



Two students of Greencoat School, Stepney

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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 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](mailto: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 is taken from a post card of about 1910 showing a boy and a girl wearing the original uniform of the Green Coat School. The school was founded, in 1710, by 117 leading inhabitants of the Hamlet of Ratcliff, who assembled together for that purpose. A plot of freehold land was purchased, and on it in 1720 a schoolhouse for 110 pupils, was erected which remained standing until 1853, when it made way for a building at 5 Whitehorse Street. On either side of the doorway were effigies, carved in 1759, of a boy and a girl in the costumes of charity scholars at that time. Renamed 51 Whitehorse Road in 1937, it moved to its present location in Norbiton Road, Limehouse in the 1970s?

The children are wearing medals awarded for perfect attendance for the entire academic year. No medals specific to Green Coat School have been recorded, so these may have been generic types available from a number of suppliers.

## East London History Society Lecture Programme 2019

### Thursday September 19:

**Bow Railway Stations**  
Jon Bailey

### Thursday October 10:

Short AGM  
**Victoria Park, then & now**  
Philip Mernick

### Thursday November 14:

**W.W. Jacobs**  
Steve Pilcher,

### Thursday December 5:

**The Creeping Plague of Ghastly Fascadism**  
The Gentle Author,

### Thursday January 16:

**Film on an east London subject**  
Ray Newton & John Tarbey

### Thursday February 13:

**First World War & Tower Hamlets  
Cemetery, the story continues.**  
Diane Kendall

### Thursday March 12:

**Religion & Revolt on Wanstead Flats**  
Dr Mark Gorman & Peter Williams

### Thursday April 9:

**Hackney, Portrait of a Community**  
Laurie Elks

### Thursday May 14:

**The Precinct of St Katherine's by the Tower  
in the 18th century**  
Derek Morris

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](mailto: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 apart from this one 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.

### **Tom Ridge's campaign to save the second oldest gas holder in the world.**

The East End Waterway group has issued their Gasholder Special Newsletter Six campaigning on Tom Ridge's behalf, for the preservation of the Bethnal Green gas holder built in 1865/6, believed to be the second oldest surviving gas holder in the **WORLD**. It includes a link to the petition that Tom urges you to sign. The newsletter was a bit too long for us to reprint but we have copied it onto the ELHS web site and you can find it at: <http://eepurl.com/gz3dcH>

## **Hughes Mansions Survivors?**

I am writing from the TV production company responsible for Guy Martin's programming on Channel 4. We produced his recent D-Day special and over the years we've created a variety of history-based shows, including building a Spitfire and World War 1 tank. We also recently told the story of the lost regiment left behind after the Dunkirk retreat. We're looking at the approaching 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW2 and, more precisely, the last 'bomb' dropped on London – namely a V2 rocket that obliterated Hughes Mansions, in Vallance Road, in the March of 1945, killing 135 people. I wondered whether your organisation could help with locating survivors of that attack (miraculously there were quite a few) and ask whether they would be interested in telling their stories?

Any assistance would be hugely appreciated.

Neil Duncanson, CEO, North One Television,  
3-7 Ray Street, Farringdon, London EC1R  
3DR, 0207 502 5720,  
[neil.duncanson@northonetv.com](mailto:neil.duncanson@northonetv.com)

**From: Roger Mills**

**Subject: Signage in Tower Hamlets Parks and Spaces**

Tower Hamlets Parks Department is planning to put up a new series of history interpretation panels in parks in the borough. They want to hear anything you think should be included in the panels.

This message is mainly to alert interested parties that this work is underway and more details about plans for particular sites can be provided.

The planned signs are limited in space with regards to words and images so not all information would be able to be included - *but* they are interested in gathering stories about our parks. **Contact them on:**  
[park.projects@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:park.projects@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## **Exhibition: Unite & Resist: Protests in the East End 1970-2000**

**Saturday 3 August 2019 - Saturday  
15 February 2020**

**Tower Hamlets Local History  
Library and Archives**

Our next exhibition will showcase original archives from our collections which illustrate the prolific activism of the people of Tower Hamlets in the latter decades of the twentieth century. From the Stepney School Strike to the Battle of Brick Lane, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Stop Clause 28, the exhibition shines a light on these and other important moments in the borough's recent history including several lesser known struggles.

