A R B FULLER

Mr A R B Fuller, a member of the Society's Council for twenty-one years died on April 11 this year. A former Master of Charterhouse, Mr Fuller had been Librarian of St Paul's Cathedral for more than twenty years, and until his final illness was a familiar sight in its precincts. A colleague of his at St Paul's, Sir David Floyd Ewin, has described him as "Always direct and definite in his views, and what is more, very courageous, fearing no-one, expressing himself clearly and with authority". His knowledge of the history of the Cathedral, its muniments and other treasures was probably greater than that of anyone else who had been attached to the Cathedral over the centuries. Sir David adds, "The day before he died I had taken him out to lunch and he was in great form. He passed away in his chair just as I had left him, so he was spared a long and distressing illness." He will long be missed on the Society's Council.

DRW

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Two publications are now well in hand, The A–Z of Georgian London, to be issued early in 1982 to members, and Robert Baker of Piccadilly Hall and His Heirs by Dr Francis Sheppard.

In 1738 John Rocque was selected to undertake a fresh survey of London, the first for 56 years. Nine years later he completed it. Rocque's map, magnificently drawn by John Pine, measured 6½ feet by 13. A contemporary catalogue recommended attaching it to the corne of the washcoat or converting it into a screen. Inevitably it became the standard map of the period. Today, in the original it commands high prices; facsimiles of it published for the Society between 1913 and 1919 and by Harry Margary in 1971 have been out of print for some time. In November 1981 Harry Margary in association with Guildhall Library published a reduced facsimile of Rocque's Survey entitled The A–Z of Georgian London; it forms a sequel to The A–Z of Elizabethan London. In addition to its atlas section the volume contains notes on the preparation of the map by Ralph Hyde and the index originally published by Pine and Tinney in 1747, re-arranged into one alphabetical sequence. A special edition of The A–Z has been published by Mr Margary with a distinct title-page for the Society. This volume will constitute London Topographical Society Publication 126, and paid-up members will receive it as their publication for 1982.

When four Survey of London volumes were issued on Piccadilly and the surrounding area, their Editor, Dr Francis Sheppard, felt unable to include more than a résumé of the long and tragic struggle within the Baker family for the possession of the fields on and around what is today the main thoroughfare of Piccadilly. The argument dragged on, in and out of the Courts, for most of the seventeenth century. Robert Baker, a haberdasher who sold piccadills and other trimmings, originally came from Somerset; the claimants to his estate travelled down to the South-West to take depositions from those too old or too infirm to make the long journey to the Law Courts in London, and the records survive, taken down verbatim, so that we seem to hear those long-dead country voices telling of what they remembered from their childhoods. The lawsuit has a Dickensian quality, reminiscent of the interminable proceedings fought out in Bleak House. Dr Sheppard's complete account, illustrated with maps which include the 1585 Plan showing Piccadilly and the Soho area is now at proof stage; members of the Society may look forward to learning, three hundred years after the events, the true and full story of Piccadilly.

COVENANTS

Will members who find a buff Inland Revenue form enclosed kindly fill it in where marked and return it to me. This has to be done at the start of each Covenant.

If any new members would like to sign a Deed of Covenant, I should be pleased to send them a form. The covenant can be undertaken for four years instead of seven if preferred.

Since April 1981 people who pay tax at higher rate can claim relief at the higher rate, and they can either keep the extra or pass it on to the Society by increasing their subscription though paying the same net amount. To achieve this it would be advisable to confirm with your tax consultant what is applicable to your own tax situation.

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

THE 'RHINEBECK' PANORAMA — AN INSIDER'S IMPRESSIONS

David Webb, Reference Librarian at the Bishopsgate Institute and a member of the Society's Council, recounts the quite unprecedented rush for one of our publications. Fortunately our demands on the Institute's staff are normally slight. His account gives us an opportunity to express our gratitude for their help from time to time and for accommodating our large stock of publications, and especially for rising to the present occasion.

It has been known for some time that Felix Barker was writing an article on the Rhinebeck Panorama and the circumstances of its discovery for The Times, to coincide with its issue. What had not been foreseen was the furor set off by the article, which managed to whet the appetites of readers all over Britain — and, eventually, all over the world.

