The Annual General Meeting

Our 106th Annual General Meeting took place at Friends House, headquarters of the Quakers in Euston Road, on 4th July 2006. With an exceptionally hot afternoon forecast, several members called to say they would not be making the journey to London. After many years of rising attendance, numbers were sharply down at about 240 members and guests, compared with some 325 in 2005.

Those who came were able to have their tea in the pleasant internal garden, although a certain amount of disorganisation within Friends House catering department meant that we did not get everything we had asked for. Our apologies for that, but we did negotiate a substantial refund.

Members were welcomed to the business meeting by Penelope Hunting. The report on the 105th AGM and the annual report for 2005 were approved. Roger Cline introduced the annual accounts for 2005, pointing out that some of the figures in the printed accounts did not add up correctly. He reported that the Society’s general financial outlook was rosy. Profits from sales of past publications had been good. Although costs of distribution were high, thanks to the heavier than usual annual publication, many copies had been delivered by volunteers. The accounts were accepted, subject to audit.

In her report on publications, Ann Saunders said that the Record was in a new, larger, metric format, with glossier paper. Some of the colour printing in the previous volume had come out horribly, leading to complaints from members. The new format, chosen only after a long and hard debate, would do more justice to illustrations.

It had been hoped to have a book on Somerset House by Simon Thurley as a second publication for 2006. Although he did not have time to write it, he has promised it for next year. In addition, it is planned to publish an A-Z of Edwardian London, reproduced in colour.

At the election of officers, the existing team was confirmed without opposition: Penelope Hunting as Chairman, Ann Saunders as Hon. Editor, Roger Cline as Hon. Treasurer, Denise Silvester-Carr as Newsletter Editor, Simon Morris as Publications Secretary, Patrick Frazer as Hon. Secretary and Hugh Cleaver as Hon. Auditor. Similarly, the other members of Council were all re-elected.

Under any other business, Denise Silvester-Carr thanked members who had contributed articles for the Newsletter and asked others to write articles also.

Peter Barber then whetted members’ appetites by describing the forthcoming exhibition of London maps, to be held in the British Library from 24th November (see separate article page 3). As well as many old friends, including originals of LTS publications, there would be all sorts of unknown treasures. Londoners’ concerns – taxes, wealth, health, etc. – would be well represented. There would be plans, panoramas and balloon views, including Hooke’s plan of the Monument, the original plan for the British Museum Reading Room, Hawksmoor’s drawings of churches and a 1940 map published in Berlin. Moreover, Peter announced, to wild applause, it would be free.

Finally, Aidan Flood spoke on “The death of Endsleigh Gardens”, sacrificed in the 1920s to build Friends House. He charted the efforts by London County Council and other bodies to save the gardens enclosed by London squares, which were badly needed as lung space but could be sold by the freeholders for redevelopment. Although the battle to save Endsleigh Gardens was lost, it raised awareness of the problem and this ultimately led to legislation that saved hundreds of other squares.
Notes

Cockerell’s Tribute to Wren
In 2003, we published a reproduction of Charles Robert Cockerell’s watercolour capriccio of churches and other buildings attributed to Sir Christopher Wren. Any members who were not entirely satisfied with this will soon have an opportunity to buy the original, which Sotheby’s will be selling in Bond Street on 23rd November. The estimate is £40,000-£60,000 and it will be on view from 17th November.

Are you properly addressed?
We have recently undertaken a major revision of our mailing labels and membership list. Consequently, this might be a good moment to check your label and/or entry in this year’s Record. Please let Patrick Frazer know if anything needs changing (contact details on back page).

As part of this process we hunted down dozens of missing postcodes, but a few still elude us. If your address lacks a postcode, we would love to hear what it is. Similarly, we have tried to include members’ degrees and professional qualifications, subject to some editing for quantity as some of you are amazingly well qualified. Again, please let us know if you would like us to make any additions or amendments.

Where Are They Now?
The City of London Guide Lecturers’ Association plans to celebrate its forthcoming Silver Jubilee with an exhibition at Guildhall Art Gallery that records the whereabouts of structures, monuments and items that once adorned the City but subsequently found their way elsewhere. Obviously large scale structures such as the Mercers’ Hall entrance that was transported to Swanage in 1902 and Rennie’s London Bridge, now in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, will have to be illustrated in photographs, as will All Hallows, Lombard Street, re-erected in Twickenham. However, there are many transportable items around the country such as the sculptures and monuments from the Mansion House and the Baltic Exchange that were sold at auction in recent years.

If you know of similar items large or small, the organisers would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Robin Michaelson on 07793 819 387, write to him at 66 Marlborough Road, London NW8 0PL or email robinmichaelson@hotmail.com

RIBA Gold Medal Search
Liz Walder, one of our members, is studying the Royal Institute of British Architects’ Royal Gold Medal as a PhD subject at the School of Architecture at the University of Liverpool. As part of her project she is trying to trace all the medals that have been awarded since 1848. Thirteen of a possible 158 have now been located and enquiries are being made through companies such as Spink’s to see if any have been sold. The British Museum’s numismatic department is also pursuing the search in its magazine. The RIBA itself holds only three of the medals (1851, 1952 and 1973), and the Fondation Le Corbusier in France holds Le Corbusier’s medal.

If any member can shed light on the whereabouts of any of the missing medals, please contact Liz Walder. Her email address is Liz.Walder@inst.riba.org

Scoria Blocks in the East End
Hayfield Passage leads from the Mile End Road into Stepney Green. The Pevsner London 5:East guide (p.457) describes the passage and observes that “the present roadway is laid with blue tinged sets, reputedly brought in as ballast on ships”. Tom Ridge in his Central Stepney History Walk more precisely stated that “The narrow roadway is paved with Tees Scoria bricks which were made in Middlesborough from slag in local iron furnaces.”

On one of my recent walks around Mile End an engineering geologist pointed out that there are similar sets in Whitby and throughout Cleveland. It has become clear that they resulted from a major development by the iron masters of Tees Side in the latter part of the nineteenth century, which led to the production on a large scale of these sets.

Basically they needed to find a use for the slag produced by melting the rather poor iron ores from the Cleveland Hills. The Tees Scoria Company was set up and the sets were exported worldwide; indeed 1,000 tons were sent to London in one year alone. By 1912 exports of scoria blocks from Middlesborough amounted to 622,881 tons! A full description of the process appeared in the Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist, No. 13, pp.23-32, 1981, in an article entitled Scoria Blocks, by C. H. Morris.

I would like to know if these blocks are still widespread in London? My address is 21 Haddon Court, Shakespeare Road, Harpenden, AL5 5NB. Tel: 01582 769513 or email: derek@terrahuman.demon.co.uk.

