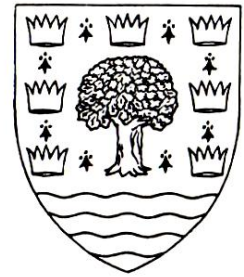


Ilford Historical Society

Newsletter No.107 December 2011

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Dear Reader

We start the newsletter on a very sad note, by telling you that Pat Heron died on Thursday 13th October. Many of you will remember her talk to us in April about the Belgian refugees at Valentines Mansion during the Great War. This research was published as a book *Guests of the Nation* while *The Life of Edith Haslam* made available her work on the life of the Ilford suffragette. Both topics showed the depth of her original research.

Pat worked at the Ilford Local Studies and Archives and was always very helpful to those seeking to use the resources, and we are both very grateful for all she did to help us in various ways.



Pat Heron at the Local Studies Library, 2007

Jef Page & Georgina Green

All Hallows by the Tower

On Tuesday 18th October our members had a very interesting tour around All Hallows church by the Tower of London, led by City of London guide Peter Smith.

Founded as a Saxon abbey in 675 by St Ethelburga, there are strong connections to Barking as he and his sister helped create Barking Abbey. It is the oldest church in the City, and below its floor in the crypt's museum is a rare, in-situ, Roman pavement.

The church has a gruesome history because of its nearness to Tower Hill where public executions took place. Beheaded bodies were brought into the crypt for laying out before a decent burial could be arranged and Sir Thomas More, amongst many others, was brought there. On a happier note John Quincy Adams, the USA ambassador to London and later the sixth president, was married in the church in 1797.

The church narrowly escaped the Great Fire of London in 1666 as fortunately the wind blew the flames the other way. Samuel Pepys climbed the church's tower to get a better look at the conflagration - and quickly left to bury his valuables and parmesan cheese, when it got too close and the

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heat seared him. But the church didn't escape the bombing in 1940 and suffered from high explosive and fire bombs which burnt out everything, leaving just a shell, only the walls standing. It has now been fully restored with an impressive ceiling and stained glass windows showing its connections to merchant shipping, the Thames, and City of London livery companies.

Its most famous churchman was Rev Philip 'Tubby' Clayton, a World War I chaplain, who was there (with his dog Chippy) for many years. A successful publicist and fundraiser, he raised money to rebuild the church after 1945 and was one of the founders of 'Toc H' which strived to help displaced men and families.

One of our members became unwell in the crypt and we were very grateful to the staff of All Hallows who reacted quickly and dealt with the matter most efficiently - for which we thank them. Whilst dealing with medical emergencies isn't in the Secretary's job description - it's good to know we can rely on Janet and that we take our responsibilities seriously.

Thanks also to Janet for arranging this outing for us.

© *Jef Page, October 2011*



ILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 1066 and all that - POINTS OF VIEW

A year ago I gave members the chance to give their views on their favourite historical things. Only a few took the opportunity. Set out as 20 questions, here are some of the answers.

Favourite periods ranged from Tudors & Regency to the Industrial Revolution.

Asked what Essex meant to you, answers included : "It's home", to "mainly a flat county with very few National Trust properties, comparatively uninteresting".

London meant: "History, much of our heritage", "Wonderfully close by, I love it!"

Asked what was historically important about Ilford, answers were less forthcoming: "The Hospital Chapel, outflow of the East End", "development of the same (I love it)".

Which historical mystery would you most like to solve? "Who was Jack the Ripper, and maybe Kennedy's murder", "the meaning of the Nazca lines in Peru".

If you could change the past what would it be: "The setting up of prison camps leading to the Holocaust", "Edward VIII's abdication, the death of Charlotte - George IV's daughter".

If you could travel back in time what event would you most like to witness: "Building the Pyramids", "a Shakespearean play at the Globe".

Your favourite, or last history book you read: "The Foundling Museum", "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire", "The Terrible Daughters (Mary & Anne) of James II".

Favourite historical film: "Any Catherine Cookson film", "Elizabeth I", "Shakespeare in Love".

Which person would you most like to meet: “Holbein, a brilliant artist”; “Oscar Wilde- because he was a terrific raconteur, Charles II- a great charmer”.

Favourite building: Pont du Gard France; South Kensington, Greenwich and London museums.

On your last holiday did you visit a castle, museum, house etc: Ephesus, Aghia (?), Sofia, Blue Mosque, London and Ashmolean museums etc.

Your favourite historical talks: “Pub Signs in Essex- at Woodford HS”; “one by an ex-policeman on Tyburn- at Barking ELFHS”.

Which two people would you most like to invite to dinner: Shakespeare, Wilde, maybe Cleopatra, Leonardo da Vinci, “my uncle William” (Why?).

How can immigrants diverse histories be accommodated? “Pass”, “It all takes time”.

Should children learn history? “Yes; Of course”.

Which periods should they learn about: “From 1066 to date!”

Is history popular? “It never was for me at school”, “Less so nowadays as emphasis is on exam results”.

Are there too many questions: “No!” “Quite long, but stimulates the mind.”

Of the talks- Essex pub signs, Tyburn, and the biographies are all possible. Maybe Nazca. The pyramids are always on TV as of course as are the Tudors, but we’ll see.

This is a bit of fun but I might repeat it. Recently the National Trust went into partnership to bring out a Beano special issue, becoming the “Gnational” with Dennis the Menace & Gnasher- his dog. It showed the NT at various castles, landmark sites etc, as Dennis fired off tomatoes with his catapult defending Powis Castle, Billy Whizz at Sutton Hoo, and Minnie the Minx at the Giants Causeway etc. It was a way for the NT to show their attractions can be fun for kids. Dumbing down? - I think not.

© *Jef Page, August 2011*

Sources for Local History ~ Local Studies & Archives

The new Central Library in Clements Road was opened on Tuesday 25th February 1986 by HRH The Duke of Gloucester. Originally the building boasted Adult and Children’s Lending Libraries, a Reference Library, a Local History room, an Audio library and a coffee bar.

