

## **The Annual General Meeting held on 3rd July 1996**

The ninety-sixth Annual General Meeting was held in the church of St John-at-Hackney. In spite of a tube strike, intermittent showers and the challenging location, about 180 members and guests arrived at the right place at the right time. The large church accommodated the meeting comfortably and members enjoyed the equally spacious churchyard, a tour of Sutton House and St Augustine's Tower nearby.

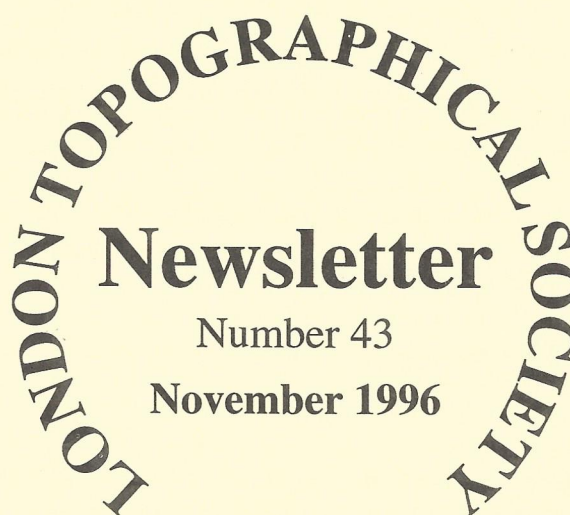
The official business of the AGM was conducted efficiently and with humour, as usual. This year's publication, the Wyngaerde Panorama, fulfilled a longstanding ambition nursed by our Hon Editor, who expressed her praise for the team of experts involved with the publication. Her own hard work, and that of our Chairman, was later acknowledged by a spontaneous vote of thanks from the floor.

Three new members of the Council were elected and welcomed: Mrs Bridget Cherry, Mr Stephen Croad, Mr Laurence Worms, and Mr Iain Bain was elected a Vice President of the Society.

The first of the guest speakers, Dr Susan Foister of the National Gallery, gave us some background about Wyngaerde, although his reasons for being in London during the reign of Henry VIII and his purpose in drawing the Panorama remain a matter of speculation.

Mike Gray, researcher at Sutton House, talked about the church we sat in, built 1792-7 to designs by James Spiller, friend and associate of Soane. He also covered the development of Hackney and the history of Sutton House. Finally Carole Mills, the property-manager of Sutton House, explained the various tours and introduced the guides who had kindly agreed to conduct the tours.

There was much to see and do: beginning with the tea, valiantly master-minded by Joyce Cumming, then a round of the stalls selling books - including of course LTS publications - and the purchase of raffle tickets. Noorthouck's *History of London* was kindly donated as a prize by Stephen Marks, a Vice President.



### **A Note from the Hon Treasurer**

A reminder that your subscription is due on 1st January and you may wish to send it to me now before it is forgotten. Institutions will receive an invoice. The rates are unchanged - domestic £20, foreign £25 paid in sterling or £37 paid in foreign currency. United States dollar bills for \$40.00 are acceptable, sent at your risk. You can pay for the period 1997-2001 inclusive at £90, £115, £127 and \$180 respectively, a saving of at least 10%.

If you are not sure if you pay by Banker's order and have not kept your bank statements from last January to check, you can rest assured that your cheque will not be presented if we have a record of your subscription being paid by Banker's order and it is in fact so paid in January.

Many thanks to all those members who responded to my appeal in the last Newsletter for new covenants: provided the rules do not change, these should provide us with useful extra income for the future. Once the first payment has been received I shall be sending covenantors a tax declaration to complete. It is still not too late to covenant your subscription from 1997 provided the cheque is not dated before the covenant; if the covenant sent in the last Newsletter is not to hand, a letter or telephone call to the Treasurer (details on last page) will bring another.

Can I remind Librarians of institutions yet again that they should not claim for Publication No. 149 as not having been received if they have on their shelves volume xxvii of the *London Topographical Record*. The two are one and the same.

- Roger Cline

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# London streets, places and numbers since 1855

by Alan Ruston

One of the most successful publishing ventures of the Society has been the A to Z maps of London and its environs from Elizabethan to Victorian times.<sup>1</sup> The possession of reprints of well known but rare maps is a boon to all types of historian, and in particular those with social, local and family history interests. A significant advantage of each of these books are the indexes of street names, specially prepared to accompany each map. These indexes enable the researcher to locate, for example, an obscure alley quickly and easily and also to compare map with map, to see how the names of the streets, places and alleys in particular areas have changed over the centuries.

This article concentrates on this last point by giving an account of the development of the official naming and numbering of streets within London and analyses the formal publications of listings produced by the metropolitan local authority from the late nineteenth century until 1967. These listings are important in that they show the nomenclature as it developed. They also give details of the place names, chiefly originating in the period from the 1830s to the 1850s, that were abolished after 1856 and the new names and numbers that were adopted over the whole period. However it is first necessary to consider the complexities introduced in the previous centuries

## The eighteenth century background

A quote by Isaac Taylor from his pioneering and popular book, *Words and Places*, first published in 1864 sets the scene:

"Local names...are never mere arbitrary sounds, devoid of meaning. They may always be regarded as records of the past, inviting and rewarding a careful historical interpretation.....The history of many cities has been deciphered from inscriptions, and so the history of Old London may, much of it, be deciphered from the inscriptions which we find written up at the corners of its streets. These familiar names, which catch the eye as we pace the pavement, perpetually remind us of the London of bygone centuries, and recall the stages by which the long unlovely avenues of streets have replaced the elms and hedgerows, and have spread over miles of pleasant fields, till scores of outlying villages have been absorbed into 'a boundless contiguity' of brick and mortar".<sup>2</sup>

Street names sometimes recall a link with the past or a local association but it is often difficult to identify the connection with any degree of certainty. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries changes were made away from the traditional names for no apparent reason. They often were more improbable than the original, and so in the centre of London there are several examples of reversion to a former name. In the

sixteenth century houses were not numbered and the shops were distinguished by painted or sculptured signs which could be easily and widely recognized. Locating individual people in poor areas must have been very difficult, even if it was attempted, and disappearing in London was no doubt as easy then as in later centuries. During the early eighteenth century the situation worsened as the names of many of the less important streets and places were continually altered to correspond with changes in ownership, or of the signs that hung in the streets.<sup>3</sup>

By the 1750s signboards and posts had become so numerous that they became a nuisance, and an Act of 1762 provided for the removal in some London parishes of hanging signs and for fixing them to the houses to which they belonged.<sup>4</sup> Changes were also taking place governing street pavements:

"In fact down to 1762 when the Westminster Paving Act was passed from which we may date all those improvements and conveniences which have made this country the boast and envy of the world, the streets of the Metropolis were obstructed with stalls, sheds, signposts and projections of various kinds and each inhabitant paved before his own door in such manner and with such materials as pride, poverty or caprice might suggest. Kerb stones were unknown and the footway was exposed to the carriage way except in some of the principal streets where a line of posts and chains, or wooden paling, afforded occasional protection".<sup>5</sup>

Although the various Acts did not require the numbering of the houses, a further provision in 1765 did introduce this requirement for the City of London; however this was repealed two years later.<sup>6</sup>

The first recorded instance of a street being numbered is Prescott Street, in Goodmans Fields, about which Edward Hatton in 1708 stated, "Instead of signs the houses here are distinguished by numbers, as the staircases in the Inns of Court and Chancery."<sup>7</sup> Numbering gradually spread until the 1760s after which it appears a wider adoption of the practice took place.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the century, the numbering of houses had become well established, and seems to have been done on the consecutive rather than the odd and even principle with which we have become very familiar.

None of this sensible enterprise was regulated of course and numbering systems varied even in the same street. For example about 1780, Craven Street in the Strand had three sets of numbers. There were irregularities everywhere, and the naming of streets and parts of streets was left to the idiosyncrasy or whim of the owner. The repetition of the same names was very common.



## The nineteenth century and the move towards regulation

The situation in the first half of the nineteenth century was a mess, made all the worse by the fast pace of urban development. A correspondent to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1811 made a point about the renaming of streets:

"The practice of giving new names to streets appears to me to increase very much of late and is, in my opinion, generally speaking, very absurd; it tends to make confusion, and lead people into mistakes....(I) hope to have the opinion of your readers on what may be called this street-naming innovation".<sup>9</sup>

The duplication in the names of streets was a headache especially for the delivery of letters. John Lockie's *Topography of London*, published in 1813 which listed the names of London streets and places shows, for example, that there were fifty places named Crown Court in London, thirty-eight thoroughfares named Charles Street, thirty-six named John Street and thirty-two named Queen Street. In addition, where several slight variations were used for other streets, courts and alleys, for example St John Street, the whole haphazard arrangement became totally confusing. Formal adoption as a street by local Highways Boards from the 1830s onwards did not extend to control over its name or numbering.

