

# LONDON'S HISTORY THROUGH LITERATURE

Week 2. Restoration London





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dU44TDkbOw>

# Restoration London: Key questions

1. What can we learn about social life in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century London from Pepys' *Diary*?
2. What characterises Pepys as a historical source?
3. How did Londoners react to the tumultuous 1660s, in which the monarchy was restored, the city was decimated by plague, and the old City largely burnt to the ground?

# Restoration London: Key events

- 1642: Outbreak of the English Civil War  
(Charles I raises his standard at Nottingham on 22 August 1642)
- 1649: Execution of Charles I (guilty of high treason, 30 January)
- 1660: Pepys' diaries begins (1 January)
- Restoration of Charles II (welcomed into City of London, 29 May)
- 1665-6: Great Plague, kills one sixth of Londoners
- 1666: Great Fire of London (2-5 September)
- 1667: Dutch raid on the Medway during Second Anglo-Dutch War (9-14 June)
- 1669: Pepys' diaries ends (31<sup>st</sup> May, fears about eyesight)
- 1685: Death of Charles II and ascension of James II, deposed in 1688







# Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)

- Born at Salisbury Court, Fleet Street on 23 February 1633
- 'Low' social standing; father was a tailor, mother daughter of a butcher
- Marriage to Elizabeth St Michel (1640-1669). No (known) children
- Lived in three locations in London: Salisbury Court, near Fleet Street; Axe Lane, Westminster; and Seething Lane, near Tower Hill (Navy Office)
- Talented musician and singer
- Bon vivant, who kept a lion in his office, and arrested several times for treason and piracy



# Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)

- Appointed Clerk of the Acts at the Navy Board (July 1660), and later Secretary to the Admiralty Commission in 1673
- Elected Fellow of the Royal Society (Feb 1665), and later its President (1684-6), time of Newton's *Principia Mathematica*
- Member of Parliament for Castle Rising, Norfolk (Nov 1673), and later Harwich (1679-1689)
- Governor of the Royal Mathematical School of Christ's Hospital (1675-99)
- Briefly imprisoned at the Tower after false accusations of espionage and Catholicism related to the Popish Plot (1679), and later Jacobitism in 1689
- Career effectively ends with fall of James II and later rise of William and Mary
- A figure at the heart of a continually shifting social, political landscape



‘The diary is a social ledger, but more than this it is the text in which Pepys creates what he is endeavouring to be, but is unsure whether he will actually become’ - Mark Dawson

‘The whole book, if you will but look at it in that way, is seen to be a work of art to Pepys’ own address. Here, then, we have the key to that remarkable attitude preserved by him throughout his diary, to that unflinching ... sincerity which makes it a miracle among human works... Whether he did ill or well, he was still his own unequalled self; still that entrancing *ego* of whom alone he cared to write.’ – Robert Louis Stevenson



# Diary (1660-69)

- 1 January 1660 to 31 May 1669
- Written using a shorthand system devised by Thomas Shelton in 1642
- Ended after Pepys' concerns about his deteriorating eyesight
- Posthumously, six volumes deposited at Cambridge –shorthand considered impenetrable
- 1818: John Smith, Cambridge undergraduate, sets to deciphering the diary
- 1825: Selection of entries, edited by Lord Braybrooke, published
- 1893-99: Alost complete edition, edited by H.B.Wheatley, published (omitting sexual references)
- 1970-1983: First complete edition, edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews



# Methodology

- Daily notes written-up every few days
- Different opinions as to why Pepys kept his diary: 'a means both of confession of sin and of checking upon his moral balance-sheet' – Lawrence Stone (1977)
- 'an exercise in spiritual book-keeping' – Christopher Hill (1980)
- 'The diary is essentially a narrative of social accounting by a middling man on the make' – Mark Dawson (2000)
- An invaluable source for London life during events like the Plague or Great Fire, as well as social class and class anxieties, entertainment, particularly alehouses and theatre, conspicuous consumption, the divide between public and private life, as well as key sites in London





# English Civil Wars (1642-51)

- Series of conflicts between Parliament and Charles I and his supporters, resulting in the execution of King Charles I and a short-lived Commonwealth of England (1649-53), followed by a Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell
- The war devastated England and resulted in over 200,000 dying, with many of its victorious republican and religious ideals ultimately undermined
- 'I went out to Charing Cross to see Major General Harrison hanged, drawn, and quartered; which was done there, he looking as cheerful as any man could in that condition'  
- Samuel Pepys (1660)

# Breakdown of the Protectorate

‘boys flung stones, tiles, turnips &c... some they disarmed and kicked, others abused the horses with stones and rubbish they flung at them... in some places the apprentices would get a football (it being a hard frost) and drive it among the soldiers on purpose, and they either darst not (or prudently would not) interrupt them; in fine, many soldiers were hurt with stones, and one I see was very near having his brains knocked out with a brickbat flung from the top of an house at him. On the other side, the soldiers proclaimed the proclamation against any subscriptions, which the boys shouted at in contempt, which some could not bear but let fly their muskets and killed in several places (whereof I see one in Cornhill shot through the head) 6 or 7 and several wounded’

- Pepys, reporting to Edward Montagu, 5 December 1659





*William Dobson, Charles II,  
when Prince of Wales, with a  
Page, c. 1642.*

# Breakdown of the Protectorate

- Many city apprentices had produced a petition for the removal of the army from the streets, following the put-down of a royalist rising in Cheshire, and the surrounding of Westminster Hall by republican major-general John Lambert on 13 October which excluded the speaker and most MPs
- The army had made a proclamation prohibiting all future petitions, and the army under Fleetwood and Lambert had
- Pepys later reports the trial at the Old Bailey, wherein the Grand Jury wanted to bring charges against the officers:
- 'The present posture of the City is very dangerous, who I believe will never be quiet till the Soldiers have absolutely quitted the town' ... 'Never was there (my Lord) so universal a fear and despair was now' – 8 December 1659







