

BRIEF NOTES ON CHURCHES OPEN FOR LONDON OPEN HOUSE 2010

All Hallows by the Tower. A mediæval church partially rebuilt in the 17th century but escaping serious damage in the Great Fire which was observed by Pepys from its tower.. Not so lucky in the Second World War when it suffered bomb damage but was subsequently beautifully restored. The interior is entirely post-war, an interpretation of the late Gothic style.

All Hallows on the Wall. The previous church on this site escaped destruction in the Great Fire but was rebuilt by George Dance the Younger in 1765/67. He was just 24 years old, but achieved an exquisite small interior of neo-classical simplicity regarded by Betjeman as one of the most successful of the London interiors.

Christ Church Spitalfields. Designed and built by Hawksmoor over the period 1714-1728, the building is massive with cathedral-like proportions. The church was altered by Christian (architect of the National Portrait Gallery) in 1866. It suffered considerable internal destruction during the Second World War and subsequent dereliction. The Hawksmoor Committee saved it from demolition, and the roof was replaced in 1966. Subsequently the Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields was formed to restore the building to use. That organisation has succeeded remarkably well, returning the building to its original design and fitting it out as a first class functions venue. Parish services are held in the church on Sunday mornings at 8.30 and 10.30 am.

St Alban the Martyr. The previous church built by Butterfield in 1863 was largely destroyed by bombing in 1941. The present building was designed by Adrian Gilbert Scott, remaining true to the parish tradition of Anglo-Catholicism but taking account of modern liturgical changes. It features on the East wall an impressive mural by Hans Feibusch completed in 1966, and at the West end a jewel of a chapel (which survived the bombing) created in 1891 in memory of the parish's first vicar, Fr Mackonachie. The rebuilt church was re-dedicated in 1961.

St Andrew by the Wardrobe. The name comes from the King's Wardrobe established in the mid-14th century near behind it, where the King's ceremonial robes and other valuable possessions were stored. The church on the site was destroyed in the Great Fire and rebuilt by Wren as his last church commission in 1685-95. Seriously bomb-damaged in the Second World War it was rebuilt within the original walls and re-opened in 1961. The furnishings were assembled from various other City churches no longer existing.

St Anne & St Agnes. The joint dedication is unique, and first appeared in mediæval times. It suffered destruction by fire in 1548 and again in 1666, when it was rebuilt by Wren (with the assistance of Hooke). Re-dedicated in 1680. Bomb-damaged in the Second World War, it was restored to Wren's original design and reopened in 1968. It has a fine musical tradition and hosts a regular series of recitals. It is the home of the Lutheran Church in the City.

St Bartholomew the Great. A Norman foundation as a priory church by Rahere in 1123. Only fragments of the original building remain. Much of it was pulled down when the parish took it over from the post-Reformation owner, Sir Richard Rich, in 1543. The present exterior is largely post-Reformation, 16th-17th century with some Victorian work by Aston Webb in 1886-98. His brother was churchwarden, and he continued with embellishment (largely to the interior) until 1928. Despite its mongrel provenance, or perhaps because of it, the building has great atmosphere and has been used on several occasions for filming.

St Bartholomew the Less. Chapel of the Holy Cross established in 1123, moved to the present site in 1184. Henry VIII established it as a parish church in 1547, the parish being the St Barts Hospital site. The entrance, original tower and vestry of the present building are 15th century in origin. The octagonal worship space was originally designed by George Dance the Younger in 1789-91, adapted by Thomas Hardwick in 1823-25 and embellished in 1862-63 by P.C.Hardwick. After suffering bomb damage in the Second World War the repaired church was re-opened in 1957.

St Benet Paul's Wharf. A church has been on this site since 1111. Destroyed in the Great Fire, the present church was built by Wren and Hooke (possibly owing more to the latter) between 1677 and 1683. It was one of only four Wren churches to escape damage in the Second World War but was vandalised in 1971: repaired and reopened in 1973. It has a long-standing connection with the College of Arms across the road. Also since 1879 the church has accommodated the Welsh Episcopalian congregation in London. It is therefore sometimes known as "the Welsh church", though that is a misnomer. Paul's Wharf was the wharf on the Thames from which stone and other building materials were conveyed for the Wren reconstruction of St Paul's cathedral.