Regulation did not take place until 1855 with the passing of the Metropolitan Management Act (18 & 19 Vict, Chapter 120). This Act was one of many enacted in the 1850s which attempted to regulate and control the streets and sewers of

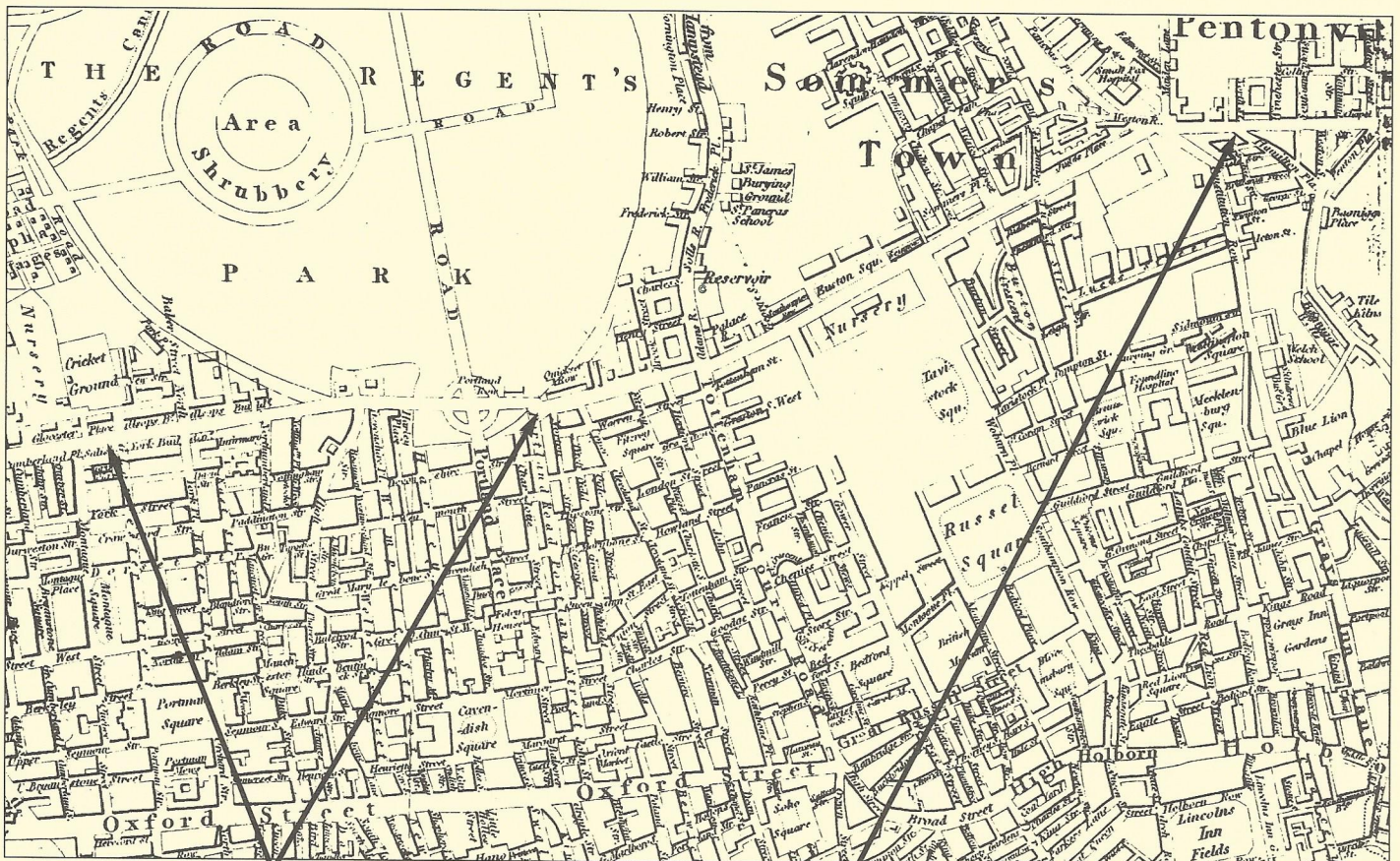
London and to place its financing on a proper footing. This particular Act was important as it laid down rules for sewers and set up the Metropolitan Board of Works to superintend the changes for London. For the first time the power to control and regulate the naming and numbering of streets and houses was provided for and given to the new Board of Works (sections 141 and 142). Section 142 was simple and to the point and this signal requirement proved to be an important factor in facilitating the fast urban development which took place over subsequent decades:

"The said Metropolitan Board shall keep a Register of all Alterations made by them in the Names of Streets, and such Register shall be kept in such Form as to show the Date of every such alteration, and the Name of the Street previous to such Alteration as well as the new Name thereof".

This Register set up by the Board of Works, maintained and developed under later legislation by its successors the London County Council and the Greater London Council, has proved an important record in detailing the growth and expansion of London during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the 1850s it was the means by which order was secured out of a chaotic situation.

It appears that the Post Office was the driving force behind the insertion of these clauses. This is made clear in a letter from Sir Rowland Hill, Secretary of the General Post Office to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, dated 5th April 1856:

"I am directed by the Postmaster-General to



The New Road from Paddington to Islington was 5,115 yards (4,677 metres) long. Detail from Lockie's *Topography of London* (1813) LTS Publication No.148.



address you on the subject of the power vested in the Board for regulating the nomenclature of streets and the numbering of houses in London... Regarding the matter as one in which the Post Office is greatly interested, His Lordship was desirous of seeing the controlling power vested in a central authority - and was instrumental in getting a clause proposed to that effect - in the hope that the power so given might be exercised on more comprehensive and general principles than would probably be observed were it placed in the hands of the district Vestries... His Grace desires to point out that a reform of the street nomenclature of London, by doing away with the multiplication of the same names for streets, now carried to a perplexing extent, especially if accompanied by a more accurate numbering of houses, would be of great importance to the Post Office service, and consequently to the public interests and convenience, in promoting the expeditious and correct sorting and distribution of the correspondence...(the) report upon the Post Office for the year 1855... adverted to these points when describing the measures contemplated, or in progress for the acceleration of the London deliveries; and His Grace feels that the co-operation of the Board, in correcting the present abuses of street nomenclature, would be valuable in facilitating the accomplishment of that object."<sup>10</sup>

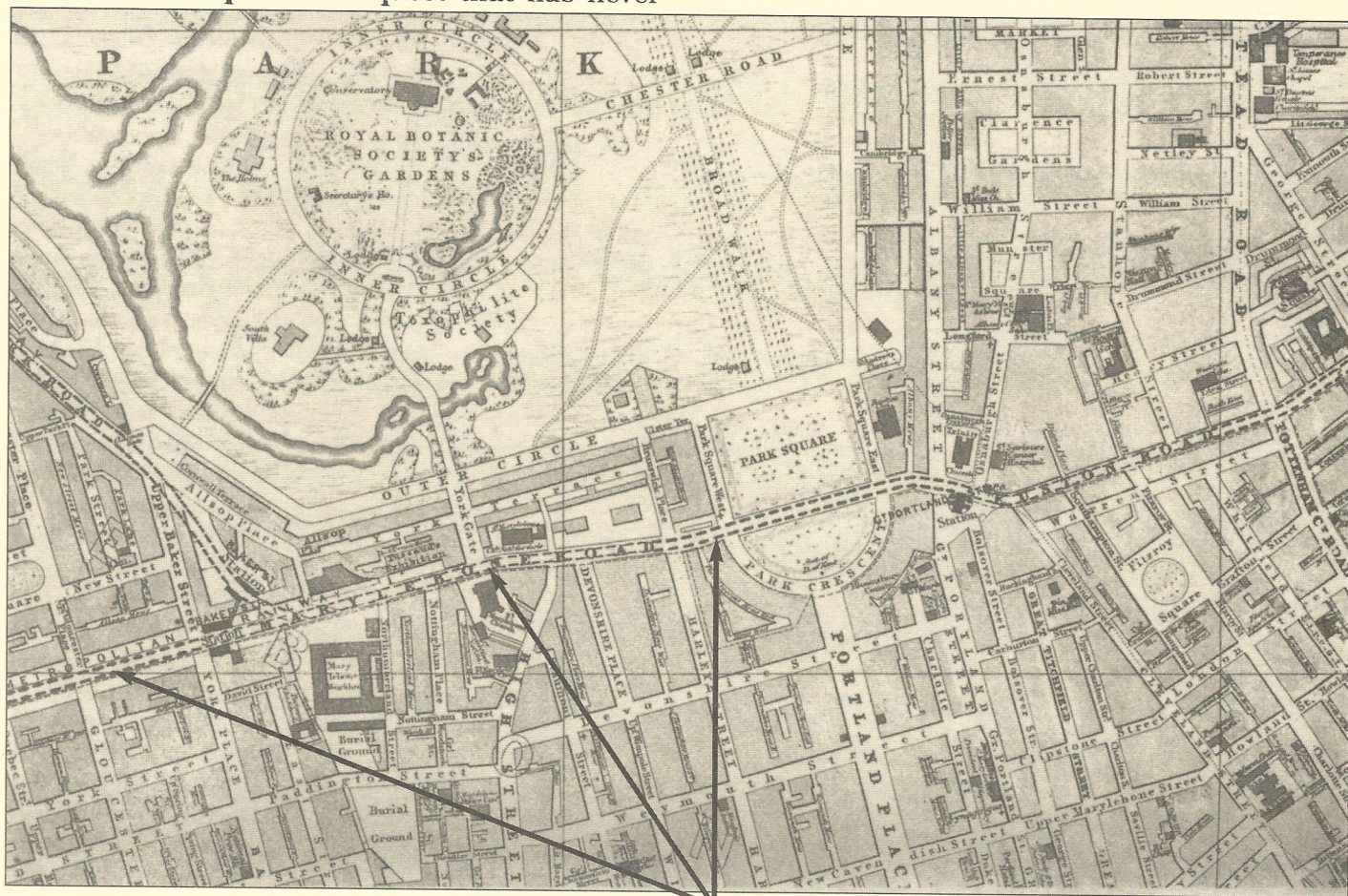
The Postmaster General argued that "there should not be two streets of the same name in London", an impossible request that has never

been fulfilled. The Post Office cited that there were forty-eight Charles Streets in London (an increase of ten from 1813), thirty-two John Streets and thirty-six Queen Streets, which presented them with a growing problem of location to a specific area. An assertive line was taken by the Post Office, and early in 1857 the Board started on the work of simplification of street names and numbering by working through the list given them by the Post Office.

W.E. Riley described how they set about their task in the first and most extreme case:

"The New Road was formed in 1756-7 by Act of Parliament, between the Angel at Islington and Edgware Road, as a continuation of City Road to connect Paddington with the City. The number of subsidiary names or places, such as Angel Terrace, Euston Place, York Buildings, etc in the thoroughfare was no less than fifty-five. The Board divided The New Road up into Marylebone Road, Euston Road and Pentonville Road, names that we know today, and abolished all the separate names existing in the line of the former thoroughfare. The numbers were applied on the odd and even principle, and this system has been used ever since".<sup>10,11</sup>

Our London street and numbering system therefore can be said to date from the division of the New Road by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1857 under powers given to it under the Metropolitan Management Act.



