

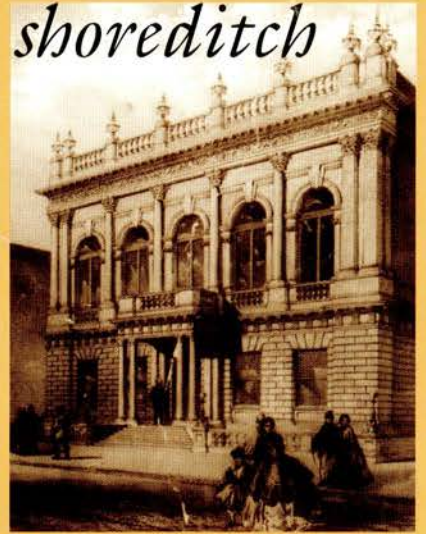
HackneyHistory

VOLUME FOUR

people



shoreditch



gardens



victorian values



scientific instruments

places

HackneyHistory

In this issue -

- Hackney and the restoration of Charles II
- Stoke Newington and the origins of suburban gardening
- Hackney and the improvement of public health
- Town hall architecture - a new perspective on Shoreditch
- The business of scientific instrument-making

Hackney History is the annual volume of the Friends of Hackney Archives. The Friends were founded in 1985 to act as a focus for local history in Hackney, and to support the work of Hackney Archives Department. As well as the annual volume they receive the Department's regular newsletter, The Hackney Terrier. Hackney History is issued free of charge to subscribers to the Friends. In 1998 membership is £6 for the calendar year, rising to £8 in 1999.

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fax 0171 241 6688, e-mail archives@hackney.gov.uk.

ISSN 1360 3795

£4.00

free to subscribers

HACKNEY *History*

volume four

<i>Abbreviations used</i>		2
Hackney and the beginnings of nonconformity	<i>Philip W. Plumb</i>	3
Shirley Hibberd: Stoke Newington's forgotten gardener	<i>Anne Wilkinson</i>	13
The Victorian values of Dr Tripe	<i>Carole Pountney</i>	23
Shoreditch Town Hall	<i>Chris Miele</i>	29
Casella : the London progress of a scientific instrument-making company	<i>Jane Insley</i>	39
<i>Contributors to this issue</i>		47
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		47
<i>About this publication</i>		48

Published by the Friends of Hackney Archives
Hackney Archives Department
43 de Beauvoir Road N1 5SQ

For further details see page 48

Edited by Isobel Watson
Cover design by Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price
Printed by Sackville Printers, Heddon St W1

ISSN 1360 3795

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ABBREVIATIONS

HAD Hackney Archives Department
VCH Victoria County History

All publications cited are published in London
unless otherwise indicated.

HACKNEY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF NONCONFORMITY

Philip W. Plumb

The Tyssen Collection of sermons (see *Hackney History 3*) throws light on the beginnings of Nonconformity. The books, collected by a scholar with a deep interest in the religious history of the area, with many contacts and the opportunity to collect rare and vital works on the subject, allied with contemporary and modern sources, portray a picture which shows Hackney to have been at the very centre of the rise of Nonconformity. Most prominent among the Presbyterian leaders were Thomas Manton, rector of Stoke Newington 1645-56, William Spurstowe, vicar of Hackney, 1643-62, William Bates, later to be minister of the Mare Street meeting-house, 1694-99, Simeon Ashe, lecturer at Hackney, and Richard Baxter, a close friend of Spurstowe who always stayed at his house during his many and important visits to London.

The struggle between the Laudians, who defended the episcopacy as being in the direct line of church government since the Apostles, and the Puritans, who considered that this system would lead to a return to Roman Catholicism, was complicated by the support of the monarchs of the day for the bishops. An attack on the bishops could be construed as anti-Royalist. When Charles I lost control of the country, the bishops became increasingly vulnerable.

Many loyalist incumbents attracted criticism for their neglect of pastoral duties, their personal bad behaviour and particularly the abuses arising from the widespread existence of plurality whereby clergy held simultaneously the livings of more than one care of souls, thus enjoying the tithes from each.

'Malignant Priests'

During the Long Parliament (1640-1660), John White, a barrister, member of parliament and strong opponent of episcopacy, was appointed chairman of the House of Commons Committee on Religion. He told the Commons that eight thousand of the clergy were 'unworthy and scandalous' and deserved to be cast out. During the 1640s clergymen were sequestered¹ for more than one reason. All clergy who espoused the King's cause were treated as 'malignant' and in most cases expelled from their parishes: those who were held to be guilty of erecting rails before the communion table, or of bowing to the altar, were likewise deprived, while many others were arraigned on account of their alleged moral deficiencies. If one type of charge could not be substantiated then another probably would. The number of ministers thus deprived has given rise to much controversy over the years, but it was certainly at least two thousand.

Parliament ordered later that the wives of sequestered ministers should receive about one fifth of the amount of their livings so that their families should not starve; but often this was not regularly paid. Bishop Hall, whose writings had provoked the Smectymnuus pamphlets of Spurstowe and others, had all his property seized, 'not leaving so much as a dozen trenchers or my children's pictures'. Puritans who may have disliked ceremonial but were guilty of reverence for the Crown did not escape. The rector of Okerton was four times pillaged by Government troops, sent to prison thrice and lost all his possessions so that he had to borrow a shirt. Another sequestered minister, John Haggard of Chilcomb, Hants, who had a family, was so poor that he was reduced to roaming the streets looking for bread that might have been dropped there and, when finding some, 'hath dropt his Glove on it, took it up, and eaten it with Greedines'.²

In Hackney, George Moor, who had been rector since 1622, refused to appear before the House of Lords in December 1640 to answer charges in the petition of Calicut Downing, the vicar, but seems not to have been deprived. The vicar of Stepney, William Stamp, was not so lucky. He was taken in custody to the House of Commons in July, 1642, accused of being one of those interfering violently with the enlisting of volunteers to serve under the Earl of Essex, on Sunday, 22nd July, in Stepney churchyard. He was imprisoned for 34 weeks, fled to Oxford and eventually went abroad, where he died at the Hague in 1653. William Heath, rector of Stoke Newington, was sequestered in December, 1644, and his place was taken by Thomas Manton. Heath became vicar of Bengoe, Herts, in 1650. In 1660 he petitioned to secure profits at Stoke Newington.

The Committee for Compounding

It was not only the clergy who had problems: many complications ensued when the manorial estates of the Earl of Cleveland, royalist and debtor, were dispersed. In July 1653, William Northey, of the Middle Temple, pe-

tioned the Parliamentary Committee for Compounding that he had taken a lease on land in Hackney on behalf of Edward Webb but Webb was now disturbed by William Cutler, of Hackney, who 'mowed the grass and keeps petitioner off the premises with armed men'. In reply, Cutler claimed that he had, six years previously, purchased 11 acres of marsh land in Old Ford, Middlesex, but was now interrupted by William Northey, pretended steward of Stepney and Hackney manors. Northey, 'on pretence that the lands belonged to the Earl of Cleveland', got a lease of them for Webb in trust for himself. Cutler begged leave to enjoy the land having paid most of the purchase money.

There were other Hackney worthies in trouble for supporting Charles I. Thomas Reston, who compounded for delinquency in September 1646, in bearing arms against Parliament, 'was taken a year ago and carried to Gloucester. By reason of sickness and great expense, could not make his peace with Parliament. Has taken the National Covenant and Negative Oath.' He was fined £54. Sir Henry Wood, on 31st May, 1649, pleaded that he had been from childhood in the house of the late King and for 24 years a sworn servant, which put an extraordinary obligation on him to attend his Majesty, his wife, and children. 'In 1641 was appointed to wait upon the Queen in Holland, for making and overseeing her ordinary provisions of diet. Has so demeaned himself therein that he is not justly chargeable with doing anything offensive to Parliament, nor has been charged with delinquency'. He was fined £273.³

The Presbyterian State Church

The abolition of episcopacy by Parliament, in January 1643, left a gap in the structure of the Church in England which was not a problem for the Independents but was not to the liking of the Presbyterians. Furthermore, it had been necessary for Parliament to enlist the aid of the Scots to defeat Charles I, under the Solemn League and Covenant,⁴ and in return they expected to see a State Presbyterian

church established in England. The Long Parliament in June 1643 set up the Westminster Assembly of Divines to reform the English Church. There were 151 nominated members: 30 lay assessors and 121 divines. The latter were selected from widely divergent views and fell into four groups: the Episcopalians, who played very little part in the proceedings, largely out of loyalty to the King; Presbyterians, who included all the Smectymnuus authors as well as Anthony Tuckney, chairman of committee (and later to marry Spurstowe's widow), and Richard Vines; Independents, among whom was Philip Nye, one of the combined lecturers at Hackney in 1669; and Erastians, who stood for the ascendancy of the state over the Church and were thus in opposition to the Independents who wished to be completely free of the state.

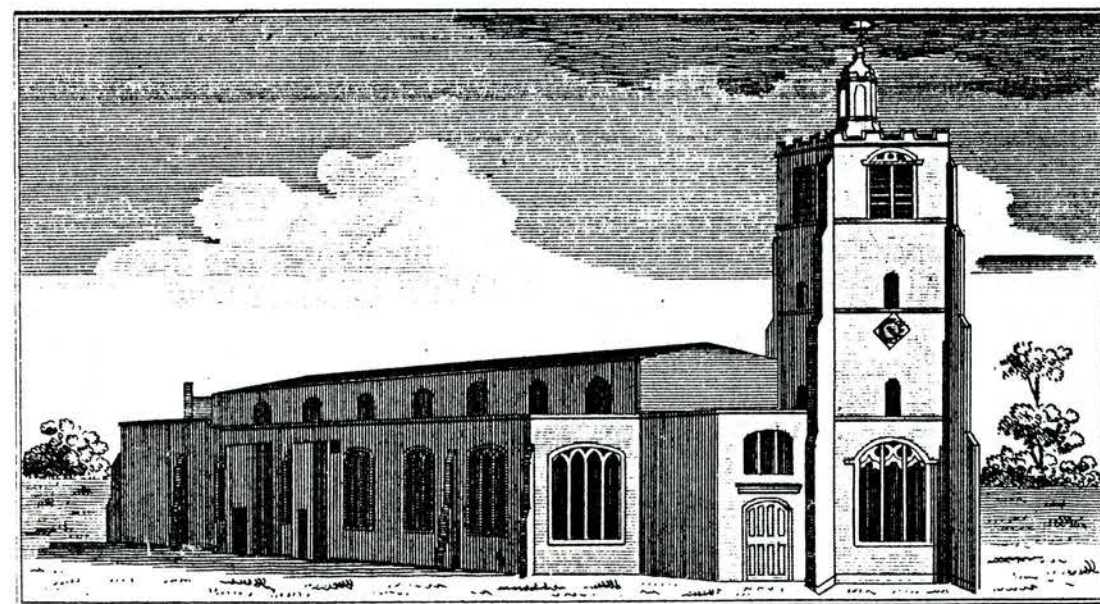
Despite the many disputes between Presbyterians and Independents, eventually a Presbyterian State Church was approved by Parliament, and in 1646 the system began to be established. Each parish had to elect elders to exercise discipline in co-operation with the minister. The newly-formed presbyteries were grouped together in *classes* to which each sent a representative. Above these were regional assemblies and finally a national assembly. The

system never fully operated over the whole country, and there were many problems in those parishes which did operate under this regime. Some incumbents were unhappy at sharing responsibility with the elders. Many parishioners did not like the ways in which their elders exercised their responsibilities: in Bolton, for example, the elders tried to make all those wishing to receive holy communion on the Sunday apply to them the previous Friday for a communion token.

In London the system of *classes* was put into effect. The 137 parish churches of the capital were arranged in twelve *classes* with the Chapel of the Rolls, the two Serjeants' Inns and the four Inns of Court together making up the thirteenth. The Ordinance of 20th October 1645, which appointed William Spurstowe and George Clarke, of Hackney, as Triers and Judges of the abilities of Elders in London, shows that Hackney was in the eighth *classis* together with St Andrew Undershaft, St Katherine Creed, St Helen's and Aldgate.

The Puritan Lecturers

The importance to the Puritans of preaching the gospel was often frustrated by the reluctance of many of the incumbents of livings to satisfy the desires of the laity in this re-



View of the Church of S^t JOHN at Hackney.

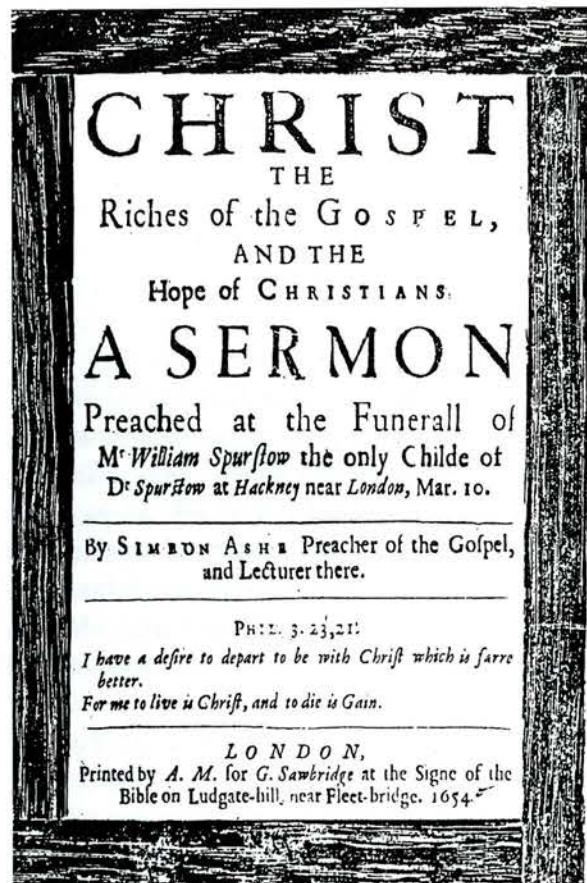
spect. Where patronage was in the hands of the Church and Court, the laity had no control over the appointment of ministers so a system of lectureships started in the sixteenth century. Ministers, often unordained, were appointed and charged with lecturing in church on the Christian faith. They were financially supported by the parishioners, who were usually responsible for their selection. In London, where the majority of advowsons were in the hands of the church and court, this led to many parishes having a minister of loyalist views and a lecturer with more radical sympathies, with consequent hostility between the two.⁵ In Hackney, during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum, this was not the case, particularly when William Spurstowe's lecturer was Simeon Ashe. Ashe, one of the leaders of the London Presbyterians and a much respected preacher, had come to London in 1640 as the Earl of Manchester's chaplain. During the 40s and 50s he held a number of lectureships at London churches, and even when he became the intruded rector at St. Augustine's, Old Change,⁶ in January 1654/5, he officiated as 'preacher of the Gospel and lecturer' at Hackney, as is evidenced by the title page of the sermon he preached at the funeral of William, aged 9, the only child of William and Sarah Spurstowe, in March 1654.

Regicide

In 1648, Charles I escaped to Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, expecting to be welcomed; but the governor treated him as a prisoner. He continued, however, to negotiate with Parliament. William Spurstowe was one of the clerical commissioners appointed to confer with the King there, and is said to have warned him of the consequences of refusing to abolish episcopacy completely.

The trial of Charles I was opposed by the Presbyterians, including particularly Spurstowe, who joined in signing, in January 1649, a 'Vindication' organised by Cornelius Burgess, protesting against the trial.

After Oliver Cromwell's death and the deposition of his son, Richard, as Lord Protector,



there was a great movement towards restoring Charles II to the throne in which the Presbyterians played a leading role.

Restoration

Charles II made a Declaration, at Breda, even before landing in England, that there should be 'liberty to tender consciences, and that no man should be disquieted or called into question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which did not disturb the peace of the kingdom'. William Spurstowe preached a sermon at Hackney, 22 April, 1660, in favour of the King's return. The Declaration was read in both Houses on 1st May, 1660. As soon as Charles entered London, ten or twelve Presbyterian ministers, among them Richard Baxter, Edmund Calamy (one of the Smectymnuus authors), William Bates, and Thomas Manton, one-time vicar of Stoke Newington, were nominated as king's chaplains and were introduced to the King. Baxter wrote that the King not only gave them free audience but 'gracious answer' and declared that it should not be his fault if ecclesiastical

unity were not brought about. At this, Simeon Ashe 'burst into tears with joy, and could not forbear expressing what gladness this promise of His Majesty had put into his heart'.⁷

Charles was probably sincere in promising that the re-established episcopal church would encompass at least the Presbyterians. They had been foremost in promoting his return to the throne and desired to be part of the Church. The leading Presbyterian divines were offered preferment, including Baxter and Calamy, who were offered bishoprics, and Bates and Manton deaneries. They did not accept.

The Presbyterians hoped that such ceremonies as kneeling at the Lord's Supper and the observance of saints' days would not be enforced, and that the use of the surplice, of the cross in baptism, and the custom of bowing at the name of Jesus, should be abolished, on the grounds that these were not of great importance to the Episcopalians but were greatly offensive to them.

On 22nd October 1660 a meeting was called at Worcester House in the Strand to discuss these matters. The King, two dukes, two earls, one lord and seven bishops were already assembled when the six leading Presbyterian ministers, Baxter, Reynolds, Spurstowe, Wallis, Ashe and Manton were received coldly, and ushered in. After Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor, had read his proposals on episcopal powers, he produced another paper saying that the King had been asked by the Independents and Baptists to grant freedom of worship.

