Notes and News

The 115th AGM took place on Monday 6 July 2015 in the spacious premises of Cadogan Hall, the former Christian Science church in Sloane Terrace, Chelsea. Minutes will be printed in the May Newsletter; officers and Council members appointed are listed on the back page of this Newsletter. The occasion was memorable for a presentation to our long-serving retiring editor, Dr Ann Saunders, who received a painting by one of her favourite artists (a Norfolk scene which Ann had chosen), a commemorative album compiled by Roger Cline with contributions from members, and a cheque thanks to the generosity of members. She was also nominated a Vice President. Members gathered from 6pm on the ground floor of Cadogan Hall (formerly Sunday schools for the Christian Science church above, now a concert hall). Owing to the later time than usual, it was an occasion for drinks rather than the customary LTS tea. There was ample room for drinking and chatting, and time to collect copies of Ann’s latest achievement, volume 31 of the London Topographical Record, packed with interesting contributions, as well as the bonus of an attractive extra publication, Richard Morris’s 1830 panorama of Regent’s Park. After the business meeting in the grand concert hall upstairs we were treated to an excellent talk by the Chelsea historian and architect David de Lay. His subject was the late eighteenth-century development of the area of Chelsea to the north of Sloane Square known as Hans Town, by the architect Henry Holland; little known, because most of it has been rebuilt, although the street layout survives. Our thanks go to him, to the Cadogan estate, to our chairman and secretary for organising such a successful occasion and to all those who manned the table and handed out our new publications.

Work is already in hand by our new editor, Sheila O’Connell, on next year’s publication, a collection of plans of London buildings before 1720, culled from many different sources by Dorian Gerhold.

Ann’s guiding hand will be much missed, but it is good news that she will continue to be involved as a Vice President. This year has seen some sad losses to the Society; this Newsletter includes obituaries both to Elspeth Veale, Vice President since 2003 and to Ralph Hyde, for many years a much valued Council member, who was closely involved with many of the society’s publications. His sudden death came as a great shock. The Council, aware of its declining numbers, has proposed three new members, Dorian Gerhold, Peter Guillery and Geoffrey Tyack, and we are delighted to announce that they have all expressed willingness to serve and will be formally nominated at the next AGM.

Dorian Gerhold is well known for his numerous
Elspeth Veale 1916-2015

Elspeth Veale who died in April this year was born on 6 May 1916 in the middle of the Great War. Her father was a Methodist minister and she and her sister went to Newland High School in Hull which she remembered with affection. From there she went on to King’s College London to read history and was awarded her BA in 1937. After a year’s training course Elspeth taught in girls’ grammar schools in St Albans and West Yorkshire but returned to London in 1946 when she was appointed to a post at the Skinners’ Company’s School for Girls in Stamford Hill.

This appointment was significant in determining Elspeth’s later career because she became interested in the Skinners’ Company, taught the girls about medieval skinners and began herself to explore the rich archive of the Skinners’ Company kept at their hall. Encouraged by the award of a one-year research fellowship at the Institute of Historical Research in 1950, Elspeth developed her research on the English fur trade in the medieval period into a doctorate which she was awarded by London University in 1953. Her ground-breaking book on this topic (published by the Oxford University Press) followed in 1971. Elspeth was one of the first historians to write a company history which looked not simply at the governing structures and physical environs of the company but rather at the ways in which medieval skinners actually worked in importing, preparing and stitching the furs. Her focus was on the craft and not the company, but in spite of this the company acknowledged her scholarship, paid her fee when she took up the Freedom of the City, escorted Elspeth to the Guildhall and gave her, she recalled, ‘a splendid lunch’.

In 1953 Elspeth had taken up a post at City of London School for Girls where she is remembered fondly by those she taught – not only for her historical insights but also for her stylish outfits in bright colours. Elspeth’s final move was to Goldsmiths’ College, University of London, where she became, in due course, the Dean of the School of Humanities. She continued with her scholarly publications which included an Historical Association pamphlet on Teaching the History of London. She always maintained her interest in London history and in dress and clothing, although after her retirement in 1977 she extended her scholarly work to include studies on the history of Wimbledon where she lived.

Elspeth was a great supporter of London history, not only by her excellent scholarly publications, but by serving as Treasurer of the London Record Society for many years. She also unobtrusively subsidised a number of London research activities. She was a regular attendee at the medieval London seminars at the IHR. She joined the London Topographical Society in 1957, and in 1980 played an important part in organising the Society’s 80th anniversary celebrations. In the same year she was elected to the Council. She was made an honorary member in 2008, and was also appointed a Vice President.

Her intellectual powers remained sharp until the end of her life and she never lapsed into sentimentality. On occasion she could be bracing, or forthright, but she was always kind, encouraged younger scholars and was willing to share her knowledge, and to learn from them. Elspeth had a wide circle of friends and a cluster of cousins and godchildren many of who spoke with warmth and humour about their friendships with her at the service held in April to celebrate her life. The study of medieval London history and medieval London historians have benefitted immeasurably from Elspeth’s purposeful scholarship and supportive friendship. She was an admirable scholar and an admirable person.

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– Caroline Barron

A copy of Elspeth Veale’s essay Matilda Penne: Medieval London Skinner, including a short autobiography and bibliography, was published in 2015, and is available from Skinners’ Hall, 8 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2SP for £3.
Ralph Hyde 1939-2015

The sudden death of our council member Ralph Hyde on 5 June will have come as a considerable shock both to those who knew him personally, and to those who appreciated his considerable range of publications on aspects of London maps, panoramas and paintings. This account will concentrate largely on his work for the Society over almost 40 years.

Ralph joined St Marylebone Library in 1960, which is where I first met him. On the amalgamation of London boroughs in 1965, Ralph moved to the Guildhall Library, initially as a library assistant, before his appointment as Assistant Keeper of Maps and Prints in 1970. He succeeded James Howgego as Keeper in 1975, and was elected to the Society’s Council two years later.

From the outset, Ralph was active in the Society’s publication programme, making his first major impact with the discovery of the Rhinebeck panorama in a New York suburb in 1980. Its subsequent acquisition by the Museum of London (it is not currently in display) was a sensation, and Ralph steered it through for the Society to publish. Felix Barker prepared a major feature for The Times and the orders arrived by the sackload from all over the world. It remains the Society’s all-time best-seller.

Ralph is particularly associated with the series of A-Zs of Historical London, beginning in 1979 with Elizabethan London. These were intended to be more user-friendly working tools than the full size facsimiles which the Society had been publishing at intervals since the end of the nineteenth century. Ralph worked on most of the series to date, notably Georgian (1982), Victorian (1987), Restoration (1992) and Charles II (2013).

Ralph’s interest in panoramas led to his organisation of the major exhibition ‘Panoramania’ at the Barbican Art Gallery in 1988, with an excellent catalogue. This was a sequel to one he had curated at New Haven’s Yale Centre in 1985, ‘Gilded Scenes and Shining Prospects’. He went on to publish ‘Barker’s Panorama from the roof of the Albion Mills’ for the Society, also in 1988, as well as a volume on the eighteenth-century town panoramas of Samuel and Nathaniel Buck (1994).

There was much more. Ralph edited Cecil Brown’s bird’s eye view of bomb-damaged London (2003), a catalogue of the ward maps of the City of London (1999) and a catalogue of the London views of the Stationers’ Almanacks (2010). Meanwhile he was publishing other works commercially or through the Corporation of London, including the sequel to Howgego’s catalogue of London maps to 1850, covering the second half of the nineteenth century and based on his Library Association thesis; a booklet on the Regent’s Park Colosseum; a survey of London watercolours of Henry Tidmarsh; and a history of failed architectural schemes for London (London as it might have been, with Felix Barker, 1982).

