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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.

Subscriptions

We will be sending out subscription reminders with this ELHS Newsletter. If you don't receive a reminder, then you don't have to pay! Because of the current uncertainties we are keeping the 2021/22 subscription at the old rate of £5. It has been at this level for at least twenty years, but some-time in the future it will probably have to be raised. Not for another year, however – we will keep you fully informed.

Philip Mernick

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

This charming picture appeared in the July 19th 1884 edition of the Graphic titled "The Public Garden of the Brewers Company at Stepney". It's not there anymore, so where was it? The accompanying text gives us some clues.

PUBLIC GARDEN AT STEPNEY

The ground occupied by this garden, in extent about 2,500 square yards, is situated partly in Whitechapel and partly in Stepney, at the back of the London Hospital. It belongs to the Brewers Company and in the autumn of 1881 was generously handed over, together with a yearly grant towards the salary of a permanent gardener, to a Committee, to be laid out, controlled, and administered as they might think fit. The garden was opened to the public July 1, 1882, and, considering the limited area

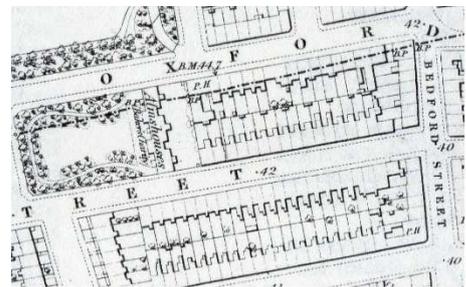
at command, a large amount of variety and interest has been got out of the ground.

The design, which has converted a perfectly flat area into mounds, walks, slopes, and excavations, was suggested by Mr. Stanley Kemp-Welch. The entrance gates are the gift of Mr. Willmer White, of the St. Pancras Iron Works. Opposite the entrance a high bank has been thrown up, on which ivies of various kinds have been planted. The garden-house, presented by Lord and Lady Brabazon, is intended as a shelter for infirm and delicate persons. The lake, which is the chief attraction in the garden, is well stocked with fish and water-fowl. Some of these were given by the Rev. H. Lubbock: some by a little girl who saved up her pocket-money in order to give pleasure in this way to those who are beyond the reach of rural sights and sounds.

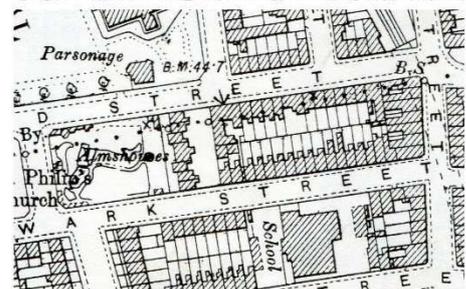
Various other kindly donors have given an aviary, well filled with birds, a fernery, a fountain, and a filter and stand. White mugs are supplied, so that the thirsty visitor can always get a draught of wholesome water. The plants and trees in the garden have done remarkably well. The garden has proved a great boon to the neighbourhood, affording, as it does, to hundreds of men and women a means of escape from the coarseness, the dirt, and the disorder which seem to be inseparable from the lot of the poor. Some kind soul has lent a wicker-work Bath chair for taking crippled persons to and from the garden. One middle-aged woman was thus enabled to pay it a visit who before had not crossed her threshold for five years.

Exclusive of gifts, the garden has cost about £1000 to lay out and maintain, and the annual expenditure is reckoned to be from £100 to £130. Subscriptions in aid will be thankfully received by the treasurer, Mr. Henry Williamson, 64, Philpot Street, E.

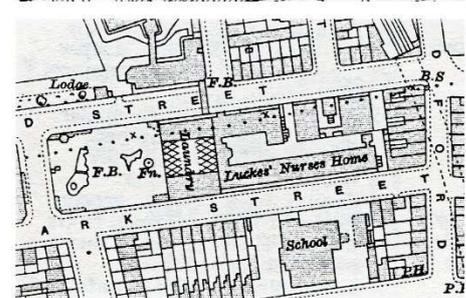
“Partly in Whitechapel and partly in Stepney at the back of the London Hospital” suggests that the gardens are the area depicted on the 1873 and 1894 OS maps and this is confirmed by the Post Office directory of 1889 where “Brewers Almshouses / Public Gardens of the Brewers’ Company” is located on the south side of Oxford Street (renamed Stepney Way in 1938) between Turner Street and Bedford Street. So what happened to the gardens? They were London Hospitalised! After 1905 the entry for that position reads “New Block of the London Hospital” and the following year “Isolation Block of the London Hospital”



1873



1894



1913

A number of questions still remain which I will try to answer in another Newsletter. The first is that the 1913 map still shows the garden although now inside the hospital grounds – is this the nurses garden shown on many contemporary post cards?

The alms houses are not on the 1913 map and were presumably demolished in 1905. Tower Hamlets Archives has a photograph possibly taken just before demolition but are they the same Brewers Almshouses depicted in a common 19th century print and described as being in Mile End? By Mile End do they mean our current Mile End or Mile End New Town just the other side of Whitechapel Road.

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 4-15. 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.

From your ELHS Committee

As we cautiously move towards a post-COVID ‘normality’, the ELHS looks forward to re-suming its programme of talks, which we hope to start in early April 2022, once the clocks go back and the evenings are lighter. Further details will be in the next newsletter.

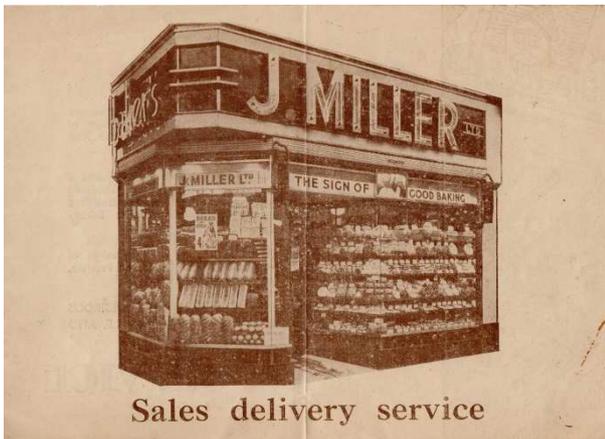
However, this is your society and to relaunch the committee needs help! We are in need of articles, membership secretary, treasurer, editor, web site master and programme organiser. Each role on its own is not an onerous task as we’re a small society but any help that you can provide would be much appreciated. Please email: mail@eastlondonhistory.org.uk if you are able to help!