*This period of rapid change in the East End saw Tower Hamlets residents forming independent collectives and rising up in protest at various different emerging threats. The display features banners, badges, garments, posters, photographs, pamphlets and other archives which provide important evidence of these sometimes short-lived campaigns. Most of the items on display have been newly acquired or newly catalogued and have never before been on public display.*

## Books and More

### **New book from MOLA reveals evidence for the medieval priory and hospital under Spitalfields Market**

London's Spitalfields Market was the location of one of the city's largest archaeological excavations, carried out by MOLA between 1991 and 2007. A new book from MOLA presents the archaeological and documentary evidence for medieval activity here, on the north-eastern fringe of the historic city, and the site of the Augustinian priory and hospital of St Mary without Bishopsgate, later known as St Mary Spital. Large areas of the medieval precinct have been explored, making this by far the most intensively investigated medieval hospital, and one of the most extensively investigated monastic establishments, in Britain. The charnel crypt of the 14th-century cemetery chapel can be seen today in Bishops Square.

*'The medieval priory and hospital of St Mary Spital and the Bishopsgate suburb: excavations at Spitalfields Market, London E1, 1991–2007'* is available on the [MOLA website](http://www.mola.org.uk) (£32, ISBN 978-1-907586-48-4).



## 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>

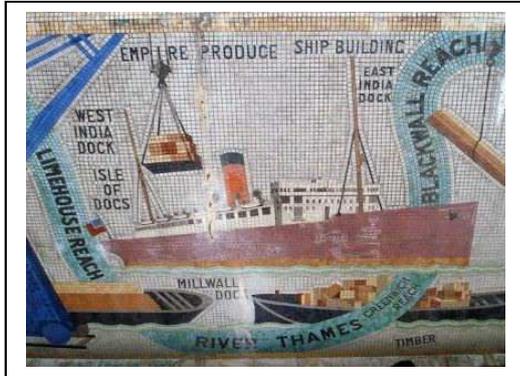
**Denise Bangs**  
**Idea Store Business Development Manager (Digital Services) My Back Garden**

<http://www.onthecorner.tv/about-us/>

## In Search of a Publisher

### EAST OF POPLAR IN MANDALAY

#### Lives at the heart of Empire 1600-1951



Poplar Town Hall, artist David Evans

I am just in the process of completing a book on Poplar and am looking for possible publishers. It is entitled 'East of Poplar in Mandalay' and I enclose relevant details:

***This is a story of mercantile Poplar and the East End of London and its relationship to the East India Company, the British Empire and the Indian subcontinent.***

This book examines the influence and legacies of the East India Company, the docks and maritime connections on Poplar and the East End of London. It explores the relationship of the area with the British Empire, imperialism and the Indian subcontinent and has a focus on the turbulent late Victorian period and the first half of the twentieth century.

The story is told, in part, through the life of James ('Pop') Wells from Wells's Junk Shop in the East India Dock Road. Pop's life and times, whether fully conscious of it or not, were shaped by the sea, empire, imperialism and India. His father Tom was born in Poplar in 1888, a landmark year for the East End in terms of poverty, deprivation and political

strife. Pop was born in 1918 in 'the Ashbucket' (Mason's Arms, Poplar) during the First World War, supposedly the 'war to end all wars'.



Pop grew up rooted in Cockney culture yet as a young man was to find himself far away in India and Burma fighting in atrocious conditions in the Naga Hills in 'the last great battle of empire' at Kohima. Eventually just twelve weeks before war was officially over, he was wounded at Dirty Pagoda Hill near Mandalay. In 1946 he finally returned home after six years to his beloved Poplar, to find it devastated by the Blitz. His old world was no longer.

His life, like millions of others, was at the mercy of the wider global world and accelerating change, all far beyond his control. Following years of austerity and rationing amongst the ravaged East End, a new world was being forged by 1951. The Festival of Britain, the creation of the NHS, the welfare state and the beginnings of a new multi-national Britain. Meanwhile the flag was running down throughout the Empire leaving powerful legacies both at home and overseas.

Any ideas for publishers greatly appreciated,  
Danny Wells  
*'Breathing Life into History'*

[www.history-talks.co.uk](http://www.history-talks.co.uk)

## **HENRY RAINE AND THE RAINE'S FOUNDATION**

At the time that Henry Raine was born in 1679, Wapping was semi-rural. Henry's father, Rowland, was a brewer. His mother, Elizabeth Barrett, was from Caulcot in Oxfordshire. The origins of the Raine family are a little uncertain although there seem to be many of that name originating in the north of the country.

It is assumed that Henry must have lived in some comfort. He was brought up in the Anglican tradition. From the age of 15, he was apprenticed to another brewer, Anthony Bond of the Worshipful Company of Brewers. The brewing industry was expanding into the suburbs so the Company of Brewers was losing its influence. By 1698, Rowland was to be sued by the company or he could join thus avoiding a large fine to the City Court. He eventually decided to join and settle out of court by paying a fine of £10.

