East Side Stories
Londoners in transition

An exhibition of material from UCL Special Collections and the Newsam Library and Archives, UCL Institute of Education

February – December 2017
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East London has a long and fascinating history of regeneration and change. This exhibition provides snapshots of everyday lives as the metropolis expanded and new communities emerged over the centuries. Touching on education, trade, leisure and health, *East Side Stories* draws on material held in UCL Library Services including the London History, Jewish and Chadwick collections, the Hayward Library and the Inner London Education Authority archive.

Dedicated to the memory of
Frederick Alfred Bearman
1949–2016,
Preservation Librarian and
Member of the Library Services
Exhibitions Group
Introduction: East London History

As UCL embarks upon its own expansion east and faces the challenges and opportunities that this poses, it is not simply moving into a neutral space but one that has been at the centre of historical transformation.

East London has an inescapable presence. Its material importance to the capital city is compounded by the way it is so firmly lodged in the popular imagination. Where exactly East London and the East End begin and end remains the subject of considerable debate among residents, planners, politicians, workers and officials. It has commonly been viewed as a working-class area, while also serving as a destination for diverse populations. Waves of migrants have settled and passed through, including the persecuted Huguenots of the seventeenth century, Jewish and Chinese migrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the Bangladeshi communities of the post-war period. In recent years the East End has become a zone of hyper-diversity, inhabited by people from all parts of the globe. Its accessibility and proximity to the centres of power and wealth have heightened a sense of contrast, with visible inequalities stimulating a wide range of social action. The paradox inherent in its location, both marginal and mainstream, has long made East London a seedbed of new ideas and experimentation.

Despite its long history, it was only in the eighteenth century that the separate villages of East London were subsumed rapidly into urban development. The working classes of East London would furnish the capital with labour and leisure opportunities of many kinds. They worked in a range of essential industries and services including textiles, docks, shipbuilding and domestic service. East of the city was the ideal location for messy and foul smelling industries, the prevailing westerly wind ensuring that such unpleasantness never troubled the sensibilities of the wealthier classes. The invention of the term ‘East End’ in the late nineteenth century helped to embed it as a symbol of all that was lowly, evil and unchristian – a place in which poverty, disease and crime abounded. Outsiders viewed the area with both curiosity and terror. As a result slumming and voyeuristic engagement with the unknown became possible, if risky, for the adventurous.

Unsurprisingly the East End became a catalyst for social reformers, most famously William Booth and the university settlement at Toynbee Hall, among many others. Literary imaginations were fired by the sheer difference of the East, although readers could quickly retreat to more salubrious quarters. From George Orwell’s Down and Out in Paris and London, a proof copy of which is featured in this exhibition, to Michael Young and Peter Willmott’s community study and recent accounts in Monica Ali’s Brick Lane, not to mention television series such as Call the Midwife and EastEnders, East London is a place that continues to fascinate a wide audience.

Those living in East London and the East End have not been passive victims, but have actively disputed the meaning of their home. At times inhabitants became embodied in radical traditions of organising and campaigning, for instance in the celebrated Battle of Cable Street in 1936. The First World War poet and artist Isaac Rosenberg, the writers Bernard Kops and Gilda O’Neil and the poet Benjamin Zephaniah, as well as the many worker-writer groups and dramatic ventures which started in the 1970s, spawning Tony Marchant, Alan Gilbey and Liz Thompson among others, have all offered differing representations of East London, exploring complex histories and cultures.

While East London has been in constant flux, we currently stand at a crucial turning point. Gentrification, the movement of local people out of the inner city and wealthier incomers taking their place, spiralling property prices, financialisation and the intense demand for land have been reshaping the district for a number of decades. Most noticeably, the glass skyscrapers with their impersonal workspaces are gradually encroaching upon once vibrant communities. And, despite the creation of Canary Wharf and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, high levels of poverty continue to be found and social disparity is acutely felt.

This exhibition offers important insights into the chequered history of East London based upon the unique archives and rare books held at UCL. Among its key themes are the East End’s centrality to the development of British trade and capitalism, its status as a ‘problem’ area beset by a number of social ills and the consequent desire to control and regulate its people – both through punitive institutions and in movements motivated by a philanthropic spirit. Education, social divisions and health
are particularly prominent in the material on display. As ever, the perspectives and concerns of working-class people are harder to detect, but not impossible.

