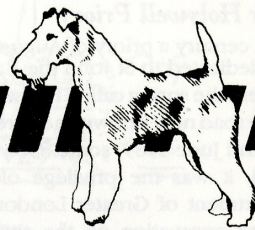


THE TERRIER



THE FRIENDS OF HACKNEY ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

No. 17

Winter 1990

Saved!

As this issue, belatedly, goes to press, Hackney Archives Department has just survived the most dramatic week in its history.

On Thursday March 1st Council staff learnt for the first time how the Directorate of Leisure Services intended to handle its budget for 1990/1991. The proposals included the total closure of the Archives, by July this year, in order to save some £71,000. There followed several busy days of letter-writing and telephoning, and by Tuesday, when the Council's Policy and Resources Committee met to consider the report, councillors cannot have failed to be aware of the strength and depth of feeling both in Hackney and further afield. Letters poured in from Friends, and from supporters far and wide. We are profoundly grateful for this support, as the aim was achieved, and the councillors rejected closure.

The most extraordinary thing about this episode is that the report that was put to councillors included the following statement: "Although there is no statutory obligation upon the Council to maintain an archives function, the implications for the Council in terms of its lost heritage would need to be accommodated elsewhere".

There are two obvious criticisms of this statement. The first is that as a statement of the law it could hardly be more inaccurate. It assumes that archives are like library books. They are not. The council has a statutory obligation to make proper arrangements for the custody of its own records: so says the Local Government Act of 1972. It also has to make certain kinds of its own documents available for public inspection. These obligations it discharges through the Archives Department. It appears that the Leisure Services Directorate were considering their budget in ignorance, or disregard, of the functions the council has delegated to them. The second criticism is that although the report recognised the existence of the historic records held by the Department, it took a wholly unrealistic approach to the implications of the proposal in this respect, in assuming that three months would be sufficient to sort out the mess that closure would create. The Council has undertaken the custody of historic documents, as it may do under legislation of 1962. It has in consequence obligations to the public, and to the depositors of those documents, not all of whom are still around to negotiate with. When the metropolitan county councils were

abolished in 1986 it was not in all cases a simple matter to find homes for their archives: in Merseyside it took several years. In 1987, when the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts visited and reported on the Department, they recommended that consideration be given to the relocation of the Department not only physically, but structurally within the Council. The current rethinking of the Council's central accommodation requirements provide an unmissable opportunity for a physical move: the wholesale misconceptions abroad in the Leisure Services directorate about the nature of the functions entrusted to them cry out for a restructuring.

Moves

There is good news and bad news. First the bad news. Jean Wait will not be continuing as editor of *The Terrier*; all Friends will share my regret, and join in thanking her for launching the newsletter and for all the hard work she has put into making it a success. Thanks also to Andrew Thorp for his help. The good news however is that the archives assistant post has been filled, and by the time you read this Susan McKenzie will have joined the Department. We welcome her, and wish her success and enjoyment in the archives profession.

Isobel Watson



A 17th century token from the Mermaid tavern, found at Sutton House: see pages 3 to 5

ARCHAEOLOGY IN HACKNEY:

The Hunt for Holywell Priory

In the mid-12th century a priory of Augustinian canons was founded, dedicated to St John the Baptist, on a 3-acre plot of land where the spring called Haliwell rose and which fronted onto the road now known as Shoreditch High Street. Between May and June 1989, some 850 years after the first stone was laid, it was the privilege of the Museum of London's Department of Greater London Archaeology to conduct the first excavation on the site of the monastic precinct. A large area, being used at the time as a public car park, was made accessible to us by its owner, Springvale Properties. This group also generously sponsored the works and the writing of the resulting archive, for which the Museum is very grateful.

