understand the main College building is now part of the University of Tower Hamlets? but I see they have retained the old LCC coat of arms on the outside of the building. Those were the days.

Thanks once again for the trouble with sending the Newsletter. Very kindest regards.

PS Is the refurbished baths still used for swimming, or has it been converted to something else?

Ed: the statue outside the baths is that of Richard Green, not his father, George Green.

Philip Mernick:

Another enquiry for the newsletter. I have had the same request from Kate Thompson herself. I announced her (Kate's) request at last month's ELHS meeting, the first of our new series. The speakers (two) talked about the WW2 P.O.W. camps on Wanstead Flats and in Carpenters Road, Stratford.

Very little official information is available but they showed some interesting ephemera from local sources. A wedding certificate for a POW marrying a local woman and a photograph of POWs attending a West Ham football match.

They would welcome any more local recollections.

From Sarah Richards: Newsletter request

I've lived in Bow for over 20 years but have only relatively recently found out about the ELHS and have been fascinated reading the past newsletters. I'm very pleased to hear you are still going strong and I've sent a cheque to become a member. If it isn't too late, I'd like to add a message to the upcoming newsletter if possible: "I'm helping author Kate Thompson research her next novel, which is based in Bow during WWII. She would like to focus on the Bryant & May factory and some of her characters will work there. I've found lots of information on the famous Match Girl strike but Kate would really like to speak to someone who worked there or has a friend or family member who worked there during WWII and can tell us more about it. I'd also like to hear from anyone who lived in and around Fairfield Road during WWII.

Sarah Richards, 15 Albany Works, Gunmakers Lane, E3 5SB. sarah@oliveroad.london

From: lydia@ech.org.uk
Subject: Eastside Community Heritage
Press Release - Silvertown Explosion

I am writing on behalf of Eastside Community Heritage in Ilford. Attached is a press release for our upcoming project on the Silvertown Explosion which took place on the 19th January 1917. We are currently looking for stories from people whose families were involved in the explosion and residents of Silvertown.

Any help would be greatly appreciated.
Thank you,

Lydia Beardmore.

Silvertown Explosion: 100 year anniversary
Press release for immediate release

‘It seemed as if some vast volcanic eruption had burst out in the locality in question. The whole heavens were lit in awful splendour.’
Stratford Express, 27 January 1917

On 19th January 1917 a fire, which led to the ignition of over 50 tons of TNT in an ammunition factory in West Ham’s Silvertown caused an explosion killing 73 people and injuring 400 more. The factory, which was manufacturing explosives for Britain’s First World War was destroyed in the blast along with 900 surrounding properties, while a further 70 000 houses incurred damages. Due to the explosion happening in the midst of WW1, press coverage was limited and although the explosion was London’s largest and most damaging to this date, the incident seems to have been largely forgotten about.

To mark the 100 year anniversary of the Silvertown Explosion, Eastside Community Heritage, has been awarded £9600 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to collect oral histories to accompany an exhibition and talk’s held by Graham Hill (co-author of ‘The Silvertown

Explosion, London 1917’) at St Luke’s Church on 19th January 2017.

“Silvertown Explosion devastated homes and families and brought the horrors of the 1st World War into everyday lives, 100 years on and Eastside Community Heritage is pleased to have been given the opportunity to commemorate this horrendous event, to ensure that younger generations can learn and not forget this history”

Judith Garfield MBE Executive Director
Eastside Community Heritage

We are looking to interview, as part of the oral history project, people who live or had family who lived in Silvertown at the time of the explosion. If you (or anyone you know) might have some information, photographs, stories or memorabilia to contribute then please get in touch as soon as possible by emailing lydia@ech.org.uk or calling 020 8553 3116.

The project will also be working with local historian Graham Hill who will be launching a new edition to his book ‘Silvertown Explosion’ as well as providing a number of history talks starting on Thursday 27th October as part of Newham Heritage Week, time and venue to be confirmed.

About Eastside Community Heritage
Our organisation is Eastside Community Heritage which was established in 1993 as part of the Stratford City Challenge community history project. In 1997 Eastside became an independent charity. Over the years Eastside has worked on numerous projects documenting the lives of ordinary people from, and who live in, East London. It also created the East London People’s Archive which now holds over 2000 oral histories, thousands of photographs and video material all preserved and archived for public benefit. The archive is now accessible to the public for further information contact office@ech.org.uk

Aims:

- To inform people through the provision of heritage and cultural based activities such as exhibitions, publications, dramas, workshops etc.
- To empower individuals and groups to access the resources to write, rewrite, record, publish and present their own histories and that of the local area and community.
- To promote civic pride through active participation and involvement in community affairs.
- To promote greater harmony and understanding of interracial and intergenerational experiences through historical explorations.
- To celebrate the cultures and heritage of East London's diverse communities.
- To provide independent historical, social research and evaluation.

To find out more about Eastside Community Heritage please visit the website: www.hidden-histories.co.uk follow us on Twitter @EastsideCH

About Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk @heritagelottery

Friends of St. George's German Lutheran Church
Helping the Historic Chapels Trust to maintain St George's

2017 Events

Wednesday 18th January - 6.30pm
Elias Canetti – an unusual Nobel Prize Lauriate – a talk by Imke Siegrist

Thursday 23rd February – 6.30pm
Conserving a Baroque Masterpiece

A talk by Will Palin about the Conservation of the Greenwich Old Naval College Painted Hall

Thursday 23rd March – 6.30pm
Ethnic Cleansing? The end of Little Germany in Tower Hamlets – a talk by Sigrid Werner

Tuesday 25th April – 6.30 pm
Music and the Reformation – a talk by Philip Norman

Tickets for all talks £5 on the door.

