

THE HACKNEY TERRIER



HACKNEY ARCHIVES
NEWSLETTER

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New to Hackney Archives

Acquisitions, loans and deposits

Archives

There have been five acquisitions since the last Terrier. The largest is a group of papers which relate to the former Lee/Action/Middleton estate and comprise part of the London estate papers of the De Samaurez family of Shrubland Hall, Suffolk. Part of these records had formerly been at Suffolk Record Office and discussions took place with that repository before we accepted the deposit, arranged by the honorary estate archivist, Bill Sergeant, a former Archivist of Suffolk.

Luckily the deposit was smaller than anticipated and includes an estate map of 1870 (of which we had no prior copy); but much of the earlier Hackney materials remains at Suffolk.

Stephen Park, (who is the vice chair of the East of London FHS), has recently taken over as Hackney's Superintendent of Births, Marriages and Deaths. A small transfer has followed almost immediately, which adds to the mortuary records of Hackney civilian dead - we now have a full set - and the register of Shoreditch civilian war dead from 1940-45. This includes the place of burial of the casualties - a record which will prove useful for genealogists.

Stephen also propose to transfer to us the marriage notice books from 1837 to c1980. This covers marriages in non-Anglican places of worship and again will substantially enhance our genealogical resources. There is also a proposal to copy the registrar's indexes to births marriages and deaths from 1837-1872, with the originals coming to us for copying and then

remaining, though details of this have to be worked out.

Other accessions include additional modern UNISON papers and campaigning papers from a former member of the Socialist Workers Party's Hackney Branch for the late 1990s.

Hackney resident Leslie Hibbins has loaned HAD some family and school photographs from 1910 to 1935.

Martin Taylor is producing a much needed leaflet on ethnic minority sources in the archives and library and we still hope to go ahead with a house history leaflet in the future.

David's next book *Late Extra: Hackney in the News* is still on schedule for publication this December.

Local History Library

Book purchases include the *Ingenious Mr Fairchild* by Michael Leapman (reviewed on page 5) and Volume 1 of *Greater London History Sources - City of London*, which we will also stock with our other publications for sale, price £9.95. As well as the Corporation of London Record Office and the Guildhall Library Manuscripts Department, this volume also describes the holdings of St Bartholomew's Hospital Archives, which include records of hospitals in Hackney.

Thanks also to Josephine Boyle for arranging the donation of a copy of the Wenzel family history notes.

Office News

Three students from Hackney schools duly completed their period of work experience, all putting in scanning duties to catch up with *Hackney on Disk* work. Our thanks to Gulestan Doldur (Skinners School), Tom Fewings (Stoke Newington school) and Lawrence Wright (Gladesmore school)

Gaelle Nevin, a postgraduate student from Belgium, joined us on 7 August and will be working on a voluntary basis for two days a week for the next six months. Gaelle is also working on image scanning, although we intend to give her some new cataloguing work to gain a range of work experience.

The recent period also saw accelerated activity for David in his role as chair of the London Archive Regional Council, since he has seen through the production of a brief for the production of a regional archive strategy, and has taken part in the production of the brief for the cross-domain museum, archive and library strategy through the London Museums, Archives and Libraries group

Hackney Archives Department is a participant in all three of the *Access to Archives* projects that began in the London region, under the auspices of the London Archive Regional Council, which David chairs. *Political Thinkers* will see just one Hackney list included, the Charles Bradlaugh, but the larger business collections will be included in *London and the Wider World* and the majority of local government lists before 1965 in the *London local government* project.

HAD will mark up its lists or contribute word processor copies, or in some cases the ADLIB electronic files. Manual lists will have to be marked up so that those inputting the text can get the structures and 'levels' correct.

The data will then be available via the Public Record Office's web site, but contributing offices will also get data back, and in our case this will be assimilated into ADLIB. The result should see nearly 50% of our lists in digitised form, ready for access via the web.

There has been an exchange of catalogue data with the Royal Botanical Garden library at Kew. This included catalogue entries for the Natural History Museum, which holds many of the original watercolour drawings made for Loddiges *Botanical Cabinet*.

A short note of thanks is due to Paul Gwinell and all other colleagues in Hackney Council who offered to help us out with a letter in German that arrived recently. The subject proved baffling to most who tackled it. Clearly the author wanted something to do with the American War of Independence - and had probably mistaken Hackney Archives for the PRO(!).