The image of East London drew upon a history that stretched back several centuries. In 1666 the minister of Shadwell feared for sufferers of the plague who might die as sinners; he entreated wealthy and pious Christians to pray for the souls of their poorer brethren. Jumping over a century to 1814, we find John Thomas Smith’s representations of ‘vagabondiana’ highlighting ‘typical beggars’ in the vicinity, no doubt attracting comic attention and ridicule. Fear of crime was ubiquitous. Nevertheless the views of outsiders, with their emphasis upon revulsion, filth and horror, could be deflected into a different purpose. The surveyor who identified people living in the ‘most offensive and filthy condition’ among stagnant pools and rotting vegetables had a reforming agenda. The application of scientific and clinical language in Edwin Chadwick’s Sanitary Commissions, also on display in the exhibition, led to improvements in health, but portrayed residents as docile subjects of a disciplinary authority.

The river is a persistent presence in the East End, yet its meaning shifts across time. In a ‘great trading nation’, the Thames was a crucial channel for the trade in coal and other necessities which fuelled not only industry but also the expansion of domestic life. The 1799 Select Committee appointed to improve the Port of London published a striking map to help achieve its purpose. The bright green Thames becomes a free-flowing organism, an ever flowing mass stretching its tentacles out across East London. The well-ordered coloured squares in pink and yellow next to London Bridge represent the docks and warehouses required to feed the city’s insatiable demands. A few years earlier William Blake had bemoaned the ‘charter’d Thames’ in his celebrated poem ‘London’, deploring how the institutions of army, church and monarchy were connected with ‘mind-forg’d manacles’, neglect and ‘faces of woe’ he found in the surrounding streets. His bitter lament clearly did not register with cartographers intent on economic development.

Education and learning also stand out, the chilling utilitarianism of the nineteenth century jostling with progressive educational ideas of the twentieth. In the 1870s Mr Buckle’s prize was awarded to ‘the headmaster who could produce the best results at the lowest cost’, which was nevertheless outshone by the award to the superintendent who achieved the lowest death rate in his patch. Such rudimentary league tables make those of Ofsted and the OECD appear positively tame. One column includes the less than precise category of ‘unknown, doubtful or 50–50’; another juxtaposes death rates with numbers of children. The exhibits illustrate how the educational pendulum swung towards a concern with child-centred learning, from Clara Grant’s welfare innovations to, later still, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) with its multicultural jigsaws, designed to encourage learning about different communities.

East Londoners themselves are occasionally visible within these wider social, economic and political changes, as glimpses of different meanings shine through some of the objects on display. Although in 1802 Jewish groups were referred to as part of the ‘lower classes’, by 1846 there are signs of cultural recognition with the publication of a Jewish cookbook, while in 1921 the West Ham synagogue celebrated with a prize-giving at Stratford Town Hall. The 1913 menu for the annual dinner of the Whitechapel and Spitalfields Costermongers’ and Street-sellers’ Union reflects the way in which civil society was being occupied by local constituencies. In the 1940s the Trades Advisory Council enquires about relative weights and contents of the Bun Loaf and Challah Loaf, echoing an earlier ‘moral economy’ of the eighteenth century while looking forwards to the fair trade movement of contemporary times.

History is never simply about the past and it remains an invaluable resource for the future. The shifting configurations of East London have not obliterated all the older ways of life or modes of thought. Struggles over space, health, learning and livelihoods are still being played out today.

**Dr Tom Woodin**

*International Centre for Historical Research in Education (ICHRE)*

*UCL Institute of Education*
Items in the exhibition

**London History Collection**

Several items in the exhibition are taken from this collection, comprising over 5,000 volumes, around 500 maps and many pamphlets on the topography, architecture and social and economic history of Greater London. Originating with a bequest received in 1873 from the executor of Captain Henry Ward (d.1867), it became a separate library in 1922. The collection was further augmented by a large number of books and pamphlets from the Library of Miss E Jeffries Davis in 1945.

