

THE TERRIER



THE FRIENDS OF HACKNEY ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

No. 19

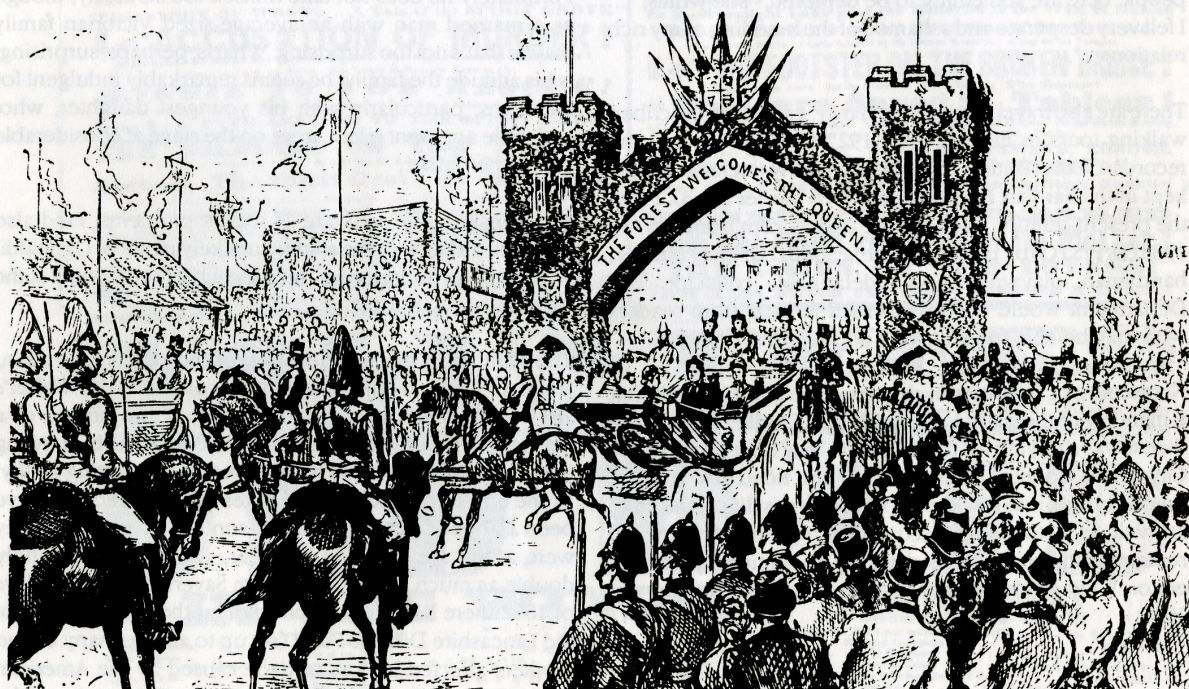
Summer 1990

OFF THE SHELF: HACKNEY DIARIES

For some of the most direct and telling insights into daily life in past times, we are indebted to those who have, for whatever reason, taken the trouble to keep a diary. Hackney Archives Department has a small and fascinating collection of original, transcribed and printed diaries, through which past residents speak to us in their own voices - though perhaps the voice may sometimes produce in the reader an impression different from that intended. The most recent addition to the collection is the diary of William Evans, a city clerk and Sunday School teacher who lived in Mehetabel Road. This diary was bought at auction earlier this year by the Friends; it is described on page 6. Also in this issue is Bill Manley's account of Fred Wilton's life in the year 1863, drawn from his diary. Fred was the manager of Hoxton's

great Britannia Theatre, and his diaries, discovered in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Australia, are held on microfilm in the Department.

The earliest diary material held by the Department (D/F/DAW/3) relates to John Dawson (b. 1692), an excise officer and collector of rare books, who lived in Hoxton Market. Dawson left manuscript books (1722-69) giving a great deal of meteorological information, and, more dramatic, an abstract (M3215) of his diary (the original is held in Kirklees) detailing his early life in Ireland, his spell in the army, and voyages at sea. Dawson's career and importance in the book world is discussed in a thesis by Tony Brown, of which



Epping Forest welcomes Queen Victoria, May 1882

Vestry House Museum

the Department holds a copy.

Another working life in Hoxton is described by Edward Harvey, a postman, in the years 1858-1861; the Department holds a copy of the editor's manuscript of the published version, "A Postman's Round". There is a wealth of fascinating detail and incident. The Harveys are given to discussing their dreams with one another, and to appearing in court. Edward describes carefully how he disengages himself from one young lady in order to take up with another, and there is a good deal about holidays and sightseeing (the Great Eastern), as well as about family and working life.

Many diarists have solitary lives, difficult marriages or are nursing a love affair. John Bolton, who also lived in Hoxton but worked in the City, kept a diary in 1857 (Z21). This seems to belong to the category of lovers' diaries, because it consists mostly of accounts of his meetings with his young lady, "dear Lotte", whose family may not have wholeheartedly approved of him. He also records events of the day, chiefly murders and notable shipping movements. Current events are also the material of an anonymous notebook (M4233), dealing with the year 1839.

Contemporary with William Evans's diary are a short extract (M3398) from another by William Crocker, describing (as William does) Queen Victoria's journey to declare Epping Forest open in May 1882; and the 1879 diary (M3399) of Reinetta Hoone, a student of art living in Clapton, who takes a job in a photographer's studio. She records, like William, social visits and church matters (and her employer being sued for breach of promise of marriage); but her attitude to the church is much more matter-of-fact. She uses her diary to vent her irritation: "The conversational powers of the people here are something to be deplored," she writes; "... I felt very desperate and ashamed of the breeding of my rich relations..."

There are also travel diaries; C. F. Hardy, a solicitor, described walking tours in Europe, 1880-1927 (D/F/HDY), and the records of the British Xylonite Company include diaries kept in the Far East by employees (see Terrier no. 3). From the present century, there are the diaries kept from 1967 to 1985 (D/F/STO) by Leonard Stone, a South Hackney builder, handyman, playwright and indefatigable collector. The Department would be very pleased to hear from readers who may be able to identify or deposit other material.

No account of Hackney diaries would be complete without a mention of the diary kept in 1715 by Dudley Ryder. The diarist was studying for the Bar; his family kept shops in the City and a country house in Urswick Road. He gives a unique insight into Hackney non-conformist life at the time, as well as a touching account of his (mostly unwise) romantic attachments. His diary, in an edition by Pepys's editor William Matthews, was published by Methuen in 1939.

