



**Armistice Day in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park November 1918**

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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](mailto: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

The cover picture was taken in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2018, Armistice Day. The wire sculpture represents a soldier and was made by artist Darcy Turner and volunteers during the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park Summer Fayre 2018. It can still be seen 24/7 as the park never closes.

The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park's Hidden Histories project, under the direction of Diane Kendall is almost ready for publication. It aims to detail the history of every World War One casualty buried in the cemetery. Previews given in talks at the Soanes Centre have demonstrated the effort that has been put into this project and it is hoped to publish extracts in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

## East London History Society Lecture Programme 2018-2019

**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](mailto: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 four series of Newsletter (1992 to Spring 2018). 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't be searched. If you have any Newsletters from the 1950s or 1960s please let us know, I am sure we are missing some issues.

## Painting the Hamlets

An exhibition of paintings and drawings of local scenes from The Borough of Tower Hamlets' own collection. Bancroft Road: 15 November 2018 to 25 April 2019



## From Our Members:

### What's in a name?

I first started researching my Nan Emily's family tree early in the 1990s at the old Family Records Centre in Myddelton Street, Clerkenwell, which I am sure many of you will remember.

Researching Nan's family was no mean feat though as her family's surname was Jackson, which I would rate as being one of the most difficult names to trace at that time along with the surnames Smith, Jones, Brown, Lee and Taylor.

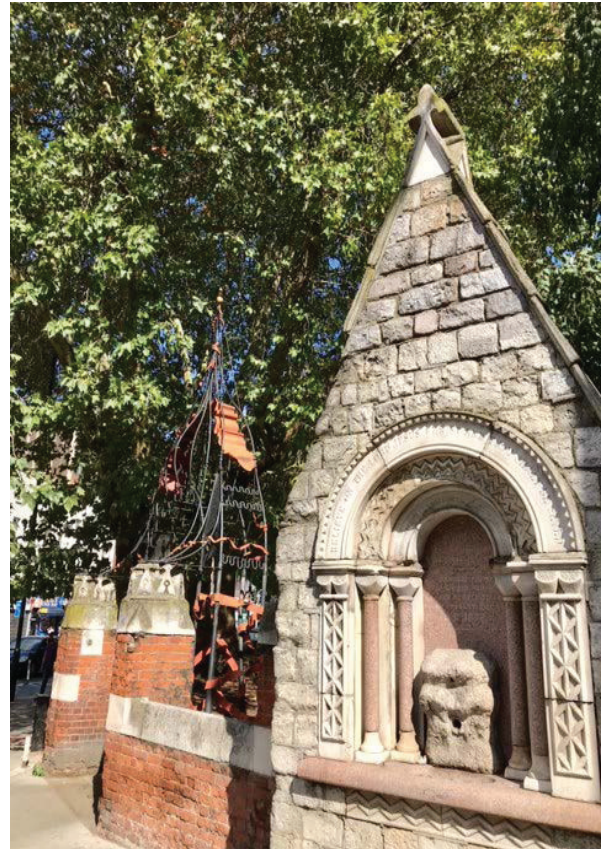
My Nan always said that her side of the family were very cosmopolitan, but I just could not find this mysterious cosmopolitan link that Nan was always mentioning until I found out who my X2 Great Grandfather William Robert Jackson married.

William was born at Charlotte Street, Whitechapel in October 1858 and was christened at St Mary's Whitechapel on the 7th November 1858.

There had been a church on this site of Adler Street, White Church Lane and Whitechapel High Street since the 14th century, albeit rebuilt a couple of times.

Apart from the footprint of the church all that remains now is the above former entrance to the churchyard at St. Mary's Whitechapel. The locals used to call this the white chapel as the outside of the church had been whitewashed with lime and white chalk. Later Whitechapel was to become the actual name of the district.

During the blitz the church was destroyed and then fully demolished in 1952. It became St. Mary's Gardens in 1966 and then in 1998 was renamed Altab Ali Park.



See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\\_Mary\\_Matfelon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Mary_Matfelon)

William's father Robert was from Stepney and had a varied career starting out in service as a gardener, then a groom and finally a coachman. When he left service he became a sugar porter then his final role was a railway porter.

William's career path through took a different turn as he became a poultry salesman. Poultry is the word that describes any type of bird a human raises for food, feathers or work. On the 25th December 1879 at St. Johns Church in Bethnal Green William married Mary Ann Fienkessi or Tienkessi. It was Mary Ann that I assumed was my Nan's cosmopolitan link due to her surname.

As well as not being able to read my X2 Great Grandmother's surname another mystery was that on their wedding certificate Mary Ann's Father's profession was down as "Gentlemen"! All of my other ancestors back then had the normal East End professions of the time like

Carmen, Dockers, Labourers, and Carpenters etc. but now we had a “Gentlemen” in the family!



St. Johns Church Bethnal Green

My real difficulty with finding out more about my ancestor was that the registrar for the area clearly couldn't spell this particular unfamiliar sounding surname, hence Mary Ann looking like her surname was Finekessi or Tienkessi on all the various certificates that I obtained. Thankfully the rest of my Jackson ancestors were not so elusive to track and have so far managed to trace them back to my X5 Great Grandparents Joseph and Elizabeth who hailed from Great Baddow in Essex.

It was my X4 Great Grandfather William, who Mary Ann's husband was named after, born on 30th April 1805 that made the move to London's east end. By the 1820s he was living in Bow, married to a local girl Elizabeth

Morris and then they settled in the Mile End area.

I never forgot Mary Ann though and always wondered where she hailed from and did try and check her name from time to time every few years but to no avail.

After investigating other branches of my family tree and not looking at the Jackson family history for 5 years or so, I had a chance meeting with one of my neighbours. I mentioned in passing that I was interested in family history research and Ruth asked if it was easy to find ancestors. So I mentioned how far back I had gone in my various family surname researches and how I was stuck on finding out more about a couple of people. Also how for this particular name I was stuck because I couldn't read the handwriting on any of the certificates and neither could any of the family.

