

LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY Newsletter Number 64 May 2007

Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2007 **Monday, 2nd July 2007**

The 107th Annual General Meeting of the London Topographical Society will be held on Monday, 2nd July 2007, at St Mary's Church, Wyndham Place, W1. Refreshments will be served from about 5.30pm and the meeting will start at 6.30pm.

The church lies between York Street and Crawford Street, directly north of Bryanston Square. It is a short walk from Marylebone, Baker Street and Edgware Road stations, and not too far from Marble Arch. The area is well served by buses running along Marylebone Road, Edgware Road, Gloucester Place and Baker Street.

St Mary's is a Grade I listed building, built in 1821-23 to a design by Sir Robert Smirke. It has recently been nicely done up to provide a bright and airy meeting space and has a large area downstairs for refreshments. We should have plenty of room and if the weather is fine we can spill out on to the pleasant open space outside.

The annual publication and additional free prints (see page 2) will be distributed to members at the meeting. Those who cannot attend will be sent their annual publication by post, probably in August or September.

As usual, members may bring guests to the AGM. We will be providing sandwiches and cakes, but volunteers will be welcome on the day to help with the vital tasks of pouring out cups of tea and issuing publications.

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 106th Annual General Meeting
- 2 Annual Report of the Council for 2006
- 3 Accounts for 2006
- 4 Hon. Editor's report
- 5 Election of officers and members of Council
- 6 Proposals by members
- 7 Any other business

Item 1 was published in the November newsletter; items 2-3 are included in this one.

– Patrick Frazer, Hon. Secretary

107th Annual Report of the Council of the London Topographical Society for 2006

The publication for 2006 was the *London Topographical Record*, Vol. XXIX. Members were able to collect copies at the Annual General Meeting; other members received theirs later in the year.

The Society made a financial surplus of over £13,000, with profits from selling past publications again contributing about one-quarter of total income. During the year some £27,000 was invested in reprinting Booth's poverty maps, the parishes map and the Rhinebeck panorama. We also regularly reprint the five London A-Zs when necessary. Unfortunately, it did not prove possible to reach agreement with the London Metropolitan Archives for a reprint of the successful atlas of *Bomb Damage Maps*.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 4th July at Friends House in Euston Road. It was followed by talks from Peter Barber and Aidan Flood. A full report on the meeting appeared in the November newsletter.

A total of fifty-five new members joined the Society during the year, slightly more than in 2005 but below the five-year average of sixty-three. At the end of the year there were 1,071 paid-up members and three honorary members, continuing the steady increase in numbers seen in recent years.

The *Newsletter* was published in May and November. Articles included *The Building of the Lowndes Estate, Knightsbridge* by Jennifer Moss, *The Tower Liberty of Marine or Well Close Square* by Sarah Barter Bailey, *A Token of the London Baker whose Oven sparked the Great Fire* by R. H. Thompson, *London: A Life in Maps* by Peter Barber, *Samuel Johnson's London* by Natasha McEnroe, *James Axtell, Builder* by Dorian Gerhold, *Canaletto in London* by Denise Silvester-Carr and *Out with the*

treacherous Tube Map by Tony Aldous, as well as the usual notices, news, notes and reviews.

Council meetings were held in January, April and September to discuss the Society's publication programme, membership, finances and general administration.

Notes

The A-Z of Edwardian London

This year's publication, *The A-Z of Edwardian London*, will be the sixth in the series of A-Zs of London published by the Society. With an introduction by Professor Michael Port, it is based on *Bacon's Large Scale Atlas of London and Suburbs*. The alphabetical index runs to over 20,000 street names and it is printed in full colour. As it is a facsimile, it is larger in format than our previous A-Zs. It is also thicker and so fiendishly heavy that our Hon. Editor suggests you might bring your own wheels or a pram to take it home!

Alan Pearsall

Alan Pearsall, a member of the Society for many years, died on 31st March 2006. He was knowledgeable on many London subjects, particularly the River Thames, and like our Treasurer had common interests in the Newcomen Society, railway history and industrial archaeology generally. After arduous war service he spent his career at the National Maritime Museum as general historian and curator of manuscripts.

In an obituary in the *Independent* Pieter van der Merwe wrote that "Pearsall's retirement in 1985 was marked by his investiture with the reconditely suitable but now discontinued Imperial Service Order, and by (as he was told) a small private dinner at which he arrived to find fifty people waiting to honour him. Never openly astonished, he smilingly observed that a bomb dropped on the room would wipe out maritime historical scholarship at a stroke. Happily, he was to remain engaged in it for another twenty years. His last two conversations in hospital were, appropriately, about advice to a postgraduate student on naval aspects of the Crimean War, and a specialist discussion with an old railway friend. Neither he nor his visitors anticipated that, by the next morning, he would have followed a lifetime's habit and quietly slipped away."

London Reconstructed

Those of you who attend the AGM will be able to collect for free an extra London item, courtesy of Alan Pearsall, who left us a bequest in his will. Rather than absorb the gift in meeting general expenses, we have used it to purchase the remaining copies of the sets of four prints of London Reconstructed by the late Peter Jackson, our former Chairman, a noted illustrator and authority on London's history. We are especially grateful to Valerie Jackson-Harris for facilitating the purchase.

Our plan is to make the sets available in a flat pack measuring 26 inches x 19 inches. You can extract the prints and their corresponding key sheets and roll them up if you find that more convenient (bring elastic bands/cardboard tubes). We should have a few sets left over after the AGM so that, if you are unable to attend, you may apply for your copy by sending the Treasurer £3 to cover the cost of postage and packing, but do not expect a rapid response.

Should any member consider following Mr Pearsall's generous gesture, the Society would be extremely grateful. The suggested correct wording for such a bequest in a will is:

I GIVE free of tax the following:

The sum of xxx xxx pounds to THE LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY of 36 Old Deer Park Gardens Richmond Surrey Registered Charity Number 271590.

Last Chance

Only a few days remain to see forty etchings of London before and after the Great Fire by the celebrated Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-77). The exhibition at Guildhall Library Print Room until Saturday 12th May features the large and exceptionally detailed panoramas of London, Westminster and Greenwich, as well as a fascinating view of the aftermath of the Fire.

Open House

Open House weekend in London will be on Saturday and Sunday 15th and 16th September when more than 600 buildings of architectural merit will throw open their doors. A large number are generally never open to the public, but such is the popularity of this weekend nowadays that often you have to book in advance. Details will be found in the Open House London booklet, which will be published in August or online on www.openhouse.org.uk and click the London key.

Thames Bridges Mnemonics

Lester May's mnemonic for London's bridges in the November *Newsletter* certainly exercised several members. John Perry has suggested "Through London And Southwark Many Bridges Will Have Wedded Locales Visibly Grown Completely Apart But Basically Whole" (Alexandra has been substituted for Cannon Street). A member who wishes to remain anonymous has come up with "Through London City's Suburbs Many Bridges Wander, Heavily Welded, Locally Visible, Great Constructions And Beautifully Built Wonders." Brian Cookson's "Putney Puritans Have Begun Crucifying Kind Kings Restraining Thus Royal Revenge" covers the western stretch of bridges – Putney Railway, Putney, Hammersmith, Barnes Railway, Chiswick, Kew Railway, Kew, Richmond Footbridge Lock & Weir, Twickenham, Richmond Rail and Richmond.

Sir Rafe Sadleir of Sutton House, Hackney by Mike Gray

In 1507 a healthy boy was born to Henry Sadleir and his wife in Warwickshire. That boy Rafe grew up to become one of the most important courtiers and statesmen in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I. At his death, eighty years later, he was considered to be one of the richest commoners in the country. Rafe was also the man who built Sutton House, Hackney. This year is the 500th anniversary of his birth and at Sutton House we, the Sutton House Society and the National Trust, are commemorating the event with a weekend of activities on 23rd and 24th June and descendants of Rafe Sadleir from all over the world are coming to Hackney to help us celebrate the occasion.

Henry Sadleir was steward to an important landowner in Warwickshire, Sir Edward Belknap, who was Henry VIII's chief butler responsible for maintaining the royal wine cellars. When plans were formulated for the legendary Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, the grand tournament and meeting of Henry with Francis I of France in Calais, Sadleir assisted Belknap in the administration. His particular role was the acquisition of the vast quantity of "canvas and buckram" needed to make the royal tents and temporary palace. Shortly afterwards, in 1521, Belknap died and Henry Sadleir had to make new arrangements for himself and his family. He decided to purchase a house in Hackney, then a salubrious village to the north east of London, popular with noblemen and wealthy merchants. Henry wrote to his friend Thomas Cromwell. "Syr, I shoyd your mastreshyp howe I have boughte a howse in Haceney - I trust I my wife and our childryn shall injoye the saied howse with the appurtenances to godly plesure."

It is not known precisely where this house was but Hackney landowner Sir John Heron, treasurer to the King's chamber, to whom Sadleir had to submit his accounts, held property close to St Augustine's Church and in the light of the future building site of Sutton House it seems reasonable to suggest that the house that Henry bought was that which, in later documents, was described as "formerly a brew house" or inn.

In the meantime young Rafe was being brought up and educated, probably from the age of seven, in the household of Thomas Cromwell in London. He wrote later that he was "nourished... and admired" by Cromwell from the "yeres of discredytion". By the age of nineteen he was already employed by Cromwell as his secretary and, "by meanes whereof he did many thinges touchinge matiers of state and by that meanes he in continuance of time was knowne to King Harry."

