

Cockney Ancestor



Summer 2024

Number 183

The East of London Family History Society

<http://www.eolfhs.org.uk>

Registered Charity No. 1094419

Vice Presidents:

Mr. David Filby, Mrs. Vera Bangs, Sarah Wise

Executive Committee

Chairman	Gary Barnes, 57 Ashdown Court, 2E Fulbourne Road, Walthamstow E17 4GF
Vice-Chairman	Melissa Ford, Petersfield, Church Lane, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1RQ
General Secretary	Janet Seward, 38 New Place Gardens, Upminster RM 14 3DQ
Treasurer	Kevin Dopson, 88 Gelsthorpe Road, Collier Row RM5 2LX
Membership Secretary	Sue Waine, 55 Park Lodge, Queens Park Avenue, Billericay CM12 0QH
Publicity Officer	Vacant
Projects Co-ordinator	Gary Barnes, 57 Ashdown Court, 2E Fulbourne Road, Walthamstow E17 4GF
Surname Interests	Vacant
Committee Members	Vera Bangs, 24 Alderney Gdns., Wickford SS11 7BD Jeffery Harvey, 55 Trelawney Road, Hainault, Ilford IG6 2NJ Charlie Mead, 70 Gernons, Basildon SS16 5TN

Branch Representatives

Central London	Jill Smith, Enquiries to General Secretary
Havering	Audrey Neal, 25 Sandown Avenue, Dagenham RM10 8XD
Newham & Redbridge	Ron Wood, 14 Crownhill Road, Woodford Bridge IG8 8JG

Front Cover Illustration

The Front cover illustration shows Walter Cyril Waterman, known as Cyril, as a toddler posed on a very old-fashioned tricycle. Cyril is Marion Keeler's father.

Image courtesy of Marion Keeler

Cockney Ancestor

In this Issue

WWII Defences Along the River Lea From Old Ford to Canning Town, Part II..	Alan Homes.....	3
Cockney Accents and The Holfords.....	Peter Holford.....	8
Life in Guinness Trust Before, During and After WWII – Part II.....	Douglas Andrews.....	11
Aldersbrook Children’s Home.....	Melissa Ford.....	16
Eating My Words (Some of Them).....	Madeline Seviour.....	19
Family Kinship in Debden.....	John Harrison.....	21
Jack the Lad.....	Ron Johnson.....	23
Obituary – Terry Kaye.....	Terry Bethell.....	25
Church Farm Hoppers Camp, Capel, Kent	Dawn Adams.....	26
Our Cockney Ancestors.....	Marion Bidmead.....	28
Researching a Family History Novel.....	Jean Renwick.....	32
The Reminiscences of an Ordinary Man – Part XVII.....	Reg Coleman.....	37
One FamilyTwo Brick Walls.....	Peter Cope.....	42
Report on the 2024 AGM.....	Janet Seward.....	46
Renewals.....	Membership Secretary....	49
LifeSpans in ChatGPT – Part I.....	Peter Holford.....	50
The Stories We Were Told.....	John Murray.....	52

Regular Features

Editorial.....	2	Round Up.....	30
Writing for CA.....	2	Recycling for CA.....	55
Post Box.....	18	Advertisement Rates.....	55

Diary Dates..... 56

© *The East of London Family History Society and Authors.*

The views expressed in articles and features are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Editor or the Society

Editorial

Nearly half way through 2024, where does the time go?
The 2024 AGM is over and a report on the day can be found on page 46.

I was hoping to receive lots of articles about those WWII ancestors who had taken part in D-Day but this has not happened—it's still not too late to get writing!

My father was a first lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserves serving on minesweepers so I doubt if he was taking part in the D-Day landings, he seemed to have served mainly in the Mediterranean. He never spoke about his experiences but I know it was a very dangerous job and he lost a lot of friends and comrades. He used to keep his uniform, sword and medals in a trunk but these were lost on one of our many moves around the world.

There is also a message from our Membership Secretary, Sue Waine, reminding us all that our renewal dates will be upon us soon. As the committee have regretfully had to increase memberships this year please note the different methods of payment in Sue's message. If you don't receive *CA184* (autumn issue) then you have probably forgotten to renew.

Please look carefully at the photo of three little girls on page 28 (Our Cockney Ancestors). It has been sent in by Marion Bidmead from The Copped Hall Trust. Marion says it was found in some books that were donated to the trust but they have no idea who these girls are. They do not want to throw the photograph away as it is such good quality and would love to find it a home. If you feel that you know who the girls are please contact Marion or the Copped Hall Trust.

Marilyn Roberts is trying to find a home for a picture of Fairlop Fair and the Fairlop oak. Although it is shown in black and white in Postbox (page 18) it is in colour. Contact her if you are interested.

Editor

The Editorial Committee is a Sub-committee set up by the Executive.

Members are:

Vera Bangs (layout), Audrey Neal (article preparation), Brian McDonald (grammar and postbox), Peter Holford (proof-reading) and Graham Keeler (photo editor).

WWII Defences along the River Lea from Old Ford to Canning Town—Part II

Alan Homes No. 206

The pillbox would have been manned by either regular soldiers, or more likely, members of the Home Guard (a.k.a. *Dad's Army*). Originally called the *Local Defence Volunteers*, the Home Guard was formed in May 1940 as an armed citizen militia supporting the British Army. Initially the plan was that this lightly armed force would simply guard key points such as public buildings, transport links and centres of communication, all essential to the war effort. But in the event of a full-scale German invasion, then the Home Guard would face the enemy in whatever capacity and take its chances with other combat formations in the defence of the country.

The pillbox and anti-tank obstacles at Old Ford would have formed part of the *London Stop Line Inner Defence* (Line C) in the event of a German invasion.

The River Lea formed a natural barrier but bridges were obviously weak points that needed defending. If word came through that the enemy were approaching the Inner Defence Line, British soldiers would have placed steel rails or RSJs in the slots located within the anti-tank obstacles, connecting them all together and forming a solid barrier across the pathway, blocking off the road. The primary purpose of the stop lines was to hold up the enemy, slowing progress and restricting the route of an attack.

FW3 designs were made from reinforced concrete (the Old Ford pillbox and anti-tank obstacles appears to have been constructed using roughcast concrete). The pillbox was formed using shuttering of wood, usually planks, but sometimes plywood or corrugated iron (in the case of the Old Ford pillbox, around 13 planks—their impression still visible on the outside walls) with concrete then filled into the gap between the planks. Once the concrete had hardened, the wood shuttering was removed. Construction was usually carried out by local firms to a set FW3 design, although builders sometimes adapted them depending on circumstances and whatever building materials were available locally.

Soldiers rarely slept in pillboxes, or rather (officially) did not sleep in the pillbox! Regular army troops manning the defences were billeted in civilian houses close to their area of responsibility. Obviously, Home Guard soldiers lived locally. A pillbox on their patrol line would probably be used as a shelter for the soldiers on guard duty but not actually patrolling. It seems likely that these men may have catnapped, but always wary of the duty officer who would have been less than understanding if he found them asleep! In the same vein the pillbox may have had rudimentary heating. This probably took the form of a small stove



Figure 7 Aerial photo of the railway bridge

Image courtesy of Alan Homes

primarily used for cooking rather than heating. Pillboxes tended to be cold, damp and terribly exposed and would not have been very accommodating in the middle of a cold winter.

There is no record of the noise of the guns being taken into consideration when the pillboxes were designed. In fact, the indications are clear that no such thought was in the designers' minds as the concrete is usually quite smooth and would have had no sound absorbing qualities whatsoever.

Equally, no soldiers were equipped with ear defenders. In those days the authorities were not so worried by health and safety! What is certain is that firing a rifle, or especially a machine gun, from a pillbox was a cramped, noisy and uncomfortable operation.

There was no electricity supplied to pillboxes. However, the matter of telephones is different. There must have been some sort of communication system, though there is no evidence one way or the other. In all probability, this would have been a field telephone in at least some pillboxes. Otherwise, in an emergency, it would have meant one of the soldiers running to the nearest house that had a phone to contact their superiors.

A quarter of a mile to the south in Bow Goods Yard (now the site of *Aggregate Industries*) was another FW3 Type 22 Pillbox. The pillbox stood adjacent to the railway bridge on the west bank of the River Lea, just to the south of the railway lines leading into the Bow Goods Yard sidings. The pillbox was probably demolished in the 1970s or 1980s and no trace of it now exists. On the east bank of the railway



Figure 8 FW3 Type 22 pillbox at Bow Goods Yard
Image courtesy of Alan Homes

bridge leading into the goods yard were a number, of rail blocks (three on each side of the tracks). These cubed tank traps are still in existence although access to them is restricted. Note: Rail blocks were made of reinforced concrete cubes which were placed in the cess (i.e. the area either side of the

railway tracks). In the event of an invasion, old rails would have been placed between the cubes and across the tracks to impede enemy vehicles, such as tanks, using the railway lines to advance.

Figure 7: This aerial photo of the bridge leading into the railway sidings shows the existing rail blocks (large circle) and the approximate location of the pillbox (smaller circle).

Figure 8: This photo probably shows the FW3 Type 22 pillbox at the Bow Goods Yard. In the background is a British Rail class 08 diesel-electric shunter (number 08409). These shunters were used extensively in the Bow Goods Yard. This particular, locomotive was built at British Rail Derby in June 1958 and renumbered (D3524) in March 1974, so the photo must have been taken sometime between these dates.

The next railway bridge across the River Lea was around 100 yards to the south and carried the Stratford to London mainline trains (now also used by the Docklands Light Railway). On the east bank of the railway bridge spanning the River Lea were more rail blocks (long since removed).

South of Hackney, there were only two routes that crossed the River Lea for road traffic travelling from Essex into London, the A11 at Bow Bridge and the A13 at Canning Town. Therefore, because of their strategic value, these bridges would have been prime objectives for any enemy troops approaching from the east. At Bow Bridge were placed road blocks. The exact type of road block is not



Figure 9 A typical collection of buoys
Image courtesy of Alan Homes

clear. They could be anything from old cars or trucks straddling the road (old motor vehicles were used at the Tolworth roundabout on the A3) to purpose built concrete blocks, the most common of which was the *Buoy* anti-tank obstacle.

The buoys were

widely deployed during the invasion crisis of 1940–1941.

Each buoy was a truncated cone of concrete with a rounded bottom, about two feet nine inches high, and with a two inch diameter hole through the axis. They would be placed in rows across a roadway. The advantage of a buoy was that it could be used to block or unblock a road quickly, which was especially useful on a busy main road like the A11 at Bow Bridge.

Passing a rod or crossbar through a pair of buoys formed a wheeled axle that could easily be rolled into place; when the axle was removed the buoys could be separated and stood up. Although easily knocked over, the conical shapes could not be rolled very far, they would move unpredictably and out of the field of view of a tank driver, making it difficult to avoid them. However, they were eventually judged to be ineffective and phased out. Because they were sited on public thoroughfares, the local



Figure 10 Anti-tank rail blocks
Image courtesy of Alan Homes



Figure 11 Aerial photo of the railway bridge across the River Lea
Image courtesy of Alan Homes

population generally found any type of road block a nuisance, especially car drivers who often drove into them by accident in the dark!

Figure 9: A typical collection of buoys supplemented

by steel girders used to block a road. Moving south, the next bridge across the River Lea was the West Ham to Bromley-by-Bow railway bridge. On the west side of the bridge, either side of the tracks, were placed three rows of rail blocks, around ten or twelve in total. Some still exist. Although not accessible to the general public, a number of these rail blocks are visible from a moving train. Adjacent to the rail blocks on the south side of the tracks was another FW3 Type 22 pillbox. However, this pillbox was demolished long ago, the exact date unknown.

Figure 10: Anti-tank rail blocks located just to the north of the railway tracks on the west side of the railway bridge spanning the River Lea, between West Ham and Bromley-by-Bow stations.

Figure 11: This aerial photo of the railway bridge across the River Lea between West Ham (to the east) and Bromley-by-Bow (to the west) shows the existing rail blocks (dark circles) and the approximate location of the former pillbox (light circle).

The final defensive position in Bromley-by-Bow was at the bridge crossing the River Lea at Twelvetrees Crescent where there was a road block. As was the case with the road blocks at Bow Bridge, the type used is not known.

The next bridge across the River Lea was the A13 at Canning Town. Here there was a pillbox and road blocks situated on the west side of the bridge. Very little is known about them. These were removed either during or immediately after the war.

Sources: The Pillbox Study Group (<http://www.pillbox-study-group.org.uk>).

7 Thorpe Leas, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 0BA

Cockney Accents and the Holfords

Peter Holford No. 14359

In CA166 Sandra **DAVEY** posed the question of whether East Enders are really East Enders. It's something that has passed through my mind many times over the years.

Sandra cites immigration to the East End and, indeed, the East End has acted as a transit camp for many groups of people. I doubt any family can claim East End purity.

I have lines arriving in East London from Suffolk, Somerset and France (Huguenots) from at least the 17th century. But the **HOLFORD** family were Cockneys through and through.

From at least 1750 the family lived in Spitalfields, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green and Hackney. Their work was within the community; silk weavers, piano makers and publicans. So, they all have Cockney accents. Right? Well, actually no, they didn't!