Ruth said that she was good at reading old handwriting and said that the name to her on the certificate that I showed her looked like it was Tienken which is a German name. By a strange co-incidence she is also German. After all this time I didn't really hold out much hope that the name was actually Tienken, but I went off and looked online and Ruth was right. Now I had the exact surname I was easily able to cross reference online Mary Ann's marriage to William. I was also able to find out that Mary Ann had been born in 1863 in Stepney and was baptised on the 30th March that year at St George in the East, Tower Hamlets. Mary Ann's parents were Jürgen and Hannah Tienken who came over to the UK from Germany. This immigration was not new as Germans had been coming to the UK for centuries.

My “new” X3 Great Grandparents were both born in 1823, George in Hanover and Hannah in Bremen. Once he settled in England Jürgen anglicised his first name to George. George and Hannah married in 1849 at St. George in the East and afterwards lived at 18

York Street in Mile End. They went onto have four children:

George (1851-1872)

Henry (1853-1915)

Anna (1860)

Mary Ann (1863 - 1921)

George had an interesting profession, one that I had never seen before and this was a Sugar Baker.

When I looked it up on Wikipedia, it gives the following definition – “A sugar-baker was the owner of a sugar house, a factory for the refining of raw sugar from Barbados. Sugar refining would normally be combined with sugar trading, which was a lucrative business”. As I understand it when we started to refine sugar in this country, we did not have the relevant skills or the people who would work in the very unpleasant conditions, so we looked to Germany for the skills required. There is a chapter about what the sugar bakeries were actually like in the old book *The Wilds of London* by James Greenwood. This can be downloaded free from Google books [https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The\\_Wilds\\_of\\_London.html](https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The_Wilds_of_London.html)

There were quite a number of these German Sugar Bakers in the East End. In the 1850s most of the London refiners, 28 of them, were in the Stepney area where George lived and the area was sometimes known as “little Germany”. This particular trade dwindled down to just 12 in the 1880s because of various factors like completion from abroad, duties etc. Today there is only Tate & Lyle in Silvertown who still undertake this role from their original 1870s site, but thankfully now it's a modern factory.

George is actually mentioned on the sugar refiners and sugar bakers database <http://www.mawer.clara.net/intro.html> which is an interesting site to look at and shows some of those who were involved in the industry in the UK.

Neither of George's sons followed him into the sugar baking profession though as George Jr became a Dock labourer and Henry a cabinet maker.

George died at the age of 57 in 1880 and his wife Hannah died five years later in 1885. Both are buried at Bow Cemetery (now known as Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park).

I actually managed to find a will for Hannah and it showed that she lived at 79 Clark Street, Stepney, so not far from where she lived with George. Hannah left the princely sum of £229 8s. 10d, which was quite a fortune in those days and is today worth about £36,676. So it's no wonder that George was described as a “Gentlemen” on his daughter Mary Ann's wedding certificate.

So, what became of William and Mary Ann? Sadly, Mary Ann was left a young widow as William died when he was only 31 years old on the 2nd December 1889. William was buried on the 8th December at Bow cemetery as Mary Ann's parents had been. I also managed to find a copy of William's will and in it he left Mary Ann his personal estate of £82 15s and 1d. Today this would be worth about £6,790.

As a now single mother, Mary Ann found it difficult to keep her family together and her eldest child, my Great Grandfather George, by 1891 had been sent to the Bethnal Green Parish School, which surprisingly is in Leyton. She kept her youngest son Arthur with her.

I lose track of Mary Ann for a while, but then she and Arthur both re-appear on the 1901 census and were shown as living at 21 Essex Street in Forest Gate. Both had jobs, Mary Ann as a Domestic help and her son as a Stationers errand boy. Whilst Arthur working at thirteen years old seems very young today, we mustn't forget that at the time the Elementary Education Act of 1893 only insisted on compulsory attendance at school from the ages of 5 to 11 years old.



Bethnal Green Parish School

By the time of the 1911 census Mary Ann and Arthur had moved out of the east end area and were now living at 3 Brightside Terrace, Nightingale Grove, Hither Green, Lewisham. Now he was older Arthur worked as a chemist's assistant.

By the next year they had moved to Guildford, with Arthur still as a chemist's assistant who now worked at the Guildford branch of Boots the Chemists.

Arthur's story was not to have a happy ending though as on a summer's day on the 10th July 1912 along with his friend Ernest Heather, Arthur decided to go punting on the River Wey in Guildford after leaving work early. On reaching St Catherine's in the evening Arthur very unwisely decided to go off punting alone. Whilst on the river bank with his back turned Ernest heard the punts pole snap and a splash when Arthur fell into the river. Arthur could not swim, but alas Ernest himself was not a very strong swimmer either. Ernest did try to save his friend though, but got exhausted and then someone else on the riverbank jumped in to try to save Arthur who by this time had drowned.

On the 15th July Arthur was buried at St. Nicholas church in Guildford.

After this tragedy Mary Ann lived for another nine years and also died in the Guildford area.

Mary Ann's other son, my Great Grandfather George, was to settle back in the east end and by 1902 was living in Hoxton. All George's family were born in Hackney and his Grandchildren in the main stayed in the area. It wasn't until the late 1990s that some of them moved to other areas and in 2016 that the last of his Grandchildren who lived in the area died.

There is now only one of George's direct descendants, one of his Great Grandchildren, who still lives in Hackney as the rest of us are scattered round the UK and Australia. I still go back to visit all my old haunts in the area though as you can take the girl out of Hackney but you can't take the Hackney out of the girl. **Annette Kilbourn**

### **Williams Brothers Direct Supply Stores**

Two young brothers, John and Alfred Williams, from Sheerness in Kent founded their business in 1872 with their first small shop located in Caledonian Road, Islington. Over the years many more were opened across London and the suburbs, although concentrated north of the River Thames. The Times Newspaper reported in 1963 that Williams Brothers Direct Supply Stores Ltd had 150 grocery, butchers & hardware shops in the Home Counties and North London. They were taken over in 1971 by Booker, or was it by Budgens, later taken over by Booker - the history of the British grocery trade is extraordinarily complicated!

Their most familiar mementoes are the iron dividend checks (brass for higher value) that survive in large numbers. They were used in the same way as Co-ops like Royal Arsenal did for the paying of dividends based on previous purchases (5% for Williams Brothers). Do you remember shopping at a Williams Brothers store and particularly do you have any ephemera relating to them, pass book, paperwork, adverts etc.? Stuart Adams, author of *The Essex Collection* plans to do a book on them.

