

Almshouses for the elderly

Introduction

Almshouses represent part of the support which was available to the elderly poor before the widespread provision of occupational pension schemes or the introduction of the state pension in 1909. Almshouses are a form of charitable housing provided to a specific group. The almshouses listed in this guide are all for the elderly, although LMA holds other records relating to almshouses provided for other groups. Almshouses were typically established by a bequest or charity, and were managed by the trustees of the charity or bequest.

A guide to the records of almshouses from the former Guildhall Library collections is available on line at: <http://www.history.ac.uk/gh/18v.htm>.

Details of records relating to almshouses supported by the City of London's livery companies can be found in the livery company section of this guide. There are also records relating to almshouses in the following entries in the charity pensions section of this guide:

- Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society
- Corporation of Trinity House
- Doctor Spurstowe's Charity, Hackney
- Family Welfare Association
- Fishmongers' and Poulterers' Institution
- London Aged Christian Society
- National Benevolent Society of Watch and Clock Makers
- Parmiter's Foundation: Parmiter's Almshouse and Pensions Charity
- Poulterers' Benevolent Institution
- Sion College

AGED POOR SOCIETY (LMA/4439)

The Aged Poor Society was established in 1708 as a benevolent Catholic charity to give permanent relief to poor Catholics of 'good character'. Relief of the poor was achieved by the payment of pensions or allowances, the provision of almshouses or other accommodation, and the maintenance and support of beneficiaries.

The Society's almshouse in Hammersmith was known as Saint Joseph's Almshouse. The minutes and reports provide detailed information on the establishment of the almshouses, the use of funds from bequests, the admission and discharge of aged poor beneficiaries, and the membership and patronage of the Society.

Minute book: includes Quarterly Meetings, Annual General Meetings, Board of Directors, and Governors' Meetings	1902-1921	LMA/4439/01/001
Almshouse Committee minute book 1850 - 1866: includes extracts from the Aged Poor Society minute book 1835 - 1850, Almshouse Fund accounts 1838 - 1865, and Anniversary Dinner ticket 1869	1838-1869	LMA/4439/01/002

AGED POOR SOCIETY (continued)

Bound annual reports	1820-1871	LMA/4439/02/001-002
Bound annual reports for Saint Joseph's Almshouse	1851-1880	LMA/4439/02/003
Annual reports including Saint Joseph's Almshouse	1854, 1871, 1911, 1914 – 1920 - 1922, 1925, 1930 - 1940	LMA/4439/02/004-008
'Historic records of the Aged Poor Society, an abstract', by J J Ratton, honorary treasurer	1915	LMA/4439/02/009
Photocopies: booklet on the Society's 'Rules' 1957, a letter from the Duke of Norfolk 1875, and a list of Governors 1989		LMA/4439/02/010

ALMSHOUSES AND HOSPITALS: CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION (CLA/064)

The City of London Freeman's Houses were built in the 1830s, and known as the Reform Almshouses. They came under the control of the Corporation of London in 1848 and since then have been known as the London Almshouses or Freeman's Houses. Rogers' Almshouses were first built in Hart Street, Cripplegate, by the executors of Robert Rogers in 1616. In 1856 the Corporation rebuilt the almshouses in Brixton on land adjoining the London Almshouses.

Papers of London Almshouses and Rogers' Almshouses, 1615-1991, including rules and regulations, financial accounts, reports, Committee of Management minute books, petitions for admission, Trustees' minute books, warden's report books, and various other administrative papers	1615 - 1991	CLA/064/01
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CHRIST'S HOSPITAL: DAVID SMITH AND EMBROIDER'S ALMSHOUSES (CLC/210)

David Smith, an embroiderer of London, bequeathed money to Christ's Hospital for the building of six almshouses for poor widows. After the almshouses were sold in the 1860s it appears that the widows continued to receive financial support.