These last two facilities were later closed to make room for the museum (more about that in a later newsletter).

The official brochure announced “Redbridge residents can for the first time study the history of the area in accommodation specifically designed for that purpose. Secure glass-fronted bookcases and display units are used to house the stock. Seating is provided for 20 students. Special storage facilities have been created for archives and there is a strong-room depository.”

At this time the Reference Librarian was Peter Wright, then Secretary of the Ilford Historical Society. Peter was one of the founder members and is, of course, now our President. He had long advocated better facilities for our local heritage and the Local History Room was developed under his guidance. The first Local



Peter Wright, June 2007

Studies Librarian was Peter Jackson, an enthusiastic young man, who was keen to add to the stock and purchased the census for the borough, among other things, to boost the wide range of material which had been carried across from the Reference Library in 1986. It wasn't long before the Local Studies Room was holding exhibitions on different topics of local interest, in lieu of a museum, and Peter's photo regularly appeared in the local paper, holding one object or another, to publicise the opening. However, he moved on after three or so years and in 1989 Ian Dowling took over as the Local Studies Librarian. Under his guidance the facilities have improved and grown over the years. Ian obtained microfiche of the Registrar's Birth, Deaths and Marriage records when they became available, and Local Studies now includes computer access with a subscription to "Ancestry.co.uk" which is a much easier aid for those trying to trace their family tree.

The Local Studies Library has a wealth of material stored out of sight (newspaper cuttings, pamphlets and leaflets etc) but available on request. This article is based on one such file as although I well remember those early days I wasn't sure of the date! There is a large collection of maps of the area, built up over many years by Reference staff, not just since 1986. The extensive book stock covers a wide range of local topics. As well as Ilford, Woodford and Wanstead history, Council Minutes, etc. there are topics of local relevance such as the Blitz, the Bywater & Thompson Trial, Barnardo's, and Trevor Brooking. Many Essex publications are included as well as books about other towns and villages in the county. In future articles I will write about how to use some of these facilities (Census, Directories, Maps) to find out about our local history. Meanwhile, if you hear about something from the past and want to know more – go along and ask them! (What's that phrase "use it, or you might lose it")

The Local Studies Library also has some relevant books for sale which include, for example:

George Tasker : *Ilford Past and Present* (1905, reprinted 1992)

The Old Photograph Series: Ilford Compiled by Ian Dowling & Nick Harris (1994)

Victoria County History of Essex, Barking & Ilford extract from Vol 5. This volume was originally published in 1966, but this section was reprinted by the Library in 1987. It is remains the best source of information to start off any local history research.



Henry Stevens (great-great-grandson of Clement & Sarah Ingleby) handing over some archives relating to the Ingleby family to Ian Dowling and Dawn Galer at Valentines Mansion, October 2011.

Another aspect of the Local Studies Library is their collection of original archive material which is currently being reassessed by Dawn Galer who, as the Collection Officer, is shared by the Local Studies and the Museum. From my own experience I know this includes an amazing collection of letters written between members of the family associated with Wanstead House c.1760 – 1829. This has been studied in great detail by Greg & Gerry Roberts who gave us such an interesting talk in April 2010. I quote just one example below, written to Catherine Tylney Long on the announcement of her engagement, by

Anne Wellesley, Lady Mornington. She was the mother of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Maryborough (the father of William Pole-Wellesley) said to be a somewhat cold and severe woman, aged about 70 and widowed 30 years before, in 1781.

Hampton Court Palace

Novbr. 24th 1811

By a letter which I last night recd. from Mr. William Pole, I am informed that the Event is to take place which He had so long set his Heart upon- I cannot therefore resist taking this opportunity of commencing an acquaintance with you My Dear Miss Long. You have made My beloved Grandson so happy by your descision in his favour, that I think I already Love you about as much as I do him - I will not however intrude myself any longer than to add that I hope soon to have the pleasure of sharing you in Person, that I am very sincerely yours

A.Mornington

Another aspect of the Local Studies and Archives is the large collection of old photographs which they hold, a wonderful resource for historians. The article by Jef Page about Clements includes a photograph of Clements Cottages kindly provided by the staff. (See page 7)

I'd like to finish this article with an example of the information I have found, thanks to Ian and his team, about the **Ilford Skating Rink**.

In an effort to find out more about Ilford in the past I spent some time going through Kelly's Directory for 1912 – and there will be an article about this in a later newsletter. One entry which caught my eye was for “Ilford Skating Rink, High Road, F. Leighton Manager”.

I have never imaged ice skating in Ilford a hundred years ago, so I went to see what the Local Studies Library could tell me.

To start with it wasn't an ice rink, but was for roller skating! Apparently it opened on 7th May 1909 on Ilford Hill and the building was so large (22,000 square feet) it extended from No.28 High Road to Roden Street. At the time it was said to be the largest and best equipped skating rink in the country. It could accommodate up to 1,000 skaters and 2,000 spectators. The venue was used for roller hockey – indeed Ilford hosted the international championships and was at one time the home of the world's top team.

During the Great War, in 1917, the site was taken over by the Oakley Ltd who were scheduled to build 25 Sopwith Triplanes, although in fact just three were produced before the design was modified. No.N5912 was on display at RAF Hendon in 2009 (and may still be there) and there are photographs and detailed information about it on the internet (Google : Sopwith Triplane N5912). In the 1920s and 30s the site was used as a Whist Drive Hall, and it was demolished sometime between 1939-1947.

© *Georgina Green, 21 November 2011*

Redbridge Local Studies and Archives collects, manages, preserves and makes accessible local history resources relating to the history and culture of the local area. They are open to the public from Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 8pm and on Saturdays from 9:30 to 4pm.

If you want to know more about Ilford in 1912, don't forget our talk on 9th January 2012 by Roger Backhouse on *Edwardian Ilford: Work, rest and play*

Listed Buildings in Ilford

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings/>

831, HIGH ROAD, GOODMAYES

Grade: II

Date first listed: 02-Dec-1998

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Shop with living accommodation above.