We are also looking at ways to take the society forward in this new ‘normal’, maybe offering an afternoon talk once in a while, arranging for attendance via Zoom, changing the Newsletter to a printed bumper issue once a year alongside a regular email newsletter. Any ideas welcome, so do get in touch via email: mail@eastlondonhistory.org.uk. We will be sending all members a questionnaire before any decisions are made. ELHS committee looks forward to hearing from you!

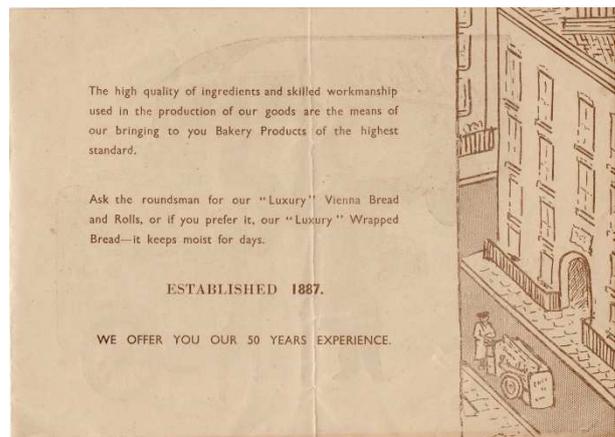
Thank you for your continued support!

M.O.T.H. Philip Mernick

As many of you will know I collect all sorts of items relating to Tower Hamlets. To display some of them, my brother Harold created a web site called M(ementos) O(f) T(ower) H(amlets) which can be found on our main web site www.mernicks.com. Although it has been pretty dormant for some time, I still look out for things and recently acquired this advertising leaflet from Poplar bakers J Miller Ltd. My guess is that it dates from the 1930s and I thought it might bring back memories of how things were advertised before the Internet.



Sales delivery service



Bancroft Road invites you.

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive is now open four days a week, without you needing to make an appointment. They are still fairly quiet so it is an excellent time to do that research you would have done if it hadn't been for Covid-19.

Opening times

- Mondays: closed
- Tuesdays: 10 am to 5 pm
- Wednesdays: 9 am to 5 pm
- Thursdays: 9am to 8 pm
- Fridays: closed
- Saturdays: 9 am to 5 pm

The Blacksmith and the Toffee-Maker, by Jackie Gooding Chapter 2

“Why am I here?”

My name's Betty or Bessy; I answer to both. I was christened Elizabeth 40 years ago in 1848 and I lived for 40 years in the same “two up, two down” house in Turner St where I was born. It was where my parents rented when they were first married. I had two older brothers and an older sister and as the lastborn, I was given lots of attention and became spoilt! So getting married and having to cook and clean for my husband came as a shock. I thought, of course, that getting wed would give me freedom; freedom from my Mum's nagging and freedom from my Dad's endless complaining. They were both quick to tell me when I was in the wrong but not so forthcoming with encouragement. Maybe they were trying (too late) to correct the fact I had been spoiled in earlier years. I learned how to read and write but then at 11, had to bring in a wage.

I met Bert when I was walking in “Vicky Park” with my friend Mary one day in June 1867. There was music coming from the bandstand and we strolled over to take a look. Bert was playing the trumpet and looked so handsome in his navy bandsman's uniform. I didn't know how to tell him I'd like to be his girl. I just stood and watched, knowing that he knew I was watching him. He winked at me and (shame on me) I winked back! After three final encores the band started to pack up. Albert came over to introduce himself. I was so shy I could hardly speak and neither could he! What a pair! We walked round “Vicky Park” so much in the next few months getting to know each other that I swear I could lead you from one exit to another blindfold! We were married in October 1867. But the freedom I had dreamed about was not to be. Bert and I didn't have enough money to rent

our own place and so we stayed with my parents. My brothers and sister had all left home as soon as possible!



Band stand in Victoria Park 1905

Bert was a docker and had to get up early to stand in a queue each day waiting to be chosen (or not) for physical work loading and unloading cargo. He was big and strong and enjoyed the business of the docks. But he hated the humiliation of no regular pay. He was always one of the first men to be selected because of his height and his muscles – he was a fine figure of a man! He wanted children (lots of them) but it was not to be. Sarah was born a year after we married. She's our only child. In 1878, after 11 years of marriage, I was widowed. Bert was crushed by falling cargo at the docks. The crane had failed to hold the weight. I never did discover what cargo had fallen on him. The company wouldn't say nor would they pay compensation. Bert couldn't walk. He found it hard to breathe. He was taken to “The London” (Hospital) (where I work) but sent home the same day to die, which he did, a week later.

His death hit me hard. We had never been rich, but we'd always had food and clothes. My regular wages from working in the laundry at the London Hospital had kept us from poverty. I'd had a job there since I was 11 (and I still work there!) Don't get me wrong, my relatives

did what they could to help, but they had their own families and jobs.

I shall never forget the support of the Salvation Army girls. These women in their black bonnets won me over by their smiles and open-hearted generosity. They didn't just talk religion, they did it! For the week that Bert was dying at home, they visited with food. No tambourines or Hallelujahs but help watching at his bedside all night. After Bert died, I spent more and more time with the Salvation Army, not because I believed their gospel but because they offered me warmth and acceptance. Faith came later. Sarah didn't like me having an interest that wasn't her and used to mock me for going to meeting and going on marches. I told her to mind her own business!

Sarah and I were still living in Turner Street, but both my parents had passed away. Sarah was employed at the Bryant and May Match Factory in Bow but neither the conditions nor the pay were much good. We were both terrified she would get phossy-jaw, which is when the phosphorus from the matches eats into the workers' jaw and face. Sarah's an attractive lass with a good brain. I'd wanted her to have more education than me but it's the same old story – I needed the money she could bring in by working. She's fiery-tempered but also quick to apologise and make peace. She wasn't courting yet, saying she'd not seen a lad she wanted!

