The Annual General Meeting

The ninetieth Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society was held on 4th July 1990 at University College School, Frognal, London NW3. After an ample tea members drifted towards the large, wood-panelled school hall to obtain their copy of volume xxvi of the London Topographical Record, as well as the extra publication – Devastated London. The bombed City as seen from a barrage balloon drawn by Cecil Brown.

The Annual General Meeting was officially opened by the Chairman and the members were conducted at a comfortable trot through the Agenda. Members were warned that the annual subscription of £10 might soon be increased, but with the Society in its 110th year and with the satisfaction of an exceptionally fat London Topographical Record, an increase may be justified. Furthermore, as the Hon Editor pointed out, members could look forward to an interesting publication for 1991: four sheets of the original manuscript drawings for the first edition of the Ordnance Survey maps of London. This is timed to coincide with the bicentenary of the establishment of the Ordnance Survey, to be celebrated in 1991 with an exhibition at the Tower of London (from May until August).

The officers and Council members of the London Topographical Society were re-elected, after which a proposal surfaced that the times and dates of the Annual General Meeting might in future be planned so as not to coincide with the meetings of other London societies. The possibility of a London Topographical Society tie was also discussed, three possible designs having been submitted. It was agreed to pursue the matter at the next Council meeting.

The Annual General Meeting concluded with an entertaining talk about University College School by Peter Barber. As an Old Gower, as old boys of University College School are known, he was able to convey the character of the place as well as recounting the history of the school – of necessity brief because an eccentric headmaster buried the school’s archives somewhere under the tennis courts.

Founded in 1830, the school was originally in Gower Street where it established a reputation as a radical and somewhat disorganized college. The number of pupils dwindled in the late nineteenth century, and as many of them lived in Hampstead it was decided to move the school to a large site in Frognal. The new school buildings, designed by A. Mitchell, were opened by King Edward VII in 1907. The hall where the Annual General Meeting of the Society was held was gutted by fire in 1978, only to be promptly rebuilt in the same grandiose style within eighteen months.

LAMAS winter lecture programme

As usual LTS members are invited to attend LAMAS lectures, which are held on Wednesdays at the Museum of London. Coffee, tea and sherry (at modest prices) are served from 6.00 pm, and the lectures start at 6.30 pm (AGM at 6.15).


14th November: Further Historic Treasures of Whitehall (aspects of historical interest in government property), by Peter Lawrence.

5th December: Uphall Camp and Iron Age London, by Dr Pamela Greenwood.

16th January: The Middle Saxons – Middlesex from circa 400 to circa 850 A.D., by Keith Bailey.

27th February: Annual General Meeting and Presidential Address: The Wall and its Influences, by Dr Derek Renn.


10th April: Further Excavations at Barking Abbey, Essex, with particular reference to Saxon glass-making, by Ken MacGowan and Mike Heyworth.

15th May: Early Traditional Buildings of Middlesex, by Pat Clarke.

LAMAS visits and conferences

The LAMAS visits programme has been cut down to a single expedition to Crickley Hill and Gloucester Cathedral, on Wednesday 24th July 1991, price £13.50.

25th Local History Conference on People and Places. Saturday 24th November from 11.00 am to 5.00 pm, at the Museum of London.

Rescue Archaeology in London

Ralph Merrifield

LTS members may well have been puzzled by the marked deterioration of relations between English Heritage and the Museum of London in recent months. This is due to changes which English Heritage proposes to impose on the organization of rescue archaeology in London, to bring it more into line with a system it would like to see uniformly adopted. In this planning archaeologists (those concerned with studying developers' plans and advising whether archaeological investigation is needed on any site and to what extent) are rigidly separated from executive archaeologists (those who carry out the actual excavations and the work resulting from them). The former would normally be employed in county planning departments. The latter are variously employed, by local authorities or independent trusts, usually on a territorial basis as local archaeological units. It has been urged, however, that developers should have a choice when they are required to employ the services of archaeologists, and some of these units have recently been encouraged to travel widely in quest of work, competing with locally based units for excavation contracts.

In London a different system has developed, mainly as a pragmatic response to a pressing need under changing political circumstances. By the early 1970s the continued destruction by development, of unrecorded archaeological data was perceived to be unacceptable, and a small archaeological team was set up in 1973 by the Corporation of London as an integral part of Guildhall Museum for archaeological work in the City. This was duly incorporated in the new Museum of London as its Department of Urban Archaeology (D.U.A.) and grew rapidly as developer-funding for rescue archaeology became more widely accepted, particularly among the high-profile developers responsible for most construction within the Square Mile. Outside this area rescue archaeology in Greater London remained a Cinderella, though from 1972 great efforts were made to maintain an archaeological service in north Southwark under an independent committee (Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee). The old London Museum, incorporated with Guildhall Museum in the new Museum of London, had just two archaeological field officers, whose attention was mainly concentrated on those areas of west London where past finds indicated a strong archaeological potential, particularly in pre-history.

English Heritage's predecessor, the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings of the Department of the Environment, encouraged the development of locally based archaeological units, variously administered and financed, throughout the country in order to carry out excavations in advance of the great destruction of evidence that was taking place as rebuilding proceeded.

There was great concern among London archaeologists, both in the museums and county societies, about the situation in Greater London, for only the City had anything approaching an adequate archaeological service. The D.O.E. was prepared to fund projects, but not to employ staff, and the greatest difficulty was the lack of archaeologists who were free to undertake excavation at short notice for as long as might be required. A piecemeal approach was the only possibility, and credit is due to the county societies and museums for their acceptance of new responsibilities, and to the Directorate of Ancient Monuments for encouraging them to do so. In 1974 the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society recruited a small team of archaeologists under contract to carry out work in the inner London boroughs north of the Thames, financed partly by project money and partly by grants from the boroughs served. A little later in the same year similar action was taken by Surrey Archaeological Society for the south-western boroughs. The Passmore Edwards Museum undertook responsibility for the boroughs east of the Lea, and the Museum of London extended the work of the old London Museum in the west London boroughs north of the river. The Museum was also involved with the team employed by the Independent Southwark Committee, through its Honorary Field Director, Harvey Sheldon, who continued in this office after his appointment as Archaeology Officer (Greater London) to the Museum. The Southwark Committee had extended its responsibilities to the Borough of Lambeth, from which it received a grant, and was now known as the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Excavation Committee.

