

# The Hackney Terrier

*The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter*

# 92

Summer 2014



## The Friends of Hackney Archives AGM 2014

Thursday 3 July

At the Hackney Archives, in the adjacent meeting room

6pm AGM business

6.30pm **Talk: Daily life in Hackney during the First World War, Professor Jerry White**

We hope you will be able to attend. The talk will be open to all, so please let your friends know about it. Do please RSVP to Hackney Archives 020 8356 8925 or [archives@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:archives@hackney.gov.uk)

## Who are these people?

Isobel Watson purchased this photo for us on eBay late last year, but we don't know who's in it. While we don't expect anyone to be able to give us the names of the people shown, we would be interested in any guesses as to the type of occasion.

The photographees are all men, with a range of ages. They look quite smartly dressed and each has a button hole, which suggests an important occasion or a celebration. However, the posture of several of them is fairly relaxed, even slouched, which suggests something not too formal. We did wonder about a sports team or a work photograph, but we thought that a sports team would be dressed in a more uniform way, and that people in a work photograph would look more formal. Have any of the Friends got any other ideas, or think that our assumptions are incorrect?

We can't be certain that the people in the photograph were local, but the photographer definitely was. The name below the photograph is "TS Robinson" of "185-187 High Street,

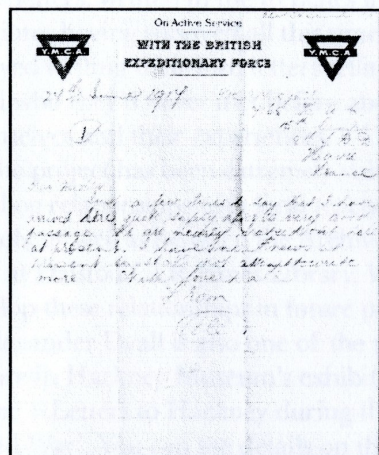
Homerton" (later Homerton High Street). I had a look through our directories and found that Thomas Stimpson Robinson was in business in Homerton for quite some time. He was at that address from at least 1895, and last appears in the 1941 directory, still listed as a professional photographer. A bit of a hunt on Ancestry (which is freely available in our Search Room) shows that he probably died in early 1941, aged 84.

*Siân Mogridge, Archivist*





# Cityread 2014 – Local History and Letter Exchange Project



Over the past few months, Hackney Archives has been involved in an exciting project to engage local schoolchildren with a collection of letters written by a local boy who went off to fight on the

Western Front during the First World War.

Cityread London is an annual month-long celebration of reading in the capital that takes place in April. It is aimed at encouraging reading for pleasure. There are a few books chosen which all the participating boroughs encourage local schoolchildren and library users to read. To commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, this year the books chosen had that conflict as their theme.

A range of local activities are organised to support Cityread. This year the Archives was involved with the Local History and Letter Exchange project. This involved offering local schools a session at the Archives with a First World War theme, followed by a session either run by library staff or delivered by the teachers back at the school, where the children would write letters to named children in other boroughs.

The aim was to inspire the children with an interest in the history of their local area, particularly with regard to the First World War period, and to encourage them to express themselves and share their interests and connect with other children across London.

Three local schools – Millfields, Gayhurst and Benthall – expressed interest in taking part in the

project and the Archives session was delivered to eight classes (mainly Year 6, with some Year 5) from these schools during March and April.

We chose to design the session around an important collection of letters written by a young man called Alexander Percy Dyal, who lived in Upper Clapton and signed up with the Honourable Artillery Company in 1916. He arrived in France in June 1917 and the letters are ones that he sent home to his parents and younger sister over the next few months. We selected certain letters and supporting documents, such as photographs, maps and census entries, to bring the letters to life for the children, and then devised three different activities relating to different stages of Alexander's life.

The classes were divided into three groups, with each group doing all of the activities. While working with copies of the documents during the activities, the children also had the opportunity to view the original letters, introducing them to the role of the Archives in preserving documents so that they can still view these letters that are almost a hundred

years old. Some of the schools chose to do the letter-writing back at the school and others opted for the session to be delivered by the library staff, straight after the Archives session.

The sessions worked really

### WRITING HOME

Letters to Hackney during the first world war

Exhibition at Hackney Museum  
6 May – 30 August 2014  
Admission free

Hackney Museum  
Technology and Learning Centre  
1 Bessing Road  
London E8 1JQ  
hackney.gov.uk/hackneymuseum

Tues, Wed, Fri: 10.00am – 5.00pm  
Thurs: 10.00am – 4.00pm  
Sat: 10.00am – 5.00pm  
Sun: 11.00am – 4.00pm

THE FUSLER MUSEUM LONDON Hackney Archives 2014 Hackney



well, with the children becoming intrigued by the life of this young man who lived in Hackney during the First World War and by the idea of these letters, written in the trenches in France and Belgium, having survived all this time. They also enjoyed writing their own letters telling another child who they'd never met before about themselves and their experiences.

