



The

HACKNEY TERRIER

newsletter of Hackney Archives

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IN THE SEARCHROOM & BEYOND

Staffing & Volunteers, Searchroom & Annual Closure

Three new volunteers have joined us to work on the Hackney on Disk project. Ann Jameson, Melissa Bliss, both members of the Friends, and Marino Petrou, who has been seconded from Sutton House, where he was already undertaking voluntary work. All have been trained to scan images, create the catalogue data, and link image to data. Positioning the image on the map, which is technically easy, does require knowledge of the locality and the collection, and it is likely that the majority of this work will continue to be done by the Borough Archivist. Marino has now come to end of his voluntary period and we wish him well for his coming period of paid work at Sutton House.

A combination of leave and staff sickness in February reduced the staff to one for two and a half weeks. The service was kept open and our performance targets in answering correspondence were maintained, but it was not possible to achieve as much as had been hoped during the stock taking period. However a considerable part of the visual collection has been checked and three deposits listed and transferred to one of our out stores, giving us small amount of space to allow us to continue to take in new accessions.

During our closure period, we were able to have the carpet replaced in the searchroom, office and exhibition lobby. The new carpet, a light blue, makes the Department look much brighter and smarter.

The user survey that we have been undertaking since November has now had 100 responses and is now closed. Thank you to all who completed a return. A report on the outcome of the survey will be sent to the relevant council sections and the outcome will be included in the next Terrier.

Continuing mechanical trouble with the microprinter reader has now come to a head, and the drive on the 35mm film deck is now no longer repairable. The machine was thirteen years old and we had known for some time that sooner or later the supply of spare parts for the obsolete model would run out. With the help of the contingency budget of the Directorate of Education and Leisure of which HAD is a part, we have acquired a new Bell and Howell AB6 2600, which has zoom lenses and a deck that combines a fiche and film facility. In the interval between the old machine failing and the new one being delivered, HAD has had to print copies at the Guildhall Library: our thanks to Lilian Gibbens for carrying the films and for our customers for patience.

Service Improvement Plan.

With the advent of the new Chief Executive, Hackney Council has introduced a new process of service improvement plans. The Hackney on Disk initiative will feature in the HAD Service Improvement plan as a principle plank of improvement, as will our customer charter and the performance standards that we have already drawn up.

Premises

The first floor store at Stoke Newington, mostly used for records management purposes, but also holding some archival material, has been cleared

and the contents transferred to Vestry Street. The new store will provide the 1000 box spaces needed to take incoming Housing Benefit records and leave HAD with sufficient space to displace some archive collections from the Rose Lipman site, once listing has been completed.

Staff from the former Leisure Directorate are scheduled to leave Shoreditch Town Hall by the end of March, which is also our target to clear our small store there. Records, mostly actual and potential Hackney departmental records, will go to East Road, and the shelving, if suitable to Stoke Newington. This will reduce our total sites to three.

Research Projects

The department has recently become involved in a major new project run by the centre for Metropolitan History entitled MORTALITY IN THE METROPOLIS. The aim of the project is to chart & analyse the major improvements in public health in London between 1860 and 1920 by creating a detailed database of numbers, causes and location of death for each of the Metropolitan districts with two detailed studies of Hackney and Kensington.

The role of Hackney in this important study, the first of its kind for any major European or North American city, is made possible by the survival of comprehensive records of causes and ages at death for Hackney and Kensington for much of the period. It is, according to the participants, difficult to exaggerate the importance of this fact. These records will allow the research team to access information more detailed than that provided by the annual and ten yearly reports of the Registrar General published during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and make it possible to undertake a much more detailed study of changes in urban public health than has previously been undertaken anywhere. The records will also allow a study of the causes of the decline in urban infant mortality in the first decade of this century, one of the most complex dilemma in modern urban history.

The project is funded by the Wellcome Institute and will continue until May 1997.

PUBLICATIONS & PUBLICITY

Alan Sutton Publishing have agreed to publish both the illustrated history of Shoreditch - to be called, it is hoped, *More Light, More Power*, and a fourth picture book, this one covering Hackney (including South Hackney), Homerton, Dalston and De Beauvoir Town. This will form a complementary volume to the recently published Stoke Newington picture book.

The Guide to our collections should be reprinted this week which will allow us to fulfill outstanding orders. It is intended to complete a revised version in the course of the coming year. Design of a new general purpose leaflet, embracing text from some of our existing ones, but with illustrations and taking the form of a small booklet, has been agreed in broad measure. This will go into production within the next few months. We are also beginning to amalgamate our existing information leaflets and input them onto our PC. This makes both the updating of the information and the distribution much easier.

