



The HACKNEY TERRIER

THE FRIENDS OF HACKNEY ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

No . 29

Winter 1992/3

ABOUT THE FRIENDS

In the last year the *Hackney Terrier* has acquired a large number of new readers, many of them Hackney residents. It therefore seems a good time to outline what the Friends of Hackney Archives are about.

The Friends were founded, in 1985, as a support group for the work of Hackney Archives Department - the first such group in a metropolitan area (Merseyside has since then followed our lead). Primarily, in these first seven years, we have spoken up for the records and their users, reminding the Council, when necessary, of the needs of both. The existence of such a group proved to be more than justified in 1988, when a proposal to close the Archives saw the light for a short time. Second, we have been able to assist in building the collection, in two principal ways. There is the ongoing donations fund: many grateful visitors like to leave tangible thanks in the Friends' box in the searchroom at the Archives. This fund enables us to assist with specially expensive purchases (such as Joseph Priestley's lectures). And there have - when the sums required went beyond the current kitty - been special appeals, which have secured two significant collections of theatre posters for the department's increasingly important theatre collection. We can, within limits, occasionally also plug gaps when the Archives funds run out (see back page). From time to time we have also been able to organise talks and visits on local history subjects, and raise funds (and our profile) by setting up a bookstall at local events.

Who are Friends? It is a constant source of surprise to those we meet that we are none of us employed at Hackney Archives Department. It might also surprise some readers to know that the number of members in Hackney and its neighbouring London boroughs are

nearly equalled by those further afield (quite a few as far as Australia). This goes some way to explain why we have not given greater emphasis to talks and visits. Indeed the situation now is that less than half the membership of our small Committee is resident in the borough. It is not difficult to see why, for sound practical reasons, this limits the scope for organising local events.

So a New Year message to local readers: how about it? Ideas, offers of help (various tasks need assistance, especially distributing publications), willingness to join the Committee... any or all of these would be more than welcome. A short note or a telephone call to the Department (071 - 241 2886) will put us in touch.

Isobel Watson
Chair

WELCOME

November saw the arrival of Hackney's new Senior Assistant Archivist. He is Peter Foynes, who comes to Hackney from the Modern Records section of the Greater London Record Office. Peter is 34, and was born in Limerick. He studied English and history, graduating B.A. from University College Cork, and M.A. with a thesis on Marian worship. Before developing his career in archives administration, which he studied at University College Dublin, he worked in accountancy, in a shoe factory, on building sites, as a floor sweeper in an Amsterdam brewery and (to quote his own words) as general dogsbody on a Flemish mushroom farm! He and his wife, who is a sculptor, have lived in South London since coming here in 1990; they are planning to move into Hackney in the near future. Our good wishes to Peter in his new position; we hope he enjoys the work in this busy small office, and has all good luck house-hunting in the spring.

BROWNSWOOD: ON THE EDGE OF THINGS

This issue begins a four-part history of the Brownswood area, in the north west of the modern borough of Hackney. Brownswood is bounded by Seven Sisters Road on the north, Blacxstock Road on the west, Mountgrove Road on the south and Green Lanes on the east.