David Smith's Gift: contemporary copy will of David Smith (includes establishment of almshouses and pensions of 20s each to the six widows resident in the almshouses)	1587	CLC/210/G/BSE/001/MS13813
David Smith's Gift: four copies of printed ordinances and rules for the six almshouses on St Peter's Hill, as set out in David Smith's will (proved P.C.C. 1587), with extract of the will relating to the qualifications and character required of those widows eligible for admission to the almshouses.	[1587?]	CLC/210/G/BSE/002/MS13814
David Smith's Gift : other material relating to property and legal matters		Series CLC/210/G/, section CLC/210/G/BSE/

See also: Charity pensions, Occupational schemes.

CORPORATION OF TRINITY HOUSE (CLC/526)

In addition to its role as pilotage and lighthouse authority, Trinity House operates as a charitable organisation for the relief of mariners. Trinity House is known to have had almshouses in Deptford since 1608, and its predecessor, the Deptford Seamen's Guild, also maintained an almshouse for sick and old sailors although no records relating to these almshouses survive in the main collection.¹ Almshouses in Mile End were built in 1695 on land bequeathed by Captain Henry Mudd. Other almshouses were built in Church Street, Deptford, on land given by Sir Richard Browne. After the Mile End almshouses were damaged by bombing in 1941, they were replaced by the Trinity Homes in Walmer.

Please note that in addition to the items listed below, further references to Trinity House's almshouses may be found in other Corporation of Trinity House records such as minutes and accounts.

LMA Information Leaflet number 51 gives more information about the records held in the Corporation of Trinity House collection.² For more information on the Corporation's charitable functions, and details on the petitions filed with the corporation to receive a place in the almshouse, please see the entry in the charity pensions section of this guide.

Pension copy out-correspondence, concerning former seamen and pilots living in Walmer Homes	1980 - 1986	CLC/526/MS30217 (9 items)
Registers of Corporation of Trinity House almspeople, organised by almshouse, giving name, age and reason for assistance	1845 - 1971	CLC/526/MS30219 (3 items)
Rules for admission to Corporation of Trinity House almshouses	1849	CLC/526/MS30221
Agendas for committee for visiting almshouses. The committee was discontinued in 1950 and matters concerning almspeople thereafter went to the Pensions Committee (CLC/526/MS30216/36-54) and matters concerning almshouses to the Estates Committee (CLC/526/MS30211/18-29)	1897 - 1950	CLC/526/MS30222 (10 items)
Trinity Homes, Walmer: agendas of the committee for building and overseeing the homes	1955 - 1968	CLC/526/MS30223 (2 items)
Trinity Homes, Walmer: agendas of the Dreadnought (nursing wing) committee	1960-1977	CLC/526/MS30224 (2 items)
Trinity Homes cash book	1969 - 1984	CLC/526/MS30230A
Mile End almshouses: papers and drawings	1843 - 1953	CLC/526/MS30268
Photographs of Mile End almshouses	194-	CLC/526/MS30354

See also: Charity pensions, Occupational schemes.

¹ Chris Lewin, *Pensions and Insurance before 1800* (Tuckwell Press, 2003).

² <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/visiting-the-city/archives-and-city-history/london-metropolitan-archives/Documents/visitor-information/51%20Records%20of%20the%20Corporation%20of%20Trinity%20House.pdf>

EALING VESTRY (ACC/2208)

Ealing almshouse minutes	1879-1904	ACC/2208/E/126
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See also: Poor Law, Widows' and Orphans' Funds.

EMANUEL HOSPITAL (CLA/071)

Emanuel Hospital was founded in 1600 by Lady Anne Dacre who directed her executors to buy land at Tothill Fields, Westminster, and build a hospital or almshouse for 20 poor people and 20 poor children. The Hospital would be supported by revenue from Brandesburton manor and estates in Yorkshire. The executors were to appoint the governors of the Hospital during their lifetimes, after which the responsibility would fall to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London. The hospital was rebuilt in 1701 and extended in 1728. In 1794 an Act of Parliament was obtained by the Lord Mayor to increase the number of people who could benefit from the hospital.

