Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2004
Tuesday, 13th July 2004

The 104th Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society will be held on Tuesday, 13th July 2004, in the Concert Hall of the Royal College of Music. Refreshments will be served from about 5.30pm and the meeting will start at 6.30pm. Members may bring guests to the AGM.

The fine barrel-vaulted Concert Hall was designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield and built in 1901.

The Royal College of Music is in Prince Consort Road, just down the steps from the Royal Albert Hall. It is a reasonable walk from Gloucester Road and South Kensington stations. There are also buses (Nos 9, 10, 52, 70 and 360) that go either to Kensington Gore or Queen's Gate.

After the business meeting, we will have talks about the annual publication from Pamela Tudor-Craig and Christopher Whittick. We are also planning to have talks about the Royal College of Music and/or architecture in its vicinity, including one from the distinguished historian Hermione Hobhouse who will talk about Prince Albert and developments in the area.

The annual publication will be distributed to members at the meeting. Those who cannot attend will be sent theirs by post, probably in August or September. Please write to the Hon. Secretary if you would like to nominate anyone as an officer of the Society or as a member of Council, or if you wish to raise any matter under item 6 of the agenda.

AGENDA
1 Minutes of the 103rd Annual General Meeting
3 Accounts for 2003
4 Hon. Editor's report
5 Election of officers and members of Council
6 Proposals by members
7 Any other business

Items 1-3 are all published in this Newsletter.

-Patrick Frazer, Hon. Secretary


The main publication for 2003 was a twelve-sheet reproduction of Jan Kip's View of London, Westminster and St James's Park 1720, with an introduction by Ralph Hyde and keys by Peter Jackson.

In addition, members received a full-colour reproduction of Charles Robert Cockerell's Tribute to Sir Christopher Wren, a large watercolour capriccio of circa 1838 showing over fifty buildings attributed to Wren. The publication included an introduction by John Schofield, key by Tracy Wellman and reproduction of the engraving by William Richardson based on the watercolour.

The heavier cost of printing two publications was entirely responsible for the deficit of nearly £6,000, compared with a surplus of £7,000 the previous year. Profits from the sale of past publications, at over £10,000, continued to make an important contribution to income.

The Society's balance sheet remained very strong, with year-end liquid resources of over £100,000, enough to cover three to four years of operating expenditure.

The Society's chairman, Peter Jackson, died in May. Subsequently, the Council elected Dr Penelope Hunting as chairman and Denise Silvester-Carr replaced her as newsletter editor. Valerie Jackson was appointed an honorary member.

At the end of 2003 there were about 1,000 members and four honorary members.

The Newsletter was published in May and November, with articles on City Merchants and the Arts after the Great Fire by Mireille Gallou, the London Property Market before and after the Great Fire by Ian Doolittle, Traditional Craft on the Thames by Stephen Croad and several shorter pieces.

Council meetings were held in January, April and September to deal with administrative matters and discuss the Society's publication programme.
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society 2003

The 103rd Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in the Clore lecture theatre at the British Museum at 6.30pm on 31st July 2003. About 300 members and guests were welcomed by the acting chairman, Patrick Frazer, who gave a short appreciation of Peter Jackson's great contribution to the Society. Members observed a minute's silence in his memory.

The Annual Report of the Council and the Minutes of the 2002 Annual General Meeting, which had been previously circulated, were approved and the Annual Accounts were adopted. Ann Saunders introduced the annual publications and outlined plans for future publications.

Apart from the position of chairman, which would be left vacant until an appointment was made by the Council, all the officers were re-elected, viz: Roger Cline as Hon. Treasurer; Ann Saunders as Hon. Editor, Simon Morris as Publications Secretary, Penelope Hunting as Newsletter Editor, Patrick Frazer as Hon. Secretary and Hugh Cleaver as Hon. Auditor. With the exception of Emma Stewart, who had decided to resign, all Council members were also re-elected.

Suggestions from the floor included the establishment of a prize in memory of Peter Jackson and producing a publication in 2005 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Nelson's death.

After the business part of the meeting, there were talks from three members of Council: Ralph Hyde on Kip's View, Laurence Worms on the zograscope that he had demonstrated before the meeting and Sheila O'Connell on the exhibition London 1753, to which members were given special access after the meeting.

The chairman thanked Joyce and Donald Cumming for co-ordinating refreshments before the meeting, as well as the many people who had helped distribute food, drinks and publications. He also thanked Sheila O'Connell for making the meeting possible by negotiating to use the Museum's facilities.

Publication Number 163 for 2004

This year's offering is about pre-Fire St Paul's Cathedral, which lost its spire in 1561 and by 1616 was in a sorry condition. A poor scrivener, Henry Farley, fought a one-man campaign to get the building restored, petitioning James I, writing and publishing poems and tracts and finally commissioning a painting of the Cathedral, both as it was and as he thought it could be. This diptych was executed by John Gypkin, and to it he gave a front cover which has been rarely or never exhibited. The three paintings contain much topographical detail, and to them Farley's poems add even more particulars. They are an extraordinary unexploited and truly personal source of information about the streets, sights and politics of early seventeenth-century London.

The diptych belongs to the Society of Antiquaries and on their behalf the historian Pamela Tudor-Craig has studied the painting and the poems. Jointly with the Antiquaries, we publish her findings in a fully illustrated narrative which we think you will find as enthralling as any detective story.

In 2005, for this Society's 125th birthday, we hope to publish the Atlas of Bomb Damaged London, reproduced from the contemporary set of maps held at the London Metropolitan Archive. An introduction has been written by Dr Robin Woolven, formerly of the Royal Air Force. This is perhaps the largest, most ambitious and most complicated publication the Society has ever undertaken. If the current negotiations all go well, it should provide Londoners - and the world - with a major research tool. It will be issued only to members unless commercial copies are available from the London Metropolitan Archive.

Ann Saunders

Cakes and Ale

Each year the numbers attending the Annual General Meeting grow, which is an excellent and healthy sign but it does mean that more and more cakes are consumed. Last year more members than usual contributed delicious examples of their baking and Joyce Cumming and the Committee hope that this will happen again this year - it really does help!

Ann Saunders

Notes from the Treasurer

The accounts which appear as a separate sheet with this newsletter are with the Auditor although so far unaudited. They show no great difference from last year, although there is the expected deficit this time due to the high cost of producing Kip (publication 161) and of adding a second publication for the year. In 2004 the publication should be cheaper although I can see another deficit looming if the Editor's plans for 2005 come to fruition, but not enough to make too serious a dent in our reserves.

Tax Repayments

There is a new scheme for giving to a charity such as ours through your tax return if you are one of those taxpayers who completes a self-assessment tax return. From April 2004 you will be able to nominate this charity to receive all or part of any repayment which is due to you from the Inland Revenue. The current Gift Aid scheme continues to operate in respect of your annual subscriptions.

If you wish to make additional donations in this way, all you have to do is to quote our identification code which is DAA949RG at the appropriate place on the new self-assessment form. There will be a provision for the gift to be anonymous (which was not
possible through the Gift Aid Declaration system. There will be a full list of participating charities and their codes on the Inland Revenue website. Thank you in advance for any gift you decide to make in our favour!

Any orders?
Besides our usual publications available for sale at the AGM, we hope to have some special offers, including:

*Hugh Alley’s Caeat* (book publication 137) at a special price of £5 (usual members price £12);

*Hollar’s View from Lambeth* (sheet publication 138) at a special price of £3 (usual members price £6);

The last twelve hardback copies of *The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell* (book publication 135) for £20 – otherwise only available in paperback;

Five more copies of last year’s offer of the book on the Tabor London map collection at the bargain price of £47.50, half the original asking price.

