PAPERS READ AT THE 51st LAMAS LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE HELD AT THE MUSEUM OF LONDON, 19 NOVEMBER 2016: 'WALKING THROUGH LONDON'S HISTORY'

MAPPING MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN LONDON

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The talk focused on *A Map of Tudor London 1520* (published by Old House Books in conjunction with The Historic Towns Trust in 2013) which was displayed on the screen.

Making the Map

The International Commission for the History of Towns was set up in 1955 under the Presidency of Professor Philippe Wolff of Toulouse who defined the purposes of the European Commission. It was established to enable the comparative study of European towns, many of which had suffered so much destruction in the Second World War, and to help to protect the old historic centres of towns which were then being threatened by a large amount of redevelopment, in order that children, in Professor Wolff's words, would not grow up in 'soulless cities'.

The two key figures in carrying the British enterprise forward were Mary Lobel (known as Roddy), who had edited the Oxfordshire Victoria County History and now became the General Editor of the project, and Colonel Henry Johns, the topographical mapping editor, a veteran of the Second World War, who was at that time working in the cartographic department of the Clarendon Press.

The first volume of city maps appeared in 1969 and was followed by a second volume in 1975. Meanwhile, it had been decided to tackle London. This provided a much greater challenge than any of the towns mapped so far, because London had undergone much greater changes than any of the other towns and cities. Before the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s, London had some thirty religious houses. Their rapid takeover was prompted in part by London's massive growth of population: from some 50,000 in 1500 to 200,000 in 1600. While the burgeoning population pushed London's suburbs out into the green fields around the city, the Great Fire of 1666 destroyed about two thirds of the medieval heart of London. The railways and new roads of the Victorian period gouged out large chunks of the city, and the bombing of the Second World War led to further destruction and redevelopment. So it was decided that the London map should focus on the period before the Dissolution, and attempt to map the historic medieval city.

This was a challenging enterprise. It was

decided to use the map compiled by John Ogilby and published in 1676 as the base. The few surviving buildings were mapped, new archaeological evidence was included, and the previous work of historians such as Marjorie Honeybourne was incorporated. John Stow's *A Survey of London* published in 1598 was read from cover to cover, and new research on the voluminous deeds surviving from the medieval period was undertaken. All this research was documented in a gazetteer which listed every place recorded on the maps in the volume, and explained the sources used. *The City of London from Prehistoric Times to c. 1520* was finally published in 1989. The 'main' map of *c.*1520 in the *Atlas* volume covers four double-spread pages. In several places the map could only chart the 'best guesses' of historians, but for the first time there was a proper (as opposed to a sketch) map of the City of London in the medieval period.

In 2008 the Historic Towns Trust decided to publish the 1520 map as a single folding map in partnership with Old House Books. This 'pocket' edition proved very popular, selling several thousand copies, and has now effectively sold out.

Using the Map

This modern map of London *c.*1520, though entirely artificial, is in many ways a better guide to mid-Tudor London than actual maps and views created in the 16th century. It presents the past using symbols and conventions from the present. It allows us to view the city plan from above – in the way we have become used to visualising town plans – but also to translate this overview into pedestrian routes and place-finding in a way we are familiar with from our use of A to Z maps, Google maps and so on. It is drawn to scale, so distances are realistic, and it is based on combining information from multiple sources not all of which would have been available to any contemporary Londoner. Even John Stow, Londoner born and bred and assiduous chronicler and explorer of the city, did not have access to the records of central government, or the property transactions and wills of private citizens which have been used, directly or indirectly, to construct the map.

The map can be used to find places in early to mid-Tudor London and visualise their surroundings. Readers of *Wolf Hall* (Mantel 2009) may wish to locate the site of Thomas Cromwell's house in Austin Friars, and the gazetteer and key take you straight to Austin Friars, even though, in 1520, Cromwell wasn't yet living there. The map locates the city's hundred-odd parish churches, most of which are completely lost to sight today. An accurately scaled map allows the reader to appreciate shifts of scale and space – the narrow streets and narrower alleys, compared with the breadth of Cheapside – though like most maps it doesn't show contours, key features for the pedestrian, so the steep slopes down to the river and the central dip where the culverted Walbrook flows through the city are hidden.

The map lets you see how far apart, or how close, places were, and to trace itineraries such as royal entries and civic processions. Katherine of Aragon, arriving to marry Prince Arthur in 1501, was entertained by pageants:

> first at the Bridge, at the Conduit in Gracechurch Street, the Conduit in Cornhill, the Standard in Cheapside, [with] the cross new gilded, at the Little Conduit, and at Paul's west door. (Greyfriars' Chronicle 1852, author's translation)

The Midsummer Watch, we are told by Stow:

> passed through the principal streets thereof, to wit, from the litle Conduit by Paules gate, through west Cheape [Cheapside], by ye Stocks, through Cornhill, by Leaden hall to Aldgate, then backe downe Fenchurch streete, by Grasse church, aboute Grasse church Conduite, and vp Grasse church streete into Cornhill, and through it into west Cheape againe. (Stow 1908)

Though the map shows London nearly 80 years before the publication of Stow's *Survey* in 1598, it is the city he grew up in, and reading the map alongside the perambulation recorded in the *Survey* adds another dimension to both.