In the life and career of Rafe Sadleir 1535 was a key year as well as in the history of Sutton House. At the relatively early age of twenty-eight Sadleir was awarded the important administrative post,



Portrait of Sir Rafe Sadleir thought to be by Hans Holbein

shared with Thomas Cromwell, of Keeper of the Treasury of the Chancery known as the Hanaper. This was life tenure and carried with it the substantial emolument of a major office. It was also the year that his first surviving son, Thomas, was baptised in Hackney Church, Cromwell being the godfather, and also the year in which his first family house was built, known then as the "bryk place".

The evidence for the building date is derived from two sources. Tree ring analysis has shown that some of the key timbers in the house were felled in 1534 and sixteenth-century building techniques required working with green rather than weathered oak. We also know that a large house known as the King's Place in nearby Clapton had been granted by the King to Cromwell and in 1535 he was rebuilding it using a hundred oaks floated down the River Lea from Henry VIII's lands in Enfield. It seems more than likely that some of the trees found their way to Rafe Sadleir's new building site. In a deed of sale of 1550 to John Machell, master of the Clothworkers' Company, it is described as a "capitall messuage or tenement with the appurtenances of old tyme called a Brewhouse and afterwards a dwelling house... and now called the bryk place."

As is implied by its name the house was built in brick, a relatively novel material at that time except for the grandest of houses like Hampton Court. It was a compact H-plan building of three storeys. It made a bold show of status with elaborate patterning in burnt brick diapering which is still visible despite extensive re-fronting of the house in the eighteenth century.

"In the summer of 1535, the King embarked on one of the most important progresses of his reign [to the West Country]... not just an elaborate hunting jaunt, but a public relations exercise... promoting the recent religious reforms." Accompanying the King and Anne Boleyn was a vast escort of courtiers and servants. Included in the party were Thomas Cromwell, Rafe Sadleir and the famous Flemish court painter Holbein.

Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543) was appointed court painter to the King and his work was in great demand by merchants and courtiers in and around the City. He painted Henry and Cromwell and many of the men close to them. Several portraits however have never been identified and none in the past have been attributed to Sadleir. However, I suggested that one portrait known as An Unidentified Man may in fact be Rafe as it was painted in 1535 and the man's age is given as twenty-eight, which was Rafe's age in that year. There is also a noticeable resemblance between the portrait and the face of the recumbent figure in his memorial in Standon Church, Hertfordshire.

Dr David Starkey's response to this proposal was interesting and worth quoting:

"Mike Gray's suggested identification [of the portrait] with Ralph Sadleir is a new one on me. But the days do fit – and perhaps more than you realise. For not only was Sadleir twenty-eight in 1535 but 1535 was also the year that straddled his service to Cromwell and the King. Indeed there is an interesting possibility that the portrait was painted on the royal progress of 1535. Henry was accompanied by both his new Queen, Anne Bolyne, and his minister, Thomas Cromwell. In Cromwell's train was his secretary and confidential assistant Sadleir... the host of the royal couple on the 23rd to 26th was Sir Nicholas Poyntz of Iron Acton, Gloucestershire. Poyntz commemorated the visit by

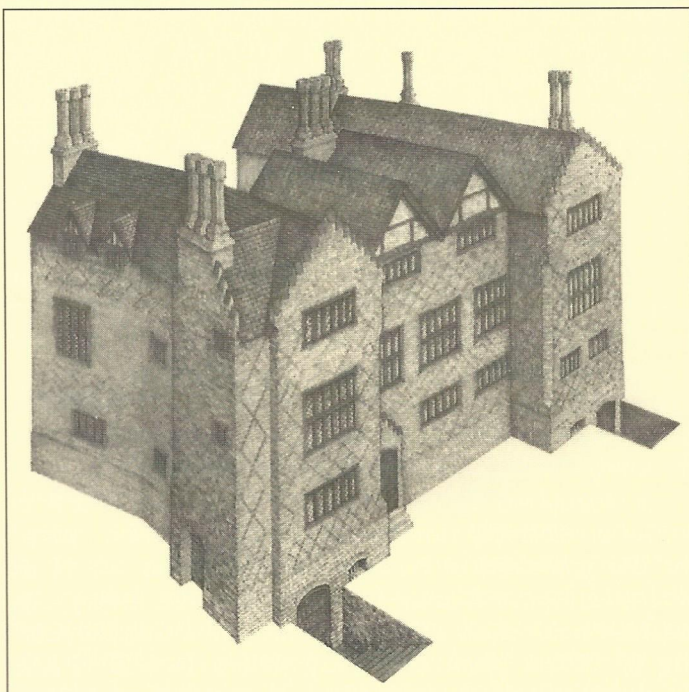
commissioning his portrait from Holbein... The details of dress, in particular the upturned collar, and the trim of the moustache and beard, are very similar to the (possible) Sadleir portrait. My guess is that they were done at the same time by the royal painter who accompanied the court on a progress that would bring not only the Reformation to the localities, but the Renaissance as well. It is a lovely seemingly convincing story."

At the recent Holbein exhibition at Tate Britain the drawing and a portrait in oils based on the drawing of An Unidentified Man 1535 were hung side by side. Dr Susan Foister, curator of the exhibition, wrote in the catalogue that it has been, "plausibly suggested the sitter might be Sir Ralph Sadleir".

Rafe Sadleir went on to become the King's ambassador to Scotland where he saw Mary (later Queen of Scots) as a baby. He won glory at the battle of Pinkie in Scotland, became one of the advisors to Edward VI and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in Elizabeth's reign. His most onerous task as an old man was to be the custodian of Mary when she was in prison awaiting trial. He described her as, "this most wicked and filthy woman", but nevertheless still took her on falconry expeditions to the great displeasure of Elizabeth.

Sadleir's link with the village of Hackney ceased in 1550 when he sold the "bryk place", which we now call Sutton House and settled his family in Standon, Hertfordshire. A prize-winning book, *Sutton House, A Tudor Courtier's House in Hackney* (see page 19), records the history of Sadleir, his house in Hackney and the vicissitudes of its occupation over the subsequent 470 years.

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"Bryk Place" c.1535 (a conjectural reconstruction by Richard Bond)

Saving London's Squares

by Aidan Flood

Rain or shine, one of my colleagues goes out at lunchtime and invariably spends a few tranquil moments in one of the nearby garden squares, of which there are many in Holborn. Bloomsbury Square, Brunswick Square, Queen Square, Red Lion Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Square are all a short walk away. Then there are the private gardens, such as the one in Mecklenburgh Square which, although closed to the public, also provide an oasis of greenery that can be enjoyed by passers-by.

One should not underestimate the contribution these open spaces make to the quality of life for the people of London. Basil Holmes, the Secretary of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, wrote in a letter published in *The Times* on 13th September 1905, that these spaces "whether or not open to the public are of the utmost value to the community at large, especially when properly planted: and, together with numerous disused churchyards and burial grounds scattered throughout the metropolis, they form most important lungs and airholes, as well as visions of beauty, in the midst of crowded surroundings". Some of these squares have been there for over 200 years and it would be very easy to take their presence for grant-

ed. Their survival, though, has not always been guaranteed. Indeed it took a concerted campaign, and the loss of some squares to developers before the London Squares Act of 1931 was finally passed listing 410 named spaces in London that would be protected in perpetuity.

The formation of these squares and open spaces was a distinctive feature of the development of high-class residential estates in London over a period of some 250 years, from about the middle of the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. It is probable that the intention of these early developers was merely to leave a large open area in front of the houses. These spaces appear to have fallen into neglect and the inhabitants of the houses sought means to introduce improvements and arrange for their continued upkeep. The first instance of this happening would seem to be in relation to St James's Square in Westminster. In 1726, sixty years after the houses had been built, an Act of Parliament was passed which provided that the enclosure should be managed and maintained by trustees who were empowered to levy a rate for that purpose on the inhabitants of the houses in the square.

Gradually other legislation was introduced to regulate the management and upkeep of specific gardens. The Metropolis Management Act of 1855, which made extensive changes in the local government of London, allowed for Commissioners,



St James's Square in Blome's map of 1689

Trustees or other Bodies to continue the maintenance and management of their enclosures and levy rates on the inhabitants to defray their expenses. The Town Gardens Protection Act of 1863 allowed local authorities to deal with certain cases of neglected enclosures. Under certain circumstances the authority could appoint a committee from the inhabitants of the houses around the garden or open space to take over the management and raise money by an addition to the general rate which would be levied on the householders to cover their costs. If the owners or occupiers did not agree to take over management of the land, the authority could do so, as happened with Clapton Square in Hackney. Title to the land, however, remained with the rightful heirs.

A situation, which perhaps had not been foreseen, occurred in 1903 with Edwardes Square in Kensington. As the leases of the properties around the square all came to an end, new leases were issued but this time without any rights of the occupiers to use the enclosure. The freehold to this land was then sold by the owner, Lord Kensington, with the knowledge that the purchasers intended to develop the land as a residential estate. With a certain amount of alarm the London County Council debated the best means to be adopted for securing that the gardens in squares and similar plots of land should not be built upon. Among the proposals suggested was the compulsory purchase of sites under threat. The LCC had indeed already purchased some enclosures in order to save them from being built on, though this had involved very heavy expenditure out of public funds. In 1900 the LCC had purchased Albert Square in Stepney for £10,560 and three years later bought Ford Square and Sidney Square, also in Stepney. The three enclosures were situated in densely populated parts of Stepney and the LCC justified the high costs involved by stressing the importance of maintaining the existence of open spaces in such a deprived part of London.

