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



Nurses from the London Chest Hospital celebrate the tree sprouting three years after it was bombed during the war. - Credit: Barts Health Trust NHS archives

See page 15

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.

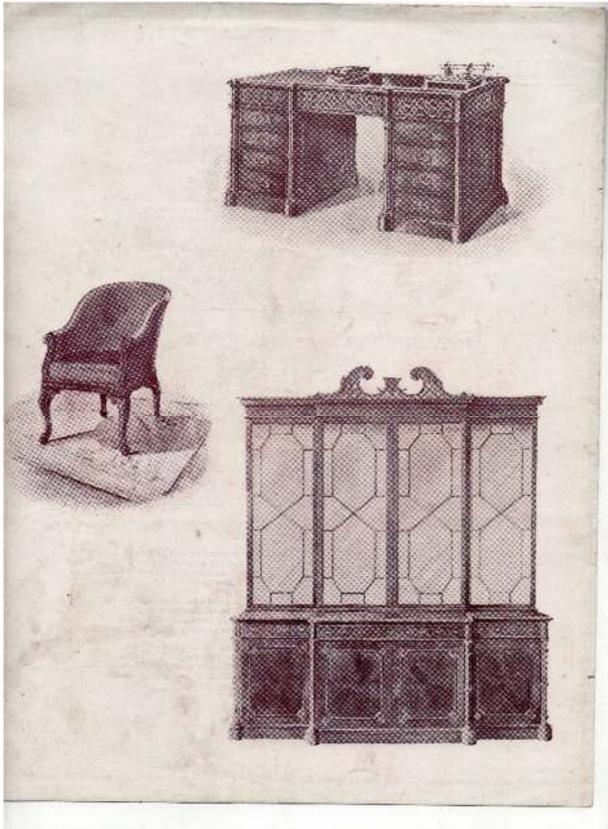
Join Doreen and Diane Kendall and assist in recording monumental inscriptions in Tower Hamlets Cemetery on the second Sunday of each month, from 2-4 pm.

Currently cancelled due to Covid-19.

Cover Picture

The front page of the programme for a special presentation to Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of York held at The Peoples Palace on February 11th 1909. William Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864-1945) was born at Fyvie Manse, Aberdeenshire, the son of a Scots Presbyterian minister. His ordination into the Anglican clergy was in 1891 and served in slum parishes in Leeds and Portsmouth until 1901 when he was appointed suffragan Bishop of Stepney. In 1908 he became Archbishop of York and in 1928 Archbishop of Canterbury. The programme features on its back page a suite of furniture presented to the Archbishop for use in his study at York. According to a report in the Yorkshire post of the 12th of February he said in his speech "As to the gift which had been presented to him, he liked to think that, as far as possible, it had been made by men who were working and living in East London. He had always had and always would have, a deep sympathy and great respect for the decent, honest, working man of East London. The furniture would be used to furnish as

completely as possible what was called in the exalted language of the North the Audience Chamber at Bishopthorpe, or as he liked to call it "the study". And that meant that when he sat, or wrote, or read or looked for ideas around him, he would never for the rest of his life be able to escape from East London (cheers). His time as Bishop of Stepney had been the hardest but the happiest period of his life (Cheers.)



*Cosmo Lang's region of Stepney within the Diocese of London extended over an area of two million people in more than 200 parishes. Almost all were poor, and housed in overcrowded and insanitary conditions. Lang knew something of the area from his undergraduate activities at Toynbee Hall, and his conscience was troubled by the squalor that he saw as he travelled around the district, usually by bus and tram.

Lang's liberal conservatism enabled him to associate easily with Socialist leaders such as Will Crooks and George Lansbury, successive

East London History Society Lecture Programme 2021

Because of the current Covid-19 emergency we have postponed our lectures. We expect to have another newsletter before then to advise you of the up to date position.

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 all issues of ELHS Newsletter from 1992 until issue 4-18. 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.

mayors of Poplar; he was responsible for bringing the latter back to regular communion in the Church. In 1905 he and Lansbury joined the Central London Unemployed Body, set up by the government to tackle the region's unemployment problems. That same year Lang took as his personal assistant a young Cambridge graduate and clergyman's son, Dick Sheppard, who became a close friend and confidante. Sheppard was eventually ordained, becoming a radical clergyman and founder of the Peace Pledge Union. * Wikipedia

A Decade of Local History

By Jackie Gooding

Do you recall when you could attend a local history meeting in person? Here are a few of my memories from the last ten years, organised by groups such as Walk East, the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, Whitechapel Idea Store, the local University of the Third Age and the Bishopsgate Institute.

I'm an incomer to the East End but I've lived and worked here as a teacher for 33 years. The more I look at local history, the more I discover and want to investigate. Having walked around Bethnal Green with Graham Barker looking at "Terraces, Tenements and Tower Blocks" once a week for 10 sessions in 2014, I joined a similar course called "Beer Barrels and Brewhouses" in 2017 and another named "Victorian Footprints" (again in Bethnal Green) in 2019. We also spent time in the Archives in Bancroft Rd researching our chosen topics. I was intrigued to find out about "Palestine Place", a Christian Mission to the Jews for 80 years which occupied the land subsequently used for the Bethnal Green Infirmary. This hospital was demolished in the early 1990s to make way for Housing Association flats, where I now live! The Archives have provided a range of fascinating talks (with free refreshments!) The Suffragette "pop-up" canteen in 2018 (where you could eat for a donation) was perhaps the most innovative. At a 25th anniversary meeting for Women against Racism in Sept 2019 I was surprised to be acknowledged as a Tower Hamlets College lecturer encouraging adult students to vote out the BNP in 1994.

Another event that brought old campaigners together was "Remembering the Stepney School Strike in 1971" when I heard the legendary Chris Searle for the first time. The annual free Writeidea Festivals at the Idea store Whitechapel have featured a mini programme from the Archives with its own

history bookstall. I've learned about the Huguenots and laughed as Michael Rosen told his life-story. One final Sunday session there was Klezmer music played live with Vivi Lachs singing. It seemed such an appropriate place to be enjoying Jewish music. In 2018 there was the Whitechapel History Fest with UCL and the Survey of London which was a feast of historical talks, including two by people I knew: Jil Cove and Julie Begum. I had met Jil through the u3a History Group where we had been on local history walks. I compiled a quiz for this group on Famous Women in the East End, with information from Harold Finch's invaluable "The Tower Hamlets Connection – A Biographical Guide".

During lockdown I've enjoyed being shown around the borough in virtual walks led by David Charnick, who trains local tour-guides. What a feast of information! Last year I was part of a team creating an the 37th annual circular London walk to raise money for charity. It was around six local churches and the East London Mosque in Tower Hamlets. We had so much to point out that was of interest we had to be ruthless in our selection of information.

