

The Hackney Terrier

The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter

111



Spring 2022

Dear Friends,

There have been a number of changes to the membership of the Friends' Committee in recent years, and we have just co-opted Sue Doe and Kate Starling. We therefore thought it an opportune moment to introduce the members of your Committee, with brief biographies set out below.

We are conscious that we have not been able to hold an AGM for two years now, at which to report the Friends' business and for members to ratify our Committee appointments, but hope that we may be able to do so later this year. If anyone has any questions about our activities please do email us at hackneyhistory@gmail.com.

Robert Whytehead

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Friends of Hackney Archives: the Committee

By what by-paths and indirect crooked ways...

Robert Whytehead, Chair FoHA, studied English History at university but moved sideways into archaeology, joining the Inner London Archaeological Unit in 1976, later part of the Museum of London. In 1991 he joined the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service of English Heritage, becoming Regional Archaeologist. He succeeded Isobel Watson as Chair of FoHA in 2012.

Kate Starling has recently joined the Committee. She has been a Hackney resident since 1982 and has been volunteering at the Archives since retiring from a long career at the Museum of London. She is currently helping Archive staff to add missing data and images onto the online catalogue, Soutron – a fascinating undertaking.

Justin More has lived in the Borough for fifty years and his family for more than a century before that. He has first degrees in Law from Bristol University and in History from the Open University and a Master's degree in Classical Civilisation from Birkbeck University of London. He is a Life Member of the Hackney Society and is Membership Secretary of the Friends.

Lucy Madison organises events for FoHA and is an unashamed London history geek. A former primary school teacher, she founded and now runs *Bring Your Baby Guided London Walks* and *Bring Your Baby Pub Quizzes*.

She is also one of the co-writers of *Women from Hackney's History* and edits her blog *Horrid Hackney*.

Sean Gubbins is FoHA's Treasurer. A Hackney resident since 1981, Sean had a career as an IT Project Manager and then a London secondary school history teacher. His passion is all things historical, particularly relating to Hackney. For the past 20 years, Sean has been researching, devising and leading a schedule of local history walks all over today's Hackney as walkhackney.co.uk.

Susan Doe is Hackney born and bred with ancestry in the area going back a few centuries. Recently semi-retired from a long career in knowledge and compliance in the legal profession. She qualified as a guide in the City and received the Freedom of the City in 2017.

Elaine Burrows has lived in Hackney for more than fifty years. It was this long connection and her former career as an archivist that prompted her to join the Friends. She was one of the people who made the original listings for what is now known as 'London's Screen Archives'.

Iain Bruce is the editor of *Hackney History* and *The Terrier*. His doctoral thesis (alas, never completed) was on the parish clergy in London after the Black Death of 1349. Much time was spent in the archives of Westminster Abbey, St Paul's and the Guildhall. He has now joined volunteers helping catalogue Hackney's archives. He taught in Oxfordshire and in Edmonton.

An Update from The Archives

Given the turbulent last couple of years, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the Archives might need a little time to dust ourselves off and regroup before launching into action again. However, we're pretty much as busy as we've ever been, both in terms of welcoming and supporting researchers and getting stuck into projects and collaborations.

Research and Enquiries: In terms of researchers, we're seeing more and more requests to view material, which is encouraging in a world of ubiquitous online access. Having said that, we will be building on our very successful 'Archives Basics' and 'Archives Live' digital programmes, both successfully piloted during 2021. 'Archives Basics' sessions were short online introductions to the Archives to help researchers understand what we hold and how to navigate our online catalogue. 'Archives Live' was configured as online talks and events, some with a creative aspect, where people whose area of expertise or life-experience intersects with our collections. They were given a platform to share with what proved last year to be a worldwide audience! We are poised to begin a new season of both sessions commencing April 2022.

Upcoming Projects: We are continuing with two projects. Newington Green Unitarian Church has deposited fifteen boxes, adding to the collection we acquired from them in 1986. The two collections will be collated. The second project continues cataloguing and conserving the An Viet Foundation Archives (see *Terrier* 110). This complements the plans for a new community centre for all Hackney East and South Asian Communities supported by Mayor Philip Glanville – who visited us to see the work in progress.

