



The

HACKNEY TERRIER

newsletter of Hackney Archives Department

No.43

Spring 1997

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Sales of the two new books, *More Light, More Power* and *Hackney, Homerton and Dalston in Old Photographs*, have been good enough to allow us to keep Michael Kirkland on until the end of the financial year. Michael was originally set to leave us in mid- March but will now remain until Easter. Although we are examining ways of trying to raise the £7,400 or so that would be required for a one year contract for someone at Michael's level to work for us for 18 hours a week, this is a considerable sum to find. But the rewards would be significant. Time would be made available for staff to work on more short guides to accompany the church register leaflet. We have in mind guides and short bibliographies on shops and markets, transport and housing. A fourth post makes all the difference when leave and sickness coincide in ensuring that Hackney Archives Department stays open. Finally we are being urged to consider a Chartermark application to put an official seal on our service standards. Having the extra margin of an additional post could make a difference between the success and failure of our application.

SEARCHROOM SERVICES

As Friends will be aware, our Customer Charter includes a promise of a response to the telephone within four rings. Up to now we did not think it was possible to monitor this standard but the digitisation of our exchange allows us to avail of a BT service which will monitor a given line for ten working days, with five days notice in advance. To ensure that we do not choose a period to suit ourselves - and we have suggested that the Education and Leisure's Customer Services initiate monitoring periods. The results would then be

incorporated into our monthly monitoring to accompany our monitoring of postal responses. To date this has been satisfactory, though not perfect: a 96% compliance with our five day target over the last nine months; 97% compliance over the last six months.

Those Friends who have visited us recently will know that we have replaced all our old census indexes with the revised versions produced by the Public Record Office. In turn this rendered all our old guides on using the census indexes out of date. Peter Foynes has now revised these guides, and, working with Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price, our conservator, has incorporated revised versions of other help for searchers into a single volume, produced in multiple copies, boldly labelled and bound in a bright green.

Our present lighting is unsuitable for use with computers and does not meet health and safety standards. We placed an order for replacement fittings last year, and work is set to begin shortly to replace all fittings in the searchroom, office and conservation room. Regrettably it was not possible to carry out the work during our annual stock taking closure, but we are fitting it in on closed days to minimise disruption to the public service. The new lighting should provide a more comfortable working environment for customer and staff alike.

HAD & THE HERITAGE LOTTERY

We have just learned that a case officer has been assigned for our bids for *Hackney on Disk* and the feasibility study. This has taken longer than we anticipated, but we should be able to establish a timescale for when decisions can be expected soon.

HACKNEY ON DISK

The first sale of the software application underlying the Hackney on Disk application has just been made to the London Borough of Redbridge's Library services. In addition, we were short listed in the Innovations section of the *Local Government Chronicle* awards, along with four other local authorities. David Mander and Ken Laing of Information Science were present at the award ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel on the evening of 17 March, when the winners in all the award categories will be announced. Unfortunately, we did not receive the overall award but we were commended. On a more mundane note, some 4000 images have now been added to the system and demonstrations continue apace.

HACKNEY COUNCIL REORGANISATION

Those Friends who take the *Hackney Gazette* will have seen an outline of major proposals affecting the structure of Hackney Council. Included in the proposals is the abolition of the present directorates, including Education and Leisure. However services would be largely unaffected, and in the new structure, Hackney Archives Department would form part of a service division, provisionally entitled Cultural Services, which would correspond closely to the present Leisure and Continuing Education Division. There will be no changes to our day to day operations.

HAD WEBSITE

Hackney Council's Computer Services staff have now completed the work on the Guide part of our Website. We are also introducing pages on our publications, featuring images of our postcards book covers and publications details. The pages, which will be regularly updated to match our publication leaflet, will carry sales details and should help augment income from our publications programme. Michele Vincent is designing pages for the Friends which will include selected items from past Terriers and Hackney History. It is also intended to include information on *Hackney on Disk*. The completion date for all these projects is April 30th.