The East End is so rich – both in visible local history and in people interested in talking and writing about it. There are many more walks, lectures, pamphlets and books I could tell you about. But, to conclude, let me mention the Bishopsgate Institute, almost opposite Liverpool St. It's another source of archives and artefacts with a wonderful programme of courses on the history of the East End. The most memorable for me was given in 2016 by David Rosenberg on "Rebel Footprints – A Guide to Uncovering London's Radical history". His book of the same name has been described as "a response to conservative heritage tours and banal day-tripper guides bringing to life the history of social movements". Long live local history!

A Chinese Sees the World by CS See; some aspects by Walter Fung, written for SACU's magazine, China Eye

The Chinese author was in fact Malay Chinese from Kuala Lumpur. He had previously never been out of Malaya but went on a trip around the world visiting many countries. He does not say how he funded his epic journey and does not mention any travelling companion. However, the Rotary Club is mentioned frequently; perhaps this organisation may have facilitated his lengthy trip and possibly helped with accommodation. He visits the World HQ of World Rotary in Chicago and the book is dedicated to Rotarians of all nations.

He visits the Chinese quarters of several places saying that he was anxious to see how the Chinese lived in Europe and America. The book was published in 1937 in Singapore by the Malaya publishing House Ltd. There are numerous illustrations and photographs amongst the 216 pages.

This short article relates his impressions of his time in Britain. Chinese students are living in many parts of the country, but mainly in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and Birmingham. They are studying textiles and engineering whilst some in Edinburgh and Ireland are studying medicine. Quite a large proportion of the Chinese students are funded by the Chinese government, others have wealthy parents.

Interestingly Mr See tells of '**exaggerated Limehouse**'. 'Imaginative reporters and authors have written about Limehouse and as a result it is famous all over the world for 'weird stories and horrid murders.' However, when you go there, you see more Jewish and Greek people, but there are enough Chinese children to have Chinese schools. The Chinese are mainly to be seen in eating houses which are not very well furnished or clean. There is a combined restaurant, bar and museum called

Charlie Brown's owned by the son of a Chinese father and English mother.

Advertisements all over London display 'untruthful propaganda' to encourage the tourist. Mr See states that in reality, there is nothing of real interest in Limehouse except a few poorly furnished eating shops and a small number of Anglo-Chinese children shabbily dressed.

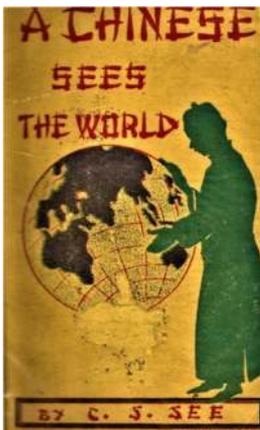
Mr See's account of London, then moves to fashionable Chinese restaurants in New Compton Road, Charing Cross, Greek Street, Gerrard Street and Piccadilly Circus. Interestingly, although Mr See is writing in the early 1930s, this is the area of the present-day, 2020 London Chinatown. The restaurants Mr See visits are 'high class', clean and run in a Westernised manner with a Chinese décor - a contrast to those in Limehouse. The best Chinese restaurant in the West-end is Maxim's with English speaking, well-mannered Chinese waiters dressed in stiff collars and evening dresses. The menu includes both English and Chinese dishes. Water chestnuts, bean sprout and egg foo-yung are menu items. It seems to take a while for English diners to decide what to order and they are fascinated the waiters writing down their order in Chinese with a few deft strokes of their writing brush. Fortune cookies are available at the end of the meal. There is a dance floor which can be used for sixpence.

This book was published in 1937 and it interesting in that at this time, there were already Chinese restaurants in the West-end of London, in the area occupied by the present Chinatown. The menu items quoted in these presumably up-market West-end restaurants at the time, egg foo yung, water chestnuts and bean sprouts seem to reflect basic simple Chinese restaurant and take-away menus offered in the 1950s and 60s. Today more sophisticated menus are presented even in Chinese takeaway food shops and popular restaurants.

His journey also took him to Ceylon, Cairo, Milan, Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia before Britain. He then went on to New York, the Grand Canyon San Francisco, and Los Angeles. He then crossed the Pacific Hawaii, Japan and on the China to visit Shanghai, Soochow, Peking and Nanjing, the capital of China at that time. From there he went to Canton and Hong Kong and back to Malaya

On arrival in New York's Chinatown, he remarks that after spending six months in a European environment, he first felt strange but happy to see so many people of his own nationality living in typically Chinese surroundings.

He makes an interesting comment on Western parenting compared to Chinese parenting. The Western parent explains what behaviour is needed, whilst the Chinese parent teaches his offspring by chiding.



Published by the Malaya Publishing House Ltd in Singapore 1937.

Walter also wrote: I am always interested in items about China written before 1949 and the current anti-China wave which seems to be with us. I was interested in that there were quite a few Chinese restaurants in the West End even in the mid 1930s. Some accounts say that the West End restaurants were opened by Kuomintang officials after the Communists took over China and the officials could not go

home, so they stayed. This is of course true, but they were by no means the first and only Chinese restaurants as Mr See's account shows.

Why “The Blacksmith and the Toffee-Maker”?

Pre-lockdown, I used to facilitate a Creative Writing group for the University of the 3rd Age in Tower Hamlets and we each wrote a short story every month. We all used the same title which we chose together. In Jan 2018 the title of our composition had to be a pub-name.

I'd seen **The Blacksmith and the Toffee-Maker** pub in Islington. I was curious and looked up the origin, which proved to be modern. It's a quirky love-song by Jake Thackeray. I kept the idea of a bachelor blacksmith but set my story in the Victorian East End, using the local history I'd discovered since arriving in Tower Hamlets in 1988. Thereafter my characters, Tom (the blacksmith) and Taffy (the toffee-maker) took over!

For each of the next five months I wrote another chapter using the new title we had all chosen in the Creative Writing Group. My fellow writers became my critically appreciative audience as I read out my creation. It developed to ten thousand words and more. Each chapter was narrated by a different character.

The continual tension was between the plot and my desire to include references to (and details of) what was happening in the late nineteenth century in Whitechapel, Stepney and Mile End. How could I weave in what I knew about the London Hospital, Victoria Park, the Salvation Army, match-factories, St Dunstan's, hop-picking, various schools, Jewish life, Toynbee Hall and Tower Bridge? Of course, I wanted to include the art of toffee-

making. Making the dates and ages agree was another challenge.

The result is six instalments – Dickens-style: one in each ELHS Newsletter for the next six editions. I hope you will enjoy both the story and the setting of the Victorian East End.

