The 115th Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society will be held on Monday 6 July 2015 in the Cadogan Hall at 5 Sloane Terrace, SW1 for details, see pp. i-iv in the centre of this Newsletter

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2015 publications and our Editor

This year’s publications, which will be ready for collection at the AGM, will be the last to be produced by our Hon. Editor, Ann Saunders, before her well-deserved retirement. There will be a presentation to Ann at the AGM and an appreciation of her work will be found below. If any members would like to contribute or to send their good wishes please write your message on a card (or sheet of paper not larger than A5) which can be included in a presentation scrapbook, to reach the Hon. Treasurer, Roger Cline, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SH, before 6 June.

This is the year for another volume of the Record which, as seasoned members will know, is published roughly every five years. Volume 31, LTS publication no.176 will be a bumper number. Our editor has somehow found time to contribute two essays demonstrating the breadth of her interests – on the fiasco of the Triumphal Arches prepared for King James I and VI in 1604, and on William’s Farm, Regent’s Park. A galaxy of distinguished scholars offer contributions ranging from information on the metropolis gleaned from medieval legal records, to discussion of Henry VII’s almshouses, Inigo Jones’s ceilings and Roman baroque in London. There are essays on London homes of eighteenth century MPs, and stories of individual sites in the City. Greater London is not forgotten, with new evidence about the Chiswick enclosure map, and an account of the Finchley obelisk to the radical leader Major Cartwright. Surely something to interest everyone. And there will be the extra treat of an additional publication, a facsimile of Richard Morris’s 1830 panorama of Regents Park, with an illustrated essay placing it in its historical context, for which we are indebted to our member Geoffrey Tyack.

Anyone wishing to be reminded of past publications will find a complete list on our website, the section dealing with the Record includes contents lists for all the past issues. Observant members may notice some changes to this Newsletter. Following discussion after the last AGM, with advice from our helpful printers, we are experimenting with a paper that is lighter in both weight and colour, in the hope that it will benefit illustrations and keep postage costs down. The material for the AGM is printed on an inset of four pages in the centre of this Newsletter.
Ann Saunders – an appreciation

Ann Saunders has been Hon. Editor of the London Topographical Society for a remarkable 40 years. During that time she has, through her energy, enthusiasm and commitment, been largely responsible for steering the Society to its current strong position.

Ann was part of the new team that took over during and after a very difficult couple of years that culminated in 1974 with the death of Marjorie Honeybourne, who had combined the roles of Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Editor. Ann (who had been only recently co-opted on to the Council) became Hon. Editor, joining Peter Jackson (Chairman), Stephen Marks (Hon. Secretary) and Anthony Cooper (Hon. Treasurer).

When I rather timidly volunteered to take over the vacant position of Publications Secretary in 1978, I found that I had joined the nicest and most interesting group of people you could hope to meet and Ann kept a motherly eye on the Council, the membership and the general wellbeing of the Society. Going to Ann and Bruce’s house for supper of shepherd’s pie may not have had quite the social cachet of Jeffrey Archer’s, but I am sure it was much more enjoyable.

At the heart of Ann’s achievement, and at the heart of the Society, are its publications. Since becoming editor in 1975, Ann has overseen the publication of nearly 60 books, maps, plans, views and other items. During that time she has shouldered a considerable part of authorship as well, together with Ralph Hyde and Peter Jackson in particular.

Ann would bring to Council meetings a cornucopia of ideas for publications, often stretching for years into the future. Her amazing range of contacts has not only filled the five-yearly Record with articles but also come up with exactly the right person to write the necessary introductory text for maps and the like. She has also been very successful at raising funds from City Companies and other charitable bodies towards the cost of publications. This has helped make otherwise too-expensive publications possible, or allowed more and better illustrations.

Some of the publication projects took many years to realise, but Ann worked tirelessly to bring them to fruition, often having to badger authors to meet agreed deadlines, or source the necessary illustrations herself. Three projects stand out in my memory as having required immense tact, patience and hard work: the LCC Bomb Damage Maps book, Felix Barker and Peter Jackson’s Pleasures of London and, most recently, Peter Barber’s London – A History in Maps.

In principle, the Society concentrates on publications that would not attract a commercial publisher. In spite of this, many have proved to be highly profitable, starting with the Rhinebeck panorama. Its astonishing overnight success triggered a virtuous circle of bigger budgets financing better publications, attracting more members and permitting even more lavish productions.

Ann’s contribution has gone far beyond her editorial role. Her contacts have helped people the Council with useful and effective officers. And then there is the AGM, which seems to me to encapsulate Ann’s skills and personality. Over the years she has helped to identify, and negotiate our way into, a series of wonderful locations – who can forget St James’s Palace, Freemasons’ Hall, the Banqueting House or Mansion House? In my days as Hon. Secretary, she would always come with me on reconnaissance visits to possible places to check their seating capacity, catering possibilities, environment and prices.

But that is nothing to the day itself when many hundreds of publications have to be delivered by the printer precisely on time to the chosen location and distributed to the expectant members. With the exception of one year, when the vital consignment was held up by the Customs, Ann’s planning has always triumphed.

The AGM has surely done more than anything to turn us from being a just a learned society into something much more like a happy family. Our annual get-together is above all about fun, with a remarkably high proportion of the membership crammed, as often as not, into an interesting building with free food and drink, especially lavish in the days of Joyce and Donald Cumming, as well as talks and the annual publication(s) to take home and enjoy. Ann’s regular calls to the membership for contributions of cakes and other goodies were a regular feature of the Newsletter until numbers coming to the AGM started to swamp the ability of individuals to cope. Nevertheless, the AGM is always notable for the enthusiastic way in which members join in to help distribute publications, as well as food and drink if required.

Ann’s huge contribution to the LTS is just one part of a long career of scholarly research into London’s history, going back to the days when, as Ann Cox-Johnson, she worked at St Marylebone Library. This and her PhD thesis led to a book on Regent’s Park (1969), and a study on the Regent’s Park villas. Revision of London volumes in Arthur Mee’s King’s England series (1972 and 1975) was followed by her masterly and monumental Art and Architecture of London (1984). The City of London has been a special interest: two books on St Paul’s cathedral (2001, 2012), joint authorship of The History of the Merchant Taylors’ Company and contributions as well as editorial work on the comprehensive LTS volume on The Royal Exchange (1997).
Ann was Hon. Editor of the Costume Society from 1967 to 2008. In recognition of her work, she has been become an honorary fellow of University College London, was elected a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Horners, and, in the 2002 New Year honours, was awarded an MBE as historian and as Hon. Editor of both societies.

What stands out is that Ann is a warm and kindly person, who sees the very best in both people and places. I have been lucky to work with her over three decades – and the Society is lucky to have had her as its editor for even longer.

– Patrick Frazer

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Notes and News

We are sad to report the recent deaths of two of our members, our Vice President Elspeth Veale, and Ken Gay, President of Hornsey Historical Society. There will be obituaries in the November Newsletter.

Rescuing Tallis LTS members can enjoy their own well-produced copy of John Tallis’s London Street Views (1838-40, with later additions), which we published in 2002, but the condition of the original editions is another story. Guildhall Library has one of the finest collections of these, including some rare ‘variants’; it is believed to be the only complete collection available in a public library. Some of the Tallis collection is in original parts each retaining the original wrapper. Many of these parts require conservation and stabilisation as well as improved boxing, and cannot be shown to the public. The LTS has made a grant to employ a conservation specialist to carry out the work necessary. The aim is to achieve a collection that can be made available to the public for consultation in the library and be suitable for exhibition. The progress of the conservation work will be documented on the website with ‘before’ and ‘after’ images, and we hope to report on progress in a future Newsletter.

Transforming Topography is the new (provisional) name for a website being developed by the British Library as part of its online learning programme. A new post of research curator is being created to work on this, focusing especially on King George III’s Topographical Collection. (See British Museum website for more details.)

The Sir John Soane Museum in Lincoln’s Inn Fields is completing the refurbishment of its second floor, returning it from offices to Soane’s original arrangement, a highly ingenious use of limited space, with his private suite of bedroom and bathroom at the back, and his model room in the front room, all authentically recreated with the help of detailed contemporary records. Public access will be possible this summer; for details see the Soane website (Soane.org). There will be an article on the subject in the next Newsletter.