Each unit team was required to monitor planning applications in its own area; carry out rescue excavations as required, and produce reports on them. The system, rickety as it was, was made to work by good will on all sides and by making considerable demands on voluntary work. One of the great unsung heroes of this period was Allan Tribe, the Hon. Treasurer of LAMAS, who shouldered the burden of financial administration not only of the Inner London (North) Archaeological Unit, but also of the Southwark and Lambeth Unit. There were often cash-flow problems, especially at the beginning of the financial year, when grants were delayed but staff had to be paid.

The proposal made by the Greater London Council in 1983, that this system should be replaced by an integrated archaeological rescue service for Greater London to be administered by the Museum of London, was received with considerable relief all round. The G.L.C. was prepared to make a substantial annual grant to the Museum to cover this, on condition that the service should be extended to all the Greater London boroughs, including a number of outlying boroughs that had been omitted from the earlier scheme. With some modifications this was agreed; the Passmore Edwards Museum was unwilling to relinquish its archaeological role east of the Lea; and a strong plea was made for the Kentish boroughs of Greenwich, Lewisham, Bexley and Bromley to be served by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit. It was agreed that a proportion of the G.L.C. grant should be reserved for these purposes, and the Museum of London proceeded to establish a new Department of Greater London Archaeology to provide a rescue service for the rest of the London boroughs. This was designed in parallel with its existing Department of Urban Archaeology, with Harvey Sheldon as its Archaeological Officer, responsible directly to Max Hambidge the Museum Director, like his opposite number in the D.U.A.. This ended the illogical situation brought about by historical circumstances that the Museum was concerned with the whole of London in its policy of collecting and exhibiting, as in its educational
work, but with the City alone for rescue archaeology, apart form its minimal commitment to west London. It meant that the Museum could develop an integrated service for Greater London as it had for the City, covering the identification of priorities by the study of planning applications, negotiations with developers, actual excavation, the conservation and study of finds, including environmental investigation, publication of reports, and the care of the resulting archive of finds, excavation notes, drawings and photographs.

Maintenance of the Greater London service (as distinct from costs of excavation and publication, which could be project-funded by English Heritage and to which developers were usually prepared to contribute) was largely dependent on the annual grant from the Greater London Council. The service was consequently jeopardized when the G.L.C. was abolished in 1986, but was saved by an undertaking from the government to continue this funding after the abolition, when the additional grant to the Museum was administered by English Heritage, whose own governmental grant was increased for this purpose.

Under the sweeping changes now proposed by English Heritage, in default of a county authority for Greater London, English Heritage will itself take over the function of studying planning applications and deciding what, if anything, needs to be done for the excavation or preservation of a proposed development site. To this end its London staff will be increased by the creation of an Archaeological Planning Section, and the post of its Chief Archaeological Officer for London was advertised on 29th July 1990. His principal tool will be the computerized Sites and Monuments Record, the development of which English Heritage took over from the G.L.C. His task is unenviable, for in the short term at least, i.e. for perhaps the next five to ten years, the Sites and Monuments Index will be defective, such is our present ignorance of so much of the archaeology of Greater London.

The Museum is attempting to fill as many of these gaps as possible, and views each site as part of an on-going research programme that is really a long-term investigation of the little-known archaeology of the Lower Thames basin, a region important in both pre-history and history, but mostly built over and accessible for investigation only when redevelopment takes place. Would this aim be pursued by English Heritage in its proposed new role as “Curator” of London archaeology - its own term to define the function of the county archaeological officer elsewhere - with the dedication and determination shown by the Museum of London? Has it any intention of trying to do so, or does it regard devotion to this research as a fault to be eliminated?

It is particularly worrying that English Heritage’s spokesmen have let it be known that in their view there is far too much archaeological excavation in London. They apparently believe that much of it could be avoided by persuading developers to alter their plans so that significant archaeological structures are not destroyed and can be left intact for the investigation of a future generation. For this purpose use would be made of the new wonder-technique of geophysical survey, which can detect and locate buried structures. If practicable, this could relieve our own generation of much of its responsibility. Unfortunately the application of geophysical survey to archaeology is in its infancy, and archaeologists are sceptical of its ability, in the present state of the art, to locate and interpret insubstantial buried features. They are even more sceptical of the possibility of persuading developers to alter cherished plans on such authority. The wish of English Heritage to reduce the scale of archaeological work in London, however, may underlie its determination to become the sole arbiter at the planning stage.

In this it will probably be supported by some archaeologists elsewhere, particularly in rural areas, who undoubtedly contrast with envy the expenditure on London archaeology with their own inability to finance important work. Yet a glance around the London sky-line will demonstrate that this is where destruction is occurring to an extent unknown elsewhere. The volume of development is reflected by the number of planning applications determined in London - more than 60,000 annually, approximately 15% of those for the whole country. Likewise it may not be realized by non-urban archaeologists that in a built-up area development gives almost the only opportunity for archaeological investigation - hence all the wide gaps in London’s Sites and Monuments Record.

It is against this background of a unique pressure of work that English Heritage’s sudden perception of a flaw in the present organization of London archaeology must be judged. London’s excavators are in no danger of running out of work, unlike their colleagues in rural areas, who now seek employment in regions remote from that of their special study and experience. Planning advice given by the London service to boroughs is therefore unlikely to be coloured by its need for “jobs for the boys”, and no such suggestion has previously been made. The real difficulty is to release experienced archaeologists from excavation long enough to finish their reports on previous work. It can in fact be argued that the arrangements English Heritage is proposing for London will be more unsatisfactory, in that it will undertake the role of the county Curator in proposing projects while continuing its present function of channelling public funds to these projects when necessary. The open dialogue between Curator and English Heritage will be replaced by a private internal discussion within the hierarchy of English Heritage, in which the merits of the project may not be the only consideration.

It is significant that the London boroughs themselves seem satisfied with the advice they have received from the Museum and show no desire for change. The Corporation of London has rejected English Heritage’s proposals so decisively that an exception has been agreed for the Museum’s longer established City archaeological service (the D.U.A.), which will continue both to advise the Corporation and to carry out the resulting excavations. The views of other London boroughs are likely to be similar, for an excellent relationship has been developed with most of them.

