

1710

Land 1000 Acres 1712

Trustees of the Samlth
Walcott Charity

County of

Sease of land and
other

Mr. D. B. Peto

Subd 200 Acres 1714

The Trustees of the
Samlth Walcott Charity

Sease of land and
other in Walcott East Hamlet

Mr. Abraham King

Deed of Appropriation

(to be Enrolled)

By His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury
of or piers of Ground in this aforesaid County
for a Leas or direct.

Dated 1714

The Trustees of the
Samlth Walcott Charity

Mr. William Gardner

County of

Sease of land and Stable

in this aforesaid County

Samlth Charity

Commencing 25 March 1714

Term of Years 99

Expire 25 March 1813

Mr. King

Dated 25 March 1714

Commences 25 March 1714

Term of Years 99

Expire 25 March 1813

Samlth Charity

Edmund
Walcott's
Estate

MISTAKES

The map on page 10 is attributed to 'Old Ordnance Survey Maps' at the bottom of the page, and to 'A-Z of Victorian London' at the top. The attribution at the TOP is the correct one : 'A-Z of Victorian London: by courtesy of London Topographical Society'.

A tiny sign marking 'Lambeth Stairs' should have been shown on the map on page 4. Instead it landed (who knows how) on page 41, having turned upside down in the process! The words it obscures are : 'died, happily in ...'.

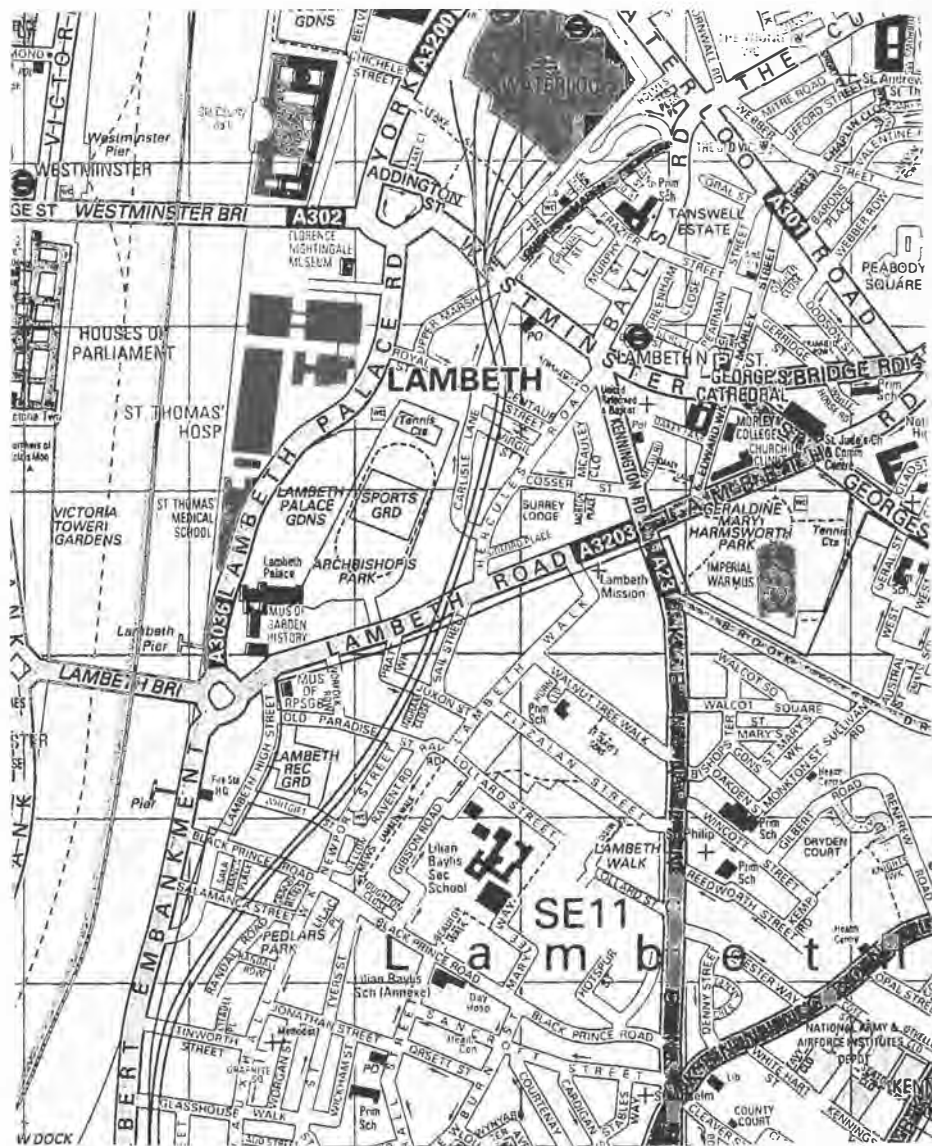
My heartfelt apologies for both.

Edmund Walcott's Estate

A History of the Walcot Estate

in Lambeth

© Maud Zimmermann 1996

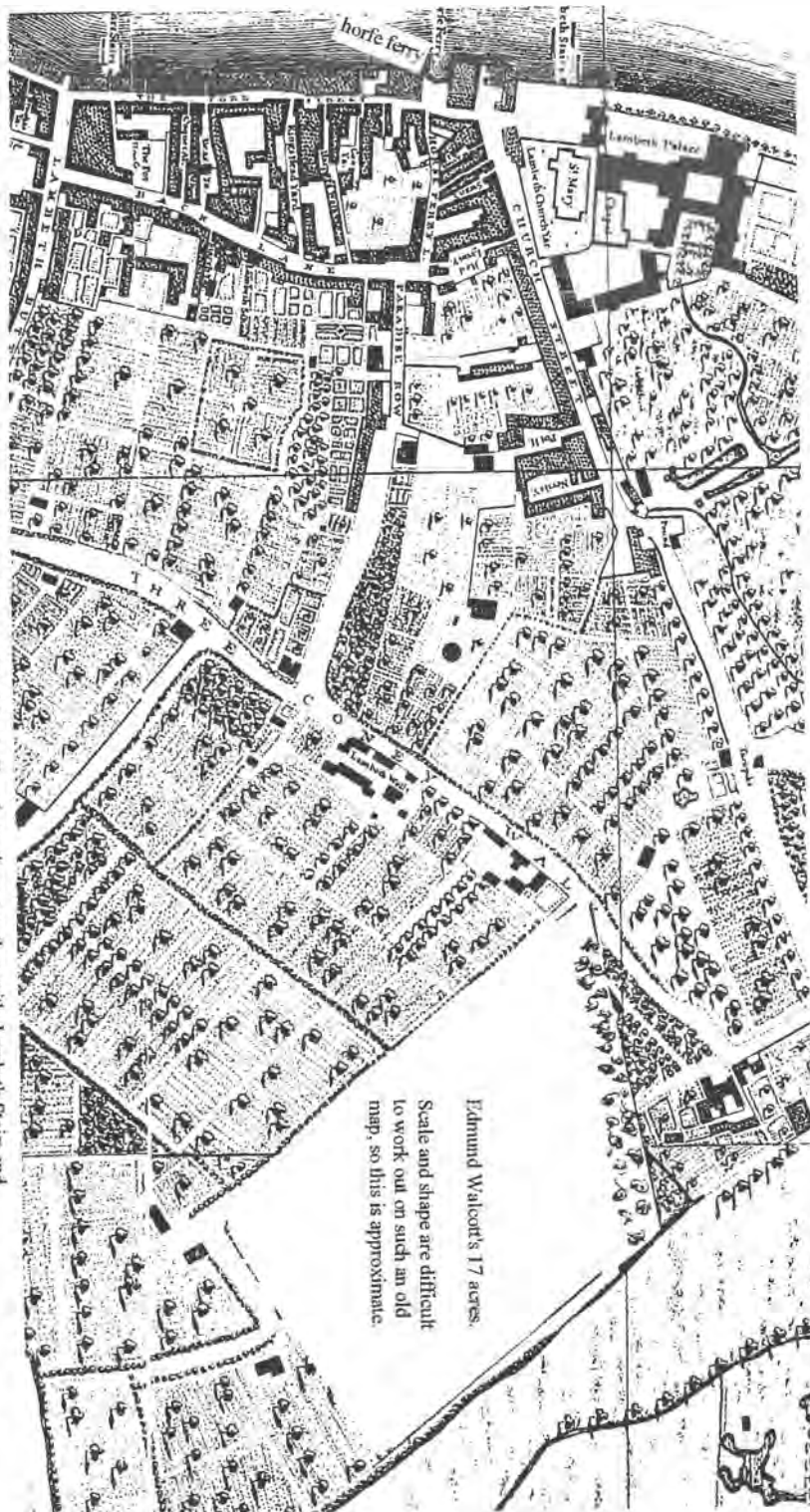


Modern map showing the Walcot Estate in relation to the bridges, roads and railways.

The railways certainly contributed to the 'drain' of the better-off to the suburbs.

Many of the large houses left in Lambeth were frequently divided into floors or sometimes single rooms, for multi-occupation.

Map courtesy of Nicholson London Colour Street Atlas, (HarperCollins)



Map of 1737. Lambeth Palace and St. Mary's Church are there, together with Lambeth Stairs and the horse ferry marked at the riverside. It can be seen that, apart from the area very close to the river, there are hardly any buildings. Three Cones Walk became the Lambeth Walk, Lambeth Butts (bottom left-hand corner) became Black Prince Road, and Church Street became Lambeth Road. Note the umpike marked near the top. A-Z of Georgian London: by courtesy of London Topographical Society

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a palace at Kennington and places for archery practice, but that was in the time of Edward the Black Prince. By 1737 there is no sign of a building on the map, and only the name - Lambeth Butts - is a reminder of the archery. Lambeth Butts became in due time Black Prince Road. The area belonged to successive Princes of Wales as Dukes of Cornwall.

