

The East London History Society

PROGRAMME 1984/85

1984

20 Sept.	All Stations to Poplar Thurs. Jim Connor	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm
29 Sept.	Visit to Wesley's Chapel, City Road Sat. Rev. D. Wollen, M.A.	Meet outside Chapel	2.15 pm
25 Oct.	Annual General Meeting Thurs. followed by Videotape "To the Hopfields"	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm
22 Nov.	Tower Hamlets Joint Annual Lecture Thurs. Lord Asa Briggs "Centenary of Toynbee Hall"	Bancroft Road Library	7.30 pm
12 Dec.	Balloons over Newham Wed. Howard Bloch, B.A.	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm

1985

23 Jan.	The Thames Barrier Wed. R. W. Horner (Chief Engineer, G.L.C.)	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm
21 Feb.	Sam Elsbury — The story of a Jewish Tailor Thurs. Dr. John Archer	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm
20 Mar.	East London Methodism Wed. A. H. French, M.B.E.	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm
30 Mar.	Bow Waterways Sat. Walk led by Mr. A. H. French	Meet Bromley-by-Bow Station	2.30 pm
24 Apr.	The Industrial Archaeology of London's Wed. Docklands Dr. R. J. M. Carr	Queen Mary College	7.30 pm
9 May	19th Century Photography in Hackney Thurs. Jon Newman	Rose Lipman Library De Beauvoir Road, Hackney	7.30 pm
20 June	Hackney Walk Thurs.	Meet Geffrye Museum	6.30 pm

The East London History Society exists to further interest in the history of East London, namely the London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets.

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**EAST LONDON
RECORD**

No. 7

1984

EAST LONDON RECORD

Editor: Colm Kerrigan

The East London History Society publishes the *East London Record* once a year. We welcome articles on any aspect of the history of the area that now forms the boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets. Articles, which need not be in their final form, may be handed in at the Local History Library, Tower Hamlets Central Library, Bancroft Road, London E1 4DQ, or sent by post to the editor at 38 Ridgdale Street, Bow, London E3 2TW.

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Unless otherwise stated, the illustrations are reproduced by courtesy of Tower Hamlets Libraries.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mr. Bird was prompted into his research when he found Faccini's insignia on a rare Pasquale piano he was renovating, while David Cobb came on the subject of deaths in Wapping through having made an earlier study from village registers on the causes of death in late 18th century rural Oxfordshire. Mr. Greenhalgh now lives in Hackney, not all that far away from the 'Bandstand' of his article; John Pierse has published many studies of his exceptionally interesting Irish ancestors; C. J. Lloyd is the archivist at Tower Hamlets Local History Library. Tom Ridge is head of Social Studies at Sir John Cass's Foundation School, Stepney; Bernard Nurse had an article on photographing Tower Hamlets in *East London Record* 3 (1980), Mike Gray's study of Joseph Priestley in Clapton appeared in last year's issue, and Alfred French wrote about Limehouse in our 1982 magazine. Stanley Reed used to be Director of the British Film Institute and Bernard Canavan is at the Island History Project. In our 1981 magazine David Behr wrote about the dramatic election at Mile End in 1916. Howard Bloch is the Social Studies Librarian for Newham and Secretary of the East London History Society.

Cover illustration: Faccini's Organ Depot in 1933. Albert is the one walking away; the man in the foreground was a well known local organ-grinder.

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FACCINI'S BARREL ORGAN DEPOT, STEPNEY

Anthony G. Bird

FACCINI'S real christian name was Bartolomeo, but he was normally called Albert. In 1899 at the age of 14 he left his home town of Piacenza in Northern Italy with two uncles and came to live in Clerkenwell, where there was a large Italian community. This part of London was known as 'Little Italy' and was the heart of the piano industry.

At the age of sixteen Albert made and sold ice cream. Then in 1902, when Albert was seventeen years old, he started work for someone who could not pay his wages, but who gave him a barrel piano instead (a street piano with ten tunes would cost £18 new). This was the start of Albert Faccini's business and it developed from there. He must have been working in the piano industry, as he would have had to have a good knowledge of pianos to accept one as payment, for a report in 1901 in the *New Penny Magazine* reads, 'Very few people could afford to become proprietors of pianos as the maintenance would be too expensive'. There would be a shilling (5 new pence) a week for stabling, half-a-crown (12½ new pence) for tuning and five pounds for a new set of tunes. The charge to hire a piano was one shilling and eight pence (8½ new pence), which was reduced during bad times to one shilling and sixpence (7½ new pence) and one shilling and fourpence (6½ new pence). The average earnings of the hirers were five to six shillings per day (25 to 30 new pence).

At first Faccini had a small shed at the White Horse Lane end of Ernest Street and in 1911 he owned approximately six pianos. At this time he was also working in the wine vaults in the London Docks.

In 1905 Bartolomeo Faccini married Mary Holland in St. Bartholomew's Church, and they were to raise 17 children. In 1913 they were living at 149 Ernest Street, which was a house right opposite his business premises. In the same year his father-in-law David Holland moved into three rooms on the first floor.

In the First World War Albert Faccini returned to Italy to enlist in the army and left his wife to run his business.

Latimer Christian Mission Hall in Ernest Street was built in 1893 and it was in use until it was bombed in 1940. In the yard next door there was Alfred Head and Company, builders from 1900-1905. If you were looking down Ernest Street from Harford Street after the First World War, on the left you would have found first the Latimer Christian Mission Hall, then a large lean-to type shed joined to the side of the Mission Hall — this was Albert Faccini's premises. In the yard next door there was George Warren with his horses and carts. Next came four houses — 128, Susan and Thomas Mansworth; 126, Ada and James Spooner/Richard and Amelia Parker; 124, Emily and James Noon/Joseph Hunt and Charles Day; 122, Kate and Moses Barzilay/Alfred and Ann Plunton. Then came a small shed which belonged to William Selfs.

In the twenties Albert had up to thirty street pianos. Amongst his regular customers were the well known Luna Boys, who dressed up in women's clothes and did a dance act. The Luna Boys were George Baker, Harry Hollis, Tom Lilley and Bib Saunders and when they did not have



Bartolomeo Faccini in 1933

sufficient money to hire the piano for their act, they would borrow it from 'Sue Gregory' whose real name was Mrs. Sue Mansworth of 128 Ernest Street. She would also give them needle and cotton to repair their clothes.

In the thirties the shed was packed tight with pianos, probably about 50. Most of these would have been hired out, but there were always some in for repair or new tunes, for Albert had the ability to pin a new tune on a barrel. There were older pianos at the back of the shed which were kept for spare parts. He had regular organ-grinders that would have their favourite pianos and if they arrived late or the piano was in for repair, they would spend a long time in selecting a replacement. Albert first charged one shilling (5 new pence) when he started his business. Then the hire charge was increased to one and sixpence (7½ new pence) and finally to half-a-crown (12½ new pence) in the late thirties.

This would have been paid in halfpennies and pennies, and Albert would send his eldest daughter Violet with the bag of coppers hidden in her push-chair along to Mr. Fish the pawnbroker in Burdett Road to get it changed. It would not be unusual for a person to hire a piano and a month later bring it back after taking it all around the Eastern Counties. It was also not unusual for the police to say that they had found one of his pianos miles away and he would then have to retrieve it himself. He had an old motor-bike for this. He would also repair cart wheels for George Warren in the yard next door.

Among his customers in the thirties were the Nancy Boys. They had the same type of act as the Luna Boys of the twenties. They would dress up in

women's clothes and would dance on wooden planks which they carried around with them. Faccini always referred to them as the dancers. One of the group was Bertie Osbourn.

Ernest Street was bombed in the great raid on London Docks on the 7 and 8 September 1940. A bomb demolished the Latimer Mission Hall and incendiary bombs fell on Faccini's shed, but these were quickly extinguished by Faccini's son-in-law, John North. It was then that Albert Faccini took his family to live in Laindon, Essex and closed the business down. Over the period of roughly thirty years he had about fifty pianos which he hired out. These would almost certainly have all been made by Pasquale and Company, for the family cannot recollect Albert having any other make of piano. Also Mr. Pasquale was a great personal friend of Albert.

Out of 123 houses in Ernest Street which were occupied by 468 registered voters in 1939, there were only 21 houses with 37 registered voters left in 1945.

Albert Faccini was very proud of being an Italian. He would not become a British subject and so he was one of those to suffer the indignity of being interned when, in 1940, the Internment Act had been rushed through Parliament as part of Emergency Powers. In December 1940 it was realised that many were wrongfully interned. This was taken up by the popular press, and on Albert Faccini's behalf, a successful petition for his release was organised by the residents of Ernest Street. He passed away in 1958, aged 73 years.

WAR AND PEACE

Patricia Craven

A green-fenced field, bright daisy studded,
Spans the street where bombs once thudded;
Acid etched in time's dimension,
Childhood lives in memory's benison.

Stone steps, time-dipped to a stained glass door,
Lincrusta'd walls, scrubbed lino floor;
Steep stairs dark as the parlour's gloom,
Oh, the musty scent of that dim 'best room'.

Till the night was lit in a ghastly glare,
Searchlight swinging in vain to flare;
Black smoke palled from the ruins hot,
Wardens' shrill whistles, ack-ack guns cough.

Eternal the scales smudged on ivory keys,
Worse followed — (Czerny!) — 'Staccato there, please!'
Warm evening glowed in our black-leaded grate,
Wireless tuned in to 'Monday at Eight'.

Then, 'Walls Have Ears' and 'Careless Talk Costs Lives',
Some dug for Victory, some queued for one and nines;
Utility marks, rations, stoically borne,
Woolton pies, one egg a week and yards of red taped forms.

Clear I hear the mantel clock that chimed the pass of time,
Feel snug pyjamas oven-warmed for that reluctant climb;
Up lined stairs to sleep secure in Oxydol-white sheets,
Yes, life was sweet before the grass that now grows in our street.

WHAT THEY DIED OF IN WAPPING, 1657-1661

David Cobb

WE could all win a prize for guessing the commonest cause of death in Wapping in 1665. But what about 1664? On 10 July, 1657, the person keeping the burial register of the parish of St. John, Wapping (more usually referred to in that register as Wappen) was responsible for an innovation: after each entry he began to add a cause of death. At first, he usually also gave information about the occupations of the families to whom the dead people belonged (mariner, cooper, chandler, saylmaker, merchant, carpenter, victualer, limeman, caulkier, pulleymaker, to give a flavour of the estuarine community from which they all came). However, after a few months this information is rare, and the details of the dead person tend to be limited to their marital status, and perhaps a note of where they lived ('by the newe stares', for example).

The entering of causes of death was continued for several years by a variety of hands, but in the second half of 1661 a general deterioration of spelling (penchoner and penchenor instead of pentioner, tizeke instead of tissick or ptissick) is accompanied by increasingly frequent omission of a cause. In 1662 causes are the exception rather than the rule, and so I have found it useful to base this article on the period 10 July 1657 to 31 December 1661. These are, of course, very interesting years to have such information about, giving as they do some idea what Londoners might have considered *normal* ways to die, in the years just before the Great Plague.

In this period, a total of 683 burials took place in St. John's, and for 639 of them (or 93.5%) a cause of death is given. (31 of the 44 cases without a given cause occurred between July and December, 1661).

Needless to say, in keeping with contemporary medical knowledge, many of the 'causes' are symptoms rather than diseases, and further interpretation is needed (though not always possible) before one can get at real causes.

An accurate breakdown can be made by sex, for this is given in all but 9 of the 639 deaths with known causes. And of these 9, 6 concern stillborn babies.

More than 30 different causes of death are named. These are shown in Table 1, in alphabetical order, with the number of deaths for each sex.

An analysis by age at death would be at least as interesting as the one by sex, but here we are on unhelpful ground, because in no single case is an age given. It is only possible to make the sort of assumptions about age which I have used to produce Table 2, in which there are 4 groupings, viz.

Group 1: infants and dependent children: those actually called 'child' or

Table 1.

Note: I use the spellings most commonly found in the register, though of course there are numerous variations on some of them.

Cause of death	Males	Females	Sex not given	Total
Age	3	5	0	8
Ague (=malaria?)	1	1	0	2
Bleeding	1	0	0	1
Cancer (one more specifically 'canker in ye mouth')	1	1	0	2
Childbed	0	10	0	10
Colenture (perhaps colature, a strain?)	1	0	0	1
Collick	2	1	0	3
Consumption	55	48	0	103
Convulsions (probabiy mostly infantile diarrhoea)	16	48	2	126
Cough of ye lungs	3	1	0	4
Dropsey (also drapsey)	17	24	0	41
Fever	64	51	0	115
Fever in childbed	0	2	0	2
Fever and convulsion in ye guts	0	2	0	2
Fits of ye mother	0	1	0	1
Flux (=dysentery?)	5	6	1	12
Gout	1	1	0	2
Imposthume (=“a purulent swelling, cyst or abcess”, SOED)	3	4	0	7
King's Evil (a form of TB)	1	0	0	1
Lancen (as Wappen=Wapping, should=lancing)	0	1	0	1
Measels	1	7	0	8
Palsey (=paralysis)	1	1	0	2
Quinsey (=tonsilitis?)	0	1	0	1
Rickets	5	3	0	8
Rising of ye lights	1	1	0	2
Scowring (=purging? i.e. dysentery)	1	2	0	3
Small pox	12	11	0	23
Spleen	1	0	0	1
Stillborn	9	7	6	22
Stone and stone collick	2	3	0	5
Surfeit	1	0	0	1
Teeth	35	38	0	73
Thrush	3	3	0	6
Tissick, Ptissick (=phthisis, tuberculosis of the lungs)	7	7	0	14
Tympany (=tumor?)	0	2	0	2
Ulcer	1	0	0	1
Violent causes*	12	0	0	12
Wind collick	4	3	0	7
Worms	0	1	0	1
Yellow jaundeyes (also given as yellowe haundies)	1	2	0	3
TOTALS	331	299	9	639

*Violent causes: 6 drownings, including one in a well; 2 children ‘burned at ye fyer’; one rupture; one unspecified accident; one ‘killd with a peice of timber in a yard’; one ‘killd himself with a fall out of windowe being sick of ye smallpox and lightheaded’.

