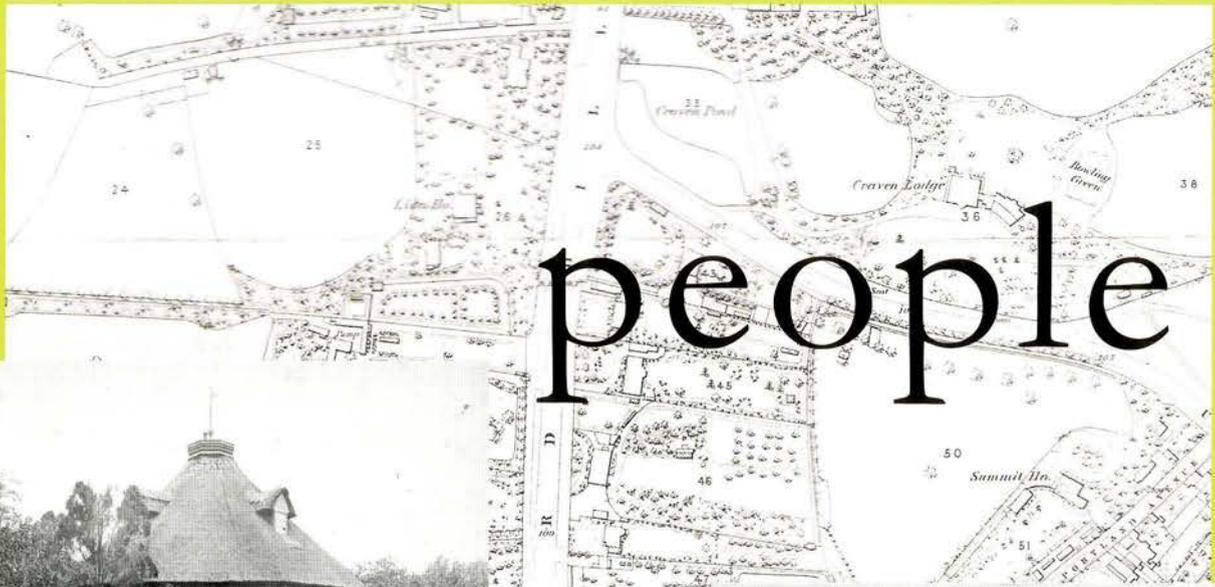
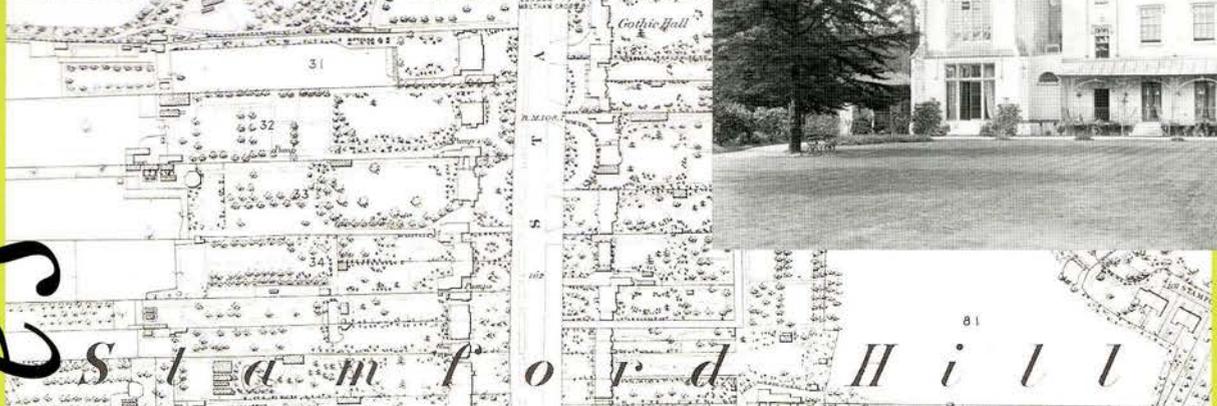


Hackney *History*

VOLUME EIGHTEEN



people



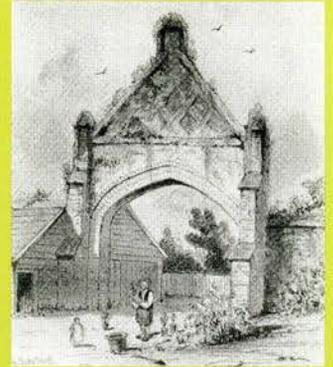
places



Hackney *History*

In this issue -

- how Stoke Newington laid claim to early grandees
- Shoreditch Church's famous bells
- mid-19th century middle class families of Stamford Hill
- physical resistance to the Salvation Army
- Laburnum Street School, from foundation to closure



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Abbreviations used in the notes

HA Hackney Archives

HKG Hackney and Kingsland Gazette

LMA London Metropolitan Archives

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London unless otherwise indicated.

The cult of celebrity in 18th century Stoke Newington



Steve Kirby

Laying claim to courtiers

It is 1700. The settlement of Stoke Newington clings, at the eastern end of Church Street, to the great Roman axis of Ermine Street – the A10. The village is braced for flux. To the west, the old Tudor manor house has just come down, and land is being parcelled for brick-built mansions. The rich are coming, up the hill from London: merchants, writers, men of favour. But for now, Church Street remains a patchwork of scattered wooden cottages, backed by dirt and pasture. Notable amongst these relics is an aged timber house, set back from the south side of the street behind the Falcon Tavern.¹ It is described in Sir Walter Besant's *Fascination of London* series as

A very old house, whose gables can just be seen from the top of a passing omnibus. This is in the last stage of decrepit old age.²

By then the house was abandoned, awaiting demolition. We can suppose people were saddened by its demise, since the building was prominent in local folklore. It was known through the 18th century both as the oldest house in the village, and 'Sir Walter Raleigh's House'.

There is no record that the great personality of Elizabethan England owned a property in Stoke Newington, or that he even visited the parish. But people enjoyed the notion - the 18th century equivalent of 'I heard Stewart Lee was in Spence bakery this morning ...'

This early cult of celebrity was not peculiar to Stoke Newington. An equivalent Raleigh fable attached



Stoke Newington from the north west: after a mid-18th century engraving

itself to a house on the site of the Old Queen's Head pub in Islington. Nor peculiar to this age: like all *proper* English villages Stoke Newington had its Oliver Cromwell legend. The Lord Protector was believed to have visited his daughter on Church Street,³ and as late as 1855 one proud house in the parish still boasted a front door knocker that he was supposed to have rapped on to ask for directions.⁴

For Stoke Newington though, this flirting with folklore and *Elizabethana* was just for starters. Why have Stewart Lee, when you can have, say, John Cleese or Eric Morecambe? And so the village laid its claim to Queen Elizabeth I herself.

The road that follows the eastern edge of Clissold Park remains today Queen Elizabeth's Walk. The street's early predecessor was a pathway, bordered by elm trees. It was laid out around 1700 as a kind of pleasure garden for the residents of the grand Church Row terrace, which had replaced

the old manor house.⁵ Quickly the path appeared in cartoons and local maps as 'Queen Elizabeth's Walk'. This choice of name was no casual homage to a recent and revered monarch. In fact, it was commonly believed that the queen had visited the old manor house, and must have strolled in its grounds. The name was intended literally: for the people of Stoke Newington, to walk amongst those elms was to walk in the queen's own footsteps.

Two strands of the story

In the 18th century, this local cult of Elizabeth separated into two distinct strands. The first, older and more sensible, stuck with the queen's visit to the old manor house of Stoke Newington when it was in the possession of John Dudley,⁶ a distant cousin of her courtier and favourite, Sir Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. This branch peaks with a gift - a 'jewel of great value' presented from the queen's own person to John's daughter Anne Dudley.⁷ The second strand, wilder and more

prone to hysterics, conceived of covert visits by a younger, *Princess* Elizabeth during the reign of her Catholic sister, Queen Mary.

We can say that the manor house tradition has stood the test of time, since it survives in more recent histories.⁸ As recently as 1999, its footprint was being used for historical myth-making about an illegitimate child of Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester.⁹ Earlier, in 1954, during repairs to bomb damage in St Mary's old church, a new stained glass window was installed depicting the queen. And a rental apartment is currently being advertised in the postcode as 'Queen Elizabeth's Penthouse'.¹⁰ But there are difficulties with this story, that could be taken as weaknesses. The Stoke Newington Dudley, a brewer by trade, was far too inconsequential a subject to have expected a royal visit in his own right. And it is hard to believe that the reigning queen would have found it necessary or fitting to meet her favourite, Leicester, at some halfway house. Some histories take a shortcut here, by conflating the two Dudleys, putting the manor house in the direct possession of the Earl of Leicester.¹¹ And one ignores them entirely, declaring the building a 'royal residence'.¹²

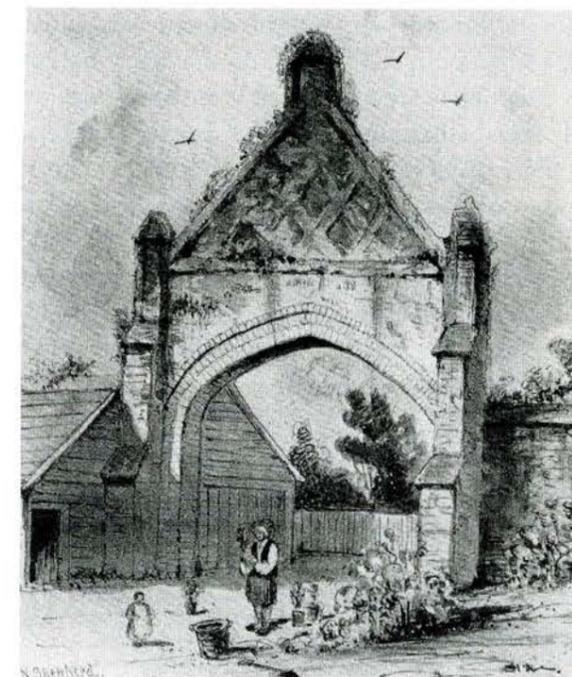
The Old Gateway

We should pause here to remember one particular topographical feature, which in the 18th century became a lightning-rod for all fascination with Queen Elizabeth I. It was the old eastern gateway to Stoke Newington Manor House, which stood on land behind the present day Fox Reformed, between Edwards Lane and Barn Street. This high arched gate survived its manor house by almost two complete centuries¹³ - in stages blocked in by bricks, overgrown and by the end incorporated into the playground wall of the Manor House boarding school attended by Edgar Allan Poe.¹⁴ It is captured in ramshackle disarray in a watercolour of 1841 at the British Museum.¹⁵

The ruin was known locally as the Old Gateway, the Ancient Gateway and the Tudor Gateway.¹⁶ The manor house itself having been razed, the

gate remained the closest physical link between the 18th century village and the queen. More names followed - captured in two engravings of that period - titled 'Queen Elizabeth's gateway'¹⁷ and, most fancifully, the 'entrance to Queen Elizabeth's Palace'.¹⁸ But even these elaborations find a back door to the truth - if the queen did indeed visit the manor house, then she would certainly have passed through this, its grand entrance on the north side of Church Street.

If exaggeration makes this tradition look like early urban myth-making, then it is rescued by a few historians who point only to the facts. The most sensible case for a royal visit to Stoke Newington is that the manor house served as a convenient and familiar halt on Elizabeth's royal progresses (the monarch's summer trips outside of the capital to see or be seen by her subjects).¹⁹ Mary Hill Cole even gives us the precise dates that Elizabeth was in the village - 23 May 1575 and 14 May 1577.²⁰ She also proposes a third and final visit in April 1588, when the lease on the manor house had passed to Sir Roger Townshend, veteran of the fleet that defeated the *Armada*.



'Queen Elizabeth's gateway' by F. N. Shepherd



Queen Elizabeth's Walk, as seen in 1822 by Jane Smith

The princess's hiding-place?

The old church of St Mary, on the north side of Church Street, was built in 1563 by Dudley's manorial predecessor, William Patten. His initials and the date can still be seen on the oldest part of the building, nearest the road. It remains today the only Elizabethan church in all of London, and one of the earliest not to have been converted from a place of Roman Catholic worship. But before it there was an older medieval church of 'stone, flint and pebbles'.²¹ This earlier church was reputed to have contained a pew at which the Princess Elizabeth sat to pray during the reign of her sister, the Catholic Mary Tudor.²²

This branch of the Elizabeth cult supposes itself older, since it deals with the time before her accession to the throne. But it is almost certainly a corruption of the manor house tradition, overlaid with a topical yarn of religious intrigue and Tudor-era plotting.

The French ambassador had his residence in the village at the time, and it was said that any malcontent of a certain standing was welcome to an audience – the princess perhaps included.²³ But we must look again to the 18th century for Stoke Newington's most flamboyant legend, namely that the Princess Elizabeth was hidden away in the village for safekeeping during her sister's reign, when the country had swung back to Catholicism and Elizabeth represented a very real touchpoint for the Protestant cause. There is even a Rapunzel-esque brick tower for the princess to be concealed inside. This high stronghold was recalled by two 'old gentlemen' of the village still alive in 1763 as 'part of the offices, or perhaps a pleasure house belonging to the mansion'.²⁴ One of them ('a respectable inhabitant of the parish') positively recalls the old staircase leading up to the very room where Elizabeth had been concealed. The building itself existed, captured alongside St. Mary's Church in an 18th century etching of the village.²⁵ But the 'legend' relies too heavily on the notion of the Dudleys as willing conspirators, and they had no connection with the manor house until 1571, a good stint after Elizabeth's coronation.

Grisly tales

By the middle of the 19th century the wildest stories had died away in oral tradition, as Elizabeth herself disappeared into the past. The village was, by then, busy with Cromwell. The last word goes to two ancient dames of the village who, when asked in 1855 if they recalled anything of brick towers or French ambassadors, could only recall two grisly stories relating to Queen Elizabeth's Walk in the previous century.²⁶ The first recalls 'Chicken Joe', an 18th century masked highwayman, hanged on Stamford Hill for the murder of a servant on the Walk. And the other, a 'young gentleman in handsome costume', who hanged himself from the 'topmost bough' of one of the elm trees there, and whose body was laid out in the courtyard of the Falcon Tavern, beneath the high gables of 'Walter Raleigh's House'.

Notes

All web references are given as at 3 February 2014.

1. The Falcon Tavern occupied a site between present day Nando's and Gujarat House.
2. Walter Besant, *Hackney and Stoke Newington* (Fascination of London series, 1908).
3. She was even believed to be buried in the village, although the entire legend is now discredited. Bridget Cromwell's husband, Charles Fleetwood, did in fact build Fleetwood House (on the site of the present fire station), but only after her death and his remarriage. We can trace the story to a parish burial record of a different Bridget Fleetwood (see William Robinson's *History and antiquities of the parish of Stoke Newington*, (1820), and Besant, above).
4. Revd. Thomas Jackson, *A lecture on Stoke Newington* (1855).
5. Church Row occupied the site of the present day Town Hall from the mid to late 1690s until 1936.
6. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/tudorhackney/localhistory/lochn.asp>
7. *Biographica Britannica: or the lives of the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain from the earliest ages down to the present times*, vol. 6 (1763).
8. <http://snobsvslobs.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/from-15th-century-to-present-day.html>
9. <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/GEN-MEDIEVAL/1999-12/0945501805>. The Earl of Leicester did in fact have an illegitimate son by another woman, and probably sent him to Stoke Newington to be raised (<http://www.waynelfletetower.co.uk/synopsis/robert-dudley-the-carl-of-leicester/>)
10. <http://www.homeaway.co.uk/p1033797#summary>
11. Besant, 1908.
12. David Bartlett, *London by day and night* (1852).
13. The old manor house (on the site of the present day Town Hall and Public Library) was demolished in 1695. The gateway was finally taken down in 1892 to make way for new cottages on Edwards Lane. An heroic photographer captured it for all history a few years before (HA P10907).
14. William Fearing Gill, *The life of Edgar Allan Poe* (1877).
15. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=683180&objectId=3206767&partId=1
16. Mary Elizabeth Phillips, *Edgar Allan Poe the man* (1926).
17. LMA, Collage no. 23337.
18. HA P11589.
19. James M. Sutton, *Materialising space at an early modern prodigy house: the Cecils at Theobalds 1564-1607* (2004); Mary Hill Cole, *The portable Queen Elizabeth I and the politics of ceremony* (1999); John Nichols, *The progresses and public processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 2 (2014).
20. Cole, *The portable Queen Elizabeth*.
21. Robinson, *Stoke Newington*.
22. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45256>
23. Jackson, *Lecture*.
24. Robinson, *Stoke Newington*.
25. British Museum, collection number: 1927,1126.1.25.64.
26. Jackson, *Lecture*.

