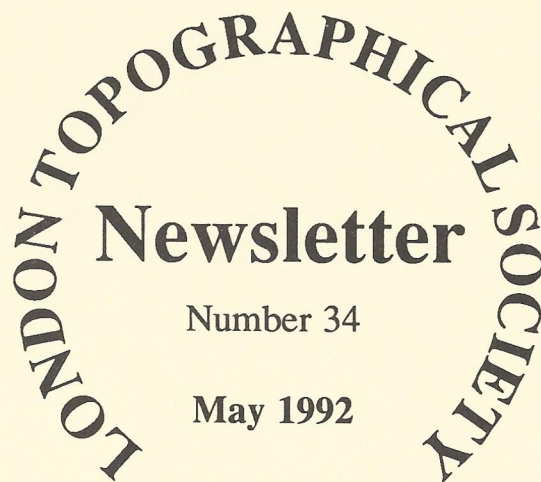


**Notice of the  
Annual General Meeting  
Monday, 6th July, 1992**



The ninety-second Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society will be held on Monday, 6th July, 1992 at the Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. As usual, the meeting will start at 6.30pm, following refreshments which will be available from 6.00pm. Carlton House Terrace is not far from Charing Cross, Piccadilly, St James's Park and other underground stations.

The Royal Society, which was formally established in 1660, is the oldest scientific society in the world. It is an appropriate location for our AGM since this year's publication, *The A to Z of Restoration London*, is based on the Ogilby and Morgan map of 1676. Former Presidents of the Royal Society include many great names connected with London's history and architecture, among them Wren, Pepys and Sloane.

Carlton House Terrace was built by John Nash in the 1820s and 1830s. However, after severe bomb damage in the last war, the interior was rebuilt. The Royal Society moved to number 6 in 1967 after 110 years in Burlington House.

If all goes according to plan, members attending the meeting will be issued with this year's publication, *The A to Z of Restoration London* (the city of London 1676), with an introduction by Ralph Hyde. As usual, we are intending to make the AGM as much fun as possible and we hope that last year's record attendance – representing one quarter of the entire membership – will be beaten. We expect to have talks about the annual publication and the Royal Society, and there will be an opportunity to buy some past publications at reduced prices.

Members should write to the Hon Secretary if they would like to nominate anyone as an officer of the Society or as a member of Council, or if they wish to raise any matter under item 6 of the agenda. Please let the Hon Secretary know by 24th June if you or any guests will be attending the AGM, so we have some idea of the numbers to be fed.

**AGENDA**

1. To approve the Minutes of the ninety-first Annual General Meeting in 1991
2. To receive the ninety-second Annual Report of the Council for 1991 (herewith)
3. To receive the Accounts for 1991 (herewith)
4. To receive the Hon Editor's report
5. To elect officers and members of Council
6. To discuss any proposals by members
7. Any other business

Patrick Frazer, Hon Secretary, 36 Old Deer Park Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2TL (telephone 081 940 5419).

**The Westminster Time Map**

Simon Morris

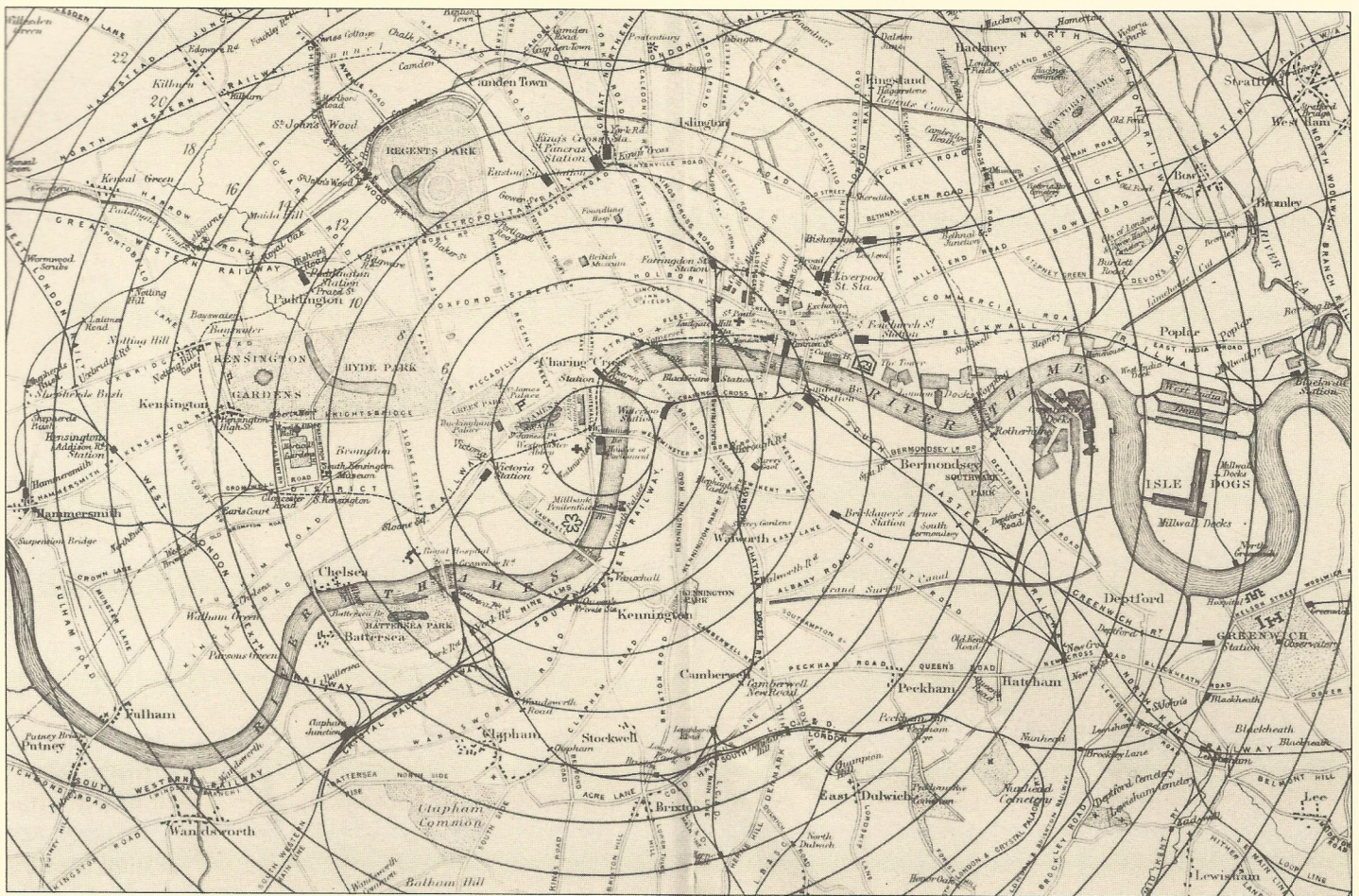
Thematical maps, which showed information about London in addition to topographical detail, gained prominence during the nineteenth century. Those showing the incidence of illness (particularly cholera), water and gas supply, sewerage, geology and land use are all recorded, but of particular interest and unique in concept is the map which told the time.