Further north by the riverside was Lambeth Palace, the official residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and St. Mary's Church.

Between the Duchy property and Lambeth Palace, inland from the river, lies an area which is marked as largely under cultivation. In the fifteenth century the land had been in the ownership of the FitzAlan Earls of Arundel, and had passed by inheritance and/or marriage to the Mowbray Dukes of Norfolk and thence to the Howard Dukes of Norfolk. In 1559 Thomas Duke of Norfolk sold a part of this property which was sold on two or three times, until in 1657 seventeen acres came into the ownership of Edmund Walcott.

By his will dated 1667 Edmund left these seventeen acres in trust for the poor of St. Mary Lambeth and St. Olave Southwark: thus the income derived from the estate went to those in need in the ancient parishes. In addition to these seventeen acres of freehold Edmund held an acre of *copyhold ground which had previously belonged to his uncle Richard Walcott, sometime bailiff of the Manor of Kennington. (This acre reverted to the Archbishop as Lord of the Manor after Edmund's death in 1668.) Edmund left his property to his father William Walcott for life and the reversion to the charity, but his father survived him by only a year. Both Edmund and William asked to be buried in St. Olave's Church. The seventeen acres comprised the area lying between Walnut Tree Walk and Brook Drive on either side of Kennington Road (the two latter roads did not then exist). The shape of the seventeen acres was a rough oblong perched more or less on one of its corners.

**copyhold: 'right of holding land according to the custom of a manor by copy of the roll originally made by the steward of the lord's court' - dictionary definition!*

The records of St. Mary's Church for 1667 (the date of Edmund's will) show under 'charities' that rents of houses and ground were for the benefit of the poor and needy parishioners. From the map it will be seen that there were very few buildings at that time. A note by G. Master who was churchwarden in 1904 and who wrote a brief and interesting history of the church, states that 'proceeds are now applied in pensions, medical relief and for schools'.

At the time of Edmund's death the estate was tenanted, eventually passing to John Ramsay, grocer and alderman of London, and thence to his daughters and their husbands Baron Herbert of Cherbury and Sir William Broughton. It was partitioned in 1713 between the parishes of St. Olave and St. Mary so that it might be more conveniently developed, and by agreement Lord Herbert paid rent to St. Mary's parish and Sir William to St. Olave's. The present line of Kennington Road formed the line of demarcation, St. Mary's taking the north-eastern and St. Olave's the south-western portion. (There was a small adjustment in 1815 involving 112-114 Kennington Road, between the two parishes - see the building-up of Kennington Road.) The estate was obviously sublet since the records show that the partitioned lands were in the occupation of John Gold, Simon Hardy, Edmund Goldegay and Thomas Ellisome. Gold and Harding were gardeners, and probably the whole estate was used for market gardening.

In the mid 1700s the City of London was crammed to overflowing, and residents and newcomers were looking elsewhere for accommodation for themselves and their businesses, though still within easy reach of the centre and within reach of transport for food and materials for their trades. The area of most concern to us is of course Westminster. It was already heavily populated, though more spacious than the City: here stood the royal houses and the homes of the high, the mighty and the wealthy. There were parks for fresh air and for grazing (cows were allowed in one of the parks, since supplies of fresh milk and other dairy products were needed), and there were places where fresh food could be grown.



ANNO NONO

GEORGIIV. REGIS.

Cap. 45.

An Act for confirming a Partition of the *Walcott* Charity Estates, situate in the Parish of *Lambeth* in *Surrey*, by vesting the same in Trustees for the several Parishes of *Lambeth* aforesaid and *Saint Olave Southwark* and *Saint John Horsleydown*, in *Surrey*, and for regulating the said Charities; and for empowering the Trustees of the said Charities, and also the Trustees of a certain other Charity called *Hayle's Charity* in *Lambeth*, to grant Building and Repairing Leases. [28th July, 1828.]

WHEREAS *Edmund Walcott*, Citizen and Haberdasher of *London*, by his Will, bearing Date the Third Day of *January* One thousand six hundred and sixty-seven, gave the Rents and Profits of Seventeen Acres of Freehold Land, and One Acre of Copyhold Land, together with the Buildings thereupon erected, then in the occupation of *Thomas Hardy*, unto his the said Testator's Father, *William Walcott*, since deceased, for his Life, and after his Decease the said Testator gave and demised One Moiety of his said Lands and Tenements, with the Appurtenances, to the Parson and Churchwardens of the Parish of *Lambeth* in the County of *Surrey*, and their Successors, Parsons and Churchwardens of the said Parish, for

Will of Ed.
mund Wal-
cott, Jan 3,
1667.

The first page of the Act confirming the partition of the lands between St. Olave Southwark and St. Mary Lambeth, the granting of leases, and confirming the sharing of the St. Olave portion with St. John Horsleydown on a three-fifths/two-fifths basis.

The Act also deals with a piece of land in St. George's Fields in the parish of St. George the Martyr Southwark, left to the trusteeship of St. Mary Lambeth by Robert Hayle and his wife Anne, in the year 1671.

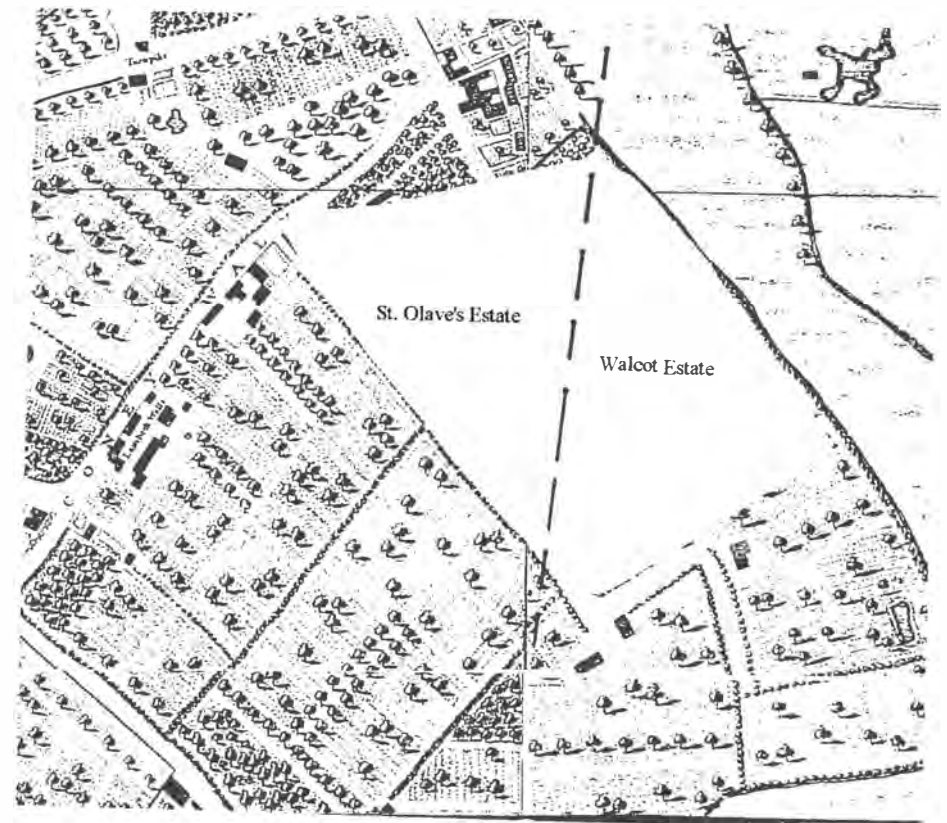
Also mentioned is the proposed roadway from what was still called Walcot Place to Bird Street.

Covent Garden (originally Convent Garden), for example, was the area owned by the Abbey of Westminster to provide fresh fruit and vegetables, and the name was retained for the market which grew up there and which until recent years supplied London with much of its fruit and vegetables. There were also districts of mean streets and alleys, and much poverty.

In order to keep a now large area supplied with food and materials it was necessary to 'import' these; and transport from the arable lands of Surrey and Kent meant crossing the Thames by boat. Everybody and everything, including animals, had to be ferried (hence the horse ferry marked on the map, and the name Horseferry Road across the river).