# The Restoration of Charles II

- After the fall of Richard Cromwell in 1659, there is a power vacuum between the dismissed Rump Parliament, the Army leaders under John Lambert, General Monck in Scotland, Vice-Admiral Lawson, and the London City Council
- The City Council appeals for a 'free and full Parliament'
- For many within the new government, there's a gradual shift in allegiances from republicanism and puritanism, to a wish to restore the parliament and king
- Pepys' two employers, Edward Montagu and George Downing, both make the successful shift from leaders within the Protectorate by offering either military support (Montagu) or useful intelligence for the new King (Downing)



Hieronimus Janssens, Charles II Dancing at a Ball at Court (1660)

# The Return of Charles II

- General Monck eventually marches to London, breaking the deadlock.
- A new parliament meets, and Charles II sends his 'Declaration' of Breda, offering a general pardon to all who asserted their loyalty
- Charles promises liberty of conscience, defers power to parliament, and promises that the troops and navy would be paid
- On receiving the declaration, Parliament grants £50,000 to the exiled king and invites him over
- Shortly after the 1661 Coronation, a new Parliament is elected that is overwhelmingly Royalist and Anglican.
- Soon after, a crackdown begins on Puritanism and religious non-conformity







# London's continued population boom

- 1550-1700 = Huge expansion in population.
- 1550: 75,000 people; 1600: 200,000 people;  
1650: 400,000 people; 1700: 575,000 people
- 1550, London = 2.5% of the population of England. By 1700, London = 11% of the population of England
- During the same period, the population of the rest England barely doubled but in London it increased by more than 7 times
- 1650-1700 = population of the rest of England actually fell; but population of London increased as people moved from the country to the city
- What pressures would this put London and its surrounding areas under?

Population of Early Modern European cities (in thousands)

	1500	1550	1600	1650	1700	1750
London	50	120	200	375	490	675
Constantinople					700	
Paris		250	250	450	530	570
Naples		80	289	265	232	315
Marseilles		30	45	65	75	88
Lisbon		100			188	
Amsterdam					172	
Rome			102	121	142	158
Rouen	40	75	60	82	64	67
Seville			150			
Venice		158	139	120	138	149
Moscow					130	
Bordeaux	20	33	35	40	45	60
Milan			130	109	120	124
Palermo		80	105	100	100	107
Antwerp					66	43

Sources: T. Chandler and G. Fox, *3000 Years of Urban Growth* (New York, 1974), pp. 11-20; P. Benedict, 'French cities from the sixteenth century to the Revolution: An overview', in P. Benedict, ed., *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* (London, 1989), p. 24; R. Finlay and B. Shearer, 'Population growth and suburban expansion', in A. Beier and R. Finlay, eds, *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London, 1986), p. 39; G. Felloni, 'Italy', in C. Wilson and G. Parker, eds, *An Introduction to the Sources of European Economic History* (London, 1977), pp. 5-6.

Number of cities with at least 10,000 inhabitants, by territory

	1500	1550	1600	1650	1700	1750
Scandinavia	1	1	2	2	2	3
England and Wales	5	4	6	8	11	21
Scotland	1	1	1	1	2	5
Ireland	0	0	0	1	3	9
Netherlands	11	12	19	19	20	18
Belgium	12	12	12	14	15	15
Germany	23	27	30	23	30	35
France	32	34	43	44	55	55
Switzerland	1	1	2	2	3	4
Italy	44	46	59	50	51	65
Spain	20	27	37	24	22	24
Portugal	1	4	5	5	5	5
Austria/Bohemia/Moravia	3	3	3	3	4	6
Poland	0	1	1	1	1	2

Source: J. de Vries, *European Urbanization 1500-1800* (London, 1984), p. 29.

Total population of all cities with at least 10,000 inhabitants (in thousands)

	1500	1550	1600	1650	1700	1750
Scandinavia	13	13	26	63	115	167
England and Wales	80	112	255	495	718	1,021
Scotland	13	13	30	35	53	119
Ireland	0	0	0	17	96	161
Netherlands	150	191	364	603	639	580
Belgium	295	375	301	415	486	432
Germany	385	534	662	528	714	956
France	688	814	1,114	1,438	1,747	1,970
Switzerland	10	12	25	22	39	60
Italy	1,302	1,498	1,973	1,577	1,761	2,159
Spain	414	639	923	672	673	767
Portugal	30	138	155	199	230	209
Austria/Bohemia/Moravia	60	67	90	100	180	294
Poland	0	10	15	20	15	36

Source: J. de Vries, *European Urbanization 1500-1800* (London, 1984), p. 30.

Urban population as a percentage of total population

	1500	1550	1600	1650	1700	1750
Scandinavia	0.9	0.8	1.4	2.4	4.0	4.6
England and Wales	3.1	3.5	5.8	8.8	13.3	16.7
Scotland	1.6	1.4	3.0	3.5	5.3	9.2
Ireland	0	0	0	0.9	3.4	5.0
Netherlands	15.8	15.3	24.3	31.7	33.6	30.5
Belgium	21.1	22.7	18.8	20.8	23.9	19.6
Germany	3.2	3.8	4.1	4.4	4.8	5.6
France	4.2	4.3	5.9	7.2	9.2	9.1
Switzerland	1.5	1.5	2.5	2.2	3.3	4.6
Italy	12.4	12.8	14.7	14.0	13.4	14.2
Spain	6.1	8.6	11.4	9.5	9.0	8.6
Portugal	3.0	11.5	14.1	16.6	11.5	9.1
Austria/Bohemia/Moravia	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.4	3.9	5.2
Poland	0	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.5	1.0

Source: J. de Vries, *European Urbanization 1500-1800* (London, 1984), p. 32.