St Botolph Aldersgate. First mentioned in the early 12th century. The present building is 18th and 19th century, with mediæval foundations. Most of the church was rebuilt by Nathaniel Wright in 1789-91. In 1829 the East wall was moved back to allow the widening of Aldersgate Street. The interior is well-preserved late 18th century, described by Pevsner as being of "extreme elegance". The churchyard was put together with those of neighbouring churches (now disappeared) to form "Postman's Park". The church now houses an Evangelical congregation.

St Botolph Aldgate. Dedication indicates a Saxon origin, as for other churches with the same name.. The present building is by Dance the Elder, built 1741-4. Internal redecoration by Bentley in 1888-95 has resulted in an impression of light and openness which is unusual in a City church. Particularly notable is his ceiling and coving, the latter boasting lithe standing angels in high relief holding shields of arms – a unique treatment in the City and probably anywhere. A busy parish church with a ready welcome.

St Botolph Bishopsgate. The mediæval church was rebuilt in 1725-28 to a design by James Gould. Gould's son-in-law George Dance the Elder took part in the building of it. The church was restored after war damage by Cachemille-Day in 1947-48 and again after terrorist bomb damage in 1992 and 1993 by Stephenson. It is now in fine condition. Next to it in its extensive churchyard is a free-standing parish hall, originally built in 1861 as an infants school and used between 1952 and 1994 as the Livery Hall of the Fanmakers Company.

St Bride Fleet Street. Built by Wren in 1671-78 on mediæval crypts. There are many and important archæological remains under the church which were excavated in 1952-53 with a follow-up in 1992-93. This church is noted for these remains, including an ossuary, and for its Wren spire, said to have been copied by a parishioner (Mr Rich) as a wedding cake design now famous the world over. The parish was also a centre for the development of early printing, and became the home of the English newspaper industry for a long time. The industry still has strong links with the church although it has now moved its operations elsewhere. The interior of the church was destroyed by bombing in the Second World War and restored by Allen in 1957-58. He produced a design which is attractive but contemporary in feel, so definitely "not Wren". Nonetheless it is a fine interior.

St Clement Danes. The Wren church was very badly damaged by bombing in 1941. It was rebuilt by the Royal Air Force in 1958 to become the Central Church of the RAF and that is its function today. This was the only Wren church with a circular apse and this feature has been retained. The interior of the church is light and charming. The crypt is worth a visit.

St Clement Eastcheap. A church was first recorded on this site in 1106 and rebuilt in the 15th century. It was again rebuilt after the Great Fire by Wren in 1683-87. It is generally regarded as "plain and simple" for a Wren church, but it has an interior charm which is unexpected from outside. Alterations to the interior by Butterfield (1872 and 1889) and Comper in 1932-34, the latter remarkable for the blue and gilt reredos produced by Butchart under Comper's direction. There is an alley way down the side of the church which leads to a small churchyard giving access to offices at the back of the church building. The church bells are those mentioned in the nursery rhyme "Oranges and Lemons". The "Eastcheap" suffix is there because originally the church was at the end of Eastcheap – the road left it when the new road pattern for London Bridge was formed with the creation of King William Street.

St Dunstan in the West. The original church was first mentioned in 1170. Now a Gothic octagon built in 1830-33 by John Shaw, father and son. The last of the mediæval City churches to be rebuilt, the occasion being the widening of Fleet Street which required the church to be moved some yards northwards. It is aligned North-South. Its centralised plan had gone out of fashion some thirty years previously but fitted the constraints of the site. Apart from its unusual design the church is noted for its exterior clock made in 1671, and the statues of Queen Elizabeth I (allegedly contemporary) and King Lud and his sons which are to be found respectively above the vestry porch and within it. These statues were all rescued when the City's Ludgate was demolished in 1760. At weekends the church houses the Romanian Orthodox congregation, and becomes "St George's".

