Our 113th AGM will be held in St Clement Danes, the Central Church of the Royal Air Force. Standing opposite the Royal Courts of Justice at the end of the Strand, the church was built by Christopher Wren in 1680-82, burnt down by the Luftwaffe on 10 May 1941 and then abandoned until reconsecrated as the RAF church in October 1958. Former parishioners included Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, James Boswell, Edmund Burke and the poet John Donne.

In accord with its role the church has books of remembrance on display containing more than 150,000 names; nearly 900 squadron and unit badges made of slate are set into the floor; and a range of RAF colours and squadron standards hang in the church. Members will be able to visit the crypt with its coffin plates and chain to prevent body snatchers from stealing coffins. A range of impressive seventeenth century plate is also on display.

Refreshments will be served in the church from about 5.15pm and the meeting will start at 6.00pm. Members are entitled to bring one guest.

**AGENDA**

1. Minutes of the 112th AGM.
5. Election of Council officers and members.
6. Proposals by Members.
7. Any other business.

Items 1, 2 and 3 can be found in this Newsletter (see pp.18-19)

Following the AGM, Robert Thomson will talk about the index he compiled for this year’s Publication; Elizabeth Williamson, the Editor of the Victoria County History, will tell us about the research her team is doing on the registers of the church, and Blue Badge Guide Peter Anderson will talk about the history of the building.

**How to get there**

The church is at the east end of the Strand, between Aldwych and the Royal Courts of Justice. 

*Tube:* The nearest underground station is Temple (Circle/District Lines) – Holborn Station (Piccadilly/Central Lines) is also walkable.

*Buses:* (alight at Aldwych or at the Royal Courts of Justice) – more than twenty routes stop here with Nos 9 & 15 running heritage Routemaster buses.

**Facilities**

There is very limited disabled off-street parking at the entrance to the church. Please contact Mike Wicksteed (mike.wicksteed@btinternet.com).

The church’s toilet facilities are also limited, so it is strongly recommended that members make a pit stop before arriving at the church. For anyone caught short there is a disabled toilet in the church (off the verger’s office) and there’s a pub, The George, across the road.

**Around St Clement Danes**

The present junction of Aldwych and the Strand belongs with the creation of Kingsway in 1905, but recent archaeological investigations have shown that the Aldwych area has a most interesting older history. As the name suggests, it was the site of the Middle Saxon trading port of Lundenwic (the discoveries are described in a brand new publication by Museum of London Archaeology).

More recent places of interest nearby include:

- The Royal Courts of Justice (9.00am – 4.30pm, entry off the Strand); the Roman Bath, 5 Strand Lane (to arrange a viewing between 11.00am – 3.00pm. Email: dcreese@westminster.gov.uk [best] or phone Mr David Creese on 020 7641 5264); Twinings Tea Museum & Shop (opposite the RCJ); Fountain Place at Middle Temple (to rest your feet if it’s a sunny day); Sir John Soane’s Museum, 12-13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields; and Dr Johnson’s House at 17 Gough Square off Fleet Street.

- Middle Temple Hall: Up to 5.30pm if you tell the porter you’re an LTS member – and there isn’t a function taking place – you will be able to view the Hall at Middle Temple, built between 1562 and 1573 and which remains virtually unchanged to this day having survived the Great Fire of London and both World Wars.
Notes and News

This year’s publication, No.174, which will be ready for collection at the AGM, is *The A-Z of Charles II’s London, 1682, London Actually Survey’d by William Morgan*, a valuable record of the rebuilt City emerging after the Great Fire. Work is already in hand on next year’s exciting publication: provisional title ‘*Les Singularitez de Londres*’. It is a description of London in a manuscript at the Vatican, never before published in full, which dates from 1577, and so precedes Stow’s famous Survey.

Note from the Treasurer. HMRC, formerly known as the Inland Revenue, requires me to point out to all members who Gift Aid their payments to the Society that you must pay enough income tax and/or capital gains tax in any tax year to cover all the tax on all your payments made under the Gift Aid scheme in that year which the various charities will reclaim for that tax year. If this ceases to be the case, or if you have any question, please contact me.

This requirement to all charities has been made because the model Gift Aid Declaration supplied by the Inland Revenue and which you signed when joining the Gift Aid scheme only referred to paying enough tax to cover your donation to this society and not to all your gift aided charitable payments.

If you do not yet gift aid your subscription payments you can download a Gift Aid declaration from the How to Join section of the website or obtain one from me.

– Roger Cline

News from the London Metropolitan Archives

The Archives of the Cubitt Estates are an important record of the great nineteenth century squares and estates developed by Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855), one of London’s leading master builders. A catalogue of the ten volumes of rentals and leasebooks of the Cubitt estates held by LMA has recently been completed. However, these are not the whole story: at a recent auction 537 further volumes of Cubitt estate records came under the hammer, but LMA was unable to secure them and they were sold for £1,700. Their current whereabouts is unknown. Anyone with further information should contact the LMA.

Christ’s Hospital and St Paul’s Cathedral Archives, previously stored at the Guildhall, were transferred in February to the LMA at 40 Northampton Road, Clerkenwell. In future all consultation of these archives will take place at LMA. For further information contact the LMA by email at ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk or telephone 020 7332 3820.

Members should note that the LMA Newsletter is an excellent way of keeping up to date with the LMA’s exhibitions, activities and acquisitions.

A future for Britain’s postal heritage. In 2016, provided funds can be secured this year, a new postal museum will open at Mount Pleasant, giving access to every British stamp issued since 1840 and more than 70,000 artefacts. The museum will be the cultural hub of a Royal Mail masterplan of 680 homes, offices and retail space, and an international destination for the study of postal communications, telling how postal services transformed world history over 400 years.

Miscellanea. It is always good to learn that the Newsletter inspires readers to seek out and share new sources of information. Michael Major, a recent member, draws attention to the interactive map called ‘Bomb Sight’ which was devised by a team from the University of Portsmouth using data from the National Archives. See www.bombsight.org/#15/51.5050/-0.0900 and the BBC History reference at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-20637222

Another tip from our member Derek Morris, the historian of East London, who reminds us that an increasing number of land tax and insurance records for London in the eighteenth century are now available online. Derek makes good use of these in his recent article, ‘The Shadwell Waterfront in the Eighteenth Century’, by Derek Morris and Kenneth Cozens, *The Mariner’s Mirror*, 99, issue I, 2013, pp.86-91. The article can currently be accessed on line at www.tandfonline.com/eprint/XXKHs4qKJbpi5bdrQAJ/full, and under the open access rules applied by Taylor and Francis, the publishers, up to 50 free reprints of the article are available.

If you want to experience your own panoramic view you can visit the Mayor’s room on the seventeenth floor of Westminster City Hall, Victoria Street on 26 June 2013, where the well-known historian of medieval art, Dr Nicola Coldstream FSA, is giving a talk to the Westminster History Society on Imagery and Cult at the shrine of St Edward the Confessor. 7pm. Tickets £10, including a glass of wine. Available in advance or at the event – information from Judith Warner – jwarner.westminster@hotmail.com

The WHS is a supporters’ group of the Victoria County History, and the profits from their activities go toward the VCH’s current research on Westminster. For recent news on their work see their website: [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/middlesex-london](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/middlesex-london). Current work includes a parish history of St Clement Danes, to be published next year, probably as a print-on-demand paperback, about which we will learn more at our AGM (see p.1). LTS members may also be interested in the final seminar of the VCH’s Locality and Region series. ([www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/learning/seminar](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/learning/seminar)) which will take place on 4-6 July.

While the VCH is concerned with historic Westminster which grew up around the palace and abbey, the northern area of the modern borough, which originated as the parish (later Borough) of St Marylebone, is being tackled by the Survey of London. The Survey still hopes to have a future, but owing to the savage cuts to English Heritage’s budget, it will increasingly need to look for financial help from elsewhere. Meanwhile its recent publications provide evidence of its current energy and value: the splendid new Woolwich volume is reviewed in this issue; Battersea will follow in the autumn.

Less happy news about the long established Blue Plaques scheme, founded by the Royal Society of Arts in 1866, and taken over successively by the LCC, GLC and English Heritage. The Plaque budget has been halved, staff cut from five to two, the advisory panel of eminent members suspended and for the next two years the annual number of plaques will be reduced from twelve to six. Whether the scheme has a future beyond 2015 is unclear. If you feel strongly about the survival of this much loved London institution you may like to write to Simon Thurley, chief executive of EH (and an LTS member), or to the chair of the EH Comissioners, Baroness Andrews. The excellent English Heritage Blue Plaque website has much fascinating material on the plaques and the people they commemorate. One of the latest to be erected is on 67-70 Great Russell Street, the creation and briefly the home of the architect, John Nash, the subject of a new book reviewed in this issue (see p.13). Nash lived here for a few years in part of an ambitious development, designed in 1777-8, when he was only 25. The smart all-over stucco treatment was then a novelty, and although it bankrupted him at the time, the terrace can be seen as a harbinger of the architect’s future work.

