

Poplar, in Domesday times was part of the Manor of Stepney, which belonged to the Bishop of London. The name has been found spelt as Popeler, Popler and Popelar. One of the theories put forward was that the name referred to the number of poplar trees growing in the area, but there is no real evidence to support this. Another theory was that a single tree grew on the rising ground north of the Isle of Dogs, which was visible from the river, providing a sighting point for travellers.

The earliest reference to the manor of Popelar comes in 1396 when the manor was reverted by William de Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, Sir Aubrey de Vere and others to the Abbey of St Mary of Graces, Tower Hill. The land was leased out to various people, among them the Black Prince, who spent some time in Poplar. During this time, the Chapel in the Marsh was built. This little chapel served the people living on the Isle of Dogs, mainly farmers, who during Tudor times successfully farmed the land. The great flood of 1449 caused tremendous damage to the houses and land, and the chapel was abandoned. It was later used as a farm building, and the ruins could be seen until the building of the Millwall Docks in the 1860s.

During the reign of Henry VIII, with the dissolution of the monasteries, the manor remained with the crown, but eventually granted out to various worthy people. There is a lot of confusion regarding the Manor of Poplar and the Manor House of Poplar, which was owned and occupied separately: Sir Gilbert Dethick was granted the Manor House and an acre of land in Poplar by Henry VIII. His son Sir William Dethick was born in Poplar in 1543, and was knighted by James I. William's son Henry in turn played a prominent part in Poplar's affairs. He also contributed to the funds to erect the Company chapel, later known as St Matthias.

Early maps show houses mainly along the High Street, North Street and Bow Lane. Blackwall had dwellings along the Causeway and Cold Harbour. Trade and industry appeared to be mainly connected with the ship yards. That the High Street was the only route from the City of London to Blackwall and served travellers and seafarers journeying to and from the ship yards is reflected in the fact that at one time there were upwards of twenty-seven inns and taverns along the High Street and a further fifteen at Blackwall.

The Hamlet of Poplar and Blackwall first came into prominence with the founding of the East India Company in 1600 and the establishment of its offices at Blackwall twelve years later. Since then the district's history has been largely bound up with ships and shipping.

It was the East India Company who were responsible for Poplar's first church. In 1654 they erected their Poplar Chapel on the north side of Poplar High Street. Some years earlier the company had built a hospital or almshouse

for 'maimed men or relief of orphans or widows' close by. The company maintained the almshouses (rebuilt in 1802) until 1866, when the land was sold to the Poplar District Board of Works, and their chapel transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, when it became the church of the new ecclesiastical parish of St Matthias. The arms of the company can still be seen in the ceiling of the church, which has recently been refurbished by English Heritage and the LDDC and is now used as a Community Hall.

The first of three docks to be built within the parish opened in 1802, when the West India Docks was inaugurated in the presence of Henry Addington, the Prime Minister. On August 4th, 1806, the East India Docks opened against a colourful background provided by the East India Company's second regiment of volunteers, supported by flank companies of two other regiments and some 500 carriages 'with feminine beauty and fashion'.

In the year 1817 the parish of All Saints, Poplar, was created after a petition was made to Parliament by the residents. Until then it formed part of the parish of Stepney, with St Dunstan's the parish church. The first stone of the new parish church, All Saints, was laid by the Bishop of London on 29th March 1821 and the church was consecrated in 1823. It is an imposing and handsome building with a 161 foot high steeple, thought to have been copied from Gibbs. The church was designed by Charles Hollis and built by Thomas Morris of Blackwall, but Second World War damage made it necessary for the interior to be remodelled in the 1950s.

Life in Poplar in the 1820s centred around the High Street, North Street, Pennyfields and Blackwall. East India Dock Road had only recently been constructed and was originally called East India Road. It ran through fields and market gardens from its junction with Commercial Road at Limehouse to the Iron Bridge over the River Lea. The only significant cluster of dwellings was Canton Place on the north side of the road. One of the fine houses here was 'Howrah House', built by shipowner Duncan Dunbar as a residence about 1790, and which afterwards became a convent, when it was bought in 1882 by the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus.

Robin Hood Lane and Naval Row, in the vicinity of East India Docks, had some of the meanest dwellings, and was one of the most densely populated pockets. It also had two warehouses, stables, a carpenters shop and the East India Company's wagon shed.

