



Cockney Ancestor



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The East of London Family History Society

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Front Cover Illustration

The Front cover illustration shows that William Ravell was transferred to the Royal Engineers since, in this photograph taken at the London Studio, Cairo, he is wearing RE shoulder badges. You can read more about William Ravell in Brian Schirn's article on page 3 in this magazine. *Image courtesy of Brian Schirn.*

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Editorial

Well here we are in 2025. Not a good start for me as, as well as computer problems, I managed to pick up the dreaded coughing virus whilst on a cruise over Xmas and the New Year.

Pleased to say thanks to Kevin Dopson's help my computer is up and running again. Roll on the Spring!

Please put 12 April 2025 in your diaries. We are holding our AGM at the Museum of the Home (previously the Geffrye Museum), 136 Kingsland Road, London E2 8EA. Details of the day are in the programme on page 28 of this magazine.

Nominations are invited for the posts of Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer. Nomination forms are available from the General Secretary (address inside the front cover of the *Cockney Ancestor*), by email (society.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk) and on the website.

Members are advised that motions for discussion at the AGM should be notified to the Secretary no later than Friday 21 February 2025.

I would like to thank all our authors who contributed in 2024. I am pleased to say that a lot of new members have sent in their articles which is very encouraging.

We are very short of articles at the moment so if you are snowed in and have nothing to do how about writing for *Cockney Ancestor*? I may even have to resort to writing something myself! Details on how to submit your article can be found on the inside back cover of this magazine.

If you would like to join the Editorial team in any capacity please contact me at editor@eolfhs.org.uk. We can always do with help.

Let's hope 2025 will be a happy and healthy year for all our members.

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).

The Role of My Two Grandfathers in World War I – Part II

Brian Schirn No. 6483

Cairo

After resting at the island of Lemnos for a week, the Battalion embarked on the *HMT Marathon*, which was used as a hospital ship as well as a troop ship, and disembarked at Alexandria, Egypt, arriving there 16 December 1915. They then marched to Mex Camp, where the Battalion rested for eleven days.

The 1st/7th Battalion, among many other troops from the Mediterranean



William Ravell in the canteen, on the left
Image courtesy of Brian Schirn

Expeditionary Force, was transferred to Egypt to support the Anzac Mounted Division and 52nd (Lowland) Division fighting the Turkish and German Forces who were attempting to invade Egypt and seize the Suez Canal. The Canal was a vital part of the supply route from India and the Southern Hemisphere and the Mediterranean and had to be defended at all costs.

Palestine had been part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries and a large Turkish



**William Ravell as a tourist not part of
the Camel Corp**

Image courtesy of Brian Schirn

army was positioned along a line from Gaza to Beersheba, in Palestine, threatening the security of the Suez Canal. The British Command decided that this was an appropriate time to attack the Turks in Palestine. On 5 March, 1916, the Battalion went by train to Cairo and marched to Mina camp where they rested until 1 April, 1916.

It was about this time that William **RAVELL** was transferred to the Royal Engineers since, in this photograph taken at the London Studio, Cairo, he is wearing RE shoulder badges. (See cover Photo)

Between 1 April 1916, and 30 November 1916, the 1st/7th Battalion, Essex Regiment, prepared defences and occupied a number of different outposts along the Suez Canal in rotation with other regiments. There were no casualties recorded for the Battalion during this period and so it must have been a relatively quiet interlude in the fighting.

Palestine

The army was renamed as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and the 54th Division was steadily brought up to strength by the arrival of drafts. The Division was assembled in mid-January 1917 for the opening of the Palestine Campaign. This period of relative calm came to an end when the Battalion crossed the Sinai Desert in stages and arrived at El Arish, near the Palestine border 24 February 1917.

At the First Battle of Gaza the 53rd (Welsh Division) launched an attack to take Green Hill 26 March 1917. Green Hill was one of a series of ridges running west to east between Gaza and Beersheba defended by the Turks, blocking the only viable passage into Palestine. Despite heavy fighting the attack was a complete success and the position was held until nightfall when the 53rd was ordered to withdraw. The following day showed that the Turks had not reoccupied the position and the 1st/7th Battalion was sent to support the patrols but a violent Turkish counter-attack finished the battle. The Battalion's casualties at Green Hill were 228. It

was probably at this time that Edwin SCHIRN was promoted to Pioneer Sergeant for the battalion. A Pioneer Sergeant was a regimental appointment found only in line infantry regiments and was normally responsible for carpentry, joinery, and related work. The Second Battle of Gaza commenced with attacks on the Turkish lines 17 April 1917, with the 1st/7th Battalion held in reserve at Wadi Sharta.

On 19 April, the Battalion was moved up to support the Imperial Camel Corps in an attack on Sheikh Abbas Ridge and captured a position overlooking the Gaza to Beersheba Road. The Turks, however, had more than 250 big guns and the EEF was repulsed, suffering a total of 6,325 casualties.

The Battalion defended their position on Sheikh Abbas Ridge until it was relieved from trench duties for five days on 21 April 1917, having had five men wounded and then on its return suffered another ten soldiers wounded.

On 1 June 1917, the Battalion was transferred to Tel El Jemmi and then bivouacked in Wadi el Ghuzze behind the front lines. On 13 June, 1917, the Battalion took over the defence of the trenches at Lees Hill, on Es Sire Ridge, in support to the 52nd Division, close to Gaza town, where they were stationed until 30 June. It was 28 June 1917, at Lees Hill, that Edwin Schirn died. His death certificate states cause of death 'Died of wounds – suicide.' *I have often wondered how as he always managed to self-inflict a number of wounds before dying and since every soldier had his Lee Enfield.303 rifle by his side why did he not shoot himself? I believe he suffered so badly from enemy gunfire, e.g. shrapnel, that he was driven to take his own life – especially since there was no mention of self-inflicted wounds.*

Edwin Schirn is buried at the British War Cemetery at Gaza, among the graves of over three thousand British soldiers, a hundred Australians and twenty New Zealanders. This cemetery was always very well-tended by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission but after WWII it started to receive some damage and now I shouldn't think there is anything left. A scroll on parchment with the Royal Coat of Arms together with a bronze plaque were presented to his wife Clara together with a gratuity of £13-18s-9d



A postcard from Edwin to
his daughter Clara
Image courtesy of Brian Schirn

as well as a war widow's pension and children's payment totalling £1-18s-9d a week.

The youngest child, George, was born 8 April 1916 and so never knew his father. William Ravell was given the personal effects for Edwin Schirn so they must have been pals since first joining up in May 1915. Gaza was subjected to a heavy and continuous bombardment by the Turkish army from 27 October 1917. The Third Battle of Gaza started 1 November 1917, with a series of night attacks and the 1st/7th Battalion was sent to the El Arish Redoubt in a holding attack on the following day.

The fighting was very confused but the Battalion took all of its objectives, notwithstanding heavy casualties from Turkish machine gunners. The bombardment intensified on 6 November and, that night, successful attacks were launched on several Turkish trench systems.

On the morning of 7 November, Gaza was found to have been evacuated in the night. The Gaza to Beersheba Turkish defence lines subsequently collapsed and the Turkish army forced into retreat. Following several battles during the pursuit, the EEF captured Jerusalem 9 December 1917.

The 54th Division was engaged in line holding until September 1918 and then returned to the offensive for the Battle of Megiddo, near Haifa, 19 to 25 September, which finally broke the Turkish resistance.

The main assault force broke through the Turkish lines and opened the way for the cavalry to pursue the defeated enemy. By the time the Armistice with Turkey was signed 30 October 1918, the 54th Division had reached Beirut.

The armistice with Germany was signed on 11 November 1918.

William Ravell returned to the Essex Regiment from the Royal Engineers after the Armistice and then had to wait his turn for a berth on a ship returning troops to England. He was finally discharged from the army on 11 February 1919.

Both Edwin Schirn (posthumously) and William Ravell were awarded the 1914–15 Star (Gallipoli), British War Medal and Victory Medal. These medals were issued in the 1920s at a time that coincided with the publication of a comic strip in the *Daily Mirror* called *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred* and for some reason these nicknames stuck for the three medals together.

William Ravell brought back the personal effects for Edwin Schirn and took them to his widow, Clara, who lived only about half a mile away.

My father, Henry, was delegated to make a return visit to the Ravell household of William and Beatrice Ravell and daughter, Gladys, which led to a number of subsequent visits ***and that is how my father, Henry, and mother, Gladys, first met!***

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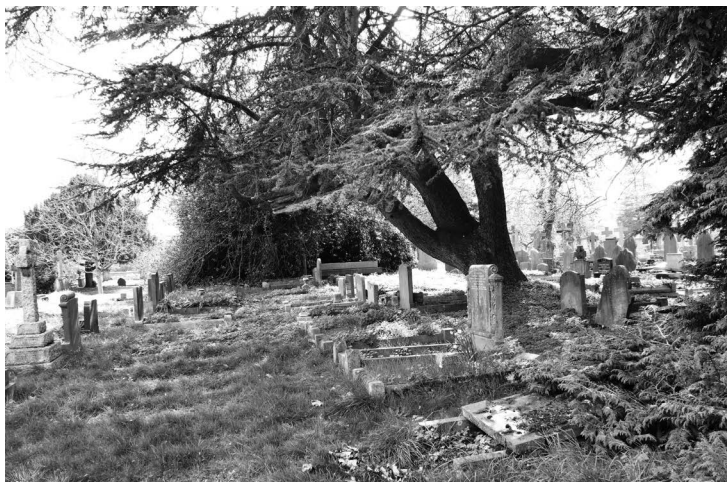
Mobbs Burial Records

Diana Stemp No. 16372

Readers of *Cockney Ancestor* may recall my story, *One of the Mobbs*, which was spread over two issues: Issue No 176 (pages 17–21), and Issue No 177 (pages 8–11) about my three x great-grandparents, Daniel Maddox **MOBBS** and his wife, Ann (nee **VALE**). In that story I mentioned that I hadn't yet found where they had been buried. Well, since that article, I've found their burial records and, while visiting London in April this year, I was able to visit their grave site. So I wanted to share this information with those of you who may also be related to this couple. Daniel and Ann are buried in an unmarked grave at the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium . Below are some of the details:

Register No	Name	Registration no	Date of Death	Date of Burial	Situation of Grave
23	Ann Mobbs	112268	19/6/1873	24/6/1873	Square: 181 Grave: 35630 Grant: 3470 3 rd class Private Grave Consecrated
31	Daniel Maddox Mobbs	150574	8/8/1878	14/8/1878	

I've included a photo of square 181, which is easy to find on a map of the cemetery. From the main gate, walk straight down Chapel Avenue, then turn right into Central Avenue. Square 181 can be reached through square 182, on the left, or you can walk round the corner into St. Andrews Road where square 181 will be directly on your left. The cemetery is well-served by public transport. I took the Elizabeth Line train to Manor Park station and, upon exiting, it was an easy walk down Forest View Road, past the edge of Epping Forest, where the entrance is directly ahead. Alternatively, buses towards Wanstead or Leytonstone stop not far from the main gate (routes 101 and W19, stop J). After a lifetime of living in London's East End, with the majority of the time at 83 Driffield Road, Bow, Daniel was living at 11 Estcourt Road, Fulham Fields when he died – almost penniless So I walked to Estcourt Road, Fulham on my recent visit just to see what that was like and to compare it with his house in Driffield Row and it was quite different. Although there were brightly painted terraced homes in in Estcourt Road, Fulham Fields (see photo) they border dull grey medium-rise social housing blocks, so it's quite densely populated.