The great advantage of the operation of an archaeological service by a museum such as the Museum of London or the Passmore Edwards Museum - as also by museums in other parts of the country to which English Heritage has not yet turned its attention - is that it meshes perfectly with the museum’s other services to the community, and particularly with its educational work.
Most people are interested in the history of their own neighbourhood and can readily appreciate the significance of a local excavation. If they can be invited to take part themselves, as is sometimes possible usually through a local society, their enthusiasm is increased. The results of the excavation and the finds from it can then be the subject of a local exhibition. An excavation of a single site, however, only forms part of a continuing programme of research aimed at reconstructing earlier landscapes and modes of life, and the interest of a local community can be engaged in this by means of lectures and exhibitions. Another useful means of maintaining contact with communities in Greater London has been the local liaison committee, of which several have been set up. On these the Museum’s archaeological staff meet members of councils, representatives of local societies, local government officers and others with a special interest in the progress of investigation, on which regular reports are presented, while the committee itself performs a useful task in monitoring the archaeological work. In these ways a valuable fund of good will towards the Museum’s service has been built up in many boroughs, as has been demonstrated by their reactions to the recent threats.

Unfortunately English Heritage has another weapon to use against the Greater London Archaeological Service – the unanswerable one of financial sanctions. It proposes to phase out the grant to the Museum of the establishment costs of the service, continued by decision of the government after the demise of the G.L.C. This will be phased out over four years with annual reductions and will disappear entirely in 1994. The Museum will undoubtedly endeavour to continue a reduced service for Greater London but it has to be recognized that it will be gravely impaired by this loss of revenue. The blithe comments by some English Heritage spokesmen that it can be recouped by increasing demands on developers merely demonstrate their innocence in dealing with urban developers. These can be persuaded to contribute towards the investigation and even publication of evidence they are about to destroy, but not to general administrative costs, working accommodation and storage, still less to the continued employment of key personnel. English Heritage’s expressed intention has convinced many archaeologists that its real purpose in seeking change is not to reform London’s rescue archaeology but to reduce it to vanishing point, perhaps in the hope that the public funds released may be diverted to other purposes more congenial to its leaders. What is quite certain, however, is that London archaeology will not die quietly!

Postscript

The above article was written early in August in response to a deadline of early September, and represents a London archaeologist’s view of the situation at the time. A meeting of senior officers of English Heritage with Lady Hanworth (Chairman of the Joint Working Party on London Archaeology), Dennis Turner (Chairman of the South West London Liaison Committee) and the author (Chairman of the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Committee) on 23rd August seemed to indicate a change in English Heritage’s attitude, as expressed by its spokesman to a meeting of the Joint Working Party, 4th May. While maintaining its claim to take over the Museum’s role as planning adviser, English Heritage’s spokespersons disclaimed the intention to phase out the Museum’s establishment grant in four years, saying that they merely needed a break-down of this expenditure for public audit. I am cautiously optimistic that a more satisfactory outcome may be negotiated than seemed possible previously, particularly as the Museum’s expertise in London archaeology was constantly reiterated. It will certainly be required at the planning stage!

P.P.S.

A dramatic slump in London’s building industry in the last few weeks has invalidated two of the arguments in this article – one on each side. I had argued that London archaeologists did not lack work owing to the rate of development; now suddenly they do, partly as a result of the Gulf crisis, which has increased builders’ costs and made any prospect of reduction in the interest rate seem remote. English Heritage had argued that the loss of the Museum’s grant could be offset by increasing demands on developers; that will be impossible in the present state of the industry. Unless public funding continues, the Museum’s service to Greater London archaeology can hardly survive even in skeletal form – and it is still required for post-excavation work on the mass of evidence recovered in the last few years, and as a nucleus for further expansion when development recommences, as it surely will. It will then be necessary to replace the hundred archaeologists now under notice of dismissal.

The Editor would welcome comments; the deadline for the next Newsletter is 14th March 1991.

1 This exception is justified by English Heritage on the grounds that the establishment of the D.U.A. in the Museum of London is financed by a grant from the City Corporation, so that it can be claimed that the Corporation, as planning authority, is in effect being advised by its own officers. This is regarded as a legitimate arrangement, even if those officers also carry out excavations – a somewhat Byzantine argument with which I will not quarrel, as it leads to the right conclusion!
Thomas Faulkner, topographer: how authoritative?

G. Saul

Thomas Faulkner (1777–1855) is described in the British Library Catalogue as “topographer”. His books are often quoted as authoritative and that without qualification. Hugh Phillips in his two volumes about mid-eighteenth century London quotes Faulkner extensively on the subject of the Chelsea Waterworks, and more recently Peter Jackson and Annabel Walker quote him in *Kensington and Chelsea* – but with what justification?

Two of Faulkner’s books concern the Chelsea and Kensington areas. In *Historical and Topographical Description of Chelsea* there is an outline of the history of the development of the Chelsea Waterworks which bears little resemblance to the record to be found in the Waterworks Directors’ Minute Books, Account Books and Shareholders’ Minute Books.

Criticism of Faulkner’s works relating to the Chelsea Waterworks has to answer the question as to why both the waterworks itself and General Wilford (for years Governor and in 1820 still a Director) were subscribers to the first edition of Faulkner’s book. This, and the account itself, suggests that Faulkner derived his information from the water company. Yet there is no mention of Faulkner having approached the company for information in the way that William Matthews did prior to his publishing *Hydraulia* in 1835. It is also reasonable to ask how much credence may be given to the water company’s records.

The recent move by Thames Water to place its historical records on permanent loan to the Greater London Record Office has begun the process of making available an enormous archive largely unread since the individual water company’s records ceased to be of importance to the Metropolitan Water Board and its successor. The surviving Minute Books of the original water companies are now catalogued and accessible. They cover approximately 1,300 “company years” of London water company business prior to 1904. The record for Chelsea is longer than any other, only the first Minute Book (1723–5) is missing; many early annual Account Books as well as all the Dividend Books survive.

Faulkner states that the Chelsea Waterworks Company could serve 10,000 people with more water and at a cheaper rate than the New River Company. The Company advertised that it would be capable of serving London and Westminster and parts adjacent as soon as pipes were laid. The purchase of the old Horseferry Road Waterworks (variously known as Millbank Waterworks or Westminster Waterworks) is dated by Faulkner to 1729, whereas 1727 is the date given in the Minutes. The purchase of the materials from the old church of St Martin-in-the-Fields is stated to be 1721, which is before the company’s Letters Patent were issued and almost certainly two years before work started on the waterworks; the date is also at variance with information from other sources. In the Minutes of September 1726 it is recorded that Sir John Colbatch, a Director, proposed that if the building was for sale it should be purchased for a maximum of £300 – in the event £270 was paid. It was used for wharf buildings but not for housing the waterwheels and engines.