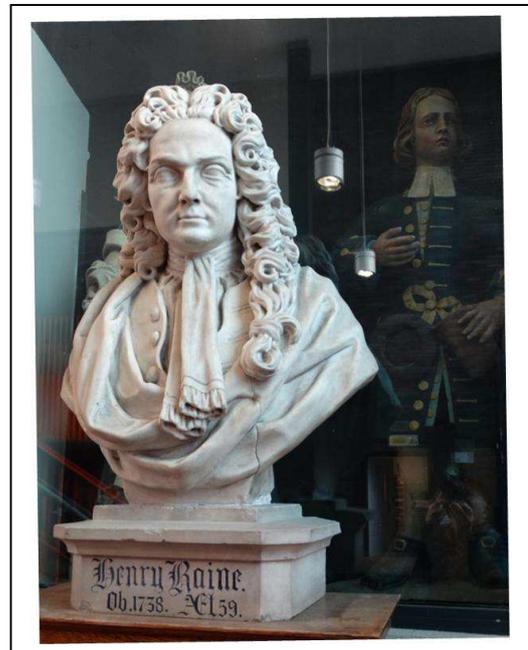
By apprenticing Henry to another brewer it was a path to respectability as Rowland was still considered an interloper.

For the next thirty years, Henry gradually rose within the Company of Brewers and in 1704 was made a Freeman of the Company and he was invested as a liveryman in 1715. His brewing business was located by the Thames at New Crane Wharf and was known as the Star Brewery.

Henry Raine had become prosperous enough that he was able, in 1714 to build a house in Woodford called Hurst Place. It is still there to this day.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1724, Henry married Sarah Petre at St Dunstan's Church, Stepney. Her father was a sea captain and the family lived in Mile End Old Town. She was descended from Sir William Petre, from a prominent Roman Catholic family who had been secretary to Edward VI, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth. They built Ingatestone Hall where Petre's descendants still live.

Sadly, Sarah died childless two years after the marriage at the age of 32. Unusual for the time, it seems that Henry Raine didn't marry again.



During this time from 1714 until 1729, St George's in the East was built. It is one of six Hawksmoor churches built in London with funding from a 1711 Act of Parliament known as the 50 Churches Act. The aim of the Act was to build 50 new churches to serve an ever-growing population in the developing suburbs. It was a way of counteracting a move away from the established church towards the nonconformist churches.

In 1698, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was founded. SPCK

wanted to bring inexpensive Christian literature to the masses. In order to succeed in its aims, it needed to encourage people to be able to read. Therefore, the mission was also an influential part of the 'Charity School' system. Parish councils and vestries were encouraged to set up these schools and find supporters to finance these new places of education. Queen Anne in 1711 had written to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to encourage the support of Charity Schools.

Henry Raine, from the parish records was involved from the beginning in the work of establishing a school at St George's in the East. By 1729, 132 charity schools were established throughout the country.

The actual beginning of Raine's Foundation is uncertain. Henry Raine most probably would have been involved in funding the school. The school in the parish by 1716 selected 50 boys for the school and in 1718, 50 girls were selected for the school. But by 1719 Henry Raine built the school on his own land in Fawdon Fields, New Gravel Lane, This lane is now called Raine Street. Therefore, the school can be said to have been founded 300 years ago this year. (The building still stands today and has been used as a base for the Academy of St Martins in the Fields and lately as a community centre.)

It seems Henry Raine was involved in the everyday running of the school and that he may have taught in the school himself. It isn't clear whether Henry Raine composed the school motto but it originates from that time and was affixed to the exterior of the original school. From that time and until today the motto is "Come in and do Your Duty to God and Man"

Girls were admitted from the age of 8 for reading, sewing and some arithmetic. The subjects would enable the girls to go into domestic service. At first, it was considered that there was no reason for girls to learn how

to write. On completion of the four years of school, a situation was procured with a "respectable family", and each girl was given a complete outfit.

Boys at the age of 8 were admitted for reading, writing and arithmetic. On leaving the school, the boys were given £3 to pay for their apprenticeship to a trade. Many would enter trades related to the river and the sea: for example carpenters for the shipbuilding industry.

All pupils were brought up in the principles of the Church of England. To be accepted for the school there had to be proof of baptism from the parish register. This is because there had been false claims at times from parents who wanted to get their children into school. Many fathers had jobs connected to the sea and the Thames.

In the summer, the children went to school from 7am until 11am and then 1pm to 5pm. In the winter, one hour later and one hour earlier in the afternoon. No work was to be done by candlelight. The boys had to learn their catechism by heart and to recite it distinctly and clearly. A singing master was employed and the children would process to church and sing on Sunday mornings and the evenings. In 1736 Henry Raine established an "asylum" behind New Gravel Lane School, The word, "asylum" meant a place of shelter. Only the most deserving of the day school girls had the right to go there for 4 years to remove the girls from the "corrupting influence" of their parents. The 50 chosen girls would be boarded. By 1883 funds had run out and the asylum closed.

