

THE NEW GLOBE TAVERN and its
PLEASURE GROUNDS, MILE END ROAD

By Todd Longstaffe-Gowan

That's 'ow we doos it in the Mile End Road!
That's 'ow we spend our L.S.D.¹
With our good old concertinas,
An' a pot or two between us
We're as 'appy as the birds upon the tree.
Tuppenny smokes of the finest brand,
A wagonette that 'olds a 'eavy load:
Doin' it proper – reg'lar tip-topper –
That's 'ow we doos it in the Mile End Road!

Music Hall song, 1905

Lyrics by John P. Harrington

Gazing south from the summit of the newly-formed 'Art Mound' in Mile End Park, you get a good view of the East End and the distant City. (fig. 38) The fifteen-metre high earth mount, bristling with a tangle of lavender, long grasses and weeds, is one of a multitude of idiosyncratic features sprinkled along the length of London's newest park – the most conspicuous and famous of which is the 'Green Bridge' which spans the busy Mile End Road. Created in the Millennium Year, Mile End Park boasts of being the largest urban park to be created in central London since the nineteenth century. However, it is not the first public garden to adorn the Mile End Road. Indeed, on the very site where the 'Art Mound' now rises, once flourished the pleasure gardens of the New Globe Tavern – the 'Vauxhall Gardens of the East End'.²

The New Globe Tavern and its pleasure grounds are recorded in an ambitious lithograph showing three perspective views of the establishment, drawn by its owner Thomas Gardner, and 'Sketched and Drawn on Stone by H. M. Wichelo' in c.1842. The middle vignette (fig. 39) shows 'The Front View of the Tavern', a substantial establishment presenting to the Mile End Road a broad three-bay

façade embellished with strip pilasters and a wrought iron balcony. Proudly emblazoned upon its stepped pediment is the legend 'The New Globe', surmounted by a model sphere.³ An archway to the west of the tavern leads to the gardens behind, which are suggested by the sprouting foliage of trees, and two jaunty flagstaffs.

The top view in the print is a general bird's-eye view of the gardens, possibly taken from the rear windows of the tavern itself. (fig. 40) This view is entitled 'The Hill and Bowling Green with a view of the Regent's Canal and E.C. Railroad'. Visitors are portrayed strolling through the spacious gardens, which are embellished with flowerbeds, rock-works, shrubberies, fountains, statues, kiosks and clusters of rustic supper boxes. An imposing lantern in the form of a statue of Atlas balancing three globes illuminates the bowling green at the centre of the pleasure ground; the scene is further enlivened by barges plying the Regent's Canal, and a puffing locomotive that scurries across the horizon – the latter perhaps an amusing novelty to contemporary visitors. The immediate and distant environs of the gardens are also depicted in considerable detail: to the right (east) of the gardens cattle are shown grazing in leafy paddocks, vaunting the rustic charms of the setting; whilst belching chimneys and the lofty spire of St. John Bethnal Green in the left middle distance proclaim the proximity of the gardens to the bustle of the metropolis.

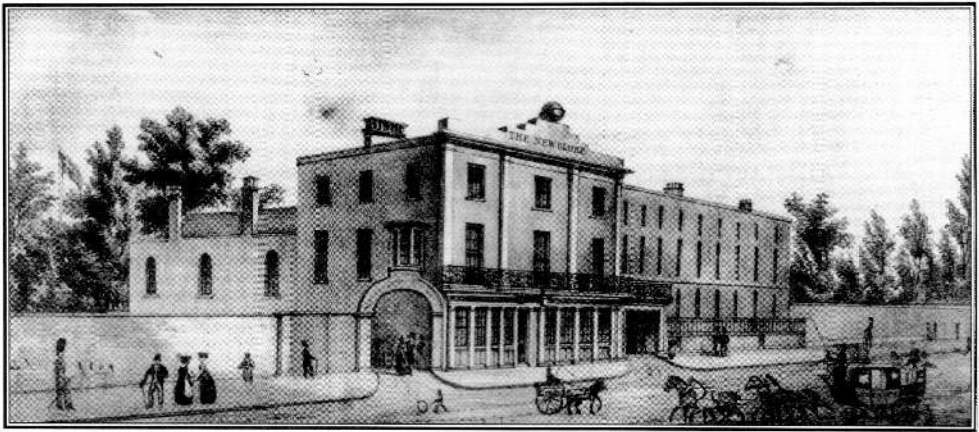
The bottom view is a more intimate vignette showing the 'Lower Grounds with Fountains &c.'. The scene is one of great merriment: visitors are portrayed drinking at tables in the lee of a pair of giant trees, and nestled in fanciful treillage and chalet-style supper boxes; others amble aimlessly through the gardens. (fig. 41)

