

East London History Society

Newsletter

Autumn 1993

Vol.1 No.4



Old Ford Road at the end of Wick Lane about 1872.

non members Price £1

Letters from our Members.....

Chris Dixon, Newcastle upon Tyne:

I found plenty of interest in the Spring Newsletter, particularly George Renshaw's memories. In his article he mentioned his cousin, Billy Scotchmer - my Dad's cousin was married to a chap named George Scotchmer, and I have never heard of anyone else with this surname until I read George's article. I wonder if there is any connection? Many of George's reminiscences echo the things my Dad used to tell me of his young days, I expect they are of the same generation.

Arthur J L Hellicar, Benfleet, Essex:

Perhaps the mention of Poplar Hospital (in the last Newsletter) should have made clear that the notice board, a very large one, was there in the days of the horse drawn traffic. It was removed when motor vehicles took over from the horse and the latter no longer galloped along East India Dock Road.

Re Grotto Day: I received a letter from Mrs Marie Morris of Maidenhead in which she states that her brother-in-law, born in Plaistow, remembers the tradition. It took place on St James's Day, 25th July, and had nothing to do with any local church. Mrs Morris suggests that the custom was brought to London from Norfolk by immigrants who came looking for work in the 19th century. Her great-great-grandfather was one. He lodged with his future father-in-law in Barking.

There is a slight error on page 4 of the Newsletter. The cigarette or 'fags' mentioned should have read "Players Weights and Woodbines."

George Renshaw's interesting memories about washing day and the mangle took me back to my very early days, 1912-13 or thereabouts. We had a contraption for mangling or wringing washing in a newly erected shed in the 'backyard' in Brunswick Road. It was a large box-like 'machine' measuring (and I am now trying to picture it in my mind's eye) about 4 ft long, 2 ft wide and a foot or so deep. The inside of the box was filled with pieces of slate to give it weight, and it moved along on rollers.

My measurements might be exaggerated, but I do remember it as a large cumbersome object. Why do I

remember it? It's use gave me a laugh on the day that grandmother decided to mangle clothes whilst the shed roof was still being covered with felt, and my dad was nailing it down. His weight was too much, the roof fell in, and granny was covered in wood, felt and confusion.

Incidentally, the washing aids that George mentions should have been Oxydol and Reckitt's.

(ED: Thank you for the corrections and we hope our readers amend their records accordingly).

Elsie Sanders, Alresford, Hampshire:

The subject of shells and processions brings back memories of my young childhood in Poplar. We lived in Aberfeldy Street and as trams and other traffic were constantly using the street I don't recollect any shell displays on it. But it was a very different matter in the side streets. Our nearest was Dee Street.

At certain times of the year, it seemed to me in the summer or at least when the sun shone, Dee Street had quite a few houses which were beautifully decorated around the downstairs front window. Lace curtains were draped on the street side of the window, colourful large religious pictures, crucifixes, candles and paper flowers. Sometimes the ledge was widened using a small table to take even more religious objects. I distinctly recollect shells at the foot of some of the tables or on the ground itself, placed in pretty patterns. At a given time a procession lined up at the far end of Dee Street and then slowly made its way towards Brunswick Road and beyond. I presume it was a Roman Catholic procession, but I'm not sure. There were a few colourful banners in the procession, clergy, etc but the main body of the procession was made up of little children accompanied by some elders. The girls wore all white, and it must have cost their parents all they had to make sure they were nicely turned out, even to white shoes and socks. Amongst all the other memories I have of my childhood, this is one which has never left me.

As we lived in Aberfeldy Street, we were of course part of the the Scottish Estate, of which we were all very proud; possibly we thought it put us a bit above our friends who didn't have a Scottish street name. I was most interested to read about the Scottish family of MacIntosh and the laying out of the Estate. I also went to Culloden Street School where I was extremely

happy, from 1914 to 1940, after which I went on to Limehouse Central School, having just missed passing the scholarship to go to George Green's School in East India Dock Road. This annoyed me for years as I had looked forward to wearing a mortar board, as they did at George Green's at that time. So far I have not read anything about Limehouse Central School.

(ED: could we have some recollections of the above school? We could do a little feature on it.)

John Gates, Farnham, Surrey:

The walk round Victoria Park certainly jogged a lot of dormant memories for me. Quite a lot of distortions of recollections, too, were shown up for what they were.