Jackie Gooding

The Blacksmith and the Toffee-Maker

by Jackie Gooding



Chapter 1: Tom and Taffy

It's 1880. Tom, the blacksmith was 50. His friend, Taffy, a toffee-maker from Wales, was 20. Both men were single and were often to be found in The White Hart pub in Whitechapel.

Having been brought up at the family-smithy in Goudhurst, Kent, Tom had learned the tricks of the trade, at least in theory, as a boy. As he grew up and became stronger, his father trusted him with heavier and more difficult jobs involving the furnace.

When he was 10, Tom fell in love with the girl from the farm up the road. She was called Alice, pretty and intelligent but shy. He found it hard to be alone with her and declare his passion. They'd met at the local school, but he left when he was 11. He was sent at 14 as an apprentice to his Dad's friend, Stanley Jenner, in Whitechapel. Stanley ran the blacksmith's that was part of the Anchor Brewery. Tom didn't want to leave home and his seven siblings or Alice, the undeclared love of his life! But he had three older brothers and so no chance of taking over the family business. London sounded so exciting! He was to travel with his Dad, who was looking forward to seeing his old friend Stanley again.



Charringtons' Anchor Brewery, Mile End

Tom found it hard to settle in his new place of work. It didn't feel like home and he missed his Mum. He also missed Alice but found out much later that she'd married the new schoolmaster in Goudhurst and so was no longer available. There were three daughters in the Jenner household and Tom's parents had hoped Tom would marry one. The oldest was very academic and went on to become a governess and never married. The middle daughter said she'd marry for money and she did! The youngest was infatuated with a soldier and eloped with him. That left Tom still unmarried. However, at only 19, what did he care? But he was still single at 29, 39 and 49 and as he got older, he cared very much that he lived alone and had no children.

Taffy had come to London to seek his fortune but he hadn't had much luck. His father had died when he was eight and as the only child, he'd been very close to his mother until her recent death from tuberculosis. They had lived in the attics of a big house in Llanrwst, near Snowdonia in North Wales. Taffy's Mum and Dad worked for that big house: she was the housekeeper and he looked after the horses.

The English couple who employed them realised their worth and looked after them well so Taffy's Mum kept her job and her home until she died. Then Taffy had to find his own accommodation. He didn't have a job: he was a pale, weak and spindly lad who used his brains rather than his muscles. Being the only child, he'd been spoilt, especially by his Mum who had fed him and kept him clean. What were his skills? He was bilingual in Welsh and English and knew how to make toffee. Helping his Mum make toffee was such a happy memory for Taffy. You could buy sugar more cheaply than ever before because of the sugar-cane grown by slaves in the West Indies. Toffee isn't complicated: it's sugar and butter and salt heated until it becomes caramel. You had to be careful when you removed it from the heat and it hardened. Taffy used to grease the stone slab where the toffee was poured and then cover his hands with butter and "pull" the toffee while it was still warm.

On Christmas Eve in Llanwrst there was a carol-service in Welsh at 3 am called "plygain", before cock-crow. To stay awake before going to chapel there was "Noson Gylfaith" (Toffee Evening). All the family and friends would join in and the experts at pulling toffee could make the initials of someone they fancied. Taffy and his Mum used to make toffee all year, selling it in the market at 2oz a penny.

Tom first met Taffy one cold wet night Nov 1880. The young Welshman had been trying to cross Whitechapel High Street and had nearly been run over by a horse and cart. He was too

weak to stand, having eaten nothing for two days. Helping him onto the pavement, Tom offered to buy him a drink but Taffy said he'd never tasted alcohol in his life. He refused to go into the pub at first but realised how much he needed warmth and a friend, so they went together to The White Hart. Tom was known in the pub and seeing the state of Taffy, the other drinkers (mostly men but not all) made space for the pair of them near the open log-fire.



London Hospital, Whitechapel (1900)

Tom told his life-story while Taffy ate steak and kidney pie with peas and carrots. Then Taffy told the story of his life. Everyone was fascinated by the toffee-making and the exhausted Welshman was the star of the evening.

Although warm and welcomed, Taffy still worried where he would sleep. He'd been to every doss-house suggested, respectable or not. He knew nobody in London, unlike where he came from where everyone knew everyone else 's business. No-one was a stranger there. But in Whitechapel he'd felt so lonely he wanted to die. His mother's untimely death aged 45 had shocked him into running away from Wales. Llanrwst meant nothing to him now that his Mum was no longer alive. Someone had told him he'd get casual work in the East End. But he hadn't. He looked too weak. Surely he'd find some unskilled job in London, some lodgings and maybe even some friends? He played the violin – maybe that would be useful?

“Have you got anywhere to sleep tonight?” Tom asked Taffy.

“No” was the reply.

“Come and take shelter at my place” Tom invited. “I’m on my own, so there’s no missus to object. I haven’t got much but what I’ve got, you can share. I live just near here, at the brewery up the road. I have two rooms to myself at the forge. There’s straw to sleep on till we get you a bed.”

“I don’t know what to say,” spluttered Taffy. “Then say nothing” said Tom. “Just accept and follow me. You can be the son I never had.” Taffy thought he’d gone to heaven. It was warm at the forge and Tom gave him an ancient nightshirt to sleep in, saying “I’ve to be up at 5 am to get the fire going but you can join me when you want”.

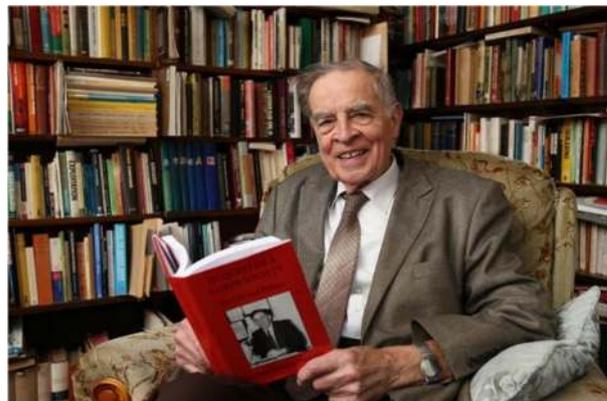
So Taffy appeared at midday, just in time for a bread and cheese lunch!

“How am I going to pay my way?” asked Taffy. “I’m not strong enough to be a blacksmith or work in the docks. Maybe there’s something I could sell.”

“How about making toffee?” suggested Tom. “We could find a way for you to use the heat of the fire in the forge and you could sell the toffee in the market and maybe in the pub if we ask the landlord. Let’s start today!”

TO BE CONTINUED in the next ELHS newsletter.

Stan Newens – a tribute from Steve Pilcher



Stan Newens holding a copy of his autobiography. Image supplied by his family.

