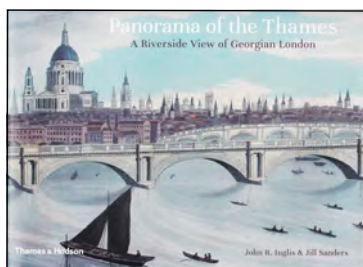


Panorama of the Thames



John R Inglis and Jill Sanders

Thames and Hudson

2015

256 pages
many illustrations, index,
gazetteer

£29.95

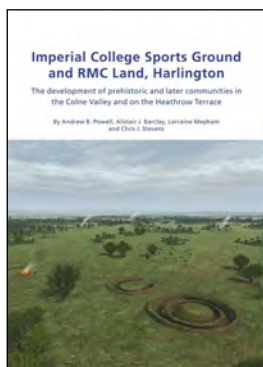
Reviewed by Clive Orton

This is an extraordinary book. The original, published by Samuel Leigh in 1829, consisted of just two pages: (i) a panorama sixty feet long, depicting both banks of a 15-mile stretch of the Thames from Westminster to Richmond, and (ii) a view, six feet long, of the City, Southwark and Lambeth, as seen from Adelphi Terrace (just north of Charing Cross). The panorama shows the two banks of the Thames facing each other, so to view the opposite bank

you have to turn it upside-down, and it folds up so that it can be used as a guide-book by a traveller on a boat. The present version shows the banks separately over several pages (of slightly larger than landscape A4 format), interspersed by short summaries of each parish. Leigh's annotation is maintained; the present authors have augmented, and in some case corrected, it, but always as if they were writing in 1829. The view shows the Lord Mayor's procession on the Thames as well as the churches of the City and the industry of the south bank.

The modern edition is a delight. The original watercolours are faithfully reproduced, and a good level of background information is provided, without being overwhelming. It could not be used to fulfil the original purpose of a guide-book for tourists on the Thames (it is far too heavy), but it will be invaluable to anyone interested in the topography of this section of the Thames, and to anyone researching the history of one of the Thames-side parishes. For even the 'coffee table' reader, who may just want to dip into it from time to time, it is a vivid reminder of a river scene that has changed out of all recognition in less than 200 years. Considering the scope and quality of production, the price is very reasonable (printing it in China must have helped), and the book would make an excellent gift as well as an addition to one's library.

Imperial College Sports Ground and RMC Land, Harlington the development of prehistoric and later communities in the Colne Valley and on the Heathrow Terrace



Andrew B. Powell, Alistair J. Barclay, Lorraine Mephem and Chris J. Stevens

Wessex Archaeology Report 33

2015

335 pages, paperback
122 illustrations (36 colour),
tables, bibliography and index

£30

Reviewed by Alastair Ainsworth

This book reports on full open area excavations undertaken in advance of mineral extraction by Wessex Archaeology between 1996 and 2009 on two sites to the east of the main access road into Heathrow Airport. These sites are next to the villages of Sipson and Harmondsworth, both of which will disappear if the proposed third Heathrow runway is built, and are c. 4km from the major excavations undertaken at Heathrow Terminal 5 by Framework Archaeology. The percentage of features fully excavated was based on a targeted approach.

The book comprises the site excavation reports, finds reports and a final overview. In addition to being easy to read, the stand-out features of the book are the superb colour-coded site plans

provided throughout the site excavation reports, although these sometimes dwarf the colour photographic plates on the page.

The report covers the evidence found at the sites for the history of landscape development due to human actions from the pre-Neolithic to the medieval periods. Some of this evidence was presumably difficult to interpret as the word 'truncated' is used regularly throughout excavation reports. An unusual aspect of the sites was that the bottoms of wells and waterholes were waterlogged and enabled the recovery of some wooden artefacts as well as significant amounts of environmental evidence.

The landscape history described from the evidence did not seem to add any new major insights to the story through the ages previously outlined for the Heathrow area from the excavations at Terminal 5 and other nearby sites, though some finds were rare for the Middle Thames region, especially the almost intact withy-bound early medieval bucket found at the bottom of a waterhole.

I was struck by one apparently mismatching aspect within the book. The excavation reports provided multiple examples of the dominance of wood during the prehistoric period for houses, fences, household artefacts, funeral pyres, cooking and warmth. However the environmental reports all concluded that, from the Middle Bronze Age, the landscape was "open and grazed grassland" with some "trees that were left standing... in the corner of existing fields". All that wood had to come from somewhere.

Also I might add to the discussion on page 305 about the reasons for the transformation of the landscape during the Middle Bronze Age. Bronze enabled the production of swords. Sadly, swords have only one function and that is to kill people.

This book is recommended for anyone interested in the development of landscapes in the Middle Thames region. As with the reports on the Terminal 5 excavations, this book makes us look forward to the landscape information that may be discovered under the footprint of the third Heathrow runway and eventually, if Heathrow Airport is moved elsewhere, under the whole footprint within the airport perimeter.