There were expulsions from the main school. This was mainly for truancy or "neglecting school" or for baiting the new master. It seems some girls were expelled for "striking ye mistress". One boy was expelled in 1753 when the Trustees uncovered a "nest of sin". A girl was expelled for "lewdness". Also, the records

tell how two boys were flogged for swearing and having “obscene talk” with the girls. In 1757, Catherine Potterson was expelled for pilfering.

When Henry died in 1738 his will stated that he was 'bred up from childhood in the hamlet of Wapping and raised up by God from a small beginning to a plentiful fortune". He left thousands of pounds of South Sea Stock and properties.

Henry Raine, in his will, instructed his nephews to twice a year to hold a ballot in which he said that £210 be set aside from his stock so that girls from the asylum at the age of 22 could enter a draw for a dowry of £100. The £10 was for a feat after the draw. This was known as the “Marriage Portion” From the school records regarding the “Marriage Portion” it says that “six poor maids come trembling to draw the prize and the fortunate maid who got it burst into tears with excess of joy”.

The girls had to be 22 and of good character as well as employed. They also had to be practising members of the Church of England with excellent references. The Marriage Portion was first drawn in 1758 when Ann Motherland drew the prize. Unlucky candidates could put forward their names again for the next ballot.

The ballot was a big celebration in the parish. The girls would decorate the church and the school choir would sing. The dowry would be given in gold sovereigns in a silk bag, Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in about 1897, the tradition was discontinued. This was because the money had run out and there wasn't always a demand as very few candidates applied for the dowry.

In 1818 the school was part of the St George's National Schools movement. This was a movement that admitted children to school to learn the basics. Schools were expected to

make a small weekly charge to some pupils. However, there were still 50 free scholarships for boys and 50 for girls. In 1820 a new boys' school was opened by the Duke of Clarence who later became William IV.

In 1870 elementary education was introduced for all. This meant that by 1875, the Boys' school moved to Cannon Street Road and the girls' school moved nearby. Further subjects in the curriculum were added. The school became more of a secondary rather than an elementary school.

With the further developments in education, it was realised a new school would be needed to meet the demands of the changes that were taking place in education. If not, there would have been a cessation of the work of the Foundation and the loss of a school in the area. In July 1908, The Mercer's Company made available a site in Arbour Square for a new school. The Governors paid £9,600 for the site. The Governors had to convince the Board of Education that they could build a school for 250 boys and 250 girls. The finance to build the school came from various sources. The total cost of the project was £36,500 ,and the governors had to raise £15,000. (These debts were paid by 1921.)

In January 1913, the Arbour Square school opened. The school had specialist classrooms for subjects such as Art and Metalwork for example. Unusually, the school also had a firing range on the roof. The boys and girls were taught in the same school building but kept separate.

In 1915 the school cadets were founded. The cadets were disbanded in 1924 when the government withdrew funds for all cadet corps.

In October 1917, the school was visited by King George V, Queen Mary, Prince Albert and Princess Mary. This was after the school

sheltered 5000 people during the air raids in the First World War.

In World War 2, the school was evacuated; mainly to Brighton and to Egham because of the air raids.

By 1968, it was predicted that numbers would fall in London. Therefore, the boys and girls schools amalgamated and new classrooms were built on the roof.

The school moved from Arbour Square to the old Parmiters building in Approach Road in 1984. This was after Parmiters moved out of the area to Watford.

In 1997, the school joined with St Judes in Old Bethnal Green Road. This school had been built on the site of St Jude's church which had been destroyed in the Second World War. It had been opened by Princess Margaret in the 1950s. By this time the school was becoming a comprehensive school.

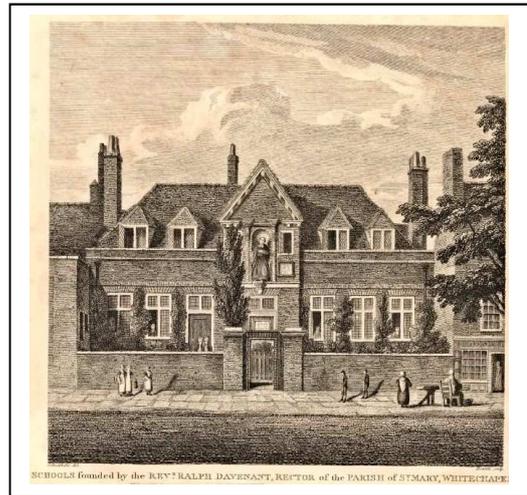
Three hundred years later, the school still celebrates Founder's Day on the first Friday in May. Part of the school attends a special service at St George's in the East and lays a wreath on Henry Raine's tomb in the churchyard.