Mr. Gardner's perspective views appear to have been published to promote his own, and at the time highly novel, pleasure grounds. The generous format of the lithograph (380mm x 580mm), and the poor quality of the paper upon which it is printed, suggest that it

1. L.S.D. (£-s-d), pounds, shillings and pence.

2. Taverns, coffee-shops and leisure grounds had abounded in Mile End Old Town from the early eighteenth century, the most famous of which was Spring Gardens (from c.1702) – also known as the Jews' Spring Gardens on account of its proximity to the Jews' Burial Ground. Spring Gardens ceased trading in 1765, and the land was developed for housing. Derek Morris, *Mile End Old Town 1740–1780* (London, 2002), pp. 94–5.

3. Warwick Wroth reports in 1907 that the 'fine golden globe' was still 'keeping balance on the roof'. The globe had been painted black, and possibly replaced by 1971. Wroth, *Cremorne and the Later London Gardens* (London, 1907), preface, p. vi; *East London Advertiser*, 'When Mile End was famous for its festival gardens', 27th August 1971.



38. View looking south-west from the Art Mound, over the site of the former New Globe pleasure grounds
(PHOTOGRAPH: TODD LONGSTAFFE-GOWAN)

39. Detail of H.M. Wiche's lithograph of c.1842 showing the 'Front View of the [New Globe] Tavern'
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)

was produced in relatively large quantities, possibly to be sold or given to patrons as a memento of their visit, or delivered into the hands of bill-stickers.⁴ Gardner was certainly keen to attract visitors to the new pleasure grounds, and by all accounts he was successful in doing so: in the hey-day of the New Globe gardens in the late 1840s there were often as many as 1,000 visitors in a day.⁵ Although it was not uncommon in the early nineteenth century for genteel amateur artists to commission professionals to translate their sketches into lithographs, it is perhaps more unusual for a publican/proprietor like Gardner to undertake such a venture. However, the artist and lithographer Henry Mayle Wichelo, Jr. was 'Drawing Master to the Stepney and Stockwell Grammar Schools', as well as a number of other educational establishments in the vicinity of Mile End Old Town, and it may have been that he and Gardner met at the New Globe.⁶

The origins of the New Globe Tavern are unclear. Although an eighteenth-century surveyor's affidavit suggests that it was in business by 1781,⁷ published recollections of the Gardner family – who owned the land from 1784 – propose that William Gardner of Coggeshall, Essex farmed the land until his death in 1816, selling his hay and straw at Whitechapel haymarket. Although Gardner was also licensee of the Cherry Tree public-house, some 50 metres to the east of the New Globe (now the site of the Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church), it is his widow, Martha – a 'woman of great enterprise' – who is credited with building, or rebuilding, the New Globe Tavern in 1820.⁸ It is said that after the family farm was split in two in 1816 by the cutting of the Regent's Canal, Martha turned her hand to planning the development of the east bank of the canal (later known as Commercial Wharf) with a view to making the most of the commercial prospects brought

about by the advent of the new waterway that linked the suburban hamlet of Mile End Old Town to the London Docks and the industrial centres of the Midlands. Martha intended to run the tavern in conjunction with her eldest son, William, but neither she nor her son were able to enjoy the fruits of their hard work: both died in 1821, shortly after the New Globe opened its doors. In the event, Thomas Gardner, the youngest of Martha's nine children, inherited the New Globe, and ran the family hay business.