Part 1 RURAL BROWNSWOOD

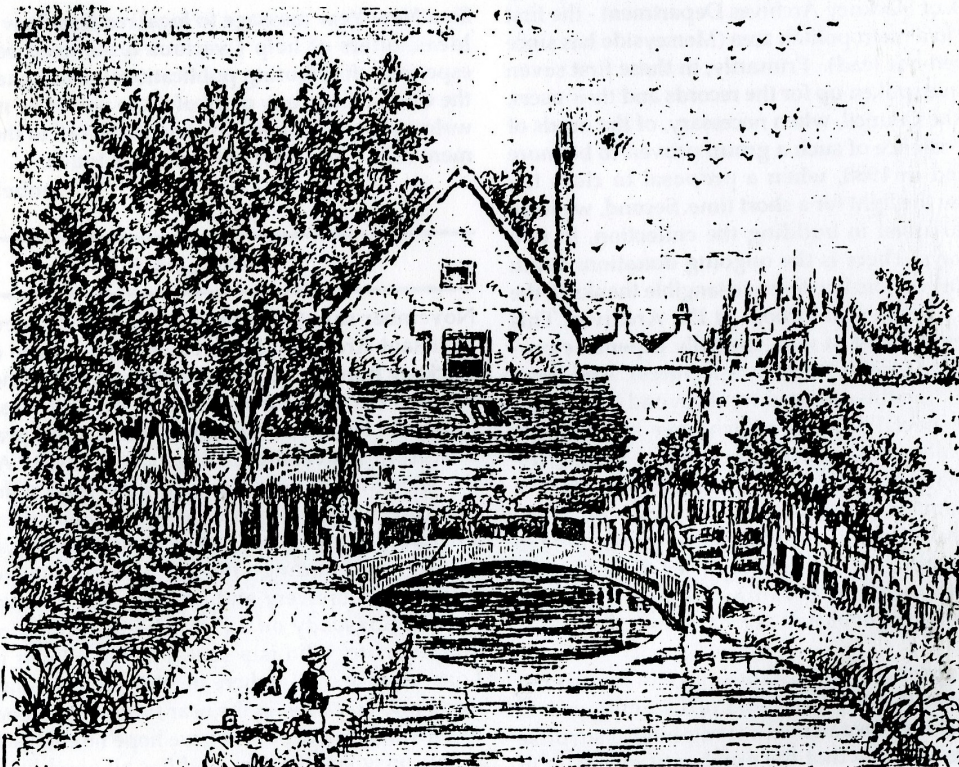
Brownswood as we know it in 1993 is still essentially a creation of the mid-Victorian period. In Queen Elizabeth I's time it contained only three houses and as late as 1861 much of the parish was empty. Many of the early records have been lost and it is impossible to reconstruct a detailed history. Nevertheless we can catch glimpses of that early period, shining through the darkness like shafts of light penetrating 'the great main wood called Brownswoode' — so called in 'The Terrier or Boundaries of all the Landes, pastures, meadows and woodes of the Prebende of Brownswoode' produced in 1577.¹ At that time the 122 acres of wood stretched as far as Crouch Hill and was already of interest to botanists. By 1796 it had been reduced to 27 acres and the last forest trees were felled in 1869, although the vicar of St John's claimed around 1929 that there were still vestiges of the

wood in the vicarage grounds.²

In earlier times the area seems to have been known as Stonestaple, the name by which it is apparently recorded in Domesday.³ Various suggestions have been made as to how it came to be called Brownswood. Since some early documents refer to Brandeswood, it probably derives from the name of David Brand, prebendary of the area and a king's clerk around 1200.⁴ From before the Norman Conquest until 1840 St Paul's Cathedral had 30 prebendaries, each expected to recite a group of psalms every day; Brownswood's quota was numbers 72 to 76.⁵

The prebendaries obtained their income from country estates like Brownswood. Since they often found these properties more attractive than the cathedral, it is questionable how many psalms were actually sung. For example, on 21 May 1568, Prebendary Robert Harrington and some companions 'broke into the close of William Patten of Stoke Newington and trod down the grass growing there'. 'Such apparently unchurchmanlike behaviour - committed, what is more, on the Lord's Day - received its due reward. On 2 April 1569

Wm Paten and John Ferme yoman (*sic*) together with



The Sluice House: a pencil sketch by W. Adams, 1874

many unknown persons assembled riotously [and] with armes and violence made unlawful entry on a certain close called Little Kyngesfeilde ... a parcelle of the said Prebend, and having expelled the said Robert from it and disseized him of it, still keeps him out of it.

Eight years later Robert Harrington had recovered his property: on 17 May 1577 the Terrier of Brownswood recorded that he received rents and other incomes totalling 'nyneteen pounds Ten shyllings Ninepence half-penny farthing'.⁷

The New River

In 1613 the New River — neither new nor a river — first brought its 'fresh streame of running water' the 39 miles from near Ware in Hertfordshire to Clerkenwell. Five years later Brownswood saw the first alteration to the course when a westward loop around the head of the Hackney Brook was shortened by a 150-yard wooden aqueduct known as the 'Boarded River'. This leaky contraption never worked, so in 1776 the New River Company replaced it with a clay-lined embankment.