Circa 1870 part of terrace with c1900 interior. Exterior of stock brick with stuccoed dressings, including moulded eaves cornice. Three storeys; one window. Second floor window is a double window with cambered head and pilasters with plain capitals. First floor has tripartite round-headed window with pilasters with floriate capitals. Both have later C20 inserted aluminium casements. Shopfront has pilasters with large corner brackets, fascia, c1900 leaded lights at top of shopfront and shopfront with two large panes and left side double door with rectangular fanlight above.



originally sold fruit and vegetables as the tilework designs do not reflect the stock in trade of a butchers shop. The tilework is a rare survival.

Shop interior has fine quality tilework of c1900 with cornice of raised egg and dart motif borders and swag design with roses and dado panel with similar borders and exotic flowers, possibly honeysuckle. The most striking panels are three tiled panels (approximately 300mm wide by 1200mm tall) containing female figures in flowing robes with decorative borders. One bears a bunch of roses, another a basket and grapes and the third cymbals so they probably represent Flora, Pomona and Terpsichore. There may be a fourth panel behind a later partition not visible at time of inspection. Between the figurative panels are panels of raised tiles and stylised floral motifs. Plastered ceiling and black and white patterned Minton tiled floor. Metal bars across the ceiling for hanging meats. Possibly this shop may have

Now Aryana (Convenience Store) The exterior of the shop is in a rather sad state and the features mentioned above are not easy to see. Inside the shop is a blaze of light and colour. The Victorian tiles are mostly hidden behind display units and posters which are likely to appeal to the shops' clientele.

© Georgina Green, 30 July 2011

The Secrets of Clements

Radicalism in Ilford? Fallen Through the Cracks of History

In 1933 Clements farm cottages, 1-4 Clements Yard, Ilford, were being demolished. Cleared from behind Melcombe Lodge (18th century) and the Pioneer Market on the corner of Clements Lane and Ilford Lane, the land was wanted by the Hippodrome for a car park (in 1933!) part of Clements Court today. There are some high quality photos of the cottages, c.1910-20¹, revealing them as small Tudor gabled farm cottages, brick, oak framed, neat, and well-rendered. The original farmhouse was substantial having a “gigantic and amazing fireplace”, nine foot wide, the full width of the room. In 1456 independent yeoman farmer John Clement² paid rent to Barking Abbey. Aside from the Victorian renovations, the “Elizabethan portion of the house thought to be the oldest, was the newest”, with fine old hornbeam and oak archways and a spacious stone cellar. In 1811 Clements estate was merged with nearby Crowchers (or Crouchers) by John Thompson and the large farmhouse was divided into four small cottages. This provided homes for families who could work the new enlarged Clements farm estate that stretched from Ilford to Loxford, and along Ilford High Road to Cricklefields (and pay rent to Thompson).

In the photos the doorway furthest from the photographer (next to the old Green Lane?) had a Georgian-style door, a fan light above it with imposing Greek pilasters beside the doorway and open shutters on the ground floor windows. Women and children shyly peek out as the camera recorded the scene, unused to being photographed. By the 1930s the cottages were just considered to be four old cottages without ‘mod cons’ fit only for demolition. Kelly’s *Directory of Ilford* doesn’t list them or the people who lived there. The 1911 Census names the families as Root at no.1 Clements Yard, Hampshire at no.2, the Drapers large family of six at no.3, and Annie Watts at no.4. In Clements Cottages were the eight Heaps.

When the last photos were taken the houses looked quite forlorn: families gone, the cottages a lifeless pile of rubble. Only the oak beams were left standing, sticking out like the broken ribs of a skeleton, the bones of a bygone age waiting for burial. In 1933 there were few sentiments for conservation, to preserve old cottages, and in the garden an old, dead mulberry tree waited to be axed. In a letter to Ilford Council the beams were offered for sale, to keep for posterity, or re-use - but the offer was spurned. Either a clever, far-sighted builder got them for nothing, or they just went on a fire.



Clements Cottages c.1910

© LB Redbridge, Local Studies and Archives

¹ Redbridge Local Studies Library, negs B/93/7/17

² Clement paid 9s. 4d. rent which was very high, and farmed other estates around Ilford. Others mentioned on the 1456 rent roll were John Chaunce and John Bowier.

Historian Fred Brand wrote an excellent article about the cottages in the *Ilford Recorder*, 9th February 1933. As they were being demolished, a horde of 12 coins was discovered, probably having slipped through the cracks of the floorboards. The oldest coin was a 1752 George II penny, and a fine old silver 1817 George III half-crown was found. Mislaying a 1d could mean thirst - there goes a pint. But losing 2/6d could mean famine: 2/6d was at least a day's wages and food on the table for the family. Two other coins of interest were found.

Brand reported that one coin was a Chichester ½d dated 1794. Stamped on one side was the head of Elizabeth I and on the other a representation of Chichester cathedral. Around the rim was engraved "Payable at Dallys, Chichester" so it was unlikely to have any value in Ilford. Geoffrey Stone, Chairman of Redbridge Numismatics Society, brought me one to see and showed me that it was Chichester Cross (market cross) on the coin. Certain medieval towns and private manufacturers had the right to mint coins and provide small change for their local markets. The coins, struck to a reasonable standard, were used as tokens spreading into wider circulation, especially along stage coach routes. Had someone travelled up from Chichester and lost the coin or had an Ilford resident travelled back from Sussex?

Another coin was rarer, created to honour a famous legal victory against the charge of high treason. It, too, was dated 1794 - a dangerous year to speak your mind and advocate reform, which the government called sedition. To commemorate at least four not guilty verdicts a number of bronze and silver medallions, coins or tokens were minted. The one found at Ilford had the bust of John Horne Tooke on one side and was engraved "JH Tooke Esq 1794". Around the edge were the words "Tried for Treason". On the reverse "Acquitted by his jury, Counsel Hon T Erskine, V Gibbs Esq". Geoffrey Stone showed me one of these as well.