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Exhibitions and Events

London Squares Weekend. 13-14 June. A wonderful opportunity to explore the variety of London’s open spaces, including many not usually accessible to the public. Tickets £10. See www.opensquares.com.

London Parks and Gardens Trust. Summer lecture. Wednesday 24 June, 6.30pm. Twenty-one years and 150 million. The National Lottery’s Impact on London Parks and Gardens. The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road SE1 7LB. See also the LPGT website for details of their guided walks.

Open House London Weekend of 19 – 20 September 2015. Now in its 23rd consecutive year of offering free public access to buildings and places of interest that are normally closed to the public or that charge for entry.

Since 2011, it has been including engineering as well as architectural structures, in conjunction with the Institution of Civil Engineers. In 2014, it succeeded in opening 865 places to visit. The 2015 programme will be available in August.

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Circumspice

How well do you know London? Where is this? Answer on p.15
Miscellanea

The Guildhall Art Gallery has celebrated fifteen years in its purpose-built gallery next to Guildhall with a rehang of its rich collection of Victorian paintings, a special interest of Sonia Solicari, principal curator since 2010. These have been reorganised under themes: Home, Beauty, Faith, Leisure, Work, Love, Imagination – groupings which underline their thought-provoking, often sternly moral messages, and enjoyably demonstrate the story-telling abilities as well as the artistic skills of their creators. There is also a section on London topography; from January to April this was amplified by a special exhibition celebrating 120 years of Tower Bridge. Early designs, and views of the bridge under construction contrasted with early twentieth century paintings by marine artists, who included the bridge as a stately backdrop to the then busy shipping scenes in the Pool of London; more recent works focused on the bridge as an icon for London, ending with a specially commissioned work by the Ecuadorian New Expressionist Mentor Chico. For images see City of London Guildhall gallery website.

Canaletto: Celebrating Britain 14 March 2015 – 7 June 2015
Not in London, but with much about London. This exhibition is at Compton Verney Gallery, a country house in Warwickshire well worth a visit. It is the first time that these magnificent paintings and drawings by Canaletto have been brought together, including examples from private collections, to provide an overview of the artist’s work created during his visit to Britain between 1746 and 1755. Canaletto’s vision of London, with its emphasis on the Thames, was a significant influence on later topographical artists; his topical mid-eighteenth century subjects included the old and new Horseguards and the brand new Westminster Bridge.

Sculpture Victorious, Tate Britain 25 February – 25 May 2015
London’s public monuments and Victorian buildings demonstrate that a desire for both ornament and personal commemoration played an important part in the new industrial age. This display is most enlightening about the new techniques and materials which helped to make sculpture a significant ingredient of Victorian art. The Great Exhibition was an influential catalyst. Both Gothic and classical styles were disseminated by means of measuring machines which enabled speedy reproductions in different sizes, creating a market for small scale copies. Electroplating made it possible to simulate bronze (the Magna Carta barons in the House of Lords are of zinc coated with a copper solution). The exhibition includes extraordinary virtuoso works in all manner of materials, ranging from Minton’s colourful majolica elephant to the majestic black and white figure of Dame Alice Owen by George Frampton, from the school which she founded, created from marble, alabaster, bronze paint and gilding.

Bonaparte and the British: prints and propaganda in the age of Napoleon. British Museum, 5 February – 16 August 2015, accompanied by a catalogue by Tim Clayton and Sheila O’Connell (256 pp., 221 colour illustrations), £25.
Our member Sheila O’Connell, curator of the Napoleon Exhibition at the British Museum, explains its special relevance for London.
It may seem strange to be mentioning an exhibition about Napoleon in the London Topographical Society Newsletter. The Emperor General never made it to Britain, let alone to London, although he assembled armies of invasion on the French coast of the Channel in 1798 and in 1803. But the exhibition – mainly drawn from the resources of the British Museum’s Department of Prints and Drawings – isn’t only about Napoleon, it is also about the London printmakers and publishers who produced enormous quantities of visual propaganda to denigrate him and to boost morale at home.
There are views of London in the exhibition, but they have no claims to accuracy. The large cheap etching showing Nelson’s funeral procession approaching St Paul’s should not be taken as evidence of the streetscape in January 1806. In his view of William Bullock’s London Museum, Piccadilly, George Cruikshank’s concern was not to give a record of the interior of this fascinating establishment, but rather to show the London populace swarming like bees over Napoleon’s carriage captured after Waterloo. Something closer to truth is probably to be seen on two pieces of transfer-printed pottery, both based on the same print, showing an imaginary scene where ‘Little Boney’ stands outside the shop of Samuel William Fores on the corner of Piccadilly and Sackville Street pointing at a print of Bank of England displayed in the window and asking a large armed volunteer if he can have it. It is likely that the shop bears at least some resemblance to Fores’s.
If the exhibition does not provide images of London, its topography is, however, reflected in the workings of the print trade: Hannah Humphrey selling sophisticated prints by James Gillray to the elite from her shop in St James’s Street; Piercy Roberts and Thomas Tegg selling cheaper products to a wider market in the City. In the Strand Rudolph Ackermann’s print-shop window displayed spectacular transparencies – painted cloths illuminated by gas-light. A print in the exhibition reproduces a transparency celebrating Napoleon’s defeat at Leipzig in 1813 and another representing his fall after Waterloo where General Blücher drives him off as Wellington escorts Louis XVIII to the French throne.
Prints in the exhibition emerge from a thriving industry and the booming market encouraged many newcomers. John Brydon of the Looking-Glass and Print Warehouse, Charing Cross, was a respected carver and frame-maker, as well as offering to furnish funerals, but he invested in the production of a series of fine prints of the battle of the Nile based on drawings by a naval officer who was present; Stampa & Son of Leather Lane, also manufacturers of picture-frames and looking-glasses, went down market with a number of cheap mezzotints commemorating the death of Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar. There were also young men for whom artistic careers began with Napoleonic subjects: John Cawse produced lively caricatures for Fores, and went on to exhibit portraits at the Royal Academy for 40 years; John Lewis Marks, who shows a cheery Napoleon sailing to France from Elba in 1815 accompanied by Death and the Devil, became a publisher in his own right in Long Lane, Smithfield. Eventually most successful of all was Charles Eastlake who became President of the Royal Academy and the first Director of the National Gallery; Eastlake’s career got off to a fine start in late July 1815 when he was among the crowds who rowed out to see the former emperor standing on the deck of the Bellerophon on Plymouth Sound as he awaited exile to St Helena (he was not allowed to set foot on shore). The portrait that Eastlake painted from sketches drawn on the spot earned him 1,000 guineas and he was, furthermore, astute enough to publish a print based on it; the profit allowed him to spend several years studying and cultivating influential patrons in Rome.

Paper Peepshows
Ralph Hyde introduces a new book on a fascinating collection, available as a special offer to members.

Peepshows were introduced in the mid-eighteenth century by Martin Engelbrecht in Augsburg. They called for a long wooden cabinet designed for the purpose, incorporating a viewing lens and sometimes a mirror. In the 1820s peepshows made entirely of paper appeared on the scene more or less at the same moment in Vienna, London and Paris. The clumsy cabinet was no longer needed. The new peepshow was equipped with paper bellows so it could be expanded or contracted in a trice. Paper peepshows were light; they were...
comparatively cheap and they fitted neatly into the pocket.

The format lent itself to a wide variety of subjects: to coronations and to state visits and funerals, to pleasure gardens, to trips up river and to the ceremonial openings of new railways, to distant views of cities and to tourist landmarks. They were produced universally. New ones are still appearing today. As far as London is concerned, dozens were published of the Thames Tunnel and the Crystal Palace, but there are also peepshows of St Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Egyptian Hall, Regent’s Park, the London Missionary Society’s museum in Blomfield Street, Vauxhall Gardens, the Adelphi Theatre, Fleet Street, Tobacco Dock, and so on.

Over the last 40 years, our member Jonathan Gestetner and his wife Jacqueline have collected 370 of these paper peepshows. Theirs is an astonishingly and uniquely comprehensive collection. All have now been painstakingly catalogued by Ralph Hyde. The resulting profusely illustrated and fascinating volume, which also tells the history of paper peepshow phenomenon, will be appearing at the end of March 2015. Towards the close of the year the Gestetners’ peepshow collection will be gifted to the V&A.