Square 181

Image courtesy of Diana Stemp



Estcourt Road, Fulham

Image courtesy of Diana Stemp

Very different from when Daniel lived there. I am so pleased to have closed the loop on Daniel's life story at last.

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From Geordie to Cockney:

The Story of William Alexander Brewis (1845–1893)

Susan Pepper No. 22125

I had always understood that my **BREWIS** ancestors were lightermen from East London. So as part of my research into the life of my 2 x great-grandfather, William Alexander Brewis, I spent an afternoon at the London Metropolitan Archives, looking for him in the microfiche indexes to the apprentice binding books and affidavit books of the *Company of Watermen and Lightermen*. I did find a first cousin twice removed, James Brewis, and a grand-uncle, Harry George Brewis, bound in 1913 and 1916 respectively, but I found no trace of William. This account will explore what William actually did after he moved to East London from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in his mid-teens and how the lighterman myth may have arisen.

William Alexander Brewis was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 27 April 1845, and was the eldest son of George Brewis, a cartman, and his wife, Isabella. He was baptised, 3 August 1845, at St. John's Church in Newcastle where his parents had married in the previous year. His birth was followed by that of his brothers, George and James Turnbull, the latter of whom died in June 1853 aged only three. Another brother, James Bulman, was born in 1855 but, by 1861, the family's fortunes had changed markedly as William's father had died and his mother had moved the family south to East London.

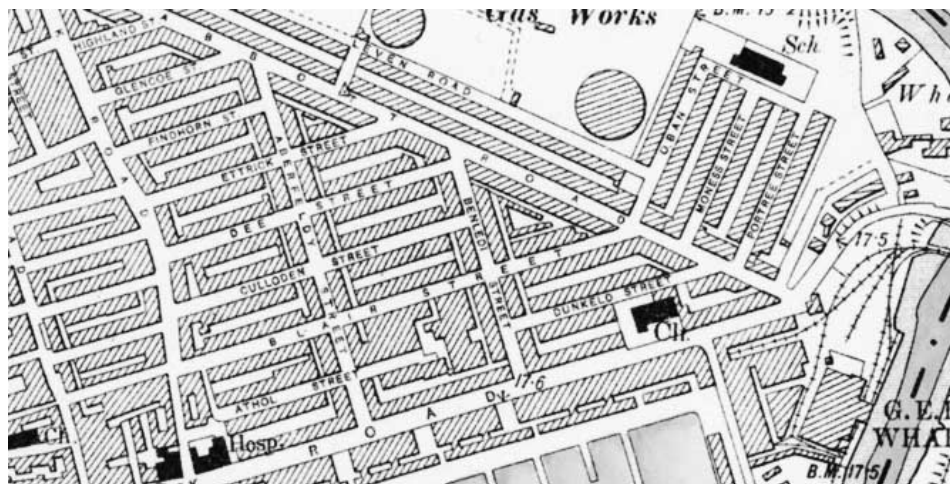
Although aged only 16, William was evidently living away from the rest of the family in 1861 and, unfortunately, I can find no record in the census for him. I do know that he was living in Ashton Street, Poplar at the time of his marriage on 5 May 1867 and that, by that time, he was described as an engineer. In subsequent records, William is referred to as an engine driver, and specifically in the 1891 census, as a tug engine driver. Presumably, as the member of the crew responsible for driving the tug engine rather than the captain of the vessel, he would not be classed as a lighterman, although I can see how the confusion might have arisen within my family. He would not therefore have needed to serve an apprenticeship with the Company of Watermen and Lightermen, which would explain my failure to locate him in the apprenticeship records.

This still leaves the question as to how the son of a deceased cartman from the North East of England found his way onto Thames tugboats, where roles often passed from father to son and I believe that the answer may lie with his uncle, William **WHARRIER** (his mother's brother-in-law). In 1841, William Wharrier was an engineer, living in Poplar and, although by 1851 he was working as a tugboat engineer in Ramsgate, it is not inconceivable that William found his nephew a position through his connections in the Poplar area. Coincidentally,

William Wharrier went on to have a highly distinguished career as an engineer on the Ramsgate harbour tugs and he was awarded the RNLI Silver Medal for gallantry in 1874 and 1881 and was given the RNLI Silver Third-Service Clasp on his retirement in 1890.

As a tugboat engineer, William Brewis would have been responsible for operating and maintaining the tug's steam engine. I know of one tug which William crewed, the *Diana*, a 67-foot iron screw steamer with a one-cylinder engine, built by the Thames Iron Works and Shipbuilding Company, Blackwall in 1883. William would have been on the *Diana* during the period after June 1886 when she was registered with the lighterage company, *Vokins and Company*. This company had been founded in the late 1850s by a lighterman, William **VOKINS**, and was based in Blackwall; the *Diana* would have had the company's distinctive black funnel with a red 'v' on a white disc or white band.

I do not know when William started at Vokins' or indeed whether he was with the company throughout his working life, but I do know that he progressed in his career as, in 1881, he is described as 'a senior marine engine driver'. William married Jane **ELLWOOD** at All Saints Church, Poplar, 5 May 1867. One of the witnesses to the marriage was his cousin, John Wharrier, also an engineer and again illustrating the close ties with the Wharrier family. Jane was the daughter of Ephraim Ellwood, a labourer, and she had been born and brought up in Over, Cambridgeshire. She must have met William after she came to London to enter service at the house of William **TAYLOR**, a house agent, at 1 Kedgerree Place, Poplar. The address given for both William and Jane on their marriage certificate was Ashton Street in Poplar. They would have been living in one of the houses built when the street was developed by Thomas **ASHTON** of Blackwall and the builder, Thomas **HALE**, in 1807–1808. Ashton Street is still in existence today, but none of the nineteenth century housing survives. William and Jane subsequently moved to 10 Sidmouth Terrace in Battersea, but, by 1871, they were back in Poplar and they both remained in East London for the rest of their lives. In 1871, William, Jane and their two sons were at 21 Cawdor Street, sharing the accommodation with another family, William **KEERS**, a police constable, and his wife and three children. Cawdor Street ran between St. Leonard's Road and Brunswick Road and consisted of Victorian terraced houses and shops, all of which were demolished in the 1950s and 1960s, either for the construction of the Blackwall Tunnel Approach or for new housing. In 1881, William and Jane were at 37 Glencoe Street, Poplar. Their family had significantly expanded by then with seven sons ranging in age from 13 to 8 months and they enjoyed sole occupancy of the



**Map showing the location of Glencoe Street, Abbott Road,
Ettrick Street and Dee Street**

Image courtesy of the National Library of Scotland www.maps.nls.uk

property. Glencoe Street was absorbed into the construction of a slip road onto the Blackwall Tunnel Northern Approach and no longer exists, although the name is remembered in a block of flats called Glencoe House which stands beside the A12. The family were still at 37 Glencoe Street in 1891 but, two years later, they had moved again to 167 Abbott Road. This road survives and has the distinction of being the longest in Poplar, although all the Victorian housing has been replaced.

Map (see above) showing the location of Glencoe Street and Abbott Road (and also Cawdor Street, which is unmarked, to the west of Ettrick Street and Dee Street and running parallel to them). OS London Sheet VIII. SW, published 1894–1896 On 18 January 1893, William was admitted to the Dreadnought Hospital in Greenwich, a facility founded by the *Seamen's Hospital Society* to provide relief to sick and injured seafarers. William was suffering from 'scalds' and, from local newspaper reports, it is apparent that his injuries were the result of a collision off Deptford Creek between his tug, the *Diana*, and a steamship, the *Sanda* of Glasgow. The impact caused the stop valve of the boiler to break off and William, who was in the engine room at the time, suffered scalds to his head, face, neck and both arms and hands. His eldest son, William, was a fireman/stoker on the *Diana* at the time of the accident, but he was fortunate to be at the top of the ladder out of the engine room when the collision occurred; although he was thrown into the river by the force of the impact, he avoided being scalded like his father. William accompanied his father to hospital and

sent a telegram to his mother: 'the boat is cut-down, father and I are saved'. Sadly, this message proved poignantly optimistic as a week later, January 25, William died in hospital from septicaemia as a result of his burns; he was aged just 47. The subsequent inquiry, at which his son appeared as a witness, found 'contradictory evidence' surrounding the signals given by both vessels and did not assign blame to either.

William's widow, Jane, was still at 167 Abbott Road in 1901, but she later moved further east to 8 Malmesbury Road in Canning Town. The 1911 census reveals that she had become paralysed in 1895 and she evidently relied on the support of her sons, two of whom, Walter and Percy, remained with her in 1911. Jane died on 15 December 1914 at the age of 69; her death certificate gives her cause of death as cerebral haemorrhage, and it seems likely that her earlier paralysis was the result of a stroke too.

Six of William and Jane's eight sons, William, George, Albert, Garnet, Harry and Walter became tug engine drivers like their father and the Brewis connection with the Vokins company continued as his son, Garnet, was working as an engine driver for Vokins in 1921. And, in a tragic postscript to the accident described above, William's eldest son, William, was found drowned in the River Thames at North Woolwich, 31 March 1915; according to his death certificate, there was 'no evidence to show how he came into the water'.

William's tug, the *Diana*, was re-engined following the accident in 1893. From November 1916 she was registered to Clements Knowling and Company of Brentford, and she was eventually scrapped in 1949. She was on the national news again in April 1933 when her master, Richard LEWIS, was fined £10 for navigating at a speed likely to endanger the public; he had apparently swamped and sunk a rowing eight near Kew.

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Follow Up to Aldersbrook Children's Home

David Horwill No. 3818



**My late father and his siblings
taken at their mother's funeral**
Image courtesy of David Horwill

The recent article in *CA* 183 (p 16) on Aldersbrook Children's Home reminded me of its significance in my family history, as my late father, Edward **HORWILL**, spent part of his youth there. But how did that arise? My grandmother, Florence **DEBOO**, was born 6 November 1875 in Poplar. She was the last of nine children born to Ephraim and Emma Deboo (nee **DRAKE**) but by only a matter of minutes as her twin brother Fred preceded her into the world.

On 21 December 1891, when Florence was sixteen years and one month old, she gave birth to an illegitimate

child, the putative father probably being a brother-in-law. Although the brother-in-law admitted his offence with my grandmother, he was eventually unable to pay the two shillings a week maintenance and, at about the age of nine, the young boy was taken into care with *Barnado's*. Shortly after, he joined many other children of varying ages on a journey to Canada where he spent the remainder of his life. Whilst these events were taking place, my grandfather, Arthur Horwill, who was born in Plymouth 5 May 1857, was plying his working life as a mariner sailing to various destinations around the world. He had been apprenticed to a Liverpool shipping company and earned his Second Mate's certificate in his five-year apprenticeship. But the lure of sea must have been beginning to pall and, around the late 1890s, he decided to settle down. He is to be found on the 1901 census living with a widow and her unmarried daughter,

and now employed as adock labourer – that daughter was Florence Deboo. At that time their address was 23 Rowlett Street, Bromley by Bow.

