

A personal selection of local, British and world, history

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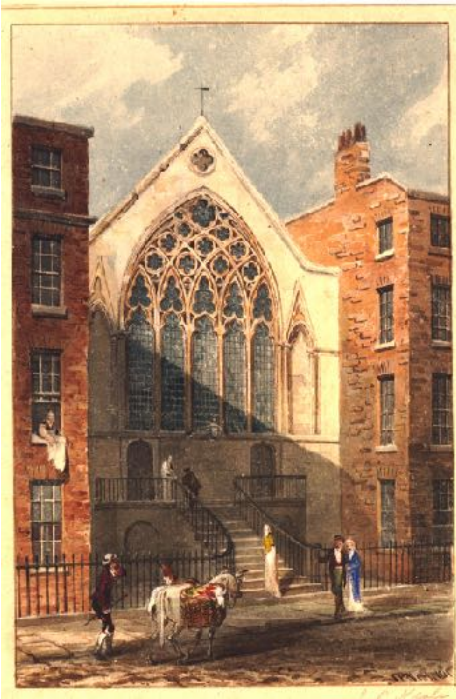


A HIDDEN GEM

In 1260 it was normal for Bishops to have a townhouse in London for when they had to help the king govern the country. The Bishop of Ely owned one of the largest properties¹, his wealth being based on sheep. For 262 years Ely House and its chapel was the property of 21 Catholic Bishops. It lay outside the City of London. The size of the property in the sixteenth century can be seen above.

Today Ely Place is a gated road of multi-storey terraces at the southern tip of the London Borough of Camden in London. It hosts a 1773- rebuilt public house, Ye Olde Mitre, of Tudor origin and is adjacent to Hatton Garden. It is privately managed by its own body of commissioners and beadles. The Ely Place Beadle's shelter is shown right².





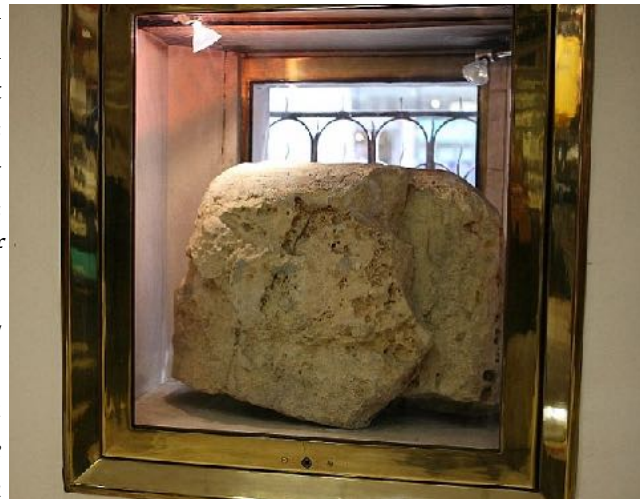
John of Gaunt lived at Ely Place and is mentioned by Shakespeare who commented on his garden's excellent strawberries. The property passed to Sir Christopher Hatton, a favourite of Elizabeth I, in 1577 and his garden has given its name to London's jewellery quarter. Henry VIII is supposed to have met Cranmer there.

The Bishop's original chapel is largely still there (left³) in the form of St Etheldreda's which, along with Westminster, is the only surviving work of Edward I. It is famous for its crypt which in effect made it a double-decker church. In 1624 it became Protestant but reverted to Catholicism in 1876.

St Etheldreda (aka Ethelreda, Audrey and Æthelthryth) was a princess from East Anglia who founded Ely Abbey. Her niece and great-niece continued as abbess. She died in AD 678 and her statue is in Ely Cathedral.

