Miscellaneous 6

Poplar & Limehouse

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Name	Interviewer.	Address.	Page.	Nature of Interview.
Mr. Brown	ALB.	Orchard. House Place. Board School	1 – 13	
J. Harrington	G.H.D.	12 Bowen Street. Crisp St. Poplar.	23 – 31	Master stevedore & jobbing builder: re labourers & public work in Poplar
Oakley	ALB.	33 Devonshire Rd. Greenwich	15 – 21	
Hagon.	A.L.B.	Lunehouse. Philanthropic Society	33 – 34.	
Raymond.	A.L.B.	Poplar. Benevt. Accident Relief. Society	35	
Miss Blatch.	G.H.D.	St. Matthew's. Carr Street Mission	37 – 47.	An account of the Carr St. District & Mission in so far as it lies in St Matthew's Parish.
Wm J. Burrell.			49	Member of the Stepney Lunehouse. C.O.S.

Social Condition

May 25th.

(2)

Interview with Mrs Brown, Orchard House Place Board School.

Mrs Brown is Head Mistress of the Orchard House Place School.

Orchard House Place is a green little corner of this district, almost completely shut off from the rest of London; in shape and character it has strong resemblance to the Isle of Dogs: but it is on a much smaller scale, and is surrounded by the sea instead of the Thames.

Mrs Brown has been here since the School was first started 11 years ago, and is said to be the only person that knows the district thoroughly well.

Mrs Brown is about 60 years of age: she is a kind, motherly old body, with a very sweet face.

The place has been and still is to a

great extent a sort of Alsatia: the people seem to be by nature pirratical and predatory: here the law scarcely runs: a policeman is seldom seen, and in case of need to fetch one from Poplar takes about 25 minutes. The place can hardly be orderly till a constable is stationed there; but at present the police are really afraid to come. The result is that in spite of their thefts (from the docks and wharves) and their disorder few of the inhabitants can get landed in gaol.

The total number of families is 50 and of these not more than 10 are respectable. Few of the men ever do regular work: they prefer to get two or three days a week unloading barges etc: many of the women and girls work in the galvanized iron and sack works. The Thames Iron Works and the two large oil mills hitherto not employ the men. The boys are often employed in cleaning the bottoms of much barges, etc which they earn as much as 15/- a week, and they hitherto not work for

Housing, Sanitation, Health.

less.

Many of the families have been here for 4 or 5 generations: if they at last exhaust the patience of the landlord and disappear for a time they almost always return. The place is of course like a village: full of gossip and scandal. If a stranger is seen the news at once spreads, and boys often run up to the School to tell Mrs Brown that a man with a top hat has been seen, with the kindly idea that she may not be caught napping by an inspector, as they think that she must live in the same dread of authority as they do.

The people generally would not be poor but for their improvidence and shiftlessness: in one way and another they make a good deal of money, but it is spent as soon as made.

The houses are like pig-sties. This is due not to the two landlords, who do their best, but to the character of the inhabitants.

The sanitation till quite lately was abominable;

Religion.

There was no sewer, and the drains went straight into Bow Creek, with the result that at low tide the smells were awful. The authorities seemed to look upon it as indifference on Mrs D's part when she tried to stir them up; but with the aid of Mr Booth's her efforts have been successful and there is now a sewer.

In spite of these drawbacks the place is not unhealthy, partly owing to it's open surroundings. Mrs D. has had much better health here than in Chelsea or Mayfair.

The ground landlord is the Ecclesiastical Commission.

Many of the 50 families take in lodgers and the houses are terribly crowded: from five houses come no fewer than 57 children.

The people are utter heathens. They never dreamed of going to any place of worship. Chandler Brown has done something for them. He has given the place over to Mr Campbell, a Mind Clergyman, who holds a mission twice

Drink.

Education

on Sundays. He is assisted by his sister Mrs Ricardo.

There are four Public Houses, all doing a good trade; the women drink even more than the men. The place has just been swelling in a general mire of horrid scenes of drunkenness.

Before Mrs Brown came the children went not to school at all; people came here with the idea of evading the office. The difficulties of securing attendance have been great, and there is no family which has not had a child sent to a truant school. Few reach the higher standards, and all learn & directly they are 13, get many of them are bright and intelligent. But Mrs B. notices an improvement in the new generation; they are gaining self respect, they begin to wear collars and are ashamed to be loutters. Ever since she came Mrs B. has had evening classes; they are at last beginning to be successful, but the

Marriage.

