

The Landmark Trust

CLOTH FAIR History Album



Written by Charlotte Lennox-Boyd

& Charlotte Haslam

Updated in 2015

The Landmark Trust Shottesbrooke Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3SW
Charity registered in England & Wales 243312 and Scotland SC039205

Bookings 01628 825925 Office 01628 825920 Facsimile 01628 825417
Website www.landmarktrust.org.uk

KEY FACTS

Nos. 39-45 Cloth Fair acquired by Landmark in 1970

Architects for the restoration Donald Insall and Associates

Contractors for No 45 F & FH Higgs Ltd

**Contractors for Nos. 43, Mowlems Ltd
44 and 8 Cloth Court**

Contents

Summary	5
The Recent History and Restoration of 39-45 Cloth Fair	7
A Historical Tour of Cloth Fair	12
John Betjeman and Cloth Fair	27
Tour of Cloth Fair - The North Side	
Barley Mow Passage	30
Cloth Court to Sun Court: Nos. 42-39 Cloth Fair	33
Sun Court to Kinghorn Street: Nos. 38-24 Cloth Fair	37
The Hand and Shears	45
Tour of Cloth Fair – South Side	
Kinghorn Street to the Church Porch	48
Back Court Passage	52
North Transept of the Church	54
Church Porch to Smithfield Gate: Nos. 9-3	54
St Bartholomew the Great	55
Bibliography	56



Re-faced in brick during the 18th century, Nos. 39-45 Cloth Fair are hold late 16th-century houses at their core, built on a once crowded medieval street plan and rare survivors in the City of the Great Fire of London.

Summary

'Why cannot the City form a ... committee and grant it a roving commission to move whenever some ancient memorial is threatened, or action to preserve an interesting old building is needed?', wrote an indignant journalist in *The City Press* in 1914. 'It would create public opinion and bestir the citizens in defence of the few architectural links that remain, to unite this prosaic and drab century with the more light hearted, if in many ways far less happy, times of the Tudor era.' This was in protest at the proposed demolition of a portion of Cloth Fair, a lone survivor in London's City of the Great Fire of 1666. Today, Nos. 41 and 43, owned by Landmark, present more of an eighteenth-century air but the timber frames encased behind the later facades date from around 1600.

The row stands almost in the shadow of St Bartholomew the Great, once church to a mighty Norman foundation, which has also withstood Fire and Blitz alike. Even in the priory's days, this was an area of bustling commerce rather than cloistered seclusion; nearby Smithfield was a noisy livestock and meat market from the twelfth century, and once a year, the priory held a great cloth fair on its patron saint's day. 24th August, that gave its name to the street built upon it, Cloth Fair.

At the Dissolution, the priory, a plum site, was bought by Sir Richard Rich, Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations and Thomas Cromwell's right hand man. Rich moved into the prior's lodgings in 1540, but it was his grandson, Robert, 3rd Baron Rich, who began to build seriously on the priory grounds, throwing up speculative housing of grand tenements three and even four storeys high, on 31-year leases. Today's Cloth Fair holds these behind the later brick facings.

The crowded Elizabethan houses around Cloth Fair had become squalid, overcrowded tenements by 1913, understandably vulnerable to the strictures of a more sanitary age. Cloth Fair, with its acquired eighteenth-century proportions, stood its ground rather better than the ramshackle alleys behind it, which the Sanitary Committee for the City Corporation condemned for demolition in 1914. This proposal to clear the area was not without controversy, as we saw in the opening passage, but there was nothing in place to enable present need to coexist sympathetically with the resonance of the past, and the timber-framed tenements behind Cloth Fair were felled.

Cloth Fair itself might have gone the same way had salvation not arrived in February 1930 for No. 41-42, 'the last Jacobean house in London,' in the shape of architects Paul Paget and John Seely. The houses had been scheduled as dangerous structures but Messrs. Paget and Seely had the vision, and the professional skills, to see that they could be saved. The acquisition of others in the row followed.

Cloth Fair also stands as something of an emblem for the conservation battles of the twentieth century, and not just by the virtue of its survival. Urban buildings, no less than the City itself, evolve to meet current purposes, so Georgian re-facings and Victorian shopfronts came to mask the old jettied timber frames. The restoration of St Bartholomew's first focussed attention on the area in the 1880s. The first Ancient Monument Act was passed in 1882; in 1913, the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act recognised for the first time that there are physical remains of the nation's history which are so important that the state has a duty to ensure their continued survival. This Act is generally counted the foundation of modern statutory protection, although it was many years before this was fully established.

In 1954, Paget came into contact with one of England's most effective architectural conservation campaigners, the poet John Betjeman (1906-1984), through 'a battle about a television mast in the Isle of Wight.' 'Of course I have to live here,' said Betjeman, and he took a lease on the upper floors of No. 43, which he used for the next twenty years as a convenient London bolthole from which to conduct his affairs and campaigns. Betjeman was a passionate yet accessible spokesman for architecture's soul as well as its aesthetic qualities. In 1958, Betjeman was a founding member of the Victorian Society, champions still today of what was then unfashionable and disregarded.

Like John Smith, John Betjeman represents a distinctively English aspect of our tradition of building conservation: the impact of passionately committed private individuals, often championing building preservation in direct opposition to State-sponsored development. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was founded by William Morris in 1877, several years before the first Ancient Monument Act was passed. The National Trust was founded as an independent charity in 1895 by Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, all private individuals concerned both at creeping urbanisation in the natural landscape and the destruction of historic buildings. John Betjeman gave a voice and a genial face to this gathering crusade for building conservation in the mid-twentieth century.

Through his poetry (he was appointed Poet Laureate in 1972), and eventually his radio and television programmes, Betjeman chronicled with acute but affectionate insight his own time: the 'Metro-land' of the commuter belt, and life in the suburbs as the creep of ribbon development reached deep into Middlesex.

It was from Cloth Fair that Betjeman campaigned to save Euston Arch, an 1837 masterpiece of the Greek Revival designed by Philip Hardwick demolished in 1961, one of the most bruising deliberate architectural losses London has suffered. Betjeman was more successful in lobbying for the late Gothic Revival glory of St Pancras Station, now triumphantly restored and redeveloped as the Eurostar Terminal, where he is captured posthumously in bronze, Everyman in a crumpled raincoat gazing up in wonder at the mighty span of William Barlow's train shed roof.

Without people like John Betjeman, Paul Paget, John Smith and many other advocates, Londoners would live today under very different skylines. London in the 21st century is a vibrant city that celebrates both its past and its future, private initiative tested and refined by a framework of robust statutory protection – even if the debates are as fierce as ever, not least over the future of Smithfield's great Victorian covered market.

Landmark's involvement with the Cloth Fair houses began in 1970, and they even briefly occupied the offices at No. 43. Seely and Paget moved out in 1976, and tenants came and went, Landmark taking its chance to refurbish and restore the flats and offices when it could. In 1981, the flat in No. 46 became a Landmark, and this was followed in 1986 by John Betjeman's former apartment, the building cleverly strengthened and extended to create a wine bar on the ground floor with three flats above – demonstrating John Smith's acumen as a developer as well as a conservationist.

Betjeman's flat was redecorated, but still looks much as it did when he lived there. The wallpaper in the sitting room was, appropriately enough, a William Morris design called Acorn. The colourway was no longer in production but happily, Sandersons agreed to reprint it specially.

Caroline Stanford 2015

The Recent History and Restoration of 39-45 Cloth Fair

The Landmark Trust bought Nos. 39-45 Cloth Fair in 1970 from Mr Paul Paget. Mr Paget had bought and restored Nos. 41/42 in 1930, to serve both as a home for himself and John Seely (later Lord Mottistone) and as an office for their architectural practice. It is reputedly the only house in the City to date from before the Great Fire of London, the last survivor of many such houses that stood in the street until the early 20th century, and it might well have been demolished too had Seely and Paget not come to its rescue. Mr Paget told the story of how it came about in an interview that he gave to Clive Aslet shortly before his death in 1985, which appeared in the Thirties Society Journal for 1987:

When the practice was going reasonably well the partner said: 'You know I think we ought to be in the City.' He gave the word, and every weekend was spent in hunting round for a possible property in the City. And there again it was quite incredible luck because we chanced across this ancient little street with a pre-Fire of London house for sale for £3,000 freehold. It's unbelievable. We persuaded the parents to provide the necessary cash, and of course it did prove to be wildly rewarding - a wonderful shop window. We spent blissfully happy years there.

We went there in 1930. Then my father, who was on the point of retiring from being Bishop of Chester, was like most bishops and had got nowhere to go. He got rather miserable about the thought of retiring. We were able to buy the next door property, so I had some very beautifully engraved notepaper with the heading 39 Cloth Fair; and I wrote to him and said: 'Here is your new address.'

*My father was very, very reluctant, so I employed an artist [Roland Pym] to do a decoration for the bathroom. I remember offering an illustration of this to the then very popular weekly glossy called *The Tatler* and this was published as the frontispiece of that week's issue, under the caption 'Bathroom for a Bishop.' You can imagine that my father found it of some embarrassment when facing his other bishops at the Athenaeum Club.*

Most of the other houses in Cloth Fair had been demolished during the First World War and afterwards, leaving only this small group of houses at the western end; it is possible that Nos. 43-45 would have gone as well, if they too had not been bought by Mr Paget:

In the end we bought the street. John Betjeman, with whom we had come into contact over a battle about a television mast in the Isle of Wight, came down to lunch and said: 'But of course I've got to live here.' So in he moved next door [in 1954]. We really had very pleasant neighbours.


The houses were so close that the neighbours across the alleyway could see us carving the Sunday joint - it was so close that you almost felt as though you should hand a plate across. So when eventually we got possession of the house on the other side of the alleyway, we decided that this should never happen again and we blocked up the window. This was such a terribly gloomy aspect that we got Brian Thomas to paint a scene of the Sailor's Return. This was a lovely thing to look out at. I used to hear the tourists being conducted round the City and the guide would stop and say: 'Here is a very interesting case of a window that was blocked up at the time of the window tax.'

Brian Thomas was a mural and stained glass painter, some of whose work can be seen in St Paul's.

At No 40, underneath No 39, the cloth warehouse of Mitchell, Inman & Co, served as a reminder of the traditional trade of the area, but in general by 1970 the tenor of the street was more literary and professional. An antiquarian bookseller, Frank Hollings, occupied No 45, Sir John Betjeman still lived on the upper floors of 43, with the quantity surveyors Godfrey Smith in the offices below, and the firm of Seely and Paget continued to occupy No 41. The nurses of St Bartholomew's Hospital had a hostel at No 39.

Changes have occurred since then, as tenants have come and gone, and the Landmark restoration work has been carried out. For a time the Landmark Trust itself occupied the office at No 43. The firm of Seely and Paget moved to Christchurch Tower in 1976, and after failing to attract a City livery company or some such institution to take their place, it was decided in 1980 that the buildings in this block - the Jacobean house and the warehouse - should be sold.

FRIDAY

City  Press

FEBRUARY 7, 1930

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY RESIDENTIAL CITY

CLOTH FAIR'S PICTURESQUE OLD HOUSE

DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT RELICS

The last remaining Jacobean house in Cloth Fair is in course of reconstruction. Its early-seventeenth-century frame had become so weakened that it was recently scheduled as a "dangerous structure."

Investigation showed that the premises could still be used if certain structural reconditioning and alterations were effected. Such renovation has now been commenced,

and the building will be used for business offices. Especial care is being taken to preserve the outward appearance of this old house. The centre of interest in this information is the fact that this particular building has many times been declared so unsafe as to be beyond all hope of restoration for living purposes. It was built in 1614, and, like the Church of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, which it faces, was situated just outside the area of the Great Fire.

TO BE INHABITED.

The house has been acquired by Mr. John Seely and Mr. Paul Paget, architects, of Queen's Square Mews, St. James's, who will conduct their business, and also reside in it, when the alterations have been completed. They are very keen that as much as possible of the old building shall remain, or be restored. There will be nothing new that is not absolutely necessary. As will be seen from the accompanying photograph, the house has four pairs of bay windows. When the premises were taken over the windows were sashed, and bore signs of having originally been casement windows. Old mullions have been revealed by the taking out of some of the sashes, and in all cases the exact position of them is clearly defined. Fortunately, the remaining mullions are in a sufficiently good condition to enable almost exact reproductions of them to be incorporated in the scheme of restoration. Traces of leaded lights were also found, and the new windows are to be leaded to conform with the old style. It is not yet known whether the roof will have to be stripped, but, if so, it will be rebuilt with the gables, as at present.

RETAINING THE FEATURES.

On the front elevation, and between the bay windows, can be seen two small centre windows filled in with brick-work. These will be opened up and glazed with leaded lights. Extensive rebuilding has been necessary on the ground floor, which was last used as a cutter's office and showroom, and which had very few hints to give as to its former style. This floor, therefore, can only be built in the

general Jacobean style—as close to the original as circumstances permit.

As much as possible of the woodwork and fire-places throughout the house will be retained. When the ground floor was turned into a showroom, the main corner of the building (below the figure 42), was set back in order to allow of a doorway being built into the corner, to serve both Cloth Fair and

New Court. This detracted from the strength of the frame of the house, besides destroying the original angle.

The scheme of restoration is being so carefully and closely carried out that it embraces even the rebuilding of this corner, in order that the house shall, as nearly as possible, present the same appearance after restoration as when it stood amongst other and even older houses in that area.