One of the Council members, W. H. Dickinson, moved that the Council ought not to purchase any of these squares. Instead the proposition should be put before Parliament that these squares should not be built on at all, because they were so necessary to Londoners as air spaces. He considered the existing state of affairs to be "an abuse of the power of the landlord interest against the public interest". He also argued that although the potential value of the particular piece of land would be affected, the gardens actually enhanced the value of the land lying immediately around it and belonging to the same proprietor. Consequently the LCC produced the Edwardes Square Protection Bill, which was introduced into the House of Lords in 1904. The Chairman, Lord Balfour, refused to move a second reading and intimated that if moved by anyone else he would oppose it. This move effectively ended any hope that the Bill would succeed and it was subsequently withdrawn. A letter from the solicitors for Lord Kensington was also published in *The Times*

reminding the LCC of "the propriety of abstaining from doing anything which may interfere with or prejudice the free course of the sale". Subsequently, the Edwardes Square Garden Committee sued the new owners of the land and their case – that they did in fact have the right to exclusive use of the enclosure in perpetuity – was upheld by the House of Lords in 1910.

This success, based as it was on the interpretation of very specific legislation, did not set a precedent for the future of the other enclosures in London. The battle lines were drawn. On the one side were a number of organisations such as the London Society, the National Trust, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, the Greater London Committee of the National Playing Fields Association, and the London County Council. Their arguments were based on the essential need for providing and maintaining open spaces and playing grounds to ensure the development of a healthy population. On the other side were those that held the opinion that the rights of property should be protected against any threat. They were not all necessarily opposed to the idea of preserving the squares but were insistent that the property owners be adequately recompensed for relinquishing their rights.

The LCC tried again. They introduced into Parliament the London Squares and Enclosures (Preservation) Bill in 1905. With the Bill was included a list of over 400 London enclosures varying from large public spaces such as Parliament Square to minute spots at the junctions of roads. One short sentence indicates the aim of the Bill: "From and after the passing of this Act it shall not be lawful to erect any building or structure upon any part of the scheduled lands." There was however no element of compulsion in the Bill, a copy of which was sent to each owner intimating that if they objected their land would regretfully be withdrawn from the schedules. Almost 300 were withdrawn. The House of Lords again rejected the Bill in May 1905. It was reintroduced in 1906, this time only containing in the schedule the enclosures of those owners who expressed agreement with the Bill, sixty-four in all, thirty-eight of which were already owned by local authorities, with others belonging to the Crown and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. This was accepted and passed into law and though a step in the right direction hardly offered any protection to squares under threat. The London Society's response in their later report "London's Squares and how to save them" was "Thank you for nothing!"

After this limited success the issue of London's squares receded from the political arena for some years. However in 1922 the subject came to the forefront once again with the sale of two sites in St Pancras – at Mornington Crescent, on which the Carreras factory was built, and Endsleigh Gardens, the site of Friends Meeting House on the Euston Road. The grave public concern at the loss of these

enclosures is evident from correspondence and editorials in the newspapers of the time.

In one such letter to *The Times* in September 1922, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association urged the LCC to give such "fair compensation to the owners" to preserve the sites for public use. A deputation including members from the above Association, the London Society, the Town Planning Institute, the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, the London School of Tropical Medicine, and the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research was received at a meeting of St Pancras Council stressing the detrimental effects any building would have upon the amenities of the district.

The St Pancras Town Clerk was instructed to make a report to Committee, which he did in November 1922. His report concluded that Endsleigh Gardens was the private property of Messrs Cubitt & Co. and that they had every right to sell the property and that "the purchaser of the land is in a position to erect upon the site such buildings as he may think fit". He also ascertained that the price of the land would be in the region of £50,000. The Council regretfully informed the deputation that they were unable to take any action. The land was purchased by the Conservative MP Sir Alfred Butt who informed the Council that in all probability building operations would commence within about a year. He did offer to contribute £10,000 himself towards the £50,000 in order to preserve the site but the Council decided that this was still too much.

A further report submitted to the LCC in 1923 recommended that no action be taken in the matter of the preservation of Endsleigh Gardens either by acquisition or town planning. It was pointed out that the space was only two and a half acres, that a large sum had been demanded, and a score of similar squares existed within a half-mile radius. Given their earlier efforts in the support of open spaces this would appear to be a surprising response particularly as there is no evidence that the LCC even made representations to the vendors in this case. A cynic might suspect from what followed that the LCC were quite prepared to accept the loss of Endsleigh Gardens as it fitted in with their plans for developing the Euston Road and they had the powers to obtain a considerable strip of the land in question for nothing.

The fate of Endsleigh Gardens was sealed. Sir Alfred Butt sold the land on to the Society of Friends for £45,000. Although there was no requirement on their part, they took pains to ascertain that no public body was prepared to purchase the gardens for a public park. The eastern third of the square was quickly re-sold to raise money for their build-

ing with the garden between the two sites remaining as Friends House property. Before the building was completed, thirty feet of the site adjoining the Euston Road had to be surrendered to the LCC for road widening and all the trees alongside the north side of the gardens were felled, never to be replaced despite claims from the National Trust that the Society of Friends had given undertakings that they would be preserved. The London Society declared the Society of Friends as "the first to set the bad example of shutting out light and air in one of the best-planned areas of Central London". Joanna Clark, in her book on the building of Friends House, says, "Friends' search for light and air for their own staff had led them to be accused of depriving others." Hubert Lidbetter, the architect of the new building, in writing about the project said that there were many difficulties to be overcome... including the inevitable outcry against building on an open space, even though it was not a public open space and was actually a somewhat derelict conglomeration of trees and shrubs surrounded by high and forbidding railings. Photographs of the gardens at the time would suggest that this description was debatable.

A similar situation was played out in the case of Mornington Crescent. The leases of the houses had expired in 1922 and the enclosure, a site of some four and a half acres, was offered to the Borough Council for the sum of £60,000. The Council minutes of 19th September 1923 show that the price was not considered to be justified and the offer was refused. The land was actually sold for £75,000, an amount way beyond anything that could be raised by campaigning bodies from public subscription.

The loss of Endsleigh Gardens and subsequently Mornington Crescent finally raised public awareness that even more important enclosures were at risk. Mr Laurence Chubb, secretary of the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society in a *Times* editorial of 8th March 1924, stressed that "the need for a definite policy, aimed at the reten-



Leicester Square in 1883 shortly after Albert Grant MP, who had saved it from being built on, gave it to the Metropolitan Board of Works

tion of squares and open spaces, is a growing, and indeed an imperative one". Mr Henderson-Livesey of the London Progressive Association wrote to *The Times* in August 1924 stating that the attitude of the LCC towards the question of preserving these open spaces ought to be a test question at the next election to that body. A *Times* editorial in June 1925 thought that neither space were "any great loss" but alerted its readers to the more serious plans for the purchase of the Foundling Hospital site together with Brunswick and Mecklenburgh squares as a new home for Covent Garden Market. The intention to submit a bill to Parliament for permission to develop these sites was published in *The Times* on 27th November 1926. On 8th December, the paper carried an illustrated feature entitled "Disappearing Squares of London: The Threat to Bloomsbury". Another correspondent, also writing in December 1926, declared, "Few will deny that prohibition of building on open spaces which are necessary for public health is a justifiable interference; and if this is so, the only question is that of compensation." He went on to demand a Parliamentary Inquiry. Frank Hunt, Valuer to the LCC, agreed with this position and declared that the remedy was to be found in the force of public opinion and in the control exercised by Parliament over the use of property.

The London Society published its influential report "London's Squares and how to save them" in 1927, the year that Friends House opened on the Endsleigh Gardens site. In one passage concerning the Foundling site the author wrote that "...there is still a danger that the Hospital and the square gardens may be handed over to desolation and destruction. When these trees have been cut down and burnt, when the buildings have been torn into rubbish and carted away, and the site partitioned up and built over to yield what is called 'profit' – what will it profit? Is it not obvious that London will be the poorer?"

The LCC made application to Parliament to institute an Inquiry into the present position in regard to the enclosures in London. A Royal Commission was subsequently appointed, took evidence from the interested parties and made its report the following year in September 1928. Its recommendations were unequivocal, stating that "It is beyond question that the enclosures add greatly to the amenities, not only of their immediate surroundings, but of London as a whole... Their loss to any extent would in our view, be deplorable. All the enclosures (461) falling within the scope of our Inquiry should be preserved permanently as open spaces." The Commission went on to recommend that an Act of Parliament to prohibit building on them should be passed as soon as possible.

It would have been very difficult for Parliament to ignore the advice of its own Commission. However, the wheels of government do not always move as fast as one would wish. With a touch of irony, the London Council of Social Service, togeth-

er with the St Pancras Council of Social Service, held a meeting in Friends House in June 1929 where Londoners were urged to keep the pressure on the Government to save the squares. Sir Willoughby Dickinson said that he regretted that the Friends House had ever been built and it was their duty to see that such a thing never happened again.

Notice was finally given of the introduction of a Government Bill in November 1929. In May 1930 the chairmen of the London Society, the Metropolitan Gardens Association, the Commons Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, the London and Greater London Playing Fields Association and the London Squares Committee wrote to *The Times* expressing their great disappointment at the lack of progress and appealing to the Government to allow no further delay. Since the loss of Endsleigh Gardens, West Kensington Gardens, Barons Court Gardens and Hereford Gardens had also gone to developers with others under serious threat. The matter was now one of extreme urgency.

The Bill was finally put before the House of Lords in March 1931. Its terms provided that the enclosures set out in the schedules should become "protected squares" which meant that they could be used only as ornamental gardens, pleasure grounds, or grounds for play, rest, or recreation, and the erection of buildings other than those necessary for the enjoyment of the enclosure for such purpose would be prohibited. Of the few hundred landowners affected only twenty-seven presented petitions against the Bill and these were not opposed in principle but questioned issues of compensation. Agreement was reached over 410 of the original 456 spaces mentioned in the Bill, which duly passed into law in June 1931.