The Hackney film project, reported at the last meeting, and advertised by Bygone Films through the Hackney Gazette, did not go ahead. We have asked Bygone Films to compensate those who contacted the Hackney Gazette with free film and hopefully this has been done. Although we believe that Bygone Films intend to proceed with the production of an East London film, to include the Hackney material, we have had no confirmation of this to date.

CONSERVATION

Sara will work up to the end of February, by which time she will have completed her contract commitments for the Archives Department for this financial year, to take up her maternity leave. She will return to work in June, The 1930 directory has now been completed and will go for binding to Chivers in the new financial year. Over the Christmas period the remaining archive lists were put into binders, and the colour coding completed. Our lists remain white, GLRO lists are red and records in other custody are pink. The records of conservation work in progress have now been computerised.

Sara has also completed a small repair to a photograph loaned to us by Mrs White for copying. There was no charge to Mrs White, in consideration of the loan, but she has made a donation of £5, which has been added to Friends funds.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Tyssen Sermon Collection

Philip Plumb has completed the collection of input of data onto the database for the Tyssen sermon collection catalogue. It is a substantial collection, over eight hundred items running to some two hundred pages. Proof reading and decisions on layout details remain, a not insubstantial task in itself, given the size of the collection. A bound volume catalogue will be available shortly which will include a subject index but the production of index cards for the searchroom is still presenting some problems. The photocopied title pages of relevant works have been sent to the British Library's project recording all works published in England before 1800.

Hackney on Disk.

There have been several demonstrations to interested local history and archive staff, and to staff from the Museum of London Archaeological Services. These included the evening meeting for LAUF at Sutton House, which four Friends also attended. A grant aid application to the British Library has been completed, asking for £10,000, the result will be known in May, but the likely maximum will be £5000, if we are successful. An application to the Lottery Heritage section will be completed shortly. This bid will be for some improvements to the software, to pay for two workers to complete the scanning and catalogue entries for the entire visual collection, and for some additional hardware. A related application will ask for a funding principle to be established so that other London boroughs that choose the system will be able to seek to cover their inputting and scanning costs and to explore the possibility of data link ups between boroughs, to allow future on-line searches by customers.

Records Management

Changes in storage arrangements have been outlined above. The RM project work continues and we are now beginning survey and analysis work on the Design Services Unit of the Council, which includes the Architects, Engineers and Quantity Surveyors, among others. HAD is also considering investigating the use of commercial storage, where we would liaise between departments and the storage company, and manage retrieval requests. This service would be costed on the basis of the company's charges and our own costs and could be made available as an option.

ACQUISITION AND LISTING

Archives

Rounding off 1995 were an additional group of records for British Xylonite, transferred from Suffolk Record Office, a mortgage for a property in Nevill Road, and, potentially, the most useful, a collector's book for land tax in Stoke Newington for 1821. This is a period for which no rate books or other land tax records survive. The volume, which was purchased from a dealer, gives owners and occupiers, but does not mention any place names. The Chair has kindly used a photocopy to try to match up names with the licensed victualler's records at the GLRO to establish a few pointers to the order in the volume. Acquisitions for 1996 include a delightful trade card of the 1870s, an addition to the records of Bailey and Son, deposited last year, which shows the shop front in Curtain Road, and has an ode to a deceased dog on the back! While not of a quality to merit publication in its Hackney namesake, due reference will be made. The GLRO have transferred a small group of papers concerning a furniture company's insurance claim in the 1880s (Shoreditch), and Barbara Bampton's records of the Hackney libraries occupation of the mid 1980s have also come in.

Listed records include the photographs of Eton Clubs by the late Gordon Draper, and the photographs and accompanying diary records of

the Hackney Gazette from 1983-93. It will now be possible to produce a photographic print from any photo that appeared in the paper in that period; sadly it would appear that all earlier negatives have been destroyed. The small group of material from the late Olwen Rees (the most useful item being an essay on the architecture of the former London Orphan Asylum) has also been listed, together with a large BRA deposit from 1990. This work, begun by Richard Dugdale and completed by the Borough Archivist, includes the deeds for the development of the Aspland Grove area, which included the handiwork of Mr Amos on Amhurst Road, whose collapse was reported and illustrated in the Illustrated London news in 1862.

A quotation has been received from the GLRO for the microfilming of Hackney records. Undertaking all the work at once allowed a significant discount on splitting the work, and the Chair agreed to provide a donation in this financial year, effectively a loan to be repaid by LB Hackney in financial year 1996/7. The full cost will be £809 exc VAT, and the film should be with us in March 1996. The new film will include some Hackney vestry and inhabitants meetings and will enable researchers using Hackney nineteenth century local government sources to do more work at HAD in future.