We are beginning three other projects. 'Future Hackney' is an organisation documenting social change in East London. They work at the intersection of social engagement and photography, co-authoring exciting public work with local communities. We will be collaborating them in March and April of this year with a focus on Ridley Road aiming to share heritage skills with the young people engaged in their wider project by taking them through the process of accessioning material into the archives by the National Archives.

In the north of the Borough, we are collaborating in a project celebrating the centenary of The Lea View House Estate, part of the first push by the L.C.C. to provide good-quality housing. The ground was broken in 1936 and the Estate was fully populated by late 1939. The face and faces of Lea View House have changed greatly over the years and the project proposes to tell a 'peoples' history' of the Estate through a series of workshops and mediations.

Another estate-related project is to help document the history of Daubeney Fields and surrounding estates. There is surprisingly little about this area's 20th century development in our collections, particularly in terms of visual material, and we are excited to learn more about its recent(ish) history from the residents.

Staff Changes: Last year's secondment of Tahlia Coombs



Angela Davis speaking at Hackney Town Hall, 1986 (HAD 15 2 52)



Unknown man: unknown Alsatian (HAD 15 2 13)
Can anyone place the man, dog or scene?

(Heritage Manager) to the Council's Culture team has meant reshuffling at the Archives. Elizabeth Green is acting as part-time Archives Officer, leading on a full audit of our collections and supporting the project with Newington Green Church. We have also welcomed back Lisa McDermott to cover part of Elizabeth's normal duties. She is vital in ensuring that remote and in-person enquiries are processed. Hannah Milton, Senior Archives Officer and part-time Archives Manager since late 2021, has been juggling her usual duties with writing policy documents and working on digital preservation as part of our move to accreditation. Oddly, while some of us would shudder at the thought of writing policies all day, Hannah is strangely enthusiastic about it all...which is a good

thing as there are a lot of them to write! Etienne has been dividing his time between being Archives Manager and acting Heritage Manager (part time) until Tahlia Coombs is returned to us.

So, all in all, a lively, and perhaps even exciting start to 2022.

Stocktake Update: Halfway through our stocktake, things are going relatively well. We have downloaded records from the online catalogue to compare them with what is actually on the shelves. We were never going to be able to check all 27,000 archive records during a two-week closure period. The idea, however, is to establish a system to allow us to

carry on checking once we re-open. We have also been checking the condition of the items to identify material that needs conservation work or re-packaging. The whole team has been involved, working around other urgent commitments, mostly working in pairs, one on a laptop adding data to a spreadsheet and the other physically handling the items. So far, we have checked almost five rows, making up 1739 records. Starting off with the actual object – document, volume, item in a box - rather than a description on a catalogue has given us an interesting perspective on what we hold such as the photographs opposite.

Elizabeth Green

The Hackney of History in Nine Weeks

For the first time in recent years, the Friends put on a History of Hackney course from pre-historic times to the present day. I suggested the project, inspired by a similar series of talks given by Hackney historian and community activist Mike Gray over twenty years ago in Sutton House.

Mike Gray, who died in 2015, had been a leading light in getting the National Trust to restore and open Sutton House to the public and to convert the old Homerton Library into Chat's Palace community arts centre. With his extensive knowledge of Hackney and its history, I convinced Mike to join me in another first: offering a regular schedule of Hackney history walks. Twenty-one years later, having researched and devised walks all over the borough, I felt I had enough material to put together a series of talks telling Hackney's history. I offered to devise the course for the Friends, suggesting an initial framework text and presentation for nine weekly talks.