Nearby Blackwall had numerous houses in Brunswick Street (now Blackwall Way), Cold Harbour and the small adjoining streets. Much of this was swept away in the building of the Blackwall Tunnel, completed in 1897. Further east, along the tortuous sweep of the River Lea a significant habitation had grown up around Orchard House. This close-knit group of families served the Thames Ironworks and the glassworks, as well as the many shipyards of Blackwall.

The Isle of Dogs, which only twenty years earlier had been mainly

marsh land, was now the site of the West India Docks, and the rest was open fields. Millwall Docks would not be built for another sixty years. While a few houses and buildings were dotted along turnings off the High Street, the main area of habitation was on the west side, along Millwall, from the entrance to the docks down to the Ferry House.

The number of houses in the new parish of All Saints in 1818 was quoted by a local newspaper (based on the rate survey) as 1,476 with 7,708 inhabitants. The census figures three years later showed that there were 12,223 inhabitants occupying 2,020 houses. This rapid expansion continued throughout the 19th century.

Although the majority of the population in the 1820s was of the poorer working class, there were also a number of well-to-do and even wealthy families, mainly connected with ship-building and the shipyards. The **Greens** and the **Wigrams** lived at Blackwall for several generations. **Duncan Dunbar**, merchant and ship-builder, who lived at Canton Place, owned warehouses along Narrow Street. His fine ships were all built at Calcutta.

High Street Poplar housed the 'better class' of people. The houses here were larger, the rateable values being from five to seven times as much as those situated in the little side turnings. High Street was the street of taverns, and indeed Poplar and Blackwall boasted of an extraordinary number of inns and taverns, no doubt catering to the itinerant seafaring population. On the south side were the *Green Man*, *Black Horse*, *Spotted Dog*, *Harrow*, *Rising Sun*, *Ship* and *Captain Man of War*, whilst on the north side stood the *White Hart*, *Angel*, *Sun* and *Sawyers*, *Red Lion*, *Green Dragon*, *Old General Blakeney*, *Queen's Head* and the *White Horse*.

An imposing building on the north side of the High Street at this time was **John Stock's** Academy, sometimes known as Poplar College. It had a garden and lawn, with a bath, probably a pool or fish pond, with three acres of land adjoining. It stood to the east of Poplar chapel and almshouses. In Newby Place stood **Ann Newby's** residence, complete with stables, garden and seven acres of land, which she gifted to the parish for the building of the new parish church. On the site of her house there now stands the Rectory of All Saints Church.

Another large building on the south side of the High Street was the Workhouse. The census also indicates a large number of single occupants in the East India Company's Almshouses.

Much of Poplar was still open farmland and market gardens. The survey in 1817 showed **Mary Marchant** with a farmyard and fourteen acres of land in North Street, and nearby **Richard Smith** occupied nine acres. There were others with varying parcels of land, like **Stephen Wharton**, who owned eight acres in Cottage Place and **Jane Mew**, who owned six acres in the High Street. **Jethro Farran** had his house and blacksmith's shop in Bow Lane (now Bazely Street), which then extended across East India Dock Road and

followed the line of the present Follett Street.

Only two roads led north from the High Street. One, North Street, continued for a few hundred yards before turning into a cart track and losing itself in Bow Common. The other, Bow Lane, now Bazely Street, continued northwards into what is now Ida Street, then curved round to join Robin Hood Lane. A few years later it extended to Bromley Hall. The cottages numbered 1-6 Bow Lane, whose occupants were all elderly women, were the almshouses bequeathed by **Hester Hawes**.

On the south side of East India Dock Road, in what is now Mallam Gardens, stood the Manor House which had been rebuilt in 1810. It was owned by **Mary Wade**, widow of **Jeremiah Shirbutt Wade**, and her five daughters. In 1821, **Catharine Wade** is shown as residing in the Manor House. The family had already given its name to two streets, Wade Street and Wade's Place. By the mid-1850's this was to increase to no less than sixteen streets.

Cottage Place and Cottage Row formed another area of high occupancy. These cottages all had front and rear gardens and up to the late 19th century lent an air of country life to what was rapidly becoming one of the most densely populated suburbs of London.

Limehouse was devoted almost entirely to industry, a mast house, boat building sheds, oil mills and warehouses, carpenters' and plumbers' shops, corn chandlers and other buildings. Taverns were the *Royal Oak*, *Shipwrights Arms* and *Antigalican*. Limehouse Hole had a cluster of poorer dwellings with high occupancy.