The bells of Shoreditch

Sally England

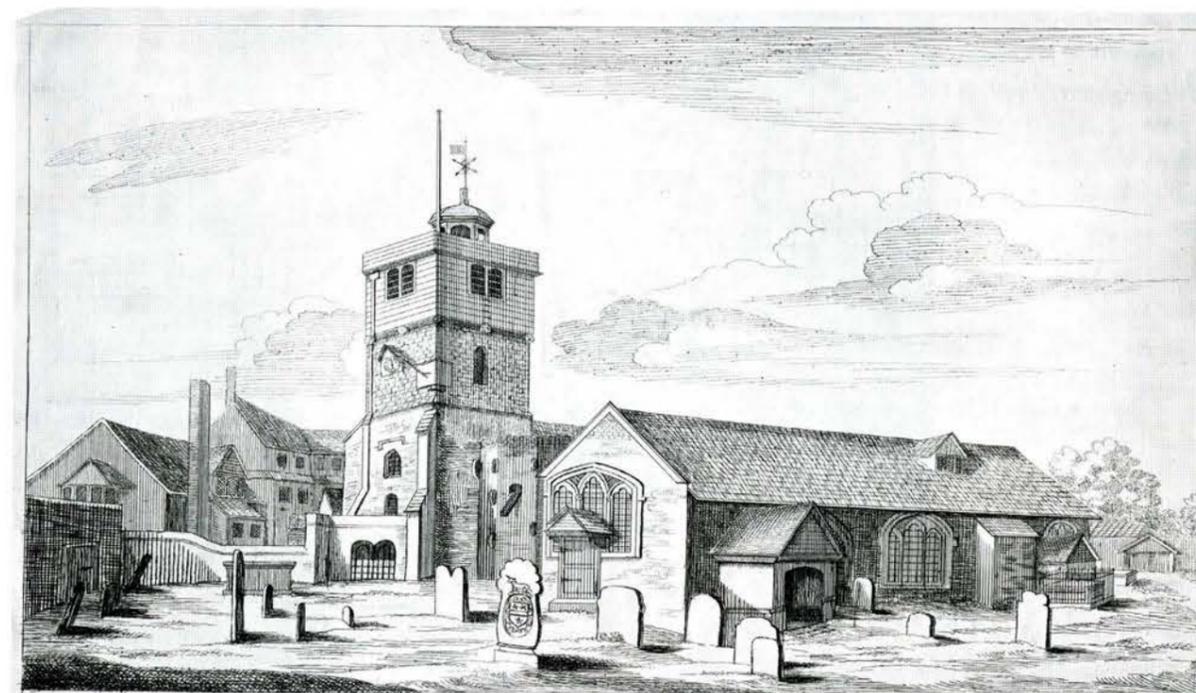
2

The ringing-in of Christmas and the New Year by church bells is an old tradition, and one Hackney church that always joins in is St. Leonard's, the parish church of Shoreditch on the corner of Shoreditch High Street and Hackney Road, which retains a very fine peal of bells.

Although the present building only dates from 1740, there has been a church on the site at least since Norman times, as it is known that a vicar was appointed to it in 1185. This early church was built from chalk and rubble that was later replaced by brick and stone, with a tiled roof and wooden ceiling.

Little is known about the original bells that hung in the square tower at the west end of the church. John Dawson of Hoxton recorded in his diary, now held in Hackney Archives, that on 11 August 1733 'I see Shoreditch bells, which are five in number, the tenor weighs about 18 cwts.'¹ In his 'History and antiquities of the parish of Saint Leonard Shoreditch' of 1798, Sir Henry Ellis noted that 'in one of Queen Elizabeth's progresses to Enfield, she was much pleased with Shorditch bells; by which we may suppose them not to have been an unpleasant ring, as her Majesty had some taste for music', so the bells must have been in place before Elizabeth I's death in March 1603.²

Ellis also states that around 1713 'a high wind carried off a part of one of the corner of the steeple ... so that two of the bells might be entirely seen', while James Peller Malcolm recorded in his *Londinium redivium* of 1803 that in 1716 'the walls of the old church rent asunder, with a frightful sound, during Divine service, and a considerable quantity of mortar falling, the congregation fled on all sides to the



A South West Prospect of S^t Leonard Shore-ditch in Middlesex. Lens: delineavit y^{fecit} July 1735

The old church, drawn and engraved by B. Lens in 1735

doors, where they severely injured each other by their efforts to escape'.³

It was not until 1733 that a committee was at last formed to inspect the church and decide what to do about its poor state of repair. An Act of Parliament was passed two years later authorising the old church to be pulled down and a replacement to be built. Demolition work began in May 1736 and the new church, designed by George Dance the elder, began to take shape.

The new church had a peal of eight bells cast in 1739 by Thomas Lester of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry at a cost of £800 5s, with a further two bells made by Lester and Pack of Whitechapel added in 1765, and two more treble bells in 1807.⁴

By the end of the 19th century the bells were silent, being out of tune, but were retuned by Warners of Spitalfields and rang out again for the first time in 20 years on 8 November 1913, when several hundred ringers turned out for the event. More repair work was undertaken in the late 1960s by John Taylor

and Co. of Loughborough, and at the same time the Drapers' Company donated another bell. A crack in the 10th bell was successfully welded in the 1980s but another crack had appeared by 1990 and the only solution was for Taylors to recast the entire peal. Today the bells are noted for their excellent tonal quality.⁵

The St. Leonard's bells found fame by their inclusion in the well-known old nursery rhyme and singing game, 'Oranges and Lemons':

You owe me ten shillings,
Say the bells of St. Helen's.
When will you pay me?
Say the bells of Old Bailey.
When I grow rich,
Say the bells of Shoreditch.

Quite what the original meaning of the words was is now not at all clear. Folklore specialists Iona and Peter Opie traced various theories, most of them bloodthirsty ones relating less to the list of churches and more to the macabre final lines:

St Leonard's bells awaiting repair at the workshops of Warner, Spelman Street, Spitalfields. They were down for repair between 1875 and 1913.



Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
Here comes a chopper to chop off your head.
Chop chop chop chop
The last man's dead!

Suggestions include that the song refers to child sacrifice, to Henry VIII's many wives and the beheading of two of them, or that it describes public executions. However the 'chop' lines, along with the reference to Shoreditch, don't appear in the earliest version of the poem, which dates from around 1744:

When will you pay me,
Ring ye Bells at ye Old Bailey,
When I am Rich,
Ring ye Bells at Fleetditch...⁶

London's largest underground river, the Fleet, which runs from Hampstead Heath to Blackfriars, was finally completely covered over during the later 1760s, so perhaps that was when Shoreditch found its way into the poem, being a far better rhyme for 'rich' than 'Fleet Market', which replaced the now subterranean Fleet Ditch.

It would be lovely if the bells of St. Leonard's had been mentioned in just one poem, but in fact they have appeared in four, the others being far less well known, with two of them relating to the activities of societies of bell-ringers.

The Rambling Club of Ringers was founded in the 1700s by Holborn clockmaker, William Laughton, who wrote a history of the club in verse, the Shoreditch section of which covers seven stanzas. Only the last two concern the bells and the patterns or 'changes' that the Club rang, though the whole poem suggests that however good a bell ringer Laughton might have been, he was not a good poet...

Grandsire went first, old double next,
Simons, and new Doubles were the rest.
The peal of bells are not extra ornary
For some are very ornary.

They'd be mutch better if they had
A good second and third, for those are bad.
The other three are not bad bells,
For pretty well they toll'd their tales.

The mention of five bells and also Laughton's description elsewhere in the poem of the church being 'old and ruined' and the glass windows 'all decayed by time' show that it was the old church of St. Leonard's that the Club visited.⁷

The new church, with its increased number of bells, became the headquarters of another bell-ringing society, the Cumberland Youths. The name 'Cumberland' was taken from William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, the second son of George

their rivals, the College Youths, the Society had rung 12,000 changes Treble Bob Royal, the greatest number in that method every completed. To mark the occasion one John Titchborn was moved to verse:

Come Rings all and view this Church
Within the Steeple Door
Twelve thousand Oxford Treble Bob
Was Rang in Eighty Four
In Hours Nine and Minutes five
The Cumberlands did compleat
And on the Twenty Seventh of March
The College Youths they Beat
Success unto the Cumberlands
Wherever they do go
That they may always have Success
To Beat there haughty foe.

St. Leonard's is still one of the three principal towers used by the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths.⁸

The final poem takes us back to a time when Shoreditch was still quite a rural suburb. It was written by Joseph Dane who worked at St. Leonard's as 'steeple-keeper and Ringer of the Five and Eight o'Clock Bell' and also as 'Steeple-Keeper of the New Church at Hoxton', that is St. John the Baptist, Hoxton, completed in 1826. Dane's poem was 'humbly presented to all my worthy Masters and Mistresses of the Parish':

Most worthy Sirs, accept of this Address
In artless lines, my duty to express;
To greet my worthy Masters, one and all,
Inform them how my Bell doth rise and fall,
Both morn and eve, their servants do remind
Of their just duty due to masters kind,
At five at morn my bell is put on end,
Which warns them all their business to attend;
Tradesmen of all sorts, labourers and all,
Jump out of bed, soon as my bell doth call,
The pretty Milk Maids, dress'd so neat and clean,
With yoke and pails quite cheerful they are seen;
The jolly Dyers, Carpenters also,
Bricklayers and Smiths, all to their business go;
With Porters too – and likewise Market Folks
In groups assemble, crack their harmless jokes;

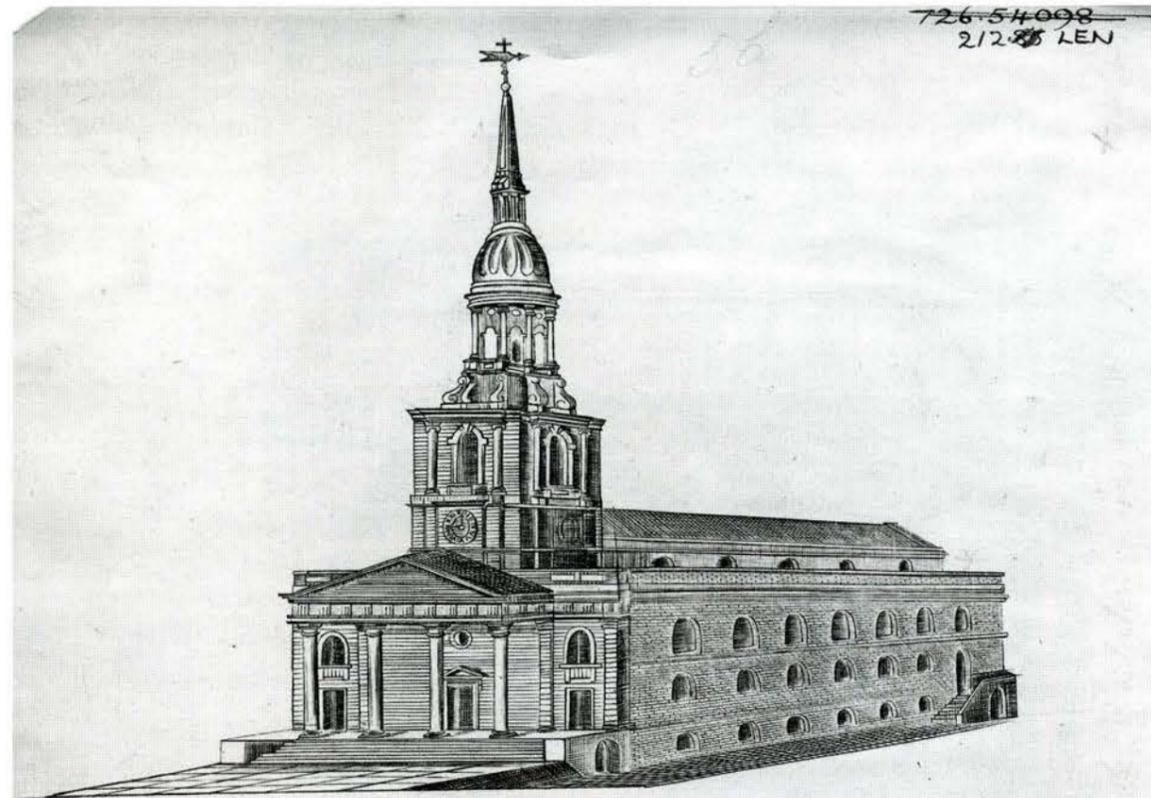


CUMBERLAND PEAL BOARD.

The Cumberland Youths' peal board in St Leonard's, recording the ringing of Treble Bob Royal, 27 March 1784

II and victor against the Scots at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746. Legend has it that on his return from Scotland, Cumberland passed through Shoreditch and the bells of St. Leonard's were rung by the London Scholars to proclaim his victory, after which they changed their name, reflecting the then popular use of 'Cumberland' at almost any opportunity.

The first peal for the Society was rung on 19 November 1748, but it was on 27 March 1784 that the peal was rung that inspired another poem about St. Leonard's bells. In an attempt to outdo



726-54098
2/28 LEN

The South West Prospect of St. LEONARD SHOREDITCH.

A COPY OF VERSES,

Humbly presented to all my worthy MASTERS and MISTRESSES of the Parish of St. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH,

BY JOSEPH DANE,

Steeple-Keeper and Ringer of the Five and Eight o'Clock Bell;

And Steeple-Keeper of the New Church at Hoxton.

MOST worthy Sirs, accept of this Address
In artless lines, my duty to express;
To greet my worthy Masters, one and all,
Inform them how my Bell doth rise and fall,
~~Both morn and eve, their servants do remind~~
Of their just duty due to masters kind,
At five at morn my bell is put on end,
Which warns them all their business to attend;
Tradesmen of all sorts, labourers and all,
Jump out of bed, soon as my bell doth call,
The pretty Milk Maids, dress'd so neat and clean,
With yoke and pails quite cheerful they are seen;
The jolly Dyers, Carpenters also,
Bricklayers and Smiths, all to their business go;
With Porters too—and likewise Market Folks
In groups assemble, crack their harmless jokes:
Wherefore you find, I serve both high and low;
Gentlemen, Tradesmen, Mechanics also.
None but the *Lazy* think I call too soon;
Should I neglect, perhaps they'd lie till noon.

I'd please them all, if WILL would serve for DEED,
But that's a task in which I can't succeed. —
I ring the bell at eight o'clock at night,
Which gives the weary Labourer delight;
~~They home to supper go, their rest they prize.~~
And sleep until my bell calls them to rise.
Thus, through the year, I constantly attend,
Hoping to be remembered at the end
By all my worthy Masters, ever kind,
Whose approbation may I always find.
Should it prove so my spirits it will cheer,
Give me great pleasure to begin NEXT YEAR;
A year, I hope, that will be crown'd with Peace,
That Trade and Commerce greatly may increase:
That we may our families maintain,
And have no reason to complain.
Now to conclude my lowly humble rhyme,
I wish you all a joyful Christmas time;
And many happy seasons may you see,
Blest with content, and with prosperity.