Exhibitions

Should you tire of railways, Highways, at the Museum of London (to 16 June), a free exhibition in the entrance hall, displays six out of sixteen photographs commissioned by the Museum, taken in 2003 by John Davies, on the eve of the introduction of the congestion charge. They form part of Davies’s project ‘Metropoli’. The large scale and intricate detail demonstrate only too clearly the surrounding muddle that develops around major routes such as the Hammersmith flyover and the Blackwall Tunnel approach.

Painted Faces is a free exhibition at the Guildhall Art Gallery (to 9 December), taking a fresh look at a range of portraits from the gallery’s permanent collection, some of which have not been on display before.

London’s green spaces
London Landscapes 33 (Spring 2013), the instructive Newsletter of the London Parks and Gardens Trust, includes a fascinating article by John Goodier which will be of special appeal to LTS members. It records his explorations of the areas coloured green on John Tallis’s Map of London and its Environs, 1851. Why some open spaces are green and others not is often puzzling. Discussion of details of lost sites and their later fates range from the Surrey Zoological Gardens in south London to Belsize and Tufnell Parks, once private parks on the slopes of Hampstead.

If you are keen on exploring today’s open spaces do not miss the annual Open Garden Squares Weekend, 8-9 June 2013, this year organised by the LPGT together with the National Trust, when 220 gardens will be participating. For details see www.opensquares.org

Changing London
As one walks over Hungerford Bridge toward the South Bank, the sharp outline of the distant Shard appears in the gap between the Royal Festival Hall and the jagged profiles of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Hayward Gallery. That gap may in future be filled by a bold new Festival Wing whose main feature would be a raised glass box soaring high beside the Hayward’s spiky roof. The box, or ‘pavilion’, would contain a rehearsal and activities space, approached by a grand stair opposite the old entrance to the Festival Hall. At ground level, the present dismal service area would be replaced by a ‘heritage and archive centre’, and a new space is promised for the ‘urban arts’, catering for the skateboarders who currently use the area beneath the concert hall. An additional building alongside Waterloo Bridge would provide room for cafés and restaurants.

These ingenious proposals follow on from the refurbishment of the Festival Hall in 2007 and the re-creation of the Jubilee Gardens beyond Hungerford Bridge. They represent a determined effort by the Southbank Centre to improve their incomparable riverside site, accepting the existing distinctive 1960s buildings but expanding their facilities and making better use of the spaces around them. At present the scheme is only a set of ideas (no detailed drawings and no funding for building yet available). You are invited to comment on them at a display on the ground floor of the Royal Festival Hall. When you are there, do not miss an excellent small exhibition nearby about the 1951 Festival of Britain, with photographs, drawings and reminiscences of this significant event which not only inaugurated the use of the south bank for cultural purposes but had a far-reaching influence on post-war design.

A rather different case of incorporating the old within a new setting is demonstrated by the rebuilding on the site of the Regent Palace Hotel, now complete, which featured in ‘Changing London’ in Newsletter 70 (May 2010). Part of the ground floor of the triangular site between Sherwood St and Glasshouse St just off Piccadilly is now occupied by the Brasserie Zédel, with a pleasant café in the French manner (retro posters and baguettes à journaux) but the basement now houses the recreated grill room and bars of the old hotel, the latter remodelled in the 1930s by Oliver Bernard, with fabulous original art deco light fittings and decor. Well worth a look, as is the exterior of the new building by Dixon Jones, with its discreet but rich ceramic cladding (a different colour on each front). On one corner the ‘green’ character of the building is demonstrated by a clever light work, Vital Signs by Spencer Finch, 2012, which ‘makes visible the inner life and systems of the building by translating data streams into bars of colour’; the changing colours reflect power consumption, lift activity, recycled rainwater usage, temperature differential and fuel cell production.

Benjamin Franklin House – a special offer
Craven Street, tucked away south of the Strand, close to Charing Cross Station, was laid out in 1730 by Henry Flitcroft. It retains a fine sequence of Georgian terrace houses, rescued from neglect in the late 1980s. No. 36 was restored by Donald Insall & Partners in 1997-8 for use as a museum, to

New scheme for the South Bank
celebrate the life of its distinguished resident, Benjamin Franklin (1706-90). Benjamin Franklin House is now offering London Topographical Society members ‘two for the price of one’ entry to its Historical Experience and Architectural Tours over the next year (to end of May 2014. Take your copy of this Newsletter with you). Claire Smith, front of house and marketing supervisor, explains here what is on offer.

Benjamin Franklin House is the only remaining residence of Franklin anywhere in the world. Built c.1730, it was home to Franklin – scientist, diplomat, philosopher, inventor, US Founding Father, and more – for nearly 16 years between 1757 and 1775. We opened as a dynamic museum and education facility in January 2006, on Franklin’s 300th birthday, and are dedicated to telling Franklin’s little-known London story. The House holds a Grade I listing in acknowledgment of its famous former resident as well as a significant number of original architectural features.

Our main public offering is the Historical Experience which takes place Wednesday – Sunday (12-5pm). Lasting approximately 45 minutes, the show uses the House’s historic rooms as staging for a drama which incorporates live performance, sound, lighting, and visual projection to bring Franklin and the House to life. Every Monday we feature Architectural Tours showcasing the building’s Georgian features, and those from other periods, and Architectural Tours are £3.50 per person.

We also have a modern glass armónica, a unique musical instrument Franklin invented while living at Craven Street. Beethoven and Gluck all composed for the armónica. We can end either the Historical Experience or Architectural Tour with a demonstration of the instrument, giving guests a chance to play it themselves.

For details of the extensive events programme see the Events section of our website for more details. Benjamin Franklin House is open six days per week (Monday, Wednesday – Sunday: Tuesdays we are open exclusively to schools free of charge). Both the Historical Experience and Architectural Tours run five times per day at 12.00pm, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 3.15pm and 4.15pm. Admission to the Historical Experience is £7 per person, with a concessionary rate of £5 per person for students and over 65s. Architectural Tours are £3.50 per person.

King George III’s Topographical Collections

The sole known complete set of Thomas Milne’s land-use survey maps of London of 1800, Hawksworth’s autograph plan of Christchurch, Spitalfields, the sole surviving manuscript plan for Robert Adam’s Adelphi development and the set of annotated plans for proposed London docks, that were sent to George III in the hope of influencing him, must be among the star items in last year’s LTS publication London: A History in Maps.

It is not generally realised that they form part of King George III’s Topographical Collection. There are more than 30 items from the Collection in the book and I could have included so many more had space allowed. It covers the whole world and the heavens in 250 volumes, with numerous separate but associated atlases and books of views. With approximately 50,000 maps, atlases and books of views dating from the 1540s to 1824, the Collection has few competitors anywhere in terms of rarity, beauty and research interest. Yet it is virtually unknown as an entity even to map specialists.

There are about 15 thick volumes relating to London and its suburbs alone, including printed and manuscript maps, watercolours, manuscript architectural plans, engravings and magnificently-coloured aquatints. They rub shoulders with the most delightful ephemera – adverts, annual reports and printed passes. Part of the material, such as plans relating to grass-cutting in the gardens of Kensington Palace, have a royal provenance, in some cases going as far back as 1660 and, in the case of a manuscript plan of the River Thames in 1588, even earlier. Others such as manuscript proposals for improving the defences of Tilbury Fort are state papers that caught George’s fancy when crossing his desk in the course of his duties. Some of the most magnificent items were presented to him by his creators. And many maps and views again were acquired by his librarians, knowing the King’s interests, at auctions or from dealers. Unlike his other collections which were assembled by experts, the Topographical Collection was George’s hobby. Not only did he actively acquire maps, plans and views himself, but he kept the collection in the room immediately next to his bedroom in Buckingham House. It came to the British Museum in the 1820 as a donation from George IV.

The Collection was last catalogued in 1829, and now the British Library intends to re-catalogue, conserve and digitise it and to share it with the world. Eventually we hope to add the King’s Maritime Collection so that both can be virtually reunified with George III’s Military Collection, which remains in the Royal Library in Windsor. While in better days the Library could depend on its grant-in-aid for this, it is now having to look to private sources. In the case of the parts of the Collection relating to Great Britain – about 40% of
the whole – we are hoping to rely on local enthusiasm both to raise the money and to provide the sort of specialist knowledge that only locals possess to help in the cataloguing. Even small sums would help and if you go to the British Library’s website at www.support.bl.uk/Page/Current-Projects you will find a straightforward way of contributing. Please do!

