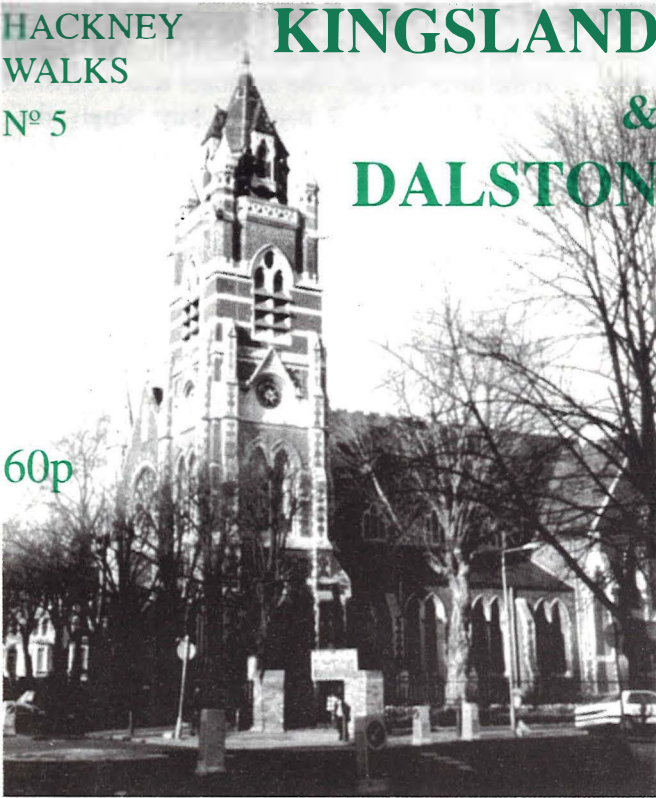


HACKNEY  
WALKS  
Nº 5

# KINGSLAND & DALSTON

60p



*St Mark's Church*

This walk traces a route through the old crossroad settlement of Kingsland and the erstwhile hamlet of Dalston, explores the Victorian suburban developments of southern Shacklewell, leads through the colourful and exuberant market at Ridley Road to return to the starting point on Kingsland High Street.

The walk is approximately 1.5 miles and takes an hour and a half at an easy amble.

