



The Princess Alice Disaster, 1878 (Illustrated London News)

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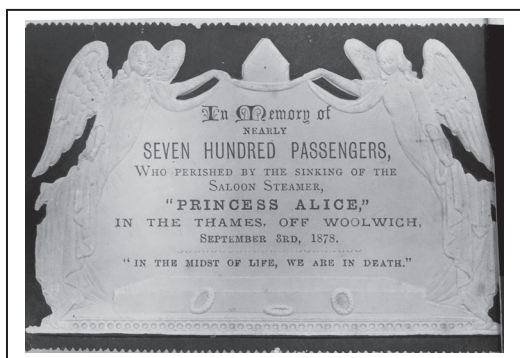
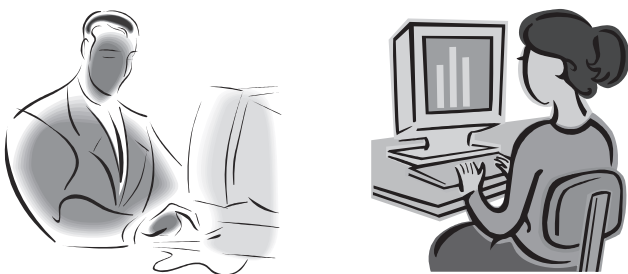
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The Newsletter is edited and typeset by Rosemary Taylor and Philip Mernick, with the assistance of an editorial team comprising, Doreen Kendall and David Behr.



The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park are always seeking to augment their store of information on the burials in the cemetery, and any history related to the area.

If you have information or memorabilia you would like to share or allow the FTHCP to copy, please contact friendsthcp@yahoo.co.uk or contact Diane Kendall c/o The Soanes Centre Southern Grove London E3 4PX.

Join Doreen and Diane Kendall and assist in recording monumental inscriptions in Tower Hamlets Cemetery on the second Sunday of each month, from 2-4 pm.

All volunteers welcome.

Cover Picture

On September 3rd 1878 the paddle steamer SS Princess Alice sank off Barking Reach in what remains the UK's worst inland shipping disaster. The pleasure steamer was returning from a "Midnight Trip" to Gravesend when it was in collision with the much larger screw collier SS Bywell Castle on a limited visibility bend in the river. The wooden Princess Alice was cut in two and rapidly sank. It was carrying around 800 passengers but the exact number is not known as young children travelled free. More than 100 people were rescued by the Bywell Castle and other ships but an estimated 650 died. Bodies continued to wash up on both banks of the river for more than a week and 120 victims were buried in a mass grave at Woolwich Old Cemetery. Tower Hamlets Local History Library has a penny pamphlet of the time listing the names of many of the saved and the victims showing that they came from all over London and not just The East End.

**East London History Society
Lecture Programme 2018-2019**

Thursday September 13, 2018

Discovering Stratford Village
Matilde Martinetti

Thursday October 18, 2018

Short AGM and then
Glimpses of East End Life 1940s and 50s.
(films)
Ray Newton & John Tarbey

Thursday November 15, 2018

**Floods, going to the Dogs and Hallelujah
Bonnets: a peoples' history of Lower
Clapton, E5.**
Carolyn Clark

Thursday December 13, 2018

**Stratford seen through Edwardian Postcard
images**
Peter Williams & Mark Gorman

Thursday January 10, 2019

**Little did we know - Hidden Histories of
WW1.**
Diane Kendall

Thursday February 14, 2019

A modest living, memoirs of a cockney Sikh
Suresh Singh

Thursday March 14, 2019

**The East End in Colour 1960-1980, the
photographs of David Granick**
Chris Dorley-Brown

Thursday April 18, 2019

Henry Raine and Raines Foundation School
Joe Dolman

Thursday May 16, 2019

Captain James Cook
Derek Morris

As previous, all meetings start at 7.30 P.M at
Latimer Church Hall, Ernest Street, E1 4LS

Suggestions and ideas for future topics and/or
speakers for our Lecture Programme are
always welcomed. If you can suggest someone
or indeed if you would like to give a talk
yourself, please get in touch with David Behr,
our Programme co-ordinator, either at one of
our lectures or, alternatively, email our
Chairman Philip Mernick with your comments
and suggestions. **Email: phil@mernicks.com**

ELHS Record and Newsletters. You can now
download from our web site (no charge) PDFs
of all issues of East London Record and the
last three series of Newsletter (1992 to 2013).
They can be found on our publications page
together with indexes to aid selection. We have
sold all hard copies of our Mile End and
Wapping books but PDF copies can be
supplied for £6 each – contact us for details.

All of the PDFs can be searched for specific
words. We also have older Newsletters (from
1962) scanned but the quality of printing
means that the PDFs can not be searched. If
you have any Newsletters from the 1950s or
1960s please let us know, I am sure we are
missing some issues.

From Our Members:

Clapton FC

I don't know how aware members are of the Clapton FC Archive at the Bishopsgate Institute. This was deposited in September 2016 and has been added to since then. It comprises the football club's minute books from 1901 to 1958 (with a small gap in the 1930s), along with a variety of other papers, booklets and photos.

The archive was deposited as part of an initiative to preserve the famous club's history, in the face of an attempt to liquidate the Trust that runs the home ground (the Old Spotted Dog Ground in Forest Gate) and a refusal by the current Chief Executive to admit new members. The supporters who have archived these minute books etc have also formed a new team, Clapton Community FC (usually referred to as Clapton CFC), which has made news in recent days from the large interest being shown in its away kit, designed in commemoration of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. The team will play this season in a Middlesex League and is based at Wadham Lodge in Walthamstow.

Chris Tymkow

From Margaret Wiltshire:

I wonder if anyone can answer this?
During the 1930s we children were taken to a pantomime at The Queens theatre in Poplar, after the show & as we came out we were given an apple an orange and a marshmallow fish. The fish sticks in my mind as I cannot see any significance of it.

I wonder if there was some charity or benefactor that provided this. It's a puzzle.
Anyone got a clue?

From member Walter Fung

Dear Philip and the Committee,

Thank you for your newsletter of August 2018.

I am still researching the early Chinese community in the UK (i.e. mainly in the period 1900 up to say 1950). The Chinese people in the UK of this time are my grandfather's and father's contemporaries. I have used the services of a professional genealogist to help me in certain areas.

