



Minton Tile c. 1890 – from Philip Mernick's Collection

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Editorial Note:

Philip Mernick, Chairman, Doreen Kendall, Secretary, Harold Mernick, Membership, David Behr, Programme, Diane Kendall, Sigrid Werner and Rosemary Taylor.

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

Enquiries to Doreen Kendall, 20 Puteaux House, Cranbrook Estate, Bethnal Green, London E2 0RF, Tel: 0208 981 7680, or Philip Mernick, email: phil@mernicks.com. Check out the History Society's website at www.eastlondonhistory.org.uk.

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 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 a Minton tile, possibly decorated outside the factory, depicting the blind beggar and his daughter. The legend tells of Henry de Montfort, son of Simon de Montfort, blinded at the battle of Evesham in 1265. He was nursed to health by a baroness, and together they had a child named Besse. He became the "Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green", begging at the crossroads so successfully that he became very wealthy. His beautiful daughter attracted many suitors who quickly disappeared when they discovered that her father was a beggar. That is until one true young man ignored her "lowly" birth and proposed. He then discovered that his father in law was both wealthy and of noble birth and the couple, we assume, lived happily ever after. The blind beggar and his daughter were adopted as the badge of Bethnal Green and appear on many municipal documents and badges. In recent times they were also associated with a certain notorious public house.

East London History Society Lecture Programme 2020

January 16:

Films of Wapping

Ray Newton & John Tarbey

February 13:

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

Diane Kendall

March 12:

Religion & Revolt on Wanstead Flats

Dr Mark Gorman & Peter Williams

April 9:

Hackney, Portrait of a Community

Laurie Elks

May 14:

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

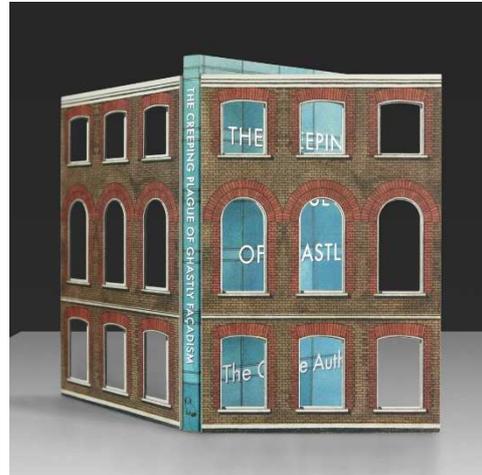
Derek Morris

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**

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.

The Creeping Plague of Ghastly Facadism by The Gentle Author



"As if I were being poked repeatedly in the eye with a blunt stick, I cannot avoid becoming increasingly aware of a painfully cynical trend in London architecture which threatens to turn the city into the backlot of an abandoned movie studio."

The Gentle Author presents a humorous analysis of facadism - the unfortunate practice of destroying an old building apart from the front wall and constructing a new building behind it - revealing why it is happening and what it means.

As this bizarre architectural fad has spread across the capital, The Gentle Author has photographed the most notorious examples, collecting an astonishing gallery of images guaranteed to inspire both laughter and horror in equal measure.

A hardback of 122 pages with double board covers 156mm x 234mm, £15. Available from various sources online or direct from Spitalfields Life.

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 75th 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

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

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

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.

Researching Rebels in your Family History. Bancroft Road, Saturday 18th of January 2020. 11-4PM

A day of talks and workshops introducing how you can research the rebels in your family. Sessions will range from a beginner's guide to family history, special sessions exploring Afro-Caribbean and Somali family history to writing and publishing your research! We will have stalls from Friends of Island History Trust, The East of London Family History Society, The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, **ELHS** and others. For our younger family historians, we welcome them to join our family historyzine workshop. More information from www.ideastore.co.uk

TOURISTS IN TOWN:

This refers to an article by David Webb in Newsletter 4-03, Winter 2015/16 about photographer J.W. Bond, illustrated with pictures of James & Mary Piper of Beccles.

The background to two mid-19th century Hackney portraits

Two photographic images on glass— so called ambrotypes— owned by collector of East London ephemera Phil Mernick, are there only by chance. The two people portrayed, identified as “James Piper of Beccles” and “Mary Piper née Shardelow” by the labels on the reverse side, were mere tourists in town, on a visit to their children.

At the start of the 1860s, the couple’s eldest son Samuel lived with his wife Rosa in Harriet Cottages on Enfield Road, just off De Beauvoir Square. Samuel worked in an overseer’s function in the warehouse of Messrs. Leaf, Sons & Company, in the City, selling woollen cloth, silks and ribbons, and all sorts of haberdashery. So did his younger brother Edward, who kept his family in what were called the Layland Cottages, towards London Fields in Hackney. The men had an older sister too, Sarah, who with her husband John Page had a house on Shrubland Road in Shoreditch.

All three had moved out of their small Suffolk birthplace of Beccles in the 1850s, and into the expanding estates and businesses of East London. The work the Piper boys chose, was not far removed from what they grew up seeing: James Piper, their father, ran a successful draper’s shop. In London, however, the company was larger by leaps, and their role (as so-called warehousemen) just a link in the chain. A newspaper of 1857 described the job. An order for sample dresses would arrive in a letter which was first received by the manager of the Order Room. He then passed it to a

warehouseman to take care of, and himself wrote the invoice for the client. The warehouseman selected one or two of his men to select the dresses. They gave these to a porter who wrapped them up in a parcel of brown paper. Then the carman of the company delivered the order— which was signed for by the hotel porter receiving in a book the carman carried with him.

Born in 1805, James Piper at age twenty married a widow eight years his senior: Mary Shardalow. She brought with her a daughter, Elizabeth. And it was that girl, a lot older than the next few children, married when they were still at school, who was the first to move to Hackney— the Piper children’s first nephew was born on Mortimer Road in 1847.

With their half-sister Elizabeth settled in East London, Sarah, Samuel and Edward had a base there to follow up on later. And James and Mary Piper, they came to call too. On one such visit, they stepped into a photo studio.