HISTORIC CLOTH FAIR.

Cloth Fair was the latest of the City's ancient streets to fall beneath the destructive pick. In 1913 it boasted many fine Tudor houses, and considerable objection was raised when the Corporation sought to remove them because of their insanitary state. Heated arguments in the Court of Common Council took two sides, one being that of the Sanitary authorities, who urged demolition in the public interest; and the other that of the archaeologists, who urged preservation, also in the public interest. It was finally decided that the premises could not be restored, and must either go or remain as they were. They were pulled down during the War.

This old house, numbered 41 and 42, is the last, and we feel grateful that it is not to fall into ruins for the lack of an effort to secure preservation.

Work has been going on now for a few weeks, and Mr. Seely and Mr. Paget hope to move into the building early in May. They are to be envied, for there must be a peculiar charm in living in so old a house. There can be very few houses of this age now in habitation in the City.

INTERESTING FINDS.

A 17th century drinking horn and two vessels have been unearthed during the building of a main wall to strengthen the frame work. One of the vessels is fairly well preserved, and has been dated by Museum experts as belonging to the reign of Henry VII. It bears a pattern of unusual design. The second vessel is probably of a later date, and is more broken.

Especially interesting is a boundary mark of the Parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, which has been discovered behind one of the fire places. It belongs probably to the late 18th century, and is an iron plate, nine inches square, and bearing a representation of the figure of St. Giles. Does this mean that the Parish of St. Giles extended to Cloth Fair?

During the excavations, also, there have been found two human thigh bones, two arm bones, some rib bones, and part of a skull. It has been suggested that they are the remains of a victim of the Great Plague, but more likely their association is with the burial ground of St. Bartholomew-the-Great.

The restoration of Nos. 41 and 42 in 1930 was greeted with delight by the press.

In 1974-75, No 45 was restored and refurbished - the only change in appearance being the restoration of glazing bars to the windows. The rest of the work was structural – rebuilding parapets and chimneys, strengthening the front of the building over the shop front and repairing the roof; while inside the kitchen and bathroom were improved but otherwise the existing arrangement of rooms was kept to. When the work was completed Mr Heath of Priory Antiques moved in on the ground floor and the flat above was let to Miss Jean Imray, who worked for the Mercers Company and who had lived at No 44 (now 46) for many years. When she left in 1981 the flat became a Landmark.

After much thought, and many changes of plan, work started on the remaining buildings in 1986. These included No 43a - now 8, Cloth Court - which had been a butcher's shop since before 1900, and was bought by Landmark after the last owner, Sivier's, moved out in 1973. The idea was to convert the whole of the ground floor area into a wine bar, while making three flats on the floors above. This meant extending the single storey extension behind No 43 to run right across behind the two houses (which may originally have been one), at the same time creating a flat area which could become a roof garden for the flats.

As with No 45, the main work was structural; a number of steel ties and joists had to be inserted to strengthen the floors and in particular to give extra support to the wall above the shop front; and the parapets of both houses had to be taken down and rebuilt, along with the gable end of No 43, which was bulging badly.

A new door and a second window were made at the back of 43, to give access to the roof garden and to allow the bathroom a window of its own. Otherwise everything was left as little disturbed as possible, all original fittings being retained. The flat was redecorated, but still looks much as it did when lived in by Sir John Betjeman. To achieve this, some problems had to be overcome: the wallpaper in the sitting room, for example, a William Morris design called Acorn,

was no longer made in exactly the same colour, but Sandersons agreed to print it specially.

The wine bar windows are new, but the fascia (apart from some of the brackets which had to be replaced) is original, dating from around 1800, as does the back entrance to Sivier's in the passage. Sivier's front entrance in Cloth Court was also left as it was, although it is of later date than the other shop fronts, probably dating from the 1890s, when Maples & Co, Meat Contractors, set up business there.



Nos. 43-45 Cloth Fair in 1970, when they were bought by the Landmark Trust

A Historical Tour of Cloth Fair

The history of Cloth Fair is closely bound up with two names which mean something to all Londoners, and to many people from elsewhere - Smithfield and St Bartholomew. To most people the one means meat and the other means medicine; but there is far more to it than that.

A weekly cattle market was held in Smithfield – the smooth field outside the city walls - from the 12th century at least, and flourished from 1327 when it received Royal Charter and became the King's Great Market. Every Friday drovers would bring livestock from the country to sell to the butchers of the City of London, and they continued to do so until the middle of the 19th century. Only then did it become purely a meat market.

Immediately to the east and south of the market ground, and also dating from the 12th century, were the Priory and Hospital of St Bartholomew - the commercial and the spiritual existing happily side by side. The Priory presided over, and profited from, the activity at its gates, and once a year it launched into commerce itself, because as part of its endowment it had the right to hold an annual fair on the feast of St Bartholomew, 24th August, and the days preceding and following it.

By Elizabethan times, Bartholomew Fair was one of the great events of London, with many different trades represented there and sideshows and spectacles of all sorts, but originally it involved only the cloth trade - and so Cloth Fair, because it was on the site of this street that the fair was originally held, in the early days when it was contained entirely within the priory precinct. The booths were set up on the green to the north of the church, covering the burial ground and even extending into the nave of the church itself - this was not considered sacrilege then; a rental of 1306 unconcernedly listing rents paid 'from the stalls that are inside the church and those fixed to the church outside.'

Later the fair overflowed into Smithfield and the streets around, but in the medieval period the main entrance was an archway on the site of the present entrance from Smithfield to Cloth Fair, which was locked at night in order to safeguard valuable goods. Here the proclamation was made declaring the Fair to be open:

OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ! All manner of persons may take notice that in the close of St. Bartholomew the Great and West Smithfield, London, and the lands and places adjoining, is now to be held a fair for this day and the two days following, to which all persons may freely resort and buy and sell according to the liberties and privileges of the said fair, and may depart without disturbance, paying their duties: And all persons are straitly charged and commanded, in his Majesty's name, to keep the peace, and to do nothing in the disturbance of the said fair as they will answer to the contrary, at their perils; and that there be no manner of arrest or arrests, but by such officers as are appointed. And if any persons be aggrieved let them repair to the court of Pie-Powder, where they may have speedy relief according to justice and equity. God save the King and the Lord of the Manor! (Early 17th-century version)

It was not until after the dissolution of the priory in 1539 that houses were built in this area. The priory buildings, together with the right to hold Bartholomew Fair, were bought in 1543 by Sir Richard Rich, for the sum of £1064 11s 3d. He was Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, which was responsible for the management and disposal of the monastic estates, and so was in a good position to snap up the best of them; he had already moved into the Prior's House in 1540.



Part of Ralph Aga's map of London, of about 1560-70. The nave of the church of St Bartholomew has already been pushed down but the Great Green of the Fair, to its north, has not yet been built over. The city wall still stands, just to the south of Little Britain.

It was his grandson Robert, 3rd Baron Rich, who began to build on a serious scale, after he came into the property in 1581 (this Lord Rich was also husband of Penelope, the Stella of Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence 'Astrophel and Stella', who 'Hath no misfortune but that Rich she is.') E.A. Webb, whose immensely detailed 'Records of St Bartholomew's Priory' (1921) is the chief source for the history of the area, says that houses were now built in Long Lane, Cloth Fair, Kinghorn Street, Middle Street and Newbury Street:

After having obtained from the queen, in the year 1583, confirmation of his rights and privileges, he started to cover the vacant ground by granting apparently thirty-one year building leases. This was in or about the year 1590, for in that year Lord Rich wrote to a Mr Hicks to ask Lord Burleigh to persuade the Lord Mayor of London not to stop his building at St. Bartholomew's.

This appeal unfortunately seems to have been effectual as the erection of the crowded buildings went on; in fact it appears that Rich exceeded his rights, for about the year 1595 the Court of Aldermen directed that

'Lord Rich be waited upon touching a building set up by him on the city's soil near Gt. St. Bartholomew's';

and later they directed that;

'an encroachment in Long Lane near St. Bartholomew's by the tenant of Lord Rich be viewed.'

It is probable that the buildings in Long Lane, and from the church to the Smithfield gate of the Fair (that is to say the buildings on the north side of the great churchyard), and the buildings, demolished in 1917, in Cloth Fair eastward of the north door of the church, were completed by the year 1597, for the leases in the Rental of 1616 date from that year. The north and south sides of Cloth Fair, Kinghorn Street, and the north side of Middle Street had leases dating from 1598. The leases on the south side of Middle Street, on both sides of Newbury Street, and from Sun Court to New Court, dated from 1608 to 1614. The houses were probably all finished, or nearly so, when Lord Rich conveyed the property to his son Henry on the latter's marriage with Isobel Cope, in the year 1612.

Building, however, was still going on somewhere in the parish between 1651 and 1653; even as late as 1669 there is a record that the Court of Aldermen ordered *'a stay to be made of buildings in the parish of St. Bartholmew'* but this was probably in the Close precinct.

Lord Rich's development did not go unopposed; according to Webb a great outcry was raised at the erection of houses on this land, known to many as the "Great Green of the Fair". His profiteering was flagrant too, the houses being crowded in, tiny tenements into which people were crammed. Speaking of further, and similar, development by Lord Rich's son Henry, created Earl of Holland, a letter from a Thomas Gundry to the Earl of Middlesex in 1636 describes the poor of the parish as "a commodity the parish hath gotten by the Earl of Holland's building". But the protests were no more effective than were those which, paradoxically, were made in 1914-1917 when most of these houses were swept away.

There was, in any case, no need to fear that so profitable an event as the Fair itself would be threatened because once a year, the houses and shops were turned into fairground booths, it being a condition of the leases that this should be so. Webb quotes a later example, a lease by the 2nd Earl of Holland to John Wotten, cloth worker, of a messuage in Newman's Row, Cloth Fair, containing a cellar, a low room, a shop, two chambers and a garret:

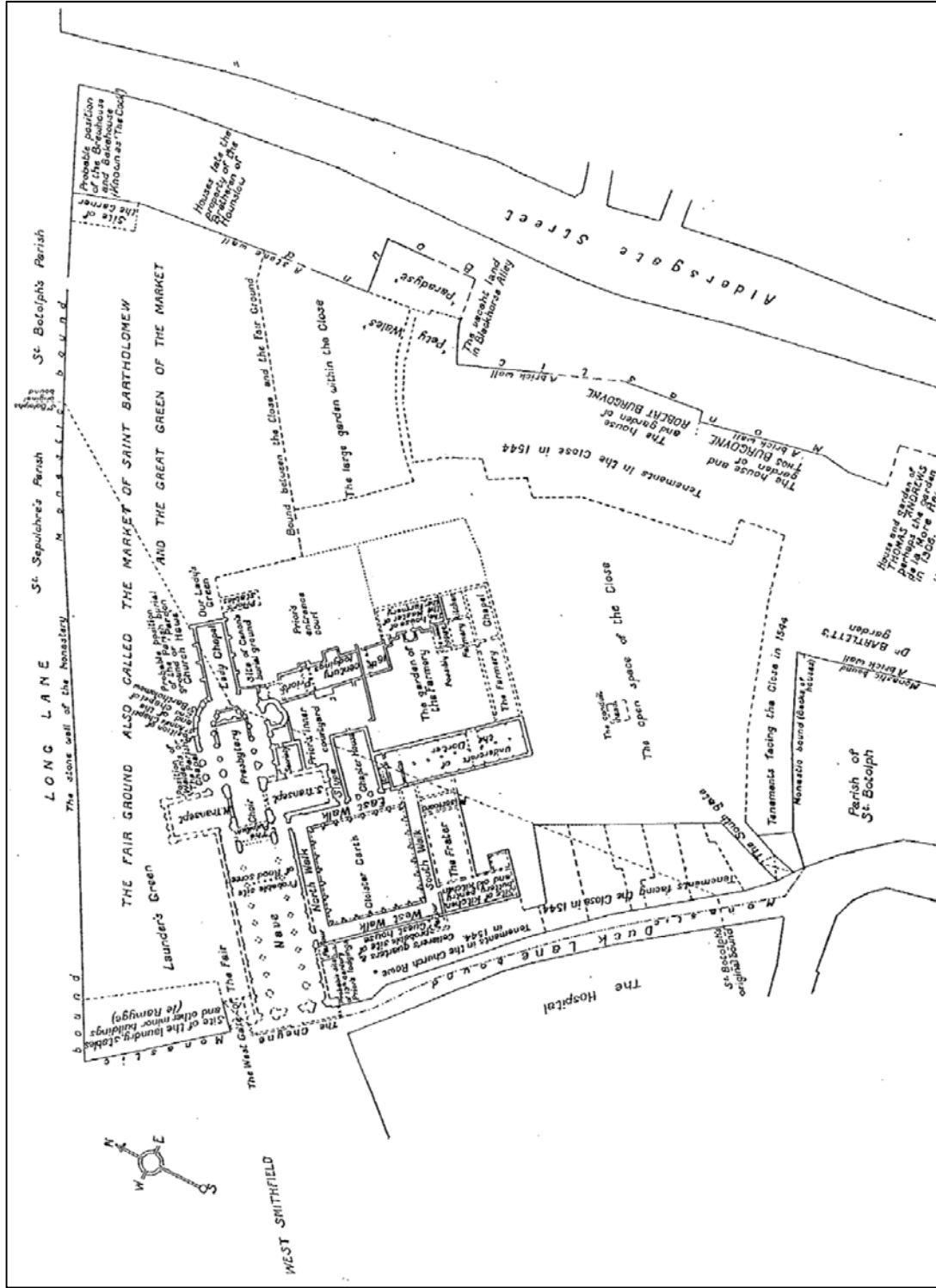
'Except and always reserved out of the present demise unto the said Robert Earl of Holland, the low room or shop of the same messuage or tenement for the space of seven days in every year during the term hereafter mentioned, that is to say the feast day of St. Bartholomew the Apostle and the three days next before and the three days next after the said feast, to be had and used as a booth or booths in the said fair there by such person or persons to whom the said Robert Earl Holland shall from time to time yearly during the said seven days and for the use aforesaid let and dispose the same'

