The 116th Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society will be held on 6 July 2016 at the Great Hall, St Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield, at 5.45pm.

For details see the pull out section in the centre of this Newsletter.

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Notes and News

Our Society continues to flourish with a membership of around 1,200. Our next publication, which will be available for members to collect at the AGM, is London Plotted, Plans of London buildings up to 1720, a fascinating collection assembled by Dorian Gerhard from a variety of sources. It includes biographies of the surveyors involved. Next year's publication, jointly with the Bodleian Library, will be London views from the collection of Richard Gough; edited by Bernard Nurse (for a preview see Newsletter No. 80). And for the year after? – see below...

Catalogue of Parish Maps. Work on the Catalogue of London Parish Maps up to 1900 compiled in manuscript by the late Ralph Hyde is proceeding apace. Containing the comprehensive and meticulous 533 entries that Ralph recorded some 40 years ago, it needs updating to reflect new acquisitions and, above all, the advent of the internet that enables the near-instant interrogation of catalogues of distant and previously inaccessible holdings.

A team of 18 members has been convened and this task well underway. We so far have volunteers for nearly every parish, who have agreed individually or in a small team to work through the listing for that parish, address any queries that Ralph noted in his manuscript and check holdings in the relevant local history library, the main repositories (the British Library, National Archives and London Metropolitan Archives) and on the internet for other holdings. In addition Peter Barber will contribute an introduction and Laurence Worms will provide biographical notes on the individual map-makers. Roger Cline has agreed to act as sub-editor and Simon Morris is acting as convenor of the group.

We are aiming to complete the revision work by the end of 2016 and to be ready to produce an interesting and well-illustrated catalogue for publication by the Society in 2018. Further volunteers are welcome, especially those with an interest in South London and the City. Also – if any member possesses a London parish map falling within the scope of the project it would be most helpful if they could contact Simon Morris (contact details are on the back of this Newsletter).
Anniversaries, Exhibitions and Events

Guildhall Art Gallery: Visscher Redrawn: 1616 – 2016 The 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death is being commemorated by the display of the famous 1616 engraving of London by Claes Jansz Visscher, together with a new pen-and-ink version by the artist Robin Reynolds. Reynolds’s single drawing has been arranged to fit the Visscher landscape, which stretches from Whitehall to St Katharine’s Dock on four large plates. The new drawing includes ingenious references to Shakespeare’s 37 plays, three major poetic works, and the sonnets. Until 20 November, part of a programme of special events and exhibitions marking the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death. For details see www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/visscher and www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/shakespeare

Riots in Camden, An historical exhibition is the current exhibition at Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, Theobalds Road (to 11 June). Perhaps it is a pertinent title. Enjoy the spacious setting on the Library’s 2nd floor while you can. The Local Studies centre is threatened with a move to more cramped basement quarters as part of the infamous cuts affecting libraries throughout London. In Lambeth there has been widespread local protest at the proposal to turn three libraries into health centres, including the Minet library, which is seeking a new home for its archives.

Capability Brown in London The latest issue (Spring 2016) of London Landscapes, the Newsletter of the London Parks and Gardens Trust, well-illustrated with numerous maps, celebrates the work of the landscape gardener Capability Brown, born three hundred years ago. Recent research has identified no less than 42 sites in Greater London where Brown definitely or possibly worked. An article by Chris Sumner and Susan Darling draws together the string of landscapes along the upper reaches of the Thames: on the north side the Duke of Northumberland’s Syon Park laid out by Brown in 1754-7, and across the river, Brown’s more controversial work for the Royal Family in what was later Kew Gardens. Here he swept away many of the recent garden buildings erected for Queen Caroline, and lowered her riverside terrace, creating a pastoral river landscape linked with Syon’s water meadows. Other articles throw new light on sites elsewhere, now largely built over, where Brown may have worked, including the lost Fitzroy Farm in Highgate (discussed in London Landscapes spring 2015), and Ealing Place in South Ealing. An impressive number of exhibitions and study days are listed as part of the Capability Brown Festival, including a conference at Hampton Court on 6-8 June; see further the website capabilitybrown.org

Open Garden Squares Weekend is on 18-19 June. Once again a wonderful opportunity to visit 220 ‘secret, private and little-known’ London gardens with a single ticket (cost £12). Details at opensquares.org

Building a City: 350 years after the Great Fire. A conference organised by the Heritage of London Trust. Friday 17 June, Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria St. London SW1E 6QP. The morning session is on the Great Fire and its aftermath; the afternoon session is on Innovations for London building – looking to the future. Speakers include Dr Peter Bonfield, Adrian Tinniswood, Charles Hind, Jon Greenfield, Philip Davies, Dr Peter Catterall, and many others. For further information and to book a place visit www.heritageoflondon.org/
London Record Society: Please Support Us!

The London Record Society was founded in 1964, largely on the initiative of William (Bill) Kellaway who, having worked first at Guildhall Library and then at the Institute of Historical Research, was aware of the rich stores of records relating to London (and not just the City of London) that needed to be published and accessible (translated where necessary) for researchers and all those interested in the history of London.

Since then more than 50 volumes have been published, ranging in date from the eleventh century (Westminster Abbey Charters 1066-c.1214) to the twentieth (The London Diaries of Gladys Langford 1936-40). A full list of the Society’s publications can be found on their website. The volumes can be bought for £35 each but the Society is urgently seeking new members who pay an annual subscription of only £18 and receive a volume (occasionally two volumes) every year. It is these regular subscriptions that enable the Society to edit and publish a volume of records every year. All the editors and officers of the Society give their work for free. If you would like to help them, and to receive an annual volume, please contact: the Hon. Membership Secretary, Dr Penny Tucker, Newton Farmhouse, Bere Alston, Devon PL20 7BW or at MemberSec@LRS@aol.com.

London Record Society website gives details of their recent publications and other activities. This includes conservation of the research notes – some made a hundred years ago – for the VCH volumes on Middlesex. These are now available for consultation at the London Metropolitan Archives. See further londonrecordsociety.org.uk.

The Annual General Meeting of the LRS will be held at 6pm on Tuesday 28 June at Trinity Congregational Church, St Matthew’s Road, Brixton. London SW2 1NF (nearest tube, Brixton on the Victoria Line). It will be followed at 6.45pm by the launch of the Society’s 51st volume, The Angels’ Voice. A Magazine for Young Men in Brixton, London, 1910–1913, a fascinating insight into the culture of suburban London on the eve of the First World War. The volume’s editor, Alan Argent, will talk about the magazine and the lives of the young men who produced it. His talk will be followed by wine and other refreshments. ALL ARE WELCOME, INCLUDING NON-MEMBERS OF THE LONDON RECORD SOCIETY.

– Caroline Barron
Chair London Record Society
c.barron@rhul.ac.uk

Circumspice

Where is this? For the answer see p.13.

London on Film at the British Film Institute

In 2015 the London Topographical Society awarded a grant to support the British Film Institute’s (BFI) film heritage project London on Film. Ellen McGuinness and Mark Duguid explain the project and appeal to LTS members for help in identifying some of the subject matter.

In 2015 the London Topographical Society awarded a grant to support the British Film Institute’s (BFI) film heritage project London on Film. The BFI, a charity governed by Royal Charter, was established in 1933 to champion moving image culture in all its richness and diversity, for the benefit of as wide an audience as possible, and to create and encourage debate. Our objectives include expanding education and learning opportunities and providing access to the film collections held at the BFI National Archive.