The project has been extremely valuable in building relationships with local teachers and schools, as well as between the Archives and library staff at Dalston CLR James Library. We hope to develop these relationships in future projects.

Alexander Dyllal is also one of the soldiers that feature in Hackney Museum's exhibition, 'Writing Home – Letters to Hackney during the First World War'. You can see details on the back page of this newsletter.

*Elizabeth Green, Access and Outreach Officer*

## Online Resources

### Poor law records

The abstracts of over 22,400 London Poor Law records from between 1581 and 1899, covering over 300 years and 66 City of London parishes, are now available online. Poor Law records are a major source for those interested in both local and family history and touch almost every aspect of the lives of those who had fallen on hard times or whose predicaments drew them to the attention of the parish officers.

The parish officer/overseer of the poor was expected, when necessary, to feed, clothe, house and find work for his poor inhabitants. He apprenticed pauper children and diligently pursued the fathers of illegitimate children born in the parish. But ultimately he protected his parish from the claims of paupers who were not his responsibility. Thus these records can allow you to prove relationships between

both members of the same family and between families and places.

A large number of families lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Illness, death of the main wage earner, a bad harvest or other disaster could cause a family to become dependent upon poor relief. Poor Law records can provide the means to help you to follow these 'pauper' ancestors through their trials and tribulations.

These Poor Law abstracts (summaries) contain a complete summary of the details contained within each entry and include all details including names and places plus incidental information such as relationships and occupations, where found in the original documents.

[www.origins.net/BritishOrigins/Search/General/LondonPoorLaw/BOSearchLondonPoorLaw.aspx](http://www.origins.net/BritishOrigins/Search/General/LondonPoorLaw/BOSearchLondonPoorLaw.aspx)

### London OS Town Plan 1893-6

The OS town plans of London in the 1890s mentioned in the last *Terrier* are now available on Google Maps, where you can toggle between them and satellite images of a place today. A button in the lower left-hand box slides between the two displays, allowing varying degrees of overlay.

<http://goo.gl/pB5SI5>

### AIM25

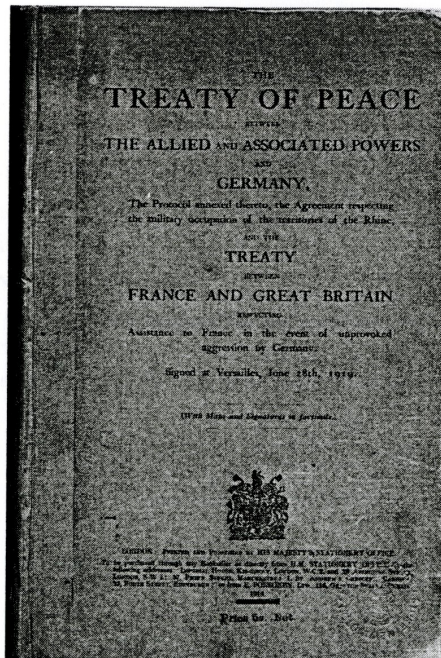
Friends undertaking research in London may find this a useful site. AIM25 (archives in London and the M25 area) is an online portal providing access to the archive catalogues of over 120 higher education institutions, royal colleges, scientific and cultural bodies, businesses and local authorities based in London.

[www.aim25.ac.uk](http://www.aim25.ac.uk)

Please let us know of any websites or online resources you feel might be of interest to members of the Friends.

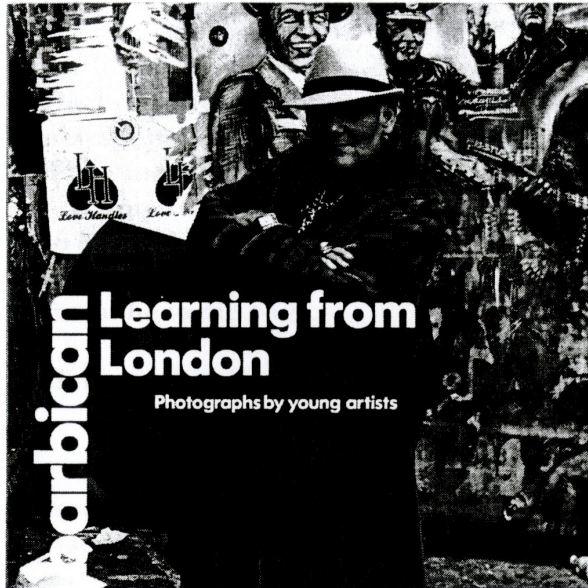
# Additions to the Local Studies Library

