

**EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY  
PROGRAMME 1991 - 1992**

Wed. 13 Nov.	How Labour Won West Ham in the Inter-war Years. John Marriot	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Wed. 4 Dec.	Early Years of Captain Cook From Whitby to Wapping. Julia Hunt,	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Wed. 29 Jan.	Pull No More Bines Memories of Hop Picking Gilda O'Neill	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Wed. 19 Feb.	Anglo-Catholic Socialism in East London 1870-1970 Kenneth Leech	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Wed. 11 March	A Riverside Journey in picture postcards 1900-1930s Steve Kentfield and Ray Newton	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Wed. 8 Apr.	Billy and Charlie: the Shadwell Fakers - Phillip Mernick	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Thurs. 7 May	Post-war East London: Members' Memories and Research	Queen Mary & Westfield College,	7.30pm
Thurs. 14 May	Visit to Royal London Hospital	Crypt of St. Augustine Newark St., E1,	6.30pm
Sat. 27 June	Around Tower Hill - Walk led by Ann Sansom	District Line Station, Tower Hill	2.30pm

Queen Mary and Westfield College is on Mile End Road, E1, half way between Mile End and Stepney Green underground stations.

The East London History Society (founded 1952) exists to further interest in the history of East London, namely the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham. Besides the East London Record we publish two newsletters a year and organise a programme of talks (details above); we also arrange local walks and two coach outings a year are organised. Details of membership are available from John Harris (Membership Secretary) 15 Three Crowns Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 5AD.

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# EAST LONDON RECORD

No. 14

1991

## 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 forms the London boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, and Newham.

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Cover illustration:

Italian street musicians in mid-nineteenth century London: see the article by John Ramsland on page two.

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c East London History Society and contributors

## NINETEENTH CENTURY EAST END CHILDREN AS PAVEMENT ENTERTAINERS

John Ramsland

.... an organ-grinder, blue-nosed as his monkey, set some ragged children jiggling under the watery rays of a street lamp. Isaac Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto*.

One way for poor East End children to survive on nineteenth century London streets in the harsh demanding world of the metropolis was by entertaining passersby through a performance that would fleetingly capture their imagination and attention - that would compel them to stop, watch and listen. Tumblers, conjurors, acrobats, musicians, ballad singers, street actors, and presenters of Punch and Judy, 'freak' and peep shows were all part of the diverse street scene, and depended on the bystander's coin. The children and youths involved in such street entertainment developed a wide range of skills in music, song, dance, drama, and movement which were passed from generation to generation and contributed to the development of a distinctive East End culture. The kerbstone became an informal but demanding school for the performing arts for the less fortunate young.

Even by 1902 the writer Jack London, who was living incognito in the London docks, noticed that East End street children delighted 'in music, and motion, and colour, and very often betray a startling beauty of face and form under their filth and rags'. He maintained that the one beautiful sight in all the despair was that of the children 'dancing in the street when the organ-grinder goes his round'.<sup>2</sup>

East End street performers were of two basic kinds: those who depended on the free offerings of passersby and those who charged a small admission fee before providing entertainment. The entertainers who charged a fee to customers were usually proprietors of small enclosed puppet-shows, 'freak' shows or wax works, and telescope, microscope or peep-show exhibitors. Wax works and 'freak' shows were particularly popular in Whitechapel and on Mile End Road in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, especially in evenings after dark when the atmosphere heightened the excitement and the darkness hid flaws in presentation. Such fee-charging entertainers presented their shows in darkened alleys where portable screens were used to block out non-paying would-be spectators.

Punch and Judy show performers used a language which was a unique mixture of colloquial English and stage Italian. It was derived loosely from the original Italian scripts brought to London by an Italian puppeteer called Porsini at the

beginning of the nineteenth century. For example *homa* meant 'man', *dona* meant 'female', *charfering homa* meant 'policeman', *bonar* meant 'good', *slum* meant 'call' and so on. All of these terms were well understood by the East End audiences through repetition and because of the English language context they were placed in. As poverty in the East End became increasingly severe in the second half of the nineteenth century, many of the Punch and Judy performers shifted their booths to West End squares where members of the audience could at least afford to throw coins at the conclusion of the performance, coins which were then gathered by the child assistants. Even there, interest in Punch and Judy diminished as more sophisticated tastes developed.<sup>3</sup>

Musical presentations were by far the most common form of East End street entertainment and they generally involved children and youths most heavily because of their physical and vocal attractiveness to pavement audiences. The sounds of music, from the organ to the tin whistle, would greet the London pedestrian. Among the musical instruments most commonly played were bagpipes, hurdy-gurdys, pianos, flagelets, hand-organs, glass-tubes, matalplates, harps, violins, musical bells and concertinas. Others played simple tunes on goblets. There were street singers of varying vocal range and age from infants to eighty year olds. Crowds in the streets, roads, bye-ways and back-alleys of the East End gathered around German brass bands, black and white minstrels, children's choirs with accompanying dancers, and Italian organ grinders. The tunes usually played were short, sentimental or comic and popular, reflecting the music hall rather than the concert stage. Adults, youths, boys and girls all took an active part in street musical performances.

Street bands, consisting of about a dozen members, made up of boys and men dressed in uniform could be found around Whitechapel and Aldgate performing on Saturday evening. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century 'the sparkling compositions of Offenbach, Auber and Lecocq'<sup>4</sup> could be enjoyed by neighbourhood residents and by passersby. The music that they played was classical, interspersed with an occasional popular air. Their music was atypical when compared to the average fare of the local penny gaffs and musical halls. The street audiences to these performances were largely Jewish: their central European background provided them with a strong taste for classical music and a nostalgia for the musical culture of their origins.

Individual child street vocalists usually presented a repertoire of current popular music hall melodies. Some of these songs were humorous and spiced with double entendre; others were full of pathos and sentimentality. Frequently street vocalists performed at closing up times outside hotels where they would be thrown a few coins by departing drinkers if their performance was at all tolerable.

The street organ grinders were mainly of Italian descent but occasionally they came from an Irish background. Sometimes boy organ grinders worked independently and alone and lived in cheap East End lodging houses. Adult organ grinders were usually accompanied by a boy or girl or a young woman dressed in a traditional Italian costume of bright, attractive colours. They performed from twelve to fourteen hours a day and moved around the streets on a regular route. Some street organs were drawn by donkeys; others were pushed by a young assistant. The more elaborate street organs were illustrated by moving panoramas. The boy or girl assistants sustained the attention of onlookers by playing tambourines or triangles to accompany the organ and through the elegance of their dancing. Monkeys were used to complete the visual impact, but frequently died in the harsh London winter climate and were commonly replaced by trained white mice who were more hardy.<sup>5</sup>

Chalk artists and model makers, both boys and adults, provided another form of entertainment for passersby. A particular venue for the artists who worked with coloured chalks was the flagstones on Whitechapel Road. The designs used varied from the simple to the elaborate: fish, mice, birds, sea pieces, winter



"ACCORDION AND TRIANGLE."

*Nineteenth century street musicians, probably Italians from Clerkenwell in The Strand Magazine.*

scenes and so on. They were accompanied by the words of an appropriate saying such as 'Talent should be Rewarded' and 'Poverty is No Crime'. The street artist's work was usually not well rewarded as he depended entirely on free donations from passersby. Others, commonly disabled, displayed models of ships, churches and public buildings usually made of decorated cardboard or wood that they themselves had made. They either gained alms from their display by pedestrians or commissions to make further models for specific customers.

Thomas Wright, in his book *The Great Army* dramatised the life of one such young crippled model-maker whom he identified by the nickname of 'Tough-un'. 'Tough-un's' work, according to Wright, was so outstanding that one customer would recommend another and after a short period he did not have to display his work in the streets at all. He built up a clientele of continuous orders for models of historical castles and churches. He was such a perfectionist that he would walk miles on his crutches in London to view and record the exact shade of colour of the facing stone of a building. As a boy he had been a trapeze artist but he had been crippled in a fall at a country fair soon after he began professional work. He then turned his hand at model making, and was able to make a living from it because of its excellence.<sup>6</sup> Only a small number of model-makers did so well.

Another type of street artist was the penny profile cutter who used scissors, black paper and white mounting cards. Such street artists worked at lightning speed to create a silhouette portrait of a customer in return for a penny fee. Henry Mayhew in 1862 provides a reported oral autobiography of one such craftsman from the East End:

I'm a penny profile-cutter, or, as we in the profession call ourselves, a profilist. I commenced cutting profiles when I was 14 years of age... One day I went to a fair at the Tenter-ground, Whitechapel. While I was walking about the fair, I see a young man I knew as "doorsman" at a profile cutter's and he told me that another profile-cutter in the fair wanted an assistant, and thought I should do for it. So I went to this man and was engaged. I had to talk at the door, or "tent", as we call it, and put or mount the likenesses on cards. I was rather backward at touting at first, but I got over that in the course of the day, and could patter like anything before the day was over. I had to shout out, "Step inside, ladies and gentlemen, and have a correct likeness taken for one penny".

Penny profile cutters worked both the streets and the fairs. As with other street artists and performers, 'touting' was an essential aspect of their work to attract paying customers.

Street acrobats were seen in the streets as small performance troupes usually made up of children and adults until the 1870s when new police regulations largely prevented them performing. They were mostly small male groups although individual girls occasionally took part. After the 1870s they worked exclusively at country fairs, continuously touring around. In the East End before

the 1870s they performed in bye streets presenting lively exhibitions of building human pyramids, running up the pole, somersaults and balancing tricks with chairs. To achieve a presentable performance in the hard competition of the streets, they had to train for many hours. Children usually started acrobatics with their parents but some street children were occasionally 'adopted' by acrobatic family troupes if they showed natural ability. Acrobats usually worked the East End streets when they were down on their luck between engagements in music halls or circuses as a way of attracting the attention of theatre and circus managers and agents.

Mudlarks, crossing sweepers and other neglected boys from the East End often earned a few coins from tumbling tricks in the streets. Many were skilled at cartwheels and could walk on their hands for long distances. They made a little income during the holiday period in crowded thoroughfares. According to Mayhew, Baker Street was a favoured place for boy tumblers from the East End. Here they kept pace with omnibuses on the crowded road by running briskly and every few paces springing onto their hands in a cartwheel. Sometimes this was done merely to attract attention to obtain preference for casual jobs; otherwise it was done in the hope of earning a tossed halfpenny. On examining the hands of one of these children Mayhew found that 'the fleshy parts of the palm were hard as soling leather, as hard, indeed, as the soles of the child's feet'<sup>8</sup> He described the extraordinary abilities of the 'King' of the tumbling-boy crossing sweepers in 1861:

...He could bend his little legs round till they curved like the long German sausages we see in the ham-and-beef shops; and when he turned head over heels, he curled up his tiny body as closely as a wood-louse, and then rolled along, wabbling like an egg.<sup>9</sup>

Street exhibitions of strongmen sometimes drew large East End audiences. Sometimes they had diminutive boy assistants to show off their own large physiques in contrast. Their performances usually consisted of lifting heavy objects with their teeth, and throwing weights above their shoulders or holding them at an arm's length.

While street reciters were popular for many centuries in London, they were reasonably scarce by the 1860s when Mayhew estimated that there were about ten lads in London who earned their living by these means. The only two he was able to locate worked together and earned between six and ten shillings a week. Their most popular pieces were dramatic ballads in which one boy would always play the noble characters and the other the villains. Their only theatrical props were fake moustachios and sticks. The most popular ballads that they performed were 'The Highwayman', 'The Gipsy's Revenge', 'The Miser', 'The Gold Digger's Revenge', 'The Robber', and 'The Felon'. One of these pieces was usually at the heart of their sequence of presentations. The crowd were warmed up by a few individual recitations, then the two of them would launch into an energetic

rendition of their chosen ballad and then one boy would go around with the hat while the other rounded off with other short recitations. The boy's solo recitations were usually taken from Shakespeare's tragedies: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Richard III* or *Macbeth*. The boy who played the noble characters volunteered to demonstrate his abilities to Mayhew:

...He went to the back of the room, and after throwing his arms about him for a few seconds, and looking at the ceiling as if to inspire himself, he started off.

Whilst he had been chatting to us his voice was - as I said before - like a girl's; but no sooner did he deliver his, 'Most potent, grave and reverend Signiors' (Othello's apology) than I was surprised to hear him assume a deep stomachic voice - style evidently founded upon dramatic models at minor theatres. His good-looking face, however, became flushed and excited during the delivery of the speech, his eyes rolled about, and he passed his hands through his hair, combing it with his fingers till it fell wildly about his neck like a mane.

When he had finished the speech he again relapsed into his quiet ways, and resuming his former tone of voice, seemed to think that an apology was requisite for the wildness of his acting, for he said, 'When I act Shakespeare I cannot restrain myself - it seems to master my very soul'.<sup>10</sup>

The favoured spots for the boys' performances were the Commercial Road near Limehouse and the Walworth Road, which they considered to be 'the most theatrically inclined neighbourhood'.<sup>11</sup> They occasionally played in public houses where they usually took good earnings. The two young thespians, therefore, brought the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare to some variable but appreciative audiences in the East End.

Telescope operators could only work on clear nights when the moon and stars were visible. They charged a penny for looking through the instruments. One such operator who worked near Mile End Gate gained good patronage because of his 'considerable and wonderfully accurate' knowledge of astronomy which was 'not often met amongst the working classes'.<sup>12</sup> Microscope operators also worked the streets and used slides of stagnant water, the feet of flies, fleas, or cheese mites, or the legs, arms or wings of other insects. They charged between a halfpenny and a penny for a viewing of a slide set accompanied by an exposition. The slides were shown with the aid of oil lamps and powerful reflectors. Their exhibitions were a modest part of the wonders of the industrial age. Telescope and microscope operators had to have substantial capital in comparison with other street entertainers. A telescope cost between sixty and eighty pounds. It cost between ten and twenty pounds for a microscope operator to set up a working exhibition. Both needed a superior scientific knowledge. The more successful operators had boy assistants to whom they passed on the mystery of their art and craft. The boy assistants usually had the job of attracting the attention of passersby by 'touting'.

