

THE RICH INHERITANCE

Many parts of the City reflect their history in the layout of their streets and buildings and no part more so than Bartholomew Close. With three Livery Companies now joining the Butchers in this Conservation Area of small properties, it seems an appropriate moment to look briefly at the origins and adaptation of the Close to the changing needs of the City.

The site lies outside the Roman Wall adjacent to the Smoothfield where in Mediaeval times it was convenient to assemble large crowds whether for jousting in Giltspur Street, in rioting against the Government or in the sale of cattle driven from the fields of Hampstead down Cowcross Street.

But the site played no part in any of these diversions because the Monk Rahere persuaded King Henry I to grant him the land upon which to build his Priory and nearby the Hospital dedicated to St. Bartholomew. Foundations of the buildings were secure because they lay on one of the several gravel outcrops which occur in the City. And around the site the Priory erected a wall with gates at regular intervals, clearly marked today by the passages leading from Long Lane, Aldersgate Street, Smithfield and Little Britain. So we know that from 1123 until 1539 the site was developed as a community with the Prior's house, the Dorters, the Cloisters, the Refectory and attendant kitchens and an infirmary all surrounding the Priory with its Lady Chapel to the east of the Apsidal Sanctuary, the Choir and the Nave reaching to the very edge of the Smoothfield, with the north transept separated from the Choir and used as the Parish Church. To the east and north within the Priory wall was the open space variously called "The Fair Ground" or "The Market of St. Bartholomew" or "The Great Green of the Market".

All this came to an end in 1539 when the suppression of the Monasteries ejected the Prior and his canons and, by a deed sealed in the Chapter House of the Priory, transferred the property to the King. The document is still in existence and in excellent condition. The property was handed over to The Court of Augmentations (a sort of London Residuary Body to tidy up the consequences of the suppression). Of this Court Sir Richard Rich was the Chairman and a close adviser to King Henry VIII. Sir Richard Rich had taken up residence at this time in the Prior's house at Austin Friars, also suppressed, but soon decided that his resources could better be enhanced by acquiring the property at St. Bartholomew. He therefore prepared a valuation of the buildings (on the same basis as might well be adopted for probate purposes only) and upon the terms that the Choir of the Church should be retained and converted into the Parish Church, he purchased from the King the entirety of the estate at a total price of £1,064.11s.3d. His document of title consisted of letters patent dated 19th May 1544. Sir Richard, now Baron Rich who had Catholic sympathies, gave up his investment in Bartholomew Close to Queen Mary on her accession when she installed the Black Friars, but he purchased

the estate back from Queen Elizabeth for £298.9s.4d. with vacant possession so the Noble Lord was made to pay twice for his property.

A word might be added about Sir Richard Rich, a Knight at the time of the suppression, Attorney General for Wales, Solicitor General, responsible for the arrest and prosecution of Ann Askew, a famous Guildhall trial, and her subsequent burning in Smithfield. He became Speaker of the House of Commons and then Lord Chancellor in 1548.

The other leading character in the suppression of St. Bartholomew and who witnessed the deed of the surrender was William Petre who had been appointed by the King to organise the suppression of the Monasteries which he did up and down the country with great enthusiasm, St. Bartholomew being almost the last.

He was present with Lord Rich when Queen Mary entered London in 1553 and remained a principal adviser to Queen Mary as he had been to Henry VIII, Edward VI and was to be to Elizabeth on her accession.

Once Lord Rich had taken re-possession of his estate, which excluded the Parish Church now established in the Choir and the demolished Nave now the Parish Graveyard, he converted the transepts and the Lady Chapel for secular use. The Close nevertheless remained a liberty outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor and accordingly is not described in Stow's Survey of London.

Lord Rich then proceeded to gather his friends around him and sold part of the Cloisters and other premises to Sir Walter Mildmay, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his supporter in the Court of Augmentations Thomas Burgoyne. Later the Close was inhabited by noble families with a Walsingham connection including the De Veres, the Fanes, the Nevilles, the Carys and the Scudemores to name only a few. Sir William Petre lived in Aldersgate Street just outside the estate on a plot which became London House. Neither Lord Rich nor Sir William Petre confined their property interests to the City and each had estates in Essex and the Petre family remain the owners of Ingatestone House to this day.