In 2015 we launched London on Film as part of a wider project, Britain on Film, which aims to make British film heritage accessible to UK audiences by digitising films and publishing them on our video-on-demand platform, BFI Player (http://player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film/). Audiences can navigate their way through an interactive map, exploring hundreds of films spanning well over a century and covering every London borough. London on Film showcases London’s film and television heritage to tell a rich and potent story of the capital’s people and places. Users can visit locations where they and their families have lived and worked, while getting a vivid sense of life in a changing city. It is an accessible and immediate way to explore London’s social and cultural heritage – or just reminisce!
Two films already on BFI Player give a flavour of the riches to be found:  

**London Street Scenes – Trafalgar Square (1910).**

This majestic Edwardian panorama of Trafalgar Square takes in the National Gallery and St Martin-in-the-Fields, finishing at the start of the Strand. Charing Cross Underground Station and the pedestrian underpass are seen under construction, while the current site of South Africa House (built in the 1930s) is occupied by a hotel.

**Hoxton... Saturday July 3rd, Britannia Theatre (1920)**

A fascinating glimpse of the pull of the music hall in this film showing crowds outside the Britannia Theatre and around Shoreditch. On Old St, a no. 43 tram jostles with horse-drawn and motor vehicles past the London Apprentice pub.

**How the films are digitised**

Digitising film is skilled, complex and time-consuming work. The process begins with curators selecting films for digitisation from the collections of the BFI National Archive. Technical archivists then inspect the Archive’s holdings to determine the best source material for digitisation; we will often hold several copies of a film, from ‘pre-print’ (e.g. negatives or ‘interpositives’) to finished projection prints.

The materials are run through specialist scanners which, in effect, photograph each frame. How long this takes will depend on the length of the film and the condition of the materials. Addressing defects in the source can add considerable time and cost. The output will be a digital file with a resolution of 1920x1080 pixels, the standard for HDTV.

Finally, a curator will contextualise the film for its BFI Player audience. The objective is to enrich the viewer’s experience by highlighting key features, providing background information, sharing specialist insights, and placing the film in its historical context.

**Test your London knowledge**

We hope that *London on Film* will engage Londoners in exploring the history of their city. And we hope they can teach us more about the films, too. With this in mind, we have chosen two films featuring London locations that BFI curators have not been able to identify. Can you help?

Both films can be viewed in full, free, on BFI Player.

**A Quiet Morning (1955)**

A documentary about an ordinary family Saturday in a (probably north) London suburb, featuring several unidentified locations: a large pond; a quiet, well-to-do suburban street with large Tudor houses; and a bustling shopping street.

**Cyclist Turning Right (1983)**

This road safety film features two boys cycling down an unidentified busy London street, which features a large ‘Bathroom Discount Centre’.

If you recognise the locations or have any insight into these images, or any of the other London films featured on BFI Player please email Britain-on-film@bfi.org.uk. Find more films to test your London knowledge at http://player.bfi.org.uk/london-enigmas.

The London Topographical Society is also supporting the production of a *London on Film* DVD. This will include films not available online, as well as providing wider context on the subject with specially-chosen extras and a detailed booklet. If you’d be interested in sharing your knowledge with us to create the DVD, please send an enquiry email, explaining what you could bring to the project, to the address above.

The unprecedented reach of this project has also allowed us to launch our national fundraising campaign to support the BFI National Archive and our nation’s film heritage – *Film is Fragile*. Please help us to ensure films like these are protected and available for the public to view by supporting the campaign. More details at www.bfi.org.uk/filminsfragile.

— Ellen McGuinness and Mark Duguid  
British Film Institute
‘A Quiet Morning’: The suburban street – what may be a church notice board is just visible in the hedge on the left

‘A Quiet Morning’: The suburban street

‘A Quiet Morning’: Next to Blacke & Cook Ltd grocers is the entrance to ‘1 to 4 — Mansions’ (the first word is lost in shadow)

‘A Quiet Morning’: Another view of the same street with the Capitol (cinema?) in view

‘Cyclist turning right’: Four views of the same busy road

‘Cyclist turning right’: The Bathroom Discount Centre – it does not seem to be the shop of that name now based in Fulham

‘Cyclist turning right’: What looks like an Indian restaurant is visible next to the bus stop

‘Cyclist turning right’: The bus stop, serving routes 189 and 200
Surveying the City: John Britton's London Topography 1820-40

A report of the Research Seminar by Stephen Daniels, University of Nottingham, at the Paul Mellon Centre, Bedford Square, 10 February 2016

John Britton (1771-1857) is one of those intriguing nineteenth-century figures who embody the transformation from the Georgian to the Victorian world. He was a learned autodidact, an antiquary, lecturer and topographer but also a dealer in books and maps, a popularising publisher, a fixer and relentless promoter of the Britton brand.

Although Britton was a Wiltshire man, and published 35 volumes on the Beauties, Antiquities and Cathedrals of Britain between 1801 and 1835, he had been living a mildly rackety life in London since the age of 16. It was on Britton's 'reformed vision of topography' as it applied to London that the Mellon Centre's seminar on 10 February focused. There can be no more appropriate guide to this complex figure than Prof. Stephen Daniels, currently writing a 'book-length study' of Britton, as his previous publications have ranged freely, in a Britton-like manner, across the disciplinary boundaries of art history, geography and history.

Despite his prolific output of books, Britton did not have an easy time of it. The income from his portfolio career was always precarious as the Napoleonic Wars left the country in a state of economic depression. By the same token, it also allowed him in 1820 to acquire at a favourable price the delightful little jewel-box of a house, 17 Burton Street, Bloomsbury, designed by Thomas Cubitt, complete with miniature Stonehenge (subject of one of Britton's publications) in the garden and an octagonal cabinet room inspired by Nash's saloon at Corsham Court. This served also as the commercial showroom for his stock of maps, prints, books and antiquarian knick-knacks, and as venue for his literary salons. Britton never underestimated his intellectual mission: in his first autobiography (he wrote two) he is depicted at a desk adorned with busts of Shakespeare and William Camden. Among his clients was Sir John Soane and it was Britton who published an exhaustive catalogue of Soane's collections, procured for him the sarcophagus of Seti I and organised the grand party to unveil it.

The key to Britton's prolific output was collaboration with artists, engravers, cartographers and other writers, most notably with E.W. Brayley, met when both were teenagers in a Clerkenwell bookshop, but also with A.C. Pugin, George Cattermole, Frederick Mackenzie, W.H. Leeds and many others. Many of these associations ended fractiously. Britton had a short fuse and financial precariousness made him shifty and cheese-paring over money: one engraver took his revenge with a tiny inscription insinuated into the corner of a plate: 'A fine drawing spoilt by John Britton'.

Professor Daniels, while acknowledging Britton's trickiness, drew out his thoughtful ambivalence about London's exponential growth, the vast and shape-shifting metropolis and the opposing pulls of antiquity and modernity. While Britton's publications, especially with A.C. Pugin and Brayley, provided a bedrock for the Gothic revival in the mid-century, and he was a pioneer in campaigning for the statutory protection of historic buildings, his Public Buildings of London (1825, also with Pugin) was a celebration of metropolitan improvement, of the benefits of technological innovation. Nowhere is this ambivalence more evident than in Britton's attitude to the railway, whose arrival in Norfolk he deplored on conservationist grounds, yet which he welcomed for the way it enabled a man to cram more work into a day. He published his London and Birmingham Railway after he found the 20-year-old illustrator John C. Bourne chatting to the men and making meticulous drawings on the site at Euston. Britton's enthusiastic, facty text, coupled with Bourne's exquisite awe-struck drawings of this newest of building types under construction, depicted like the decayed remains of an Ozymandias-type civilisation, encapsulate the complexity of Britton's outlook on past and present.

