

The Hackney Terrier

The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter

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Spring 2013

AGM Announcement

The 2013 AGM of The Friends of Hackney Archives will be held on Thursday 27th June, starting at 6.30pm, at the Hackney Archives, in the meeting room adjacent to the archives themselves.

We are very pleased that David Mander OBE has agreed to speak on the history of the Hackney Archives Department, and also on future developments in the world of archives.

We do hope you will be able to attend.

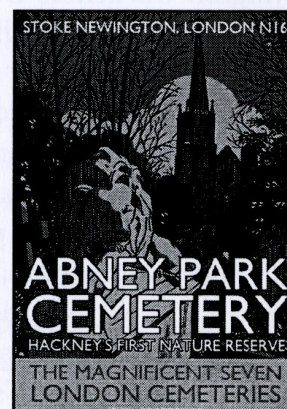
The Friends Committee

We are looking for new members to join The Friends of Hackney Archives Committee, and in particular to appoint a new Treasurer. If you feel you might be interested in joining the Committee please do contact the Chair, Robert Whytehead: robertwhytehead@msn.com 07751-654956.

Help Abney Park!

The Friends aren't the only Hackney Heritage organisation seeking your help. Abney Park Trust also needs you! The Trust is looking for volunteers and trustees, particularly with skills and experience in: journalism & PR, mapping, archives and file management, IT, accountancy, legal matters, office and HR

admin, strategy, fundraising, wildlife management and design. But we're happy to hear from anyone interested in getting involved in this amazing cemetery and nature reserve whatever your skills and experience may be. Email abneyparkcemetery@gmail.com or call Kirsten on 0755 3092688 for more info.



New Accessions

The first few months of 2013 have brought several interesting accessions to the Archives.

The Hackney Allotment Society has kindly made a double donation. The society, founded in 1979, has deposited its own early archives with us, which date from about 1980 to about 2000. These include minutes, newsletters and correspondence about the allotment sites, and should be a useful record of an activity which has become increasingly popular in Hackney in recent years.

In addition to its own records, the Society has also given us those of the Stoke Newington Gardeners Guild, which they received in 1993 when the Guild closed. Going by the rather nice cover for the menu of the dinner in 1968, which was to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the Guild, it must have been formed in 1947. However, if there is anyone out there who knows more about the foundation of the Stoke Newington Gardeners Guild, I'd be very pleased to hear from you.

We are also part way through receiving the records of E. Reed & Sons. This family business started up in Hackney in the 1860s, and was based for many years on Bentham Road. They were originally blacksmiths, but during the First World War they started specialising in surgical appliances, which ended up being the firm's main work until its closure in 2008. Some appliances had to be

made to measure, and the records we have received so far include paper "templates" taken from hospital patients for obtaining the size and dimensions for splints and support frames. I may have more to report on this fascinating collection in the next Terrier!

Siân Mogridge, Archivist



Hackney Remembers

As part of our outreach activities, Hackney Archives is working on a project to commemorate the centenary of World War One. Led by the Fifth Word Theatre Company and in partnership with Hackney Museum and the Jewish Military Museum, the project aims to research the lives of Hackney families left behind and Hackney soldiers who served, with an emphasis on members of the Jewish population in Britain who went to war.

The project outcomes include a teaching resource, sessions in two local schools and an exhibition which will open in the Platform area of Hackney Museum in July.

The Archives element of the project includes supporting volunteers to do research into Hackney before and during the First World War. In order to introduce the volunteers to the project and the resources we hold at the Archives, as well as how to do the research, we held a volunteer training day in conjunction with Hackney Museum on

25 February. Since then, a group of four volunteers have been regularly visiting the Archives to undertake research. They have been looking through archive collections, the local studies library and the image collection, as well as going through local

newspapers of the period.

Some fascinating details have emerged that give a flavour of what Hackney was like at the time, such as advertisements for performances at the Hackney

Empire and the type of films showing at local cinemas – most of which no longer exist.

The volunteers' research should be completed by the end of the month, with the school visits taking place in May and June. However, it is hoped that the research undertaken by the volunteers will also contribute to other projects to commemorate this centenary that are still being planned for the next few years.