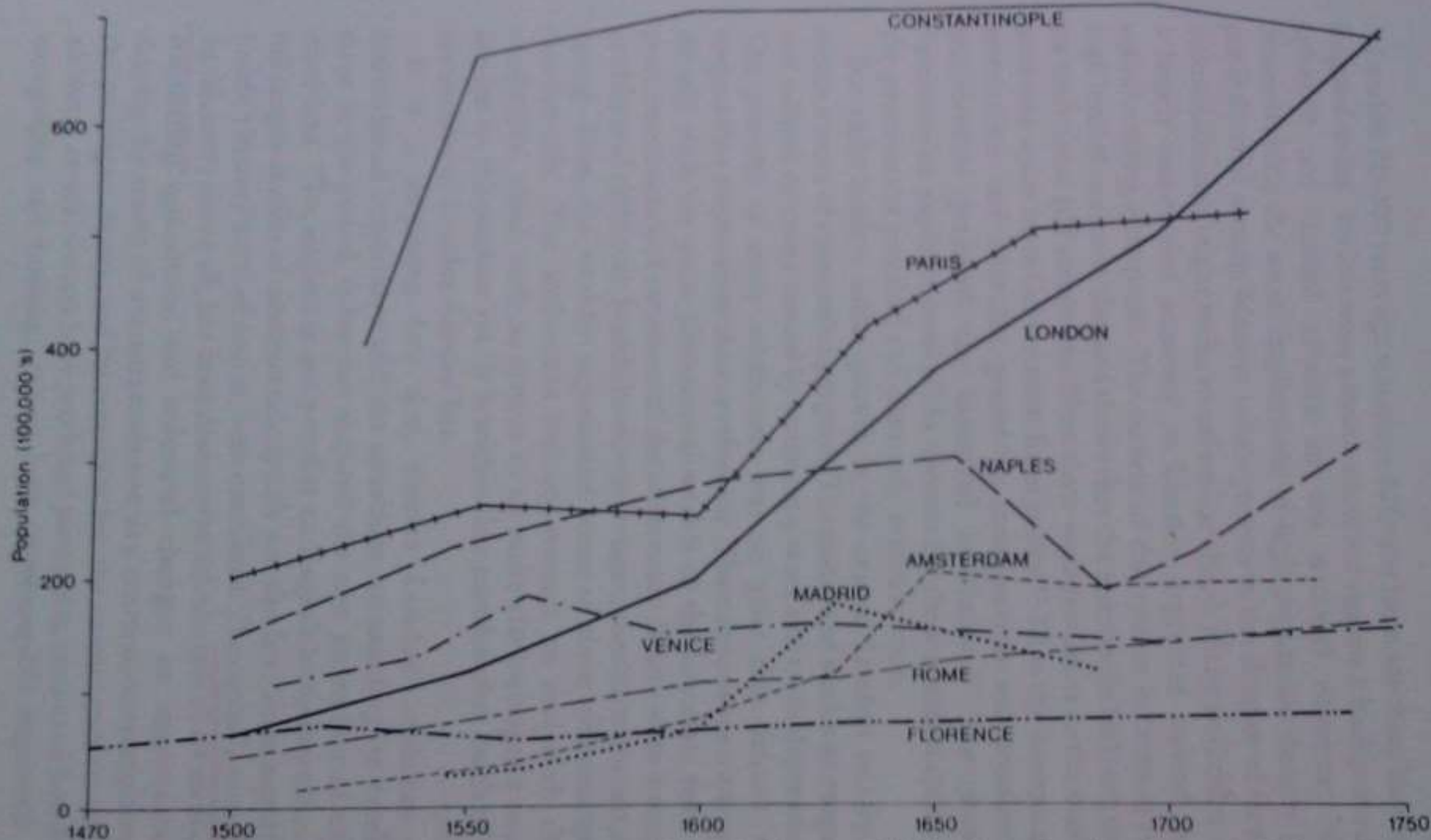


Fig. 1. European metropolitan population movements, 1470-1750. Sources: C. Tilly, Karen Fonde and Ann V. O'Shea, 'Statistics on the urbanization of Europe, 1500-1950' (unpublished typescript, 1972); E. Hélin, *La démographie de Liège aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Brussels 1963); T. Chandler and G. Fox, *3000 Years of Urban Growth* (London 1974). We are most grateful to Professor Tilly for permission to cite his unpublished figures. The London totals, 1550-1700, are from Table 5, p. 49, below.

# The Rise of Samuel Pepys

- Pepys is in charge of the barge and musicians that return Charles
- Montagu (now Lord Sandwich) secures Pepys a good job at the Navy board. Pepys has little knowledge of the Navy...
- Also appointed at the Privy Seal, where petitioners to the crown went to have their documents signed
- With his new income, Pepys moves to Seething Lane and begins spending time and money decorating, altering and improving his home
- 'I pray God keep me from setting my mind too much upon it'



"MRS. PEPPY AND HER FRENCH GOWN CALLED A SAC."—PAINTED BY NOBLE.—EXHIBITION OF THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS.



# Entertainment and pleasure

- The growth of the 'middling sort' fostered the development of services to suit
- The *Diaries* are invaluable in giving detail to aspects of everyday life: the prices of books, theatre seats, clothes, fashions, jewellery, food and drink, furniture, household goods and decoration, musical instruments, and household servants
- But little on street markets, beggars or the lives of the 'lower orders'



Engraved by R. Bowlandson, del. et sculp.

Blount, Aquat.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

London, Feb. 17, 1797. Sold at R. Adairman's Dispensary, at the end of Broad.

# Entertainment and pleasure

- London was already notorious for the number of inns and alehouses:  
1630-1: 26 alehouses in Wapping, 306 in Finsbury, and 551 in Westminster
- 1657: 924 licensed alehouses in London
- Reopening of theatres and brothels
- Pepys - 'Music and women ... I cannot but give way to, whatever my business is'
- At Drury Lane, an 'abundance of evil women stood at the doors, which, God forgive me, did put evil thoughts in me.'



# Entertainment and pleasure

- The *Diaries* proudly recount visiting the theatre in a coach and horses, something Pepys saves up for and purchases in November 1668
- ‘it being mighty pleasant to go alone with my poor wife in a coach of our own to a play; and makes us appear mighty great, I think, in the world’
- 351 visits to the theatre recorded in the diary: nearly 1 in 8 to see Shakespeare

*Othello* = ‘a mean thing’