It was on 25 December 1903 that Florence and Arthur were wed at St. Gabriel's Church, Chrisp Street, Poplar. They went on to have five children, the eldest, Arthur, being born 28 November 1905, followed by George 18 July 1908, Edward (my father) 12 May 1910, Sidney 1 August 1912, and finally Kathleen (known as Kay) 9 October 1914. Then tragedy struck. On 27 March 1916 Florence died at the age of 40 (the death certificate states that she was 43) having suffered from acute bronchitis leading to cardiac failure. Their youngest child was then only about eighteen-months-old. It is not known how Arthur coped looking after five children and continuing attending the local docks. Some family help must surely have taken place. But only about two and a half years later, Arthur himself succumbed to the flu pandemic. His death on 30 November 1918 left the five children as orphans. By now they were living in Maplin Road, Canning Town and came under the jurisdiction of the West Ham authorities. Kathleen was taken in by an aunt and uncle as a further child tacked on at the end of their own brood (ironically this uncle may well have been responsible for fathering Kathleen's half-brother in Canada). Meanwhile each of the four boys were placed in scattered homes. My father spent some time at 27 Pelham Road, South Woodford before being placed in Aldersbrook.

Irrespective of the child's ability at school, they were limited to certain trades; the armed forces, fishing, or farming. My father and an elder brother became carpenters. The younger brother joined the Navy and the eldest was placed with Fegan's Boys and also, ironically, was sent to farm in Canada, never knowing that he already had a half-brother there.

Alas, as far as I am aware, no listings of the children who spent time in the homes and at Aldersbrook Children's Homes exist although I am aware that there are extensive minutes amongst the local authority records detailing the running of these establishments.

The family scattered over the years. We lost touch with Arthur in Canada and only discovered his whereabouts much too late to re-establish relationships. He died in 1993. George never married and eventually joined my parents in Worthing where he died in 1984. Sidney took his family out to South Africa after WWII (in which he served throughout the war in the Royal Navy). He and his wife Annie, nee **JARVIS**, took their two surviving children (one child was killed as a result of a bomb landing nearby) and had two more in South Africa. Kathleen went with her daughter and son-in-law out to Southern Australia quite late in her life where she enjoyed life to the full, dying at the grand age of 98.

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George Ewer and his Grey-Green Coaches

Nigel Turner No. 4773

I was very interested to see the photo in CA No. 183 taken on 4 February 1953 by Douglas **ANDREWS** of a brand-new *Grey-Green* coach parked on the forecourt of 55 Stamford Hill. As Ewer's Grey-Green Coaches were a part of East End life for much of the twentieth century, a brief history may be of interest. C.G.(George) **EWER** was born in 1864. By 1901 he was working as a greengrocer, living with his wife and six children at Leonard Street, Shoreditch.

Sadly, George passed away in 1907, but the family business continued and, by 1919, was a partnership between sons, James Henry, Albert, and Albert's father-in-law, George **SMART**.

The first motor vehicles were acquired around about 1919, but a major step forward came in March 1921 with the purchase of a brand new *Dennis* charabanc.

The partnership was dissolved in November 1922 and James Henry Ewer (known as 'JH') began trading as *George Ewer & Co*, concentrating on coaching.

His brother, Albert Ewer, started a rival business mainly running buses but later acquiring coaches which led to sibling rivalry until 1934 when JH bought Albert's business for £10,000.

A limited company, *George Ewer & Co Limited*, (trading as *Grey-Green Coaches*), was registered 14 February 1930, the directors being the brothers, JH and William Arthur Ewer, together with their sister, Alice L. **SMITH**. In the same year, a large house at 55, Stamford Hill was acquired which was converted into offices and a garage was built in its grounds.

The 1930s was a time of great expansion such that eighty coaches were in service by 1939 and several premises in East London and East Anglia were in use.

After the war, the task of rebuilding the business began with the acquisition of a number of competitors and then expansion into car dealerships.

The company was listed on the *London Stock Exchange* in 1947 although the Ewer family remained in control with members of the next generation becoming directors. In early 1953 the company bought five brand new coaches registered NLT 171 to NLT 175 which entered service in March. The photo taken by Douglas Andrews is one of those, but which one will, I'm afraid, have to remain a mystery. The chassis was a *Royal Tiger* built by *Leyland Motors* of Leyland, Lancashire while the forty-one seat *Wayfarer* bodies were by *Harrington* of Hove in Sussex.

They were withdrawn from service in October 1962 and gave several more



The former coach station at St. Margaret's Green, Old Foundry Road
Image courtesy of Nigel Turner

years of service with other operators.

Sadly, a hostile takeover bid in 1980 led to the company being acquired by the *Cowie Group* and the rapid departure of the Ewer family from the company that they had founded. A decline in the coach industry led to the company morphing into a bus operator ultimately becoming the present-day business *Arriva*.

Ironically, Adrian Ewer, a grandson of J.H. Ewer, was latterly a non-executive director of Arriva's competitor, the *Go-Ahead Group*. I did have a brief conversation with him a few years ago but he never worked for George Ewer as his career began just as the family left the company.

Apart from memories of streams of Grey-Green coaches heading up the A12 road into East Anglia, there is a physical reminder in the shape of the former coach station at St. Margarets Green/ Old Foundry Road in the Suffolk County town of Ipswich. As a listed building, the lettering 'Ewers Grey Green Coaches'

remains in place in 2024 despite it being over forty years since it closed.

The Ewer business has been well documented over the years. In particular, the two volume *Grey-Green and its contemporaries* by the late Tom **MCLACHLAN** provides a social and family history of not only George Ewer but also of many of the London coach operators of the twentieth century which may be of interest to anybody whose ancestors worked in the industry.

'Greenwood', 23, Ketleys View, Panfield, Braintree, Essex CM7 5AF
Email: nigel@surechem.co.uk

Homework For Tonight

Jeffery Harvey No.232

I've been doing my family history for about 40 years now and have volumes of pages of births, marriages, deaths, addresses etc.

But when I reviewed my grandfather's history I realised that I hardly knew anything about him.

When I was at school I used to visit him every Saturday morning for a tea and a chat but on reflection he told me nothing about his childhood, who his friends were, what school was like, what he did after school or at the weekends or even during the holidays. Did he go on holidays? How did he get his first job? Nothing!

So to make sure that my grandchildren will not be in the same position in 60 years time I've started to write my memoirs.

Nothing too erudite, just a lot of little memories with a few notes of explanation, such as that busses in the olden days didn't have doors but had conductors who sold you paper tickets.

It's easy on a computer - just write the memories down as you think of them. You can put them into some sort of order later.

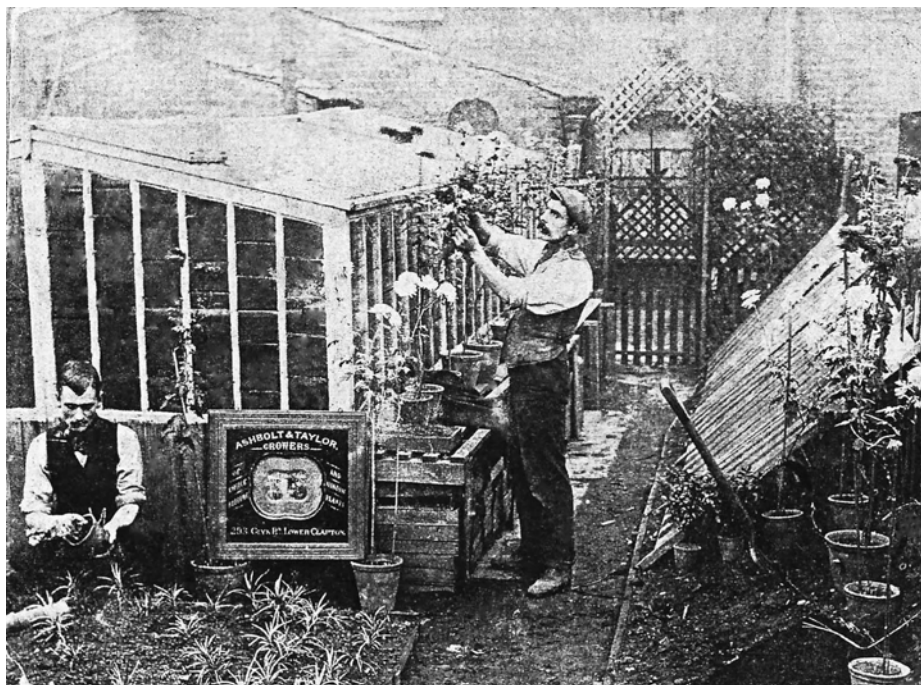
So, homework for tonight will be:

Start writing your own memories – future generations will thank you for them.

55 Trelawney Road, Hainault, Ilford IG6 2NJ



Post Box



- ☐ Kathy Munson asks if any reader recognises the two men shown in their Glyn Road, Hackney garden at the turn of the 20th century. Mr **ASHBOLT** died at the early age of 30 in 1904 but which one was he and who was Mr **TAYLOR**?
- ☐ John Sly (13403) sends a request for Postbox.
He has one of the medals awarded to William Ernest **MILLS**, but he is having trouble finding the key to his door.
Here is what John knows about him. His death certificate records his age on death as twenty. There is no record of a man of this name in the birth registers of the GRO or in the censuses for 1901 or 1911.

He married Sarah Jane **SLADE**, a twenty-two year old spinster, of 11 Major Road, West Ham, on 25 December 1912 at Christ Church, West Ham. He was described as a twenty-one year old labourer of the same address. *Soldiers Died In The Great War* records that he was born in Holborn, lived in Plaistow, enlisted at Stratford, and was killed in action on 6 November 1914.

He was entitled to the bar to the Star.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that he died 6 November 1914. He is buried in Bedford House Cemetery. His Effects form shows that he was killed between 22 October and 6 November 1914.

His credits and war gratuity were paid to his widow, Sarah Jane, sole legatee.

Hopefully one of our members will be able to unlock this door. If you have any information please contact John (Email: Sly211@btinternet.com)

John Lucas Allen – A Victorian Scoundrel?

B J Spear No. 883

Buckhurst Hill House is a fine Georgian Mansion built 1815 and now divided into flats. The railway to Buckhurst Hill opened in 1856, wealthy East Enders moved in, and in 1871 the house was occupied by John Lucas **ALLEN** widower, 50, no occupation, b Hackney, Mary **J RUNDER**, 34, niece, unmarried b Middlesex and three servants. He died 23 November 1880 in Brighton aged 66 leaving £80000, Mary Jane Runder spinster being an executor and main beneficiary. The *Woodford Times* of 4 December 1880 announced the decease of Mr John Lucas Allen, for so many years a resident of Buckhurst Hill House. His kind and genial temperament has endeared him to a large circle of friends, and the various excellent charities in the neighbourhood, including the Village Hospital, will lose in him a generous friend and benefactor. Mr Allen for many years belonged to the order of Freemasons and was an esteemed member of the Grandmaster's Lodge and the Order of Knights Templar, and his death will be a source of much regret to his brother masons.