ADDISON AND STEELE IN PLAISTOW E13

Passmore Edwards built libraries for the poor. Plaistow had prospered, a little, since then, a place where respectable houses stood in row after dull row until the war came. Then rosebay willowherb grew in the gaps where houses had been.

I day-dreamed my way through schooldays,
drifted on my way through bomb-shattered streets
to the Passmore Edwards Library,
not in search of knowledge or success,
but to let the world of books
close round me, full of promise.

And there, on a shelf marked 'essays and humour',
I found wit and restraint and elegance,
I found precision in language;
I found Addison and Steele.
The world they lived in was, as they say,
a closed book to me, and stayed so.

And yet, across the years and the classes
something had passed
and given a spark of purpose
to my drifting.
Thank you, Passmore Edwards.

Pat Francis

Book Shelf

Whitechapel in 50 buildings. Louis Berk & Rachel Kolsky, Amberley Publishing 2016, ISBN 1 4456 6190 2, card covers, 96 pages, £14.99

The text on the back page defines its purpose. “Why Whitechapel? Outside of the Square Mile (the City of London) it is probably the best known area of Greater London in the UK, if not the world. The buildings here range from the majestic – for example, the Nicholas Hawksmoor churches at the eastern and southern end of the district (Christchurch and St George in the East) and the magnificent Royal London Hospital in the centre – to a wonderful series of social housing projects dating from 1695 to the present day. In-between are buildings of immense importance to the social history of the UK. This book maps the journey of the various immigrant communities who have lived and contributed to the area, from the Huguenot weavers in the eighteenth century, the large Jewish community of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the recent growth of the Bangladeshi community, as evidenced by the changing face of Brick Lane. Join Louis Berk and Rachel Kolsky as they take the reader around some of Whitechapel's finest architectural treasures in this beautifully illustrated book”

It **IS** beautifully illustrated - with 93 coloured pictures, many full page size. The buildings are listed in chronological order from Whitechapel Bell Foundry (1738) up to Shoreditch High Street Station (2010). Did I hear you exclaim “that’s not in Whitechapel!”. In fact, it is in both Shoreditch (Hackney) and Bethnal Green (Tower Hamlets). I suppose Whitechapel” could be limited to the boundaries of the ancient Whitechapel parish, created in 1673. The Survey of London, in its current project is doing this, but we would miss out on some very interesting buildings like St. Georges in the East, the Troxy Cinema and Stepney Green. For a number of reasons, like it or not,

Whitechapel is far better known to the book buying public than Shadwell or Mile End New Town. ELHS Newsletter is, however, not published by academics who live by point scoring against their fellows. We either like it or we don’t, and I like it. Excellent pictures and quite detailed histories. There is also a map to help you locate each building.

Philip Mernick

The Boss of Bethnal Green (Joseph Merceron, the Godfather of Regency London). Julian Woodford, Spitalfields Life Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-9576569-6-3. 396 pages, casebound.

This, amazingly, is the Gentle Author’s tenth book to be published under the Spitalfields Life imprint, and Julian Woodford talked to ELHS on the subject at our November meeting. Joseph Merceron was born in 1764, in Brick Lane, just across the road from Truman’s Black Eagle Brewery. The author was familiar with the stories of how Merceron, like a nineteenth century political “Boss” had “run” Bethnal Green for fifty years but when he investigated almost everything written appeared to have originated with Sidney and Beatrice Webb and had been coloured by their political outlook. Researching the subject himself he tracked down descendants still holding original documents and even a pistol allegedly used in an attempt on the life of George III. Joseph’s father had been an early property speculator in Spitalfields building poor quality houses catering for the rapidly growing local population. As a local landlord Joseph was able to exploit the local voting system and control the operations of the local vestry. He did this very successfully for five decades and amassed a great fortune. How did he get away with it for so long was the question the author pondered. The answer was unexpected, he was useful to Government. With the French Revolution leaving the state in fear of radicals (many living in the East End) stirring up trouble, it was useful to have somebody in control of the area who owned houses and many public

houses. As a magistrate Merceron could ensure that pub licences were awarded to himself and his cronies, and who would be better placed to listen out for discord and tip off the authorities. It was only when the French monarchy was restored after Waterloo that his protection seems to have been lost and his misdeeds could be published. He went to jail in 1818 but was out in 1819 and resumed his activities until his death in 1839. His estate, excluding his many properties was rated at £180,000, many millions in modern terms. People involved in his downfall include Hector Gavin (Sanitary Walks in Bethnal Green) and John Barber Beaumont (Beaumont Square and Institute, whose funds played a major role in the creation of The Peoples Palace). The book provides a very clear picture of what was going on in Spitalfields two centuries ago and can be highly recommended.

P.S. A local politician exploiting the voting system to run an East End borough for his own benefit could only have happened in the past, it couldn't happen now, or could it?

Philip Mernick



See note on page 3

A New Memorial

Thomas John Barnardo (1845–1905) the fourth child of six children was born to John and Abigail Barnardo in Dublin on 4 July 1845, his father was a furrier running a shop and supplying the carriage industry and the family lived a comfortable life, At the age of 16, Thomas Barnardo converted to Protestant evangelicalism and joined a religious group called the Open Brethren. Overriding his father's objections, he made his way to London in 1866, intending to prepare for the mission field in China and began studying at the London Hospital as a missionary medical student in 1867.