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**House of Commons. The several plans and drawings referred to in the second report from the select committee upon the improvement of the Port of London. Appendix G.9 and G.22. Plate X. Section showing Plan of the River Thames with the Proposed Docks at Rotherhithe. Engraving by R Metcalf, for Surveyors Office, Guildhall. Ordered to be printed 11th July 1799.**

_UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, SR LONDON HISTORY PORTFOLIO 7_

The overview and detailed inset plan show proposals for expanding and transforming the dock area along the River Thames, stretching to the east beyond Wapping and Limehouse. Such expansion was to cater for the growth of commercial activity, fed by the demands of London’s ever-increasing residential and business population at the end of the eighteenth century. The plans included widening existing quays and building warehouses along Thames Street, as well as the construction of a floating dock, capable of containing 408 ships “peculiarly favourable to transacting the Coal Trade.”
‘A plan of London on the same scale as that of Paris’ in Rocque, John. A new and accurate survey of the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark, with the country about it for nineteen miles in length, and thirteen in depth ... Publish’d according to Act of Parliament 1751, in sixteen sheets, price two guineas. London: printed by H. Lewis, 1751.

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, SR LONDON HISTORY PORTFOLIO 45B 1751

Rocque (c. 1709–1762), surveyor and cartographer to the Prince of Wales and thought to be the son of Huguenot émigrés, first published a series of maps of London and its environs in the 1740s. They were the most detailed available at the time and he produced several editions, including this one from 1751 following a fire that had destroyed his stock and premises a year before. Greater London was clearly predominantly rural at this time, with little indication of the growth that was to follow: Spittle Fields and Tower Hamlets border countryside, St Pancras and Paddington are still fields and Hyde Park is on the edge of Middlesex. Rocque nevertheless describes his maps as being ‘of general use to all persons who have occasion to travel round this metropolis, for business, health or pleasure, and to all curious persons at home or abroad’. The subscribers who made the publication possible included a jeweller, a wine merchant, a coachmaker, a plasterer and a linen draper. An indication of Rocque’s aspirations, and perhaps those of London, is given in his comparison of London with Paris: ‘In order to ascertain the difference of the extent of these two rivals, the [plans of each] have been divided into equal squares ... London therefore exceeds Paris, by 1427 acres, the former being 8½ square miles & Paris only 6½.’
The Aerated Bread Company, familiarly known as the ‘A.B.C.’, was at one time a high street institution rivalling Lyons Corner Houses. Established in 1862 as a bakery experimenting with techniques for making bread without yeast, self-service tea rooms were soon added and the chain expanded, reaching its peak in the 1920s. This guide to London’s sights and attractions includes a photograph of an A.B.C. shop in Stratford.

John Stow was an Elizabethan historian and antiquarian. He spent over 30 years of his life writing a topographical survey of London, giving information about its history, buildings and social customs. First published in 1598, the work was revised once in Stow’s lifetime and many more times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reflecting changes and expansion in the city. By the mid-nineteenth century readers were less likely to use the book as a contemporary city guide and more as a historical document, creating a demand for Stow’s own Elizabethan editions to be reprinted.

This example is a reprint of Stow’s 1603 edition. Here he describes how bread was brought daily from Stratford into the City of London. There Stratford bread was prized, ‘being two ounces in the penny wheat loaf heavier than the penny wheat loaf baked in the city’. The passage also illustrates how Stow based much of his history on the many manuscripts and original documents he had read as a “fee’d chronicler” of the Corporation of London: here he gives examples, from the fourteenth century to his own day, of bakers who had been found selling underweight loaves of bread.

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LONDON HISTORY FOLIOS 1720 STO

The most significant revisions to Stow’s Elizabethan classic were made by John Strype, a copy of whose 1720 edition appears here. Strype points out that, for this edition, he has ‘Corrected, Improved, and very much Enlarged’ the work to reflect the growth of London in the 80 years since its last edition, especially following the new City that emerged after the Great Fire in 1666. One of the best known features of the work is its guided walks, or ‘perambulations’, around the outskirts of London, which include information on rivers, gates, bridges, schools and churches. Displayed here is the entry for Stratford Langton in West Ham, described as ‘a place much frequented for country houses of wealthy citizens, and the habitations of such other of them who cannot enjoy their health in London’.

Willis, Thomas. A help for the poor who are visited with the plague. London: printed for Peter Parker in Popes-head-Alley, 1666.