Even allowing for the conventions of obituaries a respectable citizen – or perhaps not! The Berkshire marriage index says he married by licence 19 August 1843, St. John the Baptist, Anglican, New Windsor, bachelor, gent., father Thomas Allen gent., to Ann **HARLEY**, widow, father James **HANSCOMB**, gent., both of full age and of Gloucester Place, witnesses Charlotte Jonas Allen probably his presumed sister Charlotte Lucas Allen bap 26 September 1810 to Thomas Allen/Susannah **HUSKE** and John **COBBETT**. *The Evening Standard* said he was the youngest son of the late Thomas Allen of West Hackney and Ann was the relict of James Harley Esq. His father was almost certainly Thomas Allen who died in 1837 leaving a PCC will and a wife Susannah, children and property though John Lucas Allen is not mentioned neither has his baptism been found. They had a son, William (John mentions a deceased brother William in his 1880 will). Thomas Allen of Robinson's Row was buried on 16 December 1837 aged 72 years at West Hackney. A very faded 1841 census record shows John and Charlotte Allen at Robinson's Row, West Hackney, no occupation given. It appears to show a family of modest rentiers. In 1844 – 51 he was a voter in Lewisham though the 1851 census revealed him as a lodger at 20 Artillery Place, St. Luke's, married, aged 35, landed house proprietor, b Hackney. His wife was at 17 Grove Place, Hackney calling herself Maria Allen, head, mar, 48, proprietor of houses, b Hackney with James Harley, gentleman, 27, son, b Shoreditch and a servant. On 5 July 1852 Allen was defendant at Middlesex County Court accused of *Unlawfully keeping a common brothel*. 1856-7 he was on the electoral registers at 1 Crescent Place Camberwell, in 1856 being involved in building development in Lorimer Square, Southwark, he being of Finsbury Square. He had been a member of the *Honorable Artillery Company* since 17 August 1848 (gentleman age 32 (untrue) 4 Grove St., Hackney and 47 Brunswick St., Hackney Road) and resigned 6 November 1856. In 1860 Charlotte Lucas Allen died aged 48 at the *Highlands*, Upper Norwood.

In 1861 he was at 17 Sussex Place, Marylebone aged 43, widower (both untrue) proprietor of land, and houses with 'niece' 25 year-old single Mary Runder b Exeter, Devon and two servants. This was one of the large expensive terraces round Regents Park, a big step up from Hackney. Who was his 'niece'? Mary Jane Runder was christened in Exeter St., Lawrence, 21 August 1834 to Francis (jeweller)/Mary Ann Runder had an older son Francis Matthew in 1832. Francis was apprenticed as a jeweller in London in 1803, he and his partner went bankrupt in London in 1825. He married in Devon, 1831 Mary Ann **LOCK**, was a jeweller in Exeter High Street and went bankrupt a

gain in 1849, dying in Exeter in 1868. Not found in 1851 but the children seem to have gone to London (a Francis Runder was charged with larceny in Surrey in 1856 and Mary Jane solved the family financial problems by becoming the *niece* of Allen). Where did the money come from? He was clearly separated from his wife and the 1857 *Matrimonial Causes Act*, which made divorce easier, enabled her to sue him for divorce in 1858. However, the procedure was slow and expensive, and the lurid details were eagerly reported by the popular press whose readership enjoyed the embarrassment of their betters. 1 August 1863, the *North London News* under the leader *wife desertion* reported that *John Lucas Allen, a rich man residing in a large house at Sussex Terrace, Regents Park, had deserted his wife and left her dependent on the parish for support*. After much legal wrangling he had refused to pay and the prosecutor thought he should be pursued under the *Bankruptcy Act*. It was then ordered that no more outdoor relief should be given to Mrs Allen and that the alternative was the workhouse. 11 November 1863, the *Evening Standard* (and many other papers) reported that Mr James John Harley of 17 Grove, Hackney was summoned. for having *maliciously written and published a defamatory libel on Mr John Lucas Allen, a member of the Royal Thames Yacht Club, residing at Sussex Place, Regents Park*. This concerned ; a letter reading: *John Lucas Allen Esq. of Albemarle St., Piccadilly who was later brought as a rogue and vagabond before the magistrates at Worship Street Police Court for leaving his wife,, who is blind, to starve. Sussex Place Regents Park, 21 August Sir, Unless some provision is made for your wife I shall set on foot a subscription among the members of the Royal Thames Yacht Club on behalf of the poor woman whom, according to the newspapers, you married for her property and then deserted. And when you were brought to the court as a rogue and vagabond you proposed through your solicitor that she should sell her bed and you would pay for her support in the workhouse; you at the time, living in affluence with another woman. Truly a delightful acquisition for the Freemasons, the Royal Botanical Society and the Royal Thames Yacht Club who, no doubt, must feel themselves highly honoured in having you as a member. I must add that you and your partner VELEY of Chelmsford, are two base scoundrels, and a disgrace to any civilised community. Yours etc A Member*. James John Harley was Ann's son and hence Allen's stepson. Allen and his solicitor Veley swore the letter was in Harley's handwriting whereas Harley and his backers swore it was not. Among the statements relating to Allen's cross examination he said that the brothel keeping arose out of some property he had bought, the tenants had been given notice to quit and he had not been tried. *My wife has applied for maintenance through a police court. She had at the same time about £120/*

a year. She is much older than I am. When I married my wife represented herself as younger than she was. There is a respectable lady called Runder living in my house. I have adopted her as my niece. In another paper it was reported that he had a child, which he denied. When the case was resumed, three witnesses called Allen a *brute, scoundrel* and that he had *robbed an old lady of her money to keep a young woman*. Allen claimed the delay in bringing the case was because he had been away. Eventually Allen withdrew the prosecution; the publicity must have been most unwelcome. His wife died 24 March 1864 in Hackney still married to John of Sussex Place, Regents Park and *Hadleigh House*, Essex and was possibly buried at Nunhead, 2 April 1864, aged 66.

James John Harley was bapt 7 January 1824 at Shoreditch to James/Ann Harley, the marriage of James Harley and Ann **HANDSCOME** possibly 17 September 1819, St. Botolph's, Aldgate. She was possibly the Ann Hanscombe christened 21 September 1797 to James/Ann Hanscombe. She was clearly far older than Allen and property rich when she married him. At that time man and wife were legally one so, unless the wife made a marriage settlement ringfencing her money (a prenup in modern parlance), there was little to stop the husband taking her property. Clearly, he did that so the term *scoundrel* was well deserved. Allen's will left Jane Runder virtually everything in trust (and after her death to some of his relations) so she became wealthy with money. She married Dr William Boughton **STIRLING** in 1884 in Brighton, him being eight years younger with little money but he died three years later. Her mother was living with their unmarried son, Francis of no occupation, in Pimlico, 1871 and died there that year. Francis was buried with his mother in Brompton cemetery in 1897 leaving £1100 with his sister as administrator. She moved to 74 Marine Parade (claiming to be 60 in 1901) eventually dying aged 83 in 1914, leaving £57,254. It is not clear what happened to the trust but there were various bequests including to her coachman, Henry **RINGWOOD**, who inherited a house and stables and a single retired dentist John **FITZGERALD** b 1850, Devon, who was executor, possibly a relation of hers., Allen's solicitor, Frederick Thomas **VELEY** (whose daughter was Allen's godchild) was a prominent citizen in Chelmsford, not dying till 1892, aged 84 leaving £27,000. James John Harley never seems to have worked, marrying in the Isle of Man around 1860 and having a son. He died in 1904 aged 67 leaving *Fairfield House*, Kings Road, Edmonton and 17 The Grove, Hackney probably to widow Margaret, £3,546 so Allen does not seem to have got all the family money.

idle Speculation

The *Dictionary of National Biography* has an entry for an anonymous author, **WALTER** whose diaries covering 4,200 pages were privately published in Amsterdam after 1882 with the title *My Secret Life*. He was a compulsive womaniser and his diaries detail his activities real or imagined with around 1,200 women. Historians writing boring tomes on the Victorian period often bring in Walter to spice things up! Who was he? He deliberately changed many biographical details to avoid identification but those who have gone through the diaries in detail (quite a chore – I have never read it!) concluded Walter was a wealthy man whose exploits started in the early 1830s, hence born before c.1815, who died around 1880 and spent much of his life of leisure in and around London. He married unhappily for money, his wife eventually died, and he had another better-liked lady while continuing his other activities; he does not appear to have had children. Various candidates have been suggested, none with much evidence, but given his general character, John Lucas Allen is as likely a candidate as some of the others.

Bibliography

Buckhurst Hill House. Loughton and District Historical Society Newsletter 217 April/May 2018

Enthusiasms M. **GIROUARD** 2011 chapter 5. He was an architectural historian who died recently but this book details his other odd research. After much effort he failed to identify Walter.

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You Herbert

Annette Kilbourn No. 14179

It's funny but some names and events are deeply ingrained in a family's history and one such name in mine is **HERBERT**. In my family if my sister or I ever did anything silly, then my dad would say to us *you Herbert*

Now why would he call us that I can hear you ask, well my dad's family used to live in at 100 St. Peters Street in Bethnal Green and one of the other family's that lived there were the Herbert's who lived at No.24.

Now in my case my Dad called me 'a little Herbert' when I was being a bit silly or mischievous when I was a child. I always thought this was just something that just my Dad used to say, but my cousin Lesley said that my Auntie Vi used to say this too and I even heard the phrase when I was wandering down Roman Road market a few weeks back and one of the stall holders said this to his assistant. This phrase took me right back to when my dad was around.

What was the beginning of my family's association with the Herberts? Well in 1909 my Grandparents Christopher & Lily **KILBOURN** rented two first floor rooms from my Great-Grandmother Emily who lived at 100 St. Peters Street when they first got married. After Emily died in 1922, my Grandparents took over the whole house for their large family. They stayed here until the mid-1930s when they moved a short way down the road to No.4 St. Peters Street. I have mentioned this before but there is an enjoyable book that is written by Derek **HOUGHTON** who lived at No. 74 St. Peter's Street the same time as my dad and his siblings, and this is called 'A Bethnal Green Memoir'.

My Dad's family maintained their friendship with the Herbert family long after the Kilbourns left St. Peters Street to move to Hackney as the Herbert family for well over a century used to run market stalls across the East End and we would see them at the various markets that we visited. This costermonger family dynasty was founded by one Walter Albert Herbert (1877–1947), which is a name that runs down the generations. This Walter was born in Whitechapel and married Rachael **RITSON** (1875–1939) in 1896.

On Walter's army record from when he enlisted in WWI on 24 June 1916, he is shown as a fruiterer / greengrocer who was living at 138 Brady Street. Maybe the costermonger dynasty in the Herbert family goes back even further than that. Walter and Rachael had seven children and one of these was a son also called Walter Albert Herbert (1901–1947) who married Selina **SAVOY** (1901–1973). She was known as Lena and was the matriarch of the Herberts. It was their children who my family knew as they lived at 24 St. Peters Street



My Uncle Reggie shown on the right with the Herberts on their fish stall at Mare Street, Hackney – about 1945/46



Image courtesy of Annette Kilbourn

and their cousins who lived in the surrounding streets. I clearly remember when I was a child if we were ever shopping at Bethnal Green Road my Dad would always have a laugh and joke with his childhood friends who had a vegetable/potato stall if they were not busy, but if they were then he would always jump on the stall to help them out for a while. The stall was diagonally opposite the Tesco's there and near the café *E Pellicci* (been on the site there since 1900 when it was opened by an Italian family from Tuscany).

Whilst Dad was doing this my Mum, sister Chris and I would wander off getting the rest of the shopping and often getting our fruit from the other stall run by the Herberts up the other end of the road towards where the old Percy Ingles the bakers used to be.

The family also had a fish stall on a Sunday at Brick Lane market, this one was run by Leslie Herbert Snr who ran the stall for over 40 years. My dad would only have a quick hello to his friend here though as my Mum would moan at him about his clothes smelling of fish after he had helped Leslie.

After my family moved to Hackney, my Uncle Reggie when he was young, used to work on Wally Herbert's fish stall in Hackney which I am sure that many of you would remember as it was right on the corner of Amhurst Road (Mare Street end). This location was handy for my Uncle Reggie as the family were



The stall as it is today. The poster on the wall is where the stall used to be in the 1945/46 photo

Image courtesy of Annette Kilbourn

living in Brett Road, so it was a less than five-minute walk to the stall.

