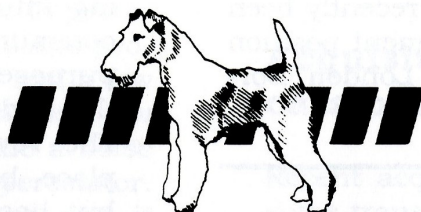


THE HACKNEY TERRIER



Number 49

Spring 1999

NEWSLETTER FROM THE HACKNEY ARCHIVES

Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

Welcome to Michael Kirkland, who has joined the HAD team as IT and Searchroom Officer, succeeding Michele Vincent, Searchroom Supervisor, who left in December 1998. Since Michele's departure, the job has been modified to reflect the advances we have made in new technology, and the post has been upgraded accordingly. Michael is a familiar face to users of HAD, having been the project worker employed by the National Trust to work on *Hackney on Disk* for the last two years. We are pleased that Michael will now be able to use his knowledge of IT and his skill in working with the public on a full time basis.

After only 4 months with HAD, Jane Gotts our Library IT Support Assistant left us on 22 January. Her departure was occasioned by her own need for a larger salary and a permanent contract to secure a mortgage. In her short time with us, she proved an able and enthusiastic member of the team, and we would like to wish her every success in the future.

The post of Library IT Support Assistant has been advertised in the Library Association's Graduate Opportunities and circulated among the job centres. The closing date was 16 March, with interviews on 31 March. We hope that the successful candidate will be in post in April, taking some of the pressure in the search room off Michael and Martin.

Manuela Toporowska, who spent two days a week scanning images for *Hackney on Disk* as a volunteer, left at the end of 1998 to take up full time employment. Once again we wish every success to Manuela.

Richard Bailey, a student from the University of Middlesex, has volunteered to work at HAD for a day a week as part of his course work. He will mainly be scanning images for *Hackney on Disk*, but has already participated in our stock taking with every sign of enjoyment!

For a period in January, Tudor Allen, an unemployed qualified archivist, spent time with us listing a collection of miscellaneous deeds on the ADLIB system. This increases the number of lists on ADLIB, Richard Bowden having

edited and inputted the Hackney and Stoke Newington pre 1855 parish records. We were pleased to learn that Tudor has recently been appointed to a permanent position as archivist for the London Borough of Redbridge.

Stock Taking

In the weeks beginning 14 and 21 February, HAD was closed for its annual stock taking. One of the major tasks was to look through the M series, which consists of miscellaneous documents from a variety of sources. They are primarily, but not exclusively, deeds and other property records. A number of misfiles were identified and each box was rearranged to make accessing the individual documents much easier.

We were very pleased to complete this, as all three of the full time staff had a number of commitments which we were worried would eat into the closure period. We also managed to tidy the searchroom, chase up unmatched document request slips and undertake a number of other mundane but necessary housekeeping chores.

We reopened to the public on Monday 1 March. The wave of personal visits and telephone requests which hit us demonstrated the scale of the public demand which we have to postpone to do our stock taking.

Financial Matters

The Council has been through a difficult process to determine the 1999/2000 budget. It is proposed that HAD's rating money be re-

duced by £20,000, as in the present year, in consideration of the division of the Rose Lipman building into its separate library and community centre units for rating purposes. HAD now administers the budget for the whole building. The revaluation has now taken place, back-dated to 1 April 1998, but has not raised the combined rateable value of the building.

The budget process is now coming to an end. The Learning and Leisure Directorate has put forward stringent cuts in its services (of which HAD is one) towards meeting the Council's projected deficit, so we hope that we will not be called on to make further savings, should the need arise.

In the Searchroom

There will be a major, but temporary, change to our Saturday openings this year because Easter falls on the first weekend in April. Consequently, in April and May we will be open on the SECOND and FOURTH Saturdays, rather than the usual first and third. The actual hours will remain the same (9.30-13.00, 14.00-17.00). These revised open Saturdays will be:-

Saturday, April 10

Saturday, April 24

Saturday, May 8

Saturday, May 22

The pattern of opening on the first and third Saturday of the month will resume in June, the first one being Saturday 5 June.

Two new air conditioners and a powerful humidifier have now been installed to improve the climate in

the searchroom. The relative humidity, previously in the high twenties, now averages 50%. This a considerable atmospheric improvement, both for documents and people. The humidifier itself had a few teething problems. For the first few weeks it persistently made a noise like an outraged coffee percolator. This has now been cured and it now adds little to the existing background noise in the searchroom.

