

A Gazetteer of Our Christian Heritage

London 1: "Oranges and Lemons"

The Churches of the Nursery Rhyme (Part One)



"Bells of London", is an old folk song, with several variations, including one version that memorializes fifteen London bells and neighborhoods. The children's song mentions only five churches. In some cases we have to guess the actual identity of the church mentioned in the rhyme. The sequence given is that found in *The London Encyclopedia*¹ with one exception: I have placed St. Clement first because it is the most quoted rhyme.

1-a "Oranges and Lemons", Say the Bells of St. Clement's

This church is usually identified with St. Clement Dane, but it's just as likely that it is St. Clement Eastcheap, Clement's Lane and King William Street. Both were near the docks where citrus fruits were unloaded. But, St. Clement Danes is the traditional site. There is believed to have been a church here in the 9th century built for the Danes who married



English women and settled here. The wooden church was replaced with stone, and in 1189 Henry II transferred the church to the Knights Templar until their suppression when it was put in the care of the Austin (Augustinian) Friars. This structure was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.



The church was rebuilt by Oliver Wren between 1683-1687. Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) held a pew here with a brass plate nearby to identify it. In 1941 the church suffered severe damage from three separate bomb attacks and was reduced to a shell. The Johnson Pew was destroyed.

The Rev. W. Pennington Bickford in 1920 began the custom of giving out oranges and lemons to children on St. Clement Day while tower bells played the old nursery rhyme tune. He died a few weeks after the destruction of the church "from shock and grief."² His wife followed him in a few months. A brass plaque near the ruin bore this inscription: "*They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided.*"²



The tower bells, mostly from 1693 and a sanctus bell dated 1578 came down. A new peal of ten bells was hung in 1957. Contributors were RAF of Commonwealth and Allied Air Forces. It is now the central church of the RAF in London.

Some of St. Clement Danes’ Neighbors.

The Royal College of Surgeons was founded presumably in 1368 as the “Guild of Surgeons Within the City of London.” Henry VIII merged this with the Worshipful Company of Barbers, which did not last. In 1800 a royal charter approved the separation, and in 1843 the title changed to the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The college moved to Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1797. The present building replaced that destroyed in World War II.



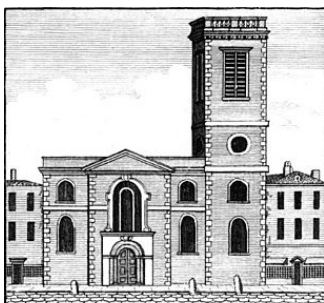
Dr. Samuel Johnson’s House is now a fully credited museum. The house was purchase by Cecil Harmsworth, a liberal MP in 1911 when it was little more than a forlorn or dilapidated tenement. Harmsworth insisted that it be refurnished as a home. An educational program includes tours, talks and a range of free or low cost workshops for schools



Somerset House is on the Strand just east of Waterloo Bridge. William Chambers designed the present building in 1766 on the site of a Tudor palace. The Royal Academy, the University of London the Admiralty (briefly), The Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries and the Geological Society all were here at one time. During the 19th century this was the place to go for all birth, marriage and death certificates in England and Wales. These are now in the National Archives. Extensive art collections were moved to the Victoria and Albert Museum There was damage during World War II. Somerset is now a place for rock concerts and the visual arts. It has been used in a number of major films.



1-b St. Clement, Eastcheap, also lays claim to be the church remembered in the



rhyme, Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbett¹ believe its claims are based on the fact that “it stands by the wharves where citrus fruit from the Mediterranean was unloaded.” Saint Clement was the patron saint of sailors. (Left: 1777) First mentioned in 1067, and again in the reign of Henry III, (ca.1207) as "St Clement in Candlewystrate", “St Clement the Little by Estchepe.” Chepe means market, and Eastcheap was so named to distinguish it from Westcheap, now know as Cheapside.

The church, the smallest in London, was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666. It was located near Pudding Lane where the fire started. Wren rebuilt it in 1683-1687 for which the parishioners sent Wren a hogshead of wine. William Butterfield made significant alterations in 1872 to conform it to “High Church” tastes. There was more work done in 1933. Repairs were made of minor damage caused by bombings in 1940 and it was redecorated yet again in 1968. From 1998-2011 it was home to “The Players of St Peter”, an amateur theatre group that performs medieval mystery plays.



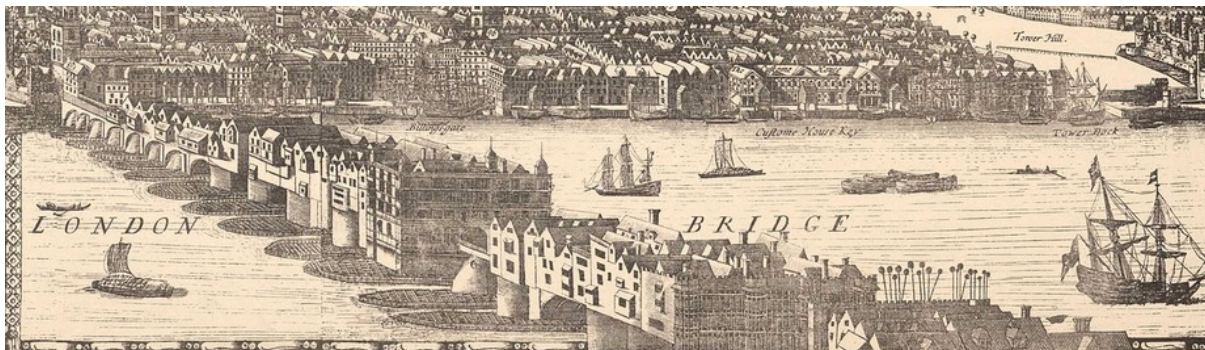
St. Clements, Eastcheap, is tucked away on Clement Lane near the intersection of King William Street and Gracechurch Street.