The Hospital's archive includes a series of petitions, made to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, for admittance to the hospital. They include information about the petitioner's background (such as details of their family, profession and any connection to City of London, whether they resided in the parish of St Margaret's Westminster and their payment of parish taxes) and the circumstances which led them to need a require a pension (which often includes details of the petitioner's age). The petitioners asked to be considered for a specific vacancy at the Hospital, and the name of the previous resident is often given. Petitions were certified by the minster and churchwardens of the parish, and any other witnesses the petitioner could gather. The majority of claimants seem to be in their 60s or 70s.

As the Corporation of London was responsible for appointing the hospital's governors the records listed below include records from the Corporation's Emanuel Hospital Committee.

The administration and finance series includes: a history of the School; journals, ledgers, cash books; Hospital vouchers; a list of Wardens 1673 - 1786; ordinances and regulations made by the Governors of Emanuel Hospital; rentals; a copy of Lady Dacre's will; and weekly reports of the master of the Hospital		CLA/071/AD/01 (series)
Petitions for admission of pensioners to the Hospital, or children to the school.	1679 - 1785	CLA/071/AD/02/003/001
Rough Committee minutes and papers	1673-1734, 1745-54, 1778, 1793-5, 1801	CLA/071/AD/02/003/002
Lists of pensioners and children in the Hospital and School	1716 - 1736	CLA/071/AD/02/003/003
Charity Commissioners' Schemes and Orders	1877 - 1948, 1953 - 1969	CLA/071/AD/02/004/009 - CLA/071/AD/02/004/017, CLA/071/AD/02/004/024 - CLA/071/AD/02/004/028 (14 files)

EMANUEL HOSPITAL (continued)

35 petitions from women for vacant place in the almshouses (produced by death(s) of Ann Barker and Mary Hodges) and scrutiny paper recording votes at election to fill these vacancies. Petitioners include Dame Mary Gerard	174-?	CLA/071/AD/02/006/004
Petitions for admission for both the school and hospital		CLA/071/AD/02/006/004 - 009
6 petitions from men for vacancy in the almshouses (produced by Mr Collison's death); 1 petition for vacant place at the school; 1 petition to continue in post of searcher and sealer at Leadenhall	1742?	CLA/071/AD/02/006/005
4 petitions from women for vacant place in the almshouses (1 petition for vacancy produced by deaths of Mary Gascoyn and Elizabeth Cole)	174-?	CLA/071/AD/02/006/006
25 petitions from women for vacant place in the almshouses (12 for vacancy produced by death of Mrs Carver, 11 for vacancy at death of Alicia Taylor and 2 unspecified)	1752?	CLA/071/AD/02/006/007
33 petitions from women for vacant place in the almshouses (21 for vacancy produced by death of Mary Ampleford, 4 unspecified and 8 for vacancy produced by death of Mrs Carver) and list of petitions dated 4 Jul 1749	174-	CLA/071/AD/02/006/008
20 petitions from women for vacant place in the almshouses (17 for vacancy produced by death of Dame Mary Gerard and 3 unspecified) and 3 petitions for vacant place at the school. One petitioner mentions the South Sea Bubble	174-	CLA/071/AD/02/006/009
Records relating to the Brandesburton Estates, which funded the Hospital		In series CLA/071/EM/01 and CLA/071/AD/02
Medical Reports for almspeople	27 Feb 1868 - 28 Nov 1877	CLA/071/PS/01/013
Account of articles delivered for the use of the Hospital: daily record of items such as bread, milk, meat, other household goods delivered to the Hospital	19 Aug 1844 - 5 Oct 1849	CLA/071/PS/02/006
Records of the Emanuel Hospital Committee, Corporation of London's Court of Common Council, including minute books, 1729-1989; rough minutes, 1804-1841 and 1870-1889; committee papers, 1689-1964 and letter books, 1907-1997	1689 - 1997	COL/CC/EHC (subfonds)

See also: Charity pensions, Occupational schemes.