Elizabeth Green,



A WW1 tank in Stoke Newington Church St, encouraging people to join up, c1916

Dalston Square now open!

We are delighted to announce that the move of Hackney Archives from De Beauvoir Road to Dalston was completed in January 2013. After a slightly more extended planning period than anticipated, we were pleased and relieved when everything progressed smoothly: the checking process is still ongoing, but so far the collections have all been accounted for in their new locations.

This move begins a new phase in the history of the Archives service in Hackney, and of the Borough's libraries. Hackney's Archives service was created in 1965 with the formation of the London Borough of Hackney. Each of the three old metropolitan boroughs of Hackney, Stoke Newington and Shoreditch had their own local history collections, which from 1965 onwards were amalgamated into one borough-wide collection.

The amalgamated service moved into the new Rose Lipman Library and Community Centre when it opened on 12 June 1975. "...The main lending library with 17,000 books is on the ground floor... The children's library with 8,000 books is on the first floor... the exhibition lobby leads to a reference room and a large archives and records store," boasted the official programme.

The Rose Lipman Library closed some years ago, but the Archives remained until the opportunity arose for the service to become part of Dalston's new library building. The new Dalston CLR James Library is the latest incarnation of a local service that has been in existence for a hundred years, one whose history has reflected national events as well as political campaigns and struggles within the borough and wider society.

The first Dalston Public Library, on the corner of Forest Road and Woodland Street, was opened by the Mayor of Hackney on 26 October 1912. The cost of the library, £5,280, was provided by

Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, and the site was a gift of the Rhodes family, large local landowners.

On 4 January 1945 the library received a direct hit from German rocket bombs (V2s). Eighteen people were killed, including two members of staff and a number of children. The building was completely destroyed and out of the 20,000 books thought to be in the building, only 12 were salvaged. Temporary accommodation was found and only three months after the incident, books were being issued from a shop at 82 Dalston Lane.

The Borough Council was keen to find a replacement building for the library as soon as possible. However, after the war finances were tight and it was 14 years before the new two-storey library on Dalston Lane was opened.

As part of the Council's anti-racist strategy, a decision was made in early 1985 to rename the Dalston Branch Library after Cyril Lionel Robert (CLR) James. The Council minutes of 27 February 1985 report: "We are delighted that CLR James, the internationally famous historian, writer, philosopher, socialist, Pan-Africanist and cricket enthusiast has honoured us by agreeing to attend the ceremony and formally open the re-named



A historic move. From this...

Library.” The decision reflected feedback from the local community as well as a formal request from the Hackney Council for Racial Equality. The re-naming ceremony formed part of a week of related activities taking place at the end of March 1985, to celebrate the completion of anti-racist year. During the same year, the Council adopted an Anti-Apartheid Declaration to support the struggle of Black South Africans against the racist regime.

CLR James’ name was preserved when the new library and archives building was opened on Dalston Square in the spring of 2012, just along from the old library. A grand opening ceremony featured author Nick Hornby and local poet and comedian John Hegley.

The Archive was able to open its new search room containing maps, an image database, microfilmed materials and part of the local studies library, but as you know we still had to wait for work on our strong rooms to be completed before we could move the main collections.

Before we started the move, we’d all assumed that something was bound to go wrong at some point, and it was rather a surprise to get to the end and find that nothing had happened that we hadn’t been able to work around. None of us had carried out a move on this scale before. We moved 1.5 kilometres of records, consisting of over 13,500 individual boxes or volumes for the archives and around 16,000 local studies library items.

Our main concern (apart from ensuring that the documents weren’t damaged) was to make sure everything ended up on the right shelves. We have 2,546 shelves in our new strong rooms, which means that mis-shelving an item is no laughing matter – it could literally be years before we found it again. To make matters more complicated we weren’t moving material directly from one shelf at Rose Lipman to one shelf at Dalston. In our new strong rooms we’ve arranged the archive material by size to make the best possible use of the space, and this meant that when we were



... to this... ©Ed Lyon

packing material at the Rose Lipman end we found ourselves dashing about between different shelves, picking up one volume here, a couple there, and so on. Fortunately we had great removal people with a large store of patience. The removal company we used were JFM, who have a lot of past experience in moving archives. Nothing would have gone as well as it did without their help.

