THE CITY OF LONDON'S HISTORIC STREETS

by M. B. Honeybourne

THE City of London owes its origin to the Romans. Traders followed Julius Caesar's explorations and in A.D. 43 the Emperor Claudius sent Aulus Plautius to begin the conquest of Britain for the protection of these merchants and to secure a regular supply to Rome of corn, hides, tin, hunting dogs and slaves. By this time a very small trading settlement, Londinium, may possibly have existed on the north bank of the Thames near the then tidal limit, which happened also to be the lowest crossing place, for down stream there was no site with hard ground on both banks. On the north bank this crossing place was in the vicinity of Botolph's Wharf or Gate just west of Billingsgate, while on the southern bank it was near the west side of St. Olave's Wharf. It was somewhere here, in the more or less tidal part of the river that, according to Dio Cassius some 150 years later, Aulus Plautius crossed. He may have been helped by a temporary bridge of boats or rafts.

The near hinterland on the north bank has two small gravel hills 40–50 feet high (Cornhill and Ludgate Hill today) and the earliest Roman settlers chose the eastern one. Tragedy overtook this growing settlement in A.D. 61 when Boudicca marched on London and burnt it. Roman London was rebuilt and the general lines of a few of her main streets can be located by the foundations of Roman buildings and finds of road-metalling.[1] The Roman baths and mansions in Upper and Lower Thames Street prove that both parts of this street, earlier called the "street by the strand", perpetuate a Roman road, possibly the earliest highway in London to be made as, on its southern edge, there must have been wharves serving the sea-borne trade with Rome and her dependencies and the river trade of the interior. Road-metalling sometimes 6½ feet thick prove the existence also of a great west-to-east Roman road running from Newgate Street south-eastwards in a direct line to the western sector of Fenchurch Street and on to Mincing Lane. Presumably this road ran thence to Aldgate for Colchester and the cornlands of East Anglia. Outside Newgate this some Roman highway, the Saxon "Haerestraet" (= military road), is marked today by the line of Holborn and Oxford Street and continued westwards over the Roman bridge at Staines to Silchester and the west country. On its way it crossed a straight south-to-north Roman highway, the Edgware Road-Watling Street coming from Westminster, where there was an early ford probably serving as a London by-pass for Romans travelling from Kent towards Staines or Verulam (St. Albans).[2] From the latter city the Watling Street ran north-westwards to fortified Chester and the Roman gold and lead mines of Wales. A secondary east-to-west road in the Roman city of London ran to Ludgate, outside which was a Roman cemetery. The metalling for this road has been found along Cannon Street, Watling Street and Budge Row.

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[1] All these finds are plotted on the large-scale map of the city within the walls in R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London* (1965).

Other Roman road surfaces have been excavated on the east and west sides of the Roman Forum. This Forum and its Basilica to the north lay athwart the north end of modern Gracechurch Street (the northern continuation of Fish Street Hill) just south of its junction with Cornhill and Leadenhall Street. There had been a great replanning[3] of this trading and government centre in the late first or early second century when the Basilica was extended so far westwards that it became the largest building of its kind outside Rome. It may have been at this date that the original eastern apse was truncated so that a metalled road could be made immediately to the east, to head north through the later Bishopsgate and thence along the Ermine Street to York and the Roman Wall. Only one piece of metalling for this important road has been found in the city but it must have existed, running northwards from Lower Thames Street, probably up Botolph Lane and its northern continuation, Philpot Lane.

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[2] For suggested routes south of the Thames to this ford, see R. Merrifield, *Roman London* (1969), pp. 63-67.

[3] R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London*, pp. 45, 118; and R.C.H.M., *Roman London* (1928), p. 40 and plate 5.

