

BEATING THE BOUNDS OF THE GAMES

A STORYWALK AROUND THE MARSHES AND THE WICK IN HACKNEY

Background information to the walk

Hackney Wick, or Wyke, was one of the Medieval manors of Middlesex given by the Chapter of the Knights Templar to Robert de Wick. It consisted of a mixture of marsh, arable and meadow land, with the River Lea winding its course through the landscape providing fishing grounds for the local populace.

This walk has been inspired by the historic places and people of the Marshes and the Wick, and the tradition of beating the bounds of the parish – originally an ancient festival to bless fields, stock and folk that evolved to parishioners ‘ganging’ (walking) around the edge of the Parish to remember boundaries before maps were commonplace. Children were ‘encouraged’ to remember various landmarks – streams, hedges and ponds. This was done by ducking them in water, beating them and then giving them a treat.

The ‘Wick’ or the ‘sink’ as it was known locally was described by Charles Booth, the philanthropist and social researcher, as a place of ‘chronic want’ in the 19th century. Today the Marshes and the Wick border the London 2012 Olympic Games site. Much of this areas’ historic past has been and will be swept away by this famous sporting event and the legacy that it promises. This walk attempts to

remember the individuals and places that shaped this ‘remote’ corner of the borough. We hope to organise this walk every year in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympics.

Points of interest along the walk

1. LAMMAS LAND

Location: South Marsh Car Park

Hackney Marshes are former Lammas Lands – common land where parishioners had rights to graze livestock from Lammas Day on the 1 August until Lady Day (former New Year’s Day) on the 25 March. This ancient grazing right declined in the 1880s following the arrival of the railways in the 1840s, which transformed Hackney from a rural backwater to a centre of industry. In 1890, the Settlement of St Mary of Eton purchased Hackney Marshes from the Lord of the Manor and ‘gave the marshes to the people of Hackney in perpetuity for recreational use as an open space’.

2. REVEREND DOUGLAS AND HIS 100 FOOTBALL PITCHES

Location: Hackney Marsh

In 1889, Reverend EK Douglas, from the Eton Mission, ‘appealed to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association to use its influence to get permission for the boys to play football on the Marshes’. During the mid to late nineteenth century ‘association’ football had become a

popular sport among the working, middle and upper classes. Originally, the Eton Mission Boys’ Club played football in Victoria Park, but the numbers of ‘boys’ who wanted to play the game far outstripped the number of pitches available resulting in Mission Club members to play on the marshes. This resulted in cattle and sheep drovers confiscating their goal posts in attempt to drive them off the common land. Douglas’ appeal resulted in the Board of Agriculture agreeing to place the Marshes under the control of the London County Council (LCC) as a public open space. The LCC, the Hackney District Board (forerunner to Hackney Council) and other individuals purchased the land for £75,000 from the Lord of the Manor and its other owners. In 1894, the Marshes were dedicated as a public open space. The Marshes proved so popular that Eton Mission had to instigate the marking and booking of pitches, which created the ‘largest area of marked-out football pitches in the world’ once described by the Earl of Meath (Chairman of LCC Parks and Open Spaces Committee) as the ‘most significant playground in the world’.

3. DICK TURPIN AND THE WHITE HOUSE

Location: White Bridge to East Marsh

Richard ‘Dick’ Turpin, the notorious

highwayman, horse-stealer, house-breaker and murderer, was known to frequent ‘Beresford’s’ White House near Hackney Marshes. Born in 1706 in Essex, to the son of a butcher, he became an apprentice to a butcher in Whitechapel, but was ‘discharged’ before finishing his apprenticeship due to misconduct. The White House was the last place that Matthew King, his fellow accomplice and member of the Essex gang, gave as to Turpin’s whereabouts after a bungled ‘incident’ in Leytonstone. On 29 April 1737, Turpin or King stole a horse named Whitestockings, close to the Green Man in Leytonstone. Richard Bayes, the landlord of the inn, ‘put out enquiries’ as to the whereabouts of the horse. He quickly received information that similar horse was being kept at the Red Lion Inn in Whitechapel. On 1 May Bayes went to the Red Lion to make enquiries where he accidentally came across King and tried to apprehend him. It is said that King ‘immediately drew a pistol which he clapped to Mr Bayes breast’. In Baye’s version of events ‘Turpin, who was sitting not far off on horseback, hearing a skirmish, came up, when King cried out ‘Dick, shoot him, or we are taken by God’, at which instant Turpin fir’d his pistol, and it mist [missed] Mr Bayes, and shot King in two places, who cried out; ‘Dick, you have killed me’, which Turpin hearing, he rode away as hard as he could. King fell at the shot, though he liv’d a week after

