

The Hackney Terrier

The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter

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Spring 2015

Update on the Heritage Services

Dear Friends,

As you are aware, Heritage Services has been restructured due to the financial constraints caused by the austerity policy of the current Government (2010-2015). Heritage Services consists of three teams: Hackney Archives, Hackney Museum and Heritage Education.

Hackney Museum had four members of staff; this has been reduced to 3.5 with the loss of one managerial position and the creation of a part-time junior Heritage Assistant. Interviews for this new post are due to take place in May. Emma Winch, who has been Schools and Families Officer at the Museum for almost 10 years, is now the Heritage Learning Manager. This new post will span both the Museum and Archives and deliver learning and engagement for all ages, with the support of the wider team.

Hackney Archives team has been reduced from 4.2 staff to 3.5. Sian Mogridge (previously Archivist) is the now the full time Senior Archives Officer; Sally England (previously Local Studies Librarian) is now part-time Senior Archives Officer; and Elizabeth Green (previously Access and

Outreach Officer) is now Archives & Local Studies Assistant working Tuesday to Saturday. The Principal Archivist post (vacated by Libby in January) is now called Archives Manager and is currently being advertised for recruitment. Ed Lyon, who was the part-time Archives Customer Service Assistant, started a job at UCL in January (his post was deleted). Our opening hours were reduced by 4 hours and we are no longer open on Fridays. We are currently trialling a late opening on a Thursday evening (10am to 7:30pm) and a half day on Saturday (12:30 to 5pm).

To ensure that user experience does not suffer, the team is currently working on improving our published information, specifically on the website and search-room signage. This is to help users better prepare for their visit, to ensure they can order the items in advance and are able to find collections quickly.

Those of you who have visited us recently will have noticed a change in the search-room. Additional shelving for the local studies collection means that more information can be made available on open access. A new map cabinet has

Events

FoHA AGM and Talk Thursday 25th June:

5.30pm Refreshments

6.00pm AGM

6.30pm Talk by local author Lee Jackson on "Dirty Old London"

(Latest work: *Dirty Old London, the Victorian Fight Against Filth*, Yale, 2014)

Talk 7th October 6.30pm:

Sarah Beeson MBE 'The New Arrival: memories of nursing in 1970s Hackney'.

Sarah's book entitled *The New Arrival*, Harper Collins, 2014, tells the story of her training at Hackney Hospital.

Refreshments will be served from 6.00pm.

Members and non-members are most welcome at both these events. If you are intending to attend either of them could you please let Hackney Archives know (by email or 'phone) so that we have an idea of numbers.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Robert Whytehead, Chair Friends of Hackney Archives

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been purchased to better store a new and more accessible arrangement for OS maps. Two new microfilms reader/printers are awaiting installation by the Council's IT team. The electoral registers will be brought back from the store to be available in the search-room.

The Archives team are keen to continue to improve customer experience and Hackney Archives welcomes

feedback from users to support our work. If you are interested in supporting schemes to improve the searchability and indexing of collections, please contact the team about volunteer opportunities and forthcoming projects.

Tahlia Coombs
Heritage Manager

Hackney at War



Whilst researching a temporary exhibition at Hackney Museum last year to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, we came across Hackney Archives' collection of recruiting posters.

Produced by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee from Britain's entry in the war on 4th August 1914 until January 1916 when the Military Services Act was passed, this almost complete collection of 165 posters provides an incredible record of the war. Working together, Hackney Museum and Hackney Archives are developing an exhibition (Feb – Jun 2016) and range of opportunities to engage local people with the collections and this part of Hackney's history.

Alongside the exhibition at Hackney Museum which will focus on recruitment and conscription, we are working with the Peace Pledge Union to develop an exhibition to go on display at Hackney Archives about conscientious objectors.

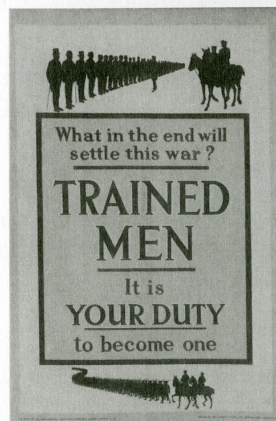
Volunteer support is a key part of this so we have recruited a number of volunteers to research the subject and to advise on how best to reach different parts of the community. We hope to create a regular blog to share some of the findings.