Either before or in the second century, but probably the earlier date, it seems more than likely that London Bridge was built to replace perhaps a temporary pontoon bridge of rafts. As the Roman military headquarters were at Richborough in Kent a permanent bridge across the Thames would have been a necessity. This bridge has always been assumed to have been entirely of wood but Trajan's bridge[4] of the first century at latitude 44·35 N and longitude 22·42 E over the wider and faster flowing Danube had, as Trajan's Column in Rome shows, stone piers and a wooden superstructure only. So had another Roman bridge, the "Pons Mosae" at Trier[5] over the Moselle, one of the tributaries of the Rhine. This Trier bridge, at the junction of many Roman roads, took the place of an earlier bridge constructed before A.D. 70. The earlier bridge had thick oak beams grouped to form seven large piles, 33½ × 64 feet in diameter, rammed into the river bed, and each beam for this purpose had its lower end sheathed with iron plating. On this foundation were limestone masonry piers about 26½ feet high supporting a wooden superstructure. The later bridge, built at some time between the first and fourth centuries, had wholly masonry piers standing on the rock bottom of the river bed and these same stone piers carry the present bridge. May one not conclude that London Bridge was similarly constructed with stone piers and a wooden superstructure, and therefore easily survived until 1209? The site of this pre-1209 bridge[6] has been located from the extant deeds and archaeological evidence as having stood immediately east of the church of St. Magnus the Martyr and therefore at the foot of Pudding Lane, In 1842 under the middle of this lane (as it runs today) and into Lower Thames Street of the above date was recorded a Roman wall 2 feet 8 inches thick, with the remains of a hypercaust about a foot to its east.[7] Consequently a Roman road northwards from the bridge would have had its eastern side one foot 4 inches farther west than the present centre of the lane, to allow for this heated building to the east. Now both Pudding Lane and Lower Thames Street were widened after 1666, the former probably like St. Dunstan's Hill to 24 feet and the latter definitely to 30 feet. The width of no Roman road in London is known but 10 feet 8 inches of the width of a Roman Pudding Lane could have overlapped the present lane. So, as very few Roman roads in London exactly coincide with later ones, the above wall does not preclude a Roman road more rather than less on the site of the present one.

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[4] *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXIII (1753), p. 405, with plate.

[5] H. Cüppers, "Die Trieren Römerbrücke" (*Trieren Grelunger und Forschungen*, V (1969)).

[6] The evidence for the site of the Roman/Saxon bridge is in "The Pre-Norman Bridge of London" (*Studies in London History*, ed. by A. C. J. Hollaender and W. Kellaway, 1969). pp. 17-39.

[7] R. Merrifield, *Roman London*, p. 286; R.C.H.M., *Roman London*, p. 136 and plate 44; and *Archaeologia*, XXIX, p. 154.

St. Botolph's Wharf or Gate, mentioned above, seems the most likely site to have been, as in early mediaeval times, the main Roman landing place for merchandise brought in ships coming up on the tide. It may also have been the northern end of a ford and/or ferry from Southwark, for even in early Norman days the river here was fordable east of the bridge because the water in the Pool of London was 12-14 feet lower than now. The siting of the Roman ford, ferry and bridge was determined, like the site of London itself, by the existence on both sides of the river of firm land, a fairly long stretch on the northern side (bisected by the Walbrook) but considerably shorter on the southern bank, where it only extended from near St. Olave's Wharf to the west side of Southwark Cathedral, just beyond St. Saviour's Dock, possibly made by the Romans for the landing of corn and hay from up the river. The discovery in 1969 of a Roman metalled road in this direction, and the name Stoney Street nearby, point to this conclusion.

In the north-west corner of the city the Romans in the early second century built the great fort uncovered by Professor Grimes. Its interior bounds were more or less marked until the 1939-45 war by London Wall, Hart Street, Monkwell Street, Noble Street, Oat Lane, Love Lane and the northern part of Aldermanbury, while across the centre of the fort from east to west ran Addle Street-Silver Street. The entrance to the fort was on the south and through this gate from Cheapside ran Wood Street, which continued northwards across the fort to Cripplegate. All these streets remained intact until the blitz: few can now be accurately traced on the ground owing to the vast new trunk road cutting north-eastwards through the fort and misleadingly called "London Wall" along its entire length.