Improving the Map

The Historic Towns Trust,[1] which now holds

the rights, has decided to reprint the map in an improved format, incorporating revisions and new information. The map of London *c.*1520 published in 1989 is not of course infallible; scholars with detailed knowledge of particular areas have found errors or disagreed with interpretations, and the map represents the state of archaeological knowledge and cartographic expertise in 1989. Since then a good deal of excavation and research has taken place, especially on the sites of London's religious houses and the waterfront, and new discoveries have been made, such as the third plate of the 'Copperplate' map of *c.*1560. A reprinted map will incorporate corrections and new or revised information. New cartographic work will enhance the visual appearance and clarity of the map, and further useful information, such as parish boundaries, will be displayed. The new map will be presented in the same format as the Trust's new towns and cities maps (Oxford, Winchester), Ordnance Survey style, at the larger scale of 1:2,500, with colour on front and back, a revised gazetteer and cover blurb, and new in-text illustrations.

All this will create a better – more legible and accurate – hard-copy map, which the reader can use as before, affordable and portable but static. However, as part of the process of revising the map for print publication, a georeferenced digital version will be created. Not simply a flat image, but one constructed from separable information layers. This will make possible exciting new ventures: a link with the Heritage Lottery funded Layers of London project,[2] for example; online presentation and interactive tagging; sharing and exchanging data with other researchers on medieval and early modern London. In the longer term, the Trust aims to create a wholly new map of London on the eve of the Great Fire. This last is a very ambitious and expensive project, however, on a much larger scale: London's population and built-up area increased eightfold between 1520 and 1660. In the meantime, the Trust (which is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation) is seeking financial support for the new edition of the 1520 map, which it is estimated will cost around £10,000, for publication in 2018.

Notes

[1] Historic Towns Trust, http://www.historic-townsatlas.org.uk (accessed 13 February 2017).
[2] Layers of London, http://layersoflondon. blogs.sas.ac.uk (accessed 13 February 2017).

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GUIDEBOOKS, POCKET PLANS AND THE EMERGENCE OF TOURISM IN 18TH-CENTURY LONDON

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The modern guidebook to London emerges in the 18th century out of a range of forms of topographical description, including surveys – most notably John Stow's *Survey of London* (1598), a work condensed, digested and reworked throughout the 17th and into the 18th centuries – histories and directories. It is also indebted to the growing number of short descriptive guides that walked readers through continental cities, such as Fioravante Martinelli's *Roma Ricercata* (1644) and Germain Brice's *A New Description of Paris* (first published in French in 1684 and translated into English in 1687). In developing a new kind of historical and topographical work, publishers of 18th-century guidebooks to London imagined a distinct audience: new arrivals who wanted a brief account of the city's history, who needed practical information on where to go and how to gain access to particular sights, and who wanted to be able to transport this

information with them as they toured the city. One such guide, *A Companion to Every Place of Curiosity and Entertainment in and about London and Westminster* (1767), summed up its purpose as follows:

> The Stranger is here directed how to gain Admittance into each Place; and where Money is paid, we have affixed the particular Price. To make it still more perfect, the Rates of Coachmen and Watermen, from the principal Parts of London to the Places herein mentioned, are prefixed; and the volume is printed in a convenient Size for the Pocket. (*A Companion* 1767, iv)

Guidebooks claimed to reflect a sense of the most significant locations in and features of the metropolis while at the same time constructing a hierarchy of sights from which the visitor might select what to visit.

The template for the London guidebook that traced a tour was set by *A New Guide to London: or, Directions to Strangers* (1726), an updated and reworked version of François Colsoni's French-language *Guide de Londres pour les Etrangers*, first published in 1693 and which reached a third edition in 1710. Colsoni had a keen eye for what a new arrival to London might want to know. He organised the visitor's time around a series of five tours and included practical information on entrance fees, tipping customs, passports, making travel arrangements and even occasional hints on pronunciation. In the early 1720s, when Thomas Smith and the Bowles brothers (John and Thomas) appear to have acquired the copyright for Colsoni's guide, the material was reworked to reach a larger audience. *A New Guide to London* was published in parallel French and English columns, 'For the Use of Foreigners and Strangers' (*New Guide* 1726, title page). Like many guidebooks that followed, it was advertised in such a way as to highlight the distinctiveness of its format, and its suitability for particular kinds of new arrivals in London. *A New Guide* is, they announced:

> so necessary to all who come to this Metropolis, and particularly to Foreigners, whose chief Design being only to see the chief Curiosities of Countries, Cities, and Places, find themselves at a great loss when there is not some short Relation thereof printed, to hint, as it were, where those Antiquities are to be found (*ibid*, np)

