

LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY  
**Newsletter**  
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Poster for travel by London Tramways 1928  
 Printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. Collage – the London Picture  
 Archive, image 36923. See p.7-8

**Notes and News**

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on 2 July 2019 at St Andrew's Church Holborn. Minutes and Annual Report will be published in the May *Newsletter*. The Officers and Members of the Council elected are listed on the back page of this *Newsletter*. We are delighted to welcome our new council member, the medieval historian Caroline Barron, and offer her our congratulations on her recent OBE. Following the meeting Caroline gave us some insights into the interesting history of the parish of St Andrew Holborn, adjacent to the City but sited west of the river Fleet. She was followed by our council member Dorian Gerhold, who described his research on this year's splendid publication on Old London Bridge. Congratulations are due to Dorian for this excellent work, which has received much favourable publicity, including several pages in a special *Country Life* issue on London.

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**Out of the Ruins of Cripplegate by David Gilchik 1962**

'Cripplegate' by David Gilchik, 1962 shows new buildings arising amidst postwar desolation; David Sherlock's view of the same area, 1965, displays the brave new world of London Wall is now virtually unrecognisable. Atmospheric views capture the character of individual streets, such as Anthony Eyton's 'Spitalfields windows' 1975-6, which is hung as part of a chronological sequence of houses, from the eighteenth-century terrace to the twentieth-century suburban villa. Studies of the geometrical grids of tower-block housing provide an alternative approach. The process of change is demonstrated by a memorable sequence of photographs by Rachel Whiteread, showing the demolition of the towers of Clapton Park, while the haunting film by Catherine Yass, 'Last Stand' shows the concrete core of a new tower rising slowly into the sky, amidst the raucous protests of wheeling seagulls. What a pity that this exhibition has no catalogue, with some discussion of the Gallery's collection policy; there is not even a handlist or a selection of postcards. You can however view all the gallery's oil paintings on ArtUK.

Also at the Guildhall Art Gallery, until 8 December, is an exhibition of archive materials '**The London Than Never Was**' an intriguing collection of plans and drawings of grand schemes that were never built.



**Broadgate Reflections by Brendan Neiland 1989**

## Mary Beale's painting-room in Pall Mall

Artists, as is noted elsewhere in this issue, have both lived and worked in London over many centuries. Penelope Hunting reveals here the career of Mary Beale, a celebrated portrait painter in the later seventeenth century. Her biography of Mary Beale, **My Dearest Heart**, is published by Unicorn (2019).

Mary Beale (1633–1699) was one of the first professional British women artists. Skilled, determined and industrious, she painted the portraits of archbishops, earls, politicians, Fellows of the Royal Society, beautiful women and adorable children. In one year alone, 1677, she completed eighty-three portraits at her Pall Mall 'paynting-roome'/studio. As a professional woman artist she was preceded by Joan Carlile (c.1606–1679) whose portraits date from the 1650s, but Carlile was not as productive nor as successful as Mary Beale whose career reached its zenith in the 1670s.

Mary was the only daughter of a Suffolk vicar, the Reverend John Cradock (1595–1652). After the death of her mother in 1644 Mary was brought up by her father who encouraged her interest in art (Cradock was himself an amateur artist and a freeman of the Painter-Stainers' Company). Following Mary's marriage to Charles Beale (1631–1705) in 1652, the couple chose to live in Covent Garden, the artists' quarter of London with Sir Peter Lely's studio at its centre. The Beales moved to Hind Court, Fleet Street, when Charles was appointed Deputy Clerk of the Patents Office in



**Mary Beale, Self portrait, 1672. St Edmundsbury Heritage Service**

1660. There they entertained 'people of quality', many of whom were painted by Mary.

Following Charles's dismissal from his post in 1664 the Beales abandoned London for Hampshire. Returning to the capital in 1669 in order to pursue Mary's career as a professional portraitist, Charles rented a recently built house near the sign of The Golden Ball, Pall Mall, part of the development of Pell Mell Fields by the Earl of St Albans between 1665 and 1670. The sign of The Golden Ball may have referred to a perfumer's shop at the south end of St James's Street or to a sign in Golden Lion Court, nearby. In the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1666, affluent society moved out of the City to the 'west end' and Mary Beale's studio was ideally located to attract patrons. Likewise, the flower painter Simon Verelst (1644–1721) lodged in St James's Street, and Queen Catherine of Braganza's favourite portrait painter, Jacob Huysmans (1633–1696), was living in St James's at the time of his death.

The Beales' tall brick house (the site is now numbers 59 to 63 Pall Mall) had a 22 feet frontage onto the north-west side of the street named Pall Mall after the game of pell mell played on the northern fringe of St James's Park. The house accommodated Charles and Mary Beale, their two sons and one or two servants; at the heart of the household was Mary's 'paynting-roome' where she worked long hours, six days a week. Closets in the garret, dining-room and attic were stacked with frames and stretchers; a laboratory or scullery was equipped with kettles, pails, grinders and pigs' bladders for storing paint. This was where Charles Beale experimented with colours, manufactured oil paints and prepared canvases for his wife.

Mary Beale's Pall Mall studio was a magnet for the British aristocracy, the episcopacy and neighbours in St James's. The list of those who made appointments is a veritable *Who's Who* of the seventeenth century. George Savile, Marquess of Halifax (1633-1695), a resident of St James's Square (Halifax House boasted some 50 rooms and the luxury of river water piped into the Marquess's bathroom), strode along Pall Mall to sit for Mary Beale in 1677 when Charles Beale noted 'Lord Halifax's face finished' in three hours. The Hon. Henry Coventry (1618-1686), who negotiated the Treaty of Breda with the Dutch in 1667, sought out Mary Beale and the resulting portrait is at Longleat House, Wiltshire. Mrs Beale painted George, Earl of Berkeley FRS (1627-1698), wearing ermine robes and with his coronet to hand, c.1679; Berkeley is remembered as one of 'the immortal seven' at The Hague in 1660 to invite King Charles II to take the throne. Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1638-1709), and the Countess, were personal friends of the Beales and they too posed for Mary in the 1670s. Another family, the Lowther/Thynnes, commissioned some 30 portraits from her in 1677. The physician Dr Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689), known as the English Hippocrates, was a neighbour in Pall Mall



During her most productive years Mary Beale lived near the sign of The Golden Ball, Pall Mall (1670-1699). The house was close to no. 169 on William Morgan's map of 1682. LTS publication 174 (2013)

who admired Mary's work; he was painted by her three times between 1672 and 1688. He loaned money to Charles Beale and encouraged young Bartholomew Beale to study medicine. Sydenham's associate, the royal apothecary Daniel Malthus (1651-1717), who lived at the sign of The Pestle and Mortar, Pall Mall, was painted by Mary 'on Account of Kindness and not for profit' in 1681. Those who commissioned Mary found her intelligent, congenial and pious; they often stayed to dine when the light faded, and they recommended her to their contemporaries.

Appointments with Mary Beale were organised by Charles, who devoted himself to furthering the career of 'My Dearest Heart'. His almanacks record names, dates, expenses and the progress of her work. Their sons, Bartholomew and Charles, assisted in the painting-room, completing the draperies and the decorative ovals that invariably framed their mother's head and shoulder portraits. Fellow artists Thomas Manby, William Moore and Henry Cooke worked amicably for Mary Beale, filling in backgrounds; Sarah Curtis was a pupil and two attractive young women frequented the painting-room when models were required.

The court painter Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680) encouraged Mary Beale, who was privileged to observe him at work (it was said that Lely first put a pencil in her hand before she was married). Lely's double portrait of Charles and Mary Beale, another of Mary in a low-cut white dress, Lely's self portrait, family portraits by Robert Walker, Thomas Flatman and by Mary herself, also her copies of paintings by Rubens, Van Dyck and Correggio hung on the walls of the Pall Mall house.

In 1672 Lely, accompanied by the artist Richard 'Dwarf' Gibson (1605/15–1690, he was just over a metre tall) visited Mary's painting-room. Lely commended her work, 'Coppyes & those from the life',

and he admired the alabaster casts of hands made by Charles (Mary painted heads and shoulders from life but hands, arms, draperies and backgrounds were finished later). Lely was invited to the Pall Mall painting-room again in 1677 to view Mrs Beale's latest portraits: Thomas Belasyse, Earl Fauconberg (husband of Mary Cromwell, the Lord Protector's daughter), Mrs Stillingfleet (wife of the Bishop of Worcester) and Sir William Turner (a former Lord Mayor) among them. Lely commented that 'Mrs Beale was very much improved in her painting'.