How many were made - perhaps a few thousand? Where the Ilford finds are now is not known - finders keepers? The silver medallions were of high quality and expensive to buy like any limited edition: up to £1-11-6d. The coin that was found was copper, and struck, not minted. Geoffrey Stone explained "large copper blanks were punched between two steel dies

under tons of pressure. Although not a true coin because they were of halfpenny size, many are worn, i.e. in circulation, and can be considered tokens". The authorities turned a blind eye to their production until 1797.

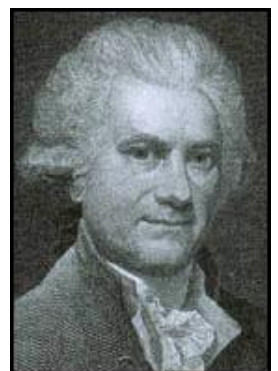
But two coins dated 1794 - too much of a coincidence? What was going on? The 1790s in England were radical years, especially 1792-97. Revolution was in the air and radicalism in the wind, blown across the Channel from France. At first the mood towards France was one of fatherly concern but during 1792-93 it changed to one of anger and suspicion as the tumbrels began to roll and exiles fled to England bringing with them tales of terror. The French Revolution was in full cry with the guillotine crimson with blood and the French aristocracy being decimated. The government here was frightened: what if the mob became infected with the same mad disease and ran amok out of control as it had during the 1780 Gordon Riots. Any call for reform, however moderate, was to be crushed.

The Society for Constitutional Information, founded in 1780 and flourishing until 1783, had published tracts explaining the principles of the 1688 constitution, the political system and its abuses, and the need for reform. In 1793 the government drafted a Bill refuting the call for reform, preparing the Traitorous Correspondence Bill (Gagging Acts) to thwart societies like that, and the London Corresponding Society, founded in 1792, a radical society calling for parliamentary reform by constitutional means: votes for all men, fairer redistribution of parliamentary seats, etc. Its members were self-improving respectable artisans.

Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* was banned, and when poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth visited France in 1791 to address their National Assembly, both were watched and followed on their return. There was paranoia and invasion fears as the French republic declared war on Britain in January 1793 and in the same year both Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were guillotined.

Did this revolutionary fervour infect Ilford? It is difficult to prove, as it's assumed that the village of 2,000 souls and 226 houses was a peaceful, fully employed, law-abiding one, but what was going on under the surface we'll never know or if there was a secret 'village Hampden'. Only a privileged few had the right to vote and speak their minds. We don't know if Ilford was predominantly Tory or Whig, but it was patriotic. In 1795 the Prince of Wales stopped in Ilford to review local militia troops raised to defend Essex and England against the French.

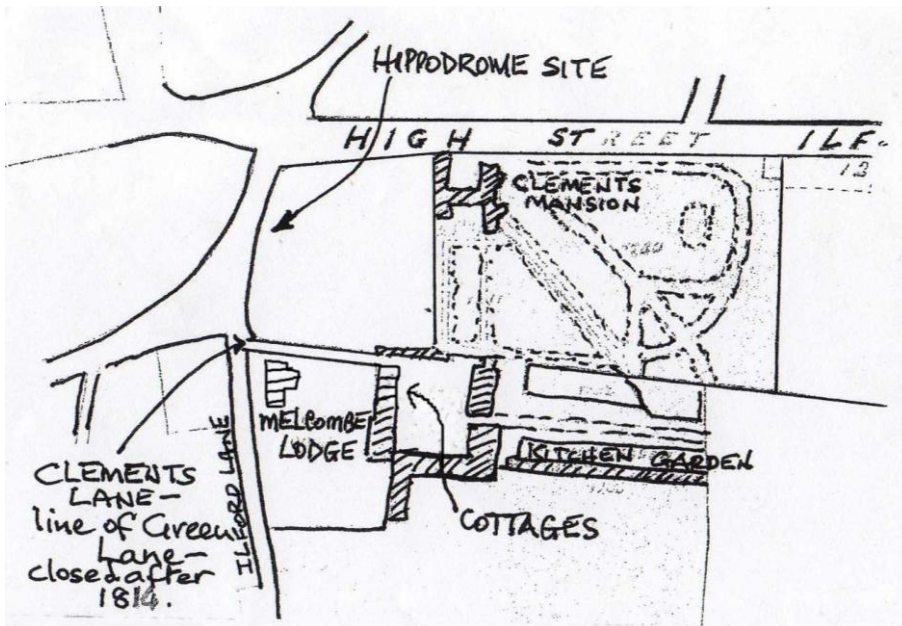
John Horne Tooke ³ (1736-1812) was a well-educated radical (Eton and Cambridge) who loved debating and trod a very dangerous path, being fined and imprisoned in 1778. He had led the Society for Constitutional Information, and denied being a member of the later London Corresponding Society, but the government saw him as its leader and rabble-rouser, encouraging the unwashed and uneducated into rebellion. He was tried for treason at the Old Bailey where the jury was almost hand-picked to bring in the right verdict, but they didn't! Although the government's prosecution was led by William Garrow (of the TV series), Tooke was acquitted.