## 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, view but he certainly had an impact on post war life in the East End.

**Bancroft Road also has copies of many issues of our East London Record (published between 1978 and 1998) which they would like to clear. They are offering them at £1 each but they may be willing to deal!**

## Idea Store Library

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)**

## Appeal from the Chairman of Victoria County History of Essex Trust

I am writing to update you on the progress of our publication programme and, more particularly, concerning the deteriorating state of our financial position. This is, therefore, both a letter of information and a plea for help to ensure the future of the VCH in Essex. In regard to the programme, Part 1 of Volume XII (St Osyth to the Naze. North-East Essex Coastal Parishes) is with the printer for publication during 2019; Part 2 (the Sokens: Kirby-le-Soken, Thorpe-le-Soken and Walton-le-Soken) is completed and ready to join the queue for publication of many 'Red Books' in train from other counties. The completed and reviewed 'Short', Nineteenth-Century Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston is also in the press. From the perspective of VCH Essex, the years since the 2011 Appeal which launched this sequence of publications have been extremely productive. To have produced the highly-praised Volume XI on the North-East Essex Seaside Resorts of Clacton, Walton and Frinton, the two parts of Volume XII, the Shorts for Newport and Harwich, plus substantial progress on a Southend Short, is remarkable. That this has been achieved within the reduced time allowed to our Editors, is a tribute to their dedication and to that of the volunteers.

The next Red Book, Volume XIII, will be a complete history of the internationally important Essex town, port and resort of Harwich and Dovercourt, from Prehistory, through the Middle Ages, to the 20th century. Most of the work on the 19th century has been completed and the Editors are currently researching the Medieval and Tudor periods. It is, therefore, very appropriate that we should once again invite you to join us at Harwich. For your diary, please note that the Annual General Meeting of the VCH Essex Trust will be held on Saturday, 27th April 2019 at the 1912 Centre, Cow Dune, Harwich,



commencing at 2pm, and we hope that many of you will be able to join us there. Full details will be sent to you in March. But! We are approaching a major crisis in that we now have only a few months of funding remaining. Subscriptions from our loyal supporters have diminished and we must now seek more substantial resources by launching a new Appeal at the forthcoming AGM.

Grant applications and a proposal to the Heritage Lottery Fund are already being prepared to support elements of Volume XIII on Harwich. This is truly a make-or-break time for VCH Essex and we ask our supporters not only for personal help but to assist in more widely publicising the cause of VCH Essex and its unique, irreplaceable programme for the study of the history of our county.

sincerely

**Geoffrey Hare**

## **Bancroft's Hospital: An East End Institution for 150 years**

\*\*This article is an expanded version of an excerpt on Bancroft's Hospital from a chapter written by the author on Mile End Almshouses in Goose N, Caffrey H and Langley A eds. *The British Almshouse: New perspectives on philanthropy c1400-1914*, FACHRS Publications, 2016

Many members will be familiar with Bancroft Road in Mile End which today enters the Mile End Road opposite the Ocean Estate and bisects the busy campus of Queen Mary College, University of London. It is also, of course, the location of Tower Hamlets' Local History Library and Archives. The road was named after Francis Bancroft, an eighteenth century worthy (or not so worthy – read on and make up your own mind!).

### **The Founder**

Francis Bancroft (1667-1727/8) had served the Lord Mayor of London in various official

capacities and on his own account operated as an agent and broker; in effect a middleman introducing buyers and sellers and collecting commission on the sums involved<sup>1</sup>. His reputation was equivocal; according to his contemporary John Strype he was: 'a common pest of the Citizens' who 'not only pillaged the Poor but likewise the Rich' by taking pay-offs from those he summoned before the City courts for trivial misdemeanours<sup>2</sup>. He had claimed a relationship to Archbishop Richard Bancroft of Canterbury (1604-10), but research has failed to establish any connection.

He added his dubiously acquired income to family legacies and built up a considerable fortune which he invested in land and property and above all in Stocks and Government Bonds and retired from the city in 1720 before the bursting of the South Sea Bubble.

Strype in 1735 said that as a result of his reputation as a hard-nosed lawyer quite unembarrassed in demanding bribes, he was held in such low esteem that during his funeral procession in March 1727/8 the City mob tried to tip him out of his coffin as it was borne through the streets of London. However, good story as it is, contemporary reports make no mention of such an incident. Before his death he had had erected an elaborate memorial in St. Helen's Church, Bishopsgate and left very detailed instructions about his funeral, including:

### ***Directions for embalming the body, &c***

*My body I desire may be embalmed within six days after my death, and my entrails to be put in a leaden box, and included in my coffin, or placed in my vault next the same, as shall be most convenient; and that my coffin be made of oak, lined with lead; and that the top or lid thereof be hang with strong hinges, neither to be nailed, screwed, locked down, nor fastened any other way, but to open freely, and without trouble, like to the top of a trunk.*

***The place and manner of Interment;  
Expense of the funeral.***

*And I desire to be buried in a vault which I have made and purchased for that purpose under my tomb in the parish church of St. Helen's, London, within ten days after my decease, between the hours of nine and ten o'clock at night. And I do direct, that the whole expenses of my funeral, over and above what I have hereafter given for mourning and rings, shall not exceed the sum of two hundred pounds, which I leave to the care and management of my executors hereinafter named.<sup>3</sup>*

Twelve carriages lit by footmen carrying torches and sixty boys from the poor house accompanied the coffin on its night-time journey from Draper's Hall to the church with members of the Drapers' Company acting as pall-bearers.<sup>4</sup>

**The Drapers' Company**

The Company was involved because Bancroft, who died a bachelor, had left the residue of his fortune after bequests to maternal relatives to it. He had become free of the Drapers' Company in 1690, but had never been an active member. However he relied upon it to administer his will and left over £25,000 to the Drapers to erect twenty-four almshouses and a school for one hundred boys. It was the largest single sum they had ever received for charitable purposes.