By 1888 The New Road had been divided into Marylebone Road, Euston Road (continued p. 5 lower left)



### Development of streets names and numbering

The Board's employees in the Street Nomenclature Office set about their job methodically, recording and eliminating names where possible. Their powers were strengthened in the Metropolitan Management Amendment Act 1862. In section 87 the Board was empowered to object to any new name and "to order and direct that any Row of Houses or Buildings in any Street or in any Line of Road in the Metropolis shall, for the Purpose of distinguishing the same, be marked with such Numbers or Names as they shall deem convenient and proper for that Purpose, and which they shall specify in their Order".<sup>12</sup>

Their first street list, made public in 1868 showed disturbing trends in that, using the previously quoted examples, the number of thoroughfares named Charles Street had risen to sixty-five, John Street to sixty-eight and Queen Street to thirty-nine. However the area incorporated within London was growing, and later codifications in 1875 and 1887 provided a firm base for rationalization.<sup>13</sup>

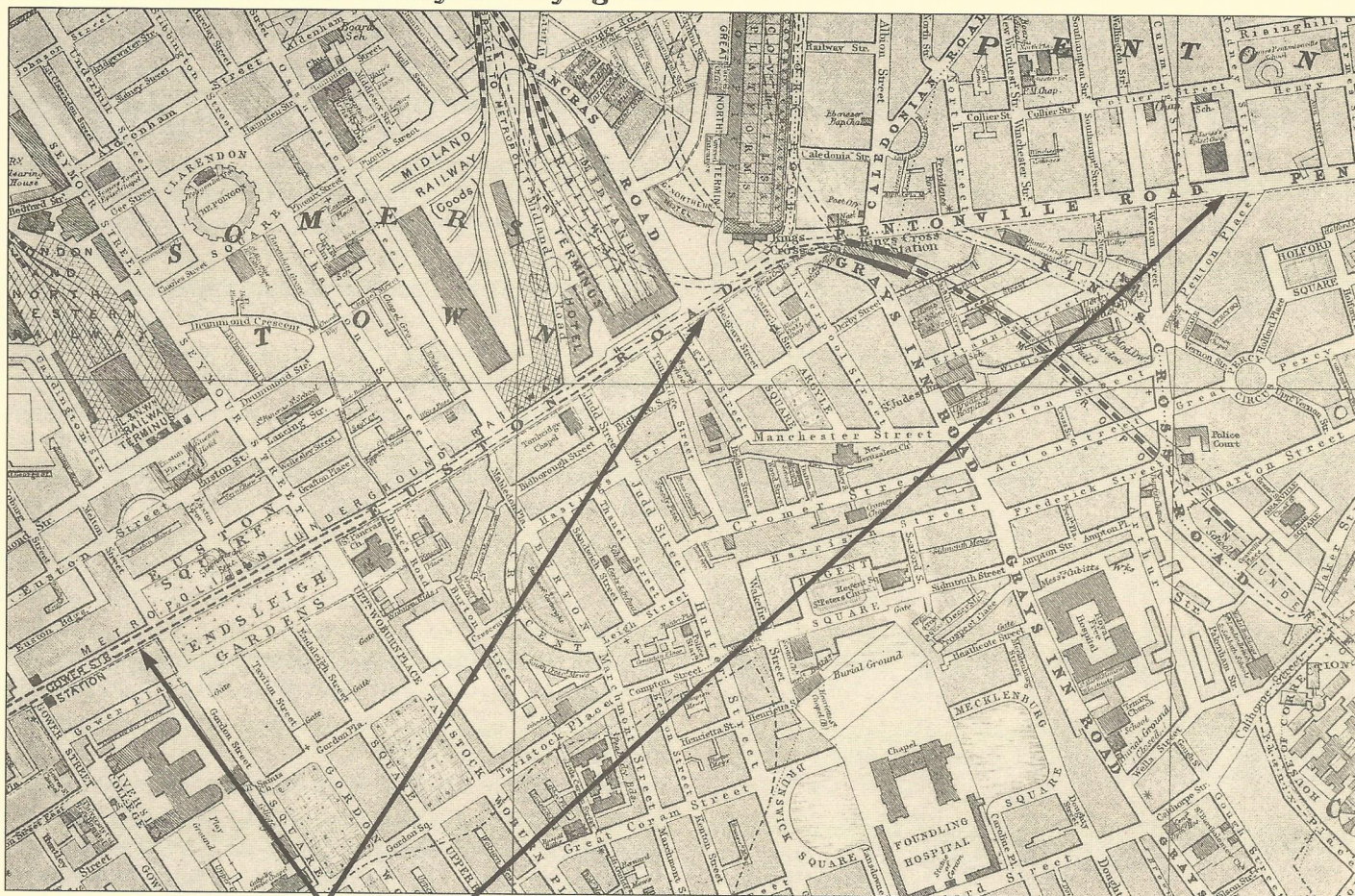
The list published in 1887 consists of 594 pages, and gives the street name, postal district, locality, parish, and year of adoption. This book is a landmark and while the Board had not met the Post Office's impossible demand of 1856 for near complete eradication of duplicated street names, it does provide the postal district and locality for every street or place to aid identification. This must have become the postmen's bible in the closing decade of the nineteenth century in carrying out

the task of directing the ever increasing number of letters to the right place in the fast expanding metropolis.<sup>14</sup>

### The advent of the London County Council

The Board gave way to the London County Council in 1889 which took over these responsibilities. The L.C.C. sought a new and specific mandate for itself, and obtained it in Part IV of the London Building Act 1894. Clearing away previous legislation, the Act gave the Council the power to alter any street name, govern the provision of new names, and require the local authority to number houses as it ordered. In addition Section 38 required that "the Council shall keep a register of all alterations made by them in the names of streets and in the numbers of the houses therein, and such register shall be kept in such form as to show the date of every such alteration and the name of the street previous to such alteration, as well as the new name thereof".<sup>15</sup>

Although individuals had the right to inspect this record, the L.C.C. decided to make the whole generally available in the form of a published list. The first edition appeared as a large volume in 1901. It has proved to be a significant resource for historians to plot the changes in street, terrace and place names and to locate particular addresses long since altered or demolished. No commercially produced map could provide this detailed and consistent approach to the geography of the 23,000 street names to be found in London.<sup>16</sup>



Euston Road, Pentonville Road. Detail from Bacon's Map, LTS Publication No 137.



The second edition which appeared in 1912 supplied more information and included a comprehensive introduction from the Superintending Architect, W. E. Riley. He was able to announce that since 1889 about 1,500 streets bearing repeated names had been renamed and 3,500 subsidiary names abolished, despite "the opposition of local residents affected, who regard themselves as arbitrarily chosen victims of reform, and plead that not theirs but the other streets of the same name should be renamed". All the alterations in street nomenclature and numbering which had occurred since 1856 are shown in this edition, and a separate section is included of abolished terrace or place names recorded under the current name of each street.<sup>17</sup>

The third edition which appeared in 1929 was the most comprehensive produced by the L.C.C. A detailed municipal map at six inches to the mile had been prepared and each street has a precise reference to it in the body of the text as well as to the Ordnance Survey map. Alterations in the block allocation of numbers to houses in each street in the period 1856 to 1928 are included as well as the date of the Order. An entirely new section appears containing notes on the origins of street names, both old and new.

Former street names are cross referenced, as are the abolished subsidiary terrace or place names in certain streets that are too numerous to incorporate in the main text. The arrival on the scene of blocks of flats is also reflected, with parks and open spaces being systematically recorded for the first time. What is surprising is that even with the expansion of the metropolis, the number of streets in the administrative county had dropped to 17,660.<sup>18</sup>

The 1929 L.C.C. list has an appendix containing about 350 streets within London which before the reforms made after 1856 had terrace or place names only and no numbers. Streets containing only two or three examples, of which there are many, are shown in the main body of the List. The appendix includes seemingly endless examples of Albion Villas, Grove Terrace, Rose Cottages and the like and these were often in the 1840s the only locating address within a street. The number of terrace or place names rose sharply during the period of the 1830s to the 1850s when property development in certain parts of London was fast and furious.

An analysis of these 350 streets shows that they are located in areas that form a kind of ring around the old London - Putney, Wandsworth, Balham, Brixton, Dulwich, Norwood, Sydenham, Penge, Lewisham, Brockley, Plumstead, Peckham, Greenwich, Camberwell to the south, and Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington, Shepherd's Bush, Holloway, Islington, Highbury, Hackney, Dalston and Stoke Newington in the north.

The section on the origins of street names often states the obvious. For example Faraday Street in

Newington, South London could only be named after the discoverer of the electro-magnetic induction who was born in the area. However there are other inclusions that bring out some obscure associations. For example, Czar Street in Deptford is recorded as being named after Peter the Great who lodged in Sayes Court in 1698 (Evelyn's Diary). Finsen Road, Herne Hill is named after Niels Finsen the pioneer in the medical use of ultra violet light; Ella Road, Crouch Hill is derived from "Casella" which was the name of the person upon whose behalf application for sanction of the street was made, and Kemp Street, Hoxton after James Kemp (died 1819), a cobbler who is reputed to have founded the first Sunday School in London at Hoxton. The section is most valuable and I suspect neglected by researchers as a source of information not to be found elsewhere.

### Post War and the Greater London Council

The effect of bombing during World War II and later redevelopment meant that there were significant changes in London streets, and the fourth edition of the L.C.C. list did not appear until 1955.<sup>19</sup> "The decade from 1929 to 1939 saw an intensification in the L.C.C.'s programme for abolishing duplicated and subsidiary street names. Parish boundaries now coincided with those of the Metropolitan Boroughs... (Likewise) particulars of old street names abolished before 1 August 1929 and notes on the origins of street names have been omitted".<sup>20</sup>

This made for a less comprehensive volume which, while smaller in format, had grown to 870 pages. For the historian these omissions are disappointing, if understandable, in meeting the laudable objective of keeping the whole in one volume. Comparing the alterations with the 1929 edition shows how much, and yet how little, London had changed in twenty-six years of building turbulence.