In contrast to the prosperity of the 1670s, in 1681 Charles and Mary Beale were 'in great want of money'. This was partly due to a lull in the art market after Lely's death. Moreover, the threat of the accession to the throne of the Roman Catholic Duke of York, which generated plots and riots, preoccupied Mary Beale's circle, with a consequent decline in the number of her commissions. Another factor in 'our low condition' was extravagance: Charles's tailor's bills, purchases of engraved pewter plates, furniture, engravings and books, the cost of entertaining and the consumption of quantities of cherry brandy left the family with just 2s 6d in the house to see them through to Easter 1681.

The accession to the throne of King William and Queen Mary in 1689 heralded a more stable, Protestant era which was to Mary's advantage. Daniel Finch (1647–1730), Earl of Nottingham, had been painted by her, with Lady Finch, in 1677 and, as Secretary of State to William and Mary, he influenced appointments of the clergy. Archbishops John Tillotson and Thomas Tenison, bishops Gilbert Burnet, Richard Kidder, Humphrey Humphreys, Symon Patrick, Edward Stillingfleet and James Gardiner celebrated their promotions by having their portraits painted by Mrs Beale. Her last portraits of the 1690s complete a unique visual record of the clergy, nobility, politicians, physicians and intellectuals who occupied centre stage in the history of the seventeenth century.

Mary Beale died aged 65 and was buried at St James's, Piccadilly. After the death of 'My Dearest Heart', Charles Beale lived with his son, Bartholomew, a physician in Coventry. The younger son, Charles, was a talented artist whose drawings are at the British Museum; he died unmarried and in poverty in Long Acre.

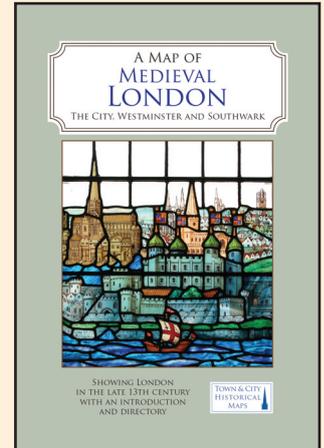
Mrs Beale's status as a professional artist in command of a busy studio in Pall Mall for 30 years deserves recognition. An unpublished catalogue of her work, compiled in the 1980s, lists around 160 verified oil paintings with another 40 or so attributed to her. More portraits have been discovered since and more will undoubtedly come to light as a result of the current surge of interest in pioneering women artists.

– Penelope Hunting

Note. Quotations are from Charles Beale's almanacks.

## A New Map of Medieval London

In 2018 the London Topographical Society generously supported the publication by the Historic Towns Trust of a new map of Tudor London. This was based on the map which Colonel Henry Johns had prepared for the HTT's *Atlas of The City of London* published in 1989. The Trust has now published a new *Map of Medieval London (c.1270–1300)* in the same easily-accessible folding map format as the map of Tudor London.



It is surprising how much of London at that early date it has been possible to show on the map, which now incorporates archaeological work by MOLA and documentary research carried out by several scholars including Martha Carlin, Nick Holder, David Lewis and Tim Tatton-Brown. The map highlights the building work being carried on at a number of the religious houses that circled London, at St Paul's Cathedral, at the Tower of London and at the south-west corner of the city where the city wall was extended to reach the Fleet River. By 1300 the new houses of friars were already having a dramatic impact on the topography of the city. It has also been possible to show the route of the new water supply brought in lead pipes to the house of the Greyfriars which, in turn, inspired the remarkable new public water supply, also brought in lead pipes from Tyburn via Fleet Street to the Great Conduit in Cheapside.

In 1300 the population of London numbered c.80,000 people but, as this map shows, it was still a city closely encircled by fields, orchards, marshes and vineyards. Southwark, so often treated as the poor relation of London, is shown to be a significant suburban development with a large monastic church dedicated to St Mary and now linked to the city by the fine new stone bridge completed c.1216. An inset map of the vill of Westminster is also included which demonstrates the significant urban development of the manor as the Palace there became not a royal retreat but, rather, the centre of a burgeoning civil service.

The back of the map is almost as rich as the front: apart from a directory listing all the streets and buildings shown, it includes an inset map of Lambeth and a remarkable reconstruction of London Bridge from Dorian Gerhold's 2019 book (London Topographical Society publication 182). The full text of William FitzStephen's account of the city in which he and Thomas Becket were both born, written in the aftermath of Becket's murder in 1170, is printed in full in a modern translation. In this way the map comes to life and it is possible to locate the young men of medieval London playing



## COLLAGE – The London Picture Archive

*Jeremy Smith, from the London Metropolitan Archives, explains the history and value of this exceptional database.*

*Collage* – The London Picture Archive is an image website for the City of London’s graphic collection and collection of paintings, representing the holdings of London Metropolitan Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery.

In the (astonishing) 20 years of its existence, *Collage* has become something of a brand name with London image seekers. What began as a treasured resource for professional picture researchers has blossomed to become one of London’s most widely visited image platforms, used by publishers, historians, students and London enthusiasts of all kinds.

The *Collage* database was first made available to view at the end of the 1990s and had its web launch in the year 2000. This was a remarkable step at a time when museum and library collections were viewed face to face at reading room tables, or on the walls of the institutions that owned them. In the early days the *Collage* development office saw a steady stream of visitors from peer institutions asking many questions and eager to enter the field.

Among London’s cultural institutions *Collage* was neck and neck with the National Gallery’s impressive ‘MicroGallery’, which understandably for a national collection attracted excellent publicity. But *Collage*, with at its core the prints and drawings that were then held at Guildhall Library, was the much larger database, launching with more than 20,000 images.

For *Collage* to have existed at all represents a massive act of faith by the City of London in the digital future. The City’s Common Council granted a substantial sum for the building of *Collage*, investing in photographic equipment and scanners and appointing a team of eight staff. In retrospect we can see how far-sighted this was, since image databases are now more or less expected of national and local government cultural institutions, in the same way that a working text catalogue ever was.

‘Early adopters’ as a pioneer such as *Collage* might reasonably be termed, are often saddled with prototype technology that is quickly overtaken by rivals. While not completely free of problems *Collage* has held out very well due to the strength of its original planning. It has also managed consistently to increase its offer in terms of sheer numbers, building up to the current **quarter of a million** London pictures that are now accessible under the *Collage* banner. Last year *Collage* users viewed images more than 2.5 million times.

Why should LTS members get to know *Collage*?

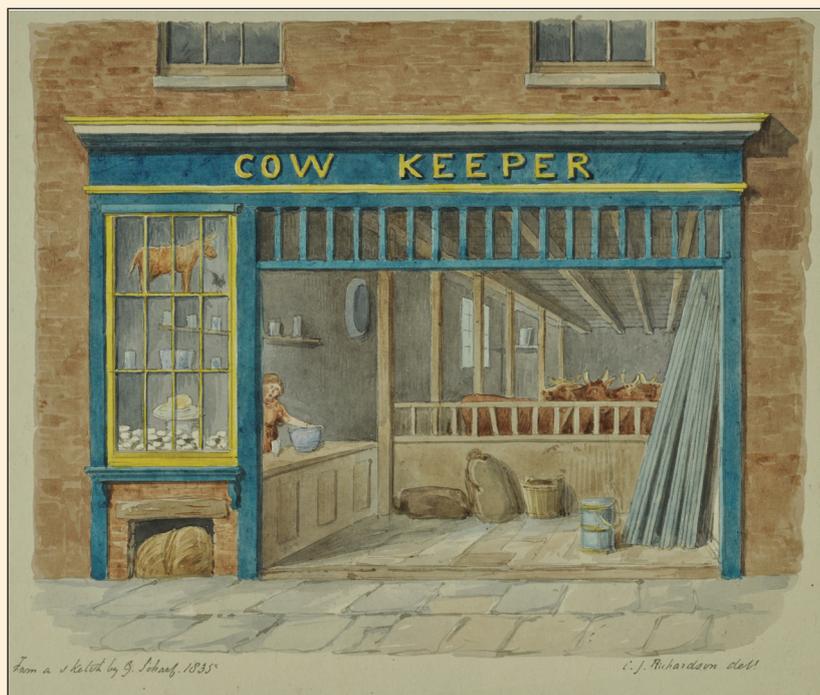
The real answer to this lies in the collections that are held at London Metropolitan Archives and Guildhall Art Gallery. Together they constitute the biggest collection of images devoted to a single subject that exists in the world. Or so we believe!

Made up of paintings, drawings, watercolours, prints, photographs, maps and ephemera and ranging from c.1450 to modern times *Collage* showcases the greatest visual assemblage of London materials that exists. In recent years we have added film. There are views of buildings, views of streets, panoramic views, aerial views, river views, portraits of Londoners and much more. These riches can be approached by artist, by street name, by building, by person, by medium or by date. The search possibilities are infinitely flexible and interconnected. And each result brings a high quality and enlargeable image to your screen.

*Collage* is a reliable friend for those high pressure, deadline-punching searches for illustrations, or can rescue a student essay, or else can provide many hours of pleasurable leisure browsing providing inspiration (sometimes inducing heavy London nostalgia) in the process.

