



London: A Life in Maps

Peter Whitfield

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Like all the great historic cities of Europe, London appears to us solid and unchanging. We feel that we can still explore the London of Dickens, Dr. Johnson, Defoe, Wren, and even Shakespeare. The very names St Paul's, Smithfield, Charing Cross, and St James' seem to link us with those past eras. But this solidity is an illusion, for throughout its long history London has been changing and evolving. It has been renewing or replacing the streets and buildings at its heart and has been spreading inexorably outwards. This process is vividly illustrated by maps of London that have been drawn and published over the past 500 years; and this book offers a magnificent panorama of London's history by focusing on its maps. The link between London and Westminster; the devastation of the Great Fire; the emergence of the West End as a place of fashion; the opening of the Royal Parks; the building of the docks; the coming of the railway age; the impact of World Wars—all these processes and many more are evident in these historic maps. Approximately 200 important maps from the mid-16th century to the present day are illustrated and discussed. For all those who know London, but who wish to look behind the modern facade, *London: A Life in Maps* should prove irresistible, highlighting the challenge of predicting London's future development and character.

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Carolyn Lutz:

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