− Derek Morris

Thames Bridges Mnemonics
Lester May, a member of the Society, writes that in an effort to remember the names of bridges across the River Thames he has looked in vain for a suitable mnemonic. Unable to find one he has “invented”: These London Crossings Seem Memorable Because We Have Won Luncheon Vouchers. The initial letters take you from Tower Bridge to Vauxhall, and farther upstream from Grosvenor Railway Bridge to Wandsworth Bridge you can add: Get Cross About Battersea Bridges – Wonderful!

The full list of bridges is Tower, London, Cannon Street (Alexandra), Southwark, Millennium, Blackfriars, Waterloo, Hungerford (Charing Cross), Westminster, Lambeth, Vauxhall, Grosvenor (Victoria), Chelsea, Albert, Battersea, Battersea Railway (Cremorne), Wandsworth.

Why not test your skills and see what you can devise?
London: A Life in Maps
by Peter Barber

London: A Life in Maps will be the first exhibition for over forty years devoted to the development and mapping of London over the 2,000 years of its existence. Since the last exhibition in 1964 much has changed in our knowledge of London's past and of its maps. Popular and academic attitudes towards mapping and what it can reveal about the spirit as well as the geographical form of the past have also altered radically.

The exhibition at the British Library from 24th November will illustrate how the image of London has evolved over nearly 2,000 years and how maps and panoramas have reflected the mentalities, concerns and interests of Londoners. It will be enlivened with letters, diaries and other memorabilia.

The first section begins with the earliest depiction of London - on a gold medal of AD 296 that will be on display in London for the first time - and takes the story up to the time of the Great Fire of 1666. A view of London from the Tower of about 1480, one of the copperplates used for the earliest-known printed map of London of the later 1550s, the autograph diary of John Evelyn and the unique manuscript survivor of the survey commissioned while the ashes were still warm, are among the treasures that will illustrate the story. London had several generally-accepted set images - particularly as a walled city and as a city on the Thames seen from the East - before the creation of what is now the standard view from Bankside dating from the 1540s and typified by the extensive panoramas by William Smith in 1588, Visscher of 1616 and by Hollar of 1647. Other images which did not catch on, such as an extremely rare printed view of London from the North of about 1600, will also be on show. From early on maps also reflected the seamy reality as well as the sanitised beauty of the official images and these are shown in a detailed map of Charterhouse's water supply of about 1450, owned by Charterhouse, a map of lawlessness in Southwark of the early 1540s from the National Archives and another by Ralph Treswell of 1612 showing houses in the vicinity of the Fleet Ditch owned by the Clothworkers' Company.

The second section follows the revival and expansion of London in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries when it overtook Paris as the largest city in Europe. It reveals how that expansion came about despite official efforts to curb London's growth, where the expansion occurred and the lives led in the elegant new aristocratic estates of the West End. At the same time this section will illustrate the pastimes of Londoners. As well as large maps of the whole of London and Westminster by Ogilby and Morgan of 1676 and 1681, by John Rocque of 1746 and a magnificent panorama of London from St James's Park of about 1716, there will be a sketch by Hawksmoor for the steeple of St Bride's church and a manuscript plan of Whitehall Palace (the largest palace in Europe of the time) which doubles as a key to the power structure of Great Britain in about 1670, and items such as a manuscript survey of East Cheap of 1686. The earliest known map of Mayfair and Belgravia (dating from 1665) and an early plan of St James's Square, identifying the house owners, have never been exhibited before.

The third section deals with the East End, the generator of the wealth that was spent in the West End, but until the early nineteenth century an area that was not felt worthy of inclusion on most maps of London. The great 1703 map of the parish of Shoreditch by Joel Gascoyne, made at a time when the population was expanding at a rapid rate and the hamlets within it were trying to be made into parishes in their own right, will be accompanied by Hawksmoor's manuscript design for the church of one of the parishes that soon emerged, Christchurch Spitalfields, and by a plan of Deptford in 1623, in its early days as a royal dockyard, annotated by John Evelyn in about 1690. There will be a reminder of the gentility of much of what is now the East End in the form of an elegant watercolour of West Ham village in about 1750 by Jean Baptiste Chatelain. The coming of the great commercial dockyards after 1799, which enabled London to cope with an enormous increase in trade in the late eighteenth century and forced East London on to all future maps of London, will be illustrated through plans that were specially annotated for George III and an aquatint panorama by William Daniel.
The fourth section deals with the other major changes between 1750 and 1850, many of them directed by government and on Crown land, that were to change the face of the metropolis. In addition to Richard Horwood’s enormous map of 1799, the last to show London as a walkable city, this will include Robert Adams’s little known plan and elevation for a grand entrance to London at Hyde Park Corner, the unique surviving architectural plan for the Adelphi, plans and views for what were to become Regent Street, Regent’s Park and Trafalgar Square and the Thames Tunnel as well as George Scharf’s panoramic lithographs of the rebuilding of London Bridge (with some of his preparatory drawings) of the 1830s. In these years London mushroomed. Already the largest city in Europe, by the end of the period it became the largest city in the world.

The fifth section will deal with the villages that now constitute greater London. These had lives and centuries’ old histories of their own and the exhibition will show the stages by which they began to be integrated within the metropolis, though until the mid-nineteenth century most still remained separated by green fields. Here the exhibits will extend in time from 986 (a charter defining the boundaries of Hampstead) to detailed square and circular printed maps of London and its surroundings from the 1800s. They include the great Rocque map of the country around London of 1746, his manuscript plan of the country estate of Edward Gibbons’s parents in Putney, John Corris’s plan of the rural manor of Putney in the 1770s created for the lord of the manor, Lord Spencer, and a vast plan of the manor of St John of Jerusalem of about 1810 which covers the land from St John’s Gate in Clerkenwell to Hornsey Lane. Throughout this period, the country villages contained the weekend and summer homes of well-to-do Londoners. Rocque’s magnificent plan with views by Rocque of the Earl of Tiltney’s vast mansion at Wanstead in the 1730s and a plan and elevation by one of George IV’s favourite architects, Henry Holland, of his own country “pavilion” in Chelsea of 1790, will illustrate how the surroundings of London were transformed after 1600 from vast estates, originally owned by the church to a patchwork of villas with small parks owned by wealthy Londoners which in their turn eventually gave way to the familiar semis and terraces of today. A beautifully executed watercolour view of 1811, showing the Knightsbridge turnpike, gives an example of the improved roads that made daily commuting possible and helped to create a suburban mentality long before the outer suburbs came into being.

