



EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY
BULLETIN

No. 18

September 1971

EDITORIAL

The Rector of Little Ilford has drawn attention to the fact that visitors come from all over the world to see the ancient parish Church of St. Mary, Little Ilford (Church Road, Manor Park), built in 1100, yet the majority of the thousands of people living within a mile of the Church have never been inside it. He invites people to look around the Church (the Society paid a visit to it some time ago) which has some interesting brasses and a window dating from Henry VII.

The excavations in Duke's Place, Aldgate, on our western border, have uncovered the foundations of one of the round Roman bastions on the City Wall. It is interesting to note that whereas the foundations of the bastions in the Barbican area are 20 feet above ground, this one is 20 feet below the ground level. Members should take a look at this site before the ruins disappear in the subway and road widening scheme. Talking of things Roman, Harvey Sheldon of the London Museum, is hoping to undertake a new dig at Old Ford this autumn. This will be in the Maverton Road and Morville Street areas where 19th century discoveries have already been made. This is adjacent to the Roman Road where excavations were undertaken last year yielding coins, pottery and bones. Volunteers to help with the 'dig' (most of the heavy work has been done by machine) are urgently required, and should give their names to Mr. French (504 2737). The work will be done either in October/November 1971 or in February/March 1972.

On a brief visit to the old church at Chiddingstone, Kent, a memorial plaque was noticed paying tribute to a well-known local personality which states "formerly of East London". One wonders how many of the "Victorian elite" would have wished this on their tombstone, and why the relatives decided to do so.

The Port of London Authority is vacating its premises in Trinity Square and Cutler Street. The contents of its museum and some of its archives are being given to the London Museum which has recently been extended. The Society has, however, protested that items which came into their possession in East London should remain in East London, and Mr. Robertson of the Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, will be permitted to view the items and discuss their disposal. Members will regret that the wonderful collection of East London prints (the Gardner collection) and the P.L.A.'s own magnificent collection of East London paintings, will be removed to their new headquarters presumably in Tilbury. This cannot be prevented as they are a private collection. I have, however, suggested that they be displayed at the White-Chapel Art Gallery before leaving the area but there are problems.

The longer nights are approaching, and the Committee again urge the members to set themselves a task and employ their evenings profitably. The local history and reference libraries are full of material and your librarian or a member of the Committee will gladly suggest a subject to pursue. Why not write an article for this Bulletin? or follow up some prominent name or activity of former years? Have you ever looked up old Wills, Church or Society minutes, old maps or plans? The Society has sponsored lines of research and activity in the past, but support has been poor. A.H.F.

A LIMEHOUSE APPRENTICE,

William Adams was born in Kent around 1575. Attracted by the activity in ships and shipping during the adventurous Tudor period, he left the Kentish countryside to serve a shipbuilding apprenticeship in Limehouse. He interested himself not only in practical shipbuilding but in the science of navigation and in due course he went to sea.

The East India Company, incorporated in 1600, in their search for new markets sought to send woollen goods "a most liberall vent of English clothes and kersies" in the Dutch ships that extended their trade northwards from the Archipelago into the China Sea. The first Dutch vessel to reach Japan was one of a Rotterdam fleet which sailed in 1598 for the Moluccas by way of the Magellan Strait and dispersed in the Pacific. She was the "Liefde" and was piloted by William Adams who told his story of the vessel in letters from Japan in 1611. After leaving Chile, the Captain steered for Japan, hoping to find there a better market for his "woolen cloth" than in the "hot countreyes" of the East Indies. He failed to find the northern Cape of Japan "by reason that it lieth faulce in all cardes, and maps, and globes". With the survivors of her crew disabled by scurvy, the ship was in April 1600 towed into a harbour of Kyushu and confiscated. Adams was employed by the Japanese Shogun in his craft, settled in the country, and married a Japanese wife. He became the intermediary through whom both the English and the Dutch opened up trade with Japan. A Dutch factory was set up in 1609 at Hirado on Kyushu, and in 1611 the English company, learning from its factors at Bantam and from the Dutch that Adams was "in greate favour with the Kinge" directed its seventh and eighth voyages to Japan, with letters from King James I to the 'Emperor'. In June 1613 Captain John Saris in the "Clove" reached Hirado, where with Adams help he established a factory and negotiated a trade treaty. Saris was not on good terms with Adams, whom he regarded as a naturalised "Japanner" and as too friendly with the Dutch; and Adams cited his treatment by Saris as his reason for refusing the latter's offer to carry him back to England. In a letter to the Bantam factory in 1613, accompanied by a 'pattron (chart) of Japan' (now lost), Adams had reported that cloth had become as cheap there as in England, the market being flooded by the Dutch and by the 'ship from New Spain' (the Manila galleon). His forecast was justified by the failure of the English factory at Hirado, which was abandoned in 1623.

