



Newsletter

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**The independent voice for
archives in the Capital**

Happy New Year!

Welcome to AfL's first Newsletter of 2016.

Archives for London provides a wealth of activities which 'are not to be missed' says a regular participant whilst enjoying our 2015 summer soiree at Orleans House, Twickenham.

Looking forward, we have a great series of seminars lined up for you – remember first Thursday of the month at LMA. You will find reviews of these in this issue and in forthcoming Newsletters.

There are many anniversaries to commemorate as always, and in 2016, AfL will touch on one or two in the course of our seminars and conference, such as that of Capability Brown – gardening on a large scale, the Fire of London and the Blitz - disruption and recovery on a large scale, and many more topics showcasing the diverse archives held in London. Did you know that Capability Brown had an input to London gardens? He is most known for his country estate 'improvements', so come along and hear which gardens and where. Similarly do you know as much as you think about the Fire of London? And where the bombs fell in the Blitz? And do you know how people managed with housing? And how London was rebuilt each time after these major catastrophes? – London's archives can tell you, and this information will be presented and interpreted by our fine line up of speakers throughout the year.

An innovation in what AfL offers members will be AfL Practicals – these will combine the best of several worlds for practitioners and users alike – practical sessions with visits. A combination of a topic relevant to practitioner's daily work and of interest to users, plus a tour of the venue. The first of these will be in the spring at the Royal College of Surgeons, where the Archives, Library and Hunterian Museum have been working collaboratively on a Collections Review, through which all will be revealed!

Announcements about the AfL conference and the Summer Soirée – our greatest surprise event – will be made in due course.

We always welcome volunteers, and there are many ways you can become involved with AfL, including assisting at the seminars for example serving drinks – you'll get to know a lot of people that way – it is a great networking method, our present helpers will be pleased to induct you! In 2015 we had interest and input from several new volunteers who can give time to assist remotely, for example with publicity and our online systems as part of our Forum system, which allows people to dip in and out as helpers, depending on their time and what is needed by AfL. This may include long and short term commitments e.g. long term volunteering work with the website, which is currently undergoing a review for technical issues and content, (so please bear with us), and short term e.g. backing up the conferences.

As I said, work will go ahead on a re-vamp of the website, and as always, we welcome input from our members do you have ideas, or have you seen examples of sites that inspire you? We would also like you to tell us what you would like us to put on in terms of meetings and topics to be covered in the new Practicals series, the seminars and the conferences.

Finally, raising AfL's profile – you can all help with this please: the online presences twitter and www.facebook.com/archives4london assist in profile raising, but word of mouth is also hugely important, so do please keep talking to family, friends and colleagues about AfL and, best of all, bring them along to events. There will be a warm welcome from Board members, our many other volunteers and members, and myself and I look forward to meeting you throughout 2016.

Best wishes from Anne Barrett Chairman
Archives for London
January 2016

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Freedom of information

There have been several items, particularly on the on-line pages of *The Guardian* newspaper, dealing with freedom of information, or rather the lack of it, from Whitehall departments: I have 'borrowed' some of the Guardian's material, and the source is hereby acknowledged. Before launching in to any discussion, let's be honest. The editor tries to keep his personal ideas out of the AfL newsletter, but for once I am going to throw that caution to the wind, and be entirely personal. If you disagree, send a comment, I will be only too pleased to include a response in the next newsletter.

So far as I am concerned we should have open government. Now obviously there are certain things that should be kept under wraps, we do not want to go around advertising we are about to launch a strike against a terrorist group. But ministers' diaries? Officials have spent £30,000 in a long battle trying to stop the release of the appointments' diaries of the former health secretary Andrew Lansley. Why? They argue that it would be damaging to reveal there had been gaps in his diaries – but surely a man needs time to collect his thoughts and plan? The government has taken the case to the court of appeal, wasting yet more public money.

We have recently learnt that Prince Charles has access to cabinet papers, as of course does the Queen, and were Charles one day to become king we would benefit from the continuity – there is a regular audience between P.M. and Queen, and one outgoing P.M. advised his successor to be well-briefed, the Queen is up-to-date and sharp on official matters. An official observed it would have been preferable for the mandarins to have been open on Prince Charles' involvement, "But this is the civil service ... where they're still not used to drawing a line between what is and what is not secret".

The government has set up a commission designed to make it more difficult to obtain official information under the act – which has exposed child abuse, the misuse of MPs' expenses, unhygienic restaurants and nuclear power station leaks.

Both the Freedom of Information and Public Records Acts allow Whitehall officials to put formidable obstacles in the way of release. The notorious section 3 (4) of the Public Records Act states that documents can be retained by Whitehall

departments "for administrative or any other special reason".

There is an act that allows Whitehall to withhold documents if the intention is to publish them some time in the future. There are about 600,000 Foreign Office files in collection waiting to be transferred to the archives, and it is thought that it might take 75 years for them to be weeded and sent to Kew. It will also be a long time before there will be a proper, regular release at the archives of major cabinet documents.

Of course we have a bit of a wait to see if the Labour party can get into power, and if they do if they will live up to their promises. But, in a response to remarks by the leader of the House of Commons saying it was wrong that the Freedom of Information Act to be used as a "research tool" to "generate stories" for the media, Labour party member Tom Watson said the act must be improved.

In a further backward step, responsibility for freedom of information policy has been taken away from the Ministry of Justice and placed firmly in that bastion of official secrecy, the Cabinet Office. And the release of records to the National Archives has been placed under the control of what are called "knowledge management" units set up in Whitehall departments.

Freedom of information is said to cost too much money. It is being 'misused' as a "research tool to generate stories for the media, and that is not acceptable. It is a legitimate and important tool for those who want to understand why and how governments make decisions, and this government does not intend to change that." [Grayling]

"What they'd really like to see is less open government. It is the job of journalists to hold the government to account on behalf of the public. The Freedom of Information Act is a vital tool in their armoury which should not and must not be removed or weakened."

Maurice Frankel, the director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information, said: "The FoI Act exists to help hold government to account, improve the public's understanding of what it does, to show whether policies are working and identify where public services need to be improved.

"Journalists are key users of the act for those purposes and no one should be surprised if that involves producing stories. That's how the public learns what is going on."