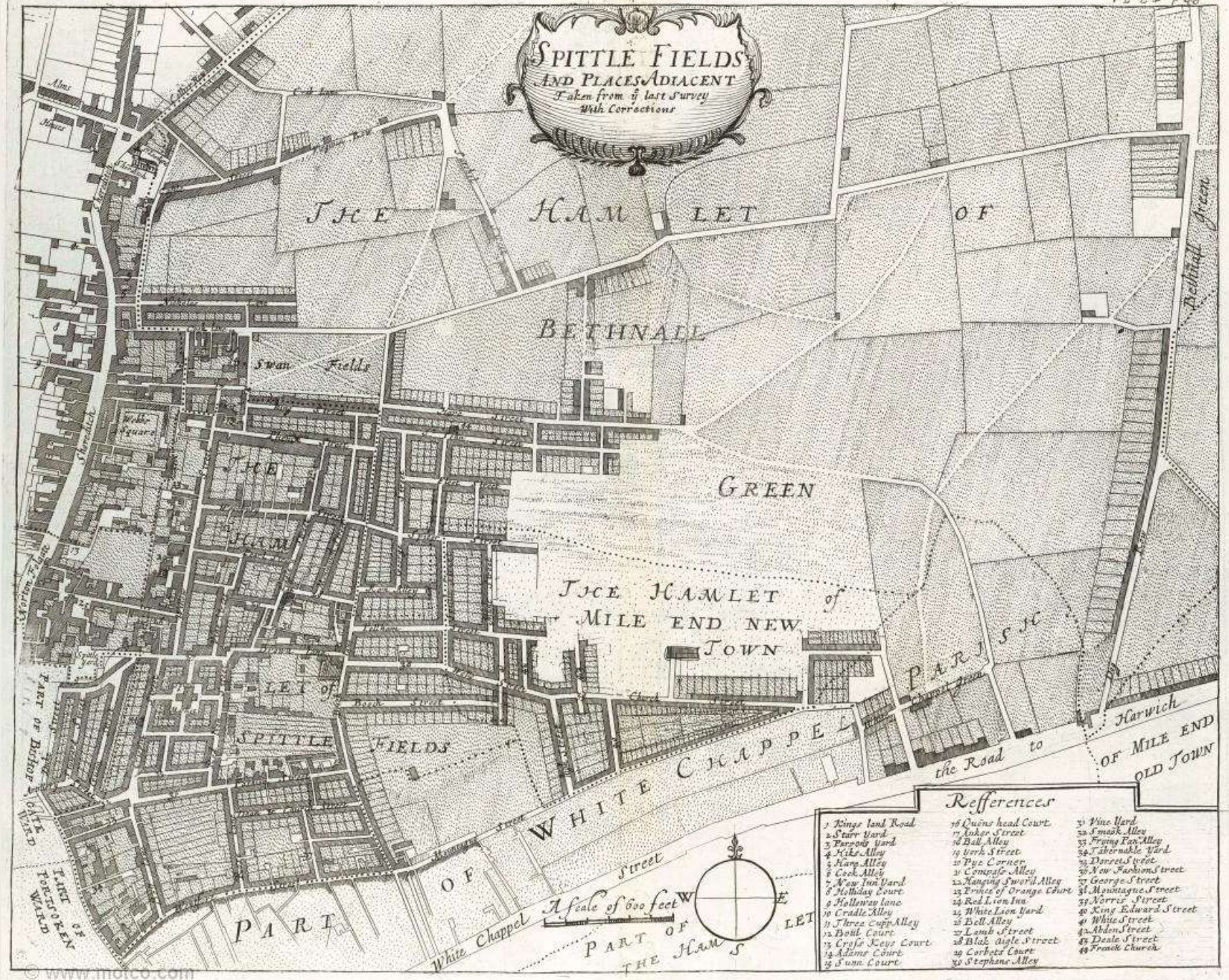
*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* = ‘insipid and ridiculous’

*Hamlet* = saw it five times

Also saw Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* four times, as well as Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker



SPITTLE FIELDS  
AND PLACES ADJACENT  
Taken from a last Survey  
With Corrections



References

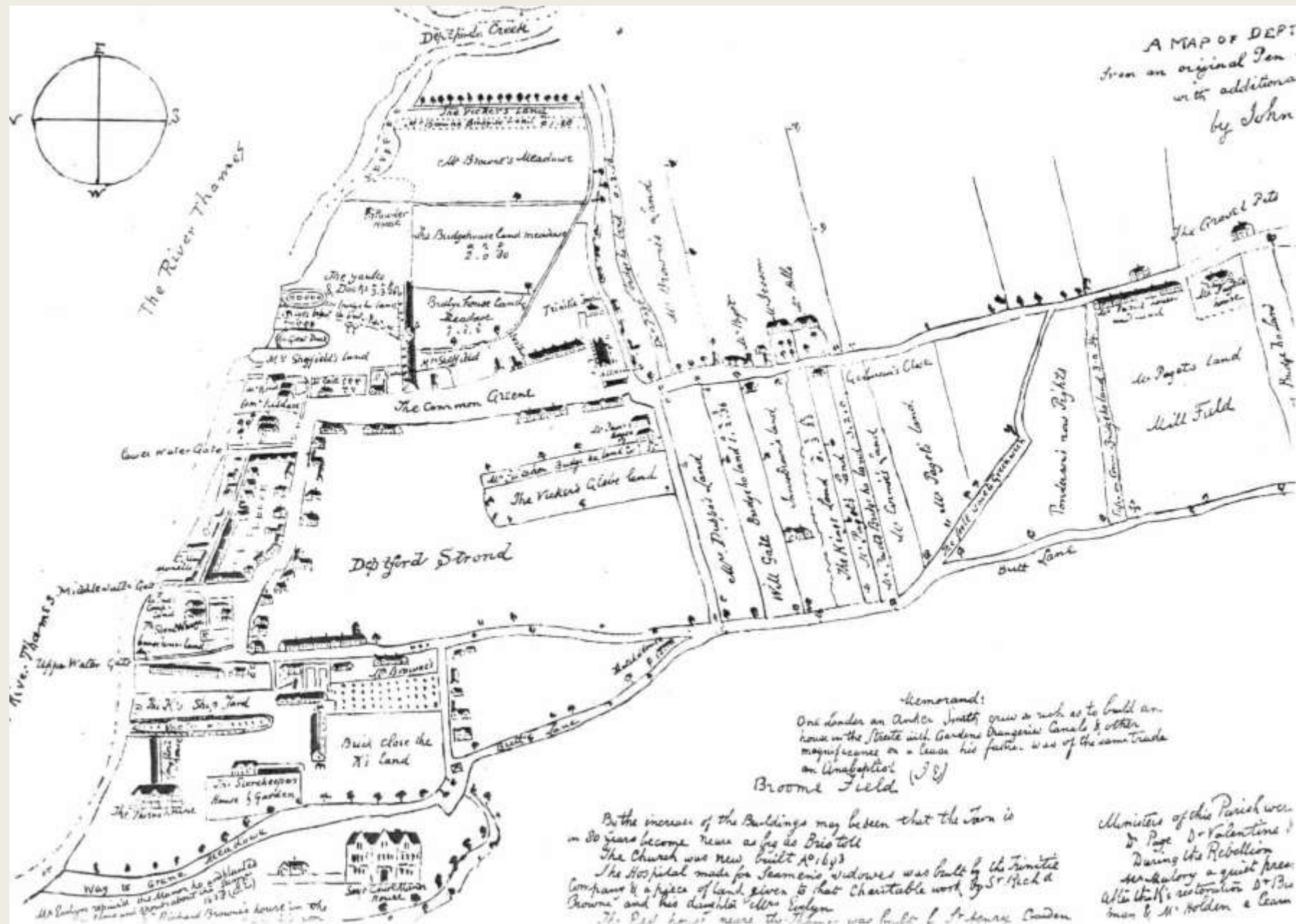
- |                     |                           |                        |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Kings land Road   | 16 Queens head Court      | 31 Pine Yard           |
| 2 Starr Yard        | 17 Ankers Street          | 32 Smeak Alley         |
| 3 Tarring Yard      | 18 Bell Alley             | 33 Frying Pan Alley    |
| 4 Kicks Alley       | 19 York Street            | 34 Tishernable Yard    |
| 5 Kings Alley       | 20 Pye Corner             | 35 Donkeys Court       |
| 6 Cook Alley        | 21 Comings Alley          | 36 New Fashions Street |
| 7 New Inn Yard      | 22 Hanging Sword Alley    | 37 George Street       |
| 8 Holiday Court     | 23 Trilke of Orange Court | 38 Montague Street     |
| 9 Holliday Lane     | 24 Red Lion Inn           | 39 Morris Street       |
| 10 Cradle Alley     | 25 White Lion Yard        | 40 King Edward Street  |
| 11 Three Cups Alley | 26 Bell Alley             | 41 White Street        |
| 12 Bull Court       | 27 Lamb Street            | 42 Abden Street        |
| 13 Croft Keys Court | 28 Black Nigle Street     | 43 Deale Street        |
| 14 Adams Court      | 29 Corbets Court          | 44 French Church       |
| 15 Swan Court       | 30 Stephens Alley         |                        |