My dad was always proud of his Cockney heritage, born and raised in pubs in Hackney and Bethnal Green. And yet he didn't have a true Cockney accent. On the other hand, his sister who was ten months younger than him had the broadest Cockney accent I ever heard.

I queried this with Dad (Ernest John Holford) on a few occasions. He said his dad (Ernest Holford) didn't really have a pronounced Cockney accent either.

I never knew my granddad; he died in 1931. But I knew one of his sisters, Flo, and she was quietly spoken with a mild London accent.

My grandmother (Alice May **STAFFORD**) didn't have a Cockney accent either. But she had been born and raised in Camden Town and her family only moved to Hackney when she was sixteen. She readily identified herself as a Cockney because she loved the place and lived in Hackney for the best part of seventy years. But her accent was a North London one. In fact, her mother had grown up in Hampstead.

Accents are set at quite an early age. An article in the *Financial Times* sums it up quite succinctly:

We probably all know immigrants who arrived in a country as young children and end up speaking with the same accent as the natives.

Those who arrive after the age of 12, and certainly 14, often speak the language fluently but seldom lose their foreign accents.

It is easier, as an adult, to change your accent in your native language than in a foreign one but it requires a determined effort and, for many, involves extinguishing important aspects of their identity. Why would you

want to do it? (Michael Skapinker, October 3 2017 (Financial Times))

I was once introduced to a woman, Magda, who was a teacher in Manchester. She was Polish. Her father had been in the pre-war Polish government and the family had arrived in the UK as refugees after the war. I would never have known she was foreign because she spoke English perfectly and with a standard English accent.

She had a sister who had a business in Buckinghamshire and who needed assistance. I took the job! The sister was a few years older and spoke good English but with a dense East European accent. Magda was twelve when she arrived in England while her sister, Lena, had been seventeen. She had been too old to be able to master an English accent. And that was also true for my grandmother; she arrived in Hackney too late in her life (16-years-old!) to adopt a local accent.

But I wonder if Dad never had a Cockney accent. It is possible to be able to use different accents in different social situations.

I was born within the sound of Bow Bells but I know that doesn't make me a Cockney; I never lived within the sound of Bow Bells and after a week in hospital my Mum took me home to Putney. I grew up in Putney and went to a local primary school with a very mixed intake.

I soon learned that the language of the playground demanded a Cockney accent to be able to survive and to have status with the dominant characters. Those who didn't found themselves bullied; usually verbally but sometimes physically.

In family circles I was picked up on for dropping aitches and missing 't's. I learned to adapt accordingly.

Some of my aunts assisted in this training. My mum (born Stella **WOOD**) was one of five girls born and raised in Yorkshire. Four of them, including my mum, migrated to London in their early twenties and all four of them ended up with different accents!

Working in an office environment, Mum said she was teased unmercifully for her flat Yorkshire vowels. She quickly eradicated them and learned to speak with a standard London accent.

Eve married a Canadian Air Force pilot and became a Canadian with the accent to match.

Hilda kept her Yorkshire vowels; it didn't bother her. Florence developed a very refined, cut-glass accent as she accumulated trophy husbands, marrying a director of *Hawker Siddeley* and then a *Shell* executive

When I went to secondary school my middle-class accent took over. It was a selective school so social and academic success now required a 'better' accent. I could still switch to Cockney at weekends in Putney but after a couple of years we moved to Merton and I stopped using it.

Meanwhile we used to visit my dad's sister, Beatrice Constance, and her husband, Edward **SKINNER** (Auntie Bet and Uncle Ted). They were broad

Cockneys even if they had moved out to Goff's Oak in Hertfordshire. Ted had been dad's best friend in their twenties. They had rowed on the River Lee and boxed; Ted had been an East London boxing champion.

So why were brother and sister so different?

It was true that Dad and his sister became separated at the age of about nine when my grandparents divorced in 1923. Dad had stayed with his dad in the pub (*The Palmerston*, Well Street, Hackney) but Bet had been sent to live with a series of aunts because it was felt that the pub wasn't a suitable environment for a girl with no mother. (My grandmother was deemed the guilty party in the divorce and lost the children).

But I believe the difference between them was because of other factors. Dad was very much more aspirational; he wanted a better life. At work he was known by his first name, Ernest (shortened to Ernie). But he soon learned that his second name, John, was more socially beneficial! He joined the police and rose through the ranks finishing as a Detective Chief Inspector. I don't think he would have managed that with a broad Cockney accent at that time. I don't think mum would have been attracted to a broad Cockney either. She too was aspirational, concerned with 'getting on' and keeping up with her equally aspirational sisters. Perhaps aspiration leads to people consciously moulding their accents to gain social advancement.

Bet and Ted were evidently happy and content with their identity – why change it? This seems to chime with present day where regional accents are becoming accepted. There is less reason to adopt 'received pronunciation' in order to progress. But at the same time regional accents are disappearing or becoming less pronounced as mass media has increased its influence over the way people speak. Perhaps we have moved away from a society where George Orwell could say that *the working class are branded on the tongue*. And so much the better.

Living in a valley in the Pennines for the last forty years I have heard the decline of the distinctive local dialect which is now only spoken by some of the oldest generation. It will soon be extinct as the local mills have closed and the young people commute to Manchester. And that poses the question: Is Cockney the same as it was 100 years ago or has it been modified and is now different, infused with Aussie vowels and mannerisms acquired from on-line chat? Or is Cockney now a part of Estuary English?

For the record, my accent hasn't changed after living in the North for so many years: I arrived too late for it to change! But my wife and children have northern accents.

Reference

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estuary_English

Email: counthill@aol.com

Life in Guinness Trust Before, During and After WWII, Part II

Douglas Andrews No. 5210

As recounted in my earlier article we seldom spent time in the shelters but, when we did, it was either in one of the flower-bed ones by the boiler room or one of the two near the railway embankment. We nevertheless preferred this type because, rightly or wrongly, we felt that they would prove to be safer than the surface ones if they should receive a direct hit.

Dad was never with us when we did use them because he worked nights throughout the war delivering telegrams, for which service he was later commended by his superiors (plus his volunteer service as a fire-watcher). He had, however, been fined thirty shillings for speeding in the black-out when doing 28 m.p.h. in a 25 mile an hour zone, with his driving licence endorsed to this effect—and he had to pay the fine out of his own pocket! My father was one of those individuals who had never taken a driving test, having been taught to drive by the GPO then issued with his licence.

On each of the five levels of flats there had been a very low-powered light on each landing which helped when climbing the stairs but, during *The Blitz*, even this meagre light source was reduced to one every two floors and the sash windows on each landing were completely painted over with a matt black substance.

From our landing window four floors up, we often watched the numerous searchlights hunting for enemy bombers, accompanied by the deafening crash of gunfire and the resultant flashes when their shells exploded. I remember only too well that Finsbury Park had three anti-aircraft guns where the sports field was later built and there were more in Victoria Park. There was also a barrage-balloon site adjacent to the large pond on Clapton Common manned, if that is the correct term, by ATS girls!

The war provided a wonderful feature for us boys in the flats when, at the outbreak of hostilities, the wide expanse of low-lying marshy ground encompassed by the arc of the railway line from *Tottenham Hale* to *Clapton* stations was criss-crossed with ditches approximately a hundred yards long by four feet wide and two feet deep. This measure ensured that no aircraft or gliders could land there. But what delighted us was that the ditches soon filled with water, which in turn became home to tiddlers, fresh-water snails, leeches, newts, tadpoles then frogs and toads, water boatmen and other aquatic insects.

The reed beds were a haven for small nesting birds plus several species of dragonflies. As if this wasn't enough to keep us interested, there was always train spotting to be done with the local line to Chingford and the East Anglian



Father and Micky

Image courtesy of Douglas Andrews

passenger traffic with its larger locomotives. But we found most interest in the goods trains coming along the line from Stratford with the largest engines of all, pulling trucks full of tanks and guns and other war materials imported from the USA, having previously been unloaded in the docks.

The keeping of pets was always strictly against regulations and, on the occasions when we provided shelter for some poor creature, mother feared that we would receive a *Notice to Quit*. One of the first to receive our help was a lost racing pigeon my father called ‘rings’ since he had a couple of them on a leg. The bird was fed with split peas—a commodity that was not on ration—but, although he had lost his way, he always managed to find our kitchen window ledge, which at that time was four floors up.

On one occasion when mother had made a rice pudding and left it to cool by the open window while we visited an aunt, the bird blotted its copy book by entering the window and leaving his calling card on its surface!

At other times we briefly took in stray cats, a hedgehog or two and we had two quite large fish in the enamelled bath in the kitchen for a few days. But perhaps the most notable was a mallard duck which father picked up by the side of Balls Pond Road late one evening and brought home tucked inside his postman’s jacket. The bird spent the night in the small kitchen sink filled with water and, as usual, it was left to mother to take the fish and duck (plus my newts when she found one crawling across the kitchen floor) back to a safe release point, The New River. I

do not know if the ‘no pets’ ruling was relaxed behind the scenes, but we adopted a cat in the late 1940s (see picture of father and Micky) which posed problems when we lived four floors up at No. 255, but we shortly thereafter moved to a ground floor flat at No. 281 near the allotments between us and Holmleigh Road, thereby solving them.

Remember mother’s ambition to one day live in the block near the main gate? During the summer of 1944 she was somewhat peeved to say the least, when her niece, Olive **DYER**, moved into a second floor flat just opposite the Superintendent’s office! She achieved this by the simple expedient of marrying the Superintendent’s son, Arthur **BIRCH**! It’s not what you know. That period of Olive’s life must have been tinged with sadness however, because her older brother, also an Arthur, a corporal in the *1st Bn. The Rifle Brigade*, had been killed just after D-Day the 6 June, fighting near Caen 25 July 1944. He was buried in Ranville Cemetery near Pegasus Bridge.

For the entire time I spent living in the flats, it had always been the responsibility of the tenants to do their own decorating. So, whenever it was necessary, you asked one of the porters for (1) a bucket-full of whitewash, or (2) a yellowish distemper, accompanied by a brush that was at least 4 or 5 inches wide. If you hadn’t returned them within about a fortnight, questions would be asked about their return—there could well be a waiting list.

Immediately after the war we experienced two very severe winters and, whereas one might think that with our massive coal industry there should be no problem of supply, this country was exporting it to our recently defeated enemy Germany, the argument being that their need was even greater than ours. This posed problems in the flats because supplies of coal were somewhat irregular and, if we were to get any, it always arrived mid-Saturday morning by way of a steam-powered lorry from *The Gas Light & Coke Company*. As soon as it entered the main gate, we would rush upstairs and grab our large stout-handled bag then join the queue which had already formed by the boiler room where, if we were lucky, we were allowed to buy 28 lbs of coal. We then hurried back upstairs and tipped it into our bunker and promptly returned to the queue in the hope that (1) we would not be recognised, and (2) that we could buy a further 28 lbs. of precious fuel.

One summer, a year or two after the war, *Guinness Trust* provided a day excursion to the seaside for all the resident children, and there was the unusual sight of a dozen or so *Grey Green coaches* lined up by the main flower beds ready to take us to Margate and Dreamland (the large amusement park). After lunch we went on to another resort—possibly Broadstairs or Ramsgate, then home.

On 4 February 1953 (just five days before I exercised my single-journey rail ticket to Portsmouth Harbour to join the Royal Navy for the foreseeable future) I took the pictures of *Grey Green’s* latest model of coach on their forecourt. I believe it was named *Coronation* and, when the photo was taken, it was so new that it couldn’t



Grey Green's latest model coach
Image courtesy of Douglas Andrews

be driven on the road since it had not been issued with its registration number!

From about the mid 1960s onwards, the Trust began work modernising the entire estate, which involved considerable interior rebuilding, the removal of one flat in every four and the

provision of—what was it?—a lift shaft or perhaps a garbage chute (I was never in any of the modified blocks to find out).

Before work could commence, each block had, of course, to be emptied. This involved rehousing tenants into another flat as and when one elsewhere became vacant. My brother and I, together with our wives, were therefore called upon to move our ageing mother at least three times during this process. I believe that in mother's eyes at least, this inconvenience was well worth-while, because it enabled her to achieve her ultimate ambition (at last!)—she was finally housed in what had been the Superintendent's block, which, after its modernisation, was a warden-controlled one! One obvious result of the modifications was that the individual numbers of each flat disappeared and each block, now containing only fifteen flats in each of the two entrances, acquired a name, the first of which began with the letter A (*Adams House*) and so on, alphabetically.

After the war, very few people had a car and it was not possible to park in the flats since the gates were locked every evening. My father had, however, bought a second-hand Hillman Minx 1938, registration number GEV 508—but why he did so was a mystery to me, because the nearest garage he found to rent was in one of the railway arches under Hackney Downs station, complete with its earth floor and perpetual dampness. This involved two of us in two bus journeys each way every time father wanted to use it—one son vital to provide the necessary push if the car refused to start as it frequently did, with Dad jumping in as soon as it was rolling

down the slope to bung it into second gear and hope that it started! Petrol was, of course, severely rationed, only a few gallons per month, but Dad habitually used the garage on the corner of Albion Road, just opposite Stoke Newington Town Hall, because it was on his way to work at Upper Street Islington Sorting Office.