<sup>(1)</sup> The Time Map for the Westminster Clock Bell appeared in the *Horological Journal* in November 1875. The brief accompanying article, which extended barely beyond a single column, described how the clock had become an acknowledged standard of time by reason of its exact time-keeping qualities. Indeed, the Astronomer Royal's report had stated that on no fewer than 83% of days in 1874 its error on Greenwich time was below one second. In the following year neither sun nor stars were visible during ten days of cloudy weather and, when it eventually cleared, the clock was found to be more accurate than the Greenwich chronometer. <sup>(2)</sup>

This degree of accuracy is today taken for granted, particular since the regular broadcasts of Big Ben's chimes and the six pips of the Greenwich time signal began in 1924. To the Victorians, though, it was an outstanding achievement.

The establishment of a standard national time was needed to enable the coach and railway systems to operate in accordance with a fixed timetable, and by the early 1850s Greenwich time had been introduced by the railway companies for uniform use throughout the country. Greenwich time was maintained on chronometers at the Royal Observatory, but only by going to Greenwich was one able to determine it, and set one's timepiece to the correct time. Clerkenwell watchmakers regularly despatched staff to Greenwich to check the time, while from 1836 until 1924 Greenwich time was supplied to subscribers – principally watchmakers – three times a week by the Belville family who each day set an accurate watch and carried it to London.

For less favoured Londoners there was no accessible means of determining the correct time, and this



Map showing for the Westminster Clock Bell the allowance of time to be made on account of the velocity of sound. The circles are drawn concentric from the Westminster Palace Clock Tower and show according to distance how many seconds should be subtracted from the time of hearing the first blow on the bell at any hour in order to have the true Greenwich time.

concern was reflected in the enormous public interest over the turret clock for the tower of the new Houses of Parliament. The circumstances leading to the installation of this clock, and more especially the great bell (known as Big Ben), were surrounded by delay, controversy and error, and seized the public imagination. The old Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire in 1834. The foundation stone for the new buildings was laid in 1840, and four years later Sir Charles Barry, the architect, proposed that a clock with 30 feet diameter dials which would strike the hours on a 14 ton bell be placed on the clock tower.

A further ten years elapsed before the clock was finished, much of the intervening time being consumed in an acrimonious controversy as to who was to construct it. Other difficulties beset the project, not least the cracking of the first hour bell in 1857, and the clock had to remain on test until the tower was completed in 1859. As *The Times* commented, "There is no more melancholy object than a large public clock which won't go."<sup>(3)</sup>

Recast the following year, crowds cheered as 16 horses hauled the bell to the Palace of Westminster. The clock started striking in July 1859 but, commented a correspondent to *The Times*, "the sound was a failure, wanting in gravity, power and solidity of tone, which is comparatively faint."<sup>(4)</sup>

The problem was that the hammer was too heavy and the replacement bell cracked in October 1859, so

"in the very act of striking Big Ben became dumb forever"<sup>(5)</sup> and from then until 1862, when Big Ben was repaired, hours were struck on a quarter bell.

The Time Map postulates that the hour bell, which was struck from July to October 1859, and again from 1862, was audible for a considerable distance, and could be heard with sufficient clarity to enable a timepiece to be accurately set.

While exact time could be obtained by listening to the first blow on the hour bell, an allowance had to be made for the time taken by the sound in reaching the observer. Taking the velocity of sound as 1100 feet per second, and assuming the temperature to be 50° Fahrenheit, the map shows by a series of concentric circles the number of seconds which must be subtracted from the time of hearing of the first blow at any hour in order to have the exact Greenwich time.<sup>(6)</sup>

The map seems at first sight to be of practical use. But could the bell be heard at such distances, is the map based on a sound premise, and why issue it over fifteen years after the bell first sounded?

The sound of a bell weighing 13 1/2 tons, set 200 feet up a clock tower, and struck each hour by a 7 cwt hammer should have been heard by a great many Londoners, and indeed was. A resident in Harleyford Road, Vauxhall, a mile across the river, was sufficiently close to notice that the rebound of the hammer was distinctly heard after each blow.<sup>(7)</sup> The bell was audible over considerable distances. A resident

of Tor Villas, Camden Hill (3 miles distant), wrote to *The Times* on 15th July 1859: "Perhaps it may be interesting to many readers of *The Times* to know that the great bell at Westminster was distinctly heard striking the hour of midnight last night...at this distance the sound was most sonorous."