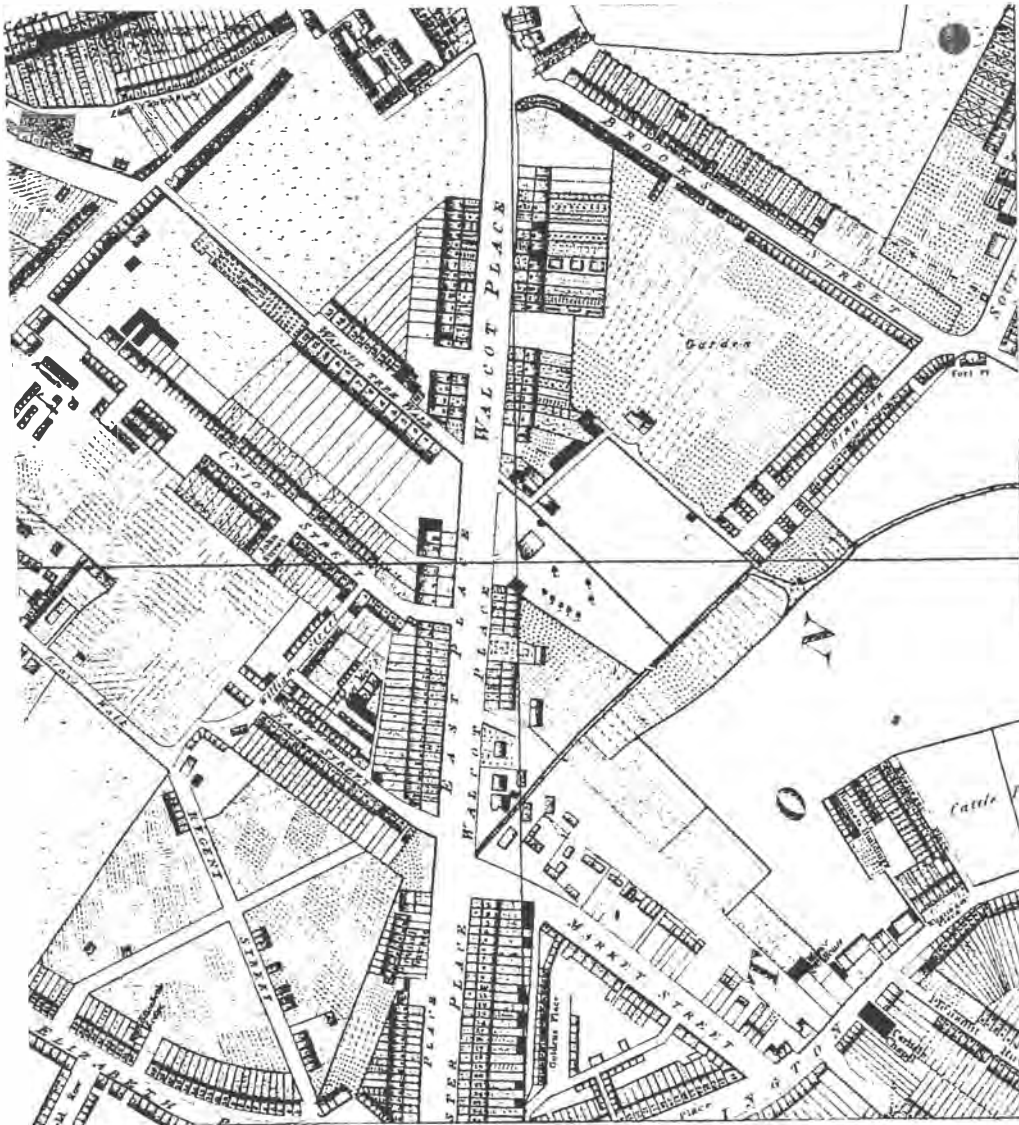
Westminster Bridge was the most northern and the first of the three bridges to be built between Westminster and Lambeth. It was built in 1750 to connect with a new road joining the Surrey area with that of Kent. An Act was passed in 1750/51 empowering the *Turnpike Trustees of Surrey, Sussex and Kent to repair and widen certain existing roads and make new ones. Our Kennington Road was just such a new one, named simply New Road or Walcot Place, linking Westminster Bridge Road with Kennington Common (now Kennington Park) and the road through Surrey. Both St. Olave's and St. Mary's sold land to the Turnpike Trustees for the laying out of this road (other contiguous estates were those of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Duchy of Cornwall). As the area was open fields and gardens there was no difficulty in complying with the clause in the Act which said that the road was to be as straight as possible.

**Turnpikes were places on important roads where one was required to pay a toll. There was a turnpike at the Kennington Common end of the New Road where it joined Kennington Road (which in due time became Kennington Park Road - try not to get confused!). There was already a turnpike on Church Street on the corner of what became Hercules Road. Church Street became Lambeth Road, and led from Newington Butts to the ferry, for which one would also have had to pay!*



The parish of St. Olave lay roughly in the Tooley Street/Lower Road area of Southwark - probably the Walcott family hailed from there. St. John Horsleydown was in the same area.

The broken dotted line denotes the demarcation line between the two parts of Edmund's estate, and is also the line taken by the new road built in the 1750s. There were small adjustments and 'swappings' of little pieces here and there, but essentially the major area remained as arranged at the time of the partition. It would have been impossible to predict in 1667 that in a hundred years the land would be bisected by a main road, and that within two hundred years it would all be built on.



The partition of the estate was reinforced by the position of the new road. It should be noted that the road is very wide in proportion to the size of the estate, and the houses which were built are very far apart.

The land shown on the map is still marked as for market gardening, behind the houses. Many of the new minor roads are now lined with habitations.

Old Ordnance Survey Maps: pub. Alan Godfrey by courtesy of the Guildhall Library

The frontages opened up by the making of the New Road increased the value of the estate; consequently the Trustees took advantage of this by leasing land for the building of houses.

No.121 Kennington Road was built between 1774 and 1777; 123-133 were built between 1773 and 1775 by William Head, carpenter. Nos.135-143 were built about the same time by Edward Chandler. Nos.155-165 can be traced back to 1788; 167-169 were built about 1816 by William Roffey. On the other side of the road what are now nos.104-112 were built soon after 1768 by James Morris: and this was where the adjustment was needed, mentioned on p.6. It was found that 112 was half on St. Mary's land and half on St. Olave's! The adjustment worked in St. Mary's favour, but the stone gate post marking the boundary between nos.112 and 114 is still there, the 'southern' side of the post stating firmly 'St. O & St. J'. St. J. is St. John Horsleydown, now absorbed into the parish of St. Olave Southwark.

No.127, now the office of the Walcot Estate and Lambeth Endowed Charities, was occupied from 1812-1847 by William Tidd, legal writer. He was chiefly known as the author of 'Practice of the Court of King's Bench', for a long time the sole authority for common law practice (the work is mentioned in 'David Copperfield'). It became the residence and office of Mr. Thomas F. Garnish, Clerk to the Trustees, from 1917 until his death in 1954. Miss Winifred Woods, his ward who shared the house with Mr. and Mrs. Garnish during that period, continued to live there upon her appointment as Clerk until her retirement in 1967. This 50-year period is therefore a quarter of the total life of the house! Interestingly, in the Schedule of 1903 the house is shown as having the Bishop of Southwark as 'Tenant, Person liable, or Person in whose Name invested'. The office of the Trustees at that time is shown as 331 Kennington Road.

From 1836-1840 the estate was further extended when in 1835 the Trustees obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury a piece of ground on the north-west side of Bird Street (now Sullivan Road-Monkton Street) so that a road might be opened from the turnpike (i.e.Kennington) road into Bird Street.

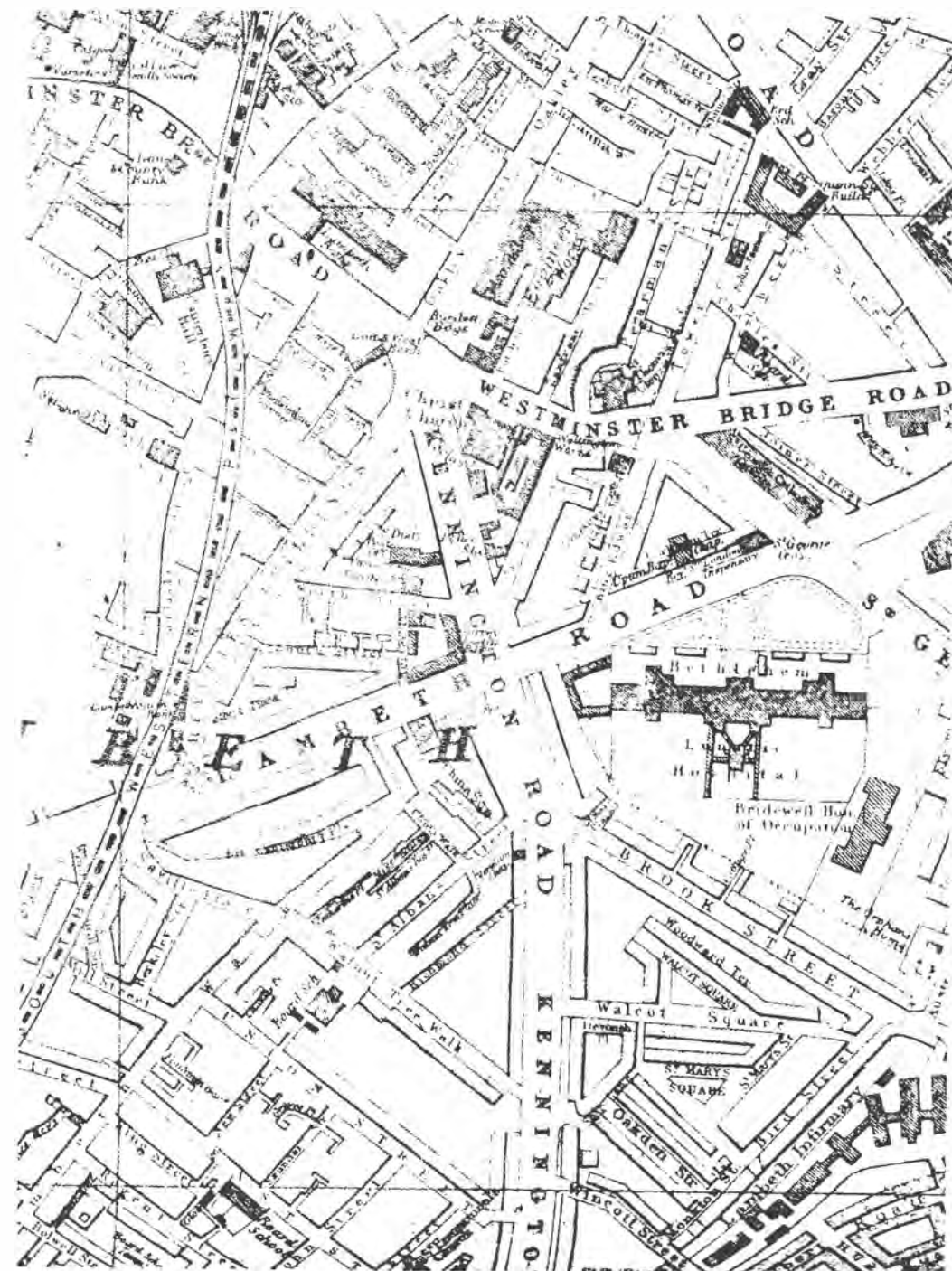
In the same year the Trustees also had an assignment of an adjoining piece of ground from Lytton Keir and Isaac Lawrence. This plot, which had previously been garden ground in the occupation of Dionysius Fairclough, was laid out in the form of a triangle, and is now Walcot Square. (Poor Edmund Walcott seems to have lost his last 't' when Walcot Place was made.) The houses were erected between 1837-1839. Nos.9-81 were built by John Woodward of Paradise Street; 16-24 by Charles Newnham of Newnham Place, Paris Street; and 26-50 by John Chapman, builder, of Waterloo Road.

