

The Hackney Terrier

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The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter

Autumn 2008



'The Theatre' is found!

The Theatre, built in 1576, was the first purpose-built theatre in England – the creation of local carpenter-turned-actor James Burbage. It became the site of performance of some of the early works of Shakespeare by the Lord Chamberlain's company, in whose company the dramatist also performed as an actor alongside James's son Richard Burbage. The wooden superstructure is said to have disappeared in 1598, more or less overnight, after the acting company fell out with the landlord over the terms of the lease and transported what they could salvage of the building over to a new site – the first Globe theatre – on the South Bank. In one of the most exciting finds of recent years by the Museum of London Archaeology Service, the original brick foundations of The Theatre have now been identified at New Inn Broadway in Shoreditch.

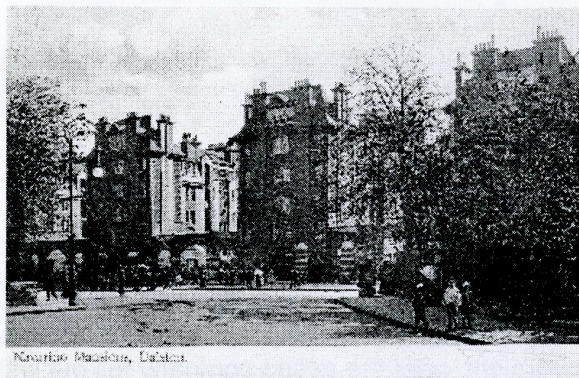
It is pleasing that the site is to become a new theatre for the Tower Theatre Company, formerly of Islington, and that though there are no plans to re-create The Theatre, the new discovery will influence the design of the new building.



16th century Shoreditch. The flagged building on the left is thought to be one of the early theatres.

Recent accessions

The Friends have continued to provide a useful source of accessions to the Archives, having kindly purchased for us a postcard of Navarino Mansions from eBay in July.



The summer was a quiet time for new accessions, but a couple of notable collections have come our way within the last couple of weeks. First, we've received papers relating to Chats Palace and the Hackney Marsh Fun Festival in the 1970s and 1980s, as an addition to the papers received from Mike Gray towards the end of last year. We also very recently received a series of 6 large framed 19th century parochial documents from St John at Hackney. These latter documents are currently receiving some attention from our conservator, Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price, who is removing them from their frames to preserve them in archival packaging.

Proactive development of the collections at the Archives is something which has not been possible in recent years due to lack of storage space. Now that we have had that space extended, we have been turning our thoughts towards ways of encouraging more accessions, particularly from Hackney's relatively recent past. For some time we have been discussing possible community history projects with the vicar of St. Peter's Church, De Beauvoir, which culminated on 26 August in a free drop-in session at the Archives. Residents in the De Beauvoir area were encouraged to bring along personal

papers and photographs, either for donation to the Archives, or for scanning to add digital copies to the collections. As a result of this event we received two new collections of photographs from local people, and made contact with local residents who were new to the Archives. We'll be running a similar event for Black History Month, more details of which you can find elsewhere in this issue.

Become a community observer and help develop the archives!

Hackney Archives is working with Hackney Museum on a project called 'Mapping the Change', which aims to involve local people in recording the changes in the Borough between now and the staging of the Olympic and Paralympic games in 2012. One of the major elements of the project with which we are most closely involved is the Community Observers scheme. The aim is that individuals will create their own record, for ultimate donation to the Archives, of the changes they experience or observe in their local area as a result of the build-up to the Games in 2012. There will be an event at the Archives in November for people who want to join the Community Observers scheme: anyone interested in joining should contact staff at the Archives.

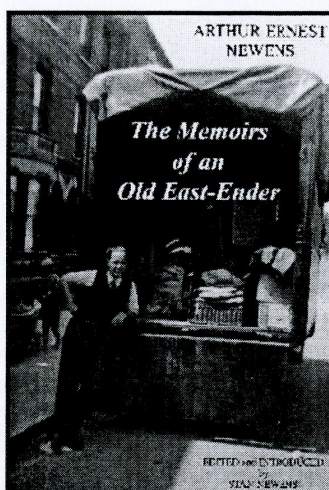
New volunteer

A new volunteer, Anita Miller, joined us in August and will be spending a day a week with us for the next month or so. She has embarked on the task of box-listing the Bush Boake Allen archive, in preparation for final sorting and cataloguing, which we hope to achieve within the next couple of years. The entire archive amounts to over 70 boxes, so it's a big task and we're delighted to have her help on this project.