Relief

lads when they had at first they found quite hopeless.

The new school was opened last year: it is an excellent building, with two admirably good playgrounds.

Marriage is very early: often at 16 or 17: nearly always for pressing reasons. There is a complete absence of parity, and it seems impossible to teach it while there is such herding.

There has been little charitable relief here. Mrs Brown has not been able to afford it, and no one else has been near them. There have been dinners for the children to the number of about 50 a day in the winter. Mrs Brown knows all about each home and takes care that they only go to the right children. Boots too have been sent down and given away but have always been pawned or sold.

Mrs Ricardo is now doing a little in relief

through Mrs Brown, but gives no money.

Mrs Brown is really a most excellent and sensible old lady. In this benighted spot she has evidently been the only civilizing influence and at last her work is beginning to tell. To her young people she is a sort of earthly providence and father confessor, and they evidently have for 'Governess', as they call her, the greatest respect and affection. She finds that harshness does not pay, and rules them entirely by love.

Poverty.

Parish notes 11/8 (2)

May 28th.

Interview with Mr Oakley, 33 Devonshire Road, Greenwich:-

Mr Oakley is Head Master of the Glengale Road Board School, Isle of Dogs. He has been there since 1876, and previously was Head Master for six years of St. John (Isle of Dogs) Voluntary School. During that time he lived on the island.

Mr Oakley is about 50. He is a fluential cheery man, but he was not very productive and much that he told me was mere repetition of previous interviews.

The eastern side of the Island is and always has been better off than the Millwall side. There has been a great improvement in the last three years. The only bad streets are Samuda St, Davis St and Stewart St: from these come all the toothless and badly clad boys in the school.

The Dock work has been more regular lately

Drink.

Housing etc.

Marriage.

and Jamaica business has much increased.

There is a slow improvement. The Bands of Hope are doing good; but there are three times as many houses as wanted.

The new houses when basements are not allowed are all right; but many of the old houses bad.

Mr Oakley has been through three floods. In the first in 1872 his school was in a basement and he and his scholars only just got out in time to avoid being drowned.

The island is wonderfully healthy: the only part it seems to affect seriously is the throat: any new comer suffers from his throat and has to get acclimatized. There are no good voices in the schools.

Marriage is nothing like so easy as it used to be.

Religion.

Relief.

Amusements.

Cowan and his curates are doing excellent work: without any undue influence he gets good congregations, entirely of working people. His activity too has led on the dissenters, who are much more active than they were. So far as Mr O. can judge the influence of the Church is good. They have got hold of many of the rougher boys at the school and have certainly improved them.

Mr O. remembers the time when there was probably not 50 in the three churches in the island on Sunday, and now the two other churches are almost empty. Mr Hewlett is quite past his work, but deserves credit for his schools, which have always been excellent.

For two years there has been no necessity for children's dances at this school.

As noted one hears that the people are football mad; but Mr O. does not think their interest in the game has led to any

increase in the desire for play.

The School has cricket and football teams which have been very successful.

Almost the only place of entertainment the people go to is the Queen's, which used to be fearfully low, but may be improved.

Mr Oakley is a churchman and a man of religious character. He conducts a mission service in French every Sunday.

John Harrington, Builder & master Stevedore

Poor streets & rents.

Drink.

The Irish.

Improvement in Poplar.

Just as much work as formerly.

Miscell
10.11.12
12

(2)

G.H.D

June 4th

Mrs John Harrington. 12. Bowen Street. Crisp Street Poplar. A man of about 65; born in Poplar.

6/- or 7/- per wk for 5 rooms in Sophia & Rook Streets: each house probably has 2 or 3 families. These are the worst streets in Poplar Rough & poor

Increased wages have led to increased drink. Drink is the curse. All the churches try now to do something & do good but it is a drop in the ocean.

Irish poor turn up to mass but they are commended to do so by their church: wishes Anglicans wd. enforce churchgoing in the same way

As a master stevedore he employed many Irish; they are rough but they have a knack of clever stowage When busy his son would employ as many as 80.

Great improvement in the district among the poor. Upper class has moved out. The top is not so rich but the bottom is not so poor.

Just a much work as ever for stevedores. Steamers take larger cargoes & come back quicker than they used to do.

Marriages

Poor. relief.

Criticism of Labour men.

marriages early. about 21 for both sexes. He knows of men who cohabit before marriage and of a perhaps larger number who have connection but it is not by any means the usual thing.

