LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL NEWS

The newsletter of the London Topographical Society

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GRAND CENTENARY OFFER

To reduce stocks and to make room for our latest publications we are making a special centenary offer to members. The complete 5-volume set of Mills and Oliver's *Survey of the Building Sites of the City of London after the Great Fire* will be available for a limited period at only £5. The normal price is £16. The LTS publication is a reduced facsimile of the original manuscript which not only describes the building sites with their measurements and bounds, but also includes a large number of plans. By their systematic survey Mills and Oliver helped to bring order to the chaos of post-fire London and their work is a first-hand source of great value to students of London's topography. The four volumes of the survey are enhanced by a volume of introduction and detailed indexes (places, subjects and persons) compiled by Philip E Jones, sometime Deputy Keeper of Records at the Corporation of London Record Office. To order your copy please complete the separate order form. The special offer is only open to orders postmarked during the centenary year of 1980. (Extra time will be given to those living overseas.)

COVENANTS

Those of you who signed Deeds of Covenant applicable to tax year 1979/80 will find a buff form enclosed. Will you please fill it in and sign it where marked, and return it to me: I have to send it to the Inspector of Taxes with our first claim. I will send the forms next year to those whose Deeds will apply in 1980/81.

Members who joined recently will find a Deed of Covenant form enclosed, in case they would like to start one for next year. It is now possible to covenant for four years instead of seven if preferred.

I am pleased to say that 79 covenants have been received to date. This will provide a very welcome increase in the Society's income.

Anthony Cooper, Hon Treasurer, 6 Waterside Place, Princess Road, London NW1 8JT.

NEWSLETTERS BY AIR

In our last newsletter our arithmetic went wrong: overseas members who want to receive their newsletters by airmail should let the Hon Treasurer, Anthony Cooper, know with their next subscription and include the appropriate money, making a total of £6.25 or 15.50 dollars US or Canadian.

LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

In 1980, the London Topographical Society proudly celebrates its centenary. The twenty-fourth volume of the *London Topographical Record* contains a Foreword, specially written by the Society's Patron, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, commending the work of the Society and looking forward to another hundred years of publications. The Society is most grateful to His Royal Highness. The fourteen contributions to the volume range from a study of the medieval waterfront to an account of the establishment of the new Museum of London; the Editorial Committee would like to thank all the authors.

A celebratory exhibition at Papermill, organised by Anthony Cooper with the assistance of Patrick Frazer, was mounted from September 22nd till October 10th. Thirty-three of the Society's 124 publications were on display, ranging from our first venture, Wynaggio's *1550 View of London*, to the current *Record* and our special centenary panorama — Swetnan's 1789 prospect of London from the North. The Society's thanks are due to Messrs Wiggins Teape and to their Manager, Mr Smith, and his staff at Papermill who made sure everything ran smoothly. The exhibition was visited by over 1,500 people and nearly 50 new members were recruited. A team of invigilators, organised by Dr Elspeth Veale, stood by throughout, to answer queries, to welcome visitors, and to deal with sales; they were kept busy and our thanks are due to all those concerned. Publicity for the exhibition was undertaken at very short notice by Yvette Williams, a handsome handbill and invitation card were designed by Maurice Rickards, and labels were prepared by Rosemary Weinstein. And everywhere Ann Saunders was aiding, abetting, encouraging and keeping everyone cheerful!

About 200 members and their guests attended the Centenary Party on the evening of Tuesday September 23rd. The exhibition was opened by Bamber Gascoigne who is a member of the Society with a keen interest in history and topography, as well as being an author, publisher and television personality. Splendid refreshments were prepared by a team of fourteen ladies led by Mrs Cumming while Trevor Ford and a team of helpers distributed the drinks. A tripartite birthday cake in the shape of 100 was iced with views of London; refreshments were so prolific that two of the cakes remained uncut and it is hoped that, since they were well laced with brandy, we shall be able to serve them at the Annual General Meeting in 1981.

Perhaps the most heart-warming thing about the whole gamut of centenary celebrations, apart from the astonishing response from the public, was the spontaneous team-work of all the members who joined in, whether it was with the *Record*, or the many facets of the exhibition, or the party preparations and service. It is true that we only meet once a year in the normal way of things, but it is certain that, given a special occasion, we certainly function as a Society!
SWERTNER'S LONDON PANORAMA

Two weeks before the French Revolution, Jan Swertner, 'not professedly an artist', published the first of his London panoramas. It was an unusual one. Instead of being taken, as panoramas were, from the south bank looking across the Thames, or, as they just occasionally were, from a point immediately the gallery of a church steeple in a village out on the fringe of the rapidly spreading metropolis. Despite its claim to be a panorama of the Cities of London and Westminster, Swertner's, in point of fact, was a panorama of 18th-century suburbia. Therein lies its fascination for us today. The London Topographical Society has chosen to make Swertner's panorama its extra century publication precisely for this reason.