Libby Adams
Principal Archivist

Additions to the local studies library

Stan Newens kindly got in touch to offer a copy of his father's biography *The memoirs of an old East-End'er*. Arthur Newens was born and bred in Bethnal Green where, in the 1920s, he established his own road haulage business which also served Shoreditch and Hackney up until the mid 1960s. Following his retirement Mr Newens learned to touch-type, and wrote this fascinating story of working class East End life which his son has since expanded and completed. (920 NEW SR)

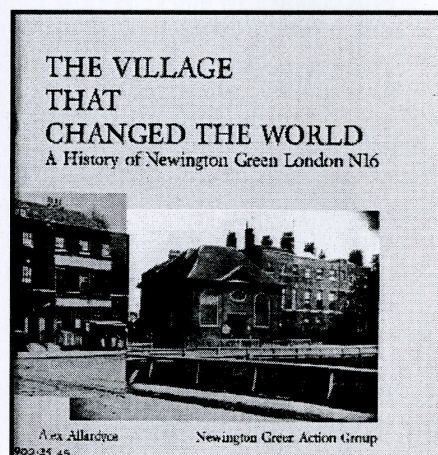
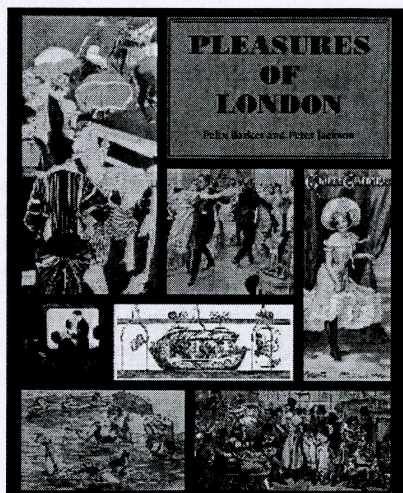
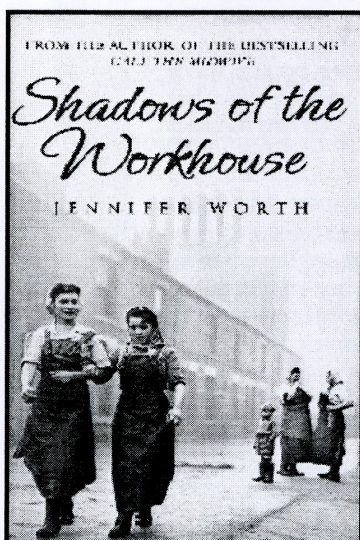


In complete contrast is *Pleasures of London* by Felix Barker and Peter Jackson, this year's subscription publication from the London Topographical Society, a highly illustrated look at the city's pastimes and pursuits from medieval times to the present day, though the lack of an index makes navigating the massive amount of information included somewhat difficult. (909 AS/OS)

A darker side of East End life is portrayed in Jennifer Worth's *Shadows of the workhouse*, an anecdotal account of life as a community nurse in the 1950s and the people encountered living on the very brink of destitution. The book includes a number of illustrations from the Hackney Archives collection. (920 WOR SR)

The village that changed the world by Alex Allardyce is a fascinating booklet which explores the history and development of Newington Green, piecing together the historical puzzle of the Green as it stands today, and celebrating a number of significant anniversaries of 'the village green with a history to be proud of.' (908.1 AS)

