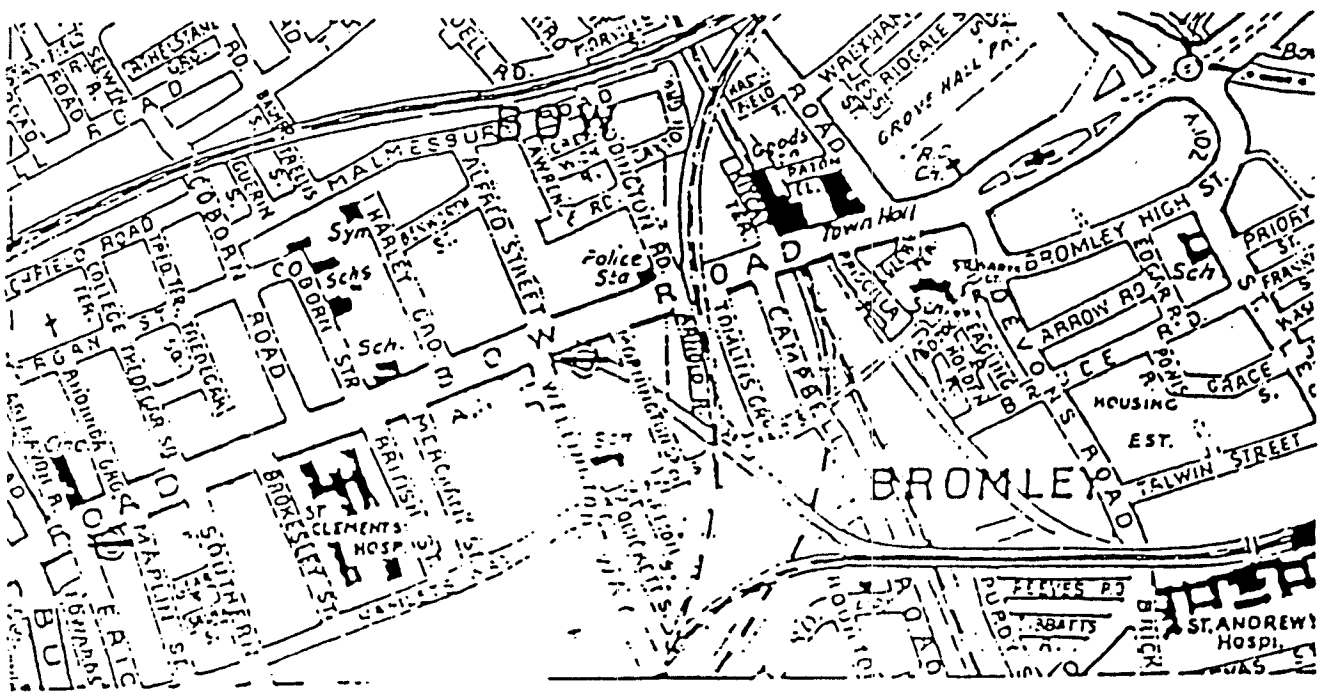


East London History Society

Newsletter

Spring 1991



A WALK WITH HISTORY

ROSEMARY TAYLORS WALK, " UP AND DOWN THE BOW ROAD " WILL TELL YOU ABOUT THE BOW ROAD YOU NEVER KNEW. SEE PAGE SEVEN FOR DETAILS.

NEWS UPDATE

The Annual General Meeting of the East London History Society was held on 24 January 1991, deferred from 25 October 1990.

The meeting was chaired by Mr French, President of the Society.

The following Committee members were elected:

Chair - Rosemary Taylor
Secretary - Doreen Kendall
Treasurer - Phillip Mernick (Jenn Page will continue until Phillip can take over, probably in Sept 1991)

All other Committee members attending the meeting agreed to continue serving on the committee, and we have a new member, Mrs Betty Osborne.

Committee members with special portfolios:

John Harris - Membership Secretary
David Behr - Programme Secretary
Ann Sansom - Coach Outings and Excursions organiser
Colm Kerrigan - Editor, East London Record - the ELHS Annual Publication

Note:

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Mrs Doreen Kendall
20 Puteaux House
Cranbrook Estate
Bethnal Green
London E2 ORF

Articles and Items of Interest for the Newsletter to:

Rosemary Taylor
5 Pusey House
Saracen Street
Poplar London E14 6HG

Applications for membership and subscriptions to:

John Harris
15 Three Crown Road
Colchester
Essex CO4 5AD

The Newsletter will continue to be produced by Rosemary Taylor and John Harris.

Fifty Years Ago

January 1941

All men between 16 and 60 years of age must register for fire watch duties (Women could volunteer).

All commercial premises and factories must have people on fire watch duties during air raids, and every group of houses, every street must provide its own fire fighting teams.

Widespread snow and sleet in Britain and the Continent interrupted German air attacks on Britain (and British attacks on Germany). In one of the few daylight raids on London, a bomb fell on the 12th Century Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene in East Ham. The Church was restored in 1945.