The Public Catalogue Foundation is undertaking the enormous task of digitising the nation's collection of publicly owned oil paintings, making them available online and also in the form of printed catalogues. Hackney Archives' oil paintings are included in the *London: North & East* catalogue along with those at Hackney Museum, Stoke Newington Town Hall and the Geffrye Museum in Kingsland Road. A copy of the catalogue has been donated to the Local Studies Library as part of the project. (*shelved at 352.48 SR/OS*)



It's not every day that you receive the Treaty of Versailles through the internal post, but that happened recently after Stoke Newington Library found a copy in their possession and decided that Hackney Archives was the best home for it. This ties in very well with all the research we're currently undertaking on the centenary of the First World War, and will no doubt be of great interest when we look at the peace process in a few years' time. (*shelved at 940 OS/SR*)



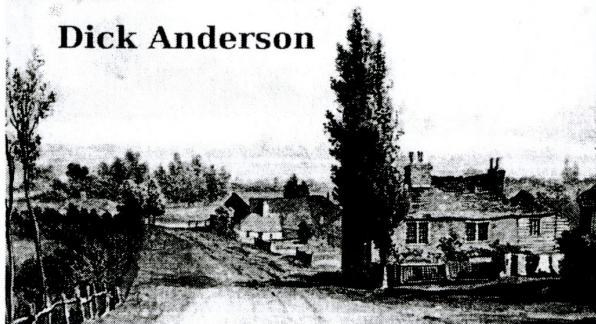


Pupils from local secondary schools have been working with the Barbican Centre on the photographic project 'Learning from London', portraying both the local area and other parts of London. The accompanying book contains both the images and the photographers' thoughts on how and why they took their pictures.  
(shelved at 908.4 SR)

Dick Anderson has been visiting the Archives regularly for several years whilst researching a history of rowing on the Lea River. He has now published a book on the subject, *Springhill: two centuries of River Lea rowing*, and has kindly given two copies to the Local Studies Library.  
(shelved at 748.1 AS)

### **Springhill: Two Centuries of River Lea Rowing**

**Dick Anderson**



*Sally England, Local Studies Librarian*



### Recent articles in HackneyToday

Hackney Archives contributes a regular history page to the Council's fortnightly free newspaper *HackneyToday*. The page looks at stories and events both past and present using material from the Archive collections and Local Studies Library.

If you live outside the borough and don't receive *HackneyToday*, you may be interested to know that an electronic copy (in PDF format) of the latest issue of the paper is available online at [hackney.gov.uk/w-hackneytoday.htm](http://hackney.gov.uk/w-hackneytoday.htm). You can also find back issues from the same page.

Here are details of some of the articles published since the last Terrier:

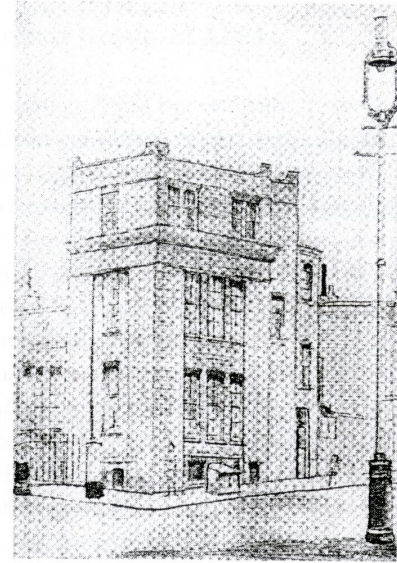
**Issue 322:** Although almost nothing of Hackney Brook can be seen above ground today, this important waterway has left clues that can be used to trace its course both through the landscape and through time.



**Issue 323:** Binge drinking! Foul language! Immorality! Society going to wrack and ruin! Something must be done! Not alarming headlines from today, but the serious concerns of a group of organisations that came together during the 1690s as the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, in an attempt to combat what was seen as increasing moral laxity.



