

NEWHAM
LIBRARY SERVICE
NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER - June 1988

I think it safe to say that this issue does not contain too much in the way of "news". That is simply because nobody has sent "news" in. Reports of our meetings are conspicuous by their absence in this issue. The reason is that these are usually written by myself. However, I have not managed to get to all our meetings and those which I have attended have not really inspired me to take any notes. The main reason for this is that some speakers tend to occupy the evening by reading a prepared script, a practice that makes it difficult to write notes whilst listening to so many dates and names being read.

Members are reminded that all our meetings, unless otherwise advised, are held at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, Bow. Our visiting speakers start at 7.30pm and we ask members to arrive in good time. One more item remains of our current programme and we can look forward to an interesting evening :-

Friday 24 June = 7 30pm at Queen Mary College.

DAYS OUT IN HPPING FOREST by Stan Newens MEP (London Central) and David Wilkinson of Loughton.

NEWHAM LIBRARY SERVICE

Whether you are looking for old photographs, preparing a course, searching for statistics or tracing your family history, the Local Studies Library can help through its archives. They are at The Local Studies Library, Stratford Reference Library, Water Lane, Stratford, London E15 4NJ. Telephone 534 4545 ext. 25662. Please telephone before visiting, to ensure that the librarian will be there.

Exhibitions to call to member's notice are :-
HOPPING DOWN IN KENT at West Ham Town Hall foyer. On show 5th September - 1st October.
THE WORK OF THE LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY at Plashet Library. On show 6th June - 2nd July.

New titles available in the Local Studies Notes are:-
No.61 Stratford Wholesale Market 1931
No.62 Balloons over Newham.
No.63 Emigration to Australia 1910
No.64 Memories of the 1953 floods, by Ms M Yates of Morgan Street, Canning Town.

Reprint from EAST LONDON HISTORY GROUP (No 6, March 1968) Newsletter

- "Did you know that...."
- 1 John Wesley's mother lived in Spital Square?
 - 2 At a Buckingham Palace Garden Party in 1918, King George V was surprised to learn that the Rev W H Lax, the well-known preacher, actually slept in Poplar?
 - 3 The King Edward VII Memorial Park occupies the site of the former Shadwell Fish Market?
 - 4 A century ago, Whitechapel Market (a little past St. Mary Matfelon) was more outstanding than Petticoat Lane, which was already of considerable size?

"FUNNY HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED,
AIN'T IT..."

A little of a tape-recorded conversation with Mrs Edie Siggins by John Curtis.

"We never went to the pawnbrokers. And we were never allowed to go in the eel and pie shop either. They (my family) used to say you can cook it cheaper than you can buy it in the eel and pie shop - and they did used to buy their own eels and cook them.

My friends used to go and get faggots but we never had faggots... Peas-pudding.. we had our own - but not peas-pudding out of a peas-pudding shop. Its a shame, isn't it... I missed all that. I've never really had faggots.

We used to have sheep's head. Used to have that for supper - a cold sheep's head... and pig's trotters - I loved them! ... and brawn on Saturdays. Dad always had half a pound of brawn for his Saturday dinner. Oh, that was lovely, that brawn they used to get at Hensons. They were nice, those sheep's heads, weren't they... and the brains we used to get...

We used to have a lovely Saturday dinner of boiled mutton, scrag-end you know - and white cabbage. This was one of my Grandfather's specialities. In his spare time he was a cook. He used to go round cooking meals for people... Well-off traders, you know.. like the dairyman if they were having company.. and the man who ran the shoe factory in The Oval (Bethnal Green). He used to go and cook for him.. and another man who Mum used to do spare-time cleaning for.. you know, when they wanted to live it up a bit. And he used to go to some big house in the West-end as well.. and do the cooking. Mum used to go with him and help.

One of his specialities was stewed mutton with white cabbage - big white cabbage - and brains - sheep's brains... it was delicious. Never taste anything like it these days.. and big floury dumplings like that... Ooh... they was lovely....

And the steak and kidney pudding was out of this world. You never taste anything like that.. and roly-poly and things like that. Funny how times have changed, ain't it.. Of course, all those things are frowned on now, aren't they.. but oh they were lovely!

I don't remember his recipes but I remember those that Mum did - that he taught her.. and I always think that Mum's Christmas puddings can't be touched.. the Christmas puddings they used to make. It was always a big thing in our house, the Christmas pudding! All the kids got round the table.. and I had seven cousins.. and a brother.. that was nine of us. We got round the table and we used to blanch the almonds in a cup of hot water - and then take them out and pop the skins off.. Chop them all up - I do the same recipe now.

They don't taste the same really because I don't fiddle about chopping up the almonds like she used to. And also, we used to have that big candied peel... and cut all that up.. and we used to stone the raisins.. you don't get them now, do you... those raisins you have to stone. And I think its different! With that candied peel, that big candied peel you used to cut up... I think that had a quite different flavour to this chopped up stuff you buy now - completely different. You can't even taste the flavour in that chopped up stuff now.. not like you used to.

Yes - its funny how times have changed...

POPLAR DISTRICT BOARD OF WORKS
by Chris Lloyd

HOW DID THE POPLAR DISTRICT BOARD OF WORKS FIT INTO THE JIGSAW OF LONDON
AUTHORITIES FROM 1886-1890?