Table 2.

	Children	Young unmar.	20-60	Pensioners	Uncertain age
Age			2	6	
Ague		1			1
Bleeding			1		
Cancer	1	1		10	
Childbed			1		
Colenture			1		
Collick			3		
Consumption	23	4	63	11	2
Convulsions	123	1	2		
Cough of ye lungs	1		3		
Dropsy	3	1	30	7	
Fever	21	10	84		
Fever in childbed			2		
F. & convulsions in ye guts	1		1		
Fits of ye mother	1				
Flux	6		4		2
Gout		1	1		
Imposthume	3	1	3		
King's Evil	1				
Lancen			1		
Measels	8				
Quinsey			1		
Palsey			2		
Rickets	7		1		
Rising of ye lights			2		
Scowring	3				
Small pox	16	5	2		
Spleen			1		
Stillborn	22				
Stone and s. collick	2		3		
Surfeit		1			
Teeth	72		1		
Thrush	4	1	1		
Tissick	2		10	2	
Tympany			2		
Ulcer			1		
Violent causes	3	2	7		
Wind collick	5		2		
Worms	1			3	
Yellow jaundice					
No cause given	27	0	14	2	1
TOTALS	356	29	264	28	6

whose names are followed by 'sonne of' or 'daughter of'. Also those mentioned as being 'kept' at the expense of the parish, or 'orphans'. Also all deaths from 'convulsions' or 'teeth', unless otherwise specified (the reason for this will appear later).

Groups 2: young unmarried people of marriageable age: principally those referred to as 'batcheldor'. No equivalent term is used for unmarried women; the term 'spinster' appears nowhere. The female sex must therefore be under-represented in column 1. 'Mrs T's sister' is, however, included here. I have also taken the liberty of including servants and maidservants in column 2, making the daring assumption that the majority of them would have been quite young, and also unmarried. Altogether, this is not a satisfactory grouping.

Group 3: breadwinners, age assumed to be between 20 and 60: husbands and wives, and also widowers and widows, unless the word 'pentioner' is added. Also those, not very numerous, whose names are followed by neither 'sonne, daughter' nor by 'husband, wife'. Finally, an assortment of occupations and other attributions, e.g. mariner, but also 'lodger', 'stranger', 'a dutch Mr' (I take this to represent the Dutch title 'Mijnheer'), 'a Scotchman', 'a Barbadoes merchant', and one 'that wrought'. (There are 7 references to Dutchmen; they are the only foreign nationality mentioned, if one excepts the Scots.)

Group 4: people above working age: essentially, the 'pentioners' excepted from Group 3, including such as 'Old Warner' and 'Goodie Pee'.

Since age depends so heavily on subjective interpretation, it may be more reliable to present a table of causes of death according to the eight principal status words used in the burial register, viz. child (including son and daughter); bachelor; servant; wife; husband; widow; widower; and pensioner. This is done in Table 3. Only 55 out of 639 burials have to be left out if this classification is used. These are entries for which there is either no description of the dead person at all, or those which are described only by their occupation or their provenance ('a woman from Ipswich', 'captain', 'a strange man dyed in ye street', etc.). (A passing comment on the last of these: this is the only hint that anyone might ever have died of something like a heart attack. The diagnosis 'sudden', which is found in other registers, is absent from the Wapping records.)

Some further light may be shed on the Wappennite's morbidity if the various causes of death are taken out of alphabetical order and re-grouped according to their supposed characteristics, i.e. as infectious and contagious

Table 3.

	Other son, dr.	Child.	Husb.	Wife	Widower	Widow	Bach.	Serv.	Pens.
Age				1			2		6
Ague		1			1				
Bleeding			1						
Cancer						10			
Childbed								1	
Coleture									1
Collick				2					
Consumption	12	23	22	17	3	11	1	3	11
Convulsions	1	123	1					1	
Cough	1	1	1	1					
Dropsy	4	3	9	13		4	1		7
Fever	14	21	33	27	3	8	2	7	
F. & convuls.		1							
F. in childbed		1							
Fits of ye mother		1							
Flux	5	6		1					
Gout				1				1	
Imposthume		3	2	1					
King's Evil			1						
Laneen					1				
Measels			8						
Quinsey								1	
Palsey					1	1			
Rickets		7			1	1		1	
Rising of ye lights									
Scouring		3							
Small pox	2	16	1					2	2
Spleen				1					
Stillborn		22							
Stone & s. collick		2		3					
Surfeit								1	
Teeth		72					1		
Thrush	1	4						1	
Tissick	2	2	4	3			1		2
Tympany	1			1					
Ulcer	1								
Violent causes	2	3	5						2
Wind collick		5		2					
Worms		1			1	1	1		
Yellow jaundice				1	1	1			
No cause given	9	27	2	4					2
TOTALS	57	356	86	90	8	31	9	18	28

diseases; non-infectious and non-contagious diseases; parasitic diseases; unsatisfactory medical care, neglect and self-neglect, dietary deficiency; childbed, childbirth and infant mortality; senility; psychic and nervous disorders; accidents; vague causes; and no cause given.

This system of classification is fraught with questions, too: the groupings are not mutually exclusive in medical terms, and furthermore, there is subjectivity present not only in my own interpretation of the data, but also in the diagnoses which went into the records in the first place. With this need for caution stressed, I re-present the data in Table 4.

Table 4.

	In this table, o = sex not given.								
	children			adults			uncertain age		
	m	f	o	m	f	o	m	f	o
1. Infectious and contagious diseases									
Consumption	11	12		43	35		1	1	
Phthisis	1	1		6	6				
Cough	1			2	1				
King's Evil	1								
Fever	8	13		56	38				
F. + convulsions						2			
Flux	3	2	1	2	2				2
Scouring	1	2							
Convulsions (in infants only, as 'summer diarrhoea')	74	48	1						
Teeth	35	37				1			
Small pox	7	9		5	2				
Measles	1	7							
Sub-totals	143	131	2	114	87		1	3	0
2. Non-infectious and non-contagious									
Cancer			1		1				
Tympany						2			
Imposthume		3		3	1				
Ulcer					1				
Gout					1	1			
Quinsy						1			
Stone or s. cholic		2				3			
Sub-totals	2	4	0	6	8		0	0	0
3. Parasitic diseases									
Ague					1		1		
Thrush	2	2		1	1				
Worms		1							
Sub-totals	2	3	0	1	2	0	1	0	0
4. Unsatisfactory medical care, neglect and self-neglect, dietary deficiency									
Dropsy	2			17	21				
D. in bowels		1							
Surfeit					1				
Bleeding					1				
Lancing						1			
Rickets	5	2				1			
Sub-totals	5	5	0	19	23	0	0	0	0

5. Childbed, childbirth and stillborn

Childbed							10		
Fever in childbed							2		
Stillborn							9	7	6
'Fits of ye mother'							1		
Sub-totals							9	8	6
							0	12	0
							0	0	0
							0	0	0
6. Senility									
Age							3	5	
7. Psychic and nervous disorders									
Convulsions (in adults only)							2		
Palsy							1	1	
8. Accidents									
Drowning							1		
Burnt to death							2		
Crushed								1	
Threw himself								1	
Rupture								1	
Unspecified								1	
9. Vague causes									
Colenture								1	
Collick								2	1
Wind colick							4	1	2
Rising of lights								1	1
Spleen								1	
Yellow jaundice								1	2
10. No cause given									
	15	6	6	9	8	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	183	158	14	170	152	1	2	3	0

Discussion

The preceding tables suggest that the Wappenite had to clear a series of hurdles on the way to long life — a course which relatively few were destined to run.

The first of these hurdles, which he or she encountered within days, weeks or at most a few months of being born, was 'convulsions'. This (as A. H. Gale tells us in *Epidemic Diseases*, Penguin, 1959) was a term commonly applied at this time in the London Bills of Mortality to summer diarrhoea of infants. This infantile diarrhoea was responsible for 19% of all deaths in Wapping during the period 1657-1661.

A little later in the first year of life the baby faced its second hurdle, known to the people of that time as 'teeth'. This accounted for another 10% of total deaths. A comparison of infant deaths from the two causes, 'convulsions' and 'teeth', between July 1657 and December 1661, with baptisms in the same parish during the same period (numbering 246) produces the astonishing figure of 79%, i.e. after the ravishes of 'convulsions' followed by 'teeth', only about 1 in 5 babies seems to have survived into its second year!

What was 'teeth'? I have not found an answer, but there are hints in the Wapping registers that it could be infectious, even epidemic in proportion, for between 11th November and 20th December, 1660, there was a spate of 8 deaths from this cause (7 male, 1 female). It may not be without significance that in the same 6 week period there were also no fewer than 4 deaths from measles — four, that is, out of a total of only 8 in the entire four-and-a-half year period. This suggests an epidemic of 'teeth' simultaneous with an epidemic of measles.

In addition to summer diarrhoea, 'teeth' and measles, smallpox was another fence to be cleared in childhood or early life, when it caused about 3% of total deaths. Perhaps we may assume from the almost complete absence of adult deaths from smallpox that one way or another the vast majority of the population had acquired immunity to the disease by the time they were adult.

Tuberculosis — more like a continuous tangle of barbed wire throughout life than a single fence — makes its presence increasingly felt. The distinction between the more prevalent form, consumption, and the less prevalent one, phthisis, was no doubt easier for the seventeenth century mind to grasp than ours today. It must have been a fairly nice distinction, for both consumption and phthisis are usually considered to be tuberculosis of the lungs. Phthisis, more than consumption, seems to be associated with the working population, but this may or may not be significant. The term 'decline', which is commonly used in burial registers elsewhere to refer to tuberculosis, is not found once in Wapping. Perhaps in the use of the two terms 'consumption' and 'phthisis' we should see an effort to distinguish between rather rapid deaths from tuberculosis (the former), and deaths from the same disease in which wasting was more gradual (the latter).

Dropsy is also an important cause of death among those of working age, causing nearly 2% of total deaths. Together with the mainly childhood deaths from rickets, the incidence of dropsy draws attention to likely deficiencies in the Wappenite's diet.

The risk from fever seems to have increased with age, and therefore the absence of even a single death from fever among pensioners is extraordinary. We can only guess how many specific complaints are covered by the vague term 'fever', but we may certainly expect typhus fever to have been among them, to follow the opinion expressed by F. F. Cartwright (*A Social History of Medicine*, Longman, 1977). If so, this would further underline the evidence provided by the incidence of dropsy and rickets, for as Cartwright says (p. 58) "typhus fever . . . tends to be prevalent in dirty communities suffering from gross malnutrition".

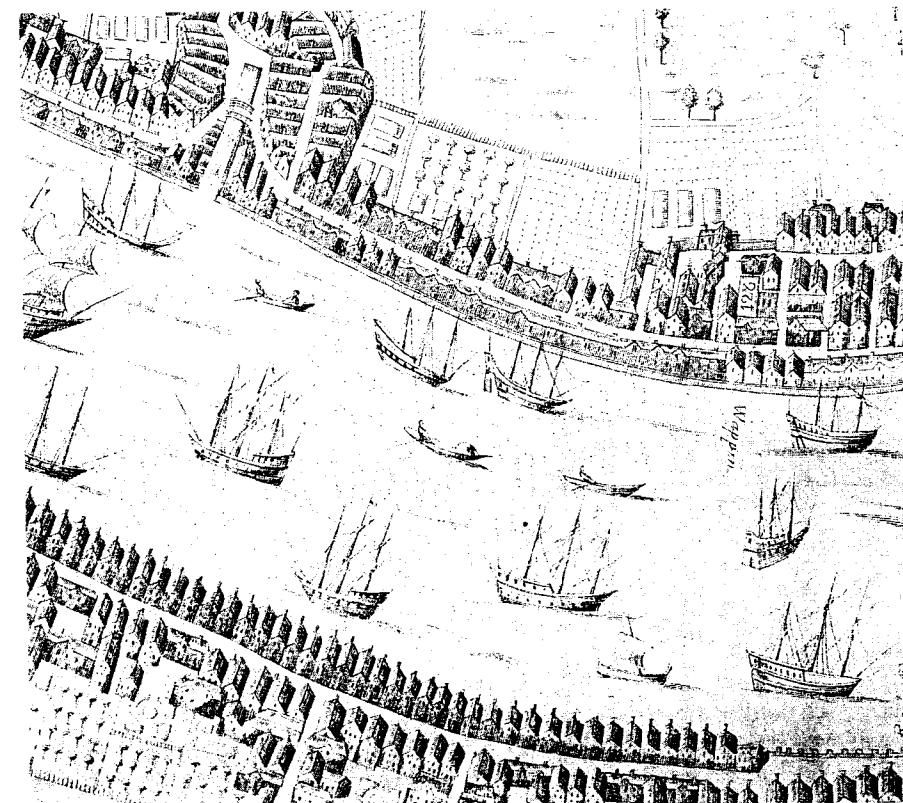
The number of male deaths is substantially larger than that of females — 355 to 311, or males 53.5%, females 46.5%. The explanation of this may be partly socio-economic. No doubt the indigenous population of Wapping, with its wharves and shipbuilding yards, was swelled by a surplus of young unmarried men, coming into the parish as shipwrights and mariners.

Considering the ratio of male deaths to female deaths is approximately 7:6, it is perhaps worthy of note that in the ratio of widows to widowers the proportions of each sex are reversed, at nearly 4:1.

Whilst there is nothing in general in the Wapping public health of 1660 to excite envy, it seems that deaths from violent causes were no more common than they are today. And in comparison with the Plague Year that was soon to follow, the pattern was a prosaic and predictable one.