LAMAS conference

The LAMAS autumn conference this year took the topic *Middlesex, our vanished county*. It was a day of varied presentations with something for everybody, and equally inevitably topics that some found less interesting. The editor will admit he found the day less interesting than other LAMAS conferences attended, so the write-up here is shorter than usual.

Pamela Taylor spoke on the early history under the title *Middlesex from first reference to Domesday Book*. She said that the early sources are obscure and difficult to interpret, so much of the early history is 'best guess'. However, the name Middlesex definitely occurs in a charter of 704, now in the archives at Canterbury, in the form *Middelseaxan*. Its presence there is because several parts of the county were estates belonging to Canterbury, among them Hayes, Harrow, Pinner, but there is no evidence of a royal demesne. We may assume the name Middlesex differentiates the area from that of both the East Saxons, modern Essex, with whom the boundary lay along the River Lea, and the West Saxons, Wessex, the kingdom which was to dominate much of southern England 200 years later. The boundary in the west is less certain, but a line along the River Colne (the Hertfordshire Colne – there are several rivers with that name in England, including one in Essex) may have been a former boundary.

St Albans, with its Abbey, has a long history dating back to Roman times, and may have presented a barrier to further expansion northward by the *Middelseaxan*.

With its long southern limit along the River Thames, Middlesex, along with London and Essex, was of easy access both by the Anglo-Saxons and later by the Vikings. The latter invaded quite frequently from 870, leading to the kingship of Cnut in 1016. These invasions may have been part of the cause of the mixed history of the former county.

Jacqui Pearce spoke about ceramic manufacture in Middlesex from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. This talk was well illustrated with images of the items under review, but without pictures any write-up is uninformative. I hope it will get a good write-up in the volume of transactions covering this event.

Charlotte Scott from the LMA spoke about the administrative county of Middlesex in the period 1888 to 1965. In 1888 its area was reduced by the formation of the LCC which took a large swathe of its SE parts: in 1965 it vanished altogether as an administrative unit with the formation of the GLC (which acquired Barnet, formerly part of Hertfordshire, and lost Potters Bar, formerly in Middlesex). It became the smallest county in England, although one of the most populated at the end of its existence. It retained the Middlesex Guildhall at Westminster. The guildhall was on the site of the belfry of Westminster Abbey and it was used as a market from 1750 to 1800. The LCC expected Middlesex to leave the building, but instead it was exchanged for the Middlesex Sessions House in Clerkenwell. The current building was built between 1912 and 1913, designed by J. S. Gibson, and is rather gothic in style, decorated with medieval-looking gargoyles and other architectural sculptures by Henry Charles Fehr. It now houses the Supreme Court.

The Guildhall incorporates in the rear a doorway dating from the seventeenth century which was a part of the

Tothill Fields Bridewell prison and moved to the site to be incorporated in the building. The county saw substantial population growth, especially around the time of the 1929 depression, when people moved to the London area in the hope of finding jobs, and then again when the post-war baby-boom caused an enormous increase in the need for schools in the 1950s.

Robin Eagles, a research fellow at the House of Lords, gave the most entertaining talk of the day. It was about John Wilkes and elections in Middlesex 1768-1790 (although he mentioned some earlier events), subtitled it *Profligate in principle as in practice*.

In 1754 Wilkes was a member of 'The Sublime society of the Beefsteaks', which met in the red-light district of Covent Garden, ostensibly for the consumption of beef meals, but given where it met what should we think?

In 1763 near Medmenham Abbey he was part of the group called the Medmenham Monks, later known as the Hell-fire Club. The club was given over to 'luxury, self-indulgence and fornication' (John Sainsbury in his book on Wilkes). It does not need much imagination to guess what reputation Wilkes acquired from these activities.

In spite of all this he stood for Parliament. In March 1768 he came last in election for St. George in the Fields in London. He moved his attention to Middlesex. Middlesex was at that time much different from today. It was a predominantly rural county, but with a number of parishes, those along the river or closer to the City if inland, where the inhabitants did not make their livelihood from the land, but were merchants, tradesmen and manufacturers. It is these that seem to provide the largest measure of support for Wilkes. The more well-to-do cast their allegiance elsewhere.

Wilkes contested Brentford Butts. Here his supporters carried slogans 'More meat and fewer COOKS', a reference to his opponent George Cooke, who came second in terms of votes cast, Wilkes coming top of the poll. His supporters rampaged through the streets from Charing Cross to Oxford Street, causing much damage. The authorities attempted to deal with the rioters, but only three persons were convicted. On account of his background and behaviour, although elected, Wilkes was excluded from the Commons.

He appeared in court the following April, having surrendered himself voluntarily, but nothing transpired, it being left to Parliament to deal with him as he was an elected MP. A week later he was again committed to custody, and this time was indeed picked up, but his supporters intercepted the coach carrying him and took him to The Three Tuns tavern Spitalfields, from where, having addressed his supporters from an upper window, he 'escaped' to the Kings Bench prison for his own safety. He was still there on 10 May. when at event now known as the St George's Fields massacre took place. There may have been as many as 20,000 of his supporters there: it was not a massacre as we understand the word today, as some 6 persons were killed and about 15 wounded.

There is much more than can be written about Wilkes' life, I found at least four biographies, I hope you will explore London's eighteenth-century politics.

Bethnal Green burials

The playground of St John's Primary School in Bethnal Green was known to have been the site of a private burial ground, run by John Kilday, in the period 1840 to 1855. To accommodate an extension to the school the site was to be built on, and before the work was done it was investigated. The work is reported in an article in *London Archaeologist* (Vol.14 pp.150-153), work that shows an interesting correlation of sources. There were 1033 burials at the site: some of the coffins had name plates, and, given the short period in which it was in use, it was possible to find the death certificates of 306 of the burials from the 419 where the name could be determined with some certainty.

The area was not a prosperous one in this time: sanitary conditions were not good, leading to disease, compounded by the fact that diet was often poor. Respiratory diseases and TB accounted for more than a quarter of the deaths, 'Natural death' and Old Age for less than 6%. Care is needed in interpreting the cause of death: what was recorded did not necessarily correspond with what would be recorded today, and those reporting the death may have been mistaken.