Little more was heard of Adams who probably spent the remainder of his life in Kyushu. What is remarkable about this East London apprentice is how, with little or no education, he mastered his craft (shipbuilding) and the art of navigation so early in life, became both merchant and negotiator, a friend of King James I and so closely known to the Emperor of Japan, and a writer of considerable skill whose letters are recognised today as an authority on Far East Exploration in the 16th and 17th centuries.

R.A.S./A.H.F.

THE ABBEY OF STRATFORD LANGTHORNE

Before the building of Bow Bridge, West Ham was a small village remote from the public highways, but the new road through the northern portion of the parish made it more accessible. It was probably this new road which led William de Montfichet to select West Ham as the locality for the Abbey which he founded in 1135, and which came to be called the Abbey of Stratford Langthorne. The monks of the Abbey, like all Cistercians, were fond of horticulture and the name Langthorne is said to be derived from the hedges of "long thorns"

with which they surrounded their plots of ground. The Cistercians are so called from Citeaux, a place near Dijon, from which the monks of La Trappe originally came.

The Abbey of Stratford Langthorne, with grounds covering some sixteen acres, was the earliest, wealthiest and most pleasantly situated Cistercian house in the country. That its surroundings were ever picturesque it seems impossible to believe when one gazes today at the old "Adam and Eve" public house, the Abbey Mills, and the North Woolwich Railway, which now covers its site. Yet Camden in 1586 describes the Lea at Stratford as "washing the green meadows and making them look very charming", while Weaver in 1631 saw here "the remains of a Monastery pleasantly watered about with several streams, and the meadows near the mills planted round with willows". The Abbey itself was on the Channelsea, but the Lea is only half a mile distant from its site, and the scenery described by Camden must have been within easy view of the Abbey grounds.

Although Stratford Langthorne Abbey was too recent a structure to have been exposed to attacks from the Danes, it suffered considerably from a natural enemy, being flooded so frequently that the monks for a time deserted it, retiring to Burgestede (Burstead) near Billericay. During this interval, it is to be presumed, the banks of the Lea and Channelsea were strengthened, so that the monks could return to Stratford without fear of further molestation. Several kings of England are mentioned in connection with the Abbey. Richard I, who is said to have repaired the buildings after the floods, granted it a charter in 1193. Henry III in 1267 received the Pope's legate within its walls, and in 1467 the Abbot sumptuously entertained Edward IV. who, in return for the good dinner, gave his host a grant of two casks of wine per annum. It was from this Abbey that Margaret, the aged Countess of Salisbury, in the reign of Henry VIII, was dragged to the Tower to be beheaded on a charge of treason. How she came to be living in a monastery and not a nunnery history does not explain.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century an ornamental arch of the chapel and a brick gateway giving entrance to the precincts of the Abbey were still standing. These have long since disappeared and the only relic now lies in the Church of St. John the Evangelist at Stratford. It consists of a stone carving unearthed during the making of the North Woolwich Railway in 1845. Archdeacon Stephens, to whom the writer is indebted for these particulars, purchased it from the landlord of the "Adam and Eve" public house, in whose yard it had lain exposed to the weather for many years. The design is of a number of human skulls set in separate niches, and may have been built into the wall, or stood over the door of the mortuary chapel.

During the construction of this railway an old bath, 12 ft. long by 8 ft. wide and 5 ft. deep, was also found. It consisted of an outer stone wall 6 ins. thick lined with red tiles, which again were covered with finely glazed Dutch tiles. At the same time were discovered an aqueduct leading to the river, a rough stone coffin, and an onyx seal set in silver with the words 'Nuncio vobis gaudium et salutem' engraved on it. This was probably the Abbey seal.

Archer Philip Crouch (1900).

TRINITY HOUSE, TOWER HILL : Make a note in your Diary of the visit on October 9th 1971, at 10.30 a.m. Meet outside Trinity House (Tower Hill Underground Station then a hundred yards along the road opposite the entrance).