Because of the prevailing COVID restrictions, the talks were given over Zoom, the use of which over fifteen months into the pandemic had become second nature to most people. Following an introductory talk in August, the one-hour talks began on Wednesday 13 October at 7 p.m.. There were four other speakers, all Friends. The chair, Robert Whytehead, as a retired professional archaeologist, was the ideal presenter for the first talk 'From Stone Axe to Ermine Street'. Calling upon her research into the Tudor women of Hackney for the recent bestseller *Women from Hackney's History*, Sue Doe gave the talk on Hackney in the 1500s. She also called upon her research into Hackney women involved in the suffrage movement to give part of a later talk. Iain Bruce came up with some fascinating research in his presentation about Georgian Hackney. Laurie Elks, as editor of *Hackney: Portrait of a Community 1967-2017*, was an obvious contender to give the last talk: 'Hackney 1965+'. Unfortunately, Lucy Madison who so



calmly and ably compered each of the talks, was, due to illness, unable to present two of the talks she had wanted to give.

As they were given over Zoom, the talks were able to attract large audiences. In total 195 people listened to the talks between October and December; interestingly only 14% of them were Friends of Hackney Archives. 56% of people listened to just one session: 44% to two or three and 28% to four or more. The average number listening per

week was 68. The numbers slightly tailed off in the last three sessions, perhaps because we were approaching Christmas and there were other commitments on people's time. Participants were zooming in from different parts of the world: one pair of Friends in New Zealand set their alarm so they could be up by 7 a.m. to listen in on their Thursday morning.

Many have asked whether these talks were recorded to be made available online. This was not done due to lack of technical know-how and the funding required. It is something the Friends' Committee will investigate, as well as taking into account any feedback to improve the talks for repeat presentations. As a follow-up to these talks, a thirty multiple-choice question quiz as well as a Reading List were produced. If you would like copies of these, or if you have feedback on the course or ideas for future talks on aspects of Hackney's history, please contact hackneyhistory@gmail.com.

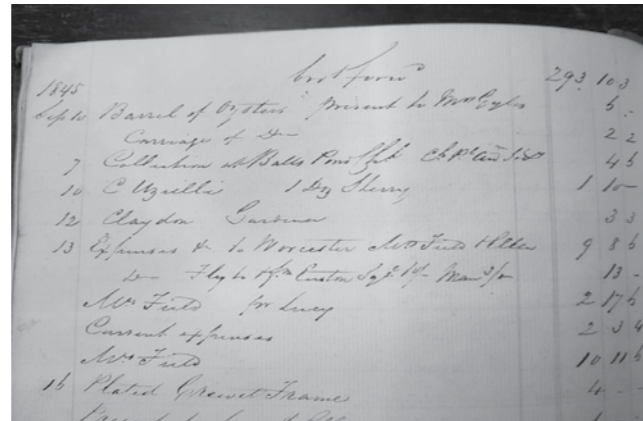
Sean Gubbins

The Account Book of Josiah Field

Friends from time to time give gifts and so, true to its name, the Friends of Hackney Archives have offered the Archives an interesting addition to its collection.

Advertised by an antiquarian bookseller in June last year as ‘A Bank of England senior cashier’s personal accounts, 1824 to 1847, a substantial autograph volume of the accounts of Josiah Field from Dalston’, the asking price was £950. After negotiation, we paid £700.

