NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  Wednesday July 15th 1981

The eighty-first Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society will be held on Wednesday July 15th 1981 at The Holme, Inner Circle, Regent’s Park, at 6 o’clock. The meeting will follow refreshments which will be available from 5.30. Please inform the Hon Secretary if you wish to nominate under item 4 or raise any matter under item 5 of the agenda. After the business meeting Dr Ann Saunders, the Society’s Hon Editor and author of a book on Regent’s Park (a reprint of which will be available at the meeting), will talk to the Society on the subject, and members will be able to see the exhibition ‘Villas in Regent’s Park’. The enclosed brown leaflet about the exhibition also has a location plan on the reverse.

Please let the Hon Secretary know by July 10th if you and any guests will be attending.

A G E N D A

1 To approve the minutes of the 80th Annual General Meeting in 1980
2 To receive the 81st Annual Report of the Council for 1980 (herewith)
3 To receive the accounts for 1980 (herewith)
4 To elect officers and members of Council
5 To consider any proposals by members
6 Any other business

Stephen Marks Hon Secretary, Hamilton’s, Kilmersdon, near Bath, Somerset (tel 0761 35134)

THIS YEAR’S PUBLICATION

Work is well advanced on the production of a coloured facsimile of a large bird’s-eye panorama of London in about 1800 by an unknown artist. The only known copy of this superb view is in a private collection in Canada. It will be reprinted on 4 sheets, as the original, but reduced in size. It will be accompanied by key diagrams drawn by our Chairman, Peter Jackson, and by an introduction by Ralph Hyde, Keeper of Prints and Maps at Guildhall Library and a member of the Society’s Council; the whole will be contained in a thin card cover. The printing is being undertaken by Westerham Press under the direction of Iain Bain, head of publications at the Tate Gallery and also a member of Council. We are doing our best to have this ready by the Annual General Meeting, in order to have copies available for those who are paid up to take away with them; this will help the Society greatly by saving postage and tubes.

For next year The A to Z of Georgian London, with Rocque’s Plan of 1746 as its base, will be published in conjunction with Harry Margary and Guildhall Library and will be issued to members. It will make a companion to our very successful A to Z of Elizabethan London which members received in 1979.

81st ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1980

Two publications were produced for this, the Society’s centenary year. Volume 24 of the Record, considerably longer than any previous volume, was issued to members for their 1980 subscriptions; it was honoured by a foreword from our Patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. A facsimile of Jan Swertner’s 1789 panorama of London from the north was produced as an extra publication, and work has been in hand on the preparation of the publication for 1981, a facsimile of a bird’s-eye view of London in about 1800. Two newsletters were issued in May and November.

The eightieth Annual General Meeting was held at the head office of Coutts & Co, 440 Strand, on July 9th 1980 by kind permission of the Directors of the bank. The Society’s officers were re-elected without change; with the exception of Mr Cecil Farthing and Mrs Victoria Moger, who were not standing, the council was re-elected with the addition of Dr Elspeth Veale. After the business meeting members heard a brief account of the bank and under the guidance of Miss Veronica Stokes and her colleagues were able to see many of the bank’s treasures and several of the features both of the old building and of the recent rebuilding of all but Nash’s external walls.

In September and October the Society held an exhibition
at Paperpoint to celebrate its centenary. It was extremely successful in bringing the Society to wider notice; many new members were recruited and substantial extra sales made.

The Society’s paid-up membership, boosted by the exhibition, at the end of 1980 stood at its highest figure of 559, including a number who have paid late; 30 members were written off during the year. Sales, which included not only the exhibition sales but also the special centenary offer of Mills & Oliver, contributed the remarkably sum of £5114 to the Society’s funds, thus continuing to keep the Society in excellent financial health.

NOTES AND QUERIES
The newsletter is issued twice a year. Space is available for you to ask any questions relating to London topography or to communicate items of interest to members or information about research in progress. Please write to the Hon Secretary.