Charles proposed to insert a clause in the projected Royal Declaration of Indulgence that persons who were not members of the Established Church should be permitted to meet for religious worship provided they did not disturb the public peace. Baxter, although wanting liberty of worship for the Presbyterians, did not want it for Unitarians and Catholics as well, and said so. When the Declaration was published it did not contain this clause but made most of the concessions the Presbyterians wanted. However, Parliament rejected the consequent Bill when it came before it in November 1660.

Meanwhile, an Act was passed for the confirming and restoring of the ejected or sequestered ministers, many of whom were coming forward to reclaim their former livings. This meant that the ministers who had taken over their benefices had themselves to move out.

Spurstowe, who had been appointed Master of Catharine Hall, Cambridge, in 1645 (while remaining vicar of Hackney), lost this position in October, 1649, for refusing to sign allegiance to the existing government 'without a king or house of lords'. With the Restoration, John Lightfoot, who had replaced him at Cambridge, offered to resign the mastership in his favour, but he declined.

The Parliament which took office in May 1661 was extravagantly Royalist and anti-Puritan. It became known as the Cavalier Parliament, and lasted until February 1679. The City of London returned two Presbyterians and two Independents, but the rest of the country returned mostly strong Royalist Anglicans. A Corporation Act was passed which required all holders of municipal offices to renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, which Presbyterians would not do, and thus lost all influence in corporations where they had been politically powerful.

The Act of Uniformity

The Act of Uniformity was passed on 19th May 1662, and decreed that all ministers were required publicly to accept the Book of Common Prayer before St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, and to repudiate the National Covenant of 1643. Ministers not episcopally ordained were to be deprived. All ministers, tutors and professors in universities, and schoolmasters in every school in the country were required to make a declaration of the illegality of taking up arms against the King.

The material aspects of refusing to conform were not negligible. Wives and families would be made homeless, with no form of income except for those of the few ministers who were men of property. Even teaching was now barred to Nonconformists. Some 2,000 ministers refused to conform, were therefore ejected from

their livings, and found themselves in similar plight to the clergy evicted during the Civil War. Some of those ejected for refusing the Act of Uniformity had already been ejected in 1660, following the restoration of sequestered incumbents, and had found themselves another living, sometimes in the same county. Lecturers, assistants and curates serving chapels of ease, heads of colleges, fellows, and college chaplains from the universities, and schoolmasters were also ejected. The plight of the nonconformist ejected was worse than that of the Royalist clergy sequestered, as this time Parliament did not order any money for the families.

Farewell Sunday

Sunday 17th August 1662 was 'Farewell Sunday', the last Sunday before St Bartholomew's Day when the law would take effect. Samuel Pepys decided that he wished to hear Dr. Bates's farewell sermon, and walked to St Dunstan's in the West.⁸

Dr William Bates, born in Bermondsey in 1625, was educated at both Oxford and Cambridge and was Vicar of Tottenham in 1649. He became Vicar of St Dunstan's, among the richest churches in London, in 1654, and was



William Bates, engraved after a portrait by Kneller

one of the leading spokesmen for the Presbyterians. He was strongly in favour of Charles II returning to the throne, and, together with other London ministers, used his influence to help bring about the Restoration. He was made a Royal chaplain in 1660, appointed a Commissioner for the Savoy Conference of 1661 and in the same year was made D.D. by royal decree. He was offered the deanery of Lichfield but refused. On 23rd May 1661, at a Lord Mayor's banquet, Pepys noted that Bates's 'singularity in not rising up nor drink the King's nor other healths at the table, was very much observed'. Bates was also at odds with Sheldon, Bishop of London, who told him and another Presbyterian, Jacomb, that if they would not read the Book of Common Prayer, nor order their curates to do so, he would send those that would.

Bates was a popular preacher, described by contemporaries as 'silver-tongued', and Pepys entered the church at 8 a.m. by a back door before the main doors were opened. The church was already half-full, but he managed to get a good place in the gallery, next to the pulpit, and was able to hear very well. It was a very good sermon but made little reference to the occasion. In the afternoon, Pepys went to hear Bates again, but this time had to stand in a crowd, such was the throng. At the end of his sermon, Bates departed from his habit of saying nothing extraneous to his text and business, to say, in effect, that his conscience was clear: 'I know no reason why men should not pardon me in this world, and am confident that God will pardon me for it in the next'. Pepys wrote that he had heard that most of the Presbyters took their leave that day 'and the City is much dissatisfied with it'.

The fate of the ejected

In general, the ejected ministers did not move far from their old parishes. Many of the 76 ejected from London and Westminster moved to the City parish of St Giles, Cripplegate, while others found refuge in Hackney and Stoke Newington, where City

merchants, many of them with Nonconformist sympathies, had their country residences. Outside London, comparable groupings took place. In Exeter, grumbled Bishop Seth Ward, himself ejected from Cambridge University during the Civil War for writing against the Covenant, twenty ejected ministers resided in that city, with nothing else to do 'but lie gnawing at the root of government and religion'.

Simeon Ashe would certainly have vacated his living as rector of St Austin's, London. Ironically, he died, and a few days later was buried on the eve of St Bartholomew's Day. He was a man of property, and had always been very hospitable to his fellow ministers, although charged with severity against conforming clergy. If Simeon Ashe did not live long enough to refuse to conform, other lecturers did conform, including Francis Raworth, who became the William Jones lecturer (supported by the Haberdashers' Company) at St Bartholomew Exchange in 1662, after the dismissal of George Griffith, an Independent, who would not take the oath. Raworth also became vicar of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, but died of the plague in 1665, while Griffith became a congregational minister in London and lived and worked until he was in his eighties.

William Spurstowe, described by Richard Baxter as 'an ancient, calm, reverend minister', resigned his living at Hackney on 24th August 1662. He had an independent fortune and was able to go on living there until his death in 1666. He was a most charitable and kindly man, with whom Baxter stayed when he came to London, and was hospitable to his colleagues, especially those in need. He died intestate, and his widow was involved in Chancery proceedings over his estate in 1675. Other ejected ministers had powerful friends, who helped them by employing them as chaplains, but many had to rely on friends and colleagues in more humble circumstances. A. G. Matthews, author of *Calamy Revised*,⁹ has shown in that invaluable work how many ministers ejected not only from London but from other parts of the country came to reside

in Hackney.

William Bates

Perhaps the most important of these was William Bates, not only - as Pepys testified - a good preacher, but skilled in Italian, and a great scholar, who lost books to the value of £200 in the Great Fire. He was licensed as Presbyterian on 8th May 1672. At Middlesex Sessions in November 1682 he was fined £100 for preaching thrice at Hackney the previous month. The Toleration Act 1689 allowed Nonconformists their own places of worship, teachers and preachers, and in July 1694, he certified the meeting-house in Mare Street, Hackney, as a place of worship. Bates and others made various attempts to work out a scheme of comprehension,¹⁰ but without success, mainly owing to the uncompromising attitude of the bishops.

Bates married for a second time on 1st July 1664. Of his children, Margaret was buried at Hackney, 7th October, 1669, as were Edward, 7th October, 1709, and William, a London merchant, 3rd May, 1720. Bates died on 14th July 1699, and was buried a week later in the chancel of St John's, Hackney. His library was bought by Daniel Williams, founder of the great Nonconformist library, for over £500. Calamy had an intriguing interview with Bates in 1694, in which Bates refused to take any part in his or in any public ordination, owing to a 'hindrance peculiar to himself', about which Calamy was bound to secrecy.

Bates was assisted, gratis, at Mare Street by Thomas Woodcock, who had been forced to leave his post as rector of St Andrew Undershaft in 1660, on the restoration of the sequestered minister. During the Plague he moved to Leicestershire, living near Anthony Tuckney. He went to live at Leyden, Holland, for a time 'for the sake of his sons' but returned to England and lived in Hackney. He was fined £100 for preaching three times in October 1682, at the meeting-house, Hackney. In 1690 he was preaching at his own house there. He was buried at Hackney, 3rd April 1694. Extracts from his papers were published

in the *Camden Miscellany*.¹¹ Gordon¹² described them as 'often racy'! What can he mean?

Another of Bates's assistants, in 1678, was Onesiphorus Rood, formerly curate of Tothill Fields Chapel, Westminster and one-time chaplain to the House of Lords. Rood was fined £60 at Middlesex Sessions in November 1682, for preaching twice at conventicles in Hackney in September and October of the same year. In 1690 he was still living in Hackney, and possibly preaching at the Compter (there were two debtors' prisons, one in the Poultry, the other in Wood Street, for persons arrested within the City and Liberties. Rood was probably at the former).

The Conventicle Act 1664

The Act of Uniformity was designed to prevent Nonconformist ministers preaching. The Conventicle Act 1664 was aimed at laymen. It declared illegal all meetings for worship, in private houses or elsewhere, of more than five persons (in addition to the household) unless held in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer. The penalties were severe: gaol for three months or a fine of five pounds. A second offence would double these punishments, while a third offence warranted transportation to any foreign plantation for seven years, or a fine of one hundred pounds. These draconian measures made the Nonconformists even more resolute in their faith. There were great numbers of dissenters, and informers were very unpopular with most of the population. One informer, Edmund Potter, reported that Hampden, Baxter and Dr Manton often met to confer, at a lord's house seventeen miles from London, towards Oxford.

Pepys recorded his distress at seeing 'several poor creatures, carried by Constables for being at a conventicle. They go like lambs, without any resistance. I would to God they would conform, or be more wise and not be ketched'.¹³

The Five Mile Act

Another repressive measure was made law in October 1665: the Five Mile Act sought to meet the perceived danger of the ejected ministers settling in groups in towns like Exeter and London, and enacted that all who refused to take the oath of non-resistance to the sovereign, or to promise 'never at any time to endeavour any alteration of the government in Church and State', should be forbidden to come within five miles of a corporate town and should not be allowed to teach in any public or private schools. The penalty was a fine of forty pounds.

The Dons and the Ducklings

By 1668, the Presbyterians were completely divided over the alternative goals of comprehension and toleration. The older leaders, including William Bates, Thomas Manton and Richard Baxter, whose influence was mostly with the gentry, wanted a re-union with the Church, while the other wing, largely reflecting the middle classes, whose leader was Samuel Annesley, vicar of St Giles' Cripplegate until ejected in 1662,¹⁴ wanted toleration as did the Independents, Quakers, Baptists and other Separatists. Sir Joseph Williamson, one of the King's advisers with special responsibility for the Nonconformists, labelled the first group the 'Dons' and the second the 'Ducklings'. Bates, Jacomb and Manton had subscribed to the Five Mile Act on the premise that the oath meant no more than a promise not to endeavour to change the Government by unlawful means, and became known as the 'Five Mile Men'. They were the 'dons' who tended to lord it over the others. Annesley, Nathaniel Vincent, Thomas Watson and James Janeway were the 'ducklings' who, it was said, 'did not fear the water' and were ready to take the plunge in breaking the law and setting up conventicles.¹⁵

The Declaration of Indulgence

Despite the penal laws passed by a vengeful Parliament, Dissent was not stifled and Charles decided to exercise his royal powers, as he

saw them, by issuing the Declaration of Indulgence on 15th March 1672. This suspended 'all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical against whatever sort of Nonconformists or recusants', and under licence allowed a sufficient number of places of worship for those unwilling to conform. There were three forms of licence: for a teacher of a particular congregation with a further licence to teach in any other licensed place; a general licence to teach in any licensed place; and a license for a place. Various groups of Nonconformist ministers presented addresses of thanks to the King. Twenty-eight London ministers presented their gratitude in person, among them being John Owen, William Bates and Thomas Manton. John Bunyan was released after twelve years of imprisonment, and a licence was granted for him to preach in Bedford.

Licences were sought for preaching-places in upper rooms, barns, malting-floors, gardens, houses, buildings in orchards, halls belonging to public companies, and anywhere else where people might meet. Many bishops were worried that with the disabilities lifted, the Nonconformists were increasing at an alarming rate. Some authorities insisted that the Declaration was not retrospective, and continued to levy fines for transgressions happening before it. The Bishop of Bristol even decided to ignore the Declaration altogether and harried magistrates to issue warrants for heavy fines against Nonconformist ministers - which the magistrates were very reluctant to do.

Parliament suspected, rightly, that the King was trying to strengthen Catholicism as well as free Dissenters from the penal laws. They proclaimed that the King's Declaration had nullified forty Acts of Parliament and that Parliament alone could repeal those Acts. They, therefore, cancelled the Declaration, and within three weeks passed the Test Act which required all holders of civil and military office to take the Oaths of Supremacy, to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist according to the usages of the Church of England and to make the Declaration against Substantiation. The licenses granted under the Declaration were revoked in 1675.

The Combined Lecture

The Episcopal Returns¹⁶ of 1669 show that at Hackney, in that year, seven non-conformist ministers held a lecture in concert. Three were Presbyterian: Peter Sterry, Thomas Watson, and William Baxter. Four were Independents (Congregational): Philip Nye, George Griffith, Thomas Brookes and John Owen. Philip Nye, one of whose sermons is in the Tyssen Collection, had a varied ministerial career. His nonconformity had got him into trouble as early as 1633, when he was a Lecturer at St Michael's, Cornhill. He was reported to be leaving for New England, but instead went to Holland, and became minister at Arnheim. His daughter, Dorothy, was however baptised at Hackney, on 1st June, 1636. Later, as vicar of Kimbolton, he represented Huntingdonshire at the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and played a prominent role in religious and public matters. He appears to have made powerful enemies, as he was accused in 1662 of acquiring a great estate by taking bribes, with one of his sons, for disposing of livings, and of using his personal

DAVIDS Deliverance and Thanksgiving.

A
SERMON
Preached before the
KING at WHITEHALL
Upon *June 28. 1660.*

Being the DAY of
SOLEMN THANKSGIVING
FOR THE
Happy RETURN of His MAJESTY.

By
GILBERT SHELDON, D. D.
AND
Dean of His MAJESTIES Chappell Royall.

Published by His Majesties Special Command.

LONDON,
Printed for Timothy Garthwait, at the Little North
Door of S. Pauls. 1660.

influence with Oliver Cromwell to thwart patrons of recourse to law. He defended himself, and survived the charges to maintain his pre-eminent position amongst Congregational divines.

After the Royal Indulgence of 1672, in which Charles II, to the annoyance of the Church party (in power in Parliament) suspended the penal laws against Dissenters, a Tuesday morning lecture was established by London merchants to be given at Pinners' Hall, Old Broad Street, the meeting place of a Congregational Church. This lecture series continued the co-operation founded in 1669 at Hackney by choosing three Presbyterians, including William Bates and Thomas Manton, two Congregationalists, and Richard Baxter (simply registered as Nonconformist) to preach in rotation. This inter-denominational accord continued for over twenty years.

The Happy Union?

The Toleration Act of 1689 brought to an end all legal repression of dissent, and the Presbyterian and Congregational ministries planned to amalgamate. All but three ministers in and around London, more than eighty altogether, met together on 6th April 1691, in the large Stepney meeting-house,¹⁷ where the Congregational pastor, Matthew Mead, preached a famous sermon, 'Two Sticks Made One'. The main objective of the union was that congregations, in choosing their ministers, should consult with, and obtain the agreement of, neighbouring pastors. In the event of disagreement, advice should be sought from a specially-convened synod. This co-operation became known as 'the Happy Union'. Unhappily, within a year, Daniel Williams, a Presbyterian, founder of the great nonconformist library, caused great controversy with the publication of his book *Gospel Truth*, based on his Pinners' Hall lectures. His chief adversary was Isaac Chauncy, Congregational, and the main dispute was whether repentance or faith took precedence in the order of grace.

To outside observers, not a great deal to quarrel over.

Notes

1. Sequestration was the term applied to the seizure of the estates of royalists and to clergy removed from their livings under the ordinance of March 1643. 'Intruders' were the ministers who took their place. Those who refused to conform in 1662 were the 'ejected' or 'silenced'.
2. The principal source for details of the sequestered ministers is J. Walker, *The Sufferings of the Clergy*, 1714, greatly revised and extended as *Walker Revised* (Oxford, 1948) by A. G. Matthews. Walker's original work was an Anglican retaliation to Edmund Calamy, *Abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times*, 1702. Calamy, the grandson of Spurstowe's collaborator in the Smectymnuus series, had included a very long chapter listing and detailing the men who had been deprived of office for refusing to comply with the Act of Uniformity 1662. Calamy published a second edition in 1713, in which this chapter had become a volume of 864 pages. Matthews, an English Congregational minister, published his *Calamy Revised* in 1934 (Oxford). The two modern books are an indispensable contribution to our understanding of the religious struggles of the seventeenth century, but the original works need to be consulted for much detail for which Matthews was unable to find space.
3. *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents 1643-60*, HMSO (1891), 1470, 2166, 2072.
4. 25th September, 1643, the agreement between Parliament and the Scottish covenanters, whereby in return for military assistance from Scotland, the English agreed to a Presbyterian system. The engagement of September 1650 imposed on all men over 18 an oath of allegiance to a government without king or lords, which even many Presbyterians could not in conscience swear.
5. Paul S. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships* (Stanford, 1970).
6. Also known as St Austin's.
7. Bolam, Goring, & c, *The English Presbyterians*, 1968, is a detailed study of Presbyterian origins. A. Gordon, *Freedom after Ejection* (Manchester, 1917), is a review of Presbyterian and Congregational nonconformity in the last part of the 17th century, and J. Brown, *Commonwealth England (Eras of Nonconformity)*, 1904, and *From the Restoration to the Revolution (Eras of Nonconformity)*, 1904, are concise but informative accounts from the dissenting viewpoint.
8. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, (ed. Latham and Matthews), 3, 166.
9. See note 2 above.
10. That is to say, inclusion: see note 1 above.
11. vol. xi., 1907.
12. See note 2 above.
13. Pepys, *Diary*, 7 August 1664.
14. His youngest daughter, Susanna, was to become the mother of John and Charles Wesley and seventeen other children.
15. See note 5 above.
16. Ordered by Archbishop Sheldon, who believed that numbers of nonconformists were greatly exaggerated, and preserved in Lambeth Palace Library (Tenison MSS, 639).
17. A fragment of which still exists between Stepney Green and Stepney Way, east of Garden Street, E1.