Princess Diana meeting my mother
Image courtesy of Douglas Andrews

The garage issued its favoured regulars with a small blue Bakelite violin badge (this was before plastic had been invented!) which father pinned behind the lapel of his jacket, and whenever he wanted to fill up, he would ask the pump attendant for something like *two gallons with coupons* and—flashing the violin behind his lapel—*three on the fiddle!*

Mother was by no stretch of the imagination, adventurous. She had been born in Stamford Hill and passed away almost ninety-seven years later, less than a mile away and still in Stamford Hill. She never flew and only once did she ever venture abroad. This was a five-shilling excursion across the Channel some-time between the wars, but she didn't like the sea so she never left these shores again.

Once the modernisation work was finally completed, it was decided to arrange for a public figure to visit Guinness Trust to ceremonially declare them open and meet their oldest resident. *Her Royal Highness Princess Diana* graciously agreed to carry out this task. When mother was informed of her impending honour, her immediate reaction was *Oh, she won't want to meet me!* But she did and the result is there for all to see, as in the above picture, which pleased the family no end!

Email: doug@towerroad.plus.com

Aldersbrook Children's Home

Melissa Ford No. 7658

West Ham Borough had originally housed children in the workhouse, then they started housing them in scattered homes. You had several children in one house looked after by a matron (also called a houseparent). There were many of these scattered homes around. Not just in West Ham but in South Woodford, East Ham, Leytonstone, Forest Gate and Stratford—all run by the West Ham Union.



Aldersbrook Children's Home
Image courtesy of Melissa Ford

In 1907 West Ham decided to purchase land by Wanstead Flats on the Wanstead side. By 1911 they had built five receiving homes called Lodges, also workshops for training the older girls and boys. Each one was named after local notables, **LISTER, FRY, MORRIS, HOOD, and BUXTON.**

By 1929 when the *West Ham Poor Law Union* was dissolved, East Ham, as a County Borough, took over public assistance within its own area and it also agreed to take over the *Union's Children's Home* at Aldersbrook. A Community Hall was added that still stands today. On the wall it bears the inscription *County Borough of East Ham 1931*. It is still owned by Newham Council despite sitting inside the London Borough of Redbridge. In 1933 the site opened a nursery.

With the outbreak of WWII it was decided that the children should be evacuated to Bacton in Norfolk, then to Polzeath in Cornwall. Alterations were made to the building. The nursery block was used to accommodate a casualty clearing station. The hospital opened 16 September 1939 with 68 beds for civilian and service casualties. The hospital had an operating theatre, x-ray and physiotherapy departments.

The home farm, which was part of the children's home was allowed to have livestock to help with the war effort. Lister lodge was altered to become the air raid shelter.

By 1943 the government amended policies and transferred the casualty clearing stations to the main hospitals. By 1945 the site was once again a



Plaque on wall

Image courtesy of Kelissa Ford

children's home. Fry lodge became the receiving ward for new arrivals.

It was decided that the nursery was to be used as a temporary maternity hospital. It opened in March 1947 with 21 beds. The nursing staff consisted of a matron, an assistant matron, four staff midwives and 12 assistant nurses. The lying-in wards were named after flowers – Heather, Rose, Acacia, Hyacinth, Primrose and Snowdrop, while the labour wards were Lavender and Laburnum. The admission ward was called Keene and the children's nursery ward was named Peter Pan. To have your child at the hospital would cost you seven guineas. The maternity hospital didn't join the NHS until 1950. My own sister was born there in 1953. It continued being a maternity hospital until 1957 when it was closed. The site was taken over as a geriatric unit for East Ham Memorial Hospital and was known as The Aldersbrook Unit. By 1983 the 3-acre site was sold for £875,000 and the building was demolished; a new housing estate was built called Alders Close.

I am not sure when the children's home closed but the main building became an old people's home from the 1950s. Buxton, Hood and Lister lodges became Newham council flats.

Several of the buildings remain standing.

(First published in Newham & Redbridge newsletter 182)

Email: historymel4@gmail.com



Post Box

The Editor reserves the right to edit letters due to space considerations.

- ☐ Marilyn **ROBERTS** (13251) says that she came across an old copy of *Cockney Ancestor* (Summer 2004). She keeps all her back copies in one place and she was curious as to why this was not with the others, but she soon found out.

Colleen **MITCHELL** had written a short piece on the *Fairlop Oak*. Marilyn was born in Bow and attended *Sir Humphrey Gilbert* school, so Fairlop was where pupils went for sport and recreational activities. It was then that Marilyn remembered that she had an old framed print of *Fairlop Fair* which features the *Fairlop Oak*, purchased to remind her of her roots.



When she found the print again, there was a photocopy of the article stuck to the back. Marilyn meant to contact Colleen to offer the print free of charge but never got around to it.

After some 20 years, the offer still stands so if anyone is interested, contact Marilyn and she will make arrangements to send it. (Email: *marilyn.roberts45@gmail.com*)

- ☐ Janet **GREAVES** has written to say that she noticed a couple of books in Newham Bookshop which may be of interest to members. These were: *London Cemeteries—An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*, by Hugh Meller and Brian Parsons. *The People's Cemetery. Public and Communal Burials at the City of London Cemetery from 1856*, by Leyton and Leytonstone Historical Society. Janet says that, in her more active days, she could remember that it could take a lot of time to discover where somebody was buried.

Eating My Words (Some of Them)

Madeline Seviour No. 14195

In *CA176* I had a rant about the *hints* which are distributed like confetti by the likes of *Ancestry* and *Findmypast*. I must now confess that *Ancestry* has given me a real gem, which has provided some valuable new information, tied up some loose ends—and created another puzzle! The document in question is from *Westminster Poor Law Records*. It's a *Settlement Examination*, dated 23 July 1812, and concerns my 4 x great-grandmother, Mary Ann **SIVIOUR**. She and her four children were being removed from the parish of St. Sepulchre, Newgate to St. Clement Danes.

This is what I knew about the family prior to reading the document: My 4 x great-grandparents, Matthew **SIVIER** and Mary Ann **WRIGHT**, married in Acton 26 July 1801 (*parish register and Boyd's Index*). This is confirmed by the Settlement Examination. Their children:

Elizabeth **SIVOURE**—baptised 14 April 1805 at St. Clement Danes—parish register gives date of birth 6 January 1804.

Sarah **SAVIOUR**—baptised 30 November 1812 at St. Sepulchre (parish register).

Matthew Sivier (my 3 x great-grandfather)—baptised 5 April 1816 at St. Sepulchre (parish register). Ann Sivier—baptised with Matthew.

Surname spelling didn't settle as **SEVIOUR** until the mid 19th century.

Now a problem: 17 March 1813 Joseph **SEVIORS** was baptised at Clerkenwell. This was a non-conformist baptism—the register states that the parents were Matthew and Mary Ann of the parish of St. Sepulchre. It gives Joseph's date of birth as 27 November 1812. This was three days before the baptism of Sarah—why were they not baptised together? Was this a different family? Even allowing for variant spelling, Seviour was—and is—an unusual name.

There is a non-conformist burial at Clerkenwell of Matthew Saviour 26 July 1812. This could have been my 4 x great-grandfather or his father, also Matthew.

The *Settlement Examination* answers some questions.

It provides the childrens' dates of birth: Elizabeth's is confirmed; Sarah, baptised in 1812, was born 9 November 1805; Ann, baptised in 1816, was born 24 September 1808, and Matthew 9 June 1810. Matthew was three years older than I'd thought. Calculating from censuses and his death certificate he was assumed to have been born in 1813.

The document suggests that the Matthew buried 26 July 1816 was my 4 x great-grandfather. The *Settlement Examination*, three days previously, had stated that 'her (Mary Ann's) said husband has been in *the House for the Cure and Prevention of Contagious Fever* (Grays Inn Lane) ever since Monday last'

The mystery of Joseph is now solved. On 20 January 1817 Mary Ann was once again removed from St. Sepulchre to St. Clement Danes, together with Sarah, Ann, Matthew, and Joseph, aged 4. Joseph was born four months after the death of his father. On 19 May 1817 the family was admitted to *St. Clement Danes* workhouse. The eldest child, Elizabeth, was not with the family. She would have been 12-years-old; I have no further information about her until her marriage in 1839.

A remaining puzzle is the chaotic nature of the children's baptisms—I previously mentioned the baptism of Sarah three days after the birth of Joseph; Joseph's baptism took place three years before that of his elder siblings Matthew and Ann. Then there is the switch from C of E to non-conformist and back again.

But that's not all that the *Settlement* document revealed—I now know that in 1812 the family had been living in Houghton Street in the parish of St. Clement Danes. Houghton Street seemed familiar—then I remembered that it is one of the roads off Aldwych, though of course Aldwych wasn't built until the early 20th century. I worked there for more than thirty years—how strange to realise that I was so close to where my ancestors had lived.

I found in the *London Picture Archive* a beautiful late 18th century map of the area. I ordered a print, and it was posted to me—or rather to Madeline **SAVIOR!**

114 Westbury Road, Ilford, Essex. IG1 3BW

Family and Kinship in Debden

John Harrison (non-member)

I work as a town planner. A planner's training is a very wide one and one of the subjects I studied at college was sociology.

One book that was recommended for reading for sociology was *Family and Kinship in East London* by Michael YOUNG and Peter WILLMOTT, first published in 1957 and still in print. I did not read the book when at college, but I have recently acquired a copy and read it.

The book has two halves. The first is a sociological study of families in Bethnal Green carried out by interviewing a sample of residents. This describes close-knit extended families. This was particularly the case with the female line. When daughters married, they would often either live with their mother's family if they could not find accommodation for themselves or find accommodation nearby rather than live with the husband's parents or near the husband's parents. Married daughters living elsewhere would see the mother frequently and the mother helped with bringing up the children, for example with babysitting.

Clearly the family was not the only basis for relationships. The community of Bethnal Green was relatively stable. People had grown up together, so a trip out to, say, the shops would result in one encountering many people one knew. There were various catalysts which facilitated relationships such as the workplace and public houses—the area was well supplied with the latter, seemingly almost one on every corner.

The second half of the book reports the outcome of interviews with residents of *Greenleigh*, a London County Council housing development in Essex. The authors deliberately concealed the identity of *Greenleigh*, but I can reveal (well I don't think it is much of a secret nowadays) that it was Debden. In 1953 50 couples who had moved from Bethnal Green to Debden were interviewed and 41 of them were re-interviewed in 1955.

The picture the book paints is one of the Debden couples being much more isolated. They moved from an environment where they knew their neighbours to one where they did not. Debden had little in the way of community facilities, namely just two pubs and a community centre at the time. Also, shops were not nearby, scattered throughout the area, but concentrated in two shopping centres. Neighbours, were considered to be, *stuck up* and there seemed to be very much a *keep up with the Joneses* attitude. Though links with families in Bethnal Green were generally retained, distance and the cost of public transport meant contact was less frequent, except for a few who kept jobs in Bethnal Green. Activities were much more home-based and frequently this centred round television. The

authors concluded the families who had moved to Debden to have benefited from better quality housing and a more rural aspect but lost out in terms of the closer links with family and neighbours that Bethnal Green provided. Also, families with children had better educational opportunities for the children. Clearly these conclusions cast some doubt on the desirability or the appropriateness of the *overspill* policy of decanting residents from London to surrounding areas to reduce overcrowding in the metropolis.

It was Sue TAYLOR, who has done a lot of research on Debden's history, who told me that *Greenleigh in Family and Kinship in East London* related to Debden. Some of the interview notes which formed the basis for writing the book are now available at *Churchill College, Cambridge*. In the book, family names are changed, but Sue has been able to talk to Debden residents who were interviewed for the book and contrast what they said with the notes of what they said in the 1950s. She tells me the residents gave a much rosier picture of their move to Debden to her than the more nuanced contemporary notes imply.

Family and Kinship in East London was quite a significant publication; to quote from Wikipedia, *It, was the first British sociological study that properly investigated deeply people's attitudes, beliefs and feelings. Using detailed prose and limited statistical analysis, it charted how decisions from the top affected ordinary people in their day-to-day and prospective lives.*

In exchanging e-mails with Sue Taylor about the book and this article, she has given me some comments which are worth sharing to conclude this article.

The thing to remember with the book, especially after having been given access to some of the research papers / transcripts, is that they were comparing family structures in Bethnal Green with a new estate they called Greenleigh. It was never meant to be a description of the new estate, which is partly why they renamed it and hid the identities of the people they interviewed. The theme of the book is that families in Bethnal Green were very close, usually dominated by a matriarch who ensured that everyone was looked after and that new mums had lots of support. Once young families moved to Greenleigh, they lost all that support and were often very lonely, especially as husbands were at work during the day, so they had to develop new support networks where they lived. The book makes it sound more positive than it was. The first Debden residents came from Dagenham, and new tenants could come from anywhere in London, not just the East End. Non-London County Council (LCC) tenants were not allowed to apply for a house there—and that included Loughton residents, who had to wait for Harlow to be built.