Built astride the new channel, probably on the site of 57 Wilberforce Road, was one of the company's eight sluice houses, tenanted by two 'walksmen' who regulated the flow. Next to the Sluice House lay the extensive grounds of the Eel Pie House, a tavern famed for its 'Fresh New River Eels', actually imported from Holland.⁸ This resort of criminal elements from the city had a notorious reputation, as shown by this racy cutting from the Dispatch of 5 February 1826:

Ned Savage appeared at the Sluice-House on Tuesday last, and threw up his hat at the time appointed: but his opponent did not make his appearance. Thus, being disappointed of the wrestling match, the fancy coves retired to a large room in the public house where Sam Wedgbury and his pals soon found a temporary pit with forms, tables etc; a dog fight and rat killing match (the first for purse, the second for nix) were then exhibited. There were two many lad of the pit present to part without having a turn-up of a more manly character. A purse was accordingly collected and Bill Webb, of Newport Market, readily set to with a sailor for the contents. About twenty rounds were fought; both men received heavy punishment and both showed fine game qualities. The sailor's courage was particularly admired, but he was ultimately obliged to strike his colours, and Bill Webb pocketed the blunt.

Further north along the New River lay Hornsey Wood House and its grounds, now Finsbury Park. The charge here for tea was generally 1/6 or 2/- so it was more frequented by 'the middle classes of society', including George Crabbe and other poets.

In the 1850s, when legislation required the filtering of all water supplied, the New River Company responded with its 'castle' pumping station and its filter beds. As it was still used as a source of fresh water, especially for cattle, Hornsey parish fought a vigorous but unsuccessful campaign against plans to divert and culvert the New River. When the area was built up, it disappeared into underground pipes, but the route can still be traced where there are gaps in the houses at Wilberforce Road and Finsbury Park Road.

The Park that Never Was

In 1850 some citizens of Finsbury, alarmed at the rapid spread of London, formed a committee to establish a park for the northern suburbs. The first proposal for a 300-acre 'Islington Park' centred on Highbury Barn lapsed, only to be replaced by a much more grandiose and well designed scheme for a 500-acre estate slightly to the east.⁹ This would have been called Albert Park, and would have embraced most of Brownswood, stretching as far south as Highbury Fields.¹⁰ Two successive governments favoured the idea and the requisite notices were served on landowners, but the governments both fell, with crucial bad timing. In 1857 the new Metropolitan Board of Works revived the scheme, obtaining authorisation to buy 250 acres. But when an initial government promise of £50,000 was cancelled, the Albert Park lapsed again. Twelve years later a meagre 114-acre site in the grounds of Hornsey Wood House was purchased for £54,280, and the inspirers of the original plan got their glory in the name Finsbury Park.

David Pracy

Notes

1. HAD D/F/SPR 12/27.
2. HAD Stoke Newington file 3403 class 92: the cutting is undated but the vicar concerned, William Priest, was appointed between 1927 and 1929.
3. Joseph Edgar Marriot, *The history, topography and antiquities of the Borough of Hornsey (Harengeye)*. Unpublished manuscript, 1906, at Bruce Castle Museum, Haringey, p. 586.
4. Marriot, p. 583.
5. A.W. MacKenzie, *The history of Brownswood.*, 1894 (HAD D/F SPR 12/12).
6. Middlesex Quarter Sessions 21 March 10th Elizabeth and 2 April 11th Elizabeth, quoted in HAD D/F/SPR 12/27, opposite p. 2.
7. HAD D/F/SPR 12/27, p. 7.
8. Mary Cosh, *An historical walk along the New River*, 1987. Michael Essex-Lopresti, *Exploring the New River.*, 1986. J.W. Gough, *Sir Hugh Myddleton, entrepreneur and engineer*, 1964.
9. Keith Sugden, *History of Highbury*, 1984, pp25-29.
10. Superb large scale map of the proposed scheme, HAD V42, 44.