At work in the laundry one day in 1888 I wasn't concentrating and my hand was too close to the huge mangle that helped us squeeze the water out of the washed sheets and towels. The pointing finger on my left hand got caught. The mangle was hand-powered and when I screamed the woman turning the wringer stopped immediately. But my finger was squashed and the pain made me shriek. My workmates told me I should see a doctor and escorted me to the Patients' Waiting Area where I sat for several hours hoping for

attention. My mates had to return to the laundry to work so I was left alone.

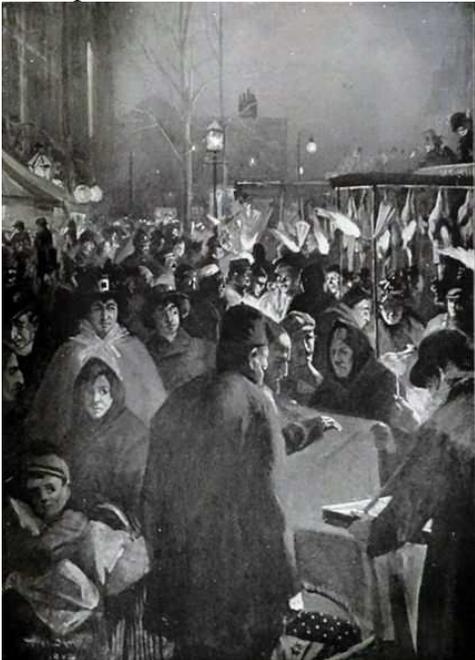
Next to me there was a handsome muscular man in his 50s. He seemed to have a problem like mine; a very bruised finger. We started to chat and I discovered he was a blacksmith called Tom who had hit his hand by mistake when hammering in the forge. His finger was swollen and black like mine. Tom talked about Taffy, a toffee-maker, who lived with him. I assumed Taffy was his son and Tom was a widower. I told him I'd been widowed for ten years and that I had one adult daughter called Sarah.

I was called first to see a nurse who gave me some arnica ointment. Tom saw the same nurse after me and was given the same remedy. We left the hospital together. My superior in the laundry had told me to take the rest of the day off because I had never been absent in 25 years except for a week when Sarah was born. So I was free to accompany Tom for a cup of tea in Whitechapel market, opposite the hospital. He was quiet and I found myself chattering away. He didn't seem to find this annoying: maybe he was in such pain he didn't care! I was flattered he wanted to be with me, a buxom matron past the bloom of youth, and we agreed to meet again.

Sarah was jealous of Tom because I gave him the time I used to give her. I'd chosen to be with the Salvation Army without her permission and now I was spending precious leisure-hours with another man who wasn't her father. I had to fight for my right to spend my time as I chose and not live according to her expectations. I'd anticipated being dictated to by my husband but not by my own daughter! I continued to see Tom once or twice a week for walks in the park or for the plentiful cheap local concerts in the back of pubs or at Charrington's Great Hall on the Mile End Road. We even went on an outing to the seaside at Clacton which I loved.

Tom came along to Salvation Army meetings and marches. He knew what “the army” meant to me and he too was impressed by their “good works”. Like me, he’d been “born” a Christian, but we both found a new personal love of Jesus. I wish Bert had been around to play his trumpet in a Salvation Army band. He would have loved the music.

The time came to introduce Tom and Taffy to Sarah. By then I’d realised Tom was a bachelor and Taffy wasn’t his son. All of us met together at the forge. Taffy was shy but I recognised him as the young man who sometimes sold toffee in Whitechapel Market. We talked about how you make toffee and ate some that had been prepared that morning. We walked to my home in Turner St for afternoon tea. The afternoon went well and Tom and I decided to tell Sarah and Taffy we were going to get married in September. They were both shocked, neither expecting the older people in their lives to have their own needs and desires. They didn’t want change: life should go on as it always had done and it shouldn’t be either Tom or me getting married. I was cross at their selfishness but fortunately it brought Sarah and Taffy together in a way none of us had anticipated.



Whitechapel Market c. 1905

Bossy Sarah and timid Taffy spent hours discussing how to prevent the marriage between Tom and me and, in addition, how to destroy our relationship altogether. However, they had no power except their disapproval. I persuaded them both (Sarah and Taffy) to come on a Salvation Army outing to Wanstead Flats. There were about a hundred of us opposite “the London” (Hospital) piling onto horse-drawn buses to drive into the countryside.

There was a Revival Meeting in the open air when we arrived. Sarah and Taffy looked embarrassed and uncomfortable, especially at the noise of the brass band and exuberant tambourines and then the altar-call to be saved. “Why am I here?” complained Sarah, not caring who heard her. Taffy said he felt the same way. They both left the meeting (and Tom and me) and went for a walk. Taffy was feeling lonely and insecure. I had taken over from him as the most important adult in Tom’s life. Nobody had talked about who would live where after the wedding. Tom and I hadn’t decided ourselves. It made sense for Tom to stay living next to the forge. But would Sarah move there with me? Did I want to leave the little house where I’d lived for 40 years? What did Taffy want?

It became clear to Tom and me that Sarah and Taffy were attracted to each other even if they denied it. Finally, we saw them walk hand-in-hand along the Mile End Road. Taffy saw me privately to ask for my daughter Sarah’s hand in marriage. I was so happy! The next week we all went to see the vicar of St Dunstan’s, Stepney to ask if we might have a double wedding in September. He had no objections, once he understood that I was Sarah’s mother but Tom wasn’t Taffy’s father. The next major decision was who would live where and why. Taffy was quite happy to move in with Sarah at Turner St and I was prepared (with a heavy heart having never ever moved before) to live alongside the forge.

“Why am I here?” – Sarah had asked at the Salvation Army meeting.

Now she would say “I’m here to love Taffy as he loves me, just as Tom and Betty love each other.”

Chapter 3 will appear in the next newsletter.

Trinity House Workshops

**A tribute to the people of Blackwall
By Jim Ridgeon, former Workshops
Manager, Blackwall and Maintenance
Manager, Trinity House**

This article first appeared in the Trinity House journal *Lantern* in 2006 and appears here by kind permission of the Corporation of Trinity House, London and the Estate of the late Jim Ridgeon.

J E (Jim) Ridgeon retired from Trinity House in 1988 after 24 years’ service. In 1968 he was appointed Assistant Workshop Superintendent at Blackwall and later Workshops Manager and Maintenance Manager.