James William Bond of Gwynn’s Place, off Hackney Road, wasn’t an obvious choice to be commissioned for the Pipers’ likenesses. The gentleman was merely an amateur photographer, his real profession listed as optician. However, Bond was also keen on experimenting with microscopes— and therein had found a friend in Samuel Piper. As was fashionable in those days, the above-mentioned company of Messrs. Leaf rallied its working men around a common interest by giving them a hobby club. The Old Change Microscopical Society, as it was called, organised soirées for the men’s families, with gas lit slides of insects or pond life showing under long lines of their instruments. They also showed their collections to likeminded societies all over London. Samuel Piper took his enthusiasm even further: he is credited with the invention of several microscope improvements.

James and Mary Piper's photographically recorded visit to their children might have been one of many. Mary Piper died in 1865, back home in Beccles, but when her husband remarried the following year, he chose Haggerston's All Saints church as the venue. His oldest son witnessed. The labels on the two Piper ambrotypes point to a date much further back, perhaps as early as 1855 but also an address optician James Bond occupied till at least 1861.

The ambrotype portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Piper at one point went back home with them: the author of this article has a carte de visite copy of one made by a Beccles photographer. That copy then returned to London, to be pasted into a photo album kept by Samuel Piper's wife Rosa (which more than a century later found its way into a Norwich auction, then into the collection of the present author in the Netherlands). The ambrotypes too returned to London, and must have been kept with the descendants of either Elizabeth, Sarah or Edward Piper, they in turn eventually being acquired by Phil Mernick— their images and travels making them, indeed, proper tourists of East London history.

Kelvin Wilson

Ridderkerk in the Netherlands. Archaeological illustrator, storyteller and collector of early photography. Presently the owner of, and busily researching, (most of) the Piper family's Victorian photo mementoes.

Books and More

West Ham and its Fire Brigade by Peter Williams

About 140 pages, about 150 black and white and 15 colour photographs. Published on 30th March, £14.99 + £2.95 UK postage (£17.94) ISBN 978-0-9934684-4-5.

Contact Peter at pows.wanstead@gmail.com or send cheque to Peter Williams at 71 Lorne Road, London E7 0LL or PayPal to petros.williams@btinternet.com

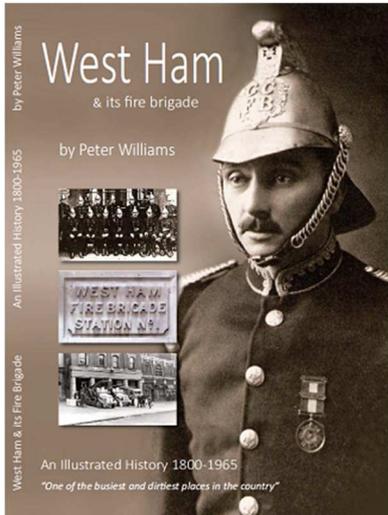
This book looks at the development of West Ham as part of the wider East London area, and how West Ham's position influenced the development of its fire brigade.

From haphazard arrangements under the old parish vestry system in the 1850s, the book tells the story of the development of systematic public services, such as the fire brigade, during the period of rapid industrialisation and development after the coming of the railways in the late 1830s.

Many new industries were located in West Ham including those smelly, offensive and dangerous trades no longer permitted in London proper after the mid-1840s. The area east of the River Lea saw many industrial innovations in petrol, chemicals and early plastics as well as the refining of products in the docks from the trade of the Empire, most notably rubber and sugar.

All this had an impact on the fire brigade, which had to professionalise rapidly to meet all the risks in the borough. West Ham Fire Brigade became known as an innovator in equipment and techniques – and faced its greatest challenge ever in the 1940s with the Blitz on the London docks.

After the period of the National Fire Service in the War, the Brigade returned to West Ham Council control and survived until April 1965 when it became part of the London Fire Brigade.



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!

Hidden Histories

Published by the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park the book will be available at branch meetings and at the 2020 ELFHS AGM. Alternatively please send a cheque for £14.99 + £4.50 postage and packing with your name and address to The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, The Soanes Centre, Southern Grove, Mile End, London E.3 4PX. It will be on sale at the meeting.

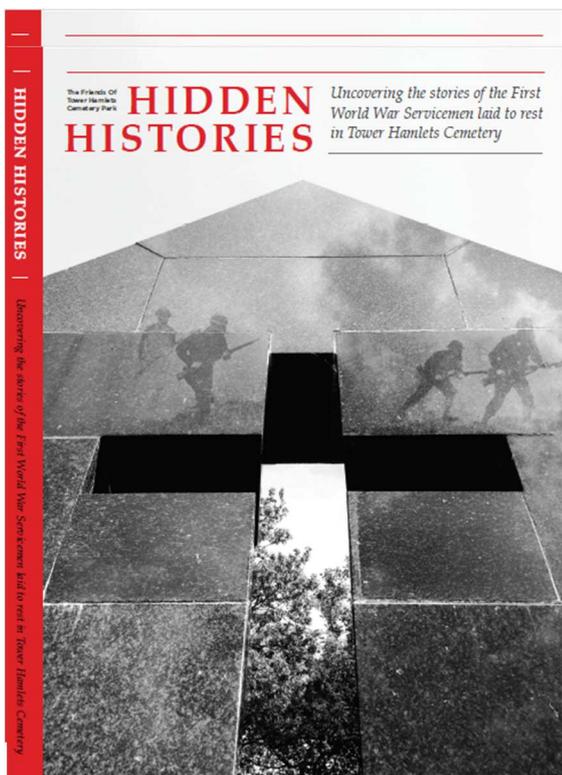
Many of you not only attended the History Fayre back in 2015 when the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park launched their Hidden Histories WW1 project but also their Vintage tea themed afternoon in November 2018 to celebrate the closure of the project, where you were blithely promised the Hidden Histories book on the lives of the 204 WW1 servicemen would soon be available.