EX LIBRIS - The Road

Christopher Hadley's *The Road* (William Collins 2023), as the blurb puts it, is 'A story of Romans and ways to the past'. It is a really good 'read'. One of his *by the ways* mentions that in 1742 a lump of limestone that stood in the centre of London's Cannon Street was removed as a traffic hazard and placed in the wall of nearby St Swithin's church. This is the celebrated, even venerated, London Stone, from which some say all Roman milestones in Britain were measured, making it Britannia's version of the Millarium Aureum, the golden Milestone that once stood in the forum of Rome. gilded in bronze and engraved with the major cities and distances from the Eternal City.



Like the Golden Milestone - now reduced to a lump of marble thought by some to have been its original base - the London Stone is but a gnarly lovable fragment of its former glory. It is rather grandly displayed in a Portland Stone shrine built into the wall of an office building on Cannon Street (above³). Legend says that it was brought from Troy by Brutus - that it is the heart of London and must never be removed. Archaeologists have suggested that this mother of all Roman milestones in Britain originally stood in the middle of the gateway into the Roman Governor's palace.



BACK TO THE FUTURE⁴

An explore around Bridport in Dorset discovered a number of bookshops, in one of which I found *The Mysteries of King's College Chapel* by Nigel Pennick (Cokayne Publishing 1974). The college chapel, as I expect you know, has the widest fan-vaulting anywhere and the finest windows of painted glass surviving in England. A piece of useless knowledge which you may not know however is that in 1447



the town had no municipal rights and the King took a large part of the town common land on the other side of the river to the built area (left on the map). *These became known as the King's Backsides, now euphemistically shortened to 'the Backs'.*

The Mysteries in the title refer largely to the *Vitruvian* and *Geomantic* qualities that formed part of the building's design, a bit like *Feng Shui* in China. Anyway we will explore this further in the future. The amazing photo above, was taken from a cherry-picker by Sara Rawlinson, *Architecture MasterPrize Winner in Historic Interior Photography (2022)*. You can obtain a copy by going to <https://heritagephotographs.com/p/cherry-picker-vii-kings-college-chapel>. By the way, did you know that photo-voltaic panels have been installed on the roof. The planners wouldn't let me do it because our house is Grade 2 Listed!

CORRESPONDENCE⁵



Chris Morgan writes ref J&T No.139: When the civil servants in the Royal mint were informed of their relocation to Llantrisant, they named it *the hole with the mint*.

BOURNEVILLE NOT BELGRADE

A sign of the times: Church of the Holy Prince Lazar (left), Bourneville, Birmingham also known as *Lazarica*, is a Serbian Orthodox church located at Cob Lane in Bourneville, Birmingham, England and

was built for political refugees from Yugoslavia after World War II, with the support of the exiled Prince Tomislav of Yugoslavia. Serbs have been associated with Bournville since Dame Elizabeth Cadbury sponsored thirteen Serbian refugee children of World War I. It is a replica of a Serbian church designed by Dr Dragomir Tadic. The murals are *fresco* painted on wet plaster.

OXFORD HUMANISTS⁶

In J&T No.131 we looked into the world of Erasmus and the life-long friendships he made in England after being introduced to the Oxford Humanists. Now here is some more information about individuals culled from *Who's Who in History Vol. II.* by C R N Routh (Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1964).

John Colet (1466 - 1519), Dean of St Pauls and founder of St Paul's School. His wealthy and well-connected father belonged to the Mercer's Company and was twice Mayor of London. They lived in the 'countryside' at Stepney. He was one of 22 children, and the only one to survive infancy. He was educated alongside the young Thomas More at St Anthony in Threadneedle Street. In 1483 he went up to Magdalen College, took his MA and then travelled to Italy. He was a priest by 1498 and the next year met Erasmus. He made a name for himself with his Oxford lectures which were affected by the Platonism he picked up in Italy. His style was quite original and he worked something of a revolution in teaching the Scriptures. *Doctors and abbots were to be found at his lectures armed with notebooks.* He was influenced by the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite until his friend Grocyn concluded that they were not genuine.