A New Guide to London organised the city in the form of a tour, but did away with the series of daily routes provided by Colsoni in favour of one complete circuit that visitors could begin and end, skip over and recommence where they pleased, a feature presented as offering more flexibility to individual readers. Visitors were directed to particular historic sites (such as Whitehall, Westminster Abbey and the Tower of London) as well as taken on a tour through particular areas (including the Minories, St Giles and Hanover Square). Throughout, the visitor is invited to pause in his or her walk through the city's streets to look at or visit particular sites. At the same time as the authors suggest a broad survey of the city, the introduction points to a tension between 'the brevity' of the work and the 'vast number of noted Places', thereby highlighting the distinctive nature of the guidebook, and the generic limits placed on it. At the end of the circuit, the narrative notes that:

> We have omitted (because we would not send you too much out of the way of the most remarkable Places) to mention *Wapping*, *Southwark*, the fine Streets and Parts of *Goodman's-Fields*, *White-Chapel*, *Spittle-Fields* and a number of other areas. (*New Guide* 1726, 83)

These are then described individually, rather than as part of the general pedestrian circuit, and are thus relegated to being sights of secondary importance that only the visitor with more time, or very specific interests, might visit.

A New Guide's tour leads the reader through the streets of the metropolis, instructing the visitor on where to go and what to look at. On leaving St James's Palace, the starting point of the tour, for example, the visitor is told, 'Going out of this Palace towards the *East*, you find *Marlborough-House*' (*New Guide* 1726, 6–7). Passing through Ludgate, the reader is instructed: 'Then going up this Street, you see before you the *Cathedral of St. Paul's*' (*ibid*, 33). Although the guide is presented to readers as less prescriptive than its predecessor, there are

occasions when imperatives tell you what you must do: on leaving Westminster Abbey, the stranger is told that 'Thence you must go to the *Parliament-House*' (*ibid*, 16). Points of interest were not limited to historic sites of key political and religious importance. At one point in the tour, for example, visitors were advised to note:

> the fine Street call'd *Cheapside*, where, as well as in all the Streets from *Charing-Cross*, the great Concourse of People, the Magnificence of the Shops and Merchandises, will Surprise and Charm you. (*ibid*, 37)

The pedestrian tour outlined in the guidebook maps London's complex social, cultural and historical fabric, shifting regularly between local or individual and national histories, and between accounts of political power, manners and customs, and commercial prosperity. The guide's itinerary was reinforced in the print series, *Several Prospects of the most noted Publick Buildings in and about London* (1724), which was advertised in the guidebook and which broadly follows the route outlined by the tour. Visitors could also trace their route and find their way on *A Pocket Map of the Cities of London and Westminster* (1723) by Thomas Bowles,[1] which was available for purchase and also advertised *Several Prospects*. These works overlap and complement one another in ways that help the reader map the city and locate key sites.

A New Guide to London is the first of many pocket guidebooks in English to be produced in the 18th century. Like *A New Guide*, many walked their readers through London on foot, and many advertised additional items such as pocket maps or tables of boat and coach rates at an additional cost. These could be sewn into the guide or pasted on cloth for durability and presented in a slipcase for protection. Taken together, these works suggest some of the ways in which visitors to the capital began to be imagined and addressed in new ways. In particular, they point to the ways in which the visitor to London was imagined as both a critical observer of the city and a consumer of its sites and its history.

Note

[1] London Metropolitan Archives SC/GL/PR/GP/003/k1269477.

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KEYNOTE LECTURE – FROM TYBURN TREE TO MARBLE ARCH: WILLIAM BLAKE WALKS AT NIGHT

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All his life, William Blake was a compulsive walker who endlessly traversed London in his own company. 'His principal childhood memory', according to Peter Ackroyd (1996, 18), was 'of solitary walking'. One evening when he was in his early twenties he resolved to walk east along Long Acre in the direction of Great Queen Street, where his former master, the engraver James Basire, lived. It was a perfectly ordinary decision. But it had unexpected and enduring consequences. For this occasion – 6 June 1780 – happened to be the fifth day of the anti-Catholic uprising known as the Gordon Riots.

Suddenly, Blake was swept up in the headlong charge of hundreds of rioters determined to liberate those confined to Newgate Prison in the preceding days. 'He encountered the advancing wave of triumphant Blackguardism', according to his first biographer, Alexander Gilchrist, 'and was forced (for from such a great surging mob there is no disentanglement) to go along in the very front rank, and witness the storm and burning of the fortress-like prison, and release of its three hundred inmates' (see Bentley 2001, 57). The destruction of Newgate, which met with brutal retribution at Tyburn, was the most violent civil disturbance to take place in Britain during Blake's lifetime.