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LONDON HISTORY 1666

Death was very familiar to Londoners in the Early Modern period, who had relatively short life expectancies. Many women died in childbirth and there was a high rate of child mortality, compounded by poor sanitation and overcrowding. However, the situation became particularly acute in 1665 and 1666 when an outbreak of bubonic plague killed almost one-quarter of the city’s population. As the epidemic worsened in the warm summer, the royal family and many merchants and professionals fled London, but this was harder for those who were poorer. The Lord Mayor’s certificates of good health, required to pass beyond the city gates, became scarce, leaving poorer people, and those doctors and clergy who had decided to remain, to manage as best they could in a city of closed businesses and carts of corpses. Those who did manage to escape to areas surrounding London were likely to find themselves turned away by village communities overwhelmed by the exodus. Some of them died of starvation in the surrounding fields.

The book displayed here urges people facing death to turn to Christianity and confess their sins, and illustrates the desperate people of London and Westminster appealing for God's mercy. The message is not only addressed to the poor, with the book's first section entitled: ‘To the rich: a serious exhortation, and seasonable advice.’ Despite its paternalistic approach to tackling economic inequalities, the work does urge compassion from the well-off, and shows an awareness that the plague affected rich and poor differently: ‘Sad is the state of many poor families, in this time of visitation. The rich flee from the stroke, the poor fall under it.’

Smith, John Thomas. Vagabondiana: or anecdotes of mendicant wanderers though the streets of London, with portraits of the most remarkable drawn from life. London: Published for the proprietor … [etc], 1817. Bound with An Account of the Expences [sic] of the entertainments given in the Guildhall of the City of London to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent with their Imperial and Royal Majesties the Emperor of all the Russians and the King of Prussia, 1814.

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LONDON HISTORY FOLIOS 1814 CIT

John Smith (1766–1833) was a printmaker, engraver and antiquarian. In this publication he depicts the numerous typical characters seen on the streets of London at the beginning of the nineteenth century – a time when the population was rising at an alarming rate, putting an impossible strain on the housing supply. Street-dwellers were all united by their nomadic or wandering lifestyles and lack of settled home or habitation, whether by choice or circumstance. Many were dismissed as vagabonds, and it was often difficult to recognise the genuine charity cases. In his preface Smith observes that ‘Beggary of late has become so dreadful in London … that it was in most instances extremely difficult to discover the real object of charity from the imposter’.

Smith’s acerbic and often sarcastic commentary accompanies the sketches, offering an entertaining diversionary account in its own right rather than a polemic on the social evils of the age. The diversity of characters is amply reflected in the portraits shown here.
Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901) was a prolific writer and a well-known champion of campaigns, ranging from authors’ rights – he established the Society of Authors – to social reform. A number of his fictional works were concerned with social conditions, among them his first novel, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*. Set in London’s East End slums and initially serialised in *Belgravia* before publication in three volumes in 1882, the novel is cited as an inspiration for the People’s Palace in Mile End, built to bring entertainment and education to the local population. (Opened by Queen Victoria in 1887, it was subsequently rebuilt after a fire and is now part of Queen Mary University of London.) In his later writing career Besant published non-fiction works about London, drawing on his journalistic articles and reforming activities; these include the two volumes shown in this exhibition. Illustrations by Phil May, Joseph Pennell and L. Raven Hill brought the scenes described by Besant vividly to life.

In the first chapter of his 1901 work, ‘What East London is’, Besant describes a modern city with no long history, nor hotels or newspapers: ‘East London suddenly sprang into existence because it was unexpectedly wanted. A map of London of the year 1830 shows a riverside fringe of hamlets – a cluster of houses outside the City of London … there are lanes and paths through fields and orchards and market gardens, with occasional churches and clusters of houses and detached country residences.’ By the end of the century this had become a new urban area of ‘about five hundred miles of streets, perhaps more’. The book goes on to explore a series of lives from these newly populous communities.

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LONDON HISTORY 1797 SMI

The illustration here of St Augustine’s Church above Hackney’s brook was drawn by William Ellis in 1791. It is suggestive of a quiet town, predating the modern city portrayed by Walter Besant a century later. The picture appears at the start of Daniel Lyson’s chapter on ‘The parish of St. Augustine, or St. John’s, Hackney, in the county of Middlesex’, which Lyson describes as follows:

The parish of Hackney is situated on the west side of the river Lee; and formerly contained the country seats of an Early of Northumberland, countess of Warwick, Lord Brooke, &c. but since the Court has been regularly kept at the west end of the town, Hackney has been deserted by the nobility; though it is still inhabited by a great number of opulent and respectable citizens.