To help get the best from *Collage* there are some suggested subject ‘Galleries’ of images on a chosen theme, proposed to you by LMA staff and more than 100 precise subject definitions for browsing. There is also a ‘London Picture Map’ allowing you to search images relating to a district just by clicking onto the relevant portion of a London street plan.

*Collage* has of course opened our resources to researchers all over the world, wherever the internet can be accessed. This is its greatest achievement. It puts London and London history vividly



The Shopfront of a Cow Keeper, Golden Lane, Barbican. Watercolour 1835 from a drawing by George Scharf. *Collage* – the London Picture Archive, image 320329



The Camel House, The London Zoological Gardens, 1828.  
Lithograph. Collage – the London Picture Archive, image 304386

onto the desk, laptop or palm of anyone that has the interest to explore our city. People will come to it from many different angles and with many different requirements, but *Collage* is flexible enough, we think, to be able to offer up something for all of them.

Images that are needed for reports or essays or books or television programmes can be flagged as ‘favourites’ for later review and if need arises can be purchased direct from the website as digital files, or as high-quality prints on paper. These can be passed on to designers, editors, colleagues or tutors – subject to certain conditions in the case of commercial uses.

An even larger version of the *Collage* database exists for researchers who are able to visit our archive search rooms in Clerkenwell EC1. Known as ‘*Collage Researcher*’ this version includes the many copyright images that we are not allowed to publish online.

*Collage* will continue to develop, and changes are planned for the year ahead including improved tools for viewing maps, additional search filters and more content in the London Picture Map facility. Plus, as ever, the number of archive collections that are captured and made available will continue to rise.

– *Jeremy Smith*

This *Newsletter* includes three examples from the wealth of visual material to be found in *Collage* – the London Picture Archive. The travel poster on page 1, is a reminder of the significant role played by transport advertising in the twentieth century, The London Tramways were operated by the London County Council, the records of which are held at the London Metropolitan Archives. The Golden Lane shopfront on p.7 is a watercolour after a drawing by George Scharf. It was not unusual for dairymen to keep their livestock in surprising locations. Finally, the lithograph above of the Camel House, was one of several views of the zoo by Scharf. Peter Jackson’s book (1987) about the artist’s work tells us that the building seen here was in fact designed (by Decimus Burton) to house Peruvian Llamas.

## The work of the Heritage of London Trust

*London is forever changing. Preserving significant evidence of the past, both large and small, adds to the excitement and depth of the urban experience and to our historical understanding. Dr Nicola Stacey, Director of the Heritage of London Trust, explains the important contributions made by HOLT in this field.*

The Heritage of London Trust is just approaching its 40th Birthday. Over four decades HOLT has restored 700 historic places across London. The colour and variety of these places reflects the astonishing richness of London’s built environment: clocks, weathervanes, temples, wells, gates, bells, schools, libraries, statues, memorials, spires, heraldry, grottoes, fountains, ruins – so much of what gives the city its character and tells stories of its past. As we reach the Spring of 2020, we take a quick look at a couple of our recent projects and the ways in which we work today.

London’s landscape continues to change at a fleet pace. Swathes of the City and outer London boroughs would be unrecognisable 40 years ago. Ring roads, business parks and office blocks press through pre-war housing and shops. The National Heritage List (England’s listing system) affords some protection to historic places but vital as it is, ultimately, the list is just a list. Building developments absorb their precursors with greater or lesser success. Some are triumphs, like the Goldsmith’s Centre for Contemporary Art in New Cross, the restoration and repurposing of the vast rusted iron water tanks and laundries of Laurie Grove’s Victorian public baths to create the chicest and most evocative new art space in south London. But others reduce and degrade: a few square feet of Bermondsey Abbey’s ruined great church, excavated in the early 2000s, are hidden beneath scratched glass in the corner of a Turkish restaurant in Bermondsey Square. Small, less prominent sites languish unnoticed – even if they are listed on the Heritage at Risk Register – as erosion and corrosion dissolve the stone and iron that keep them standing.



Laurie Grove baths’ water tanks, converted to gallery spaces in 2018 – Dr Nicola Stacey, HOLT Director, on site

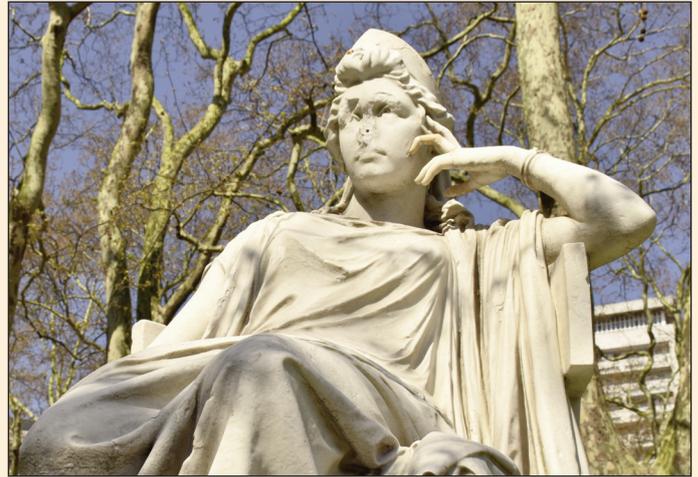
The Heritage of London Trust seeks out these particular places for support. Half of HOLT's projects are initiated by our small team. HOLT brings together conservators, local and statutory authorities, community groups and local residents to look at a site, consider costs, scope and time frame, get the right people on board and a restoration project going. Others are brought to us by the public, conservation officers, Historic England's Heritage at Risk team, vicars or local building trusts. We offer project grants early on and increasingly provide condition surveys to gather momentum and drive a project forward. We are steadfastly unbureaucratic and keep our grant application process simple. We don't mind whether the grant recipient is a charitable trust or a private business as long as the restoration completes to agreed conservation standards and provides public access. We recommend conservation specialists in all fields. We monitor project progress, visit frequently, and release grant funding once a project is completed satisfactorily. And we try wherever possible to bring together all those involved to celebrate their very notable successes at the end.

One of the earliest tenets of HOLT's work was to engage the public with London's heritage: through research, publications, visits and any other means we have to encourage its appreciation. Over the last year, we have invited local school children to our projects to learn about the history of the site and its conservation. The feedback from these visits has been tremendous, and we plan to extend our schools' programme in 2020.

### **Sarah Siddons statue, Paddington**

Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) was the best-known tragedienne of her era. Eldest daughter of the theatre manager Roger Kemble – many of whose descendants became well-known actors and actresses in the nineteenth century – she began as a lady's maid in Warwickshire, married aged 18 and had seven children, five of whom predeceased her. She briefly alighted on the London stage in 1774, followed by five years' work on the provincial theatre circuit. Returning to London in 1782, she became the greatest acting sensation of her time. Expressive and brilliant, her emotional power captivated Georgian audiences. Her empathetic performance of Lady Macbeth reconfigured understanding of the role. Public interest was phenomenal; she became a cult figure and feverish spectators, both men and women, had to be carried out of the theatre. The Duke of Wellington attended her receptions and 'carriages were drawn up before her door all day long'. She died in 1831 in London and was interred in St Mary's Cemetery at Paddington Green. Over 5,000 people attended her funeral.

During her lifetime Sarah Siddons was much illustrated, and she was painted as 'The Tragic Muse' by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1784. In 1897, a fine white marble statue of Siddons by the French



**The statue of Sarah Siddons, Paddington, before restoration**

sculptor Léon-Joseph Chavalliaud (d. 1919) was unveiled on Paddington Green, based on Reynolds's portrait, shortly after its opening as a public park. The actress sits regally in classical costume, with a dagger in her right hand and tragic mask under her chair.

With increasing anti-social behaviour in the park over recent years, the statue was badly vandalised in 2011. Her face was partly destroyed. Other parts of the statue were in poor condition, and historic repairs in polyester resin had failed. HOLT liaised with Westminster Council to get match funding for restoration over summer 2019, led by grant aid from HOLT. The statue was restored in summer 2019 by a team from London Stone Conservation. The conservators moulded her lost features first in a hard wax, using archive images as well as contemporary portraits of the actress, and carved new pieces in marble. HOLT brought a local school, Paddington Academy, to the project to visit the sculptors at work, find out about conservation and learn about Siddons's life and context. Our Patron HRH The Duke of Gloucester unveiled the restored statue on a sunny morning in July.

