

## ***Women's Work***

Women ran the houses. In Camden Square there were two servants in most of the houses and three in some: a young servant, often coming from a country background, and older cook who assisted the family would live in, with 'episodic' help from chars and laundresses. In working-class Somers Town, by contrast in 1881 38% of employed women were in domestic service, and 22% in clothing.<sup>1</sup>

Factories employed both men and women: an informant for Booth's survey, in the 1890s, described a Christmas service held at the Idris soft drinks factory in College Street having 200 women compared with 50 men. A celebrated Pathé News film clip is of women workers marching in St Pancras Way from the Idris factory, led by militant Annie Lowin (who lived in Somers Town).<sup>2</sup> The North London School of Telegraphy at 41-43 Camden Road is mentioned in the papers of suffragette Millicent Garrett Fawcett.



Women workers marching (1911) <[britishpathe.com/video/factory-girls-on-strike/query/Camden](http://britishpathe.com/video/factory-girls-on-strike/query/Camden)>

For middle-class women, while remaining 'respectable' was an important consideration, 'enterprising women were engaged in business'.<sup>3</sup> Employment was more often within the home, maintaining independence and drawing on networks: enterprises included dress-making, provision of lodgings and education for children.

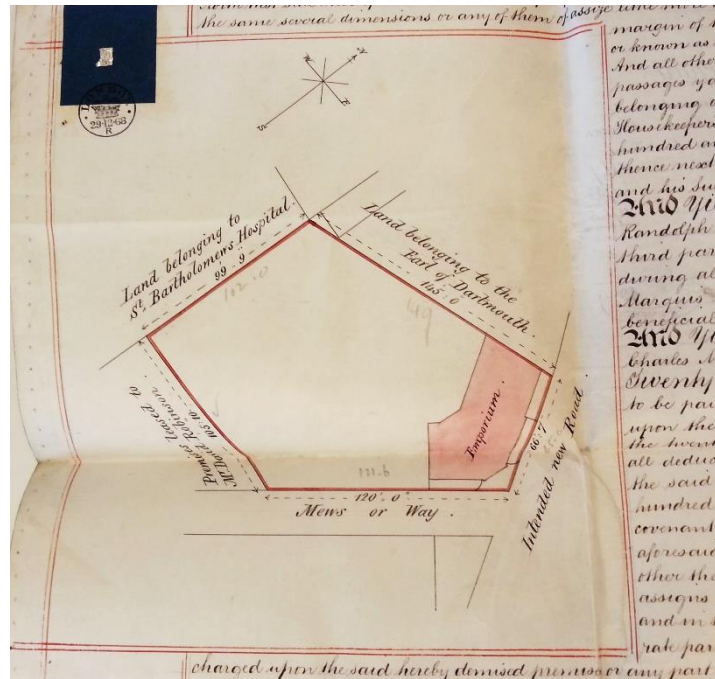
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<sup>1</sup> Andrew August, *Poor women's lives: gender, work and poverty in late-Victorian London*, Associated University Presses, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Bob Reeves, 'Annie Lowin & the Idris strike in Camden Town', *Camden History Review*, 2019;43:28-31.

<sup>3</sup> Alison Kay, *The foundations of female entrepreneurship*, London, Routledge, 2009:134.

**The Housekeepers Association** was built at Sandall Road, behind Camden Road, where now stands Camden School for Girls.



E/CAM/0049

It was a cooperative enterprise, with members taking a shareholding and then buying goods at lower price. Although the majority of shareholders were men, the main users would have been local women.

MEB, 28. 6d.  
**CAMDEN HOUSEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION.**—The **Housekeepers' Emporium**, the opening of which is announced in our advertising columns, is established for the sale of the best goods at reasonable prices, on ready money terms exclusively. It is, in fact, an effort to counteract the increasing tendency to exorbitant prices and vitiated quality of the daily necessaries of life. The shareholders are housekeepers and heads of families, whose primary object is to supply their own households with wholesome food, but they also admit the public to the benefit of the establishment on precisely the same terms as themselves, and will be content to obtain a moderate dividend on their outlay. The promises they hold forth in their prospectuses and price list are very attractive, and, if fulfilled, will confer immense benefits upon the public. It is objected to the Housekeepers' Association that they will interfere with the industry of small tradesmen; the reply is that if justice and integrity interfere with the small tradesmen such interference is peremptorily called for in defence of the public, and it is only on these principles the association can look for success.  
**FRIGHTFUL DEATH ON A RAILWAY.—On Mon.**

*The Standard* Thursday 1 October 01 1868.

1897.1

List of Persons holding Shares in the *Housekeepers Association* on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of *March* 18<sup>th</sup> Year immediately preceding the said 15<sup>th</sup> day of *March* and of Persons who have held Shares of *March* Address, and an Account of the Shares so held.

REGISTRATION OF THE COMPANIES ACTS, 1862, 1867, & 1870.

(25 & 29 Vict. c. 85; 30 & 31 Vict. c. 131; and 32 & 34 Vict. c. 131.)

COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES.

Special Resolution  
OF THE  
HOUSEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION, LIMITED,  
Passed 20th September, 1870, Confirmed 5th October, 1870.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members of the said Company, duly held at the ESSEX-COURT, Camden Road, in the County of Middlesex, on Tuesday Evening, the 20th day of September, 1870, at Seven o'clock; and at a subsequent Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members of the said Company, also duly convened and held in like manner at the same place, on Wednesday evening, the 5th day of October, 1870, at Seven o'clock, the following Special Resolution was duly passed and confirmed:—

That a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Jerratt, Bart., and Charles Wilson, in conjunction with the Directors, be appointed to liquidate the affairs of the Company.

By order of the Liquidators,  
JOHN DUNCAN,  
Secretary.

*John Duncanson*  
*John Duncanson*  
24 Margate Road  
Camden Square

Serial No.	Name	Christian Name	Address	Occupation	Shares held by Name	Amount paid for Shares
79	Bayley	George Smith	65 St. Augustines Road	Commercial Clerk	1	
80	Copthorne	John	117 Camden Road	Stationer	1	
81	Rayment	George	The Regent Home, Regents Park Road	Schoolmaster	2	
82	Chambers	Thomas Hodgson	Algar Lane	Coal Merchant	5	
83	Hilger	Mary	165 Camden Road	Stationer	1	
84	Hopkins	John	26 Camden Street	Lib. Registrar	1	
85	Woodley	George	143 Camden Road	Physician	25	
86	Hamilton	James	10 Canada Terrace	Stationer	5	
87	Nelson	Charles	21 Margate Road	Scoutmaster	10	
88	Stratford	William Edward	Stamford	Salvage Broker	10	
89	Rogers	George Albert	19 Hilltop Road	Vicar of St. Peter's	5	
90	Spalding	Ann Sophia	Valencia Villa	Housewife	20	
91	Stone	Charles	279 Camden Road	Stationer	1	
92	Lewis	Alfred Lionel	48 Church Road	Shortland Writer	2	
93	Norris	William Davis	156 Grove Street	Stationer	10	

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REGISTRED  
1 OCT 1870

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But it failed – running only from February 1868 to liquidation in October 1870.

**Schools.** Rachel Heaviside, Oliver's mother, kept a day school for girls in their house in King Street (now Plender Street). Elizabeth Dickens, Charles' mother, tried (unsuccessfully) to run a school in North Gower Street. Frances Buss founded Camden School for Girls and went on to be a national leader in girl's education. Catherine Raisin, later Professor of Geology at Bedford College, was both a student and a teacher at the school.

Revised 9 March 2020