The battle had taken twenty-six years. When Mr E. Charteris, KC, opened the case for the Bill he said that no legislation of recent years had a more vital bearing on the future welfare of London. When one looks around modern London and contemplates astronomical land prices and the seemingly insatiable demands of developers one has to acknowledge an enormous debt to those campaigners that saved London's squares for future generations.

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Adrian Flood is Senior Librarian at Camden Local Studies and Archives. This article formed the basis of his talk at the 2006 AGM at Friends House.

The Span Phenomenon

by Tony Aldous

What did the latter half of the twentieth century do for the character of London's suburbs? Not too much, you might think, looking at the sprawl of volume developers' bland housing schemes, brutalist and high-rise council developments and the spread of sheds to house supermarkets, light industry and retail parks. But of course the fifty years up to the Millennium had its good moments – notable among them the "Span phenomenon" which left its mark in two areas, one in south west, the other in south east London. The character of Twickenham and Richmond, and even more that of Blackheath, were profoundly affected.

It started in the mid-1950s when two architects, Eric Lyons and Geoffrey Townsend, decided that if they were to build the kind of houses they wanted to build, they would have to become developers. But in those days architects were still considered gentlemen and were accordingly prohibited from getting their hands dirty in quite that way. So Townsend bravely resigned his RIBA membership and became the developer; Lyons stayed an architect and did the designing. The houses and flats he designed were, for the time, shockingly unorthodox – flat or monopitch roofs, "goldfish bowl" windows, front and back walls that were not structural but tile-hung or clad in weatherboard, and houses in terraces *for sale* rather than the semis that established house-builders thought were the only houses that would sell. They were wrong – at least for the niche market of young professionals that Span were aiming at. Because of their slightly unorthodox construction, they were affordable. All but a handful of building societies refused them mortgages, but now, after thirty or forty years, they are still standing and have long developed a certain cachet.

The Span style – particularly the white weatherboarding of the firm's middle period – was widely copied and became something of an architectural cliché; but it was never just the design of the buildings that made Span estates special, and also valued parts of the suburbs to which they belong. Outstandingly, it was Span's landscapes which made its developments exceptional. While most housing developers thought landscape was the planting of a few trees on Space Left Over After

Building, Lyons and his landscape architects (notably Ivor Cunningham who later became his partner and eventually his successor) saw it as a first and equal stage, arranging the building to make the most of mature trees and other existing features. Every home should have views that were a delight, every estate have grounds that were a pleasure to walk through.

The other key innovation was the establishment of residents' organisations to manage these landscapes and other common facilities and arrange the triennial repainting of exteriors required by the leases. If you bought a Span house, you bought a share in the management company, and this plugged you into an emerging and very vital community. This is nowhere better seen than in Blackheath, where the third big figure, builder-turned developer and enthusiast for modern design Leslie Bilsby, played a key role in developing no fewer than twenty-two Span estates*. One of these, The Lane (which won a Civic Trust Award for what might be described as "the ingenious use of an impossibly-shaped site"), recently held an open-air party so that present and past residents could celebrate its fortieth birthday. Many of the houses have had to be underpinned; the underfloor electric heating has not survived a more energy-conscious age. But the planting has matured; the residents' society has taken on the role of freeholder; and altogether the estate and its community are alive and well. Blackheath, Richmond and Twickenham would be much the poorer without the (at the time often controversial) interventions of Span.

* Listed at page 198 in *Eric Lyons and Span*, edited by Barbara Simms. RIBA Publishing.



The Lane, Blackheath

St Paul's Cathedral: A Poem In Two Parts by Brian Stater

The recent exhibition at the Dulwich Picture Gallery of paintings and drawings by Canaletto, many of them rarely seen in public, was a reminder of the rich and varied topography of mid-eighteenth-century London. Canaletto in England: A Venetian Artist Abroad 1746-1755 addressed a broader canvas than that of the capital alone. But it is Canaletto's images of London, in particular those of St Paul's Cathedral and the City, which are among his most celebrated and hold most allure for LTS members.

The Canaletto exhibition may now be placed in historical context by an extremely rare, but lengthy poem, which vividly describes St Paul's and the City. Only three copies of *St Paul's Cathedral, A Poem. In Two Parts* are known to exist. One is in the British Library, the other two are held in Guildhall Library. The author remains anonymous.

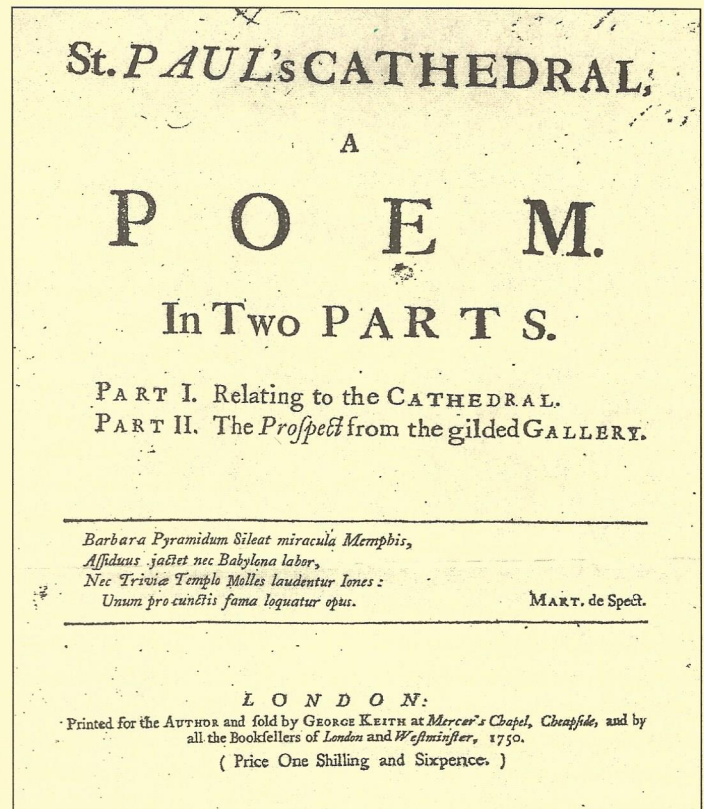
The poem was published in 1750 and is therefore contemporaneous with Canaletto's most fertile period. It addresses many of the themes of the painter's work. To that extent, it may be read as a companion to several of the outstanding images exhibited at Dulwich. The poem's absence from the standard bibliographies of both the City and St Paul's Cathedral is something of an anomaly in so well documented a building. It is hoped that LTS members will be interested to learn of, and may be able to assist in researching, this interesting document.

The work is composed in rhyming couplets, some of which feel rather leaden to the modern reader, but others still ring fresh with acuteness of observation. The first part, comprising twenty-five pages, or around 500 lines of verse, is headed "Relating to the Cathedral" and offers a detailed description of the fabric of the building, which of course remains familiar to the modern reader.

The second part, of thirty-two pages and about 650 lines, describes "The Prospect from the Gilded Gallery". In other words, the poet is giving us a precise picture of the City in the mid-eighteenth century with much of the spirit and style of Canaletto's images. Both painter and poet show us the detail and variety of London's architecture. And while Canaletto often delights us with witty and well-observed sketches of its inhabitants, so does this anonymous author.

He describes the slow and taxing ascent up the stairs to the top of the dome, where the viewer may take in the extraordinary vista:

"The noblest scene beneath the Sky that meets
Of clustered Buildings, Lanes and crowded
Streets;
A World of Squares and Courts the prospect
tires,
Palaces, Churches, and their glittering spires
On Gardens, Halls superb and Thoroughfares



And Inns of Court still in litigious Cares...
...Strong Prisons, where grim Death in Horror
Stares,
And where the Debtors beg their daily fares,
On Hospitals, the seat of dire Disease,
Where youths recover and the ag'd find ease;
On Chimnies, that in long successive shrouds
Emit the steaming Smoke into the Clouds;
On signs, suspended low, the Painted pride
Of Newgate, Ludgate, Fleet Street and
Cheapside..."

Then, the author brings us down from the dome and into these teeming streets. There he sketches wealthy and important City figures, a few deft strokes producing vivid characters, worthy of Canaletto himself. Passing in the street, is a "gilded chariot"

"Where lolls my Lord, in pensive pride and state..."

Next are two figures, possibly familiar today:

"The greedy Broker, jolting in his coach
Thinks trudging Honesty down-right Reproach...
...The corrupt Lawyer lolls to either side
Orphans are starving to maintain his Pride."

Then there is a merchant, taking refreshment and putting the world to rights:

"With coffee his dry Politicks to drench,

Direct the Government and kill the French..."

The author also takes us away from the affluent figures and into the jostling, heaving life of eighteenth-century London. He observes a strutting apprentice, and a butcher whose blood-stained apron stains a young woman's dress. Then there is a chimney sweep whose brushes leave spots of smut on a passing lady's lace, and an elderly invalid, rudely pushed aside by sedan chairmen.

In a passage perhaps more reminiscent of Hogarth than Canaletto, the author describes a

stripped-to-the-waist brawl which breaks out on a street corner between a bully and a bailiff. The conflict draws both spectators and pickpockets:

"Besmeared with Blood, ferment with equal Fire
They fight, they fall and grapple in the mire.
The crowd disperse, but ah how fairly tricked,
One had his Handkerchief already pick't,
Alert the hands, to Rapine bred, explore,
The pocket dive, the Snuff-box his no more;
Too late, now others their disaster find
Who left their watches in the Crowd behind."

The author's greatest pride is his description of St Paul's itself. The structure having remained essentially unaltered from that day to this, his account is of limited interest to topographers or architectural historians. Yet the superlatives used to evoke the building's magnificence, and sheer size, are a reminder of how St Paul's dominated the City at this period.

