

Books

The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell

John Schofield (ed.)

London Topographical Society Publication no. 135, 1987 (new in paperback)

164 pages, 11 colour plates, 57 figures, bibliography, index. £16; £20.10 by post from London Topographical Society, Flat 13, 13 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SH

This volume first appeared in hardback in 1987, and was reviewed in *LA* by Peter Leach in 1988 (vol. 5, no. 14, 388). Now, some 15 years later, it has appeared in paperback, and it demonstrates the timelessness of a good book. Treswell's known surveys were undertaken from 1580 to 1614, with those in London being undertaken in the latter half of the period. His drawing, both in black-and-white as well as colour, cover a number of sites scattered across the City of London, as well as a few outside the city walls.

I commend Leach's review to today's subscribers as an example of an article in its own right, giving as it does a short account of Treswell's career and a clear discussion of the contents of the volume. His one negative comment bears repeating here: 'How were all these plans surveyed and drawn? ... as all of us who have to survey buildings of many small irregular rooms

know, it isn't easy, and some thoughts on this would have been welcome.' It is a shame that Schofield did not address this point in this edition, but it is, as Leach says, 'a small omission'.

Fiona Haughey

Discovering London Statues and Monuments

Margaret Baker

Shire Publications, 2002

224 pages, fully illustrated in black and white and colour, bibliography, index. £10.99 paperback.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to walk around London and fail to encounter a statue or a monument. In central London in particular there is hardly a single street or square without either one or the other.

Before embarking on a tour of over six hundred of them, the author starts with a brief introduction, explaining the changes that have been made from the fourth to fifth editions of a publication that started life in 1968. She outlines future developments, and expresses dissatisfaction that the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square remains "a problem unresolved". The reader is then guided through twenty-five chapters, each of which describes the statues and monuments in a specific part of London. The coverage starts with

(continued from p. 135)

2. Fig. 1 based on the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map of 1996 with permission of the HMSO. © Crown Copyright 2001. (Compass Archaeology Ltd, London SE1 1SG, licence no. AL 100031317).
3. British Geological Survey 1996 *Romford. England and Wales Sheet 257. Solid and Drift. 1:50,000*.
4. J. Rocque *An exact Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster ye Borough of Southwark with the country near 10 miles round* (1746).
5. G. W. Bacon *New Large-Scale Ordnance Atlas of London & Suburbs* (1888).
6. A. P. Middleton 'Prehistoric red-finished pottery from Kent' in I. Kinnes and G. Varndell (eds) *Unbaked urns of rudely shape: essays on British and Irish pottery for Ian Longworth*. Oxbow monograph 55 (1995) 203-210; N. R. Brown 'Later Bronze Age and Early to Middle Iron Age' in J. J. Wymer and N. R. Brown *Excavations at North Shoebury: settlement and economy in south-east Essex 1500BC-AD1500*, East Anglian Archaeol 75 (1995) 77-88.
7. D. Longley *Runnymede Bridge 1976: excavations on the site of a Late Bronze Age settlement*, Surrey Archaeol Soc Res Vol 6.
8. B. W. Cunliffe *Iron Age Britain* (1995).
9. N. R. Brown, see fn 6. For examples see J. R. Timby 'The pottery' in C. Bell 'An archaeological excavation on land adjacent to Snowy Fielder Way, Isleworth' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 47 (1996) 42-50; L. Rayner 'The prehistoric pottery' in J. Sidell, J. Cotton, L. Rayner and L. Wheeler *The prehistory and topography of Southwark and Lambeth*, MoLAS monograph forthcoming.
10. N. Brown and J. Cotton 'The Bronze Age' in *The archaeology of Greater London: an assessment of the archaeological evidence for human presence in the area now covered by Greater London*, MoLAS monograph (2000).
11. P. Greenwood 'Iron Age London: some thoughts on current knowledge and problems 20 years on' *London Archaeol* 8, no. 6 (1997) 153-161; N. R. Brown *op cit* fn 6.

central London and the West End and radiates outwards, reaching north London, the area west of Putney, the East End and Docklands, south London, Greenwich and Woolwich. The geographical structure of the book is largely a mechanism by which the author is able to organise her material; although information is not presented as a set of suggested walks, readers could easily create their own itineraries.

The author introduces her statues and monuments by describing where they may be found; she gives them names wherever possible and explains when there is an element of doubt. For example, it appears that the statue in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, may be of one of three proposed queens: Charlotte, Anne or Mary II; Byron is however quoted as saying cattily that “the face is pretty, which should eliminate them all”. Information about each work is given including, wherever possible, the date and other details of its construction (apparently Landseer had to “work quickly with a decaying carcass” when his model for the lions in Trafalgar Square died). A short history of each work is provided, with reasons why commemoration was seen to be appropriate at the time. Enjoyment of the chatty text is enhanced by the liberal provision of photographs of a selection of the works, mostly in colour. There is a short bibliography, and this is followed by three maps, covering many of the areas described in the text.