Still to come, for the Society, is a catalogue of London parish maps (probably 2018) which Ralph had helped to locate and coordinate (see p.5 of this Newsletter).

Ralph’s energy was boundless (and I speak as someone who was frequently called on to supply research and references for his publications); his retirement from the Guildhall Library just before the Millennium enabled him to devote himself full time to the cataloguing and research of the Jonathan and Jaqueline Gestetner collection of panoramas and optical toys. As is always the case, the task took much longer than anticipated, but it was gratifying that Ralph lived just long enough to see its publication in the spring of 2015.

Appropriately, Ralph met his future wife, Ruth Bollington, at Tooley’s map and print shop (now Daunt’s Bookshop) in the Marylebone Road, where she was working as an assistant. The writer has happy memories of a reunion of former Marylebone Library staff hosted by Ralph and Ruth at their Woolwich home some 20 years ago. Ruth tragically died from cancer not long after Ralph’s retirement.

A fuller obituary will be published in due course in the Society’s Record series.

– David Webb

Ken Gay 1923-2015

Kenneth David Gay, born in Stratford, West Ham, spent 60 years of his life in north London, living near Alexandra Palace. After a career working in the Public Relations department of the National Coal Board, he devoted his retirement to campaigning for and writing about his local area, while maintaining wider interests which included both films and London topography. He led many popular walks exploring his home ground of Muswell Hill. He succeeded Joan Schiwitzer as President of the Hornsey Historical Society and for many years was Chair of that Society’s Publications Committee; Hornsey’s impressive publications record owes much to his involvement. In 2011 his efforts were recognised by a Lifetime Achievement Award by the British Association of Local History. Among his own books are a succinct history of Muswell Hill, From Forest to Suburb (1988), also Muswell Hill, A History and Guide (2002), and Palace on the Hill (3rd ed. 2005). His memoir, Hand in hand with time (2009), recalled his experiences growing up in an East London suburb.

– Bridget Cherry

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Events

2015 is the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Michael Robbins, author of the invaluable Middlesex (1953) written as part of the, alas never completed. New Survey of England edited by Jack Simmons. Middlesex, Our Lost County is the subject of the 50th annual conference of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, Saturday 21 November 2015 at the Museum of London. The day will start with a tribute to Michael Robbins by the President of LAMAS, John Clark, and will include talks on Middlesex before Domesday (Pamela Taylor); Middlesex ceramics (Jacqui Pearce); John Wilkes and Middlesex elections (Robin Eagles); the Middlesex County Council (Charlotte Scott) and the recording work of the North Middlesex Photographic Society (John Hinchelwood). This year’s publication awards will be announced and there will be the usual displays by local history societies (including the LTS) – an admirable opportunity to explore work by local groups throughout Greater London. For booking and further details see the LAMAS website.

By the time this Newsletter is published there will have been a chance to remember Michael Robbins in a different way, as co-author of volume 1 of the magisterial History of London Transport, at a Centenary Symposium at The London Transport Museum, Covent Garden on 3 October. (T. C. Barker and Michael Robbins, A History of London Transport, vol. 1. The nineteenth century, 1963). Other tempting activities at the Transport Museum include a showing of the 1929 film Piccadilly, billed as 'a stylish evocation of jazz-age London', on Tuesday 1 December at 6.30. For details see ltmuseum.co.uk

Gresham College Lectures. The article on Sir Thomas Gresham in Newsletter 79 may have awakened interest in the College which he founded, which is still going strong, and has published its lecture programme for 2015-6. These lectures, free and open to all, usually on a first come basis, cover a wide range of historical, cultural, economic and scientific topics. They are held in a variety of locations (mostly Museum of London, Royal College of Surgeons and Barnards Inn Hall). For details see www.gresham.ac.uk. Of special interest to London historians: 18 November: Simon Thurley on 'Envy of Kings: the Guildhall of London and the power of medieval corporations', 6pm at the Museum of London. And on 28 January 2016, a symposium: ‘London – the Global Maritime centre in a changing World’, 6pm at the Guildhall (booking required).

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century British Architecture, Saturday 23 January 2016. The 6th New Insights conference, organised by Claire Gapper and Paula Henderson at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, ranges wide in its subject matter with lectures by experts in their fields. Definitely relevant for London will be Anthony Wells-Cole on William Laud’s idolatrous painted glass for Lambeth. Among other intriguing subjects which may also be of interest to London historians are: Yelda Nasifoğlu, ‘Robert Hooke, experimental philosophy of air, and architecture’; Trevor Cooper, ‘The arrangement of post-Reformation parish church interiors, from contemporary plans’, and Jonathan Kewley, ‘Resurrection in the churchyard: the emergence of a new culture of extramural memorialisation in the seventeenth century’. The conference costs £50. For further details contact claire.gapper@btinternet.com or write to Dr Claire Gapper, 12 Officers’ Terrace, The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent ME4 4LJ.

Autumn Metropolitan History Seminars at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street (Wednesdays at 5.30) include: 25 November: Tom Hulme, Civic Identity and the Octopus: historical pageants on the border of London (at 26 Bedford Way); 9 December: Sarah Ann Milne: the practice of property, the Drapers Company estate 1540-1640. See further: events.history.ac.uk

Exhibitions

Death and Memory, Soane and the Architecture of Memory, Sir John Soane’s Museum, Lincoln’s Inn Fields. This subject was a potent inspiration for the architect Sir John Soane. 2014 was the 200th anniversary of the death of Soane’s wife Eliza, which affected him deeply. The exhibition includes Soane’s designs for the family tomb at St Pancras, his design for a monument to the Duke of Wellington, and rarely exhibited drawings for mausolea and funerary sculpture; also on display will be drawings for monuments by other architects such as Robert Adam, Piranesi, William Chambers, Nicholas Hawksmoor, John Flaxman and George Dance. Until 26 March 2016.


Agincourt 600, Guildhall Art Gallery. A display featuring the rarely seen Crystal Sceptre which, according to recent research, was given by Henry V to the City of London as a mark of his gratitude to the City for providing the funds to fight the battle of Agincourt in 1415. The exhibition also charts the pilgrimage made by the king following his victory, paying homage to his patron saints. Until 3 December.

Camden 50 (see the website Camden50.co.uk) is the umbrella title of a series of arts and ‘engagement activities’ which have been taking place over the last six months on the themes of ‘democracy, innovation and radical thinking’ over the half a century that has passed since the creation of the borough of Camden. Events include an exhibition at Holborn Library.
Camden, as older members will remember, was formed from the boroughs of Holborn, St Pancras and Hampstead. The old boroughs within the London County Council area in many cases simply took over the boundaries of still older parishes, and it is PARISH MAPS that are to be a focus of a future LTS publication, as the following note explains.

Maps of London Parishes – help needed

There are catalogues of many different types of London maps – from 1553 to 1850; from 1850 to 1900; and of City Wards. The last two are by the esteemed Ralph Hyde, long-term member of our Council and pre-eminent authority on London mapping, who sadly died this summer.

Ralph had prepared the manuscript for a further catalogue of London maps, this time of London parishes within the old LCC area up to 1900. These range from elaborate manuscript plans through unique tithe redemption maps held at the National Archives to the array of attractive printed and often coloured parish maps of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Most of the work has been done; Ralph was utterly meticulous in his work and in the late 1960s and early 1970s visited all the local history libraries to note their contents. Ralph entrusted us with the publication of this catalogue, and had planned to oversee a committee of volunteers who would check the libraries for more recent accessions, answer the few queries he noted in the manuscript and possibly do some further research on the internet (then uninvented) to find out more about the individual maps. We have computerised his manuscript and now need the help of our members to bring this important work to fruition as one of our annual publications, targeted for 2018. All volunteers will be acknowledged in the publication.

