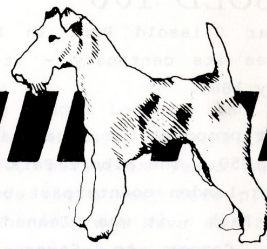


THE TERRIER



THE FRIENDS OF HACKNEY ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

No. 14

Spring 1989

News From Hackney Archives

Staff

There is no progress yet on the filling of Jenny's post, but we hope to be able to appoint a new Assistant Archivist (to replace Jayne) in the foreseeable future. We may also be getting one or two YDS Assistants, so the staff shortage should be less acute. It has not been an easy winter, either for us or for our users.

Fortunately we have been able to retain the services of our present conservator, Sara Archard. Sara is working with Graham Bignell, and spends three days a week at Hackney Archives. She works on our own documents and on items we take in from other archive repositories (thus generating income).

Sara trained at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, and has had a year's experience since qualifying. She lives at Lee, in Lewisham, and her hobby is playing squash.

Publications

Two new Godfrey Edition maps have appeared; Dalston 1870 and Stoke Newington 1914. The notes for the Stoke Newington map are by Jenny Golden and describe the working-class suburbs which West Hackney and Stoke Newington had now become, and the changes in local government which had made Stoke Newington a Metropolitan Borough. Jenny finishes with a note on the 1911 controversy over whether couples should be allowed to "spoon" on Hackney Downs.

Dalston in 1870 was nearly all built up, but except along the canal very little industry had moved into the area. As always with the 1870 edition, the trees and the layouts of the gardens are shown and give a clear picture of a pleasant suburb on the edge of London.

The historical notes by David Mander are enlivened with amusing extracts from trade directories of the period.

David is editing another publication due out this autumn - Hackney in Old Photographs before 1914. This is being published by Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd. as part of their nationwide series. It will include about 250 pictures of Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington, and as well as choosing the pictures David is doing extensive background research. For example, the photograph shown overleaf as listed in our catalogue as Portland Place, not surprisingly as that is what it says. David compared it with other photographs of Portland Place (the houses on the south side of Lower Clapton Road, including the Urban Studies Centre) and realised that it was wrongly labelled. After looking at a number of other photographs in our collection and poring over the Ordnance Survey map he finally identified it as Drayton House, which stood in Upper Homerton (now Urswick Road), opposite Sutton Place.

Hackney in Old Photographs before 1914 will probably have a cover price of £6.50, but we hope to offer Friends a discount. More news with the Autumn Terrier!

Jews and politics in Hackney

Those of you who were not able to come to Elaine Smith's talk on 23rd February may like to know that it is to be published in New Essays in Anglo-Jewish History, edited by David Cesaroni and published by Blackwells.

Jean Wait

CLISSOLD 100

This year Clissold Park in Stoke Newington celebrates its centenary - it was opened on 24th July 1889.

The first proposal for a park in this area was made in 1850. The Albert Park would have been the North London counterpart of East London's Victoria Park - it was planned to extend from Highbury Corner to Seven Sisters Road, including the area of Clissold Park. The park which did eventually result from this proposal - Finsbury Park in 1869 - was considerably smaller, and no doubt local people felt that something more was needed.

Clissold Park (then called Newington Park) was bought in the early 19th century by William Crawshay, owner of a major ironworks in South Wales. His daughter Eliza married the Rev Augustus Clissold, and the couple lived in the house for many years. After Clissold's death in 1882 the estate reverted to one George Crawshay, who in 1886 sold it to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for building land.

The mansion was built about 1790 by Jonathan Hoare of the banking family. The architect was his nephew Joseph Woods. The bricks were made

on the spot, from clay dug on the estate - the resulting pits were made into ornamental lakes. When the estate was sold for building the lakes were filled in, and when it became a public park they were dug out again.

A committee was formed to try and acquire the estate for a public park. The leading campaigners were John Runtz and Joseph Beck, whose efforts are commemorated on a drinking fountain in the park. The various local authorities in the area contributed, as did the Charity Commissioners. With the money thus raised the Metropolitan Board of Works acquired the park, although it was their successor the London County Council which owned it by the time of the opening. The ceremony was performed by the L.C.C. Chairman, Lord Rosebery.

To commemorate this important centenary we are including some previously unpublished views of the park in this edition of *The Terrier*.

Jean Wait

Sources: Victoria County History Vol VIII; Sexby, The Municipal Parks...of London.