Who was Josiah Field? He was a trusted employee ending as a senior cashier ‘authorised to sign Bank of England notes’. As his salary grew, he invested safely in consols – government securities with a fixed annual interest of 3% – and took out life insurance. Within the family he seems a considerate husband to Lucy and father to Lucy and Ellen. Unsurprisingly, he was not a man to make wild switches in his life. When the family moved from number 6 Mayfield Terrace, Dalston, it was only to number 8. He records his rent as £9 per quarter. Poor rate was charged at £1-17-4½ and his tax at £1-6-0½ a quarter. He was a stalwart of Dr. Burder’s Congregational Chapel in St. Thomas’s Square and supported the Sunday School. He gave to charities such as the Distressed Manufacturers and the Kingsland Benevolent Society. The volume contains a memorandum on the Irish Potato Famine, dated 24 March 1847: ‘A general Fast in consequence of dearth & great apprehension of Famine – Dreadful distress in Ireland where a great number of persons are dying daily of Starvation - £8,000,000 Sterlg. raised by loan for Ireland & immense Subscriptions raised by private persons for their relief – about £250,000 has been already raised by such means!’ He supported his brother Cornelius giving him money and provisions (tea, 1½lb – 8/-). A music teacher (in 1827 there are two entries for ‘C. Field Music’ totalling 7/11) and railway clerk, Cornelius was declared insolvent in 1850 – the same year that Josiah’s death was recorded in *The Times*. In his will dated 1st July 1848¹, he left everything to ‘my dearest wife Lucy’. What was life like at no. 6 (or 8) Mayfield Terrace? Regular payments were made to ‘Mrs. Field for housekeeping’ – usually in the region of £2. He paid his maid Barbara Bennett £2 a quarter. He was keen on his garden though he seems to have left the labour to a gardener (3/6d) to plant his ‘shrubs, roots etc.’ (5/9d). We learn of purchases of clothes for himself – Briggs & Hardy, Hatters (£1-7-0), gloves (4/-) – and for his daughters – Davies Linen Draper for Lucy (£1-4-0), together with 3/4d for a ‘Semptstress’. Items are repaired (teapot 1/6d) coat (1/-) his boots (£1-1-6). There is evidence of home winemaking: ‘1¼ Sieve of Currant, 9/9d & 1½ Sieve Gooseberries 10/6d’, ‘4½ Gallon Cask 4/6d’, ‘hire of Wine Press 2/-’, ‘19lb Sugar for Wine – Martin’, ‘Rogers



Barrel of Oysters – present to Mrs. Gyles 6 [shillings]
Carriage of D^r [to Worcestershire] 2[s] 2[d]

for Beer Funnel’, ‘Ale Glasses 9/-’, ‘Bottle Brush’; and of consumption of spirits – ‘Webb Currall & Son 2 Gallons of Gin’, ‘1 Gallon of Whiskey – Hughes’. As to holidays, only one to Worcestershire is recorded extensively – down to the purchase of medicine for diarrhoea.

How to use the minutiae of Field’s life?

At the simplest level one could reconstruct significant parts of a middle-class family’s life: why did Field buy so many pairs of gloves? What did Lucy and Ellen study at the Polytechnic Institution? Radiating from 6 then 8 Mayfield Terrace are connexions to local traders. Patterns of the Fields’ life emerge from a diachronic approach – repetitions of or variations in their mode of living. Family drama might emerge from following Cornelius. A recurring thought is that if every penny that is spent is recorded, what degree of privacy did the daughters have? A final step would be tracking Field in the Bank of England Archives.

The Account Book is being transcribed. On completion, the Friends hope that whatever aspect or method a researcher chose, they will find a rich seam to mine.

Iain Bruce

1. National Archive: PROB/11/2102/310

130 Years of Haws

If it is true that beauty of form follows practicality of function then surely the Rowley Ripple Copper watering can must rank amongst the most elegant manifestations of that saying. Developed and patented by John Haws in Clapton, it is still being manufactured, though now in Smethwick.

The Patent of 1886 declared: ‘This ... watering pot ... is much easier to carry and tip, and at the same time ... much cleaner, and more adapted for use than any other put before the public.’¹ A watering rose was developed with each hole precisely spaced and tapered to deliver the gentlest of dowsing. Initially, the Haws factory was adjacent to the present Lea Bridge roundabout but increase in trade required transfer to larger nearby premises opposite, on a site adjacent to St James the Great Church on Lower Clapton Road – now the site of Anthony Kendall House, 219 Lower Clapton Road, built in 1994 where there had been since 1939 the Ritz and then, until 1973, the ABC cinema. A further move later took the company to Bishop’s Stortford. John was succeeded by his nephew Arthur. The Second World War took many of the skilled workers and the company fell silent until 1950 when it was taken over by Taylor Law Ltd. and later still in 1982 by its present owners, Eclipse Sprayers. But what do we know of the founder, John?