Sally England
Local Studies Librarian

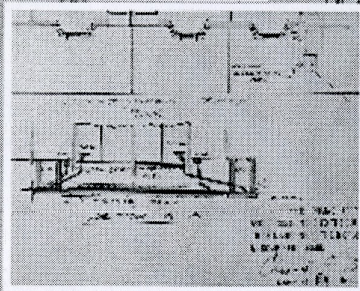


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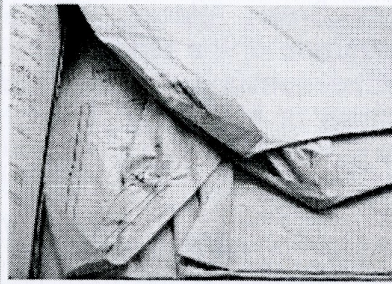
CONSERVATION

Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price

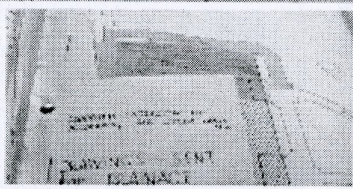
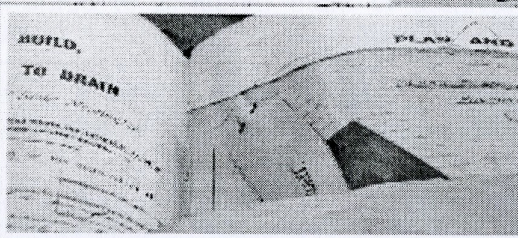
Detailed section of new build



Torn and crumpled plans and pages which are flattened and repaired.



Staples, pins and clips which are removed



When we consider the subject of drainage plans we don't immediately think of it as a riveting one - no pun intended. However, drainage plans are a rich and diverse way of researching places and properties and are very helpful in establishing a location for a building, premises or residence. If we are lucky they are sometimes available on microfiche or microfilm.

Because they include applications for building permits they provide a variety of valuable information including architectural plans of the building, additions, renovations and correspondence between council and the owner or occupier. Some date back to the 1850s and vary from a sketched outlines of the site to detailed plans, elevations and sections. The records include the address or location of the building, nature and date of the anticipated works and the name of the owner, builder and architect. They may also contain information about subsequent applications.

The volumes in which the plans are bound range from those which are slim to large, heavy and unwieldy ones. Unfortunately the amount of use and the lack of careful treatment of them means that the pages and plans are frequently crushed and torn. Sometimes if they have not been attached properly they become separated from the original file.

In addition not only may the volumes have been stored in municipal cellars or areas with high humidity and bad ventilation, and are thus covered in mould and mildew, but also, due to the quantity of plans and correspondence being stuffed inside their spines, they may be broken and boards damaged.

I am currently in the process of making good the Shoreditch contingent. It is a somewhat repetitive exercise in that almost all the plans have to be flattened, with an iron, and many of the pages and plans need a considerable amount of repair. However, sometimes the drawings are very detailed and even decorative and I sometimes speculate who might have drawn up the information and who the client might have been.

TimeLine Heritage Fair

As previewed in the previous edition of the *Hackney Terrier*, TimeLine's fundraising Heritage Fair held on 13th July was a roaring success. It was something of a triple celebration, marking TimeLine's third birthday, Clissold Park's 119th, and Hackney becoming a Fairtrade Borough. Appropriately there was singing, dancing, and a splendid cake. The fun also included performances by poets John Hegley and Jo Roach, appearances by journalist George Alagiah and Ian Rathbone, the current Speaker of Hackney, plus a penalty shoot-out with Arsenal FC and a costumed dance performed at the Abney Park Cemetery chapel. There's more on the event plus all back copies of TimeLine at www.timeline.org.uk, a website full of fun and facts about Stoke Newington and Hackney history and heritage.

Summer events at HAD

Over the summer, we tried a number of new events. Most of these were centred around the 'Discover Hackney's Heritage Hackney Stories Week' in August, organised by the Hackney Heritage and Built Environment Partnership. The first two events were creative writing workshops, organised jointly with the Hackney Society and led by children's author Bridget Crowley. The aim was to encourage participants to produce pieces of writing inspired by local buildings, using the resources at Hackney Archives to stimulate the imagination. Bridget Crowley visited the Archives before the event to choose images of buildings and the people who live in them to use during her sessions. The workshops were aimed at families to encourage inter-generational/family learning and five people attended (two mothers with children and another adult). None of the attendees had ever visited an archives service before and they were all excited by looking at photographs and maps showing streets where they lived and how they looked in the past. One of the participants was particularly excited to find her name and the names of her family in old electoral registers. At the end of the two workshops each participant had produced a

piece of creative writing. These were displayed, along with copies of the images from Hackney Archives in the Archives Outreach Room during the Hackney Stories Week in August.

