



The

# HACKNEY TERRIER

newsletter of Hackney Archives Department

No. 42

Winter 1996

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## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

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With one long time associate leaving us, four volunteers making their mark, there have been a few new faces at Hackney Archives Department since the last Terrier.

After nine years as our contract conservator, Sara Archard left at the beginning of October to take on a job as conservator working at Dundee University Archives. Sara has kept pace with the volume of repairs and cut into our considerable backlog of conservation work, and contributed to display and exhibition work. Our best wishes to Sara, Simon and Abigail in their new life in the Scottish countryside.

Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price joined us in the autumn to gain practical experience of conservation work. Jacqueline has her own book repair business and had undertaken conservation training. Originally her experience was to last until the end of October, but she has now taken on our conservation work, on the same two day a week basis as Sara.

Michael Kirkland who joined us in June, working one day a week as a volunteer to gain experience, is now working for two days a week. A small underspend on the salaries vote in the HAD budget is being used to create a temporary contract for Michael until the end of the financial year. Michael will be dividing his time between searchroom duties, and support and administration work. He is also working on a street index to the 19th century Hackney valuation lists. These are especially

important as we have no rate books for the period 1875-1900.

Natalie Sergeant, from Aix en Provence, joined us in late August and put in a day a week for some six weeks. Natalie hopes to train as a librarian, and has now gone on to further voluntary work in a specialist library. Joan Potter, a member of the Friends, is working with us one morning a week, mostly helping in support work for *Hackney on Disk*. Joan remains our sole volunteer at present.

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## IN THE SEARCHROOM

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As part of our gradual improvement in public facilities at HAD, the old registry table and ten of the chairs have been replaced by three smaller beechwood tables and blue upholstered seats. The new tables and chairs provide a better height ratio and should make research a little more comfortable.

Our customer survey last year identified our phone line as one of the problems in customer delivery. We have now introduced a 'call waiting' service on the line, which tells us that customers are trying to get through, and allows us to call back as soon as a line is free.

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## HAD & THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

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The Heritage Lottery Fund has now received two bids from Hackney Archives Department.

*Hackney on Disk* will require additional terminals, some changes to the software and additional operators if all the images are to be added to the database and the system is to

realise its full potential. A £97,000 bid been submitted.

We are acutely aware of the limitations of our present premises for both public access and storage. For some time we have been interested in the site of the former Hackney Free and Parochial School on Wilton Way, a Grade II listed building. The building totals some 40,000sq ft, which is more than we would require. As a new building for HAD would pose the Council some financial problem, we have been asked to ensure that any further studies look at our existing building, as well as a new site. The Rose Lipman Library is set to close as soon as a new library in the Shoreditch College site opens. While expanding into the present building would give us two additional floors and double up our storage space, any adaption of the building would require substantial building work and the closure of the service, plus the re-housing of the archive collections while this took place.

Accordingly a new feasibility study will examine the main school building of the former Hackney Free and Parochial School site and the Rose Lipman Library. We have found a prospective partner for the school building - the Hackney Building Exploratory. This project would provide Hackney with its own building museum, aiming to explore the economic and social aspects of development as well as the physical issues around construction. The concept would be based on the highly successful The Building of Bath Museum, and the driving force, Polly Hudson, was formerly director of the Bath museum. The Hackney Building Exploratory would be set up under the auspices of the Hackney Society. Our interest in the Wilton Way building has been registered. The next stage depends on a lottery decision.

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#### HACKNEY ON DISK

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*Hackney on Disk* featured in full colour in the Library Association Record in August 1996, and this has prompted a range of further enquiries and demonstrations. Interested parties have included staff from the Prudential Insurance, the Royal Academy and the Business Design Partnership (an architectural

practice. Representatives from Norwich's libraries, museums and the University of East Anglia travelled down to see the system at Hackney, and Ken Laing has travelled to the Netherlands to give a demonstration at the Hook of Holland.

In September, David Mander won the annual Godfrey Award, sponsored by Alan Godfrey, the map publisher, and awarded by the British Cartographical Society. The award was presented at the Society's annual conference at Reading on 14 September. *Hackney On Disk* has also been entered for the Local Government Chronicle 1996 awards in the Innovation category, supported by Hackney's Chief Executive.