The Board's boundaries commence at Bow Common Bridge, extend to White Post Lane, which adjoins Hackney Parish, and also covers the area from a portion of Duckett's Canal from Victoria Park southwards to the river's edge.

One hundred years ago some of the environmental and highway works were undertaken by the District Board of Works, working in consultation with the numerous other statutory authorities, such as the Metropolitan Boards of Works, the neighbouring Vestries, the City Corporation, the Local Government Boards and, latterly, the London County Council.

During the period 1888-1890 the District Clerk of Works report discusses the Board's activities concerning dock bridges, Bromley Bridge, Plaistow Hospital, plans for the Blackwall tunnel, flooding in the Isle of Dogs, road maintenance, pollution of the River Lea, and abatement of smoke nuisances.

The status of each authority and the question of defining and the asserting of the parameters of each's jurisdiction crops up in several problems arising at the time. One of these was the Board of Work's proposal to the Highways Committee of the LCC that road improvements were necessary at four bridges crossing locks.

The Highway Committee ruled that they were responsible for carrying out this work. The Board issued a Memorial identifying the problem areas; the bridge crossing the lock connecting Limehouse Basin with the Thames at the western end of the Export and Import Dock; the bridge crossing the lock connecting the Blackwall Basin with the Thames at the eastern end of the same dock (both were constructed about 1815); thirdly, the bridge across the western entrance to the South Dock was built in 1836 and a fourth bridge was built comparatively recently at the eastern end of the South Dock.

The Board had not been successful in ordering the East and West India Dock Companies to rebuild the bridges and the dock companies are now in the hands of the receivers. The Memorial stated that the approaches and bridges were wholly inadequate for the rising traffic as well as possessing steep gradients

The hospital belonging to the Board at Plaistow still remained unoccupied. It had been offered to the Corporation of West Ham but was declined on the grounds that nearby was maintained a smallpox hospital belonging to the West Ham Guardians.

One of the main contentions of the vestries in the east of the Metropolis was that they had for many years paid large contributions in rates and coal and wine dues, for providing permanent communications from the north and south of the Thames, west of London Bridge. The City Corporation agreed to build a bridge at the Tower at a cost of £750,000 and the Metropolitan Boards of Works undertook, if Parliament approved, the scheme to provide a tunnel at Blackwall.

A bridge was impossible at Blackwall, owing to the exigencies of the navigation. A comparison of costs revealed that the annual expenses for the tunnel would be £41,000 and for a Woolwich Ferry £34,000 (the annual cost of working the ferry being £14,390, whereas the maintenance of the tunnel would be £5,000). The LCC, on 26 March 1889, only a few days after coming into existence, resolved to construct the Blackwall Tunnel, authorized by the Thames Tunnel (Blackwall) Act 1887. An amendment to the letter from the Metropolitan Board of Works, proposing the substitution of a ferry only received three supporters.

The contention that a tunnel was best was supported by Sir Joseph Bazalgette, who put forward the argument that in his studies of weather conditions for 1879, 1880 and 1881 there were an average of 38 days in which fogs prevented trains travelling from Cannon Street to Charing Cross without delays, and twelve days of frost, making fifty days in the year in which ferries would probably be unable to work. The Limehouse District Board of Works stated that they did not wish to prejudice the Blackwall Tunnel construction in favour of having its tunnel at Shadwell built before. Ferries are useful for local traffic but cannot be a substitute for an efficient continuous line of communication offered by a tunnel or bridge, as proved in Liverpool and New York.

Delegates from the vestries and local boards met in 1886 and agreed to leave the position of the first trans-communication to the Metropolitan Board of Works. Four members of the Poplar District Board of Works throughout the debates, (Walter Hunter, W P Bullivant, J McDougall and Miss Cobden) voted throughout in favour of the tunnel.

Floodings in the Isle of Dogs: Sydney Buxton, MP, wrote to the Poplar District Board of Works asking what steps had been taken since the last disastrous sewage floods of June and July 1868. The Board explained that the Royal Observatory showed that on the 30 July, between 3pm and 7pm, two and one sixth inches fell in the Isle of Dogs, on an area of 47 acres, after this area had been wetted by previous showers. Allowing for a possible absorption of one sixth of an inch, the quantity of water to be run off amounted to 21 million gallons. The pumping power of the Metropolitan Board of Works is capable of lifting 5 million gallon in 4 hours. The floods of the Isle of Dogs often occur at or near the time of high water, when the main sewers cannot be released.

Houses with basements are, in Manchester Road, 255 in all; Stewart Street, 50; Samuda Street, 22; Davia Street, 11; East Ferry Road, 10; Mansfield Street, 4; Strattondale Street, 39; Glengall Road, 68; Olliffe Street, 7; Strattondale Street, 150; Seyssell Street, 37; Billson Street, 32; Pier Street West, 14; Newcastle Street, 6; West Ferry Road, 9; Manila Street, 7; and Tobago Street, 3. More flooding occurred on 23 and 26 May 1889 and the Metropolitan Boards of Works referred applicants for improvements to press the LCC Sewers Committee for action.

