

Notes from an illustrated talk given by Fiona Price of Lambeth Archives at the AGM of the Cleaver Square, Cleaver Street and Bowden Street Residents Association and Neighbourhood Watch, 25 November 2009

*NB. Some of the illustrations mentioned in this talk can be found in the Archives photos and files section on this website. Copyright London Borough of Lambeth.*

Cleaver Square is within the Kennington Conservation Area first designated in 1968, boundaries of which were extended 1979 and 1997. The area is characterised by smart terraced housing which developed from the late 18th century onwards. It also incorporates the impressive Duchy of Cornwall Estate, which was laid out in the 1910s to a very high standard of design and layout.

It was the first square of its kind south of the river. Interestingly in 1928 the houses in the square were described as working class houses and flats!

1. Rocque's map of London. There were two editions of Rocque - this is the later one published in 1745. There are many older maps of London but this is one of the most famous.

Kennington means King's town and there seems to have been a palace here since Saxon times.

2. This is a 1636 engraving of a map of the Manor House, Kennington held at Lambeth Archives. It shows the Lodge which replaced the original palace. As history isn't an exact science, H.H. Montgomery in his book "The history of Kennington and its neighbourhood", published in 1889, places the Manor house in Reedworth Street.

There have been many Royal visitors to Kennington over the centuries. In 1016 King Canute is reputed to have brought his fleet through the Parish on a quest to conquer London. Being unable to breach the fortifications near London Bridge (first built by Romans in 50AD) he supposedly widened a ditch and took his boats through from Rotherhithe to Chelsea! (This probably ranks with the Elizabeth I sailing up the Effra to Raleigh Hall story). The ditch is said to have survived for a while, known as Canute's ditch. His son Hardicanute came to a wedding feast in 1041 and died here after the feast. It was a favourite residence of Edward, the Black Prince, and the citizens gave a grand masquerade here for the amusement of his son Richard II. 130 citizens in fancy dress marched from Newgate to Kennington where they danced and feasted then returned via London Bridge. Richard took as his crest the White Hart, hence the street name. In later years he brought his second wife-to-be here, the 7-year old Isabella of France, his "Little Queen" (Charles IV of France's daughter) en route to her lodgings in the Tower of London. Katharine of Aragon stayed here in 1502, after which it seems to have fallen into disrepair.

James I settled the Manor on the Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, and it became part of the Duchy of Cornwall. The survey of the Manor of Kennington in 1615 includes Prince's Meadow up to just north of Stamford Street, East to Vauxhall and West to Bermondsey. We have a microfilm copy of this survey. James I built the Manor house to replace the Palace and this survived until 1875.

3. Image of the Long Barn, Kennington Palace. This is the Long Barn, Kennington, and part of the original royal palace. The Long Barn is the only surviving part of the Palace at this time and was pulled down in 1795. According to H.H. Montgomery, in 1706 this had been used as a kind of workhouse to house Palatinate Protesters (Huguenot refugees from Louis XIV's France); and, of course there was later a Victorian workhouse in Prince Road (Black Prince Road.). The Manor of Kennington surveyed in 1615 included Prince's Meadow in the North and the land between Black Prince Road and Vauxhall. The Manor House was probably built early 1600s to replace the old Palace. This was pulled down in 1875. This engraving by T. Allen is from a contemporary drawing for his History of Lambeth, published in 1826.
4. Kennington Turnpike. This formed one of the gateways into London, the Toll gate being among some of earliest images we have of the area. *Kennington Turnpike 1825*, (Copy of watercolour by G.Yates (1825), original held by donor, W.Plowden.) showing the toll gate and house. These roads were turned into turnpikes in 1717 until the system was abolished in 1873. The church in the background is St. Marks Church, built in 1824 as one of four Waterloo churches erected to give thanks for the return of peace. It was damaged during World War II then restored in 1949. The church stands on the site of the Kennington Gallows. Many executions took place there – for example in 1678 Sarah Elston was burnt to death for the murder of her husband. The Common was a meeting place for many demonstrations but possibly the most well known was the Chartists' rally of 1832. In 1848 the Common became a park. The subsequent loss of cricket pitches on the Common in turn, led to the release of the Oval from a market garden to a cricket venue. The Surrey cricket club was formed at "The Horns" and secured permanent tenure of the Oval. In the 1750s there were very few houses in the Parish but after Westminster Bridge opened in 1753 much development happened, especially along the old Roman route of Stane Street in the Kennington Park area. There was a lot of Georgian development – stretches of this ribbon development remain in Kennington Park & Kennington Roads. South Lambeth Road also developed at this time but areas like Harleyford Street were developed later after Vauxhall Bridge was opened in 1816. In 1764 lamps were placed across St Georges' Fields. The erection of St Mark's and the houses built on Camberwell Road and Brixton Road brought people to the area and the Parish was defined as separate from St Mary's.