We have had a number of volunteers so far, and Peter Barber, formerly Map Librarian at the British Library, has agreed to write the introduction and Laurence Worms, co-author of British Map Engravers, will also assist. What we are looking for are members who are prepared to do the following:

- Take responsibility for a single parish or parishes within a borough;
- Visit the local history library to check it still holds the maps that Ralph has noted, answer any queries that Ralph has noted, and catalogue any additions;
- Take a photograph (your mobile phone will suffice, and we will pay any library fees) of two or three of the larger or more important maps in the library so we can assess which to select for professional photography;
- If you have the energy, see if the library has any information on the individual surveyors or the patrons who commissioned the maps. You might also like to do some internet research to see what else you can come up with.

We need volunteers to cover all London from Putney to Plumstead, Stamford Hill to Streatham; one-third of the total are maps of the many minute City parishes, and we need several members interested in covering them. The holdings of the National Archives at Kew, principally tithe maps, also need to be checked. Please contact Simon Morris if you would like to discuss participating (7 Barnsbury Terrace, N1 1HJ, email santiago decompostela@btinternet.com). Members who volunteered at the AGM have already (and gratefully) been noted. We plan to convene a meeting of prospective volunteers one Saturday in the City over the next few weeks.

Circumspice

What is the subject of this sculpture and where is it?

Answer on p.13.
Photographs as historic records:  
the ‘Red Boxes’

This Newsletter highlights a fascinating local collection of historic photographs of Lambeth (pp.10-12). Photographs of all parts of London can also be found in the national collection now in the care of Historic England at their centre at Swindon. Those with long memories will recall that the famous ‘Red Boxes’ of mounted photographs collected by the body which began as the National Buildings Record used to be housed in Savile Row, and in the more distant past at Great College Street. Their move to Swindon was much lamented by London historians. But now comes the welcome news that 600,000 of the photographs in the Red Boxes have been digitised and can be consulted online. Coverage of Greater London is arranged under boroughs. It is patchy, but there are many interesting older photographs including records of threatened (and later demolished) buildings. To search the collection, visit: historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/archive-collections/englands-places/

Changing London

Art and the Underground

One of the most bewildering places in London at the moment is the junction of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Circus, which is being remodelled in connection with the creation of a new interchange between Crossrail and the London Underground. The new Crossrail station (three football pitches long, five storeys deep, with an additional entrance in Dean Street) will be served by an enlarged entrance hall to both Crossrail and the underground at Tottenham Court Road. The transitional confusion is even generating its own literature – a witty article by Andrew O’Hagan in the London Review of Books (4 September 2015) describes the seemingly anarchic programming of the crossing lights which frustrate pedestrians attempting to traverse the present site. This will one day become a new plaza at the foot of Centrepoint, with an entrance to the stations, where the footfall is estimated to increase by 30%. When work was in progress earlier this year, it was revealed that it entailed the removal of the mosaic decoration on the arches above the escalators in the present station. These were a part of the striking and colourful decoration, drawing on sources ranging from ancient art to modern technology, by the Scottish artist Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005), added in the 1980s to cheer the hundred-year old building. Cries of protest led by the Twentieth Century Society and a petition signed by 8000 highlighted the inadequate protection currently enjoyed by modern art works of this kind, but failed to change the plans. However, there were assurances from Transport for London that the mosaics elsewhere in the station would be preserved, and if necessary made good by 2016. Recently it was announced that the arches mosaics would be repaired and displayed in Edinburgh, where there is already an important collection of Paolozzi’s works. Previews of the vast, sleek new entrance concourse (architects: Hawkins/Brown) suggest an aesthetic very different from Paolozzi’s forceful mosaics with their lively diversity of historical and technological themes cheering the passenger along the narrow tunnels. The new building will have art work by Daniel Buren making use of ‘emphatic abstractions using severely simplified forms and arresting colours’ (Royal Academy of Arts magazine 127, summer 2015). At present the entrance to the Central Line is closed but one can still access the Northern Line from the SW corner of the crossroads, and view the Paolozzi murals on the platforms.

TfL may be impatient with the recent past, but it would be unfair to brand the organisation as philistine, for since 2000, it has supported a varied artistic programme, carrying on the tradition begun under Frank Pick between the wars. Some of the
results are temporary displays, but there are also permanent installations, for example the ‘labyrinths’ by Mark Wallinger. 270 different black and white designs on vitreous enamel panels, one for each station, installed in 2014 to celebrate 150 years of the underground. They neatly pay homage to the circular motif of the underground’s logo, while offering the symbol of a journey, a contemplative experience, and a special identity for each station. Currently a new project, ‘Underline’ by the architectural collective Assemble, is focusing on improvements to enhance commuters’ experience at the unappealing Victoria line station at Seven Sisters. See further art.tfl.gov.uk

Some London novelties

**Apple Tree Yard.** between Jermyn Street and St James’s Square, Piccadilly, was the site of the office of Sir Edgar Lutyens, and the place where he drew up designs for New Delhi. This is now commemorated by an inscription on three Dolerite blocks set in a recessed bay, and a grey basalt sculpture, entitled ‘Relief Figure emerging to EL’, all by the sculptor Stephen Cox. The group, with its cultural allusions to both the East and West (Cox has been much influenced by both Indian and Egyptian sculpture), offers a change from the usual commemorative portrait figure, and provides an interesting counterpoint to the impeccably detailed new office block behind by Eric Parry. This extends to St James’s Square; although large, its mass is cleverly broken up by a variety of materials and elevations.

**Kings Cross Pond** is the latest excitement offered by the grand development scheme transforming the area north of King’s Cross. Advertised as ‘the UK’s first public man-made, naturally purified outdoor bathing pond’ and as ‘an art installation you can swim in’, it is sited in the midst of building work at 20 Canal Reach, off York Way (£3.50 per session, see kingscrosspond.club). It is planned as a centrepiece to the future Lewis Cubitt Park (it will admit only limited numbers until the planting is mature). A useful guide to all the new buildings of the Kings Cross development can be found at kingscross.co.uk/architects-journal-tour. Should you be curious about other swimming opportunities today, you can find details of 50 sites in *Swimming London*, by Jenny Landreth (Aurum Press, £8.45). But London Swimming Pools are no new phenomenon, as we are reminded by the fascinating article by Todd Longstaffe Gowan in The London Gardener vol. 18 (2013-4) on ‘Perilous Pond’ near Old Street. This existed in Stow’s time, was restored and improved as ‘Peerless Pool’, a mid-eighteenth century pleasure bath, and survived until the later nineteenth century.

**On the fringe of the square mile.** Pressure for profitable commercial development on the City fringes, nibbling into the neighbouring boroughs, continues to threaten the distinctive character of areas surrounding the City. Historically these were home to London’s varied industries, to its trading infrastructure, and to the people who worked there. Today the older buildings have often found new uses, housing small scale enterprises and developing their own cultural identity.

Redevelopment proposals have aroused strong feelings. At West Smithfield the developers have been held at bay (see Newsletter 80), and the latest news is that an architectural competition will be held, supported by £200,000 from the Mayor of London, which will develop plans for the adaptation of the historic market buildings as a new, more spacious home for the Museum of London. But on the opposite site of the City, the story is rather different. Currently attention is focused on Norton Folgate, the area north of Bishopsgate just outside the City boundary. The land belonging to the medieval hospital of St Mary Spital became a Liberty after its Dissolution, and was later absorbed by Borough of Stepney, which became part of Tower Hamlets. Major redevelopment by British Land is proposed for the area around Blossom Street, just to the east of the main road, where the freehold landowner is the City of London. Blossom Street has an impressive array of late nineteenth-century warehouses. On 21 July local campaigners, expressing the view that opposing the destruction was a battle for the identity of London, formed a human chain around the site. Shortly afterwards the proposal was rejected by Tower Hamlets planning committee, but has now been called in by...
the Mayor of London for further discussion. Today the warehouses, complete with their cranes, loading bays and Victorian street lights, stand empty, like a deserted film set, ominously guarded by CCTV and security men fiddling with their phones.