I used to get out on my bike quite a lot before school and, later, before starting the day's work at John Dore and Co. Bromley High Street, in 1939/40. Sometimes I would go as far as Woodford or Dagenham, but if the weather was less promising the route was often confined to circuits round Victoria Park. I would not like to venture on those longer public roads today!

It is most surprising to find how little I knew of the significance of the events that are now being revealed to me, and especially how close the locations of those events were.

I enjoyed re-reading "In Letters of Gold" again after the walk. Re-acquaintance with the scenes of childhood does not immediately clarify the picture entirely, I find, and several points now present a new aspect.

For example, I somehow had the impression that 198 Bow Road was in the vicinity of Bromley Public Hall and Fairfield Road, but your (modern) view shows that it must have been sited within yards of my grandfather's workshops at the bottom of Finch's Yard. The road widening of 1936-7 (?) removed all of that side of the road, including the Brewery. No. 198 must have been in the middle of the road in your picture. As I remember the road before widening, it was barely wide enough for traffic to pass the tramcars at all point, which may have been one of the reasons for the widening.

The opening up of the towpath on the Duckett's (Hertford) Canal is another interesting opportunity to extend my reminiscent touring. My mother came from

St Dunstan's Road in Stepney, but brought up her younger brothers and sisters in Beachy Road and 44 Candy Street, just by the junction of the canal with the River Lea, after her mother died when she was only seventeen.

Elsie Shirley, Springfield, Chelmsford:

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "In Letters of Gold" and found it most interesting, even more so because I know of all the places named in the book.

I lived in Chad St before being bombed in WWII, and I was married in St Paul's church. I have a sister-in-law who lived in Ford Road before the war, whose maiden name was FARRELL, so I know she'll be keen to see the book.

And finally, some words of high praise about *In Letters of Gold*, from Bill Field of Basildon, Essex:

It's wonderful, and as a book collector I know a cracker when I see one. My mother was probably one of the (-) girls, since she worked at the factory from the age of ten, until she was fifteen years of age. It's not possible to imagine the unstinting efforts of your good self, associates and friends, but you each have my utmost admiration, I hope to persuade my local public library to invest in some copies. It is worthy of unstinting praise to all concerned, and a worthy little gem in any body's library. And a final word, apart from the contents of the book, the small volume is so beautifully produced. Thank you for an item of sheer joy!

□In Letters of Gold, price £4.95 inc. packing and postage, from Rosemary Taylor, 5 Pusey House, Saracen Street, Poplar, London E14 6HG.

Derek Morris, Harpenden, Herts:

I thought some of your readers may like to have an update on my research on Mile End Old Town - 1750 since I gave my talk to the ELHS some time ago.

For the past ten years I have been studying MEOT for the period 1740-1780 and have given talks on the subject to various societies.

I have now assembled a data base with over 4500 names from the MEOT land tax registers in the above period. I have not looked at post 1780 yet. For each

name I have the start date and the end date of their payment of land tax. These have also been cross checked with births, marriages and deaths for St Dunstan's in the East.

I also found it possible to recreate the order in which the tax collectors went round the parish and to then relate this information to deeds and leases. This means that for land tax payers I can locate their property within a few hundred yards. This is very good considering that there are few addresses in the tax records before 1780. I can also track families as they move around MEOT and judge whether they could afford more or less rent!

I would be happy to do a search in my data base if this would help any readers. I ask for £1 plus a SAE to search for upto ten names.

I have plans to publish an index to the tax registers. The advantage of the index is that approximately 60% of the tax payers only stayed three years or less in MEOT before moving on. Where they all came from is probably impossible to prove except in a few cases, hence my interest in contacting anyone else with an interest in MEOT in the 18th century. If any newsletter readers have any information relevant to the above I would be happy to add it to my data base.

Mr Alf Morris, Bow, London E3 spoke to Doreen Kendall, recalling his memories of the dreadful night of the tube Disaster. He and his Aunt walked ahead, making for the shelter, leaving his parents to lock up the house. As they walked down Victoria Park Road they could see the searchlights in Museum Gardens. He recalls that it was the normal procedure for searchlights to be switched off when they spotted a plane, and for the guns to open fire. Everything went dark as the searchlights were switched off, and as they made their way in the darkness, there was a loud screech, and people starting shouting, thinking bombs were falling. His Aunt was trapped in the crush of bodies, and he was rescued by a large, well-built lady, who pulled him out of the pile. His Aunt remained trapped on the left hand side of the entrance. She was wearing a black astrakhan coat with large buttons, which rescuers managed to undo and drag her out of, thanks to its shiny lining. She was badly bruised, as the unfinished entrance had jagged edges on the rough walls. Alf's Aunt, Mrs Lilian Hall died in December 1992.

