

HERITAGE EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

NEW IDEAS FOR THE PAST....

2004 was a year that saw a steadily increasing number of schoolchildren experiencing Heritage at first hand in the borough. This was the result of many new initiatives developed by Heritage staff. These included four new loan boxes containing original artefacts, historical photographs with Teachers' notes and computerised resources. An increased outreach programme on



subjects as varied as 'Barking Abbey' and 'Holidays in the Past' as well as in-house activities such as exhibitions and talks were introduced. This newsletter contains articles detailing some of these new developments.

In 2005 we hope to expand Heritage services to schools and we would be pleased to hear any suggestions which could help improve Heritage provision.

Hands on History.....

One of our borough schools is named Dorothy Barley and whilst many people will know of the school probably few know much about the life of its namesake. Through a newly developed scheme of work for KS3 pupils, resulting from collaboration between the Borough Archivist Judith Etherton, the History Advisory Teacher Gillian Gillespie, and the Head of History at the Jo Richardson Community School Andrew Martin, students have discovered more about Dorothy Barley. She was the last Abbess of Barking Abbey and was there during the turbulent years of the abbey's dissolution. The scheme of work includes three main areas for students to investigate. Firstly, life in the abbey with a particular focus on the nuns' everyday lives, secondly, the destruction of the abbey and thirdly, the importance of this religious house both nationally and locally in Tudor times.

During the Autumn Term of 2004, Andrew ran the project in his school. As part of the scheme Y8 students were asked to gather information from primary sources and make judgements from them. The objective was for pupils to evaluate the sources, record their findings and reach conclusions concerning the religious complexities of Tudor England. Students benefited from working in small groups to research and formulate their ideas and then presented these views through whole class discussions. These activities encouraged students to explore and develop their historical skills.

Student feedback regarding the work undertaken was positive and many were amazed to discover that their local area once had one of the most prestigious abbeys in the country. The highlight for most was the opportunity to handle and examine a 400 year old parchment document. Over the next few months a final scheme of work will be produced and made available for all secondary schools. So watch this space!

Issue 8
Spring 2005

IN TOUCH WITH BARKING AND
DAGENHAM'S HERITAGE.

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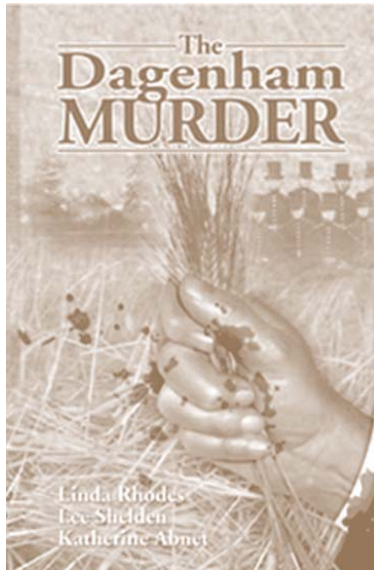
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Young archivists at work wearing cotton gloves to protect the valuable documents!

A Murder Mystery at Eastbrookend.....

A 20 year-old Dagenham policeman, George Clark, went on duty at 9pm on Monday 29th June 1846. During the night he was brutally murdered, yet nobody has ever been convicted of the crime. Many articles about the case have been written, but



the soon to be published book, *The Dagenham Murder* is the first full-length study. Back in 1976, Lee Sheldon, a pupil at Eastbrook School was looking for ideas for a school project when he read about the murder in the *Dagenham Post*. Since then he has done an immense amount of research, and over the last two years in collaboration with Katherine Abnett and myself has discovered even more.

Since the main characters in the case were mostly working class who left no diaries, letters or wills, we had to gain much of our information from the public records. George Clark came from the tiny village of Battlesden in Bedfordshire, where he lived with his parents and sisters. Lee has traced descendants of Clark's family. One of them had never heard about the murder although he, his father and grandfather were all called George!

Clark worked at Stepney Police Station, before transferring to the sleepy village of Dagenham just six weeks before his death. Why was he sent to Dagenham? The *Times* stated that officers from Stepney had been redeployed because of threats by local villains. Essex newspapers, however recorded that George had been transferred to replace Dagenham policemen dismissed for the violent assault of a stableman from the Cross Keys.

In order to re-create Clark's beat we studied the inquest statements, the 1844 Dagenham tithe map and the 1860s OS map. His route started at the Four Wantz Junction, then continued to Eastbrookend, Tanyard Lane (now part of Rainham Road

North), Frizlands Lane and Oxlow Lane. Lee re-traced Clark's footsteps, walking at the regulation 2 ½ miles an hour, to make sure the times matched! The policeman's savagely mutilated body was found in a cornfield at Rush Green, and we discovered that today this area is part of Barking College's car park!

Clark's colleagues lied at the inquest and therefore became prime suspects. Sergeant William Parsons went off duty on the 29th June at midnight, six hours earlier than normal, having indulged in a heavy drinking session in Romford. He persisted in denying his actions, and persuaded his constables to lie under oath. Parsons was arrested but escaped, and we have an entertaining newspaper account of how he was recaptured at the Steam Packet Beer House in Lincoln by two policemen disguised as labourers. Parsons was eventually acquitted of conspiracy and disappeared. By using the Internet we discovered that he emigrated to British Columbia, eventually running his own hotel.