Brunswick Street, now Blackwall Way, although mainly residential contained **Richard Emery's** cooperage, **Gagen** and **Groves** livestock sheds and fodder warehouses, **Ashton's** wharf and the famous Blackwall Yard, at that time owned by **Wigram, Green and Company**.

Change was already evident at Blackwall in 1821, the year when the first steam vessel, the paddle-wheel steamer, *City of Edinboro'* launched for the Edinboro' Steam Navigation Company, was constructed in the yard. The previous year, **George Green** had taken over the yard in partnership with **Money Wigram** and **Henry Loftus Wigram**. **George Green** was soon to devote a large portion of his wealth to improving conditions in Poplar. He built schools, almshouses and a large Chapel in the East India Dock Road. Blackwall was perhaps Poplar's busiest spot, and taverns such as the *George*, *Ship*, *Shoulder of Mutton* and *Pig*, *Old Hob* and the *Globe*, the *Artichoke*, *Plough*, *Kings Arms*, *Britannia* and *East India House* catered for the workers at the ship yards and seafarers in search of a ship or a good time after many months at sea. Nearby Cold Harbour had the *Gun* and the *Fishing Smack*.

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATION OF FORMAT

The information in this Index can be found at Tower Hamlets Local History Library, Central Library, Bancroft Road, Stepney, E1 4DQ, in two volumes entitled "Census 1821". However, the catalogue title is shown as "Population Register" with the references POP 750-2 (Vol. 1) and POP 753-5 (Vol. 2).

- The Parishioner's name, address (sometimes a house number has been recorded), the number of families occupying the premises, together with the total number of persons (including separate lists for males and females), have been transcribed and printed in this document. However, the details concerning Family Occupations (i.e. whether employed in Agriculture, Trade and All other occupations not comprised in the two preceding classes), are shown in numerical form only and have not been extracted.
- Multi-occupancy houses are shown by a '/' plus a number after the total figure, e.g. '12/4' - this denotes a total of 12 people in a house occupied by 4 households.
- Several names and addresses have been repeated. It appears that the enumerator failed to record the number of occupants in a household at the first attempt. This seems to have been corrected by the duplicate entry although a few were not completed.
- The '#' sign placed after a surname means that this entry has been crossed through by the enumerator.
- To differentiate between the two volumes in this typed index, the letter 'B' has been added to the page numbers for the second volume.
- The Street Index shows all streets listed in the two census volumes, although some streets did not acquire houses until a later date.