and gave Turpin the character of a coward.” Whilst dying King gave information to Bayes that Turpin would have ridden to a ‘noted house by Hackney Marsh’. Further enquiries revealed that Turpin had indeed visited the house, and that he had sworn revenge on Bayes, saying, ‘I have lost the best fellow-man I ever had in my life; I shot poor King in endeavouring to kill that dog’. King died a few days later whilst Turpin was in his bolt hole in Epping Forest – soon to make his fatal journey to Lincolnshire and then York where he was eventually hung for stealing horses.

4. HARRY MALLIN AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Location: Northern Plaza, Gate 15, London 2012 Olympic Site.

Henry ‘Harry’ Mallin, born in London in 1892, was an amateur middleweight boxer who won two Olympic gold medals (1920 in Antwerp and 1924 in Paris), and five British amateur titles. Mallin’s connection to Hackney Wick started when he joined the Eton Manor Boy’s Club (see point 10). In the 1920 issue of *Chin-wag* – the Eton Manor Boys’ Club magazine – there is a photograph of Mallin captioned ‘Our Champion’. He was ‘untouchable in the boxing ring’ with an astonishing record of more than 300 fights where he had never been beaten. A London policeman for 37 years, Mallin never became a professional boxer. A ‘master of

defence’ Mallin’s fights were rarely dramatic, but he was known as a skillful rather than a powerful fighter. It was the Paris 1924 Olympic Games quarter-final that was among his most memorable and controversial fights, where his dream of being the first man to defend an Olympic title was nearly broken. ‘I was punishing him [Roger Brousse] with my left hand when in the second round he came inside and I felt his teeth on my arm...[but] I pulled my arm away before I was bitten. But I wasn’t so lucky in the next round. As he hung on he fastened his teeth in my chest and threw a vicious right at my chin’. When the final bell rang he thought he had won, but he was not going to take any chances, so he went over to the referee and removed his vest to display the tooth marks and broken skin, explaining that he had been fouled. He was examined, but it was declared that since Roger Brousse wore a gum shield the officials didn’t see how Mallin could have been bitten. For the first time in 14 years of boxing the decision had gone against him. On his way to the dressing room, Mallin encountered the Earl of Cadogan, who was president of the British Olympic Association. ‘Bad luck, Mallin,’ Cadogan said. But a Swedish official – Oscar Soderlund intervened, asking Mallin to wait while he lodged an official protest. Twenty four hours later, after a string of witnesses and boxers from every other competing country –

except France – refusing to enter the ring, the jury sat to make a decision. The protest was upheld and Brousse was disqualified. Before Mallin’s semi-final could begin, Brousse’s supporters fought a running battle with the gendarmes. Order restored, Mallin went on to win the Olympic Gold Medal against Joseph Beecken of Belgium.

5. RIVER LEA AND THE LEE NAVIGATION CANAL

Location: Eastway and Lee Navigation Canal

‘None but lightermen knew all the torturous and casual channels into which the Lea breaks in its old age between Bromley and Tottenham; a mesh of waterways, each with its own name, that ramify the wilderness of marsh and waste country, much of which appears to be a No-man’s-land’. *Morning Leader*, 1909.

The River Lea (or Lee) rises near Luton, winding its way through the Hertfordshire countryside. Upon reaching Hertford it essentially becomes the Lee Navigation Canal where it continues to the River Thames. The Lee Navigation Canal was constructed in sections, over hundreds of years, in an attempt to improve the River Lea’s navigability. Unlike other canals it is a canalized river, rather than an entirely new canal. There were arguments between barge owners and mill owners who preferred the available water to be used for the mills rather

than locks. Originally the River Lea and its canals would have been used to carry grain for beer and bread, and more recently to transport materials from the London docks to the many industries along the towpath. The River Lea Act 1766 authorised the construction of locks and new sections, including the Limehouse Cut. Originally the locks would have been single gate locks, which relied on a build-up of water and its sudden release to enable boats to pass. Today, we see pound locks (which were introduced in 1771) along the Canal, with gates at each end, which is far less wasteful of water. The main body of the Lee Navigation Canal was built in the 1770s to shorten the route from Limehouse to Hertford. The navigation passed into the control of the British Waterways in the 1960s.

