



EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY
BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

Readers will recall that in Bulletin No.12 (September 1969) a short article appeared on "The Pearlies" in which mention was made of the Marriott family. John Marriott died early this month at the early age of 46 and has been succeeded by his 17-year-old son, John, as "Pearly King of London and Finsbury". As his "District" includes much of Hackney and he was a familiar figure there raising money for charities, he deserves a place in our records. He was cremated in the East London he loved. Many "pearlies" attended his funeral which was reminiscent of the rather colourful and lavish funerals of the early part of this century in East London. Hermit Road echoed to the sound of many a brass band on Sunday mornings. Friendly Societies were represented by the friends or colleagues of the deceased, wearing sashes, aprons and gloves, and escorted by enormous coloured banners.

The first week in June saw the departure of the last inhabitant of Oriental Street, Poplar. Speaking to this last family, they remembered when the tall houses were occupied by the "elite" of East London. Ship's officers and dock foremen. The Captains and Company's representatives stayed at the numerous small hotels along East India Dock Road. The maritime atmosphere has gone for ever. The occasional pigeon flutters out of the broken windows and the occasional meths drinker slides through the broken doors of the derelict basements. In ten years, we shall never be able to show anyone where Oriental Street stood.

It was interesting to see an Easter Fair and Circus on the St. Katherine' site though regrettable that vandalism presented great difficulties. Fairs have been on this site, or near this site, for many centuries. One wonders what happened to the hooligans who interfered with the nearby Rag Fair in Hog Lane, two centuries ago. They probably got shorter shrift than their present-day successors.

The death of one of our ex-Committee members, Mr. E.J.Dobson, is very sad news indeed. He was always keen on having things right and members will recall how he kept us on our toes at Annual General Meetings. Nevertheless, he was a great lover of East London and his passing is a loss to us all.

The recent Tudor programmes on TV were very popular, and members will be interested to know that a Tudor Exhibition is being considered for East London at the end of the year. More details will be available later.

May I leave you with the following advertisement:-

"NURSES WANTED

Two active, intelligent persons as Nurses, from 30 to 40 years of age, to physicians wards: each will have four assistants under her direction; and about 50 patients confided to her care. They must be able to read and write, and produce testimonials of moral character. Apply to the Matron, London Hospital, from 10 to 4 o'clock."

(This appeared in "The Times" on the 3rd October, 1840).

Have a good holiday!

A.H.F.

DICK TURPIN : EAST LONDON'S HIGHWAYMAN!

Many of the stories of Dick Turpin, probably the most famous of all highwaymen, are of course legendary. The most romantic tale, which concerns Dick Turpin's celebrated ride to York on his mare, Black Bess, in which Harrison Ainsworth ("Rookwood") credits him with having ridden the 200 miles from London to York in 15 hours, was apparently untrue. The hero of this story was, it seems, John William Nevison, a Yorkshire highwayman who had been dead some 20 years when Turpin was born.

It is said that Turpin was born at the "Rose & Crown" Inn at Hampstead, in Essex, of which Inn his father was the landlord. The local parish registers record his birth on September 21st, 1705, to John and Mary Turpin. At nearby Thaxted, a building still exists known as Turpin's house - reputedly the place where he sometimes changed horses to outwit his pursuers, galloping up to the stables on a black horse and departing seconds later on a white one, or vice versa.

Turpin started his career as a butcher's apprentice in Whitechapel, London, and before long he was augmenting his wages by stealing meat and even cattle. At length, a herd of cattle belonging to a Plaistow farmer disappeared. The crime was traced to Turpin's door and he had to move on. A cave in Epping Forest, on the outskirts of London, became his next headquarters. He joined a gang of deer-stealers and together they raided local churches and lonely farmhouses.

One of Dick Turpin's highway victims about this time was the poet, Alexander Pope, whose villa overlooked the River Thames at Twickenham. Pope was already in the neighbourhood of his home when attacked, but to Turpin's disgust all that was forthcoming was a bundle of papers. He threw them into the hedge as worthless, but on seeing Pope make a dart towards them he snatched up the bundle again, thinking he must have missed something of value. He had. The papers were the original draft of Pope's "Essay on Man". To recover this, the poet surrendered a gold chain which Turpin had surprisingly overlooked.