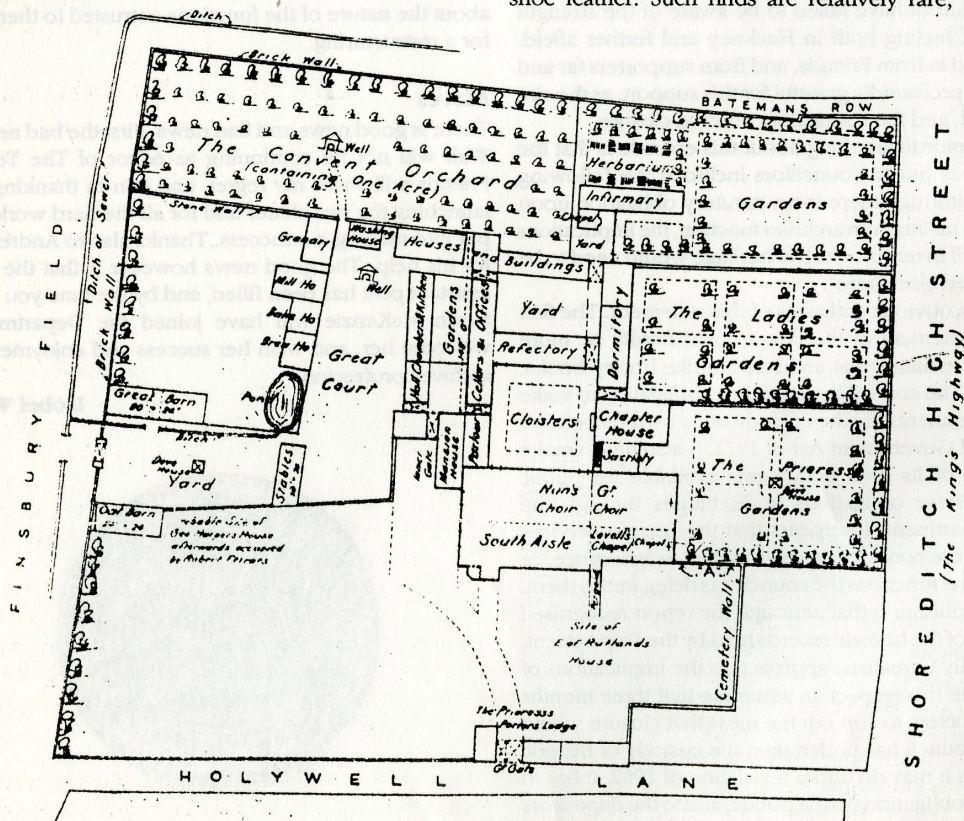
The Museum's brief was relatively straightforward. Our task was to locate and assess the amount of archaeology that survived on the site on the basis that development would proceed in the near future. Within this overall objective, we were particularly interested in the survival of the monastery and its attendant buildings. Documentary research in the past had produced a likely layout of the priory, and this suggested that the church, cemetery, gatehouse, gardens and guest lodgings might be found under the car park site. We were eager to test the accuracy of this research.

Given that we had over one-third of an acre to examine in

one month to an unknown depth below ground level, we availed ourselves of the services of a 12-tonne mechanical excavator and driver. The Museum team consisted of a supervisor, six professional archaeologists and a finds assistant. The machine excavated lengthy trenches that transected the site and gave us the best overall view of the archaeology remaining. This was done under strict archaeological supervision in order to minimise the damage done to the deposits we were after. Following the machining, the archaeologists cleaned up the sides and the base of the trenches so as to record the layers, walls, pits and wells that were revealed. Only a very limited hand excavation was done: this was a trial excavation after all.

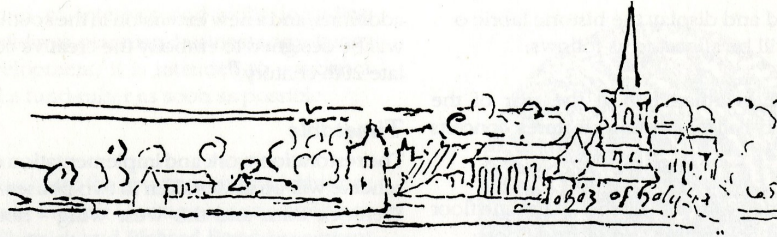
The subterranean water that rose in the 12th century as Haliwell spring, or the Holy Well, was discovered in great abundance. So much water was discovered that the trenches started to flood before we had reached the desired levels in some cases. This caused problems not only in recording the archaeology, but in safety as well. One trench, being a mixture of loose rubble above and loose waterlogged clays below was recorded as well as possible from the trench-top.

The waterlogging certainly has its bonus side, however. In the trenches enormous pits were discovered filled with an evil-smelling black mud. Amongst this archaeologically rich matter was discovered a beautiful piece of painted glass from the priory, and well-preserved fragments of 16th-century shoe leather. Such finds are relatively rare, and add an



Conjectural plan of Holywell priory

from the Survey of London, volume VIII



Extract from Wyngearde's "Panorama of London" about 1540, showing Holywell Priory

illuminating dimension to the more common remains such as walls and floors.

