



Shot from Above: Aerial Aspects of London

Stephen Brindle

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In 1944 the RAF undertook a remarkable aerial survey of the British Isles. Taking photographs from a low flying Spitfire they mapped the whole of the United Kingdom. Here, published for the first time, are a selection of these incredible photographs. Focusing on London, they show the havoc wreaked by the Luftwaffe on the buildings of the capital. Just as remarkable are the contemporary shots, taken by English Heritage's own aerial photographer, Damien Grady, who by flying at the same height in a helicopter, has managed to replicate each view exactly as it looks in 2006.

The book is laid out with the 1944 shot on one side of the page and the modern equivalent on the other. We see the Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf reduced to rubble in 1944, compared with the shimmering metal and glass towers of today. At the other end of the city is Heathrow, still a grassy field dotted with a few military planes in 1944, unrecognisable compared with today's sprawling international airport.

The 1944 shots show remarkable detail - factories with their roofs camouflaged to escape the attention of the German bombers, Hyde Park turned into allotments, even the details of films showing in Leicester Square.



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