His tasks at Workshops were in support of various modernisation and automation schemes down the years which the Trinity House Engineer-in-Chief’s Department embarked upon in an effort to replace outdated equipment, improve reliability and save running costs.

Before coming to Trinity House Jim Ridgeon, who came from a Portsmouth naval family, served at the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough and with the Admiralty Signal and Radar Establishment, Haslemere. Before joining Trinity House he served in the Signal Engineer’s Department of British Rail Western Region. He died on 6 January 2020 aged 90.

Before memories of the above have gone forever, and for those interested in what went before, let me take you on a walk round tour.

Where was it and how did you get there?

Coming from Trinity House on many occasions you caught a No 23 bus and after passing Blackwall Tunnel got off at the next stop. Opposite was the start of Leamouth Road, at the end of which you were confronted by two large and two small side gates, supported by brick pillars, upon which were two old 300mm oil lanterns. You have arrived at Orchard Place, the home of Trinity House Workshops, London E14. On the right was the telephonists’ housing. In the good old days this was manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As well as dealing with calls through the working day, after hours, they took and recorded messages from the districts. These messages were passed directly to the duty officer who took what action was deemed necessary. In the case of failure or breakdown, men would be asked to attend immediately, or come in next morning prepared to travel. The following forenoon these signals were always atop the day’s mail presented to the Workshops Superintendent and the first to be dealt with.

The site

Opposite was the office block, housing on the ground floor the wages and costing personnel. On the top floor was the Superintendent, his technical officers, and the clerical staff. To the rear was the kitchen and canteen and in days gone by the gas with which the buoy bodies were filled, was produced here. Beyond the canteen the River Lea formed one boundary and ran into the Thames which was the frontage for Workshops.

Coming from the office and walking towards the Thames the first building housed the packing and transport section. Materials from the various shops or from stores were packed and transported by road or rail to the depots and lighthouses. The road transport consisted

of two Ford Transit vans and a three ton lorry complete with a Hiab crane.

As the tenders rarely came up river as far as Blackwall damaged lighted buoys were recovered from the depots by road. A lorry with a 30ft trailer was hired for this task.

The next building was the Training School built when the number of trainee keepers and lightsmen was vast. Technical assistants gave instruction on mechanics, electricity and radio as well as basic cookery including bread making.

Copper Shop

Next, having done a right turn you came to the Copper Shop. On entry you were confronted by a multitude of patterns and jigs on the walls. These related to lighthouse flue sections, paraffin vapour burner (PVB) piping and so forth. The coppersmiths and sheet metal workers produced the various acetylene pipes for buoys, the chimneys and tops of the 200mm lanterns and radar reflectors. With the coming of the IALA Buoyage System in 1977 a huge number of radar reflectors were required. The largest item staff here produced and fitted on station was a replacement copper roof for Lundy North Lighthouse.

Blacksmiths' Shop

Next door was the Blacksmiths' Shop which housed three forges and a very powerful hydraulic hammer. All manner of ironwork was manufactured here, including numerous bell hammers associated with wave-actuated bells on buoys, and in days gone by, chain was made here.

The heaviest task undertaken was the manufacture and fitting of replacement lewis on sinkers. On a lighter note, with visiting school children, the hammer produced to their delight very enlarged pennies.

Boiler Shop

Crossing the yard, one entered the Boiler Shop. The platers', welders' and riveters'

primary task was the repair, and on occasion, the manufacture of lighted buoys. Damaged lighted buoys were repaired and the method used was to cut out the damaged side plating, which was rolled, reformed and welded back in the position from which it came. Dished ends which formed the top and bottom of these buoys were bought in from an outside contractor. This enabled a complete buoy to be built, or in the case of a damaged dished end, a sector could be replaced. A frequent task was to replace the studs associated with buoy gas pockets. The studs and associated large nuts were manufactured in the Fitting Shop. In the early days here the fitting of a replacement stud was a time-consuming task, but in latter days a stud was fitted in minutes using electric welding. The workload was much increased with the introduction of the IALA system when large numbers of 2nd class buoy superstructures were manufactured as well as the superstructures for high focal plane buoys.

Fitting Shop

The Fitting Shop was on two floors. The ground floor held the large machinery such as lathes and mills. Here fitters and turners manufactured and repaired items recovered from lighthouses and light-vessels. Bread and butter lines came from orders placed by stores and ranged from specialised nuts and bolts to complete 200mm lanterns. The largest task undertaken was the manufacture of the 360mm aluminium lanterns to be fitted to the Lanbys and automated lightvessels. The top floor housed the smaller lathes and the Flasher Shop. Lighted buoys were recovered after three years at sea and the 200mm lanterns returned to Workshops. The lanterns were stripped and the flasher mechanism overhauled, the latter was set to the required character and bench tested for a week to ensure character stability before being fitted in the newly painted lantern. From time-to-time large Dalen lanterns were overhauled and also the mechanism associated with CO₂ bell buoys. Flasher mechanics would visit the

depot when this type of buoy was fitted out and, on occasion, undertake the repair of a buoy at sea. As with all the other shops the modifications necessary with the implementation of the IALA Buoyage system increased the workload with flasher mechanisms being adjusted to produce the new characters; the most difficult of these being the South Cardinal.

Radio/Electrical Shop

Adjacent to the Fitting Shop was the Radio/Electric Shop. Over a period of just a few years new technology required tradesmen to change from dealing with large glass valves and radio beacon chronometers to transistors and chips within the new single side band transmitter/receivers, electronic radio beacons, radar beacons (racons) and the control equipment associated with xenon navigation lights fitted on the Lanby buoys. As with all new equipment there were teething problems and these were overcome by having test rigs for each type of installation to ascertain where the problems lay and to introduce any necessary modification.

Adjoining the Radio/Electric Shop was the Stores, both mechanical and electrical. Anything from a resistor to a lantern, rotary converter, or a portable diesel alternator, could be supplied to one of the shops, a depot or a lighthouse. Stock was maintained by placing orders on an outside contractor or on one of the shops.