The Wally Herbert who started the fish stall was Walter Albert Herbert (1920–1994), and he established this pitch around 1940. The wooden stall which later became a crescent shaped brick counter at the same site was still going strong until 2017, albeit run by his granddaughter Sally and we Kilbourns were still customers right till the end as were my aunts on my Mum's side of the family.

It is interesting too as I loved reading books by the author James Herbert (1943–2013), but I never made the connection to my Dad's old friends until my cousin Lesley told me that he too was one of the Herberts from the East End.

James's father had the very memorable name of Herbert Herbert (1914–1999). Herbie as he was known, was a cousin of Walter Albert Herbert. Herbie and his wife Kitty also worked as costermongers selling fruit and veg from stalls in Bethnal Green and Brick Lane.

I found this link online that takes you to James's *This Is Your Life* TV programme which was really interesting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxRJUF4rXc>

As the Herbert family grew older and retired from their stalls it is now left to another of their descendants, Marc Herbert, the son of Leslie Herbert (1927–2008) to keep up this family tradition in Globe Town Market Square. His father Leslie



Photo of the stall in Globe Town Market Square (an hour before Marc closed for the day)

Image courtesy of Annette Kilbourn

first got his pitch here in 1974.

I love the sign on the stall that still has Leslie Herbert's name on which my Dad said that one of his customers painted for him and some **HILLER** Bros barrows from the 1940s.

The Hillier Bros are an interesting East End family too and were first based at James Street Bethnal Green and then moved to 64 Squirries Street

in Bethnal Green. This family who had been in the East End since the 1860s made, maintained plus repaired old market stalls /barrows and these were then leased to the market traders. Bob Hillier was the last of the Hillier family to do this role and he worked here up until 1991, and the workshop was then let to tenants who continued to maintain and repair the old stalls. Bob was another guy that my family knew.

You used to see these Hillier Bros stalls in markets all over the place in the East End and you can still occasionally see them as in the case of Marc Herbert's stall. Back to the Herbert market dynasty, sadly, Globe Town Market Square is now not a busy market area with Marc's being the only stall there when I last went, so I was sad to hear that he had a career change due to the rising cost of fresh produce. He does continue the family tradition but is only there on a Saturday now from 8am to 2pm. I doff my hat to Marc as I wouldn't want to be standing out on a stall in all weathers as he does but I do smile when I see him on the stall at Globe Town as it's a poignant link to my dad's old childhood friends the Herberts and I always remember dad laughing and joking with them in my childhood.

Email: annettekilbourn@btinternet.com

Notice of the 46th Annual General Meeting



You are cordially invited to the Society Day and Annual General Meeting
of The East of London Family History Society
to be held on

**Saturday 12 April 2025
at the Studio
Museum of the Home
136 Kingsland Road
LONDON E2 8EA**

Nominations are invited for the posts of Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer. Nomination forms are available from the General Secretary (address inside the front cover of the *Cockney Ancestor*), by email (society.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk) and on the website.

Members are advised that motions for discussion at the AGM should be notified to the Secretary no later than Friday 21 February 2025.

Please note that voting at the AGM is restricted to one vote per membership. Members will be able to vote in person or online.

The East of London Family History Society (Founded 1978)
Registered Charity No. 1094419

Please note: The doors will open at 10.00 am. The AGM will start at 10.45

A G E N D A

Annual General Meeting of the East of London Family History Society

Saturday 12 April 2025

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Apologies for Absence | Janet Seward |
| 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting | Gary Barnes |
| 3. Matters Arising | Gary Barnes |
| 4. Chairman’s Report | Gary Barnes |
| 5. Treasurer’s Report | Kevin Dopson |
| 6. Election of Examiner & Trustees | Kevin Dopson |
| 7. Election of Chairman | Melissa Ford |
| 8. Election of Officers | Chairman |
| 9. Motions to put before the AGM | Chairman |
| 10. Any other business | All |

About the Society Day and Annual General Meeting

The doors will open at 10.00am, with the AGM starting at 10.45. The day will end around 4.00pm. (The museum does not open till 10.00am so there will be no access before that time).

Theme for the day – It's all about Hackney!

As our venue is in the interesting borough of Hackney, we have invited speakers to talk on aspects of this vibrant area.

In the morning, we welcome Sean **GUBBINS** to talk about the area. He has been leading history walks in Hackney since 2002 and has lived in Hackney for over 20 years. He is a member of the Hackney Society and Friends of Hackney Archives and contributes articles on local history to EASTeigh, a monthly neighbourhood magazine.

In 2013, Sean studied for an MA in Historical Research at the University of London in order to develop his research skills to enable him to delve into Hackney's past.

After lunch, we welcome Brian **JOHNSON** from the *London Canal Museum*. Brian's talk will cover the history and development of the Regent's Canal with particular focus on the Hackney and Hoxton areas.

Brian worked in HR in the transport industry (buses and trains) for 20 years and then as a consultant. On retirement, he became a volunteer for the museum.

Book Stall

We will be selling maps of our area but no books. We can only take cash.

Museum of the Home <https://www.museumofthehome.org.uk/>

The museum is free and you can walk around at lunchtime.

The museum, formerly the Geffrye Museum, has a permanent exhibition of *Rooms Through Time*, which shows how ways of living, furniture and décor have changed through the ages, from the 1630s to the present day.

The museum's *Gardens Through Time* traces the development of city gardens over the centuries.

Refreshments

We will serve tea and coffee in the Studio on arrival. There is no charge for this but donations are welcome. Other refreshments and lunch can be obtained from the museum's onsite café or locally. There is a lunchroom for members who wish to bring their own food.

Wheelchair Access

The Museum of the Home is accessible to wheelchair users with step-free access from Hoxton overground station and both museum entrances. There are accessible toilets suitable for wheelchair users in the reception area and three further accessible toilets across the museum.

HOW TO GET THERE

The museum entrance is opposite Hoxton Station (London Overground) on Geffrye Street and provides step-free access from trains to the museum.

You can also enter the museum from Kingsland Road.

This is the best entrance if you are arriving by bus, using a Blue Badge parking bay, or being dropped-off by car. Please note that the Blue Badge parking bays outside the museum gates only allow a stay for up to three hours.

There is no parking at the museum and local on-street parking is limited.

Your Committee looks forward to seeing you there!

Family Home in Putney but Born in Lambeth– Why?

Peter Holford No.14359



The Railway Hotel, Putney High Street
Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Mum and Dad met on a blind date on Christmas Eve 1942 at the *Railway Hotel* on Putney High Street. Dad had been transferred from Leman Street police station in Whitechapel earlier that year and lived in the section house attached to Putney police station.

Mum had moved to London from Hull, Yorkshire in 1941 and was living with her sister, Hilda, in Isleworth. They married eight months later at Isleworth and

rented a flat in Putney a short walk from the police station and the *Railway Hotel*. I was born in 1948 and lived for the first thirteen years of my life in Putney. I went to a local school next to Putney Common and was in a class full of Putney kids. Many of them had been born just across the road from the school in Putney Hospital. But I wasn't! My birth certificate shows I was born in Lambeth, six miles from my childhood home. Why? This is the sort of headache that genealogical researchers can often face. One example from my tree is the 4x great-grandfather who died seven miles from his home in Lincolnshire. Fortunately (for me) it happened in 1838 and so there is a death certificate. Under cause of death it simply says 'run over by a wagon'. So presumably as a farmer he was travelling on business—place of death explained! But for my birth there is no documentary explanation to say why I was born in a different borough. At the age of 60+ I finally asked my mum. What took me so long? I guess it's because I knew from an early age I had been born in St Thomas's Hospital and I just accepted that fact as one of those things that had happened. It seems it was all to do with my dad's job.

I was born in April 1948, just six weeks before the NHS came into existence. The NHS was launched by Aneurin **BEVAN** on 5 June with a visit to Trafford Hospital near Manchester (more about this place in due course!).

Before the NHS, the healthcare system was organised in a non-standard way with many charities involved and employers having arrangements for their employees with specified hospitals. And so it was with the Metropolitan Police who had just such an arrangement with St Thomas's Hospital. This means that there are untold numbers of people born there simply because their fathers were policemen. If I had been born six months later I would undoubtedly have been born at Putney Hospital. In 1948 both St Thomas's and Putney Hospital were requiring major repair after war-time bomb damage. The northern part of St. Thomas's was destroyed in air raids on 9th and 10th September 1940. Those who died in the raid were Dr J C **CAMPBELL** (House Surgeon), Miss **DOUCET** (Physiotherapist), Miss S **DUNN** (Physiotherapist), Miss S **DURHAM** (Physiotherapist), Miss K M **FORBES** (Student Nurse), Miss G **LOCKYER** (Physiotherapist), Miss H M **RICHARDSON** (Nursing Auxiliary), Dr P B **SPILSBURY** (House Surgeon), Miss B **MORTIMER-THOMAS** (Physiotherapist) Miss C G **WALKER** (Student Nurse), Robert **TANNER** (Auxiliary Firefighter) and Evan Morgan **JONES** (Auxiliary Firefighter). Three of the six pavilions that formed the Victorian hospital were destroyed. The three on the southern part of the site were undamaged and are now Grade II listed. I must have been born in one of them as reconstruction didn't start till the 1950s and the main 13 storey block was only completed in 1975. It was built in the teeth of much opposition from MPs who objected to the sight of it from the *Palace of Westminster*.



War damage at St Thomas's Hospital

Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The nurses' home at Putney Hospital was hit by a V1 flying bomb on 14 August 1944. Remarkably there were no casualties but the second floor was totally destroyed. The nurses were sleeping on the ground and first floors! Putney Hospital was a comparatively short-lived establishment opening in 1912 and closing ninety years later in 2002 while St Thomas's is now one of London's major teaching hospitals and is very old: it is named after St Thomas Becket and was described as ancient in 1215.

In a very anachronistic experience, in 2010 I had a knee operation in a private unit set up in Trafford Hospital, the birthplace of the NHS. I must add that it wasn't my choice to go private. I was sent there from the other side of Greater Manchester and it was paid for by the NHS. Nye Bevan must be turning in his grave.

Email: counthill@aol.com

Crime in War-torn Britain

Doug Andrews No. 5210



The Crook twins

Image courtesy of Doug Andrews

Now, after 84 years, the story can be told of a misdemeanour that occurred on 29 March 1940 at 9.45am in Mansfield Avenue, Tottenham N15 involving a horse-drawn coal cart and a three-wheeled milk float.

In charge of the coal cart was a Mr Alfred George **TURNER**, aged 43, of 10 Barrett Avenue, Wood Green N22, and the milk float was apparently owned by a Mr

Walter **ROBINS**, aged 40, of 68 Summer Hill Road, Tottenham N15.

At first glance, the addresses of the people concerned in the incident are outside the area of prime interest to The East of London Family History Society, but perhaps the tale does come within the East London area, bearing in mind the fact that the owner of the coal cart was *The London Co-Operative Society Ltd.* of 54 Marylands Street, Stratford E15.

As the Report form is completed in pencil—and a not particularly sharp one—I shall type the statements of the participants in full, hoping that I can read them accurately. Alfred Turner stated that, ‘I left my coal cart on the left hand(?) of the road facing West Green Station. While I was absent the horse must have walked across West Green Road into Mansfield Avenue.’

Class of vehicle: Horse-drawn coal cart loaded with coal.