### **Sir Christopher Wren's spire, Lewisham**

The medieval St Antholin's Church, once tucked into the corner of Budge Row and Watling Street in the City, was rebuilt in 1682 after the Great Fire by Sir Christopher Wren. The top of the new spire



**The statue of Sarah Siddons, Paddington, after restoration by HOLT in 2019**

reached 154 feet, laid over a fine polygonal church. The Portland stone spire was itself octagonal in plan, divided by horizontal ribs and crowned with the head of a composite capital, with round shell architraves at its base. In 1829, its upper part was damaged in a storm, but it was rescued and sold for £5 to one of St Antholin's churchwardens, Robert Harrild. St Antholin's survived another 50 years but was demolished altogether in 1875 to make way for the development of Queen Victoria Street.

Born in Bermondsey, Robert Harrild (1780-1853) was a printing pioneer. He developed a new form of printing machinery, using rollers rather than hand held leather balls to apply the ink. These new rollers vastly increased newspaper production and by 1825 they had been installed in most Fleet Street offices. Harrild bought Round Hill House in Sydenham and had the Wren spire transported by cart to be re-erected on a brick plinth in his garden. A local benefactor, Harrild became involved in all aspects of Sydenham life, and one of its parish Poor Law guardians.

Round Hill House became the Sydenham and Forest Hill Social Club in the 1930s but was demolished in the 1960s, replaced by the current terraced estate. It is now managed by L&Q. The spire survives on a brick plinth in the centre of the estate along with a large cedar tree from Mr Harrild's garden.

The spire was structurally sound but the weathervane was corroded and unstable, the capital's scrolls badly eroded and thick black sulphation crust in the architraves. HOLT liaised with L&Q and Lewisham Council and got a grant match funded by L&Q. Again, conservators were London Stone Conservation, who have been working this autumn to restore the spire, recarve lost stonework and reinstall and regild the weathervane. HOLT brought two local schools – primary and secondary – to the site in October 2019 to learn about the Great Fire of London, Sir Christopher Wren and his rebuilding of London, and their local philanthropist, Robert Harrild.

At any one time, HOLT has 40 projects of this kind across London, usually in at least half of

London's boroughs. Our projects increasingly complete in under 18 months from first meeting, and standalone projects such as these above cost around £15,000-£20,000. Completely independently funded, HOLT raises its money from varied sources. HOLT's Patrons are offered an interesting programme of site visits, project launches and small special events, and HOLT also runs free public visits throughout the year and an annual conference at the Society of Antiquaries for anyone interested in its work. For more information on becoming a HOLT Patron or on our projects, visit [www.heritageoflondon.org](http://www.heritageoflondon.org), Heritage of London Trust, 34 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH or call 020 7099 0559.

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## Restoring the Palace of Westminster

*Over the last few months political activities within Westminster have distracted attention from the state of the buildings, surely the most complicated complex in the whole of London. Dorian Gerhold brings us up to date on the practical problems and the issues that they raise.*

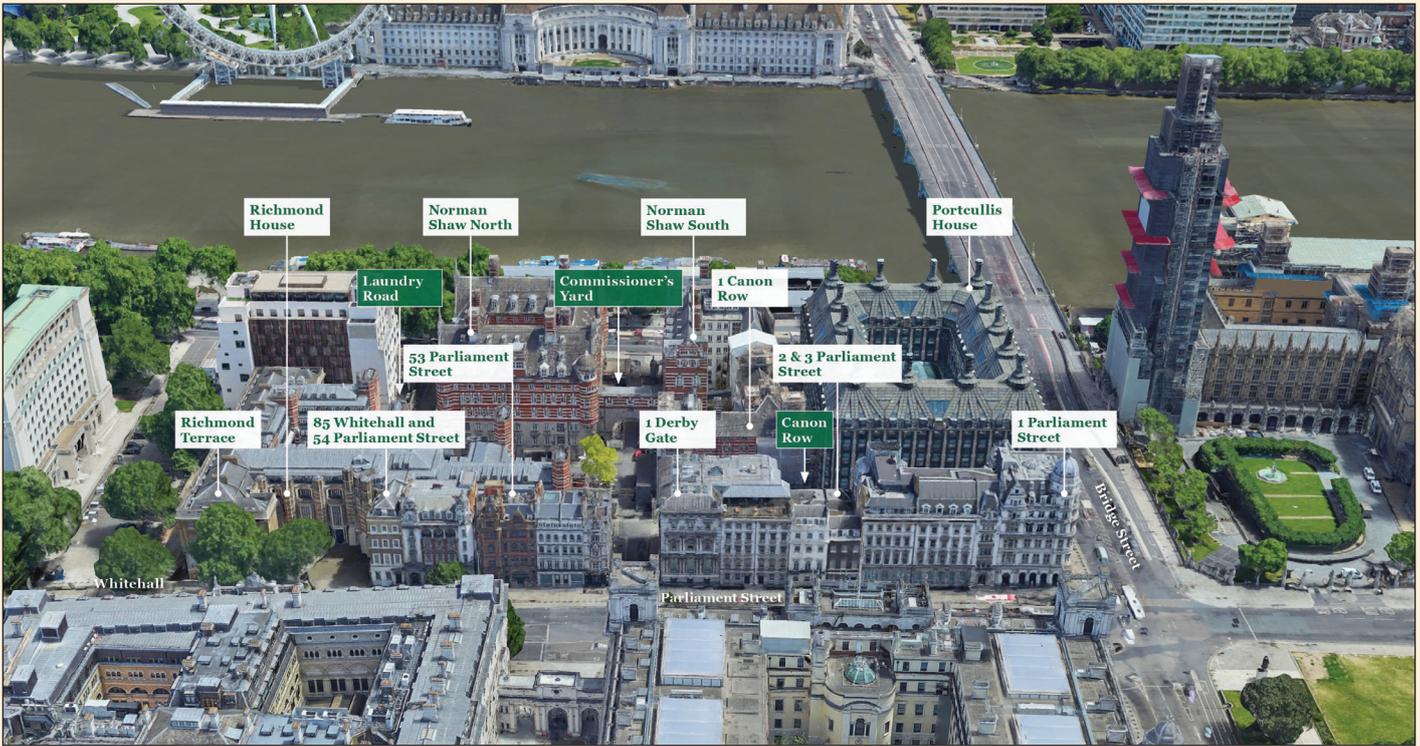
One of Britain's largest building projects, likely to take until the 2030s and to cost billions of pounds, is being prepared for Westminster. When completed, hardly any change will be visible from the street or from the Thames, but one of Britain's most historic buildings will have been rescued from serious threats and given a new lease of life.

That building is the Palace of Westminster, largely dating from about 1840 to 1870. The Palace's problems are not structural, but are instead its mechanical and electrical services (heating, ventilation, water, drainage, sewage and electrics), mostly installed in the late 1940s but in some cases older, and long overdue for renewal. There is a mix of ageing systems, often undocumented and in congested or inaccessible spaces, plus asbestos. Also, there is not effective fire compartmentation, the roof leaks and much of the stonework is deteriorating. There is an increasing risk of a catastrophic event such as a major fire, a flood of sewage or a breakdown of an essential service. The main reason for the backlog of repairs is that major works can only be carried out when Parliament is not sitting. A feasibility study concluded in 2012 that 'If the Palace were not a listed building of the highest heritage value, its owners would probably be advised to demolish and rebuild'. The scale of the building is vast: the roofs cover five acres and there are about 1100 rooms and 4000 windows.

The growing risks have long been known about, but there has been a reluctance among MPs to move out of the building and concern about the cost of renewal, which will inevitably be seen as parliamentarians spending money on themselves.



Pupils from Holy Trinity School, Forest Hill, visit the Wren spire for a talk by HOLT



The Northern Estate. Parliamentary copyright image. Reproduced with permission of Parliament

Renewal cannot sensibly be done in stages because it is not possible to dismantle the existing mechanical and electrical systems section by section and working in a building still in use would be expensive and hazardous. A joint committee of both Houses advised in 2016 that the entire Palace should be vacated in due course to enable the work to proceed, and in January 2018 the two Houses acknowledged the need to repair the Palace and agreed to move out.

The intention is that neither House should move very far: the Commons to a temporary chamber on Parliament's Northern Estate and the Lords if possible to the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. This means that Members and staff occupying Parliament's many outbuildings will not have to be relocated, thereby saving money. The idea of moving Parliament out of London was ruled out at an early stage because Parliament and Government need to be close together and building an expensive new parliament building would not remove the need to restore the existing one.

Parliament's Northern Estate is the area roughly bounded by Whitehall/Parliament Street, the Ministry of Defence, the Embankment and Bridge Street, excluding New Scotland Yard. Its buildings, many of them listed, range from the Georgian houses at 2 and 3 Parliament Street to Richmond Terrace of 1822-24, the two Norman Shaw buildings of 1890 and 1906 and Portcullis House, purpose-built for the Commons and opened in 2001. The plan is to build a new chamber for the Commons behind Richmond Terrace, with new office space to its south. Other changes would include renovating and upgrading the existing buildings, a new atrium within Norman Shaw North and improved circulation and disabled access. It would have the advantage that MPs and

staff would be working within a secure perimeter, within easy reach of the new chamber. In due course the latter would become a back-up chamber or a conference facility or exhibition space. The estimated construction cost is about £700 million, which with VAT, inflation and contingencies rises to about £1½ billion. A planning application is imminent, and work is planned to start in 2020.