SHIRLEY HIBBERD: STOKE NEWINGTON'S FORGOTTEN GARDENER

Anne Wilkinson

Hackney's Victorian nurseries and market gardens have been well researched in recent years and have received welcome publicity. A gardener and writer associated with Hackney, well-known in the 19th century but now forgotten, was James Shirley Hibberd



Shirley Hibberd in later life

(1825-1890). He wrote the first comprehensive guide to gardening in towns and edited the first journal for amateur gardeners. He wrote 14 books on gardening, at least 10 on other subjects, and edited three horticultural journals. He once commented that leisure was an enjoyment he knew nothing of. He was ahead of his time in encouraging wildlife and natural planting, as well as in persuading people to attempt gardening in towns at all. He suggested that gardening could be used to alleviate stress, but he himself died of exhaustion at the age of sixty-five. His fellow journalists mainly agreed that they would miss a true friend and a respected colleague: his burial in Abney Park Cemetery was attended by about 200 mourners.¹

Roots

James Shirley Hibberd was said to have been born in St Dunstan's parish, Stepney, in 1825, and attended the Stepney Meeting House School.² His parentage and early life are obscure, but he may have been connected with the Shirley family of Mile End, who were wealthy landowners in the early 19th century. On Hibberd's first marriage certificate his fa-

ther is named as James Hibberd, occupation 'printer'. Almost the only references Hibberd makes to his father are in relation to his early love of gardening: 'my father was an enthusiast in the culture of monster melons, pumpkins and blanched celery, as well as the more refined departments of flower growing; and to an appetite acquired in childhood I owe many of the choicest pleasures and associations of my life since'.³

Hibberd was said to have been apprenticed to a bookseller when young, instead of going into a 'medical' career, because of his father's early death. This would be logical through business connections if his father was a printer and could explain his becoming a journalist. However, he probably had scientific training. He emerges in about 1849 writing in *The Vegetarian Advocate*, the official newspaper of the Vegetarian Society (founded 1847). He is not only the author of numerous articles on 'the proper food of man', but a tireless public speaker, lecturing all over the City and east London, including 'the Hackney Chapel' (probably the Independent chapel in Mare Street) and Dalston, taking part in discussions and appearing at vegetarian soirées and banquets. He is described as an 'operative chemist' and the author of *Outlines of Chemistry - a textbook for the use of beginners*, published in 1850. The term 'operative chemist' was used at the time by those chemists and druggists who wanted to distinguish themselves as serious scientists, rather than simply dispensers of drugs. They often supplemented their income by lecturing, particularly to medical students.⁴

Hibberd's articles in *The Vegetarian Advocate* include descriptions of man's teeth and digestive system, 'the chemistry of sleep' and the 'psychical' distinctions between man and animals (by which he means that animals rely on instinct and intelligence, while man relies on intelligence and conscience). There is a strong element of religious faith, which remains throughout his life. Not so vegetarianism and its accompanying teetotalism. In 1874 he reviewed a book on vegetarianism, explain-

ing that he did not believe there was anything beneficial about abstaining from meat. He was more in favour of teetotalism for those who had no self control, but did not feel it applied to himself. The next year he wrote an endorsement of a brand of sherry 'that a gentleman may drink with benefit to his health'.⁵ Throughout his life, however, he spoke out against cruelty to animals in slaughterhouses.

Vegetarianism and temperance

How Hibberd got into vegetarianism and quickly left it behind may be explained by a semi-autobiographical story which appeared in a collection of essays, stories and poems he published in 1886.⁶ In the story a young man, while away from home as a student, becomes a member of the Pythagoreans, as vegetarians were known before 1848. The sect is led by a charismatic figure who requires his followers to abstain from meat, alcohol, salt, conventional medicine and, where possible, clothes of animal origin. The devotees delighted in discussion of extravagant trifles, such as not eating beans: the temptation to eat bacon with them being a good reason not even to eat beans on their own! We can only guess how much of the story is an exaggeration (probably most of it), but his reasons for joining sound genuine enough: 'That I was drawn into the net and made a full novice will not surprise you, for you know how pliable and impressionable I am... I had a secret liking for all the singularities of the sect to which many plausible persuasions had attached me'. In the story, the young man eventually falls into delirious fits through malnutrition and the leader turns out to be a fraud and ex-mental patient.

The Vegetarian Advocate ceased publication in 1851 and was replaced by *The Pioneer and Weekly Record of Movements*, a paper dedicated to temperance. Hibberd was only mentioned as author of a poem, 'The Empire of the Heart'. However, an advertisement in it showed one way he was earning his living: 'at the Hackney Literary and Scientific Institution - two lectures on astronomy, with an orrery, grand transparencies, fifty feet

in circumference, and illustrated choruses from the oratorios of the creation and the seasons, by Shirley Hibberd'.

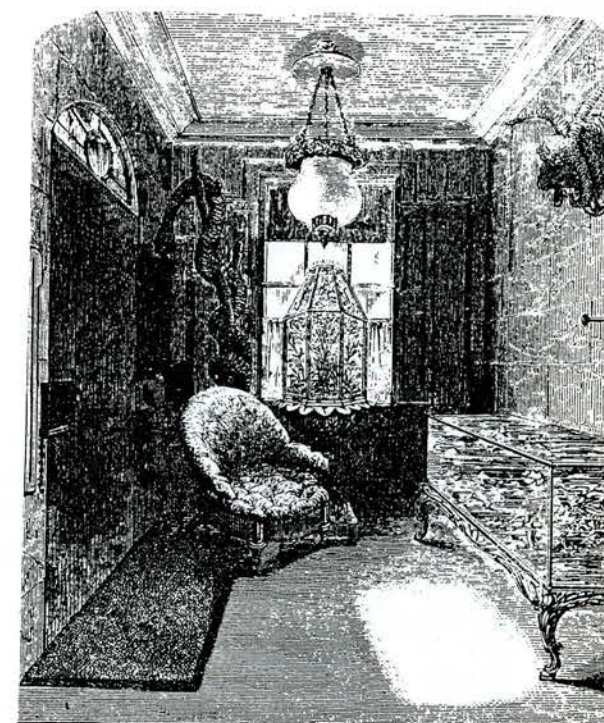
A Pentonville garden

In November 1850 Hibberd married Sarah Elizabeth Voyer at St Andrews Church, Holborn. They were both living at 11 Little Gray's Inn Lane, off Gray's Inn Road. Sarah's parents were George and Sarah Voyer, who lived at 10 Little Gray's Inn Lane; George carried on business at 4 Little Gray's Inn Lane as a gold and silver chaser. Sarah had been baptised on 1st February 1824 at St Luke's Church, Old Street, Finsbury. They met in the summer of 1850. In 1851 he published 'Summer Songs', a book of love poems written to Sarah and poems about flowers. *The Vegetarian Advocate* had included some 'improving' poems and rousing songs written by Hibberd, including 'The Two Streams' (against drink - one stream was water, one wine), 'The Battlefield' (anti-war) and 'Hurrah for the Mighty Deep!' (celebration of the sea).

After their marriage, the Hibberds moved to 42 Cumming Street, Pentonville (the house is no longer there). Experience in gardening there led Hibberd to write *The Town Garden*, published in 1855. The first edition was literally pocket-sized, containing clear instructions on how to make a garden 'where the chimneys are more numerous than the trees and the sky not of the most Italian blue'.⁷ Towns were filthy in the 1850s, and most people gave up attempting to grow things because of the thick film of soot which quickly covered plants, trees, the ground and all buildings. He gives instructions on how to delay digging the garden until the spring because if you dig in the autumn you will only have to dig in the accumulation of soot all over again before planting. He also advised on covering the best plants with glass bell jars to keep them clean. He recommended plants, such as plane trees and ivy, which could survive soot, and even a few roses capable of growing within 3 miles of St Paul's. The book received mixed reviews but must have sold well enough to

encourage Hibberd to go on writing about gardening.

Hibberd published another book in the same year: *Brambles and Bay Leaves - essays on things homely and beautiful*, which was more in line with the way he expected his career to develop. It included writing about nature and the countryside, descriptions of walks in Essex and Hertfordshire, chemistry, philosophy, religion and eastern and classical mythology. He says the essays were written 'during the intervals of severe, though not uncongenial, duties' and he seems to have been working as a freelance writer and lecturer. However, in about 1854 Hibberd appears to have gone through some sort of family tragedy. In the second edition of *Brambles and Bay Leaves* (1862), he writes, 'When the first edition [of the book] had been committed to the press, a dark cloud overspread my domestic life and rendered me altogether careless whether the book should find readers... The cloud has not cleared away, but has changed its form and



The entrance hall (with aquarium) at Stoke Newington

acquired a few additional touches of blackness; though thank God, it has a golden fringe, so that there are gleams of light afar off'. Sarah Hibberd was an invalid throughout her life, and eventually died of heart disease in 1880. On her death certificate the heart disease is described as having existed 20 years. Therefore, by 1862 she would have been aware of it. Perhaps this is the 'changed form' of the cloud. They had no children, but as the tragedy co-incides with a house move to Chelsea in 1855 it is possible that Sarah suffered a miscarriage or still-birth while there and then moved away to try to forget it. Sarah's mother is listed in the 1851 census as having been born in Chelsea, so she may have gone there to stay near relatives.

Return to North London

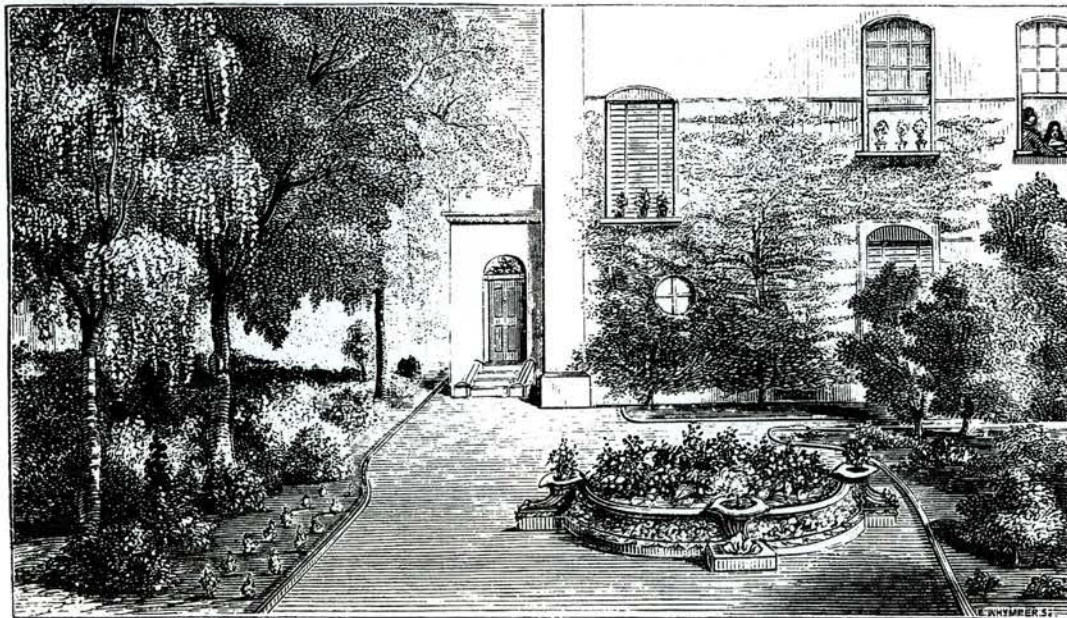
Whatever prompted the move to Chelsea, by 1856 the Hibberds were back in North London, at a house and garden in Church Road Nursery, Tottenham (behind the Bruce Castle Museum). Hibberd's interests were still wide-ranging: in 1856 he reputedly gave a lecture at The Great Globe, Leicester Square, on the Crimean War. He also published a book on the subject in the same year: *The Epitome of the War, from its outbreak to its close*.

The house at Tottenham gave both Hibberds more scope to indulge in their horticultural

and zoological interests. In an essay called 'A Happy Family' published in the second edition of *Brambles and Bayleaves* in 1862, Hibberd described his home as being 'far enough from town to be free from temptations of pleasure, yet near enough to avoid lapsing into vapid dullness'. His wife gave singing lessons and although they had no children, they had a talking parrot, 2 cockatoos, 2 grey and 2 green parrots, 2 Australian ground parakeets, 2 macaws, 2 lorries, 2 Brazilian toucans, a fresh water and sea water aquarium, various jars of other aquatic curiosities, 40 song birds in the attic, decorative poultry and tame jays and jackdaws in the garden, a bee house with half a million bees, and a flock of Angora goats on the neighbouring common.

The suburban rustic

These interests were the basis for Hibberd's best-known book, *Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste*, published in 1856. It became much better known in its revised edition in 1870, where pictures of his Lordship Terrace garden were included. In its first incarnation it included detailed descriptions of aquariums, bird and bee keeping, and growing ferns and other plants in indoor glass cases. The sections on marine life and bee-keeping show Hibberd's scientific knowledge and are extremely precise: I doubt that many people



The front garden at Lordship terrace, with 'jardinet'

nowadays could be bothered to set up or maintain an aquarium or Wardian case in the way he describes, nor keep the variety of marine life he collected, rather than just tropical fish. There were many books on these subjects in the 1850s, but perhaps Hibberd's was the first to put a bit of everything in one place and connect it with poetry and good illustrations, as well as a few personal anecdotes and practical tips for 'do-it-yourself' to save money.

By 1858 Hibberd had made his name as a writer and began to rely on gardening alone as his subject. He edited *The Floral World and Garden Guide*, a monthly newspaper 'for amateurs with moderate means and ambitions to excel in the various practices of horticulture'. He moved to 6 Lordship Terrace, Stoke Newington, and in *The Floral World* tells us why (writing in the third person):

... in consideration of the health of his wife, has lately abandoned a garden in the country, and taken a villa at Stoke Newington where the air suits her better than the marshy spot in which he, years ago, pitched his tent...The look is free and uninterrupted, right away across the meadows, to Muswell Hill, with the Lordship Road reservoir, like a silvery mirror, intervening.

The house was semi-detached and probably built in the 1820s. The road was then called Meadow Street. He started the long process of renovating and improving the garden and, month by month, readers were given descriptions of his rockery, fern house, rose garden, spergula lawn, jardinière in the front garden (contained in Ransome's patent stone) and fruit and vegetable experiments, as well as his Christmas decorations. He tirelessly extolled the virtues of the 'plunging system' whereby plants were kept in pots and used in the borders when at their best, then replaced with something else coming into its prime. He used coconut fibre (which has recently become popular again as a substitute for peat) in which to stand the pots. He is the first to admit that this system requires hard work, but compares it favourably to the popular 'bedding' system employed in most gardens at the time which required even more work and only produced

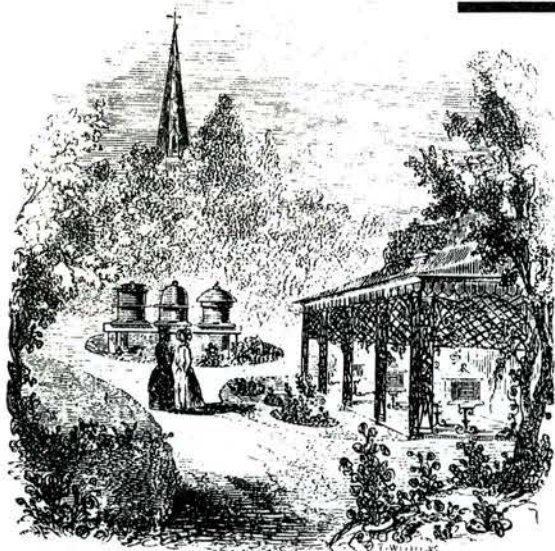
results during the summer.

Although the garden in Lordship Terrace (now covered by the Lordship Estate) was about 286 feet long, the increased experiments with fruit and vegetables, as well as flowers and shrubs, meant Hibberd needed more space to grow everything. He had a garden off Queen Elizabeth's Walk, opposite Clissold Park, which later became Robert Oubridge's nursery, where he grew fruit trees, and another garden off Park Street (now Yoakley Road). On the 1868 Ordnance Survey map you can see that there was a convenient pathway going through from Lordship Road behind the houses to a large patch of open land where his garden in Park Street must have been. Here he grew vegetables.

Produce in abundance

While at Lordship Terrace, Hibberd wrote *Profitable Gardening*, *The Rose Book*, *The Fern Garden*, *New and Rare Beautiful-Leaved Plants*, *Field Flowers* ('a handy book for the rambling botanist'), *Clever Dogs*, *Horses etc.* (a curious book of tales about animals doing brave deeds), as well as revised editions of *The Town Garden* and *Rustic Adornments*, and he edited *The Floral World* and *The Gardener's Magazine*. The early issues of *The Floral World* are an apparently random collection of articles by Hibberd himself and a group of local gardeners from Hackney and its surrounding areas. Mr Chitty of Stamford Hill writes about tender shrubs and greenhouse plants, Mr Prior from Homerton specialises in roses, and Mr Oubridge ('the master of fuschias [sic] on this side of London') and Mr Williams from Holloway (orchid expert) between them provide expertise on every subject. The paper also includes answers to readers' queries, book reviews and reports of shows and exhibitions. Stoke Newington was renowned for its Chrysanthemum Society at the time, started by Robert James of the Rochester Castle public house.

