



The

# HACKNEY TERRIER

THE FRIENDS OF HACKNEY ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

May 1995 sees the fortieth anniversary of Victory in Europe and a wide range of celebrations are planned in Hackney. The Archives Department and Hackney Museum are combining to produce an exhibition called Hackney at War, which will open on Thursday 4th of May 1995. It is intended to produce a set of postcards, one of which will be the illustration of wardens at Lebon's Corner, Dalston in 1940, to accompany the exhibition, which will run until VJ Day in August. The exhibition will draw on the

forthcoming publication of the same name, by Jennifer Golden, commissioned by Hackney Council, which will be published during May. Finally the Hackney Gazette will publish a special supplement on 4 May to coincide with Hackney's celebrations.

The Friends will be able to take advantage of the special pre publication offer for Hackney at War, details of which are included with this issue of the Terrier. Details of other new publications are given later in this issue. With many projects under way and with a brief period where we will again be short staffed, this year promises to be very busy.

David Mander



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*NEWS FROM HACKNEY ARCHIVES  
DEPARTMENT*

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Jean Chaudhuri's third stint at the Department finished on 31 March. Our thanks to Jean once again for the temporary cover she has provided while our third post has been regraded and job-evaluated. Our Customer Charter was approved by Education and Leisure Committee on 7 February. Our thanks to all who took part in the consultancy exercise. The Charter will be produced as one of our leaflets and copies will be placed by the Visitor's register. As part of the small changes introduced with the Charter, we now have a suggestions book, which is on the display rack by the visual catalogue. There will be a marker placed by the visitor's register to highlight this and to remind customers that signing the visitors book is also an agreement to abide by the searchroom rules. Work on the premises feasibility study is still progressing at the time of writing. Our records management project has got over its first hurdle and two pilot projects are to go ahead in conjunction with the Council's Management Services.

And some good news for customers. Godfrey New has not raised his charges and in turn we have been able to hold all our charges at last year's level for 1995/6. The exception is the Godfrey Map series, which the publisher is raising the price from £1.75 to £1.85 from 2 April 1995. Alan Godfrey has held his previous price for some years and even with the ten pence rise the maps remain very good value.

One response to our new format has been a suggestion that we should have a regular slot in the Hackney Terrier to allow readers to contact each other with information requests. We are more than

willing to publish such items; though we would reserve the right to edit items sent in and would suggest that purely family history enquiries might get a better response via the pages of the East of London Family History Society's Cockney Ancestor or through Metropolitan, the journal of the London and North Middlesex Family History Society.

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*MAJOR PROJECTS*

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Philip Plumb has almost finished his cataloguing project on the religious writing and we would expect the project to be completed by the end of April. Work is progressing on the Hackney on Disc project. There will now be two 'front ends'. The Hackney Archives Department version will be the system as outlined in the last Terrier. There will be two ways in - either using a direct subject question - "What does the system have on public houses in the 1880s?", for example -or using the maps with the mouse to point to a building or part of a street and bring up the image or images. The map user will have an initial choice of pre or post 1870. Pre 1870 images will be linked to the appropriate parish maps for Hackney, Shoreditch or Stoke Newington. Post 1870 users will have a map of the borough as a menu, and be asked which of three dates they wish to use : the first edition of 1868-72, the second of 1893-6 or the third of 1913-16 -together with a choice of area. The next screen will then be the chosen map, allowing a selection of street or individual building. The Sutton House 'front end' will be more orientated to project work for schools, allowing images, maps and documents to be used to answer questions on the Victorian period, though it will draw on the same database. For the purposes of the pilot a representative range of Ordnance Survey maps will be

scanned into the database, together with the fine series of colour aerial photographs recently taken in by HAD. The Ordnance Survey sheet for Hackney and Homerton will form the test map and about 450 images will be entered with their associated catalogue data. It is hoped to launch the pilot project at Sutton House in September this year, and if successful we will then put together a bid for grant aid to help complete the project.