Mrs J Fowler, Guildford, Surrey:

My husband and I were born in Bethnal Green and I attended St John's School, we were both members of the Repton Club and were married at the Church.

Sadly my grandmother and my husband's mother were both killed in the (Bethnal Green Tube -) disaster, and we greatly appreciate the effort made to bring about the memorial service. I understand that the booklet I have asked for gives more information about Bethnal Green, which will be of interest to us.

Dorothy Frith, Windermere, Cumbria:

As a serving member of the London Ambulance Service stationed in Wilmot Street, Bethnal Green, I was an attendant on the first ambulance to arrive at the scene of the disaster. Neither the driver nor myself had any idea of what to expect and we were both horrified when our first four 'casualties' proved to be four dead bodies. Our second run was a similar journey to Bethnal Green Hospital with four dead bodies. This time it was necessary to go to the mortuary to retrieve blankets from the dead and the sight of a pile of bodies of dead children is a nightmare not easily forgotten.

On our third journey I had one conscious man who was very disturbed because he did not know what had happened to his wife. By this time the doctors from the hospital were outside certifying the dead who were being taken to St James the Less where a temporary mortuary had been hastily set up. At this stage I grabbed a doctor pleading that I had a man who was alive on my ambulance and he was taken into the hospital.

Our ambulance station was indeed a sombre place that night, we were particularly appalled that such extensive deaths had occurred when no bombs had been dropped.

This incident reinforced for me my conviction of the utter futility and cruelty of war and when the shelter in Baghdad was bombed in 1991, I relived the nightmare of the 3rd March 1943 although it was 50 years ago.

Ikey Jacob (Late of the Tenterground) enjoyed reading George Renshaw's memoirs, which stirred a few memories of his own:

With the pending demolition of the Spitalfields Tenterground, my family were, in 1925, rehoused into "Shoreditch Buildings" or to give them their official title, the LCC Boundary Street Estate. This was some 25 years after the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII had graciously opened the estate.

I transferred almost immediately upon our arrival in the neighbourhood from the Jews Free School in the "Lane" to Virginia Road School, where I soon discovered that a large proportion of the 'jobs' were, like myself, Jewish. How, like Mr Renshaw, I too recall those patriotic flag waving Empire days. How proud we all were to belong to the Empire upon which the sun never set. How we sang those patriotic songs and cheered our Britannia seated on her dais in the middle of the playground.

One year I remember in particular that glorious lady was portrayed by none other than Flora Isaacs, like myself a resident of Sunbury Buildings, and my childhood sweetheart. How I loved that girl! Trident, robes, helmet, the lot.

As the family expanded and grew older we moved, because of overcrowding, from Sunbury to Sonning and thence to Marlow.

Upon my leaving the school that had started its life in the infamous "Nichol", I at 14 years of age, embarked on a five year apprenticeship with Sammy Finkelstein, woodcarver to the trade, 7&8 Marlow Workshops. emerging, once out of my indentures as yet another woodcarver for the furniture trade to support.

I had known Siddy Longcroft, mentioned by Mr Renshaw, when he lived in Gascoigne Place, before his marriage to Ethel. But it was not until the mid to late thirties that we became good friends.

Once out of my apprenticeship I worked for one or two local firms to gain more experience with a view to starting up on my own. during this period Sid offered me a job working for him in his first floor workshop above the Gooch Brothers polishing shop in Columbia Road, which I accepted. When, sometime later, he moved across the road to a shop opposite Columbia

Road School I would on occasion help him out there too.

During this period of my life I had a spell in Davenport's working with that other fine carver, Harry Deeks. Yes, Mr Renshaw, they certainly did make good solid furniture.

