



## Tower Subway, opened 1870

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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.

**Currently cancelled due to Covid-19.**

## Cover Picture

2020 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Tower Subway. Described as the world's first deep level tube railway, it ran from Great Tower Hill to Pickle Herring Stairs near Vine Street, Southwark. A circular 7-foot-diameter tunnel was dug 1,340 feet, using a wrought iron shield, a method that had been patented in 1864 by Peter William Barlow. The cable hauled carriages held 14 passengers but the service only lasted for a few months.

Converted to a foot tunnel it was used by a million people a year at a halfpenny cost. After the toll-free Tower Bridge opened in 1894, the number of users dropped and it closed in 1896. Later converted to carry water mains and hydraulic power tubes, the latter have now been replaced by telecommunication cables. The original railway used lifts to get to the bottom, but they were later replaced by spiral staircases. The southern entrance was demolished in the 1990s (and replaced?) and the Tower Hill entrance is a 1926 replacement.

## East London History Society Lecture Programme 2020

**Because of the current Covid-19 emergency we have postponed the last two lectures of our 2019/20 season and provisionally allocated them to September and October of the 2020/21 season. We expect to have another newsletter before then to advise you of the up to date position.**

### **September 2020**

**Hackney, Portrait of a Community**  
Laurie Elks

### **November 2020**

**The Precinct of St Katherine's by the Tower in the 18th century**  
Derek Morris

Suggestions and ideas for future topics and/or speakers for our 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 all issues of ELHS Newsletter from 1992 until issue 4-15. 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.

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## Requests for help

**Returning member John Burden** writes  
I was born in the German Hospital Dalston in 1947 & lived in Graham Road, Dalston until I was 10<sup>1/2</sup>. I have fond memories of Hackney and have been researching my family history on and off for 40 years.

I have become increasingly interested in the history of the area, its buildings, churches schools, hospitals and other features such as Ridley Road Market, railways etc., many of which have changed considerably since I left the area with my parents, for Hertfordshire.

If you or any other members can suggest sources, contacts, publications etc. I would be very grateful.

John can be contacted at  
[burdjohn@hotmail.com](mailto:burdjohn@hotmail.com)

### **Kenneth Greenway, Manager of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park appeals for donations.**

All the events and activities at the cemetery park are cancelled for the foreseeable future because of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the friends depend on these events for income

Help the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park get through the COVID-19 outbreak and continue protecting local nature and heritage.

See a video of Ken's appeal and read more information at  
<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/friends-of-tower-hamlets-cemetery-park-survival-appeal>

## OBITUARY

### James (Jim) Eric Ridgeon

On 6 January 2020 aged 90, former Superintendent of Blackwall Workshops and Maintenance Manager. He joined Trinity House in 1964 and retired in 1988.

In 1968 he was appointed Assistant Workshops Manager at Blackwall, under Gordon Viola and later Workshops Manager.

His tasks at Blackwall, Orchard Place, London E14, now an arts centre, see:

<http://www.trinitybuoywharf.com/>), where he led a large team of craftsmen across many disciplines, were in support of the Engineer-in-Chief in various modernisation and automation schemes. Coppersmiths made lantern roofs and piping for PVB and acetylene apparatus; blacksmiths created all manner of iron work, boilermakers repaired damaged buoys; carpenters fashioned timber buoy superstructures and made patterns and the radio and electrical technicians kept the aids to navigation operational and in touch with ship and shore.

It was here, too, that lighthouse keepers were trained using London's only lighthouse tower. Down the years the Service embarked on plans to replace outdated equipment. Principal of these was the electrification programme that was the precursor of the lighthouse automation and remote control we see today. At that time, as today, the Service ethos was aimed at improving reliability and the saving of running costs.

Workshops' function was ultimately transferred to districts and the Engineer-in-Chief's Department moved to East Cowes at which time Jim Ridgeon was appointed Maintenance Manager based at HQ on Tower Hill where he completed his service in 1988.

It has to be remembered that a quarter of Workshop personnel formed the outstation team. They were mechanics, electricians and radio mechanics whose work included attending breakdowns, periodic servicing, and modernisation. They were listed by trade and each day the list was updated to indicate the station at which they were working, or if they were available in workshops. In the event of a failure a man could be sent to attend. If one was on an adjacent station he was contacted and asked to transfer. Passage to the station could be by road, rail, district tender, local boat and, when available, helicopter.

From Blackwall in earlier times the Honourable East India Company built its ships and sailed them to the Indies. Here, too, Trinity House berthed its yachts (forerunners of the district tenders) and in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century this hive of industry in what we now know as the Tower Hamlets on the Essex bank of the Thames, became the Corporation's principal depot. This was in the London District until business moved to Harwich post-war with the need for additional, deeper, berths for larger tenders and anchorages for the extensive light vessel fleet.

### Obituary supplied by ELHS member Paul Ridgway



Trinity House buoys at Orchard Place

## LIVERPOOL STREET STATION – ITS GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

The series of events leading to the construction of Liverpool Street Station can be traced back to the Eastern Counties Railway. This Company was authorised under an act of parliament dated the 4th of July 1836, to build their railway and place it's London Terminus at or near Shoreditch High Street.