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### ***PUBLICATION NEWS***

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The last of the four large scale Ordnance Survey maps, South Shoreditch and Bunhill Fields, for 1870, has been published and is now in stock. Also just released and on sale at HAD is Broad Street to Poplar, a Photographic Journey. This latest book from Connor and Butler publishers covers the part of the North London Line that ran from the City through Dalston junction and east through Homerton. It will cost £7.25. Planning is advanced on the publication of the late Bill Manley's intended book on Stoke Newington. Dick Whetstone has agreed to the proposal put forward by Alan Sutton Publishing, which will involve additional postcards being added so that the book includes the Stamford Hill and Upper Clapton areas. Publication is scheduled for the autumn of 1995 and the price will be £7.99. A draft of the Victoria County History volume on Hackney has now been given to HAD and will shortly be available for consultation. The completed work is expected to be published in late summer or early autumn 1996.

Keith Sugden has now completed the first draft of The Archaeology of Hackney and has received comments on the text from some of those invited to do so. It had been

hoped that there might be some assistance in publication from English Heritage, but no financial help will be forthcoming. A decision from the Hackney Society is awaited.

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### ***ACQUISITION, LISTING AND CATALOGUING***

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#### ***ARCHIVES***

For some time there has been problems with the records of Abney Park Cemetery. Terrier readers may recall that original burial registers were transferred to HAD in December 1993. Although the duplicate grave registers contain some information on the location of graves, this information ceases after 1885. This has led to continuing problems concerning access to the information which have now been resolved, as the Parks Service are now meeting the cost of microfilming the original burial registers between 1885 and 1927 (registers before that date have the grave locations, and registers afterwards were filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah.) The filming will be managed by HAD and copy film will go to the Parks Service and the Trust. Filming work will be completed by the summer of 1995 and further details of the new arrangements will appear a forthcoming Terrier. Other deposits have included a 1980 garden design for 42 Cassland Road - a useful addition to our garden records material. We were also pleased to acquire a small collection of photographs and sports programmes from a donor, who, as a pupil at Shacklewell School from 1925 and then went on to Upton House Secondary School. There was a well preserved school cap with the collection, which has been passed on to Hackney Museum. Listing of the LCC/GLC street

naming files is well under way and we should be able to make these files available by the end of April. The draft list of the records of Hackney Downs School has been completed, and we are grateful to Alan Ruston for looking through it, and providing some additional notes on the history of the school and the Clove Club. The finished list will be on the shelves shortly. The considerable photographic archive built up by the school has been also catalogued through the visual catalogue. While this Terrier was in the course of compilation, we received the marriage register of the, now closed, Latter Rain Outpouring Revival Church of 242, Hoxton Street, which was in operation from 1979-1994. This came from the General Register Office. Does any reader have any other information on this church ?

#### *VISUAL COLLECTION*

Recent acquisitions include a photographic copy of a watercolour of another view of Clissold House when owned by Mr Gudgeon in the early 1800s. We have also purchased thirty nine original photographs as used in the Home Publishing Guide to Stoke Newington of 1958.

#### *LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION*

The stock-taking has turned up some long lost gems. We have considerably augmented the printed material on the Hoxton Market Christian Mission, and can now provide some of the thoughts of Hoxton MP Claude Hay to his constituents at the turn of the century. Charles Dickens' All the Year Round contributes Hipped in Hoxton, a comparison of life in the East and West Ends of London in 1864. And there is a useful piece on the Clapton nursery firm

Hugh Low & Co in an Edmonton Hundred Historical Society publication from 1983. The firm moved out to Enfield in the 1880s, finally severing their Hackney connection in about 1900. Our supply of new books has been temporarily affected by a serious fire at our suppliers, the Canonbury Bookshop. What is suspected to have been an arson attack resulted in damage to the shop and loss of stock. The owner will establish a service from temporary premises in the near future. Recent accessions included a history of the London fire brigades before the LCC takeover, a history of London parks and gardens by the Hon Mrs Cecil, the former Lady Alicia Amhurst, one of the Tyssen family and one of the Acts of Parliament enabling the construction of the route to Liverpool Street station to go ahead. Donations have included five programmes for Christmas pantomimes at the Britannia Theatre, again from Alan Ruston. The programmes are from 1886 to 1900 and came originally from an elderly lady who lived in Lower Clapton, who was probably taken to the performances as a child. We are also grateful to George Cooper for two 19th century parish magazines for St Peter's, De Beauvoir Town and for a little guide to Stamford Hill and district, produced by estate agents, Fisher Stanhope & Co, in the early 1930s. This is illustrated by photographs taken by Martin Sanders .