Before long these new and controversial houses in Cloth Fair and the neighbouring streets were an integral part of the City, and came to be regarded all the more in that, standing outside the actual city walls, they mainly escaped

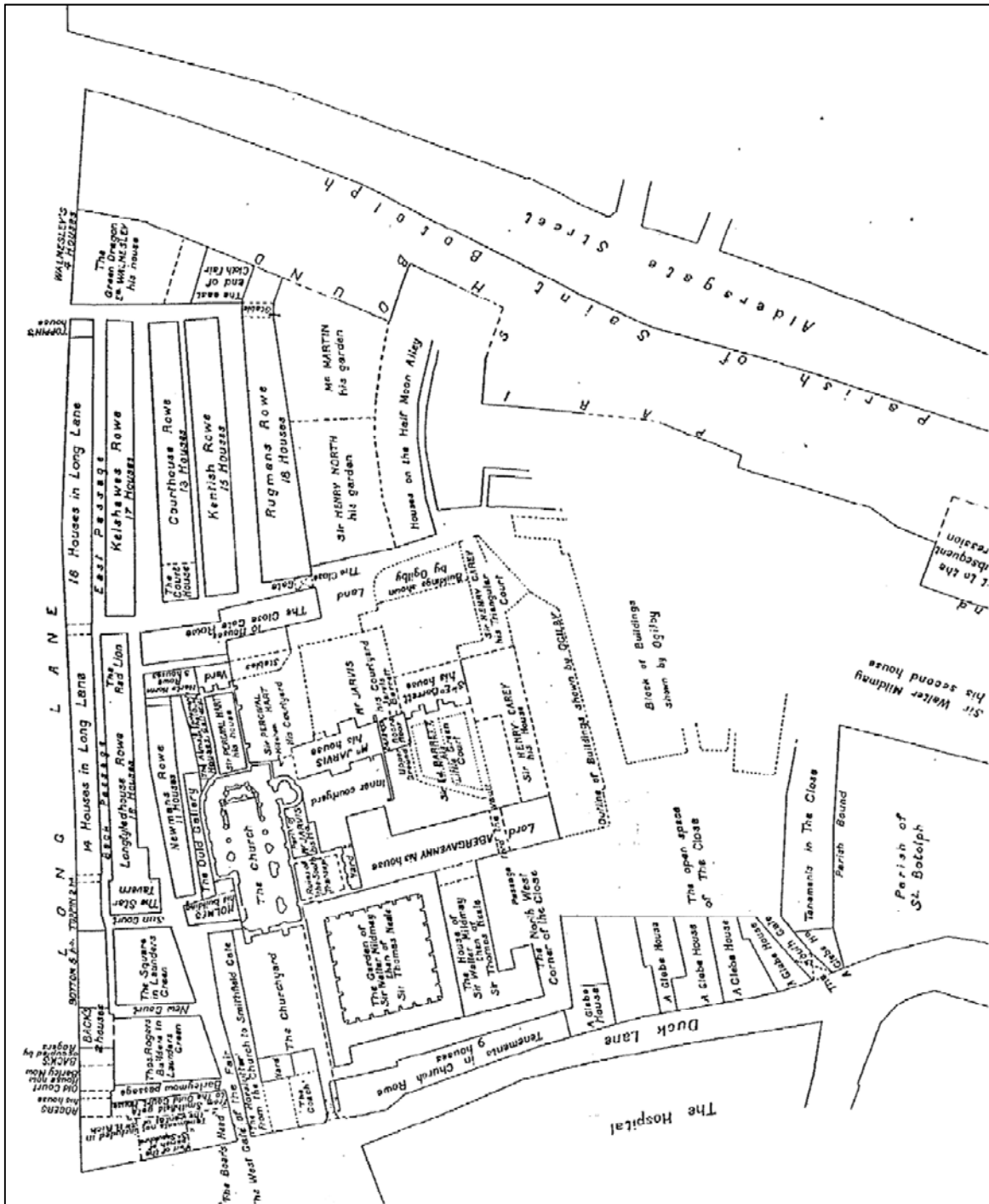
the Great Fire of 1666. As such they survived into this century as a relic of "Old London", the only place where the true feel of the crowded medieval - or Elizabethan - city could be obtained. It was also, by 1900, a squalid and insanitary slum, and so, for praiseworthy reasons, some of its most ancient and important buildings were swept away.

The debate between conservationists and improvers is recorded in the newspapers of the time, and it is amusing to compare this with the conservation battles of today. Fortunately, for nearly a century before, artists and photographers had been recording the street, with its ancient houses and the alleys and yards leading off it, and many of their works are retained in the museums and libraries of London.

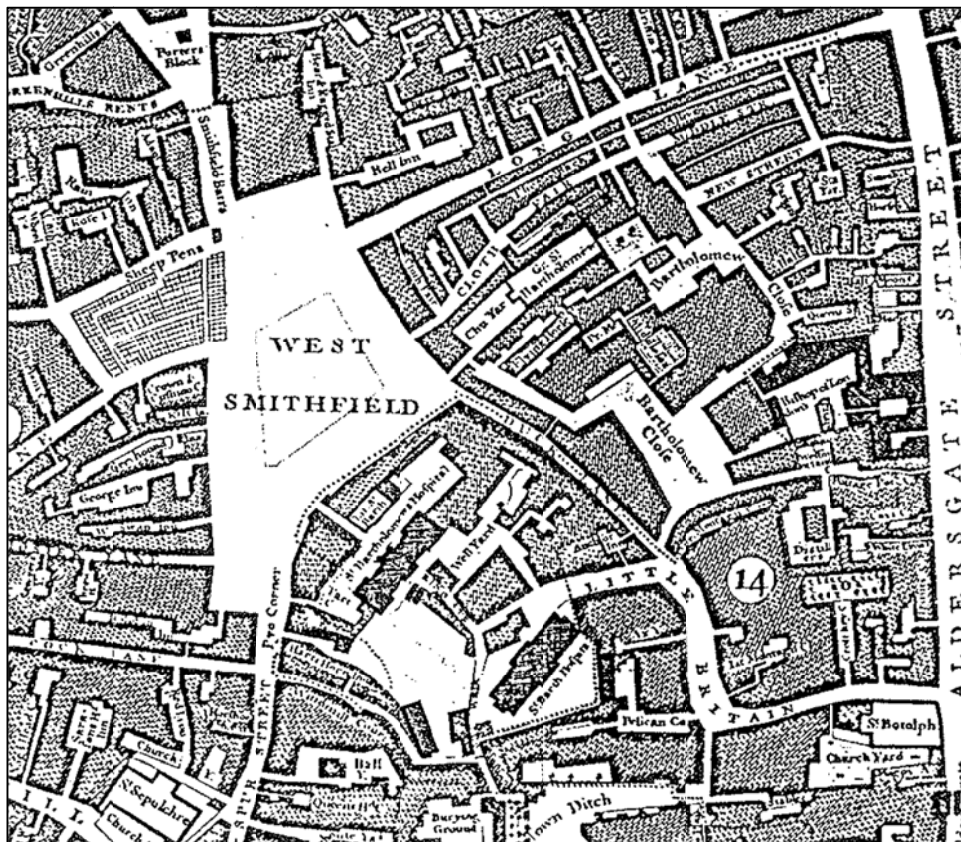
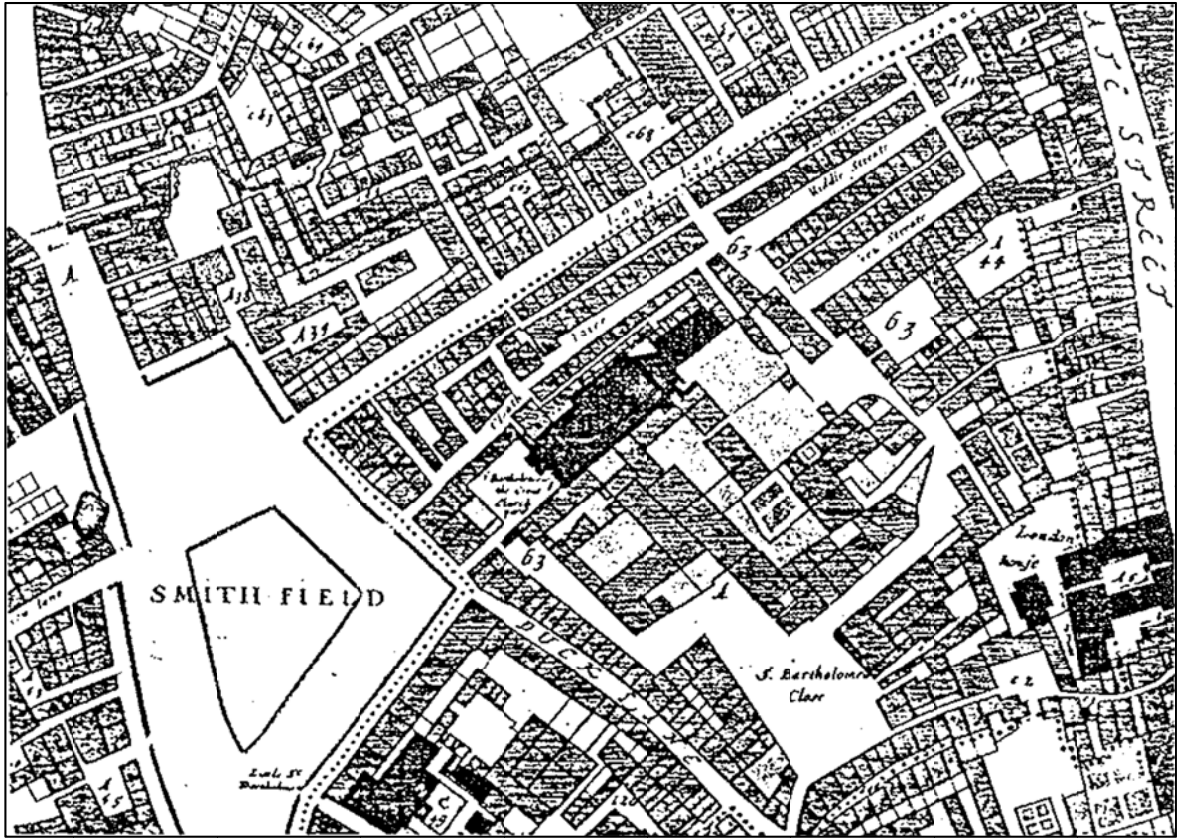
With the help of these and other sources such as trade directories and census returns, it is possible to put together a tour of the street as it was in the late nineteenth century when, as Webb, its chief historian, says, very little change had occurred since 1616, the date of a rental drawn up for Lord Rich, giving precise details of all the houses on his land. We start at its western end, on the northern side, and return along the south, to finish by St Bartholomew's churchyard, where it all began.



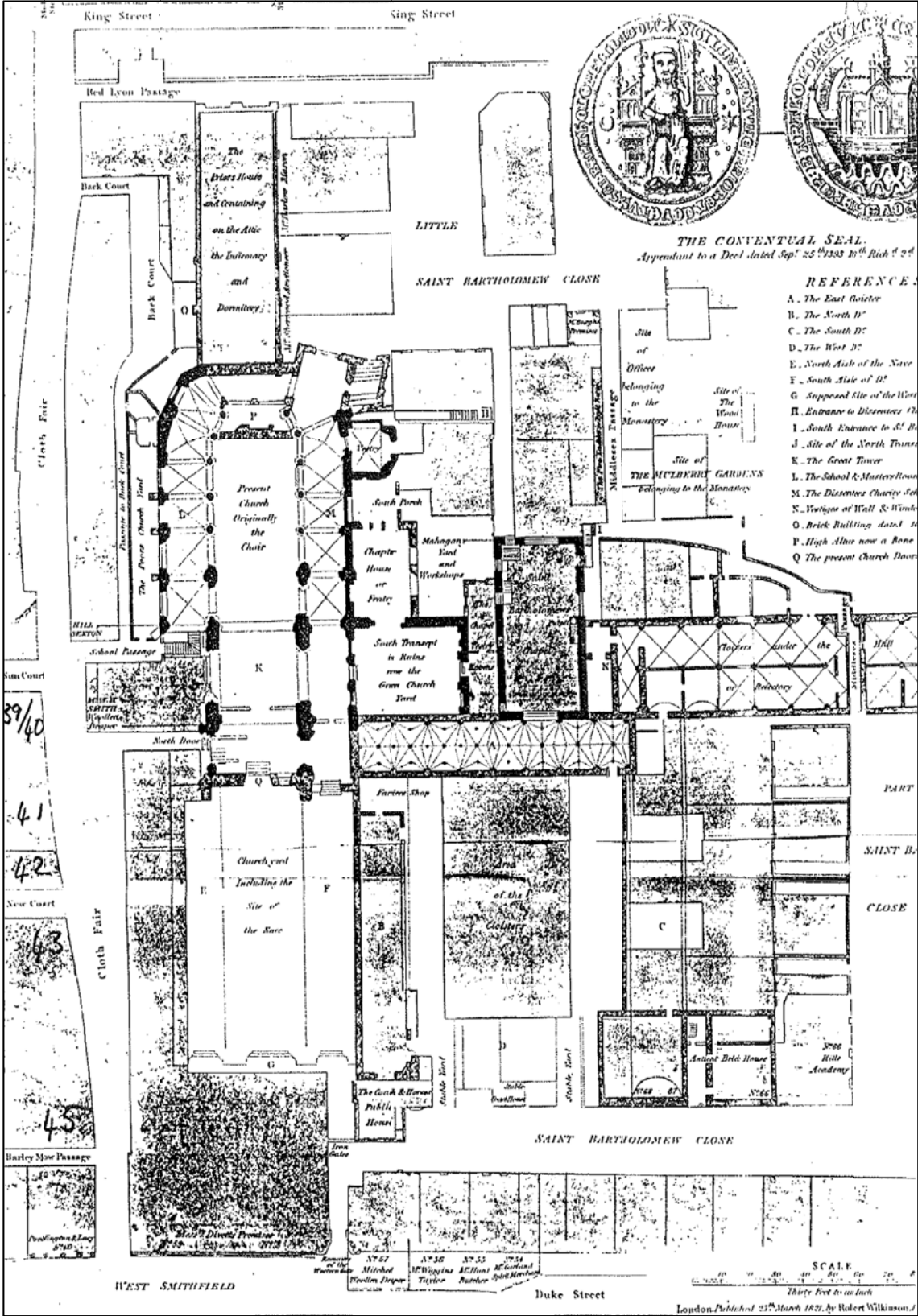
Reconstruction by E.A. Webb of the Priory precinct at the time of the dissolution in 1539. (Source: Webb's records in London library.)