So, the focus of the research was how the wives, in particular, managed, without support. Yes, they had lovely houses with indoor toilets and a bathroom - all mod cons in those days—but there was nobody to help them should something go wrong, and many have told me missed their mothers and sisters, especially when

children were unwell or when the children were at school and they had nobody to talk to. The men kept on doing what they had always done, they went out to work, some locally, some still went back to where they had previously lived by train, and they kept up their friendship groups that way.

The LCC built the houses but they neglected the infrastructure, a familiar story! Children were bussed to Chingford and Woodford because the LCC had failed to build schools in its building programme—and for a time, Loughton Hall (a large house formerly the home of the Lord of the Manor) became a school too. There was talk of a school strike, organised by the very active Communist Party that met at Loughton Hall and they also organised a protest because there were initially no buses in the area—people had to walk into Loughton—and mums had to walk into Loughton six times a day if their children went to Staples Road School, close to the centre of Loughton, and came home for dinner (children to school, the walk back, then taking them down for lunch and then back again, and at 4pm, picking children up from school).

Loughton, Essex (complete address withheld)

Jack the Lad

Ron Johnson No. 15826

My grandfather, George JOHNSON, was born in Haggerston, 8 April 1906. When the blitz hit London, he was evacuated to the small village of Roade, in Northamptonshire.

I was born in 1951 and got immersed in genealogy when I was about 16. Following the golden rule of family historians, I chatted to my Pap, and asked him what he could remember about his family. I soon learned he came from a family of eleven, all born in either Shoreditch, Haggerston or Hoxton.

One of his brothers in particular intrigued me. Pap told me he thought his brother, Alf, had been in prison, but he didn't recall how, when, or why.

Sadly, my Pap died before I found out about Alf, and it wasn't until the internet came along that I discovered Alfred Thomas Johnson who was born 27 October 1902 in Shoreditch. (I think that for the rest of my story we'll have to call him Jack the Lad...!).

Great-uncle Alf had indeed been in prison, in fact he'd graced the interiors of His Majesty's prisons many times since the age of 13. Sometimes he called himself a baker's journeyman, sometimes a café proprietor, but it was all a scam. It turns out that Pap's brother Alf was a conman of huge proportions.

All in all, the *Police Gazette* recorded no less than twenty-one aliases he'd



Alfred Thomas Johnson
Image courtesy of *The Police Gazette*

used over his career of crime. It described Alf as being, *an audacious thief and fraud, who frequently posed as a bachelor or widower. The Gazette* also stated he would often claim to *have a silver plate in his chest and to have shrapnel wounds.*

An inveterate and plausible liar, Alf conned people all across England. In Great Yarmouth (don't ask me how he got there!) he obtained food by false pretences as he had an RAF officer's uniform,

claiming to be a Captain **MONTAGUE**, the Commander of the R-33, based in Pulham, Dorchester. He boasted he was under orders to fly to Germany in his airship in the next day or two. In actual fact, Alf was a cook in the RAF and they sacked him after just a few weeks!

Aged just 13, Alf stole money from his father and he was sent to *Milton Industrial School* in Farnborough until he was 16. After release, he traipsed to Bedfordshire and stole a bicycle in Biggleswade.

Suffolk was his next port of call and he was arrested in a hotel in Lowestoft, this time claiming to be Flight Lieutenant Sir William **COKE** of Henlow airfield in Bedfordshire.

In 1923 he was at it again! He stole a book of 23 cheques from a Mrs Annie **BRUMSDEN** and £10 from 77-year-old Edith **BONNINGTON**. For these offences he was sentenced to nine months in prison.

Alf's life of crime ended suddenly and sadly in Well House Hospital in Barnet, having been knocked off his bicycle by a lorry on the new Barnet bypass. He succumbed to his injuries on New Years Eve, 1938 and was buried in Hatfield Hyde cemetery. He left behind his long-suffering wife, Ivy (nee **CHAPPLE**, born 9 April 1902 in Edmonton) and six children who probably knew nothing of their father's criminal escapades. I often wonder if he ever sent any of his ill-gotten gains back home to support them all.

Moral of the story? Open cupboards and you may find skeletons. Makes a change from the ag. labs though, don't it. Do you have a Jack the Lad or Jill the Lass in your tree? I'd like to hear about them if you do.

25 The Ridings, Roade, Northampton NN7 2NH



Obituary



Terry Kaye

by Terry Bethell



We were astonished to learn that Terry Kaye, the Chairman of the Central London Branch died very unexpectedly shortly after the May meeting of the Branch.

He had been running the Friday meeting in his normal style, introducing the speaker, and setting out the latest family history bulletins and organising questions as always.

To hear first thing on the Tuesday morning that he had passed away shocked us all.

Terry was born in Clacton-on-Sea in May 1947. His family moved to East London and for his secondary

education he attended Beal school in Ilford. He went on to work in the Civil Service until his retirement and subsequently moved to Woking and more recently to Ash.

He is remembered for his love of Cricket, firstly for Essex and subsequently for Surrey, where he was a regular spectator.

He also followed Woking Football Club which was close to his home.

He enjoyed jazz music and he was of course, interested in Family History and followed organisations such as the Society of Genealogists.

He assisted several people locally in their research.

Our sincere condolences go to his wife Barbara and their family.

Church Farm Hoppers Camp, Capel, Kent

Dawn Adams No. 8923

29 September 1939

On Sunday, 3 September 1939, Prime Minister Neville **CHAMBERLAIN** announced on the wireless that *this country is at war with Germany*. Thousands of East Enders were *not* at home, clustered around the set in the traditional picture: September was (and is) when the hops are picked in Kent.

The *Kent & Sussex Courier* of Friday, 1 September reported their arrival on the previous Monday (28 August, not then a Bank Holiday).

They came on special trains, arriving in Paddock Wood, carrying their respirators (gas masks). That may seem surprising, given that war had not yet been declared: gas masks had, in fact, been distributed in October 1938 by local authorities who had received them from the Home Office Depots in July that year. Manufacture and emergency distribution of gas masks had been discussed in Parliament as early as November 1936.

Hop-pickers generally stayed in huts, in fields close to the hop gardens (see picture below). Some were better built than others, but water had to be carried in buckets and cooking done on open fires. (I have no information on latrine



Hop picking in Yalding
Image courtesy of Dawn Adams

arrangements, but reminiscences from the 1950s may be found here: <https://londonsroyaldocks.com/forgotten-stories-hop-picking-fields-kent/>).

With a war on, there would be no singing round the camp fire after dark, owing to blackout restrictions. Local newspapers reported that some East Enders had never experienced a completely dark night, and found it disconcerting. Welfare support was provided by local churches and by the *Salvation Army*.

Collecting information for the *Identity Card Register* on 29 September presented something of a challenge for Tonbridge Rural District Council (among others), reported the *Tonbridge Free Press* on 22 September. Picking would not be finished in some hop gardens; also evacuees had begun to arrive.

The problem of an address for the hop pickers was dealt with by placing full responsibility for completing the returns onto the farmers whose hop gardens the pickers were living in. This might be complicated by the relatives of the pickers, who were constantly coming and going and by pickers who came and went without informing the farmer.

As for the evacuees, billeting officers were asked not to move anyone on the registration day itself. (Some hop pickers were due to become evacuees on finishing.) It became clear that, despite discouragement by the authorities, up to 8,000 friends and relatives of hop pickers had indeed made casual visits.

The programme of special trains for returning pickers began after 22 September, but there were many pickers still in Kent on *Registration Day*. The harvest had been a good one though the cones were small meaning that more needed to be picked to achieve a certain weight. Picking may have been a holiday, but the money still had to be earned.

So, while hunting my grandmother's second cousin, Flora **HICKS** (nee **CHURCHILL**), I found her with her widowed mother in the Hoppers Camp at Church Farm, Capel, Five Oak Green, rather than in Limehouse where I had expected to see her. There were over 300 people in that camp and a rough and ready count shows that more than half (176) were either redacted (because potentially still living ie born after 1923?) or specified as children. Just under a third (94) were women with *unpaid domestic duties*, while 44 men and women were in some sort of paid employment (plus seven street hawkers/dealers working on their own account).

Most of the declared occupations were urban rather than rural (motor drivers, factory or warehouse workers, machinists), though there was one farm labourer.

Five people were incapacitated—perhaps relatives who could not be left behind to fend for themselves. And there were nine deletions, people who had been there but were found to have gone, as predicted. If you have *mislaid* a cockney ancestor in 1939, you too may find that they were *hopping*.

34 Station Road, Topsham, Devon

Our Cockne

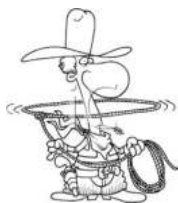


Marion Bidmead (*email: malb1956@hotmail.co.uk*) has sent th
It was found among some books which were donated to the C
so lovely, she couldn't bring herself to discard it. The original
"Could these girls be y

y Ancestors



This photograph is being put in to us in the hopes that it can be found a home. It is being kept on a noticeboard at Copped Hall with a message, 'Can any of our family members?' for fundraising purposes. The photograph is



Roundup

- ❖ Due to major building works affecting the public research spaces, the *London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)* will be closed from 4:30pm on Thursday 18 July and will re-open at 10am on Monday 5 August 2024.
- ❖ Visit the LMA's *Lost Victorian City Exhibition* a free exhibition open from 13 May 2024 to 5 February 2025.
Using the collections held at *London Metropolitan Archives* the exhibition provides a window into a Victorian London that has since gone from view. Featuring photographs and records of buildings such as the *Oxford Arms* in Warwick Lane in 1875, the Pool of London, horse drawn transport, shopping and entertainment, experience a captivating journey through a city that was rapidly evolving.
- ❖ *Findmypast* have published baptisms, marriages and banns (1558–1955) and burials for the county of Kent.
- ❖ *The National Archives (TNA)* have over 128,000 service cards for women who served in the *Women's Land Army* in WWII.
- ❖ *The City of London Cemetery heritage tours*. The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium is a 200 acre site full of natural beauty. With more than 3500 trees, 32 acres of landscaped memorial gardens, a woodland area, water features, ponds, and a nature area, the cemetery is home to a wide variety of birds, insects and animals. There are many stunning features to our site, along with a number of notable persons buried here, and we will attempt to show you some of them during our heritage tours. Tours last approximately two hours and are conducted on foot so please remember to bring your comfortable shoes.
To book a free place on one of our tours, please call our Bereavement Services team on 020 8530 2151 or contact us by email. Tours start at 10am and finish at approximately 12pm. Dates Sunday 21 July, Sunday 18 August, Sunday 22 September, Sunday 20 October.
- ❖ *Ancestry* has released records held for 125,000 Japanese Americans who were interned after the attack on Pearl Harbour.
They have also released the records of over 90,000 British Red Cross volunteers from WWI and have announced a collaboration with the National

Archives and Records Administration to make new records available, starting with a range of USA material from the Korean War.

- ❖ Following the announcement of the forthcoming General Election in July, on 24 May all signatories of the ‘*Do not allow original wills to be destroyed after 25 years*’ petition (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/654081>) were notified that the closing date for the petition had been brought forward to 00.01am on 30 May. This is due to the dissolving of Parliament, ‘which means all parliamentary business—including petitions—must stop’. The petition won’t be reopened after the election and the new Government *will have to decide whether to respond to petitions from before the election*. As this petition had met the eligibility requirement of more than 10,000 signatures (it had more than 15,000 signatories), it was responded to by the government on 1 March.
- ❖ *The Society of Genealogists* are holding an online talk by Jackie Depelle (1 hour) on *Discovering Manorial Records—working back from 1926 to 1089!* on Thursday, 1 August 2024 14:00–15:00. To book go to their website <https://www.sog.org.uk/>. Non-members £10.00.
- ❖ Have any of you seen *D-Day: The Unheard Tapes* on BBC iPlayer? Excellent three part documentary reliving the invasion of Nazi-occupied France through powerful eye-witness recordings. Young actors who resemble the interviewees at the time lip-sync the original testimony with actual footage of the invasion as it happens.
- ❖ TNA have released a new resource tracing the locations of 20th-century Prisoner Of War (POW) and internment camps in the UK—including the one located at Kew—through a series of interactive maps. A total of 538 camps have been mapped, including 510 POW camps and 28 internment camps. The resource provides the names of the camps together with dates of operation and links to relevant documents held in their collection, such as camp correspondence, inspection reports and war diaries. Search today to discover the history of these sites.
- ❖ *London Family Search Centres* are pleased to announce expanded resources in central London. The London Hyde Park FamilySearch Centre at 64-68 Exhibition Road SW7 2PA will open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am-4pm and the first and third Saturday of the month 10am-4pm. The London Wandsworth FamilySearch Centre at 149 Nightingale Lane, Balam, SW12 8NG will open Tuesdays and the second and fourth Saturdays, 10am-4pm. <https://locations.familysearch.org/en/gb/england/london/>

Researching A Family History Novel

Jean Renwick, author of The Mourning Brooch Books One & Two (non-member)



The mourning brooch
Image courtesy of Jean Renwick

In 1989 I inherited a curious brooch which inspired the writing of a trilogy based on real people, taking the story from its Yorkshire origins to London, the North-West and overseas to Philadelphia, Portugal, Belgium and Constantinople.

The best one could say about the brooch is that it is striking. Today we look upon mourning jewellery as macabre, especially when it incorporates a lattice of hair, but my mourning brooch has taken me places that I never imagined possible.