**Joe Dolman**

## **DAVENANT FOUNDATION SCHOOL**

In 1680 Ralph Davenant Rector of St. Mary Matfelon church Whitechapel, founded and endowed a school for 40 poor boys of Whitechapel. A short time later, in addition to this bequest, a number of properties were given over to the school by Davenant's wife Mary and her sister who endowed some shares of an estate in Essex to be overseen by a newly formed body of trustees to maintain the school.

Ralph Davenant died in 1681 before the school could be built, but in his will he left a sum of money that he was owed to be used for the construction of the building. He also decreed that additionally, his goods should be sold towards the school funds after his wife's death.



The trustees struggled at first to find a site suitable for the construction of the school, but eventually a plot of land was found on the north side of Whitechapel Road to the east of the present day Davenant Street. This land was a part of the burial ground of St. Mary's situated about a quarter of a mile from the church. Previously it had been the site of a burial ground, a lime pit used during the great plague. Approval was given by the Bishop of London for the school to be built on the site and construction began in 1686, after a certificate had been granted for the secular use of the church land.

The lower part of the building was constructed with a brick range surrounding a seven bay front and the upper part had two pairs of hipped dormer windows set into the roof. A tower like structure was the outstanding feature. This contained the central bay of the seven at ground level and was finished off at roof level with a hipped top.

The endowments overseen by the trustees proved insufficient and in 1701 a benefactor believed to have been the former treasurer of the Trustees, donated £1,000 towards school funds. This money was invested in land and the capital on this and the other properties given to the school, generated funds which enabled it to provide education for about 30 girls in addition to the 40 boys originally planned for.

In the early 1800's there were more than 2,000 poor children over the age of seven in the parish and a local organization associated with the Whitechapel branch of the Church of England National Society, collaborated to address this problem. As a result a new school was opened in St. Mary Street (now Davenant Street) immediately west of the existing school. The foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Cambridge on the 12th of October 1813 and the building was completed in 1815. Both schools then became known as the Davenant schools and when the method of education known as the Monitorial System was introduced, it became possible for up to 1,000 pupils to be taught there in one large hall.

The 1680's school flourished and gain stability thanks to the generosity of its benefactors and it gradually began to benefit from a substantial income. This upturn in its fortunes enabled the school to take on many more pupils but by the early 1800's it became apparent that the present building would no longer be able to cope with the anticipated increase in pupil numbers, especially if the successful Monitorial System of Education was introduced.

A decision was therefore taken to proceed with the construction of a new building in Whitechapel Road and substantial donations were made towards the scheme by several local dignitaries including a number of the trustees.

The foundation stone was laid by the Duke of York in 1818 and the building was completed very soon afterwards. It was built with two storeys and a basement with five bays. The construction was of yellow brick with stone coping and cornice and there was a deep railed area in front of the basement. The entrance to the school was through a central archway leading to a raised ground floor and above the archway was a stone plaque engraved with the name of the school.

The various Whitechapel Parish Charities were amalgamated when the Charity Commission was formed in 1853. This alliance led to the formation of the Whitechapel Foundation Commercial School which was opened in 1888 in Leman Street. It created a third strand of the Davenant complex because the Whitechapel Charities now embraced both the St. Mary Street and Leman Street Schools which were merged with the Whitechapel Road School to form the Whitechapel Foundation. What had been Davenant's original school on Whitechapel Road now became known as the foundation school. The St Mary's and Leman Street schools were now confusingly both called the Davenant schools.

In 1891 the governors voted against a new roadside building in favour of a new structure to be built in the playground, behind the existing school. Building work took place in 1894-6 and it was built on columns and girders which enabled the playground space to be retained. An enclosed staircase led to the first floor where additional up to date classroom space and a magnificent assembly hall were situated.

Once this new extension was completed the Leman Street school closed down in 1896. The St, Mary's Street school continued under LCC maintenance as Davenant Elementary School, but it finally closed in 1939.

During World War II the school was evacuated and taken over by the Heavy Rescue Service

which was under the auspices of the civil defence organisation.

In 1944 when the building was handed back to the school authorities, it became the Davenant Foundation School for Boys and at that time it educated about 200 pupils.

The final dramatic event in the school's history occurred when it moved away from the East End and relocated to Loughton in 1966, thus ending a 280 year association with Whitechapel.



**Whitechapel building in 2019**

### **Tom French**

Acknowledgements:  
British History on Line The Survey of London  
Davenant Foundation School History (Loughton).

### **Landmylle's Lock on the River Lea?**

During Crossrail there was extensive work on the site of the "portal" where the railway emerges from the tunnel on the east side of the River Lea, and over a series of "back rivers". Near to the present course of the main river were a series of wooden stakes set at right-angles to the flow, interpreted as a series of weirs.