However London was a city struggling to cope with the effects of the industrial revolution, the population had doubled between 1821 and 1851 (and would double again before the end of the century) Much of this increase was concentrated in the East End, where overcrowding, bad housing, unemployment, poverty and disease were rife and a few months after Barnardo arrived in London an outbreak of cholera swept through the East End killing more than 3,000 people and leaving families destitute. Thousands of children slept on the streets and many others were forced to beg. Dr Barnardo became deeply involved with helping the East End, preaching out-of-doors, and for a while teaching at the Ernest Street Ragged School. After resigning from his position as Superintendent, in 1868 he founded the East End Juvenile Mission in Hope Place, World's End and two years later opened the Working & Destitute Lads Home at 18 Stepney Causeway training boys in carpentry, metal work and shoemaking. These skills enabled the boys to secure apprenticeships and work.

Spaces in the school were limited, and one evening, an 11-year old boy, named John Somers (who was nicknamed 'Carrots') was turned away because the shelter was full. He was found dead two days later from malnutrition and exposure. From then on Dr

Barnardo vowed never to turn another child away and a sign was hung above the door stating – ‘No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission’

Dr Barnardo then turned his attention to The Edinburgh Castle on Rhodeswell Road, Limehouse, the largest and most infamous gin palace in the East End of London. Such establishments were often the target of the temperance movement and in the summer Dr Barnardo with his two friends Joshua (a reformed drunkard) and Mary Poole erected a large mission tent in front of the building.

By the autumn of the same year 4,000 habitual drinkers had sworn never to drink again, and the Edinburgh Castle, and other public houses in the area, had lost their most valuable customers. In October the Edinburgh Castle was forced to close down and was put up for sale. Barnardo quickly decided he would convert the house of evil into a house of God.

With money given in response to his appeals, he was able to buy the building and had soon established it as a Mission Church and a coffee shop having realised that people needed a place to escape from their, miserable dwellings. The Castle became a vast social centre with Mothers’ Meetings, Penny Savings Banks, Singing Classes, a Flower Mission, a Maternity Society, Sick Benefit Clubs for working men as well as Bible Classes, prayer meetings, and educational lectures. Following his death in 1905 Dr Barnardo’s body lay in state at the Edinburgh Castle for three days before being taken for his funeral and interment at the Girls Village Home in Barkingside. Mile End stadium now covers the site of the Edinburgh Castle.

In September, 1876, Barnardo took out a 21-year lease on two canal warehouses, in Copperfield Road which were converted into Ragged Schools The Copperfield Road Ragged School opened in 1877 and had a staff of four paid teachers and six paid monitors. This staff would teach and supervise an

average daily attendance of 106 boys, 100 girls and 60 infants all from the area around Mile End and Stepney They came from all backgrounds, regardless of faith, colour, or disability. Children from as far as West India, Africa, India, and America passed through its doors and could not have received education any other way. They would receive free education and also help in finding a job. Children who were found to be in need were given free breakfasts and dinners in the cold winter months. The need for this nourishment was such that from 1887 to 1888 alone, records show 36,158 hot breakfasts were served at Copperfield Road School.

Marrying Sara Louise Elmslie, nicknamed Syrie in 1873, - a philanthropist herself who had already set up a 'free school' for children, they received a wedding present from the chairman of the London Stock Exchange Sir John Sands of a 15-year lease on Mossford Lodge, a house just outside London, at Barkingside in Essex, with 60 acres and was the beginning the first Barnardo's home for girls and by the 1900s there was a school, hospital and church at what became known as the Barnardo's Girls Village By 1900 there were 65 cottages, a school, a hospital and a church around three village greens. By the 1920's the village would able to house 1500 girls. Barnardo’s ethos of good training continued with the girls and were trained mainly for domestic service. The training was so good, the girls were sought after by royal and society households. Girls were also trained as nursery nurses and Barnardo’s pioneered the first Nursery Nurse training scheme.

Dr Barnardos first hospital facility was established in 1877 in a house at 19 Stepney Causeway, which quickly became inadequate and work started on a site adjacent to 13-17 Stepney Causeway for a purpose-built hospital to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, Her Majesty's Hospital for Sick Children opened in January 1889. With 84 beds for the care of the poor children of Stepney, at the

time it was the largest children's hospital in London and one of the first hospitals to specialise in children's diseases. The Hospital had a low mortality rate because of its high standards of hygiene. The Hospital closed in 1922 as most of the children had moved to new accommodation in the William Baker Technical School in Hertford. Its work was taken over by the John Capel Hanbury Hospital in the Boys' Garden City, Woodford Bridge, Essex.

By the turn of the century Dr Barnardo's Homes occupied one whole side of the Stepney Causeway, from Commerical Road to the railway line and when Dr Barnardo died in 1905, the charity he founded had opened 96 homes caring for more than 8,500 children. The Project

In December 2012, The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park (FoTHCP) known locally as Bow Cemetery were kindly allowed to host their 'History Away Day' at Barnardo's Church, Barkingside which ended with a tour of the site and being shown one of the early Barnardo registers.

Within the register was a moving account of the death of John Mills, who died on May 14th 1876 aged 9 years and was buried at Bow Cemetery. John was nine when he was admitted to Barnardo's in January 1875. His father, a labourer, had died years earlier and his mother was a seamstress working in the most destitute parts of east London. John had attended the Hope Place Free School, a ragged school run by Dr Barnardo's East End Juvenile Mission, but came into Barnardo's care after his mother began suffering from heart disease. He spent more than a year in the charity's care before being moved to the Devonshire Cottage Infirmary where he passed away. Interestingly, Dr Barnardo was present and all the boys with the band followed to the grave.

The seed was sown to try to identify how many children that died whilst in Dr Barnardo's care are buried in Bow Cemetery.

Three years and many hundreds of hours later the project has drawn to a close for the five FoTHCP volunteers Diane Kendall, Doreen Kendall, Anne Quade, Sylvia Law and Penelope Williams.

