

Tramshed



main photo: Jason Lowe

Designed by Vincent Harris, the Tramshed was built in 1905 as an electricity-generating facility for the tramway system. This Grade II listed building has been renovated by Waugh Thistleton Architects, who worked with the restaurateur Mark Hix to create a restaurant.

Waugh Thistleton's design aimed to recognise the heritage of the building and complement the Edwardian glazed brick interiors. They chose materials to match the magnificent space: heavy gauge stainless steel, leather and great planks of Douglas fir. The chairs they selected, which are also used by the US prison service, are made from recycled coke bottles.

The new design received a commendation at the Hackney Design Awards 2012. The judges commented: 'Introducing new uses into historic buildings is an exciting challenge and one clearly relished in this case. A tough, no nonsense former industrial space, all hard surfaces and robust materials, has been unobtrusively softened by the addition of acoustic baffling above the exposed trusses to ensure that you can make yourself heard easily'.

Damien Hirst has created artworks specifically for the Tramshed, where the menu focuses on steak and chicken. A sculpture, 'Cock and Bull' (2012), is installed four metres above diners. The work – a Hereford cow and cockerel preserved in a steel and glass tank of formaldehyde –

forms part of the 'Natural History' series, Hirst's collection of preserved animals. In addition, the artist has created a painting entitled 'Beef and Chicken' (2012). Installed at the mezzanine level, the painting depicts the 1990s cartoon characters 'Cow and Chicken' (Cartoon Network).

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Building Watch

St Mary's Lodge

By Tony Harms

St Mary's Lodge in Lordship Road dates from 1843. It is much loved locally and its derelict state is an eyesore and a health and fire hazard. The background to the building was published in Spaces 23.

The property was sold by the Council in 2002, with a covenant placed on the title restricting its use for the purposes of community use or the provision of education. Since that time, the house has never been used. In 2005, a fire gutted the building, leaving only the exterior shell.

In 2003, Mayor Jules Pipe and Councillor Vincent Stops had themselves photographed in front of the building claiming that they had stepped in to prevent its demolition. On 27 November 2004, Mayor Pipe again gave a public assurance that the council would do everything legally possible to protect the building.

In 2009, after a long period of complaint and meetings with local residents, an



application to restore and develop the Lodge, with the construction of additional buildings, was made. The local Conservation Areas Advisory Committee gave the 2009 planning application by the Tora Etz Haim (TEC) synagogue a cautious welcome subject to various concerns about materials and scale. They went out of their way to say that the garden should not be preserved as open space at the expense of the renovation of the lodge. However, that application remained 'under negotiation' for three years.

Later in the year it was discovered that half of the back wall had been demolished and the bricks removed, presumably for resale. Fourteen local residents wrote to the *Hackney Gazette* complaining of the situation. The owners said that the bricks had been stolen.

In 2010, Mr Pipe said in a letter to a local resident that the situation 'was not ideal' but rejected a call for compulsory purchase in favour of working with the owners, and, in 2012, in a statement to the Stoke Newington Neighbourhood Forum, he said that he was 90% certain of agreement. In April 2012, the property was sold to Keren Habinyan Ltd – believed to be representing the Vizhnitz Charedi community – for £875,000. The application is now listed on the Council website as 'withdrawn'.

The lodge was sold by the council at an under-value for charitable or community use. It has not been so used for over 11 years and has been allowed to become derelict, collapsed, an eyesore and a fire and health hazard. Builders are using the front drive to burn rubbish. The adjacent 'tack room' appears to have collapsed.

St-John-at-Hackney development plans

By Rossana Tich

Plans have been submitted by the Incumbent and Parochial Church Council of St-John-at-Hackney to develop a substantial plot of land adjacent to the churchyard and gardens.

The planning application was submitted to the Council last November and comments were sought from local groups such as the Hackney Society and CAACs. However, there appears that there has been no general public consultation either prior to the planning application being submitted or, indeed, during the consultation period.