Poor out-relief is given too easily now. Mr. H was in favour of greater latitude formerly when Poplar was a strict Union but he would never have allowed so much ~~so~~ easily as it is given now. He used to be a guardian himself. The old argument was that you did away with self reliance by granting out-relief, this is true if you give too much, but he thinks it used to be pushed too far. Now there is a reaction & guardians have gone to the other extreme. No doubt it is part of the socialist programme of men like Lansbury. Lansbury a great talker, put him up & he will go on for the hour. So will Crooks but Crooks is a better man than Lansbury, a sotterer man, "a trade union man". Lansbury wishes to transfer wealth from

Favoritism.

Labour & strikes

from the pockets of those that have to those that have not & is contented with doing it anyhow. He did not think labour men were satisfactory public workers though somewhat inclined to make an exception in favour of Crooks.
"Labour men are easier to get at; I do not say they are worse than other men; but less temptation will turn them aside than is sufficient for a man in better circumstances. Then they are apt to put the best talkers rather than the best workers into jobs."
Dock work is rather more regular now. Stevedores labourers get 8d an hour for a full day of 9 hours & 1/- per hour overtime. The effect of the Great Strike was to send many of the strikers at once into the workhouse.
"There is much labour that would be employable at lower rates now doing nothing in the workhouse." These labour-men have all been going in for direct labour & the consequence is that a man in the House can't do anything at all; surely it was better to let an old

Car.

Education

Religion

Church work.

Rents.

In Woodstock Rd. rents are about £30 per year. In E. India Dock Rd. they vary from £40 to £60: the tenant in both cases paying rents & taxes.

carpenter or painter do a lot of work rather than allow a lot of outside men come in & do it. These direct labourers are paid by the hour & "hang out the jobs", introducing in-discipline into a place where discipline is sup-posed to prevail.

Education "has turned out a lot of clever boys, no doubt about that, but it has decreased respect-fulness." Wishes religion was taught in the schools "Perhaps I speak with feeling but a man of mine had his head cut open by boys throwing stones on coming out of school." If you gave them some religion boys would be easier to deal with & quieter.

Chandler & Carrol are doing a good deal "These high church fellows" seem to be getting hold of the people. So do the Catholics. He does not hear much of the Nonconformists.

Rents in Bowen Street 9/- per week (Landlord paying rates & taxes) for 6 roomed houses. In Gale Street (Finian barrack group) rents are 6/- or 7/- per week. Population there

Amusements

Mr. Harrington's appearance.

there very rough. Have the reputation of pulling everything to pieces. Houses are let in halves there he thinks, and are occupied by 3 or 4 families.

There are no amusements except the music stall. Public House the great resort. much harm done by spirit drinking. "The labourer's tipple is beer but that of the man slightly above him is whiskey." The whiskey sold is fiery & unwholesome stuff.

Mr. Harrington a man of about 65; a slow & cautious speaker afraid of committing himself: took away a copy of Form E in order to send written answers: born in Poplar: medium height, dark beard turning a yellow grey, baldish head with the long side hair drawn across to conceal its nakedness: was a master stevedore & is a jobbing builder & house owner: has given over the stevedores business to his son who formerly acted as his manager: portly with black shabby waistcoat, frock coat & top hat: very friendly & pleased to think he had given any useful information but afraid it had been too rambling. Now lives at Plaistow. A mild yellowness about the moustache & hair on the lower lip betokened pipe smoking.

June 10th.

Miscell
10.11.12
12

(2)

The Lincoln Philanthropic Society:—

I have called three times on Mr Hason the Sec. of the L. P. S. (twice by appointment) without success, as Mr H. is a family man who appears to be at work from about 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. I imagine hence that there is little or nothing to say about the Society, which has been in existence for 53 years, and is of the old fashioned, tickets distributing character. The whole gist of its operations last year is contained in the following extract from the Report:—

> Four Hundred and Forty recommendation papers for Relief were received, and the cases visited and relieved. The amounts distributed being £90 7s., as against £97 18s. last year.
>
> The detailed amounts of Receipts and Expenditure, duly audited, are appended.

June 16th.

Miscell
10.11.12
12

(2)

The Poplar Benevolent and Accident Relief Society :-

Mr Raymond the Secretary of this Society has also twice disappointed me. The Society is almost similar in character to the Lunchonia, but on rather a larger scale. The following sentences from the Report adequately explain its methods :-

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The Committee of the above Society have the pleasure of presenting to you their 50th Annual Report, together with the statement of accounts for the past year, ending Lady-Day, 1896.