#### *ORAL HISTORY AND REMINISCENCE*

The stock-taking also brought to light a recollection of life in Trederwen Street, Hackney, before the war, written in 1980, shortly after the street had been cleared. We have also received two tape recordings made by a former resident of Hackney Terrace (Cassland Road), recalling life there from just before the First World War.

### GARDENING HISTORY

A suggestion from David Mander that Shore Gardens in Frampton Park Road be re-named and re-planted is to be taken further. The gardens form part of the site of the former Loddiges Nursery and the Parks Service are to explore the possibility of putting in some plants that Loddiges would have stocked. This would be linked to the plaque to the nursery which will go on the nearby Hackney Free and Parochial School and should give the small garden an historic focus.

David Mander

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### FRIENDS EVENTS

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This year's AGM will take place on Wednesday 3 May at 7.30pm at Sutton House, Homerton High Street. The bar will be open, though the house closes at 5.30pm, so if you come early you will have time for a leisurely drink. The annual lecture, on the Archaeology of Hackney will be given by Keith Sugden, will start promptly at 8pm. The lecture will be illustrated.

On the 9th of July, John Paton will lead the Annual Walk, through South Shoreditch. Those wishing to join the walk should meet at 2.30p.m. outside Saint Leonard's Church, Shoreditch High Street.

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### NATHAN GOES HOUSE HUNTING: THE FIRST ROTHSCHILD AND HACKNEY.

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*"Mr Rothschild gave his promised entertainment on Wednesday last" reported the Morning Post on Friday 13 July 1821, "in a style of suprizing magnificence and taste, at his beautiful villa on Stamford Hill. The party consisted of the Princes Esterhazy and their respective suites. The Prince of Leon was*

*also a guest. In the Great Banqueting-room of this fine edifice (the style Tuscan), covers were laid for thirtytwo; at half past seven the company sat down to a dinner consisting of turtle and other delicacies; the fruits were the produce of the hot-houses, but the other wines, all from the Rhine, excelled any yet imported; there were fifteen different sorts, all of German growth. When the cloth was removed, golden ewers and basons were handed round with water. Among the novelties were many dishes dressed in the Jewish fashion. At ten o'clock they got up from the table and joined the Ladies in the Saloon: at eleven the Drawing room displayed a splendour of dress, in diamonds and embroidery little expected. To enliven the scene, that inimitable comic actor, Taylor, gave his imitations of the living and the dead; his personifications of Cooke, Kemble, Liston and Elliston were admirable; he then gave an outline of himself. The Princes Esterhazy and Leon departed at twelve, then the company retired to a sumptuous supper. It was three in the morning before the party broke up. The Dining-room communicates with the finest Conservatory perhaps in the world, it was filed with pines and grapes, growing in full luxuriance. But what attracted more notice, was the enchanting picture which the country around presented - rich in pasture, skirted by a tide river."*

Perhaps the thought of all the fine wines had gone to the head of our correspondent a little, for the River Lea was only visible as a distant prospect from Nathan Rothschild's front windows, and no-one in their full senses could describe the New River, flowing a few hundred yards from the fields behind the Stamford Hill house as tidal. But we have been given the best of introductions to the second and better known of the Rothschild homes in

Hackney. With the help of the Rothschild Archives and a little research in Hackney's own archives, it seems that there was an earlier connection, with a different part of the parish. (1)

Nathan Mayer Rothschild was born in 1777, the third son of a Frankfurt merchant. Initially trading in Manchester as a textile merchant, he moved to the City of London in 1808, and shortly afterwards established himself at New Court, St Swithin's Lane, where the bank he founded still has its headquarters. His four brothers aided his management of bullion movements on behalf of Britain during the Napoleonic Wars, though they were often on the end of considerable rudeness. A descendant has described Nathan as "short and fat, with blue eyes, reddish hair and a strong German accent". He claimed not to care for titles, indeed in 1815 he said "I do not read books, I do not play cards, I do not go to the theatre, my only pleasure is my business. As long as we have a good business and are rich everybody will flatter us" His surroundings at New Court were less than impressive, at least according to Prince Hermann Puckler-Muskau, who sought him out in the 1820s "in a poor obscure-looking place, and making my way with some difficulty through the little courtyard, blocked up by a wagon laden with bars of silver." But the person was impressive enough, having "the imposing confidence of a man who felt such trifles [as his peculiar accent] to be beneath his attention." (2)