# Rural suburbs

- The *Diaries* describe outings in London's still rural outlying villages: Sir William Rider's house at rural Bethnal Green; or 'into the fields to Bow' , in search of air; or to Islington, which he had known as a child with its pastures, dairies, refreshment houses and facilities for duck-shooting on the ponds;
- Or with his wife by coach, on what he called 'our Grand Tour' through villages such as Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, Hackney, Kingsland, Newington Green and Islington, and back home via Bishopsgate;
- Other diversions described by Pepys include a contortionist, animal and bird impressionist, and sometimes brothels, like those also nearby Moorfield, now a public park





The Deptford area on a map owned in 1623 by John Evelyn, a resident of the area. Evelyn's house, Sayes Court, is at the bottom left. Above it is marked "The K's Ship Yard", the location of the expanding Deptford Dockyard.

DIE ACTION VOR CHATTAM.  
VND CHARNESSE,







Above: Joseph Farington, Painting of the Dockyard (1794)

Left, top: Pieter Cornelisz van Soest, Dutch Attack on the Medway (1667)

Left, below: HMS St Albans, being launched onto the Thames at Deptford in 1747



# The Navy

- Pepys was also decisive in organising and modernising the Navy, something which Charles and the Duke of York were keen to build up, though not fund
- Parliament however was reluctant to fund shipbuilding during peacetime, and was regularly in conflict with the King about taxation
- The Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667) changes this, with decisive events like the raid on the Medway, in which most of the English fleet is destroyed
- After a massive invasion in 1672, the Dutch attack the English at the Battle of Solebay in 1672, in which Pepys' patron, Montagu, is killed
- Pepys methodically learns about the Navy, visits the dockyards regularly, and by the end of his career has doubled its battleships to 59
- In Pepys we observe how government officers and businessmen intermingled, through clubs, hospitality, and business/pleasure trips, and gifts and patronage





London, the great plague of 1665



‘My meeting dead corpses of the plague, carried to be buried close to me at noon-day through the City in Fanchurch Street. To see a person sick of the sores, carried close to me by Gracechurch in a hackney-coach. My finding the Angel tavern, at the lower end of Tower-hill, shut up, and more than that, the alehouse at the Tower-stairs; and more than that, that the person was then dying of the plague when I was last there, a little while ago at night... To hear that poor Payne, my water[man], hath buried a child and is dying himself. To hear that a labourer I set but the other day to Dagenhams to know how they did there, is dead of the plague; and that one of my own watermen, that carried me daily, fell sick as soon as he had landed me on Friday morning last... is now dead of the plague... doth put me into great apprehensions of melancholy, and with good reason.’ – 14 September 1665



Year	All burials	Plague burials	Total pop.	Mortality %
1563	20,372	17,404	85,000	24.0
1578	7,830	3,568	101,000	7.8
1593	17,893	10,675	125,000	14.3
1603	31,861	25,045	141,000	22.6
1625	41,312	26,350	206,000	20.1
1636	23,359	10,400	313,000	7.5
1665	80,696	55,797	459,000	17.6