Local History Library and Visual collection

Microfilming of the Hackney Gazette subject indexes on card for the years 1965-82 has been completed and the fiche is now available; leaflets will be revised in due course to indicate this. New additions include an autobiography by Jewish author Maurice Beckman, *A Hackney Crucible*. There have been two further trade catalogues sent on approval by our regular dealer, both from Shoreditch firm Crowden and Keeves. The later edition, ready by September 1939, laments the outbreak of war, as well it might, since a number of firms in the south Shoreditch area suffered considerable bomb damage.

Photographic acquisitions include twelve Shoreditch mayors, from the years 1922 - 1960, salvaged from a panel in the Shoreditch town

hall basement. Regrettably the other views in the frame were missing by the time we came upon it. A good colour copy of the GLRO water colour of Kingsland Road of the 1820s, which shows one of Rhodes' brick works on land that is now part of De Beauvoir Town has also been acquired as well as a pre-war view of Kynaston Avenue in Stoke Newington and a turn of the century photograph of Sapwell's music stool manufacturers in Drysdale Street, Shoreditch.

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

The Friends are still without a Treasurer. Peter Foynes is still acting treasurer, which is an unsatisfactory situation as it blurs the line of distinction between the Department and the Friends. The duties are not onerous; attendance at four meetings per year and basic record keeping. If any Friend feels able to take on the post, please contact the Department.

Events

The visit to the Museum of St John, at St John's Gate in Clerkenwell will be at 11.00 am, not 11.00pm, on Saturday 23rd of March. Apologies for the error in the flier in the last mailing. Places are still available and any wishing to join the trip should contact the department. The Annual Stanley Tongue Memorial lecture on the building of De Beauvoir Square will be, as announced at the Great Chamber in Sutton House on Wednesday 15th of May at 7.30 pm. The speaker will be Dr Charles Posner, who has done extensive research on the topic in both London and the Channel Islands. Dr Posner is an experienced lecturer and the evening should prove to be both enjoyable and informative. The Annual General Meeting will be at 4.15pm on Saturday, June 15th at the Department. All Friends are welcome.

NEWINGTON GREEN IS TOO FAR AWAY!

Robert Aspland (1782 - 1845), after whom Aspland Road in Hackney is named, was one of the leading and most controversial Nonconformists of his day. From 1805 to 1845 he was minister of the New Gravel Pit Chapel in Chatham Place. The members of his Unitarian

congregation included not only David Ricardo, one of the great classical economists, but also Daniel Whittle Harvey, who both founded the Sunday Times and was also the first Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

To invite a young and relatively untried young man to the pulpit which had formerly been occupied by Richard Price and Joseph Priestley was a brave step, and one which was amply rewarded. At the age of 23 he came, via Norton in Derbyshire, from his first ministry at Newport, Isle of Wight, to one of the largest and most prosperous dissenting congregations near London.

The nearby Presbyterian chapel, Unitarian in all but name, at Newington Green had lost their afternoon preacher and sought the services of this very bright young man almost at once after his arrival in July, 1805. He hesitated to accept such an appointment and eventually replied later that year, turning down the offer. The letter is now at the Hackney Archives Department in the Newington Green Unitarian Church Collection (D/E 257 New 11/5)

*To Mr Swaine
Highbury*

Dear Sir

I hope you will excuse the length of time I have taken to deliberate on the invitation which the congregation at Newington Green have been pleased to make me through your hands. I am sincerely obliged to them for their candour and good opinion, & had there been no obstacle in the way should most cordially have accepted the situation which they so kindly offer. It is indeed flattering to my feelings that having been called to succeed the memorable Dr Price at Hackney I should also be nominated as his successor at Newn. Green.

I have not the pleasure of knowing more than one family in your society, but they have, I confess, predisposed me not a little in its favour. The character of your late minister & the amiable & friendly connection subsisting between him and the several members of the congregation I should also have reckoned as sure presages of mutual affection & kindness.

The distance, on the other hand, from Hackney Terrace to Newington Green & the want of all

accommodation of publick-stages on the road I have all along considered as a serious objection; & this, added to the circumstances of my having received a prior invitation to an afternoon lectureship in the town, & the consideration of the very peculiar nature of my present situation at the Gravel Pit, has constrained me reluctantly to regard your request as upon the whole impracticable.

