



Erastus Rogers' Bacon Factory, Spitalfields (see page 3)

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Editorial Note:

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



The future of ELHS

Your committee isn't getting any younger and isn't currently very active as a body. We need to find people to carry on the work we are doing, so will be looking for volunteers. If you would like to take a more active role, please let us know. We can be contacted via our web site or directly to me at the email address at the top of the page. Philip

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.

East London History Society Lecture Programme 2019

The Programme of Talks has concluded for the present. The new programme will commence in September. Suggestions and ideas for future topics and/or speakers for our 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 all four series of Newsletter (1992 to 2018). 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.

Cover Picture

This issue's cover picture comes from volume 3 (1933-4) of *The Copartnership Herald*, the house journal of the Commercial Gas Company, Poplar, bought at Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives' recent book sale. It illustrates article 23 in a series "Pages from the sketch-book of a co-partner" and shows the interior of Erastus Rogers, Provision Merchants in Grey Eagle Street, Spitalfields. The article itself reads

Erastus Rogers: Baconian

When walking about our district, the sense of smell is often assailed in powerful fashion. Let us talk first of pleasant odours, for the influence of a scent is great. What can be better to a man in good health than the smell of grilling rashers greeting him as he comes down of a morning?

I am reminded of this pleasure whenever I visit the bacon factory of Erastus Rogers. I like his name, too, for it smacks of antiquity and controversies long laid by; but upon enquiry I find that little or nothing is known of him or his personality by the present owners of the factory. The name, however, remains, and I am content to imagine that with such an appellation he must have been a notable character, and may even have held and practised his own pet theory of bacon.

Those dark chambers with the tall doors in the picture are called "stoves"; they each hold two hundred and fifty sides of bacon, and in them for the past hundred years the succulent flitch has been smoked, and has sent up its pungent aroma; and I am told that before the coming of Erastus there was rising from these premises a still more racy effluvium, for it was a tannery before it was a bacon factory.

The yard is roofed in and lighted dimly by the windows and vents seen in the picture. It is strange and impressive by reason of its masses of shadow, its smoke and general air of

mystery; the doors and walls and roof timbers are beaded with a substance like tar which is the smoke and bacon fat adhering to them. It is of a rich, glistening black and, but for my consideration for the printer (who has always been so good to me), I would have made my drawing blacker even than it is.

The bacon here is smoked only, the curing being done elsewhere. Smouldering sawdust is the stuff that makes the smoke, and I am pleased and interested to know that the flavour of the bacon is improved if oak sawdust is used. Thus, we can give yet another good mark to the character of that excellent timber. The floor of the "stove" is strewn with the sawdust, which is ignited by a superimposed layer of red-hot wood ashes. Before smoking, the bacon is dusted on the inside with peameal¹, and in the picture we see a flitch of bacon on its way to the "stove"

Much of it comes from abroad—for it is not everyone who can afford to buy the veritable Dunmow Flitch or the Wiltshire brand - and hot water is required to wash away the superfluous salt in which it is packed; and this is where our old geyser comes into the picture.

You may have overlooked this detail; you will see it on the extreme right-hand side; modest, unobtrusive, steadily doing its work as it has done for a great many years in that place without expectations; but now the honest old geyser is rewarded by "having its picture took" and appearing almost like an old colleague in the pages of our House Magazine.

G. H. R.

Note 1: Peameal is made from ground yellow peas.

All of the illustrations to GHR's articles are signed Rose so I have to assume he (another assumption) is Mr G.H. Rose.

Letters and Enquiries:

Enquiry from Kelvin Wilson about David Webb article in ELHS Newsletter, 4-03

I read with interest in your newsletter of Winter 2015-2016, found online, David Webb's article about East London photographers Le Beau and Bond. The remark is made about a couple of ambrotypes of a Beccles couple, what they were doing in East London...

I know exactly what they were doing there, as I own (and am busy researching) the photo collection of the elderly couple's Hackney-resident son—including a carte de visite copy of the father's glass plate portrait! (see below)

Is it possible to put me in contact with Mr. Webb, please? You can imagine that I am very curious about these images turning up—and Mr. Webb may likewise be interested to hear their (rather rich) background story.

Philip then replied:

Dear Kelvin, unfortunately David Webb died towards the end of 2017, however the ambrotypes of the Beccles couple, as were almost all of the photographs used in his long series of articles for us, are in my personal collection. If you have any related information, we would be delighted to publish it in our Newsletter.

Kelvin:

Thank you for your swift reply. I am sorry to hear Mr. Webb passed away. It is a good thing his photos are, however, now well kept.

I'd be very interested to hear a little more about the ambrotypes of James Piper and Mary Shardalow. How you know they were taken in a Hackney studio, for starters—do they both have a J.W. Bond label on the back? I'd also be interested to hear how Mr. Webb came by them (in fact they were mine not David's, Philip) — my own collection relating to this

family (which consists of one ambrotype and some sixty carte de visites) were bought in bits and pieces through different intermediate dealers, but all originated at a Norfolk auction house.