By 1850, administrative structures and drains that had barely been adequate for seventeenth-century London could no longer cope. The burgeoning population was accompanied by equally enormous and growing problems that could only be dealt with by bodies with some power over the whole of the built-up area. Section six contains the maps and panoramas that illustrate this growth, analysed the resulting problems and suggested solutions that were sometimes enacted. They vividly illustrated the growing ethnic diversity of London (though this had been present since Roman times) and the enormous number of Victorian Londoners who had been born elsewhere in the country. They pinpointed the whereabouts and extent of poverty (and wealth) and, almost incidentally, the unhealthy living conditions that were made worse by the demolitions to make space for new roads, railways and railway stations and by recurrent visitations of cholera. As well as the Stanford Library maps in various guises and a sheet from Charles Booth’s Master Map of London poverty, this will also include fire insurance plans demonstrating the awful living conditions along the banks of the Thames immortalised by Dickens (who had grown up among them), a map of the Jewish population of the East End in 1890, plans revealing the ruthlessness but also the idealism of Victorian developers and others showing the open spaces and improved housing, schools, social amenities and

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Hollar’s map of London after the Great Fire. 1667
sewage treatment that were responses to the problems.

The seventh section charts the development of London from about 1850 to 1945. This was the age of the development of metro- (but also Pooter-) land, the coming of novel purpose-built buildings like the great restaurants, hotels, stores, theatres and museums, of widespread and extensive mobility, and of the revolution in leisure. It also witnessed the publication of those two icons of modern London, the A-Z and the Underground map, though each had far older origins.

The end of the period was marked by the traumas of the two world wars. The exhibits here will include a sheet from the first official map to record who owned what in London, a plan of South Kensington showing the site for the museums and the Albert Hall before development, the plan for the British Museum Reading Room that was submitted to its trustees, a detailed early plan of Harrods, plans of the damage wrought by bombs in the First and Second World Wars and a map of London produced in Berlin in August 1940 identifying the streets through which its creators assumed the German forces would sweep through the capital on their triumphant passage northwards.

The last section shows the revival of London after wartime experiences that were regarded as tantamount to a second Great Fire. Centralised planning and comprehensive redevelopment coexisted with unbridled commercial development and concerns about conservation, “Swinging” and “Cool” London with homelessness, ethnic tensions and traffic congestion – none of them quite so novel as some might think. Maps for the 1948 Olympics will be seen near a psychedelic panorama of Carnaby Street of 1970. The early twenty-first century brings London – now perhaps the most international of all the world’s cities – continued strains and further challenges, notably renewed population growth and the possible consequences of climate change in terms of flooding. Modern mapping of London can now merge in a single digitised system the plans, views and panoramas that had hitherto run parallel to each other. But it continues to reflect as its predecessors had the concerns and visions of its age – and particularly the next great London event, the 2012 Olympics.

Much of the impact of the exhibition will come from the display of the series of great original maps and panoramas revealing the growth of London from about 1250 to the 1850s. The exhibition will also give the British Library the chance to show many of its smaller and less well-known treasures with several items that as far as is known have never been exhibited before.

The visitor will be able to approach the exhibition in several ways. If short of time he or she can view the exhibition almost as an art exhibition. If more time is available, or a second visit is made, or if there is an aspect that is of particular interest, the visitor will be able to use a series of drawers containing further images and fascinating documents and ephemera to drill below the surface of the image displayed above.

The exhibition London: A Life in Maps opens at the British Library on 24th November and runs until March 2007. Admission is free.
Samuel Johnson’s London
by Natasha McEnroe

The London that Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) knew was a city of extremes. The houses, clothes and carriages of the rich contrasted abruptly with the harshness and poverty that was commonplace for most. For Johnson, the danger and poverty of London was balanced by its cultural and intellectual side; during his life he would dine with nobility and converse with the King, while never forgetting the hardships he had suffered as a struggling writer. These extremes were not normally experienced by one man; it was Johnson’s success as a literary figure that enabled him to move between the strata of society in a way that would be unthinkable for most people, and therefore he had a unique view of London.

Johnson lived in London for nearly fifty years, and during that time he saw many changes. Reforms meant improvements in street lighting, the paving of walkways and the removal of the picturesque menace of thousands of swinging signs. When Johnson arrived in London in 1737, the Fleet ditch had only recently been paved over, there were thousands of beggars and prostitutes, slums and gin shops with their cheerful promise of “Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence”. The streets were thick with filth, both in the centre of the road and near the houses. London was known as the best-lit city in Europe, and certainly in the later years of Johnson’s life, London was a much less alarming place than it was when he first arrived.

Johnson and his friend David Garrick (1717-1779) left their home of Lichfield on 2nd March 1737 and set out to travel the 120 miles to London. Johnson would remark in later life that when they arrived in London he himself had twopence half-penny in his pocket, while Davy had three halfpence in his. They called on a Mr Wilcox, who ran a bookshop in the Strand, and he lent them five pounds. Johnson began to try and make a living for himself as a writer, and quickly settled into London life.

At this time, the nucleus of London was still the City, but it had already started spreading west. It had a population of between 650,000 and 700,000 and by 1750, London was the largest city in the world, outstripping both Paris and Constantinople. London spread from Limehouse to Hyde Park, a distance of five miles across and two or three miles from north to south. Beyond Hyde Park was open country and it was not uncommon to see farmers driving herds of livestock through the streets. The streets themselves were dirty and dangerous. There were piles of waste on the roadways, both human and animal, with open sewers in the middle of most streets. Sewage would often contain dead cats, dogs and even horses, and thick coal smoke added to the overall ambience. It was said that you could often smell London before seeing it.

The noise could be deafening; horses hooves and the wide metal wheels of carts and carriages were constant from early morning to late at night. Sometimes, badly made houses would literally fall down, adding to the uproar. Much of the noise was made by London’s citizens - ballad singers, town criers and particularly street sellers. Street sellers would either ring a hand bell or have a special cry advertising their wares, offering anything from food, medicine, wood or milk.

Shop signs were found on most walls, and while they were picturesque, they were often dangerous, falling on people or even dragging down the house front it rested on. The signs hung nine feet from the ground, hopefully high enough to avoid knocking a man from his horse. The signs illustrated what was sold inside - a sign showing Adam and Eve meant apples and other fruit could be purchased, and a Green Man showed a distillers shop. Many of the meanings are not immediately obvious to modern eyes; for example, an elephant symbolised combs of ivory sold within. Directions were often given by residents using these signs, which were not officially outlawed until 1762, when the system of house numbers was introduced.