Hackney Archives also had a stall for the launch of the Hackney Stories Week at the Festival Day at the Round Chapel on 2 August. The event included music by Young Jazz Hackney and The Hoxton Singers, and various storytelling sessions during the afternoon. Although numbers were not as high as expected (possibly due to bad weather and the school holidays) all those who came stayed for some time finding out about the different organisations and seemed to enjoy themselves.

The final events in this programme were the 'How to Research Buildings' Workshop and Storytelling Event on 9 August. The workshop aimed to introduce participants to the range of sources held by Hackney Archives that can be used to research the history of a building. During the first part of the workshop, archives staff gave a brief introduction to the various sources, such as maps, electoral registers and directories. They then gave two examples of how to trace a particular site/building, using the available sources. After a short tea break participants were then given an opportunity to do their own research, with staff members on hand to provide assistance. The workshop format worked really well and all the participants indicated that they enjoyed the event and would like to attend similar events that we might organise in the future. Most of those attending lived in Hackney and were able to use the second part of the workshop to trace the history of their own houses, some of them discovering that their houses were in fact much older than they had thought. A number of those participants attending the workshop subsequently visited the Archives to continue their research.

We hope to be able to offer this workshop, and possibly similar ones, again in the future. Keep an eye out for details on the events page of

Hackney Archives website
<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/ca-archives-events.htm>

Elizabeth Green
 Access and Outreach Officer

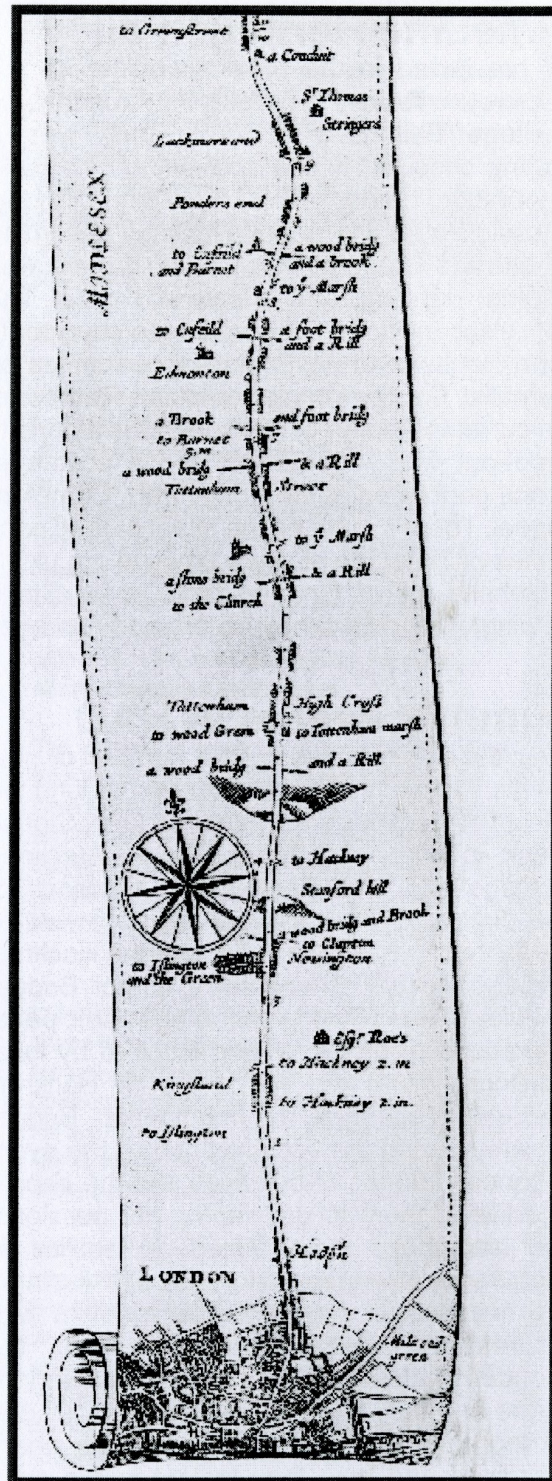
A Mite added to Stoke Newington's history