I could write an article for your newsletter, yes—thank you. You asked what the Pipers were doing in East London, also. Well, it was to visit their two sons and a married daughter, all living around De Beauvoir Square. The wife of one of those sons has been the focus of my research ever since I bought her ambrotype portrait. See below... and see why I am so excited to hear you perhaps have more of those.

Philip:

Dear Kelvin, I have now found the photographs. Both ambrotypes are in gilded wooden frames with later labels reading "James Piper of Beccles" and "Mary Piper nee Shardelow".

I attach the fronts and one back, the other back is the same but incomplete. I can send you pictures that include the frame if you wish. I am afraid I have no record of where, or when I obtained them. If you could supply something about them and why they were in Hackney (any length) I would be delighted.

If I don't get the additional information in time, I will hold it over to the next Newsletter.

Philip

See back page for pictures of Mr and Mrs Piper

Dear Editor,

As a new member I am enjoying reading the Society's newsletter. I have ancestors who have lived in East London mostly on my Mothers side her Cox and Matthews families and hope some of your members may be able to help me resolve a few questions I have yet to solve.

Firstly my Fathers German part of the family were listed in the Church burial records of St Georges German Church, Wilhelm Stuhr Jan 1837, and his brothers Hinrich, and Luder, Sept. 1848, and Gerthard Aug 1866, but as yet have never found out where they were buried, Hinrich and Luder both died in the German Hospital at Dalston. Wilhelm died in Ellen Street and Gerthard died in Fashion Street, so where would they have been buried?

My second query is about the rise and fall of my Mothers Cox family in Bethnal Green and Stepney, if my research is correct I have Thomas Cox (1797-1862) of Bethnal Green married to Hannah Patience Hawkins in 1816, and all 11 of their children born in the BG workhouse, (1816/40), would they have the chance to learn a trade apart from silk weaving?

Thomas died in his son John Cox pub in Great Prescott Street in 1862. John is recorded as a Publican from 1857 and a Cowman later as he was not very successful in his new Trade. This connection to keeping Cows was last recorded in Chalgrove Road Hackney in 1900, but seems to come in and thread its way through the family from a Thomas Cox, (born about 1710), Drover of Mile End Old Town who had his family of 12 children from 1729-45 in Stepney. Any information about the Drovers of this part of Middlesex or the Fairs which they may have visited on their way from Essex and Suffolk to the meat markets of Smithfield would be helpful for me.

Many thanks Eileen Blythe, Folkestone Kent CT18 7AP

Was this the last pub in Bromley by Bow?

The Blue Anchor in Bromley High Street is no more. In April it was boarded up with signs seeking a new manager: now it is just a hole in the ground. I had never been inside it but its apparent antiquity was confirmed by the excellent Pubs History.com web site showing licensees from as early as 1826. I thought of

the other closed Bromley pubs I could still visualise and put them into the list below: in the order they came to mind.



The Blue Anchor 2004



The Blue Anchor April 2019

Priory Tavern, Imperial Tavern
 Rose & Crown, Black Swan
 Bombay Grab, Widow's Sons
 Moulders Arms, Tenterden Arms
 Queen Victoria, Rising Sun
 Duke of Wellington, Seven Stars

Bromley Parish is a strange shape so I may have missed a few. A moment's retrospection reminds me that The Bow Bells has survived its recent flooding and the Beehive remains off the beaten track, in Empson Street but it doesn't comfort me much.

Philip Mernick

Kutchinsky, Jewellers, 171 Commercial Road.

I hadn't heard of them until I saw one of their pieces of jewellery illustrated in Antiques Trade Gazette, so I looked them up. The Kutchinsky business was established in 1893 when Hirsch Kutchinsky arrived in England having fled Poland along with his son Morris and other members of the family. They brought with them many years of experience in the trade, having served as jewellers to the court of Ludwig of Bavaria, and wasted no time in setting up a jewellery manufacturing company in the East End of London. In 1930 Morris was joined by his sons Joseph and Solomon. Joseph was 16 and gradually worked his way up learning all the different aspects of the business including the importance of fine quality craftsmanship and first class customer service. He proved to be a natural salesman and the business thrived, moving in 1958 from the Commercial Road premises in the East to the Brompton Road in West London's Knightsbridge. Much of the jewellery they made during the late 1940s and 1950s was purposefully ostentatious, an outward celebration of the end of wartime restrictions and a return to the availability of luxury goods. Brooches, bangles, earrings and rings were all encrusted with diamonds in round, marquise and baguette shapes, scattered with coloured gems or set with bright corals and turquoises. Whimsical designs of animals and birds have become synonymous with the name Kutchinsky, rendered in 18ct yellow gold and gem-set or coloured with enamel, the firm created a menagerie of characterful creatures over the years. Joseph's two sons Roger and Paul joined the business which continued to find favour with a wide range of clients both at home and abroad, particularly in the Middle East. The business was sold to Moussaieff Jewellers Ltd in 1991.