After dark, the streets were not a safe place to be. In certain areas, footpads, pickpockets and prostitutes abounded, and the darkness held little protection. Link boys - boys with lanterns who could be hired to light your way home - were sometimes in league with the footpads, and would lure the unsuspecting into traps. Johnson often walked late at night, and unusually wasn’t attacked very often.
Partly, perhaps, he didn’t look very rich in his shabby brown coat and ill-fitting wig. Also, his great size might have made people think twice about accosting him – on one occasion he was attacked by four men, but he managed to keep them at bay until the watch arrived. In later years, he took to carrying a club.

Johnson was well known for his kindness to beggars, particularly children. Frances Reynolds (1729-1807) tells of how he would press pennies into their hands as they lay sleeping in doorways, so that they would be able to have breakfast, at least, the next day. On one occasion, Johnson was irritated by someone who criticised him for giving so freely, arguing that the beggar would only spend the money on drink. Johnson felt that if a man were pushed into the gutter, he would seek the pleasures of the gutter. “Life is a pill which none of us can bear to swallow without gilding.”

There were sixty or seventy pleasure gardens in London during the eighteenth century, of which the most famous was Vauxhall Gardens. Vauxhall boasted a Chinese temple, a hermit’s cottage and a smuggler’s cave. The main walks were lit by many little lanterns, but the smaller walkways were dark, and even the most experienced mother could lose herself when searching for her daughter. Johnson was a friend of Tom Tyers who, with his brother Jonathan, ran Vauxhall for many years. James Boswell (1740-1795) commented that “Vauxhall is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation; there being a mixture of curious show – gay exhibition, musick, vocal and instrumental, not too refined for the general ear; – for all which only a shilling is paid. And last, though not least, good eating and drinking for those who wish to purchase that regale.”

In fact, the food was not universally agreed to be “good”, and a frequent complaint was that the ham was cut so thin that it was possible to read a newspaper through it.

Despite being a moderately successful writer, Johnson still found it hard to make enough money to live comfortably. He tried to follow the advice of a Birmingham friend on how to live well on £30 a year. The largest item was £10 for “clothes and linen”, otherwise “a man might live in a garret at eighteen-pence a week, few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, ‘Sir, I am to be found at such a place’. By spending three-pence in a coffee-house he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. On clean-shirt day he went abroad and paid visits.”

Johnson was once described as “a pessimist with an enormous zest for living”, and his circle of friends had a great importance in his life. He enjoyed people’s company for the sheer pleasure of talk and debate, but also a fear of being alone meant long hours spent avoiding going home. Johnson was always a great frequenter of coffee houses and taverns, once famously saying that the throne of human felicity is a tavern chair.

By the early eighteenth century, the Strand was becoming well known for its coffee shops and chop houses. Coffee shops would be for many a second home – a place to sit by the fire, meet and talk with friends, read one of the many newspapers that were kept there, and even use it as a postal address. By 1714, there were over 500 coffee houses, many of them catering for specialised clientele. The Jamaica Wine House – still in use today – was used by
sailors and merchants from the West Indies; clergymen met at Child's near St Paul's Churchyard; and authors met at Button's in Bow Street. Tom’s Coffee House in Covent Garden was a post-theatre meeting place for all classes, of which Johnson was a regular.

Fleet Street had numerous eating houses, from the famous Dolly's Beefsteak House to Mrs Lovett's Pie Shop. Chop houses would be used when Johnson was entertaining, although sometimes food would be sent out for and brought back to his house ready cooked. One Easter, Boswell arrived for dinner at Johnson’s house, and was surprised to find they were eating at home, as this was unusual, but he describes a good dinner of soup, boiled leg of lamb, spinach, a veal pie and a rice pudding.

The prevalence of coffee shops never took away from the popularity of taverns, and Johnson always felt at home in an inn: “As soon as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care and a freedom from solicitude, when I am seated I find the master courteous and the servants obsequious to my call, anxious to know and ready to supply my wants; wine there exhilarates my spirits and prompts those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight.”

It was at the Mitre Tavern in Fleet Street, where Hoare’s bank now stands, that Johnson first had dinner and a long conversation with Boswell. They drank two bottles of port, and sat talking until 1am. The Mitre, in later years, was so proud of being a favourite haunt of Johnson's that they had a bust of him, and numerous signs to point out his favourite chair.

The meetings of Johnson’s famous Club took place in the Turk’s Head in Gerrard Street. The idea of forming a club had come from Johnson’s friend Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) in the winter of 1763-64. Reynolds suggested that they should reform an earlier club that had met at a coffee house in Ivy Lane, and that the members should meet weekly for an exchange of ideas. At these Club meetings, Johnson was in his element. His friend Hawkins (1709-1789) tells us “Johnson was, in a short time after our assembling, transformed into a new creature... His countenance brightened: his mind was made to expand, and his wit to sparkle: he told excellent stories: and in his didactic style of conversation, both instructed and delighted us.”

In addition to being known for its coffee shops, Fleet Street had long been associated with printers and booksellers. Its connections with literary London made it an obvious place for Johnson to live, and he had ten different residences off Fleet Street. He took great pleasure in its “animated appearance”, and Boswell tells us that it had a “cheerfulness... owing to the quick succession of people which we perceive passing through it.”

Johnson moved house frequently, often a move would reflect a change in his finances. Boswell describes his own difficulty in finding a lodging that was both pleasant and affordable: “A genteel lodging in a good part of town is absolutely necessary: seeking a lodging is like seeking a wife. Sometimes I aimed at one of two guineas a week, like a rich lady of quality, sometimes one guinea, like a knight's daughter; and at last fixed on £22 a year, like the daughter of a good gentleman of moderate fortune.”

Johnson’s first lodgings on arriving in London were with a stay maker in Exeter Street. He moved out of London to Greenwich for a time, in order to finish his play Irene, but returned to live in a number of places around Holborn and Fleet Street. After leaving No.17 Gough Square, he moved to Staple Inn, Gray's Inn, and he had rooms in Inner Temple Lane, the site of Dr Johnson’s Buildings, which were erected in 1857. In the last years of his life, from 1765-76, he resided at Johnson’s Court, named for an Elizabethan tailor of that name, not for Samuel Johnson. Lastly, he moved to Bolt Court, probably named after a vanished tavern called the Bolt-in-Tun. This house had a small garden with a vine that Johnson “took delight in watering”. According to Boswell, Johnson had seventeen different London addresses, of which No. 17 Gough Square is the only one left standing today. This fine eighteenth-century town house is open to the public six days a week (closed on Sundays), and gives a real sense of the London that Johnson would have known.

Natasha McNerroe is the curator of Dr Johnson’s House.