John Horne Tooke

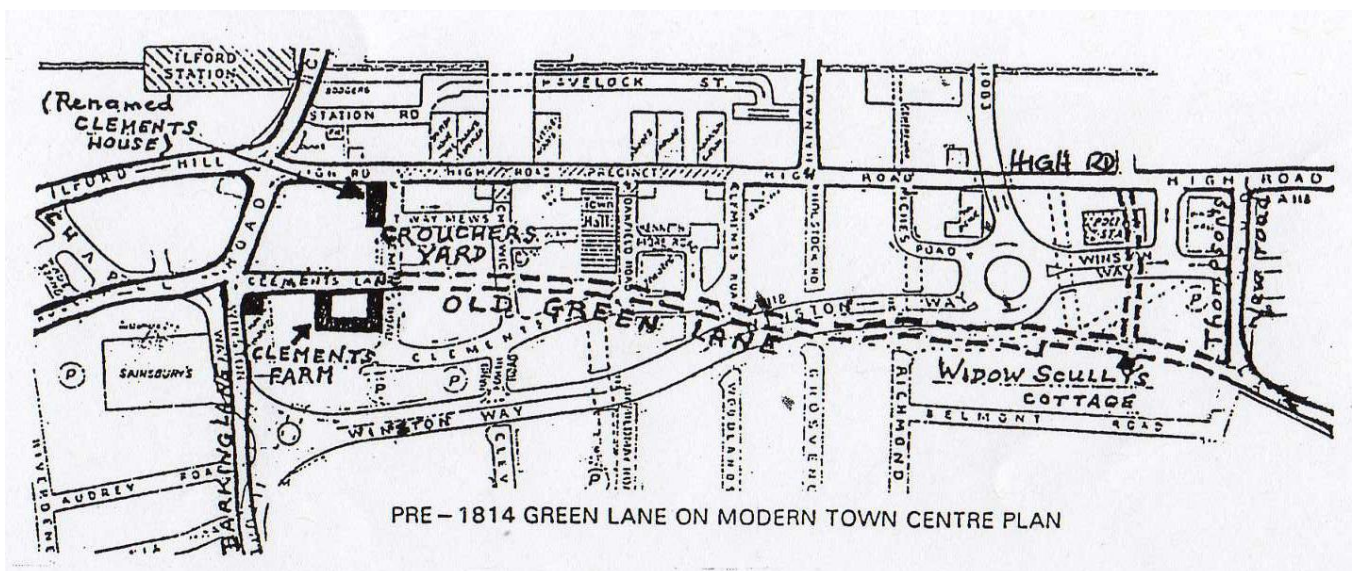
³ John Horne added the name Tooke to his surname in 1782 after being designated heir to his rich friend William Tooke. He was strong supporter of John Wilkes till 1771, led the SCI, promoted Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, and fined and imprisoned in 1778 for supporting the American cause of independence by trying to raise funds to aid the victims of 'murder' at Lexington and Concord.

Whilst the result was very important to Tooke and the others, it was also important to every one because it set the principle that calling for constitutional reform was neither seditious nor treasonable. The medallions were struck and the radicals, their counsel and the jurymen immortalized in copper and silver. John Horne Tooke was later elected to Parliament as MP for the rottenest borough Old Sarum 1801-02.



Map left shows Clements and the rough positions of the cottages which had been part of the original farmhouse. Green Lane ran through John Thompson's farmland, so he closed it.

Lower modern map is overlaid with a plan of Clements estate showing Crowchers (which became Clements Mansion), the farmhouse, and the original line of Green Lane and diversion up to the High Road. Only recently it reopened at the Ilford Lane end as Clements Lane. The map is taken from Bert Lockwood's superb IHS article in newsletter no.50.



Who was living at Clements in 1794? The tenants were Thomas Miller and his family who farmed the 260 acre estate (plus 110 acres copyhold), for generations between 1673-1803 when the family seemed to go bankrupt, and the farmhouse was broken up to create small cottages. In 1803 John Thompson, who'd been leasing Goodmayes Farm, decided to buy the central Ilford farm and become a pillar of the community. He bought Clements in 1803 and Crowchers house on the High Road c.1811, combining the two estates into Clements.

Fred Brand speculated that it was a juryman who had lost the medallion under the cottage floorboards. I thought this was unlikely, but acting on past Ilford HS President Bert Lockwood's sound advice I took a trip up to the Essex Records Office to check the poll books

and see if Thomas Miller had the vote. Only 1774 and 1810 are available. I found Miller listed as a freeholder so he clearly owned the 150 acre balance of the farm and could vote.

So how did the token arrive in Ilford? We'll never know, of course, it's all speculation. And what of Miller himself? Maybe Miller was pleased with the verdicts and the juries upholding Englishmen's rights and acquired the coin as loose change and lost it, or perhaps a friend of his was a supporter and passing through. Bert thought it likely that Miller might be a supporter of the SCI. Considering that generations of his family farmed Clements, little is known about them. Thomas Miller and the coins fell through the cracks of Ilford's history, we don't why his family lost the farm and for the moment they'll keep their secrets. However, he does turn up in 1822.

In that year he was called as a witness in a court case. Sir Charles Hulse sued Rose, Pratt & Daldry, coal merchants, at Chelmsford Assize to recover the wharf along the Roding in Ilford. Giving evidence for Hulse as to his rights were 80 years old Sarah Ross and Thomas Miller 78, so born in 1744. He recalled driving coal wagons onto the wharf 50 years earlier i.e. in 1772. Due to Ross's and Miller's memories of old customs, traditions and people Hulse won his case. Was Miller interested in rights and the law throughout his life?

There were between 650 LCS members in 1792 and 2,000 in 1796 (in 1797 it was finally declared illegal and suppressed) so it will be quite a task and incredible good fortune if I can locate a membership list and see if any Ilford or Essex men, or Miller, are named. When LCS members were rounded up by the government membership lists were confiscated to be used as proof against them, but so far I've had no luck in locating them.

GREAT THANKS TO Geoffrey Stone (coin information), Madeleine Janes (Census research), Bert Lockwood (for checking the article), Redbridge Local Studies Library staff, and Essex Records Office staff.

Letters from: Geoffrey Stone 20th June 1996; Bert Lockwood 14th July 1997.

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© **Jeffery Page, August 2011**. (This has been edited from an essay written in 1997.)