Since at least Williamson in 1891 the catalogues of seventeenth-century tokens have included as 'Surrey 196' the following, under NEWINGTON BUTTS:

Obverse **THOMAS WELLS OF** around 1668
 Reverse **NEWINGTON CHANDLER** around the letters **W**
 above **T M**

Conventionally such a triad represented the surname of a married couple, and the forenames of husband and wife. There is a specimen of the token in the Norweb Collection, which I am publishing with Michael Dickinson, but we declined to put it under Surrey for lack of evidence.

Recently one Tim Scotney sought to attribute the token to South Newington in Oxfordshire, where there was a married couple bearing the rather common names of Thomas and Mary Wells, with children baptised between 1670 and 1678. However, he could not find the token-issuer in birth or marriage records for South Newington, in the Protestation returns of 1641-2, or in the Hearth Tax returns of 1665, and concluded that there must be a query as to his presence in the parish at the time the token was issued. He then brought into play a Thomas Wells who flourished 1653-72 at Banbury, six miles to the north, supposing that he might have moved to South Newington in time to issue the token. This looks like special pleading. He also mentions that Thomas Wells (Welles) was buried at Banbury in 1696, but described as a maltster, and the excellent *Banbury Corporation Records* edited by Gibson and Brinkworth shows that he was in Banbury holding the office of Constable in 1668-9 and 1669-70.



This led me to look into a note I had had since Hackney's archives were in the Strong Room at the original Mare Street library, 'Thom.

Wells pays for 6 hearths in Stoke Newington, 1674'. This is probably in one of J. R. Daniel-Tyssen's manuscript compilations, which I did not identify because the original was obviously in the PRO/ National Archives. However, it was not necessary to visit, for Thomas Wells, victualler, is mentioned in VCH *Middlesex* for Stoke Newington (viii. 182), with the same number of six hearths in the Hearth Tax return for 1664. It is not clear to me why he was important enough to be mentioned.

The victualling trades were described by Campbell in 1747, with section 11 'Of the Chandler-Shop':

'The Chandler's-Shop deals in all Things necessary for the Kitchen in small Quantities: He is partly Cheesemonger, Oil-man, Grocer, Distiller, &c. This last Article brings him the greatest Profit, and at the same time renders him the most obnoxious Dealer in and about *London*. In these Shops Maid-Servants and the lower Class of Women learn the first Rudiments of Gin-Drinking, a Practice in which they soon become proficient, and load themselves with Diseases, their Families with Poverty, and their Posterity with Want and Infamy. The Chandler-Man takes no Apprentices, and I could wish there were no Masters or Mistresses.'

One may add that Stoke Newington occurred as Newington in documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and also on maps of the period. That is also the spelling on the first strip of Ogilby's map of the London to Berwick road, at the junction of Stoke Newington Church Street and the A10. Somewhere near that junction was the substantial house occupied before 1690 by Thomas Wells. The parish registers for St Mary Stoke Newington were accessible on microfilm XP6 at Hackney Archives Department, and I found that burials included Mary, the daughter of Thomas Wells, on 14 Aug 1667, and three women named Mary Wells without further description, on 20 Feb 1687[-8], 4 Nov 1689, and 1 April 1693. All were buried in accordance with the 1666 Burying in Wool Act. Although there is no telling which of them might have been mother, wife, or daughter of Thomas Wells, burial in shrouds of pure wool at least shows that the

relatives of the defunct were not amongst the poorest in the parish. Only three male burials of the right name are indexed. Thomas Wells, 'a poore man that died in Hornsey parish' on 19 Feb 1670[-1], Thomas, son of John Wells, on 2 Aug 1678, and on 23 March 1703[-4] Thomas Wells, *Chandler*, 'and had a certificate etc. from Justice Clarke', i.e. that he also had been buried in wool.