Spectral Illusion with Real Skeleton The Diary of Fred Wilton, 1863

Ladies and gentlemen, may I be permitted to introduce another Friend, a very old friend, Fred Wilton? Old friend on two counts: he was born at the beginning of the 19th century; and I have been spending many, mostly very pleasant, Monday and Tuesday afternoons in his company - by way of his diary, that is.

Some years ago Hackney Archives published a facsimile poster from the "Britannia" Theatre, Hoxton. The original was Fred's handiwork, since he was the "Brit"'s stage-manager, hirer-and-firer, play adapter, substitute actor, shoulder-to-cry-on and publicity man. All on two pounds a week, which was not a fortune, even in the mid-1800's. No wonder he also kept a grocer's shop in Houndsditch, which is where we find him in 1863, at the beginning of his surviving diaries - when he's not on stage, that is.

Fred is not a big man; has probably shed whatever West Country accent he had; finds it convenient to wear a wig; and has trouble with his false teeth - presumably, though he doesn't say, the recently developed vulcanite ones - and his eyes (he needs a reading-glass). He doesn't worry too much about his clothes, as a rule; has a good appetite; and likes his drink - beer more usually than anything else. He reads a lot, notably the Times, likes to show off his knowledge of French and a little Latin; and when he is not at work or playing host to his many visitors, playing chess with some of them, or gardening, he goes fishing - though his ability there is rather worse than his usual chess-playing standard.

Fortunately he does not take himself too seriously, though as a married man with an average-sized Victorian family maybe that's not too surprising. What is, perhaps, surprising, is his attitude the family: he seems remarkably indulgent for the times, particularly with his youngest daughter, who, with little apparent talent, goes on the stage at considerable cost to her father.

As a sensible grocer aware of rodent problems, Fred also has a cat, a she, with the slightly unlikely name of Garibaldi. So there's the background - let's see what Fred's doing at the theatre.

The "Brit" is in the second week of the pantomime *Abou Hassan* - which would have little in common with Weber's 1811 opera - starring, as clown, one of the heroes of a celebrated boxing match, Tom Sayers, who is drawing immense crowds despite his apparent lack of acting ability. At the end of the month Fred notes that "the receipts have been £40 per night more this season since Xmas than they were at the same season last year, and some nights fully double as much, all owing to Tom Sayers". In the last days of 1862 there had been a collection at the theatre in aid of the Lancashire Distress Fund (set up to aid the many cotton workers affected by loss of trade caused by the American Civil War), and Fred takes it along during the first day of the

BRITANNIA

THE GREAT THEATRE, HOXTON.

FIRE-PROOF STAIRS, PASSAGES, AND ENTRANCES

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to Mr. SAMUEL LANE, Actual and Responsible Manager, Grove Lane, Tottenham, Middlesex.

Stage Boxes 2s. Boxes & Stalls 1s. Pit & Box seats 6d. Front Gallery 4d. Back Gallery 3d.

HALF-PRICE at half-Past Eight o'clock to Boxes and Pit.

EXTENSION OF THE NORTH LONDON RAILWAY. The Extension of the North London Railway, from the Victoria Station to the Victoria Park Station, is now under construction. The new line will be 1 1/2 miles long, and will be completed in the course of the year 1867. The new line will be a double line, and will be worked by the Great Northern Railway. The new line will be a great benefit to the public, and will greatly increase the facilities for travelling between the Victoria Station and the Victoria Park Station.

FIRST PRODUCTION IN ENGLAND OF A Transatlantic Hibernian Drama

By Mrs. S. LANE Every Evening in a Powerful New Character!

On **SATURDAY, MAY 18th, 1867,** & during the following Week, at a quarter-to-eleven 7 o'clock, will be presented.

A new and exciting Dramatic Drama, written by Mr. J. B. BOWEN, and originally produced in New York, where it had a long and most triumphant career, and, by the late Mrs. Lane, in London, under the name of **THE SHAMROCK**.

SHAMROCK

OF IRELAND!



OR THE FLOWER OF IRELAND!

SCENE - FIRST IN DUBLIN, NEAR GALWAY. Afterwards in ENGLAND. TIME - 1776

Mr. O'Hara, a young man, who is the hero of the drama, is a member of the Hibernian Society, and is a great favourite with the people. He is a brave and noble man, and is a great friend to the poor. He is a great lover of his country, and is a great defender of its rights. He is a great friend to the people, and is a great lover of his country. He is a great defender of its rights, and is a great friend to the people.

Act 1. Sc. 1. - Interior of the O'Hara Farmhouse
THE STORY OF WRONG - A Tale of the SPIRIT GROVE
ACCUSATION OF MURDER!
A Brother defends his Sister (Scene 1) - Attempted arrest of Charlie!

MIGGIE TO THE RESCUE!
Scene 2. - A PATH LEADING TO THE SPIRIT GROVE
THE SOLDIERS ON THE TRACK!
Scene 3. The Spirit Grove by Moonlight

The Fugitive and Pursuers! "Would you shoot my baby?"
"Whose child is it?" "MINE!"
Scene 4. A BOYMY FARE (Evening) - Charlie's arrest - Arrival of Pat Muller.

A Sister's Dishonour--VENGEANCE!
Scene 5. - Moonlight Lake near the Killeries in the West of Ireland
Scene 6. - The Killeries and Mountains of Ben Greggan.

THE FOOTSTEP ON THE BROKEN BRIDGE!
"They are Saved!" Tablean!
Scene 7. - A STREET NEAR ST. JAMES'S, LONDON.
Scene 8. - CHARLIE IN SEARCH OF HIS SISTER.
Scene 9. - The Union of the Lovers!
Three in One, like our own Blessed Shamrock of Ireland!

VOLUNTIERS

Mr. J. J. HARDING, Mr. J. P. HARRIS, Mr. J. B. BOWEN, Mr. J. P. HARRIS, Mr. J. B. BOWEN, Mr. J. P. HARRIS, Mr. J. B. BOWEN.

OLD MAID

IN THE WINDING STREET!

Mr. J. J. HARDING, Mr. J. P. HARRIS, Mr. J. B. BOWEN, Mr. J. P. HARRIS, Mr. J. B. BOWEN, Mr. J. P. HARRIS, Mr. J. B. BOWEN.

Madlle. CELESTE STEPHAN.

A playbill from 1867, probably the work of Fred Wilton

new year, duly noting in his diary: "Paid £13.7.6 [£13.38] ... to Mr Ledger, Editor of the 'Era', to be inserted in the 'Era' of Jan'y 4th..." Against this he notes the declaration of emancipation of slaves by President Lincoln. This is in a completely different script: I suspect Fred was ambidextrous - useful for someone on the stage - and I'm sure that he kept up with world affairs.