Indeed, its sound was noted further afield "The great bell of Westminster was distinctly heard by me in Richmond Park, between Richmond and Sheen Gates, striking the hour of midnight on Wednesday night, and I also heard it the next morning at 7, though not so distinctly as on the previous night" wrote another correspondent to *The Times* on 16th July 1859. People hearing the bell at some distance may not have realized the need to make an allowance for the time it took the sound to reach them, since *The Times* reported that it had been officially requested to state that "Persons hearing the clock at long distances must remember that the sound takes 4 1/2 seconds to travel a mile."<sup>(8)</sup>

It seems the bell certainly could be heard, at dead of night or early in the morning, in favourable conditions up to 7 miles away. However, the noise of heavy horsedrawn traffic, of boats on the river, of steam engines and the workshops of central London, not to mention competing church bells make it unlikely that the bell was regularly audible during the day over a distance greater than 1 or 2 miles. Even were it audible further away, it may not have been with sufficient regularity or reliability for the purpose contemplated by the map.

If, then, the map is to be considered as a theoretical exercise rather than a working document, how good is the theory? Is it realistic to expect the sound to radiate out evenly from the clock tower? What the map shows is what could be heard across London were the city flat, calm and silent. The map is flawed in that it makes no allowance for natural contours, nor for prevailing winds.

Then why publish a map with so little practical application, and why do so when the clock was no longer a topical issue?<sup>(9)</sup> The answer seems to lie in the *Horological Journal* itself. The article states that the clock was designed by Sir Edmund Beckett, the President of the British Horological Institute, and mentions that its accuracy had just been acknowledged by the report of the Astronomer Royal. The most likely explanation for the map is that the *Horological Journal* is paying a compliment to Sir Edmund, who had just been elected President, and was additionally attempting to assist its London readers to make use of the clock's outstanding accuracy.<sup>(10)</sup>

It would be interesting to hear from any members who have themselves heard the great bell of Westminster at any distance, or who are aware of any literary references to this.

#### Notes

1. See Ralph Hyde, *Printed Maps of Victorian London 1851-1900* pp. 24-28. The Westminster Time Map is not recorded in Hyde but is based on a Cassell, Petter & Galpin map possibly used in a guide book.
2. See "The Adoption of Standard Time and the

- Evolution of Synchronised Timekeeping": Alun C. Davies, *Antiquarian Horology* Spring 1979 p. 284, from which the next two paragraphs are also drawn.
3. *The Times* 4th March 1859.
  4. Letter to *The Times* 13th July 1859.
  5. *The Times* 3rd October 1859.
  6. Time Map for the Westminster Clock Bell, the *Horological Journal* November 1875 p 48.
  7. Letter to *The Times* 16th July 1859.
  8. *The Times* 12th September 1859.
  9. To judge from the columns of *The Times*, there was little interest in the Westminster clock from 1859, and no mention of it at all in 1875.
  10. I am grateful to the British Horological Institute for confirming to me that Sir Edmund Beckett was President from 1874 to 1905.

•••••

## Vauxhall Abroad

Michael Robbins

Penelope Corfield's article "The Age of Vauxhall" (in the last issue of the Newsletter) is, naturally enough, about Vauxhall in London and the changes that have taken place on and around the Lambeth site of Vauxhall Gardens. The story can be extended more widely. There were imitations of Vauxhall abroad, and in one case an enduring cultural impact, even if it arrived by a rather roundabout route.

Paris was early to imitate Vauxhall, with a pleasure-ground opened in 1764 called *Wauxhall d'Été* where fireworks were displayed and an entertainment called *mâts de cocagne* (which it is said Parisians had not known since the English occupation of 1420). The words are translated as "greasy poles"; but they may mean just "maypoles". A second *Wauxhall d'Été* was established in 1785 in the Rue de la Douane, close to the present Place de la République; it lasted until 1841, and there was an attempted revival after 1848. The *Grand Larousse* adds that there were some Vauxhalls in several other towns also – "*assez médiocres établissements, pâles copies de l'original*".

In or soon after 1803 a Vauxhall Gardens was opened at the top of the present Lafayette Street, in Lower Manhattan, New York City. It remained a resort of fashion until 1855. The Astor Library was built on the site; this, with alterations and conversions, is now (or still was in 1979) the Public Theater, between East 4th Street and Astor Place. An earlier Vauxhall Gardens, of the colonial period, at the corner of Greenwich and Warren Streets, then facing the Hudson River, is shown on a map of 1776.

The name of Vauxhall, as virtually synonymous with outdoor entertainment on the urban fringe, was thus known in the eighteenth century in some cities outside England. In St Petersburg there was a place so named at the Catherinenhof on the Nevsky Prospect from about 1820, and when an enterprising syndicate succeeded in establishing a pleasure-park at Pavlovsk, close to Tsarskoe Selo outside St Petersburg, in the 1830s, it too was soon called Vauxhall.

The venture was enormously successful, and many of the leading musicians of the era performed there; Johann Strauss II was in residence during the summer as musical director and principal conductor from 1856 to 1865 and 1868 to 1870. The Pavlovsk Vauxhall, as it was normally advertised, continued until its seventy-eighth season in 1915, and concerts were resumed under the Soviet regime in 1919. Every one of the wooden buildings was destroyed in the Leningrad siege of 1941-44; only a single fountain remains.

But this was not all that Vauxhall did for Russia – or, to be more precise, for the Russian language. A railway – the first railway in Russia – was opened in May 1838 on the 6 foot gauge from St Petersburg to Pavlovsk, specifically to serve the Vauxhall garden. The terminal station in St Petersburg, which had a handsome front facing the Fontanka canal by the Berlin architects Stüler and Strack, quickly became known as the Vauxhall station. (Many railway terminals on the Continent, as for example in Berlin and in Russia, came to be known by the name of the principal destination served, like the Finland station in St Petersburg). Then, by a curious transfer of the sense, the word Vauxhall – БОК3АА – became the normal, everyday Russian word for a main-line station – that is, for any large or main-line station, though not for wayside halts. This, and not the explanation given in some respectable works (that the Russians admired London's Vauxhall station so much that they copied the word), is the indirect route by which Vauxhall Gardens entered a European language in a sense that would have astonished the gardens' original promoters.



## News and Notes

### New Publications list

We are sending copies of the new glossy publications list with this Newsletter. Members are reminded that they can order past publications at a 25% discount. If there are items on the list which you feel you should have received, please remember that the extra publications are not sent to members automatically but must be purchased separately.