Well we started the project with optimism and naivety and we finished not quite so naive but still will plenty of optimism, not knowing the setbacks that would beset us as we tried to get the book to print and the weeks turned into months. We continued to beaver away and when you see the book I hope you will think it's been worth the wait, because I'm still astounded by the amount of research 'we' actually did and the small A5 pamphlet which turned into over a 250 page A4 book does our servicemen proud.

The book not only uncovers the stories of the 204 servicemen who lost their lives during the First World War and are commemorated on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission War Memorial, (located just inside the entrance to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park) and buried in the now closed cemetery, as it follows the lives of servicemen who were born in the East End, but also those from Canada, Australia and New Zealand who never returned home.

Using contemporary reports from the time, it charts a synopsis of the international nature of the conflict, conscription, and new developments in warfare, the part men and women from the major Commonwealth nations played. The role the East London Suffragettes played in helping the women cope not only with the emotional cost of loss and worry as they saw loved ones depart for the battle front, but finding they were suddenly left alone to provide for their family while coping with rationing and Zeppelin raids. With no social benefits the diversity of jobs held by family members did not always succeed in keeping the family from the Workhouse. How local war shrines developed into the War Memorials we know today.

Diane Kendall



The Old Nichol

The Old Nichol, situated immediately to the south-east of St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, in the borough of Bethnal Green, was the most notorious slum in 19th century London. Built on land which originally belonged to the nunnery of John the Baptist Holywell, founded in 1189, it passed into private hands with the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-40). It took its name from John Nichol of Gray's Inn, the owner, who granted a lease of 4 ¼ acres to John Richardson, a London mason, in 1680, after building a few houses himself.

Houses were built on the southern area and Old Nichol Street, running from east to west, was in existence by 1683. New Nichol Street, parallel to it but further north, was built by 1708. Half Nichol Street, parallel but still further north, by 1732.

Some way further to the north but still parallel was Old Castle Street, which took its name from a fortification built in the English Civil War. Continuing to the east from Old Castle Street was Virginia Walk, which existed by 1694.

During the late 17th and early 18th century numerous houses were built along the existing streets but without planning or an effective system of drainage. Cesspools were dug to take the sanitary waste in the same area as wells were sunk – a threat to health.

The land to the south of Castle Street and Virginia Walk was built up. Gasgoigne Place and Sweet Apple Square were constructed in the 1770s.

The area between Half Nichol Street and Castle Street was developed as Nelson Street and Collingwood Street in the early 19th century and named after two naval heroes.

However, the houses were jerry built and were crowded into very limited space.

In 1842, Hector Gavin, a qualified doctor and seasoned campaigner, wrote a detailed report on the Old Nichol entitled *Sanitary Ramblings, being sketches and illustrations of Bethnal Green*. He described west Bethnal Green, encompassing the Old Nichol as exceeding all others in filth, disease, mortality, poverty and wretchedness. He visited and reported on every street in great detail.

Collingwood place housed a collection of mud and filth. Nelson Street had a cow yard with a number of dung heaps. Half Nichol Street was covered with dirt and rubbish trodden into the mud. Turville Buildings in Turville Street had 8 houses with no water tap, 2 privies for 3 houses and another for 7 houses – all nasty and offensive. Old Nichol Street had 1 tap for 9 houses. “The houses”, he says, “have been constructed in defiance of every law and principle on which the health and lives of the occupants depend.”

Many have scarcely any foundations; clay or damp earth lies immediately under the floorboards; floors are often below the level of the ground and liable to be flooded; they are often built with the worst materials and lack repair. The dwellings of the poor are destitute of those structural conveniences common to the better class of houses, he said. The privies, where they are attached, are either close to the houses or at a distance from them, exposed to public view or common to large numbers of houses and families.

Hector Gavin’s criticisms produced little change and 40 years after his report conditions were still appalling. Neither Bethnal Green Vestry Committee nor the Metropolitan Board of Works intervened. In 1888 the MBW dismissed as too small an appeal by Bethnal Green Medical Officer of Health to take action on 29 of the houses.

In 1890 the Bethnal Green Medical Officer of Health reported in full on the area. It consisted of 28 narrow streets, containing 730 houses, 12 public houses and beer shops, 21 shops and factories and 2 lodging houses. The population was 5,566 – 3,376 adults and 2,196 children. The death rate per annum was 254 per thousand compared with 159 for the rest of Bethnal Green which was higher than for London as a whole.

The new London County Council, established in 1889, responded to the appeal under the Artisan Dwelling Act from the Medical Officer of Health and produced a plan to demolish the Old Nichol and rebuild a model housing development designed by Owen Fleming.

The Rev. Arthur Osborne Jay came to office at Holy Trinity Parish which embraced the area in 1886. He wrote 3 books, *Life in Darkest London, A Story of Shoreditch* and *The Social Problem*, which described the conditions and problems of the area.

He also invited the novelist Arthur Morrison to the area, which led Morrison to write *A Child of the Jago*, in which he used pseudonyms to represent the actual streets of the Old Nichol. He presented the population as dominated by vicious and murderous villains and criminals.

It is true that many criminals lived in the area. One street was said to include 68 ticket of leave men who had spent time in prison.

The book *Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1981) by Raphael Samuel gives an account of the life of a criminal born in Boundary Street. However, not all the population conformed to the picture painted by Arthur Morrison or that reflected in Arthur Harding’s story.

Three generations of my ancestors lived in the Old Nichol, at 17 Nelson Street, from the 1860s until demolition. George Frederick

Sheen (1799-1889), my great great grandfather, his son James Thomas Sheen (1843-1936), my great grandfather, and the latter's daughter Sarah Jane (1869-1957) who was my grandmother.

James Thomas Sheen went out to work in a rope yard at 8 years of age and never attended school, but later became a master upholsterer in his home and trained 8 of his 9 sons in his trade. He had a horse and cart and used to take the horse through the house to the back yard overnight as there was nowhere else to stable it. James Thomas Sheen was converted by the Salvation Army, became teetotal and brought up his family to be law abiding citizens.

Along with thousands of others, the Sheen family was obliged to vacate their home for demolition and James found a house and a yard in Brick Lane, just south of Bethnal Green Road. His children and many other residents found replacement homes further east in Bethnal Green.