SEARCH SERVICE

Our search service was launched in April 1992,

since which time there has been no change in the level of fees. From 1 April 1997 these will rise from £6 to £8 per half hour and we have also taken measures to ensure that our service standard of a 14 day response time from receipt by the record searcher can be maintained in the eventuality of any lengthy period of sickness or absence.

There have been some 130 searches since March 1996. We hope to ensure that the present high standard of the service is maintained and that the new fee rate will be sustained for some years to come. None of our other fees and charges are to be raised in the coming financial year.

NEWSPAPER INDEXING

An indexing project has been set up through the good offices of Dan Wenbren of Middlesex University. Four final year history students are to index the Shoreditch Observer for the years 1857 to 1869, roughly along the same lines as Bettie Knott's index to the Hackney Gazette from 1869-81. There will be broad subject headings, like the environment, and within them specific headings, for example on parks. Each article will have a single line summary (as short as possible) and a page reference. Indexing will not include names, nor will crime stories feature.

Even so the project will take two years to complete, so this year's students will only get about a year each done. At the end of their project in May the students give a presentation on the newspaper as a source for local Victorian history. We hope that the index in its final form will make our earliest local paper more available to searchers at HAD.

ANNUAL CLOSURE

This year's annual stock taking closure included work on one of our outstores, a major check on documents in the conservation workshop, a check on our oversize archive storage areas, and some work checking that parts of the pamphlet sequence of the local history library matched the catalogue. As part of the work on the oversize shelves we listed a cache of 97 maps and area plans, 752 plans of individual premises and 7 other documents. A summary of these additions to the collection is given below.

ACQUISITIONS

Undoubtedly the most significant of recent acquisitions is the arbitration award to settle the dispute between landowner Richard Benyon de Beauvoir and developer William Rhodes over De Beauvoir Town and the Kingsland Basin. Those who came to last year's annual lecture will remember Charles Posner's fascinating account of the origins of the area. This document, which runs to 266 pages provides considerable detail on Rhodes construction work, even down to the railings round De Beauvoir Square.

On the book collection side, we were pleased to receive copies of the new work from the East London History Society on Victoria Park and a biography of mountaineer and mountain painter Edward Theodore Compton, born in Stoke Newington in 1849. (both noted below). Another gap in our London post office directory collection has been filled with our purchase of an 1890 London directory.

PUBLICITY & EXHIBITIONS

Both Peter Foynes and David Mander have given talks on Shoreditch. Peter spoke to a group working on the change of use of Shoreditch Town Hall on 25 January, while David's talk to the Hackney Society two days later had a very good audience of 75 people. We are pleased that both *More Light, More Power* and *Hackney, Homerton and Dalston* are selling well.

Hackney Depicted, an exhibition of topographical paintings and drawings from HAD's collection, will go on display at Sutton House from 4 June to 6 July 1997. The opening night will coincide with the Stanley Tongue Memorial Lecture, so we shall look forward to seeing Friends at the occasion. Eight new colour postcards will be published featuring works in the exhibition. Details and prices will be given in the next *Hackney Terrier*.

Sutton Publishing have now agreed to publish an illustrated history of Stoke Newington by David Mander, which will be a companion volume to the Shoreditch one, and will appear in the autumn of 1997.

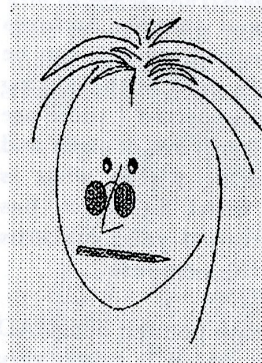
Our *Guide* is now some seven years old and long overdue for a revision. Peter and David are to divide this work between them over the

coming months with the aim of bringing out a new edition by April 1998. Revisions will naturally be incorporated into the Website!

We gave a short notice that a feature on Gwendoline Rose Lerner featured in *Hackney Today*, Hackney Council's magazine. The *Hackney Gazette* has also run a feature. Briefly Gwendoline took part in a series of publicity photographs produced by the Ministry of Information in 1947, intending to show the day in the life of an English schoolgirl for Australians (ours is *not* to ask why). The photos include her parent's council flat, 27 Edred House, Kings Mead Way, and scenes at Dalston County Secondary School. Gwendoline was then aged 13; we suggested that if she could be traced then it might be possible to recreate aspects of the day fifty years on, involving Kingsland School, which is the successor to Dalston CSS. There have been some interesting responses to us and to *Hackney Gazette* reporter Fiona Mitchell, but no definite leads as yet. Watch this space.