Charles Dickens must have known this area well. He has Mr. Guppy in 'Bleak House', in renewing his proposal to Esther, saying:

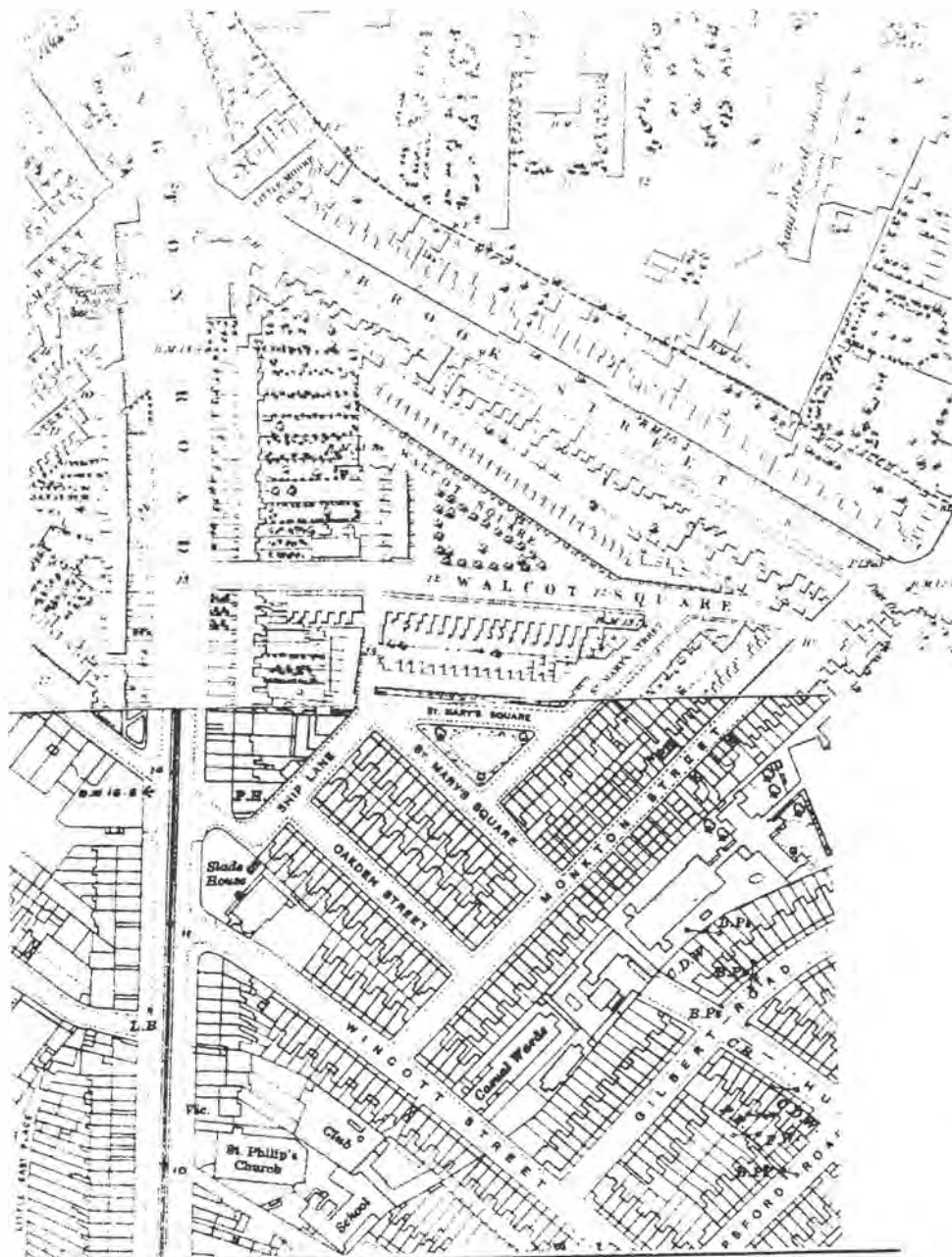
'I have some connection and it lays in the direction of Walcot Square, Lambeth. I have therefore taken a 'ouse, which, in the opinion of my friends, is a hollow bargain (taxes ridiculous, and use of fixtures included in rent) It's a six-roomer, exclusive of kitchens and in the opinion of my friends a commodious tenement'

St. Mary's Gardens (formerly St. Mary's Square) and St. Mary's Walk (formerly St. Mary's Street) were developed in 1839-40. Bishop's Terrace (formerly part of Ship Lane) marks the line of the eastern section of Walnut Tree Walk which got cut off by the building of Kennington Road.

A notable omission from the 'Survey of London' (published 1951) from which much of this information came is the block of flats on the corner of Walnut Tree Walk. This is inexplicable, since Walcot Gardens was built in 1901 according to the date over the door of the 'detached' block, (Doris Williams's mother remembered the whole thing being built), and it was all still standing after the second world war. By the same token, the spaces where 1-7 and 2-12 Walcot Square stood are also not mentioned in the 'Survey of London'; nor is there mention of the builders involved in those houses, as there is for much of Kennington Road and Walcot Square. Maureen Johnston notes that the builder of the houses where she lives on Kennington Road was not named either.



A-Z of Victorian London: by courtesy of London Topographical Society



The top map is dated 1878, and the bottom 1914. There was not a 1914 map available for the Walcot Square bit, so the two pieces of map are somewhat uneasily joined. It can be seen how much overbuilt the district had become after the advent of the bridges and the railway. Showing on the 1914 map are the tramlines set into Kennington Road.

Old Ordnance Survey Maps: pub. Alan Godfrey by courtesy of the Guildhall Library

Vauxhall Bridge was built in 1816, and Lambeth Bridge was built in 1862. By 1878, therefore, three bridges provided easy access to the other side of the river. Over the same period the railways appear on the maps, initiating the first real possibility of commuting to the green suburbs and facilitating the carriage of produce and other goods into the now heavily-populated areas of Westminster - and Lambeth; for by the mid and late 1800s the area making up Vauxhall, Kennington and Waterloo was packed with houses of varying sizes and degrees of affluence (or poverty - there was much of this), and with industry. The map shows the Bethlehem Hospital (now the Imperial War Museum), and that of 1888 shows a change of name - the 'Bethlehem Lunatic Hospital'. Then there is a Bridewell House of Occupation, an orphanage and Lambeth Infirmary, all within 'our' corner of Kennington. By 1888 St. Thomas's Hospital had been built on the south side of the river.

On the 1914 map something else is shown: tramways set in Kennington Road. There had been horse trams and horse buses in London for decades, but in 1903 the first electrified trams ran to various destinations in outer London. The trams ran all night, which made it possible for night workers of all kinds - waiters, theatre people, workers in 'the print' etc., to get home. They (the trams) ran down Kennington Road to Tooting via Clapham and Balham, to Streatham via Brixton, and to Peckham and New Cross via Camberwell. They gave excellent service, and there was genuine regret and nostalgia when the last of the tracks were taken up in 1952/3.

Between the two world wars council properties were built on slum clearance ground to try to improve housing conditions - the China Walk estate was one example of these; but apart from that the area was now formed into the neighbourhoods which were more or less static, so far as buildings and types of community were concerned, until the second world war.

...

THE ESTATE SCHEDULE of 1903 has names that are still remembered today: Williams (grandfather of Reg); Bertoletti (his daughter continued to live in the house until her death some years after the second world war); Pulford (grandfather of Ralph whom many of us knew); Hammett (he of the garden of no.49 - see p.23); Susans (grandfather of Rose McIntosh); Holbom; Dennis (grandfather of Albert who died recently) and so on. Reg and Doris Williams and Joan Knott and Rose would know many more. One family lived in Walcot Square from before the turn of the century till a year or so ago, and, had it not been for the bombing, would have lived in the same house.

THOMAS RICHARD SWETMAN is shown in the schedule as occupying no.14. He worked backstage at the Alhambra Theatre.

Sadly his wife died in 1908 (aged 37), and he was left with six children: Tom, Maude, Rose, Vicky, Jim and Bill. The eldest daughter Maude in due course took over the care of the house and the younger members of the family.

Because Thomas worked late the family developed, as the years went by, the habit of waiting up for his return; this habit lasted all their lives, and until recent years it was common for one or other of the sisters to be throwing bread out for the pigeons on the green at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning (the pigeons weren't out at that hour of course - they arrived with daylight for breakfast).



Tom



Maude



Rose



Jim



Ivy Victoria (Vicky)



Bill



He was killed in September 1915, aged 20. During an engagement with the enemy the gun breech exploded, killing Tom and others. He had kept a diary, his last entry being Saturday 15 September. In a different hand a note is written under Monday 27th: "He died at 8am 27.9.15".