The 1841 Census shows that he was born in Romford in 1836, the third son of farmer Thomas Haws and his wife Sarah. The Census for 1891 (there is nothing for 1901) finds him living at 4 Mayola Road in Lower Clapton with his wife Elizabeth then aged 51. Her place of birth is given as Mauritius as is that of their elder daughter Mary (16 in 1891, so born in 1875). Their younger daughter, Lillian, aged 13, was born in Brentford, Essex in 1878. John died on October 10th, 1906, aged 70, leaving effects to the value of £2,705 12s 3d equivalent to roughly £350,000 at today’s reckoning. What is intriguing is the Mauritius connexion.

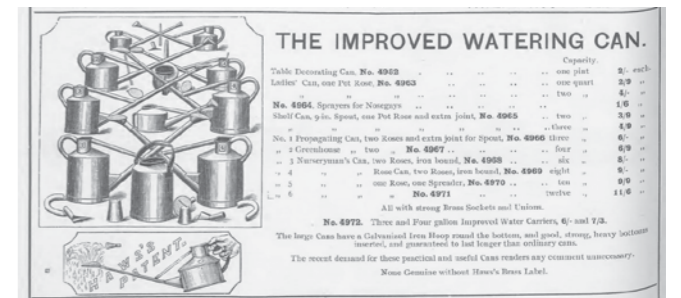
Mauritius had been first a Portuguese, then a Dutch and then a French colony before being seized by the British in 1810. Haws, a civil servant in the British Colonial Service, began cultivating vanilla plants which the colonists had introduced to the island in the 1840s. It was a profitable business. Haws is said to have found watering pots required in cultivation heavy and cumbersome and turned his mind to an improved version, the version which he patented in 1886. Its benefits were that with a higher carrying handle and lowered spout at the canister’s base, greater control over the dispersion of water could be achieved. On his return to England at some point between the birth of his two daughters (1875 and 1878) he established his factory. The company website gives 1886 as the year of its foundation but this may be by taking the year of the granting of the Patent as the starting point of the business proper. Haws was in his 50s and managed an expanding business up to his death at the age of 70.

1. <https://haws.co.uk/blogs/our-story/130-years-of-haws>



The Rowley Ripple Copper, 2022

The family continued to live locally. In 1909 the widowed Elizabeth, ‘a pensioner (Mauritius Government Funds)’ was living at 21 Newick Road off Clapton Pond. John’s nephew Arthur, a widower and son of John’s younger brother Henry, now ran the company and had married his first cousin Lillian in St James the Great Church next door to the factory. Arthur and Lillian, together with the unmarried Mary, are recorded at 10 Lea Bridge Road: in 1918 they had moved to Cleverleys Road, Upper Clapton, before transferring to Bishop’s Stortford where the factory – retaining the name ‘Clapton Works’ – had relocated.



‘The recent demand for these practical and useful Cans renders any comment unnecessary.’ *Pryke & Palmer Illustrated Catalogue, London, c. 1900*

What of its products? A 1900 advertisement boasted a ‘Ladies’ Can holding one quart’ and costing 2/9d. For 1/6d, you could buy ‘Sprayers for Nosegays’. A ‘Nurseryman’s Can with two Roses, iron bound holding eight quarts’ cost 9/-. If you were sufficiently muscled, there was an ‘Improved Water Carrier’ holding four gallons (the water alone weighing 40 lb. or 18 kg.) and with ‘Galvanised Iron Hoop round the bottom’ to add to the weight. The advertisement ends: ‘None Genuine without Haws’s Brass Label’. The same applies to today’s cans: the label is the guarantee.