The Society have distributed by Shilling Tickets relief to the amount of £258 16s. 0d., each subscriber having received during the year 15 for distribution. By means of the Pension Fund five old couples and five single persons have received respectively 5s. and 3s. weekly during the winter months, the total sum of money spent in this way being £52 8s. 0d., proving a source of help to many poor families in dire distress. Accident relief to the amount of £1 10s. 0d. was also given bringing up the TOTAL AMOUNT TO £312 14s. 0d.

With the present report concludes the Jubilee Year of the Society. The value of the work that has been performed cannot be over-estimated. The objects and aims of the institution have been so often set forth in these pages that a repetition of them would be superfluous. During the period under review, thousands of people have been relieved, and many a bright ray has penetrated the darkness of homes otherwise given over to the blackness of despair. A reference to the respect board will show that upwards of £8,600, or an average of £172 per annum, has been expended in relief, and mainly by means of one shilling tickets.

Carr Street Mission.

Meetings held in Carr Street.

CS (2)

July 1. G.H.D.

Mrs. Blatch. Mission Woman. St. Matthews. Carr St. Mission. 42 Carr Street.

Has been in the St. Matthews Parish 7 yrs. Here in Carr St. since Xmas.

Mr. Franey is new Scripture Reader in place of Mr. Oldham who left last Xmas & has gone to Hackney.

Mr. Oldham used to reside here.

Mr. Franey lives in 74 Salmons Lane - he has been in the dist. since Xmas. He came from the lay workers in Commercial Rd.

Mothers meeting. 40 on the book. About 20 come regular. Great many mothers have shirt work out from Macintyres in Canal or Copperfield Road.

Children's Band of Hope on Tuesdays.

Working Men's Club. with about 20 to 30 members.

Services.

Some improvement.

The District

Dockers Garden Parties

Sunday Services. nothing in the morning exc. Communion on 4th Sunday in the month at 9.30. am.
gen. get 9 or 10 all women exc. perhaps 1 or 2 men
Sunday School every Sunday at 3. for children, quite 50 come. 8 classes. of 8 or 10 each. The infants have the chapel (part of the premises next door).
Six o'clock service for children. You can get the ch. to morning service here. Parents won't get out of bed: even as it is many ch. come without their dinners.
7 PM service for adults. 18 or 20 come. 3 or 4 being men. The Congregation in every cases is drawn from the neighbouring streets.

District greatly improved. Formerly she hardly dared walk down the street. There is still a great deal to be done. She qualified this about the improvement later: saying 'it was no worse.'
Not much to choose between any spot in this district. Just about the same class in each street or court. Carr St & Eastfield St. no better than Johns Gardens.

Have Garden Parties. "The Dockers Garden Party." one a fortnight or

Childrens Farthing breakfasts.

Nature of the inhabitants.

once in 3 weeks. About 35 come of whom 17 are church men & the rest are wives, sisters - no children. It begins at 7 P.M to 9.30. Entertainment at 8. following a free tea.

In the winter ¼ breakfasts are given. in the Parish room in the York road now. 2 slices of bread & butter & coffee at 8 am. 3 times a week. 3 chn of a family come for ½d. Does not nearly pay its way it is important to make the peopl pay something

Chief part of their men in the district are casual Dockers. coal porters. All are casual. There is no regular worker in the neighbourhood. People move from street to street very often but dont leave the dist.
Mrs Blatch. (working under Mrs Ranae father from Kensington) goes round collecting for a parochial clothing fund. Finds the people very honest. They pay up instalments that have been paid for them. The language in the worst thing in the place. She collected £2 last week.

Many of the men are fishcurers in addition to being Dockers.

Women's work.

Language & Drink the curses.

The tuesdays following Bank Holiday

Other religious work.

Public Houses in the District

Not much immorality in proportion to the number of the people. Great many factory girls employed at Allens Chocolate factory & at Batgers (they go to Bis. and Hill & Jones'. Girls are only fair in character. There is a sewing class for them at the York Road. They are rough. All on piecework. Some are so much quicker than others that earnings vary greatly. The fruit season the busy time.

Language & Drink are the curses of the District. Much women's drinking. Mondays & Tuesdays after Bank holiday are women's days. On the Mondays (Bank holiday) the they are taken out of pawn & they go jaunting. on the Tuesdays they pawn them away again & spend the money on drink.