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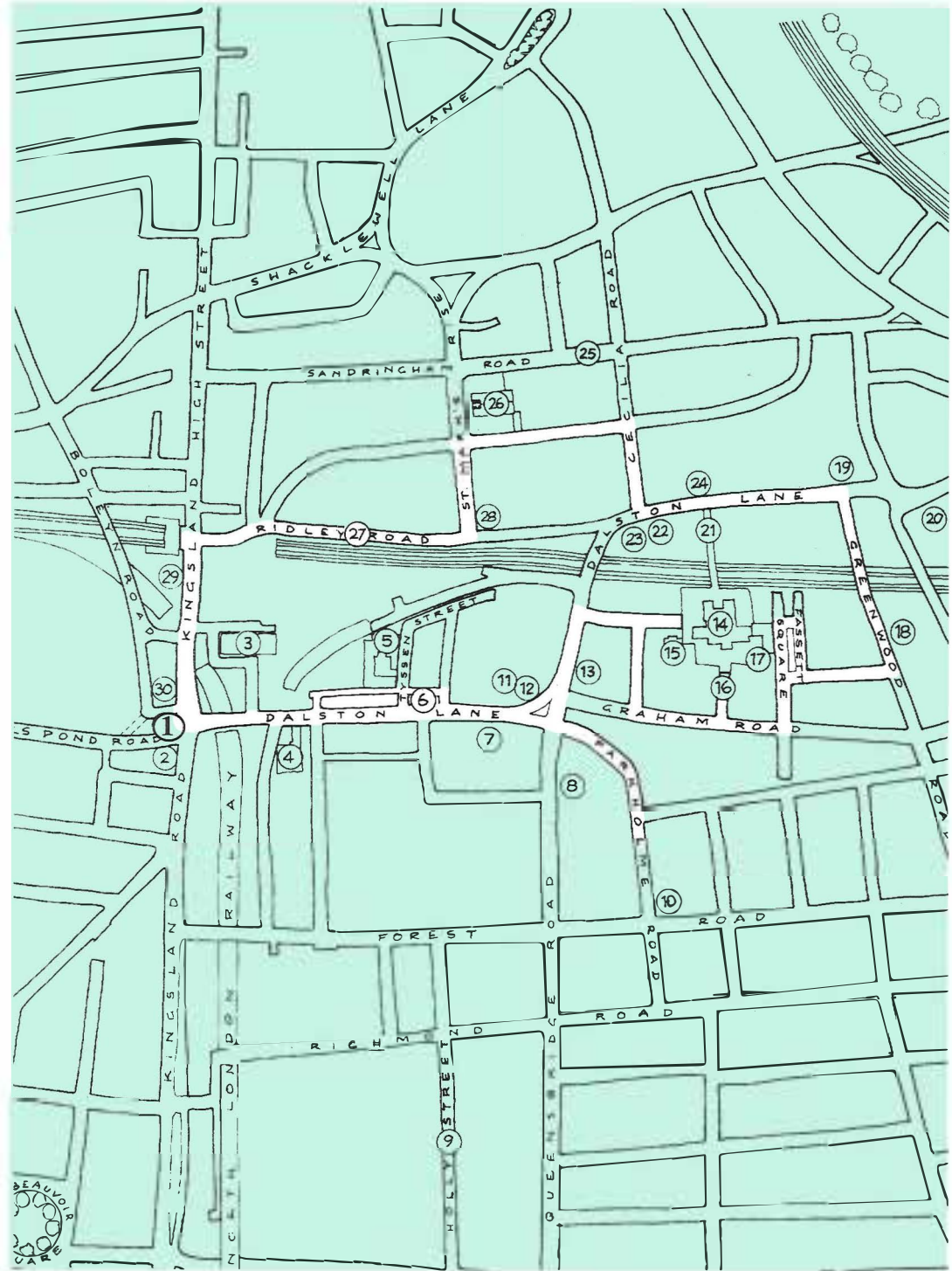
26 *St Mark's, Dalston*  
19 *Asylum for Destitute  
Women*

*Dalston Kingsland  
BR Station*  
27 *Ridley Road Market*

5 *Springfield House*  
3 *The Print House*  
14, 17 *The German  
Hospital*  
12 *St Bartholomews  
Vicarage*

**1 Start: Dalston City  
Partnership**  
2 *Site of the Lock  
Hospital*

9 *Holly Street Estate*



Standing at the crossroads where Kingsland Road becomes Kingsland High Street and Balls Pond Road meets Dalston Lane (1) the traffic is heavy; vehicles travelling to and from the City of London to the south are intersected by the flow of cars and lorries between Islington and Hackney, and East Anglia beyond.

The buildings that define the crossroads are nineteenth century, erected following the construction in 1850 of the North London Railway between Islington and Bow and the branch to Shoreditch built in 1865.

A settlement has been established at this important cross-roads since the Roman period. As the Romans cast the main strands of their web of roads out from the city, the road to the north passed through Bishopsgate and from there headed due north, as uncompromising as a motorway, to link the Roman fortresses and settlements of Lincoln and York to the Empire. Called Ermine Street after a first century Saxon warrior, the road became an important topographical feature, shaping the pattern of subsequent settlements. Kingsland High Street is built over the Roman antecedent.

A Roman settlement on the west banks of the Lea Valley near Clapton was linked by a route to similar settlements in Islington and Highgate, intersecting Ermine Street.

Like other villages and settlements in close proximity to London, Kingsland, and Dalston to the east, shared a contradictory relationship with the City; a place of refuge and retreat, banishment and quarantine.

Until the later nineteenth century the area around Kingsland and Dalston was predominantly rural. Market gardens and, by the mid-eighteenth century, brickfields provided employment, within easy reach of the city markets on well drained fertile soils.