The most controversial aspect of the proposals, apart from the cost, is the intended demolition of much of Richmond House, a recently-listed grade II\* building, constructed by Sir William Whitfield and partners in 1982-84 and until recently housing the Department of Health. It adjoins and incorporates Richmond Terrace, the back part of which was demolished in 1979, and has a façade towards Whitehall. The façade (the only part visible to the public) is certainly excellent, with its towers and bands of coloured brick. Under the plans, it would be the only part of the 1980s building to survive. Conservation groups such as the 20th Century Society have condemned the proposed demolition, noting that Richmond House is the most expensive public sector office building ever built and is constructed of the finest materials. The parliamentary authorities refer to low floor-to-ceiling heights, irregular floorplates and levels and stair towers which are too narrow, and it is not clear where else a new chamber could be built. The controversy raises questions about the extent to which admired but fairly recent buildings should constrain urban renewal schemes.

Meanwhile some other works are visibly in progress already. A rolling programme to restore the Palace's cast iron roofs began in 2009, and should put an end to the frequent leaks. The roof of Westminster Hall is being cleaned and repaired, especially the lantern. This aroused controversy because no provision was

## Sir John Soane and the Port of London, 1807-1812

*In his continuing exploration of the archives relating to the construction of the London Docks, Derek Morris reveals the hitherto unacknowledged involvement of the architect Sir John Soane.*

### Introduction

From the 1690s until the 1790s the City Corporation, some livery companies, other interested groups, and the owners of the legal quays, withstood the pressure from London's merchants to permit the building of new docks down river from the Tower of London. New docks were needed to ease the over-crowding and delays at the 21 legal quays, that were just 1,419 feet long and 40 feet deep, with the Sufferance wharves, adding another 3,700 feet of quay frontage.<sup>1</sup> It was said that the queue of ships waiting to unload stretched past Wapping and Shadwell to Limehouse Reach, almost blocking the main channel.<sup>2</sup>

Typical of their submissions objecting to the building of the new docks was their claim:

All that the Sufferance Wharfs asks is, either that they, the *ancient Servants of the Public*, may be put upon the *same footing with these new Adventurers*, and allowed to reserve such of the foreign commerce as Merchants may choose should come to them; ... [and] they solicit a Clause of Indemnity, proportionate to that what a Jury may determine to be the extent of their injury.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, as is well-known, William Vaughan in the spring of 1794:

called a meeting of London merchants and members of public bodies, which a year later resolved that wet docks at Wapping were the solution. A petition was started and in 1796, under increasing pressure, Parliament formed the Select Committee for the improvement of the Port of London, including Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger, to consider the matter. Ideas were invited for reform of the Port and eight separate schemes were reviewed. The committee sat for twenty-five days during which time it heard evidence from the wharfingers who owned the Legal Quays, Customs, Trinity House, the East India Company, the Admiralty, shipowners, merchants and lightermen.<sup>4</sup>

Unable to withstand the pressure for the new docks the owners of the legal and sufferance quays and others, ensured that the acts for the building of the East India, West India and London Docks contained clauses that allowed them to be compensated for loss of business.<sup>5</sup>

The acts established Commissioners for Compensation, who were headed by Lord Sheffield with five Aldermen and 34 other persons. The Commissioners included several Lord Mayors of London including Sir William Curtis, (1795), a Director of the West India and East India Dock



Richmond House

made for what would have been a once in a generation opportunity for a close archaeological investigation of the roof. Most obviously, Big Ben (strictly the Clock Tower until recently and now the Elizabeth Tower) is being restored and will re-emerge from its scaffolding in 2021.

Once the Northern Estate works have been completed, scheduled for the mid-2020s, the Palace can be vacated and work can start there, taking an estimated five to eight years. The work will be overseen by a sponsor body consisting of both parliamentarians and non-parliamentarians, including LTS author Simon Thurley. Its first task will be to prepare a costed programme and a business case. As yet there is neither a detailed design nor an approved budget, but a study in 2014 gave a broad indication of possible costs in different scenarios, of which the lowest was £3.5 billion (or £2.25 billion before VAT and 'risk') if the Palace was fully vacated and there were only moderately enhanced facilities. Improved facilities will certainly include better access for the disabled and better public access more generally. More ambitious changes could include glazing over two of the courtyards to form atriums, making Cloister Court (a partly 1520s survival) more accessible, and a new visitor centre. The Parliamentary Archives may be permanently moved off-site. Any improvements will have limited impact on the total cost, because the bulk of that is replacing the mechanical and electrical services. If all goes well, the Palace will be re-occupied in the early 2030s.

#### *Further reading:*

First report from the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster, *Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster*, HC 659 (2016-17)

House of Commons, *The essential first step: a plan for Parliament's Northern Estate*, consultation document May 2019

#### **PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE**

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companies, Brook Watson (1796), who in 1782 was appointed by a Royal Commission as Superintendent and Director of Forage, provisions and necessaries in North America, Sir John William Anderson (1797), a major trader with interests in timber, tar and hemp from the Baltic, Harvey Christian Combe (1799), and Sir John Eamer (1801). So men of wealth and great mercantile experience but it is a surprise to discover that Joseph Merceron,<sup>6</sup> the notorious oligarch of Bethnal Green, was also an adjudicator of claims. Claims could not be considered until 1807 when the three docks were finally operational.

On 24 March 1807, two of the Commissioners, Henry Thornton and Peter Bentham, discussed the problems they were meeting in assessing the 'losses' claimed by the freeholders and leaseholders of the Sufferance Wharfs and warehouses. In particular they were concerned about their need to understand the situation of an estate, the condition of the buildings, and the use to which they could be put as the new docks opened. Their conclusion was that they could "not form a correct judgement without the assistance of a Surveyor".<sup>7</sup> They also suggested that as the wharfs would be well-known to the officers of the HM Revenue their assistance would be useful, but it is not yet clear if this happened.

The Commissioners noted that they had received 1,376 claims: a few were withdrawn, others were duplicated, many were dismissed and some 20 or so were disputed and went before a jury to assess the claim.<sup>8</sup>

Of the 12 great livery companies only the Mercers (1) and Drapers (3) resisted the temptation to submit demands for compensation. The others all submitted claims for losses as 'tackleporters': the losses ranging from the £4,186 claimed by the Ironmongers' to the £32,220 claimed by the Merchant Taylors'; all these claims were 'dismissed' by the Commissioners. Two particularly well-documented disputes involved William Walter Viney and Thomas Pitcher, a Northfleet ship builder.

## John Soane

In 1807, John Soane was completing his nineteenth year as Architect and Surveyor of the Bank of England, was in his second year as Professor of Architecture to the Royal Academy, and had just been appointed clerk of works to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. But not noted by his biographers was the appointment of Soane and his partners as Surveyors to the Commissioners for Compensation for losses caused by the opening of the East India, West India and London Docks.<sup>9</sup> Soane's partners in this venture were William Pilkington (1758-1849) and James Spiller (1761-1829).<sup>10</sup>

It was first necessary in June 1807 to establish the terms under which Soane and partners would work for the Commissioners, in accordance with An

*Act for rendering more commodious and for better Regulating the Port of London.*<sup>11</sup>

As Surveyor of the Bank of England, Soane received a commission of five per cent on the half-yearly total expenditure on building work, and a similar payment system was agreed with the Commissioners.<sup>12</sup>

For all Valuations of Estates the following sums per cent computed upon the Amount such Estates may be considered by us to have been worth previous to the year 1800 or other period at which the primary Valuation might be made:

Upon Valuation not exceeding £1,000	Two per cent
Exceeding £1,000 and not more than £5,000	One per cent
Exceeding £5,000 and not more than £10,000	Three quarters per cent
Exceeding £10,000	Half per cent

These percentages to be paid whether the Estates are purchased in the determination compensated by Agreement with the Partner or under the verdict of the Jury, the same percentage to include our Surveys and attendances upon your Convenience, and all business necessary for bringing before you our report of value.

Over and above which we consider that for every attendance upon consul in the way of Consultation we to be paid each the sum of one Guinea. And where the value of the Estate or Determination or determined by a Jury for every attendance on them and to give Evidence each of us to be paid the Sum of three Guineas in each case.

Should Plans of the Estates be necessary they will be charged at some moderate rate but it is not possible to fix what.

Soane's team produced hundreds of plans and cross-sections of property, maps of the larger estates, which together with the supporting correspondence, will be of great value to local and social historians.