It was not until at earliest the last years of the second century that the Romans fortified London on the land side by a city wall. Access to the inner surface of this wall was by the roads from east to west now known as Jewry Street, Bevis Marks, Camomile Street, Wormwood Street, London Wall, Noble Street and, much farther south, Pilgrim Street. We have Roman names for neither gates nor roads but there can be little doubt that at least near the gates the main Roman roads are still our chief thoroughfares, now raised 13-20 feet on the accumulated waste of nearly twenty centuries. These gates were later named Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, Aldersgate, Newgate and Ludgate. Cripplegate and Aldersgate were special cases. The former was the north gate of the fort and seems only to have led to the open land later known as Moorfields, crossed by several streams which after the silting up of the Roman culverts through the wall made a damp waste or moor. The Romans built Aldersgate later than the wall, probably to give access from Newgate Street and Cheapside *via* St. Martin-le-Grand and Aldersgate Street to Old Street, certainly a Roman highway—and by-pass—and possibly a British trackway older than London.

Owing to the widthdrawal of the Roman army in the early fifth century and the increasing number of Saxon raids, the trade of London must have declined very seriously and the Romano-British who stayed in the city probably had to grow their own food in the fields outside their protecting wall. Very many houses must have stood empty and uncared for, and would finally have collapsed over the roadways.

The Saxons seem to have been chary of coming to live in the city. They were more interested in the flat gravel patches which they found, for example, at Croydon, Hanwell and Mitcham. The Saxons probably also feared the more sophisticated Londoners, who would certainly have done all they could to keep them out. When the Saxons did eventually settle in the city and began to engage in trade and industry, they chose the western hill. They would have begun to rebuild along the old Roman street lines, but not in most cases on the same frontages owing to the extensive rubble from the broken-down Roman buildings. Hence the divergent lines of most of the Saxon and later streets. The names[8] of none of these are Roman in origin, which may perhaps indicate what little intercourse there was for a long period between the Romano-British and the newcomers. Of the city gates, only Aldersgate, Aldgate ('Aestgate') and Cripplegate are definitely mentioned in Saxon times, but the names of the other gates, all giving their names to streets, were probably in use before the Norman Conquest. An example is Bishopsgate, the general upkeep of which was the responsibility of the Bishop of London, who received for the purpose two faggots of wood from every wood cart entering the city—surely a Saxon arrangement. Also in the Saxon deeds are the names of the two artificial tidal docks, one east and the other west of the bridge and known respectively as Billingsgate and 'Aetheredes hyd' (later Queenhithe[9]). Dowgate, the main outlet into the Thames of the Walbrook, where wine was landed, is also named in Saxon documents. The existence of these three landing places corroborates Bede's ninth-century statement that London had again become an international port, "the mart of many nations". Markets must have been set up again and these have Saxon names though not mentioned in Saxon deeds. One market was in East Cheap ("ceap" = market) on the eastern hill and another was in West Cheap (now Cheapside) on the western hill, the main reason for the two probably being that the Londoners found the Walbrook running through the centre of the city difficult to cross. The stalls for the various commodities were set out north and south of the wide main market street and gave rise to the place-names Wood Street, Milk Street, Honey Lane, Ironmonger Lane, Bread Street, Distaff Lane, Fish Street Hill, Cornhill, Candlewick Street (now Cannon Street), Grasschurch Street (modern Gracechurch Street), Fenchurch Street ("fenum" = hay) and Lime Street. Some of the riverside wharves and narrow lanes leading thence to the markets were also given the names of commodities as, for example, the Wool Quay, Fresh (fish) Wharf, Oyster Gate, Fish Wharf (two of these), Haywharf, Wine Wharf, Garlickhythe, Timberhithe and Wood Wharf; and Timberhithe Street (now High Timber Street—for the long straight ships' masts), Vintries Lane, Hoggen Lane (Huggen Lane) and Haywharf Lane. Broken Wharf, west of Queenhithe, has another origin: an Inquisition of 1250 reveals that forty years earlier the Abbots of Chertsey and Hamme had quarrelled over the repair of the wharf and that since then neither had done anything about it.

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[8] The best book on the City's place-names is still H. A. Harben, *A Dictionary of London* (1918).

[9] See p. 91.