By the time of the first world war Tom was old enough to be in the army, and in 1915 was stationed in Hemel Hempstead, in training with the London Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. Letters from people who lived in Hemel Hempstead show that they were very kind to the young men stationed there, and even after the battery was sent overseas they would write to them and send cigarettes and other comforts. Tom kept in as close touch with his family as one could in those days, writing letters from Hemel Hempstead and cards from France: soldiers were issued with correspondence cards, so chat was non-existent when they were in action.

He must have been a kindly young man: in three of his postcards before he went overseas he was at pains to make sure his father sent Vicky to West Square School.

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

I am quite well.

I have been admitted into hospital

{ which } and am going on well.
{ recovered } and hope to be home very soon.

I am being sent down to the base.

I have received your { letter dated 1st Sept. }
" parcel " " 1st Sept. "

Letter follows at first opportunity

I have received no letter from you

{ lately }
{ for a long time }

Signature } Tom
only.

Date } Sept 20th 1915

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or card addressed to the sender of this card.]

The following is the text of a letter written to Maude Swetman by a young woman from Hemel Hempstead. The cutting which was enclosed is beside it.

11/11/15

Dear Miss Swetman,
The enclosed letter was in our last week's Gazette, and it tells so plainly how poor Tom met his death, we thought you might like to have it.

Mr. Glenister of Russell Cottage lives just at the back of our house, and as the letter was from one of Tom's comrades, we think it is reliable.

We trust you are all feeling as well as can be expected. My mother joins with me in kindest regards from

Yours very sincerely,
Isabel M Woolcock

WITH THE LONDON R.F.A.

IN THE GREAT FIGHT.

The London R.F.A., who were billeted for some time at Hemel Hempstead, took an active part in the great fight, as shown by a letter from Gunner H. J. Tucker to Mr. Glenister, of Russell Cottage, Hemel Hempstead. He says:—

"At last I have time to answer your letter and post card, and thank you for the cigarettes; it was kind of you to send them. The reason why I have not written before is that we have been so busy that we have not had time even to shave. What do you think of the latest advance and the taking of Loos? It kept us busy, in fact we ached all over when it was finished, for we were firing all day and night for a week. In our last action the — Battery had a nasty accident. A breach of a gun blew open, killing four of their men. They were Gunners Swetman, Elles, Hucklesby, and Bombardier Daldring. Our position was next to a cemetery, where they were buried. You can guess our feelings. We saw plenty of others being buried whilst we were there; we still manage to keep our casualty list small, although we had some narrow escapes. In the last position a shell hit our gun 'pat,' and smashed it to atoms while we were in action. We had to stick to our guns, whether any more came or not, and they shelled us for quite an hour, finishing up with gun pit hits. A corporal who used to be in the Battery, now on the Headquarter's Staff, was hit with shrapnel, and is now in dear old London. We often sit and talk of the times we had at Hemel Hempstead. But no such times here, although it is not so bad, taking it all round. I have a brother out here, and my two other brothers (both married) have joined, one was an armourer in the Army Ordnance Corps and the other in the R.F.A., so now all of us are in the service. The weather is rather changeable and cold towards the evening, especially on guard."

The rest of the family stayed together for the remainder of their lives. None of them married.

Between the wars and after, the two younger girls worked in offices and Maude kept house. The boys always worked together and, indeed, played together. They played football as amateurs and were enthusiastic followers of the professional game. The whole family had season tickets for Chelsea Football Club until long after the end of the second world war. Incidentally, during the second war the brothers served as special constables with the police.

They were also fond of cars! They had a series of them in the late twenties and thirties - usually convertible and fast. Cars were really quite rare at that time - I think they may have been the only people on the estate to have owned one. After the war the models tended to be largish still, but a little more staid. Motoring probably just pipped football as the love of their lives. Jim once said that when they were young they could not always afford the petrol, so they would spend their free time tinkering with and polishing the current car till it shone! The family spent a large part of their holiday together every year, a practice that continued after the death of their father a few years after the end of the second world war.

Social life immediately after the first world war consisted mainly in exchanging visits with friends and relatives, but there were also 'expeditions' further afield - across the river! Once or twice a week all of them (except father of course) would go over to the Embankment Gardens by Charing Cross station to meet friends and acquaintances. I once asked Bill why they went there and he said, 'There was a band of course,' in the tone of voice which said that that explained everything; and I suppose it did. Without radio and television and with films in their infancy, that left theatre, music hall, live music and one's own resources - usually well used. Certainly it was quite a large party which met there - it included my mother-in-law and the man she eventually married and his brothers and sisters (seven of them).

Vicky became profoundly deaf when comparatively young and, though she continued to work and was a valued member of her firm until her retirement, the rest of the family - particularly 'the boys' - made sure that she had the best hearing aids on the market (no NHS for them until twenty-five years or more after its inception), and 'mothered' her. She was still using a 'private' hearing aid into her nineties. It was old and decrepit, and caused Bernard Nicholls much time and rueful effort in trying to make it work, but she wouldn't have a new one!

No.14 Walcot Square was badly damaged in the blitz so the family were moved into no.41. There they died: Maude and Rose in 1977 and 1978 respectively, Bill in 1986 and Jim in 1987. Vicky, the last of the family, died in 1995 at the age of 93.



Vicky with David Jones on her 90th birthday.

...



Thomas Richard Swetman and his wife, Susan Elizabeth Lucy.
Susan died on 22 March 1908, aged 37.

Lambeth Walcot Estate,

KENNINGTON.

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR TENANCY.

House 1.91 Walcot Square
Name of Applicant William George Williams
Present Address 91 Walcot Square
Occupation Compositor
~~Present Landlord's Name and Address~~
Has lived in the house 5 years
~~Name and Address of Employer or of two substantial and respectable references~~

Married or Single Married
Number in Family: Adults 2 Children 2 Sons 21 & 16 years Girl 13 years

Let off one room to a single woman
Let off one room to a single man

Not more than five adults and two children to dwell on the premises

I, William George Williams offer to become the Tenant of the House No. 91 Walcot Square on a weekly tenancy from the 24 June 1907 at the rent of 15/- per week, and if the offer be accepted I agree to conform to the conditions as stated in rules set out on the other side The Landlord to pay all Rates & Taxes

Signed William George Williams

Date 19 June 1907

THE PRE-WAR TRIANGLE in Walcot Square was covered with trees and bushes, with a hut near the centre in which were kept the workmen's tools and equipment, the whole surrounded by high railings. Reg Williams says that every morning the workmen met near the St. Mary's Walk junction (there were quite a few of them at that time). Exactly on 8 o'clock they walked round to 14 St. Mary's Walk where Mr. Wall lived, to sign on for the day. Mr. Wall was in charge (he was also Margaret Beecroft's grandfather). Incidentally, Margaret says that her great-great-grandmother lived at no.50 Walcot Square. She had sixteen children, nine of whom survived, and she brought them all up with the help of 'a little maid upstairs'.

To return to the estate employees: there are twenty-three of them shown in a photograph dated July 1924, on an outing to Maidenhead. They apparently had an outing each year. In the twenties and thirties Mr. Garnish (you remember, the Clerk to the Trustees) used to walk around the estate inspecting windows and curtains; if they were not up to standard the tenants were told to improve them (Reg again). The houses were much sought after, and rightly so; there was a waiting list and those who finally got a tenancy felt it was well worth the waiting. The housing shortage in London existed as far back as the first world war, when my mother-in-law was first married; it is not a modern phenomenon nor a result of the bombing, though that of course didn't help.

In an area where extreme poverty was just a street or two away, estates like the Walcot and the Duchy were much prized, and on the Walcot Estate there has been a fine spirit of continuity and community right down the years to the present time.

...



A very old photograph of the employees of the Walcot Estate going on their annual outing, on this occasion to Worthing. I know it is hard to see detail, but the short man on the extreme left is Mr. Garnish. The man half covering him appears to be a cleric - possibly the then Rector of St. Mary's.



The back garden of no.49 Walcot Square in August 1928. Mrs. Hammett lived there at that time. There is mention of Mr. William G. Hammett in the schedule of 1903; perhaps she was his widow.

WALCOT ESTATE AT WAR

Conditions were much the same throughout the country, so it is worth filling in the background to what life was like at that time.

Bombs

High explosive: maximum damage and destruction, so that a direct hit would destroy whole houses. Other buildings in the vicinity would suffer from blast: windows would be blown in, doors and building fabric badly damaged.

Incendiary: literally bombs which burst into flames. In order to try to limit the damage, employees in offices, factories and shops, and householders, did fire duty (mostly on roofs!), using a gadget called a stirrup pump to put out fires - a very dangerous occupation with bombs falling! Most fires of course necessitated the services of the fire brigade, aided by the Auxiliary Fire Service. When water was short painful decisions had to be made about what to save; St. George's Cathedral was burned because other local needs were greater.

V1s: these came later in the war, when Germany had the French, Belgian and Dutch coasts under its control. They were pilotless planes, commonly known as 'doodlebugs'. They had engines which propelled them towards London, then after a time these would cut out and the planes would become rudderless. They would swoop and turn rather like paper aeroplanes, so that one had no means of knowing where they would land - definitely unnerving!

V2s: rockets which were fired at England and dropped to earth - no warning and highly explosive, causing heavy damage.

Air raids were often highly concentrated, so that bombing was continuous for a matter of hours by night or day. An added fear-jerker, we are reminded by Joan Knott, was a 'screaming' bomb - the noise was a high-pitched and continuous screech from its release until it landed, and was incorporated into the bomb's manufacture especially to cause panic.

