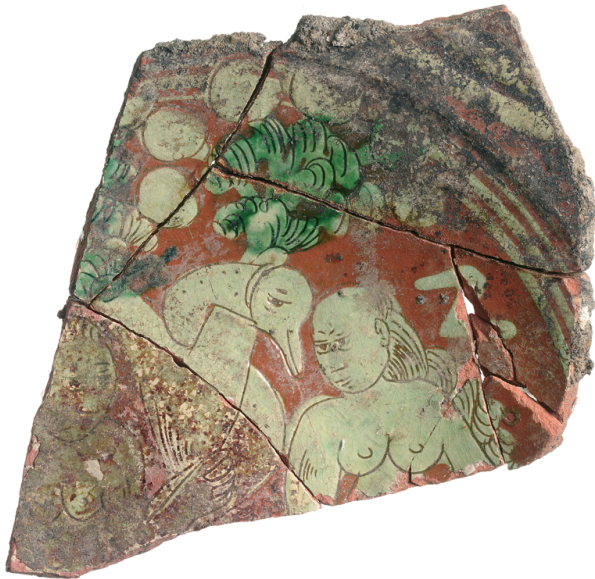


Feeding the Navy

Ian Grainger describes investigations into the Royal Navy's first victualling yard, which supplied British sailors for over 200 years



London's Royal Navy victualling yard was excavated in 1983–8 during the redevelopment of the former Royal Mint on Tower Hill. The victualling yard was founded in 1560 on the site of the internationally important East Smithfield Black Death cemetery (MOLA Monograph 43, published in 2008) and the remains of the abbey of St Mary Graces, the last Cistercian house founded in England (a forthcoming MOLA Monograph). This was the first, large-scale naval food supply base in the country and remained the principal one until the late 18th century. It served British fleets from the time of Drake and the Spanish Armada, through that of the Commonwealth and the Anglo-Dutch Wars in the 17th century, into the 18th century with Hawke and the Seven Years War, Rodney and the American War of Independence. The yard closed in 1785, finally proving inadequate for the needs of the expanding Georgian navy. A major new monograph aims to integrate the various strands of evidence – stratigraphic, documentary, finds and environmental – to tell the story of what is the only large-scale archaeological investigation of an early post-medieval naval victualling establishment in this country.

The excavated remains are compared to the substantial documentary evidence available, particularly two crucial, detailed plans of 1635 and 1776. As a result, the many components of the yard – slaughterhouses and yards, the salthouses, pickling sheds, cooperages, bakehouses, storehouses, and offices and dwellings of personnel – can be identified on a series of phased plans.

Of central importance to the development of the yard was the existence of the surviving abbey buildings. When Edward Baeshe, the first General Surveyor of the Victuals, arrived on site, rather than clearing the site and beginning anew, he reused these buildings extensively. This decision, though economically prudent and probably logistically sensible for the small Elizabethan navy, was to have serious consequences for the victuallers faced with supplying the far larger fleets that followed. Some of

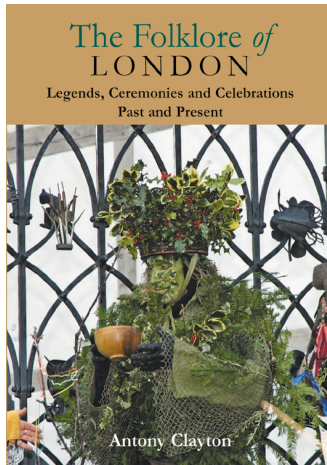
these buildings, described in the early 17th century as likely to 'fall down ere long, being the ruins of a decayed monastery', were still being used by the victuallers when the yard closed. The book presents the archaeological evidence for the problematic reuse of both the buildings themselves and of building materials derived from them incorporated into new structures.