David Cobb stresses that he is not a doctor and would welcome correction from any interested member of the medical profession.

Part of Wapping, from Richard Newcourt's map of London in 1658



AROUND THE BANDSTAND

D. Greenhalgh

IN the 20s when the Mildmay was in its 'prime', the member of parliament for Bethnal Green was Percy Harris, a Liberal. This famous Jewish M.P. was elected time after time, not because of his politics, or his religion, but because he was a human being who loved people and the people loved him. He would spend hours over a cup of tea and a beigle listening to the troubles of his constituents. When he became a baron he was known as Harris of Bethnal Green.

We must first of all recall the conditions in Bethnal Green in the 1920s and 30s. Electricity had hardly started, the streets and homes were gaslit, the gaslighter was a well known figure with his bike and long pole, a little tug at the lever and with a 'pop' the lamp was lit.

In the home the continued hiss from the gas was a part of life, when the mantle broke a quick run over to the local shop with ½d bought another pure white fragile dome, this was fitted with careful hands and the room was once again filled with light, when you looked around the room you could see the damp patches in the corners, you could see the wooden table often covered with newspapers, except at week-ends when a starched white cloth took over. In the winter and often in summer, a coal fire blazed, a large black oven which was at the side of the fire was always hot and ready for baking, perched on top would be a soot-marked kettle which was always kept boiling, just in case anyone should call. For a lot of women this oven was their only means of cooking. Marvellous for potatoes in the jackets and roasted chestnuts. Over the fireplace was the mantel-piece with its large mirror with fancy knobs, on the shelf would be a box of matches, two brightly coloured vases, one at each end; these usually contained the odds and ends that had accumulated over the years, or maybe a 'sepia' picture would be there, the family photos would be set out on the sideboard, that was the place of honour.

If you were rich enough there would be a wireless, a big ugly thing which ran on accumulators that had to be re-charged; this you take to 'Bens' in Bethnal Green Road or that small shop in Calvert Avenue every week or so.

The front door opened directly on to the street, or if you lived in the buildings, on to a damp landing: above the door on a ledge would be the gas meter where you had to stand on a chair to put a penny in the slot when the gas ran out. In the scullery was a copper where on Mondays without fail the dirty laundry was boiled with a lump of soda, or, a little blue bag. A small brown sink with a leaking tap above it was the scene of many a fight in the mornings as the children milled around for a quick splash before going to school: this never took long, as the cleaning of teeth was almost unheard of. A door off the scullery led to the 'lav', a small white-washed room that nearly always had some lumber in it, such as an old mangle with its big turning wheel. The seat of the toilet was more often than not loose, this had to be replaced carefully

before sitting down: there was never a toilet paper shortage, in those days the youngest member of the family always had the job of cutting the *News of the World* into neat squares, then threading them on to a piece of string which was then hung on a nail, the toilet could also be used for storage, such as hanging a zinc bath on a nail in the corner.

Moving out of the scullery into the 'kids' bedroom where a large bed with brass posts slept all the kids; in large families this meant that some had to sleep down the bottom of the bed.

It was a lucky family indeed who never had the signs of squashed bugs on the wall for, no matter how clean the occupants were, they came through the walls from the family next door, the smell of 'flit' still hung in the air after the last attack on them.

It was a never ending battle for our mothers to keep the home and us clean, yet those in houses always had pure white door steps, those in the buildings all took their turn in cleaning down the stairs. Some of the buildings on the Boundary Estate had bathrooms on the landing, but these had to be shared: they were not used very often as this caused embarrassment.

Other buildings in the area had been condemned since the First World War and Linden Buildings, for instance, was still being let long after the Second World War.

The Bandstand, Arnold Circus (East London Advertiser)



On leaving your home on the way to school you would try to find a tin can to kick all the way, when you were outside the school gates you gave your shoes or boots a quick wipe on the back of your sock before entering.

When you started school, most went to the infants at Rochelle Street. In the mornings you had milk and biscuits, in the afternoons you had to go to sleep on rickety small beds while big green blinds were pulled down over the windows. At seven years old you graduated to the Juniors, you stayed there until eleven years old then you sat for exams to decide which pupils were average, above average and brainy. 'The Infants' was famous for playing the percussion instruments.

The visit of 'Nitty Nora' was always a worrying time for our mums. Would this huge woman in starched uniform with her steel comb in a bowl of disinfectant have to start cutting your hair or have you sent to the cleansing station?

Going up into the 'juniors' you progressed from being rapped over the knuckles to six of the best and your name in the punishment book. The Headmaster's name was McCarry, some of the other masters' names were Cohen, King, Davidson and Weiss. Playtime was a 'madhouse'. God help anyone who moved after the whistle had been blown. Fire drill was a welcome break and lucky you if it came during a hated sums lesson.

The best thing about school in this area were the double sessions on Fridays during the winter, plus the fact that we had all the Jewish holidays as well as the normal ones.

Outside the school on the corner stood that grand old man 'Cambell', whose home-made Nutty Balls, Toffee Apples, slabs of toffee dipped in coconut were famous for miles around. If your luck was in he gave you a taster, for a halfpenny you could buy five or six 'balls' or pieces of toffee in a little white bag; you could even buy something for a farthing. In the very cold weather some of the mums who lived opposite his barrow would give him hot cups of tea. A visit to his flat at the top of the buildings was a wonder to behold, his copper was used for boiling the toffee, the beautiful smell that hung around the flat was delightful.

Facing the school was the bandstand, because of its peculiar shape with stairs running up and down all over the place the special games that were invented were numerous. On Tuesday (or was it Wednesday?) evenings during the summer a band would perform, the park-keepers would arrange the seats crossways to stop the kids running about; these only served as hurdles in an obstacle course. If you were fortunate enough to live facing the bandstand you could sit by your open window and just listen to the music.

In the roadway around the bandstand there was a ready-made race-track. It was used first as a running track, then skates, carts, scooters, in later years bikes even had their turn, the carts and scooters of course were home-made, there were some wonderful creations. The main components of a

scooter were a plank of wood, four screw-eyes, a four or five inch bolt and two ball bearing wheels, one preferably bigger than the other. The face of the scooter could be decorated with sterilised milk bottle tops in your name or favourite number. For the carts you needed one plank of wood, a box to sit in, two pram axles, two pairs of wheels, once again one pair preferably larger than the other, a piece of wood attached to the front axle separated from the main plank by a small bolt and washers. A piece of string tied to each end was the steering system.

There were other street games that stood the test of time as well, each street gang had its favourite, ours was 'Tippycat'. Two squares as wickets were drawn in the road, each batsman had a thin stick as a bat and the bowler a small piece of wood for the ball, the bowlers had to toss the ball underarm to land in the wicket whilst the batsman had to try to hit it as far as possible without being caught. Some other games (besides the obvious ones) were Gammer, Donkey, Tin Can Tommy, who can forget these endless games of Glarneys in the gutter. Tops had a run at one period, this was not the game played by girls with whips, but with tops that were made from boxwood in the shape of a cone. Many skilled games were played with these tops, your friends watched in awe if you could throw it and catch it spinning on the palm of your hand (until it started to burn). Diablos and yo-yo's each had its turn, but by far the best were self-made games.

During Pesach certain streets had their own festivities. In Boreham Street, for instance, the cry of 'lucky farthing' could be heard from morning to night, while the rare cry of lucky halfpenny was certain to cause a mad rush away from the other games. Fruit bowls in all the Jewish homes were raided for cobnuts by the children, with these nuts all kinds of wonderful games were devised. 'Lucky Castle' was one, a shoebox with holes cut out was another but by far the favourite was 'Lucky Farthing'. A farthing was placed upright against the wall (you were slung out of the street if you put chewing gum behind it), from a distance you threw nuts trying to knock it down, there were many arguments as to whose nut had knocked it down, but on the whole the games were played very friendly and pretty fair; the nuts were never eaten, they were usually sold (roughly 25 for a farthing).

Every boy played with cigarette pictures at one time or another, these boys were experts at 'flicking', once again the games devised were numerous, it was even another form of currency.

During the early thirties, buttons became the rage, everywhere you would see boys playing pontoon or banker with grubby playing cards (often only half a pack) for buttons, they came in all shapes and sizes, they had different values.

There was always something for boys to do, though money was tight swapping became a way of life.

At one time a roundabout on a cart pulled by a skinny old horse used to call round the streets, the price of a ride was a halfpenny or a jam jar.

The sight of an aeroplane nearly always meant another free entertainment; the only planes in those days seemed to be sky writers. It was always a game to guess what was being written, the pilots joined in the game by starting the writing in the middle or at the end, often it was not until the last letter had been written was the message clear. Persil must have spent a fortune on this form of advertising.

Sundays was always a colourful day. Markets seemed to be in every street; Brick Lane from Whitechapel up to Shoreditch was one teeming mass of people. The whole area was full of people trying to flog something. Brick Lane for fruit, Columbia Road for flowers, Club Row for animals, Old Nichol Street for bikes, you name it and there was a place to buy it. Sundays also brought out the characters, 'Prince Monolulu' with his 'I've got a horse', 'Joe Asenheim' and his '56 ice cream', he kept it frozen with hot ice, we could never understand why it burned you when you held a piece.

A favourite turn was the 'Luna Boys', they set up stage by sprinkling a little sand in the roadway, the dancing of those boys was marvellous to our young eyes. It was also a day for the 'Shrimp and Winkle' barrows.

For Sunday dinner you had to be satisfied with roast beef, chicken was only for very special days. Left-overs were used for Monday dinner, most families had Bubble and Squeak.

The fruit shops always had barrels of apples on the pavement outside, needless to say these were often the target of the dreaded 'Boggart Gang', this gang was feared by all, we even went as far as to post lookouts to keep weeney while we played games.

Old Sterns in Brick Lane had large glass bottles filled with pineapple slices, Martha's a couple of doors away, had pickled herrings and 'Walleyes' in barrels, what a sweet woman she was!

The sweetshops in the neighbourhood were meeting places, some of the names that come to mind are Alf Freemen, Reubens, Phillips, Julies, Zagers, Backers, Rees and Mosses. The shops were the first to get electricity: with that came the pin-ball machines, you could play for hours with a piece of 35 mm film! The small shops were open at all hours, if they were closed a knock would always bring a reply, if it was a Saturday the Jewish owners would say "Pay me tomorrow".

A visit to Jimmy Sales for a haircut with dad was always a great occasion where he put the board on the arms of the chair for you to sit on because you were too small, how grown up one felt when you could sit in the chair just like the men. The Magnet Laundry was next door to him, how we used to stamp down the bagwash so it would cost less.

The most impressive shop in the district was 'Haltrecht', this was on

the corner of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road. When your mother got a cheque from 'Sonia' or one of the other money lenders to buy clothes what a thrill it was to go there, or you could go to Wickhams. Once you had bought your goods you gave your cheque in, then you would look up and watch the little canister which contained money or cheque go whizzing by to a small office where the girl would empty it, then she would put your receipt and change back inside, with a quick tug of the lever the canister would whizz back again to where you would be standing.

Around the corner in Brick Lane was Garrets the butchers, the smell of pease pudding and saveloys always made your mouth water. Outside was Fullers fruit stall, his display was indeed a sight. At Christmas time these stalls would be lit with bright oil lamps, the whole of Bethnal Green Road would be one blaze of colour. On Christmas Eve the stalls and shop would be open until midnight — the game was to leave it until the last minute to get your bird, as there were no fridges in those days you often got a real bargain.

The population was a real cross section. Jews from all parts of Europe had settled there, few spoke more than a few words of English, but all spoke Yiddish. The children tried to teach their parents English, but a large percentage would reply back in Yiddish. The elders went to the Synagogue every Sabbath while the children, who were anglicised, slipped off to the 'tuppenny rush' at the Smarts picture place. The local cinemas were always packed; it was easy in those days to bunk in. The posh cinema was the Olympia, on Friday they had a stage show as well as the films. The doorman was a big Irishman named Pat O'Keefe; he loved kids and would often let them in for nothing. The Cambridge Luxor, Troxy and the London Music Hall were also well known and well visited. A real treat was a visit to the Hackney Empire for live entertainment.

The games of Cowboys and Indians always intensified after a visit to the pictures. Every boy had his favourite cowboy, remember Tom Mix, Tom Tyler, Hoot Gibson, Buck Jones and Ken Maynard? For a brief period the Three Musketeers became the vogue, unfortunately there were too many accidents with the home-made swords, so the sound of 'Bang bang, you're dead' again filled the streets.

During the long summer holidays the schools ran a holiday scheme for the poor families called 'The Country Holiday Fund', when you were boarded out with families in the country for a week or two, but for most it was the old street games that kept us out of trouble.

A holiday for most of the kids was a day trip by charabanc (most likely Fallowfield and Knight) to Brighton or Southend.

As you got older and managed to save a few coppers a 'Sixpenny all day' on the trams was another special treat. The boys certainly had their money's worth, a journey under the Kingsway subway was always the first ride, then maybe a trip to the end of the line to Croydon to see the aeroplanes.

Most boys at some time or another were unfortunate enough to visit the Mildmay Mission Hospital. In the out-patients department no matter what religion you were you had to sit through what seemed like hours of hymn singing; this was played on an old organ pumped from the back by one of the fitter patients. 'God forbid' you should be kept in, there were only three wards in the whole hospital. Above each bed was extracts from the Bible, in fact everywhere you walked, looked, turned, the religion was there. One that sticks in my mind was 'Gather little children to come unto me'. On Sundays there were services morning, noon and night; it was a grim place to spend any time in, however, the nurses (mostly Irish) were marvellous.

Religion was mostly practised by the foreign-born families, the Irish and Italian Catholics went to Mass and Confession, their neighbours, the Jews, went to Synagogue. In the Jewish religion the boys who are under thirteen had to go to Cheder; how the majority looked forward to their thirteenth birthday (today you are a man). Religion was a thing respected by others, the English-born rarely let it interfere with their pleasures.