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James Axtell, Builder by Dorian Gerhold

James Axtell (c. 1590-1679) is well-known to historians of London as one of the developers of Golden Square, but it has not previously been known that he was an important builder over a long period. The record of his work is fragmentary, to say the least, but it is likely that more information remains to be discovered, and the main purpose of this note is to alert researchers to his importance.

Ages given in later legal proceedings indicate that Axtell was born in about 1590.1 He was almost invariably referred to as a carpenter, and he stated in 1674 that he had "used the said employment of a carpenter and in buying and selling of timber and building of houses for several yeares whereby and otherwise he acquired a considerable estate".2 His widow, Elizabeth, claimed in 1680 that she had brought him £500 on their marriage, "which was the meanes and reason... her said husband gott the estate aforesaid her said husband att the tyme of [her] intermarriag being not worth fifty pounds in the world".3 From 1641 to the end of his life his place of residence was given in legal proceedings as St Martin-in-the-Fields.
The first evidence of Axtell as a builder relates to 1635-36, when he was already aged about forty-five. He gave evidence about a house constructed at Putney in those years for Sir Abraham Dawes, an extremely rich merchant and customs farmer, stating that Dawes had employed him as "surveyor of the buildings". It was Axtell whom Dawes had ordered to make all haste to complete the building. The house was approximately on the site of the present Putney station, and was brick-built and H-shaped, with three storeys and garretts. Unfortunately it was demolished in about 1788, apparently without anyone having drawn it. Several witnesses indicated that the house was much too big to be maintained by the lands attached to it, and it was reduced in size in about 1660, but even after this it had thirty-seven hearths, making it comparable to Osterley and Swakeleys (thirty-four and thirty-nine hearths respectively). The total cost, according to Sir Thomas Dawes, who had the building accounts, was £6,700 – sufficient for a large country house. This episode alone is enough to identify Axtell as a significant builder. However, what, if anything, he built in the next twenty-five years is unknown.

In 1642 Axtell was advising on the adequacy of carpentry work in a new house built for Sir Edward Bellingham in Lincolns Inn Fields. The remaining evidence is all about buildings in the St James's Square area. In particular, he built a house there, presumably in the early 1660s, for the Earl of Bath, who was Groom of the Stool to Charles II. This appears to have been 6 Cleveland Row (demolished 1905) or earlier.

Axtell also built on his own account in that area. In the Earl of St Albans's rent roll of 1676, Axtell's brother-in-law, Andrew Carne, a stonemason, held lease of 1661 in trust for him three messuages and other buildings in Haymarket and five messuages in Pall Mall. Another lease of 1661 subsequently assigned to Axtell concerned two houses in Piccadilly and Jermyn Street. There were also leases paying only ground rents made in 1663 and subsequently assigned to Axtell: one for a plot twenty feet wide in St Albans Street and a plot twenty-two feet wide in Charles Street, "since built"; and one for a plot ninety-six feet wide in St Albans Street. Axtell's will of 1671 refers to three messuages in Pall Mall "beeing three of the six messuages heretofore built by Thomas Allat chandler and myself"; to twelve houses built under three leases from the Earl of St Albans (including Jacob's Well, the Vine Tavern and the Duke's Head); and to his ground lot to five men "to build upon scituate in the old Pall Mall in St Albans Street and Charles Streete". The will also mentions other properties which were probably not built by Axtell.

By 1668 Axtell was purchasing property in Enfield, and by the late 1660s he had "acquired considerable estate sufficient to maintaine himself during his life without further labour in his said trade from which he intended to withdraw himself". He described himself in his will of 1671 as of Enfield. Having no children, he had helped his brother Francis, also a carpenter, by procuring custom for him, lending him money and paying for timber for him to use in building: Francis had enclosed open land in St Martin-in-the-Fields belonging to James as a timber yard. So when the Earl and Countess of Bath wanted their house in Cleveland Row extended in June 1672, James handed the work to Francis, keeping £40 out of the £275 paid, in return for which he was to look after the designing of the said whole work. Articles of 1st July 1672 provided that Francis was to build it "according to a draught drawn by James and in a way James should approve. Unfortunately Francis died later in the year before the work was finished and his widow, Martha, sued the Earl for not paying her the £40 which had gone to James. She denied that James had done the designing, claiming that he had "given over all worke of that nature before that time".

By 1670 James Axtell had already purchased some of the rights to Gelding Close, where he intended to put up "such houses as might accommodate Gentry" and where Golden Square was later built. It brought him no profit and probably huge legal costs. The King did not grant permission for the development until September 1673, and the respective rights of Axtell and Isaac Symball, who had purchased the other share in the land, were not sorted out until early 1675. Axtell proceeded as far as staking and setting out his land for building, but died before any of it had been leased out. In fact he seems to have provided little more than the names of Lower James Street and Upper James Street, leading out of the Square.

Axtell lived modestly in his last years, and the number of his servants was reduced to just one, perhaps reflecting the difficulties over Gelding Close. He died in November 1679. According to his will, his personal estate amounted to £483:9s.3d, and his debts, legacies and funeral costs to £883:9s.2d; however, there was also real estate. Under his will the Gelding Close land was to pass to the children of Francis, and therefore in practice to their mother Martha Axtell, who had already sought to entangle James in legal proceedings. It was Martha who, in 1684, managed to lease out all Axtell's property in Golden Square at good rents, after which building soon began.

**Notes**

1. He gave his age as fifty in October 1641 and sixty in January 1647 (National Archives [hereafter NA], C 24, Bradborne v. Wymondsold, p.61; NA, C24/701, Webbe v. Woodford.
2. NA, C 10/173/1.
3. NA, C 8/230/57.
7. NA, C 10/173/1.
9. NA, PROB 11/361, q. 154, James Axtell.
11. NA, PROB, 11.361, q. 154.
14. NA, C 10/173/1
17. Ibid.

Canaletto in England by Denise Silvester-Carr

When Canaletto arrived in London in May 1746 his topographical views of Venice were already known to many of the country’s wealthy landowners. The fourth Duke of Bedford had bought twenty-four for his Covent Garden house in the 1730s (today they hang in Woburn Abbey) and the Earl of Fitzwilliam and the Duke of Leeds had also acquired paintings. Joseph Smith, the British Consul in Venice, had introduced many of the young milordi on the Grand Tour to the artist. Smith was Canaletto’s greatest patron, and fifty of the 500 paintings that he later sold to George III – today in the Royal Collection – were by the Venetian artist. Smith, who arranged the sale of works by a number of Venetian artists, was not the only agent acting for English connoisseurs. The Irish impresario Owen McSwiney, the bankrupt former manager of the Queen’s Theatre, Haymarket, who had fled to the Continent to escape his creditors, was buying allegorical paintings on behalf of the future second Duke of Richmond in 1722 and five years later purchased four of Canaletto’s Venetian views on copper for the Duke. Twenty years on it was the Duke who was to give Canaletto one of his first commissions in England. Visitors to Venice had declined after the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession and, with little work coming his way, Canaletto seems to have decided that if his English patrons could not come to him he would go to them. He arrived with a letter from Consul Smith to McSwiney asking him to introduce the artist to the Duke.