*The Diseases and Casualties this Week.*

<b>A</b> Abortive.....	5	King's evil.....	10
Aged.....	54	Leucy.....	1
Apoplectic.....	1	Murdered at Sepoy.....	1
Bodridden.....	1		
Cancer.....	2	<b>Plague.....</b>	<b>3880</b>
Childbed.....	15	Quins.....	6
Chilblains.....	15	Rickets.....	13
Colick.....	1	Rising of the Lights.....	19
Consumption.....	174	Rupture.....	2
Convulsion.....	88	Sciatica.....	1
Dropsie.....	40	Scouring.....	13
Drowned two, one at St. Nicholas Tower, and one at Lambeth.....	2	Scurvy.....	1
Feaver.....	353	Sore legges.....	1
Fistula.....	1	Spotted Feaver and Purples.....	120
Flux and Small-pox.....	10	Starved at Nuffe.....	1
Frigidnes.....	1	Strangury.....	1
Gangrene.....	1	Suddenly.....	1
Gowd.....	1	Surfeit.....	87
Grief.....	1	Teeth.....	113
Griping in the Guts.....	74	Thrush.....	3
Jaundies.....	3	Tifick.....	6
Imposthume.....	13	Ulcer.....	2
Infants.....	21	Vomiting.....	7
Killed by a fall down stairs at St. Thomas Apostle.....	1	Winde.....	8
		Wormes.....	18

Christened Females..... 215    Buried Females..... 203    Plague—3880  
 In all..... 166    In all..... 539

Increased in the Burials this Week..... 129  
 Parishes clear of the Plague..... 36    Parishes Infected..... 56

*The Asses of Great Britain by Order of the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen*  
 A penny Wheaten Loaf to contain Nine Ounces and a half, and three half-penny White Loaves the like weight.

‘This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and "Lord have mercy upon us" writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw. It put me into an ill conception of myself and my smell, so that I was forced to buy some roll-tobacco to smell to and chew, which took away the apprehension.

- 7 June 1665

L: Pepys, *Diaries*

R: Woodcut from Thomas Dekker, *A Rod for Run-Awayes* (1625)



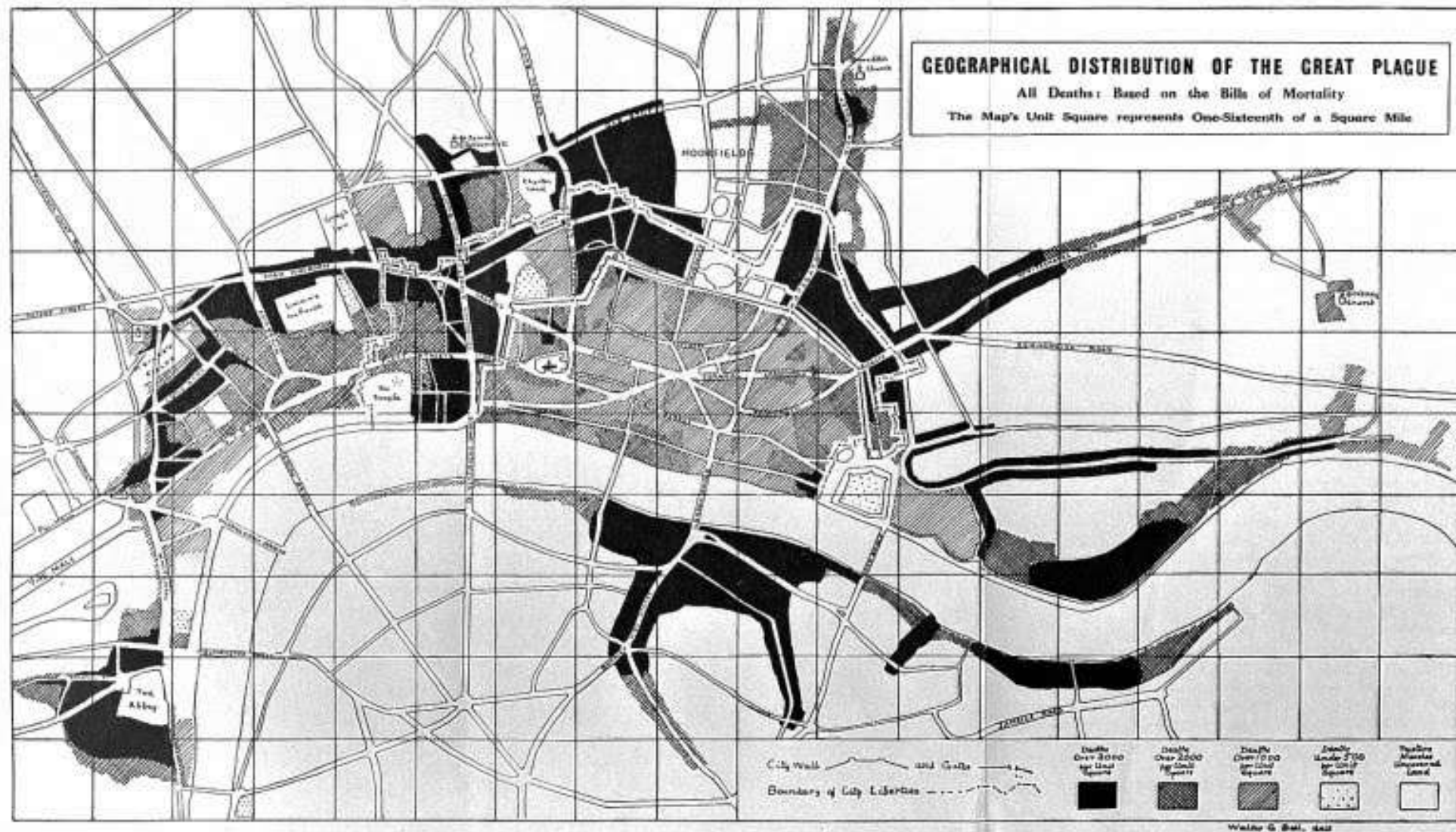
# The Great Plague

- Begins in the poor slum of St Giles, and moves from west to east
- Outbreak initially concealed, with Bills of Mortality concealing causes of death
- By June 1665 it is widespread, and city authorities begin quarantining the sick in houses marked with red crosses, with watchers appointed to ensure none escaped
- A curfew closes pubs, theatres and other public places, and orders the wholesale destruction of all domestic animals (fleas) – Pepys estimated around 40,000 dogs and up to 200,000 cats killed – ideal for rats
- Some of the sick were moved to new ‘pest houses’, where there was better chance of recovery, like those at Old Street, Stepney, Westminster, Marylebone and Soho
- Key sources include Samuel Pepys and Daniel Defoe (drawing on his uncle, Henry Foe’s first-hand experiences)