### Record prices for LTS publications

It is always interesting to see what our publications make on the open market. Some impressive prices have been achieved – or at least asked – over the last few months.

Pride of place must go to the two complete copies of Salway's *Kensington Turnpike Trust Plans* (publication no 8, 1899-1903) which were sold at Christie's last November. Although they were sharing a single portfolio, they went for £800, against an estimate of £500-700. Taking into account the buyer's premium and VAT, the true cost was £894. As this suggests a price of some £500 for a complete set of Salway in its portfolio, it must surely be a new record for an LTS publication.

Although not in quite the same league, a five

volume set of Mills and Oliver's *Survey of Building Sites after the Great Fire* was priced at £85 in a recent booksellers' catalogue. This makes our few remaining sets look rather attractive. They are available, to members only, at just £16 plus post and packing.

### Moratorium for cake-makers

Outside contributions to the catering are not allowed at the Royal Society, so members can relax after last year's magnificent effort at the Bishopsgate Institute. Take advantage of the lull; I am sure that your support will be needed again another year, wherever the meeting is held in 1993 – there is nothing as good as a home-made tea!

### The Rose Theatre

A model of the Rose Theatre based on evidence excavated by the Museum of London archaeologists at the Rose site in 1988 and 1989 is the centrepiece of a new, permanent display "Tudor and Stuart Theatres" in the early Stuart gallery at the Museum. The model of the Rose Theatre is a metre high, made of wood painted to resemble timber and plaster, with a thatched roof and a cutaway section to reveal the stage and internal details. The display includes artefacts from the Rose site, notably the inscribed gold "Rose" ring. The Museum is closed on Mondays.

### London from Southwark c. 1650

Combine a visit to the exhibition mentioned above with a look at one of the Museum's recent acquisitions – a rare oil painting of London before the Great Fire, probably the work of a Dutch artist *circa* 1650. The view from Southwark embraces Whitehall in the west, the city dominated by St Paul's, and the Tower in the east, with the theatres of the south bank in the foreground. Some architectural details are not strictly correct and the scene is not dissimilar to earlier panoramas – the Visscher, for instance. But because this is an oil painting, with all the colour, depth, texture and tone of a good oil painting, it is to be relished. It conveys the atmosphere of London in a way that engravings cannot, and reminds us again of the importance of the Thames to the life of London.

### Congratulations

Our Hon Editor, Dr Ann Saunders, has been made a Fellow of University College London. The citation mentions her editorship of LTS publications, from which we all benefit, and for which we are all profoundly grateful.

### Catalogue from Jarndyce

David Webb writes: Society members, and particularly those who collect antiquarian volumes on the history of London, should make every effort to obtain a copy of the latest second-hand catalogue from Jarndyce Books – *No 84 London*, including sections of books and pamphlets – low-life, novels and topography; maps, and a supplement on poverty. Over 700 items are listed, and even if Jarndyce's prices are not for you, the detailed accounts of the individual items will certainly prove extremely interesting – and you might even be lucky enough to already possess some

of the volumes, for which you paid pence in a jumble sale thirty or more years ago! I must say that I liked the sound of *The sufferings of G.B. Fortitude, an author, during two years residence in the City of London* (1835). Copies of the catalogue can be obtained from Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers, 46 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1B 3PA, tel. 071 631 4220.

#### **Books for Sale**

Michael Rawcliffe, a member of the Society, offers the following books for sale. Anon, *Hampstead: Past and Present* (c. 1960) £3. *Illustrated Exhibitor* (1851) £40. *London's Country Guide* no 2, south of the Thames (c 1910) £4. *Old Lombard Street* (notes prepared for the opening of the Royal Insurance Co. 1912) £4. Adams M., *Some Hampstead Memories* (1912) £10. Dutton R., *London Homes* (1952) £3. Fletcher A., *The London Nobody Knows* (1965) £3. Quennell P. ed., *Mayhew's London* (1969) £4. Stanley H.M., *London Street Arabs* (1890) £12. Thorne J., *Handbook to the Environs of London* 2 vols (1876) £35. Please contact Mr Rawcliffe 081 290 1453, evenings.

#### **The London Underground Railway Society**

Members are invited, free, to an illustrated talk on "The Development of London's Underground as shown by its maps" by Alan Blake, on Friday 12th June 1992 in the conference room of Baden Powell House, on the corner of Cromwell Road and Queen's Gate, London SW7, at 7.15pm. The meeting is organized by the London Underground Railway Society, whose President is a recent recruit to the LTS.

#### **Maps and Society**

A series of lectures with the theme "Maps and Society", held at the Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, concludes on 14th May with John Andrews' talk on "More suitable to the English tongue: the cartography of Celtic placenames". Admission is free and the meeting begins at 5pm. A new series is planned for the winter 1992-3; details to come in the autumn Newsletter.

#### **What Columbus Knew**

This is the title of an article written by Dr Helen Wallis, Council member of the LTS and formerly Map Librarian of the British Library, published in the May issue of *History Today*. The article assesses Columbus' geographical mapping skills and shortcomings. The May *History Today* is a special issue marking the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America, and it signals the start of the Columbus celebrations.

#### **Parish boundary marks**

A member of the Society, Leonard Maguire, has spent much time and effort in the cause of parish boundary marks in the city. At a time when these were fast disappearing owing to property development, he campaigned for the re-erection of surviving boundary marks, the preservation of rare examples and the provision of replicas (in a furnace in his garden). Parish boundary marks can be invaluable to the

topographer trying to locate a lost street or a medieval landmark and their preservation on new buildings should be encouraged. If anyone is interested in taking on Mr Maguire's mantle please contact him on 081 657 5228.

#### **Missing tower**

A member writes to ask if any reader of the Newsletter has detailed knowledge of the Tower of London, in particular a missing tower on the inner bailey, mentioned in a survey made in the twenty-third year of King Henry V 1111 thus:- "The wall from Bowear's Tower unto Burbege Tower in length 90 foote - Burbedge Tower unto Brick Tower in length 18 foote". This Burbedge/Burbege Tower is not mentioned in Hayward and Gascoyne's survey nor in subsequent surveys. If anyone can throw light on the matter please contact Peter F. Leese tel. 0923 720910.