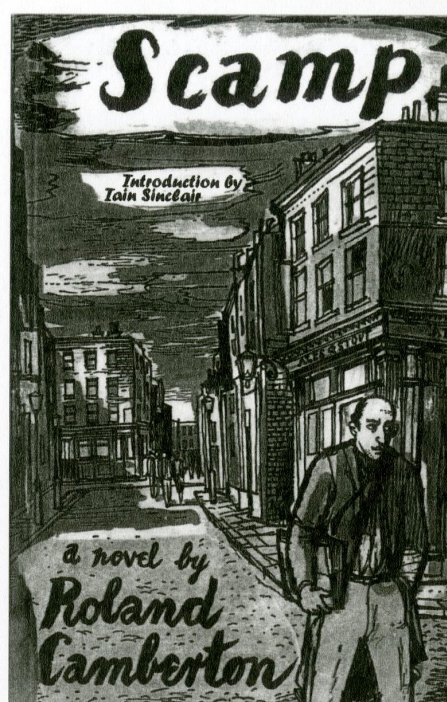
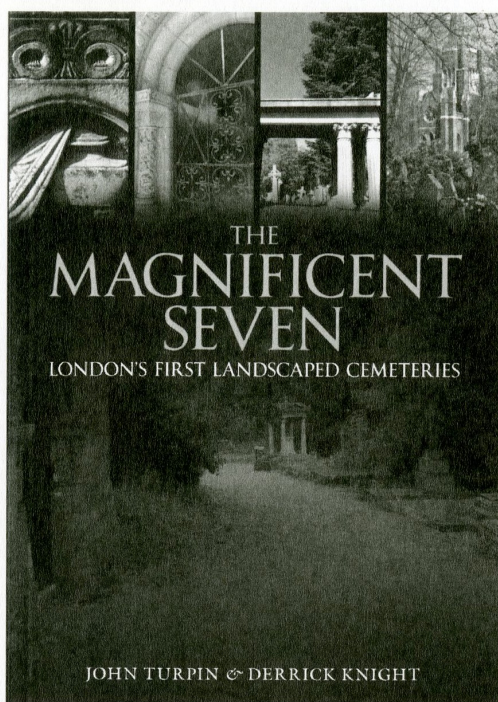
We are also in the process of applying to Arts Council England to secure funds to create an artist-in-residence programme to work closely with local schools, families and community groups to interpret the collections in new ways and show their relevance to people who live in the borough today.

Through the exhibitions, learning and engagement opportunities and by working with local people and artists, we hope to explore the impact of the First World War on what is today the London Borough of Hackney and the effects it had on communities who may have roots elsewhere but have since made the borough their home.

Would you like to get involved either as a researcher or advisor? Please contact Niti Acharya, Hackney Museum Manager, for role descriptions and application forms Niti.Acharya@hackney.gov.uk.

Niti Acharya





New Additions to the Local Studies Library

Over 50 new books have recently been added to the Local Studies Library

Most relate to the collections themselves so cover a very broad spectrum of topics, though some are specifically to help the Archives team with their work, such as 'Cataloguing sheet maps' and 'Archiving website: a practical guide'.

Not all of the books are factual. The work of contemporary local authors is also represented, for example 'I am China' by Mare Street based novelist Xiaolu Guo, and I.R. Charles' 'Under a Hackney Sky', as well as those by authors now deceased such as 'Scamp' and 'Rain on pavements' by the mysterious Roland Camberton, the pseudonym of former Hackney Downs School pupil Harry Cohen.

Non-fictional stories are told in 'Voices from the workhouse' and 'Untold histories: Black people in England and Wales during the period of the slave trade', and there's lots of information about successful black and ethnic minority businesses in 'Black enterprise in Britain' and 'How they made a million: the Dyke & Dryden story'.

To tie in with marking the First World War centenary there's 'London 1914-17: the Zeppelin menace' which tells

the story of air-raids a century ago, including the very first bomb to hit London, which fell in Stoke Newington.

There are lots of books about transport, including a guide to exploring the Regent's Canal, a survey of north east London trolleybuses, and a history of the North London Railway. Transport crosses with archaeology in a report of the finds uncovered during the redevelopment of the East London Line, and there's another archaeological report on the site of Holywell Priory in Hoxton. More recent vanished buildings are covered in 'London's lost power stations and gasworks', with more architecture featured in 'London's country house', 'London's churches are fighting back' and 'The London square: gardens in the midst of town', all of which include Hackney locations.