The same area in the 17th century, after development by the Rich family



Ogilby's and Rocque's maps show how little change there was in the area in the late 17th and early 18th century.



The area in 1821, from Wilkinson's Londina Illustrata. Note School Passage, Passage to Back Court and Back Court.



This map of 1658 by Farrthorne and Newcourt gives an idea of the crowded nature of the City

Nineteenth-century trade directories

CLOTH FAIR—WEST SMITHFIELD.
Length 165 yards.—No. of Houses 46.
3 Proctor, Thomas, *Working cutter, &c.*
6 Vere & Smith, *Drapers & men's mercers*
8 Jacob, Benjamin, *Woollen draper, &c.*
10 Shaw, James, *Furnishing ironmonger*
15 Barr, Rich. *Tallow chandler and melter*
18 Barker, James, *Button & trimming seller*
19 Walker, J. B. *Grocer, oil & colour man*
20 Jones, John, *Men's mercer and draper*
21 Wilson, John, *Woollen draper & mercer*
23 Owen, Thomas, *Cheesemonger & factor*
25 Prendergast, Michael, *Woollen draper*
28 Lucomb, John, *Woollen draper & mercer*
29 Bell, Richard, *Cheesemonger & factor*
31 Stephens, Samuel, *Flannel warehouse*
33 Dawson & Williams, *Woollen drapers*
40 Elston, Wm. *Men's mercer & button maker*
42 Hester, Thomas, *Men's mercer & droper*
43 Wafforne, James, *Oil and colour man*

Cloth Fair,
West Smithfield.

3 Bouffler Jas.	22 Mudford & Hewitson
4 Gill James	23 Evans J.
5 Woodall Joseph	25 Hall Wm.
7 Waterson & Brewster	26 Pitman Jas.
8 Bysh J.	27 Burton F.
9 Rich Joseph	29 Collins James
10 Smith W. H.	30 & 31 Stevens Saml.
11 Hill S.	33 Dawson & Williams
12 Haddon Geo.	36 Campbell John
13 Davis Richard	37 Ives Wm.
14 Roker C.	40 Holt & Mitchell
17 Clark Stephen	41 Coram Margaret
18 Barker Mary	42 Hester Thomas
19 Bell Richard	43 Wafforne Joseph
	45 Williams Hugh

1817

1828-9

Cloth fair, *West Smithfield.*

5 Ives Wm, tailor
6 Bouffler Jas, tailor
7 Jeffrey Thos, tailor
9 Rawlings W, appraiser
10 Mackenzie Robt, tailor
12 Haddow Geo, tailor
13 Stuart Geo, brush maker
14 Morgan F, tailor
17 Jack W, surgical instru maker
16 Sedgwick F, sack and bag maker
18 Graham Jas, tailor
19 Williams Benj J, music printer
21 Ford and Son, printers
22 Roberts J, packing case dealer
23 Toms A, cheesemonger
26 Pitman Jas, woollen draper
27 Stincomb Thos, woollen draper
28 Clay —, greengrocer
30 & 31 Kitt Thos, woollen draper
31 Emans Wm, publisher

36 Alexander Alex, baker
37 Hare J, tailor
38 Thompson Jno, "Rising Sun"
40 Mitchell and Co, woollen drapers
42 Richardson J, boot maker
43 Mills T, cheesemonger
44 Chapman J, retailer of beer
45 Waugh A, tailor
46 Jones John, carpenter
51 Daniel John, horse hair dealer

1839

Cloth Fair, Smithfield.

- 3 Waugh Andrew, tailor
- 4 Belward Richard, plumber
- 5 Ives Jos, tailor
- 6 Bouffler James, tailor
- 9 Sedgwick Fras, sack & bag maker
- 12 Haddow George, tailor
- 14 Morgan Francis, tailor
- 16 Watson Richard jun, gas fitter
- 17 Sudlow John, engraver
- 18 Mitchell Edward, woollen draper
- 19 Webb William George, printer
- 22 Buckett William, butcher
- 23 Toms Aaron, cheesemonger
- 24 Reader Edward, hair dresser
- 25 Harrington Wm Hen, tobacconist
- 26 Pitman James, woollen draper
- 27 Stinchcombe T, woollen draper
- 30 Kitt Thomas, woollen draper
- 34 Thompson James, shoemaker
- 35 Solomon Sylvester, tailor
- 36 Cammann John Thos, baker
- 38 Thompson John, 'Rising Sun'
- 40 Mitchell D & Co, woollen drapers
- 42 Richardson James, boot maker
- 43 Mead Isaac, cheesemonger
- 44 Lysons Richard, boot maker
- 45 Wontner Richard, woollen draper
- 46 Jones John, carpenter
- 51 Daniel John, horse hair merchant

1844

Cloth fair, 59 West Smithfield.

- 3 Waugh Andrew, tailor & piece brokr
- 4 Daniel John, horse hair manufactr
- 5 Ives Joseph, tailor
- 6 Bouffler James, tailor
- 8 Lewis Ezra, grocer
- 9 Sedgwick Francis, sack & bag manfr
-here Church court intersects.....
- 12 Haddow George, tailor
- 13 Wilson George & Co. fancy box ma
- 14 Morgan Frs. tailor & piece broker
- 17 Cottrall Robert, last maker
- 18 Mitchell Edward, woollendraper
- 19 Kiddle Mrs. Jane, grocer
- 21 Davies John, dairyman
- 22 Buckett William, butcher
- 22 Webster Thomas, boot & shoe maker
- 23 Andrews William, cheesemonger
-here King street intersects.....
-here Middle street intersects.....
- 24 Wickham William, beer retailer
- 25 Scamell Daniel, tobacconist
- 26 Pitman James, piece broker
- 27 & 28 Stinchcombe T.&Co.woollendrap
- 29 Surmon Mrs.Louisa, window blind ma
- 30 Kitt Thomas, woollendraper
- 31 Clark George, undertaker
- 32 Casey Michael, tin plate worker
- 34 Pollard Joseph, boot & shoe maker
- 35 Morgan Alexander, tailor& piece brokr
- 36 Loveridge John, baker
- 38 *Rising Sun*, John Thompson
-here Sun court intersects.....
- 40 Mitchell Dav. & Co. woollendraps. &c
- 41 Emslie William, copper pl. printer
- 42 Richardson James, bootmaker
- 44 Howard Henry, cheesemonger
-here New court intersects.....
- 46 Jones Richard John, carpenter

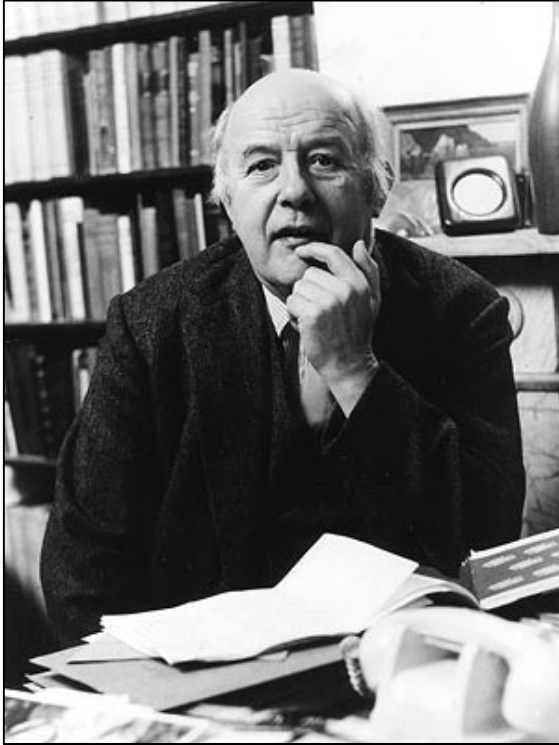
1850

Clothfair, 59 West Smithfield. (E.C.) (CITY)
 3 Bolden Robert, bookbinder
 4 Daniel John, hair merchant
 Maydwell Joyce & Co. cattle
 medicine dealers
 5 Stocker Miss Elizabeth, piece broker
 10 *St. Bartholomew's Boys' School*
... here is Church court ...
 13 Pollard Joseph, boot & shoe maker
 14 Morgan Wm. tailor & piece broker
 16 Williams Henry, hatter
 17 Walker Peregrine, tailor
 18 Dold John, trimming warehouse
 19 Morgan Alexander, woollen draper
 20 French Charles, dairyman
 21 Bannister John, butcher
 22 Bunsey Mrs. Lucy, grocer
 23 Critchinson Thomas, cheesemonger
here are King st. & Middle st
 24 Wickham William, beer retailer
 26 Pitman Miss Jane, piece broker
 28 Pound Henry, plumber
 29 Greig Mrs. Mary Ann, grocer
 30 Hopper John, piece broker
 31 Evans William, working jeweller
 32 Naden Noah, regalia maker
 33 Williams Henry, sign writer
 35 Husbands Philip, glass cutter
... here is Sun court ...
 40 Mitchell, Inman & Co. woollen
 warehousemen
 42 Squire Frederick, piece broker
 43 Jones Richard John, builder
here is Barley Mow passage.

1871

Cloth Fair, 59 West Smithfield. (E.C.) (CITY)
MAP N 8.
SOUTH SIDE.
 3 Madewell Geo. coffee rooms
 3 Hanson Wm. Thos. door sprug. m.
 4 Hamilton Wm. butchers' cutter
 6 Ashton Alfred, butcher
 6 Stepto Arthur, butcher
 8 De Fraine George, bootmaker
 9 Archer Henry, machinist
*... here is an entrance to St
 Bartholomew the Great
 church ...*
 18 Bismire Charles, pipe mounter
 19 Bletcher Thomas Wilson, sewing
 machine repairer &c
 26 Phelan Wm. Mortimer, dairyman
 21 Bannister Alfred, butcher
... here is Back court ...
 22A. Lee Mrs. Honor, hairdresser
 22 Jackson John, chandler's shop
... here is Red Lion passage.
 Stocks Enoch, chimney
 sweep, }
 Bartholomew house (Mo- } Red Lion
 del dwellings) } passage
*... here are Kinghorn street
 & Middle street ...*
NORTH SIDE.
 24 Dunwoody Wm. beer retailer
 25 Bradford Henry, newsagent &c
 26 Pitman James, haberdasher
*... here is passage leading
 into Long lane ...*
 27 Tiernan John, boot maker
 28 Russell James, marine store dr
 29 Matthews Geo. french polisher
 30 Jackson Reuben, grocer
 31 Price Albert Hy. T. dried fish dr
 32 Hayes James & Co. printers &c
 33 Hanson Joseph, ticket writer &c
 35, 36 & 37 Hampson, Bettridge &
 Co. bookbinders' press mas &c
 38 *Rising Sun*, George Danu
... here is Sun court ...
 Allen Henry, oilman (5 Sun cl.)
 40 Mitchell, Inman & Co. woollen
 warehousemen
 41 & 42 Markham E. T. & Co. whole-
 sale cutlers
... here is New court ...
 32A, 43 & 43A, Maples & Co. meat
 contractors
 33 Balcher & Co. builders
here is Barley Mow passage.
 44 Powell Chas. M. brassfounder

1895



John Betjeman was one of Britain's most popular Poet Laureates. He leased the apartment at No. 43 Cloth Fair for some twenty years, when he was at the height of his fame.