This book will be selling for £45. For LTS members copies are available at a special discounted rate of £37.50, free p&p in the UK (overseas rates on request). To order, please write to Antique Collectors’ Club Ltd, Sandy Lane, Old Martlesham, Woodbridge IP12 4SD, quoting LTSPEEP.

Bishops’ Tombs at Fulham

If you have ever approached Putney Bridge from the north (built in the 1880s. replacing an older timber bridge) you may have looked down on the churchyard of All Saints Fulham. This was the church closest to Fulham Palace, the Bishop of London’s country seat (which can be reached by a pleasant walk along the riverside). Bishops of London are known to have been buried in the churchyard from the fourteenth century onwards; east of the chancel is fine sequence of Bishops’ chest tombs, ranging in date from the later seventeenth to the late nineteenth century. These tombs are now in need of conservation; plans are afoot to repair them as part of a larger project to welcome more visitors to the churchyard and raise awareness of its historic interest.

Changing London

The western part of London Wall, laid out after heavy wartime destruction, used to be one of the most eloquent examples of the City’s post-war aspirations: sleek rectangular curtain-walled towers in a spaced-out march beside a new broad traffic route, with quite an exhilarating raised pedestrian walk which took you from Moorgate station, past an aerial view of the isolated fragment of the medieval Elsing Spital and battered stretches of the ancient city wall, to the Museum of London nestling in the angle of London Wall and Aldersgate Street. All that changed when the overweening bulk of Alban Gate (1988-92 by Terry Farrell) straddled the road way and blocked vistas from all directions. Since then the 1960s towers have been remodelled or demolished, much of the area south of the road rebuilt, and at time of writing there is a vast hole between Alban Gate and Moorgate, in preparation for London Wall Place, being developed by Brookfield Multiplex (architect: Make).
The deep basement is for a 12 storey tower, to be completed in 2017, already let to Schroders plc. The second larger phase, further east, will step up to 16 storeys, with a series of roof gardens. The height is less than that of the 1960s towers but the effect will be of denser buildings. (For more details on the new buildings see the website London Wall Place.)

Between the two blocks, at ground level, will be a new St Alphege Garden, incorporating two ancient relics. The name recalls a medieval parish church which lay north of the present London Wall and disappeared after 1540: a garden was made in its churchyard in 1872, and remodelled in the 1950s, beside a fragment of the City Wall. The ruin which lies further south is the fourteenth-century crossing tower remaining from the church of Elsing Spital, founded as a hospital for the blind by William Elsing in 1331 and later an Augustinian Priory. After 1540 its church became the parish church, was rebuilt incorporating the old crossing tower and renamed St Alphege (or Alphage, sources differ). The tower alone survived the war, preserved rather uncomfortably beside the upper walkway. The new garden is a welcome opportunity to provide a unified setting for the two ruins.

East and West of the City. The walk from Moorgate to the Museum of London may remain only as a memory. The success of the campaign to preserve the Smithfield General Market (see Newsletter no.79) is followed by the rumour that the Museum of London may become a future occupant. The proposal is welcomed in principle by the Victorian Society, as it could both secure the future of the buildings and increase the Museum’s visitor numbers. If the Museum moved away from London Wall, it would mark a departure from the post-war ideal of integrating the new with an understanding of the past in the heart of the City. One can imagine Smithfield, together with neighbouring Clerkenwell, becoming a consciously preserved ‘historic’ neighbourhood on the eastern fringe, while elsewhere, the towers of Mammon are allowed to march relentlessly onwards, encroaching ever further on Shoreditch and Spitalfields.

Currently debate is focused on the area NE of the City (in Tower Hamlets and Hackney) around the site of Bishopsgate Good Yard. A passenger station was first built here in 1840, replaced by a major goods station opened in 1881. The site lay semi-derelict after a fire destroyed the station in 1964, and was cleared in 2003-4. The remaining structures are the grand entrance gates and parts of a long viaduct. A proposal by Hammerson plc and Ballymore would develop the area with 600,000m² of offices and 1450 homes, including six towers of 28-55 storeys, drastically changing the character of the area. Opposition is being spearheaded by the youthful and energetic East End Preservation Society, founded 2013 – see their website for more details (facebook/eastendpsociety).

The Gough Collection in the Bodleian Library: Illustrated London

Our member Bernard Nurse, formerly Librarian to the Society of Antiquaries, has been working on the Gough Collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. He provides a preview of some of the topographical material on London, which he is preparing for publication.

The collection on British topography which the antiquary Richard Gough (1735-1809) bequeathed to Oxford University’s Bodleian Library is one of its greatest treasures. Gough had the passion “to know all that related to [his native country]’s topographical antiquities”: he had the wealth to acquire as much source material as he wanted; and he had a “zeal to serve the public” through publications of which Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain (1786,1796) is probably the best known today. He recognised the value of visual recording of past monuments and commissioned the most accurate draughtsmen to illustrate his publications. Probably only the King George III’s Topographical Collection, now in the British Library, exceeds the Gough collection in importance and extent.

However, such varied material, including manuscripts, drawings, printed books and engravings, copperplates and tapestry maps presents immense difficulties of access. Printed books are on the university’s online library catalogue (SOLO); the card catalogue of maps has been digitised and is now available on the library website, manuscripts are listed in the published and digitised summary catalogues. Individual prints and drawings are not easy to trace as they are mostly kept in large albums or folders with only a nineteenth-century manuscript list as a general guide or separate lists by scholars such as Jerome Bertram of images of church monuments as public catalogues.

The London items form a significant part of the whole, but one that is often overlooked by researchers who are more familiar with the rich and
increasingly accessible holdings of London libraries and record offices. As part of its outreach programme, the Bodleian Library is keen to make the contents of this collection better known to scholars and the general reader alike. A large-format publication featuring about 120 images of London from the collection and accompanying text is planned for publication in 2016. Gough knew London well: his family home was in Enfield, with another house in the City. Although he complained about the “spread of our overgrown metropolis”, by today’s standards, the built up area was comparatively small in his lifetime, and examples will be drawn from the present Greater London to contrast the town and surrounding countryside in the eighteenth century. A prolific letter writer, most of Gough’s correspondence concerns antiquarian research for publications, but occasionally he would write to a close friend with eye witness accounts of London events. These included reports of crime in Enfield, fires in the City and on London Bridge, the Gordon Riots, the effects of extreme weather conditions in the 1760s, opening the tomb of Edward I in Westminster Abbey and providing help for a parish apprentice misused by his master. It is proposed to add transcripts of these in an Appendix.

Maps and plans
Gough was particularly interested in collecting maps and plans. In 1774, he purchased the famous ‘Gough Map’, named after him, and recently re-dated to c.1375; it is the earliest to show the whole of Britain in geographically recognisable form and the first to show routes and distances between settlements. The London vignette is the most elaborate of all. One of the few new publications of a printed map of London in the first half of the seventeenth century was that sold by the Dutchman Cornelis Danckerts in Amsterdam about 1633. In the Gough collection is a unique version from around 1650, which extends the map’s coverage further west with manuscript additions. From 20 years later is the unusual coloured plan with pictorial elevations of Nevill’s Court, Fetter Lane, which Dorian Gerhold has researched for the forthcoming volume of the London Topographical Record.

Drawings
One unexpected find was a copy from c.1743 of an unpublished lost colour version of the celebrated mortuary roll commemorating the burial of Abbot Islip in 1532. The roll shows the earliest views of the interior of Westminster Abbey. Also in the Gough collection, are over 30 drawings of monuments in the abbey attributed to the artist and poet William Blake, c.1774-7, when he was apprenticed to the engraver James Basire. There are numerous other views of street scenes, country houses and churches etc but most unfortunately are undated and unsigned. Some record unusual details such as the notice in Canonbury warning the public that deadly “mentraps and spring guns are placed in these grounds”. One of a Gothic revival cottage in Belsize Park from c.1780 appears very like a section of the rear of the present Hunter’s Lodge, 5 Belsize Lane, usually dated to the early nineteenth century. Gough was a great admirer of the Buck brothers’ painstaking work in recording historic buildings and acquired several of their drawings including two for their prospects of Greenwich and Deptford. The large format proposed by the Bodleian should enable these and the five City and Westminster prospects to be reproduced with reasonable clarity.