W. C. MANTZ, Printer, 150, Brick Lane, Spitalfields.

Wherefore you find, I serve both high and low;
Gentlemen, Tradesmen, Mechanics also.
None by the *Lazy* think I call too soon;
Should I neglect, perhaps they'd lie till noon.

I'd please them all, if WILL would serve for DEED,
But that's a task in which I can't succeed.
I ring the bell at eight o'clock at night,
Which gives the weary Labourer delight;
They home to supper go, their rest their prize,
And sleep until my bell calls them to rise.
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That Trade and Commerce greatly may increase;
That we may our families maintain,
And have no reason to complain.
Now to conclude my lowly humble rhyme,

Notes

1. HA D/F/DAW/3/1-2.
2. Henry Ellis, *The history and antiquities of the parish of Saint Leonard Shoreditch, and liberty of Norton Folgate, in the suburbs of London* (1798).
3. J. P. Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum, or an Antient History and Modern Description of London, compiled from Parochial Records, Archives of various Foundations, the Harleian MSS. and other authentic Sources* (1802–7).
- ⁴ H.J. Bradley, *A history of Shoreditch church: with list of vicars, benefactors, peals rung on the bells and many illustrations* (1914).
- ⁵ I. Opie and P. Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (1951, 2nd edn., 1997).
- ⁶ Opie, *Nursery Rhymes*.
- ⁷ Bradley, *Shoreditch Church*.
- ⁸ www.srcy.org.uk, 19 March 2014.
- ⁹ Joseph Dane, *A copy of verses humbly presented to all my worthy masters and mistresses of the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, by Joseph Dane, steeple-keeper and ringer of the five and eight o'clock bell and steeple-keeper of the new church at Hoxton* (c1800; at HA).



The tenor bell in transit during repair work (see page 10)

Stamford Hill - opulent and healthy

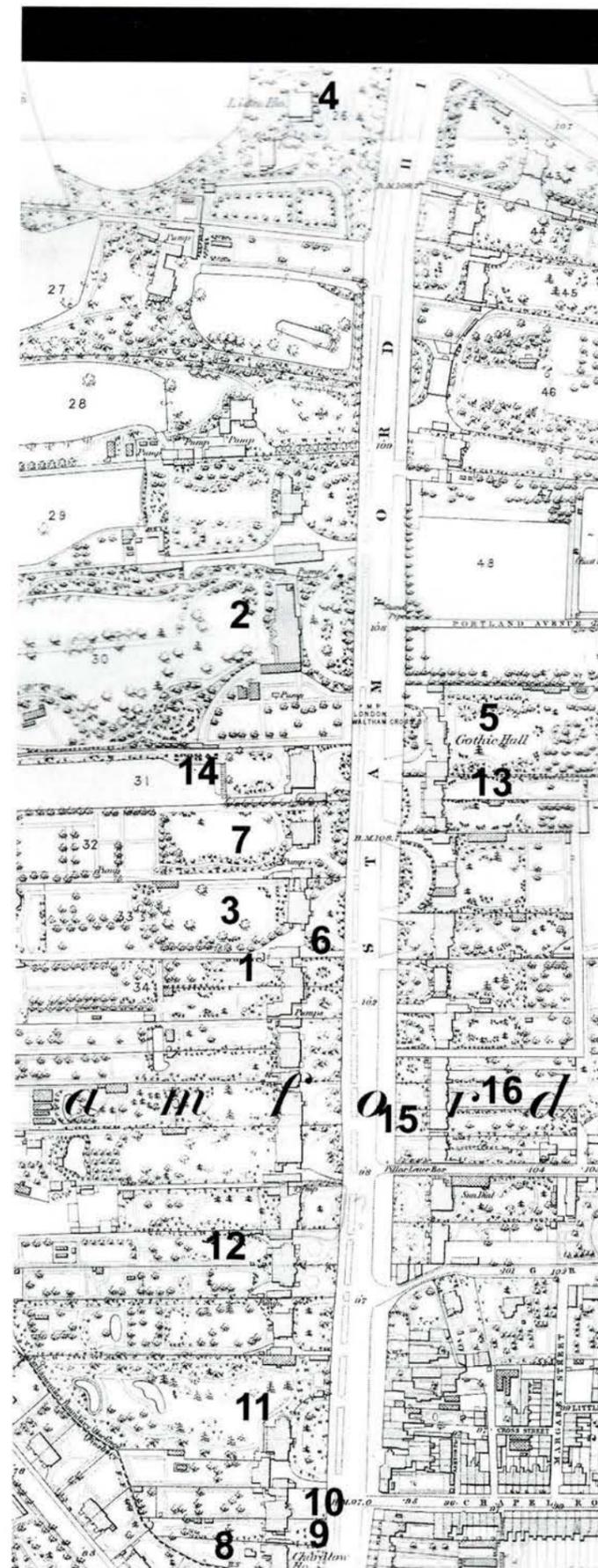
Anne Wilkinson

3

It is a locality consisting principally of villa residences and is regarded as one of the healthiest and most opulent of the suburban districts of London. *Post Office Directory*, 1859.

Modern Stamford Hill is hardly an inspiring place. The traffic races between the lights, dodging the buses and cyclists, pedestrians walk purposefully past commercial premises, and the blocks of flats look anonymous and possibly foreboding. However, on turning down a side street, on a fine day, one cannot fail to notice a view across to distant Muswell Hill on one side, or over the Lea valley on the other. Even on the Hill itself, there is a lingering feeling of opulence from the avenue of huge plane trees that line both sides of the road. These are the indestructible remnants of what Stamford Hill used to be.

Stamford Hill is just one section of the long straight road that runs up from the City, which in the early 19th century led merchants and financiers away from the miasma of noise and dirt in their workplace to the fresh air and fine views in what was still almost countryside. Many kept private carriages, but some relied on the coach that regularly plied its trade between the Flower Pot public house in Bishopsgate and the Swan on Clapton Common. Places could be booked the night before, and the coach would drive around picking up its regular customers to get them to work in the morning. They lived in large houses in their own grounds, with plenty of room for their families and an army of servants to look after them. Yet the exclusiveness was doomed. By the early 1870s the railway arrived, and in the late 1870s, once the trams became cheap enough for working people, there was no going back. By 1900, the large elegant houses were crumbling and old-fashioned. Only institutions found them suitable and the developers



Stamford Hill on the Ordnance Survey of 1868: the numbers in bold refer to the numbers assigned to each of the houses mentioned in the text of this article

KEY

- 1 67 (Allfrey)
- 2 The Hall (Droop/Richmond)
- 3 69 (Lancaster; A. Collier)
- 4 Lion House (Baker)
- 5 Gothic Hall (Windus; F. Collier)
- 6 69 gardener's cottage (J. Thompson)
- 7 71 Coles
- 8 41 site of Station House
- 9 43 (Stanley)
- 10 45 (Pitt)
- 11 47 (Button)
- 12 51 and 53
- 13 Beck
- 14 73 (G. Thompson)
- 15 98 (Hobson)
- 16 100 (Taverner)



Stamford Hill - possibly the rear of no. 55 - shown in 1826

waited in the shadows, ready to replace them with uniform homes for commuters.

The great houses on Stamford Hill were built from the late 18th century onwards. Thomas Starling's map of 1831 shows that most of them were established by that date. The 1868 Ordnance Survey map, on page 15, shows most of the same houses with detailed plans of their gardens, many of which stretched back over 300 yards. An illustration (above) of a house on Stamford Hill, dated as 1826, shows the back of the house and part of the garden. It is not identified as a specific house, but looking at the bay window, the design of the garden and the other buildings close by, it looks very much like the house later numbered as 55.

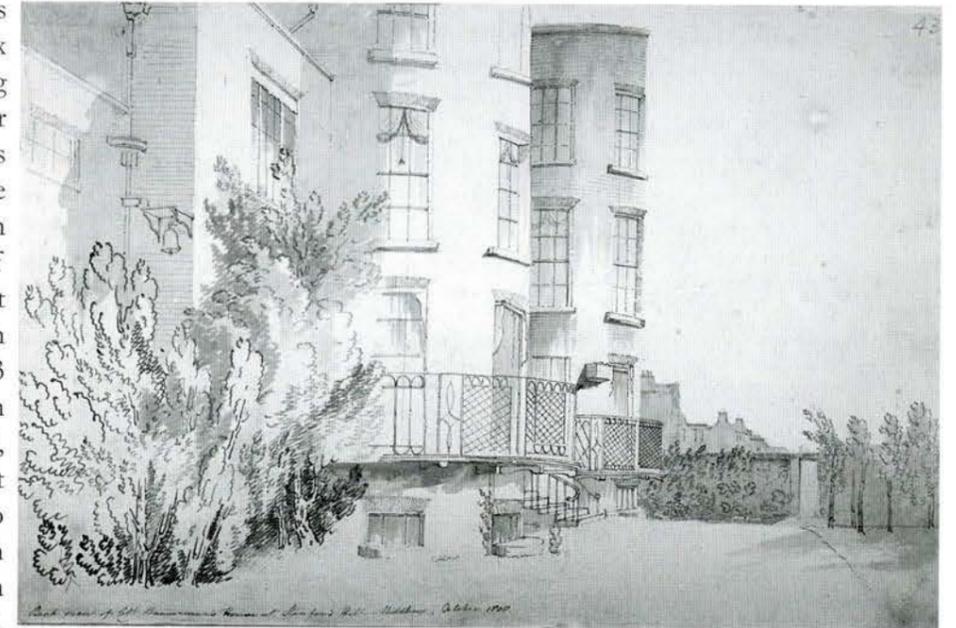
This article concentrates on the residential properties between Manor Road and the top of the hill. The censuses from 1841 to 1911 have been used to identify families, but unfortunately the 1861 census was destroyed in World War 2, although Post Office and commercial directories, as well as rate books and land tax records, help to

provide continuity. As most houses were not named or numbered in the early censuses, and were not always recorded in the same order, it is not possible to identify every family with a specific house, but I have concentrated on the families who appear in several censuses, and in the later ones the number of the house is given.

The Allfrey family

The longest-lasting family on Stamford Hill, who occupied the same house [1] from the 1841 census until 1911, was that of George Allfrey (see p. 25). His house was modest in comparison with many others, and stood a little less than half way up the hill on the west side, just south of present day Montefiore Court. It was one of a pair, eventually numbered 65 and 67, but the Allfreys' house, no. 67, had only a quarter of the land belonging to the double plot, as no. 65 had the continuation of the garden at the back. Nevertheless, it still had a back garden over 200 feet long and 50 feet wide, and in the 1911 census was described as having 11 rooms (excluding bathrooms).

George Allfrey was born in 1798 in Sussex into a wealthy farming family, but his father had died when he was young, and being the eldest of five children (including a set of twins) he had no doubt inherited a good sum of money. In 1823 he married Mary Ann de St Croix (b. 1793), the seventh of about 16 children born to Nicholas and Sarah de St Croix of Sutton House, Homerton. Nicholas was an Excise officer who had come



Colonel Bannerman's house, probably 'the Hall' (later Rothschilds'), by J. C. Nattes, 1808

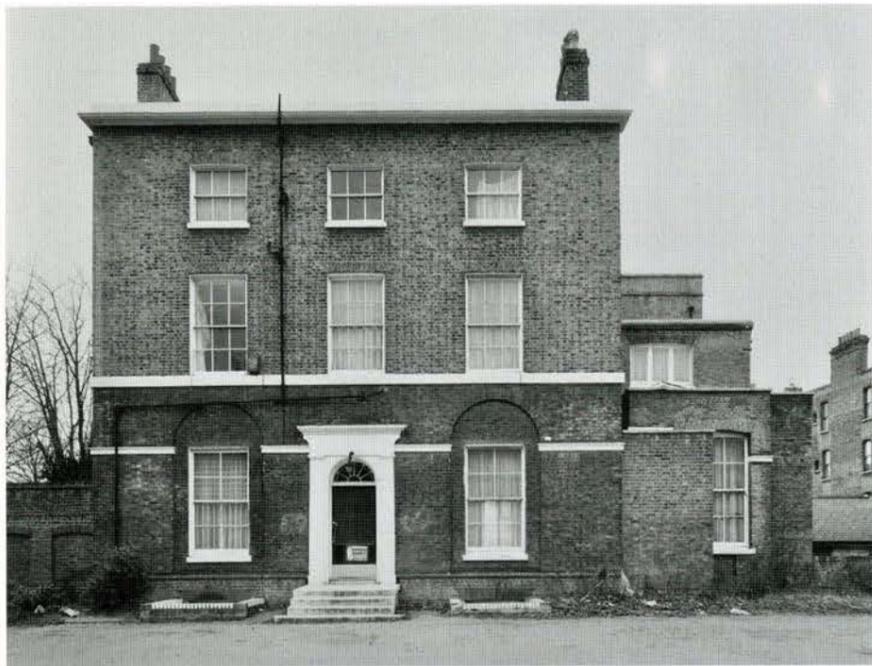
to London from his native Jersey. His wife Sarah had inherited the lease of Sutton House from her adoptive parents.¹ George and Mary Ann had two children, George (b. 1824) and Margaret (b. 1825), who were baptised at St John-at-Hackney. In 1824 George Allfrey was elected as a member of Lloyds and would have found Stamford Hill a convenient place to set up home, with his own carriage in which to drive down to the City. Lloyds underwriters or 'names' used their own money to insure ships and were personally liable if a ship was lost. George was probably elected through his connection with his uncle Edward (b. 1770), a Lloyds name since 1795, one of whose risk books is still preserved in the Lloyds archives.

George Allfrey's first marriage was short-lived: Mary Ann died in 1828, in Hastings, and was buried at West Dean, East Sussex, near George's childhood home. George lost little time in finding a new wife, and in 1832 married Elizabeth Richmond (b. 1804), the daughter of Henry Richmond, a Commissioner of Customs and Excise (b. 1770 in Liverpool), and temporarily a neighbour in Stamford Hill.

The Hall

Henry Richmond had lived in London from before 1800 and with his wife Harriet had twelve children. He is listed in the 1841 census in Stamford Hill, with his daughter Rose (b. 1808), and appears to be staying with his oldest daughter, Mary (b. 1796), who lived there with her husband, Johann Abraham Droop, a German merchant with business premises at 9 Love Lane, Eastcheap. They had three children. Henry's wife had by this time died, but he does not yet seem to have moved permanently to Stamford Hill, as another daughter, Margaret (b. 1803), was at his house in Chester Square, Belgravia. Johann Droop was to die in 1842, aged 61, leaving Mary a wealthy woman. In 1823 she had had a portrait painted by the successful society painter Thomas Lawrence, an etching of which is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

It is not known exactly which house the Droops lived in, but it could have been the large house, known as the Hall [2], which was one of the earliest houses on the Hill, and had been the home of Nathan Mayer Rothschild from about 1820 to 1835, when it was sold to Joel Emmanuel, a Bond Street jeweller and later a philanthropist. It was



69 Stamford Hill, photographed in 1971

on the plot between the present Dunsmore and Linthorpe Roads. In 1841 the Droop/Richmond household was large enough to include seven female servants and one male, although their roles were not specified. The usual indoor staff would be a female cook, several maids and possibly a male servant. The maids would be housemaids (for cleaning, making up fires and carrying water), parlour maids (for serving meals and carrying messages), ladies' maids (for helping ladies with dressing, hairdressing and sewing) or kitchen maids (for helping the cook). A household with children would have a 'nurse' (a 'nanny' in modern terms) and possibly a nursemaid to help her. The male servant would probably be a footman, who might double as a manservant to dress the men of the household. There might also be a 'page', a teenage boy training as a footman. A coachman or groom might be listed with the household, but, like a gardener, he might have his own living quarters and could therefore be married with his own family.