The Lancashire collection is only one of many mentioned in the diaries over the years: the Brit people are a charitable lot on the whole.

On the 6th January John Heenan, "The Benicia Boy", Sayers' opponent in that boxing match, was in a stage box, and was obliged to shake hands on stage with Sayers. Later, on Wednesday 11th March, in the last week of the run, this was repeated, with a bout of fisticuffs thrown in, in the middle of the pantomime. It was Sayers' benefit night. Attendances don't seem to have been affected on this night by the fact that on Tuesday, the previous night, all London theatres had been open free, in celebration of the Prince of Wales's marriage to Princess Alexandra of Denmark - but they were affected, dreadfully, on the Thursday. Fred doesn't tell us about the last two days of the week, and the run.

In between these events comes the entry on February 5th: "Miss Sophie Miles's 1st rehearsal at the Britannia (to make her first appearance next Monday)". In the light of subsequent events - see the next instalment! - Sam Lane (the Brit's proprietor) and Fred may have wondered whether it had been such a good idea to take young Sophie on. In the meantime, the week after Sophie's debut, "Mrs Atkinson refused the part of Mrs Polonaise in Ellen and Susan, and was told she must take a week's notice from tonight". And she went.

On April 1st Fred notes "Mr Pepper's 1st rehearsal of his Spectral Illusion for Easter with real Skeleton". This, and its subsequent use in a succession of shows over the best part of the year at the Brit, was the first time on any stage of this now historical, simple, but effective trick to make "ghosts" appear at will. It really was "all done by mirrors", with a bit of lighting help. Its exhibition at the Polytechnic in Regent Street could have done nothing to diminish public interest, and did the Brit no harm at all. Fred took some of his family there to see it.

Before its actual use, there was another rehearsal, on Good Friday, the 3rd. A small fire in Sophie Miles's dressing-room, quickly discovered and extinguished, did nothing to hold up the work, though Miss Miles probably wasn't too happy about the effect on one or two of her dresses.

Just at this time Fred and his wife, Amelia, start looking for a new home, though both his married daughter Harriet and her husband Fred Rountree are taken ill in turn, and need some nursing. They eventually settle on a place, then fairly new, at 91 Nichol Square, just off the Hackney Road; the rent for the whole house and gardens is £26 a year. Fred can't wait to sign the agreement - he's off buying and planting all

sorts of flowers and plants straight away; and he is to spend most of his remaining years in England at this address. On 20th June, having settled with his shopman, Edwin, he sighs into his diary "Left 115 Houndsditch for good (we hope).

In the midst of this activity he is still working as busily as ever, and on Whit Monday he has an additional job: Mrs Sara Lane, Sam's wife and "Queen of Hoxton", sends him to check on a "ghost" effect in the show at the "Eagle". But all is well: "Found no resemblance".

On June 1st he writes to James Robertson, Superintendent of the Great Eastern Railway, for a pass for "Self and Son" to Chelmsford and back, the next Sunday "in return for our care and exhibition of June bills and Boards of the Great Eastern Railway". (This was a common enough practice, places of public resort like theatres, music halls and pubs displaying train time tables and other details.) Fred sometimes took the whole family on a day out this way, though more usually, as here, it was a fishing companion. In this case the "son" was in fact a friend, called Bardett. As so often, the friend had little better luck than he did.

On 11th June he notes that "Mr Lane's yacht, "Phantom", won another Prize today". Later he observes (referring to one or two problems that Sam Lane had to face (of which more in due time) and hinting at others, that he could not be envious of his boss for all his yachts and other possessions. He had his own problems, after all. As well as his regular job, his winding up of the shop, planting and tending the new garden and supervising the redecoration and installation of a new gas supply, he reports the disappearance of Garibaldi the cat, which they had brought with them from Houndsditch. He doesn't seem particularly attached to the cat, however, and soon after her re-appearance gives her to his son-in-law for use in his new pub.

Rather more exciting and gratifying to him is the news that his old friend Cecil Pitt - prompter, part-time actor, and playwright at the Brit (related to the Dibdin family of Sadler's Wells) is presented with a gold prompter's whistle subscribed for by the Company. This was on Saturday 4th June, and on the following Monday Fred reports that Cecil is wearing it. Although he doesn't describe it, these "whistles" could be very elaborate affairs, and consequently quite valuable - with gold chains, medallions, and even precious stones hung about them they were hardly intended for use. On that same evening, Miss Burdett Coult's, the philanthropist and friend of Dickens, came in to see the Pepper's Ghost effect, and her party had to have the whole thing exhibited again after the show. Later that week there was a trial of a more elaborate version of the ghost effect; but, says Fred laconically, "Failed".