To begin with, the Barnardo Registers were checked for all children who died in care. Over 2,000 names were extracted and then searched for within the Cemetery Registers. The process was then reversed and the Cemetery Burial Registers between 1867 and 1939 were checked. This was a massive undertaking, as approximately 350,000 people were buried at Tower Hamlets Cemetery between its opening in 1841 and its closure in 1966.

The process was further complicated by low literacy levels and misspelling of names in the records, as well as records documenting children who were extremely ill and given care by Barnardo's, but who had not been technically admitted to the charity. Therefore, all queries had to be cross checked back to the Barnardo's registers. Regrettably, it is for this reason that 513 is not the definitive number of children who died whilst in Dr Barnardo's care and buried in Bow Cemetery, the number will almost certainly increase as further discoveries are made.

It has always been reported that two of Dr Barnardo's own children are buried in Bow Cemetery. Tom died aged 5 months and was buried on April 29th 1882, whilst Kenward passed away of diphtheria at the Barnardo's Convalescent Home in Felixstowe, Suffolk, aged 12 years and was buried on January 16th 1890. However, during the project it was confirmed that another son Herbert who also died of diphtheria in Woodbridge, Suffolk aged 9 years was brought home to be buried with his brother on August 5th 1885.

The FoTHCP are thrilled that the project has culminated with a new memorial in the now Cemetery Park and in the near future the names of those buried will be remembered on the FoTHCP website.



This £10,000 Sculpture along with three other memorials has been the vision of National Council member Jean Clark,, a former Barnardo's child who has spent the last 10 years tirelessly raising funds to remember the children in Barnardo's care who sadly passed before their time. Her efforts have raised in excess of £30,000 so far

The sculpture was designed and carved by master carver Tom Nicholls, Tom is a London based has won the prestigious "Carver of the Year" awards in 2013 from both the Master Carvers' Association and the Worshipful Company of Masons and also received the "Highly Commended" award for Craftsmanship at the Stone Federation of Great Britain awards in 2016 for his carving work. Tom first trained at Weymouth College in the traditional techniques of Stonemasonry, Carving and Lettering. This provided him with a solid foundation in the craft. While developing his skills as a freelance sculptor, Tom went on to win a QEST (Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) Scholarship which allowed

him the opportunity to embark on a Post Graduate Diploma in Historic Stone Carving at the City and Guilds of London Art School in Kennington where he obtained a 1st.

In 2012 Tom was awarded the opportunity to be a key part of the core team of seven sculptors who worked on producing the Heraldic Ornamentation for the Queens Diamond Jubilee barge project. Modelled in clay, the monumental sculptures were then cast in resin and gilded. Other notable projects have included carving 6 large brick architectural relief sculptures on a mansion block near Sloane Square in London, carving a bespoke grotesque sculpture to his own design for St Georges Chapel, Windsor and also winning the Ripon Cathedral Gargoyle competition in 2015

Tom wanted to create a design which captured the overall ethos behind the Barnardo's Charity and its roots in the East End of London, while still being sensitive to Tower Hamlets Cemetery.

The hands releasing a bird into flight are there to symbolise Dr Barnardo himself and Barnardo's in general, as well as the work that has been achieved to care for and support vulnerable children and to reflect the support and care given by Dr Barnardo and the Charity to vulnerable children. The hands gently encourage the bird to free itself and take to the sky. By providing the children with care and support, Barnardo's has enabled them to fly free out into the World.

The hands also represent Dr Barnardo's amazing strength and kindness in the face of opposition. They reach to the sky, symbolising his inexhaustible enterprise, forward thinking nature and pioneering spirit.

Many stories and folklore suggest that birds were taken as signs of renewed life, often as a transition between life and death. This idea is particularly relevant given that the sculpture is a memorial to the deceased and the use of a

bird sits nicely within the setting of Tower Hamlet's Cemetery, which is a vibrant nature reserve full of bird song

The Bird loosely based on a Sparrow has been used to represent the children as birds which can be thought to represent freedom and an opening to the future. They have been used to represent ideas and imagination, transcendence and divinity, freedom from materialism and physical constraints. The Sparrow which has for a long time been linked to the poorest of society in the East End of London, hence "Cock Sparrow", or "Sparra". The small size, sprightly energy and way they get together and chatter makes them seem a fitting metaphor for the children of the East End.

With the slight twist or spiral up towards the sky of the sculpture, symbolises progress, evolution, growth, expansion and energy radiating outward, which are all appropriate to the ethos of Barnardo's. Standing as a pillar of strength reminding us of the immense achievements of Barnardo's during its history, whilst also providing a symbol of hope for the future.

On 5th December 2016 the 6ft high Portland stone memorial to 513 children buried between 1876 and 1924 in the City of London and Tower Hamlets Cemetery (known locally as Bow Cemetery) was unveiled by Dr David Barnardo OBE, great-great nephew of Dr Thomas Barnardo and Jean Clark.

Diane Kendall

Teaching at Daneford School, 1972 – 1991

The life and soul of a school often reflects that of the local community. The school is often a microcosm of local history. Daneford, (boys) School reflected the locality around the north of Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, Haggerston and Hoxton.

The School has been through many status and name changes since the original Victorian School Board of London institution was created:

Daniel Street School, 1900-1959

Daneford Secondary Modern School, 1959-1965

Daneford Comprehensive School (for Boys) 1965-1993

Bethnal Green Technology College, 1993-2010

Bethnal Green Academy, 2010-2016

Daniel Street School

Daniel Street was situated between Bethnal Green Road and Gosset Street in E2. The area's borders are Bethnal Green Road, City and Liverpool Street Station, Hackney Road, Shoreditch and Hoxton. Daniel Street itself no longer exists but part of it remains as the staff car park.