Twenty-five years later, living in South Molton Street, just off the old route from Newgate to Tyburn, seven or eight minutes on foot from the site of the Fatal Tree, Blake surely reflected again and again on the walk he took across London on the evening of 6 June 1780, a solitary stroll that was suddenly transformed with a phantasmagoric rush into

an apocalyptic night in which destruction and liberation could not be dissociated from one another. In the address 'To the Christians' that prefaces chapter IV of *Jerusalem*, Blake's most ambitious prophetic book, 'a Watcher & a Holy-One' tells the poet to supplicate not to the 'proselytes to tyranny & wrath' but the prostitutes and sinners – 'For Hell is opend to Heaven; thine eyes beheld / The dungeons burst & the Prisoners set free' (1988, 233). In the liberation of Newgate he was granted a vision of the apocalyptic destruction of the regime of discipline and punishment of which Tyburn was emblematic. Here, at the heart of London's darkness, was a searing flash of light that, in spite of the feverish destruction it caused, remained incandescent for decades.

London in the epoch of ascendant industrial capitalism was in Blake's mythological imagination a city encased in night. The black sun of the Enlightenment stained it; and, at its centre, Tyburn Tree, the ancient scene of execution, cast an impenetrable shade. In his paintings, poems and illuminated books, Blake pitted a kind of anti-Enlightenment light against London's night – in a sustained, if finally doomed, attempt to redeem it.

In the course of its 600-year history, culminating in the late 18th century, it is estimated that some fifty or sixty thousand people died at Tyburn Tree, which is today the site of Marble Arch. Today, there is no reference to the mass victims of these infamous gallows (though at Tyburn Convent, overlooking Hyde Park, there is a plaque commemorating 105 Catholics executed from the mid-16th century). No doubt it is predictable enough that the obscurest, most desperate members of London's poor population, condemned for committing trifling crimes against property, should remain uncommemorated at Marble Arch. But even infamous victims of the Tyburn regime are unnamed. There is no mention of Jack Sheppard, the most notorious and popular thief of the 18th century, who twice escaped from Newgate, and whose execution in 1724 drew admiring crowds of as many as two hundred thousand people.

Tyburn Tree was in the 18th century the symbol not of some crude, outdated order of justice, a remnant of feudal times, but of a legal system engineered and rebuilt by the capitalist bourgeoisie. Most of those executed at Tyburn were ordinary men and women who had been reduced by economic circumstances to a state of desperation – apprentices, ill-paid servants, unemployed labourers, prostitutes and vagrants. As Roy Porter points out:

> those committing crimes – notably the 1,200 Londoners hanged in the eighteenth century – were less hardened professionals than servants and seamstresses and the labouring poor, down on their luck or out of work, starving, or just fatally tempted. (2000, 184)

In chapter 2 of *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, the reader stumbles into a monumental gate that – in contrast, it might be said, to Marble Arch – promises to liberate, as opposed to entomb, the spirits of those executed at Tyburn Tree. In a dreadful voice, the poet invokes the memory of Britain's 'Victims to Justice' and avers:

> There is in Albion a Gate of precious stones and gold
> Seen only by Emanations, by vegetations viewless,
> Bending across the road of Oxford Street; it from Hyde Park
> To Tyburns deathful shades, admits the wandering souls
> Of multitudes who die from Earth.
> (1988, 181)

This Gate is 'the Gate of Los'. Los is Blake's shape-shifting allegorical embodiment of the imagination. Los's Gate represents the possibility of redemption for the countless spirits of those who, as in an industrial factory, have been sacrificed on the scaffold at Tyburn, which he identifies as a 'Mill, intricate, dreadful / And fill'd with cruel tortures' (1988, 181).

Blake insists that the Gate of Los, standing against 'the Mill / Of Satan', 'cannot be found / By Satan's Watch-fiends tho' they search numbering every grain / Of sand on Earth every night' (1988, 181). To these 'Watch-fiends' – who are both Enlightenment rationalists, measuring material reality with their deadly mathematical instruments, and oppressive nightwatchmen, policing the people's city – it is invisible, undetectable. It escapes the oppressive double logic of

enlightenment and illumination that is best symbolised, in the late 18th century, by the disciplinary regime of the Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's design for a prison whose 'central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything, and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known' (Foucault 1991, 173). Concealed as if in some fold in 18th-century London's time-space continuum, the Gate of Los is a secret portal into Jerusalem, Blake's city of salvation. It is as if Marble Arch, in all its blankness and coldness, was installed there in the mid-19th century not only in order to inter the brutal history of Tyburn, but to block access to Blake's imperceptible 'Gate of precious stones and gold'.

Blake was in his mid-twenties when the scaffold at Tyburn was dismantled for the last time in November 1783; but its ominous form haunted him throughout his life. As Jeremy Tambling writes, for Blake 'London in the early nineteenth century retains its ghosts of Tyburn' (2005, 118). In August 1783, an artist and engraver called William Wynne Ryland, whose fashionable and highly successful print-selling business had gone bankrupt in 1771, was hanged at the Tree for forging bills on the East India Company. It was to this professional artist that, in spite of the expense, James Blake had tried to apprentice his son William in 1772. Legend has it that Blake, who was 14 at the time, deterred his father from committing him to this indenture by commenting, 'Father, I do not like the man's face: *it looks as if he will live to be hanged.*'

In 2012, approximately three hours after I had set off on a midnight walk to Newgate from the traffic island in which the plaque commemorating Tyburn is roughly embedded, police called to Marble Arch found a man in his mid-forties lying dead on the central concourse, directly beneath one of the arches. This man, Mark Morrison, a Scot who had formerly worked as a chef but who had for some time been homeless, had been strangled with a strip of green tent fabric. An engineer working for London Underground had caught sight of a man stooping over the murder victim at around 3am, but this man ran off when challenged.