6. HACKNEY HAWKS AND THE HACKNEY STADIUM

Location: By the window in blue Olympic boundary fence, Lee Navigation Canal

‘Make it a date, Friday at eight’ – that was the slogan designed to draw the crowds to Hackney Hawks – the speedway team at Hackney Stadium in Waterden Road. Opened in 1932 for greyhound racing, the first speedway meeting was on Friday 3 May 1935. Speedway is thought to have originated in Australia in the early 1920s coming to the UK in 1928. Speedway was noisy – you could apparently hear

the roar of the motorbikes in St John-at-Hackney Churchyard. Only having one gear and no brakes Speedway was fast, furious and thrilling. The slogan 'traxcitement' was coined to describe what you felt when you paid your money and walked through the Hackney turnstiles. For Chris Fenn, author of Hackney Speeday it was the highlight of the week 'We would park along Eastway, there were cars everywhere, and would enter through the turnstiles by the tote board. Once inside I tore my programme to catch up on news and make sure my favourites were printed in the line-up... Then at the stroke of eight, back to my spot and waiting for the opening strains of the Hackney theme tune, 'The Magnificent Seven', as the riders walked out for the parade'. Many people regarded Hackney as the best Speedway track in the UK 'as it had steep banking and little or no home advantage'. For Vic Harding, a Hackney Hawks rider, this was to prove fatal. On the 8 June 1979 he was involved in a crash with Steve Weatherley. Harding was rushed to Hackney Hospital, but later died in Whipps Cross Hospital. Weatherley was left with a broken back and was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Following this tragic accident, the Hawks hosted a *Vic Harding Memorial Trophy* every season in Harding's honour. Hackney Stadium became the venue for a weekly car boot sale and was demolished by the London

Development Agency in 2003 to make way for the Olympic Park.

7. GEORGE COOMBS AND CLARNICO CONFECTIONERS

Location: Lee Navigation Canal and Carpenters Road

'Always say Clarnico please', became the slogan of this confectionary firm who at the turn of the 20th century produced fondant fruits, marzipan filberts, marshmallow drops and fancy packages of fine chocolates. Gray, Barrow & Co were a firm of fruit merchants trading from Pudding Lane in the City of London in the mid-19th century. In the early 1870s the partners also started dealing in candied peel. They found this particularly profitable, so decided to manufacture it as a separate business. Land and buildings were acquired in Hackney Wick, and to help run the new business, George Gray invited Robert Coombs, a confectioner from Shoreditch, to join them. The partnership flourished and they added the manufacturer of jams and certain confectionary items to the candied peel business. By the early 1880s they had shops in Bishopsgate, Southwark and Peckham, and showrooms in Birmingham and Manchester. By 1885, their profits amounted to almost £5,900. Depending on how you measure worth their profit would have been in the region of £500,000 to £2 million. The partners felt the time

had come to turn the business into a company. In 1887, in order to avoid confusion with the existing partnership they decided to call the company after their wives' maiden names. Mrs Gray, had before her marriage, been Miss Clarke, and Mrs Barrow had been Miss Nickholls, so Clarke Nickolls and Co became the name of the new company. From the very start the partners were concerned about 'the co-operation of capital and labour'. Writers such as J S Mill were among those who advocated profit-sharing as a means of raising labour productivity and improving industrial relations, which were terrible at the time. The original memorandum gave power to the directors to share profits with their employees – who had to have worked for a full calendar year before they could qualify. The proportion of the employees' share applying to the wages of those who did not qualify was credited to The Provident Fund. This was set up to provide pensions for employees, allowances to widows, sick allowances, funeral grants, and marriage 'portions' (dowry) for women who had been in the company for at least five years. Confectionary manufacturing required a lot of space and was very labour intensive. Eventually the Hackney Wick Estate extended over 16 acres. Whilst the principal business of the Company was confectionary, it also branched out into other associated manufacturers. To supply the confectionary factory