By the 1841 census, George and Elizabeth Allfrey had four surviving children and were to have five more. All were baptised at St Thomas's Chapel, Clapton Common, which acquired a reputation for

its 'high' Anglican principles about which there were periodic disputes.

No. 69

The house, later no. 69 [3, left], immediately north of the Allfreys', on the site that is now Montefiore Court, was a detached double-fronted house in its own grounds. It had been owned by the Montefiore family, related by marriage to the Rothschilds, but during the 1850s and 60s was occupied by the Lancaster family, and on some census returns is named Lancaster House.

William James Lancaster (b.1802) was an insurance broker, who was also involved in the lead trading business that his grandfather John Locke had established. The firm became known as Locke Lancaster, and was run from St Peter's Chambers, Cornhill, in partnership with William's brother Samuel (b. 1819). The family had come to London from Yarmouth in Norfolk, but William and Samuel had been born in Walthamstow. William and his wife Judith brought up eight children in the house, including twin sons. In 1851 they had a cook, two housemaids, a nurse and nursemaid. Their groom, Frederic McElroy, lived in a separate cottage with his wife and three children.

Bakers and Morgans

Two other families who lived at the top of the Hill on the west side were the Bakers and the Morgans. The Bakers lived at Lion House [4], one of the few houses named on the maps. It stood approximately where Sainsbury's now is, but was set back from the road in thickly wooded grounds. Edward Baker (b. 1781) was a chemist and druggist, whose son followed him into the business. His second wife, Anne, was still at Lion House at the time of the 1881 census, when she was 66, at which time she

employed not just a cook and housemaid, but also a butler. The Morgans were descendants of William Morgan (1750-1833), chief actuary to the Equitable Life Assurance Company, who effectively created the profession of actuary. In 1851 his son Arthur (also an actuary, b. 1801) was living in Stamford Hill with his wife, Louisa, and his sister Susanna. They employed a cook, footman, housemaid and laundry maid.

Gothic Hall: the Windus family

If it is difficult to identify the Droop house, it is easy to identify Gothic Hall [5], a large house on the opposite side of the road, clearly named on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map. It stood just south of the present day Stamford Hill library (on the corner with Portland Avenue), its site being then an open field. Gothic Hall was an imposing house with a carriage drive and stables adjoining. Its owner, Thomas Windus (b. 1779), had extended the house to provide a museum for his collection of paintings and antiquities. No occupation, other than 'freeholder', is given for Windus in the census returns, but he is believed to have descended from a Hertfordshire family and inherited the beginnings of his collection from his father. By 1841 he was a widower with four daughters and three sons living

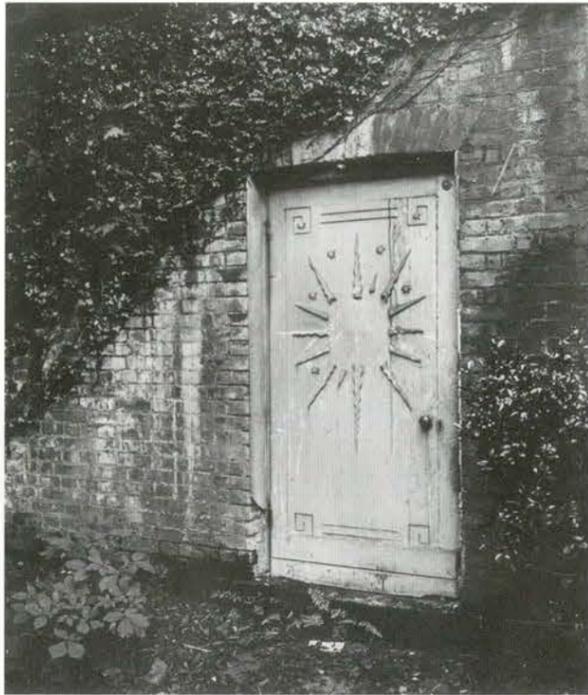
at home. Photographs were taken of the house before it was demolished, showing the extension built like a chapel. Underneath was a large concrete bath, sometimes described as a swimming pool, which was said by later inhabitants to be haunted. In 1854 Thomas Windus died and his historic collection was sold at Christies', in auction.

Although Thomas's son Ansley (b. 1811) appears to have stayed on at Gothic Hall for some years, the family gradually dispersed. One daughter, Constantia (b. 1830), went to keep house for her brother Alfred (b. 1829), a naval captain, in Heston, Middlesex. Another daughter, Emma (b. 1816), went to live in Brighton with her sister Laura (b. 1822), by 1861 a widow with two children. Laura had married a Belgian, Henri Charlier. Laura's daughter Julia (b. 1845), was also widowed at a young age, and by 1891 was running a lodging house in Brighton. Ten years later, she was matron of a 'penitentiary home' in Bognor Regis: in reality, a home for unmarried mothers who earned their keep by taking in laundry.

From the census returns it seems clear that although many families were large, there were often rather few descendants in proportion. Most families



The rear of Gothic Hall in the early 20th century



The entrance to the swimming bath at Gothic Hall

would lose one or two children at a young age, and many who did grow up would not marry. Women often ended up housekeeping for unmarried brothers or elderly parents, or made their homes with married sisters. Even those who did marry did not always have children. Therefore, although families of ten or more are not uncommon in the mid-19th century, possibly less than half would produce descendants themselves.

The families grow up

By the 1850s, George Allfrey's eldest son, George, had followed his father into Lloyds. Most of the sons went away to boarding school, and the oldest daughter, Margaret, seemed to have become a companion to her aunt, Mary Droop. In 1851 she was recorded as being with Mary Droop and Mary's daughter, also Mary, aged 16, in a hotel in Christchurch, Hampshire, accompanied by Henry Richmond, aged 81. The atmosphere might have been a little gloomy: cousin Mary was to die later that year and Henry died in 1858, so the trip might have been for health reasons. While part of the family was away, Henry's other daughters, Margaret, Rose and Henrietta, were all living in the house on

Stamford Hill, together with a cook, housemaid, seamstress (who probably acted as a ladies' maid), footman and coachman.

As the 1861 census is not available, only members of the families who were away from home can be traced. George Allfrey's next son, John Octavius (b. 1833), also an insurer, had moved to Ventnor on the Isle of Wight with his sisters Margaret, Katherine and Mary. John Octavius never married, and although Margaret died later that year, Katherine and Mary remained with him. The next son, Charles Henry (b. 1839), was in Edinburgh, studying medicine. Unfortunately, in 1861 their mother Elizabeth died at the age of 57. This time George chose to bury his wife in London and bought a grave in the recently opened Highgate Cemetery. The Richmond family had already buried Henry there in 1858. It might seem strange that the Richmonds and Allfreys should choose Highgate for burials when Abney Park Cemetery was just down the road. However, Abney Park originally opened purely as a Nonconformist cemetery and Anglicans would have preferred to be buried in Highgate. It was on a magnificent site with a commanding view over London, and had dramatically designed mausoleums and vaults in the Egyptian style. If the Richmonds and Allfreys had worshipped in St Thomas's chapel they probably adhered to the High Anglican traditions and would prefer a burial place where there was a specific chapel for Anglican services and where non-Anglicans would be buried separately.

By 1861 the two oldest Lancaster brothers had married. John Locke Lancaster (b. 1833) had joined the family lead business and married at St Mary's, Stoke Newington, in 1859. However, by 1860 he was already a widower, his wife Emily having died soon after giving birth to a son, who also died. In 1862 he married again and with his second wife, also called Emily, had four children. They moved first to Marylebone, then to near Southend, and ended their lives in Hove, Sussex. John's twin brother William became a marine insurance broker who joined Lloyds, but in the Post Office directory for



The Lancaster family in their garden, about 1866

1877 is also listed as a wine merchant. He married and had seven children, eventually settling in Hampshire. In 1866 William James Lancaster died, leaving 'under £100,000', which in the language of the Probate Register means it was almost £100,000. His executors were his brother Samuel and one of his younger sons, Arthur Henry (b. 1841), who carried on the family business. Arthur eventually settled in Surrey and left over half a million pounds when he died in 1928.

The Lancasters' house and garden were photographed in the 1860s (above). As the family members were all clothed severely in black, even though from the trees it would appear to be summer, it might be assumed that the photos were taken when they were still in mourning for William, so would date to the summer of 1866. The family members still living at home at that date would be Judith (seated on the left of the group), her sons, Arthur Henry and Alfred Dobree (b. 1842) (who became an artist), and daughters Louisa (b.1835) (who became a Sister of Mercy), Alice (b. 1846) and Edith (b. 1851). The second daughter, Henriette (b. 1837), was already married

by that date. Two daughters are seen on the lawn with Judith and one of her sons, while the other two children are standing on the verandah. A photograph (below) was also taken of the thatched octagonal summerhouse, just visible on the map of 1868 near the end of the garden. A gardener is working nearby and one of the daughters is sitting on the steps to the summerhouse, holding some knitting or sewing.



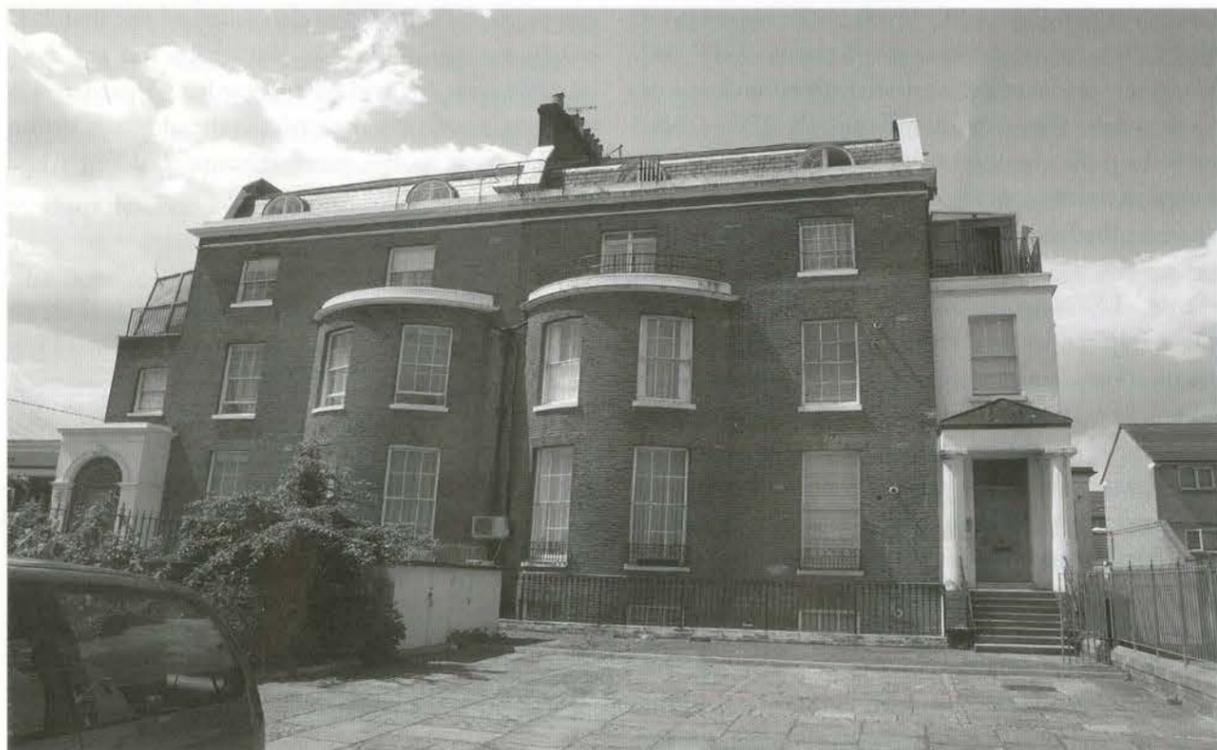
The Lancasters' summerhouse

The Collier families

Over on the east side of Stamford Hill, the new occupants of Gothic Hall were Frederick Collier and his wife Mary Ann. In 1871 he was described as a merchant aged 57 and was living there with his wife and stepson Thomas Smith (34), also a merchant. Frederick's younger brother, Alfred (another merchant), moved into the Lancasters' old home about 1868. By 1871 Judith Lancaster and her three daughters were living at Phillimore Gardens, Kensington. Alfred and Frederick Collier were sons of Edmund Collier, a merchant, born in Shoreditch in 1789, who had been living with his family in Laura Place, Lower Clapton, in 1841. Alfred was ten years younger than Frederick and had probably married his wife Susan about 1858; they were eventually to have ten children.

The Collier brothers had a younger sister, Lucy (b. 1821), who in 1853 married Alfred Richard Cutbill, a 43-year old divorcee. Divorce was very uncommon before 1858, when it became possible to obtain a decree through the newly formed divorce courts.

Before that, the only way to obtain a divorce was to put through an Act of Parliament, and that was exactly what Mr Cutbill had done: the proceedings were reported in the *Times* of 25 April 1853. It seems the first Mrs Cutbill, with whom Alfred had had three children, had, in 1843, committed adulterous acts with a man who had been engaged to Mr Cutbill's sister. Once his wife was banished from the house, Alfred Cutbill obtained a judicial separation through the ecclesiastical courts, but this was not enough to enable him to marry again. His reason for waiting ten years to obtain the divorce was partly through lack of funds (he estimated that the divorce cost him about £500) and partly because he believed it would bring the bank which employed him into disrepute. The real reason he decided to start proceedings when he did was probably that he wanted to marry Lucy Collier. One of his daughters was staying in the Colliers' house in Walthamstow in 1851, so clearly he already had a close relationship with Lucy at that time. There were no children of the second Cutbill marriage and Alfred Cutbill himself died in 1866.



51 and 53 Stamford Hill in 2014

The gardener

For a balanced view of the families on Stamford Hill, we also need to look at the servants. The gardener at no. 69 [6] when the Colliers were living there was James Thompson. In 1871 he was aged 32 and had been born in Yorkshire, the son of a gardener. His wife, Eleanor, had been born in Tottenham and her father had also been a gardener. Eleanor had lived with her parents in Edmonton, where she married James Thompson in 1866. They were to have four children, John, Alice, Elizabeth and Eleanor. However, Eleanor, the wife, must have died in the 1880s, as in 1891 James Thompson married a second wife, Eliza, at St Mary's, Stoke Newington. They went on to have two more children, and were still living on Stamford Hill in 1901. James's daughter Eleanor was at that date living at home and was a dress and bodice maker. His son John became a secretary to a limited company, married and lived first in Maury Road, then Narford Road. By 1911 he was living with his family in Hornsey, and his 21-year old daughter was a shorthand typist, one of a new generation of women workers.

The Coles family

By the time of the 1871 census there were more new residents in the next house [7] up from the Colliers on the west side of the hill (later no. 71). The Coles family were by then living in this house with substantial grounds stretching back about 400 feet from the house and a further small paddock beyond. Richard Cooke Coles was an East India merchant (he probably imported tea, indigo or spices), aged about 58, and at the time he had a wife and four sons between the age of 14 and 27, the three oldest of which were described as clerks. Coles had been born in Streatham, then just a village in Surrey, in 1813. He had married his wife Elizabeth Regina Kreeft in 1843 at St Katherine Cree Church in the City. Her father was Christopher Kreeft, a merchant and also consul for the Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, in what is now northern Germany. In 1851 Richard Coles had been living at no. 3 Stamford Hill, one of 11 houses built between Abney Park cemetery and Manor Road. These did

not include the present terrace of houses which start straight after the cemetery and were built a few years later, but are the earlier, larger houses, mostly semi-detached, some of which have been replaced by flats on the corner of Manor Road.