This was the era of the Pleasure Garden in London and the best known of these was in Kennington. Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens (Spring Gardens) were open from about 1732 to 1859. Mr Juba danced here – one of earliest images of black people in Lambeth. Surrey Gardens were also quite close. \_

**Now I will talk about (and show illustrations of) sources available for those interested in finding out more about the history of the area and their own homes.**

### Sources

Lambeth Archives houses a topographically based collection, not political or industrial – the common denominator for all the collections is a sense of place. On a visit to the Archives allow plenty of time. There are a few rules; pencil use only, no food & drink in the search room, take notes (remembering to note sources), bags and coats must be put away. There is limited access at certain times, commonly on a Saturday. We do have an Open Day every year where we showcase some aspect of our collection with exhibitions, talks, films, etc.

1. **On-line sources** Censuses; British History on-line has Survey of London, Victoria County Histories and lots of other material.
2. **Street directories.** Alphabetical by street and Trades, and Businesses. Central London, Surrey and suburbs. Kelly's Post Office and local directories – earliest 1600s

Mostly 1800s to 1980s. Used for locating, dating and use of buildings. Occupants (owner, tenant or business only – not family), house and premises name

3. **Census returns.** Census taken every 10 years from 1841. 1841 census not as useful as doesn't give date of birth - only age to the nearest 10 years! We have 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 in Archives. 1901 and parts of 1911 available on-line. Gives the whole family so can see if house was in multiple occupation, what living conditions were like, etc .
4. **Rate books** - Rates were collected from 1601 "Act of Elizabeth" which made parishioners liable for a poor rate to support the Parish. Collected by the Vestry (The Vestry was a meeting of clergy and parishioners, originally in a vestry, for the conduct of parochial business). In 1855 Lambeth Vestry was set up as a secular body and precursor to London Borough of Lambeth set up in 1899 and Lambeth Borough Council formed in 1965.

We have rate books from about 1700-1873 and Streatham 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Give: Property owner, occupier; Property use – domestic or business; Useful for Dating of property.

5. **Electors registers** We have Lambeth, Streatham & Clapham – 1832 to date with gaps. Not taken 1940-1944 inclusive. Early registers are in name order only within Parliamentary division. More recently it is possible to opt out of public register so registers are of limited use again since c2002. Only show people eligible to vote but does show addresses and occupants. Property type and use if dwelling house, multiple occupancy, etc. Dating of property via occupancy
6. **Archives** - House deeds & leases, etc - large collection called the Surrey Deeds collected by Wm Minet.; Wills; Parish Records; Sales particulars – small collection of sales particulars; Manorial Records - Kennington Manor records mostly in the archives of the Duchy of Cornwall but we have a few items.
7. **Photographs and other images.** Invaluable resource. Available to the public via the Landmark website and postcard collections
8. 0482 Cleaver Square in 1955 showing northern part of square with trees. Stenton Covington, benefactor who lived in Gibson's Hill, Norwood helped with the purchase of the centre of the square by the Council in 1927. Sometime after this the tradition of playing games in the centre was established.
9. 05470 The entrance to Cleaver Square at Kennington Park Road showing the name plate and the remains of the old Princes Square sign painted on the wall, just visible. Showing houses in west side of Kennington Park Road. Princes Square derived its name from the two houses built by Michael Searles for Joseph Prince at entrance to Prince's Square in the 1760s. (photos by M. D. Trace)
10. 05458 North-west corner of the square showing houses and the 'Prince of Wales' public house. 1964
11. 0347 Advertisement for a 'Great Drapery Sale' at Axtens, 226-232 Kennington Park Road printed in 1891. The shop was run by the brothers J.C.& J.S.Axten. Adverts can show type of area.
12. Booth map 1890-1900 - shows poverty and affluence in colours. Note the Bishop of Kennington's Palace is yellow (very affluent).

Booth "Life and labour of the people of London, 1899"

London CC Names of street and places 1955 and 1912 with amendments – invaluable

LCC Survey of London Vols XXIII Invaluable for detailed history of buildings and streets.

Area histories – "History of Kennington" by H.H.Montgomery

## Maps & plans

1. Well covered from 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
  - Ordnance Survey & Estate Plans - 1949 OS map will show bomb damage
  - May have drainage and Building plans
  - Show land use history e.g. Milne's Land use– topographical maps
  - Property & Estate development
  - Goad map 1897 and later up to 1950s for insurance purposes detailed many streets of London shows footprint and construction of buildings– unfortunately I couldn't find them in time to photograph
2. Rocque 1741-45 Show how Cleaver Square was laid out on fields
3. Horwood 1792 - 1799
4. Horwood detail 1792 – 1799 Leases granted in 1879 on White Bear Field owned by Mary Cleaver. 36 houses in Cleaver Square by 1797.
5. Stanford 1862
6. Stanford detail 1862. In 1928 houses were described as working class houses and flats.