Spring cleaning has revealed some more copies of *The Royal Exchange* (book publication 152) – available at members price of £33.75 and also the attractive sheet *City Parishes Map of 1907* at members price of £3.

All of these can be ordered with pre-payment by post from the Treasurer before the AGM for collection there or for despatch by post (costing in the UK twenty per cent or £4 per order of books, whichever is greater, and twenty per cent or £4 per order of sheets, whichever is greater). He also has another twenty-eight volume set of the Record including the scarce wartime volume XVIII for which he will consider offers over £700 excluding despatch, less if you do not want recent volumes.

– Roger Cline

**Traditional Craft on the Thames – Part II**

by Stephen Croad

For thousands of years fishermen, fowlers and traders had poled, rowed or sailed along the Thames and the remains of prehistoric dugout boats (or logboats as they are termed now) have been discovered in the upper tidal reaches. Plank-built craft also were developed at an early date and because of their restricted range special types and features evolved in a particular area. The few early wrecks to have been excavated in or around the Thames suggest a tradition of barge building that may have originated in the Bronze Age. The working boats on the river did not require a large amount of free-board, as they were unlikely to encounter rough seas, but they had to be stable and flat-bottomed to navigate shallow waters. In addition, they needed to be sturdy to withstand the battering at wharves and regular grounding for loading and unloading in tidal reaches.

There are numerous illustrations from the late sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century showing these vessels and two broad types may be discerned. Both were punt-shaped without decks and with little free-board when laden. However, some had a rounded bow with a stem, while others were ‘swim-headed’, as the flat bottom rose to a square bow. This latter type appears to have had the more ancient lineage.

The early term for a general cargo vessel in London was a ‘shout’. During excavations in 1970 in the bed of the river near the north end of Blackfriars railway bridge, the almost complete remains of a medieval shout were discovered. This appeared to have been built locally about 1400 and to have sunk almost exactly a century later. The type seems to have been similar to the Dutch eel boats, which were regular visitors to the Thames. These were known by the name ‘galliot’ or ‘schuyt’, from which the English word may have derived. These Dutch boats had been visiting the Pool of London ‘from time immemorial’ and prior to the demolition of old London Bridge they were accustomed to moor opposite Queenhithe, but later moved to lay off Billingsgate – a tradition that survived until the outbreak of the Second World War. A romantic tale, which may well be true, maintains that when London was struck by the Great Plague in 1665 the Dutch galliots continued to supply fresh eels to the capital. As a reward for their disregard of the risks, they were given the right to free moorings.
Another triumph of trade over prudence or politics resulted when after the Great Fire in 1666 Dutch carriers offered their services to transport timber from the Baltic, despite the fact that England was at war with Holland.

The term 'barge' appears to have been adopted in the fifteenth century. At this time Londoners referred to any cargo vessel that traded inland, that is westwards from London Bridge, as a 'Western Barge'. By the eighteenth century this had become a 'West Country' barge, as anywhere up river was considered to be the remote west. These craft employed single, square-rigged sails, although the size varied enormously. Some were tall and narrow, while others were much broader than the beam of the boat. Their predominant colour was tan from the mixtures including red and yellow ochre used to preserve them. In order to manoeuvre and negotiate bridges, shoals and other obstacles the crew rowed using very long oars, called sweeps, which were rowed from a standing position, like the lightermen.

The prevailing westerly winds on the Thames were an advantage when sailing downstream, but for journeys upstream the barges were towed by teams of men. Known as haling, five men could pull an unladen barge, but fifteen halers were needed for every twenty-five tons of cargo carried. Strings of horses for towing were known from about 1600, but they were the exception rather than the rule, even for loads of 100 tons, until well into the eighteenth century. As a consequence of increased prosperity from the sixteenth century onwards vessels grew in size and number. By the mid-eighteenth century barges had a capacity of 200 tons and by 1800 the annual trade through Staines had reached 85,000 tons. Even then large numbers of men were employed in hauling barges. Wharves expanded and riverside inns developed as resting places for crews and as contact points for barge masters, agents and gangs of halers.

Strand-on-the-Green at Brentford became a popular place for barges waiting for trade or carrying out minor repairs. Hence at one time there were large numbers of beer sellers, and The Bull's Head and The City Barge are two surviving inns. The latter, originally called the Maypole Inn and first licensed in 1786, was renamed after the state barge, the Maria Wood, built in 1816 and used by the Lord Mayor of London for his official journeys until 1859. When not in use it was laid up opposite the pub, which took its new name by association, a process not uncommon on the river.

London Bridge had been for centuries an obstacle to shipping and thus different types of cargo ves-

sels had evolved upstream and down, or above and below bridge, as it was termed. The removal of the medieval bridge in the 1830s allowed barges to navigate from ports on the coasts of East Anglia and Kent to the upper reaches of the Thames. This led to the development of the spritsail barge, which incorporated the best features of the earlier types. The predominant square-rigged sail was gradually replaced by sprit-sails, which appeared first on the non-tidal river from about 1790. By about 1850 the fore-and-aft rig had taken over and lee boards were employed to enable them to sail safely into the wind. Wheel steering replaced the tiller from about 1885. Flat bottoms meant they could sit upright on the foreshore for unloading at low tide. However, the constant grounding resulted in much wear and tear with regular repairs necessary. Loading and unloading was achieved by the use of tumbrels – horse-drawn tip-carts carrying a one-ton load. Although it was hard work, a barge could be sailed by a crew of two, but it was more common for there to be six men and a boy.

The swim-headed sailing barge originally worked the Thames above London Bridge. It has been suggested that this form had a very long lineage, perhaps even perpetuating Roman boat-building traditions. Following the development of the more common spritsail barge, which could navigate both the river and coastal waters, the two types continued to work alongside one another, although no more swim-headed barges were built after 1910.

There were several variants of the standard Thames barge, notably the 'Stumpie'. It had no top mast, but a large spar, called a sprit or spreet, running from the foot of the mast to the head of the sail. The whole could be lowered to allow it to pass under the bridges on its way up or down the river. The 'Stackie' travelled with reefed sails and their cargoes were piled high up into the rigging. Spectacularly loaded with hay shipped from the
meadows of Essex and Kent, these were once a common sight on the Thames when London ran on horse power.

Traditionally barges had been built at small yards all along the Thames, but the advent of the new style boat led to a concentration in a few centres. Builders at Reading and on the Kennet were particularly successful. The Thames barge is perhaps the most familiar traditional sailing vessel, but it was as much a product of the industrial revolution as the canal narrow-boat or the steam engine.

Barge traffic reached a peak in the first half of the nineteenth century, but declined as a result of competition from the railways. In the early days materials for building the railways were shipped by river and canal. The first two steam locomotives for the Great Western Railway, Premier and Vulcan, were sent from Liverpool by sea to London in 1837. Then they were conveyed by barge to West Drayton. The following year, the famous North Star arrived in the London docks and from there it was taken by barge to Maidenhead. Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-59), engineer to the GWR, had a narrow escape as the sheer-legs collapsed when the locomotive was being unloaded and a workman next to him was killed.

Another important traditional vessel in London was the dumb barge or lighter (the name derived from the lightening of cargoes from larger vessels). Ships visiting the port of London grew too large to berth at the Thames quays, so had to moor in midstream. Their cargoes were then transferred to shore by lightermen, who usually operated alone or with an apprentice. They worked the boat with either a pair of sweeps (long oars) at the bow or a single sweep from the stern. They needed great skill and an intimate knowledge of the river and the tides in order to negotiate the huge number of vessels frequenting the port. The term 'lyghter' was recorded first on the Thames in 1391 and gradually the large box-like, swim-headed lighters, which still exist today, developed.