Hibberd is responsible for introducing or promoting many plants we are familiar with today which thrive in our pollution as they



The bee-shed at Lordship Terrace

did a hundred years ago. Aucuba japonica, the spotted laurel, seen all over London, was a plant he made popular. When it first came from China it was not thought particularly exciting, as it had no berries. Much later, it was realised that there are separate male and female plants and in order to have berries you must grow both. Hibberd obtained male and female plants, propagated lots of cuttings and then displayed them at a lecture and sold them through a local nursery. Soon after that everyone had them.⁸ Hibberd constantly advised town gardeners against trying to imitate parks and large country gardens where there were better facilities for raising bedding plants and where a larger staff would be employed. He tells the amateur gardener to concentrate on mixing shrubs and bulbs with hardy herbaceous plants. He seemed to be fighting a losing battle as it was the end of the century before this style of gardening became popular.

Public and private

By the 1860s Hibberd's garden was becoming so well known through his journalism that he was constantly asked to let the public visit. These requests were refused on the grounds that it was a private garden, 'devoted to experimental purposes and utterly unsuited to the entertainment of visitors'. However, as a compromise, a photographer was allowed in and the resulting engravings gradually started to appear in the magazines and books. A 'portrait' of Hibberd himself was also offered to

readers, price one shilling.

Although Hibberd's own gardens have disappeared, we can see his work in Islington Green. He was paid £260 to lay it out in 1863 by St Mary's parish. He writes in *The Floral World* of December 1869 that if readers wish to see Irish ivy used as an edging plant they only need to look at 'The Green': 'you may find a moment's amusement in criticising said writer's notions of town gardening'. There you can still see the ivy, aucuba and plane trees recommended again and again by Hibberd in all his books and articles on town gardening. They seem ordinary now, but look how they have lasted!

By 1871 Hibberd had moved from the house in Lordship Terrace, but may still have retained the garden. Builders started encroaching on Park Street and Queen Elizabeth's Walk, and the character of the area was changing. By 1871 he was living at Bridge House, Hermitage Road, which runs between Green Lanes and St Ann's Road. In a story published in *The Gardener's Magazine*, December 1880, obviously autobiographical, called 'Life on a Private Road', he describes how he found the house, how idyllic it first appeared, but how he gradually had to put up with fog, floods, gypsies, fruit and vegetable thieves, naked prize-fighters and herds of grazing animals. The building of houses and the coming of the railway finally drove him out: 'and the end of it was, the man had a year of rheumatism and the woman broke her heart. He survived to find another home; she went to the grave, leaving him a lonelier and a thousand times less helpful [hopeful?] than when assailed day and night by innumerable enemies in the private road.' It was a sad ending to what should have been a perfect life.

Bridge House appears on the 1864 Ordnance Survey map, not named, but next to a larger house called 'The Retreat'. The lake north of the house was part of his garden. Hibberd set up a new experimental garden and had some unusual ideas about training fruit trees, which not everyone agreed with. One of his obituaries states that his system 'brought down upon

him a vast amount of ridicule from practical men, and which we cannot say was quite undeserved; at any rate, no one apparently cared to see their trees loaded with brick-bats, and so the system he advocated for bringing trees into fruitfulness was never adopted'.⁹ His idea was that fruit trees should not be drastically pruned, but should have some branches bent into a downward position by hanging weights from them, to promote growth. The illustration in *The Floral World* for February 1876 shows bells hanging from the branches like Christmas decorations, rather than broken bricks. He calls the method 'pulley-pruning'. He also suggested that because fruit grew well against walls, as long as the sun was shining to warm the wall and ripen the fruit, but could be damaged by walls getting cold if there was frost at the wrong time, 'reversible' walls could be used. These were wooden fence panels which could be fixed on one side of the tree or the other, depending which way the sun or wind was coming from. It looks a fairly cumbersome process, which was probably why it never caught on.

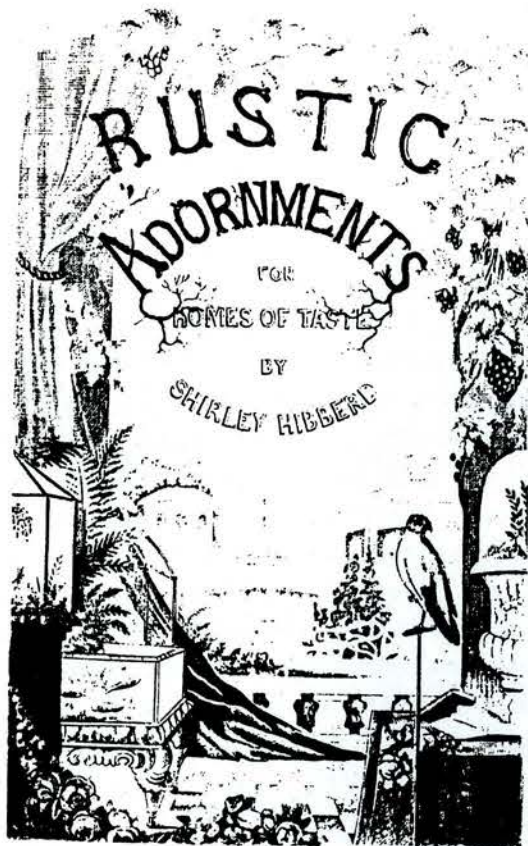
Experiments

Hibberd constantly held trials of different vegetables to find the best varieties and was particularly interested in potatoes, partly because potato disease had so devastated life in Ireland. He advocated growing potatoes on tiles to help drainage and combat cold. He dug a trench, put down a layer of downward curving tiles and then covered them with soil, growing the potatoes on the tiles, thereby leaving an empty space under the plants. He claimed he got much better yields on his heavy soil. In 1878 Hibberd produced a book on *Home Culture of the Watercress*, when he discovered that running water, which was previously thought essential for growing watercress, was severely polluted. He explained how watercress could be grown in pots plunged into water troughs in any garden. He was awarded a gold medal by the Royal Horticultural Society and also wrote a poem to the watercress sellers of London, when he was accused of putting them out of business.

The experiment with watercress was part of Hibberd's general interest in water supply. It



Mrs Hibberd's fern house at Lordship Terrace



The first edition

was a topical issue because of the dangers of cholera and other waterborne diseases. In 1870 he had reviewed a report on sewage in Tottenham in *The Floral World*. He promoted the idea of each house having a system of covered, preferably underground, tanks to collect rainwater and dew and use it for all domestic purposes, including drinking. He designed the system so that the first water falling on the roof would wash into one tank, taking dirt and soot with it, and then the next flow of water (which would be cleaner) would be directed into a different series of tanks, one of which would contain a filter for drinking water. Through his experience of keeping marine life in aquariums, he had noticed that if water was kept still and in the dark it naturally cleared itself and remained fresh. His ideas appeared in 'Water for nothing - every house its own water supply' in 1879, and the same system of tanks was shown in *Amateur Gardening* on January 24th 1885.

While at Bridge House Hibberd also wrote *The Amateur's Flower Garden*, *The Amateur's*

Greenhouse and Conservatory, *The Amateur's Kitchen Garden* and *Familiar Garden Flowers*, as well as *The Ivy* and *The Seaweed Collector*. *The Ivy* included history and folklore connected with ivy, as well as descriptions of the 200 varieties collected by Hibberd at Stoke Newington. The book is attractively illustrated, every page having a border of ivy around it.

Domestic tragedy

In March 1880, after thirty years of marriage, Sarah Hibberd died of heart disease. She was buried in Abney Park cemetery. They had moved to 15 Brownswood Park, a terrace of houses built in the 1860s overlooking Clissold Park and just round the corner from Lordship Terrace. There was not much garden, but perhaps by this time Hibberd had given up the practical side of gardening. He was then 55 and had suffered from rheumatism, bronchitis and toothache, among other things. In March 1884 Hibberd married Ellen Mantle, aged 28, who had been listed as his cook in the 1881 census. After the marriage they moved to 1 Priory Road, Kew. In January 1885 Ellen had a daughter, also named Ellen, but called Nellie, but sadly died four days later of septicaemia. So Hibberd once again missed his chance of a family life. He probably moved to Kew because of his increased activity in the Royal Horticultural Society, sitting on several of their committees and judging and organising shows and exhibitions. At the time their headquarters and gardens were in Chiswick, just over the river.

Despite his domestic tragedy, Hibberd launched himself into work, still in constant demand as a speaker and editing *The Gardener's Magazine* and, for three years, *Amateur Gardening* as well. In 1886 he published *The Golden Gate with Silver Steps*, named after a present Hibberd gave his young daughter on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday party, and said to be for 'young people of all ages'. It contained many essays, stories and poems previously published, some semi-autobiographical, including one on try-

ing out cannabis at the age of 24.

Hibberd's death was sudden, although he was in failing health. All his obituaries describe his last days in typical Victorian morbid detail. He attended the annual show of the Chrysanthemum Conference, on Tuesday 11th November 1890, which took place in an unheated hall with everyone complaining about the cold. On Thursday he organised and introduced the National Chrysanthemum Society's dinner, giving a speech, but apparently without his usual liveliness, and left early, clearly ill. On Saturday he took to his bed and early on Sunday died, of bronchitis and exhaustion. His funeral a week later was attended by many of the well-known names in the horticultural world. The drawing room of his house was filled with floral tributes and the cortège took two hours to travel from Kew to Stoke Newington. The service took place at All Saints' Church, Aden Grove, and the burial in Abney Park Cemetery in Sarah's grave. The gravestone is still to be found on the left-hand side on Boundary Road South, just up from the column to the left of the main entrance. The inscription has worn away, but the stone is white, with a small cross and ivy leaves engraved round the gothic-shaped top. The Royal Horticultural Society commissioned a portrait in his memory, which hangs in their hall today.

Hibberd's legacy

The genius of Shirley Hibberd was that he was a born communicator, able to analyse and write about anything that interested him, and put it across simply and enthusiastically to all classes of readers. From his early articles on human physiology to instructions on setting up an aquarium or making compost, to his summary of the history and cultivation of ivy, he never ceased teaching and encouraging and was always an entertaining speaker. However, his enthusiasm sometimes led other people astray. His lecture on pelargoniums in 1880 included speculation on how the first pelargonium came to Britain, which has long ago been proved wrong, but many later writers

faithfully repeated the story as fact. Similarly, in Jane Fearnley-Whittingstall's book *Ivies* (1992) she states how Hibberd's book was the first comprehensive survey of ivies, but that his 'esoteric approach to naming them' has meant 'experts have been clearing up the muddle ever since'. In his later years, Hibberd made some enemies by his forthright opinions on certain writers and members of the RHS committee, but the only subjects for his anger through most of his life were cats and jobbing gardeners. Although he loved and respected most animals, he seemed to despise cats and in *The Town Garden* even gave a recipe for poisoning them. As to jobbing gardeners, he had no respect for men who wanted garden work as a quick way to earn money for beer. If a gardener did not follow his instructions he got rid of him, or worse: 'a gardener who cuts into the turf on the edge of the lawn to make a finish ought to be compelled to eat all that he removes'.¹⁰

Hibberd's legacy is his writing, almost all of which is out of print. It is extremely sad that later writers, such as William Robinson (whose early writing Hibberd praised and published but who later became a rival), and Gertrude Jekyll, are better known because they designed larger country house gardens which have survived. Hibberd is forgotten because his gardens have gone, covered by rows of terraced houses with gardens the size of his first one



The back garden (and proprietor?) at Stoke Newington

off Pentonville Road. Yet so much of what he wrote could be used as it stands today and is extremely entertaining. So many of us try to restore our houses to their Victorian splendour, and it would be fitting if we used Hibberd's ideas to restore our gardens in the same way. When you notice the ivy and aucuba growing in your own or your neighbour's garden, imagine that it might be a descendant of the plants Hibberd started off in Stoke Newington. If he materialised in any Hackney garden today he would surely be pleased to see how gardening is thriving in towns, with bulbs in the spring and shrubs all the year round, ponds to attract small birds and insects and the flowers grown for bees. He would marvel at the apparently clean air and envy the variety of roses and the perfection of pelargoniums. He would truly love self-service garden centres where all gardeners go as equals to pick out what they want (whereas Jekyll or Robinson would probably send the head gardener with a shopping list). For Hibberd, gardening was 'of all worldly occupations...the noblest, the most useful, and the one which promises the richest mental and material rewards'.¹¹

Finally, I leave you with his last words from *Rustic Adornments*:

May your hours of rustic recreation profit you in body and soul. May your flowers flourish, your bees prosper, your birds love you, and your pet fishes live forever. May the blight never visit the tendrils that make your arbours and porches leafy, your borders gay, or your fern-banks verdurous; and may you find in every little thing that lives and grows a pleasure for the present hour, and a suggestion of things higher and brighter for contemplation in the future. I herein reach my hand towards you with an affectionate FAREWELL!



The geranium pyramid at Stoke Newington

Notes

1. The following articles were used as starting points for research: 'A Forgotten Floral World: Shirley Hibberd and his garden', *The Hackney Terrier*, 42 (1996); 'The Victorian who said it all', Richard Gorer; *Country Life*, 13 March 1980; introduction by Anthony Huxley to *The Amateur's Flower Garden*, facsimile reprint (1975); introduction by John Sales to *Rustic Adornments*, National Trust Classics reprint (1987). They were mainly based on obituaries written by contemporaries of Shirley Hibberd, such as in *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, *The Gardeners' Magazine*, *The Garden*, *The Gardening World*, (all 22 November 1890); *Journal of Horticulture*, 20 November 1890; *The Times*, 17 November 1890.
2. Charles McNaught, 'Round about Old East London', *East London Observer*, 3 Sept 1910.
3. *The Town Garden* (1st ed.), preface.
4. R. F. Bud and G. K. Roberts, *Science versus Practice: Chemistry in Victorian Britain* (Manchester, 1984).
5. *The Gardener's Magazine* (1874) 301, (1875) 645.
6. *The Golden Gate with Silver Steps: 'Beans without Bacon - a Pythagorean Romance'* (1886).
7. *The Town Garden* (1st ed.), preface.
8. *New and Rare Beautiful-Leaved Plants* (1868) 113.
9. *The Gardening World*, Nov. 22 1890, 185.
10. *The Amateur's Flower Garden* (facsimile reprint) 266.
11. From 'The Joy of a Garden', *Brambles and Bay Leaves* (2nd ed).

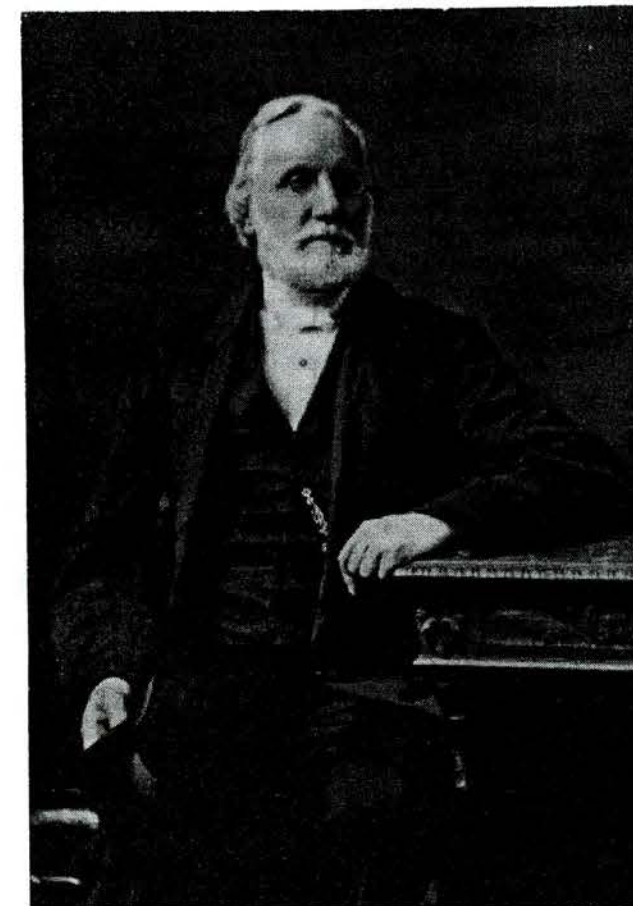
THE VICTORIAN VALUES OF DR TRIPE

Carole Pountney

The Board of Works

For many people, not least Margaret Thatcher, 'Victorian values' have been considered to be those of non-regulation, individual responsibility and *laissez faire*. While such values may have applied in some areas, and in the earlier part of Victoria's reign, they had no place in the philosophy of the inestimable John W. Tripe MD MRCP, sometime president of both the Society of Medical Officers of Health and the Royal Meteorological Society, who was the medical officer of health for the Hackney District Board of Works from 1855 until two weeks before his death in 1892.

John Tripe was born in the parish of St George in the East in 1821, but obtained his medical degree from the University of St Andrews. In 1867 he moved from Commercial Road to a rather smart semi-detached house in Richmond Road, Hackney¹ backing onto London Fields. Married to a wife twenty years his junior, he came late to parenthood, having a daughter, Mary, when he was 49 years old, and five years later a son, John Henry, who also took up medicine. The family appears to have lived fairly modestly, with only



Dr John Tripe

one live-in general domestic servant, and from the census returns it would appear that both the children were sent away to school.