The other Dagenham policemen didn't fare so well. Isaac Hickton and Thomas Kimpton were convicted of perjury and sentenced to seven years' transportation. Neither actually went to Australia, and served their sentences in British prisons. Their colleague Abia Butfoy was committed to the Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum a few years after the murder, and died aged 43. A doctor's report shows that he was haunted by Clark's death as 'during the night he is frequently restless - shouting in his sleep crying 'Murder, Murder''

In 1858, twelve years after Clark's death, a Mrs Mary Ann Smith came forward to say that four men, including her former husband, William Page, had killed Clark after he caught them stealing sacks of corn from a barn at Eastbrookend Old Hall. Two of the four suspects were dead, one having hanged himself and another having gone to Australia. The only one brought to trial was George Blewitt, who had been a horse keeper at the time of the murder. The Grand Jury heard the evidence against him at the Essex Summer Assizes but rejected the accusations, and Blewitt walked free.

Many other theories have been put forward since then. Was it mistaken identity? Had Clark made enemies back in Stepney? He was popular with young ladies and so was he killed by a jealous husband? He was a religious man, therefore did his colleagues silence him in case he reported them for corruption? Or was Mrs Smith right all along about her husband and his friends? Read the book and decide for yourselves!

To purchase a copy of the book, please contact the Local Studies Library on 020 8270 6896.

Linda Rhodes, Local Studies Librarian.

This publication will enhance the KS3 Local Study Unit 'Why was PC George murdered in Dagenham in 1846?' which is based on his murder. This has been developed by the CIAS and is available on the Schools Intranet. The enquiry is a fully approved piece of Edexcel coursework and will provide an excellent introduction to GCSE skills for KS3 pupils.

Heritage treads the boards!



Moving to the Becontree Estate

songs, which we felt, would be suitable. We had some ideas but a big thank you has to go to Gillian who helped to write the play's script. Using the letters 'Hunters Hall' we traced back the history of the school site and area. Through narration, songs, dances and role-play we passed on a great deal of information about local history to Y2 parents and the rest of the school. A PowerPoint Presentation of historical photos helped to bind the play together.

The children learnt about important local events and people who settled in the area. Although some of our famous locals include Captain Cook, Elizabeth Fry, Dudley Moore and Archbishop George Carey I think they were most impressed with our famous footballers! But who can blame them when the impressive list of celebrities includes Bobby Moore,



I'm forever blowing bubbles

Martin Peters, Alf Ramsay, Terry Venables and Sir Trevor Brooking!

The Y2 children learnt an incredible amount through this venture and had great fun performing the play. Parents and grandparents commented on its content and said that they too had learnt a lot. A number of parents even attended two performances not only to see their children but also to learn more about their home borough.

I am certain that this project has helped the children to be proud of Barking and Dagenham, which I feel is so vital for their self-esteem and future development.



Plough the fields and scatter at Hunters Hall Farm

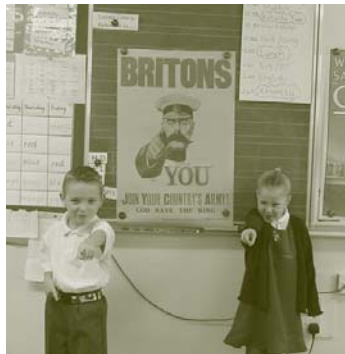
**Una Henderson
Assistant Headteacher
Hunters Hall Primary School**

Launch of new loan boxes



Between the 1st and the 12th November, Rush Green Infants School borrowed a new loan box based on 'Remembrance' from Valence House Museum. Year 2 found the resources extremely interesting and were able to handle artefacts including medals, a china cenotaph and trench art as well as to talk about the photographs, postcards and posters included in the loan box.

After the two-minute silence on Remembrance Day, many children shared tales from grandparents about their experiences during the war years. The loan box also opened up opportunities to discuss present day wars.



WHAT'S ON IN HERITAGE?

LOCAL HERITAGE SOCIETIES

Barking and District Historical Society - Meetings held first Monday of every month on various historical themes. Meet 7.45 pm at Salvation Army Citadel, Ripple Road, entrance in Morley Road. 020 8591 2835

Chadwell Heath Historical Society - Meetings held fourth Wednesday of every month on a variety of topics of historical interest. Meet at 7.30 pm at Forsters Close Hall, Forsters Close. Contact: 020 8599 9805

East of London Family History Society - Meetings held third Wednesday of every month on local historical topics. Meet at 6.45 pm at Salvation Army Citadel, Ripple Road, entrance in Morley Road. Contact: 020 8590 9694

HERITAGE SITES

Eastbury Manor House - Visitors' Day - first Saturday of every month - A themed family day with entertainment and activities. Heritage Day - second Saturday of every month. Explore the house with a guided tour, visit the tea room and gift shop. Contact: 020 8724 1000
Forthcoming events: **8th January** - 'Eastbury Tells a Story', **5th February** - 'Love is all Around', **12th February** - Heritage Day, **5th March** - 'Twist and Shout', **12th March** - Heritage Day.

St. Margaret's Parish Church - Open every Saturday - 10 am - 12 pm. Contact: 020 8594 2932.

Valence House Museum - Including gift shop, café, and herb garden open every Saturday - 10 am - 4 pm. For details of tours and special events, contact: 020 8227 5293.

The next issue will focus on a new intranet

Living History

As part of the Remembrance Commemorations in November 2004 Les Perry, a veteran of D-Day returned to his old school after an absence of 73 years!!! His visit added an extra dimension to the session as the children listened to the memories of this former pupil about his old school and wartime experiences.

Why not follow the example of Eastbury Infants and invite an ex-pupil into your school? There are many opportunities within the history curriculum for local residents to share their memories. Why not investigate this further by researching people connected with your school - teachers, dinner ladies, parents and grandparents. We are sure that this oral history will enrich your pupils' understanding of the past.



COMING UP IN THE SUMMER ISSUE...

resource based on life in Dagenham Village in the 1920s. The site and materials provided have been jointly produced for schools by the Heritage and English CIAS Teams.