The spritsail barge survived to work through two world wars (some even went to Dunkirk in 1940). In 1885, there were over 2,000 sailing barges registered and in 1930 there were still about 1,000, but none was built after that date. In 1939 there were 600 working barges, but the number had fallen to 181 in 1950. The last sailing barge to carry a commercial cargo was the Cambria in 1970 and she is now part of the Maritime Trust collection on display in St Katherine Dock. The Thames Sailing Barge Club maintains a number of vessels and each year stages a sailing match. This has been held at Gravesend since 1863, although then it was a trial for working boats rather than for those who sail for pleasure. A test of the skill and strength of lightermen has been organised each year since 1975 by the Transport on Water Association. They race the seven miles from Greenwich to Westminster.

In the days of sailing ships, vessels would have to tack from one headland to the next on the river. The stretch of water between the headlands became known as a reach and on a meandering river like the Thames there were numerous reaches. Some of them took their names from towns and villages along the way, such as Chiswick, Chelsea, Woolwich or Gravesend. Others were descriptive, such as Long Reach, Sea Reach or Halfway. Halfway Reach extends from Crossness at the end of Barking Reach to Jenningtree Point where Erith Reach begins. Both these markers are located on the southern shore. However, until the nineteenth century, Halfway Reach was known as the Guzzard – a name of unknown origin, although it has been suggested that it may have been a corruption of Buzards Bush. This reach name was recorded in the late seventeenth century, but its location is not known. A record of the Lord Mayor's Court of Conservancy in 1680, which regulated the number of fishing boats permitted in each stretch of the river, listed many picturesque names. Some of these remain unchanged, but among those lost are Ley Shelp, Barkin Shelp, The Carrick, Julian Tree Fob, Erith Nasse, Stoke-fleet Nasse or Stakes End and Avely Hole. There are several names including the word 'shelp', meaning a shoal, and 'nasse', which is a corruption of ness, a promontory. Erith Rands, which remains and is the next stretch downstream from Erith Reach, derives from an Anglo-Saxon word referring to a border, perhaps in this context a shoal. Further down river there are the Lower Hope, formerly Tilbury Hope, and Northfleet Hope. Here the word 'hope' derives from Middle English meaning an inlet or bay. The stretch of the river on the east side of the Greenwich Peninsula has been known since the eighteenth century as Bugsby's Reach. Formerly it
was called Cockle’s Reach or Podd’s Elms Reach, but near where Woolwich Reach begins there was an area known as Bugsby’s Hole. Hole is a term used on the Thames to refer to an expanse of deeper water where ships could be moored in safety. It is assumed that Bugsby was someone’s name, but who he was is a mystery, although unlikely stories abound. The word ‘hithe’ is of ancient origin and referred to a landing-place on a river and has given rise to numerous place names on the Thames, for example Queenhithe and Rotherhithe. The most recent Thames name is King’s Reach, which is the stretch of water between Westminster and London Bridge. This was so named to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935. However, technically this should be two reaches, one on either side of the bend at Waterloo, but for some curious reason neither previously had borne a name. A plaque commemorating the naming was placed on the parapet of the Embankment by Temple Stairs.

At a busy port like London, shipbuilding and repair was an important industry. For example, in the late thirteenth century London had more shipwrights than any other port, with the sole and perhaps unexpected exception of York. The shipwrights had their own City guild from an early date. This was mentioned first in 1387-8 as a Fraternity of St Simon and St Jude on Thames-side below London Bridge. It ranked number fifty-nine in the order of precedence laid down by the Court of Aldermen in 1515. Its earliest surviving ordinances date from 1428 and there are charters from 1612 and 1784. Around 1606 the Shipwrights moved to Ratcliffe in Stepney and had a hall there until the end of the eighteenth century. The Company continues to maintain close links with the craft.

Although shipwrights were the key members of the labour force in shipbuilding, many ancillary trades, such as carpenters, smiths, sawyers, caulkers and others, were employed. In the sixteenth century, sites at Wapping, Ratcliffe and elsewhere on the north bank of the Thames were significant centres for shipbuilding and repair and the growth of the London industry was stimulated by the establishment of Royal Naval Dockyards at Deptford and Woolwich.

Small, traditional shipbuilders and repairers prospered all along the Thames, but even those that survived into the age of photography seldom attracted the attention of the pioneer photographers. Therefore, the record by William Strudwick (see LTS Newsletter No. 53) of the riverside at Lambeth in the 1860s is particularly valuable as it illustrates vividly the small-scale works on the tidal foreshore. There were several boat builders and repairers on Fore Street, a narrow road, which ran close to the river and parallel to the High Street, that was the nucleus of the original riverside settlement of Lambeth. Even the street pattern disappeared when the Albert Embankment was constructed in the 1860s.

A major consequence of world exploration and the resulting growth of maritime trade in the Tudor period was the need for more and bigger ocean-going vessels. Hence, shipbuilding became an important industry on the Thames. Henry VIII established Royal Naval Dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford, close to his palace at Greenwich, which were a huge stimulus to shipbuilding. By the end of the sixteenth century England had a permanent fleet, built and maintained on the Thames. The royal dockyards were to become the first large-scale industrial complexes and encouraged the growth nearby of other shipyards. Perhaps the most famous was at Blackwall laid out in 1587 and its first East Indiaman, the Globe, was launched in 1612. Many more yards were established in the eighteenth century to cater for the increase in commerce and the need for warships to protect the trade routes.

The Royal Naval Dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford both closed in 1869, but a number of commercial yards grew to prominence in the nineteenth century. The construction of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s Great Eastern at Napier Yard on Millwall foretold the end of shipbuilding on the Thames. The Great Eastern, at 27,384 tons displacement, was launched only with enormous difficulty in 1858 and for forty years was the largest ship in the world. However, Brunel’s foresight meant that eventually Thames yards would become impractical for the great ships of the future. The Thames Ironworks & Shipbuilding Company at the mouth of Bow Creek was the biggest and most important shipbuilder on the Thames. They specialised in building liners and warships. For example, the world’s first iron battleship, HMS Warrior

Baltic Wharf, Millbank. Photograph c.1900.
(now preserved at Portsmouth), was launched from here in December 1860. The largest warship built on the Thames was HMS Thunderer, at 22,500 tons, constructed on the same slipway as Warrior and launched in 1911. Despite a strong campaign to save the company, the Thames Ironworks closed in the following year. The last shipbuilder to go was the old-established firm of J. & G. Rennie, which clung on at Greenwich until 1915.

An unlikely legacy of shipbuilding on the Thames continues to flourish in east London. When the Thames Ironworks closed, the works’ football team changed its name to West Ham United. Their nickname – ‘The Hammers’ – derived from the firm’s emblem of crossed riveting hammers.

Shipbuilding on the Thames declined as the nineteenth century progressed, but ship-breaking prospered. As iron began to supplant wood, so the proud merchantmen and battleships of the sailing navy were replaced. The painter J. M. W. Turner witnessed the poignant sight of HMS Temeraire, a veteran of Trafalgar, being towed up the Thames in 1838 to John Beatson’s breakers yard at Rotherhithe. Henry Castle & Son at Baltic Wharf on Millbank, near the Tate Gallery just north of Vauxhall Bridge, operated a flourishing ship-breakers and timber merchants from the mid-nineteenth century. The figureheads from some famous warships dating from the time of the Napoleonic War were displayed over the gates and became a prominent feature on Millbank. Baltic Wharf was bombed in 1941 and the large collection of items from the last of the wooden warships was destroyed.