Modern scientific methods mean that the remains can be analysed and the cause of death ascertained. The case of Emma Freebain was given in detail in the article. Using Free BMD I was able to find an index record of her death (last quarter 1851), but her birth is not recorded, but was presumably in the autumn of 1850, and, usefully, she is recorded in the 1851 census. The death certificate gave an age of one year, but an analysis of the teeth suggested this was under-reported by 4 months, bringing it into closer agreement with the plate on the coffin recording an age of 17 months. In spite of her known age, her bones were those one would expect to find in a child of no more than 3 months. She had probably been kept indoors, with little exposure to sunlight, contributing to a vitamin D deficiency. From the 1851 census, the researchers found that Emma was in the care of a baby-minder: they note that minders had a poor reputation, feeding children as cheaply as possible, and giving them opiate derivatives to keep them quiet, not good for overall health.

There were also a number of burials where the coffin contained a mother and child. Childbirth was always a dangerous time for a woman (anyone who has done family history in the seventeenth century will surely have encountered perinatal deaths of either a mother or her child, sometimes of both: I have found instances in my own family researches), but by this period the danger was diminishing: that it was so prevalent here is a further reflection of the area's status. Two burials were found where a foetus was interred with the mother, at 35 and 38 weeks of pregnancy, and these the researchers assign to complications during labour,

It is almost sad that amongst this data one smiles to read a death certificate where the cause of death is 'Hooping cough': missing 'W'!

A fuller report on the excavation by Ives, MacQuarrie and Hogg, *Insights into post-mediaeval Life Death and Burial*, is forthcoming. They believe that it will shed light on, and enable the reconstruction of, life in the Victorian city.

King James Bible

The King James Bible (KJB), the 'Authorised Version', was for many of us the version of the Bible with which we grew up and heard, if we attended, in church. There are more recent translations, but for those of the editor's generation, the wording of the King James version is the one we think of.

The task of preparing it was initiated by King James 1 (of England) in 1604, shortly after he came to the throne of England, although he had planned an English version as early as 1601 when he was still just James VI of Scotland. It was assigned (according to Wikipedia) to some 47 scholars. As part of the title of the first edition reads, it was "Newly Translated out of the Original tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesties special Commandment".

English translations of the bible had been circulating in manuscript since as early as 1400. 1525 saw the first printed edition of Tyndale's New Testament, followed by the Old, with work by Miles Coverdale: this was the basis of the *Great Bible* issued under Henry VIII in 1535. A revision called the *Geneva Bible* was prepared in that city by English expatriates who had fled there during the reign of Mary, since she, as a Catholic, would only permit the Latin bible to be used. The Geneva bible seems to have remained popular for some time. However, some found it too Calvinist (no surprise given its origin), and in 1568 the *Bishop's Bible* appeared. The revised 1572 version of that was a major input to the KJB. The Bishops' Bible is also known as the "Treacle Bible" because Jeremiah 8:22 reads "Is there not treacle at Gilead?". In 1611, "treacle" became "balm".

Little is known of the process by which the KJB was assembled as few documents seem to have survived. It does seem that each of the individual scholars used his own ideas about the 'best' translations, as the same word in the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek or Latin text is differently rendered in different books of the bible. There was no overall control.

A recent article in the online TLS (see www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article1619318.ece) noted that Bodleian holds an annotated copy of Bishop's Bible, and Lambeth Palace Library possesses a partial draft of the New Testament Epistles. The article, by J.A. Miller, goes on to reveal that the archives of Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge hold the earliest known draft of any part of the KJB, in the hand of one of the King James translators. It is unmistakably in the hand of Samuel Ward (1572-1643), Miller writes that he "was part of the team of seven men in Cambridge charged with translating the Apocrypha. At the time of his selection as a translator, probably in 1604, Ward was still a young Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. In 1610, though, he became Master of Sidney Sussex, a post he held until his death. Today, a trove of Ward's notebooks and other manuscripts survive in the college's archives, and among them is a small notebook now identified as MS Ward B". The article suggests that looking at the revisions in the M/S gives evidence of co-operation between the various translators.

Victoria County History

BALH (British Association for Local History) holds meetings every March and October: at these there is always a talk by someone with an interest in the field, and that held in Senate House last October was given by Prof. Richard Hoyle, who was appointed director of the Victoria County History (VCH) project some 20 months ago. The project has a long history: it was started in the last years of the reign of Queen Victoria, whence the name, and has been running ever since. Prof. Hoyle spoke about the current state of VCH research. It was a rather depressing tale. All readers will be aware of the 'red books', the big volumes that cover either some area of a county, or some aspect of its history. As a spin-off, there is a series called England's Past for Everyone (EPE), a series of books each of which deals with a smaller area. The material is either taken from the VCH, or, if the relevant volume is not yet published, is a record of work undertaken so far. Indeed Prof. Hoyle hinted that there is a move to produce shorter volumes which require less research that is needed for a whole county.

The VCH web site map shows the status of the various county volumes: www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties holds a copy. Some counties, such as Cambridgeshire, are complete. Others are extremely fragmentary: one might pick on Devon for which one volume was published over 100 years ago, and although an EPE book on Exmoor has appeared in the last few years, there is nothing else. Of the English counties, the map shows no VCH work at all for Northumberland alone.

In the 1950s and 60s it seems that county record offices and archivists were keen to contribute to ensure that volumes for their county were published, but the situation is now much different: the cut-backs on local government have resulted in much less effort being available, and more has fallen on the shoulders of volunteers. Whilst some are retired academics, whose work can be trusted, there are also many volunteers whose work may not be of the same standard. VCH needs people with an appropriate professional background, to ensure that the information is up to the best international standards.

A number of people are also retirees. Whilst there is nothing wrong with the work they do, it raises an issue of continuity: how long will they be able to carry on, and what will happen if they stop working for any reason. Indeed, much of the archive sector is seeing a similar change, with greater reliance of volunteers. Just look at how much indexing and transcribing is done by volunteers at AfL's home, the LMA.

The ability to access the records is also in decline: although most counties still have record offices, that for Shropshire is open 14 hours a week, on 3 days, and many others have opening times not much better.

An area that is more encouraging is that of local record societies. Many are continuing with the work of transcribing and interpreting local records, and making the results of their research available in annual publications. London is lucky here it has both a record society that produces quite scholarly work, and also the London Topographical Society.

BRA: Personal View of the Chairman

AfL members may also be members of the British Records Association: if they are they will be aware that the organisation is facing some difficulties. In October, chairman, Dr Anthony Smith, made this statement setting out the position, reproduced with his permission.