The New Globe operated in a conventional manner until 1838, when Gardner purchased the six-acre field which lay immediately behind his establishment with a view to creating extensive pleasure grounds in imitation of Vauxhall Gardens.⁹ This land had been developed in the late 1740s by the West Ham Water Works, and contained a large, raised, lozenge-shaped reservoir.¹⁰ (fig. 42) Gardner filled in the hollow core of the disused earthwork to form a bowling green, from the top of which panoramas could be gained of surrounding fields, the neighbouring Regent's Canal, and the Eastern Counties Railway line. It is not known who built the structures in the gardens, or who supplied the statuary or the lighting. The well-known firm of seedsmen and nurserymen, Messrs. Gordon, Thompson & Baskett of Mile End Road, may possibly have supplied Gardner with trees, shrubs and flowers for his new gardens.¹¹

There are no contemporary accounts of the New Globe Pleasure Grounds. A London guide-book of 1846 does, however, describe similar 'tea and tavern gardens' of the mid-nineteenth century as having an old-world air: 'the amusements are innocent, the indulgence temperate; and a suitable mixture of female society renders it [our guide means *them*] most gay and pleasing.'¹² The public-house was then 'no inconspicuous feature of the Metropolis; yet in the earlier half of the nineteenth centu-

4. Henry Coxwell relates that Thomas Gardner engaged bill-stickers to post bills advertising forthcoming attractions in New Globe Gardens.

11. Coxwell, *My Life and Balloon Experiences, with a Supplementary Chapter on Military Ballooning* (London, 1887), p. 155.

5. Celia Davies, *Clean Clothes on a Sunday* (London, 1974), p. 59.

6. H. M. Wichelo, Jr. (1825/6–67) came from a family of artists. His father, H. M. Wichelo, Sr. taught a 'New System' for sketching from nature, with great success. There were at least two editions of this work published in 1849, and another in 1857. He wrote a manual on perspective, *The Students' Guide: or, Elements of Drawing and Perspective; with Directions for Drawing and Colouring from Nature* (1841). This article is described as 'Professor of Drawing at the Clapham, Stockwell, and Stepney Grammar Schools'.

7. London Metropolitan Archives, MR./B/C/1781/195.

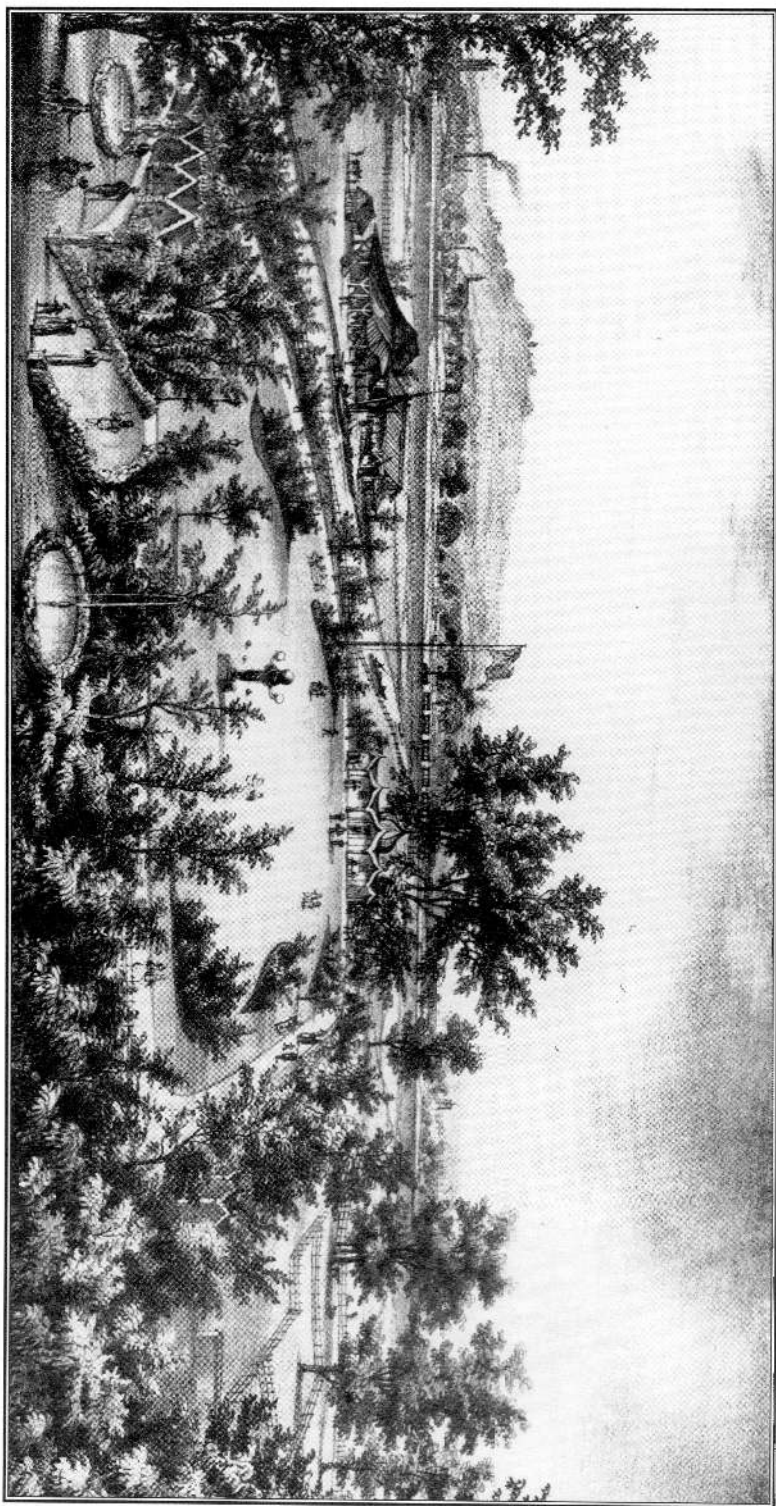
8. *London Topographical Society Newsletter*, no. 39 (1994), pp. 8–9.