The arrival of the G.L.C. expanded but made little difference to the operation of the L.C.C. street nomenclature section, and the Orders which determined street names and house numbers.<sup>21</sup> A final supplement of just forty-two pages appeared in 1967 that completes the story of the official publication of lists of street names.<sup>22</sup> The detail and accuracy of each book is a tribute to the three metropolitan authorities who successively produced them for nearly a century.

### NOTES

1. LTS, *A-Z of Elizabethan London* (1979), *A to Z of Restoration London* (1992), *A-Z of Georgian London* (1982), *A-Z of Regency London* (1985), *A-Z of Victorian London* (1987).
2. Isaac Taylor, *Words and Places* (1873) Chapter 11 is devoted to the history of London street names.
3. W.E. Riley, *List of Streets Places...in the Administrative County of London* (1912) p.iii. Riley



4. 2 Geo. III chapter 21: An Act for Paving, Cleaning and Lighting the Squares Street etc in certain parishes and liberties and for preventing Annoyances therein; and for other Purposes therein mentioned. 3 Geo III chapter 23 is similar covering other parishes. See also Riley, above.

6. 6 Geo. III chapter 26 : An Act for the better paving, cleaning and enlightment of the City of London, and the Liberties thereof; and for preventing Obstructions and Annoyances within the same; and for other Purposes therein mentioned. The Act was repealed by 8 Geo. III chapter 21.

9. *Gentleman's Magazine* (1811) vol i supplement p.634. There was a response from "LT" of Brompton and "RM" in 1811 vol ii September 1811 p.238: "some changes, perhaps, have been changed for more reputable names, as the streets have been improved by more respectable inhabitants".

11. Cunningham, *op cit* p.xxviii, states that the New Road was 5115 yards (4677 metres) in length, far exceeding Oxford Street the next in length at 2304 yards.

13. Riley, *op cit* p.v. Much of Riley's introduction is quoted verbatim in George H. Cunningham, *London, a comprehensive survey of its history etc.* (1927) pp.xix - xxi.

15. 57 & 58 Vict., chapter 213, sections 32 to 38.

the Guildhall Library includes supplements of amendments and corrections up to 31 December 1904. The text provides the following information for each street: Name/ Locality/ Postal District/ Parish/ City or Metropolitan Borough/ County, Electoral and Parliamentary Division/ Ordnance Sheet reference 5 ft to the mile/ year of approval/ Alterations giving date of Order, number of the plan, names abolished/ Remarks.

18. L.C.C., *List...County of London* including the names of blocks of dwellings, parks and open spaces showing localities, postal districts with delivery office numbers, parishes, Metropolitan and municipal map references, together with the alterations in street nomenclature and numbering since 1856 and the origin of certain names (1929). The volume in the Guildhall Library includes Supplements of amendments, corrections and additions covering the period 1929 to 1934, while a copy in private possession also includes similar supplements for 1935 and 1936.

20. L.C.C., *List...County of London* (1955).  
Introduction by J.L. Martin, Superintending  
Architect of Metropolitan Buildings and Architect to  
the Council.

22. G.L.C., *Supplement to the Names of Streets and Places in the former Administrative County of London for 1955 to 1967* (1967). References to the municipal map were deleted. Besides the new street names, and the former titles for renamed streets, the supplement includes details of the Orders made in the period relating to the numbering and renumbering of streets and buildings.

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## A Revision of the Catalogue of Crace's London Plans

The collection of plans and views of London assembled by Frederick Crace (1799-1859) is one of the treasures of the British Museum and the British Library. Users of the catalogue, compiled by his son, John Gregory Crace and published in 1878, have, however, long realized that things were not quite right. The most obvious "discrepancy" is that the collection is no longer one unit, even though it was purchased entire by the British Museum's Department of Prints and Drawings in 1880. Since 1933 the plans, described in the first section of the catalogue, have been held by the Map Library (now part of the British Library) while the views (though they contain several plans), described in the second part of the catalogue, are still with the British Museum's Department of Prints and Drawings.

A comparison between the catalogue and the portfolios containing the plans and views reveals further discrepancies. There are several supplementary portfolios of views, which are not described in the catalogue since they actually contain many of the British Museum's later acquisitions of London topography, arranged in the same order as the Crace collection. These have been dealt with effectively by the Curators of the Department of Prints and Drawings. The situation with the plans has been less satisfactory. It has long been known that several of the items described in the catalogue are not to be found, that several plans date from long after Frederick Crace's death and must, presumably, have been collected by his son, and that there are numerous plans that are not described in the catalogue, good though it is by the standards of its day.

In view of its imminent departure from the British Museum building in 1998 - and the definitive splitting of the two parts of the collection (which had hitherto been only a few metres apart) - the Map Library has purchased a microfilm of the entire collection of views and has reviewed the Catalogue of Plans. Entries have been tidied up and made more precise. There have been new identifications and datings in the light of research undertaken in the century since the catalogue appeared. In the case of the "drawn" plans, a consistent distinction has been introduced between original manuscripts and mid-nineteenth century tracings of earlier plans commissioned by Frederick Crace. In the process of revision, moreover, fresh light has been shed on the provenance of some plans, such as the large group of plans of individual properties in plans' portfolio IX which must have come from a register compiled for the Mercers' Company.

Undoubtedly the most important aspect of the revision of the catalogue, however, has been the confirmation of the missing items and the identification of the previously uncatalogued plans. Twenty-seven plans are missing and were, almost

certainly, never received in the Map Library [Portfolios VIII.69; IX.122 (2 plans), 145 (4 plans); X.36,50; XI.58; XII.38(part); XIII.36,39,40; XIV.21; XV.47,48,66; XVI.23,59; XVII.39,41,44,53; XVIII.11,16]. More than balancing these are the fifty-four newly identified items of which fifteen are in manuscript. Perhaps the most exciting is Portfolio XIV.40\*, a manuscript survey, in ten sections, at a scale of 200 feet to the inch (1:2400), showing new buildings along the New Road from the Edgware Road to the City Turnpike, dated 1796. It is identical in appearance and style to Portfolio XIX.40, a survey of 1794 showing new buildings in the neighbourhood of St George's Fields. This plan is by Thomas Milne, the creator of the now famous land-use map of London and its environs of 1800, which was produced in facsimile by the LTS in 1975 (Publication No. 118/9). The two items could well be fragments of a hitherto unknown survey of London by Milne, that came to nothing because of the publication between 1792-99 of Horwood's map. Alternatively, and perhaps more plausibly, it could be that Milne was working for Horwood - a possibility strengthened by what may be the association of the publisher, William Faden, with these manuscript fragments and with the later editions of Horwood's map.

Other newly discovered plans include: a ground plan of Basinghall 1810, (Portfolio IX.215), a plan of lots between Park Lane and Oxford Street, Park Street and North Street of 1768 (Portfolio X.65), a print of the "Return of the Volunteer Corps, including the Officers and Staff, as assembled in Hyde Park on the 4th of June 1799" by Boydell (Portfolio X.5\*), a plan of London Zoo in 1830, with a list of the animals there (Portfolio XVII.65), a design of the Inner Circle of Regent's Park laid out as a garden for the Royal Botanic Society in 1840 (Portfolio XVII.66), the plan of a path from the Copenhagen estate in Islington to Maiden Lane, Kentish Town in 1843 (?) (Portfolio XVII.67), a plan of various sewers under commission for the City, Westminster and Middlesex about 1815 (Portfolio XVIII.11\*), a plan of about 1720 illustrating a proposal to supply London and Westminster with water from Drayton (Portfolio XVIII.59\*), a copy of Ashpitel's survey of Hackney as corrected to 1831 (Portfolio XIX.43\*) and a manuscript map of the Diocese of London, possibly a draft for John Harris's "New and Exact Map of the Diocese of London" of about 1714 (Howgego 60) (Portfolio XIX.60).

The Map Library intends to incorporate all the corrections and amendments that have come to light in a copy of the catalogue that will be placed on the open access shelves of its reading room. For a full list of the amendments and revisions, please contact Peter Barber at the Map Library, British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG.

*Footnote: The Crace Collection of London Views in the British Museum is available on microfilm from Mindata at £500. Tel.01225 466447.*



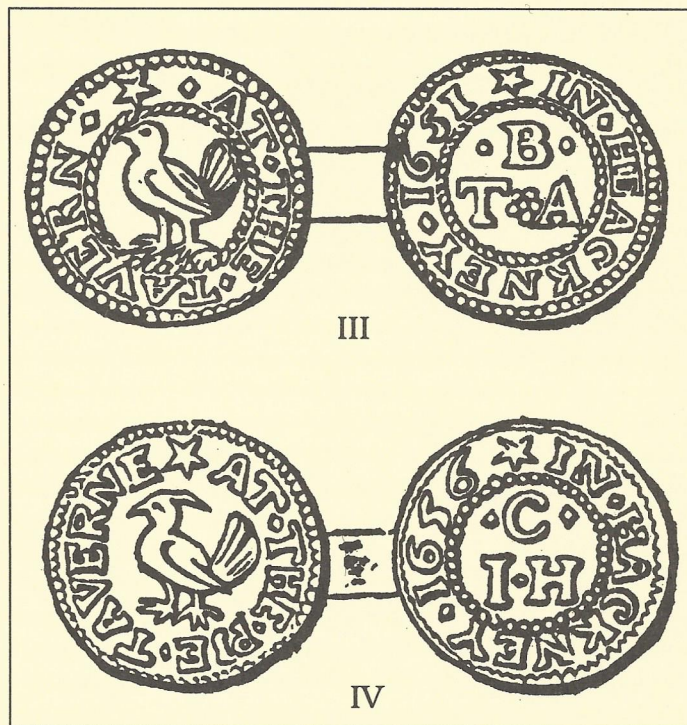
## Hackney tokens in VCH Middlesex vol x

As Alan Ruston wrote in his review (May 1996 Newsletter) of the *Victoria History of the County of Middlesex* vol x on Hackney Parish, any errors in such an authoritative volume are a minor consideration. Nevertheless, it may be worth pointing out that documents of a particular form, those neither written nor printed but impressed between dies, have not been drawn on very satisfactorily.