Booths were erected in the East End alleyways or in rundown vacant shops by sometimes unsavoury entrepreneurs for the purpose of exhibiting extraordinary persons in 'freak shows'. Usually the police would force them to move on quickly because they attracted excitable crowds in which pickpockets were active. Most of these proprietors had child assistants whose jobs were to 'drum up' customers in crowded thoroughfares or to act as lookouts for police intervention. One penny was charged for admission. The proprietor provided a pseudo-scientific commentary to paying customers. These shows took place every few minutes and had potential customers lining up. Sometimes a considerable amount of money could be gained by a proprietor who unscrupulously exploited the startling physical abnormality of some unfortunate person. These exhibits were particularly common in the back streets around London Hospital and helped to add to the unsavoury atmosphere of an area which had gained a particularly infamous reputation through the Jack the Ripper murders.

Montague Williams provides an eye-witness account of such East End shows, in *Round London Down East and Up West*. In his account he saw (as he neared London Hospital on foot) a very large canvas mounted on a rundown house garishly depicting a fat lady, a black dwarf, an armadillo, snakes and other sensational attractions. At the entrance was a girl in 'brilliant attire' playing a barrel organ while a man, similarly dressed, invited the public to enter for a penny a head. The main exhibition was in wax depicting the first Whitechapel murders. Williams then observed several other exhibits in other parts of the establishment.

After this start, Williams, who was a magistrate, continued his personal investigations of East End shows in which he found many children involved as paid assistants and performers as well as excited spectators. He discovered five establishments in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel and was moved to write that 'anything more degrading and debasing than the performances that went on there I never saw'. The Whitechapel murders were favourite subjects there. Apart from waxworks, there were several peep-hole shows with illuminated coloured three dimensional views of the famous murders.<sup>13</sup> Aside from Jack the Ripper, other famous murderers such as Sweeney Todd, the barber, were frequently mythologised in East End exhibitions. In the evenings noisy crowds flocked to the area and a constant din could be heard throughout the London Hospital wards well into the night.

The most celebrated case connected with the East End shows was that of John Merrick, the Elephant Man. The unfortunate Merrick was born with a rare disease which made his head abnormally large and his facial features elephantine. He was ruthlessly exploited by an East End showman who put him on exhibition in a warehouse in Whitechapel close to London Hospital. This showman has a boy assistant who he had trained to 'drum up' customers from the main thoroughfares. Merrick was rescued by Frederick Treves, an eminent surgeon who was interested in studying his disease. Treves found Merrick sanctuary in London Hospital where he was given a small one room apartments.

Merrick was taken up by London society as a fashionable charitable cause.

As a youth the famous circus proprietor 'Lord' George Sanger set up his first show in Bethnal Green:

....Then I took a large furniture warehouse at the corner of Dog Row, now the Bethnal Green Road, decorated it up, and opened up my show. In conjunction with the conjuring and the performing birds and mice I introduced the poses plastiques. Madam Walton was then in London giving her living groupings, and very grand they were. I went in for humbler tableaux, depicting Cruickshanks' illustrations of "The Bottle", and people took to them amazingly. The crowd sometimes was so great that we had to square the police not to interfere. My assistants - six young girls, four young men, and two little boys out of the Mile End Road - who had never done anything in the business before, improved in skill nightly, and at last I felt ready to make the first big venture of my life as showman.<sup>14</sup>

Not all, of course, could be as successful as Sanger.

East End children were therefore heavily involved in street entertainment and a familiar sight on the pavements. Their performance moved them away from being passive objects of charity to where they were able to survive through their own abilities. By producing an extraordinarily broad range of entertainment that could be appreciated, they presented the palpable message to their audiences that they had as much grace and enchanting ability as well-known West End theatre performers. Their performance was an act of creative defiance against a rapidly changing capitalist society that had so comprehensively pushed them towards a marginalised existence. They helped to create a culture of verbal sharpness and rich colour, and of music and laughter, which expressed itself most publicly through the penny gaff, the music hall and the popular song and dance.

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## ON THE ISLE OF DOGS

Ellen Rac

I was born at 39 Strattondale Street during a Zeppelin raid, my mother said, and people stood in doorways looking up at the searchlights. The Isle of Dogs, that area of land formed by a loop in the Thames, was my home for twenty years. Docks, factories, the pungent smell of industry and ships' mournful foghorns. A densely populated area where the tide, bridges and the movement of ships touched the life of every inhabitant. It became an 'Island' when the West India Dock was built, with its entrances to the river. We rarely left the Island except to shop in Crisp Street market with its noise and its cheerful, cheeky traders or for a Sunday visit to Petticoat Lane.

The wider world of London, the City, Fleet Street, the Strand, Piccadilly were only names to us, mysterious, grand. Buckingham Palace was heaven and there was some confusion as to who was really The Supreme Being, King George or God.

Queen Mary descended upon us at Glengall Road School one fine sunny Empire Day, a vision of pale blue, her toque and veil symbols of her lofty status. Enthusiastically, we waved small Union Jacks and just as enthusiastically sang words we little understood.

March, march, march to the bright and dainty splendour  
of the dear old flag,  
To the splendour of the flag.  
White for purity, red for bravery, blueooooo for loyalty,  
Dear old flag.

My parents, when they first married rented two rooms in 46 Strattondale Street on the understanding that there were to be no children. So when my coming arrival could no longer be concealed the time had come to look for another home. Conveniently 39 Strattondale Street became vacant but the rent was too high for us to afford. However, the problem was solved when my mother's sister Aunt Ame, with husband Uncle Joe and small baby Edie, decided to join us to share the house and the rent. Eventually my mother and aunt each bore three children of such similar ages they might have planned each pregnancy together. Even the sex order was the same. To each a girl, a boy and then another girl, giving each of us children a cousin of the same sex and similar age. In an unplanned easy going arrangement we were cared for equally by mother and aunt. The O'Shea's bedrooms were on the top floor while ours were on the middle floor and both families occupied a living room at street level.

Five very dark stairs led to the basement where the big old copper stood encased in concrete with its heavy wooden lid. The washing was boiled here every

week after an all night soaking and a furious rubbing on the corrugated wash board. Here, too we cleaned our shoes every morning, fighting over the blacking and the brushes to be first in the playground.

We became very adept at jumping from top to bottom of those five dark stairs. We'd land in a graceful heap by the cellar door before scrambling to our feet and dashing through the basement to the toilet in the little yard just outside the back door. In daylight the path to the toilet caused no problems but, as darkness fell, those five stairs bathed in black shadow, presented all kinds of horrific images. Safely inside the toilet, I'd shoot the bolt and gaze at the moon through the space above the door whilst regaining my breath and the courage to dash back inside again. Our absence was often noticed by one of the boys who would then take the opportunity to wait just inside the cellar door to boom 'I'm Jack the Ripper' and we'd collapse on the stairs with shrieks of delicious hysterical laughter.

The days began early. Little 'getting up' noises wakened me.

Dark mornings and that lovely smell of bacon accompanied by a mental picture of mum and aunt Ame stationed by their respective stoves pushing large succulent slices of bacon around the frying pan; sitting on the stairs to peer through the bannister rail at my father sipping his last cup of tea before leaving for work; his brief kiss on my mother's cheek, his cap adjusted and then out into the bleak darkness; creeping downstairs to sit in Dad's big wooden armchair, hugging drawn up knees covered by the wincyette nightgown; watching Mum clear ashes from the grate and blacken the surrounds with black lead on a cloth; porridge and bread and jam, and a soft call to my brother to 'get up and don't wake the baby'; garments draped on the guard, the comforting warmth of drawers, liberty bodice and vest on goosepimple skin; Dad arriving home again before we left for school. He hadn't been 'taken on'. Grim faced, removing his lunch sandwiches from his pocket; slumping resigned into his chair to settle angrily behind his newspaper. We moved warily around him, eager to shed the gloom of the house for the laughter and fun of the school playground.

There were times when both Mum and Dad went off in the early morning before I was up, my father to look for work, my mother to domestic work or a job in a factory. Then when I wakened I made my way to Aunt Ame's kitchen where Uncle Joe sat enjoying his huge plate of bacon and eggs. Hot tea by a roaring fire, Aunt Ame's old cardigan around my shoulders, 'Don't catch cold, love'; Uncle Joe getting ready for work, a woollen scarf folded over his chest, his waistcoat buttoned over his scarf; combing his dark hair flat against his head, parting it carefully while peering into the overmantle mirror; Aunt Ame hovering anxiously, lovingly, clutching his cap, her head held a little to one side watching him.

'Are you warm enough, Joe? Did you put on the good vest, the woolly one?'

Uncle Joe rolled his eyes to the ceiling and grinned at me. He lifted first his right foot then his left on to a chair, folded the bottom of his trouser leg and

adjusted his bicycle clips. Auntie Ame held his jacket wide open ready for him to slip into. Solicitously she watched his every move. Uncle Joe gave her a quizzical glance and checked the contents of his waistcoat pockets, his wood-bines, his watch. Suddenly he moved towards her, folding her and the jacket close in his arms. 'Give us a kiss, you silly old cow.' Aunt Ame struggled and wheezed with laughter, breaking away and slapping him helplessly across the back with a tea-towel. We followed him to the front door and watched him cycle off into thick dark fog towards the Woolwich Arsenal where the wooden boxes he made would be used to hold ammunition in preparation for future wars.

Uncle Joe had served in the British Army in the First World War where much of his time was spent in the cook-house. He regaled us with stories painting colourful scenes with words acting and mime. Uncle Joe's acting prowess wasn't too surprising in view of his earlier experiences. His working life began at fourteen at the Blue Lights Cinema in Greenwich when it was a music hall. He was engaged as a 'Scene boy', and demonstrated his skill to us with a large square of cardboard on which was printed 'SCENE 1' and held close to his chest while he tap danced on the concrete by the back door. As a finale he danced off stage through the open shed door to his real love, Chinchilla rabbits.



*John and Beatrice Baldwin,  
with children Joe, Olive and  
Ellen, taken at Eastern  
Avenue, Romford.*

Housed in rows of cages covering three walls from floor to ceiling the rabbits were mated and entered in shows all over London. Proof of success, the red or white cards stuck with drawing pins proclaiming 1st or 2nd prize, crept over every inch of one wall and on to the ceiling. As soon as we were allowed we took them from the cage to hold and fondle, stroking tiny ears with one finger. The arrival of a new litter could mean a perfect Chinchilla specimen, or food for the pot. Mum soaked them in vinegar to whiten the flesh and cooked them with vegetables, herbs and dumplings. The meal seemed to bear no relation to those furry bundles in the shed and we devoured them without a qualm.

My father and uncle Joe spent hours in the shed at week-ends and summer evenings, choosing a potential champion from one of the cages, blowing at the fur and comparing the grey, white and black rings that formed, with pictures of champions in the *Fur and Feather* magazine.

The front door of the house opened on to the pavement and the big wooden step, a symbol of pride, was scrubbed twice a week. Mum or Aunt draped in a hessian apron knelt to slosh the soapy water, reaching out to include a small section of the pavement, a half-moon of wet before easing backwards to scrub the length of passage lino.

Our house was the middle one of three owned by Mr Collins. These three were painted a pale yellow at regular intervals; the rest with their grey cement frontages became grimier with the passing years, aided by the indelible imprint of thousands of muddy balls which even incessant rain couldn't erase. The houses opposite boasted small gardens at the front with railings and a gate. The lovely old library building at the Glengall Road end drew hordes of children after school to creep around its stacked shelves in pin-dropping quiet. The librarian's tight lipped gaze across the counter and the huge notice just inside the door that boomed SILENCE created an atmosphere of excessive restraint which often proved too much. An uncontrollable giggle escaping from a child's lips proved infectious and had us all rushing to make our escape. Old men disturbed from their nap or their reading looked up with disapproving glances as we fell back through the outer doors shrieking the uncontrolled laughter. Only when we'd completely recovered did we dare venture back inside.

Opposite the library was the grocery shop with its bulging shelves, and nearer the Manchester Road end of the street was Baldwin's, a greengrocer with a display stall that leaned against the window outside. Just around the corner in Manchester Road was the Pie Shop with its delicious smells, succulent slices of salted beef, ham, saveloys, faggots, and peas pudding. The place seemed always filled with people clutching basins and dishes of all shapes and sizes. The high counter was flanked at each end by two huge glass jars. One contained pickled onions, the other, gherkins and between the two jars the well coiffured head of the proprietor's wife moved incessantly, peering, frowning, questioning, 'With gravy or without?' No one dared to push in before their turn. She knew exactly

who came first no matter how big the crowd, how small the customer. She fixed you with her powerful gaze and repeated the order to you to check that she had heard aright. Then she turned and stated the order clearly and concisely to someone who seemed to be in the vicinity but could not be seen by the customers. The unseen one also repeated the order. Such elaborate procedure, devised no doubt to avoid mistakes, created for me an imagined long tunnel with people standing ready at intervals throughout, my order echoing from one to the other and the food being cooked in the darkest recesses.

Hugging the warm basin to my chest, I scorned the three shallow steps a few feet away which signalled a safe passage and jumped to the pavement from the high stone ridge that ran along the front of the shops. A shattered basin embedded in a pile of food seen frequently at the jumping spot, was a warning we ignored. Our object was to reach level ground as quickly as possible, to lift the white paper covering the basin and scoop a fingerful of the delicious contents.