Computer matters

The linking of HAD's local area network to Hackney Council's main server which were referred to in the previous *Terrier* have now been working for a couple of months. After some initial problems, we are now pleased with the way it is working.

Access to e-mail and other central Council IT functions is now much speedier, and there is access to the Internet on the four public terminals in the searchroom. We have decided provisionally to restrict people using these terminals for Internet access to our own web pages and other archival websites, such as the Historical Manuscripts Commission site.

Ken Laing has designed and installed a new front end for the public terminals. This is a screen with buttons which can be clicked on with the mouse to give access to *Hackney on Disk*, the Internet, and ADLIB.

All new book cataloguing is being done on ADLIB. There are now getting on for 800 entries, and it will soon be worthwhile advising customers to look at ADLIB as well as

the card indexes when searching for a book on a particular subject.

Acquisitions and cataloguing

Recent acquisitions have included some transcripts of letters between the founders of Bryant and May; sales particulars of 1893 for 297 Victoria Road; and circulars of Hackney Downs School 1982-94. Farrer & Co., solicitors of Lincoln's Inn Fields, have transferred 11 boxes of miscellaneous and mainly nineteenth century deeds to HAD via the British Records Association.

A collection of Shoreditch vestry clerks' records has now been listed (L/V/C). The vestry clerk was the principal officer of the Vestry, serving 120 elected vestrymen. From 1869 until his death in 1890, the post was held by Enoch Walker, formerly himself a vestryman, and also onetime editor of the *Shoreditch Observer*. He was a powerful figure and influential in the policy as well as the operation of the Vestry. His successor, H.M. Robinson, presided over administrative improvements and initiated the foundation of such facilities as baths, libraries and housing schemes.

The records reflect the multifarious concerns of the vestry clerks. Subjects touched on by the clerks in just one file of correspondence from 1870, include the nuisance of chickens in Clifton Street, disorderly houses in Weymouth Street and the removal of a cycling race track in Hoxton Market. This archive is important for the social, as well as the administrative history of Shoreditch.

Two introductory books for the local historian have recently been added to the local history library. These are *Local History: a handbook for beginners* by Philip Riden (Merton Priory Press 1998) a new edition of a local history classic; and *Discovering Local History* by David Iredale and John Barrett (Shire Publications 1999). The Iredale and Barrett book is heavily illustrated but more superficial, whereas the Riden is more useful for someone interested in finding out which records are where, and what can be found out from them.

One job completed during stock taking and not noted above was the cataloguing of a number of works held for some time by HAD, which seek to prove that the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written by the most famous resident of Brooke House, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Most of these were written before World War II, and are accessible through the ADLIB book catalogue. The theory was first posited in *Shakespeare Identified* by J Thomas Looney (Cecil Palmer 1920). Perhaps one should not draw conclusions about the quality of the history from the name of the author...

Publicity and publications

In the last *Hackney Terrier* we noted that we were to hold two open days, on the evening of Monday 1 February and on Saturday 13 February. These were primarily aimed at residents of the Borough who might not have even heard of HAD. We advertised the events in the *Hackney Gazette*, and distributed leaflets to the Borough's

libraries and other organisations. The leaflets were financed with help from the Learning and Leisure Directorate central budget.

Although there was a disappointing response to the evening event (largely due to the *Gazette's* failure to publicise it in time), useful work was done with those who did turn up, and indeed had not visited the Department before.

The Saturday event was a great success. Well over 40 people, many of them new to HAD, dropped by. Most seemed to be very impressed with our operation, especially *Hackney on Disk*, and learned something new about the area in which they live.

We would like to record our thanks for helping us, and representing the Friends, to Isobel Watson, Josephine Boyle and Joan Potter. The open days were a success, and we will consider doing another next year.

Friends may remember the Public Service Quality Forum survey of visitors to UK archives, in which HAD participated in June 1998. As a result of the praise we received from our users, HAD has been recognised by the Public Service Quality Forum as a place of excellence for leaflets and guides in the 'small response' category (ie small in terms of the numbers of questionnaires completed in the stated survey period).