It is with regret that I write to mark the death of the East End born former MP, MEP, historian, author and member of the ELHS, Stan Newens on March 2nd, 2021.

Born in Quilter Street, Bethnal Green, on the 4th February 1930, Arthur Stanley Newens was the eldest of three children whose parents, Arthur and Celia Newens, ran a small road haulage business.

The family moved out to North Weald, in Essex just before WWII, but continued to run the business in the East End. Stan meanwhile spent his youth in the countryside and went to Buckhurst Hill County High School and then on to University College, London, where he read history. Afterwards he attended Westminster College in order to obtain a teaching qualification.

However, National Service beckoned in 1952, before Stan could commence teaching. He opted to work in the North Staffordshire coalfield for almost four years, rather than get drafted in to the Korean War, which he objected to. His time as a miner drew Stan into trade union and political activity.

Stan finished working in the mines in 1956, moved back to North Weald, and went on to

become a teacher of history, at Kingsland Central School, in Hackney, which then became the Edith Cavell Comprehensive School.

His interest in politics had flourished whilst at University and during his work in the coalfields. Stan became MP for the Epping constituency – which covered Chingford, Waltham Abbey, Epping and Harlow – in 1964 and remained as MP for Epping and subsequently the new constituency of Harlow, on and off, over a period of 15 years until defeated in the Conservative landslide in 1983. He was MEP for London Central from 1984 to 1999.

My parents had been introduced to Stan, by a mutual acquaintance, when I had just started at school and the close friendship between our families flourished over 50 years.

The Stan I got to know and appreciate was someone who was very close to his family and his roots in East London. He also developed an enduring bond with the Epping/North Weald and Harlow area. This was very much a marginal constituency and it was a constant battle to try and hold the seat.

His ability to ‘weather the storms of adversity’ and still carry on regardless with his campaigning, gave all who knew him, courage and strength as well. Re-reading his autobiography recently reminded me of the many difficulties and tragedies he wrestled with in his own life, including the death of his first wife, at an early age.

Stan was a committed and diligent MP. His assiduous campaigning for all his constituents, regardless of whether they supported him politically, won him great respect in his constituency and with his political opponents. In addition, he was passionate about the importance of the co-operative movement and was President of the London Co-operative Society from 1977 to 1981.

Looking back now – hopefully most fair minded people will see that his anti-Vietnam war stance was a wise decision, as was his support for non-intervention in Iraq – even though he would quickly comment that Saddam Hussein was a tyrant.

But more importantly, he was a man of compassion, who would ask questions before deciding on a course of action. In his autobiography, you will find mention of an instance of Stan having to deal with a case of a young girl in his school who had stolen money from a fellow teacher. Upon making enquiries, he found that the family had been a victim of circumstances and had been unable to pay their electricity bill. In this case, Stan contacted social services and was able to arrange for the electricity to be re-connected.

Stan had a great passion for history and genealogy. After retiring, he wrote his autobiography, ‘In Quest of a Fairer Society’, published in 2013 – which set out his experiences and views. Prior to that he had written a definitive history of North Weald in 1985 and many other booklets and pamphlets. He gave a talk several years ago, to the ELHS, on the subject of the 19th century East End author, Arthur Morrison, which was based on a book he had published in 2008.

A lifelong campaigner on many issues – Stan never forgot his roots. When the Tower Hamlets Records Library was threatened with closure, Stan was happy to be drawn in to support the campaign to keep it open and gave a rousing address to a public meeting.

Stan died peacefully at home, with his family on March 2nd 2021.

Steve Pilcher – March 2021

From: Roy Sharp
Sent: Sunday, December 13, 2020 4:50 PM

Joseph Samuda

I enjoyed reading the article on Joseph Samuda, and when I first saw it I was struck by the thought that I had come across this name before but not in the context of marine engineering and shipbuilding on the Isle of Dogs. Some years ago I was following the careers of the great Brunels, and I was intrigued by Isambard's brilliant idea for an "atmospheric railway" and which became reality and operated between Exeter and Newton Abbot in 1847.

When I probed more deeply into the history of atmospheric railways I learnt that in 1840 an experimental but fully functioning section of atmospheric railway was running on Wormwood Scrubs ! This railway was built and designed by two brothers, Jacob and Joseph Samuda. They were both members of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

The system had a continuous cast iron pipe laid between the rails with a slot running along the top of the pipe. The first carriage of the train had a piston attached by a metal pylon to its underside and the slot was kept sealed by a leather flaps which lifted open with the passage of the train. At one end of the track, which I think was about one quarter of a mile long, an engine was employed to extract the air out of the pipe, thus "sucking" the train along. There was no engine at the other end as the track was laid on gently sloping ground and so the train returned by gravity.

The train ran for two years, whereas Brunel's only ran for one year, and the Samuda's recorded the following results:-

- 11 June 1840: Load 11 tons, 10 cwt, max. speed 22.5 mph with 15 inches of vacuum
- 10 Aug 1840: Load 5 tons 0 cwt max. speed 30.0 mph with 20 inches of vacuum.

Unfortunately Jacob Samuda was sadly killed in 1843 when one of the marine engines that they were developing exploded, and so brother Joseph carried the family name into immortality.

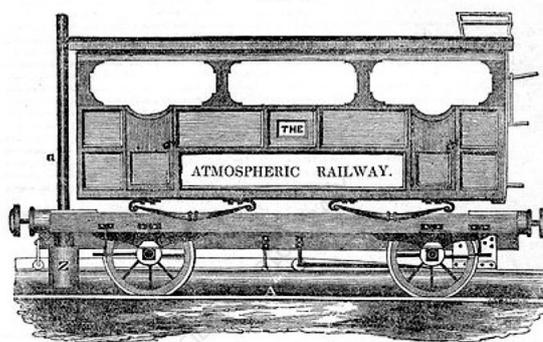


Illustration of Clegg & Samuda's Atmospheric railway from Magazine of Science. Issue 76, 1845

Philip notes: In my cover picture text in Newsletter 4-18, I showed this image of a large piece of silver presented to Joseph Samuda by friends and former constituents, that was about to be auctioned. Readers might be interested to know that it sold for £56,000!