On Saturday 11th January the weather improved, the Luftwaffe returned. 137 bombers attacked London, bombing through heavy cloud. The raid lasted from 6.25 until 9.30 pm.

In Bishopsgate, outside Liverpool St Station a direct hit on a bus resulted in 22 passengers killed, 2 bus drivers and 1 bus conductor killed and 4 buses destroyed.

At Bank Station a bomb penetrated the road and exploded in the Booking Hall. The blast travelled down the escalator killed 50 people who were waiting for a train, some died after they were blown on to the track and were run down by a train which had just entered the station. The survivors made their way along the track to another station. 6 of the station staff were missing, they were never found.

Other places bombed that night were:

East and West Ham
Leyton
Victoria and Albert Docks
Poplar
Stepney

Lawrence of Arabia & Chingford

The bone of contention is, did Lawrence live or reside in Chingford. The late Bernard Ward, a Forest Verderer is quite emphatic - that he did not in the strict sense of the meaning. However John E Mack in his book on Lawrence states that in August 1922, Lawrence alias Shaw made trips to Pole Hill.

There is no doubt that Lawrence owned land in the Pole Hill area, upon which a wooden hut or bungalow was and it was subsequently burned down. It is said that he had in mind to set up a printing press within to print and publish his book "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom". Another hut was built and it was finally dismantled and taken to Warren Lodge, Epping New Road, the HQ of the Epping Forest Commissioners. Whether it remains there I have not yet determined. (Warren Lodge was once the home of General Grosvenor whose superior was the Duke of Wellington, who visited him there.)

A Guardian cutting states that Lawrence in 1927 sold his land to Chingford Urban District Council for exactly the same sum as he had paid for it. A retired Chingford Postman, Mr R Humphries of Drysdale Avenue recalls delivering mail to Lawrence (Shaw) on Pole Hill where he says he was camping in a tent. Lawrence clearly stayed in Chingford and often met his friend Vyvyan Richards, a schoolmaster at Bancrofts of Woodford, nearby.

The Ministry of Health did approve a proposal for the CUDC to spend £200 on a memorial in Chingford to Lawrence. It was never implemented.

A sensible conclusion is that Lawrence was indeed a temporary resident of Chingford and to commemorate this Arabia Close near Pole Hill is so named. Lawrence was honoured by being commemorated in St Paul's Cathedral, after his early demise in the West Country as a result of a motorcycling accident.

A bust of Lawrence can be seen in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral. He is buried in the village church of Moreton Dorset.

George Rider

Letters from our Members

Ruth Kibble, Crouch End, London writes:

I found the East London Record very interesting - especially the article about Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton - and I now have sets of the Upper Lea and the Stort postcards. There's nothing like a dose of nostalgia, now and then!

I can't remember whether I told you why I was interested in Sir Thomas, but apart from admiring his good deeds, I had two ancestors who worked for his family at Waltham Abbey - a great grandfather and also my grandfather, Francis Hale, who seems to have come up from Gloucestershire and headed straight for the Buxton family. I've often wondered what the reason was.

You can imagine how interested I was to see among the Notes at the end of the article a reference to a letter from a William Hale. Would it be possible for me to get in touch with the author - Harold Finch - to see whether he knows any more about this Mr Hale? It's probably just coincidence, but I don't like to leave any stone unturned where Family History is involved.

(ED. Note: We have passed on Mrs Kibble's request, and keenly await the results.)

W Yetton-Ward, 24 Beatrice Avenue, Felxstowe IP11 9HB:

I am particularly interested in the Yetton family known to have been in Bethnal Green from about 1745 to 1910, finally as Licencees of the Rising Sun opposite the Fire Station in Globe Road and as printers in Green Street. William Yetton died in March 1902 and was succeeded by his son also William. Lewis Yetton was the printer.

Also information about the Ward family who were smelters and Iron Merchants with an address at 7 James Street. Edwin Ward was a Sunday School superintendent and received a presentation in 1872 (East London Observer). My father was James Josiah Ward born 7 December 1858.

I have no doubt you are well indexed and if you have references to any Yettions or Wards I will be glad to receive copies of your journals if you will tell me the cost. *(ED. Note: Can any of our members help with the above enquiry?)*

Bill Hughes, Adelaide, South Australia, writes:

I am very interested in the article (Record 1990 page 23) about Sir Thomas Buxton Bt as his family were connected with Barclays Bank in the early days, and I served the Bank at 54 Lombard Street for over 40 years and personally knew some of the Buxton family. One of them was the wife of the Rector of Hayes, Kent and I lived in a house adjoining Hayes Rectory from 1933 - 1939 and my three children were baptized at Hayes Church.

Another circumstance of interest to me, is the fact that Sir Thomas Buxton was born at Earls Colne in Essex in 1786 and my great great grandfather William Hughes was born at Layham Suffolk only a few miles away in 1776, and married in Colchester in 1797 and died there in 1844. Later the Hughes family left Essex and went, first to Southwark and later to Bethnal Green and Stepney, and were East Enders. I was born in 1906 at Stoke Newington, so I reckon I could claim to be a Cockney.