Index work on the new edition of the guide to the collections has begun, but is proceeding slowly. We hope that it will be published this year, both in book form, and on our web page. A new edition of the purple introductory leaflet to HAD

has been printed and is in use. It includes a description of *Hackney on Disk*.

Friends who are members of the East of London Family History Society will have seen the very full description of HAD in the latest edition of *Cockney Ancestor*. We were very pleased with the article and it has created quite a lot of interest in HAD and our services. A number of new members have

joined the Friends having found out about us for the first time.

David Mander has agreed with Sutton Publishing to write a new book, to be published in the autumn of 1999. *A Hackney Century* will be a pictorial survey of Hackney in the twentieth century, using local paper and other sources to supplement new and existing picture material.

HACKNEY & THE "TITANIC" DISASTER.

extract from the Hackney Gazette 22 April 1912

The release of the film Titanic last year added a new layer of interest to a subject that in its many aspects continues to capture the imagination. For me it bought back a childhood fascination, briefly revisited when the wreck was discovered in 1986. These days I am of course spoiled for choice with many books, documents, photographs and web-sites to consult.

As I looked at the passenger and crew lists and saw London addresses, the tragedy started to feel close to home. Three members of the famous band were from Clapham, Brixton and North London and this made me wonder how the disaster may have effected Hackney. I had not seen mention of Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington in connection with the

Titanic or its main characters, but I thought it might be worth a quick look for local interest in the Hackney Gazette of April 1912 .

The first mention is on 17 April, two days after the sinking. In a brief paragraph we are told that the MP for Hackney, Mr Horatio Bottomley asked the President of the Board of Trade if he would take steps to prevent passenger ships taking the North Atlantic for the purpose of breaking records. He also asked about the number of lifeboats compared to the number of passengers. Answers, of course, were not forthcoming.

On the 22 April we start to find out how the disaster did effect the area. The Gazette reports that the previous night at churches across

the borough, there had been many references to the Titanic and the singing of "Nearer, My God, to Thee", played by the band before 'the vessel took her fateful plunge'. The Mayor of Hackney, Councillor W. Hammer and members of the Borough Council attended a special memorial service at West Hackney Church where a collection was taken for widows and orphans.

Amongst those reported as missing from Hackney were Mr J T Wood, aged 40, from Narford Road, Upper Clapton and Mr Philip W Conway (Second Class Steward), aged 25, from Bentham Road, South Hackney. There was also much concern for the safety of the son of Mrs H Allen, a Hackney Guardian, who was travelling to America to start a new job as an engineer. The name Allen had appeared on a recent survivor's list, so there was still hope.

Also in the 22 April issue is a lengthy editorial about St George's Day which dwells heavily on matters of chivalry, valour and sacrifice. The Titanic of course gets a mention in this context but there is nothing about the passengers, crew or the ship itself.

On the 24 April the Gazette reported that Stoke Newington Borough Council had passed a resolution expressing their condolences to the relatives of those who lost their lives.

By the 26 April there had been a special matinee performance in aid of the Mansion House Titanic Fund. This was held at the Clapton Cinematograph Theatre and the large audience included the Mayor and Mayoress of Hackney. In addition to the splendid pictorial pro-

gramme, Mr Louis Garnett (baritone) gave a very pathetic rendering of the hymn "Nearer, My God, To Thee" and "The Mighty Deep", and Mrs Ethel Harvey (contralto) sang with much feeling "Life's Recompence" and "Absent". In his speech the Mayor thanked the theatres directors for the twelve guineas raised by the event.

Also by 26 April Mrs H Allen's worst fear had been realised: 'At Wednesday's meeting of the Hackney Guardians a letter was read from Mrs H Allen, a member of the Board, stating that her last hope for the safety of her son, who was on board the ill-fated Titanic, had vanished, and the members of the Board passed a vote of condolence with her in her bereavement, and rose from their seats in a mark of respect.'

Further research may reveal other references to the Titanic; for now I'll leave looking for any official mentions in council minutes! I had a quick look at the Bryant & May match book albums for any White Star Line advertisements and Shoreditch cuttings for the period, to no avail. If any Friends know of any other Hackney connections with the Titanic, I would of course be most interested to hear from them.

Michael Kirkland

Footnote: The Clapton Cinematograph Theatre.