– Peter Barber

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London Explorations – 3: Hampstead Heath – east to west

We all know ‘Appy ‘Ampstead ‘eath – or do we? Tony Aldous’s third London Exploration aims, in tracking east-west from Highgate to Golders Hill, to take in some of the lesser known features of the Heath and associated open spaces, including a towering Tudorbethan acropolis built to house single working women, and Lord Leverhulme’s spectacular Pergola, raised on Doric columns, which gave his house, The Hill, splendid views over the fields of west Middlesex. Numbers in the text refer to the map (drawn by Ivor Kamlish).

We start at Lauderdale House (1), whose front gate is in Highgate High Street. Buses 210, 271 and 143 from Archway tube station stop just outside. The house looks eighteenth century, but a Georgian makeover disguises a much earlier timber-framed building. It is named after the Duke of Lauderdale, friend and associate of Charles II, who borrowed it for Nell Gwynne’s use. Restored after a 1963 fire, it is now an arts and community centre. Go round it left, passing a plaque recording an earlier 1893 renovation, to a nice little café (closed Mondays) and terrace looking down over lakes and lawns. The grounds are now Waterlow Park (2), given with the house in 1889 by sometime Lord Mayor Sir Sidney Waterlow to the London County Council, to be ‘a garden for the garden-less’.
Descend past the lakes to a gate into Swains Lane, and turn left to pass between the gates to Highgate’s East and West Cemeteries (3). Then, 50 yards on, turn right through white gates into Oakeshott Avenue and the beginnings of the Holly Lodge Estate (4). This stretch of land between Swains Lane and Highgate West Hill belonged to Coutts Bank heiress, philanthropist and social reformer Baroness (Angela) Burdett-Coutts. After the deaths of her and her husband, the land was put up for sale but was seen as remote from London and did not immediately sell. This part of it, with four- and five-storey half-timbered blocks, was developed in the 1920s by Lady Workers’ Homes Limited, with flatlets for single women drawn to London to work as clerks and typists. They did not live in luxury; cooking facilities were meagre and lady workers shared bathrooms.

At the junction of Oakeshott Avenue and Hillway, turn left downhill with another long view over central London, and half-timbered detached houses; then second right into Langbourne Avenue and thus out through more white gates to Highgate West Hill. Go straight across into Millfield Lane and thus to the Heath and Highgate Ponds (5). Six in number, these are strung out along a tributary of the River Fleet and include a pond for boats, one for birds, one for fish, one for men to swim in and one for women. Only in one of the Hampstead Ponds half a mile west are they permitted to bathe together.

The ponds are impounded by raised banks or dams with paths across them and are technically ‘reservoirs’, subject to safety checks. A problem for the City of London Corporation which, since 1989, has managed the Heath and some adjoining public open spaces. It has recently been warned that increased danger of flash flooding requires it to reinforce and enlarge the banks. Locals are sceptical, but if such works are to happen, they want the finished appearance to be as natural as possible, and for the ponds to look much as they do now.

Follow the eastern side of three ponds, paralleling Millfield Lane, then, near the junction with Merton Lane, turn left across the causeway between Bird Pond and Boating Pond (6) and join a westerly path which soon skirts woodland to your right. This becomes part of an avenue of limes, and at its crossroads with what is now the Heath’s main east-west cycle path is a plaque (7) commemorating its replanting after the great storm of 1987. The storm occurred in the hiatus between the abolition of the Greater London Council, which had previously administered the Heath, and the City of London Corporation’s assumption of that task. In the interim a little loved and largely unsung organisation, the London Residuary Body, was responsible – and it set in train the replanting.

Turn right along what is now the cycle path and reach The Viaduct (8), which straddles Viaduct Pond and seems, in more senses than one, ‘over the top’. Why build such a structure in the middle of nowhere? Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, landowner and nineteenth century lord of the manor, planned to build 28 grand villas along an access road of which the viaduct formed a key link. Unfortunately for him – but fortunately for posterity – its foundations repeatedly collapsed. By the time it was satisfactorily completed, impetus for the development had fizzled out.

Crossing over the bridge, follow the cycle path round to the right, then fork right on to a track over the smaller Bird Bridge (9), then follow unpaved track round with upper pond on right to return almost to the Viaduct. Then left, back to the lime avenue and right along it to The Pryors (10), an imposing mansion block. Here turn right along path which veers away from East Heath Road and passes a children’s playground (right). On with woods to the right and we shortly come to Vale of Health Pond (11). Continue with the pond on your left and turn left at the end of a fence to pass The
Gables, a rather grand nineteenth century terrace facing the Heath. At its end, turn left and you are in the heart of a little, hidden-away hamlet, the Vale of Health (12). Until the 1770s, this was a rather nasty swamp with only a couple of dwellings: then the Hampstead Water Company drained the marsh and created the present pond as a reservoir. In the nineteenth century the Vale began to attract Londoners seeking fresher air than London’s, including poet Leigh Hunt who entertained friends including Keats, Shelley and Hazlitt; also Byron whose time here is celebrated in Byron Villas ahead of us. Twentieth century residents included D. H. Lawrence (Blue Plaque) and, on your right facing a small triangle of trees, another blue plaque to the Indian poet/philosopher Rabindranath Tagore.

Part of the Vale’s twenty-first century appeal is that it has only one road in and out, so no through traffic – though several charming footpaths and alleys, one of which we find just to the left of the Tagore house. At a lamppost, turn left to Heath edge again; left once more through a metal barrier, then look for a rough track leading up to wooden steps between gorse bushes. Continue ahead to Spaniards Road (13). Looking right you see that this road is raised like a causeway above the Heath. It wasn’t always so: Maryon Wilson again! Frustrated in his development plans, he let out this part of the Heath for sand and gravel extraction.

Turn left and cross a zebra to Jack Straw’s Castle (14) and nearby Whitestone Pond, highest on the Heath. Jack Straw’s Castle was a famous – perhaps notorious – coaching inn, named after the Jack Straw who led the Peasants’ Revolt. The present building, however – strikingly cream-coloured, castellated and timber-clad – dates only from 1964, a witty pastiche by architect Raymond Erith. It is no longer a pub.

Turn right in front of the building along North End Way, skirting a grassy area to your left. As this reaches a wall, turn left along a path and enter the gateway to The Hill and its Pergola (15). Climb up spiral steps and explore. This was the work of soap millionaire William Lever (1851-1925). Lever, later Lord Leverhulme, bought a grand house The Hill which, as Inverforth House, still stands alongside. He then had eminent landscape architect Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) design him extensive gardens on a sloping site facing south and west; then, to give a better view over the Middlesex countryside towards Harrow, using spoil from the construction of the tube extension from Hampstead to Golders Green, Mawson constructed this spectacular pergola, 800ft long and turning through several angles, with a belvedere for viewing (on a fine day) the spire of Harrow church. It even has a public right of way threaded in under it.

Inverforth House became a convalescent home; then, in the 1980s, developers proposed to convert it into very up-market flats. After some haggling, a deal was done: the scheme could go ahead and the flats have the use of an adjacent part of Leverhulme’s gardens; the public would get the rest. The City Corporation, which administers the adjacent West Heath, took it on and, in 1992, had it splendidly restored. And you can still, on a fine day, see Harrow church on its hill in the distance.

Just before the final western viewing point, look for steps down on to a terrace above the gardens’ ornamental pool. Follow this round and exit the Hill by a gate on to heath land. Go ahead and left to rustic steps leading down to a gate into Golders Hill Park (16) and its deservedly popular Refreshment House with its sunny south-facing terrace. Thereafter you have a choice: either a bus from just outside the park gates to Golders Green, Archway and Hampstead tube stations; or wander down through the park, noting hedgerows retained as reminders that this was countryside, to a gate into West Heath Avenue. Turn right into its northern leg, then left at North End Way to reach Golders Green tube.

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Circumspice

Who lived here? Where is this building? See p.11.
Why 99 years?

London leases are a baffling subject, but crucial if one is trying to understand how and why London developed as it did. Frank Kelsall, the author of this contribution, formerly a member of the GLC Historic Buildings Division (later part of English Heritage), has a longstanding interest in the history of the London house. He comments that the thoughts below represent only a cursory attempt to answer the question at the head of this note. Contributions and comments from those with experience of researching London’s leasehold system, or a more clear-headed understanding of the land law would be very welcome.

It has just been announced that West Ham United Football Club is to have a 99-year lease of the Olympic Stadium. Whether or not the stadium should be let for football may be a matter of controversy but no-one seems to have considered why, if let, a lease of this length was appropriate. That much of London was built on 99-year leases is a broad generalisation but probably one which most historians of the development of London would accept. Simon Jenkins, in Landlords to London, says that there were seven times as many leasehold houses as freeholds but doesn’t discuss the length of the leases. Simpson’s Introduction to the History of the Land Law says that ‘the longest customary period for a lease… is the building lease, customarily fixed in the nineteenth century at 99 years’. In many places in London the effect of the 99-year lease can be seen very clearly. In Russell Square, for instance, houses on the south side, built in 1800 by James Burton, were dressed up with new fashionable terra-cotta mouldings in 1899.