Soane's Private Correspondence provides a snapshot of the assessments made between 1807 and 1812 for the Commissioners for Compensation. The properties assessed, were found on both banks of the Thames from Chelsea to Northfleet, including the City, Southwark, Bermondsey, Wapping and the Precinct of St Katherine by the Tower.<sup>13</sup> To support these assessments there are some 88 indexed 'drawings', but for each 'drawing' there are sometimes up to ten or so detailed plans and cross-sections, particularly of roof structures.<sup>14</sup>

To illustrate the wide scope of these assessments this paper briefly concentrates on the Iron Gate Wharf in the Precinct of St Katherine's, Hawleys Wharf, Wapping, the Three Cranes Wharf and Hambro Wharf in the City, and Pitcher's Dockyard in Northfleet.

## The Surveys

It is probable that the site visits and calculation of assessments were carried out by Soane's articulated pupils, with Soane and Spiller appearing before Consuls and juries, when their assessments were challenged. The scope of Soane's surveys are described in a set of instructions given to the surveyor sent to assess the Carrington Wharf in St Saviour's Dock, Southwark, belonging to Charles Seymour Pearson.<sup>15</sup>

The surveyor was to record the thickness of walls in each storey, together with general heights, scantling of timber and substance of floors. The plans were to show 'the general minutes of the substance of walls and timber of the warehouse together with the height of stories.' The same information was collected at other sites, and we find that the joists at a warehouse in Mill Street, Bermondsey, were 9in by 4in and the rafters 5in by 2in.<sup>16</sup> In Kennson's warehouse in Nicholas Lane, off Cannon Street, the first floor height was 10ft 3in, the second floor 10ft, the third floor 8ft 2in and the garret 7ft 8in.<sup>17</sup> For some properties there are detailed cross-sections of the timbers in the roof of a warehouse, such as Mr Pearson's in Shad Thames Street.<sup>18</sup>

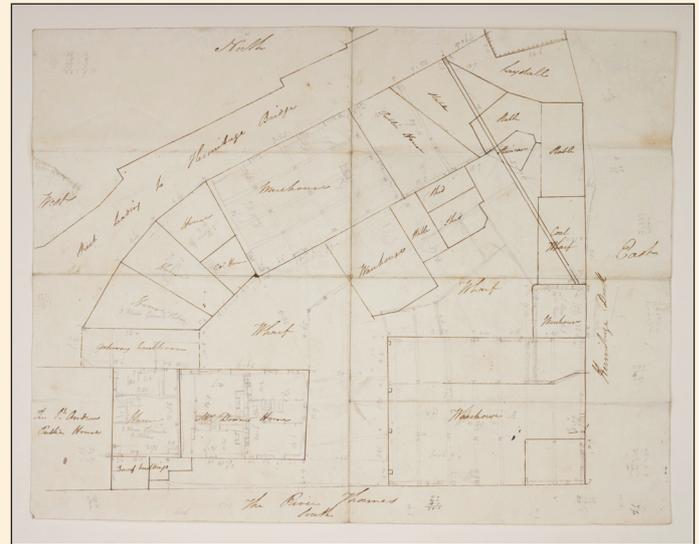
There are three plans of particular interest to historians of Stepney: the Swan Brewhouse, Wapping,<sup>19</sup> the Dundee Wharf, Wapping<sup>20</sup> and the extensive holdings of William Mashiter at the Iron Gate Wharf and elsewhere in the Precinct of St Katherine-by-the-Tower.<sup>21</sup> There is also a detailed plan of James Danver's extensive estate in St Mary Axe.<sup>22</sup> One problem with these pencil-drawn plans is that the majority are quite faint.

The assessors collected information on rents, both of the claimants and similar adjacent property, the remaining length of a lease and the quality of the property. A good example of the latter was the description of Charles Orlando Gore's warehouse at 4 Cooper's Row, Crutched Friars, as "in a state of perfect repair and capable of standing 80 years".<sup>23</sup> Gore in 1803 was living in Walmer, Kent and insured 24 Crutched Friars for £1,000.<sup>24</sup> In contrast Lady Elizabeth Blunt's property at Symon's Wharf, Southwark, was in "a very bad state".<sup>25</sup>

## Iron Gate Wharf, St Katherine's

William Mashiter, a wealthy wharfinger, on behalf of the proprietors of the Iron Gate Wharf, claimed 'losses' of £98,277-16s-0d and was awarded £18,000. This was one of the largest claims, and demonstrates the importance to London's merchants of this stack of warehouses just down river from the Tower. Mashiter regularly insured his stock for sums of £5,000 and the rent of £150 was the largest in the Precinct of St Katherine's by the Tower.<sup>26</sup>

Soane in a discussion of the Iron Gate Wharf was of the:



Hawley's Wharf, Wapping

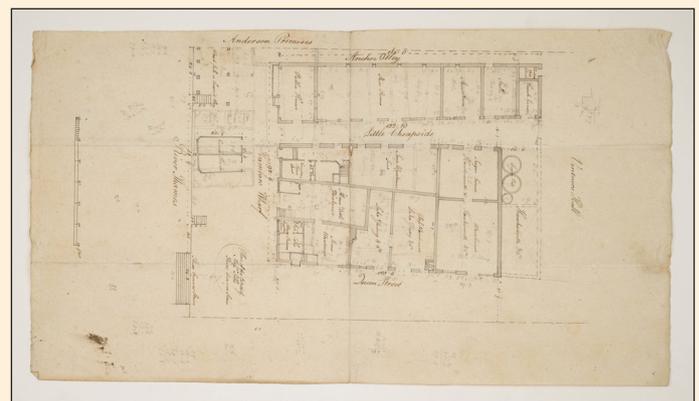
Opinion their situation which are considered by many to be the most preferable of any Sufferance Wharf [and] must continue to command a considerable trade, which Trade [has] become now of a more uncertain and contingent Nature, than it was before the passing of the West India and London Docks Acts.<sup>27</sup>

## Hawleys Wharf, Wapping

The warehouses, wharf and other property of John Hoare were immediately west of the Hermitage Dock, and connected via Catherine Street to the City. By 1752 this was a well-established wharf, and the Hoare family can be traced as wharfingers until 1829. Soane's plan provides more detail than available on Rocque.<sup>28</sup>

## Three Cranes Wharf and Hambro Wharf

The property of Messrs Sills lay between New Queen Street and Anchor Street, and on either side of Little Cheapside, which ran from the Thames to the Vintner's Hall, and in 1803 they had insured their warehouses and stock for £6,300.<sup>29</sup> Soane's plan shows a public house by the Thames, stables, a 'skin room', Mean's bottle shop, a glass warehouse and Hawkesworth's sugar house. Hawkesworth and Prescott were at 49 Queen Street from 1796 to 1799.<sup>30</sup>



Crane's Wharf and Hambro's Wharf



## Reviews

### **The Heath Wall, Battersea's buried river**

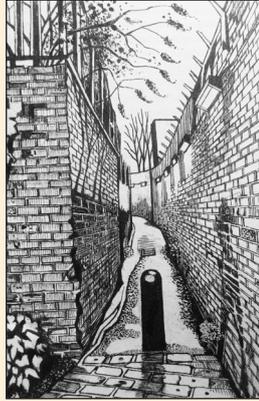
by Jon Newman, illustrated by David Western,  
Backwater Books 2019, ISBN 978 1 91612 9 108  
£6.50

This handsomely produced and elegantly illustrated small guide tells the story of the elusive 'Heath Wall', a lost London river overlooked by previous writers on this theme. The first section outlines its history, the second forms a walking guide; each is supported by a clear and attractive map printed inside the covers. Heath Wall, once a southern channel of the Thames, divided damp, low-lying Battersea from the higher ground south of Wandsworth Road, entering the Thames by sluices above Vauxhall Bridge. It was a boundary in Saxon times, and its route still divides the modern boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth. The name is a corruption from the Anglo-Saxon Hyse/Hese:

high wall or bank. As the footnotes show, this is a scholarly work, but it wears its learning lightly and is a delight to read, full of information not only about the management of the waterway but with much on the its surrounding development at different times.

At first the Heath Wall provided agricultural drainage – a boon for Battersea's prosperous market gardeners, but as housing and industry developed, by the nineteenth century it had become an unpleasant and unhealthy sewer. Many local people died in the cholera epidemic in 1849, although the source of the infection was not recognised at that time. The problem was not tackled until the construction of Bazalgette's intercepting sewer system. Hard on these improvements came the exemplary Shaftsbury estate built from 1868 by the Artizans and General Labourers Company; to be on the safe side these model workers' houses were planned with ventilation valves from every room leading to airshafts.