I have been Chairman of the Association for over four years, having previously served as Chairman of the Records Preservation Section. Throughout my time the Association has struggled to cope with adverse circumstances. The ending of its grant aid, a decline in the number of individuals willing to act as volunteer officers, diminishing interest amongst younger archivists and the wider archival profession, and our reduced membership, have all caused mounting strain on our financial and volunteer resources. We have been obliged to stop employing a professional archivist, so that all archival work is now undertaken by a small number of volunteers. In spite of this saving, we have endured ever mounting financial pressures that make continuous stringent economies unavoidable. These have had a detrimental impact on the services we offer: e.g. difficulties meeting publication costs mean that our journal Archives is being published in arrears, we have not been able to offer a training course for several years, and despatches of archives by the Records Preservation Section have fallen to a very low level.

Moreover, recent work by our Treasurer and Office Manager has made it clear that, without radical change, we face insolvency in the near future. The only realistic way of significantly increasing the Association's income is by substantial and recurrent increases in subscription rates. Against the background of our declining 'user offer', just cited, such a policy would not be welcomed by members or conducive to recruiting new members.

It has been suggested that further adjustments in the way we work may provide a remedy. Notably, it has been proposed that the Records Preservation Section should no longer take in archival records, thus relieving us of the necessity of renting office space and thereby freeing up an income stream that will enable the Association to flourish in the future. From my own experience of years work in the BRA, I find it impossible to believe that this will be a long term solution to our financial and volunteer support difficulties. The proposal might prolong our independent existence for a year or two longer, but it does not offer a radical solution to the deeply rooted problems we face. We would simply continue to struggle for a bit longer.

I believe that a much more hopeful possibility of perpetuating the activities of the British Records Association is afforded by the prospect of establishing a place for them within the Archives and Records Association. The offer made to us in good faith by the ARA is a reasonable and constructive one; a situation within the ARA would undoubtedly provide a facilitating environment for our activities as well as make them more visible and attractive to younger archives professionals, whilst preserving the essence of the BRA.

Editor's note: after the above was written. the vote at the recent BRA AGM was not to join with ARA

London Society and transport in London

The London Society's annual Bannister Fletcher lecture was given last November in the almost quaint buildings of the Art Workers Guild in Queen Square. Apart from the interest of the lecture it was fascinating to be able to go inside the building. The lecture room was crammed to the ceiling with portraits of Brothers of the Guild. It does have some lady members, but I noticed that even they have the title Brother in the guild's newsletter.

The lecture was given by Sir Peter Hendy, now at Network Rail but previously at TfL. Whilst not addressing issues of direct archival interest, he spoke about something that affects all of us, transport within London.

The population of London is growing, it will shortly be 9 million and could easily be 10 million by 2030. All these people need transport: they need their own to get to work and places of leisure; but more importantly they need to be fed, clothed and generally serviced. We need vehicles on the road to bring supplies in, and to take the garbage out. We need to allow for the fact that cables, water and gas mains, drains all run beneath our streets, and will need repair and servicing from time to time. All this requires road transport. Can we really allow private cars to be clogging up our roads as well? let alone taxis cruising empty for fares.

Do you remember the Location of Offices Bureau? Set up in the 1963 it has the remit to move jobs out of London, partly because it was thought (probably rightly) that people preferred to work closer to where they lived, and also because the transport infrastructure was creaking. In 1975 London was the laughing stock of Europe so far as its transport was concerned. Now people and businesses are moving back (think Canary Wharf and Docklands, the Shard, the 'Gherkin', and 20 Fenchurch Street, the last nicknamed the Walkie-Talkie building, the lens effect of whose shape is reputed to have melted car parts). Now other cities are beating a track to London saying "how do you do it"

Trains on the underground are being modernised. The most recent line, The Jubilee, is now old hat. Crossrail is well under way—the tunnels are now all dug, it the process of fitting out that is now in train, and then at some time we will need the no doubt disruptive process of connecting the new lines to the existing services at interchange stations. However, the project is not as new as it might seem, as ideas for such a link were first put forward in the 1950s. And are you aware that a Crossrail2 is planned: it will connect Cheshunt to Chessington i.e. run roughly NE to SW (see the map at crossrail2.co.uk/the-route). One wonders whether they will uncover any interesting remains, like the plague pit in Charterhouse Square that was found during Crossrail1 (reported in newsletter 24).

Major transport link like this take years to plan and build: an assessment of requirements is needed, how much will it be used, will it save people time and money, are the savings worth the outlay? Then detailed planning, public meetings at which alternatives will be put forward: perhaps after a few years you have an agreed scheme, then acquire the land and sites needed

for it – more haggling with owners – and finally build it. Who'd be a transport planner?

Sir Peter opining that central government had not always been very helpful. It had tried to keep its fingers on purse strings for public projects like these. He implied that there are signs that these are being loosened, giving more freedom to the local planners, who are in touch with the needs of their communities. London will benefit from this.

London Topographical Society

Last November's London Topographical Society (LTS) newsletter contained several items of news to pass on. Sadly, two deaths are reported. The editor of this newsletter is from north London, and went to a school in Muswell Hill, the home of Ken Gay. Ken was very active in the Hornsey Historical Society, several of whose publications line the editor's local history bookshelf, and are worth exploring if you have any connections with London N8. The second death is that of Ralph Hyde. He worked in the Maps and Prints department at the Guildhall, being particularly knowledgeable on the maps. AfL members will be aware of the series of A-Z maps of London that the LTS has published, from that of Elizabethan London to that to Victorian London. The LMA has put an appreciation of him on its website, which online readers can find [here](#).

On the subject of LTS and maps, the London bomb damage maps which the LTS published in 2005, and which was so successful that second hand copies were said to fetch over £1000, have reappeared in a brand new Thames and Hudson. The map images have been cleaned up a little, and there are 50 pages of photographs of the bomb damage, taken at the time, many in the COLLAGE collection at LMA. The volume has been edited by LMA member Laurence Ward. It is priced at £48, but it is suggested that online sources (Justbooks, Amazon) may be cheaper. Several other books are reviewed: *Murder Mayhem and Music Hall* by Barry Anthony, about Victorian London, sounds fun and gets a good review. Geoff Pick of LMA also spoke about the new edition at the December party.