Some archaeological deposits discovered date to long before the priory. The Romans certainly used the site, as unworn roof tile pieces and 2nd-4th century pottery was found. As the site had been called Holy Well before the priory was founded, it is entertaining to speculate that there may have been a sacred spring here for at least 1500 years ...

Of the priory, sufficient was found to establish that the supposed layout was, at least in general, fairly accurate. The church was fractionally uncovered, but enough was seen to find a large masonry wall with what appears to have been a niche built into it. It may have held a reliquary. Smaller walls also found might have been parts of internal chapels or screen walls. A decorated tiled floor was partially uncovered and then carefully reburied. One burial was found inside the church, the wood of the coffin partially preserved by the waterlogging.

The gatehouse and guest lodgings were not located, though thick and extensive layers of demolition debris in the expected areas might indicate their fate.

Of the cemetery, puzzlingly scant evidence was found. Only one burial was located in the trial trenches expected to reveal such deposits. It may be that the denser areas of burial were elsewhere, beyond the site limits. However, more burials are sure to be uncovered if and when a full-scale excavation takes place.

The discovery of at least three Tudor brick walls, one of which was 7 feet high and 30 feet long and still completely buried, suggests that substantial parts of the mansions [sic] of the Earls of Rutland and their aides are yet to be revealed. The Rutland ownership of part of the precinct is a further chapter in its history. A servant of the Earl was dwelling in the precinct in a house leased from the Prioress as early as 1525, while another was acting steward for the priory's external affairs in the early 1530s. It was thus natural that when the Dissolution caught up with the priory, ownership should switch in this way. What is not so usual, and would be exciting to excavate, is that the Earl had a gallery built from his house into the church, to connect with the chapel of Sir Thomas Lovell. Before his burial in 1524 Lovell had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, Constable of the Tower and a Knight of the Garter. He had also lavished money and endowments on the priory, 're-edifying' it, as Stow

commented in his 16th-century "Survey of London". Discovery of the remains of this gallery and chapel would provide a remarkable insight into the practicalities of the Dissolution and the shift of power from the spiritual to the temporal.

Although the excavations were only a tiny glimpse of what lies below, the discoveries were tantalising in their potential. Many people from the immediate vicinity displayed great interest, although for safety reasons we could not conduct more than one site tour, and we are particularly grateful to those businesses on New Inn Yard that allowed us to use their roof accesses for photographic purposes. The moral support of the Friends of Hackney Archives is also acknowledged, and we sincerely hope that before too long we might get a chance to unveil the whole story.

Barney Sloane
Senior Archaeologist
Museum of London

SUTTON HOUSE - THE GOOD NEWS

Two years ago plans were far advanced to convert Hackney's most important architectural and historical treasure, Sutton House, into private flats (see Terriers 6 and 10). The prospect of this sad fate prompted the formation of the Sutton House Society, to campaign for a restoration programme more befitting the unique qualities of the building and ensure that it would be properly open to the public.

Thanks to extensive coverage on television and in the national, local and architectural press the issue became a 'cause celebre', and the house attracted five to six thousand visitors over the handful of days it was specially opened, despite its derelict and vandalised condition.

Without going into the reasons for the deterioration of the house, which has been owned by the National Trust since 1938, its future now looks much brighter. In September the National Trust announced its decision to endorse the proposals made by the Sutton House Society with the following words: 'a scheme has been devised which will create a new future for Sutton House which will ensure its protection and provide far greater opportunities for public access than existed in the past'.

This scheme prepared by Richard Griffiths of Julian Harrap Architects and Roger Lansdown of Prometheus Ltd. (Business Consultants) proposes a mixture of cultural, community, educational and commercial uses but stresses that the primary

objective is to safeguard and display the historic fabric of the house. The premises will be allocated as follows:

- Wenlock Barn (the Edwardian hall at the rear of the courtyard) as a community hall for meetings, lectures, concerts and private functions;
- the West Wing to include a cafe with kitchen at ground floor level, and offices to rent on the first and second floors;
- the main body of the house to have a shop and reception area and a craft workshop at ground floor, lecture and exhibition rooms on the first floor, and a caretaker's flat on the second floor;
- other rooms for varied community purposes, restored to reflect the historic development of Sutton House and its social and economic history, complementing other local museums.