You will recognise the compulsion of research. Add to that a fascination to discover the real people behind the bare facts provided by certificates of birth, marriage and death, and you will understand how I was drawn to write a novel about families descended from the Elizabeth **ADDY** commemorated by the brooch. Could you try to do the same with your research?

I was left the brooch by my godmother, Dorothy **WALKER**, a close friend of my mother who lived in the village of Knowsley, near Liverpool.

I was intrigued; who was Mrs Addy, the woman named on the rear of the brooch, and why did my godmother own it? Research revealed she was Elizabeth Addy, who died aged 39 near Doncaster in 1849, leaving her farmer husband to raise two young daughters, Mary-Ann and Frannie.

However, as I built a family tree working down from Elizabeth, I could not make the link to Dorothy. It took time but, thanks to a canteen of silver cutlery gifted to Dorothy's parents on their wedding in 1903, I was able to trace the path of the brooch.

In *Book 1* of *The Mourning Brooch*, between 1849 and 1876, I reveal how the two daughters grew up and married. Mary-Ann (now Marian) Addy married John-

Henry **WILLEY**, member of a well-to-do Bradford family of wool merchants, and had three surviving children including a daughter, Henrietta.

Fortune favoured this side of the family. Marian's younger sister, Frannie Addy, wed Joe **MELLOWS**, a local farmer living close to Doncaster, and had a son and five daughters surviving into adulthood. The story continues in *The Mourning Brooch Book 2* running from 1878 through 35 years as they in turn grow up, marry, and have children of their own. As my research progressed, I was gripped by how the lives of the original two sisters took such different paths.

Scandal is a gift for a novelist and in Book 1 there were a couple of such events to add drama to the story. The Dead Wife's Sister Act, which forbade a man to marry his sister-in-law, created emotional tension. Later, we encountered a divorce, hitherto not readily available. This time it was press coverage which not only revealed the story of wife-beating but also the personalities of those involved, personalities which were threaded back into the earlier part of the story to add authenticity.

For Book 2, I found newspaper reports of scandal in Southport, at the turn of the nineteenth century the elegant resort for well-to-do Lancashire folk and the setting for a newly widowed lady with her young children.

With the help of the local family history society I was able to describe much about the resort. Later, we learn of the nefarious dealings of her new husband who gets into financial difficulties after selling quack potions which would counter hair loss, amongst many other afflictions, and also firm the bust.

When the Liverpool bankruptcy court takes him to the cleaners it is reported widely in the local papers and his wife's position is destroyed among her upmarket Southport friends.

Since in Book 2 an increasing number of characters emigrated to Philadelphia, I needed to step up my research. Unable to travel to the USA, fortunately I had the help of two American genealogy enthusiasts. The Germantown Historical Society helped me identify places where people lived and I paid for research by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. When John-Henry and Marian Willey move to live in America, he becomes known as a thriving wool merchant in Philadelphia, the 'Bradford' of America.

In contrast, I turn to Marian's sister, Frannie Mellows. Without revealing too much, life in Doncaster was much harder and her husband, a tenant farmer and breeder of shire horses, turns from the vagaries of agriculture to work in industry, like so many across the country at that time.

Doncaster was a town of train makers and *The Plant* the major employer. I don't know that Joe Mellows worked there but from the census details, he probably did. Working conditions were grim and, although agricultural workers came willingly to work for better money and under cover, it was a tough job with long hours and many industrial accidents requiring support from the *GNR Locomotive Sick Society*;



Holy Trinity, Sloane Square
Image courtesy of Jean Renwick

subscription a penny a week.

A marriage certificate can tell so much, but again leave you dangling. Lily, Frannie's eldest daughter, marries at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, a grand arts & crafts church, the widest in London, paid for by the 5th Earl of Cadogan, with its magnificent Burne Jones east window produced by William MORRIS.

She cites 69 Cadogan Square in London as her abode on her marriage

certificate. I have no idea why she was there nor how she met Ted Walker, listed as under-butler at 33 St. James's Square, then the London residence of the Earl of Derby, but I concluded that, like Ted, she was in service; a logical conclusion as censuses showed other of her sisters in domestic service. But nothing else linked her to Cadogan Square. What is more, she did not appear in the UK 1901 census. Neither did the owner of 69 Cadogan Square, a Mr Wyndham COOK, second son of one of the three wealthiest men in Britain, Sir Francis Cook, a textile merchant (*Google his story*).

Sir Francis held a superb art collection but had also bought Monserrate, a run-down palace near Sintra in Portugal, and spent huge sums renovating it. Why is Monserrate important? A couple of months before the 1901 census, Sir Francis Cook died. There would have been many affairs to settle including Monserrate

and, as Wyndham Cook and his wife also did not appear on the census, perhaps they were out in Portugal doing just that. And perhaps Mrs Cook's lady's maid accompanied them? Perhaps that was my Lily Mellows? Yes, all speculation, but a plausible theory and one that I have exploited to the full, adding more foreign travel to the tale.

I followed Lily and Ted Walker after their marriage and since, as a married man, Ted no longer could live-in at St. James's Square, I discovered from the birth certificate of their first son that they had a flat in one of the Peabody Buildings in Orchard Street, Westminster. I once had connections to that area so, by checking old maps of that time, I was able to write about Lily pushing the pram down Old Pye Street to Strutton Ground to do her shopping. Again, using maps, I could trace Ted Walker's likely walk to work in St. James's Square.

I was intrigued by a passenger list which showed one of the main characters travelling with his wife to their home in Philadelphia from Southampton, first class on the *SS Philadelphia* in December 1908.

They had travelled from Constantinople in Turkey. I knew that this was the centre of the mohair market, with goats of Asia Minor and beyond providing the staple for this highly prized wool.

With Google I reached The JB Priestley Library of the University of Bradford and discovered an astounding diary. In 1889 Bradford wool merchant Joseph **RILEY** had travelled to Constantinople, suspecting fraud by his agent out there. He wrote a diary noting his journey departing from Dover then from Paris all the way – on the Orient Express! Each city he passes is described: the landscape, the people in the fields. What could I do other than marry together the passenger list and that diary and have my wool merchant travel from Philadelphia to England and then by Orient Express to Turkey? Although my wool merchant travelled 20 years later than Mr Riley, I unashamedly borrowed from the diary to describe the journey. I love this sequence in the book as it is so unexpected – but based on fact, albeit bent a bit for the sake of the story.

Death certificates can reveal much and one of the characters, who worked in the brewing industry, was living in Chorlton-cum-Hardy when he died aged-thirty-three of chronic nephritis, chronic hepatitis, cerebral apoplexy and cardiac failure. With the help of a GP friend, I was able to deduce his lifestyle and the impact on his marriage and so develop a storyline

When you have no evidence of the day-to-day lives of people, you turn to national and local events and rely heavily on press reports. The court reporters revealed the shameful events which led to the bankruptcy of the snake-oil salesman, but the press also covered events around which your characters lived their lives.

In Book 2 we have the death of Queen Victoria and later the celebration of the coronation of Edward VII. The Earl of Derby was prominent in the

coronation and press reports tell of the grand dinners he hosted in London.

For my godmother's father as under-butler, there were many occasions for him to appear in the novel as the Earl and Countess of Derby had busy lives and the press reported the minutiae of their state, social and family life. So, I could relate how close the Derbys were to the Royal Family and how they hosted them on many occasions at Knowsley (racing at Aintree) and at their London home.

I was keen to understand what life was like for servants working up at *Knowsley Hall* and so I joined a public tour of this impressive stately home and gained permission to be shown 'below-stairs' where Ted Walker would have worked.

The long corridor downstairs, stretching the length of the house, would have been as busy as Piccadilly at its Edwardian height and was known as *Bedlam Row*.

I saw the pressing rooms, now fitted with commercial ironing machines and the servants' hall, now used for shooting lunches.

The Derbys and their household, once deemed larger than that of the King, dominated life in Knowsley and nearly everyone in the village was linked somehow to the hall. That link will grow further as the story unfolds in Book 3.

There are nearly 200 characters in Book 2 of *The Mourning Brooch* although the majority are only in passing. Only six are fictional. That authenticity is something which I prize greatly and, throughout, I have sought to treat these people with respect unless, as in press coverage, I discover them to be shady or downright unpleasant.

The Mourning Brooch Book 3 will be the final part of the saga, covering 1913 to 1943, two world wars.

There is a lot to research and I am fascinated by life on the home front in Britain but equally for the ex-pats in the USA.

Also, in 1920 my godmother is born and grows up to enjoy tennis with her special friend, my mother.

How both face WWII will be based on memories—my memories of what my parents told me of life in a village close to Liverpool and its vulnerable docks.

The story will end with an epilogue, wrapping up all the loose ends factually, and this way the reader will know the outcome but those in living memory will be respected with the simple truth of what really happened to them.

My books are self-published in paperback and for *Kindle via Amazon* as, at 77 I don't have the time to be refused by over 60 publishers. I just want the story out there to be read and enjoyed.

Jean Renwick (www.jeanrenwickauthor.co.uk)—where you will find many photographs.

Address withheld.

The Reminiscences of an Ordinary Man—Part XVII

This article was written by Reg C Coleman (Non-Member) in late 1970/80.

July 1924 was getting near to when I would be 21-years-old and I was getting restless and anxious to improve my position in life. Many of my friends were frivolously enquiring as to when I was going to have my 21st birthday party but, in fact, I had never given it a thought. Nor did my mother, for she had too much on her plate to worry about parties. We had never had a party at home in my life as parties go. For one thing there was no room, bathroom and my bedroom all rolled in to one and the remaining room was my parents' bedroom. So, no 21st party; besides, I could not afford it.

At the office, the manager had brought one of his friend's sons along for me to teach office procedure to. He had just left a famous school and I was amazed to discover that he could not do a simple fraction in arithmetic. To my astonishment, a few weeks later, the manager told me that his father, a bank manager, had taken him into his bank. So, this made me more restless; what the hell was I doing here in this place with no apparent prospect to get any further.

During the following Saturday afternoon I walked to my local Metropolitan Police Station and offered my services as a police recruit. I was interviewed by an Inspector whom I had admired for years when I had seen him on patrol with his sergeant. He was a smart and upright man and strutted with a military bearing and, when I had been a lad at school, often watched him and, with my boyish admiration, tried to strut along similar to him. Now, after all these years of seeing him at a distance, I was talking to him.

First he asked, *Can you fight?* I replied, *Yes Sir.* Then we sat down at a table, face to face, and he produced a Police Manual. Handing me a pen, he then told me to write down a paragraph which he dictated from the manual. This was to check my writing and spelling which was essential for reporting. Chest measurement came next, after which I removed my shoes for my height in stockinged feet to be checked. I was $\frac{1}{4}$ below the regulation height, then he told me to stand on the balls of my feet and stretch up and I was able to reach the required standard. My weight was 10 stones 13 lbs stripped. All that remained now was for the form to be sent to Scotland Yard. I had passed, as I thought, and I went away feeling happy.

Three weeks later a letter came from Scotland Yard. I had passed everything except my weight, which was too light. There was such unemployment then and the list of applicants so long, that the authorities became very selective in their choice. My first attempt had failed, but, by a strange co-ordination of events, I did many years later become a policeman in faraway Bristol.

During this year the solicitor for our company gave up his practice in the City of London to become the secretary of *Boots the Chemist* at their head office at

Nottingham. I had known him for some years so decided to write to him and ask what possibilities existed for a job with his company. A little later a letter came from their High Holborn office granting an interview. Despite having the backing of the secretary, I came up against class distinction or what was known then as *the old school tie*. I was confronted with three smiling and smug looking gents whose first question was *Well now young man, what school did you go to?* I could have lied or bluffed in my desperation to get a better job, but would have had to produce a testimonial, so I replied *An elementary one and I finished off in an L.C.C. night school*. Instinctively I knew that I had lost the job intended for me by the frown on their faces and by the peculiar way that they went into a huddle of discussion, just like I had seen the magistrates in a court of law, before passing sentences during my previous occupation in the solicitors' office. Turning to me with a kindly smile they said, *We are afraid that the only job we can offer you is a manual one, of a warehouseman*. This was a lower one to the one which I already had so I kindly thanked them and refused the post. I firmly believe that they got the answer they had hoped for and had appeased the request of their secretary. That was the position of 50 odd years ago, if you did not possess that *old school tie* you were up against a brick wall.

I had hoped that I would have gone to Nottingham and been near my friend the solicitor, who knew my value better. I wrote and thanked him for his help and told him the type of job offered and my refusal. To some extent I was an independent devil perhaps like my father and never told my dad what I had come up against because he was a sick man anyhow and I did not want to burden him with my troubles. I had always fought my own battles and felt a little cowardly to seek help from my parents.

My birthday came along and passed like any other with no emphasis on being the 21st. My holiday was due and I decided to spend it in Norfolk. A friend in south London owned an old war time lorry of five tons and went to Norwich twice a week and asked if I would like to accompany him. We met in the Mile End Road, Bow and off I went with him.