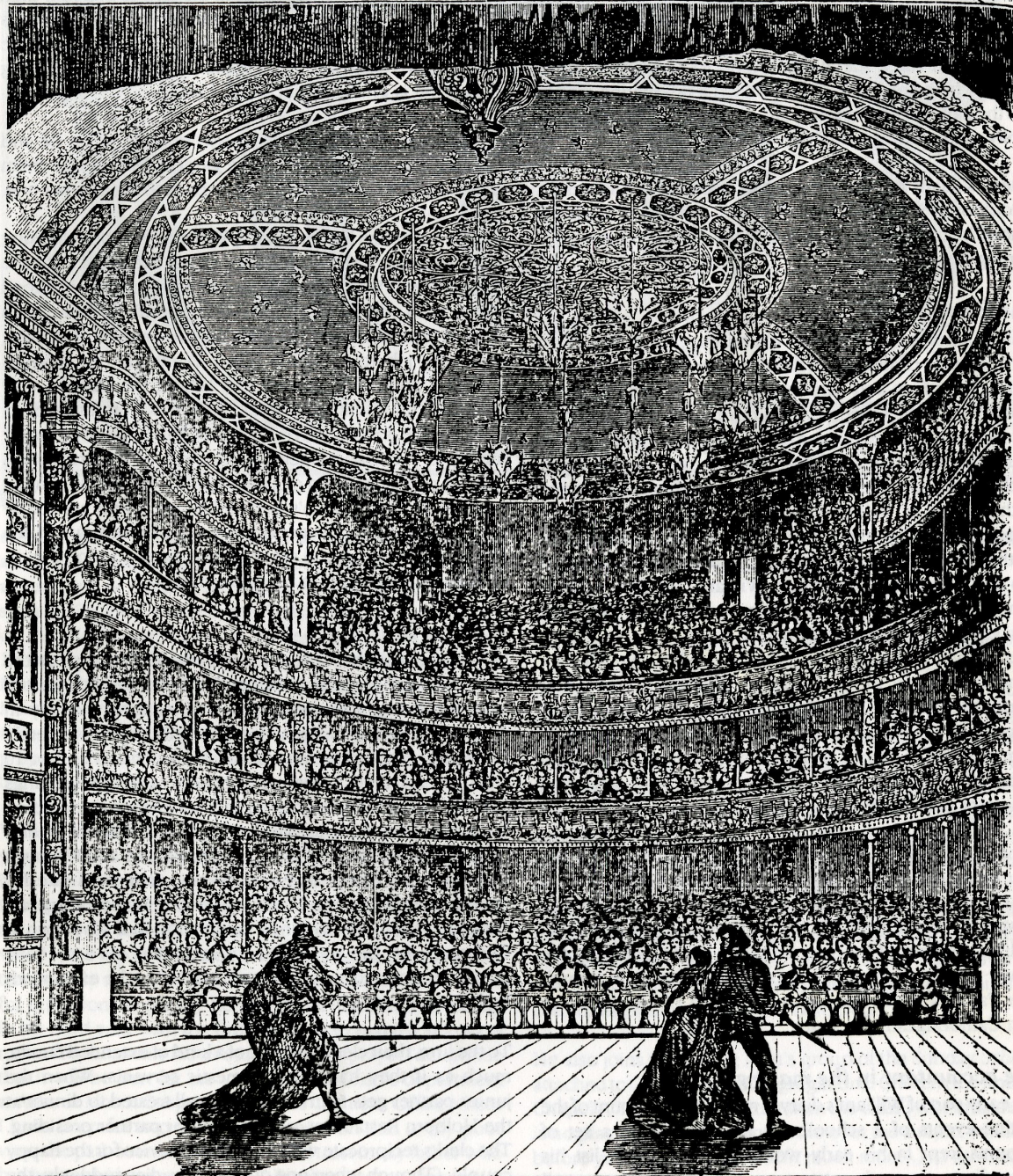
The following Wednesday, as so often, was a benefit night, in this case for Sara Lane's brother-in-law, Crauford. William "Billy" Randall, first of a line of music hall performers, is shown as taking part. "Immense posters" (no doubt put together by Fred), and "lots of woodcuts", we're told: the latter no doubt added to the cost, as they were usually hired.

"House not so great at first as expected, but filled up afterwards, and became crowded". That doesn't always happen, especially when Fred's turn comes round. That Sunday he is "home all day - partly engaged on new Piece for Miss Downing's Benefit." This is not unusual, especially for a Brit star like Adelaide Downing; so not much peace for Fred on his two pounds a week. For once his turn does attract a good house; total takings are nearly £50, of which he will get a third. The bill is somewhat shorter than is common - "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" (featuring a falsely-

accused man on parole and Hawkshaw the Detective); two "turns" of Billy Randall and black-face Orville Parker, and a piece called "Old Booty". Still, he seems to be satisfied, which isn't always the case. And there I think we'll leave him for the nonce.

Bill Manley

An account of Fred Wilton's remaining diaries will appear in a future issue.



The Britannia Theatre in 1858

ACCOUNT RENDERED: the diary of William Evans

The diarist

William Burges Evans was born on 10th August 1867, and lived all his life at 30 Mehetabel Road, near Homerton High Street and to the south of Sutton House (which his diary never mentions). His first volume of diary (1881-84) was kept in a book printed for use as a school attendance register, with a single line of comment on each day he chooses to record. There are perhaps half a dozen entries, on average, each month. The other two volumes (1889-1900) are in ruled hardback notebooks, and have many entries which are fuller. They provide a fascinating insight into the daily life of a serious young man, with a troublesome family, in the last years of the Victorian age.

When William begins writing the diary he is thirteen, a schoolboy at St Michael and All Angels (Church of England) School in Lamb Lane, London Fields, and preparing for earning his own living.

The Evans family

William's home stood nearest the railway, westernmost on the north side of Mehetabel Road, on the site now occupied by Hackney Free and Parochial School. (In 1882 he notes proudly that "the Queen passed our house on the NLR on her way to declare Epping Forest for ever open.") The house belonged to, and was presided over, by his great-uncle, Edmund Evans, a retired carpenter. It was also home to the whole of William's family: father Francis (another carpenter, usually unemployed) and mother Martha; elder brother Ted, a plumber; and Tom, John and Amy, between two and six years younger than William. The Evans family came from Cambridgeshire, where in the early 1880's the family holidays were usually taken. There was also "Aunt", Eliza Hawkins, Uncle's housekeeper, who, like Mother, came from Tring in Hertfordshire. William stayed on at school till after his 15th birthday, more than three years longer than the law required. Nothing is said, but it is likely from presents of money and clothing that his uncle thought highly of William, and probably sponsored his schooling and entry into City life.

Father and Ted have similar problems: "Father gets work after being out three months. Thanks be to God." Ted has poor health and seems to be accident-prone. Family life can be stormy: when there is a row between Father and Aunt, William gets out of the way by going on an outing to the Tower; and there are numerous country excursions, though after Father's death there is more heard of Hertfordshire than Cambridgeshire cousins.

The accountant in the making

The early part of William's diary is not only an account of the routine events of a schoolboy's life; it includes a set of accounts kept in his early working years. These list his expenditure on such matters as clothes, frequent small presents to his brothers and sister, refreshments, fares and

"extra food" (which suggests something about the regime kept by Aunt, to whose housekeeping he eventually makes a contribution). His income includes the proceeds of sale of pet rabbits, bred from a pair given to him by his friend Tom Beckett; and what he can earn from gardening. At the end of 1882 he renders his account: Aunt owes him three shillings for parsnips, and he is owed thirteen shillings and ten pence (69p) elsewhere. "Other debts for vegetables I do not expect to be paid. This 13/10 I think I shall be paid therefore I shall reckon it as part of my worth. I am 9 shillings poorer in my personal dealings at the end of this year than I was at the beginning." The cashier in the making is practising income and expenditure accounts and balance sheets. This is characteristic of William's approach to keeping a diary: he is giving an account of his life.

Nonetheless, boyish exploits cause trouble: when he and Tom dig a seven foot hole in the garden, Mother tells them angrily to fill it up. But later they go back to dig another one.