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#### ACQUISITION AND LISTING

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Recent deposits have included photographic records from Millfields School, a Bryant and May almanack for 1868 and some additional papers of the firm of William Bailey & Son, furniture and looking glass makers of Curtain Road. The last group included a Victorian mirror made by Henry Bailey, which has been transferred to Hackney Museum.

The additional deposited records from Clapton Park United Reformed Church (The Round Chapel) have now been listed. These included a substantial collection of local and national temperance and Band of Hope Union material, built up by Miss P. Beard and her father. The collections covers almost a hundred years of campaigning against the demon drink, with locally signed pledges going up to 1964. In addition to national conferences there were a variety of local fund raising events - does anyone know what kind of affair a 'vanishing tea' was?

Although the antiquarian albums of Florence Bagust were listed some years ago, only a selection of the extensive photographic material they contain had been cross indexed in our visual catalogue, an omission that is now being addressed. The albums include views by Alfred Braddock, commercially produced photographs, and copy photographs given to Miss Bagust by friends and neighbours. There are also some original

drawings, including an impressionistic pencil sketch of the back garden of a house on the south side of Sutton Place, drawn in 1856 by Alice Nyren, the first headmistress of the Clapton School of Art.

New acquisitions for the visual collection include a colour copy of the perspective view of Aske's Hospital, Pitfield Street that is reproduced in black and white in the Shoreditch Survey of London and two views of the interior of St John's Church, Pitfield Street after the redecoration of May 1937.

We had hoped to be able to produce a list of recent acquisitions for the local studies library, but this will have to be held over, as no cataloguing has taken place recently. Among recent acquisitions have been two delightful trade catalogues produced for Lewis Berger & Co for stencil patterns to decorate woodwork and walls dating from 1916 and about 1920.

To simplify access arrangements to the census microfilms, we have replaced all our street card indexes and the Office of Population Census and Surveys index of the 1881 census with revised Public Record Office versions. All census indexes are now in bound volume format, and a new short guide has been introduced to help customers use them.

The Mormon Church has completed a name index for the 1881 census for Middlesex. In due course this will be available for direct public consultation at Hackney; in the interim our record searcher will be able to undertake paid searches.

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#### CONSERVATION

Jacqueline has been working her way through a substantial quantity of binding and has picked up on the long project to repair our extensive theatre poster collection. Those who saw our exhibition on gardens may remember the splendid photographs of the Gaviller house and garden (183 Lower Clapton Road). The original album from which the black and white photographs were copied was beginning to break up. The original acidic pages have now replaced and the repaired album will be available again for consultation in the new

year. We took advantage of the conservation work to scan in the album in its entirety.

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#### PUBLICATIONS, PUBLICITY & DISPLAY

Our two new books for the autumn, *More Light, More Power, an illustrated history of Shoreditch and Hackney, Homerton and Dalston in Old Photographs*, were launched at a well attended launch at HAD on the 4th November. A small display based on the Shoreditch book was prepared for the launch and can be seen in our lobby. It is intended that the display will be up until the middle of next year.

A spring exhibition is planned of paintings and drawings of parts of Hackney, taken from the collections held at HAD. The venue will be Sutton House and the exhibition will be ready to coincide with the Stanley Tongue Memorial lecture in the summer of 1997.

David Mander gave a talk at the Geffrye Museum as part of their Victorian season on the 19th of November. An article drawn from the research for the talk appears in this Hackney Terrier. David has also been asked to give a talk based on aspects of *More Light, More Power* to Hackney Society members on 27 January 1997 at 8pm, venue to be announced. Members of the Friends will be welcome to attend.

HAD featured in the December issue of Hackney Today, the Council's magazine for Hackney residents. Included in the double page spread was an item on Gwendoline Lerner, who featured in a 1947 photographic series based on Dalston Secondary School.