We reached Thetford Heath and the lorry broke down, miles and miles out in the wild, with not a house in sight. There were no battery starters in those days and the engines were started by inserting a large crank handle into a hole in the front of the motor. One had to exert considerable pressure to swing this handle and it had been known for the handle to kick back and break your wrist. There we were in the hot sun for hours, tinkling with the engine and continually turning the crank handle. There was very little motor traffic on the roads in the 1920s and we never saw a soul to give a helping hand. Sweating profusely in the hot sun and, many hours later, my friend, asked me to have one last go at swinging the crank handle. Taking a deep breath and in sheer desperation I swung that handle with all the might I could muster and what a relief it was when this mechanical beast of

an engine spluttered and hissed as though working against its will and gave way jumping into action. We sat down with a sigh of relief and wiped the sweat off our brows and jumped aboard hoping that it would not happen again.

I got off the lorry about ten miles from Norwich, having spotted a sign to my place of destination and said goodbye to my friend. I then walked about three miles across fields and stiles to my mother's birthplace of Wicklewood. Here I was destined to meet a girl named Gladys **HAMMOND** and simply could not shake her off. She was mad on me. I discovered that the village blacksmith let cycles out on hire for a penny per day and thought it would be a good idea to hire one for the holiday, which might enable me to dodge out of the way of Gladys. This proved to be very unsuccessful. Whatever road and lane I chose to take, dear Gladys laid in wait to ambush me on her cycle. When I returned to London, she wrote to me having procured my address from a relative. I courteously replied and we were pen pals for a long time; suddenly the letters stopped. I've often wondered what happened to dear Gladys the sweet village girl.

Now and again I accompanied my dear grandfather whilst he sat in his first-floor bedroom from where he shot pigeons with his double-barrelled shotgun. He had a tomcat named Nun who was quite a character. This cat would sit below his window and, when the pigeon fell to the ground, raced out and brought them in, laying them neatly in rows.

At night he became a poacher and roamed the Earl of Kimberley's estate which was about 1½ miles away and as regular as clockwork, when grandfather opened his backdoor at the crack of dawn, there was either a pheasant or a partridge laying there. One could not control the exploits of a cat, but nevertheless this was a punishable offence under the Gaming Laws so grandfather plucked the bird and burnt the feathers and proceeded to cook it for dinner immediately.

As far as the pigeons were concerned, they were a menace to the farmers and a flock settling in a field could clear its produce in a very short time so, from time to time, the farmers held a shooting period. The gamekeepers on the Earl's estate would try to shoot a cat, if seen, but somehow old Nun outwitted them and survived. Grandmother often made pigeon pie and very nice it was too.

After returning to London, I gave up the quest of looking for another job and tried to content myself with being lucky to have a job at all.

On looking around the streets of London it was a common sight to see men with only one arm, with the sleeve of their jacket pinned back to the shoulder with a safety pin. Another had a peg leg, like Long John Silver in the plays, there not being the expertise of the surgical professional as today to make false limbs. Others had one eye and the eyelid had shrunk back into the socket and others blinded completely. A large number of these poor men were unemployed. Some would stand on street corners with a row of medals pinned across the chest and with a notice stating a wife and so many children to support, accompanied

with a tin can for passers-by to put money in. Sometimes, a four-or-five-man band would march along the streets playing their instruments, with one fellow collecting coppers from passers-by in his cap.

There were also numbers of men who had been gassed during the war and had only one lung and the remaining one deteriorating fast. There was one chap working in my gang of men at the wharf who had been gassed and, whilst exerting while working with the other men, I could see his mouth opening and his chest heaving up and down as he gasped for air. In today's conditions he would never have been allowed to work. What expectancy of life has this poor chap got?

There were thousands of young widows trying to support their fatherless children. This was one of the many aftermaths of war, so I thought to myself, what was I grumbling about. The Great War of 1914/18 fought supposedly to end all wars as the politicians tried to make us believe, had also left in its wake a changed society.

The ordinary folk had become acutely aware of how they had been used in the furtherance of wealth by the upper classes who were still the top dogs in industry and unrest steadily getting worse only needed a small spark to set off a conflagration.

Not so many people went to church as before the war, perhaps disputing in their minds whether there was a God who could have allowed this to happen, but forgetting that, after all, this giant catastrophe was man made.

Less women became domestic servants and the well to do and great families were having to cut their meals and also to entertain in the restaurants and hotels owing to the depletion of their staff. The old order of society was disappearing.

Great estates were being sold or broken up and this became the beginning of the time when Dukes and Earls began to open up their palatial residences to the general public to view.

Motion pictures were just becoming more prominent and wireless broadcasting increasing. One thing that did not change, however, was the old order of public schools, in spite of the higher fees and the pictures in the periodical called the *Tatler* of titled people at shooting parties and at Ascot and Goodwood or the Eton and Harrow cricket matches. Something new was the invasion of high society, however, by the newly rich war profiteers as they were sometimes depicted in the magazine called *Punch*.

A memory I have too, is of the first cup final to be held at Wembley Stadium in May 1923, when King George V attended. This also showed the times were changing for he must have been the first reigning monarch to grace his presence at a football match in public.

Men's and women's fashions were changing fast. Bowler hats were being replaced by soft felt ones, collars also from sedate stiff and starched types to soft material, trousers also to very wide ones known as Oxford bags. Ladies

skirts were getting shorter year by year. Convention was going by the board.

Ladies were no longer being chaperoned and began smoking in public and even entering a public house without a male friend or husband to have a drink which was unheard of before and were taking an active part in the workaday scene.

When I first started work as a boy of 14, one seldom saw a woman working in an office ever as it was strictly a male domain.

The 1914/18 war had something to do with all this change in society and conditions of life. Petrol buses were taking over more from the tramcars, even air travel began to start when a man named **HANDLEY PAGE** and his partner Mr **THOMAS** began a company in 1919 the first, I believe, in England of inaugurating a service of aeroplanes carrying mail and freight plus two or three passengers to Paris and the continent.

Gradually a number of other companies were formed, but a considerable number went bankrupt and the government, after a commission of enquiry, stepped in and formed a company named *Imperial Airways*, granting it a subsidy in 1924. As invention and progress increased by 1926, three engine planes were in operation carrying 19 passengers to Paris, Amsterdam and Germany.

To be continued.....



cine - slides - video 2 Dvd

**Have all your treasured memories
transferred to disc**

- 8mm & 16mm cine films converted to DVD.
- VHS & camcorder tapes copied to DVD.
- 35mm slides, negatives & prints scanned and saved on disc.
These can also be compiled into a slideshow with music and transferred to DVD for viewing on your home TV.



Contact **Michael: 01708 735810** www.slides2disk.co.uk

One Family Two Brick Walls

Peter Cope No. 14117



Eliza Williams nee Wellsteed
Image courtesy Peter Cope

At the 2024 AGM, listening to the interesting talk about **CRIBB'S** Undertakers' history and how they have adapted to modern circumstances, reminded me that I still had two significant brickwalls in my **WILLIAMS** and **WELLSTEED** East of London ancestry.

I researched this line many years ago when all that was available was the 1881 census and the IGI on CDs. Most of my searching was undertaken at the old *Family Record Centre* in Myddleton Street, Islington, ploughing through those huge index books. Apart from the 1881 census it was very difficult if not impossible to locate ancestors in the other censuses so the Birth, Marriage and Death certificates were mostly all I had to go on. I would regularly spend a whole Saturday there ordering as many as a dozen certificates at closing time before I headed for home.

I had worked my way back to my 2 x great-grandmother, Eliza Williams (nee Wellsteed). From the 1881 census I knew that she was living with her

daughter, my great-grandmother, Ann **BEER**, at 2 Ferns Road, Stratford. Slowly more records came online including the 1891 census (a transcript initially I seem to remember) where I could not find Eliza.

Searching for her death in the 1880s I drew a blank on her death in Stratford. In 2004 I ordered the death certificate for the Eliza Williams who died in 1889 in Bethnal Green aged 80 as this seemed to fit best although she should have been two years younger. According to the certificate she died in *Bethnal Green workhouse* but there was no mention of her marital status. Instead, her home address was given, 21 Brierley Street and she was a seamstress. Although I added this to my tree, as I can see on *Ancestry* others have, I was never happy that I had



1 Adelphi Terrace
Image courtesy of Peter Cope

found the right person. I searched many times, particularly for a burial but always drew a blank.

So, as I made my way home after the AGM, I resolved to try and bring this wall down. Of, course I know a lot more now than I did twenty years ago. To summarize, Eliza was born 25 July 1811 in the *Green Man*, Castle Street, Whitechapel, where her father, Thomas Wellstead, was the landlord, probably assisted by his wife, Amy (nee **PARTRIDGE**). He had been born in Chatham in 1773 and, like many of his family, started out as a civilian shipwright's apprentice in the Navy Dockyard. For reasons that are unclear, whilst still quite young, he became a pub landlord moving first to Poplar, then Whitechapel and finally the *Duke of Wellington* in Spitalfields where he became a builder as well.

Eliza was not the first child of Thomas and Amy to bear that name. Another had been born in 1809 but died in Castle Street of measles in July 1810 aged just one-year-old. I cannot find a baptism so the burial record is sadly the only evidence of her existence but her birth has an important bearing on my search for her younger sibling's death and burial, more of which anon.

Eliza married a local man, Edward Williams, a cowkeeper, 11 July 1837. I have written before about his Welsh parents and their family and cowkeeping activities in Shadwell. The wedding was one of the first recorded in the new civil registration scheme. By the time of the 1841 census, he had become a Hackney carriage driver. Business must have been good as the couple, along with their

ever-growing family, moved from Artillery Street to Heneage Street and, during the 1850s, to No. 1 Adelphi Terrace, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green. The house, a handsome double fronted one, still stands but is now known as 98 Old Ford Road.

Edward died in 1866 and was buried at Tower Hamlets Cemetery in plot 309E. Eliza continued to live at Adelphi Terrace until at least 1875 when her daughter, Caroline, married John Henry **DURDEN** but, as I have already mentioned, was living at 2 Ferns Road, Stratford by 1881. Eliza's youngest son, Walter John Williams (who was also living at 2 Ferns Road in the 1881 census), died in 1883 in *West Ham Infirmary* and, like his father, was buried in *Tower Hamlets Cemetery* in plot 142F. Surely Eliza would have been buried at Tower Hamlets too if she didn't die in Stratford? Searching the *Tower Hamlets Cemetery* registers on *Ancestry* I found the burial in 1887 of Eliza Williams of 13 Frederick Place, Stepney, aged 78 in plot F176, but no clue to suggest that this was my Eliza nor did I recognise the address.

I searched on *FreeBMD* again for any Eliza Williams dying between 1881 and 1891 in Middlesex and Essex. This website is invaluable and makes searches much easier except that in this case *FreeBMD* automatically include Elizabeth when a search for Eliza is made. Trawling through there were none in the right areas that fitted the 1811 birth. Of course, I should have noticed that the census records gave her age as being older. I think now that it is possible that, for whatever reason, her birth had been confused in her family with that of her elder sister. It had certainly taken me a time to work out that there were two Eliza Wellsteeds.

Eliminating the Elizabeths, I thought that the Eliza Williams who died in the June quarter 1881 in Whitechapel aged 72 and the one in the March quarter 1887 in Whitechapel aged 78 were the best possibilities. Now that it is possible to buy digital copy certificates for a reasonable £2.50 each, I ordered both.

The 1881 details were as vague as the 1889 one but could have been right. Fortunately, however, the 1887 details were comprehensive. Eliza Williams, the widow of Edward Williams, master coachbuilder at 13 Frederick Place, Mile End the death registered by C Durden daughter. My Eliza's daughter, Caroline Durden! This single piece of information was the only clue that confirmed I had the right death. It also matched the burial at Tower Hamlets just six days later.

At last, the wall came down. Finally, I had found the right death!

In my family we have many photographs of unnamed ancestors, relatives and friends. The one that accompanies this article is believed to be Eliza. It was taken by J. **NORTON** of 309 Cambridge [Heath] Road, suitably near Old Ford Road and someone in the family has written 'grandma Williams' on the back. As for 13 Frederick Place, it still exists as 13 Aberavon Street. In 1891 it housed two families; 12 people in total in a Georgian two up two down-house! It sold a few years ago for over £900,000. However widowed Caroline and her two young sons had moved to 21 Coborn Road, a superior house, still with two families but only

eight people in all. Next door, 19 Coborn Road sold for £1.3m in 2021! I wonder what Eliza and Caroline would have made of that?

One Down – One to Go

Now, like buses, brickwalls never appear on their own but in twos or threes. So, my second Williams mystery is identifying Eliza's eldest daughter Eliza Amy's husband. There is no trace of a marriage nor any sign of Eliza Amy's husband in any record. These are the facts. Eliza Amy Williams was born in Bishopsgate in 1839. In 1841 she was listed with the family in Artillery Street as a two-year-old. In 1851 the family were at 5 Heneage Street (off Brick Lane), Eliza a five-year-old scholar. By 1861 the family had moved to 1 Adelphi Terrace, Old Ford Road, Eliza had left school and was single, working as a governess.

In 1871 she was still living with her now widowed mother at Adelphi Terrace as a teacher but she was married. Her surname was shown as **ROUSE** but later records confirm that this was a mistake as it should have read **BOASE**. In 1881 Eliza Amy was also at her youngest sister Ann's home at 2 Ferns Road, West Ham and she was listed as a married governess. By 1891 she was lodging at 27 Grove Crescent Road, Stratford but described mistakenly as single, a school certificated teacher.

