

The Hackney Terrier

The Friends of Hackney Archives Newsletter

99



Spring 2017

Walks and Talks – Forthcoming FoHA Events

Thursday 6th July • *The Stones that Built Hackney*

A walk with Dr Ruth Siddall, UCL

6.30pm meet at Hackney Town Hall. The walk lasts about 90 minutes and ends at St Augustine's Tower, where we can enter the Tower and get to see the views from the roof.

Please book places at:

<https://hackneystonewalk.eventbrite.com>

'This walk looks at Hackney through the geology and history of its building stones. From the Medieval building materials used in St Augustine's Tower, through Portland Stone used in monumental civic architecture and Scandinavian granites used to add a touch of class to the classic London pub, a walk along Mare Street reveals a social history of stone use in North London. No previous knowledge of geology is required, but be prepared to get up close to stone to spot minerals and fossils!'

Saturday 23rd September • *Save the Chesham Arms!*

Film and talk by Jon Yeomans and Sukhpal Sahota

2.00pm at Hackney Archives and CLR James Library.
Booking will be through Eventbrite

'Pubs are closing at an alarming rate all over London. Hundreds of years of social heritage is being replaced by betting shops, expensive flats and supermarkets. But residents of one street in Hackney are not willing to give in to this trend. Led by one man and his passion for pubs, they are going to fight to bring back their pub.'

As we investigate why pubs are closing at such an alarming rate all over London and across the UK - we follow a group of determined residents in Hackney fighting to save their local pub from a property developer who wants to turn it into flats. Through interviews with key industry experts and pub landlords struggling to make ends meet, we reveal the strains that the pub trade is under in modern day Britain.

The documentary is both revealing and heart-warming - giving us an insight into how the trade works, while focusing on a community who come together as they try to save their 150 year old backstreet pub called *The Chesham Arms*.

See the film website: www.rippingoutthebar.co.uk

Saturday 21st October • *Dalston's Four Aces Club*

Film and talk by Winstan Whitter

2.00pm at Hackney Archives and CLR James Library.
Booking will be through Eventbrite.

'aCharting the life and death of the legendary 'The Four Aces Club', which started in 1966 in the entrance halls of the 1886 Dalston Coliseum and theatre buildings. It introduced new music genres to the UK and played host to some of the most influential international music and musicians of our time. Home to many reggae sound systems including Count Shelly and Sir Coxone, who hosted talent contests and made the discovery of Louisa Mark who gave birth to the Lovers Rock genre. It was London's equivalent of the New York Apollo. This club hosted acts such as Stevie Wonder, The Skatalites, Ben 'E' King, The Ronettes, Desmond Decker, Otis Redding and many others. Visited by Bob Dylan, The Clash, Malcom McLaren, Billy Ocean, Vivienne Westwood and Bob Marley who were regular patrons there.'

The venue played an integral part during 70s and 80s against the backdrop of social issues like, racism, violence and SUS Laws. In the 1980s the Four Aces merged with the main auditorium, it became north London's legendary home to 'Labyrinth' pioneering the new music genres of acid house and drum & bass where 'The Prodigy' made one of their first public appearances.' The club buildings were demolished and replaced by the Archives and Library and adjacent residential development.

The Friends of Hackney Archives AGM is planned for November or December, but a date not yet confirmed. Please keep an eye on the website for confirmation of this.

Further details of these, and other, events will be posted on the www.hackneyhistory.org/Events webpage. Please note we are now using *Eventbrite* to manage bookings as all events have limited places. All the events are free.

New Faces

We are very pleased to welcome new staff to the Archives, which will soon be up to full strength. Etienne Joseph has been appointed Senior Archives Officer. Lisa Peatfield has taken on the Gibson Project; and Michael Read temporary Collections Assistant. You can read more about them and their roles on pages 2 and 3. It is hoped that the appointment of a second Senior Archives Officer will be announced shortly.

Gibson Project Officer, Lisa Peatfield

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My name is Lisa Peatfield and I'm the new Project Officer at Hackney Archives. Over the next two years I'm going to be working with Hackney Archives' Gibson collection: around 150,000 negatives taken by Ron Gibson working from his photography studio on Hackney's Lower Clapton Road. The images we have span the period between 1952 and 1979 and offer a fascinating look into Hackney's past and how Hackney has changed over the last 65 years. The images include weddings, bar mitzvahs, studio portraits, dinner dances and company outings as well as some commercial work. A (relatively) small number of the images are online now on our Flickr page www.flickr.com/photos/50897082@N04/albums and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/HackneyArchives and we're adding more all the time.