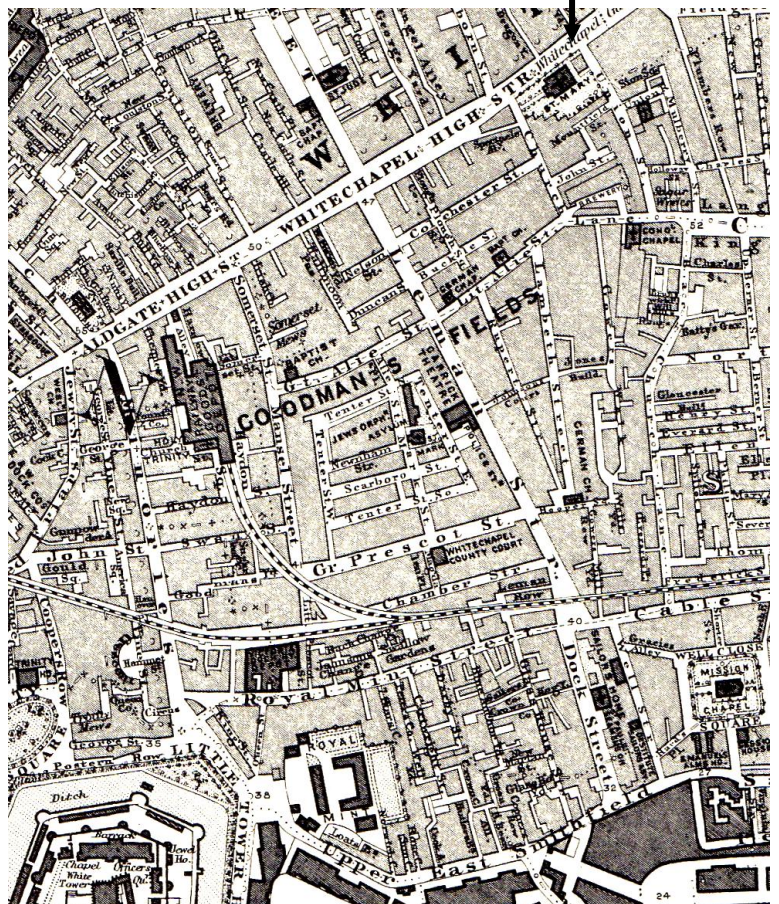
A Short History of Whitechapel

If you walk along Whitechapel High Street you will find Adler Street where you will see a small park called the Altamoli Park. This is named in memory of a 25-year-old Bangladeshi who was murdered on 4th May 1978 in Adler Street by three teenage boys as he walked home from work. This park was formerly known as St. Mary's Park, and was the site of the 14th century chapel of St. Mary Matfellow from which the area of Whitechapel gets its name.

The earliest known record of the church dates back to 1329 when its Rector was Hugh De Fulbourne. Originally built as a chapel-of-ease, in 1338 it became the parish church for the western part of Stepney. The parish was known as Villa beatae de Matfellow. The name Matfellow is somehow or another derived from the Hebrew "Matfel" which signifies a woman recently delivered of a son, i.e. to the Virgin. The inhabitants of the parish were bound annually, at the feast of Pentecost, to go in a solemn procession to the cathedral church of St. Paul in the City of London to make their oblations as a testimony of their obedience to Mother Church.

So, how did the area get the name Whitechapel? In the Middle Ages whitewash was commonly used by builders, and the church was given a fresh coat of whitewash from time to time giving it a clean and attractive appearance. Eventually the whole area became known as White Chapel.

The register of the church records the burial of a remarkable person, Brandon, the supposed executioner of Charles I. The entry is 2nd June 1649: "Richard Brandon, a man out of Rosemary Lane" and to this was added the following memorandum: "This Richard Brandon is supposed to have cut off the head of Charles I". Brandon confessed that he was paid £30 for his work, and that it was paid to him in half-crowns (2s 6d, or 1/8 of a pound). An hour after the axe fell he took an orange stuck with cloves and a handkerchief out of the King's pocket when the body was removed from the scaffold. He later sold the orange in Rosemary Lane for ten shillings. (50p.) Richard Brandon was the son of Gregory Brandon, and claimed the headman's axe by inheritance. Rosemary Lane is now Royal Mint Street, north-east of the Tower of London.



Let's move on to "Petticoat Lane" which was formerly called Hog Lane and is now called Middlesex Street (between Liverpool Street and Aldgate stations). Hog Lane had rows of elm trees on both sides, and the locals used to "walk about and refresh their dull spirits in the sweet and wholesome air". It's a lot different today!

By the late 16th century the suburb of Whitechapel had attracted the less fragrant activities of the City with tanneries, breweries, and slaughterhouses opening for business. There was also the Whitechapel Bell Foundry which later cast Philadelphia's Liberty Bell and London's Big Ben (now at 34 Whitechapel Road). In 1680 the Revd. Ralph Davenant, of the parish of St. Mary Matfellow, bequeathed a legacy for the education of forty boys and thirty girls of the parish. The Davenant Centre is still in existence although the foundation school moved from Whitechapel to Loughton in 1966. Population shifts from rural areas to London from the 17th century to the mid 19th century resulted in great numbers of destitute people taking up residence in Whitechapel in order to find work in the growing industries.

In 1797 the body of Richard Parker, hanged for leading the Nore mutiny, was given a Christian burial at St. Mary's after his wife exhumed it from the unconsecrated burial ground to which it was originally consigned. Crowds gathered to see the body before it was buried. The Nore was a Royal Naval anchorage in the Thames estuary. The sailors, led by Parker, a former officer who had been voted President of the Fleet by the mutineers, wanted an end to impressments, unequal pay, poor quality rations, and better leave entitlements. They also wanted to remove cruel or unpopular officers from ships and have them banned from serving on them again. Worst of all – at least in the authorities' eyes – the mutineers blockaded London and stopped trade in and out of the port.

In 1827 William Booth began his Christian Revival Society, preaching the gospel in a tent erected in the Friends Burial Ground at Thomas Street, Whitechapel. On 7th August 1878 the Salvation Army was formed at a meeting held at 272 Whitechapel Road. A statue commemorates both his mission and Booth's work in helping the poor.