The reconstructed area comprised a number of wide streets, which took on Huguenot names, radiating around a raised central area, Arnold Circus, on which a bandstand was built. A total of 1,067 tenements were erected which accommodated 5,524 people. The scheme also comprised a laundry, shops and workshops. It was opened in 1900 by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII).

Few of the original residents, however, were allocated tenements and the social class of residents went up. To the present day, the Boundary Street scheme around Arnold Circus has provided much sought-after accommodation for City workers and other middle class residents – a very different scene from the original Old Nichol that it replaced.

Stan Newens

A Family from Europe

My German ancestry starts with Gerhard and Martha Stuhrs' daughter Martha Amelia marrying John Alfred Howard in Holy Trinity Church, Grays Inn Road, Holborn in February 1869. Martha was 18 and John was 24, they both give their address as Grays Inn Road, Holborn. John and Martha were my Paternal Gt Grandparents. John Alfred was born about 1844 the tenth child of eleven born in Clerkenwell, John worked as a Feather Dyer, and was most likely deaf, the son of Charles Howard, 1801-56, a Bricklayer from Wenhaston Suffolk, who married Emma Fronds 1805-53 in August 1822 in St Marylebone London.

Martha Amelia Stuhr, Martha's mother was born in 1851 in Back Row, Bath Terrace, St George in the East, she was the daughter of Gerhard 1805-66 a German Sugar Baker from Hanover and Martha Stuhr (nee Groves) 1826-98, of Spitalfields, East London. Gerhard died in Fashion Street in August 1866 after a long illness. Martha died in the Central London Sick Asylum in the Strand in November 1898. She had lived with her different married daughters over the years.

John and Martha Amelia Howard, lived in Percival Street, Clerkenwell from about 1876, John is recorded in Street Directories as Feather Dyer and later as Ostrich Feather importers, and later as Hat makers. They had 8 children from 1869-86. The first 3 children were born in different parts of Hoxton. Their 3rd child was Henry Samuel Howard 1874-1953, my Grandfather. Later as their business grew, they moved to Beech Street, Barbican, then Seven Sisters Road, Holloway, and finished up in Hornsey Road, Holloway, from about 1887. But their workshop remained in Percival Street, Clerkenwell till 1911.

Martha died in July 1890 age 39, possibly in childbirth, she was a strong driving force in

the family business and very creative, after her death the loss was so great that the business began to slide away, and John's loss was a major blow to the whole family. Her portrait hung in the family parlour in Percival Street and was seen and remembered by her many Grandchildren who thought she looked very stern.

My Stuhr family from Hanover Germany were living in Whitechapel. I discovered other family members working in the London Sugar refining trade after joining Anglo German Family History Society.

I later discovered after a visit to Hanover that Gerhard had 3 brothers working in London and they were from Meyenburg nr Bremen Northern Germany.

William Frederick (b1798-1837) married Mary Ann Middleditch, in May 1824 at Christ Church Spitalfields London, he died in January 1837, age 39, at King Street Whitechapel. He was the oldest brother and left a widow Mary Ann and a 9-year-old son, Heinrich Herman, Mary was alive in 1871 age 78, Heinrich became a tram driver and died in Paddington London in 1897 age 70.

Gerhard (b1805-1866) my ancestor, married Martha Groves (b1826-1898) in June 1848 at St Leonard's Foster Lane, City of London, he is listed in the 1851 census at Back Row, Bath Terrace, St George in the East, with wife Martha and daughter, Martha, the family is listed as Stewart. In 1861 census the family were living at 37 High Street, Mile End, with a son 7-year-old Gerhard and his sister Martha, Gerhard junior became a printer's assistant and died in St Giles Union Infirmary London in 1907 age 57.

Two more Stuhr brothers left Germany and came to London to work, Henry (Hinrich) (b1816-1849) Henry is recorded on the shipping lists as arriving in London Docks

from Bremen in April 1842, and again in 1848, no marriage found for him, he died in September 1849 age 33 in the German Hospital, Dalston Hackney.

Luder the youngest of the family, b1821 lived in Breezers Hill, Whitechapel, and later Ellen Street, he also died in September 1849, age 28, in the German Hospital Dalston Hackney, he left a widow Margaritha (nee Geils) and son Thomas Casper age 1 year. Margaritha remarried to Charles Welch and they later moved to live in Victoria Australia. Charles died in May 1883, Margareta died in Jul 1893 and her son Thomas Casper Stuhr died in Feb 1932 all in Victoria.

The brothers were all working in the sugar refineries close to the London docks. The 4 brothers were from Meyenburg 20km north of Bremen, their parents were Hinrich 1769-1834, and Margreth Stuhr nee Baumann 1772-1834. They had 10 children. Hinrich was a Shepherd.

My Groves family from East London starts with Martha Groves b1826 the family came from Spitalfields East London, she was the daughter of Samuel b1797-1839 and Mary Groves, nee Clifford 1792-1886, they had 9 children 8 girls and one son who died an infant. Two of Martha's sisters also married German sugar bakers, Emma Groves born 1828 married Hans Rathgen in October 1847 at St Johns Bethnal Green.

One family story which had been handed down to me via my father's cousins was that Gerhard had fallen into a vat of boiling sugar and died, however my research proved this to be incorrect, his death certificate of August 1866 says he died from cholera (as did his brothers) he was known to have had poor health for some years, as his daughter Martha Amelia (1851-1890) my Great grandmother was taken out of the German School in Alie

Street Aldgate, because of her father's poor health in 1862.

An email from a Genes Reunited member in Australia tells me we are related through Martha's sister Emma Groves (b1828) who married Hans Rathgen German sugar baker, and having read Bryan Fulawer's book about the German Sugar Bakers in London and the UK about a month before, I found it was Hans who died from shock and scalds after falling into a pan of boiling sugar in September 1879 aged 69, (see Middlesex Coroner's Inquest report 18th September 1879) he was the brother in law of Martha and Gerhard.