Architectural drawings
Among the post-fire architectural drawings are two of St Mary-le-Bow and a design drawing for the central pavilion of Robert Hooke’s new Bethlehem Hospital.
Many of the surviving drawings of Wren’s assistant at Westminster Abbey, William Dickinson (c.1671-1725) are in Gough’s collection, including plans of 1706 of Old Somerset House. Dickinson’s plans are the earliest surviving to show the whole palace in detail and are considered very accurate. Gough also acquired many plans of Charles Bridgeman, the royal gardener, including some of Kensington Palace Gardens. Between about 1726 and 1738, he redesigned the gardens there with many of the features that can still be seen today.

Prints

Most of the engravings can be found in London collections but some are rare and Gough has made interesting comments on them. He never travelled abroad, but had a good command of French and, in 1775, edited anonymously two accounts of visits to London by Frenchmen, Estienne Perlin (1558) and Puget de la Serre (1639). The latter included a fine prospect of Cheapside on the occasion of the Entrée of Marie de Medicis, re-engraved by Basire for the publication. Gough could not resist pointing out that Londoners were not at all pleased to see her because of her Catholic religion. In his annotated copy of Dugdale’s History of St Paul’s (1658), Gough records a visit he made on 19 May 1783 when he notes the location of the only surviving pre-fire monument, that to John Donne, stored in St Faith’s chapel with the urn in a separate vault. He dates Moss’s view of old Somerset House to 1775 just prior to demolition, and says he took it ‘on the spot from actual measurements’. Among the rarities are engravings of the state firework displays that were a feature of late seventeenth-century London.

While there is still much editing to be done, the finished book should provide lovers of London with a unique, previously unseen collection of views of the great city.

– Bernard Nurse


Design for central pavillon of Bethlehem Hospital by Robert Hooke c.1675. Gough Maps 44. Fol.61 no. 119.
Using livery company records at Guildhall Library

Our member Dorian Gerhold offers some helpful advice for researchers.

Although most of the former Guildhall Library manuscripts have been moved to London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), livery company records remain at Guildhall Library and have to be consulted there. They contain much topographical material, but are not easy to use, and the purpose of this note is to act as a guide. The staff both at Guildhall Library and LMA are extremely helpful, but it ought not to be necessary for researchers to rely so heavily on their advice.

The most important of the records for London topography are those relating to the companies’ extensive property holdings in London, including deeds and leases, plans and surveys, rentals and the many decisions recorded in minute books. In some cases there are records relating to the trades concerned, and there is also much information about Londoners, especially in the companies’ membership and apprenticeship records.

The only livery company records at LMA rather than Guildhall Library are the relatively few items – usually maps – which were transferred to the former Guildhall Library Prints and Maps Department. These may be available online on Collage (collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk). The online catalogue indicates whether items are at LMA or Guildhall Library. Note that some companies have retained some or all of their records (see pp. iv-v in City of London livery companies, referred to below).

Items should be ordered at Guildhall Library by ticket using the old references (e.g. MS 7329/1); do not use the full, clumsy LMA references. They cannot be ordered electronically.

Using the online catalogue

The reason why livery company records are not easy to use is that Guildhall Library has virtually no finding aids for them other than LMA’s online catalogue, which has serious flaws. In particular, the information on documents is scattered across different fields and different levels of description, while any search using more than one word will fail unless all the words are in the same field. For example, searches within the records of a particular company cannot be made successfully by putting the company’s name and another word or words in the Search Terms box (e.g. ‘Armourers Bishopsgate’), because the item-level descriptions rarely include the name of the organisation. Even within the item-level descriptions, information is inconsistently divided between ‘Title’ and ‘Scope’, so simple searches for which more than one word is entered will often fail to find the relevant items. Never take ‘No records found’ as indicating that the records you want do not exist.

The online catalogue is nevertheless immensely useful, in three main ways:

(1) Accessing full catalogues of individual collections (but note that this function periodically stops working for long periods, and is not working at the time of writing). In Simple Search, entering the name of the Company and ‘minutes’, e.g. ‘Armourers minutes’, will usually bring up the record for the collection, though not the minutes themselves. (If that fails, use Advanced Search, put the name of the Company in the Title box, e.g. ‘Armourers’ Company’, and select ‘Collection’ in the Level of Description box.) Click on the title of the collection, and the next screen will offer, on the top right-hand side (if it is working), a red box saying ‘Catalogue’: click on that and then on ‘View Catalogue PDF’. The result will be a catalogue similar in form to a printed catalogue, though without any table of contents. Catalogues for collections can also be accessed by clicking on the title of any individual document in a collection and then on the red ‘Catalogue’ box. Having been downloaded they can be kept for future reference or printed. (When the catalogue function is not working, the alternative is to press the ‘Level Down’ button at the bottom of the screen and go laboriously through the various archival levels.)

(2) Searching within the records of a Company. First find the reference for the Company’s collection

Porter’s Key (or Quay) in 1772, from a plan book of the Fishmongers’ Company’s properties by George Gwilt (Guildhall Library, MS 21536). Porter’s Key was on the eastern part of the present Custom House site, and had been rebuilt by the Company after a fire in 1715. (By kind permission of the Fishmongers’ Company.)
(e.g. CLC/L/AB for the Armourers), either by the same method as above for accessing catalogues or by going to 'Browse the archive', which is offered at the bottom of the Simple Search screen. (Livery companies are mostly indexed, bizarrely, under 'W' for 'Worshipful Company', but the Vintners are under 'Vintners' and the Watermen, not strictly a livery company, are under 'Company'.) Then, using Simple Search, put the reference for the collection (e.g. CLC/L/AB) in the Reference Code box followed by an asterisk. You can then put other words, e.g. 'minute' (not 'minutes') or 'Bishopsgate', in the Search Terms box and the word or words will be searched for within that Company’s collection. If you search for more than one word you may still have a problem, as they will not be found if one is in 'Title' and the other in 'Scope'. Any plans transferred to ‘Special Collections’ will also not be found.

(3) Looking up known Guildhall Library MS references. In Advanced Search, put in the Former Reference Code box the old reference in exactly the following form: the letters ‘MS’, followed by space, followed by the reference as a five-figure number with extra noughts at the beginning if necessary, e.g. ‘MS 07329’. If the item had further numbers (e.g. MS 7329/1 and 7329/2), ‘MS 07329*’ (i.e. with an asterisk) should locate all the relevant items; ‘MS 07329’ will sometimes locate them and sometimes locate some of them and not others; ‘MS 07329/1’ will not locate anything. The same method can be used for any former Guildhall Library manuscripts.

Other finding aids

The enquiry counter at Guildhall Library has a summary list of the livery company records there (City of London livery companies and related organisations: a guide to their archives in Guildhall Library (2010)), giving MS numbers, which can be looked up in the online catalogue for more detail; it lists deeds and leases as ‘Muniments of title’ with no further information except overall dates. For pre-1666 records, Derek Keene and Vanessa Harding, A survey of documentary sources for property holding in London before the Great Fire (1985) (available on open shelves at L.60.1 at Guildhall Library) is essential, though some of the information on the location of records is now out of date. For a few companies there are detailed catalogues of records such as deeds, but these have to be ordered. Examples are those for the Vintners (MS 33963/1-3), for the Haberdashers’ deeds (MS 1996/63, Index) and for part of the Merchant Taylors’ archive (MS 34102). ‘Ancient deeds’ up to about the sixteenth century have often been calendared in detail.

The old typescript catalogues can be consulted on open shelves at LMA (not at Guildhall Library), but as items are listed in numerical order, by MS reference, you need to know the MS references to make use of them. They sometimes contain a little more information than the online catalogue. The old card indexes to the Guildhall Library manuscript collection can be consulted at LMA, but have to be ordered. The reference is MSUNCAT followed by the London classification, e.g. L.42.86 for streets; ask at the enquiry desk at LMA for the volume containing the London classifications.

Many of the apprenticeship records have been indexed in a series of volumes edited by Cliff Webb (series title: London apprentices), and in some cases (nine companies so far) at www.londonroll.org.

- Dorian Gerhold

A Question of Gauge

David Crawford explores the history of the northbound section of the Blackwall Tunnel, and discovers how the capacity of the Victorian structure has been increased by ingenious modern technology.