9. Vauxhall Gardens, also known as The New Spring Garden, was opened c.1660, and flourished until 1859. The gardens were set in a 'pretty contrived plantation', and contained supper-boxes, ruins, arbours, cascades, fountains, statues, and a music room. From c.1730–90 the gardens were the most fashionable resort of the day, were open every day except Sunday from May until September, and a shilling admission was charged. When the New Globe gardens were opened in c.1839, Vauxhall Gardens were in decline.

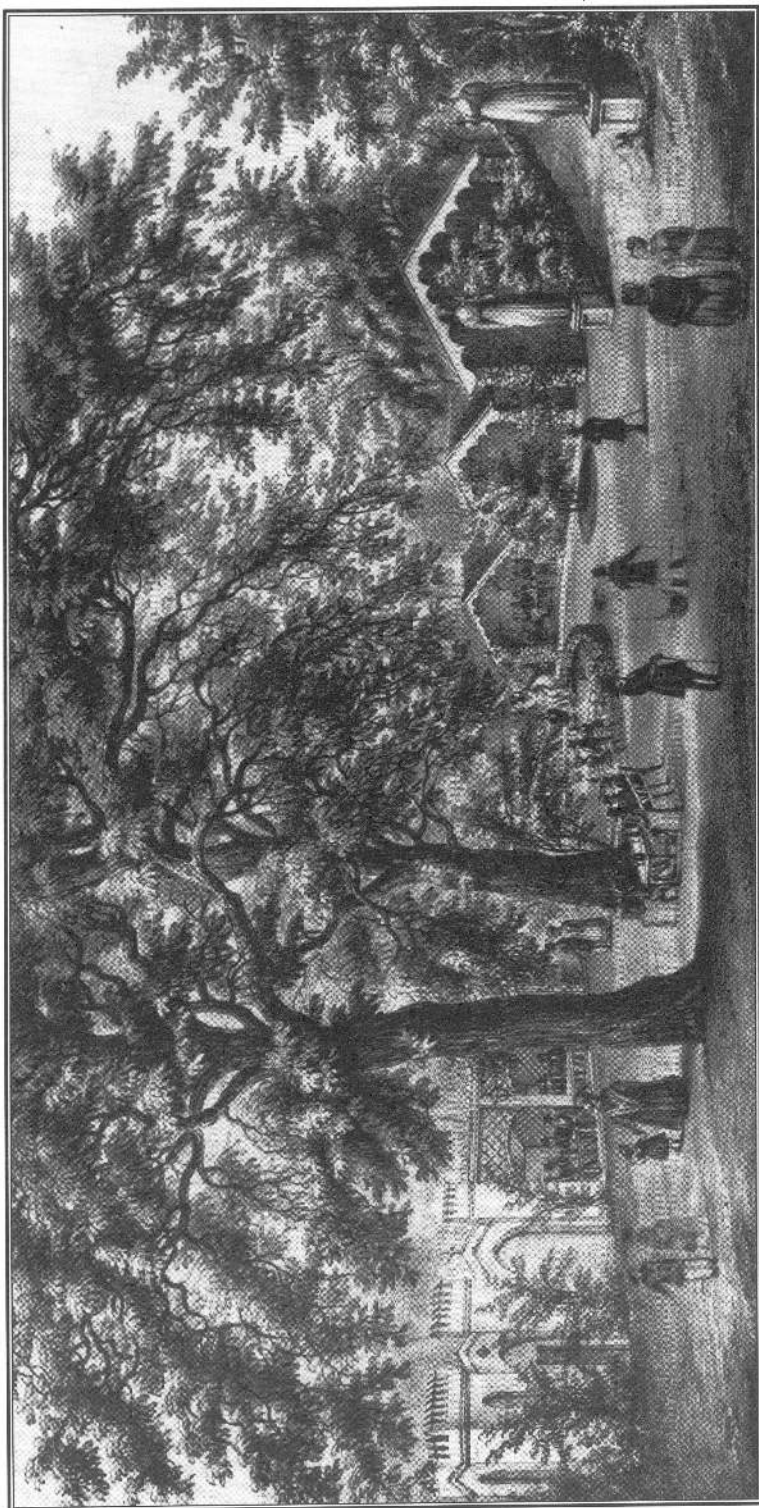
10. Morris, *Mile End Old Town*, pp. 26–7.