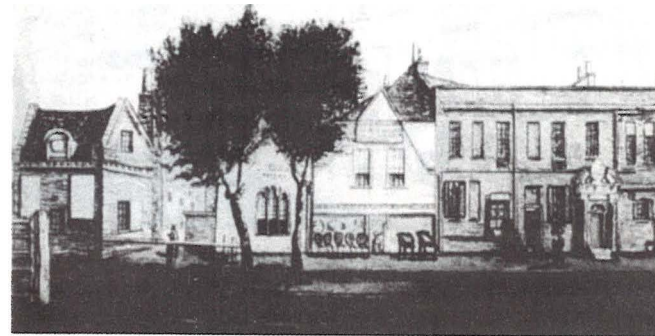
A mediæval leper hospital called the Lock, attached to St Bartholomews Hospital at Smithfield, stood on the southern side of the junction between Balls Pond Road and Kingsland High Street (2). Transformed into a hospital for venereal diseases the hospital ceased to be used in 1761, but its side chapel remained an important landmark until its demolition in the mid-19th century.

In the mid-seventeenth century Samuel Pepys describes a walk across the fields to Kingsland from the city, the road being too filthy to walk on, reminiscing on

his boyhood years when he boarded here and played bows and arrows in the surrounding fields.

By the nineteenth century the surrounding land was largely owned by three families; the Rhodes, the de Beauvoirs and the Tyssen Amhursts. It was these families who, by selling their estates as building plots to developers, provided the economic catalyst for the development of Victorian suburbia in the area.

An 18th century turnpike gate stood at the crossroads until the 1860s. Established to collect tolls for road maintenance and safety, the gate keepers became renowned characters for their 'bolshiness' and extortion. The building of a new network of roads in the 1860s meant that transport could easily avoid the gates and they soon became unviable.



*2 St Bartholomews Chapel*

**The first part of this walk is in an easterly direction along the mediæval route which is shadowed by Dalston Lane, through Dalston and towards the village of Hackney.**

Walking east along the southern side of Dalston Lane the route crosses the path of the Dalston-Broad Street railway line. Opened in 1865, this branch line connected into the existing North London Line and provided a crucial link between Dalston, soon to become a residential suburb, and the places of work in the city. The branch line was closed in the 1980s at the height of the speculative boom in the city when Broad Street Station was demolished to make way for the office development at Broadgate. Plans to reconnect Dalston's rail link with the City are currently being considered. The North London rail line to the north is soon to have the Euro-

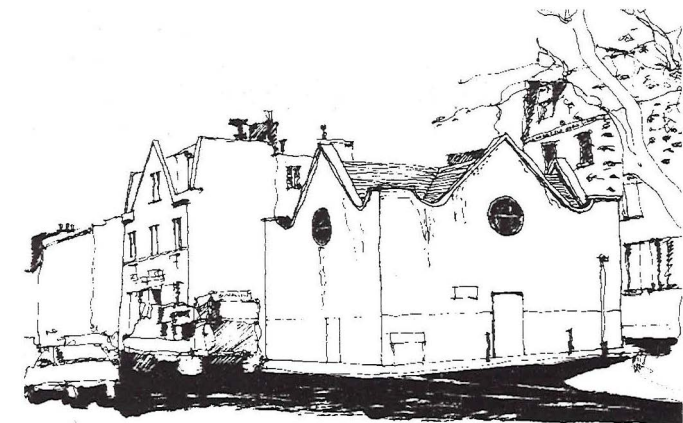
pean Rail link from Stratford to St Pancras tunnelled beneath it.

Looking north up Ashwin Street, The Print House (3) has been recently refurbished by Bootstrap Enterprises to provide office space for local businesses. Built by Reeves Artists Materials in the 1890s on land leased from the railway, the factory was an important local employer until it moved premises in the 1950s. Notice the mosaic friezes depicting artists' materials. The Green Door Café in the Print House offers an imaginative selection of vegetarian meals.

On the south side of Dalston Lane between Roseberry Place and Beechwood Road a large building (4) looms behind the street facades. Currently housing the Four Aces club it was built as a theatre in the 1890s to replace an earlier circus building constructed in 1860; the auditorium seated an audience of 3000.

Further down Dalston Lane on Tyssen Street to the north, another large industrial building is witness to Edwardian confidence in the manufacturing sector. Springfield House (5), built in 1902 as a furniture factory is still the largest building in the area. The factory's bold facades suggest large interior halls.

Next to Springfield House stands the now redundant Dalston Police Station (6), another solid Edwardian building, with an elegantly gabled lockup adjacent to the main building, built in 1914. The architect J D Butler also designed Hackney Central Police Station.