Much of the remaining evidence given by Faulkner is financial and is substantially wrong. The Chelsea Waterworks Company was nearly insolvent by 1731, whereas Faulkner admits that the company was in debt in 1739–40, claiming that the severe winter was largely to blame. Faulkner goes on to state that there was a need to increase the number of subscribers – this is a misinterpretation of the proposal to sell 2,000 shares, which dated from 1731. The Accounts bear this out in that the original capital of £40,000 from the sale of shares, and the £20,000 which was borrowed at interest, had been spent by 1731. The only solution was to increase the capital and this involved a tortuous route for a company, with an Act of Parliament which authorized the King to grant Letters Patent. It was 1737 before the scheme to issue the new shares in the place of the redeemed bonds was finally authorized and implemented. Many of the bond holders accepted shares for their bonds and part of the arrangement was the payment of a 4 shilling dividend on all the 4,000 shares. A further financial crisis arose and the dividend was suspended in 1740, not being resumed until 1752 and then only at the rate of 3 shillings per share.

The evidence of the company secretary, John Bligh, given to the 1809 Select Committee on the West Middlesex Waterworks Bill and repeated in essence to the 1821 Select Committee by his successor, James Lynde, stated that the company had only paid an average dividend of 2% on its nominal capital throughout its entire history. By comparison with the New River Company, the Chelsea Waterworks Company was an abysmal failure. All this information was publicly available even in 1822.

In regard to Kensington, Faulkner omits any substantial mention of the West Middlesex Waterworks, which was established in his own lifetime. The original entrepreneur, Dodd, (who saw the first West Middlesex Bill through Parliament) was sacked as company engineer after the Bill received the Royal Assent (as he was from three other London water companies) and the place where the water was abstracted from the river was moved immediately after his departure. Faulkner fails to mention the pipe laying and reservoir building in Kensington which followed – this deserves a chapter of its own. The reservoir site in Campden Hill is still in use and many of the hydrant and stop-cock covers can still be seen, not only in Kensington but elsewhere in west London.

To anyone unfamiliar with the water company records, they provide a mine of topographical and other information, to be compared with the records kept by the Vestries and other bodies. For any topographer suspicious of politically motivated accounts of the water supply in the metropolis, the way is open to look at what the individual companies did.

There are two contemporary criticisms of Faulkner’s works. One in the British Library refers to a small handbook, *The Antiquities and Public Buildings in Places of Resort in Chelsea for Visitors*, and this is bound with a paper entitled *The Weekly Despatch vs Faulkner*. In the paragraphs bound with Faulkner’s book are the words “a more contemptible larrago of misapplied antiquarian pedantry and twaddle can scarcely be found” and “the Handbook derived little from Faulkner’s errors and absurdities”. A similar point is made in Faulkner’s entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which refers to “a brief adverse criticism on Faulkner’s *History of Brentford*” in the *Athenaeum* no 945 6th December 1845.
The unsatisfactory nature of his remarks about the Chelsea Waterworks and the omissions about the West Middlesex Waterworks must surely raise questions about Faulkner as a reliable reporter of the time. What of other London topographers?

References
Thomas Faulkner, _Historical and Topographical description of Chelsea 1810, 1829; History and Antiquities of Kensington 1820; History and Antiquities of Hammersmith 1839_. Weekly Despatch vs Faulkner’s “History of Chelsea” 1840 (BL Press mark 796 i 21(2)). William Matthews, _Hydraulia_ 1835.

News and Notes

_The Chart Show_

This headline prefaced an article about the London Topographical Society written by Patricia Mowbray and published in _The Sunday Times magazine_, 1st July 1990. Complete with illustrations of the best-selling _Rhinebeck Panorama_ and Cecil Brown’s drawing of the bombed City, the article must surely generate new members and fresh orders. Our Chairman, the Hon Editor and Ralph Hyde were quoted and Ms Mowbray gave the Society a favourable, unsolicited review.

_Repeatable give-away opportunity_

Members who are able to get to the City can pick up a nice addition to their libraries – entirely free of charge. _Continuity and Change – Building in the City of London 1834–1984_ is an attractive large-format paperback, with a hundred pages packed with excellent photographs of the City’s buildings. From Fishmongers’ Hall (1831–4) to those being built at the time of publication six years ago, they range from handsome to downright ugly, but the text makes them all seem interesting.

Demand for the book has been heavy, but some copies have been set aside at the Bishopsgate Institute’s Reference Library for members who read about it here for the first time. It may also be available at the Guildhall Library if stocks hold out.

This is a good moment to record how much the Society owes to the Bishopsgate’s librarian, David Webb, and his assistant Alison Carpenter. Not only do they act as our shop window to the world, but they are in the front line when we get some welcome Press coverage. Several years ago they coped with the overwhelming demand for the _Rhinebeck Panorama_, and more recently they dealt with the response to _The Sunday Times_ write-up featuring the bomb damage drawing. Life would be a lot more difficult without their help.

_Recording the Risk_

An exhibition at Guildhall Library served as a reminder of the interest of fire insurance maps. It is always worth investigating the exhibitions presented in the Whittington Room at Guildhall Library, where from June to August 1990 “Recording the Risk. Fire Insurance Maps: their history and use” warranted special attention. The shape of the Whittington Room was cunningly disguised and the space stuffed with maps and well-designed, informative “story-boards”, also the odd fire bucket, charred debris and other imaginative touches, all of which underlined the value of fire insurance plans not merely to the fire insurance companies and their clients but to topographers, historians and geographers. The very large scale of the plans ensured that details such as skylights and construction materials could be included and the plans produced by the firm of Charles E. Goad are particularly impressive. This firm was established in the City in 1885 and by the time of its founder’s death in 1910 the firm had produced fire insurance plans of fifty-four British towns and 1,300 towns in Canada. Of course the history of fire insurance pre-dated Goad; this exhibition traced the development of the genre from 1745 to 1970 and dated the origins of fire insurance to 1681, when that shrewd property developer, Dr Nicholas Barbon, established an insurance office for houses.