The warehouse character of Blossom Street, distinct from the neighbouring weavers’ streets of Spitalfields, is explained by the former existence nearby of the vast Bishopsgate Goods Station. Most of the station site has stood derelict since a fire in 1964, but part has been rebuilt for the new Shoreditch High Street Station on the London Overground, opened 2010. Remnants of Victorian brick walls, like fragments of ancient Rome, appear here and there beside the sleek concrete elevated track. Radical redevelopment of the surrounding 10.3 acres is still under discussion. At present it is a lively scene bursting with energy; colourful graffiti, small enterprises in battered buildings beside weed covered wasteland, all against a backdrop of towering cranes which creep ever closer. The latest scheme (by developers Ballymore and Hammerson), published in June, is scaled down from earlier ones in response to a Save Shoreditch campaign led by the Mayor of Hackney: the proposed towers are reduced to 46 storeys, shops, studios and workplaces are included, with an elevated public park along the historic listed viaduct (built in 1840 by John Braithwaite for Eastern Counties Railway). The objectors remain unhappy about the scale, the loss of an informal, inexpensive setting for small ‘tech’ businesses, and that only 10% of the 1356 proposed homes will be affordable housing. Explore this extraordinary area before it changes – if you continue for a few minutes further east you will reach the upper end of Brick Lane and the treasure trove of No.166, the Brick Lane Bookshop (on which see further p.19) which began in the 1970s as a community bookshop, the first bookshop in Tower Hamlets (for its history see bricklanebookshop.org).

Changes at Sir John Soane’s Museum

In contrast to the radical transformation of other parts of London, No.13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields has been preserved as a time capsule from 1837, following the wishes of its owner, the architect Sir John Soane. But while Soane’s ingeniously designed public rooms and his incomparable art collection have for long been a favourite destination for the discerning visitor, there is now a whole extra floor to explore, as Sue Palmer, the Soane archivist, explains.

The ‘lost’ private apartments at Sir John Soane’s Museum

Since mid-May 2015 visitors to Sir John Soane’s Museum at 13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields have been able, for the first time in more than 160 years, to visit the second-floor ‘private apartments’ – Soane’s Bedroom and Bathroom, the Oratory, Mrs Soane’s Morning Room, the Model Room and the Book Passage. These spaces, used as apartments for successive Curators until 1945 and subsequently as staff offices, have been painstakingly restored to look exactly as they did on Soane’s death on 20 January 1837 – the culmination of years of painstaking research by Deputy Director Helen Dorey and others using the rich range of archival and visual sources at the Museum. The project, part of a wider three-phase restoration project – Opening Up the Soane – was generously funded by the Monument Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund,
the Wolfson Foundation and many other individuals and organisations.

A sizeable team of specialist craftsmen, among them joiners, historic paint experts, wallpaper historians, stained glass restorers and historic textile and carpet experts, worked on the project under the aegis of the conservation practice Julian Harrap Architects.

Visitors to the house in Soane’s lifetime had access to the second floor and today’s visitors follow the same route that Soane prescribed, as outlined in his 1835 Description of the House and Museum on the North Side of Lincoln’s Inn Fields...

Entering through an iron gate at the top of the stairs one passes via a curved passage into Eliza Soane’s Morning Room [Fig. 1]. After her death in November 1815, her husband kept this room and her adjacent bedroom intact until 1833. The picture hang in this room thus primarily reflects her tastes, with just one or two later interpolations such as the view of the Smoking Room at Chelsea Hospital (where Soane was Clerk of Works from 1807 until his death) which he commissioned from George Jones in 1834.

From the Morning Room the visitor passes into the large front room which Soane converted from Eliza’s bedroom into a Model Room in 1833, to replace a previous Model Room in the attic above [Fig. 2]. The room is very much a museum of architecture in miniature, with models of ruined and reconstructed classical buildings in cork and plaster of Paris intermingled with models of Soane’s own buildings, many of them now lost, including his Law Courts at Westminster (demolished 1883); various parts of the Bank of England (interiors demolished 1930s); the New State Paper Office, precursor of the Public Record Office, now The National Archives (demolished 1862) and Holy Trinity, Marylebone, one of his three London churches, now sadly an events venue.

From thence the visitor passes into Soane’s Bathroom and Bedroom (visitors in his lifetime were merely allowed a glimpse into these intimate spaces). The Bathroom, dating in origin to 1820, has excited considerable interest among domestic historians, as the use of the words ‘Bath Room’ is very early [Fig. 3]. The Bath itself (one of only two pieces which had to be recreated, though the wooden surrounds are original) was fed by hot running water from a furnace in the attic above – again a rare early example of this domestic comfort.

Another excitement of the Bathroom is the wall of original wallpaper which was uncovered during the course of the work. That it had darkened over time was proved by the existence of a sample of the original paper in the order book of Cowtan and Son, who originally supplied it to Soane, in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This sample enabled the reproduction wallpaper to be accurately recreated, hand block-printed and hung in the traditional way over canvas.

Beyond the Bedroom can be glimpsed the Oratory, a curious space formed out of closets at one end of the Bedroom in 1833. It seems to be intended as a shrine to Soane’s dead wife, and it is probably no coincidence that he created it in the same year that he dismantled her bedroom after 18 years. The space is illuminated by a large panel of antique stained glass depicting St Arsenius, the hermit – a reference perhaps to Soane’s lonely widowed state, mirrored by the fictional alter ego Padre Giovanni who is supposed to inhabit the Monk’s Parlour in the basement of the Museum.

Finally, one exits via the Book Passage which has a spectacular double-height light well piercing up into the attic floor above, densely hung with
depictions of Soane’s own work, including the lost Pitt Cenotaph in the National Debt Redemption Office in Old Jewry which was demolished in 1900 [Fig.4]. Members of the London Topographical Society will no doubt also be intrigued by the case on top of one of the bookcases which displays two mummmified cats and a rat. One of them was ‘found in a house in Lothbury taken down to make room for the New Buildings of the Bank of England in 1803, between the wall and wainscoting of the Room with the Rat in its mouth’. The other was found at Walpole House, near the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, ‘under similar circumstances’. Cats – dead and alive – were quite commonly interred in buildings during construction work by superstitious builders, as primitive good-luck charms, or possibly to scare away vermin.

Because of the constricted nature of the spaces and the fragility of the surfaces, entrance to the Private Apartments is by guided tour only. They are included on the one-hour Highlights Tour (£10) at 11.00am and 12.00 midday on Tuesdays and Saturdays and at 12.00 midday on Thursdays and Fridays, bookable in advance on www.soane.org through Eventbrite. Alternatively there are free half-hour tours on Tuesdays to Saturdays at 1.00 and 2.00pm – first come, first served, sign up in the South Drawing Room.

– Sue Palmer, Archivist, Sir John Soane’s Museum

The opening of the private apartments is celebrated by a new edition of the delightful book, *At Home with the Soanes, Upstairs, Downstairs in nineteenth century London*, by Susan Palmer (Pimpernel Press, £12.99) which explores the evidence for the daily life of the Soane family and their servants at Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Surviving records provide fascinating details of water and drains, food and drink, heating and lighting, shopping and festivities, all brought to life by contemporary drawings. Illuminating not only about the Soane family, but for anyone interested in daily life in the early nineteenth century.

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**London’s Local Libraries, new proposals for Lambeth**

The future of many of London’s local libraries is a cause for concern. Reorganisation can put at risk access to historically valuable archives. Controversial plans considered at a recent Cabinet meeting of Lambeth Council proposed closing one of the borough’s libraries and converting three more to gyms, including the Minet Library, Knatchbull Road. This was purpose-built to house Lambeth archives, for which a new home would need to be created. At present the Lambeth Archives will remain accessible at the Minet Library, pending an options appraisal in 2016. Meanwhile we include here an article which demonstrates just one facet of the interest of this important collection.