*6 Old Dalston Police Station*

To the south a small Georgian terrace (7) has projecting shop fronts lining Dalston Lane. The shops were built in the front gardens of the houses after 1830, when Dalston Lane became a local commercial centre.

Dalston Lane turns to the north, avoiding the course of an old stream bed along Parkholme Road and Wilton Way, following the contours of the land and heading for the crossing of the now culverted Hackney Brook at the junction of Amhurst Road. Queensbridge Road to the south was laid in the 1840s to serve the Middleton Estate between Middleton Road and the canal, connecting Dalston Lane with Hackney Road. The east side of Queensbridge Road is lined with elegant early Victorian terraces (8) reflecting an affluent past when confidence was high and the cost of labour low.

The Victorian developments to the west of Queensbridge Road were pulled down in the 1960s to be replaced by the Holly Street Estate (9): 4 towers and numerous 4 and 5 storey horizontal walk-ups. These developments represented a singular view of how people should live, their stark uncompromising design contrasting strongly with the ordered individualism of the Victorian developments. The failure of provision became apparent soon after the estate was built. The redevelopment, phase one, is now in progress; another phase of housing development to reflect the character of our time.

Parkholme Road, curving elegantly away from Dalston Lane, was the residential heart of Dalston before the Victorian estates were developed. Earlier houses were replaced by large Victorian terraces.

Benjamin Clarke, writing in the 1890s, recalls “a bun or a cake house in Parkholme Road which being so near to, yet out of London, had a questionable reputation as a place of assignation between the frivolous and sometimes vicious of both sexes.”

In the early 19th century, William Rhodes, the grandfather of Cecil Rhodes, was the dominant landowner and he is thought to have been responsible for the development of the group of four houses N<sup>os</sup> 40–46 Parkholme Road (10), an interesting exercise in early domestic Victorian Gothic.

The George on the corner of Wilton Way is a popular drinking and eating house.

Returning to the junction there are several buildings of note. An austere detached Georgian house stands back from Dalston Lane on the north side N<sup>o</sup> 57 (11), predating surrounding buildings and the railway.

To the eastern side stands St Bartholomews Vicarage (12), the annexe to a church that stood on the site behind. Built in the 1860s neo-Gothic style by Dove Brothers of Islington, the church was opened in 1870. The church was demolished in the 1970s to accommodate a garage, which was not built. The Vicarage has stood derelict for many years, a symbol of urban decay, despite local initiatives to encourage sensitive reuse of the building. A development is now imminent to convert the building into flats for a local Housing Association.

On the east side of Dalston Lane N<sup>os</sup> 92 and 94 are interesting early 19th century buildings (13); of particular note are the Dutch gabling and 5 storey tower to the left hand side of N<sup>o</sup> 94.

Turn right from Dalston Lane into Ritson Road the route approaches the western side of the German Hospital (14). Established with royal backing in the 1840s to cater for the needs of the poorer German community throughout London, the hospital took over the buildings of the Dalston Infant Orphan Asylum which moved to larger premises in Wanstead. The decision to open the hospital in Dalston in 1843 was governed by the perception of the area as a healthy clean place, on raised ground with good drainage, yet within close proximity to the city where much of the poorer German community lived and worked.

The success and increasing demands from local



14 The German Hospital in 1864

outpatients on the services of the hospital led to the erection of the existing buildings in 1864, on the southern part of the hospital site. The architect was a classical stalwart of the RIBA, T L Donaldson. Surprisingly, the style of the building owes more to a re-interpretation of an Elizabethan manor house than a Greek temple, and belies the modernity of its planning. The pavilion layout of the main buildings represented the most recent ideas on health, hygiene and ventilation endorsed by Florence Nightingale herself.

Further buildings were erected in the early 20th Century to house staff but the most notable is the 1930s wing facing Fassett Square (17). Designed by the architects Burnet Tait and Lorne and built in 1936, the extension again reflects a pioneering spirit to the design of health care buildings. With its roof terraces and sunlounges, generosity of space and fine detailing, the building pays homage to Alvar Aalto's design at the Paimio Sanitorium in Finland built between 1929-33.