THE DIARY OF FRED WILTON

For the first instalment of Bill Manley's account of the diary of the stage manager of Hoxton's Britannia Theatre, see *Terrier* no. 19 (Summer 1990)

Part Two

When at Christmas 1863 Fred looked back on the year, it could not have seemed too much out of the ordinary. The marriage of the Prince of Wales to Alexandra of Denmark which opened all the theatres free; the advent of Pepper's ghost (and of Miss Burdett Coutts, the philanthropist, with a party of friends, to be shown the mechanics of the effect); forty soldiers from the Tower of London brought in to make up the numbers in *Days of Louis XV*; the singer Billy Randall having to "oblige" on Lord Mayor's Day, before a packed house would let the melodrama open; the £6 odd whip-round for Allwood, the scene shifter, recently widowed with five children; and Sara Lane, the leading actress and gov'nor's wife, falling ill - not for the first time nor for the last (with quinsy, this time, and needing stand-ins)... none of these was much out of the way for Fred. Nor was his having, as usual, to spend the Sunday just before Christmas writing long "puffs" for all the newspapers about that season's pantomime. Perhaps it was just as well that he wasn't back in his (and Sam Lane's) native West Country. He preserves a newspaper cutting about three boys



Sara Lane: the printed portrait she gave to admirers (National Portrait Gallery)

at St Ives, who were caught playing marbles instead of going to church, and were put in the stocks.

Had he suspected anything, he might have been worried about his son in law's mother, Mrs Rountree. She was so disturbed about losing money on her last pub venture - the Red Lion in Rosoman Street, Clerkenwell - that she committed suicide three weeks into 1864, causing no little upset. Hardly had the family got over the shock when Fred junior was arrested for debt. So it is perhaps the more remarkable that our Fred chooses this time to reminisce, with anecdotes of the Britannia (for current cronies, or predicted prying page-turners?):

"Now that the saloon has become... a huge wealthy metropolitan fact, a few matters tending to illustrate the peculiarities of the management and establishment... during its rise from obscurity may not be altogether unamusing to strangers. In those days (1843 and thereabouts) it was considered necessary for the safe evasion of the law about unlicensed theatres to announce the concert in the bills and make the theatrical performance appear only a subordinate part of the entertainment - but at this date the concert had dwindled down to a mere chorus and a song or two, and soon after fell off to a chorus only, and finally even the chorus was dispensed with and the bills boldly assumed the same aspect as the bills of the Minor Theatres though the place was still called, like other of the same class, a 'Saloon'."

I think it is clear enough from this that the law had been quite strict about letting unlicensed places - mostly pubs, but also "gaffs" like Bianchi's by Shoreditch Church - exhibit anything which might be called a play; even a cross-talk act.

It is perhaps unfortunate, to the tidy mind, that Fred doesn't put a date on this next bit:

"When I first saw Mr S. Lane, it was soon after he had taken the house and fitted it up for theatrical performances (*during the life of his first wife*). His then stage manager, Henry Howard, took me one morning to see the saloon. Mr S. Lane was standing on one of the pit benches, and was already making some alterations. I was struck with a certain rough independence about him and the clear and determined manner in which he gave his orders to the Carpenters... He honoured me with only a slight, quick, nod of indifference & went on with his business... I had expected some diffidence in a man quite unacquainted with theatricals..."

So Fred offers his opinion that the opening hours are too early for Sam's predominantly labouring-class audiences; and when Sam asks him if he thinks that a reduction of the lowest seat prices from 3d. to 2d. will bring back the defecting audiences, Fred says no, but he thinks an improvement in show standards might. Fred laconi-

cally reports that Sam ignored both bits of advice, and that the audiences did come back - perhaps that improvement did take place. Certainly the arrival of the theatrically-minded Sara seems to have made a great difference.