While this domestic community with interests with Government was establishing itself in Bartholomew Close, Lord Rich died in 1568 and was succeeded by his son Robert. But it was his grandson, the third Baron, who on the death of his father in 1581 started to consider the possibility of developing the open space within the Priory walls. Perhaps he took up this diversion because his wife Penelope, having given him six children, then proceeded to live openly with Charles Blount 8th Lord Mountjoy, another resident in the Close, giving him five children. In order to maintain the estate as a liberty the third Baron obtained in 1583 from the Queen an exemplification of the enrolment of the Charter and confirmation of the privileges granted to the Monastery by

Henry VIII in 1489. The estate did not descend to the eldest son of the third Baron but was settled on the younger son Henry on his marriage with Isobel Cope in 1612. In 1622 Henry was created Baron Kensington and in 1624 the Earl of Holland. He then proceeded to be all things to all men in the Civil War as a result of which he was taken prisoner in 1649 and beheaded by the Roundheads. After the Restoration, his second and surviving son succeeded to the titles as Earl of Holland and Baron Kensington and in 1673 to the titles of the Earl of Warwick and Baron Rich. It is not necessary to follow the decline of the Rich family tree because the fifth Earl of Holland died in 1759 without a son and the various titles became extinct. However, the Bartholomew estate and the advowson for the Parish had been left to a daughter, Lady Elizabeth Rich, who had married Francis Edwardes, and their son became the new Baron Kensington in the Peerage of Ireland in 1776 and thereafter the story of the development of the estate passes to the Edwardes family.

It is perhaps wise now to pass from personalities to the layout of the estate effected by the third Baron Rich.

Agas's Map which was made about 1563 while the first Lord Rich was alive showed the fairground of Cloth Fair remaining in its monastic condition. Hoefnagel's map of about 1572 shows the fairground still open but the third Baron began to develop the property in 1581 by covering the vacant ground with narrow streets and small houses whose layout is exactly positioned today.

The buildings in Long Lane and from the Church to the Smithfield gate of the Fair on the north side of the Great Churchyard were completed by the year 1597 for the leases in the rental of 1616 date from that year. Long Lane has always been the boundary of the Parish and all the buildings on the south side were used for shops with residential living over the shop. At some time before 1598 the wall of the Priory was pulled down and the tenements then erected were designed to give "great rents".

The north and south sides of Cloth Fair, Kinghorn Street and the north side of Middle Street had leases dated from 1598 while on the south side of Middle Street and on both sides of Newbury Street and from Sun Court to New Court they dated from 1608-1614. It appears clear that the building was virtually finished when Lord Rich settled the properties on his son Henry in 1612 but some building continued until the years after the Great Fire which did not reach the Close at all. Some of these buildings incidentally were not demolished until 1917. (One, no. 41 Cloth Fair, remains to this day).

In the rental of 1616 the inheritance of Lord Rich in the Close in Cloth Fair and Long Lane was stated to be:—

Number of tenants	59
Number of tenements	208
Rents paid	£334.0s.2d.
Yearly value	£2,099.10s.0d.
Clear improvement	£1,765.9s.10d.

The profits of the fairs tolls etc., coming to the Lord of the Liberty were then said to be £140.

By the end of the Seventeenth Century 280 inhabitants of the Precinct (who included the Bishop of London) contributed £241.0.0d. in one quarter to the newly imposed land tax which despite its name was in effect a poll tax.

Cloth Fair was described by Strype in the year 1720 as “a place generally inhabited by Drapers and Mercers and is of some note. The houses are pretty good for timber buildings and very well inhabited by shopkeepers who deal in apparel linen and upholsterers goods both old and new”.

Cloth Fair has been wound round the new north transept of the Church and slightly widened and Cloth Street at the east end has been substantially widened, but Middle Street and Newbury Street and Kinghorn Street are virtually the same today.