Weaving sinuously under the Thames, through difficult subsoil, the northbound bore of the Blackwall Tunnel is heavily used by traffic on the busy A102, including single-decker buses on Transport for London TFL’s route 108. Its ability to cope as well as it does today, despite the increased size of today’s vehicles, is an encouraging example of historic engineering infrastructure still filling an important role in cross-river travel, with the support of technology.

Now half of a twin-tunnel crossing, the original bore was built by the then London County Council (LCC) between 1892 and 1897 to meet the need for more Thames crossings east of the City. By 1880, all road bridges downstream from Chiswick were toll-free, but the two-fifths of the city’s population then living east of London Bridge, around the city’s docklands, remained under-served. (The Greenwich foot tunnel did not open until 1902.) The Thames Tunnel, now part of the London Overground rail network, had afforded a pedestrian crossing from

A no 58 tram from Victoria terminating in 1950 beside the southern gatehouse (reproduced with the permission of the Greenwich Heritage Centre).
1843, but proved too expensive to adapt for horses and wheeled vehicles. In 1869 it was converted for the East London Railway. In 1887, therefore, the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) Thames Tunnel (Blackwall) Act enabled the building of a new crossing, largely to accommodate docks traffic

The Board's engineer, Sir Joseph Bazalgette, designed a scheme with separate tunnels for vehicles and pedestrians, but work had yet to start when the Board was abolished in 1889 in favour of the new LCC. The chair of its Bridges Committee was William Bull (later the Rt Hon. Sir William Bull MP, Bt), who represented Hammersmith. The LCC then commissioned its own engineer, Alexander Binnie, to design a single tunnel wide enough for two lines of vehicles with footpaths for pedestrians. On opening on 22 May 1897, this became the largest sub-aqueous tunnel ever built, the central section 950m long, with a two-lane roadway just under 4.9m wide flanked by the footpaths (which have now disappeared).

Construction was by means of an early combination of two technologies. The first was the tunnelling shield, originally devised by Sir Marc Isambard Brunel, and subsequently improved by J. Henry Greathhead for the 1886-90 City and South London Railway, now part of the Northern Line tube. The shield was driven forward by hydraulic jacks and protected workmen who dug their way forward. The second was a compressed air working environment, already in use in North America and introduced while excavation was under way to keep Thames water from entering and delaying progress. It presented health risks and Bull, very much a hands-on politician, insisted on experiencing them himself against medical advice.

The internal lining was of cast iron ring sections, faced with glazed tiling on concrete.

At Bull's suggestion, there was a built-in subtunnel to carry piping and wiring, and allow repairs without stopping traffic flows. (At one point in his career, Bull was a director of electrical engineers Siemens Bros & Co Ltd, a forerunner of today's global Siemens Group.)

Externally stood the two ornate gatehouses, built as physical gauges of approaching vehicles’ ability to fit within the tunnel's headroom. They were not the first solutions proposed. In his commemorative album, now in the London Transport Museum Library, Bull says that Binnie, 'who like most engineers I find has little artistic taste' wanted to put sections of the metal tunnel lining at the entrances as gauges for approaching traffic. Bull rejected the idea as 'very ugly as they would, at a distance, have looked like two huge beer barrels'. Instead, he sketched, on a sheet of blotting paper, his idea for gatehouses incorporating arches of the correct height, with accommodation above for the resident engineer and tunnel supervisor. He gave the job of developing his design to the LCC's first superintending architect, Thomas Blashill.

_The Buildings of England London 2: South_ describes the southern survivor – of red sandstone, with hipped roofs – as an 'ambitious building with steep pavilion roofs and angle turrets of characteristic Art Nouveau outline. Pretty and progressive'.

_The Survey of London, volumes 43 and 44, Poplar, Blackwall and Isle of Dogs, pp.640-645, surmised that ‘the proximity of the East India Dock Gateway on the north side no doubt inspired Blashill to compete with it in architectural terms’_. As the illustration shows, the two buildings, the earlier designed by Ralph Walker, do, while in very different styles, complement each other quite neatly. But Blashill’s ‘inspiration’ was his hands-on employer.

Had modern traffic growth involved drastic physical changes to the near approaches, the Grade II-listed Southern Tunnel House, as it's now known, might have faced the same fate as its northern twin. This was demolished in 1958 to make way for a new southbound-only bore, to increase overall capacity. Most of the vehicles initially using the tunnel were dock and railway vans, and it soon became popular with local workers on both sides of the river. It was so successful that, by the time of its completion, the

Modern technology now effects the necessary pre-gauging (reproduced with the permission of VMS Ltd).
LCC was already planning a second vehicle crossing at Rotherhithe, as well as the Greenwich Foot Tunnel.

But, being designed for predominantly horse-drawn nineteenth-century traffic, the tunnel was soon being outgrown by the scale of twentieth-century motorisation. In 1937, therefore, the LCC decided to build the larger bore some 245m downstream, allowing the older one to carry two exclusively northbound lanes.

It remained, of course, too low for the larger vehicles that its twin was now handling, and bans were imposed on those that were overheight. But these bans were routinely being ignored, resulting in frequent tunnel closures to enable the diversion of offending drivers.

In a report dated 30 March 2011, TfL, which now owns the tunnels, noted that, although violating vehicles individually ‘take only a few minutes to remove from the traffic flow, cumulatively they led to around four days’ worth of unplanned tunnel closures’. It calculated that, for every minute that the bore is closed, ‘around 60 vehicles are prevented from travelling through’, creating queues on the approach road. On an average day, these closures could delay up to 750 vehicles. Previous proposed or executed gauging methods went from the ‘ugly’ to the ornate. The answer now was high-tech – the installation of electronic ITS (intelligent transport systems). This works in two stages. The first detects all overheight vehicles, directing those over 4m high away from the tunnel altogether; the second detects which lane vehicles are in. This is important because those between 2.8m high and the maximum allowed are required to drive in the left-hand lane, to suit the configuration of the bore. Those heading for the wrong lane are directed to the correct one. As a result, numbers of overheight vehicle incidents have fallen from a high of 135 in one period in 2010, before the installation of the system, to 26 between 01 and 31 March 2015. The new electronic gauge is thus helping the Victorian tunnel to continue to meet modern travel demands.

The overhead vehicle detection system uses roadside vehicle height detectors, traffic cameras and variable message signs – of the kind that give journey times or congestion warnings on motorways – for the early identification and alerting of non-compliant traffic. It has been installed without any physical impact on Southern Tunnel House, through which compliant traffic still flows.

LTS member David Crawford is the author of British Building Firsts and contributing editor of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) International journal. He acknowledges the help of TfL, the London Transport Museum Library, the Museum of London Docklands, the Greenwich Heritage Centre and VMS Ltd in researching this article.

– David Crawford

Remembering Dr Salter

Tony Aldous introduces sculptures commemorating a noteworthy Bermondsey family.

An old man in a Panama hat gazes towards the river, or more probably towards the little girl by the wall playing with the family cat. The old man looks less comfortable than he used to, when he was on a park bench with a back to lean against – but that bench wasn’t very secure and it was from there that he was abducted. Dr Alfred Salter – for it is his statue we are talking about – was, and is, a great hero in Thamesside Bermondsey. A prize-winning medical student at Guy’s, he eschewed a Harley

The former northern tunnel gatehouse with, right, the former East India Dock Gatehouse (reproduced with the permission of the Museum of London Docklands).

The commemorative opening plaque (reproduced with the permission of TfL).
Street career, choosing instead to work as a poor man’s doctor in the borough where, as a student, he had learned how the other half scratched a living – or failed to.

Quite soon he realised that what afflicted Bermondsey folk – appalling physical and social conditions – could not be cured by medicine alone. He became a borough councillor (first Liberal, then Labour), a member of the London County Council, and finally MP. He and his wife Ada, both members of the Labour controlled borough council, led a series of pioneering initiatives including a local health service free at the point of delivery; a huge campaign of tree planting in the streets which brought admiring visitors from abroad; and a programme of replacing slum tenements with garden suburb style cottage housing; a cluster of these still exists in nearby Wilson Grove. The programme was short-lived because both Whitehall and county hall considered flats ‘more suitable’ for the poor of Bermondsey. Salter first became MP for Bermondsey West in 1922. The returning officer who declared him elected was his wife Ada – mayor of the borough. He lost the seat a year later, but regained it in 1924. He then held it until 1945 when he stood down for health reasons. For much of this time he combined parliamentary duties with his medical practice; overwork certainly contributed to breakdown of his health. It has been noted by his biographer Fenner Brockway that three of Salter’s guiding and very militant principles – pacifism, republicanism and teetotalism – were ones most of his constituents would never have supported. Nonetheless they voted for him again and again – for the ‘good old doctor’ and for a good constituency MP who understood them and talked their language. At one election his agent, without telling him, put up posters which urged people to ‘Vote for good old ALF’. By next morning most of them read ‘Vote for good old ALE’. He was cross with his agent, but rather enjoyed the joke.