Fred's reminiscing was soon interrupted in favour of references to his occasional fits of indigestion, other ailments of his own (on which he doesn't elaborate) and of other people (on which he does). There were also the Shakespearean tableaux of April 1864, which were the Bri's contribution to the appeal for a Shakespeare monument; and a benefit three weeks later for the attendant at the "Aggie" (Islington's Royal Agricultural Hall), who had lost an arm to a hungry menagerie lion. All this was followed by the discovery of a thief (the "skivvy") at home, and then another at the theatre - the son of a respected actor. All this, however, didn't stop him from his occasional habit of inserting little jokes in the diaries.

From this point onwards a number of entries are concerned with photographic portraits, both professional and amateur - the latter mostly taken at Fred's home in Nichol Square. It is a pity, therefore, that so far, to the best of my knowledge, not one has come to light. There are many pictures extant of most of the principals in the Britannia's stock company, and the more notable visiting artists, quite a few of them reproduced in theatrical histories, books of memoirs, the Shoreditch cuttings books and the like. It is hardly to be expected, I suppose, that the lesser lights would be featured in the ordinary way; so more's the pity.

And there are (what would you expect in a theatre?) more dramatics. One of the ballet girls, Mrs Geary, burnt on stage from a gas flare, spends three months in hospital but - having been given up for dead - is back at work a year later. The North London Railway arrives, almost outside Fred's door in Nichol Square; the steamship *London* sinks and the survivors appear on the Brit stage - to the great displeasure of Charles Dickens. On a more mundane note, Fred's overweight teenage daughter goes on a tomato diet, and then on the stage; his butcher sends him a cartload of stable dung as a present; and he is given a meerschaum pipe by subscription from members of the company.

Fred has to rewrite shoals of advertisements, after quarrels over billing. Other, unadvertised, alterations have to be made when - as often seems to happen - appalling weather keeps members of the cast away. More often than not it is Fred who has to traipse round trying to find a substitute - preferably one who knows the part! What is almost incredible is that, nearly always, the show does go on - even if, as does happen, the wanted, but "unavailable" substitute gets the sack.

There was more drama when principal G. B. Bigwood went, apparently, on a series of binges; in one case Fred's

daughter Jessie spent her only two scenes with him unable to say his lines.

Then two other highly-respected principals had a stand-up fight on the bridge over the canal at Whitmore Road. The climax came shortly after Sophie Miles's benefit show, when she played Hamlet for the first time - and then eloped with T. G. Drummond (they were both married) to the United States. Surprisingly, to Fred at any rate, the public didn't seem to mind - two of their favourites gone, and no reaction! There certainly was, though, predictably, from the Britannia's management; as the season of preparations for pantomime and Hogmanay set in, it can't have done Sam Lane's liver any good at all.

Bill Manley

The Britannia Diaries of Frederick Wilton, 1863-1875, edited by Jim Davis and published by the Society for Theatre Research, 1992, are now available at Hackney Archives Department.

BRITANNIA THEATRE HOXTON

PROGRAMME

ONE PENNY

MONDAY, JULY 21st, 1902, and during the week at 7 o'clock.

Proprietors:
Messrs. WM. SAMUEL & ALFRED LANE CRAUFORD.

Business Manager	Mr. ALFRED LANE CRAUFORD
Acting Manager	Mr. G. B. BIGWOOD
Stage Manager	Mr. ALGERNON SYME
Musical Director	Mr. THOMAS FISH

LODDIGES NURSERY

Part 4: THE INFLUENCE OF THE NURSERY

Trees in the Hackney Botanic Nursery

Besides its leading role in displaying and selling exotic hothouse plants, the Hackney Botanic Nursery built up an unrivalled show of rare trees. As John Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* noted in 1826 "There is no such collection of hardy trees and shrubs in the world". Almost as though this were not sufficient distinction, Loudon continued: "In this department, Messrs Loddiges have done more than all the royal and botanic gardens put together." Records of sales to Kew, as early as 1806, have survived in their archives. The earliest surviving order is signed by William Loddiges, the less famous of Conrad's nurserymen sons. Judging from annotated notes added by J. Smith in 1854 (Curator of Kew Gardens 1841-1864), interest was shown in mid-Victorian times in trying to ascertain which of Kew's maturing trees had this famous pedigree. A specimen of the conifer *Thuia filiformis* (= *Thuia occidentalis* 'Filiformis'), planted some 48 years earlier, was one of the few to be successfully rediscovered (but has not survived at Kew).