As well as grafting with Sid by day we would go out many an evening 'darting' it in the local pubs where we would play any two for half a pint each a game, losers to pay. Sid was renowned as a very fine darts player and as I too was considered to be not at all bad with the arrows, we would, on occasion, with the backing of the locals at the Royal Oak, Birdcage, or Loggerheads, find ourselves playing a match against two other well-known marksmen - Tony Lloyd, Joe Baker, George Bailey, Jimmy Smith and the like for a fiver or more a side.

The part of Mr Renshaw's story that baffles me though is his telling of seeing a "crowd of foreigners" round the Bandstand on Cable Street Sunday. I, who lived in Marlow Buildings at the time, with its entrance in Arnold Circus and front room window overlooking the Bandstand, cannot recall seeing this strange phenomenon at all. But there it is. [Perhaps my old memory is not what it used to be. Either that or I couldn't recognise a foreigner even if I fell over one.

The mention of Cable Street and the reason why that confrontation took place re-awakens within me Jewry's darkest days in modern British history. Without wanting to tread on Mr Renshaw's toes - I'm sure he will comment more fully on the fascist scourge, it being an integral part of Bethnal Green's pre-war history - I would like to say that, as a Jew, my people were really put under great stress by those black-shirted louts, who stock in trade consisted of scribbling on walls everywhere "P J" (Perish Judah) and marching rounds the streets chanting, "Yids, Yids, we've got to get rid of the Yids."

I could go on, but in fairness to Mr Renshaw's next article I'll stop here.

ED - I enjoyed reading Ikey's reminiscences so much I felt I had to include it in full, as it shed light on several events mentioned in George Renshaw's article, the final part of which will be held over to the next newsletter.

The Illustrated London News for 1842

Considering the appeal of popular illustrated newspapers today, it is surprising that more was not made of the 150th anniversary of the Illustrated London News (ILN), the first issue of which appeared on 14 May 1842. Newspapers before that date occasionally carried illustrations, usually a woodcut, and Herbert Ingram got the idea for the ILN from observing that more people in his native Nottingham bought the Weekly Chronicle when it carried a picture. He also noticed that people liked reading news stories about London. A newspaper that carried these two essential ingredients - pictures and news from London - could not fail, he reasoned, especially if their presence was evident in the very title of the newspaper.

He came to London and, with money raised from promoting a laxative for which he had acquired the recipe, he appointed an editor, writers, engravers and printers to get the venture going. He had the new newspaper advertised around London by an army of men carrying sandwich-boards (there is an engraving of them on the back page of the first issue.) While it was not an immediate success, it was soon selling far more than established newspapers and by 1863 had a weekly sale of 300,000 - the newspaper tax had been abolished in 1855. He was able to meet the demands of such a run because the illustrations were engraved on the wood of the native English box tree, wood hard enough to take such a number of impressions from the steam-powered printing machines of the time.

I was recently fortunate enough to buy the first 33 issues from a stall off Brick Lane. They had been bound together at the beginning of 1843 and although the binding was in tatters the text and illustrations were in reasonably good condition.

What are the contents? Summarising more than 550 three-column pages and describing about 1,000 illustrations is clearly impossible, so I shall restrict myself to hurrying through the main items of general interest that caught my attention and concluding with some of the contents that related to East London.

Royal events were well covered, with the subject, clearly, having as much popular appeal then as now. In the very first issue there are eight

engravings of Queen Victoria's 'Bal Masque' at Buckingham Palace, with a lengthy accompanying text. Throughout the other issues can be found illustrations of royal palaces, royal tours, visits from foreign royalty and there is even an engraving depicting the attempted assassination of Queen Victoria on her way from Hyde Park and, a few weeks later of the would-be assassin.

There are military scenes, views of interest from Barcelona to China and, nearer home, illustrations of construction works of note like Pentonville Prison, newly completed, 'on novel principles of prison architecture,' the new Hungerford Bridge and the present Houses of Parliament, then being built.

While the declared editorial policy of the ILN was to eschew politics, at least in the party sense, social and political events at home and abroad were noted and illustrated where appropriate. Parliament was reprimanded for breaking up for the summer recess of 1842 without finding a solution to the distress in the manufacturing districts and, when rioting broke out in these districts in August, there were illustrated reports from towns like Manchester, Preston, Stockport and Halifax. Disasters were depicted in great detail: a fire in Hamburg was shown in the first issue and there are two particularly vivid illustrations of a fire in Liverpool in October. Besides news items from home and overseas, there were regular reports from the courts - at one time, indeed, Ingram had thought about devoting the new illustrated newspaper exclusively to crime reports.