The main body of the church was demolished in 1798, but the tower still remains.

Jewish Collections

UCL Library Services holds printed, manuscript and archival collections of Hebraica and Judaica that are of national and international importance. Several items in the exhibition come from Dr Moses Gaster’s (1856–1939) vast archive of correspondence, diaries, notebooks, memoirs, photographs, press cuttings, ephemera and more, which forms part of the collections. The Gaster Papers, on loan to UCL from 1960, was given to the university in 1974.

Posters in English and Yiddish for bazaar and fair in aid of the Million Penny Fund for Jewish victims of the war, [c.1916].

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, GASTER/8/C/2

There has been a Jewish community in the East End of London since the Early Modern period. It grew substantially between 1880 and 1920 with the arrival of large numbers of immigrants fleeing persecution and poverty in Eastern and Central Europe. By 1914 over 100,000 Jews lived in the East End.

The Million Penny Fund was founded around 1916 to assist Jews who were suffering because of the First World War. Among them were the families of those interned in England as “enemy aliens” at the outbreak of the War, as well as Jews in Palestine and Eastern Europe. The Fund’s president was Dr Moses Gaster, Haham (spiritual leader) of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community. These Sephardi Jews were generally more anglicised and affluent than the working-class, Yiddish-speaking communities of the East End. Dr Gaster, who had arrived as a refugee from Romania in the 1880s, seemed equally at home in both communities.
Jewish New Year card, [1886–1939].
_UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, GASTER/1/A/MEN/10_

A card to celebrate the Jewish New Year, sent to Dr Moses Gaster and/or Lucy Gaster by M P Mendoza. Mendoza and his family attended the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Bevis Marks in Aldgate.

New Year card, [1890–1939].
_UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, GASTER/1/A/SOL/3_

A card for the Jewish New Year sent to Dr Moses Gaster and/or Lucy Gaster by Emma Solomon. This card, designed and printed by Raphael Tuck & Sons, seems to have been intended for the secular New Year, but a greeting in Hebrew has been added in gold ink.

Menu (Bar Mitzvah), 1909.
_UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, GASTER/1/A/MEN/10_

A menu for a dinner at Bonn’s Hotel in Whitechapel to celebrate the confirmation (i.e. Bar Mitzvah) of Jacob, son of Mr and Mrs A J Mendoza. This document illustrates the busy social life of Dr Moses Gaster and his wife Lucy, who attended many family celebrations and communal events. Members of the established anglicised Jewish community often used English terms to describe events in the Jewish religion, such as “confirmation” for Bar Mitzvah or ‘initiation’ for Brit Milah (circumcision).
Letter from the Trades Advisory Council regarding wartime food regulations in relation to the baking of challah, 1945.

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, TAC/C

In order to counter the activities of the British Union of Fascists and other bodies in the 1930s, in 1936 the Board of Deputies of British Jews, representing the Anglo-Jewish community, created a Co-ordinating Committee (for defence measures). This in turn became the Defence Committee, concerned with social, political and economic matters in which anti-Semitism played a part. As well as addressing defamatory statements the Committee’s work included investigating periodic complaints about economic discrimination. In 1938 an ad hoc committee was set up to advise the Defence Committee on trade practices and related matters. It met infrequently until the outbreak of war in 1939, then was reconstituted in 1940, with the appointment of a Secretariat. For a while it continued as an ad hoc committee, but in 1941 it adopted a constitution as a democratic organisation, based on a membership encompassing Jewish traders, industrialists and professional men. This Trades Advisory Council of British Jewry, generally known as the Trades Advisory Council (TAC), continued under the auspices of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The TAC aimed to strengthen goodwill and to maintain standards of commercial integrity; it also dealt with all questions involving Jews in trade and industry.

Challah is a type of bread eaten on Sabbaths and Jewish festivals. It is made from white flour enriched with egg, and hence did not conform to the bread recipe stipulated by rationing regulations.