The names of two of the above-mentioned streets, namely Gracechurch Street and Fenchurch Street, introduce an important element in many London street names. This element was due to the revival of Christianity in the city under the Saxons. St. Gregory sent St. Augustine from Rome to London to refound a bishopric there. He was diverted to Canterbury but sent St. Mellitus to London in or before A.D. 604. St. Paul's Cathedral for secular canons was soon founded, and before the Norman Conquest the College of St. Martin-le-Grand, also for secular canons, was in existence. St. Paul's had a combined bakehouse and brewhouse outside the cathedral precinct (hence Bakehouse Court, now swept away), and the wharf for landing the corn for the bread and ale was known as Paul's Wharf, also gone. The parish churches named before 1066 are All Hallows Lombard Street, St. Andrew Holborn, St. Benet Gracechurch, St. Gregory, St. Michael Cornhill and St. Peter Cornhill, the last just west of the Roman Basilica and successfully claiming in the fifteenth century to be an older foundation than St. Paul's itself. Unnamed, but having Saxon features, are All Hallows Barking and St. Bride's. Other churches must also date back to Saxon times, including those dedicated to Roman, Saxon and Danish saints such as St. Alban, St. Alphage, St. Augustine, St. Botolph, St. Gregory, St. Olaf and St. Pancras. Many lanes and alleys took their names from the above churches. By the reverse process the names of streets were often added to the dedications to distinguish one church from another, e.g. St. Botolph Aldgate, St. Botolph Aldersgate, St. Botolph Billingsgate and St. Botolph Bishopsgate, each one by a city gate.

For Norman times there are very many more extant deeds and consequently many more recorded place-names. One new church of this date was that of St. Mary-le-Bow on the south side of Cheapside, where there is a steep downward gradient. This was got over by building part of the church on round Norman arches (i.e. bow-shaped): hence the full name of the church and of Bow Lane. It was the erection of this church that led another St. Mary's church at the southern end of Bow Lane to become St. Mary Aldermary. There were altogether seven churches dedicated to the Virgin and therefore requiring distinguishing cognomens.

The Norman Conquest resulted in the building of the Tower of London, and also of Baynard's Castle to the south-west of St. Paul's close to the city wall and the River Fleet ("fleot"=estuary). Baynard's Castle gave its name to the ward. The site was given by Edward I to the Black Friars, who have left their name also on the district, in which is Church Entry, originally the walkway between the nave and choir of the monastic church. The Grey Friars' monastery north of Newgate Street gave us Greyfriars Passage between their nave and choir; and the Austin Friars are remembered by the lane leading to the site of their cloister. The White Friars off Fleet Street lived west of the street named after them and its later continuation Carmelite Street to the river. The Minoresses or the Little Sisters of St. Clare had their convent to the east of the street called after them the Minories. St. Helen's, an earlier nunnery, has left its name on St. Helen's Place and Great St. Helen's off Bishopsgate. Some religious foundations have left no place-names but the lines of some of the city lanes still mark the boundaries of their precincts and the town houses or "inns" of the bishops, abbots and priors of religious houses outside London, the most well-known being perhaps the Bishop of Salisbury's house off Fleet Street (Salisbury Square), and Ely Place, still a precinct and where still stands the Bishop of Ely's mediaeval private chapel. Bevis Marks is one of the boundaries of the London Inn of the Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds. The large precinct of St. Paul's Cathedral was bounded by Paternoster Row, Amen Corner, Ave Maria Lane and Creed Lane, names suggesting a processional route for the cathedral clergy on special occasions, or places where religious books, etc. were sold. St. Paul's precinct, when walled, seems to have created a traffic block for those going to Newgate and therefore perhaps led to the making of Carter Lane for carts and Knightrider Street for horsemen.

The lane called Old Jewry near Guildhall marks the quarter where the Jews lived under the protection of the City authorities from Norman times until their expulsion by Edward I in 1291; and Jewin Crescent near Cripplegate marked, till the Barbican metamorphosis, the site of the Norman Jews' cemetery, for many years the only one in England. Jewry Street (earlier Jewry Lane) was another place of early Jewish settlement and the one to which the Jews returned in Cromwell's day.