There was little of the gay, debonair rascal of legend in the real-life Turpin, who was at times quite ruthless. While hiding in Essex he would rob the local smugglers by masquerading as a revenue officer, and on one occasion he fatally shot a forest keeper who had tracked him to his cave. He shared his refuge with Tom King, another highwayman, and Turpin's wife kept them supplied with food. Several of the old inns between Epping and London cloaked the movements of Turpin and his accomplices - known as the "Essex Gang" - but their chief meeting-place was the White Hart in Dury Lane, London. Another haunt was the Spaniards Inn on Hampstead Heath, where a bullet supposed to have been fired by Turpin during a scuffle is still displayed for all to see.

Turpin lost his chief partner in crime, the jovial Tom King, through a mischance. A constable was in the act of arresting King at the Red Lion in Whitechapel when Turpin rode up. He fired, but the bullet hit King instead of the constable, and the shot proved fatal.

Soon after this incident, with a price of £200 on his head, Turpin "retired" to the north of England, where he assumed his wife's maiden name of

Palmer. For three months he lived at Long Sutton in Lincolnshire and then crossed the River Humber into Yorkshire, staying near Beverley. At intervals he would disappear "on business"..

Turpin's disguise as John Palmer served him for about two years, and it is surprising that, after so elusively adventurous a career, it was a comparatively mild affair of horse-stealing that led at length to his capture at the Green Dragon Inn at Welton, near Hull. At this inn, one of his favourite haunts he was unable to use the trap-door by which he often evaded his would-be captors. He was seized and led away to imprisonment in York Castle, where his real identity was revealed by someone who recognised his handwriting. After being tried for murder and other crimes, he was sentenced to death. The Old Debtors' Prison in York, where he was confined, is now incorporated within the Castle Museum, and his cell can still be seen unchanged, with its grim stone table and iron bed.

Just before his execution on April 7th, 1739, Turpin provided money for five men to be fitted out with black head-bands and gloves to act as his mourners. Then, dressed in a brand new fustian suit as though going to meet a friend, he went unabashed to the gallows on the Knavesmire. At the very last he presented a memento to the chaplain in attendance - a carved ivory whistle which he had used to summon his accomplices.

Whatever may be factual or fictional in the East Londoner's view of Dick Turpin, he clearly knew the back streets of Whitechapel, the alleys of Bethnal Green and the side lanes of Plaistow. There is a grave in Wanstead Churchyard to the Turpin family of Whitechapel, but though this is sometimes pointed out as Dick Turpin's resting place this seems unlikely. It is possible that these were relatives of his.

G.B.Wood/AHF.

THE LONDON ORPHAN ASYLUM AT CLAPTON

Never was a distinction between the vocation of a Christian minister and the practical philanthropist recognised by Dr. Reed. Christ's mission was to humanity in all its destitution, affliction and sin; to the body as well as to the soul, and the disciple was bent from the first upon following the example of the Great Master. Before he had been ordained a year, a case of distress presented itself which taxed his charity to the utmost. For the sake of three orphan boys employed by a shoemaker in Rosemary Lane, Tower Hill, he became answerable to some extent for the debts of their master, who shortly after became bankrupt, and left his benefactor to discharge the claims of the creditors and to support the boys from his own purse. Being in no circumstances permanently to bear such a burden, he presented the case of the orphans to the public, and while engaged in providing for them he conceived the idea of an asylum for orphans which was founded in 1813. The first house taken was in Cannon Street Road East, which was held for about two years. The increasing family necessitated a removal to a more commodious one in Bethnal Green and thence to Hackney Road. A fund was then opened for the present spacious range of buildings, which was raised upon the beautiful site at Lower Clapton in the year 1823. The energy and devotion of the founder to the cause of the orphan proved contagious to the highest degree. It found his hands sustained by good men of all persuasions. Political and religious differences were unheeded

and amongst the firmest supporters of the growing institution were the late Dukes of Kent and Wellington and the late George Byng Esq., M.P.. The objects for which the asylum was raised were these: To maintain, clothe and educate fatherless children, respectably descended but destitute of support, between the ages of seven and fifteen, without reference to sex or locality. The report in 1821 shows that 109 boys and girls were thus cared for. The present report shows that the permanent number on the establishment is 400. Since its opening, 2,712 children have been admitted to the London Orphan Asylum, while 2,300 well trained for the business of life have issued from its walls. Situations have been found by the Board of Managers in the leading offices and warehouses in the City for the boys, and for the girls engagements in schools and the higher branches of domestic service. Beyond this for some years a fraternal influence is retained over the ex-pupils, who are encouraged to return each returning year with a good character from their employers in the hope of obtaining a pecuniary reward offered to such as behave well. The funded property now amounts to £70,000; the interest derivable from this sum, together with £4,600 from annual subscriptions, forms the main source of income.