The 1830s saw a shift in antiquarian and topographical publication, as steel engraving made cheaper publication possible, a development Britton applauded as diffusing knowledge to a wider audience, with pamphlet-style publications. There was to some degree a polarisation of production with the rise also of luxury limited editions, paid for by subscription. One Britton publication that embodied these twin claims of democracy and luxury was Britton's Topographical Survey of St Marylebone, a huge map expensively engraved on copper by B.R. Davies and published first in 1834, which Professor Daniels sees as his most significant London publication. One might question any claim for the Survey being at the cutting edge of cartography – there is more on-the-ground detail to be had from Rocque or Horwood – but Daniels' focus is more on Britton's wider interest in the map as an expression of the municipal entity. This was a reformist political as much as a cartographic celebration of this "immense city north of Oxford Street", with a rental value greater than Scotland, and yet for far too long unrepresented in parliament, a 'colonial dependency on Westminster'. The new railways stand out on the map and around the edge are vignettes of new churches but also the Diorama, the Pantheon and our own godless college of UCL. Britton's career as a topographer was over by 1840 though his contribution was recognised with a much-needed state pension in 1852. Britton outlived most of those with whom he had fallen out to be celebrated by a new generation, especially of young architects (he was an early supporter of the Institute of British Architects), such as George Godwin, editor of The Builder. The questions at the
end of Prof Daniels’s very well received paper added fine grain and amusing detail to the Britton story, of his friendships, and how this ‘sprightly boy with the wit and wisdom of a man’ used private theatricals to move up in the world, supplementing his income as performer, songwriter, actor and reciter at Philip de Loutherbourg’s Eidophusikon. On one occasion he was booed off stage and replaced by a performing dog. The only sadness of the evening was that no publication date is set for Professor Daniels’s book on Britton. I for one would subscribe like a shot.

– Aileen Reid

Aileen Reid works for the Survey of London, Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London

Modern Living
framed by the glory of gas

David Crawford explores the creation of some surprising additions to the King’s Cross landscape.

Circular apartment blocks are a rarity. Building three together in close proximity, on a tight triangular plan, presents some complex design challenges. Not the least of these is the risk of some residents having outward views dominated by the exteriors of their near neighbours’ homes.

But the format has proved to be an opportunity as well as a constraint for the new Gasolders residential complex currently rising on the north bank of the Regent’s Canal, forming a striking element within the 27 hectare King’s Cross Central development (the largest mixed-use scheme within single ownership to be developed within Central London for 150 years).

In response to conservation criteria built into the scheme’s masterplan, the 145 new homes sit within the Grade II-listed hollow cast iron columns of a linked ‘Triplet’ of circular guideframes originally built to contain Victorian gasholders. A fourth guideframe nearby (originally designated no. 08) defines the new Gasolder Park open space. The columns are joined horizontally by elegantly spare and visually arresting wrought-iron lattice beams.

The Triplet, the only example of its kind in Britain, was built in 1879-1880, close to King’s Cross Station – south of its current site – to enable the enlargement of three existing gasholders, erected between 1864 and 1867 and designated as nos. 10, 11 and 12 in a once larger array, by making them telescopic (ie vertically extendable). They could then accommodate increased volumes of gas without the need for any additional land. The new apartments enclosed by the Triplet therefore play their part in the preservation of some important survivors of Britain’s Victorian industrial and engineering history. The Buildings of England London 4: North

Site map: part of the King’s Cross Development Area described the array in its original location as ‘unequalled as a townscape feature’ and ‘the most impressive array of gasframe frames anywhere’.

Gasolders first emerged in the early Victorian period to store town gas, made from coal, as fuel for lighting streets and buildings prior to the spread of electricity. The telescopic version invented in 1824, which needed guideframes to control its operation, made for greater efficiency.

By the early twentieth century, gasholders were dominant features of the urban landscape. Industry historian Brian Sturt comments: “There were over 1,000 gas companies before nationalisation [in 1948]. Just about every town had its own gasworks and the gasometer was the central focus.” But the situation changed permanently with the early 1960s discovery of natural gas in the North Sea and the consequent development of new technology to support its storage and long-distance distribution.

The original location of the Triplet, south of the canal, reflected the fact that, by the mid-1850s, King’s Cross had become a major industrial hub, thanks to its good freight transport links. The Regent’s Canal, completed in 1820, led the way, becoming in turn available as an interchange with the Great Northern Railway’s London terminus. This opened in 1852, with nearby coal yards for holding deliveries of the raw material needed for powering locomotives as well as for supplying the Pancras Gasworks. Eventually the largest in London, this had become operational in 1824. It was built by the Imperial Gas, Light and Coke Company, founded in 1821 and later amalgamated with the Gas Light and Coke Company. The Imperial’s first consulting engineer, Samuel Clegg, decided from the outset that its works should be built where they could be supplied with coal by barge, to reduce handling costs. There was a readily-available site in the canalside market gardens at St Pancras.

The Triplet was the work of the company’s superintendent, John Clark. The unusual interlinking of the guideframes, each sharing one
column with its neighbours, was a space-saving decision prompted by the pressure on land in an area that was becoming increasingly busy. This feature has contributed greatly to their interest value for industrial archaeology, and to the case for their preservation.

The gasholders became an immediately identifiable landmark during the neighbourhood’s industrial heyday, featured in early photographs of London, and in films such as the 1955 Ealing black comedy *The Ladykillers*, which had scenes using them as a towering backdrop.

Those that survived into the twenty-first century, though decommissioned, were dismantled in 2001 to clear the way for running the Channel Tunnel rail link into the neighbouring St Pancras Station. Their guideframe components were stored locally until 2011. Following the collapse of earlier plans for the area, the 1996 decision to move the link’s London terminus from Waterloo proved to be the catalyst for large-scale regeneration of the King’s Cross area, and for the preservation of the Triplet.

In 2005, King’s Cross Central staged a design competition for the reuse of the Triplet, which attracted 80 entries. The winners were architects Wilkinson Eyre, previously laureates of the Royal Institute of British Architects’ Stirling Prize – with the only submission that featured a residential solution.

Their scheme, now being realised, is of three circular ‘drums’ of apartments blocks, each sitting within one of the triplet guideways. The drums are of different heights – 27.5m, 31m and 40.5m – to suggest the upward and downward movements of the original gasholders in response to the volumes of gas contained within them. On top are roof gardens. The space at the intersection of the three guideways forms a sky-lit open courtyard, with connecting bridge walkways. Each drum, in turn, has its own internal sky-lit atrium, with the lift lobbies that serve each floor grouped in areas that would have allowed the least scope for attractive external views. The wedge-shaped apartments widen out from their entrances off the atria in an internal geometry of spaces expanding towards the outer face of each drum, with external windows sited to allow each owner a glimpse, at least, of a column that they can claim as part of their view.

Chris Wilkinson, director of Wilkinson Eyre, comments: “The circular nature of the structures could seem difficult, but as soon as we began to explore it we understood its possibilities. A slice gives you the opportunity for every apartment to feel expansive. You open the door and the interior

The developers, King’s Cross Central Limited Partnership – the sole landowner, with mixed-use scheme specialist Argent acting as asset manager – see the group as a new landmark, greeting rail passengers arriving from the Euromainland in a ‘reinvention of their original setting’. Their new role has emerged within the context of the King’s Cross Central masterplan, drawn up by architects Allies and Morrison, and Porphyrios Associates. This provided for their reconstruction at their new site, across the Regent’s Canal, once the necessary work on the foundations had gained clearance from any historic constraints by Museum of London Archaeology.

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view opens up before you. Working within a circle has resulted in really beautiful ideas.”

As the planning of the apartments proceeded, the ironwork which was to surround them was despatched, in kit-of-parts form, to Yorkshire-based specialists Shepley Engineers, who had previously worked on the restoration of the roof of St Pancras Station. The two-year-plus restoration of the columns involved the removal of up to 40 layers of paint, and the repair of cracks, rust and other flaws. The main technical challenge was to demonstrate that the guideframes could be re-erected as a self-supporting, stand-alone structure, inside which the apartment buildings could be built without touching the historic ironwork. Wilkinson Eyre considers the juxtaposition of heritage structure and contemporary architecture, with a physical separation between the two, as an important aesthetic quality. The proposed structure was tested for tensile strength and computer-modelled for its resistance to wind-loading. The results have shown that the reinstallation will not need any external support from the new buildings.