Canaletto’s earliest London views were painted from the terrace of Richmond House on the Thames, and from other viewpoints he drew and painted Westminster Bridge. The bridge was one of several buildings that was to feature many times in his thirty-five London views, and some ten paintings and drawings of it will be among forty paintings and more than a dozen drawings at Dulwich Picture Gallery from 24th January in an exhibition that focuses on his time in England.

Charles Labelye’s bridge, nearing completion when Canaletto arrived, was the most important construction in London in the 1740s. Because little is known about his nine years in England we can only speculate as to why the bridge held such appeal. As the first bridge across the Thames in central London since London Bridge went up centuries earlier, it attracted huge public interest but the real reason may have been that two of his patrons, the dukes of Bedford and Richmond, were Commissioners of the Bridge, as was Sir Hugh Smithson, soon to be created Duke of Northumberland. Smithson, oddly, the only known original buyer of the bridge pictures, acquired the well known early view looking through an arch towards the City. Painted in 1746, it shows the wooden scaffolding still in place and a workman’s bucket hanging from the parapet. Another view, on Lord Mayor’s Day 1746, shows the bridge finished with two large
Out with the treacherous Tube Map!

by Tony Aldous

The May 2006 LTS Newsletter enclosed a Transport for London rail map which Roger Cline incautiously described as showing “how our public rail transport might be in 2012”. I’m sorry, Roger, but it does nothing of the kind. All it shows is the Underground and the other rail lines in which Transport for London (TfL) has, or expects to have, control. It ignores many local rail lines which are just as important to the London districts they serve but happen to bear the label “National Rail” and, for the next few years at least, remain outside the Mayor of London’s control.

The map is just one of the latest of many generations of London rail diagrams all descending from Harry Beck’s ground-breaking Tube Map of 1933. The diagrammatic form — all straight lines, vertical, horizontal and diagonal, rather than the cartographically accurate wiggly lines of earlier rail maps — is so familiar today that one is surprised to learn how shockingly revolutionary it was at the time. Indeed, London Transport’s publicity manager first rejected it as a step too far, then when Beck persisted, relented.1 Contrary to the publicity department’s fears, the public loved it. It was clear and easy to read and simplified what was, even then, a complex network. Long recognised as a classic, it has been imitated by transport systems round the world.

But that very classic status has, I believe, blinded people to what for many Londoners is a fatal flaw: the Tube Map is still a company map. It includes Amersham, out in Buckinghamshire and well beyond the Greater London boundary, but not places like Hackney, Peckham or Barnes, in London’s inner suburbs. Yet these places have local rail services, which for their communities serve much the same purpose as the tube. They are not on the map because they are not controlled by TfL. This has a number of unfortunate results. Most obviously passengers are frequently misled as to the best route to a desired destination.

Take, for instance, the tourist from abroad who has just visited HMS Belfast. He wishes to go on to the National Maritime Museum. At London Bridge station he sees a tube map. It tells him he should take the Northern Line to Bank, change on to the DLR and reach Greenwich via Limehouse and Canary Wharf — a total of eleven stations and one change, taking around twenty-five minutes. It fails to tell him that Greenwich is just two stops away (an eight-minute journey) by South East Trains from the platforms above him. Likewise a passenger at Waterloo looking at the tube map for directions to Richmond may conclude...
he should take the tube to Embankment and make a sixteen-stop journey by District line – a journey of around forty minutes. South West Trains run six trains an hour from Waterloo to Richmond; the best get you there in sixteen minutes. The Tube Map simply does not show this.

Secondly, the Tube Map has, over seven decades, distorted the social and economic geography of London. Being "on the tube" boosts house prices and reinforces the assumption that places like Blackheath (twenty minutes from Charing Cross) are out in the snow drifts halfway to Dover. Dinner invitations to places not “on the tube” are commonly greeted with doubt and foreboding!

The overall picture is, admittedly, somewhat rosier. TIL’s excellent Internet Journey Planner takes in all rail as well as bus and tram services; and maps showing all London’s rail lines do exist – they are called London Connections and come in two versions: TIL’s (in which only tube lines are colour coded) and National Rail (which colours both, but its own services more prominently). But the misleading Tube Map is ubiquitous – outside stations, in pocket diaries, in tourist information centres. If TIL really believes in “joined-up” transport and transport information, it should pension off the Tube Map in its present form, and produce a new series of London rail maps. For most purposes London Connections is probably too complex. It should be supplemented by an inner area map with arrows showing off-map termini, and four quadrant maps – east, south, west and north, each overlapping with the centre. Mr Beck’s classic is still invaluable – but it badly needs updating.

Notes:

Google Earth – http://earth.google.com/
by Kimberly C. Kowal

Ten years ago, a 1:50,000 map of Honduras was snatched out from under me by a staff member in the reading room at the Library of Congress; he had spotted the “classified” stamp disallowing public consultation, not uncommon for relatively current mapping of areas with political unrest. How things have changed. Geospatial renderings of the whole world wide are now available freely to all, if only to entertain and amaze.

As most web-users know, Google Earth is a free tool on the web providing satellite imagery of the entire globe. More precisely, however, it is a proprietary application (of which the beta version is freely downloadable for personal use), available online for those with broadband Internet access in order to open and view KML files. KML (KMZ for zipped) stands for Keyhole Markup Language, providing a hint to the background of the project. Keyhole Corp., acquired by Google in 2004, produced the first commercial mutation of satellite imagery gathered by US intelligence-gathering space-craft (Keyhole satellite system) when it was declassified in 2002.

The data covers the world, to various levels of resolution and currency. As the user moves between scales and locations on the earth, the imagery/data is streamed from Google’s servers to the user’s computer. Resolution is fifteen metres per pixel for the world (medium) and one foot – one metre for over one hundred urban areas (high – view from the ground of approximately 800-1,500 feet), including London. Imagery is captured by satellite or aircraft sometime in the last three years, with these urban areas said to be on average twelve to twenty-four months old.