My grandfather and father arrived in London in mid-August 1924 and were to travel on to Liverpool. My father (12 years old at that time) recalls that they tried to buy a train ticket to Liverpool, but my grandfather thought that they were being misled as the fare being asked for was far too cheap. Possibly the ticket seller was selling them an underground train to take them across London to the mainland station, Euston?

Not knowing how to communicate effectively, they asked a taxi driver to take them to any Chinese laundry. My father believed it was in the East End of London. There the English wife of a Chinese laundryman put them on a train to Liverpool. Presumably she went with them to Euston. In my grandfather's address book, there is a Mrs Lee Gwen at 31 High Street, Poplar. This was probably written about 1924. Was she the lady who helped my grandfather and father?

In the commercial directory there is a Guen Lee laundry at 64 Upper North Street, Poplar (1908), presumably the husband of Mrs Guen Lee. The spelling of Chinese names in English varies. It depends how they sound to the English ear.

The 1911 census shows Le Guen living with his wife Elizabeth Guen with three children at 35 Lower North Street, Poplar, running a laundry. The three children are surnamed Moss; Alfred Terrance (b. 1903), Frederick

Charles (b. 1905) and William Cornelius (b.1907). No marriage record was found for Lee Gwen and Elizabeth Moss (or Burns) before 1911, so is likely that they were living together as husband and wife.

There is a marriage recorded between a Lee Gwen and Elizabeth Moss in December 1920. It seems that Elizabeth Moss's maiden name was Burns because there is record of a marriage between Elizabeth Burns and Alfred Joseph Moss in 1900.

The last named son, William Cornelius, was registered on his death in 1975 in the Westminster district as William Cornelius Gwen. Possibly he was the son of Lee Gwen?

Elizabeth L Gwen died at the age of 79 in Islington during September 1958. Her year of birth was about 1879. (This fits in with Elizabeth Moss/Burns)

There is record of a Mr Lee Gwen sailing for Hong Kong during February 1932, his address given as 31 High Street, London E13, occupation, laundry proprietor. He was aged 69 at the time and probably died in China.

Hi Philip,

I did enjoy the last newsletter, as it touched very lightly on my families who had lived in Central London long ago.

My father's Howard family lived in Clerkenwell and were ladies Hat makers. John Alfred Howard 1844-1921, was deaf, of Percival Street is listed in the Census as Feather Dyer, and the Post Office 1881 Directory he is listed as a Ostrich feather manufacture.

Many workers were listed as artificial flower makers, his wife Martha Stuhr was from St Georges in the East, and the daughter of

Martha Groves and Gerhard Stuhr, a German sugar baker, she was very much involved in the designs of the Ladies Hats.

My mother's Cox family lived in MEOT from 1720s where Thomas Cox married Ann Davies in St Dunstan's in Aug 1722, I believe they were both born in Whitechapel, Thomas and Ann had 13 children baptised in St Dunstons, he is listed as a Drover, but have not yet discovered if he was working in Smithfield or the Navy supply yards at Tower Hill.

The family connection with Cows in particular follows down the family line to my Mother when living in Chalgrove Road Hackney in the 1920s could remember the milking stalls at the bottom of the garden, which were not in use any more. I have been told by other members of the family the Cows were taken to Hackney Marshes to graze, I know there is still a small bridge called Cow crossing over the river. I believe the Drovers had to be Licenced but have never found them in the ¼ sessions records.

From 1720s MEOT to 1920s Hackney the family had lived in Bethnal Green, (one generation all born in the Workhouse) Shoreditch and Spitalfields, some Weavers, some Milkmen and a Publican. So some of the Street names in the Booth notebooks were very familiar to me.

Very inspiring issue. Many thanks.

I am doing a project in the village with the WI so we have a copy of the CWGC site of burial, name, Regiment and date of the death for each family member, and the Cemetery where he was buried all of which can be downloaded from there site. Is this of use?

Eileen Blythe,
Folkestone Kent.

My Great Uncle, Private Albert Cox 1890-1915

My mother's Cox family were long-time residents in East London, I have found the family in Mile End Old Town from 1722 with Thomas Cox a Drover marrying Ann Davis and baptising their 13 children in St Dunstan's Stepney, they moved around into Bethnal Green, and Spitalfields working as Weavers. one generation of 11 children were all born in the workhouse of St Matthews, Bethnal Green from 1816-1840 but keeping Cows was part of their family tradition and by 1847 they were described as Cowkeepers, somehow by 1881 the family arrived in Chalgrove Road Hackney still keeping Cows, until 1891, the last reference I have found.

The last generation born before the 1WW were to George James and Harriet Cox, at 7 Chalgrove Road Hackney 10 children 2 girls and 8 boys 1875-93. Their son was Albert born about 1890 he was 11 months old in 1891. He was married in Aug 1914 at St Johns Parish Church to Louise Goodchild, he worked for the LCC (Tramways Dept.) and is listed on the Memorial for the LCC staff and on the CD which was produced in 2004. I don't have a date but he enlisted at Stratford Essex, into the Essex Regiment, and in March 1915 his Regiment sailed from Avonmouth to Egypt on route to Gallipoli. The landing for the Essex Regiment was 25 April 1915, Albert was killed in action on 28th June 1915, he is remembered on the Helles Memorial Turkey which is managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Notes from the Essex Regiment webpage. Forces-war-records.co.uk Commonwealth War Graves Commission, cwgc.org/search. My Cox family from Hackney in WW1. Frederick James Cox was the youngest son of George James and Harriet Cox of 7 Chalgrove Road Hackney, born in Dec 1893. He enlisted in Hackney for the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment as Private 34012, I don't have a date, and died of his wounds on 4

November 1918, he is remembered in the Romeries Cemetery in France he was awarded the Victory and British War medals. He was the brother of Albert Cox.



This is a picture taken about 1924 at 7 Chalgrove Road Hackney which is a bit unusual as most pictures would have been taken in a Studio. My mother Ada Ellen Harriot Matthews 1911-91 is on the far right age about 13, in the middle is Harriot Cox nee Moulton age about 72, mother of Albert and Frederick James, and George Edward Cox age 50 who is standing behind her. On the far left is George Edward Matthews age 40 and his wife Ada Florence Matthews nee Cox age 38, the Matthews family lived next door at 9 Chalgrove Road Hackney. The pictures on the wall are not very easy to see, but seems to be 2 Ships each with a Sailor above, which I do not know about, and 2 of Soldiers in similar frames one has clearly got 2 medals mounted alongside the photo.