Elizabeth Groves another sister b1824 in Fashion Street married John James Hendebourck in May 1843 at St Matthew Bethnal Green.

Eliza Groves, another sister (1833-72) of Martha also married a German Sugar baker from Hanover John Peter Luckmann in March 1853 at St Jude Whitechapel. The 4 sisters were from Spitalfields, daughters of Samuel and Mary Groves (nee Clifford), Samuel was a Customs House Ticket Porter.

A second piece of information which has come to me in a very unusual way, we were visiting Poland and went to a book signing which we came across by chance, by Jerzy (George) Stuhr a Polish actor and film director, for his book "History of the family Stuhr" as we were staying in Krakow Poland on the day this was taking place only 400 yards away from the Hotel we were staying in. We were able to talk to him after the signing about his book and family tree, he had traced his family in Poland back to 1840 (not easy with all the different wars, in that Country), and before that in Austria, there Stuhr is a common name.

The reason I made such good progress with my research was that on the London burial register for Luder in September 1849, (only a

week after his brother Henry,) his village of origin was written, (Luders wife was half German) but we had difficulty in reading it, all I knew from the census was that Gerhard was from Hanover. So we made a trip to Germany and a visit to the Family records Office in Hanover, and with some help found the village we thought Luder had come from.

We then decided to visit this village and found the Parish Register had been typed out and put in alphabetical order and a copy was in the village church, when we visited Meyenburg in September 2006, and I did not know that they were all brothers, until I read it. Our visit was very interesting we found old pictures of the Stuhr House in the Library and met 2 local history experts. The land is very sandy like Suffolk and strip farming still carries on the wooden houses are more like long houses. In Meyenburg, north Germany which is 20km north of Bremen the name Stuhr is not very common at all, the earliest Stuhr family member I have found is Gerd Stuhr who died in 1769 age about. 54, in Burhufe Lower Saxony, which is a small coastal village north of Bremen between Wilhelms-Haven and Bremer-Haven.

By using the web site www.genealogy.net I have been able to grow my tree in Germany without having to go back to the record office in Hannover, so I now have the following new families on my tree, Baumann, Ficken, and Gefken, of Meyenburg, Unbekannt, and Woltmann, of Beverstedt, Tietjen, Wendelken, and Kuck, of Scharmbeck, north of Bremen.

While entering my new families on Genes Reunited the very last entry was for Gevert Kuck of Scharmbeck (abt.1629-1708) I am descended from his son Cordt Kuck (abt.1657-17th), I noticed a label saying I contact, so I made contact and found that he lived in the UK and he was a descendant from Cordts brother Marten (abt.1658c-1720). Now isn't it a small world?

Research notes

Anglo German Family History Society;
 German Sugar Bakers Index, by Bryan Mower
 Tower Hamlets Local History Library,
 Bancroft Road;
 Registers of St Georges German Lutheran
 Church and School Little Alie Street London;
 Registers of St Paul's German reformed
 Church, Hooper Square London
 Ancestry. Co;
 Hanover Library, for Family History,
 Germany.
 St Lucia Church Meyenburg, Germany.
 Meyenburg Library Germany Family
 search.org.
 IGI.
 Genes Reunited.

Eileen Blythe (nee Howard)

Horse Power

It was only last month that I learned where the actual words horse power came from when I was at an exhibition about James Watt the inventor. In 1783 he developed the concept of horsepower to calculate his royalties when his engines were used to replace horses. The term horse power has been the measurement for engine power ever since.

Today it's hard to believe with all the cars on the roads just how important horses actually were in the 19th and early 20th century. London and other large cities were dependent on horse power for their transport systems, delivery networks and their civic amenities. At the time horses were either owned outright and then the owner / driver of the horse would take the best care that they could of them as they were their livelihood, but some were rented out by the day and in this case the driver would work the horses as hard as possible to get his money's worth out of them. It's been estimated that at least 300,000 horses were at work in the capital and when the horse

was king there were many industries that grew up around their use like stables, blacksmiths, saddleries etc.

So, what exactly were horses used for, well everything basically. Here are just a few things:

- gathering in crops and ploughing fields
- dray horses delivering goods like beer to the many inns
- pulling carts that were used to deliver various items and trades
- at brick manufacturers and paint manufacturers powering machinery
- pulling horse drawn busses / trams
- at the docks to move items from the boats, around the dockyards and into the city
- pulling fire engines
- house removals
- pulling dust carts
- by the railways for shunting, hoisting, pulling exceptional loads and transportation.
- pulling hansom cabs
- delivering coal
- rag and bone men
- delivering laundry
- pulling the carts at funerals
- National defence i.e. the cavalry, artillery and transportation
- taking people out on a charabanc – horse drawn coach
- horse racing
- by the gentry to go riding in parks etc.

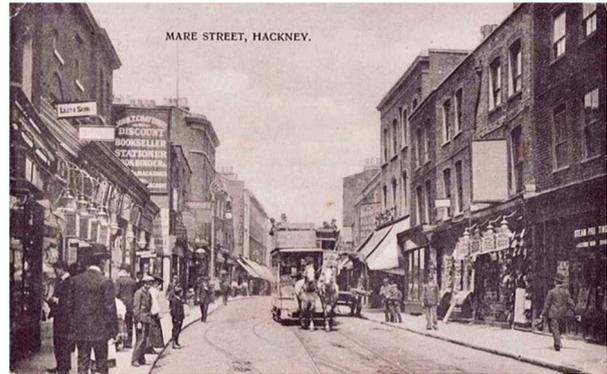
In 1867 horse and cattle troughs were being placed on the streets by The Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association which had been set up by Samuel Gurney, an MP who was the nephew of Elizabeth Fry, and Edward Thomas Wakefield, a barrister.

The foundation was set up in 1859 and originally provided clean drinking water on the streets of London and started out being called the Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association.