The local Jewish Board of Guardians did a marvellous job, at Pesach prams were lined up outside the local club waiting for the free distribution of Kosher food for the poor. The Jews respected the Sabbath, many a non-Jewish boy had a regular round of homes to light fires on a Saturday. The halfpenny or penny payment was on the mantelpiece waiting for them, as the Jewish people were not allowed to handle money on the Sabbath, mind you, you were not allowed to leave until the fire was really and truly ablaze. On Friday nights the candles were kindled, they could be seen all over. Friday night was also Solo night.

The Jews used their skills and prospered. The area became famous for its small businesses, cabinet makers, tailors, carpenters. When they had made a few shillings they looked around for better housing conditions, that could not be found in Bethnal Green. This is when the exodus began, poor families from other countries have now taken their place, the small shops run by Asians. These, too, are another hardworking race.

In ten years' time very little of the streets of our childhood will remain, most of the area has been demolished and new flats and town houses have sprung up. The Boundary Estate has been modernised, three flats made into two, giving each one a bathroom, but it is still a long climb if you live at the top!

The Mildmay Mission Hospital has been modernised, a new wing added but alas this famous hospital appears doomed for closure. Rochelle Street School is now a school for the mentally handicapped and retarded children. There are now no cinemas in Bethnal Green, they have been made into Bingo halls; just like the Hackney Empire.

RESCUE OF THE CROWN JEWELS IN 1841: THE TRUE FACTS

John H. Pierse

IN 1841 the Tower of London was on fire. The outbreak occurred about 10 o'clock on the night of Saturday, 30 October, and is thought to have started in the Bowyer Tower — probably as a result of an overheated flue. The flames quickly spread to the roof of the adjacent Grand Storehouse (or Great Armoury), which was soon ablaze from end to end, and then set fire to the Martin Tower at the north-east angle of the Inner Ward, which incorporated the Jewel House containing the Crown Jewels.

By about 11.00 p.m. the entire roof of the Grand Storehouse had begun to fall in and by this time thousands of spectators had assembled at the Tower to watch with mesmeric fascination the blazing inferno. All the time the fire was raging the alarm bell of the garrison was kept ringing continuously and this added to the general state of alarm. A contemporary but somewhat exaggerated account of the event published within hours of the outbreak reported,¹

So intense was the heat sent forth that the multitude could scarcely remain even outside the moat, and many sunk from exhaustion and pressure; the crackling of the yielding timbers was distinctly audible even on the Surrey side of the River Thames. It was a majestic sight, and many around us observed, 'I shall not forget this fire even on my death-bed!'

As the fire raged and spread, concern mounted for the safety of the Crown Jewels. The Keeper of the Jewel House, Edmund Lenthal Swift, Barrister-at-Law, did what he could by having fire hoses played on to the Jewel House walls, but he finally decided that the regalia would have to be removed for safety. The Jewel Room itself was on the lower floor of the Martin Tower and the entrance door was approached by a flight of steps; the Keeper and his family lived in rather cramped conditions in chambers above. The actual Jewel Room was at the end of a short passage and was a stone groined and vaulted chamber, one end of which was completely cut off by a waist-high wall surmounted by an iron grille rising to the roof. The vertical bars of the grille were about a hand's breadth apart and were reinforced with robust horizontal rails: a small hinged and locked grating in the left-hand corner provided access to the inside of the 'cage' when necessary for arranging or cleaning purposes.

In the subsequent rescue attempts, much delay was caused through security regulations; Mr. Swift himself had the key to the Jewel House door, but the Lord Chamberlain, Earl Delawarr, who held the keys to the access grating and the display cases, was not available. Eventually, crowbars had to be found and these were used to prise apart and break the bars of the grille. An individual described in subsequent printed accounts of the affair and described variously as 'a sturdy warden', 'a Sergeant (in the army)', 'a brave

policeman named Pierce ('Pearce', 'Pearse', 'Peirce', etc.)' of 'the City (or Metropolitan) Police' effected the rescue of the Regalia by climbing through a narrow gap in the protective grille and handing out the various items. Most accounts agree that, with the extreme heat, danger from suffocation or crushing in the event of the roof falling in, the rescuer was a brave man, and that some recognition — and possibly an award — in appreciation of his valour should have been made. In the event nothing of the sort was done but it is hoped that in this article something will be done to set the record straight.

The person who actually carried out the rescue operation was in fact William Fitzmaurice Pierse, Superintendent of H Division (Whitechapel) of the Metropolitan Police, whose official report of the incident to the Police Commissioners ran as follows:²

To the Commissioners
Gentlemen

H Division
November 9th 1841

Having received information at 10 o'Clock P.M. that the Tower was on Fire I proceeded at once with a large Body of Police towards that Fortress: on reaching Tower Hill at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 o'Clock I perceived that the Fire had gained a considerable ascendancy and was rapidly increasing. On obtaining an Entrance through the Gates I proceeded at once towards the small Armoury which I found on fire both on the right and left of the principal Entrance and the flames rapidly descending from the Roof to that of the First and Ground floors. I gave directions to the Inspectors and Constables under my charge to render every possible assistance in checking the fire and saving property and I feel it but an act of justice to the Inspectors and Constables to say that their exertions exceeded anything I have ever witnessed.

At about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 o'Clock I saw Superintendent McClean of the P Division who was assisting in removing Arms, etc., and perceiving the flames were rapidly approaching the Jewel House I expressed m; deep anxiety to him for the safety of the valuable property deposited therein. Mr. Swift who had charge of the Crown Jewels came up an instant afterwards on his way to the Jewel House (and) I suggested to him that the Jewels ought to be at once removed as the Building where they were deposited was in danger. Mr. Swift replied that he was thinking of removing them and requested us to accompany him to the Jewel House which we did. A Mr. Pulford of the Croydon Railway was also there and on reaching the Jewel House the outer door was opened by Mr. Swift that on entering I perceived that the Jewels could not be got at there being a strong iron Grating between us and those valuable articles. Mr. Swift here gave directions to the Wardens to force the Grating in which we assisted and after much difficulty an aperture was made sufficient to admit one person and I by the desire of Mr. Swift forced myself through as it was very narrow. Mr. McClean and Mr.

Swift were then standing on the outside of the aperture and the first-named Gentleman held a Candle through the Bars to light me and received with Mr. Swift the Regalia as I handed it to them. The first that attracted my attention was the new Crown in a Glass Case and having removed the latter (I) handed the Crown to Mr. Swift. I then removed the Case off a second Crown and handed it to the same person and all the other valuable Articles consisting of Crowns, Royal Spurs, Sceptres, Bracelets, Swords, Salt Cellars, and Service of Communion Plate which I passed through without difficulty but on reaching the last Article a Silver Font I found the Aperture not large enough and in consequence Mr. McClean, Mr. Pulford and a Warder of the Tower by united efforts with a large Crowbar broke away another Bar of the Grating. While this was being done there were repeated Cries for us to leave the Jewel Room as the Fire was at our heels. Superintendent McClean then said 'Pierce — Don't stir until you have got the Font'. I resolved not to move till I had secured it and it was carried out by the Warder assisted by Mr. McClean and Mr. Pulford.

As we emerged from the dark passage the heat was so great as to shrink my Hat and burn the tail of Mr. McClean's Coat besides suffering on the Face from the intense heat. Mr. McClean then asked Mr. Swift if he knew the faces of the Men who removed the Jewellery to the Governor's House and he replied that they were the Warders. I then said (that) it is all right.

I immediately afterwards accompanied Mr. Swift to the Governor's House and there saw the whole of the Jewels and various articles which I had previously handed out of the Jewel Room perfectly safe.

W. F. Pierse
Supt.

Superintendent Pierse's report shows that while most published accounts of the incident state that all items were rescued except the large silver font, this piece was in fact saved and is recorded as later having been used for the baptism of the Prince of Wales. Known as the 'Royal Baptismal Font of Charles II', this piece was 3 ft. 6 in. high by 1 ft. 6 in. in diameter: another large item was the Wine Fountain measuring over 2 ft. 6 in. in height by 2 ft. 4 in. in diameter.

Another on-the-spot account of the incident was by the well-known artist George Cruikshank who, while not actually present at the time, visited the Tower the morning after the fire and was able to obtain first-hand accounts of the rescue, which he illustrated in two etchings considered to be among his finest work.³ Cruikshank would most likely have known some of the occupants of the chamber at the time and so we can assume that his representation of the incident is reasonably accurate. His accompanying description stated:



George Cruikshank



Rescue of the Crown Jewels in 1841 (etching by George Cruikshank)

There stood the keeper himself, his wife at his side, partaking the peril; and the warders, whom he had summoned to the rescue. We cannot, however, portray the stifling heat and smoke; the clamour of the soldiers outside the closed portal, which the fires of the Armoury were striving to reach; nor the roar of the still-excluded flames, the clang of the pumps, the hissing of the water-pipes, the gathering feet and voices of the multitude. These are beyond the pencil.

An attempt has been made to identify the persons shown in Cruikshank's sketches by M. R. Holmes in his published account *The Crown Jewels*, but in the present author's view, inaccurately. Referring to Cruikshank's etchings he states:⁴

Two top-hatted policemen and a Yeoman Warder stand in the foreground, the spectators' benches are crowded with men in ordinary dress, two of them holding candles to light the work of the fire officials, one of whom is attacking the grille with a fireman's axe while the other stands by with a crowbar, under the direction of a senior personage with black whiskers (probably Pierse) who appears to be giving orders while chewing a cigar or a toothpick with Palmerstonian calm. To attack the lock would be useless; they are obviously concentrating on the hinges, and the smaller engraving shows that a little later the whole section has been removed and is leaning against the wall beside the crowbar, looking extremely battered about the edges. It was Superintendent Pierse himself who climbed through the opening and handed out the Regalia. In this second engraving he has got in, and is passing one of the crowns to a colleague, while the Yeoman Warder stands ready to take charge of it, carrying the leather crown-box or *futteral* in which it is kept when in store. A large piece of plate, possibly the silver-gilt fountain, has been already extracted, and is on the bench beyond him, but it was the christening font that gave trouble. Try as he would, Superintendent Pierse could not get it through the gap, and the crowbar had to come into play, and force the bars further apart, before it could be extracted.

Looking at Cruikshank's sketches, it is clear that the only female figure in the upper view must be Mrs. Swifte, and the ten male figures consist of men all wearing top-hats but who may be distinguished as men in uniform (frock coats, buttoned-up collars, yeoman warder dress, etc. — three in all), and men in 'civilian' dress (swallow-tailed coats, cravats, etc. — seven in all). Pierse is obviously the sole figure in the lower illustration *behind the grille*, and in the upper sketch is probably the man on the extreme left foreground holding the large crowbar. He was 37 years of age at the time, and this corresponds. The person next to him in the upper sketch could well be Superintendent McClean of P Division who, in the lower view, could be the figure on the extreme right. Mr. Swifte, Keeper of the Jewel House, was 65 years old at the time, and in the upper illustration is probably the man wielding the axe (with his back to the viewer, wearing a swallow-tailed coat, with grey hair and

without 'mutton-chop' whiskers), while in the lower sketch is the man receiving the crown from Superintendent Pierse. (A portrait of Mr. Swift painted about the turn of the century shows him as a young man in his twenties and is therefore of no great help here. He evidently had a strong face, dark hair, and a cleft chin.⁵

The figure described by M. R. Holmes as 'a senior personage with black whiskers . . . (and) . . . chewing a cigar or toothpick with Palmerstonian calm' cannot possibly be Pierse since this same figure is clearly seen in the lower sketch (fifth from the left) — but in neither illustration appears to have anything at all in his mouth (nor has anyone else for that matter) — while Pierse is clearly seen behind the grille and in the act of passing out a crown.

Cruikshank's account of the incident accompanying his sketches neither refers nor alludes to Pierse by name, office or action, but nevertheless, apart from the flowery, flamboyant style typical of the period, his probably remains the best account. His description of the remains of the Grand Storehouse a few hours later still makes remarkably vivid reading: 'Above was the "sky" of a November morn; and below, covering the immense sweep of the floor, heaps of fused metal, of dimensions scarcely to be credited, with bayonet-points bristling up everywhere, close-set and countless, like long blades of grass.'⁶

As to be expected, accounts were given in the press.⁷ On Monday, 1st November, 1841, under the heading 'The Tower of London — Awful Conflagration', *The Times* gave some account but the part taken by Pierse (spelled 'Pearce') was played down. Mr. Swift wrote to the editor the same day stating that 'The first and hasty reports . . . could hardly be other than inaccurate' and explained that it was solely under his direction that the Crown Jewels were saved. He was close to retirement age at the time, reportedly 'ailing and cantankerous', and no doubt heavily conscious of his responsibility as Keeper. He duly made his official report, which was presented to Queen Victoria, and reference to this was made the next day:⁸

The report in question proceeded to show that, notwithstanding the great heat which pervaded the Jewel-room at the time, Superintendent Pearce [sic], of the H Division, having broken the iron bars in front of the regalia, succeeded in handing the new Imperial Crown and other portions of the Regalia to Mr. Swift, the Keeper of the Regalia, by whom they were placed in the custody of several warders.

Notice was also made of the difficulty in making their final escape, for the flames from the Armoury (Grand Storehouse) completely crossed the courtyard.