Harriot died in Nov 1928 age 76, her daughter Ada Florence died in May 1926 age 40, and her husband George died in Feb. 1957 age 72 I have a photo of George Edward Matthews in Uniform of the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry abt 1918, he survived the war and is listed in the LCC staff war records CD in the Tramways Dept. Where he worked till 1953, the Matthews family had been living at 9 Chalgrove Road from 1915.

Eileen Blythe

Benjy's Mile End

Our member Doreen Fletcher has given us permission to reproduce some of her weekly articles from her web site at www.doreenfletcherartist.com and I chose for this newsletter Benjy's, Mile End, first published 13/05/2018.

It was 2015, mid- August in Southern France, deep in the heart of the Cevennes mountains and, although only 11 am, the heat was already in the low 30s centigrade. I was invigilating the first exhibition of my paintings to take place for 15 years at the local Maison du Pays. As the French take their holidays en masse at this time of year there was a steady trickle of interest and I found myself talking with several people, both tourists and locals. I noticed a blonde, fit looking man who wandered in and he was looking intensely at the work, all of which was based on the local area for its subject matter. He struck up a conversation in halting French by asking me about the artist and I at once realised that this was no French tourist; he was in fact from London. When I replied in our native tongue he looked relieved to be able to continue in English.

We talked some more and he said he had a few days' holiday left and would return with his wife and children to maybe purchase something. When he left I didn't really expect him to come back but sure enough, three days later, all four of them were waiting for Steve and myself in the car park as we arrived for another hot morning's work. Their names were Des and Katie and it transpired he was a Superintendent of Police based at Heathrow Airport.

What has all this got to do with Benjy's you may ask? Well, having driven a hard bargain on the purchase of some etchings (he had learned a lot liaising with market traders in the line of duty) Des began telling me about his early days on the beat in the East End. He had spent some years working in Poplar, based at

Bow Road and Limehouse stations, and as we exchanged information about several well-known local landmarks... mainly public houses, we wandered onto the reputation of certain clubs. When I mentioned that I had painted Benjy's nightclub his eyes lit up. He remembered the place when it was run by the parents of Hannah Benjamin, hence the name, Benjy's. They opened the nightclub in 1975 and unlike many other club owners, Hannah's parents always closed at 2.00 am on the dot. Hannah informed me that they spent many happy years there until the early 21st century when it gained notoriety under different ownership and names, first as 'Broke', and then as the 'Boheme'. A murder that occurred inside the club caused its licence to be revoked in 2011; then the building was in the public eye once more in February 2017 when it narrowly escaped demolition to make way for a 15-storey tower block. This was due to vigorous campaigning on the part of Mile End Old Town Residents' Association.

I used to pass Benjy's on my way home from evening modelling sessions in Central London and was drawn to the visual display of its façade lit up in neon, which I think was rather exotic for this part of London at the time. I was attracted by its glow in the twilight, its position next door to the Betting shop, the front of which lent an interesting, formal abstract quality to the composition with its position on the corner of the Burdett Road. Who knows what was going on beyond the traffic lights?

Prior to the yellow Millennium Bridge being built spanning the Mile End Road, it was the most colourful feature of this junction and formed a focal point once the Odeon cinema opposite had been shut down. The cinema was demolished only to be replaced by an anodyne 1980s post-modern structure. However there remained the Terminus Cafe that I entered a few times and which I also eventually painted. But that succumbed to being transformed to an estate agents.

Steve's mother has different memories associated with the painting, particularly that of the Mecca Bookmakers next door. She tells us that previously there had been a popular Cafe on this spot. In the late forties when they were courting; Steve's father and mother regularly frequented the establishment for a 'Vienna Steak'. According to popular belief this consisted of diced horsemeat formed with vegetables and herbs into a patty or hamburger, then it was cooked in breadcrumbs.

It fell out of favour with the demise of post-war rationing and the ending of austerity, not it seems, to the regret of many people as it appears to have been forgotten. However, given the recent climate... could it possibly make a return!



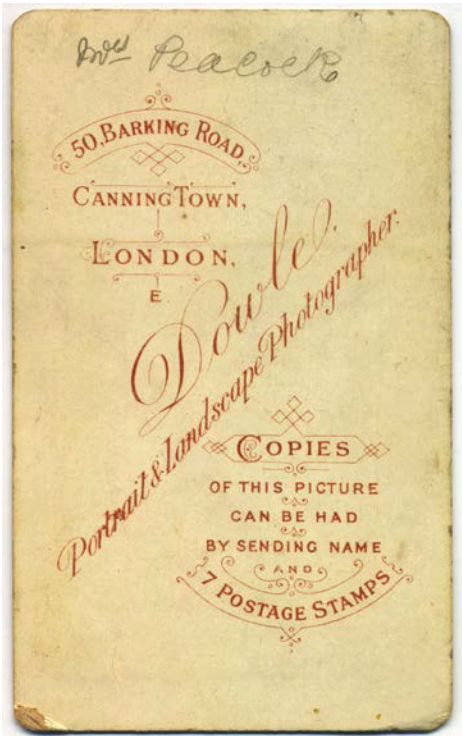
Text and image copyright Doreen Fletcher

Dowle, Son and Father: East End photographers

A Carte de Visit. A collection of photographs was handed to the Sherborne Historical Society (SHS) recently. They were mostly from the 20th century, and crucially had names written on the back. Peter Meech (SHS's membership secretary) took charge of the collection and was able to identify most of the people and places in the photographs. However, one photograph was from a much earlier period, judging by the style of clothing worn by the sitter, a middle-aged lady named on the back of the card as Mrs PEACOCK.

The photograph was a carte de visite, a style popular in the mid to late 19th century. On the back the photographer was named as DOWLE, Portrait & Landscape Photographer, of 50 Barking Road, Canning Town, London E[ast]. The challenge was to find out as much as possible about the photographer(s), to identify who Mrs Peacock was, and whether she was part of the family of people in the rest of the collection of photographs.