Hackney Board of Works at its inception in 1855 appointed three chief officers: Dr Tripe, Mr Lovegrove the district surveyor, and Mr Ellis the clerk. All three were still in place in 1892 (this was unique in London local government). By 1877 Tripe's salary had risen to £450 a year, augmented by his appointment, at £75 a year, to his secondary post of public analyst for the district.² This was rather less than Hackney paid the surveyor (£650), but rather more than the clerk received (£350). By 1888, Tripe was earning £575, Lovegrove £700.

During his thirty-seven years in Hackney, Dr Tripe's annual reports were models of clarity, thoroughness and vigour, demonstrating his quest to improve public health. Whenever new legislation was enacted, he adopted it with enthusiasm; where he considered existing powers to be inadequate, he lobbied for change - taking matters as far as the Home Secretary if necessary. Tripe, then, was no advocate of *laissez faire*, since most of the measures he adopted imposed costs and duties on the ratepayers and on owners of individual properties.

Smallpox epidemics

As medical officer, Tripe had continually to contend with epidemic diseases, including smallpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria and cholera. Many of his annual reports deal in depth with attempts to tackle these on a preventative basis. A particular concern was the unnecessary mortality resulting from smallpox. In his 1872 report he noted the good effect of vaccination 'even when imperfectly performed', but revised this opinion after a severe outbreak in 1876, when many deaths occurred among those who had been vaccinated, but inadequately. His 1877 annual report contains a detailed explanation of the process of vaccination, including a discussion of Dr Jenner's evidence to the House of Commons of 1802. Tripe's mission for adequate

revaccination continued through the 1880s, and included repeated appeals to the Local Government Board, which refused to pay for revaccination, and (unsuccessfully) to the School Board authorities to examine the extent of protection in schoolchildren. In 1883 he finally persuaded Board of Works to pay to revaccinate 770 children between 10 and 14 years old, but felt bound to admit in his 1886 report that this action did not 'appear to have exerted any appreciable effect'. Concluding that a more extensive revaccination programme was needed, he convinced the Board to pay for revaccination of children between 12 and 15 years. This appears to have been successful, since the Local Government Board eventually decided to introduce a revaccination programme for '12 or even ten-year olds', and by 1891 Hackney had had no deaths from smallpox for four years.

Epidemiology

His interest in epidemics led Dr Tripe to examine the periodic and geographical patterns of disease. In his 1871 report he advanced a theory that diseases had a 'tendency to become epidemic every fourth year', listing the outbreaks of smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough and (enteric) fever since 1856 to demonstrate his point. By his 1890 report, he was predicting an imminent outbreak of scarlet fever as it had been 'comparatively quiescent for three years'.³ However, the frequency and ferocity of small-pox epidemics throughout the 1870s led him to concentrate on the significance of the location of the Homerton Fever Hospital, opened in 1871. From 1872 Tripe observed that smallpox deaths were concentrated near the hospital, and in his 1881 report produced impressive statistics which demonstrated that proximity to the hospital tripled the death rate.⁴

In 1883 he presented his findings to the Royal Commission on Hospitals for Infectious Diseases ('my evidence was rather voluminous') leading to a change in general practice⁵ as well as the local initiatives which Tripe had initiated for cleansing and transporting the sick.



Conduit Place, off Northwold Road, c 1890: conditions of Tripe's era, not redeveloped until the 1930s

Tripe attempted to restrict the spread of other epidemics, particularly diphtheria (he closed the Board School in Tottenham Road in 1881, following an outbreak there, then, in typical fashion, he inspected all the schools in the district, and finding 'the sanitary arrangements more or less defective in nearly all' required remedies to be carried out). If some of Tripe's ideas seem now a little odd (he ascribed the Clapton diphtheria outbreak of 1887 to 'the peculiar infective power of sewer gas'⁶), he clearly recognised defective drainage to be a contributory factor, and initiated corrective action, not only in the houses of the poor: by the 1880s he was requiring the replacement of the old bell-traps by yard-gully traps even in the grander (and older) houses of de Beauvoir Square.

House inspection

As medical officer, Tripe, with two inspectors, was required to inspect houses where infectious diseases had occurred or in response

to complaints. The complaints procedure enabled his team to identify and call for remedies in about 1,500 cases a year. The first major piece of legislation to enable Dr Tripe to develop a more proactive role was the Sanitary Act 1866. Undoubtedly as a result of his initiative, Hackney was the first district to obtain powers under section 35 of this Act, which enabled metropolitan districts to draw up regulations to control overcrowding in rented houses, and to ensure that these were maintained in a 'cleanly and wholesome state'.⁷ Enforcement measures gave 'nuisance officers' new powers of entry to inspect such property at any time.

There had been a major cholera outbreak in 1866, and the District Board had to appoint extra, temporary, inspectors to deal with this emergency. Tripe succeeded in retaining two of these, and a clerk, on a permanent basis to set up a system for the inspection of all houses with a rental value of less than £20 p.a.⁸ In the first eight months of its operation

4,285 nuisances were identified (see Table 1).

In the first full year after the adoption of the regulations, the department measured and inspected 5,168 houses, which, Tripe claimed, were *all* the poorer houses in the District. Despite a continuing influx of 'a far larger proportion of the ...working classes',⁹ Tripe's department continued to use the 1866 Act to inspect about 6,000 houses a year until the 1880s. Clearly the measure was a useful mechanism to restrict the worst excesses of inadequate rented accommodation. It seems likely that the mere threat of action was effective with regard to overcrowding, particularly after 1869, when Tripe resorted to the step of naming publicly individual cases of 'indecent overcrowding'.¹⁰

'Indecent' overcrowding had virtually been eradicated by 1878, and by 1890 he was able to claim (largely because of over-building) that 'overcrowding here is ... not of a glaring character'.

With regard to nuisances other than overcrowding, most houses inspected were free of defects, while for the minority where nuisances were identified, most were 'abated' before summonses were issued, so here again, the threat of action appears to have been a valuable tool in Tripe's quest for adequate housing, although periodically Dr Tripe identifies properties where the owners preferred closure to repair.

Slum clearance

From 1868, the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act (the 'Torrens Act') enabled District Boards to demolish houses 'unfit for human habitation'. In the previous year Tripe had already identified as unfit fifteen houses in Lawrence Buildings, Sanford Lane, West Hackney, and a further five houses 'at the back'. The District Surveyor reported that ten of these required structural alterations and that five should be demolished. In the 1869 annual report, the Board stated that some of these had been pulled down and rebuilt, others repaired and the remainder would 'shortly be closed' (p 6). Tripe's report for the same year

Cesspools emptied, filled, linked to sewer	288
Manure/refuse removed	138
Premises repaired, limewashed	1576
Premises ventilated	913
Pigs, sties removed	58
Choked drains cleaned, repaired	408
Other nuisances	904
	4285

Source: Hackney District Board of Works
Annual Report 1868

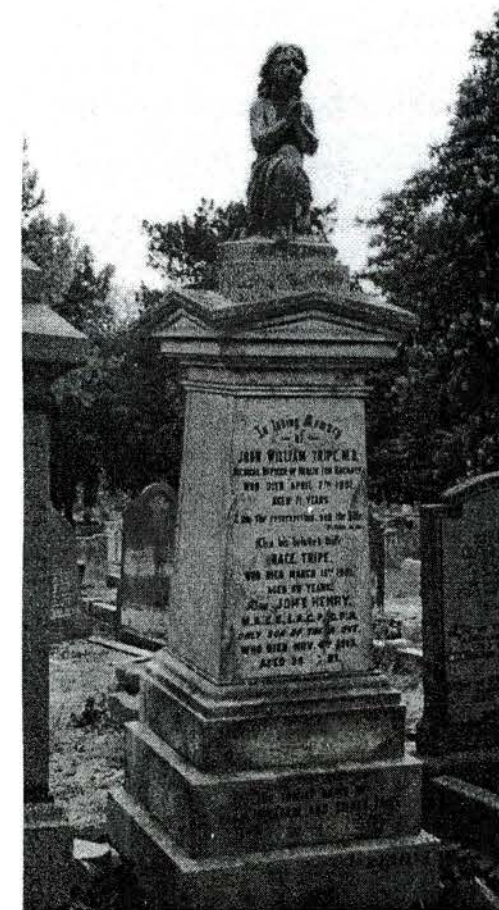
shows that progress had been rather slower than this bald statement implies, as it had been 'necessary to serve seven notices for each house'. Progress remained slow: while the tenants of numbers 10 and 11 Lawrence Buildings had left in September 1869, all the tenants of numbers 1 to 9 refused to leave, and could only be removed by court order. By his 1874 report, Tripe concludes that strict enforcement of the Torrens Act would only make overcrowding worse. He did not mention it again until 1879, when he conceded that a proposed amendment might be useful.

By the 1880s, further legislation afforded new opportunities to shame bad landlords. In 1886 Tripe identified 33 properties whose owners 'preferred shutting-up or pulling-down to repairing' houses. As Tripe held 'a very strong opinion that it is most unfair to the ratepayers that they should be compelled to pay for uninhabitable property which has been allowed by owners to get into a dilapidated state for want of substantial repairs', he used the new Act, which contained no such powers, rather than that of 1868. Clearly, Dr Tripe believed that house-ownership incurred duties and costs beyond free market forces. His was, however, a balanced view: in 1884 he conceded that the landlords of Hackney were not 'so much to blame' as the tenants,¹¹ and in that year he allowed 'dusty, damp, low-

roomed houses with no fireplaces' in John's Place to remain 'for the present' as they provided cheap, uncrowded accommodation to single families with no unusual health or mortality problems, whose only alternative would have been single rooms in model dwellings.

Adequate housing

By the mid seventies, Tripe's range of interest had moved on to the unsatisfactory contribution some of the new housing was making to the public health of Hackney: 'many of the small houses are built either on the sod, or still worse, on rubbish foundations',¹² and of poor materials. Although defective drainage nuisances were declining in number (1872 MoH report, p 25), population density was leading to an increase in other forms of nuisance. Further,



The grave at Chingford Mount

It must not be assumed that the removal of the nuisances will make them fit in all cases for habitation, as many of the houses were originally constructed in such a bad manner, and on so vicious a plan as to make them more or less unhealthy residences at all times. Powers conferred upon district surveyors should be much augmented by Act of Parliament so as to prevent old mortar being used in rebuilding, to insist in all houses built on made ground having the whole basement covered with Portland or other cement and other improvements which I need not mention here.

(MoH Report, 1875 p 25).

Beyond Hackney

In the following year he saw Cross, the Home Secretary, with a list of proposals to ensure that all new houses were built on sound foundations, and of sound materials. With some modification, Cross accepted these recommendations, although they did not become enforceable until the Building Acts were amended in 1878 to enable the Metropolitan Board of Works to draw up a 'comprehensive and strict set of regulations'.¹³

Tripe's public health interests went beyond the bounds of Hackney. He took an active part in Hampstead's litigation to close a fever hospital, and was a member of public health associations of France and Belgium, and quoted experience by other authorities (in both London and Germany) in his reports on small-pox. Requests for his papers on the 'periodic disease wave theory' came from France and America. His evidence to the Home Secretary and to various government investigations led to changes in practice and legislation to cover all local authorities. Not one to hide his light under a bushel, in his 1885 report Tripe quotes at length 'so marked an eulogium' from the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes praising Hackney's practice in enforcement of housing standards. However it is through his annual reports to the district board that the full range of his interests is shown.¹⁴ His obituary in the *Hackney Gazette* on 8th April 1892 acknowledges this:

His annual reports were masterpieces of ability and marked by statistical precision and fraught with both interest and instruction.

From such examples, it is clear that Dr Tripe was an inveterate campaigner for increased control over the actions of individuals, and a vigorous pursuer of 'remedies' whether paid for by the ratepayers or by individual landlords. He seems, too, to have been an excellent boss: every year his report concludes with a commendation on the work of his inspectors, with whom he appears to have had an affectionate relationship: shortly before his death, he presented each of his staff with a suitably inscribed silver matchbox, 'a last evidence of the thoughtfulness and consideration he always had for those who worked under his direction'.¹⁵

Notes

1. Initially number 172 Richmond Road, the house was re-numbered to 232 in 1876. Unlike four other houses in this block, it survived the bombing of the second world war, but numbers 226 to 254 were later demolished to form an extension to London Fields. The site is roughly where the tennis courts now stand.
2. The duty of the public analyst was to test products about which the public complained, most of these related to poor quality milk, but also included whisky, beer, coffee and even opium.
3. In the event, a major epidemic did not materialise.

4. During the 1880s Tripe's reports were accompanied by maps showing the location of each outbreak to demonstrate that smallpox was affected by the proximity of the hospital, while scarlet fever was not.
5. Smallpox cases were removed directly to isolation hospitals or 'ships' instead of being brought initially to Homerton.
6. Medical Officer of Health's (MoH) report, 25, in Hackney District Board of Works (DBW) 22nd annual report, 1878.
7. The Hackney District Regulations, under section 35 of the Sanitary Act 1866, reported in the DBW's 11th Annual Report, 1867. Tripe reports that the Secretary of State considered Hackney's proposed overcrowding standard (a minimum of 300 cubic feet of air per person for sleeping accommodation) to be rather low, but approved the measure nonetheless.
8. Tripe estimated that these made up about one third of all Hackney's dwellings.
9. MoH report, 11, in DBW 12th annual report, 1868.
10. MoH report, 21, in DBW 13th annual report, 1869. For example, 13 Bath Row, 18 Rosina St, 22 Templar Rd, 16 Palace Rd etc. In 1875 he repeated this approach for (non-indecent) overcrowding, eg at 32 Palace Rd, eight persons, including children, per room of 864 cubic feet; at 13 Goring St, eight persons (including children) per room of 843 cubic feet.
11. MoH report 1887, 31: 'the poorer classes are getting more careful as regards the WCs than ... some years ago, when they so frequently blocked them up ... by throwing rubbish into them.'
12. MoH report 1876, 23: Tripe here meant 'rubbish' literally. Builders would carry away the sub-soil for use elsewhere, and replace it with household refuse. This is the 'made ground' mentioned in the quotation from his 1875 report.
13. However, Tripe notes that 'considerable opposition [had] been manifested by builders' - he thought amendment was likely.
14. Even his meteorological interests are covered - a review of the local weather is included each year.
15. *Hackney Gazette*, 8 April 1892.

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL

Chris Miele

Introduction

Town halls - and the London subspecies, vestry halls - are quintessentially Victorian buildings, the direct expressions of the break-neck pace of municipal legislation between 1835 and 1914 and, just as significantly, of the desire of local people to express their aspirations for local self-government.

Shoreditch Town Hall,¹ with its three distinct building phases, perfectly embodies the development of London local government. There are no town halls in London which so graphically record the steady, accretive growth of local government as does this complex. What is more, the first and second phases of Shoreditch Town Hall were significant works of architecture in their own day, setting a standard for other projects around the capital.

An overview of the building phases

The surviving vestry hall (1863-68) was the result of increased duties imposed upon London vestries by the Metropolitan Management Act 1855. The present council chamber on the ground floor survives intact from this pe-

riod, and is an exceptionally fine, and complete, example of its type. This first phase of building consists of the five bays to the left of the present tower range and is entered by a single-storey porch carried on paired Ionic columns. It was designed by the Shoreditch district surveyor, Caesar A. Long. The single bay, set back ranges to either side of this first build were added before 1897, most probably in 1893 in order to meet safety standards imposed by the then newly formed London County Council.

Between 1898 and 1902 the architect W. G. Hunt incorporated the earlier vestry hall into one coherent, monumental design. This phase, following on from the Local Government Act 1899, has a three-bay facade topped by a pediment, the tympanum of which bears figure sculpture and the coat-of-arms of the newly established Metropolitan Borough of Shoreditch. A two-stage tower with a niche features an allegorical female figure, identified as 'Progress,' holding a torch - a reference to the Borough's innovative street-lighting and refuse-destroyer scheme. One of the condi-

tions imposed on the architect was the retention of the old vestry chamber for use as a council hall, as well as the massive public hall on the first floor. This was at the time the largest public hall incorporated within a vestry hall complex in London. In 1904 a fire completely gutted the old public hall, and the interior was completely redecorated and given a new roof. The odd broken pediment to the left of the two-stage tower dates to this rebuilding of 1904-5.

Phase three (1936-8) corresponds to the brick ranges to the rear of the Old Street block and is entered by Rivington Place. Architecturally it is the least distinguished of the three, and it is not considered in this article.

A 'symbolic centre'

The Municipal Reform Act 1835 was the impetus for the first wave of town hall buildings in the provinces. At a stroke it created 178 municipal corporations endowed with new duties and powers. Unlike old-style town government, most councils chose to build new offices rather than share premises. They were also able to fund building out of local rates, loans secured by rates, or even by issuing stock. This system of funding answered what one historian has called 'the widespread desire for a symbolic centre'. Indeed, in some places there was a headlong rush to get projects up and running to give social form to the new statutory entities.²

London vestry halls, required for the 38 separately constituted vestries, were a distinctly different type, for the most part creatures of the Metropolitan Management Act 1855, although some vestry halls had been built in the decades prior to the Act. Whereas town halls outside London could be in any style of architecture, London vestry halls were mostly classical in order to signal the vestry's independence from Church control. Nevertheless the functional requirements of the two types were broadly similar: a large hall, smaller committee rooms, and a variety of offices. And Londoners did tend to think of their vestry

halls as expressing local identity, with the result that many were referred to, incorrectly, as town halls. Obviously, since no single London parish could rival Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, or Northampton, no London vestry hall matches the scale or richness of the architectural masterpieces that were built in these places.³ However, the best London vestry halls could easily rival town halls in middling-sized cities.