Cor. Crane's Stall in Samuel Street belongs to Barnados. Have mothers meeting & Band of Hope there.
A little mission in Condor St. belonging to Stepney Temple. Salvation army make no way. Their Chapel used to be a Salvation hall. Have a fair share of thieves here.

The Exmouth arms in Maroon St. (Mrs Anderson) is the best Rept. pub in the neighbourhood. The Cobden

in

Indifference to religion

Roman Catholics

District Visiting

'Comfortable' Doctrine

C.O.S.

in Repton St. is noisy & noted for drunken women. Great many too many pubs in the Dist. Not a coffee house in the place until you come to the other end of Salmons lane.

No antagonism but much indifference to religion. You go & ask them to come to church. They promise right enough & then when the time comes "they have some idle excuse"

Good few Roman Catholics here but "they don't seem to appreciate their religion"

Mr. Llewellyn is a very good man. Has tried every way. Home to house visiting etc. Is most particular that the sick & those who stay away from Sunday school shd be visited. If a child stays away twice he is at once visited. Roll of communicants greatly increased. He is not a "high Churchman" "its what I call comfortable!" There is a surpliced choir but not anything else.

C.O.S. do a good deal. Vicar is on their Committee.

They have a chapel, a working mans club, and a garden in

The importance of clothes to Churchgoers.

Slop work.

Well doing in small ways.

Miss Blatch.

Parish boundaries.

this house. The Chapel was formerly used by the Salvation army. meeting house but the army has so little success that they took it over from them.

Church going & school going are very much a matter of clothes. Women will come to the mission services who would not go to church. In the same way want of clothes makes many children truants. A child with better clothes laughs at those with worse than himself. It is very hard on the widows in the district who have school children - They work away at trousers, shirts and juvenile shirts & hardly gain a living. 'It's enough to make you cry to see them sometimes'. This home work is increasing in the district.

What does most good are the small things. A competition of dried flowers gave a great impetus to the window gardening in the district. You want to give the people an interest that is not the public house.

Miss Blatch is a small spare woman of the servant class. Capable. Brought up in Essex. Probably better able to understand the women of the district for not being too much above them.

The Parish runs up the West side of the canal as far as Marion St (only the S. side) & west as far as White horse St.

Character of population.

Parish 11/18 (2)

July 1st.

Interview with Miss Jane Burrell :-

Burrell

Miss Burrell is a member of the Stepney and District C.O.S.; almoner of the S.P.D. for the Lea District - sec. of the C.H.F., school-board manager etc. She has taken a house in the East India Road to be near her work, but unfortunately, with the idea of saving me trouble, she asked me to call on her at the central office of the C.H.F. in Buckingham St. The room was full of people, and she was evidently very busy, so that I found it impossible to get much of any value. Anything she said applies especially to the Lea St district.

From what she has known of this district has been as bad as possible, and there is little improvement: sometimes she thinks things are better, sometimes not. Bedfield St is as bad as any street in London, and

Drink.

Education

Religion.

nothing can possibly be worse than York Buildings in Marvon St.

As to drink things have certainly been worse during the last year, especially among the women. The people lately have been doing well, and the money all goes in drink.

In spite of the efforts of the officers there is a terrible amount of truancy, and a good many children manage to escape altogether: the people shift so from court to court and house to house. The managers are however effecting a great improvement in the appearance of those who come to school, insisting on their being washed etc. The only school which has a thoroughly low standard is Dr Barnardo's, which has a bad influence: here they make no effort to instil or have decency and regularity.

Miss Burch thinks that these people attend no place of worship; she bases

Relief.

to Edinburgh Castle once to see if they were there, and found a congregation of (apparently) ladies and gentlemen. The only man who seems to have got hold of them at all is Mr Oldham. (Mr Llewellyn is St Matthew's Agent) Scripture reader, who has a Mission in Cow St. Mr Haden's parish was terribly neglected when he came. The last vicar gave the people up in despair and dropped every sort of organisation. Hader, who was formerly a curate at St Ann's (Surdon), seems to be working hard

The district has been rather pauperised by Mr Mary Abbott's Kensington, who took it up and sent a lot of money down. Mr Llewellyn, Lowe, who had the administration of it is finding it necessary to draw in his horns, and is pursuing his relief on stricter lines, though he still gives too many dinners.

Mr Haden then at St Ann's was

Health.

sympathetic with the C.O.S. but now refuses to work with them on the plea that none of his people come up to their standard.

In spite of the conditions under which the people live their health is wonderfully good; ~~among~~ the children especially seem strong and active: lots of lads go up to the Derby every year.