Road Maintenance: The burden on the local ratepayers was eased by the Local Government Boards providing £995 for the 1887-88 account for the maintenance of dis-turnpiked and main roads. The roads dis-turnpiked on the 9 May 1885 were the East and West India Dock Roads. The LCC contributed to the maintenance costs from 1889-90 for all roads and the cost was charged to the General County Rate.

A conference of delegates appointed by the East End Districts was held at the offices of the Limehouse District Board of Works in White Horse Road. It was resolved to establish which of their roads had the heaviest traffic and which had mainly local traffic; and that the District Boards and Vestries should claim to retain the maintenance of main roads and that the LCC should contribute to the costs.

A problem about interpreting and reconciling provisions of section 11 of the Local Government Act 1888 about the management of portions of shared roads, some portions being maintained well by some authorities, and not so well by others, has caused a delay until further legislation can be passed. The engineer of the North London Railway Company hopes to start work on the bridge in Wick Lane in April 1890.

Pollution of the River Lea: Legal proceedings had been taken by the Board against West Ham Corporation after their failure, after 3 months notice, to restrain the nuisance caused by the flow of sewage into the Lea at Canning Town. The population of West Ham, at 180,000, had trebled in the last 10 years and additional sewers for drainage had been constructed, all of which discharged into the Lea near Bow Creek. The sewage needs to be filtered and only discharged when the river is in the ebb-tide.

Because the Corporation had not complied with the directions of the Local Government Board for dealing with the sewage, the Local Government Board have refused to allow the Corporation to raise by loan any money for the purpose of making additional sewers for the extension of their drainage. By March 1890 the Corporation had at last complied, in as far as extra land had now been purchased to extend the outfall works at Canning Town and the plans had been approved now for the constructions of tanks.

Health: By Act of Parliament, given the Royal Assent on 30 August 1889, cases of infectious disease had to be notified to the Medical Officer of Health and either the Vestry or the District Board had the responsibility of enforcing the Act in their areas. By March 1890, 520 cases had been certified by medical practitioners to the Medical Officer of Health in the Poplar District Board of Works area.

Smoke: The Board was active in the abatement of smoke nuisance but was hampered by the recent failure of a new Bill of Parliament to become law, revising the existing Acts. The first Act was in 1853. The subsequent Nuisances Removal Act, covering "persons not using the best practical means" for preventing or counter-acting noxious effluvia from their premises, gave constables the right to enter and inspect furnaces and steam engines. The second Act was passed in 1856, amending the first Act, and included in it all steam vessels on the Thames, west of the River Nore, and limited the proceedings taken by the police, other than such which had been vested in the local authorities.

The third Act, The Sanitary Act of 1866, for the first time included the term nuisance in the context of any fireplace or furnace which does not consume the smoke, used for working engines by steam, or in any mill, factory, dye-house, brewery, bake-house or gas work or any manufactory or trade process whatsoever and any chimney sending forth black smoke (excluding private dwelling chimneys). The House of Lords may receive the Bill giving authorities more powers, again in the next Parliamentary session.

During the Parliamentary session of 1889 all the local authorities were uncertain of the Government's intentions to amend the duties at present fulfilled by the Vestries and District Boards under the Metropolis Management Act of 1855, but for the present year 1890, at least, no such change will take place. (The District Boards transferred their responsibilities to the Metropolitan Borough Councils which were created by the London (Local Government) Act 1900, thus rationalizing the jigsaw of authorities in London and creating larger administrative units.

Perhaps there are lessons to be learned and comparisons to be made of the complex administrations of a century ago with the demise of the Greater London Council and the fragmentation of responsibilities to numerous new authorities.

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HACKNEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume one, number one, was published in Spring 1937.

Items in the newsletter included :- 'Relics of Broad Street Station' an item about saving some of the cast-iron columns from the scrap merchants: 'Heat and Dust' (Shoreditch Generating Station), concerning conservation of electric arc lamps in Shoreditch and the generating station: 'Stoke Newington Reservoirs and the New River', conservation work again, this time the reservoirs and buildings: 'The Agapemomite Church' (Rookwood Road, Clapton Common), a nicely potted history of the church, some of its people and its building: 'Seeing Red', some history of public telephones and pillar boxes, and a plea for preservation.

An interesting item in the 'In Brief' column is:-
 The new Hackney Museum is on the way to opening some time next summer (1988?). It now has a curator, Christine Johnstone, and a building, part of the old Methodist Hall in Mare Street, but no collection as yet. The museum will be a local history museum with special regard being given to the history of immigrants who have moved in the area over the last century.

The space at Mare Street is large and reasonably flexible and should last well into the foreseeable future. The museum is interested in anything connected with Hackney and life there. They are looking for donations to start off their collection and if you have anything which you think may be of interest, please contact Christine Johnstone, Hackney Museum, Central Hall, Mare Street, London, E8 1HE. Telephone 986 6914.

ODDS and ENDS

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EAST END VIDEO GROUP

The East End Video Group is a library, archive and distribution network based in Tower Hamlets. They have a wide selection of tapes made in or about the East End, historic footage of the Siege of Sidney Street, reminiscence group tapes, work made by schools and colleges, documentaries and feature films. They organise occasional screenings at venues in the borough, or you can hire or buy of their tapes for a nominal fee.

If YOU have any film (16mm or Super) or video which you think may be relevant, even unedited or unfinished footage, please submit it. They pay a producer's fee and return the original.