St George's German Lutheran Church. The church building dates from 1762-3. The congregation was founded by Dederich Beckmann, a wealthy sugar boiler and father-in-law of the first pastor. It served as a religious centre for generations of German immigrants who worked in the East End sugar refineries and in the meat and baking trades until their expulsion in 1915 during the First World War. The congregation later returned. During the Nazi period in Germany St George's pastor, Julius Rieger, set up a relief centre for Jewish refugees from Germany who were provided with references to travel to England. The leading theologian and anti-Nazi activist Dietrich Bonhoeffer was also associated with the work of St George's when he was pastor at the nearby (now demolished) German Reformed St Paul's Church between 1933 and 1935. St George's closed to regular worship in 1996 when it was taken over by the Historic Chapels Trust, for which it now serves as headquarters. The building was substantially repaired and refurbished and officially re-opened by HRH The Duke of Gloucester on 24 September 2004. It is an 18th century gem.

St Giles Cripplegate. A large parish church on the North side of the Barbican. It escaped the Great Fire but was severely damaged in the Second World War. This gave the opportunity to remove some 19th century "improvements" and revert to the 1545-50 pattern of the building. It re-opened in 1960. Though principally 16th century there are elements of earlier buildings incorporated in the present one. The large East window is post-war (1957) but based on late 14th century traces found during bomb damage restoration and replacing a large bull's-eye window of 1704 (with glass of 1791). The St Giles International Organ School is based in the church.

St Helen Bishopsgate. The building is a fragment of a Benedictine nunnery. It has the expected double nave pattern, one half for the nuns and the other for the parishioners. Sadly this pattern is disturbed by modern re-ordering in 1993-95 by the current Evangelical ministry of the church, with serried ranks of chairs facing the pulpit in the middle of the South wall. The result is uncomfortable. Pevsner lamented that "the [1993-95].restoration shows no sense of a creative dialogue between past and present The loss to the viewer's perception of the unique early history of the church is also grave."

St James Garlickhythe. The London starting point for the pilgrims to Compostella. The current building is Wren's replacement (1676-82) of its mediæval predecessor. Damage was caused in the Second World War when a massive bomb fell on it but did not explode. The subsequent restoration erased Victorian "improvements" to the interior, which is now near perfect. A bizarre accident in 1991 when a crane fell across the road to demolish the centre of the South front did no permanent damage since the damage was repaired precisely to the previous pattern. The church contains a number of fittings from neighbouring churches now demolished, and in particular armorial memorial boards reflecting armorial memorials destroyed in those demolitions. Note also the splendid carved armorial supporters of lion and unicorn, one pair belonging to the church and the other coming from St Michael Queenhithe. The quality of the light admitted through the clear glass clerestories has resulted in the church being known to some as "Wren's lantern".

St Katherine Cree. A rare example of a church (built 1628-30) constructed during the reign of Charles I, this church escaped the Great Fire. Restored in 1879 and 1962 it retains much of its 17th century character. Violence was done to the interior by the construction of

plasterboard offices in the North and South aisles in the 1962 restoration, but these are currently being removed. "Cree" in the title derives from "Christchurch", the 12th century Augustinian priory in whose grounds it was built. It became a parish church in 1414. The 17th century church was under the patronage of Bishop Laud and was consecrated by him.

St Lawrence Jewry. The church of the Corporation of the City of London, standing on the South West corner of Guildhall Yard, it suitably reflects civic splendour. The present building by Wren was built in 1671-80. It was gutted by firebombs in 1940 but was restored by Brown in 1954-57. As a complement to Guildhall ceremonies the church is very fine. "Jewry" in the title refers to the fact that this area originally housed a Jewish community, which was expelled by Edward I in 1290.