Surprisingly, we found that the easiest things to get mixed up were the boxes. In our new strong rooms we fit six of our standard archival-quality boxes per shelf, and we assumed that this would be straightforward compared with the shelves of volumes, which might contain anything from five volumes to 60, depending on the size of the books. The wire cages used for moving the archives could fit thirty boxes, or five shelves-worth, at a time. However, the important thing to remember was that the 30 boxes had to be put in the cage in reverse order at Rose Lipman, so that they could be taken out in the correct order at Dalston.

This might not seem too complicated, but when you’re spending hours at a time huddled over a clip-board directing removal people, it’s amazing how easy it is to lose track of where you are in your current batch of 30 boxes. The majority of items that have ended up on the wrong shelf have been boxes – although they’ve mostly ended up >>

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within five shelves of where they ought to have been, so not too difficult to track down.

The volumes may have been less mixed-up, but they were slower to move. They needed more careful handling and more bubble-wrap. It's the volumes that have benefited the most from the move, though. At Rose Lipman we did not have many deep shelves, which meant that a number of the larger volumes actually over-hung the shelves they were sitting on, which was not ideal.

At Dalston we specifically requested a greater variety of shelf-sizes. We also had the shelving arranged so that large, heavy volumes could be laid flat (better for the spine) rather than having to stand upright. Our large plans also have their own specially designed storage. We have a number of plan rolls between two and three metres in length, which obviously don't fit on normal-sized shelving.

Clearing the ramp of snow at Rose Lipman



At Rose Lipman they had to be stored on the tops of the shelves, but at Dalston we now have a number of three and four metre long shelves, which provide a much better home.

The local studies library stock was transferred last of all, by which time we had met, resolved and learned from a number of logistical puzzles, which meant that this final section of the move went much more quickly and smoothly than anticipated.

Apart from the snow... And the helicopter crash...

Of course, the snow had to arrive when we were finally wheeling the full cages out of the Rose Lipman building, up the steep ramp, and into the removal van. Bubble wrap protected the items from the weather, but the ramp soon became an icy hazard which the guys from JFM (fortified by copious hot drinks) had to keep clearing to ensure that they didn't slip while handling a heavy cage, which could roll back onto them.

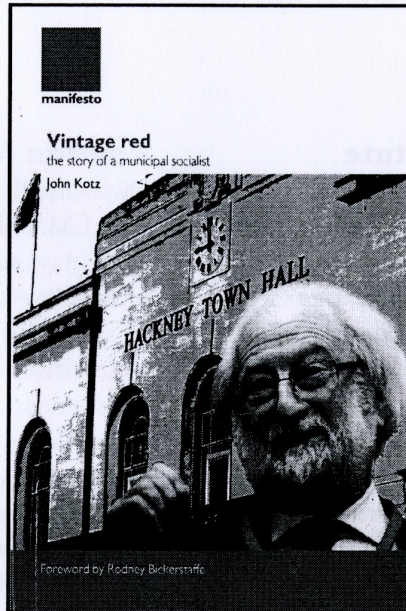
The tragic helicopter crash in Vauxhall occurred extremely close to JFM's base in Nine Elms, and was in fact witnessed by the team on their way to Hackney. The subsequent closure of adjacent streets for several days meant that getting the removal van to us was often extremely delayed or even impossible, with traffic jams caused by the bad weather not helping the situation. But JFM came through superbly, with the team using public transport to reach us and then packing up as many cages as possible ready to be moved once the van could get to Hackney. Luckily we were already well ahead of schedule by then.

Having completed the move we've been working our way through the checking, ensuring each item is in the right place, and noting down the correct location of anything that's got slightly out of order. We're about two thirds of the way through this, but the main job is finally done – the archives and local studies library are now all here in our strong rooms at Dalston CLR James Library.