Early London vestry halls

The earliest surviving vestry hall in London is that built for the parish of St Martin in the Fields by John Nash in c.1830, as part of the Charing Cross improvement scheme. What is most significant about this modest structure, and what, ultimately distinguishes it from later examples, is its integration in a single block with vicarage and parish school. It was this link with the ecclesiastical parish as an administrative unit that later vestry halls would seek to break in an attempt to assert the independence of local government and administration from the Church of England. The somewhat earlier Marylebone Vestry Hall in Marylebone Lane (c.1825; demolished) doubled as the court house. Again this linkage is characteristic of the type before the Municipal Reform Act. Greenwich 'Town Hall' (these words are emblazoned on the main front) is another very early surviving example.

James Lockyer's Paddington Vestry Hall, completed in 1853 (demolished), set an important precedent, coming as it did on the eve of the 1855 Act, yet this was judged a disappointment by George Godwin, the influential editor of *The Builder*. Nothing about the new vestry hall, he wrote, expressed the corporate authority of the more than 45,000 parish dwellers, even though the vestry had more business to transact than 'two or three very respectable provincial cities'.⁴

Instead, the handsome, substantial building showed not one trace of the huge wealth hidden behind the dull brick faces of houses in the surrounding squares and streets. The almost exactly contemporary Lambeth Vestry

Hall in Kennington Road is little better, although there is a monumental Tuscan portico with giant columns in antis.

There was a spate of vestry hall building in the wake of the Metropolitan Management Act 1855, most of it aiming to redress the defects which Godwin found so palpable in Lockyer's Paddington Hall. Perhaps the best surviving example is the one built for Mile End Vestry in Cable Street (1860-62) by the architect Andrew Wilson. This is an important precedent for Shoreditch, because the essential features of the elevation - a plain rusticated base containing offices and a main hall on the first floor divided into bays by a pilastrade punctuated by large windows - was repeated several years later on the Old Street site. The treatment of the entrance porch is also vaguely similar. It is also interesting that Mile End, like Shoreditch, chose to incorporate the original structure into a new building, thus demonstrating their pride in what had been achieved more than twenty years earlier.

The placement of the main hall on the first floor, where the exterior elevation has been articulated into a pilastrade or continuous arcade, was quite common in London vestry halls of the 1860s. A. P. Howell's 1862 design for the St James's Westminster Vestry Hall (demolished) in Piccadilly conformed to the type. An interesting, and outstanding, variation, and one which survives, is James Knight's Tower Hamlets Vestry Hall in Bancroft Road. Here the influence of Venice is stronger and the architecture correspondingly richer, although as built much of the detail was simplified, a fate which befell many vestry halls. In terms of architectural quality and interest, this and the Mile Vestry Hall are more nearly comparable to the first phase of Shoreditch Town Hall, though the latter surpassed these in size and cost.

The long-demolished Hackney Vestry Hall of 1864-6, by Hammack and Hammack, deserves an important place in this chronicle of Italianate vestry palaces, having had an exceptionally vibrant, sculptural facade. Exactly

contemporary with Shoreditch and Hackney was the vestry hall designed by Henry Jarvis for St Mary's Newington (now Southwark Borough Municipal Offices, Walworth Road): unusual for being in modern Gothic style. This is Shoreditch's nearest rival, since it incorporates later local government buildings including an Edwardian library and thirties Health Centre. Jarvis, like so many other designers of vestry halls, was also the District Surveyor for the area; as such he would have had offices in the new building and a small staff. His Southwark Vestry Hall is directly comparable in style to that of the Poplar District Board of Works (1869-70), a sub-variant of the vestry hall type, in Poplar High Street.⁵ It was designed by A. and C. Harston (one of the principals was District Surveyor). A separate Poplar 'Town Hall' (demolished) was completed in 1870 in nearby Newby Place, and was also Gothic. The series of surviving Vestry Halls is nicely rounded off by that in Hampstead (1877-8) by another District Surveyor, H. E. Kendall in partnership with F. Mew. It was listed as a 'fine, early example of a London Vestry Hall' in August 1994.

Phase one: 1863-1868

Initially the Shoreditch vestry met in the nearby Nonconformist Chapel in Old Street. Most of the £30,000 spent on the new town hall had been raised by borrowing from an assurance society at 5% repayable over thirty years. By 1868 close to £100,000 had been raised in this way. The willingness with which Shoreditch borrowed was unusual among metropolitan vestries, and made possible substantial capital works executed in the 1860s and 1870s.⁶

In September 1863 a sub-committee of Shoreditch vestry, specially constituted to oversee the construction of a new vestry hall, met for the first time.⁷ The Shoreditch district surveyor, Caesar A. Long (active 1860-70)⁸ was instructed to obtain a suitable site, but this was easier said than done. The parish was heavily developed already and land was dear. At once he entered into negotiations with

several different owners, but it took close to a year to strike a deal for the Fuller's Hospital site. Long bought it at auction in August 1864 for £4,850. There was also compensation to the Hospital for the removal of their almshouses fronting Old Street. After adding conveyancing charges, this brought the total spent on the site alone to £7,500, a considerable sum, which, to give some sense of scale, exceeded the total budgets of most other London vestry halls of the period. Indeed, the roughly £30,000 which Shoreditch vestry wound up spending on their new building was far greater than what any other London vestry paid until the end of the century. The Shoreditch project was, in short, remarkable. Its scale and ambition made it comparable to the municipal offices and halls being built out-

side London in middling-sized towns, which was only right, really. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the population of Shoreditch numbered roughly 120,000; there were 120 members of the vestry alone.

The vestrymen quite clearly wanted something to symbolise the London variety of modern municipal government. The brief drawn up for the design in January 1865 makes this intention clear:

The Committee have concluded it necessary that the design should be such as would indicate the public character of the edifice, not extravagantly ornamented but of a substantial and durable character. They have rejected a mixture of brick and stone [on the facade], which however pleasing in appearance in rural or suburban districts, is unfitted for the dense atmosphere of the heart of



The first vestry hall: a lithograph by the architect, Caesar Long

London. Compo was suggested but your Committee considered the saving in the cost by no means sufficient the use of a material which is extremely perishable and continually requiring repair...

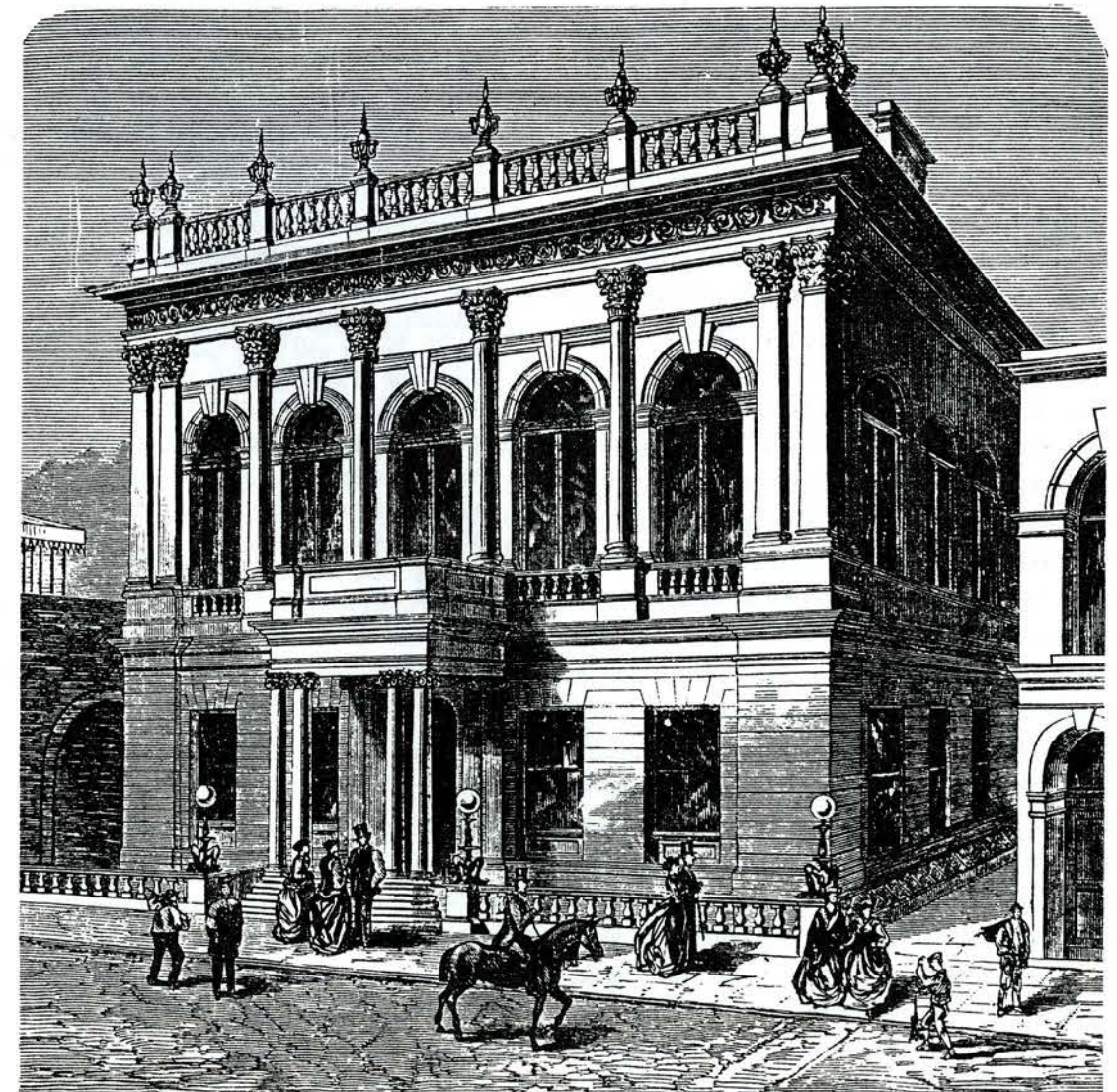
Portland stone was specified, and the style was meant to be 'modern... for the purpose of a public edifice'.

But the outstanding feature of the new building would be the massive public hall, capable of seating up to 800 people and taking up the entire width of the first floor. As built it was larger than any which had come before, and any built until the second wave of London Town Halls that followed on from the Local Government Act 1899. The Vestry envisioned a truly multi-functional space, responsive to

community needs. Again, the manuscript minutes are quite detailed on this point. The hall was to be suitable for:

discussions of subjects of Local and National importance, for the free expression of opinion upon the political, and social, questions of the day; and likewise to afford means for instructions and amusement by Lectures, Concerts, and Entertainments... [we] hope and not unreasonably anticipate that the use of the edifice may tend to further develop, strengthen, and perpetuate the municipal principle, and to secure to the Metropolis, of the advantages of Local Self-Government for Centuries to Come.

On a more mundane level, the building was to provide offices for the vestry clerk, the surveyor, the rates clerk, accountants, and the



The new building, in August 1867, with the railway to the east and the new Fire Station to the west

medical officer of health and his staff, in addition to a large council chamber, ordinary committee rooms, and a suite for the magistrate. There was also a caretaker's flat.

Building for posterity was no easy task. It required thought, money, and, perhaps most importantly, a good idea of what had been done before. So, in November 1864 the special Committee visited the new halls at Islington, Paddington, Kensington, Chelsea, St James's Westminster, Lambeth, and Kensington Green. There would be the same desire to do something 'state of the art' when it came to the deciding the gas lighting of the Hall and Chamber almost exactly two years later.

The construction was too substantial to fund out of the rates, so the Public Works Loan Committee was approached for £22,000, Long's initial estimate, in the first instance. Eventually a mortgage was secured with the Mutual Life Assurance Company. Long's designs were done in December 1864. The finances were in place by June of the following year, when Long presented his contract drawings, bills of quantities, and specifications. The builder, John Perry of Stratford, commenced at the end of August. He seems to have been appointed on Long's advice, as there is no record of competitive tenders being sought. This made the members of the building committee suspicious, although there were no specific allegations of impropriety, at least recorded in the archival sources. Perry does seem to have abused his position somewhat, primarily by preparing stonework on the Old Street site which was bound for one of his jobs in the City. There was also a long-running dispute over the quality of bricks used, although this was decided more or less in Perry's favour. The survey after the fire of 1904 did not quite conclude that the original workmanship had been shoddy, rather that corners had been cut. There were also problems with the hall roof arising from the decision taken in mid stream to heighten the ceiling. In any case the foundation stone was laid on 29 March 1866 by Sir John Thwaite, Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the finish-

ing touches were being put to the great Hall's decorations in summer 1867.

The Town Hall had the look of a proud Renaissance palazzo, high and broad but occupying only half of the site frontage available. The architect had very wisely decided to run the long axis of the building to the south, thus freeing up the western portion of the site to let to help offset the cost. The Metropolitan Board of Works paid £1,550 for a lease, and put a new Fire Brigade station there.

The original Vestry Hall survives in its entirety, and is an outstanding example of the type. It is worth concluding this section with a description of the building as planned which was published in the *Illustrated Times* for 31 August 1867:

The basement stories will be devoted to extra offices, housekeeper's apartments, laboratories, stores, strong rooms, lavatories, etc. The corridor [entered by the main entrance] is 15 ft. wide, is in the Roman Doric style, and paved with Minton's tiles. The Council Chamber is Ionic in style, with an inverted coned ceiling [coved ceiling]... The story above is to be the great hall, certainly one of the finest public halls east of Temple Bar. It will have four staircases, and will be capable of seating about 2500 persons [*half of this number could be seated at a pinch*]. The style of architecture adopted in this room is of the Composite order, and it will be lighted by four sun-burners. The building is fireproof, the architect using Messrs. Fox and Barrett's patent flooring. The facade of the building is of classic design, comprising Roman Doric and Corinthian orders, the [entrance] portico being Ionic. The entire front will be of Portland stone; the sides and back of brick, with stone dressings. ... The gas arrangements have been intrusted [sic] to Mr. W. Lilley, gas engineer, Kingsland Road.

The first period of municipal reform

The Shoreditch Vestry was quick to exercise the new powers granted under the Metropolitan Management Act 1855. There was an extensive paving programme (amalgamating three separate, earlier authorities), drainage works, and an aggressive public health policy promoted by Dr. Robert Barnes, the medical officer of health.⁹ Barnes was one of

the first MOHs within the new metropolitan area to adopt an innovative system for the notification of diseases, and with a team of dedicated inspectors he abolished cesspools, repaired drains, and increased ventilation in poorly designed tenement properties. One of Barnes's most laudable achievements was to contain an outbreak of cholera in 1866, just as the new vestry hall was nearing completion. Barnes's offices were, incidentally, in the vestry hall. As for the vestry, in addition to its ordinary responsibilities, individual members worked together to rationalise poor relief (prior to this there were seventy trustees of the poor - Shoreditch was famous for its almshouses).

Poor relief accounted for the single largest item charged on the parish rates, although the vestry sought to reduce this expenditure against the will of the workhouse guardians. Still, these guardians were, like Dr. Barnes, exceptionally enlightened. As early as 1855 they had built an industrial school at Brentwood in Essex for pauper children, and in 1863 the new workhouse commenced building. It was unusual for its date in having a separate infirmary wing, with its own distinctive facade. (The Hoxton Street facade of the latter has been retained in the redevelopment of the old workhouse site to the rear of St. Leonard's Hospital.)

This first reforming vestry was composed mostly of prosperous tradesmen; in 1859 the largest occupational grouping was employed in the local furniture trade. The next group were publicans, then people involved with the clothing industry and food trades as well as six builders. There were five surgeons, and about one fifth of the vestry can be described as men of substance, merchants, wholesalers, dealers in corns, coal, and tea.

By 1870, after close to fifteen years of strenuous, progressive improvements, the pace slowed and did not pick up again until the mid 1880s, so that the grandeur and ambition of that first vestry hall by Long should most definitely be seen as a monument to a short but very intense period in local govern-

ment. The vestry clerk from 1870, Enoch Walker, who founded *The Shoreditch Observer*, is often thought to be responsible for this retreat; under his direction the vestry concentrated its efforts on street improvements. Barnes's successor, Dr. H. G. Sutton, was no less eminent - he was an authority on diseases of the chest - but he had to face an ever-mounting catalogue of intractable social problems, overcrowding, poverty, unemployment. And yet in 1877, almost against the odds, the parish achieved a constant supply of water through his efforts, the first metropolitan parish to do so.

The Town Hall extension, 1898-1902

A report was prepared in July 1898 to consider alterations to Long's vestry hall, probably in anticipation of the 1899 Act.¹⁰ A limited competition was held for the new building, and the four designs submitted were shown in the public hall in March 1899.¹¹ In June 1899 W. G. Hunt was declared the winner, and, as was usually the case with competition winners, asked to revise his design. The difficulty of the job was the requirement to keep the old Vestry Hall in use during the construction of the extension which was to be built on the site of the old Metropolitan Fire Brigade building. This entailed dividing the contract into two phases, with the 'cut-through' being made only after the new construction was well advanced. Inevitably there was wrangling over the design of the clock tower, its single sculpture, described simply as a 'statue of Progress', and the sculptural group intended for the tympana of the pediment.

Only three builders decided to tender, and every one came in well over Hunt's £20,000 estimate. To make matters worse, Hunt was not prepared to vouch for any of them. There were two problems. First, over the preceding eighteen months there had been a steep increase in the cost of labour and materials, and, second, in the architect's view it would have been far better to invite tenders from a hand-picked list rather than simply advertise publicly, which had been done, apparently, against



The extension, from a lithograph, c.1900

his advice. A second set of tenders were obtained in this way, with Killby and Gayford coming in lowest at £21,833. Construction began in March 1901, and proceeded quickly and without too many hiccups.