Work was started in March 1837 and a little over two years later a stretch of line was completed to Romford. It ran from a temporary terminus at Devonshire Street, Mile End Old Town located close to the northern end of Bancroft Road. It was opened to passenger traffic on the 20th of June 1839. The completion of this stretch of line enabled the Company to extend it eastwards to Shoreditch where work began on building its London Terminus. This was situated close to the site of Webb Square which was located close to the junction with Church Street (later renamed as an extension to Bethnal Green Road). It was opened for passenger traffic on the 1st of July 1840 and this led to the closure of the Devonshire Street station very soon afterwards.

The proliferation of competing railway companies led to many disputes over the following years, so much so that a bill was eventually presented for their amalgamation. In the following year the bill had its second reading and it was passed on the 7th of August 1862. This resulted in the creation of the Great Eastern Railway, which on that date absorbed the Eastern Counties Railway and several other smaller railways, all of whom had served East London and or Essex and East Anglia. Not long after its formation the Board of the newly formed railway company drew up plans for a new station in the City of London to replace the Shoreditch Terminus of its

predecessor. This, which had been renamed Bishopsgate in 1846, was inconveniently placed for the countless number of City Workers using it. Located in one of the poorest areas of London it was not very far away from the notorious Old Nichol, which was immortalised by Arthur Morrison's novel *The Child of the Jago*.

Plans were approved for the construction of the station and connecting line and these were authorised by the Great Eastern Railway (Metropolitan Station and Railways) Act 1864. It was to be built on a site of approximately 10 acres adjacent to Broad Street Station west of Bishopsgate Street and extending to Skinner Street in the north from its southern extremity at Liverpool Street.

The link to connect the station to the main line involved the laying of an extension branching from the line east of Shoreditch Station to Liverpool Street. It would leave the original main line just west of the present Bethnal Green Station and maintain a steep gradient until it sank below street level near to Brick Lane. This would provide some saving in land acquisition allowing the line to pass under one side of the original terminus site and thereafter to go under Commercial Street and Shoreditch High Street before turning south. At this point there would be a considerable gradient on the line's approach to the station, which would allow it to be built below street level. This was a requirement of the 1864 Act to facilitate a direct connection to the low-level Metropolitan Railway. The link was seldom used however and it was eventually abandoned when they opened their own station on the 12th of July 1875.

When setting out the route of the extension, all the owners and occupiers of the buildings along the route received notice that the railway company intended to compulsory purchase their property. This resulted in the

displacement of an estimated 7,000 people in the Shoreditch area.

In addition, an enormous number of people would also be displaced once the company acquired the land on which the station was to be built. The tenements in which they lived were located in a maze of alleyways and cul-de-sacs which included: Angel Alley, Blythe's Buildings, Smith's Buildings, Lamb Alley, Dunning's Alley, Peter Street, Sweet Apple Court, Half Moon Street and One Swan Yard.

In 1865 the Great Eastern Railway received powers to develop just four small detached areas of property within the site that year, the total measurement of which would be approximately half an acre. One lying between Liverpool Street Buildings and Bishopsgate Street; a second between Sun Street and Dunning's Alley; a third in Angel Alley (comprising a Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday school) and a fourth being All Saints Church in Skinner Street. A very small area of public way was also included in these plans.

This led to a great number of claims for compensation including one received from the occupants of Blythe's Buildings. They had met the Surveyor on the 27th of June 1865 and everyone there received compensation despite the fact that Blythe's Buildings was not within one of the four areas to be taken! Incidentally, the 1851 census records show that my Great Grandfather, John William French was living at 5 Blythe's Buildings, but by 1863 the family had moved to 2 Lamb Alley. This was where my Grandfather Henry Matthew French was born on the 23rd of February 1863.

Less fortunate however than the residents of Blythe's Buildings were those living in Half Moon Street. A meeting to decide the validity of their claim for compensation took place on the 5th of July 1865 at Mansion House Court and although Half Moon Street was situated within one of the four thoroughfares to be

taken, their claim was rejected by the Company Surveyor who said that the tenants were occupying property belonging to the railway company.

Once most of the problems including lengthy financial claims had been settled, the project was able to move on. The footprint of the station would not cover the full width of the ground to be taken however, and only property on the west side was to be demolished. The area of the site on the Bishopsgate Street side was not purchased at this time, and its properties were mostly left unoccupied and derelict. The truncated thoroughfares on which they stood, running mostly from east to west, would be reduced to a fraction of their former length once the station was built.

By 1870 very few properties were left standing and once these had been demolished the ground was cleared and levelled. Enormous quantities of earth were then removed to a great depth to enable the link to be made to the sub-surface Metropolitan Railway.

Finally sewers and other obstructions encountered below ground had to be dealt with, but after these problems had been overcome the Company was able to issue a statement on the 5th of August 1871, declaring that the construction of the station would begin in the very near future.

Built to the design of Edward Wilson, the Chief Engineer of the Great Eastern Railway, the partially completed station was opened for traffic on the 2nd of October 1874. Suburban services only were in operation initially, until the completed station was opened a year later on the 1st of November 1875.

The number of platforms installed was increased to ten, two of which were for mainline services and the remainder earmarked for suburban traffic.

When the project to build the new station was only in the planning stage, grave doubts were expressed about its feasibility, and in some quarters, it was thought that the project would turn out to be an absolute waste of money. Subsequent events were to prove however, that those fears were utterly and completely unfounded.

The volume of traffic using the station increased enormously in a very short space of time after its opening and the massive increase in suburban commuter trains to north east London stretched its capacity close to breaking point. As a result, the Company came to the conclusion that the only way forward was to expand the station, to meet its present day needs and future development.