Cultural items included regular features on literature, science, London churches, out-of-the-way buildings, natural history and fashion, the last two in particular delicately illustrated. There are engravings of McCreedy at Drury Lane, opera at Covent Garden and ballet at Her Majesty's Theatre. For those with a taste for display, there is a picture of Mademoiselle Caroline at Vauxhall Gardens, 'the most graceful, as well as wonderful, lady rider the public has ever beheld.' For sporting enthusiasts, there is racing at Goodwood and cricket at Lord's, and there is a portrait of Jimmy Liddy from Wandsworth, winner of the Dogget's Coat and Badge for 1842 - John Rugg of Wapping, alas, came in a distant fourth.

2
28 = +3

East London makes an early entry in the ILN's meticulous recording of 'dreadful' happenings in the Metropolis, when a Scottish seaman is reported to have jumped into the Thames to rescue a woman from Ratcliff who 'in a fit of despair, and heated by inebriety, threw herself over the swing-bridge in Old Gravel Lane, Wapping.' There was no such reprieve for Jane Cooper of Hoxton, who hurled herself to her death from the Monument in August. She was a servant girl whose master, when asked, 'could assign no reason for the dreadful act.'

Hoxton had featured in a happier context earlier in the year, when a Mr Green made a balloon ascent from the 'Royal Standard Tavern Albert Saloon.' It was his 200th ascent and 'the last preparatory to his intended voyage across the Atlantic, with the great Nassau balloon, on a visit to America.' This interesting subject was not illustrated, nor was the account of a Chartist meeting attended by 10,000 people in Stepney, where a resolution was carried asking the Queen to order the troops to be withdrawn from the 'disturbed districts' in the North.

In October the Thames Tunnel entrance featured in a tiny illustration, which was offered to readers 'less in the form of an illustration of its subject than as a specimen of the new system of surface printing.' The following month there were medals advertised to celebrate the opening of the Tunnel, the 'seventh wonder of the world,' as it was called. (Today it carries the tube trains between Rotherhithe and Wapping.) The 'official' opening was not until March 1843.

There is an engraving of St Dunstan's Church, Stepney, in the series 'Churches of the Metropolis' and there are several views of shipping on the Thames that include East London's riverside and docks.

An issue in July carries news of the launching of an East Indiaman, 'The Queen', from Blackwall. An engraving of the same ship appears in October with the intelligence that should the Chinese war continue, she might be commissioned by the government. The owners would be handsomely compensated, no doubt, but the East India trade, for all its riches and glamour, had its hazards, as we are reminded in a news item the following month. The 'Reliance', an East Indiaman returning from

Canton, was wrecked off Boulogne when the Captain 'mistook the French lights on the coast for some others, as one of them had been changed since he left England, about twelve months ago.' The Captain was among the 110 people lost, with 27,000 boxes of tea.

One final illustration may be worthy of local interest. It is an engraving of hop-picking at an unspecified location in Kent or Sussex in September, with the following comment on the hop-pickers:

They are made up of the most varied materials, and are of all ages and sizes. During the season it is not unusual to see them huddled together and sleeping at night in the open air.

'Varied materials' seems a curious phrase and presumably means 'all sorts of characters.' The engraving, though, is delightful and I was reminded of Gilda O'Neill's excellent talk to the Society last November. I wondered if the engraving was based on observing East Enders in the hop-fields (impossible to prove) and wondered also if this is the earliest engraving of hop-pickers (possible to prove?) Does anyone know of an earlier one?

COLM KERRIGAN



HOP PICKING.

The foregoing cut represents a group of hop-pickers, who, at a certain period of the year, flock in hundreds to the counties of Kent and Sussex. They are made up of the most varied materials, and are of all ages and sizes. During the season it is not unusual to see them huddled together, and sleeping at night in the open air. At the close of the hop-picking season, now rapidly coming on, they return to their respective homes.

Out and About with the Society

Last August, when the committee had to make the decision to move from Queen Mary and Westfield College because of the high cost of hiring the room, we were worried that our members would not like the change. How wrong we were, and how delighted we are with the arrangement we now have with the Latimer Congregational Church. The venue has proved to be very successful with old and new members, no stairs, comfortable seats, easy parking, tea on arrival and a bookstall. The committee would like to thank everyone for their support. We have tried to maintain a high profile by attending as many of the fetes, bazaars, exhibitions, lectures and walks by other organisations to sell our Society, and to spread the message that our history is our inheritance and is there for everyone.