Book Review

MINNIE LANSBURY, Suffragette, Socialist, Rebel Councillor by Janine Booth. ISBN 987-1-910170-55-7. Published by Five Leaves Publications. Soft Cover, 224 pages. Price £12.99

This book is a long overdue acknowledgement of the crucial role played by a woman, once revered in the East End but since reduced to barely a footnote in the history books.

As the cover states: This is a story of a remarkable young woman who became a popular champion and whose tragically early death broke the hearts of her family, friends, comrades and community. It is also the story of Eastern European immigrant Jews in Cockney London, of the fight against poverty and for enfranchisement, of opposing war while defending its victims, of embracing revolutionary possibilities and of defying bad laws.

Born in Whitechapel, to impoverished Jewish parents who had fled Polish Russia to the safety of London, who nevertheless worked hard to provide their children with a decent education and a secure foothold in life. Minnie attended the Jews Free School and then won a scholarship to the Coborn School for Girls in Bow. On completing her education, she trained as a pupil teacher and eventually became a qualified teacher. From then on, it was but a short step to her involvement in the National Teachers' Union, labour politics and the suffragette movement.

When Labour swept to power in the 1919 local elections, Poplar council appointed Minnie to the post of Alderman. She and her fellow councillors dramatically improved services, but faced financial crisis in 1921 when the economy crashed and unemployment spiralled. They decided to defy the unfair council funding system, and were sent to prison.

Minnie Lansbury's experiences and struggles are directly relevant to today's labour movement, and to today's campaigns against anti-Semitism and for women's equality.

To quote from the final chapter: Minnie's life story remains relevant today, more so than we might wish. We still have poverty, inequality and residents of poor parts of London paying higher local taxes than those in richer parts. We still have both antisemitism and hostility to immigrants from Poland and elsewhere. Women are still under-represented and still struggling to be accepted as equal and separate individuals with or without husbands. We have attacks on pension rights and failure of government support for disabled people including, but not only, ex-soldiers. We still have deaths from preventable and curable diseases such as influenza, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

There have been improvements, true, but the struggles of the disadvantaged and marginalised are still very real and relevant. We need to remind ourselves again and again of this situation and ask ourselves what we as individuals can do.

This is indeed a labour of love, and Janine's admiration for Minnie shines through on every page. Crucially, this is not a rehash of previous works. The author has meticulously scoured the records in the archives, tracked down and interviewed descendants of the Glassman family, and uncovered some hitherto unknown facts in the life and times of Minnie. On a personal note, the icing on the cake for me was the definitive answer to the mystery of the 'Russian Jewels' about which I had made mention in my research, but did not follow through. I commend the author for her dogged persistence in working through the mystery and for uncovering the facts of this 'stranger than fiction' episode in the Glassman and Lansbury family history! The book opens with this tale of diamond smuggling, Russian agents and Special Branch, a story which

rapidly escalated and made the national, and international papers.

Well worth a read, and a truly commendable effort on the part of the author to bring to the forefront the remarkable achievements of a truly remarkable woman.

(About the Author: Janine Booth is a writer and activist who lives in Hackney, east London, She is a well-known figure in her trade union (RMT), in the wider labour movement,, and in disability rights and feminist circles. She writes and performs poetry, which has been widely published. She has researched, written and spoken on the subject of Minnie Lansbury for several years, including writing a book about the Poplar rates rebellion – Guilty and Proud of it: Poplar's Rebel Councillors and Guardians 1919-1925.)

Further information from Ross Bradshaw at Five Leaves Bookshop (0115 837 3097)

Rosemary Taylor



Minnie Lansbury Memorial Clock Bow Road



Minnie Lansbury arriving at Poplar Town Hall, prior to being escorted to prison

Books and More

Amberley Publishing

Amberley have sent me some more of their books. Their web site lists forty-five books published THIS MONTH so, needless to say, I only ask for copies of those I think have a local significance. Space constraints in this issue means that I can only give you my impressions rather than a proper review. Their web site at www.amberley-books.com will give you the publishers "official" descriptions.

The Heyday of Thames Pleasure Steamers by Andrew Gladwell: ISBN:978-1-4456-8069-9, 2019, card covers, 96 pages. £14.99

Lots of pictures of the steamers that used to take cockneys from London to coastal resorts such as Margate, Southend, Clacton and Ramsgate. Some pre-war but most from the 1950s and 60s, also pictures of programmes, tickets and Advertising material. I am sure that many of our members took one or more of this sort of trip when they were young.