The group is based at three centres; Four Corners Film Workshop, Tower Hamlets Arts Project and Island Art Centre. For list and other information, contact Catharine Johnson at Island Art Centre, Pillier Road, London E14, (Tel: 987 7925).

CYRIL GILBERT Flat 3, 5 St. Matthews Gdns, St. Leonards on Sea, TN38 0TS

"I am particularly interested in Mile End Brewery in the period 1867-1910, when my grandfather Thomas Gilbert, and Great-grandfather, John Gilbert, and his sister's husband, Thomas Rumball, all worked there, having migrated from Thorley, Herts, in the mid-1860's. where my great-great-grandfather, Thomas Gilbert, was landlord of the Coach & Horses inn, around 1847-1851. This inn dates back to 15th/16th century, when it was a 'hall house' and Cecil Rhodes (of South Africa fame) lived there when it was owned by his uncle.

My earlier ancestors came down from Scotland and I think they came to Hertfordshire with the early cattle drovers, who fattened up the cattle there, for later transport to London. I think my family went on to settle in Bethnal Green in the 1860's. I was born in East Ham in 1922 and my parents and grandparents were born in Mile End (Shandy Street). If anyone can supply any information or background, I would be pleased to hear from them."

DEREK MORRIS 21 Haddon Court, Shakespear Rd, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 5NB

My interest is any aspect of Mile End Old Town and Stepney Green between 1700-1770. I would like to contact anyone with similar interest. In particular, I want to know of any documentary evidence, or pictures, of this period.

LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM

From the early days of horse-drawn omnibuses to the most modern computer controlled tube trains, London's transport story is told by this remarkable collection. There are working exhibits to see and try and videos using archive film showing transport in action. There is a shop selling postcards, books and souvenirs, including poster reproductions.

The museum is on the Piazza, Covent Garden, London. Telephone 379 6344. Opening hours, 10am - 6pm every day except 24-26 December. Reduced rates for pre-booked parties, and free admission for handicapped visitors (and various special facilities).

(NB. The leaflet I have says "Come and try the museum for 30 minutes FREE... if you stay longer, you pay..."

GREATER LONDON PHOTO LIBRARY

There were many fears about the future of this collection upon the demise of the G.L.C. For those interested, the service continues. I have recently received a pamphlet, issued by the City of London, giving particulars of the library services.

The library holds almost half a million photographs, mostly topographical, covering the Greater London area. Anyone can use the library and those wishing to do so should make a personal visit. The library cannot carry out picture searches for you. Appointments are not necessary and the library is open from 9.30am until 4.45pm, Tuesdays to Fridays. It is best to avoid the lunch period, 1-2pm.

Most of the pictures have been taken for official purposes by the former G.L.C. and L.C.C. Particularly well covered are education, local-authority housing, transport, the river, bridges, parks, churches, hospitals, the fire-service, war damage, pubs, theatres and cinemas. In general the pictures are more architectural than social. The bulk of the material is twentieth century, plus some photographs going back to the 1860's and some of contemporary subjects. The library is basically a historical source rather than a news-agency.

Copies of photographs can be ordered and photocopies can also be bought. Depending on the purpose for which you use them, there is a scale of charges. The library claims copyright on all pictures.

Any further information from the GREATER LONDON PHOTOGRAPH LIBRARY, Greater London Record Office and History Library, 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB (Tel: 01-633 6759).

Two points about this item occur to me (John Curtis). First, there is no mention of photographic postcards being available at the library. It seems to me that here is a great opportunity to exploit a market. If the facility exists it should be mentioned and publicised; if it does not exist, it should!

Second, the subject of copyright, which the library claims on ALL pictures. I understand that copyright on photographs lasts, for the commissioner of the photograph (be this the photographer or any other person) for fifty years after its first publication date. If this is so, then copyright on many old pictures has run out. A further aspect of this is that many photographers give pictures to museums and libraries so that they are readily available to other people. I do not think this availability should be restricted by museums making charges for copyright which is not theirs. Museums are, after all, financed by public resources. Why should the public have to pay twice? What do other readers think?

MEMBER'S POINTS

MRS L E ROBERTS (from New Zealand)... The name of the man in the article, who wanted fly-buttons, was John Holmes of Pontefract, where he says he intended to open a museum. He has not replied to my letter. However, perhaps a member might be interested in collecting these old fly-buttons.

KEIRAN COSTELLO has a particular interest in rail transport history... and he works in a professional capacity as Assistant Curator at North Woolwich Old Station Museum.

PHILIP MERNICK. My interests are postcards from Tower Hamlets, carte de visite photographs from local studios, and tokens and medals, etc., relating to Tower Hamlets.

MR A L HELLIAR (writing to Doreen Kendall) I have hazy memories of my time as a boy scout in, not Baden Powell's outfit, but what was known as a Queen's Troop. We met in an empty factory in St Leonard's Road, North End, close to the 'Cut', River Lea. We were a poor outfit, most lads without uniform, and during our drill nights, the rougher locals would pelt us with stones through broken windows.

We went on a so-called route march to Blackheath, but journeyed through Blackwall Tunnell by bus. The march ended in a brick fight with lads who had followed us from Poplar and we had to return home. I mention this because Dr Stuart Murray wanted info' but my recollection is too scanty to be of use to him.