A visiting foreign nobleman, we are told, would find it impossible to adequately describe the building to incredulous countrymen. All he could do to persuade them of its towering height would be to point, speechless, to the heavens.

All of this is of course draws another parallel with Canaletto, who portrayed the cathedral in precisely this way, too. His studies of the building show it as the dominating structure of the City, as it was rebuilt after the Great Fire, with the dome reaching, unchallenged, far into the sky.

But in the poem, this theme goes a little further. St Paul's is identified as an expression of the nation's vigour and success. The poet insists that the cathedral is "Britain's Glory" and embodies "Its Wealth, Its Splendour and its Power..."

In the poem, too, we get a glimpse of an aggressively Protestant character to both the City and the building. The reader is treated on several occasions to diatribes against all foreigners (the long-suffering French especially) and the cathedral is celebrated as a magnificent riposte to St Peter's, its Catholic equivalent.

"No longer boast of thy transcendent Dome
No longer plead a matchless structure, Rome..."

Here the author's enthusiasm out-runs the facts, as St Paul's is of course considerably smaller than St Peter's.

Canaletto, who was certainly not above exaggerating the size of buildings he depicted, never explicitly alluded to the Protestant nature of the City. But, as a visiting Catholic, perhaps he was too wise, or too tactful, so to do.

Brian Stater lectures on architectural history at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. He can be contacted at brian.stater@mac.com

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News

A Mile of Style

Regent Street has been one of London's most fashionable streets for almost two centuries. Dubbed "a happy hunting ground for the ardent shopper" by Max Beerbohm, it has undergone many changes across the years, and some of these will be outlined in *A Mile of Style*, an exhibition devoted to 180 years of shopping in Regent Street at Guildhall Art Gallery from mid-April until 30th June.

The Quadrant, taken down in 1848, and the stuccoed façades designed by John Nash early in the nineteenth century – which can be seen in the *Tallis London Street Views* (LTS publication 160) – had mostly disappeared by the 1920s to be replaced on Nash's sweeping curves by more solid Portland stone buildings by Sir Henry Blomfield, Norman Shaw, F. T. Verity and others. Many of the famous stores have also disappeared, most recently last year Dickens and Jones which had been on the same site since 1835. Swan and Edgar, Hedges and Butler and Swears and Wells are now but distant memories but Liberty's, Aquascutum, Hamley's and the Café Royal (all in the street in late Victorian times) remain as does Austin Reed, whose centenary in the street will be in four years.

The exhibition, a rare collaboration between Guildhall Art Gallery, Westminster City Archives and the Crown Estate, also draws on the archives of three of the longest-established and most iconic brands in the street – Aquascutum, Austin Reed and Jaeger. The stores' graphic and advertising art, as well as original fashion designs and vintage costumes, provide a fascinating insight into two centuries of fashion changes.

A revised and updated edition of *Regent Street*, Hermione Hobhouse's seminal book on the street, is scheduled to be published by Phillimore & Co in July.

Lost and Found

In September the Royal Academy of Arts is to mount a major exhibition that will explore the achievements of its nearest neighbour in Burlington House, the Society of Antiquaries. For the first time in its 300-year existence treasures from the learned society (of which many LTS members are Fellows) will be showcased in the Academy's main galleries. Antiquities and manuscripts of immense historical importance, such as the processional cross of Richard III recovered from the battlefield of Bosworth and the earliest-known medieval manuscript illustrations of Stonehenge, will be shown alongside the Society's extraordinary collection of English royal portraits from Henry VI to Mary Tudor.

Since its foundation in 1707 the Society has been at the forefront of research in archaeology and the study of historic sites, monuments and artefacts of Britain, and the exhibition will feature milestones in the discovery, recording, interpretation and com-

munication of Britain's past. Guest curator Dr David Starkey considers buildings, paintings and jewels as much a part of history as written documents and he has said that the "exhibition won't simply be a display of the Society's treasures – wonderful though they are – it's also an opportunity to show how history is made and why it matters".

Lost and Found: Antiquaries in Britain 1707-2007 will run from 15th September to 2nd December.

Turner's House

Joseph Mallord William Turner is such a big name in British art that it was comparatively easy for Tate Britain to find about £5 million recently to "save" his watercolour *The Blue Rigi*. However, there is a good deal less interest in the fate of Sandycombe Lodge, the rural villa he designed for himself in Twickenham in 1811, with a greater or lesser degree of help from his friend Sir John Soane. Turner lived in Twickenham with his father, who tended the garden, but he sold the house in 1826.

Originally called Solus Lodge, the house has subsequently been expanded by adding a second storey to its wings. At one time Turner could look out on the Thames, source of much of his inspiration, but as the house has lost its original contents, most of its garden, and is rather hemmed in by other buildings, as well as being threatened by plans for a massive office block nearby, its future is in jeopardy.

The present owner, Professor Harold Livermore, is planning to leave Sandycombe Lodge, including some of its contents and an adjacent plot of land, to a trust that has been established to run it as a museum. The work of transformation will be supported by the Friends of Turner's House. In the meantime, this group organises several Turner-related meetings and social gatherings a year in Twickenham, as well as occasional visits (for example, to see Turner's work in the print room at Tate Britain). Members are also sometimes invited to join in events organised by other Turner groupies, such as the Turner Society.

It is usually possible to visit the house on London Open House days, which are on 15th and 16th September this year.

LTS members can join the Friends of Turner's House, whose membership year starts at the end of August, by contacting Ann Halliday at 2 Lexington Court, Tower Road, Strawberry Hill, TW1 4PR; ann@aphalliday.fsnet.co.uk; telephone 020 8891 0026. The annual subscription is currently £5. The Friends' summer party takes place on 6th June and non-members are welcome if they bring £3 with them. Details of the party are available from Vicky Price, 27 Montpelier Row, Twickenham, TW1 2NQ; telephone 020 8892 7969.

Book Reviews

Six Hundred New Churches – The Church Building Commission 1818-1856

by M. H. Port. 2006 Spire Books Ltd, P.O. Box 2336, Reading RG4 5WJ. ISBN 1 904965 08 3. 386 pages. 249 illustrations. £49.99.

England in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was a confessional state. Later Evangelical and Tractarian scorn have obscured the extent to which Church and State worked in effective symphony in the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars to promote social cohesion and to respond to the needs of the rapidly expanding population, especially in the manufacturing districts.

Part of the strategy was to build new churches and to provide greater accommodation in the Church of the Establishment to match the huge wave of chapel building during the period of the Revolution in France and the subsequent war.

The great Daniel Wilson, Vicar of Islington, gave expression to a widely held view when he declared in 1825 that "by a decisive plan of affording church accommodation there is every hope of keeping the vast bulk of the population in the Church and of training them in those sentiments of sound religion and those habits of Christian subjection and obedience which are the best foundations of loyalty in the state as well of individual piety and virtue". It is possible to dissent from the aspiration but at least, unlike some modern expressions of church policy, it was clear. It was a doctrine responsible for building the 2,000-seater ecclesiastical battleships of the 1820s.

There was to be no "useless splendour", a gibe at some of the churches built with Parliamentary help in the reign of Queen Anne, but according to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, the new churches would require "that decent decoration" consonant with "the character of the Established Church".

Professor Port sets the scene and discusses the work of the Church Building Commission from its inception in 1818 to its final demise in 1856. His book was originally published in 1961 but this new edition has been modestly updated and augmented by an increased number of illustrations with extensive captions. It is good that this significant work of reference has been re-issued because the scale of the achievement represented by the building of the "Commissioners' Churches" has been under-appreciated ever since, not least architecturally.

In 1824 the unexpected repayment of a war loan by the Austrians enabled Parliament to make an additional half million pounds available but the political atmosphere had changed and the decision proved more contentious. Churchmen kept hoping for further grants but even when a sympathetic Tory government was returned in 1841 under Sir Robert Peel it became clear that there was insufficient support in a reformed House of Commons, which now included dissenters and radicals of various hues, to permit any further Parliamentary assistance.

The Commission however continued until 1856 to distribute the funds remaining from the first two grants as well as the drawbacks of customs and excise duty paid on the materials used in church construction. This last source of income is an interesting precedent for the current Chancellor of the Exchequer's decision to permit the reclaim of VAT both on church repair work and on associated professional fees.

By 1856 with the assistance of the private giving stimulated by the money from Parliament, some 612 churches were constructed. A good number of them are in the Diocese of London as I know very well since it is usual to invite the Bishop to make a return visit as a church celebrates the 150th or 175th anniversary of the laying of its foundation stone by my predecessor Bishop Blomfield.

Professor Port describes the difficulties of dealing with local vested interests in a church like the Church of England where power is so excessively dispersed but his chief virtue is in his account of the architects and building styles of the period.

There is some fascinating information for members of the London Topographical Society in the Tables and Appendices. Holy Trinity Brompton, for example, built in the first period of the Commission's existence, stands out for its relative cheapness at a little under £10,500. Generally, building costs went down during the period although the Commissioners continued to insist on quality.

Readers hoping for some account of the fate of the various churches illustrated will be disappointed. The photographs are interesting but exclusively black and white and the cost of the book is £49.99 but this is an important work of reference which, because the churches it describes hardly feature in books like Simon Jenkins's *One Thousand Best Churches*, deserves a place in any specialist collection.

– Richard Chartres

London: A Life in Maps

by Peter Whitfield. 2006. The British Library. ISBN 978 0 7123 4918. 208 pages. 252 illustrations. £25 (hb), £14.95 (pb).