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**Old Lambeth: the Woolley Collection and William Strudwick**

*Photosographs of old Lambeth by the pioneer photographer, William Strudwick, form an important part of the collections of Charles Woolley, now in Lambeth Archives at the Minet Library, Knatchbull Road, Lambeth.*

It was the hope of Charles Woolley (1846–1922) that his collection of photographs, prints, pottery and other objects all associated with Lambeth would be the kernel for a museum devoted to the borough’s history. This year is the centenary of his gift to the borough of his collection. Shortly before his death Woolley was pressing Lambeth to make use of Brockwell House, built in the 1860s in the grounds of Brockwell Hall and recently vacated by the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories. However, the prospect of a museum died with him and Brockwell House was demolished the following year and the land incorporated within Brockwell Park. The Woolley Collection remains in the care of Lambeth Archives at the Minet Library near Myatt’s Fields. The future of these archives, particularly their accessibility to the public, is itself now a serious cause for concern as Lambeth grapples
with the effect of reduced resources. Sadly a familiar story.

Although Woolley seems to have created the impression that he came from a comfortable background with a university education, the evidence suggests more straitened circumstances: he was already working as a clerk at the age of 14 and the records of King’s College London do not support the suggestion that he was a graduate. But there is no doubt that he had a deep attachment to Lambeth, not least to its parish church, St Mary’s, at the gates of Lambeth Palace. Woolley came to pursue a successful career in the City as secretary and director of many companies, only turning to local politics on the formation of the Metropolitan Borough of Lambeth in 1900, when he became a Conservative councillor for the Tulse Hill ward and in time an Alderman. By this time he had moved to 35 Dulwich Road, the house in Herne Hill that would remain his home for the rest of his life. He resigned from the Council because he disagreed with the borough’s claim to the proceeds of sale of the land known as Pedlar’s Acre. This had been sold to the LCC in 1910 as part of the site for the building of County Hall. Woolley, now a loyal churchwarden at St Mary’s, supported the view that the church was entitled to the proceeds, but a case in the Chancery Division to decide the issues of title went against the church.

In the catalogue of the Woolley Collection dated May 1915 held by Lambeth Archives 310 items are listed. The catalogue was compiled by Woolley himself. The first section comprises 79 photographs; they mostly show the Lambeth river frontage and adjacent streets shortly before the building of the Albert Embankment in 1866-69. The second section has 108 varied images with ‘views, engravings, portraits, etc.’ and the last section lists 120 items of Lambeth stoneware, pottery being one of the principal industries among the many factories that grew up near the Thames. The photographic collection is of especial interest in the topographical context, comprising prints made from the 12 by 10 inch glass negatives taken by the photographer William Strudwick (1834–1910) and a few prints produced by Strudwick himself.

Strudwick’s legacy is important, as one of the early photographers who wanted to record the world outside the studio. In the 1860s this was technically no easy task. At that time photography had moved on to the collodion process, which offered many advantages, but which required the glass plate to be wet-coated, sensitised, exposed and developed all within about 15 minutes. This meant that the photographer was burdened not only with a heavy camera and tripod, but also a mobile darkroom and the many materials needed for production of a negative. Strudwick reminisced 30 years later: “In this work I was assisted very much by a large dark tent or house on wheels (a home-made one). It had a boarded floor and carried all the working plant, and was large enough for me to stand upright in, with ample elbow room. This dark tent was drawn by a man and, on arriving at a given point, I could have a plate ready in ten minutes.” (The Process Year Book, Penrose & Co. [1896], pp.78-81). He also remembers it being sold years later for 14 shillings. As an outdoor photographer Strudwick is unusual because he did not concentrate on venerable antiquities and fine architecture and scenery, as many contemporaries were doing. He did take photographs of Lambeth Palace and the Houses of Parliament, but he also took many of the ordinary houses and workplaces of Lambeth, however insalubrious. Judging from what he wrote in 1896, he was attracted both by the ‘picturesque’ nature of these scenes and by an awareness that they were disappearing. In this interest to record a ‘lost’ London he pre-dates the Society for Photographing the Relics of Old London by some ten years.

Strudwick’s career was one of mixed fortunes. In 1860 he had published a book on photography that went into three editions and the following year he is recorded as a ‘photographic storekeeper’ at the V & A. This probably lay behind the museum acquiring some 50 ‘Old London’ views by Strudwick in 1869 (some the same as those held by Lambeth Archives). There are isolated examples of later photographs – of the old Half Moon Tavern in Herne Hill before it was rebuilt in 1895 and of the Tulse Hill Hotel, built in the 1840s and which survives today. But it would seem that Strudwick increasingly turned to other things. The British Museum holds some well-executed topographical water-colours. It is also said that he worked as an architect and wrote comic poetry, though I have seen no evidence of this. The location of his various homes in South London show a steady decline in prosperity. He died in the Croydon Workhouse Infirmary in 1910 and received a pauper’s funeral.

In 1913 the Photographic Survey and Record of Surrey released Strudwick’s photographic collection – someone had had the wisdom to deposit it at Croydon Town Hall – to Charles Woolley ‘for Record work’. This enabled Woolley to have prints made, though the original negatives have not survived. Indeed, many were in poor condition when Woolley had access to them, which accounts for imperfections in the prints. These photographs make an important contribution to Lambeth’s history. Some were very recently on show at Morley College’s excellent exhibition ‘Water Lambeth’, alongside Doulton stoneware also from the Woolley Collection. Like Henry Doulton, Woolley was buried at West Norwood cemetery but, in contrast to Doulton’s fine Grade II listed mausoleum, cemetery ‘maintenance’ by Lambeth resulted in the disappearance of Woolley’s gravestone some years ago, surely a fate that this benefactor of the borough did not deserve.

-- Laurence Marsh

Laurence Marsh has developed a special interest in the nineteenth-century history of Lambeth through his research for the Herne Hill Society. The following images are reproduced by kind permission of Lambeth Archives department.
Church Street, later Lambeth Road, looking east. The houses, all demolished towards the end of the nineteenth century, faced St Mary’s parish church, the wall of the graveyard being shown on the far left. Woolley noted that among the houses (with To Let in the upper windows) was "Teetotal Hall of John Bunyan memory. This is the house with the open archway leading into Old Swan Yard. The figure in the hat … is old Mr T. F. Leaver (deceased), father of Mr Leaver (still living) of Leaver & Goulty, and grandfather of Mr Leaver, of Leaver & James, who are still carrying the business of the well-known mast, oar and scull makers, of High Street, Lambeth." It seems that ‘Teetotal Hall’ contained a pulpit from which it is said John Bunyan used to preach, the pulpit having been brought from the non-conformist meeting-house in Zoar Street, Southwark.

Woolley’s describes this view as “An old Riverside Court, called York Wharf, Lambeth, with members of its resident fishing population in their home scene.”
London required huge quantities of drain pipes and chimney pots as the city grew. Woolley notes that this view is taken “from the Thames tidal way, on the foreshore in Prince’s Street, Lambeth Reach. The building ... is in the most elementary form, but nevertheless, it was a thriving Lambeth industry which well maintained its work-people. This is the riverside back view of Smith’s pottery and shows the conditions of factory life, half a century ago. The men worked largely in the open air, and boys, as shown, of 11 and 12 years of age were freely employed. This was afterwards largely rectified by Lord Shaftesbury and other philanthropists.”