March 3rd was the 50th Anniversary of the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster. A Memorial Service was held at the Church of St John, to a full congregation of survivors, relations and local people. The Bishop Stepney, the Rt. Rev Richard Chartres conducted the service, then was escorted by the Mayor of Tower Hamlets to unveil the plaque at the south east entrance to Bethnal Green Underground station. We are all pleased that after 50 years the worst civilian disaster of the Second World War has been identified and placed on record, with a fitting memorial. The efforts of local people, following three years of intense lobbying, paid off.

On the 26th March, Rosemary Taylor's book on the East End Suffragettes, "In Letters of Gold", was launched, with a Signing. The event was attended by many supporters and sympathisers of women's rights, who enjoyed a buffet supper and the chance to meet and exchange news and views. Some of the guests had known Sylvia Pankhurst and her son Richard during their many years stay at Woodford Green.

This was followed by a project on Votes for Women at the Professional Development Centre in the first week of April, which was attended by schools from around the Borough. It was voted a great success by pupils and teachers alike, and the Inspector of Schools has suggested another week in 1994.

On 8th April the coach set off for Rochester, with a large contingent of members, thanks to Ann Sansom's recruitment drive. Besides the Dickens connection, there was also the history of the Medway, and the Cathedral. The day's enjoyment was rounded off with a super cream tea, and despite an unexpected thunderstorm, the trip was voted one of the best.

May the 5th saw us all celebrating the unveiling of a plaque on the side of the Lord Morpeth Pub in Old Ford Road, commemorating the work of Sylvia Pankhurst and Norah Smyth at their Women's Hall and Cost Price Restaurant, which was opened at the start of the First World War, to help alleviate the distress and suffering that conflict had brought to the East End. Caroline Benn, author of "Keir Hardie", (who will feature in our new Programme) gave a well researched speech, and Dave Watson the Landlord decorated the Pub in Suffragette colours, with the addition of a beautifully designed mirror, and even provided a Votes for Women horse and cart, to the delight of the local children. Also in attendance was Casimir Isolani, Norah Smyth's nephew, who came to honour his Aunt's memory.

On the 15th May we took a walk around Victoria Park, exploring areas of the park not usually noticed by visitors, such as the point where Charles Duckett's canal joins the River Lea, the sites of the wartime cut and cover shelters and the boundary stones between Hackney and Poplar. Some members remarked on how small Victoria Park was in comparison to their childhood memories. The diversion to the canal proved so popular that it has been suggested we walk the canals from Mile End to Three Mills. Has any member done this walk, if so, how long would it take? We thought we'd ask before your committee tries it out and gets lost, exhausted or never heard of again!

In May a series of lectures were undertaken by the Committee for Bow Neighbourhood Education Centre. This really stretched our minds and resources, as we were asked to limit the scope of our talks to the history of what is presently Bow Neighbourhood. This fitted in very well with our programme as it followed on from the end of our lectures, providing keen historians with an opportunity on continuing their interest in local history through the summer.

The Editor of East London Advertiser asked us to guest the weekly local history column, so Doreen and Rosemary obliged with a little cameo on Lord Morpeth (of Old Ford Road fame!), otherwise Commissioner of Parks and Forests in the mid 1800's, when Victoria Park was being laid out. This was a coup for us, as it takes a lot of persuasion to get local papers interested in our activities. The result of the article was a surge in enquiries for membership and requests from other societies for Rosemary to lead walks and give talks on local women's history and buildings on the Bow Trail.

On the 15th July we witnessed another success. A plaque to commemorate the East London Toy Factory at 45 Norman Grove was unveiled by Mrs Paul Isolani-Smyth, the great-nephew of Norah Smyth. Several other members of Norah's family travelled from as far away as Cheshire to be present on the occasion. We were also delighted to have Mrs Andrea Silk on hand to describe her experiences of working at the Toy Factory as a girl of 14. The present owners of the two houses graciously invited us in to and it was truly a unique and memorable experience to find ourselves seated in the old Toy Factory being served iced punch by Ms Rosie Bates, and watching Andrea recapture the past.