Battle of Waterloo

The anonymous owner of a set of watercolours, signed T. [Thomas] Stoney, believed to have been painted by an Irish civilian travelling in Belgium at the time of the Battle of Waterloo, has agreed to sell them to the British Museum at substantially less than he could have got on the open market, it is reported by the [Daily Telegraph](#). Director Neil MacGregor, who is leaving the museum after 13 years, used internet crowd-funding to buy them. The paintings were done just two days after the Battle of Waterloo, and are now on display at the museum; the first time they have been seen by the public.

The haunting images, created by a talented painter, show the bodies of fallen soldiers on the ground and are believed to be the first images of the landmarks and landscapes of the battle. Some are shown on the Telegraph's web site, use the link above, or your favourite search engine to view them.

Newspapers

Mr Luke McKernan has written a very appreciative article about the Colindale newspaper library : it can be found at lukemckernan.com/2013/10/09/leaving-colindale. The storage closed 2 years ago and the newspapers moved to the BL main repository at Boston Spa, (there is a good picture of the new facility here britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/thenewsroom/2015/01/into-the-void.html) with facilities to access newspapers (subject to suitable notice) at the reading rooms in Euston Road.

Luke writes "The British Newspaper Library was at Colindale, from 1932. Countless researchers have made use of the Colindale reading rooms over the past eighty years, and it is held in great affection, but few I think would disagree that the place was coming to the end of its natural life. Little changed architecturally from the 1930s, the place had an antique charm, with large volume newspapers being wheeled on venerable trolleys to researchers seated at vintage tables, the very embodiment of libraries from another age. The fixtures and fittings, like the bound newspapers themselves, shedding bits of leather and fragments of fading newsprint, belong to a time when the word digital might only refer to the use of fingers to leaf carefully through the pages. Colindale looked as though time has passed it by.

"The British Library's programme has included building a new Newspaper Storage Building at Boston Spa in Yorkshire, digitising millions of pages. Where they will be kept in optimum storage conditions with carefully controlled temperature and humidity, such as Colindale did not provide. Researchers will be provided with microfilm and digital 'surrogates' at St Pancras. Where no surrogate copy exist it will still be possible request the print originals from Boston Spa; so long as they are in good enough condition to travel, they will be delivered to St Pancras within 48 hours.

"The Library's newspaper collection goes back to the seventeenth century and the birth of the newspaper itself. Systematic collecting did not begin until 1822 (earlier newspapers come from private collections donated to the British Museum). Publishers were obliged to supply copies of every newspaper they published to the Stamp Office for the purposes of taxation. These copies were transferred to the British Museum, until 1869 when newspapers were included in legal deposit legislation, a process that continues to this day, with each issue of just under 2,000 UK and Irish newspaper and weekly or fortnightly periodical titles received per year. In times past they were bound in volumes; now they are collected in boxes. The collection grows at just under 300 metres per year.

"These are some of the names of past papers: The Birmingham Journal & General Advertiser, The Leeds Intelligencer, The Poor Man's Guardian, The Dundee Courier, The Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette, The Salopian Journal, The Northampton Mercury, The Lincolnshire Chronicle, The Hartlepool Mail, The Rochester and Chatham Miscellany, Domestic Friend, and General Advertiser ..."

Newspaper index

Newspapers can be a valuable source for information on what was happening in an area, and what was considered important at the time. Mr Richard Heaton has compiled a finding aid of what newspapers have been digitised and are available online. There is page devoted to the London boroughs, listing a large number of papers, often two or three per borough. The index does not cover dates after 1913, so it is of no use for twentieth century history, but if you want the nineteenth, or late eighteenth century, it may be useful (local newspapers are few in number for the early eighteenth century). The web pages also contain useful hints on searching, and the pitfalls of the digitisation process (such as the letter m sometimes being converted to 'iu' or 'in'). The index can be found at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~dutilleul/BritishandIrishNews.html>. Note that the site is an index, it contains no images or transcripts. The largest number of images is available through the Newspaper archive, which is hosted in the US and contains American newspapers as well as British, some are available through FindMyPast. Although they can be searched for free, both sites require a subscription to view details.

'The slings and arrows ...

... of outrageous fortune' may mean that by the end of 2016 we have had enough Shakespeare. You will not need to be reminded that he died on (or about) 23 April 1616, and 23 April co-incidentally may also have been his birth date in 1564. An exhibition will open in Somerset House on 3 February 2016, to commemorate 400 years since his death (and no doubt it will be but one of many such events). He is described as the 'Worlds' greatest playwright' which might just be over-egging his work. (Sorry if that appears a tad curmudgeonly, I do love my Shakespeare, honest!)

Several web sites: for the Somerset House exhibition bymewilliamshakespeare.org, a more general site www.shakespeare400.org both refer, and there are some entertaining quizzes that will test how well you know your bard, at www.shakespeare-online.com.

No sooner was the above 'one of many' written than a message arrived about *Shakespeare in Ten Acts* exhibition, which opens at the British Library on 15 April as their contribution to the anniversary. They say "it will focus on ten significant performances of his plays, from the 1600s to the 21st century, and will explore the story of how Shakespeare became 'the Bard' we know today."



And above, last line, is the parish register entry of Shakespeare's baptism on 26 April 1564.
© Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

BALH essays

As part of its work to promote historical writing, BALH (the British Association for Local History) gives two awards, for a long and a short essay. The 2015 winners appeared in the *Local Historian* issue for October 2015. The short article dealt with the costs of administering care in the second half of the nineteenth century (1855-1900) in the asylums of two contrasting communities, predominantly rural Shropshire and Middlesex; the latter at most of that time included the LCC area, so the study is of relevance to historians of London. Shropshire had a smaller population, so although there were fewer inmates, the *per capita* cost to the county population appears to be much the same for the two areas. Middlesex seems on the whole to have fed its inmates for less – was it able to achieve economies of scale, or were they just poorly fed (echoes of *Oliver Twist*)? The article is very scholarly with 6 tables giving comparisons over the period. Sadly, the author, Frank Hughes, concludes that “recovery rates were below those anticipated by proponents of the scheme”.

However, personally I found the long article of great interest. It is an account of the background to the publication of a transcript of the diary that Norfolk resident Mary Hardy started in 1773, and in which she wrote the last entry only two days before her death in 1809: it thus covers some 36 years. It has been published in four substantial volumes, by the Burnham Press at a price of nearly £100.