Prince’s Street, looking north. Woolley notes: “The roadway and the footways are noticeable in their primitive construction, and the conditions were insanitary. The wall at the extreme right still stands. It was the boundary of the Phoenix Gas Works. The site of the old Delft Lambeth Pottery was exactly opposite to the pottery shown on the front elevation top line, which was the land frontage of Cliff’s Imperial potteries.” To the left of the nearer jar on the elevation is the top of a bottle kiln.
So who is he? Officially he’s called The Architect in Society. Unofficially, he’s surely the alter ego of the man who commissioned him from sculptor Keith Godwin. But Eric Lyons, designer of – for their time – shockingly different homes for progressively-minded young professionals, was never even close to being crushed. He fought single-mindedly for honest and elegant modern design against planners, bureaucrats, preservationists, and anyone who got in the way.

He had two key henchman: Geoffrey Townsend, who resigned his RIBA membership when it prevented him from acting as Lyons’s developer; and Leslie Bilsby, builder to some of the pioneering architects of the 1930s and enthusiast for modern design. Bilsby lived in Blackheath and snapped up houses with large gardens as the Victorian leases on its leafy Cator Estate fell in. He was thus able to provide Span – the company set up by Townsend – with sites for a score of well-designed and lusciously landscaped developments. The Architect in Society is set in a cross wall of one of these, Hallgate, where it provides an entrance to the low-rise terraces of another Span development, The Hall.

Lyons had not long before won planning permission on appeal, against the combined forces of the London County Council, Greenwich Council and the Blackheath Society, for a block of flats in a plum location. His South Row site – its buildings wrecked by a WW2 bomb – was on the edge of the heath and overlooked a picturesque tree-lined pond. His opponents wanted pastiche infill; he was having none of it. Godwin’s sculpture celebrated that victory. Now the South Row flats are listed; they are these days admired and defended by conservationists. Is the load borne by The Architect in Society for that reason any lighter? I really wouldn’t bet on it.

– Tony Aldous

The Newsletter Editor welcomes suggestions from readers for items in the Newsletter.
The deadline for contributions to the May Newsletter is 16 April 2016.
For contact details see the back page.
binding at the centre of sheets – ‘our’ atlas had a narrow white vertical margin separating the pages. Also the 2015 maps have a wide lower margin for page numbers – surely redundant as sheet numbers are in the left-hand margin and this results in the maps being reproduced at a slightly smaller scale.

However, for general readers and researchers these points are more than compensated for by the inclusion of some 50 pages of quite astounding black and white photographs of damage in the City taken by official City of London Police photographers PCs Arthur Cross and Fred Tibbs. Many are reproduced as dramatic full-page illustrations without margins; not only are these invaluable records of the City’s damage but many are themselves works of art. Here a small annotated map of the City would have been useful, but an A-Z answers most questions.

Laurence Ward and the LMA are to be congratulated on this splendid book which both acknowledges this Society’s earlier work and, coincidentally on page 252, includes the Cross and Tibbs photograph of the bombed remains of the Dutch Church, Austin Friars. It was in that rebuilt church that ‘our’ atlas was launched the evening before the 7 July 2005 bombings again shook London. At £31.20 from Amazon this can be on the shelves of all interested in twentieth-century London.

– Robin Woolven


This is a remarkable book, initially demanding attention because of its size and weight, then for its arresting photography, and thirdly but not least for its comprehensive and meticulously researched text which tells the story of the rebuilding of England during the 30 years after the Second World War. Those who attended the 2009 AGM at the Barbican may remember Elain Harwood’s spirited talk on that post-war section of the City. Here one can find those buildings — and many other London ones — set in their broader English context.

The subject matter is discussed by building type, an arrangement which sprang from initial research as part of English Heritage’s investigation of post-war buildings worthy of listing. This is not a descriptive account of those selected; for these, see the same authors’ England’s Post-War Listed Buildings (2015, Batsford, £40). The narrative approach of Space, Hope and Brutalism considers the human, social, economic and architectural factors that contributed to their creation. There are telling small details: building materials were in short supply after the war: the flats at Woodberry Down, Stoke Newington, had fencing made from ARP stretchers, while the appearance of the Barbican some 20 years later owes much to the engineers, Ove Arup, who favoured deep edge-beams of concrete which could be used as parapets. We meet real people rather than faceless architectural practices or council departments, learn about where they trained and what interested them. The book includes an invaluable 56 pages of mini-biographies, and (as some compensation for the absence of plans) there are nearly 50 pages of notes with detailed references.

In the section on housing London buildings are especially prominent. The dilemma was how to build well and cheaply — and fast — not only to replace the houses lost or damaged in the war, but to continue the slum clearance programme that the war had disrupted. Together with housing, the chapters on schools, hospitals, civic buildings, transport and industry add up to a built history of the post-war welfare state, the ‘space and hope’ of the title. Defining how ‘Brutalism’ fits is trickier; its meaning has changed from its first use, suggesting honest exposure of building materials and lack of fancy detail, to the later assumption from the 1970s that it is only about concrete. While there is plenty on concrete in the book there is much else as well. James Davies’s striking photographs bring out the variety, the daring spaces, and the colour of post-war architecture — this last a revelation to anyone familiar only with black and white illustrations of the buildings discussed. Unusual viewpoints offer new insights, such as an amazing view from above of the curving roof of the Commonwealth Institute.

The subject divisions make it easy to dip into the book for some telling comparisons. On Libraries for example: stately Kensington, designed by Vincent Harris for councillors who did not want anything modern, aroused ‘Anti-ugly Action’ protesters; the light-filled, flexibly designed (and much cheaper) Holborn was designed by the more progressive borough architect Sydney Cook, with a formica-lined staircase as a modern touch. Other chapters have similarly intriguing contrasts: the stark, forceful curves of the concrete arches of St James Clapham, followed by the sharply angled roof timbers of St Paul Lorrimore Square, both from the late 50s. Hope and optimism did not always lead to unmitigated triumphs; a thoughtful final chapter sums up the changing political, social and architectural ideals of the 70s but warns of the danger of concentrating on the flaws rather than the achievements of the previous decades.

– Bridget Cherry


This extremely readable, and often very entertaining, book takes a detailed look at the seamier side of Victorian London, concentrating on the Strand and its neighbouring streets. The Strand
was then, as it is now, home to theatres, shops, hotels and bars of all sorts, but it also had a more subversive atmosphere than it has today, with a popular reputation for all sorts of wickedness. This book tells the stories of actors, prostitutes, music-hall stars, fraudsters and pornographers who operated on or near the busy thoroughfare. For much of the nineteenth century the Strand was known as 'the place for fun and noise, all amongst the girls and boys', as the song *Let's All Go Down the Strand* had it. but by the end of the century legislation had begun to tame its excesses.

Among the many fascinating stories in the book are the murder of the matinee idol William Terriss outside the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre, and the arrest and trial of Stella and Fanny (the cross-dressing Ernest Bolton and Frederick Park), both of which have been well documented elsewhere, though that is no criticism, as the stories are well told here. But there are plenty of less well-known characters in this book, including Lottie Collins, the music-hall star who was the first to sing *Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay*, during which she danced energetically around the stage in a combination of the rather demure 'skirt dance' and the far more exotic and scandalous cancan (though she never exposed her thighs, apparently). Florence St John was a popular and hugely successful actress and singer, often performing at the Gaiety and Savoy Theatres, but she had a very complicated private life, being married four times, and involved in a celebrated divorce case, a story told here with much relish.

There is also a chapter about 'mug-hunting' in the Strand, as it was always full of people trying to get passers-by to part with their money, especially innocent visitors to London. Some, of course, such as beggars, were genuine, but mostly they were scams by organised criminals and prostitutes. It was so bad that Dan Leno said he always took a cab down the Strand to avoid them. The author also deals with the development of the peepshow, which offered the visitor to the Strand the first experience of moving pictures, but also caused considerable scandal. Surprisingly enough, the first film studio was built in the Embankment Gardens. The final chapter, called 'The Backside of St Clement's', looks at the pornography trade carried on in Holywell Street, soon to disappear with the development of Kingsway and the Aldwych.