Morwenna Hall, who is the mechanical engineering team leader with Argent (and also the great-great-granddaughter of Isambard Kingdom Brunel), explains that 3D scanning technology was used to collect geometric data for constructing accurate digital three-dimensional models of each column before it was taken down. “If it had a three degree lean, we’ve put it back just like that on the new site.” She also discovered that the column sections had originally been bolted together from the inside – presumably by young children sent in, in the same way as others were being sent up to sweep narrow Victorian chimneys. “We had to work out a way to put it all back together from the outside while retaining the aesthetics.” Her solution, applied to all the guideframes, uses metal reinforcing collars that are strapped on top of the original joint lines to secure adjacent sections together. The collars sit slightly proud but are painted the same colour, for visual continuity.

Gasholder Park is already open as a grassed public open space designed by architects Bell Phillips Associates for use during the day by local residents, and by pupils at two new schools serving the growing population of the regeneration zone. At night and during weekends, it becomes a venue for events that can accommodate up to 2000 people. From its southern edge, paths lead down to the Regent’s Canal towpath. Its realisation responds to a 2004 Public Realm Strategy, aiming to create a framework of routes and public spaces ‘for everyone to enjoy... (with) lots of activities taking place all year round’.

Not all are happy. ‘GasometerGal’ Sarah O’Carroll, who is photographing all the country’s remaining gasholders, feels that the ‘urban majesty’ of the group is somewhat diminished. “If they’re not in-situ I think you lose a sense of sheer scale. The integration into housing and public parks in King’s Cross shows how we can successfully preserve and reuse the structure, but already no. 08 is being dwarfed by the new buildings around it.”

She has a point. Even the tallest apartment block is nearly 6m shorter than the Plimsoll Building standing 16m away.

– David Crawford
VICTUALLERS OF WHITE STREET, SOUTHWARK

Friars School, Bangor owned land in Southwark between 1557 and 1895 (Fig. 1), and its archives from this period are preserved in Gwynnedd Council’s Caernarfon Record Office. These and London sources provide the background for research to be published more fully elsewhere. This article by David Ellis-Williams is a taster, the story of victualling houses and their successors on a short stretch of White Street, over four centuries.

For most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, part of Long Lane was known as White Street, and for most of the period considered, two alleys on the school land ran off the street. Victuallers were generally established at the corners of alley and street.

The first mention of the houses dates from the 1560s, when most of the land was divided into small gardens, with tenements along the west side and cottages along Long Lane. This was the fringe of the built-up area: further away from the river was marsh or open farmland. Local residents were mostly unskilled working people. The White Hind was at the corner of the western alley, then known as White Hind Alley, and was leased to Walter Bexley up to 1571, together with tenements in the alley. In the course of a court case in 1577/8, Maryon Huntingdon, looking back to the 1540s, said these tenements had been let at a penny a week. Victuallers were often landlords for more than just the victualling house itself, and it was common for the alley behind also to be rented out by them. The name of White Hind Alley continued through seventeenth-century leases, although there is no more mention of the house itself.

At the other end of the property stood the Boar’s Head. Present in the 1560s rentals, this house continued for many years. John Sherbrock was victualler at the Boar’s Head until his death in 1689. The Museum of London have a halfpenny trade token issued by him, bearing the image of a Boar’s Head, giving the address of Long Lane: ‘White Street’ had not yet come into use. He may also be the John Sherbrooke paid for stationing soldiers in 1679. The Boar’s Head continued into the early eighteenth century, with Jacob Meares the victualler in 1709-13.

Another victualling house, the Blue Anchor, kept by Edward Reighnolds between 1705 and 1713, was recorded inside Boar’s Head Alley, where many seamen and their families lived. They must have been a thirsty lot, as a third house, the Sheers, opened its doors under Abraham Simpson in 1703. He was followed in 1708 by William Gore, a nephew of Walter Gore, who had taken a long lease on all of the school land, which William was later to inherit. After his death in 1718 his widow remarried, to James Clifford, another victualler, who briefly kept the Sheers. A complex legal case involving the terms of Walter Gore’s will led to them losing possession of both the lease and the victualling house. It passed through Josiah Whiteley, then his widow, to William Smith and by 1768 was called the Bull.

The Boar’s Head and the Sheers both fronted on to the street, now White Street, on opposite corners of the alley, and co-existed for over a decade. The Sheers became dominant, and the alley became Sheers Alley, shown on Rocque’s 1746 map, and the location given in directories for a Baptist Meeting House at the end of the alley, established in 1695 and continued until 1765, when Methodists took over.

Meanwhile, at the western end, White Hind Alley had been renamed Bangor Court, although often appears as New Alley in official records. A new victualling house, the Fox, had opened at the former White Hind site. Richard Fendall was a son of a father of the same name, who farmed at the Grange in Bermondsey, the family commemorated in a street name today. The son was established at the Fox by the 1740s; in 1751, he gave a testimonial in advertisements for ‘Viper Drops’, “having been much afflicted with Colics and Disorders in his bowels, Grippings, Swimmings and Giddings in the head”. The drops may not have been all that effective, for he died in 1753, leaving everything to his widow, Sarah. Living there at the time of her death in 1765 was James Bues, Sarah Fendell’s sister’s son, and the Fox transferred to him. Bues was running the Fox in July 1768 when a fire at the tallow chandlers’ shop across the alley took down all that side, and damaged the Fox a little. In the aftermath, the school relet the area, and Bues took on a lease comprising the Fox and the whole of the eastern side of the alley.

After Bues’s death, the Fox again passed down the female line, the lease and the licence together inherited by his daughter Hannah. Her husband William Allen was a line and twine spinner who then established his workshop just behind the Fox: this seems to have been his business, while Hannah did the victualling. Also behind the Fox was a Skittle Yard, providing some recreation for its customers.
In 1822, the Antigallican, a new licensed victuallers, opened on the former site of the Bull, now numbered 10 White Street. Charles Roberts held the licence, but a surety from Willmott suggests that he was behind its development. After Willmott secured a renewal of his lease in 1837, he was able to invest more in redeveloping the public house. He advertised for a new tenant, the property described as a ‘Wine and Spirit Warehouse’, having ‘a bold attractive front, with plate-glass windows’. This was now the Royal Standard, sublet by Willmott, and later by his daughter Elizabeth Garrett, to a succession of licensees.

At the other end, the Fox continued at 1 White Street. Most of its licensees after Hannah Allen also leased that side of Bangor Court, as her family had done. In 1856, both lease and licence transferred to William Paget, previously licensee of Sir John Falstaff in Kent Street – but he was soon in difficulty. The school had to send in bailiffs to recover the ground rent; for 1858 only a half year was ever paid. That summer, the school’s London agent wrote:

“The houses have been condemned by the Police authorities under the Act, and have been taken down by Mr Paget. The public house (which he occupies) is shored up, and appears in a dangerous state. Mr Paget informs me he expects notice to pull down both the side walls in the Court at the back of the public house. He says he has already paid for the contract for pulling down the houses and shoring up his own home £34. And he informs me he has laid out £191 in general repairs. This property is in a deplorable condition, and

The early victuallers probably brewed onsite: a sketch plan from around 1720 indicates a brewhouse on the site on the Sheers/Bull. By the 1760s, a larger brewery had been established by John Atkinson behind that site, at the centre of the school land. This passed later to James Hogg, who took on the former Baptist Meeting House as a beer warehouse.