Sadly in 1901 she was incarcerated in *Essex County Lunatic Asylum* as E A Boase. It is difficult to read her marital status. I was able to find out more on a visit to Essex Record Office in Chelmsford some years ago but it told me nothing about her husband. Fortunately, she was only there for a few months and was living at 21 Park Grove Road, Leytonstone in 1909 when her unmarried sister, Elizabeth Wellsteed Williams, died intestate. Administration was granted to Eliza Amy Boase 'widow'. Eliza was still at 21 Park Grove Road in 1911 living in one room, a widow and former private school teacher.

When she died in 1916 her nephew, Matthew Beer, registered the death. I ordered the certificate as surely that would tell me her husband's name? Under 'occupation' it says 'of 16 Wragby Road, Leytonstone, widow of BLANK Boase'!! Even Eliza's nephew didn't know his uncle's name. I have searched so many times in so many ways but have never found any clue as to his identity. Whatever name variations I put in *FreeBMD* draws a blank. Likewise on *Ancestry*, *FindmyPast* and *FamilySearch*. Did he leave a will naming her? I can't find one. Why was he never living with his wife? Was he a Cornish merchant seaman (Boase is mainly a Cornish surname)? Little chance of that route being of any use.

Is there a record of Eliza's qualifying as a 'school certificated teacher'? I have never been able to find if such records survive. Every search has drawn a blank. So, if you fancy a challenge can you find Eliza Amy's marriage and her husband's name?

Email: petercope@hotmail.co.uk



Report on the 2024 AGM

Janet Seward, Society Secretary

This year's AGM was held on Saturday 6 April at the Trinity United Reform Church, Upminster.

77 members attended in person and 38 on Zoom.
We started with the AGM.

The Chairman's Report

Gary Barnes gave the Chairman's report.

The Society website is continuing to be developed by the Webmaster, Bill Hughes.

Gary said that we are initiating more projects particularly around cemeteries in East London. Gary asked to be advised of any projects, that members want to carry out. He emphasised the importance of research by describing how Brenda Keer had been able to trace a family and give them useful information. He thanked Brenda for her work.

Gary reported that membership had dropped again. He said that this was a challenge, and that the society must invigorate itself with fresh ideas and new blood.

Gary said that the branches are doing well and that there is a Zoom link to Havering and Newham & Redbridge branch meetings.

Once more it was the Chairman's sad duty to remember those the society has lost since the last AGM:

- Tom Cannon—on the CA Editorial Team and their proofreader
- Meryl Catty—a Vice President
- Rosemary Mint—very involved with the society over the years in many ways including recording gravestones and transcribing records, straight forward with a heart of gold
- Linda Hawthorn
- Brenda Barnett
- Anthony Joseph
- Colin Blanchflower
- Derek Peasy
- Patricia Howard

Gary took a short pause so that we could remember them all.

Gary said that finance continues to be a challenge and stated that the Executive Committee is committed to dealing with this issue.

He made special mention of Vera Bangs, the *Cockney Ancestor (CA)* editor, who has been particularly successful in bringing down printing costs. Thanks to these efforts, the society's finances are in a much better place and the society has broken even.

Gary concluded by asking for more volunteers to assist the Executive Committee and thanking the current Executive for their support.

The Treasurer's Report

The Society Treasurer, Kevin Dopson, presented highlights of the accounts from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. He said that the income was slightly lower but, with savings, the society had made a slight surplus.

Printing the *CA* is our highest expenditure, but hall hire, and speakers' fees are also rising.

He said that this year we have not drawn down any reserves however it was necessary to consider an increase on the annual subscription.

Election of Executive Committee

Our Executive Committee remains unchanged, but Janet Seward said that this was the last year that she would serve as Society Secretary.

Gary thanked the membership for re-electing him and the committee.

He also thanked the branch representatives:

Jill Smith (Central)

Audrey Neal (Havering)

Ron Wood (Newham & Redbridge) for their contribution.

Election of Vice President

Sarah Wise was elected as a Vice President to fill the vacancy following the death of Meryl Catty. Sarah is a published author and has written many books on the poor and unconsidered of London, and particularly the East End. She has frequently visited our branches to give talks and has been very generous with her time for us.

Increase in Subscriptions

It has become clear that the society's income is not keeping pace with costs and the following motion was put to the AGM that the subscription rates should increase. It was accepted and was agreed by the meeting that:

- i. online membership £15 (soft copy *CA*)
- ii. UK membership £20 (hard copy *CA*)
- iii. membership for members outside the UK who receive a hard copy of *CA* £35

The Chairman advised members that the new rates would apply in the next

round of renewals in September or thereafter. That concluded the AGM.

Our theme of the day was From Cradle to Grave looking at the beginning and the end of life as experienced by our ancestors.

In the morning, Dr Sarah Read, a senior lecturer at Loughborough University, spoke about midwifery from the late 1600s to the early twentieth century.

Although the church licensed midwives from the early sixteenth century, the majority of women who attended births were untrained but experienced ‘hand women’. This situation continued into the early twentieth century when midwives were regulated.

After lunch, John Harris, senior partner in *T Cribb and Sons* talked about the history of undertaking in the East End.

Cribbs was started by John’s great grandfather, so he and his brother are the fourth generation to run the business.

The business is thriving and employs the children of John and his brother, the fifth generation. The success of the business is thanks to the foresight of the brothers.

The demographics of the East End have changed over the years and traditional undertakers could not meet the needs of the population.

Cribbs have changed their business to cater for the Sikh community and those who have links to the Caribbean, Africa, China and the Philippines.

They have a large establishment in Ghana and are the only funeral directors in the UK with an office in a foreign country.

In this country, the business has spread out into Essex.

As well as meeting modern needs, the business is mindful of its heritage with a museum in Beckton and carriages and horses kept in Essex.

Our thanks go to Sue Waine, our membership secretary, and her band of helpers who kept us going with tea, coffee and cake.

The Society Stall run by Melissa Ford and her husband was a great success and raised over £200 selling books and maps.

We hope everyone who came or viewed on Zoom enjoyed the day.

Message from the Membership Secretary

Sue Waine No. 975

Membership renewal time is approaching for a large number of our members who renew in September. Email renewal reminders are sent out about 30 days before membership is due to expire. You can always check your renewal date when you log in to the member only area of our website; just go to account page or you can contact me at *membership.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk*.

Those members who pay by standing order **will not** receive a reminder but please ensure to update the payment amount with your bank before the end of August as membership fees are going up this year, the first time in six years. The new fees are listed below. Please ensure that your membership number is quoted as a reference when payment is made as it makes my life easier when dealing with hundreds of renewal payments coming it at the same time.

Members who do not have an email address will receive a reminder by post.

If you wish to make a card payment just go to our website and click on the *renew tab* at the top of the page (no need to log in), then click on *renew membership*, scroll down and click on the type of membership you require.

If you prefer to pay by cheque please send a sterling cheque (with membership number written on the back) made out to ***East of London Family History Society*** for the correct amount, to me, at the address shown on the inside front cover of the Cockney Ancestor magazine. You can print off a renewal form by going to our website and clicking on the *renew tab* at the top of the page (no need to log in), then click on *download renewal form*.

Cockney Ancestor magazines are sent out to all members except for those paying the £15 online fee; these members can read/download the magazine in the member only area on our website.

New Annual Membership Fees for 2024/2025

£15 online UK and overseas members

£20 UK members

£25 EU members

£35 for members in the rest of the world

Although we have done our utmost to keep running costs down since increasing fees six years ago, the ever upward cost of hall hire, speaker fees and spiralling postal costs for the quarterly magazine means that we have had to increase fees.

Thank you for your support this year and I hope you will continue to do so next year.

Lifespans – ChatGPT – Part I

Peter Holford No.14359

Can AI (Artificial Intelligence) help with writing an article for *Cockney Ancestor*?

You've done the research. You've got the facts; the dates of births, marriages and deaths and the places your ancestors lived in each census. Now comes the challenge of writing it up. A list of facts needs a story to make it interesting for others; a narrative of how your ancestors lived; possibly a background of what was happening at the time that affected them and governed the choices they made. AI (*Artificial Intelligence*) is a tool that can help and it's not as difficult as might be imagined.

The news in the first months of 2023 was full of stories about AI showing faked photos such as the Pope in a white bubble coat and Donald **TRUMP** being man-handled to the ground by a few police officers as he is being arrested. There have also been stories about how written accounts can be fabricated, notably using *ChatGPT*. These are legitimate news items that warn of the dangers of AI when used by malign actors. But like all new technology there is a positive side. I decided to have a look for myself and see if I could use it as a tool to help me write an article for *Cockney Ancestor*.

It may seem like very advanced stuff but that doesn't mean that it's difficult to use. Just think of a TV: very few people could claim to understand what goes on inside the box. But we all know how to use the remote. Search engines like *Google* were cutting edge technology when they first appeared but most people now use them with little difficulty.

For a first try I decided to see what help *ChatGPT* could provide with an article about peoples' lifespans; specifically, the lifespans of the people in my family tree and the factors that affected the ages they reached. I Googled *ChatGPT* and found the website – <https://chat.openai.com/>. I created a free account and logged in. Find the box that says *Send a message* and type in the details of what you want to know and press *Enter*. For some seconds it says *Typing* and then several paragraphs of text appear. I did this twice and on each occasion the text was substantially different but very much relevant to the subject. On the first occasion it referenced the East End, even though I hadn't mentioned it, while on the second occasion it talked about the USA.

So why can the text be so different? The term Artificial Intelligence is very misleading. It may be artificial but it is certainly not intelligent. *ChatGPT* is a machine learning application that has been fed billions of pages of data from the Internet and is programmed to select relevant data and organise it into coherent English. It works by a system of probability, selecting the words that usually follow



The Red Inn

Image courtesy of Peter Holford

each other in tracts of text that it has consumed. It is very impressive but is not making subjective evaluations of what is most relevant and what should be omitted.

So, is it useful for somebody who wants to write for *Cockney Ancestor*? It will never write an article that includes family specific details but it can provide background to a story that you want to write. In effect it is a very

sophisticated search engine—the next Google. In fact, Google has released its own version of this AI software called Gemini (formerly Bard).

But there are warnings. It has *learnt* from billions of pages of data. All that data will include errors, lies, and prejudices. Make sure to check all the facts – it has been shown to make mistakes when selecting what to present. It can also be unintentionally funny at times. I asked for a chatty commentary. On the first occasion it started with, *Well, hello there! It's ChatGPT, and I'm here to chat with you about your advancing years and your ponderings about your life expectancy compared to your ancestors.* On the second attempt it began, *As an AI language model, I am not capable of experiencing life or death.* Well, it's good to be reminded that you aren't dealing with a human being!

It is also vital to realise that the text spewed out by AI may be totally wrong! I have researched a coaching inn on the Great North Road at Adwick-le-Street near Doncaster. It was called the *Red House* and was owned by William **HEALD**, one of my 5 x great-grandfathers. I asked *ChatGPT* for the history of the building. It informed me that it was a sprawling inn with low beams and roaring fires but that it had been closed and demolished when the Doncaster by-pass (A1(M)) was built in the 1980s. All of that is completely wrong! It is still standing (see photo) on a slip road of the A1(M), it is a large high Georgian building and it closed as an inn in about 1870 according to a book written in 1889 (*Old Coaching Days* by

Tom Bradley). A more recent request failed to mention that it had been an inn and the 550 word description of it was a succession of meaningless generalisations of zero use.

For the article on *Life Spans* I decided to use two complete paragraphs from *ChatGPT*. Then I checked my text in another program called *GPTZero*—<https://gptzero.me/>. In this program you copy and paste the text into the webpage to find out if it has been generated by AI. It's impressive. It successfully identified my original text as having been written by a human which was very reassuring. The text generated by *ChatGPT* that I used was identified as computer generated. Does it matter? No. If the text is factually correct and adds substance to your story then use it. Of course you can also edit it. The quality and usefulness of the text generated will be linked to how precise you are with your request. It is just another tool that can help in researching an article for *Cockney Ancestor*.

But a word of warning—keep it general and don't include personal data in the request. Programs such as these will harvest huge amounts of data which may eventually lead to highly sophisticated advertising and very personalised phishing attacks.

In the next CA—*Life Spans* by Peter Holford and *ChatGPT*

Email: counthill@aol.com

Those Stories We Were Told

John Murray Member No. 16158

That 'Great Moment!' when you find that bit of evidence, that moment in family history research when you have knocked down that brick wall to discover that hidden family secret. Not only is it that moment of adrenaline rush, you have found the information that reveals the secret that was safely hidden by our ancestors, it is also that moment that casts some light and reasoning upon our forebear's mindsets and social/family values of their day. With that in mind, let me relate one such moment in my searches as a discovery came together, breaking down the biggest brick wall I ever had; where was my paternal grandfather born and what was his history?