_Courtauld Institute Galleries at Somerset House_

It is a triumph that the collection of the Courtauld Institute should find a worthy home. The top floor of the red brick building in Woburn Square was not a satisfactory place for the display of the Courtauld Collection and the prospect of showing a greater proportion of the paintings in the restored rooms at Somerset House (rooms which formerly housed the Royal Academy, the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries) seemed ideal. As soon as the Courtauld Institute Galleries opened here in June 1990 thousands of people poured through the giant archway on the Strand and up the spiral staircase into the newly painted, newly carpeted rooms where the gems adorn the walls. The paintings, of course, are mouth-watering, but the decor of the rooms is lurid and the splendour of the Great Room has been ruined by modern partitions and panels. Worst of all, the rooms are airless (the exhibition is not recommended to anybody with a respiratory problem). Lack of adequate air conditioning is already causing some paintings to deteriorate. So much for the Courtauld Institute Galleries – what about Somerset House?

This magnificent building designed by Sir William Chambers is one of London’s glories. Yet today the quadrangle is no more than a car park, the mighty buildings overlooking it are wasted on the Inland Revenue and the river terrace is forbidden territory. Is it too much to hope that while the Courtauld Institute Galleries in the north block sort out their teething problems, a new role might be found for the remainder of Somerset House?

_Images of the London Blitz_

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the London Blitz an exhibition at the Museum of London presents a wide selection of photographs never shown or published before, along with familiar images of devastation. The work of Bill Brandt, who was commissioned by the government to compile a record of conditions in London’s underground shelters, is featured, also that of Bert Hardy (of _Picture Post_ fame) and George Rodger (of _Life_ magazine). The exhibition runs until 5th May 1991 and it supplements the new Second World War Gallery at the Museum which illustrates themes of life in war-time London. A programme of lunchtime lectures and workshops is scheduled for the autumn, to commemorate the Blitzkrieg of 1940–1, the star attraction being Dame
Vera Lynn who will talk about “Living and working in London in the Blitz” on 23rd November.

**Dr Johnson’s House**
Dr Johnson’s House, 17 Gough Square, off Fleet Street, has re-opened after refurbishment. Johnson lived here between 1748 and 1759 and wrote *A Dictionary of the English Language* here. His disciples may like to note that the house is open 11 am until 5 pm every day except Sundays and Bank Holidays.

**Stow Service 1991**
Each year the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society arranges the Stow Service at St Andrew Undershaft, London EC3, where John Stow was buried in 1605. Members of the London Topographical Society are welcome to attend; the service will be held at 12 noon on 17th April 1991 and will be conducted by John Wittich, the Parish Clerk. The speaker will be Dr Derek Renn and the Stow address bears the intriguing title “Stow and the other Towers of London”.

**Beatrix Potter’s archaeological paintings**
Did you know that the creator of Peter Rabbit and Jemima Puddle Duck was keenly interested in archaeology? A set of watercolours by Beatrix Potter depicting everyday Roman objects such as shoes, pots, nails and tools recovered from the silty deposits of the Walbrook Stream near Mansion House in 1872–3 are exhibited at the Museum of London from 23rd October until 27th January 1991. The finds themselves have since disappeared, but fortunately Beatrix Potter’s delicate watercolours provide a charming and valuable record of the lost Roman antiquities. She presented her archaeological drawings to the Armitt Trust in 1935 and the exhibition is presented jointly by the Armitt Trust and the Museum of London.

**Archaeological distribution maps**
The Museum of London and the Passmore Edwards Museum are currently compiling archaeological distribution maps for each of London’s boroughs. It is intended that this information and accompanying advice will be presented to each borough for use in producing their Unitary Development Plans. This work aims to ensure that all heritage implications are established at an early stage in local authority planning development. If members or societies to which they belong hold any relevant archive information which might have escaped the notice of the Museum, Ken Whittaker (tel. 071 837 9996) would be pleased to hear from them. Mr Whittaker has been alerted to the LTS list of publications.

**Books for sale**
A member, John J. Plant of 101 Clova Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9AG (tel. 081 536 0924), offers the following books for sale.

*The Guildhall of the City of London together with a short account of its Historic Associations and the Municipal Work carried on therein.* This is a special souvenir edition, presented by the Corporation of the City of London to those attending the centenary meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1931. Printed by Eden Fisher and Co., 202 pages. Cover torn at one point. £5.


**Blitz over Westminster**
Photographs from the Westminster Civil Defence Records held at Westminster City Archives (Victoria Library, 160 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1), form the basis of a booklet (£3.50) and a small exhibition (until December). The booklet, *Blitz over Westminster*, contains a brief text by Roy Harrison, but it is the photographs and their captions that chill the soul. St James’s Piccadilly, for instance, was very badly damaged. Date: 14.10.40, 19.54 hrs, two dead – the verger and his wife were trapped between falling masonry and died from their injuries despite a twelve hour struggle to reach them. The booklet cheats by including Harrods (3.8.44, 01.46 hrs, twenty-nine casualties including six dead), but the photograph of this smart store in disarray is irresistible. Available from Westminster City Archives, tel. 071 798 2180.

**Authors**
It has been suggested that a list of recent (1990–) books written by members of the Society should appear in the Newsletter. The Editor would be pleased to hear from members who are authors, giving details of the publication, the publisher and price. Review copies are welcome.

**Advance warning**
The bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey, in 1991, is generating several conferences, exhibitions and celebrations which will interest members of the LTS. Full details will be given in the May Newsletter.

**Subscriptions**
The annual subscription to the Society is £10 (US$20), due on 1st January 1991. If you are not paying by banker’s order (whether covenanted or not) please send your cheque to the Membership Secretary: Trevor Ford, 151 Mount View Road, London N4 4JT.
Book Reviews


We do not know how many drawings were made for the building of St Paul’s by Sir Christopher Wren and his team of draftsmen. When his library, and that of his son, were dispersed under the auctioneer’s hammer in 1748, more than 900 architectural drawings went for sale. About half of them are now safely in the library of All Souls College, Oxford; some 185 items were acquired twenty years later by Wren’s successor as surveyor to the Cathedral, Robert Mylne, and were placed in the library there for reference, later being pasted into two large volumes for convenience and safety, though in almost random sequence, related sheets often being separated.

It was in this order that the drawings were reproduced by the Wren Society (vols ii and iii) in 1925 and 1926. In 1980, the Dean and Chapter wisely and generously deposited the drawings in the Guildhall Library, where they were re-mounted individually on to card, and that most excellent scholar, Professor Kerry Downes, was invited to prepare a fresh catalogue. This he did, being encouraged and supported throughout by Ralph Hyde, the Guildhall’s Curator of Maps and Drawings. The result was published in 1988, with every drawing reproduced (save those which were too faint to photograph), and is for sale at £29.95 hardback or -bargain of bargains – £14.95 paperback.