At a later date trees and shrubs were frequently supplied to the Duke of Devonshire for Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, where Joseph Paxton was head gardener. The Duke himself became a frequent visitor by carriage to Loddiges' Nursery.¹ Loddiges' also supplied rare trees and shrubs for St. James' Park and Kensington Gardens. Some years later these were properly labelled, by order of the Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and the *Gardener's Magazine* recommended they be used as a reference collection.

The Layout of the Hackney Arboretum

The arboretum in the Hackney Botanic Garden was laid out with considerable forethought for the visitor, in spite of its daunting size. Here, at the largest tree collection in Britain, where "all the trees and shrubs which will grow in the open air, with the exception of some of the more common species" could be seen, they were all helpfully labelled.² The importance attached to accurate naming was unique, and great care was taken to varnish over the labels in order to preserve them.³

The route of the path began close to the Mare Street entrance south of today's Darnley Road. It ran through Conrad Loddiges' freehold garden, over a footbridge which spanned a public lane, and led thereafter around a series of decreasingly circular walks. Along the entire length of these spiral walks, specimen trees and nursery stock were laid-out alphabetically on the right-hand side of the path.⁴ The novelty of this walk was commented upon in the *Gardener's Magazine* of 1833: "The

arboretum looks better this season than it has ever done since it was planted... The more lofty trees suffered from the late high winds, but not materially. We walked round the two outer spirals of this coil of trees and shrubs; viz. from *Acer* to *Quercus*. There is no garden scene about London so interesting."

On the left side of the spiral paths lay huge collections of roses, followed thereafter by herbaceous plants. At the end of the walk lay a special American collection of select shrubs and small plants growing in bog earth in between small grass paths. The stock at the front of each row was not for sale, being left to grow into natural shapes and sizes. Behind these were the younger stock of trees, shrubs, seedlings and grafts available for sale to the public. Here was something for everyone. For the lay visitor the colours alone sparked amazement: "The acers, which furnish the yellows in the American forests, are in great luxuriance at Messrs Loddiges. The birches, which furnish the reds, yellows and browns, are also very fine. What a treasure..."

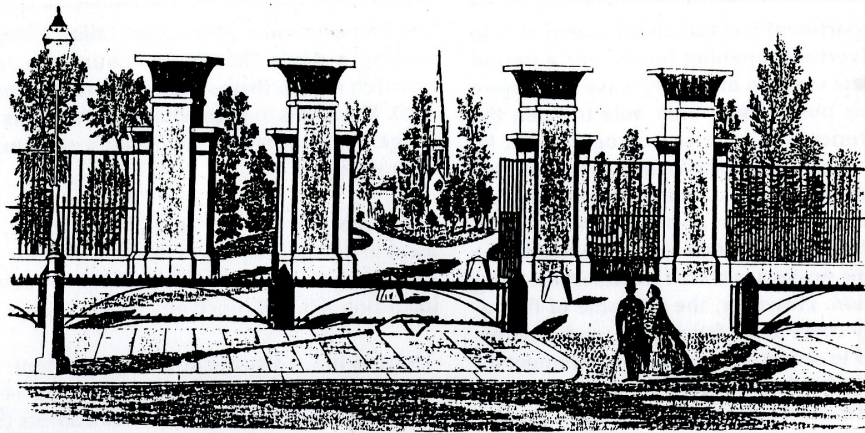
Loddiges' Model for the First Public Park

In 1833 Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* ran an article urging that all open spaces near to centres of population, be they old Royal Parks, new public parks, or estates adjoining towns, should copy the Hackney Botanic Garden arboretum of Messrs Loddiges, and throw such land open for public benefit: "The time is just commencing for the establishment of public parks, and gardens adjoining towns, in which the beau ideal of this description of scenery [the foregoing description of Loddiges' arboretum] will be realised, at the expense of all, and for the enjoyment of all. The whole of Regent's Park would be required to plant one of each of the species and varieties contained in Messrs Loddiges arboretum, at proper distances, varied by suitable glades; Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens would form another scene for a similar plantation; and a third might be formed of Greenwich Park".