Frederick William Dowle (1858-1929)

A good start was made by finding a reference to a Frederick William Dowle (FWD) in Kelly's Directory for 1886, which showed him as a photographer at 50 Barking Road. This was a date consistent with the style of dress worn by Mrs Peacock. However, in the census of 1891, 50 Barking Road was occupied by Frederick LEGG, a general labourer, and his family. FWD's whereabouts in 1891 are unknown, but in the 1881 census he was recorded lodging at the Farrier's Arms, Worcester, as a photographic artist aged 22. His birthplace was shown as Old Kent Road. Also lodging there was Henry Albert NORCLIFFE, a 37-year-old photographic artist, born in Walworth, London. Thus FWD moved from Worcester to east London between 1881 and 1886. From 1887 to 1888 he has premises at 50 High Street, Clapham, but there is a county court judgment against him in 1888, and this probably marks the end of his career as a photographer.

It could be that FWD was Norcliffe's apprentice, or at least learnt the trade from him, as they both originate from south London. Norcliffe had premises at 16 Glasgow Terrace,

Westminster, from at least 1871 to 1876; he had moved to 10 Chichester Street, Westminster by 1878. He had studios at 35 Bromwell's Road, High Street, Clapham, from 1888-1893, and at 19 Bromwell's Road between 1893-1896.

There is a reference to FWD on 8 February 1901 as executor of the estate of his mother, Mary Ann Dowle, who died on 27 May 1897 while at 119 North Street, Poplar. By this time FWD was a general storekeeper. It is interesting that administration was granted to FWD, not to Mary Ann's husband, named as Richard [John] Dowle.

FWD married Elsie MacDONALD (born c1872 in Oxford) in Wandsworth in 1894. The following year they had a son, Robert Henry Douglas, while living in Chelsea. The 1901 census showed them at 26 New Street, in the Brompton district of Kensington. FWD was by now a grocer and oilman. The Post Office London Directory for 1902 shows the entry for FWD next to his older brother, Richard Stephen Dowle (RSD). Interestingly, there are several references to Dowles as bootmakers, a trade FWD's father practised for a number of years.

Thereafter FWD's fortunes seem to have declined. In 1911 his son Robert was living with an uncle and family in Cowley, Oxford, presumably relatives of his mother. During 1912 FWD was admitted several times to the Hammersmith workhouse. By 1919 he had moved further east and on 31 December he was admitted from Rowton House to the South Grove Institute, Mile End Road, part of the Stepney Union, Tower Hamlets. The admissions' register is very informative in that it records that FWD was separated from his wife; Elsie's address was unknown. He was discharged on 9 February 1920. FWD continued to live in hostels and was probably admitted to workhouses on occasions. An electoral register for 1929 recorded him at 221 Hammersmith Road, another Rowton House hostel for poor men. He died at Hammersmith

Hospital, Ducane Road, on 31 January 1929, aged 70.

Richard John Dowle (1831-1905)

Richard [John] Dowle (RJD), FWD's father, was the son of John and Charlotte Dowle, born in Poland Street, Westminster, on 2 July 1831. His father was a milkman at the time of his baptism at St James, Westminster, on 10 October 1831. A sister to RJD, Mary Ann, was born on 21 July 1834, but by the time of the 1841 census Charlotte had died and John, now described as a dairyman and using the name Peter, had remarried, to Eliza EVANS. They had several other children. RJD, just 19 years old, married Mary Ann ASHEN (born c1835 in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire) on 28 July 1850 at St James, Westminster. At the time of his marriage RJD was a tobacconist, but pursued several trades during his life, including that of photographer.

RJD and Mary Ann had five children, born between 1852 and 1860: Maria Eliza (b1852 in Westminster); Richard Stephen (b1853 in Southwark); Harry James (b1856 in Southwark); Frederick William (b1858 in Newington) and Charles Thomas (b1860 in Camberwell). Two of the children died as infants: Harry James in 1862 aged 5 and Charles Thomas in 1860 aged 13 months.

Clearly RJD moved around a considerable amount, judging by the birthplaces of his children and his address at the time of the census. In the 1851 census he was still a tobacconist, living at 50 Broad Street, St Giles in the Fields. By 1861 he was earning a living as a bootmaker in Newington, Lambeth. He was described as a master bootmaker (employing one other person, a servant, Harriet Eliza GARDINER) in 1871, having moved to Marshall Street, Golden Square, Westminster. By 1881 he had moved to 89 Wardour Street, Westminster, still a bootmaker. During this time Mary Ann and daughter Maria Eliza had on occasions worked as dressmakers. In 1882 the Post Office London Directory listed a Mrs Ann Dowle, bootmaker,

at 44 Knightrider Street in the City of London and by 1891 RJD and Mary Ann seem to have separated. RJD had moved to West Ham, and was practising as a photographer at 34 Barking Road, a few doors away from the premises where his son, FWD, was in 1886. However, Mary Ann was living apart from RJD, at 29 Alton Square, Bromley, describing herself as a wardrobe dealer. It is interesting to note that a family named Peacock was living two doors away at 38 Barking Road. RJD continued as a photographer until 1901, still at 34 Barking Road. By this time Mary Ann had died. The fact that probate was granted to FWD rather than RJD reinforces the suggestion that the marriage had failed.

RJD was admitted to the Leytonstone Union (probably the Whipps Cross Infirmary), and died there on 29 March 1905 aged 74. He left less than £50.

Discussion

A near contemporary article in *The Strand Magazine* of 1891 gives a vivid picture of life as an East End photographer, and describes the studio and many of the clients. Situated close to the docks, there was a fascinating range of nationalities to solicit for trade, and the article includes many sketches and caricatures. The article, illustrated by J L Wimbush, was anonymous. David Webb, who has researched extensively the careers of London photographers, has identified the main subject of the article as James Cornelius CURRAN, who practised in the Commercial Road with his wife Jane and assistant James GOLDIE. Webb has also identified the author as Harry HOW, a tabloid journalist who wrote a series of 'Illustrated Interviews' of contemporary celebrities in *The Strand Magazine*.