MARJORIE BLANCHE HONEYBOURNE
Those who generously contributed to the memorial fund for Miss Honeybourne, the Society’s Editor and Treasurer for many years, may like to know that the accumulated sum was put towards the cost of printing her obituary and bibliography in the recently-issued Volume 24 of London Topographical Record.

NEWSLETTERS BY AIR
Overseas members who would like to receive their newsletters by air (and who have not already arranged this) should let the Hon Treasurer, Anthony Cooper, know with their next subscription and include the appropriate sum. The extra cost is £1.25 or 3 dollars for each year’s issue of two newsletters, making a total of £6.25 or 15.50 dollars US or Canadian. The Treasurer’s address is 6 Waterside Place, Princess Road, London NW1 8JT.

A MAP OF PUTNEY IN 1636
The original hand-drawn map of Putney, made by surveyor Nicholas Lane in 1636, has come to light after being untraced since 1926. It has been given to the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, which was gutted by fire in 1973, on the understanding that it would be reproduced and copies sold in aid of the Restoration and Rebuilding Appeal, and that it would then be displayed in the rebuilt St Mary’s.

The map measures 22” x 36” and has a scale bar of perches indicating a scale of 5 chains to the inch (16 inches to the mile). A large part of the map is taken up with the fields which are shown with their acreages and ownerships over an area of a mile south of the river ‘Theames’ to ‘Putney Upp Heath’ (now Putney Heath), and a mile and a quarter from ‘Putney Lower Heath’ (Putney Lower Common/Barnes Common) on the west, near Beverley, Brook separating Putney from ‘Barnes’ parish, to the sewer ditch on the east dividing Putney from ‘Wansworth-feilde’.

The principal streets are ‘Richmond Roade’ (Upper Richmond Road), Putney High Street, and the London Road crossing Putney Heath, Putney Common, and Wansworth Common. On Putney Heath there is a Bowling Alley, the site of which survived till this century as Bowling Green House and is still marked by Bowling Green Close. St Mary’s Church is shown with its churchyard by the river, but of course there is no bridge at this date. At the junction of Richmond Road and the High Street are the pound and some substantial houses.

This exciting map has been well reproduced by half-tone colour printing, slightly reduced to 18¾” x 30¾” on a sheet 20¾” x 32”, and is recommended to members. It costs £5.25 and is available by post from St Mary’s Appeal (Map), PO Box 48, Putney High Street, London SW15. An order form is included on one of the accompanying leaflets.

A ‘NEW TALLIS’
In circumstances not unlike the present an Architects’ Unemployment Committee was set up towards the end of 1931 to provide some employment for architects thrown out of work by the severe depression which hit their profession particularly badly. It was a joint committee comprising representatives of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Architects’ Benevolent Society, the Association of Architects, Surveyors and Technical Assistants, the Architectural Association, and the London Society.

A large part of the work was handled by the London Society, which paid for the materials and whose Organising Secretary was Percy Lovell, also Secretary of the London Survey Committee for many years; other work was done through the London Survey Committee, the RIBA’s Slum Clearance Committee and an Architectural Graphic Records Committee. The employment was founded on three principles: that money should not normally be paid simply as a dole, but that all payments should be genuine salaries for genuine work; second, that work should not be invented as an artificial means of giving occupation, but should be of some real value to the community which would ideally be undertaken by some public body if money were available; third, that no-one should be employed so as to deprive others of their work. In the course of 2½ years, to the end of 1934, over £12,000 was collected and nearly that sum paid out in salaries. Every man in the scheme was to get three days’ work in return for a weekly allowance of £2.

The work undertaken covered a wide range. There were Surface Utilisation Surveys on 25-inch maps which had to be brought up to date; these were concentrated on outer London, as the London County Council already had such a survey prepared for the county. There were a Survey of the Country of London on 6-inch maps and replanning schemes in North Kensington, Fulham and Bermondsey; a model was made of a typical house in an urban street for the instruction of firemen; and a model, of which six casts were taken, of the Greater London area was prepared in high relief. Heights of buildings were surveyed and plotted, and measured drawings of seventeenth and eighteenth century houses made.