11. The firm of Gordon, Thompson & Baskett was established in 1742 by the celebrated nurseryman James Gordon (1728–91). During Gordon's lifetime it was one of the most celebrated nurseries in Britain.

12. Wroth, *op. cit.* preface, p. iv. Wroth does not supply the name of the guide-book.



40. Detail of Wichelo's lithograph of c.1842 depicting 'The Hill and Bowling Green
with a view of the Regent's Canal and E. C. Railroad'
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)



41. Detail of Wichelc's lithograph of c.1842 showing the Lower Grounds with Fountains &c'.
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)

ry it had, if not exactly gaiety and innocence, some characteristics which tended in that direction – its little gardens in summer, its tavern concerts in winter-time.¹³

The New Globe gardens presumably operated like other metropolitan pleasure resorts of the period: the season began in April or May, and lasted till August or September; the gardens were usually open three or more days a week, although not generally on Sunday. Such resorts depended for their reputation on evening concerts, their fireworks, and their facilities for eating and drinking. The New Globe gardens were, in fact, typical of what later became known as district tea-gardens: these '*rus-in-urbe* retreats', which were then an agreeable feature of suburban life, were the English answer to the Bavarian beer-gardens – 'though with inferior music'. They were 'the first to show dramatic ambition, and to erect in some portion of its limited but leafy grounds a lath-a-plaster stage large enough for eight people to move upon without incurring the danger of falling off into the adjoining fish pond or fountain. A few classical statues in plaster, always slightly mutilated, gave an educational tone to the place, and with a few coloured oil-lamps hung amongst the bushes the proprietor felt he had gone as near the Royal Vauxhall Gardens as possible for the small charge of a sixpenny refreshment ticket.'¹⁴

Gardner was an energetic entrepreneur: he organised a range of diversions to attract the public to the gardens, including ballets and concerts, the lavish illumination of the entrance arch to the gardens in Mile End Road, and the regular arrangement of over ten thousand lights throughout the gardens. He also engaged the balloonist Henry Coxwell to make various ascents from the grounds. The most celebrated stunts of the self-styled 'aeronaut' took place in the early 1850s: in October 1853 Coxwell's balloon – the 'Sylph' – catching 'a violent puff of wind' hurled his car into a chimney stack, sending bricks and mortar tumbling downwards; the following summer

he launched – under cover of darkness, and unknown to the crowds assembled in the pleasure grounds – a dummy ('pseudo aeronaut') in his place. The latter nocturnal ascent was accompanied by 'pyrotechnical signals' and a general display of fireworks beneath the car.¹⁵ Fireworks were, in fact, for many years a great attraction at the New Globe; and from the mid-1840s Gardner's friends William and John Brock supplied all the necessary fireworks. The Brocks later established their reputation as Britain's leading pyrotechnists at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