Blackout

This was strictly enforced, since it was essential that aircraft should not be guided by lights to industrial areas or highly-populated civilian areas. It entailed covering all windows, and not showing lights through an open door. Imagine covering all windows with blackout at dusk every day, particularly since most ordinary curtains were not effective enough, and black material had to be used and fixed so as not to leave chinks of light. To help remind people and to enforce these and other regulations, air raid wardens were appointed or elected by residents and employers, and 'Put that light out' was a common cry.

Car and lorry headlights were masked - only a slit provided light, and there was a cowl like an eyeshade to keep the light directed downward. Railways were particularly vulnerable because of the sparking which frequently occurred, and which could be seen for miles. Travelling by rail had its problems - stations were so dimly lit that one could barely see, and picking out one's station required skill and deduction! Railway carriages, buses and trams were also dimly lit and their windows were criss-crossed with sticky tape to prevent glass from splintering. Windows in buildings too were treated in this way.

Besides those doing fire duty and air raid wardens, there was also the Home Guard. 'Dad's Army' was an amusing and endearing series on television, but in real life, in vulnerable places like cities, coastal areas and the Kent countryside where bombs were often jettisoned, this job was as dangerous as all the others. Bear in mind that fire-watching, air raid 'wardening' and 'home guarding' were off-duty occupations - working and home life went on as well.

Bear in mind also that with most bombs that fell (and they must have run into tens of thousands throughout the British Isles), civilians were injured or killed - men, women and children.

Evacuation

The children were evacuated from vulnerable cities, including London. School-age children were sent into the country with their schools, it being the best way to cope with administration and with their continuing education. Parents were, therefore, bereft of their offspring and this was in some cases a tragedy of great proportions. Imagine a school-age child being whisked away from home for nobody knew how long! Tales of evacuation are legion: the country people did not want city kids billeted on them, and city children wanted to be back with their mums - their dads were probably already away in the forces. There was the added hazard of mum being injured or killed, and home being destroyed. Someone may have done official research into the number of disturbed adults resulting from such childhood experiences. Many of course survived very well when billeted with kindly understanding grown-ups, and mums left behind had the comfort of knowing that their children were safe, though not necessarily happy! In Joan Knott's case, the woman who looked after her was so kind that they became very fond of one another, and Joan has remained in touch through all the years. She, Rose McIntosh and Margaret Beecroft have very mixed memories.

Rationing

This country could not survive on the food which it could grow for itself: even with every available acre under food production there was still not enough. Much, therefore, came from overseas and had to be brought by ship - a highly dangerous proceeding with U boats patrolling the seas and oceans. Supply ships travelled in convoys with Royal Navy ships trying to protect them, but many naval and merchant ships were sunk.

One person who lived on the Walcot Estate sailed on a merchant ship:

"A ship's captain and thirty men owe their lives to a woman who is sailing the seas as an engineer. The Merchant Navy owes one of its valuable cargo ships to her too.... And yesterday at a communal kitchen named after her, 400 workmen had a sixpenny lunch."

The woman concerned was Victoria Drummond who lived with her two sisters in one of the estate houses on Kennington Road. Between the wars the three women ran a girls' club (the Queen Victoria Club for Girls).

Victoria was a god-daughter of Queen Victoria - her mother had been a lady-in-waiting. She was famous before the second world war as the first woman to obtain a Board of Trade Certificate for ship's engineering, and to serve in the Merchant Navy. She said she had always liked engineering, and after qualifying she sailed all over the world. During the war she served as Second Engineer Officer, and among other duties helped with the Dunkirk evacuation.

The newspaper story quoted above referred to an incident in the North Atlantic. The captain, Captain Warner, described what happened when the ship was attacked by a bomber:

"When the bombs were falling round us, with the ship thrown about by explosions Miss Drummond got the best out of the ship and the crew and we owe our lives and the ship to her in conditions that can only be called hellish."

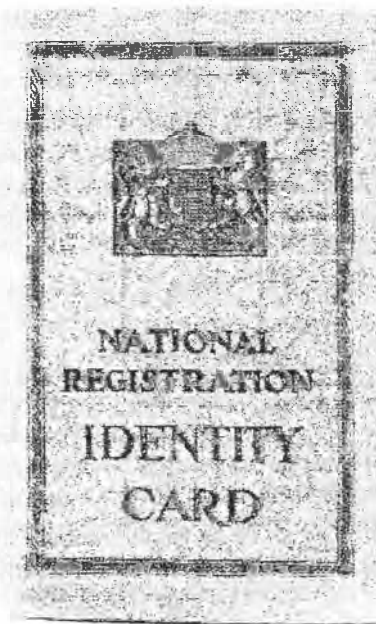
When the ship docked at Norfolk, Virginia, the local residents were so impressed by her heroism that they collected £400. Miss Drummond gave this to the Lambeth Communal Kitchens Committee, which is how the 400 workmen had their sixpenny lunch!

Her sisters, Jean and Frances, also had a hectic wartime: they were voluntary air raid wardens on our 'patch'. After their house was bombed they moved into 'Tresco' on the opposite side of Kennington Road; and years later the choir of St. Philip's Church made a special point of singing carols for them at Christmas.

Rationing of various commodities was introduced early in the war. Food rationing obviously had the greatest effect. Everyone was issued with a ration book, checked against one's identity card. The ration book - and its owner - had to be registered with a particular shop: one could not decide that the butter was better at one shop than another, or one butcher's meat was better than another's, and shop around. One registered, and was duly allowed to buy one's rations at that particular

FOR OFFICIAL ENTRY ONLY (apart from Holder's Signature). ANY OTHER ENTRY OR ANY ALTERATION, MARKING OR ERASURE, IS PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OR IMPRISONMENT OR BOTH.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION OFFICE ANA 4385 438 HILMERMAN 13 Walsley Square SE11 31, Denning Road 1912		REMOVED TO (Full Postal Address) REMOVED TO (Full Postal Address) REMOVED TO (Full Postal Address) REMOVED TO (Full Postal Address)	
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Identity cards had to be carried everywhere by everyone. The actual size was 13cm by 8.5cm. Those serving in the armed forces had to carry a different type, but for the same purpose: they had to be produced when asked for by accredited authority. This is of course a civilian one.

shop, and the book was marked or bits were cut out accordingly, each time. The amounts of food were small; one could buy 4 oz. of butter per person per week, about the same amount of meat, sugar, tea and so on. These amounts, however, could be varied (downwards) when supplies were scarce. Eggs, milk and cheese fluctuated with the seasons and the time of the war. I particularly remember that eggs were rationed to something like three per week for children, and this continued beyond 1952. Other foodstuffs were often in short supply though not actually rationed - potatoes, vegetables, fruit and of course fish.

What then became established, which exposed us to the ridicule of other nationalities, was the queue! Serving out small amounts of provisions took time and other customers had to wait; and occasionally if rumour spread of a particular commodity normally in short supply being on sale, everyone rushed to try to get it - forming a queue to do so. Without the queue there would have been murder: queue jumping was not allowed!

Shipping space was needed for vital foods and equipment, so some foodstuffs disappeared for the duration of the war: the banana for one. Maureen Johnston was seven years old before she saw a banana - that must have required an Alice-in-Wonderland type of introduction. Oranges were in very short supply; most of us nowadays would find a dearth of these a definite hardship! Food rationing continued long after the end of the war. The last foodstuff on ration became freely available in 1954, which meant that rationing of one commodity or another had lasted for fifteen years!

Other things affected by rationing were clothes and petrol. Clothing coupons were issued on the same basis as ration books. Growing children were allowed more coupons (fortunately). Cloth was also on coupons - 2 per yard I remember. If one used up all one's coupons before the year was up, hard luck!

Petrol was doled out very sparingly indeed - it was largely for essential journeys only. Doctors were allowed extra, and hauliers etc., but the ordinary citizen had a titchy amount that was hardly worth having, and most cars were laid up for the duration.

• • •

There are shops in Walcot Square, though there has been a change of use with all of them in recent years.

There was a grocery (corner of Sullivan Rd. and Walcot Square); backing on to it was a hardware shop which also sold oil (and coal in small quantities when the old-fashioned delivery carts and vans vanished). Next door was a little haberdashery and shoe-repairer; the shoe-repairer's sister ran the haberdashery. Next came a shop selling sweets, cigarettes, newspapers and stationery etc. On the other side of the road was a greengrocery. Further along at no.89 was a dairy. In the days before refrigerators and one- and two-car families it was useful to have small shops in one's community, particularly if one were old or coping with small children in prams and pushchairs. Incidentally, just around the corner in Brook Drive there was a fish shop and a butcher's. Near the Kennington Road end, on the corner of Bishop's Terrace, there was another shop - a general store which was destroyed in the bombing.

Here it is below. The woman in the doorway was called Sally Webb.



U

A.R.P./M4

MESSAGE FORM

Date 8.11.40.	Time at which receipt or despatch of message was completed 21-45	Telephonist's Initials D. Wood
------------------	---	-----------------------------------

ADDRESS TO:-

Ada.

TUL 4942

TEXT OF MESSAGE -

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

- A. WALCOT SQ KENNINGTON RD &
BROOK DRIVE, H.E. 1930
- B. C.D.P. not arrived 2 bodies
await removal,
- C. NIL
- D. NIL
- E. NIL

REMARKS

District Warden Mr Lounellor
DEADY would like to know
if these bodies can be removed
as soon as possible stage

Message ends.

TIME OF ORIGIN OF MESSAGE:-

21-43.

ADDRESS FROM

ICTS for Post 9. Smith WATKES

SIGNATURE (of official authorising the despatch of an "out" message).