Yet despite even greater changes in the latter half of the twentieth century, the observations of Joseph Conrad – appropriately a sea captain before becoming a writer – in his novel Chance (1913) remain perceptive: ‘romance has lived too long upon this river not to have thrown a mantle of glamour upon its banks’.

Further Reading


* This is the second of two articles resulting from research for the author’s recent book Liquid History: The Thames Through Time (2003), published for English Heritage by Batsford at £15.99, and reviewed in the November 2003 Newsletter.

Simon Bradley, Pevsner’s new ‘co-author’, tells Tony Aldous about his up-dated Westminster*

It is perhaps an apt reflection of the economic and social condition of London in the twenty-first century that the author of the latest Buildings of England volume for the capital lives, not as Sir Nikolaus Pevsner did for so many years in a ‘surprising urban Gothic’ Victorian terrace on the edge of Hampstead Heath, but in a 1970s ex-GLC maisonette in Bethnal Green. One has, moreover, a strong impression in talking to Simon Bradley that, in spite of strong views about some London buildings, his own relaxed and genial personality goes hand in hand with a determination to be both comprehensive and eclectic in his coverage.

Bradley is in some sense a Londoner twice adopted. Born in Newcastle, he came at the age of seven to live in Richmond when his father, who worked for the National Coal Board, was transferred to the board’s headquarters, the now redeveloped Hobart House in Grosvenor Place (described by Sir Nikolaus as ‘nondescript’). But it was in a desk drawer in the NCB’s Newcastle office that Bradley senior discovered paperback copies of Durham and Northumberland, brought them home, and thus introduced his son Simon to the series and to the name Pevsner.

London to that seven-year-old was, he remembers, ‘truly bewildering’ but by the time he returned to the north-east in his teens he had presumably come to terms with it. From Newcastle’s Royal Grammar School he went to Christ Church Oxford, followed by a PhD at the Courtauld Institute on the early nineteenth-century gothic revival. Research for the Historic Royal Palaces Agency led to his being recruited to the Pevsner team and producing, six years ago, his first Buildings of England opus, the updated and much enlarged City of London volume. Now he has given us an even better Westminster.

History suggests that when a splendid institution celebrates a significant anniversary, it needs to beware. A year or two on, look out for signs of senility, hardening of the arteries, even collapse. Not so the Buildings of England series of architectural guides. The Pevsner Architectural Guides (to use the snappier alternative title lately adopted) used the series’ fiftieth birthday in 2001 as a springboard for major new initiatives, notably a historic buildings website and a new, low-price paperback series on cities.

The continuing vitality and momentum of the Pevsner enterprise is resoundingly demonstrated by the latest London volume in the main Buildings of England series. London 6: Westminster by Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner may well be reckoned the best and most useful Pevsner to date. It also shows how far the series has come since the 1950s, when its founder reckoned, using Courtauld
researchers as his scouts and writing up his notes in pub bedrooms, to produce two slim volumes a year.

Slim the new Westminster is not. It reproduces many of Sir Nikolaus’s original descriptions and judgments in his 1957 Cities of London and Westminster (hence the joint by-line), but whereas that volume devoted rather less than half its 640 pages to Westminster, Bradley’s new edition has 872 larger-format pages and is solely about Westminster. It is the culmination of five decades of progress in which Pevsners have become more comprehensive, more painstakingly researched, better produced. And for the first time for the London Pevsner series, the block of photos (123 of them) in the centre of this new volume are almost all in colour.

This is thanks to the series’ new publisher, Yale University Press, who achieved this change and even slightly reduced the price by moving printing from Somerset to Hong Kong. Penguin had loyally stayed with the series for half a century through thick and (very often) thin, but had lately found it a bad fit for their publishing strategy. Yale have taken up the baton with gratifying enthusiasm and freshness of approach. They have inherited a remarkable team of authors, reinforced by some new blood – notably Simon Bradley whose previous title, the City of London volume, appeared in 1997. Unlike Bridget Cherry and John Newman, who bore the brunt of navigating the Pevsner ship as well as contributing some of its best volumes, Bradley never met Pevsner the man. He knew him only from his books – dusty paperbacks in that office drawer in Newcastle.

Does that make Bradley a more independent voice, able to dissent or depart from Sir Nikolaus’s more wayward judgments? Perhaps, though Cherry and Newman, who started as Nikolaus Pevsner’s research assistants or chauffeurs, have often in recent times dissented, to the extent of writing, ‘Pevsner said X. Today’s judgment must be Y’. Bradley continues this, and is certainly much more inclusive than Pevsner was. For instance, already in his City volume he gave fifteen lines to that delightful little oasis, Postman’s Park and its G. F. Watts connections. Pevsner totally ignored it; at least initially his predisposition was to buildings rather than built places – an unfortunate bias which his successors have been gradually correcting.

Bradley seeks to be comprehensive and dispassionate. One of his ‘discoveries’ was the interior of 18 Carlton House Terrace – the last private house remaining there – which was done over for the Astor family by J. L. and F. L. Pearson. “Not necessarily my taste,” he says frankly, “but one I quite admired.” No question that it had to be dealt with very fully. A similar comment might apply to the Ritz, to which he devotes half a page, though he confesses to being very disappointed. “I think the architect got bored.” Pevsner dismissed it impatiently in five lines; Bradley, though disappointed, recognised that it is worth more than that, with much of interest that merits recording.

To compensate, there were pleasant surprises. In Bury Street, St James’s, for instance, he discovered purpose-built bachelor chambers by Butterfield with typical polychromatic brickwork hidden under the grime, and still with some original shop fronts below. “I got it listed,” he adds gleefully. “All the time I’m seeing things that need protecting.” He also takes pleasure in a classic instance of what may be called ‘conservation by demolition’ – the demolition of the execrable Marsham Street towers. I well remember Peter Walker, as first Environment Secretary newly installed in 1970 as the building’s unwilling tenant, remarking that the sole compensation of being there was not being able to see the thing. For his part Bradley, asked which was his least favourite London building, says: “With Marsham Street gone, I have to stop and think.”

Another eye-opener was St James’s Palace, whose interiors he describes as “quite extraordinarily undiscovered”. Designers who had a hand in recasting the state apartments of what since the time of William and Mary has been the official residence of the sovereign, include Wren, William Kent, Nash and – improbably – William Morris. The early nineteenth-century recastings also created discreet little pieds-a-terre, including quarters for the Duke of Clarence and Mrs Jordan. Pevsner managed two pages; Bradley gives it eight, including an invaluable plan, but says it “really needs a monograph”.

He is also full of enthusiasm for some of London’s theatre interiors. “There’s a huge variation”, he says, from the splendidly refurbished Royal Opera House (four pages in this edition) through Matcham’s Coliseum (“When it’s restored it will be stunning”), to the Lyceum (so long at risk, but happily now restored and brought back into theatrical use). Like many of his descriptions, that on the Coliseum includes fascinating historical insights: his text includes the revelation that “the large bars were originally tearooms equipped with telegram offices, intended as places of resort between and during the four performances scheduled each day.”

Though Westminster, where conservation and architectural ‘contextualism’ have long been the planners’ watchwords, has not been so prolific of bold new buildings as the City of London, this volume does justice to the most notable buildings that have gone up since Cherry’s update of 1973. These include Richard Rogers’ splendid corner-turning Channel 4 in Horseferry Road; Nicholas Lacey’s riverside flats at Crown Reach near Vauxhall Bridge; James Stirling’s Clore Gallery at Tate Britain; Terry Farrell’s striking piece of riverscape, Embankment Place, above Charing Cross Station; and Michael Hopkins’s Portcullis House, which Bradley regards as a flawed attempt to do the right thing by the Palace of Westminster to the south and Norman Shaw’s former Metropolitan Police headquarters to the north. He reserves his enthusiasm for the Piranesi-like spaces of Hopkins’s new Westminster underground station tucked away.
beneath it. When he is enthusiastic, he doesn’t hide it. And, enthusiastic or critical, his style is clear and lively – what in the newspaper trade is called ‘a good read’.