Not Portland Place! Drayton House, Upper Homerton, 1884 H.A.D. P 1446

OFF THE SHELF

In the Terrier No 3 Barbara Ray gave some interesting extracts from the Hackney Cuttings Book, which she is indexing. A similar series of cuttings books, which have now been fully catalogued, were compiled by the Tyssen Librarian (keeper of Hackney's charitably-founded library) at the end of the last century and beginning of this. The first four books in the series contain cuttings from old newspapers of the 18th and 19th centuries, and No 7 is a similar volume purchased by the Tyssen Librarian. Nos 5, 6, and 8 - 23 contain contemporary cuttings 1898-1902. The series continues with cuttings books compiled by Hackney Borough Libraries staff from 1922 to 1965.

The following cutting (from book no. H/LD/7/16) is reproduced verbatim; it is from the Illustrated Mail of October 1901. Unfortunately the illustrations mentioned are of such poor quality that they cannot be reproduced; come in and see them if you can!

LONDON'S CHINA GARDEN - invented, designed, and produced by an ex-soldier Board School caretaker.

Homerton Board School boasts of having one of the most extraordinary gardens in existence. In a corner of the asphalted quadrangle which surrounds the school, is the caretaker's house, and on a space between this house and the school Mr Newman, the caretaker, has been busily occupied for seventeen years constructing his strange garden.

First he brought the mould in in sacks, and laid beds out on the asphalt, and then he proceeded to surround these beds with what he calls ornaments. These "ornaments" are the most heterogeneous collection of oddments ever seen. Carefully set in cement are old lustre ornaments, bits of looking glass, cockle, oyster and other queer looking shells, glass stoppers, pieces of broken plates, coloured photographs, bones of hyena, horse and stork, and statuettes of many animals and notabilities.

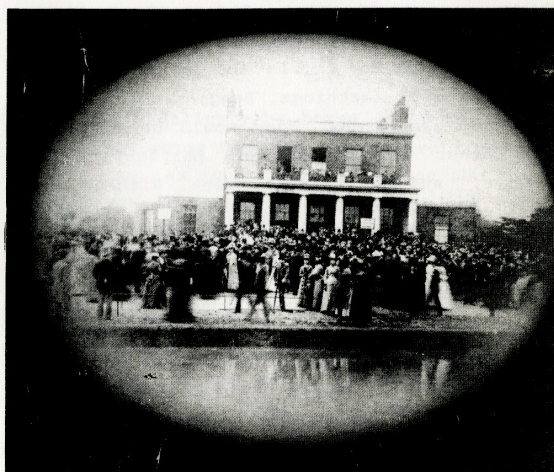
Above these ornaments spin a number of toy windmills, by the side of which float several flags, and here and there about the garden are scattered a dozen model ships, some looking fit to sail a pond today, and others looking melancholy wrecks.

"I was one of the Bengal Lancers, and served through the Indian Mutiny" says Mr Newman. "When I came here, seventeen years ago, it struck me that this was a very bare place to look at, and as I could not have an ordinary garden, I started one along the lines you see".

"I get my stuff from all sorts of places. Whenever there is a fire or old houses are being pulled down, I take a sack, make friends with the firemen or workmen, and find all sorts of treasures. Then I go down to the Hackney Marshes where they shoot [tip] rubbish, and sometimes come away with best part of a sackful.

"I found that horse's skull down there." Mr Newman points proudly to a horse's skull that forms one of the chief ornaments in an extraordinary set piece which he calls "Gladstone's Memorial", and which he says took him three years to construct. This memorial covers the wall to a height of about seven feet, and is composed of a weird collection of broken crockery, pieces of a soup tureen, boot buttons, horse shoes, a looking-glass, various tin discs, and other odds and ends stuck into cement.

"Here is a Lancer chasing a Boer," says Mr Newman, pointing to a couple of old toy soldiers disposed about the rockery so as to carry out that idea. "Here," pointing to more toy soldiers, "are British infantry fighting the Boers; and riding over that bridge, behind the statue of General Roberts, are Lifeguards coming to take the Boers in the rear."



Clissold Park: the opening ceremony. HAD S 353

Mr Newman is loyal. There are portraits of the King and Queen stuck on the centre-piece to his garden, which is shown in our second photograph. But, as is natural in an old soldier, he is an ardent admirer of the Army, and there are statuettes of generals stuck all over his garden. Roberts, Buller, French, and Baden-Powell have the most prominent places; but there are others, and among them is Louis Botha, the famous Boer.

Ex-President Kruger is also represented, but his effigy is not a flattering one. Mr Newman, who does not admire Kruger, made it out of part of the spine of a defunct horse. On one side of Mr Kruger is Mrs Kruger, and on the other Mr Newman has ironically placed a gilt statue of Liberty.