We are holding a special winter sale with price reductions for some publications ; *Glimpses of Ancient Hackney & Stoke Newington* was £8.95 now £5 (p&p £1); *Hackney at War* was £7.99 now £4.50 (p&p £1); *We think you ought to go* was £5.00 now £2.50 *Buildings at Risk* was £2.00 now £0.50; *Sutton House Guide* was £3.00 now £1.00; *North London Railway (Chisholm)* was £6.50 now £2.50; *Hackney Empire card* was 35p now 15p; *Abney Park Greeting card* was £2.50 now 50p; *Regents Canal views* was 90p now 30p; *Theatre Posters* was 90p now 25p; *Workhouse rules* was £1.20 now 40p;

*Daniel Defoe in Stoke Newington* was 50p now 5p. Assume 26p postage per item unless otherwise stated.

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#### STOP PRESS

We have just learnt that among the recent acquisitions of the Theatre Museum are plans from the practice of Frank Matcham, architect of the Hackney Empire. Among the 9,000 plans are some 150 plans of the Hackney Empire and plans from the Alexandra Theatre, Stoke Newington. John Earl, who worked to ensure the Empire became a listed building, is working with the Theatre Museum and they expect the plans to become publicly available during 1997. We intend to ensure that copies of the plans become part of the collections at HAD.

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#### A FORGOTTEN FLORAL WORLD: SHIRLEY HIBBERD AND HIS GARDEN.

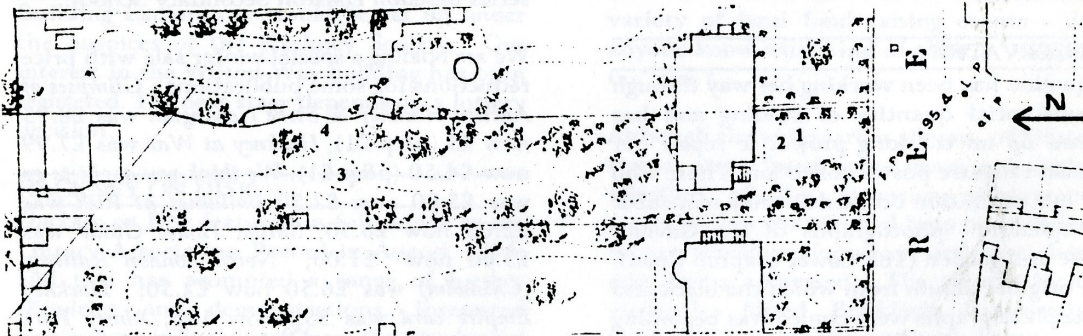
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The gardening writer Shirley Hibberd (1825-90) was one of the many gardening celebrities who featured in our exhibition *A Pleasant Paradise* on the plant nurseries and gardens of Hackney. Hibberd edited one of the first gardening journals, the *Floral World*, which he founded in 1858. Hibberd was born in Mile End and had lived in Pentonville, but after the publication of *Brambles and Bay leaves: essays on rural life*, in 1855, he was able to use the proceeds to buy No 6 Lordship Terrace, one of a row of houses forming the north side of what was then Meadow Street, and lived and gardened there for the next thirty years.<sup>1</sup> Shirley Hibberd made an important contribution to the debate on the nature of the

Victorian garden. In the course of preparing for a talk on nineteenth century Hackney gardens, I came across Hibberd again and felt that he deserved more attention than we were able to give him in the exhibition. He was a garden designer as well as a writer, was a teetotal vegetarian, and refused to discourage birds and other creatures normally regarded as natural enemies of the gardener. He held strong views and was able to ensure they were clearly expressed. As he said in his introduction to *The Amateur Flower Garden* of 1861, he aimed at 'homely gardens' but he also accepted that there was room for a wide range of views:

"If it is herein stated that roses will not grow like house-leeks on tiled roofs, nor rhododendrons in beds of chalk, those points must be considered settled, for they do not admit of discussion. But when it is further added that beds of roses do not assort tastefully with beds of geraniums, that coniferous trees are out of place in a flower border, there is room for difference of opinion, and the reader is at liberty to quarrel with the author to any extent, and set at nought every one of his advices and suggestions."<sup>2</sup> Hibberd's views were often strongly stated, especially so when it came to local authorities who were "usually indifferent about the appearance of open spaces and lose many opportunities of embellishing cities and especially of giving effect to architectural masses, through refusing to plant trees on spots adapted for the purpose."<sup>3</sup>