World News!

Hackney Historic Images On-Line is now live on the Council's site. There are about 400 pictures to view, searchable by subject and location. Go to www.hackney.gov.uk from the home page click History in Hackney from the list of shortcuts, then click Hackney Historic Images On-Line

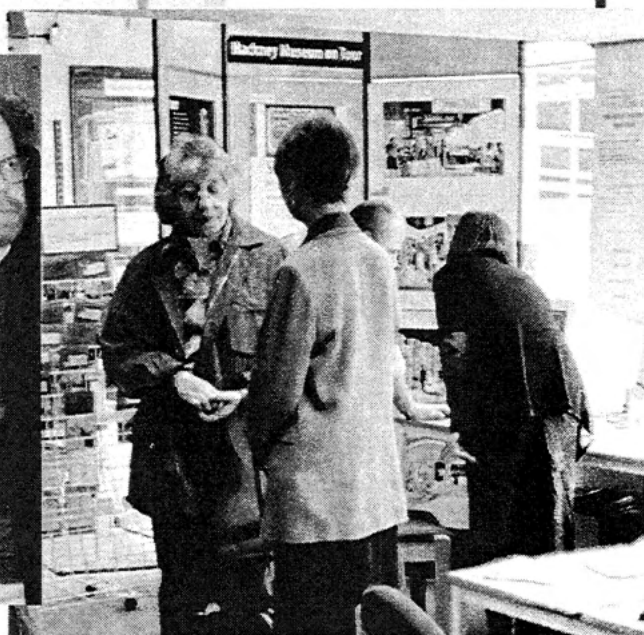
Michael Kirkland completed an html and web-page training course, which adds to his design and digital image skills and enables him to edit and update our pages on the Council web site. We would like to include *Hackney Terriers* on the site, beginning with the next issue; Michael and Martin's time permitting.

FEATURES

The Hackney Local History Mini-Fair



1st
July
2000



Our thanks to all Friends who volunteered to help for the day. There were 72 names in the visitors' book, but we estimate that the total was around 90, substantially up on the 42 who attended last year. The publicity contributed to this, and seems to have been most effective at the Family History Centre; the majority of the visitors were family historians.

There were some ups and down on the day. The split level floor arrangement did not really work, with people crowding in downstairs and the stallholders upstairs being comparatively quiet through the day.

On the plus side Mrs Doris Hull identified her old flat on HA2000 (see page 7), and a story followed in the *Hackney Gazette*. The new edition of the guide to Hackney Archives was available for sale at the open day.

We are grateful to Friend David Cooper who took the photos of the event on our behalf.

Thank you to the East of London and Middlesex and North London Family History Societies and to our colleagues in the Hackney Museum.

Pollock's Toy Museum

by Mo Heard

Pollock's, which is at present housed at 1 Scala Street, just behind Goodge Street Station, has been offered the opportunity to secure a lease on part of a Grade 2 Listed building at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich.

Some older people reading this, may remember that Benjamin Pollock had a shop at 73 Hoxton Street; a plaque has recently been erected at the site to commemorate the shop.

I am a museum Trustee and I am putting together as much history of the shop and the family as I can find. I am gradually finding and talking to people in their seventies and eighties who remember buying theatre sheets and plays from Mr Pollock before the war. Do you (or your parents) have any memories, ephemera, photographs or home movies relating to Pollock's?

The new museum will be a resource centre for those researching the toy theatre and Victorian popular printing, as well as the history of toys, and it is most important that everything is recorded, conserved and catalogued. If you know the museum and would like to write a letter of support to the Trustees for their development plans, it would help with our application for funding.

Do visit Pollock's Toy Museum as all revenue helps to keep us viable. The charge is £3.00 for adults and £1.50 for children. Open Monday - Saturday, 10 - 5. There is a shop selling all sorts of toys, toy theatres, and books.

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020 7636 3452
moheard@freezone.co.uk
www.pollocksmuseum.co.uk

Pollock's - A quick history

Pollock's Toy Museum can trace its history back to 1808 when J.K.Green opened his Wholesale Retail Theatrical Print Warehouse in east London.