Carpenters' Shop

Behind the Copper/Blacksmith Shops was the Carpenters Shop. The pattern maker, as with the Copper Shop, had numerous patterns for service equipment but in the absence of a foundry these were sent out for the required castings. Patterns were produced for the aluminium 200mm and 300mm lanterns. In the early days a bread and butter line was to produce the wooden battens for buoy superstructures. In respect of spherical and conical battens and using straight grained ash

these had to be steamed to the required form. Eventually these were replaced by pre-formed marine plywood.

The Apprenticeship Scheme

Within Blackwall Workshops there was an apprentice scheme and for most years there was at least one studying and working in each of the Shops. Each apprentice had an apprentice master and to acquire the required academic level he attended the local technical college on day release. Upon completion of the five years they joined the workforce or moved on to a local engineering firm. I'm pleased to say, most of these who stayed on climbed the internal tree to become foremen and technical assistants.

The Outstation Team and their work

A quarter of Workshop personnel formed the outstation team. They were mechanics, electricians and radio mechanics whose work included attending breakdowns, periodic servicing, and modernisation. They were listed by trade and each day the list was updated to indicate the station at which they were working, or if they were available in workshops. In the event of a failure a man could be sent to attend. If one was on an adjacent station he was contacted and asked to transfer. Passage to the station could be by road, rail, district tender, local boat and, when available, helicopter.

All lighthouses, except for some acetylene-powered stations which were subject to contract to AGA, were serviced annually. Spares were drawn from stores and the men could, dependant on the size of the station, be away for up to four weeks. Lightvessels were normally on station for three years and during this period the machinery would be serviced once. When recovered from station and prior to going to a shipyard the machinery, electrics and radio equipment was serviced *in situ* or returned to workshops for overhaul and repair. The diaphone fog signals were subject to wear, as were the sirens from lighthouses, and the

moving parts were built up and machined to give the required clearances. The attending mechanic went with the lightvessel on tow to the yard. Towards the end of the period in the yard the other tradesmen returned and the vessel was prepared for the next station on which it would serve. A technical officer from Workshops would test the light, fog signal and other aids to navigation prior to the tow. The mechanic remained with the vessel until the Lightsmen accepted that all was well. Lanby buoys underwent a similar work pattern when they were brought in for dry docking and repair (DD & R). For a number of years light vessel DD & Rs were never straightforward due to the new electronic equipments requiring different voltages from that which was produced by the Gardner 1 L 2 Crompton Parkinson machines viz. 100V DC.

Problems were encountered with the introduction of televisions in light- vessels which necessitated installation of rotary converters. More headaches were provided by the first racons (radar beacons) for as well as the problem of space, the 6ft racks and the running of waveguide, this equipment again required 240V AC and more powerful rotary converters. The new radio beacons required 24V DC but a much larger capacity than was available from the R/T batteries. The problems were resolved by mechanically coupling CAV 24V machines to the IL2 engines. This work required platers/welders to join the outstation workforce.

With regard to the modernisation of a lighthouse, outstation mechanics always installed the replacement diesel alternators and compressors. On rock towers, where accommodation was limited, outstation electricians did the work. In some instances keepers were withdrawn and, as well as doing their own technical work, outstation staff were required to watchkeep. On land stations or island stations the electrical work was carried out by an outside contractor. When working

offshore Blackwall men could be asked to remain on station for up to eight weeks.

For more than twenty years there were periods when it was difficult to recruit tradesmen for, in any one year, eight to nine months was spent away from home. With regard to communications before the coming of VHF and single sideband transmitter/receivers, the only link with offshore stations was via the local Coastguard station, when one had to ask for a link call. This frequently meant delays in getting information and spares to a station.

On the domestic front Blackwall Workshops was sometimes the only link between the men on stations and their families. Enquiries would be made as to when Joe/Fred/George would be coming home. On one occasion, as duty officer, I got a call from a ward sister who gave me a hard time in respect of a wife giving birth and who wanted the husband home. I had difficulty in explaining that the man was on the Longships Lighthouse and the weather was such that there was no way he could be brought ashore.

At any time being a "hinge-pin" one never knew what was around the corner, everything from a telex from Yarmouth late on a Friday afternoon, when the workshops were empty to engine rooms at Bull Point and Start Point slipping down the cliffs. Until the recovered machinery could be assembled a light vessel named Bull Point was quickly prepared in Swansea to provide the required fog signal offshore. When merchant ships collided in the Channel two light vessels painted green rather than red were prepared to mark the hazards. On each and every occasion the men of Blackwall came up to the task and I am pleased to have been a part of that team.

In conclusion I would be totally remiss if the ladies of Blackwall did not get a mention. They provided all with a cheery smile, kept the place clean and tidy, kept all the paperwork

moving, fed us, and as many will remember, served us with a pint of real ale at lunchtime.

All that remains today are most of the buildings whilst the skills and fellowship that were present have been dispersed. Only a handful of the old hands are still in the Service, many are happily enjoying retirement and, sadly, some have crossed the bar.

Tudor House Bromley by Bow and the Ruty Family

After reading the Gentle Authors blog on William Kent's Arch In Bow. Spitalfields Life, 14th April 2020. I was curious to find out who George Gammon Ruty, the occupier of Tudor House and the purchaser of William Kent's arch, was.

George Gammon **Ruty** was a third-generation mason and paviour (sometimes pavier or pavior), that is someone who lays paving slabs. He followed in the tradition of his father Samuel (1802-1860) and his grandfather, also Samuel Ruty. After the eldest Samuel's death at Elder Street, Norton Folgate, his son Samuel was apprenticed to Alexander **Goudge** on 13 November 1815, living with this Master paviour's family at Spit(t)al Square, Spitalfields.

Exactly a year after completing his seven-year apprenticeship Samuel Ruty married Sarah **Gammo(a)n** of Shoreditch (b. 1801) at St John's Parish Church, Hackney, on 13 November 1823. They went on to live at the Ruty family's stone yard and house back at Elder Street. The marriage produced seven children, four of whom would survive into adulthood: Samuel Thomas (b.1824); George Gammon (b.1826); William Henry (b.1833) and Louisa Isabella (b.1840).

In 1824 Samuel gave evidence at the Old Bailey against a Stephen **Stokes**, who had allegedly stolen a hammer valued at 5

shillings, the property of Alexander Goudge. In spite of the evidence of a watchman, another of Goudge's employees subsequently took responsibility for misplacing the hammer and Stokes was found Not Guilty.