It is worth clarifying the present state of the London Pevsners. They all, incidentally, carry a joint by-line, the updating author and Nikolaus Pevsner – quite rightly since all incorporate large chunks of his original text. This volume London 6: Westminster, covers only the pre-1965 city, bounded to the north by Oxford Street and excluding the old metropolitan boroughs of St Marylebone and Paddington. Those two areas, now part of the present Westminster, are covered in Bridget Cherry’s London 3: North West (published in 1991). Cherry, in edition to her then role as series editor, also found time to produce not only North West but also volumes 4: North (1998), and 2: South (1983). East, of which we were given a foretaste in Elizabeth Williamson’s 1998 London Docklands, is due this year 2004 (updating authors Bridget Cherry and Charles O’Brien). This, along with Bradley’s paperback London: the City Churches, pointed the way to Buildings of England’s strategy of using paperbacks to update the much changed urban cores of out-of-date Pevsner county volumes.

If anyone doubts the Forth Bridge style challenges involved in keeping these books up to date, he needs only look at that earliest of the enlarged and updated London volumes, Cherry’s London South. No Tate Modern, no London Eye, no OXO Tower redevelopment, and none of the huge London Bridge City development, let alone Foster’s City Hall. No Peckham Library, no super-green Bedzed housing in Croydon, and (since the 1983 volume included Thames bridges and tunnels) no wobbly bridge nor its twin Hungerford neighbours. So who will update London South? And when? Will it be Bridget herself? Or John Newman – though he has been busy lately with The Building of Wales? Or might it just possibly be Bradley? Whoever does it, it ought to be soon.


News and Notes

Maps as Art

LTS members do not need telling that maps are works of art. But who has thought of using maps to convey the relationship between places, people and fashion? Inspired by the form and significance of London maps, Alice Richmond Watson, a talented young artist, has created ‘CityScapes’ (below). “The panoramic view of London was taken from Anthony van den Wyngaerde’s drawings of around 1550. I chose this particular view,” she explains, “because I liked the way he chose to ignore perspective and instead concentrated on trying to show the cluttered waterfront consisting of small buildings and old warehouses. I feel this exemplified what my paintings are about.”

CityScapes’ by Alice Richmond Watson. The figures are dressed in London maps.

The figures below the panorama are collages using maps of London. “My map figures,” she says, “show the extent to which people are as much products as architects of the cities and communities they live in. With these figures made from layers of different types of maps of London from different times I am expressing that cities leave traces on people for ever. And the layering and mapping of the paintings are akin to the layers of one’s life. I am also intrigued and excited by maps for their visual beauty and strange abstraction in two dimensions. I used the elegance of maps to create a sense of history on an aesthetic level by looking at fashion through the ages.”

In ‘CityScapes’ and others of the series, members will spot familiar maps dressing the figures – Fairthorne and Newcourt (1658), Ogilby and Morgan (1676) and Charles Booth’s Poverty map (1889) among them. A recent exhibition of the artist’s work at a West End gallery attracted much interest. Contact Alice Richmond Watson, tel: 07747 634 533.

Maps and Society

The third and final lecture in the history of cartography series at the Warburg Institute will be on Thursday 27th May at 5pm. The speaker on this occasion will be Dr Scott Westrem of the City University of New York whose subject will be Calculation, Delineation, Depiction, Inscription: the
Practicalities of Medieval Mapmaking. Admission is free and the Warburg Institute is based at the School of Advanced Study, University of London, Woburn Square, WC1. The talk will be followed by refreshments.

Enquiries: 020 8346 5112 (Dr Delano Smith).

Wanted
Required urgently for research into London in the 1790s, one copy of Horwood’s Plan of London 1792-99. Facsimile published in thirty-two sheets, 1966. London Topographical Society publication Number 106. Any copy considered. Alternatively, any original larger maps of London of early 1790s would be of interest. Please help. Michael Phillips, 5 Greyfriars Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2QG. Tel. 0131 225 2769. Email: mcp4@york.ac.uk

Cost-Cutting Boroughs
The reference libraries of many London Boroughs used to subscribe to the Society but there has been a marked falling off lately. Recent penny-pinchers include the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Lewisham and Hackney. If you visit their libraries, you could ask to see the older publications of the Society (unless their penny-pinching has gone so far as to sell them off!) and you could then make a fuss if the more recent publications are not also available. It might do some good. Our Parliamentary members might like to do the same for the House of Commons reference library which has also given up – all of them have been members for over 70 years.

-Roger Cline

Bargain Price Poverty
Our reproductions of the Booth Poverty maps are one of our most popular publications. You can access the interactive versions of the maps, courtesy of the London School of Economics, which holds the Booth Archive, on www.lse.ac.uk/booth. Researchers can look at full catalogues of both the archives of the Enquiry into London Life and Labour and the family archives and see accounts of the walks the survey teams took around many areas of London. They can also search for individual streets, postcodes, famous landmarks and companies.

The LSE is offering their own reproductions of the maps in twelve sheets at £14.95 each or £79.95 for the set. Our price to members of £19 including postage for sheets covering the same total area and presumably at the same scale seems considerably better value!

The maps may be ordered with pre-payment by post from the Treasurer before the AGM for collection there or for despatch by post. See back page for his address and telephone number.

Bank of England CD Rom
The Bank’s architects in succession have been George Sampson, 1732-1734; Sir Robert Taylor, 1765-1780; Sir John Soane, 1783-1833; Professor C.R. Cockerell, 1833-1855; P.C. Hardwick, 1855-1863; Sir Arthur Blomfield, 1883-1899; A.C. Blomfield, 1899-1912 and Sir Herbert Baker, 1925-1939. The genius in this list is Soane. In 1814 he gave the visiting Tsar Alexander I a conducted tour of his new and revolutionary half-hectare building, still in progress. The Tsar was hugely impressed and asked Soane to come to his hotel, the Pulteney in Piccadilly, to tell him more. Soane arrived with a roll of drawings under his arm which he presented to the Tsar. Where are those drawings now, one wonders? A few weeks earlier Soane had conducted the Tsar’s sister, the desperately difficult Duchess of Oldenburg, around the Bank.

In 2003 the Bank commissioned a very clever computer walk-through of the Duchess’s tour for their Soane exhibition. The Architecture of the Bank of England from its Foundation in 1694. An interactive CD Rom makes that computer walk-through generally available. It is a strange and awesome experience, and I recommend it.

Also on the disk you get a skeletal history of the Bank’s architectural history; very brief biographies of its architects; more information about Soane’s work for the Bank; and sixty extremely fine photographs taken in 1925 by Frank Yerbury, immediately prior to the demolition of what was still largely Soane’s building. The disk concludes with amateur film footage of Herbert Baker’s building being constructed, made by members of the Bank of England Film Society. It is available at the Bank of England Museum, Bartholomew Lane, London EC2R 8AH, price: £5.99.

-Ralph Hyde

The new DNB
“The greatest publishing event of 2004” is how The Times has hailed the new sixty-volume Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, which is due to be published by Oxford University Press in September. This massive undertaking, to which a number of our Council and members have contributed, has been rolling off the presses in Frome, Somerset, since January at the rate of four volumes a week. Completion was scheduled for the end of April.

A series of launch events involving distinguished speakers and contributors talking about local heroes and reprobates will be held throughout the British Isles, mainly between October and December.