All the necessary shops were within walking distance from home. Whoever was first dressed and ready for school was sent off to Caddies, the butcher in Manchester Road, for the daily meat supply. Wandering homewards, the parcel of meat was a pendulum at the bottom of the swinging bag. Mum at the door, peering, beckoning, 'Come on, you'll be late', as she grabbed the bag and gave me a little push towards school.

I was three when I first entered that huge grey building which was Glengall Road School. A large classroom was set up as a nursery school, where, once the screaming for departing mothers had died down, we played all morning and slept in the afternoon on small mattresses laid out in neat rows on the floor.

Later we graduated to the school proper, where Miss Bartlett reigned supreme and where the boys were separated from the girls with a high fence dividing the playgrounds. Periodically, an optician and a dentist came to carry out their appropriate functions, testing eyes and teeth, and a nurse who caused panic with her frantic search for nits.

It was at Glengall Road School that I sat the '11 plus' scholarship and in due course was directed to Millwall Central School, where I would wear a smart uniform, play cricket, learn French and eye the boys in assembly each morning. I would be expected to stay at school until I'd reached the age of 16 at least, while my brother and cousins remained at Glengall Road Elementary school until, at the ripe old age of 14, they would be required to leave and join the workforce.

The walk to my new school meant crossing the Millwall Bridge which wasn't always immediately possible. We were often halted at the closed barriers while a ship eased its way into the dock. Smiling Lascars waved to us leaning high over the side of the ship and we waved back until the ship had disappeared from view and we could focus our attention once more on the bascules, impatient for them to be lowered. But during this operation they might halt in mid-air and the words

'broken down' hum through the small crowd, throwing us girls into a tizzy of indecision. We could wait in the hope that the bridge would soon be functioning again, or begin the longish walk around the dock. Occasionally, a lorry driver turning into the docks drew up and beckoned. The less sedate of us rushed to clamber on to the tailboard dragging heavy schoolbags in our wake. Walking or riding on a tailboard, our annoyance was the same on reaching the far side of the bridge if we found it in full working order once more.

In the bright airy classrooms of the school we were introduced to a wide variety of subjects from woodwork and cookery to experiments in the science lab with its exciting array of bunsen burners.

Geography, History, English, French Plays and Netball. Once in a French play I played the part of a mother on a picnic with her children. I wore a big brimmed hat and a long skirt and high heeled shoes. From the picnic basket I drew stuffed and coloured rag articles holding them high in the air, la saucisse, le poulet, la pomme, l'orange. The audience laughed so much each time I held aloft these grotesque imitations of the real things that my commendable pronunciation went unnoticed.

Compared to Glengall Road School, life at the Central School was full and often pleasantly surprising. We were taken on visits to London's historic places, St Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, the British Museum and others, where, with teachers to guide us, we wandered respectfully, awed by the treasures inside. Westminster Abbey marked the downfall of at least six girls when the party boarded the tram on the Embankment and the six raced upstairs to sit in the front seat that curved above the head of the driver whose flat topped hat became a target for small pieces of orange peel. The girl with the orange took deliberate aim and never missed. With no re-action from the driver the episode seemed hilarious. But the driver wisely bided his time. The incident was reported and we who sat in the curve of the tram were punished. Yet no one asked who was eating the orange.

The Millwall Baths in Glengall Road was the venue for our yearly galas and weekly swimming lessons. With a rope attached to the waist and held aloft by Miss Boulton, we swam breast stroke beside her as she walked stiffly along the pool's edge. Should Miss Boulton's attention wander, the rope tautened and our limbs moved faster in an effort to avoid being dragged along like an unwilling puppy. But we did learn to swim and later came the tremendous excitement of being chosen for the gala. Mum found an old red woollen skirt and made me a swim suit. Someone called me a 'red herring' but I was too pleased with myself to care. The suit fitted like a glove around my skinny frame and I loved the feel of it.

The Millwall Baths also housed a laundry where housewives could take the weekly wash in winter. I walked with Aunt Ame on my way to school and helped

her push our pramload of washing across the Millwall Bridge and along the Glengall Road to the baths.

Noise, steam and clanging 'horses'; women at the washtubs rubbing and scrubbing, loud laughter and shouting above the noise of generators and Jack overseeing it all. Jack, with his strong arms pulled out a 'horse', helped the women drape the rails with the wet washing and returned it to the heated drying room. When it was pulled out again, a missing article caused a minor panic. 'Oh Jack, where's me green jersey?' sent Jack clambering like Tarzan on to the horse and swinging himself back into the heated space to retrieve the missing garment from the floor and re-appear triumphant.

We were sustained through the long days of school by the thought of summer holidays. Long halcyon days of freedom. Times of great excitement when we boarded a charabanc, our lunch in a paper bag, and headed with the Sunday School party to Theydon Bois, a few miles into the countryside. We rode on a roundabout and swings like colourful boats. There was a rope above the seats at each end of the boats which could be pulled to make them swing higher and higher amid shrieks of sheer joy. There were races and prizes, grazed knees and tears and singing in the charabanc all the way home.

I recall summer days when the sun shone from morn 'til night and all the kids in the neighbourhood straggled off to the New Park in Stebondale Street laden with bats, balls and food. If we could find a baby to mind we stacked our bottles of tea and jam sandwiches in the pram around the baby's feet and earned a penny for minding the baby.

On days of oppressive heat we followed the ice cart until it drew up alongside the butcher's or the fish shop. Keeping our distance we watched as the Ice Man, sack across his shoulders walked round to the back of the cart. With huge tongs which chipped and splintered the ice, he drew the immense block towards him and manoeuvred it on to his shoulders. As he lumbered across the pavement and through the shop doorway we quickly raided the back of the cart for the sparkling slivers of ice and ran off sucking them or rubbing them on wrists and forehead until they were smooth and rounded.

The street was the 'village green' of the community and trundling through it was an assortment of noisy, grubby life. The Rag and Bone man, his croaking cry indistinct but unmistakable, sent us rushing indoors to mum who, with a worried look parted with an old skirt or dress that might have been mended once more. Filthy mittened hands picking at garments already piled on the cart. Eyes shifty and mean, lips mumbling 'Not enough for a goldfish'. The dash back inside to beg mum to please find something else before the cart went away. Dizzily frustrated by swimming around in jam jars the fish were soon found dead and floating only to be washed unceremoniously down the toilet.

And moving haltingly but regularly through the street came the buskers, whose arrival was announced by the sound of a mouth-organ, a violin, a banjo



*Millwall Central School, 1929. The author is on the right of the second row.*

or a barrel organ, or even a song. There was a 'one man band' with instruments attached to various parts of his body which he scraped, thumped or blew with great dexterity. Without interruption to their music these *artistes* scanned the road for missed coins thrown by passers by. Undaunted by rain, untouched by insult, they proceed with studied indifference when a window was thrown wide and an angry voice cried 'Get round to the next street, for Gord's sake'.

But there were special favourites loved by everyone. Sally's appearance at the corner of the street set up a scream of welcome. Not a lone entertainer as the name implied, but six. Dragging a platform on wheels on which stood a piano, and surrounded by shrieking excited children they came to halt in the centre of the street. We knew they were men but Sally was Sally and we in our innocence loved them just as they were. Bright coloured voile dresses, heavy make-up, lips a perfect cupid's bow and silk stockings. 'Right you kids, sit sit'. A limp wrist waved in our direction and we quickly sat on the pavement calling our friends to sit beside us, pushing and shoving in fidgety anticipation. Mothers left their housework and stood watching from doorways, smiling knowingly.

'Now that's enough noise. QUIET Please'. Slim white hands with bright red fingernails clapped and a hush fell over the audience. The pianist mounted the platform and the show began. Faces tense with concentration and a fixed smile, the dancers moved with the precision of chorus girls on a London stage. Heels kicking high in the air, their full skirted dresses were a billowing cloud of colour.

We small girls sat entranced, admiration tinged with envy and longing. Mothers moved forward and tinkled pennies into the collection box when the show ended, and the little band went on its hip-swinging way. 'Ta-ta loves, see you next week.'

Summer also brought the grottos. Lacy pieces of material spread with great care by the front doorstep and decked with bright coloured baubles or ornaments sneaked from the mantelpiece when mum's back was turned. Jam jars filled with paper flowers and on each corner of the cloth a large flat stone. One grotto displaying such artistry was soon noticed and was the signal for several to appear along the length of the street, subtly competing.

It was summer when my mother shocked us all by being carted off to hospital for what turned out to be a minor operation. She was away for 12 days and it seemed like a hundred. I was sent off to my grandparents' in East Ferry Road where they lived opposite the 'Queens' with my six unmarried aunts and uncles. My brother and baby sister were left with Aunt Ame and I longed to be with her too. Grandma never tired or correcting my cockney speech, my dropped h's, my sloppy vowels, my habit of saying 'What' when I meant 'Pardon'. She made stew with rounds of parsnip floating on top which made me queasy. When a horse and cart stopped at the front gate, she would hand me a bucket and shovel with stern instructions to scrape up every bit for her rhubarb growing in the little plot behind the house.

My three uncles like my grandfather and father, were boilermakers whose talk was mainly of the shipbuilding 'game', the movement of ships and the number of rivets they had 'put in' the precious day. They talked of politics, lay-offs, strikes past and possible future strikes. They tried to assess a ship's arrival in terms of duration of work. Forever uncertainty.

My three aunts worked in a nearby biscuit factory (Meredith & Drew) for five days of the week and on Saturdays, set about cleaning the house from top to bottom. The smell of furniture polish and disinfectant filled the air as they stretched and bent, dusting and rubbing at everything in sight. Grandma puffed up the stairs to inspect their work, running her fingers along ledges and banisters, stepping carefully past a bucket of soapy water on the landing or the dirty sheets thrown down the stairs to the little hallway. Grandad, unmoved by all the activity, sat in his big wooden armchair, studying the horse racing and planning his Saturday bet.

The word 'money' never failed to spark one of Dad's sermons, threatening doom if we squandered so much as one penny that came our way. Even our Saturday job, delivering sheets, pillow slips, ladies underwear, cardigans dresses and pinafores, from stocks piled high on chairs and settee in Mrs Tingey's parlour and which earned my brother and I each a shilling, was the subject of a pep-talk as we came through the door.

'Look after the pennies, the pounds will look after themselves.' So angry was he to receive a bill from the Inland Revenue Department charging him for tax on the interest earned by his meagre savings, and knowing a strike was imminent, he marched off to the nearest Police Station and volunteered to go to prison, having ascertained that a week 'inside' would discharge his debt. He happily sewed mailbags while mum, in her shame, invented stories to explain his absence to inquisitive neighbours. His release coincided with the ending of the strike, and to his great satisfaction found his savings intact for that inevitable rainy day.

That 'rainy day' threatened innumerable times and often became a veritable storm as when a policeman appeared at the door with a glum face and the news that Dad had fallen down the ship's hold and was in Poplar Hospital with a fractured leg and injury to his back. The day after he arrived in hospital, a representative of his employer (Harland and Wolfe) appeared at his bedside and offered him, by way of compensation, a small weekly sum of money for a limited time. My father flatly refused. Instead, after his six weeks stay in Poplar hospital, he engaged a lawyer and began a battle that was to last for nearly two years and which cast a gloom over the household.

Shocked into silence by the postman's knock and the big white envelopes pushed through the letter box, our attention rivetted on his shaking hands as he tore open the envelope and read the words bidding him to appear once again in the office of the company's doctor or lawyer, where he was plied with sly questions in an effort to shift blame and avoid responsibility. In the telling, my father seemed so vulnerable and fragile beside those faceless powerful shipping magnates, but he was also doggedly determined to fight.

To our amazement, he finally won his case and limped back to work with one leg shorter than the other. A further memorable outcome was that my mother was able to give up her job in the pickle factory where she was required to stand inside the huge vats and scrape out the remains of the mustard pickle with hands that were left stained and yellow for weeks.

Then came an event that made us feel like millionaires. Dad's devotion to the 'News of the World' fashion competition paid off. To the amusement of his brothers and workmates he managed to place in an approved order of merit, six flimsy and glamorous nightdresses. A condition of the competition was that part of this £300 was to be spent at Selfridges where my mother chose a beautiful Jacobean style piano. We children began lessons almost immediately until enthusiasm waned and other pursuits took our fancy.

As children, our knowledge of religions or things spiritual was hazy. The Salvation Army, the Methodist, the Presbyterians, the Congregational churches all competed in vain for our loyalty. St John's Anglican Church in Galbraith Street was the church nearest our home and convenient for family weddings, funerals and baptisms, when attendances could be quite impressive. Our interest

was aroused, usually around Christmas time, when rumours of church parties with the inevitable orange and marzipan fish, began to circulate.

Then two Priests in black birettas and cassocks began moving purposefully among the people, spreading the gospel and the Anglo-Catholic religion, and our perfunctory attitude towards the church began to change. St John's rectory now housed clerics of a different persuasion and we children were gently but firmly gathered into the fold. Urged on by parents who envisioned peaceful Sunday afternoons spent in blissful sleep while their children were at Sunday school, and drawn by the kindly interest of the Priests, we were instructed in the Faith, learned our catechism and became devout little Anglo-Catholics.

Sunday was a clean day. Clean streets, clean clothes, cream straw hat with wide satin ribbon, black patent shoes and white socks. Sunday was Father Hicken remembering all those small anxious faces and keeping watch for the miscreants who dared to approach the altar for communion during Mass, having absented themselves from Saturday confession. We who had observed the ritual trudged homeward in a mist of holiness along pavements marked with un-Sunday hopscotch, chattering like magpies in the Sunday quiet.

Yorkshire pudding, rice and prunes. After the meal, my father replete, nodding in the chair before the fire, my mother, sleepy eyed, reading the Sunday paper and the children, restless, eager to get out of the house.