London Rail Freight Since 1985 by Malcolm Batten, ISBN 978-1-4456-8895-5, 2019, card covers, 96 pages, £14.99

The author tells us that he starting taking photographs in 1970 but it wasn't until the 1980s when freight services were reorganised that uniformly boring and usually dirty locomotives were repainted into bright divisional colours. I have to admit that I was

never into train spotting let alone freight train spotting so I was rather surprised how colourful many of the images are. The book starts with east London and works anti-clockwise round to the south east.

I really hadn't paid much attention to the subjects of the book until I was sent a copy, but travelling almost daily between Bow and Stratford (by DLR) I realise how much freight traffic actually passes through Stratford.

Aggregate trains to the Bow aggregates depot, freight from Felixstowe heading north via the Overground tracks to Willesden and tanker trains going from places unknown to more places unknown. I have no desire to know the class of the locomotive but I am now aware that they vary greatly in logo and colour.

A-Z of Greenwich, Places – People - History by David C. Ramzan. ISBN: 978-1-4456-8907-4, 2019, card covers, £14.99

Not east London but sufficiently close.

Publishers description: The historic Royal Borough of Greenwich is well known for its magnificent maritime, military and civil architecture, ancient royal park, ship and boat building, and pioneering developments in scientific discovery, light industry and manufacturing. Its streets stretch out across the Meridian Line and show how Greenwich evolved into a working-class suburb of London, where a workforce of several thousand was employed in the many industries located along the riverside and across Greenwich Marsh, where the bodies of river pirates were once hung in chains. With stories of Greenwich's remarkable history and heritage encompassing the martyrdom of St Alphege by Viking raiders, the birth and death of celebrated kings and queens, the heroic exploits of famous generals and sea captains, bold military and naval actions, and the many amazing scientific and industrial inventions and innovations that placed Greenwich on the international time zone map, David Ramzan navigates the reader through this A to Z, discovering the places, people and events that have brought fame and fortune to Greenwich.

Bargain Books

Bancroft Road has copies of Tower Hamlets' 1995 reprint of Jack Dash's autobiography "Good Morning Brothers" (first published 1969), priced at only 99p. It details his life growing up in Stepney and his activities in the East London Docks from 1945. You may not agree with his, lifelong Communist, view but he certainly had an impact on post war life in the East End.

Bancroft Road also has copies of many issues of our East London Record (published between 1978 and 1998) which they would like to clear. They are offering them at £1 each but they may be willing to deal!

Idea Store Library

It would be great if you could alert your members to our new online service available to Idea Store library members; The British Newspaper Archive.

The British Newspaper Archive is great for local history buffs and genealogists alike. The service can be accessed for free in all our Idea Stores and libraries and the Tower Hamlets Local History & Archive:
<http://www.ideastore.co.uk/idea-stores>

We also offer free access to the Times Digital Archive {1785 – 2009} as well as the Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history-online-free-resources-for-idea-store-users>

**Denise Bangs
Idea Store Business Development Manager
(Digital Services)**

Appeal for Help

I hope you don't mind me contacting you out of the blue! I work for On The Corner Films in London. We're an Oscar, Bafta and Grammy-winning production company specialising in feature documentary films, including the ground-breaking documentaries *Amy* and *Senna*. You can see more of our work here: <http://www.onthecorner.tv/about-us/>

We are currently producing a major documentary series focussing on the music, culture and politics of a very particular year – 1971. I was hoping that you might be able to help me with some research!

We're really keen to show the viewer what it was actually like to live in the early 1970s, and we've found that the best way to do this is from people's home movies. I came across your organisation and was hoping that you might either have some, or might know how I could reach people with it?

We're particularly interested in any footage where families, friends or individuals might be listening to music - or it looks like they *could* be listening to music (even if they're not actually). That might be at a birthday or street party; festivals holidays; carnivals; people hanging out in groups; in the pub or bar; and in the home where there's a radio in shot; or even driving in the car. Ideally the super8 or 16mm will be digitised.

We're really keen to provide a window into the world of the early 1970s, so anything that can tell that story will be fantastic.

Thank you very much in advance for your time, and please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.
Warmest regards,

Natalie Fiennes
07986559115
www.onthecorner.tv

My Back Garden

Hackney Downs or as we called it in the family the Downs, was the park that my family would go to all the time. It was like our back garden as we used to live nearby.

Growing up I used to do all sorts over there when I was a child like whizzing along on my scooter, riding my bike, sitting on one of the park benches along the row of London plane trees near the rail lines and waving to the train drivers as the trains went by, having picnics, reading, walking our dogs and as my Mum used to say “to just go for a walk to blow the cobwebs away”.

The one thing that I really looked forward to each year was the spectacular fireworks event in November, which I used to watch from my bedroom. I still love to watch fireworks events today, but due to cost cutting by Hackney Council in the 90s this event no longer occurs in the park, which is a real shame.