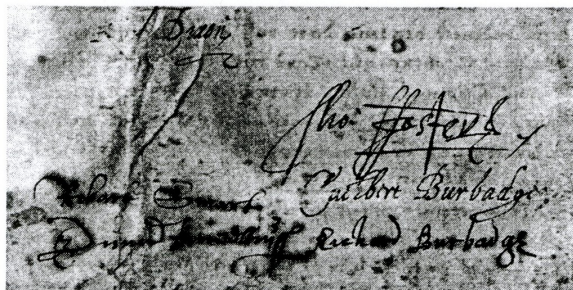
**Issue 324:** The story of the Maurice Hostel in Hoxton, part of the settlement movement which aimed to provide social services and education to the impoverished local population and bridge the widening gap between classes, with university graduates volunteering to live and work in the slums in colonies of learning and fellowship.



**Issue 325:** 'The Island' was a small, irregular plot of land north of Hackney Downs used to build five short streets of basic housing for railway construction workers. After just a century the area was demolished, but by then it had become home to a uniquely close-knit community united in poverty and friendship.

**Issue 327:** It's a century since the Geffrye Museum in Kingsland Road first opened its doors to the public. Formerly the almshouses of the Ironmongers' Company, the pensioners moved out in the early 1900s, but uncertainty over the fate of the building provoked a struggle that lasted over 20 years in an attempt to save it from destruction.

**Issue 328:** Throughout this year TfL is celebrating the Year of the Bus. 2014 has been chosen because it coincides with a number of important anniversaries in the story of the London bus, including one relating to the First World War and another with a very special Hackney connection.



**Issue 329:** This year marks Shakespeare's 450th birthday. Although it is not known exactly why or when he first came to London, the earliest records place Shakespeare in Shoreditch, working with the Burbage family at the first ever permanent professional playhouse: The Theatre.



# What's On

### Hackney Archives

#### World War 1 Centenary in Hackney

Would you like to be involved in commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1 in Hackney? Come and find out how to uncover local stories relating to Hackney during the war by researching the collections at Hackney Archives. The workshop will include a guide to researching the Archives collections and an opportunity to find out about what else is going on.

*Saturday 14 June, 2-4pm*

#### Legacies of British Slave-Ownership

Nick Draper (University College London) will introduce the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project and Mike Watson will present new research highlighting Hackney's connections with the subject. After 1833, compensation of £20 million was paid to British slave-owners. This legal procedure produced an archival record of slave-owners around the end of British Caribbean slavery. The UCL project has converted this information and more into a searchable database that sheds light on the connections between slavery and the formation of modern Britain. This workshop will help you to use the database as a tool to aid family and historical research.

*Wednesday 18 June, 6-7.30pm*

*Places are limited for these FREE workshops so book early to avoid disappointment.*

*Please telephone 020 8356 8925 or email [archives@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:archives@hackney.gov.uk) to book a place.*

### Hackney Libraries

#### Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month

*Hackney Central and Homerton libraries*

*6-28 June*

*For more details see*

*[www.hackney.gov.uk/libraries-whats-on.htm](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/libraries-whats-on.htm)*

### Exhibitions Elsewhere

#### The East London Group of Artists

##### c1928-1936

This is a rare and exciting opportunity to see works, exhibition catalogues, press clippings and sketchbooks on loan from private collections, museums and government archives from around the country. They reveal forgotten memories and uncover stories from the East London Group's history and local heritage. Celebrated in their day, these artists are now almost forgotten.

Many of the scenes in these works reveal the changing landscape and history of East London, from interiors and streetscapes to industrial scenes and East End figures. The show also includes scenes or buildings that no longer exist or were destroyed during the war. A real chance to delve into our local history.

*The Nunnery, 181 Bow Road, London E3 2SJ*

*Tues-Sun, 10am-5pm, to 13 July*

*[www.bowarts.org/nunnery/east-london-group-artists-c-1928-1936](http://www.bowarts.org/nunnery/east-london-group-artists-c-1928-1936)*

#### Writing Home – letters to Hackney during the First World War

Marking the centenary of the start of the First World War, this exhibition presents some of the letters written to families and sweethearts at home in Hackney by two young soldiers fighting on the front line.

*Hackney Museum, 1 Reading Lane Hackney, London, Greater London, England, E8 1GQ*

*Tues, Weds, Fri 9.30am-5.30pm, Thur 9.30am-8pm, Sat 10am-5pm, to 30 August*

*[www.hackney.gov.uk/museum-exhibitions.htm#](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/museum-exhibitions.htm#)*

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**The Hackney Terrier** is published by the Friends of Hackney Archives, Dalston CLR James Library and Hackney Archives, Dalston Square, London E8 3BQ 020 8356 8925, [archives@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:archives@hackney.gov.uk)

Contributions to future issues should be sent to Sally England at the above address.