Nathan had a wife and three young sons in 1815, and although he professed no other interests other than business, New Court may have seemed a little cramped for his growing family. A better town house was one option, and Nathan did

indeed acquire one in Piccadilly. But the open air of the country, with fields and farm produce of one's own was also possible. In an age of stage coaches, a man who needed to be in the City daily would not want to be too far away and it might be an advantage if there were also Jewish neighbours in the vicinity. Hackney fitted the bill admirably, allowing Nathan to ask if there were any suitable houses with estates to rent or buy. The Hackney of the first two decades of the nineteenth century was a pleasant parish, with views over the Lea Valley to the east and a mixture of grazing and pasture land separating small settlements along the London road to Shoreditch, and the road from Stamford Hill to Hackney town itself, though Clapton. The first recorded Jewish family after the Restoration had bought a small house in Homerton in 1674 and by the early 18th century there were a number of families living in the area of Mare Street adjoining the Triangle. One prominent gem merchant, Jacob Franco, bought the house later known as Clapton House, just to the north of Clapton Pond, in 1744 and built a private synagogue in the grounds in the 1770s. There is a story that another resident of Clapton House, Israel Salomons, who had leased it in 1780, asked Hackney Vestry if they would compensate him if the silver gates he was proposing to put up in front of the house were damaged. More accurately an advertisement of the house of another Jewish merchant, mentions a splendid Oriental garden pavilion amongst the sale effects. Although there were also poorer members of the community, the wealthier would have attracted relatives and others to swell the twenty five or so Jewish households in the parish. (3)

Nathan had a close family tie with one of these prominent Hackney families, for his sister Henrietta had married Abraham

Montefiore. The Montefiores had been Hackney residents for at least fifty years, when in 1818 Abraham bought a large house in Kingsland Road. But Nathan had preceded him, though he may have made use of the family connections to advise him on his move. (4) It was Clapton that Nathan and his family moved to, some time in 1815, when he took the middle house of a group of five on the east side of Lower Clapton Road, just to the north of the junction with Urswick Road. The original Five Houses were built before 1726, for in the October of that year they are mentioned in Hackney vestry's minutes. To the east of the Five Houses lay the extensive estate of Hackney House. This house, originally built for Stamp Brooksbank, governor of the Bank of England in 1732. The estate was divided in the 1780s, with a substantial part being acquired by Christopher Alderson, owner of the northern of the Five Houses and Thomas Boddington, who owned the middle one. The southern part and the house were taken for the dissenting Hackney College, which lasted until 1796. At that stage the house was demolished and the land put up for sale, It was too good an opportunity for other Five House owners to miss and Boddington made a further purchase of land, giving his house substantial grounds. It has been suggested that Boddington built a new house from the materials of the old Hackney House, but it is more likely that he made alterations. The middle house was inherited by his son Benjamin, who would appear to have rented it to Nathan Rothschild. Boddington continued to pay the taxes, and so Rothschild does not show up in either the poor rates or the land tax, but an extensive schedule survives of damages to the property, drawn up at the end of his tenure in December 1816. The rat ebooks show the house as empty at

this date, and then apparently reverting to Boddington.(4)

The house would appear to have had three storeys, including an attic floor, and two wings, called east and west. It included a servants' hall, laundry and dairy, while the principal floor had a morning room, eating room, library, small drawing room and possibly (though not listed as there were no breakages) a large drawing room as well. There are little glimpses among the listed items, ranging from the broken globe in the library, past a japanned coal scuttle on one of the landings to five ornamental flower pots in the small drawing room. There seems to be a considerable quantity of broken glass, twenty one windows in various parts of the house to a broken pane in a bookcase, while a variety of objects, including night bolts, the tops of China jars and a pier table. It may be that Nathan's young family were unduly boisterous - but even the mahogany chairs in the housekeeper's room are marked as 'broke'. Although Nathan's sister-in-law thought the estate beautiful, it would seem that the family chose not to stay for long (5) It would appear that Nathan left Hackney altogether for the next two and a half years. The Boddington house was sold to William Amory in 1822. Amory demolished it and built a new house further back into the park that Boddington had created out of his part of the Hackney House estate. The drive to the new house passed over the site of the old one, and it was this new house, of five bays with its central Ionic pediment, that another businessman whose father had come from Germany, John Berger, the paint maker, bought in 1830. (6) It was to Stamford Hill that Nathan turned for his next and more successful