On 14 October 1831 Samuel Ruty found himself in the debtors' prison at Marshalsea owing his father-in-law, Alexander **Gaymon (Gammon)**, £21 15s 6d. He was discharged three days later on 17 October 1831, presumably after reaching an agreement with his (suitor) creditor and payment of prison fees of 10s 10d.

In 1831 Samuel Ruty was back at the Old Bailey giving evidence against one of his employees, Dennis **Haley**, who was accused of stealing three half-sovereigns and one half-crown. After confirming how much he had paid the defendant on Christmas Eve, the accused was found guilty and transported to Australia for seven years.

By 1841 the family were living at Gifford Street, Shoreditch, with wife Sarah and children Samuel, William, George and Louisa, all at home.

On 15 November 1850 George Gammon Ruty married Elizabeth Jane **Cooper** at the Parish Church of St James Garlickhythe in the City of London. Both were then living at nearby 15 Garlick Hill. They went on to have twelve known children:

The first seven were baptised at Saint Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, while the family were living at City Terrace, 15 Nicholl Square and then later at 30 and 29 Cumberland Street, all in Shoreditch,

Elizabeth Louisa Ruty baptised on 13 July 1851, died unmarried 1940, aged 89.

Caroline Catherine Ruty baptised on 25 April 1853, died unmarried in 1872.

George Samuel Gammon Ruty baptised 18 March 1855. George married Clara Josephine **Bourdon**, a near neighbour from St Leonard's Street, at St Martins in the Field in 1874

George died, aged 40 in 1895, while Clara died in Margate in 1926.

Miriam Jane Ruty baptised 12 June 1859, died unmarried in 1930.

Arthur Victor Ruty baptised 9 June 1861, died unmarried in 1901.

Winifred Annie Ruty baptised 23 April 1865, died unmarried in 1932.

Naomi Mary baptised 23 April 1865, later married Clarence Charles **Knowles** and seemingly died on the Wirral in 1929.

The next five children were baptised at Holy Trinity, Mile End Old Town after the family moved initially to Coborn Road, then 24 High Street, Bow and later to Tudor House at High Street, Bromley-by-Bow.

Edgar John Ruty who was baptised on 3 July 1867. Edgar married Mary **Fysh** at All Saints, West Ham in 1894 and they had eleven known children together. Edgar began his working life as a Coach Builder, but later ran a dining room at 35 Broadway, Snakes Lane, close to the station at Woodford. Edgar died in Cranbrook, Kent in 1931.

Agatha Phoebe Ruty baptised 25 April 1869 and later married Henry **Meyer** at St. Leonards, Bromley on 7 September 1895. Agatha died in South Africa in 1944.

Harold Frederick Ruty baptised 25 June 1871, died unmarried in 1903.

Madoline Jessie Ruty baptised 14 September 1873, died unmarried in 1941.

Gertrude Annie Ruty baptised 12 September 1875, died in 1876 aged just one.

George's father Samuel Rutter, late of Elder Street, Norton Folgate, but then of 3 Somerset Place, Forest Row, Dalston, died on 17 October 1860, aged 58. His widow, Sarah, was the sole beneficiary of his estate which was valued at under £200. After her husband's death, Sarah spent time living with youngest daughter Louisa – a teacher of Music – at 79 Pearson Street, Shoreditch.

By 1871, George Gammon Ruty was living with wife Elizabeth and nine children at 24 High Street, Bow and was described as a Mason and Paviour. He had a very successful business, gaining contracts right across London, Essex and Kent for laying and repairing roads, as well as creating modern machinery including the Ruty road-scarifier for breaking up existing road surfaces. This was a very successful machine, both in the UK and also abroad. It was exported to Australia; the Municipal Council of Sydney obtained at least one.

George Ruty was before Guildford County Bench in May 1895 claiming he did not need a special licence for using a locomotive in the county but when it was proven he had taken out a similar licence in 1890 he was fined 40s and costs without a license, his employee was fined 20s for driving the locomotive during prohibited hours. In June 1896 on a similar charge he was fined £2 and costs and in 1897 he was fined 10s and costs for allowing use of an unlicensed locomotive at Enfield highway.

On inheriting the business his son George appears to have carried on the practice, being fined 10s on each summons in 1903 for allowing his locomotive with three loaded wagons through Egham without a licence. Their second daughter Caroline Catherine Ruty died in 1872, aged 19, and was buried in a private grave number 6266 at Tower Hamlets Cemetery. Her remains were subsequently relocated to a private grave 6268, which was acquired by her father at Tower Hamlets Cemetery three months later. Another daughter

Gertrude died, aged just one, and was buried in the grave in August 1876.

By the 1881 census the family including nine children were living at Tudor House at 12 St Leonard's Street. With an acre of gardens and grounds and a frontage to St Leonards street of over 200 feet it was one of the area's grandest houses. Previous tenants had been the Stockwells (Ship builders) and a Mr Wooding whose lease George Ruty continued. The house was in good condition structurally and had been kept in excellent condition. The arrangement of the rooms, chimney stacks, hall and stairs were exactly the same as the house on the south side of Three Mills as were the powder closets and bedrooms and were probably of the same period. Much of the house had been refitted during the reign of William III, the staircase with massive newels and handrails and the panelling in the principal rooms of the ground floor. (Other rooms had Elizabethan panelling).

Only parts of the grounds were used as a garden and the free-standing arch acquired at a public auction of items from Northumberland House (Northumberland Avenue, Whitehall) when that building was demolished in 1873 to make way for an approach to the Victoria Embankment. The arch (which now stands at the local Bromley-by-Bow health centre, although its condition has deteriorated through weather and pollution) stood at the northern end, the rest of the land being used for workshops and stables.

George Gammon, Elizabeth Ruty and their eight adult children, including five unmarried daughters, were living at the same address in 1891.

In May 1893, George Benton, a lighterman and one of George Ruty's sub-contractors, died in the Thames when his boat capsized while loading ballast for Ruty on his barge, the Tulip.

George Gammon Ruty died and was buried in the family's private grave on 24 May 1894. In his Will, which was proved on 22 June 1894, he left an estate valued at £16,671 6s 11d to his widow, Elizabeth. This was evidence of the success of his contracting business.