St Magnus the Martyr. It is likely that a church was founded here in the early 12th century. The Great Fire destroyed it and the parish began rebuilding in 1688. The task was taken over by Wren in 1671 and mostly completed by 1684. Between 1762 and 1768 part of the building was demolished to allow a pedestrian route through the base of the tower onto old London Bridge, thus allowing the bridge carriageway to be widened. The architect for this is likely to have been Dance the Elder. The tower's lowest storey thus became a porch, and still is. There have been many changes to the building since 1684, most of them not documented. There is a reference to it being "beautified" in 1814 which might account for the clerestory windows. Whatever the history, the present-day result is probably the most magnificent Anglo-Catholic interior of any City church. It also contains an extraordinary scale model of old London Bridge with which it was so intimately connected.

St Margaret Lothbury. First mentioned in 1185, rebuilt in 1441 and again by Wren between 1698 and 1700, the church finds itself tucked at the back of the Bank of England. It contains a wealth of fine Wren-era woodwork, its own and pieces brought here in the 19th century from other Wren churches now gone. The screen is from All Hallows the Great, and one of only two such screens to have survived. The Tester above the pulpit is from the same church.

St Martin Ludgate. First mentioned in 1138, the church on this site was rebuilt in 1437 and again in 1620, but was destroyed in the Great Fire. The present building was designed and constructed by Wren and Hooke between 1677 and 1684. The tall sharp leaded spire is a deliberate foil to the massive dome of St Paul's at the top of the hill. The interior contains superb 17th century woodwork. The very large central brass chandelier (still with real candles) was brought from St Vincent Cathedral in the West Indies in 1777.

St Mary Abchurch. First mentioned in the late 12th century, the church was destroyed in the Great Fire and rebuilt by Wren in 1681-86. It is the most complete example of a Wren church to have survived. Bomb damage in the Second World War was carefully restored to its original state by Hoyle & Tristram. The reredos, which is the only piece in the City certainly documented as being by Grinling Gibbons, was shattered into two thousand pieces by the bomb blast: the pieces were meticulously re-assembled between 1948 and 1953. Also of note is the shallow dome, painted by a parishioner William Snow in 1708 depicting the Christian Virtues.

St Mary Aldermary. The name reflects the tradition that this is the oldest church in the City dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Mentioned in 1080, but certainly much older. The mediæval building was replaced by one in the Gothic style in 1510, the building work (funded by parishioners' bequests) continuing until 1629 when the tower was at last finished. The building was then destroyed in the Great Fire. Reconstruction was entrusted to Christopher Wren, but it is thought that his team was responsible for most if not all of it, since Wren had no enthusiasm for the Gothic style. The choice of that style seems to have been made by the parish. It was completed in 1682, and is now regarded as one of the two most important 17th century Gothic churches in England. The fan-vaulted roof is particularly spectacular.

St Mary at Hill. A church on this site was first mentioned in the 12th century: the present building is a mixture of styles, preserving the plan of Wren's rebuilding of 1670-74 after damage by the Great Fire. Later rebuilding following further severe fires in the 1840s, 1960s and 1988. Until the fire of 1988 the notable woodwork of the late 17th century, with some

excellent additions by Gibbs Rogers in 1848-49, remained intact as a complete ensemble. It has now been removed to store in the tower, and the parish declines to re-install it. This accounts for the present barn-like impression of the interior.

St Mary le Bow. Perhaps the best known City church since its bells have become the symbol of London life. The crypt dates from Norman times, suffering a fire in 1087 after which it was rebuilt by Lanfranc of Canterbury as the London headquarters of his Archbishopric. It is still used to accommodate hearings of the highest ecclesiastical court, the Court of Arches. The church above it was rebuilt by Wren in 1670-75 after the Great Fire, but was almost completely destroyed above ground by bombing in the Second World War. The church was rebuilt and refitted by King in 1956 to 1964, only the Tower and lofty steeple remaining of Wren's work. The modern church is attractive and creates a striking effect.

St Mary le Strand. An ancient parish dating from the times of Angle-Saxon settlement. Its church was on the land now occupied by Somerset House, but was destroyed by Edward Lord Protector (Somerset) and its stone used in the construction of his palace. The parishioners took refuge in the Chapel of the Savoy where they remained for some one hundred and seventy-five years. The 1711 Act of Parliament for the building of Fifty New Churches in London gave the parishioners the opportunity to apply for their own, and the application was granted (other of the New Churches were St George Hanover Square and Christ Church Spitalfields). Because the site was so prominent the Commissioners resolved to make the church the most lavish. The architect, Gibbs, amply fulfilled that decision when designing the building in 1715. Still prominent on its island site, the building is now considered one of the finest examples of 18th century church design. It is the official church of the WRNS.