Donald Olsen’s Town Planning in London set out a general pattern which showed that the customary length of building leases increased from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century but contracted somewhat toward the close of the nineteenth. Olsen said that Covent Garden was built in the 1630s on 31-year leases; 61-year leases were common on the Bloomsbury estate in the early eighteenth century followed by 80-year and then 99-year leases. But by the 1880s, although 99-year leases were still granted in the outskirts of London, there was a tendency to offer shorter terms, of 80 years or even less. Olsen noted that the leases for Bedford Square, under building agreements of 1776, were the first 99-year leases on the Bedford Estate.

Not all landowners went over to 99-year leases as early as the Duke of Bedford and it may be that the 99-year term was not as general in either time or place as is commonly supposed. Heather Warne’s 2010 printed catalogue of the Duke of Norfolk’s London and Middlesex deeds at Arundel Castle, mainly relating to the Arundel House site in the Strand, shows that an estate act of 1671 gave powers to make leases of up to 60 years but that most of the leases granted under contracts of October 1676 were for 41 years. Further estate acts of 1724 and 1783 granted renewed powers to make 60-year leases and it was not until a new act of 1846 that 99-year leases were authorised.

More detailed study, especially in the pages of the Survey of London, can refine Olsen’s pattern. In Covent Garden in the 1630s the early 31-year leases noted by Olsen were quickly followed by longer terms, including 41-year leases for the colonnaded Piazza houses. The first leases for Bloomsbury Square (in the 1660s, before it came into the Bedford Estate) were for 42 years. Most of London built in the last third of the seventeenth century was on 61-year leases: the many leases scheduled in the trust deed for Nicholas Barbon’s fire insurance company in 1683 (mainly the Essex House site in the Strand, Wellclose east of the Tower and the Artillery Ground in Spitalfields) were almost uniformly of that length. That this term may be in line with what Parliament thought was appropriate may be seen not only in the private acts for the Arundel House site but also in the acts for rebuilding the City after the Great Fire which first gave the Fire Court the power to extend leases by 40 years and then to order any term not exceeding 60 years. The lease tables in the Survey of London show that a term of about 60 years remained adequate for building on the Burlington Estate and Sackville Street, with leases dating from 1719 onwards; but the leases for the Argyll Street area, built in the later 1730s, show slightly longer terms of between 66 and 69 years.

That by c.1720 the 61-term was thought perhaps a bit too short is shown by the 1713 agreement made for the development of part of Millfield (on which the area around the east side of Hanover Square was built) where building sites were let in pairs by the Earl of Scarbrough (up to Lady Day 1750) and by Joseph Jolly, a stone merchant, who added a further 30 years. Such arrangements have some precedent in the seventeenth century; for example Barbon did not begin development of the Harpur Trust Estate in Holborn, which he had acquired under an existing lease expiring in 1709, until in 1684 he had added a reversionary lease...
taking his term to 1760. This argument is strongest in the case of the Grosvenor Estate where an estate act of 1711 limited leases which Sir Richard Grosvenor could make on the parts of the estate in which his mother (a lunatic) had a life interest to 60 years; after development began in 1720 a trust deed of 1721 and a further estate act of 1726 were needed to facilitate leases of up to 99 years though not all early leases were of this length. At the same time as the 99-year building lease seems to make its first significant appearance in Mayfair similar terms were being granted on Lord Harley’s Marylebone property (now the Howard de Walden Estate) following a 1719 estate act. So when the Duke of Bedford adopted 99-year leases in Bloomsbury in the 1770s he was following a precedent established half a century before.

When Sir John Soane gave his lectures on architecture at the Royal Academy he was critical of speculative leasehold building: “It will eventually destroy all relish for substantial construction and finally root out every vestige of good architecture.” He echoed Isaac Ware’s view that ‘the nature of tenures in London has introduced the art of building slightly’. Such attacks on the leasehold system were common and lay, at least in part, behind the need for Parliament to look at urban estates at the end of the nineteenth century. Then leaseholds were vigorously and successfully defended. There are now thousands of listed buildings in London built on leasehold which have outlived their original term by a substantial period, in some cases several times over. Olsen’s work has shown that the survival of buildings has depended more on location and management than on the initial quality of construction and design. Nevertheless it may be reasonable to argue that at least up to the 1720s leases got longer because of a simple proposition: the longer the interest in the land the more likely it was that the house would be well designed and well built by the tenant. The portico houses in Covent Garden had longer first leases than those in the side streets. Many of the houses built on short leases in the 1630s were ruinous and rebuilt in the 1670s, and when Bedford House was demolished the houses built on its site in 1706-14 had 61-year leases.

What lay behind this leap from a ‘norm’ of 61 years to one of 99 years, which clearly took place earlier than Simpson had thought? It would be difficult to argue that the longer period was necessary for aesthetic or structural reasons when houses of comparable quality were being built more or less simultaneously on both Burlington and Grosvenor Estates. Mireille Galinou’s recent book on St John’s Wood shows that the 1794 master plan for the Eyre Estate proposed 99-year leases but that the first building leases were for only 59 years. She makes a novel suggestion that this may have been because St John’s Wood houses were secondary rather than main residences. But the length of lease had some financial implications, as is shown by the fact that in 1807 the estate was prepared to extend a term of 73 years to 99 in return for a payment of £100. James Anderson’s research on the development of a market in improved ground rents shows that as an investment there was very little difference between the two terms: he quotes the evidence of Edward Ryde to the Select Committee on Town Holdings in 1886 that shorter leases are no disincentive to a developer, but suggests that longer terms may have had an appeal, especially to novice investors, to justify higher multiples, often described as ‘years purchase’ in the sale of ground rents. (Copies of Anderson’s thesis are in Westminster and Camden local history collections.)

So if structural, aesthetic and financial considerations are not compelling reasons behind a 99-year term what else could there be? One explanation may be that to some extent landowners were in competition with each other to secure developers and builders, especially reliable ones, as London was expanding in all directions, and especially to the fashionable west. 99-year building leases seem first to have appeared on the Grosvenor and Harley Estates when they were right at the fringe of the built-up area. It is not easy now to think that these areas may have seemed marginal in the 1720s, but both estates took a long time to complete until well into the second half of the eighteenth century. Offering longer leases may have been one way of attracting the best builders. In the nineteenth century Thomas Cubitt built almost exclusively on 99-year leases.

Establishing how long building leases evolved does not explain why the term which became so general was 99 years. It was clearly a conveyancing convention. Such terms existed in the seventeenth century. When Barbon built the Essex House site he had to accept an existing lease made in 1666 of the house built for Lord Keeper Orlando Bridgeman: this was for three lives or 99 years. Christopher Chalklin (in the Provincial Towns of Georgian England) quotes a Bath Corporation lease of 1763 for a similar term of 99 years or three lives. The rapid expansion of London in the seventeenth century needed a legal framework to support house building; perhaps the most notable example of this is the equity of redemption which became a key to the mortgates which underpinned most building. In the thirteenth century the jurist Bracton had said that ‘a tenement cannot be called free which he possesses for a certain number of years’ even if this was for a hundred years ‘which exceeds the life of man’. Traditional leases for lives had a different legal status to leases for specific terms. In a business where there were many variables – costs of labour and materials, interest rates and the market for houses months or years after a development was undertaken – at least one element in the equation, the term of a building lease, could be fixed. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries landowners, developers and builders gradually perceived a need for longer leases even if it was perfectly possible to build on shorter terms.
The change from the uncertainties of leases for lives to the certainty of fixed terms benefited all those who undertook urban building, but no-one was prepared to commit themselves beyond Bracton’s ‘life of man’. Was 99 years seen as the equivalent of three lives?

– Frank Kelsall

Circumspice (see p.8)

Harrow Weald Common is an odd and enchanting place, largely woodland with little streams and bridges and, among the trees, intriguing humps and bumps. Some of these undoubtedly result from nineteenth century gravel digging, but some are associated with a chain of ancient earthworks known as Grim’s Dyke. It is near these that woodland gives way to trim lawns, a sunken garden and other well-kept garden features – and this house.

Also called Grim’s Dyke, it was built in 1870-72 by Norman Shaw for painter and Royal Academician Frederick Goodall to provide both a studio and a place to entertain in. Its most famous owner was, however, W. S. Gilbert of Savoy Opera fame, who lived there from 1890 to 1911 and enlarged and altered the building without altering its powerful, high-chimneyed, red brick character. He also converted the stable block into a home for his collection of vintage motorcars.

Gilbert’s tenure ended in tragedy. Soon after moving to Grim’s Dyke he had set about extending an existing lake in the grounds, and for years swam in it daily between May and September. On 29 May 1911 he was teaching two local girls to swim; one of them got into difficulties and Gilbert went to her rescue. He said: “Put your hands on my shoulder and don’t struggle.” She did as he told her, but then felt him sink under the water. He drowned.