'Stay together and don't be late', we heard as we slammed the door and ran all the way to the Island Park. If the lift wasn't immediately available we flew down the stairs three at a time. But if the lift stood waiting we squeezed in beside bicycles and riders, mothers and babies with prams, until the uniformed lift man decided enough was enough and closed the latticed doors with a clang. Disgorged into the tunnel, we clattered through the echoing tube of white tiled concrete, marred in places by rusty dribbles of water which, we were sure, was the Thames trying to break through. Up in the lift on the Greenwich side we skipped past the Royal Naval College where twelve year old boys in Navy uniform and sailor hats marched in a caterpillar line out of the church. Through Greenwich Park, past the Observatory and out on to the Heath.

Born with history in our veins but bred to ignore it, we saw Blackheath as only a common, hard with frost in winter, a playground in summer. We cared not that it was once a haunt for highwaymen. The place where Henry V was greeted by the citizens of London on his return from Agincourt. We only knew that each Bank Holiday it became a huge fairground, magnificent with colour and noisy with raucous music and laughter.

Our destination was an Aunt Gertie who gave us toffee apples and a half-penny, then waved to us from her gate imitating mum with her warnings as we began the long trek back. Running now in the grey evening light, eager to be home. Shrimps, watercress and a roaring fire...

## EAST LONDON AND ELIZABETH FRY

Lella Raymond

Elizabeth Fry (Betsy), in her snow-white Plain Quaker bonnet and long heavy brown silk cloak, sails through the first half of the nineteenth century: Quaker Minister, penal reformer, founder of schools, of philanthropic associations, libraries for lighthouses, dispenser of Bibles; feted by royalty and triumphant saintly pioneer of Europe - such is certain. A matriarchal figure, mother of eleven, grandmother of twenty five - a redoubtable woman it's true, and a complex one. First, her awesome reputation was more than her family could take, and she longed to be a real mother. Second, beneath the calm dignity of that austere Quaker mantle was hidden a flirty, fun-loving girl, who loved pretty clothes and red boots with contrasting laces.

Two hundred years ago, in 1788, we meet her as a child of eight, one of the large, vivacious Gurney family, chasing round the lawns and under the great trees of Earlham Hall, the fine old house on the outskirts of Norwich, then surrounded by the quiet, undulating Norfolk countryside. It stands there still, but is now the School of Law of the University of East Anglia. The Gurneys are wealthy woollen manufacturers and bankers. They are also Quakers. In most un-Quakerly manner the girls chatter about dress, depart for music and dancing, talk of boys and, all together, brothers and sisters, play pranks on the high road and passing coaches.

The wide lawns remain, with leaves blowing over them, and we can hear the unsuppressed laughter as the children run into the garden - round the house they go, down to the little River Wensum, lying on the haycocks in the fields, creeping into the walled orchard to eat the fruit. The stables were filled and they all rode well, and would take themselves into the City. The Meeting House in Norwich was in Goat Lane, and still is, and was ruled by the Plain Norwich Quakers. It was more than these exuberant boys and girls, in their fine, expensive clothes, could do to maintain a sense of decorum throughout the long, often silent Meeting. The Plain Norwich Quakers looked with reproach at this flighty, fashionable lot, with the muffled giggles and the whispered 'gloomy old Goats'.

In this setting and from this childhood, Betsy Gurney is found, before growing into a striking young woman, with her long fair hair and clear blue eyes, torn between fun and flirting and the longing for a spiritual crusade - '... a most beautiful starlight night... I looked at the sky I thought of God I looked at the hill (Norwich Castle) I thought of redcoats and my feelings went jumping about ...' (punctuation she ignored). Then of London, 'My mind is in a *whirl*, in all probability I shall go to London ... I must be very careful not to be led away either in body or mind ... I must be very careful not to get vain and silly ... do not make dress a study even in London ...read the Bible when I can.'

So we follow her, now seventeen, into London. She must have been lovely, with a tall gracious figure she carried herself well. She stays with relations in a large house in Brick Lane, Whitechapel. The house is no more. She goes to the Meeting House in Gracechurch Street, where now, it seems, stands the former main London office of Barclays Bank International; she goes also to the play, to Drury Lane, and Covent Garden. Loving grand company, 'the high', and fashion and admiration - yet the Plain Quaker spirit within will not leave her.

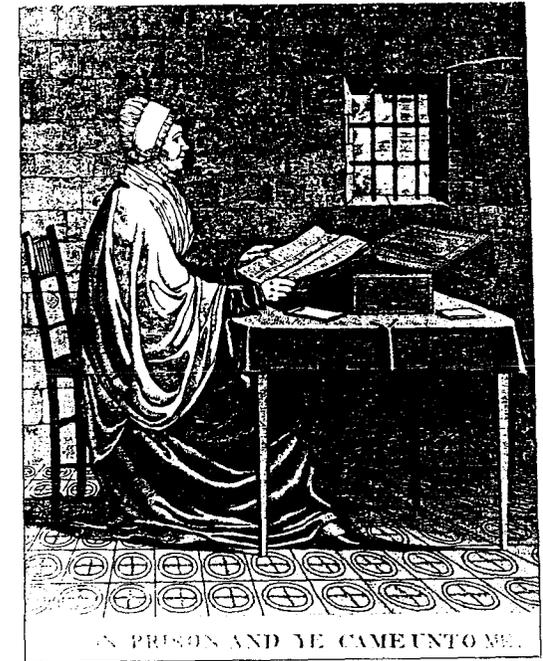
Back at Earlham, she endures with courage the mocking of her brothers and sisters at her efforts for the spiritual life while, 'flirty and vain', she enjoys the dances and the attentions she attracts. But it is the plodding, somewhat limited Joseph Fry whom, after hesitation, she accepts in marriage. The Fry family does not aspire to the social standing and graces of the Gurneys. They are tea merchants, but also Quakers, and also wealthy.

As a married woman, Betsy Fry's first home in which she is mistress was a large house in Mildred's Court, now St Mildred's Court, opposite the Mansion House in the City of London. In her day it was a quiet haven from the surrounding bustle and the engulfing fog of the City. Curving steps and an iron railing led to a large door lit by an overhanging lantern. It might have proved pleasant, but Betsy had to share it with the warehouse staff, the counting house being a part, and it was suffused by an aromatic smell of tea and spices. On Sundays it was invaded by all the Fry family for lunch after Meeting in Gracechurch Street. There was no peace for the young bride, twenty at this time, in which to settle and get to know her husband. The house has long gone, and St Mildred's Court is now a confined cul-de-sac, between Poultry and Mansion House Street, but a square blue Corporation of the City of London plaque records that:

MRS ELIZABETH  
FRY  
1780-1845  
PRISON REFORMER  
LIVED HERE  
1800-1809

A further influx was suffered by the young couple with Yearly Meeting of Quakers' representatives from all over the country. This was held in what was the 'cathedral' of the Society of Friends, Devonshire House at nearby Bishops-gate, east of Mildred's Court, serving the Society from 1794 to 1920. The original house was opulent, with gardens and bowling alleys, and stood just east of the Bishops Gate of the City spanning one of the most important roads in Roman Britain - Ermine Street, which ran from London north to York. The Gate was demolished in 1760. The house had descended from the De Vere family to the

Elizabeth Fry (Library of the Society of Friends).



Earl of Oxford, High Chamberlain to Elizabeth I, who visited here, then to the Cavendish family who provided the name by which it was known. In 1667 part was leased to the Quakers, and later a substantial Meeting House was built. In mid-eighteenth century the freehold was purchased and 'Devonshire House' was used as an inclusive name for the buildings of the Friends.

Elizabeth and Joseph Fry were conveniently close, within walking distance at Poultry, to be expected to provide hospitality for Yearly Meeting, when the streets of the City saw the incursion of white Quaker bonnets like a flight of gulls blowing through them.

Today, a prowling round Bishops-gate discovers a narrow street lined by wine and sandwich bars, Devonshire Row, and to the right Cavendish Court, a dark tunnel suggesting all that could survive, leading to the back of the Abbey National building. Go through Devonshire Row and beyond are the fine Georgian houses and the newly built side of Devonshire Square, where much of the former Quaker buildings stood. Back again through Devonshire Row and the traffic pounds past Liverpool Street Station, the buses shunt into the bus stops, the cranes, drills and dust of the vast Liverpool Street Station redevelopment opposite pervade the scene, and the peace and the flock of white gulls are gone.

Then in 1808 Joseph Fry's father died and left the couple the Fry family estate, Plashet House and farm, as their home. This great country house, with servants,

and grounds that gave way to cows grazing beyond, was in total contrast to the overcrowded, ceaseless and intrusive habitation of Mildred's Court. Betsy exalted in the gracious beauty of the wide house, the spreading lawns and park and little farm. Queening it, as lady of the manor, she was at home and in her element. Her rapidly growing family could play and run out, carefree, happy, as in her own childhood at Earlham.

The approach to Plashet today is by Upton Park Underground Station, with a sign on the platform WAY OUT AND WEST HAM UNITED FOOTBALL GROUND. The estate of Betsy and Joseph is now completely covered by the narrow streets of East Ham. Walking the bounds takes one from Green Street and its trendy shops, across where stood St Stephen's Church, built in honour of Elizabeth Fry, but wrecked by bombing in 1940 and finally demolished in 1954, up St Stephen's Road and past a long, plain-fronted modern block of flats, Fry House. All around late Victorian terrace houses for the labourers of 1880 to 1890 spread into small roads running across what must have been the open parkland of Plashet House. Coming round into Katherine Road, named after her eldest daughter (though mis-spelt, she was Katharine Fry) and then into Plashet Grove, where it turns a corner one finds a well-built chapel of similar period to the terrace houses, attached to which is its manse which still bears the name Newgate Villa. This chapel belonged to the Methodists and a large square plaque on its front bore the words ELIZABETH FRY MEMORIAL CHAPEL. But this plaque was plastered over, when the chapel was sold in 1934 to the Full Gospel Hall, of the Assemblies of God.

We can imagine Betsy ordering her carriage and driving out through them for the eight miles to the City, through the countryside, via West Ham Lane, Stratford, Bow, the Mile End Road, Whitechapel, Leadenhall Street and Cornhill. Mildred's Court was still the family business centre and a convenient London address, but she was glad to return to the elegance of Plashet and its stylish hospitality. Nonetheless, she felt compelled to visit its surrounding poor.

However, in the cold winter of 1812-13 a bell called for Elizabeth Fry. We find her back in Mildred's Court, in the heart of the City of London. To the east was the way through to Devonshire House, and on the other side to the west were Bow Bells from St Mary-le-Bow in Cheapside, and the bells of St Paul's Cathedral a little further along the road. Beyond that again might be heard the muffled bell for a public hanging outside Newgate Gaol. The notorious goal was alongside an old gate of the City, New Gate, pulled down in 1717, and opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is still there.

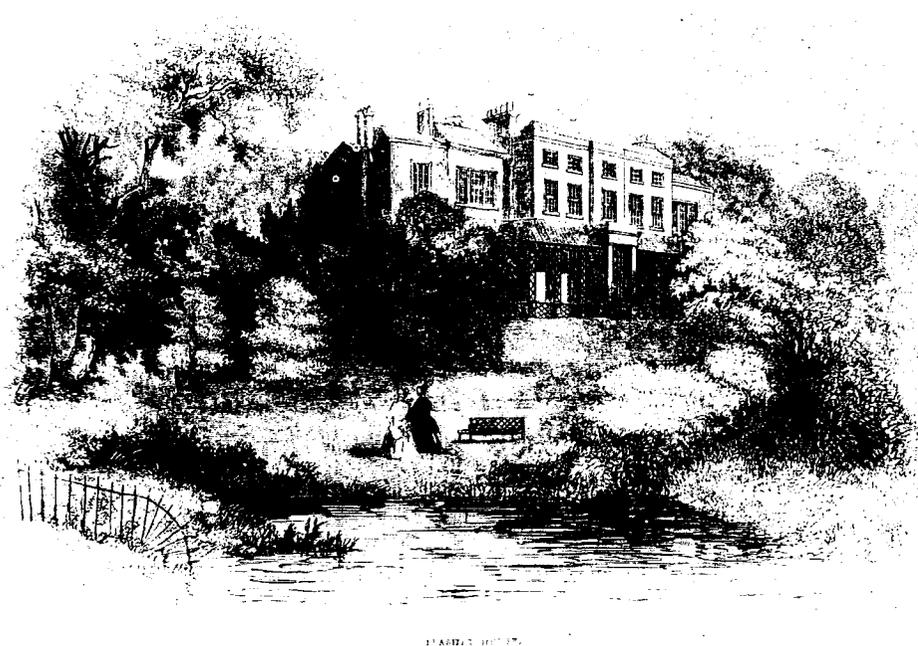
So, in deep winter, and Mrs Fry is at Mildred's Court.

Here enters Stephen Grellet, an aristocratic French emigre, 'travelling in the Ministry' of the Society of Friends. Appalled at the wretchedness and dereliction of the outcasts of the streets of London, he is drawn to the prisons, eventually

arriving at the heavy door of Newgate. Inside was a sight and smell so dreadful, he gasps in incredulity and horror. Above everything, it is the plight of the women and babies, the women lying in layers, the babies on the ground all but naked, and dying in the cold - a population rendered diseased, brutish and depraved - that sends him forth out into the street choking for breath. And then, as he recorded: 'My much-valued friend, Mrs Elizabeth Fry, lived along the way in Cheapside. To her I hurried.'

Such was the summons and so was brought to Elizabeth the crusade for which her life had waited. She was thirty two.