The architectural approach is defined by Richard Griffiths: "The Tudor core consists of five major rooms at each floor level, and it is intended to conserve these as far as possible in their undivided state when the house was last in full use, before the panelling was stolen or removed to store. However, where the English Heritage survey has revealed earlier features of particular archaeological interest such as a Tudor fireplace, it is intended that these should be made visible by means of doors in the panelling or similar devices. The evidence of alterations during the life of the building will in general be conserved, except where modern alterations have had an adverse visual impact. The major alterations to accommodate the new uses will be restricted to the Edwardian

additions, and a new extension in the south courtyard. These will be designed to embody the creative contribution of the late 20th century."

Timetable

The restoration work and implementation of the community scheme will be undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 includes Wenlock Barn and the West Wing - notably the income generating parts of the scheme. Phase 2 comprises the main parts of the Tudor building except the second floor, most of which is included in Phase 1.

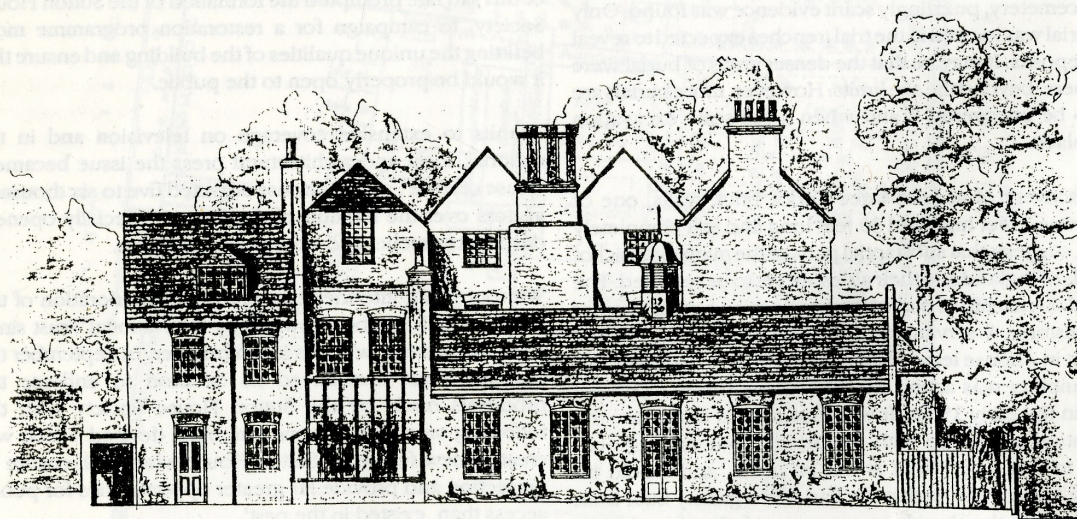
The Phase 1 brief has just been finalised, and the building contract is due to start in July 1990 for completion by the end of October 1991. The Phase 2 brief should be finalised in March 1990, to commence in September 1991 for completion by the end of March 1992.

The cost

The estimated cost of restoration and conversion is £1,500,000. Of this the repairs to the historic fabric and structure of the building will be funded by the National Trust, grant aided by English Heritage. The balance required to fully realise the scheme will be met by a fund-raising campaign to be launched by the Trust.

Management

The project will be managed by a Local Committee of the National Trust consisting of twelve members, nearly all Hackney residents, who have been nominated equally by the Sutton House Society and the Trust. The Committee held its first meeting in December 1989 and consists of people



*Elevations for Sutton House prepared by Julian Harrap
Architects: the south elevation and Wenlock Barn*

with a wide spectrum of interests and skills including education, historic buildings, planning, business consultancy and community development. It is intended to appoint a project manager and a fund-raiser as soon as possible.

Research

In the meantime research into the structure and social history of the house continues. English Heritage historic buildings surveyors Andrew Whittrick and Richard Bond have spent over a year now interpreting the structural development of the house, and have uncovered many long forgotten features like the Tudor stone fireplaces and bricked in privy. Their work is soon to come to an end and the thoroughness of it means that we shall probably know as much as is possible to know about the changes which the fabric of the building has undergone, at least from above-ground evidence.