Several readers have been convinced by this, including my joint author Michael Dickinson, so the Norweb specimen will be illustrated under STOKE NEWINGTON in *Norweb Tokens Part VIII*. What does it add to the history of Stoke Newington? Well, it shows that here, as throughout England, Wales and Ireland, there was a desperate need for small change in a growing economy. An agent of the moneyers in the Tower of London some five miles down the road, or a moneyer himself, must have persuaded Thomas Wells that he could solve a problem by commissioning a pair of dies bearing his own name, and spending, say, as little as one pound in order to receive perhaps two pounds worth of farthings, which can be assumed to have been the denomination of his tokens.

One may suspect that he would have profited by supplying gin not only to local maid-servants and the 'lower class of women' but also to northbound travellers before they faced the perils of Stamford Hill, 'often frequented by Highwaymen' (Ogilby, p. 10). A specialisation in distilling appears from the apprenticeship of Thomas, son of Thomas Wells of Stoke Newington, yeoman, to an Apothecary on 3 Dec 1661 (Wallis). Indeed, the timing suggests that the token-issuer might have been, not the father, but the son just out of his apprenticeship.

References may be found in *Token Corresponding Society Bulletin* 9(3), June 2008, pp. 88-91, of which a photocopy has been deposited in the Hackney Archives local studies library at 915 P.

Robert H. Thompson

Forthcoming events

The London Maze

Saturday 4 October 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Guildhall Art Gallery

The London Maze is a free local history fair devoted to London and its past. It is organised by the Department of Libraries, Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery of the City of London and takes place in Guildhall Art Gallery and the Guildhall complex on Saturday 4 October. There will be dozens of stalls from libraries, archives (including Hackney Archives), museums and local history societies, specialist talks, guided walks and a wide range of activities.

Community History Day - are you part of Hackney's history?

Saturday 25 October, 11am - 4pm, Hackney Archives

Come along to find out more about Hackney's past, and how you can contribute to the history recorded in Hackney's archives.

If you have photographs or documents which we might be interested in, please bring them along and talk to staff at the Archives. If you don't want to part with your photos and personal papers, we can always scan them. We are particularly interested in the memories of those from the Windrush generation.

There will be a range of activities for all the family including tours around the Archives strongroom, demonstrations from our conservator showing how old documents are preserved, history trails for children and displays from our collections.

For further information please contact the Archives.

The LAMAS Conference – London Recorded by word, map and camera

Saturday 15 November 10a.m. – 5 p.m., Barbican

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society's annual conference is always unmissable, and this year the theme is recording London – Prof. Caroline Barron on 'London from Fitzstephen to Stow', Colin Thom of English Heritage on the Survey of London

1894-2008, Dr Cathy Ross of the Museum of London on the 'forgotten' survey Life and Labour in the 1930s, and Stefan Dickers of the Bishopsgate Institute on the LAMAS slide collection. The conference takes place at the City of London School for girls in the Barbican. Tickets (£10 for non-members, to include afternoon tea) via annhignell@waitrose.com or www.lamas.org.uk.

LAMAS lectures

Lectures are held monthly on Thursdays in the Terrace Room at the Museum of London, 150 London Wall, beginning at 6.30 p.m. (refreshments from 6 p.m.) Forthcoming dates include **6 November** (Nigel Jeffries, ceramic specialist, on the archaeology of 19th century houses). **4 December** (Sophie Jackson of MoLAS on new discoveries inter alia from the Temple of Mithras) and **8 January** (Pam Willis, curator of the Museum of the Order of St John, on Hospitallers and Templars in Greater London and beyond). Visitors are welcome, especially from affiliated societies such as the Friends.

The Hackney Terrier is the newsletter of the Friends of Hackney Archives. News and draft material can be sent to Sally England,

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archives@hackney.gov.uk**

The Friends of Hackney Archives are an independent charity (no. 1074493) dedicated to supporting Hackney's archives and promoting local history. Membership is £10 per calendar Year (£20 overseas) and is open to all.