THE INFANT ORPHAN ASYLUM AT WANSTEAD

Dr. Andrew Reed became aware of the necessity of a similar institution for infants at an early date in his benevolent career. There was no public establishment for the relief of fatherless children under seven years of age, and the board of the London Asylum was consequently besieged by widows who found their hands so tied by the little children as to render exertion for the rest of the family an utter impossibility. This deficiency was supplied in 1827. He addressed a touching appeal to the public, and temporarily took some little ones into his own house. Friends and money soon came to his assistance, and a house was taken in Hackney Road which was considered in the light of a nursery to the Clapton Asylum. A larger house was then engaged at Dalston (now the German Hospital) and when the present palatial home (which was erected under the auspices of the late Prince Consort and His Majesty the King of the Belgians) was prepared for their reception, the family was removed to it in 1843. At this juncture, having superintended the minutest details of arrangement, and attended daily to watch, as it were, the laying of each stone of that splendid pile he loved to contemplate, Dr. Reed relinquished his connection with the Institution, and left it, well sustained, to give his mind to other objects. Though at first designed to receive orphan children without distinction from the earliest period to the age of seven, it is now intended "to board, clothe and educate in the principles of the Church of England, the boys until they attain fourteen, and the girls fifteen years of age". The Asylum is delightfully situated, about seven miles from London; it is equal to the accommodation of 600 children, and is the largest institution of its kind in England. The educational department comprises four extensive schools, and is under the best superintendence. The Asylum was incorporated in 1843; its annual expenditure is about £13,000 a year. There are a few admissions by purchase, and the rest of the funds are purely due to voluntary contributions."

(These two articles were published in "The Illustrated London News" in March 1862, and were submitted by Mr. Wilmott).

"For me, the East End of London, where you get the true Londoner, is more pleasant to live in than any other area."

(Lord Snowdon, 1971).

HOUNDSDITCH - EAST LONDON'S WESTERN BORDER.

Houndsditch was first paved in the year 1503. The citizens of London came out through Aldgate and Bishopsgate to walk along the new street and to "refresh their dulled spirites in the sweete and wholesome ayre". To the east were "fayre hedgrowes of Elme trees and pleasant fieldes" and to the west the mud wall enclosing the twelfth-century moat and beyond that the ancient Roman city wall.

The moat, which originally ran all along the wall from Ludgate to the Tower, became, during the Middle Ages, a stagnant ditch and "much filth especially dead Dogges were there layd or cast". So it was called Houndsditch.

But its history goes back much further. A thousand years ago, in the time of King Canute, this piece of land was part of the property of Criter (Knighten) Gild. Thirteen Knights, well beloved of the King, begged him for the strip of land between the Thames and Bishopsgate. He gave it to them on condition that they "performed three combats and ran at tilt against all comers - all of which they performed gloriously".

The Gild of Knights held the land until the twelfth century, when they gave it to the Holy Trinity Priory, the site of which is shown by a wall plaque in nearby Mitre Square. One of the Priors of Holy Trinity built a row of cottages in the field by Houndsditch, for bedridden couples. On Fridays devout people of the city walked along that way to bestow alms to the sick lying by their windows.

In the reign of Henry VIII there were many changes. The Priors and canons of Holy Trinity were sent away, the Priory buildings were demolished and houndsditch field was given to Magdalen College, Cambridge.

Most of the field was then made into a garden to grow herbs and roots for the market, but the area nearest Aldgate was acquired by three brothers called Owens who were Gunfounders, and here they made brass cannons. The noise was so great that "the poore bedrid people were worne out" and moved away and their cottages were taken by "brokers and sellers of old apparell". During Elizabeth's reign the garden was divided into plots, houses were built, together with carpenters' yards and a bowling alley.

As years passed, the ditch was filled in, the Roman wall removed and Houndsditch became a busy thoroughfare in the City of London. Modern buildings are gradually replacing the older shops, but Houndsditch's two churches at Aldgate and Bishopsgate remain unchanged. Both are dedicated to St. Botolph, a Suffolk abbot of the seventh century, who did great work in improving the roadways across the dangerous marshes of East Anglia and so he became the English Patron Saint of Travellers."

(Mrs. R. J. Griffiths, GPO. LTR. "News & Views" per Mr. Anderson).