Indeed, this tool is fascinating, and flying into the earth as images adjust to various scales of speeding remotely-sensed imagery will impress any map or terrain lover. Place names over the world can be searched and located, as can addresses for the USA, Canada, and Europe; 3-D buildings and terrain models of a very few places are available. One may create files in the paid versions of GE, and online news stories can now be found accompanied by a KML file with geographic locations, data, photos and other information imbedded within (such as the BBC’s coverage of the London bombings).

As with any new technology, however, competitors have arisen, most recently MS Windows Live Local http://local.live.com/, which, more conveniently, runs within a web browser. More are soon to follow, surely, but enjoy this one for now.

Kimberly Kowal is the British Library’s Curator of Digital Mapping.

News

Journey to the New World

Four hundred years ago, on 20th December 1606, three ships, the Susan Constant, the Godspeed and Discovery, set sail from the London Docks with 108 explorers on board. Backed by James I, and funded by the Virginia Company, they were going to the New World in search of gold and to see if they could find a route to the Orient. Five months later they landed on the banks of the James River, sixty miles from the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Jamestown, Virginia, became the first English settlement in America, and it is appropriate that the Museum in Docklands, almost on the site of the point of departure, should host an exhibition that tells the story of the journey, of its links with London and of the settlement.
Recent historical research and archaeological discoveries by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia’s Antiquities and other archaeologists are overturning received opinion on the Jamestown settlers. The exhibition will bring together an important body of seventeenth-century finds, many of them having made the crossing from London to the New World, as well as artefacts from the Museum in Docklands’ permanent collection. It is one of the few celebrations in this country to mark the 400th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in America. Plans to celebrate in a big way in Virginia have been underway for several years.

Journey to the New World opens on 23rd November and runs until 13th May at the Museum in Docklands, West India Quay, E14. Open daily 10am-6pm. Admission is free (there is a £5 + concessions charge for an annual admission ticket to the museum).

Exploring 20th Century London Online
In September www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk, a groundbreaking website project that draws on the collections of four London museums, went online. Exploring twentieth-century London offers an encyclopaedia of some 8,000 objects which tell the story of the capital in the last century. It gives voice to stories dramatic and everyday, nationally significant and deeply personal. At the click of a mouse you can access the holdings of the Museum of London, London’s Transport Museum, the Jewish Museum and the Museum of Croydon.

The site is packed with images, artefacts, sound files and database records which tell some surprising tales of life in the city. If you want to know what drew crowds of thousands to a Highgate bus driver’s funeral or wish to know where Bollywood first arrived you will find it here. You can search by borough or explore by themes which include everything from Art and Design to Politics, Youth Culture and Fashion or from fetish maps to faith books. The site has the largest collection of the museums’ images ever made accessible, including important and previously unknown pictures. It will be especially useful during the closure of part of the Museum of London and of the London Transport Museum.

Maps and Society
The first in the 2006-2007 Maps and Society series of lectures in the history of cartography was scheduled to take place on 19th October when Dr Robin Woolven was speaking about the London County Council Bomb Damage Maps that the LTS published last year. Further lectures at the Warburg Institute in Woburn Square will include a talk on 23rd November by Malcolm G. H. Bishop entitled ‘The 1518 Map in Sir Thomas More’s Utopia – Dentistry Solves the Mystery. Maps, Myths, and Gardens: Faithorne and Newcourt’s Map of London (1658) will be the subject of Dr David Marsh’s lecture on 25th January and the series continues with a further five lectures between February and May. All lectures, which start at 5pm, are free and followed by refreshments. For details of the full programme contact Dr Catherine Delano Smith on 020 8346 5112.

Museum of London Closures
In February 2007 the Museum of London will begin an £18 million initiative to redevelop the galleries which tell the stories of London from 1666 to the present day. This will mean the closure of the lower floors for the next two years. The new galleries will open in 2009 with significantly increased access to the Museum’s objects, both in the galleries and online, and will also include a new Clore Learning Centre, a theatre and a central Sackler Learning Centre containing an information zone and coffee point.

For more information, including about how to support the campaign by “buying a year of London’s history” and becoming part of the new display, telephone 020 7814 5505 or see www.museumoflondon.org.uk/buyayear

Book Reviews
Alice Owen: The Life, Marriages and Times of a Tudor Lady

The story of the foundation of the Dame Alice Owen charity, comprising a school and almshouses in Islington, is well known. Even today a walk down Goswell Road takes you past the Dame Alice Owen Technology Centre, emblazoned with a curious badge – an arrow seemingly caught in a tall hat. A telling symbol, this commemorates a lucky escape followed by the vow, made a good fifty years later, to give tangible thanks for her salvation.

Written by her nine times great-grandson, this engaging work relates the upwards social mobility of Alice, the Islington innkeeper’s daughter who through three marriages to City merchants and, lastly, a judge, acquired wealth, status and social recognition. We begin with a sketch of sixteenth-century Islington, and while much of the detail is necessarily speculative, the author builds up a convincing picture of the life of this young girl through petty-school, past the traumatic but formative accident on the archery fields of Finsbury, and through to her first marriage.

We are then acquainted with Elizabethan England. No Merrie England, insists the author, reminding us of the inflation, religious strife and poverty which formed a backdrop to the young Alice’s long life. This leads on to a number of courses; an overview of Elizabethan London, then the work of brewers and of the Brewers’ Company – her first husband’s trade and the trustees to this
day of her foundation. We are then acquainted with Cumberland, home of a later husband and, finally, with the workings of the law courts and Parliament where her third and last husband laboured so fruitfully. Lastly, and rightly, we are introduced to the fruits of her labour that still bear her name – the almshouses, now discontinued, and the school now moved to Potters Bar.

This book succeeds at several levels. First, it is a life of Alice Owen to which the author has rightly added substantial and well-researched contextual material. Then again, it is something of a period piece – an exemplar of how a woman with the right qualities, not to mention a good deal of luck – could leave a lasting mark on society. And finally it is a challenge to family historians – for that is how this work began – on how diligent research can unearth rich treasures of detailed narrative.

– Simon Morris

**Dunsford Manor, 1851-1898: A Late-Victorian Manor in Wandsworth**

Wandsworth is fortunate in the survival of an unusually long run of Court Books covering 1680-1898, now in the London Metropolitan Archives; these are reinforced by other documents in Lambeth Borough Archives and the Surrey Record Centre. The history is complicated, since the manor consisted of pieces of land scattered all over Wandsworth, held by forty-six tenants, some of them still copyhold – Miss Ensing gives a useful list of definitions. Matters become even more involved when we realise that succession was according to ancient Borough English custom, namely that property went to the youngest, not the eldest, son. Miss Ensing is to be congratulated on her unravelling of the intricacies of the development of one small piece of what is now London.