Daniel Street School was founded by Schools Board of London (SBL) in 1900 and opened with 353 Boys and 378 Girls. I recall vague recollections given to me by two former pupils Nona and Charlie, who were drinking partners of mine in the Approach Tavern in the early 1970s. Nona described playing in a playground on the roof and boys in a playground on the ground floor. Classes were heated by coal boilers (in each class) with an assembly area on each of the three floors.

Apparently in those early days, Nona also remembers being able to buy jugs of milk from a dairy in Diss Street, just off Hackney Road. I

believe that there are records of this and other 'farming' in the area a century ago.

I recently found this short piece on the internet, wherein a certain Gloria Lacey recalls going to the school in 1924: *"It must have been about 1924. My Headmaster was very angry because I'd passed the eleven plus, but we were too hard up for me to stay at school or go to college. We'd never even had the money to buy the uniform. I said to the Headmaster "I'm leaving school. I'm fourteen on Friday and I won't be coming to school anymore. " He wanted me to stay on but I couldn't. I knew I'd have to get a job. I was fourteen on the Friday when I left and on Saturday morning I got up early, went out and got a job"*.

Then Lil Murrell recalls classes at the school in 1936: *"We went to Daniel Street School. There was a little flat in the building, made up of a kitchen, bedroom and dining room. We were taught how to make beds, do the washing and the cooking. It was all more or less preparing us to be housewives for when we left school at fifteen and got married. I didn't bunk off or anything like that."*

A few years later a certain Ronnie and Reggie Kray attended the school. This is an extract from one of the many biographies of the twins: *"School began when they were eight. Neither was much of a scholar, although Reggie was certainly the brighter of the two and showed a gift for words. Outside school they were constantly involved in fights but in the classroom they were the reverse of rebels. Their principal teacher was a Mr William Evans, a genial rugby-playing Welshman from Monmouthshire who taught at Daniel Street (and Daneford) School for more than thirty years, certainly too long to be over-sentimental about small boys. "Salt of the earth the twins; never the slightest trouble to anyone who knew how to handle them. Course they were tough and they were fighters, but they weren't the sort that rolled around the playground or spat in each other's faces or used knives as some of them do today. If they had to be punished*

they'd take it like gents. And if there was anything to be done in school, they'd be utterly co-operative. A sporting gala or something of the sort; they'd be the first to help. Nothing was ever too much trouble."

Daneford School

Daneford Secondary Modern School was formed in 1959 out of an amalgamation of Mansford Street School (now Oaklands School) and Daniel Street School – hence the name: Dane-ford,

In 1965, after expansion with three new blocks the school re-opened as Daneford Secondary School for boys with 975 boys on roll.

In 1973, the year after I joined the staff it was accorded comprehensive status.

My Beginnings, from 1972 and beyond

How did I arrive? On completing a three year Certificate of Education Course at St Paul's College in Cheltenham, in the summer of 1972, I returned to London and in particular east London where I had spent my college vacations as a volunteer and resident, in St Margaret's House in Old Ford Road, running a children's holiday club.

I had previously written to the Inner London Education Authority requesting that my name be put in the 'pool' of new teachers in the new academic year. I also wrote to a number of Tower Hamlets secondary schools and was told by all that there were no vacancies.

My first engagement with Daneford was from a letter from the Headmaster Mr Pat Kenway who said he was *"..very interested in my combination of music and drama..."*. He invited me to visit him and the school in May 1972.

Shortly after that I was offered the job of Head of Music and Drama, Scale 3 (head of small department in those days). There were no other

candidates as the last Music teacher had left in 1970! The boys had had no class music for a year.

After two weeks supply teaching at the end of summer term in July, with a salary of about £80 a week, I started full-time work in September 1972.

Daneford was very much a working class (predominantly white) boys secondary school. As before the war, it continued to have a number of vocational streams in the curriculum with a painting and decorating suite as well as woodwork and metalwork workshops.

I don't intend to go into great detail on the sociology of the students, but I do recall that the boy's parents had a range of jobs, including:

French Polishing (including my friend Nona from the Approach) (Teesdale Street)
Asphalting/roofing
Market stall holders
Cabbies
Local government services and
Unemployed, of course!

I believe that almost every one of them came from local council housing.

There was no Sixth Form and little aspirations for students to move into Higher education, certainly not university, although we rejoiced when a small number of students did manage to get into FE College and a few of them getting into University.

In my first year there was streaming. I realise now how demoralising and vicious this was: We had six form entry and each of the six classes were labeled according to their year group and level i.e. '3.1.' was third year, top level, then down to '3.6.' who were third year, 'bottom level'.

My first time-table included both top and bottom third year classes. The contrast between these two groups of boys sticks in my mind very vividly. The top level class was akin to a grammar school class, beautifully dressed with blazers, white shirts, bright ties and all initially keen to learn and listen to this new, rookie teacher. I know for a fact that some of these boys had actually been offered places at the local grammar and church schools in Bethnal Green: Parmiters and St Judes.

The bottom stream was much smaller and (sadly) the truancy rate and level of social problems was very high. Few could write a complete sentence (none of them ever brought a pen or bag into school), mostly not in full uniform (certainly no PE kit or aprons for practical subjects etc.) and often smelling of chip fat and urine. I know this might sound insulting but it is certainly not meant to be. I simply want to make it clear how tragic it was that these boys had been relegated and ruthlessly assessed so early in their education and at such a critical time in their lives. Fortunately, the current situation is somewhat different.

I had to adopt completely different teaching methods and materials for each level. This enhanced my belief in comprehensive education – a belief I hold strongly now at a time when I often wonder whether successive governments and education ministers seem to be making up policy as they go along, with opportunism, popularity and finance seeming to be the main political drivers of policy.