Dr Heiner Schultz Gutschke, Valancia Spain, wrote to thank Doreen Kendall for the Record, for which he had to paid in German Marks! He went on to say: "The copy of the 1913 article has arrived, curiously enough with a library stamp from Bethel, a place near Bielefeld Germany, where I used to live for quite some time. Many thanks for getting the photocopy."

Charles Wakelield of Lake Park Florida, USA:

I have just received a copy of the Christmas edition of the ELHS newsletter, and I must say it's absolutely brilliant, every article a gem, in particular the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster, which when it happened, I was 13 but I still remember the tragedy and in reading through the list of names you wonder how many families were wiped out. In the case of Mrs Annie Baker - her husband and daughter, £1450 plus costs. Did the authorities at the time think that was adequate compensation for a husband and daughter, I don't think so, it's a wonder that the council of the time admitted to anything at all.

Please keep up the good work, thank you.

PS. I was residing in Hackney in 1943, now in the USA.

PPS. Wonderful news on the two library buildings, Bethnal Green and Bancroft Road.

(ED. Note Thank you for your kind words. We'll do our best to keep the newsletter as informative and interesting as possible.)

Letters from our Members contd...

Dr Brooks, writes to us from Israel:

Many thanks for the Record. Again it gives enjoyable reading and shows much effort. I have in my collection quite a few original paper cuttings of the 18th Century about footpads, robberies etc., and if I have time I shall put them together with a commentary. Perhaps they would be of interest as a follow up to the article about Dick Turpin.

(ED Note: Thanks to all our overseas members, who take such a keen interest in the Society and its activities.)

George Rider, Chingford historian, sent us the following:

At the George Hotel, Wanstead, on the outside wall near the entrance to the Palace Bar is an inscription:

"In memory of Cherry Pey at a cost of 1/2 a guiney. 17 of July. That day we had good cheer. Hope to do so many a year.
RC 1752 D. Jerrey."

The story of this memorial to a cherry pie is: In 1752 two men engaged on repairs to the Inn were caught enjoying a cherry pie which they just lifted from the tray of a Pie-Man passing below them. The Justice of the Peace fined them half a guinea and the stone was carved to commemorate same.

With reference to the article on Dick Turpin in the Record, Mr Rider offers the following:

The late A L Martin of Chingford Historical Society recorded that c1752 Dick Turpin made unsuccessful raids on the Chingford and Barking churches attempting to steal the church plate.

Mr Tony Barton recorded that Turpin was friendly with the landlords of the Green Man at Whipps Cross and the Kings Oak at High Beach, where once another inn stood - Turpins Cave.

It is also recorded that Turpin lived for a while at Sewardstone, Chingford, whether Sewardstone included High Beach I do not know.

Lionel Hovez, Yateley, Hampshire wrote to John Harris, who replied, and Mr Hovez wrote in again. Here are both letters:

I am wondering if your Society can help me in my

search for background history of my family.

My father's home had been 364 Hackney Road, Bethnal Green. Apparently known as the Dog's Home, because a front room of the house was used by the Canine Defence League. There were some cottages behind known as Rainbow Cottages. He was a pupil at Teesdale Street School. He and my mother had parts in Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado, with the Bethnal Green Working Men's Institute (1930).

My grandfather George Ernest was a member of a Cricket Club in his earlier years. I have a team photograph. He worked at a soap factory, Wrights, I believe. That is all I have for the period 1900 to 1930 at present. What I would like is some descriptive sources or if there are archive photographs available.

Thank you for your reply and for the copy of the EHLS magazine. I found the magazine fascinating reading. My sister and I can remember being walked to Morris House from Whitechapel station. I cannot understand why we never used Bethnal Green station. But perhaps the story of the disaster there gives me the reason.

I am rebuilding my memories. We only visited occasionally from Feltham in Middlesex. A visit to Bancroft Road Library is certainly a must. From an article in the magazine it seems that the visit should be soon rather than later.

Mrs Trudy Sillifant, Weston Super Mare sent in an extra £1 towards phone calls and postage needed in Saving the Library Campaign. She also writes: "This newsletter is so interesting, I do look forward to receiving it."

W Wilford, Brentwood, Essex:

The newsletter arrived this morning. I knew of the Tube disaster but have not seen a detailed account before.

Thanks too for cleaning the War Memorial. Up to the early 80's somebody always attached a small wreath about November 11th.

I hope to get to a meeting eventually. I think the last time was when I spoke about St John's School, Hoxton in the late 60's.

For the Record

Mr A L Hellicar, Benfleet, Essex has more information on the German Community. He writes:

The article (in the Record) brought back a memory or two of the 1914-18 war. I remember seeing the damage done to, in particular, baker's shops. One in Abbott Road, corner of Highland Street, was kept by a German named (I believe) Keller. In later years the premises were taken by a tailoring firm, Shaer and Layman, and it was there that I had made my very first to measure suit - air force blue colour and Oxford bags style. Cost 30/- (thirty shillings) or 150 pence.