During my hours of research with old maps and rate books, I frequently made a note of a name which might have been the origin of a place or street name in Poplar. Most of these notes were then inserted in a copy of a book compiled by Daniel Bolt, a one-time surveyor in Poplar. The book was in fact, a street list, with added information, and I would like to suggest that extracts from it would make an interesting item for the 'Record' or 'Newsletter'. Had I been at Bancroft Road for a few years longer I would have liked to have revised Dan Bolt's work and included my findings, and perhaps, name origins relating to Stepney and Bethnal Green.

FELICITY FREMUR As well as being a member, is Co-ordinator of The Heritage Centre, Spitalfields. This is a museum and resource centre in the process of being set up in two Georgian buildings at 17/19 Princelet Street, which were bought by the Spitalfields Trust in 1980. The aim is to build local links, to show how Spitalfields has changed and adapted to different cultures through the years. Anyone with ideas or suggestions, or would like to help, call Felicity on 377 6901 or visit the Centre.

DOREEN KENDALL Hackney Empire was due to return to something of its former glory in May, when the two domes on the front facade were to be replaced in terracotta at a cost of £250,000 to Mecca Ltd, and with the central female goddess funded by an English Heritage grant. In 1979 Mecca took down one dome when a dangerous structure notice was served by Hackney Council. The other dome followed soon after. The return of the domes sees the end of a long struggle, when, after complaints from the Hackney Society, English Heritage took Mecca to court.

On Saturday, 26 February, Hackney Empire had an open day. They need to raise £150,000 to buy the freehold from Mecca, enabling them to run it as Hackney Empire Preservation Trust. For the past year, helped by C.A.S.T. New Variety (who administer a chain of London cabaret venues on a non-profit basis) the H.E.P.S. have had a great year, playing to packed houses 3 nights a week. Volunteers help run the bar, coffee shop, programmes, mailing lists, as well as doing the scrubbing and cleaning needed to return the theatre to its former glory. (The Hackney Empire is a listed building, inside and out, Grade II with star).

The East London Synagogue in Rectory Square, Stepney, has been sold for £260,000 for use as sheltered housing. It is unclear if the synagogue will be demolished for this building work. Built in 1877, with brilliant William Morris style mosaics, stained glass, wood-carvings and brass-work. Local people tried to have the building listed. Unfortunately, it was not considered of great enough architectural value or merit.

The memory of Israel Renson was honoured when The Victoria Park Society and Hackney Archives held a successful Exhibition at 'Friends Anonymous' Prideaux House, E9. He was a founder member, well-known in and around the park. Projects on show included local school's class work on the area a hundred year ago and what their history will be in the future; The new City Airport; The Dockland Light Railway; and The Hurricane in Victoria Park.

ROSEMARY TAYLOR I am currently researching St Mary's and St Joseph's Church, Poplar. The Parish Priest has provided me with an abundance of old documents, newspapers cuttings, etc. This has led me into tracing the history of Upper North Street, or North Street as it appears on the 18th century maps. I would be grateful for any old maps (or copies) of Poplar, 18th century or earlier, or information as to where such maps may be procured. Photographs would also be very welcome. All will be gratefully acknowledged.

Does anyone know anything about a pub in Bow called the "Old Five Bells", which sold only tea, coffee and sandwiches, from 1924 to ?? (I have a cutting showing it was still a going concern in 1949). I only know it was in the vicinity of the Bromley Tabernacle and Bromley Berger Hall. Perhaps members Mr H Read, Bradley Snooks and David Wollen could be interested in these topics.

BOB VICKERS Is any member who is interested in the link between the Braintree and Spitalfields silk-weaving industry willing to visit Braintree Historical Society to exchange information in a "town-twinning" venture? The actual sites of the industry are being demolished but the museum has a lot of records and samples of work. Perhaps a return visit may give a further understanding of our common history.

* * * * *

We are indebted to Mr J A Welch, who though not a member, writes "It has occurred to me that a local history society might find some interest in the enclosed piece, written by my father in 1878..."

Note: - This was an 18-year old's contribution to a magazine called 'The Wasp', produced by a group of office colleagues. Each author provided a number of handwritten copies on thick paper which were then sewn together to make up the issue.

FROM ALDGATE TO BOW

Starting from the pump at Aldgate for a ramble along Whitechapel, Mile End Road, and so on to Bow, is not to any observant person without its objects of interest and giving scope for a partial insight into the attractions which abound in the eastern part of London; and as the subject will be new to many of our readers who cannot claim to have wandered in this locality, I will give for their edification a few notes made by myself during a leisure hour.

The first object that received the attention of the traveller is a row of low-roofed shops of ancient appearance standing on the right hand side of Aldgate, which gives, every weekday, signs of activity upon the approach of daylight, and causing men dressed in blue or white smocks and devoid of headgear to hurry to and fro with huge carcasses of fresh meat balanced on their shoulders and then deposited in carts that shortly after are despatched to various destinations in London and elsewhere, and the meat devoured as best suits the appetite at the magic hour of one.