John Betjeman and Cloth Fair

The poet John Betjeman (1906-1984) was one of England's most effective architectural conservation campaigners, through 'a battle about a television mast in the Isle of Wight.' 'Of course I have to live here,' said Betjeman, when he took a lease on the upper floors of No. 43 in 1954. He used Cloth Fair as a convenient London bolthole from which to conduct his affairs and campaigns for the next twenty years. Betjeman was 'a poetic visionary who spoke for England'¹, a passionate yet accessible spokesman for architecture's soul as well as its aesthetic qualities. His poetry was loved by many; through the 1960s and 70s, he achieved even greater fame through his radio and television documentaries, affectionate, personal travelogues of the architecture and train lines he loved, in a country he saw to be changing not always for the better. In 1958, Betjeman was a founding member of the Victorian Society, champions still today of what was then unfashionable and disregarded.

Like Landmark's founder John Smith, John Betjeman represents a distinctively English aspect of our tradition of building conservation: the impact of committed private individuals, often championing building preservation in direct opposition to State-sponsored development. The Society for the Protection for Ancient Buildings was founded by William Morris in 1877, several years before the first Ancient Monument Act was passed. The National Trust was founded as an independent charity in 1895 by Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, all private individuals concerned both at creeping urbanisation in the natural landscape and the destruction of historic buildings.

Through his poetry (he was appointed Poet Laureate in 1972), and eventually his radio and television programmes, Betjeman became 'the minstrel of middle class suburbia',² chronicling with acute but affectionate insight his own time: the 'Metro-land' of the commuter belt, and life in the suburbs as the creep of ribbon development reached deep into Middlesex:

¹ A. N. Wilson, *The Telegraph*, 28/2/15.

² Kenneth Allsop, *Daily Mail*, December 1960.



Betjeman and his fellow campaigners failed to save the demolition of Euston Arch, a defeat that still resonates among conservationists today – some of whom have not given up hope that it might be reinstated.



Betjeman's passionate advocacy of St Pancras and its hotel by George Gilbert Scott was instrumental in its survival. The hotel, designed by George Glibert Scott, reopened in 2011 after an exemplary restoration. Today, St Pancras is one of London's best-loved landmarks, and Betjeman is justly commemorated at its heart in an affectionate statue.



'Gaily into Ruislip Gardens/Runs the red electric train,/With a thousand Ta's and Pardon's/Daintily alights Elaine;/Hurries down the concrete station/With a frown of concentration,/Out into the outskirt's edges/Where a few surviving hedges/Keep alive our lost Elysium – rural Middlesex again.'³

Betjeman campaigned to save The Euston Arch, an 1837 masterpiece of the Greek Revival designed by Philip Hardwick. It stood a few hundred yards west of St Pancras, somewhere south of Euston's current platforms 8 and 9. It was austere, and imposing, 70 ' high and 44' deep. "Between the fluted columns, each eight and a half feet in diameter, which formed the main carriage entrance," wrote John Betjeman, "might be glimpsed the green hills of Hampstead beyond." For over a century this was the first sight of London for travellers arriving from the North West. Betjeman and others pleaded with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan for it to stay, or at least moved elsewhere and re-erected. "Macmillan listened - or I suppose he listened," the architectural critic JM Richards recalled. "He sat without moving with his eyes apparently closed. He asked no questions; in fact he said nothing except that he would consider the matter." Macmillan, born in 1894, was of the generation which wanted to escape, not preserve, the 19th century. The arch was demolished in 1961, now considered as one of the worst acts of architectural vandalism London has suffered. ⁴

Betjeman was more successful in lobbying for the late Gothic Revival glory of St Pancras Station, now triumphantly restored and redeveloped as the Eurostar Terminal, where he is captured posthumously in bronze, Everyman in a crumpled raincoat gazing up in wonder at the mighty span of William Barlow's train shed roof. Without people like John Betjeman, Paul Paget, John Smith and many other campaigners, Londoners would live today under very different skylines.

Caroline Stanford, 2015

³ Middlesex, from *A Few Late Chrysanthemums* (1954).

⁴ Martin Gayford, *The Telegraph*, 16 August 2008. Some of the Arch's stones ended up in Bromley, in the garden of the demolition contractor. Then, in 1994, Bob Cotton, a British Waterways engineer revealed that the rubble had been purchased in 1962 to fill a chasm in the bed of the Prescott Channel. Broadcaster Dan Cruickshank discovered an estimated 60% of the 4,400 tons of the Euston Arch was indeed buried in the bed of the Prescott Channel at its junction with the Channelsea River that runs into the River Lea in the East End of London. At the time of writing (2015), and in the best Betjeman-esque tradition, a Euston Arch Trust has been formed to lobby for its reconstruction. www.eustonarch.org

Tour of Cloth Fair – The North Side

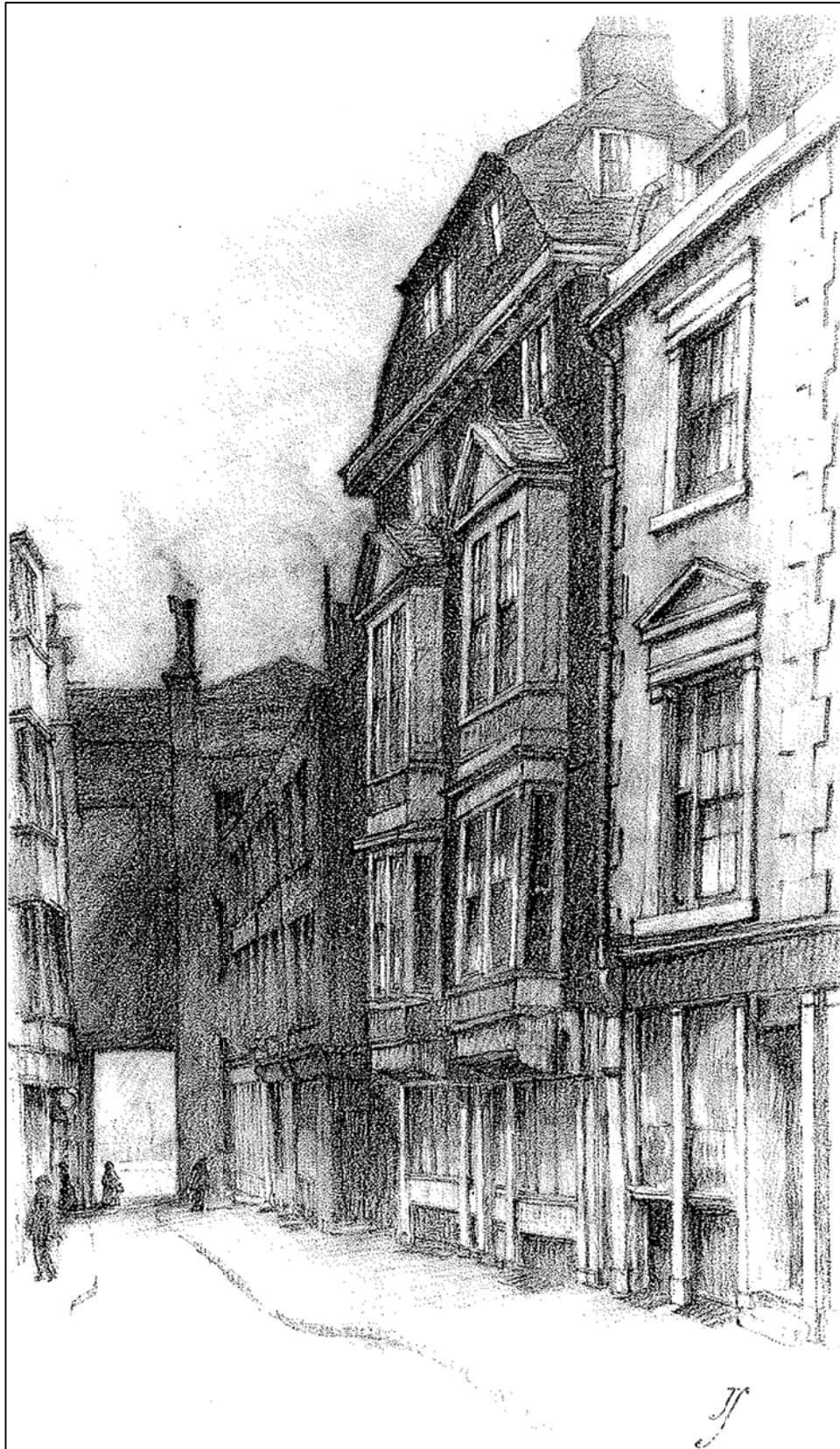
Barley Mow Passage to Cloth Court: 45-43 Cloth Fair

These houses were built in the later eighteenth century, on the site of four houses built after 1609 on the Priory's laundry green. The laundry itself, and the Priory stables, occupied the site to the west, where the bank now is, opening onto Smithfield. In the rental of 1616 they were leased to Thomas Rogers, a wealthy man whose own house and stable occupied most of the site. The others contained shops, and at fair-time, were converted into booths. In Barley Mow Passage, on the left hand side, there were originally eight tenements and two booths. The Barley Mow, at the end of the passage, was possibly at one time the seat of the fairground Court of Pie-Powder (for which see later).

Nos. 43 and 44 were probably built as one house. It is likely that they always had a shop on the ground floor, such as that of Mr Campion the milliner, whose trade card, of about 1800, has survived. The 1851 census lists the occupants of these houses simply as "shopkeeper", but it is possible to learn their occupations from the trade directories, the earliest of which, 1817, gives the occupant of No 43 as Joseph Wafforne, oil and colour merchant.



From the Guildhall Library



Looking West, by J. Swan. Old houses in Cloth Fair from a crayon drawing in the Museum of London. Note the arch into Smithfield from Cloth Fair



Looking East. C.H.Mathew 'Part of Cloth Fair' 1845 from the British Museum

Cloth Court to Sun Court: Nos. 42-39 Cloth Fair

Nos. 41-42 constitute the "Jacobean House", supposedly, after all the demolitions of the early part of this century, the only house left dating from before the Great Fire. The appearance of the house, however, is as much of the late seventeenth-century, so that although the framework may well date from the reign of King James I - and bay or oriel windows were a feature of the Elizabethan houses of Cloth Fair - it was greatly altered 60 or 70 years later.

The 1616 Rental records 11 houses on this site, forming a block between New Court (now Cloth Court) and Sun Court and built, like Nos. 43-45, on the priory laundry green. They enclosed a courtyard in which stood "a pumpe of very pure water" which had, presumably, been used for the laundry. The value of the property was £85, with an annual rental of £7 6s 8d. The leases were granted in 1614, which could therefore be the date of the house. It still contained several households at the time of the 1851 census, when two painters (house painters?), two bootmakers, a mason and a labourer are recorded as living there.

As already described, the house was restored by Seely (Lord Mottistone) and Paget in 1930. It has, of course, been much drawn and photographed, and it is interesting to note the changes in its appearance over the years.

No 40 has been a cloth warehouse since, at least, the early part of the nineteenth century, when Mitchell & Co set up business there as woollen drapers. Not long afterwards they became Mitchell, Inman and Co; John Inman and his family are recorded as living in Nos. 39-40 in 1851.



Nos. 41 and 42 in the mid-19th century. From the Grace Views in the British Museum



1910



An insurance map of 1886. Notice how the use of the buildings is noted, and the materials of which they are built, if those could be a fire risk. The restoration of the church has just begun, work being carried out in the Lady Chapel.

Sun Court to Kinghorn Street: Nos. 38-24 Cloth Fair

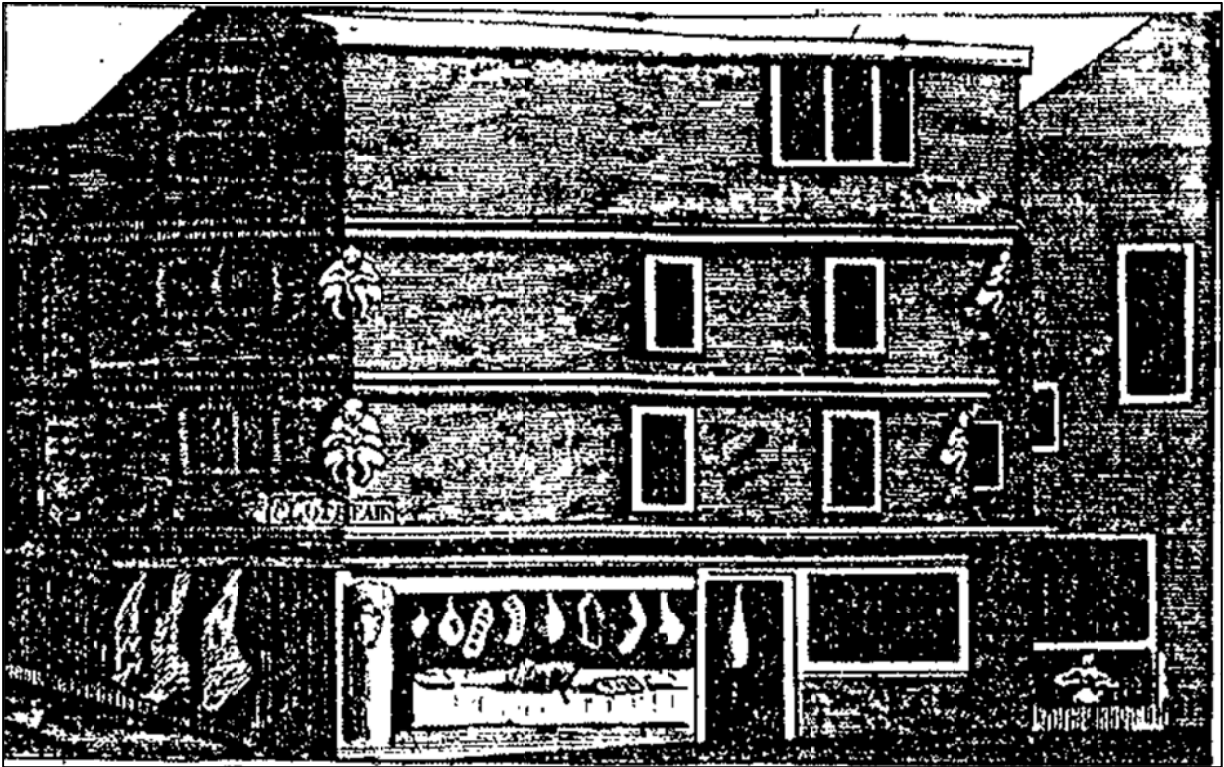
In the Rental of 1616 this stretch consisted of 16 houses, two of which had been combined to form the Star Tavern. This occupied the same site as the Rising Sun, which has itself been there since at least the end of the eighteenth century (although rebuilt around 1900).