Van Oven, Joshua. Letters on the present state of the Jewish poor in the Metropolis; with propositions for ameliorating their condition, by improving the morals of the youth of both sexes, and by rendering their labour useful and productive in a greater degree to themselves and to the Nation, 1802.

- Alexander, L. Answer to Mr. Joshua Van Oven’s Letters on the present state of the Jewish poor in London; in which some of his hasty mistakes are rectified, with a word to P. Colquhoun, Esq. on the subject of the Jews as treated in his Police of the Metropolis … [etc]
- Judaea, Philo. A letter to Abraham Goldsmid, Esq. containing strictures on Mr. Joshua Van Oven’s letters on the present state of the Jewish poor. Pointing out the impracticability of ameliorating their condition, through the medium of taxation and coercion. With a plan for erecting a Jewish college, or seminary, &c.

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Joshua van Oven (1766–1838) was a Jewish educationist and surgeon with a practice in East London. In 1795 the magistrate Patrick Colquhoun published a report on policing and crime in London which drew attention to the numbers of poor, unskilled and unemployed Jews. In letters and meetings with Colquhoun Van Oven proposed a scheme of training for young people and care and support for the old and infirm. He intended the schemes to be funded through Jewish communal taxation and the transfer of some parochial funds raised from Jewish residents. However, the plan received a mixed response from the Jewish community and parishes. It was never put into practice, though it did lead to the opening of the Jews’ Hospital in Mile End in 1807.
This trade union was founded in 1888. Some of the issues on which it campaigned, such as Sunday trading, were of particular importance to Jews who were a large proportion of its membership.

Programme for West Ham Synagogue Hebrew and Religion Classes prize-giving, held at Stratford Town Hall, 1921.

In the late nineteenth century a number of Jews began to move out of the East End to West Ham and East Ham. In 1897 a group of residents decided to hold services for the Jewish High Holy Days in Forest Gate, and to set up Hebrew and religion classes for children. A synagogue was opened in a rented house in 1900, and the congregation’s first minister was appointed in 1903. In 1906 it became the West Ham Associate Synagogue, and a permanent building in Forest Gate was consecrated in 1911. The congregation grew steadily as immigrants moved out of the East End to the suburbs.

Although the congregation was Ashkenazi, the event was chaired by Dr Moses Gaster and the prizes presented by his wife Lucy. This demonstrates the high esteem that the Gasters enjoyed among different sections of the Anglo-Jewish community.
The Soup Kitchen for the Jewish Poor was founded in 1854 in order to provide soup, bread and meat to poor Jews – particularly penniless refugees escaping pogroms in Eastern Europe. Originally situated in Fashion Street, Spitalfields, the soup kitchen moved to Butler Street (now Brune Street) in 1902.


The first Jewish cookery book published in English, this is thought to be edited by Lady Judith Montefiore (1784–1862), the wife of the wealthy businessman and communal leader Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885). The *Manual* demonstrated the compatibility of keeping kosher with gentility. It showed housewives how they could make an elegant meat sauce without butter, while also continuing the rich Jewish culinary heritage. The book also illustrates the author’s view that refined women could combine personal accomplishment with domesticity.
Chadwick Papers

This collection comprises the correspondence, memoranda, pamphlets and newspaper cuttings of Sir Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890), a sanitary reformer and disciple of Bentham. Papers cover the wide range of Chadwick’s interests, particularly police reform, the Poor Law Commission, public health and sanitation, buildings and education. The collection was given to University College London in 1898 through Sir Benjamin Richardson, Chadwick’s biographer, together with some 500 books and pamphlets from Chadwick’s library.

Mr Buckle’s Prize, Awarded by the Council of the Society of Arts, 1873.

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Rules and results of a competition between schools run on a half-time principle, in which pupils received training in industrial or other practical skills in addition to traditional schooling. The prize was awarded to the headmaster who could produce the best results at the lowest cost. Participating in this competition were the industrial schools of Shoreditch and St George’s in the East and the training ships Goliath and Warspite. Such training ships were established in the nineteenth century to provide education and naval training for boys from poor families, with the intention that they would go on to join the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy. Some land-based schools for poor children also included elements of naval drill to improve discipline and physical health.
Regulations for Common Lodging Houses (under the Common Lodging House Act, 1851) situate [sic] within the Metropolitan Police District.