The price of the new DNB will be a rather daunting £6,500 but an online individual subscription version will also be available at £450.

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Book Reviews

Builders of Repute: The Story of Reader Bros

The general picture of a Greater London built by hundreds of firms, ranging from the man-and-boy operation to the Cubitts employing several thousands, is a familiar one. The story in detail of any one firm is far more obscure: there are not many histories of speculative builders, Dyos's account of Edward Yates in Victorian Suburb. A study of the growth of Camberwell (Leicester, 1973) being the paramount example. To filling that gap, Josephine Boyle (herself the grand-daughter of one of the 'Bros' of her title has made a highly useful contribution.

Thomas (1870-1935) and Richard Reader (1876-1950) were the sons of a City Locksmith. Thomas worked as an engine fitter and Richard as a plumber and gas-fitter. In the 1890s a cousin, Fred Kearney, was working for the speculative builders A.C. and E.L. Rayner in Wanstead Park; in 1898 the Rayners applied to build a terrace in Dangan Road, for which the Reader brothers were (tradition has it) the actual builders. They started their independent operations in 1900, with four houses in Spratt Hall Road, Wanstead, Essex, in continuation of a terrace already constructed by Kearney. The design, probably devised by Thomas, is illustrated here: a two-storey type with a prominent canted ground-floor bay; a two-light wind above topped by a gable, with a narrow window to the side above the plastered, top-lighted doorway: a substantial lower middle-class house. How they financed this operation is not known, but from there they sub-contracted for a twelve-house terrace in Grove Green Road, Leyton. In June 1902 they made a decisive forward step, applying to Finchley Urban District Council to build thirty three houses in Prince's Avenue, Ballards Lane. Alexander Martin was architect for the first twelve, with a design similar to that of Spratt Hall Road, but 'rather larger than average, being twenty four feet wide and sixty four feet deep', and containing four bedrooms, dressing room, bathroom, internal and external wcs, kitchen, scullery and coal cellar, as well as the requisite two reception rooms. The remaining twenty one houses, a year later, had five bedrooms 'and lots of fashionable, florid detail'.

From Finchley, the Readers returned east, to the Monkham Estate at Woodford Green (large houses, 1904-14), then to Clapton Common (1912-21), Childs Hill, Hendon (1922-c.1932, with motor garages), Hervey Road, Blackheath (1925, similar), Canons Drive, Edgware (1930s, expensive houses 'designed in an eye-catching modern style by Tom's twenty one year-old son, Clayton'), Chingford (1930s, mixed development), Winchmore Hill, Southgate (1933-37, detached and semi-detached), Loughton (1937-38 and 1952-58), similar, Coopers Hill, Chipping Ongar (1958-63), bungalows and mostly three-bed roomed houses, and a few incursions further into Essex, and finally much of Barnfield Mews on the New Barn Estate at Chelmsford (1965-68), prices around £5,000. Interspersed with this range of speculative housing was a large extent of local authority housing for Hackney and Poplar Metropolitan Boroughs.

Although the name 'Reader Bros' continued in use, after the First World War the two brothers 'travelled on parallel tracks which occasionally converged and then separated again', their personalities being very different. (In 1963 Richard's three sons set up limited companies but they retired from business in 1974.)

It is, indeed, a little difficult to follow the building history in this book. Mrs Boyle, who has written several novels, has inherited a large archive of Reader Bros material, and as a member of the family is keen to recount the full story of her ancestors and relations using written, photographic and oral material, so that, although a quite rounded figure emerges of the principal characters (their active musical pursuits, in particular), one is sometimes lost in insignificant or irrelevant detail or supposition. At the same time such interesting points as the value of the estate left by Richard Reader at his death in 1950 are not given (though that of his widow, in 1967, is £261,464).

There are many illustrations from the archive, showing family members, employees, works in progress, photographs of Reader houses, and their elevations and plans (of which the clarity of reproduction leaves something to be desired). For the topographer as for the urban historian, this book is a valuable mine of information.

Mile End Old Town. 1740-1780: A Social History of an Early Modern London Suburb
By Derek Morris. East London History Society 2002. ISBN 0 9506258 3 3; 121 pages, illustrations, appendices, indices. £9.60, or plus £2 (ppp) direct from Derek Morris. 21 Haddon Court, Shakespeare Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 5NB.

Derek Morris, a member of the Society with an ancestral interest in the hamlet, who has published several articles on Mile End Town, including some in the Newsletter, has undertaken the laborious task of working through the local land tax assessments and the Stepney Manor records, as well as many other sources, to provide a remarkably thorough and lively account of its inhabitants and activities. Morris's account presents a markedly different picture from that traditional one of East London still presented in a dismissive paragraph even in well-reputed histories.

He reminds us that the A-Z of Georgian London is basic for the study of the area, and provides some corrections to Horwood, as well as a useful table of street names as given in Rocque, and Horwood, and...
the current names. He shows that Mile End Old Town was a district with a substantial middle-class population. Among misconceptions of the district that he explodes are beliefs that it was an area of poor handloom weavers housed in short-life properties run up to last little longer than the thirty one-year leases permissible under the custom of the manor: longer leases were not rare. The principal industries of the hamlet were, Mr Morris establishes, brewing and rope-making (thanks to its closeness to the Thames); and fifty six per cent of the houses in 1780 had more than five rooms, while twenty five householders enjoyed the services of a man-servant, a mark of affluence. There was, however, a good deal of coming-and-going; seventy per cent of the land-tax payers moved within five years, and there were few owner occupiers — indeed, fewer than five per cent.

There were no large estates: that of Clare Hall, Cambridge, with its twelve houses and five acres appears to have been the principal. Merchants, dealers, traders and sea-faring men were among the inhabitants, and much of the hamlet was still in agricultural use, with 244 acres of pasture and 230 acres mown in 1772, probably indicating roles as a last fattening-ground for cattle and geese from Norfolk, and providing hay for the great Whitechapel market. Among the artisans and labourers, the building industry was the largest employer, principally in the carpentry and bricklaying trades. As in other districts around London, market-gardening was a feature, but Mile End Old Town was famous for the nurseries of James Gordon, "probably the first to introduce the China Rose", described by Daniel Solander as "considered here in London to be the greatest in his art".

One-seventh of land-tax payers in 1780 were women, often widows, which, Mr Morris claims, suggests the genteel character of the place. One of these was Mary Fitzhugh, widow of an East India Company captain, who in 1738 had a house built in the Mile End Road, 'a little beyond the turnpike', which she insured for £1,800 (compared with £1,300 for Sir William Heathcoat's house in aristocratic St James's Square).

There appears to have been little new building in the Georgian era until 1764 when Assembly Row, consisting of thirty terraced houses, was built by several builders on leases of sixty one years. Captain James Cook bought one; his ship, the Endeavour, was a customer for twenty eight miles of ropes prior to sailing for the Pacific in 1768. An earlier development was the construction of Bancroft's Hospital, under the trusteeship of the Drapers' Company — which still has an educational interest in the district today. The hospital opened in 1737-8 as almshouses for twenty four old men and a school for 100 boys. The cheap land and salubrious atmosphere, as well as nearness to the City, recommended the district as a good location for City Companies' almshouses.

Mr Morris describes the life of Mile End Old Town in minute detail, and his tables and appendices — masters, apprentices, estates and landowners, builders, ropemakers and more — will be a handy source for social historians. He presents convincingly a picture of an East London hamlet becoming a suburb sustained by the strong middle-class element essential in its development.