For such a substantial development in the heart of Hackney's historic conservation area, making the plans more widely known, and accessible to view and comment upon, would have been most welcome.

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing rectory and outbuilding, scout hut and former Learning Trust facility and their replacement with a mixed-use development comprising 58 dwellings, church community facilities, a semi-public urban square and communal garden area. The buildings are four storeys plus basement and work would also include alterations to the boundary treatment of the St-John-at-Hackney churchyard. The development site contains land that has not been built upon since mediaeval times (this is mentioned in the application documents); a remarkable survival in central Hackney. The design is by DLA Architecture and the application number is 2012/3345.

The applicants were encouraged by Hackney Council to steer clear of pastiche design and to strive for something modern, to enhance and preserve the conservation area setting. However, the Central and South Hackney CAAC commented that the proposed

design looks dated and overbearing, is overdevelopment of the site, has a surplus of blank brick façade and incorporates touches of Georgian in places. It represents a real missed opportunity in terms of ambition for the site and quality of design and would have been, perhaps, an ideal opportunity to hold an architectural competition.

Whilst some buildings on the site are of no architectural merit and are at the end of their useful life, the demolition of the Victorian former coach house (now used as the scout hut) is questionable with no attempts to incorporate it and its replacement with mundane buildings would neither enhance nor preserve the conservation area. There are also concerns over the paved semi-public space and the balconies overlooking the St-John-at-Hackney communal gardens and churchyard.

The application is still being considered by the planning team and at the time of going to press, it is not known what the status is with regards to its progress.

Hackney Captured

On 11 May 2013 at 2.15pm, the Rio Cinema is screening a compilation of films from Hackney Archives and Freeform Arts Trust. Fascinating footage of many Hackney landmarks and significant events of the last century recaptures Hackney's rich and vibrant history on the big screen. £4 to Hackney Society members.

The Pickwick Bicycle Club

By Mary Sewell

In 1996, a plaque was unveiled on The Downs Hotel, Hackney Downs, by the Mayor of Hackney, Saleem Siddiqui. It stated that the oldest cycling club in the world*, the Pickwick Bicycle Club (PBC), had been founded there in 1870. When The Downs Hotel was converted to flats a few years later the plaque disappeared. Apparently the developer had intended to put it back, but it was stolen from his store.

With so much current enthusiasm for cycling as a result of British successes at the Olympic Games and the Tour de France, the increased availability of Barclays Bikes and cycle lanes and with the Velodrome and BMX circuit just down the road, perhaps now is the time to get the plaque reinstated. The Pickwick Bicycle Club is on the case.

The Pickwick Bicycle Club is alive and well, with approx 200 male members, each of whom is known by his sobriquet, one of 200 characters from the *Pickwick Papers*, with whose character and deeds he should be familiar. Originally, the Captain was Samuel Pickwick Esq. and other names were balloted. Since 1875 the President has been Samuel Pickwick Esq.

When the six cycling enthusiasts met at the Downs hotel on 22 June 1870, they chose

the name in honour of Charles Dickens, who had died on 9 June and was buried in Westminster Abbey on 14 June 1870. This also gives the club the distinction of being the world's oldest Dickensian association.

The six were friends, 'full of the freshness of youth and eager for "travel and adventure", who arranged outings together for their mutual enjoyment and good fellowship'. They chose a club uniform of a white straw hat with black and amber ribbon, and later a compulsory black cap with amber pipings for Club outings. They operated with military discipline, necessary in those dangerous days of irregular road surfaces, dim street lighting and hostility towards their new form of transport. They had a system of whistles for dark winter evenings: one sharp whistle for caution, two for stoppage and three for distress.

'The cyclist was considered fair sport for the hooligan of the period, who was not particular whether it was a brick or an epithet, frequently both, that he hurled.' On their first excursion, to Epping Forest, Jack Bryant, aka Tracy Tupman, 'represented the party in an "animated discussion" with an abusive and pugilistic butcher'. Fortunately, when they passed that way the next week, the butcher was nowhere to be seen.