Outside London these hopes came to fruition as the Derby Arboretum: an eleven acre park donated to the public by a wealthy Nonconformist industrialist, Joseph Strutt. Inspired by the Hackney Botanic Garden arboretum, John Loudon laid it out as a more public version. Strutt's philanthropy enabled it to be opened completely free of charge on two days of the week, although at other times a small charge helped pay for its upkeep. The Derby Arboretum was opened on September 16th 1840 and attracted considerable attention, not only for its trees, but also for being the first park in Britain expressly laid-out for, and owned by, the public.

The Abney Park Cemetery Arboretum

Simultaneously, Loudon's idea of a parkland arboretum open to the public was taken-up in London by George Loddiges himself. He took shares in the Abney Park Cemetery company who were designing the first gar-



ABNEY PARK CEMETERY, HACKNEY, LONDON. BY THE ARCHITECT J. C. CARTER.
Respectfully Dedicated to the Company by their Obedient Servant, J. C. Carter.

den cemetery for Nonconformists in the capital, and installed Loudon's dream: an ambitious 31 acre arboretum on the edge of London: "Abney Park Cemetery... a named arboretum has been planted in it by Messrs Loddiges, which contained every hardy tree and shrub, varieties as well as species, that was in their collection a year ago. The names are on brick, the same as in the Hackney arboretum." The Abney Park Cemetery arboretum opened in May 1840, just ahead of Loudon's Derby Arboretum, although some planting was left until the following year. Nevertheless Loudon's aim, to produce "the most complete collection of trees and shrubs that can at present be formed in Britain" was outclassed by George Loddiges' own project at Abney Park. Whilst John Loudon could be proud that, "the total number of species and varieties contained in the [Derby] Arboretum number 913; or with the addition of the 100 sorts of roses planted in the belt 1013", this fell far short of the 2,500 species and varieties planted at the less publicised Abney Park Cemetery arboretum.⁵

Ultimately, quantity was not a good measure of the value of the arboretum to the nation (despite Loudon's emphasis). More important was the simple fact that the Derby Arboretum was publicly owned, and therefore able to survive as a long-term asset to the nation. By contrast, the private Abney Park Cemetery Company soon found it necessary to abandon its arboretum and sell the space for burial plots. That the cemetery was designed as a "Park", soon counted for nothing against the demands of market economics. Only now that the cemetery has been taken over by Hackney Council, which is pursuing a partnership with the local Abney Park Cemetery Trust, might its fascination be re-discovered and cherished once more.

David Solman and Graham Douglas

Notes

1. Clarke, *Glimpses of Ancient Hackney and Stoke Newington* (1894, 1986); G. Chadwick, *The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton*, 1961, p.22.
2. Loudon, *Encyclopedia of Gardening*, 1834.
3. This practice of preserving the labels was commented on in the *Gardener's Magazine* (1831) since it was not yet carried out at the Horticultural Society's Chiswick Garden.
4. See the plan in *Hackney Terrier* no. 26.
5. Loudon, *The Derby Arboretum*, 1840. Note that George Loddiges could have made the Abney Park Cemetery arboretum larger still. Ten years earlier the 1830 catalogue had listed 3,075 hardy trees and shrubs.

TEA OR TEETH? A PROPHECY FOR 1993

"Dr J. Murray Gibbes has discovered a new evil which attends too much tea-drinking. In the current number of *Hygiene* he declares that Mrs John Bull and her daughters are the largest consumers of the content of those cups that cheer but do not inebriate, except indeed their colonial cousins in Australia, whence the doctor has sent his contribution on the effects of stimulants generally.