FAMILY WELFARE ASSOCIATION: FORMERLY CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY (A/FWA)

The Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity (known as the Charity Organisation Society) was founded in 1869 as a result of concern that the overlapping work of charities in London represented a waste of resources and was contributing to pauperisation. Its

founders sought to promote a more scientific approach to charity, based on the principle that relief should only be given after a thorough investigation of the applicant's circumstances and character. Its objects included promotion of co-operation between charitable agencies and Poor Law authorities. It was later known as the Family Welfare Association (FWA).

As part of its work the FWA acted as trustee to a number of Almshouse charities, listed below.

Papers relating to Mrs Esther Doe's Almshouses, of which the FWA was a trustee	1916-1986	A/FWA/C/J/16 (10 files) and A/FWA/C/K/02 (4 files)
Papers relating to Dovedale Almshouses Trust, of which the FWA was trustee		A/FWA/C/J/17 (2 files) and A/FWA/C/K/03 (2 files)
Papers relating to the Pilgrims' Lodge Trust of which the FWA was trustee. The Trust was concerned with sheltered housing. Records include Trustees' Meeting Minutes, administrative papers, financial papers, admission papers and annual reports		A/FWA/C/J/18 (2 files) and A/FWA/K/09 (25 files)
Papers relating to Miss Tate's Almshouses, of which the FWA was trustee. Includes Trustees' Meeting Minutes and administrative and financial papers. The Almshouses were operated for poor widows or spinsters over 55		A/FWA/C/J/19 (3 files) and A/FWA/K/10 (23 files)
Trustees' minute book for Charlotte Beaty's Almshouse	1985 Jan-1986 Oct	A/FWA/C/K/01/001
Trustees' meeting minute book, including balance sheets and reports, for Josiah Forster's Trust	1983 Nov-1992 Mar	A/FWA/C/K/04/001
Trustees' and management committee meeting minutes (including statements of expenditure and income and list of beneficiaries, correspondence and balance sheet) for Gillingham Almshouses	1949-1991	A/FWA/C/K/05/001-002 (2 files)
Trustee's meeting minutes, financial papers and comforts fund papers for Hopton's Charity	1730-1986	A/FWA/C/K/06 (12 files)
Trustees' meeting minutes and accounts for Mary Overand Charity	1960 - 1992	A/FWA/C/K/07 (2 files)
Cash Book for Penn and Widow Smith's Almshouses	1964 - 1985	A/FWA/C/K/08/001

See also: Charity pensions, Occupational schemes.

LICENSED VICTUALLERS' ASYLUM (CLC/145)

In 1826, a group of licensed victuallers formed the Licensed Victuallers' Asylum to relieve decayed and aged members of their trade and their wives or widows. The following year the Society acquired land in the Old Kent Road, Camberwell, on which they erected 103 separate dwellings to serve as almshouses.

Abstract of the charter of incorporation and of rules, ordinances and by-laws	1851	CLC/145/MS21458
Extracts from the charter of incorporation	1860?	CLC/145/MS21459
Copy opinions concerning property	1890?	CLC/145/MS21460

METROPOLITAN BENEFIT SOCIETIES' ALMSHOUSES, BALLS POND ROAD (LMA/4228 and ACC/3130)

The Metropolitan Benefit Societies' Asylum was founded in 1829 by John Christopher Bowles. The foundation stone of the Asylum which was situated in Balls Pond Road, Islington, was laid by the Lord Mayor in 1836. The Asylum was intended to provide accommodation for aged persons of either sex who were members of any friendly or benefit society and who lived in or near London. The almshouses were modernised in 1959. In 1964 twelve two storeyed houses for four tenants each were arranged around three sides of a quadrangle with a central hall to provide homes for a total of 48 men and women.