The Manor Road area

The character of the area around Manor Road was on the point of changing. On the 1868 map the houses are still standing in their own grounds, and on the east side was a small country park with serpentine paths attached to Ibston Lodge. By 1872 this had been swept away for Stoke Newington station, and the railway line which passed under the corner of Stamford Hill and Manor Road destroyed several houses north of Manor Road in its path.

Immediately north of the railway a small house [8], later no. 41, replaced Charlton House and housed the station master and his family. Next, there were two semi-detached houses which still remain, joined to the present day petrol station. Although the first one [9] looks small, it was big enough in 1881 and 1891 to house Mr and Mrs Henry Stanley and their seven children, with two servants. Henry was a colonial broker's clerk and two of his sons were in the same business. The larger house [10], with the circular bay, housed Horace Pitt, a provision merchant, who also had seven children. Next up the Hill was a much larger house in its own grounds [11] with a small lake and a range of glasshouses. The site is now covered by the garage and Morrisons supermarket, but in 1871 this was the property of Reuben Button, a landowner and property developer, who had worked his way up from his birth in the City, the son of a bookkeeper. In the 1850s Reuben and his wife Priscilla, who came from Bethnal Green, were living in London Fields and had six children. In 1861 they were in Highbury New Park, Islington, and Reuben was described as a 'proprietor of houses'. By the time they came to Stamford Hill they were living with eight of their eventual 11 children. Their oldest son, Ruben, was 23 and described as a surveyor. One of the building projects that Reuben Button senior took on was the development of the land

belonging to Craven Lodge, the large house that had been the home of Samuel Morley MP, which stood east of Stamford Hill just north of Clapton Common.

Although the next house up the Hill has also disappeared, the following two, shown on page 22, are still there, numbered 51 and 53, a fine pair of semi-detached properties [12] with semi-circular bay windows at the front. These houses must have been built between 1831 and 1868, as on Thomas Starling's map the plot seems to contain one large flat-fronted house with a single garden the width of the whole plot. The large scale of the two existing houses gives an idea of the scale of the other houses on the Hill at the time. There is little continuity in the censuses for their occupiers, but the family at no. 51 in 1881 and 1891 was that of John Fry, a stationer and printer, with two children, a nurse and four servants. The long gardens stretched 500 feet back as far as the railway.

The Beck family

A different sort of family altogether lived on the other side of Stamford Hill, just south of Gothic Hall [13]. The Becks were there from before 1841 to the 1880s. Richard Low Beck (b. 1792) was a wine merchant, who in 1841 had a wife, Rachel, and seven of his 11 children. His mother had been born Elizabeth Lister and was the aunt of Sir Joseph Lister, the surgeon who introduced the idea of antiseptics into hospitals. However, it was Elizabeth's brother, Joseph Jackson Lister, the father of Sir Joseph, who was more influential on Richard Beck's family. Joseph Jackson Lister was also a wine merchant with a business in the City, and he lived in Stoke Newington. He became a skilled amateur scientist, largely responsible for designing and introducing the microscope.

Although Joseph Jackson moved out of London and by 1841 was living at Upton in Essex, the family kept close ties with Stamford Hill and Stoke Newington because they were Quakers, and most of the family chose to be buried in the graveyard attached to the Friends' Meeting House in Park

Street, now Yoakley Road. Although the Meeting House has disappeared, the burial ground is still there, and can be entered behind Lister House in Yoakley Road. The gravestones have been moved to the sides of the burial ground to make it into a small park, but many of them, including some of the Beck family, can still be read. Unlike gravestones in most burial grounds, they are very small and uniformly shaped with plain rounded tops. The only information they record is the name of the deceased and the dates of birth and death (all phrased as, for instance 'the fourth day of the third month', the form favoured by Quakers), with no biblical quotations or other wording. Richard Low Beck's youngest son, Ernest (b. 1842), followed him into the wine business, but one of his sons, William (b. 1823), became an architect, and two others, Richard (b. 1827) and Joseph (b. 1830), followed their uncle into the optics business, running a successful optical and microscope manufactory at Cornhill in the City of London.

The later 19th century

As the old-established families died out or moved away from Stamford Hill, many more tradesmen moved in. George Thompson, an Islington meat wholesaler, was living at no. 73 [14] in 1881. His young family required a nurse, two housemaids, a governess and a coachman, who lived in a cottage with his own family. Henry Hobson was a tailor who ran a business with his brother George at Finsbury Place in the City. He lived at no. 98 [15], and three of his sons joined the family business. Next door, at no. 100 [16], lived William Taverner, a wholesale confectioner with a factory in John Campbell Road, Islington. His two sons joined his business in their early twenties.

By 1900 Stamford Hill was very different place. On the east side, Gothic Hall became the Constitutional Club and was demolished in the 1930s. In 1871 a Congregational Church was built between the Hill and the corner with Portland Avenue, which was demolished in 1966. The land north of Portland Avenue had included a reservoir and open fields (a 'cowman' had appeared on early censuses),

but by 1894 three large houses, Portland House, Cornfield and Linden House, had been built, and still exist today. On the opposite side, the Hall had been replaced by Dunsmure Road with two terraces of narrow houses on either side. The last of those terraced houses on the north, no. 91 (now demolished, unlike the rest of the terrace), was in 1891 the home of Henry Sarson (b. 1825), the vinegar merchant, and his youngest daughter Florrie, aged 20. Sarson had taken over the City vinegar brewing firm from his father, and increased sales with strategic advertising. His sons carried on the business after him and it was eventually sold to Crosse and Blackwell.

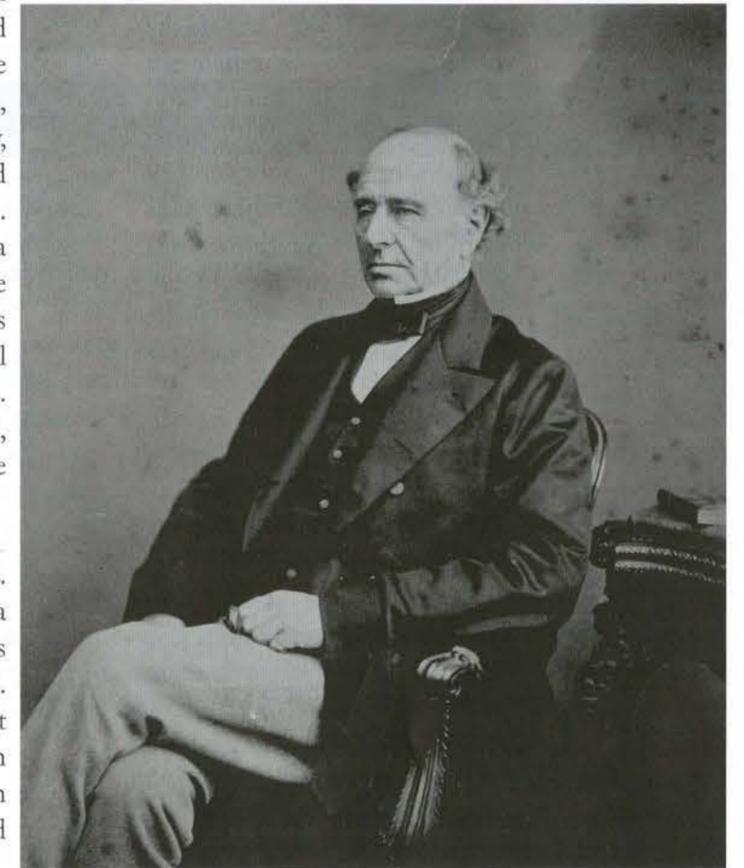
How the families dispersed

Richard Low Beck died in 1854 and the family gradually moved away. His widow died in 1874 and was buried in Stoke Newington. William, the architect, lived in Stoke Newington. He was unmarried and seems to have provided a home for several of his nephews and nieces. He died in Uxbridge in 1907. The optical brothers, Richard and Joseph, carried on working together in the City, Richard living in Holloway Road and Joseph in Albion Road, Stoke Newington. Their sister, Sophia (b. 1826), married a wealthy shipowner and died in Tunbridge Wells. The youngest brother, Ernest, was still living in the house on Stamford Hill in 1881, and carried on the wine business. By 1891 he had moved to Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, with his wife and five daughters.

The Coles also lived prosperous lives. Richard Fenning Coles (b. 1844) was a tea broker's clerk in 1881, but by 1891 was 'living on his own means' in Richmond. Alice married an East India merchant and Frederick W. Coles ended his days in Cornwall. William Byass Coles, also an East India merchant, stayed in Stamford

Hill the longest. In 1891 he was living at no. 109, the red brick semi-detached house on the corner with Northfield Road, now a dentist's surgery. He was married with two young children. Ten years later, he was on the east side of the hill at no. 132, and the family had increased to four children. By 1911 he had moved to Reigate in Surrey, where he eventually died.

Alfred Collier died in 1887, and his widow Susan was still living at no. 69 Stamford Hill in 1901. However, by 1911, she was living with her son Alfred Thomas, a brewer, and his family in Snaresbrook, Essex. The Allfreys, Droops and Richmonds remained closely connected. George Allfrey's youngest daughter, Harriet (b. 1850) married Mary Droop's son, John Reginald (b. 1846), and they had four children. They also moved to Reigate, probably following in the footsteps of John Octavius and his sisters, with whom they were staying at Reigate in 1881.



George Allfrey (1798-1869), Lloyds underwriter

Of George Allfrey's other sons, Edward (b. 1836), became a marine engineer and married another cousin, Julia Richmond, daughter of Henry's son John, and they lived in Beckenham, Kent. The next son, Charles Henry (b. 1839), qualified as a doctor in 1861, married and set up a practice in St Mary's Cray, Kent, where one of his patients was Charles Darwin. He certified Darwin's death in 1882. Francis (b. 1841) joined his uncles, George Allfrey's twin brothers, running a brewery in Wales. He married a Welsh mineowner's daughter and eventually set up his own brewery in Buckinghamshire. Alexander (b. 1848), the youngest brother, also joined Lloyds, married and finally lived in Essex. A few family members did stay on in Stamford Hill. Henry Richmond's daughter Margaret's last home was 20 Dunsmore Road, built on the former land of the Hall, where she may have once lived. She died in 1894.

Many of the large houses on Stamford Hill became institutions of some kind. No. 69 became an industrial school, reverting back to its old name, Montefiore House. It was demolished about 1970. No. 63 became a convent. Many of the houses were used as schools periodically throughout the century, but the first purpose-built school, Skinners', was erected in the 1880s on the corner with Northfield Road. Between 1901 and 1911 the first blocks of flats, Stamford Hill Mansions, were built, filling up with office and manual workers living in small households.

Finally, the last Allfreys to live on Stamford Hill were George Allfrey's oldest son, George, and his wife Katherine. They had married in 1871, at St Mary's Stoke Newington, by then the favoured church for Stamford Hill residents. They had no children and George died in 1887. Katherine stayed on in the house with an ageing cook and maid. By 1909 the attached house next door had been taken over by the YMCA and was used as a social centre, where tennis parties were held in the large garden. Katherine Allfrey just survived for the 1911 census, probably living a life that had become increasingly old-fashioned. She was 83, and lived with her unmarried sister, looked after by a cook, two maids and two nurses. She died six days later, whereupon the house was immediately bought by the YMCA to be used as a hostel.

Note

1. For further details of the family and their time at Sutton House, see Belcher, Bond, Gray and Wittirck, *Sutton House* (2004), 175-6. Some silk and lace clothing belonging to the family is on display in the house.

Sources

This article is based principally on the decennial censuses (from 1841), ratebooks and other material (including the albums of Florence Bagust) in the collection of Hackney Archives, as well as family material in private hands and records traced through www.ancestry.co.uk.

'An avalanche of wrathful violence':

physical opposition to the Salvation Army, 1881-1883

Edmund Lyon



On Sunday, 30 October 1881, a detachment of the Stoke Newington corps of the Salvation Army marched to the Shakespeare, a pub just north of Stoke Newington police station and started singing. This was not the first time they had attempted to convert the area's drinkers through song; but the 20 Salvationists did not meet with the response they expected. 'Before the end of the first verse a crowd of roughs and others gathered round and began a counter-chant', the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* (HKG) reported. Matters soon worsened – the paper continued: 'at the end of the third verse some one issued from the tavern with a can of beer in his hand, and making use of a foul expression offered it to one of the Salvationists. This was a signal for a general riot'. The beleaguered Salvationists, men and women, were 'attacked, struck, knocked down, and shamefully ill-used'. Not one of the hundreds of people present did anything to defend the Salvation Army; despite the proximity of the police station only one constable emerged, just in time to stop the Army's opponents trying to smash their way in to the Salvation Army hall. There were three Salvationist casualties: a young girl so seriously injured she had to be taken home, and two much bruised men.¹ This obscure fracas highlights a number of themes concerning physical opposition to the Salvation Army: its association with drinking, its interference with working class leisure activities, and reaction to core Salvation Army activity, in this case singing outside pubs. The article will look specifically at such events in Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington from 1881 to the end of 1883.

Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington are not generally considered to have been areas of opposition to the Salvation Army. Nonetheless, the experiences of the Army in these parishes helps illustrate the history of resistance and opposition to the Salvationists. The Salvation Army considered Hackney



The Shakespeare pub, Shakespeare Walk, in 1915

important enough to locate their Congress Hall in Clapton – and of sufficient consequence to set aside their opposition to debt to borrow money for the lease of the Grecian Theatre and Eagle Tavern in Shoreditch. Their presence in this part of London aroused opposition. And not just their presence: a columnist in the *Eastern Post* claimed

It has been persistently stated that Mr. Booth's doings are tending to undersell the working poor and to spoil their trade in different branches of labour. Among those reports are — That the Army take in washing at the Congress Hall in Clapton, that it is manufacturing match boxes on a large scale for Messrs. Bryant and May, and other match makers, and doing other work which hitherto afforded the East London poor their home employment.²

Although the column declares that investigation has shown these beliefs to be false, the rumours were, it seems from the piece, widely held to be true. Historians of the Salvation Army differ in their precise attribution of responsibility for physical opposition to the Salvationists. Nonetheless, they generally agree that the hands of publicans and brewers were somewhere in the mix. According to Glenn Horridge, there is considerable evidence that physical opposition to the Army was got up by brewers and publicans. He notes, however, this

evidence mostly emanates from the Army itself.³ Victor Bailey, in his essay on the Salvation Army riots, claims the Army's belief that publicans and brewers were behind physical opposition was validated by evidence gained over several years.⁴ Pamela Walker sees the physical opposition as emanating from the working class, although she situates it within a culture of working class violence rather than seeing it as a response to an incursion by unwelcome outsiders.⁵ These authorities do not investigate the possibility of a perceived economic threat from the Army. The notion that physical opposition to the Salvation Army was got up by business interests, rather than by working class men and women themselves, deserves greater scrutiny than it has previously received. It is entirely possible that members of working class communities were in fact acting of their own volition. An examination of contemporary sources, including some relied on by the Salvationists, suggests that while physical opposition to the Salvation Army may have been supported by publicans and brewers, the impetus behind it came from working class men opposed to the Army. In addition, a contention of this article is that rather than arising at the behest of brewers and publicans, physical opposition to the Salvation Army in Shoreditch and Stoke Newington was motivated by a defence of working class space and amenities enjoyed by the working class community. The issue of temperance as such did not play a part in motivating opposition to the Army – numerous temperance bodies operated successfully in this part of North London, with only extremely rare opposition. Yet the Salvation Army's recruitment activity in the area, most notably in Stoke Newington and Shoreditch, seemed to revolve around opposition to public houses: and the lease of the Grecian Theatre and Eagle Tavern could be perceived as a direct attack on working class leisure activities. In recreating the history of opposition to the Salvation Army in Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington, this article relies upon reports in contemporary newspapers, in particular the *Eastern Post*, the *Islington Gazette* and the *Borough of Hackney Express and Shoreditch Observer* as well as the *HKG*. From analysing these reports, a more nuanced view

of the physical opposition the Army faced can be gained.