So, in 1887, only 12 years after the station was opened, a bill was presented by the Great Eastern Railway which would allow them to widen, enlarge and improve the station and the lines leading to it. The bill was passed by an Act of Parliament in the following year and with the exception of Primrose Street and Skinner Street which would remain open, the Company was authorised to permanently stop up as public thoroughfares, all the other courts and alleys between the station and Bishopsgate Street (see the attached chart dated 1887).

By August 1888 the inevitable claims for compensation had all been settled by the Company. This then enabled them to take full possession of the site and early in 1891 demolition was started on the remaining thoroughfares and properties therein.

Three years later on the 2nd of April 1894 the extension to the station was opened and it was built to a similar design to the original structure. It contained eight new platforms, which increased the number to eighteen, and for some years it then had more platforms than any other London terminus. The number of approach lines was increased from four to six

and a network of additional lines was laid down, extending for several miles.

At the same time Bishopsgate Street was widened and the existing properties on its west side were demolished. They were replaced by a row of shops, a booking office and an additional entrance to the station. This was designed to relieve the pressure on the main entrance, which was situated in Liverpool Street.

In the early years of the twentieth Century, ever increasing numbers of passengers were carried each year and by the outbreak of the First World War the station had become one of the busiest in the World.

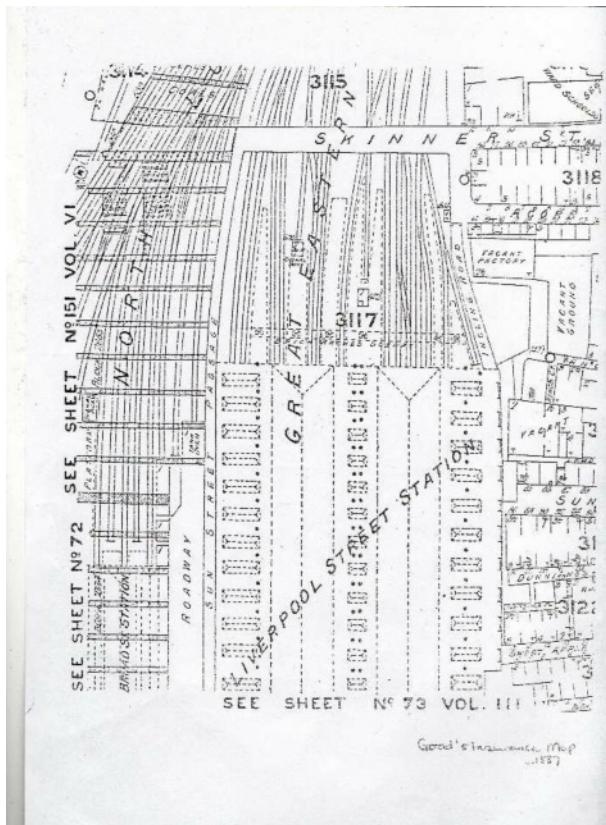
On the 13th of June 1917 a large number of Gotha bombers attacked London in the deadliest single raid on Britain during the war. In the raid three bombs were dropped on the station, killing 162 people and injuring a further 432. Incidentally a distant relative of mine, Edward French, was killed by a bomb during this raid as he was walking along Fenchurch Street.

Five years after the end of the war on the 1st of January 1923 the Great Eastern Railway was absorbed by the London and North Eastern Railway which was one of the four companies into which all of the independent railway companies were absorbed. The station remained under LNER control for the next twenty-five years until 1948, when the whole rail network was nationalized. Since de-nationalization, events have turned full circle and Liverpool Street Station is once again in private ownership.

### **Tom French**

#### Acknowledgements:

Grace's Guide, Goade's Insurance, Great Eastern Society, Wikipedia, London Gazette, City Press, Network Rail.



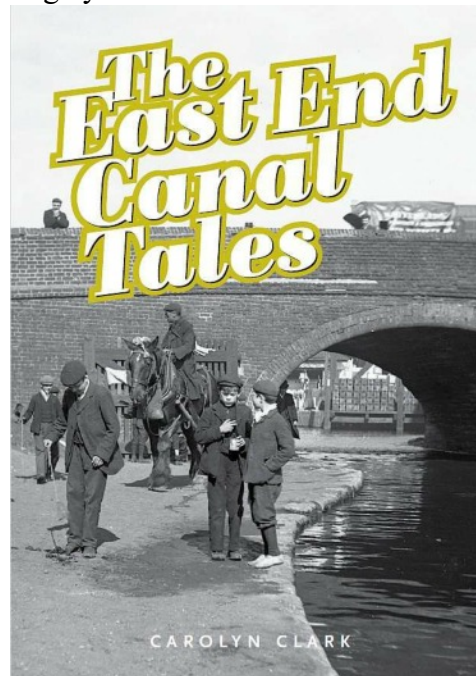
**Liverpool Street station from an 1887 Gove insurance map.**

**Books and More**

**The Story of the East End Canal**

2020 is the 200th anniversary of the reach of the Regent's Canal from King's Cross to Limehouse. The Western section was opened in 1817. At the official opening on August 1st 1820, a procession of boats travelled from Kings Cross with dignitaries on board and brass bands. On arrival in City Road Basin (then City Basin), a salute was fired followed by a race of boatmen to be the first to unload. Fireworks met the procession when it reached Regent's Canal Dock (now Limehouse Basin). Spectators thronged along the banks and the dock, but missed out on the grand party for 100 dignitaries which closed the occasion.