Jan Swertner was born in Haarlem in the Netherlands on September 12th 1746. He was a member of the Moravian sect and indeed trained for their ministry. Exactly when he arrived in London and why he came here I do not know. The great sprawling English capital fascinated him yet when he examined recent artists' attempts at recording the scene he was not too impressed. The best prints available were two oval engravings published by Boydell, one of London from Hampstead near the Spaniards Inn, the other from Denmark Hill, Camberwell, in which poor London was buried behind splendidly contrived, romantic foregrounds. What Swertner demanded was the type of view that since the Buck brothers completed their prospects in 1753 has come to be despised, the cartographic picture, the cousin if you like, of the town plan, something to be used as a working tool by the curious.

Swertner, therefore, was obliged to produce his own panorama. First he had to find a view point. After much 'trial and search', he tells us, he selected the lantern of the graceful spire of St Mary's Islington, rebuilt 1754, and traced the scene before him with the aid, I'm positive, of a camera obscura. Next he identified the buildings in the distance and produced a key. Prospect and key were then etched in outline and then the prospect itself was aquatinted. Once printed off, the publication of the new panorama was announced in an astonishingly wordy broadside advertisement. The view was put on sale at Cary's, Faden's, and Wilkinson's map shops as well as at a list of London print establishments. Now to get the most out of Swertner's panorama, and since the foreground information is not keyed anyway, I strongly recommend you do what I did and line it up with Cary's 'New and Accurate Plan of London' (1787) and with Benjamin Baker's survey of Islington (1793).

The road you see across the foreground is Church Street (today Gaskin Street) and right in the centre there are tileers at work, completing the roof of a chapel being built for a dissenting Islington blacksmith named John Ives. Later the building was to be used by Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and later still it would be converted into a school. Church Street linked Upper Street (today's A1) to Lower Street (today's Essex Street or A104).

Branching off Lower Street is Colebrook Row looking very much as it does today after renovation. Bird's buildings are to be seen; T H Shepherd later lived at no 2. In mid-centre is Islington Green and the backs of the buildings of Old Paradise Row. Camden Street can be identified to the east of it. If you are very clever you can just make out Cumberland Road, trendy Camden Passage as it now is. The Old Pied Bull, said to have been the home of Sir Walter Raleigh, is there on the right in Upper Street. Meandering away into the distance is the New River, and progressing largely through open countryside, through past Henderson's Buildings, City Gardens, and St Luke's Workhouse, is the City Road.

When Jan Swertner proudly announced his new panorama in 1789 these were his prices: standard version 10s 6d, proof impressions 16s, coloured £1 1s, highly finished in colours from the original draft by Swertner £1 11 6d. Despite all the inflation that has taken place between 1789 and 1980 the LTS version is only £2.00.*

We hope every member will acquire one. Your copy will be accompanied by a facsimile of Swertner's handbill advertising the view in 1789. It is from this that many of the details given above were taken.

*To be ordered from the Publications Secretary, 36 Old Deer Park Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2TL. Postage extra: an invoice will be sent — please do not send cash with order.

BOOK NOTES


Some years ago Sarah Tyacke realised that the map-sellers' advertisements in the London Gazette, which often give the addresses of the vendors, could be used as a source for dating the many undated maps issued between 1660 and 1720. She has transcribed the advertisements and arranged them in chronological order with an excellent introduction describing the growth of the map trade during that period, and with indexes for persons, places and subjects. The index of map-sellers gives a succinct but informative account of each individual.

Though agreeably written and pleasant to use, this is perhaps a work for the specialist rather than the general reader. For those who are seriously concerned with maps of the period, it is going to prove an indispensable source of reference and Mrs Tyacke is to be congratulated on her achievement and all the hard work that has gone into it.

Ann Saunders

Shepherd's London

Our member John Phillips' book about the Shepherd family of topographical artists and their drawings of London is now out of print, but he has some remaining copies to which members are welcome at the bargain price of £3.50 (last published price £6.50). This includes the new illustrated supplement (1980) which contains a good deal of quite surprising new information on these rather important London artists. The supplement on its own costs 25 pence post free. Orders, with cash (please add £1.35 p + p for the book) to J Phillips, 92 Rossiter Road, London SW12 9RX.

Issued by Stephen Marks, Hon Secretary of the London Topographical Society, Hamilton's, Kilnersdon, near Bath, Somerset

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