The two year project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, will see the negatives digitised and put online and shared with the wider community through various events. We're keen to hear from people who feature in the photographs and we'll be working with community groups to describe and catalogue the images in ways that are meaningful and useful to people whether their interest in the collection is personal or professional.

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Lisa Peatfield with Etienne Joseph

Since I started in April we've been busy recruiting volunteers to help us with the task of preparing the negatives for digitisation and we've begun preparations for recruiting our advisory panel. I'm also getting to grips with the collection: all 40 boxes of it! The Gibson collection is a fantastic photography collection and a wonderful resource for Hackney Archives to be able to offer and I'm really looking forward to sharing it with people in Hackney and beyond.



The Gibson Collection

Welcome to Michael Reed who joined Hackney



Archive Team at the beginning of March as a Temporary Collections Assistant, based at Dalston CLR James Library. With a background in photography and digitisation, Michael has worked in several archive and collection management roles. He will be improving access to the Archive's HA2000 database of historic images of Hackney and assisting with staffing the search room.

Etienne Joseph – New Senior Archives Officer

Having been so busy trying to fill the rather large gap left by Sian Mogridge and Sally England over the past few weeks, my background pre-Hackney Archives seems so long ago that it is becoming increasingly difficult to remember! Academically, I have had a rather chequered history lurching from an undergraduate degree in Audio Technology, through a Master's Degree in Archives and Records Management to, most recently, a doctorate exploring the concept of a 'living archive'. Before becoming an archivist, my work history was equally diverse with journalism, sound engineering, community engagement and youth mentoring all appearing on my CV during the early noughties.

My interest in archives stems from a tightly held conviction that knowledge of personal, family and community histories contributes positively to personal wellbeing, self-identity and a shared sense of place. This idea was made concrete for me when doing some research at London's Black Cultural Archives, and George Padmore Institute for some youth focussed creative sessions I was developing at the time. I learnt so much about the diverse history of post-war London that I was not aware of previously, giving me a much greater understanding of my (then), present day situation. I was hooked and the rest is, if you'll excuse the pun, history.

Since that first contact with archives, I have gone on to work with a range of institutions from small charities archiving on a shoestring to large national institutions like the National Archives. Maybe somewhat surprisingly, my background pre-archives has actually proved a huge advantage in a number of ways. My knowledge of audio (and to a lesser

extent video) formats and preservation strategies has been of great use to me as an archivist. Equally, or possibly even more importantly, the fact that I have a history of working with people from early years schools groups, right up to older peoples' organisations has stood me in great stead for the task nearly all modern archivists face demonstrating the value of archives to the wider public (and therefore being able to advocate for more funds to reach even more people!).



I am really excited to have joined Hackney Archives at such a pivotal time. The range of skills and experience across the broader heritage team is amazing and there is a real appetite for developing and sharing the collection in meaningful ways the RA Gibson Collection being a prime example. Since I began here five weeks ago, apart from the usual induction activities, I have been working hard on getting in touch with volunteers willing to contribute time to the preservation and sharing of the Gibson collection, as well as liaising with the Friends of Hackney Archives and others about potential events connecting material in our collections to the work Hackney's local historians are engaged in. Naturally, this 'fun stuff' has been interspersed with the very real work of clearing the backlogs of accessions which have accrued as a result of the staff shortages the service has experienced since 2016. If this recipe of exciting projects, events and 'bread and butter' archiving work is anything to go by then I think I'm going to enjoy my time at Hackney Archives very much indeed!

Creative writing workshop

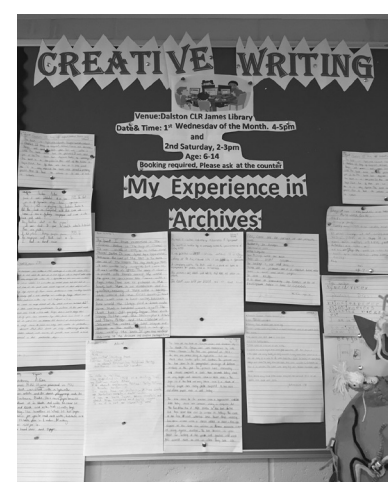
On a Saturday 13 May, Hackney Archives hosted one of the Dalston Library's regular creative writing workshops. The topic was 'The History of the Book.' Archives staff retrieved a selection of historic books and journals from the Local Studies Library, ranging from 1682 to 2011. The children were also shown old copies of the Hackney Gazette on microfilm. After a brief introduction from the Archives staff, the children were encouraged to write about the books, explaining how they were different from 'modern' books, looking at aspects such as the kind of paper, the type of writing or script and the sort of pictures (if any) they contained.