Later, the article indicated how easy it was to equip oneself as a photographer: The stock-in-trade is not a very elaborate one. He may pick up the whole apparatus second-hand for about £5, and the studio and fittings are not expensive. The thin metal plates cost not more than 10 s[hillings] per gross, and the tinsel

binding frames about 3s per gross, while the chemicals mount to an infinitesimal sum on each plate. On a good day a turnover of £2 to £3 may be made, but there are many ups and downs, and trials of temper and patience, to say nothing of the unhealthy nature of the business, all going to make up many disadvantages associated with the life of an East-end photographer.



It is interesting that the son (FWD) preceded his father (RJD) into the trade of photographer; more commonly it was the other way round. FWD practised for less than ten years before switching to earning a living as a grocer, latterly near his brother, Richard Stephen Dowle, in Westminster. It may be that Richard helped FWD; he was also a grocer-oilman, but made more of a success of his life. Richard died in 1912 leaving an estate estimated at over £4000. Shortly afterwards FWD's fortunes declined, he separated from his wife, Elsie, and his final years saw him admitted to a series of hostels and workhouses.

Having tried various ways of earning a living, RJD took on his son's photographic trade. He practised for rather longer, at least ten years, occupying the same address for fifteen. But he also failed to make much of a success of life,

also separating from his wife, and leaving less than £50 when he died.

Thus, although both father and son tried photography, an apparently easy option, neither seems to have made much money from it and no doubt soon learnt its 'disadvantages'.

Footnote: who was Mrs Peacock?

The most likely person to be the lady in the carte de visite was Elizabeth Peacock (née HOLMES), a neighbour of FWB, living at 38 Barking Road in 1891. The census for that year showed her to be the 52-year-old wife of Peter Peacock, an engineer. Elizabeth was born in Tonbridge, Kent, in 1839. Elizabeth and Peter married in Islington in 1864. They had three children, all born in Brighton: Henry Ernest (b1866), Edith Marian (b1869) and Alfred Holden (b1873). Elizabeth died in West Ham in 1901, aged 62, and Peter in 1913, aged 80.

As yet no connection has been made with any of the people in the other photographs handed to the SHS. Most of the individuals were identified by their family relationships and it may be that Mrs Peacock, referred to in a more formal manner, was simply a friend of one of these.

Acknowledgments

With thanks to David Webb for drawing my attention to the article in *The Strand Magazine* and to him and Robin Ansell for help, advice and constructive criticism. Sadly, David Webb died recently. A tribute to him was included in the *Cockney Ancestor*, no. 158, p53, Spring 2018.

References

I can supply a version of this article with full source citations to anyone interested.

Michael Pritchard, *A Directory of London Photographers: 1841-1908*, PhotoResearch; 2nd Revised Edition (1994).
 photoLondon: *The Database of 19th Century Photographers and Allied Trades in London*:

1841-1901; website:

<https://www.photolondon.org.uk/#/>

David Webb, 'Photographing the Victorian East End', East London History Society Newsletter, volume 2,19 (2007) pp 5-7. First of a series of over 20 articles about East End photographers published in the ELHS Newsletter.

Anon, 'A Day with an East-End Photographer', The Strand Magazine, volume 1 (1891), pp 458-465.

Pay-per-view websites: Photographers of Great Britain & Ireland 1840-1940

<http://www.victorianphotographers.co.uk>

The following URL seems to link to the same website: <http://www.cartedeviseite.co.uk>

Robert Barber

10 Tinneys Lane

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Books and More

Bargain Books

Bancroft Road has copies of Tower Hamlets' 1995 reprint of Jack Dash's autobiography "Good Morning Brothers" (first published 1969), priced at only 99p. It details his life growing up in Stepney and his activities in the East London Docks from 1945. You may not agree with his, lifelong Communist, opinions but he certainly had an impact on post war life in the East End.

Tower Hamlets Idea Store Libraries

It would be great if you could alert your members to our new online service available to Idea Store library members; The British Newspaper Archive.

The British Newspaper Archive is great for local history buffs and genealogists alike. The service can be accessed for free in all our Idea

Stores and libraries and the Tower Hamlets

Local History & Archive:

<http://www.ideastore.co.uk/idea-stores>

We also offer free access to the Times Digital Archive {1785 – 2009} as well as the Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland: <http://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history-online-free-resources-for-idea-store-users>

Denise Bangs

Idea Store Business Development Manager (Digital Services)

Madge Darby

Madge Darby died on Friday 14th September aged 91. She lived all her life in Wapping and could trace her family's history in Wapping to the years before St Katharine's Dock was built. Madge was a founder member of the History of Wapping Trust formed in 1984.

Her main area of interest, other than Wapping, was the 18th century and especially mariner life. The life of Captain William Bligh fell into that interest, more so that he lived in Wapping with his young family when he sailed on the *Bounty*. Madge was a staunch defender of Captain Bligh character and refuted all allegations levied at him by those who saw Fletcher Christian as a victim of Bligh's wrath.

Madge wrote a number of books for the Trust starting with *Waepas People* published in the 1980s and her latest one *Captain Bligh in Wapping*. She will be missed as a person and for her vast knowledge on Wapping and its 18th century marine connection. Another part of the old East End has gone and will not be replaced. However, we have her books on Wapping to remind us of its history and of Madge Darby.

Ray Newton

History of Wapping Trust

Butter wouldn't melt

Tuesday 4th December 1838 – North Street, Whitechapel, East London

It was a cold morning when Richard Vincent left his home in North Street and made his way towards the riverside wharves in Thames Street. In his pocket he had a note regarding a part of large consignment of best Kiel butter recently shipped from Denmark. It had been unloaded at Brewers Wharf and was now stored in Mr Joseph Barber's warehouse. The butter would be in wooden barrels and all branded with a hot iron with the initials "I M R" on the top and sides. Each barrel contained about 100lbs of butter.

If Vincent was to arrange delivery of the butter he would need to find a carman and he knew just where to find one. It was around eleven o'clock when he reached the stand close by the Lion & Key Public House near Billingsgate fish market. Sure enough, there on the stand was Michael Sullivan, one of William Hill's men, with a horse and cart waiting to be hired. Vincent had done business with him before. Approaching Sullivan, he asked if he would collect twenty tubs of butter from Mr Barber's warehouse. Sullivan readily agreed to take the job and together they set off.