The Museum of London will soon be starting a programme of below-ground archaeological work which will no doubt extend our knowledge of the origins of the house. Work will be concentrated in the area of the south courtyard where new building is to take place and where old, possibly pre-sixteenth century structures were demolished in the last century.

Ken Jacobs, a committee member of the Friends, has continued the painstaking task of sifting through dust from beneath the floorboards and behind panelling.

Among recent finds is a seventeenth century token from the Mermaid Tavern, Hackney, which is in near mint condition. Documentary research has established that the house was known as Bryk Place in the early sixteenth century when it was owned by Sir Ralph Sadler, an important statesman in the service of Henry VIII. It appears that Bryk Place had formerly been a 'breuhouse'.

Sutton House events 1990.

The house will be open to visitors on the first Saturday of each month throughout 1990, from 11 am to 5 pm, although access will be restricted once the building work for Phase 1 starts. Teas will be served, and tours of the house arranged. The main Open Days will be on Sundays March 25th and May 20th, from 12 noon to 6 pm, with a range of exhibits and stalls.

A programme of concerts is planned for the spring, four in Wenlock Barn and two in St John's church. Also in the pipeline is an Elizabethan banquet scheduled for May.

Throughout Phase 1 of the building work it is hoped to keep the East Wing and the Great Chamber on the first floor open to the public and available for events.

It is all great news, particularly for the people of Hackney, and the Sutton House Society looks forward to working with the National Trust and English Heritage, the Friends of Hackney Archives and the Hackney Society, to make sure it all comes true!

Mike Gray
Chair, Sutton House Society



The obverse of the 17th century token shown on page 1

For more information on the Sutton House Society please contact the Secretary, Julie Lafferty, 32 Ickburgh Road, London E5. The subscription to the Society is £5 for the current year.

BOOK REVIEWS

Lost Hackney, by Elizabeth Robinson

The latest Hackney Society publication, *Lost Hackney*, was launched in late September 1989 at Sutton House: the culmination of many hours of extensive research by Hackney Society member Elizabeth Robinson, and of extensive use of the Archives Department's documentary and pictorial collections. This well written and lavishly illustrated volume is an essential read for anyone who is interested in the built environment of Hackney as it stands today, and wishes to be acquainted with many of the companion buildings that have been demolished over the centuries, in the name of progress, to leave the stock of historic buildings that we see today. It is, in many ways, a saddening and enraging read, as the chronicle of 'lost' buildings is revealed, category by category totalling the cumulative destruction of a large proportion of Hackney's past in the buildings that once formed an integral part of the community.

The thematic ordering of the book makes it possible to compare the losses within each category, but is rather more useful as a quick index by building type, for who would compare the massive Greek classical revival monumentalism of Smirke's West Hackney Church, which must have given that particular stretch of Stoke Newington Road a dignity now sorely missing, with the delicate and pinnacled splendour of Nash's St Mary's, Haggerston? (Only, one suspects, that discriminating author of *Contrasts*, A W N Pugin, whose work was never represented in Hackney.) The section on squares catalogues the loss of virtually whole communities, particularly sad in the case of the formally arranged Nichols Square in Haggerston, described by Pevsner as 'notable architecturally' and albeit on a former scale, equal in style to any of the grander early-Victorian set pieces in West London. The nearest comparison amongst houses surviving today is with the remaining three sides of De Beauvoir Square, which

at one time were in danger of becoming yet another statistic of lost Hackney, saved as a result of local pressure.

Another building which in 1952 merited a Pevsner description as a 'dear little building with a miniature college chapel front: low-pitched embattled roof' was the Hackney Grammar School of 1829. The illustration printed of this building is exemplary of the fine quality of visual representation chosen to depict these lost buildings, the entire book providing in itself a catalogue of techniques from lithograph, engraving and watercolour sketch to early (and later) photographs that are highly evocative of their period.

The documentary research carried out by the author is an invaluable adjunct to the illustrations and gives a greater depth of understanding of the essential character and life of the buildings. In the case of Brooke House, the late fifteenth century mansion which formerly stood at the southern end of Upper Clapton Road, and is without doubt Hackney's greatest loss this century, the documentary evidence is extremely complete forming an entire Survey of London volume (XXVIII), recorded prior to demolition after bomb damage, in 1954-5. We may note, thankfully, that the less destructive techniques used today are helping to preserve, not destroy, Hackney's last remaining late medieval domestic building - Sutton House.