Some of St. Clement Eastcheap’s neighbors:

The London Mithraeum, 12 Walbrook, The remains of a Roman temple to the god Mithras (patron of the army) and dated ca. 240, were discovered in 1954 during excavations for a building. Bloomberg purchased Walbrook Square as a site for his European headquarters. The remains will be on display <https://www.londonmithraeum.com/> in 2017.



New London Bridge constructed between 1967-1972. “Old London Bridge” (1209-1831) There have been many London Bridges; the earliest bridges across the Thames were wooden bridges built by the Romans. The panorama shown below dates from 1682.



2. Bullseyes and Targets, Say the Bells of St. Margaret's (of Antioch), Lothbury



St. Margaret's, first mentioned in 1085, was under the patronage of Barking Abbey, Essex, an institution that lasted almost 900 years until the Dissolution. Then the church passed to the Crown. St. Margaret's was rebuilt in 1440, thanks in great measure to Robert Large, Lord Mayor at that time. He is remembered as the Master with whom the printer Caxton served his apprenticeship.

St. Margaret's is the official church of five Livery Companies, two Ward Clubs and two Professional Institutes. It also has connections with many local finance houses, all of which hold special services here each year.

Destroyed in the Great Fire it was rebuilt by Wren in 1686-90. St. Margaret's combines the former parishes of eight churches that were demolished. The interior was redecorated with pulpit, rood screen, communion rails, font and paintings from demolished churches. In 1781 the parish of the church of St. Christopher le Stocks was merged with that of St. Margaret. St. Margaret was demolished to make way for an expansion of the Bank of England.

Lothbury is an extension of Gresham Street and is in the heart of the financial district. Lothbury's name could come from any of several sources: "Lod", meaning a drain or cut into a larger stream (in this case the Walbrook), or "Lollenbury", a place of medieval copperworkers.



The rhyme "Bullseyes and Targets" may refer to archery practiced in the nearby fields made obligatory (even on Sundays and holidays) by King Edward III in 1383.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, who compiled the first English dictionary (1755), sometimes used Lothbury as a synonym for London as a whole.



The Rood Screen from All Hallows Church now in St. Margaret Lothbury



3. Brickbats and Tiles, Say the bells of St. Giles (without-Cripplegate)

St. Giles is first mentioned in the 11th century. It was rebuilt in 1537 and again in 1545-50. The founder was Alfune, an associate of Rahere, the famous prior and founder of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield.

Although St. Giles escaped the Great Fire of London (1666) it suffered badly in the Cripplegate Fire (1897). It was hit by a bomb during World War II.

The original church stood just outside a gate in the city wall, Cripplegate, which led to the village of Islington. One of the seven gates in the old Roman city wall, it was demolished in 1760. St. Giles, a Norman saint was patron of cripples. There is a legend that cripples were miraculously cured when the body of St. Edmund the Martyr passed through the gate in 1010. It could also come from the Anglo Saxon word "crepel", meaning an underground passage. (Right: The gate in 1650)



The rhyme "Brickbats and Tiles" may refer to the tile makers in the area when the rhyme was composed. (Left: Bricks in the center pile of a construction site from Comenius' *Orbis Pictus*)

St. Giles had two famous vicars: Launcelot Andrewes (1588), later bishop of Chichester and a translator of the King James Bible and John Foxe (Foxe's Book of Martyrs). The latter, ordained unwillingly, who was a surrogate vicar. Foxe and John Milton were buried in the church. John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe attended St. Giles. Milton's grave was opened in 1793 and the corpse desecrated by souvenir hunters. Oliver Cromwell was married at St. Giles in 1620.

St. Giles' Neighbors The Barbican estate is a large housing project built on 35 acres of land devastated by WWII was built between 1965 and 1976. It has three residential towers each 42 storeys high, 13 terrace blocks and two mews. The Barbican Center for the performing arts is home to the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company (founded 1875). St. Giles is the parish church for Barbican.



4. "Halfpence and Farthings", Say the Bells of St. Martin (Orgar)



Ordgar the Deacon granted the church to St. Paul's in the 12th century. Most of St. Martin Orgar was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, but the tower and part of the nave were left standing. The parish was merged with St Clement Eastcheap. Huguenots restored the tower and worshipped there to 1820, when it was demolished. The old tower was replaced in 1852 by one in the Italianate style built as the campanile for St Clement Eastcheap. By 1871 it was being used as offices and later as the Diocesan Registry. The churchyard of St. Martin's is preserved south of the campanile. In the picture the tower appears to be part of the next building, but the demolished portion of the church was on this side of the tower. *Left:* Photo: Chris Downer



St. Martin was one of several “Tower Churches” in London that are the remains of demolished churches.