a large box making department was built up, to produce both wooden and cardboard boxes, and with this they had a comprehensive printing works. A natural progression from this was, on the manufacture of Cosaques, to be known later as Christmas Crackers. At one time the company even had its own branch line from Stratford where many workers lived, but this eventually proved too expensive and closed. Clarnico was eventually taken over by Trebor Basett, which then became part of Cadbury. But, Clarnico mints – soft mint fondants with a slightly harder sugar coating – are still produced today.

8. THOMAS BRIGGS AND THE NORTH LONDON RAILWAY

Location: Top O' The Morning Public House

On the 9 July 1846 Thomas Briggs was the first person to be murdered on a railway train. He was a bank clerk at Messrs Roberts, Curtis and Co. in Lombard Street. He was travelling on the North London Railway line between Fenchurch Street and Hackney. He was found alive but lifeless on the railway line. His head seemed to have been battered by some sharp instrument; his clothes were covered in blood; and his pocket watch had been stolen. The driver and the skoker carried him to the public house which is now called the Top O' the Morning.

Mr Briggs was badly hurt. On the left side of the head, just over the ear, which was torn away, was found a deep wound; the skull was fractured and the bone driven in. On the base of the skull there were four or five lacerated wounds; there were more wounds on other parts of the head. 'Stimulants' were applied with a view of restoring consciousness but to no purpose, and Mr Briggs, having been removed to his home, died on Sunday night.

It appears that he was thrown out the carriage, but nobody on the train heard his cries for help. A German tailor, Franz Müller, suspected of the murder, had left for New York in a 'sailing-vessel'.

9. THE EARLS OF CADOGAN

Location: Cadogan Terrace

The current Earl of Cadogan and his family are the 17th on *Times Rich List 2008*. Their estimated fortune is £2,930 million (£2.93 billion).

George Cadogan, 5th Earl (1840-1915) was a conservative politician. He served as Lord Privy Seal from 1886 to 1892 (after 1887 in the Cabinet), and again in the cabinet as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1895 to 1902 and was also the first Mayor of Chelsea in 1900. In 1865, he married Lady Beatrix Craven and they had nine children. Cadogan funded the rebuilding of Holy Trinity Church in Sloane Street. Sir John Betjeman called Holy Trinity Church

the 'Cathedral of the Arts & Crafts Movement', and that indeed is what it is, containing treasures by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones among many others. It is presumed that Cadogan Terrace was named after George as he would have been a prominent figure in Victorian society. The road was named Cadogan Terrace in 1887.

The Cadogan connection continued into the 20th century with Sir Edward Cadogan (the ninth son of George Cadogan) co-founding in the Eton Manor Boys' Club round the corner (see point 10).

10. FIVE OLD ETONIANS AND ETON MANOR BOYS' CLUB

Location: Riseholme Gate and the A102(M) East Cross Route

You can't do away with the Manor Boys
For they'll be needed bye and bye
For everyone of the Manor Boys
Is ready to do or die
For they made the name of Hackney
As mighty as mighty can be
If it wasn't for the Manor boys
Where would dear old Hackney be?
In the workhouse'.

The Eton Manor Boys' Club was founded in 1909 by four old Etonians – Arthur Villiers, Gerald Wellesley, Alfred Wagg and Sir Edward Cadogan. Its fine clubhouse, designed by Harry Goodhart-Rendel (an old Etonian too), sat in Riseholme Street – a

road that was demolished in the late 1960s to make way for the A102(M) East Cross Route.

Opening in 1913, on the site of the derelict Manor Dairy Farm, the club had its origins dating back to the late 1880s when Eton College created a church mission and associated boys club to keep the men of Hackney from 'drinking, gambling and generally street loafing'.

In 1910, Gerald Wellesley wrote 'Hackney Wick is far from the West End, and at first sight is a grey and dismal place, but the boys of Hackney Wick are enthrallingly interesting.'