The event, said to be of a 'style and magnificence that had scarcely been seen before', made a big impression, just as the canal made a huge impression on the then largely rural swathe of East London.



The M25 of its day brought the materials to build the industries and homes for workers along its banks, which were in turn dependant on the canal to supply raw materials and transport manufactured goods all over the world.

Much has been written about the early days of the Regent's Canal. In 2020, as part of the 200th anniversary celebrations, the London Canal Museum published my new book, The East End Canal Tales. The book focuses on the 20th century, interweaving the memories of over 50 local residents with historical accounts to tell intriguing, humorous and often surprising stories of life and work on and by the Regent's and Hertford Union Canals.

The East End Canal Tales is lavishly illustrated with over 130 photographs, many never published before, and three maps. Read about canal trades of coal and manure and canal-side industries ranging from timber and metalworks



to ice and chocolate. Learn about the canal's role in what was the equivalent of the Victorian internet. Relive childhood memories of diving from 'the pipe' and being chased by the 'Cut Runners'. Join the villains' search for the holy grail of a gold cargo. Find out what happened in the old buildings which you can still find along the canal banks and what it was like to work on the Cut.



**Boats turning at the Hertford Union Canal entrance having unloaded timber 1965**  
© London Canal Museum

One story in the book is a notable contrast with the pomp and circumstance of the 1820 opening. An early C20th press cutting in Tower Hamlets Archives reports a group of vestrymen from Mile End's outing to inspect reports of the 'impure and offensive condition of the Regent's Canal'. This extract gives a flavour of the day:

A barge was hired & laden with sandwiches, bottled beer and vestrymen, it started from Regent's Canal Basin. Owing however to the numerous libations which were necessary to propitiate the favour of the deities of air & stream, not until the day was considerably advanced that the final 'success of the voyage' was drunk & the barge got under-way amid the enthusiastic huzzas of a crowd of boys whom the spectacle had attracted. At frequent intervals, it became necessary to empty the beer from several bottles, in order that samples

from the water might be taken for analysis.' And so it continues until Islington where: The foul air of the tunnel, the motion of the waves, or other causes, made several gentlemen extremely unwell, & two disgorged themselves involuntarily of their sandwiches.'

Some 50 years later, a canal horse driver told the tale of another horse driver who was devoted to his horse, a mare called 'Ginger'. Having collected his wages from Salmon Lane Lock on Friday, he was in the habit of going straight to the pub. Later, going up the Cut to bring a boat back, he and Ginger fell into the Cut coming through the tricky Globe (Mile End) Bridge hole. He refused to leave Ginger's side and led her to the nearest horse ramp and onto the towpath.

The East End Canal Tales is on sale at the London Canal Museum, local bookshops including Brick Lane Books, Broadway Books, Pages of Hackney, Labour and Wait, Sublime as well as on-line, priced £9.95.

A host of exhibitions, talks, open days and workshops were planned to celebrate the 200th anniversary, culminating in the East End Canal Festival in the Art Pavilion in Mile End Park on 1st and 2nd of August. Due to the national health emergency, activities to the end of May have been cancelled or postponed. We are monitoring the situation carefully with regard to the August Festival. Watch this space.

### **Carolyn Clark**

#### **NOTE TO READERS:**

Carolyn Clark wrote The Shoreditch Tales and The Lower Clapton Tales. Carolyn led the Regent's Canal Heritage Project in Shoreditch and the East End for Laburnum Boat Club from 2013-16, and the Islington Canal Project with the Young Actors Theatre Islington from 2018 supported by the National Lottery

Heritage Fund. Carolyn lives by the Hertford Union Canal in Bow.

## **Some more books from Amberley Press.**

**London's Industrial Past by Mark Amies: ISBN:978-1-4456-98021, 2020, card covers, 96 pages. £14.99**

This well illustrated book reminds us of the time when industry was London's major employer and not banks and services. When sweets and cars, toys and beer, aeroplanes and biscuits were manufactured in huge factories in and around London. I found the range extensive and the potted histories instructive. Although almost all of the companies have gone away or gone out of business, some of the buildings that once housed them have been repurposed and can still be seen. My **BIG** criticism of the book is that from an East London History Society point of view it is very west London centric, with the few eastern factories seemingly mentioned only because they had to be – after all you couldn't talk about car manufacture without Ford or confectionery without Clarnico. Even Lebus, at one time the world's largest furniture manufacturer, barely gets a mention. Maybe if the book had included chemicals, pet food, soap, plastics and canned goods we might have got something about major east London employers such as May and Baker, Spratts, Mortons, John Knight, Gibbs, BXL, Tate & Lyle and many others. How about a volume two, Amberley.

**The Escape of Jack the Ripper. The Full Truth About the Cover-up and His Flight from Justice, Jonathan Hainsworth and Christine Ward-Agius: ISBN:978-1-4456-98144, 2020, hardback, 304 pages. £20**

I usually steer well clear of Ripper books but this was offered free and the title was intriguing – “cover-up and flight from justice”!