But much of his work was firmly based on his own direct experience, either in association with Robert Oubridge, (whose Church Walk



Plan of Shirley Hibberd's Garden (middle of the three houses). Detail from two OS maps of 1868

1. Front garden and jardinet 2. Fern house 3. Geranium pyramid bed 4. Site of Apiary

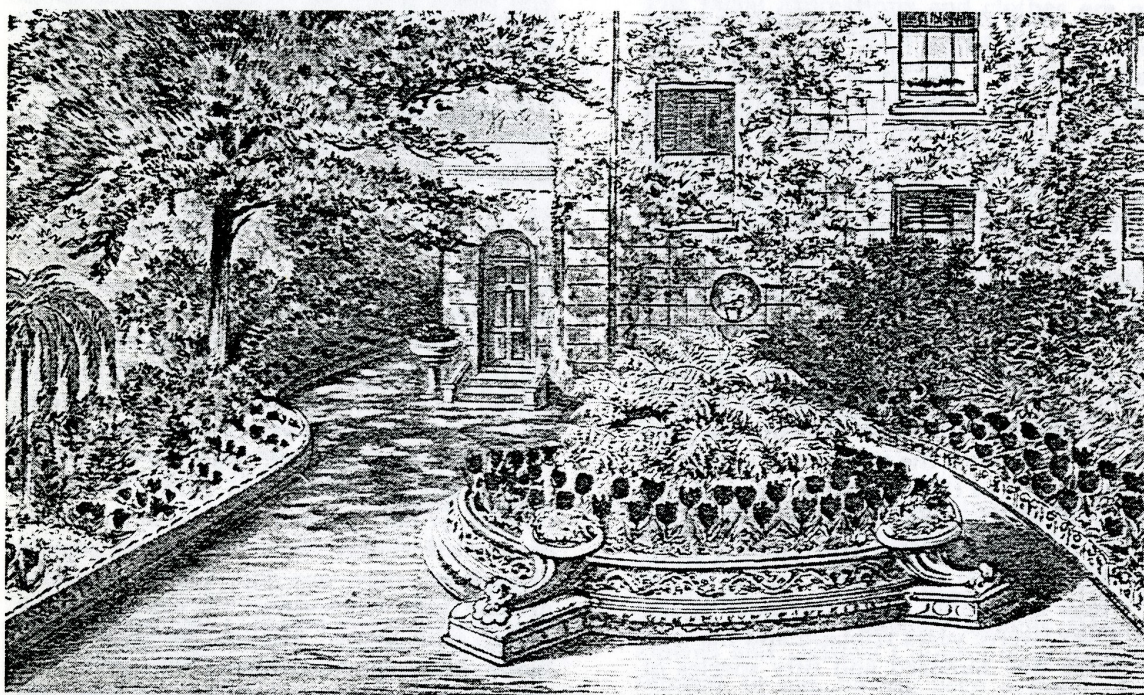
Nursery was close by on the east side of Queen Elizabeth Walk, (south of Brook Road) or from what he referred to as his 'experimental garden' in Lordship Terrace.<sup>4</sup>

Writing in 1980, Richard Gorer realised just how much could be gleaned from the pieces in the *Floral World* and some of Hibberd's other writings on what this garden looked like.

Plans of the garden were included in the journal in 1867 and again the following year. Even more can be discovered in the revised edition of *Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste*.

progressed), are also illustrated from the Hibberd garden. Our set of *The Floral World* was not complete<sup>5</sup>, but HAD does have a 60" Ordnance Survey sheet for 1870, close enough to the publication of the second edition of *Rustic Adornment* to compare notes.