Notes from the Conservation Room

Spring cleaning of the workshop took place over Christmas and everything looked nice and neat during the break. Working my way steadily through the piles for rebinding and conservation I beamed with happiness one morning when I saw the last few documents. It is very satisfying to contemplate an empty workbench.



Alas, it was not to remain clear for long! On my return after the two week annual stock take there were what appeared to be hundreds of rolled up architectural drawings in bits and pieces. They had been discovered in the most unexpected of places. So it is back to needling out, flattening, repairing and cleaning. However, being of a sanguine nature I am optimistic that the pile will begin to disappear again!

Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price

FROM THE FRIENDS

Deaf History

We have been privileged to receive a copy of Issue 1 of the *Deaf History Journal*, now deposited in the local collection. Not only does this reveal that St Thomas's Square in Hackney was the focus for the foundation of this productive society; it also proved the inspiration and focus for its co-founder, Raymond Lee, giving up smoking! All is revealed in Issue 1, which also reprints the article about Braidwood's pioneering academy for the teaching of deaf children, first published by John Hay and Raymond Lee in Terrier 33. The editors would be grateful for contributions and information relevant to the study of the history of the deaf; please write to Deaf History Journal, BDHS Publications, 288 Bedford Lane, Feltham TW14 9NU.

Standard for Archive Users

At the time of going to press there is an unresolved issue between the Friends and the Council, concerning a document entitled '*Hackney Standards -our promise to you- Libraries and Archives*'. This purports to be part of a series about minimum standards in local services (though this is not entirely clear from its content). Unfortunately, it gives a very misleading impression about what the Archives Department does and indeed, what it can be expected to do. It also falls short of the editing standards that might be expected (there are three completely blank pages out of eight and inaccurate cross-referencing within what is left). The Assistant Chief Executive has acknowledged we have raised valid concerns and we await a substantive response.

In the meantime, as we have pointed out, HAD has a customer charter which is taken very seriously by the archivists. If readers have concerns, the Department would wish to know about them; and so would we.

*Isobel Watson
Chair*

Hoxton History

Hoxton Hall have organised a local history group. The group meets on Thursdays at 1.30 p.m. and is led by Sheila Morrison. The

project for the next six months is to research the historic theatres of Shoreditch and Hoxton. Friends wishing to contribute to the project can receive further information from Hoxton Hall, tel 0171 739 5431.

FRIENDS DIARY

SATURDAY 12th April at 3 p.m.

The Church of the Good Shepherd, Rookwood Road, N16

Members are invited to visit this shrine of the Ancient Catholic Church, formerly the home of the Agapemonites. The visit, to which members of other local bodies are being invited, will be led by the incumbent, the Rev Schroder.

SATURDAY 17th May at 4 p.m.

Annual General Meeting at Hackney Archives Department, 43, De Beauvoir Road, N1

Come along and keep in touch with the latest archival developments.

WEDNESDAY 4th of June at 6.00 p.m.

Sutton House, 2-4 Homerton High St, E9

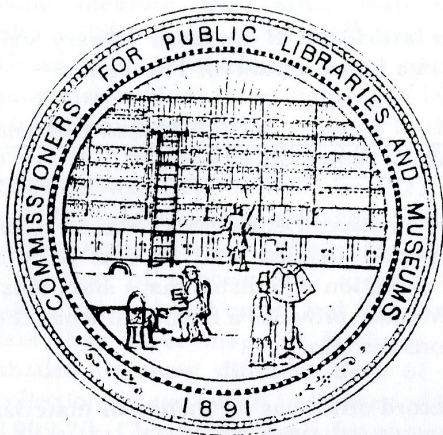
6.00 p.m. (RSVP) Preview of the Hackney Archives watercolour exhibition 'Hackney Depicted' RSVP Please telephone the department o 0171 241 2886, if you can be there.