The chapter I found most interesting describes the colourful life of the impresario Renton Nicholson. He started life working as a pawnbroker, and was bankrupted several times, spending time in debtors' prison, before becoming a journalist, writing columns about London's lowlife. Later he was famous as the instigator of the popular Judge and Jury Society, which offered mock trials at the Garrick's Head Hotel in Covent Garden, and later at the Cyder Cellars in the Strand. He presided over the court as The Lord Chief Baron, dealing with all sorts of cases, such as divorce and adultery, with much humour. He wrote a highly unreliable but entertaining autobiography which, sadly, is now out of print.

The book is well researched and written in an accessible style, and the illustrations are well chosen. There is plenty of interesting information here for anyone interested in the lowlife of Victorian London.

-- Peter Matthews

**Dickens, Reynolds and Mayhew on Wellington Street, the Print Culture of a Victorian Street**

**The Street of Wonderful Possibilities, Whistler, Wilde and Sargent in Tite Street**

Where did they live? is a question that demands cooperation of biographer and topographer. There is nothing new in such an interest. The London Blue Plaques are a familiar and much loved guide to the homes of the famous in all fields, and there is a long tradition of house museums honouring birthplaces or residences of exceptional people (as in the case of Sir John Soane, see the article on p.8). But a current fashion is to look outside the individual front door and explore the possible interaction between neighbours. Who else lived nearby? Who might meet in the street? Which streets developed a particular character or reputation from their residents?

Wellington Street, an unremarkable street running north from the Strand, was notable in the mid-nineteenth century as the address of a number of well-known periodicals and newspapers, as well as being the home of some of their owners. The radical campaigner and editor, G. W. M. Reynolds and his wife (of Reynolds Newspapers and other publications), on the west side, on the east, Charles Dickens, who published *Household Words* from 1850 and *All the Year Round* from 1859; a little further north was the office of Henry Mayhew, who was working on *London Labour and the London Poor* in 1850-1, next door to a house occupied successively by Douglas Jerrold (of *Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*) and G. A. Sala. Their interests all overlapped and there was recognised rivalry in the publicity courted by both Dickens and Reynolds, who differed in their approaches to campaigning for London's poor. In 1848, the celebrated year of revolt, Reynolds spoke at a rally at Trafalgar Square and when a crowd followed him back to his office, addressed them from the balcony. There is alas a shortage of evidence of other exciting events of this kind and although the author may be right in suggesting that all these characters may have passed each other in the street, the idea of a significant network remains somewhat hypothetical. However the topographical details have been carefully researched; one gains a vivid sense of the frenetic writing activity, and lively contemporary illustrations help to reinforce how closely the written word was bound up with the world of the theatre just round the corner. Lay readers may be a
little bemused by references to academic theorists on spatial structure and the like; specialists will appreciate the ample bibliography.

Tite Street in Chelsea had a rather different clientele. Devon Cox tells the interlocking stories of the friendships, successes, jealousies and disasters of its residents with lively enthusiasm, solidly based on research among the plentiful contemporary accounts. For the controversial artistic residents and designers of Tite Street were often in the public eye. The story includes not only the rise and fall of the writer Oscar Wilde and the careers of the artists J. M. Whistler and J. S. Sargent, but a host of other players: the architect E. W. Godwin – whose radical White House for his friend Whistler infuriated the Board of Works in 1878 – the Italian cartoonist Carlo Pellegrini, one of Whistler’s devoted followers, the portrait painter Frank Miles, who was a friend of Wilde as well as a patron of Godwin, and many others.

Tite Street was laid out just to the east of Chelsea Hospital after the building of the Chelsea Embankment in 1875. Unlike so much of London’s uniform terrace housing, and in contrast to the slum of Paradise Walk immediately to its west, Tite Street’s studio houses of the 1870s-80s reflected individual personalities, but were also, as Devon Cox observes, ‘a commentary on the nonconformist ideology’ of the street as a whole. In 1879 the artists even requested the Metropolitan Board of Works to rename the street, suggesting (unsuccessfully) Holborn Walk, Turner’s Walk or Prince of Wales Road. The Prince of Wales was a visitor to Tite Street as were other members of high society such as the friend of Frank Miles, the fashionable beauty Lily Langtry.

Whistler’s comings and goings – he lived at Tite Street only intermittently – and the much-told tale of his spat with Ruskin, form a binding thread to the narrative of the earlier years. The 1890s are dominated by the dramatic story of Wilde, who when at the height of his fame as a playwright was sued by the notoriously unpleasant Marquess of Queensbury for ‘corrupting’ his son; Wilde was sent to prison, his shattered family departed from Tite Street and, shockingly, his house was ransacked. The career of Sargent ran more smoothly. In the early twentieth century Tite Street became ‘a highly respectable factory of faces’ as Sargent, the gentleman bohemian, established himself as the supreme portraitist of the Edwardian era. Less socially acceptable characters emerge, including several women artists: among them the suffragette Edith Elizabeth Downing who helped to organise processions and pageants, and in 1912 was arrested for throwing stones at Somerset House, and Hannah Gluckstein (Gluck) whose ‘androgenous’ paintings made a stir in the 1920s. But by then the artistic traditions founded in the nineteenth century were waning in the face of the impressionist and post-impressionist art championed by Roger Fry, and the story of Tite Street limps to an end with the brief residence and death of the musician Peter Warlock, and the declining Augustus John, who moved into Sargent’s old studio in 1940 and stayed until 1950.

In following the artistic careers and the intricate friendships of residents and visitors the narrative sometimes loses sight of Tite Street itself, and it would have been interesting to have had more about the architecture. Fortunately one can turn to a helpful chronology and a map with dates of who lived where. The book is beautifully produced, with illustrations which include an excellent range of little known artistic works and old photographs.

– Bridget Cherry


Montserrat Road was built in the 1880s in the grounds of a house that had been in one family for 250 years since its acquisition by a baker and moneylender whose wealth was at least partly based on mortgages that were not redeemed – a reminder, as the building society advertisements warn, that ‘your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up payments’.

The story of the creation of one street in Putney can stand for the development of a ring of prosperous London suburbs. The impetus for the move out of town of many families was not, as one might expect, that improved public transport allowed for easier commuting, but rather the desire to escape from the grime of inner London. These substantial family homes with their large gardens undoubtedly appealed to the increasingly affluent middle classes.

The rapid development of comfortable suburban estates was facilitated by a system of leases and sub-leases: the landowner granted 99-year building leases to developers who took responsibility not only for building the houses, but also for ensuring the construction of roads, drains, and water supply; builders took leases from the developers, often borrowing from them in order to cover costs; houses were let to tenants. The handsome three- or four-bedroom red brick houses in Montserrat Road were built in just three or four months. The developers made fortunes and most of the builders did well, although some succumbed to the building slump of 1890 that followed the boom years.

Gerhold enlivens the account of legal arrangements and construction procedures with insights into the lives of the individuals concerned. Early residents of Montserrat Road included the journalist, Henry Richard Vizetelly, the popular novelist, Rosa Nouchette Carey, and Henry Richard Tedder, librarian of the Athenaeum. The Victorian landowner Robert John Pettitward practised an ascetic regime with cold-water baths and prayers every night at ten when his family and servants were required to stand facing the walls. Members of today’s Residents
Association are a more cheerful group. We also have a glimpse of less affluent lives: lists of advertisements for servants required for plain-cooking and child-care during the first 20 years, and rooms to let with ‘use of bath’ as houses began to be subdivided, a trend that – as in other attractive residential areas of London – has been reversed as the appeal of the Victorian house has increased.