Eldest son, George Samuel Gamman Ruty of Norfolk Cottage, Wellington Way, died of pneumonia in the following year, aged just 40, and was buried at Tower Hamlets Cemetery in a second grave number 7222 on 12 February 1895. The register notes the grave was extended by 12 inches with additional stones costing 20/-, but sadly no headstones (still) remain.

In September 1895, another grave (number 9589) was acquired by the family at a cost of £6 6s 0d. The owners were listed as mother Elizabeth Jane and daughters Winifred and Elizabeth Ruty of 7 Montpelier Road, Ealing.

The burial site has no headstone and there is no record of any interments in this grave. Following the deaths of father and eldest son, both called George, within nine months of each other, there were concerns for the viability of the business. Newspaper reports, including George Samuel Gamman Ruty's obituary, assured readers that younger, but nonetheless experienced, sons Arthur and Harold continued to run the business. They continued with the company's tradition of taking workers on an annual outing or "beano", in September 1895 to the Red Lion at (Stanstead) St Margaret's in Hertfordshire.

However, the company may have been in decline as Tudor House was advertised for sale in the East London Observer on 29 June 1895. The house and land were eventually acquired by the London County Council (L.C.C.) in 1898. Tudor House with offices and garden mostly adapted for the purposes of a contractors yard and a cottage adjoining in St Leonard's Street were purchased at a cost of £ 6,088. According to the L.C.C. in their

publication *London Parks and Open Spaces: Being One of a Series of Popular Handbooks on the London County Council and what it Does for London* the house was in a bad state of repair and would have had to be almost rebuilt, but other publications and public representatives (including Mr Hugh Blackiston secretary to the National Trust) who tried to save the site because of its historical history disagreed. The necessity for open spaces in a densely populated area won the day and the new recreation ground with garden, bandstand, toilets and children's gymnasium was opened in April 1900 at a cost of £2,584.

Elizabeth survived a further 15 years, living at "Ecclesbourne" 16 Mansfield Road, Ilford, with four unmarried daughters, Elizabeth, Miriam, Winifred and Madoline, all living by "private means", and two of her surviving unmarried sons Arthur and Harold, who were recorded as masons and road contractors. However later that year Arthur died, aged 40, and was buried on 24 October 1901, and then eighteen months later Harold also died, age just 31. Both were buried alongside their older brother (in grave 7222). The demise of all three brothers at such comparatively young ages, probably did signify the final collapse of the family's paving and road contracting business.

Elizabeth living at 16 Mansfield Road, passed on 30 May 1909, aged 79, and was buried alongside her husband. Her Will was proved on 17 July and she left effects valued at £1,489 4s 4d.

In the following year, on 16 February 1910, Trustees advertised for any claims or demands against George Gamman Rutty's estate. Once these were considered the estate was distributed amongst "entitled persons". Three sisters were laid to rest alongside their brothers in grave 7222: Miriam in 1930 (aged 71); Winifred in 1932 (aged 67); and finally, Elizabeth in 1940 (aged 89).

The final person to be buried in the parent's grave (6266) was daughter Madoline, who was laid to rest on 20 December 1941, aged 67. In her Will, her addresses were given as St Leonards (Tudor) House, 7 Montpelier Road, Ealing and finally Springfield Mental Hospital, Tooting. In her Will, she left £3,152 16s 7d to sister Agatha Phoebe **Myers** and a more distant relative, Marguerite Sarah **Hollins**, who lived in the USA, and who had also benefitted from sister Elizabeth's Will in 1940.

Drawings from *The Survey of London: Being the First Volume of the Register of the Committee for the Survey of the Memorials of Greater London* containing the Parish of St Bromley by Bow AD 1900



TUDOR HOUSE.



PORCH FROM SOUTH SIDE.

TUDOR HOUSE.



OLD GATEWAY OF NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE.

TUDOR HOUSE.



ENTRANCE DOOR AND RAILINGS IN FRONT.

TUDOR HOUSE.



STAIRS AND OAK DOOR IN THE HALL, GROUND FLOOR.

TUDOR HOUSE.



NORTH-EAST VIEW FROM GARDEN.

TUDOR HOUSE.



PORCH FROM SOUTH SIDE.

Diane Kendall and Kevin Carter

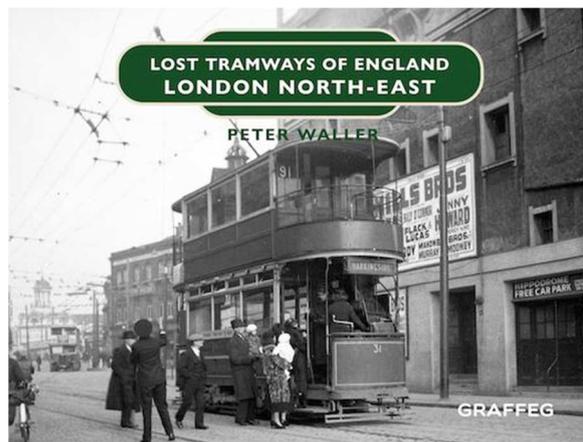
Books and More

Hannah Morley of Graffeg Books writes.

Hello, I'm getting in touch with you about the latest additions to our very popular Lost Tramways series, which explores the rich history of our tramways. These editions in the series focus on the iconic tramways of London and will be available in September.