From Christmas 1797, the area comprising this brewery and ancillary buildings, together with the eastern alley, was leased to William Willmott. The lease does not mention a victualling house, so it seems the Bull had closed. Willmott intended to sublet Hogg’s brewery to Felix Calvert, one of the larger Southwark brewers, but this fell through. This allowed Willmott to redevelop, building working-class accommodation over the whole of his lease; what had been Sheers Alley now became ‘Willmott’s Buildings’. This development, and similar housing along Bangor Court, with many occupants engaged in dock labour, building and other labouring occupations, created a ready demand for the alehouse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licensees at the Fox</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1744-53 Richard Fendall</td>
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<tr>
<td>1753-65 Sarah Fendall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766-78 James Bues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778-87 Elizabeth Bues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787-1802 William &amp; Hannah Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-04 Hannah Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804 George Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805 James &amp; Ann Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>1805 William Beadle</td>
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<tr>
<td>1806-20 Daniel Ridgwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820-41 Crown Dansie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-51 John Thomas Percy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851-52 Richard Wheatley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852-56 Charles Sampson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856 William Vigor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856-58 William Paget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demolished
1865-70 John Eblewhite
1871-89 William Osmond Hayes
1889-95 William Frederick Hayes
1896 Ambrose Trigg
1897-1901 William Neale

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1822-38 Charles Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839-41 John Aldous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-52 Arthur George Creak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852-57 Edward Harding</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860-61 William Saunders Holt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861-64 William Alrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>1864-66 Robert Angel Freeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-68 Charles Hart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868 Elizabeth Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868-79 Robert Angel Freeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-86 Susannah Freeman (later Lambert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-91 William Matlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-1901 William Elridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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something must be done about it without delay. It may be advisable to take down the public house also, considering the state in which it is.”

By September, Paget was imprisoned as a debtor at Horsemonger Lane Gaol. He had been selling Meux Brewery’s ales, but was also in debt to them, having mortgaged this now worthless property to them. Inevitably, the Fox also was demolished.

It took some time before the school could secure possession of what was now a bare plot, but eventually William Humphries took a lease, and rebuilt the whole block. A rebuilt Fox (Fig. 2) opened under the same name in 1865, but licensed as a beer house rather than a public house. William Osmond Hayes, sometime shoemaker, gunmaker and bird-dealer, took on the licence in 1871, living here with family who all worked in the beer house. His son William Frederick Hayes married Jessie Odd, who had grown up on the same patch of land owned by the school: it is tempting to think these were childhood sweethearts. He later took on the Fox after his father’s death.

At the other end, Robert Angel Freeman leased the Royal Standard in 1864. He was involved with other public houses, and for a while had other licensees running this place under him. Despite Willmott’s improvements in 1838, it turned out the Royal Standard was a fairly meagre establishment: the sitting room was only 7 foot square, there was no urinal or W.C., a former skittle ground was used as both scullery and stable, and there was nowhere to store casks. It stood next to Nos. 7-9 White Street, small two-storey cottages, not much improved since the sixteenth century, and behind these were ‘wretched’ small tenements. The school now conceived a plan to pull down all these, rebuilding larger and newer properties in their place, and Freeman won the tender to do it all.

The work was completed: what had been four properties along the street front were combined into three, and as White Street in the meantime had been absorbed into Long Lane and doors renumbered, it meant that 7, 8, 9, 10 White Street became 17, 19, 21 Long Lane (Fig. 3). However, Freeman had been ruined. He had paid the school a premium of £700 for the lease, and then the building costs over-ran by £1,200, forcing him into a mortgage from the Courage brewery. He had also been plagued by worsening headaches. At 5.30am on 26 April 1879, Freeman sat at the edge of a shallow water tank at the back of the Royal Standard where, having procured a six-barrel revolver, he shot himself, drowning in the tank. The inquest returned a verdict of suicide while in a state of temporary insanity. Press reports suggested that he had lost a good deal of money from the building, and that this had led to his suicide, but his severe headaches, with witnesses reporting a change in his character, may point to an underlying health condition.

Not long before, Freeman had married his housekeeper, Susannah, who took over the Royal Standard after his death; she later took on a manager Albert Lambert, and then married him.

The school sold most of its freehold at auction in 1895. The new owners did not hold these for long, because soon the London County Council bought out all freehold and leasehold interests, for a new road layout. By 1903, the Fox and the Royal Standard, and neighbouring properties, had been pulled down. Long Lane was widened, the new street covering the entire site of the Fox, and part of the Royal Standard. Apart from pedestrianisation of the new part of Tabard Street, the road layout today is as created when the pubs were demolished over a hundred years ago.

– David Elis-Williams

David Elis-Williams studied Physics and Applied Statistics at university, later qualified as a public finance accountant and was Finance Director at the Isle of Anglesey County Council. Since retiring, he has pursued interests in history and archaeology, including publishing ‘St Gwyddelan’s Church and the Medieval Geography of Dolwyddelan’ in the journal ‘Archaeology in Wales’. He is a governor of WEA YMCA CC Cymru, the all-Wales adult education charity.

Shops and offices have long been an accompaniment to London’s railway stations – if only the near ubiquitous W. H. Smith bookstall or the offices of coal merchants with piles of coal alongside adjoining sidings. Those almost from the railways’ earliest days. Later London Transport, pushing out its tendrils into a Middlesex countryside barren of shops, incorporated them into the ground floors of station buildings – buildings in modern movement style designed to make a statement about place and provide a focus for emerging suburbs.

But what is this? At Canary Wharf, the shops and cafes at Crossrail Place are there two years before the trains. For Crossrail Place is a northward extension of the Wharf, plugged into it and into adjoining Poplar. The owners of the Wharf have not only provided the site for the new Crossrail station (designed by Foster & Partners) but built the whole thing short of fitting out platforms and concourse. And on top of those two levels are four more, the highest of them the subject of my picture.

For this is what is inside the barrel-vaulted roof of Crossrail Place – a long, winding roof garden, with lattice roof above, part glazed, part open to the sky. The garden (laid out by landscape practice Gillespies) has planting to reflect the explorations of nineteenth century plant hunters who searched to east and west for new species to bring back to avid Victorian plantmen and owners of stately homes. The roof garden, which is open to the public and free, has explanatory plaques about this, which seek (somewhat artificially, one might think) to link the east-west reach of the plant collectors with the new east-west line railway. Crossrail, of course, gets to its destinations rather more quickly than the plant collectors. The journey time from east (say, Canary Wharf) to the west (say, Bond Street) will be a mere 13 minutes, with a train every five.

On a visit by the Queen recently, Transport for London announced that Crossrail is to be renamed the Elizabeth Line. But Londoners have a habit of rechristening such projects. What started officially as ‘the Baker Street and Waterloo Railway’ soon became ‘the Bakerloo’. So what’s the betting on this one becoming ‘the Lizzie Line’? Affectionate rather than lèse-majesté, of course.

– Tony Aldous

**Circumspice (see p.3)**

**Reviews**


In 1829 Samuel Leigh, a commercially-minded publisher, particularly of travellers books, produced an extremely detailed 60 foot engraved panorama of the banks of the Thames from Twickenham and Richmond to the City, and another showing an extensive view of London from the Adelphi. The panoramas were folded and housed in boxes so that the panoramas could be consulted as the traveller proceeded along the Thames, passing the buildings depicted. The panoramas were far more luxurious than Leigh’s normal range of publications and the editors suggest that the expenses, and losses, involved could have contributed to his suicide two years later.

The panoramas are now extremely rare. Using the latest digital technology the editors have re-created a near-perfect, reduced-size copy. The original panorama has the Thames at the centre with the views of the banks facing each other at top and bottom, but in this version each bank is, wisely, shown separately, though a few sheets, showing just fields without building, have been omitted. Leigh’s original descriptions are quoted selectively (except for the view from the Adelphi where the descriptive text is quoted in full), however the editors have sought the assistance of the local history societies of the areas depicted to provide detailed accounts of the buildings depicted. There are short descriptions above the buildings on the panarama, from, initially, drawings (now apparently lost) to presentation, and on the digital enhancement of the original images.

The result is a book, providing images that were rarely if ever depicted on contemporary views. One can see riverside villas, which usually proved transient, and the signs of the more intensive urban development that was to lead to almost total urbanisation by 1870, and, particularly factories and warehouses. Indeed the panorama from the Adelphi is almost revolutionary in nature, with the...
City and Westminster with their churches and unreformed parliament relegated to the left and right margins while the focus is on the industrial sites on the South Bank. It is an appropriate image for the stormy period that led three years after the publication of the panoramas to the passing of the Reform Bill.