The family were essentially brewers, so the article's title is *Supplying the beer*, and their regular journeys taking their product around the Broads is the background. In this way the family met various local communities and picked up news of what was happening, and this find its way into the diary. They were very mobile.

The diary has a web site maryhardysworld.co.uk, which draws attention to several themes that emerge from the volumes. Whole families were involved, and the women and children had a role to play, they were not confined to home. As they were used at workers, the children received little formal education, and arguments with the teachers are reported. Widows carried on their husbands' business.

The need to trade outside their immediate community fostered an outward-looking attitude: they had both suppliers and customers outside their home villages with whom they dealt, and had to keep on good terms.

The physical conditions, too, get a mention. In the more inland areas there were no made-up roads, even by the standards of the time, and the maze of waterways that form the Broads made travelling difficult, even if it was flat. Then nearer the coast at Cromer, the hills, even if not very high, had descents that were difficult to manage with a fully-loaded cart. Long journeys meant long days, often with irregular meal-times, supper was often late in the day, and a main meal was taken at lunchtime when it could be.

There were numerous other people criss-crossing the fens: dancing masters, theatre troops, judges on their way to quarter sessions, itinerant preachers, and the excise-men. The roads were busy.

Punched cards

Some 200 years ago, Jacquard weaving machines used a form of punched card to control the creation of the complex images that the machines were capable of weaving (illustration at foot of column). Evidence that these cards were an inspiration to Babbage, of calculating engine fame, has emerged from an archive in Australia, where some of Babbage's descendants now live. The Museum of Applied Art and Sciences in Sydney holds some of the family archive, and a curator there stumbled upon a small piece of paper folded amongst some of Babbage's letters. Whereas the early Jacquard looms had used large cards, about 1850 a machine was developed that used smaller pieces of paper, and it was one of these that was in the Babbage archive. The report on the Australian ABC web site says that that the card has some manuscript notes on it, but although a few words can be made out, the sense is not clear.

However, the suggestion is that Babbage liked idea of the card, and wanted to use cards as a means of storing information for use with his 'Calculating engines'. There is no record that Babbage ever developed the idea, although he did write it up: the punched card of the computer industry may have a similar origin in Jacquard cards, but it was developed by Hollerith, who used cards for encoding the data from the 1890 US census. Although it was not called it at the time, the company that Hollerith worked for eventually became the computer giant IBM. Babbage's involvement in the idea prevented Hollerith from claiming any patent rights.

Punched cards and their readers were a main source of input to computers: dropping a deck of cards was a programmers nightmare. Paper tape always seemed less popular, but you could not drop it and shuffle your program! Cards were used up to the 1970s, after which direct input by people typing or from devices supplying digital readings: today, cards, and readers are museum items for computers. But an item on the web suggests a metal card is still used for modern Jacquard looms.



Geffrye Museum

Take an Overground train and alight at Hoxton and you are just 5 minutes walk from the Geffrye Museum, the *Museum of the Home*.

The twelve main display rooms of the museum attempt to show what an English drawing/dining room of a family of the 'middling' sort would have looked like at 12 different times from 1600 to the present day. We get a good idea of what the home of wealthier people would have looked like from the many larger houses that dot this country, many of which are open to the public, but much less survives of the people from the middle class, and the Geffrye attempts to fill this gap. A great deal of work has been done by the museum's curators to establish precisely what the décor of each period would have been, researching wallpapers and decoration and finding furniture that is of the period.

The building was originally a group almshouses: there are 14 homes set symmetrically around a central chapel. Each home has four rooms (two on the ground floor and two above), and each pensioner was allocated one room, so over fifty pensioners could be accommodated in the full building. Each group of four had two basement rooms which could be used for the storage of items like coal for heating, and for doing laundry: there was access to the back garden, which is now rather dominated by Hoxton station; it has been turned into a herb garden.

The home takes its name from Robert Geffrye, a man born in Cornwall in 1613. He came to London, joined the Ironmongers company, rose to become Master in 1668, and Lord Mayor of London seven years later. He lived to a good age, dying, a widower without heirs, in 1704. He left much of his estate to the Ironmongers company, specifically to found almshouses in his name. The houses were opened some ten years later. At the time this was an open area of London, the eastward spread of London had not got this far. One hundred years later things changed and neighbouring Shoreditch was the home of furniture and clothing workshops: it was badly overcrowded, working conditions were poor (think of Dickens!), crime and poverty were rife and it did not seem a good place for the pensioners, so the Ironmongers moved out.

Around 1913, the houses were bought by the LCC, partly to preserve the green space in front of the houses, as this was an area with little open space (it is still there and clearly much used as a place of relaxation on a sunny day). The Council was persuaded to convert the buildings to a museum for the furniture industry, which was still operating in the area, so it would provide a reference collection. The change in the direction of the current series of period rooms took place between the wars, when the furniture industry was moving out. This period display basis is seen in the current displays, although these are only some ten years old.

Following the various changes in the government of London (GLC, then its abolition), the museum has ended up as an independent trust.

Admission is free, there in the inevitable café serving light meals as well as tea and coffee. If you have an interest in domestic interiors, worth a visit.

The 1939 register

As it is not, technically, a census, the 1939 register is not covered by the 100 year rule, and the data for England and Wales has been made available online by the National Archives in conjunction with FindMyPast. However, the 100-year rule is still in effect for individuals. Any person on the register not known to have passed away and for whom the date of birth is within the last 100 years is blacked out, marked 'This entry is officially closed'.

The information was collected at the start of WW2, to be used in connection with the issue of identity cards and to aid conscription; and as registration was obligatory, very few people escaped.

Audrey Collins, a leading family history specialist at The National Archives said "The 1939 material is important because it gives us a detailed snapshot of the people of England and Wales, both as individuals and communities, at the beginning of the Second World War". After the 1921 census, not due for release until 2022, there are no census records until 1951: the 1931 data was lost in a fire, and war meant that the 1941 census was not taken, so this survey is an invaluable stop-gap for family historians.

It is free to search online via the Findmypast website – and £6.95 to then see an individual's details, with a map which is a very useful part of the background information, especially for London, as bombing and redevelopment mean many streets are no longer on the map. The entry I viewed (see below) had a snippet from the 1:25000 map of the area, but unlike London, when I looked at the area using multimap, little had changed.