A week later, an Afghan asylum-seeker, Ghodratollah Barani, who was in his mid-

twenties, was charged with Morrison's murder. Like the victim of this crime, he was of no fixed address. Psychiatric doctors at both St Thomas' and the Gordon Hospitals had examined Barani prior to the murder, because he had repeatedly tried to gain entry to Buckingham Palace, claiming voices had informed him that, in order to become the rightful King of England, he needed to kill someone; but he had been discharged. Police officers at the palace, for their part, had ignored his threats because they assumed these were part of a campaign to secure asylum. Eventually, in March 2013, Barani pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He was detained under the Mental Health Act and recommended for deportation on his release.

It is parabolic drama of contemporary Britain, with its cast of asylum-seekers, night-shift workers, over-stretched doctors and rough sleepers – the victims of foreign policy and domestic policy, and the relations between the two. And the violent climax of this drama encodes a sickly irony, for it is as if the horrors of old Tyburn, with its countless, near-anonymous victims of strangulation, many of them itinerant and unemployed, irrupted beneath the empty portal of Marble Arch in the shape of this corpse. The tomb of the forgotten vagrant.

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A FOOTPAD'S VIEW OF SOUTH LONDON IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY

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This paper looked at highway robbery after dusk in 18th-century South London, focusing on two major roads which linked

Central London with naval dockyards and the Continent. The first, known as the Deptford Road, stretched between Blackheath and today's Old Kent Road. Until 1804, it was the only road between Deptford and Greenwich: an important section of the route to Canterbury and Dover. The second, the Lower Road, ran through marshy land nearer the river, joining Rotherhithe and Deptford.

There were several crime waves in the last quarter of the 18th century linked to financial crises, post-war demobilisation and poor harvests. Crime was a particular problem in the maritime districts east of London Bridge, north and south of the Thames, where there were numerous seafarers and prostitutes. There was a higher percentage of violent theft south of the Thames, where it accounted for as much as half of all theft. Much of this was due to footpads and highwaymen.

Sparsely inhabited roads, such as those leading into London, were dangerous at night. Cautious travellers tried to time their journey so that they always approached London in daylight. Local people, though, were fairly confident about using the roads after dusk. It was a social age. They went to clubs and events in the evening. But they seem to have walked about at night in groups and only worried if they met people they did not know. Similarly, these two routes were also well-used by artisans who walked to work before daylight. Again, they would have been in groups. It's reasonable to assume that local robbers targeted strangers.

The Lower Road, through marshy fields between Rotherhithe and Deptford, was most suited to footpads. They hid in the ditches that drained the road. Their haunt was Halfway House, at the road's junction with today's Plough Way. Footpads usually blacked their faces. They also used clothes to disguise themselves and allay fears – often wearing the kind of linen smock associated with tradesmen, like tallow chandlers.

The five-mile (*c.*8km) stretch of Deptford Road, between Shooters Hill, over Blackheath and through New Cross to the Kent Road and London Bridge was also notorious. This route was more suited to highwaymen. Many robberies occurred between the Five Bells Inn at New Cross and another Half-

Way House tavern, three miles (*c.*5km) out of London, where Kender Street now meets the New Cross Road. Another place that struck fear into travellers was the Peckham Gap, sometimes called 'Devil's Gap', half a mile (0.8km) further west. In both locations, highwaymen could ride south, down narrow tracks, to escape.

Highwaymen received more respect than footpads. A highwayman tended to be from a slightly higher social rank. The horse he rode was a kind of status symbol. It was expensive to maintain and he risked being identified by his horse. Still, he had to be well-mounted to escape if pursued. Stories proliferated representing highwaymen as intelligent, witty and even urbane. Highwaymen needed a base. Inns sometimes sheltered them and publicans might be associates. Francis Place, the radical tailor, wrote in his autobiography that as a boy, in the 1780s, he often saw two or three horses at the door of the Dog and Duck in St George's Fields on a summer evening. People hung around, waiting to see the highwaymen mount, and 'flashy women' came out 'to take leave of the thieves at dusk, and wish them success' (Thrale 1972, 81).

Perhaps because of the aura that surrounded highwaymen, few victims seemed prepared to tackle them. A vigilant coachman might spot footpads and whip up his horses to get past. It was harder to evade highwaymen. In many cases, they needed to use little force to encourage travellers to give up their valuables.