Hibberd's Lordship Terrace house was mid row, facing south with a 33' front garden and 286' at the back and side of the house. The width ranged from 33' to 38' at the bottom. The house was one of a pair of villas with space on the west side of the house. The garden was about the same length as the



*The front garden of 6 Lordship Terrace, with Adornments 2nd ed 1870*

The first edition had appeared in 1856 and although Hibberd claimed that he was constantly called to produce a new edition, this had to wait until 1870. The work deals with plants in and outside the house, but the garden section draws on a number of features in the Lordship Terrace garden, including a fern house, an apiary, the rockery and a summer house. The details of the plunging system, (in which plants were left in pots when planted in beds, so that they could be quickly removed and replaced with other flowers as the season

*the Jardinot in the central bed (Rustic*

Adornments 2nd ed 1870)

longest of the Church Row houses (on the site of Stoke Newington Municipal Offices), though the four houses to the west on Lordship Terrace all had bigger plots, one being three times the size of the Hibberd garden.<sup>6</sup>

The front of Hibberd's house as it would have appeared in late spring appears as a colour plate in *Rustic Adornment*. Stone edged beds curve in from the east towards the front door and steps; on the west is another bed which dips away from the door. Forming the centre

piece in the surfaced front is a jardinet, a highly ornamented feature shown filled with ferns and tulips. Hibberd carried out a regular rotation to keep colour in his front garden at all times of the year. In the winter he used green and variegated ivies, hollies, aucubas, evergreen thorns, and pyracantha. An early spring display of snowdrops and crocuses was succeeded by hyacinths and tulips, with a summer show based round geraniums, and the autumn chrysanthemums. A single stone pedestal by the door also provided a splash of colour, and the house front was trellised with a bright green climber (the coloured illustration is not clear enough to make out the species). A small circular recess, which in other homes of taste might have held a bust of a suitable worthy - the Mole in *Wind in the Willows* opted for the Infant Samuel has a single potted plant. The entrance hall also features in *Rustic Adornments*: it housed an aquarium, a fern case on the west side window, the mounted head of a Jacob ram and a large (and one hopes stuffed) snake draped round a forked tree where one might have expected a hat stand.<sup>7</sup>

In the corner made by the back of the entrance and the rest of the house, Hibberd built a fernery, illustrated in a line drawing *The Fern Garden* of 1869, with the top hatted author by the open door. The tile paved lean-to used two warm walls and housed a rockery made from burrs from the brick kiln surrounding peat. Ferns were planted everywhere except at the top, where succulents made the most of the light. Over twelve years Hibberd and his wife grew some one hundred and fifty species of ferns here.<sup>8</sup>

Half way down the back garden a centre path parted round a bed, and it was here that Hibberd grew his geranium pyramids. Hibberd was an advocate of distinctive features in flower gardens, and if geometric beds were not possible then one or two mounds of flowers could provide an alternative. These could use a stone dais or circles of stakes - or the geranium pyramid, "and we stop at that because we must stop somewhere. As this is the one of the grandest of embellishments, daring distinct and desirable, if only as change away from the monotony of flat colouring and imitations of Kidderminster carpets, we shall make a little essay on the subject, founded on

our own practice." Which Hibberd duly did. The pyramid used older geranium plants - Hibberd suggested two of his own varieties, *Hibberd's Pet*, *Hibberd's Orange Nosegay* - which had been trained upright using stakes. Some forty eight plants would be needed, taken up early at the end of one season and planted again in May with bottom shoots then trimmed off, and taller plants kept for the centre. At least seven years work would be required using level planting to attain the final shape, though Hibberd conceded that the bed could be raised to form an inverted basin with a flat space in the centre and surround this with circles of stakes, each set round in turn by different sized plants. Throughout the season the pyramid would require attention, ensuring that growth went inwards. The Stoke Newington example was also surrounded by a contrasting coloured plant to off-set the scarlet and green at the centre.<sup>9</sup>

To one side of the pyramid bed was a rustic summer house, and an open apiary, while an archway over the path broke the line of vision with the rest of the garden. Hibberd was specially proud of his bee-keeping. Readers of his books "may imagine at first sight that we intend the bee-house as a useless ornament, devised to deceive the visitor after the fashion of the Empress Catherine's painted villages, or ... like any set of modern ruins, woods of canvass, or fairy palaces, temples or fountains of painted timber. Such things are simply obnoxious; they are like those deceptive Arabian fruits which attract the eye but fill the mouth with ashes." Hibberd found that the Stoke Newington of the 1860s provided enough suburban variety for his bees. He provided them with an open shed, enclosed with boards with openings from October to March. During his thirteen years of Stoke Newington bee keeping, Hibberd got about 10lbs from each hive and in 1864 a company submitted a sample of his honey in Regent Street, billed as 'London Honey'. Swarms were a problem, but Hibberd doffed his coat and set to with a will. On one Sunday the swarm landed in a neighbour's garden, and Hibberd used his naked hand to sweep the mass of bees into a new hive, which he set down some three yards away. Gradually the bees left behind, forming a mass "like a heap of grocers currents" marched towards their new

home. For the next two hours Mr Hibberd's bees provided entertainment for a good part of Stoke Newington