The book is clear that the Ripper was Montague Druitt (1857-1888). Druitt, the son of a famous surgeon, a barrister, part time teacher and first-class cricketer, whose body was found in the Thames shortly after the death of Mary Jane Kelly, was definitely one of Scotland Yard's main suspects for Ripper, AFTER the ghastly events but, of course, there was no official determination. This book tells the story of how a senior police officer and a well- respected author covered up his guilt by obscuring the facts, to protect his respectable family. I am, by choice, no expert on the subject but the story holds together and the fact that the well-respected author was G.R. Sims, one of my favourite Victorian / Edwardian writers kept me going to the end.

## **A Trip down Memory Lane, King David Lane, Shadwell E1. 1962.**

My wife and I were married in 1962 and this was our first home.

The 1960's, yes I do remember them and I WAS there, was a difficult time for newlyweds with very limited means, to find somewhere to live. However, my Father asked his Landlords, the Mercer's Company, the Premier Livery Company of the City of London, which owned Estates in Stepney, whether there was any accommodation for a young couple and was told there were rooms in King David Lane, hereafter referred to as KDL, where the tenant was an elderly widow with whom we would need to negotiate a sub tenancy.

Long before the advent of Supermarkets and Shopping Centres, the East End had a

plenitude of small shops and businesses and KDL was a prime example with most of one's needs in one small Street including the Civil and Moral protection of a Police Section House opposite, formerly Shadwell Police Station, and The Salvation Army Goodwill Centre next door. In addition, there was a Mezuzah, a very small roll of parchment inside a metal case affixed to our door frame, containing Hebrew verses, presumably for the welfare of the occupants. How much safer could we be?

KDL linked 2 main thoroughfares, Cable Street and The Highway, and was traversed half way down by Juniper Street, grim densely populated tenements, known locally as Incubator Row, in fact my school mate's family of 9 lived in one of them, in comparison our living conditions in KDL were not so bad, at least we weren't overcrowded. KDL was bounded at each end by Public Houses, The Coach and Horses on the corner of The Highway, an unusually quiet and homely pub by East End Standards, whereas The Crooked Billet on the corner of Cable Street was altogether more lively with live entertainment at weekends including customer participation. In between were the numerous shops, businesses and dwellings which included: Chemists, Butcher, Baker, Grindery Dealer, Dyers and Cleaners, Greengrocers, Confectioners, Grocers, Cycle Dealers, Stepney Laundry Ltd, Drapers, Coffee Rooms, Stewed Eels Shop. Also, our yard backed on to J E Lamboll, Commercial Motor Body Builders in Juniper Street.

We lived in No. 33, in a pre-Victorian terrace which comprised Basement/Cellar above which was a coal hole in the pavement, Ground and First Floors, plus Attic/Garret, and a tiny back yard with outside Loo.

This 'Bon Repos' was in the quiet half of the Lane, quiet, that is except for the 'Sally Army' next door giving us a rousing rendering on

Sunday mornings of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and other stirring hymns, and after "chucking out" time at weekends when patrons of The Crooked Billet would congregate beneath the lamplight outside our window to 'conduct' their good nights before going home.

My wife Patricia and I both worked in 'The Square Mile' and found it just as quick, if not quicker, to walk to work rather than Bus, also more interesting, less crowded and saved fares. We went along The Highway, starting at St. Paul's Shadwell with St. James Ratcliffe, overlooking Shadwell Basin. Captain James Cook and Mrs. Prenzlau were parishioners, John Wesley preached here, and Jane Randolph, mother of Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the USA was baptised here.

We then passed numerous pubs, all now gone, St George in the East church with a lovely secluded garden containing the ruins of a very small Museum and Nature Reserve, The Royal Mint, long since 'laundered' to South Wales, Trinity House, granted by Royal Charter In 1514 to regulate shipping, The Tower of London, and All Hallows by the Tower, the oldest Church in London, founded 675 AD as part of Barking Abbey, one of the ruins that Henry knocked about a bit.

William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania was baptised here in 1644. Admiral Penn, Williams father, kept Fire Watch here with Samuel Pepys during the great Fire of London. John Quincey Adams, 6th President of the USA was married here. Thomas Moore and John Fisher were 'dealt with' here after 'getting it in the neck' on Tower Hill. Albert Schweitzer recorded organ music here. Adolph Hitler virtually destroyed it in 1940.

Of lesser fame is the Church of HM Revenue and Customs in nearby Customs House.

Back to Bon Repos:-Our Landlady, although only a tenant, had a striking physical

resemblance to Queen Victoria, and also always wore 'Widow's Weeds', and unfortunately for us, also shared her autocratic temperament and despite her diminutive size was a dominatrix. Mrs Prenzlau, or Princlow, the latter probably anglicised as Mr. P was of Prussian descent. His trade was Breeches Manufacturer, specialising in military uniforms and his Workshop/Factory had been the 1st Floor which was to be our Flat. We decided Prenzlau was more authentic so nicknamed Mrs P, Prenny.

The first floor was empty except for floor to ceiling cupboards each side of the fireplace in which we found some fascinating items including:- A leather bound and beautifully illustrated volume in pristine condition of "The Great War", which was not as is now regarded WW1, but The Franco Prussian War of 1870/1. Some charming photographs, including a horse-drawn 'Hayride' with the party immaculately dressed in their Victorian finery. A silk Top Hat, As new and still in it's pristine box. Amazed at our find we asked Prenny if she wanted to keep them? She said No! It's all rubbish Throw it all away.