Unfortunately, no timber had enough tree rings to be dated by dendrochronology but the oldest carbon date was (calibrated) AD 1262–1290. This is older than Bow Lock, recorded as built

during the reign of Edward I (1272–1307) by the prior of Holywell (Shoreditch), and it may be a re-used timber. Other carbon dates cluster in ranges c. 1420–1520, 1461–1527 and 1555–1633, and the weirs are presumed to have been long-lived and rebuilt periodically. This corresponds to a period of strong, and growing, tidal influence, which made the Lea and back rivers a centre for mills (the few on the main channel being within the manor of Stepney, Middlesex and the more frequent mills on the back rivers within the Manor of West Ham, Essex. Weirs, which formed part of the water management of the river, had multiple uses, channelling seasonal waters into osier beds, for instance that shown in this area on Gascoigne's 1703 map, as well as providing a series of tide "flash" locks (where boatmen were charged for hauling their boats with windlass and lines through the "flash" of flowing water), and providing fisheries.

Rents for mills were often charged in eels, and before modern pollution migratory trout, sea trout, salmon and occasionally sturgeon may have been taken in baskets (or "butts") lowered into gaps where paddles had formerly blocked the flow, in frames (or "rymers"). Stafford-born Izaak Walton describes the excellent fishing in the Lea in the 1650s, in "The Compleat Angler". Commonly these weirs would have causeways constricting the flow to a narrow area, where the frames were set. Some relief from the water pressure was provided by wooden pipes through the earthen causeways, known as "gutters", though K. R. Fairclough in his 1987 PhD thesis "*The River Lea 1571–1767...*" often records them by the graphic local name of *pysser*. Re-used split elm pipes in the Pudding Mill Lane Portal excavations may well once have been such *pyssers*.

Weirs were always multifunctional and legislation drawing ultimately on the Magna Carta's clause requiring the removal of fish-weirs ('*kidelli*') commonly included the following standard text: '*les gors, molyns,*

*estankes, estakes et kydelx*’ [fish-weirs, mills, mill-pools, stakes and fish traps]. Later, as the River Lea Navigation rose to greater prominence, fees for lock-keepers became more important and on the Lea, such “staunches” were commonly referred to as “turnpikes”.

The Pudding Mill Lane Portal structures were buried by 2m of silt when the river moved on. The course of ‘The Old River’ on the Gascoigne map of 1703 east of the main channel at Old Ford, was maintained by parish boundaries, which lie just 28m east of the structures found on the site. Two parish boundary markers were found during site monitoring. The site would therefore lie between the ‘The Old River’ and the course of the Lea as shown in 1703. It is possible, suggests Fairclough, that ‘The Old River’ channel was connected with a tidal mill known as ‘Landmylnes’ that had once been part of the manor of Stepney (Middlesex), but which had fallen out of use by the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century; a ‘landmylles lock’, which lay between Old Ford and Bow Bridge, was recorded in 1551. In the 1660s, the lock’s owner (a Mr Beast, or Best) died ‘in the sickness year’ (plague?), after which it is presumed to have been removed.

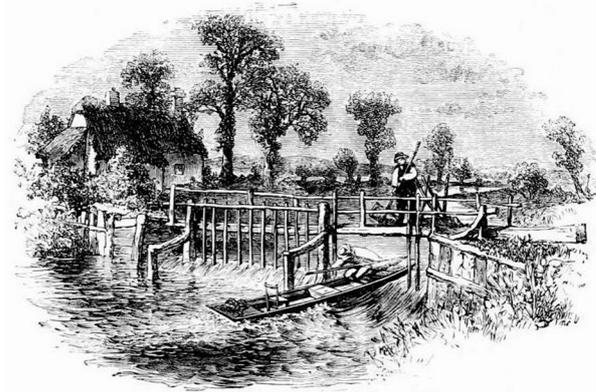
I strongly recommend a visit to the House Mill museum at Three mills, and the excellent work of their volunteers, but when you do visit, be aware it is a very late iteration of mills that once proliferated up and down the Lea and which relied on weirs to direct waters to them.

For more details of the Pudding Mill Lane excavations please read the article **A POSSIBLE WEIR AND FLASH LOCK Excavations as part of the Crossrail works on the River Lea at Pudding Mill Lane** *London Archaeologist* **Vol.15 No. 3 / Winter 2017 pp80-87** by myself, Damian Goodburn and Virgil Yendell . The original archive on which it is based is accessible at **J Gascoigne map of Stepney (1703)**

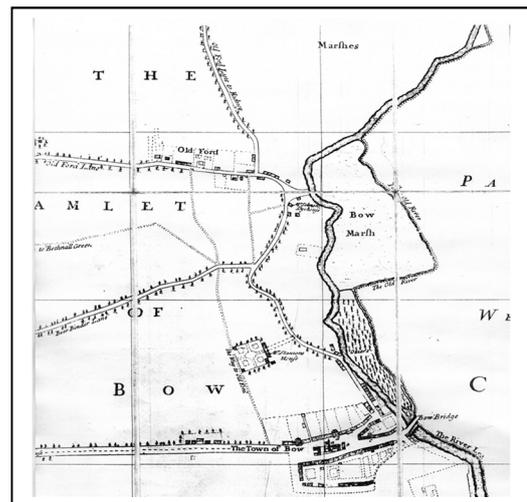
<https://learninglegacy.crossrail.co.uk/documents/archaeology-archive-pudding-mill-lane/> (though the article has far more historical analysis).