The Stoke Newington riot described above was sparked by Salvationists interrupting people's drinking. Although the Salvation Army vehemently opposed drinking, it was by no means the only temperance body at work in 1880s London. Many temperance organizations, notably the Good Templars and the Blue Ribbon Army, were hard at work in Hackney and its neighbours, and local papers like the *Islington Gazette* and *HKG* carried regular reports of their events. One very significant difference between the activities of the Salvation Army and groups like the Blue Ribbon Army was that the events of the latter were only extremely rarely disrupted by opponents. The *Islington Gazette* declared that 'the Blue Ribbon Army is not in any sense an organisation of the Salvation Army kind. It is free from fanaticism ... and simply preaches temperance and the Gospel.'⁶ The success which these temperance movements enjoyed contrasts with the attention-seeking activities of the Salvation Army, which so frequently aroused the ire of the very people the Salvationists sought to attract. The Salvation Army aimed, like the dedicated temperance organisations, to remove people from the public houses and other dens of iniquity: but the Salvationists pursued this goal through different means to those other groups, through the parades and singing which made such an impression on observers. Report after report in the *HKG* demonstrates the great activity of the Blue Ribbon Army, the Shoreditch Temperance Mission and other similar groups. For example, in January 1881 it reported that the Dove-row Adult Temperance Association claimed 190 members.⁷ Shortly afterwards, the Hackney Total Abstinence Society's first annual public meeting was told that 52 meetings had been held the previous year, with an average attendance of 100.⁸ By June 1882, the Blue Ribbon Army – founded in Shoreditch – had held more than 1,100 consecutive nightly meetings, 164 women's meetings, and 120 outdoor meetings.⁹ Temperance bodies collaborated in large events, such as the vast fête at the Crystal Palace in July

1881. The National Temperance League, Band of Hope Union and Good Templar Order took it in turns to organise this annual fête, which was reported to have attracted 10,000 people and at which Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington branches of temperance bodies were represented.¹⁰ A year later a large temperance demonstration in Victoria Park saw the Hackney Total Abstinence Society, Phoenix Abstinence Society and Blue Ribbon Army working together, accompanied by uniformed fife and drum bands.¹¹ The temperance movement in Hackney and its neighbouring areas catered not only for adults but also for children; at the end of May 1882 'the little Army' of St James', Clapton, a temperance society for youngsters, was founded.¹² There was clearly an active, mutually supportive, and diverse local temperance movement which attracted men, women and children.

It was not a staid, indoor, obscure movement. Rather, temperance groups frequently took to the streets, and possessed their own bands. Nonetheless, they attracted neither the opposition nor the opprobrium which attached itself to the Salvation Army. During the period under consideration there was only one occasion when any temperance body apart from the Salvationists received any attention from organised physical opponents. Something out of the ordinary had to occur to anger local residents; the issue of temperance alone was not sufficient to rouse the wrath of inhabitants.

Although underlying concerns about an economic threat posed by the Salvation Army may have provided a motivating factor behind physical opposition, what seems to have sparked violence, particularly in Shoreditch and Stoke Newington, was the Army's interference with working class pastimes. The Salvation Army asserted – in a memorandum prepared for the Home Office – that

in nearly every town where there has been any opposition we have been able to trace it more or less, to the direct instigation, and often open leadership of either individual Brewers or Publicans, or their employes [sic]. The plan adopted is by treating and otherwise inciting gangs of roughs ... to hustle and pelt, and mob the people.¹³

The term 'Skeleton Army' became a blanket term for street opponents of the Salvation Army who mobbed the Salvationists in this way and was proudly adopted by many of these men. Yet it is telling that the temperance work described above did not lead to physical opposition against the Blue Ribbon Army or other temperance movements. It is possible that in some areas business interests did combine with their customers to organise local opposition to the Army. But it would be peculiar for publicans in Shoreditch and Stoke Newington to encourage violence against the Salvation Army while not encouraging it against the Blue Ribbon Army or the numerous other temperance bodies at work in the area. One observer, the *Eastern Post's* 'Looker On', argued that 'there cannot be the least doubt that the publicans and their tipping customers are the backbone of this "Skeleton" imposture'.¹⁴ Yet, as he proceeded to outline, publicans in north and east London were in no position to bankroll or offer free drinks to the Skeleton Army. It seems more likely the tipplers than the publicans were behind this, as 'Looker On' went on to outline the parlous state of many public houses which had seen a great decline in their value, while their profits had been under pressure both from the advances made by the temperance movement and the heavy interest publicans paid under their agreements with breweries.¹⁵ Trying to drive away the Salvation Army through support – whether financial or in kind – for the Skeletons might well have killed the very business the publican was trying to save. A widely quoted article from the *Eastern Post* from November 1882, frequently relied upon by historians of opposition to the Salvation Army, purports to tell how the Skeleton Army was got up. Claiming to describe the funding, the article says

The "Skeletons" have their collectors and collecting sheets, and one of these sheets was thrust into my hand by a ragged and dirty-faced individual, who made a visit to a shop where I was purchasing a newspaper. Whether this collector was collecting for himself or his brethren, it is difficult to say, but his dirty collecting sheet contained a number of shopkeepers' names who subscribed ... I found that publicans, beersellers, and butchers are subscribing to this rag, tag, and bobtail imposture, and I am almost inclined to publish their names, so that

their scandalous conduct may be known to the peaceful inhabitants.¹⁶

Great weight was put on this report, seemingly emanating from Bethnal Green, by the Salvation Army who reprinted it in their *War Cry*.¹⁷ But this piece of evidence is isolated: and nowhere is it suggested that more than a small amount of money changed hands.¹⁸ When, in February 1882, the *HKG* first mentioned a 'Skeleton Army', in Bethnal Green, it was to report both this new development among the 'roughs' of the district and a battle between it and the Salvation Army. Talk of business funding or support for the new body was absent.¹⁹ When a Skeleton Army was first mentioned in a Hackney context, the *HKG* declared that 'A number of "roughs" of indifferent natures and mischievous dispositions have banded themselves into a mock Salvation Army, and march about almost nightly under the banners of "The Skeleton Army"'.²⁰ The adoption of banners and processions may have been due to similar pressures as those experienced in Stoke Newington, reported in December 1881 by the *HKG*, which stated the change had been due to a desire to avoid arrest.²¹ The creation of a 'Skeleton Army' in this part of London seems to have been a development initiated by young working class men themselves, without prompting from butchers, beer sellers, brewers or publicans, even if they may have supported the Skeletons subsequently. The organisation of opposition embodied in the Skeleton Army in Shoreditch and Stoke Newington seems to have derived from pressures on groups prepared to use physical force against the Salvationists, the pressure to avoid arrest and the observation that the Salvationists' practice of parading seems to have been considered by the Metropolitan Police as within the law. The desire of Sensible 'Skeletons' to avoid arrest did not work, however, if conduct went beyond the peaceful: a Skeleton Army meeting in Victorian Park which then paraded through nearby streets ended in mayhem, with several accused appearing in court in February 1883.²²

In May 1881, a letter from John Tower to the *HKG*

destroyed and the organ grinder seriously injured; the fate of the horse is unknown.²⁴

Although Salvation Army bands rarely posed too great a danger from their music, John Tower's annoyance was shared by many others. In October 1882 'A.M.' wrote to the *HKG* that 'it is my unfortunate lot to live in close proximity to a Salvation Hall, and the noise caused by numerous instruments is unbearable'. The Salvationists, then, did not only cause a disturbance in the streets. He continued, 'it would be bad enough if positive musicians were engaged, but this is not the case'.²⁵ The complaints of cacophony received against their bands were, the Salvation Army declared, 'one of the surest evidences of their virtue. ... the simple truth is that the band empties the public houses far and near'.²⁶ Anti-Salvation riots such as those in Stoke Newington in October 1881 caused by the Salvationists singing outside the Shakespeare public house, speak to the unintended truth of those words.²⁷

It was not simply the din which aroused antipathy. The disorderly parades also, some commentators complained, debased the religion they affected to promote. For instance, the *Islington Gazette* wondered

what sort of veneration for higher things is likely to come out of an excitement so nearly alike to the ridiculous, and so nearly allied to frenzy ... in the sensational parading of the Salvation Army there is a degree of insincerity, fanaticism, and vulgar ostentation, that is utterly inconsistent with the calm reflective spirit of the true Christian ...²⁸

So, the principal motivations for the physical opposition which became the Skeleton Army in the areas under consideration were the Salvationists' noisy and often discordant parades, their extravagant interference with working class pastimes, including the vocal harassment of people relaxing in pubs, and the targeting of the popular Grecian Theatre and Eagle Tavern. The Salvationists' occupation of the Shoreditch pub and theatre seems to have caused the greatest anger, bringing out thousands of people where perhaps hundreds at most



A Salvationist under attack, by a Salvationist artist

declared that

to one who has seen [the Salvation Army] on the "War path," singing, or rather shouting what must be presumed to be a hymn, the idea is conveyed that the chief qualification for a "soldier" or a "cadet" is the possession of an enormous lung power, rather than any particular religious opinions.²³

The level of noise generated by the Salvation Army is demonstrated by the report of an incident on 24 September, 1882, when the sound of a Salvation Army band so frightened a police horse that it bolted, throwing its rider, and leaped upon an organ grinder's instrument. The instrument was

congregated elsewhere in the area to oppose the Army.

By contrast, there seems to have been a constantly low level of opposition to Salvation Army parades in Hackney. Writing in July 1883, Clapton resident Thomas Cull described how his Sundays were disturbed by the Army's regular parades where 'a very large and discordant brass band, accompanied by a number of boys and girls howling at the top of their voices, supplemented by the beating of a big drum' had become 'an intolerable nuisance'.²⁹

When looking at the people involved in physically opposing the Salvation Army, it is difficult to get far behind the contemporary use of the term 'roughs'. Very few of them – both numerically and as a proportion of opponents of the Salvationists – can be identified, and in almost all cases those who can appear before the courts. According to reports in the *HKG*, fewer than ten people appeared in court for offences relating to attacks on the Salvation Army or for disturbing Salvationist services in 1881 and 1882. However, it is possible to get a picture of who these opponents were. Most of the men – and the defendants were entirely men – were labourers. They were mostly aged between 16 and 23, although at least one man of 30 appeared in court, and were employed in jobs such as costermongers, labourers, fishmongers, carmen, and occasionally clerks. In only one case did a man attack the Salvationists apparently on his own: physical opposition to the Army was a social pursuit. Even when opponents came together to disrupt a service, scores could be involved: more than 100 men tried to rescue Edwin Castle from the police on his arrest for disturbing a service in Stoke Newington.³⁰

The tactics of those opposed to the Salvation Army changed over time. The initial attacks on the Army appear to have been unplanned and spontaneous. For example, in August 1881 the *HKG* reported the case of Arthur Trotman, who was convicted of assaulting two men in a seemingly unpremeditated attack on a procession of singing Salvationists in

Stoke Newington.³¹ A larger, perhaps orchestrated, attack – described above – took place two months later, following Salvationists 'persistently singing outside public houses' in the locale, seemingly 'with the intention of inducing the drinkers within to quit the premises and join the ranks of the army'.³² By the start of December 1881 opponents of the Salvation Army in Stoke Newington were reported as revising their approach. The *HKG* carried a story which stated that 'the rough element' had 'hit upon a new plan for the gratification of their appetite for Sunday fun', namely an imitation army which was composed of 'some hundred young roughs ... hatless and coatless, led by a youth beating time with a stick, all howling the well-known war cry of the Salvationists'.³³ The change was prompted by the readiness of the police to arrest 'any disturber of the proceedings of the Army', and appears to have succeeded: the report is followed by months of silence about what happened next. Silences in the contemporary record, though, do not necessarily indicate nothing occurred. On several occasions where light is shed on anti-Salvationist actions the articles state that the incident in question was part of an ongoing campaign. The tactics employed changed as time progressed: the emergence of a large Skeleton Army in Hackney is recorded by the *HKG* in October 1882; it reports 'the Skeleton Army sing a discordant melody whenever the legitimate Army are engaging in a hymn and do anything possible in mockery or derision'.³⁴ The same article details a solitary, small collision between physical opponents and the Salvationists which took place in Hackney. The most frequent anti-Salvationist activity in Stoke Newington appears to have involved opponents disrupting Salvation Army services – such as the case of Edwin Castle, mentioned above – while in Shoreditch physical confrontation, described below, was the response to the Salvationist occupation of the Eagle.

The Eagle was built in 1826 by one Thomas Rouse, brickmaker and builder, so his workmen – employed at the brickfield then on the site – 'could obtain wholesome refreshment'.³⁵ Here he supplied evening entertainment which was so popular

it prompted the enlargement of the premises, and then the construction of the Grecian Theatre.³⁶ The pub became the favourite hostelry of Hoxton, so the Salvationists' possession of it aroused no small indignation, especially when it became clear that Booth intended to maintain a temperance bar.³⁷ Not only the pub's customers but the lessees and sub-lessors of the site, Messrs Ebbetts, were concerned and the Ebbetts took Booth to court to enforce the maintenance of the Eagle's license.³⁸ The case was decided in the Ebbetts' favour in July 1883.³⁹ But it was the very popularity of the Eagle and its Grecian Theatre, and the site's situation in the middle of a working class area which attracted it to the Salvationists' attention. Writing to the *Morning Post*, the Salvationists' leader William Booth noted the site could hold 10,000 people, continuing

Standing amidst a dense working-class population, and with a character far and wide such as makes it unnecessary to describe the scenes nightly to be witnessed there, the building will give us an opportunity far superior to any we have hitherto had of gathering tens of thousands of the worst of the people together, and we trust that a great many of those who have formerly been seen there seeking worldly pleasure will soon be found on the same spot, rejoicing in the Lord and leading others to Him.⁴⁰

Despite Booth's hope, the Salvation Army's parades from the Grecian Theatre, their Shoreditch Corps' headquarters, thus added insult to injury as far as many of the local community were concerned. The Salvationists' first triumphal procession from Finsbury Square to Shepherdess Walk on 12 August 1882 suggested how matters might go in the future. Starting at a quarter to six in the morning the Salvationists marched to Shepherdess Walk to take formal possession of their new premises. The *Times* noted that 'individual members of the Army experienced in the streets some rough play, and were bestrewn with flour and other harmless matters, but no one sustained any injury'.⁴¹ The *Islington Gazette* reported the 6,000 Salvationists present were confronted by an 'unruly mob, who



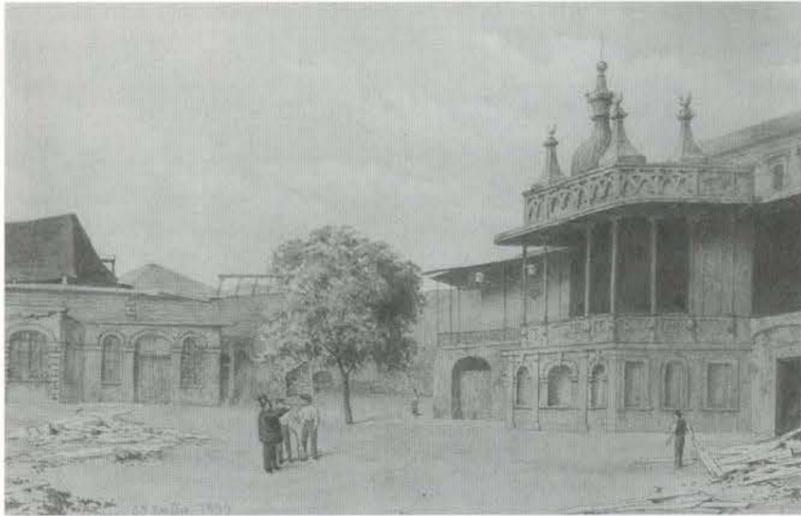
The Grecian Theatre at the Eagle, about 1840

jostled and derided them as they passed along'.⁴² After the Salvation Army's ceremony in their new grounds, they marched out shortly before 8 o'clock:

as they emerged into the street, many of the leaders were roughly handled by the crowd. Bags of flour were thrown over them, and their uniforms damaged; whilst many of the sisters were hustled and mobbed.⁴³