Growing up we were always led to believe in a lowland Scotland birth. His obituary in the *Worthing, Sussex newspaper* in May 1936 starts with his service in *Cameronian Rifle Regiment* starting in 1893 and his loyal part-time military service after his regular service through WWI. His employment at the *Worthing Gas Company* for 28 years also loomed large. Nowhere did we get any inkling of his parents' names or his actual place of birth. A mystery that existed from 1988 when I first got in to family history and produced many dead-end searches and

took up many hours of searching with no result. So, what then did I have in terms of information to research? On his marriage certificate 26 July 1904 in Epsom, Surrey, he reported his name was Thomas William **MURRAY**, he was 27-years-of-age, employed at the *Gas Company* in Epsom and his father was Thomas Murray, a labourer. At his death 30 April 1936, he was 58-years-of-age. If he had lived until July 1936, he would have been 59. From that I could at least determine he was born between 30 April and 26 July 1877. I also had a pencil note from my mother from a conversation in 1989 (long after my father had passed away). It said, speaking of her father-in-law who she never knew, *I think your dad said he was born Roman Catholic and converted to marry!*

Hours of researching a couple of Scottish births and many census entries in 1881, 1891 and later 1901 proved dead-ends and fruitless. A trip to Moffatt, Dumfriess and Selkirk in 2001 revealed nothing except a love of the lowland hills, a taste for Scottish beer, a dislike for black pudding with my fried eggs and bacon breakfast and to discover my prime Scottish candidate was a result of bigamy and died an infant mortality in 1879. Scotland was a dead-end, well at least family history wise, so with this disappointment I headed for the *National Railway Museum* in York to pursue one of my other passions; that of railways and steam locomotives.

There the search for my grandfather sat dormant while I researched other family history; that is until I was with my cousin in Adelaide in 2008 and he produced a document written by my uncle (his father) in the early 1980s. It had sat hidden in my aunt's effects for 20 years, until her death in 2006. A story of ancestors coming from Cork, Ireland and finding employment on the Thames and in this story was the mention that our grandfather was born in Whitechapel, no mention of parents, but the family had a green grocery business interest in East India Dock Road, Poplar. Nothing in the census for 1881, then one of those moments, in the 1891 census, an entry in a grocery shop on Grundy Street, Poplar (two blocks north of East India Dock Road) was a 14-year-old called Thomas Murray, born Whitechapel and the nephew of the owner, a Stephen **DUNN** and his wife Jane (aka Mary). The 1901 census revealed nothing, but the *Cameronian's Archives* in Lanark told had me that he had probably joined while the 2nd Battalion was in Aldershot and was sent to India in 1898 for four years. In his WWI military documentation, just part of the 30% that survived the fire during the Blitz, he claims he was born in Aldgate, not quite Whitechapel but close and then in the 1911 census (which had then come on line) he claims St. Georges in the East—something was being hidden. Furthermore, he is not listed in English births for Q2 or Q3 1877, well not under the name Thomas William Murray. I researched his Aunt Jane (nee Murray) and her husband, Stephen Dunn. They were married in St. George's in the East in 1868. Her father's name was Thomas Murray, a labourer. Oh, where had we seen that before! Jane was in the 1851 census for

Stepney with her parents, Thomas and Jane Murray, both from Cork, Ireland. Jane's birth certificate of April 1847 confirmed her parents. I later found the parents' marriage in a place called Kilmurry, Cork in 1845 and Thomas the father was baptized there in 1819. So, if Jane is my grandfather's aunt, then there was a good chance her parents were his grandparents and my 2 x great- grandparents. However, Jane, the mother, died in January 1852 and there is no East End of London recorded birth or marriage of the mystery father, Thomas, labourer who appears on the Epsom marriage certificate of 1904.

There it all sat until one Sunday evening when all else had failed and I Googled *Whitechapel. London 1877*. Back came a multitude of websites on theories and claims of *Jack the Ripper*. In the midst of this was a site called *Whitechapel—Moving here*. It was an interesting site with information on the many groups that had made Whitechapel home, Huguenots, mid-European Jewish, Russian Exiles and the Irish from the famine. There were also the records of the *Whitechapel Workhouse Infirmary* from the Victorian era. I had the window of April to July 1877, why not have a look? These records made gruesome reading, I guess if you were poor, desperate and sick in 1877 you had to go somewhere for help and this is all there probably was. Then on the page for 19 June 1877 were two admission entries: Catherine Murray, single, aged 24, religion 'C' for Catholic, admitted 'In Labour'. Resident Flower and Dean Street, (one of the notorious parts of the East End). Underneath—William Murray, son of Catherine. 'C' for Catholic and admitted 'by birth. Illegitimate.' The birth certificate told me little more, but here was the only Murray born in Whitechapel in the year, right place, right religion, right family name and nearly the right personal name.

Question to answer, how did he get the name Thomas? That turned up with his baptism in St. Anne's RC Church in August 1877. Catherine had him named Thomas William and she also declared his father as William **COGIN**. It seems Catherine and William Cogin were no longer an item and Catherine was on her own in the world. I traced Catherine's birth to Stepney in August 1853 and she was the daughter of Thomas (Jane's father) and a new wife called Margaret **HOWARD**. Indeed, Jane was my grandfather's aunt or half-aunt. The birth of Catherine and the entry of Margaret Howard in to the family opened-up yet another interesting search. The other interesting search was 'who was William Cogin?' Well, that search continues.

The father, Thomas Murray, labourer, on the 1904 marriage certificate, along with the evasive information on the census entries and military documentation were obviously face-saving exercises. Victorian family values at work, we do not want the world to know about an illegitimate birth in the *Whitechapel Workhouse* do we? Well, actually, I did want to know, but those who may have known when alive never told us!

Address withheld, International Member from Canada

Recycle your printer cartridges

Recycle4Charity collect used printer cartridges and make a donation to the charity of your choice – preferably the East of London FHS.

Go to <http://www.recycle4charity.co.uk>. On the home screen click on Register Now.

Further down, on the same screen, type the word East in the Choose Your Charity box. A drop down list of charities beginning with the word East will appear. Select East of London FHS–C916.

Check you have selected the correct charity at the top left of the next screen. Add your name and address details so they can send you the envelopes for returning your used ink cartridges.

On the next screen choose envelopes rather than boxes.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND Epson or Kodak cartridges, damaged cartridges, cartridges that have been previously refilled, cartridges that have been labelled for another brand eg. Tesco, PC World or Office Depot, cartridges with labels removed or extra holes (signs that refilling has been attempted).

ADVERTISING IN COCKNEY ANCESTOR

For those offering personal or commercial services to members:

Full page £45

Half page £30

Quarter page £20

Eighth page £10

Lineage adverts – non-professional: 5p per word,
plus 50p per advert for non-members

A 10% reduction if advert appears in 4 consecutive publications

Email: editor@eolfhs.org.uk or contact:

Mrs Vera Bangs

24 Alderney Gardens, Wickford, Essex SS11 7BD

Branch Information

Havering (H): First Saturday of the month at *Trinity Church, Gaynes Road, Upminster, Essex RM14 2YS*. Doors open at 1pm, meeting starts at 2pm.

Newham & Redbridge (NR): Fourth Wednesday of the month at *The Churchill Room, Wanstead Library, Spratt Hall Road, Wanstead, London E11 2RQ*. Doors open at 7pm, meeting starts at 7.30pm.

Central London (CL): Last Friday of the month at *St. Andrew's, Short Street, Waterloo, SE1 8LJ*. The meeting starts at 5.45pm. The meeting room will be available from 5.30pm.

AUGUST 2024

(H) 3rd *Where There's a Will* Ian Waller

(NR) 28th *Members' Evening*

(CL) 30th *An Introduction to Hackney's History* Sean Gubbins

SEPTEMBER 2024

(H) 7th *Finding Public Servants* Alan Ruston

(NR) 25th *Some Important Families of Victorian and Edwardian Buckhurst Hill* Lynn Haseldine Jones

(CL) 27th *Difficult Women of Hackney* Sue Doe

OCTOBER 2024

(H) 5th *Turning Your Tree Into a Tale* Kath Chater

(NR) 23rd *The Battle of Cable Street 1936* Jef Page

(CL) 25th *AGM & Members' Evening*

NOVEMBER 2024

(H) 2nd *Newgate Prison* Jef Page

(NR) 27th *Branch AGM, Members' Evening & Xmas Social*

(CL) 29th *Crime and Punishment* Diane Burstein

DECEMBER 2024

(H) 7th *History of Christmas* Nick Dobson

(NR) 25th *No meeting*

(CL) 27th *No meeting*

Society Information

Surnames of Interest:

Until the Surname Interests position has been filled please follow the instructions set out below:

Members with Internet Access and an email address are encouraged to submit their Surnames of Interest via the Society Website. Members without internet access may send details of their Interests or request a search of the Surnames of Interest to the General Secretary, Janet Seward, at the address on the inside front cover. Please remember to quote your membership number and enclose a stamped self addressed envelope. The same service is available to non-members of the Society.

Contact Email Addresses

Chairman: chairman@eolfhs.org.uk

Secretary: society.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk

Treasurer: treasurer@eolfhs.org.uk

Membership: membership.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk

Projects: projects@eolfhs.org.uk

Helpdesk: helpdesk@eolfhs.org.uk

Editor: editor@eolfhs.org.uk

Enquiries and Correspondence:

In all correspondence with the Society, please quote your membership number. When writing it is essential to enclose a SAE for a reply.

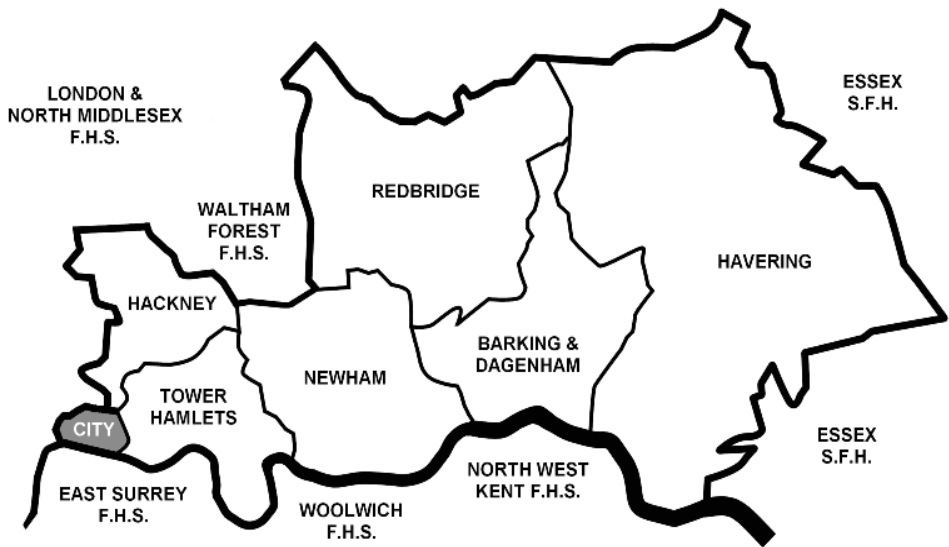
Webmaster: Bill Hughes. Email: webmaster@eolfhs.org.uk

Website: Put <http://www.eolfhs.org.uk> into your browser and add it to your favourites or bookmarks.

Writing for Cockney Ancestor

All material for inclusion in *Cockney Ancestor* should be sent to the Editor, 24 Alderney Gardens, Wickford, Essex SS11 7BD or email to editor@eolfhs.org.uk. Please quote your name and membership number and enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for any returns.

There is no guarantee that an article will be included in any particular edition. Please do not send any original photographs in case they are lost or damaged. Your article submission will be acknowledged and you will be asked to complete and submit a copyright form. Further details can be found on our website at <https://www.eolfhs.org.uk/casubmissions/>.



The Society's area is to the east of the City of London, and it comprises the London Boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham, and Havering. A selective list of places within these boroughs is as follows:

Hackney: Clapton, Dalston, Hackney, Haggerston, Hoxton, Kingsland, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington.

Tower Hamlets: Aldgate, Artillery Liberty, Bethnal Green, Bishopsgate, Bow, Bromley-by-Bow, Bromley St. Leonard, St. George in the East, Isle of Dogs, Limehouse, Mile End, Millwall, Old Ford, Norton Folgate, Poplar, Ratcliff, Shadwell, Spitalfields, Stepney, Stratford-le-Bow, Tower Liberty, Wapping and Whitechapel.

Newham: Beckton, Canning Town, Custom House, East Ham, Forest Gate, Little Ilford, Manor Park, Plaistow, Silvertown, Stratford Langthorne, Upton Park, West Ham and North Woolwich.

Redbridge: Barkingside, Chadwell Heath, Chigwell, Clayhall, Cranbrook, Fairlop, Fullwell Cross, Gants Hill Cross, Goodmayes, Hainault, Ilford, Great Ilford, Little Heath, Newbury Park, Redbridge, Seven Kings, Snaresbrook, South Woodford, Wanstead, Woodford, Woodford Bridge, and Woodford Green.

Barking and Dagenham: Barking, Beacontree, Part of Chadwell Heath, Dagenham East, Dagenham Heathway, Dagenham Village, Rush Green and Upney.

Havering: Chadwell Heath, Collier Row, Corbets Tey, Cranham, Elm Park, Emerson Park, Gidea Park, Havering-atte-Bower, Harold Hill, Harold Wood, Hornchurch, Rainham, Romford, Upminster, and Wennington.