Periodically, footpad numbers were swelled by brutalised ex-convicts. In 1776, prison hulks for men were set up on the Thames at Woolwich Reach. War with the North American colonies meant criminals could no longer be transported to America. The Thames badly needed dredging and it was hoped that convict labour would remove shoals and improve the safety of shipping. By October 1777, the hulks could hold 1,200 men. People went to see convicts working and they became something of an attraction, but they were also a danger. Some prisoners escaped to commit robberies. In the early 1780s, a hundred or so were simply freed at the end of their sentence with no provision for earning a living afterwards. They contributed to the increase in crime in the 1780s.

Newspapers turned robberies into juicy

narratives and included details that might help potential victims. Reports indicated where dangers lay, the kind of carriage most easily assaulted, the most vulnerable passengers and the kind of rapid action that might offer protection. Men escorting women were at more of a disadvantage than men travelling together. Footpads targeted light, one-horse carriages which were less able to thunder past than more powerful vehicles. For those determined to guard their property, a blunderbuss, of the kind carried by naval officers on warships, was a good precaution as it was effective at short range.

There were various initiatives to combat the robbers. By the 1780s, there were night horse patrols on the Deptford Road. These began to have effect, seizing notorious footpads, but residents were unwilling to pay to protect travellers who were simply passing through, so a regular horse patrol was not established until 1805. But in 1790, the chief magistrate at Bow Street, Sir Sampson Wright, set up a permanent foot patrol in London during the hours of darkness. This operated south of the river, too. Patrols stationed themselves near pubs like the Five Bells, and it was said that they guarded roads around the metropolis so effectively that criminals returned to the centre of town.

If we want insights into how contemporaries experienced these two areas, we can turn to actor-network theory. This treats objects as part of social networks. Turnpikes and taverns, for example, were central within specific networks. Taverns also invited overlapping networks. So, a pub might be a criminal rendezvous but also a place where Bow Street runners grouped. Or a hub where sailors might attempt some community policing. Military institutions at Deptford and Woolwich were part of the web. They provided targets – officials and officers who might have money. The dockyards also encouraged footpads to dress as sailors to dispel initial fears. The experience of these locations varied according to social class. Convict hulks were both edgy attractions and places of suffering. Even affluent locals might approach Deptford Bridge with a sense of trepidation since it was a major smuggling route and much of the community was involved in contraband.

These two routes offer an example of how geographical features favour different types of criminal activity. Robbery on one route was clearly different from that on the other. Footpads as well as highwaymen might assail you on the Deptford Road, but highwaymen were unlikely to venture into the boggy Lower Road. Arguably, when these earlier hot-spots are examined through the lens of psychogeography, 18th-century lawlessness has left a legacy for present Londoners.

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PAYING FOR PASSAGE – THE IMPACT OF TOLLS ON THE 19TH-CENTURY LONDON PEDESTRIAN

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This lecture examined the topic of London's 19th-century tolled roads and bridges, and how they impacted the free movement of pedestrians through the imposition of a foot toll. Charging a toll for a foot passenger was peculiar to London bridges and tunnels built as private concerns which sought to remunerate their investors through extracting payment from every class of user. The maximum toll was specified in the authorising Act of Parliament. Deptford Creek, Vauxhall, Waterloo, Southwark and Hungerford Bridges could charge 1d for each pedestrian, while Battersea, Lambeth and Hammersmith Bridges might charge ½d, as could the Lea Bridge on Barking Road, and users of the Thames Tunnel paid 2d. Only one road had this power and Highgate Archway, originally constituted as a tunnel, charged 1d. Foot tolls would have struck users as unusual, if not extortionate, since pedestrians went free not only on the extensive public road network maintained by turnpike trusts, such as the Surrey New Roads and Hampstead and Highgate Trusts, but also on new roads, such as Commercial and New North Roads, built by privately financed subscriber trusts in the early 1800s.

Charging a foot toll had a number of negative consequences – obstruction, isolation and occasional conflict. Tolls might also be inadequate and, while bridges were

Fig 1. Southwark and adjacent bridges, showing the tollgates on Southwark Bridge (detail from 'A Balloon View of London (as seen from Hampstead)' published by Banks & Co, 1851; private collection)

generally kept in order, some roads were poorly maintained. In 1830 'a coachman could hardly sit on the box when driving along' Highgate Archway, while a pedestrian user objected to paying 1d 'for the privilege of walking, ankle deep in mud, on this attempt at a footpath'. Vauxhall Bridge Road was described as a mile of mire to be waded through at a foot pace (Parnell 1838).[1]

It was recognised that a foot toll might obstruct free movement. An 1836 Parliamentary Committee heard how clerks and labourers diverted over Westminster Bridge on their journeys into work to avoid the Vauxhall Bridge pedestrian toll. Another report, 40 years later, concluded that foot tolls were a heavy and oppressive tax on the labouring classes. Lambeth Bridge foot tolls were 'almost entirely taken from labourers coming from the Surrey side in the morning, and going back at night'. Women living in Vauxhall who were outworkers for a Pimlico manufacturer spent 6d of their 10s weekly wage just in crossing over Vauxhall Bridge. Workers' wives took it in turn to bring dinner baskets to hand through the toll gates

at Waterloo and Deptford Creek Bridges to avoid having to pay a toll.[2]

Tollgates might also isolate a district. Commercial Road, with its gates and bars, shut off the district from communication and 'as soon as you come out at the point of the dock wall you immediately come upon the iron bridge and there a foot toll is even levied on the dock labourers'. This foot toll on Barking Road Bridge so isolated the Essex side that it came to be known as 'London across the border'. The toll charged on Deptford Creek Bridge severed Deptford from Greenwich: 'It shuts [the district] completely up ... it seems like a deserted wilderness'.[3] This isolation could be melancholy. Waterloo and the other Central London toll bridges were so quiet that they came to be associated with suicides, and *Illustrated Police News* contains numerous graphic descriptions and illustrations of gallant rescues of desperate people who had thrown themselves off the bridges.