This large room, which would now be described as 'Studio/Flat', was our shared Living/Bedroom, fortunately our 3 Piece Suite from Waring and Gillow, our only possession of any value, included a Put-u-Up, whereby the settee was converted to a bed.

The rear room was converted to a kitchen/diner with water plumbed from the mains in the back yard with copper pipes running externally up the rear wall, and despite lagging would regularly freeze as the Winter of 1962/3 was the coldest for 200 years, lasting several weeks and known as 'The Big Freeze'. We also had a new electric supply installed with our own meter.

I still have our first LEB Bill totalling 17/2d..Seventeen Shillings and 2 Old pence,

approx.86p....of which 16/10d was the Standing Charge, so we had used 3 Units @ 1.375d per unit at a cost of 4d....4 old pennies, hardly a shock!

We had no fridge, heating was by an open fire, supplemented by electric and paraffin heaters as required. Gas had already been laid on by North Thames Gas Board who installed our own meter, and we often kept the gas cooker on for added warmth.

Having made our flat habitable, we did not move in until after our Wedding and Honeymoon. Annoyingly, when we got there the cupboards were bare, not only did we regret not taking them when dismissed as rubbish, but were upset that Prenny had been in our flat in our absence, our relationship with Queen Vic did not get off to a good start. WE were not amused.

Following the birth of our son Peter in The East London Maternity Hospital, we urged Prenny to let us have the unused Attic as a proper bedroom. She reluctantly agreed with provisos. It was a good move, being a cosy Dormer with sloping walls and sufficient space for a double bed and a cot. We wondered why it had not been offered before.

Later I was provided with a mortgage by my Employers and we migrated to the 'Wilds' of Essex....Hornchurch, where for some time we could not sleep at night due to 'The sound of silence'

Our flat was passed on to my youngest sister Teresa and Brother in Law Robert who were later rehoused following 'Slum Clearance' I must say the first 28 years of my life spent in East London have been truly memorable.

**John Clark**

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## KEARLEY AND TONGE

As a kid living in Bromley-by-Bow, I had the ambition to become a long-distance lorry driver. This was influenced by the 6 wheeled lorries that passed up my street that were the Eddie Stobart's of their day. In particular there was one that had the words International Stores in large letters down its side that thundered back to their depot in Ordell Road, Bow, having been on the road for two or three days. To achieve this, I had to start out as a van boy and so with this in mind I found myself, when old enough, applying and getting a job with a transport company that under contract supplied the vehicles for Kearley and Tonge, wholesale provision merchants in Whitechapel. This was around the year 1940/1. This was the first of three stages, Van Boy, Drivers Mate then a Driver on the big stuff-- the ultimate goal.

You began your 'apprenticeship' with the four wheeled opened back two-ton Fords, that worked locally. Then at the age of 18 you 'graduated' to the next stage up which would mean you were now going long distance with a bigger six wheeled Leyland truck and possible nights out. As a Van Boy, your job was to be custodian of the goods being carried in the back. After the goods had been delivered you could then join the driver in the cab.

I eventually had a regular driver and at the start of the day we used to meet at the coffee stall in Mitre Square where Kearley and Tonge had their provisional warehouse, and with other drivers sharing their knowledge, he would organise his routes according to the deliveries we had. The deliveries were of groceries to corner shops, hotel kitchens and some very big houses.

The Two Ton Ford was a simple vehicle, there was no ignition key, just an On/Off switch and a starter button. There were no side windows in the driving cab. It was easy to drive and this

you learned when you sat in the cab with the driver and he would, on quiet stretches of road, let you lean across and hold the steering wheel. All part of the learning curve.

We were making our last delivery in the Ealing area to a corner shop and amongst the deliveries to be off loaded was a large sack of washing soda. The shop- keeper asked for it to be dropped off at the side door and this I thought, I was capable of doing, So, whilst the driver and the shop owner were checking the delivery notes, I went outside got in the cab and started up. I put the gear-stick in reverse intending to make a manoeuvre that would put me right to pull forward to the side door. Full of confidence---but lacking driving skills--- I began the move---It was then that I suddenly realised, I had never driven in reverse, all my 'tuition' had been when we were going forward, HOW DO I STOP THIS THING. By this time, I had mounted the pavement, knocked down a tree, demolished the wall that surrounded the front garden, and proceeded back across the flowerbeds towards the front window of the house. By this time the driver hearing the commotion was out of the shop like a bat out of hell. He threw himself into the cab grabbed the handbrake, the engine stalled and the van came to a halt. As you can imagine a few choice words were said in my direction. The van had stopped about 9 inches from the front of the house. I remember this elderly lady coming to the door and saying, "Oh my poor garden". From then on, my memory is somewhat vague except to say that on getting back to the depot I was told to report to the office in Ordell Road the following morning.

Next morning, not knowing what to expect, I knocked on the door marked OFFICE, introduced myself and was promptly handed a small brown envelope with my earnings plus my insurance cards. No shaking of hands or anything, just the 'friendly' words of "Sod Off" or words to that effect. I think it must have

been at that point that my earlier ambitions of becoming a 'Drivers Mate' began to fade, for I never was--ever. I am not aware of the outcome of this episode; I was never questioned by the police or anyone so I guess I put it down to experience.

Many, many, years later, I did become a driver---I bought my first car, a Ford Anglia through the courtesy of the Ford Motor Company Dagenham with whom I had become an employee, and was so for close on 35 Years.



A 12-ton Thornycroft. 1933.