The book can be read through or merely dipped into, and although it is reasonably up to date, the inclusion of the recent removal of the statue of Sir Walter Raleigh from Whitehall to Greenwich has given rise to an error in his dates, which are given as “1992-1618”. No doubt his accepted birth date of 1552 will be included in future. Other minor errors relate to items that are on the maps but cannot be located in the index.

Although it could be argued that it would be helpful to have a separate index, grouping statues and monuments into such categories as Royalty, Military, Politics, Medicine and so on, this latest edition of *London Statues and Monuments* is likely to be as successful as its predecessors in entertaining and educating Londoners and visitors alike.

A Guide to the Roman Remains in Britain

Roger J A Wilson

Constable, 2002

752 pages, with black and white illustrations, bibliography, index. £14.99 paperback

First published in 1975, the fourth edition of this well-respected reference work includes data that have become available in the past fifteen years, and now gives detailed coverage of 270 sites. The Introduction states that the book is designed primarily for the “ordinary individual”, but there can be few specialists who could claim to be familiar with every detail.

The author has organised his information geographically, using ten chapters to describe sites on a regional basis, running from South-East England to Scotland, including special chapters devoted to Hadrian’s Wall and London. These chapters are augmented by a Gazetteer of visible remains not mentioned in the text, featuring links back to the regional information. A listing of principal museums in Britain displaying Romano-British material is given, including website addresses.

The chapter on London makes reference to a map of the Roman City, and takes the reader through an historical sequence of events from *Londinium’s* construction to its decay. Recent finds are well covered, and descriptions of the Spitalfields female burial (featuring a sarcophagus and lead coffin) and the Gresham Street bucket-and-chain water lifting equipment, are confirmation that the author has been successful in bringing his comprehensive guide into the twenty-first century.

Richard Gilpin

An Introduction to the Cuming Family and the Cuming Museum

Stephen Humphreys

London Borough of Southwark, 2002

24 pages, many illus., index. Price not stated.

Stephen Humphreys provides an illuminating and meandering insight into Southwark’s eclectic and busy history. The story of the museum founders, father and son, Richard and Henry Syer Cuming, is interspersed with the stories of some of the museum’s principal objects, and takes you on lively trip around the streets, houses, shops and workhouses of 18th, 19th and 20th century Southwark. The scholarly material given life by Humphreys’ free-flowing writing style provides for numerous ‘did you know?’ anecdotes. My favourite ‘tale’ is of Charles Dickens and the sign of the dog and pot. The sign a – wonderfully moulded brass and wood model of dog eating from a pot – was a memorable landmark on Dickens’ walk home to Lant Street, Southwark, from his work at a blacking factory in Charing

Cross. His encounter with this intriguing ironmonger's sign which, I find out represents a 'firedog' used to hold cooking pots over an open fire, is recorded in his memoirs. The sign, now housed at the Cuming Museum, was used by several Southwark businesses, eventually becomes the advertising symbol for engineering firm Hayward Bros., and features on iron coal-plates which can still be seen set into London pavements. Such 'tales' bring the history of Southwark to life, providing a life for the objects by taking them outside the museum display. Also, perhaps more importantly, my walks round London gain a new found purpose, a search for a rather intriguingly designed coal-plate; thanks, Stephen!

Lesley Smith

Under Hackney: The Archaeological Story

Keith Sugden with Kieron Tyler

Friends of Hackney Archives, 2002

64 pages, many illus., bibliography. £4.95

This small volume, published with the assistance of the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS), provides a wealth of detail on the history and archaeology of the borough of Hackney from the Palaeolithic period through to Tudor times. Although Hackney was not referred to specifically in the Domesday Book, coming under the manor of Stepney (*Stebunheath*) until the 14th century – the definition of Hackney for the purposes of this volume are taken to be the boundaries created for administrative purposes in 1965 and encompassing the three councils of Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington. In addition to the progression from Palaeolithic Hackney through the Bronze and Iron Ages to Roman times and beyond, thematic issues are also recounted in each chronological period – for example, Roman burials in Hackney are described as is medieval agriculture as practiced in the area, Hackney's large houses and manors, trade and industry in the medieval and post-medieval periods and even Shoreditch in Shakespeare's time! In all cases results of recent archaeological excavations are supplemented by information gleaned from earlier archaeological exploration and historical data.

The Appendices of the book contain information on find spots of extinct Pleistocene animals; tool collections; modern excavations of material of Palaeolithic date in Stoke Newington; Saxon and medieval place names and finally information pertaining to the Borough contained within the

Domesday Book. For budding amateur archaeologists or simply those who wish to know more about their borough's past, *Under Hackney* also contains extremely useful charts, maps, glossaries, references and further reading and sources of further information including places to visit, advice on finds, excavation and planning and also details on how to become involved in archaeology.

Jo Dullaghan

The Roman tower at Shadwell, London: a re-appraisal

David Lakin with Fiona Seeley, Joanna Bird, Kevin Rielly and Charlotte Ainsley

MoLAS Archaeological Studies Series No. 8, 2002

71 pages, 27 Figs., bibliography, index. £6.95

Nearly 30 years ago excavations in Shadwell uncovered the remains of a 9m square building that the original excavator interpreted as a Roman signal tower and that explanation has passed into the literature. Further excavations on an adjacent area revealed more Roman features and added to an impressive array of finds. However neither site has been fully published until the present report, which is the result of a joint MoLAS and English Heritage project to publish back-log sites.