Walter Robins stated that, ‘I left my barrow on the corner of Mansfield Avenue while serving, when returning, found (the) barrow on its side.

Class of vehicle: Three wheeled Milk Barrow.

Owner: As Driver.

Damage: Bottles broken and about 12 ½ – 13 pints of milk spilt, and six dozen (2 ½ size?) eggs broken. No damage done to barrow.

N.B. I’ve checked, and this incident took place before eggs were rationed!

There were no witnesses to the accident and the condition of the roadway is described as ‘dry.’

Additional particulars (including how accident happened): Apparently the

Date 29-3-1940 Time 9:45 am Place Mansfield Avenue
Tottenham N.15 If a witness no
 1st VEHICLE: Driver or Rider, Mr., Mes., Miss. affred George Turner
 Full postal address 10 Barrett Avenue Wood Green N.22
 Badge No. _____ Estimated Age 43
 Statement: I left my Coal cart on the left side of the road facing West Green Station while I was absent the horse must have walked across West Green Road Mansfield Avenue
 Driving Licence correct _____ If not, give No. _____ Issued on _____
 by _____ { County Council
 County Boro. Council
 Insurance correct _____ If not, give particulars _____
 HO/RT/I served for { Licence
 Certificate, Police Station _____ absent

Class of vehicle Horse drawn Coal cart taken out with cart
 If a motor goods vehicle { Identity Certificate displayed _____
 Carrier's Licence No. (A or B Licences only) _____ Were Records of Work produced _____
 Heavy Goods Vehicle {
 Driver's Licence correct _____ If not, give letter and No. _____
 and date of issue _____
 If not produced, address where it will be available _____
 Index and plate Nos. _____ Licence correct _____ If not, give particulars _____
 Owner (name and full postal address) The London Co-operative Society Ltd 54 Marylands Street Stratford E.15
 Name Memo

Page 2 of the Report
 Image courtesy of Doug Andrews

horse-drawn vehicle strayed from the corner of Avenue Road into Mansfield Avenue and collided with unattended milk pram. There was no chain attached to the wheel of the cart while unattended. I told him he will be reported for being such a distance as not to have complete control over the horse drawn vehicle.

Signature: Jack Reginald **CROOK**.
 5/6146.

How we obtained this police document is not known, but it was found in an old drawer, so was possibly not processed through the official police channels. I

should therefore like to think that the whole incident 'was a storm in a teacup' and that no subsequent action was taken against the two parties involved!

By way of background information, the author of this police report, Jack Crook, was my and my older brother's cousin, and was one of twins, the other being Laurence Alexander, always known as Alec.

When growing up they were inseparable but, within three months of the outbreak of WWII they had lost their uncle, Reginald Vincent Crook, who was a member of the crew of the destroyer *HMS Duchess* when it was rammed by the battleship *HMS Barham* and sunk off the Mull of Kintyre on 12 December 1939.

They had both previously enrolled as special constables attached to St. Ann's Road Police Station in Tottenham but presumably left when they both joined the Royal Navy (as did their younger brother, Frank, later) but the photograph of the twins (in their brand-new naval rating's uniforms!) is dated on the reverse 'December 1940'. After the war, Alec emigrated to

Mick Barron
 2nd VEHICLE : Driver or Rider, Mr., Mrs., Miss *W. R. Robins (M. Altan)*
 Full postal address *68 Summer Hill Road Tottenham*
 Badge No. *741* Estimated Age *40*
 Statement *I left my barrow on the corner of Massfield Avenue marked with a number when returning found barrow on the side*
 Driving Licence correct. ☐ If not, give No. ☐ Issued on ☐
 by ☐ { County Council
 County Boro. Council
 Insurance correct ☐ If not, give particulars ☐
 HO/RT/I served for { Licence,
 Certificate, Police Station
 Class of vehicle *3 wheeled*
 If a { Identity Certificate displayed
 motor goods vehicle
 Carrier's Licence No. (A or B Licences only) ☐ Were Records of {
 Work produced ☐
 Heavy Goods Vehicle's
 Driver's Licence correct ☐ If not, give letter and No. ☐
 and date of issue ☐
 If not produced, address ☐
 where it will be available ☐
 Index and Plate Nos. ☐ Licence correct ☐ If not, give particulars ☐
 Owner (name and full postal address) *as Driver*
 Damage *Bottom broke about 12.15 13.15 split and
 6 Day 2" Eggs Broken
 no Damage done to Barron*

Page 3 of the Report
 Image courtesy of Doug Andrews

Condition of roadway *Dry* If tram track ☐
 Additional particulars (including how accident happened)
*apparently the horse drawn
 vehicle strayed from the corner
 of Avenue Rd into Massfield Avenue
 and collided with unattended milk
 barrow. there was no chain attached to the
 wheel of the cart while unattended
 I told him he will be responsible
 after being lost a distance as at
 the time complete contact over
 the horse drawn vehicle as seen*
 Signature *Jack Raginick Brook*
56146

Page 4 of Report
 Image courtesy of Doug Andrews

Australia where he married and brother Jack went to what was then Rhodesia
 where he too married and they never saw each other again.

Email: doug@towerroad.plus.com

D-Day, Pegasus Bridge and Uncle Harry

Anne Gawlik No. 7266

My Uncle Harry (Henry William **CLARK**), known to friends and fellow servicemen as Nobby, was born at 30 Marcus Street, West Ham, on 28 January 1923. His parents were Jack (John Thomas Clark) and Nell (Margaret Ellen Winstandly **TIMSON**).

The family, Jack, Cis, Harry, George, Stan and my father, Alfred James Clark, moved out of the East End to Beverley Road on the new Becontree housing estate in Dagenham in 1934 and that is where they were living when the Second World War broke out.

Aged 18 in January 1941, Harry joined the *Kings Royal Rifle Corps*. In the early months of 1942 he volunteered to join the newly formed *Airborne Foxes* and was posted to Bulford Camp, Wiltshire, where he joined 'D'ⁱ Company of the *2nd Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (Ox & Bucks)* commanded by Major R.J. **HOWARD**. This move consequently placed him at the very spearhead of the D-Day invasion.

Here Harry found that the *Ox & Bucks* were to be trained as glider squadron troops but it wasn't until 22 May 1944 that they learnt what their role in the month ahead would be. They were to be the first troops to land in France on D-Day and take part in the first action of the invasion.

This **coup de main**ⁱⁱ operation was to capture and secure the bridges over the River Orne and the Caen Canal at Ranville-Benouville in Normandy.

This mission was critical and vital to the success of the Normandy landings. If the forces that landed were to make rapid progress across France, it was essential



Young Harry

Image courtesy of Anne Gawlik

that they were able to go by the quickest route which involved crossing the Orne River and the Caen Canal. These were both guarded by German troops with orders to blow the bridges in the event of invasion. It was imperative that the bridges over these waterways were captured intact and secured before the invasion troops could advance.

After learning their mission, codename *Operation Pegasus*, training became highly intensive.

Harry said they moved to a sealed concentration area on the fringe of Tarrant Rushton Airfield to maintain secrecy. He said that they ate, drank and dreamt about bridges in the run-up to the actual event. Although they were based in Wiltshire the final intensive practice took place at the Countess Weir bridges in Exeter where the double waterway and bridges configuration was remarkably similar to that at Ranville. There is a plaque on the bridge in Exeter which commemorates this.

In Harry's own words:

*'On the afternoon of the 3 June 1944, 24 platoon of which I was a member and commanded by Lt David **WOOD** were marched into the briefing room which was kept locked and an armed guard at the door. Major Howard was inside. We received the details. It was Normandy, the target: 2 bridges on the Caen Canal and River Orne to be captured intact and held until relieved. Platoons 24, 25 and 14 were to capture the canal bridge. Platoons 22, 23 and 17 to take the Orne Bridge.*

We studied the very accurate sand table model, read whatever information was available, books, maps, papers and photos. Major Howard answered questions on the bridges and the method of attack.

The first platoon to land would rush straight across the bridge to secure the western end around the Café Gondrée. The second platoon down would clear the enemy from the northeastern bank of the Canal. The third Horsa glider to land had the task of crossing over to the west bank of the canal to reinforce the first platoon. Casualties were to be handled by the doctor and his two orderlies. That was the laid down plan of action for the canal bridge attack. The plan was that six Horsa gliders would be towed across the Channel shortly before midnight on the eve of the invasion by modified Halifax bombers. The gliders would be released as they approached the Normandy coast. They were to glide silently to the destination and land in the designated zone close to the two bridges, three to the Orne River bridge and three to the Caen Canal bridge.

Harry was to help capture the canal bridge intact and hold it at any cost. Gliders were chosen because of their silent flight, preserving the element of surprise which was vital. They were not, however, very easy to land accurately because of their lack of engines.

After initial postponement for bad weather the go ahead for *Operation Overlord*



Pegasus Bridge

Image courtesy of Anne Gawlik

was given. The troops drove out to the gliders and awaited departure. They were given a strong cup of tea laced with rum and at 22.30 they boarded the gliders which then took off at one-minute intervals at 23.00 on 5 June 1944. Harry and 24 platoon were in the second glider with Lieutenant David Wood and pilots Oliver **BOLAND** and Phil **HOBLES**.

Harry was sat near the front of the glider. He said that they sang bawdy songs all the way across the Channel to keep their spirits up. Nearing the coast, they fell silent

and the gliders were released. They glided steeply into the target and miraculously all three of the gliders landed safely (if roughly) in the landing zone.

Their training quickly took over and with the element of surprise on their side everything happened according to plan.

Major Howard ordered 24 platoon to clear the enemy from the pillbox and trenches on the north-eastern bank of the canal. Again in Harry's words: *'We very swiftly complied with this order, helped by some of the enemy who ran away and hid in the bushes. In perhaps six or seven minutes, we routed the enemy. Lt Wood was on his way to Major Howard to report all cleared when he, the platoon sergeant and radio operator were hit by a burst of automatic fire. Corporal **GODBOLD** reported to John Howard who in turn gave him command of the platoon and in turn gave the 38-type radio set to me. We had captured our bridge.'*

Both bridges were taken quickly. They managed to overcome the German troops who were taken completely by surprise and with very little resistance. There was some gunfire as Lieutenant Den **BROTHERIDGE** bravely led his troops across the bridge. He was caught in gunfire and became the first allied

soldier to be killed in action on D-Day. A sniper, covering the canal bridge with gunfire, was quickly overcome and the bridges were secured. The whole mission was completed in ten minutes. The call sign 'Ham and Jam' went out, letting the Allied forces know that **both** bridges had been secured.

The mission was a success. The soldiers, numbering about 135 men, now had to hold the bridges until reinforcements arrived and the allied forces landing on the Normandy beaches arrived to advance across France.

At 1.00am a tank was heard approaching the bridge. This was quickly taken out by an anti-tank gun and eventually at around 3.00am a large number of troops from 7th Parachute Regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel **PINE-COFFIN** arrived to reinforce the *Ox & Bucks*.

Harry later wrote, in his account of the proceedings:

'As dawn broke, we readied ourselves in expectation of heavy counter attacks from infantry and tanks, however, these failed to appear. The German High Command was seemingly in a state of disorder and failed to realise the importance of the bridges.'

The sound of naval bombardment on the beaches reminded us that the sea borne troops were coming ashore, whilst intense sniper fire began to cause a number of casualties among our troops. Later in the morning the Division received support from the navy, 16-inch shells passed over our heads with a deafening roar.