Tolls might also deprive honest labourers of a much-needed amenity. Battersea Park, accessed from the north by Chelsea, Albert and Battersea Bridges, was effectively closed off to those who could not afford the foot toll. A tollbar might also be morally undesirable; Waterloo Road, cut off by a toll, was said to attract thieves and prostitutes, with the whole area in a 'debased, depraved and infamous state' that only free movement might remove.[4]

Although there seem to have been fewer set-piece brawls than at the busy main road turnpike gates, the collection of the pedestrian toll might result in conflict. On one Sunday morning in 1836 a mob rushed the Barking Road Bridge tollgate to evade the foot toll, assaulting both toll keepers and police reinforcements. In similar vein Good Friday 1874 saw a riot on Chelsea Bridge when the tollbooth was stormed in protest against collecting a foot toll on a public holiday.[5]

Charging a toll may also have impeded residential development. Contemporaries certainly thought so, and the area around Battersea Park, only accessible over toll bridges, was described as poor and depressed: 'instead of having got a second Belgravia, we have got a second Alsatia'. A review of District Surveyors' returns for the decade spanning the lifting of bridge tolls

goes some way to supporting this assertion. Freeing Waterloo Bridge seems to have made little difference to nearby building activity because the area was already extensively developed. Removal of the Vauxhall Bridge toll may have been a factor in the development of nearby Bonnington Square and the Grove Estate, as well as three blocks of artisans' dwellings commenced in 1878–9. Housebuilding in Battersea close to Albert and Battersea Bridges increased significantly from two years before freeing; this development occurred on 16 streets, suggesting that freeing accelerated a pattern of construction already underway.[6]

It is unsurprising that, with so many negative associations, there were active and growing campaigns to abolish the tolls from the 1820s. The key obstacle was money, the issue being who was to bear the cost of buying the bridge. Progress was slow and Southwark Bridge was the first to be freed from toll by the City in 1864, and purchased outright in 1868 (Fig 1). The remaining toll bridges were eventually freed by the Metropolitan Board of Works under the Metropolitan Toll Bridges Act 1877 which gave it a power of compulsory purchase exercisable within two years which it could fund by borrowing £1.5 million.

The abolition of tolls, and especially a foot toll, was a cause of celebration. A gala fête held near the hated Barking Road Gate included a cricket match, racing and dancing, and culminated in a display of fireworks. Deptford Creek Bridge was opened among general rejoicing; cannon were fired and bells rang in Greenwich and Deptford churches, followed by a civic feast. Cheers and processions accompanied the opening of the other toll bridges by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1879 and 1880.[7]

These bridges, all constructed at private expense, created new lines of communication. But the imposition of a toll – most notably for pedestrians – limited their usefulness and the toll gate came to be viewed as an unacceptable obstruction to free passage, eventually and after many years of campaigning removed at public expense.

Notes

[1] *The Times*, 2 January 1840, 7b; 6 November 1841, 6b.

[2]   *Parliamentary Papers* (*PP*) 1836, vol 31, House of Commons committee evidence, Lambeth Bridge; vol 19, Select Committee on Turnpike Trusts and Tolls, report; 1865, vol 8, Select Committee on metropolitan toll bridge bill; 1876, vol 14, report of Select Committee on Toll Bridges (River Thames).

[3]   *PP* 1849, vol 46, Turnpike Tolls (Tower Hamlets *etc*); 1865, vol 8.

[4]   *PP* 1856, vol 14, report of Select Committee on metropolitan turnpike roads; 1857, vol 9, report from Select Committee on Chelsea New Bridge bill, sess 2.

[5]   R v Connor, McCarthy and others (all but one acquitted); unidentified cutting in Barking Road file at Tower Hamlets Library; *The Builder*, 4 April 1874.

[6]   Battersea Churchwarden quoted in report of Select Committee on Toll Bridges (River Thames) 1876, vol 14; *Abstracts of Returns of Fees by District Surveyors, showing the numbers of New Buildings*: London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) MBW 1775 onwards.

[7]   *East London Observer*, 12 August 1871; *The Metropolitan*, 27 March 1880; *Illustrated London News*, 31 August 1879; 3 July 1880.