Mrs Hibberd took particular interest in the bees, which provided a distraction from chronic sickness, and it was only the loss of gardens and local hedgerows as Stoke Newington was developed in the 1860s that prompted Hibberd to move his hives five miles further out of town.<sup>10</sup>

The same pressures prompted Hibberd to move out to Muswell Hill around 1875, but his books provide a fascinating insight into a successful mid Victorian garden. His published works and the pages of the *Floral World* give more details than there is space for here on plants that he grew and loved. The Lordship Terrace house and garden were swept away in 1933 for the construction of the council estate on the site. But Hibberd's published work provides enough the source material to tempt the reconstruction of a period garden to go with a period house.

Richard Gorer. *The Victorian who said it all*. Country Life, 13 March 1980 ; Ordnance Survey Maps London III 76 and 86, 1870 edition. Works by Shirley Hibberd 1. Gorer op.cit; 2 op.cit. 3 *Amateur Flower Garden* 1st ed p2; 4 Gorer op.cit. 5 O.S. III 76 1870; 6 *Floral World and Garden Guide* (HAD holds volumes for the years 1870 -4; 7 O.S. op.cit 8 *Rustic Adornments* pp 51, 214-228, 229-264, 277-316; the coloured illustration is opposite p 28; 10 *Rustic Adornments* pp312-4 11 op.cit. Pp229-30, 236-7, 247

David Mander

#### BOOK REVIEWS

**HACKNEY, HOMERTON AND DALSTON:** *Prints and Engravings 1720-1948 from the Collections at Hackney Archives Department, David Mander. Published by the London Borough of Hackney and Sutton Publishing Limited, 1996, ISBN 0-7509-1228-6, paperback 160 pages. Price £9.99.*

David Mander has done it again! He has produced a first class collection of prints and photographs on what was termed "Old Hackney", intended as a companion volume to *Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill and Upper Clapton and More Light, More Power: An Illustrated History of Shoreditch*. The volume should also be compared with David's earlier compilations - *L B H in Old Photographs before 1914* (1989), *L B H in Old Photographs 1890-1960*, with Jenny Golden (1991). There are few repeat photographs in the present compilation, so rich is the Hackney Archives collection. We now have available one of the finest published records of the past of any London borough, thanks to David's efforts.

While the number of pages at 160 is the same as the earlier books, it is larger in size and the annotations beneath each image are more extensive. More early prints have been included than previously, some of which are new to me. The full page photograph of Hackney Churchyard on a snowy midwinter day in 1885 shows the large Rowe Mausoleum, which had gone by 1913. It is an evocative image and a superb example of the photographers art. The group of photographs of the numerous but silent gathering of local worthies inside the Central Library awaiting the arrival of the Prince and Princess of Wales for its opening in 1908 is in a similar category. The facial expressions and clothes are most expressive of the Edwardian era.

The commentaries below each picture add greatly to our enjoyment and understanding of the image. Unfortunately something seems to have happened to the text on pages 22 and 23, where the caption below the two pictures is almost the same, and the last line of text is missing on both pages 112 and 145. A amusing and impossible statement appears on page 76 below the photograph of the Unitarian Church in Chatham Place. There is an open field in the foreground, but the commentary states "This photograph of around 1880 was taken from the field opposite, which was built on in 1861."

These however are minor imperfections in a volume which is a must for anyone with an interest in Old Hackney, and is beautifully produced by Sutton Publishing. The last section on two Hackney schools (Hackney Downs and Dalston County) is of particular interest to me, having been a pupil of the former. Here we see the schools in their prime, with photographs of a joint theatre production in 1948 showing a very young Harold Pinter in a Shakespearean role as Romeo.