The house, now a hotel, and its grounds have been well restored and retain many features from WSG’s time. It advertises itself as a ‘country retreat’ which – although it is just within Greater London – seems justified: it is hidden away in well-wooded Harrow Weald Common, which itself is set amidst green belt fields. The hotel is something of a draw for Gilbert & Sullivan devotees, and hosts G & S themed events.

– Tony Aldous

Reviews


Ian Nairn called Woolwich ‘a provincial centre that has got embedded in London by mistake’ (Nairn’s London, 1966). With its secretive military establishments and its relative inaccessibility from central London, Woolwich was terra incognita to most Londoners then, and it still remains a place apart. Now, however, as London moves eastwards, and transport links improve – the Docklands Light Railway now, Crossrail soon – it may lose something of its distinct character. What better time, then, for the Survey of London, in its first venture south of the river since 1956, to turn its attention to its little-appreciated historical and architectural riches?

London, it has often been remarked, is a collection of villages, but it also encompasses several towns. What makes Woolwich different from, say, Enfield, Uxbridge and Croydon is its manufacturing base and its strongly working-class character, still immediately noticeable to anyone emerging from Woolwich Arsenal station into the open-air market of Beresford Square. As Peter Guillery shows in this consistently fascinating and readable volume, that character is inseparable from the military presence, starting with a naval dockyard in 1513, and continuing through the establishment of the Arsenal in 1696 to the building of the Royal Artillery barracks alongside Woolwich Common in 1774-7 and its extension during the Napoleonic Wars. Taken together, these represent one of the most impressive agglomerations of military buildings in the country: the early Arsenal buildings of 1716-23, convincingly attributed here to Brigadier-General Michael Richards of the Board of Ordnance; the Royal Artillery Barracks, built in 1774-7 and later extended by James Wyatt, who expanded the Arsenal buildings during the Napoleonic Wars; and John Nash’s extraordinary tent-roofed Rotunda, first erected at Carlton House in 1814 but moved to the ‘Repository’ – an artillery training ground – to serve as a museum-cum-war memorial in 1820. Squeezed between the riverside factories and the barracks, the town itself was described in the 1840s as ‘the dirtiest, filthiest, and most thoroughly mismanaged… of its size in the kingdom’. But it grew more prosperous in the late nineteenth century, acquiring in the process not only its famous professional football team (at Highbury since 1913) but also a superb Edwardian Baroque Town Hall, opened in 1906 by Will Crooks, the fourth Labour MP to be elected, and the impressive brick and terracotta headquarters of that monument of working-class mutual self-help, the Royal Arsenal Co-Operative Society.
Most readers will be drawn to the descriptions of these architectural setpieces, but due attention is also paid to housing. Woolwich could serve as a microcosm of the rise and fall of post-war London council building, from 1950s tenements through the point blocks, slabs and system-built towers of the 60s and early 70s to more recent ‘high density low rise’ developments, several of them on the site of demolished tower blocks. Other demolished buildings are featured too, from the dockyard ‘Great Storehouse’ of c.1693 to the town’s three theatres, its riverside power station, and even the ‘Autostacker’: an innovative multi-storey car park that formed part of a comprehensive town-centre redevelopment scheme of 1961 (its lift system did not work, and it lasted only six years). And the story is brought up to date with discussion of recent changes in the town centre: England’s first Macdonalds, opened in 1974, the conversion of the Gaumont and Odeon cinemas of 1936-7 into Pentecostalist churches, and the recent building of what is claimed to be the largest Tesco store in Europe on the site of a 1970s municipal office block.

Like earlier Survey of London volumes, the book is well supplied with plans, constructional diagrams, photographs, and drawings, the latter by Peter Cormack, a Geoffrey Fletcher de nos jours. In a town where change has been frequent and often sudden, some of the older photographs are especially poignant, such as the 1960s pictures of the spruce interior of the now sadly empty Art Deco RACS store at the down-at-heel far end of Powis Street, aptly called ‘the Ramblas of Woolwich’. With its industrial base largely destroyed and a quarter of its current population born outside the British Isles, Woolwich has changed as much in recent years as in any comparable period of its history, but, while explaining and interpreting its past, Guillery never loses sight of its present: his description of the redeveloped Arsenal, for instance, with its upmarket blocks of flats by Berkeley Homes, as ‘a sterile dormitory framed by museums and sheds’, is spot on. Anyone who wants to grasp the relevance of architectural history to an understanding of London’s past and present could do much worse than to go to Woolwich, and, if so, it is hard to imagine a better companion than this hefty but magnificent volume.

Geoffrey Tyack


Though Sir John Summerson, himself a trained architect, was probably the first to recognise and discuss the significance of the square in the development of London, he was not the first to recognise its importance. Arthur Dasent’s magisterial volume on St James’s Square and its inhabitants (1895) is still held in respect by the Survey of London (volumes 29 and 30) – their editor acknowledging in the few instances of disagreement that Dasent might still be in the right – and Beresford Chancellor’s History of the Squares of London (1907) is still the first book which I would take from the shelf if asked unexpectedly to lecture at short notice, yet Todd Longstaffe-Gowan’s handsome volume (Yale, 2012) is to be welcomed for its own particular qualities – its scope, the excellence of the illustrations and its comprehensiveness in coming right up to date.

After a short introduction, written to tempt the reader to tackle this large and heavy volume, the author begins in the obvious place, with Covent Garden, and continues with Lincoln’s Inn. The analysis of drawings, etchings and maps reproduced on pp.20–23 is fascinating: it is worth having a magnifying glass to hand to appreciate the detail. We continue with the reconstruction after the Fire of 1666. The distinction is made between residential and market squares. Attention is given to the opportunity opened up for vistas from squares on the edge of London such as the windmill visible from Soho Square when looking towards Hampstead Hill (p.42); the deliberate planting out of squares seems to begin with the market gardener, Thomas Fairchild, who recommends honeysuckle and primroses (illustrated p.49) besides other flowering shrubs – a suggestion followed to this day with the Daphne Odora which perfumes the churchyard of bombed St Dunstan-in-the-East.

By Chapter 3, the squares begin to proliferate. Perhaps space could have been found for a reference to Jane Austen’s Emma when dealing with Mecklenburg Square? But we rush on to post-Napoleonic Wars development of Regent’s Park, with Regent Street leading to Trafalgar Square. The wealth of illustrations, many dug out from private collections and obscure libraries, makes the high price of the volume almost reasonable.

The last three chapters contain the most original material. By the nineteenth century, London was becoming more and more overcrowded. The importance of the squares as ‘invaluable lung space’ was recognised and the London County Council made attempts to protect them, but the spoiling of the squares began with the outbreak of the 1939–45 war when railings were removed wholesale (p.192). planting and pruning inevitably neglected, and the bombs did the rest. Sir Patrick Abercrombie’s Plan for Redevelopment was prepared by 1943 – before the war had ended – but restoration takes time, population fluctuated before increasing, and styles of building changed with the demands. Tower blocks loomed, destroying the scale and proportions of the square and the gated community began to appear.

This review could easily be two or three times as long, but space forbids that. I can only advise all the membership to get access – by fair means or foul – to a copy of the book and in particular to
enjoy the illustrations which speak louder than the words.

– Ann Saunders

**London’s Statues and Monuments.**

The streets and parks of London are embellished with hundreds of monuments and statues of the renowned and sometimes of the long forgotten. They come in all shapes and sizes and date from different periods of history. A few are fictitious like Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens (erected in 1912) and at Great Ormond Street Hospital (2000). Others are military figures who were once famous but are now but names lost in the mists of time, especially those of the late nineteenth century. Almost all are of men and women who made their names at some point in their lives. The majority have achieved something noteworthy in their field and this is recorded on their statues. From the small statue of Henry VIII (c.1702) in the gatehouse of St Bartholomew’s Hospital to the large statue of Nurse Edith Cavell (1920), opposite the National Portrait Gallery, each has a brief story to tell. The black memorial to the Women of World War II is a tribute to the work they did and was put up in 2005 in Whitehall, a few yards from the great Portland stone Cenotaph that commemorates all who died in the two world wars. This was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and unveiled on 11 November 1920 in front of the coffin of the Unknown Soldier before it was taken to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

Peter Matthews, who compiled and photographed the statues and monuments of the great and good (two-thirds of them are illustrated), displays a lucid and succinct style and also shows in many instances a sense of humour. He is well-qualified to do so as he worked at the London Tourist Board for many years and now at the Museum of London. An excellent guide.

– Denise Silvester-Carr

**John Nash, Architect of the Picturesque.**
edited by Geoffrey Tyack, English Heritage. 264pp. 90 illus. 2013, ISBN 978 1 84802 102 0. £50.00.