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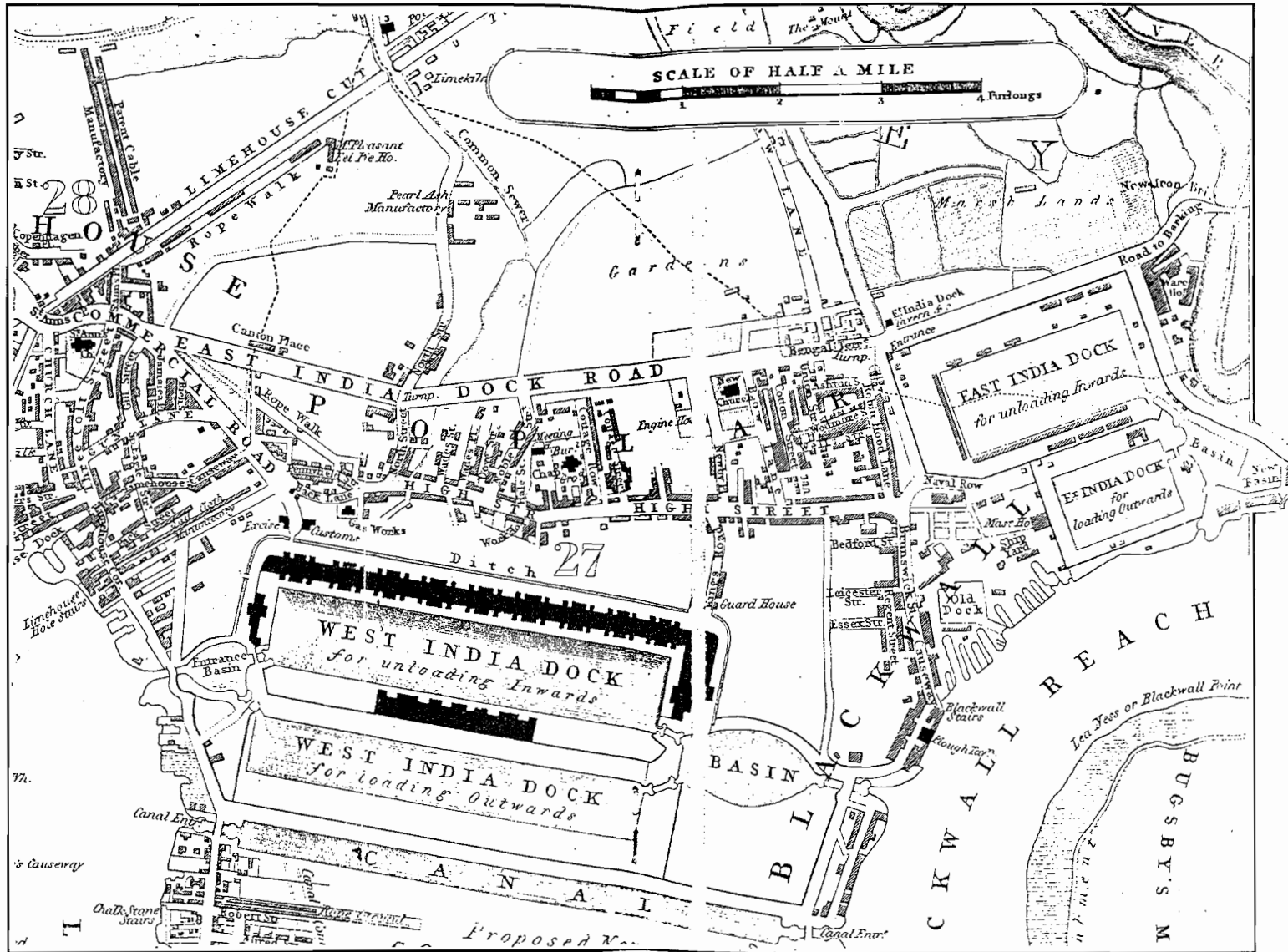
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NOTE

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, errors and omissions may have occurred for which the Society can accept no responsibility. However, the editors will be pleased to receive details of any which may be found; also clarification of doubtful entries.

Extract from Cruchley's map (1829)



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NAME	FORENAME	ADDRESS	M	F	TOT	PAGE
SMITH	MARG'T	7 ALMS HOUSES	0	1	1	7B
SMITH	JNO	2 SYERS BUILDINGS	1	1	2	99
SMALLMAN	RICH'D	18 BOW LANE	3	6	9/2	155
SMART	WM	17 UNION STREET	1	1	2	166
SMITH	ANN	3 WINCHES COURT	1	2	3	148
SMITH	ANN	22 WELL ST. SOUTH	1	2	3	143B
SMITH	ANN	PHOEBE ST	4	3	7	19
SMITH	CHARLES	IVY PLACE	1	1	2	145
SMITH	GEORGE	39 WOOLMORE ST.SOUTH	1	1	2	140B
SMITH	JAMES	HARROW LANE	5	2	7	131
SMITH	JAMES	116 HIGH ST. SOUTH	3	1	4	119
SMITH	JAS	MILL WALL	1	1	2	38
SMITH	JAS	ALFRED STREET	1	1	2	101
SMITH	JNO	2 PROVIDENCE COURT	1	2	3	77B
SMITH	JNO	GARDEN ST	2	4	6	148B
SMITH	JNO	3 ROBINHOOD LANE	3	2	5	167
SMITH	JNO	23 WOOLMORE ST.SOUTH	4	6	10	139B
SMITH	JNO	160 HIGH STREET	7	7	14/4	5B
SMITH	JOHN	CANTON PLACE	2	3	5	93
SMITH	JOHN	NORTH STREET	3	3	6	58
SMITH	JOHN	63 HIGH ST. SOUTH	4	4	8	115
SMITH	JOHN	19 COTTAGE PLACE	4	1	5	15B
SMITH	JOSEPH	213 HIGH ST. NORTH	--	--	--	127
SMITH	JOSEPH	58 HIGH ST. SOUTH	1	3	4	115
SMITH	JOS'H	213 HIGH STREET	3	2	5	1B
SMITH	MARY	NOBLE ST	1	1	2	49
SMITH	RICH'D	NORTH STREET	4	5	9	58
SMITH	RICH'D	4 HANKS COURT, ROBINHOOD LANE	3	3	6/2	173
SMITH	RICH'D	18 ROBINHOOD LANE	4	6	10/3	168
SMITH	RICH'D	7 WINCHES COURT	1	1	2	148
SMITH	ROBT	WADE ST	6	5	11/2	111
SMITH	SARAH	37 ALMSHOUSE	0	1	1	10B
SMITH	SUS'H	17 COTTAGE STREET	1	1	2	16B
SMITH	THOS	31 HIGH ST. SOUTH	6	6	12/2	77
SMITH	THOS	1 GILLS COURT	4	1	5	138B
SMITH	THOS	35 WOOLMORE ST.SOUTH	1	4	5	140B
SMITH	T?	HITCHS COURT	4	3	7	89
SMITH	WILLIAM	11 BLACK BOY LANE	4	4	8/2	138
SMITH	WILLIAM	131 HIGH ST. SOUTH	1	2	3	120
SMITH	WILLIAM	147 HIGH ST. NORTH	2	1	3	122
SMITH	WILLIAM	57 PENNYFIELDS	3	1	4	5