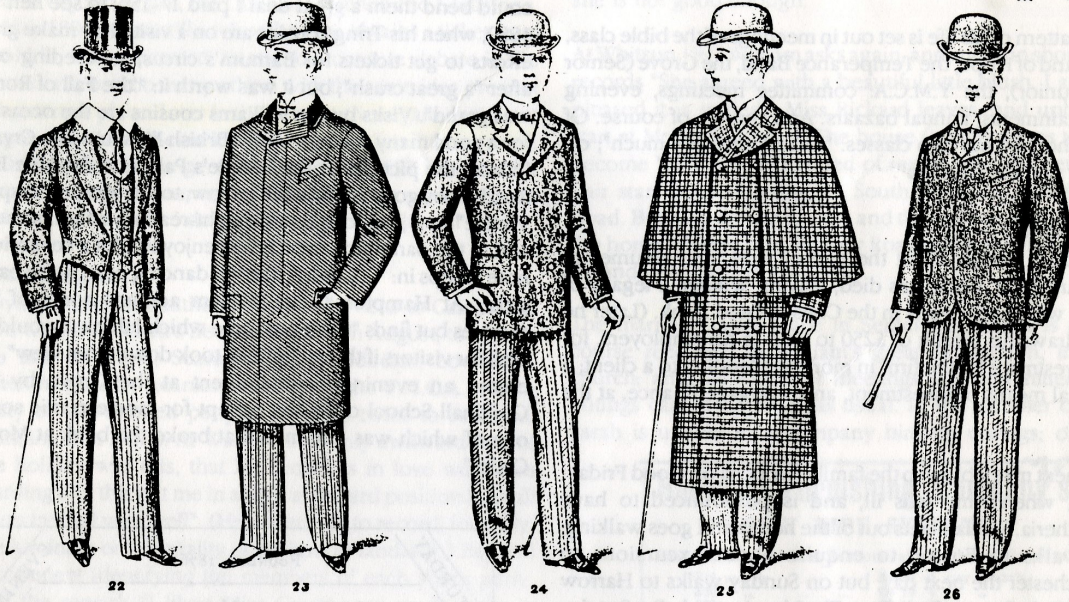
Shortly before he leaves school, William sets about looking for a "situation". His quest takes him as far afield as to the Post Office in Walthamstow, and to a fishmonger in Broad Street, who will "send for him if required". (When, in an evident state of anxiety, he goes back to enquire, they have given the job to someone else.) Eventually he engages himself - duties unspecified - to Lebon, the Dalston coal merchant, for 6 shillings a week. Before two months are up, however, he is recruited by Mr Botwright, evidently a family friend, to join the cashier's department of Ashurst Morris Crisp, a prominent firm of City solicitors, for two shillings a week more. To William's great relief, Mr Lebon graciously lets him go, giving his good wishes. So he sets out with a clear conscience, and a season ticket from London Fields, on what will turn out to be a long career.

Working life

His progress in the cashier's department is steady; by the time the diary ends he is evidently Mr Botwright's trusted assistant. Every year, before his own summer holiday in August, William gets a pay rise: later this happens in early December, and by the end of the diary consists of 5 or 10 shillings each time. At the age of 22 he is earning 35 shillings (£1.75), though as time goes on he loses interest in recording his actual salary. After ten years with the firm, his two weeks' holiday (plus extra days off at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun) rises to three. There seems to be no recognised rate for overtime, only grace and favour payment. In the early years "stopping late" at work finds recognition in a sovereign at Christmas; by the time William is 21 the rewards have grown, as he is given a "present" of £10 for the extra work he has done "re Salt Union".

To the firm, their clerks are part of a kind of extended family, much as if they had been domestic servants. When the junior partner gets married, they are all treated to dinner at the Holborn Restaurant, with the senior partner presiding. The clerks reciprocate with a silver tea service for the happy couple. (Though when one of the clerks dies suddenly, the amount given to his mother by the firm is significantly

"MARVEL OF VALUE."



G. J. WOOD, KINGSLAND AND ISLINGTON.

CLOSED ON THURSDAYS—KINGSLAND 2 O'CLOCK; ISLINGTON 5 O'CLOCK.

outstripped by the amount raised by his fellows.) There is an annual cricket match, with "cold collation" to follow, against one or other of the big City law firms, somewhere such as Neasden, Acton or the Welsh Harp. As the years go on the cricket match loses its interest for William, but aged 16, when on holiday in Cambridge, his association with the firm leads him to want to see Trinity Hall, where young Mr Morris had graduated. The firm nevertheless run a tight ship, and when Mr Botwright is on holiday, or at the time of preparing the annual balance sheet, the hours are long and the work is tiring.

William is naturally conscientious and tidy-minded. As a young man on holiday, he worries about what is happening in his absence at work. He scarcely ever mentions taking a train without noting its departure time, and often its arrival time as well, not to mention the fare. He suffers agonies when, on a trip to the bank, one of the firm's cheques goes temporarily astray. In his diary he does not ordinarily go in for reflection, so plainly he was greatly troubled by being, in his third year with the firm, pressed to make a sideways move: "My heavenly father's answer to my prayer I determine that it will be best for me to go into Mr Crisp's department at Ashurst Morris Crisp & Co from the Cashier's Office where I have been for two years. I may mention that to my poor view the path seems cloudy but I will trust in my father who has been and is so good to me." Brother Tom succeeds him in the cashier's office, with, apparently, less success.

Eventually William returns, and in later life he is to describe himself for official purposes as an accountant.

Deciding for Christ

Once he has settled down to office life, William's religion is the dominant theme in his diary. Though he has "signed the pledge" in April 1882, it seems he is drawn into local religious life through an interest in debating, which begins on a visit, when on holiday, to a Cambridge University debating society: "I liked the debate very much which was on 'Lord Ripon's policy in India' or something to that effect." He joins the debating society at the Grove Young Men's Institute in Brooksby's Walk, Homerton, and is soon participating in the debates: "...the subject was vaccination and I told the society I approved of compulsory vaccination from the lymph of the calf if done properly". In his twenties he is often called on to address meetings, on such subjects as "Mind How You Speak"; and clearly he grows in confidence, and also comes to be much in demand as a comforter of the sick and the bereaved.

He also joins the Young Men's group of the Sunday School attached to Clapton Park Congregational Church (the Round Chapel) ("I like it much better than the class I was in as there is no play and you can think more over the subject which is before you and thereby benefit much more".) At the end of 1884 he joins the Church, giving the minister at the Round Chapel, by request, a letter stating how he had "decided for

Christ". Eventually he becomes Librarian at the Grove, and a teacher at the Sunday School. Indeed every year he "gives his report" as to the progress of his class; how many have joined, how many have left. It is not always to his satisfaction.