At once she responded. Cutting flannel, sewing baby clothes with female Friends, setting up schools and sewing groups for the prisoners, providing Bibles, bullying the prison authorities for humane, sanitary conditions for these women, many of whom were held without trial or on trivial charges. She set up associations of Quakers to help her. There is no question she had a beautiful voice, almost mesmeric, and inside Newgate prison and similar settings, her readings from the Bible had a profound effect on the women. But over all, it was her fortitude, her quiet courage in entering Newgate unescorted, consistently, that won a trust from these women, lost and without hope. It was in this sphere that her natural genius becomes apparent. Later, withheld from visiting by the birth of another child, she travelled from Plashet with the newly born baby in



Plashet House (Library of the Society of Friends).

her arms and went straight to the women in Newgate. Disarmed completely, they crowded round her.

As is known, her work for prison reform was to cover Europe. Champion for the abolition of women in chains, transport ships, solitary confinement (much later, Pentonville appalled her) and above all capital punishment - all this brought her international renown and royal patronage - this last she relished and had the honesty to admit.

Newgate gaol was demolished in 1902 and in its place now stands the Central Criminal Court or Old Bailey. Today, all those who hurry through the great concourse pass the tall statue of Elizabeth Fry on her pedestal, demure but commanding in her Plain Quaker cap and dress.

We return to her, in 1813, launched on her public ministry and with over thirty years of life left. Betsy's own relations, the wealthy and influential Gurneys, flourished and it was at this time, in 1812, that her brother Samuel Gurney had purchased West Ham Park estate and house. This fine mansion, later Ham House, and grounds were near neighbour to Plashet House. The strong philanthropic drive of his sister was also found in Samuel Gurney, and was directed towards the wide scope which lay before him in East London. (His monument stands today, a tall severe obelisk, in the middle of Stratford Broadway and the swirling buses, traffic and laden shoppers' pull-me-rounds). Indeed, sixteen years later his beneficence encompassed Betsy.

When in 1828 Joseph Fry's bank crashed and stopped payment, the Frys were bereft. This was a profound humiliation for Quakers who were revered for their probity. Betsy was crest-fallen. Stylish living, Plashet House, all that must go. But Samuel offered them the small house (small by Fry and Gurney standards) and grounds encroaching a small area and part of his own property - Upton Lane House, later The Cedars, and always referred to by Betsy as Upton ...'back to Upton'. This austere, yellow brick house, with central pediment and classical porch, from which stone steps lead to formal gardens beneath the great cedar trees, was the home of Elizabeth and her family for the rest of her life, till 1844 (she died the following year), and saw the triumphs of those years. It was here in 1842 that Betsy, after conducting Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, on a visit to Newgate, reached Upton before him, just in time to receive him and his suite, graciously, on those steps, much to her complacent pleasure, and the festive excitement of the village locals. He enjoyed his visit and the warm hospitality of her large family and was late leaving.

At that time, West Ham was an area of rural solitude, a small country village composed of pleasant villas, shady walks, country lanes and pure air.

And so what do we find today? Unlike Plashet, Ham House estate has survived, as West Ham Park. It was a condition of sale of succeeding Gurneys that the estate should become a public park. In the summer of 1874 the Park was

opened by the Lord Mayor with due celebration and festivity, and it has since been maintained by the Corporation of the City of London. It is still there, of course, with hordes of screaming children playing in the sun on swings, shoots, and see-saws where once the drive and lodge gave on to Upton Lane. The course of the small stream that partly encircled the house can be traced through what is now a sunken formal garden. The House, itself, which was wide, spacious and dignified was pulled down in 1872. It is marked by a cairn over which climbs a profuse *clematis rubrens*.

Walk around the Park, and come out on to Portway, turn right and this is where stood Betsy's Upton Lane House - The Cedars. Prior to its demolition in 1960 it was derelict, open to the sky with its classical porch shored up with rough wooden buttresses, and rubble piled all round. The cedars are gone and the building which we see in place of her house is purposeful, modern, yellow and flat and, by perverse irony, the Headquarters of the Territorial Army, 4th Battalion The Royal Green Jackets. Army lorries are parked in line in the front. However, on the front lawn, where once the formal gardens lay, is the T A flagstaff base, against which a heavy plaque has been fixed, with the words:

ELIZABETH

FRY

PIONEER OF PRISON REFORM

LIVED HERE

1829-1844

It is January 1842. She writes in her journal: 'I began this year in an unusually delicate state of health never having recovered the effects of my last journey on the Continent ... a severe shake of my constitution. I can walk very little way without great fatigue and pain in my back.'

She was sixty two.

A last sight of Betsy Fry is struggling from her carriage through deep mud to the Mansion House, her heavy silk Quaker dress bespattered up to the knees, as she tries to push through the rough and excited crowds to a great banquet. Inside the Mansion House she is conducted to the retiring room, where she tries to mop herself down, with the Lord Mayor on the other side of the door... It is time to enter the Egyptian Hall! With her extraordinary reserves, she composes herself, and sallies forth on the arm of the Lord Mayor beneath the superb chandeliers and amid the glittering company. Betsy, in her white Quaker bonnet and plain flowing Quaker dress - how striking in that elaborately attired assembly - is escorted into the Egyptian Hall by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, and

seated between him and Prince Albert. Be that as it may, her crusading zeal was undaunted. She lectured and admonished them throughout the sumptuous fare.

She died in Ramsgate three years later in 1845 at sixty five, for her time a considerable age, and enshrined in a tremendous reputation. She was buried at Barking in the 'Society of Friends (Quakers) Burial Ground', which sign is part of the iron gate in the wall.

The Burial Ground is discovered through an area of 'sixties high-rise blocks of flats, parking lots, the recent arrival alongside of the A124 Northern Relief Road, pizza and video shops. The grave stones, due to desecration, have had to be removed. Hers, which includes the name of her husband, Joseph, can be seen erected in the garden of Wanstead Meeting House. The Barking Ground is mown grass now, surrounded by a low stone wall and wooden seats. Mothers with prams push across it. But still the vandalism goes on. The seats are broken, and the wall crumbling. There was a brass plaque fixed to a little plinth which read:

#### FORMER QUAKER BURIAL GROUND 1672-1940

within this space bounded by these walls  
lie buried members of the Religious Society  
of Friends (Quakers) most of whom lived  
and worshipped in Barking and neighbouring  
areas.

Included in their number is Elizabeth Fry  
(1780-1845),  
the prison reformer....

That, too, has gone.

*The local Society of Friends is involved in reparation of the Burial Ground and replacement of the plaque. I wish to acknowledge my debt to June Rose, Elizabeth Fry, A Biography (Macmillan, London, 1980) and to the Guildhall Library, the Library of the Religious Society of Friends and the Newham Local Studies Library.*

## JOURNEYMEN BAKERS IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY EAST LONDON

Edwin Dare

In 1815 restrictions on free competition in the baking trade were lifted, leading to a worsening of conditions among journeymen bakers. They complained about their position without success for some time, but in 1848 their complaints about the circumstances in which they worked, and which were adverse to their health, were brought before Parliament. The facts were not disputed.

In 1861 the Home Secretary, Sir George Lewis, called for an investigation of the complaints and appointed Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, the factory inspector, to report on the grievances. The inspector confined his recommendations to three points:

1. That no youth under 18 years of age should be allowed to be employed in a bakehouse later than the hour of 9pm or earlier than 5am.

2. That bakehouses should be placed under inspection, and subjected to certain regulations in regard to ventilation, cleanliness etc.,

3....in the interests both of the journeymen and the public, I am prepared to submit to you, thirdly, that it would be desirable that the provisions of the Act for preventing the adulteration of articles of food, &c (23 & 24 Vict, c, 84) should be made more effectual. (1)

Saying that 'it would be impossible for Parliament to interfere with the nightwork and the long hours of daywork of the adult labourers in the baking trade' the inspector hoped that the inquiry would effect some amelioration in the men's conditions through 'mutual concessions... between the men and their masters'. However, as he pointed out, 'There is probably no branch of trade supplying a vast and constant demand which has so completely remained in the primitive condition of ministering to that demand from a multitude of small and isolated sources as the baking trade'. Although a hand-driven mixer had been introduced into Britain from France in the early 1850s, it was not until 1858 that Ebenezer Stevens, a baker whose father had a large engineering works in Harwich, patented a hand-operated enclosed vessel, or drum, for mixing dough. The machine was followed by a steam-driven one in 1863.

In London around this time there were estimated to be some 2,500 to 3,000 bakery businesses. The postal directory gave their number as about 2,500 and some small bakers may not have been included. Some premises described as bakers were without ovens; they sold bread baked elsewhere. The number of bakehouses was probably somewhat above 2,000: the 1862 postal directory records about 300 premises in East London (Stepney, Bow, Limehouse, Poplar, Whitechapel and Shadwell) as bakers: a few were run by bakers' shopmen indicating that there was no bread baking on the premises.

With the ending of price control a new feature had entered the field: under-selling. In 1862 the under-sellers, who sold almost wholly to chandler's shops, comprised three-quarters of the London trade. The full-price bakers delivered their bread to customers' houses. This meant that bakers, after working long hours in the bakehouse had to set out in all weathers with a cart of some sort, or carrying a basket, to deliver the bread.

Under-selling meant longer hours for the journeyman as his employer tried to make up the losses incurred by selling just above the price of production. In addition, there were cases of master bakers making bread from poor quality flour adulterated by various ingredients including alum, millet seed and 'a stone flour made from Derbyshire stone'. There were even 'cutting bakers' who undersold the under-sellers by selling bread below the cost of producing it, the object being to drive out competitors.

In 1859 the journeymen had tried to improve their lot by getting their employers to end nightwork and to introduce what was called the short-time system. The term was rather euphemistic because it was a claim to be allowed to work from 4am until 4pm.

The reality of the journeymen's hours was given in a letter signed 'A Journeyman Baker' in *The Stratford Times and South Essex Gazette* on 30 September 1859. The writer referred to the 'hundreds of our fellow creature (who) are compelled to endure from 18 to 20 hours' severe toil, and in an unwholesome atmosphere'.

Some six weeks later the paper carried a report (11 November 1859) of a procession and a meeting in favour of the short-time campaign. The procession was headed by the Eastern Counties Railway Institution brass band and banners. It passed down the High Street, through the Broadway, up Angel Lane, and then round the point to Rokeby House, the meeting place. The meeting was attended by several master bakers, the general secretary of the union, The London Operative Bakers' Association, and 'other gentlemen of well-known standing and influence in Stratford'.

A concern expressed at the meeting was that very few bakers had time to go to church, that many employers would not employ married men and that this resulted in bakers being called intemperate. But the journeymen were urged not to strike:

'You have a deal to suffer; wait a little longer. Truth is powerful, and it must prevail'. It was to be many years before truth prevailed!

The concern of the Rev. W. Holloway, who chaired the meeting in the absence of a Mr Hilleary, was to save the bakers' souls and he urged the meeting to take to heart the example of David when he wanted water: 'His followers went and slew the Philistines who surrounded the well. But David said, 'I will not drink of it, for it hath the blood of the Philistines whom ye slew upon it'. It is difficult to imagine what the poor, tired bakers, who had no time to attend church, made of this message.

The meeting was clearly connected with the setting up in October 1859 of the Eastern Unity Master Bakers' Society. The chairman of the Society, James Robertson, was thirty-six years of age and in business at 3 Salmon's Lane, Limehouse, where he had been for the past 17 years. He favoured the idea of the men's hours being from 4am to 4pm but thought that any attempt by Parliament to enforce them was out of the question. His evidence to the Inquiry gives a picture of working conditions in many of the small bakeries of the time.

His bakehouse, with two ovens, was underground of what had previously been the kitchen and back parlour of a house. It measured 18 feet by 20 feet and was 7 feet high. The foreman baker started work between seven and 8pm to set the sponge.<sup>2</sup> He then went to bed until midnight when other men started work on making the dough. This took them about an hour, after which they slept till 4am. They would work with the foreman until around 4.30pm after which they would go to bed at six or seven o'clock in readiness for their midnight start.

The secretary of the Society, John Dosell, a 37 year-old from Woolwich, had a bakehouse at 46 Brook Street, Stepney. He threw light on the dispute over nightwork and the long working hours. The masters in the East London area had agreed to the short time hours except on Saturdays when they wanted their men to work one to three hours paid overtime.

The men's representatives would not go along with working the overtime arguing that extra men should be taken on instead as there were 'a large number of men always out of employ'. But perhaps the real reason for the failure of the short time hours campaign was given by Dosell when he said that the 4am to 4pm hours had been broken by other master bakers who were keen to have their bread ready to capture the early morning trade.

His men worked from 2am to 4pm. They were generally called by a policeman but, he said, this could create a problem should the policeman be called-on to arrest someone, or have to attend a fire. According to John Bennett, secretary of the London Operative Bakers' Association, Dosell was 'one of the most influential masters in the east end of London'.

Mr. Dosell believed that 'If the men's habits were steadier they need not suffer as much as they do from nightwork'. It is difficult to see how the alleged habits would have lessened the nightwork hours, but they clearly featured large in labour relationships. James Gilruth, a Scot whose shop was at 74 White Horse Street, Stepney, took the view that if lads under 18 years were not allowed to work at night 'they would not be so likely to get into drinking and smoking and other vicious habits, thinking themselves men too soon, as they do now'.

Christian Heiser, whose father began the family business at 8 John Street, Limehouse, around 1820, was also concerned about the journeymen's involvement with drink 'and all sorts of immoralities' adding that he had never known a journeyman baker who had attended a place of worship.

He brought to the argument about the men and their habits a new factor, that of recruitment to the trade. Tremenheere found that many processes were easily learned in a few weeks, that the journeyman had to provide no tools and,

compared with some jobs, the earnings were regular and not subject to interruptions through the weather. There was a natural supply of labour from London supplemented by recruits from Scotland, the West of England and Germany.

It was, perhaps, the latter group which was to play a more noticeable part in the trade in London. According to John Bennett these largely agricultural labourers came to Britain to avoid conscription into the army and finding it difficult to get work in their own trade would get a job in a bakehouse, working 'for very little money, in a boy's place, just to obtain a living and to acquire the language'.