The increasing industrialisation of the yard is a major theme. The late 16th- and early 17th-century yard was almost domestic in appearance, with large areas given over to allotments or gardens. During the later 17th century these areas were replaced by the yards and buildings of a greatly expanded cooperage, where iron-bound barrels were made. This extensive rebuilding of the yard facilities may be linked to a period of naval reform overseen by men such as the famous diarist Samuel Pepys (Clerk to the Navy Board 1660–73, Admiralty Secretary 1673–9 and 1684–9)

TOP: Werra slipware dish from the site showing Adam and Eve
BELOW: Heavily worn 16th-century tiled flooring in the 'Old Salt House'.
 Photos © Museum of London Archaeology



The Folklore of London: Legends, Ceremonies and Celebrations Past and Present



Antony Clayton

2008

Historical Publications Ltd

240 pp

83 illustrations (black and white photographs)

Index, bibliography and extensive footnotes

Reviewed by Sarah Dhanjal and Jo Udall

From churches and pubs to sewers and tube lines, London locations are alive with legends and myths. This is a fascinating and readable account of important, but often overlooked aspects of London's history: events which never happened, happened in ancient times, or are only indistinctly remembered, but still generate stories and activities which knit together the cultural lives of the people. As well as a wealth of information about the human, animal and spectral associations of London pubs, the writer gives an excellent brief account of London's mythological foundation derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, and the stories attached to the London Stone. A calendar of customs and ceremonies throughout the capital forms a large part of the book. In January for example, actors and staff at the Drury Lane Theatre cut a cake on Twelfth Night, in memory of the

eighteenth-century actor Robert Baddeley: the event has been cancelled only three times since 1794. The custom of commemorating the execution of Charles I began in 1893: the Chinese New Year celebrations began as recently as 1973. Scott Wood concludes the book with a chapter on modern revivals, like tree-dressing and the May Day Jack-in-the-Green.

Myths are in a constant state of evolution: the subterranean burrowings of the Moleman of Hackney join tales of the tunnels under the City and caves of Blackheath; Flashmobs provide the anarchic release of more ancient pagan festivities, and votive deposits are found, reburied, and talked of – or are displayed in a pub. The spectacle of the Lord Mayor's Show is now joined by the Notting Hill Carnival.

Some stories have such a hold on the imagination that they become a concrete part of the city's fabric. Gog and Magog (or Corineus), for example, date from the twelfth-century myth of London's founding by a dynasty from ancient Troy: effigies of the giants greeted Henry V, and Elizabeth I in city pageants, and they still stand in the Guildhall having been recreated by the civic authorities after their destruction in the Great Fire of London, and again after bombing destroyed them in the Second World War.

To give a true flavour of this book, we decided to select our favourite pieces of information which were new to us. We'll be looking out for the annual Joseph Grimaldi Memorial Service held every February in Dalston, where the congregation of clowns read the lessons in costume and provide a show in a local school hall, and the Twelfth Night celebrations on Bankside, near the new Globe Theatre, where 'the Holly Man' and others perform a mumming play.

The section on pub names includes the supposed archaeological connections of a pub near Fleet Brook and Battle Bridge, reputedly named the Elephant and Castle after remains of the said animal and a spearhead were found nearby. We were intrigued by accounts of trees associated with Marc Bolan and Mendelson, the Fairlop Oak, the maypole of Cornhill, the 'lost' train of Crystal Palace, and the annual Lion Sermon at the church of St Katherine Cree, which was endowed in 1649 by a Lord Mayor of London in memory of his escape from a lion in Arabia.

The book is stimulating and well-documented, and adds another dimension to life in London.

continued from previous page

who visited the yard and was clearly very involved in its business. Pepys' diary entry for May 7 1666 reads: 'And went with him [Sir William Coventry] unto the Victualling-Office where we sat and examined his businesses and the state of the victualling of the fleet'. The Victualling Office itself, rebuilt in the 1720s was not found.

The success and ultimate failure of the yard as a supply depot is assessed and its impact on the area around it examined. By the 1780s the yard was surrounded by densely occupied tenements. Commenting on the smuggling of meat out of the yard, the former clerk of the cutting house remarked, 'Let it be recollected, the office at Tower Hill was surrounded by a neighbourhood, where three-quarters of the inhabitants would have become

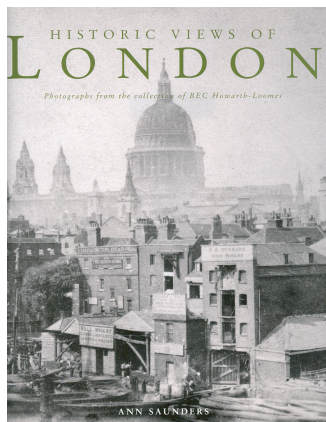
receivers of what might be brought'. Archaeological evidence for this was provided by the large amounts of animal bone, particularly cattle horn cores, found in the tenement areas.

This book provides a comprehensive well-illustrated study of the archaeology and history of an early post-medieval naval victualling establishment and will be of particular interest to archaeologists and naval historians alike.