The pattern of his life is set out in meetings of the bible class, the Band of Hope, the Temperance Band, the Grove (Senior and Junior), the Y.M.C.A. committee meetings, evening entertainments, annual bazaars. And church, of course. Of preachers he has two classes. "I liked him very much"; or, "I did not like his style".

Family life

The diary breaks off at the end of 1884, and resumes in January 1889. Uncle has died, leaving William a legacy of £230, which he invests in the Consolidated Bank. (Later he withdraws his wealth of £250 to lend to his employers, for re-investment by the firm in mortgage lending to a client; a normal means of investment, and mortgage finance, at the time).

The next major blow to the family happens on Good Friday, 1889, when Amy falls ill, and is pronounced to have diphtheria. William gets out of the house and goes walking; he walks to Euston to enquire about excursions to Manchester the next day; but on Sunday walks to Harrow and High Barnet from East Finchley instead. By Sunday Amy is breathing better, but on Monday morning she dies. "About 2 o'clock Amy pulled her long hair over her face and Mother and Aunt saw there was a change. Mother put Amy's feet in hot water of which Amy took no notice. Amy's last words were 'Am I going the right way?' and then she passed peacefully away..." He is clearly very distressed, and endeavours to find comfort in the prospect of heavenly reunion. "Mother father aunt and my brothers are very much cut up for we all loved her. I do hope that the hearts of the unsaved among us may be given to Christ and then we shall say 'it was a good thing for her to be taken away.'" He goes with Ted and the undertaker to choose a plot for a family grave at Chingford. Shortly thereafter he meets Mother coming out of Chapel, clearly an unusual event: "I hope this will be the first of many such visits".

Meanwhile Ted is in and out of work, and things come to a head in 1891. "My brother Ted has been in an unsatisfactory state for a long time; his business is no good and he has got mixed up with a set of fellows who are no use to him. He has also been a great trouble to the home and very often has come home drunk - He has offered to go to Vancouver so Mother has arranged for him to go." William goes with him to Liverpool; perhaps to make sure that he does, indeed, go.

But the gaps in the family are perhaps less noticeable with increasingly frequent visits from the Williams cousins from Tring - Arthur and Ted, and, especially, Annie and Sarah.

Entertainments

William has a constant circle of friends, young men who in general seem to share his serious approach to life but have nonetheless a penchant for the grotesque and the

spectacular. For example, in 1883 he goes with Tom Beckett (he of the rabbits) to the Royal Aquarium, by courtesy of Mr Botwright, and to see "Krairola half human being and half monkey. She was very hairy and her limbs were so that you could bend them a great deal I paid 1/- [5p] to see her." In 1889, when his Tring cousins are on a visit, they make great efforts to get tickets for Barnum's circus, succeeding only after "a great crush"; but it was worth it: "the Fall of Rome" was grand". Visits by the Williams cousins are the occasion for a good many outings, to the British Museum, the Crystal Palace, the pictures at the People's Palace in the Mile End Road. They go to Buffalo Bill's show, to Olympia to "inspect Venice" in a gondola, to a thought-reading entertainment, and to the panorama, which was enjoyed. But a censorious note creeps in: "....I didn't like the dancing part by the ballet girls". At Hampton Court William admires some of the pictures but finds "there are some which I think it would be well for visitors if the authorities took down from view". He enjoys an evening entertainment at the Grove by the Guildhall School of Music, except for "some comic songs one of which was 'the man that broke the bank at Monte Carlo'".

FOUNDED 1876.

Grove Young Men's Institute.

President: Mr. S. B. GOULD

1. This Institute meets temporarily (till the new premises are ready) in the Upper Schoolroom of the Old Gravel Pit Chapel, Chatham Place, Morning Lane, Hackney, on Saturday Evenings during the winter months from 6:30 to 10 p.m.
2. THE OBJECT of the Institute is to enable YOUNG MEN of the neighbourhood to spend a pleasant evening with their friends and companions; and Chess, Draughts, Dominoes, and other Games, with the principal daily and weekly papers, are provided for their amusement and recreation. Also refreshments at a moderate charge.
3. THE SUBSCRIPTION is ONE SHILLING a quarter (that is from October to December, and from January to March). No one can be admitted who is under sixteen years of age.
4. FRIENDS or VISITORS are admitted on payment of one penny a night.
5. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP:—Admission to Saturday Evening Meetings and to the Entertainments given by Members and Friends on the last Saturday in each month; to the Sunday Morning Meetings; to the Chess, Draught, Essay, and Elocution Competitions; also use of Library of over 300 volumes.
6. EXTRA PRIVILEGES:—Members may, by a small additional payment, join the Football and Cricket Clubs; Instrumental Band; Mutual Improvement and Debating Society, and Christian Evidence Class.

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Politics

From his adolescence William takes an interest in current events, noting an attempt to shoot the Queen, and later the deaths of John Bright, the Duke of Clarence and Gladstone. In May 1884, when still a schoolboy, he obtains a ticket from the M.P., Henry Fawcett, to attend a censure debate in the Commons, but too many others with the same idea prevent his getting a place. Later in the year he tries again, but is not impressed: "I only heard Irishmen speak". It is little surprise, therefore, that in the general election of 1892 he votes for Robertson, the Conservative, because he is against Home Rule ("also because I do not care for Sir C. Russell").

Sea changes

Boyhood trips to Southend and family visits to Cambridge give way, in William's free fortnight each August, to trips to the Isle of Wight, Scarborough, Llandudno, Lowestoft. Often he goes by steamer, and stays at the Y.M.C.A., with a party of like-minded people. He goes twice to Scotland, climbing Ben Nevis. At Walton "The only awkward part of the holiday was this, that Mr Brown is in love with Miss Harding and this put me in a little awkward position but still I was treated very well". (He never fails to record, formally, the kindness or hospitality of his host or landlady.) Beyond a comment identifying the members of each year's party, and the remark "I liked Miss Gaunt very much - she is delicate", William himself seems to take very little interest in the young ladies of his acquaintance, although he is pleased enough to escort family friends or the Tring cousins to London landmarks. Indeed when a Miss Salter "on whom John has set his affection" appears at home, or a friend becomes engaged, he seems almost baffled, if not hostile. But brother John, who qualifies as a chemist, and his bride delight the diarist by being received into the Clapton Park church.