Foot Note: Kearley and Tonge, founded in 1876, was a Tea Importing Company, their head office being in Mitre Square Whitechapel. The company diversified into Provision Wholesaling and by 1890 had 200 branches known as International Stores. Their transport delivery vehicles were under contract with International Transport who had their depot in Bow, at Ordell and Tredegar Road. The garage facility was responsible for the repair and maintenance of 137 vehicles, plus trailers.

## George Donovan

## Cheers

I was thinking the other day how pubs really played a big part in the history of three of my male ancestors i.e. my Great Grandfather and both of my Grandfathers.

Ale has been consumed since the Bronze Age as it was safer to drink than the water at this time.

During the time of my Grandfathers, the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s the East End of London were awash with pubs and these weren't just places to drink, but were also the social hub and the focus of the community. I am sure that there wasn't much that got past the pub's regulars.

The landlords and barmen would also build a relationship with their regular customers, especially if they were older, so if a regular didn't turn up one night someone would be dispatched to go round and check-up that the person was ok.

So to the men going to the pub was like going to a club where they would talk, play darts, maybe billiards, dominoes and shove ha'penny.

At this time not many women frequented pubs, so it was often a way of husbands to escape her indoors.

Often the pubs were divided into three parts: the public bar the common section of a bar, not as exclusive, as quiet, or as comfortably furnished as the saloon or private section. Behind the bar on shelves were usually rows of glasses, bottles, cigarettes and boxes of matches. As smoking was allowed at the time the wallpaper used to be a yellowish colour. Pubs at the time would have served any or all of the following: porter beer, mild ale, bitter, pale ale, strong ale, Indian pale ale or barley wine. And sometimes draught spirits and wine. In the East End and around the docks people often asked for Wompo which was a name for the best ale.

It was common practice for men to start off drinking a pint and then getting gills (a half a pint). They used to pour the gill into the pint mug.

In my family we had a pub landlady who was my Grandfather Christopher Kilbourn's sister Emily. My Great Aunt, Emily Susan Kilbourn was born on 24th January 1890 at 25 Moye Street, Bethnal Green and was one of nine children. Her parents were the rather regally named Charles Augustus and Emily Susan Kilbourn. Charles had many occupations over the years: A Coffee Dealer, Coke Dealer, Butcher and the one that he was best known for, an Ice Dealer.

On the 12th March 1911 Emily married Arthur Edward Keep (1890-1939) at St. Mathews Church, Bethnal Green. They went onto have two children who were Emily Harriett Keep (1913-1999) and Arthur William Keep (1916-1918).

Arthur's occupation on their wedding certificate was a Carman mineral water manufacturer and he continued doing this until

1918. Maybe whilst he was in the first world war he decided to change roles slightly and by 1926 he and Emily are shown as landlord and landlady of the King Harry pub at 253 Cambridge Heath Road, Bethnal Green. This pub has long since closed and now you wouldn't even know a pub had been there as it's a block of flats with shops at pavement level.

The next pub that Emily and Arthur ran was The Good Intent at 12 Mansford Street, Bethnal Green.

Sadly this pub too was to close and in later years was demolished and made into flats. I have not managed to find any photos at all of this pub.



(Photo: Emily and Arthur's first pub - King Harry Pub. Photo from the site The Lost Pubs Project <http://www.closedpubs.co.uk/index.html>)

The Good Intent pub was in the next street to where my Grandfather Christopher and his family used to live at St. Peters Street in Bethnal Green. My Grandfather sometimes went to his sister's pub, but also used to go to the pub in his street.

The Oxford Arms was known as "our pub" in the family at the time as it was in their street and this was where the all the births and weddings in the street were celebrated, plus

where old departed friends had a glass raised to them.

The Oxford Arms also no longer exists as it was destroyed during the bombing in the Second World War, but thankfully there is a photo of this pub.



(Photo: Oxford Arms, 77 St Peter Street, Bethnal Green - photo from <https://pubshistory.com>)

To get an inkling of what St Peter Street and the area was like at the time I recommend that you read "A Bethnal Green Memoir" by Derek Houghton which is really good, especially as my family get a mention on Page 20.

When I was a child, I often used to walk past a pub called The Brunswick Arms in Well Street, Hackney when my family went shopping there. At the time my Dad used to sometimes say that one of our family used to run that pub. I never thought anything of it at the time, but when I got interested in ancestry try as I might I never found out who this relative was. I thought it was perhaps Emily and Arthur, but it was Emily's in laws that ran it. So in a way my Dad was right and as with some other family tales when they are passed down the generations they are only correct in part. I recently found that Arthur's father was William Thomas Keep and he was shown as a

mineral water manufacturer on his wedding certificate. Later though he ran a pub and this pub turned out to be the Brunswick Arms. I found this on his will in 1928 which showed his address as 99 Riviera Drive, Southchurch and of The Brunswick Arms, 25 Brunswick Street, Hackney Road. William left all his effects to his wife Amelia Harriet Keep which were the sum of £1713 6d.

Amelia didn't survive her husband that long and by 28th November 1928 she too had died and her address is also shown as the Brunswick Arms. She left everything in her will to her two sons Thomas and Arthur who were shown as beer retailers and she left £1573 17s 2d



(Photo: Brunswick Arms just as I remember it from walking past as a child - <https://whatpub.com> )

The Keep family continued as publicans right up until Arthurs death in 1939 when in his will he left Emily the sum of £1025 14s.

