

shopping streets in London and Westminster in the late 1830s and the 1840s. The accompanying map shows all the streets covered in the *Street Views* (High Street, Islington, a part of which was included, is not shown for reasons of space).

Both the original series and the supplement were accompanied by a very comprehensive index, which gave the name and occupation of over 90% of the occupants of the buildings shown.

Oil Merchants

The indexes for the two series of views list approximately 8,000 shopkeepers and their activities. Of this number, 107 can be positively identified as being connected in some way with the merchandising of oil, being described variously as:

oilman
oil and colour merchant
Italian warehouse
lamp oil warehouse
oil and hop merchant
oilman and fish sauce warehouse
oil and candle warehouse
chandler and oilman

The majority of these 61 (in all) are described simply as oilman.

The map shows that there are no obvious concentrations of oil merchants. There is, however, a dearth of them in two perhaps predictable areas, namely: 1. the aristocratic area of St James/SE Mayfair, where owners of commodity shops would not have been able to afford the high rents and 2. the essentially office area of the central City of London, where the comparatively low density of households would not have required oil shops.

Oil Jars

The next stage in this research was to identify each of the 107 oil merchants on the pictorial street views. This revealed 13 shopfronts, on which one or more oil jars could be identified.

Some of the oil jars are rather crudely depicted (notably that one on No 75 Blackman Street), but, nevertheless, the accompanying pictures show quite clearly the existence of up to three jars on each shop front.

Close examination of every shop (not only of those described in the index as oilman etc.) has revealed no additional oil jars. None of the identified oil jars exist any more and, in fact, none of the buildings on which they were fixed are still standing.

These views cannot, however, be taken as proof that other oil jars did not exist in London or Westminster in the 1830s and 40s, for two reasons:

- Tallis' *Views* only cover selected streets
- There is no reason to suppose that his engravings are totally accurate. In fact, as the views were often prepared to tight deadlines,

errors and omissions were quite possible. Therefore, oil jars might have existed on shopfronts other than the 13 mentioned.

Conclusions

This search of Tallis' *Street Views* has provided considerable information on the existence of oil jars in the centre of London, from which a number of implications can be drawn:

- 1 The existence of oil jars as shop signs in central London was probably, at one time, much denser than John Ashdown's articles implied.
- 2 Redevelopment in Central London has destroyed nearly all traces of oil jar shop signs. In fact, in the area encompassed by Tallis' *Views*, only two shops now show oil jars, these were identified in John Ashdown's first article¹ as 39 Greville St, EC1 and 127 Lower Marsh, SE1.
- 3 Tallis' *Views* open up a fruitful field of research, investigating the preponderance of shop signs in London in the 1840s. In addition to oil jars, a cursory examination of the *Street Views* shows a wide range of signs, including kettles, keys, brushes, pawn brokers' balls, horses, dogs.

The full list of all 13 shops is:

- 1 J. H. Spiller: Oilman, 98 Holborn Hill (now Charterhouse Street), 1 Jar.
- 2 B. M. Tite: Oilman, 86 Holborn Hill (now Charterhouse Street), 1 Jar.
- 3 Edridge: Oilman, 20 Red Lion Street, 1 Jar.
- 4 John Vaughan: Oil & colourman, 75 Blackman Street (now part of Borough High Street), 1 Jar.
- 5 Sheldon: Oilman & GPO, 10 Smithfield Bars (now part of Smithfield Market), 2 Jars.
- 6 Gregory: Oil & colourman, 4 Horsemonger Lane (now part of Southwark Bridge Road), 2 Jars.
- 7 Nunn: Oilman, 132 Shoreditch (now Shoreditch High Street), 1 Jar.
- 8 Rentell: Oilman, 194 Shoreditch (now Shoreditch High Street), 1 Jar.
- 9 Bryan: Tallow chandler & oilman, 72 Wardour Street, 3 Jars.
- 10 Roberts: Oilman, 77 Wardour Street, 1 Jar
- 11 W. Grey: Oilman, 10 Westminster Bridge Road, 2 Jars.
- 12 Langdon: Oilman, 24 Westminster Bridge Road, 3 Jars.
- 13 Cadd: Oilman, 67 Chiswell Street, 1 Jar.

Excavation Round-up: late entry

Perry Hill, Hawkesfield Road, S.E.6. TQ 366 725. Lewisham Natural History Society (K. White). Trial trenches in back garden revealed post-medieval features and medieval and post-medieval pottery.

corrections

Fulham Palace (walled garden). TQ 241 7599. Directed by K. R. Whitehouse.

St. Helier Station, Green Lane, Morden. TQ 2550 6716. Report duplicated by accident. Large quantity of RB sherds found here, and smaller number in gardens 100m to E at TQ 2555 6710.