- 'Alas! Sir', says he, 'almost desolate: all dead or sick. Here are very few families in this part, or in the village' (pointing at Poplar), 'where half of them are not dead already, and the rest sick.' Then he, pointing to one house, 'There they are all dead', said he ... Then he pointed to several other houses. 'There,' says he, 'they are all dead, the man and his wife and five children. There', says he, 'they are shut up; you see a watchman at the door'; and so of other houses.' – Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year*
- 'Lord, how empty the streets are and melancholy, so many poor sick people in the streets, full of sores: and so many sad stories overheard as I walk, everybody talking of this dead, and that man sick, and so many in this place, and so many in that.' – Pepys, October 1665





# Great Plague – effects on London

- Plague ravaged outer London's poorer areas: St Giles, Holborn, Shoreditch, Whitechapel and Southwark
- It spreads rapidly during a heatwave in June 1665, and there is quickly an exodus of wealthy Londoners: 'All the town going out of town, the coaches and waggons being all full of people going into the country'
- London was effectively governed by General Monck, as parliament was closed and the King and Court left London
- Pepys remains in London, sending his wife to Woolwich, putting his affairs in orders, expectant of death, and undertaking a number of affairs
- At its peak in September, 7000 die per week – one sixth eventually die



DRESS WORN AT THE PLAGUE OF NIMEGUEU.

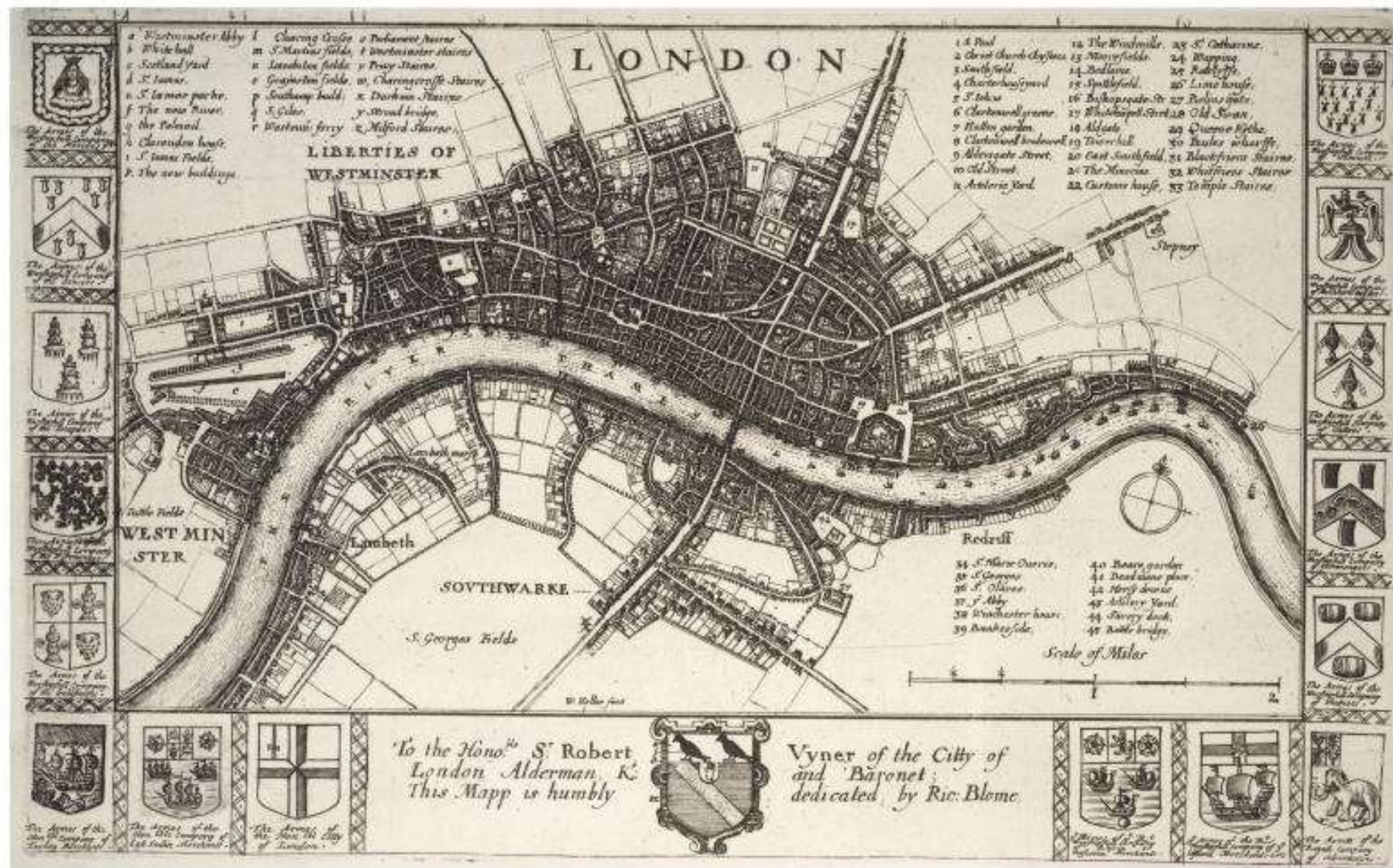


# Great Plague – effects on Pepys

- On 27 August, shocked that the parish authorities had taken no steps to bury a plague corpse lying in a coffin out in the open, Pepys reflects sadly that the plague was making people 'more cruel to one another than ... [to] dogs
- 'we have gone through great melancholy because of the great plague, and I put to great charges by it', but 'I have never lived so merrily (besides that I never got so much) as I have done this plague-time'
- While Pepys lost his brother Tom and many people he knew, it was one of the happiest times of his life, involving long working hours, well-paying new jobs (treasurer to the Tangier Committee and surveyor-general of victualling for the navy), and election to the Royal Society, obtaining a 12-foot telescope
- With his wife out of London, Pepys enjoyed a new freedom to undertake affairs



# Wenceslaus Hollar, *Plan of London before the fire*







Wenceslaus Hollar, Map of London, 1666



The city of  
London, as it  
was before the  
burning of St.  
Pauls  
ste[eple],  
[London? :  
G. Godet?,  
1565?]