LEFT: *Mixing dough about 1830. Yeast and salt were dispersed in the water and the dough was mixed by hand. On the wall is the oven peel and a sack fitted to a pole to wipe the oven before baking.*



BELOW: *The side flue oven of about 1830. The fire door is on the left of the oven, the draught is adjusted by the handle on the right.*

A group of these young Germans would sometimes form a club among themselves with the object of setting up their own business. When they had contributed enough money to the group's funds lots would be drawn and the successful winner was given sufficient money to buy a business or open a new one. Their success was probably a factor which, in the war of 1914-18, led to attacks on German shops at the height of anti-German rioting.

English journeymen did not act in the same way to get their own business; they saved from their own earnings and took steps individually to go into business. As Thomas Mackness said at the Inquiry, 'Out of the nine working men which I have in my three shops, six are Germans. The Germans are fast superseding the English workmen in the baking trade; the English workmen are so unsteady, and so given to drink'. Christian Heiser considered that the Germans were educated to some extent and had much more self-respect than the English who were 'so uneducated'.

Apart from the heat, draughts and lack of space, what were the conditions in which newcomers to the work found themselves - and which could have been a cause of their drinking? Tremenheere reported on one bakehouse he had visited where 'Hundreds of cockroaches, ants and other creeping things were running upon the walls and on the boards on which the bread is made...A dirty sack spread on one of the boards on which the bread was about to be made, and where a man had just been lying down'.

An equally bad example, again the area of London was unspecified, was given by Thomas Claridge, master baker of the Surrey House of Correction, Wandsworth Common: 'The men's bedroom was over the bakehouse, and was reached by a ladder through the floor, on a part of which the stock of flour was kept. The bedroom contained the beds for the use of nine persons, some of whom got up at 11pm the others at 2pm. Those who went to work at 11pm went to bed about 8pm and those who rose at 2am took the place of those in bed who got up at 11pm. Beds were not remade; nor were they allowed to get cold before they were re-tenanted again. Beetles and cockroaches were very numerous in the room'.

As Claridge further explained, some men slept on the boards on which the dough was prepared, using one or two sacks as a pillow and another for covering, being allowed to sleep out only on a Saturday night 'when they found a bed at a public house, or are fortunate to have a friend to indulge them with one'.

The conditions of working also depended upon whether the master baker was selling at full price, or whether he was an underseller or a cutting baker. The former had a better reputation for having better ventilated and cleaner premises. In the latter cases it was not unusual for rafters above the troughs, in which the dough was made and left to rise, to be festooned with cobwebs which could fall into the dough. The coal-fired ovens with their dust and sulphurous fumes and poor drainage added to the problems.

Medical officers of health in East London failed to inspect the bakehouses because they lacked the statutory power to do so as of right.

In all these circumstances it is not surprising that the men turned to the public house for their recreation. As John Bennett said 'The public house in London is, in most cases, the baker's home; it is so for all the young men'. London pubs were houses of call for bakers where they went to find out what jobs were available and where the landlord kept a few beds for use by journeymen for 2s or 2s 6d a week.

But there were some signs of change being brought about by efforts to introduce mechanisation to this labour-intensive industry. William McCash was owner of 'One of the largest establishments in or about London' situated in The Broadway, Stratford. He employed twelve men, and did an above average trade of making sixty 280lbs sacks of flour into bread and another ten sacks into confectionary each week. (Twelve sacks total were reckoned to be good business; twenty above the average.) He used Stevens' machines which he intended to convert from hand power to steam driven. He claimed that none of his men worked more than ten hours in 24, although he still had to have men starting work at 2am because his trade was so extensive.

But improvements were slow in coming. Leaving the question of technological change to one side, what are the likely reasons for the slow change?

A constant theme among the master bakers was the need to meet the public demand for hot bread at a time when there was a baker's shop on virtually every street corner. As John Mules who had been a baker at 14 William Street, Cannon Street, St Georges in the East for 24 years said: 'The labouring classes will have hot bread for all their meals as a general rule; they say their children like it best, and it serves them as a hot meal, and it is more satisfying. Thousands of them cannot afford the time to cook if they had the means'.

A few years after the Inquiry *The Working Man*, in its issue of 21 April 1866, pointed to another area where men should have sought support when it wrote: 'But, after all, the real remedy lies with the public. They might, as in the case of the Early Closing Movement, powerfully assist the cause of the men by refusing to deal at those establishments where excessive hours of labour were insisted upon'. In Scotland and Ireland the men had been successful in limiting nightwork and overtime. Perhaps the London men were less militant in their approach.

With the public preferring to maintain their demand for hot bread it was back to the journeymen for action. In the small businesses with which the trade abounded masters and men worked alongside one another: this, and the hope of some men of becoming masters themselves undoubtedly curbed a more active movement for change. Union members trying to organise their fellow workers would have found it difficult to develop feelings of unity, of standing together to improve things. The problem can be seen in union membership in the London area: the Amalgamated Union of Operative Bakers and Confectioners was founded in 1861; some thirty years later when a determined effort to recruit

members was being made it had under 2,000 members out of a potential of around 8,500.

Henry Webb, a committee member of the Operative Bakers Association, and who may have been disappointed with his lack of success in organising his fellow workers, possibly put his finger on another reason for lack of action: 'As a class I believe that the journeymen bakers are the most ignorant of any class of labouring men; it cannot be otherwise as long as they work as they do at present; and on Saturday night they are like wild animals let loose; and on Sundays they lie about, mostly without cleaning themselves, and very seldom enter a place of worship; in point of morality there can be no doubt that they are very low indeed'. This harsh judgement omitted that in some cases the men would have worked for almost twenty-four hours between Friday night and Saturday evening, that some would have had to go to work on the Sunday for 'bakings', that is baking people's Sunday joint in the baker's oven (a practise which continued for many years), and that it was necessary to turn in on Sunday to set the sponge.

Sunday work had long been a matter of contention. In 1794 the matter had been submitted for judgement.<sup>3</sup> The bakers used the question of Sunday observance and attendance at church as central to their case - a feature of their campaign for better conditions at various times (perhaps they relied on it too much?). They said that baking rolls on Sunday morning and baking meat later, was used as an apology for Sunday work. Those who favoured the bakers working argued that by one baker working on Sunday, an opportunity was given to fifty people of going to church. 'Do we not', said the bakers 'as much as others require the benefit of public instruction? Do we not as much as others stand in need of the aides of religion, to qualify us both for living and dying?... There is no occasion for one being lost, that fifty may be saved ... The abolishing of Sunday baking will prevent very few indeed from going to church, who are otherwise disposed to attend; for the truth is, that those persons who are alive to the great concerns of religion, *seldom* send any thing to a Baker's oven on Sunday, and *never* make the enjoyment of a warm joint, the condition to attend'.

Lord Mansfield did not go along with the bakers' theology and so Sunday baking continued. There had been an agreement earlier to end Sunday baking of meat but some masters broke the agreement and the practice was re-started emphasising what we have seen earlier that the smallness of the businesses leading to fierce competition and lack of organisation among the journeymen led to a backward trade.

Change started to develop in the late 1800s - but that's another story.

#### NOTES

1. Report addressed to the Rt. Hon. Sir George Grey, Bart., MP, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department Relative to the Grievances complained of by the Journeymen Bakers: Accts. & Ppers (19) 1862 Vol.47.

2. Making the sponge: Potatoes were first boiled, then mashed, after which hot water was added followed by cold water to reduce the temperature. Yeast and flour were then mixed with the potatoes and the whole left to ferment. The ferment was used later to make the sponge which, after a further period, was mixed with the remainder of the flour and more water to make the dough.

3. The Grounds of Complaint against the practice of Sunday Baking: submitted to Members of the Legislature by the Master and Journeymen Bakers of London, Westminster and the Borough of Southwark 1794.

**Further reading:**

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George Ort, *The Modern Manna* (published privately, 1984).

**APPENDIX**

Committee of Eastern Unity Master Bakers' Society - Formed October 1859.

**Chairman:** J.T. Robertson 3 Salmon's Lane, Limehouse

**Secretary:** J.W. Dosell 46 Brook Street, Stepney

**Other Members:**

William J. North	25 Three Colt Street, Stepney.
James Gilruth	74 Whitehorse Street, Stepney
- Morris	Rhodeswell Road, Stepney
William Farthing Bull's Lane,	3 World's End, Stepney
John Mules	14 William Street, Cannon Street, St. George's
James Nichol	9 1/2 Kings Place, Commercial Road (east)
William Clark	7 Kerby Street, All Saints, Poplar or 1 Gate Street, Upper St. North, Poplar

**Other East London bakers who gave evidence to the 1862 Inquiry**

Christian Heiser 8 John Street, Limehouse

Thomas Mackness 15 Cable St; 207 High Street, Shadwell  
and 45 Three Colt St. Limehouse

Edward Cornell 56 Royal Mint Street  
- Baker - High Street, Shadwell

George Smith 42 Whitechapel High Street

Edward Goymer 7 Cable Street, Wellclose Square

William McCash The Broadway, Stratford

## THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS IN HACKNEY

### Clifford Gully

Medieval East London was dominated by the close proximity of the capital city. It was the biggest and most prosperous of the English towns and indeed, it was the largest market town in southern England. The walled and towered city of London was often crowded and was a place of great interest to the country peasants, with its open - fronted shops of many kinds and narrow, paved cobblestone streets. Such visiting peasantry may well have travelled to London to trade as this was the main activity of the capital. Part of the wealth of such a city as London was in the possession of the great landowners of the region, who controlled vast expanses of land which was farmed by these peasants in exchange for rents or services. The land to the east of the City of London was known as the Manor of Stepney and was in the possession of successive bishops of London. The peasants who farmed the land on the area that now forms the borough of Hackney lived in villages like Hackney, Hoxton, Haggston and Dalston, usually consisting of no more than a cluster of houses and sometimes a church or manor house. The first mention of Hackney as a village was in the reign of Henry II in 1252. The village also contained the priory of the military order of the Knights Templars. Along with the Teutonic Knights they were the fighting orders of the period.

This order of the Knights Templars developed during the early crusades and was originally founded in 1118 by a small group of crusaders, Hugo de Payens, Godfrey de St Omer, Roral Gondemar, Godfrey Bisol, Payens de Montidier, Archibald de St Aman and Andrew de Montbar, Count de Provence. They called themselves 'poor fellow soldiers of Jesus Christ', and had as their main objective the protection of weary pilgrims travelling to and from the Holy City of Jerusalem. Such a house as the Templars house, which was to be located somewhere in or near Well Street, Hackney, could be owned by the order for, although they declined the possession of individual property, they acquiesced to any amount of wealth when it was shared by a fraternity with common aims. One of the group of crusaders mentioned earlier, Hugo de Payens, became the first master of the Templars soon after their inception in the second decade of the twelfth century. With his enthusiastic stewardship the Templars soon became enriched with donations of land and money. This was especially so after his visits to Normandy, England and Scotland in 1128.

Within a few years of the orders expansion the white mantle bearing a red cross became the distinguishing costume of the Templars. As mentioned earlier, one of the properties was situated locally. It was called the priory and was probably managed by a prior selected from the order. The Grand Prior of all

England, who had ultimate authority over all priories in the country, had a seat in Parliament as a Baron of the Realm. It is very easy to imagine the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, held sacred by the Templars, being enacted within the priory, and their assistance to the poor in the parish as well as their attention to the care of the sick soon encouraged many noble recruits to join them. Thus, as the order of the Knights Templars developed and expanded in England, overall heads began to be appointed each year. Brother Odo de St Amand became 'Grand Master of the Temple' and he was the seventh knight to be so titled.

Regarding the orders activities in Hackney, it may be assumed that they revolved around and emanated from the priory itself. It is known, for example, that the Templars were occupied with industries in and around the village of Hackney and the outlying settlements. Temple Mills, which were situated south of Lea Bridge, probably derived their name from the order. As with most medieval mills, they would have been put to a wide range of uses which would have included grinding corn for the peasants of the surrounding cottages and villages. Other activities pursued by the Templars locally probably included grazing sheep and producing wool as well as carpentry and metalwork, gardening and agriculture and forestry in general. In addition, wooden beds and amenities may have been provided for tired pilgrims at the priory. These pilgrims travelled the roads on their way to famous shrines such as at Canterbury - very much like those in Chaucer's poem 'The Canterbury Tales'. Not only priories but also abbeys provided lodgings for such travellers and these were probably



*A Knight Templar, from the Temple Church (Guildhall Library)*

far cheaper than the many inns and alehouses that were springing up all over the country during the period. Also the priory and indeed the Templars would have offered protection from the hazards of the medieval road, which was very dangerous and infested by rogues, bandits and vagabonds in search of easy pickings from helpless pilgrims.

The order of the Knights Templars was inspired by the holy order of Cistercian monks who recruited mostly in France. On an international level the Templars undertook some excellent work within the context of the crusades, even defeating Saladin and his armies at the Battle of Ascalon in 1177. By the middle of the twelfth century the Knights Templars were very rich indeed and their entire income was estimated to be not less than six million pounds at today's present value.

They possessed churches and chapels in every country in Christendom, whilst in England they gave magnificent entertainments for visiting kings, princes and distinguished nobles. Unfortunately, however, with the decline of the crusades in the thirteenth century their activities fighting the so-called infidel became less. The vast land and wealth they had acquired and their activities in international finance in France were to be their undoing. Philip IV pursued a ruthless financial policy and destroyed the Templars. In 1307 many were arrested and the Pope, Clement V, was forced to dissolve the order, something that was finally accomplished in 1312. The Grand Master and his assistants were arrested and executed in 1314. In England the Templars became the object of popular dislike as their priories became treasure houses whilst the Hospitallers became more acceptable and set up hospitals for the poor and sick. Edward I eventually ordered the seizure of the Templars property and money, accusing them of heresy and sorcery. Many knights were burned or put to death. With their suppression came the confiscation of all their property in England which was given to the Knights of St John by statute of Edward II. The order of the Knights Templars was destroyed forever and completely obliterated from the medieval world.