1091

A copy of one of the original message forms which were completed by wardens and other ARP workers for every 'incident'. Supplementary reports appear to have been 'follow-ups'. Typed copies of other reports are interspersed with photographs on the following pages of pictures. Sorry one page is a little higgledy-piggledly, but the extracts refer to the photographs on that particular page.

THE WALCOT ESTATE was extensively damaged in relation to its size, and thus mirrored the effects of the blitz throughout London. Wherever comparatively new buildings can be seen - in three sections of the even-numbered side of Walcot Square, in Bishop's Terrace, in Kennington Road and across Kennington Road next door to Walcot Gardens - the original buildings either received a direct hit or were rendered irreparable. Many more of the houses were uninhabitable because of damage from blast, and families had to be moved out of one house into another so that makeshift repairs could be carried out. Repairs were necessarily makeshift - it was impossible to get building materials and labour during the war; as late as the 1960s the damaged walls of the odd numbers in Walcot Square were being repaired. Considering the age of the houses, it is astonishing that they withstood so much!

Of two features in wartime St. Mary's Gardens and Walcot Square there is now no sign: there were underground air raid shelters under the triangles which were to be used by the residents night after night and, during the daylight raids, day after day. Joan Knott remembers:

My earliest recollection of war on the estate was the converting of the greens which consisted of trees and shrubs into air raid shelters. St. Mary's had individual Anderson shelters, while Walcot was made into a communal shelter.

The first few nights of the blitz were pretty uncomfortable down in the Walcot shelter, with only slatted narrow wooden seating, no heating and unmentionable toilet facilities I remember trying to sleep sitting up and then waking in the morning stiff and tired. However, things improved and bunks and heating were installed. As it became such a regular thing we all chose our bunks and kept them during the time we sheltered down there, taking blankets and pillows over early and going ourselves as it began to get dark. It became like a social club and in a way, despite the terrible battering London experienced, we almost looked forward to seeing friends and neighbours down there. Friendships made down there still exist today: for example Doris Williams (who was a Morris then) and myself, and she and Reg Williams, who celebrated their golden wedding last year.

Of course there were sad occasions when houses were damaged and destroyed. My mother and I were lucky: a bomb hit St. Mary's Walk, demolishing nos.9 and 10 and turning no.8 into a shell; but no.7 where we lived was intact, though knocked about a bit. I also recall one of the houses at the end of Walcot Square having the complete front from roof to basement destroyed and looking exactly like a child's doll's house with the front removed so that you could view the rooms and contents. Also, one of our neighbours was killed instantly when he had just gone outside the shelter to have a cigarette.

Doris Williams's father was an air raid warden, and a nerve-racking time he must have had! Like hundreds of others, this was a part-time job - he worked at his own job during the day. Doris and her family lived in no.24 Walcot Square and she says:

One evening we were rehearsing for a concert we were to be putting on in the shelter when the warning sounded. We were all for going on with the rehearsal, but Dad said 'shelter', so we all went. A bomb fell, killing the people next door in no.22 who were in an Anderson shelter they had had built in their garden.

Dad usually stood just outside the entrance of the shelter; one evening a bomb fell on the spot where he usually stood. Mother went to the entrance to see him, but he wasn't there. A search finally found him in Kennington Road: a bomb had fallen there just before the Walcot Square one, and he was on top of a pile of rubble, helping to get people out.

Reg points out that bombs were usually dropped in 'strings' - not just one bomb and then a gap of a couple of miles or so!

Joan goes on:

People were happy to help each other and took the difficulties in their stride - clearing up rubble and soot day after day, before being able to boil a kettle of water and cook breakfast on an open fire. Gas and water mains were often blown up or were damaged, so we had neither gas nor water on tap, and frequently no electricity.

Margaret Beecroft remembers that from 1939 to 1945 the dangers uppermost in parents' minds were of their children being caught in a bomb blast, buried alive, burnt by an incendiary - as indeed happened, sadly.



From the corner of Walcot Square and Bishops Terrace - looking towards Kennington Rd. The damaged houses on the right were nos. 1-7 Walcot Square. Reg & Doris Williams tell us they had full basements (not the 'area' sort on other parts of the estate). They were beyond repair and demolished. Lambeth Borough erected pre-fabricated houses on the site.

17.9.40 Time 23.16
Young boy knocked down by blast of bomb
Kennington Rd., opposite Walcot Square.

17.9.40 Time of message 23.45 hrs.
At 11.30 pm - h.e. bomb exploded Walcot Square. Serious damage to property.
Known casualties 1 killed.

The site of nos.2-12 Walcot Square and 1A Bishops Terrace. The hut was used by 'The Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association for the City of London'. Beyond is the big factory building used by a firm called Williams (who made leather washers), to the right the backs of the Kennington Rd. houses looking towards the 'Ship'.



17.9.40 Time 00.49 Supplementary
No panic. Rd. closed with red lamps. approx 100 rendered homeless.
Crater 10 ft. wide, full of water in Walcot Square at junction of Kennington Road stop
A dead motor cyclist on post 8 side taken away in police van. Others by ÁMB. 1SP 1RS attended.

18.9.40 Time 10.47 Supplementary Report
A Bishops Terrace and Walcot Square Kennington Road
B 145 Kennington Road dangerous
143 " " damaged
141-121 " " slightly damaged
14 Walcot Square slightly damaged
1HRP No.1 heavy at work more needed
REP clearing debris

22.9.40 Time 16.02
Furniture: Salvage of damaged property:
Mrs. Sainsbury of 14 Walcot Square would like her furniture moved to 8 Oakden St., also Mrs. Hellewell of 16 Walcot Square wants her furniture taken to Lambeth Depot.

Apart from that our streets seemed relatively safe places. At the beginning of the blitz we children were quite blasé after a few days and life went on much as usual apart from very short school hours and making sure we were home before 6pm before the sirens sounded. Of course eventually we had to sleep in the Anderson shelter in the back garden and just in time as it happens, as the first night we did this some passing bomb brought the ceiling down on my bed, even though it had been in the basement! Eventually we children were evacuated, but upon our return in 1943 when all had seemed to be fairly quiet, we got on with life again relatively uneventfully - if one forgets about shortages and queuing and making do and mending. This was life until the summer of 1944 when we moved from Walcot Gardens to Walcot Square (we had previously moved into Walcot Gardens from 157 Kennington Road since 157 was considered unsafe due to blast damage - the LCC promptly moved in three families who were in a worse plight). The night before we moved my mother had seen a strange sight in the sky - a pilotless plane she said. The air raid warden said 'Rubbish', but it was the first V1 we saw. We soon got used to ducking under the nearest cover whenever we heard a plane's engine cut out. The horror of the V2s was that one didn't hear anything at all until too late!

Joan remembers: One daylight raid my mother and I were on our way to the shelter, shortly after an incident when a London school had been machine-gunned and children had been injured. Suddenly I was aware of something flying low above us. I shouted to my mother to duck and we threw ourselves to the ground by the pillar box. Nothing happened . . . I glanced up, and to my embarrassment saw a flock of pigeons!

Her first evacuation 'billet' was an unhappy experience: I was evacuated to Worthing with a family where there were rows all day long, there weren't sufficient blankets and sheets on the bed - in fact my mother had to send me some. It was really dreadful, so I complained to a teacher and I was eventually moved to another house where she had three children and I was the fourth evacuee.

5.11.40

Time 17.20

On account of the owner finding no use for damaged furniture, which is lying outside No. 6 & 8 Walcot Square
Please arrange for removal to the depot as not wanted.
Message ends.

9.11.40 Time of message 10.38 - - - Supplementary report

A Walcot Square between Kennington Road and Brook Drive H.E.
09.20 hrs 8.11.40.

B Entrance to public shelter damaged by crater 6 feet by 4 feet.
Walcot Square Nos. 11-23 old type two storey and basement brick
built, fragmentation to doors and windows.



St. Mary's Walk

8.11.40 Time 21.45 Supplementary Report

A WALCOT SQ. KENNINGTON RD & BROOK DRIVE
H.E. 19.20

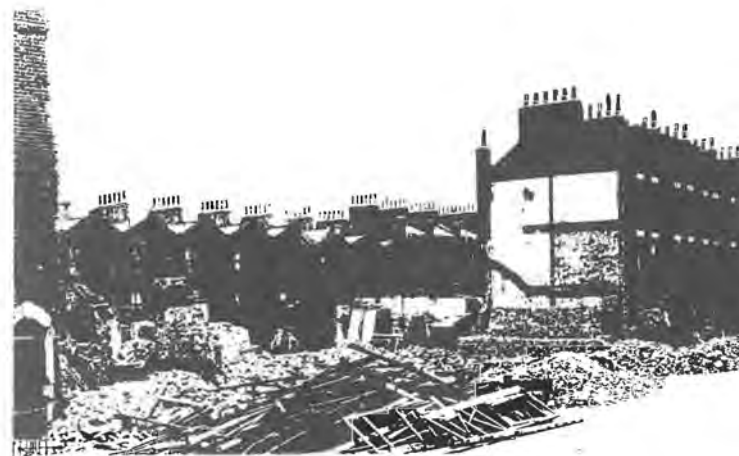
B CDP not arrived. 2 bodies await removal
District Warden Mr. Councillor Deady would like to know if these
bodies can be removed as soon as possible.

At one time she also took in two soldiers, and it was one of the happiest times of my life. Being an only child with just me and my mother, it was just like having a family - a real family. We went on the downs and collected blackberries and made jam and lots of other activities. It was really a very happy time, and to this day I am still in touch with her and her family.