Books and More

Review by Derek Morris of *Jeopardy of Every Wind : The Biography of Captain Thomas Bowrey* by Sue Paul, 2020, ISBN (paperback) 978-1912049-62-2, ISBN (ebook) 978-1912049-63-9, 345 pages, £17 plus postage

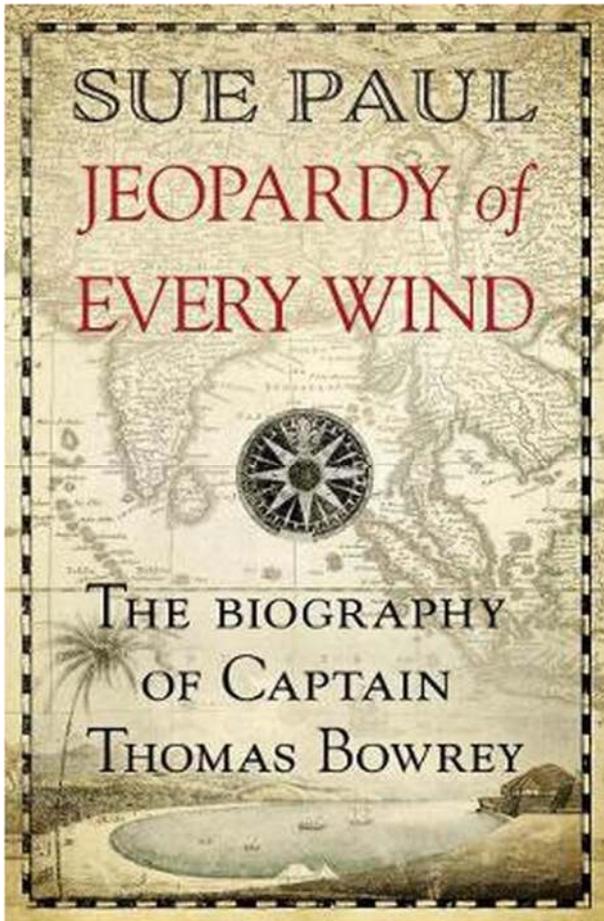


Image supplied by publisher

Introduction

Anyone interested in the history of Stepney in the eighteenth century can turn to a wide variety of resources but we are particularly fortunate that fairly massive archives have survived for three of the leading families.

In the 1970s an estate owner in Oxfordshire discovered that there were 150 tea cases full of

paper in one of his barns. Fortunately, they did not end up on a bonfire as planned as they were found to be the business papers of Henley and Son shipowners, who between 1770 and 1830 ran a fleet of ships from their base in Wapping. The papers are now in the Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum.

A second important set of documents are the account books of Stephen Martin Leake, Garter King of Arms, who lived most of his life in Mile End Old Town. Perhaps influenced by the money his father Admiral Leake lost in the the crash in the share price of the South Sea Company he kept detailed accounts of every penny that he spent over a period of some forty years until he died in 1782. A microfilm of these books can be found in the THLHL¹

The third important source was a chest of old papers found in 1913 in a house near Evesham in Worcestershire and now held at a variety of libraries but principally at the British Library and the LMA. These were the diaries and papers of Captain Thomas Bowrey, who lived between 1650 and 1713. Bowrey arrived alone in India in 1669, and after 19 years trading in the East Indies returned to Wapping to continue his merchant activities. We are therefore fortunate that Sue Paul has devoted some six years to pulling together from a wide range of resources the remarkable story of this merchant adventurer.

Captain Thomas Bowrey

The Bowrey family can be traced in Wapping from 1635 and many had connections with the sea, so in a phrase of the time “he was born to the sea”. With the early death of his father, it was decided that the young Thomas should sail to India.

Sue Paul provides a wide range of background information to back up the stories told in the Bowrey papers, especially conditions in London in the 1660s and many aspects related to the East India Company. Bowrey learnt his

trade as a country trader independent of the EIC in Fort St George, later Madras, until he returned to London in 1688.

In his first decade in India Bowrey developed a deep knowledge of the local textile trades, whose luxurious cottons and silks were in demand in Europe. By 1675 Bowrey had moved his activities first to Thailand and then to Sumatra, building up a knowledge of local sources of spices, market conditions and languages, before returning to Bengal, and by 1682 was trading on his own account.

Eventually, in 20 October 1688 he sailed for England and during the voyage began work on his Malay-English dictionary.

Bowrey returned to Wapping and in 1691 married Mary, the daughter of Phillip Gardiner, a Wapping merchant and one of his long-term confidants. Later they moved to Well Close Square,

From his East London base Bowrey invested in a number of trading ventures in the Far East, using his extensive knowledge and local agents. Not all these ventures were successful but Bowrey was well aware of the risks he was taking, having suffered from piracy, corruption and ship wrecks.

One unique event occurred in July 1704 when the *Worcester* arrived in Fraserburgh after a voyage to Bengal. Sue Paul describes the complex reasons which led to the ship being seized in Leith by Roderick MacKenzie of the Scots Company in retaliation for their ship *Annandale* being seized in London. The incident provided a focus for the Scot's seething resentment against the English, part of the ongoing constitutional conflict between England and Scotland, and Sue Paul writes. "It is generally accepted that the case of the *Worcester* brought about, or hastened, the Union of Scotland and England in 1707." The resulting legal disputes continued until a few months before Bowrey's death in 1713, and still

resonate today amongst those favouring Scottish independence.

In 1707 Bowrey made his last investment in trading voyages but never lost his interest in East India trade and his last years were spent dreaming up schemes to improve his fortune.

Over the years Bowrey drew up proposals for copper coinage (due to shortage of silver coinage), and another to reduce piracy. He also worked with the South Sea Company on the establishment of a settlement on the west coast of South America to facilitate East India trade. His wide range of interests is recorded in a catalogue of his books which covered agriculture, glass making, travel, history and religion.

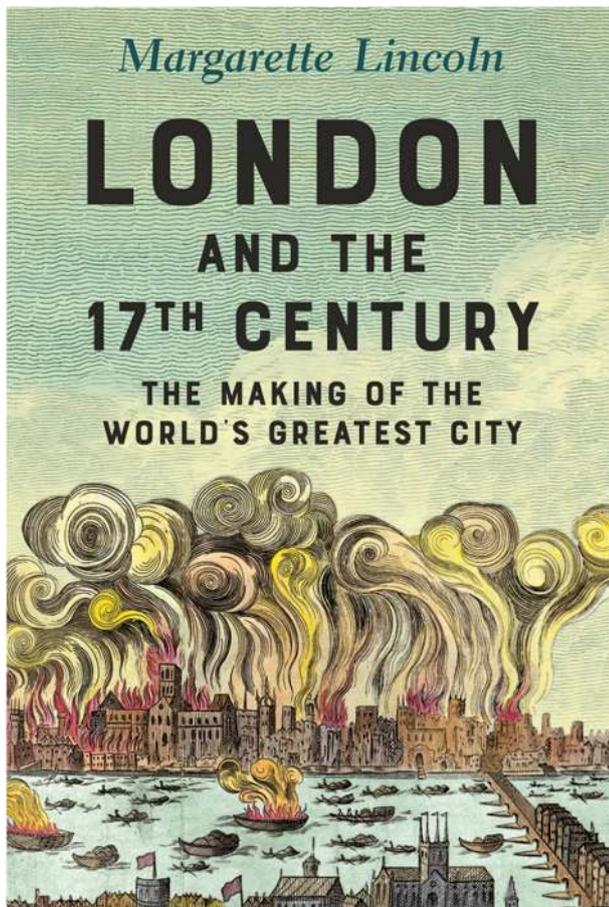
Sue Paul's book includes an extensive bibliography, an index together with a gazetteer, several maps and a glossary.