Further along, presumably opposite the entrance to Red Lion Passage, Webb identified another pub, The Red Lion, whose proprietor in about 1800 was "severely reprimanded" by the vestry for allowing card-playing in his house; in 1803 his licence was actually cancelled (though later restored) for allowing "tippling" during Divine Service.

More recently, at No 24 on the corner of Kinghorn Street, was the Old Dick Whittington, which claimed to be the oldest public house in the City of London. In fact illustrations exist showing the same house to have been a butchers shop in 1800, and a hairdresser in 1850, so that at the time of its demolition in 1916, it had only held a licence for sixty years or so. However it was one of the earlier houses in the street, its lease dating from 1597. The projecting upper storeys were supported on grotesquely carved corbels, which are preserved in the Museum of London.

The houses in between were known as Longtyled-house Row. In 1616 they were held on five leases, dating variously from 1598 to 1604, and were worth £152. One of the leases was held by David Dee, who was Rector of St Bartholomew's.

The nineteenth-century trade directories show the occupations most popular with the inhabitants of Longtyled-house Row to have been those of draper or haberdasher. Some of them had quite grand ambitions, such as the Cloth Mart whose trade card of 1821 is preserved in the Guildhall Library.



From the European magazine for 1800, showing No24 Cloth Fair as a butcher.

WOOLLENS
AT PRICES NEVER BEFORE HEARD OF.

The Public are respectfully informed, that

Ladies' Merino and Saxon Wool Cloths,
REAL WELCH FLANNELS,
WHITTLES, NAPT AND PLAIN COATINGS, TABLE COVERS OF EVERY SIZE,
IRONING CLOTHS, BLANKETS, GREEN AND BLUE BAIZE,
Printers' Swanskin Blanketing, Hosiery, &c. &c.
ARE SELLING AT UNPRECEDENTED LOW PRICES AT
STEPHENS' CLOTH MART,
And Real Welch Flannel and Hosiery Warehouse,
30 & 31, CLOTH FAIR, WEST SMITHFIELD,
THE FIRST ESTABLISHED
Woollen Market in the British Empire.

Cumpton, Printer,
Middle st.

From the Guildhall Library

The houses were altered over the years and much rebuilt, but in spite of eighteenth-century glazing and shop-fronts, the houses retained their crowded Elizabethan character, and as such were finally condemned by the City Corporation as insanitary: in 1914 they were sentenced to demolition. The findings of the Sanitation Committee were reported in full by The Times:

Having carefully considered the whole of the circumstances we feel that it is our duty to report that the area comprising sites including much of Longtyled-house Row is insanitary, owing to its closeness, narrowness and bad arrangement, and that some of the buildings therein are in a defective condition and require to be demolished or reconstructed and rearranged in order to remedy the evils.

Numerous articles in the press mourned the passing of these relics of "Old London". The City Press recommended positive action and a more respectful attitude to buildings of the past:

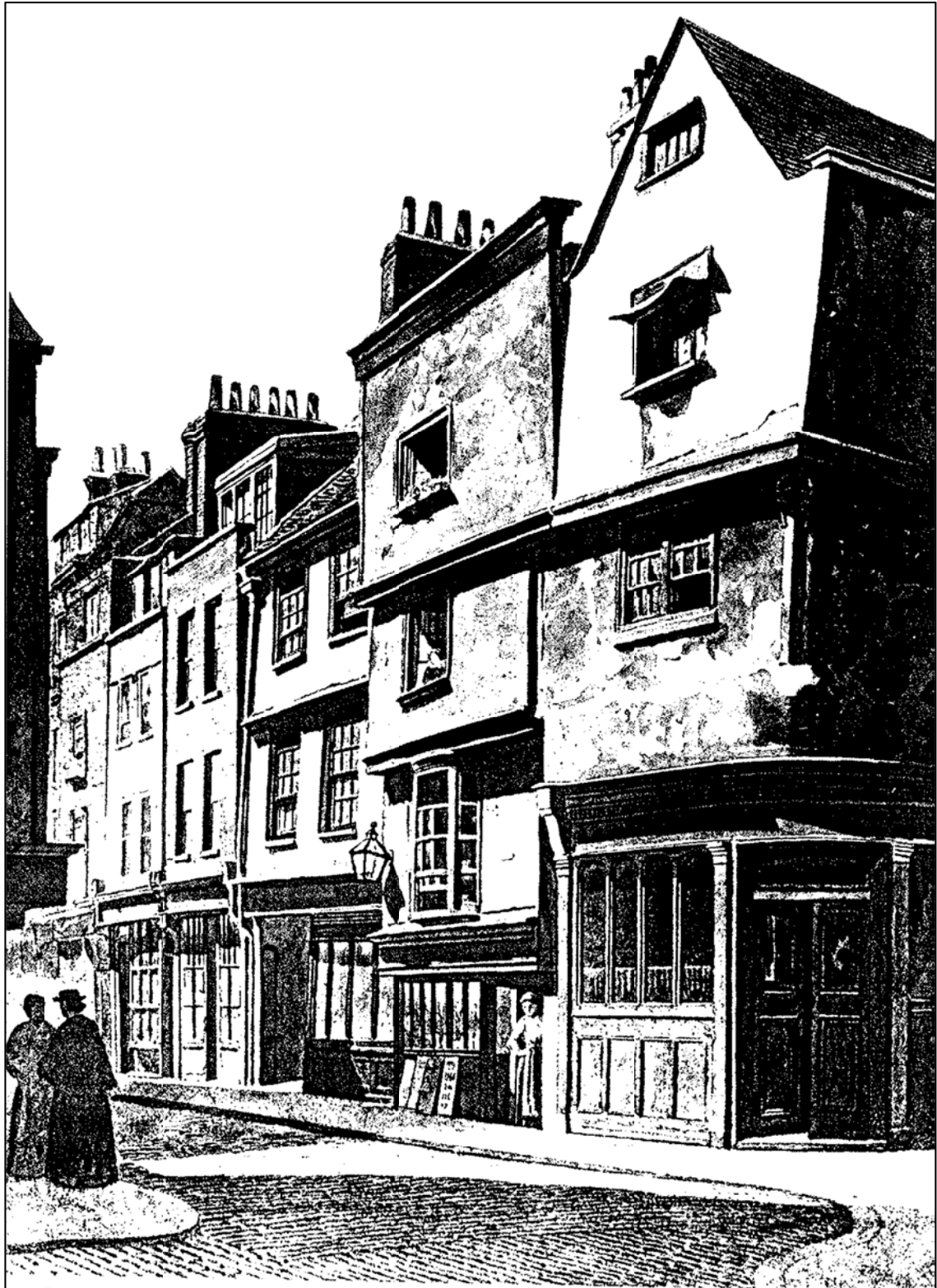
The County Council has its Local Government, Records and Museums Committee. Why cannot the City form a like committee and grant it a roving commission to move whenever some ancient memorial is threatened, or action to preserve an interesting old building is needed? Directly, such a committee would be fruitful in results. Indirectly, it would be still more fruitful as tending to create public opinion, and bestir the citizens in the defence of the few architectural links that remain to unite this prosaïd and drab century of ours with the more light-hearted, if in many respects far less happy, times of the Tudor era.

Others were less moderate, and controversy raged as conservationists went into battle. In retrospect, it was perhaps a wasted argument, and with the central weakness that these houses, in any case architecturally less complete than those at the western end of the street, were genuinely squalid and tumbledown. Instead of trying to save the whole street, the campaigners should perhaps have concentrated their effort on saving the much more important and interesting houses next to the Smithfield gate, which in fact lay outside the Corporation's well-intended sanitary scheme. Although it might now be possible to rehabilitate these houses in Longtyled-House Row, rebuilding the backs while retaining the fronts for example, on the whole it was inevitable that they should go.

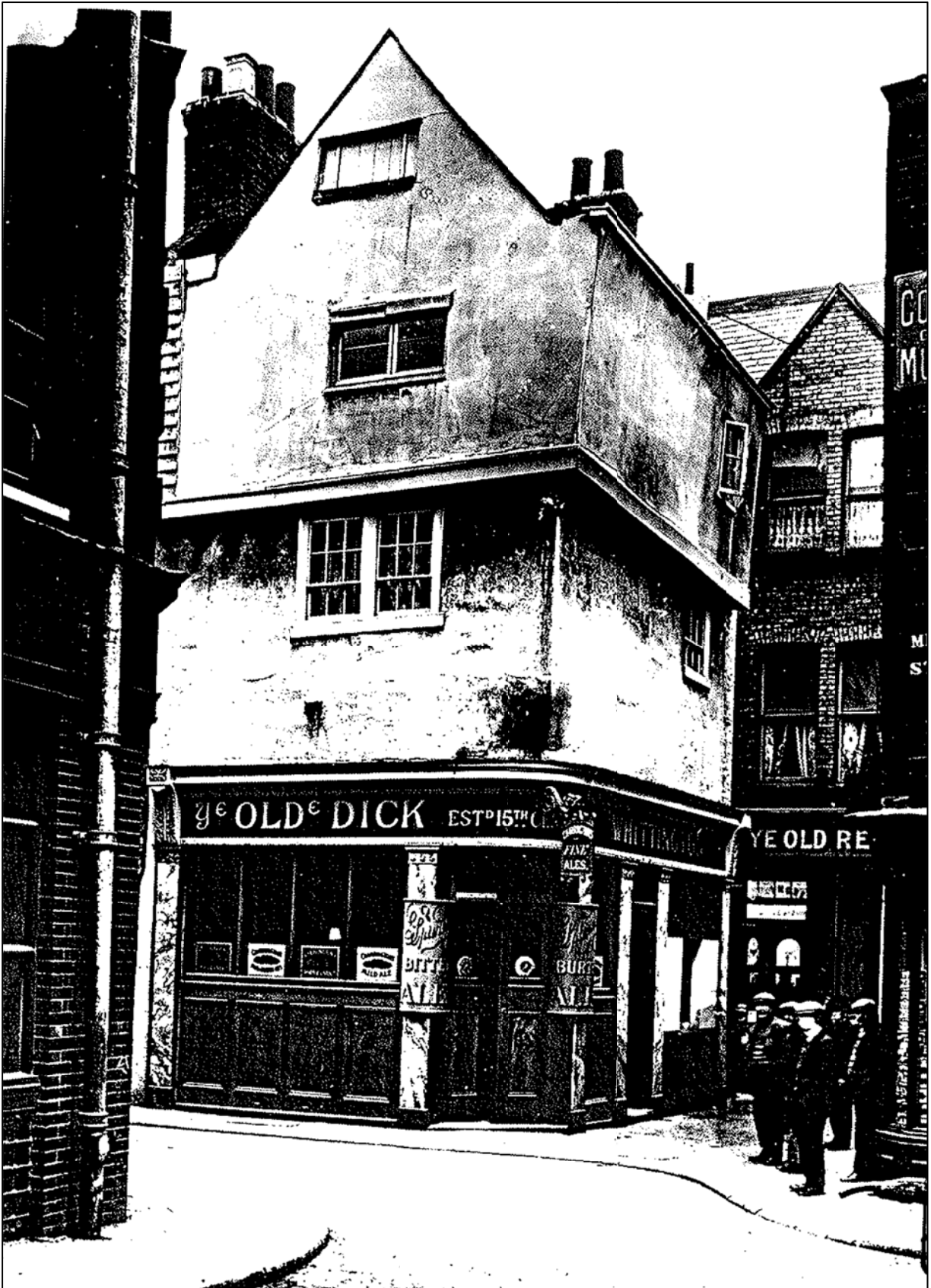
In any case, the Sanitary Committee was adamant, and the demolition of the whole row was completed in 1917. The site then stood empty for many years, and only recently have houses been built on it, attempting in their irregularity and with their bay windows to evoke their predecessors.