**The Buildings**

After looking at sites in Newington Butts, Kingsland Road and Hoxton the Drapers decided on a five acre site on the Mile End Road that was purchased for £580. The set of almshouses was one of sixteen built along less than two miles of the roadside through Whitechapel and Mile End between 1623 and 1825. It was easily accessible from Drapers' Hall in the City of London but in what was

still a semi-rural setting. In 1737 building work was completed on Bancroft's Hospital with its impressively spacious quadrangle; the school, chapel, and masters' houses were set to the rear opposite the road with the almshouses in facing rows making up the other two sides. From 1803 the school accommodated boarders and buildings were added to the rear of the main school and six more almshouses built including lodges on either side of the entrance. The site also had an acre of garden ground, a burial ground to the rear of one row of almshouses and playgrounds for the boys.

**Managing the establishment**

Bancroft's will set out a detailed scheme for the management and regulation of the almshouses and the school. Day to day management was in the hands of the Headmaster who was responsible to the Master, Warden and Assistants of the Drapers' Company. Only 'deserving and real poor objects ..... of good life and conversation' who were members of the Company were eligible for the houses with preference being given to Freemen. Wives were admitted with their husbands, but had to leave if widowed. The men, dressed in their buff coloured gowns, with their wives were required to attend the chapel twice a day unless unwell. Twice each year the almsmen, with the boys from the school, had to make their way into the City to hear commemorative sermons preached after which they were rewarded with a dinner.

The will set out that boys aged 7-15 years could attend the school and that they were to be taught to read, write, and cast accounts, and be instructed in the Christian religion, according to the doctrine of the Church of England. They were provided with free education and uniforms. The almsmen received free lodging and from 1737 were paid £8 and six sacks of coal each year with a 'bays gown' every third year. By 1853 they were being paid £30 a year plus coals with nursing or medical care as required. Almsmen who undertook additional tasks such as the porter,

chapel clerk and gatekeepers were paid between £5 and £16 extra each year.<sup>5</sup>

### **Almshouse Rules and Regulations**

As far as regulation was concerned, Bancroft gave the Drapers full powers to: ‘displace and put out .....the old men and place in others in their stead, at their wills and pleasure, in case they shall conceive sufficient cause for their so doing’. A small committee was appointed to oversee the establishment and its members met another of the Founder’s requirements by visiting: ‘once a year, or oftener if occasion requiring, ..... to inquire into the state, condition, and behaviour of the said poor men; as well as to ‘take, view, and give orders for the needful repairs of the said school and almshouses’. The Committee was then allowed to spend up to £5 on a dinner for its members and the two schoolmasters to mark the occasion.

There were twenty-eight rules set out by the Company for the almsmen and their families to observe and breaking them often resulted in an appearance before the Visiting Committee. The rules covered a wide range of infringements including:

*That no alms-man nor his wife use any railing, bitter, or uncharitable speeches to any of the other almsmen or their wives; and that no alms-man presume to strike any brother or brother's wife, under the penalty of a private reprimand for the first offence, a public reprimand for the second, and for the third offence expulsion from the hospital for ever.*

*That no alms-man, or his wife, sell any chandlery ware, liquors, or fruits within the grounds of the hospital, or keep any bulk or stall there, or any public shop for exposing anything for sale, or put up any sign or show-board within the premises, under the penalty of forfeiting three months' pension for the first, and expulsion for the second, offence.*

*That no linen be laid upon or dried in the ground before the almshouses.<sup>6</sup>*

Almsman James Luke Sedgewick, a former cork cutter aged fifty-seven years living at No.21 appeared on 28 May 1847 to explain why he had frequently missed the afternoon service in contravention of Rule VIII. The Committee were not satisfied with his explanation and ordered him to attend in future.<sup>7</sup> Mr Sedgewick was a long-term resident. He had entered the Hospital with his wife Mary (née Wathern). She died in 1855 and in 1857 at Stepney parish church he married fifty-nine year old spinster Sarah Davidson who was living in Cook’s and Row’s Almshouses just along the road. She died three years later and in 1864 at the same church he was married, aged seventy-four years to fifty-one year old widow Mary Ann Lack. Sedgewick died in 1871 aged eighty years having been shown on the Hospital census returns from 1841 until 1871.<sup>8</sup>

### **Leaving Mile End**

From its records the Drapers’ Company seems to have spent far less time dealing with disciplinary problems in the large school than with bad behaviour including drunkenness, bickering and even fighting amongst the thirty almsmen and their wives. This may have influenced the decision to close the almshouses when the Hospital was demolished and the site sold in 1884. The school relocated to Woodford, Essex and in 2018 is a co-educational independent day school with 1,000 pupils. The Mile End site forms part of the campus of Queen Mary College, University of London and both the College and the School have continuing links with the Drapers’ Company.<sup>9</sup>

We now have only a road name to remind us of a man, who, however shadily he made his money, ensured that after his death the Drapers’ Company ensured that it benefitted the local area, particularly in the provision of a valuable education for poor boys that equipped them for successful working lives.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Wing, K.R., *A History of Bancroft's School, 1737-1987*, (Woodford, 1987) p.11

<sup>2</sup>Strype, (1720), p.278, [www.hrionline.ac.uk/strype](http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/strype) consulted August 2018

<sup>3</sup>TNA, PROB11/626, Will of Francis Bancroft, proved 1727

<sup>4</sup>Wing, p16

<sup>5</sup>'Report on the Charities of the Drapers' Company: Part I', City of London Livery Companies Commission. Report; Volume 4 (1884), pp.120-144. [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) consulted: August 2018

<sup>6</sup>'Report on the Charities of the Drapers' Company: Vol 4, (1884) pp.178-215

<sup>7</sup>Drapers' Company Archives, E/MB3

<sup>8</sup>LMA, Registers of St. Dunstan, Stepney, P/DUN/095 & 101, Census 1841: HO 107/713, Book 12, Folio 10, 1851: HO107/1553, Folio 243, 1861: RG9/299, Folio 133, 1871: RG10/566, Folio 20 <sup>9</sup><http://www.thedrapers.co.uk> consulted August 2018

## Janet A Cumner

### A Horse-radish Field in Stepney, 1800

“How much is your property worth?” was a question posed to many property-owners in Wapping in 1800 by the London Dock Company, and the answers can be found in a series of ledgers in the library of the Museum of London Docklands in Canary Wharf.