*Later during the morning, a German patrol boat was spotted coming from the direction of the coast. When it was some 200 yards away Corporal Godbold, Pete **CHEESLY** and me ran with a PIAT to some cover on the canal bank. We kept a close eye on the boat, and whilst there was little sign of life, the engine was ticking over, and someone appeared to be steering it. At about 50 yards range Corporal Godbold fired a PIAT grenade at the boat. It struck it just behind the wheelhouse and exploded internally. The boat drifted into the canal bank and two very frightened Germans emerged from below deck.*

John Howard ordered me to march them down to the 5th Para Brigade Headquarters, at Ranville, along a stretch of road exposed to enemy snipers. As we approached the Orne Bridge we came under fire. Like myself the prisoners were reluctant to cross, yet it had to be done. After a short dash we arrived at Brigade Headquarters, and I handed the two prisoners over to an MP Sergeant. I was able to return to my company without incident. Later the sound of battle from the beaches became more prominent.

*Word came through that the leading elements of the Commando Brigade were in the vicinity, and shortly after 13h00 the sound of bagpipes could be heard and Lord **LOVAT** with his piper, Bill **MILLIN** crossed the canal bridge. As the brigade crossed the bridge a number were felled by very accurate sniper fire.*

We had assumed a defensive position around the bridges that gave us a wonderful view of the 6th Air Landing Brigades' Gliders coming over during the



Harry and Arlene
Image courtesy of Anne Gawlik

evening. We were eventually relieved by troops of the 3rd Division just before midnight on the 6 June. For 'D' Company of the 52nd it had been the Longest Dayⁱⁱⁱ We had captured and held our two bridges in an attack that is now a part of history.' It was a pivotal moment in the invasion plan. The bridge they captured over the Caen canal was renamed *Pegasus*

Bridge after the operation.

A café stands on the entrance to *Pegasus Bridge*. This café was, and still is, owned by the **GONDRÉE** family. They welcomed their liberators with open arms and formed close friendships with many of the soldiers. They claimed to be the first house in France to be liberated on D-Day. Uncle Harry kept in close contact with the Gondrée family and returned many times to visit and stay. He was always treated like family.

In September 2016 I visited Benouville and the Pegasus Bridge Museum. I went to the café and met Arlene Gondrée (who was just a child at the time of the invasion) and spoke to her about Harry. She said that she remembered Harry well and that all the soldiers had been 'lovely boys'. She has an unofficial museum of D-Day memorabilia in the *Café Gondrée* where there are photographs of all the troops involved in the *Pegasus Bridge* Operation and where I found a watch donated to the collection by my Uncle Harry.

The original Bridge has been replaced by a new one, but the original has been moved to the official *Pegasus Bridge Museum* situated next to the glider landing zone. There is a full-sized replica of a Horsa glider at the museum along with memorials to all the soldiers in all the gliders. A stone marks the landing spot of each of the gliders.

Harry went on to fight in actions across Northern France. In the advance more than half of Harry's platoon were killed in action. Harry was knocked unconscious



Harry talking to visitors at Ranville

Image courtesy of Anne Gawlik

with a perforated eardrum and returned home briefly. He then parachuted into Arnhem and participated in *Operation Market Garden*. He was later moved to No.25 Platoon and on 24 March 1945 was involved in the Rhine Crossing.

On 5 April, during the advance to the Baltic, Uncle Harry was hit by four machine gun bullets, two in his hand and two in the leg.

His hand was shattered, and he was critically injured. As fighting was intense, he was left alone in an abandoned roadside cottage with a bandaged hand. Bleeding badly and in great pain he crawled into the road where he was found by a jeep. He was taken across the river on a raft to a field hospital where he was deemed so close to death that a priest was summoned to perform the last rites. He was conscious throughout and willed himself to stay alive until he could be treated properly. Eventually, 24 hours after he was shot, his hand was amputated and he stayed recovering in a barn until 10 May when he was flown back to England.

Hoping to be close to family he found that he was sent to hospital in Salford and took a turn for the worse. His parents hurried up from Dagenham and found him critically ill, semi-conscious and rambling about a nurse he was going to marry. 'I must have meant it' he said, because, in 1948, he did go on to marry Beatrice May **WRIGHT**, the nurse who cared for him. As he put it, 'That was the end of me war, but the start of me marriage.'

I remember from my childhood when Harry and Aunt May visited us by motorbike and sidecar. As a child I was always fascinated by Harry's hand.



Harry and May's wedding
Image courtesy of Anne Gawlik

He would take off his leather glove and hold out his hook prosthetic to shake hands. Later we shared an interest in family history, and it was Harry who got me started on the hunt for my East End ancestors, in particular the **WINSTANDLY TIMSON** connection. But that's another story.

Harry regularly returned to Ranville and could often be found giving talks and tours of the site to visiting army cadets. He also attended USA reunions of soldiers who fought side by side across France to the Rhine. He died in 2008 in Brentwood,

Essex and I will always regret that I did not appreciate the importance of his contribution to the war and D-Day until it was too late to acknowledge it.

Source Harry Clark's personal account

Further reading

Pegasus Bridge by Stephen E. Ambrose

The Devil's Own Luck—Pegasus Bridge to the Baltic 1944-45 by Denis Edwards

The Pegasus Diaries by John Howard and Penny Bates

(Endnotes)

- i 'D' company consisted of four platoons (22, 23, 24, 25) of 28 men in each platoon. They were later joined by two platoons (14 and 17) from 'B' Company, 30 Royal Engineers and 12 pilots from the Glider Pilot Regiment, plus a doctor.
- ii A sudden attack in force
- iii This operation features prominently in the celebrated war film '*The Longest Day*'.

Chiddingfold, Surrey

Not Quite an Ancestor

Just an uncle, preparing for D-Day 1944

Muriel Gibbs No. 4440

Although my uncle was born in West London, his mother, little Ada **GOODRIDGE** (1875–1956), was born in Haggerston and so a little about a man with East London connections who was there on D-Day, 6 June 1944.

My uncle, Ada's son William Frederick **DOWSETT** (1905–1994), was a serving member of the Royal Navy (1929–1956), a Chief Electrical Artificer who saw action in many famous actions of WWII.

Service aboard the aircraft carrier *HMS Ark Royal*, 1940/41, Russian convoys 1942–1943, Salerno Landings 1943 and, of course, D-Day in 1944 when aboard the cruiser *HMS Scylla* one of the ships bombarding German defences along the Normandy coast. Not that he ever talked about it very much, but here are a few of his comments just before the event.

May 1944—a birthday greeting to his wife (working in Portsmouth Dockyard)

My Darling

This is just a little note to wish you many happy returns of the day sweetheart, and do hope we may be together but if we are not, you will know my thoughts, as always will be with you dear.

My one grand hope and prayer, is that we shall have many years of happy married life together, pick up that life that has been so rudely disturbed by the war; perhaps we have not much longer to wait sweetheart.

At the moment, we all know, that great events will shortly take place, but you and I are concerned, in quite different ways perhaps, but let us have courage and do our utmost to face these things when the time comes and look forward to the years that lie ahead, God willing, the time will come, when the life we long for together will really come true, how often do I dream about these things.

Ever your very devoted husband Bill.

(They did go on to celebrate some 60 years of a very happy marriage—and many more birthdays.

Others I have known who were also there. An army pilot riding around Normandy on a motor bike looking for suitable landing sites for army planes.

A former colleague being ordered to speed his lorry ashore.

Our late next door neighbour John **CONNER** (who was born in East London) who having returned from the Battle of El Alamein in 1942, sailed at 10.15 pm on 6 June (with his tank) and recorded 'a marvellous crossing' and then on 18 June

‘first wash and shave for 4 days’. The stories and memories of the thousands who took part are many and varied and we honour them. As was said at the time ‘A blow for freedom that will live in history!’

69 Leyspring Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3BP

From Bethnal Green to North Wales Part II via the Royal Navy, Edinburgh and Yorkshire

Phillip Hollington No. 13326

This is the second of three articles tracing the life of my grandfather Arthur James **HOLLINGTON** from his birth in Bethnal Green to his death in North Wales. Part I dealt with his early life and the First World War, part III will look at his time as a hotelier, first in Thirsk, Yorkshire and then up to his death in North Wales.

1920s

Arthur stayed aboard *Queen Elizabeth* until May 1920, when she was Flagship of the Grand Fleet (Atlantic Fleet from April 1919), and during this period she visited ports on the Atlantic coasts of France, Portugal and Spain, as well as in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa.

In May 1920 he joined the cruiser *HMS Castor* for a month, followed by *HMS Coventry* until September 1924. Around this time he bought a camera, and we have many photographs taken on his various voyages in the 1920s.

HMS Coventry, a light cruiser launched in 1917 and eventually sunk off Crete in 1942, was flagship of the destroyer flotillas, first of the Atlantic Fleet and later of the Mediterranean Fleet. Such a flagship, being considerably larger than the destroyers, provided accommodation for the admiral and his staff, plus additional communications and firepower if it was needed.

A sister ship, *HMS Caroline*, is preserved in Belfast and open to the public.

Coventry's log books for June 1920, when my grandfather joined her, to May 1921 are available online¹, and paint an interesting picture of her voyages, and of the constant exercises and training necessary to keep the ship efficient and prepared for action at any time.

Once again there were a number of cruises to the Mediterranean, showing the flag in various ports. During his time aboard, Arthur would have witnessed a torpedo explosion while in Malta, which left two of his shipmates dead.

From September 1924 until August 1927 Arthur was at the shore base in Port Edgar on the Firth of Forth, *HMS Columbine*, conveniently close to home and family.

He served on several destroyers based there, the only time he was on small ships. Life on these was very different: he would probably have been the only steward, or the senior of two, when he would have been serving the captain. Although these were modern ships, dating from the end of the First World War, life aboard, due to their restricted space, was much less comfortable, and much wetter in rough seas, than he was used to. The destroyers were part of the Atlantic Fleet (successor to the Grand Fleet), and although most of their sea time was only for short periods, returning to base after a day or two they also undertook longer exercises and cruises to, for example, the Mediterranean.

At Port Edgar the destroyers could hook up to shore power, and stores and a canteen were available. However, on going to sea, each ship would draw enough bread and meat for just four days, as well as other necessities, although with no refrigeration facilities few perishables could be carried.

On longer voyages the seamen would have lived in much the same way as their Nelsonian forebears – basic rations and sometimes bully beef were all that were available. There were no baths, just a crude washing place with tip-up basins exposed to the elements, and lighting was a mixture of 20-volt electric lamps and oil lamps. However, when based in the Mediterranean things were better, for example proper galleys replaced space formerly used for drying oilskins.

In August 1927 Arthur was posted to *HMS Greenwich*, a destroyer depot ship based at Rosyth, and then in November 1929 to *HMS Victory*, not the famous Nelson-era warship but the name given to the RN barracks in Portsmouth.

After a week there he travelled to London to take passage on 15 November in the P&O liner *RMS Mooltan* (Capt. W. P. **TOWNSEND**) to Colombo in what was then Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), where he would join the cruiser *HMS Effingham* (Capt. Bruce **FRAZER**, who would later gain fame as the admiral who sank the German battleship *Scharnhorst* at the Battle of the North Cape in 1943). He was to be Chief Steward to the Commander in Chief (C-in-C), East Indies Station, Rear Admiral (Vice Admiral from 1930) Eric **FULLERTON**, based at Trincomalee, now a major base for the Sri Lankan navy.

He would be away for two and a half years, until July 1932, and after a short period back in the UK he was away again until 1933.