Brief accounts of the incident may also be found in Lenihan's *History of Limerick*⁹ and in de Lacy Bellingari's *Roll of the House of Lacy*.¹⁰

All writers seem to agree that it is to be regretted that no official recognition of Superintendent Pierse's bravery was ever made. In the words of Major General Sir George Younghusband, himself one-time Keeper of the Jewel House (1921):¹¹ 'It would be gratifying to be able to record that the hero of this adventure received some notable recognition of the service he had rendered. Truth, however, impels the confession that the deed was at the time

eclipsed by the great tragedy of the burning down of the ancient Armoury, a building several centuries old with many historic associations. Later, when this conspicuous service came to light, the ardour of recompense had grown cold.' Likewise, John E. N. Hearsey, writing some forty years later (1960) stated that when the fire had burned itself out the next morning, the cloth on which the Crown Jewels had lain was found to be completely charred. He also remarked that it seemed not a little curious that Pierse, who had organized the rescue and had literally served the Crown most faithfully, himself received no official reward or recognition.¹²

It seems pointless here to correct the many individual errors made in the numerous accounts of the fire at the Tower (in any case space wouldn't permit), but since Mr. M. R. Holmes's account is in a Government publication, perhaps it should be pointed out that he makes a mistake in stating that the Tower of London was within the City of London jurisdiction and thus the responsibility of the City Police.¹³ The Tower of London was at this time (and still is) outside the City boundaries and quite properly came within the jurisdiction of H Division Metropolitan Police. However, the City Police did attend the fire, a strong body acting under the orders of Inspector Bradley, while the Metropolitan Police was represented by about 200 to 300 men under the orders of Superintendents Pierse and May and Inspectors McClean and Wallar.¹⁴

It may be of interest to supplement this account with some biographical information and a sequel. William Fitzmaurice Pierse himself was an Irishman, born in 1804 at Newcastle West, Co. Limerick, the second child to John Fitzmaurice Pierse of Listowel, Co. Kerry and his wife Johannah, née O'Brien of Newcastle West.¹⁵ The family emigrated to England about 1821 and originally settled in the Finsbury area, then part of Middlesex. Evidently the Duke of Wellington (himself an Irishman) was the young man's patron,¹⁶ and Pierse entered Sir Robert Peel's newly formed Police Force at an early age. (It is of interest that the Duke of Wellington became Constable of the Tower of London in 1826 and Pierse must have joined the Metropolitan Police when it was formed in 1829.) The early records of the Police Force are fragmentary but entries in the registers show that he was promoted to Sergeant on the 29 September, 1829 (Warrant No. 1887), to Inspector on 28 April, 1830, and to Superintendent about 1836.¹⁷

Early records for H Division are sparse but fortunately the records of adjacent Wapping (Thames) Division, formed in 1798, have survived and provide some information.¹⁸ From the Occurrences Book for 1839 it is reported that on 2 November Superintendents Pierse of H Division and Evans of the River Police surveyed the London Docks in order to ascertain what additional force would be necessary to make the Division more efficient. A later entry (24 March, 1840) relates to a police constable charged with using improper language and action left for Pierse to deal with: 'Supt. Pierse says he merely wishes him reprimanded and cautioned'. On Friday 3 April, 1840, Superintendents Pierse and Evans were 'to attend Scotland Yard tomorrow relative to the London Dock Police by order of Mr. Mayne'. (Mr. — later Sir Richard — Mayne together with Charles Rowan, were the original Commissioners appointed by Sir Robert Peel, and are regarded as the 'real

architects of the Metropolitan Police'')¹⁹ Later entries (6 August, 1844) refer to Superintendents Pierse and Evans making enquiries 'about the steamer that took "Louis Napoleon Buonaparte" from this Country', and to a report ordered by Mr. Mayne regarding a Thames Division boat, the board of survey to be composed of Superintendents Russell, Pierse and Steel of R, H and F Divisions, respectively.²⁰

On the 6 September, 1831, William F. Pierse married Elizabeth Dede, then of Spital Square, at St. Botolph Without, Bishopsgate Church, the witnesses being relatives of the bride.²¹ From local parish records it appears that the Dede family were of Huguenot descent and silk manufacturers in Spital Square.²² The young couple set up home in No. 1 Princes (now Princelet) Street, later removing across the road to No. 17 which they occupied with a servant girl named Mary Peacock.²³ They had eight children in all, the first six being baptized in nearby Christ Church, viz: Maurice de Lacy (b. 1832), Elizabeth (b. 1833), Amelia (b. 1836), Florence Johannah (b. 1838), Marian O'Brien (b. 1839), Kathleen (b. 1841), William Fitzmaurice (b. 1843—d. 1847) and Alice Emma (b. posthumously, 1846).

The area covered by H Division was centred around the Tower Hamlets district and included Spitalfields, Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. One Police Station (or 'Office') was in Lambeth Street and later records refer to one in Church Street.²⁴ As already noted, early Police records are somewhat fragmentary, but from later accounts it would appear that life in the force was both active and strenuous. Compared with other Divisions (there were initially only six Inner Divisions but by May 1830 these had been extended to seventeen),²⁵ H Division was a particularly onerous one at this time of extreme poverty, unemployment, and the rise of Chartism (at that time regarded as a menace), etc. and the crime rate was higher than elsewhere in the Metropolis.²⁶ It has been stated that, during the 1800s, assaults on the police in H Division were more frequent than any other in the Metropolitan Police, although, curiously, H Division had less beggars than any other Inner Division.²⁷

After his exertions at the Tower in the autumn of 1841, Pierse's health steadily declined and, on the 1st February, 1846, after six months of inflammation of the brain followed by three days of apoplexy, he died at the early age of 42. His brother-in-law Charles de Lacy Nash, a solicitor, married to his sister Mary, was present at the death: he was buried in nearby Christ Church graveyard.

His young widow (she was then aged only 31), with a family of eight children to bring up of ages ranging from 14 years to only six months, found herself in a desperate plight. This was not unnoticed by their kindly neighbours and the following public appeal was issued — no doubt under the sponsorship of the Rev. William Stone, Rector of Christ Church, Spitalfields who knew Superintendent Pierse and his family well.²⁸



The Jewel House in 1841 from Knight's London

LONDON, FEBRUARY 1846.

SOME Friends of the late Mr. WILLIAM FITZMAURICE PIERSE, the much-respected Superintendent of the H Division Metropolitan Police, finding on investigation that he has left his Widow and Eight young Children unprovided for, have resolved to solicit his private Friends, the Inhabitants of the District, and any benevolent individuals, to assist her in giving her Children the maintenance and education, of which the unexpected death of their Father, in the prime of life, has so suddenly deprived them.

Mr. Pierse had been engaged in the Metropolitan Police fifteen years; but, according to the regulations of the Force, his Widow and Children did not become entitled to any provision or Pension whatever. In consideration, then, of his public duties, and in consideration, too, that the seeds of disease which prematurely terminated his existence were sown in discharging those duties, his

Friends feel that they may be permitted to solicit your assistance. Without referring in detail to his uniform endeavours to discharge them efficiently, they feel justified in recalling to recollection, that in the year 1840 much alarm existed throughout the Metropolis, and particularly in the Eastern Districts, owing to the formidable demonstrations of the Chartists, and their intention to have recourse to physical force and the destruction of public property in those Districts. As their principal places of rendezvous were in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green, within Mr. Pierse's District, he was incessantly engaged in opposing them, and after many nights and days of unceasing anxiety and toil, was the individual who, by his personal intrepidity, — being the first to enter a building in which were assembled 1500 secretly-armed Chartists, and assisting in capturing twenty of the Leaders, — gave the deathblow to Chartism in that part of the Metropolis.

They desire also to recall to recollection Mr. Pierse's extraordinary exertions at the memorable Fire at the Tower of London, on which occasion he was the principal means, at imminent personal risk, of preserving to the country, the Crown, and other Regalia of England, from the flames with which they were surrounded.

The promptitude with which he attended to all complaints of the Inhabitants of his District, his anxiety and readiness, at all times, and on all occasions, to protect their persons and property, and his unwearied exertions to promote quietness and good-feeling in his District, will, his Friends earnestly hope, be duly appreciated, and be felt as additional inducements to all who can estimate character and worth in his position, to assist in promoting the object in view, that of providing his Widow with the means of commencing a business, in which she may be enabled, by industry and perseverance, to maintain and educate his interesting and helpless family.

The following Gentlemen have kindly undertaken to promote this object, and to receive Donations from all who may be benevolently disposed to unite with them:-

REV. WILLIAM STONE, Rector of Christchurch, Spitalfields.
MESSRS. TRUMAN, HANBURY, BUXTON, & CO., Spitalfields.
THOMAS MIDWINTER, Esq., Churchwarden of the Parish of Christchurch, Spitalfields.
THOMAS BRUSHFIELD, Esq., Treasurer of the Parish of Christchurch, Spitalfields.
REV. W. WELDON CHAMPNEYS, Rector of St. Mary, Whitechapel.

This Rev. Gentleman has kindly appended to his name the following recommendation:- "Having on very many occasions experienced the kind readiness of the late Mr. PIERSE to assist me, and being able to bear my personal testimony to his efficient

services, I earnestly recommend the case of his Widow to the notice of the benevolent, and shall thankfully receive any subscriptions." THOMAS LULHAM, Esq., Churchwarden of the Parish of St. Mary, Whitechapel.

THOMAS MIERS, Esq., do. do. do.
G. S. WALLIS, Esq., Vice-Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Whitechapel Union.
CHARLES MEARS, Esq., Bell Foundry, Whitechapel.
JAMES SPENCELEY, Esq., Trustee of the Parish of St. Mary, Whitechapel.
J. F. KIRBY, Esq., Trustee of the Parish of St. Mary, Whitechapel.
JOS. PATTRICK, Esq., do. do. do.
G. T. CROFT, Esq., do. do. do.
REV. W. QUEKETT, Incumbent of Christ Church, St. George in the East.
WM. STUTFIELD, Esq., Treasurer to the Board of Guardians, St. George's East.
W. L. HOWELL, Esq., Vestry Clerk, St. George's East.
THOMAS STONE, Esq., Clerk to the Board of Guardians, St. George's East.
THOMAS LIQUORISH, Esq., Churchwarden of the Parish of St. George's East.
JOHN JAMES BOND, Esq., do. do. do.
PETER RAYNER, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Guardians, St. George's East.
B. F. SKELTON, Esq., Trustee and Guardian of do.
E. J. BATH, Esq., do. do.
REV. JOHN GARWOOD, Incumbent of St. Mary, Spital Square.
WM. BRANDON, Esq., Churchwarden of do.
THOMAS MASON, Esq., Vestry Clerk of do.
JOSEPH FRENCH, Esq., 18, Norton Folgate.

In addition to the above Gentlemen, Messrs. HANBURY, TAYLOR, & LOYD, Bankers, 60, Lombard Street, have kindly consented to receive any Donations forwarded to them; and Communications addressed to Mr. RICHARD SWIFT (Secretary to the Fund), 87, Hatton Garden, will be immediately attended to.

The following year the widow and children removed from Princes Street to No. 105 Bishopsgate Street Without and here, in May, 1847, the second son of the marriage and his father's namesake William Fitzmaurice Pierse died aged 3 years 9 months.

In the meantime, Charles de Lacy Nash, brother-in-law, wrote to Sir Robert Peel on the 17th March, 1846, explaining the plight of the family and drawing attention to the fact that there appeared to be no pension for police officers in this situation and mentioned that doubtless the anxieties and pressures in his work had contributed to his premature death. He wrote again on the 20th March reiterating the circumstances and appealed for assistance. This last letter was answered by Mr. (later Sir) William H. Stephenson (Private Secretary to Sir Robert Peel from 1841-7), indicating that a pension of £100 per annum had been awarded to the widow and her family — which would have been about half-pay for a Superintendent. Evidently the normal allowance for police officers to go towards funeral and mourning expenses was £100 — and this had already been paid. A final letter from Charles de Lacy Nash revealed that he had been advised that at just about the time that Superintendent Pierse had died, the Commissioners were in fact arranging a long leave of absence for him and were providing for him to have a pension!²⁹

Whether the anxiety, sorrow and humiliation of recent events had proved too much for Mrs. Pierse we cannot tell, but the family disappeared from the area soon afterwards and no subsequent records of them in the district can now be found. Among other relatives, William had a younger brother George Pierse, who was born in either Listowel or Newcastle West in 1816, and worked as a Watchman in the London Docks: he died a bachelor at No. 5 Clark Street, Mile End Old Town in November, 1851, his sister Mary (wife of Charles Nash) being present at the death.

It may be of interest, however, to record that in or about 1870, two great-aunts of the present writer (descended from John Patrick Pierse of Greenwich, another younger brother to Superintendent Pierse), were visited separately by an elderly lady (apparently a lace worker) with her son and daughter who had come over from the Continent (France or Belgium) as relatives. From the descriptions given to the present writer, they fitted Mrs. Elizabeth Pierse, who would have then been about 73, and her son Maurice, then aged about 54, and one of the younger daughters. It is possible that, after the sadness and humiliation of recent events, the family had emigrated sometime between 1847 and 1851, but returned some twenty or so years later to visit their old home and make contact with relatives.

NOTES

1. *Latest Particulars of the Awful Fire and Total Destruction of the Tower of London . . . 1841.* pub. J. T. Wood, Cripplegate, London, 1841, p. 4. A copy of this pamphlet is in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library, and I am indebted to Mr. D. T. Elliott, Chief Librarian (1979) for drawing my attention to it.
2. BL Add MSS. 40587 f 269-70.
3. L. Blanchard (ed.), *George Cruikshank's Omnibus*. London 1842, pp. 233-7. Illustration reproduced by permission of the British Library.
4. J. Charlton (ed.), *The Tower of London: its Buildings and Institutions*. M. R. Holmes, Chap. 5 — The Crown Jewels. Department of the Environment. H.M.S.O. 1978, pp. 65-6. The extract quoted here is with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
5. Portrait of Edmund Lenthal Swift by John Opie (1761-1807) in the Tate Gallery, cat. ref. No. 4066.
6. Cruikshank, *supra*, p. 234 note.
7. *The Times*, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 November, 1841.
8. *The Times*, 3 November, 1841.