This is a well-known story<sup>1</sup> and for F. Rule:

*In many ways, the area in which the proposed (dock) development would be situated was ideal as it was in close proximity to the legal quays and the city. However, its central position also meant that the area already had a well-established community who were not remotely interested in vacating their homes and business premises to make way for a new dock.<sup>2</sup>*

More precisely:

*Objectors calculated that up to 2,000 houses would have to be demolished to accommodate the development and long-established businesses along the river's edge would be forced to relocate or shut down completely. The construction of the docks would also inevitably affect the existing infrastructure not only in Wapping but also in the neighbouring parishes. Complaints were received from the Shadwell Waterworks, the Commissioners for Sewers in Tower Hamlets and even the scholars of King's Hall and Brazen Close College, Oxford, who were the patrons of the nearby rectory of St Dunstan in Stepney.*

Sir Joseph Broodbank, Chairman of the dock and warehouse committee of the Port of London Authority in 1921 provided a detailed background to this development and related:<sup>3</sup>

*The acquisition of the site, which included a large amount of house property, was a much more complicated operation than in the Isle of Dogs (for the East and West India Docks) and the cost of the properties considerably exceeded the estimates.*

### The Process of Evaluation

The LDC had a well-organized process, which began by inviting every property owner to submit their estimate of the value of their property. Then the LDC's evaluators began the inspection of every property, and were particularly concerned about fraud and over-evaluation of a property's value. They recorded every detail: the number, location and description of cellars, rooms and garrets, and the state of repair, but not the plan layout. Then, using the concept of “present value”, the LDC submitted their offer to the owner. Inevitably the LDC's evaluation was lower than that of the owner. Which suggests that if the LDC had accepted the property owners' evaluations, the cost of building the docks

would have been even higher than originally estimated.<sup>4</sup>

A detailed analysis of how the LDC set about this task was published in 2017 and concentrated on Virginia Street, in St George-in-the Fields, that has completely vanished under the London Docks.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to evaluating property the LDC surveyors found themselves dealing with a variety of businesses, and in particular a field of horse-radishes.

### Horse-radish

Horse-radish had a long history in medicine as a cure for a variety of complaints, as well as playing a role in cookery. For the early Greek physician and botanist Pedanius Dioscorides (c. 40-90 AD) in *De Materia Medica*, the wild radish (which the Romans called *armoracia*) had slender roots “soft, and somewhat sharp, both the leaves and the root are boiled instead of vegetables. It is warming, diuretic and burning”. His book formed the core of the European pharmacopoeia until the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Dioscorides's ideas were extended by Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654), an English botanist and herbalist and in his *Complete Herbal* he wrote that

The juice of horse-radish, given to drink, is held to be very effectual for the scurvy. It kills worms in children, being drunk, and also laid upon the belly. The root braised and laid to the place grieved with the sciatica, joint-ache, or hard swellings of the liver and spleen, does wonderfully help them all. ... Garden radishes are eaten as salad, but they breed humours in the stomach and corrupt the blood, yet, for such as are troubled with the gravel, stone or stoppage of urine, they are good physick.

In the early 1800s horse-radish fields could be found in Shoreditch<sup>7</sup> but were the LDC surprised to find themselves buying James Hudson's garden ground in Torrington Street? Hudson provided a lengthy description of his business and the losses he would incur when bought out by the LDC.

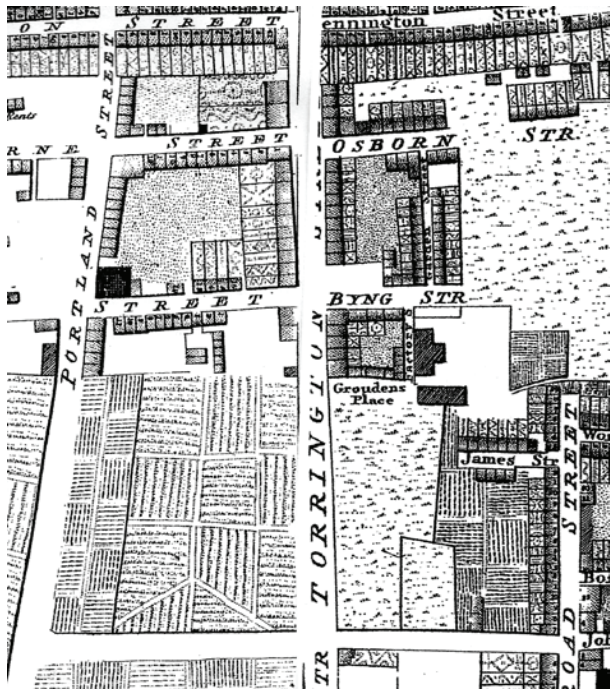
*The horse radish (by which my livelihood is maintained) is grown from plants regularly placed at proper depths and distances on the ground from whereas it is annually cut leaving the plants remaining from year to year for a fresh crop which plants cannot be removed unto any other situation will become of no use or value whatever.*

*As there will be a material difference in the value of the crop as now growing and at the time when your notice would entitle you to possession I have taken the liberty to send you an estimate of what I conceive would be the real loss to which you will be pleased to add what you think I am entitled to for being literally turned out of my business to make way for the proposed docks, there being no soil or situation so eligible as that I now hold.*

Hudson's estimate of his loss was laid out as follows:

For loss occasioned by crop being taken up ...	
being unfit for sale	£ 30-0s-0d
For the value of the crop	£ 50-0s-0d
For the plants remaining in the ground as the	
stamina for future crops	£150-0s-0d
For erection of a shed which is to be taken	
away and sundry fences	£ 30-0s-0d
For loss of situation	£ 70-0s-0d
	-----
Total	£330-0s-0d

Finally, Hudson estimated that the average value of each year's crop was £300, which indicates a considerable business.<sup>8</sup>



Notes:

1. Derek Morris and Ken Cozens, *London's Sailortown, 1600-1800: Shadwell and Ratcliff, a social history*, 2014
2. F. Rule, *London's Docklands: A History of the Lost Quarter*, 2000, p. 13
3. J. Broodbank, *History of the Port of London*, vol I, 1921
4. MoLD, Port of London Authority Archive, Museum of London Docklands, PLA/LDC/2/1/1 and 2/1/2
5. D. Morris, Purchasing Property in East London in the early nineteenth century; The London Dock Company in the 1800s, *Newsletter*, London Topographical Society, No. 84, May 2017, pp. 5-7
6. T. A. Osbelston and R. P. A. Wood, *De Materia Medica*, 2003
7. LMA, MR/B/C/1812/097, October 1812 PLA/LDC/2/1/1, p. 51, 1800