THE SHOREDITCH PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

The earliest reference to a parish school dates from 1537 but the institution appears to have ceased about 1662.

Following the establishment of the Charity School movement about 1688, the Vestry of the Parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, met on 25th Sept. 1705 to negotiate for "the great room at the house formerly inhabited by Alderman Foster." This was secured at an annual rental of £4. Nine trustees were appointed (3 from each Liberty) and it was decided that the number of boys to be admitted should be fifty. The boys were to be admitted at seven years of age.

The Trustee appointed in each Liberty (or District) was to go to the home of each of the boys nominated for a place and report on the suitability of each. The level of subscription decided the number of admissions, and at the opening date the subscribers were as follows:

Church End and Hoxton	£35. 19. 0.	19 Boys.
Holiwell Street	33. 17. 0.	20 "
Moorefields	20. 12. 0.	11 "

To Mr. James Hart was accorded "harty thanks for his offer to teach the boys to sing Salms, without any reward for the same".

The candidates appeared on 8th November 1705 with their Subscribers and drew lots for admission and the Bishop preached a Sermon at the opening on 25th November.

The pupils were all re-clothed at Easter in the following year and, with the master and beadles in attendance, walked to St. Paul's with others from the Charity Schools of London. A similar gathering met at "Saint Pulchers" at Whitsun.

Their Easter clothing consisted of :

- " a coat and cap
- a pair of stockings
- two shirts
- two bands
- two paire of shoes and buckles"

Every boy had his parent or some other friend to help dress him "and after that went to Church in order, and then to Schoole again where each boy had a bun and ale; and when ended went the master and boys round the Liberties of the Parish."

At fourteen the boys were apprenticed for seven years and at this time were given "coat, westcoate and breeches, four shirts, four neck cloaths, four hanckerchiefs, two pair of stocking, two pair of shoes and hatt, which amounts to, in the whole, Three Pounds."

An account dated 1710 shows that the coats cost four shillings each, caps elevenpence, buckles one penny per pair and each band two pence halfpenny.

By 1722 it was necessary to build larger premises. The sum of £800 was subscribed and a site in Kingsland Road purchased and here, for the first time, the boys and girls were taught under the same roof.

About 1801 the Shoreditch Pavement Commissioners recommended the widening of Kingsland Road at this spot - just north of the junction with the

road to Hackney - and compensated the Charity Trustees in the sum of £800 which, added to a further public subscription of over £900 enabled them to erect the building which stands today, although now in industrial occupation.

In 1798 the age of admission was raised to nine years by which means it became possible to increase the intake to sixty boys, which total was further increased to one hundred in 1811. A subscriber had the option of paying half a guinea annually or could become a Life subscriber on the payment of five guineas or more, and each half guinea carried an entitlement of one vote.

Following the successful re-establishment of the Boys' School in 1705 a school for girls was opened four years later. Premises were secured in Pitfield Street on an eleven year lease and between forty and fifty girls were educated there. As related above, on the expiry of the lease a decision was taken to erect a new School House and the Schools combined.

Like the boys, the girls were re-clothed each Whitsun and received additional clothing at certain other times of the year. On leaving the School they were presented with a Bible and prayer-book and a gratuity of one pound towards their expenses prior to going into service.

The Schools were discontinued as the result of a scheme which was approved by the Charity Commissioners in 1884.

S.C.T.

CURIOSITIES OF LONDON

"We learn from a contemporary that a curious revelation has recently been made in the East End of London. One of the chief characteristics of that densely populated quarter is the vast number of animals - cats, dogs, pigeons, fowls and rabbits - which manage to support a precarious existence amid the gloom and dirt of miserable back-yards and blind-alleys. How such creatures continue to live where human beings die, not merely of starvation, but of downright lack of light and air, is a problem which it must have often vexed the minds of philanthropists to solve; but live they do; and as their existence was generally supposed to exercise a humanising influence upon their proprietors, no one would ever have thought of interfering with them. Latterly, however, disquieting rumours were circulated that people who had not even a share in a back-yard or even a blind-alley indulged in the luxury of poultry-keeping, and the sanitary authorities were at last moved to institute enquiries on the subject. Their activity was soon rewarded. In a room inhabited by a man and woman and their two children, twelve fowls were discovered living under the shelter of the bedstead, while in an adjoining room, owned by the same persons, a colony of one hundred and twenty-seven unfortunate cocks and hens were trying to make-believe at being in a farm-yard.