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**Hart’s weir (now the site of Northmoor Lock on the Thames near Oxford) – a ‘paddle and rymer’ weir with the ‘paddle’ raised for a boat to pass upstream through the flash lock**



**J Gascoigne map of Stepney (1703)**

## Tower Hamlets Pubs

In the previous issue of ELHS Newsletter (4-13), I bemoaned the disappearance of Bromley by Bow's pubs following the closure (and demolition) of The Blue Anchor. I was, therefore, rather pleased to see in the July 31<sup>st</sup> issue of The Evening Standard an article with the headline "East End pubs get protection from last orders"

The article by Rachael Burford read "Dozens of the East End's best known pubs, from the hostelry where Brunel drank while building one of the great Victorian steamships to a hangout of the Krays, are to be granted protection from developers. Tower Hamlets has identified 37 venues - almost a third of the borough's pubs - it wants to list as assets of local importance.

The listing gives protection to buildings not considered grand or of important enough historical value to be registered by Historic England. Developers wanting to build around them will have to ensure they preserve the pub and its characteristics. Tower Hamlets is believed to be the first local authority in the country to offer protection to dozens of pubs at the same time.

Among those set to be locally listed are The Ship Inn, which Isambard Kingdom Brunel is said to have drunk at when building the Great Eastern steamship at Burrells Wharf, The Bow Bells, whose haunted bathrooms have attracted ghost hunters globally, and The Marquis of Cornwallis, a favourite with Sixties gangsters. The George in Blackwall, which was visited by film star Jayne Mansfield in 1959 and used as an unofficial meeting place for the Millwall Football Club in the 1890s, is also among those set to be locally listed.

In the past 18 months more than 1,140 pubs in England and Wales have closed down, with many either demolished or converted into homes or offices.

In 2015 the Joiner's Arms in Shoreditch, one of Britain's most famous LGBTQ pubs which boasted Alexander McQueen and Christopher Kane as customers, closed to make way for a housing development. The 165-year-old Carlton Arms in Bethnal Green closed in 2018 so flats could be built above. Developers had said they would retain the pub, but it was demolished last September.

Tower Hamlets now has 130 pubs — 75 fewer than in 2001. Neighbouring Newham has seen the biggest decline in the country, with fewer than half the pubs it had in 2001 still open. Ann Sutcliffe, of Tower Hamlets Council, said: "The local list will ensure that heritage assets are protected so they can be enjoyed by future generations."

The actual Tower Hamlets' report can be found at: <http://www.tiny.cc/234xaz>

At 64 pages it is far too long for us to republish (assuming Tower Hamlets let us) but it is full of very interesting information. It compares the situation in Chelmsford, Ipswich and Barking & Dagenham with Tower Hamlets and includes many examples of closures and the dubious methods sometimes used by developers to get permission for change of use. The seven pages long bibliography shows how detailed was the research. The report includes a map showing the location of pubs and invaluable lists of open and closed pubs, the latter with their dates of closure. I will have to check with our friends at Bancroft Road if printed copies are available.

Then on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August I received an emailed newsletter from Tower Hamlets and the second item was "Council steps in to give more time at the bars" Following this will give you details, including pictures, of all 37 pubs now added to the Tower Hamlets Local List. You can get this report from <http://www.tiny.cc/8eq7az>. **Philip Mernick**

## **The Bethnal Green Museum to be transformed.**

I recently had a very instructive meeting with Hailee Kukura, Project Manager for the transformation.

Many members will have been to the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, a branch of the Victoria & Albert Museum. Opened in 1872, it reused the “Brompton Boilers” built to house exhibits from the 1851 Hyde Park Exhibition.

The Department of Practical Art offered to set up branches in North, South and East London but only East London took up the offer. Its activities have always been aimed at the inhabitants of the East End but it also served as an overflow for the main V&A Museum: I remember the upper floor housing Japanese arms and armour and Victorian furniture made from deer antlers.

From 1974 it has been the UK’s National Museum of Childhood. Attendances have risen from 250,000 in 2006 to 400,000 in 2018 and the Museum plans a major transformation. I reproduce below information from their web site.