What these forty-seven pages, reproduced from typescript, show is, first, how the right to land could belong in law to someone who was far away – we get landowners in Bombay, Natal in South Africa, Norfolk in Virginia, and Australia. Real authority belonged to their agents, usually solicitors who, on the whole, seem to have been honest. Secondly, we realise that the true value of land was its usefulness in raising a mortgage with which a man could develop a business and, if successful, become an influential figure in his community. One such enterprising resident was William Stamper of East Hill, who from 1844 was developing a coach-building business on the main London road. A photograph (Wandsworth Local History Services, image no. 388/391) shows extensive property on the corner of Wandsworth High Street and Fairfield Street, c.1900, by which time early motor cars would have been under repair as well as coaches and carts.

A particular delight are local place names – would you not like to live in Chickabiddy Row and would not fear to dwell in Gory Shot?

Local history is vital if we are to understand the areas in which we live, if our surroundings are to be more to us than a mass of incoherent buildings without meaning, or life, or a past. Modest publications such as this are worth their weight in true gold.

– Ann Saunders

**Voices from Dickens’ London**

As the Peter Ackroyd foreword informs us, Mr Paterson’s book is an attempt to “enter the culture and society” of nineteenth-century London “in an immediate and unmediated manner” by tuning in to the voices of the past. Extensive quotations from a range of contemporary sources – Dickens himself, of course, but also Henry Mayhew, George Augustus Sala, the foreign visitor Max Schlesing, Captain Donald Shaw of the 86th, the footman William Tayler and others – are marshalled under various headings (shops, transport, entertainment, crime, etc.) to reconstruct what is perceived as a lost city that “had far more in common with a Third World city than with the cosmopolitan capital we know today”.

The original authors are entertaining, informative and quirky in their sidelights on London life, but quite how “immediate and unmediated” a picture we ultimately get is perhaps another issue. The quotations appear frequently to be extracted from secondary sources, perhaps piling selectivity on selectivity, and Mr Paterson’s industrious commentaries have an occasional tendency towards blandness. Some are simply baffling: to select Francis Grose’s *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (first published in 1785) as a guide to Victorian slang seems perverse when John Camden Hotten’s *Dictionary of Modern Slang... used at the Present Day in the Streets of London* (1859) is so much more apposite – even if using the 1823 edition of Grose with revisions by Pierce Egan – another author here ignored.

A worthy effort and of value for assembling a host of material in convenient form – but just a little disappointing in a book I wanted to enjoy more.

– Laurence Worms

**Haringey’s Hidden Streams Revealed**

As an outer London borough, Haringey has the advantage that OS Maps of the nineteenth century show local streams before diversion or culverting when the land was later developed. Based on research by an enthusiast and written by established authors (both LTS members), there is no doubt that this is a comprehensive survey. There are plenty of photographs, current, during and
after development and plenty of maps, mostly pre-development, annotated as necessary, including a fold-out map at the front showing the streams of the whole borough.

The main intended reader is the local resident or historian and for this reader the book is ideal. For the reader not so familiar with the area, the book even with its index and maps is not enough to follow the text because not all the buildings and streets mentioned appear on the maps. Even with a recent street atlas, your reviewer found it hard going to follow the path of the streams being described, at least from his armchair. Perhaps he should get out more.

— Roger Cline

**King’s Cross: a tour in time**


With King’s Cross about to change out of all recognition over the next few years, now is a good time to remind people of its rich and little-known history. In just under a hundred photographs, prints and maps, Camden Archives has put together a quick survey with captions of the last 250 years. In addition to the station and the ensuing blight caused to housing and business, we get such delights as the Royal Panarmonium Gardens with its amazing suspension railway – the London Eye of the 1830s – not forgetting the original King’s Cross, crowned by its ludicrous statue of George IV which vanished ten years ago. An excellent record of an unfashionable area of London.

— David Webb

**Crime & Criminals of Victorian London**


This book is based on the Victorian press such as the Illustrated Police News and has chapters on different crimes from wilful murder to fraud. As with many newspapers today, the reports of the time concentrated on sensational crimes since they would sell papers and a prolonged read leaves one feeling a little punch-drunk. It does give a picture of life in the darker coloured areas of Booth’s Poverty Maps (LTS Publication 130) with the threat of the workhouse and transportation hanging over the desperate poor. I was interested to learn that until the First World War the law assumed that a wife who committed a crime in the presence of her husband was acting under his authority and coercion and so could not be found personally guilty. There are a few annoying spelling mistakes and other errors such as “he bought at Bishopsgate a 6d ticket to Park” – possibly Gidea Park or Woodgrange Park?

— Roger Cline

**Queen’s Park, Kensal, Brondesbury and Harlesden. A Pictorial History**


As the title indicates, this is primarily a book of photographs preceded by a short introduction to each of these four districts of north-west London. The illustrations – in the main from the local library archives – and their pithy captions provide a fascinating social history of the area from mid-Victorian days to roughly the middle of the last century. Who would have thought that Mark Twain, no less, opened Kensal Rise library in 1900, his presence secured by the enterprising committee that had raised funds to build it? Only the reading room was complete but dozens of local denizens, the men in evening dress, the women sporting frothy hats, turned out to hear him talk. In an atmospheric shot of the Marathon in the 1908 Olympics you can see how times have changed. Crowds line both sides of the street as the leading runner passes the Jubilee Clock in Harlesden, two mounted policemen look on and Dorando Pietri crosses the tramlines with two attendants on bicycles and one large following car. A number of pictures show the same views over a period of years. Wrentham Avenue, for example, was wide and bare in 1900, its terraced houses looking sombre. Sixty years later trees line the pavements and parked cars have reduced the width of the road. This is a readable, expertly researched glimpse at the changes in four neighbourhoods of London.

— Denise Silvester-Carr

**Eminently Quakerly: the building of Friends House**


For those members who were unable to attend this year’s AGM, Joanna Clark’s handbook neatly outlines the Quakers’ move from Devonshire House, EC1, to Bloomsbury, and continues with a brief account of the Society’s occupation of Friends House. The search for a new Meeting House had begun before the First World War and the sale of the freehold of the Bishopsgate site enabled them to buy Endsleigh Gardens in 1923, when – as Adrian Flood pointed out at the AGM – no laws protected London’s open spaces. A competition to design the new building was won by Hubert Lidbetter and the first meeting was held in the uncompleted building in 1927. Last year an internal report concluded that nothing indicated the use of the building, which looked shabby, and the Grade II listed headquarters underwent a facelift in time for its eightieth birthday.

— Denise Silvester-Carr
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