***The Royal Navy victualling yard, East Smithfield, London* by Ian Grainger and Christopher Phillpotts, MOLA Monograph Series 45**

Available spring 2010 from MOLA (email bookssales@museumoflondon.org.uk) or the Museum of London bookshop or buy online at www.museumoflondonshop.co.uk.

Historic Views of London



Ann Saunders

2008

English Heritage

237 pages

many plates (B&W), index,
bibliography

£19.99

Reviewed by Clive Orton

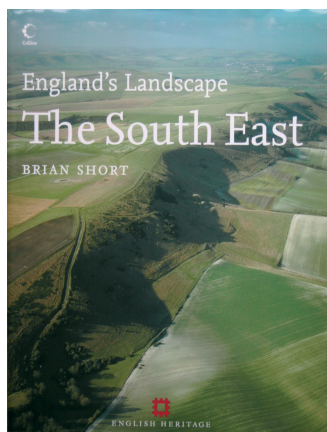
Of the making of books of old photographs there is no end, or so it seems. And it's easy to see why – this book is the author's selection of about 220, dating from between 1850 and 1915, from one collection (made by Bernard Howarth-Loomes).

Multiply that by the number of personal and institutional collections, and the number of possible selections must be endless. The background is just as interesting as the images themselves; many come from stereoscopic pairs, and until I read this book I was unaware of the great vogue for stereoscopic photographs and their viewers which swept the country in the 1850s and '60s. The author hints that their popularity may have contributed to the boom in tourism that followed in the late 19th century (p 15). The images are arranged geographically (eg the Thames, City of London) and thematically (eg traffic, medical London, statues), so that a wide range of topics is covered. Each image has a useful commentary, many of which highlight a detail which it would otherwise be easy to overlook.

So who is this book for? If you want to research a particular topic, then the NMR is the obvious place to start, and indeed the reader is pointed in that direction on p 228. Since the latest images are nearly 100 years old, the book can't be used for a nostalgic wallow (as I suppose many such books are). But as a reminder of how much London and its environs have changed in the last 100/150 years, this book really excels, especially for readers who are familiar with the present-day appearances of the locations illustrated. Whether this is worth the £20 purchase price is an individual decision, but if you are looking for a book of this genre, this one would be a good choice.

England's Landscape (Volume I)

The Southeast



Brian Short

2006

English Heritage

Hardback

256 pages

124 figures in colour and black
and white plus 7 tables

Bibliography and index

£35.00

Reviewed by John Brown

First I must apologise – it has taken me two years to review this book! During that time I have picked it up, put it down, and picked it up again on numerous occasions, both for general interest and to search for some nugget of information that might be applicable to a project I may have been working on. And in some ways this process reflects the problems I have had in comprehending the scope of the book, and whom it is intended for. This is a weighty tome, both in word and deed. Its aspiration is to summarise the nature of development, both natural and

human-influenced, that has led to the shaping of the landscape character of the whole of the South East Region of England. The book approaches the subject both chronologically and thematically, divided into a foreword and three parts. The foreword introduces concepts of landscapes as representations of power, control and identity. Part I deals with geology and topography, and defines regional historic character areas. This is followed by the evolution of settlement patterns up to the present day. In Part II the thematic aspects are then presented, focusing on the evolution and subsequent decay of farming landscapes, which essentially formed the character of much of the Southeast, and urban landscapes, including ports, spa towns and industrial towns. London receives a chapter of its own, reflecting its dominance of the region, in itself a very neat summary of the capital's development. Part III looks at the role of the landscape of the Southeast in art, both in terms of painting and fiction, and the resultant invention of a romantic ideal and nostalgia for that same. In many ways I felt this was the most successful section in terms of reader enjoyment, as it was not so constrained by the necessity of facts and figures that punctuate the preceding sections. The final chapter summarises the journey the book has attempted, and the lessons learned.

Back to the question I raised at the start of the review – who is this book intended for? It is not really hugely useful for in-depth study, although the summaries of each region's character areas are good. On a number of occasions I felt the language to be a bit elitist, and the geology section in particular will be difficult for anyone with less than a GCSE/ O level knowledge of geological terms. So not a coffee-table publication either despite high production levels. The 'converted' – local studies enthusiasts for example – will get a lot from this book however, and it will be particularly useful for undergraduates studying social geography or archaeology.