The authors intend readers of their book to travel back to 1829. All mention of developments after that date have been intentionally excluded and at times the language tries to emulate the florid style of the period. This may irritate some readers particularly those who are not familiar with the detailed history of the areas covered by the Thames panoramas and may want to know when the buildings shown were demolished. Moreover there are signs of haste in the production. There are repetitions and a few typos and though the gazetteer proclaims itself to be an A-Z the organisation of the information within the individual sections is neither alphabetical nor in sequence with the views, though page references do facilitate use.

Despite these weaknesses, this reasonably priced and handsome book can be strongly recommended to anyone curious to see the less familiar parts of early nineteenth-century London. It would certainly have delighted the much-lamented Ralph Hyde.

– Peter Barber


The celebrated Danish architect Steen Rasmussen, writing in *London the Unique City* in 1937, considered that London was best understood as a series of linked villages. Eighty years later Travers adds a further layer to our comprehension of London’s immense complexity – the role of the post-war boroughs in shaping the built environment.

Tony Travers is a professor at the London School of Economics who has written extensively on local government, and that of London in particular, and combines academic rigour with an immensely readable style and eye for quirky detail. Where else would you learn that Waltham Forest might have been called the London Borough of Forestlea, or that the London Borough of Bexley held a competition to name its new estate, and ‘Thamesmead’ was the winning name submitted by a local resident? This makes the book a delight to read, and converts what could so easily have been a dull plod into a sprightly canter through half a century of London’s local government.

A canter it is, with so much to cover; and a triumph too, with so much covered so well. We start with the creation of the Greater London Council, with particular controversy surrounding the number of constituent boroughs, their powers and their extent. Every single one, save the London Borough of Harrow, entailed some combination of or, depending on your point of view, mutilation to, the existing boroughs and urban and rural district councils. The proud County Boroughs of Croydon and East and West Ham were reluctant to surrender their powers, while suburbia fought tooth and nail to stay outside, and Epsom made its Town Clerk an honorary freeman for his successful efforts in keeping it in Surrey. One resulting quirk is that Surrey County Hall remains embedded in the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.

There follows a brief history of each of the 32 boroughs; this is a mine of information, drawing on material supplied by the boroughs themselves supplemented by the author’s own researches. What emerges is that, while each borough is a semi-autonomous fiefdom, they have much in common and their policies have significantly converged in recent years under the tutelage of an increasingly interventionist central government. Three points come across strongly from these diverse histories.

While the historic shape of London depended so much on the haphazard development of private estates, the post-1965 London boroughs represented the zenith of centralised planning and development. Nearly every borough had its grandiose housing projects – streets in the sky which, as Glendenning & Muthesius pointed out in *Tower Block* (1994), were viewed as a symbol of local and municipal pride. Until, that is, Ronan Point came tumbling down in Canning Town in 1968 and the tide turned against the new brutalism. Forty years later most councils were demolishing their 1960s developments, blighted by damp, asbestos and unguarded walkways and replacing them with housing built on a more humane scale.

Next, politics. Nearly every borough went Tory in May 1968, apocryphally a reaction to Enoch Powell’s *Rivers of Blood* speech a few weeks earlier but more probably a sign of ennui against the then Labour government. The old style Labour councillors disappeared and were replaced by the new hard left like Ken Livingstone, elected in Lambeth in 1971. The result was 20 years confrontation with central, generally Tory, government. These were the years of refusing to set a rate, declaring borough-wide nuclear-free zones, opposing development in Docklands and government intervention in failed boroughs. It was the residents who bore the brunt, suffering from poor services and poorer housing maintenance. This was when London was beginning to look terminally run down.

Lastly, the good news. Since around 2000 the boroughs have become brighter, recognising their
role in a globalising economy and seeking to boost investment in housing, development and employment. Travers points out the irony that it is now the Labour-controlled boroughs, especially those adjoining the Thames, that are at the forefront of promoting spectacular new developments.

And we end with some counterfactuals (might-have-beens to you and me). What if... there had indeed been over 50 boroughs in a much wider GLC? Or the motorway box had been built? Or docklands had been allowed to stagnate? Or population had fallen below six million? All of these are fascinating possibilities, and discussing them highlights how, as always, London owes its present form and shape (to borrow the title of Michael Hebert's splendid survey) more to fortune than design.

– Simon Morris


As you might guess from the publisher, this is not popular history, but, although it is a scholarly book, it is also a good read. It tells the story of fog in London from Elizabeth I’s complaints about the smoke to the killer fogs of the 1950s and 60s, and also tells the story of the many attempts to solve the problem. In the seventeenth century there were complaints from Robert Hooke and John Evelyn about the smoky atmosphere, caused by the burning of sea coal. Conditions grew worse in the eighteenth century, with many complaints by foreign visitors such as Haydn, who claimed it was the cause of his rheumatism, but the true London fog, the dense, yellow smog, started in the early nineteenth century, caused by pollution from industry combining with domestic fires, as London began to expand rapidly. Some fogs lasted for up to a week, causing much hardship for the population, though it brought out a sense of community, a sort of Blitz spirit. Cab drivers found it hard to get around, and there were lots of accidents, but it gave more work to the linklighters, and it was good weather for pickpockets and burglars. Lamps had to be lit in shops during the day, and it was impossible to read indoors without lighting candles.

It wasn’t just central London that was affected by the fog. In 1922 a woman died in Croydon station, having fallen from the station platform on to the track to be hit by a train. Nor was it only human lives which were at risk. When the Royal Smithfield Club moved its annual Smithfield Club cattle show in 1868 from Smithfield to the Royal Agricultural Hall in Islington, they thought they would avoid the poor weather conditions of central London, but in 1873 one of the worst fogs in living memory badly affected the cows, many of which died or had to be slaughtered.

From early in the nineteenth century, writers, poets and novelists began to refer to London’s fogs in their work, though it may come as a surprise to discover that the first mention of a ‘pea-souper’ was by the American author Herman Melville who, in a travel journal, referred to an ‘old-fashioned pea soup fog’. Pea soup today is green, but traditional pea soup was made from dried split peas, which were yellow, the colour of the fog. The fogs had several other names, including ‘London particular’, first used by Dickens, the name was well chosen, as ‘London particular’ was also a kind of Madeira wine, which was brown, like the worst fogs.

By then, there were calls for Parliament to act, as the fogs were a nuisance to the capital’s inhabitants and made its buildings dirty; it was only later that the health problems were recognised. There was much opposition to the calls for reform, and parliamentary action to tackle the problem was slow and sporadic, due to support for industrial interests.

Much of the book is taken up with analysis of the use of fog in the work of authors such as Dickens, Henry James, Conan Doyle and Joseph Conrad, all of whom used it for symbolic purposes. The author also considers several minor novelists, often unnecessarily relating the plots at great length, but I was surprised that she doesn’t mention Margery Allingham’s famous, if over-rated, novel The Tiger in the Smoke, in which fog plays a key role. Monet’s and Whistler’s pictures are also discussed, with their prolific use of fog, along with the work of several lesser artists, some of which deserve to be better known.

I feel I should highlight a couple of rather surprising topographical howlers. In describing one of Monet’s paintings of the Houses of Parliament, what is clearly the Victoria Tower is called St Stephen’s Tower, and a photograph of the Haymarket in fog refers to the dome of St Paul’s in the background, which would be impossible, and is actually the much smaller dome of Her Majesty’s Theatre.

One of the great joys of the book is the selection of photographs, cartoons and paintings, including work by Cruikshank, Turner, Tenniel and Leech. The book is worth buying for the illustrations alone.

– Peter Matthews


page 15
index, CD-ROM of tables and metadata, £35.00. ISBN 978 1 907586 293.