Attended by 13 children aged between 7 and 14 years, as well as 8 adults, the event was a great success. One enthusiastic participant, who was looking at Daniel Defoe's 'The king of pirates : being an account of the famous enterprises of Captain Avery : with lives of other pirates and robbers', commented 'I think this book was a bestseller, because how would the library find a book made more than

a hundred years ago' that, at 381 pages, it was 'longer than both 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone and Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets' and concluded 'if you are reading this, come to the Archives and explore Hackney's history' !

Thanks to Grace Igbekele from Dalston Library for coming up with the idea and for facilitating the event with the help of Balaka Fell-Holden, another library staff member. Hopefully this workshop will provide the inspiration for future collaborations between the library and the archives.

Elizabeth Green



Hackney Heritage Learning Network

For Local History Month this year, Hackney Museum have been working with other local heritage organisations, known collectively as the Hackney Heritage Learning Network, on a new project.

The collaboration with St Augustine's Tower, the Geffrye Museum, Sutton House and Hackney Museum has seen three Year 5 classes from local schools take part in four trips over four weeks. They have visited each of the sites in chronological order and learnt about the people of Hackney through history: from a close companion of Henry VIII to the residents of the Gascoyne Estate (part of a temporary exhibition at Hackney Museum, open until 3rd June). The visits have also given the classes a chance to visit four important local buildings, including Hackney's oldest building, St Augustine's Tower, and the restored almshouses at the Geffrye Museum.

After each trip, the class spends the afternoon back in the classroom reflecting on what they have learnt and responding creatively to what they have seen, using different methods of printing.

The project has given us the opportunity to get to know the Learning Teams at other local heritage organisations, and



to understand how they work, as well as enabling 90 local children to learn about and experience the heritage of their local area.

Josie Stevens at Hackney Museum

Y5 pupils from a Hackney school on the roof of St Augustine's Tower, with Laurie Elks from Hackney Historic Buildings Trust

Warhol to Walker: American prints from pop art to today

From Andy Warhol to Hackney Wick this special exhibition explores the influence print movements have had on Hackney. Starting with the explosion of pop art in the 1960s, the exhibition displays works on loan from the British Museum by celebrated artists including Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and Kara Walker alongside Hackney artists.

A British Museum Partnership Exhibition generously supported by the Dorset Foundation.

Hackney Museum Exhibition

11 July – 16 Sept 2017



Pop art inspired local artists to create their own works. Courtesy of Hackney Museum.

Talk: From Warhol to Wick

Thursday 27th July, 6.30pm

Join British Museum curator Jenny Ramkalawon to explore the progress of American printmaking from the 1960s to the present, reflecting on issues of gender, power and race through movements such as pop art, minimalism and photorealism.

Book via Eventbrite hackney.gov.uk/museum

Hackney Museum, Technology & Learning Centre, 1 Reading Lane, E8 1GQ

020 8356 2509

www.hackney.gov.uk/museum

FoHA supports exhibition bringing Stoke Newington history to life

Last year local historian and Friends of Hackney Archives Committee member Amir Dotan made the news with his unique collection of 'mash-up' images exploring Stoke Newington past and present.

Combining his passion for local history and knowledge of graphic design, Amir blended old photos and drawings with their present day urban settings from Google Street View.

After the huge public response the images received on social media, Amir approached Hackney Museum and FoHA about displaying some of these images around the borough. The resulting small grant from FoHA has covered the printing costs of 12 images that explore grand houses, pubs, cinemas and shops that once dominated the scenery of Stoke Newington.

This display reflecting on the dramatic changes of the last century will be available to the public at Hackney Museum from June and over the summer. It will go on to be displayed at Hackney Archives.



The Terrier makes it to 100!