In the Victorian era the population of poor English country stock was swelled by immigrants from all over, particularly Irish and Jewish people. The Jewish actor Jacob Adler (1855 – 1926) wrote "The further we penetrated into this Whitechapel, the more our hearts sank. Was this London? Never in Russia, never later in the worst slums of New York, were we to see such poverty." This poverty drove many women to prostitution. In October 1888 the Metropolitan Police estimated that there were 1,200 prostitutes resident in Whitechapel and about 62 brothels. At least five of these prostitutes were murdered by the legendary killer known as Jack the Ripper. These attacks caused widespread terror in the district and drew the attention of social reformers to the area. These included George Bernard Shaw, whose Fabian Society met in Whitechapel, and Lenin who lived and led rallies in Whitechapel during his exile from Russia. The area is still home to Freedom Press, the anarchist publishing house founded by Charlotte Wilson.

The Elephant Man, John Merrick, became well known in Whitechapel. He was exhibited in a shop on the Whitechapel Road before being helped by Dr. Frederick Treves at the Royal London Hospital, opposite the actual shop. In 1890 John Merrick died, aged 28, in the London Hospital where there is a museum about his life.

Whitechapel suffered great damage in the Blitz, and the Chapel of St. Mary Matfellow was destroyed on the night of 29th December 1940. It was finally demolished in 1952.

The Bangladeshis are the most visible migrant group today and make up 52% of the population. The East London Mosque at the (City) end of Whitechapel Road is a major symbol of the resident Islamic community.

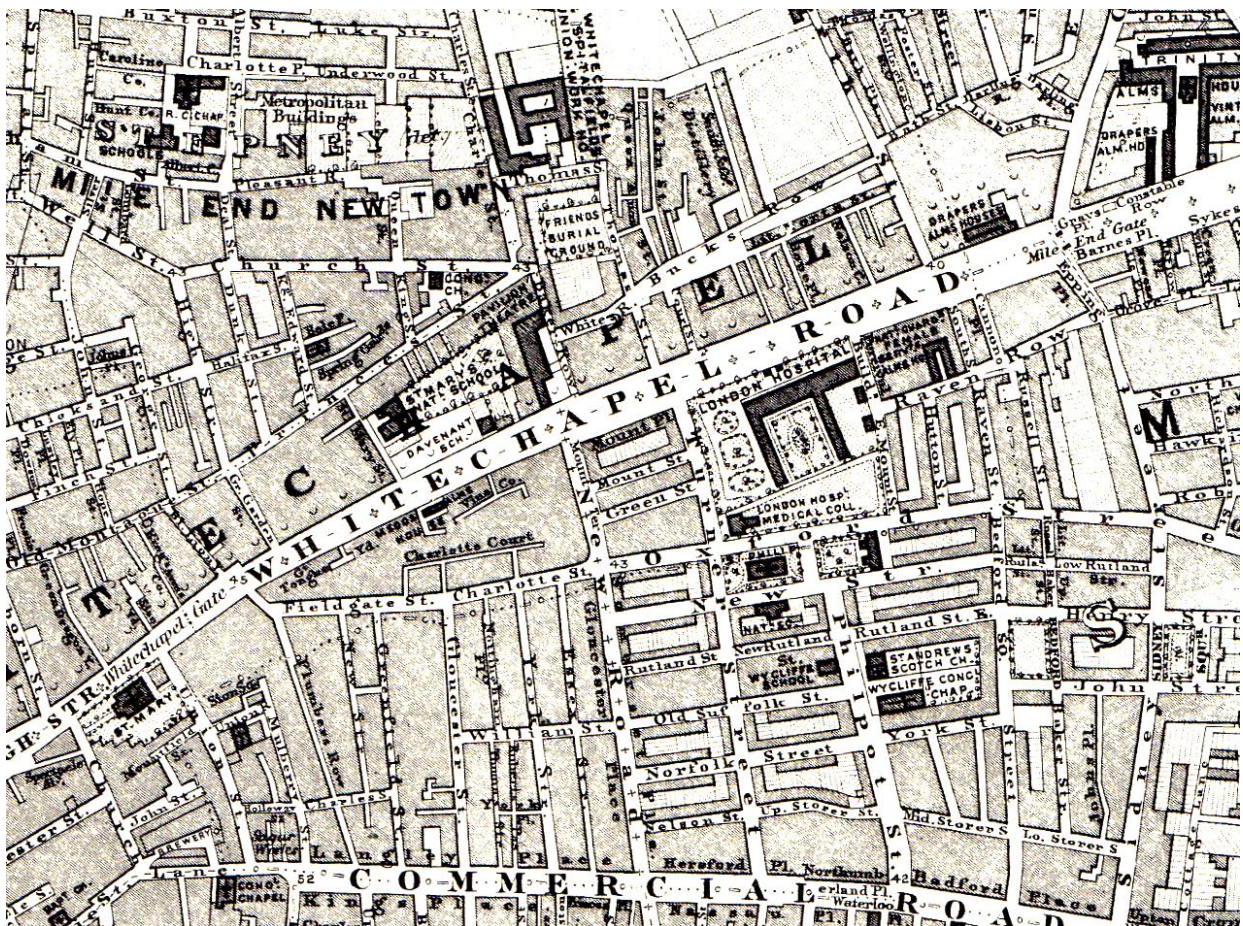
If you go to chapter 22 in Charles Dicken's *Pickwick Papers* you will find a mention of Whitechapel. Sam Weller describes it as "Not a very nice area". One of Fagin's dens in *Oliver Twist* was located in Whitechapel, and Fagin himself was possibly based on a notorious local character named Ikey Solomon.

Some noteworthy figures born in Whitechapel include:

- Abraham Beame, first Jewish Mayor of New York City
- Jack Cohen, who founded the Tesco supermarket chain
- Ashley Cole, Chelsea footballer, ex-husband of Cheryl
- Bud Flanagan (born Chaim Reuven Weintrop)
- Margaret Pepys, mother of Samuel, and
- Abe Saperstein, founder of the Harlem Globetrotters.