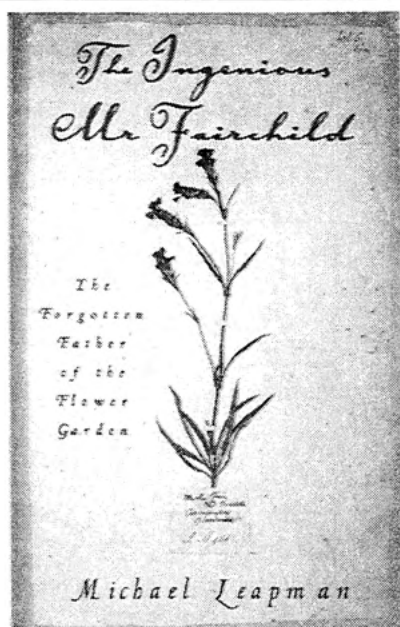
Green died in 1860, one of over 100 publishers engaged in the business of "Juvenile Drama" in its heyday. His stock was taken over by one of his more enterprising retail agents, John Redington, who owned a shop almost next door to the celebrated Britannia Theatre, Hoxton. It was at the Britannia, the original home of the Lupino family, that many of the dramas immortalised in the penny plain sheets had had their first production.

Redington's daughter married Benjamin Pollock in the early 1870s and on the old man's death, Pollock took over the shop. There he devoted his life to reprinting all the old traditional plays and pantomimes and still colouring them by hand, to be sold at 'A penny plain and twopence coloured'.

The small shop was dark and dingy, but behind the dusty window panes was a magical storehouse of endless delight. Many famous people poked around those crowded rooms, which smelled eternally of paper, paint, and glue - Dickens, R.L.Stevenson, Churchill, the Sitwells, Charlie Chaplin, Diaghilev, G.K.Chesterton, Ellen Terry, and J.B.Priestley. When Pollock died in 1937, his daughters, Miss Selma and Miss Louise carried on for a while, but the little shop in Hoxton finally closed in 1944, after sustaining much bomb damage.

In 1946, the actors Ralph Richardson and Robert Donat, with Alan Keen, an antiquarian bookseller, took over. But the new company only lasted to 1952, and Marguerite Fawdry bought the bankrupt stock and opened the Museum in Monmouth Street in 1956.

Book Reviews



**The Ingenious Mr Fairchild: the forgotten father of the flower garden
by Michael Leapman.**

Headline, 2000 £14.99

"Now, when Gardening goes so far among Men in general, as to engage the Minds of the most worthy Part of Mankind, or I might say of all men who have the least Time for Diversion; I see no Reason why I should cultivate this innocent pleasure among my fellow-Citizens; that from the highest to the lowest, every one may be improving their Talent, or even their Mite in the best Way they can..."

Thomas Fairchild's introduction to his *The City Gardener*, containing the most experienced method of cultivating and ordering such evergreens, fruit trees, flowering shrubs, flowers, exotick plants as will be ornamental and thrive best in the London gardens published in 1722 serves as a reminder that the modern garden industry has firm antecedents.

Fairchild's was one of several nurseries that flourished in Hoxton in the late 17th and early 18th century, and Fairchild, with his experiments in hybridising plants was arguably one of

the most important of those plantsmen, and is the subject of Michael Leapman's new biography.

Fairchild was born in Aldbourne, a Wiltshire farming village, in 1667, and came to London as an apprentice to a London cloth worker in 1682. After his term had ended in 1690 he moved to Hoxton - probably as an employee in the nursery he was to make his own and ran until his death in 1729. Leapman draws on a range of contemporary sources to flesh out his portrait, notably the writings of the Richard Bradley (described as Britain's first gardening journalist), and provides some London background, using *The City Gardener* to take the reader round some of the gardens Fairchild mentions.

Two very useful chapters examine Fairchild's experiments in detail and put them into the context of the time. The book finishes with a short history of Fairchild's bequest that established, the *Vegetable Sermon*, preached for many years in St Leonard's Shoreditch and a chapter on Fairchild's legacy - the fate of the nursery and the importance of his hybrid experiments.

Although so little survives on Fairchild, Michael Leapman, aided by the research work of his wife Olga, has produced an enjoyable portrait of a genial and active man. Although the work is not footnoted, there is a bibliography of secondary sources. I have only one small quibble with the very thorough research - the site of Fairchild's nursery is said to have had a workhouse built on it. As it was on the west side of what is now Hoxton Street, this is not the case, and it was a warehouse that stood on the site in 1872.