The site presented many difficulties due to its triangular shape. Made from golden yellow stock bricks and Portland stone with a red pan-tiled roof the building was an elegant and state-of-the-art clubhouse. Designed in two identical halves – one for 'boys' and the other for 'old boys'. Each side shared the use of a central library and great hall for use in common. The interior was monochromatic with grey painted woodwork, distempered walls in various light buffs and greys, white ceilings and black furniture designed by the architect. Facilities included games rooms, gyms, club-rooms, changing rooms, billiard rooms, bath rooms and a shooting range in the basement. Goodhart-Rendel also built the Manor House,

which looked like a Lutyens' building, for the Old Etonians to stay in. It was surrounded by beautiful gardens.

The clubhouse, together with its nearby sports ground – The Wilderness (opened in 1923) – provided first-class sports and social facilities for boys who could join when they were 14, but not after 16 allowing then to graduate to become an 'Old Boy'. This was set up as 'it made little sense to accustom boys to club life and team spirit if, at the age of 18 or 19, they were to be turned away.'

Many of the boys received coaching from many leading sportsmen, including Sir Alf Ramsey and Douglas Jardine. The running track used at the London 1948 Olympics was re-laid at the Wilderness. A strange coincidence is that the Wilderness now forms part of the London 2012 Olympic site.

Arthur Villiers devoted his life to the club. He got jobs for people from the Wick and gave them houses. He also invited 'lords and ladies, ambassadors and famous sportsmen to the Wick for supper parties, and might summon a couple of local teenagers to join the company'.

'You only had to ask, and you could have anything you wanted,' says Franklin. 'We asked for a new squash court and we got one. Someone showed an interest in judo

and within a week there were mats and a room put aside.'

But then it all collapsed. In the mid-1960s Villiers decided to close Eton Manor never really explaining the reasons why. Many theories were suggested: spiraling costs associated with running a club, immigration to the area, or other improprieties.

Meanwhile, the LCC meanwhile had decided to drive a motorway through Hackney Wick, requiring the demolition of the magnificent clubhouse and the Manor House. 'The members thought it would be possible to carry on at the Wilderness, but the motorway sliced the community in two and demolished what had been its heart'. Villiers died in 1969, on the Wilderness, aged 86.

11. JAMES BAUM AND DEERFOOT

Location: White Lion Public House

James Baum was the publican of the White Lion in Hackney Wick. In 1857, he built a running track alongside the public house. It was not the best track in the world. It was very short, so that the runners had to do nearly seven laps to make one mile. It has some awkward bends and a large number of trees nearby meant that the spectators didn't get a very good view. However during the next ten years it was one of the most important

tracks in the country. Running and walking races were called 'pedestrianism' at this time, and all the best pedestrians in the UK raced at Hackney Wick. Usually they raced for money, and there was a lot of betting on races, but to make things interesting Baum had special prize belts and cups made for certain distances. If you won a belt or cup you got to keep it for a while, but any other 'pedestrian' could challenge you to another race for it. If you won three races in a row, you got to keep the cup or belt for good.

Baum did well out of racing. As well as charging an entrance fee he sold food and drink to the crowd. He provided wrestling in between races, and even fireworks in the evening. The most successful period was in 1861-3, when the American Indian Lewis Bennett came to Britain and challenged many British 'pedestrians'.

Known as 'Deerfoot' Lewis Bennett grew up on the Cattaraugus Reservation, approx. 30 miles south of Buffalo in Upstate New York. The Seneca were part of the League of Five Nations, which included the respected and sometimes feared Iroquois.

He raced all over England, but some of his most important races were at the White Lion where he was very popular with the crowds. Bennett's first race in the UK was in

Hackney Wick on 9 September 1861. 'The impact of an American Indian appearing before a crowd of parochial Londoners in this way cannot be underestimated. The vast majority of the English population in 1861 was not well-traveled or worldly wise, and the chance to see an American Indian at close quarters was an exciting event'.

Bennett was tall, lithe and sinewy. He ran in full Native American dress – a cloth kilt decorated with porcupine quillwork (like embroidery) and beads. The regulars were spellbound.

This first race was with Edward 'Teddy' Mills over six miles, which he lost. But, he ran again on the 25 November 1861. This time 10,000 people came to see him run against Sam Barken for the 10-mile cup, which he won. Bennett was in the UK for 87 weeks. In this time it is estimated that he ran 130 races.