Reaching the warehouse on The New Quay in Thames Street Sullivan drove his cart into the yard whilst Vincent waited some little way off. Sullivan handed the note to a young lad who took it to the counting house. A little later the lad returned and said he might take the twenty tubs and Mr Barber's men would load them into the cart. Once loaded, Sullivan set off only stopping when he reached Vincent who took the cover of the horse's back and draped it over the tubs. Sullivan was surprised because you usually only put covers over a load when it was raining.

Together they set off along Thames Street and up Tower Hill only stopping when they reached the top where. Vincent said that he would go ahead and Sullivan should follow and wait near the Mile End Turnpike.

After resting the horse for a while, Sullivan set off along Whitechapel Road passed St Mary's Church, the Bell Foundry and the London Hospital until he caught sight of the Toll House and the Mile End turnpike gates. He stopped by the turning for North Street. As there was no sign of Vincent he went into Mr Man's little Brewhouse and called for half a pint of beer. At that moment Vincent appeared and called out "make that a pint" and gave Sullivan sixpence and telling him to finish his drink and then to take the horse and cart down North Street and wait for him in the King's Arms.

When Sullivan reached Kings Arms he found Vincent already there waiting for some friends to arrive. In the meantime they had a meal and some more beer. After a while they were joined by Thomas Roberts, a neighbour of Vincent who kept a chandlers and a Tom & Jerry shop in North Street. They all sat there chatting for nearly two hours.

By now Sullivan was getting impatient and told Vincent that he was wasting his time and wanted to get back to Whitechapel. He got up and went outside followed by the other two. Vincent looked down the lane and was relieved to see two men with a van waiting some distance down the lane. He sent Roberts off with the butter and waited with Sullivan. After about twenty minutes, Roberts returned with the horse and cart but no butter.

Whilst driving back, Sullivan mentioned that he was still owed for the hire and Vincent assured him that he soon be paid. When they reached Roberts' chandlers shop, Vincent went in whilst Sullivan had a pint of beer next door. On returning to his cart he found Vincent waiting who straight away gave him a sovereign. Sullivan told him that the charge for the hire of the cart was only 15/-. Vincent replied that was fine, he was to give his master the 15/- and keep the other 5/- for himself. After stopping once more in Whitechapel Road to share a quarter of rum, they went their separate ways.

On reaching Mr Hill's yard in St Dunstan's Hill, Sullivan was informed that Mr Barber wanted to see him. He immediately went to the warehouse in Thames Street and found Mr Barber who asked what had he done with the twenty casks of butter he had collected that morning. Did he not realise it was stolen by the use of a forged note? Sullivan spent the next three days in the compter.

Thursday 6th December 1838

Vincent and his friends now set about trying to sell the butter. First, James Gregson approached James Harrington, a publican in Great Tower Street and asked if wished to buy some butter. Gregson said he knew someone who had butter to sell at 1/- a pound or £4 a hundredweight. Harrington replied he would need to see it first and Gregson said he would return with a sample that afternoon. As he turned to leave Harrington called after him "It's none of that butter stolen from Mr Barber's quay is it"

Friday 7th December 1818

Gregson returned next day around lunch time somewhat tipsy and without the butter. Harrington said he would not buy without seeing it first. Gregson replied "It don't make any difference to me if you have some or not": went through to the tap-room called for a pint of porter, sat down and fell asleep. About an hour later two of Vincent's friends came in and shook Gregson awake, dragged him outside, all the time swearing at him and calling him an old fool. So it seemed that the first attempt to sell on the butter came to nothing.

Later that day William Christall and James Northcote tried a different approach. Taking a cask of butter, they called on Edwin Sutcliffe, a cheesemonger in Whitechapel Road. Christall went in and asked Sutcliffe if he would like to buy some butter as he had a friend outside who had a cask for sale. He mentioned a price of 84/- for the cask.

Sutcliffe said he might be interested. They brought it in saying they had four more casks if he was interested. Sutcliffe tasted it and

found it was good Kiel butter worth 104/- a cask. Yes, he was interested but would want to see it all. They said that was not a problem; he could go and see it now. Leaving the cask in the shop, Sutcliffe locked shop and followed them to Wellclose Square.

On reaching Wellclose Square the three men made for Angel and Crown and found Gregson sitting in the tap-room. After a moment the landlord, Francis Toy, came in and asked Sutcliffe if he was the gentleman come to look at the butters, if so, he could arrange for it be brought to him. Sutcliffe asked where the butter was now but received a very evasive answer. In fact, every question received an evasive answer. Sutcliffe finally said he would have nothing more to do with buying the butter and promptly left.

What Christall, Northcote and Gregson didn't know was that the previous day, John Tripp, one of Mr Barber's warehousemen had called on Edwin Sutcliffe and others to warn them that there was stolen butter being offered for sale.

On his way home, Sutcliffe called on John Tripp, and told him what had passed. As a consequence a message was sent to the Police Office in Lambeth Street asking for an Officer to be sent Mr Sutcliffe's shop. Tripp and Sutcliffe returned to the shop and inspected the cask that had been left there. They realised that all the brand marks had been cut away. About this time Thomas Shelswell, a police officer arrived from Lambeth Street Office bringing with him Samuel Taylor, a Whitechapel Street Keeper. Sutcliffe asks them to wait outside and a little way off; telling them that should anyone come to collect the cask they should follow and see where it is taken.

Sure enough, Christall arrived with George Hopkins and asked Sutcliffe again if he would buy the cask of butter. He replied that he would have nothing more to do with it. Christall then instructed Hopkins to pick up the cask and together they left. Putting the cask in the cart and covering it with a sack, they set off into the night followed at a

distance by the police officer and the street keeper down Red Lion Street.

Then, borrowing a heavy overcoat from Mr Sutcliffe so he wouldn't be recognised, the warehouseman went back to the Angel & Crown in Wellclose Square. On finding the landlord, Mr Toy, he asked him what he knew of any stolen butter. Toy replied that he knew a little but could not tell because it would get others into trouble. Tripp reminded him that he had a wife and children and begged him for information but still he refused. "In that case, you must take your chance with them" replied Tripp and went home.

Meanwhile, as previously instructed, Police Officer Shelswell and Street Keeper Taylor followed Christall and Hopkins until they stopped outside a green-grocer's shop in Rosemary Lane. Christall told Hopkins to take the cask into the green-grocer's .