Just over a month later the Salvation Army dedicated the Grecian Theatre to its new use. A volatile crowd greeted the Salvationists with 'considerable hooting and hissing'.⁴⁴ During the afternoon, the crowd grew larger and more boisterous. Numerous Salvationists, both men and women, were injured by the crowd; one man who rode up the City Road atop a tram was so injured by missiles thrown by the Salvation Army's opponents that he was scarcely recognisable before he got to the theatre.⁴⁵ The large body of police present was so outnumbered that 'they seemed as nothing', and were unable to protect the arriving Army officers and soldiers.⁴⁶

The ill-feeling arising from the Salvationists' occupation of the tavern and theatre did not swiftly dissipate. In January 1883 Frederick Marsh appeared at Worship Street Police Court in connection with anti-Salvationist disturbances on 14 January at



The Grecian theatre in course of demolition, painted by J. P. Emslie in 1899

Shepherdess Walk, where at least 5,000 people had been present.⁴⁷ On 29 January 'a large mob was congregated around the Grecian Theatre, waiting for the Salvation Army to leave'; one Salvationist was stabbed.⁴⁸ At the start of February 1883 the *HKG* reported claims that there would be a London-wide mobilisation of the Skeleton Army to attack their Salvationist opponents.⁴⁹ This was no idle threat: between two and three thousand Skeletons 'paraded the City-road, Shepherdess walk and other streets, singing their coarse parodies; and tumultuous behaviour constantly obliged those who were passing to take refuge. Many assaults were committed with impunity'; the Salvation Army decided not to parade that day.⁵⁰ This was, however, not an isolated occurrence. Weekly, the *Eagle* saw an 'avalanche of wrathful violence' as the Salvationists' opponents assailed their processions.⁵¹ The great and sustained violence against the Salvation Army around Shepherdess Walk appears to be unmatched anywhere else in London. But there is no suggestion in the newspaper reports of the violence that the mob had been got up by brewers or publicans, or any body outside the local community. The anger which led to the weekly gathering of anti-Salvationists around Shepherdess Walk seems to have sprung from two factors: opposition to the Sunday parades of the Army, and their occupation of the Grecian and the Eagle.

This unparalleled resentment and hostility to the Army, which seemed set to continue for months to come, effectively disappeared overnight. In February 1883 the Salvation Army ceased its weekly parades, which welcomed by the *HKG* who described the cessation of Salvationist activity as a truce 'between the residents of the metropolis and [Booth's] soldiery'. However, the paper feared a resumption of 'the dismal and repulsive jargon of music and voice, sent forth in pitiable discord'.⁵² The *Times* noted the Salvationists were still not marching in September 1883; and that there were police outside the Eagle.⁵³ And then — nothing. The campaign of physical opposition to the Salvation Army seems to have stopped as suddenly as it started.

The end of the campaign

There are a number of possible reasons for the abrupt end of the campaign, although it is impossible to be certain why the series of attacks on the Salvation Army seems to have come to an end — or if it did. There were certainly no further attacks reported. The imposition of harsh sentences could have had an impact. On 1 January 1883 the *HKG* reported that one John Andrews had been sentenced to six months' hard labour for assaulting a police constable in November 1882.⁵⁴ The officer attacked was so severely injured he had not worked since, perhaps leading to the maximum sentence the magistrates could impose. Several weeks later, a Bethnal Green costermonger, J. Old, was sentenced to two months' hard labour for assaulting a member of the Salvation Army; the report's subheading read 'A warning to the "Skeletons"'.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the severe rioting at the Eagle on 4 February — part of an ongoing campaign — showed there was yet energy among the Salvationists' enemies.⁵⁶ An attempt to widen the physical opposition to the Salvation Army to other temperance bodies, when

a Skeleton Army tried to take on the temperance mission at the Shoreditch Tabernacle, suggests that there was some sentiment for a broader anti-temperance campaign, and makes the cessation of violent opposition to the Salvation Army just a few months later all the more surprising.⁵⁷ However, on 12 February the *HKG* reported that a Bethnal Green priest, the Revd. Robert Loveridge, had persuaded some of the Skeleton Army to end their campaign after entering into a dialogue with some and inviting others to a church service.⁵⁸ Although no further similar discussions and events were reported by the *HKG*, it is possible that local discussions did take place. Furthermore, at least some former physical opponents of the Salvation Army entered their ranks. For instance, Charles Jeffries, a former leader of the Skeletons, enjoyed a long and prominent career within the Salvation Army following his conversion.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The Salvation Army's International Heritage Centre authority file on opposition to the Army does not list any references in the *War Cry* for Hackney, Shoreditch or Stoke Newington.⁶⁰ However, the physical campaign against the Salvation Army, which was accompanied by correspondence in the *HKG* and the legal case surrounding use of the Eagle Tavern, is indicative of a range of concerns and oppositions to the Army. This is paralleled in other parts of London by similar campaigns, which have largely been forgotten not only by historians but by the Salvation Army themselves. Although the struggles at Worthing, Basingstoke, Chester and Honiton have received greater attention from historians and scholars of the Salvation Army's past, the physical opposition detailed above is suggestive of wider resistance to the entrance of the Salvation Army into working class communities across the country than has been recognised. Further, claims about brewers and publicans doing any more than supporting the physical resistance to the Army should be reviewed; it is my contention that these obscure rather than reveal the truth about the mobilisation of opposition to the Salvation Army. Certainly, it was very late in the day before any role

for brewers or publicans in physical opposition to the Salvation Army was mentioned in the pages of *HKG*, where it was claimed that some 'London rowdies' wore helmets paid for by 'some East End publicans'.⁶¹

However, a more salient issue is the sheer scale of the physical opposition to the Salvationists in Hackney, Stoke Newington and Shoreditch. The anti-Salvation Army activity described in contemporary reports in just this small area of London suggests that opposition to the Army across the capital may have been of a significant scale. Victor Bailey claims that 'Salvation Army riots affected at least 60 towns and cities between 1878 and 1892'.⁶² This would appear to be an underestimate, certainly if London parishes are each considered broadly comparable with a town. A difficulty — but also an opportunity — for the student of public order or Salvation Army history is that so little research seems to have been done on physical opposition to the Army in London. There are hints that the history of Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington is echoed elsewhere in London, in Chalk Farm and Southwark for example.⁶³

Where historians have looked at this history of physical resistance to the Salvation Army, they have frequently ignored the wealth of information in local newspapers. Donald Richter, for instance, does not refer to any local newspaper in the chapter in his *Riotous Victorians*, which may account for his claim that 'processions in London were customarily accompanied by adequate police protection and few serious collisions occurred there'.⁶⁴ The avalanches of violence experienced weekly at the Eagle suggest matters were otherwise: it is possible there is a rich seam for historians to mine in the rest of London.

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Laburnum Street School



Brian Longman

The School Board

When the Elementary Education Act 1870 came into force it made education available to all children in England and Wales. Schooling had previously been limited by class, and poorer children would generally go straight into a place of work without any basic education. This revolutionary Act, known as the Forster act, made some form of education compulsory for children until they were 10 years old or educated to a set standard, whichever was the later. This age was raised to 11 in 1893 and 12 in 1899. The Act created elected school boards which were responsible for building and running schools where needed. The School Board for London (LSB) was the first board to be founded under the Act and covered the area of the Metropolitan Board of Works and later of the London County Council (LCC), the area now known as inner London.

The LSB's main objective was to build new schools and renovate others that it had inherited to provide education for all poor children in its area: by doing this it became the biggest provider of education in London.¹ There was a great need for new schools, and in 1871 Edward Robert Robson (1836-1917) was appointed as the Board's first architect. Initially Robson was responsible for overseeing architectural competitions to design new schools, but this was soon considered to be expensive and time consuming. As a result Robson was given control of the design and produced a large-scaled, attractive, yet functional school layout that became a standard for years to come, while giving each building its own individuality.² In 1902 a new Education Act, the Balfour act, abolished school boards and placed control of education under local authorities. In London, responsibility passed to the LCC in 1903.³ The LCC began to integrate board schools and non-board schools, and following a survey in 1905 set about an increased building and renovation programme, which included the replacement of a large number of schools not considered suitable for renovation.

A new school

As part of the continuing requirement for new schools in underprivileged areas of London, Laburnum Street School was built in 1908. The LCC's chief architect at this time was Robson's former assistant Thomas Jerram Bailey (1843-1910), who had replaced Robson in 1883 and was responsible for almost all LCC schools built between 1904 and his retirement at the end of 1909.⁴

The school was built on a brownfield site between Laburnum Street and the Grand Union (Regent's) Canal in the borough of Shoreditch. The site had previously housed the retort chambers and cokeyard of the Independent Gas Light and Coke Company gasworks. The company, no longer producing gas at the site, sold off half of its land, which was divided at the canal inlet to the gasworks with the school taking the area fronting Laburnum Street and the remainder being used for industrial purposes.⁵

The design of the building was typical of most LSB/LCC schools of this time. Built in the

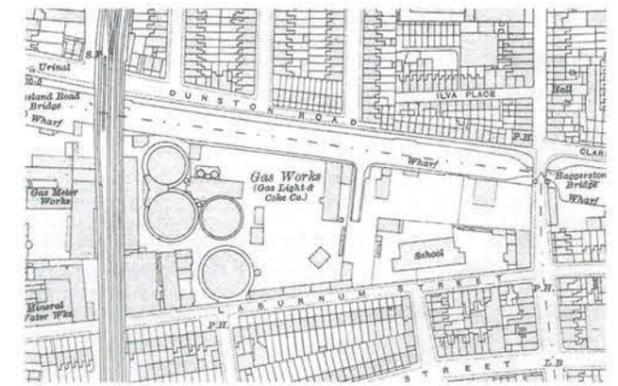
Queen Anne style, it was a tall and sturdy three-tier building of London stock brick with red brick and stone dressings. The front section, which faced south, contained the halls and stair cores and was flanked at each end by double gabled wings; it had a steep hipped roof topped with a central bell turret. The rear section, facing north, contained the classrooms. This also had a steep pitched roof and several attractive crow-stepped dormer gables facing the Regent's Canal. External detailing was minimal, with restrained pediments, keystones, corbels and sills. The white sliding timber sash windows were very large, making them a striking feature against the red brickwork. There were three entrances to the front of the building: raised boys' and girls' entrances to the stair cores and a level infants' entrance direct to the ground floor: each of these had a stone relief above the door. The school grounds were enclosed within an eight feet high brick built boundary wall with three entrance gates at the front, one for the boys, one for the girls and another for the infants; playgrounds surrounded the school building and had a tarmacadam surface. There were a number of outbuildings in the grounds including a two-storey



The front elevation of the school in 2002

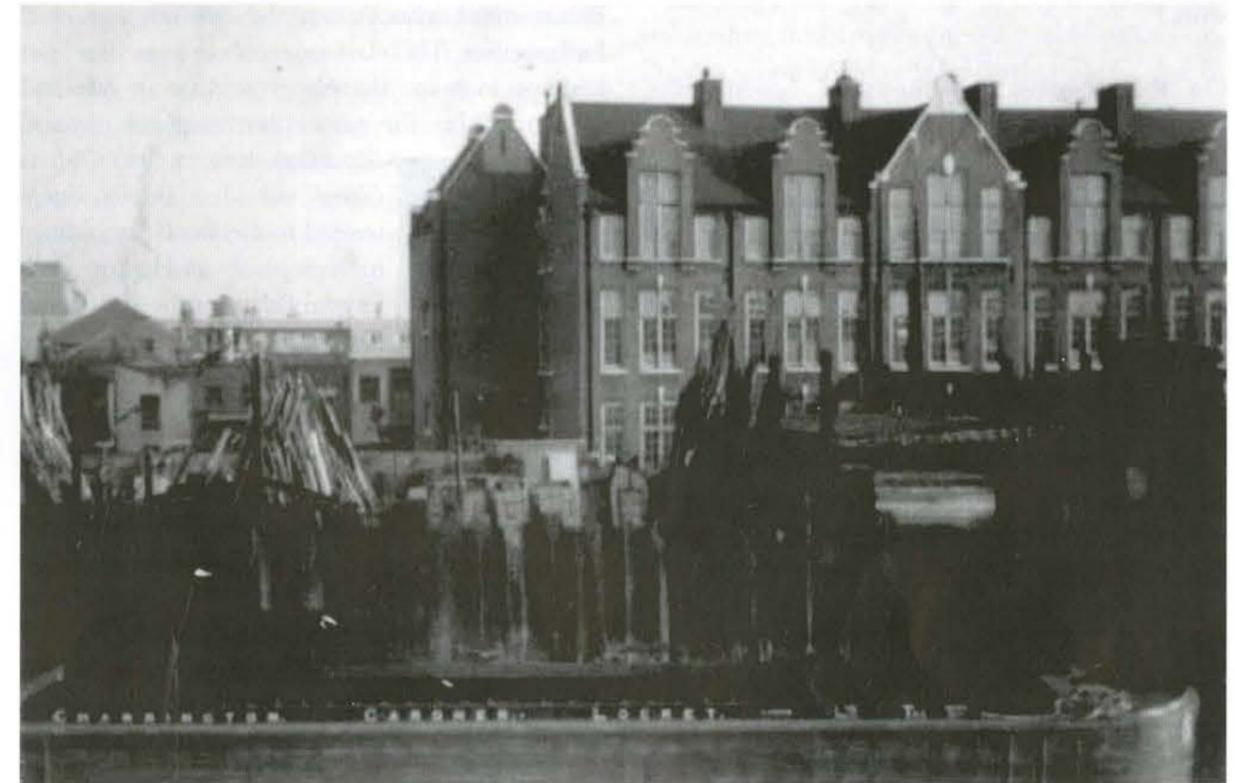
school house, two toilet blocks, a raised classroom and playground shelters which contained built-in seating. The playgrounds were divided east and west by a wall and gate at the front of the building and by a fence at the rear.

Internally there were large central halls at each level, used for assemblies, school meals, drama, dance and gymnastics. The ground floor hall had large decorative fanlight windows above the double entrance doors at each end, and the top floor hall had exposed roof trusses and tension rods. The classrooms had extremely high ceilings and large windows allowing daylight to flood in. Supplementary lighting was provided by skylights and gas lamps. The walls were glazed brick to dado level; later much of this was painted over. Floors were concrete, with some areas such as the halls and classrooms having a varnished herringbone parquet wood finish. The staircases fed a separate service core which contained small service rooms such as the staffrooms; these had lower ceilings allowing for additional mezzanine levels. These



The school and gasworks sites in 1916

service cores could be seen on the southern (front) exterior of the building as projecting bays. Some of the rooms on the service core had cast-iron fireplaces. Staircases were also constructed in brown glazed brick, a material widely used in schools for its ease of cleaning. There were basic cloakrooms and washrooms at each level, constructed of timber partitioning. A cellar on the south-east of the building accessed from the girls' staircase contained the boiler-rooms, which were fitted with coal chutes; the boilers provided hot



The Regent's canal and timber wharfs with the school behind, about 1951

water to sinks and heating via radiators. Internal architectural decoration throughout was minimal and robust.⁶

Robson and Bailey left a legacy of school architecture in London that is as recognisable today as it was when these soaring triple decker buildings rose up as symbols of hope over the local communities. Many of these schools are now being acknowledged and listed by English Heritage.