Although the early numbering in the volumes has been retained for inventory purposes, the separation of the drawings has made possible a re-ordering of their sequence; from this, Professor Downes has learnt much about Wren’s constant re-thinking and refining of his plans for St Paul’s. Architectural drawings of such scale and detail only began to be made in the seventeenth century; they served to define the dialogue between the Dean and Chapter and their architect, to settle what was wanted and what it was physically feasible to provide.

In a short but wholly admirable introduction, Professor Downes outlines the building of the Cathedral and the slow evolution of the final design. He tells us about Wren’s draftsmen, of whom Edward Woodroffe, John Oliver and Nicholas Hawksmoor are the best known though there must have been several others, and reveals details of Wren’s realistic and practical approach to the work — how he gave each part of the fabric time to settle before building further, and how he set his masons to hew stone in cold and frosty weather so that it was ready for mortaring when the season became clement. Those who find this introduction too short can turn to Dr Downes’ Christopher Wren (1971) and The Architecture of Wren (1982, 1988).

The volume reproduces 220 drawings in black and white, many of them, inevitably, much reduced in size. Twelve of them are given a second time, larger and in full colour, making greedy thoughts flit through the reader’s mind. Intriguingly, drawings 211–217, by Hawksmoor, are for a baptistry adjoining, and bell-shaped piazza enclosing, St Paul’s. Does Prince Charles know of these? If so, perhaps they may be realized one day?

Altogether, this a volume to be welcomed, studied and returned to time and again. It makes Wren’s drawings for London’s cathedral accessible as they have never been before. Being given much, we crave more. Could Professor Downes be persuaded to produce a companion volume of those drawings which are in the keeping of All Souls, Oxford, please?

—Ann Saunders


Though not intended as a topographical study, there is so much London history in Hazel Le Rougetel’s life of Philip Miller, the enterprising and innovative eighteenth century gardener, that members may be glad to have it brought to their attention.

From 1772 till 1770, Miller was in charge of the Physic Garden at Chelsea. This was a great period for botanical and horticultural research and discovery. Seeds and plants were exchanged by enthusiasts half-way across the world from each other, through dangers of war, shipwreck, theft, rats and rot, to be coaxed and nursed into fresh life in alien climates. It was a time of great excitement and great scientific advance. Miller’s attentiveness to the Garden, his promptness in responding to postal enquiries from anywhere in the world and, above all, his extraordinary labours in producing the massive Gardener’s Dictionary (first edition 1731, to be followed by seven others) made an unrivalled contribution to the study of plants and their propagation. Did you know that if, when planting stocks, you sow a few radishes among your seed, you will preserve the young flowers from being eaten by insects? No, neither did I, nor did Gilbert White back in 1752, but I am going to try it next year.

Miller was dismissed from his post in his seventy-ninth year for insubordination. I think we can argue in his defence that he did know more than anyone else.

This book tells of a life-time of achievements. It is beautifully produced, with handsome colour plates, and is a pleasure to read, being printed in Garamond on a broad, well-leaded page. Certainly one to add to your reading list, and both the author and the Natural History Museum are to be congratulated.

—Ann Saunders

Mrs Coade’s Stone by Alison Kelly. The Self Publishing Association 1990. Available from the publisher, 18 High Street, Upton on Severn, Worcs WR8 0HW. 327 pages, copious illustrations. £48.00.

This is the book for which we have been waiting a long, long time. We all know that Coade Stone is a ceramic resembling natural stone but much less inclined to weather away; we may even be able to recognize examples in key-stones over doorways or in plaques on houses, and the name of Eleanor Coade, the remarkable and redoubtable woman who ran the firm from 1769 till her death in 1821, may be familiar. But the full story of the firm, the full range of its wares, and the world-wide distribution of its products, have never before been told with so much care or scholarly detail.

The book begins with an account of the Coade family and a history of the firm. A chapter discusses the production of the artificial stone; experiments have been
carried out which demonstrate that it could still be manufactured today. The author emphasizes how fortunate Eleanor Coade was in her times - houses, both great and small, built during George III's long reign, cried out for exactly this sort of ornamentation, and architects and garden designers of the stature of Robert Adam, Henry Holland, Humphrey Repton, most of the numerous Wyatt family including Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, also John Nash, William Wilkins and Sir John Soane, were delighted to use her products.

Miss Kelly devotes chapters to statues and busts, to architectural detail both inside and outside the house, to garden ornaments and to funeral monuments. Most of the photographs have been taken by the author; since there are more than 230 of them, this alone represents an industry as remarkable as that of Mrs Coade herself.

The book finishes with twenty pages listing architects who employed Coade Stone, and 115 pages of a gazetteer, telling us where we may seek out the product, from the Home Counties to Haiti, and from London to Lisbon, not forgetting Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Colombo, Rio de Janeiro, Canada and the United States.

Alison Kelly is to be congratulated on carrying such a task through to a successful conclusion, and on having sufficient courage to be her own publisher when commercial houses gibbed at the enterprise. We wish the book every success. It is expensive - but it is fair value. Pester your local library to buy it and then use it hard. You will find it rewarding.

—Ann Saunders


South Hackney is a residential area of some 320 acres - roughly half a square mile - in inner north-east London. Triangular in shape, it is bounded on the south and east by Victoria Park, on the north by Wick Road and to the west by Mare Street and Well Street. Both these and the roads they enclose Isobel Watson knows on the most familiar terms: she has clearly paced the streets as well as delved into the parochial archives.

What the late Professor Dyos did for Camberwell in Victorian Suburb Isobel Watson has done for South Hackney. By painstaking study of the development of the three largest estates (St Thomas, Norris and Cass) she has answered the topographer's stock questions of why it was built up, when and by whom.

Hackney was a microcosm of nineteenth century urban development. We meet the badly-run estate which sold freehold plots (Parr), the estate which didn't enforce its leases (St Thomas) and also the well-run Cass estate, the local paragon.

In earlier days the building was quite grand. A handsome Georgian terrace was constructed along Cassland Road on a unique co-operative basis, and villadom erected on St Thomas's Road. Later, though, Crown estate properties lay empty in Victoria Park, the Cass estate found it difficult to attract suitable tenants, and light industry was beginning to gain a foothold. As with so much of London, the mid Victorian tide of fashion which brought bricks and mortar to the once open fields was sweeping on.