Adjacent to the side entrance into the German Hospital stands the German Lutheran church (15). Relocating from the city, the church was erected in 1876 after the hospital had established a new focus for the German community. The grandiose gothic detailing over-emphasises the scale of the building which is in fact rather small.

A nazi-sympathising clergyman during the war, and a dwindling congregation, culminated in the closure of the church in 1982, when it was sold to the West Indian Church, The Faith Tabernacle, Church of God.

The German hospital itself closed down in 1987. It is soon to be refurbished and converted into mixed development for Housing Association accommodation and primary health care facilities.

Continue south down Stannard Road and join Graham Road. Walk east towards the village of Hackney. Graham Road was laid out as part of the network of roads linking the suburban developments of the 1860s.

Further east down Graham Road turn north into Fassett Square, the model for 'EastEnders' Albert Square. Lined with 1860s two storey terrace houses, surrounding a central garden, the domestic scale has been shattered on the west side by the 1930s wing of the German Hospital (17), rising above the houses like an

ocean-going liner above its pilot boats. Note in particular the details of the balconies to the south-west, porch canopy and supporting orb to the east, and the cantilevered maternity wing to the north.

Leaving Fassett Square at the south-east corner, walk to Greenwood Road turning north and continue over the railway to rejoin Dalston Lane. Greenwood Road (17) has some fine examples of early Victorian flat fronted terrace housing.

Rejoining Dalston Lane, the site of the old Asylum for Destitute Women is now occupied by the Samuel Lewis Housing Trust (18). The Asylum was built as a detention centre for women who had recently been imprisoned, and was a useful supply of domestic labour to the aspiring Victorian middle class households in the neighbourhood.

The Samuel Lewis Artisan Dwellings (1923) which replaced the Asylum are currently themselves being redeveloped to provide houses and maisonettes with gardens.

To the east down Dalston Lane can be seen Navarino Mansions (20), a flamboyant exercise in Edwardian artisan block dwellings. Designed by Nathan Joseph for The Industrial Dwellings Company, these blocks are currently undergoing extensive refurbishment and modernisation.

Turn west on Dalston Lane past the northern entrance to the German Hospital and the site of the Orphans Asylum (21); some interesting 18th-century terrace buildings, Nos 160-166 (22) and No 126 (23), and a rather grander 18th-century detached mansion to the north-west (24) which now houses the local offices of Circle 33 Housing Association.

Turn north up Cecilia Road and west onto Sandringham Road (25). This area represents a later phase of Victorian suburban development on land sold off from the Amhurst Tyssen estate. The houses are large and set well back from the road, incorporating neo-gothic arched windows and doors.

St Marks, (26) the large church which faces onto St Marks Rise, was built by Dove Brothers and consecrated in 1870 as a focal point for the layout of surrounding streets and to cater for the spiritual needs of the new residents. The church was designed by Chester Cheston,

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*17 The German Hospital, 1936 block*

surveyor to the Tyssen family. Large enough to be nicknamed the 'Cathedral of the East End', the church was described as 'brutally ugly' by its first vicar who proceeded to embellish it.

At the bottom of St Marks Rise is Ridley Road market (27) with an aromatic Turkish supermarket on the corner (28). Established after 1918, Ridley Road is the commercial heart of contemporary Hackney, representing a cultural extravaganza. The stalls reflect the many communities that have moved to Hackney in the last thirty years from eastern Europe, the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and Africa. The Ridley Road Bagel Shop is open 24 hours providing nourishment at all times of day and night. The market runs adjacent to the railway, meeting Kingsland High Street at its western end.

Turn south down the high street towards the crossroads. The buildings that line the road are largely 20th-century embellished replacements of their 18th- and

19th-century forebears. F. Cooke, The Pie and Eel Shop at No 41 (29) provides traditional East End food and drink.

The land to the north of Kingsland passage on the west side of the High Street formed Kingsland Green (30), housing raucous fairs between the 1850s and the 1870s, when it was turned into a market garden and eventually in the 1880s sold off as building plots.

Kingsland Passage is now all that remains of the Green. The cast iron railings of the toilet entrances and the illuminated upside down map of Hackney reflect the municipal optimism of a bygone age, a spirit that the Dalston City Challenge team in the adjacent offices is seeking to recreate.



*1 Turnpike Gate, Kingsland Road, c 1825*

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