In 1876, Mr Gee won £10 damages to himself and his machine against



Mr Parsons, proprietor of the St Albans coach, who had driven across the road and laid into him with his whip, when he and his friend Mr Mitchell tried to overtake. Not only that, but the Guard had attempted to catch their wheels with an iron ball on a cord, designed for 'destruction of cyclists'. Mr Parsons was fined £2 and the guard £5.

These obstacles notwithstanding, cycle clubs burgeoned and the second Hampton Court Meet on 6 May 1876 was attended by

* *The Pickwick Bicycle Club is the oldest existing cycle club in the world, although it was not the first.*

Continued overleaf

Abney Park Cemetery

By Anna Zucchelli

Those of you who have visited the cemetery lately might have seen that the chapel and several gravestones have been fenced off. This is part of the Council's health and safety plans for Abney Park. A structural condition survey was carried out last summer by Mann Williams. The main issues in their report included:

- Decay of wall plates and rafter feet from theft of lead from parapet gutters
- Steeple balcony decking covered in asphalt, now cracked, allowing for water ingress
- Saturated masonry to springing points of groins at the corners or the narthex above the porte-cochère, at risk of decay – no danger as yet, but might be in the future
- Invasive growth of ivy and other vegetation
- Fracture in vestry wall due to rotation of bay has disturbed brickwork
- Displacement of steeple ribs due to corrosion and expansion of metal fixings

and falling from height. Also risk of displacement of steeple cross especially with high winds

- Lack of lightning conductors
- Cracks in tower turrets due to expansion of ferrous metal cramps and invasive vegetation
- Risk of displacement of stone capping to pinnacles due to ferrous metal corrosion and expansion
- Risk of displacement of gable copings

The main current risk is the falling of loose masonry, hence a perimeter fence set back from the chapel walls and the cessation of events and location filming within and around the chapel. Other health and safety improvements include repair of unsafe areas of the boundary wall and the laying down of unstable gravestones.

Abney Park Trust and Hackney Council are currently undergoing negotiations regarding the renewal of the lease, but it is a long and time-consuming process. The addition of new trustees and volunteers has breathed new life and vitality into the Trust, which is



hoping for a positive future for the cemetery, although what shape that will take is as yet uncertain.

We still have a long way to go and need some help! The Trust is looking for new trustees and volunteers who have certain skills which can help Abney Park. The skills required include: fundraising; human resource management; journalism, public relations; volunteer planning and management; office administration and management; law (especially landlord and tenant); heritage management; biodiversity management (Abney Park is a designated Local Nature Reserve and potential Site of Special Scientific Interest SSSI); IT; and design – print and online.

If anyone is interested, they are asked to contact abneyparkcemetery@gmail.com.

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members of 16 Bicycle Clubs with names such as Wimbledon Stragglers and Sutton Nondescripts. Individuals also attended. The Grand Meet at Hampton Court in 1877 attracted up to 2000 riders.

The intrepid PBC members, dressed in knickerbockers, cycled around Southern England as far as Penzance, then north to the Lakes and Isle of Man and even to Brittany, the Loire and Dieppe (1000 miles). They organised races with serious prizes such as a silver watch, 15 guineas or a cup; later prizes were less extravagant. They were obviously fun-lovers who, from the start, enjoyed an Annual Dinner, frequent excursions and races, billiard competitions, boxing, tugs of war, 'smoking concerts' and balls. In 1899 the Cinderella Dance at the Cripplegate Institute for members and their lady friends was an unqualified success.

Noticeboard

St Mary's Old Church

A project in Stoke Newington plans to create an arts centre in the 16th century St Mary's Old Church. Building work, led by Shoreditch-based Matthew Lloyd Architects, will provide new facilities and repair the roof.

Victorian frescoes

Restoration work at St Monica's Church in Hoxton Square in January has uncovered original decoration by E W Pugin, featuring Latin inscriptions and stylised floral motifs. Pugin, the son of Augustus Welby Pugin, one of Victorian England's most eminent church architects, designed the church, which was built in 1864-65.