#### **Civil War**

Members living near Hull, Coventry, Nottingham, Worcester or Cirencester might like to see "Civil War", the travelling Royal Armouries exhibition. It opened in April in Hull, where 350 years ago the first confrontation took place between the forces of King and Parliament. Details available from Royal Armouries, HM Tower of London, tel. 071 480 6358.



## **Book Reviews and Notices**

#### **London**

by Elaine Harwood and Andrew Saint. *Exploring England's Heritage* vol 1, H.M.S.O. 1991. 288 pages, copious illustrations, two maps. £15.95.

Of the making of books there is no end, and those who write about England's capital are exceptionally zealous. It is therefore easy to dismiss yet another book on London as likely to be a re-hash of obsolete material, but any London addict who neglects this first volume in a new series in production by English Heritage does so to his or her loss.

The authors have not set out to write a history of the metropolis, or of the architecture which makes up its fabric. What they have done is to choose 200 buildings or enclaves, list them by type, and describe each, relating it to or comparing it with other examples to which they wish to draw our attention. The selection is set out in seventeen separate categories:- places of worship; public and municipal buildings; palaces; country houses and villas; parks and gardens; squares; planned housing and flats; town and terrace houses; buildings concerned with health and welfare; schools and colleges; professional and corporate structures; accommodation for eating, drinking and sleeping; entertainment; exchange (by which they mean shops and commerce); industry and warehousing; transport; and finally commemorative structures and memorials. Almost without exception, each entry is accompanied by a clear, well-chosen recent

photograph or other illustration.

Each section begins with a short introduction, and it is these which are of unusual and particular interest. An admirable amount of serious thought and research has gone into them; what impressed me most was the freshness of perception, and the sharpness of assessment. The authors understand how buildings are used, whether liturgically, judicially, administratively, or for purposes of education, manufacture or recreation. Society accommodates itself, reveals itself, expresses itself in buildings. The authors have not only described the arrangement of stone, bricks and mortar; they have thought about the needs and ambitions and hopes that lie behind particular choices of form and building material. Consider this passage on p. 129, in the introduction to the section on town and terrace houses –

“After the Fire, things change. Brick definitively replaces timber, better capitalization in the building trades means that houses begin to be built in groups or even complete rows (“terraces” from the later 18th century), while the basic format of the new houses and the relation between them are set by an evolving set of building laws – perhaps London’s greatest contribution to international urbanism. One pastime for the lover of London’s architecture is to savour how, over the centuries, a mysterious process of give and take between regulation and architectural fashion guides the terraced house along. First the brick-built novelties of Inigo Jones and his contemporaries, exemplified by Lindsey House, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, are embodied in the post-Fire regulations. Then the rules about party walls and unprotected woodwork are slowly tightened up, so that the flush window frames and door-hoods found at the west end of Queen Anne’s Gate, for instance, vanish at the other end of the street. Even in outlying developments like Kensington Square or Church Row, Hampstead, the builders tend to fall in with metropolitan practice.”

It is a mistake to do as I did, which was to read straight through the volume in every free moment over three consecutive days. By the end, my eyes were beginning to find the fairly small type face, and the triple column arrangement with unaligned right-hand margins, rather a noticeable strain. It would be much better to take a category at a time or, using the clear maps at the end showing Inner and Outer London, to explore what is singled out in a particular area.

There is no entry which does not contain solid, nutritious meat – consider No. 114 for Harrington and Collingham Gardens in Kensington which is a miniature essay on late Victorian speculative finance (the Peto brothers), street planning and house design (Ernest George), with some fascinating details on the profits raised by *Patience* for W.S. Gilbert. I think I learnt most from the section on industry and warehousing – I shall have to make some expeditions – but I found some fresh fact or thought in every category.

When a second edition is prepared, I would like to see the entry headings include the name of the architect, if known, and a date, even if approximate; or, failing that, they should be set out in bold type in the main text, as is done in the collective entry for



Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, illustrating town and terrace houses in the new English Heritage volume, *London* by Elaine Harwood and Andrew Saint.

Board Schools (No. 132). One or two tiny slips or misprints have crept in – Middle Temple Hall does not date from the fourteenth century; the old Palace of Westminster was burnt down in October 1834 and not November; Edward the Confessor is not our only canonized monarch – we did rather well for royal saints before the Norman Conquest, the name of Bury St Edmunds commemorating only the best known. Some readers might crave a small glossary tucked in somewhere – members of this Society will have no trouble with flettons or “galleries in the trabeated Smirke style”, but there may be those who would be glad of guidance. But these are very small quibbles and this is an exceptionally good book. We must hope that subsequent volumes – English Heritage plans to cover the whole country – will be of an equal standard.

– Ann Saunders

### London

by Denise Sylvester-Carr, photography by Andrew Butler. Collins and Brown 1991. 160 pages, profusely illustrated in colour. £12.99.

The author herself is modest about this book: it “is not intended to be a history of London; that would be an impertinence when there are so many authoritative books on a thousand different aspects of this vast capital”. But within the limits it sets itself – to be a selection “of the brightest reflections in a kaleido-

scope, an appreciation of a great city that never fails to fascinate" – it is a resounding success.

It is, first of all, a very beautiful book at a very reasonable price. Andrew Butler photographs familiar and less familiar sights from unusual perspectives, in resonant colour and with superfluous details boldly cropped away. The statue of Richard 1 outside the Palace of Westminster, for example, is shorn of its plinth, leaving the monarch's horse seemingly prancing on the ground; gleaming, golden-marbled John Stow calmly clasps his annually renewed quill, precisely filling a page; sun dapples the tombstones of Bunhill Fields in the antithesis of graveyard gloom. Eerily, the shutter clicked on those rare occasions when London is clear of people and cars.