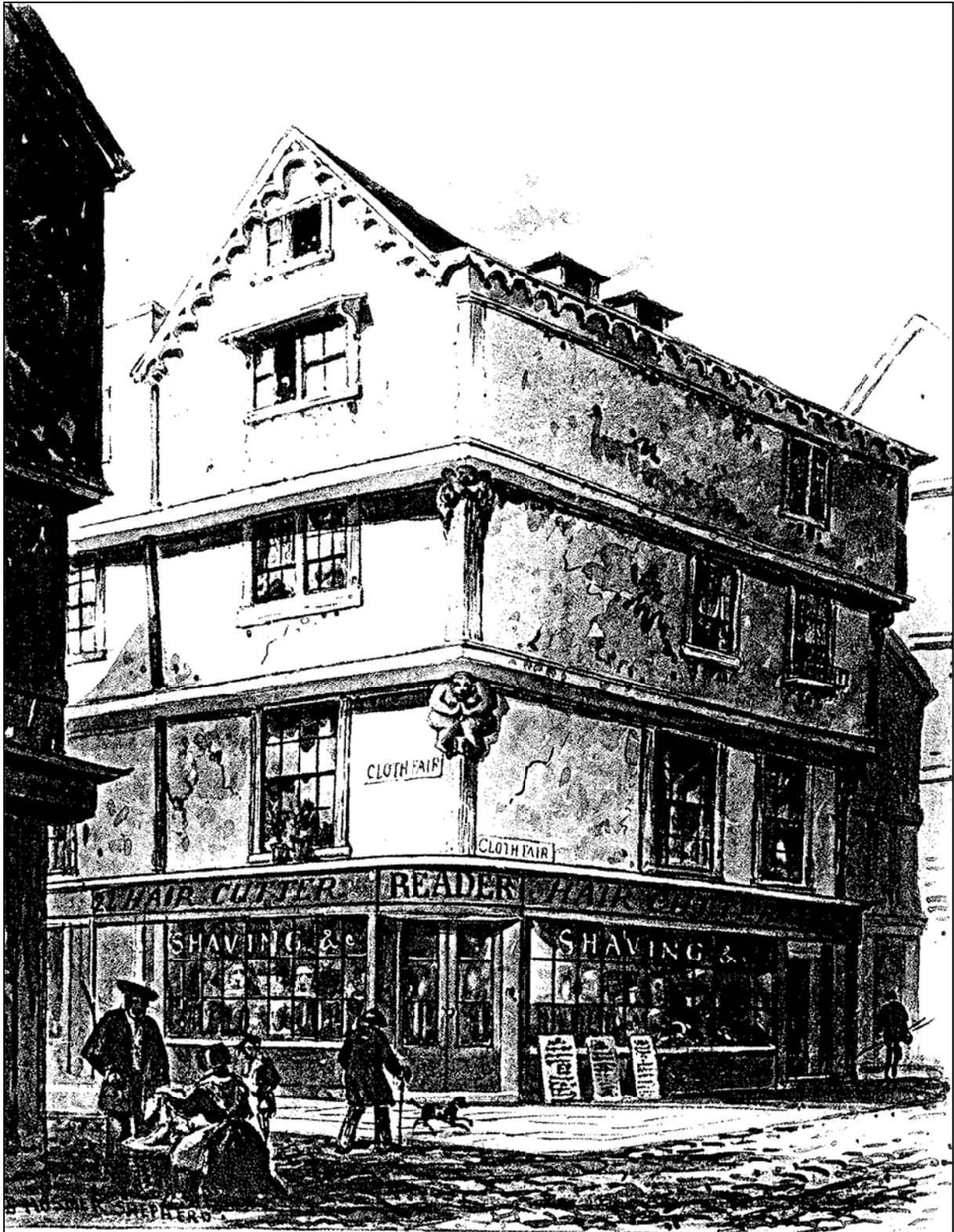
The eastern end of Cloth Fair, in 1880. The Old Dick Whittington was in the end house. From a watercolour by G. Wilfred in the Museum of London



The same row, looking west, with the Old Dick in the foreground. From a watercolour by A.B.Bamford of the 1890s, in the Museum of London.



The Old Dick claimed that it was the oldest licensed house in the City of London



And the view that disproves that claim... the same house as a barber's shop in 1850. Note the grotesque corbels, now in the Museum of London. From Grace's Views, British Museum.



December 1914.

"YE OLD DICK WHITTINGTON," CLOTH FAIR, LONDON.

From the Etching by W. Monk, R.E.

Note: A drawing of 1850 by T. H. Shepherd shows this building as a hairdresser's shop, and an earlier drawing in the Grace Collection at the British Museum shows it as a butcher's shop; hence the title of "Ye Old Dick Whittington" is a popular misnomer.

Plate II.

This engraving by Monk for the London Almanack shows the dilapidated state of the buildings at this end of Cloth Fair shortly before their demolition.

The Hand and Shears

Although not strictly in Cloth Fair, the Hand and Shears on the corner of Middle Street and Kinghorn Street was very much a part of the cloth fair itself, for in it was held, for many years, the Court of Pie Powder. This only sat during fair time, to settle any disputes that arose within its bounds, and was originally under the jurisdiction of the steward of the Priory. Later, after the City Corporation had successfully established their right to tolls from stalls outside the priory's boundaries in 1453, they too were represented there, and their Sergeants at Mace enforced its decisions - though the fines were still to go to the prior.

According to 'The Old Showmen and the Old London Fairs' by Thomas Frost (1881) it consisted of four keepers who formed a tribunal 'instituted for the summary settlement of all disputes arising in the fair and deriving its name, it is supposed, from "pieds poudres" because the litigants had their causes tried with the dust of the fair on their feet".

An undated cutting from a journal called 'Merrie England', one of many in a collection compiled around 1900 by D. Foster on "Inns, Taverns, Alehouses, Coffee Houses etc in and around London", tells us that:

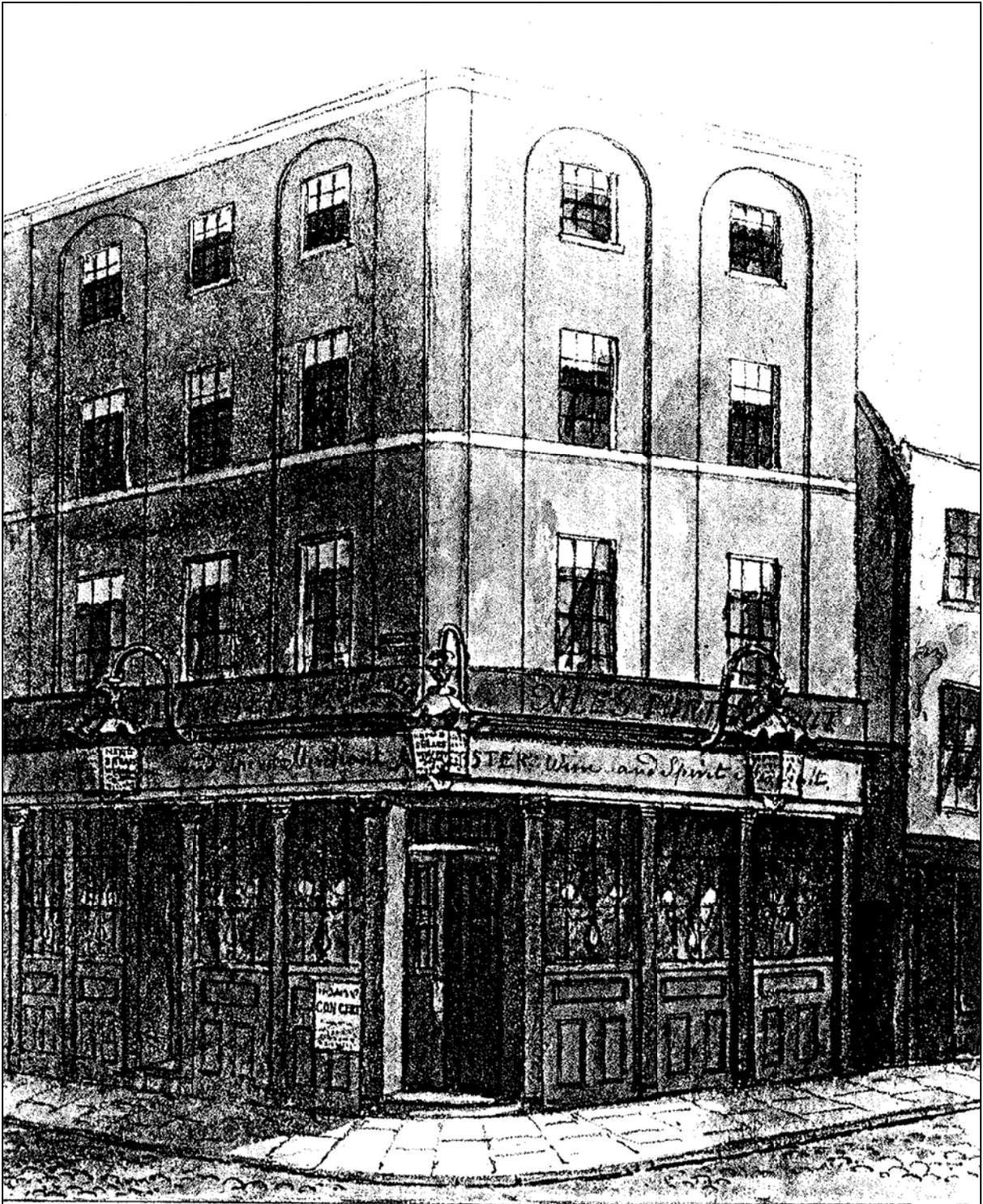
'the Pied Poudre was originally instituted to determine disputes regarding debts and contracts when the churchyard of the ancient priory contained the booths and standings of the Drapers and Clothiers. The beadle of Cloth Fair received the annual sum of 3s 4d for measuring the yardsticks. The officers of the Pied Poudre are two Sergeants at Mace for the Lord Mayor, two for the Poultry and two for Giltspur Street Compters and a constable appointed by the steward of the Lord Kensington [the 18th-century landlord] to attend the court on his behalf.

Immediately after the dissolution of the priory the Court seems to have been held in the Barley Mow Tavern, described in the 1616 Rental as The Old Court House. Not long afterwards, and certainly by 1616 when it is actually called the The Court House, it was held in a chamber in the Hand and Shears.

It was from the Hand and Shears, too, that the tailors and drapers set out the night before the official opening of the fair, to perform their burlesque version of it.



From Wilkinson's Londina Illustrata (1821) The inscription below describes the scene taking place in the dining room of the Hand and Shears



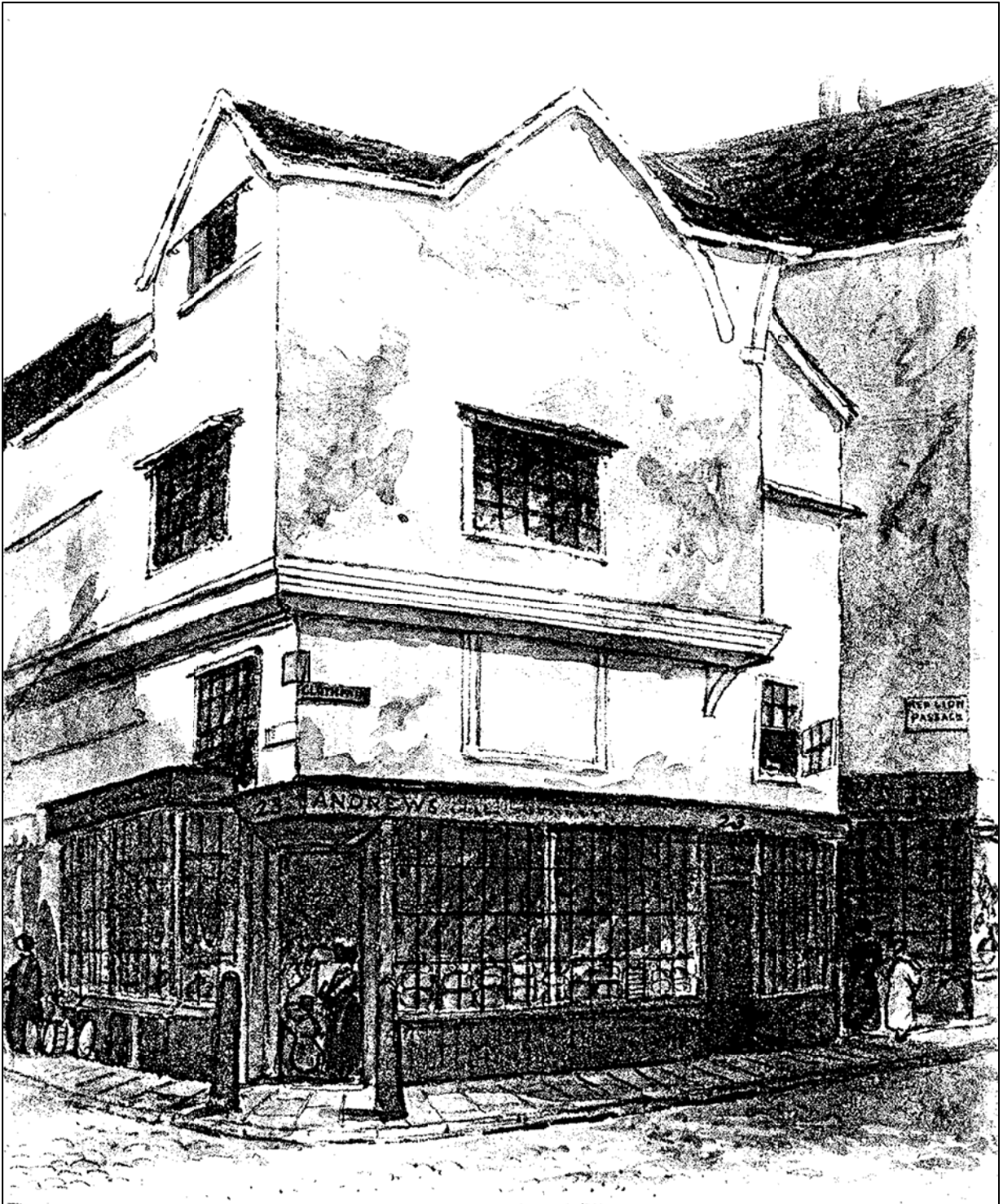
The Hand and Shears after it as rebuilt in the second quarter of the 19th century.
From the Grace Views in the British Museum

Tour of Cloth Fair – South Side

Kinghorn Street to the Church Porch

The houses in this stretch were numbered 11 to 23 (from west to east). Of these 12 to 22 were known as Newman's Row, from the first leaseholder, whose name was recorded in the 1616 survey. No 11 was in a separate lease, that containing the north transept of the church, one corner of which it was built over. Most of the houses dated back, in part, to 1598, although like those on the north side of the street, their fronts had been much rebuilt. No 23 was at one time the Old Sun Inn, but throughout the 19th century it housed a succession of cheesemongers. No 22 was called Warwick House, because it had a shield on its front bearing the arms of the Rich family, later Earls of Warwick, though there is no evidence that any of the family ever lived there. This shield is now in the Museum of London. The house may have dated from 1582, in which case it was probably the earliest house in the street.