As the new building was nearing completion, there was an approving notice published in *The Builder* for 1901.¹² The anonymous author commented on one of the most remarkable features of the project, the decision to incorporate the old Vestry Hall into the new project. This was taken because the old Hall was seen 'from a political and social standpoint ...[as] historically interesting', and indeed it was. So the importance of the old Vestry Hall as a symbol of progressive local government was apparent to a vestry which was in the 1890s one of the most advanced and experimental in London (see below). The article notes that Portland stone was chosen to harmonise with the old wing and, of local significance, that the aggregate used in the concrete for the fire-proof floors of the new

wing was the 'residue from the Destructor Station' in Hoxton Market.

'Model vestry' to municipal borough

The radical movement of the 1880s transformed Shoreditch vestry.¹³ In 1885 the area returned two radical MPs, William Randall Cremer for Haggerston and James Stuart for Hoxton. The decrepit vestry surveyor was dismissed in 1887, and in 1890 a new vestry clerk, H. M. Robinson, replaced Walker. At his initiative the vestry took control of refuse collection and street cleaning. It also acquired the district's first public open space (Goldsmiths' Square) and adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act. A public library was opened in disused gas company offices in Kingsland Road, and in 1893 the Shoreditch Technical Institute, the first of its kind in London, was established offering training in furniture making and the building trades. This moved to the Aske's Hospital building in 1898, and in that same year the vestry undertook an extensive scheme of local authority housing in Nile Street (now demolished), the first such in London and predating the more famous LCC Boundary Street to the south of St. Leonard's. But perhaps the most ambitious and noteworthy public work of this second phase of municipal reform was the complex constructed to the north of Hoxton Market which combined refuse destructor, electricity generating station, library, baths, and a washhouse. There was an elegant economy to it all, since the burning of refuse was used to drive turbines that generated electricity (to light the streets) and steam (that heated the baths and library). As we have seen, the remains of refuse burning were recycled further as aggregate for the concrete used in constructing the Town Hall extension. Just before the old vestry was transformed into a municipal borough by the Local Government Act 1899, Lord Rosebery, briefly Liberal Prime Minister (1894) and previously a Chairman of the London County Council, presided over the opening ceremony of the refuse-destructor complex, praising Shoreditch as 'one of our model Vestries'.

When the new metropolitan borough of Shoreditch was created in 1900, it adopted the motto 'More Light, More Power' in recognition of this great public work.¹⁴

The London town hall boom

The Local Government Act 1899 extended the scope of local government in London, creating the municipal boroughs which survived until 1965, and providing the impetus for the construction of an entire new generation of local government buildings. Consequently the years around the turn of the century saw a boom in municipal office building which was analogous to that which followed the earlier Metropolitan Management Act.

The new crop of town halls were grander, taller, more expensive, more self-consciously symbolic of local pride in self government than even the grandest vestry halls had been. In most cases the new buildings were constructed on entirely new sites, and in the outer boroughs - then technically urban district councils - several services were even amalgamated on one site, forming, in effect, a town centre. This was not possible in Shoreditch, one of the most densely populated and developed boroughs in greater London; and in any case, as we have seen, the vestry had a sense of its own history and had taken the decision from the very beginning to incorporate their old vestry hall into the new building out of a sense of local pride.

The style of Sir Edwin Cooper's Marylebone Town Hall (1912-18) is more comparable to Shoreditch than the grandeur of Woolwich, the flamboyant historical references of Deptford, or the picturesque favoured in suburban East Ham, Tottenham and Hendon. Shoreditch's new Town Hall complex was higher and more compact than Marylebone's, and more of its original urban context has survived. Bethnal Green Town Hall (Percy Robinson, 1910, and later) is also comparable in terms of style and of course context, but the fact that its short elevation faces the main road, Cambridge Heath Road, and that there is open space nearby, makes it seem less urban

than Shoreditch.

The Edwardian rebuilding

On 15 August 1904 a fire started in the roof of the old hall, completely destroying it and the surface decorations below. The structure remained, including the galleries. Fortunately the Council Chamber was not harmed, nor was any substantial damage done to the ground floor. No life was lost, and every official document saved. Hunt's addition suffered hardly at all. Although the accident had happened while decorators were putting finishing touches on the interior, they were exonerated in the investigation into the fire which followed. Interestingly, this subsequent insurance payment was the first made under the scheme of mutual metropolitan insurance, which Shoreditch had been instrumental in establishing.¹⁵

A. G. Cross of 17 Old Queen Street -apparently no relation to the more famous family of architects which included the great bath designer A. W. S. Cross -was called in to survey the damage, which was eventually estimated at £7,290, close to half of which was to cover the cost of a new roof. Cross added the present broken pediment with odd, block inset, that now spans Long's original elevation.

After the roof the most expensive item was the rebuilding of the Hall's proscenium arch and its new decorations. Cross also replaced the old iron supports for the gallery with reinforced concrete beams. He also decided to span the Hall with a steel roof, to provide dressing rooms behind the stage area of the Hall and to link these via a passage to the rear, which was apparently lacking in the old arrangement. Prices had to be revised when it was realised that sections of Long's building were beyond repair. The floor and some of the 1860s stonework needed replacement because inferior materials had been used in the initial construction.

The Town Hall in its contexts

How does Shoreditch Town Hall stand up against its London rivals? It is not equal in

quality to Chelsea, Deptford, East Ham or, the greatest of them all, Woolwich; but it is not far off these high watermarks of municipal design. After all, Hunt had his work cut out for him. Long's Italianate elevation could not simply be reproduced, as the style was out of favour; classicism had moved on. Hunt's design achieves a kind of dynamic harmony. The different elements of the design answer one another, and this strategy respond admirably to the needs of the site. Hunt composed with oblique views in mind: but the final product would soon be disturbed.

What ultimately distinguishes Shoreditch Town Hall from its worthy competitors is its tough, urban quality. But what is perhaps more significant is that its original context has not been destroyed by subsequent redevelopment or planning, as has been the case in Marylebone. Though the trams, carts, and omnibuses are long gone, Old Street still bristles with traffic, and the trains still boom by on the elevated line running out of Liverpool Street away from the town and into suburbs near and far. The architecture stands up to this remarkably well, managing coherence in the most hostile environment.

Notes

1. This article is based on a report prepared as part of discussions between English Heritage and Hackney Borough Council as to the future use of the Town Hall. The research was carried out with the generous assistance of Joanna Smith at the London office of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. Most of the documentary sources were consulted at HAD.

2. C. Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* (1981), 8-11. The appendix to this book contains the most accurate list of town and vestry halls so far published.

3. Cunningham, 15-16. See also R. Holder, 'Conspicuous by the Absence: Town Halls in Nineteenth-Century London', in *English Architecture Public and Private*, ed. J. Bold and E. Chaney (1993), 296-301.

4. 11 (1853), 753-4.

5. *The Builder*, 25 November 1871.

6. F. Sheppard, 'St Leonard Shoreditch', in D. Owen and others, *The Government of Victorian London, 1855-1889. The Metropolitan Board of Works, the Vestries, and the City Corporation* (1982), 324-346, at 333.

7. Unless otherwise noted the following account is based on the Town Hall Building Committee Minute Book, HAD T/L/1, 1863-67.

8. In *The Architects, Engineers, and Building Trades Directory* (1868) Long gave his two principal works as the Shoreditch Union Workhouse and the Vestry Hall. The Builder index compiled by the Survey of London and former GLC London Region Historians Team records a series of minor works from 1861 to 1867, all in or near Shoreditch: St Paul's Schools, Broke Road, Dalston; St Paul's Haggerston; the Infants School to St Matthew's Bethnal Green; St Andrew's Hoxton; and several houses and public houses in Kingsland Road, the City Road, and Hackney Road. The fact that his membership in the Royal Institute of British Architects (he was made ARIBA in 1861) lapsed in 1871 suggests that his career ended prematurely.

9. The following section is based on Francis Sheppard's outstanding chapter on St. Leonard Shoreditch in D. Owen and others (above). See also D. Mander's admirable summary history of this period in *More Light, More Power. An Illustrated History of Shoreditch* (1996), 61-72. See also C. Miele, *Hoxton, Architecture and History* (1993), 33-7.

10. The following is based on HAD, L/T/8, L/T/9, and S/G/2 unless otherwise stated.

11. A copy of the competition conditions can be found in the Royal Institute of British Architects Library, competition file.

12. *The Builder*, 19 October 1901, 340.

13. Sources as mentioned in note 10.

14. The coat of arms is that, according to Mander, above, 117, of John of Northampton, Lord Mayor of London in the fourteenth century and a former lord of one of the Shoreditch Manors.

15. *The Shoreditch Observer*, 20 August 1904, p.5.

16. HAD S/G/4, 19 August, 7 October 1904; S/G/5, 2 June, 25 July, 9 and 17 October 1905.

CASELLA: THE LONDON PROGRESS OF A SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENT-MAKING COMPANY

Jane Insley

Introduction

In Hackney Archives Department is a collection of papers relating to the business dealings of the firm of Casella, a company with a long history of manufacture of meteorological instruments and other scientific apparatus.¹ The Science Museum in South Kensington has over a hundred examples of their products and a selection of trade literature.² Taken together, this material gives a fascinating glimpse into the way the company was run; for the purposes of this article, we shall focus on the testimony of three people.

The first, Robert Miall, became the manager of C. F. Casella and Co Ltd in the autumn of 1906, a couple of years after its removal from 147 Holborn Bars to Rochester Row. He described the vicissitudes of business life up to the late 1920s in a typescript preserved in the company's own records.³ The second, William ('Mac') Barnes, was works manager in Fitzroy Square from 1952, and kindly agreed to be interviewed about his time there.⁴ The last, Pat Marney, was an appren-

tice at Casella's in the early 1960s, before becoming an instrument maker and restorer in his own right, specialising in antique barometers.⁵ Between them, these three take the Casella story up to the point where it moved away from London.

The partnership between Louis Pascal Casella and Cesare Tagliabue began in the early 19th century, with premises in Hatton Garden. According to Miall, Louis P. Casella was the son of an Italian refugee who became a naturalised British subject and taught drawing or painting to some of the Royal Family. Casella developed the business of scientific instrument making very successfully through the century, and eventually passed the company on to his two sons. By 1906, the younger son, Charles Frederick ('C. F.'), was in charge of the day-to-day running of the business, and the elder son played little part, having business interests elsewhere. However, he did agree to guarantee the rent for the Rochester Row premises, just behind the Army and Navy store.

Robert Miall's story

The firm's accommodation was two small flats, above the landlord, an ironmonger whose shop occupied the ground floor.

The lower flat consisted of four smallish rooms, housing C. F.'s office, the general office, a kind of store room and a show room. The upper flat had three rooms; a glass shop, a metal shop and the packing room. There was no lift, and I felt sorry for the railway man who often had to carry a very heavy case, such as one containing twelve levelling staves, down the narrow staircase.

C. F. Casella was no businessman; he was extremely kind, and popular; he was short, thick-set and muscular, and played a good game of tennis up to his sixtieth year. His chief recreations when I knew him were gardening, tennis and his club. In business he had one determination which stood him in good stead; he would never let an instrument leave the bench if he thought it was not as good in workmanship, performance and finish as it could be. I have known him hold up some pieces of apparatus for weeks for this reason, when the customer would have taken it as it was and was frantic over the long delay.

C. F. had a rather idiosyncratic way of conducting business. As Miall remarked, he would arrive at the office each morning at 10 o'clock.

First he went round the workshops, discussed things with the two foremen and talked to each workman. This was very popular with the men but it took at least an hour at a time when everyone in the office wanted to get at the post. The ceremony of opening the letters took nearly all the rest of the morning. Miss Juler, the typist, read them out; we had a discussion on most of the letters and C. F. wrote notes in his diary on all the more important ones. I sat as a kind of observer or consultant, not that I was really qualified to be a consultant in those days.

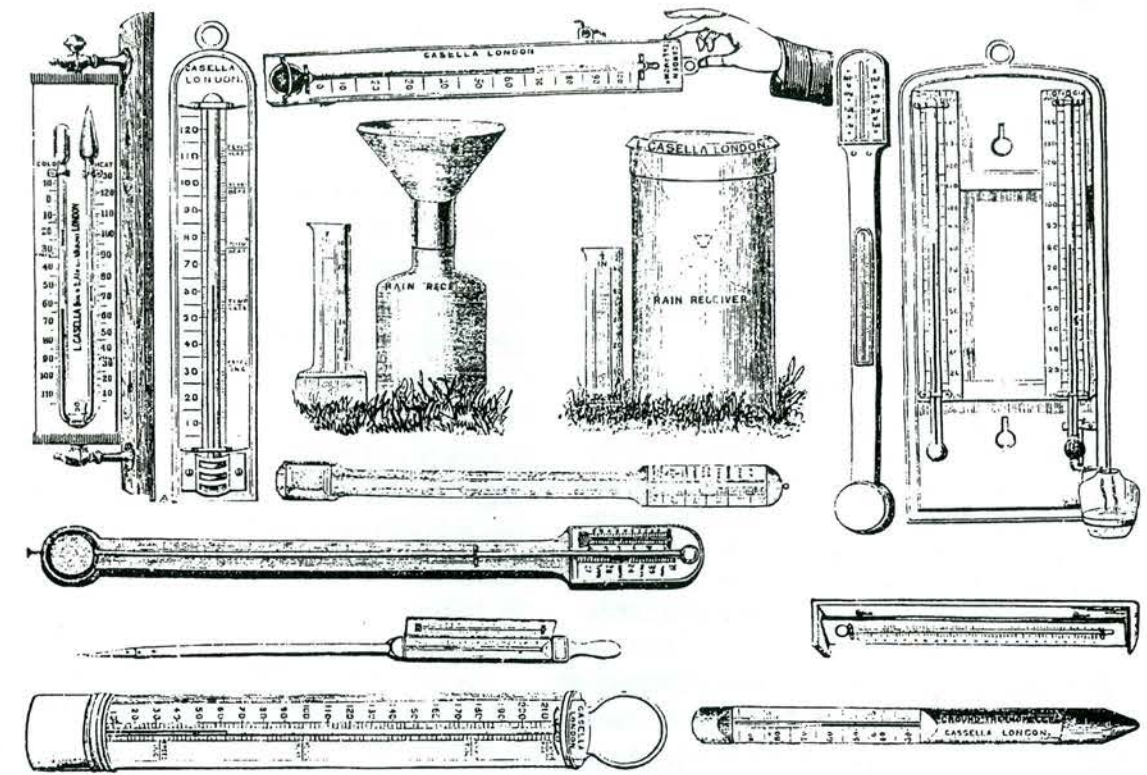
When this rigmarole was over Miss Juler and I departed and C. F. telephoned to his brother, L. M. Casella, a long daily call of about half an hour. At a quarter to one C. F. left for his lunch at St Stephen's Club, returning to the office, slightly fuddled, about 4 o'clock for an hour's work or, more likely, chat. He never came to the office on Saturdays and not always on Wednesdays.

The waste of time in the office and in the business in general was almost incredible. Every incoming letter had a short precis of its contents written on the outside or on the envelope, every entry in the daybook was copied in detail into the ledgers, which were heavy brass-cornered volumes and naturally occupied an enormous amount of space; every outgoing letter, whether hand- or type-written, was copied in an old-fashioned copying press. In theory the order books, day books, ledgers and letter-books were indexed, but it was no single person's job to do it and in practice it didn't get done. To look up a previous transaction or prepare an estimate in the absence of up-to-date catalogues, was quite likely to take an hour or two. Office hours were a little longer of course, 9 to 7, with no elevenses or afternoon teas, but the tempo was much slower.

The situation was hardly better on the technical side. There were eight work people in the metal and glass shops, including two foremen.

From 1906 to my knowledge, and for many years before according to report, Casella & Co.'s finances and their general business reputation had been in a parlous state, particularly their finances, and until the firm was reorganised they grew steadily worse. They had hardly any credit with their suppliers, and orders and work in hand were constantly delayed because they could not find the ready money demanded of them. ... Another little event which illustrates the financial position was when all the men in the metal shop, including Knox [the foreman], went back home because they had no material to work on, and when C.F. arrived at 10 o'clock the shop was empty. The men, who were paid by the hour, were supposed to arrive at 7am, but I soon discovered that they did not turn up till 9.

Miall set to to attempt to bring some order to this. One of his first jobs was to prepare a new set of catalogues which resulted in more and larger orders; the problem of finance became more acute than ever. He had a small amount of capital, from savings and a gift from his father, and in the course of searching for a more rewarding way to improve his position, he met an engineering designer called R. M. Abraham. Between them, they thought it might be possible to 'make something' of



A range of 'weather instruments' offered by the company, c. 1900, 'for the cottage, the garden, the farm, the dairy or the sea-coast'

Casella, and began by submitting a few of Abraham's designs for new instruments to C.F., to the benefit of both parties.

Miall had tentatively brought up the subject of joining C. F. as a partner, but nothing came of it, until the day when their Brazilian agent, desperate for his account to be settled, threatened to transfer his agency to a keen rival. The rival, J. J. Hicks, had been an apprentice in Casella's before setting up his own business.⁶ As the supply of clinical thermometers to Brazil was the largest source of such profits as the firm made, this would have been disastrous.⁷ So Miall made his move.

I told him that I had £400 and would lend it to him if he would use it to pay Bruneau [the agent]. C. F. accepted my offer ... This loan naturally facilitated my future discussions as C. F. could no more afford to repay me than Bruneau or his other creditors. When I told him, my father thought I was mad, but in the end it was the best investment I could possibly have made.