Encouraged by this success, the officials persevered in their search, and in another house in the same street, they discovered nearly three hundred fowls enjoying the comparative gentility of the second floor. Immediate orders were given for the removal of the birds to a more congenial atmosphere, and despite the violent resistance of their owners - who are said, by the by, to be foreigners - the clearance of these Augean fowl-houses was soon accomplished. But we really need a modern Hercules to keep London clean, and even he would find his place no sinecure."

Chambers' Journal, June 14 1879, per H. Willmott.

BYRON NOEL, VISCOUNT OCKHAM

Viscount Ockham was the eldest son of the Right Hon. William, 8th Lord King, raised to the Earldom of Lovelace at the coronation of the Queen in 1838. Viscount Ockham's mother was, in the grandiloquent phraseology of the "Daily Telegraph" of the early sixties, "a lady of hereditary interest far beyond the narrow pale of the peerage roll, as the only child of Lord Byron and the Ada of his poems". The Viscount's grandmother was the heiress of the Noëls, "the amiable and ill-starred wife of the proud and haughty poet-lord".

Viscount Ockham entered the Navy as a middy, but left it after a few months service. "Pride of soul," says the "Daily Telegraph", "would not allow him to obey his superiors." It allowed him, however, to serve as a sailor on an American merchant ship, and on his return to England to work as a common labourer in Mr. Scott Russell's shipbuilding yard in the Isle of Dogs. While employed here he used to spend most of his spare time at the "Prince Regent's" public-house, West Ham. He is said to have married a woman belonging to the class amongst whom he lived. If so, when, on the death of his grandmother in 1860 he succeeded to the Barony of Wentworth, this woman could have claimed the right to be presented at Court. The claim was never made, for Viscount Ockham's tastes lay more with the bar of the "Prince Regent's" public-house than with the drawing-room of Buckingham Palace. He died of the rupture of a blood-vessel at the early age of twentysix.

LFC/AHF

ST. SAVIOUR'S NATIONAL SCHOOLS, POPLAR

"In a thickly-populated new district, forming part of the extensive parish of All Saints, Poplar, are St. Saviour's National Schools, situated in Northumberland Street. The first stone of the building was laid by Mrs. Wigram, wife of the head of the well-known shipbuilding firm at Blackwall, in November 1864, and the schools were formally opened a twelve-month ago last Christmas by the Right Hon. The Earl of Harrowby, K.G. They are already attended by a large number of children. The cost of the building, exclusive of the site, was £3687. It was constructed from the designs of Messrs. Francis, architects, of Upper Bedford Place; by Mr. W. Howard of Chandos Street, Covent Garden.

The Schools, with the classrooms, are capable of accommodating more than 800 children - boys, girls, and infants. House accommodation is provided for the master and mistresses. Beside the Schools, a site has been procured adjacent to them for the future erection of a church and parsonage, as soon as the necessary funds can be obtained. A mission district, in connection with the Bishop of London's fund, has already been attached, which is superintended by a very active and efficient clergyman."

("Illustrated London News" 23/2/1867).

"EAST LONDON PAPERS"

It is regretted that the cost of producing this periodical has necessitated a complete revision of its financial position. It can no longer be issued to members of the E.L.H.S. as part of their Society subscription. The new rate to subscribers is £2 per year, but if sufficient members respond, they may be made available to members at £1 per year. Please send your remittance to Mr. French at 36 Parkland Road, Woodford Green, payable to "East London Papers".

./-

DICKENS' EAST END

For many years before the last war, there was a small cul-de-sac next to the "City Arms" in West Ferry Road, Isle of Dogs, bounded by the south wall of the West India Docks. This was only a few yards from the north western swing bridge. Along this cul-de-sac, there were a few small cottages with flowers growing in the earth outside; very old, picturesque and unusually rural for a part of Dockland. Among the many changes of the post-war world, this cul-de-sac has been fenced off and the houses demolished. Readers will, however, find interest in the following item from "The London of Charles Dickens".-