Denise Sylvester-Carr's text may have to jump a little uneasily past the photographs, but it is a rich selection of fact and anecdote, broad social history and individual biography, architectural analysis and statistical precision, and, just occasionally, personal prejudice – she can't resist condemning modern British Rail decorative practice as "the end of the line".

Even for readers who know London well, there's much to enjoy. Who notices the galleons sailing down the Mall? Or believes a polar bear once fished in the Thames? Or can locate the plant which first produced the first banana tasted by Queen Victoria? Turn more pages, and learn the difficulty of worshipping in a city with forty-two churches (most of them are closed on Sundays), the astonishing range of entertainments once available in the Strand (from a chess club to a barbershop-singing mouse), even the quantity of honey harvested one recent summer from a single beehive in a private garden in Chelsea (more than 200 pounds).

Throughout, there is evidence of much knowledge as well as much love of London. The captions complement and expand the main text, and the skilled matching of illustrations and words show that producing this book was a real partnership, not simply a packager's compilation of two unrelated halves. Buy *London* as the ideal gift for a friend or relative who does not yet know the city well. But allow time for a thorough browsing through its pages before the wrapping paper is sealed.

– Liz Sagues

### **The City Parochial Foundation 1891-1991: A Trust for the Poor of London**

by Victor Belcher. Scholar Press 1991. xiv + 378 pages, index. £22.50.

Victor Belcher's book is published to mark the centenary of the City Parochial Foundation, a grant-making trust whose first hundred years it chronicles. The book's appearance is timely in a wider sense also, since the reduction of central and local government spending in recent years has compelled those engaged in benevolent activities which for long have been publicly funded to seek support from voluntary bodies of the kind whose initiatives had blazed a trail for the welfare state. The policy of the City Parochial

Foundation is to make good deficiencies in the social, health, education, and environmental services in London (defined as the Metropolitan Police District of London and the City of London), concentrating its work on small and local projects for the benefit of the poor inhabitants of London. It is in the top twenty, possibly the top ten, of charitable trusts. Unlike the other big trusts it has a restricted area of benefit, and unlike the others, indeed unlike the smaller trusts, it was created not by an individual or a family or a firm but by parliamentary statute.

The Foundation is an amalgamation of small parochial charities. The City had more than a hundred separate parishes, some very small, and over the centuries individual donors had endowed those parishes with more than a thousand charitable trusts ranging widely in their wealth and in their objects, but mostly for the benefit of the poor or the parish church. The changing social and economic conditions of the City, the movement of population, incompetent administration, and the combination of traditional policy and corrupt practice had rendered many of the trusts ineffective in carrying out their founders' intentions long before the charities were merged in the Foundation.

Mr Belcher tells his story clearly, comprehensively, and imaginatively. He traces the evolution of the Foundation from the movement for reform of the 1820s and 1830s, and specifically from the work of the Brougham Commission, which sought to bring some order to the administration of charities throughout the country. Following the formation of the Charity Commission in 1853 and the agitation for reform of City institutions in the 1860s, a royal commission on the City's parochial charities, sitting from 1878 to 1880, led to an Act of 1883 authorizing the Charity Commission to establish the Foundation: the period up to 1891 forms the first and shortest of the three sections into which the book falls. The other two sections each deal with roughly half the period of the Foundation's existence, up to and after the Second World War. Each of those sections follows three themes, first the trustees and administration, secondly the management of the Foundation's endowment, and thirdly the application of the income; the third theme, the *raison d'être* of the Foundation, naturally takes up the most space, occupying three chapters in one section, four in the other.

The story, which is a remarkable one, is, as the author says, that "of the achievement of the reform of the parochial charities in spite of the innate conservatism and obstructionism of City interests", being, indeed, the only major reform of the City that succeeded out of the many that were attempted in the later nineteenth century. Continuity and resistance to change characterized not only the long drawn out steps towards the setting up of the Foundation but also, its own history. The trustees, nominated as representatives of municipal and educational bodies, served for an average of eleven years; seven of the eight chairmen during the course of a century held their office for an average of nearly fifteen years, and five of six clerks for an average of nearly twenty.

The Foundation's management of its estate, con-

sisting almost entirely of property in the metropolis, was perhaps rather less conservative. Mr Belcher shows a keen interest in the buildings and their architects, as we might expect from an author who is an expert on London's building history. The amazing increase in the income which the Foundation received from its estate and was able to distribute to recipient organizations was only partly the result of shrewd administration, the other cause being the very rapid rise in City rents. The Foundation's gross income doubled in relation to the retail price index between 1891 and 1937; between 1937 and 1990, on the same scale of real value, it multiplied more than twenty-five times.

The charitable objects to which the trustees applied the income were at first relatively slow to change. Apart from the ecclesiastical objects, much of the income was destined from 1891 to helping the poor through the long-term means of providing education, training and healthy recreation. The polytechnics depended largely on the Foundation, and it was many years before they were weaned from that dependence. Nevertheless, the Foundation has been among the first to support some novel benevolent ventures.

The story of the Foundation touches upon London history at many points: education is the most obvious, but there are also, for example, theatrical entertainment (the Old Vic, Sadler's Wells and the People's Palace were early recipients), outdoor recreation, the influence of the professions and, in the metropolis as a whole, of the City, and the problems of new immigrant groups. Lord Downham is quoted in the book as saying that the experience and information which he had gained in his work for the Foundation had been of value in his other public duties; in a similar way, the history of the Foundation lights up other aspects of London's history, like the property boom of the 1970s and 1980s, the early stinginess of the L.C.C., and the expectation that the "deserving" poor should show evidence of former thrift and domestic cleanliness.

The history of parochial charities is often a depressing tale of a waste of resources, caused by the desire of testators to perpetuate their own names and bind their successors or by the reluctance of bureaucrats to allow change. It is refreshing to read of the success of the City Parochial Foundation, a most unusual institution described in an admirable book.

– Christopher Elrington

### **The Times London History Atlas**

edited by Hugh Clout. Times Books 1991. 191 pages, colour illustrations, maps. £19.95.