— M.H. Port

**Palace of the People:**
**The Crystal Palace at Sydenham 1854-1936**

The sesquicentenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851 was celebrated three years ago, and another celebration is now upon us. The Crystal Palace was moved, after its success in Hyde Park, to a new site at Sydenham, where it was to stand for eighty-two years. It flourished, decayed and was undergoing a revival when it departed in 1936 in a giant conflagration which could be seen from Hampstead to Brighton.

![The north transept of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, 1854. After Philip Delamotte. From M.D. Wyatt's Views. Private Collection.](image)

This book marks its opening by Queen Victoria in 1854, and provides a very detailed and scholarly study of its role as a centre of mass entertainment and popular education, perhaps the very first theme park. The interior was designed by the scholarly decorator Owen Jones who had worked in Hyde Park but who had much more scope at Sydenham, where a number of highly decorated Courts in various styles were developed. The parallels with South Kensington are important and the Cast Courts at the Victoria and Albert Museum are probably the best example of the decoration and contents of the different Courts, which included an Alhambra Court and one based on Aboo-Simbel.

The grounds were not neglected and, in emulation of Versailles, a splendid series of fountains were developed by Joseph Paxton, necessitating expensive water supplies, and, to provide some education elements. Antediluvian Animals were installed, which survive to this day. Other entertainments were added and the Palace became the home of Handel festivals under George Grove and later the nascent Imperial War Museum, and of less
intellectual pursuits like dog shows, football and cycling.

The book gives a meticulous and superbly illustrated account of the development and ultimate decay of the Crystal Palace and the surrounding park. It throws an interesting light on the way in which London suburbs were used for recreation, since other parks were developed elsewhere, and how the Victorian passion for improvement spilled out into entertainment.

— Hermione Hobhouse

**Feeding London. A Taste of History**


All, it seems, you could ever possibly have wanted to know about London and its food is laid before you in this book. Richard Tames presents a fascinating and well-illustrated survey of the relationship between Londoners and their food through time. And he knows his social history and his London perhaps better than his food. As well as revealing the strange things that our predecessors once ate, he is able to make fascinating links. The spread of the railways and cold storage in the mid-nineteenth century led not only to cheaper food but to Barking losing its position as London's fishing port (how many people know that it ever enjoyed that status?). Despite rationing 'ordinary' people actually ate better quality food than ever during the First World War, because families had larger disposable incomes thanks to the employment of women in the munitions factories and elsewhere. Later in the book, one becomes acquainted with fabled chefs like Escoffier and can find out that Italian food was already available in London in the seventeenth century.

Tames begins with a general introduction that rushes, at times a little breathlessly, from the earliest recorded history until the present. Then we are introduced to cookery books and the food theoreticians. Next we are told stories of London's food markets and grocers and their modern successors, the supermarkets like Tesco and Sainsbury. You can learn the potted history of Fortnum and Mason and Twinings but also of tea shops, restaurant chains, hotels and now-familiar brands of food (e.g. Heinz and Peak Freans). Then we turn to eating out in restaurants, clubs and coffee houses. The next part covers all aspects of 'eating in' outside restaurants or cafés — from aristocratic town houses to work houses, with the eating habits of Dr Johnson, Dickens and the Bloomsburyites thrown in for good measure. The final chapter is devoted to adulterated food, and antidotes to it, to Thomas Chatterton whose problem was actually that he didn't eat, to obesity, starvation, slimming diets, nutritionists and modern food critics. Did ever a book contain so much in such (relatively) small space?

But, like over-eating, the book comes at a price that is other than financial. As it progresses it becomes rather disorganised. The author seems to rush from one picaresque subject to another, with some sections lasting just a few lines and others going on for a few pages but with no obvious sense of direction. There is little to help the reader who may get equally enthused and wants to learn more. The extremely meagre bibliography contains a mere nineteen titles. Mr Tames clearly read much more, since this reviewer recognised the unacknowledged sources for some of the information.

Perhaps this would not really matter for the non-specialist reader, if Mr Tames could be relied on for his facts. Unfortunately, even within this reviewer's limited knowledge, restricted to restaurants and cafés run by Italian-Swiss, this is not always the case. His account of this little but not insignificant chapter in London's culinary life is littered with minor errors which do not inspire confidence as to the accuracy of the rest of the text. The book, then, to finish with a culinary simile, is a tour de force conjured up, using a secret recipe, from a wide variety of literary ingredients but resembling, on closer inspection, a curate's egg.

— Peter Barber

**London's Coffee Houses: a stimulating story**


The history of London coffee houses is sporadic. Bryant Lillywhite's massive compendium is a monument of historical research, but not a connected narrative. Aylmer Vallance's history, published almost fifty years ago, does not extend beyond the eighteenth century. To fill this gap, Antony Clayton, whose earlier book Subterranean City was well received four years ago, has compiled a history extending from the introduction of the coffee bean into London in the mid-seventeenth century to the colonisation of London by foreign brands and chains such as Starbucks in the late-twentieth century.

The early story of coffee houses is reasonably familiar. Clayton itemises in some detail the history of seven of the most famous in eighteenth-century London and demonstrates their eventual decline in the wake of authority's suspicion of their role in the politicisation of the city. In the following century, coffee houses reigned much of their old popularity in the wake of the temperance movement when they were regarded as a healthy antidote to the forbidden pleasures of the gin palace. But their worthiness almost proved their undoing in the frivolous London of the 1920s — and it remained for the post-war scene to reinvent the coffee house as the venue for London's burgeoning rock 'n' roll era.

Clayton places the development of the coffee house squarely in the overall picture of London's eating and drinking establishments — its relationship with gentlemen's clubs, Lyons's teashops and Soho milk-bars. In recent years even public houses have decided that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em — and coffee is now available in pubs more extensively than at any time in the past.
Those who now deplore the ‘Starbucksisation’ of London should bear in mind the fate of the Lyons’s teashops, once seemingly so impregnable and ubiquitous. The trick is always to start the next trend in drinking fashions before a rival muscles in on your act.

This is an excellent, well researched and well illustrated account of a part of our daily lives which usually flashes by all too quickly. Clayton’s brew is well stirred but never too frothy.

— David Webb

The London Book Trade: Topographies of Print in the Metropolis from the Sixteenth Century

Booksellers naturally make reluctant reviewers. I am no exception, but a collection of essays by historians of the book trade itself, whose work one already knows and admires, a collection moreover that fuses bibliography with the topography of London – and adds much to both – is a different matter.

The collection opens with a meticulous piece of research by Peter Blayney charting Wynkyn de Worde’s move from Westminster to Fleet Street in 1500 – a move pregnant with significance for the history of printing in London. The site of De Worde’s Fleet Street printing-house is re-established, demolishing the theories of even the most sacrosanct of earlier authorities. As a demonstration of the right reading of early documentation and of the delicate sifting of fragmentary evidence, this is an essay that provides valuable lessons for all those concerned with the reconstruction of the urban landscape.

Giles Mandelbrote contributes a thoughtful piece on the effect on the book trade of the Great Fire, similarly revising earlier assumptions, deftly exploiting the evidence of probate inventories, and demonstrating the profound interplay of physical location and professional expression. The picture overall is of a widening and increasingly complex network, stretched into new areas both literally and metaphorically. But there follows a contrasting essay by another of the co-editors, Michael Harris, showing how much remained at an intensely local level. The printers of Carter Lane, between St Paul’s and the river, either side of 1700, are held up for examination as a colony as dense and as dependent as bees and hive.

The following essays offer similar shifts of focus from London-wide to London-local. Sheila O’Connell provides an excellent overview of the eighteenth-century trade in prints, making nice distinctions between the differing operations of the City and the West End – and the different audiences of the bulk retailers and the independent artists. At the micro-level, James Raven offers a glimpse of the exciting London Book Trades Project – ‘Researching the History of Eighteenth-Century London Book Production’ – with what is almost a physically tangible recreation of the bookshops of Paternoster Row before 1800. Once again, we are offered an object-lesson in research methodology, applicable to any exercise in unearthing London’s communal past.