By the end of the 1850s the popularity of the gardens began to decline, and by 1860 Gardner – shortly before his death – sold the tavern and pleasure grounds. Although the pub continued to flourish under new ownership, the gardens were redeveloped and laid out as streets of houses. The fate of the New Globe Pleasure Grounds was not unique: as Wroth remarks in *Cremorne and the Later London Gardens*, in the 1850s 'many of these garden spaces – often, it is true, of Lilliputian dimensions – were marked out as building-ground, which was either sold to alien contractors or utilized by the proprietor of the tavern when he thought fit to erect thereon a roomier and more imposing edifice. At the same period, or some years later, the increase of music-halls, or local theatres, and palaces of entertainment, rendered the tavern concert, with its unambitious glee-parties and comic singing, a superfluity.'¹⁶

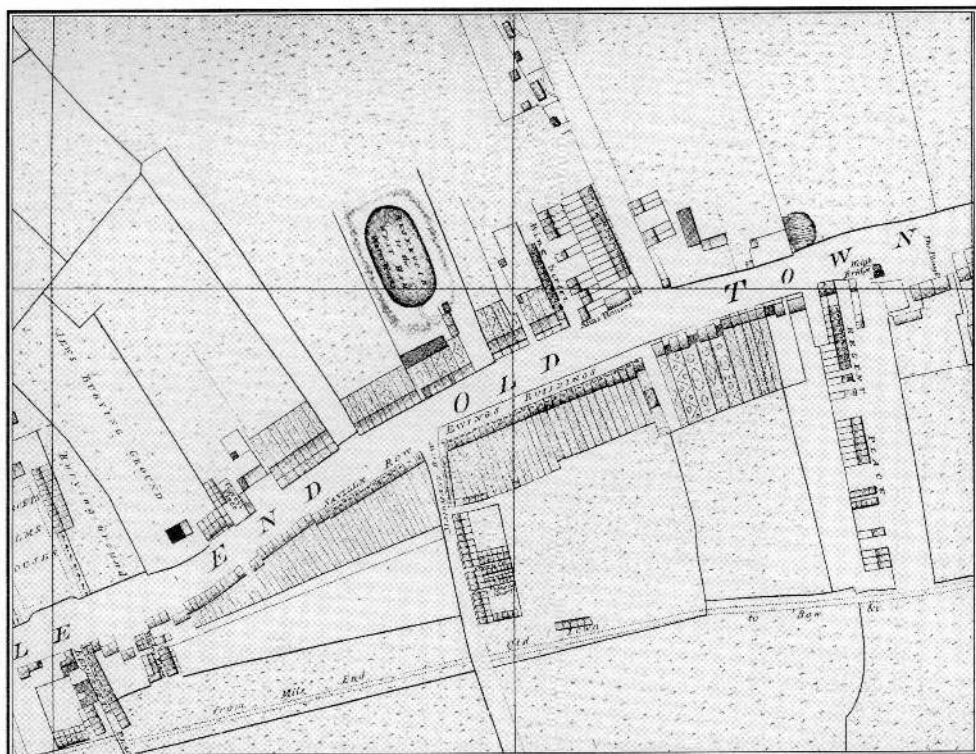
Whilst the nineteenth-century pleasure gardens have vanished, the New Globe Tavern survives; (*fig. 43*) although it no longer counts lock-keepers among its customers, it attracts the custom of local residents, doctors from Mile End Hospital, and students from Queen Mary College. Remarkably, the pub – one of the oldest in the area – still enjoys open views on three sides, and its surroundings have benefited from the recent refurbishment of the towpath of the Regent's Canal and the building of Mile End Park. These improvements have made it possible for the curious to snake

13. Wroth, *op. cit.* preface, p. vi.

14. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1911 edition. Other establishments cited by the *Encyclopaedia* include the Beulah Spa at Norwood, the White Conduit House at Pentonville, the Yorkshire Stingo in Marylebone Road, the Monster at Pimlico, the St. Helena at Rotherhithe, the Red Cow at Dalston, the Highbury Barn at Highbury, the Manor House at Mare Street, and the Rosemary Branch at Hoxton.

15. H. Coxwell, *My Life and Balloon Experiences*, *op. cit.* pp. 155-158; H. Coxwell, *My Life and Balloon Experiences*. Second Series. (London, 1889), pp. 8-12.