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The industrial revolution and increase in population in the nineteenth century saw people moving to London in unprecedented numbers. By the middle of the century, areas where cheap lodging could be found were dangerously overcrowded. Common lodging houses were among the very cheapest forms of accommodation, in which individuals shared rooms, and usually beds, with multiple other occupants. The 1851 Act required these houses to be registered with the Metropolitan Police (a practice that continued until 1894).

These regulations were a direct response to the poor standards of crowded accommodation and unscrupulous landlords, and acknowledged the threats to public health posed by disease and poor sanitation. They restricted the number of lodgers per room, set out the landlord’s responsibilities regarding furnishing, cleanliness, ventilation and state of repair and gave instructions for what to do in event of an outbreak of contagious disease. The regulations had little real success in effecting change, not least because they did not clearly define what a common lodging house was and therefore who was being regulated. However, they did represent a first attempt to address the problem.


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By the mid-nineteenth century the booming population and lack of seweage and sanitation systems for the capital had led to several serious outbreaks of contagious disease such as cholera and typhoid. The Metropolitan Commission of Sewers was formed in 1848, partly in response to the problem. This report of c.1849 describes the need to build a new drainage system for the city and surroundings. It includes plans for a new sewerage tunnel running west-east to carry away London’s waste. The tunnel was never built, but the map here shows London and environs as far out as Stratford and West Ham with the proposed tunnel marked.

Metropolitan Sewers: Report on the Drainage of Goulston St and neighbourhood, Whitechapel, [1849].

UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, CHADWICK 52

This report has similar origins to the larger, London-wide ‘Report on the Drainage of the Metropolis’ above, but focuses instead on a particular area of Whitechapel. The detailed written report and large coloured plan describe the overcrowded conditions in East London and the problems arising from them, chiefly the threat to public health. The plan shows the locations of businesses and houses with the positions of clean water sources and drainage marked. Both are revealed to be hopelessly inadequate for the number of people living and working within these few streets.
The Newsam Library holds 27 Special Collections of books and pamphlets as well as archive materials ranging in date from 1797 to the present day. All aspects of teaching, learning and education are covered. These include personal libraries such as the Hayward Collection and materials published by educational bodies.

A Special Meal. Galt for ILEA, [1980].
NEWSAM LIBRARY ARCHIVE ILEAP93

The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), a local education authority for the City of London and the 12 Inner London boroughs from 1965–90, ran a Learning Resources Branch to create materials for use in schools and provide in-service teacher training. One of a series of ‘celebration jigsaws’ depicting multi-cultural family events across London, this depicts the meal marking the Jewish Sabbath eve on Friday night.

Grant, Clara E. Farthing Bundles. London: Clara E Grant, c.1930.
NEWSAM LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS HW228

Clara Grant (1867–1949) was a primary school teacher and the founder of the Fern Street Settlement in Bow Street in London’s East End. This book, self-published by the author, was given to Dr Frank Herbert Hayward (1872–1954), a District Inspector of Schools for the London County Council; he worked tirelessly for 32 years for the cause of elementary education in the poorest districts of East London. It bears the inscription ‘A little token of deep appreciation of all that Dr Hayward has done for education – Clara E. Grant’, Fern St, Settlement, New Year’s Day 1930) and a note added in Hayward’s writing reads, ‘My little “Celebration” of my retirement’. Grant also dedicated her book to her “little mates” who have enriched my life and its relationships’. Glued to the boards of the copy are three tiny booklets, 11 x 8 cm; these are the annual reports of the Fern Street Settlement for 1931, 1932, 1933 and 1935. The book is autobiographical and includes chapters on Chapmanslade, Wiltshire where Grant was born, her time at the teacher training college in Salisbury and a study of ‘Poplar, its people and its poverties’. It received favourable reviews in the press, with the Chairman of the Education Committee describing it as ‘a combination of history, humour, commonsense and deep thought – provocative, suggestive, inspirational’.

Clara Grant is best known for the changes she made as head teacher at an infants’ school in Bow (now known as the Clara Grant Primary School on Knapp Road) to improve the lives of the children under her care. This included providing hot breakfasts and sometimes even supplying the children with clothing. She also founded the Fern Street Settlement nearby where she became known as the ‘Bundle Woman of Bow’ for the famous bundles of toys she sold to children for a farthing (one-quarter of an old penny), made up of ‘very human things such as children love’:

Tiny toys of wood, or tin, whole or broken, little balls, doll-less heads or head-less dolls, whistles, shells, beads, reels, marbles, fancy boxes, decorated pill boxes, scraps of patchwork, odds and ends of silk or wool, coloured paper for dressing up, cigarette cards and scraps.