I can thoroughly recommend this book for those who want to understand the long-standing links between the seamen and merchants of Stepney and trade in the east, and also complements the books by Muhammad Ahmedullah², Georgina Green,³ and Jean Sutton⁴.

Derek Morris

Notes

1. THLHL, MS 474 Stephen Martin Leake account books
2. Muhammad Ahmedullah, (ed), *From Red Dragon to Nemesis: Innovations in East India Company Shipping*, Stepney Community Trust, 2018
3. Georgina Green, *Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines and the East India Company*, 2015
4. Jean Sutton, *Lords of the East: The East India Company and its Ships, 1600-1874*, 2000; *The East India Company's Maritime Service, 1746-1834: Masters of the Eastern Seas*, 2010



From Tanuja Shelar, 5th February 2021

I am excited to write to you from Yale University Press regarding our recent publication, *London and the Seventeenth Century* by Margarett Lincoln (cover attached). I hope this will be of considerable interest to members of The East London History Society.

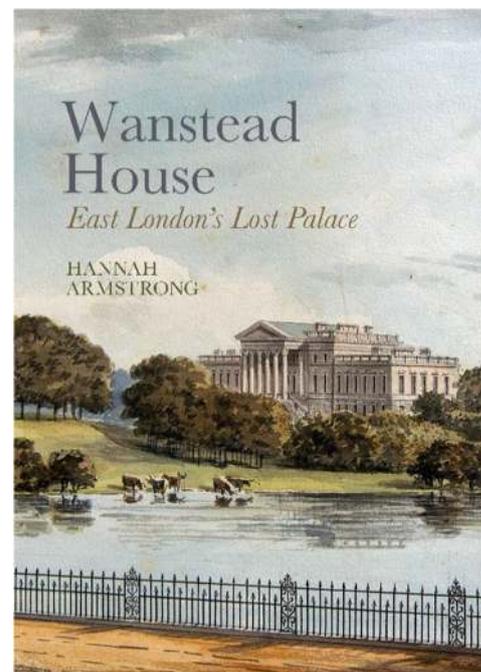
The first comprehensive history of seventeenth-century London, told through the lives of those who experienced it

The Gunpowder Plot, the Civil Wars, Charles I's execution, the Plague, the Great Fire, the Restoration, and then the Glorious Revolution: the seventeenth century was one of the most momentous times in the history of Britain, and Londoners took center stage.

In this fascinating account, Margarett Lincoln charts the impact of national events on an

ever-growing citizenry with its love of pageantry, spectacle, and enterprise. Lincoln looks at how religious, political, and financial tensions were fomented by commercial ambition, expansion, and hardship. In addition to events at court and parliament, she evokes the remarkable figures of the period, including Shakespeare, Bacon, Pepys, and Newton, and draws on diaries, letters, and wills to trace the untold stories of ordinary Londoners. Through their eyes, we see how the nation emerged from a turbulent century poised to become a great maritime power with London at its heart—the greatest city of its time.

Would it be possible to introduce the author or the book to your members? Margarett is available for virtual events and interviews. Additionally, we could also offer a discount code for your members.



Nigel Franceschi of Friends of Wanstead Parklands asked me on March 20th to mention a new book on Wanstead House

WANSTEAD HOUSE: East London's Lost Palace by Hannah Armstrong

With the help of over 80 illustrations, Hannah Armstrong tells the fascinating story of the awe-inspiring Georgian palace, Wanstead House. From the initial purchase of the original Tudor mansion by Sir Josiah Child, to the building of Colen Campbell's classical masterpiece and Wanstead's Regency heyday, Dr Armstrong's new book reveals the meteoric rise and fall of Wanstead House in unprecedented detail.

Due to be published at a recommended retail price of £45 in March 2022, 'Wanstead House: East London's Lost Palace' is available to pre-order now direct from the publisher for a limited time offer of only £27 (plus p&p). www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/books to place your order. Enter the promotional code WANSTEAD40 at the payment stage to benefit from the 40% discount and discover for yourself the incredible history of Wanstead House.

'Wanstead House: East London's Lost Palace' will be published on 1st March 2022 by Liverpool University Press on behalf of Historic England, hardback, 276x219mm, approx 224pp, 80+ illustrations.

Bethnal Green Mulberry Tree The Gentle Author via Crowd Justice

We are raising £10,000 to pay for QC Richard Harwood OBE and Paul Atkinson, barrister to represent us in May at the full hearing of the Judicial Review at the High Court of the council's decision to issue planning permission which includes digging up the Bethnal Green Mulberry.

We believe Tower Hamlets acted unlawfully in granting permission to Crest Nicholson and there are five grounds for Judicial Review.

We are delighted to announce that on Friday 15th April, the High Court also agreed we could raise - as an additional ground for Judicial Review - the fact that the Conservation Officer concluded in her report that the plans would result in Substantial Harm to the listed buildings but this was not disclosed to the public or the councillors making the decision - on the basis that she had changed her mind by the time of the planning meeting, thus defeating the public and councillors' right to know.

We understand there is currently a pressing need for genuinely affordable housing in Bethnal Green but we also recognise a responsibility to future generations. Crest Nicholson's proposal has too little affordable housing and we want this improved. Above all, we want the development to be done in a sensitive and humane way, so that it does not damage the historic Mulberry Tree and the built heritage of the hospital building, blighting the Victoria Park Conservation Area.

This is a strong campaign, valiantly led by the **East End Preservation Society**, that has raised the profile of this beautiful venerable living icon but we have to fight if we want to resist the wanton destruction of our veteran trees and built heritage at the expense of a greedy-profit driven development.

Thanks to your support our Judicial Review to SAVE THE BETHNAL GREEN MULBERRY is going ahead at the High Court on 5th & 6th May.

We still need a little more help to get there.

After three years campaigning - and now with the patronage of Dame Judi Dench - we are overjoyed that we have been granted this Judicial Review with a full hearing, if we can raise £10,000 to pay our barrister and QC.

**Postscript: The £10,000 has been raised.
The judicial review will be 5th & 6th May.**

[CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT OUR LEGAL FUND](#)

Anyone who donates £100 or more will receive either a cutting of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S MULBERRY TREE or a big tub of Mulberry sorbet made by KITTY TRAVERS of [LA GROTTA ICES](#) from the fruit of HISTORIC LONDON MULBERRIES picked by THE GENTLE AUTHOR of *Spitalfields Life*.