My next pub that used to be pointed out to me by my Mum when I was a little girl and we were shopping in Hoxton Market, was The Admiral Keppel. This was a pub used by my Great Grandfather George John Henry Tolladay.

He liked to be called John and was born in Haggerston in 1884 and then moved about the Hoxton area. He married Eleanor Harrison and



she was born in Crondall Street in Hoxton in 1882. He started out as a Costermonger then switched jobs to become a dock labourer / general labourer. My Mum and Aunts remember when they were young children meeting him outside the pub when they were shopping with my Nan and said if they did see him he would buy them some little treat from the market.



(Photo: My Great Grandfather George John Henry Tolladay)

In the above photo when he and some mates were out on a beano, maybe from the pub shown below, my Great Grandfather is the first person standing on the left. I would say he was in his late 20s / early 30s at the time.



(Photo: The Admiral Keppel pub, 232 Hoxton Street, Shoreditch - photo from <https://pubshistory.com>)

John's eldest son was my Grandad John Charles Tolladay who was born on 21st October 1903 at Haggerston.

When I was growing up the family knew my Granddad as Arch, which was a nickname that my Dad gave him, as Granddad could often be found the worse for wear as he liked a few sherbets.

A few years after he married my Nan Emily, the family moved to Eastdown House which is opposite Down Park in Hackney. During the Second World War and for a couple of years afterwards a lot of the open space in Hackney Downs Park, or as we called it in the family over the Downs, was divided up into allotments as part of the Dig for Victory campaign.

My Granddad had one of these allotments and by all accounts he was really green fingered. My Aunt Shirley clearly remembers as a little girl going along with him to his allotment and on the way home Granddad sometimes used to pop into The Three Sisters pub at the junction of Queensdown Road and Cricketfield Road. One of his mates used to run the pub and his name was Harry Twining.



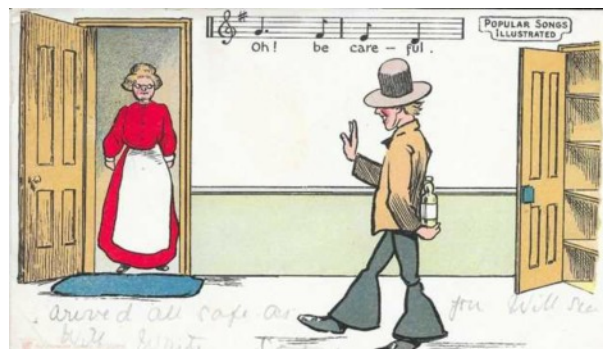
(Photo: The Three Sisters, 35 Queensdown Road, Clapton - photo from <https://pubshistory.com>)

Shirley would be left outside with a bag of crisps and a bottle of pop. By the time he would come out of the pub there wouldn't be many vegetables left as he would give most of them away to his cronies, so my poor old Nan rarely used to see much of this produce unless one of her older children were dispatched to collect some of it. This pub is still there today, but now has the trendier name of The Star at Hackney Downs, up until fairly recently though if you looked on the outside there was still a faint sign of the Three Sisters picture right where it was in the photo above. Unfortunately when I last went to the area I noticed that it had been taken down and replaced. Another piece of social history vanished.

My Granddad used to collect old postcards, normally of boats and local Parks, but he also had a couple of drink related cards and pub related items in his collection which I have included in this article.



Postcard sent on the 2nd May 1904 and sent to Alf and says "Arrived safely at 2pm all is well Mabel and Dad". Alf lived at 74 Blackpool Street in Burton on Trent.



Postcard sent on 4th September 1903 to a Miss Smith c/o Mrs Mackie who lived at Struan, Bearsden near Glasgow. The only message was written on the front of the card where it says arrived all safe etc.



Postcard sent on the 15th August 1904 to Master B. Ferris and says "What do you think of this old toff? Hope you are enjoying yourself as much as he is. With love May". B. Ferris may have been on holiday as the address on the card was 22 Marine Terrace, Margate, Kent.



A couple of Guinness Beer mats  
A 7 up mat advertising the 1965 film The Intelligence Men and a 1958 Guinness wallet calendar

My Nan and Grandad divorced after the war and he moved away from the Hackney Downs area to Stamford Road, Dalston where he used to frequent the nearby pubs. His favourite one though was the De Beauvoir Arms in his road. Well after he died the pub changed its name to the Trolley Stop, but in about 2011 it was refurbished as flats.

If you look on the outside of the building today you can still see the old De Beauvoir name in the ironwork



(Photo De Beauvoir Arms / Trolley Stop – photo from <http://www.closedpubs.co.uk>)



(Photo: My Granddad John Charles Tolladay – singing at the De Beauvoir Arms Stamford Road at Dalston in the late 1970s. The woman in front of him doesn't look too impressed by his singing ability though.)



(Photo De Beauvoir Arms / Trolley Stop as it looks today as flats.



The old pub name can still be seen above the doorway to the flats in the old iron work.

Today pubs are still part of our heritage, so let's hope that not too many more close, as once they are gone they are gone for good.

**Annette Kilbourn**

**We must apologise to Annette, for losing a number of the images from her Horse Power article in the previous issue of the Newsletter. If I can, I will put a complete copy on the ELHS web site.**

**Finally, I hope that you all stay safe and well. The East End has survived many crises!**

**Philip**