9. M. Lenihan, *Limerick; its History and Antiquities*. Dublin 1866, p. 751.
10. De Lacy Bellingari (pseud. Ed. Harnett), *The Roll of the House of Lucy*. Baltimore USA 1928, p. 267.
11. George Younghusband, Major General, Sir, *The Jewel House*. London, 1921, p. 22.
12. John E. N. Hearsey, *The Tower*. London, 1960, p. 226.
13. M. R. Holmes, *supra*, p. 65.
14. *The Times*, 1 November, 1841.
15. BL Add MSS 38019, Tab. 597c (94).
16. Lenihan, *supra*, p. 751.
17. PRO (Kew), HO 65/26. His name and rank also appear in Pigot's (Court) and PO (Official Section) Directories between 1833 and 1847.
18. I am indebted to P.C. (199) D. Lines of the Thames Division Metropolitan Police for drawing my attention to these entries in the Station's Occurrences Book in the first place, and to the Division's Superintendent M. E. Allen for kindly granting permission to quote them in this article.
19. David Ascoli. *The Queen's Peace (The Origins and Development of the Metropolitan Police 1829-1979)* London 1979, p. 2.
20. Thames Division Metropolitan Police Occurrence Book, *supra*.
21. Parish Register, Marriages, St. Botolph Without, Bishopsgate. James (probably the bride's father) and Mary Ann Dede were witnesses to the marriage. The Baptism Registers for the same church include many other references to members of the Dede family.
22. The name originally had a grave accent and was spelt Dede. Entries in the church registers of Saint Jean Spitalfields (1687-1827) refer to members of the Dede family from Abraham (1697) to Catherine and Pierre (1796); see publications of the Huguenot Society of London, Vol. 39 (1938). The name James Dede (probably that of the bride's father) appears in Robson's (Commercial), Kent's (London), P.O. (Crickett & Woods) and Pigot's (London, Provincial and Metropolitan) directories from 1822 to 1828 as a silk manufacturer at 17 Spital Square. From 1836, James Dede appears described as a stationer and account book maker at 58 Bishopsgate Street Without, and an entry Jane Dede, School, 12 Wood Street, Spitalfields, appears in Pigot's Directory for 1836. Wood Street, now Wilkes Street, was at the corner of Princes Street (where the Pierces were later to set up home) and contained a Protestant school.
23. Census returns 1841.
24. PRO, *supra*.
25. Ascoli, p. 181.
26. Henry Mayhew. *London Labour and the London Poor*. London 1851. Vol. 4, *passim*.
27. J. Ashley, *A Short History of H Division, Metropolitan Police*, Liverpool 1979, p. 13. I am grateful to Colm Kerrigan for supplying this reference.
28. BL Add MSS 40587, f. 268 f & v.
29. BL Add MSS 40587, f. 271-5v.

FURTHER READING

- In the compilation of this article, many reference works were consulted. The following (in date of publication order) are additional to those cited in the text, and may be read to supplement the otherwise abbreviated account given here.
- J. Britton and E. W. Brayley. *Memoirs of the Tower of London*. London, 1830.
 - J. Hewitt. *The Tower: Its History, Armouries, and Antiquities; Before and since the Fire*. London, 16 Dec. 1841.
 - C. Knight (ed.) *London*. Vol. 2, p. 201-265. London, 1842.
 - J. Wheeler. *A Short History of the Tower of London with a List of the Interesting Curiosities contained in the Armouries and Regalia*. London, 1845.
 - R. S. Gower. *The Tower of London*. London, 1901. Vol. 1, p. 18, Vol. 2, pp. 142-6.
 - G. Younghusband, Major General, Sir, *The Tower from Within*. London, 1918.
 - E. H. C. James. *His Majesty's Tower of London*. London, 1950, p. 39.
— *The Pictorial History of the Tower of London*. London, 1957.
— *Chamber Book of Days* (quoted in R. C. Gower's *The Tower of London*, *supra*).
 - R. J. Minney. *The Tower of London*. London, 1970.
 - C. Hibbert. *The Tower of London*. London, 1971, pp. 132-3.
 - A. L. Rowse. *The Tower of London (in the History of the Nation)*. London, 1972, pp. 250-2.
 - H. J. Taylor and H. M. Colvin (Gen. ed.). *A History of the King's Works*. Vol. 6 (1782-1851). H.M.S.O. London, 1973, pp. 490-1.
 - D. Wilson. *The Tower (1078-1978)*. London 1978, pp. 224-7.

ST. PAUL'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, BURDETT ROAD

C. J. Lloyd

INDUSTRIAL Schools were neither workhouses, schools nor boarding houses and yet they combined features of all three. The object of their introduction after 1835, firstly in Scotland and Northern England, was to prevent juvenile crime in crowded cities. They admitted destitute children and gave them simple work and education. An early equivalent movement in the London region was the Ragged School System pioneered by Lord Shaftesbury and others.

The Industrial Schools Act (England), 1857 regularized the voluntary efforts made with legal standards. Children on admission had to be between 7 and 14 and not be detained beyond 15. The 1861 Act made the previous act more workable, stipulating the provision of board, lodging, clothing and education to vagrant and neglected children. A distinction was drawn between Reformatory and Industrial Schools by the clause that no child be sent to the latter if previously convicted of a felony. The 1866 Act declared that the local authority, in the present case the Hamlet of Mile End Old Town Vestry, was to be the Prison Authority and children could be kept to 16 years of age in industrial schools (the Mile End Old Town Workhouse, Bancroft Road, had an industrial school since at least the 1860s). Under the Act, any person could bring before the courts any child under 14 found to be begging, of no fixed abode or to have no guardianship. The Elementary Education Act of 1876 also had relevant clauses to bring children into industrial schools.

A serious defect of the 1866 Act was the lack of effective machinery to enforce it. One victim of the poor monitoring was St. Paul's Industrial School. It was certified for worthiness by the Home Office Inspectorate of Reformatories and Industrial Schools and the School Board for London sent boys there. It was closed by the Home Office after allegations of sub-standard conditions. We are fortunate in being able to learn about the daily life of the school through the newspaper reports of the Board and Home Office Inquiries after a fire and trial in 1881. The school, which was rate and State supported, had several managers at the time, Sir Edmund Hay Currie, a philanthropist and member of the Board, Mr. John 'Rob Roy' McGregor, an evangelical missionary and founder of the Ragged School Shoebblack Society and the longest serving, Mr. Thomas Scrutton, of whom more later. The last named, it was alleged, was the only active manager for the last five years. A number of official Board Visitors such as Mrs. Elizabeth Surr and Miss Helen Taylor frequented the place. They alleged, *inter alia*, that the manager gave too small an allowance (equivalent to 2/4d per boy) to the Governor, Mr. John Hinchliffe, which resulted in the dilapidated condition of the building and the poor quality and quantity of food. The supplies were arranged by the manager. Boys alleged the loaves bought from allocated funds were given over for the Governor, his family and the establishment officials, who in all were twelve. In exchange for loaves, cakes were given. Breakfast was cocoa with 8 oz or 6 oz of bread. No butter or sugar was provided. On occasion

dripping or jam was given. Dinner sometimes consisted of only soup and pudding or soup and cheese. On other occasions it was hot or cold Australian meat. Black beetles and crickets had been seen in the gruel according to one witness. Only two boys in employment and two who were ill were allowed meat twice a week. The school was constantly visited by the medical officer, Mr. James Horton, of 23 High Street, Stepney, on a salary of £30 per annum. He was a personal friend of Mr. Scrutton and vouched for the kind treatment the boys had been given.

The school housed 250-300 boys in nine years and although thirteen boys died in that time this was stated by Mr. Scrutton to be a lower death rate than that of the school's vicinity. The school had an infirmary but it was alleged that the boy Osborne, for example, who had sore hands and feet and had been birched, was one of those who had died three days later. Although the school had a shoemaker the boys were given shoes with holes and it was alleged that the clothing allowance, which was 35/- per child, was used to buy second-hand clothes, the rest being pocketed. We know the boys attended St. Paul's Church, in Burdett Road, that they mowed its lawns and that the clergymen often visited the school to use the printing machine. Punishments were graded by the seriousness of the offence. For cutting a hand on a printing machine, W. G. Griffin imputed he received nine strokes of the birch and 48 hours on bread and water. Other discipline methods were handcuffs on hands and feet, and standing to attention in the yard in all weathers. As far as education was concerned, it was very elementary and subject to interruption if work had to be carried out. Indeed, one of the Home Office Inspectors stated at the later Royal Commission of Inquiry into Industrial Schools, that most teachers of such schools were not certificated but they were fit to teach 'as far as we want them to go'. The Home Office felt anything above the 'Fifth Standard' generally ended in failure.

The London School Board, mainly concerned with building schools to provide free education through the rates, entered the Industrial School field to cater for the local destitute child population. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 gave School Boards powers (which prison authorities had only possessed since 1866) of contributing to the establishment of and maintenance of industrial schools and also (which prison authorities did not have) powers to themselves establish industrial schools. Thus from 1874 to 1903 the School Board for London had built nine of their own and made contributions to many others. With none of their own buildings at first, the Board initially adopted the Act by entering into agreements with existing institutions to send children to them for Industrial School Training. St. Paul's Industrial School was one of the first of the Board's ventures into the field.

Documentary evidence of the school's early days is scant. Thomas Scrutton, chairman of the Industrial Schools Committee of the Board, proposed that special arrangements for a Board grant be made to the managers of a certified school in Burdett Road, Limehouse (not named).¹ 'The certified industrial school', precursor to St. Paul's, is unknown and was not in any case in existence in 1871 according to the census returns.² St. Paul's

Industrial School was situated on the corner of Turner's Road (later Ackroyd Drive) between numbers 107 and 111 Burdett Road (east side).³ After Burdett Road was renumbered in 1874 the school stood at number 199. The naming of the industrial school was probably after the church in Bow Common. The local church was, as was so often the case in the past, the source of nomenclature for numerous new developments in its parish; for roads, schools, public houses and clubs. Well established already by 1872 was the St. Paul's Church National School nearby, between numbers 114 and 116 Burdett Road (west side) (later between 180 and 182). The School Board for London used the name again when it built St. Paul's Board School in nearby St. Paul's Road in 1873. To complete the variety of school types in this locality were two private schools, the East London College for Boys in Burdett Road at the Turner's Road intersection and the East London Collegiate School for Ladies, at 42 (later 262-4) Burdett Road (west side).

The managers of the old certificated industrial school gave the board powers in the grant arrangement of 1872 to fill all vacancies at St. Paul's, the school having accommodation for 100 boys.⁴ The building grant, one of the largest to be made to an industrial school, was for £1,000, to alter and enlarge the building.⁵ The school had an ignominious closure in 1881. The allegations that were made were against the school governor, John Hinchliffe, the school manager Thomas Scrutton and the School Board for London for ill treatment, fraud, manslaughter, and poor inspection and management controls. It was only after the closure that a private libel action was taken out and damages paid, thus discrediting some of the charges.⁶ Ostensibly the school was closed because the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Sir William Harcourt, felt he could not reform the school's management in a way which would inspire much confidence.⁷ The Secretary may also have been under pressure to close quickly as criminal proceedings on staff began to be demanded which Radical political groups such as the new Democratic Federation would seize upon. Certainly moral indignation felt by humanitarian Victorian philanthropists was only part of the force behind the move for closure. The school was fair game to use as just another means to discredit the Liberal Gladstone Government. Miss Helen Taylor actively opposed the Irish coercion policy of the government from 1880-85 and was at the forefront for closure. She was also a Radical member of the School Board for London from 1876-1884, an advocate of women's rights and step-daughter of John Stuart Mill. A founder member of the Democratic Federation in 1881, she spoke on the platform at Limehouse Town Hall on 29th November 1881 about the school abuses. Her campaign brought about many reforms later in industrial schools.

Another important influence on Sir William Harcourt's closure decision was the need to re-establish the integrity of the Home Office within the cabinet and assert the independence of the Home Office from the poor management of the School Board. Indeed with the closure, the Home Office restated it was the final regulator of Industrial Schools, albeit with recommendations flowing from local management and the School Board for London.

On another level, too, St. Paul's Industrial School was used in an ulterior way. Within the Board's membership itself political and personal rivalry was deep. Mrs. Fenwick Miller, elected for the Hackney Division and a women's rights supporter, observed there was an 'official party' and an 'independent party'.⁸ In the former party, Thomas Scrutton and Edward North Buxton had respectively Non-Conformist and Anglican electoral support in the Tower Hamlets Division. They formed a clique with others on the Board.⁹ Scrutton, who had long been identified with philanthropic and educational work locally, was an original member of the Board since 1870 and Chairman of the Local Marine Board. He was also very active in ensuring that Liberal M.P.s were elected for Tower Hamlets.¹⁰ Scrutton was vehemently opposed by Mrs. Elizabeth Surr, the member for Finsbury, with support from Mrs. Fenwick Miller (Hackney) and the Radical Miss Helen Taylor (Southwark). Mrs. Surr was regarded as an 'amiable but credulous person',¹¹ an adversary of Mr. Scrutton since the Upton House School for Truants, Homerton scandal,¹² in the 1870s and was eager for a new chance, which St. Paul's Industrial School provided, for revenge. The campaign was on.