## Newspapers & periodicals

Events – fires, accidents, etc

The Builder has some plans (Archives has long run

South London Press – long run

Newspaper cutting not dated but before 1937 as still refers to Princes' Square "After a storm of protest by the tenants the London County Council withdraws its plan for development of Prince's Square. " The LCC had plans to compulsorily purchase Cleaver Square and build blocks of flats as with the roads on the North side of the Square. Can see this in the aerial view .

Aerial view 1934 above Kennington Cross with Kennington Lane diagonally crossing Kennington Road left to right. Cleaver Square is in the lower right-hand corner and St Mary-the-Less centre left on Kennington Road. The 'X' at the centre marks the Durning Library.

## Council records

**Street renumbering/renaming files**– tells you what old names and numbers were

Redevelopment brochures for many 20<sup>th</sup> Century estates in Lambeth – shows basic plans for estate and types of dwelling.

Photos taken by Lambeth Planning Department of rear view 40-47 in 1980. To collate the rear extensions policy for the Council. Higher façade visible on roofs, middle of back yards. Close inspection of these photos will yield information about when houses were changed. Many in this square were changed in Victorian times. Apart from the Prince of Wales. Hipped roofs were very fashionable in Georgian times, flanges over the windows. Lots of clues to the history of a property can be worked out just by looking at it.

Photo montage of 1-17 and 38-42 again concerning rear extensions in 1980.

### **Plans**

Prince of Wales pub proposed alterations 1932. Not too many plans, but have some.

### **Civil Defence Records**

Flying Bomb incident. Bomb damage to Pilgrim Glassworks and gasometer, Hayward's Pickle Factory incident. 8th July 1944

Bomb Report Cleaver Square (bomb fell in garden of 42 Cleaver Square, leaving 30' crater 18' deep but house relatively undamaged).

### **Drainage records – a very good source of information**

Drainage plan for section of Kennington Road in 1956 shows businesses - gives a flavour of the area - Reeves bottle washers, Bourne Leather shop. Some interesting businesses in Kennington – Ivory factory, a marmite factory, Heywoods pickles; only existing gin distillery in London

Piece de resistance - Drainage plans for Cleaver Square yielded this map of "an Estate at Kennington Cross property of Henry Bowden, Esq." 1847. Request for drainage plans for Cleaver Square yielded these.

Detail of 1847 map of Cleaver Square. NB. Lambeth Archive has now decided to repair and conserve this map. Shows houses in square and locations of drains. Has not been available for public scrutiny before.

### **A brief administrative history of Lambeth**

From the sixteenth century Lambeth parish was governed by the vestry of St Mary's - the rector, churchwardens and worthy inhabitants. Acts of Parliament were passed, culminating in the 'Act of Elizabeth' in 1601, making parishioners liable for relief of the poor of the parish through a rating

system. This marked the beginning of the local government duties of the churchwardens and the vestry. Over the two centuries they became increasingly responsible for local administration, such as highway maintenance and street lighting. A Burial Board of 9 members was appointed in 1852. Under the Metropolis Local Management Act of 1855 a new authority was created. The new Lambeth Vestry was a secular body, although the rector and churchwardens were ex-officio members. Vestrymen were elected for a limited period from inhabitants with property qualifications. Separate bodies of commissioners were set up as a result of the vestry's adoption of the Public Libraries Act in 1886 and The Public Baths and Wash-houses Acts in 1890. Responsibility for burials, baths and washhouses was transferred to the Vestry in 1894.

Local vestries were disbanded by an Act of 1899 and superseded by twenty-eight metropolitan borough councils. The Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth consisted of the area covered by the ancient parish of Lambeth plus a small part of the adjoining parish of Camberwell. The London Borough of Lambeth was formed in 1965 by a merger of the Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth with parts of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, namely Clapham and Streatham.

### **Poor Law Unions**

The Lambeth Board of Guardians was constituted in 1834, covering only the parish of St Mary Lambeth, and remained until 1928. Records are held at the London Metropolitan Archives. Clapham and Streatham were part of the Wandsworth Poor Law Union and records are held at Wandsworth Local History Library and the LMA

### **Lambeth Archives Department**

The Minet Library opened in 1890, a gift to the vestries of Lambeth and Camberwell from William Minet, a Huguenot antiquarian and philanthropist who had built the library as part of the Minet Estate. The Library was administered jointly by the vestries, and later metropolitan boroughs of Lambeth and Camberwell until 1956, when sole responsibility passed to Lambeth. William Minet donated his collection of books, prints and manuscripts relating to the history of the whole of the pre-1888 County of Surrey, which included Lambeth, Wandsworth and Southwark. His collection became known as the Surrey Collection and formed the basis of what is now Lambeth Archives Department. The contents of the collection have increased steadily over the last 100 years to form one of the largest local authority archive and local history libraries in London. The department is recognised as an official repository for council, manorial and certain public records.