Old Change was the street in which stood the King's Exchange, where in the thirteenth century bullion was received for converting into coins; and the King's Wardrobe off Carter Lane was where from the fourteenth century until the Great Fire of 1666 were stored goods bought in bulk for the royal households. Wardrobe Place and the church of St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe retain the memory. Aldermanbury may also have had a connection with the kings, this time before the citizens secured self-government in 1191. The north-west side of Aldermanbury, where the Roman fort had stood, is the traditional site, noted in a sixteenth-century St. Paul's deed, of King Ethelbert's Palace, and when the Saxon kings moved to the future site of the College of St. Martin-le-Grand the old palace may have become the headquarters of the royal official, an "ealdorman",[10] in charge of the city. On the south-east side of Aldermanbury has stood probably from Saxon times the Guildhall, where the citizens themselves dealt with legal cases relating to trade and had their own recognised standard of assay. How early the chief citizens took the title of Aldermen of the wards (our first list is dated *c.* 1130) we do not know nor whether the street named Aldermanbury is derived from the singular or the plural of "alderman".

Only a few place names in the city come from mediaeval personal names. One such is probably Lothbury from Loteringus, a landholder there in *c.* 1130. Another is Basinghall Street, earlier

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[10] These "ealdormen" were created and named by the eighth- and ninth-century Mercian kings. They were the predecessors of the reeves, later called sheriffs and portreeves, i.e. shire and town reeves (F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (2nd edition, 1947), pp. 301-302).

Bassishaw, from the thirteenth-century Basing family; and a third is Bucklersbury, from the Bokerel or Buckerel family of the same century. Lawrence Pountney Hill and Lane are named after John de Poulteney, mayor in 1334, who founded a college for a master and seven chaplains next to and attached to the church of St. Lawrence in Candlewick Ward; and Philpot Lane comes from Sir John Philpot, mayor in 1378. Leadenhall describes the roof of the great house on the south side of the street of that name owned by the Nevill family from the late thirteenth to the late fourteenth century. The Mayor and Commonalty secured the freehold in 1411 but seem before that date to have been using a part of the building for a covered-in market and for other purposes. Leadenhall Market, last rebuilt in 1881, is now an outstanding example of late Victorian ironwork construction and is arranged in streets all under one roof, as in the middle ages.

By the end of the mediaeval period the lay-out of the city into streets and lanes was practically complete and this pattern has survived until our own day with very few changes. These we will now consider.

It might be thought that the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century would alter the street lines but this was not so because these lines were already well established before the monasteries were founded. In some cases, such as Whitefriars, the precincts were broken up into many separate properties and therefore small new alleys, often named after the old and new owners, were made but most precincts already had secular buildings around their boundaries and even deeper into them. In other cases the precinct became the home of the new owner, as at Holy Trinity or Christchurch (Creechurch) Priory by Aldgate, which was given to Sir Thomas Audley and passed thence to his son-in-law, the Duke of Norfolk: hence Duke's Place and Duke Street. The domestic part of the Priory of St. Helen was bought by the Leathersellers' Company and is still their headquarters (rebuilt), while the domestic buildings of the Grey Friars were converted into Christ's Hospital. The choir became the parochial church of the new parish of Christchurch, Newgate.

The greatest change in Elizabeth's reign was the clearing away of several little lanes and some eighty houses between the western ends of Cornhill and Threadneedle Street for Sir Thomas Gresham to build the Royal Exchange between 1566 and 1570. This was enlarged after the Great Fire of 1666 and again after another fire in 1838. To improve the approaches after this last fire Threadneedle Street was widened by the demolition of the Church of St. Bartholomew the Less at the south-east end of Bartholomew Lane and by the loss of the French Protestant Church on the site of St. Anthony's Hospital church on the north side of Threadneedle Street. The only other change of note was the renaming of the western arm of Broad Street. This became Throgmorton Street after the Queen's foreign envoy, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, buried in the church of St. Katherine Cree, built in mediæval times for the lay residents of the above-named Priory of Christchurch, Aldgate.