Lost Tramways of England: London North East

Peter Waller. Publication 23 September 2021. £8.99. Format Hardback, 150 x 200mm, pages 64, ISBN 978191407980



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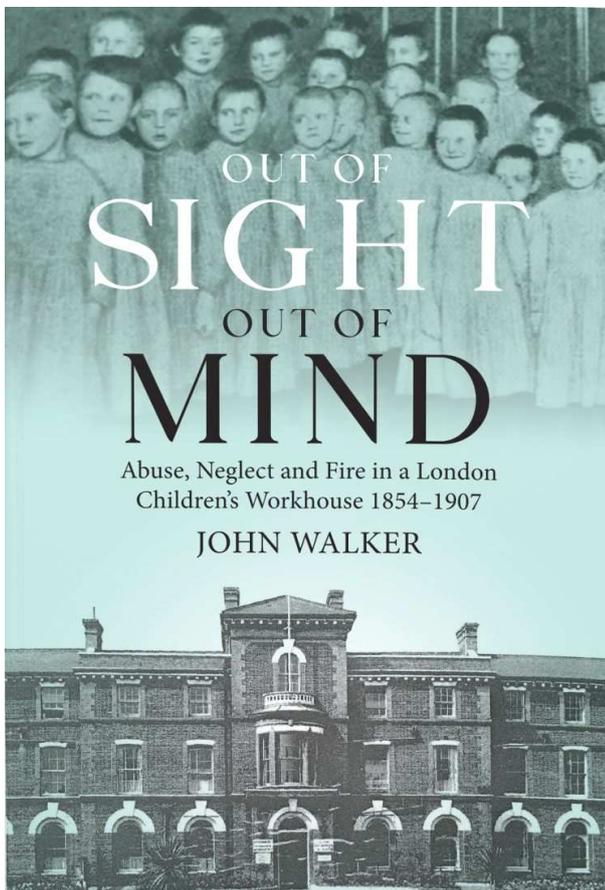
Once the largest tramway network in the British Isles, the tramways had belonged to a range of operators until the London Passenger Transport Board was created in July 1933. This resulted in a great variety of tramcars operated in the Metropolis. This is one of four volumes to cover London; the routes to the northeast, were the result of network developments by a number of local authorities and converted to trolleybus operation leading up to 1940.

North-East London locations: Aldgate, Bow, Barking, Barkingside, Beckham, Canning Town, Chadwell Heath, Chingford Mount, Dalston, East Ham, Edmonton, Enfield, Ferry

Lane, Hackney, Higham Hill, Ilford, Leyton, Liverpool Street, London Docks, Plaistow, Ponders End, Poplar, Royal Albert Docks, Stamford Hill, Shoreditch, Stepney, Victoria & Albert Docks, Waltham Cross, Wanstead Park, West Ham, West India Docks, Whitechapel, Whipps Cross, Woodford

There are similar publications to cover each of London North West, London South West and London South East

Contact Hannah at **Graffeg Limited** 24 Stradey Park Business Centre, Llanelli SA14 8YP Wales. Tel:01554 824000, email sales@graffeg.com web www.graffeg.com.



John Walker wrote describing his new book.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind - Abuse, Neglect and Fire in a London Children's Workhouse, 1854-1907 is the story of how 50,000

workhouse children, mainly from Whitechapel, Poplar and Hackney were treated in a residential "barrack school" in Forest Gate between 1854 and 1907. The children, aged between 2 and 14 years of age were kept from their parents, separated from their siblings and isolated from much of the rest of society in truly appalling conditions. Those conditions are spelled out against a backdrop of the way in which pauper children have historically been treated in Britain since the Norman Conquest.

Scandal and brutality were the hallmarks of the regime. Attempts to reform are considered and it was two working class men from Tower Hamlets, Will Crooks and George Lansbury - both later to become Labour MPs who cut their public service teeth as governors of the Forest Gate workhouse school - who eventually closed the institution. They transferred the children to Brentwood in Essex and established what was almost to become a template for 20th century children's homes.

I would hope its publication could excite some member interest locally.

If you would be interested in me giving a presentation to your members about it (either in person or via Zoom) - please don't hesitate to contact me and I will be happy to oblige.

Correspondence

ELHS member John Sly writes: I hope that you will be able to publish this request in the next Newsletter. I am looking for the entry in the 1881 and 1891 censuses for EDWARD ANDREW MURPHY. He was born 31 December 1874 at 32 West Street, Shoreditch, the son of the late George Murphy, confectioner, and his wife Elizabeth (nee O'Neill). His mother died in late 1875, so he was an orphan by the time he was a year old. He was almost certainly taken into care (of some sort) and possibly was given a different name

The next time he appears is when he joined the Army in November 1893. From there I have most of his story (he apparently changed his name to Edward JAMES before his marriage in April 1906 to Annie Emma Harrison when they were living at 3 Henson Street, Hoxton. In 1911 he was the Deputy Keeper of the Westminster Chambers Lodging House. He died in Richmond, Surrey, 27 May 1947

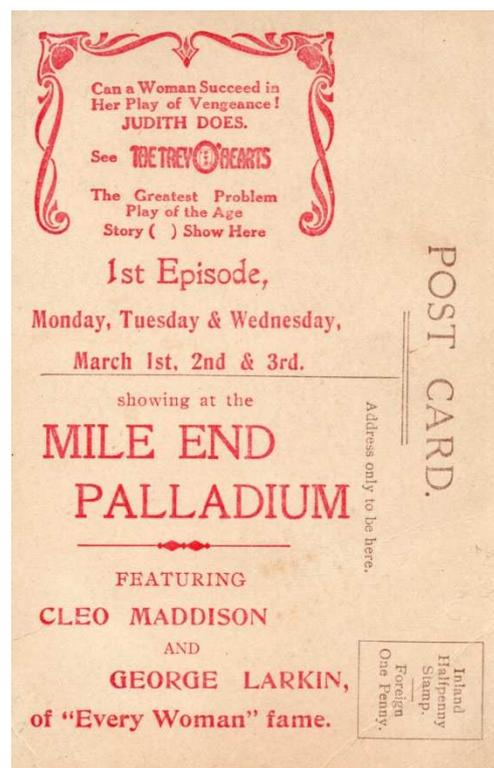
On the 29th July Derek Morris forwarded me the following communication from Sarah Morris' (no relation). Hi Derek, on the anniversary of the execution of Thomas Cromwell, 28 July 1540, I finally published my blog on Tudor Stepney and 'Great Place'. The blog can be found at <https://bit.ly/3196iyu> Members may find it of interest – I did!

On the 17th of July Derek emailed: Dear Phil, An Australian contact has asked the following questions:

“I was just reading a journal from a convict ship in 1853, which refers to ‘Samaritan Water companies tank’ coming along side and willing the water casks. Samaritan Water was a quack treatment but there also seems to have been a waterworks at Poplar with this name.

But it raises the question – how did they fill the water casks? It seems logical that some folks offered this as a commercial service.”

Can any ELHS members solve this problem?



Advertising post card for a 1915 serial movie. The cinema (closed in 1938) was at 370 Mile End Road (south side), now part of Mile End Park.