The actual history of the Downs is that it consists of 40 acres of land that was formerly Lammas land which had been surrounded by fields until the mid-19th century. By 1865 Downs Road and Downs Park Road had edged the common land and lots more building development had begun in the area. As a result of this The Metropolitan Board of Works acquired the Downs from the Lord of the Manor, Tyssen Amherst, by Act of Parliament in 1872 and it was then preserved as a public open space.

It was not until the 1880s though that the Board finally purchased the full rights to the land from the Lord of the Manor, under an Act of 1881. The common rights were then extinguished by a Special Act of Parliament in 1884.

After being laid out with paths, having trees planted and benches added, the park was formally opened in 1884. The Downs was a green oasis in the developing area and was

very popular as it still is today with the locals. When I went on one of the excellent Walk Hackney tours <http://walkhackney.co.uk/> Sean the tour leader made us all laugh when he said that in 1904 the local Presbyterian Minister had said on the letters page of the local paper, The Hackney and Kingsland Gazette, that the Downs was a “..... plague spot where couples resort to lying about shamelessly.”

Looking on the British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> the residents nearby were up in arms at this and there was then a long running stream of letters on the correspondence page of the Gazette either agreeing with the minister or the majority who were defending their park. One woman said “.... One can always see something wrong if one looks for that kind of thing...” and “... The evening is to some of us the only time that we can get a breath of fresh air and personally I have enjoyed many an hour on the Downs in the cool of the evening. I have lived within five minutes’ walk of Hackney Downs for the past 25 years and have never heard such a disgusting question raised before.”

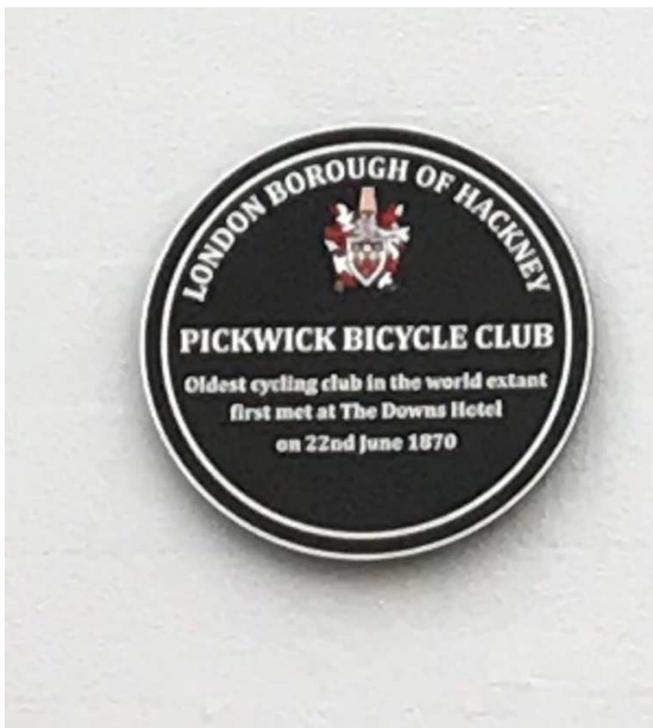
Another said “.... I suppose they go to the evening classes and week-night clubs at the churches or chapels for their recreation. If this is so I can safely tell these people that I would sooner see my sister on the Downs at 12 o’clock at night than let her be at any of the socials or dances which are held by these institutions.”

The Presbyterian minister had failed to realise just how important the park was and still is to its users. To many this was the only green space that they and their families had the use of, so it meant everything to them and they would defend it staunchly.

Whilst not in the park itself, just opposite it is The Downs Hotel (now flats) and it was here that the oldest cycling club in the world, The Pickwick Bicycle Club, was founded in 1870.

I am sure that the members would have cycled through the park and if you go there today you can see their plaque on the wall of the old hotel.

This club is still going strong today and if you look on <http://www.pickwickbc.org.uk/> you can find a wealth of information about the club, its history and look through some their old photos.

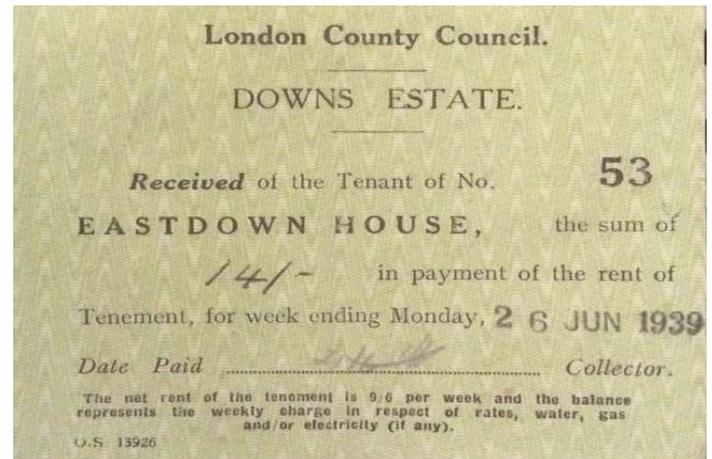


Pickwick Bicycle Club

With regards to my own family we have many links with the park, mostly from the 1930s onwards. I know though that my Nan Emily, who lived at Hoxton at the time, occasionally used to go over the Downs when she was growing up as she and her Mum used to visit Aunts and an Uncle in the area. They used to pop over the park for a short while on their way home if they had time.