“Halfpence and Farthings” may relate to moneylenders who traded in the area. *(Left: Medieval moneylenders.)*

5. “Pancakes and Fritters”, Say the Bells of St. Peter (Cornhill)



This restored (1680) Wren church reputedly stands upon the site of the oldest church in the City of London. It is also reputedly the site of the Roman basilica of Lucius, the first Christian ruler of Britain, and was the seat of an archbishop until the Saxons arrived in the 6th century. The 1552 church was destroyed in the Great Fire. Wren rebuilt it (1677-78). In 1872 the church underwent another restoration when most of Wren's installations were removed, leaving a the pulpit with its sounding board, a wooden screen, the font and the organ on which Mendelsson played in 1840 and 1842. The church is now used by St. Helen Bishopsgate now uses St. Peter's Church for training men and women in its Associate Program in



Christian Ministry.

Cornhill refers to the corn market that dates to Roman times. It is the highest spot in London. Pancakes and fritters were sold to workmen in the area, an early “fast food.” *(Right: Cornhill Street was*

immortalized by Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*. Bob Cratchitt made it a point to slide down icy Cornhill 20 times in honor of Christmas.)



St. Peter's Neighbors

At a distance, but still part of Cornhill, the highest point in London, is *The London Stone*. The stone, believed to come from the site of the Roman Praetorium is, as of 8/6/2015, set behind a grill in the wall of a soon to be demolished office building at 111 Cannon Street. Its future has yet to be determined. At one time the stone was used as a place for the swearing in for the Lord Mayor of London. For many years it was in the outer wall of St. Swithin's Church.



St. Michael [the Archangel Church] (1133) stands on the site of Roman Londinium. Rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666 is believed to have followed a design by Wren. Nicholas Hawksmoor replaced the fifteenth century tower. The church escaped serious damage in the Second World War and a new ring of twelve bells was installed in April 2011. The Book of Common Prayer, the King James Bible and the English Hymnal continue to be used in services. The church is a corporate member of the Prayer Book Society



The Royal Exchange. Cornhill is the center of London's financial district. The Royal Exchange was opened by Queen Elizabeth I, January 1571. This is the third building extensively remodeled in 2001.

The Monument and Notes

The Great Fire of London:

The fire began in a bakery on the night of September 2, 1666, catching quickly to the mostly wood constructed houses and lasted for six days. The loss of life was minimal: some estimate only six people. The fire covered four-fifths of the city, destroying 89 churches, the old city gates, hospitals, schools, libraries, 13,000 private dwellings and 430 streets. Even King Charles II joined the bucket brigade.

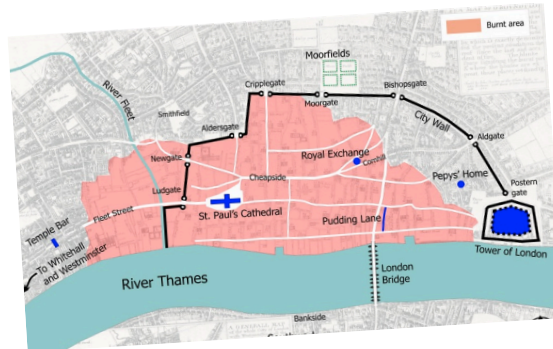
Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), the diarist was an eyewitness the inferno, observing from the river by boat and from the Tower. He wrote of “*the churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the crackling of houses at their ruin.*” Pepys was Chief Secretary to the Admiralty under both King Charles II and King James II. At the time of the fire he was worrying about some apparent hostile maneuvers of the Dutch fleet. He wrote of the successful efforts of his friend Admiral Sir William Penn, father of our William Penn, to bring an end to the fire by marshalling forces to blast buildings in its path and thus create a firebreak. The fire came only one year after the Great Plague.



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Sir Christopher Wren and Robert Hook designed the 202 ft. Monument, memorializing the fire, erected between 1671-1677. Its shaft was also intended to be a scientific instrument for gravity and pendulum experiments, and to serve as a “zenith” telescope (pointing upward to an imaginary point.) The shaft connects to an underground laboratory for observers to work. (Right: Samuel Pepys, Admiral Sir William Penn. Below: a farthing of Charles II, 1672 and a map showing the extent of the Fire.)



References

1. *The London Encyclopedia*, Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, (Ed.), Macmillan, London, 1983
2. The rhyme: http://www.rhymes.org.uk/oranges_and_lemons.htm.
3. *The Lost Treasures of London*, William Kent, 1947.
3. *Pilgrim's London*, Robert H. Baylis, Oxford, 1990
4. “Church Bells” Album of Notable Churches in the City of London (N.D.)

Next: London Bells 2. Bells of Whitechapel; St. Katherine's; St. John's; St. Anne's & St. Agnes, and St. Botolph.