Appropriately Fairchild's Mule features on the cover. Although the 19th century gravestone in the Hackney

Road burial ground is to be restored and moved to St Leonard's Church, as Michael Leapman points out, there is no plaque marking the site of the nursery. Perhaps with loss of the Sermon, it is time that Fairchild received some local commemoration - which should not be too difficult as part of his nursery is now the Dorothy Thurtle garden...

David Mander

207 Hoxton Street

As featured on the cover and the Local History Mini-Fair article, one of our guests, Mrs Doris Hull, was astonished to find a photograph of the inside of her flat from the 1950's. Mrs Hull was of course able to tell us much about it and still had her rent books, which she has since deposited with us.

We are very grateful to Mrs Hull for these important additions to our local history collection. We made a copy of the photograph for Mrs Hull and arranged with the Hackney Gazette to cover the story, which appeared in the 28 September issue.

207 Hoxton Street was a flat of five large rooms, requisitioned and refurbished by Shoreditch Council after the war. The photograph was taken in 1951 for the Festival of Britain to show the improved interiors of older property.

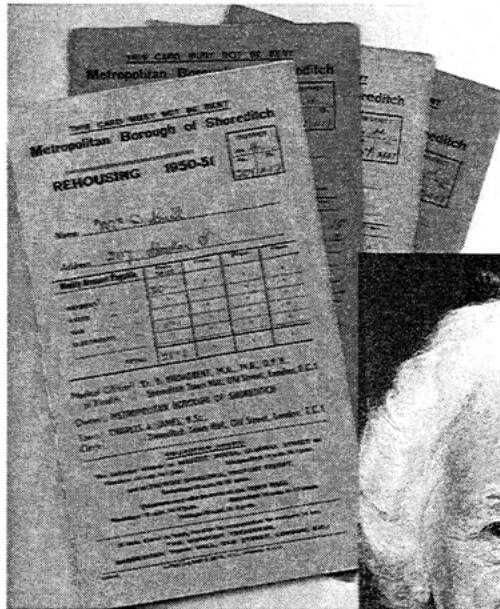
It was situated on the corner with Purcell Street, over the shops of

W Burdett, fishmongers and H Bird, grocers. The market down below was always very lively and cleaned by Shoreditch council every night. The flat was returned to the original owners in 1958 and Mrs Hull was rehoused by the council in Whiston Road, Haggerston.

Mrs Hull has fond memories of the flat and says she sometimes dreams she is back there. She bought up three children there, two of which were born in the flat. The hot water geiser had just been installed by the council which meant no more painful hands washing clothes in cold water! However, the flat did not have a bathroom or wc indoors.

The clock on the mantelpiece is all that survives to the present day; apart from the rent books, our photograph and Mrs Hull's crystal clear memory!

Michael Kirkland



Doris and Michael with that photograph.
With permission from Steve Merrick.

Friends' Interests

Jennifer Mister neè Moore has sent the photograph below of Southwold Road Junior School.

Jennifer is in the middle of the second row with five girls on either side and would like to hear from anybody who recognises themselves. She was at the school 1951 - 1957.



Mrs J Mister
7 Canford Close
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BROOKS, Phillip G and his son, Carrington Phillip, of Oriel Road, Homerton 1870 - 1900. Any information, photographs of Oriel Road.

Clive Lynch, 135 Pilkington Avenue, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B72 1LH

CHALLENGER, SPROSTON, TREMBLE, SCOPES, STEVENS-BURT, GOLDING (east London) and **MANNING** (18C Cheshire) Any info please.

Christopher Challenger
c/o Hackney Archives or email
christopher.challener@virgin.net

PEOPLE'S CONCERT SOCIETY, active in London between 1878 and 1935. Recitals already identified in Stepney, Holloway and Greenwich. By 1909 more than 1,200 concerts held, secretary during Edwardian years was Mrs Arthur Smith (AKA Ethel L Robinson who ran a concert agency in Wigmore Street). Any information, particularly venues, performers and reviews.

Alan Bartley c/o Hackney Archives

If you would like to make public your subjects of research, please drop a line to Martin or Michael, giving your name, contact address and your specialised interest. We have decided it is better not to advertise people's telephone numbers, but we would be happy to include e-mail addresses.

Credits & Contacts

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Hackney