I've tried to remember where in Chrisp Street the shop (Schonfield) was situated (page 6 of Record). A check on a P O London Directory could place it as on, almost, the corner of Grundy Street. If so, with Appleton's the two shops were occupied by Harry Neave, selling drapery, footwear, furniture etc.

Page 39 - Notes and News - mentions Gladstone's statue in Bow Road, referred to in John Blackwood's book. It was paid for and erected by Messrs Bryant and May I've always understood. It was the memorial fountain which stood outside the Bow Road Railway Station that was subscribed to by employees of the firm, commemorating the defeat of a proposed tax on matches.

Letter from Mrs Sally Thomson, of the Anglo German History Society, Shepperton, Middx:

Thank you very much for sending the copy of East London record, I shall be happy to review it for our next edition of "Mitteilungsblatt". It makes so much sense when Societies can work together like this, because I am sure we all have something to offer each other. I thought the standard of article in the Record was extremely good and really quite professional. I only hope I can do justice in my review. I will most certainly publicise your Society, as I think our members could gain a great deal from it, especially in the way of background material.

Richard Marlow, London E13 has written in to complain that West Ham "never seems to collect many column inches." This was with reference to the Record, but we welcome contributions from our members who have items about West Ham or any other part of East London, for

that matter.

Sam Vincent, from Letchworth Herts, writes:

The letter from Chris Dixon caught my eye as the mention of my name. Unfortunately Chris did not mention her Uncle Albert's surname, and I would dearly love to learn that especially as he lived in Alma Road.

The story referring to Bethnal Green Tube disaster and the inclusion of the names of the unfortunate victims I found of great interest, as I often saw Dick Corbett (the local boxer as mentioned) around Bethnal Green when I lived there.

My elder sister Bess used the tube shelter with her husband-to-be but the rest of our family as you have read, did otherwise.

Fred Wright, from Romford, Essex, came across the following in the 1861 Census for Bethnal Green:

In the Parish of St John in Palestine Place (a most appropriate location) there was listed the inhabitants of The Operative Jewish Convent. The Principal and Head of the establishment was seemingly christian. He was Peter Jennings MA born in Dover. The occupants were adult undoubtedly Jewish and came from all parts of Europe and were mostly engaged in the making of books and such associated trades. Also attached were a Hebrew Girls and Boys School. These were mainly teenagers and their places of birth varied so much that it would seem that each must have a story to tell as to how they came to be boarders in an institution in Bethnal Green.

Has any reader knowledge of this place? In all the reading I have done on East London history I cannot recollect having come across any mention of it.

In Search of Barge Builders

Mr Fred Harrison, Guildford Surrey has appealed for help in his research:

I am trying to find out about the following:

1. Has anything been written about, or does anybody have knowledge of, the trade of Barge Building on the Regent Canal in the Bethnal Green area during the period 1855-1881?

2. When children were orphaned in 1881 where is it likely that a Bethnal Green authority might place them (apart from neighbours or relations)?

The background to these questions is as follows:

My great great grandfather Richard Harrison moved from Newbury, Berkshire to Bethnal Green in about 1855. He was a Barge Builder. He lived at 6 Green Street, Bethnal Green. By 1861 his son George (my great grandfather) was 20 years of age. He also became a Barge Builder. George had a number of children, the eldest being Richard. He also followed his father into the same profession. Another son, Charles Henry Harrison (my grandfather) was born on the 15 September 1874. By the time of the 1881 census he would have been six years old.

George died on 12 May 1879. His wife Alice died on 3 February 1881. My grandfather Charles Henry and his brothers and sisters therefore became orphans. However, apart from the eldest son Richard, there is no sign of them in the 1881 census.

I have spent many hours searching through the Bethnal Green microfilms in Chancery Lane without any luck. Where did they go? Who looked after them? I looked at the Dr Barnardo Census Records for Stepney, but drew a blank. Where do I go now?

Of course I eventually rediscovered my grandfather when he married my grandmother in 1897. He was then working for the Midland Railway in Gloucester. But between 1881 when his mother died and 1897 when he got married, I have 16 unknown years. Any advice anybody could offer would be greatly appreciated.

M F Ellston, Basildon Essex, sets the record straight:

I refer to the Christmas 1990 copy of the Newsletter and in particular to the letter from Mrs R E Oliver on page six.

There appears to be some little confusion here. Hughes Mansions were named in 1928 by the London County Council following an application by the Stepney Borough Council. Stepney originally intended to simply name them as Vallance Road Flats but it was thought that this would lead to confusion with numbers in the Vallance Road.

Upon the request from the LCC for an alternative name Stepney put forward "Hughes Mansions" after Thomas Hughes the author of Tom Brown's Schooldays. Indeed the name was nearly turned down for at the same time Deptford had made a similar application for Hughes House for a block of flats at the Hughes Fields Estate in Deptford, named after Admiral Sir Richard Hughes, baronet, who dies in 1812. However it was determined that there would be no confusion between Hughes Mansions in Stepney and Hughes House in Deptford and both names were granted.

Whilst the author did indeed have a daughter who was a social worker in the area the building is named after Thomas Hughes and not Mary.

May I say how much I enjoy reading the Newsletter.