For those who are less familiar with the physiognomy of historic Hackney, a useful location map is provided, and for those less well acquainted with the Council's sporadic commitment to conservation, a perceptive preface by the

Georgian Group's Secretary, Roger White, sets the contents of the book in their context, and urges a continuing vigilance by both local and national amenity groups to ensure that a revised edition of this volume is never necessary.

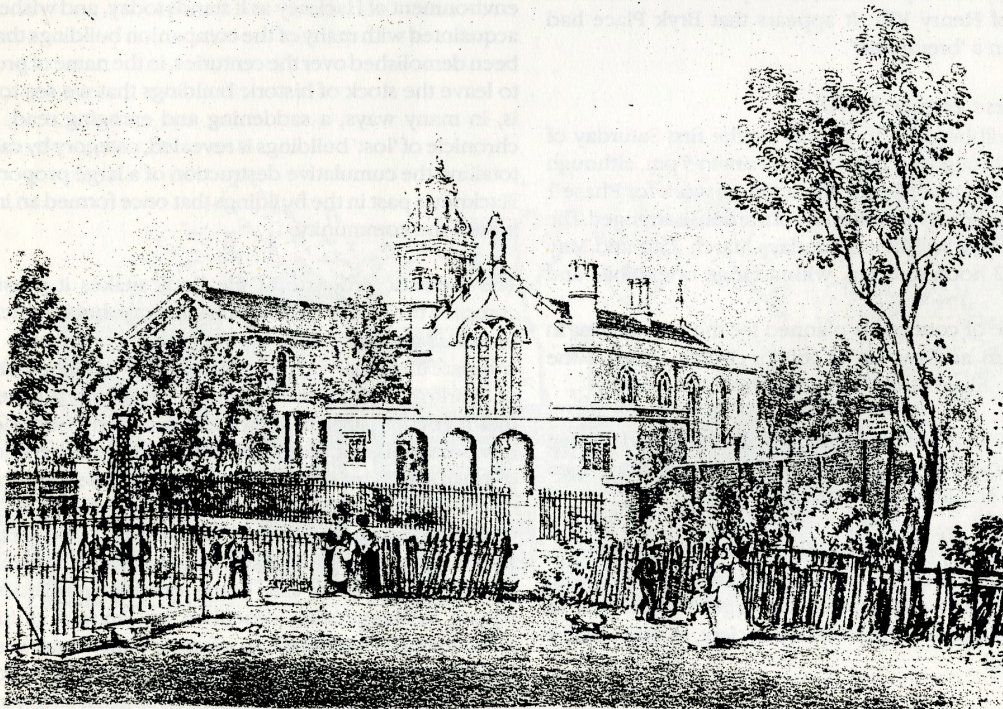
Zoe Croad

Lost Hackney by Elizabeth Robinson is published by the Hackney Society at £4.50. (0-9506558-6-4). Available from Hackney Archives, at £5.35 if ordered by post. Cheques payable to the London Borough of Hackney.

Gentlemen in the Building Line, by Isobel Watson

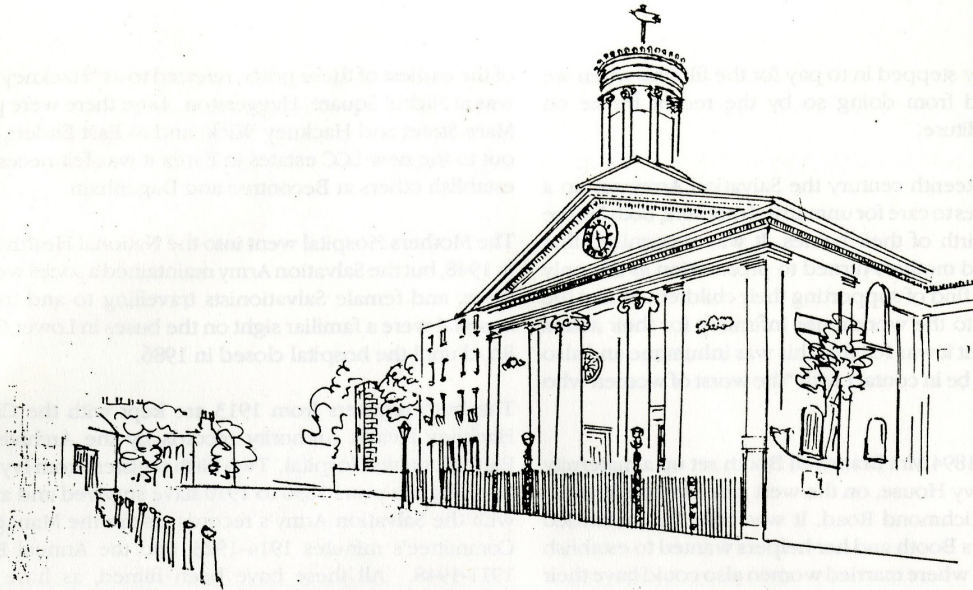
A legal mind applied to the study of local history is a comparative rarity. So many writers do just enough research to make their subject interesting to the man on the Hackney omnibus and leave it at that. In the case of Isobel Watson, however, it would be no exaggeration to say that she has devoted years of her life to investigating in fine detail just this small area of the borough.