7.30 p.m. Following the preview there will be the *Stanley Tongue memorial lecture for 1997* The Search for Sutton House, by Mike Gray The historian of Tudor Hackney reveals his sources in an illustrated lecture. Highly recommended, no need to book.

HAGGERSTON LIBRARY

The February 21st edition of the Hackney Gazette ran a front page story on the proposed rescue and development of the old Haggerston Library building on Kingsland Road. For many people who are familiar with the building, this will be seen as the latest instalment of a long and sorry saga. The Library closed in 1975 and different proposals have come and gone (including for use as a night-club in 1988), but the building has remained empty and deteriorating. It is now apparently in such poor condition that only the facade can be saved and contractors consider the building to

be un-safe to enter. In the latest scheme the restored facade will front a new block containing 22 flats, one work space and three workshops.



One of the successful entrants for a competition to design a building for Shoreditch Library Commissioners 1891

The building did not start life as a library; 236 Kingsland Road was about 10 years old and previously owned by The Gas Meter Company. Although the building was not purpose built and soon proved to be too small for the new and growing Library, it was considered suitable enough and was opened on 10th May 1893 by the Duke of Devonshire. An extension was added in 1896 to what was by then the Haggerston Branch of the Shoreditch Libraries.



Another unsuccessful entrant for the seal competition of 1891

The 1850 Libraries Act empowered Borough Councils to levy a rate to provide public libraries that were free and open to everyone. It was not a statutory requirement but could

be bought about by a petition from the rate payers. It was not until 1891 that Shoreditch rate payers petitioned the Vestry to hold a ballot on the adoption of the Public Library Acts. In the poll, the required two thirds majority was achieved but out of the 14,294 ballot papers that were issued only 5,000 were returned valid. (Shoreditch's population at that time was over 124,000).

The Vestry then appointed nine of its members as the Library Commissioners for the parish. The Commissioners decided that the two parliamentary divisions of Hoxton and Haggerston should each have a library of equal size. Finding suitable premises in Hoxton proved to be difficult but in Haggerston they had soon located and acquired the Kingsland Road building.

The other force behind the provision of libraries in Shoreditch was the involvement and donations of John Passmore Edwards (1823 -1911). Passmore Edwards was one of a number of radical philanthropists who gave substantial grants to establish and maintain libraries across the country during the late 19th century and early 20th century. In Shoreditch, shortly after the Haggerston Library opened, Passmore Edwards made a donation of £4,250 which covered the cost of the purchase of the Haggerston Building. He also provided for the new library at Hoxton, made donations of books and funded the Haggerston extension.



The successful entrant in the 1891 competition

The extension was designed by a leading library architect of the day, Maurice B. Adams. Although Adams was a radical, he continued

with the original architectural style and the building gained a symmetry it did not previously have. The internal room design was maintained with bay windows to the rear and the external neo-baroque style was faithfully copied across the front of the building. It is impossible to tell from the outside that it was not built all at once. There are before and after drawings of the building held in the Archives, as illustrated on page 70 of the book *More Light, More Power*.

The neo-baroque style was used by another architect Henry T. Hare for the Islington Library in Holloway Road which opened in 1906, and is very similar in appearance to the Haggerston building. Hare was also the architect for the Hoxton Library in Pitfield Street which opened in 1898. Hoxton was the other branch of the Shoreditch Library but was bigger and became the administrative centre for both.

The Haggerston Library was very successful and the number of visitors rapidly increased in its first few years. By 1894/95 the daily average attendance was 1233 rising to 1540 by 1900. As library services developed its popularity continued into the 20th century and the building was extended and refurbished in 1936. During World War Two the library was bomb damaged but continued to function and following the severe damage to the Hoxton Branch, temporarily became the central library in Shoreditch. After the war both libraries were restored and modernised and by 1956, when Hoxton re-opened, Shoreditch also had two smaller branches on the edges of the borough.