Eventually, in 1910, C. F. agreed to turn the firm into a private limited company with himself and Miall as directors. Abraham continued his job as an engineer for a pneumatic railway signal company. That year was a very successful one, partly as the result of the new catalogue. Miall had several hundred pounds standing to his credit, tackled C. F. once more about Abraham joining them, and this time he agreed. Abraham put up the same amount of cash and joined the board.

He was not only a born designer, but also very enterprising and full of ideas for improving the business. The landlord at Rochester Row was persuaded to build another room over the workshops, turning the original two shops into one metal shop and using the roof addition as the glass shop. Abraham was also keen to have a proper works with proper equipment. The old-fashioned lathes and other machines horrified him as much as the business arrangements had once horrified Miall.

The search for suitable premises turned up an unlikely candidate, which in fact was found to be more promising than expected. It was a tumbledown place consisting of a small dwelling-house in front with a yard and workshops at the back.

The workshop consisted of a central part one story high, and two out parts two stories high, and in addition a sort of loft with a wooden outside staircase. All very dilapidated and gloomy, and in a gloomy part of Walworth, but obviously a set of buildings which, with some money spent on them, could be made to serve our purpose. So we asked my brother Dr Stephen Miall, a solicitor as well as one of our directors, to see the receiver. He told him that we didn't think the place was worth such a "fantastically high price" as £500 but that if he would take £350 we would buy the lease. The receiver jumped at the offer.

The company moved to these premises in 1913, and was thus very well placed to expand output considerably when war broke out. The volume of manufactures was multiplied about 30 times while the war lasted - exports declined heavily but soon recovered when peace came. The previous year the firm had taken on skilled craftsmen with experience of dividing (engraving scales) on metal, to complement their existing skills of dividing on glass tubes.

We bought a straight-line and a circular dividing engine from the Societé Genevoise, had them calibrated from time to time by the National Physical Laboratory, and it was not long before we got a reputation for accurate dividing, and orders for standard Yards and Metres from various Government departments. With Scott's advent we launched out more seriously into the making of theodolites and surveyors' levels, and R.M.A. designed a whole new series of these. He produced also, during his time, many other new and ingenious instruments, the most important, from the point of view of sales, being a rainfall recorder and an improved Fortin barometer.

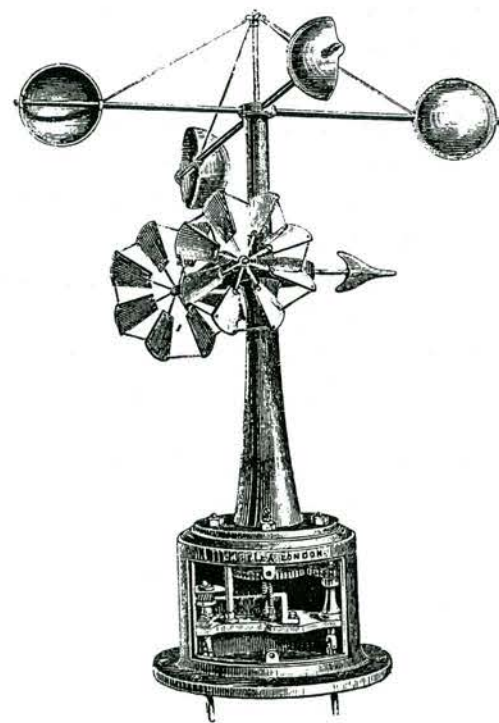
C. F. Casella died of consumption in 1916, at the age of 64; R.M.A. and Miall bought his shares and were then in sole control of the business. In order to satisfy the demands of the Air Ministry, an approach was made to

C. F.'s brother with a view to an amalgamation with his own firm. This was agreed in principle, but the war ended before the necessary refurbishments could be made to the premises in Walthamstow, and the removal did not take place until 1920. Unfortunately, the amalgamation was not a success. Miall commented that the two organisations never properly fused and there always persisted a jealousy between the two sets of employees although they both belonged to one concern.

The search for new premises was on again when one day R.M.A. went to Fitzroy Square to see his brother in a nursing home. On his way he passed Regent House, then half pulled down, and was surprised to see a notice that the freehold was for sale.

He told me that he thought it might suit us much better.... After some weeks of haggling over the price, we bought Regent House, completed the rebuilding, and in 1928 or 1929 closed the Parliament Street office and moved to Fitzroy Square.

BECKLEY'S ANEMOGRAPH.



From the company's catalogue, 1908

Mr Barnes's story

Mr Barnes joined Casella in October 1952, at the age of 39, as works manager. There were 40 to 50 people employed, with 25 to 30 on the manufacturing side, five or six apprentices, and the rest working on packing, sales, accounts, and commercial activities, such as advertising and catalogue production. R. P. Abraham was the managing director, in overall charge on a day-by-day basis, and responsible for research and development. By then, the accommodation was again no longer very appropriate, and as the firm expanded it was necessary to move, this time to Britannia Walk, in 1961. The firm practically doubled in size, with 40 or 50 people working as instrument makers, and approximately 10 apprentices. When Barnes retired as works director in 1980, approximately 100 people were employed there.

His normal day stretched from between 8:15 and 8:30 in the morning, to from 6 to 7 in the evening, about half an hour longer than the average. The last half hour or hour of every day would be spent talking over events and making time for things that could not be fitted in earlier in the day. The company would have separate works orders for a diverse variety of instruments, and some of the orders would be only to make a sum total of 6 instruments at any one time. For bulk orders they often would produce instruments in batches of 25 to 50.

The company was renowned for instruments which were connected with the measurement of temperature and humidity. One of the best known instruments was the thermohygrograph, which basically had two elements, one for temperature, one for humidity. The temperature element was a bi-metal, and on assembly, the element for humidity was comprised of human hair. Both these elements operated pens which inscribed a written record on a clock drum. The hair was specifically obtained from Italy, having been sold by Italian girls and women. Their hair was way and above more advantageous to use than the hair of native

Englishwomen, being more pliable and less brittle.

One of the most important new ventures during Mr Barnes's time was in air sampling, in which Casella became one of the leaders in the field. The genesis of the air sampling instrument production stemmed probably from the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell, who had many problems with contaminated air, from both nuclear and other contamination, and at their request Casella manufactured one of the first personal air samplers on the market. This had a sampling head on the lapel of the coat, and a battery-driven sampling instrument which consisted of a suction pump which drew the sample through the sampling head.

Another very large area of activity was for air sampling instruments used by the several thousand coal miners working in the coal industry. Casella used to manufacture sophisticated dust sampling instruments which were capable of distinguishing the size of a particle down to 7 or 8 microns - small enough to end up at the bottom of the lung and cause silicosis and other disease.

The day-by-day working of the company was run through the board of directors, who were all executive directors, implying that they were there 5 to 5½ days a week. There would be an official Board meeting every month. The agenda would be prepared, all members would be asked if they had anything they would like put on the agenda for discussion. The monthly meetings were generally very good-natured and friendly affairs. The levels of pay were mostly considered once a year, when they would decide what amendments would be made to people's pay, at all staff levels.

In those days, inflation was with us more than it is now, and every year it was necessary to increase rates of pay so that the company was in a competitive situation and was able to obtain all grades of personnel and keep them - making it worth their while to stay with the firm, or even join it. And I would like to say that we had many people who had spent their entire livelihood with the company - I can remember 3 who had been

at the firm for 40 to 50 years and their long service and loyalty was very much appreciated.

I had lots of worrying times but looking back it was a very pleasant environment and very sincere.

There were occasional visits abroad. Mr Barnes used to go to Belgium to see their Meteorological Office in conjunction with large contracts with Casella for rainfall recorders. The Director of the Belgian Meteorological Office had the good fortune to be housed in what was a former Royal palace,

...and I remember to this day the very grandiose and luxurious surroundings in which he worked and the parkland which surrounded his office. I also remember his very good stock of liquor and cigars!

The commercial relationship with the National Coal Board and the Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell was remembered with affection.

I had a very close working relationship with them. We often disagreed, but it took quite a lot of one's time up and it was a matter of some satisfaction to have got the contracts to manufacture the instruments, and also some satisfaction to know they've been manufactured in such a manner that met with their requirements and approval, and at the end of the day one had made a small profit on the job.

Another memorable contract was to manufacture night sights, which brought Casella, and Barnes in particular, into close proximity with the Ministry of Defence. He remembers it as a very pleasant and educational experience -

There was a requirement for 1500 gun sights for use on mainly tanks, and the contract went out to competitive tender and the contract to manufacture these sights was given to three companies of which Casella was one....MOD inspectors would visit the works - and MOD accountants, checking that our profits were notexorbitant!

Not all the working relationships were so pleasant.



From an undated brochure, c.1900

I remember one [supplier] who shall be nameless whom we were very dependent on for some supplies, who repeatedly promised to deliver certain items and repeatedly failed to deliver certain items. I remonstrated with them, and when I ended up having a first class row with them, in the next post they sent me all my orders back, torn in two!

Pat Marney's story

Pat Marney started his working life at twelve years of age, going with his father to work on a Saturday morning, sweeping the floor, running errands, and watching craftsmen making instruments. He always knew he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, but first spent some time with Casella's, as an apprentice. He joined them in 1962, at the age of sixteen, at the works in Britannia Walk, near City Road.

When you first started, they had to assess your ability, so you were given fairly mundane jobs. You work alongside somebody, and the foreman would monitor your ability and then if you were

better or a little bit brighter, they'd give you another job and so on. But even at that stage you were geared to a semi-sort of production line - if we were making for example rain gauges, we may be making fifty or a hundred of those, so if you were set on what we called the pillar drills, you'd have all your jigs and your castings and you could be on there for weeks drilling holes, and tapping holes, and that sort of thing. When you'd done that, that would go on to the machine shop, and they would have to do a bit of machining, and then possibly the instrument would have to be finished and then go through to what we called the spray shop, to be spray-painted.

I did sometimes fall out with management, as I always felt, my father always had it in his factories, that he tried to rotate people around a lot quicker, so that you become a lot more familiar with everything... I used to always say to them, it would be rather nice if as an apprentice, you went round a lot quicker to all the different sections.

There was an unofficial hierarchy.

If you had to use the very expensive milling machines, you would only be put on those if they thought you were safe, and that you could cope with it. At the end of the day, you could ruin either the machine, yourself or a lot of material!

But work experience was supplemented by study.

I was on a day-release for part of my apprenticeship, at Hackney Technical College, which I was doing my City and Guilds instrument making. I did opt out, but I went to help my father in his business. The apprenticeship was five years.

Some jobs were kept for the mature men, and some were specialised.

Bill Fenn, my foreman, had a section where he would do the mercury tubes for the Fortin Barometers, and things like that - that was his speciality. Apart from keeping his eye on us apprentices he would spend his time there. And then there was another chap, that had a section where he would boil all the mercury tubes.... you used to have six tubes at an angle on holders, and you had a gas jet that you placed underneath the tube,

a long gas jet, the burner went right across the six you see. The idea was that you would burn all the air out. So you start at the bottom, boil the mercury and gradually move your gas jet to the top, and it all come out you see.

They would explode, yes. Quite often, so I mean you can understand the old boy that used to boil those, and had been doing it for many years, he knew the danger signs. My father had taught me anyway because he used to boil tubes anyway.

But times were changing.

The very first instrument I actually made was dust samplers for the Atomic Research Station, they would make that sort of thing, and they would make instruments for flour grading, and agricultural things. Even in the early sixties they were coming away from the old met instruments that they used to do.

It was not a particularly highly paid job.

When I started in 1962 I was paid £3/10/- for a 42 hour week, and I had to travel all the way from just outside of Romford to say Britannia Walk in London, and I think the train fare cost me about £1/10/-, so there was about 30 bob to go home. My poor mother didn't dare ask me for any money because there was none left!

We were always on a bonus system, everything was bonus. A full man's wages at the time, towards the end of my apprenticeship I think was £13/10/- and that was why it was important we had a monthly bonus which could be quite a bit of money - even then I remember getting £30 or something, it was quite important, that was the incentive. What happened there was one month there was an absolutely dreadful bonus. I did a drawing of the works manager of Casella's standing outside, playing the violin and he's got his cap on the floor, and I put a little A-board sign next to him saying 'Wife and Jaguar to support', and I had his name, Mr Barnes, and I pinned it up on the notice-board in the canteen, and I can say he wasn't at all impressed by that!

We worked 8 o'clock to about half past five, that was the 42 hour week, Monday to Friday, and you had a half hour for lunch. You normally had ten minute tea breaks, at 10 o'clock and four o'clock in the afternoon. That was your day, and

when you're standing filing or drilling castings for a few weeks, that can seem an awful long week!

But, I suppose when you look at it all it was very good schooling, because, what was good was that you were learning self discipline, and to work alongside other people, other craftsmen, and appreciate their work.

Things did occasionally get a little out of hand.

One Christmas Eve, you see, all the apprentices, we went to the local pub, in fact we did a slight pub crawl in our lunch break, but we got a little bit carried away, and instead of going back, I think we had half twelve to one as our lunch, and I don't think we got back before half two, three o'clock in the afternoon, and we was all a little bit worse for drink, and we crept into the back of the factory, and all shot into the toilet basically to try to freshen up, and anyway the door opened up, and it was Mr Barnes. He said, You are in no condition to go anywhere near machinery, and he basically slung us out - for our own good, I think.

Pat Marney left his apprenticeship after three years, to join his father and eventually to take over the business as a conservator of antique barometers and other scientific instruments. However, there were obviously no hard feelings.

Some years later, Mr Abrahams rang me up and arranged to come over with his wife to see me, and he brought a barometer which he thought was by Tompion [a renowned seventeenth century clockmaker]. Unfortunately, it was a typical mid-Victorian copy of a Tompion barometer. Of course, he was hoping it was going to be an original one!

The end of the story

One day some years ago, I took it into my head to visit the old factory, you see, to see who was there, totally out of the blue, I thought I must go past Britannia Walk and see who's still in Casella's. The whole place was all deserted, all emptied, and I was standing on the steps, and I well remember the steps, because we always used to sit out there lunchtimes, and the boys would have a

fag and drink their tea, and the rest of it, and it brought back lots of memories, and I was standing on the steps, and I couldn't believe it, this chap came along, and it was Mike, who I had done day release with at Hackney Technical College. He told me he was still with the company, he gave me his card, 'Production Manager, Director' and everything, but he said, "I'm here with about two staff in the offices, because we've all gone up to Milton Keynes, the factory has moved up on the M1. It's all gone".

Notes

1. HAD D/B/CAS.
2. The museum objects are kept in a dozen different collections in the Museum; most are in the Meteorology collection.
3. My thanks to Casella London for permission to use this document.
4. Interview recorded 12 December 1997.
5. Interview recorded 8 April 1998.
6. For a comprehensive study of J. J. Hicks and his work, see Anita McConnell, *King of the Clinicals - The Life and Times of J. J. Hicks (1837 - 1916)*, (York, 1998).
7. For a description of the lengths to which companies would go to defend their business interests, see Jane Insley, 'Trickery in the Trade: The Apprehension of Forged Thermometers in Sao Paulo, November 1928', *Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society*, (55), December 1998, 23-25.

Contributors to this issue

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Dr Chris Miele is an architectural historian who joined English Heritage in 1991. He has published widely on Victorian architecture, and is currently editing a collection of essays on William Morris and the conservation movement for the Paul Mellon Centre for the Study of British Art.

Philip W. Plumb is a retired University librarian, JP, and incumbent chairman of the W. S. Gilbert Society. He catalogued the Tyssen collection of sermons in Hackney Archives. He is a contributor to *Hackney History 3* and a forthcoming volume of reminiscences of Burma.

Carole Pountney's aim in Hackney was to extend, for an Open University doctorate, her Birkbeck MA research on the development of Battersea. She kept being diverted by Dr Tripe's excellent reports, which proved infinitely more interesting than the borough surveyor's, which she *should* have been studying.

Anne Wilkinson is a shipping lawyer who lived in Hackney for 17 years. An interest in local history and urban horticulture led her to Shirley Hibberd. She is now researching amateur gardening for an Open University Ph.D., and writing a Hibberd biography.

Acknowledgements

The illustrations in this volume appear by permission of the Archives Department of Hackney Borough Council, except those on pages 20, 27 and 43 which appear by permission of Anne Wilkinson, Roland House Research, and the National Museum for Science and Industry respectively.

Jane Insley extends grateful thanks to the firm of Casella for permission to use Robert Miall's manuscript, and to Mr W. Barnes and Mr P. Marney for their kindness in agreeing to be interviewed.

The editor wishes to thank Jacqueline Bradshaw-Price for the cover; Michael Kirkland for assistance with the illustrations; John Finn; and all the staff of Hackney Archives Department for technical support and general encouragement, not least for building bridges towards future editions of this publication.

About this publication

Hackney History is published by the Friends of Hackney Archives. This is the fourth volume of an annual series dedicated to publishing original research into the history of the area of the London borough of Hackney (the former metropolitan boroughs of Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington).

The Friends of Hackney Archives were formed in 1985 to act as a focus for local history and to support the work of the borough council's Archives Department. Membership is open to all.

Members receive the Archives Department's newsletter, *The Hackney Terrier*, three times each year, and *Hackney History* each summer. In 1998 the subscription for the calendar year is £6 for mailing to UK addresses, increasing to £8 in 1999.

Enquiries and correspondence can be addressed to the Friends of Hackney Archives, Hackney Archives Department, 43 de Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ, telephone (0171) 241 2886, fax (0171) 241 6688, e-mail archives@hackney.gov.uk. Contributions to *Hackney History* are welcome. Intending contributors are invited to get in touch with the editor before putting text into final form.

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