The Great Fire of 1666 burnt two-thirds of the city but again, apart from a few street widenings, there were not many changes. One was the cutting of King Street and Queen Street, named in honour of Charles II and his queen, to improve the route to Guildhall; and Prince's Street, after Charles II's brother and heir, Prince James, Duke of York, later James II. This last street led to Moorgate, the comparatively new city gate, built in 1415, which was leading to some development outside the city wall. Another change was the erection, on the site of the burnt church of St. Margaret, Fish Street Hill, of the Monument to commemorate the Great Fire. The square around the column was called Monument Yard, absorbed in 1883 and 1892 into Monument Street, made to connect Fish Street Hill with Lower Thames Street.

In the eighteenth century the Bank of England's new building on part of its present site was ready for occupation in 1734. Several alleys had been swept away for this; and more still, together with the church of St. Christopher le Stocks to the west, disappeared in 1871 for the Bank to be extended to the east and west. The churchyard site was carefully marked by Garden Court within the Bank precinct. In 1737 came the covering-in of the noisome Fleet River above Fleet Bridge to accommodate the new Fleet Market, the successor of the Newgate Street one. Fleet Market was removed in *c.* 1830 and the wide open space became Farringdon Street. Meantime the Mansion House had been built between 1737 and 1752 on the site of the old Stocks Market[11] (1282 onwards) and the church of St. Mary Woolchurch, but only minor street changes were made. The erection of Blackfriars Bridge, 1760-70, also led to few alterations as Farringdon Street was already there. Only a connecting road, New Bridge Street, needed making, and this was effected by covering the unwholesome Fleet estuary south of Fleet Bridge.

In the early nineteenth century came Southwark Bridge, 1815-19, which was able to use Queen Street for its northern approach. This century, however, saw also the rebuilding of London Bridge on a new site a little farther up stream. The change of site for the new bridge, opened by William IV in the presence of Queen Adelaide in 1831, caused considerable local changes: Adelaide Place and King William Street were cut through the old lanes; and houses, shops and the church of St. Michael Crooked Lane were pulled down to link the new bridge with the Bank intersection. There were other changes too, such as the making of Arthur Street, a curving hill connecting the new bridge with Lower Thames Street; and a new junction with Gracechurch Street, which was in line with the old bridge. Some years later, 1853-54, it was decided to widen Cannon Street and extend it westwards from Walbrook as a direct thoroughfare to St. Paul's Cathedral. Then in 1861-71 Queen Victoria Street, a wide new street from Blackfriars Bridge to the Bank, was cut at a difficult gradient through the steep lanes running up from the river to Cheapside; and Holborn Viaduct was constructed at the same time, 1864-69, across the valley of the Holborn or Fleet to by-pass the steep slope of Snow Hill. Some time earlier Liverpool Street, named after Lord Liverpool, Prime Minister from 1812-23, replaced the old irregular way called "Bethlehem" which had centuries before been the entrance to the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, founded to the east of this way in 1247. The coming of the terminus of the Great Eastern Railway to Liverpool Street further changed this area, as did similarly the building of Fenchurch Street Station in 1882. The erection of Tower Bridge,

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[11] "Le Stokkes" Market was for the sale of meat and fish, and was named after the wooden blocks or tables ("Stokkes") on which the butchers and fishmongers did their cutting.

1885-94, also led to road changes, but in a less historic district apart from the Royal Mint, erected on the site of the Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary Graces founded in 1349, the year of the Black Death.