Although it is of course a reprint rather than an original copy, the oldest new book is 'The wise-woman of Hogsdon', ie Hoxton, by playwright Thomas Heywood, first published in 1638, plus there's information about Shoreditch's important role in the development of English theatre in 'Shakespeare's London theatreland' and 'English professional theatre 1530-1660'.

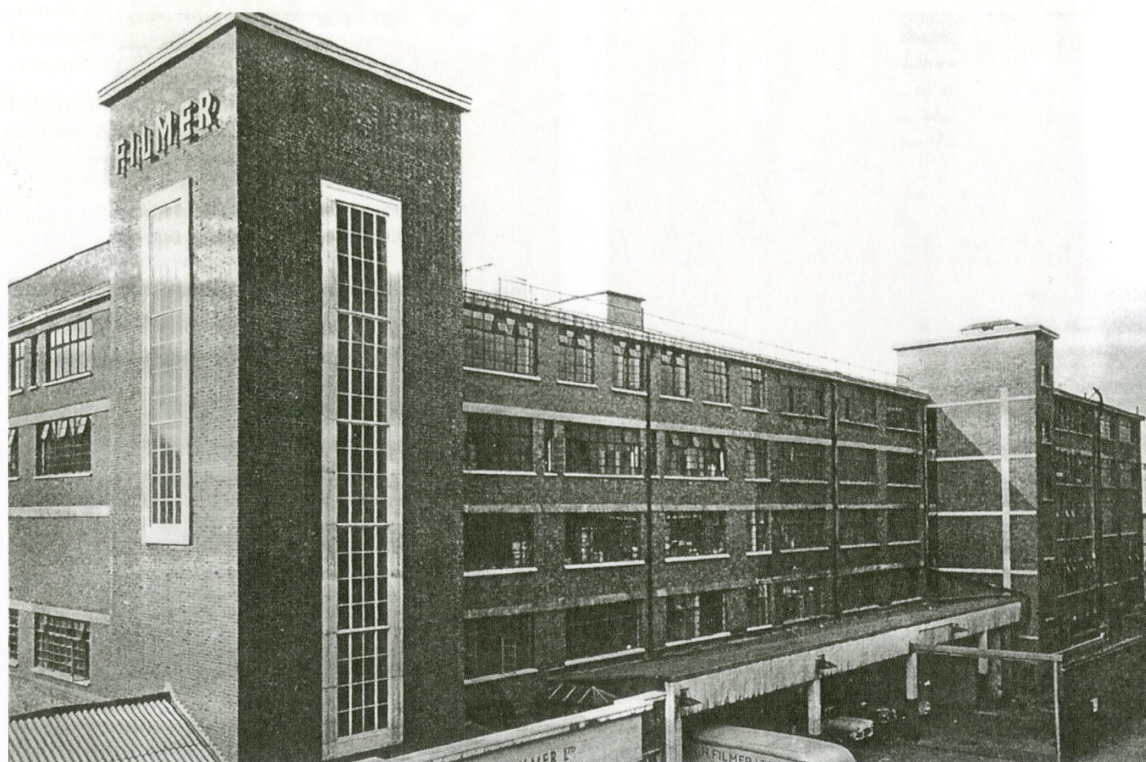
Sally England

London Boroughs 50th Anniversary

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Greater London, London Councils have put together a website, including interactive maps and archive images: <http://boroughs50.londoncouncils.gov.uk/>

Whilst Hackney Museum is showing an exhibition: **Hackney@50 – The People's Choice** until 29th August.

A 1950's Factory: Filmer's Wenlock Road London N1



In the summer of 1950 I commenced work as a Management Trainee in a London cardboard box and paper bag manufacturer. My proposed schedule was that for the first two years, prior to my National Service I would work in every department in the factory and thus become familiar with every process, machine and chain of command on the factory floor.

The premises were situated between Islington and Bishopsgate in Central London, and adjacent to the Regents Canal. The main building was of a 'modern' layout having been purpose built in the mid 1930's. It comprised four floors of brick and reinforced concrete construction and employed approximately 300 people in the factory and an additional 50 in the various offices. It also comprised two wharves and a large single storey raw material warehouse. Of the factory staff 80% were females aged between 15 to 25 and known as "our girls" plus the older foreladies and chargehands. The male staff ranged from 15 to 65 and included an overall Works Foreman plus section foreman. The factory hours were 7.55am to 5.55pm with one hour for lunch plus two, 15 minute, canteen breaks. In addition to the canteen was a medical centre and a large social club.

Nearly all the girls lived locally and were able to walk to work or else use the buses, tubes or even the remaining tram services. You would be penalised for being late and the 7.55am start meant you should be at your machine and running by 8.00.