SURNAME	FORENAME	ADDRESS	M	F	TOT	PAGE
SMITH	WM	BRUNSWICK	2	3	5	157B
SMITH	--	19 WOOLMORE STREET	3	3	6	79B
SMITHER	THOMAS	107 HIGH ST. SOUTH	1	1	2	119
SNELL	THOS	DEANS BUILDINGS	2	4	6	88
SNOOK	H'Y	ORCHARD HOUSE	2	1	3	112B
SNOOK	MARY	15 ROBINHOOD LANE	0	3	3	168
SNOOK	THOS	24 COTTON STREET	3	2	5	69B
SNOW?	WM	COLE HARBOUR	4	3	7	155B
SOALEY #	JNO	--	1	1	2	161B
SOANES	ROBERT	93 HIGH ST. SOUTH	4	4	8	117
SOTCHER	RICHARD	2 TURNERS BLDGS	7	9	16/4	7
SOUTH	JNO	8 UNION STREET	4	2	6/2	166
SOUTHWARD	MARY	120 HIGH ST.SOUTH	1	2	3/2	120
SPARKS	CATHERINE	PARADISE PLACE	0	1	1	50
SPEAR/SHEAN?	JAMES	1 UNION STREET	5	2	7/2	165
SPEEDING	JAS?	NORTH STREET	3	2	5	109
SPENCER	JNO	ROBINHOOD LANE CORNER & STEPHENS ACRE	4	2	6	174
SPENCER	JNO	FOLLY HOUSE & WALL	4	2	6	153B
SPICER	JAS	MILL WALL	1	3	4	36
SPICER	THOS	WADE ST	1	1	2	110
SPILLER	WM	34 ROBINHOOD LANE	1	1	2	170
SPOWERS	WM	4 NEWBY PLACE	5	5	10	137
SPRINGALL	WM	MILL WALL	1	4	5	35
SPRINGATE	WM	6 SYERS BUILDINGS	5	2	7	99
SQUIRE	JEREH	LIMEHOUSE HOLE	6	3	9	22
STAFFORD	THOS	11 REGENT STREET	2	1	3	106B
STAINS	HENRY	34 WOOLMORE ST.SOUTH	1	2	3	140B
STANDEN	WM	277 HIGH ST.NORTH	6	8	14/2	71
STANTON	WILL'M	9 COTTAGE STREET	2	1	3	18B
STAPLETON	THOS	LEICESTER STREET	4	6	10/3	159B
STARKY	JOHN	4 COTTAGE STREET	1	2	3	19B
STATE	JOHN	265 HIGH ST.NORTH	3	3	6	70
STEAD	WILL'M	COTTAGE STREET	1	1	2	17B
STEANE	CH	2 PARK STREET	2	4	6	17
STEBBING	JNO	16 COTTON STREET	3	7	10	69B
STEBINGS	WM	NORFOLK STREET	6	5	11/2	160B
STELLEY	HAN'H	46 ASHTON STREET	2	4	6/2	164
STEPHENS	JAS	2 CALQUHOUN PLACE	1	1	2	96
STEPHENS	JNO	CAROLINE PLACE	1	2	3	126B
STEPHENSON	JOS'H	22 REGENT STREET	2	2	4	107B