What the LDC made of this claim remains to be explored. **Derek Morris**

## Note re. Torrington Street

Torrington Street, St George in the East (c1785-c1802) from Mike Elliston's (unpublished) Topography of Tower Hamlets

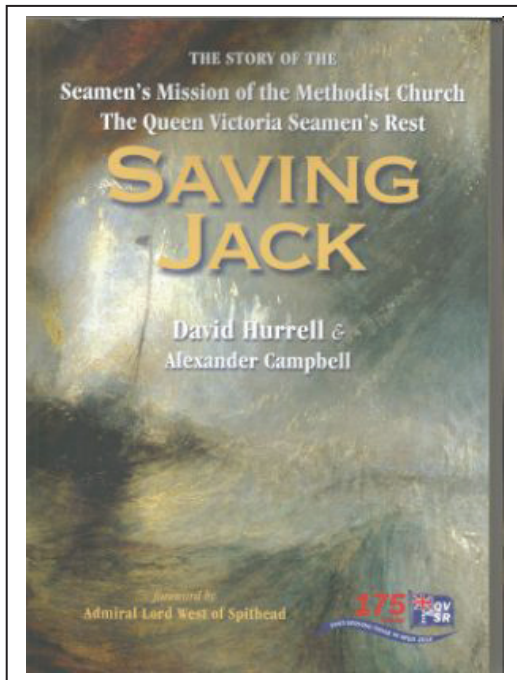
Torrington Street ran south from the southern end of John's Hill or John Street to the south of Pennington Street. It is first shown on maps of the mid 1780s possibly as a proposal for several maps called it simply New Road. It was laid out across the former pasture grounds or market gardens to Shard Street, which was the short northern continuation of Bird Street (Tench Street) to the north of Green Bank. This area was developed for housing from the mid 1780s to 1801 when the plans for (building) the London Docks here appeared, for land outside the city was becoming valuable for housing of artisans. The whole area was demolished for the construction of the London Docks from 1801 on.

## Saving Jack

**The Story of the Seamen's Mission of the Methodist Church, The Queen Victoria's Seamen's Rest.**

**A4 132 pages, published by the QVSR  
Authors David Hurrell and Alexander Campbell**

I was delighted to receive my copy of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative book, as I was closely involved with the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book. Although not a commercial publication and without an ISBN or price printed on the cover, I feel the wealth of valuable information contained in the book deserves of wider attention. A substantial volume, with a wealth of illustrations and photographs from the Mission's archives, as well as maps and illustrations of London's docklands from the earliest times to the present day, it is well worth a read.



The origins of the docks are traced down the centuries, and for even those who are familiar with the background history of the docks, it makes for an interesting and engrossing read. It covers all the docks north and south of the river, the rise of trade and industry and the growth of the East End from a group of hamlets nestled in the shadow of the Tower of London, to a vast trading empire reaching to all parts of the world, importing exotic goods from every continent. All this trade and industry relied on the services of the merchant seamen, and seafarers from every land could be found at any time in the East End. The often lonely men would find themselves the hapless prey of every form of low life intent of separating them from their money and worldly goods. They had no one to turn to in their desperate plight, and into this void stepped the Christian missionary.



Victorian philanthropy is a controversial subject in the present day, but it would be an act of blind cynicism to ignore the positive effects of the charitable work of these earnest men and women who devoted their lives to improving the lot of the less fortunate.

I quote from the foreword by Admiral the Rt Hon. the Lord West of Spithead:

The work of the Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest (QVSR) started back in 1843 amidst the cacophony of noise and colour which was then the East End of London. The port was a hive of activity and industry but at the same time was a place of danger and darkness. It was into this setting that the Methodist Church began its work amongst seafarers and families. And there was a great need for this band of Victorian Christian men and women who made it their mission to offer shelter, support and hope; you will read of their exploits and get to know some of the characters as 'Saving Jack' tells its tales of the sea.

The book traces the history of the Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest from its early beginnings in Cable Street to its commanding position on the East India Dock Road, where it serves the needs of retired merchant seamen and other elderly men from all walks of life and all nationalities and religions.

For me, the integrity in the book is found in its historical accuracy and its ability to provide

commentary on the social history alongside the stories of those working for the QVSR. The book serves as a stark reminder of the hardships that seafarers and their families had to endure over the years, many of these scenarios would be unthinkable in today's modern society yet there are still considerable pressures on the modern seafarer. Charities such as the QVSR are striving to meet those needs, and we must not forget how crucial maritime trade remains to our great nation. The people component is vital .... as is the case today, seafarers have frequently been forgotten, their life at sea has often been a lonely one filled with many cares and concerns.'

When the Mission began in 1843 it operated from St George's Wesleyan Chapel, Cable Street and later, the old Eastern Institution (Commercial Road East) which became the Wesleyan Seamen's Chapel and later Stepney Temple. The first property was not rented until 1887. Forty four years later the old Magnet Pub, part of the present building was converted to the Sailors' Rest reading rooms. As the need for larger premises grew, the idea of creating a permanent home for sailors took hold and grew into what became the Seamen's Rest. The first building was formally opened in November 1902, and was subsequently enlarged and expanded to its present form.

If your curiosity and interest has been sufficiently aroused, I suggest you contact the Mission at 121-131 East India Dock Road, Poplar, London E14 6DF, Tel. no. 020 7989 5466. Their website is [www.qvsr.org.uk](http://www.qvsr.org.uk)

**Rosemary Taylor**

## **LOWER CLAPTON FILMS**

### **Carolyn Clarke's November talk to ELHS**

When Carolyn spoke to us about Lower Clapton on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November she posted up details of some films available on-line. Here they are again in case you would like to see any of them.