Sean Gubbins

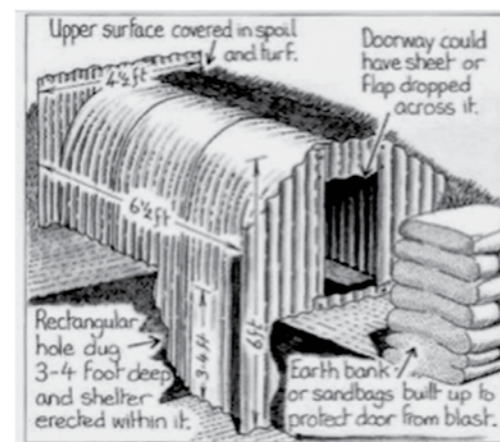
An Anderson Shelter on Hackney Terrace

Much to their surprise as they were clearing a large mound at the bottom of their garden in Hackney Terrace, Cassland Road, the owners discovered a remarkably well-preserved Anderson Shelter filled with rubble and buried under a mound of soil. In the rubble were conch shells, wood that might have been part of the original fittings and some advertising signs for tea (the wartime owners had been coffee dealers). The space is dry and, now cleared, has become a garden shed and a children's den.

Such a shelter is a rarity in itself but this is no ordinary Anderson Shelter: it is double the standard length of 6'6" feet (1.9m) giving dimensions of just over 4 m. (13'2") long externally, 1.45m. (4'10") wide internally and with a maximum head height of 1.80m. (5'9"). There are traces of some tiled flooring which would have reduced the headroom to c.1.6m. (c. 5'3"). The curved sheets for the sides rest in iron side channels and the front and back sheets sit in end tee-sections. Front and back vertical end-sheets are braced by a bolted-on angle section. They span the full width of the structure and extend up above the ends as in figure 2. The door in the eastern end is 0.87m. high by 0.54m. wide (2'10" x 1'9") – quite a tight squeeze. The structure is neatly sandwiched between the two side garden walls and is built against the end garden wall on its southern long side. This positioning would have provided the maximum possible protection from bomb blast. The photograph of the interior looking towards the entrance shows very clearly both its structure and how claustrophobic the space is.



Figure 1: The shelter revealed



Complete Anderson shelter weighs 8CWT=406 Kgs.

Figure 2: Cutaway section

The shelters took their name from Sir John Anderson, appointed by Neville Chamberlain in 1938 to take charge of Air Raid Precautions.¹ Shelters were issued free to all householders who earned less than £250 a year. One and a half million in all were issued to areas most likely to be bombed. The standard shelter comprised six curved galvanised steel sheets bolted together at the top: it could accommodate four adults and two children. They were very strong – especially against the compressive force of a bomb. Even greater strength came from being half buried and covered by a mound of earth – as was the case in Hackney Terrace; but most were inherently damp and cold, so most families used them only once an air-raid warning had sounded. As to their distribution, a survey in November 1940 discovered that only 27% of Londoners used Anderson shelters since most people did not have gardens. What makes the Hackney Terrace shelter even rarer is that it has survived. Normally shelters were either collected at the end of the war to be recycled or sold to the householder for £1. Some survived because they were 'brought to the surface' and converted into garden sheds.

We do not know how often the Hackney Terrace shelter was used but given the intensity of bombing, it would have seen much use. In the nine months at the height of the bombing between 7th October 1940 and 6th June 1941, Hackney was hit by 736 high explosive bombs and 21 parachute mines.²

Between Well Street and Meynell Road ten bombs are recorded. The Terrace itself was bracketed. At its western end, the large, early 19th-century free-standing Cassland House was, according to the war damage map, 'damaged beyond repair'. Diagonally opposite the eastern end of the Terrace, the largest structure hit was the 1872 Wesleyan Chapel.³ (Figure 4) on the junction of Queen Ann Road and Cassland Road. An incendiary bomb on the night of 22-23 September 1940 left it a roofless shell.⁴ It was

3. <https://www.mywesleyanmethodists.org.uk/content/chapels/middlesex/hackney-cassland-road-wesleyan-chapel>

1. Much of what follows draws on the invaluable website at: <https://www.andersonshelters.org.uk/index.html>
2. <http://bombsight.org/bombs/27435/>

designated: 'seriously damaged – doubtful if repairable'. The site is now occupied by Stuart House, a block of flats.