attempt to find a country villa. on the west side of the London road. This house had been built thirty years earlier and had briefly been the home of Joseph Taylor, MP. Nathan leased a further 11 acres at the back of the house in 1821, providing grazing land and allowing planting to shield the garden from the west. No illustrations of the Stamford Hill house survive, but the 1868 Ordnance Survey show it to have been the biggest house in the road, with a substantial carriage sweep at the front, a long wing to the north, two curved bays at the rear and a substantial conservatory on the southside. The family was to stay in Hackney for a sixteen years. Nathan even played a part in local activities, for he served as president of the Stamford Hill and Stoke Newington Dispensary, established in 1825. For her part Hannah found "the situation more agreeable in the streets of London; we do not have any of the benefit from our National friend, the fog". The break with Hackney came in 1835, when Gunnersbury House was bought and the Stamford Hill house was sold at auction to Joel Emmanuel, the Bond Street jeweller. It had over fifty years of use ahead of it before being cleared away when Dunsmure Road was constructed. Nathan did not actually live in Gunnersbury, for he died in 1836 before the family had moved in.(7)

It was rare for anyone to get the better of Nathan Rothschild in his prime, but even in the 1820s, there were some sharp customers living in Hackney. One night one Mr Lucas, who lived opposite him, was coming home late from a party when he saw Nathan and two companions getting into a carriage and give the order to proceed to the City. Lucas followed them and barged in to the New Court offices, pretending to be drunk. He succeeded in penetrating the private office

and there collapsed, resisting all efforts to revive him. Eventually his steady breathing persuaded Rothschild and his companions that he was deep asleep, so they covered him with a blanket and carried on with their business. This included some information about Spain, which would not be know for another day and would then affect stocks. As the Rothschild broker was late in coming to his summons, Nathan grew impatient and set out to find him. Lucas then made a rapid recovery from his supposed drunken stupor and went rapidly in search of his own broker, beating Nathan to the kill. Nathan is said never to have forgiven his neighbour for his "base, dishonest and nefarious stratagem". (8)

David Mander

#### FOOTNOTES AND SOURCES;

I am grateful to Melanie Aspey of the Rothschild Archive for help in compiling this article. The Rothschild Archives are based in Hatton Garden and are open by prior appointment on Monday to Friday from 10am to 4.15pm. Intending searchers should write to Melanie, the Archivist, with details of their research proposal and with two references. The Archive was established in 1978 and has become the record office for records of N.M.Rothschild & Sons Ltd and records relating to family activities all over Europe. Records created after 1918 are not generally open for consultation. Of special interest from the Hackney perspective are the following groups of records: Rfam/C/1, the correspondence of Hannah Rothschild (1783-1850), some 200 letters which have all been transcribed; XI/109, family letters arranged chronologically, and probably including material on the Hackney properties; Rfam/T/8, the assignment of the lease of the Stamford Hill house, 1835; XII/158 receipted accounts, which also includes some garden expenses, probably for the Stamford Hill house. Other sources are given below. Abbreviations used are as follows: HAD: Hackney Archives Dept; RA: RothschildArchive; VCH: Victoria County History of Middlesex, draft article on Hackney. OS: Ordnance Survey 60".1. Copy of Morning Post in HAD Biography files:Rothschild2. The Shadow of a Great Man Lord Rothschild (1982);The City of London Vol 1: a world of its own 1815-99, David Kynaston, p 6, 74-53. The Jews in Hackney before 1840. Malcolm Brown, 19864. Glimpses of Ancient Hackney and Stoke Newington, Benjamin Clarke, edited D. Mander, 1986 p 122; VCH, Clapton section; D/F/BAG 14; Map of Turnpike Roads, 1799 (copy HAD); HAD P/J/P 323,234,236; RA X/109/56/3/85. Ibid (letter from Nathan's sister-in-law to her mother, dated 2 May 1816).6. VCH; HAD P/J/P 167-168,236, P/J/LT 96-977.Brown op cit; HAD P/J/P 238. RA R/Fam T/8;OS 1868;Tyssen estate map cited in Brown; HAD D/S 28; RARfamC/1/80, 24 September 1828.8. From a chapter of Anecdotes of Trade and Business Immorality, included in HAD biography file Rothschild.