From the early 1930s to 1949 my Granddad John Charles Tolladay, Nan and their family all lived near the Downs at Eastdown House, so the park was used all the time by Nan, Granddad, my Mum, Aunts and Uncles.

One thing that my Uncle Johnny used to do was to go along to the park of a weekend to watch the older boys flying their model aircrafts in the spring and summer months. Imagine my surprise when I was recently reading the excellent book called The Lower Clapton Tales by Carolyn Clark and saw that there is a photo of boys flying their kites over the park on page 24.



Rent Receipt

Many of the people in the area now don't realise that during the Second World War and for a couple of years afterwards a lot of the open space in the Downs was divided up into allotments.

This was part of the Ministry of Agriculture's "Dig for Victory" campaign which appeared on posters everywhere at the time encouraging people to grow their own food. To this end all available land in gardens, recreations grounds, school playing fields, railway embankments etc. were dug up to grow vegetables for the war effort. Even the lawns outside the Tower of London were turned into vegetable patches. My Granddad was lucky enough to have one of these allotments over the Downs and by all accounts was very green fingered. He grew all sorts of vegetables like onions, carrots, peas, cabbages, potatoes, lettuce, runner beans etc. But unfortunately though, this produce often didn't make it onto his own family's dinner table!

My Aunt Shirley remembers as a little girl going along with Granddad to his allotment. Afterwards on the way home Granddad often used to pop into The Three Sisters pub at the junction of Queensdown Road and Cricketfield Road (it's now called The Star by Hackney Downs).

My Aunt would be left outside the pub with a bag of crisps and a bottle of pop and by the time Granddad came out of the pub there wouldn't be many vegetables left as he would have given the majority of them away to his cronies. This was not popular with my Nan who rarely used to see much of this produce which was meant to help feed the family, but she soon cottoned on and if she knew he was going to the allotment she would give him a couple of hours then dispatch my Mum or an older Aunt to go collect the produce from him before he got to the pub.

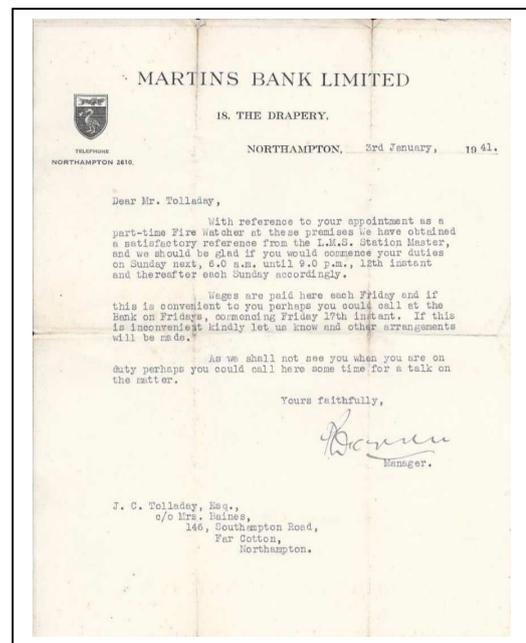
As well as allotments in 1938 deep trenches were dug over the Downs and other parks to make shelters and these were lined and covered with concrete or steel. The shelters could normally hold about fifty people. My Nan did not like going in the shelters with all the family, but then who would have, but it was better than taking their chances with the bombs. When things were getting really bad in the east end with all the bombing Nan and Granddad made the decision to take their family away from London. Before they left, Granddad asked one of his friends to look after the allotment for him whilst he was away and then they left Hackney.

So in December 1940 the family ended up in Northampton where they lived with a Mrs Baines at 146 Southampton Rd, Far Cotton Northampton. Here Granddad very quickly became a fire watcher at Martins Bank. The family didn't stay in Northampton very long though as my Granddad wanted to do more for the war effort and the family wasn't happy there so they all came back to Hackney. My Granddad went back to being a Docker and also then worked on the ships carrying the

troops across to France.

Whilst Granddad was doing his bit for the war the rest of the family, after coming back home briefly, then went to Hockwold in Norfolk where they stayed until the end of the war.

It's a good job that the family were in Norfolk as there are numerous photos at the Hackney Archives which show the extensive bomb damage in the area. One photo sticks in my mind which is the one taken on the 23rd July 1944 of Birchington House on the Pembury Estate in Lower Clapton, which is just up the road from where the family lived and is almost opposite The Three Sisters Pub which shows the block suffering from extensive bomb damage.