(Doreen Kendall has replied to Mr Ellston to thank him for this information. The misleading information on Hughes Mansions being named after Mary Hughes appeared in a catalogue of the Quaker Exhibition of Needlework at the Festival Hall in September 1990, to name but one source.)

David Behr, Programme Secretary ELHS, quotes the following from East End Story by A B Levy, page 70.

This is further to a discussion of the origins of what is now the Students Hostel, next to Raphael House in Mile End Road. There is an interesting plaque on the site.

The Beth Holim (House of the Sick), established in the 18th Century by the Spanish and Portuguese congregation for sick, poor, lying-in women and as an Asylum for the aged.... It was founded in 1747 in.. Leman Street and came to Mile End in 1792.....Behind the Beth Holim you can still see the flat Portuguese inscribed burial stones of the oldest Jewish cemetery in the United Kingdom, opened in 1657.

Making the Connection

Collin Mitchell, Spalding Lincolnshire appeals for help:

I find it rather ironic that in the 17 years in which I have pursued the subject, I have succeeded in tracing our maternal French Connection back to the village in France from when they fled in 1690, to escape religious persecution and the paternal side back to the early 1700's who were mainly mariners or sea-farers of one kind or another out of Ramsgate and yet one fact has persistently eluded me; that of my paternal great-grandmother Elizabeth Wilkinson, nee Mitchell who is alleged to have died in 1911 aged 66.

And so I make a final appeal since I can think of no other course of action left open to me. I have compiled the following dossier about her:

Elizabeth Mitchell was born on 19 December 1848 at No. 8 Chapel Street, Sub-district St Paul in the Registration District of St Georges in the East. Her parents were George and Elizabeth Mitchell nee Carr who had five other children, George, Benjamin, Edward, Emma and Isaac of which she was the eldest. At the time of the 1861 Census the family had removed to 29 Mary Ann Street, Sub district St Mary.

Elizabeth does not appear in any other official records until 4 November 1868 when she gave birth to a son Francis (Frank) at 110 Pennington Street, the father being Francis Wilkinson. Although they are alleged to have been married, extensive research at St Catherines House does not reveal any documentary evidence to support this contention.

Further research of the 1871 Census Return for St Georges in the East does not show that they were living there at that time, neither is there any evidence to indicate that they were living in Ramsgate, the home town of Francis Wilkinson and his relatives.

Elizabeth Mitchell and Francis Wilkinson had five other children:

John Arthur born 5 August 1876 at 26 Meeting House Alley.

Elizabeth Rose born 29 April 1878 at the same address, she died in 1902 aged 24.

Violet May born 28 March 1880 at the same address.

Ada born 3 July 1883 at 22 Meeting House Alley.

Arthur George born 30 January 1891 at 22 Meeting House Alley.

According to the 1881 Census Return they had moved back to 26 Meeting House Alley with their children John, Elizabeth, and Violet together with another Benjamin who appears to be a relative.

By 1895 they had moved yet again to 77 Sutton Street and although Francis Wilkinson was a house painter by trade, he now ran a green grocer's shop at that address where he died in December 1896 aged 48. This is the last known address of Elizabeth Wilkinson, as she now described herself, widow of the deceased.

It is generally believed that she died in 1911 but a record of all the deaths registered in the Indexes of that name covering the period 1896 to 1932 at St Catherine's House does not reveal one that might be her.

Her sister Emma Maria was born in 1857 and is said to have married a farmer named Miller from Dover.

Barbara Rawes, Cheltenham Glos, writes:

I have already traced my Huguenot ancestors back to their origins in France and Holland and am a member of the East London F H S. I am now at the stage when I want to find out as much as I can about their lives and working conditions.

I was particularly interested in the article about the French hospital as one of my relatives was an inmate. Poor old man, he got into trouble for shouting at the staff and for filling his pockets with little pieces of bread. He must have suffered from a mental condition which wasn't understood in those days.

I hope your representations managed to stop development of Meath Gardens. I am sure everyone knows you have to have Home Office permission before disturbing known human remains and that they sometimes pay attention to objections.

Library Update

Jayne Colquhoun, Office of Ministry of Arts and Libraries:

We have corresponded with officials of the Globe Town Neighbourhood and understand that both Bancroft Road and Bethnal Green libraries are now to remain open. There will, however be a feasibility study on opening hours with a view to maintaining both libraries on a four-day week basis, thus ensuring that one library always remains open during the week. I can confirm that the East London History Society (??) will stay in the library premises at Bancroft Road. I hope this will reassure you.

(ED. Note: Since receiving this letter the study has been completed)

Note:

A questionnaire was prepared by Anne Cunningham, Neighbourhood Arts and Information Officer, on proposals for library opening hours and other future uses. The response was overwhelming, which showed if nothing else that the library services were considered a vital part of community life, and any changes to the service would meet with considerable resistance, if it was felt that these changes would result in a reduced service.

A study of the findings of the questionnaire reveals some surprising facts. Bancroft Library appeared to be the most used, followed by Bancroft Local History Library, with Bethnal Green coming third. Most people saw a need for a review of the services, and would accept changes to opening hours, if this would improve facilities.