Firstly, there seems too ready an assumption (p.65) that seventeenth century tokens bearing signs necessarily identify public houses. This assumption is inappropriate for Richard Jennings at Hackny (*sic*) Ferry (i.e. Jeremy's Ferry), 1668, for as the device on the token illustrates, he was the actual ferryman. Indeed, "Richard Jennings ye Ferryman" was drowned in a flood on the Lee in 1678 (see K.R. Fairclough in *Essex Archaeology and History* 23 1992 p.63). The Ferry public house should therefore be deleted from p.65 and the index. William Proctor, also, with the device of a lamb couchant, may not have kept a Lamb Tavern since his token describes him as a brewer (a trade which might have been included on p.96). Brewing for premises of his own cannot be excluded, but there is no certain documentation of a Lamb public house in Hackney village.

Secondly, there has been too ready an acceptance of Robinson's description of his token no. III dated 1651 and reproduced here, as bearing the figure of a cock, and "probably" intended for the Cock Tavern in Mare Street at the corner of Sylvester Road. Actual specimens, e.g. in the Norweb Collection, reveal that the bird is from the same punch as that on Robinson's no. IV (see illustration; his engraving is inaccurate), but this was issued in 1656 AT THE PIE TAVERNE, which of course means Magpie. The identical bird punch was also used for tokens reading AT THE PYE WITHOUT ALDGATE and AT THE PIY IN THE MINNERIS (Minories), so its identity as a magpie was consistent; whereas the maker used quite a different punch to represent a cock. The Magpie Tavern in Hackney is known to have existed in 1656 (a Cock not until 1723), and Robinson's token no. III may be taken to be an earlier issue from the Magpie, before a change of landlords. The Cock Tavern (1651) is a figment of Robinson's (or Daniel-Tyssen's) imagination and should be deleted.

Tokens could have been added to document the Queen's Head in Hackney, 1663 (Spink Coin Auctions, no.51 1986 lot 139; M. Dickinson, *Seventeenth-century Tokens of the British Isles* 1986 p.162. 63A). Another is described as bearing the "Royal Standard" in Kingsland, 1667, (J.R. Dainiel-Tyssen, Catalogue of his Library, Hackney Archives Department Ms c.1880? p.281); this might have been the King's or Prince's Arms at Kingsland noted by Taylor the Water Poet (see



p.65). There may be other tokens to add. Incidentally, the "moniers" mentioned on page 96 of the VCH volume were not money changers or bankers but members of the Company of Moneyers in the Tower of London, for whom Hackney was a favoured residence, see C.E. Challis in *British Numismatic Journal* 45 (1975) pp.72-6 and 59 (1989) pp.185-6.

– Robert Thompson



## News and Notes

### Delivery of publications

A few members complained about the late delivery of this year's publication. The AGM and the issue of the Society's annual publication coincides with the beginning of the holiday season. Hence the packaging needed to protect the Wyngaerde Panorama was delayed which meant that the publication was not sent out by post until mid-August. There was also the problem of postal strikes, not to mention the size of the Wyngaerde - too large for most letterboxes. If you still have not received your copy, it may have been returned to the Society: please contact Roger Cline (see last page). This can be avoided in the future if members unlikely to be able to take delivery of large items can let the Membership Secretary have an alternative "parcel" address. Ideally, come to the AGM to collect your copy or call to collect it at a later date from the Bishopsgate Institute.

### London Lacunae

In the course of research for the forthcoming LTS volume on the Royal Exchange it has become apparent that surprisingly little photographic evidence exists for the central open courtyard of what could easily be described as the hub of the City.

Specifically, views of the courtyard or quadrangle before 20th June 1896 when Hamo Thornycroft's statue of Queen Victoria was unveiled, are at the moment non-existent. Of course, drawings and engravings of the interior do exist especially after the re-opening of the Exchange in 1844 but the fact that no photographs have yet been found in the course of checking more than ten metropolitan and national archives is noteworthy.

The Victoria statue which preceded the 1896 version was executed by John Graham Lough in 1845 and had from the beginning severe degradation problems which culminated in 1889 with Sir Frederick Leighton's assessment that the face was "almost wholly obliterated". The statue was destroyed in 1891. The state of this sculpture almost suggests that embarrassed City authorities discouraged photographic coverage. The fact that the courtyard was roofed over by Barry in 1884 might have led one to believe that engineering progress records would exist which would show the centre of the space but even these images cannot be traced. In addition, Lough's Victoria was one of the very first representations of the Queen - yet there is no known photograph of this important though obviously disfigured memorial.

That such an obvious location endowed with quite sufficient light for photography is without any known record is a salutary reminder about the assumptions of the existence of historical evidence. No doubt those images are out there in unlikely places where, hopefully, LTS members will remember that this "common" view is extremely rare.

- Ian Leith

*If a member knows of a photograph of the statue, please contact Ian Leith directly tel: 01793 414730.*

### The Pugin Society

Admirers of the work of A.W.N. Pugin are invited to join the recently formed Society "to do everything possible to promote the name and work of Pugin". There is a twice yearly Newsletter and plans for excursions and lectures. U.K. membership is just £5. Contact the Hon Sec, Catriona Baker, 122 Grange Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9PT.

### Phyllis Pearsall

The remarkable story of Phyllis Pearsall MBE, founder of the Geographer's A-Z Map Company, was sketched in *The Times* obituary columns, 29th August. Artist, writer, friend of Nabokov, she was the sole inspiration and researcher for the A-Z map of London first published in 1936.

Prompted by the lack of an adequate street map and frustrated at being mis-directed, Mrs Pearsall took it upon herself to remedy the situation. "I had to get my information by walking", she recalled, and these walks around London covered some 3,000 miles. Assisted by one draughtsman, she had the first 10,000 copies of the A-Z printed and persuaded W.H. Smith to take 250 on a sale or return basis. Thus began her success, leading to A-Zs of several cities, road maps and atlases, for which we are all grateful. Her business methods were eccentric, amateur and generous; the success of the company she founded surprised her, for she considered her real talents lay in painting and writing. Her autobiography, *From Bedsitter to Household Name*, was published in 1990.

### Leather Library files

Years and years of LTS Newsletters (or telephone directories, magazines, correspondence files, A4 folders) fit neatly into the library files/boxes from Shepherds Bookbinders, 76 Rochester Row, London SW1 (behind Westminster Cathedral). The files have a leather spine in a variety of colours with gold lettering. Available from £25. Shepherds also do framing, bookbinding and conservation, notepapers, notebooks and other good Christmas presents.

### The RIBA Roundhouse

The RIBA's collection of architectural drawings, models, manuscripts and photographs is due to move to a new home at the Roundhouse, Chalk Farm. That building has had a chequered existence since it opened in 1847 as an engine shed, and has lain empty since 1983. It is now proposed to adapt it for the RIBA's drawing collection, forming a new cultural centre with facilities for exhibitions, lectures, a shop and café. Michael Hopkins and Partners have produced designs and a bid has been submitted to the National Lottery Fund. If you would like to support this project please contact James Bentley, British Architectural Library Trust, 66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD, tel. 0171 580 5533.



### Archaeological Archive to close

The Museum of London's archaeological archive containing the finds, records and reports from all excavations undertaken by the Museum since the Second World War is to close. Due to cuts in the grant from the Department of National Heritage the Museum is unable to maintain an accessible archive. The Museum also operates MoLAS which provides archaeological services to developers in London. Once excavations and the post-excavation research and publication programme are completed, the finds and records are handed over to the curatorial division of the Museum. This will no longer be possible unless funds and space are procured. Max Hebditch, Director of the Museum, stated in April that henceforward the Museum would only be able to take archive material if realistic funds were provided from private or public sources. "Lack of proper funding to care for a growing archaeological archive will be a great setback for the future of London archaeology". The Museum is currently in discussion with interested parties, so hopefully some arrangement will soon be reached to ensure the care of future finds and records.

### New life for old river

The Thames has been an underated asset for too long. The Environment Secretary, John Gummer, has woken up to this by launching a strategic plan to restore the Thames to its rightful place at the heart of the capital. The plan to improve transport, recreational facilities and planning extends from the Lower Thames and the Thames Barrier, through the City to Hampton Court and Windsor. It aims to force planning authorities to pay more attention to the river's potential and the appropriate development of the riverside. It is proposed to reopen twelve wharves and key areas have been earmarked for enhancement. This all sounds eminently sensible. We wait expectantly. An impressive-looking 40 page full colour magazine with ten maps, *Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames* can be obtained free from DOE Publications, tel. 0181 691 9191.

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## Around Town

### Thames Frost Fairs. An exhibition at Guildhall Library

With the Thames very much in the spotlight at the moment (a Thames bridge competition is featured in the Royal Academy "Living Bridges" exhibition [see below], there are proposals for a Millennium Wheel at the South Bank), and with winter fast approaching there could hardly be a more appropriate time for Guildhall Library to launch an exhibition on the theme of Thames Frost Fairs. Though not intended as a response to a suggestion by one recent writer that the Frost Fair be revived - on artificial ice islands - the exhibition will gather pictures, words and ephemera and attempt to recapture something of the experience.

Reliable records of a frozen Thames go back to 1281 and freezes were not infrequent thereafter. Occasions when the brave and the foolish were actually prepared to venture out onto the ice are, thankfully, somewhat fewer. We do know however that in 1564 fairly enthusiastic sports were played on the frozen Thames and in 1608 the ice at London Bridge was hard enough for a tent to be set up as an alehouse and a barber to offer his services in the middle of the river!