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'A SUNDAY RAMBLE': WALKING LITERATURE AS AN URBAN MIRROR

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What can satirical literature of the 18th century tell us about the act and experience of walking in early modern London? Using as our case study *A Sunday Ramble* (1774–97), we believe that there is much incidental information in the descriptions of places and behaviour that can be observed and analysed by the historian which offers insights not always available from other types of sources.

A Sunday Ramble is particularly valuable in this sense as it follows a walking tour of London on a Sunday by two friends, setting out from Bishopsgate Street in the early morning and ending with dinner late in the evening. During the walk the two companions visit several well-known locations, pausing to eat, drink and recount stories between themselves and with other characters that they meet along the way. The text has a topical eye and distinctly commercial leanings offering a series of sardonic but didactic encounters with social and cultural archetypes, as a means of reporting opinions, activities and personalities common in London, in the late 18th century. There are, therefore, many insights on walking in this text for us to examine.[1] Let's look at just two of these.

Bagnigge Wells

This pleasure garden had first opened in the 1760s, becoming famed for its two underground water wells, its walks and afternoon tea. It was also more cosmopolitan than other popular spas, being described by one historian as having attracted 'a clientele from a broad spectrum of society' (Curl 2010, 105). Thus, as a location, it offered the author of *A Sunday Ramble* ample opportunity for satire on class, gender and spaces. This plays out in the wide variety of characters that the companions encounter as they walk, ranging from 'a strange figure' that they pass, described as a young man dressed 'in the habit of an old man in the middle of the last century', another young man 'very genteelly dressed, who appeared to be in deep consumption', two ladies of 'easy virtue', those who wished to indulge their meditation in the private alcoves, and other dandy-type characters seeking the 'giddy crowd' or a young woman with which to walk the 'less frequented walks' and 'melt her fond soul with softest tales of love'.

The physical descriptions of Bagnigge Wells such as 'a small neat cottage, built in the rural style' near to a bridge and 'several seats placed by the water-side, for such of the company as chose to smoke, or drink cider', are combined with lively descriptions of diverse people likely to be seen as one walked the garden. Thus, the pleasure garden offers a variety of characters and situations located by a space or set of spaces, that the historian might use as an indication of social life in the period.

Green Park

Another location walked upon by the two companions is Green Park. They visit here at sunset and on their approach overhear two fashionable young women in gossip. Their subject is courtship and marriage of someone that they know. The conversation is told at length and, unusually for *A Sunday Ramble*, relayed as dialogue:

> 'So! have you heard that Miss T–is going to be married?'
> '"Married" *Lud ha'* mercy! No, sure! *She* going to be married?'
> 'Tis true, upon my word, for I saw her sister to-day, and she told me it was all settled.'
> 'Well – but who is she *going to have*?'
> 'Who, *who do you think*?'
> 'I'm sure I can't tell – one of her father's clerks, I suppose; she was always *aforward kind of body*.'
> 'No, indeed – what think you of young Tobine the mercer?'
> 'The *deuce*! It cannot be.'

A Sunday Ramble uses this act of eavesdropping to reveal to readers the secrets and opinions of two young women.[2] For historians, this offers up an opportunity to review the type of conversation two women might have had as they walked or it might, equally, only tell us what men thought women talked about. In doing so a judgement is made about careless talk. The author warns his readers that 'persons most addicted to defamation are themselves remarkable for some misfortune, misconduct, or conscious defect.' From such an episode, the historian can glimmer possible avenues of research. Did women gossip as they walked through parks and is this the type of conversation that they had? Did men eavesdrop on these conversations? Was location and, perhaps, time of day, key to understanding the act of conversation that occurred? Did women purposefully have these types of conversation as they walked as to avoid the danger of defamation claims?

Conclusions

Using two short examples from *A Sunday Ramble* we can see that location is important because of their associations. It is the kinds of people that frequent them and the kinds of behaviour contemporaries expect to witness there that make the story and provide the incidental detail that historians can extract and use to understand something new about the act and experience of walking. In *A Sunday Ramble*, walking is used as a format to show Londoners the London that they are familiar with from popular culture, and perhaps, from personal experience.

On this latter point, we need to be cautious. In such a literary genre not all is necessarily as it appears. The text is sometimes borrowed from other texts; characters that are named are archetypes and not necessarily unique individuals. For instance, the potential groom that the two gossipers in Green Park describe is not unique to this particular satire. Tobine the Mercer is a stock character who played a role in the 1762 *London Chronicle*, and is the main character in a comedy, *The Suicide*, performed at the Theatre Royal on July 11, 1778. Tobine even 'wrote' a short piece of his own in 1805 called *The Spirit of the Public Journals*. Indeed, the entire gossiped story is retold as well in 1790, in the *Lady's Magazine*, and again in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*. Using published texts to understand walking, must, therefore, take account of the textual context if incidental detail is to be used as evidence.

Notes

1   This paper was written as part of the Passage: Writing on Walking in London 1550–1950 project, http://passagewalks.blogs.sas.ac.uk (accessed 31 January 2017).
2   For more on eavesdropping see Locke 2010; and for its use in literary genres see Gaylin 2002.

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