Until the Second World War it will be realized that the City of London's mediaeval street plan had only been eroded in a comparatively few places. This survival was because despite rebuilding nearly everywhere in Queen Victoria's reign the new buildings, though taller and larger, were always so designed as to respect the building frontages along the old streets, lanes, alleys and courts, even when some of these were widened after 1666. The 1939-45 war brought about the flattening of the area between St. Paul's and Newgate Street, and also of much land north of Cheapside and Guildhall and around the streets called London Wall and Barbican near the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate. The south-west end of Upper Thames Street also suffered. More isolated damage occurred elsewhere and many gave thanks that Hitler's bombs had missed so much of the historic city. Then the Planners moved in and did not even leave the line of Paternoster Row when they designed their new out-of-keeping piazza, Paternoster Square, and raised it high above the cathedral ground-level for the sake of a car park underneath. At the same time the new and massive Juxon House further obscured the familiar western view of St. Paul's from Ludgate Hill and led to public protest. The Barbican-Golden Lane development, on entirely new and confusing street lines and largely outside the city boundary, is far enough off the heart of the city to be tolerated, and so are the wind-and-rain-swept foot-bridges over the new London Wall street. However, there is now south of the cathedral 'Paul's Vista', a wide and long series of concrete steps and flat meaningless platforms (for car parks under) which completely obscures, unlike the steep hill lanes, the cathedral at ground level except from mid-stream and across the river, and gives a view of the dome itself far less attractive than from the old narrow approaches with their sudden unexpected glimpses of Wren's masterpiece. Another cold piazza is planned at the Mansion House-Royal Exchange intersection and is to have on its western side a tall dark-grey tower block which will blot out the familiar view of St. Paul's from the east, and the breath-taking view of the tower of St. Mary-le-Bow silhouetted against the sky from the St. Paul's end of Cheapside, where already another obtrusive building on a new frontage line obscures the cathedral from yet another angle. We now hear that all over the city there are to be raised pedestrian walkways, 20-40 feet above street level, with innumerable bridges 12-15 feet wide across the highways[12] because the narrow lanes, our natural footpaths, are being swept away by the developers, and because the main streets are to be cleared as far as possible for wheeled traffic; though how anyone imagines that these walkways will contain the 350,000 daily commuters is an unanswered question, as is also their adequate policing. For the motorists, but not in every case for public transport, there are being made six-lane through roads to replace or duplicate the present highways. Thus is through traffic having no business in the city being deliberately encouraged. The results are tragic. The making of the "Southern Route" along the north bank of the river has already, because it is to have attendant feeders, obliterated every lane and alley leading to the river between Blackfriars and Trig Lane, a point not far west of Queenhithe; and similarly there has disappeared every right-of-way to the river (except at present All Hallows Lane) between Cannon Street railway bridge and London Bridge. Most of the remaining lanes on the north side of Upper and Lower Thames Street are also being stopped up or diverted and their gradients altered. West and north of the Tower of London wide featureless new roads make the district almost unrecognisable; and the vast roads round the church of St. Botolph Aldgate and the resultant unending underground pedestrian passages are both a disaster. The "Northern Route" has led to the widening of London Wall (the street) out of all proportion and is to do the same for Wormwood Street, the north end of Bishopsgate Street, Camomile Street and Bevis Marks. It is also obliterating the alleys out of these streets and, worse still, will remove all trace of the site of Bishopsgate itself. Another great west-to-east road was planned to begin at Ludgate Circus and run in a straight line to a much widened and straightened Carter Lane and thence to Cannon Street. This line would have swept away the network of lanes and by-ways south of Ludgate Hill which commmeorate the site of the first Baynard's Castle and the Black Friar's monastery which took its place. This complex of lanes and alleys is one of the very few left in the city, the finest example of which is also threatened. This is the Queenhithe complex consisting of tidal Queenhithe Dock itself—the only known Saxon dock in the world and mentioned by name ("Aetheredes hyd") in King Alfred's reign—which still retains its attendant wharves and river stairs, its market place, the lanes from the river to this market and the uphill lanes from it to the great retail market of Cheapside. This untouched area, the only one by the river now, epitomises the two thousand-year-old dependence of the city on her river. Piecemeal every link with the past of London is being swept away.

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[12] For example, four bridges are planned across Bishopsgate alone, and another four over Old Broad Street.

To return to the proposed new road from Ludgate Circus, this would also have isolated the Deanery, which was designed to have houses on three sides of it. All this change and devastation in this part of the city was to divert traffic from the long-established wide highway of Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's Churchyard, henceforth only to be used for summer coaches and on a few ceremonial occasions. This particular monstrous road proposal is now said to be shelved but even without it much of the valuable land of the city is being swallowed up by through traffic routes, and as a result an entirely new street pattern is emerging in too many parts of the ancient city. No corner of it seems immune. This inordinate priority given continually to the exaggerated needs of possible future wheeled traffic is the prime cause of many of the changes. Two-thirds of the North Bank are to be sterilised as a result, and the "Northern Route" is having the same effect.