The preferred days for opening, were Saturday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

For Bancroft alone, Saturday and Monday were clearly ahead.

The unfavourable days were Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, both in general and for Bancroft in particular.

For Bethnal Green it was Tuesday, Saturday and Thursday.

The afternoon was the most preferred time, with 6pm to 8pm being clearly the best time for most, with some people opting for extended hours.

44% thought the library could also be used for other purposes such as Evening Classes, Drop in Centres, Under 5s provision and Coffee Bar.

33% were against this proposal, whilst 23% had no opinion on the subject.

Dates for your Diary:

Thursday 9 May - St Matthias Church.
Talk by Robert Baldwin

Queen Mary and Westfield College 7.30 pm.

Saturday 11 May - Up and Down the Bow Road.
Walk led by Rosemary Taylor

Meet at Mile End Tube Station 1 pm

Saturday 18 May - Coach Outing to Chiltern Open Air Museum

Meet at Mile End Tube Station 10.00 am.

Sunday 2 June - Visit to Bevis Marks Synagogue 11.00 am

See details below.

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 June - The East End Festival at Millwall Park. East London History Society will be hosting a stand. Books, Exhibition of The War and After - life in the 40s and 50s. Memorabilia wanted, photos, articles of daily use, etc. Video presentation of Postcard and Token Collections. History Workshop, members will be available to offer advice and assistance.

David Behr has organised a Guided Tour of Bevis Marks Synagogue for Members of the East London History Society.

Bevis Marks Synagogue was dedicated in 1701 and was the first one to be purpose built in England, since the Jews were expelled in 1290. This special guided tour of the Synagogue is on Sunday 2 June, starting at 11 am.

To get there, cross Houndsditch close to St Botolph's Aldgate and walk towards Bishopsgate. Creechurch Lane (off Houndsditch) leads to Bevis Marks.

Aldgate is the nearest tube station, but Aldgate East is only a few hundred yards away. Liverpool Street Station is close to Houndsditch (from there Creechurch Lane will be on the right).

Bevis Marks Synagogue is a listed building, and a donation of £1 per person is suggested.

Money For Old Rope

THE PAPER INDUSTRY IN EAST LONDON

In the early 1800's, with the growing demand for paper for which the raw materials had to be imported and old techniques employed, mills were set up in various parts of the country and a few of these were established along the River Lea. The quality of paper was not good - they used too much rag and non-binding admixture so competition overtook them.

In the 1840's a Mr Petrushkin formed a Company and installed a paper factory in Bow Road. The paper was of better quality because he used hemp, normally imported and expensive. Most of his hemp, however, was obtained from used ships' ropes. The disposal of old rope was usually a Chief Officer's perk hence the expression "money for old rope" and the ships in London's Docks provided a constant supply (not always old!) The use of hemp in paper appears to have been pioneered in East London.

In 1860, Edward Lloyd opened a paper mill, also in Bow, using straw as a binding agent but this caused the paper to dry and crack easily. With others, he experimented with Esparto grass imported from North Africa. This produced a very high quality paper, the fibres being more pliable and less affected by the bleaching agents, primarily copper sulphate. Thus Lloyd's Paper Mill was in great demand, at one time having 200 employees working two shifts of twelve hours each at between ten and thirteen shillings a week. There were no set lunch hours and workmen's wives or children usually brought their lunches along between two plates done up in a large red handkerchief.

Another mill established on the same Esparto-based manufacture was a firm called Wiggins, Teape and Company. They were in Bromley-by-Bow (Mills Lane). This great Paper combine is still very much with us. It is a tribute to East London's adaptability that this factory started by a small firm (Mr Teape opened a small printer's shop on Tower Hill) should become the mammoth set-up it is today.

To keep these and other mills supplied with materials, hemp being rare and Esparto time-wasting, rag factories were established in Bow, the Isle of Dogs and Ratcliff. These washed, sorted and shredded the rags to provide the poorer quality paper needed for cheap literature and for the growing demand from the newspaper world. Other firms, like John Hill & Company of Millwall, set up factories to repulp used or waste paper. Office cleaners and

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Blackwall, The Brunswick and Whitebait Dinners

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housekeepers made considerable perks by selling the paper accumulated from waste paper baskets, and even the ordinary householder could get a few pence by saving up newspapers and selling them in bundles.

Newsprint did not sell as well as other paper owing to the type of ink used which made it difficult to bleach sufficiently for remanufacture as white paper, but it could be used for cheaper newspaper, comics, wrapping paper and cardboard.

William Allan set up a paper mill in 1812 in BOW Lane producing the heavier type of paper used for decorating purposes. He was joined by a paper-hanger named William Parry and in 1846 "Allan's Mill" moved to larger premises in Old Ford. Throughout the Victorian era East London continued to produce good quality papers and paper products. (A lecture on this subject was given to the Society in December 1976). Most of these mills have now gone and probably the last and most recent closure was the Limehouse Paperboard Mills in Narrow Street, Limehouse, a site occupied earlier by Curling's Shipyard.