My Granddad's letter from Martins Bank

My Granddad as well as being Green fingered used to like collecting postcards and amongst all his numerous ones of ships there are a few showing the Downs from the 1903 – 1910 period. I like to think that these perhaps reminded Granddad of childhood visits to the park or perhaps were to remind his family of the area whilst they were in Norfolk. I have put a few of them in this article along with

photos that I have taken of the views as they are today.



The Clapton Presbyterian Church is in the background of this postcard

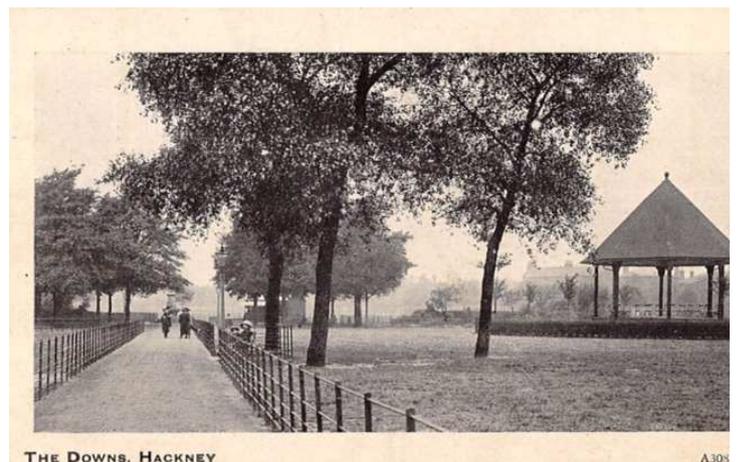


The same view today, but the church in the right hand corner is now called The New Testament Church of God (Pentecostal) and there is no spire on the church now as I assume that this went due to bomb damage in the Second World War



The same view today

View towards Cricketfield Road with the



Same park bench as the second postcard, but this time looking to the left towards the fountain in the centre of the park



Clapton Presbyterian Church in the background



The fine old bandstand on the right has long gone as has the drinking fountain in the centre of the park



Another view of the bandstand



The same view today



View from the Queensdown Road side of the park with the Downs Baptist Church on the corner – this was always known as the Downs Chapel in our family



The same view today, but the church is now called the Open Doors Baptist Church

In 1940 there was a press campaign run by Lord Beaverbrook who was the Winston Churchill's Minister of Supply. The campaign involved the public being asked to donate their pots and pans made of aluminium which could then be melted down to make fighter aircrafts i.e. Hurricanes, Spitfires etc.

The public donated over 70,000 pots/pans etc. and a good percentage of these were recycled.

Following on from this all of the iron gates and railings which are shown on the old postcards of the Downs were also taken away to help the war effort in 1941/2 after the government passed an order for the compulsory requisition of all iron fences / gates in the UK.

According to my Granddad through it was well known at the Docks that far too many iron fences / gates were collected than were used and some of them were unsuitable. The government didn't want this to affect the morale of the country, so according to my Granddad a fair amount of this unsuitable material was loaded onto barges and then dumped in the Thames. The rumour was that some were also kept at council depots or hidden in railway sidings etc.

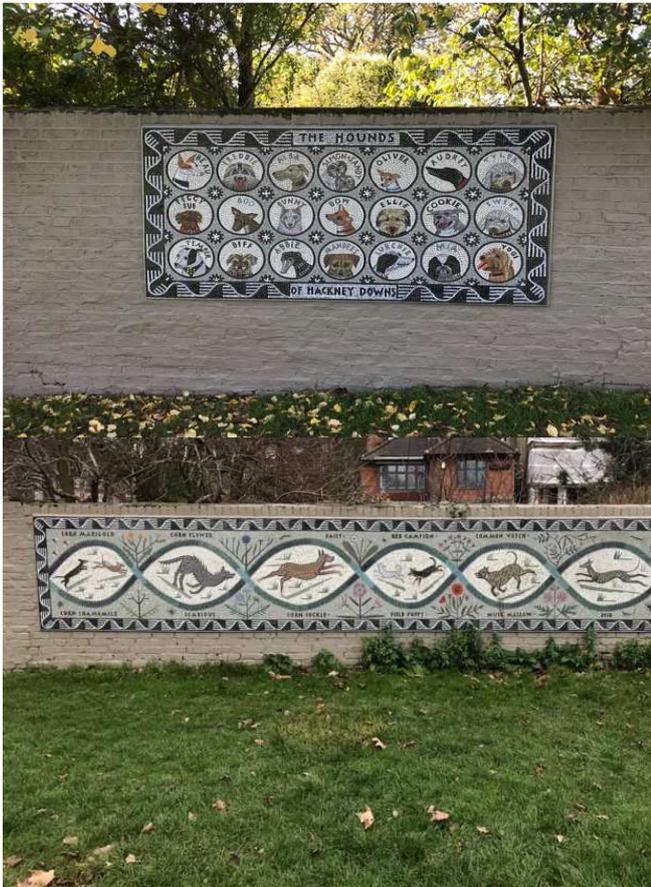
So back to the present day if you go to the park now it's still enjoyed by the local community and it has many of the elements

that were there when I was growing up (albeit updated slightly) i.e. the tennis courts and playground area, but now there is now a multi-use games area (football pitches / basketball courts). The bowling green is still there but this doesn't seem to be in use anymore.

