



HERITAGE of LONDON TRUST

NEWSLETTER: Autumn 2008

News from the Office

After months of preparation, the East London Heritage Trails Weekend in mid-September was a triumph. We are especially grateful to everyone who made it possible, from the buildings who welcomed many visitors and put on displays and talks, to the walk leaders and booklet designers.



Cathy Cartwright takes a group on a walking tour of Mile End, September 14th, 2008

Photograph by Mr William Scaldwell

We have had a great deal of positive feedback from this event, and we hope it will be viewed as a valuable educational experience that will highlight the heritage of East London and Tower Hamlets for years to come. We would like to host a similar event in another Olympic borough in 2010, but this will be dependent on securing funding. If you require additional trail guides, a small number are still available from the office – just send a self addressed, stamped (66p) envelope to the address below.

Martin Drury stepped down as Chairman in October – our able and accomplished Trustee Bridget Cherry has taken up the reins in his place. Bridget headed up the *Buildings of England* for many years, and was instrumental in ensuring that the East London Heritage Trail guidebook was completed in time for the weekend in September. We are thrilled to have her on board to help us with the challenges of the year ahead. Trustee Derek Lutyens has also joined our office team, taking on the difficult task of sorting out financial issues and

keeping the books up to date. We'd also like to thank our latest volunteers, Jane Alexander and Nishat Sattar, for assisting with the occasional special project and event. We do very much rely on the support and goodwill of our friends, volunteers, and trustees to keep the Trust a successful enterprise, and we are very grateful for the help we have received from all of you over the past year.

After almost 18 months of fundraising, the newly restored Minnie Lansbury Memorial Clock was unveiled in Bow on October 16th. Actress Angela Lansbury sent a message of congratulations, and Minnie's family were on hand to celebrate. News clippings and photographs of the event can be viewed on our website, which is regularly updated.

Royal Tour of the East End

On September 24th, 2008, the Trust's patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO, visited some of our projects in the East End and south London.



HRH The Duke of Gloucester (left) with the Mayor of Greenwich at St George's Chapel, Woolwich

Photograph by Mr Simon Hildrew

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Accompanied by Trust Director Diana Beattie, Vice President Julian Spicer, and HOLT Ops Director Laura Norris, the Duke visited 810 High Road, Tottenham, St John on Bethnal Green, St George's Chapel, Woolwich, and Chislehurst Golf Club, Bromley. It was an opportunity for the Duke to see first hand some of our current projects and meet the local people who care for these historic buildings. The Duke inspected the

ruins of St George's Chapel, Woolwich, viewing the stunning gold mosaic of St George and the Dragon in the apse – the Heritage of London Trust has agreed a grant of £5,000 towards its eventual restoration, which will take place once a scheme for a new protective roof for the apse is completed. Further details of the Duke's visit can be found on our website.

Completed Projects

Alexis & Elizabeth Emma Soyer Monument, Kensal Green Cemetery



*Soyer Monument during restoration
Photograph by Mr Nicholas Mellersh*

Alexis Soyer (1810-1858) was Britain's first celebrity chef. Born in France, he made England his home, and became head chef at the Reform Club. He is best remembered today for his efforts to improve army catering in the Crimean War, where he invented a special travelling stove. It continued in use with the Army Catering Corps until the late 20th century. He wrote best-selling cookery books, and some of his sauce recipes were mass-produced by the food company Crosse & Blackwell.

His wife, the painter Elizabeth Emma Soyer (née Jones), died in childbirth in 1842. Alexis focused his grief into constructing a magnificent tomb in her memory – the Portland stone statue of Faith once held aloft a cross, while sweet cherubs flanked a portrait roundel of Elizabeth. Elaborate curved iron railings surrounded the tomb, which was illuminated by a "jet of gas-light". Soyer was buried next to his wife in 1858.

This monument has been a concern of the Trust since 1998, when the first plans to restore it were put forward – by then the railings had been removed, parts of the sculptures had been broken off or vandalised, and the sculptures were darkened by pollution. After many years of fundraising, the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery and the Reform Club were finally able to commence a full restoration, which has seen the sculptures cleaned and restored – there are still plans afoot to reinstate the iron railings. The Trust gave £6,866 towards this restoration project, and we are so pleased that this monument can once again be appreciated.

Society of Friends & Events

The Duke of Gloucester was not the only one inspecting our current projects – HOLT friends had an equally successful tour, taking in Crossness Pumping Station, Chislehurst Golf Club and St George's, Woolwich on October 21st. It is our intention that there should be further such visits in the year ahead – what better way to see how your membership money is being spent?



*Miss Jane Alexander (left) and Mrs Annika Flower,
Westminster Palace reception, October 30th 2008*

Friends also enjoyed a unique evening of tours and drinks in the Members Dining Room at the Houses of Parliament on October 30th. This was graciously arranged by Sir Patrick Cormack, MP, Chairman of the All Party Arts and Heritage Group. It was a lovely evening in awe-inspiring surroundings. In early 2009 we are planning interesting new events, including a visit to the Marianne North Gallery, Kew, a walk in Limehouse, and possibly another lecture. Until then, Happy Holidays!

Tara Draper-Stumm, November 2008