A H French

A Cockney Kid

(The following is an extract from A World of Schools by Writeback - reminiscences of schooldays. This was an Oral History project from a group of women at the Bromley-by-Bow Neighbourhood Church Centre. The book was published in December 1990)

John Geary was born in Tower Hamlets in 1939 and has lived here all his life. He first started school towards the end of World War Two and his education was influenced by the aftermath of the war. He has four children who all go to local schools. He enjoys painting and has done several large pictures.

I was four and a half when I started at St. Paul's Way infant school towards the end of the war. It was on the site of the present St. Paul's Way school. Then it was just one little building, a brick building, with cold, big classrooms, metal framed desks screwed to the floor, two to a desk, ink wells in the corner, ordinary pens.

At that time we lived with my grandma because we had been bombed out of our own house. We kept chickens, three geese, sixteen rabbits and a goat in our back yard. We had been evacuated twice, the first time to Cornwall, where the people were very kind and understanding and later to Cheshire. The people there didn't want to know. They said, "What are you doing here. Why don't you go back to your own place." But they weren't being bombed, were they.

A lot of the schools were bombed and badly damaged so when I first started school I was doing mornings or afternoons only because they were having one lot of children in, then another lot in. And they used to have little camp beds, green things with crossed legs. They used to open them up and cart us all down to another classroom. They called it "rest period". We would have the register taken, and after about two hours of lessons, we'd go down for the rest period. I think it was mainly to let other people come into our classroom. We didn't rest very much! I think a lot of the children who came through the war didn't really trust anyone.

One of the strange things being a child round here during war was having a playmate one day and the next day the family didn't exist any more. I'd hear my mother say "Oh, poor Mrs. Coombes' lot copped it last night; the father, the son, the two daughters. Only leaves little Jeffrey on his own." And you sit there and think, "What's happened to all the rest of them? Where have they gone?"

After the war, when I first went to junior school, there were around twenty-five in a class, increasing all the time as children came home from evacuation. When you've got several hundred thousand children evacuated from London and suddenly a lot of them flood back in, well, places

have got to be found for them. Of course, so many of the buildings were bombed and badly damaged. I mean, it was nothing to have cardboard up the windows of the school until they could get round to doing something about it. And there was no heating and not enough schools.

Clothing was short. The majority of the children round here wore shoes too big for them, wore short trousers with the backside hanging out of them. It was a common thing to see a child going to school with cardboard in his shoes or lino. People would cut the lino from under the wardrobe so it didn't show, and carve it to the shape of the child's shoe because he'd got holes in his shoes. And you'd still get soaking wet feet and cold in the winter. But that was the only way you could get to school. Leather was scarce and you couldn't just go out and get what you wanted. You needed clothing coupons.

I went there till I was eleven and learnt the usual run of the mill things. The emphasis was on getting you to read and write and do maths, and I became very good at doing maths and doing reading and writing. All from that little school. I mean, when I was six years old I could read the Sunday newspaper from end to end.

When I was eleven I went on to Farrance Street school, which is now Langdon Park, but then it used to be down by Burdett Road. It was an old building, boys in the bottom playground, girls in the roof playground with the railings round. Like all the schools I went to, it was a mixed school. We had a lot of groups in the fifties when I went there. There were lots of pop groups and skiffle groups. Some of them became quite famous. There was money in it. There wasn't much else around here.

After a couple of years I left that school and decided to go to St. Paul's, Church of England school, which was in Burdett Road. This was a small school. The football was better there and the sports side of it. The children living local, a lot of them went there.

The only test there seemed to be was the 11 plus exam. to get into grammar school. There didn't seem to be much emphasis on it. No one seemed to care whether you passed the 11 plus or didn't. Many of the children in the 11 plus group mucked about. They didn't seem to want to know. Most didn't want to go to grammar school. They liked the girls and sports.

Very few of the children round here were dedicated to learning. It seemed survival was more important than anything else. You went to grammar school, you stayed on till sixteen. You went to ordinary school and with a bit of luck, you could get out at fourteen and a half, start work and help your mother.

Most of the teachers were single, spinster women. Teaching didn't seem to mingle with family life. They were austere, hard. They could whip you

A Cockney Kid contd.....

with their tongue. One look from the Head would send shivers down your spine. The PE teacher could whack you with a slipper.

In all the schools I went to the cane flourished. It didn't really correct anybody. Stinging hands never really corrected anything. I never knew a child round here after the war who was sorry for being caned. One child would say to another, "I got six of the best yesterday and look; it's gone. Can't hurt me." This was the attitude round here. I can stand up to anything they can do. It was a very hard area.

Did I enjoy school days? I really wanted to learn. I think I really did want to learn. I was very keen to read and write and spell. I was keen to do maths. I don't think the lessons given on geography and history were all that good. They were the same old boring Battle of Hastings 1066. We had to chant it. I don't think that went down very well with the children round here. Cricket, football. That was good.

I think it was a very hard time, I think it was a very dangerous time, but I think it was the best time of my life.