An index of architectural drawings in London was being compiled for the Architectural Graphic Records Committee under the supervision of the Librarian of the RIBA. There are references to work having been done in the libraries of the RIBA, the Guildhall, the Society of Antiquaries, the House of Commons, the Royal Academy, the Record Office [sic – ? PRO], the Office of Works, the Middle Temple, the London Society, University College London, the Bishopsgate Institute, the Westminster City Library, the Borough Libraries of Kensington, St Pancras, Chelsea and Croydon, and unspecified borough libraries.
One of the most interesting surveys undertaken was the series of strip drawings of elevations of the principal streets of London. It was started at the suggestion of Professor H S Goodhart-Rendel, who had drawings made showing the current state of Piccadilly to illustrate a lecture on that street which he gave at the RIBA in March 1933. He started with John Tallis’s drawings of the north and south sides of Piccadilly; these were enlarged to a scale of 24 feet to the inch and measured sketches to the same scale were then prepared of the same street as it was at the time.

Tallis stopped just west of Albemarle Street and St James’s Street, but the new elevation was carried as far as Hyde Park Corner on the north side: joined together the sections of the new drawing made an elevation over 18 feet long.

In fact, a drawing of The Mall from Buckingham Palace to Admiralty Arch was the first of the new series to be completed; it was some 12 feet long. Copies could be purchased in July 1933 from the London Society for thirty shillings, part of the proceeds going to the draughtsmen; a copy mounted on a spring roller in a box was presented to The Queen. At that time the Piccadilly elevation was nearly complete and work had started on Oxford Street, Bond Street, and the Embankment from Blackfriars Bridge to Battersea Bridge, and also on a counterpart to the elevation on Salway’s Kensington Turnpike Trust Plans.

By March 1934 completed drawings covered the north side of Piccadilly from Hyde Park to Piccadilly Circus, the south side from the Ritz Hotel to the Criterion, the east side of Whitehall, extended to show the Houses of Parliament, St James’s Square, the Embankment from Blackfriars Bridge to Charing Cross Bridge, and the north side of Knightsbridge and Kensington Gore. Others not specified had been started.

At an exhibition of this and other work of the Committee, held at 7 Bedford Square in June—August 1934, the last-mentioned elevation had reached the lodges of Holland House, with some omissions of the length of Hyde Park, but the Albert Memorial was included. A tracing of Salway’s elevations was displayed under the new drawings. Work on the west side of Whitehall had not been completed by the time of the exhibition.

According to Goodhart-Rendel it was hoped that when the drawings had been made they would be published as a book, a ‘new Tallis’ as he called it, the proceeds of its sale going to the fund which had assisted their preparation. As far as I know none of these drawings was in fact published except as illustrations to show this part of the work of the Committee.

Some years ago, when I was preparing the evidence for a public inquiry on Curtis Green’s Westminster Bank in Piccadilly, I came across first Goodhart-Rendel’s article and then the other references to the ‘new Tallis’ but, in the limited time available, I did not find any of the finished elevations. Is there any knowledge or record of their whereabouts, or of the measured drawings, which were to be made available for the Survey of London, or of the architectural drawings index?

Stephen Marks

Sources


LONDON SURVEY’D


Images of Chelsea, by Elizabeth Longford, volume 1 of Images of London. Saint Helena Press, 1980. Limited edition, 50 copies @ £225, 1000 @ £70.


Surveys of London are without number and without end: it is a continuing challenge in so many directions. Some are learned, some chatty; some are historical, some architectural, some pictorial; some are many-volumed, many-splendoured things, some within the compass of a single book. One work may partake of several of these qualities. Here are brought to your notice three very different kinds of survey, two, based on considerable historical and academic research, forming parts of an old and a new series, and one a handsome picture book.