This was a mega-excavation: lasting from 1991, the year the new fruit and vegetable market opened in Leyton, LB Waltham Forest, to 2007, and covered 4 ha (c. 10 acres). The findings were significant: a roman cemetery, the medieval priory and churchyard of St Mary Spital, including some 11,000 graves, and hundreds of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth-century houses, together with vast quantities of household artefacts.

The roman cemetery and the medieval priory and the osteology of its graveyard are the subjects of three separate monographs. The focus of this volume is the archaeology and social history of the households of this study area. It is divided into the following sections: a) the post-Dissolution development of the priory site, circa 1539-1660; b) the further development of the site and suburb, circa 1660-1880, and c) essays on a range of social history and architectural topics.

Whilst the names of several of the builder-developers will be familiar from the Survey of London, Spitalfields and Mile End new town, LCC 1957, there is further evidence in this volume under review, of their work on the Artillery Garden site (formerly part of the St. Mary Spital precinct) and around the original Spitalfields Market, founded in 1682 to serve the developing area. The authors identify several of the sites excavated, their builder-developers, and former tenants, and link them to the respective dated finds assemblages recovered. This study of these finds groups – dubbed ‘household archaeologies’ – represents something of a pioneering effort and follows similar studies in the United States, but is not usually possible on complex urban sites in the United Kingdom.

25 Fort Street for example, was the home of James and Elizabeth Vernell, silk manufacturers of Huguenot extraction, who leased the property until 1813/14 when they moved to the more fashionable Spital Square. His will (NA Prob 11/1911 of 1839) shows that James was a wealthy man, although the silk weaving industry was by then past its peak. Evidence of a theft from his warehouse provides an insight into the running of his business. Household artefacts left behind tell us something of domestic circumstances, although disappointingly, non-French! Faunal and botanical remains provide information on diet. Other families investigated in this way are the Van Milligens of 5 Spital Square (1850s) and the Harts and Woolfs of 31 Fort Street (1870s).

The last section of the volume (Part IV) explores aspects of the suburb’s administration and the topography of its development, together with its diverse religious life. Evidence from the ‘household archaeologies’ provides a basis for discussion of sanitation and rubbish disposal, leisure activities and working life. Of particular interest to members will be the section on the architecture of the early suburb and discussions on the methodology of reconstruction of mid sixteenth – eighteenth-century houses for the purpose of adding to our knowledge of London house types.

Altogether a rigorous archaeological and historical survey, with many fascinating insights into the growth and development of a less well-known part of Spitalfields.

– Rosemary Weinstein

Smithfield Past, Present & Future

To many people, Smithfield means meat. Cattle and sheep were traded here in open pens from the early middle ages until 1855, when the live animal trade was moved to Copenhagen Fields. In 1868 the Metropolitan Meat and Poultry Market designed by City architect Horace Jones opened, and meat and poultry have continued to be sold there right up to today. Smithfield Market still survives and prospers as the last wholesale market in the City of London, in an increasingly vibrant and regenerated Clerkenwell, which reverberates with the bustle of restaurants, clubs, bars and offices.

Over 35 years ago, Alec Forshaw, architect and former Islington Conservation Officer, published Smithfield Past & Present (1980), which was illustrated with atmospheric photographs by Theo Bergström. At that time, the market was seriously threatened by the Greater London Council, who wished to move the meat market outside of central London, as occurred with the other wholesale markets of Billingsgate, Covent Garden and Spitalfields. A second edition of the book appeared in 1990, after the Corporation of London had committed to retain and refurbish the market and this, the third edition, is a timely update. The Smithfield area, close to the Crossrail interchange at Farringdon, is expected to experience rapid economic growth as access is improved. The author has partly rewritten the text, and significantly updated the content, following further threats to parts of the market in recent years.

Forshaw, a tireless campaigner for London’s threatened heritage, describes with clarity the long
and complex recent battle between the City of London, Henderson Global Investors, English Heritage and campaigners such as SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Victorian Society. The battle was to prevent the demolition of Smithfield General Market, the vacant Fish Market, the Red House, and the Engine House, at the Farringdon Road end of West Smithfield. The threat ended in the summer of 2014, when the then Secretary of State for Local Government, Eric Pickles, rejected a £160 million development plan by Henderson Global Investors, and Forshaw ends the story with optimism, with the prospect of the Museum of London's move into the market buildings.

Smithfield's story is about more than just meat. Forshaw traces Smithfield's development from Roman times to the present, including the priory church of St Bartholomew the Great and the adjoining hospital (now the biggest NHS trust in the UK), and the story of Bartholomew Fair, which took place every year from 1133 to 1855. Originating as an important cloth fair, it became London's biggest annual jam-boree. After its suppression in 1855 the street pattern was reconfigured, focused on the new central buildings for the market designed by Horace Jones.

Smithfield is a remarkable area of London that is full of architectural gems, both religious and secular, surviving ancient street patterns, and quaint nooks and passages. As someone who knows the area well, reading this book made me want to visit old haunts and explore new places. Lying just outside the City walls, it was untouched by the Great Fire in 1666, and despite the devastation caused by the Blitz in the area that was to become the Barbican, Smithfield itself was remarkably unscathed. I particularly enjoyed Chapter 6, Living and Living it up, which charts the rise and fall and rise again of Smithfield as a place to live. It also explores the growth of 'boutique' hotels such as the Zetter and The Rookery, and the varied and interesting public houses, which due to a variety of factors have survived in large numbers, unlike other parts of London, where pubs close every week.

One minor criticism is the lack of sufficient large scale plans. The historic maps reproduced, such as Richard Horwood's 1799 map (p.55) and the OS map of 1873 (p.74), would have been more useful had they focused more closely on Smithfield. On occasion the words of the author become slightly autobiographical (as he admits at the start of Chapter 8), but these are minor points. The third edition of Smithfield Past, Present & Future is a really important publication that explores many aspects of this unique part of London. The future looks good for Smithfield, and as the author Graham Swift wrote in his 1996 novel Last Orders, long may the area continue to be ‘...the true centre, the true heart of London. Bleeding heart, of course, on account of the meat’.

– Dr Ann Robey


The Dulwich Notebook is an extremely attractive book. It is beautifully designed, very well printed (in colour) throughout and with illustrations on almost every page. The photographs by Torla Evans, commissioned for the book, are excellent as is the selection of historic images, many of which will be unfamiliar. And for a book produced to such high standards its price represents outstanding value. The defining feature of Mireille Galinou’s book, and what differentiates it from the more familiar style for local guides, is the inclusion of as much material about the wholly contemporary as about the past. The pages showing, for example, succulent displays of food in fact exceed those with historic maps.

One can imagine that other parts of London, all with a historic village centre but today the disparate result of several centuries’ development, would be well suited to the treatment in this book – perhaps Clapham or Wimbledon or Hampstead – but it works especially well for Dulwich. A number of old estates survive in London, but they are the product of aristocratic landholdings and run today as commercial businesses. The estate at the heart of Dulwich, which began life in 1619, owes its being to Edward Alleyn, no aristocrat but an actor and entrepreneur in Shakespeare’s London. He decided to found a school for poor scholars, an almshouse and a chapel and to fund the charity from his lands, the Manor of Dulwich. Alleyn’s College of God’s Gift at Dulwich is today the Dulwich Estate and it is the thread that binds together much of the material included in the Dulwich Notebook. The charitable estate is unique in London in still comprising, despite the passage of 400 years, an impressive 1500 acres and, although the Leasehold Reform Act of 1967 led to it losing its freeholds of residential property, a ‘scheme of management’ has continued to give it considerable power over new development. This power, together with the Estate’s continued ownership of extensive land, has certainly had a profound influence on how Dulwich looks today: the generous extent of green space, the churches, the independent schools and the almost complete lack of social housing (though the Estate’s joining with Wates to build many modestly priced dwellings in the 1960s amounted to a form of social housing).