We no sooner leave this emporium of the good old English beef than we are surprised to see the extraordinary amount of vehicular traffic that unceasingly rolls and continues rolling throughout the day - cabs, stage coaches, trams, wagons, lorries, carts heavy and light all contribute to the din and only when day is succeeded by night is there any rest afforded to those who, after a day's hard toil, seek repose by the warmth of the fireside, or sleep in oblivion till their duties calleth them once again to :-

*"Till, and thus the strife prolong,
Thro' Life's uneven road;
Until in peacefulness they dwell
In their unseen abode"*
(Welch)

We now approach the haymarket of Whitechapel, which on business days retards the progress of the traffic in consequence of the hay and straw carts being stationed in the middle of the not very wide thoroughfare and remaining there till they have disposed of their merchandize, but I have reason to believe that its removal is intended to some vacant land in Bow Common Lane, and the sooner we see this accomplished the better.

We now take the liberty of peering thro' one or two shop windows and notice a novel introduction respecting the competition of grocers, which consists of giving articles of household use gratis, according to the quantity of tea purchased by their customers, such as preserve dishes, cups and saucers, clocks, satchels, concertinas, ornaments, tumblers, egg cups, plates, and others too numerous to mention and as I do not think this is carried on with loss, the gain no doubt is ensured by selling an inferior quality of tea to what the price paid for it demands.

Passing onward, we presently stop to admire the church of St. Mary Whitechapel which has recently been rebuilt at the expense of the great brewer, Ind Coope Esq., who gave the munificent sum of £20,000 for its restoration.

Proceeding on our journey we pass the house of 'Wainwright celebrity', the East London and Pavilion Theatres, and come to a part of our journey that is the liveliest we have as yet enjoyed. Here the pedestrians are gathered into minor groups listening to the hawkers (who occupy a position between the stalls, barrows and stands that line the pavement) enumerating the virtues of the wares they are offering for sale, or to the songster who very often happens to have a cold and a concertina for a 'Reserve Force'. The scene is made more livelier by cries of "Three stick a penny", "Try your weight sir?", "2 shots a penny", and numerous other sounds of speech, whilst opposite stands the London Hospital, with a frontage that is now complete by the addition of the 'Grocers Wing'.

At the corner of the Cambridge Road we notice an open air 'Sale by auction' (in full swing) of the human frame adornments, where you buy a vest 6s/6d, dress coat 1/- and trousers to match 1/-, or suit complete 2/6d but of course they are not equal to the suits made by Lynes & Son. We now emerge into a

wider thoroughfare, perhaps the widest road in London, which is called 'Mile End Road', and approaching the 'Assembly Hall', a wooden structure of tent-like shape and commonly called the 'Big Tent'. Halting for a few minutes we watch the people flocking in for an hour or so to hear a lecture given daily by 'Fiddler Joss' (as the placards announce).

In passing the 'Dublin Castle Coffee Palace' I would recommend my young reader to step in and enjoy a cup of the drinks that are ready from 7am till 11.30pm, and after, if he is in a good frame of mind, engage in a friendly controversy on the Eastern or any other question, and if you support the policy of the Government you will not fail to meet with a hearty reception by the group of persons that congregate nightly all the year round outside of the imposing and substantial edifice. Resuming our walk we pass the well-known Lusby's Music Hall, Charrington's Brewery, also the milestone whereon many a tramp has gazed with feelings of delight as he found that it only required another 1760 yards to reach Whitechapel.

We now begin to enter a neighbourhood of a less active character and modern appearance and passing the fourth group of almshouses that are on our left and bending the curve of the road we stand in front of the City of London Union, the exterior appearance of which is worthy the remark "that it looks more like a palace".

We now proceed to the length of the pleasantest road in Bow called 'Bow Road', where trees of youthful age, and now about to rise from their winters slumber, are implanted on each side of the thoroughfare to the delight of the pedestrians that nightly perambulate the walk and which has earned the cognomen of the 'Monkey's Parade'. The church of Bow looms in sight and the bell is tolling the hour as we pass Bow and Bromley Institute which possesses a spacious, large oblong room that is frequently available for concerts, entertainments or other like purposes, and now praising the gentlemen who built the set of almshouses that immediately precedes the church, we draw to our journey's end, a feature of which is that for a distance of three miles we had counted no less than 90 public houses for such a short distance that it helped materially to spoil our appetite for the meal that awaited us in 'Home, sweet Home'.

James Alexander Welch (1859-1935).

TOWER HAMLETS ARCHIVE REPOSITORY

The archives are now housed in a special strongroom in which the temperature and humidity levels are constantly monitored, preserving the contents.

For the most part they are original and unique handwritten or typed records; The surviving records of the Borough Council and its predecessors, the Boroughs of Bethnal Green, Poplar and Stepney (1900-1965); and the various civil parishes from the 16th century to 1900. These include committee minutes, ratebooks, land-tax assessments, vestry minutes, churchwarden's accounts, poor-law records, etc., anything concerned with administration. There are also archives of some local organisations; title deeds; church and chapel records; manuscripts of literary works. The earliest manuscript held is a parchment lease of 1574; The earliest in volume format, a book with details of meetings of the prominent inhabitants of the 'hamlet' of Poplar, from 1593.

Those wishing to look at material should make an appointment by telephoning 980 4366 Ext 47, or, if you want further information, contact Jerome Farrell (Archivist) or Christopher Lloyd (Local History Librarian) at Bancroft Library, Bancroft Road, London E1 4DQ, or by the telephone number above.

