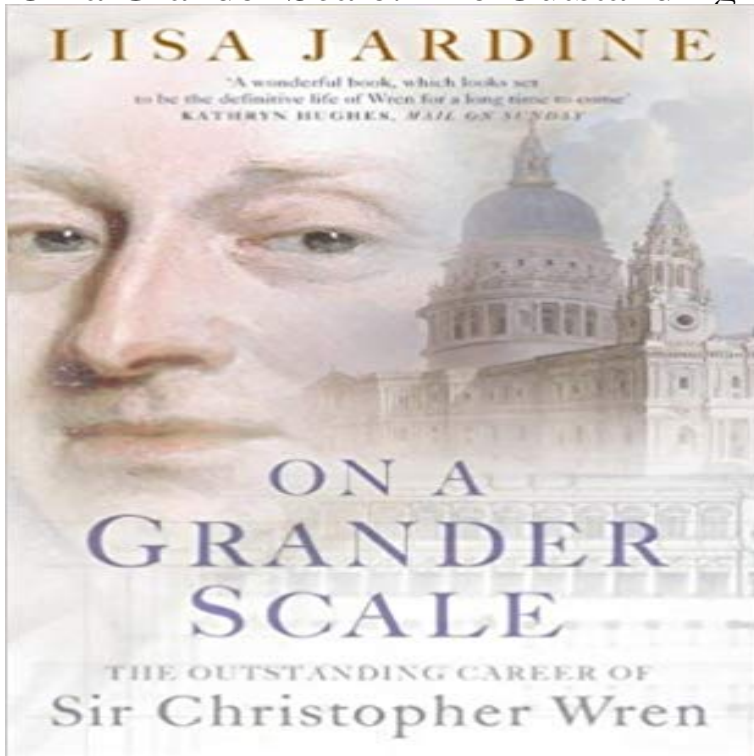


On a Grand Scale: The Outstanding Career of Sir Christopher Wren



A biography of Sir Christopher Wren from one of Britain's best writers and historians. The figure of Sir Christopher Wren looms large in English national consciousness. The imposing beauty of St Paul's Cathedral stands forever for the nation's achievement - its undamaged dome towering above the rubble of the Blitz in the Second World War a symbol of the London's indomitable fighting spirit. The man behind the work was as remarkable as the monuments he has left us. Lisa Jardine takes us deep into Wren's imagination and discovers the unique, exacting nature of his mind and the emerging new world of late-seventeenth-century science and ideas. Wren was a versatile genius who could have pursued a number of brilliant careers with equal virtuosity. A mathematical prodigy, an accomplished astronomer, a skilful anatomist, and a founder of The Royal Society, he eventually made a career in what he described in later life as Rubbish - architecture, and the design and construction of public buildings. But he remained committed to science. The Monument to the Great Fire was built with a subterranean laboratory; the south-west tower of St Paul's was used as a vertical telescope during construction - both were designed to function as public monuments and as oversized scientific instruments. Wren was a major figure at a turning point in English history. He mapped moons and the trajectories of comets for kings; lived and worked under six monarchs; pursued astronomy and medicine through two civil wars, the English Commonwealth, the Great Fire, the Restoration, and the eventual extinction of the Stuart dynasty. Jardine explores also Wren's personal motivations and passions. A sincere man with a remarkable capacity for friendship, his career was shaped by lasting associations forged during a turbulent boyhood, and a lifelong loyalty to the memory of his father's master and

benefactor, the martyred king, Charles I. Everything Wren undertook he envisaged on a grander scale - bigger, better, more enduring than anything that had gone before.

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