In 1504 he was made DD and in 1505, Dean of St Paul's. The clergy resented Colet's plain dress and simple lifestyle and especially his attacks on the abuses of the Church. He became very wealthy on the death of his father and used the money to found his school. He placed the management of the foundation under the Mercer's Company rather than the clergy. He framed the statutes but added a clause allowing the Mercers to alter them if it seemed right.



The Bishop of London, FitzJames, tried to have Colet charged with heresy but this was kicked out by the Archbishop. FitzJames continued to harass Colet for the rest of his life. Colet preached before Henry VIII who was about to go to war with France. His sermon denounced war but Erasmus records Henry turning to his courtiers with the words *Let every man have his own doctor; and let everyone follow his own liking; but this is the doctor for me.* Colet was very anti-Papist but it is doubtful if he would have supported the Reformation. A monument raised to him was destroyed in the Great Fire.

The Holbein portrait (above) from the Royal Collection can't have been drawn from life as Holbein did not arrive in England until 1525.

William Grocyn (1446 - 1519), called the *Patriarch of English Learning*. Born at Colerne near Bath, he was educated at Winchester and New College Oxford which he entered in 1465. He accepted the living of Newton Longuville in Buckinghamshire but at the same time became Reader in Divinity to Magdalen College. He left Oxford to travel to Italy in 1488 where he hoped to learn Greek from the Greeks who had settled in Italy after the fall of Constantinople. He met the great classical scholars, Poliziano and Chalcondyles who helped him perfect his Greek and knowledge of their literature. His likeness⁶ is shown on page 4.

He returned to Oxford in 1491 where he devoted his time to daily public lectures in Greek. When Erasmus arrived in 1497 they quickly became friends, their circle including More, Colet and Linacre. Erasmus wrote of Grocyn: *Who can help admiring the unbounded range of his scholastic knowledge?* He took the living of St Lawrence Jewry in 1496 and preached at St Paul's for his friend Colet. More wrote to Colet: *Grocyn is in your absence, as you know, the master of my life, Linacre the director of my studies, Lily the dear companion of my affairs.* Lily was the first headmaster of St Paul's School. While at New College Grocyn acted as tutor to Warham. When Warham became Archbishop he generously gave Grocyn several preferments, making him a wealthy man. He was very generous and for example let Erasmus stay with him free of charge. He died in 1519

and left his wealth to Linacre who kept to the terms of the bequest and used the money for poor relief and purchased books at Louvain for distribution amongst Oxford scholars.



Incidentally, **Thomas Linacre** (1460 - 1524), who was also a great scholar and went to Italy, devoted his learning to medicine, translating Galen from Greek to Latin. He also founded the College of Physicians and lectureships in medicine at Oxford and Cambridge. Whilst in Venice, he met Aldus Manutius the great printer and they collaborated on several books. He also took his MD at the great university of Padua which was so prestigious he was given an MD in Oxford on the strength of it.

BIRTH OF THE LUDDITES⁷

Ned Ludd, the village idiot of Anstey near Leicester, was apprenticed to a weaver and one night broke two stocking frames at which he was working. This incident was seized upon by organised groups of angry workers, inspired by the French Revolution, who went around smashing up machines. They claimed to have been sent by *General Ned Ludd*.

PS Don't forget that you can access all back-numbers and a searchable index on the website jot-and-tittle.com.

1. From Living London History: <https://livinglondonhistory.com/ely-place-and-the-remnants-of-a-great-medieval-palace>
2. Ditto
3. Courtesy of Mail On-Line.
4. The earliest known complete map of Cambridge, engraved by Richard Lyre and first published in 1574. Copies can be obtained from The Map Company.
5. Image by Adam Hughes courtesy of Birmingham Live.
6. The Grocyn window is from St Lawrence Jewry and comes from an article by Simon Knott on Flickr. The drawing of Thomas Linacre is in the National Portrait Gallery and was given by Mary Elizabeth Stopford in 1931, the daughter of William Fleming MD.
7. From *I Never Knew This About England* by Christopher Winn (Ebury Press 2005).