From time to time, we are reminded of the terror of a bombing raid. Every year, around 60 WWII bombs are dealt with in London. We see from the safe distance in a television broadcast the explosive, destructive force. Now, imagine



Figure 3: Interior looking east towards the entrance

sitting in your shelter in Hackney Terrace at the height of a raid, wondering what is happening to your familiar world above, what is happening to your friends and neighbours.

Iain Bruce

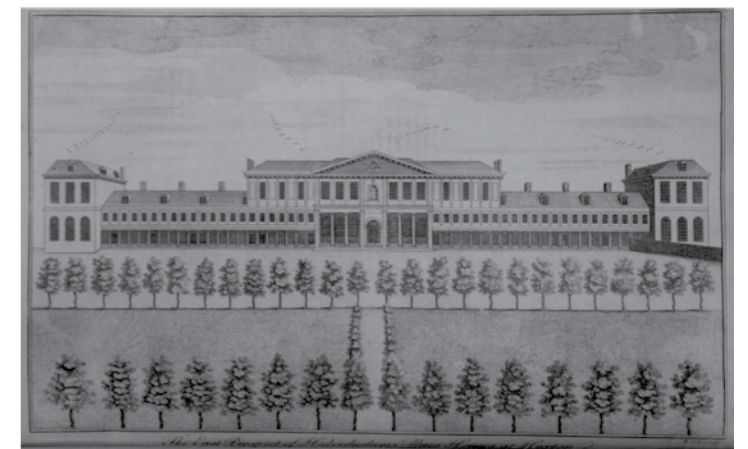
4. <https://hackney.soutron.net/Portal/Default/en-GB/SearchResults>



Figure 4: Cassland Road Wesleyan Chapel: HAD WD 142

Aske's Hospital – 'Fitter for a Palace than an Almshouse'

This magnificent Hospital, situate at Hoxton, [Pitfield Street] was erected in the Year 1692, by the Company of Haberdashers, pursuant to the Will of *Robert Aske*, Esq; who left upwards of thirty thousand Pounds, for the maintaining at Bed and Board twenty poor Haberdashers, and twenty boys; who are to be taught besides: But a Moiety of this Sum being shamefully squandered, in erecting an Edifice fitter for a Palace than an Almshouse the Company were obliged to turn off the Boys for several Years. Each of the Pensioners in this Hospital have [*sic*] very handsome Apartments, consisting of three Rooms with proper Diet and Firing. Three Pounds in Money yearly, and a Gown every second Year: Which, together with the Salaries of the Chaplain, Clerk, Butler, Porter and other Domesticks, amounts to about eight hundred Pounds *per Annum*.



William Maitland: *The History of London from its foundations to the present time*, London 1775, vol 2, p.1289

A one-bedroom flat in 'Aske's Hospital' is currently (February 2022) available for £799,995

Short Notices

Turkish Baths

Hackney History Vol. 14 (2008) carried an article by Malcolm Shifrin on the Dalston Turkish baths: *'A dream to keep you happy for a week' The Dalston Junction Turkish bath and two that never happened*. He has subsequently set up a website www.victorianturkishbath.org dealing with the subject and is the author of *Victorian Turkish Baths* (Historic England 2015).

Turkish baths form just one part of the broader topic contained in the Baths and Wash Houses Historical Archive, created by Carl Evans who has drawn our attention to their website: <https://www.bathsandwashhouses.co.uk/>.

Their subject areas include: 'Historic Bath Houses & Plunge Pools, Swimming Baths, Wash Baths, Wash Houses, Therapeutic Baths, Turkish Baths, Russian Baths, Saunas, Aeratone Baths, Leisure Pools, Open Air Pools, Lidos and elements associated with them.'

They invite anyone who has information on, or memories of, all aspects of bathing to contribute to their research via their websites.

Tree Walks

Hackney has just planted 3,000 street trees. Two books to explore are by Paul Wood: *London Tree Walks: Arboreal Ambles Around the Green Metropolis*, Safe Haven Books, 2020, ISBN-13:978-1916045347

London's Street Trees: A Field Guide to the Urban Forest, Safe Haven Books, 2020, ISBN-13:978-1916045330

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