Specialist sections on Bergers the paint manufacturers, with their long association with the borough, the troops stationed in Victoria Park in 1911 in anticipation of industrial unrest, and Second World War bomb damage in Eleanor Road, show Hackney life in all its range and complexity. On the back page we see a plump man in a horse and trap on Homerton Road, said to be Messrs Abbot's foreman, making his way home in 1905 - I wonder who he was? Similar intriguing thoughts and speculations arise from numerous images in this book, which help give

the whole attraction and charm. It is a work both for that pleasant activity of browsing as well as for information. David Mander's latest offering is not a contrived collection of disassociated photographs, but a compilation that presents a clear and affectionate glimpse into the past using set locations and themes. Thoroughly to be recommended to newcomers as well as to those who knew Old Hackney thirty and more years ago.

*Alan Ruston*

**MORE LIGHT, MORE POWER:** *An Illustrated History of Shoreditch. Published by the London Borough of Hackney and Sutton Publishing Limited, 1996, ISBN 0-7509-1217-0, paperback 128 pages. Price £9.99.*

The last history of Shoreditch as a whole was that of Henry Ellis, published in 1798. David Mander's latest publication is a worthy successor.

David starts with the statement that Shoreditch was the third smallest of the Middlesex parishes, and goes on to show what a rich history is packed into its 640 acres. The arrangement of the material is partly chronological and partly thematic, a good choice where neither would have been successful alone. There are thematic chapters on the parish churches, charity and sickness, poverty, local government 1855-1900, entertainment, and business and industry, while more general chapters cover the periods before 1660, 1660-1840 and since 1900. We learn about those features of Shoreditch which are paralleled elsewhere - the workhouses, the turnpike roads, the industries, the railways - and those which are peculiar to Shoreditch. These include the large number of private lunatic asylums, and more happily Thomas Fairchild's pioneering nursery, where he produced the first artificial hybrid plant (a cross between a carnation and a Sweet William). And pre-eminent in this category is The Theatre. James (not Richard) Burbage built England's first purpose-built playhouse in 1576, and later Shakespeare's early plays were produced here by Richard Burbage, James's son.

Many readers will find it helpful to have various Shoreditch institutions clarified, such as the almshouses, and the four separate Hoxton Academies which all trained theological students. However one notable institution, the Geffrye Museum, does not appear at all! Possibly it was the victim of the procrustean approach of the publishers, to

which some infelicities of expression are doubtless also due. It is sad that such a rich and complex history as that of Shoreditch had to be cut to size; however, we can be grateful for what we have.

As one would expect from this publisher, illustrations are a major component of the book. Prints, drawings and paintings are included as well as photographs, and the quality of reproduction is high. Many of the illustrations are old friends, such as the cover view showing taxis in front of St Leonard's, and the famous Shoreditch Water Closet. But others are less familiar. There is a harrowing print from the *Illustrated London News* showing one room inhabited by eleven people - not in 1860 but as recently as 1919. And there is a delightful view of Hoxton Street market in 1948, which conveys both shabby poverty and bustling life.

Two maps are given, showing Shoreditch in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They are unusual in that they are not simple reproductions of contemporary maps, but show the principal streets, institutions and large buildings mentioned in the text even though these did not all exist at the same time. Whilst less decorative than reproductions, they are much more useful. For the nineteenth century we are given the location of all 24 places of worship and the seven theatres, which would be impossible to pick out on an Ordnance Survey map of similar scale.

This book is wholeheartedly recommended to those who live in or know Shoreditch, those whose ancestors lived there, and anyone interested in the history of London.

*Jean Wait*

*The Hackney Terrier was produced by David Mander and Peter Foynes of Hackney Archives Department at 43, De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ. Tel 0171 241 2886. Fax 0171 241 6688; e-mail archives@hackney.gov.uk The Terrier is distributed free to members of the Friends of Hackney Archives. Membership of the Friends is open to all. The subscription is £6 for each calendar year, (plus £2 for each additional member at the same address and £12 for overseas members (if paid in sterling). Back numbers are available from the Friends at 29 Stepney Green E1 3JX (large sae for details).*