St Mary Moorfields Roman Catholic Church. The first St Mary Moorfields was opened in Finsbury Circus in 1820 following Roman Catholic emancipation. It was a large Classical building designed by Newman. That building was pulled down in 1899 and the congregation moved to the present building in Eldon Street, designed by Sherrin, in 1903. Sherrin also designed the dome of the London Oratory and several Underground Stations.

St Michael Cornhill. After the Great Fire the church was rebuilt 1669-72 on parochial initiative, with little or no input from Wren although his team helped in the realisation of the design. Pevsner observed that the speedy completion of the work suggests the re-use of much mediæval material. The old tower of 1421 remained, but was finally taken down and rebuilt in Gothic style in 1715-22. In 1857-60 the building became the first to be thoroughly remodelled to High Victorian taste by Sir George Gilbert Scott. It is essentially this remodelled church one sees today, with some more ancient traces showing through. There have also been some post-war attempts to tone down the more overpowering aspects of Scott's work.

St Olave Hart Street. The smallest mediæval church remaining in the City, with an atmospheric churchyard. First mentioned in the 12th century; some fabric of 1270 remains, including the crypt. The aisles and tower date from the mid-15th century. The church was gutted by firebombs in 1941 and restored by Glanfield in 1951-54. Pevsner observes that Glanfield's restoration successfully retained an atmosphere both intimate and antique.

St Sepulchre Newgate. There has been a church on this site since Saxon times, but the present building dates from 1450. The largest parish church in the City. It was gutted by the Great Fire, leaving only the walls and tower standing. The parish set about rebuilding (1667-71), without reference to Wren, based on the burnt-out shell. Frequent alterations over the years, and much of the remaining 17th century interior disappeared in drastic re-ordering between 1873 and 1880. It is the National Musicians Church.

St Stephen Walbrook. Wren's masterpiece. He lived at No.15 Walbrook and took special care in rebuilding his parish church at 39 Walbrook between 1672 and 1679. The previous 15th century building was destroyed in the Great Fire. It is the most majestic of his parish churches and from it he learnt a lot which was subsequently applied to the building of St Paul's. In particular St Stephen's was given the first dome to be built in England. His brilliance lies in managing space. Entry to the church is up a flight of thirteen steps then through a small lobby. If the double doors of this lobby are open the interior of the church is revealed as one

comes up the steps. The interior was remodelled in 1978-87 as part of a major underpinning and strengthening of the fabric (with a new central altar by Henry Moore) and now provides a worship space of extraordinary peace and light.

Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, Bevis Marks. The oldest surviving English Synagogue. It was built in 1699-1701, replacing the first Synagogue following Jewish resettlement (built 1656, enlarged 1674). The builder was a Quaker, Joseph Avis, and there is a tradition that when the eventual cost was lower than his estimate he returned the difference to the congregation. The building today remains largely as built.

The Dutch Church, Austin Friars. A church was originally founded on this site in 1253 and rebuilt after 1354. After the Dissolution only the preaching nave was kept, and given to the Dutch Protestants in 1550. It was heavily restored in 1863-65 by l'Anson and Lightly after fire damage, and destroyed by a direct hit in 1940. The present building was built by Bailey in 1950-54. The interior is unremarkable, but has good modern stained glass.

Wesley's Chapel. Built in 1778 by John Wesley, founder of Methodism. The architect was George Dance the Younger. In 1891 the centenary of Wesley's death was marked by embellishment of the interior: marble pillars were donated from Methodist Churches around the world to replace the original pillars made from wooden ships' masts donated by George III, new pews were added and stained glass was installed. In 1972 the Chapel was found to be structurally unsafe and had to be closed. On 1st November 1978, exactly 200 years after Wesley opened the Chapel, the restored building was re-opened in the presence of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh.