Notes and News

The 112th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 11 July 2012 at St Botolph’s Bishopsgate. This was a well attended event, enlivened by a most interesting talk by Susan Meyer on fans (including some topographical examples), occasioned by the fact that the church hall had been the home of the Fanmakers Company for many years.

However the 2012 AGM was not one of our best, in that the catering contractors let us down by arriving with one of their two tea urns unserviceable and, after delays in getting all the images for this year’s publication photographed at the British Library, our new print organiser was unable to get the books which had been printed in China through the docks in time for delivery to the AGM. Members however enjoyed what teas were available, perused the bookstall and listened through a lashed-up audio system to the Hon. Editor’s tales of what they could look forward to this year and in future years.

So against all expectation members had to go home without the promised annual publication, London, A History in Maps. This disappointment – and the ensuing anxiety about colossal postage costs – was mitigated by a splendid volunteer effort, coordinated by our Treasurer Roger Cline, through which a large proportion of the books were delivered by hand very soon after the event. About 150 members collected their copies from the Treasurer’s At Home three weeks later and several others took weighty barrow loads for distribution in their home areas; the Publication Secretary’s office became a City distribution centre. Member Martin Williams deserves special mention for collecting and delivering around a hundred copies – he said it was like being an early Father Christmas, being welcomed by members as they took in their goodies.

We are reverting to Graham Maney, our long-standing print organiser, in 2013 and our new Secretary will be able to keep a sharp eye on the catering arrangements. If any 2012 member has not received his or her London, A History in Maps (at 6lbs in weight, it is difficult to overlook) let the Treasurer know.

Members will surely feel that this wonderful publication was worth waiting for. Our thanks must go both to our editor, Ann Saunders, and to Derek Brown and his team at Oblong, for a beautiful book with colour illustrations reproduced with exceptional subtlety and clarity, particularly welcome for such subjects as the notoriously faint Wijngaerde drawings of early Tudor London and also to our council member Laurence Worms, who contributed the biographical notes on the engravers. But above all we have to thank the author, Peter Barber, who has turned the much-admired exhibition which he curated in 2007 into a lasting record, with a lucid text introducing an amazing variety of illustrations – not only maps which are works of art in their own right, but a delectable collection of drawings, watercolours, prints and panoramas – demonstrating the inexhaustible riches of the British Library collections. As Ann writes in her editorial note, the book is truly ‘a milestone in the representation of London’s growth and development’. We were delighted to see an excellent review in The Times (20 September). How appropriate that Peter Barber, head of the British Library Maps and Topographical Views, and Council member of the LTS, was this year awarded an OBE. We send him our warmest congratulations.

The Society’s publication for 2013 will be an edition of William Morgan’s 1682 map of the City and Westminster. This fascinating map includes much additional material, including views of buildings and lists of donors, which will be given appropriate attention in the introduction by Ralph Hyde and index by Robert Thompson

In this age of cuts many organisations are struggling to achieve their aims. Fortunately our Society is in good health financially, with an increasing membership now standing at 1150, and we are in a position to offer some modest help to others. This issue of the Newsletter includes reports of two such cases, the cataloguing of the Crace material in the British Library Maps department, and the conservation of the Bowen collection of photographs in the London Metropolitan Archives.
**Christmas Presents solved**

If you found the 2012 publication a delight, perhaps your friends and relations might be similarly delighted if they received a copy of *London, A History in Maps*. As a special offer up to 10 December, for £30 the Society will send directly to a UK address your present of this book with a note that it comes from you. If you care to send the Treasurer with your order a card to be enclosed he will do his best to do so.

**Our New Secretary**

Good news about the Society’s administration. Following the appeal for a Secretary we are pleased to report the appointment of Mike Wicksteed, a long standing member. Mike is a retired civil servant with much experience in communications matters in a number of government departments. He will take on not only the usual secretarial duties but also the development of the website.

‘I’ve been a what you might call a ‘sleeping’ member of the LTS for nearly 18 years and thoroughly enjoy receiving the Newsletter and the annual publication. However, over all that time I never attended AGMs nor contributed to the Society in any way. I retired from the senior civil service last year, so when I noticed that a volunteer was needed to fill the Secretary’s post it struck me that I might put my paw in the air to put something back to an organisation which has given me so much pleasure over the years.

I attended this year’s AGM and was informed by Penny Hunting that the Council had selected me last month. I very much look forward to helping out as Hon. Sec. for the foreseeable future.”

– Mike Wicksteed

**Your email addresses needed**

Organising the Treasurer’s At Home and delivery/collection of the publication was made much easier when your current email address was known. However about one-third of the addresses we had noted turned out to be out of date. Please send to the Treasurer an email with LTS as the subject heading, so that we can contact you by this method in future. Rest assured we shall only use the data to contact you on Society business.

**Ups and Downs in London**

Despite all the financial worries, this has been a remarkable year for London; the Olympics and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee have inspired new buildings and special events and there have been many worthwhile efforts presenting different aspects of London through exhibitions and books, some of which we note in this newsletter. November 2012 also sees the publication of *Woolwich*, the first volume to appear from the Survey of London’s South London recent research programme (to be reviewed in the May Newsletter). It will shortly be joined by *Battersea*, which is in the press. The Survey has now turned to the north and started work on Marylebone. But it is sad to report that further work is seriously threatened: the outlook beyond 2014 looks grim, with the threat of a 50% or more cut to the Survey’s activities. It would be deplorable if this means an end to over a century’s meticulous and illuminating research on London’s history and development.

On the museum front, it is good news that the William Morris Museum at Walthamstow, scandalously shut down a few years ago, has now been refurbished and reopened (though sadly without its former curator). Less good – indeed shocking – news is Barnet Council’s plan to sell off the artefacts from the now closed Church Farm Museum at Hendon, many of which were presented by local residents. Meanwhile in Tower Hamlets the London Metropolitan University has decided to dispose of the Women’s Library. The important collection is to go to the LSE, but the ingenious building by Wright and Wright in Whitechapel, specially built as recently as 2002, is unwanted. The building in Old Castle Street is of interest also because, appropriately, it incorporates the remnant of a Washhouse opened 1851, a very early women’s amenity in what was once one of the poorest areas of London. Better news about another building in this area: Wilton’s Music Hall, an amazing mid nineteenth century survival near Wellclose Square, for long in a parlous condition; sympathetic conservation is now in progress.

**Changing London**

During the last quarter century, the City of London has been creeping eastward, with buildings on a scale which dwarfs the remaining domestic terraces of eighteenth century Spitalfields. The City’s involvement in the area is not new. Spitalfields Market, founded by Charles II, rebuilt as a private enterprise in the 1880s, was acquired by the Corporation of London and expanded in 1926-9. Part of this expansion consisted in the provision of an Exchange for the fruit and wool markets, which was built on the south side of Brushfield Street in 1929, framing the view toward the towering baroque bulk of Hawksmoor’s Christ Church on the other side of Commercial Street. The architect, the City Surveyor Sydney Perks, was sensitive to the context, his façade is in traditional materials, a long brick and sash-windowed frontage to Brushfield Street with a

Brushfield Street, the Fruit and Wool Exchange on the right.
dignified stone-faced central entrance to the spacious auction and meeting rooms within. The building is a reminder of the time when the City was concerned with goods, not just services. But the market moved away in 1986, and since then the future of its building has aroused bitter controversy. The current threat to the Exchange has roused widespread protest (see further, Spitalfields Community Group website). The plan by Bennetts Associates for the developer Exemplar includes not only the Exchange but the adjacent block to the south with White’s Row multi-storey car park. The application for redeveloping this huge site solely for commercial use, keeping only the façade to Brushfield Street, was twice rejected by Tower Hamlets council. An alternative proposal for mixed use of the site, including some housing and retaining the Exchange, was put forward by Johnstone Architecture, but in October the developer’s proposals were allowed after appeal to the Mayor of London. However the battle is still live, and SAVE London’s Heritage is now pressing for English Heritage to reconsider its decision not to list the building.

Correction
The last issue of the Newsletter, under Changing London, referred to the University of the Arts at King’s Cross. We are grateful to Linda Mead for pointing out that the University of the Arts is not a new name for St Martin’s and Central School of Art. The Granary building at King’s Cross is for Central Saint Martin’s College of Art and Design (CSM), which is a constituent college of the University of the Arts. The latter also includes Camberwell College of Arts, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion, and Wimbledon College of Art, which are all separate colleges on other sites.

Circumspice
Where is this building? Answer on p.11.

Exhibitions

www.britishmuseum.org
This ingenious and rewarding exhibition, in the ample space of the old Reading Room, links Shakespeare with the world of his time – which means, largely, the world of London, but not entirely. For the buzz of the cosmopolitan capital is contrasted with Shakespeare’s vision of the Forest of Arden, based on the playwright’s upbringing in rural Warwickshire. Maps, artworks and appropriate treasures from the Museum appear in the context of extracts from the plays spoken by eminent actors, throwing light on Shakespeare’s approach to history, to the classical world and to contemporary politics. The merchant city of Venice is explored as a parallel to London; other themes which reverberate in the plays include immigration, witchcraft, and the exploration of the New World. Although Shakespeare is often thought of as an Elizabethan, he lived to 1616, so here too is the Gunpowder Plot and James I and VI’s innovative term of ‘Great’ Britain. Topographers will enjoy London depicted in Hollard’s Long View, excellently displayed, and the objects found in the theatre excavations on Bankside which include the pottery money boxes used to collect theatregoers’ fees. Not to be missed, but if you can’t get there, there is a catalogue by Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton (£40, paperback £25).
– Bridget Cherry

On the facing walls of the Architecture Space (the grand name given to the lobby next to the Academy’s restaurant) are two long street elevations of the north and south sides of Piccadilly, rather in the style of Tallis’s London Street Views of 1838-40 (LTS publication 160). But the Piccadilly views are nearly a century later. ‘A prospect of Piccadilly’ drawn by H. M. A. Armitage and Henry Durrell under the direction of the London Society was part of a scheme to give work to underemployed architects. The drawings are presented here with a commentary by Professor Alan Powers. His starting points are the observations on Piccadilly made by the architect and critic H. Goodhart-Rendel, in a lecture of 1933. Powers adds his own comments together with additional details about more recent buildings. Goodhart-Rendel was particularly skilled in discerning the subtler aspects of streetfront design: a subject in which modern architects have shown little interest, and Powers has a refreshingly broad appreciation of the variety of styles that the street has to offer. This is a chance to study a lost art, and in the process you can learn much about the history of Piccadilly and how it has changed since the 1930s.
– Bridget Cherry
Workhouse, London Metropolitan Archives, Northampton Street, N1. Until 10 January.
An exhibition drawing on archive material revealing life in the workhouse after the Poor Law Act of 1834. Free. NB the LMA will be closed for stocktaking from 1-19 November.


The Big 40, Orleans House Gallery, Riverside, Twickenham. Until 25 November.
An intriguing exhibition is announced of works selected by local people of all ages with some connection to the gallery. The Big 40 celebrates its 40th anniversary, and commemorates 50 years since the death of its founder Mrs Nellie Ionides. The 40 examples from the celebrated Richmond Borough Art Collection, some never exhibited before, include landscapes and portraits, by both locally known and nationally distinguished artists. Tuesdays – Saturdays 1.00-4.30pm, Sundays 2.00-4.30pm  www.richmond.gov.uk/arts Free admission.

A plaster cast of the flayed crucified corpse of the criminal James Legg is one of 262 remains found in a long forgotten graveyard in the grounds of the Royal London Hospital six years ago. Legg, who was executed in 1801, was removed from the gallows in order to settle an artistic debate with regard to crucifixion and to ascertain anatomical correctness. It is one of the many burials dug up and analysed by experts from the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) and can be seen in this new exhibition.

Corpses were supplied to pioneering surgeons, and Londoners were fearful of the sinister resurrection men stalking the city’s graveyards – and the shameful fate that could await them in death. The skeletons showed significant signs of dissection. Bones were wired together to create articulated skeletons for teaching. By practising on dead bodies, the surgeons were better able to treat their live patients before and after it was legal to do so. The discovery offers fresh insight into dissection at the time and into the murky trade of dead bodies. It explores a dark and gory period of our history and the legacy of medical ethics and standards of practice today.

– Denise Silvester-Carr

Royal River
Royal River is the title both of the exhibition that took place during the summer months at Greenwich, as part of the Royal Jubilee celebrations, and of the accompanying book (Royal River. Power, Pageantry and the Thames, Guest curator David Starkey, edited by Susan Doran with Robert J. Blyth, Royal Museums Greenwich, 2012, £25 ISBN 978 1 85759700 4). The book has an introduction by David Starkey, and essays by specialists as well as catalogue entries of the items displayed. These are all generously illustrated, making it a good substitute for those who were unable to reach the exhibition in the short period of its existence.

The exhibition took place in the new extension of the Maritime Museum, a discreet steel and glass annexe at the SW corner of the older buildings. The ground floor café looks out toward Greenwich Park, the basement below provided a sequence of spaces which worked well for an exhibition divided up into different themes and illustrated with large paintings as well as small and disparate objects.

Among the many impressive works of art gathered together for the exhibition the great prize was the vast Canaletto painting borrowed from the Lobkowicz collection in Bohemia, which shows the colourful Lord Mayor’s Day pageant with its array of decorative barges among crowds of smaller craft, all set against the backdrop of the City skyline. The book generously gives it a foldout double spread so that one can enjoy the details, and relate them to the tantalisingly fragmentary surviving artefacts – models of the barges, carved fragments, liveries and badges. Lord Mayor’s Day was a spectacular annual civic festival, but the eighteenth century scene depicted by Canaletto had as its precedent earlier royal displays, as is discussed in David Starkey’s introduction. As the Thames linked the riverside palaces, there were opportunities for royal propagandist shows such as Anne Boleyn’s Coronation procession from Greenwich to Westminster and Catherine of Braganza’s grand ‘Aqua Triumphalis’ from Hampton Court to Whitehall. James II had a Coronation fireworks display which was memorably lavish (even if it did not win him long term popularity). The impact of royal personalities is
brought out by a notable assemblage of portraits from different collections. 

There were curiously few efforts to match these ephemeral events with permanent riverside buildings of comparable splendour. Simon Thurley shows that by the later seventeenth century the river had ceased to be a normal means of transport between the palaces, although it was used for public ceremonies; for these a river terrace was constructed at Whitehall by James II. But even the Queen’s palace at Somerset House lacked a grand riverside entrance (although one was given to the government offices that succeeded it in the later eighteenth century). The exception was the river frontage of Greenwich Hospital, expanded from the incomplete Palace begun by Charles II. Queen Mary, founder of the hospital, specified ‘magnificence’ as an essential quality, and John Bold traces how later visitors, both native and foreign, continued to be impressed by the great baroque frontage. The association of the Thames and Greenwich with the royal navy, epitomised by the retired seamen at Greenwich Hospital, was expressed eloquently by the funeral of Nelson in 1805, discussed in a special chapter by Timothy Jenks. Nelson's lying in state at Greenwich was followed by ‘a great Aquatic bustle’ (in the words of Charles Lamb); paintings and engravings convey the dramatic impact of the solemn naval procession up the Thames to Whitehall.

The new bridges attracted artists, although early nineteenth century industry changed the river for the worse. Brunel’s famous tunnel, built with heroic effort from 1825 to 1843, was a famous visitor attraction, and the exhibition displayed an intriguing collection of the souvenirs it inspired. Among the unsuccessful suggestions for improvements in the 1820s it was fascinating to see the optimistic panorama presented by Frederick Grove, proposing a continuous colonnaded quay from Charing Cross to Blackfriars. The river story tails away with Bazalgette, pumping stations and the Embankment; royal river events became infrequent, the welcome to Princess Alexandra at London Bridge in 1863 being an exception. Instead there was royal travelling – George IV’s visit to Scotland – and royal yachts, whose furnishings made a somewhat anticlimactic end to this splendid show. For a reminder of continuing royal involvement one can turn back to the foreword by the Queen, tellingly illustrated by a photograph showing the eleven year old Princess Elizabeth purposefully striding forward among the royal party, on the occasion of the opening of the Maritime Museum seventy-five years ago.

– Bridget Cherry

The British Library’s Crace Collection

Magdalena Pescko, who is cataloguing the British Library’s Crace Collection, introduces us to its fascinating variety.

The Crace Collection of London Maps and Plans offers an unparalleled overview of history of London cartography, and so the cataloguing project funded by the London Topographical Society will be of particular interest to researchers working in this subject area. Nevertheless, until now the British Library’s online catalogue contained a very few references to this collection. The entire collection was purchased by the British Museum’s Department of Prints and Drawings in 1880, however in 1933 it was split into two sections. Plans and maps were moved to the Map Library, now part of the British Library, the rest of the collection, London Views, remains at the British Museum. In recent years the Collection of Views has been catalogued to the British Museum’s Online Database.

The British Library’s Crace Collection of Maps and Plans is exceptionally thorough. It comprises some 1400 printed and manuscript maps produced between ca. 1570 and 1860, arranged in nineteen portfolios. Seven initial portfolios consist of general maps of London, followed by plans of the City wards and parishes in portfolio VIII. Portfolio IX comprises eighteenth century plans of properties in the City, mainly from the records of the Mercers and Haberdasher Companies. Maps in portfolios X to XVI cover London districts and are divided according to the area represented. Portfolio XVII contains plans for rebuilding the City after the Great Fire, while portfolio XVIII consists of public sewers and water courses. Finally, portfolio XIX accommodates maps of the environs of London.

Crace collected some unique items, including proofs before letters or manuscript plans. When he was unable to acquire a particular map he had it copied or traced. Thus he obtained a nineteenth century copy of Charles Evans’ survey dated 29 March 1760 which shows the freehold belonging to Sir Charles Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, the site where Buckingham Palace now stands. He also purchased and included in his collection a hand drawn Plan of Palace Green and other grounds, & the westwards of Kensington Palace by the famous surveyor and...
architect Thomas Chawner, which shows the proposed housing development in the former Kitchen Gardens, west of Kensington Palace. The development now houses several major embassies.

A great number of manuscript plans in the collection come from rent books belonging to the Mercers’ Company. They often list tenants’ names, lease agreement, dimensions of the property and the use made of premises. Some of the plans also report the proposed alterations to the buildings, i.e. John Baker’s plan of the property in Queen Street, Cheapside, let to Mr William Wallis with intended building works marked in pencil. Another interesting example of Mercer’s Company records is a plan of property on Cateaton Street which shows a group of houses in Mumfords Court. ‘Mercers’ is written as a title for the plan, which indicates the document was produced for exclusive company use. Interesting feature of this plan is the list of lease details and measurements attached to it by sealing wax. These unique records are not to be found elsewhere and are of great importance for researchers interested in social history and in the practices and conventions used in urban surveys in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Many maps published after 1750 were brought up to date and reissued. Crace acquired the most significant maps of the city and its suburbs and their updated editions. Four different editions of John Cary’s New and accurate plan of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and parts adjacent, first printed in 1787, can be found in the collection, alongside with four issues of Thomas Kitchin’s New and correct plan of the cities of London, Westminster and borough of Southwark from 1775, later published with Robert Sayer’s and John Bennett’s imprint.

A catalogue of maps, plans and views of London, Westminster and Southwark collected and arranged by Frederick Crace edited by Frederick’s son John Gregory, and published in 1878, is the only available source on the collection. The descriptions are vague and sometimes misleading. Plan of Cordwainer’s Ward, 1768 is a good example of one of these brief entries. This item has recently been recatalogued with full title given: An exact and correct plan of Cordwainers ward, taken by order of Sr Henry Bankers Krnt and Alderman. 1768. The names of surveyor William Chamberlaine, and engraver James Kirk, were identified and added, as well as the note on the map’s content. In the process of re-cataloguing new information was revealed, i.e. entry for no. 114, portfolio IX lists three plans, where in fact there are five documents – four plans (three manuscripts and one engraved), as well as a print with details of leasehold estates on Aldersgate Street, issued prior the auction. These documents are now catalogued separately, with image attached to each record.
Recording London’s Sculpture

The first volume in the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association’s recording project (NRP) appeared in 1997. Since then there have been fourteen volumes on different cities or regions series. These scholarly catalogues aim to raise awareness of the nation’s heritage of public sculpture, exploring the planning, patronage and artistic intentions of each work. Philip Ward-Jackson has so far contributed two volumes: that on the City of London, which came out in 2003, and this year, a first volume on the non-architectural statuary of historic Westminster. Here he provides some personal thoughts on his involvement with the project.

The period of sculpture which chiefly interests me, the nineteenth century, saw a massive escalation in public statuary in London, as in other European cities. So the PMSA’s National Recording Project appealed from the start. However, had I been asked to write on Westminster at the beginning I might well have baulked at it. Parts of the field have been very thoroughly covered in the Survey of London, and since then, numerous scholarly monographs on individual sculptors have provided more than adequate accounts of major monuments in the area. The bait which lured me in was the commission to write the volume on the City, which remained, comparatively, a terra incognita at that time. Margaret Whinney, in her seminal Sculpture in Britain 1530-1830, had been terribly dismissive of the City’s sculpture, apart from the St Paul’s monuments. Was it fair of her to have written off Sir Robert Taylor’s Mansion House pediment as ‘tedious’ and ‘clumsy’? And of course, before Benedict Read wrote his Victorian Sculpture, rare were the unblinkered, like Tom Boase and John Physick, who could disregard the taboo on sculpture produced between 1830 and 1900. Furthermore, public sculpture has been notoriously sluggish in its acceptance of cutting edge modernism, nowhere more so than in the City, which means that a certain revisionist tolerance, not necessarily the same thing as a conservative aesthetic attitude, is required of its historians.

Doing this survey brought the pleasure of ranging across history, from the ancient traditions of the City, as vividly preserved in the writings of authors like Stow and Evelyn, to events which may have occurred within my lifetime, but of which at best, before researching them, I had only the vaguest memory. What a challenge to discover that nobody in recent times had attempted to describe Cibber’s reliefs on the Monument to the Great Fire, which had been referred to in their day as ‘hieroglyphics’. Because it is called in common parlance simply ‘The Monument’, this column had been adopted as a fitting logo by the PMSA, and as such appears on the covers of all the volumes in the series, but it fell to me to attempt, for the first time since the early eighteenth century, with the assistance of old guidebooks and historic iconologists, to come up

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Note
1 See Anna Maude, Cataloguing Crace London Topographical Society Newsletter, November 2009, no. 69, pp. 4-7.

The deadline for contributions to the next Newsletter is 16 April 2013.
Suggestions of books for review should be sent to the Newsletter Editor; contact details are on the back page.

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with an interpretation of each of Cibber’s figures. In the case of a more recent sculptural programme on St Swithin’s House, now replaced by Foster & Partners’ Walbrook House, the efficient reporting of the post-war press provided me with a description which I had lacked the foresight to elicit from the sculptor, Siegfried Charoux, though I met him frequently as a student, at the dinner table of my architect uncle.

Westminster came next, and accepting the task seemed like ‘biting the bullet’, a phrase made the more appropriate in this case by the plethora of military imagery on offer there. Much of this is unquestionably of low aesthetic quality, and in its quantity begins to look like a reproach by veterans’ organisations and their artistic collaborators to your average sybaritic Londoner. However, even here there turned out to be some rough diamonds. I have to confess to having been rather shocked by the size and bullishness, given that they were not much above ground level, of Ivor Roberts-Jones’s statues of Field Marshal Slim and Viscount Alanbrooke, when they were first put up as companions to Oscar Nemon’s Monty in front of the Ministry of Defence in the early 1990s. As time has gone by, and in contrast with what has followed, I have begun to appreciate what great things these are. Having said that I was daunted by the amount of literature already existing on Westminster’s statuary; Roberts-Jones’s contribution, because it has received so little attention, is one example of the sort of work which has justified me in taking on the task. Between them, the Liddell Hart Centre for

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Richard I by Carlo Marochetti, Palace of Westminster, erected 1860

Military Archives at King’s College and the Archive of the Henry Moore Institute at Leeds provided the material for reasonably well-informed entries on both those statues. In addition, something I could hardly have reckoned with on setting out, the declassification of the Minutes of the Royal Fine Art Commission at The National Archives produced much fascinating material on the early history of the National Police Memorial, in which Roberts-Jones was also involved.

Decidedly the happiest part of a historian’s work on public monuments concerns things which no longer excite the vulgar passions, though they may have done so in their day – ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity’ as Wordsworth would have it. Many bad feelings were excited by one historic figure, Carlo Marochetti, whose work has always preoccupied me, and whose sculptural role in Westminster at one point seemed to be approaching the hegemonic. He is still represented by several significant monuments in the metropolis, despite having his attempt at domination thwarted. To most he will be remembered chiefly as the author of the equestrian Richard Coeur de Lion outside the Palace of Westminster. This had proved a popular feature when erected in plaster outside the Crystal Palace in 1851, but its suitability as a permanent memorial to the Great Exhibition, urged by an influential group of Marochetti’s friends and supporters, was questioned in parliament. It was erected on its present site in the nick of time in 1860, between the death of Charles Barry, who had opposed it, and that of Prince Albert, who had supported it. In my book, the battle royal played out between this man, depicted in the art press as an Italian interloper promoted by court favour, misguided to the extent that artistically Marochetti was more of a Frenchman, can only form a sort of subtext. The encyclopaedic nature of the recordingendeavour will have been a corrective to any monographic tendency with regard to what I have to admit has become something of an obsession.

An example of the ill-feeling which monumental matters in the present can engender was an event which coincided practically with the publication of my Westminster book. This was the sudden appearance at a bleak intersection of walkways in Green Park, close to the underground station, of a fountain which I have always liked, and which, in its previous location, deeper in the park, had made it one of London’s better kept secrets. My immediate response to this was that the fountain, sculpted in 1953/54 by the little known J. Estcourt Clack, might profit from this exposure. With its small decogothic gazebo, supporting a finial group of the goddess Diana and her hound, the whole thing a response to complaints about the insufficiency of canine refreshment in the park, this might look less unexpected in Vienna or even New York. Of course I soon came to regret its removal from the sylvan setting for which it had so clearly been designed. It subsequently dawned on me that this was a preliminary to the siting near Hyde Park Corner of
the Memorial to Bomber Command. This, or else the presence on the fountain of a figure of the goddess Diana on a walkway which had recently been dedicated to the memory of the People’s Princess, was deemed potentially confusing. My book’s publication was long delayed, but not long enough to force me to tangle with the ructions over the Bomber Command Memorial, let alone to speculate over the removal of this fountain. I wonder whether, even in these days of freedom of information, it would have been possible for one in my position to ascertain just why that removal had occurred.

– Philip Ward-Jackson

Subscriptions for 2013: a reminder from the Treasurer

A reminder that your subscription for 2013 is due by 1 January. Members living in the UK who pay by standing order need take no action, but other UK members should send a cheque for £20 to the Treasurer – or those of you who prefer to go online can pay through the website.

On the website, you start off as if you wish to join and then there is a choice to indicate you are an existing member; there is no need to fill in all your details, just your name and postcode.

Members living abroad got a notice with their publication that their subscription rate will be £30 from 2013, to cover the increased cost of sending subscription benefits by post. Again, a cheque drawn on a British bank is acceptable, but other cheques should be for the equivalent of £42 to cover bank charges.

– Roger Cline

The Conservation of the Bowen Collection of Photographs

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) Conservation Studio Manager, Dr Caroline De Stefani, describes the conservation of the Bowen Collection of Photographs of Second World War bomb damage in the City of London. The collection was in poor condition and conservation treatment was required to stabilise the condition of the photographs, and bespoke packaging needed to improve storage and handling. LMA is grateful to the London Topographical Society which funded the treatment and repackaging of this collection.

The collection consists of around 1300 photographs of Second World War bomb damage in the City of London originally stored in six albums (reference SC/GL/BOW). This collection is important because it not only shows bombed areas of the City, but also details of the street (and river) scene during working hours. There are also many images of the interior and exterior of bomb damaged churches. The period covered is roughly 1940 to 1953. Assistant Librarian Jeremy Smith puts the collection in context.

Context

Nothing is known of W. G. Bowen, but he may have had some sort of official role during wartime as otherwise he would have had difficulty roving around so freely with a camera. (Cecil Beaton wrote about the hostility that he received from passers-by when they noticed his camera – suspecting spying activities – and special permits were required.) Also, in some of the pictures of bomb damage, the dust has hardly settled suggesting that he had some official function in entering the damage area.

The images divide about half and half between photographs of bomb damage and photographs of churches (though quite often the two themes combine). Bowen seems to have at one point given the project a name – ‘London Town: scenes and places, and her churches’.

The streets that Bowen depicts are for the most
part noticeably uncrowded and often deserted – suggesting that he was possibly an early riser! The City of London is his main interest and he rarely photographs elsewhere, although there are excursions out to Waltham Abbey on the Hertfordshire/Essex borders and to Thames Ditton in Surrey. These photographs are of immense value as a comprehensive photographic journey through bomb damaged London. Mostly we see tragically scarred buildings and rubble and crumbling walls, but there are some unexpected sights too: the picture of the bomb site close to St Giles Cripplegate Church being used as a vegetable plot – with cabbages doing very well; and an artist at work within the ruins of St Mary le Bow Church with stool and small table, presumably painting the picturesque view through ruined walls to St Paul’s Cathedral beyond.

**Conservation**

All the photographs were shot in black and white, but they were done using different photographic processes, mainly gelatine developing-out papers. They were glued on to a purple or grey thick paper probably with animal glue. Around the pictures handwritten notes were added regarding either the location represented or technical details about the setting of the camera used to shoot the photograph. The inks used are different, mainly ballpoint pen. The condition of the photographs is generally good, but some of them show silver mirroring, a degradation process typical of gelatine developing-out papers. This deterioration is found especially in the dark areas and along the edges. The thick paper to which the photographs are attached is slightly faded on the edges and worn out, but overall it is in good condition. The pictures were glued on both sides of the page and this has caused surface abrasion where the photographs were touching each other. Some of the photographs are detached from the papers; six photographs are missing. The original binding did not make handling easy as the pages were kept together, and attached to the cover, using two screws which meant that the text block could not flex enough when opened. In this state, the album could not be used without the risk of damaging the collection further.

Conservation treatment was required to stabilise the condition of the photographs, and bespoke packaging needed to improve storage and handling. As conservation treatment it was decided to remove the paper sheets with the photographs attached from the binding and to put them into polyester (melinex) sleeves. This decision was taken because although the paper to which the photographs are attached is not archival, it does not appear to interfere with the condition of the photographs. Moreover, the written notes on the pages are linked to the photographs and choosing a different format for the photographs would have meant disrupting these links. Inserting the sheets in melinex pockets also has two advantages: firstly, it avoids the surfaces of the photographs rubbing against each other; and secondly, it eases handling and therefore
reduces the risk of damage as the sleeve will be handled rather than the photographs.

The loose photographs were reattached to the paper with hinges made of Japanese paper and wheat starch paste. This method was chosen in order to reduce the amount of humidity given by the paste on to the photograph. This is a very important aspect to take into consideration. Moisture could cause enormous damage to the photographs for various reasons mainly potential mould growth, planar distortions, deterioration of the gelatine present on the surface, and tide lines. All the individual pages inside their melinex sleeves are now stored in five bespoke boxes. On each box a plate has been attached to thank the London Topographical Society for having sponsored this conservation and preservation treatment.

More old photographs

In the Newsletter 49 of November 1999, Patrick Frazer wrote about a prospectus of the Topographical Society of England and Wales of the late 1830s.

Another group of like interest is the National Photographic Record Association, founded by Sir Benjamin Stone in 1897. The object of the association was to form a truly national photographic record of existing objects of interest, life, customs, costumes, etc. The British Museum agreed to accept such photographs for public reference which the association hoped would be found of great value to future historians. Members of the Council included Philip Norman and H. B. Wheatley who were prominent in the LTS at the time.

A brochure inscribed in 1904 contains illustrations of some of the photographs of old and historical buildings of London, the first being along the road from me, Grove House, Tavistock Place, the building where Francis Bailey, President of the Royal Astronomical Society, made his name by weighing the world. The house had been demolished some time before the brochure was printed and the site is now covered by the Mary Ward Centre. Hampstead houses illustrated include Priory Lodge, Frognal, Lord Erskine’s house and George Romney’s house. Highgate has the Bull Inn and Gilman’s house in the Grove; Cheyne Walk Chelsea has No. 4 where George Eliot died. No. 16 where Rossetti lived and No. 119 where Turner died. Reynolds’s house at 47 Leicester Square, a staircase in Colherne Court and old houses in Wych Street make up the dozen.

The inscription on the brochure is a presentation from the association to none other than the London Topographical Society who obviously did not have as good an archivist as we have now because it escaped and I acquired it at a recent Bookfair.

– Caroline De Stefani

Circumspice (see p.2)

The chunk of Southwark between the riverside at Tate Modern and Southwark Street has been undergoing huge redevelopment, with multi-storey office blocks, hotels and bars and restaurants spilling out on to traffic-free public spaces. But some things don’t change. One of them is Hopton’s Almshouses, built in pursuance of the will of a wealthy fishmonger Charles Hopton who died five days after making it. He left a life interest to his sister, but after her death his trustees could give effect to his charitable intention and by 1749 the 28 two-storey almshouses were up and ready for occupation, built on ‘the cheapest, best and most convenient piece of ground that could be had for the building’.

And there they still are in Hopton Street, a peaceful enclave of (now twenty) sheltered homes set round a garden whose trees and shrubs partly screen and soften the soaring steel and glass of a giant new neighbour to the east. But that peace was shattered in 2010 when Anchor, England’s largest housing charity, decided it couldn’t do with anything as fiddly as almshouses and proposed to transfer Hopton’s to an Ealing and Brentford housing charity.

The residents were not having it. “We want to be managed by our local housing trust, Southwark-based United St Saviour’s,” they said. Grey power got cracking. They lobbied Southwark council, persuaded their MP Simon Hughes to raise the matter in parliament, got an amendment put down in the Lords requiring meaningful consultation on such transfers, and attended housing conferences to lobby the great and good in the housing world – including Anchor’s board members. “They ran an absolutely brilliant campaign,” says Jim Wintour, clerk to St Saviour’s. Anchor backed down; his charity took over in December 2011.

Since then it has also introduced another important change. Charles Hopton’s will restricted places at his almshouses to men (originally ‘decayed’ Southwark folk) and their wives. Other women, no matter how decayed or deserving, were excluded. “We thought that was a bit old-fashioned and possibly illegal,” says Wintour. He was careful to do what Anchor seems not to have done – formally consult the residents. Seventeen voted in favour, only one against.

– Tony Aldous
Reviews

The Day Parliament Burned Down

Following hard on the heels of our 2011 reproduction of Chawner’s and Rhodes’ 1834 survey of the Palace of Westminster comes most appropriately Dr Shenton’s book on the great fire that destroyed the two Houses of Parliament on 16 October 1834, and thereby resulted in a notably conspicuous change not only to the topography of London but also to the imagery of the capital. Shenton has drawn freely on the Parliamentary Archives (where she is Clerk of the Records) in combination with the extensive newspaper reports of the day and contemporary letters and memoirs to provide a racy and detailed account of the day’s dire developments. The fire was caused by the burning of tally sticks in the furnaces of the House of Lords. Author of the National Archives’ Note on the Exchequer of Receipt, Shenton is well equipped to give an authoritative brief history of the antique mode of accounting by means of notches in wooden sticks that continued to be cut until 1826. She further reports on the character and defects of the stoves used to burn the obsolete tallies, showing that it was the copper-lined flues that were the immediate source of the devastation.

Employing a novelistic technique, Shelton maintains the tension of the story, particularly in its earlier stages, by interweaving accounts of contemporary life in Westminster (not wholly salubrious), parliamentary excitements such as Queen Caroline’s divorce proceedings and the Great Reform Bills of 1831-2, and the state of fire-fighting provision in London, with the events of 16 October. As the fire takes grip we are plunged into the immediacy of first-hand accounts. The slow start of the fire in an obscure part of the palace aroused minimal concern amongst those involved until a ‘gigantic volume of flame’ erupted from the House of Lords buildings opposite Henry VII’s Chapel, burning ‘with a fury almost unparalleled’. By the time that fire-fighting resources, such as were available, could be assembled, the fire had gained an uncontrollable hold on the Lords. Vast crowds gathered, and had to be kept back by Peel’s new Metropolitan Police and brigades of Guards; ministers arrived and some helped officials to attempt to rescue the invaluable Exchequer and Parliamentary records, many of which were flung from windows on to the water-drenched ground. As the fire spread eastwards, towards the river, it consumed the House of Commons and the Commons’ library, recently built by John Soane, along with most of the records of Commons’ proceedings. The wind blew away from Soane’s new Lords’ buildings (and here may I defend myself from the description of his characteristically Soanic Lords’ Library as ‘Gothic’, wrongly ascribed to my account in History of the King’s Works, VII, where dedicated officials achieved a more orderly removal of priceless documents, so that those splendid buildings largely survived until Barry demolished them in the 1840s and ‘50s.

Finally brought under control by more efficient fire-fighting techniques, the arrival of more powerful machines (including river-craft), destruction of internal wailing to create a fire barrier, and a change in the wind, the fire left the twelfth-century House of Lords and the adjacent Painted Chamber (see the Chawner & Rhodes survey) gutted, but capable of repair to serve as temporary Houses of Commons and Lords respectively. The walls of the largely fourteenth-century St Stephen’s Chapel, the Commons’ Chamber (the Plantagenets’ response to St Louis’ Ste Chapelle in Paris) however were found unstable and had to be demolished.

The fire of 16 October 1834 was the greatest conflagration London saw between the Great Fire of 1666 and the Blitz. Shelton has produced a compelling account of this important event in the re-shaping of London’s topography. But sadly her publishers have not made best use of the opportunity provided by the author’s having the splendid Parliamentary Art Collection at hand: the illustrations (for a Fire!), at best no larger than 10x8.5cm, are entirely in black and white.

– M. H. Port


Yet another book on St Paul’s? The Cathedral has been extensively covered by recent scholarship. A
sumptuously produced collection of essays on its history, architecture, and its social and religious significance, edited by Keene, Burns and Saint, was published by Yale in 2004 to coincide with the Cathedral's 1400's anniversary; John Schofield’s account of the Cathedral before Wren, detailing the archaeological evidence, came out last year. But the special position of St Paul's explains why the Cathedral has attracted so much attention. Its study is rewarding both because of its long history within the City, as emphasised in the subtitle of Ann Saunders's book, and because of its unique interest as the only purpose-built Baroque Cathedral in Britain, a supreme and ingenious creation of Sir Christopher Wren which provided London with a worthy new landmark after the Great Fire. And in addition, less celebrated and well known, there are the furnishings and monuments which gradually came to fill the building in subsequent centuries as St Paul's came to be regarded not just as the cathedral of London but as a place of national memorial.

To do all this justice in a relatively small space requires both a skilful narrative text and good illustrations, and these are both provided most successfully in this beautifully produced picture book. The first chapter deals with the pre-Wren period, the next ones with Wren and the dramatic story of the controversial planning and building of the new cathedral. It is a delight to see Wren’s drawings of the various phases of the design well reproduced and at a decent size, and there is some fascinating human detail about his assistants and craftsmen, matched by illustrations of their work. But for this reviewer the photographs that steal the thunder, the bulk of them by Angelo Hornak, are those of the great monuments to national heroes which began to appear from the end of the eighteenth century. The subjects range from John Howard and Samuel Johnson to the admirals and generals of the Napoleonic wars, depicted with realistic drama and pathos at their moment of death. They powerfully demonstrate the often unappreciated skill of the British sculptors of this period, among them Westmacott, Banks, and the younger Bacon. There are other surprises as well, such as J. M. W. Turner with ‘alert face and purposeful hand’ by the Irish sculptor Patrick McDowell – a late example of the classical romantic spirit. It would have been instructive to have supplied dates for these works.

A striking change in the nineteenth century, very apparent from the photos, was the introduction of bronze as a medium for sepulchral monuments, which could lead to lengthy delays, as is described in the notorious case of the monument to Wellington which took fifty-six years to complete. Still more drawn out was the discussion over how to decorate the interior which Wren had left unpainted. Today, the nave remains plain, while Thornhill’s restrained grisaille panels and trompe l’oeil coffering in the dome contrast with the mosaics of the chancel vaults added by Richmond at the end of the nineteenth century. The staggeringly rich detail of these is reproduced in glowing colour. The text is judiciously balanced in its appreciation. The nineteenth century produces many minor stories to enjoy: C. R. Cockerell, the surveyor, trying vainly to heat the building with a movable wagon of hot coals, or the more successful efforts of Miss Maria Hackett, champion of neglected choirboys (who ended up with their own choir school in Carter Lane). As an up to date finale there is a picture of the Queen at the Diamond Jubilee service, quite an impressive feat of speedy publishing. The book is most enjoyable to browse in, the illustrations are stunning and there is much information that one cannot find easily elsewhere. There is a brief bibliography and index, but for the inquisitive it is just slightly frustrating that there are no footnotes.

– Bridget Cherry

Pepys’s London by Stephen Porter.
Amberley, 2011. 256pp, ISBN 10 1 84868 869 5 £20; Paperback 10 1 44560 980 0, £10.99

This thoroughly readable book relates the happenings and background of everyday life in Samuel Pepys’s London. Pepys’s life spanned seventy years, 1633 to 1703, thus covering one of the most interesting periods in the development, or rather redevelopment, of London after the Great Fire in 1666. He commenced his diary in 1660, the year of the Restoration of the Monarchy after the eleven year Commonwealth period, and the following decade witnessed not only the Great (bubonic rat) Plague of 1665, but also the Great Fire in 1666, and hence the redevelopment of London, and the ascendancy of Christopher Wren, and their impact on London over the centuries to the present day.

Stephen Porter weaves into his writing references to the founding of Lloyd’s, the Bank of England, and the Royal Society. He also recounts stories about the pleasures and entertainments of London, and the literary and scientific work being undertaken. One aspect of London’s history which does not generally receive much attention, but which is well related in the book, is the fact that it is estimated that 20% of London’s population (which has been estimated as between 400,000 and 500,000) died in the Great Plague, yet perhaps only twenty died in the Great Fire. One of the prominent citizens of London, John Graunt, analysed the parish registers in the City churches of recorded deaths in the mid-seventeenth century, together with the cause of death. The statistics extracted were known as ‘Bills of Mortality’, and formed the mathematical basis for the actuarial profession. Subsequently, Graunt published the first tables showing rates of mortality. Apart from the time of the Great Plague, the biggest single killer of adults was ‘consumption and cough’ (20%), followed by ‘strokes’ and ‘sudden death’ (10% each), and surprisingly ‘old age’ – over age 56 at death! – (just
7%). However, out of 100 babies born, only 64 reached the age of 6 years, and 40 reached the age of 16. These figures give an indication of how difficult family life must have been, something not always appreciated when one thinks of the continuity of London life through the generations. Stephen Porter indeed treats his chapter on ‘Population and Plague’ as a benchmark for underwriting the basis of London’s future development. It is a wry comment to note that the heat of the Great Fire did kill the rats in the sewers, and that there has been no subsequent great plague. Expectation of life started to increase fairly rapidly, and indeed is still continuing to do so.

Any reader will find in the text of this well written and well illustrated book some worthwhile facts to grasp, and anecdotes to absorb, in the observations and depiction of life in London during Pepys’s lifetime.

– Robin Michaelson


Neil Rhind is Mr Blackheath. Born there, he has thrown himself at the district’s local history with indefatigable relish since 1969. This substantial book is a ‘companion volume’ to his two-part magnum opus, Blackheath Village & Environs, a third part of which is in the works. The Paragon and South Row have been singled out for this treatment because of wider than local import. The Paragon faces Blackheath from the south as a crescent of seven pairs of large houses linked by single-storey colonnades. It began as an ambitious speculation, designed and undertaken by Michael Searles, and built from c.1793 to c.1804 on land that was part of the Wrinklemarsh estate that John Cator, a timber merchant, had acquired in 1783. Grand villas were already a feature of the margins of Blackheath, but nothing as planned or coherent as this had come before. Searles, an architect who had emerged from a family background in the building trade and developed a smaller Paragon crescent on the New Kent Road in 1789–90, inevitably found himself overstretched in the difficult inflationary war years after 1793. Looming bankruptcy in 1796 forced him to spread responsibility for the development, but the carcasses were up and the crescent was eventually completed as a regular unity with an elegance and long-range scenographic impact that fully justifies its name. It is in any case of considerable historical interest as an early step towards the seriation of pairs of suburban houses – that is, what was to become the ‘semi’.

This book, long in preparation, is a hefty and unstintingly thorough history. The illustrations, around 450, are mostly towards the back, numerous small images grouped together as plates in an old-fashioned but comprehensive layout. Rhind’s building biography continues beyond first construction to cover residents and a wrenching saga of war damage and post-war reconstruction. South Row, to the west of the Paragon, is something of an extra, with less exhaustive accounts of seven further large houses on the Cator Estate of more or less contemporary date (begun 1790), in the building of which Searles was more or less involved, and most now gone. There are also three appendices, one of which is a retelling of the colourful story of the Blackheath Swindlers, first published by Bill Bonwitt. Eliza Robertson and Charlotte Sharpe were young women who in 1795 gained possession of the as yet incomplete No. 3 Paragon for a school and managed to confidence-trick their way to about £20,000 worth of credit, on which they defaulted. This episode, in fact, has generated the best first-hand documentation of the early Paragon.

The author is a great exponent of the nominal sublime, keen to relate all that he knows. There is fact-thick documentation of occupancy, which passed from wealthy City and West India merchants and shipbuilders or owners, to professionals and schools, with many episodes of middle-class climbing and falling, on to decline into hotels and boarding houses. This rich detail reflects exploitation of digital research tools such as the Times Digital Archive that were not available when the project started. Rhind has also had privileged access to private archives, from diaries to photographs.

As early as 1919 Stanley C. Ramsey and J. D. M. Harvey’s Small Georgian Houses and their Details 1750–1820 published details from the Paragon, and in 1938 the newly founded Blackheath Society enlisted John Betjeman to speak up about the crescent’s exceptional quality. But war was blind to that. Rhind’s microcosmic approach is especially strong in his account of wartime, which transcribes diary entries that speak movingly of much more than a particular place. Charles Bernard Brown, a local self-trained architect, undertook a heroic repair programme, gradually seen through from 1946 to 1958. This was notable and instructive as an early private conservation initiative, unusually attentive to detail. But the houses were now only viable if divided up as flats. Victorian additions were swept away, and few original internal features survive. On South Row, replica replacement was abandoned in favour of Eric Lyons, whose Span development of the early 1960s, another triumph, is now listed in its own right. Blackheath is fortunate to have all these buildings, and Neil Rhind.

– Peter Guillery, Survey of London


Wimbledon has lost most of its major houses. Only the seventeenth century Eagle House, and that of
relatively modest size, survives in a village that had once also seen the manor house of the Cecils and important eighteenth century houses designed by Colen Campbell, the Earl of Pembroke and Roger Morris, and Henry Holland. This book looks at two properties which had been brought together as part of the estate of Sir Theodore Janssen, merchant, then separated, and then re-united by the Rush family. Janssen, one of the South Sea Bubble directors whose property was sequestrated (but which he managed to re-acquire), owned property in Wimbledon from at least 1716 when his house was said to be ‘the next best house in this parish’. He subsequently bought the manor of Wimbledon (and the best house, which he demolished) and had a new even more up-to-date house built by Colen Campbell between 1717 and 1720. With a prospect to the south-east (as opposed to the old manor house which faced north) this house was later named Belvedere but was itself demolished in 1901.

The book is a compilation of new and old work, some published elsewhere, now brought together into a more convenient compass. Elspeth Veale’s essay on the life of Sir Theodore Janssen is reproduced from the *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* and her essay on the Marquess of Rockingham’s house from the *Georgian Group Journal*. To these is added a new essay, ‘Chasing Francis Gosfright: An Historian’s Journey’ which inquires into the early history of ‘the next best house’ which Janssen acquired, but did not build. Richard Milward’s essay on Wimbledon in the nineteenth century serves as an introduction and there are shorter essays on the development of the Belvedere Estate in the years up to 1914 and on Wimbledon’s eighteenth century housing problems.

This fascinating collection does not make an entirely coherent whole but it has much to offer. Firstly, of great importance to Wimbledon, is the pioneer work into the earlier history of the site at the corner of High Street and Church Road, opposite the Dog and Fox. This was Janssen’s ‘next best house’ and where he passed his later years at Wimbledon. There, in the 1760s, Robert Adam and Capability Brown carried out works to house and grounds for Sir Ellis Cunliffe. After Cunliffe’s death the property was acquired by Samuel Rush, already at Belvedere, and let to the Marquess of Rockingham whose family papers give a detailed account of daily life. The house was eventually demolished in 1796 and the grounds added to Belvedere which the architect John Johnson had probably improved for Sir William Beaumaris Rush in the 1780s. As a result of Dr Veale’s detective work we know that this ‘next best house’ had its origins in the 1690s, following a purchase by Francis Gosfright, a London merchant with wide-ranging trading interests who went bankrupt in 1700. The history of the house is now much clearer but it is a great pity that Dr Veale’s investigations have brought relatively little more to light about its architecture. Secondly, this book is a lesson in the extent to which local topography demands research in more than local sources, often widely scattered, and the unravelling of often complex legal transactions. And thirdly it offers the prospect for yet more investigation of Wimbledon’s buildings. One area which has recently been explored, but too late to be taken account of in this book, is the Edwardian development of the Belvedere Estate, with its high quality, often architect-designed suburban houses.

Wimbledon has been unfortunate in losing its major houses but it has been fortunate at least in finding historians capable of telling their stories.

— Frank Kelsall


**Transforming King’s Cross.** Various Authors, Merrell 2012, 160 pages, £40. ISBN 978 1 85894 587 3

*Change at King’s Cross,* published in 1990, took stock of what had happened to the array of historic railway buildings that covered the enormous site straddling the Regent’s Canal and running nearly a mile north from Pentonville Road. Twenty years later much of the change has happened; the line to Paris has arrived, St Pancras is renewed and the railway lands are being transformed, a vast building site for houses, offices and hotels. King’s Cross, together with St Pancras and Euston stations, is the nearest London ever came to a continental Hauptbahnhof. Of this great Victorian triumvirate, Euston fell to the Macmillan winds of change while St Pancras and King’s Cross survive, rejuvenated and resplendent.

*Transforming King’s Cross* is a handsome study of just one part of this massive work in the heart of London: the restoration of Lewis Cubitt’s King’s Cross station. There is a little history, well penned by Peter Hall, but the weight of the work is in the building process, with the focus on the design and construction of the magnificent new Western Concourse along with the restoration of the train shed and the flanking Eastern and Western Ranges. Anyone who has ever made their way to the Edinburgh train will recall the disagreeable experience of elbowing through the cramped and crowded Sixties excrescence that fronted the station. This is now to be swept away and King’s Cross has acquired a magnificent new entrance in the form of the wonderfully airy Western Concourse, whose massive curved canopy combines the height and light of New York’s Grand Central station with the sinuous structural lines of the new terminals at Madrid’s Barajas airport.

Principally a photographic record, this book shows how adequate funding can achieve the all-but-impossible – a fine restoration of a Victorian building and the addition of startling yet functional modern architecture. King’s Cross is, as the
authors assert, now ‘unmasked’ with later and unsympathetic additions stripped away and the true character of the building revealed and, indeed, enhanced.

– Simon Morris

**Euston Station through time**

**Acton through time.** by David and Amanda Knights, ISBN 978 1 44560 867 9

**Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia through time**

All from Amberley Publishing, 96pp, £14.99 each.

These three books are in standard Amberley format, of two pictures to a page with a caption between, the top picture being historic and the lower one from the same viewpoint today. They assume a fair knowledge of local geography and so their market is among local people.

Of the three books under review, *Euston Station* is the least successful, having by-passed any noticeable editing process. An aerial view of the station looking south is said to be looking north, reference is made to a picture on another page which is incorrectly numbered, down trains are said to come to London from Birmingham (well, they come down the map, don’t they?). The author acknowledges that the complete rebuilding of the station fifty years ago makes the usual format of now and then views pointless, so a more historical approach is used. The section on that rebuilding proved the most interesting to me. The pictures of the station are padded out with pictures of LMS locomotives and rolling stock, not necessarily at Euston, together with pictures of stations along the Northern Line and of neighbouring St Pancras and King’s Cross.

Acton I have travelled through at regular intervals all my life and the relatively small amount of complete redevelopment makes the comparison of views more interesting. No background of the authors is given, but a David Knight (an Underground employee) has written other local history books on Acton. This one acknowledges the local history work of our late member Tom Harper (which is particularly interesting to see activities in the area north of the British Museum cleared for the University development which was radically changed before building and also to see the construction of Woburn Court bachelor flats in 1937 which dwarfed the adjacent Morton Hotel, that hotel having itself previously dwarfed the residential terraces on the Woburn Court site.

– Roger Cline

**Featherbeds and Flock Beds – the early history of the Worshipful Company of Upholders**

The book is attractively produced, easy on the eye and with a few illustrations of treasures, medals portraits and trade scenes, but your reviewer found it unsatisfying. However the preface from the Principal of an Oxford College describes it as a brilliant tapestry which contributes to our understanding of English social history.

It is as the sub-title says an early history, so that the book does not take us beyond 1918 except for modern grants of arms and a list of masters. Liverymen who served as Aldermen are listed from Beaven’s 1913 work on Aldermen, but no attempt has been made to bring the list up to date, even to 1918. The preface refers to the 2006 edition which makes one wonder whether it is essentially a re-issue of a 1918 history, but Heather Creaton’s London Bibliography lists the only history of the company as a 1973 article in Furniture History Journal; the present book quotes extensively from a financial history of the company published in 1934 – indeed most of the later history in the book is concerned with income and investments.

The distribution of trades between the City Companies has never been clear cut. Upholstery as we know it was only one of these trades – the Upholders also dealt in bed accessories including curtains as well as second-hand clothes, house clearances and furniture (Chippendale was an upholsterer). By the eighteenth century company members were active in undertaking funerals but the Company could not obtain a charter to give them a monopoly of the trade – the College of Arms performed high class funerals and a rival (non-livery) Company of Undertakers existed. However the company is special in maintaining an independent existence, avoiding the divisions and amalgamations which are common in other company histories.
This book is welcomed as filling a gap among company histories on library shelves, but the full history covering the last century remains to be published.

— Roger Cline

The Battle of the Styles. Society, Culture and the Design of a new Foreign Office, 1855-61

The Victorian battle about the style to be employed in building the Foreign Office in Whitehall was, Professor Bernard Porter suggests, the most public and spectacular of three great national building controversies of the nineteenth century, the other two being the Houses of Parliament (1835-6) and the new Law Courts (1866-8). It is an entertaining story, and although oft-told, bears Porter’s re-telling (though perhaps that in History Today might have been spared us), with a salting of new quotations. Porter’s is the most thorough and exhaustive scanning of the published sources to date, but has little for the student of London’s topography. However, Porter has little interest in George Gilbert Scott’s actual New Government Offices, which he dismisses as ‘mediocre’, ‘dull … no central feature: no clearly marked entrance … only a single, stubby tower’; he seizes on Summerson’s view that the building ‘is not one that counts for much in the history of English architecture’; one from which, Porter thinks, Scott’s reputation never recovered.

It is true that in the 1960s, in the white heat of the technological revolution, the government contemplated a general rebuilding of Whitehall, a concept that provoked so much criticism that it was abandoned. Part of that criticism arose from growing appreciation of Scott’s work, incomplete as it is – a cheese-paring Works Minister, Acton Ayrton, forbidding in 1872 the erection of the central entrance and the corner towers that Scott earnestly campaigned for. Informed opinion today may be summed up in the words of the revised ‘Pevsner’ (Simon Bradley and N. Pevsner, London 6: Westminster, 2003), ‘Scott’s building certainly is a most competent piece of High Victorian design.’ But then Porter appears not really interested in architecture, and architectural historians he regards as narrow specialists needing his assistance in suitably contextualising their studies. For it is the reflection in the ‘Battle’ of important developments in the British economy and class-riven society of the 1850s and ‘60s that interests him as a historian of British imperialism, and it is those he here explores, ‘to show how the Battle of the Styles related to its broader historical environment’, though such small numbers were engaged in the Battle that the reflection is but partial. Porter himself sums up the book as ‘a piece of self indulgence’.

— M. H. Port

Editor’s Miscellany

There has recently been a burst of publications on Victorian architects, both London and provincial. Episodes in the Gothic Revival, six church architects, ed. Christopher Webster, Spire Books, 2011, includes an essay on R. C. Carpenter by John Elliott, subtitled ‘the Anglicans’ Pugin’. Carpenter is indeed best known for his churches, among them St Mary Magdalene Munster Square, but was also involved, with his father, in secular building in Islington, inter alia the Tudor style Lonsdale Square and the Italianate Percy Circus. Neil Jackson’s essay in the same volume demonstrates how foreign travel influenced the work of G. E. Street, as displayed for example in the strikingly polychromatic St James the Less Pimlico Westminster (shown on the jacket of the book). It was not always London which led the way, as is shown by the essay on the pioneer Gothic revivalist Thomas Rickman, by our council member Professor Michael Port. Indeed, Spire Books’ second volume on this theme, The Practice of Architecture, eight architects 1830-1930, also edited by Christopher Webster, 2012, includes several provincial architects, but also two essays by James Stevens Curl featuring London buildings designed by Henry Roberts and Bassett Keeling.

The future of London’s Victorian churches is another matter. The survival of many of these buildings, which often contribute so significantly to the character of their suburban surroundings, used to be considered a lost cause. No longer, as one
learns from London’s churches are fighting back: at risk, rescued, reused, a SAVE Britain’s Heritage report published in 2011. This traces the changing attitude to the conservation of church buildings since SAVE’s gloomy 1985 report, London’s churches are falling down. There are still plenty of problem buildings in the ‘at risk’ category, and the difficulties of financing longterm upkeep remain, as is discussed in the introduction. However, there is also evidence of a more constructive approach, involving timely repair helped by grants, sensitive adaptation or imaginative new use. Examples in the gazetteer include St Alban’s Teddington, a church begun in the 1880s, so colossal that it was never finished, but now a successful Arts Centre, and Union Chapel Islington, whose great centrally planned building hosts ambitious concerts. St Stephen’s Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, the masterpiece of S. S. Teulon, which was made redundant in 1977 was eventually rescued and conserved by a Trust after standing derelict for twenty years while battle raged about possible alternative uses. It now houses a school in the basement. More radical changes include the conversion of the unroofed and abandoned eighteenth century St Luke Old Street to a concert hall. But these are the success stories, and while threats of outright demolition have receded, there are a crowd of other churches where there is still a desperate need for funds for major repairs or inspiration for alternative uses, from St Laurence Brentford, a partly medieval building which, shockingly, has been closed and unused since 1961, to the diminutive ‘tin tabernacle’ in Shrubland Road Hackney which was advertised for sale in 2011.

Now for the twentieth Century. Lambeth Architecture 1914-39 by Edmund Bird and Fiona Price, an enterprising publication by Lambeth Council, is a welcome addition to books covering the understudied architecture of the interwar period. This well-illustrated paperback demonstrates the fascinating variety of public, domestic and commercial buildings of those years to be found in the south London borough, from Brixton market buildings and Brockwell Park Lido, to the Fire Station headquarters on the Albert Embankment. It is not only the architectural quality that is memorable: the selection teaches one much about Lambeth’s social history. The prosperous department stores and elegant mansion flats reflect solid middle class values, while carefully designed utility, leisure and educational buildings and an impressive quantity of new social housing demonstrate the concern to improve the quality of life for all.