The resulting book will make fascinating reading to anyone who lives or has lived in South Hackney, for she tells the story behind every single row of houses - the estate which owned the land, the often complex leasing arrangements to developers and the subcontracts to the actual builders. The area covered is the parish of South Hackney, carved out from the medieval parish of St John at Hackney in 1825, but leaves out the part west of Mare Street and deals less extensively with Hackney Wick in the east. That leaves us with a broad strip between the green belt of Victoria Park and the parish



Hackney Grammar School, Sutton Place, by George Hawkins:

a lithograph illustration from "Lost Hackney"



South Hackney Chapel of Ease, on the north side of Well Street: boundary along Well Street and Wick Road.

an illustration from "Gentlemen in the Building Line"

The scene for the development is set in the first part of the book, describing the market gardens which fed London in the eighteenth century. Among them were a few grand houses in the country and a scatter of tiny settlements such as Shore Road. Then came the 1840 act of parliament creating Victoria Park which was a milestone setting the tone for the housing developments later in the century.

The book's catchy title comes from local sale particulars of 1791 stating that 'Gentlemen in the Building Line will find it [the land] well worth their attention.' And along the way we meet such engaging characters as George Wales, the so-called King of South Hackney, who was surveyor to the Cass Estate. He is already quite well known to historians, but where this book breaks new ground is in bringing to light for the very first time the lost tribe of small builders and developers. Often the smallest builders were working with almost no working capital, putting up just a few houses at a time on credit allowed them by the builder's merchants. Others could afford to work on a much larger scale and, with good judgement during a building boom, could even become developers in their own right.

The writer goes to great pains to explain the policies of the big landowners in the parish, principally the estates belonging to Sir John Cass's charity and to St Thomas's Hospital, and to show how their hands were forced by the changing economic environment. Often the estates were in competition for the same market. But just as frequently they would overcome the awkward boundaries they inherited, to make sensible exchanges of land for access roads to their new terraces and good through routes towards Mare Street and the City.

One of the most interesting parts of the book deals with one of the oldest and grandest buildings in the borough - Hackney Terrace in Cassland Road. We are often told that building societies were invented by workers in the north of England in the early nineteenth century; but Isobel Watson shows how the subscribers to Hackney Terrace in the 1790s were

operating on exactly the same principles and may therefore claim to be the very first building society in England.

The appeal of this book should extend well beyond the boundaries of South Hackney, for the picture it draws of the lost tribe at work creating the fabric of today's inner city is one which is repeated in all London's Victorian suburbs. This book will stand out as a paragon of meticulous research into the subject of nineteenth century housing development. Some may think the subject dry; but it is enlivened with many a telling incident. My own favourite was the rumpus caused by a fair held on Well Street Common to celebrate peace in the Crimea in June 1856, with local sportsmen ignoring the grazing rights of the hapless tenant to erect their cricket tents and lay out pitches.

Keith Sugden

Gentlemen in the Building Line; the development of South Hackney by Isobel Watson, is published by Padfield Publications at £4.95. 0 9515003 0 9. Available at Hackney Archives, or from the publisher at 29 Stepney Green, London E1 3JX at £5.80 including postage and packing.

News from Hackney Archives

Volunteers

Jack Youngmark has kindly responded to Isobel's request in the last Terrier for volunteers. He has made a start on the photocopying of our photographic collection, so that users will be able to browse through the copies instead of having to order the originals. This is obviously a very useful task, but if Jack has to do it all on his own it will take some time. Any offers to give him a hand?