### **Brian's stories of Lower Clapton**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWkaKj95RVw>

### **Lower Clapton Heritage Day**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeiHds8h9kE>

### **Strike a Pose: Gibson Photography Archive**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXEHNcAWH6g&t=8s>

### **Clapton Orient**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-kAjhlrtSE>

## **Book Reviews**

Amberley Press have sent me a number of their reasonably priced books that may be of interest to members. Philip Mernick

London's Buses, the colourful era, Malcolm Batten, 2018, ISBN 978-1-4456-8403-1, 96 pages, £14.99

If you think post-war London buses have always been red, this will be an eye opener. In the early days of route tendering in the 1980s and 1990s operators maintained their own colourful liveries. The bus enthusiast will love this book with its hundreds of brightly coloured buses.

London's Crypts & Catacombs, Robert Bard & Adrian Miles, 2018, ISBN 978-1-4456-7869-6, 96 pages, £14.99

"Have you ever wondered what lies beneath your feet when you walk into an ancient church or graveyard?" - (back cover). The book has chapters on Churchyard & Burial



Ground Vaults, Church Crypts, Wren Churches, 50 New Churches, Later Churches and Catacombs. It doesn't attempt to be a comprehensive listing, impossible with the standard 96 pages Amberley format, but chooses interesting examples. Bunhill Fields for Churchyard & Burial grounds and Westminster Abbey for Church Crypts. East London has Christ Church Spitalfields, St. Anne's, Limehouse and St. George in the East, under 50 New Churches; St. Johns Wapping under Later Churches, and Abney Park, City of London and Tower Hamlets under Catacombs. Many more further afield of course and lots of fascinating pictures of what is almost always completely hidden from view.

East End Pubs, Johnny Homer, 2018, ISBN978-1-4456-8057-6, 96 pages, £14.99  
It primarily covers Tower Hamlets but also extends to the City fringes with Aldgate and Shoreditch. This is a nice brightly illustrated book that only talks about pubs that can still be visited. It doesn't try to cover every existing pub but the forty-two it does talk about are well illustrated and described. My local is called "The Widow's Bun" in the key to the clear map (very helpful if you are planning a pub crawl) and also in the chapter heading but correctly "The Widow's Son" in the text. Grumble over, a bright and informative book that should make a good present.

Brewing in London, Johnny Homer, 2018, ISBN 978-1-4456-7025-6, 96 pages, £14.99  
"At the start of the eighteenth century London had almost 200 breweries producing close on two million barrels\* of beer every year making the mighty metropolis the brewing capital of the world. By 1976 when the once-mighty Whitbread halted production at their famous Chiswell Street Headquarter, there were only nine brewers left in the capital" – (back cover).  
\* A barrel held 36 imperial gallons (288 pints or 163 litres) – editor  
Chapter headings are:  
Hops, Beer and the Birth of an industry  
South of the Thames – Thrales, Barclay Perkins and the rise of Courage

East End Brewers – a River of Beer  
They also brewed – Watney, Whitbread, Fullers, Meaux and Young's  
The Death and Rebirth of Brewing in London

Lots of pictures of pubs, wagons, adverts and bottle labels. I spent several summers in the 1960s as a student working at Trumans in Brick Lane and was pleased to see a decent description of their rise, fall and resurrection in Old Ford.

Paranormal London, Gilly Pickup, 2018, ISBN 978-1-4456-8553-3, 96 pages, £14.99  
"Many of the city's most famous landmarks are haunted, but hundreds of lesser-known sites claim paranormal happenings" – (back cover). No ghostly revelations, but buildings with associated ghost stories. The book is divided into types of building: homes, hospitals, hostelrys, hotels, museums etc. With many pictures, great for those who say "I want to believe".

## Eastside Community Heritage is looking for interviewees

I am emailing on behalf of Eastside Community Heritage, we are looking for interviewees for a new project focusing on female dock-workers. We are aiming to bring the experiences of women working in East London docks to light. If you know of anyone who would be interested or knows of someone that could help than would be amazing, this could be a woman who worked in the docks themselves or someone whose relative may have done.

If you can think of anyone that would be interested please contact either [office@ech.org.uk](mailto:office@ech.org.uk) or 020 8553 31116.

Many thanks,  
Eleanor Digby

## Chaseley Street enquiry, Alex Reeves

My Grandad is 92 and was born at number 20 Chaseley Street in 1926, where he lived until he was about 8. His family moved around East London and in fact his 89 year old brother still lives on Cable Street today. My Grandad is now on the coast in Essex, and I live in Chelmsford myself but work at Queen Mary University in Mile End. I visited him last week in hospital and he was telling me about Chaseley Street and the school that he used to go to (which turns out it was Dalgleish Street school, although it doesn't look like that is there anymore).

I went to find his house last week and it has now been turned into a metalworks, along with another house or two either side, which was a shame. I have been to the TH archives on my lunch break and it would appear that this change happened sometime between 1967 and 1991. I'm going to be going back to the archives to see what other information I can find about his family or any other records, but wondered if you could point me in the right direction of some further information and photos? He would be particularly interested in any images of the road back in the 1920s/30s, and the primary school that he went to. He also mentioned a sweet shop at the end of Chaseley Street which is no longer there, and the green at the top of the road which he called Square Park, but looks like York Square. Also, any further information about when the house was converted would be particularly interesting.

I have not yet looked through the many links on your website but wanted to get in touch in case you had any specific information about these areas. My Grandad's name is Henry Graves – I can't remember his parents' names, but there were about 9 or 10 children.

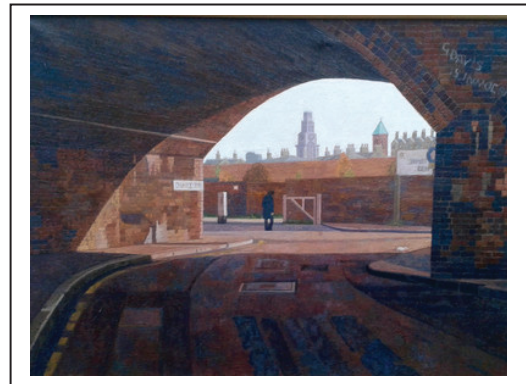
## Doreen Fletchers Pictures.

### Chaseley Street E1, then and now

Doreen has permitted us to use stories from her web site at [www.doreenfletcherartist.com](http://www.doreenfletcherartist.com), and I thought this would be most appropriate

in view of Alex Reeve's enquiry immediately above.