In 1890 Father dies of a heart attack: "the fatal spasm jerked him out of bed". William reports to the coroner at Hackney Old Town Hall, but there is no need for an inquest. Above a line on which William has written "I heard I was elected the Librarian of the Grove Institute tonight" he has added later, in cramped letters "Father was 51 years of age and though he had his faults he had some very good qualities and I am sorry to lose him", and goes on to "place on record" those who gave him sympathy and comfort.

After Father's death Mother's health is precarious, and following blood poisoning she dies, in April 1896. Astonishingly, within the week Aunt also is dead, of apoplexy. William's home is, as he says, "shattered", despite his judgment on Aunt as being "in later years of a very worrying disposition", and his friends and cousins rallying round. He wants his cousin Annie to come as housekeeper, but her father disapproves, and a Miss Rickard is engaged.

On the Whitsun following his bereavement William goes to Tring and makes Annie a present of a watch, in thanks for her help. In August, before his customary sea voyage, this year to Oban by way of Ireland, he increases his life

insurance cover to £500, stops again at Tring, and for the first time since his schoolboy accounts makes a diary entry in shorthand. This records that he has asked Sarah, not her sister Annie, to be his wife; and Sarah tells him she thinks she is not good enough.

At Whitsun 1897 William asks again, and, again in shorthand, records "She agreed with a beautiful little blush. I am very pleased it is settled." Miss Rickard leaves; and upheavals start at Mehetabel Road. The house (which seems to have become William's) is in need of repair, and the betrothed pair start house-hunting, in South Hackney and Almack Road. But they decide to stay, and the furniture is housed at the home of friends in Eleanor Road while the builders are in, and new carpets acquired.

The marriage takes place in September; Sarah is in due course received, to William's great satisfaction, into his church; and his round of meetings and committees and outings carries on much as usual. In the summer of 1898 Sarah is unable to accompany him on outings; on 20th

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August she is "taken queer", and a nurse comes round from the Salvation Army (Mothers') Hospital. Sarah gives birth to "a nice little girl". William's delicacy sends him back to his shorthand: "Sarah had a hard time and the doctor had to use instruments". The baby is named after William's dead sister, Amy.

The diary ends abruptly in January 1900; not without further incident. There is a further shorthand passage which records William giving evidence in affiliation proceedings against "Thomas", perhaps his brother. If so, the resulting maintenance paid was singularly short-lived, as Tom is struck by lightning near Stansted and killed. As usual, William deals carefully and efficiently with what is necessary to be done.

Amy was to have two sisters and two brothers, the brothers following their father into City life. William and Sarah Evans lived, with their family, at 30 Mehetabel Road until 1938, when Sarah died, William following within the year. It would be agreeable to think that the diary's ending as it does may mean no more than that at last William had begun to find congenial companionship at home, and needed it as confidant no more.

Isobel Watson

Many thanks to Margaret Mander and Sue Thompson for help with the shorthand passages in the diary.

Don't go to the City to purchase A H A T .

GENTLEMEN'S HATS CLEANED AND

DON'T go to the City to purchase a Hat,
For nothing you'll gain by a purchase like that,
Many people are under a fatal mistake
In choosing the City for fashion and make;
We own that the sound of 'the City' may claim
Respectful attention,--but "what's in a name?"
Are the articles better in make or in style?
These questions we'll fairly examine awhile.
We boldly assert, from our knowledge of trade,
That the Hats in the City are not City made;
That the workmen who make them live out of the City,
And none can dispute what we state in our ditty.
With a knowledge of this, and a knowledge of that,
Why go to the City to purchase a Hat?
Come, come to the Hat Mart of Alfred Field,
And full satisfaction your purchase will yield.
This Field is a practical man in the trade,
And Hats for the City he often has made;
His knowledge extends (as you'd have it to do,)
To Material, Fashion, and Workmanship too,
When you purchase Field's Hats you'll say 'tis a pity
That ever you purchased a Hat in the City.
Are Hats from the City in style, make, or fit,
Any better than Field's? No, not a bit!
Yet mark what exorbitant prices you pay!
And you'll find that you're throwing your money away:
City tradesmen are noted for "cutting it fat!"
As customers know when they purchase a Hat.
Come and purchase of Field (if you wish to look nice)
A much better Hat at a much lower price:
Remember our caution, and thinking of that,
Dont go to the City to purchase a Hat!

BLOCKED ON THE PREMISES,

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An item from Hackney Archives' collection of printed ephemera

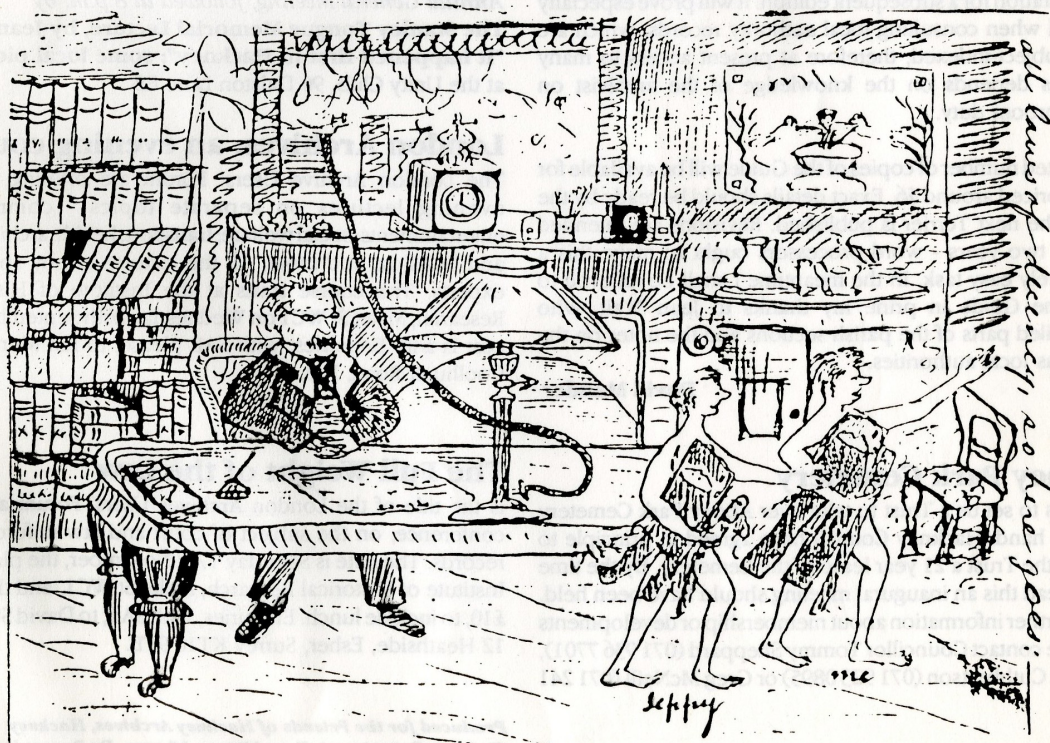
NEW BOOKS

A Victorian Schoolboy in London: the diary of Ernest Baker, 1881-82. Published by the Geffrye Museum at £3.95.