In 1868 James Baum died and the track started to go downhill. It was closed in 1872. In 1972, when the East Cross Route was being built a ceramic drinking jug was found. Embossed with the words *J. BAUM WHITE LION HACKNEY WICK*. A photograph exists in Hackney Archives of a Mr Harry Mallin, licensee of the White Lion holding the drinking jug. Too young to be the Boxer, Harry Mallin, this photo remains a mystery.

12. MARK BEAUFOY OF WICK HOUSE

Location: former Victoria Public House. On the corner of the Eastway and Wick Road

Colonel Mark Beaufoy was an astronomer and physicist who made a balloon ascent from Hackney Wick in 1821. He lived in Wick House – a building that stood in beautiful grounds on what is now the site of former Victoria Public House on the corner of the Eastway and Wick Road.

Built in the earlier Georgian era, it had a low brick wall, handsome iron gates in the centre, and a circular carriage sweep within. The back view, given above, was decidedly the most artistic, having a central doorway, and a bow-fronted elevation on either side. The Hackney Brook crossed the road under a low bridge, and formed a small ornamental lake, with a light iron bridge at one end, at the back of the mansion. With a gently sloping lawn on either bank, it separated the house from its extensive grounds. After Beaufoy's death in 1827 the house became a 'gentleman's school kept by one Dr Eady'. With the many alterations in that particular spot, it was pulled down and has left no memorial behind.

Mark Beaufoy is buried in St John-at-Hackney Churchyard.

13. WILLIAM LEONARD, A PIONEER OF PETROL

Location: White Post Lane

In 1859, Eugene Carless established his distilling and oil refining business in the Wick, on land adjoining White Post Lane. Here he constructed the Hope Chemical Works. Carless became the leading distillery in Britain for the newly imported American crude oil, and made advances in refining coal tar and shales, from which derived benzoline, paraffin oil, burning naphtha and carburine. George Bligh Capel and John Hare Leonard joined and started trading as Carless, Capel and Leonard, with Carless as works manager. Leonard was the sole proprietor within eighteen months. A major fire in 1890 damaged but did not destroy the Hope works. In 1895, Leonard negotiated the purchase of the nearby Pharos Chemical Works from Leon Clerc, together with his interests as a refiner, distiller, and importer of a range of products, including petroleum. An associate of Gottlieb Daimler, Frederick Simms suggested the trade name of Petrol, to be used for a motor launch spirit in 1893, and this was accepted by William Leonard, though it was accepted for registration as a trade mark as it was regarded by the Register to be a descriptive word.

Carless, Capel and Leonard started marketing petrol in the late 1890s. This firmly linked the firm with the

name petrol. Simms and Leonard were both founder members of the Automobile Club, later the RAC. At the turn of the twentieth century Carless Petrol was still virtually the only British source of highly refined motor spirit, and by 1906 the firm had 1,500 agents throughout the country. Further expansion at Hackney Wick took place in 1907 with the purchase of Lea Chemical Works. The Company opened a new refinery at Harwich in 1964. Production ceased at Hackney Wick in the early 1970s. In 1989 the company was taken over and broken up.

14. ALEXANDER PARKES, PARKESINE AND OTHER POLLUTING INDUSTRIES

Location: corner of Wallis Road and Berkshire Road

The Parkesine factory was constructed in 1866 by Alexander Parkes, who had developed the first plastic material a few years earlier, in 1862. It was built next to the waterproof cloth works of George Spill, which no longer survives. Alexander Parkes was born in 1813, the fourth of 8 children. He was apprenticed to a brass founders, later joining Elkington, Mason & Co. as manager of a casting department. A prolific inventor, he took out more than 80 patents, mostly related to metallurgy. He had 8 children by his first wife, remarrying after her death, his second wife giving him a further 12 children. He introduced a new

material, which he called Parkesine, at the 1862 International Exhibition in London and for which he was awarded a prize medal. Parkesine was based on cellulose nitrate which was subsequently used in the production of many plastics. Despite this the company was not successful, partly because of attempts to keep the price under a shilling a pound, and the company was liquidated in 1868. Nevertheless Parkes had laid the foundations from which others would successfully develop cellulose nitrate plastics - notably Celluloid developed by Hyatt in USA.