"My garden is nearly completed now," Mr Newman says, "but it will take me a few more years yet. It has been most satisfactory work to do, and I am very proud of it. Lady Jeune came to

see it not long ago, and she said she wanted to take photographs of it.

"Of course it means a lot of work to keep it in order, for the wind is always blowing down my windmills and flags, and the boys and girls - drat them! - are always walking off with something or breaking something. Here is a plaster model of three chicks coming out of their shells which a housebreaker gave me, but they've pulled two of the chicks out and broken one of the shells, so I've had to take it down."

Mr Newman has succeeded in producing a weirdly interesting and altogether unique garden, and he is to be congratulated on the result.

The China Garden is a favourite rendezvous in the summer evenings for the people of Homerton, especially on Sundays, when a select gathering of connoisseurs gather together to discuss the week's additions to the wonderful collection.

Memories of an Apprentice Pharmacist

In the last Terrier we printed extracts from an oral history tape of the late Israel Renson, describing the chemists shop in Brick Lane, Bethnal Green where he served his apprenticeship. These further extracts give his memories of Brick Lane and the people who came into the shop.

We had a way there that all our farthings that came in, we'd often get farthings, we'd put aside at the end of the counter near the door. There was a little sort of desk there at the end with a little lift up lid where we kept the invoices stuck on a file and on it we had a little pile of farthings. Beggars used to come in almost every day. They would be following each other up the street, particularly on Sundays, and no beggar went without his farthing. Just imagine, if they got a farthing in each shop all the way along Brick Lane they didn't do too badly - they could get a bed. We used to recognise them. Now a man came in once, a tall man, looking very very bedraggled, very parlous state. I took a farthing and handed it over the counter to him. He looked at me a bit surprised and he said 'I'd like a bottle of Eno's fruit salts, a 3s 6d one.' We never used to sell one! We used to keep one in stock, mostly they were 2s ones and if you sold a 2s one you thought you were doing well. I took a

deep breath; I thought 'What a bloomin' fool!' He probably didn't realise what it was I had offered him but I felt terrible about it. If I could have gone through the floor I'd have been happy.

I wish I'd kept a diary of every day that we worked there. Another man used to come in the shop occasionally. He was Prince Monolulu. He was a well-known, bit of a rascally tipster, a black man who claimed that he came from Ethiopia, that he was a Rus, a prince of Ethiopia - I think he was just a prince among tipsters. But for many years he was well known round the East End and I've even seen him at Hackney. He used to walk about dressed in a long multi-coloured cloak, patchwork it looked like and on his head he had an African head-dress with enormous feathers, red and blue feathers. Now he used to come in the shop. He knew my guvnor was Russian. And nearly every time he'd say a few words in Russian to him! And my guvnor used to answer him. He'd come in, 'Hello!', put on an air, and used to carry a big stick with feathers on it. I said to my guvnor 'Does he know Russian?' He said 'They're the only words he knows. He repeats them every time!.

Among our other customers were the local prostitutes. They lived, I think, in the lodging house in Thrawl Street. I didn't know a lot of them, probably half a dozen or so, just ordinary working girls in their late twenties - they were not young girls; they were older women, working women, Cockneys, simpletons in fact, simple-minded girls, nothing vicious, nothing debauched about them. In our shop they came in, they respected my guvnor very much and he was never contemptuous of them, treated them like ladies. They always called him 'Sir', very respectful, never called him by name. Even me they used to call 'Sir'! I was only a young lad, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen; well, I thought I was a young lad anyway. I always felt like a schoolboy.

They had their regular little purchases. They always had a little twopenny box of face powder which was usually 'Phul-Nana' Powder; it was a mock Indian name for the perfume - there was a Phul-Nana perfume as well - made by George Grossmith. They could have it in two colours - pink or cream. Then they would buy a pennyworth or two pennyworth or carmine which was a red granular powder which we used to knock out from a little glass jar onto a small square of paper, then we'd fold it over and double up the ends. That would be used for colouring the cheeks. It would last a long time, you'd be surprised; a trace of that on your finger and you could rub it all over the cheek, it would spread. Usually they used to do it in the form of a red circle, they'd look like red circles when they were finished, not at all artistic! It didn't graduate, it had an edge; it made them look a bit hectic. Then some of them used to buy these little books of red papers which had a colouring matter on which they would wet and rub on the lips instead of lipstick. There were lipsticks but they were only just coming in. Most girls, if they bought a lipstick were looked upon as rather fast, looked upon as ladies of pleasure! It took quite a time before ordinary girls began to use this sort of stuff. I know when I first got there in 1923 we very rarely sold lipsticks; they were only about 9d or a shilling in a silver slide case. Anyway, they'd have the carmine, lip-rouge and a box of face powder and occasionally they'd come in for a couple of pennorth of boracic lotion. They'd bathe their eyes with it because they thought it made their eyes look fresh and sparkling - 'eye-sparkle' they sometimes used to call it. Also, they had little tiny bottles, which we used to supply them with - what we called one