No 23 had been rebuilt in 1894, and Nos. 12-16 in 1891-2 (No 11 was demolished at this time, to make space for the new north porch.); for this reason, when the rest of the row was demolished in 1917 under the same sanitary scheme that had condemned Longtyled-house Row, these houses were left; but some years later they too went, and it is hard to imagine, now, that they could have been fitted in at all. Only the eastern end of the street has been built on again, now being occupied by Founder's Hall (the headquarters of the Company of Iron Founders.)

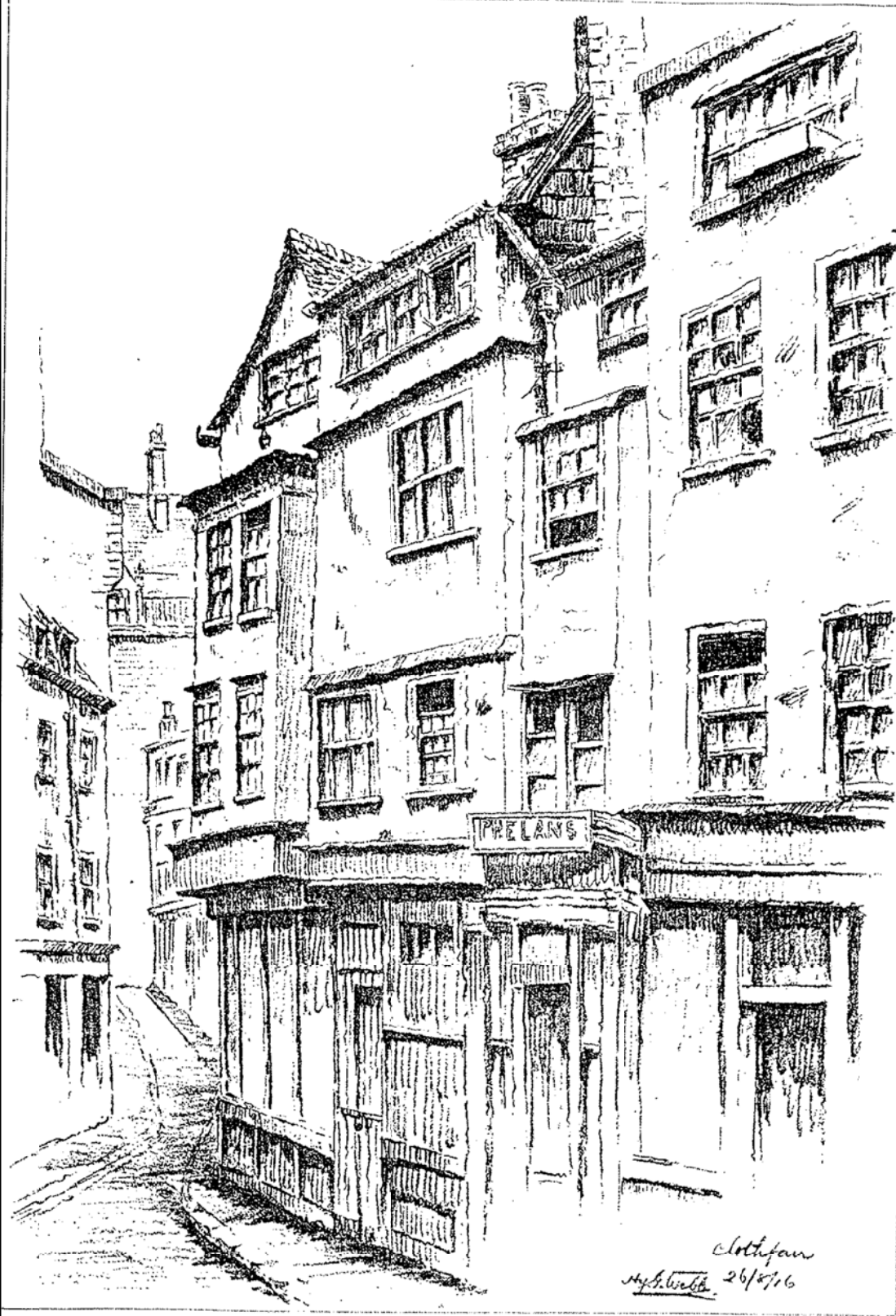


No. 23 Cloth Fair. Although the inscription calls it the Old Sun, it was, throughout the 19th century, a cheesemonger. From Grace Views in the British Museum.



Cloth Fair looking east, with the Newman's Row houses on the right. The cartouche bearing the arms of the Earl of Warwick can just be made out on the end house. From a watercolour by A.B. Bamford in the Museum of London, 1890s.

The Architect, June 7th 1918.



CLOTHFAIR.

From a Drawing by Mr. HENRY G. WEBB

Back Court Passage to Back Court and School Passage

It was these little alleys behind Cloth Fair which more than anything else were the cause of the "slum-clearance" by the City Corporation, as Webb says:

The difficulty of keeping this back alley clean and respectable was the origin of the sanitary scheme of the Corporation. The backs of the Newman's Row houses westwards, Nos. 12 - 17, projected over this passage until the close of the nineteenth century, when, in 1891, Nos. 12 to 16 were rebuilt. The backs of all the Newman's Row houses opened onto Back Court, on the south side of which, at its eastern end, still stood one of Thomas Roger's two cottages, until it fell in 1904, and two almshouses pulled down in 1896, all of which backed onto the Lady Chapel. At its western end the south side of the alley was in the first half of the nineteenth century, a burial ground for the poor.

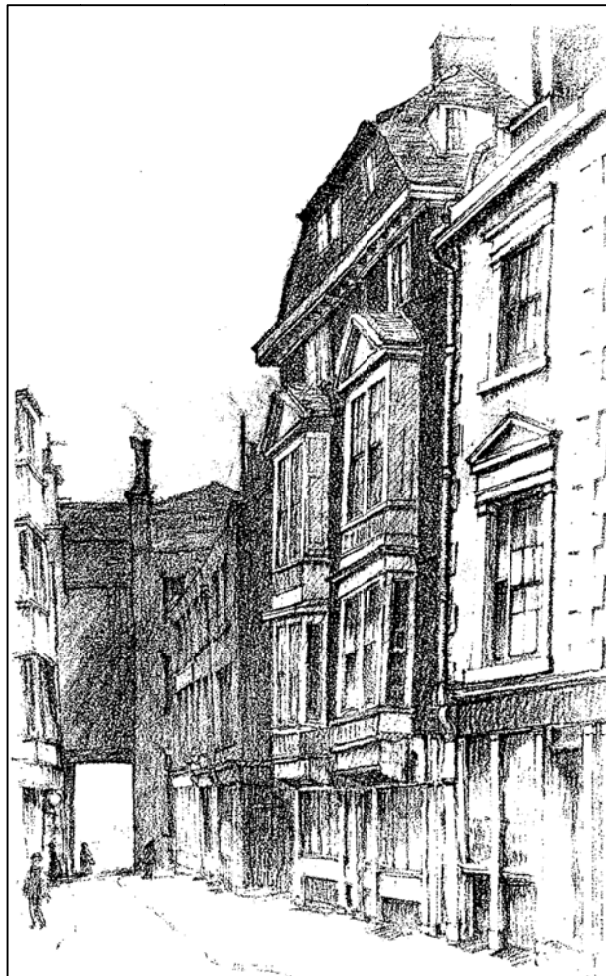
At some point the health hazard involved in this arrangement occurred to someone and the burial ground was closed, although it remained fenced off until the whole area was tidied up in the 1890s. In 1616 there had been six tenements here, called the Ould Gallery, in addition to six more in Back Court itself, two of which were Thomas Rogers' (referred to above by Webb) and four of which were shortly afterwards replaced by almshouses.

These were founded in 1632 by Elizabeth, Lady Saye and Sele, for three widows - there were three dwellings, originally, one of which fell down in 1763. The remaining two were rebuilt in 1823 but demolished in 1896, at the time of the restoration of the lady chapel. At this time an old man lived in the one remaining cottage, but he refused to move out, and so the restoration work had to be carried on around him. It was clearly a relief all round when it simply fell down of its own accord in 1904, and could be cleared away.

In Morley's Memoirs of St Bartholomew's Fair of 1859 he comments that the backs of the Cloth Fair houses were

so rotten that the other day a woman fell into the yard through the overhanging floor of one of them

The east end of Back Court was reached from between Nos. 21 and 22 Cloth Fair; at its western end the Passage to Back Court joined School Passage, which was only 5ft wide, and ran into Cloth Fair between Nos. 10 and 11. It took its name from the boy's school in the triforium of the church, which was reached by a stair turret at the end of the passage. (The school-master's house, now called Church House, survives at the eastern end of the triforium). There had probably been a school there before the dissolution of the Priory, and it continued as such, run by the parish, until 1889, when it moved to a new site south of the church. It was lit by sky lights and windows in the north wall, the arches between it and the church being blocked. However the room actually overhung the north aisle, with only floorboards to separate them, and the boys would amuse themselves by pushing pencils and other things through the gaps, to fall down into the church.



Old houses in Cloth Fair from a crayon drawing in the Museum of London by J. Swan. Note the arch into Smithfield from Cloth Fair.

North Transept of the Church

The original north transept of the church had gone by 1616, when the site was already leased to a Mr Holmes. In its place three houses were built, of which the central one, No 10, had a shop on the street front, and behind it a blacksmith's forge. This ran right down to the north wall of the church, so that the noise of hammer on anvil could be heard clearly from inside. A small house, No 9, clung onto the west (Smithfield) side of the forge, and beside it another narrow passage ran down to the north door of the church. The third house, No 11, was joined to the Newman's Row houses already described.

In 1891-3 Sir Aston Webb's restoration programme reached this part of the church and these houses were demolished, to be replaced by the present shallow north transept and porch.

Church Porch to Smithfield Gate: Nos. 9-3

These were the houses directly opposite the Landmark flats, most of which were demolished in 1914. In 1616 there were ten houses in this row, including those fronting onto Smithfield. Nos. 3-5 had been largely rebuilt in the 18th century, and Nos. 3 and 4 were rebuilt again, with the houses on either side of the Smithfield gate (the arch over which was pulled down at the same time) in 1906-8. No 5 was not demolished until about 1920.

But Nos. 6-9 were still, in 1914, substantially as built, between 1597-1606. They had pointed gables, and the characteristic oriel windows, as can be seen from the many photographs. It is these houses that were the most serious loss to Cloth Fair, especially as it would, from all accounts, have been perfectly possible to repair them. Although they were not strictly inside the Corporation's Sanitary scheme, it appears from newspaper accounts of the time that the Corporation bore a good part of the responsibility for their disappearance, since they condemned them as unfit for habitation, and agreed to pay the owner a price for the cleared land. And pleasant though it is to look directly at the church, and to

have the small patch of green of the churchyard, the street is greatly the poorer without them.

St Bartholomew the Great

It was the rundown condition of London's great Norman church that focused attention on the district of Cloth Fair in the 1880s. The first of the Elizabethan houses to be demolished in the street actually went as a direct result of its restoration, begun in 1885 under the supervision of Sir Aston Webb.

The occupation of the Lady Chapel by a factory was considered particularly shocking. It had at one time housed Mr Palmer's Printing Works, where Benjamin Franklin, the American statesman, worked for a year, on the work which contained the engraving below, Woolaston's Religion of Nature (1726). The scene is thought to portray the room in which Franklin would have worked, on the upper floor of the Lady Chapel.

Bibliography

- E.A.Webb The Records of St Bartholomew's Priory and of the
 Church and Parish of
 St Bartholomew the Great, 1921
- Henry Morley Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair, 1859
- R. Wilkinson Londina Illustrata, 1821
- George Clinch "The Cloth Fair, Smithfield" The Reliquary and Illustrated
 Archaeologist Vol 13, 1907
- Reynolds "Cloth Fair" The Treasury, May 14 1914
- Thomson "The Passing of Cloth Fair" The Selborne Magazine, Vol 28
 June 1917
 The London Topographical Record, 1916
- P.H.Ditchfield London Survivals, 1914