Surr arranged for a barrister to be paid to defend the six accused inmates who caused a fire,¹³ at the Thames Police Court and Old Bailey, with financial help from Miss Taylor.¹⁴ The evidence of ill-treatment heard at the hearings was used to publicly challenge Mr. Scrutton, the chairman of the Industrial Schools' Committee. Scrutton was unable to stop the Board resolving to hold their own inquiry independently of one the Home Office was

An industrial school



already commencing. On 29th October 1881, Mrs. Surr presented 16 accusations¹⁵ to Mr. Scrutton at the Board's special inquiry to which he admitted that irregularities had occurred, caused by the school staff. However, he drew the line at his opponents' demands for resignation by asserting the irregularities had been without his knowledge.¹⁶ Mrs. Surr pressed further and the Board resolved to ask the Home Secretary to seek the Public Prosecutor's views on ground for criminal proceedings as she had discovered that children had died at the school. At one point in the well publicised scandal the Home Office expressed the opinion, in its letter of 23rd November, 1881 read to the Board, that the whole matter be submitted to another investigation by an 'important and independent authority'.¹⁷

Mr. Scrutton always felt his best defence was to have evidence taken under oath rather than have continuous libel and exaggerated stories at the Board's inquiry, newspapers and public meetings from destitute boys. Such boys were likely to seize on any opportunity to accuse their governor and discipliner.

But the tide of opinion was against Thomas Scrutton. By late November the pace of events was moving too fast. The Home Secretary and the School Board for London were faced with outside pressures of angry public meetings and widespread newspaper reporting. At the Democratic Federation meeting in Limehouse Town Hall on the 29th November referred to earlier, Mrs. Surr took the platform with Mrs. Fenwick Miller and Miss Taylor to discuss the school. Mrs. Surr also spoke at the Mile End Old Town Vestry Hall, Bancroft Road on the 22nd November and assaults were alleged to have occurred. One thousand people heard evidence from the inmates at a public meeting at Mile End Waste on 13th November. The *East London Observer* of the 19th November carried Mrs. Surr's and Mr. Scrutton's arguments, the reports of the School Board's debates and the Home Office's correspondence.

By December Mr. Scrutton had been replaced by Mr. Spicer as chairman of the Industrial Schools' Committee but the Home Secretary wrote to the Board on 21st December that the Public Prosecutor could find insufficient (corroborative) evidence for criminal proceedings.¹⁸

The campaign only slowly died away in 1882. Mrs. Fenwick Miller continued to press the Board for a new special inquiry to resume the taking of evidence. Finally, she withdrew her motion on 27th July 1882 that the Board ask the Home Secretary to establish a Royal Commission to enquire into the case of St. Paul's.

Although he had lost his post, Mr. Thomas Scrutton charged Miss Helen Taylor with libel and won his case in early July 1882. Even though St. Paul's could not survive the furore, the inmates of many industrial schools which remained benefited from immediate implementation of tighter regulations by the Home Office and School Board for London. On closure £250 was repaid from the original building grant of £1,000 made in 1872.¹⁹

The school was taken over in 1883 by Dr. Barnardo's Homes (National Incorporated Association) whose headquarters in nearby Stepney Causeway carried the sign for many years 'No destitute boy or girl ever refused admission'. The Branch was one of Barnardo's East End Juvenile Missions and the industrial school was renamed Leopold House and Leopold Hall after H.R.H. Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany. The Salvation Army took over in the 1910s and Charles Williams and Co., wholesale clothiers later occupied the premises from about 1919 to about 1941. After the site was cleared, Elmslie Point tower block was built by the G.L.C. as part of the Burdett Estate. The eastern half of Turner's Road from the corner site with Burdett Road was renamed Ackroyd Drive in 1969.

NOTES

1. S.B.L. Minutes, 6 March 1872, p. 156. The site was in fact just in Mile End Old Town. The Board incidentally was also at the same time hoping to make use of Burdett Hall, Limehouse as a Board School.
2. Possibly the previous use of the school was actually private daytime education. James Haysman had a school on the site from 1866 (which was called the East London College in 1871). From 1872 Josiah Kershaw became principal and renamed the school the East London College for Boys in 1873. St. Paul's Industrial School appears on the same site in the 1874 trade directory and the East London College for Boys appears to have crossed over to the west side of Burdett Road, number 94 (renumbered 212) but again on the corner of Turner's Road.
3. No. 109 Burdett Road (*Kelly's Directory of London*, 1874).
4. E.L.O. 9 March, 1872, p. 2.
5. S.B.L. *Final Report*, p. 235.
6. E.L.O. 8 July, 1882, p. 7. The result of Scrutton vs. Taylor — £1,000 damages to Scrutton, the plaintiff.
7. E.L.O. 19 November, 1881, p. 6.
8. E.L.O. 19 November, 1881, p. 6.
9. Thomas Scrutton was at 73 East India Dock Road until 1873 and from 1874-81 he lived at 29 (later renumbered 273) Burdett Road (east side). In the 1880s he was with Scrutton, Sons & Co., ship and insurance brokers, 9 Gracechurch Street, E.C. and at 278 Burdett Road (west side) (1883 *Directory*).
10. E.L.O. 22 October, 1881, p. 7. 20 May, 1882, p. 5.
11. E.L.O. 19 November, 1881, p. 6.
12. E.L.O. 22 October, 1881, p. 5.
13. The fire was on 7 September, 1881.
14. E.L.O. 19 November, 1881, p. 6.
15. E.L.O. 5 November, 1881, p. 7.
16. E.L.O. 12 November, 1881, p. 7.
17. Probably meaning a Royal Commission, which in any case did not occur in the lifetime of the school. Apart from a court of law only a Royal Commission would have the legal right to hear corroborative evidence under oath.
18. E.L.O. 31 December, 1881, p. 5.
19. S.B.L. *Final Report*, p. 235.

FURTHER READING

- Dictionary of National Biography*
East London Observer 1872, 1881-2.
Kerrigan, C. 'The School Board for London' (typescript of a paper read at the East London History Society meeting, 21 June, 1979).
MacLure, S. *One hundred years of London Education*. Chaps. 1-4 (1970).
Montague, C. J. *Sixty years of waifdom or, the ragged school movement in English history* (1904).
Robson, E. R. *School architecture* (1874, reprinted 1972).
School Board for London. *The final report of the School Board for London 1870-1904* (2nd edn., 1904).
School Board for London. *Minutes*. 1872-3, 1881-2.



Dunbar's Wharf in Narrow Street around 1900: one of the postcards produced by the Limehouse Development Group, marketed in packages of five, each set containing an informative explanation of the pictures in their historical context. Far too good to use as postcards (unless to an expatriate native of Limehouse) they make delightful souvenirs of this famous maritime parish.

BOOK REVIEWS

E. F. Clark. *George Parker Bidder The Calculating Boy* with an appreciation of his calculating ability by Joyce Linfoot. KSL Publications, 1983. £21.

THE Victoria Dock, the largest in London and the first to be served by railway, was an instant success when it opened in 1855, yet the man who hoped it would add to his fame as an engineer is remembered today only as 'The Calculating Boy'. This biography of George Parker Bidder, by a direct descendant, rescues him from relative obscurity and places him firmly among the great Victorian engineers.

That Bidder was not an inventor and undertook works with an eye to economy and financial return may partly account for his having to wait so long for a biographer. E. F. Clark reveals Bidder's extraordinary contribution to the infra-structure of East London: starting with his involvement in the London Dock Extension Works and the Commercial Road Stoneway. From 1832 to 1834 he was resident engineer on the Brunswick Wharf project at Blackwall, which was the first large scale application of cast iron piling backed by mass concrete to create the world's first ocean passenger terminal. In 1834 he met his future wife, Georgina Harby, whose family lived at Pekin Place, East India Road. In 1835 he became Robert Stephenson's partner and was involved in nearly all the Stephenson's railway schemes. Though he and George Stephenson were joint engineers, Bidder did most of the work on the London & Blackwall Railway, which ran from Brunswick Wharf to the City. It was cable operated from 1840 to 1849 — the world's first rapid transit urban railway and the first complete railway to be controlled by electric telegraphy.

Bidder promoted and built a branch line from the Eastern Counties Railway at Stratford, which became the North Woolwich Branch, serving his Victoria Dock and the Woolwich Ferry. Whilst building the Victoria Dock, Bidder was also engineering the London Tilbury & Southend Railway. He was engineer to the Eastern Counties Railway from 1844 and he formed the Great Eastern Railway Company in 1862.

Bidder also brought his talents to bear on the problem of sewage disposal. E. F. Clark reviews the controversies that raged while London stank and how, in 1857-58, Joseph Bazalgette, assisted by George Parker Bidder and Thomas Hawksley, wrote the report for the Metropolitan Board of Works that recommended the main drainage system that is still in operation today.

Having been active in the pioneering days of the railway, Bidder played a major role in the development of yet another invention. E. F. Clark shows how, in 1846, he was one of the principal founders of the Electric Telegraph Company. This was the first of the telegraph companies and from a small factory in Limehouse it became the largest in the U.K. Bidder was also involved in the companies that made and laid the first transatlantic telegraph cables. After which the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company set up its great works at Silvertown.

E. F. Clark devotes ten chapters to a chronological account and ten further chapters to particular projects. He provides 146 pages of notes, full of fascinating detail and references for further reading. Even so, not all the recommended books shed much extra light on some of Bidder's activities and reference to company minutes and records would have filled out the individual stories and indicated the extent of his involvement: especially where Bidder's diaries, on which E. F. Clark relies rather heavily, provide only an incomplete and fragmentary record. This 518 page book has 83 excellent illustrations and 7 specially drawn maps, which lack scales. Bidder's foreign railways are shown as well as his East London railways but extra maps of his other English railways would have been helpful for the general reader, as would a chronology of Bidder's complex career.

T. S. Ridge

Jonathan Schneer. *Ben Tillett: Portrait of a Labour Leader*. Croom Helm, 1982. £14.95.

'I hear that Ben Tillett is quite a "safe" man today, and that he has shed all that Tower Hill wildness which made him the terror and horror of all respectable people twenty years ago' (*Clarion*, 9 November, 1917). It had only been five years before during the 1912 London transport workers' strike he had urged his audience 'now repeat after me: Oh God strike Lord Davenport (the chairman of the Port of London Authority) dead,' strengthening the popular view of Tillett as a firebrand orator and agitator.

The contradictions, reversals and inconsistent behaviour of Tillett's public life from 1887-1921 are the subject of Jonathan Schneer's excellent study of the enigmatic dockers' leader. He points out that in spite of his reputation to the contrary, Tillett had a distaste for 'direct action'; he was entirely unprepared for the great dock strikes of 1889 and 1911, and opposed to the other massive dispute in which he played a leading part, the 1912 transport workers' strike in London.

Tillett's association with East London went back to 1882 when he lived with his wife in his mother-in-law's flat in Hunslett Street, Bethnal Green, attended lectures at the Bow and Bromley Institute, and found work at a tea warehouse. However, it was not until 1887 that a dispute at the Cutler Street warehouse unleashed his extraordinary abilities to organise labourers into "a society for our mutual protection" (the Tea Operatives' and General Labourers' Association). Two years later the great London dock strike which he helped to lead made him a figure of national importance, its success encouraging for the first time the formation of mass unions among unskilled workers previously thought impossible to organise.

Tillett's triumphs and failures as secretary to the new Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union are charted with thoroughness by Jonathan Schneer. Considerable use is made of unpublished records as well as a mass of printed sources. He has attempted to disentangle the confused rhetoric from the performance of a man who played a significant part in the history of British labour at a particularly crucial time, and produced a readable and convincing account of an erratic life full of interest.

Bernard Nurse

Geoffrey Dellar (ed.) *Attlee as I knew him*. Tower Hamlets Directorate of Community Services, 1983. £2.00.

THIS is a collection of tributes to Clement Attlee from his daughter-in-law and a few of his vast circle of friends and acquaintances. They give some hitherto unknown and fascinating glimpses of his life from mainly well-known people. Few people have risen to the position of Prime Minister and received an Earldom who could claim the loyalty and affection of the ordinary worker as Clem Attlee did. Indeed, I would like to have seen one tribute from an ordinary worker in Limehouse which would surely have made the collection complete.

The book contains much that is frank and realistic — a welcome departure from the pious platitudes all too often seen in the obituaries of the great. What emerges is a view of a great man whose greatness took account of the struggles of the oppressed, the yearnings of the deprived, and the aspirations of the young. When I last met him in 1959 he was in failing health yet felt there was so much to do and so little time to do it. What I think stands out in this book is that Clem Attlee was a deep thinker — one always left him with the feeling that he knew far more than he said. Already a generation is growing up in East London to whom he is but a name, but they will not have to look far to find evidence of Clem Attlee's life and work here. I hope they will read this book and gain something of the pleasure in doing so which it has given to those who knew him.

Alfred French

John McLachlan. *Joseph Priestley – Man of Science 1733-1804*. Merlin Books Ltd. (Braunton), 1983. £1.75.

NINETEEN-eighty-three saw the 250th anniversary of the birth of Joseph Priestley, one of England's greatest scientists, remembered today principally for his discovery of oxygen but in his day equally famous as a dissenting minister and a prominent radical. In 1791 he suffered the outrage of having his house, library and laboratory in Birmingham burnt to the ground by a drunken mob angered by his support for the revolutionaries in France. It was to Hackney that Priestley and his Mary came to live after this tragedy, to be relatively safe among friends in an area rich in non-conformist tradition.

John McLachlan's book was published to commemorate the anniversary and subtitled 'The Iconography of a great Yorkshireman' it describes all the known likenesses of Priestley, over fifty in all — paintings, engravings, medallions and sculptures. A short history and present location of each image is given with some biographical information on the artists and craftsmen responsible. Sixteen, mostly full page, illustrations complement the text.

One of Priestley's best known portraits was painted in oils during the period he lived in Lower Clapton Road by the Royal Academy gold medallist William Artaud. This painting may now be seen in Dr. William's Library, Gordon Square, London. In April 1794, becoming increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities of political change in Britain during his lifetime, he and his wife emigrated to newly independent America. Soon after arriving in Philadelphia his portrait was again drawn, this time delicately coloured in pastels by Ellen Sharples. It is now on display in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Although only about sixty pages in length the book represents a considerable body of painstaking research and is a very useful work of reference for Priestley buffs and print collectors (it is still possible to pick up quite cheaply 18th and 19th century engravings of Priestley and his contemporaries in antiquarian print shops). I cannot help feeling, however, that the book would have had more general appeal had the numerous political caricatures of Priestley been included with their historical backgrounds. Priestley, often described as 'Gunpowder Joe', was a frequent butt of satirists like Gilray and Sayers who took every opportunity to abuse and ridicule him for his progressive anti-establishment views.