Planted in Stratford Upon Avon by the poet in 1610, Shakespeare's Mulberry was cut down in 1770 but DAVID GARRICK rescued a cutting which flourishes to this day. Your cutting comes from this tree.

Send an email with your preference to eastendpsociety@gmail.com and we will supply your rooted cutting later this year or give you details to collect your Mulberry sorbet from a Central London location. (Both are available only in limited numbers)

The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

Having secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, The [Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park](#) are in the process of creating a Conservation Management Plan, a document that will help us:

- Describe our heritage
- Understand why the Cemetery Park matters and to whom
- Understand what is happening to our heritage and what needs preserving
- Understand what the key issues are that will affect the Cemetery Park
- Plan conservation and restoration works for the future
- Improve public access

- Plan activities that engage the whole community

To help describe our heritage we need your help and would like to hear from anyone with a memory or story. Do you have family memories of visiting the cemetery, attending a funeral or photographs? Not only photographs of inside the cemetery but local streets before WW2 and housing clearance destroyed the area - ideally if the cemetery is included in some way. We would really like to know what the original gates looked like as nearly all the original documentation for planning and running the cemetery has been destroyed. **If you have an elderly relative living, or who used to live near the cemetery, please ask them if they remember anything.**

Please contact Diane Kendall, Heritage Lead at friendsthcp@yahoo.co.uk or Claire Slack, Heritage Officer at claire.slack@fothcp.org

We'll be very happy to ring/email you back to have a chat about your memories. You can remain anonymous if you wish.

Professor Ged Martin

In our previous Newsletter (4-18), I mentioned the paper by Professor Ged Martin on the origins of the location, Maryland Point. He has contacted me to mention another paper that may interest ELHS members. It tells the story of Frances Davis: a daring sneak thief who dressed in men's clothes and passed herself as a pipe-smoking horse dealer. A spectacular theft at the Three Rabbits, a Little Ilford (now Manor Park) inn, led to her transportation in 1787 to New South Wales on Australia's first convict fleet.

"From Little Ilford to Botany Bay: Frances Davis, cross-dressing First Fleeter" is at:

www.gedmartin.net/maartinalia-mainmenu-3/332-cross-dressing-first-fleeter

Debra Hiddleston wrote 12/03/2021 Manor Park Cemetery

I have just found out by chance that the graves of survivors of the Bethnal Green Tube Station Disaster, buried in Manor Park Cemetery will be "reclaimed" by the cemetery. It is shown on their "notices" on the website. I have a relative that was killed in this disaster.

The cemetery is offering to retain the gravestones and place them elsewhere in the cemetery.

This seems a shame for all those people that perished in such a monumental civilian wartime disaster. I also wonder whether other graves of historical interest ie Jack Cornwell will also be reclaimed. I believe his grave dates from the 1st world war. and so is much older.

Is there anything that can be done to require them to leave these graves alone? I realise that space is needed for fresh burials and I guess that the current pandemic has increased the pressure. Even so, it is a shame to interfere with the graves of these poor victims.

What Lies Beneath – Canal Finds, by Carolyn Clark



At the beginning of February, a welcome lockdown diversion arrived in the form of a drained Ducketts/The Hertford Union Canal.

The canal was emptied by the Canal and River Trust in order to carry out repair work, mainly to the canal walls. This became an event in itself: blocking the canal at the junction with the Regent's; capturing fish to put downstream as the water slowly drained away; the sad antics of waterfowl swimming in a puddle; and for some, finding It isn't as deep as they thought.

But for many people, the biggest intrigue was finding out what lies beneath. This wasn't the first time Ducketts has been drained. It happened about 10 years ago, but not for long. This time the canal stayed dry until mid-April. Time to attract the attention of the Thames Mudlarks.

The view from the bridges showed the detritus of modern life – a few bikes, traffic cones, bits of posts or pipes, bottles, flower pots and a large quantity of rubber tyres. Some would have been thrown into the 'alternative dump' as one long-term resident by the canal called it. Others probably feel from boats where tyres are used as fenders. A few were left in the canal as they help ecology, providing shelter for fish.



But the Mudlarks were able to get stuck in – sometimes literally. The bottom of the canal is a thick layer of heavily polluted mud which sucks you in. The volunteers frequently had to battle to free themselves. The reward was some prize finds among the rubbish, discarded toys and ornaments. This included a cash box, the money long gone or decomposed. When the Regent’s Canal was drained about 40 years ago, many safes were found, all but one empty. Coins found included a stash of Victorian Maundy Money. No such luck here, only a 5p. But there were old jars and odd lemonade bottles. One of these was Batey’s lemonade. Batey’s had a factory and a warehouse near the Regent’s Canal in Shoreditch. Kids would hang around outside hoping a bottle would fall off the back of a lorry. A stoneware bottle from James Cox of Bethnal Green was also found. A horseshoe find may well hark back to the days of horse drawn boats.

The best finds were military. A gun proved to be a toy replica, although canal drainage elsewhere has revealed guns, bombs and grenades. A WW2 (?) helmet still had some of its leather lining inside. A sword pulled from the mud was interesting despite its poorer condition, and will be sent off for further analysis.



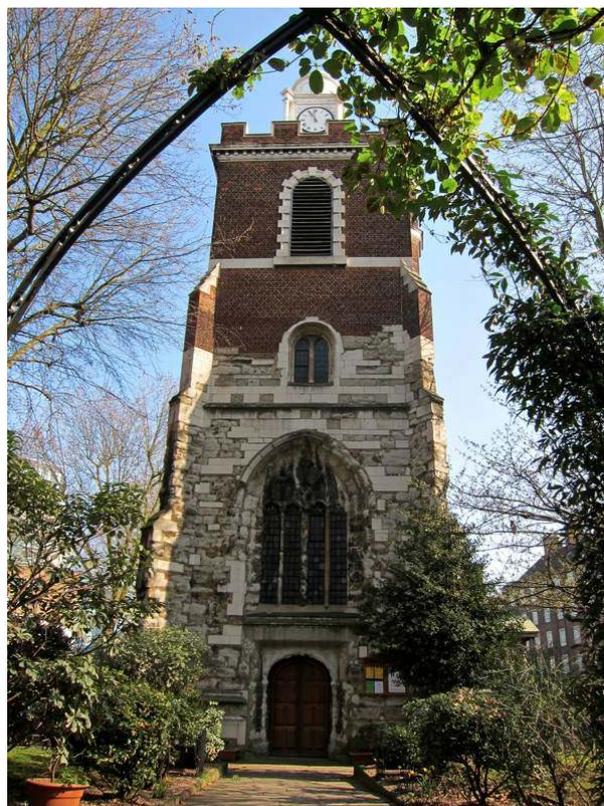
A film was made of the mudlarks activity, and can be seen on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqbxarDmzpg&ab_channel=Si-findsThamesMudlark

There are many other films from the past and present on: regentscanalheritage.org.uk. Also note that the East End Canal Festival has been postponed to July 16/17th 2022 as the Art Pavilion is doing service as a Vaccine Centre.