The British Library's outstanding London: A Life in Maps exhibition has now closed, although I am delighted to find that a virtual online version of parts of it survives on the internet. It was an exhibition that broke all previous British Library attendance records, and its curator, Peter Barber, is much to be congratulated for a thought-provoking and memorable experience. The present book shares the same title and, although this is not made wholly explicit, was published to "tie in" with the exhibition. But what sort of companion is it and how well does it "tie in"? It plainly does not mirror the exhibition and is certainly not a catalogue. What we have instead is a quite separate illustrated history of London and its built environment, picking up on various themes, maps, buildings and

areas. The cursory bibliography gives a clear enough indication that this is not a work intended for scholars – and at a basic introductory level it is not without merit. The illustrations are numerous, well-reproduced and well-chosen – even if many of them are infuriatingly unidentified and unattributed beyond the note of a shelf-mark if in the British Library – and not even that if elsewhere. The text is for the most part inoffensive, although occasionally repetitive, self-contradictory or just plain wrong. But as a companion it is pedestrian, derivative and wholly lacking in the spirit of original thought and research that so distinguished the exhibition itself. For all that it has proved popular with visitors and has sold in large numbers, we have to regard this as a lost opportunity. A full and proper catalogue of the exhibition itself would have had far more permanent value.

– Laurence Worms

The Nation's Mantlepiece:

A History of the National Gallery

by Jonathan Conlin. 2006. Pallas Athene (Publishers) Ltd, 42 Spencer Rise, London, NW5 1AP. ISBN 184368 018 1/978 1 84368 018 5. 556 pages. Fully illustrated. £34.99.

The National Gallery has given rise to many disputes: its architectural design, outside and in, has been highly contentious ever since the first rumours about the building circulated; its purpose and location have been disputed; and its acquisitions' policies have been attacked not infrequently. However, no one has hitherto pulled together these diverse elements into a comprehensive history. Conlin's considerable achievement, based on a Cambridge doctoral thesis, has been to weave into an attractive tapestry all these diverse strands. In his own words, the author attempts to relate "the insider perspective to broader social and political trends".

The first half is devoted to an overview of the development of the Gallery, including its prehistory, up to 1974, its 150th anniversary, the second half to a number of themes in which various aspects are explored in closer detail. Conlin writes in a lively manner with a nice touch of wit, so, though academically based with a thorough study of a wide range of archive sources as well as magazines from *Punch* to *Private Eye*, it is far removed from the monotony of some histories of institutions.

All through the story runs the problem of what the purpose of the National Gallery should be. Was it a storehouse of great masterpieces of painting, was it to garner the greatest paintings threatened with export from our shores, was it to foster an English school of painting, was it to be an encyclopaedia of painting representing all schools and artists minor as well as major? This argument continues, as is indicated by the trustees following their declaration that "It is the duty of the Gallery to buy paintings which do not form part of the heritage" (1982) by their recent funds-exhausting purchase of the Northumberland Raphael.

The nineteenth-century disputes over location – whether to go to South Kensington or Piccadilly, or to stay in Trafalgar Square – and the relatively recent arguments about extensions north of Trafalgar Square, of particular interest to our members, are handled lucidly and avoid prolixity; a series of plans illuminates the progressive development of the existing site. Sir Roy Strong's role in overturning the generally-agreed proposal for relocating the National Portrait Gallery in order to enable the National to expand northwards is emphasised, and the subsequent history of the contentions with the architectural profession about extension is covered in an epilogue, in which Conlin also considers the institution's contemporary role, concluding with the currently relevant question: What does "national" mean for the Gallery today, "squeezed between devolution and a supra-national community"?

In a short review one cannot argue points of detail, but Conlin's reiterated charge of corruption against John Nash was not one made by the searching parliamentary enquiries. To achieve Regent Street required all the arts of the developer; Nash took on risks no one else would venture, and his was the concept of the public space where a national gallery might sit.

The book is attractively produced (printed in China), but the numerous colour-plates, particularly the double-spreads, are disappointingly murky, and the thumbnail illustrations in the margins are often too small to be effective.

– M. H. Port

Messrs Hoare Bankers:

A History of the Hoare Banking Dynasty

by Victoria Hutchings. 2005. Constable & Robinson Ltd. ISBN 1 84119 965 6. 240 pages. 276 illustrations. £20.

What a family. What an archive and what an interesting story. Sir Richard Hoare, a goldsmith at the Sign of the Golden Bottle over against St Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street, founded the bank in 1672, since when eleven generations of the family have sustained it. The dynasty has included nine baronets, three Lord Mayors, brewers, landowners, collectors and patrons (think of Stourhead and Luscombe Castle), a quiver of clergy and one bulldog breeder balanced by one antiquarian.

"Henry the Magnificent" (1705-85), creator of the paradise of Stourhead, represents the peak of prosperity, offset by the black sheep of the mid-nineteenth century: Henry junior who terrorised the clerks, and Charlie Arthur who spent most of his life on a horse. Sauntering through this family saga are the customers: Samuel Pepys, Lord Byron, Jane Austen's family and Thomas Gainsborough among them.

High street banks please note that to mark Hoare's tercentenary in 1972 customers were presented with an engraved silver sweetmeat dish. By way of return, one satisfied client went so far as to

give the partners a pair of silver mustard pots to show his appreciation of the bank's services to his family over the last 330 years.

The survival of the family bank, its museum and archives (nearly destroyed during an air raid on 10th May 1941) is something to be proud of. Hoare's is still privately owned and is presently run by seven partners (two women among them), each directly descended from the founder. I am told that wealth is not the prerequisite for an account-holder; personal introduction by an existing customer will suffice.

– Penelope Hunting

The Westminster Circle:

The people who lived and worked in the early town of Westminster, 1066-1307

by David Sullivan. 2006. Historical Publications Ltd. ISBN 1 905286 15 5. 432 pages. 24 illustrations. £25.

The Westminster Circle contains far more for topographers than its subtitle might indicate. The book is a continuation of *The Westminster Corridor, the Anglo-Saxon story of Westminster Abbey and its lands in Middlesex* (Historical Publications Ltd, 1994), and is equally concerned with the spatial context. The first section deals with the topography of Westminster, and there are others on the development of the town as well as the abbey, and on life in two of the "corridor" estates: Eye – acquired in 1098 and comprising modern Westminster west of the Tyburn – and Hampstead. Hampstead, an earlier acquisition, also featured prominently in *The Westminster Corridor*, but with neighbouring Hendon this time omitted it is awkwardly placed within the book's ostensible frame. Hampstead is, though, the author's home territory and he brings all his unrivalled knowledge of its topography, manorial records and medieval farming practice to his exposition.

David Sullivan's great strengths are the breadth of his interests and his ability to weave his various threads into a compelling and accessible narrative. He claims people as his main concern, and this certainly protects him from bloodless antiquarianism. Development along the river bank helps explain the rise, and later fall, of Endiff, the hythe near modern Embankment station, and a detailed discussion of ditches includes their social implications. A fascinating piece of pure topography, showing beyond reasonable doubt that the village of Eye lies under Buckingham Palace, is one of several valuable appendices.

Many readers will know some of the secondary sources but few will have them all so conveniently to hand, and even on familiar ground the author's own knowledge allows a regular flow of new insights and interpretations. Some judicious editing would have helped, but there is much here for everyone and in quantity as well as quality *The Westminster Circle* represents excellent value for money.

– Pamela Taylor

London's Waterfront:

The Thames from Battersea to the Barrier

by Nicholas Waldemar Brown and Graham Reed. 2005. 0-9711966-3-X. Burke's Peerage and Gentry, c/o Boydell & Brewer Ltd, P.O. Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF. 288 pages. 500 plus panoramic illustrations. £19.99.

Panoramas have a long and fascinating history and members may recall the exhibition – *Panoramania!* – at the Barbican Art Gallery in 1988-89. A brief perusal of the catalogue to that exhibition by our Council Member Ralph Hyde will reveal the various forms of “optical entertainment” from the early eighteenth century onwards. Therefore, this handsome volume is the latest contribution to a distinguished lineage.

Apart from a brief introduction and the bibliography and index, the whole of this volume, produced in landscape format (providing double-page spreads two feet long), is comprised of over 500 detailed elevation drawings. These record the riverfront as it appeared in January 2000 travelling along the north bank from Battersea Bridge to the flood barrier at Woolwich Reach and returning upstream along the south bank.

The author Nicholas Waldemar Brown has provided a commentary on all the familiar landmarks along with the less well known, secluded stretches of the riverside. The captions are full of detail, giving dates, architects, etc., but peppered with more arcane historical information. Although the author receives top billing, it is the artist Graham Reed who provides the visual feast. He has the great ability to produce highly detailed elevation drawings of

the twenty-five miles of river frontages on each bank, but combined with the eye of an inspired topographical artist. The selective use of colour washes for the more significant sites and simple line, for instance when illustrating the industrial wastes of North Greenwich, are both informative and appealing. Altogether, this is a volume thoroughly to be recommended.

– Stephen Croad

Crossing the River:

The History of London's Thames River Bridges from Richmond to the Tower

by Brian Cookson. 2006. ISBN 2 84018 97 2. Mainstream Publishing Co. (Edinburgh) Ltd. 350 pages. 87 illustrations. £16.99.

Bridges make cities. Leaving aside those land-locked oddities such as Madrid and Johannesburg, most of the world's great cities straddle rivers. And where there is water there are bridges – in London no fewer than thirty, not to mention fifteen tunnels. Bridges make London, uniting the two great universes of North and South, and are as much part of the city's iconography as those of Manhattan, Paris or Amsterdam.

So what does Mr Cookson have to tell us? A lot, which is why he takes over 300 pages to progress – glide, even – the fifteen or so miles from beginning to end, from venerable Richmond Bridge to emblematical Tower Bridge by way of clanking railway bridges (each duly chronicled), fume-laden road bridges and once-bouncing pedestrian bridges.