The next edition of the Terrier will be number 100. We'd like to celebrate this with a bumper edition, and invite any readers to submit items, short or long, for inclusion. Our working deadline is the end of October. If you'd like to submit something, or discuss this, please email robertwhytehead@msn.com, or mail to the usual Hackney Archives address.

A Hackney Autobiography: Remembering Centerprise

From December 2014 until the end of April 2017, this project recorded and remembered Centerprise's work by recording oral history interviews, gathering a permanent archive about Centerprise and running free workshops and events.

Centerprise was a groundbreaking community centre in Hackney that opened in 1971 and closed in 2012. It hosted a bookshop, publishing project, reading centre, café, youth club, creche and more all under one roof in Dalston. It was not only a place to buy books, it made it possible for local people to write and publish their own works of poetry, autobiography and history.

'Formed into a co-operative in 1974 by intellectuals, Centerprise gradually morphed to resemble its surroundings. The cooperative management structure was dumped in the early 1990s, and the original white theorists gradually gave way to a largely black clientele. But the social function of the organisation never died, even if its shaky finances meant that it was heavily reliant on public funding and eventually fell victim to government spending cuts in 2012.

In the intervening years Centerprise survived fire-bombing by the National Front and a series of arson attacks. The radical politics that permeated the venue put it at the forefront of the cultural wars that raged in Hackney in the

1970s and 1980s. Radical community newspaper *Hackney People's Press* operated out of the building, and then English teacher Ken Worpole honed the engaged brand of popular oral history that later brought him international fame.'

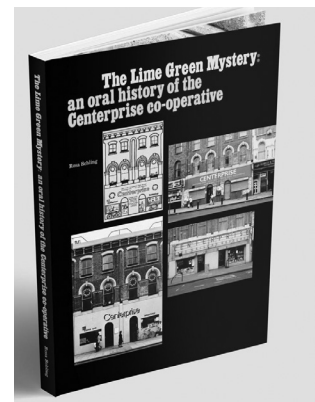
Visit the project website <https://www.ahackneyautobiography.org.uk/> to download the free mobile app, explore the interviews, learning resources and a library of Centerprise books, or order a copy of the book: *The Lime Green Mystery: An oral history of the Centerprise co-operative* published by On the Record, 2017, in a limited run, cost £7.95, also available in local bookshops.

The website presents, in audio, topics including:

- Inside Out: Homerton Station
- Food and Frontlines: Dalston Junction
- Working Women: 55 bus; Hoxton Station
- The Island: Evering Road

and written (& mapped) material, including:

- Hackney Writers: Poetry
- Individual Voices: Anecdotes
- Community Action: A variety of initiatives



Own De Beauvoir

Open School East "is a space for artistic learning that is experimental, versatile and highly collaborative." It was founded in 2013 in response to spiralling tuition fees and student debt, and the decrease in both studio provision and civic spaces. Between 2013 and 2016, Open School East operated from the Rose Lipman Building – the former home of Hackney Archives – then relocated to Margate in 2017. You can read more about this Arts Council England supported venture at: <http://www.openschooleast.org>

One project that they supported was a study of **De Beauvoir Town**, by Jonathan Hoskins:

'The research focused on a 15 year period beginning in the late 1960s. At that time, the neighbourhood of Victorian housing was threatened with near-total demolition and replacement with mass-built social housing, a decade after the same had been imposed on the southern part of the area.

Some residents were in favour of this demolition and some were not. From among the latter arose an organised and effective opposition campaign that lasted into the 1970s. The organisational infrastructure of the campaign catalysed collective action in the neighbourhood for years to come. The period is still well remembered in the area, where house prices are now the highest in the entire borough.'



The resulting publication: *Own De Beauvoir!, 2014-16* is unusual in that it is presented as a 'recovered personal journal: a semi-fictional narrative of text and images, incorporating some of the donated photographs and documents, archival material and personal accounts accumulated throughout the project. The fiction explores how an area may be transformed by localised collective action, and by representations that are made of it, in concert with the spaces of that area.'

You can read more about the project and its genesis, including sample pages from the publication at: <http://www.openschooleast.org/own-de-beauvoir-a-project-by-jonathan-hoskins> *Own De Beauvoir!, 2014-16* is available from local bookshops, or visit: www.jonathanhoskins.com

The New Yiddish Theatre at the 'Alex', Stoke Newington

The New Yiddish Theatre was founded at the end of World War II. Performing first at the Adler Hall, Stepney it then transferred to the Alexandra (Alex) Theatre, Stoke Newington Road. The two seasons 1948-49 and 1949-50 were a great success. In 1950 the building was found to have a faulty roof and forced to close. The company never recovered and ceased performances.