– Sheila O’Connell

The Centenary Book of St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb
by Alan Walker.

Walter P. Starmer, Artist 1877–1961
by Alan Walker.

When it became known that the Northern tube line was to reach Golders Green and beyond, Henrietta Barnett realised that suburban housing would soon cover the fields and slopes to the north-west of London so, with great determination, she formed a group of advisers, purchased land from Eton College and decided to lay out a garden suburb with Charles Parker and Barry Unwin as her planners and architects. This the trio did most successfully, but when it came to designing a central square, to include churches and an educational institute, something grander was desired and the up and coming (St) Edwin Lutyens – with whom Henrietta was to have a less happy relationship – was appointed.

St Jude-on-the-Hill went up between 1909 and 1911, the first vicar, the Reverend Basil Bourchier, having been appointed in 1907. Within weeks of the start of World War I Bourchier left for Belgium as chaplain with a women’s hospital unit, only to be almost immediately arrested by the Germans as a spy and sentenced to death. He was saved by the intervention of a German officer who had visited Hampstead Garden Suburb before the war and could identify him. The present vicar, the Reverend Alan Walker, took over in 1994, becoming the eighth to serve at St Jude’s; and has now written an account of the building and its astonishing sequence of murals by Walter P. Starmer.

Designed in an unusually large format, the great value of both volumes is the full-page reproduction of the murals and of Starmer’s earlier and later work. The first volume is a straightforward enough account of the building, its history during the first hundred years and the centenary service with the present Bishop of London, the Very Reverend Richard Chartres, as both celebrant and preacher.

The second volume is a different matter. It begins with Starmer’s early life and training, his experiences as a war artist (30 of his paintings are in the Imperial War Museum) and his chance acquaintance at the Front with Basil Bourchier, from which the commission to paint the walls of St Jude’s gradually developed. This book is valuable for the volume and generosity of the author’s research and every reader should be grateful for it. One fascinating thread which runs throughout is the emphasis on feminism. The prime mover was of course Dame Henrietta Barnett, but the choice of saints in the non-biblical murals is almost entirely female, the leading figure being Joan of Arc. The features given to each woman are those of Henrietta’s friends and supporters; we must hope that the author may have strength and tenacity enough for a third volume.

When the work was finally completed after ten years of hard labour up and down ladders, usually continuing even during services, Starmer’s work met mixed reactions. Many, rightly, praised it but others, increasingly, pointed out how the church is darkened by the paintings seeming to make the great building draw in on worshippers and casual viewers and, particularly in late afternoon or in winter, making it seem unfriendly. Two of the memorials should be mentioned and visited. The first is to the horses in the 1914–18 war – compare with the frieze round Charles Sargeant Jagger’s great memorial at Hyde Park Corner. The second is that to Michael Rennie, son of the third vicar, William Maxwell Rennie. Michael volunteered to act as escort to children being evacuated to Canada on SS City of Benares, sunk by a German submarine on the night of 17/18 September 1940. Michael exhausted himself saving children from the stormy waters, dying himself from fatigue; only one boy survived.

St Jude’s is worth a visit and I beg you to go there, preferably on a fine, sunny day when you will see it at its best.

– Ann Saunders

Editor’s postscript: There is a fascinating account of the life of St Jude’s charismatic vicar, the Rev. Basil Bourchier (1881–1934), on the church’s website: StJudeonthehill.com

City Mission, The Story of London’s Welsh Chapels

How many Welsh chapels can you name in London? A few buildings of architectural distinction may come to mind – Jewin in the City, rebuilt after the war, the spacious and imposing Victorian Baptist chapel in Castle Street, Marylebone, recently restored; the impressive building by James Cubitt in Charing Cross Road, for long neglected and disguised as night club and cafe but currently
being refurbished as an arts centre. But they are only a part of the story. Open this book and you are confronted with a familiar underground map dotted with no less than 39 sites spread over Greater London – from Cockfosters to Morden, Ealing Green to Leytonstone. Not all these buildings exist now, and a number have other uses; this impressive body of research teases out their stories and those of the people who met and worshipped in them.

Welsh immigration to London can be traced back to Tudor times, but the first evidence for Welsh preaching in London dates from c.1740 with visits from the revivalist preacher Howell Harris. Edwards succeeds in identifying the likely place for one of his visits, a farm near Kennington. It seems that Lambeth became a centre for Welsh settlers, there was even a fair on St David’s day, and the building coincidentally illustrated on p.18 of this Newsletter was recorded as a Welsh chapel in 1826. From the 1760s (earlier than was previously thought) there was a congregation meeting in a room in Cock Lane, West Smithfield, the origin of the group for whom a purpose-built chapel was erected in Jewin Crescent, Barbican, in 1823. By the 1830s it was flourishing with increasing membership, no longer an ‘Independent’ chapel within the Anglican church, but following the split with the Methodists in 1795, recognised as ‘Calvinist Methodist’ (later known as the Presbyterian Church of Wales).

From the later eighteenth century cultural identity was strengthened by the establishment of Welsh literary societies, and during the nineteenth century many chapel eisteddfodau furthered this tradition. Numbers of the Welsh in London were never huge: (0.74% of London’s population in 1851 were Welsh-born; 1.36% in 1931), yet Welsh chapel congregations flourished as religious and social centres through the nineteenth century and continued to increase in the early twentieth, creating a much valued sense of community among their members. An appealingly photograph shows dozens of children lined up in their Sunday best for Jewin’s children’s anniversary service in 1935. Decline began only after the Second World War, and was then rapid.

Separate chapters on different parts of London relate the history of individual chapels through their successions of stubborn and energetic ministers, not all likeable characters; the personal details make for lively reading. Edwards laments how lack of cooperation between chapels has not helped their survival. But there were impressive achievements: chapels for dockers at Deptford, a floating chapel for sailors, and for workers in south London an ambitious building of 1889 at Falmouth Road, Elephant and Castle, which became a significant centre of the eisteddfod tradition. The majority of the congregations were Calvinistic Methodists, but there were also chapels for Independents, Wesleyan Methodists, Baptists, and even churches for Welsh Anglicans, the common feature being the use of the Welsh language. The strict regime of the Calvinistic Methodists could lead to difficulties, among these was the ban of working on the Sabbath. This was a particular problem for those involved in the dairy industry, an occupation which came to be dominated by the Welsh during the nineteenth century, as preparation for Monday deliveries had to be made the day before.

The bibliography and acknowledgements reveal the extensive research underlying this comprehensive survey, which should fascinate anyone interested in London’s social history and topography.

– Bridget Cherry

**Editor’s Corner**

If you are looking for books about the changing East End (and other aspects of London too), The Brick Lane Bookshop (66 Brick Lane, E1) is the place to explore. Among recent titles is the very attractive picture book, *Makers of East London* by Charlotte Schreiber and Katie Tregyiden (Hoxton Minipress £30), which focuses on the wide range of craftspeople working in the area. (LTS members may enjoy the example of Bellerby & Co., Globe makers at Stoke Newington.) From the same publisher is *Shoreditch Wild Life* by Douglas Wallace (Book 4 in the series East London Photo stories), £14, which has portraits not of plants and animals as one might expect from the title, but of people, with a challenging preface which begins ‘the richness and the wrongness of it all’. The stories of people of the area can be read in *Spitalfields Life* by the Gentle Author (2013, Saltyard Book Co. £14.99). Covering a much broader field – the whole of Greater London – is Stephen Walter’s provocative and individual *The Island, London Mapped* (Prestel, £22.50) with hand drawn maps of every borough reflecting the author’s personal interests. A thoughtful introduction by Peter Barber points out that maps at all periods have reflected the current concerns and preoccupations of mapmakers and the ruling classes, and that Walter’s contribution, using technical mapping techniques, is both a work of art and a form of democratisation.
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