The line of the river, now underground, can be traced by boundary posts, stink pipes and manhole covers, along the four mile walk snaking between the twentieth-century public housing and small open spaces that have replaced industrial sites and insanitary Victorian terraces. But Newman has also found some remarkable reminders of an older past. In Queenstown Road two large alder trees, probably random growth on a bomb site wilderness, may be descendants from 'Grydel's elryne' (Grendel's alders) a marshy swamp with an



The illustration by David Western shows Brooklands Passage and boundary post (named from Brooklands House in Wandsworth Road, whose gardens ran down to the stream)

alder grove, recorded as a tenth-century boundary marker. The eastern end of the walk confronts the opulent twenty-first-century reinvention of Nine Elms: private housing 'wackily asymmetric and overweening'. The self-conscious 'Riverside Quay' and 'Tideway Village' are contrasted with the history of the Heathwall Pumping Station; the present one of the 1960s replaced one of 1898, promising a 'flood-free Battersea' – the 'last vestige of a previous, more prosaic and more functional Nine Elms'.

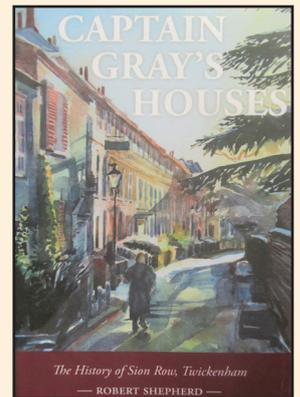
An appendix traces the line of the Heathwall Brook, a tributary running from Clapham Common, a hint at how much there is to be discovered about South London's other waterways, which are promised as the subjects of future guides.

### **Captain Gray's Houses: the history of Sion Row, Twickenham**

by Robert Shepherd, 2019. Sacristy Press, Durham, 546 pp HB.  
ISBN 978 1 78959 000 5

Even in 2019, after a lapse of three centuries, Twickenham's riverside conveys a sense of comfortable villegiatura. By 1700 the village was already becoming a fashionable semi-rural retreat from the noise and stress of what was by then one of the largest cities in the world. In 1722 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu could write that it has 'become so fashionable and the neighbourhood so enlarged that it is more like Tunbridge or Bath than a country retreat'. Some of the aristocratic villas along the river bank still survive, among them Marble Hill, built for George II's mistress Henrietta Howard in 1724-9, and Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill. So too do two well-preserved terraces of brick houses put up by speculative builders along narrow strips of land running down to the river that had once formed part of the village's common fields: Sion Row and Montpelier Row. Like similar developments in Hampstead, or in Clapham's Old Town, facing the Common, the terraces were occupied by a predominantly middle-class clientele of shopkeepers, businessmen, spinsters and widows. And in Robert Shepherd's densely researched, meticulous study they have been given the close historical analysis that this type of building deserves.

Captain Gray's Houses is in essence a micro-history of an outer London suburb. Unlike Richmond and Greenwich, Twickenham did not have a royal palace, but it was easily reachable by river, sometimes by passenger barges like those found in the Netherlands. Builders along the riverside could take advantage of the attractive watery setting, comparable to that of the Brenta



foreshore in the Veneto, celebrated in the 'Prospect of Twickenham' by Peter Tillemans (c.1725), now displayed in the Orleans House Gallery, next to James Gibbs's sumptuously decorated Octagon in the grounds of what later became Orleans House; the picture is reproduced on the front cover of the May 2019 LTS Newsletter. Alexander Pope moved to Twickenham in 1718 or 1719 and began his own riverside villa in 1720. By then Captain John Gray, former commander of the warship 'Folkestone', which had seen action in the West Indies during the War of the Spanish Succession, had bought the copyhold interest of the land – part of the manor of Syon – on which the 11 houses in Sion Row went up; he was a protégé of Laurence Hyde, the owner of the nearby York House, now offices for the local council. A plaque records the terrace's completion in 1721; its builder was Edward Reeves, surveyor at Wentworth Castle, the Yorkshire seat of the Earl of Stafford, whose Twickenham villa no longer survives. The first tenants included a portrait painter, Edward Seymour and a Dutch merchant, Sir Gerard Roeters, whose main residence was in Martin Lane, off Cannon Street in the City; their neighbours in the new houses included a handful of yeoman farmers, and, as in many of London's suburban villages, tradesmen catering for the local service economy. Two years later Gray began Montpelier Row, a little to the east. Here he employed two builders active in the West End, but the result lacks Sion Row's architectural uniformity. Both terraces survive largely intact.

Shepherd's book throws a revealing light on the material culture of the 'middling orders' who played a crucial part in the growth of what became outer London: a subject authoritatively discussed in *Elizabeth McKellar's Landscapes of London* (2013). Excellent use is made of probate inventories where they survive, and due attention is paid to the process of building: brickmaking, carpentry and glazing. Unlike most writers on the buildings of Georgian London, Shepherd chronicles, in sometimes exhaustive detail, the subsequent history of the houses: a story that takes up well over half of the book. By the end of the eighteenth century the tenants of the Sion Row houses included clergymen, minor gentry and men and women who had benefited from the growth of Britain's overseas empire; they included Edward Ironside, son of a London banker and employee of the East India Company who went to publish the first history of Twickenham in 1797.

The waterside gradually acquired a rough reputation, the houses lacked good drainage, and the terrace fell into genteel decline during the second half of the nineteenth century, when the rural hinterland was slowly swamped by new speculative housing. Then in the twentieth century there was an influx of commuting owner-occupiers; graphs and tables at the end of the book show the precipitate rise in house prices and the concurrent decline in the number of local business owners.

Today the houses, though much altered internally, are probably in better shape than they have ever been. Engagingly written, well-illustrated and beautifully produced, this is a book to be dipped into rather than read cover to cover, but it adds significantly to our knowledge of the history of outer west London, and it can be strongly recommended to anyone interested in the process of suburbanisation that has slowly transformed on the lives of countless Londoners over the past three centuries.

– Geoffrey Tyack

### **Tower Bridge: History Engineering Design**

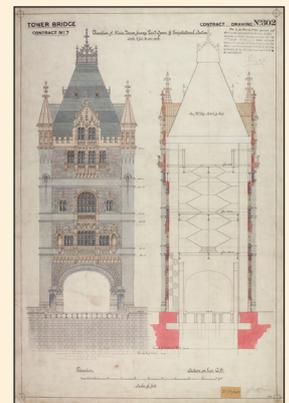
by Ken Powell. Thames & Hudson. £24.95  
ISBN 978 0 50034 349 4

"Aesthetical people", in the phrasing of the engineer Sir John Wolfe Barry, finally determined that the built form of Tower Bridge, the 125th anniversary of whose completion this thoroughly researched and imaginatively illustrated volume marks, should complement and compliment – rather than contrast with – the Tower of London.

Had the day been won at the outset by supporters of The Builder's view of the outcome as "an elaborate and costly make-believe", with its own towers "choice specimens of architectural gimcrack", would there have been as much to celebrate today? It seems highly unlikely.

Built to relieve growing congestion on London Bridge, the design of the structure that we know emerged with an agreement in 1885 from a lengthy decision-making process that generated a plethora of competing options. Driving the eventual design decision were a range of factors. These included public displeasure at the impact on London's riverscape of the 'unadorned' engineering-based steel bridges that had already been completed to carry railways into Blackfriars and Cannon Street stations. (The solid masonry of the then Waterloo Bridge on the other hand, says Powell, "could be read as architecture".)

Precedents for a combination of new and old included Holborn Viaduct, completed over the River Fleet Valley in 1869 as a cast iron bridge with Gothic masonry abutments in what Powell terms "a balance of engineering and architecture". But the critical factor identified by the author was the growing public appreciation of the architectural and historical importance of the Tower of London, the restoration of which had been underway since the 1850s. (The masonry was, in any case, far from being solely decorative, as the bridge towers needed cladding for weather protection).



**A detailed drawing of one of the bridge towers by George Daniel Stevenson. (Image courtesy of London Metropolitan Archives, City of London)**



One of the dioramas created for the anniversary celebrations (photo by Tom Morgan). The display coincided with the City's 2019 Fantastic Feats: the building of London celebration of architecture and engineering, and the designers emphasised structural details

So, in Tower Bridge, architecture and engineering met – and created something memorable.

Barry backed City of London architect Sir Horace Jones's proposal for a bascule bridge of the type that had begun appearing during the eighteenth century; while the capabilities of hydraulic power needed to move large spans had been demonstrated successfully by 1839.

Tower Bridge was, therefore, in its own right, an important waymark in the deployment of the new engineering and industrial technologies that emerged from the Industrial Revolution.

In discussing the design of the towers, Powell gives rightful emphasis to the role of George Daniel Stevenson, an assistant to city architect Sir Horace Jones, who took over the latter's sketches on his death in 1887 and worked them up to buildability – without receiving very much credit at the time. The one reproduced here is from a cache only discovered in Stevenson's former home in Wood Green in 1974.