John Curtis, 9 Avon Road, Walthamstow, London E17 3RB, has the following on offer:

I have copies of pictures ca. 1903-4 of beauty show winners and runners-up held at the Cambridge Music Hall. The pictures are of Rose Cooper, Esther Banks, Rebecca Mayne, Roe Joseph, Beatrice Berman and Louise Hover.

There is also a picture of a Miss Gormley (a Bethnal Green girl) shown with "clock and ornaments presented to her by the Police of Commercial Street Police Station (H) Whitechapel Div...for assisting a Constable who was being violently assaulted by roughs..."

These pictures were passed to me by Miss Aileen Ball, whose father was a PC at Commercial Street Station and retired in 1919. His is the writing on the backs of the photographs. I also have the transcription of a diary for the year 1919. It was kept by Mr William Crocker of Narford Road, Dalston. He was a barrister's clerk. Access to any of these can be given to bona fide members and enquirers.

Peggy Hewitt, 26 Elmtree Square,
Embsay, Skipton, N Yorks, BD23 6RE.
Tele 0756 700171.

Peggy Hewitt is writing a novel based on the life of balloonist Mary Elizabeth Cove, (Lily Cove) born 1886 at Homer Road, Hackney. Her father was Thomas Charles Cove of Hepscott Road, Hackney and her Mother's name was Annie Cue. Lily Cove died in 1906 and was buried in Howarth, Yorkshire.

Any information gratefully received. Also any offers for Bed and Breakfast for a few days required by the above while she carries out local research.

Programme News - 1991-1992

David Behr, our Programme Secretary has been busy organising the Programme for the coming year:

The September 1991 to 1992 programme is taking shape. Talks already confirmed will cover "From the Bronze Age to Post War." The Bronze Age as you've probably guessed, was among the finds made in the archaeological dig on the site of the Limehouse Road link. However, one of the most important discoveries was the location of the earliest known English porcelain manufactories.

More modern topics are: Billy and Charley - the Shadwell Fakers, who fooled Victorian Britain; How Labour won West Ham in the inter-war years; and Memories of Hop-picking.

The Visit will be a conducted tour of the Royal Hospital Archives permanent exhibition, especially covering items of local (Tower Hamlets) interest.

Only a few more talks have to be confirmed and so I hope members will soon be able to receive the full programme on a card.

Finally, I'd be delighted to receive comments (including criticisms!) and suggestions for future events.)

Autumn Coach Outing

This will be on Saturday September 28th,
to Tunbridge Wells and Penshurst Place.

We will go to Tunbridge first, and give an opportunity to look at this delightful spa town, and have lunch. The Pantiles, an 18th Century shopping street, is now a pedestrian precinct. There is a local museum and art gallery (admission free.)

After lunch, we will go to Penshurst Place. This is an outstanding stately home, where Sir Phillip Sidney was born in 1554, and still the home of the Sidney family. It includes a famous medieval Great Hall, Tudor gardens, a Toy Museum and extensive parklands. The village of Penshurst is small and picturesque, and the church is interesting. Tea is available at Penshurst.

The pick-up will be at Mile End, opposite the church, at 9.30 am to allow us more time in Tunbridge Wells. The fare will be £6.75. Admission to Penshurst is £3.00 and I will collect this on the coach.

Please send bookings to me, Anne Sansom, on the slip below, or phone 081 524 4506

Coach Trip to Tunbridge Wells and Penshurst	Saturday 28 September 1991
	Start time 9.30 am Mile End
I/We would likeseat/s for the coach trip and enclose a cheque /PO for £.....	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
Phone No.	
Please send to: Ann Sansom, 18 Hawkdene, London E4 7PF	

East End Miscellany

On 8 December 1935, George Leonard Carey, son of George Thomas and Ruby Catherine Carey, was baptized at All Hallows Church , Devon's Road, Bow. The family lived at No.68 Fern Street.

On 20 April 1991, at a solemn ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral, George Carey became Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1846 Mr Charles Harrod kept a shop in Wellclose Square Stepney, described in the Post Office Directory of that year as a tea dealer and grocer. Mr Harrod later moved to the village of Knightsbridge and opened a small grocer's shop, which in later years became world famous.

Lena Kennedy, best selling authoress, was born in Hoxton and moved to Wellington Road Leyton, where she lived for fifty years until her death in 1986.

Judah Bergman (Jack 'Kid'Berg) boxer, was born in Whitechapel on 28 June 1909. He died 22 April 1991.

First fought at the age of 14 at the Premierland, a famous London Arena, he went on to 197 contests in 21 years, many of them in the United States. Welterweight Champion 1930-31, British Champion 1934-36.

Private Sidney Godley of the Royal Fusiliers was the first private soldier to win the VC in the 1914-18 war. During the Battle of Mons, Private Godley held up the German advance single handed, firing the one remaining machine-gun until the rest of his unit reached safety. Godley was taken prisoner.

He was also the "original" of Bruce Bairnfathers famous cartoon character "Old Bill". He will be better known as the resident school-keeper of Cranbrook Road School, Bethnal Green for many years. He died in 1957 and is buried with his wife in the churchyard of St John the Baptist at Loughton.

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