dram vials - held a teaspoon. A vial was a round tubular bottle which would take a little cork. They'd bring that in and we'd fill it from say a pint bottle of perfume - Phul-Nana perfume - and they'd have three-pennorth or six-pennorth. One drop of that would last quite a time.

And that was their armamentarium! I believe quite a number of them worked, perhaps in workshops but I think mostly cleaning, doorstep cleaning and shop cleaning. Then in the evening I suppose they'd go out round the pubs, dress themselves up bit, make themselves look a bit smarter, perhaps pick up a sailor or dock-worker or something like that, and spend the evening with him. I used to see them go into the Seven Stars across the road. There was always a lot of conviviality there.

Brick Lane was always a crowded and bustling thoroughfare. It was the scene of all our deliveries for example. The firms that we dealt with all respected my guvnor because he was a very good payer. It was very rare that a commercial traveller came in the shop and never got an order - very very rare in all the years I was there. By dealing with only a few firms he always has an order for them. The firm that we did most of our business with was Butler and Crisp of Clerkenwell Road, a very old-established firm of what they called Chemists' Sundriesmen. They were wholesalers that kept everything, all the kind of things that we sold: cosmetics, which we didn't do so much with; sundries like cotton wool, surgical requisites, whatever you wanted. We had a thick price list of theirs showing all the lines that they did. If there was anything we were out of stock of, or anything we didn't stock, we'd tell the person 'You can have it tomorrow', and we would look up the list and get on the phone and order it.

We got a delivery by horse and cart. Later on they had motor vans but our delivery was always by horse and cart; and the reason for this was this. This carman had been with them for many years. He knew how to drive a horse. And he used to collect goods for them from the docks. To get down to the docks they had to have a horse, there was a certain part where only a horse could negotiate, apparently. He told us that. And that's why they kept him on with a horse and cart. Since he had to come to the docks in the East End he took our deliveries as well, brought them up to us in Brick Lane. He

was as regular as clockwork. Every day he was there at the same time. This old chap used to come staggering in with his cap and his whiskers, and with his box of goods and dump them down in the same spot and out he'd go.

Then we dealt with another firm called Burgoyne Burbage's from West Ham. They were a very good class firm, they were reasonable, they also stocked many many things which others didn't stock. But they didn't do sundries, they did only drugs and chemicals and what we called galenicals, that is preparations made from herbs, crude drugs. They manufactured; as a matter of fact I went over their factory later on when I was a student. It was one of the most modern of drug factories. But we could always depend on them. Their traveller was a very very handsome, urbane man, very polite - a man named Winchester - who I believe later on became a director of the firm.

Then we dealt with Potter and Clarke's, just down the road on the corner of Artillery Lane and Bell Lane at the end of White's Row, where they never had to deliver, I always collected. And then we dealt with several other firms who

supplied their stuff direct, like Grossmith's, for example. Or, if they did sell through wholesalers, if you bought from them you got a discount. So when their travellers came we would have an order saved up for them and they'd get their order and we'd get an extra discount. And that's how business went on. It was a very placid business; we were always on very good terms with the commercial travellers and the firms. And as a good payer they valued his business very much.

Of course, we had customers who wanted more than we could give like the women who came in wanting something to procure an abortion. Now I don't think my guvnor wanted that. He first of all was very nervous of it because it was illegal. But we did sell what they called 'female pills' or 'female capsules' which were intended, ostensibly, for menstrual troubles - they weren't poisonous and so could be sold. They were for pains and overdue periods. We used to sell quite a number of those and it's possible that women used to buy those and take excessive doses to bring about an abortion.