Although the redevelopment of the fairground was the most dramatic part of the inheritance, nevertheless much of interest occurs in Bartholomew Close where the buildings were retained and occupied mainly as residences. The Close was numbered from 1-95 and in 1666 there were in all 84 houses occupied, although the precise numbering came later. No. 1 was originally the Gatekeeper’s lodge and became one of the Glebe Houses. Albion Buildings was built on the site of Dr. Bartlett’s house and gardens, afterwards owned and occupied by Sir Walter Mildmay and the Earl of Westmoreland. No. 29 was the old Parish Watch House projecting beyond the fronts of the other houses. At the eastern side was Queen Square with a curious picture of Queen Anne “in full proportion” according to Strype. Gregory’s Court to the north of Queen Square was inhabited “by a questionable class” and adjacent to it was a walled enclosure called “Paradise”. North of that the area was called “Pety Wales” because it was occupied by a small colony of Welshmen in the same way that Little Britain gained its name by the mansion belonging to the Dukes of Brittany (Bretagne). There were of course many public houses. It is perhaps sufficient only to mention three. The first at the corner of Middle Street and Kinghorn Street, The Hand & Shears, the ultimate location of the Court of Pie Poudre where disputes in the Fair were tried expeditiously while the dust of the street remained on the feet of the contestants. At some time earlier the Court had sat in the Barley Mow public house on Long Lane. The third within the Ancient Cloisters was the Coach & Horses which was pulled down in 1905, giving for the first time the opportunity to restore the Cloister garth, completion of which took place when St. Bartholomew’s Hospital

built the Queen Elizabeth Wing in the 1950's.

Just to the south of the Lady Chapel there is the Courtyard to the Prior's house built in 1517 and occupied after the suppression by Lord Rich and later by 1630 by Lionel Cranfield by then Earl of Middlesex. This building was destroyed by fire in 1830 and a variety of small buildings were erected between the Church and Middlesex Passage which were all pulled down in 1912 for the construction of warehouses now offices for British Telecom, numbered 43 and 44 Bartholomew Close. The most interesting buildings however, in this area, were those numbered 40, 41 and 42 because these were the residences built over the Lady Chapel. The Chapel itself was used as a printing works where Benjamin Franklin was once employed. The restoration of the secular buildings grafted on to the Parish Church through the inspiration of Sir Aston Webb require treatment in a different paper from this. To the east of the Lady Chapel there is a small passage sometimes known as Red Lion Passage and sometimes as Bartholomew Passage but which in Ogilby's Map was not shown as a thoroughfare. It is by the construction of new buildings under this passage and on the adjacent site in Kinghorn Street that the Founders Company have now their new Hall.

In the main square the only other site to be mentioned is the site numbered 87, 88 and 89 Bartholomew Close and 42, 43 and 44 Little Britain. After the suppression, it appears likely that the site of 87 and 88 was open ground and 89 part of the property granted by Rich to one Ap Harry who had worked at the Church and assisted in the collecting of the rents of the Parish. Ap Harry himself disposed of his interest at an early stage and a great dwellinghouse was built in the Close, later converted into three houses. The property was held for two generations in marriage settlements established by the Toke family. In March 1823 the property was disposed of by the trustees for the princely sum of £2,180. These were the buildings which were acquired by nominees of the Butchers Company in 1872/3 when the Butchers Hall in Eastcheap was compulsorily purchased for the building of the Monument Underground Railway Station. The three stables which Ap Harry kept on the land in Little Britain were turned into houses destroyed by bombing and the new building is occupied by the Hospital.

All buildings within the Close have of course been demolished and rebuilt on more than one occasion over the centuries. Those erected in the Fair Ground at the beginning of the 17th Century were in all probability replaced in the years leading up to 1797 in the graceful style still represented by the facade of 4 and 5 Middle Street. Much of the area was converted to a more practical and business use during the 19th Century, initially for the cloth trade but subsequently as extensions to the meat trade, and the resulting appearance of the facades deteriorated rapidly, typified by the buildings on the north side of Middle Street. A particularly appalling building at the east end of the Street,

after months of struggle with the authorities, has now been demolished and replaced by the Farmers and Fletchers Hall.

The years following the end of the Napoleonic War did not bring instant prosperity to the country and for whatever reason Lord Kensington had run up considerable liabilities. Lord Kensington, while the War was still being fought, but before he embarked upon his series of mortgages, put No. 7 Middle Street and other properties up for auction at Garraway's Coffee House in Change Alley, Cornhill on the 9th of March 1810 but here because there was no problem of title the transaction was completed on three membranes of indenture. The property in the occupation of Mrs. Anne Weston a milk seller was bought by William Taylor as nominee for Bernard Boyle who was described as an Army Clothier.