But, as Isobel Watson points out, there was no general decline. South Hackney remained a solid, respectable area for many years: those proofs of gentility, the absence of sub-letting and the presence of servants, are both satisfied.

The author has also traced and identified over ninety building contractors active in the area in the nineteenth century. Sir John Summerson's "lost tribe" of mid Victorian builders is clearly there to be found by anyone with sufficient resource and patience.

The text of this book is informative and well-written. The maps, however, are disappointing. The key map is clumsy, unscaled and offers little help in relating the subject area to the rest of Hackney. Three detailed maps showing the areas of particular building agreements are interesting but rather indistinct and again, difficult to relate to the remainder of the district. It would, though, be wrong to end this review on a sour note. This is an important book which makes a valuable contribution to urban studies, and sheds particular light on nineteenth century urban development in London. It was a pleasure to read.

—Simon Morris


The author, whose work on various aspects of the subject of directories has already appeared in a number of journals and whose own research has involved the extensive use of these volumes, says that he finally decided in 1977 that the time had come to produce a new edition of C.W.F. Goss's "The London Directories 1677-1855", published in 1932. He had intended the compilation to last a year or two (who has not thought that his bright idea could be completed in next to no time?), but, as we see, it has lasted more than a decade. That it has been completed in even that length of time seems to me quite remarkable, as you will appreciate. Atkins presents his work as an interim report, not claiming to have found every collection of London directories or to have traced every edition or issue published, but we can be sure that this will be the definitive work for a very long time, even if there is a handful of additions or corrections to make.

A few figures will demonstrate the scale of the undertaking. The collections of sixty-four libraries or institutions have been investigated; most of these are, of course, libraries in London, but there are also the Bodleian and Cambridge University libraries, the National Library of Scotland, and the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies (Canterbury). The last entry is numbered 5,827 (Goss listed 285); 22,753 copies are recorded at the various libraries; 1,109 are recorded as unique, that is unique in this gathering of information. The largest holding is that of the British Library with 4,475 items, of which 572 are unique; at the other end of the scale, the Wimbledon Society Museum, whose contribution of three issues is not quite the smallest, has one unique item.

There are four lists arranged chronologically, two of general London directories (short-lived titles and lengthy series), specialist directories (such as Americans in
London, trade, commercial, Church of England), and suburban and local directories; these are made more accessible by indexes of the libraries, their holdings, directory titles, and publishers, and a topographical index. Every known and many presumed editions of each directory title are set out in its own sequence so that, unlike in Goss, you can see all the years for which it might be found; the longest running is the Post Office London Directory, which under its various titles from 1800 to 1989 takes up more than 250 entries. Is it not an immense achievement to have seen or assessed so much, and rendered it into manageable form?

This is not all. A fifth of the book is occupied by a study of these directories, divided into sections on directory types ("What is a directory?", the author asks himself, and answers at some length), the history of directories before 1856 (the Goss end date) and from 1856 to 1977, their compilation, and their uses. While you might not relish the lists as bedside reading, there is much of great interest in the text itself. In the last, rather short, section on uses, Atkins thinks that directories have been strangely neglected in the study of urban and topographical history in London, but I think it must be admitted that, like rate books or other collections of annual or periodical information, directories can only produce a benefit after sometimes disproportionate efforts at collation. This book will, however, at least enable one to know what to hope for or, perhaps, fear to find.

It is a pity that many people will not have the opportunity to look at this great work at their leisure. Even with the benefit of a grant towards publication, its price is high, though for such a work it could scarcely be less, but in consequence it will be confined largely to libraries and institutions, presumably in their reference sections. Your reviewer will, perhaps, be one of the few private owners to have the advantage of its ready availability on his shelves.

—Stephen Marks

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Maps can tell many stories and in their latest book Felix Barker and our Chairman Peter Jackson have tried to tell the story of London since the mid sixteenth century through its maps and related views. The result is most attractive and very readable.

One might quibble a little about the starting date, since it could be argued that the depiction of London on Matthew Paris’s itinerary of the road from London to Apulia on 1250, or of London and its environs on the Gough map of about a century later, had strong claims to be considered maps or proto-maps that pre-dated the copperplate, Braun and Hogenberg and “Agas” maps. Nevertheless for the period from 1558 to 1990 their selection of maps from the thousand and more candidates has been extremely good. No really major map seems to have been ignored and several openings each are devoted to details from Norden (circa 1595), Ogilby (1676), Morgan (1682), Rocque (1746), Horwood (circa 1800), Greenwood and Crutchley (both 1827) and finally the large-scale Ordnance Survey. The way in which plans of buildings in Roque and Horwood have been enhanced by display next to contemporary views of the same buildings is particularly splendid. There are also several charmers making telling points among the fifteen or so minor or less well-known maps that they include, such as the Board of Ordnance manuscript map of Westminster and Kensington of 1717 by J.P. Desmaretz or the Modern Plague of London map of about 1884 showing the location of public houses. The only map that felt ought to have been included was John Snow’s map illustrating his essay On the mode of communication of cholera (1855) demonstrating that cholera was carried in the contaminated water distributed by certain London water companies: a map which arguably helped to change the course of world history as well as telling one much about the nature of nineteenth century London. Conversely, Robert Adams’s “Thamesis Descriptio” of 1588, in which London proper almost disappears, sits uneasily in the book.

The maps are inevitably mainly reproduced as extracts, but in these cases, great attention has been paid to ensuring that the reader gets an impression of the whole map, be it through the inclusion of part of the border, the title or, failing that, some of the decorative elements. The lay-out of all the openings is very attractive and the book as a whole has a pleasant feel to it, despite its size. In the earlier parts of the book the maps are used to give “snap-shots” of parts of London at certain crucial stages of their development, be it Lincoln’s Inn in the 1630s or St James’s in the 1680s. Later maps illustrate social phenomena such as public houses or poverty as much as architecture and are used to document change, be it the coming of Trafalgar Square, of the railways (and, later, trams and the underground), ring-roads, docks, Regent’s Park and finally the redeveloping docklands. But nowhere is change more effectively illustrated than in the case of the creation of modern Aldwych at the beginning of this century. Here two different editions of the Ordnance Survey record in dispassionate detail the obliteration of one of the last relics of Stuart London, while the photographs on the same page bear visual witness to what was lost. Indeed, it is the combination of views with maps that distinguishes this book from Philippa Glanville’s London in Maps of 1974, and without exception the maps and views (many from Peter Jackson’s own collection) enhance each other. While the book concentrates on what is now central London, a conscious effort seems to have been made not to ignore the suburbs, though for reasons of space many have had to be omitted.