The Association members though quickly realised that the plight of animals was also important as although there were some troughs on the streets, they were normally outside pubs and the patrons either had to pay a penny to use them for their horses or buy a beer. Obviously not everyone could afford to do this, so people used to write to the Association with the suggestion that they provide troughs that were free for horses and cattle to use. In 1867 Earl Grosvenor said in a report that “..... The sufferings which were endured by parched and wearied animals in our streets before this Society undertook the erection of cattle troughs in addition to drinking fountains must have been past all imagination.” Once they were on the streets these Victorian filling stations made a huge difference to the animal’s welfare.

There were over 1000 of these in Britain and over and half of these were placed in London. The troughs continued to be put on the streets until the late 1930’s when motor transport had almost edged the horse off the roads.

At the time the horse drawn trams each needed 12 horses per day and adding in the estimated 11,000 that pulled hansom cabs and all the trade horses well there was a whole lot of manure on the streets, especially as each horse can produce between 15 and 35 pounds of manure each day.



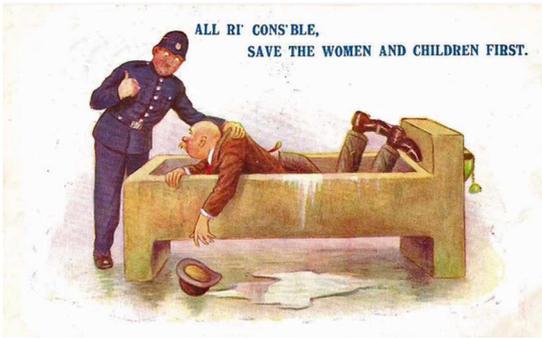
Postcard from my Granddad’s collection showing a horse drawn bus in Mare Street, Hackney 1908

There were some uses for all this manure for example it was used as fertiliser and until quite recently it was still being used by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry to make the moulds used to form the outside of the bells. For the moulds it was mixed with sand and goats hair.

But the quantity far outweighed its uses and all the manure on the streets was hazardous as well as being unpleasant when it got wet. It also caused the many diseases of the time like typhoid fever, summer diarrhea etc. to be spread quickly by the many flies that the manure attracted. So, pity those poor old crossing sweepers of the time who would have to clear a path for the pedestrians.

Indeed in 1894 The Times predicted that “In 50 years, every street in London will be buried under nine feet of manure.” This was known as the Great Horse Manure Crises of 1894. These hard-working horses in the main only survived for an average of three to five years and certainly many would drop down dead in the streets and then the carcases had to be removed. Also of course though where there are horses there is manure!

By 1912 the crises had abated somewhat due to motor cars and electric trams starting to appear on our streets. These very gradually replaced the horse.



Jokey postcard from my Granddad's collection of a drunk in a horse trough

For my East end Kilbourn family, horses were really important as they enabled them to work down the generations as Carmen.

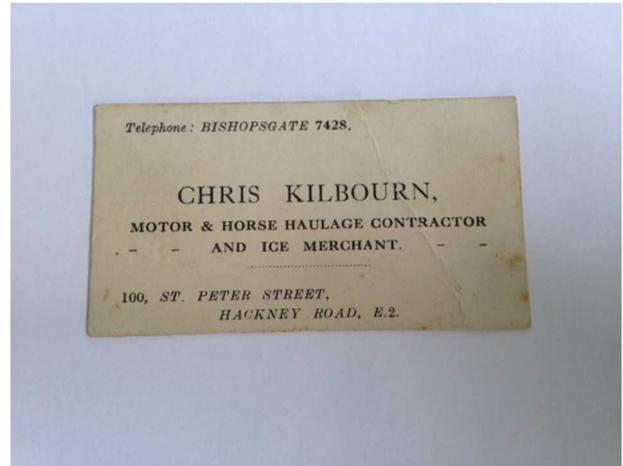
My Great Grandfather X2 Samuel Kilbourn was a carpenter / Carman operating from Webb Square in Shoreditch for 27 years from 1805 to 1832.

There are various records showing that Samuel rented yards for his horses and an example of this is that in 1825 he rented a yard at No.2 Bell Alley for 3/8 (about £15.79 today).

Then there is my Great Grandfather Charles Augustus Kilbourn who lived in Bethnal Green and had many occupations over the years which all depended on horses to get him from a to b. He was a Coffee Dealer, Coke Dealer, Butcher and his final role an Ice Dealer.

When Charles was an ice dealer he worked at the ice warehouse in Queensbridge Road, Hackney plus the wharf at Haggerston Basin for George Stephenson who started the company in the 1860s.

By the 1900s the company become the United Carlo Gatti, Stephenson and Slaters Ltd and was the largest ice firm in London plus had many horses.



My Grandfather's Business Card

Charles was an iceman right up to his death in 1901 and his 3 sons Charles Thomas (1881-1936), my Grandfather Christopher and Samuel (1885-1961) all eventually followed in their father Charles's footsteps as ice merchants.

My Grandfather Chris was born at 84 Boston Street in Haggerston on 13th October 1883. He was a stocky man of 6.5" but his build proved to be very useful in the ice trade as he was hauling heavy blocks of ice all day long.

According to the family though he was a bit of a gentle giant though as he loved all animals, but had a particular affinity with horses. If he was around today, he would have to work with horses and would probably be a vet or a trainer. He was well known in the area for his love and extensive knowledge of horses and if any of the other Carman in Bethnal Green had anything wrong with their horses then they used to say "we had better go and fetch Chris". He was called in to look at the horses in their stables or if something happened on the East end streets someone went to find him on his round. Once he saw the horse more often than not he knew what the problem was and whether a costly vet should be called in. The family all said that it really pained him if nothing could be done for a horse and it had to be put down, especially if it was one of his

own. Chris himself had 3 stables for his horses in Garner Street, one near the Broadway Market and the other at the side of Andrews Road near the canal.

Something that always makes me smile is the fact that he used to keep goldfishes in all the horse troughs at his stables as a way of keeping them clean. The horses never bothered with the fishes and just drank the water. I was told the following story a great many times over the years about Chris and one of the stables which was also used to store his motor vehicles.