He then borrowed £15,000 on the security of the Bartholomew Estate in 1812 and in 1818 he borrowed a further £5,000 from the same source and by 1829 a further sum of £3,000 from another source. In addition the Baron had granted an annuity of £300, charged on the property in favour of Mary Haselwood, a widow of Shrewsbury, for the remainder of her life. There were also on the title various marriage settlement obligations on the marriage in 1696 of Edward Rich Earl of Warwick and Holland and his wife Charlotte Middleton which obligations had been discharged but the title had not been cleared up. With all these problems in mind Baron Kensington put the remaining property up for sale at the Auction Mart in the City of London on the 27th of March and the 10th of June 1829 and with many problems of title completion took place on the 16th of December 1829 as recorded on seven membranes of the Deed of Indenture which you can see if you are interested. The property in New Street now Newbury Street purchased by Mr. Thomas Allan was in use as a cold store and warehouse for the meat trade until quite recently and the freehold belongs to the Corporation now.

One of the landlords who acquired premises after the Napoleonic wars was John Cundie a gentleman from Beaconsfield, including the Barley Mow Public House. In a lease of the 26th September 1837 he let the same to John Gardner no doubt a sitting tenant, the lease containing a ground plan which in general outline follows very much the property as it is now. In this connection the property known as 1 New Court and 2 Back Alley between Middle Street and Long Lane had been let to Charles Hayne by the third Baron Rich and the Hayne family maintained an interest in property in Long Lane until the development of the town houses and shops recently erected in Long Lane and Cloth Fair and the street between Long Lane and Charterhouse Square is called Hayne Street to this day.

It would be wrong not to say something about the holding of Bartholomew Fair. Although it is not clear, it is probable that the Fair was initiated at the time of the foundation of the Priory and the Hospital and it took place within

the walls of the Priory and to the north of the Priory buildings. It was one of the two most important Fairs in England in Monastic times and became the great annual market for the woollen and cloth trade of the country, although later on leather and pewter were also sold there and probably rugs also as the south side of Newbury Street was known as Rugmans Row. The holding of the fair periodically gave rise to ill behaviour and the riot in 1374 was sufficient to provoke many of the merchants to say they would not come again but the King told the Mayor to ensure proper protection for the traders, and the probity of stallholders themselves was subject to annual search and measurement by the Drapers and the Merchant Taylors Companies and the Merchant Taylors still possess the silver yard for the measurement of cloth at the Fair.

By the middle of the 15th century the Fair had spilled out of the Priory precinct and into West Smithfield extending down Duke or Duck Lane, now Little Britain, to the Great South Gate of the Priory and in the north to the bars at St. John Street and from thence to the steps of St. Sepulchre's Church in the South and along Long Lane to the junction with Aldersgate Street. The profits of the Fair outside the precinct were taken by the Corporation. The Court of Pie-Powder was responsible for dealing with all kinds of disputes both within and without the boundary. After the suppression Lord Rich was entitled to retain the profits of the Fair within the walls and indeed did not surrender them during the reign of Queen Mary, but the Fair was settled with other property in Bartholomew Close upon Henry, Earl of Holland in 1624 and since by then the third Lord Rich had almost completed his development programme much of the conduct of the Fair was carried out from the ground floor shops of the buildings in Cloth Fair itself. William Fitzstephen writing about 1173 said "To this Fair the City Merchants bring their wares from every nation under heaven". Ben Jonson wrote of Bartholomew Fair "this is the very womb and bed of enormity". The Fair was closed during the Commonwealth but re-opened with even greater licence at the Restoration. In 1760 the City Lands Committee considered the possibility of abolishing the Fair but upon hearing from the then owner William Edwardes that if the Fair was suppressed his estate would be greatly reduced in value and that he would require compensation the matter was allowed to drift. From time to time complaints were made and in 1816 the matter was once again referred to the City Lands Committee and in 1830 the interest of the Edwardes family was finally acquired and the Corporation therefore owned the rights of the entire Fair but it still continued on as before. In 1839 the Markets Committee referred the problems to the then City Solicitor Mr. Charles Pearson who gave advice which was indeed followed if not very quickly. By 1840 the Lord Mayor no longer opened the Fair in state, certain of the side shows were banned and by 1854 the Fair ceased to be held and the Court of Pie-Poudre was discontinued. Instead the business of the new Central Markets in Smithfield outgrew the market area very quickly and meat businesses flowed out into the small shops and warehouses in the precincts. The tide has now ebbed and the area is full of lawyers, architects, surveyors and a betting shop.

Sic Transit Gloria Mundi.