Clissold Park: the mansion and the New River in 1880 (before it was a public park). HAD P 1176

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 1989

- Tue 16 May Stanley Tongue Memorial Lecture: HACKNEY AND THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY Tim Baker
7.30 pm (Editor of the V.C.H. for Middlesex). Urban Studies Centre, 6-8 Lower Clapton Road, E8 . (FHA/ELHS)
- Wed 17 May THE ROYAL MINT EXCAVATION Peter Mills (DGLA) (IAHS)
8.00 pm Empress of Russia, 362 St John St ECl.
- Tue 20 June PAINT IT NOW - the records of Berger, Jenson and Nicholson David Mander
7.30 pm Urban Studies Centre, 6-8 Lower Clapton Road, E8 (FHA)
- Sat 24 Jun REGENT'S CANAL WALK Ann Sansom (ELHS) Meet Stepney East stn, Commercial Rd 2.30 pm
- Sun 9 July SOUTH HACKNEY WALK led by Isobel Watson
2.30 pm Meet at the Triangle, Mare Street (by Hackney College) (FHA)
- Thu 12 Oct CLAPTON SQUARE Elizabeth Robinson
7.30 pm Urban Studies Centre, 6-8 Lower Clapton Road, E8 (FHA)



Clissold Park: the lake, about 1900.
HAD P 1108

Clissold Park



Clissold Park: the bandstand, with the mansion and St Mary's church, about 1910. (Actually, the church appears to have been "added" by the photographer.) HAD P 4652

BURKE'S LAST VICTIM

Dr Robert Knox was born in Edinburgh in 1793. His family claimed kinship, on his father's side, with John Knox, the reformer. After qualifying as a doctor in Edinburgh, Robert Knox worked as an army surgeon in Southern Africa, and then as a lecturer in general and comparative anatomy in Edinburgh. He was a brilliant lecturer and teacher, whose courses on anatomy were always oversubscribed and attended by both medical students and eminent Edinburgh residents: lawyers, judges, scientists and other academics. This created a considerable degree of professional jealousy in those days when lecturers were dependent for income on fee-paying medical students, who could choose whose course they attended.

The laws governing the availability of 'subjects' for dissection were extremely restrictive. Knox believed that an understanding of anatomy was fundamental to a medical student's training, and that this could only be properly acquired through demonstration of the dissection of cadavers. Thus there was a vigorous trade in 'body-snatching' by men and women known as 'Resurrectionists', who exhumed fresh corpses and sold them on to anatomists like Knox.

In 1823, Robert Knox was unfortunate enough to be caught in the illegal purchase of a 'subject' from those most notorious of Resurrectionists, Burke and Hare. Further investigation established that Burke and Hare had gone one step further than merely 'resurrecting' bodies; they had actually murdered them in the first place. Although Knox was in no way implicated in Burke and Hare's murderous activities, he became associated in the public mind with them, to the extent that at the height of public agitation against him an auto-da-fe was held outside his house in Edinburgh. Knox continued to lecture and maintain his clinical commitments, but the stain of scandal and opportunistic professional rivalry combined to erode his lecture practice. The guilty Burke was executed; Knox had to bear the stigma and infamy for the rest of his life.

The 1832 Anatomy Act brought British practice into line with the more enlightened Continental approach, and released surgeons and anatomists from that fear of discovery which had inhibited their professional lives. Knox remained, however, the 'surgeon's scapegoat'; his

brilliant career faded, and by 1842 he was forced to leave Edinburgh and come to London to earn a living. He hated London, but professional London knew all about him, and he was unable to enter the medical establishment here. He was forced to travel the country, lecturing to various scientific and literary institutes, and to engage in journalism in order to earn money. In 1848 his licence to lecture was revoked by the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh: the final moment of professional ruin for a brilliant and gifted man.

Knox developed an interest in race and ethnology and continued to write and lecture on these subjects. In the 1850's he left his lodgings in the fashionable but cruel West End of London, and came to Hackney, where he built up a small practice, doing a lot of obstetrics work. He was an immensely well-liked doctor, who was particularly generous to his poorer patients, often giving them money and small luxuries, and frequently not charging them. Although he was never to lecture again to medical students, he was not banned from working within the laboratory or the dissecting room, and in 1856 he was offered the job of pathological anatomist at the Cancer Hospital in Westminster founded in 1851 by his patron William Marsden. (He was also the founder of the Royal Free Hospital, and had tried in vain to get a Knox a lectureship there.) Knox worked at the Cancer Hospital, and at his practice in Hackney, until his death in 1862.

Knox's former student and biographer, Henry Lonsdale, mentions his old teacher as living at 9, Lambe Terrace, [Exmouth Place] Hackney, but the census gives him as living at 14 Hackney Terrace, now part of Cassland road. I can only assume that the practice was in Lambe Terrace. Knox's friends and colleagues never visited him socially in Hackney, and therefore would probably only have known his professional address. What is certain is that this rather extraordinary, intelligent but troubled man finally found peace, and freedom from prejudice, in the relative obscurity of Hackney.

S. R. Collinson