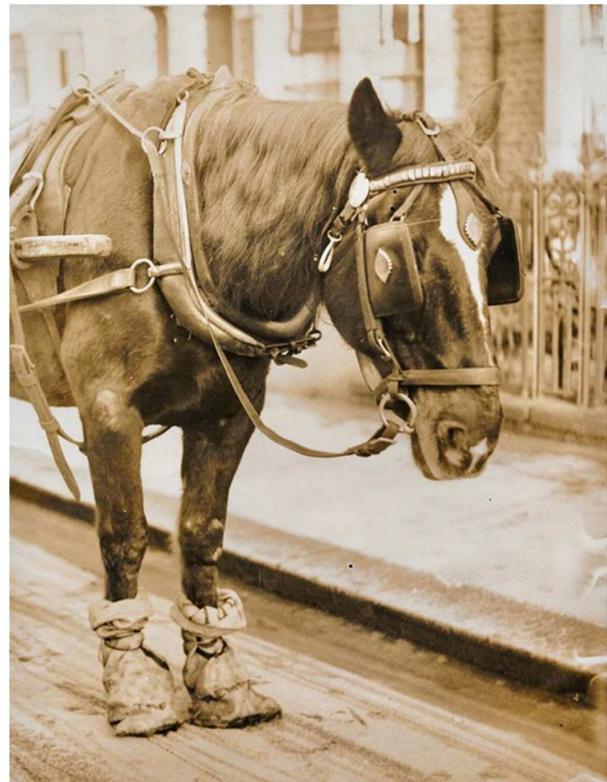
If the drivers of these motor vehicles ever got back late and Chris had already put his horses in their stalls for the night he wouldn't let the drivers back in and used to say to them "no sorry you're not coming in here you should have got back earlier. My horses work hard and are now resting for the night and they are not to be disturbed." I suspect that there were maybe a few choice East end words to that effect rather than being so polite.

He was a real stickler for keeping his horses shod properly too and he used to take them to the Blacksmiths in Claredale Street, Bethnal Green which was near where he lived at 100 St. Peters Street.

I actually have a photo of one of his older horses. In the photo below it shows the horse with sacking on its hoofs which Chris put on them when it was really icy to give them a better grip so they wouldn't slide and hurt themselves (this was a common practice by the Carmen as was putting blinkers on them so they only had a view of anything straight ahead which kept them calm and manageable).

Chris's sons all went onto work for Chris in some capacity as did his brother Samuel. He made sure that his youngest sons only did very light work for him though when it wasn't a school day.

When my Grandfather died in 1938, my Uncle Harry as the eldest son in the family took over the business.



Horse with sacking on its hoofs

Another horse story that passed down the family occurred a few months after Chris died, when Harry caused much mirth in the family when one day he brought a new horse for the firm. Harry had managed to buy a race horse rather than a working cart horse. He didn't have much business sense and it would have been better if one of the other brothers had taken over the business. I suspect the horse seller pulled the wool over his eyes about it being a working horse. Anyway, although it was a fine-looking horse, Harry was persuaded to return the horse to Blackfriars where he brought it by the rest of his brothers as it would have been no good for the company. Whenever his brothers or sisters saw him after they always said brought any good horses lately? A while after the horse incident when

World War 2 started the family decided to sell the company's assets off and pay any outstanding debts as there would be no-one to run the business whilst Harry, my Dad and other uncles were away fighting in the war. They made sure that the horses went to good homes and this was really the end of my family owning or using horses for anything.

Now in the present day we are more likely to see horses on the streets for the occasional wedding or old-style funeral, pageantry e.g. the state opening of parliament, police horses at football matches / crowd control at marches, show jumping, at horse races or just being ridden by people for enjoyment. But if you look closely when you are wandering around today though you can still see signs of this bygone time when the horse was king on our streets.

Aside from the Lloyds Bank logo and pub names which give a nod back to the past like the Horse and Groom (a pub in Shoreditch), The White Horse, Flying Horse and Coach and Horses there is also still a fair bit of horse related street furniture around. In Hackney for example there are to my knowledge 8 old horse troughs that are scattered about the borough, with some being better kept than others.



Trough at Mare Street Hackney near the corner of Westgate Street

I used to walk past the above trough most days when I was growing up. It was outside Easton's the Chemist at corner of Amhurst Road and Pembury Road in Hackney. It's still there but is sadly one of the more unkempt ones now.

If you take a walk along the Regents canal, you might spot a horse slip. Back in the day horses were used to tow barges along the canals and the slips were used to get the horses back out of the canal when they fell into it. A few things might cause them to fall in like loud noises startling them or as the barges had no breaks the poor old horses may have quite simply been pulled into the canal. Also keep your eyes peeled as on some of the canals bridges and bollards you might spot deep grooves which are actually old rope marks that were caused by the tow ropes which the horses were pulling the very heavily laden cargo boats along by.

Finally, you might just see an old strapping post which were used by the boatman who would wrap the tow ropes round the posts to slow down or turn the barge. These are metal or wooden. Unfortunately, when I went along to take my photos it was a Saturday on a summer's day, so the pathway was very crowded and I couldn't get a good photo of the one that I know of, the same with the horse slip.

Another place where you will see some old horse history is when walking along Upper Clapton Road in Clapton. Here you will find the old Lea Bridge Tram depot opened in 1873 by the North Metropolitan Tram Company (NMTC).

The NMTC was established in 1869 and used to run trams in North and East London. They started off with just 2 ½ miles of track, but went onto have 35 miles of track approximately, had 2470 horses, owned 253 trams of which 200 would be on the roads

each day.

The company wound down in 1898, after having to sell the company to the London County Council Tramways. The routes were then leased back to the NMTC to operate until such time that the LCC had enough routes to take over the whole operation themselves. This particular building of theirs still exists and was an old Victorian horse drawn tram depot that opened in 1873 and up until 1907 the trams from here took commuters to and from the City and the West end.

Today the tram depot is now used as artists and photographic studios.