### Chaseley Street E1 August 1986

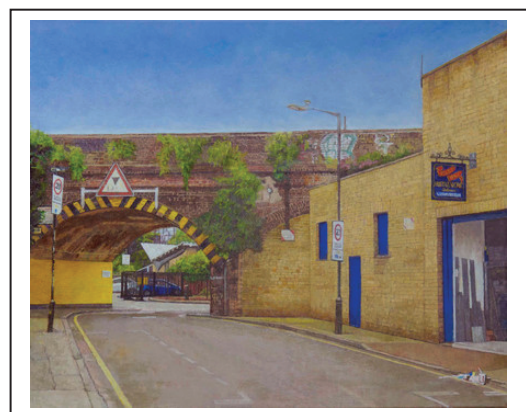


This was a shortcut I would often take under the bridge and through the flats on my way back from Sainsbury's in Watney Street Market or from the Queen's Head in York Square.

St. Ann's Church was always a pleasing view in the distance in all weathers; and there were even regular reports in the local newspapers of tall vehicles getting stuck under the low bridges.

In the summer under the railway arches impromptu exhibitions of artists work were often held where cheap wine and Beck's beer would flow freely. These were occasions where artists could let their hair down and exchange views on one another's work.

### Chaseley Street E1 June 2016



The shortcut through the flats is now gated; and Sainsbury's has been replaced by Iceland. The future of the Queen's Head is uncertain as it is no longer a thriving artists' and bikers' pub.

The view of St. Ann's Church has been blocked by a new school and recent buildings cover every piece of available space; no more reports of vans stuck under bridges thanks to the bright yellow paint job.

The streets seem cleaner, no more mattresses I remember stumbling over in the dark, although perhaps in places a little too sanitised.

*Doreen Fletcher's RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION* will be at Bow Arts' Nunnery Gallery, 181 Bow Road, E3 2SJ, It opens to the public on 25 January 2019 and runs until 24 March 2019.

## Fairfield Road, Bow

Fairfield Road is now a boring short stretch of road running between Bow Road and Tredegar Road. It serves as access to the eastern end of Roman Road and Old Ford Road and to the A12 motorway avoiding the Bow Roundabout. It is only a few hundred yards long, so what makes it of interest. The first thing is its name, dating from about 1847 which commemorates the very popular Bow Fair held in a field to the north of the road to Bow.

Known as the Green Goose fair, it was held on the Thursday after Pentecost. A green goose was a young or mid-summer goose, and also a slang term for a cuckold or a low woman. In 1630, John Taylor, "The Water Poet", wrote 'At Bow, the Thursday after Pentecost, there is a fair of green geese ready roast, where, as a goose is ever dog cheap there, the sauce is over somewhat sharp and deare', which used the double entendre to describe the drunken and rowdy behaviour of the crowds. The fair was suppressed in the 1820s and the field built on in the 1850s. The picture below shows the municipal buildings on the site at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

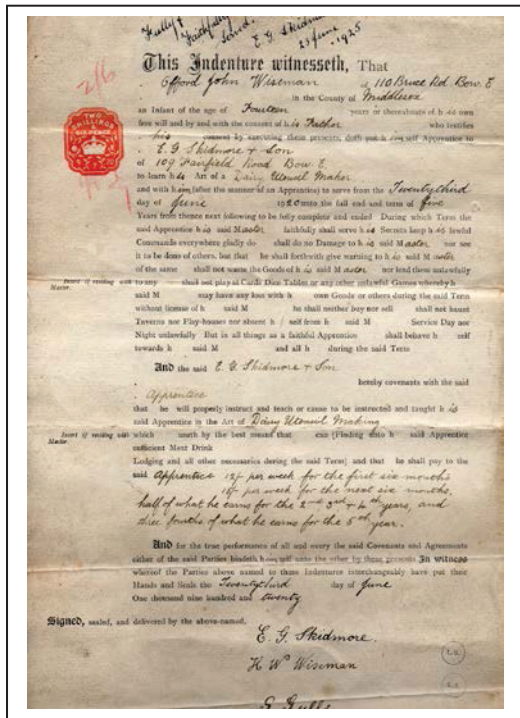


These were demolished in the 1930s for the construction of the Modern Style, grade II listed, Poplar Town Hall with its mosaic of Poplar Industry and statues of construction workers. Now used as offices by a large number of local concerns you can see, in the lobby a series of very interesting photographs taken during its construction.



Also of note in this "boring" road are a surviving 1820s terrace built before the road was actually named, the site of one of London's largest "lunatic asylums", Grove Hall, the immense Bryant & May match factory, a branch of the Battersea Dogs Home, the East London headquarters of the British Red Cross, an early omnibus/tram/trolleybus /bus garage (still in operation), several pubs (all now closed) and several important manufacturing companies. I hope to cover some of these in the next newsletter.

Last month Mick Murphy sent us this indenture document for his late uncle Offord John Wiseman.



The document apprentices the 14 year old Offord of 110 Bruce Road, Bow in the County of Middlesex to E.G. Skidmore & Son of 109 Fairfield Road Bow E. to learn his Art of a Dairy Utensil Maker, and with him (after the manner of an Apprentice) to serve from the Twenty Third day of June 1920 until the full end and term of five years. The document of apprenticeship maintains terms that must have been created centuries earlier about not playing cards or going to Play Houses. He was to receive 12 shillings per week for the first six months and 15 shillings for the next 6 months - half of what he earned in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years and three quarters in his final year. Offord, who presumably walked the short distance to work is marked as Fully & Faithfully Served 23 June 1925.

As it happens E.G. Skidmore & Son was already mentioned on the East London History Society's MOTH (Mementoes of Tower Hamlets) web site. <http://www.mernick.org.uk/moth/index.html>



This full-sized Skidmore milk can is made from brass so is presumably for display rather than use.

In 1885 Edwin George Skidmore started as a tin plate worker at 91 Armagh Road but from 1905 he is described as a milk can maker. In 1915 he moved to 109 Fairfield Road by which time the firm is listed as E.G. Skidmore & Son. They obviously survived the war and remained at that address until 1950 although from 1948 they are described as Dairy Engineers.

**Philip Mernick**