Volume XL of the Survey of London, even larger (and much more expensive) than the first part which appeared in 1977, completes the account of the Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair. The first volume on Mayfair, the thirty-ninth in the series, dealt with the general history, that is the acquisition, development, administration, social character and architecture of the estate. This volume describes in detail the buildings, not only those which survive but also the original buildings and the successive rebuildings and alterations.

The area covered is that enclosed by the estate boundary at the time of first development, though now a number of significant buildings, notably Claridge’s and Grosvenor House, are no longer freeholds of the estate. It stretches from Oxford Street to the north side of the Dorchester Hotel and Berkeley Square, and from Park Lane almost to Bond Street, an area of about a hundred acres of the most valuable property.

Mayfair has never lost its cachet, even if in the last sixty years it has lost much of its residential character. Rebuilding and alteration of houses were often carried out in the height of fashion, with great expense, employing most of the well-known architects of each period. Not only are there fine examples of Georgian, early, middle and late, but there are buildings of high quality of many later periods; to this reviewer, perhaps the most interesting of the later developments are the concentrations of rebuilding in red brick, often with terracotta, of the late Victorian and Edwardian period in and around Mount Street and Aldfoord Street.

It is one of the constant sources of surprise in Mayfair that one may find an interior completely remodelled behind a retained facade of the eighteenth century or an early interior preserved behind a subsequent rebuilding of the front, and it may have happened more than once to a house. Such changes, up to quite recent times, as well as the original buildings and complete rebuildings are meticulously recorded with full documentary evidence.
Some idea of the scope of these descriptions can be given by noting that Grosvenor Square occupies 59 pages, and that one small group of houses, albeit important, 66–68 Brook Street and 53 Davies Street, have 9 pages allotted to them.

The volume includes such diverse elements as an electricity substation beneath a raised ‘garden’ and substantial late nineteenth-century artisans’ dwellings to the north of Grosvenor Square, a long stretch of the south side of Oxford Street, the American Embassy, the former ducal mansion of Grosvenor House, and several distinguished churches. Later developments, numerous as they are, have done little to disrupt the rectangular grid of the original layout which, together with the estate’s policies and processes, is dealt with in Volume XXXIX.

Beautifully drawn text figures give plans, elevations and details of many of the buildings and there is a complete folding-out set of elevations of Grosvenor Square in about 1930, while the plates contain more than 350 photographs. Although the earlier volume is also copiously illustrated there appear to be no duplications, but there is full cross-referencing from the present to the earlier volume. There are extensive notes and index. This volume has maintained the extremely high standard of scholarship and presentation which we have come to expect of the Survey of London: may it long continue in this difficult age!

The Survey of London started in 1900 and even now has covered only a small proportion of the area of the former County of London, so it indicates some courage on the part of the publisher of a new series, Bamber Gascoigne, to embark on the Images of London, a survey of London as seen in prints.

This project arose from the success of his Images of Richmond, privately published in 1978. The series, of which Images of Chelsea is the first volume, is intended to cover many, but not all, areas of London; some unfortunately would not be able to support such an expensive undertaking. Each volume will consist of three parts, a history of the area as recorded in prints, a gallery reproducing every print of the area up to 1860 and a selection from then till the present day, and a catalogue raisonné of the prints, with indexes. The project is under the editorial supervision of Ralph Hyde, Keeper of Prints and Maps at Guildhall Library.

In this first volume the gallery, which must be regarded as the kernel of the work, contains reproductions of 663 prints, with anything from two to twenty-one on a page. Most are, therefore, very small but they are adequate for identification and to show the variations on similar subjects; indeed, it is possible to trace changes as they take place since the views are arranged by subject in chronological order. Quite a number are reproduced also at a larger scale in the text which occupies rather more than a third of the book, dealing with separate topics.