An altogether more elaborate Frost Fair was possible in the winter of 1683-4 and this is much more fully recorded by prints, ballads, poems and diaries such as Evelyn's, which tells, perfectly calmly, that after dining with the Archbishop at Lambeth on 9th January the diarist was able to cross the river to the Westminster Horse Ferry on foot. By February 4th, the day before the thaw, one can sense that Evelyn is finding the freezing conditions tiresome, particularly once he finds that some of his plants are frost damaged. He records that a "Map or Landskip cut in copper" was made of the scene. This engraving will be among the Guildhall exhibits.

The range of entertainments available on the ice seems to have been limited only by the imagination, bravery and commercial acumen of those who rushed to exploit the opportunities afforded by large crowds of fun-seeking Londoners. Anything was possible, from the innocent refreshment tent, offering coffee, chocolate and the warmth of a fire to the tent where "some do say a giddy senseless ass, May on the Thames be furnished with a lass". Skating, football, bear-baiting, turn-about, sliding chairs and the roasting of sheep were all popular, but nothing drew in the crowds so much as the Thames printing booths where customized souvenir tickets would be run off on the spot. Many of these tickets will be shown at Guildhall demonstrating the ingenuity of the London printing trade.

The activities indulged in during the 1683-4 frost took on the immediate status of tradition, to be repeated at the other Frost Fairs which followed, in 1715, 1739-40, 1788-9 and 1814. The principal focus of the fair was a pathway running roughly from Temple Stairs to the opposite bank. Safe





Frost Fair on the Thames, February 1814.

passage to the ice was provided at this point by Thames watermen and the pathway became known as "Freezeland Street" or "Blanket Street" (since this was what most of the dozens of tents were made from). As confidence grew, revellers were tempted to visit tents and extend their amusements across much wider areas, taking risks for which many paid a sad price. On land, the cold conditions caused privation and suffering and for many the Frost Fairs were very solemn occasions indeed.

The exhibition in the Print Room at Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury EC2 aims to address many of these themes. Prints, drawings and paintings will be displayed recording all of the major Frost Fairs, together with quotes from ballads, poems and contemporary descriptions. It runs from 11th November to March 23rd and will be open during library opening hours, 9.30-5.00 Monday to Friday. Admission is free. Please ring Jeremy Smith at Guildhall Library 0171 332 1839 for details.

### Living Bridges

The Royal Academy of Arts exhibition "Living Bridges" running until 18th December is something different. Proposals for a new London Bridge have been tossed around for some while. In 1986 Richard Rogers & Partners proposed a new

Hungerford Bridge; in 1994 the London Docklands Development Corporation launched competitions for pedestrian bridges and there has been a proposal for a habitable Blackfriars Bridge. Now, as a result of the Thames Water Habitable Bridge Competition, seven architects have put forward ideas for a habitable bridge between Temple Gardens and the South Bank. Two joint winners have been selected and those going to the exhibition may vote on the merits of the competition designs. Even if the bridge of the future does not inspire you, the impact of inhabited bridges on the development of cities may. There are many models and examples - imagined, executed and unexecuted and a "river of time" runs through the galleries. From the model of Old London Bridge (1176-1831) to an ambitious design for the Pont Neuf in Paris (1578) and spectacular flights of the imagination (Avon Gorge Bridge 1793) the models highlight the potential of the bridge, historic and future. Open 10-6 seven days a week. £5, £3.50 concessions.



### **Sir William Chambers at Somerset House**

"Sir William Chambers: Architect to George III" is the subject of an exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery until 5th January 1997. Robert Adam's great rival, tutor and adviser to the King, Chambers was crucial to the foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts at Somerset House. It is fitting, therefore, that the exhibition is held here, and Saturday visitors will have access to the river terrace, the navy staircase and seamen's hall. The exhibition offers a visual biography of this sophisticated architect who also designed gold and silver and the state coach used for coronations. The Curators are John Harris and Michael Snodin, joint authors of a book published by Yale to accompany the exhibition. At the Courtauld Gallery, Somerset

House, Strand, London WC2. Monday-Saturday 10-6, Sunday 2-6. £4, concessions £2.

### **Do you approve?**

The design of the proposed new building at the Victoria and Albert, The Boilerhouse, by Daniel Libeskind, is controversial. You can inspect Libeskind's model at the Museum, in a small display en route to the Library, until early December. As a result of comments made by those visiting an exhibition of the model and designs in the Henry Cole Wing last summer, the size of Libeskind's proposed building has been reduced by 5%. At the last count this extension to the V and A will cost £50 million and will be open to the public in 2001. It is not too late to make your comments (in a box beside the display). There is also a large model alongside, of South Kensington as a whole, showing just what an impact Libeskind's building would have.

### **The Raphael Gallery re-opens**

Also worth seeing at the V and A is the refurbished Raphael Gallery which has been closed since 1992. It houses the tapestry cartoons produced by Raphael (1515-6) which are now shown to better advantage. Seven cartoons, designs for tapestries for the Sistine Chapel, were brought to this country by Prince Charles in 1623 and have remained in the royal collection since, on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum from 1865.

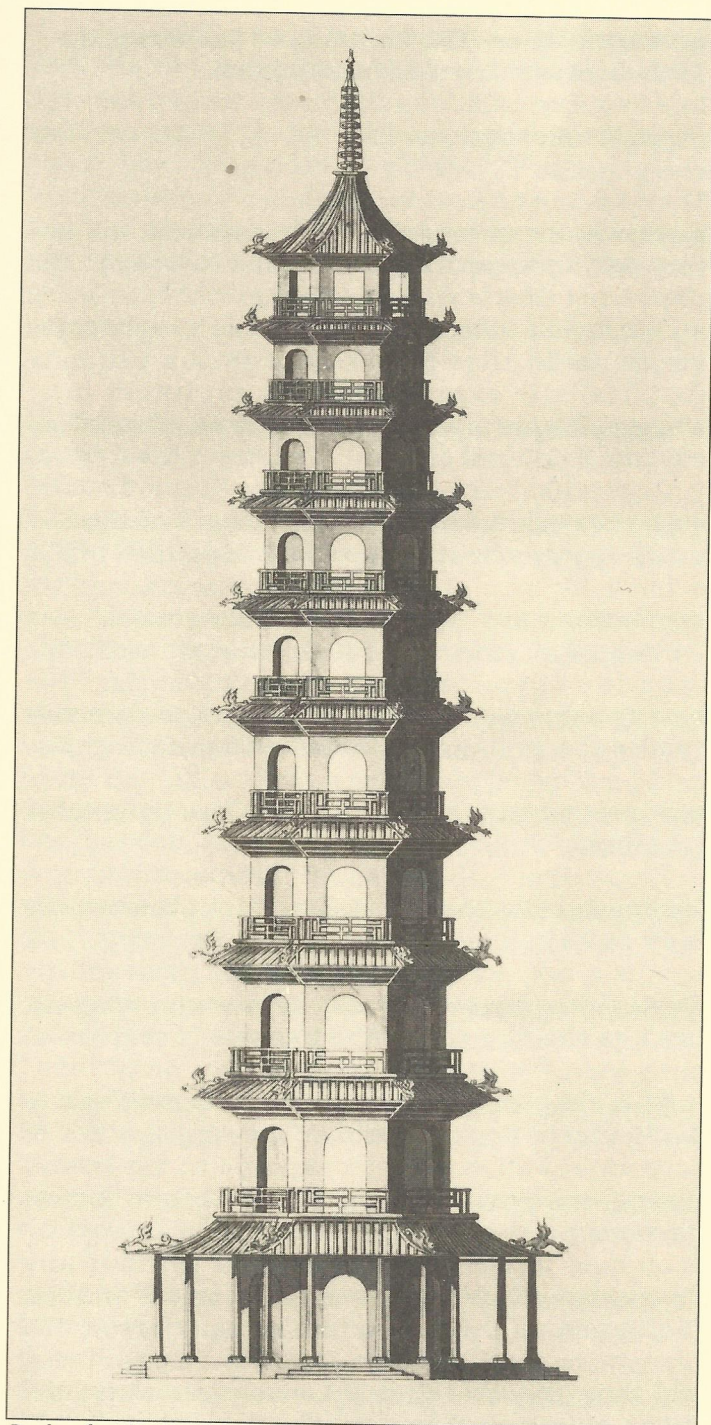
Recorded information about current V and A exhibitions is available on 0171 938 8441. The bad news is that the Museum now charges an entrance fee of £5, concessions £3; free for students, children, the disabled, Friends, and between 16.30 and 17.50.

### **London Now**

The Museum of London's gallery "London Now" will open on 21st January 1997. This will be the last in the series of galleries, bringing the story of London into the present day i.e. since the Second World War. Breaking away from the chronological approach of the other galleries, the new gallery asks questions about the present and future London. The Museum will be closed 7th-19th January to install The Catwalk, not a fashion show, but a walk or track around the Museum named after Dick Whittington's cat. Is this necessary?

### **British Archaeological Association Meeting**

On 7th May 1997 Dr John Bold will give a paper to the Association entitled "'A fixt Intention for Magnificence': the building of the Royal Hospital for Seamen at Greenwich". The meeting will be held at the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, and will begin at 5.00pm. Tea will be served from 4.30. Members of the London Topographical Society are most welcome to attend but it would be appreciated if they would telephone the Hon Director, Philip Lankester, beforehand



Design for the pagoda at Kew by Sir William Chambers. British Architectural Library, RIBA London.



(work: 0113 220 1878, home: 01904 613615).

### AGM 1997

Several locations are under inspection, central London being favoured for 1997. If members have suggestions for interesting and accessible places for future AGMs, the Newsletter Editor would be happy to know. The 1997 venue is likely to be on 3rd or 9th July and further details will be in the May Newsletter.