The author (who had no connection to the original excavations) and his collaborators have tackled a difficult task. This is because many of the original records and finds are not available, and because archaeological practices and standards have changes greatly since 1974-6. Also, the records are often such that there is scant evidence as to how various features relate to each other; nor is the dating evidence straightforward.

Consequently some of this report's conclusions have to be argued on the basis of probability, rather than surviving evidence.

The report does however benefit from our greatly increased knowledge of Roman archaeology, in particular burial practices, leading directly to the conclusion that the Shadwell tower was most likely to have been a mausoleum. The sites also had cremation and inhumation burials, a variety of fences and ditches, interpreted as boundaries, and tanks and drains of an industrial nature, from one of which a pair of lady's leather briefs were recovered. These features are now plausibly assigned to a number of phases from the 1st to the 4th centuries AD. However there was nothing in the study area of the 70s to explain the origin of the very many coins found, the large and

atypical samian ware assemblage, the substantial amounts of other pottery and layer of building rubble that included *opus signinum* and roof and flue tiles. The answer to these mysteries must lie elsewhere in the neighbourhood where, as chance would have it, the excavation of a major Roman building is underway at the time of writing.

This report is a conscientious attempt to make the most of the old material and mould it to MoLAS publication format, and it will doubtless be invaluable for future studies in the area. How the Shadwell tower fits into the larger picture is waiting to be revealed.

Rose Baillie

Discovering Roman Britain

David E. Johnston

Shire Publications 2002

160 pages, 80 Figs., bibliography, index. £9.99

This book, now in its third edition, is a compact and portable guide to sites in Roman Britain with their surviving features in situ. Each entry is supplemented by a brief history and further details of the site. Chapters 2 to 6 cover a historical outline of 400 years of Roman rule, and the countryside, towns, religious monuments and military remains. In the 7th and last chapter, England is listed by counties, Wales by main regions, Scotland as a whole (plus the Antonine Wall) and the Channel Islands separately.

The section dealing with Greater London gives a brief summary of *Londinium* as the physical focus of Roman Britain and the centre of the developing road system. Twelve sites are listed in, or very near to, *Londinium*, with four more in Greater London. Directions for access are given. The roles of the two main London museums are briefly discussed – the Museum of London as the principal curator of *Londinium*'s remains, and the British Museum's collections giving an introduction to the wider picture of Roman Britain.

Pat Nicolaysen

The Archaeology of Medieval London

Christopher Thomas

Sutton Publishing, 2002

178 pages, 59 illustrations, bibliography and index. £19.99 hardback.

Books on Roman London there are in plenty, but books on the medieval archaeology of London are remarkably few. Why should this be – is it because the Romans exert a greater attraction for the reader, because the Roman strata are better protected than the higher medieval strata, or

perhaps because the whole subject has been pre-empted by the historians? Whatever the reason, a book that fills the gap is surely to be welcomed. Chris Thomas will be known to many interested in London's archaeology as the excavator of Spitalfields and other monastic sites, and as such he is well qualified to attempt the task. He sensibly defines London flexibly, taking in both Westminster and Southwark, and sets the boundaries of his period from the re-foundation of *Lundenburgh* c. 886 to the Dissolution of the monasteries c. 1540. The book's structure appears to be strictly chronological, with chapter breaks occurring in the years 1066, 1200 and 1350. Within this framework, each chapter follows a common thematic pattern of Introduction, Layout and Development, Houses, Daily Life, Markets, Defences, Docks and London Bridge, Palaces, Religion, and Conclusion. Something for everyone, one might think.

A closer look reveals considerable thematic biases: *Religion*, for example, occupies over one-third of the book, and *Palaces* almost a further one-fifth. At the other end of the scale, *Houses* take up less than 10% of the book, and *Layout and Development*, *Daily Life*, and *Defences* less than 5% each. To some extent, this reflects the greater chances of survival of large stone buildings, such as palaces and monasteries (and their tendency to become Scheduled Ancient Monuments), but it also reflects the interests and career of the author to a greater degree than one might have hoped. It would be unfair to describe this book as 'sites I have known', but the emphasis is nevertheless patchy, with a very variable level of detail in some site descriptions. It is also a notably 'in-house' effort, with all the illustrations coming from either the author or from MoLAS, and with no direct acknowledgement of the work of other archaeological teams. All in all, I was surprised to find myself slightly disappointed when I had finished reading this book. Somehow, the dynamics of an ever-changing city was lost in the minutiae of ditches and post-holes, and the book feels like a half-way house between the typical site report and a full synthesis.

However, there is much that is good in this book: much unpublished work is opened up to us (see the number of *in prep*'s in the bibliography), and much published work is drawn together in a way that we have not seen before. It is a brave attempt, perhaps under-resourced, and it is an important step towards a synthesis of the material life of medieval London.

Clive Orton