Upon the Origins Of Bow Church by the gentle author

Bow Church is one of my favourite places in the East End, so it was an honour to be asked to write the history of this ancient place for their new website. Below you can read the first page and the rest is available at www.bow.church



The ancient Church of St Mary Stratford Atte Bow stands in the middle of the road at the entrance to the East End, where the lofty old tower welcomes travellers from Essex and bids farewell to those leaving London.

Our story begins with a miracle, when the waters of the River Lea parted in the manner of the Red Sea, allowing the wondrous passage of the body of St Erkenwald, carried across the dry riverbed on his journey from Barking Abbey to his final resting place in St Paul's Cathedral in 693. Legend has it that when the saint's body was laid down in Bow upon what became the site of the church, flowers blossomed where the bier sat upon the ground.

Our history continues with an accident, when Queen Matilda fell into the River Lea on her way to Barking in 1110 and became 'well wetted with water,' according to medieval historian John Leland. In the absence of miracles and to avoid future muddy mishaps, Matilda ordered the building of a bridge at this spot. Leland tells us it was 'arched like unto a bowe,' which gave the name to the village that grew up beside the crossing where a community of bridge keepers, boatmen, millers, fishermen, farmers, bakers, butchers, fullers, saddlers, dyers and cap makers flourished.

Each winter the inhabitants of Bow grew sick of trudging through the muddy paths to the parish church of St Dunstan's in Stepney and launched a petition, believing that they were worthy of having their own place of worship, inspired perhaps by the building of the White Chapel in Aldgate. On 7th November 1311 Bishop Baldock of London complied, licensing the construction of a 'chapel of ease' at Bow and in 1327 King Edward III granted a piece of land 'in the middle of the King's Highway,' where the chapel was founded as daughter church to St Dunstan's.

A few years later in 1348 the Black Death pandemic arrived, blighting the land and killing as many as half the population which led to a labour shortage and the expectation of higher incomes. But the Statute of Labour of 1351 capped wages, escalating grievances and social unrest that contributed to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in which over 1,500 people died.

Demanding an end to serfdom, protestors led by Wat Tyler marched from Essex through

Bow in May to confront the fourteen year old King Richard II on Stepney Green. Although he acceded to their wishes, they entered London in June, sacking the Savoy Palace and occupying the Tower of London. Richard met with the rebels again in Smithfield where violence broke out and Wat Tyler was stabbed by William Walworth, Mayor of London, crushing the revolt.

The growth of the community at Bow over the next century was such that the chapel of ease acquired its first priest in 1456, recorded simply as 'John.' Significant legacies from local tradesmen permitted the improvement of the building, known as 'The Great Work,' enlarging it to the size it is today by 1490. John of York, a baker, left £13 4d to pay for candles and £3 towards the building of a steeple. John Laylond, a carpenter, bequeathed his stock of timber for 'making doorways and floors of the new belfry.' Richard Robyn, chapel warden, left forty shillings for the steeple and John Bruggis left £3 for glazing the west window.

At this time, a vaulted crypt of sixty feet long was constructed beneath the nave to store the bodies of parishioners until Judgement Day, which was sealed by government health order in 1891. The lower part of the tower of Kentish ragstone dates from this era, as does the battered octagonal font that was discarded in 1624 in favour of a more modern design. After three hundred years as a garden ornament, it was rescued and continues in use for baptisms.

As more houses, shops and taverns were built surrounding the churchyard, it created a public space for gatherings and markets, especially at public holidays and seasonal festivals. Thus arose the celebrated Bow Fair, recalled today in the street name of Fairfield Road. The market had its origins as a Green Goose Fair held at Whitsuntide for the sale of young geese from the surrounding countryside.

Every Whit Wednesday, the congregation of Bow visited their mother church of St Dunstan's, walking in procession through the

fields to pay their dues of twenty-four shillings, declaring their membership of Stepney parish and participating in a service of worship. Bow Fair culminated an annual week of festivity in summer. Over proceeding centuries, the fair attracted large crowds of visitors from London and Essex, acquiring a reputation for debauchery and drunkenness, as Shakespeare's contemporary Gervase Markham wrote in 1600.

'To Stratford Bow unto the Greengoose Fair

A world of people one day did repair

Both poor and rich, men likewise old and young.

Mixt with the males, the females came along.

The season of the year as usually was parching hot,

The weather scorching dry.

Hay makers, mowers, thither did repair.

Compelled by the sultry-hot-fire breathing air

The extreme heat did cause a thirst

So they drank until they almost burst.'

Library situation, as of 29th April, information from respective web sites

Bishopsgate Institute

Depending on government guidelines, we will partially be re-opening our building on a bookings-only basis from Monday 17 May. This includes running a reduced researchers' service and programme.

LB Barking & Dagenham

Reopening from 12th April. Face masks to be worn.

LB Hackney

Libraries are now open for: Order and collect, PC use, bookable study space

LB Newham

Newham libraries are open for pre-booked computers and study spaces, limited browsing, select and collect services, and Wi-Fi printing.

LB Redbridge

Monday 12 April, [Redbridge Central Library](#) opening hours are Monday-

Saturday 10am-5pm and [South Woodford Library & Gym](#) will reopen Monday-Friday

6am-10pm and Saturday-Sunday 8am-6pm.

Reduced book browsing, PC use and limited study spaces is available at both libraries.

In the coming months, there will be a phased re-opening of all other Redbridge libraries. We will keep you informed as to when they reopen.

LB Tower Hamlets

We're delighted to open our Idea Stores to customers and reopen Cubitt Town Library!

Idea Store Bow, Idea Store Canary Wharf, Idea Store Chrisp Street, Idea Store Whitechapel and Cubitt Town Library will be open the following hours:

Monday to Friday: 10am to 6pm. Saturday and Sunday: 12pm to 4pm

(Cubitt Town Library closed on Sundays).

You can just pop in, (there may be a queue at busy times). If you want to use one of our computers, book ahead to guarantee your slot.

Waltham Forest

In line with government guidance, we are pleased to announce that all libraries with the exception of Lea Bridge, will return to their usual opening hours from Monday 12 April 2021.

Please check before visiting.