At that point Shelswell stepped out of the shadows where he had been watching and asked Christall what he had there and where had he got it. Christall replied "Why to be sure, it's a cask of butter and it belongs to me" Shelswell told him that he suspected it was a cask stolen from Brewers Quay. Christall looked around and cried out "Oh, if that is the case, here is the man I bought it of" and pointed to Gregson who had just come out of the shop. With that; Shelswell took Gregson and Christall into custody and sent Gregson to Lambeth Street Police Office in the care of Taylor.

Shelswell, taking Christall and Hopkins with him, set out for the Angel & Crown in Wellclose Square. When they all entered the tap-room they saw Toy at the bar. Christall called out "You've got me into a fine mess with your butter". Shelswell told him to hold his tongue and told Toy that he suspected that some of the casks of butter recently stolen from Brewers Quay here or that he knew where they were. He replied "He knew nothing about the butter, he had never seen it, and it had never been there". Shelswell then asked Hopkins to point where he had seen the cask and Hopkins pointed to a table in the corner.

By now the Street Keeper, having locked up Christall, had also arrived at the Angel & Crown. Shelswell left him in charge of Chiswell and Hopkins and took Toy into a side passage. Out of earshot of the others he told Toy that he knew him to be a respectable man and it would be to his credit if he told what he knew. Toy was quiet for a few minutes and then said "I have heard of some casks of butter somewhere nearby but they were moved about an hour ago".

Earlier that evening Toy had gone to see Charles Jarvis, a cheesemonger in Ratcliff Highway. He told him he had a friend who had some best Kiel butter and wanted 54s a cask. Jarvis told him that was very cheap but would need to see it first. Toy then left saying he would be back later with a sample. At around eight o'clock, Toy returned and told Jarvis that the men who had earlier brought the casks of butter to his public house had returned and had taken the butter away. He had since found that it was stolen butter.

Saturday 8th December 1838

The Street Keeper Samuel Taylor, taking the carman Michael Sullivan with him, went looking for Vincent. They met him in Whitechapel Road and Vincent put out his hand to shake with Sullivan but Sullivan drew away and turning to Taylor said "This is Vincent, the man who gave me the note to collect the butter" Taylor took Vincent by the arm and told him he was wanted for giving a forged order by which he had obtained 20 casks of butter and that he was to come with him to Lambeth Street. Later that day the landlord of the Angel & Crown, Francis Toy, went of his own accord to Lambeth Police Office and was taken into custody.

Sunday 9th December 1838

In the morning at about six o'clock Shelswell, Taylor and William Childs, a beadle from Tower Hill, went to Cumberland Place in North Street looking for Northcote. They found him undressed and sitting on his bed. They searched the house but did not find any

butter. Later they found a notebook in his coat pocket and written on various pages "I M R", the same as the brands on the stolen butter casks. They took him into custody and returned to Lambeth Street.

Monday 10th December 1838

The carman, Michael Sullivan was brought before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House and remanded as a witness.

Monday 4th February 1839

At the Old Bailey Richard Vincent, James Northcote, George Hopkins, Francis Toy, William Christall and James Gregson were charged with stealing 1,820lbs of butter worth £100 and twenty casks worth £20 the goods of Joseph Barber

Of the six defendants, only George Hopkins was found not guilty. He had only acted as a porter, not knowing the butter to have been stolen. Three dispositions of good character were given for Christall and six for Gregson. Thirteen dispositions of good character were given for Francis Toy and the jury recommended him for mercy.

However, despite the dispositions and the plea for mercy, all were found guilty and sentenced to seven years transportation.

The 1841 census taken on Sunday 6th June The census shows all five as prisoners aboard the convict hulk, Leviathan moored in Portsmouth Harbour still waiting transportation.

A note explaining this article.

Whilst researching my wife's Vincent family history in the East End, I checked the 1841 census looking for Richard Vincent, born Whitechapel circa 1800. To my surprise, and a little delight, I found him aboard the prison hulk Leviathan.

The article is based on transcripts of his trial at the Old Bailey using the witness statements. I

had to follow this further and in doing so found various bits and pieces that might interest other members. This included research into Tom and Jerry Shops, Street Keepers, Best Kiel Butter and whether Richard Vincent was transported. The results will be in a further article.

David Groen

Appeal for help

I am contacting you with a slightly unusual request. I am trying to trace any living relatives of Private Robert James Mack born in Bethnal Green. Private Mack served with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was killed in action in October 1918. His name is recorded on the war memorial of St Matthew's Church. He is buried in the small military cemetery in Ingooigem village in Flanders (there are less than 100 fallen servicemen buried here although the identities of less than 60 have been confirmed, most of whom died in October 1918, including around 10 from the Royal Irish Rifles including my great uncle Samuel Hutchinson and 6 members of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers including Private Mack. The people of Ingooigem have contacted me to invite me to their event to honour the fallen and mark the centenary of the end of WWI on remembrance Sunday this November. They are keen to learn more about the soldiers buried in their little cemetery and their role in liberating their village at the end of WWI. I would like if possible to make any living relatives of Private Mack aware of the commemoration so that they might also have an opportunity to provide historical information about their relative and perhaps also to attend the commemoration if they wish? Given the limited information I have I am contacting you to ask if you might be able to help with this search perhaps from local knowledge of the area. Many thanks in advance for any help you can provide with this request or any contacts you can suggest which is very much appreciated.

David Bell

Book Review

Review of *From Red Dragon to Nemesis: Innovations in East India Company Shipping*, Muhammad Ahmedullah (ed.), Stepney Community Trust, 2018, ISBN: 9780992681012, 188 pages, many pictures and tables

Local history societies are always looking for new ideas that will attract a wider, and hopefully younger, audience to take an interest in the history of their neighbourhood. Sometimes these initiatives come from organisations with different objectives but are no less welcome and those interested in Tower Hamlets can now draw on the findings of two major but separate projects, one undertaken by the Survey of London and the other by the Stepney Community Trust.

The Survey of London since late Victorian times has been documenting the buildings in many parishes. Their first book on Bromley-by-Bow was published in 1900 but it was not until 2015 that they began their study of Whitechapel. Taking advantage of the new technologies they have created an interactive map of the area, and invite anyone with local knowledge, images or reminiscences to contribute to the web site, thus providing a vital social aspect to their own professional research. This project is due to complete by early 2019 but the web site is already active and well worth exploring every few months as new information is up-loaded.