OLD O.S. MAPS

Alan Godfrey (Mapseller and Publisher) 57 Spoor Street, Dunston, Gateshead, NE11 9BD, sells a very good and wide-ranging selection of reprint maps. There are over 60 of London, of various dates. He aims to issue about 25 London maps each year. In addition to the normal scale maps, there are also 'large scale plans' which show details of interiors of 'many public buildings'.

Many of the maps are available from local libraries and good bookshops. Also by post from the publisher.

Beta vulgaris

SUGAR BEET

by Bob Vickers

When the British navy blockaded Napoleon's supply of cane-sugar, sugar-beet extraction was investigated and found to be worth exploiting as a food source. Sugar-beet develops a white, pointed root, weighing up to 2 lbs, and has about 17% sugar content. English trials in this field during the 19th century were unwelcome by those who had an interest in the West Indies. It was not until the blockade of British shipping in the 1914 war that new impetus was given to the home-grown source of sugar.

It was at Ulting, Essex, in 1852, that Robert Marriage, a Quaker, gave expression to his anti-slavery campaign by planting sugar-beet and extracting sugar at a mill, HOE MILL (between Maldon and Chelmsford). His effort were short-lived. In 1868, James Duncan of Silvertown had a factory at Lavenham, producing much beet-sugar but eventually he had to close. From 1856 to 1869 the Metropolis Sewerage and Essex Reclamation Company opened a business to grow beet at Rippleside, Barking. They also experimented at Ilford, Essex.

It was not until 1931 that the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries made the commercial production of sugar-beet feasible. By 1928 a big subsidy from the government brought interest from private producers (a group which included Tate and Lyle) and by 1928 there were eighteen factories in production. By 1936 an Act of Parliament made eighteen factors into one, named The British Sugar Corporation. These factories produced the required sugar during the Second World War.

The sugar industry of London was supplied with raw material by the farms of Essex and when, later, came the introduction of cane-sugar from the West Indies, production of sugar increased. The conditions of production were appalling; the methods and conditions of work so primitive that even the Rosemary Lane Irish would not tolerate them. The refiners, many of whom came from Germany, brought their own workers from their native land and it was these men and their families who carried out the main production of sugar in the East End of London in the last half of the 19th century.

Frank Lewis, writing in "Essex and Sugar" says that although sugar-refining was a staple industry of the East End, "yet not a single enterprise has survived". Pigot's Directory of 1803-7 shows a list of eighty sugar-refiners gathered together in Whitechapel, Mile End, St. Georges and other local areas. A letter quoted in "Essex Countryside" (No 103 August 1970) says "...across East London the refinery chimneys could be seen". The danger of fire in sugar-houses was considerable. An illustration of the result of fire, by artist Schnebbelie, dated 1820, entitled 'Ruins of a Sugar Refinery in Commercial Road', appears in Millicent Rose's "The East End of London".

Many refiners slipped over the borders into Essex to dwell in the new suburban homes that were to become part of Greater London. The following list may be of interest:-

- JOSEPH SCHRODER of German descent, had a refinery at 7 Christian Street, Stepney, lived at 13 Stratford Green, Stratford.
- MARTIN TIGER, another German, lived at 95 High Street, Stratford. His refinery was in east Stepney, at St. George's.
- DEIBERICK SCHWINGE, whose refinery was at Christian Street, Stepney, lived or had land at Woodford, (see 'Pages from an old rent book' in Essex Review, vol 133, 1924). This dates the tenancy as 1854-56.
- CLAUS HINKINS, refinery in Cable Street, lived at Maryland Point, Stratford.
- CHARLES DAMBS, whose business was in Rupert Street, Goodman Fields (Aldgate), lived at 79 Forest Rise, Whipps Cross, Walthamstow, E17. Previous he had lived in Forest Gate. Dames Road was named after his house occupancy.
- PETER KOCK, his sugar-house was in Cable Street. He lived at 1 Crownfield Place, (Crownfield Road, Stratford New Town).
- LUDWIG FINKIN, sugar-baker of Whitechapel, owned three pieces of land near Woodford Wells.
- WILLIAM SAICK was living in Hight Street, Stratford.
- JOHN WAGNER was born in Brentelburgh, Germany, had a sugar-refinery in Mansell Street, and lived at Great Langtons, Hornchurch, in 1850.

Another word for sugar-baker was 'Pan-man'. When a group of pan-men bought modest property at Plaistow in 1925, the area became known as 'Panville'. In Bethnal Green, the sugar, which was made into sugar-loaves, is commemorated in 'Sugar Loaf Walk', and Mr F Sainsbury, of Newham Library, pinpoints the site of one of the first sugar refineries in this country at Sugar House Lanes at Stratford. The 1851 West Ham census returns show a GORD CAMPE, a sugar-refiner from Germany in occupation there.

Finally, in the "Annual Register 1865" it is reported that a murder was committed by a sugar-refiner named FERDINAND KOHL.

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PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 1988-89

Unless otherwise stated, all Society meetings start at 7.30pm and are held at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London E1.