Raw materials *i.e.* card and paper, wound into large reels would arrive by lorry daily.

Overhead cranes would lift these reels into the warehouse, which adjoined the three vast laminating machines that glued together 2, 3 or 4 plies to produce cardboard sheets. This was a very noisy and dangerous place to work with glue and paper all around and staffed by experienced male operators. This was normal for all cardboard plants in an industry that dated back to early Victorian days. Not all our cardboard was laminated as we imported strawboard sheets from Holland which were offloaded into barges in the Pool of London and then towed by horses to either of our wharves before being offloaded by hoist and manhandled onto pallets and into the factory.

All the cardboard was then transported by a two-ton lift right to the top (fourth) floor of the main building where the printing, creasing and slotting operations would take place and it was on this floor that you knew you were in a 'real' factory!

You were first struck by the overpowering fumes of the solvent based flexographic printing inks which caught the back of your throat. The next sensation to hit you was the incredible mix of noises from the clatter clatter of the ancient printing presses to the roaring of the high speed creasing machines followed by the thump thump of the slotting machines and guillotines, whilst all around you the air was full of fine dust.



The next sensation would be the scene before your eyes as virtually every machine received its power from a forest of belts running from overhead power shafts that were driven by two vast humming electric motors. The belts themselves made a continual click clack noise as their joints passed around the pulleys. This was a scene reminiscent of the 'satanic' linen mills of the north. One's first impression therefore was how anyone could work in these conditions but this was general life on a factory floor at those times and you quickly adapted, especially having to shout to be heard above the din.

Some of the larger printers dated from the turn of the century and the girls that operated these machines were mounted on platforms at the top just below the ceiling. Virtually none of the rest of the machines were post war as I am talking about 1950 and everyone was surviving on machinery from the 1920's/ 1930's which had run throughout the war on Government contracts.

The next stage of the manufacturing process would be the corner stitching, folding and finally packaging all of which was carried out on the floor (3) below. The work would arrive on pallets via a one ton lift and it was at this stage you entered what was known as and looked like bedlam. This was caused by some 60 upright stitching (stapling) machines each with its own electric motor and straddling six conveyor belts leading to pressing rollers and then benches where girls wrapped the folded boxes and lids.

Every one of the stitching machines was operated by one of 'our girls' and the noise was almost indescribable. The actual machines sounded exactly the same as a machine gun and indeed were made by the same people *i.e.* Vickers Armstrong. The finished boxes were flung onto the conveyors, where they piled up before being retrieved by the pressers and packers. Adding to the noise the girls would be screaming to each other in conversation all day including when the Tannoy sparked into life with the daily 'Music While You Work'. At this point I should add that these girls,

like all the factory staff, were on piece-work so speed was of the essence.

The floor below (2) was a haven of peace by comparison as it housed racks and racks of sound-deadening finished stocks. Below this floor was the first floor and this comprised the offices, two canteens and medical centre etc.

Finally at ground level we had the Despatch Department, which featured loading bays for our three Dennis lorries plus two Scammell Mechanical Horses with trailers and also bays for the collecting vehicles from the railways for nationwide delivery. Also at ground level we had a large engineering workshop and the detached Social Club.

Our close neighbours were an original iron foundry, a brewery, the C&A Modes clothing factory and streets of Victorian 'back to back' houses and two storey tenements.

At every lunchtime and in the evening the road outside resembled a Lowry painting. We also had to contend with London fogs and then the deadly 'smogs' from thousands of open coal fires and factory chimneys and this in the centre of London. We were by no means a backward factory and utilised battery powered pallet trucks, gas-engined fork lifts and the whole factory was piped for Desoutter compressed air for power tools and cleaning.

We had a very happy factory and were proud to employ families of two and even three generations.

Gradually though things changed and by 1964 the company, after 100 years, was no more and nowadays the building originally known as Filmers and today Royles, has been transformed into luxury canal-side flats.

Factories like this one are no more but many thousands alive today still remember such places and I am glad to have also been able to have that experience.

Joe Branson, Wimborne Dorset, March 2015

Strike a Pose



Last year, Hackney Archives received a collection of 40,000 negatives from R.A. Gibson's photographic studio in Clapton (with support from the FOHA), which inspired Hackney Museum's 2014 exhibition: Strike A Pose: Portraits from a Hackney Studio.