Recent times have not been so favourable and Haggerston Library is long gone. The facade of the building might now survive and leave something for the library to be remembered by. If the current scheme goes ahead the Archives can expect it to generate interest in the history of the building and the library. There is a wide range of material available which includes the 1891 petition of Shoreditch rate payers for the library; drawings of building with plans before and after extension; the minutes of the Library commissioners; press cuttings books. We also hold photographs of the interior of the library

from the 1970's and the 1990's. Additional material on the library is in the course of being catalogued.

A fuller article on Haggerston Library will appear in a future edition of *The Terrier*.

Michael Kirkland

PLANNING FOR EVERYTHING ?

Hackney Archives Department's recent stock taking period enabled staff to deal with a bumper collection of unlisted maps and plans. David Mander provides a flavour of what the collections contain.

Every record office has its shelves of material left unlisted for a variety of reasons. Our cache of maps and plans was just such a group. The large and battered rolls, and layers of partially flattened drawings curling up at the edges formed a particularly off-putting collection. However having decided to tackle our oversize shelving there was no help for it. Two large shelves and one very full drawer would just have to be tackled. The accession register offered little help as to provenance. The vast majority had obviously come from Hackney Council, though at what stage was not clear. As it turned out there were some strays mingled in amongst the council records, so our first decision was to divide up the material among the relevant councils and add anything remaining to our 'V' sequence of miscellaneous and unprovenanced plans.

The records covered all three of our constituent councils. The earliest of Hackney's material dated back to the Board of Works days in the 1880s; the Shoreditch and Stoke Newington plans were all 20th century. Looking at the collections as a whole five broad categories emerged. (1) Area maps showing the location of estates and services. (2) Maps of slum clearance areas. (3) Plans of council premises and housing estates. (4) Plans of premises deposited with councils (5) A selection of 'might have beens' - buildings and schemes that never got beyond the drawing board.

The area maps have filled many gaps in our source material in considerable and sometimes

extraordinary detail. Two plans of 1887 and 1899 show the location of every fire station, sub-station and alarm post in Hackney. For good measure the earlier map included Shoreditch, Stoke Newington and Bethnal Green. Later Hackney maps show the progression of arc street lighting in 1929, the site of every pedestrian crossing in the same year, the location of all public and private conveniences and urinals in 1923 (*private urinals ?*) and the various changes in ward and registration districts. Then as now the collection of rubbish had a great deal of attention lavished on it, and there were no less than three maps of Hackney suitably shaded to show different days of rubbish collection for each street in the period between 1909-20. Clearly the basis for some serious and detailed research ... Some information may have been copied from earlier material, as with a map of Hackney Marshes showing the old plots, which dated from before 1885. Others were deposited by other authorities, as with the London County Council maps drawn up in 1935 to show the land taken from Millfields to build the Kingsmead estate and the compensatory piece of open land purchased in Chigwell, a place easily accessible to Hackney residents of the time.

The slum clearance plans are mostly for Hackney sources, and compliment our extensive collection of photographs, drawn on for the housing chapter of *The London Borough of Hackney in Old Photographs 1890-1960* and later books. There is some Shoreditch material for the Plumbers Place-Moria Place areas and for nearby East Road. The majority of the plans of council premises are also concerned with housing. Hackney estates include Pressburg Street, Bannister Street, Nisbet Street, 20-22 Clapton Common, Woodfield House, Rossington Street, 121-143 Shackwell Lane and Mapledene Road for dates from 1932-48. Shoreditch schemes are exclusively post war and include the St John's Estate, while Stoke Newington material covers Londesborough Road and Lordship Terrace. The housing material is especially important, as the bulk of the council plans we had listed previously were for former London County Council and GLC estates. Other buildings

include the Millfields Electricity Generating Station (before and after nationalisation in 1948), Whiston Street electricity generating station, Stoke Newington Municipal Buildings (floor plans only) and the public toilets on the Clapton Pond corner of Millfields Road (in glorious colour). A plan of the Kingsland Basin footbridge of 1948 gives a useful indication of when the original bridge over the basin was replaced.

Shoreditch Parochial Charities moved two of their foundations out to Wood Green at the turn of the century. Their records at HAD give details of the move, but up to now we have been missing the plans of the new buildings. This has been remedied with a full set of drawings from 1901.