The faulty roof could well have been due to damage caused in the Blitz. On the night of 13th October 1940 a high explosive bomb had fallen on the nearby Coronation Avenue flats killing over 160 people. By a strange twist of fate one of the victims, Sylvia Cohen was the sister of Sid Cohen who was the RAF pilot who had landed on the southernmost island of Italy, Lampedusa in 1943. The Islands' residents believing that his plane was the beginning of the Allied invasion surrendered themselves and the Island to Sergeant Sydney Cohen. "The King of Lampedusa" became the biggest hit of the Grand Palais Yiddish Theatre, Whitechapel.

It is thought that playing of matinees and evening performances on the Sabbath was the reason why the Jewish religious authorities had not allowed the New Yiddish Theatre to continue to perform at Adler House in the heart of the Jewish East End.

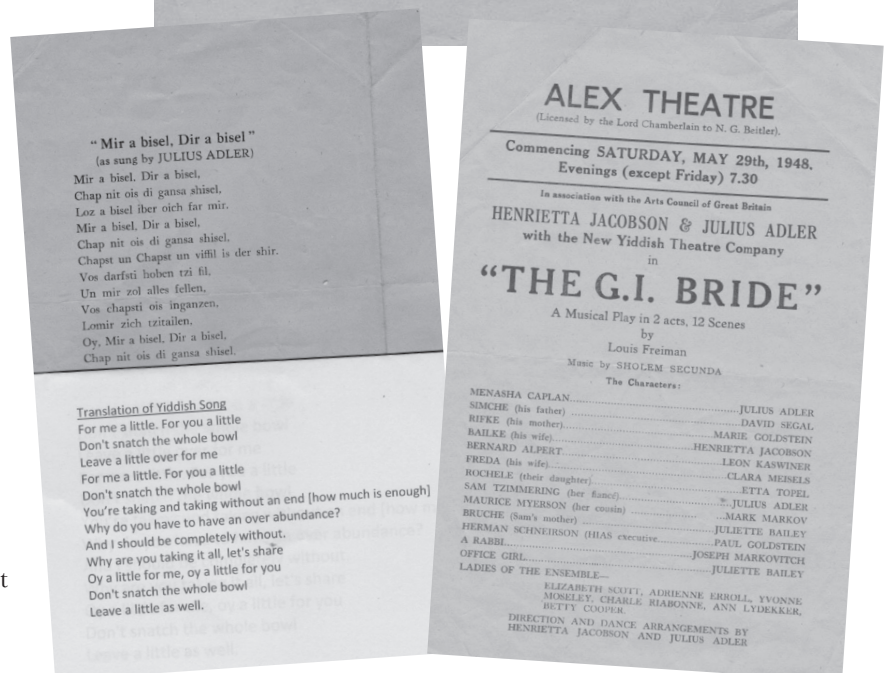
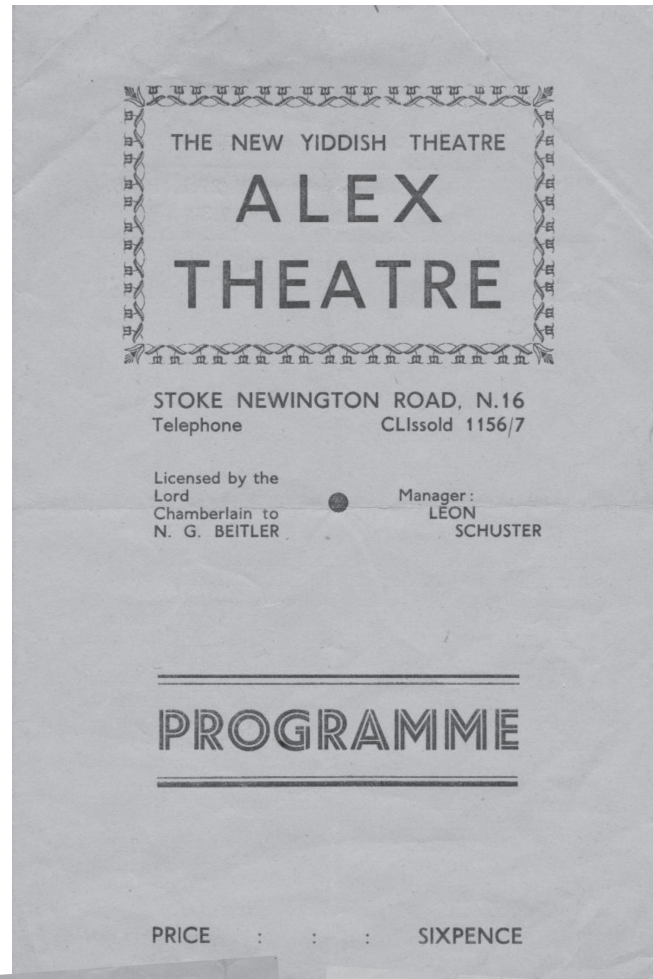
Several well known stars of the Yiddish theatre of New York appeared at the Alex during 1948 to 1950 seasons. Leo Fuchs played to full houses of over 2000 for several weeks. Both Julius Adler and his wife, Henrietta Jacobson, appear on the cast of "The G.I. Bride".