Salter died in 1945, but he was not forgotten. In 1991 a Thames riverside pocket park on Bermondsey Wall near Cherry Garden Pier gained a triptych of statues by Diane Gorvin: Salter, his daughter Joyce, and the family cat. The title: Dr Salter’s Daydream. The dream is a sad one. Alfred and Ada Salter not only lived among the community they served but sent their only daughter Joyce – known in Bermondsey as ‘the little ray of sunshine’ – to the local elementary school. It was there that she caught scarlet fever, from which she died. So Salter’s dream is one of happier times past.

The triptych was an immensely popular feature on the Thameside walk, and widespread the shock and resentment when Dr Salter – still dreaming – was wrenched from his bench by malefactors less concerned with his politics than his scrap value. A fund was promptly established to pay not only for Alfred’s reincarnation but for the addition of the one person missing from the little group, his wife Ada. The aim was to reunite them with Joyce and her cat; they, very properly, had been ‘taken into care’ by local authority. Despite the extra costs of security equipment, the £120,000 required was raised quite quickly: it came from various sources including contributions by trade unions and socialist organisations, but also £3,000 from the mighty Grosvenor Estates which is redeveloping the nearby Peek Frean biscuit factory site and wished to show support for local causes. £60,000 was raised; Southwark Council matched it. The Salter family was reunited.
The unveiling of the four statues took place in November last year, at a new and less vulnerable site further downstream on Bermondsey Wall. Speeches included those made by Labour council leader Peter John and the LibDem MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark, Simon Hughes. Both dwelt on how a gross omission had been made good by inclusion of a new statue of Ada Salter. She was, after all, a political force in her own right: Bermondsey’s first woman Labour mayor; dogged fighter for the poor of her borough and initiator of much-needed social services; originator of Bermondsey council’s ‘Beautification Committee’ which planted trees in previously barren streets and created new open public spaces where few had previously existed. She has her own memorial – a lakeside flower garden she campaigned for in Southwark Park is named after her. But it is right that she should be remembered with her husband Edward Soper, keeper of the Steeple, with his knife and grave your name, or, for want of a name, the mark which you clap on your sheep, in great characters upon the leads, by a number of your brethren, both citizens and country gentlemen: and so you shall be sure to have your name lie in a coffin of lead when your selfe shall be wrapt in a winding sheet: and indeed the top of Paul’s contains more names than Stow’s Chronicle’.

On 6 October 1623, the roof of St Paul’s was the place for great rejoicing. Prince Charles, now heir apparent since his elder brother Henry had died unexpectedly, returned home from his ultimately unsuccessful attempts to gain the hand of the Catholic Infanta, the eldest daughter of the King of Spain. London went mad with joy; the roof of St Paul’s was lit with torches, one for each year of Charles’s life. Those young enough to scale the stairs danced on the roof; the prince rode on to his father in Royston. James ran out to greet his son and his companion, the Duke of Buckingham; ‘the sweet boys fell to their knees’, James fell on their necks ‘and they all wept’. The clergy and choir of the cathedral sang Psalm 114, ‘When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among the barbarous people’. The citizens of London had no wish for an alliance with Spain, a Catholic country which, as recently as 1588, had sent the Armada as an invasion force – there was good reason to light up the roof with torches and to dance thereon.

– June Swann and Ann Saunders

Dancing on the Roof of St Paul’s

June Swann and Ann Saunders reveal some surprising activities at St Paul’s Cathedral.

Those sufficiently privileged – and sufficiently energetic – to ascend to the leden covered roof of pre-Fire St Paul’s Cathedral have left a curious reminder of such expeditions, which we find recorded in letters and diaries. They chose to have the outline of their shoes or boots cut round in the soft lead of the roof. An article by Paula Henderson in Country Life, 3 January 1985, describes how Christian IV (1577–1648), King of Denmark from 1588, in England visiting his sister, Anne, James I’s Queen, went on to the roof of St Paul’s and, “after surveying the rooftops, hee held his foote still wilest Edward Soper, keeper of the Steeple, with his knife cutte the length and breirth thereof in the lead”. Few years earlier, Thomas Platter, a Swiss physician visiting England in 1599, wrote: “On the morning of Sept 21st. I climbed 300 steps to roof, which is broad, covered with lead so that one may walk there. Every Sunday many men and women stroll together”. Another reference appears in Thomas Dekker’s The Gull’s Horn Booke of 1609, page 38, regarding going to: “top of Paul’s steeple. Before you come down again, I would desire you to draw your knife, and grave your name, or, for want of a name, the mark which you clap on your sheep, in great caracters upon the leads, by a number of your brethren, both citizens and country gentlemen: and so you shall be sure to have your name lie in a coffin of lead when your selfe shall be wrapt in a

– Tony Aldous

Circumspice (see p.3)

Not on dry land, but by now a fairly permanent feature of the London scene, Hammerton’s Ferry dates from 1908. It links the ‘Surrey’ bank of the Thames near Ham House with the ‘Middlesex’ bank near Marble Hill House – quote marks because both banks are now in Greater London and both in the borough of Richmond. If you come on foot or by bike, ferryman Andy Spencer will take you across for a pound, or 50p extra for your bike. The ferry runs daily from March to October, but in winter at weekends only.

Until the twentieth century it seems there was no opening for a ferry because all the land on the Surrey side was owned by the Tollemache family and strictly private. In 1909 the London County Council acquired Marble Hill House and its grounds and opened them to the public and a local man Walter Hammerton began hiring out boats. In 1909, with public rights of way opened up on the Ham side, he started a regular ferry service, price one penny per ride. This was too much for the proprietors of the nearby Twickenham ferry, William Champion and local grandee Lord Dysart. In 1913 they took Hammerton to court. He won, but they appealed – and the Court of Appeal found in their favour. That might have been the end of the matter: taking a case to the House of Lords was too costly for Hammerton. However a public subscription raised the money and the Lords ruled in Hammerton’s – and the ferry’s – favour.

In 1947, after 39 years of running it, Hammerton retired. It is now owned by Francis Spencer, with his son Andy as operator. Hammerton’s original
clinker-built skiff is now in the National Maritime Museum. The current ferry Peace of Mind came into service in 1997. Designed by Twickenham firm Thanetcraft and built in south Wales, it is petrol-powered and its hull is aluminium. Andy has ambitions to become a fully-fledged Thames Waterman. Currently his boat master’s licence limits him to skipping vessels carrying 250 passengers. The Peace of Mind carries only 12 – so that will do him for the time being.

– Tony Aldous

Reviews

**London's Sailortown 1600-1800. A Social History of Shadwell and Ratcliff, An Early Modern London Riverside Suburb**


London's Sailortown is the latest in the series by Derek Morris and Ken Cozens on the social history of London's eastern parishes. Shadwell and Ratcliff follow Morris's investigation of Mile End Old Town in the mid-eighteenth century and the jointly-authored studies of Wapping and Whitechapel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The 'social history' element of the book's title, which perhaps suggests an account of overall developments over two centuries, is somewhat misleading. Instead what we find is an extraordinarily detailed investigation of those who lived or worked in these two riverside parishes and the forces that shaped their existence. Local government, the waterfront and the London docks, maritime trades and networks, education, religion, crime and punishment are among the themes explored. Indeed the central thesis of this study, in common with its three predecessors, is that London's East End, at least before 1800, was not the desperately poverty-stricken, dark and dangerous district of popular legend. Rather, it was a hub of industrial, commercial and community activity, not lacking in wealthy residents as well as the poor, with mercantile links stretching across the world. The 'Sailortown' of Shadwell and Ratcliffe might be thought to be a local exception but, despite its title, mariners and those who directly served their needs feature surprisingly little in the book. As Morris and Cozens amply demonstrate, there was far more to London's so-called sailortown than those who went to sea.