Perhaps McLachlan would consider a second volume to cover this material.

Mike Gray

Phillip McCann and Francis A. Young. *Samuel Wilderspin and the Infant School Movement*. Croom Helm, 1982. £15.95.

ON taking up his appointment as teacher-in-charge of the third infants school in Britain in 1820, Samuel Wilderspin and his wife found themselves confronted with 165 children under seven years of age in the schoolroom in Quaker Street, Spitalfields. As soon as their mothers left the children began wailing, to the alarm of the neighbourhood and to the discomfort of Mrs. Wilderspin, who had to leave the room with a headache. He would have followed her were it not for the fact that he had promised the mothers to look after the children until 12 o'clock. He introduced some games, including imitations of a duck, which calmed them down. On their return, many of the mothers, far from congratulating him on coping single-handed with 165 children for a morning, removed their children from the school, saying they had sent them there to learn to read 'not to play at duck'. Poor Wilderspin was pelted with dirt in the street and jeered at as 'the Baby Professor'.

From this unpromising start, Wilderspin went on to organise the Spitalfields school to become the show-piece of the growing movement for infant education, projecting Wilderspin himself into leadership of the movement, both as a theoretical exponent of its educational principles and a practical campaigner for their realisation. The book manages to combine these two aspects of his work and relates them to other educational influences of the period. Guided by the ideas of Swedenborg on the essential innocence of childhood, he inevitably came into conflict with those who saw children as corrupt and prone to evil. The resulting battlefields of education are treated patiently and lucidly by the authors.

While his educational ideas were taken up by many of the Chartist and incorporated into their picture of the future, it was one of Robert Owen's criticisms of Wilderspin that he did not have the vision to see the infants school 'as a first step towards forming a rational character for a rational system of society'. It is clear that today's progressive infants schools, with their child-centred approach and emphasis on discovery methods and the practical aspects of learning, would meet with Wilderspin's approval, while Owen might want to ask where the rational society was for which the children are so conscientiously being prepared.

Colm Kerrigan

Margaret Gelling. *Place-Names in the Landscape*. J. M. Dent and Sons, 1983. £15.

OUR Anglo-Saxon forebears, Margaret Gelling tells us, were deeply sensitive to landscape and developed 'a vast and subtle topographical vocabulary', as English place-names testify. The range and precision of this vocabulary, she insists, can only be fully appreciated through a national survey, which formidable task she here undertakes. In the past too much emphasis has been placed on archaic elements in place-names, on 'pagan' sites and identifiable personal names: a broader approach is called for. I find her thesis persuasive and the evidence convincing.

The book categorises landscape features under seven headings and applies statistical methods to the distribution of root-words in each. What becomes immediately apparent is the richness of Anglo-Saxon nomenclature: some thirty terms are recorded under Rivers, Springs and Lakes, never synonymous, each with distinctive features; the section on Hills, Slopes and Ridges lists thirty-seven root-words, all fully explored and defined; nineteen close-packed pages, for instance on *dīn*, hill.

For all the author's meticulous scholarship, she is in no way disdainful of the amateur, accepting that the most expert study of maps can never match local knowledge. Farm and field names, moreover, recorded in local maps and land-deeds, can be as significant as those of major centres. Many obscurities remain, even for East Londoners, though most of our settlement names are etymologically plain enough: Shadwell, shallow stream, Bromley the clearing (*leah*) where broom grows, Rotherhithe, landing-place (*hȳth*) for cattle. But is that other *hȳth*, Stepney (the root lost in modern spelling) a landing-place for, or constructed from, stumps? In Hackney the second component is OE *i.e.*, island, here denoting firm ground near marsh, but whence the 'hack'? Is Bethnal (the Green is a late addition) the '*hālh*', 'nook' by the ancient river Blythe (note Blythe Street)? And my native West Ham, which I long believed derived from OE *hām*, village I now know comes from *hamm*, land in a river-bend.

Margaret Gelling's new book, which succeeds, without replacing, her *Signposts to the Past* (Dent, 1978), in which she argues the value of place-name study as a tool of the historian, is likely to be used mainly for reference. It is helped in this respect by an admirable Glossarial Index to names and key root-words, giving not only page references but also brief definitions. An initial consecutive reading however will be found rewarding, providing, in the author's words, a pleasurable 'imaginative contact' with the Anglo-Saxons.

Stanley Reed

Stan Shipley. *Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London*. The Journeymen Press, 1983. £2.75.

A handbill, reproduced at the beginning of this volume, for the Stratford Dialectical and Radical Club proudly announced its summer programme of Sunday evening lectures sometime in the eighteen seventies — the precise year is not given. It contained topics such as 'Wealth and Capital', 'How is the Welfare of the People to be Promoted' (by the editor of the Republic), 'Percy Bysshe Shelley, Poet of Democracy' and billed Prince Kropotkin as a future speaker.

As a programme, it could have probably come from any of the twenty clubs known to have existed in the East End alone. The subject and speakers reflected the cause and heroes of the mainly artisan audiences who packed the smoke-filled, rambling, rented buildings to hear — and give voice to — the political and cultural issues of the day. Most of the topics were dealt with at a fairly high level of abstraction — currency reform, political economy, science — and the motivation for the mastery of these subjects was not self improvement but political understanding and above all an enthusiasm for reform.

Stan Shipley captures and shares this spirit admirably. His researches have unearthed the ideological links between such 19th century figures as Bronterre O'Brien and later thinkers like Marx. He has also painted a fascinating picture of the personal friendships and play of ideas that animated these forgotten institutions. Written with clarity and a rare sympathy, this little volume (which first appeared as a History Workshop pamphlet in 1975) should provide illumination both for the general reader and the professional historian alike.

Bernard Canavan

Charles Poulsen. *The English Rebels*. The Journeyman Press, Ltd., 1984. £12.95.

CHARLES Poulsen has packed into two hundred pages the major episodes in the history of English popular discontent. The heroes of the book are not the kings and queens of England but rather men and women like John Ball, Jack Cade, Robert Kett, George Loveless and Mrs. Pankhurst who were thrown, often briefly, on to the centre stage of our history by the rebellious movements of their times. Many of the episodes recounted in the book will come as a revelation to those of us reared on traditional English history, and yet such incidents as the Household Community and the story of the Levellers and Diggers hold a fascinating contemporary interest.

The author recognises that in order to understand the various popular movements through the centuries it is necessary to provide some background information on economic conditions. It is of course difficult to do this given the size of the book, and sometimes the narrative's pace becomes breathless. 'The Industrial Revolution', for example, is covered in just four pages. It would have been very interesting, although perhaps asking too much, for Mr. Poulsen to have included an element on the international nature of popular discontent, or alternatively to have dwelled upon the 'Englishness' of domestic radicalism. Why, for example, did the English so often stage mild rebellions while the French embarked, at least for a time, on violent revolutions? We have introduced in the present century various measures of social justice which would have been warmly approved by the likes of John Ball and Tom Paine, and yet a great deal is owed to the Celtic cutting edge — the radicalism of Keir Hardie the Scotsman and Nye Bevan the Welshman.

Mr. Poulsen's task in relating the major episodes in the history of the English popular movements over a period of six centuries has been an ambitious one, but he has been successful in presenting a compact and exciting narrative.

The book should be read by all those who have heard enough of Henry VIII and his six wives and are interested in the continuing importance of the question posed by John Ball in 1381:

'When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?'

Anthony Fincham

Ken Worpole. *Dockers and Detectives – Popular Reading: Popular Writing*. Verso, 1983. £14 hardback, £3.95 paperback.

THIS book is timely. When local writers of the thirties and forties are tending to be forgotten among the spate of new works, it explains their importance by putting them in context.

Middle class authors and subjects dominated publishers' lists. Groups of working class writers only appeared in areas that had their own culture and traditions. Whitechapel Library, the Yiddish Theatre and other Jewish cultural groups gave such a background to authors like Simon Blumenfeld, Willy Goldman, Ashley Smith and Alexander Baron. The results are stories and novels that portray young men growing up in times of economic harshness and stunted hopes, as well as the vitality of political and cultural activities. Also sketched in are the temptations to 'easy money' offered by gambling and the underworld.

But East End writers are just one theme in this collection of essays on the working class in the literature of the period. The result could have been an annotated book list. Instead, Ken Worpole has provided a readable and provocative framework for past literature even for those who do not share his socialist views.

H. David Behr

J. E. Connor and B. J. Critchley. *The Red Cliffs of Stepney: a history of the East End Dwellings Co. Ltd. 1885-1949*. Connor and Butler, 33 Braiswick, Colchester, Essex CO4 5AU, 1984. £1.25.

IF you take a walk around the streets of Tower Hamlets you will not have to go far before you come across an example of one of the red tenement blocks bearing the legend 'The East End Dwellings Company Ltd.' The Company launched in 1884 grew out of the efforts of philanthropists the Reverend Samuel Barnett and his wife Henrietta Rowland-Barnett who sought to provide an improved standard of housing for the poor. Jim Connor and Barbara Critchley's history of the Company examines its buildings rather than their inhabitants and with a keen eye for architectural detail, reviews its changing attitude towards the provision of housing suitable for the working class. This really excellently produced and well researched account could have been extended had the authors had access to the company's records which were recently deposited in the Newham Local Studies Library.

Howard Bloch

NOTES AND NEWS

THE 1983 annual lecture, organised jointly by Tower Hamlets Directorate of Community Services and the East London History Society, was by William Golant of Exeter University. He gave us some interesting details of the East London background to Attlee's political career, of which there will no doubt be more in his book on Attlee when it appears. Meanwhile, his article, 'Mr. Attlee' in *History Today*, volume 33 (August 1983) is worth finding for a short and readable account of Attlee's career, with a booklist for those who want to know more. Of the 11 illustrations, three are of local relevance, including one of the future Prime Minister with the boys from the Haileybury House Club. This year's annual lecture is by Lord Asa Briggs, who will speak about the centenary of Toynbee Hall.

The parish church of Stepney, St. Dunstan's and All Saints, a mainly 15th century building, is in need of repair and an appeal for £100,000 has been launched. The Appeal Director is Mrs. Myra Syms, J.P., Anchor House, Mile End Road, E1 4UL.

The Ragged School Museum Trust was set up to save three buildings on Regent's Canal that once housed Dr. Barnardo's Ragged School (1875-1908) and convert them to a museum about the East End. The Trust collects any material for display in reconstructed home and work interiors. Please contact T. S. Ridge at Sir John Cass's Foundation School for further details.

The Sunday Times of 1st July 1984 celebrated the 75th birthday of one of East London's most famous boxers: Jack 'Kid' Berg, world junior welterweight champion in 1930 and 1931.

Alan Godfrey, map-seller and publisher, of 57-58 Spoor Street, Dunston, Gateshead, NE11 9BD, is reproducing old ordnance survey maps and selling them at 90p each. Of the first batch, two are of local interest. One shows Bermondsey and Wapping in 1914. Unfortunately, part of the eastern section of Wapping is 'off the sheet', but from Tower Bridge to Penang Street enough details appear to keep anyone interested in the area occupied for hours. The other, 'Whitechapel, Spitalfields and the Bank, 1913', conveys the overcrowding of the time, with scarcely any open space to be seen. Slightly outside our area, 'Rotherhithe 1914' and 'Old Kent Road, 1914' may be of interest to some *Record* readers. All the maps, which fold neatly, are excellent value for money.

Since the Hackney Archives Department was set up in 1965 it has been the intention that all the archives and local history collections of the borough should be housed within the Department. With the transfer of all the archive and local history material formerly held at Mare Street to the Archives Department, the process is nearing completion. The local history material includes the book collection, illustrations and maps. The transferred archives include the electoral registers. In the case of Stoke Newington all archives and illustrations have now been transferred from the Reference Library, and it is hoped that the book collection will follow shortly.

SOME RECENT HISTORY STUDIES RELATING TO EAST LONDON

Books

Alexander, Sally

Women's Work. The Journeyman Press, 1983.

Bush, Julia

Behind the Lines - East London Labour 1914-1919. Merlin, 1984.

- Clarke, Frank
- Cook, George A.
- Friedland, Martin L.
- Goorney, Howard
- Joyce, Paul
- Laurie, Kedrun (ed.)
- Whitehead, Jack
- Young, Peter
- Articles, pamphlets, etc.
- Bennett, Jennifer

- Carr, R. J. M.

- Dixon, Conrad
- East of London Family History Society

- Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society
- Lambirth, Andrew

- Lindop, Fred

- Matthews, Rev. D. Hugh

- Mills, Peter S.

- Park, Stephen

- Some recent deposits in Hackney Archives Department**
- Photographs from Planning Department, London Borough of Hackney.
- Stoke Newington Dispensary records 1925-1948.
- Stoke Newington War Hospital Supply Depot records, 1915-1919.
- Stoke Newington Literary and Scientific Association minutes, 1888-1938.
- British Women's Temperance Association, Stoke Newington Branch: records 1881-1918.
- Stoke Newington Ragged School records 1847-1872.
- Stoke Newington Committee, later Board of Health: minutes 1831 and 1849.
- Stoke Newington registers of electors, 1861, 1879, 1883, 1893-1964.
- Stoke Newington Surveyors of the Highways: accounts 1831-1853.
- Stoke Newington Overseers of the Poor: valuation of the parish 1824.
- Stoke Newington National Parochial School records, 1891-1911.
- Downs Chapel (Baptist): records 1869-1949.
- Hackney Literary Institute and Subscription Library: minutes 1815-1817.
- Hackney Casual Ward plans 1897-1901.
- Hackney registers of voters 1901, 1918-1964.
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