The book, produced in a limited edition in two styles of binding, is a most elegant piece of production. It will certainly be far beyond the reach of many reference libraries which ought to have it as well as of most private collectors: of the 183 entries in the list of subscribers (some of which may indicate more than one copy ordered) fourteen are institutions, of which only eight are in London. Nevertheless, the series, however far it succeeds in going, will be extremely valuable: the first volume promises well.

The last volume, Above London, contains a very impressive collection of aerial photographs, taken from a helicopter in the autumns of 1978 and 1979. It explores London by following the river from the estuary half-way to its source, with excursions to north and south. Many of the familiar sights of London are here but from an unfamiliar angle and with a breadth of relationship that is difficult to comprehend except from the air. Many of the scenes are ones that no Londoner or Englishman would recognise as London, such as Henley, Gatwick, Cliveden or Ascot; these, and many textual references betoken the American origin of the book. It is a sequel to similar books on San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hawaii and Washington (DC), photographed by an American and captioned by one of the most well-known commentators on American affairs.

This is no complaint, for it opens one’s eyes to the larger image, but it is unfortunate that the long captions contain many errors and misleading simplifications. Southwark is stated to be the most ancient part of the city; Grosvenor Chapel in South Audley Street ‘became a special place of worship for the American armed forces’ — surely a case of mistaken identity for St Mark’s in North Audley Street, even nearer the American wartime headquarters in Grosvenor Square; it ‘took Nash twenty years to complete’ Trafalgar Square — his contribution, though considerable, was virtually limited to the creation of the plan; Nash is credited, too, with the design of a tropical plant house at Kew, known neither to Colvin or Summerson — because of all he has done he suffers, as Wren has suffered, from over- attribution. Sometimes the caption doesn’t square up with the photograph: one view southwards over Soho is described as showing Bloomsbury beyond; another, of the Inner and Middle Temples, is said to include the Royal Courts of Justice, but the photograph has been trimmed short of the Strand. Such blemishes are a shame, but the large full-colour photographs are superb and well worth having.

NASH REVISITED


Sir John’s first book on this subject, John Nash, Architect to King George IV, appeared in 1935. It was a pioneer work, the first biography of the architect to be published. Since that time there have been not only much research and many publications relating to Nash and his work but also a huge change in public attitudes towards architecture of his period, town planning, and conservation. Publications include important books on Regent’s Park, Regent Street and Nash himself, and volumes of the Survey of London. These and his own research have enabled the author to give a much more accurate and documented account than was possible nearly half a century ago and provides the opportunity for a more considered assessment.

In 1935 it was not so long since Nash’s Regent Street, with all its alterations and blemishes, had been replaced by a more grandiose scheme; only 3 or 4 years before that date the Crown Estates Commissioners had allowed No 4 Carlton Gardens, forming the western end of Carlton House Terrace, to be rebuilt as an altogether larger house, designed like the Quadrant by Sir Reginald Blomfield. Nash was not highly regarded. It is interesting, therefore, that when Sir John first wrote, his own view of Carlton House Terrace, too, was by no means wholly flattering: ‘Nash’s facades are impressive in their loose, almost shoddy, fashion. The high terminal pavilions are curiously inappropriate and the intro-
duction of Greek Ionic [sic] columns...under the terraces is a lapse of taste of which hardly anybody except Nash would have been guilty. By contrast, in 1980 the terrace forming the extension 'with its strong horizontal line and stubborn Greek Doric order gives to the mansions behind a sublime patrician aloofness, while the mansions themselves are vested in the rigid magnificence of a thirty-six-foot Corinthian colonnade...Nothing could be further from Nash’s hesitant and confused design for Buckingham Palace. The Carlton House terraces are monumentally regal.