The following place is easy to walk past and I am sure that many people do, but when I am in the area I always look at the Victorian building shown in my photo. It's another old NMTC site that was used by them as their forage warehouse for their horses and the building is at Kingsland Road, Dalston. This was also where the company used to change over their teams of horses on their trams, as well as feeding and resting them a short while before they went on their way again.

NMTC 1878 in Dalston

In Walthamstow I unexpectedly stumbled on to more horse history at The Tramworks at Hatherley Mews earlier this year. The stables at Hatherley Mews were used by the Lea Bridge Road, Leyton and Walthamstow Tramways Company from the 1880s as the place where their horses were fed, watered and rested after pulling the trams. This went on until June 1905 when the horse drawn trams were replaced by an electric service. When you go there it's really quite atmospheric and if you use your imagination you can still picture the hardworking horses being walked across the cobbles to the stables for a drink, feed and hard-earned rest.



The Tramworks, Hatherley Mews, Walthamstow

When my Grandfather died in 1938, my Uncle Harry as the eldest son in the family took over the business.

My final place concerned with horse history is the old goods yard / horse hospital which is now home to the Camden Stables Market. The old stalls here have been converted into all sorts of small shops.



Originally this site was known as Stables Yard and was built in 1882 for the London and North Western railway.



Information Wall at The Tramworks, Hatherley Mews, Walthamstow.

In 1925 there were about 400 horses on the site. The goods depot was used by the railway to allow their goods to be delivered quickly as it was sited alongside the nearby Regents Canal. Pretty quickly though the site became an integral part of the Camden goods yard which at one point was thought to be the largest in the world and at this time about 800 horses worked on the site. The goods from here were interchanged between rail, road and the canal. The yard relied heavily on horsepower as it was the only transport between the road and to and from the rolling stock. They were also used in the yard itself to move things around.

On the site they had tack rooms, saddler's workshops, a blacksmith, stables, a storage area for the animals feed and a horse hospital. At one point in time the trains and horses moved and worked on the same level but this was dangerous for the horses due to the very busy rolling stock, so as a solution for this they built a special set of horse tunnel passages that ran under the railways and connected the railway to the canal. Once the tunnels were

built, they even had underground stables here. The tunnels meant that the horses were safe from being injured by the trains, which depending on the severity of their injury could lead to their deaths.

They still have a nod back to the sites past incarnation though as there are many horse bronzes on the walls depicting what used to happen there as well as a few old photos on the walls at the site. Some of these are shown in the following photos. Why not see if you can find any further nods back to the past with any horse history on the streets near you.

Annette Kilbourn

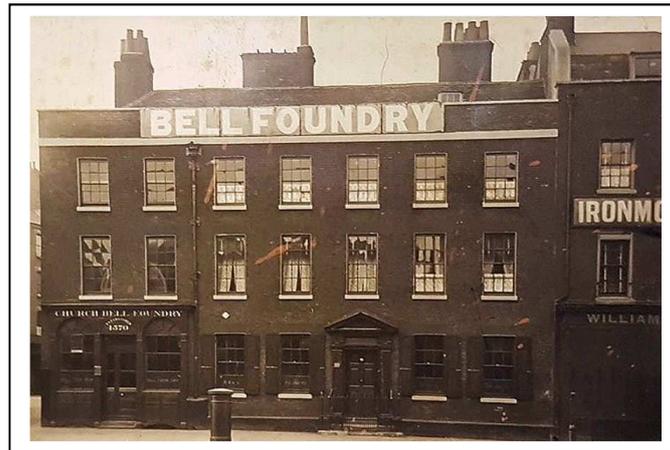
Holocaust Memorial Event, Sunday January 26.

Walk: The Jewish East End, World War Two and the Holocaust. Led by East End historian and qualified guide Clive Bettington.

Leaves from Aldgate tube station at midday. The walk will end at about 2.30 at Hughes Mansions, scene of a major wartime tragedy, in time for the inter-faith Holocaust Memorial Service at the nearby East London Central Synagogue in Nelson Street. Those interested will be guided to the Nelson Street synagogue.

This is a free event but booking is essential. Email clivebettington18@gmail.com

Whitechapel Bell Foundry update.



Whitechapel Bell Foundry frontage in 1906

The old foundry buildings have been a familiar sight on Whitechapel Road since 1739 when the foundry which had been founded in 1570 moved to the site of the former Artichoke Coaching Inn. It had been owned and operated by members of the Hughes family since 1904 but finally closed in 2017. The bell patents were sold to the bell-hanging company, [Whites of Appleton](#) in Oxfordshire, with whom the foundry had a business relationship for 197 years, and rights to tower bell production are now under the ownership of Westley Group Ltd. Production of presentation and hand bells is intended to continue under the name Bells of Whitechapel Ltd. The site was bought by an English investor who immediately sold it on (presumably by arrangement) to Raycliff Capital of New York, who announced their intention to construct a 95 room hotel (now 108 room) with a bell themed café.

The hotel plan was immediately and vigorously opposed. In March 2017 a consortium of heritage groups, including Save Britain's Heritage, The East End Preservation Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Ancient Monuments Society and the Royal Academy of Arts had attempted to have the foundry premises listed as a Grade 1 listed building as an asset of community value to preserve the historical importance of the building within the wider east end community. UK Historic Buildings Preservation Trust who have already saved the Middleport Pottery in Stoke on Trent wish to create a modern bell foundry with training and apprenticeship facilities. In addition, our several time speaker, The Gentle Author has consistently opposed the hotel scheme at meetings and in his Spitalfields Life blog.

The UKHBPT plans had much local and nationwide support but Raycliff's planning application came before Tower Hamlets Council on November 14th with voting tied three to three. The chairman then used his casting vote to approve the application. This met with much disapproval and protest and on December 2nd, Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, stepped in and issued a Holding Direction to Tower Hamlet Council which prevents them proceeding with approving the Whitechapel Bell Foundry planning application for change of use to a boutique hotel while he considers what to do.

The Gentle Author urges all those who oppose the Raycliff plan to personally contact the Secretary of State at PCU@communities.gsi.gov.uk, as the case will be judged on the number of objections.