"Captain Cuttle lived on the brink of a little canal near the India Docks, where there was a swivel bridge which opened now and then to let some wandering monster of a ship come roaming up the street like a stranded leviathan. The gradual change from land to water, on the approach to Captain Cuttle's lodgings, was curious. It began with the erection of flagstuffs, as appurtenances to public-houses; then came slopsellers' shops with Guernsey shirts, sou'wester hats, and canvas pantaloons, at once the tightest and loosest of their order, hanging up outside. These were succeeded by anchors and chain-cable forges, where sledge-hammers were dinging upon iron all day long. Then came rows of houses, with little vane-surmounted masts uprearing themselves from among the scarlet beans. Then ditches. Then pollard willows. Then more ditches. Then unaccountable patches of dirty water, hardly to be descried, for the ships that covered them. Then the air was perfumed with chips; and all other trades were swallowed up in mast, oar and blockmaking, and boatbuilding. Then, the ground grew marshy and unsettled. Then, there was nothing to be smelt but rum and sugar. Then Captain Cuttle's lodgings - at once a first floor and a top story, in Brig Place - were close before you." (Dombey & Son, IX,XV)

It has been suggested that Brig Place could have been the cul-de-sac by the "City Arms" on the Limehouse side of the City Canal - now South West India Docks. The boy Charles Dickens went frequently to see his godfather, Christopher Huffam, living at 5 Church Street, whence he could have walked by Three Colt and Emmett Streets to Bridge Road, and so the Dock, quite a short walk from his godfather's.

A.H.F./"The Dickensian" Summer 1935.

DUCKS ETC.

Undoubtedly, two centuries ago, East London's marshes and open spaces abounded in wild life. In inclement weather, ducks would fly up the River from the Kentish and Essex Coast to find refuge on the mud-flats and marshes of the Hams, Blackwall and the Isle of Dogs, possibly even north to Hackney marshes and the Waltham Forest. It has been for some time thought that the Isle of Dogs got its name from a corruption of the "Isle of Ducks" and an 18th Century Commissioners of Sewers map refers to it in this way. This suggestion has since been discounted, but few people know that an "Isle of Ducks" did in fact exist. It was a mound east of Limehouse Hole, just south of Poplar High Street (now occupied by the West India Import Dock). It was frequently covered with birds and was given this name by the local people. The mound was demolished when the area was drained and the Dock was cut.

All of this is brought to mind by the recent dramatic increase of wild duck to the East London riverside in the last winter or two. True, /-

large numbers come to the Thames and Medway estuaries, but substantial numbers as far up as Blackwall Reach, only seven miles from London Bridge, are unprecedented. The recent London Bird Report by the London Natural History Society calls this an exciting development.

The surprising count of wild duck consisted only of the flocks in the long bay between North Woolwich and Cross Ness, but there are also large numbers on the opposite foreshore in front of Barking and at the outflow of Barking Creek.

In the winter of 1968-9, 500 mallard were counted, and it was 700 a year later. Teal increased from 450 to over 700, pintail 110 to 330, tufted duck 400 to over 700, and shelduck 200 to 1,600. Pochard, which reached 1,200 in the first winter were up to about 2,000 in the second. Seven other kinds of wild duck which are very rare indeed in this area also increased.

The River is very wide in this particular Reach and actual numbers, apart from those counted by watchers, are much higher.

...all of which, no doubt, was celebrated by an extra drink in the "Dog and Duck".

A.H.F.

 "ACADEMY" - 26 Leman Street Dec.16th 1780.

"Young gentlemen are taught Latin, English & Greek, Writing, Arithmetic, Italian, Bookkeeping, Geography and use of Globes, Geometry, Navigation and Astronomy, and every practical branch of Mathermatics

by

Rev. R. Hamilton, LL.D., and able Assistants

Drawing, Dancing, Fencing, Music.

The House is large and convenient and the situation very airy, a limited number of boarders will be accommodated. Any of the other pupils may, if desired, breakfast and dine with the family.

Terms.

English, Writing, Arithmetic, Latin, Greek, Geography

1 guinea a quarter

French $\frac{1}{2}$ guinea a quarter

Astronomy, Surveying and planning - 1 guinea a month.

Merchants Accompts.- 3 guineas to complete the Pupil

Navigation 2 " " " "

Use of Globes 2 " " " "

Drawing, Dancing, Fencing & Music.- usual terms.

Boarders.- 25 guineas a year.

Aims.

To impress on the minds of his pupils a due sense of Moral & Religious obligation, to engage their affection and respect by a kind and equal Deportment. Neither falsely indulgent or unreasonably feveve. To attend the Genius and Disposition of each, to excite Diligence and promote ingenuity, to raise and maintain a generous humiliation by rewards and honours on those who excel."

H.E.M..