The ‘Farthing Bundles’ proved to be so popular that queues on the day of the sale started at 6.45 am. Not able to keep up with demand, a wooden arch was constructed in 1913 so that only the children short enough to go underneath it could purchase them. The bundles continued to be sold until 1984.

The Fern Street Settlement continues to operate today as a local community centre.
These are two directories of courses that provided apprenticeship training for boys and girls. The books were produced to help parents place their children in good situations. They are provided with information on health considerations for the various trades and prospects that these might offer, to enable them to advise their offspring accordingly.

Further information on training, apprenticeship, indentures and premiums, wages and rates is also given – all for the price of one shilling! The different training schools are listed by geographic location within London.

The second volume, for girls, was compiled in conjunction with the Women’s Industrial Council. It includes information on training available in day trade schools, domestic economy day schools, evening trade classes, art and craft schools and in domestic services, clothing, leather trades, stationery and printing, upholstery and others listed under “miscellaneous trades”. The boys’ directory includes information on building, clothing, designing, glass, leather, metal, precious metal, wood-working, printing and allied trades, and other miscellaneous trades.

Both volumes include the various Acts relevant to the trades, for example the Factory and Workshop Acts, Bye-Laws on the employment of children and street trading (boys’ volume) and the Laundry Act, Truck Acts, Women’s Compensation Act, Shop Acts, Employment of Children Acts, Trade Boards Act and the National Insurance Acts (girls’ volume).
Photographs of children at the Phoenix Open Air School, Bow, [1950s].
NEWSAM LIBRARY ARCHIVES ABB/A35/11 AND ABB/A/27/38

1949 saw the Ministry of Education merge two departments to form the Architects and Buildings Branch (A&B). The A&B Branch brought together the relevant personnel for researching and producing the built environment for education on a nationwide scale. The A&B archive, unique in its breadth, illustrates a wide range of subjects. It exists not only as a documentary record of the Branch’s activities and the construction of schools, but also of changes in styles of education. The archive includes ideas about child-centred learning, planning, furniture, colour in schools, landscape, sociology, social history, post-war changes in secondary education, the secondary modern, vocational and technical education, construction styles and system builds, gender stereotypes and many more.

These images show the Phoenix Open Air School in Bow Road during the early 1950s (Architects Farquharson & McMorran). The design of open air schools was based on the concept that fresh air, good ventilation and exposure to the outside contributed to improved health, and that they would help to prevent and combat the widespread rise of tuberculosis that had occurred in the period leading up to the Second World War. The schools were mostly built away from city centres, sometimes in rural locations, to provide a space free from pollution and overcrowding.
Additional items from Special Collections


Special Collections holds the most comprehensive body of manuscripts, notebooks and personal papers of the author George Orwell (real name Eric Blair, 1903–1950). The collection was presented on permanent loan by his widow Sonia on behalf of the George Orwell Archive Trust in 1960, and has been subsequently enhanced. Today the archive includes around 2,000 books including proof copies, significant editions and translations of his work.

Finally published in 1933 as ‘Down and out in Paris and London’, this was Orwell’s first full-length work. It powerfully describes his own experiences of living as a tramp in several locations, including East London.

Punch’s Pocket Book for 1865.

Part almanac, part calendar and part diary, ‘Punch’s pocket books’ were published yearly from around the 1840s to the 1880s. They are noted for their fold-out frontispiece illustrations, which are in the same style as ‘Punch’ magazine cartoons. The almanac section included lists of ‘London amusements’ such as museums, theatres and gardens, with opening times and directions. This pocket book belonged to Maria Sharpe, who in 1865 was 14 and living with her family at Highbury Place in Stoke Newington. The Sharpes were a prominent upper middle-class nonconformist family. Maria went on to become secretary of the Men and Women’s Club and to marry another of its members, Professor Karl Pearson (a statistician and geneticist at UCL from 1884 to 1933).
References


Articles from the *Jewish Chronicle*:


Acknowledgements

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