The pupils arrive

The elementary school opened on 23 November 1908 as three separate schools, called departments: junior boys, junior girls and mixed infants. Each department had its own floor accessed by its own separate staircase. The boys occupied the second floor, the girls the first floor and the infants the ground level; this separation of pupils was a typical school system used at the time. There was a head teacher for each department and a mixture of permanent and temporary teaching staff. The head teachers would meet annually to discuss school work.

On the opening day the girls' headmistress, Henrietta Frückling, recorded in her school



The girls' entrance, 2005: the school's inauguration is commemorated in the date on the stone relief

logbook 'I took charge today of this school. 182 girls have come from the mixed school at Fellows Street.'⁷ The boys' headmaster, Albert E.S. Lowden, wrote '171 boys lately scholars of Fellows Street presented themselves excepting one case in which the mother declared the distance too great, every boy in attendance at Fellows Street last Friday joined the new school.'⁸ Fellows Street School closed on 2 November 1908 with all staff, pupils and stock moving to Laburnum Street.⁹

The surrounding area of the school was notoriously poverty-stricken. The Charles Booth poverty map of 1898-99 shows Shoreditch and Haggerston as being a mixture of comfortable, poor and very poor inhabitants.¹⁰ During the school's early years many children were excluded for being infectious; on 23 February 1910, 40 girls were excluded by the school nurse as their heads and bodies were said to be 'in a verminous condition'. When inclement weather arrived, attendance dropped because children did not have adequate clothing or footwear.¹¹

While in the school's care the children were well looked after. The classrooms were hygienic, light and spacious and the playgrounds were safe and of ample size for games and exercise; physical education lessons were often taken outside. Pupils were treated to frequent day outings to such places as Hoxton Hall, Crystal Palace or the zoo. Every day, prayers were said in morning assembly and in the afternoon before dismissal. The LCC doctor, nurse and dentist made regular visits to the school to check the children's health and wellbeing. In the early 1900s teaching was looked upon as a type of social work in the East End: teachers considered their salaries to be less important than helping the children.¹²

Although not officially recognised until 1916, Empire Day was considered an important event, and celebrated annually on 24 May with a combined boys', girls' and infants' assembly in the playground. The children would sing patriotic songs and salute the union flag as they marched past, to remind them that they were British and part of a glorious empire. Following the assembly the school would close and everyone enjoyed the rest of the day off.⁷ After the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 the day was celebrated by all schoolchildren in the British Empire on the late Queen's birthday. Later renamed Commonwealth Day, this annual celebration lasted for around 60 years. It is now largely forgotten.¹³

The 1914-18 war

By 1914 the school had become firmly established and received an accolade from the LCC district inspector Mr Bray, who wrote in his report of the boys' department 'In many respects this is a school of great enterprise'.¹⁴

In 1915 the school began adult evening classes; these were free of charge, after a small registration fee, and open to men only. 135 men enrolled for subjects such as woodwork, gardening, band practice, first aid, and boot repairing. The classes ran three nights a week from 7.45 pm to 9.45 pm; many of the men who signed up came from the local gasworks. The first years of evening classes were frequently disrupted by zeppelin air raid scares. On one occasion the police visited the school and requested that the lights be put out, as they were reflecting onto the canal and zeppelins were on their way!¹⁵

Children were not evacuated during the first world war. If there was an air raid whilst they were attending school the teachers would take them down to the supposed safety of the cellar. Ida Rex, a young geography schoolteacher who taught at Laburnum Street between 1915 and 1919, recalls

I had to get all these boys down safely from the top of the school to the bottom with the guns going. I think I was very scared. We were going right down to the cellars where the engines were and then we sat

there and sang. And we sang going down the steps to drown the noise of the guns.¹⁶

On the evening of 2 October 1917 there was a very near miss when a bomb was dropped onto a brickyard beside the canal. The explosion damaged one corner of the school and shattered the windows; the school closed for a day to enable repairs to be carried out.¹⁷

At the end of the war, further improvements in education were brought about by the introduction of the Education Act 1918. Drawn up by Herbert Fisher, president of the Board of Education (and commonly known as the Fisher Act), it enforced some form of elementary schooling for all children and raised the school leaving age from 12 to 14. It also paved the way for tertiary education, abolished all fees in state elementary schools and widened provision for medical inspection, nursery schools and special needs education. As more women were now working in factories, there was a need for younger children to attend nursery school, where it was hoped that they would be cleaner, nourished and healthy, thus avoiding health problems later on. Fisher's vision could only be partly realised, due to the economic recession at the time.¹⁸

The inter-war years

In March 1921 the boys' and girls' departments were required to change floors, the boys who were located on the second floor, moved down to the first, with the girls moving in the opposite direction. This unusual occurrence was brought about by the ill-health of the headmaster, Mr Lowden, who was unable to ascend several flights of stairs to reach his office at the very top of the building in the attic off the second floor. Lowden served the school as headmaster during its formative years from its opening to June 1923, having previously served as headmaster at Fellows Street school and overseen the transfer to Laburnum Street.¹⁹

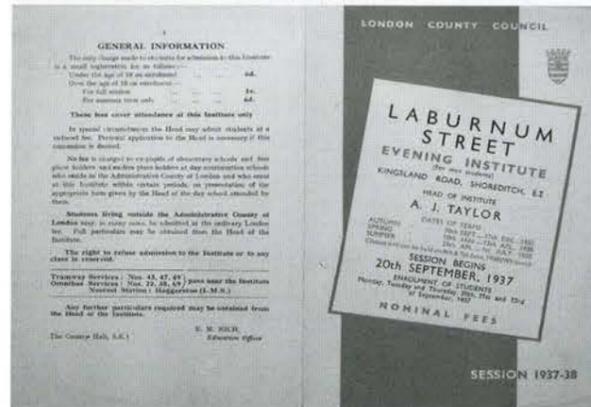
On June 16 1925, 6 year-old Gio Pook fell into the Regent's canal when he was trying to recover something he had dropped. Pook was rescued by

11 year-old Laburnum Street schoolboy William Chessher. Chessher heroically entered the water fully clothed and saved Pook's life. He was awarded a parchment certificate by the Royal Humane Society; the school was extremely proud of his act of bravery.²⁰

Following the Hadow Report 'The education of the adolescent', produced for the Board of Education in 1926, the evolution of a two-tier system of education was introduced for children in local authority education, with a break at 11+ years of age. The report also recommended that the school leaving age should be raised to 15, although this was not implemented until 1947.²¹ On 13 April 1926 Laburnum Street and nearby Shap Street schools were re-organised, with the former becoming a junior (primary) school and the latter becoming a senior (secondary) school.²²

By 1937 Laburnum Street had become an infant and mixed junior school, with the junior boys and girls no longer segregated inside the building. They retained separate playgrounds, the girls sharing theirs with the infants. This playground separation was universal in junior schools, as boys were considered rough and energetic, and girls were expected to look after their younger siblings.

Between 1935 and 1938 a single-storey infill nursery extension was added to the north-east corner of the school building, with its own entrance accessed from the girls'/infants' playground.²³



An evening institute prospectus from 1937

The 1939-45 war

In May 1938, with war again a threat, the LCC agreed to close all its schools should air attacks become likely. Training of school keepers began on September 28 that year, when the Laburnum headmaster E.H. Hawkes received instructions regarding the evacuation of children.²⁴

On 24 July 1939 schoolteacher Mr Windsdreffel was so disappointed with the work of his class he burnt their papers and put the embers in his waste bin. Whilst his actions may have been considered at that time as acceptable behaviour, the bin later caught fire and set alight his table, chair and the floor. Fortunately the fire was seen and extinguished, with only minor damage.²⁵

Much worse to follow. On 28 August 1939 the headmaster Mr Hawkes recorded in the school logbook 'As instructed, the whole staff attended school and completed arrangements for evacuation of children numbered 327.' The following day he wrote 'Opened school for evacuation children and regular pupils. According to instructions no registers were kept or marked'.²⁶

Despite being pre-planned, the billeting process was chaotic and emotional for the pupils. Leaving home and its familiar surroundings, packed with a gas mask and basic clothing, they headed out of London on crammed trains. Many of the Laburnum Street schoolchildren and teachers were evacuated to an area around Long Buckby in Northamptonshire. Following a visit by A.E. Hills, a Hackney councillor acting in his capacity as chairman of school managers, a request was made through the *Hackney Gazette* for mothers and other readers to send warm clothes and stout boots to the evacuees. Some mothers were not happy with the evacuation, and brought their children back to London. Hills scolded them by saying... 'you, by your actions, have robbed your children of their education and the chance of a holiday in the country, where they had an opportunity of learning and improving their knowledge'.²⁷



A girls' school trip to Barham House, September 1937

Because of the number of children returning to London, some schools were re-opened, as otherwise only home tuition was available, and older children could be seen roaming the streets. Such schools were known as emergency schools. Children's education suffered badly through wartime, with very little formal education available.²⁸ For example, George Sullivan, a young Laburnum Street pupil, was evacuated alone to Aberkenfig, South Wales, and put into a Welsh school. His family joined him two months later as the blitz in London intensified. When he returned home to How's Street he was too old to return to school and went straight to a place of work.²⁹

During the war years Laburnum Street was put to good use. The ground floor was used by the Auxiliary Fire Service, a voluntary service set up in 1938 to supplement the fire brigade. The first floor was used as a community feeding centre known as a British restaurant (a name coined by the prime minister, Winston Churchill).³⁰ These kitchens evolved from the LCC's Londoners' meals service, which provided a temporary emergency system for people who had been bombed out or were without gas and electricity. It was a non-profit service

staffed by volunteers, and exempt from rationing, providing a cheap meal for sixpence, pudding for twopence and tea for a penny.³¹ They provided good healthy food in a friendly atmosphere and were well attended.³²

The school building survived the war years without damage, despite Shoreditch being very severely bombed and throughout England and Wales one in five schools destroyed or damaged.³³ In the middle of the 20th century, as London was rebuilt after the devastation of war, the surrounding area was extensively redeveloped with tall council flats

replacing small workshops and Victorian terraced houses; this made the school building a less prominent focal feature of the local landscape.

In 1944 a new Education Act – the 'Butler Act' – changed the secondary school system. A new, 'tripartite' system consisted of three types of free secondary schooling: grammar schools, secondary technical schools and secondary modern schools. To assess which type of school pupils should attend they took an examination at the end of their primary education, known as the '11 plus'. This generally consisted of three examination papers: arithmetic, writing and general problem-solving. The tripartite system of education lasted until 1976.

The post-war years

Enduring pupil memories of post-war primary school were school meals and school milk. 1946 saw the Milk Act, requiring one third of a pint of milk to be provided free to every school child under 18. The milk arrived at school in crates of miniature bottles and was sipped through straws in the classroom. The Labour government of 1968 removed it from secondary schools due to cost-cutting, but Laburnum pupils continued to receive

it until 1971 when future Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in her role as education minister, stopped it for over 7s, earning her the undesirable nickname 'milk snatcher'.³⁴ Meals were available to children who stayed in school during lunchtime; less wealthy children could receive the meals free, although they did not always take this up due to the stigma attached.

Laburnum Street school underwent a slight name change in 1951 and from then on was known as Laburnum Primary School.³⁵

The London Government Act 1963 replaced the LCC with the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1965. Education in the former LCC area came under the newly formed Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), a special committee of the GLC.³⁶

In the 1960s Laburnum School championed the use of the Pitman initial teaching alphabet (ITA), an introductory phonics reading system recommended by ILEA. It never really caught on and is rarely used today.³⁷ By 1970 the school's main reading source, Ladybird books, dropped the scheme, as by then it was proving unpopular within the primary education system.³⁸

A proud new addition

Laburnum School was always a big promoter of swimming and regularly competed in and won local swimming galas. During 1964 a small 'learner' swimming pool was installed in the shelter beneath the raised classroom in the boys' playground. The funds for the new pool were raised by the school with each of the pupils' families making a 30 shilling (£1.50) contribution towards the cost. Local businesses helped by supplying building materials. The pool was built by a group of fathers who worked tirelessly and unpaid for four months during the evenings. It was completed and presented to the school on 9 September 1964; in recognition of his service to the school newly-retired headmaster J. M. Davis was invited to open it. Some of the schoolchildren celebrated the opening by taking an



The parent-funded learner pool, built in 1964

inaugural swim in the pool. Following a vote of thanks from teacher Miss Hewlett, Thomas Keen, one of the fathers involved with the building work, praised his helpers and said 'if this pool should save one child's life then our work was not in vain.'³⁹ The new facility proved to be a real asset for the school and many of the pupils were taught to swim there before progressing onto the full size pool in nearby Haggerston baths.

In the 1980s the school collaborated with Free Form Arts Trust on a public arts project. Free Form was set up to promote visual arts as a means of community improvement and self-expression. Working with children from Laburnum they created a vibrant series of colourful mosaics along the Regent's Canal towpath adjacent to the school. Although many are now neglected and vandalised, some of these are still visible.⁴⁰ A large laburnum tree mosaic spreads across the grade II-listed Haggerston Bridge, with a scroll at the bottom. This reads 'Laburnum School' and 'Miss Hewlett 1958-1982', a tribute to the much-respected and appreciated infants' headmistress.

The Education Reform Act of 1988, also known as the Baker Act, was seen as the most important education act since the Butler act of 1944. The teaching curriculum was now set by government, whereas it had previously been set by teachers. A national curriculum was put in place, with compulsory national tests known as SATS taken at key stages for 7, 11 and 14 year olds. The results



The mosaic on Haggerston Bridge

of these tests were published annually in league tables to compare how schools were performing. Education responsibility was delegated to the London boroughs with ILEA being abolished in 1990. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was set up in 1990 to carry out rigorous inspections of schools, previously these inspections were carried out by Her Majesty's inspectors. This act was to have a critical effect on the school.⁴¹

The final years

As Laburnum Primary School entered the 21st century it was considered to be failing following a damning Ofsted report which stated 'the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and the leadership and management are poor'. Despite efforts to rectify this it was to be the death knell for the school.⁴²

Five years short of its centenary, Laburnum school, now under the control of Hackney council and the Learning Trust, closed on 31 August 2003 despite a long and passionate 'Save Laburnum School' campaign fought by staff, pupils, parents and the local community.⁴³ At its closure the primary school had a capacity of 249 pupils ranging from 3 to 11 years, though in its final year 180 children (88 boys and 92 girls) were on the roll.⁴⁴ Initially it was rumoured that the school building would be converted to residential use, in the way that had become popular in London. However in 2004 a planning application was submitted to Hackney

council to demolish the existing building and build a new secondary academy school on the site; this was approved in 2005.⁴⁵ The location of the old school building and its exceptional storey-to-storey heights made it difficult to adapt and marry into a new structure, and so in 2005 it was demolished, much to the sadness of the local community. Residents who had lived all their lives in Haggerston and Shoreditch saw their childhood memories reduced to a pile of rubble overnight.

The school building was not in a conservation area, nor was it listed nationally or locally, but it was deemed to be of significant historical interest by the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, who recommended making a historic building assessment of the school. As a condition of the planning approval, a comprehensive written, drawn and photographic record was made prior to demolition; a copy is kept at Hackney Archives.⁴⁶ A new modern secondary school called the Bridge Academy was built on the site in 2007, with all traces of the former Laburnum Street School building completely wiped out. Even the huge trees that shaded the front of the building were uprooted and removed. A former Haggerston resident, Huggins Norbal, attended the school from 1968, and recalls times before and during demolition -

The local children all went to the same school, Laburnum Street infants and juniors. When my son was young I used to take him down Laburnum Street in his buggy and show him where I went to school. A big part of my life went with the demolition of Laburnum Street School. I was not happy with the design of the school that has replaced it. I would have preferred if they had kept the school building and converted it into residential properties. The area has changed a lot since I was a kid, very, very sad indeed.⁴⁷

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Dedicated to all former pupils, teachers and staff at Laburnum Street School Hackney E2.

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