

Mile End to Liverpool St February 15th, 2018

Mile End station Mile End was recorded in 1288 as *La Mile ende*. It is formed from the Middle English 'mile' and 'ende' and means 'the hamlet a mile away'. The mile distance was from the toll booth, situated where Whitechapel Road now meets Sidney St and Cambridge Heath Rd, to Aldgate in the City of London, where in 1381 Peasants Revolt Jack Straw & 60,000 Essex men camped here. Whitechapel and Mile End Roads are on the ancient London to Colchester Road. In around 1691 Mile End became known as Mile End Old Town because a new unconnected settlement to the west and adjacent to Spitalfields had taken the name Mile End New Town.

Opposite the station is **Onyx House**, designed by Piers Gough, which stands in the footprint of Essex House which flourished 1891-1905 as the Guild of Handicrafts inspired by William Morris.

Southern Grove - past the former Whitechapel Union Workhouse.

Tower Hamlets Cemetery - opened in 1841, one of London's "magnificent seven" Victorian burial grounds.

The first public cemetery in London was established in 1827 in Kensal Green, a 79-acre site, which had separate chapels for Anglicans and Dissenters. Other landscaped public cemeteries were soon opened at Norwood (1837), Highgate (1839), Nunhead (1840), Abney Park, Stoke Newington (1840), and Tower Hamlets (1841).

Monuments include:

- one to Charles Brown, a flamboyant publican –“the uncrowned King of Limehouse” – whose funeral attracted more than 10,000 mourners,
- local mayor, MP and trade unionist Will Crookes who “lived and died a servant of the people”.
- the Poplar War Memorial remembers the 190 local residents killed in World War II air raids.

Leave via **Hamlets Way & Brokesley Street**.

Note the former **St Clement's Hospital**, with its Italianate towers and railings dotted with shields, awaiting redevelopment. Originally built as the City of London Union Workhouse in 1849, it later became the

Bow Infirmary serving the elderly and poor and from the 1930s a mental health hospital.

Coborn Street – blue plaques commemorate music hall star Charles Coborn (who changed his name from McCallum) – famous for *Two Lovely Black Eyes* and *The Man Who Broke the Bank of Monte Carlo* – and on No 30 Dr Barnardo's first London lodgings.

Inset into 20 **Morgan Street** opposite, a boundary stone marks the outer extent of Mile End Old Town [MEOT]. This was a hamlet that stretched from Whitechapel to Bow. Originally the "Mile End" toll-gate stood near Sidney Street, one mile from Aldgate, but as housing extended eastwards the name became associated with this area.

Tredegar Square created in the 1820s on land owned by Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar. In 1875, brush manufacturer Henry Wainwright of No 40, killed his mistress and buried her under his shop floor in Whitechapel. He was later caught red-handed as he moved her corpse elsewhere, and was publicly hanged. At No. 24 Lady Margaret Howard established the East End's first Catholic Settlement in 1895

Note a hexagonal **pillar-box**, stamped with a swirling VR and crowned with a sprouting bud; **Central Foundation Girls School** formerly Coopers Company Boys School – see stone shields high up.

Coborn Road was known as Cut Throat Lane until 1800.

Saxon Hall – formerly St Stephens National School: the Duchess of Teck, QEII's Hanoverian great-grandmother, laid foundation stone in 1893.

At No 45 **Sylvia Pankhurst** ran a toy factory with on-site crèche so women could earn a wage making wooden animals, porcelain dolls & black cats from guardsmen's busbies.

Across **Old Ford Road** to **Gunmakers Lane** where the London Small Arms Factory was an important arms producer during the 1914-18 war.

In 1915 **Sylvia Pankhurst** obtained a nearby public house called the Gunmaker's Arms. As an ardent Pacifist, she aptly renamed it the Mother's Arms and used it as a clinic for mothers and babies and as a crèche, which allowed poor mothers to go out and earn some money

to support themselves. Later she also opened a soup kitchen to feed the local poor.

Hertford Union Canal opened 1830. **Chisenhale Studios** were Morris Cohen's veneer works & made Spitfire propellers.

Regent Canal, built 1812-1820. Follow towpath past **Palm Tree** pub and **metal sculptures** of Sylvia Pankhurst, Bow-born Ledley King & a barge horse.