Not far behind the Motor God come the Planners and Developers who purchase extensive blocks of property. The many and varied buildings thereon are, whatever their condition or history, razed to the ground, which is then bereft of all landmarks and gradients and, when thus flattened, treated as virgin soil. Ancient rights of way, homes, small convenient round-the-corner shops, listed buildings, street bollards, road sets and boundary marks, small disused graveyards respected since 1666, places with historic and literary associations, and attractive vistas are all one by one being ruthlessly destroyed. In their place are buildings designed on long continuous horizontal lines, set at strange angles to the old street frontages and leaving gaps in them like missing teeth, so that the eye no longer travels swiftly along them to some interesting turn in the road or some attractive building or view. Obtrusive raised walkways with their bridges over street after street will destroy the appearance of each one and will also block one's vision to an intolerable extent. No longer will the church of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, for example, be visible from afar; nor the four towers of St. Benet Paul's Wharf, St. Mary Somerset, St. James Garlickhythe and St. Michael Paternoster Royal be seen one after the other along Upper Thames Street, because this is to run for much of its length in an actual tunnel (far worse even than a bridge) with alien buildings and walkways on top.

The City authorities assure us that though the city is changing fast this change is being "carefully controlled and that the city will never allow itself to lose the charm and dignity of its older buildings and institutions". Yet it seems that St. Paul's and a very few other listed buildings such as the Tower of London, the city churches and the halls of the Livery Companies are almost alone to remain, together with the eight very small conservation areas already constantly threatened. The foregoing are isolated units scattered at random in the city's square mile, some long distances apart and most being divorced from their context and dwarfed by their new surroundings until they look like dolls' houses. They cannot by themselves in any way retain the city's erstwhile character, personality, and historic and literary associations. They need to have as their connecting links the present well-tried layout of streets and lanes for which they were designed and which retain their ancient names and the continuous street frontages common to all ancient cities. It is in the very varied lines of these streets and lanes that the character, charm and dignity of the city lies—the main streets wide and mostly but not wholly straight, the minor ones narrow, steep and curved, sheltered from wind and rain and affording unexpected views of towers, steeples and worthwhile buildings, not to mention the interest of their names, their bollards made from guns, and their ward, parish and owners' marks set sometimes high and sometimes low. Two other of the city's characteristic features consist of the well-designed

Victorian "pepperpots" which adorn so many street corner buildings, and the perpendicular lines of boundaries and windows which lead the eye from the shadowed street scene to the bright open sky and thus give light and shade to the picture.

It is not the present rebuilding of the city that is the disaster. The city has been rebuilt many times since its foundation nearly two thousand years ago. What is essential is that roads shall absorb no more land; that new buildings shall be designed with a more sensitive feeling for the existing ones, more respect for the past enshrined in the city's historic street lines, and a greater emphasis on neighbourliness and appearance so that they really fit into and tone with their environment and meet the challenge of gradients, frontage lines and established rights-of-way; and that all development shows more consideration for the hundreds of thousands of pedestrians needing not walkways and subways with innumerable stairs but quick, easy, interesting ground-level routes, such as the present historic lanes provide, to their trains and omnibuses. London's very roots are at stake and the City Fathers, their trustees, can alone ensure that what is left of this priceless heritage is handed on to posterity. Otherwise the whole city will become unrecognisable and characterless, just another faceless, unattractive traffic-dominated nonentity, a place for moneyed interests only, with the Cockneys pushed out, with the commuters frustrated by railings and stairways and too-wide roads from reaching their destination and put off by the lack of cheap amenities in man-sized ground-level surroundings, and with both commuters and tourists finding no intriguing nooks and corners and by-ways surviving from London's famous past. As for Geoffrey Chaucer, John Stow and Dr. Johnson, their ghosts will soon now lose their way and come no more; and all lovers of London will be much the poorer.