Of course his buildings are not all, and the observer of London’s topography will find that Nash’s impact on its town planning and development was enormous. A whole swath of London owes its present form to the genius, determination and enterprise of John Nash, from West Strand, Trafalgar Square and St James’s Park, through the very heart of the West End, to Park Crescent, Regent’s Park and the Grand Junction Canal. A glance through Shepherd’s Metropolitan Improvements will show how many buildings, how much of London, was involved. The development of all these is carefully elucidated and occupies a large part of the new book, as of the old. The account is lively and lucid throughout, as we would expect.

Since the author’s aim is much the same, the new book naturally follows a similar pattern to the old. It is not, however, a revision: the whole has been reorganised and largely rewritten and much new material added. The new book is therefore much to be welcomed to take its place as a standard reference on the life and work of John Nash.

BOOK NOTES


John Clark has achieved the near-impossible. Into the space of 32 pages he has compressed eight hundred years of London’s history, from the Roman withdrawal of 410 AD, through the obscure sixth and seventh centuries, the Viking invasions and the Norman Conquest, until its establishment as a commune with a mayor of its own at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During those eight centuries, of which comparatively little is known for certain, a new street pattern evolved, superseding that of the Roman city, a pattern that still largely survives to this day despite modern rebuilding. Mr Clark’s sketch maps clearly define the topography of early London. He also finds space to discuss the foundations of civic government which were laid during this period, as well as the establishment of London’s political and commercial strength. On every page there is at least one illustration; some are inevitably familiar, others fresh and unusual. Mr. Clark supports his account with frequent references to archaeological excavations, some well known, others of recent date. Altogether, this is a remarkable monograph, informative and stimulating, a courageous attempt to sum up a period about which all too much is uncertain: it is strongly recommended to members.

Ann Saunders

Alfred Waterhouse and the Natural History Museum, by Mark Girouard. Yale University Press in association with The British Museum (Natural History), 1981. 64 pages including plans and illustrations. £4.95.

This must be one of the most beautifully written and produced monographs to appear in recent years on a London building, with first-class colour and black-and-white photographs and reproductions of Waterhouse’s own delicate sketches. Chapters are devoted to Richard Owen (the first director) and the idea of the museum, to Waterhouse (the architect) and the realisation of the idea, and to the building itself, the latter occupying more than half the book. Dr Girouard’s lucid account covers a period of over twenty years from the first proposal for a separate natural history museum till its opening in 1881, the centenary of which is commemorated in this volume. The book should appeal to anyone interested in natural history or in architecture.


This book is written by one who clearly knows and loves his subject, an insider who has been able to look from his own experience both at the institution and at the building, to see how it has been used as well as how it has come to be what it is. It provides an excellent account for the informed general reader and is illustrated by a generous selection of paintings, prints, drawings and photographs, the majority of which come from the extensive collection belonging to the Palace itself. It is a pity that there is no plan at all, neither of the old palace nor of the new; there is, too, a tantalizing paucity of artist’s names, but all in all this is an attractive and welcome book.


This diary of 3½ years gives a remarkably vivid picture of the day-to-day life of a boy between 12 and 15 years old living in Kilburn, ending his school life and trying various jobs, till he sails as an emigrant from Portsmouth. The context is set with short chapters on the tracing of the manuscript, on his family, and on the London of his time, and there is a full index.

ALSO RECEIVED

Godly Mayfair, edited by Ann Callender. Published by Grosvenor Chapel, 1980. 48 pages including 9 illustrations. Available from London booksellers or from Dr Ann Callender, Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, London W1. £3.50, p&p 75 pence extra.


Old London Postcard Album, ed Charles Skilton. Skilton & Shaw, 1980. 48 pages with 88 reproductions in black and white and 4 in colour on the cover, hardback. £4.95.

Westminster Abbey, wallchart designed and illustrated by Richard Grasley, written by Terence Heath, 27" x 39". Francis Chichester Ltd 1980. Available from Westminster Abbey Bookshop or by post from the publisher at 9 St James’s Place, London SW1. £1.90 plus p&p 60 pence rolled or 25 pence folded.