Dr Murray-Gibbes sees a distinct connection between the movement to secure women's rights and too great a consumption of *congou*. To tea-drinking the doctor appears to trace the growing desire felt on the part of the fair sex to enter the professions, and, in fact, 'to take the place of men as bread-winners'. He views with alarm what he regards as a struggle for supremacy between man and woman, and believes that woman's brain-power must develop at the expense of her physique. In short, if things go on as they are doing, the worthy doctor fears that a century hence man will have become a toothless animal, and woman also. What a prospect is this for the dentists of coming generations! But perhaps people will give up their tea rather than their teeth."

Hackney Gazette, 12 July 1893

AUTUMN 1992 AT HACKNEY ARCHIVES

Recently the Department has not always been able to maintain the advertised opening hours. For a period after Sue McKenzie went on maternity leave and before Peter took up his post, I was only able to open the Department at times when the searchroom could be covered by Vera Henry, who was loaned to the Department part-time for typing work. Redeployment arrangements have now spirited Vera away, and in the short term there will therefore be a half-day reduction in the hours to enable the professional staff to undertake filing and administration. However, the outcome of the review of maternity cover looks favourable, and arrangements are in hand to obtain a temporary replacement for Sue as soon as possible. In the meantime the necessity to make an appointment if you intend to visit is greater than ever.

On the conservation side, more photographs have been copied in street number order, and the copies placed on open access in the searchroom. A major programme has started to demount many of our oversized prints and photographs and provide our own inert polyester sleeves for these and the remaining large unframed items. This will improve handling, minimise the risk of damage and save a little (much needed) space.

David Mander

NEW IN THE ARCHIVES

During the Council's recent spending restrictions (now lifted) only assistance from the Friends made it possible to make new purchases for the collection. These included a 1909 poster for the **Hackney Empire**, and a trade catalogue for Clarke, Nichols and Coombes ("Clarnico"), the confectionery makers. This is an illustrated brochure of the company's products, but also includes a site plan of the Hackney Wick works as well as photographs of the staff and production processes. It dates from about 1905.

A visit made by David to the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments produced a copy of an article on **Balmes House** by Priscilla Metcalf. Other additions include a privately printed late 19th century pamphlet on **smallpox in Shoreditch**, an article (c 1875) on the **Shoreditch workhouse**, and an account by Timothy Lawson, in the *Journal of the London Society*, of the **London Fancy Box Co.** of Shacklewell Road.

SATURDAY RESEARCH WORKSHOP

The Department's researcher, Lilian Gibbens, will be leading a day's "hands on" course on record-based research on the theme **the Growth of Hackney 1800-1900**. The aim is to familiarise researchers with a wide range of documents (including visual material) and their uses.

The place: Hackney Archives Department, in the basement of the Rose Lipman Library, De Beauvoir Road N1. The date: Saturday 13th March 1993. The cost will be £20, including a buffet lunch at a nearby pub.

There is limited space in the Department, so numbers will be restricted. If you would like to reserve a place, please let Lilian know at the above address (SAE please), or telephone the Department on (071) 241 2886. Do get in touch even if the date doesn't suit; other workshops may be arranged.

FROM OUR NEIGHBOURS

A marvellous exhibition on early cinema in Walthamstow has made a welcome return to Vestry House Museum.

Flickering Screens explores local cinema-going east of the Lea, offers an opportunity to experiment with Victorian optical toys, and is showing a continuous programme of clips from locally made silent films.

It runs until 1st May, every day except Sunday (for details, telephone Vestry House 081 - 509 1917).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 21st January at 7.30p.m

Our first visit to **Sutton House** will be a further opportunity to see some of the stunning **film footage in the Hackney archives**. There is no charge for this event, but a collection will be made for the Sutton House restoration appeal.

Sunday 11th July at 2.30 p.m.

John Paton will lead a **walk in Shoreditch** - details to follow nearer the day.

The annual general meeting and lecture is in course of arrangement.