East Indies and Egypt

The voyage out to Colombo was through the Mediterranean to the Suez Canal, down the Red Sea and across the Indian Ocean, and would have taken about 4 weeks, stopping at Marseilles, Gibraltar, Tangier, Port Said, Aden, Karachi and Bombay (Mumbai) on the way, and continuing on via Calcutta, Singapore, Fremantle and Melbourne to Sydney, a far cry from today's air travel.



HMS Effingham
Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

Many of the other passengers would have been in some sort of government service, although there were also a large number of wives and daughters travelling to be with their husbands and fathers in the Colonial Service. As befitted his rank, Arthur travelled in a 2nd class cabin, sharing with one other, probably also a naval man.

HMS Effingham, in my somewhat biased opinion one of the best-looking ships the Royal Navy ever had, was a large cruiser begun during the *WWI* launched in 1921 but not completed until 1925². She was designed to hunt down commerce raiders, with a high speed and heavy armament, and was eventually wrecked off the coast of Norway in 1940.

Her role as flagship of the East India Station was to show the flag around the Indian Ocean and Red Sea, projecting an image of British power and undertaking important diplomatic missions. She covered large distances, stopping off in many ports, and entertaining a number of regional dignitaries.

As Chief Steward to the C-in-C, Arthur would have had an important role in organising the many dinners and receptions held on board to entertain important visitors. His pictures, supplemented by the comments he made on the photos, show life afloat and ashore, including the domestic life of the Admiral and his family.



Itinerary of HMS Effingham

*Image courtesy
of Phillip Hollington*

His work ashore in Admiralty House, basically running a large household, would have stood him in good stead for his later career as a hotelier.

We are fortunate in having detailed records of some of the cruises undertaken by *Effingham*, with Arthur aboard, from 1930 to 1933. These included to East Africa (June–September 1930), the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea (October 1930–February 1931), and around the Bay of Bengal, including the Indian Ocean islands and Burma, in March and April 1933.

One of the highlights was when she took the British delegation, which included the King's son the Duke of Gloucester, to the



Medal awarded by Haile Selassie

Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

coronation of Emperor Ras Tafari (Hailie Selassie) of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), in November 1930.

The delegation sailed to Djibouti, and then took the train to Addis Ababa. The colourful ceremony was described by the novelist Evelyn **WAUGH** in reports for several newspapers, and included a spectacular charge by the Emperor's cavalry, many of whom would later ride against Italian tanks with the inevitable outcome.

The British delegation was in full ceremonial uniforms with ostrich feathers in their helmets, and Effingham's Royal Marine band provided the music for the some of the entertainments. As a result of their attendance, Arthur and the other members of the delegation were awarded a medal by Hailie Selassie, which he obtained permission, nominally from King George V, to wear with his WWI medals.

Life at sea in the tropics in the 1930s, even on a reasonably large ship like *HMS Effingham*, would not have been comfortable, like living in a large steel box, with no air conditioning, restricted facilities for bathing, and no modern creature comforts.

However, once ashore there were some opportunities for fishing and big game hunting, for example, together with hospitality in peoples' homes, as well as, in larger ports, hotels and other types of entertainment. This world, as seen in Arthur's photographs, and of which a good description is given in the book *Hearts of Steel*³, would have been unimaginable to the boy growing up in Bethnal Green 35 years earlier.

In March 1932 Arthur was promoted to Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Steward. At



The Sultan of Zanzibar's state barge
Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

around this time, Admiral Fullerton was succeeded as C-in-C by Rear Admiral Martin **DUNBAR-NAISMITH**, VC.

Shortly afterwards, Arthur returned to England on the P&O liner *Narkunda*, taking her from Aden and disembarking at Plymouth for the train onwards to Portsmouth. Presumably he lost little time in travelling up to Edinburgh. He was not to be home long though—*Effingham* returned to the east later that year.

In 1933, Arthur's 21-year engagement in the RN came to an end, but he was granted permission for an extension to his service and re-engaged in June 1934.

Egypt

On 22 December 1934, Arthur, together with my grandmother and 12-year-old Ian, my father, departed London on the Orient Line vessel *RMS Otranto* (Capt. L. V. **JAMES**), travelling 3rd class to Port Said in Egypt.

His occupation was given as House Steward in the British High Commission, with the last address in the UK before travel being Killearn House, Glasgow. Killearn House was owned by a Norman **LAMPSON**, whose second son, Miles Wedderburn Lampson, was High Commissioner and then Ambassador to Egypt and the Sudan from 1934 to 1946⁴. We still have a cabin trunk on which the



Cabin trunk with lettering visible

Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

wording ‘Hollington,British...The Residency, Cairo’ is just visible. The ship had aboard a large number of children, travelling to Sydney under the auspices of the Child Emigration Society⁵. Although popularly supposed to have been orphans, many of these children had been given up for adoption, or simply left in care by their parents for a better life.

Many no doubt would have had similar backgrounds to Arthur himself. However, they were told their parents had died and they were being sent to work in so-called farm schools. The injustice of this has now been recognised, and some degree of recompense made.

Once Arthur had settled in, Win (although known by her own family as Lizzie my grandfather always seems to have known her as Win) and my father, Ian, travelled back to the UK on 31 January 1935, travelling in 3rd class on the Orient Line *RMS Orama*, and calling on the way in Naples, Villefranche, Toulon, Palma, Gibraltar and Plymouth.

We do not know if the original intention had been for them to stay.

Arthur himself arrived back in London on the *Oranto* on 31 July 1935 after some 18 months in Egypt and this period of his life is largely a mystery.

We do know that running the domestic side of the High Commission, he would have organised functions and dinners and we have photographic evidence that guests would have included royalty, including the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII.

After some time in Edinburgh, he and Win took a position managing the *Golden Fleece Hotel* in Thirsk, in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

We do not know exactly when, but their first appearance on the electoral register for Thirsk is in 1937 and that year they were also still registered in Edinburgh, so 1937 would be a good guess.

They stayed at the *Fleece* through the 1940s, a time which encompassed the war, and Win’s death at the tragically early age of 46. That period will be covered in the final article of this series.

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5. <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/archivesheet10>

17 Tros yr Afon, Llangoed LL58 8AT

Save The Date – EoLFHS 2025 AGM

12 April 2025
at the Museum of the Home
136 Kingsland Road, London E2 8EA

The George, Wanstead

Melissa Ford No. 7658

It was sad to hear that the *George* closed its doors on the 13 October 2024, but the good news is that it has been purchased by Urban Pubs & Bars and its doors will reopen in Spring 2025, under the name *George & Dragon*.

This name isn't new—the original building on the site was called *George & Dragan* c1716. Over the years, it's been called *The George*, *George Inn*, *George Hotel* or just the *George*. It also has had many owners and landlords.

Apparently, at one time it was owned by Sir Alan Sugar – but I do not know how true that was. The original building was a double storey house, with a low building at the front with a flat roof. The ground floor was the inn.

Looking at the records Alfred **BYWATER** was the longest owner. He obviously prospered, because he was able to pull down the old building and rebuilt it to the building that we see today. A plaque on the wall states that the pub was 'rebuilt 1904 by A J Bywater'. The design of the building shows all the hallmarks of a Victorian Pub, the tall building with striking corner towers and roof gables was designed to announce its identity from all directions, whilst the ground floor with its ornamental glass, columns and decorative ironwork would draw passersby inside.

The building is three storeys with an attic, red brick with stone window dressings. The building has three corner polygonal turrets. Its steep pitched roof, tall ornate brick chimneys, copper-clad cupolas and Dutch gables make for a dramatic skyline. On the side of the High Street, it has a portrait of George III.

On the longest side (today's Eastern Avenue) you will find a stone tablet that has the inscription '*n memory of Cherry Pey As cost ½ Guiney y 17 of July. That day we had good cheer and hope to do so maney a year 1752.*

There are various local stories about this tablet, but the one that I think fits the bill is that a workman in 1752, stretched out his hand and stole a cherry



The George, Wanstead
Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

pie from a passing baker. The magistrate found him guilty and fined him half a guinea. Wanstead was well known for its cherry orchards as late as the 1830's, when they were mentioned by Poet Thomas **HOOD**, who lived in Wanstead 1832–35. So I think this story could be true.

The George is a popular place, and in its heyday was basically in the centre of Wanstead so it was a popular meeting place. We have even had several committee get-togethers there enjoying the food and drink.

The George was an ideal place to have a quick drink after work, when coming from the tube station. Before then, it served as a landing place for stagecoaches, omnibus etc. I for one am happy that the building will be a pub again.

Email: historymell4@gmail.com

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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.

FEBRUARY 2025

(H)	1st	<i>Sold, Separated or Divorced</i>	Ian Waller
(NR)	26th	<i>Members' Evening</i>	
(CL)	28th	<i>Talismans and Taboos at Sea</i>	Mark Lewis

MARCH 2025

(H)	1st	<i>Adverts on How to Fight Spanish Flu</i>	Andrew Summers
(NR)	26th	<i>tba</i>	
(CL)	28th	<i>Flash, Bang, Wallop</i>	Pat & Janet Elliott

APRIL 2025

(H)	5th	<i>The History of your Ancestor's House</i>	David Cufley
(NR)	23rd	<i>Down Memory Lane with Johnny Cooper</i>	Graeme Cooper
(CL)	25th	<i>Mudlarking—Things Our Ancestors May Have Lost</i>	Jason Sandy

MAY 2025

(H)	3rd	<i>Our Mutual Friend, Charles Dickens</i>	Jef Page
(NR)	28th	<i>East End Life Through the Lens</i>	Danny Wells
(CL)	30th	<i>tba</i>	

JUNE 2025

(H)	7th	<i>The Shakespeare Conspiracy</i>	Julian Whybra
(NR)	25th	<i>City Alleyways</i>	Jill Finch
(CL)	27th	<i>tba</i>	

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

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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.

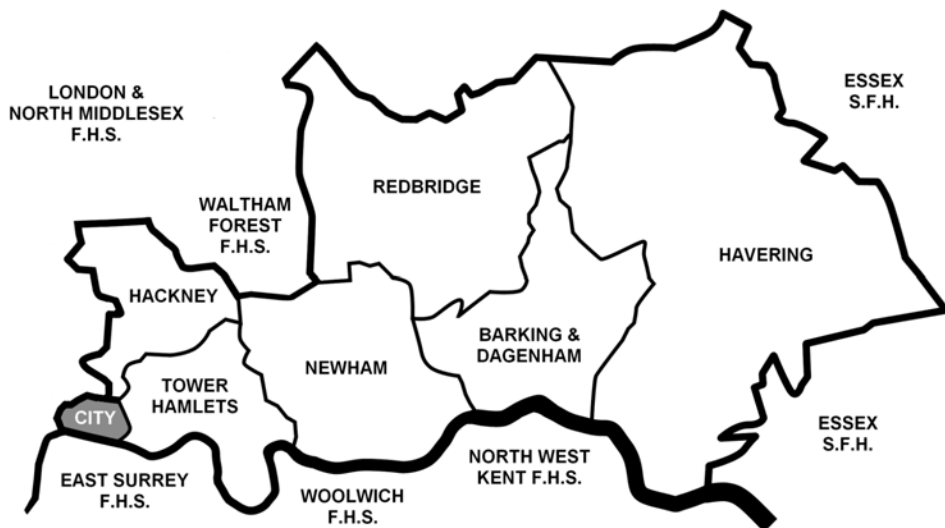
Webmaster: Bill Hughes. Email: webmaster@eolfhs.org.uk

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.

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