### **Transformation**



The V&A Museum of Childhood is beloved by its local community with a unique and wonderful story to tell as East London’s first museum. In October 2018, Director Tristram Hunt announced a major redevelopment

project to become a museum of design and creativity for children, families and young people and unlock its huge potential to fire imagination and spark ingenuity.

The V&A’s world-class collections are at the heart of this new mission. The redevelopment will draw on the full scope of the V&A’s collections of art, design and performance.

With a mandate set by local school children to become the world’s ‘most joyful’ museum, De Matos Ryan and AOC Architecture have been appointed to lead the transformation of the museum’s buildings and galleries. De Matos Ryan’s proposals include The Kaleidoscope, a feature staircase for the Main Hall inspired by optical toys and a new lower ground entrance to improve access for school groups and families with buggies.

AOC Architecture are leading on the overall redesign of the museum and three new galleries. In preparation, an entire gallery, called Open Studio, has been transformed into a working design studio. In Open Studio, visitors are encouraged to physically hold and interact with objects from the V&A collection, test out display ideas and feedback on work in progress.

Open Studio builds on the museum’s commitment towards co-design – the practice by which visitors become active, creative participants. Children, teachers, families and community groups are all central to the transformation of the new V&A Museum of Childhood.

**Philip Mernick**

## **THE FATE OF THE OLDEST TREE IN THE EAST END**

by The Gentle Author (*The Gentle Author writes daily about the culture of East London at [www.spitalfieldslife.com](http://www.spitalfieldslife.com)*)

The Bethnal Green Mulberry stands in the grounds of the former London Chest Hospital next to Victoria Park. It is a gnarly old specimen which in local lore is understood to be more than four hundred years old and is believed to be the oldest tree in the East End.

I find it a poignant spectacle to view this venerable Black Mulberry. Damaged by a bomb in the Second World War, it has charring still visible upon its trunk which has split to resemble a Barbara Hepworth sculpture. Yet, in spite of its scars and the props that are required to support its tottering structure, the elderly tree produces a luxuriant covering of green leaves each spring and bears a reliably generous crop of succulent fruit every summer.

The Bethnal Green Mulberry finds itself today in the middle of the site for a new housing development. Four hundred years ago, these were the gardens of Bishop Bonner's Palace and it is he who is credited with planting the Mulberry in the mid-sixteenth century. Even in the nineteenth century, the Mulberry was recognised as of great age and an inkwell at the London Hospital in Whitechapel made from a branch, dating from 1915, bears a plate suggesting that the Bishop sat in the tree's shade while deciding which heretics to execute.

Consequently, the Bethnal Green Mulberry has a Tree Protection Order and is designated as a Veteran Tree which grants it special protection in planning law. Yet developers Crest Nicholson want to put a block of luxury flats on the site the Mulberry, when there is plenty of space within the grounds to move the building and leave the tree to flourish and bear fruit for future generations. They plan to dig up the venerable Mulberry and move it out of their way which according Julian Forbes-Laird, Expert Witness in Arboriculture and editor of the British Standard in tree conservation, will almost certainly kill it.

Last July, the government extended extra protection to Veteran Trees which can now only be sacrificed for 'wholly exceptional reasons.' Last September, when Tower Hamlets council Development Committee met to consider Crest Nicholson's proposal, no-one could see how the developer's block of luxury flats constituted 'wholly exceptional reasons,' until the Head of Planning explained helpfully that it did not apply – since the proposal was actually to 'save' the Bethnal Green Mulberry by digging it up and moving it.

Subsequently, Tower Hamlets Council approved Crest Nicholson's planning application for their development including digging up the Bethnal Green Mulberry. In spite of the history, in spite of the Tree Protection Order, in spite of the change in Planning Law designed to extend extra protection to Veteran Trees, in spite of three hundred letters of objection by local people and over ten thousand signatures on a petition, the application was allowed. Rather than tell Crest Nicholson to move their proposed building, Tower Hamlets Development Committee granted permission for the development to go ahead and the Bethnal Green Mulberry to be dug up.

Yet there is still hope. The East End Preservation Society has crowd-funded a legal challenge to overturn the council's decision and force Crest Nicholson to go back to the drawing board and create a better development for Victoria Park which does not involve digging up the Mulberry, offers more social housing, does less damage to the listed London Chest Hospital building and preserves more of the mature trees growing in the grounds.

If they dig it up and move it, will the Mulberry fall apart? Will it decay and die after moving? Will it flourish for centuries in its new position? Time alone will reveal the fate of the Bethnal Green Mulberry.

*You can contribute to the East End Preservation Society's legal fund to Save the Bethnal Green Mulberry at [www.crowd-justice.com/case/save-bethnal-green-mulberry/](http://www.crowd-justice.com/case/save-bethnal-green-mulberry/)*

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