A different book might have explored more closely the way in which the Dulwich Estate managed its lands and how this part of London came to assume its distinctive character, or it might have looked at
the tensions, which persist today, between a charitable institution bound to optimise returns for its beneficiaries and the effect of this on the wider local community. In place of such concerns one is rewarded with many interesting insights into what can be found in Dulwich, with a particular emphasis on creative artists/artisans working in the area. There is of course a danger that what can be found today, whether artist’s studio or delicatessen, will not be found tomorrow. This may date the book, but it will also provide a lively evocation, a snapshot of the Dulwich area at one particular time.

Those with loyalties to Brixton, Herne Hill, Camberwell or Forest Hill might criticise the inclusion of landmarks in what they regard as their territory, but one can also understand why the author could not resist writing about Brockwell Park and its fine 1937 Lido or the extraordinary Horniman Museum. Missing from the book, however, is any image or account of the Half Moon Horniman Museum. Missing from the book, however, is any image or account of the Half Moon – Laurence Marsh

Ivy-mantled tower. A history of the Church and Chuchyard of St Mary Hornsey, Middlesex


Hornsey was once a secluded village within the manor of the Bishop of London, some four miles north of the City, on the reverse slope of the Highgate ridge. St Mary’s church appears to have been a conventionally simple construction of nave and chancel, extended in the late fifteenth century with a south aisle under a separate roof, where a more prosperous parish might also have raised the nave to create a clerestory. A substantial western tower was added. It is this tower, surviving the vicissitudes of a succession of St Mary’s parish churches, that is the focus of Bridget Cherry’s deeply-researched and beautifully presented book.

A wide range of sources has been investigated, including a splendid collection of images of various kinds showing St Mary’s over the centuries. Medieval wills throw light through their bequests; one towards building a tower occurs in 1429 but funds were still being collected at the end of that century, when the tower was built of red brick with the facing of stone then thought requisite for a church’s exterior. The use of rubble stone of many varieties suggests that cost was stringently controlled, though the tower was planned on a substantial scale, similar, Cherry points out, to those of churches adjacent to episcopal palaces at Lambeth and Fulham, with provision for bells and bell-ringers, and a room for a Vestry. But Hornsey did not attain its fourth stage, again suggesting impecuniosity. Nevertheless, in 1552 there were three bells in the steeple.

St Mary’s proved a popular place for burial, the fees being lower than in neighbouring Highgate (partly in Hornsey parish); the book discusses the many monuments put up in the church (including some now elsewhere) as well as in the soggy churchyard. Intermittent vestry minutes from the eighteenth century record repairs and unfulfilled intentions to rebuild, voted down on grounds of cost. Yet new large windows were constructed about 1800, a legacy provided an organ in 1806, and a new gallery was agreed to in 1815 (though perhaps not constructed). The charming, still rural village offered London artists a handy subject; Cherry has been able to find many water-colours and prints of St Mary’s in this period.

Yet London was advancing. By the early nineteenth century church-building had become fashionable, and, it is unsurprising that (given an enterprise new rector) a Vestry in May 1831 voted to rebuild St Mary’s with about 1000 sittings, more than double the number in the old church. Cherry describes the remarkable burst of activity that followed, which in some eighteen months from the submission of tenders saw the consecration of a lofty new church, aisled and clerestoried, at a cost of some £7,500. There was one notable economy: the Tudor tower was retained – though it was raised with a new belfry.

London’s incessant growth found Hornsey with a population of 37,000 in 1881, and in 1887-89 the history of 1831-3 was repeated. A larger church in Perpendicular style rose on an adjoining site, designed by a leading church architect, James Brooks, though his impressive tower and spire were left for future churchgoers to finance. Again, we are given splendid illustrations (moving into the photographic era). The old church fell into decay and was demolished, save for the tower, in 1927.

St Mary’s seemed fated. Brooks’s church, built apparently on made-up ground, experienced worsening settlement cracks, as well as wartime bomb damage. In 1967 the diocese decided on total demolition and rebuilding. Here Cherry elucidates the important ‘contemporary history’ that is often forgotten or confused in the recollection of those who live through it. Under post-war planning laws, the local authority had to approve a new structure, but its desire for ‘architecturally striking’ clashed with the ecclesiastics’ desire for a church ‘relict in design’. Prolonged negotiations proved fruitless;
the new church project abandoned, St Mary’s was merged with neighbouring St George’s, Cranley Gardens.

The old Tudor tower however was still standing; its bells removed in 1964, all openings sealed. Was it too doomed? It was rescued fortuitously as a result of the creation of a Conservation Area for Hornsey High Street. Members of the volunteer Advisory Committee forced an entrance in 1987, to discover that the lead roofing had been stripped, and the roof was in danger of collapse. Cooperation with the Hornsey Historical Society and the rector led to a rescue committee that established a body of ‘Friends’. Volunteers raised funds to enable emergency repairs, followed by restoration of the former vestry room, permitting Sunday services and community functions to be held there, and in 2005-06 raised £18,000 for major external works to ensure the tower’s future. Further voluntary work achieved the restoration of churchyard and garden. The tower may have lost its ‘ivy-mantled’ romantic charm, but preserved in active use, it also has an important function as a public memory of a lost village, one beautifully documented in this delightful book.

– M. H. Port

The Red Lion Brewery by Victoria Hutchings.

This small but beautifully produced book tells of the now almost forgotten brewery in Lower East Smithfield that belonged to the Hoare banking family in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It had come into their hands in 1802 but its long history and the vicissitudes of the many owners stretched back to early Tudor times, which Victoria Hutchings recounts in the first three brief chapters.

The Hoares became involved when Henry, a partner in the bank, bought a share in the brewery for his younger son George Matthew but the succeeding 136 years were not particularly successful. There were financial troubles with the large family of uncles, nephews and cousins, not to mention various members of the brewery trade who held directorships and appeared to do more work than the family. By the early 1890s the brewery was thriving for a short while but this success was not maintained. The natural link between the outside directors and the bank was troubled and at critical moments in its history its survival owed more to men like businessmen Francis Woodbridge and Arthur Wigan than to members of the family. When Charles Booth interviewed William Hoare in 1897 about the men who were employed, the rise in prices of public houses and his views on the varying policies of the licensing authorities he got little joy. The financial catastrophes that followed seemed less surprising in the light of Booth’s judgment. Quarrels in the next 40 years inevitably led to the eventual closure of the brewery and to the loss of much of the anecdotal history.

– Denise Silvester-Carr

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Bookshop Corner

Our Vice President and former editor chooses her favourite bookshop.

When Ed Millband was asked to name his favourite bookshop, he replied promptly, ‘Primrose Hill Books, of course’, and he was right. This Bookshop stands in a line of shops, most tending to be costly, excepting Primrose Hill Books (PHB henceforward) which sells an amazing range of volumes all at the publishers’ prices – there is no sign of Amazon here. The interior looks smaller than it really is; the bookshelves and piles of volumes crowd in on all sides, unlike Waterstones with its open floorspace with just one or two strategically placed tables piled high with a single bestseller forcing itself on your attention. At PHB, Jessica Graham (the owner) sits at the back of the shop, in front of the window, while customers queue up, clutching purchases or to ask for advice and guidance.

Twice a year, before Christmas or the summer holidays, she publishes 32 pages of suggested reading, each volume with a short description. I often yearn to buy at least half her recommendations: all that checks me is the knowledge that I lack time to read them. Jessica is married to Marek Laskowski who runs the second-hand department and will always search for anything you desire.

In this day and age, it is worth searching out PHB (or any similar emporium) for personal service, excellence of selection and reliability of advice.

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Registered charity no. 271590

The Society’s website address is: www.topsoc.org

ISSN 1369-7986

The Newsletter is published by the London Topographical Society twice a year, in May and
November, and issued by the Newsletter Editor: Bridget Cherry, Bitterley House, Bitterley,
near Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3HJ.

Produced and printed by The Ludo Press Ltd, London SW17 0BA.
Tel. 020 8879 1881 www.ludo.co.uk