Lark in the Park at Millwall was a huge success, and many local history societies took part. Perhaps next year we could have some volunteers to help us run a stall. Any ideas for a theme?

The East End Yesterdays week at Holland Hall saw us again hard at work. Three of the topics we have been working on featured as events. In our last newsletter we published queries and comments on the old custom of building grottoes. This was taken up with enthusiasm and a grotto-making day on Weavers Fields proved a great success for schoolchildren and senior citizens alike. Doreen had an afternoon session on the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster, and we had a morning on East End Suffragettes. All topics were supported by Exhibitions which could be viewed throughout the week.

Finally, our book on Victoria Park has been moving apace, the first draft has been completed, but like all research, new avenues keep opening up which just have to be explored. We are confident,

however, that in the end it will be well worth all the effort.

DOREEN KENDALL

Books etc....

Catholic Mission and Registers 1700-1880

During the 1700s persecution of Catholics died down and many priests began to keep registers of their congregation. In the 1800s Catholic missions were established in all the large industrial towns, many of them replacing the country-house chapels of the gentry which had been the main centres of Catholicism in most parts of the country since the Reformation.

In a series of six regional books **Michael Gandy**, Chairman of the Catholic FHS, gives details of every known mission and chaplaincy 1700-1880. As well as register dates for baptism, marriage, confirmation and death, he gives details of copies and links each mission to its predecessors and to the great families who supported them or the 'riding missions' of individual priests who travelled a regular circuit lodging where they could. This is the first such detailed study to appear for any part of mainland Britain.

The publication is in 6 volumes, covering London and the Home Counties, the Midlands and East Anglia, Wales and the West of England, North East England, North West England and finally, Scotland.

Price: £6.00 per volume or £30.00 for the set + p & p.

Catholic Parishes in England, Wales and Scotland : an Atlas.

In a further booklet Mr Gandy has reprinted a series of maps which were published in the Catholic Directory in the late 1950s. These show the full extent of the Catholic parish system which grew up to cater for the new Catholics and the Irish after 1850.

Price: £2.00 P&P 50p.

Details from Michael Gandy, 3 Church Crescent, Whetstone, London N20 OJR.

PROGRAMME 1993 - 1994

- Wednesday 15 September
6 pm.

Humanities Education Centre, Tower
Hamlets Professional Development Centre,
English Street, E3

- Thursday 23 September
7.30pm

George Lansbury and the Bow and Bromley
by-election of 1912 - John Shepherd

- Saturday 2 October

Coach Outing - See details on back page of
Newsletter

- Tuesday 19 October
7pm

Visit to Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest. 121-
131 East India Dock Road, Poplar E14. Bus
from Mile End - D6; bus from Oxford
Circus/Aldgate - 15.

- Thursday 11 November
7.15pm - A.G.M.

7.45pm

Sutton House - excavating Hackney's Tudor
House (illustrated) - Christopher Phillpotts

- Thursday 9 December
7.30pm

Toshers on the Thames - Liz Thompson

- Thursday 20 January
7.30pm

Lord Rothschild and the 4% Industrial
Dwellings Co (illustrated) - Clifford Lawton

- Thursday 17 February
7.30pm

Cephas Street School Evacuated - the
experiences of Alderman A Kershaw JP -
Daphne Glick

- Thursday 17 March
7.30pm

Church Life in Mile End - Latimer Chapel
and the Roman Catholic Parish of Guardian
Angels (illustrated) - Jean Olwen Maynard

- Thursday 14 April
7.30pm

The Coming of the Railways to East London
- Bob Dunn

- Thursday 28 April
7.30pm

Caroline Benn, Author of "Keir Hardie" talks
about her work.

- Thursday 19 May
7.30pm

East London Pubs - Reminiscence Evening
Members share their memories and
research

**Note: All lectures are held in the Latimer
Congregational Church, Ernest Street,
Stepney - nearest Undergrounds Stepney
Green or Mile End.**

EXHIBITION at the RAGGED SCHOOL MUSEUM
by OXFORD HOUSE and E.L.H.S.
EAST END SUFFRAGETTES Oct:Wed:Thurs:
10.00-5.00p.m. Sundays 3rd Oct, 7th No
5th Dec.