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Robinson, W., *History of Hackney*, London 1842/3.

Simon, E., *The piebald standard; a biography of the Knights Templars*, London, 1959.

Woof, R., *A sketch of the Knights Templars and the Knights of St John of Jerusalem*, London, 1865.

## NOTES AND NEWS

Mr Chisnall's memories in last year's **Record**, it will be recalled, concluded with an account of his meeting Mahatma Gandhi on Poplar High Street. Newham Arts and Entertainment, in association with the Library Service, has an exhibition of photographs documenting Gandhi's stay in East London. It will be at St. Bartholomew's Centre, Barking Road, East Ham, from 27 Nov. to 11 Dec. 1991.

Readers of Lella Raymond's article in this issue may be interested to know that an article on the Elizabeth Fry Refuge is planned for a future issue of **Terrier**, the newsletter of the Friends of Hackney Archives.

Jean Wait of Hackney Archives Department has responded to a point raised in this column last year on whether or not the matchgirls at Bryant and May's factory paid for the statue of Gladstone that remains in the middle of Bow Road despite rumours about its removal. It seems that new arrangements for work and payment that acted to the detriment of the workers at the factory around the time the statue was erected led to the impression that the girls were paying for it. Still rather inconclusive, perhaps, but in any case, as Jean rightly mentions, it could be argued 'that the matchgirls paid for the statue indirectly, since it was their labour that created Theodore Bryant's wealth'.

Following a campaign led by George Lansbury, Sutton House in Homerton was purchased by the National Trust in 1938. A restoration campaign was launched in 1987 and building work has started on the refurbishment, with Phase 1 scheduled for completion in July 1992. An appeal is being launched to raise the money needed for Phase 2 of the project.

The illustration (page 17) to Ellen Rae's article comes from the collection of the Island History Trust, a registered charity 'devoted to the recovery and preservation of the history of the Isle of Dogs and its people'. Among other activities, the Trust (Island House, Roserton Street, E14 3PG) produces the **Island History Newsletter** monthly. The eight to twelve page illustrated publication carries short features on the history of the Isle of Dogs as well as news and information of interest to past and present residents of this rapidly changing part of East London. Recent articles included 'Record of St. Edmund's School' (April), 'A Diary of the Blitz' (May) and 'Work and Wildlife in Millwall Docks' (July). The annual subscription is £5.00.

The East End Blitz exhibition at the Ragged School Museum in Copperfield Road to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Blitz attracted great attention locally. It was organised by Tom Ridge, Chairman of the Ragged School Museum Trust since its foundation in 1983. He received help from many people, including our own Doreen Kendall and her daughter Di who arranged the display on Bethnal Green. Tom's **East End Blitz Trail** is on sale at the Museum, as is **It Happened To Us**, a compilation by Mary Crabbe of people's memories and children's writings and drawings from the 1940s. Tom has recently retired as Chairman of the Trust to devote more time to research and writing; Dave Barton is the new Chairman.

The Museum, which has a special interest in the history of education and youth provision in London, collects ordinary things of daily life, work and leisure from the East End's past and is always pleased to hear from people with items to donate or lend. The Trust is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Membership is open to all and there is a wide range of activities to suit all tastes. The Trust is most anxious to hear from people interested in helping on the open days either as guides or in the shop or towpath cafe. Anyone interested should write to Rod Smith, RSMT Secretary, 46 - 48 Copperfield Road, E3 4RR or telephone the Administrator, Pauline Plumb, on 081 980 6405. The Trust's History Club continues through the winter; forthcoming talks, all starting at 7p.m. at the Museum, are 'Limehouse from Early Times to Today' (13 Nov.), 'Three East End Footballers' (8 Jan.), 'Homeworking in the East End Clothing Industry' (12 Feb.) and 'Poplar and the Councillors who went to jail in 1921' (11 Mar.).

The Museum of Docklands Project (Unit C14, Poplar Business Park, 10 Prestons Road, E14 9RL), in association with NCC Property (who saved the Project last year with a large cash injection) has produced **Gateway to the East**, priced at £2.50 for schools and £5.00 to the public. Though

intended as a resource for GCSE students, it will be of interest to all lovers of the riverside and docks, which are presented in about 100 illustrations, some of them in colour. The text is informative though brief and the quotations from visitors to the area over the centuries go well with the pictures. There is also a glossary to explain difficult terms connected with the docks, shipping and the riverside. While local students (and their teachers) will appreciate the clear explanations of what sufferance wharves or the navigation laws were, one wonders if many GCSE students need to be told what a tavern or brothel were.

The LDDC School Liaison Officer (191 Marsh Wall, E14 9TJ) has made 'Changing Place', suitable for Geography GCSE 'to help your students study London Docklands within the National Curriculum'. Packs with video, student workbook and teachers' notes cost £39.00 with £3.35 extra for postage. The video includes some illuminating interviews with local residents as well as housing experts.

Chris Ellmers and Alex Werner's **Dockland Life**. A Pictorial History of London's Docks 1860-1970 (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99) will be on sale in November 1991 and we hope to have a full review of it in the next **Record**. From the reputation of the authors (of the Museum of Docklands and the Museum of London respectively) and the vast amount of illustrations they were able to draw on, there will be many like me who can't wait to see it.

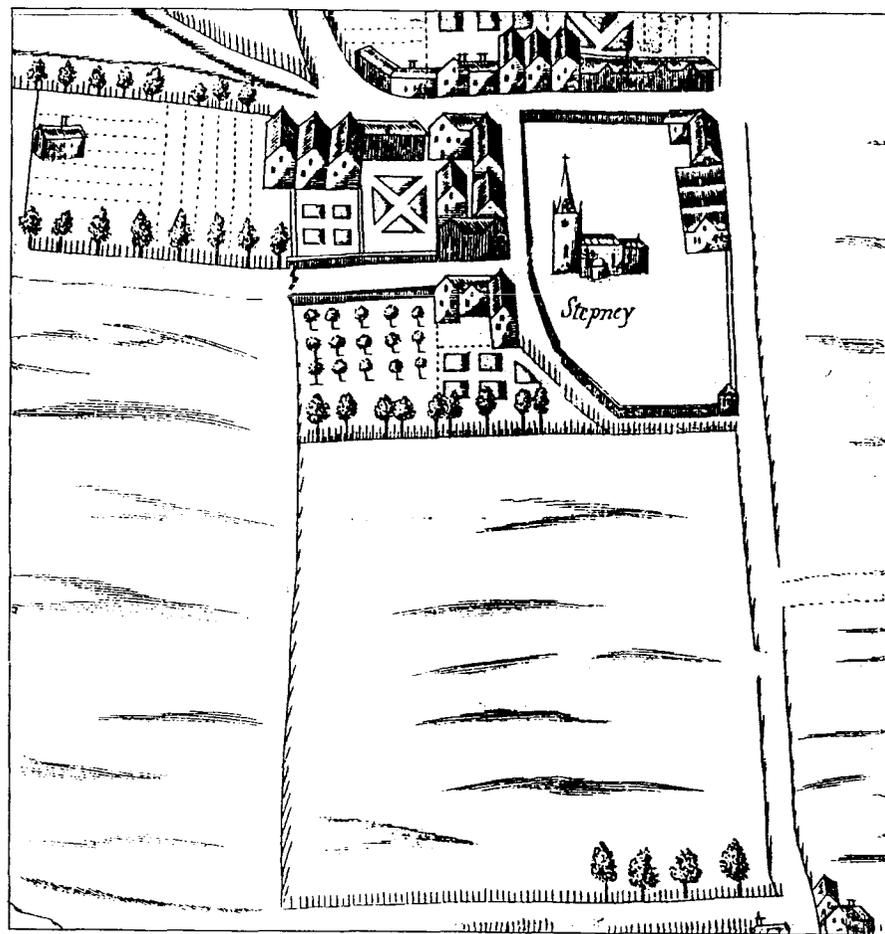
Anyone interested in the role of photography in local history will be pleased with the November 1990 issue of **The Local Historian** (Shopwyke Hall, Chichester, Sussex P.O. 20 6BQ, 3.50). It carries one article on 'A Century of Survey Photography' and another on 'Local Photographers and their Work', the latter, dealing with the Burton family of Hereford, being part of a series.

On page 11 of **Record** No. 11 (1988) we had a photograph of the plaque outside St. Paul's Church, Shadwell, which drew attention to 'famous' people who had been baptised there, one of whom was Captain Cook's son. A.W. Smith in 'Captain Cook; Londoner' (**East London Papers**, vol 11, No. 2, 1968) tried to put the famous navigator in an East London setting and Julia Hunt's **From Whitby to Wapping**. The Story of the Early Years of Captain James Cook (to be published shortly by the Stepney Historical Trust) will no doubt present new insights into this. The **Record** carried C. Ernestine Maitland's 'Jane Randolph and Shadwell' in 1988 and the following year David Leaback explored Perkin's discovery against its East End background (**Record** No. 12, 1989). The fourth name on the plaque is Walter Patten. Is anyone working on this?

It is with regret that we have to record the death of Alan Searle, whose help and generosity to the East London History Society, and to the **Record** in particular, have been enormous. Alan was already retired when he joined the Society around the time the first **Record** was being produced in 1978. He became the magazine's distribution manager the following year and during the next five years worked tirelessly to promote sales. Many of the selling points he established are still used to-day by Doreen Kendall, as is the index of subscribers he initiated. At the time of writing the committee of the Society have not made a final decision of how his generosity can best be commemorated.

### CONTRIBUTORS

John Ramsland is Associate Professor of Education at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales; Ellen Rae lives in New Zealand but, as Ellen Baldwin, she spent the first 20 years of her life in the Isle of Dogs; Lella Raymond, a history graduate, is daughter of the novelist Ernest Raymond: she was a nurse at Kings College Hospital and later on the administrative staff of University College, London; Eddie Dare's family have been in the baking trade for generations and he has written about the trade in 'Thoughts of a Journeyman Baker' (**History Workshop Journal**, no.3, spring 1977); Clifford Gully's 'Dick Turpin in Hackney' was in the last **Record**. Among our reviewers, Philip Mernick's collection of old postcards relating to the East End is often admired by fellow members of the East London History Society and deserves to be more widely known; Rosemary Taylor occupies the chair of the Society at present, Doreen Kendall is the **Record**'s indefatigable distribution manager and David Behr organises the Society's programme of talks, walks and visits; Pat Burke works for the Borough of Islington and A.H. French was a founder member of the East London History Society 39 years ago.



*A discussion of the hamlet of Stepney as it appeared in Richard Newcourt's seventeenth century map is one way of getting across the idea of time past to children of different ethnic backgrounds in Tower Hamlets to-day. It is part of a set of materials which puts to-day's multi-ethnic population in its positive long term historical setting. The emphasis is on first hand stimulus material aimed at younger children, but the packs also contain information for teachers. The project has been funded by Baring Education, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Aldgate and All Hallow's Barking Foundation and the Tudor Trust, and will be published in late 1991 by the Tower Hamlets Education Authority's Professional Development Centre. Further details are available from Kirsteen Tait, c/o Institute of Community Studies, 16 Victoria Park Square, E2 9PF.*

## BOOKS REVIEWS

Steve Kentfield and Ray Newton. **A Riverside Journey.** Tower Bridge to Blackwall Pier in Picture Postcards, c. 1900 to 1930s. History of Wapping Trust, 1990.

This book is published in A4 format with one vertical or 2 horizontal cards per page, and text below each card. This gives a very clean uncluttered look to each page and positively encourages one to examine the excellent reproduction of 79 different post cards: from the Tower of London in the West to Leamouth in the East. Steve Kentwell who chose the cards from his own extensive collection presents a very varied selection of both topographical and sociological interest. There are views of buildings, many of which have disappeared since World War 2 (some very recently, such as Charlie Brown's Pub), and fascinating and lively street scenes where a few surviving buildings can still be recognised.

What makes this book much more valuable, however, are the illustrations of working life about 1910. Post cards of the docks in action are very scarce, but here we are presented with a fine selection showing wharfs and docks crowded with vessels both steam and sail powered. Interior views of the docks also give a vivid picture of East London's vanished heritage. These are not empty buildings with high forbidding walls, but crowded places of work: men, horses, barges, carts, packing cases, etc. Here also are some of the traders reliant on the docks, such as Alex A. Wilson's shoeing forge and veterinary surgery in Commercial Road. Standing in attention in front of the premises we see Mr Wilson (?) holding his Panama hat, blacksmiths with their leather aprons, a wagon and team of horses and down the end of the alley the docks themselves. All this from one card!

The selection includes many locally published cards and even views of the premises of three publishers. The historical notes by Ray Newton are enough to inform without detracting from the images themselves and the maps at the back showing the location of each view are very useful.

The inside cover says that this is volume 1, and I look forward to the next instalment.

Philip Mernick

Hilda Kean. **Deeds Not Words.** Pluto Press, 1990. £19.95.

Hilda Kean's collective biography of four women teachers - Agnes Dawson, Emily Phipps, Ethel Froud and Theodora Bonwick - is a fascinating exploration into the hidden history of women.

The Feminist Movement had a high profile in the 1960's, so it was with considerable interest that I found the term associated with the activities of these women teachers who campaigned from the late 19th century onwards for equal pay, for the vote and for a full recognition of their status as professionals. The book recounts the women's demonstrations, lobbying, heckling and public speaking and explodes the myth of the genteel spinster teacher, at the same time providing a valuable insight into the political activities of an older generation.