It has become fashionable in recent years to label yet another history of a place an "atlas", by adding a few maps at odd intervals, mostly divorced completely from the text. The Times' lavishly illustrated history of London is rather more successful in integrating the maps with the narrative, which gallops through the well-worn account in nine period chapters (Tudor London is reached in just over fifty pages), with a

further chapter of "themes" – brief surveys of subjects which were omitted in the chronological sections – and a final chapter of places (individual or groups of buildings which warrant extended treatment). A dictionary of place names rounds off the volume.

An immediate problem contributed by the folio format lies in the large number of layouts divided down the centre of the double page, which, especially with small photographs, is most irritating. The colour is lavish, but also rather garish (the book is, of course, printed abroad) – there is a particularly nasty tinted copy of Hollar's panorama on pages 66-7, while some of the sepia-tone reproductions leave a lot to be desired. For the earlier periods, facsimiles of documents and photographs of museum material are interspersed with artists' reconstructions of buildings and areas, for the most part quite imaginatively drawn, though the view of medieval Westminster does not begin to compare with that of H.W. Brewer, made a century ago, even with the superior knowledge of today. The busy pages cram rather too much in to be able to read the text in comfort – the graphics are definitely the message here. The volume has an air of a superior school text-book. The preliminary chronology, in five parallel columns, is a useful concept which could have been developed at greater length.

– David Webb

### **The East End nobody knows. A history, a guide, an exploration**

by Andrew Davies. Macmillan 1991. 164 pages, illustrations, maps. £16.95.

In fact, this is the East End *everybody* knows – the East End of poverty and immigration, docks and crime, slums and social welfare. The first section of Davies' book is a quick gallop through 2,000 years of East End history in bite-size pieces, giving all the appearance of reprinted magazine articles. This is followed by a series of walks by area (Davies has been a London guide), ending with notes and an extensive bibliography. This is really two books in one, and would have been better as such. The historical side is written on the level of a school project – any of Bill Fishman's works gives a more coherent picture of the area. References in the walks may be pursued in the historical section, inevitably leading to much duplication. The illustrations are appropriate, but mostly very familiar – the sort, indeed, everybody knows.

– David Webb

### **The History of the Haberdashers' Company**

by Ian W. Archer. Phillimore 1991. 329 pages, 93 illustrations. £30.

The history of one of the "Twelve Great" city livery companies is an ideal subject for a book. The evolution of the Company, in this case from fourteenth century origins to the present day, embraces so many



topics: history, biography, social conditions, trade and economy, the city, charities, education, fashions, feasting, plate, property and pageantry. Furthermore, primary sources are available at the Guildhall Library or at the Company's Hall, or in this case, at both places.

The ordinances of 1371 present the first documentary evidence of the corporate body of haberdashers, but in a wider sense the emergence of the haberdashers can be traced to developments in fashion, especially the demand for accessories and fastenings. Originally, it seems that mercers dealt in haberdashery but as the variety and specialization of stock increased, haberdashers assumed this specialized trade, and the haberdashers of London rose to eminence on a tide of pins, laces, brooches and buttons.

A fascinating inventory of the stock of the haberdasher Thomas Trewe, taken in 1378, reveals a remarkable range of goods, not just the thread, girdles and beads which one might have expected but also rosaries, spectacles and writing materials. Stocked with such a wealth of desirable items, the haberdashers served an expanding market, organized themselves into a corporate unit controlling the trade, obtained a royal charter, built a Hall, and by 1538 the Company was listed as eighth in the order of precedence of the "Twelve Great" livery companies, an order which is maintained.

The religious aspect of this Company's origins is less clearly charted; it may be that the medieval guild of haberdashers had its roots in a religious fraternity dedicated to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Katherine and All Saints (St Katherine alone was adopted as the Company's patron saint), but the religious origins of the haberdashers do not appear to have been as strong an influence on the development of the guild as, for instance, the fraternity of St Mary of Bethlehem was to the guild of drapers.

This is the first full length history of the Haberdashers' Company to be published and the Company should be congratulated on its wise judgement in choosing Ian Archer, Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Keble College, Oxford, and author of *The Pursuit of Stability. Social relations in Elizabethan London* (1991) to undertake the commission. Dr Archer's book places all aspects of the Company's history in a wide context, appealing to a wide readership and not exclusively to members of livery companies. The history proceeds in thirteen chapters from "Origins" to "The Company in the Modern World"; the chapters tend to begin and end with a recap., calling to mind the advice given to me as a history undergraduate "say what you're going to say, say it, then say what you've said". The illustrations, many in colour, range from medieval manuscripts to a felt hat, and the end-papers are a delight. Appendices take care of the list of Masters and Wardens, the Company's plate, minor charities, advowsons, the value of money. There follow footnotes, a bibliography and an index complete with cross-references.

– Penelope Hunting

### Historic Hackney

by David Mander and Zoe Croad. Friends of Hackney Archives in association with Network SouthEast 1992. Fold-out brochure with colour illustrations. £1.50 by post from Friends of Hackney Archives, 29 Stepney Green, London E1 3JX.

The front of this brochure reproduces a nineteenth century print of Hackney, the back shows a diagram of Network SouthEast's North London Lines. The idea is that you take the train to Hackney Central Station, equipped with this brochure, and spend three hours exploring Hackney. A good idea. I wonder if Network SouthEast could liaise with other boroughs to provide further interesting walks? The possibilities are endless.

Meanwhile, back to Hackney. I confess I have not undertaken the three hour walk, but I have enjoyed reading about it. The route is dotted with numbers indicating a place or building of historic interest and referring to a paragraph and sometimes an illustration in the text. On the whole, the demolished buildings of Hackney are the most interesting, a point emphasized by the illustrations, which include the London Orphan Asylum (it looked more like a country mansion than an orphanage) and the original Gothic Grammar School (more like a church than a school). Happily, Sutton House survives and is currently being restored. The brochure is attractive and the text marches along with a swing. It would make an easy companion on a walk; of course it does not compare with a volume of Pevsner in the pocket (*London 4: North and North East*, covering Hackney, is eagerly awaited).