There is now also nod back to the old days as they have a meadow area in the park as part of a project to increase the number of urban meadows in London. This was very pretty in the late spring / early summer months.

I remember reading too in the Hackney Gazette, that Hackney Downs had won a well-deserved Green Flag Award in 2018.

The last time that I was there I noticed that there were two new dog mosaics in the park.



On talking to a dog walker there who noticed that I was taking photos of the mosaics, she said that they were of the dogs that are walked in the park each day.

It's a shame that the two dogs that we had when I was growing up, Patch and Cherry, couldn't have been immortalised like this, although their ashes were actually scattered very near to the mosaic.

The mosaics are called "The Hounds of Hackney Downs" and are by the Hackney Mosaic Project, who are located in the pavilion in the park. <http://www.hackney-mosaic.co.uk/> The Downs will always hold a special place in my heart as I have found memories of going there with my family and I still pop along there today if I have time when I visit the area.

Sources Hackney Gazette and London Parks and Gardens Trust.

Annette Kilbourne

Notice from Deptford Forum Publishing who published The Streets of London, the Booth Notebooks East, largely funded by East London History Society.

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE IN THE OLD EAST END

DEPTFORD FORUM PUBLISHING

invite you to an unforgettable walk on Saturday July 20 2019 from Shoreditch to Spitalfields to Aldgate which 120 years ago was one of the roughest parts of the whole of London, now very different.

Senior Blue Badge Guide Sue Hadley, an Eastender herself, will lead the walk documented in our book "The Streets of London: The Booth Notebooks: East" by George Duckworth, secretary for 10 years to Victorian businessman and philanthropist Charles Booth.

We start at 11.30 am at The Owl and Pussycat in Redchurch Street, close to Shoreditch High Street Station. We'll have coffee and biscuits there and at 12 noon listen to the first of three 10-minute pub talks by distinguished academics. Here Indy Bhullar, Curator of the Booth Legacy at the London School of

Economics where the Booth notebooks are kept, will describe how Charles Booth (1840-1916) funded and arranged the London poverty survey as the base for his 17-volume "Life and Labour of the People in London" published between 1889 and 1903. This helped influence Lloyd George's famous People's Budget of 1909, thrown out by the House of Lords to their shame and subsequent enfeeblement.

We are pleased that Mark Stephens, Charles Booth's great grandson, and his daughter Sam Stephens, Charles Booth's great great granddaughter will be on our walk.

Sue will take us through Shoreditch, past her old school in Spital Square, down to The Gun where at 1.15pm Dr Nadia Valman, Reader in English Literature at Queen Mary University of London, who researches the cultural history of east London will talk on her area of expertise – the immigrant Jewish population of Spitalfields. Nadia says: "Booth's study is extremely valuable for the detail on their lives but it's also interesting that his investigators have difficulty interpreting what they observe. My comments will compare what's in Booth to other sources on Jewish immigrant life in east London in the period."

We will reach our last pub via an area that Duckworth said was probably the worst in all London. Dorset Street no longer exists but we will see where it was and Sue will describe the horrors of the area in Booth's day. At the Hoop and Grapes at about 2.15 pm Dr Francis Holliss from the School of Architecture at London Metropolitan University will talk about the architectural aspects of home-working in East London in the late 19th Century. This will be our last stop and an opportunity for lunch. The pub is close to both Aldgate tube stations.

Guides consider 30 to be the maximum suitable number for a walk like this so that will be our limit. All walkers will be expected to pay a fee of £10 and buy a copy of the book which retails at £12 but will have a £2 discount for those on this walk. Copies will be available at the Owl and Pussycat on July 20. We would like the fee to be paid in advance

online to Mike and Jess Steele at their Halifax account 33336865 sort code 11 67 22. In the case of the several good people who have already bought copies of the Booth East book the fee payment should be £8.00.

If you are unable to join the walk, you can always purchase a copy of the book directly from ELHS. See details on the Publications page of the ELHS web site

Images mentioned at the end of Kelvin Wilson's enquiry on page 4



Mr James Piper of Beccles. J.W. Bond Studio, Gwynnes Place, Hackney Road. 1855



Mrs Mary Piper, nee Shardelow 1855