Beginning with Richmond Bridge, we hear how London's oldest surviving bridge was financed by



The covers of a number of the books reviewed in this issue

the tontine method, built, preserved and remarkably widened without losing its mid-eighteenth century appearance. Next come the 1930s' arterial road bridges at Twickenham and Chiswick, followed by a bevy of Victorian railway crossings. Each of these bridges is well researched, with many quirky facts recorded and also placed in a proper context of engineering progress, architectural refinement (or lack thereof) and economic development. There are also interspersed biographies of the main protagonists – architects, engineers and occasionally planners.

We then sail downstream towards the great nineteenth-century bridges – Hammersmith, Vauxhall, Waterloo, Southwark and Hungerford. Mr Cookson conveys a great deal of knowledge lightly and authoritatively, compressing lengthy stories into a few well worded and well illustrated pages. He has a knack of finding that elusive cutting or hidden anecdote to enliven the narrative without diminishing the scholarly content. I leave it to you to find out about the chimney boy in the bag on the bridge, the copper who slipped through another and the crowd who rushed to see the collapse of a third.

And then comes the present era. We are not left suspended, tantalisingly, in the late nineteenth century, but brought right up to date to hear of reconstruction, LCC widening, and the latest developments from the sinking of the *Marchioness* to the stranding of the whale last summer.

A book on bridges could be deeply dull, all stanchions, bascules and tides. But Mr Cookson's book is nothing of the sort – in fact, it is easily the best book on London bridges that I have ever read – and I speak as a man with a PhD on the topic.

– Simon Morris

Wartime St Pancras:

a London borough defends itself

by C. Allen Newbery (transcribed by Robin Woolven, edited by F. Peter Woodford). 2006. Camden History Society, CHS Publications, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9SH. ISBN 0 904491 64 1. 88 pages. 27 illustrations. £7.50 (add £1.50 for post and packing).

Undoubtedly the most perilous, and in retrospect the most heroic, years of the Borough of St Pancras were those between 1939 and 1945. As well as its continuing duty to keep the borough functioning as best it could, the local authority had to combat constant danger from the air, in the form of landmines, incendiary bombs, flying bombs and potentially also gas attacks and airborne invasion. Measures had to be taken to alert the population to imminent danger, to protect it, to train it to watch out for and to identify enemy paratroopers, to find and neutralise unexploded bombs, and to rescue individuals from the ruins of their homes or offices. Communications had to be safeguarded, messages passed efficiently, rubble removed, provision made for the wounded and the dead, property recovered and bombed sites decontaminated – all of this with a shrinking

resource base, as increasing numbers of men were conscripted into the forces. Meanwhile life had to go on as normally as possible during daytime. In view of the long night-time tours of duty it seems a marvel that anyone stayed awake at all.

Immediately afterwards, and while the memories were still fresh though already tinged with nostalgia, the people charged with these responsibilities wrote detailed accounts of their activities since 1936 when the government ordered the first preparations. The typewritten accounts are now housed in Camden's archives. They have been transcribed by Dr Robin Woolven, the editor of this Society's edition of the LCC *Bomb Damage Maps* published in 2005. He has added informative footnotes, numerous contemporary photographs and a concise introduction. Fittingly he has also added a detailed Roll of Honour of those members of the Civil Defence Service who were killed and a list of the medals and awards, including three George Medals.

The first and longest account, by Charles Allen Newberry, chronicles the events of these years as seen from the centre, and is followed by briefer accounts of the activities of the individual services: the ARP Special Emergency Committee, the Control Room, air raid shelter provision, the wardens, the first aid posts, the Heavy and Light Rescue Services, the Gas Identification Service, the Ambulance Service, Women's Legion Drivers, the Decontamination and Repair Services, the salvage of goods and personal property, the Food Conservation and Decontamination Service, the Mortuary Service, the Women's Voluntary Services and the Rehousing Service. This list alone reflects the complexity of the work. A sketch plan of the borough usefully identifies the location of the ARP services. A diagram might have clarified the organisational structure which remains opaque to this reviewer possibly because of the formal language of some (but only some) of the official accounts. However repeated restructurings and renamings presumably made the creation of such a diagram impossible.

The introduction makes it clear that St Pancras was not unique in commissioning these reports, but this seems to be the first time that they have been published. They perfectly capture the mood of the time, with tragedy, heroism and altruism mixed with cricket matches, comedy and bureaucratic pomposity. "All had their moans and groans", in the words of one of the reports, "but the fact remains that the system... functioned well. All credit to the planners at the top."

– Peter Barber

Theatrical London

by Richard Tames. 2006. Historical Publications Ltd. ISBN: 1 905286 14 7. 208 pages. 207 illustrations. £17.95.

The blurb for this rather slender coffee table book says that one of the reasons why so many tourists come to London is to go to its theatres, and for

those visitors, presumably mostly American, it is just possible it may make an acceptable souvenir. The pictures are handsome, and the text gallops happily across the centuries from Tudor times to more or less the present day without actually revealing anything new or even particularly interesting. Names get dropped, but it is all rather sketchy and breathless. If you have to get from then to almost here and now in a couple of hundred pages that is probably inevitable, but the result is an oddly unsatisfying Chinese meal of a book which comes to no conclusions.

The West End is currently clogged with musicals and the odd revival starring some past-their-sell-by-date Hollywood stars: some reflections on how that state of affairs came about would have been interesting. To look at the Globe on Bankside without considering the work staged there, while it may be the result of publication deadlines, is odd to say the least. Mark Rylance gets no mention! The section on Frank Matcham simply does not do justice to the man, and nowhere do we learn what happened to the Hippodrome, let alone the Hackney Empire. Both are still there, the latter a working theatre with an interesting tale about how it was rescued from decay, the other, having been home to dinner theatre, survives as a discotheque. Another of his London theatres, the Coliseum, recently restored to its original glory, gets equally short shrift and there is no mention of the English National Opera finding a home in this palace of varieties, let alone of the awful sightlines Matcham designed and his hideous overhangs which the splendour of his interiors do not quite make up for. For the scholar this is a pointless book, which does not do justice to London's theatrical heritage.

– William Russell

House Histories for Beginners

by Colin and O-Lan Style. 2006. ISBN 1 86077 405 9. Phillimore & Co Ltd, Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex. 216 pages. 59 illustrations. £15.99.

The history of houses being second only to genealogy in popularity as a subject of research in record offices, there are already several guides to it. This book is the latest and most up-to-date, including as it does many references to internet sources. Aimed primarily at the novice researcher, it gives basic guidance on such matters as dating, palaeography and "old" money (£. s. d.) and has a brief bibliography (which regrettably omits N. W. Alcock, *Documenting the History of Houses*, British Records Association, 2003).

The main focus is on the owners and occupiers of properties, not the fabric of the buildings; vernacular architects are virtually dismissed. The writers clearly have great experience of researching older houses in the West Country but there is little on London, no reference to district surveyors, and no mention of "semi-detached". Within these limits they provide a useful guide to the main documen-

tary sources (and much other, often untapped, material), arranged by periods although, somewhat confusingly, their recommended approach is not strictly chronological. There are also chapters which collect together miscellaneous scraps of information on topics such as "farms", "manor houses" and "inns" which, interesting in themselves, also provide cautionary tales on the use of documentary evidence. The book is well illustrated with rather dark photographs.

– David Johnson

The City of London Book

by Richard Tames. 2006. ISBN 1 905286 10 4. Historical Publications Ltd. 160 pages. 194 illustrations. £14.50.

Richard Tames is rapidly becoming the William Kent *de nos jours* – give him a subject connected with London and he immediately rushes out with not just one version but two. After exhausting the City of London in a previous volume, he has now rearranged and regurgitated its contents in dictionary format for the less demanding audience of the Google generation. It also gives the publisher yet another opportunity to dust down his very miscellaneous collection of City-related views. Members of this Society will of course be rightly horrified at the news that its offices are still at the Bishopsgate Institute, which was given up at the end of the last century. If you picked up the earlier version, you will not want this one; if you didn't, this is such a mish-mash that it is hardly worth bothering.

– David Webb

Civic Pride in Hornsey:

The Town Hall and its surrounding buildings

by Bridget Cherry. 2006. ISBN 0 905794 38 9. Hornsey Historical Society, The Old Schoolhouse, 136 Tottenham Lane, London N8 7EL. 28 pages. 15 illustrations. £6 + 50p p&p.

Do not quibble over the price per page. This booklet is sumptuously produced and comes with a full colour cover, plans and some colour illustrations. The text is based on research undertaken and previously published by the Society. We are taken through the acquisition of the site, the layout of the building, the addition of the Gas and Electricity Showrooms and the careers of the architect R. H. Uren, who also designed the John Lewis building in Oxford Street and the Sanderson showroom (now a hotel) in Berners Street, and of the sculptor Arthur Ayres who also worked on the Adelphi. There is a discussion of 1930s architecture, explaining how Uren won the design competition for the Town Hall against hundreds of rivals with this bold departure from the conservative tradition of English municipal buildings. By the end you feel satisfyingly familiar with the subject. A pity the complex is no longer in use by the London Borough of Haringey but it is to be conserved for community use.

– Roger Cline

Muswell Hill Revisited

by Ken Gay. 2006. ISBN 0 7524 3835 2. Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG. 128 pages. 200 illustrations. £12.99.

The address on my birth certificate – Sylvan Villas – probably tells us as much as we need to know about the origins and antiquity of the North London suburb of Muswell Hill, that curious mix of *rus-in-urbe* and Edwardian imperial – a touch of garden city, a little bit of arts and crafts, and those majestic shopping parades. Sylvan villas they were and are – and what fun to revisit them with Mr Gay in his latest work on the area. The book is divided into six chronological sections of photographs (one on Alexandra Palace), each photograph with a diligently researched note on the individual estate, street, building, house, shop, school, or place of entertainment it shows – and even a couple of trees get individual attention. There are some unusual and previously unpublished images (many from the Haringey archives at Bruce Castle) and the research is highly impressive. The whole builds into a delightful and strangely compelling record of a quirky corner of the great city.