13th Oct:History Club Lecture
by Rosemary Taylor
7th November Walk.
BOW BELL and BATTLEAXES
Meet Bow Rd Underground 1.00pm

Programme Notes and News

David Behr, our hardworking and conscientious programme organiser reports on his plans for the next season of lectures:

Thanks to suggestions from members of the committee, the new programme has been completed. I'm particularly pleased that one of our members, Bob Dunn, has volunteered to speak to the Society. But members needn't feel they have to be so ambitious.

At the Pub Evening in May you might like to speak for a few minutes on, for example, pub outings.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

The Humanities Education Centre Library naturally has a large range of educational material. It also covers local history of London and other regions. So the opportunity on Wednesday 15th September to look round from 6pm onwards should provide a sociable start to the programme, especially as cups of tea are being provided.

(English Street is close to Mile End Station. The first turning on the left from the station is Eric Street. Go down Eric Street to Hamlets Way, turn left and cross Hamlets Way. English Street is the next turning.)

In 1912 George Lansbury resigned his Bow and Bromley seat to stand as an independent in favour of women's suffrage. On Thursday 23rd September John Shepherd will tell of his research into the by-election.

Saturday 2nd October is the day booked for our Autumn coach trip to The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, which is situated in beautiful countryside between Midhurst and Chichester. It promises to be a lively and interesting trip, and if you have a hotline to heaven, please pray for the rain to hold off!

As outlined in the last Newsletter, 1993 is the 150th Anniversary of the Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest. On Tuesday 19th October the Society will visit the building and learn about its history.

Sutton House in Hackney dates from 1535. It's a rare example of a Tudor brick house with later additions and has been in almost continuous occupation. Christopher Phillpotts has conducted three archaeological excavations. He will give an illustrated talk on Thursday 11th November. (The talk will be at 7.45pm, preceded by the Society's AGM at 7.15pm.)

The final event in 1993 will be on Thursday 9th December when Liz Thompson speaks on 'Toshers on the Thames.' In her own words: "The background to it is the life of my great-great grandfather who was a tosher. He made a living from searching the foreshore at low tide for 'tosh' - anything made of copper from nails to sheeting used to protect the hulls of the ships against worms. Toshers also went after anything else saleable, but their serious living came from finding coins, and lost jewellery, etc., down the sewers. Not much has been written about toshers, apart from Henry Mayhew's interview with one in the 1850's. There is so much to learn about toshers - their beliefs, superstitions and the medicines they took to keep them healthy in an essentially unhealthy occupation."

Bernard Bresslaw 1934 - 1993

All of our members are aware of the death on the 11th June of the well known actor Bernard Bresslaw.

Bernard was for many years a member of E.L.H.S. taking a great interest in our society as befitting a man who spent his childhood in Eric street, attended Coopers Company School in Bow road. He then served two years in the army and then went onto R.A.D.A.. He appeared in the 1950's on television in the long running series "The Army Game" and most of the "Carry On" films. Later in his career he became a very accomplished Shakespearean actor. It was in his dressing room at Regents Park Theatre while preparing for his role in the Taming of the Shrew that he died

The Society on behalf of its members sent their condolences to Bernard's wife and family in their sad loss.

AUTUMN COACH TRIP

This will be on Saturday 2nd October. We will be visiting the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, which is situated in beautiful country on the South Downs between Midhurst and Chichester.

Over 35 historic buildings have been re-erected here, including a mediaeval farmhouse which has been restored to its original state, a working water mill, and a 16th century market hall. There are also farm livestock, and craft demonstrations.

Before visiting the museum we shall have a stop at the attractive old town of Midhurst for lunch (own arrangements). Tea is available at the Museum.

The coach fare will be £6.90, and admission to the Museum is £3.00 full rate and £2.50 reduced rate. Meet opposite Mile End Underground at 9.30am.

To book please send the coach fare only with the slip below to:
Ann Sansom, 18 Hawkdene, London E4 7PP. Tele 081 524 4506.

Autumn Coach Trip 2.10.93
I/we would like.....seat/s for the trip. I enclose a cheque/PO (made payable to ELHS) for £.....
Name _____
Address _____ _____
Tele. No. _____

Membership Renewal Form for 1993/1994

Please fill in the form below and return to John Harris, 15 Three Crowns Road,
Colchester, Essex, CO4 5AD.

Name _____

Address _____

Tele. No. _____