Geoffrey Tyack will be known to London historians from his study of the Victorian architect James Pennethorne, protégé and pupil of John Nash, the subject of this handsome book. Nash’s reputation has had something of a switchback ride. Bankrupted by his early efforts as a developer in London (see this Newsletter p.3), he retreated to Wales where he built up a practice including picturesque country villas; on his return to the capital he became a prime mover in the radical restructuring of the west end, but the patronage of the unpopular Prince Regent was a doubtful asset: by the 1830s Nash was reviled for the extravagance of the alterations to Buckingham Palace. His stucco frontages elsewhere were soon scorned by Victorian purists, and in part replaced by more grandiose creations by the Edwardians. Reappraisal of his contribution to London began with John Summerson’s pioneering biography of 1935. This handsome volume now brings together recent scholarship on this versatile architect. Nash emerges as a skilful opportunist, not only an adroit town planner but, as the title of the book emphasises, a master scene-creator both on a grand scale and in a more intimate picturesque manner.

The book contains essays by different authors, but builds into a satisfying whole, beginning with a useful biographical summary by Geoffrey Tyack, and ending with a list of Nash’s works. For Londoners the chief interest starts with chapter 5, where J. Mordaunt Crook unravels the numerous designs for Regent’s Park, in which Nash became involved through his appointment in 1806 to the Office of Woods and Forests. Crook interprets Nash’s first plan (1811) for the site as a rather urban and exclusive suburb for the rich. But the government demanded a park, and Nash pragmatically substituted a more picturesque combination of park, terraces and villas (although due to a slump only a few villas were built). The introduction of picturesque qualities (which owed much to his friendship with Uvedale Price, for whom he built a villa at Aberystwyth) is particularly pronounced in the two Park Villages, late small scale additions on the eastern fringe of the park, shown to be favoured by professional families, a blueprint for later Victorian suburban villas adopting a variety of styles.

Tyack, in the chapter ‘Reshaping the West End’, takes us on a fascinating walk, making excellent use of maps, drawings and old photographs to demonstrate how Nash transformed the great swathe of London between St James’s Park and Charing Cross into a grand ‘architectural promenade’, while M. H. Port explains the work on the Royal Palaces, disentangling Nash’s interiors at Buckingham Palace from later alterations. How was it all done? Some of the answers are supplied in Jonathan Clarke’s instructive chapter on Nash’s building technology, which reveal, among other matters, his innovative use of iron, ranging from top-lit galleries and skeletal dome construction to floor beams and window frames. This rewarding volume (of which only a few aspects can be singled out here) throws much new light not only on the architect but on London building activity in the early nineteenth century.

– Bridget Cherry


Our publication 121 (1978) was the late Priscilla Metcalf’s *The Park Town Estate and the Battersea Tangle*, unravelling the development of the Flower
family’s 70-acre estate in Battersea in the 1860s and into the ‘80s, directed by the architect James Knowles, jun: ‘houses… [that] represented middle-class ideals in reduced circumstances’. In Park Town, the ever-fascinating puzzles, Who built this house? Was it designed by an architect? were to a large extent resolved for us by Metcalf. Edward Muspratt was the principal builder until he was made bankrupt in 1869, largely because of the destructive intrusion of the London, Brighton and South-Coast Railway; after that many builders completed the estate.

Much more information was uncovered by Keith Bailey’s research into the builders of Battersea, embodied in *House building and builders in Wandsworth c.1850-1915* (Wandsworth Paper 13, 2005). He has now published his extended researches into the development of Battersea ‘from a mainly agricultural but partly industrialised parish into a finished suburb’. Only those who have themselves tackled similar problems in other parts of London will appreciate the laborious character of this work.

Bailey has identified 228 estates, responsible for over 26,000 houses on about 1090 acres. Clearly, these were relatively small estates. The Flower estate erected 1346 houses; even the Artizans’, Labourers’ and General Dwellings Company in 1873-82 only achieved 1279. The developers ranged from architects, surveyors and builders, through local tradesmen, lawyers and licensed victuallers to workers’ dwellings companies and the Crown.

The most prominent developer was Thomas Ingram (1831-1901), an agricultural labourer from the Fens, who established himself as a small builder by 1871 and then, in partnership with merchants, lawyers, surveyors and other builders, built up eight estates with a total acreage of 105 acres and 2195 houses. Almost all his estates had 99-year leases and ground rents of about £6-£7 a house. His practice seems fairly representative: he had a long association with an architect, William Newton Dunn, who provided the layout for several estates, and plans, though not necessarily elevations, for the houses also – Ingram’s son William was an architect and surveyor who was responsible for some plans ‘and presumably also for the elevations’. In Park Town, however, while Knowles had designed the elevations, Muspratt arranged the internal plan ‘and remonstrated against any interference… contrary to his own views, as being his own risk’ (Metcalf, quoting letter from Knowles to Flower). Ingram, however, on the 18-acre Nightingale Park estate for a middle-class clientele (note the name, designed to attract that class) went to a Wandsworth architect, Charles J. Bentley.

Most of the Battersea developers functioned on a much smaller scale than Ingram, often with fewer than 50 houses, on small parcels of land, ‘partly a consequence of the survival of large areas of medieval open-field strips’. Such developers were often bankrupted, because of their decades-long ‘persistent belief that… [an] estate was guaranteed to attract middle-class tenants, often in the face of direct evidence to the contrary’. To what extent they employed architects we still do not know.

Bailey has conveniently tabulated his material in appendices listing estates by date of commencement and type of developer, also furnishing biographical information about the developers. Here is the very groundwork of our built suburban environment.

*Bailey’s earlier pamphlet, *House building and builders in Wandsworth c.1850-1915* (Wandsworth Paper 13, 2005), is shortly to be republished, and will be available from the Wandsworth History Society, 119 Heythorp Street, SW18 5BT.

— M. H. Port

**Wandsworth’s Lost Fishing Village.**


The half-acre strip alongside the Thames, known as Waterside, some way from the main village of Wandsworth, offered a landing place distinct from the marshy ground elsewhere along the Thames. By the seventeenth century it was built up with cottages for fishermen and watermen. The evocative sketch of the riverside in 1852, which appears on the cover of this slim but thoroughly researched publication, shows a lost world which is recaptured here through analysis of the Allfarthing manor court rolls (now in Northamptonshire Record Office) and a wealth of other topographical material. Evidence of different kinds is combined to recreate a lost community, and a detailed picture emerges of local residents and their buildings from the seventeenth century through to the nineteenth. Its older history is obscure, but buildings appear on a map of 1633, and at the time of the hearth tax in 1665 there were 15 dwellings housing around 80 people. Many owned their houses; plots were subdivided and new houses squeezed into tiny sites; by 1708 there were 30, by 1800 50. Subdivision within families seems to have been especially frequent in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Records indicate a close-knit community with much intermarriage, in one case house ownership continued through six generations. The evidence of old views, descriptions and even some measured plans, reveal buildings from one to three storeys, a vernacular medley of shapes, sizes and materials; their appearance in Leigh’s panorama of 1829 suggesting alterations over the years rather than rebuilding.

A few fishermen and watermen are listed among the labourers and artisans of Waterside in the 1841 census but, with the pollution of the Thames, fishing declined. Houses began to be acquired by developers, the shore was embanked and much was demolished for Wandsworth gasworks. Today
the nineteenth century industry has gone, and new riverside apartment blocks dwarf the Ship public house, the one remainder from the earlier age recalled so skillfully in this study.

— Bridget Cherry


Here is another example of micro-history, but the fragment of London it explores could not be more different from the Wandsworth village mentioned above, except that it too has been totally transformed. The area in question is two-thirds of an acre lying between Gray’s Inn Road and St George’s Gardens. This space is now filled with recent educational buildings and new private flats. But the book is concerned chiefly with what was there earlier, an awkward triangle of squalid streets developed on brickfields from c.1810 on part of the Harrison estate. By the 1870s the tiny would-be respectable Wellington Square was being referred to by journalists as Cat’s Meat Square in recognition of its insanitary and unattractive character. The hopefully named Prospect Terrace, remarkably for London, consisted of mean back to back houses. They had damp cellars, attic rooms only 6ft high, and no proper main drainage. Evocative photographs of 1897 show the dingy three storey terraces with washing strung across their fronts. From the census records for 1841 an average of just under 12 people per house is deduced, rising to 18.3 by 1901, as a result of much exploitative sub-letting by ‘housefarmers’.

The details are skilfully set in the more general context of London’s slum clearance campaigns and the building of new schools (cleared sites for the latter assisting the former). Maps, photographs, census records and newspaper accounts (which exaggerated the number of poor Irish settlers) reveal the character of the area and its inhabitants. Particularly telling are the reports to the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes (1885), which included the evidence from the local Medical Officer of Health, Dr Shirley F. Murphy, who was forced to resign by the self-interested St Pancras Vestry, but later became Chief Medical Officer to the LCC. Sadly, the sturdy new flats eventually put up in 1910 by the new Borough of St Pancras only survived to 1940.