Committee minute book with letters and papers attached, including half yearly reports and polling papers, with lists of candidates describing their circumstances and numbers of votes cast, Aug 1875 and Feb 1876	May 1875 - Nov 1877	ACC/3130/001
Life donor's certificate with a view of the Asylum	1918	ACC/3130/002
Minutes of the General Committee	1828 - 1965	LMA/4228/A/01 (Series)
Minutes of the Donors and Subscribers half yearly meetings	1844 - 1861	LMA/4228/A/02 (Series)
Minutes of the Monthly meetings	1883 - 1902	LMA/4228/A/03 (Series)
Minutes of the Management Committee	1959 - 1984	LMA/4228/A/04 (Series)
Minutes of the House Committee 1839 to 1973;	1839 - 1973	LMA/4228/A/05 (Series)
Minutes of the Building committees	1853-1866, 1953-1955	LMA/4228/A/06/001, LMA/4228/A/07/001
Annual Statements	1963-1981	LMA/4228/B/01/001
Accounts both income and expenditure	1831-1983	LMA/4228/B/02 (series)
Revenue accounts and cash books		LMA/4228/B/03 and LMA/4228/B/04 (series)
Registers of Donors and Subscribers	1834-1987	LMA/4228/B/05 (series)
Annual returns	1975, 1979, 1980	LMA/4228/B/06/001
Rent book for Balls Pond Road	1905-1930	LMA/4228/B/07/001
Inmates Treat Fund	1950-1950	LMA/4228/B/08/001
Rules of the Almshouses 1855, 1926 and 1955	1855, 1926, 1955	LMA/4228/C/01/002
The Almshouse Gazette	1965-1990	LMA/4228/C/01/001
The programme for the re-opening of the Metropolitan Benefit Societies Almshouses 21st May 1991	1991	LMA/4228/C/01/003
Typescript notes about the history of the MBSA	198-	LMA/4228/C/01/004
Islington Gazette article about Balls Pond Road Almshouses 29th June 1984	1984	LMA/4228/C/01/005

METROPOLITAN BENEFIT SOCIETIES' ALMSHOUSES, BALLS POND ROAD (continued)

Plans and photographs of the Almshouse	1956 – 1980s	LMA/4228/C/02 (series)
Warden's Diary from 1945	1945	LMA/4228/C/03/001

SCHOOL MISTRESSES AND GOVERNESSES BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION (LMA/4459)

The Governesses Benevolent Institution was founded in London in 1841 to assist governesses during illness, poverty and old age. The Institution opened an Asylum for Aged Governesses in Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town in 1849. The Asylum was sold in 1870 and the funds were used to purchase land at Chislehurst, Kent where a terrace of 12 houses were opened in 1872. These houses were renamed 'The Home for Retired Governesses' in 1911 and then 'The Queen Mary Homes for Governesses' in 1946. The Queen Mary Homes in Chislehurst were demolished in 1966 to make way for the construction of Queen Mary House, a purpose built residential home for accommodating 44 residents. Queen Mary House opened in June 1967, causing the closure of Ada Lewis Homes and Northwood. An additional wing was erected in 1972 for less active or temporarily sick residents.

Minutes of Board of Management, Executive Committee and other committees		LMA/4459/A LMA/4459/B LMA/4459/C LMA/4459/D
Secretary's correspondence files, letter books, applicant case-files, legacy registers, registers of seals, legacy and subscriber case files and building plans	1845-1991	LMA/4459/K

See also: Occupational schemes.

STAINES RURAL AND URBAN DISTRICTS: ALMSHOUSE CHARITY OF MARY ANN PEARCE (ACC/1525)

The Almshouse Charity of Mary Ann Pearce provided almshouses and pensions. The charity's trustees were selected by the Urban District Council. The charity provided for five almspeople and four pensioners. Recipients had to be poor widows of good character, over 60 years old who had lived in Staines Ancient Parish for 2 years and were wholly or in part unable to support themselves due to age, ill-health, accident or infirmity.

Minute book of meetings of trustees	17 Jul 1908-27 Feb 1953	ACC/1524/021
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See also: Poor Law.