- Thur. 8 Sept. TOWER HAMLETS ARCHIVES, A guided tour by Jerome Farrell, Archivist
6 - 8pm at Bancroft Road Library, Bancroft Road, E1.
- Wed. 23 Sept. VESLEY CENTENARY - THE VESLEYS AND EAST LONDON - by Alfred French
- Wed. 26 Oct. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - followed by MEMBER'S EVENING
- Thur. 10 Nov. EDITH RAMSAY - by Bertha Sokoloff
- Wed. 7 Dec. MILE END IN THE 1750's - by Derek Morris
- 1989
- Thur. 19 Jan. MEMORIES OF NEWHAM - SWEET & SOUR - by Stanley Reed
- Wed. 15 Feb. THE EXCAVATION AT THE ROYAL MINT (illustrated) - by Peter Mills
- Thur. 16 Mar. JEWS AND POLITICS IN EAST LONDON 1918-1939 - by Elaine Smith
- Wed. 12 Apr. THE PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY and DOCKLANDS, PAST & PRESENT
(illustrated) - by Bob Aspinall
- Sat. 13 May VISIT TO WHITECHAPEL BELL FOUNDRY, Whitechapel Road, E1 at 10am.
- Sat. 24 June REGENTS CANAL WALK - led by Anne Sansom
2.30pm at Stepney East Station, Commercial Road.

These are the brief details of our programme for the coming year, just received from David Behr. Thankfully, we have them in time for this newsletter and, hopefully, we shall be getting a properly printed card this year. Our thanks to David for all the work involved in getting an interesting programme together, plus an anticipatory vote of thanks to all those speakers who will visit us.

You will see that there are visits and walks on 8 September 1988, 13 May 1989 and 24 June 1989. Assuming that dozens of members will want to go on these, can you please telephone David Behr on 790 7071 if you intend to take part. He can then tell you if the walk or visit is overbooked or not.

You will also notice that a 'Member's Evening' follows the A.G.M. This gives members a chance to give fellow members a short talk, etc., or to mount a mini-exhibition of some sort. So that we can have a modicum of planning.. and to ensure that you get *your* effort 'on the programme', again can you let David know, a) the nature of your item, and b), the time and/or space you think it will take. If you need any equipment, please make that known.

EAST LONDON RECORD

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

You can join the mailing list for this publication by contacting Doreen Kendall at 20 Puteaux House, Roman Road, London, E2. This will ensure that you receive all future editions 'hot off the press'. Doreen can also let you know of the availability of any back numbers you may wish to obtain. Incidentally, issue No.11 is due out in September. The book is also on sale on bookshops, especially community bookshops, museums, etc.

All members are reminded that the books make ideal little gifts, current editions being priced at £1.50 or so, (some back-numbers being cheaper). I would personally make another plea for anyone with Issue No.1. which they wish to dispose of, to contact yours truly. I only need this issue to complete the whole set. (You can send it with your subs!).

J.E.C.

THE EYE OF CONSCIENCE Book Review

Wolf Suschitzky, brother of Edith Tudar Hart, says, in this book of photographs "We call this book 'The Eye of Conscience'. It was Edith Tudor Hart's awareness of social conditions and her feelings for her fellow human beings which influenced her life and her art."

It really is a good title, summing up the photographic contents completely. Covering people and environments in Vienna, London, South Wales, Northern England and Scotland, the pictures convey the feeling of an era (the 1930's mostly) that manage to combine nostalgia with a feeling of gratitude that such days and conditions are a thing of the past. Let no-one hanker for the "good old days" after looking at the images in this book.

Apart from the captions to the pictures, the only text is potted life story of Edith Tudor Hart at the beginning of the book. To one who is interested in photography as a means of recording social history, the pictures are superb. The people portrayed, whether they are conscious of the camera or not, possess a simple directness and appeal. The pictures are well composed. From my own experience, the photographer was gifted and talented. These pictures are very valuable social documents.

Published by Dirk Nishen Publishing, 19 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2PT, at £5.95 plus £1 postage, if ordered direct. (6"x8" - 125 pages).

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

After the publication of the results of member's interests, etc., a few members thought it worthwhile to enquire after the addresses of other members, presumably to further or combine their own interests with that of others. It also emerged that quite a few of us were actively exploring very interesting avenues of history.

It would be nice to know that some of our members have been in touch with each other and that something has resulted from the survey. Well, how about spreading your information, interest, enthusiasm, knowledge, etc., etc., with other members. Its quite simple to do. Drop a line to me, John Curtis, and we can include a small article in this newsletter. You don't have to be a literary genius.. just make it legible. I sometimes take the liberty of slightly editing material but if you prefer this was not done, please say.

THE CABLE

Location of a photograph or related information on a cinema called THE CABLE, which was situated in Cable Street, E1, are sought by a Mr Alan Dein. His grandfather was manager there in the 1930s but has no records. The cinema was destroyed by bombing and was not rebuilt after the war. Any help can be forwarded by J Curtis.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - 1988/89

No, they are not due immediately but this is the chance I get to remind you that September will be here all too quickly... and that's the start of our year. Members are reminded that subscriptions are £2 for membership (£1 for O.A.P. and full-time bona fide students). You can send them in as soon as you like.

Name

Address

.....

..... Tel. No:

Please find enclosed £..... Date

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO :- John Curtis 9 Avon Road London E17 3RB