London is also a place of the individual, the idiosyncratic and the outsider, and the volume concludes with two studies reflecting a rather different interplay of place and person. David Shaw offers an elegant study of the French émigré booksellers, especially those associated with French enclaves in the Strand and in Soho, examining their output, their relationships, and their degrees of integration with the wider community. David Chambers, in contrast, takes us to the class of the complete outsiders, the owners of private presses, the printers of the drawing room and the garden shed – outside the loop of trade, traffic and commercial intercourse. In a series of sketches of individuals as memorable for the charm of their character as for the charm of their publications, we visit Balham, Bayswater, Blackheath, Croydon and many another unlikely spot on the network of printing in London – a more than satisfying end to a highly impressive collection.

— Laurence Worms

The Chelsea Book past and present

Seven years after Barbara Denny’s book entitled Chelsea Past appeared, the same publisher has produced The Chelsea Book past and present. The new book offers a different approach by presenting topics alphabetically, from the Adam and Eve pub to Worlds End, and the development of Chelsea is brought up-to-date with Duke of York Square, King’s Road. However there are close similarities between the two books, not least the illustrations. Many photographs used in Denny’s book are recycled by Richardson and the quality is poorer – even recent photographs of Duke of York Square and Petty Hall (designed for Chelsea Old Church by John Simpson) lack definition. On the plus side, John Richardson is strong on biography and he provides a substantial entry on the derivation of street names. Both Denny and Richardson repeat much of what was said in Kensington and Chelsea by Annabel Walker with Peter Jackson (John Murray 1989), a book that has been ignored in Richardson’s further reading list.

Two treasures of immense topographical interest have escaped the attention of successive historians of Chelsea: the magnificent early-eighteenth-century oil painting of the Royal Hospital by Pieter Tillemans and the frieze of Cheyne Walk painted by Fleetwood Varley for C.R. Ashbee in 1899.

— Penelope Hunting
City Merchants and the Arts 1670-1720
Edited by Mireille Galinou. Oblong for the Corporation of London 2004. ISBN 0 9536574 4 2. 228 pages, paperback, over 130 illustrations. £16.50 (includes p&p) from Oblong Creative Ltd, 416b Thorp Arch Estate, Wetherby LS23 7BJ.

The May 2003 issue of the Newsletter included an account of the conference City Merchants and the Arts 1670-1720 held at Guildhall Art Gallery on 1st November 2002. Those who missed the conference can now read the papers, plus two additional chapters, in an attractively produced book of the same title. The merchants under review are the dynamic entrepreneurs who turned the City of London into the great financial centre it has remained. Their formal public image is seen in John Michael Wright’s commanding life-size portraits of the Fire judges, but the sumptuous private life which is the subject of this study is evoked by the same artist in the portrait of the goldsmith-banker Sir Robert Vyner (National Portrait Gallery). Vyner is shown with his wife and two young children relaxing in fashionable informal dress in the grounds of the country house he had just purchased as a first step in the move from trade to the landed classes – his daughter was to marry into the aristocracy.

City merchants made enormous amounts of money and spent it on conspicuous consumption of works of art and architecture. In this generously illustrated book we are shown fabulous pieces of furniture, plate, Chinese porcelain, sculpture and paintings, not to mention houses costing as much as £4,000 – though this is perhaps not such a large sum when one reads that one South Sea Company director valued ‘My Wife’s Jewels, Watches’ at £1,960.

– Sheila O’Connell

Westminster Abbey Reformed 1540-1640

This is a series of academic essays edited by C.S. Knighton, an editor for the Public Record Office, and Richard Mortimer, the keeper of muniments at the Abbey. It is the story of the reforming of Westminster Abbey from a monastery to a collegiate church during the Reformation. The most topographical essay is Julia Merritt’s thirty-page article on the Abbey and the town of Westminster in the period.

– Roger Cline

London City Churches

 Middleton is an architect who draws slightly fuzzy versions of the buildings in a style akin to Honeysett in Private Eye and Hatts adds a useful page of their history, personalities and current activities. The format of the book reminds me of The City Companion of Mason and Sanders of 1994, although Sanders’s drawings were much more topographically accurate and their price of £7.99 for a hardback with more pages is a lesson in inflation.

The City Churches book would be a useful companion to the annual City Churches walk, being pocket-size with a map. It has introductions describing recent policy decisions and attempts to raise the churches’ public profile and contact details of the churches and their opening times, together with a recent bibliography.

– Roger Cline
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New membership enquiries should be addressed to the Hon Secretary, Patrick Frazer. Correspondence about existing membership including renewal payments, requests for standing orders and gift-aid forms and the non-receipt of publications (after September) also any change of address should be addressed to the Hon Treasurer, Roger Cline. The Honorary Editor, Ann Saunders, deals with proposals for new publications.

Registered charity no. 271590

The Society’s web site address is: www.topsoc.org

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# LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2003

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions paid by members</td>
<td>18,753.00</td>
<td>18,207.00</td>
<td>Members' subscription publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions from earlier years</td>
<td>78.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>31,571.01</td>
<td>15,653.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Tax from Covenants</td>
<td>463.29</td>
<td>308.10</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>2,412.83</td>
<td>3,336.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total subscription income</td>
<td>19,294.29</td>
<td>18,535.10</td>
<td>Total cost of members' publications</td>
<td>33,983.84</td>
<td>18,989.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit from sales of Publications</td>
<td>10,474.55</td>
<td>9,869.84</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>2,395.84</td>
<td>2,288.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest received</td>
<td>3,032.49</td>
<td>3,157.49</td>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>1,271.86</td>
<td>1,669.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants: Scouloudi Foundation</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>619.62</td>
<td>618.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry donations</td>
<td>183.81</td>
<td>222.26</td>
<td>Publications Storage and Service</td>
<td>1,423.80</td>
<td>2,182.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income for the year</td>
<td>33,985.14</td>
<td>32,784.69</td>
<td>Total Administration Costs</td>
<td>5,711.12</td>
<td>6,759.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total expenditure for the year</td>
<td>39,694.96</td>
<td>25,748.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deficit/Surplus for the year</td>
<td>-5,709.82</td>
<td>7,036.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## BALANCE SHEET 31 December 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money in bank &amp; Nat. Savings</td>
<td>101,714.44</td>
<td>97,945.80</td>
<td>Overseas members' postage in advance</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Payments</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>Subscriptions paid in advance</td>
<td>4,136.00</td>
<td>4,460.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Society’s stock of publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overpayments</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock at end of previous year</td>
<td>22,728.70</td>
<td>8,672.57</td>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>4,196.00</td>
<td>4,585.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions to stock</td>
<td>11,116.13</td>
<td>13,795.85</td>
<td>Net Worth of the Society</td>
<td>110,414.13</td>
<td>116,123.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of publications sold</td>
<td>-20,949.14</td>
<td>-19,739.72</td>
<td>Change in net worth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revaluation of stock</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
<td>Previous year’s net worth</td>
<td>116,123.95</td>
<td>89,087.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of stock at year end</td>
<td>12,895.69</td>
<td>22,728.70</td>
<td>Deficit/Surplus for the year</td>
<td>-5,709.82</td>
<td>7,036.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>114,610.13</td>
<td>120,708.95</td>
<td>Revaluation of stock</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>End of year net worth</td>
<td>110,414.13</td>
<td>116,123.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>