The Mothers' Hospital

We have just had microfilmed the records of the Mothers Hospital, Lower Clapton Road. We are grateful to the owners of the records, the Salvation Army and the City and Hackney Health Authority, who have lent us the records; and particularly to the East of London Family History Society who

have generously stepped in to pay for the filming when we were prevented from doing so by the recent freeze on Council expenditure.

In the late nineteenth century the Salvation Army set up a number of homes to care for unmarried mothers, both before and after the birth of their babies. It was recognised that many unmarried mothers turned to prostitution as the only way they could find of supporting their children. At first the girls were sent to the workhouse infirmary for their actual confinement, but it was felt that this was inhumane and also that they would be in contact with "the worst of women who drifted there."

Accordingly in 1894 Mrs Bramwell Booth set up a maternity hospital at the Ivy House, on the west side of Mare Street at the corner of Richmond Road. It was only for unmarried mothers, but Mrs Booth and her helpers wanted to establish a larger hospital where married women also could have their babies in peaceful clean surroundings, with all necessary medical attention.

This dream was realised in 1913, with the opening of the Mothers Hospital in Lower Clapton Road. Six semi-detached houses (Maitland Place) had been bought, and new wards erected in their gardens. (Throughout the life of the hospital it was intended to demolish the houses and replace them with a purpose-built block when funds permitted; ironically, the hospital buildings have now been demolished and the houses are being renovated.)

The married and unmarried mothers had separate wards, and later a ward for patients with VD was added. Moderate fees were charged to those married women who could afford to pay them. Prayers were said in the wards each day, but no religious test was imposed on patients; in the late 1930s the Hospital was hoping to set up a separate ward for their many Jewish patients. The hospital was recognised as a training school for midwives, both members of the Salvation Army and others. Many intending missionaries trained there.

In addition to the Hospital, the Salvation Army maintained several "Maternity District Posts". Here were based maternity nurses who would attend poor patients in their homes, and have difficult cases transferred to the hospital. These "Sisters" often acted as unofficial social workers for the district. One

of the earliest of these posts, referred to as "Hackney Road", was at Nichol Square, Haggerston. Later there were posts at Mare Street and Hackney Wick, and as East Enders moved out to the new LCC estates in Essex it was felt necessary to establish others at Becontree and Dagenham.

The Mothers Hospital went into the National Health Service in 1948, but the Salvation Army maintained a social work role there, and female Salvationists travelling to and from the hospital were a familiar sight on the buses in Lower Clapton Road until the hospital closed in 1986.

The birth registers from 1913 are kept with the City and Hackney Health Authority records by the Archivist at St Bartholemews Hospital. Two birth registers from Ivy House covering the years 1890 to 1910 have survived and are kept with the Salvation Army's records, as are the Management Committee's minutes 1914-1923, and the Annual Reports 1911-1948. All these have been filmed, as have a few surviving Annual Medical Reports (statistics only, no personal information) from both archives.

The birth registers have been filmed up to 1948, and in filming them all medical details have been covered up, to preserve confidentiality. The original records will of course be kept in their respective archives.

Jean Wait

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 17th May 7.30 p.m. in the Community Centre, Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road N1:

**Annual General Meeting, followed at 8 p.m. by -
The Stanley Tongue Memorial lecture, by Elizabeth Lebas:**

"Film production by local authorities 1919-50"
This talk will include some original archive film!

Sunday 15th July at 2.30 p.m.

Lower Clapton Walk, led by Jean Wait
Meet by the Old Church Tower, Mare Street

Saturday 29th September at 2.30 p.m. in Hackney Archives Department, Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road N1
Cemetery Records: a talk by John Rayment

Wednesday 14th November at 6 p.m.

Visit to Bishopsgate Institute and Library
led by the Librarian, David Webb
Meet at the Institute, 230 Bishopsgate, EC2

E. Lambert & Son, Outfits made to suit intending purchasers from 15/- to 25/- PRICE LIST post-free.	Accouchement Outfits	Manufacturers of Surgical Appliances and Nursing Specialities.
E. Lambert & Son, 60 & 62, Queen's Rd., Dalston, LONDON, N. E. TELEPHONE, 342, DALSTON.		

Produced for the Friends of Hackney Archives, Hackney Archives Department, Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ (telephone (01) 241 2886, by Wednesday Wordsetters, London E1.