Normally, the Bishopsgate Institute is closed on a
Saturday, but on July 11th 1981 the caretaker happened to be working in the building. He was aware that a publication was expected during the next few days — he was not prepared for the response that Saturday morning. The first phone call answered was at 8.30 a.m., but it was soon clear that some people had been trying to get through since 7.0! After the first 50 calls, he stopped counting, and he only stayed until lunchtime, while on the Sunday there was nobody in the building. Monday, then, was to be the first fully operational day after the appearance of the article.

That Monday, July 13th 1981, is likely to be etched on my memory for a long time to come. Even at 9.30, the switchboard had taken nearly 100 calls; for the rest of the day, the calls arrived at about 3-minute intervals. The day’s mail brought 165 orders — all first-class — while there was a continual column of would-be purchasers filing through the corridor. So much for the power of the press. The awful part of it all was that, owing to a last-minute hold-up at the printers, NO copies were available!

Tuesday was equally incredible: over 500 orders by post (the local post office made three special deliveries of a complete sackful), the switchboard still under siege, and still no copies until mid-afternoon! By now, we were running out of excuses, trying to compile lists of callers who just HAD to have copies, fending off bookshops, television stations, etc. When a token delivery finally arrived about 4.0 p.m. the vultures really descended, and the bulk had gone by the end of the afternoon. Thus, when the following day’s A.G.M. brought blessed relief, we had already passed 1000 orders, and an immediate reprint was put in hand. By the end of the first week, foreign orders were beginning to flow in, particularly from the Middle East, mostly from ‘exiled’ Britons on contract work, hangover after the ‘old country’. By the following Monday, the first orders began to come in from Australia, Africa, and America: by then, it was clear the Society was home and dry. Not until the end of July did the frantic rush begin to subside, and it only needed the New York Times to order a couple of copies to start one nervously wondering whether the whole process might be repeated all over again. Indeed, a month after the original article had appeared, the Society had to ask The Times to insert a note requesting people to be patient over the despatch of orders; the printers had been working flat out for three weeks.

Nor is the end by any means yet in sight: orders still continue to be received starting ‘I have just got around to reading the Times for July 11, and I am wondering whether you have any copies left...’

BOOK NOTES

The Illustrated London News Book of London’s Villages, by Tony Aldous, Secker and Warburg, 1980. 304 pages including numerous plans and illustrations, laminated paperback. £4.95.

Here you can enjoy the fascinating portraits of 24 of London’s villages, eight of them south of the river, originally printed as monthly articles in the Illustrated London News. The author, himself a resident of Blackheath, identifies some six types of village in London; he finds that Londoners, unlike the residents of other big cities, though they owe a loyalty to London as a whole, owe a first loyalty to their own village. He feels that London needs urban parish councils to represent the real cohesive communities. Such parish councils or town councils do in fact exist almost everywhere else in the country, formally constituted to represent the level of the community below the district councils; it is curious that there should be none in London itself, but, as Aldous points out, local societies have sprung up in great numbers to fill this need. This is a well-produced, perceptive and refreshing volume.


NOTES AND QUERIES

LONDON RECORD SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

M F Serpell of Woodwell Furlong, Church Street, Kenninghall, Norwich NR16 2EP (tel Quidenham 362) has a set of volumes 1–17 (1965–1981) in mint condition for sale at £60 (buyer to collect or pay carriage and packing).

THE HOUSE OF LOUIS BAZALGETTE AT TURNHAM GREEN

Colin Glover, 5a Rutland Court, London SW7, writes: I am researching the life of Louis (Lewis) Bazalgette, grandfather of the celebrated Victorian civil engineer Sir Joseph. In Holden’s London Directory 1800 L Bazalgette Esq is shown as living in 22 Lower Grosvenor Street and Turnham Green. He occupied the house and the Wheatstone Field (rentals £80 and £15) from 1793 to 1803. It is the first house in the Turnham Green section of the Parish of Chiswick (ratebook in Chiswick Library). In the 1801 census his entry is next to the Workhouse! I have examined an 1820s tithe map at the Library but found no clue: is there any large-scale map of the area between 1780 and 1810 known?

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.

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