Immense industry and research skill underpin what is in effect a compendium of information about Shadwell and Ratcliff, extending in some instances to the thirteenth century. Much of what is here was hitherto unknown. Wills, rate and land tax returns, parish registers, insurance policies, deeds and a variety of other primary sources have all been put to service in the effort to uncover the record of the past. These sources are the foundation of the many short biographies scattered throughout the text. For Morris and Cozens the history of place is people, their background and connections, even more than buildings; there are over 450 individuals listed in the index. The authors do, of course, recognise that such archival records are silent on many lives, but even so it is striking how effectively they have been able to exploit what is available to gain insight into the society and economy of the two waterfront parishes.

Another merit is discussion of relevant secondary sources, some fairly recently published and not always well-known, backed up by endnotes. It is evident that Morris and Cozens have a good grounding in the scholarly literature and also have a sharp eye for what more popular studies may offer the researcher. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading.

The strength of London's Sailortown in terms of its use of primary and secondary sources can, however, also create a problem for the reader. As Professor Jerry White notes in his preface, the volumes Morris and Cozen have produced, and this one is no exception, are 'labours of love'. It is their passion for their subject that has inspired the long hours of research in sometimes recalcitrant sources. No doubt the same enthusiasm encourages them to include at points details which are seemingly of peripheral relevance to the locality. They write lightly and well, but the thread of the argument can be lost and the overall picture obscured. Perhaps inevitably, given the scope of the book and the multifarious interests and connections of many of those identified, there is also some repetition of information.

Reading from cover to cover is in fact probably not the best way to approach London’s Sailortown, which is not to say that those who do so will not be rewarded by nuggets of the unexpected. The book will be an essential resource for anyone interested in particular aspects of East End history, such as housing, the role of women or crime; in investigating particular trades and occupational groups; in exploring the role of religious and charitable organisations. Family historians will no doubt be looking for names, but should also find valuable contextual information to illuminate the backgrounds of their East End forebears. Indeed in many respects this study seems to have been conceived as a reference work. Appendices include discussion of methodology, ‘Famous and Notable people’, indexes to people, subjects, places overseas and in the UK and Ireland, as also to streets in London and Middlesex, which are mentioned in the text. There are many tables. Lists in these include those in the West India business, those who supplied the Navy Board, jurors, ship chandlers, glass-makers and cheesemongers – a reflection of the diverse range of activities to be found in these two vibrant waterfront parishes.
London’s Sailortown 1600-1800, A Social History of Shadwell and Ratcliff is a valuable addition to the series. Published by the East London History Society in a large format, though thin on illustrations, at £12.60 it is undoubtedly a great bargain. But purchase it soon. Experience with the other three volumes suggests that demand will exceed supply, and Shadwell and Ratcliff may soon be hard to find except on the second-hand market!

Sarah Palmer is Emeritus Professor of Maritime History at the University of Greenwich. Her research focuses particularly on commercial shipping and port development.


Amberley Publishing describes the book as a ‘spectacular collection of images from medieval times to the present’: it is the sole selling point of the volume on their website. There are over 350 reproductions of images which come from two main sources – the author and Yale Center for British Art. I will return to the illustrations credited to the author, but the latter is welcome because some of Yale’s material is still little known in this country.

Books on artists’ London sell well – in the 1970s the extraordinary London 2000 Years of a City and its People by Felix Barker and Peter Jackson ran into several editions. Other, more recent titles, have been out of print for decades: David Piper’s Artists London (1982), Celina Fox’s Londoners (1987) and the Barbican Art Gallery’s The Image of London (both 1987), the Museum of London Paintings Catalogue London in Paint (which I co-wrote with John Hayes, 1996) or Creative Quarters by Kitt Wedd (2001, repackaged as Artists’ London – Holbein to Hirst). So this is a good time for a new take on the subject.

Unfortunately, I have found this publication extremely disappointing, for three reasons: the poor quality of the reproductions, the astonishing lack of basic information about the images reproduced and finally the complete separation of text and images. The final result is less ‘London A History in Paintings &c’ and more ‘A History with paintings &c attached’. Stephen Porter is clearly a competent historian but not one who seems comfortable with images.

The text, organised chronologically in the first half of the book and thematically in the second half, is concise and elegantly written – but rather dry, despite the nice quotes the author has included to enliven it. This may be because the text only deals with big historical events and not the stuff of everyday life. The text never refers to the images which are presented bunched up together at the end of each section, with captions. Not even when the book focuses on themes such as St Paul’s, Parks and Pleasure Gardens or Spitalfields, does the main text ever connect with the illustrations.

The captions are not always helpful. Take the plague and the Fire of London: there is no attempt to differentiate between images which are contemporary with the event and images that were produced decades later (in the case of Philippe de Loutherbourg’s Great Fire, 130 years later). The Yale version of the Great Fire is fascinating and barely known in this country. It is an early streetscape of London in colour! It gives a vivid rendering of London houses at a time when most paintings and prints were panoramic views from the river, often forcing artists to squash the fabric of London. Claude de Jongh is an exception: he painted London in brilliant detail and colour: but the reproduction of his Westminster riverscape is dull and it clashes with the gaudily coloured section from Visscher’s early seventeenth-century panorama of London which is also out of focus!

But there are real problems with the credits of the images. For instance, the stunning National Gallery painting of the Ambassadors by Hans Holbein is solely credited to Stephen Porter, presumably the copyright owner of the photograph. The caption makes no mention of the painting’s actual home, the technique is omitted and the artist’s name not indexed. In fact not a single artist is indexed in this book – an extraordinary omission – and the technique of the works reproduced is routinely omitted. This does make a difference: the series of Cries of London by Paul Sandby are unique works because they are drawings while Francis Wheatley’s Cries were popular images because as prints they were widely distributed. The author includes a great many of these Cries without ever giving a hint of why such images exist.

At times captions are awkwardly placed in the sky of the actual pictures – a final indignity in a book that never does justice to its subject. Such a pity!

Mireille Galinou


Henry VII stares out quizzically from the front cover: an intense Richard III is on the back, an early sixteenth-century work, the earliest known portrait of this much debated monarch. The price of this definitive catalogue may confine it to library use, but it is good to be able to welcome the publication of this magnificent volume, which has been many years in the making. It splendidly amplifies the only previous complete catalogue, which was made by George Scharf in 1865.

LTS Members will be familiar with the curious Diptych of Old St Paul’s, created in 1616 as part of the propaganda for restoring the Cathedral, published jointly with the LTS in 2004. The Antiquaries acquired it in 1781, a forerunner to a picture collection largely assembled in the
nineteenth century. This was boosted by the bequest in 1820 of the remarkable collection of early sixteenth-century portraits made by Thomas Kerrich, chief librarian to Cambridge University, who is the subject of an essay by Pamela Tudor-Craig. The early portraits play a star role but in addition there are a medley of religious subjects and icons, some fine portraits of antiquaries (George Vertue, William Stukely and many others), and not least, a few topographical views including two London subjects. The oil painting of Richmond Palace viewed across the Thames, based on an etching by Hollar of 1638, may have been commissioned by Queen Henrietta Maria to decorate one of her houses. The discussion of the painting of the Great Fire of London, ascribed to an anonymous Anglo-Dutch artist, is particularly intriguing. Conservation work revealed that there was heavy overpainting, probably in the early nineteenth century. Originally the picture showed a daytime view with the rising sun on the right contrasted to the city lit up by the fire. Overpainting transformed this into a more melodramatic night-time moonlit scene, in the taste of the Romantic movement. An introductory essay by Bernard Nurse on the collection includes details about its display at different times; a sketch by George Scharf of the hanging scheme in the former meeting room of the Royal Society, before the Society moved to its present premises at Burlington House, indicates that the Antiquaries then, as now, were properly proud of their collection.

– Bridget Cherry


Like London buses, after my review of Peter Hounsell's book on Rubbish in the last issue, another one has appeared, going into the general subject of Filth in more exhaustive detail – there are 40 pages of notes and bibliography. Besides rubbish disposal, Lee Jackson's book covers the state of the streets, sewers, cemeteries and houses, besides the fight for public lavatories and personal hygiene.