— Bridget Cherry


The framework for this local history is indeed uncommon. It takes five snapshots of the London borough of Hackney, one in year 12 of every century from 1612 onwards. Each is framed by a different author, and the project culminates (of course) in Olympic year. The approach is original, maybe even unique. It works extremely well.

Collage may be a better metaphor than snapshot, as the contributors interpret the brief generously, looking backwards as well as forwards and occasionally overlapping. They have set themselves a tricky task, given the disparate character of the borough – Hoxton in the south, an area regularly re-invented over the centuries; the quintessential nineteenth century suburb in the ancient parish (later metropolitan borough) of Hackney proper; the recently Olympified post-industrial eastern reaches; and greener and grander remnants of distant pasts in Stoke Newington and the north. To some extent the text ignores formal boundaries, for example by including the Old Nichol (strictly speaking in Bethnal Green) or is vague about them (as in Stoke Newington’s relationship with South Hornsey). As befits the conceit, all the contributions contrive to address in an engaging way the themes of leisure and, of course, sport.

The flavour of each is distinct. Fortunately, for a local history that aims to put people before buildings, we do not get the age-worn ‘famous local residents’ approach, rather a more nuanced account of the personalities who shaped or reflected the Hackney of their time. Margaret Willes, for 1612, gives us James Burbage and his fellow theatricals in Shoreditch; various luminaries from the court of Henry VIII, including Ralph Sadleir, who built Sutton House; Thomas Sutton, who didn’t; and Lord Zouche and his long-lost gardens. She also relies on accounts of horticulture and of the first ‘Olimpick Games’ of 1612, in Gloucestershire, to draw out more ordinary contemporary lives. Matthew Green’s expertise on coffee-houses and other popular places of resort informs a rollicking and often anecdotal account of the eighteenth century, which reminds us how parts of this suburb were urban in character from quite an early date. Ann Robey, in an outstanding summary of the impact of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century on the borough and its changing demographics, makes a similar point, and features some lesser-known landmarks in the development of the built environment. Lisa Rigg emphasises the social and political upheavals of the early twentieth century from a perspective that is national as well as local, including the contribution of national figures who happened to be Hackney MPs. Finally, in something of a *tour de force*, Juliet Gardiner and David Garrard masterfully sum up the enormous changes of the mainly post-WW2 years. This last chapter epitomises the special quality of the book: there is nowhere else within a single set of covers in which all of this first-rate material can be found.

Sadly, as so often, there is also the frustration occasioned by the lack of even a basic index. The publishers may also have done themselves a disservice by not footnoting the text: the discipline of attribution might have saved it from the odd
howler (Elizabeth Fry house-hunting in 1912? I think not. Not to mention the occasional conflation of myth with history.) Forget the caveats, though: this is, as we have come to expect from the Hackney Society, not only beautifully illustrated with appropriately uncommon images. It is also a very good read.

– Isobel Watson

**The London of Sherlock Holmes.**

The Sherlock Holmes stories were written from 1887 to 1927 and set in the years 1881 to 1914 (not all of course set in London). The book takes London locations, gives each one a historical description of around a hundred words and a few pictures, current and period, together with a note of the relevance of the location to various events in the stories. Some of the illustrations come from US libraries, but are not out of the ordinary. There are a few illustrations from the original stories.

You would not use this book as a London guide – it is far too superficial. It does remind you of the history and appearance of the London locations in the stories at the time the stories were set. It best works as a crib for tour guides on Sherlock Holmes walks who could reel off the events which befell their hero at points along the walk. Take the family and amaze them with your erudition!

– Roger Cline

**London Under.**

**London’s Labyrinth. The World beneath the City’s Streets.**

The puff on Peter Ackroyd’s book mentions his meticulous research and his bibliography lists most of the standard works on below ground London. Fiona Rule has a much shorter bibliography, notable for omitting *The Lost Rivers of London* by Nicholas Barton; had she consulted this work, she might not have led us to follow the Tyburn west along the Marylebone Road from Baker Street and then down Gloucester Place before returning to the true course at the eastern end of Blandford Street. She even mentions the Tyburn waters at Marble Arch (where there was the Tyburn Tree but no river).

Peter Ackroyd lives up to the puff and gives us plenty of facts and stories. Archaeology, Sewers, the Underground and Government secure facilities all feature. It is not clear whether he researched the sewers in person, but he delights as usual in spine-chilling stories. As one who has been down the sewers I like his quotation of the sewer being like a Turkish Bath with something wrong with it. His illustrations are legible but rather murky to suit their subject – Fiona Rule’s hardback book is much better in this respect at least (but at over double the price).

Of the three books I have reviewed, buy the cheapest and best. The others are best first borrowed from the library if you want to see what they have to offer.

– Roger Cline

**Remembered Lives – Personal Memorials in Churches.**

This remarkable little book should be owned, read and studied by all who are interested in English history, architecture, sculpture, or in the Anglican church, though it would be of use and value to men and women of other denominations and, indeed, other faiths. It is the work of the Revd David Meara, Archdeacon of London, and Lida Cardozo Kindersley, designer, letter-cutter and leader of the Cardozo-Kindersley Workshop in Cambridge since the death of her husband, David Kindersley, in 1995. It describes the purpose and value of memorial tablets, the lengthy and individual process of creating one, and gives a detailed and most helpful account of how to apply for a Faculty (permission) to set up such a tablet. It is illustrated with excellent photographs, is modestly priced (£12.00 plus p&p) – and may easily be slipped into a coat pocket.

Memorials from the Workshop may be found throughout the country; St Paul’s Cathedral and Churchyard have a proliferation of them, but many earlier such tablets are illustrated too, emphasising the long, if somewhat tenuous, tradition of commemoration. The presentation of the book is distinctive, the entire text being set in an italic typeface – 12 point Emilida designed by Lida herself. It is a beautiful and elegant design, but this reader found solidly set pages a little disturbing. This is the twelfth small book to be produced by the Workshop and the effect is less noticeable in those others where there are fewer unbroken pages of type. Get hold of a copy and see what you think. The book is too valuable to be missed.

– Ann Saunders

**Public Sculpture of Outer South and West London.**

Our November Newsletter included an article by Philip Ward-Jackson, author of Public Sculpture of Westminster vol. I, a book packed with fascinating historical background which sheds new light on some of London’s most well-known public monuments. Westminster 1 is No. 14 in the massive recording project of the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association: Public Sculpture of Britain. Outer South and West London is No. 13.
and demonstrates the diversity of a national project of this kind. The London boroughs included cover a somewhat arbitrary arc of outer London suburbia, stretching from Hillingdon in the north-west to Croydon in the south. The range of subject matter is extraordinarily varied, and the biographical notes on patrons and subjects as well as artists provide many rewarding details on local people and places, as well as on the sculptures as works of art. These notes can only touch on the breadth of subject matter.

Full length portrait statues, so common in central London, appear seldom; a rare early example is the gilded lead statue of Queen Anne by Francis Bird, 1707, on Kingston Market Hall (a predecessor of his statue outside St Paul’s). As one would expect, parks and country mansions yield an assortment of both architectural and garden sculpture (three-quarters of the 300 items in the book are in this category). The grounds of Chiswick take up ten pages, the riches of Hampton Court 33. Here the all-encompassing approach becomes somewhat bewildering, embracing Tijou’s screen and the astronomical clock, as well as indoor features such as carved staircase panels and fireplace overmantels. The Victorian and Edwardian periods contribute much eccentric variety; from Richard Burton’s tent mausoleum at Mortlake cemetery to the elaborately decorated Stanley Halls at South Norwood, given by the local industrialist and philanthropist W. F. Stanley, inventor of the Stanley knife (though it is sad to learn of the theft of many of the busts of national worthies).

From the twentieth century there are a few small scale statues (Alcock and Brown at Heathrow airport, by William McMillan, 1954; Fred Perry, wielding a racquet, at Wimbledon, by David Gwynne, 1984). These contrast with examples of low relief sculpture, fashionable between the wars, such as the winged wheels by Joseph Armitage on Uxbridge underground station, and with more stylised figures: ‘Fortitude’ by Phoebe Stabler (from a former YWCA at Acton), and a winged figure with child, 1954 by Anthony Forster, in the manner of London Transport HQ’s sculpture, on the Ministry of Pensions building at Thornton Heath – a rare celebration of the welfare state.

How much does public sculpture express the character of the locality? The introduction observes that the ethnic diversity of recent local communities has found little expression through sculpture, but local art schools have had an impact. Kingston possesses the most spectacular and provocative recent examples: the row of collapsed telephone boxes (‘Out of Order’ by David Mach, 1989) and the striking 170-metre-long ‘crinkle crankle wall’ by Nigel Hall (1990), a kind of urban land art which also forms a noise barrier. A wonderful book to browse in.