Deposited plans come from the London County Council and include Woodberry Down estate buildings and the open air swimming pool at London Fields. There are also some strays from private individuals, including the floor plans for the conversion of 333-7 Mare Street by F.W. Woolworth & Co in 1919 and alterations to the New Lansdowne Club further down the same road in 1938.

The 'might have beens' yield some fascinating possibilities. The earliest plan we discovered was a proposal of 1808 to redevelop an estate owned by Admiral Harvey fronting on to Homerton High Street and bounded on the west by Plough Lane and on the east by a new road on the site of the slightly later John Street. The proposal would have involved demolishing all the existing property on the High Street, including the timber framed range that included the Plough public house some fifty years earlier that actually was the case, and replace them with what appear to be medium size villas. In the event nothing happened, with the possible exception of John Street (later Bannister Street, one of the subjects of those clearance plans). Among the other non-events was a proposed 'boys institution' at No 1 Clissold Road, which would have been Stoke Newington's First World War memorial in place of the hall built alongside the library, an extensive council estate south of Dalston Lane, proposed around

1962 which would have involved the resiting and rebuilding of Dalston Station and given Hackney a civic theatre, public baths to accompany the new Homerton Library on Homerton High Street, and proposals from 1979 to make the Central Hall on Mare Street a performing arts centre. It is this worthy idea in a new incarnation that recently ran into difficulties with lottery funding.

There is often one plan that defies all attempts at guessing its function. Our special example is a map of London of 1932, or shortly after, with the area of the following local authorities shaded: the cities of Westminster and London, the metropolitan boroughs of Hackney Wandsworth, Lambeth, Lewisham, Finsbury and Hammersmith; the municipal borough of Brentford & Chiswick and Penge urban district council. There is no indication of what links this diverse body of councils outside and inside the former London County Council area, with the exception of a ringed black circle site on the southern side of Browning Street adjacent to the junction with Walworth Road. The site is occupied by a late nineteenth/ early twentieth century mansion block and some light industrial premises. Contemporary directories give no clue as to why it should be the focus of such a peculiar conjunction of authorities. Whatever else it is, is not Labour Party headquarters!. Staff at London Metropolitan Archives are racking their brains, but have yet to come up with an answer. Suggestions - serious or otherwise, but backed up by evidence please, to HAD.

The maps and plans have been listed into the following groups. BW/E 26-9; J/E 12; H/E/B 17; H/D 47-49; H/E 121-159; H/E/D 25-30; H/EP 7-35; P/L/C 237; S/E 3-22; S/EP 7-25; SN/EBP 9-14; LBH/GL 3-4; LBH 5/5/2-6; LBH 5/10/4-5; LBH 7/2/27-31

David Mander

BOOK REVIEW

A Pictorial History of Victoria Park, London E3 Illustrated with postcard and contemporary photographs; text and pictures collated by Phillip Mernick and researched by Doreen Kendall. 72 pp (A4). Published by the East

London History Society £6.99 (plus £1.50 p & p from Hackney Archives Department, \$3, De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ).

This engaging book will appeal greatly to all for whom 'Vicky Park' forms or has formed part of their lives. It is a useful complement to Charles Poulsen's indispensable work of 1976, and in particular to Poulsen's chapters on 'The Park in Action'. The latter - the shelters, lake, fountains, sculpture, bridges, gates and gardens are lovingly depicted in more than 100 photographs and engravings, most of them splendidly animated and only a handful repetitive. These are set out side by side with short chapters on the park's various uses, including public meetings, bathing, Fire Brigade demonstrations and sports. There is a section on the Park's wartime role, which is particularly poignant in view of the many unique features (alas the Pagoda!) which we have lost as a result of war damage. Doreen Kendall is to be congratulated on having gathered together a handy chronology, which forms an appendix to the main text and is particularly impressive on the WW2 period. The text is stronger on the daily life of the Park than the political and environmental factors which influenced its development, and there are some slips, but this is a nicely produced book which will bring great pleasure to many and provide, if used with care, a useful starting point for further enquiry.

Isobel Watson

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