Sally England, Local Studies Librarian

Additions to the Local Studies Library

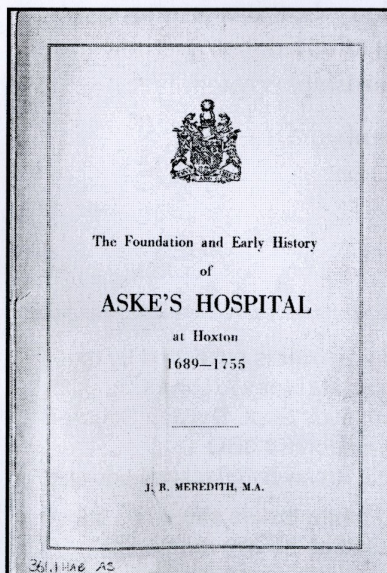
Many thanks to John Paton of the Friends who has donated a copy of *Vintage Red: the Story of a Municipal Socialist* by his friend John Kotz, who served on Hackney Council from the 1950s and was leader between 1981 and 1982. As well as a fascinating description of local government and politics in Hackney over some 40 years, John Kotz's story also describes a childhood spent in a close-knit 1930s Jewish community, which was at the time one of the largest in the world.
(shelved at 920 KOT)



places for poor members of the Haberdashers' Company. Its associated school offered education for sons of 20 freemen and was the predecessor of today's Haberdasher Aske's Federation of Academies.
(shelved at 361.1 HAB)

Andrew Ward of the Friends, who is a retired member of Hackney's library staff and a trolleybus enthusiast, has remembered his former colleagues and donated a copy of the

Catherine Phillpotts, Director of Library Services at London Metropolitan University, has donated a copy of JR Meredith's 1964 MA



thesis on the foundation and early history of Aske's Hospital in Hoxton, founded under the terms of City merchant and businessman Robert Aske's 1688 will to provide 20

London Trolleybus Preservation Society's book London Trolleybus Wiring: north east & east. As well as copious information about wiring systems, the publication contains lots of fascinating photographs of the trolleybuses and the routes they served between 1931 and 1962.
(shelved at 335.1)

Sally
England,
Local Studies
Librarian



Friends of The Friends

Local events that might be of interest to The Friends of Hackney Archives

The Bishopsgate Institute

www.bishopsgate.org.uk

Bishopsgate Institute 230 Bishopsgate, EC2M 4QH

Love London? There's a course at Bishopsgate Institute just for you. Our London interest courses give an enticing insight into London's many chapters. Discover the impact of Dickens, Pepys and Chaucer on the city, how Modernism and Postmodernism shaped the buildings around us, and how London has inspired artists and art movements. Accompany us on one of our walking tours exploring gardens in London from hidden spaces to Royal Parks or venture off the beaten track and through the quiet backstreets of Islington. You can also travel along some of the newer stations that have helped to link up the New Overground. These are just some of the subjects looked at in our courses.

Hackney Museum

www.hackney.gov.uk/cm-museum.htm

12 February-25 May 2013

Creative journeys: Responses to mental health in Hackney, past and present

13 February-18 May 2013

Resident ghosts: Hackney's earliest photographic portraits

Thirteen years ago, over 2,000 glass plates were found in a cellar in the old Parochial School in Wilton Way. They turned out to belong to a Victorian photographer called Arthur Eason who had a studio in Dalston Lane. During the 1880s and 90s his studio attracted a fascinating mix of East Londoners, from music hall performers to members of the Salvation Army.

London Metropolitan Archives

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

The LMA offers a range of walks, tours, and study days such as this guided walk, of particular local interest:

Weds 12 June 11am-1pm

Stoke Newington

This guided walk will explore the district's early history, its development as a Victorian suburb and its 20th Century status as a hotbed of radicalism. Led by City Highlights. Meet at Stoke Newington Railway Station, £8. Booking essential. Tel: 020 7332 3851

Exhibitions

Ends 16 May 2013

Frozen London: 1683-1895

This exhibition will use personal accounts and a wide selection of images to explore the story of a frozen London – how it was improved by the excitements it afforded, but also how it was affected by the hardships created. Free.

28 May-16 September 2013

Shakespeare and London

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