15. ARTHUR GEORGE GREEN AND ATLAS WORKS

Location: Wallis Road

Arthur George Green was a chemist, born in 1864 in London he worked for Brooke, Simpson and Spiller at Atlas Works.

The Atlas Works, dating from 1863, was a dye factory that produced the first aniline dyes. Aniline is toxic substance that when inhaled, swallowed or absorbed causes headache, drowsiness, cyanosis, and, in severe cases convulsions.

Whilst at the Atlas works Green discovered Primuline an important dyestuff.

Hackney Wick was the ideal situation for such a noxious industry because of its isolation.

16. PERCIVAL HOLT AND GAINSBOROUGH ROAD PUBLIC BATHS

Location: Eastway

Percival Holt, the Borough's Engineer, designed Gainsborough Road Public Baths in 1935. Originally, Holt proposed public baths with a huge swimming pool (100' by 35') with gallery, and a concert hall with stage and club rooms. These plans were never realised and were scaled back to only include public 'slipper' baths and a public laundry. The ground floor had 48 baths – 24 for women and 24 for men. There was also a waiting room, matron's office, towel and ticket office. The second floor had a caretakers' flat with a roof garden. The building is now a community centre.

A slipper bath is slightly deeper on one end than on the other. Many people associate slipper baths with Victorian period, but they continue to be produced and used today. A classic slipper bath is oblong in shape, and from the side it actually looks vaguely like a slipper. Typically, the taps are located at the shallower end, encouraging the bather to use the higher walled deep end as a lounging support. Depending on a person's size, he or she may be able to lie down in the bath, or sit up, using the gently sloping back as a support.

A joint project between the Hackney Society and Hackney Archives – to mark the start of the Cultural Olympiad

In the Victorian era, indoor plumbing was just starting to be introduced, and it was not uncommon to find homes with no hot running water. Slipper baths could be filled from large ewers of water hauled up from pans in the kitchen, or their taps could take advantage of interior plumbing, when it was available. Such baths are typically designed as freestanding units, often with small feet to keep the floor as dry as possible. The material of choice for a slipper bath was traditionally enameled cast iron.

17. BODLEY & GARNER, AND ST MARY OF ETON CHURCH

Location: Eastway

St Mary of Eton Church was designed by Bodley and Garner in 1890-92. It was built as part of the Eton Mission. The Eton Mission was founded in 1880 and sponsored by Eton College to bring Christianity and charitable works to the poor of the East End.

George Frederick Bodley, the more famous architect of the two, was born in Hull in 1827. He was a pupil of Sir George Gilbert Scott to whom he was related by marriage. He became a disciple of the new Gothic revival, specialising in ecclesiastical architecture. His own handling of the Gothic style became known as High Victorian, favouring the more decorative nature of 14th century architecture.

The church at Hackney Wick is red brick with stone dressings. The big north east gate-tower giving access to the picturesque courtyard with the Eton Mission buildings is of particular interest. The interior is equally impressive, in the tradition of Bodley's Pendlebury, Lancs (1870-74) and reminiscent of his church at Epping of 1899. *The research and walk was generously funded by the Cultural Olympiad Open Weekend, and supported by MLA's Festival of Storytelling. Part of the Hackney Wick Festival 2008.*

We hope to use these notes at the basis of a self-led walk and book.

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Further information

THE HACKNEY SOCIETY was formed in 1967 to involve and support local people in the conservation and regeneration of Hackney's built environment. We are a membership organisation that works to preserve Hackney's heritage and make the area a better place in which to live and work. We organise monthly events, and produce a newsletter and publications celebrating Hackney's social, cultural and architectural history. To join please contact info@hackneysociety.org, or log on to www.hackneysociety.org

HACKNEY ARCHIVES cares for the archives and local studies collections of the LBH and makes them available to the public for research. Their collections include the official administrative records of the Council and its predecessors, original records of local organisations and individuals, a library, photographs, maps and newspapers. For more information telephone 020 7241 2886, or log on to www.hackney.gov.uk/ca-archives

For further information about the history of Hackney Wick you can visit Hackney Archives, 43 De Beauvoir Road, London, N1

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