Rose McIntosh, on the other hand, went to Calne in Wiltshire to be evacuated, to an aunt. It was very nice, just going to a member of the family. After that she joined the ATS: *I was with an anti-aircraft unit, and we travelled up and down the east coast and Scotland, and in spite of everything it was quite an enjoyable time!*

Doris was in the WAAF with a barrage balloon unit in the London area, but she was at home at the very beginning of the war: *The day war broke out, we had a houseful of aunts and an uncle staying with us, and in the early hours of the following morning the siren went. We all had to get up, then my uncle said that the rattles were going - which meant there was a gas attack; so six females donned their gas masks. If you can imagine walking from 24 Walcot Square down about four or five houses to the Ainsworths' who were fire brigade people and had sealed their windows to make the house gas-proof (they hoped), in single file in pitch dark, in gas masks and night clothes . . . I was seventeen or eighteen at the time, and very embarrassed! We stayed there until the all-clear went, then we went back home to my dad and my uncle who had stayed in the house, and nothing had happened! We had lots of laughs about it afterwards! My mother decided after that that enough was enough and evacuated us to her brother's in Hereford. When nothing happened after about three months we came back home, and were prepared for quiet nights; but of course we didn't get them.*

Joan and Doris remember the first daylight raid on the London docks: *We came out of the pictures and sheltered under the arches. Everywhere was alight and the whole sky was red. Everyone decided that that night was going to be the biggest raid of the lot because there was so much light for the bombers!*



12.1.41 Time 21.12
1 H.E. at rear of 22 Walcot Square, 2 serious casualties and major damage to property, services present.

Two views of the site of nos. 40 + Walcot Square, one showing the backs of the houses in St. Mary's Gardens, and one taken from the present workshop site showing the backs of nos. 14-38 Walcot Square. The Borough of Lambeth used this site for prefabricated houses. When the land was returned to the estate, it was used for St. Thomas's houses, as was the site of nos. 2 - 12.



12.1.41 Time 21.36 SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT
A 22 Walcot Square between Kennington Road and Monkton Street H.E. 20.19 hours.
B 2 storey brick built old type house. 2 casualties 1 serious 1 slight. Both taken away. 4 houses partly demolished RP/W at work, RP/G not yet arrived.

Indeed, as Joan and Doris remember, if it was a moonlit night one could be sure there would be a raid. Another thing that stays in the memory is the smell of cordite - and rubble and dust.

Apparently there were Norwegians lodged in various houses on the estate; the Norwegian fishing fleet was at sea when war was declared, so they came to England. The English couldn't speak Norwegian and the Norwegians couldn't speak English, but they all managed to cope. Certainly the Norwegians were able to find the shelter and to get into the routine of wartime. There was also a Frenchman, but no-one seemed to know how he got there.

The estate also lost its railings. Because of the blackout, corner sites were allowed to keep theirs to stop people from falling into areas. They were taken away to be melted down for munitions as part of 'the war effort'. This was a term covering a multitude of activities and conditions; for example one grew as much food as possible for the 'dig for victory' campaign, and used only five inches of water in the bath (if one still had one) in order to save water - *and* of course the fuel required to heat it. To get back to the railings: unfortunately, being cast iron and not forged, they were useless for munitions and for anything else. However, Joan Knott said forgivingly that, since the government asked for pots and pans for the same reason, and they would have been equally useless, it probably made people *feel* they were helping 'the war effort'.

Margaret Beecroft doesn't think there was a party on the estate to mark the occasion of VE Day: *It certainly meant an end to horrors falling out of the sky and we could have the street lights back on again properly. People were certainly happy about that part of the war being over, but they were still very conscious about what was happening in the Far East, and of course we didn't know then what it would take to end it all.*

For the grown-ups I suppose it was a time to take stock of what they had and hadn't got left of their lives and loved ones. But for the children - well they soon got used to anything, didn't they? Or so it was thought then - after all, everyone else had to grin and bear it, so why shouldn't they?

At least they weren't going to be bombed out of their homes again or evacuated to strangers who, in spite of all their kind intentions, didn't really want them and certainly didn't expect them to be homesick. We knew that home was home again and I suppose that was enough. Not for post-war children the counsellors to help them over their 'stress' - you just had to be thankful that you were alive and well and, if you were lucky, your Dad would be home again.

Margaret is right: the strangers hadn't, of course, asked for evacuees in the first place; in the 'safe' provincial and country areas, if people had room, the authorities gave them children and/or pregnant mums and soldiers - as with Tom in the first world war, and Joan Knott's 'billet' in the second.

•

Many of the wartime residents of the estate have died in the fullness of time, though a number were killed by bombing or during service with the armed forces. There weren't too many men of eighteen to forty-five around in civilian life except for those who were in 'reserved' occupations and more valuable at home, so that civil defence, firefighting, home guarding etc. were undertaken by men and women who were very young, older than forty-five, or doing important jobs and therefore resident at home. Women were called up to work in munitions factories or to serve in the forces. It is difficult to comprehend now: everyone in one way or another was involved in the war either by evacuation, service connected with the war, or simply by living or being injured or dying in the blitz. In other words, everyone was affected, whether bellicose or peace-loving or confused and unhappy at havoc on such a huge scale.

Doris, Rose, Joan and Reg were all agreed that it wasn't until they were older that they realised what their parents had lost in the blitz and in the whole war: furniture, keepsakes, sometimes all their belongings - and the feeling of at least physical if not economic security. Certainly things were never the same again.

• • •



BEFORE: concrete posts and chicken wire



AFTER: smart black metal railings

AFTER THE WAR the triangles were just 'humpy' pieces of waste land fenced off with chicken wire, until the estate could spare time and means to cover the area with grass and, later, to plant two or three trees.

No-one could have described this work as urgent in view of all the rest of the repairs and restoration which had to be undertaken, but eventually it was done; the two triangles were turfed, and a few trees duly planted and very good they looked. This probably accounts for the affection residents feel for the 'greens'; they were hard-earned! The crowning glory, however, came in very recent years: we got our railings back!

Throughout London for many years after the end of the war bomb sites were used as playgrounds, car parks or just dumping-grounds, until supplies and money and labour could be accumulated in order to rebuild. One forgets that nothing got back to normal immediately after the war ended: only men and women who had been in the armed services since the very beginning (1939) were demobilized (commonly known as 'demobbed') as soon as possible; some younger ones were still being demobbed in 1947 and 1948 (remember - the war ended in August 1945). There were things called armies of occupation which had to be maintained - and indeed 'National Service' men (those too young to have served earlier) helped with the 'occupying', and with the huge job of running down the wartime organizations.

The Borough of Lambeth commandeered our bomb sites and erected prefabricated houses on them (for evermore, these were known familiarly as 'prefabs' and were dotted hither and yon throughout London and other badly bombed cities). The last to go from this area were those in Royal Street and Dante Road at least forty years after the end of the war.

The houses in St. Mary's Walk and St. Mary's Gardens and Walcot Square and Kennington Road were in due time made habitable again or rebuilt, and with the coming of the new railings the estate is fully dressed once more!

• • • • •



The coronation of Queen Elizabeth the Second took place in 1953.

Some weeks afterwards the queen went on 'progresses' around the country, and on one of these passed along Kennington Road.

Among those watching her procession were Mr. Rauber and, sitting on the coping of what had been the garden of no. 145,

Maude Swetman.

The small boy must be in his forties by now!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

This booklet grew out of an exhibition mounted for the Walcot Residents' Association about the Walcot Estate on the fiftieth anniversary of VE Day. From the quotations and acknowledgments throughout the text it will be obvious that I had a considerable amount of help with it.

My gratitude goes to :

The Revd. David Jones, Clerk to the Trustees, for his permission to copy photographs etc., and for his interest;

Sue Jones, who found documents and photographs for copying ;

Brenda Foulds for obtaining the air raid reports from the Lambeth Archive for the exhibition;

Tom Fuller for typing from the Survey of London for the exhibition ;

Joan Knott, Doris and Reg Williams, Rose McIntosh and Margaret Beecroft for their reminiscences;

Reg Williams for permission to reproduce a tenancy agreement and supplying cuttings about Victoria Drummond;

Maureen Johnston for reading the rough-hewn copy;

Pete Massingham for his suggestions about photographs;

Paul Zimmermann as a willing source of relevant maps and proof-reading;

Janet Zimmermann for making sure it 'read' all right and proof-reading;

Bernard Zimmermann for putting up with it all and scanning photographs.

The photographs and documents are old, and reproduction is therefore not of the best quality, but I hope they are clear enough to be informative.

They are copied with permission from the owners. The exceptions are those concerning the Swetman family; the papers about Tom will be donated to the Imperial War Museum.

I have been permitted to reproduce the various maps, and I am truly grateful to The London Topographical Society, Alan Godfrey Maps and HarperCollins Publishers. The maps are individually credited.

Maud Zimmermann

No 10

Land - n^o 24 oct 1712

Land - n^o 24 oct 1712

Trustees of the Lambeth
Walcott Charity

Sease of land and stable
in the parish of St. Andrew

Mr G. B. King

The Trustees of the
Lambeth Walcott Charity

Sease of ground and two
houses in Walcott Lane East Lambeth

Mr. Abraham King

Deed of Appropriation

(to be Enrolled)

By His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury
of a piece of ground in the street between
for a way or street.

Dated 1712

The Trustees of the
Lambeth Walcott Charity

to
Mr William Gardner

(aunty part)

Sease of land and stable

in the parish of St. Andrew

Lambeth London

Commencing (20th January) 1711

Term of years 99

1711

1711

Land - n^o 24 oct 1712

Trustees of the Lambeth
Walcott Charity

Sease of land and stable

in the parish of St. Andrew

Lambeth London

Commencing (20th January) 1711

Term of years 99

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