You may imagine that music and drama in an east London Boys school is not the easiest job to take on, particularly as I'm no gifted musician. No other staff in the school would have had a clue what to do and I had been the only candidate.

Needless to say, looking back, I did not know what had hit me and I had to buck my ideas up pretty quick. I recall my classroom cleaner Iris (who I still meet in Tesco's) reminding me

how she thought in those first days *“This poor b****r is not going survive one week here....”*

However over eight years I stuck to it and worked out a time-table and curriculum that provided a reasonable variety of activities: singing, playing and practical instrumental, listening and some very basic theory.

I had several visits from the inspectorate who, unlike today's Ofsted helped me a lot. In those days as I recall the HMI was not an unpopular organisation. My inspector was there to help me and nothing else. One might say this had to be as, if I had failed they would have had to fill a gap in the time-table and the belief was that the boys deserved to have some exposure to music, albeit on a very, very basic level.

My first classroom was three floors up and on the very far end of what was called the ‘old block’ I had to wait six weeks for a piano to be brought up, and all I had was a couple of cymbals, rhythm sticks, about 10 ‘dummy keyboards and a ‘Dansett’ record player.

However, the Headmaster was sympathetic, I had a budget and eventually I managed to stock up over the months but the start was very difficult. I must have been on the boy's wave length in some respects as much equipment was stolen. I recall one policeman visiting my stock-room to look into the theft of various brass instruments saying: *“Well, you might look down Brick Lane Market on Sunday, you may well see them down there....”* I know for a fact that great numbers of the popular Beatles LP record ‘Sgt Peppers’ were thrown out of the window, to be collected by students after class. Lord knows how many versions I brought!

I wasn't completely alone as I had five peripatetic teachers who would come in and teach (for free) piano, guitar, drums, clarinet and trombone for one or half day a week. Depending on the teacher, this ranged from an absolute headache (kids not turning up for lessons) to a brilliant success. One boy

becoming an accomplished classical guitarist and another having great success in a 1980s rock band (Bow Wow Wow) and even appearing on Top of the Pops! Nothing to do with me, just an excellent drum and guitar teacher!

Even the hugely eccentric trombone teacher, an ex-guardsmen got his favourite pupil into Kneller Hall military music academy, as a cadet!

Schools cannot ignore what is going on outside, affecting the lives of our students. I was a member of the NUT and the east London branch campaigned vigorously on a variety of issues: pay, racism, education reform, asbestos etc. Importantly, we were particularly angry about the slow re-action of the authorities to the growing racism and bullying that was going on, not just in Daneford but other schools in the borough. Our direct action and strikes often got us into trouble and I did 3 hours at Her Majesty's Pleasure in Stepney Police Station, in 1985, following my arrest during an anti-racism demonstration outside the local education office in Mile End.

Music was not my only interest at this time. In 1968-69, before my college days, I had lived and worked as a volunteer in South Africa (on a ‘Bantustan’). This had and continues to have an enormous effect of my life and thinking.

Once I had settled in and established myself as a recognised teacher in the school (5 years on) my thoughts returned to my time in Africa and I had the idea of organising a school to trip to Botswana and Lesotho in Southern Africa. I simply wanted to offer these boys the chance of a life time.

My thinking was that Daneford Boys lived in one of the most historical multi-cultural areas of London, amongst successive immigration movements: Jewish, Caribbean, Irish, Somalian and latterly Bangladesh. The negative history of racism, prejudice, bigotry

and street violence is well documented and remains evident today. The resistance to this is now part of East London History.

Yet Daneford boys would seldom move out of their area - what is now called their 'post code' neighbourhood and have any benefit from being offered the opportunity to understand how exciting global learning experience can be. In contrast, since 1960s increasing numbers of better off young people were taking a 'GapYear', and taking the opportunity to take a year out to develop international understanding and leadership skills etc. Of course this was mainly available to middle class youngsters, who had considerable financial help from parents.

This seemed to me (and still does) to be totally unfair. These boys were living in a multi-cultural situation day by day but having no opportunity to have the life-changing experience I had had before becoming a teacher. Of course there had been conscription but we have no time to consider that question here.

Coincidentally, the Revd Trevor Huddleston, the great Anti-Apartheid campaigner was Bishop of Stepney at that time and his interest proved a great help.

So, in 1976 I proposed to take a small group of boys to Botswana and Lesotho in Southern Africa the following year in 1977. The Head teacher's response was "*I think it sounds mad Mr Stevens but go ahead and let me know if you have any problems....*". Credit to him. I think a sober assessment is that the project was successful.

This started a new phase in my time at Daneford School, with a subsequent visit to London by a small group of staff and students from Botswana in 1979 and a second visit to Africa, joint with Haggerston Girls School in 1981. In that same year, one of the original exchange students organised to return visit to Africa to do voluntary work in Zambia, after

his 'A' Levels. As interest grew, I established a new youth education charity, the Daneford Trust. The first chairperson of the Trustees was the Head teacher and Mr Ian Mikardo MP was a founding Trustee (and very hands-on, too!). In the first years it operated entirely with voluntarily support.

Amidst all this and after 8 years as head, hands and feet of the Music Department I asked an inspector to visit me and advise me. I felt I was getting 'stale' in the classroom and was at a crossroads. Should I make a special effort to improve my work or should develop my interest in international school exchanges? After watching my lesson the inspector said to me: "*Mr Stevens, I don't think you are teaching to your best ability are you?...*" It was clear I had to re-think my situation.