Their “Whitechapel History Fest” opens on Thursday 25 October 2018 and on the next two days at the Idea Store in Whitechapel, there will be 22 presentations on the results of the project culminating with Dan Cruickshank's “Historical Review of Whitechapel”. The final product will be volume 54 in their parish series. The Stepney Community Trust's initiative was completely different but equally rewarding. Established in 1982 the charity was

initially responding to the severe levels of housing and social deprivation in the area. But over the years their remit has extended and the decision to look at the East India Company (EIC) was a continuation “of an attempt to achieve a better understanding of the process and mechanisms through which London's diverse communities of today are connected historically, and how they ended up in this country.”

An earlier project entitled “Bengal to Britain: Re-creating Historic fashions of the Muslim Trade” involved the recreation of dresses worn by ladies in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, and the production of a book.²

The innovative aspect of the Trust's projects is that it recruits enthusiastic volunteer participants from London's diverse communities and then supports them in their exploration of a topic of interest. As the volunteers came from a diverse range of backgrounds with no prior knowledge of the chosen subject it was essential that they learnt how to study the vast archives of the EIC at the British Library, and the resources of the Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum. Clearly this ambitious project relied on the support of many people and received financial support from the Heritage Lottery, which also enabled the book under review to be published.

The volunteers' focus was on how scientific discoveries and innovations in shipping technology enabled the voluminous and complex operations of the EIC between Britain, India and China to be so successful: for the EIC was probably the largest commercial organization in the world. The *Red Dragon* and *Nemesis* in the title were respectively the flagship on the first EIC voyage in 1601, and a powerful iron and steam-powered steamer built in the 1830s. After an introduction by Muhammad Ahmedullah there are thirteen chapters covering a wide range of topics from scurvy, firepower and longitude to the transition from sail to steam and the tea trade.

The book is full of interesting facts and figures and new perspectives on many aspects of the EIC's shipping operations, and the contributors have made extensive use of material to be found on the web, in addition to more usual publications. Broadly, the contributors cover their chosen topics very well and reach important conclusions, but inevitably, given the vast scope of the project, there are aspects that have perhaps not been covered as clearly or as deeply as one would like, and several topics stand out.

Among the references to the Overview is a link to Edmund Halley, but the discussion does not make specific references to his important voyages in 1699 and 1700 to measure changes in magnetic variation in the Atlantic Ocean.³ The hope of Halley and others that measurements of magnetic variation would lead to an accurate method of determining longitude at sea were not realized. However, Halley was aware of the importance to navigators approaching an unknown coast in bad weather of having accurate measurements of the magnetic variation, also known as declination. After 1701, measurements of magnetic variation were routinely undertaken by the captains of EastIndiamen and Royal Navy captains, including captain James Cook. An important application of science to the success of the EIC.

Similarly, in the Chapters discussing advances in ship-building there is no mention of the experiments conducted between 1758 and 1763 by the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, later the Royal Society of Arts: experiments that it was hoped would lead to an improvement in the sailing qualities and the design of ship hulls. The Society of Arts put up a premium of £100 to anyone who could improve hull design but whether the practical ship-builders on the Thames changed their ideas is not known.⁴

In a fascinating Chapter on hemp I was very interested in the discussion of a secret plan to grow hemp in the newly established colony at

Botany Bay. However, there is no discussion of the importance of Joseph Huddart, at one time a Captain in the Service of the EIC, and later an Elder Brother of Trinity House, whose "crowning achievement was his invention of a rope-making industry ... equal to the achievements of Hargreaves, Arkwright and Compton in the spinning industry". This is particularly unfortunate as Huddart's rope works were firmly established in Stepney, after his first patent was granted 24 May 1793 for 'A New Mode or Art of Making Great Cables and other Cordage so as to Attain a greater Degree of Strength therein, by a more Equal Distribution of the Strain upon the Yarns'. His second patent was granted in 1799 and described as 'An Improved Method of Registering or Forming the Strands in the Machinery for Manufacturing Cordage'.⁵ Huddart's invention greatly improved the life of ropes used by the EIC captains.

For someone who has written extensively about the many connections between the merchants and mariners in eighteenth-century Stepney⁶ and the EIC⁷, I was surprised that this aspect of their topic was not covered by the project. Surely many of the contributors would have walked down Stepney Green and realised that for many years no. 31 from the 1750s was the home of Laurence Sullivan, who was the most powerful director of the East India Company.⁸ It was at no. 31 that the idea of exporting opium from Bengal to China was developed. There is, of course, a mention of the Blackwall Docks and ship-builders but no mention of the many local suppliers of compasses,⁹ sails, ropes and the hundreds of other supplies needed to ensure every voyage had a reasonable chance of success.

In conclusion, I found this a fascinating account of a major organization, and strongly recommend it to anyone interested in shipping and trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century. I look forward to their next project.

Derek Morris

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**Greenwich in 50 Buildings,
David C. Ramzan,**

2018, 96 pages, ISBN-978-1-4456-8089-7.
Amberly Publishing £14.99

I have seen quite a few books with “XXX in 50 pictures” as titles and they are usually packed with old post card images. This one is different. Living just across the river from Greenwich and frequently visiting it, I thought that I knew everything there was to know about Greenwich’s buildings, but I found this an education.

As the title says it only covers buildings and the town of Greenwich not the more extensive Royal Borough. The majority of the buildings are in the town centre but many are on Croome Hill and Greenwich High Road and further east to Blackwall Tunnel and the O2. They aren’t in strict chronological or locational order but there is a good clear plan to tell you exactly where they are. All buildings are illustrated with bright well photographed pictures with a minimum of old monochrome post card images. The historical information is comprehensive and much greater than the usual two or three lines used to separate the pictures in other books.

Reading through it I realised how often I had walked past an old building without a second glance. Now I know much more about their history I will treat them with more respect. The book coverage goes from 10th century St. Alfege Church (number one) to the 2017 Low Carbon Energy Centre (number fifty) the large dark block with a tall elaborately moulded metal tower that one sees just before entering the northbound Blackwall Tunnel – I had always wondered what it was for!

Philip Mernick

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