Cross bridge to **Meath Gardens**, opened as VP Cemetery in 1845 & converted to gardens when full in 1894 by the Earl of Meath's Metropolitan Gardens Society. Note **eucalypt for King Cole** (Bripumyarrimin) who died of TB in 1868.

Note Berthold Lubetkin's (designed London Zoo penguin pool & Finsbury Health Centre) Cranbrook Estate [1964] & in **Usk St** Denys Lasdun's **Silkin House** [1952] (designed Keeling House, Inst of Ed & SOAS, National Theatre).

Cross market & along **Roman Rd**, then via **Peary Place** to **Globe Rd** past 2 Victorian pubs to **Sugar Loaf Walk, Victoria Park Square** and **Old Ford Road**.

Note **Museum of Childhood** [opened by Prince of Wales on 24 June 1872], St Margaret's House, **York Hall** [1929] and the Young Foundation (their initiatives have included the Open U, Which? & U3A) in 2 Queen Anne houses including home of Wyndham Deedes (who ran University House Settlement) & his nephew Bill Deedes, ed of Telegraph & butt of Private Eye Dear Bill column.

At **Bethnal Green**, just inside Bethnal Green Gardens by the tube station entrance, note **Stairway to Heaven** commemorating the Bethnal Green tube disaster – 173 people suffocated in 1943 air raid.

St John's Church was designed in 1825 by Bank of England architect Sir John Soane

Bare-knuckle fighter (Daniel) Mendoza the Jew (1764-1836) lived at No 3 Paradise Row and wrote The Art of Boxing here

Follow **BG Rd** & **Seabright St** to **Weavers Fields**. Wilmot Street flats, five storeys high and running the full length of the street, were

built between 1869-75 by the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company, led by social housing pioneer Sir Sydney Waterlow.

Weavers Fields was occupied by weaver's cottages that were central to the Huguenot silk weaving industry (NB Edict of Nantes 1685).

Cross **Vallance Rd (Krays** from 1938) and cut through the gardens of St Matthew's Church (like St Leonard's, Shoreditch designed by George Dance the Elder) & largely rebuilt after being left a roofless shell by 1940 Blitz bombing)

Along **St Matthews Row** on corner of Wood Close is a **Watch House** built in 1754 as a look-out for grave-robbers. By 1792 the guard was paid 10s 6d per week, provided with a blunderbuss & permission to fire it but only after sounding a rattle! (a right still held by the churchwardens) plus a reward of 2 guineas for the apprehension of any body snatchers. It was later used as a fire station.

Cross **Cheshire St** and take the footbridge to **Fleet St Hill**, the **Nomadic Community Garden** and **Pedley St** to **Brick Lane** where brick and tile manufacture, using the local brick earth deposits, began in the 15th century. Brewing came to Brick Lane before 1680, with water drawn from deep wells. One brewer was Joseph Truman, first recorded in 1683.

Cross **Bethnal Green Road** to **Redchurch St & Old Nichol St.**

Club Row once buzzed on Sunday mornings with birds and London's only live animal market.

Boundary Estate, started in 1890 as the world's first council housing, to replace the densely packed Old Nichol Rookery, in the 1880s, London's most notorious slum. The estate, completed by the recently formed London County Council and formally opened in 1900, was one of the earliest social housing schemes built by a local government authority.

Calvert Ave, pass **St Leonards Church** (about 1740. The church is mentioned in the line "*When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch*" from the nursery rhyme *Oranges and Lemons* and is the resting place of many actors from the Tudor period.)

Cross **Shoreditch High St.** to **Rivington Street** and **Curtain Road** where Burbage's Theatre [1576, rebuilt as the Globe in Southwark 1598] and Curtain Theatre [1577] stood. From mid-C19 to the mid-C20, South Shoreditch was the hub of the international furniture trade with prestigious showroom-warehouses in Curtain Road.

Cross **Gt Eastern St** to **Phipp St, New North Place** and **Holywell Row** where the Walbrook River rose and gave Shoreditch ("Sewer Ditch") its name.

Clifton St to **Broadgate, Eldon St** and **Liverpool St Station.**