Statistical data derived from the survey shows changing attitudes: divorcees then made up 0.1% of the population, now it is 7.2%; marriage has declined from 46% to 37%. It also shows that centenarians are on the increase: then there were 111 aged 100 or more, today it is more than 12000.

The survey reveals that by late September 1939 (less than a month after the outbreak of war), London had become a predominantly childless city. Whereas children under ten made up 14% of England and Wales' overall population, in London the figure had dropped to just 2%. The 10-20 age group population was also much reduced with the capital having just half the national average. The LMA has a booklet "We think you ought to go", which has background on this evacuation.

I searched for my parents: in spite of trying every possibility I could think of, I failed to find my father. I did find the record for my mother: interestingly, although she did not marry until four years later, when I called up the original image I saw that her married name has been added to the record. The household data revealed a household of seven females: not a man in sight: had they all gone to war? (although one entry is closed, as noted above, so might this be a man of the family?). Precise dates of birth are given, and from these you can work out that there is an obvious 'mater familias' household. My mother is listed as a domestic servant, but over half a million women were so described, together with nine million 'housewives'.

SEMINAR REPORTS

November seminar at TNA

On 5 November we enjoyed a change of scene and the hospitality of The National Archives (TNA), where Chief Executive Officer and Keeper of the Records Jeff James, joined by AfL Board Member and London Engagement Manager, Tina Morton, provided an insightful discussion into the newly published *Archives Inspire* strategy.

Jeff James began by introducing himself. He has been CEO for over 18 months, and previously spent six years as Director of Operations and Services before joining the Chartered Institute of Housing as Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Operations, returning to TNA in 2014. Jeff confessed to having an emotional connection with archives, and will soon be starting a PhD on Victorian workhouses using records at TNA.

Archives Inspire is the new 4-year plan for TNA to enhance their services, encourage engagement with the records, and to tackle the challenge of digital. The strategy was officially launched in October 2015, and will provide the focal point for all their future endeavours. For TNA, archives are all about people and that engagement is key to maintaining that connection. Jeff recalled a number of events and activities that took place throughout 2015, including live broadcasts of Magna Carta anniversary events to over 270,000 schoolchildren in June. Jeff also reminisced about the successful 2014 Explore Your Archive campaign, which at one point was 'trending' on Twitter and was generating more tagged tweets than #Christmas!

And as it was Bonfire Night, after the discussion attendees were treated a display of original records relating to the Gunpowder Plot, including correspondence, depositions and papers, as well as the infamous signed confession of Guido Fawkes. It was a genuine delight to see the records up close and for them to be explained by TNA's resident experts. AfL would like to extend their gratitude to Jeff and all the staff at TNA their time and warm hospitality on what was an entertaining evening.

Report by Sarah Radford

There was no seminar to report on in December, but there was Christmas a party. This almost happened again in January.

London Radicals

Steph Dickers is big man: physically he has an imposing presence, and he is passionate about the institution represents, the Bishopsgate Institute. It was therefore most fitting that his talk at the January seminar attracted one of the largest audiences AfL has had recently. Long standing members will be acquainted with him, he was our guide there when AfL had a visit to the Bishopsgate Institute two years ago, as part of the AfL visits programme, and he has spoken at other local history and other gatherings that I have attended. He spoke

about the Bishopsgate Institute, the library, its history and its collections, in particular some of the lesser known persons who have nevertheless had an influence of the history of London, and it was an entertaining talk.

The history of the Institute goes back to the late 19th century, when the church of St Botolph was rather wealthy, as a result of men from the city making bequests to it for 'the good of their souls'. It also owned the land where the institute stands: so the vicar, Rev. William Rogers, sometimes described as an atheist in disguise as a vicar, but also an educational reformer, used the money and the land to establish an institute to provide a free library, a large concert and lecture hall and meeting rooms for the benefit of the public. The Institute was financed by the parish's charitable endowments and its building was designed by Charles Harrison Townsend, who also designed the Horniman Museum and the Whitechapel Gallery. (Stemming from this shared heritage, at the moment the institute has a badger on loan from the Horniman, but it's only there until February, so hurry if you want to see it.)

Charles Goss was an active librarian who, with several London colleagues, formed the Society of Public Librarians in 1895. He was at that time at Lewisham, resigned after a dispute, and in August 1897 moved to the Bishopsgate Institute. He was an advocate of the 'closed library' system with an 'indicator', by which a reader could find if a title he required was available for loan, and if so borrow it: this was installed in 1901, and helped reduce thefts. He remained at the institute until his retirement in 1941. and died in 1946, and his collection is in the institute. In spite of Goss' methods, some 15,000 people signed up for membership.

Goss' interests in London history, free thought, and the co-operative movement have shaped the institutes collections, which are strong in these areas.

Another little known man is Frederick Porter Wensley (1865-1949). He had Somerset roots, but became a significant British detective, and his early career was pursued substantially in the East End of London, where the family lived until they moved in 1913 to the new development of Palmers Green. The archive owes much to his daughter, "Edie" [Edith] who, after the death of her brothers in the Great War, preserved the family's memories and correspondence, giving insight into her environment.

Next Steph mentioned Muriel Lester from Leytonstone, peace campaigner, community worker and writer. Following a move to Bromley by Bow she became active in providing social and educational activities in the community. With her sisters she bought a disused chapel as a 'teetotal pub' to give local people an evening meeting place, named Kingsley Hall, after their brother.

More recent material covers the Broadwater Farm Riots in Tottenham in 1985, and the death of Joy Gardner from 'police brutality' in 1993.

On a lighter side, Steph showed us some posters for early lectures: *Wild Animals I have known*, and *Whales and whale fishing*, were included.

SEMINAR REPORTS

Writing London

The September seminar was joint talk by Charlie Turpie of LMA, the current editor of *The London Journal*, and Robert Shoemaker, one of the co-authors (with Tim Hitchcock, unable to be at the seminar) of the recently published book *London Lives, Poverty Crime and the making of a Modern City 1690-1800* (CUP).