Commencing on 29th May, 1948 "The G.I. Bride" played to full houses. I believe that the Yiddish song reproduced on the back page of the programme "Mir a bisel, Dir a bisel" is taken from the performance. It is billed as being "In association with the Arts Council of Great Britain" and these stars of the Yiddish Theatre of New York would have filled the Alex in Stoke Newington Road.

Nathan Beitler, David Segal, Clara Meisels, Etta Topel, and Joseph Markovitch had all appeared at the Grand Palais, in Whitechapel. Beitler appears as the licencee.

In all probability performances in Yiddish had been staged in Hackney in synagogue halls and community centres in the second half of the 20th century. The Jewish community was still significant in numbers. However, I have been unable to find evidence of them.

Dr Melvyn Brooks



Hackney: portrait of a community 1967 – 2017 Edited by Laurie Elks

‘Of all the outskirts of London, the borough of Hackney is to me the most interesting and the least considered.’ Sir John Betjeman 1979

To mark its 50th anniversary, the Hackney Society is to produce a ‘portrait’ of the community over the past half century.

Hackney is one of the London boroughs that has changed most radically over this period. In 1967 it was one of the poorest areas, the home of a combination of light industry and much inadequate housing, with a largely working-class population. Many Londoners had never entered its boundaries, convinced that the West End and the City were the parts of the capital that would attract international interest. But Hackney could also boast some of the fine historic buildings of London, which was why Sir John Betjeman was persuaded to become the Society’s first President.

Today, the picture is very different. Hackney is regarded as cool, hip, the smart place to live and work, with easy access to the City. It is also home to many cultures from every part of the world. Some of its lovely historic buildings and open spaces have survived, though not all, despite campaigns to try to save them. And the picture is complex. As one long-time Hackney resident has pointed out, in some ways the place is very much the same as it was fifty years ago. For some, it remains an area of deprivation and of violence.

Fifty pieces have been commissioned for this book, from a whole range of authors who have drawn on their own experiences and expertise. The subjects covered range from social issues, such as housing, the question of ‘regeneration’, and education, to the cultural, with the demise of dog racing, the opening of Centerprise and the flourishing of the theatre as exemplified

by the Arcola and the Hackney Empire. The darker side is not glossed over, with a piece on the death of Colin Roach by Duncan Campbell, and of the riots of 2011 written by Hackney MP, Meg Hillier. There is much food for thought for the future in this for all Hackneyites, past and present.

Due for publication in October.

Hackney Society would welcome donations towards the book’s printing costs. Please get in touch at info@hackneysociety.org



The Abney Unearthed Project

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given a grant to Abney Unearthed – a 2 year project that will work with volunteers to re-map the cemetery, and through research, tell the stories of those buried here.

‘This fascinating and very exciting project will culminate in an online digital plot map of Abney Park and a searchable database. This project is extremely important as it will reinstate the burial information lost through illegible maps or damaged records. Volunteers will map the cemetery, discover those interred within and uncover their stories through research.’

If you are interested in volunteering contact volunteering@abneypark.org

www.abneypark.org/news/139/17/The-Abney-Unearthed-Project



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