The East London connection is also of interest to the local history researcher. Agnes Dawson was headteacher for some time at St Paul's Road school in Poplar, and Theodora Bonwick lobbied for the teaching of sex education in schools, writing articles for the Woman's Dreadnought and addressing meetings of the East London Suffragettes on the value of the subject.

The study was not intended to be a straightforward biographical account of the lives of the four women, and I wish it had been. The style and construction of the narrative, as well as the density of the text, makes reading it a hard task: not the sort of book to pick up and browse through. If it had been, it would have made required reading at schools. As such, it remains a valuable reference book for the dedicated historian.

Rosemary Taylor

Bob Holman. **Good Old George.** The Life of George Lansbury. Best-loved leader of the Labour Party. (Lion paperback, 1990), £5.99.

It is a feature of the age that we so often remember the work of early reformers but soon forget the persons themselves. If you ask people living on the Lansbury Estate what they know of

George Lansbury, most will say that he did good for Poplar and promoted the cause of Socialism. Few know of him as a preacher, pacifist, Cabinet Minister and Party Leader, activities which made him universally acknowledged.

I first met him as a boy and he impressed me with his sincerity and a coolness of manner which I did not recognise in his Socialist colleagues, Sam Marsh, Charles Key, etc. to whom reform necessitated forceful demonstration, argument and a constant fight. Discussing him with Nellie Cressall, another of East London's 'Stalwarts', she described him to me as 'Socialism's Gentleman' though she found his quiet and more logical approaches somewhat frustrating. Lansbury achieved more by his enthusiasm, tenacity and a depth of faith.

This little book emphasises the importance he placed on giving - not necessarily money but personal commitment. One wonders how far his message would get across today, when television, computers and mass media make such dedication more difficult though reforms of a somewhat different nature are as urgently needed. It is therefore fitting that this book should appear on the market now as the memory of 'Good Old George' recedes with the passage of time.

A.H. French

Harry Moncrieff. **Roots of Labour**. Linden Hall (233 Preston Road, Yeovil, BA20 2EW), 1990. £3.95.

Harry Moncrieff's hundred year old aunt is recorded here as remembering four to a bed, 'two at the top, two at the bottom', but the book is not just an account of the hardships of the poor in Victorian times. Rather, the subject is how such people organised themselves and founded a major political party. This is done by telling the stories of such notable figures as Will Crooks, Ben Tillett and Keir Hardie and the organisations they founded.

But the especial value of the book is the way the narrative is complimented by family memories. His own earliest memory is of being held up as a two year old by his mother to see his father addressing a socialist meeting. He is able to record how such non-political groups as temperance societies educated their members and trained them in public speaking and democratic participation. They also provided a social world where the members could be making music together. This feeling of fellowship is a major theme. They wanted to educate people to use the new opportunities responsibly and the fellowship that helped them to do so, according to the author, was inherited from the Christian tradition.

The illustrations in photographs and drawings by the author are a bonus, all part of a tribute in proud and loving memory of his parents. This spirit of affection has resulted in a book which recreates the feelings and aims of those who worked to found the Labour Party.

David H. Behr.

Ricky Clitheroe. **Away from the Bombs**. Cornish Books (Dyllansow, Truran, Trewolsta, Trewirgie, Redruth, Cornwall), 1990. £3.95.

This very readable little book tells the story of an Islington boy of four evacuated to Cornwall, the love for the people he made friends with there, his return to Dalston at the age of twelve and the divided loyalties he suffered.

Doreeen Kendall.

Paddy Fahey. **The Irish in London**. Photographs and Memories. Centerprise, 1991. £4.95.

This book is not a history of the Irish in London (this remains to be written, incidentally) but one man's memories of life among a certain section of the Irish population in London. Born in Waterford in 1912, Paddy Fahey became an apprentice to a photographer there in 1925. He came to London during the war and the most interesting recollection in the book is from that period. It concerns an Orangeman who came over around the same time as Paddy:

Those from the north they were given the impression, in his own words, that if they came to London the red carpet would go down for them. But when he got here he said, "We were treated just like the ordinary plain bloody Paddy!" That's what he said to me.

Paddy was a man for the dancing and the traditional Irish music, and one of the best photographs in the book is of Margo Barry, the 'Gypsy Queen' that he used to hear in the Hibernian Club in Fulham nearly forty years ago. He was obviously a photographer of great talent and those photographs reproduced in the book will bring back many happy memories to Irish people who lived in London in the fifties and sixties in particular. Centerprise are to be congratulated on bringing out Paddy Fahey's memories and reproducing his photographs. Perhaps the memories of other London Irish people will follow, exploring the many contributions this group of immigrants have made to London life?

Pat Burke

Iain Sinclair. **Downriver**. (Or, The Vessels of Wrath). A Narrative in Twelve Tales. Paladin Grafton Books, 1991. £14.99.

Iain Sinclair is not an easy writer to understand, as readers of his **White Chapel, Scarlet Tracings** will know. **Downriver**, too, is a work of fiction, with many of the author's fantastic imaginings located in East End settings and related to actual events in East End history. He knows his local history and I found no inaccuracies among the many factual references he makes to the area. His opinions, too, are often stimulating and he is merciless on those who would exploit the East End and its history. Here he is on attempts to turn Spitalfields into a 'Museum of Immigration' without taking account of the human cost,

as if immigration could be anything other than an active response to untenable circumstances - a brave, mad, greedy charge at some vision of the future; a thrusting forward of the unborn into a region they could neither claim nor desire. Immigration is a blowtorch held against an anthill. It can always be sentimentalised, but never recreated.

The pace is as hectic as this throughout the book, but it is worth the effort of trying to get into. For I am sure that the author, in his own way, is saying something new and important about the East end and its river, though I would be hard put to say what it is.

Colm Kerrigan

#### SOME RECENT HISTORY ITEMS RELATING TO EAST LONDON Books and Booklets (excluding those Reviewed)

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Alvey, Norman      | <b>Education by Election</b> . Reed's School, Clapton and Watford. St. Alban's and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, 1990. |
| Ashby, Margaret    | <b>The Book of the River Lea</b> . Barracada Books, 1991.  |
| Calder, Angus      | <b>The Myth of the Blitz</b> . Cape, 1991.   |
| Cosh, Mary         | <b>A Historical Walk along the New River</b> . Islington Archaeological and Historical Society, 1988.  |
| Darby, Madge       | <b>Captain Bligh in Wapping</b> . History of Wapping Trust, 1990.  |
| Davies, Gareth Huw | <b>A Walk along the Thames Path</b> . Michael Joseph, 1990.  |
| Delfont, Bernard   | <b>East End, West End</b> . Macmillan, 1990.   |
| Demarne, Cyril     | <b>The London Blitz: a Fireman's tale</b> . After the Battle, 1991.  |
| Huddart, William   | <b>Unchartered Waters</b> . The Life and Times of Captain James Huddart, R.R.S., 1741 - 1816. Quiller Press, 1990.                               |
| James, Mary        | <b>The History of Chemistry in Essex and East London</b> . Royal Society of Chemistry, 1990.   |



*The Virginia Settlers Memorial, Brunswick Dock, is one of several photographs by Rosemary Taylor to illustrate the narrative of her book, Blackwell, the Brunswick and Whitebait Dinners (£4.75 including postage), which traces the history of an interesting section of the riverside from earliest times to the present. The memorial stone records the departure of the settlers under John Smith and ought to be better known, for, as Rosemary points out, it is likely that many of the settlers came from this area and 'that America's ancestry is firmly rooted in Blackwall and Poplar, as well as Ratcliffe and Limehouse'. (p.14) The photograph, incidentally, forms part of a set of three postcards (the other two are of Canary Wharf and the gate of the Bevis Marks Synagogue, reproduced on page 48), available at 90p the set from Rosemary at 5 Pusey House, Saracen Street, E14 6HG.*

- King, John R.P. **A Catalogue of Stratford Market tallies.** West Essex Coin Investments, 1990.
- Lewis, Morton **Ted Kid Lewis.** His Life and Times. Robson Books, 1990.
- Lipman, V.D. **A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858.** Leicester University Press, 1990.
- Marriot, John **The Culture of Labourism: The East End between the Wars.** Edinburgh University Press, 1991.
- Moore, Alan **Growing up with Barnardo's.** Hale and Iremonger, 1990.
- Murphy, Michael **Catholic Poor Schools in Tower Hamlets. Part 1, Wapping and Commercial Road** (copy in T. Ham. Lib. Local History Collection).
- O'Neill, Gilda **Pull no more bines.** An oral history of East London women hop pickers. Women's Press, 1990.
- Sanitt, Leonard **On Parade.** Memories of a Jewish Sergeant-Major in World War II. Spa Books, 1990.
- Smith, Anne (ed.) **The Victorian House catalogue: Young and Marten.** Sidgwick and Jackson, 1990.
- Watson, Isobel **Hackney and Stoke Newington Past.** Phillimore, 1990.
- Widgery, David **Some Lives!: A GP's East End.** Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991.
- ARTICLES**
- Alvey, Norman 'The London Orphan Asylum, Clapton' in **The Terrier.** The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter, winter 1991.
- Darby, Madge 'Captain Bligh's House in Wapping' (note) in **Mariner's Mirror**, vol. 76, no. 2 (1990).
- Dennis, Richard "'Hard to Let" in Edwardian London' in **Urban Studies**, no. 26 (1989).
- Dix, Kenneth 'All Change: An East End of London Baptist Church in the Nineteenth Century' in **The Baptist Quarterly**, vol. 33 (1989).
- Eade, John 'Nationalism and the quest for authority: the Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets' in **New Community**, July, 1990.
- Fairclough, Keith 'A successful Elizabethan project: the River Lea Improvement Scheme' in **The Journal of Transport History** Third Series, vol. 11, no. 2 (1990).
- Fitzgerald, Robert 'Employers' Labour Strategies, Industrial Welfare, and the Response to New Unionism at Bryant and May, 1888-1930' in **Business History**, no. 31 (1989).
- Gillespie, James 'Poplarism and Proletarianism: Unemployment and Labour politics in London 1918-34' in David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), **Metropolis.** London Histories and Representations since 1800. Routledge, 1989.
- Kops, Bernard 'Wild Honey' (on Isaac Rosenberg) in **Jewish Chronicle Magazine**, 30 Nov. 1990.
- Lazarus, Michael 'Isaac Rosenberg 1890-1918' in **Jewish Quarterly**, no. 140, winter 1990-91.

Following a recent visit to the Bevis Marks Synagogue in Aldgate, David Behr, who organises the East London History Society's programme of events (see back page for 1991-2 details) provided the following note:

On a working day it is easy to rush by and hardly notice the gate to the Bevis Marks Synagogue in the arcade of the neighbouring building. The gate opens to a courtyard before a large building, revealing the oldest existing synagogue in Britain, dating from 1701. Inside it is of plain design. In the centre is the raised reading platform. At the far end, appropriately, the building is dominated by the large ark containing the parchment scrolls of the Law (i.e. the Five Books of Moses), each adorned with breast plates and bells. On three sides the synagogue is overlooked by ladies' galleries (which provide the best views). From the roof hang chandeliers in which blazing candles still light special services. Above all, there is evident the pride in a living tradition.



- Leech, Kenneth 'The End of the Dolling Era? Father Joe Williamson in Stepney' in *The Anglo Catholic Social Conscience* The Jubilee Group, 1991.
- Marriot, John 'Twentieth-century records of West Ham' in *The Local Historian*, vol.20, no. 3 (1990).
- Sargent, Edward 'The Planning and Early Building of the West India Docks' in *The Mariner's Mirror* vol. 77, no. 2 (1991).
- Smith, Elaine 'Jews and Politics in the East End of London' in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*. Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Solman, David 'Emily and Phillip Gosse: Hackney's Eminent 19th Century Naturalists' in *The Terrier*, spring 1991.
- Turnbull, Brett 'The Golem of Princelet Street: an extract from a new film about London's East End' in *Jewish Quarterly*, no. 140, winter 1990-91.
- Weiner, Deborah E.B. 'The People's palace: An Image of East London in the 1880s' in *Metropolis* (see above).
- Weiner, Deborah E.B. 'The Architecture of Victorian Philanthropy: The Settlement House as Manorial Residence' in *Art History*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1990).

#### UNPUBLISHED WORKS

- Black, Gerald David 'Health and Medical Care of the Jewish Poor in the East End of London 1888-1939' Ph.D. 1987.
- Cheetham, David R 'Community Education and the Urban Crisis - a study of state intervention in the inner city area with special reference to East London 1973-1981' M.A. London, 1981.
- Cole, Jean 'Women's role in the domestic and work spheres in West Ham 1920-1960' B.A. Thesis, Polytechnic of East London, 1991.
- D'Sena, Peter 'Perquisites and Pilfering in the London Docks, 1700-1795' M.A. Open University, 1986.
- Leedale, S. Mark 'From Rags to Rags: Planned Intervention in the East London Clothing Industry' M.Sc. Oxford Polytechnic, 1987.
- Lucas, Teresa 'The Pankhurst Sisters After 1914' Ph.D. University of Sheffield, 1987.
- Stevens, Carolyn 'A Suffragette and a Man: Sylvia Pankhurst's Personal and Political Relationship with Keir Hardie' Ph.D. Rochester University (U.S.A.).

#### Tower Hamlets Local History Archives

Recent additions:

Marriage register of East London Tabernacle (Baptist), Burdett Road (TH 8407);

Plans of Whitechapel and Limehouse Generating Stations 1899-1931 (TH 8430);

Bethnal Green, Stepney, Poplar, Tower Hamlets Committee Minute Books 1949-74 (TH 8449).

Thanks to David Behr, Howard Bloch, C.J. Lloyd, Harry Watton and David Webb for help in compiling these lists.