On a personal note my own great-grandfather (Adolph Pederson) who had emigrated from Denmark lived and died in Whitechapel. He was married at St. Botolph's, Aldgate. I don't think he would have been too popular in the East End with a name like Adolph! He changed it very quickly to Alfred, which is my middle name. My own dear mother was born in Whitechapel, so that is why the area has always been of interest to me. I hope you have enjoyed sharing that interest with me.

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Both maps are from *Stanford's Library Map of London and its Suburbs*, 1862, Sheet 11. This and many other maps are available from the Guildhall Library Bookshop

Conference Report “History- What is it Good For?”

“War: what is it good for ? absolutely nothing!” asks Edwin Starr’s anti-war song.

Can the same question- and answer - be given for history? With TV programmes like *The Normans*, *Tudors*, and *Timeteam*, we might ask *History in Crisis*? What crisis?

I fancied this one-day conference as soon as I saw it advertised in *History Today* magazine, for it’s a question about history and its relevance that I’m always asking myself. The event took place at the grand offices of the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, on 11th November 2011, Remembrance Day and at 11am we stood for the two minutes silence.

Conservative MP and Minister of State for Universities and Science David (“Two Brains”) Willetts related the government’s approach and he was joined in the opening debate by Labour Shadow Minister for Schools Kevin Brennan MP, and historian and Labour MP Tristram Hunt.

Keynote speakers included David Starkey, Justin Champion, Richard Evans (who wrote “In Defence of History”), Adam Fox (Edinburgh), Tom Holland, Paul Lay- editor of *History Today*, and Joya Chatterji (Cambridge). There was quite a

large audience comprising many students, lecturers, teachers, researchers, and writers etc. Of the speakers, the highlights were Hunt, Brennan, Fox, and of course Starkey.

Hunt led off and was lively, sharp, and witty. He began by questioning a government that decried xenophobic nationalism but wanted citizenship and shared British values to be taught in the classroom (begun by Labour), that the study of history can educate and mould a good citizen yet allowed only one hour of history a week to be delivered as part of a state-directed, school curriculum, so just 32 hours overall. History, its value and relevance to the economic well-being of the country was continually being asked to justify itself whilst the take-up of history in (middle class) private schools is far higher than in (working class) state schools.

Willetts was rather subdued and opaque regarding government policy and it was only when he began talking about his family growing up in Birmingham that he managed to bring some emotion and passion into his talk. The policies of student fees and funding in education isn’t making his job easy. Brennan in reply was very emotive and put the opposing case for Labour very well from a personal viewpoint. He questioned the Baccalaureate approach, the attitude that it’s always English history that predominates (a history teacher, he is Welsh), and that different interpretations of history are valid. There’s a continual debate now between a skills based and narrative history curriculum and an academic one based on the critical analysis of documents. Most exams take this form by asking questions, which has allowed narrow views of time to develop missing the understanding of the broad sweep of history.

The teaching of history in primary schools, and universities is considered good but that in secondary schools poor by comparison. In the profession, history is not thought just to be in jeopardy but crisis, threatened with being marginalized as has happened with Latin or Greek. I’m not keen on the word ‘crisis’ and Tom Holland in his speech made the point that the concentration on popular TV themes. i.e. the Tudors or Normans and the Edwardians doesn’t reflect evidence of crisis and it can bring new adult audiences to popular history. Sometimes TV history can be looked down upon by academics as A J P Taylor’s or Kenneth Clark’s wonderful performances were.



David Willetts

Being tied to a curriculum does hamper teachers following modules toward exam results and the dreaded schools league tables. This has focused attention on maths, English, sciences, technology etc to history's detriment and as the subject can be dropped as not part of the core curriculum (a 10% drop in those taking history exams since 1995? I'm a bit wary of stats and how they were presented), has encouraged its decline as much as changing values in a multi-cultural society.

There were sessions on: "What has history ever done for us?", and "Is all history good history?" Of the other speakers Fox was excellent, expressive and funny, talking about the film "The Life of Brian" and 'what have the Romans ever done for us?' Roads, public baths, law, aqueducts etc and how these ancient, if often seemingly dry, subjects can be updated to look at issues of modern transport, public health etc. The problem with talking about the Romans is that it's the victors who always write history. Similarly Scottish history is scarred by the 1745 rebellion, the Highlanders annihilated by Cumberland's 'butchers' and the tartan made illegal. I had thought that Irish history and the problems of objectivity would be discussed but it never arose.

Justin Champion (Royal Holloway College) pointed out that historians have a duty to enquire, inform and even provoke though 'revisionist' history is often questionable, but new on-line sources have opened up revealing new lines of enquiry for researchers.

The final keynote speaker on: "how to teach history" was David Starkey who was on good form: impish, provocative, and funny, a great communicator, a natural showman knowing he was putting on a performance. He got into an argument with Chatterji about the value-or-not of studying different cultures, and with one young man who had the temerity to suggest that documents were the way to study and analyse history. Starkey put him down quickly questioning why would he want to study dry documents and Wikipedia when often students can't even grasp the basics in terms of time and broad



David Starkey

periods. If you don't know about your own culture first how can you know or learn about any other? Are we forced to relive the mistakes of the past if we don't understand then? Starkey naturally pointed out that every teacher and historian was boring except him! School children who receive the wisdom of teachers, save a lot of time rather than reading and trying to assimilate unknown documents. The well-explained narrative has a place in history and good historians write good literature. It's not quite a clarion call to the return of the 'great man in history or 'kings and queens' (Starkey of course specializes in the Tudor monarchs!), or a 'conservative' history- but perhaps a return to a more inclusive, less strident history.

Political and economic history are still kings of the castle, but there's a place for ancient, medieval, local, and even family history being taught in a narrative sense.

Grasping the passage of time for children is very hard unless clearly taught, both at home and in school. I have never forgotten the boy who approached me to as I manned a history fair stall, and asked in all seriousness, "were the Victorians slaves?"

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The next newsletter will be available at our AGM on 16th April 2012.