It is with sincere regret I feel myself obliged to decline a connection which would have been, I am persuaded, as pleasant as it would have been honourable. The gentleman of the congregation will, I am sure [missing word] self believe that I am fully sensible of their kindness. At any time I shall be ready to render you any assistance in my power, but I hope you will not be long without a preacher better circumstanced than myself, & equally respectable, useful, & amiable with your late worthy minister Dr Lindsay¹

*I am Dear Sir
yours with esteem
Robt. Aspland*

*Hackney Terrace
Nov 12.1805*

The distance between the two places is small, and in modern terms is only from near the middle of the London Borough of Hackney to its borders - a walking distance and in 1805 easily taken by horse. The real reason for his refusal is provided by R. Brook Aspland(1805-1869) in his biography of his father (1850) at p. 177.

Being disengaged in the afternoon, my father was applied to undertake the afternoon duty at Worship Street², and subsequently was invited by the congregation at Newington Green to become their

1. Rev James Lindsay (1753-1821), a graduate of King's College, Aberdeen (DD 1805) and minister at Monkwell Street (English) Presbyterian Church, London 1783-1821. He kept a school at Newington Green, and was afternoon preacher at the chapel there from 1788 to 1805. Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England London, 1934 p.105

2 Worship Street (North of Finsbury Square) chapel, built 1780, was general Baptist in theology. Many dissenting churches in the neighbourhood of London in the late 18th century had a different preacher in the morning and afternoon, often to cater for different tastes in the congregation.



An early twentieth century view of No 42, Cassland Road, formerly 12, Hackney Terrace, onetime home of Robert Aspland (P9560/1)

afternoon preacher
In making this application³, they reminded him that his great predecessor, Dr Price, had sustained the proposed relation to them whilst minister of the Gravel Pit.

He saw fit to decline both propositions, knowing that it was the anxious wish of many of his friends at Hackney that he should be their sole pastor, and not thinking himself at liberty to defeat their wish by making any other engagement for the afternoon. Before the close of the year the matter was satisfactorily settled by his being elected the afternoon preacher (at Hackney). That the election was not unanimous (44 to 17 upon the ballot), only showed that there were some in the congregation still anxious for the service of two ministers, to which they had been so many years accustomed.

3. The letter of invitation to Aspland has not been located.

The high tone of the letter from a young, almost unknown, man of 23 shows that he expected of himself great things.

Aspland's refusal to travel such a short distance seems all the more singular because it appears that an island in the South Shetlands below Cape Horn was named after him. One of his possible descendants who served in the Royal Navy asked the Hydrographic Department of the Ministry of Defence in 1979 the origin of the ascription and received the following reply.

It is usually very difficult to establish the reason for giving a particular name or sometimes even when the name was first given. In the case of Aspland Island, I first referred to Toponomia del Sector Antartico Argentio, published in 1970 by the Argentine government. They give the probable origin of the name as follows (assuming my Spanish translation is correct:)

'This name was probably given sometime in the third decade of the last century by a British navigator in honour of the Minister Robert Aspland (1787-1845)'

Aspland Island can be located on a chart of South Shetland by Norie which was forwarded to this department in 1847 and is thus probably considerably amended from when it was first published in 1822. Bransfield's survey was published by this department on 30 November 1822 which shows only O'Brien's islands and that vaguely. So Bransfield was not responsible for the name. Nor was Weddell as he didn't approach that group.

My guess is that the name came from the numerous whalers and sealers who frequented the region between 1824 and 1834 by which time the seals had almost been exterminated. Few of their records have survived so I suspect you may never know the exact reasons for the name being given."⁴

I wonder what whaler, (sailing out of Hackney?) gave this remote island the name of a Unitarian minister born in Soham in Cambridgeshire? It is unlikely that we will ever know for certain. There was, however, no other Aspland of any note around in the 1830s so it looks as though the ascription is correct - a very remote spot named after a man constrained by the thought

4. Letter from A.C.F. David for the Hydrographer of the Navy to Mr Keith Aspland, 2 August 1979, ref H1259/79; copy in HAD

of travelling about three miles across a settled part of semi-rural Middlesex.

Alan Ruston

THE SOCIETIES FOR THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS

The Tyssen collection contains many volumes of sermons preached to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners. The societies were part of a wider movement in the latter half of the seventeenth century to combat the what was perceived to be the moral laxity of the 1670s and 1680s. Jeremy Collier's 1698 publication, *Short view of the Immorality and Profaness of the English* epitomised this concern. The societies had their origins in small groups meeting for devotional purposes and mutual improvement but later began to organise a more sustained attack on immorality and profaneness. In 1690 a society was set up in Tower Hamlets for local needs but the first society with a London wide remit was formed in the Strand.