Hackney Empire

The Hackney Empire is to receive £340,000 from the Arts Council to fund building repairs and maintenance. The Grade II listed theatre, which was designed by Frank Matcham in 1901, has suffered severe leaks in recent years despite a restoration project in 2004.

Mary on the Green

A graffiti stencil of Mary Wollstonecraft appeared on the side wall of the Newington Green Unitarian Church on International Women's Day (8 March). The mural by the street artist Stewy is in



support of a campaign to erect a statue of Wollstonecraft on the Green. The Mary on the Green campaign is attempting to raise £260,000 to fund the project. Wollstonecraft, who is best known for her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, used to frequent the church and was a key figure in a group of radical thinkers who lived in the area. In 1783 she started a school for girls on the Green.

Their bone-shakers – with iron tyres, wooden spokes and unsprung saddles – were soon developed into more comfortable velocipedes and bicycle manufacture quickly became an established industry.

Since the initial meeting at the Downs Hotel, later PBC HQs were at the Mitford Tavern (1872) and Farleigh Hotel (1877), both in Amhurst Road; the Albion Hotel, Albion Road, Stoke Newington (1884) and the Orion Gymnasium, Casterton Street, Hackney (1894). It is time the world was reminded that one of the places where this recreational and sporting passion began was Hackney.

Thanks to the Pickwick Bicycle Club and reference to the *History of the Pickwick Bicycle Club founded 1970* compiled by 'Hon. Mr Crushton', aka Mr W E Blake, published by the Pickwick Bicycle Club, 18 Eldon Street, London E. C. 1905.

Haggerston Estate

People from Haggerston recreated an old East End funeral procession from their old estate to the new one, as part of an artistic project about regeneration. The event, held on 16 March, was organised by Andrea Zimmerman, who is making a film about the estate.

Hackney Society Events

Haggerston School

Thursday 2 May 6.30pm

Architectural Tour

Architectural tour of the modernist architect Ernö Goldfinger's Grade II Listed Haggerston School. Built in 1964, Grade II listed in 2004 and recently refurbished by Avanti Architects to meet 21st century standards, it was Goldfinger's only secondary school and reputedly contains some of his best public interiors. As featured in *Spaces 39*.

Limited number of spaces, therefore booking is essential. Please email B.longmanpbm@see-plc.com to reserve a place.

£5 to members, £10 non-members (donation to Haggerston School Parents Assoc).

The London Nobody Knows + shorts

Thursday 23 May 2013, 8pm

Film screening

This rarely seen and underrated documentary film from 1967 directed by Norman Cohen features JAMES MASON exploring what was then a vanishing London. Based on a book by Geoffrey Fletcher the film travels from Shoreditch to Camden to provide a fascinating insight into a city on the brink of change.

Booking essential. Venue: The Cambridge, 13-15 Mare Street, London E8 4RP, 8pm.

Hackney Society Fundraising Event. £7 to members, £8.50 to non-members (inc. glass of wine). To book, email events@hackneysociety.org or phone 020 7175 1967.

Postcards of Hackney

Thursday 6 June 2013, 8pm

Talk with Melvyn Brooks

Founder Hackney Society member Melvyn Brooks will show images from his extensive collection of postcards featuring Hackney.

Booking essential. Venue: The Cambridge, 13-15 Mare Street, London E8 4RP, 8pm

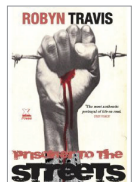
FREE to members, £5 non-members.

To book, email events@hackneysociety.org or phone 020 7175 1967.

Publications

Prisoner to the Streets

by Robyn Travis is an autobiographical account of teenage violence in Hackney and Tottenham. The X Press, £9.99.



The Public History Reader

edited by Hilda Kean (a Hackney Society member) and Paul Martin provides an introduction to public history. It looks at who makes history, approaches to making history,

and the way in which presentations of the past change over time.

The cover image is by Hackney photographer Colin O'Brien. Routledge, £24.99 (pbk), £75.00 (hbk).

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