Meanwhile, Daneford School was changing with increasing numbers of young people from Bangladesh (Sylhet mainly) were arriving at the school, being the oldest sons of workers who had come to east London earlier, to work mainly in garment making or catering etc. These young people initially had a wretched time, experiencing ill-thought out education provision and racism from boys inside the school and sections of the community outside the school ('paki bashing'). This was a period when votes for the National Front were very high, particularly in the Haggerston area. In response to this change I took the opportunity to do a diploma in teaching English as a Second Language, resigned as Head of Music and took a part-time time-table teaching ESL. This occupied the second ten years of my time at the school. During this time we organised student and student visits to Bangladesh in 1988 and 1991. The aim was to help the school, students and staff have a clearer understanding of the culture and backgrounds of increasing numbers of our students.

I finally left Daneford School staff in summer of 1991 and became part-time Coordinator of the Daneford Trust, with a small office next to

Mansford Street Unitarian Church in old Bethnal Green Road.

This is only a brief portrait of teaching in the 'east end', during two very interesting decades.

Alumni

Although Daneford School had a reputation ("*Cor Anthony you're not going there! You'll get beaten up!*"), I believe that the challenges and sometimes the chaos enforced on the school gave rise to what is now fashionably called 'resilience' amongst our students. Although all schools have their alumni, I think that Daneford has more than its fair share of notable former students, both heroes and villains:

Here are just a few:

Andrew Johnson – actor, original cast of TV's East Enders

Dr Michael McMillan – writer and curator

Issac Julien – Writer and film maker

Michael Watson MBE – former

Commonwealth Middleweight boxing champion

Shaffique Uddin – artist

Dr Delwar Hussain – writer and anthropologist

HE Anwar Choudhury – formerly UK High Commissioner to Bangladesh and currently UK ambassador to Chile

Micky Flanagan – Popular stand up comedian and script writer

Gary Haines – historian, writer and currently archivist at the Whitechapel Gallery.

The school's Hockey Team were National Under-16 Champions in 1990.

The school has changed enormously in recent years and I did continue as a school Governor until 2008. It has now become Bethnal Green Academy and the last I heard it is to go through another name change in September 2016.

Anthony (Tony) Stevens

Max Levitas

Courtesy of Spitalfields Life

Max Levitas became an East End hero when he was arrested in 1934, at the age of nineteen years old, for writing anti-Fascist slogans on Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. "There were two of us, we did it at midnight and we wrote 'All out on September 9th to fight Fascism,' 'Down with Fascism' and 'Fight Fascism,' on Nelson's Column in whitewash," he told me, his eyes shining with pleasure, still fired up with ebullience at one hundred and two years of age, "And afterwards we went to Lyons Corner House to have something to eat and wash our hands, but when we had finished our tea we decided to go back to see how good it looked, and we got arrested – the police saw the paint on our shoes."

On September 9th 1934, Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists, was due to speak at a rally in Hyde Park but – as Max is happy to remind you today – he was drowned out by the people of London who converged to express their contempt. It was both fortuitous and timely that the Times reprinted Max's slogans on September 7th, two days before the rally, in the account of his appearance at Bow St Magistrates Court, thereby spreading the message.

Yet this event was merely the precursor to the confrontation with the Fascists that took place in the East End, two years later on 4th October 1936, that became known as the Battle of Cable St, and in which Max is proud to have played a part – a story he tells today as an inspirational example of social solidarity in the face of prejudice and hatred. And, as we sat in a quiet corner of the Whitechapel Library last week, watching the rain fall upon the street market outside, it was a story that I was eager to hear in Max's first hand account, especially now that he is one of last left of those who were there.

Politics have always been personal for Max Levitas, based upon family experience of some

of the ugliest events of the twentieth century. His father Harry fled from Lithuania and his mother Leah from Latvia in 1913, both escaping the anti-semitic pogroms of Tsarist Russia. They met in Dublin and married but, on the other side of Europe, Harry's sister Sara was burnt to death along with fellow-villagers in the synagogue of Akmeyan, and Leah's sister Rachel was killed with her family by the Nazis in Riga.

"My father was a tailor and a trade unionist," Max explained in the lively Dublin brogue that still colours his speech today, even after eighty years in the East End. "He formed an Irish/Jewish trade union and then employers blacklisted him, making sure he could never get a job," Max continued with a philosophical grin, "The only option was to leave Dublin and we lived in Glasgow from 1927 until 1930, but my father had two sisters in London, so we came here to Durward St in Whitechapel in 1931 and stayed ever since."

With this background, you can appreciate the passionate concern of Max – when he was nineteen and secretary of the Mile End Young Communist League – at a time when the British Government was supporting the Fascist General Franco in the Spanish Civil War. "Even after Hitler was appointed Chancellor in 1931, the British Government was developing arms with Germany," Max informed me, widening his eyes in condemnation and bringing events into vivid reality that I had viewed only as history until he filled them with personal emotion.

"I was working as a tailor's presser in a small workshop in Commercial St at the time. Mosley wanted to march through Whitechapel because it was where a large number of Jewish people lived and worked, and I knew the only way to stop him was to have unity of the people.

I approached a number of unions, Jewish organisations and the Communist League to band together against the Fascists but although

they agreed what I was doing was right, they wouldn't support me.

But I give credit to the huge number of members of the Jewish and Irish communities and others who turned out that day, October the fourth, 1936. There were thousands that came together in Aldgate, and when we heard that Mosley's intention was to march along Cable St from Tower Hill into Whitechapel, large numbers of people went to Cable St and barricades were set up. The police attempted to clear Cable St with horses, so that the march could go ahead, but the people of Cable St fought back and the police had to give in.

At three o'clock, we heard that police had decided that the march would not take place, because if it did a number of people would be killed. The Fascists were defeated by the ordinary people of Stepney, people who emptied buckets of water and chamber pots out of their houses, and marbles into the street. This was how they stopped Mosley marching through the East End of London. If he had been able to do so, more people would have joined him and he would have become stronger."