– Penelope Hunting

### The Mercers' Hall

Jean Imray's book appeared last summer at the Annual General Meeting. It was published by the Society with the bills being met by the Mercers' Company; the story of its publication is almost a piece of London history in itself.

The first letter on my file relating to it is dated 1977; at that point I *think* – though I am no longer certain – that we were contemplating a fair-sized article in the *Record*. Before long, it had grown to a small monograph with special reference to Mercers' property in Frederick Place. Thereafter, the *opus* increased in geometric progression: it began to swell, as if it were something in a science fiction novel. But, as I realized when I came to edit the text, Jean had put in nothing that was not both relevant and essential to this micro-history of a corner of London, fronting on to Ironmonger Lane with another boundary on Cheapside.

Since I was only responsible for encouragement and editing, I can remain unabashed when I say that this is an extraordinary addition to the recording of London's history and topography. It runs to some 509 pages, with an Introduction on the pre-Fire Hall by Derek Keene and with colour plates, maps and plans as end papers, illustrations and index, it is on offer to members of the Society at what is, effectively cost price – £35.00 plus postage (£4.50 inland, £7.00

overseas). It is not cheap, but it is very good value.

– Ann Saunders

### **The story of Ealing Common**

by T. and A. Harper Smith 1992. 31 pages, photocopied maps and illustrations. £2.50 from the authors, 48 Perryn Road, London W3 7NA.

This booklet will be of interest to residents of Ealing; the general reader would do better with the section on Ealing in *The Victoria County History of Middlesex* vol vii (1982). With regard to *The story of Ealing Common*, both the "Customs of the Manor of Acton and Ealing" (1697), and "The Tenants' Book of the Ealing Commoners" (1791-1921) reveal how well protected and maintained the Common was – there was even a Keeper of the Common. Estates and housing developments around the Common are dealt with in detail and the booklet contains a list of sources/footnotes. The authors acknowledge "the generous help given by the Ealing History Library and the Greater London Record Office". It seems a pity that a little more financial generosity was not forthcoming, from any source, to provide something more suitable than the graph paper on the cover.

– Penelope Hunting

### **Docklands Life. A Pictorial History of London's Docks 1860-1970**

by Chris Ellmers and Alex Werner. Museum of London 1991. £17.50.

The Port of London formed the largest and most comprehensive system of docks the world has ever known. With a workforce of over 100,000 men, women and children, London's Dockland reached out to the four corners of the globe through the thousands of ships which came to the busy River Thames. The Museum of London is devoted to keeping the memory of Dockland alive and has now produced this lavishly illustrated volume.

The text is comprehensive, but above all it is the sequence of images, drawn from a library of over 50,000 photographs, which conveys the human drama of life and work in the "First Port of the Empire".

### **Palace on the Hill – a history of Alexandra Palace and Park**

by Ken Gay. Hornsey Historical Society 1992. £3.00 plus 60p post and packing from The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, London N8 7EL.

Built in the mid 1860s on farmland near the Middlesex villages of Muswell Hill, Hornsey and Wood Green, the first Alexandra Palace realized an idea advocated by the architect Owen Jones. Burnt down soon after its 1873 opening and then rebuilt, Alexandra Palace and Park were to be the venue of a wide range of entertainments and events. In 1936 "Ally Pally" became the place where the world's first high definition public television service began. The disastrous fire of 1980 was followed by the restoration of

the building as an exhibition and conference centre, with an ice rink and other facilities. Its future role is currently being debated.

### **The Official Guide to Bunhill Fields**

Corporation of London 1991. £1.50 from the Guildhall Bookshop, Aldermanbury, London EC2 or St Paul's Information Centre.

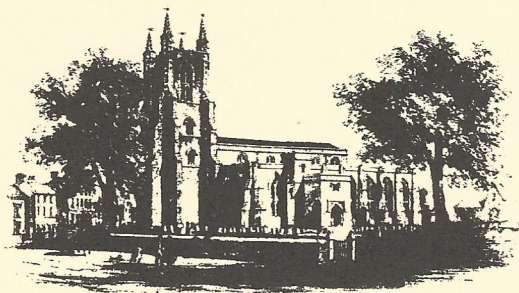
Sheltering behind the Honorable Artillery Company and wedged between City Road and Bunhill Row, is the open space and burial ground called Bunhill Fields, the curious name deriving from Bone Hill. During the Great Plague of 1665 the place was crowded with burials and enclosed by a brick wall and gates. Now it is a pleasant place to browse among the tombstones and monuments of famous men. It is doubtful if the burial ground was ever consecrated, thus it was a favoured place for nonconformist burials, becoming known as "The cemetery of Puritan England". John Bunyan, Susannah Wesley, William Blake, and Daniel Defoe were buried here. The Corporation's booklet gives biographies of those buried here and a map to help locate their graves, to encourage us to go and pay homage. Bunhill Fields is open from 7.30am to 4pm weekdays, 9.30am to 4pm at weekends, longer in the summer.

### **The Roberts map of Croydon, 1847**

Croydon, surveyed in 1847 by W. Roberts, is a town recognizable today, but without the urban sprawl and ribbon development which was to change the picture forever. The railways had already arrived and Croydon Station and the East Station are clearly shown. But there is the enormous expanse of Croydon Common between them, while further south, Haling Park is still a park. Here also are lime pits and quarries, ponds and lakes, footpaths across the Fair Field and tracks, alleys and roads which have long since vanished from memory.

The commuters of Croydon might also be interested in a book *Lords of Croydon Palace* by Yvonne M. Walker, sub-titled "The story of the Archbishops of Canterbury and their Palace at Croydon from 871 to 1780". The book spells out the long relationship between Croydon and the Primates of All England, setting it in the context of the architecture and history of the Old Palace.

The book costs £5 including post and package, the Roberts map £5 unframed including p & p, or framed £30. Enquiries to AMCD Publishers Ltd., tel. 081 668 4535.



**Croydon parish church, from the survey of Croydon by W. Roberts, 1847.**

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