16. Wroth, *op. cit.* p. vi.



42. Detail of Richard Horwood's *Plan of London* (1819 ed.) showing the Reservoir for the West Ham Water Works, upon which was later raised the New Globe pleasure grounds
(PRIVATE COLLECTION)

43. The New Globe Tavern, 2004
(PHOTOGRAPH: TODD LONGS-FFE-GOWAN)

their way up the Art Mound to conjure the extent and layout of the Gardners' former pleasure grounds; and those who make this ascent are bound to agree with Wroth, who, lamenting the demise of London's tea and tavern gardens, remarked: 'the disappearance of the tavern concert may not be a matter of keen regret, but the abolition of the garden has altered – and for the worse – the whole character of the public-house.'¹⁷

**'A NEW GLEAM of SOCIAL SUNSHINE':
WINDOW GARDEN FLOWER SHOWS
for the WORKING CLASSES 1860-1875**
By Julia Matheson

In the last issue of *The London Gardener*, I discussed the flower shows of the East End of London, which at their peak between 1860-75 could hold their own against the best of the Royal Horticultural Society. In this article I am looking at something very different over the same period – shows organised for those who could never dream of even a tiny patch of garden, but had to do the best they could with pot-plants and window-boxes. (fig. 44)

The first Window Garden Show for the poor was held in Little Coram Street, Bloomsbury, in 1860. It was the brainchild of the Revd. Samuel Hadden Parkes, the senior curate of St. George's, Bloomsbury, and from very small beginnings it was to lead on to a widespread network of such shows, both in and outside of London. From the outset, the motivation and organisation were quite different from those of the serious floricultural societies of the East End, although they developed at exactly the same time. In a lecture in 1862, the Revd. Parkes listed the advantages to the poor of flowers and flower shows, which led to his decision to start them for his parishioners: they added beauty to the 'comfortless rooms of the poor'; they promoted sensible attitudes to the health-giving properties of fresh air and cleanliness; the shows were 'an inexpensive mode of giving a vast amount of pleasure to large numbers of persons' and encouraged habits of foresight by dint of the preparation

necessary in having a plant ready for exhibition. Above all, speaking as a clergyman, 'flowers speak of God and for God where God is too often entirely forgotten'.² In 1864, he expanded on his lecture in a little book, in which he wrote that working people needed recreation, and that it was necessary to provide 'rational and innocent recreation' for otherwise they would turn to the 'debasing influences of the music hall, the gin shop, or the beer house'.³

Unlike in Tower Hamlets, where the working-class members took full responsibility for their societies and shows, the Bloomsbury shows were quite definitely something organised for the working classes, in which they were not expected to take any role other than as exhibitors. It was the clergy, aided by the better-off local residents and eventually by the aristocracy, who set the rules, managed everything, and provided and awarded the prizes. Lord Shaftesbury was one of their earliest supporters. Lady Augusta Stanley, wife of Dean Stanley, was one of the leaders of the Westminster shows. When the movement spread to the East End, one of the local clergymen, who was organising the district-wide show in 1866, made a general appeal to the readers of *The Times* to support him, and a few weeks later was able to report a major catch: Florence Nightingale had donated £5, as from 'a helpless invalid, herself dependent on window gardening for almost her only pleasure'.⁴

But in the beginning there were no such eminent persons involved and Revd. Parkes and the Lady Superintendent of the Bible Mission Room made the arrangements themselves. Bloomsbury is near the West End of London, but although in the mid-nineteenth century it included some garden squares, it had other areas as run-down and over-crowded as any in the East End. (figs. 45 & 46) In 1864 Revd. Parkes described the district in which he had worked for seven years, a network of narrow courts with a population of about 1,700 of the lowest condition:

2. Revd. S. Hadden Parkes, *Flower Shows of Window Plants for the Working Classes of London: A Paper Read Before the Social Economy Section of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, at the Annual Meeting Held at the Guildhall, June, 1862*. (London: Victoria Press, 1862), p. 3.

3. Revd. S. Hadden Parkes, *Window Gardens For The People and Clean and Tidy Rooms, Being an Experiment to Improve the Homes of the London Poor* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1864) p. 53.

4. *The Times*, 9th July 1866, p. 12.

17. Wroth, *op. cit.* p. iv.

1. *Gardener's Magazine*, 14th May 1864, p. 157-8 (in the course of a long and enthusiastic review of S. Hadden Parkes' book).