Max Levitas spoke of being at the centre of a definitive moment in the history of the East End, eighty years ago, when three hundred thousand people came together to form a human chain – in the face of three thousand fascists with an escort of ten thousand police – to assert the nature of the territory as a place where Fascism and racism are unacceptable. It was a watershed in resistance to Fascism in Europe and the slogan that echoed around Stepney and Whitechapel that day was, "No paseran" – from the Spanish Civil War, "They shall not pass."

After the war, Max became a highly respected Communist councillor in Stepney for fifteen years and, a natural orator, he remains eloquent about the nature of his politics. "It was never an issue to forge a Communist state like in the Soviet Union," he informed me, just

in case I got the wrong idea, “We wanted to ensure that the ordinary working people of England could lead decent lives – not to be unemployed, that people weren’t thrown out of their homes when they couldn’t pay their rent, that people weren’t homeless, as so many are today, living with their parents and crowded together in rooms.”

Max’s lifelong political drive is the manifestation of a tenacious spirit. When Max arrived in Whitechapel Library, I did not recognise him at first because he could pass for a man thirty years younger. And later, when I returned his photos to his flat nearby, I discovered Max lived up five flights of stairs and it became obvious that he walks everywhere in the neighbourhood, living independently even at his astounding age. “I used to smoke,” Max admitted to me shyly, when I complimented him on his energy.” I stopped at eighty-four, when my wife died – until then I used to smoke about twenty cigarettes a day, plus a pipe and cigars.” Max confessed, permitting himself a reckless grin of nostalgia.

“My mother and father both died at sixty-five,” Max revealed, turning contemplative, “I put that down to the way they suffered and poverty. My father worked around the clock to keep the family going. He died two years after my mother. At that time there was no National Health Service, and I phoned the doctor when she was sick, asking him to come, and he said, ‘You owe me some money. Unless you pay me, I won’t come.’ I said, ‘You come and see my mother.’ He said, ‘You will have to pay me extra for coming plus what you owe.’ But she died before he came and I had to get an ambulance.”

It was a story that revealed something more of the personal motivation for Max’s determination to fight for better conditions for the people of the East End – yet remarkably, in spite of the struggle of those around him and that he himself has known, Max is a happy man. “I’m always happy, because I can say

that my life was worth living,” he declared to me without qualification.

Max Levitas wants to live as long as possible to remind us of all the things he has seen. “I believe if racists marched through the East End today, people would stop them in the same way,” he assured me with the unique confidence granted only to those who have known one hundred and two years of life.

The Gentle Author

Going, going and back again!

Number one on our (and London’s) going list must be the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. This is item 1 in just published *Whitechapel In 50 Buildings* (see book reviews), England’s oldest established industrial company and yet it may vanish next year. The news was broken by our friend The Gentle Author, dedicated blogger and publisher to the interested and curious, then picked up by the Dailies.

At the time of writing all I know is that the current owner hopes to pass the business on, next year, when he retires but that the site has already been sold. Surely such an important part of East End heritage can’t finish up cut and pasted onto the front of yet another block of offices or “luxury apartments”. That might have happened under the previous Mayor of London but surely not the current one! I lay no blame on Mr Alan Hughes, the third generation of his family to run the foundry, he is doing his best to preserve jobs and tradition while adapting to modern technology and the pressures of environment control; but I hope that the built heritage still has a part to play in our lives.

The next going is much less important but still symbolises our changing lives. I was notified last week, that my local bank branch was closing. The disappearance of our local pubs gives rise to much comment and nostalgia. The closure of a bank rarely does this, but local

branches have been an important feature of our High Streets for more than a hundred years. NatWest, Bow is scheduled to close in June 2017.

The closure will not greatly inconvenience me as the old branch is narrow and often crowded and my account will move to the modern open layout style Stratford branch but it is a further blow to local history. The London & Westminster Bank opened its Bow branch in 1899 and it continued in the same organisation through all of its name changes – London, County & Westminster, Westminster Bank Ltd and finally National Westminster Plc. It replaced the old Bow Rectory and occupies a prominent corner site. What will replace it? Will it be another block of the “Luxury Flats” that are springing up all over Bow or will the building survive as another betting shop or Kebab House, maybe a coffee shop, we don’t actually have many of those along Bow Road. Watch this space.

Back again, yes sometimes the apparently dead come back to life. I reported, in the Summer issue (4-04) of the Newsletter, the closure of the famous Widow’s Son pub. Well, it reopened in November as a pub restaurant. The old hanging sign is currently missing but the other Widow’s Son name plates and notices remain outside the nicely refurbished interior. I saw menus on the table recently but it was closed. I must check out what it is on offer.

Philip Mernick

Are they Scouts?

I recently bought this cabinet size photograph (4” x 6.5”) from East London photographer W(alter) Saunders’ studio at 106 Grove Road. They look like Scouts but their badges differed from those of the Scout Association. I couldn’t figure it out so I asked the Scouts themselves.



Peter Ford, their Heritage Research Officer replied. “The picture does indeed show a Boy Scout and Scout Master. These were members of the “London Diocesan Boy Scout Corp” This was formed very early and was affiliated to The Boy Scout Association. It ran separately as a Church organization. This was indeed Baden-Powell’s original idea that Scouting should be taken up by existing Boys organizations. Boys Brigade, Church Lads Brigade etc.

The Corps remained affiliated with scouting until September 1945 when the LDBSA ceased to exist and all the groups were absorbed into the Local Districts. The motto of the L.D.B.S.C. was “I Serve” as against the Boy Scout Association’s motto “Be Prepared” The photograph must date between 1910 (creation of Scouts) and 1923 (Saunders’ closure). Does anyone know who they are?

Philip Mernick