## Book reviews and notices

### The Oxford Book of London

edited by Paul Bailey. O.U.P. 1995. 377 pages. No illustrations. £17.99.

The somewhat garish dust-jacket (the actual binding is in O.U.P.'s usual tasteful and dignified style) suggests that this is just another come-to-London guide book. It is, however, an anthology. And not just another anthology, a random affair of excerpts arranged by author or subject. Here the scheme is chronological from the Middle Ages to the present day.

The selection, not always contemporary, is often surprising, sometimes amusing. Whereas the Great Fire is well covered by Evelyn and Pepys, the horrors of the Plague are left to the imagination and often inaccurate second-hand reporting of Daniel Defoe writing many years after the event in his *Journal of the Plague Year*, followed immediately by the unexpected comic relief of Sellar and Yeatman's *1066 and all that* describing Samuel Pepys as "memorable for keeping a Diary and going to bed a great deal". Fiction is often called upon to describe fact. The account of the Gordon Riots, for example, is taken not from a contemporary source but from Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*.

Though most of London's great historical events are touched upon the strength of this book lies in its evocations of the atmosphere of the London that was. Jonathan Swift's City shower which swells the kennels with "drowned puppies, dead cats and turnip tops" or Dickens's fog-bound streets "gone into mourning for the death of the sun".

Dickens is here in plenty and although there is much which is well-known, the juxtaposition of some of the entries adds a new interest to the familiar. No London anthology would be complete without Wordsworth rhapsodizing on the view from Westminster Bridge which, we are told, was composed on 3rd September 1802 but, interestingly, it is preceded by Dorothy Wordsworth's entry in her journal dated 26th July 1802 describing the very same view in such similar sentiments as to suggest that the poet was inspired by the prose his sister had written a few weeks before.

Long before the book ends (depending on one's age) we leave history behind us and begin to read about the London of our own times. Nostalgia

takes over. How well I remember the great super-cinemas of the 1930s extolled here by Ian Nairn and, a more sombre recollection, the pre-War Armistice days when "everything suddenly stops. The trams come to a halt where they are, in the middle of the road, so do cars and lorries. It is as if a magic spell has been cast over London. Pedestrians stand still, with their hats off, their eyes downcast, and a clock strikes eleven". A vivid reminder of a London which is remembered but which is no more.

All anthologies are bed-side books to dip into. Paul Bailey's book is certainly this with the added bonus of two good indexes, one for authors, the other for general subjects, which makes this a useful reference work worthy of a place on the bookshelf.

— Peter Jackson

### Invented Cities: The Creation of Landscape in 19th-Century New York and Boston

by Mona Domosh. Yale University Press 1996. 185 pages, 71 illustrations. £25.

This slim but attractively produced volume sets out to answer the question "why do cities look the way they do?" by comparing Boston and New York, and attributing their distinctive characteristics to social and economic differences. The author's explanation seems to be that New York was the ultimate materialistic expression of a capitalist city, whereas Boston's bourgeois classes fashioned their city into a cultural capital.

Capitalist? Bourgeois? Yes, these are the author's stock in trade. If a class-based analysis of urban topography warms your cockles, then this is a book for you. The author's three favourite expressions are "elite class", "ruling class" and "ruling elite", and at a rough estimate each one appears once or twice on every single page. The best neo-marxist sweeping statement is definitely "under the traditional British system, power was bestowed by virtue of one's birth" although there are several other close contenders of similar vapidness.

The author's thesis is that whereas Boston's leading families conserved, New York attracted the bulk of East Coast import and export trade, and with it a non-conservative business class and no single ruling class. This may be a sound analysis, but it is one that gains little from being couched in such obscurantist terms.

The chapter on the growth of New York is particularly disappointing. The segregation of economic activities and expansion up-island during the nineteenth century, both well known phenomena, are made to sound as if caused by economic forces simpliciter, and without any description of the process of development and the incidence of human chance and error. To paraphrase the author's style, it is rather like being told that "the West End of London was where the ruling elite moved to, and the Grosvenor Estate became a prestigious enclave". All very two-



dimensional and a bit like reading a local history before the age of Dyos, Sheppard or Thompson.

Two lengthy sections on the growth of New York's retail district and on the promotion of sky scrapers (first by newspapers and then by life assurance companies), are of greater interest, although somewhat in the same vein. Finally, the growth of Boston is presented in a more narrative fashion and holds attention for longer, though perhaps only because it is less well known than that of New York. Particularly striking is the suggestion that the overall structure of Boston's Back Bay was based upon London's Westbourne Grove.

Overall, though, this is a confused and disappointing work and one which falls well below the customary Yale University Press standard. Confused because the treatment is so stilted and the chapters, particularly those concerning New York, do not integrate into a coherent narrative. Disappointing because it fails to answer the question posed by the author. Anyone wanting to solve the conundrum of why Boston grew haphazardly like a European city yet conserved many of its original features, whereas New York was planned on a rigid pattern since the 1820s but regularly destroyed and rebuilt itself, must look elsewhere.

– Simon Morris

#### **Mr Pope & Others at Cross Deep, Twickenham in the 18th Century**

by Anthony Beckles Willson. Published by the author (44 Popes Avenue, Twickenham TW2 5TL) 1996. 154 pages, 49 illustrations, 14 maps. £15 + £1.50 postage.

Alexander Pope came to live in Twickenham in 1719 and over the next twenty-five years created a house and garden which attracted many of the literary figures of his day. Voltaire, Swift and Gay came to stay with him and Frederick, Prince of Wales visited and sent him a present of urns for the garden. Most of the riverside villa was demolished in 1807, but the grotto survives as a reminder of Pope's important contribution to the development of English landscape gardening. The neighbourhood where the poet settled grew up along the road known as Cross Deep, which ran from the centre of Twickenham towards Teddington via Strawberry Hill. A number of houses were built in the early eighteenth century on the land between the road and the Thames. The former was a considerable obstacle when Pope wished to develop his garden, which lay on the other side of the road. Walpole at Strawberry Hill succeeded in having the road moved, but Pope made a virtue out of necessity and created the famous grotto as an entrance to a tunnel beneath the road giving private access to his garden. Samuel Johnson, who typically was critical of the grotto, grudgingly observed that Pope "extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity

provided a grotto where necessity enforced a passage".

As Beckles Willson notes, much has been written about Pope and his literary achievement, but little about the genesis of his estate. In researching this aspect, the author has produced a work of local history which is of much more than local interest. He traces the labyrinthine trail of land tenure in this small area and shows how Pope and his neighbours were able to develop their Thames-side estates. The "Others" of the title include the painter Samuel Scott, the Shirley family, notably the first Earl Ferrers, the Countess of Radnor, and Joseph Hickey, local benefactor. At the other end of the social scale are the watermen, bricklayers, maltsters, etc, who occupied smaller houses along the road. Researching them and discovering details of their births, marriages and deaths as well as their businesses is an exceptional achievement. Not far to the south of Pope's house, Thomas Hudson built a villa in the early 1750s. Beckles Willson has discovered a design (fig.50) for this house, which he plausibly attributes to Roger Morris. It is an interesting addition to this architect's known works. The discovery was made in Warwickshire County Record Office, demonstrating the lengths to which the author has gone in order to track down the smallest piece of evidence for the early history of Cross Deep.

The book is extremely well illustrated with contemporary and newly-drawn maps, as well as drawings, engravings, etc. Unfortunately, one of the most interesting (fig.47) - an unfinished drawing by Samuel Scott from the Museum of London - is so faintly reproduced as to make it very difficult to confirm the author's observations on the buildings shown. However, this is a minor quibble compared with the fascinating story which Beckles Willson tells with such care and attention to detail, yet lucidly and entertainingly.

– Stephen Croad

#### **MoLas 96**

Museum of London 1996. 58 pages, A4 size with many colour illustrations. Available at the Museum shop. £9.95.

The annual review of the achievements of MoLas during 1995 is the best to date. This is a really professional record *and* of interest to those who are not archaeologists. What a long way we have come since the Museum of London's promise of 1984 "to promote understanding and appreciation of historic and contemporary London and of its society and culture".

If you thought archaeological investigation in the City and Greater London had been in decline, you are mistaken. Many important sites were excavated in 1995 and there was a corresponding increase of MoLAS staff. This is most encouraging, especially when you read of the results.



The Jubilee Line extension at Westminster has confirmed Roman occupation of Thorney Island. The excavation at Guildhall Yard revealed a further 9 metres of the amphitheatre's curving arena wall. More of the Roman riverbank has been found at King William Street and the extensive programme of excavation at Number 1 Poultry embraced many layers of finds, from the natural gravel to a grave headstone from the site of St Benet Sherehog to Victorian basements. This reviewer confesses to having signed a petition against the development of this, the Mappin and Webb site. Having accepted the inevitable, the archaeological discoveries almost seem to justify the development, although the merits of the new building await assessment.

A site such as Number 1 Poultry underlines the importance of archaeology to the topography of London: excavation has uncovered a 60 metre length of the main east-west Roman road (*via decumana*) of about A.D. 50. Road junctions, walls of houses, oak timbers and drains fill in the map of Roman London which is still pertinent to the topography of the City.

According to the 1996 review, MoLAS flourishes. There is a land survey section, the Clark Laboratory, an analysis and publication programme; the computing section has been advanced, students have been instructed in archaeological techniques, there is a Roman fabric reference collection and contacts abroad. Yet the future of the MoLAS archive seems uncertain: this major resource should be adequately housed, cared for and accessible to researchers.

– Penelope Hunting

### **A History of the Carpenters' Company**

by Jasper Ridley. The Carpenters' Company in association with Unicorn Press 1995. 223 pages, 86 illustrations. £25.

Jasper Ridley is a well-known author, the biographer of Henry VIII, Garibaldi, Marshal Tito and with titles such as *The Tudor Age* and *The History of England* to his credit. He has also twice been Master of the Carpenters' Company, which brings us to the subject for review.