On the postwar period, Chamberlin, Powell & Bon, The Barbican and Beyond, by Elain Harwood, RIBA Publishing, 2011, will intrigue those who enjoyed the author’s talk on the Barbican at the LTS’s AGM in 2009. The book tells the story of the creation of this unique area of London and discusses the architects’ other work. This include the progressive housing built by the City of London twenty years earlier at Golden Lane, just to the north, and some other bold and original contributions to post-war London: Bousfield School in Kensington and housing at Vanbrugh Park, Greenwich. The book is an excellent contribution to the series on modern architects published by the RIBA together with English Heritage and the Twentieth Century Society.

As an aid to appreciating recent architectural developments in their historical context a thoughtful and interesting contribution is London High, a guide to London skyscrapers, past, present and future, by Herbert Wright, Frances Lincoln, £30; this was published in 2006, but was in time to feature many of the major developments in the City which thanks to the economic climate, are only now taking shape. A general historical background is followed by detailed discussion of individual sites from the late nineteenth century onwards, ending with the Shard, a reminder that this behemoth was planned nine years ago and has taken six years to build.

Studying buildings is one way of appreciating London’s diverse history, another is investigating their inhabitants. Several recent publications have explored the subject of immigrant communities. A Better Life, by Olive Besagni (Camden History Society 2011, £7.50) is a collection of nearly 40 oral histories of Italian families who settled in Clerkenwell from the early nineteenth century onwards. Olive Besagni, granddaughter of ‘Maestro Ferrari’, headmaster of the Italian school, has recorded the life of this community with great skill and sympathy. Already by 1840 there were some 2000 Italians in what became known as ‘Little Italy’. This poor area on the
fringe of Clerkenwell was partly rebuilt when it was cut through by the later nineteenth century thoroughfares of Rosebery Avenue, Farringdon Road and Clerkenwell Road, but in between there remained a mass of small streets where the new immigrants established their family cafes and shops: they survived until most were swept away in the slum clearances of the 1930s and post-war years. The individual stories provide fascinating glimpses of the daily life and work of families from the impoverished rural areas of Italy, determinedly struggling to make a living in London through a great variety of occupations. Family links were all important. The focus of the community was St Peter’s Italian Church, built in 1862, modelled on a Roman basilica, which is still a landmark in the area. Among the photos reproduced, several illustrate the elaborate annual procession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, celebrated with a day of feasting, when a statue was borne through the streets on a flower-covered platform, followed by bevies of girls in white dresses.

A curious colony, Leicester Square and the Swiss, by Peter Barber, 2011, an elegantly produced slim book of 95pp, published for the Swiss Embassy, explores the less well-known history of the Swiss in London. This is not as coherent a story as that of the Italians, and the topographical background is also less precise, extending over most of the west end. Although there was a recognisable Swiss community in Soho by the nineteenth century, Leicester Square itself became significant only in the 1960s with the building of the Swiss centre to promote Swiss products and tourism. However Peter Barber has gathered together some unexpected and intriguing stories. They start in the eighteenth century when the multi-lingual skills of the Swiss made them sought after as government advisers and tutors to royalty. London was an attractive destination especially for Swiss Huguenots, among them was the engineer Charles Labelye, the designer of Westminster Bridge. The author’s cartographic interests are evident in his exploration of the Swiss element in the circle of mid eighteenth century artists, engravers and mapmakers, which included the great John Rocque, another Huguenot, who had many Swiss contacts, also the Swiss artists Angelica Kauffmann and Henry Fuseli. He also examines the reciprocal interest in Switzerland and Alpine scenery which had developed among the English by the early nineteenth century, which led to the foundation of the Alpine Club in 1857. In the nineteenth century it was the Italian Swiss who were prominent in London, especially in the catering trade, the most famous being Carlo Gatti and his brothers whose ventures included restaurants, ice importing and the Adelphi theatre. The prize story of the twentieth century is how Switzerland was promoted through the famous April Fool hoax of 1957, when Richard Dimbleby described on television the harvesting of the ‘spaghetti crop’ in the Ticino.

Immigration in the twentieth century is touched on in John Hinshelwood’s Stroud Green, a history and Five walks, 2011, 96pp, Hornsey Historical Society, £7.50, which covers the area of Haringey and Islington just to the north of Finsbury Park station. New Beacon Books (established in 1966 by John La Rose, Britain’s first black publisher) opened a bookshop in Stroud Green Road in 1973, which became a focus for the local West Indian community. During the 1970s black supplementary schools and parents’ groups followed, both in Stroud Green and elsewhere in Haringey, in an effort to combat local prejudice about West Indian capabilities. All this, and the subsequent gradual gentrification of much of the area, comes at the end of a long story of development. Hinshelwood’s thorough research shows that contrary to popular assumption, Stroud Green had a recognisable identity with a scatter of houses well before the growth of the Victorian suburb which survives today. John Hinshelwood has tackled the history of other parts of Haringey with similar dedication: The Campsbourne Estate, a History of its Development and Redevelopment, Hornsey Historical Society 2011, 24pp £3.50, is a walk exploring a small area in the centre of the old village of Hornsey, where Campsbourne House was replaced first by housing in the 1860s, and then by some thoughtfully planned council housing after World War II. How Harringay Happened, 2011 for the Harringay Festival, 47pp., traces the later Victorian development of the open land in the centre of the borough, where the dense ‘Harringay ladder’ of streets fills the area between the Kings Cross railway line, and Green Lanes, an ancient route transformed into a long shopping parade.
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New membership enquiries should be addressed to Patrick Frazer. Correspondence about existing membership including renewal payments, requests for standing orders and gift-aid forms and the non-receipt of publications also any change of address, should be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Roger Cline. The Honorary Editor, Ann Saunders, deals with proposals for new publications.

Registered charity no. 271590
The Society’s web site address is: www.topsoc.org

ISSN 1369-7986
The Newsletter is published by the London Topographical Society and issued by the Newsletter Editor: Bridget Cherry, Bitterley House, Bitterley, near Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3HJ.

Produced and printed by The Ludo Press Ltd, London SW17 0BA.
Tel. 020 8879 1881. Fax 020 8946 2939.
LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2011

Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions paid by members</td>
<td>20,648</td>
<td>20,953</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subscriptions from earlier years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income Tax from Covenants/Gift Aid</td>
<td>4,395</td>
<td>4,604</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total subscription income</td>
<td>25,101</td>
<td>25,615</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profit from sales of Publications</td>
<td>6,751</td>
<td>6,744</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest received</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>407</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant: Scouloudi Foundation</td>
<td>1,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sundry donations</td>
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<td>Total Income for the year</td>
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<td>34,219</td>
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<td>Surplus for the year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>440</td>
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Expenditure

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Members’ subscription publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Printing</td>
<td>-3,418</td>
<td>-7,382</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Distribution</td>
<td>3,520</td>
<td>3,142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision for next year’s publication</td>
<td>14,000</td>
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<td>Total cost of members’ publications</td>
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<td>Newsletter</td>
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<td>Website, re-done in 2011</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
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<td>1,364</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Publications Storage and Service</td>
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<td>Total Administration Costs</td>
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<td>Annual Grant to British Museum</td>
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<td>Total expenditure for the year</td>
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<td>33,779</td>
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TOTAL ASSETS 2011

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<tr>
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<th>2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money in Bank &amp; National Savings</td>
<td>186,194</td>
<td>187,052</td>
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<td>Advance payments</td>
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<td>160</td>
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<td>Value of Society’s stock of publications</td>
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<td>Stock at end of previous year</td>
<td>17,750</td>
<td>22,665</td>
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<td>Additions to stock</td>
<td>2,660</td>
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<td>Less Value of publications sold</td>
<td>6,751</td>
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<td>Value of stock at year end</td>
<td>13,659</td>
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<td>Total assets</td>
<td>200,555</td>
<td>204,962</td>
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LIABILITIES 2011

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overseas members’ postage</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subscriptions paid in advance</td>
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<td>3,166</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision for future publication</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>18,888</td>
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<td>Net Worth of the Society</td>
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<td>181,656</td>
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<td>Change in net worth</td>
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<td>Previous year’s net worth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus for the year</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of year net worth</td>
<td>181,667</td>
<td>181,656</td>
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The negative printing cost figures occur due to over-provision in the previous year. The accounts are with our examiner and, assuming they are approved, they will be presented at the AGM.