The exhibition was designed to allow visitors a snapshot of the collection with around 100 images on display and by focusing on the 1970s, it was also an opportunity to explore the presence of people of African descent in the borough during Black History Season in October.

To accompany the exhibition our learning team developed free teacher-training events, school workshops and learning resources. Designed to engage and inspire teachers and children, the programme explored how Hackney has been shaped by the communities that have settled in the area, with the aim of raising aspirations and encouraging children to feel proud of their families' contribution to Hackney.

Working with a team of 10 teachers from Hackney primary and special needs schools, we created workshops that were attended by over 1200 children aged 5–11. Having some of Hackney's most creative teachers on board to help us to shape age-appropriate resources, we were able to develop a teachers' pack that provided teachers with the background information they needed to confidently teach about the issues raised by the exhibition: migration, racism and a glimpse into the social history of Hackney.

The creative-lesson plans and innovative ideas presented in the pack were also used by teachers in a range of settings outside of the facilitated workshops at the Museum. Primary school teachers planned assemblies and lessons linked to the exhibition, ESOL tutors developed their own Strike-a-Pose book which they presented to the Museum, and teaching assistants from The Garden (a local special needs school) used the images to inspire Black History Season celebrations and an exhibition which involved the whole school.

Working closely with teachers meant we have been able to inspire future generations to explore the diverse experiences of Hackney's communities using this fantastic new collection at Hackney Archives.

To see our learning resources online: <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/museum-teaching-resources.htm>

The legacy of the exhibition continues. A section of it is on display at the Southbank Centre as a part of their much larger 'Changing Britain' exhibition until early September and another part of the exhibition is on display at Homerton Hospital to the end of August.

Emma Winch



Through the Door

Through the Door was a collaborative project between Archives for London (<http://www.archivesforlondon.org/>) and Poet in the City (<http://www.poetinthe.city.co.uk/>) which aimed to encourage a connection between poets and archives repositories in London and encourage the creation of new poetry inspired by local archives collections.

Six leading poets were commissioned to undertake a residency at various London archives and then produce poetry which has been published in the booklet, "Through the Door – New Poetry from London's Archives".

Poet Simon Jenner spent time at Hackney Archives. He used, as his inspiration, a series of minute books produced by an organisation known as the Refuge for the Destitute. This was set up in the early 1800s to aid men and women recently released from prison, providing support and rehabilitation with the aim of stopping re-offending.

The minute books were the records of the committee that ran the Refuge. These include personal details about people who asked to be admitted. The clerk of the Refuge would take down the story of individuals who were applying to be admitted. Not everyone was allowed in.

It was really intriguing to see someone approaching our records from a different angle. We are more used to people using a collection like this for the information it provides – about what sort of people were admitted, what sort of crimes they had committed and generally as a source for social history of the time. I think in his poetry Simon was able to imagine what the lives of these women were like. He also seemed to pick up on the rhythm of the official language that is used in the minute books.

As part of the project an event was held at the Archives on 17 September where archives staff talked about the records and Simon read his poetry and a session was held for students from a local school, where the students were encouraged to write their own poems, inspired by the stories of the young women admitted to the Refuge. A copy of the booklet is available in the Local Studies Library.

Elizabeth Green

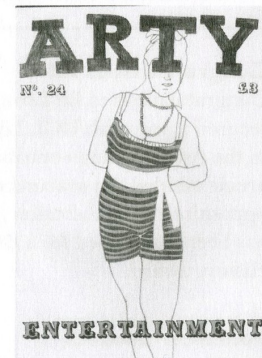


Hackney Archives hosted a fascinating exhibition spotlighting and celebrating independent publications created by artists and artists' collectives across the Borough. Sponsored by the Arts Council England, *Activating the Archive: an exhibition of Artists' Publishing in the Borough of Hackney* was curated by Banner Repeater, the artist-run reading room and arts space based on platform one at Hackney Downs and familiar to regular users of the station.

The exhibition aimed to connect previous and contemporary independent publishing and to introduce the idea of reading artists' writing to a much wider audience within the Hackney area. Visitors were welcome to handle the items and explore the ideas that the artists had been working with in creating their very individual publications. Some items are unique, some are part of small editions, all are connected in some way to living or working in Hackney.

The exhibition also aimed to show how archive collections are always changing, constantly being added to with material from today, not just consisting of dusty old documents from centuries ago, although they are important too! Some of the exhibits will be chosen for permanent preservation in the Local Studies Collection, as well as being added to Banner Repeater's own digital archive, so that in years to come future generations will be able to see how Hackney's artists of today interpreted the idea of what a publication can be.