The London Journal has just reached its 40th volume: there are three issues a year, two of general articles and one themed. It is published by Maney, and all articles are put on line (including all back issues), at www.maneyonline.com/loi/ldn. Those who have a subscription to the journal (anyone with a serious interest in the history of London surely ought to have one) can access the online article as part of their subscription, those who do not can get access to selected articles free via the website.

The *London Lives* book uses the Old Bailey proceedings, (online at www.oldbaileyonline.org/) itself a wealth of material for the period 1674-1913. The name is of course that of the road in which the Central Criminal Court (its modern name) is located, but has for many years been used as a synonym for the court itself. There has been a court on the site for many years: a building on the site was destroyed by the 1666 fire, and the start date of the online proceedings is the date its replacement opened: The 1674 building was in turn replaced by the present one, on which building started in 1902.

The London Lives book is backed up by a website www.londonlives.org/index.jsp where lives are being documented. This is a work in progress, the site (at the time of the seminar) had some 80 lives documented. Some further 70 lives were shown as 'in progress'. One of the latter, for which there was nevertheless a fairly full description, was the life of Robert Halfpenny, born about 1700 and transported to the USA in 1725 for stealing a handkerchief. Once there he appears to have settled down and married: although he had no children of his own he raised two orphans of another transported convict, suggesting a man of some humanity. He lived for nearly fifty years after his transportation. He became a tobacco planter and purchased 275 acres, and the inventory of his possessions made after his death shows a total value of some £125. It would seem that life in the 'colonies' in the end was a far better one than he would have had at home in England. This is an idea that is found elsewhere, as I have also found later cases of people transported to Australia writing home to those left behind saying "come and join me, life is good here".

Another, completed, life is that of prostitute Charlotte Walker: she is well documented, put her name and the word prostitute into your search engine and it will come up with several hits. She was in front of the judges at the Old Bailey more than ten occasions, and was arrested 27 times for stealing, but not all cases went to the Old Bailey for lack of reliable evidence. She was a spirited lady, when accused of holding both arms of a man whilst robbing him, she asked if she had three hands.

Poet in the City

A small but dedicated group met for the October seminar, a continuation of the *Poet in the City* series of events of last autumn.

The event was introduced by our chairman Anne Barrett, who commented on poetry shedding more light than a prose explanation. She cited George Szirtes' poem *Hologram*, inspired by records held at the Imperial College on the visionary scientist Dennis Gabor. Gabor was awarded the Nobel Prize for his invention of the hologram and Szirtes cleverly mirrors the complex fabric of a hologram in the poem's structure. A bit like a sestina, the poet uses just the words 'there' 'me' 'image', 'illusion' and 'another' as each line's ending across the poem's six stanzas, the poem's form evokes the intricate repeating patterns of light that compose a hologram. Although now in regular use, holograms are the basis on the small silver paych on your credit card when first invented no one know what to do with them!

Imtiaz Dharker, who had been poet at St Pauls, was invited to read some of her poems inspired by the cathedral. I cannot here reproduce her readings of her poetry, instead some of the background shown in the talk by Sarah Radford, AfL board members and archivist at St Pauls, who also chaired the meeting.

One object that had clearly inspired a reaction was a small cherub (or *putto*, pictured) that was found on the ground in 1940. On 10 October 1940 St Pauls suffered a direct hit from a German bomb. Two days later a second bomb landed just in front of the cathedral, but it did not explode. Had it done so, it would almost certainly have brought down the west front of the building, and without that support who knows what would have then happened to the west end of the nave. It took three days or careful excavation to remove the bomb and transport it out to Hackney marshes, where a controlled detonation created an enormous crater.

The putto was found amount the debris from the first bomb: no one was quite sure where it had been originally located, until Sarah chanced upon a pre-war photograph of the altar, which showed it in position.

Visit the web site at www.poetinthecity.co.uk/resource/ where you can read the poems, with comments by the poets on what inspired them.

Fallen putto image (right)
© The Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral.





AfL Events: Seminars

The following seminars are planned: but please check your monthly email for last minute changes.

- 4 February: *The Society of Genealogists and Family History Research*, given by Else Churchill
- 3 March: *Scholar, courtier, magician: John Dee at the Royal College of Physicians* given by Katie Birkwood
- 7 April: *Remembering the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's death at Shakespeare's Globe Archives* given by Victoria Lain
- 5 May: *Architectural Archives at Thomas Heatherwick* given by Alice O'Hanlon and Georgina Wesley
- 2 June: *Reflections on a Major Building Project at the Garden Museum Archives* given by Ruth Frendo

Archives for London at LAMAS Local History conference

On Saturday 21st November 2015, AfL had its first stall at a LAMAS (London and Middlesex Archaeological society) conference. (The editor's write-up of the event is on page 3.)

In the intervals we spoke to 60 people. Of this 60, only 4 (already AfL members) knew about AfL. Nearly all of the attendees were interested to find out more about the organisation. In particular, the institutional directory did help in showing our position within the archive sector. Many individuals did not spot their own borough archive and I urged them to speak to their archivist about joining us.

Unfortunately, we were not given an attendance list for the day but it was busy as it was the 50th Local History Conference and some thought it to be busier than other years.

We did try to sell membership and had some success. One gentleman (individual subscription) was not sure if he was a member already and so gave us his

details. I have passed this on to the Membership Secretary and it appears that he didn't renew this year, so we will have a returning member from this event (Thank you Roger). We also spoke to an aspiring archivist, who would also like to join because of our network. Finally, we spoke to an employee of Goldsmiths University History Department, who will discuss with his manager joining as an institutional member (£100). He thought this rate was very reasonable and within the budget for their department.

A good quote from one of the attendees of the day was "I have always meant to become an AfL member".

We also spread the word of AfL with our travel wallets and Through the Door booklets that were a success on the day.

It was a fascinating event and well worth attending. Our thanks go to Lauren Harvey and Roger Cohen without whom none of this could have happened.

Plea for help.

As the editor mentions on page 6, his interests are very much based on north London as that was where he was brought up. This does mean that items on areas south of the river are rather lacking in these newsletters. If you have an interest in Caterham, Croydon or Carshalton, or anywhere else that does not receive enough coverage here, and would be happy to provide copy to the newsletters, please get in touch: email address below.

The editor welcomes contributions to the Newsletter and letters for publication. Please send your contribution to: Peter Jackson, Archives for London, c/o London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB. Or preferably by email to: newsletter@archivesforlondon.org
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