Ernest Baker, schoolboy son of the chaplain to the Geffrye Almshouses, was almost exactly contemporary with William Evans. At the time William was beginning his first diary, Ernest was seemingly set the task of giving "a full and faithful account of the remarkable events of my life, although of course my life is no more remarkable than anyone else's life". The diary has however a wholly different flavour to William's. Ernest leads a more sheltered life, but is of a distinctly boisterous disposition. There are schoolboyish jokes, and irreverent descriptions of some of the significant people in Ernest's life, such as his schoolmaster (of the cramming variety), and family visitors. The narrative is enlivened by Ernest's own pen-and-ink sketches, and gives a vivid impression of Victorian family life, as well as of the incidents of living in Shoreditch at the time (women could not go out on foggy days without escort for fear of being "insulted", for example). Matters of note include Ernest's dismissive attitude to the almspeople, and his fatal incendiary experiment with a tortoise. The book has been nicely produced by the Geffrye Museum, in a suitably schoolboy-proof wipeable cover.

Islington Entertained: or a pictorial history of pleasure gardens, music halls, spas, theatres and places of entertainment. By Bill Manley. Published by Islington Libraries (138 pages, A4 format) at £7.50.

Bill Manley has arranged this splendidly illustrated work, itself an entertainment but also a work of reference, in three parts. In the first, he identifies, with lavish and diverse imagery, the "star turns" of the entertainment world of Islington (and its fringes). They are all here, from the Royal Agricultural Hall and Bagnigge Wells, through the Grecian theatre to the White Conduit Gardens. The illustrations range from 17th century sculpture to 20th century programme material, rare and to be relished. The ordering of the second and third parts depends essentially on the scope of available knowledge. Part Two identifies the many sites - mostly hosterries - of which some narrative history can be shown. Here, therefore, among many others, we have the Angel, the King's Head, the Rosemary Branch and the Highbury Sluice House, as well as the more unexpected Artillery Ground in City Road. As before, this Part is profusely and finely illustrated. Part Three is "work in progress": a list of other Islington places known to the author to have some history "in the entertainment line". It could (from its having no stated cut-off date) be expanded almost infinitely - to cope with 1980's trends in pub theatre for example. This is an unprecedented and immensely useful book; author, publishers, designer and printer are to be congratulated on producing something which, though appearing to have a hefty cover price, compares very favourably indeed as value for money with other books in similar format.



One of Ernest Baker's illustrations for his diary

NEWS AND NOTES

Guide to Hackney Archives Department

For some years staff at the Department have been working on a guide to the collections, and this is now nearing completion. The project is part of a revision of the London-wide "Guide to London Local History Resources", a project begun in the early 1970's by librarians. The Greater London Archives Network (a forum for London archivists) revised the terms of reference for the Guide's archive sections, and gave more guidance to compilers: so what results should, taking one borough with another, be in a format which users will find easier to deal with.

The Hackney section runs to just under 100 pages and gives a general indication of the Department's collection of books, illustrations and maps. More detail is provided for holdings of cuttings, newspapers, and directories. But the bulk of the material concerns the archive collections. The local authority holdings are indicated by reference to all committees and departmental records. For records deposited with the Archives Department by others, the Guide gives the main classes of records and the dates covered. For example, with church records, the existence of minute books, or registers, will be indicated. Each record group is given its document reference, and where appropriate individual document numbers. There is a contents list; an index is in course of preparation for a subsequent edition. It will prove especially useful when consulting local authority records, which are not subject-indexed; therefore at present access to many classes depends on the knowledge of the archivist on searchroom duty.

A limited number of copies of the Guide will be available for sale, priced around £6. Exact details should be ready by the time the next Terrier is published. Revisions are intended every two years - word processors ought to make this a relatively easy task. In the meantime I shall be relieved to see the Guide in print: my thanks to Jean Wait, who compiled parts of the parish sections and the notes on the various local authorities.

David Mander

Abney Park Cemetery

Moves to set up a Trust to take over Abney Park Cemetery are in hand. Hackney Council have agreed in principle to grant the Trust a 21 year lease of the Cemetery. By the time you read this an inaugural meeting should have been held. For further information about membership or developments please contact Councillor Tommy Sheppard (071 936 7701), David Cuthbertson (071 923 0895) or Greg McNeill (071 241 3384).

250 Years of the London Hospital

Before Hackney had its own hospitals, the London Hospital, Whitechapel High Street E1, had, like Bart's, an important place in the lives of Hackney people. To mark the London's 250th anniversary, an exhibition is being held, and is open Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. until 4.30 p.m., until 26th October.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 29th September at 2.30 p.m. in Hackney Archives Department, Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road N1

Cemetery Records: an illustrated 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

Wednesday 13th March 1991 at 6 p.m.

Visit to Wesley's Chapel and Library

49 City Road, EC1

Tuesday 14th May 1991 at 7.30 p.m.

Annual General Meeting, followed at 8 p.m. by

The Stanley Tongue Memorial Lecture, by Jean Wait: "It happened first in Hackney": some local pioneers
at the Unity Club, 96 Dalston Lane E8

London Archives: an evening course

The London Archive Users' Forum are offering twelve evening lectures on separate topics - commerce; entertainments; social welfare; transport; health; architecture and building; and more. All the lectures are by specialist experts. The course starts at the Institute of Historical Research, Malet St WC1 on Wednesday 26th September; the cost is £48. Enquiries, with SAE please, to Ian Murray, 11 Coolhurst Road, N.8.

The Full Weight of the Law

is the title of the London Archives Users' Forum autumn conference, on the subject of court and law enforcement records. The date is Saturday 17th November, the place the Institute of Historical Research, Malet St WC1, and the cost £10, to include lunch. Enquiries, with SAE, to David Stewart, 12 Heathside, Esher, Surrey KT10 9TE.

Produced for the Friends of Hackney Archives, Hackney Archives Department, Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ (telephone 071-241 2886) by Wednesbury Wordsetters, London E1.