Editors Note: Many of the buildings of the Priory of Holy Trinity remained for many years afterwards, some having been put to secular use by Lord Audley to whom they were given. Parts still remained to be demolished in the latter part of the last century. In fact, an arch (believed to be part of the Chapter House) is still in position opposite Aldgate Pump.

OLD WEST HAM INDUSTRIES.

CALICO PRINTING :

In 1676 William Sherwin (thought to be the first English calico printer) took out a patent and established works by the Lea. This was the commencement of an industry which was to last in the Stratford area for 200 years, and by the middle of the 18th century there were 80 acres of "calico grounds" by the Channelsea. The industry relied upon a plentiful supply of pure water combined with open ground nearby upon which the cloth could bleach and dry. In the 19th century it became largely a "factory" industry and turned more to silk printing. There were large works at the Abbey Mills and by the Channelsea bridge in the High Street, and even by the time of the 1851 Census there were still about 250 people engaged in the silk and calico printing and allied trades.

BCW PORCELAIN :

About 1748-9 the calico printers were joined by the renowned Bow Porcelain works. In 1744 Thomas Frye of West Ham and Edward Heylyn of Bow took out the first patent for the manufacture of porcelain and experimented for about four years at Heylyn's glass factory at Bow. In 1748 Frye took out a further patent and, backed financially by Alderman Arnold of the City of London, started the works on the northern side of Stratford High Street. The exact site is thought to be that until recently occupied by the Wilmer Lea Foundries between Bow Bridge and Marshgate Lane.

The building was constructed on the plan of one at Canton in China, and the whole was heated by two stoves on the outside of the buildings - the heat for the various processes being conveyed throughout by flues and pipes. The heat was almost unbearable at times and it is thought that Frye undermined his health by spending too long periods in it. In its heyday the works employed 300 people - 90 of whom were porcelain painters. Business troubles followed, the works closed in 1776, and the trade transferred to the china works at Derby. The British Museum has a fine collection of "Bow" and our own Passmore Edwards Museum has a representative display of the ware.

Materials for the calico printers and the porcelain makers brought trade to the Lea and its tributaries. Coal and timber came up to wharves by Channelsea bridge and lime to the kilns at Bow Bridge.

MARKET GARDENING :

Although not strictly an "industry" - market gardening also commenced in the West Ham neighbourhood about the middle of the 18th century. The southward expansion of London had driven vegetable growing from the Surrey suburbs round to the eastern side of the capital, and by the end of the century about one eighth of the area of West Ham was under potatoes, turnips, etc. This was to be the harbinger of one of West Ham's chronic troubles a century and more later - casual and intermittent employment.

(F.Sainsbury : "West Ham - Eight Hundred Years").

Note to all members : "Off-Beat Tours" arrange some very enjoyable Sunday walks around East London. Watch your Sunday papers for details. They are usually from Whitechapel Station at 2.30 p.m. and last about two hours, but details vary so the information is published weekly in most Sunday papers.

SHOREDITCH PARISH CHURCH

(Continued from Bulletin No.16)

Before entering the Church, we see the Clerk's House at the S.W. corner. Its origin may lie in the gift of William Thornton, in 1590, of two houses which stood opposite at that time, one for the clerk and one for the vicar. The freehold has been in dispute from time to time but the present building was erected in 1735, one year before the rebuilding of the church commenced, and was the residence of the Clerk until well into the present century. It is now in commercial occupation.

The Interior : At the east end, until its destruction during the recent war, stood a window of French glass, of which at least part was the work of Baptista Sutton. This window was a composite from the east and other windows of the old church. Beyond price, the restoration in 1906 revealed the artist's name upon the lower portion and this section, which depicted the Last Supper, was, at the Commonwealth, the subject of a trumped-up charge against John Squier, a most gentle and well-loved Vicar. The upper window had been presented by Sir Thomas Austen in 1634 and depicted the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau. The Communion Table was the gift of Rolph Fordham, a local cabinet maker, in 1740; the four oak chairs in the Sacrament are of unknown provenance and may well have come from the old church on the evidence of the contemporary style. The oak pulpit was originally on the N. side of the Church - note the sounding board on its two Ionic columns. The North and South galleries were removed in 1857.

The Organ, in the only remaining (West) gallery, was built by Bridge in 1757 at a cost of £600 and suffered with the south wall during the war. The case had carving of the school of Grinling Gibbons and the mechanism was renewed in 1912, having served since the rebuilding of 1736-40. The carving on the clock below may also be of the same school (it is certainly reminiscent of Gibbons' work) and the inscription relates to the restoration of the church in 1856. Restorations of the fabric have taken place in 1766, 1792, 1827, 1856, 1870, 1900 and, finally, after the recent war.