– Laurence Worms

Noel Park: A Social and Architectural History

by Caroline Welch. 2006. Haringey Council. Bruce Castle Museum, Lordship Lane, London N17 8NU. 54 pages. 33 illustrations. £5.50 (includes p&p).

Victorian suburbs are now increasingly valued. This attractive, well illustrated booklet uses both archival sources and evidence on the ground to provide a rounded account of the third planned estate of the Artizans, Labourers and General Dwellings Company. One hundred acres of meadowland near Wood Green High Road (then within the parish of Tottenham, now part of the borough of Haringey) were acquired in 1881 and laid out by the Company's architect Rowland Plumbe. Named after the chairman, Ernest Noel, MP (whose connections with neighbouring Hornsey may explain early references to the "Hornsey" estate), the estate was hardly a park; the intended recreational space within the tight grid of streets was built over. But Plumbe's designs for two-storey terrace houses and cottage flats with gardens rejected the earlier working class inner city tenement solution, and followed progressive architects in abandoning stucco trim for pleasant red brick detail, with gables and turrets to provide variety. The archives reveal how cost was kept down by bulk ordering of materials (the nearby branch railway providing a handy means of transport) and by mass production on site of standard joinery. Rentals from 4s 6d to 12s 6d per week were aimed at the skilled labourer, but letting only took off after the Great Eastern Railway reluctantly agreed to issue cheap workmen's tickets in 1885.

Welch's account covers much else of interest to both local resident and social historian: sources of

street names, status expressed by the siting of the various house types, the extent of subletting (despite official disapproval), and the amazing wealth of flourishing social activities, from tennis and cycling clubs to floral shows and concerts, many of them associated with St Mark's Church, also designed by Plumbe. The final pages bring us up to date: World War II damage, the impact of Wood Green Shopping City, and current condition; owned by Haringey council since 1966, the quality of the estate is now recognised by Conservation Area status and Article 4 Direction.

– Bridget Cherry

Streets of Gospel Oak and West Kentish Town: A survey of streets, buildings & former residents in a part of Camden

Edited by Steven Denford and David A. Hayes. 2006. ISBN 0 904491 65 X. Camden History Society. Obtainable: CHS Publications, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SH. 120 pages. 35 illustrations, maps, sources, index. £7.50 + p&p.

This is the eleventh of the historical street surveys that Camden History Society has produced since 1991, so that the format is doubtless familiar to many of our members. Of a convenient size to carry around (approx. 6 inches by 8 inches), and illustrated with prints, engravings photographs and a map, this survey consists of an historical overview and six walks through the district that provide an historical account of their development, with notes on inhabitants of interest and vanished buildings.

Apart from some building along the road out of London to Hampstead, this area was a Victorian creation, a prolonged development spread over the whole length of the reign. Much of it had belonged to Lord Southampton, who sold it off progressively, notably a sizable portion, Gospel Oak Fields, to Lord Lismore in 1806 (auctioned by Chancery decree in 1846 to small builders), and the major part in 1840 and 1841. Lord Mansfield, of Kenwood, owned the northern part, and the Hawleys owned the southern part, extending into Camden Town; three fields were owned by the St Pancras Church Lands charity. These diverse ownerships governed the course of building development, but that suffered considerable disruption from the construction of railways.

In the southern half there was a good deal of light industry, notably the manufacture of pianos (especially Collard & Collard, Chappell, and Brinsmead) and artists' materials (G. Rowney & Co., and Winsor & Newton). Booth classed the district as working class. In the north, Gospel Oak Fields were developed for small semi-detached villas and terraces from the early 1850s, which rapidly declined; the more substantial late Victorian terraces north of Mansfield Road, unusually the work of a single builder, William Turner from Chelsea, likewise became multi-occupied.

Wartime bombing and the departure of industries, together with the run-down state of much of the

residential property, made the district ripe for the comprehensive redevelopment concept beloved by left-wing local authorities in the 1950s and '60s. Strenuous opposition from residents saved elements such as Oak Village, but the London Borough of Camden, as successor to St Pancras Borough perpetrated a massive rebuild, most conspicuously the dreary Waxham block of public housing, the longest in Europe, backing on Mansfield Road.

All this is set out in fascinating detail in the course of six clearly directed routes; a handy booklet that can be thoroughly recommended.

– M. H. Port

Featherbedds and Flock Bedds:

The Early History of the Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London

by J. E. Houston. 2006. ISBN 0 9521608 8 9. The Three Tents Press, 15 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Beds SG19 1JE. 200 pages. 125 illustrations.

As the subtitle suggests, this is an early history that does not take us beyond 1918 except for modern grants of arms and a list of masters. Liverymen who served as aldermen are listed from Beaven's 1913 work on aldermen but no attempt has been made to bring the list up to date, even to 1918.

The distribution of trades between City Companies has never been clear cut. Upholstery as we know it was only one of these trades – the Upholders also dealt in bed accessories, including curtains as well as second-hand clothes, house clearances and furniture (Chippendale was an Upholder). By the eighteenth century Company members were active in undertaking funerals but the Company could not obtain a charter to give them a monopoly of the trade – the College of Arms performed high class funerals and a rival (non-livery) Company of Undertakers existed. However the Company is special in maintaining an independent existence, avoiding the divisions and amalgamations which are common in other Company histories.

Attractively produced and welcome for filling a gap among Company histories it is illustrated with treasures, medals, portraits and trade scenes. Yet, despite a preface by the Principal of an Oxford college describing it as a brilliant tapestry that contributes to our understanding of English social history, it is not very satisfying and the last century remains to be published.

– Roger Cline

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Book Bag

Every so often, a book comes along which does something different. *The Warning Carriers* is such a book. It is by Judy Jowett and is an analysis of a volume in the archives of the Goldsmiths' Company, describing the warnings delivered in 1744 and the walks followed by three Carriers. It

was their duty to tramp through the City and surrounding parishes to give out notices of valuable stolen property to goldsmiths, jewellers and pawn-brokers, those to whom a thief might try to sell his prizes. The author discusses the organisation of the notifying and the walks in detail, and then, with the aid of John Rocque's 1746 map of London and with many differently coloured dots, she traces out the routes pursued by the Warning Carriers. The longest perambulation stretched some eight miles out to Shadwell in the east, along which the Carrier visited 146 premises, the two other, shorter walks, both westward, covering 202 and 201 calling points. I have seldom seen such an ingenious volume and all concerned – author, Company and designer – deserve congratulation. It is available, price £15, from The Silver Society, Box 246, 2 Lansdowne Row, London W1J 6HL, or from Thomas Heneage, 42 Duke Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6DJ.

Another volume, equally valuable, if more conventional, is *Sutton House*, produced by four authors led by LTS Committee member, Victor Belcher (National Trust/English Heritage, 2004, ISBN 1 873592 56 6, £50). The subtitle reads *A Tudor Courtier's House in Hackney*, and it tells the tale of an extraordinary property which has survived since 1535. Built by Sir Ralph Sadleir, at first secretary to Thomas Cromwell and then one of Henry VIII's bully-boys, who found himself – inadvertently – in a bigamous situation, the handsomely panelled mansion endured through the centuries with various owners, several of them with strong Huguenot connections.

It was subdivided, then reunited; it served as a girls' finishing school, and then as a boys' boarding school, with the future novelist Edward Bulmer-Lytton as a somewhat strong-minded pupil. By the early twentieth century, it had become Hackney Church Institute and as such was visited by the future Edward VIII; in 1938, it was made over to the National Trust. Its more recent history combines wartime decay and peacetime vicissitudes but, at last, with a remarkable effort of sustained teamwork, both professional and voluntary, Sutton House was restored and is one of the most exciting properties in London. LTS members will recall an AGM in Hackney Parish Church in 1996 with the opportunity to visit Sutton House being an especial attraction. By the way, the book illustrations are superb.

May 2007 sees Hampstead Garden Suburb in north-west London celebrating its centenary. Two books are relevant: Mervyn Miller's *Hampstead Garden Suburb: Arts and Crafts Utopia?* (Phillimore, ISBN 1 86077 404 1, £30) and Alison Creedon's *Only a Woman: Henrietta Barnett* (Phillimore, ISBN 1 86077 430 X, £20). Miller's volume is an expansion and thorough updating of that which he wrote with A. Stuart Gray in 1992, while Alison Creedon's study emphasises Dame Henrietta's work as a social reformer. The subject deserves fuller discussion, but space forbids at present.

– Ann Saunders

The officers of the London Topographical Society

Chairman

Mrs Penelope Hunting PhD FSA
40 Smith Street, London SW3 4EP
Tel: 020 7352 8057

Hon. Treasurer

Roger Cline MA LLB FSA
Flat 13
13 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SH
Tel. 020 7388 9889

Publications Secretary

Simon Morris MA
22 Brooksby Street
London N1 1HA
Tel. 020 7609 0890

Hon. Editor

Mrs Ann Saunders MBE PhD FSA
3 Meadway Gate
London NW11 7LA
Tel. 020 8455 2171

Newsletter Editor

Denise Silvester-Carr
1 The Firs
162 Longlands Road
Sidcup
Kent DA15 7LG
Tel/fax: 020 8309 0858
E-mail:
dsilvestercarr@compuserve.com

Hon. Secretary

Patrick Frazer PhD MSc
36 Old Deer Park Gardens, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2TL
Tel. 020 8940 5419 E-mail: patfrazer@yahoo.co.uk

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.

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