Ridley's history of his livery company represents the popular approach with plenty of colour illustrations and an easy-going style peppered with drama. The uninitiated are instructed in the jargon, practices and protocol of a City livery company and the reader is also provided with elementary lessons in British history.

The book has an interesting start - not the medieval origins of the Company or background on the thirteenth century City, as one might expect, but an account of Election Day when the General Court of the Carpenters' Company elects the Master and Wardens for the forthcoming year. Here we have a description of the procession of robed dignitaries from the Hall to the church of All-Hallows-on-the-Wall, for whom a policeman halts the traffic. There follows "an excellent four-course

lunch with sherry, white wines, claret and port" and the election ceremony.

When we come to the origins of the Company the author defines the fourteenth century Brotherhood of Carpenters as primarily a friendly society. He rightly acknowledges that "religion played a very important part in the lives of the people of the fourteenth century" and quotes from the Ordinances of 1333 describing the Brotherhood as a "Fraternity to be holden in the church of St Thomas of Acon beside the Conduit of London and the church of St John the Baptist at Holywell beside London". Yet he insists that that medieval Carpenters' Company was a friendly society rather than a religious fraternity.

At sixteen chapters and four appendices this book is long. The lay reader may be forgiven if his interest flags at chapter fourteen "Contested Elections" wherein detail swamps story. Similarly, many of the anecdotes will only be meaningful/amusing to members of the Company. The last chapter on "The Carpenters' Company today" leaves us in no doubt that the Company is in good health, with a role to fulfil. In most respects it has adapted well to the passage of time, with the exception of the continued observance of a resolution of 1977 that women should not be admitted to the livery.

The Company's archives are kept at the Hall and the author lists his manuscript and printed sources, but there are no more specific references. In a book of this length and comprehension footnotes might have been in order to guide future researchers and to extract some of the detail from the main flow of the text.

– Penelope Hunting

### **Vanished Churches of the City of London**

by Gordon Huelin. Guildhall Library Publications 1996. Paperback, 85 pages, numerous black and white illustrations. £5.95.

This is designed to be a walker's guide for those seeking out the sites of our lost churches, or the remains thereof. These are the sixty-nine churches destroyed in the Great Fire and not rebuilt, those demolished between the late eighteenth century and 1939, and those destroyed in the Second World War and not rebuilt. There is a map dotted with their locations which could form the basis for several walks; it also emphasizes the extent of our loss. Many of the vanished churches are commemorated by a City Corporation plaque at the site, or by a boundary mark - one for St Stephen Coleman Street, unfortunately no longer *in situ*, features an encircled cockerel, a nice reference to the bequest of a brewery called the Cock on the Hoop in 1431. St Olave Silver Street is remembered in an eerie stone tablet, and in the case of St Alban Wood Street the lonely tower survives.

The value of Dr Huelin's book would have been increased by the addition of references at the end of each entry so that the reader would know where



to look for more information about a particular church. There is, however, a general bibliography.

– Penelope Hunting

### **The Growth of Muswell Hill**

by Jack Whitehead 1995. Available from local bookshops or from the author, 55 Parliament Hill, London NW3 2TB. Paperback 247 pages, black and white illustrations, maps and plans. £9.95.

The title suggests statistics, demographic tables and graphs. This is far from the case. *The Growth of Muswell Hill* is largely autobiographical. The opening chapters, in particular, focus on the author's family's move to a newly built house in Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill (1925). These were council houses built to a standard design with four bedrooms upstairs, a living room, hall, parlour and kitchen on the ground floor, but no bathroom - a bath was taken in the cast iron bath in the kitchen and the WC was outside, next to the fuel store.

The development of the Coppetts Road estate and the changes in the neighbourhood are charted with personal knowledge and sympathy. Each short chapter is alive with asides about local people, building methods and geographical description, including a vignette on Anthony Salvin and his cousin William Nesfield. The story digresses at a leisurely pace as the author compares a builder to an impressionist painter, and the houses built by W.J. Collins to "a group of people lying completely relaxed on uneven ground. Some lie with their feet and heads level; some have their feet and heads lower and some have their feet higher than their heads. Everything depends on the shape of the ground and the way they choose to dispose themselves". Clearly this is not an academic tome but it has a great deal of charm and makes a good read even for those with no personal interest in Muswell Hill. It contains almost too many plans, photographs, sections and drawings; it seems the author has left no stone unturned. Be sure to procure the second, larger edition at 247 pages, incorporating corrections and additions to the preceding version.

– Penelope Hunting

### **Book Mountain**

The trouble is that, when you are known to be addicted to a particular subject, your family and friends feed the addiction by giving you still more books about it. The London book mountain beside my bed is becoming unstable so, before there is a landslide, I think I had better tell you about some of them, in case they are of interest to you too, and then I can try to cram them onto any shelf with a gap in it.

Probably the most important book in the pile, especially as far as LTS members are concerned, is the reprint of Hermione Hobhouse's *Thomas Cubitt: Master Builder* (Management Books 2000,

£35). This magisterial work first appeared in 1971 and has been out of print for far too long. Cubitt was responsible for the development of Bloomsbury, of Belgravia, of the Lowndes Estate, of Pimlico and of parts of Clapham; without him it would not be the London we know and love. This is a book for which you should save up your book tokens.

Proceeding chronologically, Gustav Milne's *Roman London* deserves a place on your shelf beside the three written by our late, much loved and respected President, Ralph Merrifield.

Moving down the centuries, the enthralling British Museum exhibition, *Westminster Hall and the Medieval Kings*, which was running in the autumn of last year is commemorated by an excellent booklet with the same title by Malcolm Hay (HMSO £3.50), and Shire Publications have brought out a fifth edition of John Kennedy Melling's *Discovering London's Guilds and Liveries* (£4.50). This little book is a helpful starting place for any investigation into the history and ways of the City.

*England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages* edited by Caroline Barron and Nigel Saul (Alan Sutton 1995, £35) contains a useful section on London's trading across the North Sea by Vanessa Harding, and there are several chapters on cultural connections, in particular one on "Choosing a Book" by Anne Sutton and Livia Visserfuchs.

If you can read Spanish you will be interested by *Lo Que Vio*, an account by a young man called Bernando José Olives de Nadal of a journey through Flanders, Holland and England in 1700; there are still the illustrations, one or more on virtually every page. The text has been edited and annotated by José Luis Amoros and Maria Luisa Canut, and is published by the Ministerios de Asuntos Exteriores (ISBN 84 606 2610 5) I worked away at it with a dictionary and found it well worth the effort.

Travelling outside the City and into Middlesex, you may find John Leaf's *Harrow School* booklet of interest. As you would expect with a Pitkin Pictorial, there are more illustrations than text, but that does not make it any less good a souvenir and the brief, well-written account provides a clear introduction should you decide to take a guided tour of the school. Write to Mrs Jean Leaf, 15 London Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex HA1 3JJ.

Finally, there is *The Faber Book of London* compiled by A.N. Wilson. This anthology has sat by my bed since 1992, and I have never failed to find delight in it, when wakeful at night. The compiler, also a novelist and the literary Editor to the *Evening Standard*, has made his selection from an amazing breadth of material. He does not arrange his sections topographically as you might expect, but thematically - Royal London; London at War; Clubs; Taverns and Coffee Houses; Loco Life; Animals; Love; Mobs, Marches, Riots and Affrays -



which works remarkably well and leads you off into unexpected musings and discoveries. The range of poems, novels, essays, letters and memoirs from which this anthology is drawn is amazing: if you follow up even a few of the enticing leads which it provides, you will be a better-read person and that is something of which that great Londoner by adoption, Dr Johnson, would approve. If I start to quote and to delight you with titbits and snippets, I shall out-run my space. Faber and Faber have now brought out a paperback edition at £12.99 so get it and read for yourselves.

– Ann Saunders

## **Walks around haunted London**

by John Wittich. SB Publications 1996. 88 pages. £5.95.

Each chapter provides a walk outlined in a page or so with a sketch map of the area; the rest of the chapter lists some places of interest on the route, referring to stories of apparitions which have appeared at those places, most of which would infringe any rule against hearsay evidence. The topographical content of the pieces on places of interest is fairly routine.

To enjoy this book it helps if you believe in ghosts. Many people are interested in the subject, as is borne out by the frequency I find tourists being told haunting tales round the side of St Andrew Undershaft by a black-coated guide, and the number of books on haunted London that are published. To the unbeliever, this book is disappointing.

– Roger Cline

## **Brief Notices**

John Wittich's *Discovering London Street Names*, first published in 1977, has been re-issued by Shire Publications at £4.99. It is certainly more convenient than carrying around *The London Encyclopaedia* but of course contains only brief snippets of information.

*The Story of Camberwell* by Mary Boast, first published in 1972, revised 1975 and 1980, has been enlarged and re-written (1996). Now eighty-four pages including an index and black and white illustrations, it is available from Southwark Local Studies Library, 211 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JA, cheques payable to London Borough of Southwark for £4 which includes post and packing (also in local bookshops at £3.50). Mary Boast traces the history of Camberwell from its modest beginnings as a small farming village to the multi-cultural community of present day Southwark. Compulsory reading for members of the Camberwell Society.

How do they keep it up? There are another four books from Historical Publications, making about thirty in the series. *Norwood Past* by John Coulter takes in Paxton's Crystal Palace. *Southgate and Edmonton Past* is by Graham Dalling, the Local

History Librarian for Enfield. *Ickenham and Harefield Past* is by Eileen M. Bowlit, Chairman of LAMAS and a specialist on Ruislip. *Hayes Past* by Catherine Kelter has much to say about the effect on the area of the Grand Union Canal, the Great West Road and Heathrow Airport. All the books contain the customary 144 pages and 180 "fully-captioned superb old pictures together with an easy-to-read narrative - remarkable value at only £14.95" to quote from the standard Press Release issued for all.



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The Newsletter is published by the London Topographical Society and issued by the  
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Produced and printed by ZPD Print and Design, 3 Billing Place, London SW10.  
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