The main causes of London's filth were the horse and the coal fire. When this Society was founded there were 300,000 horses keeping London moving, daily depositing 1000 tons of manure on the streets. As London expanded, it became uneconomic to transport the manure to the outlying farms. Crossing sweepers would earn a tip for sweeping their patch of road, but before going off duty would sweep everything back to ensure there would be work to do again on the morrow. Less than 60 years after the Clean Air Act, we forget how the soot from coal fires kept our buildings sombre and our transport dangerous in the frequent smogs.

Recycling is nothing new. Entrepreneurs tried to persuade the City Corporation to allow street public lavatories which the promoters would provide free, hoping to obtain profit from the organic material which had many uses before the discovery of synthetic cleaning and treatment products. Street-level conveniences were subject to NIMBY opposition and it took 30 years before underground facilities were allowed and then only because the new tube railways had accustomed people to subterranean places.

The hope of profit was not the only motive. The Victorian age produced many social reformers who founded Societies for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor, Improving the Conditions of the Labouring Classes, Superseding the Necessity of Climbing Boys (to sweep chimneys) and the Abolition of Burial in Towns. The personal improvement efforts of Dickens and Octavia Hill are mentioned but not those of Gladstone, whose motives might have been suspect.

This is a comprehensive and to my knowledge accurate survey with a good analysis of how vested interests governed the improvement policies. It certainly makes one thankful for living in the Elizabethan present rather than in the Victorian past.

– Roger Cline

Vanished City: London's Lost Neighbourhoods


The never-ending search for a fresh approach to London's history has thrown up some unlikely volumes in recent years – crypts, gasworks, murderers' houses and faded wall advertisements, to name but a few. London guide Tom Bolton has come up with a book on areas of London which have passed under the public radar over the course of the last century – not just streets, not even boroughs, rather ill-defined sections of London which once enjoyed a vigorous life of their own. He concentrates rather heavily on the East End – Ratcliffe, Limehouse, Wellclose and Norton Folgate – but his range also encompasses such enclaves as Agar Town, Horselydown, Clare Market and the White City.

Each chapter is part tour, part history, interspersed with a scattering of rather bizarre photographs, including a whole section of out-of-focus snaps printed, for no obvious reason, in a bilious green tinge. Bolton has clearly done his homework, judging by the extensive bibliography at the end. It is gratifying to note the use of material from relevant fiction, thus including Iain Sinclair alongside Stow and the Survey of London for historical background. But the book lacks any kind of map, a curious omission for a volume heavily reliant on local topographical knowledge. It would be useful to have included small local maps for each area, such as the appropriate section from the LTS A-Z of Victorian London.
Bolton wears his learning lightly, and is never afraid of a good story – though the origin of Cripplegate is now thought doubtful, Ned Ward was not writing anything in 1781, decades after his death, and the London Dungeon has long since moved on from Tooley Street. The final chapter on the White City sits rather oddly with its fellows, since it only covers the exhibitions and sporting activities of the last century. Nevertheless it gives him the opportunity to display his knowledge of films and pop music related to London, as well as some quite obscure novels. Bolton has clearly picked a theme capable of almost endless sequels. If there is to be a next time, may I put in plea for historical illustrations and some decent maps. And, of course, there must be room for the Old Nichol, Tyburnia and Mesopotamia!

– David Webb


One way of enhancing one’s understanding of London’s topography is knowledge of what happened where and in an election year it seems particularly appropriate to remember that London has been the arena for many bitter political battles. This most informative book traces the history of a century of radical campaigning, from the political reformers of the 1830s to the anti-fascist marchers of the 1930s. The chapters are ingeniously interleaved with nine walks through relevant parts of London. Some of the causes described were national; such as the fight for women’s suffrage (the walk understandably focuses on Westminster); two chapters – on Clerkenwell and Bloomsbury – explore centres of progressive thought and discussion, and it is interesting to learn how many radicals lived as well as met in Bloomsbury. But it was the harsh conditions in industries and the inner suburbs which often spurred the fight for political and economic change. This book tells inspiring stories of the men and women who led such campaigns, people who had themselves often risen from extreme poverty and became celebrated as local heroes. It is not surprising that the east end features prominently: the striking matchgirls at Bryant and May’s factory at Bow, the struggles of the dockers led by Ben Tillett, the exploited immigrant workers in the sweatshops of Spitalfields, the extraordinary and triumphant story of the Poplar councillors led by George and Minnie Lansbury, running the local council from prison, where they had ended up after refusing to pay the levy to the LCC. South of the river in Bermondsey Dr Alfred Salter and his wife Ada, respectively MP and mayor, pioneered improvements in health and living conditions in the earlier twentieth century (see also the article by Tony Aldous on p.13). In Battersea there was not only John Burns, who fought (with some success) to make his borough, ‘a beacon of municipal socialism’, but also other less well-known progressive campaigners: the Barbadian-Irish John Archer, appointed mayor of Battersea in 1913, the Indian Shapurji Saklava, the first Communist MP, elected 1922, and the eccentric and energetic Charlotte Despard, who was also involved with women’s suffrage. The chapters interlock, as events happened in different places simultaneously; a time line would have helped to draw things together. Running heads to each chapter would make the book much easier to use, but there is a good index and a selective bibliography.

So what is there to see on the ground? The walks which follow the chapters are rather disappointing as armchair reading, as they do not comment on the physical character of locality or architecture, and there are only a scatter of illustrations. Strikes and demonstrations do not leave solid remains. The author is keenly aware that the changing nature of London makes it increasingly difficult to imagine the setting of the stirring events which he so eloquently describes. The maps indicate sites of birthplaces and homes, buildings which were used for radical meetings, some statues and plaques and the exceptional Cable Street mural. But the great London industries which created the distinctive nature of different areas and formed the relentless framework for so many struggles have almost entirely disappeared. The towering brick bulk of Bryant and May is now select housing in the gated ‘Bow Quarter’. In Bermondsey the jam, vinegar and biscuit factories have gone, only some exteriors of fur factories remain, and a few reminders of the leather industry. Battersea is no longer a borough; its progressive early workers’ housing survives, but the proud Town Hall is now an Arts Centre. Lack of interest in architecture has led to some lost opportunities. In Bloomsbury the walk ends with the present Mary Ward Centre in Queen Square, but does not include its remarkably original purpose-designed building of 1895 by Smith and Brewer, funded by Passmore Edwards, which remains in Tavistock Place (not Tavistock Square as the book has it). Interiors rarely feature, the bee decoration in Battersea Town hall receives a mention, but not the remarkable 1930s mural by Jack Hastings in the Marx Memorial Library on Clerkenwell Green, which depicts ‘The worker of the Future upsetting the Economic Chaos of the Present’ under the watchful eyes of Marx, Lenin and William Morris. One could suggest other additions. But the book makes a welcome contribution to a greater understanding both of the earlier character of different areas of London and of the people who fought for improvement.

– Bridget Cherry
The officers of the
London Topographical Society

**Chairman**
Mrs Penelope Hunting PhD FSA
40 Smith Street, London SW3 4EP
Tel: 020 7352 8057

**Hon. Treasurer**
Roger Cline MA LLB FSA
Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SH
Tel. 020 7388 9889
E-mail: roger.cline13@gmail.com

**Publications Secretary**
Simon Morris MA PhD
7 Barnsbury Terrace
London N1 1JH
E-mail: santiagodecompostela@btinternet.com

**Hon. Editor**
Mrs Ann Saunders MBE PhD FSA
3 Meadowgate Gate
London NW11 7LA
Tel. 020 8455 2171
*From July 2015: Sheila O’Connell*
312 Russell Court
Woburn Place
London WC1H 0NG

**Newsletter Editor**
Bridget Cherry OBE FSA
Bitterley House
Bitterley
Nr Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3HJ
Tel. 01584 890 905
E-mail: bridgetcherry58@gmail.com

**Hon. Secretary**
Mike Wicksteed
103 Harestone Valley Road
Caterham, Surrey CR3 6HR
Tel. 01883 337813
E-mail: mike.wicksteed@btinternet.com

**Membership Secretary**
Dr John Bowman
17 Park Road
London W7 1EN
Tel. 020 8840 4116
E-mail: j.h.bowman@btinternet.com

**Council members:** Peter Barber; Ralph Hyde; Robin Michaelson; Sheila O’Connell; Professor Michael Port; Peter Ross; Denise Silvester-Carr; David Webb; Rosemary Weinstein; Laurence Worms.

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