These societies achieved some success in controlling licentiousness at public events, such as Bartholomew and Smithfield Fairs. Much of their work was accomplished by informers and the constables who tried to arrest suspects were often at risk from angry crowds. One, John Dent, was murdered by three private soldiers as he tried to arrest someone near a playhouse. Both Swift and Defoe attacked the movement, the former saying the laws were cobweb laws " in which the small flies are caught, and great ones break through.

The Hackney connection with the Societies was not, at first, apparent. As some sermons were preached at St Mary-le-Bow Dissent was not the reason. A little known book published in 1912 with the rather unhelpful title of *Caritas Anglicana*, by Garnet V. Portus, proved to be largely about the Societies which otherwise did not show up in various bibliographies. It is true that the Stoke Newington Collection contains not only a satirical poem on the Societies by Defoe but also a book detailing their achievements, attributed to Defoe. This volume, however, gives no information about the societies beginnings and throws no light on Hackney connections. Also, the attribution is wrong as Defoe was hostile to

the Movement and the book is written by an apologist for the Societies.

The Hackney connection lies in prominent role taken by Hackney ministers in the movement, preaching frequently at both Salters' Hall or St Mary-le-Bow and the strong support Matthew Henry gave to the Societies.

The formation of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in 1698 and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1701 were, other, and more lasting attempts to reform society. The Societies for the Reformation of Manners came to an end in 1738. Their earlier sermons had been full of enthusiasm and hope, the later ones showed disillusionment. John Wesley said, in 1763, that the Societies had disappeared because the original members had died and those that filled their places "grew faint in their mind and departed from the work".

Philip Plump

COURT CASE REPORTED , SEPTEMBER
1827 FROM WORSHIP STREET
MAGISTRATES COURT.

On Tuesday 18 September 1827, two youths named Lexley and Browne were charged with stealing a parrot from the premises of Mr Cundale, Park-road, Dalston, at noon on Saturday last. It appeared that Poll was amusing itself outside the cage, when the prisoner Lexley ran off with her; she gave a scream which alarmed one of the servants, who called out 'Stop thief,' in which the bird lustily joined, and so facilitated its recapture.

The bird was placed on the office-table, but its evidence was not required; and the prisoners were committed for the robbery, the prosecutor being advised to go at once before the Grand Jury, who were then sitting. In about an hour after, Mr Cundale returned and said that the clerk of the indictments could not prefer a bill under the 7th and 8th George IV c29, s31, which states "to steal any dog, beast or bird, ordinarily kept in a state of confinement", and, as the parrot was outside of the cage, and not ordinarily confined, the prisoners did not come within the meaning of the Act. The Magistrate then referred to the 57th section, and found that he could fine the prisoners for the value of the property. He then fined both in the sum of £5 each, in addition to the value proved, (30s). The

money not being forthcoming, they were, under the said Act, committed to the House of Correction for four months.[Source HAD M4448]

Book review

Gasworker Ancestors.....how to find out more about them; A guide to genealogical sources for the British Gas Industry, by David Loverseed, Bsc, CEng, MIGasE, DCS, Stockport 1994 ISBN 0 9524607 0 X, A4 56pp £4,50 (& 50p P & P). Available form the publisher, 48 Flowery Field, Woodsmoor, Stockport SK2 7ED [cheques payable to J.R. Loverseed]

A must for anyone who has an interest in the British Gas industry, whether in the field of family history or that of local history. It may also appeal to science teachers

It is divided into eight sections, the first being an introduction. The very readable Sections 2,, 3, and 4 provide a brief history of the gas industry, a description of 19th century gasworks and the various occupations in the industry together with the wages and salaries paid. Section 5 deals with genealogical sources that could be used to seek out details of an ancestor or a relative employed in the gas industry. Sources range from records of individual gas undertakings, records of engineering institutions, local authority records and patents, to records of Freemasonry and the Gasworks index.

Section 6 lists available histories of gas undertakings as well as regional histories and biographies; it is kinked to sections 7 and 8 which provide the reader with information relative to the custody of records, record offices and municipal archives as well as specialist Museums with Gas Holdings and Gas Historical Societies.

The book covers the entire country, not just the North of England with an appendix providing a nine page listing of Gas Undertakings in England, Wales and Scotland.

Lillian Gibbens

The Hackney Terrier was produced by David Mander and Peter Foyes of Hackney Archives Department at 43, De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ. Tel 0171 241 2886. Fax 0171 241 6688 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).