Sally England



New Accessions

As usual we have had a number of new archives donated to us over the last few months. I've selected three to bring to your attention, but I hope they give you an idea of the variety of material we get given.

Photographs and papers of Dr Denis Gibbs

In the last Terrier I mentioned that we had surprisingly few photographs of Abney Park Cemetery. That is no longer the case! Dr. Gibbs was a keen photographer and in 1985 he had an exhibition at the Cemetery entitled "Angels, Urns and Obelisks". His wife, a member of the Friends, has kindly donated it to us. Dr. Gibbs photographed quite widely in Hackney and among the collection are also the photographs from an exhibition "Wildlife in a Hackney Garden" and a number of photos of East London pubs.

Regent's Canal through the Ages

This was a project run last year by Laburnum Boat Club (which is based on the Canal) and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. We have been donated a full digital copy of the project. This includes the exhibition panels and the school pack they created. It also includes the oral history interviews they took with people who were familiar with the canal in the past, and quite a number of photographs of the Regent's Canal, many taken from the water. I hope it will add to people's knowledge about



what was once one of the most important transport routes running through Hackney.

Rose's Lime Juice

This wonderful photograph was donated to us by a lady in Australia. It dates from around 1867 and shows a float for Rose's Lime Juice, which was presumably used for bulk deliveries to customers. The float and horses are probably standing outside Rose's shop or factory on 89 Worship Street.

Siân Mogridge

What's on

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mike Gray

It is with deep regret we have to note the death of Mike Gray, who was greatly involved in Hackney life, helping to save Chats Palace as a community centre, and most importantly ensured that Sutton House was opened to the public by the National Trust, an outstanding contribution to Hackney's heritage. Obituaries by Sylvia Steward and Laurie Elks can be found on the Guardian Other Lives webpages, and at <https://whatischatspalace.wordpress.com/stories/mike-gray-obituary>

Congratulations Ed

Congratulations to Ed Lyon, Archives Assistant, who has secured a post with UCL Libraries. He was of great help in the Archives; and contributed to Hackney History 18 an article entitled 'An avalanche of wrathful violence: physical opposition to the Salvation Army, 1881-1883' - which has been nominated for a British Association for Local History award.

Volunteer needed!

Hackney Archives is looking for a volunteer to help with a project to create a searchable index to two of our resources relating to the history of Shoreditch. There will be two parts to the project, one of which could be undertaken at home, both involving inputting information into Excel spreadsheets. If you have experience of using Excel, a keen interest in local history and an eye for detail, please get in touch for more information. Email archives@hackney.gov.uk

USEFUL LINKS:

VADS

VADS is the online resource for visual arts, with a huge number of images from a wide variety of institutions, and makes fascinating browsing.

Of particular local interest is the reference collection of the Cordwainers College, that had its origins in Bethnal Green in 1887 as the Leather Trades School, and as Cordwainers

Technical College moved to Mare Street in 1946. It is now incorporated into the London College of Fashion. The London College of Fashion itself grew out of the Shoreditch Institute Girls Trade School, founded 1906 by the LCC's ILEA, and the Trade School for Girls, Barrett Street W1, founded 1915. Fashion lovers will find much to delight, and amuse, them from the historic collections on display here. <http://www.vads.ac.uk/collections/index.html>

Go for a walk with a copper in London in 1897

From the Charles Booth

Online Archive: "The social

investigators accompanied police around their beats in London in order to update the existing street-level information for the Maps Descriptive of London Poverty 1898-1899.

The policemen were able to supply local knowledge of the area and inhabitants as well as probably

providing protection. The reports of the walks record vivid descriptions of the streets of London, inhabitants and often a description of the policemen."

These walks cover all areas of Hackney, with some curious insights from the police perspective:-

<http://booth.lse.ac.uk/static/b/districts.html>



Charles Booth
1840-1916

Hackney Roots Oral History Project

"Hackney Museum worked in partnership with UK Jewish Film's Hackney Roots project to increase access to a collection of oral histories about the experiences of Jewish people born in the 1920s and who lived in Hackney and the East End. Visit the website and listen to the extracts":- <http://ukjewishfilm.org/hackneyroots/ourhackney/oralhistory.php>

Pop to the shops: Shopkeepers' Stories

"The independent long-standing local shopkeepers of Hackney Central tell their stories about family business, immigration, community and changing times."
www.growsmall.co.uk

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Contributions to future issues should be sent to Sally England at the above address.