The Clapton Cinematograph Theatre was one of Hackney's earliest cinemas dating from 1910. Built on the site of stables next to the White Hart Public House, it was situated just north of Clapton Pond

on the west side of Lower Clapton Road. Re-named as the Kenning Hall Cinema during the 1920's it seems to have continued as a cinema up to the 1970's. The cinema building and White Hart survive today as the Chimes Wine Bar and Elite Nightclub.

The Archives have photographs of the Clapton Cinematographic Theatre and a copy programme (from the collection at the Bill Douglas Centre, School of English American Studies, Exeter University) from 1912, some of which is reproduced below and on the following page.

The CLAPTON CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRE
 LOWER CLAPTON
 ADJOINING THE WHITE HART HOTEL

CLAPTON'S POPULAR FAMILY RENDEZVOUS
 PROPRIETORS: The CLAPTON CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRE (L)^{TD}
 Manager: M^{RS} RICHARD SULLIVAN.
 CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE DAILY 3 TILL 11 P.M.
 (NO SUNDAY PERFORMANCE)
 CHANGE OF PROGRAMME MONDAYS & THURSDAYS
 PRICES OF ADMISSION 3^D - 6^D - 1/- (RESERVED)
 CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE HALF PRICE TO 6^D & 1/ SEATS AND 2^D TO THE 3^D SEATS
 RESERVED SEATS CAN BE BOOKED
 Telephone N^o 1314, DALSTON

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, June 17th, 18th & 19th, 1912.

1 THROUGH THE FLAMES

Drama by Imp.

The wife of an engineer is dangerously ill. A telegraphic message comes that a village is threatened with a forest fire and, unless a train is sent at once, the inhabitants are doomed to certain death. He dreads to leave his wife, but yields to her entreaty to go. When the engineer returns, having saved the lives of the whole village, he finds his wife has safely passed the crisis. Outside his hut the rescued people are cheering their rescuer to the skies, and they send his wife a bunch of flowers.

2 CONSTABLE SMITH AND THE MAGIC BATON

Comic Trick by C. & M.

3 THE DIAMOND BROOCH

Drama by Vitagraph.

Madame Rivera, the leading lady, is jealous of Irene, a chorus girl, with whom Jack Bronson is infatuated. She induces her maid to place a diamond brooch in Irene's make-up box, but the maid is seen by Mabel, one of the chorus girls. Irene is charged with the theft, and, after the conclusion of the evidence, Mabel is brought forward and tells her story. She succeeds in convincing the judge of Irene's innocence. Jack calls upon her and asks her to become his wife. She accepts him and he makes her his leading lady on the stage of life.

4 THE SPORT OF KINGS

Sporting Interest by Jury.

We see Mr. Buchanan's Stud-Farm at Lavington Park and the famous sire Santry which is quartered there. The trainer is carefully inspecting a string of horses, and the lads take them out to gallop. We see a number of mares with their foals, a horse and jockey ready for the race, and finally, a splendid animal which has cost months of training to prepare.

5 THE FEMALE SPY

An enthralling Drama, by Cines Co.

6 WIFFLES IN A NEW PROFESSION

Comic by Pathe.



During the Programme, Banjo Selections will be given by Miss HILDA BARRY and Mr. HARRY STUART.

This Programme may be subject to Alterations.

Friends of Hackney Archives A.G.M.

Members will be interested to learn that following the extraordinary general meeting held on 6th February 1999 the Friends was registered as a charity on 3rd March, no. 1074493.

The annual general meeting will take place at 4.15pm on Saturday 8th May 1999 at Hackney Archives Department. The business of the meeting will be to elect the committee (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and up to seven other members) and receive the accounts for the calendar year 1998. Nominations for any of the posts are invited, please contact the Chair of the Friends of Hackney Archives at 29 Stepney Green, London, E1 3JX.

1999 Subscriptions

Thank you to those who've paid. We keenly anticipate the cheques of those of you who have not yet paid! The rates are listed below.

The Hackney Terrier

The Hackney Terrier was produced by David Mander, Martin Taylor and Michael Kirkland 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. Additional contributions came from Isobel Watson. The Terrier is distributed free to members of the Friends of Hackney Archives. Membership of the Friends is open to all. The subscription is £8 for each calendar year, (plus £2 for each additional member at the same address and £16 for overseas members (if paid in sterling) Back numbers are available from the Friends at 29 Stepney Green E1 3JX (large sae for details)