Unprotected by listing until 1949, after it had survived the Second World War, the bridge escaped another threat that would have fatally diminished its status. In 1943 a designer of banks, one WFC Holden, proposed converting the towers and walkways into 18,000m<sup>2</sup> of offices as the 'Crystal Tower Bridge' to generate income. The City judged the idea 'practical' but, wisely, adjourned making a decision indefinitely. The developers, fortunately, lost.

A pleasing conclusion to the book is the chapter devoted to the workers of Tower Bridge, both builders and operators (the latter originally totalling some 80). Among those featured in photographs are the construction gang, assembled for an 1890 group photograph; Bridgemaster John Gass, whose 44-year career ended in 1930; the operators of the signal lamps, semaphore and (in fog) gong which guided ships; and a rare (until the interwar years) female – the Bridgemaster's family's cook Hannah Griggs, some of whose descendants joined in the celebrations.

The anniversary was further enriched by the exhibition of a set of dioramas offering visitors glimpses into some of the designs that were originally presented to the City in 1876. Creators All Things Studio turned a series of large plywood boxes into 'peepshows', with strategically placed

apertures emphasising key design and constructional aspects. Designer Matt Schwab told LTS Newsletter: "This playful approach gave visitors a simple, intuitive insight into the history of Tower Bridge and what might have been."

– David Crawford

**London's District Railway** by (our member) MAC Horne, a history of the Metropolitan District Railway, Volume 2 – the Twentieth Century. Capital Transport 2019 (run by another LTS member James Whiting) 978 1 85414 430 0 HB £35 416 pages, well illustrated, mainly monochrome. Volume 1 covering the nineteenth century was published in 2018 and costs £30.

In the same way as main line railway companies build their lines to outwit their rivals, so the underground railways companies did in London. It was only in 1933 that the London Passenger Transport Board was formed to take over all the railway companies and many of the bus companies as well. This history of the District Railway refers in its subtitle to the twentieth century but the history only takes us to this significant date, but with 416 pages it is a full history of those 33 years.

In 1900 the Railway was contemplating electrification and there were trails of different systems. The District had decided on the Austrian Ganz system using alternating current and a crude overhead current collector but when the American Charles Yerkes refinanced the company he rejected this untried system and reverted to the well-tried conductor rails. The newly constructed Ealing to South Harrow line was used for trials and there is a photograph of an experimental train on track with the two conductor rails arranged outside the running rails, one on each side.

There is plenty to interest an LTS member. Views of station platforms and street entrance buildings abound, of interest since many have been substantially altered when the number of tracks and/or passengers have been increased in later years. Putney Bridge has photographs of its two track and three track days – it has recently been re-converted back to two tracks. Older members may remember guards giving the starting signal to the driver by using a brass sleeve on their flag stick to make electrical connection across two wires suspended from the platform roof to operate an electric bell by the driver's cab. This book shows an earlier system in which the flag stick had a hook which the guard used to pull a single such wire sharply downwards, so that a striker at the other end of the wire was pulled to strike the bell (rather like the system downstairs in London buses after WW2).

The Earl's Court wheel, supported by a frame on both sides, unlike the cantilevered London Eye, appears inevitably in many photographs from Baron's Court, Lillie Bridge and Earl's Court itself. It did not last as long as its modern equivalent, being demolished to make way for more sidings in

the Lillie Bridge maintenance depot. At the end of the years covered by this history we are shown a photograph of the Earls Court Exhibition Hall being erected over the working lines to Ealing and Putney – your reviewer attended a recent presentation of the work necessary to demolish the hall without damaging the train tunnels below or interrupting the traffic.

The index extends to 24 pages of double columns, showing the extent of the coverage. I suspect the book is aimed at the railway enthusiast but if you only wonder why the Piccadilly line trains follow such a twisty route east of South Kensington you will find the answer here.

– Roger Cline

### **Slow Growth. On the Art of Landscape**

**Architecture** by Hal Moggridge, Unicorn Publishing Group, 2019, 352 pp numerous illustrations ISBN 978 1 91978 742 7 £30

This handsomely illustrated book by the former Principal of the distinguished landscape practice, Colvin and Moggridge, ranges widely over different kinds of British landscapes, discussing both sensitive conservation of the designed landscapes which became an intrinsic part of the romantic movement, and the efforts to manage new and fast changing landscapes meeting the challenges of today. “Views are part of the poetic experience of human life, both in cities and in the country.” The two chapters in the book devoted to cities today, particularly London, will be of special interest to LTS members.

From 1992 Colvin and Moggridge were consultants for London’s Inner Royal Parks. Among their numerous improvements were the surroundings of St James’s Park, including the clearance of parked cars by the Horseguards, allowing public access to this broad gravelled space. Moggridge’s favourite London view, which appears on the cover of the book, is of the romantic cluster of the towers of the Horseguards and Whitehall framed by trees, seen from the bridge over the lake in St James’s Park, created by Nash in 1827 as part of the remodelling and opening of the park to the public. The Horseguards view had to be recovered by reducing the surrounding trees, for landscapes do not stand still. The importance of the royal parks for the character of London and for the welfare of both Londoners and visitors comes out strongly. So does their potential vulnerability. It is concerning to learn that government funds for the royal parks have decreased to 12m from the £26m available in 1990.

Moggridge also discusses the problem of new buildings impinging on cherished views, or disturbing the spirit of the green retreats which are so valued in cities. Efforts to tackle this go back to 1938 when the City policy called ‘St Pauls Heights’ was introduced to protect the foreground of the Cathedral (though not its background, for taller buildings were not foreseen; the LCC height limit of

80ft remained until 1960). From the 1980s, selected viewing corridors from surrounding hills to protect the views of St Pauls and Westminster were adopted, leading to a grouping of tall buildings in the eastern quarter of the City, away from the Cathedral, as a counterpoint to the new towers of Dockland. The Greater London Authority plan designated 26 views as part of a framework for protection, but Moggridge’s suggestion of contour maps to define maximum heights of new buildings more clearly was not pursued, and he has harsh words for what has happened since. He has some perceptive comments on the ways in which developers mislead by presenting wide-angled views of new projects which do not reflect what the spectator will experience, and he shows that quite large buildings need not intrude on distant vistas if the land levels in different areas are taken into account. He is not hostile to good modern architecture, as he demonstrates in another view of St James’s Park: a close up of the Foreign Office tower framed within the transparent structure of the London Eye ‘symbolising a contemporary democratic population over-arching government and the state’.

There is much more in this book to stimulate debate on how existing cities all over the world can be appreciated and understood – following UNESCO’s current interest in ‘Cities as Urban Landscape’. The emphasis in the last chapter is on the importance of urban spaces, the areas of land or water which remain a constant, in contrast to more ephemeral buildings. In London it was the opening up of the banks of the Thames from the 1950s onwards which made the greatest contribution to the character of later twentieth-century London, and which remains something to celebrate.

– Bridget Cherry



### **Miscellany**

Among the unending flow of inexpensive (£14.99) illustrated books on London subjects published by Amberley is the unexcitingly named *Camberwell from old photographs*, by Eddie Brazil (2018). The sepia colouring is misleading: apart from the introductory first chapter the photos are not old Edwardian views, but were taken by the author in the 1970s when he realised that the area of his youth was being transformed as humble terraces and old factories were swept away. He records the empty houses awaiting demolition, the new taller blocks in progress (noting that many of these now too have gone), the slow development of the new Burgess Park, street life and children playing before the era of mobile phones and safeguarding, local football (including a match against a Monty Python team), all explained by lively and informative text. A worthwhile record.

## London Topographical Society

The London Topographical Society was founded in 1880 for the study and appreciation of London. It is a registered charity (No. 271590) with around 1,200 members. The Society remains true to the vision of its founders by making available maps, plans and views illustrating the history, growth and topographical development of London at all periods, and by publishing research in the London Topographical Record. Details of all publications can be found on the Society's website: [www.londontopsoc.org](http://www.londontopsoc.org)

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Roger Cline MA LLB FSA, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9SH  
020 7388 9889 [treasurer02@londontopsoc.org](mailto:treasurer02@londontopsoc.org)

### **Editor**

Sheila O'Connell FSA, 312 Russell Court, Woburn Place, London WC1H 0NG  
[sheilaoc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sheilaoc@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Publications Secretary**

Simon Morris MA PhD FSA, 7 Barnsbury Terrace, London N1 1JH  
[santiagodecompostela@btinternet.com](mailto:santiagodecompostela@btinternet.com)

### **Newsletter Editor**

Bridget Cherry OBE FSA, Bitterley House, Bitterley, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3HJ  
01584 890905 [bridgetcherry58@gmail.com](mailto:bridgetcherry58@gmail.com)

### **Membership Secretary**

John Bowman, 17 Park Road, London W7 1EN  
020 8840 4116 [j.h.bowman@btinternet.com](mailto:j.h.bowman@btinternet.com)

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