



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDY  
INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

# CMH *news*

The Newsletter of the Centre for Metropolitan History

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Once again it is time to send out another CMH newsletter, keeping you up to date with our activities since the publication of our 1993-4 Annual Report. 1995 has been a busy year for us all, with much preparatory work to be done for our two new projects and work continuing on the others. The arrival of new researchers has stretched our office space as far as it will go; fortunately we shall soon be able to expand into some extra rooms in the same part of Senate House. This will also allow us to reorganise our very cramped storage arrangements. We have accumulated quite a sizeable archive of our own over the last few years and are looking forward to making it more accessible and straightforward to use.

Information on the Centre is now available on the Internet at the following address: <http://ihr.sas.ac.uk:8080/cmh/cmh.main.html>.

## NEWS OF PROJECTS

### *Market Networks and the Metropolis*

Jim Galloway and Margaret Murphy have nearly completed the first year of this Leverhulme Trust project, which aims to reconstruct the operation of the market system for agricultural and other produce in the London region around 1400. The data comes from national and local court roll series, and the collection and editing is going well. Jim and Margaret have created a large database containing information on the credit transactions of thousands of people, and will begin work on a book on London's agrarian trade next year.

### *Feeding the City — 'Outstanding'*

We are delighted that their previous project, *Feeding the City*, was graded 'outstanding' by the ESRC in its end of award evaluation. Work still continues on research arising from that project: Jim, Margaret and Derek have now completed a substantial study of London's fuel supply in the fourteenth century and are continuing work on the City's grain supply after the Black Death.

Jim and Margaret were filmed at Westminster Abbey Library during the making of an Alan Bennett documentary about life at the Abbey, which is due to be shown by the BBC this autumn. Alan Bennett, a former historian, took a particular interest in the medieval manorial documents they were using.

### *Mortality in the Metropolis*

Our new project investigating death rates in London, 1860-1920 began in July and we are pleased to welcome two new colleagues, Bill Luckin (who is the coordinator) and Graham Mooney. They will be joined by a third researcher early next year. The project will produce a mortality database, using the Registrar-General's annual returns. The findings will then be analysed to examine changes of mortality patterns in London as a whole and in each registration district within it. Two case-studies will look at Hackney and Kensington in greater detail. Bill and Graham are already making rapid progress through the sources and this project promises to be of great value in exploring causes of death, their local variations and the influence on them of social and environmental conditions. The Wellcome Trust has funded this project, which will last three years.

### *London and the Second World War*

Heather Creaton is adding to her bibliographical database for London, 1939-45, and has also visited many more record offices and libraries to look at original source material, including films, sound recordings, photographs and maps, as well as written evidence. It is clear that a considerable amount of valuable, hitherto unused material survives. Heather is sometimes tempted to diversify into a study of the problems of wartime dogowners, or perhaps of illicit Soho drinking clubs...

### *Medal for Bibliography*

The published *Bibliography of Printed Works on London History to 1939* (1994) was awarded the Library Association's Besterman Medal for the most outstanding bibliography of 1994 in June at a very enjoyable evening at the Arts Club. Additional material for a supplement to it is building up fast, and we intend to publish it when we have a ten-year accumulation.

## COMING SOON...

Perry Gauci will join us in October to begin a new project on English merchant culture, 1660-1720, funded by the Leverhulme Trust for 3 years. Most of us know Perry already as he has worked for the History of Parliament for several years, and is a familiar figure around the library at the Institute of Historical Research. He will

be examining the merchant classes' influence on late Stuart politics and society, using a wide range of printed and original sources. He aims also to analyse the careers of a hundred London merchants to provide a sample of commercial life in the capital at that period. We are looking forward to working with him at the CMH.

## FORMER STAFF AND PROJECTS

Bernard Attard, formerly of the Oral History of the Stock Jobbers' project, joined us again for two months over Christmas and New Year to write an article on the jobbing system. He was on leave from the University of New England, N.S.W. Iain Black, now teaching at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, returned for a month this summer to work on an article using material from his Financial Headquarters in the City project. It will appear soon in *Landscape Research*. Craig Spence has continued to work on the atlas deriving from the Metropolitan London in the 1690s project, due for publication soon. Justin Champion, now at Royal Holloway, has been a frequent visitor, completing his book on the Great Plague, arising from the Epidemics and Mortality project. Michael Berlin, Rob Iliffe and David Mitchell's project (the Skilled Workforce) finished at Christmas, but they have spent a lot of time with us this year working on the resulting book and, in David's case, editing *Goldsmiths, Silversmiths and Bankers* (no. 2 in the CMH's Working Papers Series), which was published in March and launched with a party at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

## VISITORS

The Centre has received many visitors this year, as usual. Some came from the United States and Canada, others from France, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Japan and Australia.

## CONFERENCES

The Centre organised a very successful joint conference with the Georgian Group in July, on the Bourgeois London Townhouse, 1700-1840. Held over two days at the Institute of Historical Research and the Art Workers' Guild, it attracted an attendance of 84 in spite of a national rail strike. Those who could get there heard a variety of papers on the building, decoration, furnishing and uses of these houses. It made an interesting contrast to the Centre's earlier conference on Aristocratic Townhouses.

Most of us have attended a few conferences this year, as always, but our medievalists have been particularly active. They gave papers at the annual meeting of the Working Group on Medieval London and Paris, which took place in Paris this year and culminated in a tour of

the new Bibliothèque Nationale. This provided some intriguing comparisons with the still unfinished new British Library building in London.

A whole session of the Economic History Society's annual conference in Edinburgh in March was given over to the topic of feeding the city, with Derek Keene chairing the discussion and Jim Galloway and Margaret Murphy giving papers. In April Jim and Margaret travelled to New York and presented papers at the ACTA Medieval Studies Conference, and in July Jim gave another paper at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds. The papers will be published in due course.

## Forthcoming...

In collaboration with the Corporation of London, the Centre is organising a major international conference on Archives and the Metropolis for July 1996. It aims to bring together archivists and historians from all over the world, and will take place at the Barbican Conference Centre. Some very interesting and unusual papers have been offered, and the conference should be a memorable one. Booking details will be available later this year.

## SEMINARS

Another productive seminar season ended in March. The theme for the term had been 'Metropolitan Infrastructures', with contributions on subjects as diverse as the monarchy, street planning and rubbish. A programme for our autumn seminars is enclosed, the theme for the 1995-6 session will be 'Writing Metropolitan History'.

## PUBLICATIONS

The Centre's list of publications continues to grow. Due from the printer at any time is Justin Champion's *London's Dreaded Visitation: the Social Geography of the Great Plague in 1665*. A full list is enclosed with this newsletter.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

A copy of Professor Ugawa's *Edo and Paris: urban life and the state in the early modern era* (Cornell University Press, 1994), which provides a stimulating comparison of Tokyo and Paris, including chapters on government, provisioning and culture, has been received for review. Derek Keene will write about it soon in the *London Journal*.

## MAILING LIST

Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive our mailings, as our postal bill is growing rapidly. Our next mailing, which will include the *Annual Report* and the Spring Term seminar programme will be distributed early next year.