The quality of the reproductions is almost always good, and sometimes superb, often enabling the reader to use the maps, many in colour, for his or her own purposes. The commentary is a little more problematical. While Felix Barker is generally more or less correct, his text is marred by inconsistencies, mistakes in detail and by slips in proof-reading. Thus the New Road is dated to 1805 in the introduction and (correctly) to 1755–6 on pages 66–7 in the main text. Hollar becomes Holler on page 27, and the surveyor “Tiswell” (page 21); the supposed creator of a fascinating manuscript plan of central London of 1585 becomes “possibly Ralph Treswell the Elder” on page 176 (in fact one can be fairly certain that it was Ralph Treswell). The basic situation shown on the “Agas” map (pp. 18–9) is variously dated, on the same opening, to 1553 and to 1535, with the impression being given that St Paul’s had
a spire before 1561 and a tower after.

Elsewhere, Kentish Town is wrongly stated to have been founded with Camden Town in 1791 (page 67) and on page 101 the impression is given that Hampstead Lane near Kenwood currently follows a boundary, whereas in fact its old, pre-1792 course did. Sumptuously, slips of this kind give a false impression of what is essentially a very good and worthwhile book.

Map and other librarians should be thankful to the authors for the references to sources given at the end of the book – an all-too-rare item in such works, though Robert Adams’s map of the Thames is wrongly attributed to the British Museum and not to the British Library. Readers should also feel grateful for the low price of this coffee-table sized, hardback book. LTS members should certainly have it on their shelves.

—Peter Barber


Squares, as Mary Cosh reminds us in the introduction to her splendid book, come in all shapes and sizes. They throw light on the processes of urbanization, and reflect not only the different ambitions but also the personal and architectural foibles of their developers. Some “squares” just developed organically from medieval precincts but the majority were consciously created from the mid-sixteenth century onward. All invite architectural comment: many have been the sites of interesting events in the past and have been the residences of people of note, if not necessarily of conventional distinction. Islington has about thirty squares, ranging in date from the middle ages to 1935 and later, and inevitably a study of their histories also tells one a lot about the development of the present borough and about mankind as a whole.

Mary Cosh has divided her work into two parts, reflecting the differing characters of the ancient suburbs of Finsbury and Clerkenwell and of the former villages of Islington and Highbury, but a short introduction covers both. The first volume then analyses the squares of Finsbury and Clerkenwell in alphabetical order. In each case the historical development of the area is traced in considerable detail from the earliest recorded time, with an account of the square’s development and architecture and finally an account of its inhabitants. Personalities and events abound, single buildings are often the subject of detailed treatment and in all cases the story is brought to the present day.

It is a gem of a book and rarely is considerable research and learning borne so lightly. The bibliography at the end demonstrates the amount of archival research and background reading that went into its creation and it is so arranged that sources for the history of individual squares can easily be identified. The detailed index will enable the book to be “gutted” easily by the curious or by researchers hunting for elusive facts. Yet it is most readable, with only a minimum of footnotes.

Accounts of changes in land ownership, comments on architectural features and the citation of parliamentary Acts are interspersed with vignettes of Bishop Burnet defending his house in St John’s Square from the London mob at the time of the Sacheverell riots in 1710, or of the Herculean publican Thomas Topham weightlifting, and his neighbour in Coldbath Square, the reclusive Mrs Jane Lewson (circa 1700–1816), eking out her ninety year widowhood in the gowns of the 1720s. The book makes an ideal accompaniment for suggested walks through Clerkenwell and Islington but should also find its way onto the shelves of all Islington local historians. It is a pity that the reproduction of several of the well-chosen illustrations, and particularly of the maps, is so mediocre, but it is to be hoped that this will not be the case with the second volume, which this reviewer looks forward to with great anticipation.

—Peter Barber


This is Bulletin 31 from the energetic Hornsey Historical Society and it contains articles on a wide range of subjects, from “The Muswell Hill Outrage — a London suburban crime of the 1880s” by Jill Hetherington to “All Muswell Hill and Little Betty Martin; the establishing of a Congregational Church 1890–1929” by Clyde Binfield. These two articles are a really worthwhile read. There are also book reviews and notes and queries, all presented in a highly professional manner. The Hornsey Historical Society also publishes maps, post cards, prints and books, which together with other local history books often hard to find, are available at The Old Schoolhouse Shop, 136 Tottenham Lane, London N8, open 10 am to 12 noon Thursdays and Fridays, 10–4 pm on Saturdays.

—Penelope Hunting
Eric Edwin Frank Smith 1907–1990

David Webb writes: The death of Eric Smith on Good Friday, 13th April 1990, at the age of eighty-three, severs one of the Society’s oldest links; Eric had been a member of the London Topographical Society since the 1930s. Longevity was one of Eric’s traits – he was Secretary of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society for over a quarter of a century (1949–75), while he completed a round fifty years as Secretary of the Clapham Antiquarian Society (1937–87). Clapham, of course, where he moved in 1935, was both his love and his life – he inherited the mantle of historian of Clapham from John Grover in the late nineteenth century, and John Burgess in the years after World War I. Eric’s pictorial history Clapham (1976) formed the climax of a lifetime of local history, while the splendid anthology Clapham Saints and Sinners (1987) reprinted a selection from the many hundreds of articles which he had contributed to the Clapham Society since the early 1950s. Eric’s flair for elucidating the daily life of this part of south London was honoured by his election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1974.

I first met Eric in the early 1960s, when he was still working in the insurance business and arranging the affairs of LAMAS at the Bishopsgate Institute. I remember helping him with some research on the church of St Mary Abchurch (of which he had been churchwarden), and this led on to the wider field of London local history. Eric’s enthusiasm was infectious; there was nobody like him for keeping you on your toes. Clapham, for Eric, was the centre of the universe, and his removal from there to Tankerton, near Whitstable, for reasons of health, in 1986, must have been heartbreakingly – at least he was able to take the bulk of his beloved library with him. The last time I spoke to him, at Christmas, he was, as ever, engaged on further research – the whereabouts of the burial place of someone whose name I did not recognize. “Lived in Clapham?” I enquired. “Need you ask?”, replied Eric.

In the mid 1970s, the Evening Standard carried an article on Eric and Clapham, as an outstanding example of the achievements of a local historian. He will be sorely missed both by this Society and historians of London in general.

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