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At first sight this large-format, well-illustrated book resembles recent substantial guides to English Heritage properties, but this account of the ‘exemplary Palladian villa’ designed by Sir Robert Taylor in 1766 is not a guide but a scholarly account of the history of both house and park, and of the very interesting restoration works that took place from 1995-2007. Owned by Bexley Urban District from 1924, the house fell into decay and was closed to the public in 1970. A disastrous period followed, when the house was sold off to a private owner who absconded with all the fittings (fortunately later located and recovered). English Heritage managed to acquire the property in 1995 with the understanding that after repair the house would pass to other ownership. It is now in the hands of the Bexley Heritage Trust and open to the public. The radical repairs necessary made possible a detailed understanding of both the masonry and timber construction of the building and its later alterations, and the various phases of interior decoration. Appreciation of the latter was much helped by the discovery of a remarkable set of watercolours made c.1860 by Sarah Johnston, whose family lived there from 1806-63, and which record the character of the interior before late Victorian changes. The amount of evidence discovered made possible an accurate reinstatement of the house as it was when completed in the 1760s, with its exquisite fireplaces reinstated and its fine wall paintings cleaned and restored. The house is explained in the context of other work by Sir Robert Taylor, and some background is also provided about the first owner and builder, the merchant John Boyd and his family, the gradual acquisition of the Danson estate, and the money expended. This book makes an important contribution to general understanding of the Georgian villa and is a valuable record of the meticulous research and craftsmanship which has underpinned the renaissance of this remarkable building.

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Bridget Cherry
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

The 112th Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society was held at St Botolph’s Church, Bishopsgate on Wednesday, 11 July 2012. It was attended by about 200 members and guests. Penelope Hunting, Chairman of the Society, welcomed members and apologised for the late arrival of this year’s publication, which was held up at the docks.

1. MINUTES OF THE 111th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. The Minutes, circulated in the May 2012 Newsletter, were approved and signed.

2. 112th ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2011. The Report, circulated in the May 2012 Newsletter, was approved.

3. ACCOUNTS FOR 2011. Roger Cline, Hon. Treasurer, presented the accounts, which showed a surplus of £11. It was reported that the accounts have been approved by Hugh Cleaver, the Society’s Independent Examiner, to whom thanks were due. There were no questions from the floor.

4. HON. EDITOR’S REPORT. Dr Ann Saunders began by repeating the apology for the delay in the appearance of the 2012 publication. Its arrival was imminent, but problems with Customs had ensured that, for the first time in her 37 years as Hon. Editor, a publication had not been ready for collection at the AGM. The book was inspired by the exhibition, London, A History in Maps, held at the British Library in 2007 and curated by our council member, Peter Barber. The British Library had not been able to produce a catalogue to accompany the exhibition, and the Society’s publication, which takes the exhibition’s title, is intended to make up for this omission. Every single item from the exhibition is illustrated. The book has been written by Peter Barber; Laurence Worms has contributed biographical notes, with the assistance of Ralph Hyde; and an index has been prepared by Roger Cline. The publication, produced in partnership with the British Library, has been printed in China, and it is expected that there will be significant sales internationally.

The 2013 publication will finally rectify an omission in the Society’s catalogue of historic maps. The 1676 map of London by Ogilby and Morgan was published by the Society as The A to Z of Restoration London in 1992. However, William Morgan’s map of 1682, which he produced without the assistance of John Ogilby, has not previously been reproduced by the Society. It, too, will be in the popular A to Z format. It was hoped that the 2013 publication will be available in good time for next year’s AGM.

Dr Saunders encouraged members to spend some time looking around St Botolph’s, which was completed in 1729 to the designs of James Gould, working together with his son-in-law George Dance the elder.


Our 2012 Annual General Meeting was held in St Botolph’s Church, Bishopsgate. It was well attended and those present heard an interesting talk by Susan Meyer on historical fans: the church hall had been home to the Fanmakers’ Company for many years.

The Society’s 2012 annual publication, published in association with the British Library, was London – A History in Maps by LTS Council member Peter Barber, with notes on the engravers by Laurence Worms and edited by Roger Cline and Ann Saunders (Publication No. 173).

In September Mike Wicksteed succeeded Mireille Galinou as the Society’s Hon. Secretary and website editor.

This year we made our fourth and last annual grant of £10,000 to the British Museum in connection with cataloguing their Crace Collection London items. We also made the first of three proposed grants of £11,684 to the British Library for doing the same thing to their own Crace Collection. We made a one-off grant of £880 to London Metropolitan Archives to conserve a photographic collection of London views.

Our new website, launched in late 2011, was well received and thanks are due to Mireille Galinou, graphic designer Michael Keates and our webmaster, Chris Haynes. Websites should never be static: they need continual development and this happened during the year. Feedback from members is always welcome.

Ninety-three new members joined the Society during 2012. At the end of the year there were 1158 paid-up members and five honorary members.

As usual, Council meetings were held in January, April and September to discuss the Society’s publications programme, membership, finances and general administration.

Our Newsletter was published in May and November. Major articles included ‘London Squares: the pride of London’s planning’ by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, ‘London Explorations – 2. Three Mills to Victoria Park’ by Tony Aldous, ‘Recording London’s Sculpture’ by Philip Ward-Jackson, ‘The Conservation of the Bowen Collection of Photographs’ by Dr Caroline de Stefani, and ‘The British Library’s Crace Collection’ by Magdalena Pescko. They were well supported by a range of reviews, notices, news and notes.

The Society’s total income for 2012 was £36,223 while expenditure came to £39,772.
The figures below should be substituted for those appearing on page 19 of the main Newsletter

LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions paid by members</td>
<td>£21,456</td>
<td>£20,648</td>
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<td>Subscriptions from earlier years</td>
<td>£20</td>
<td>£58</td>
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<td>Income Tax from Covenants/Gift Aid (estimated for 2012)</td>
<td>£3,886</td>
<td>£4,395</td>
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<td>Total subscription income</td>
<td>£25,362</td>
<td>£25,101</td>
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<td>Profit from sales of Publications</td>
<td>£7,806</td>
<td>£6,751</td>
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<td>Interest received</td>
<td>£735</td>
<td>£407</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant: Scouloudi Foundation</td>
<td>£1,250</td>
<td>£1,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sundry donations</td>
<td>£1,071</td>
<td>£962</td>
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<td>Total Income for the year</td>
<td>£36,224</td>
<td>£34,472</td>
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<td>Deficit for the year (Surplus in 2011)</td>
<td>£3,538</td>
<td>£11</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Members’ subscription publications</td>
<td>£2,652</td>
<td>£3,418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Printing (see note)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Distribution</td>
<td>£6,579</td>
<td>£3,520</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision for next year’s publication</td>
<td></td>
<td>£14,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total cost of members’ publications</td>
<td>£9,231</td>
<td>£14,102</td>
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<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>£4,184</td>
<td>£4,270</td>
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<td>Website, re-done in 2011</td>
<td>£120</td>
<td>£1,161</td>
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<td>AGM</td>
<td>£1,210</td>
<td>£2,007</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Publications Storage and Service</td>
<td>£2,463</td>
<td>£2,610</td>
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<td>Total Administration Costs</td>
<td>£7,977</td>
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<td>Grant to British Museum (2009-12)</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant to British Library (2012-14)</td>
<td>£11,684</td>
<td>£–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant to LMA (one-off)</td>
<td>£880</td>
<td>£–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure for the year</td>
<td>£39,772</td>
<td>£34,461</td>
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BALANCE SHEET 31 December 2012

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money in Bank &amp; National Savings</td>
<td>£173,909</td>
<td>£186,194</td>
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<td>Advance payments</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>£702</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of Society’s stock of publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stock at end of previous year</td>
<td>£13,659</td>
<td>£17,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additions to stock</td>
<td>£3,064</td>
<td>£2,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Value of publications sold</td>
<td>£7,806</td>
<td>£6,751</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of stock at year end</td>
<td>£8,917</td>
<td>£13,659</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>£183,276</td>
<td>£200,555</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overseas members’ postage</td>
<td>£175</td>
<td>£120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions paid in advance</td>
<td>£4,932</td>
<td>£4,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for future publication</td>
<td></td>
<td>£14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>£5,107</td>
<td>£18,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Worth of the Society</td>
<td>£178,169</td>
<td>£181,667</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in net worth

| Previous year’s net worth               | £181,667 | £181,656 |
| Deficit for the year (Surplus for 2011)  | £3,538 | £11 |
| End of year net worth                   | £178,119 | £181,667 |

The negative printing cost figure occurs 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. Please address any serious concerns to the Treasurer before the AGM.
The officers of the
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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.

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