The Library of books left to the Parish by John Dawson of Hoxton Market at his death in 1763, were housed in a room behind the chapel and were originally 870 in number. When they were handed into the keeping of the Public Library in 1894, together with John Dawson's Diary, they totalled only 637 volumes, the others having been lost over the years. Now rebound at shuddering cost (the cost to clean one page alone of dirt and foxing was two shillings and sixpence), they represent a superb contemporary eighteenth century library in which many first editions are represented. These books are never loaned, but they are available for inspection and research at all reasonable times upon application to the Archives Department at Shoreditch District Library.

The monuments in the Church are, in general, unexceptional but there are three which survived from the old church; one under the west gallery and two on the south wall. Of these, that to Elizabeth Benson is, perhaps, of greatest interest for the genealogical connection and for its sculptor, Francis Bird (1667-1731). Best known for his work at St. Paul's Cathedral, Bird spent his early years abroad, returning to work under Grinling Gibbons in 1689. A prolific statuary, he was responsible for many lofty tombs in Westminster Abbey. The Benson memorial is unsigned, but is included in the list given by the sculptor to his friend, Le Neve, for the latter's Monumenta Anglicana.

The memorial under the West gallery commemorates Francis Clerke and

Sarah, his wife, (1625-90) and (1645-1709) respectively. She bore him fourteen sons and one daughter. He was a former rector of Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey. The third remaining from the old church is that, also on the South wall, to the Austen family, 1658/9. Also noteworthy on the South wall, is the memorial tablet to John Marshall, local grocer, prominent citizen and Commandant of the Shoreditch Volunteers in the dark days of the Napoleonic Wars. His signature is to be seen, year after year, on the Pay Lists which survive from 1803-1813 in the Public Record Office for each of the four companies of Volunteer Militia under his command and it is interesting to see the promotions and demotions therein recorded. He is commemorated (probably unknowingly by the recipients) in the Charity which still bears his name today in Shoreditch.

In the crypt stand an interesting tomb from the old church. Known as the Huniades tomb, it commemorates Johannes Banf Huniades, son of the same, who was born of Royal Hungarian stock and, on the maternal side, of Dorothea, daughter of Francis Cotton, Kt., of the County of Kent. "A consummate philosopher and complete in every part of virtue" the inscription by Elizabeth Benson (above), his sister and sole heiress, tells us. On the South side of the crypt stood the vault, also from the old church, of John Gaylor, believed to have been a baker in the Hackney Road, and his wife. It was in the shape of a baker's oven.

Finally, in this short survey, to the Bells of Shoreditch. The famous peal of twelve which is commemorated in the nursery song 'Oranges and Lemons', reached that total in the year 1807. Recast in 1823, and again in 1913, they represent a steady increase on the peal of eight provided at the rebuilding. Originally by Thomas Lester of Whitechapel and his first casting, on which account he donated ten pounds to the poor of the Parish, two more were added in 1765 by the firm of Lester and Pack and the last two were added by Mears of Whitechapel. The total was raised to thirteen by the recent gift of the Merchant Taylors' Company. The Society of Cumberland Youths was founded in 1746, by tradition to honour the Duke of Cumberland on his return after putting down the Jacobite rising of 1745. The peal boards are to be seen in the entrance and it becomes clear that the campanologists of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, like the church itself, were justly famed.

S.C.T.

Unusual Bequest.

In the Will of Samuel Wright of Newington Green, who died 27th July 1736, leaving a fortune of £36,000, was a bequest -

'to the prisoners of Whitechapel Prison £300'.

This was a Debtors Prison built in 1656.

S.A.A.

THE PRICE OF FOOD IN 1444

Wheat per Quarter ..	4/4d.	(21½ new pence)	A Hog..	3/-	(15 new pence)
A Fat Ox ..	£1/11/8d.	(1.58 ")	A Goose ..	3d.	(1½ " ")
Pigeons per doz.-	4d.	(1½ p)	Calves, each	5/-	(25 " ")
Ale per gallon,-	1½d.	(½ p)	A young swan	3d	(1½ " ")
Hay per load.-	3/6½d.	(18 new pence)	Stock-fish..	100 for 17/6d	(87½)
Red Herrings.-	3000 for 11/-	(55 ")			

S.A.A.