# Great Fire of London

- Begins in the early hours of Sunday 2 September, after Thomas Farrinor, a baker in Pudding Lane, near Billingsgate, fails to put out a fire under his oven
- Flying sparks spread the blaze to Star Inn, Fish Street Hill
- Fanned by a strong east wind, the fire spreads to a Thames Street tallow-chandler, and by Monday morning, 300 houses and the north end of London Bridge were on fire
- Worsens after reaching Thames Street, with warehouses storing oil, tallow, pitch and spirits – by late Monday morning, the city is in panic
- Evelyn describes ‘the whole south part of the Citty burning from Cheape Side to the Thames, and all along Cornehill. Tower-streete, Fen-church-streete, Gracious-street and so along to Bainard Castle, and was now taking hold of St Paules-church to which the scaffolds contributed exceedingly’
- By Tuesday, fire destroys Cheapside, the Guildhall, over the City wall towards Holborn

# Great Fire of London

- Four-fifths of the City were destroyed, including 87 parish churches, 44 livery halls, 13,200 houses, four hundred streets, and the homes of 100,000 people
- Landmarks engulfed included St Paul's, the Royal Exchange and Custom House, Bridewell and the Fleet prison, the western gates at Ludgate, Newgate and Aldersgate, most of the Inner Temple and Christ's Hospital
- Only eight deaths officially recorded
- Evelyn describes huge camps of refugees at Moorfields, Highgate and Islington, up to 200,000
- 'I went againe to the ruines, for it was now no longer a citty' – Evelyn, a week after





Afbeelding van de

Representation curieuse de l'embrasement de la

Delineation of the

# Causes

- Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Bloodworth: 'Pish! A woman could piss it out' before returning to bed
- 'People do all the world over cry out of the simplicity of my Lord Mayor in general; and more particularly in this business of the fire, laying it all upon' him' – Pepys, 7th Sept 1666)
- While Pepys also underestimated the Fire at first, Bloodworth resisted pulling down houses – the most effective method of stopping the blaze – because of money
- Pepys records a conversation with him: 'who shall pay the cost of rebuilding the houses? ... Look, what can I do? ... People will not obey me'
- Pepys hurries to Whitehall on Sunday morning to inform the King and his brother of the fire, which neither had heard about
- Charles intervenes, ordering that streets in the fire's path be blown up as fire-breaks, and supervising the campaign in person, gifting coins to the exhausted firemen

# Destruction, and responses - Evelyn

- I went this morning on foote from White hall as far as London bridge, thro the Late fleete streete, Ludgate hill, by St. Paules, Cheape side, Exchange, Bishopsgate, Aldersgate, & out to Morefields, thence thro Cornehill, &c. with extraordinary difficulty, clambring over mountaines of yet smoking rubbish, & frequently mistaking where I was
- I then went towards Islington, & high-gate, where one might have seene two hundred thousand people of all ranks & degrees, dispersed, & laying along by their heapes of what they could save from the Incendium, deploring their losse, & though ready to perish for hunger & destitution, yet not asking one penny for reliefe, which to me appeared a stranger sight, than any I had yet beheld.
- His Majestie & Council indeeade tooke all imaginable care for their reliefe, by Proclamation, for the Country to come in & refresh them with provisions: when in the middst of all this Calamity & confusion, there was (I know not how) an Alarme begun, that the French & Dutch (with whom we were now in hostility) were not onely landed, but even entring the Citty; there being in truth, greate suspicion some days before, of those two nations joyning, & even now, that they had ben the occasion of firing the Towne. – Evelyn, 7 September







As the Non-execution of this noble Plan must be regretted by all who see it, one cannot help wishing, that a proper advantage was made of every Opportunity - which deced offers, or which arises from unavoidable Dilapidations & other concurrent Causes of Neglect & Desolation, to retrieve as much of it as can be retrieved, or, at least, to adopt the like Principles of Beauty, Elegancy, and Utility, which might be gradually effected, perhaps by means of a standing Commission, founded by Parliamentary Authority, & entrusted in proper Hands, for inspecting & condemning old & decay'd Buildings, and regulating new ones. In all great & opulent Citys, Situation & Disposition are the first Things to be consider'd. The Situation of London cannot be mended; but as the Plan before us demonstrates the Disposition of it may. Under y<sup>e</sup> head of Disposition all y<sup>e</sup> Requisites of Light, Air, Cleanliness, Safety, Ease of Communication, & every other Species of Commodiousness, as well as of Splendor and Magnificence, are comprised. A good Disposition costs no more than a bad one. The same may be said of Structures of all kinds. Additional Grandeur may be manifested, without any Injury to private Property. And wherever reflects that Rome subsists at this Day on y<sup>e</sup> Remains of her ancient Magnificence, which still inspire the Generosity and command the Admiration of Mankind, must al-

\* Remarks of S<sup>r</sup> John is annually spent there by English Gentlemen

To the Consideration of y<sup>e</sup> R<sup>th</sup> Hon<sup>ble</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Lord Mayor, y<sup>e</sup> Court of Aldermen, & Common Council of y<sup>e</sup> City of London, this Plan, reduced from the Original of S<sup>r</sup> Christopher Wren,

is with all Submission, inscrib'd, by their most hum<sup>ble</sup> Servant, J. Gwynn.

Low that it would not be if worse for our Posterity, if we regarded y<sup>e</sup> Public more, & our own little paltry Ambitions and Devices less, which is, at this time, more particularly worthy the Consideration of the Magistracy & Citizens of London, when y<sup>e</sup> Improvements made in Westminster have already drawn so many thousands of empty Houses within the Walls, Shows That in contending so strenuously for the Restraining Exclusions which they call their Privileges, they are actually parting with the Substance for the sake of the Shadow. - 23. Out of y<sup>e</sup> 21245 Houses contained within y<sup>e</sup> City & Liberty of London only it appears that upwards of 5000 are empty. And out of y<sup>e</sup> 25000 said to be contained in y<sup>e</sup> City of London, Westminster, & Boroughs only, then 15000 from which facts, let every Man possess of Property reflect, if there be not a necessity of stopping this growth, not that y<sup>e</sup> Town occupies too great a space, but y<sup>e</sup> narrowness of y<sup>e</sup> Houses, & the want of y<sup>e</sup> Alleys, that only y<sup>e</sup> inhabitants of y<sup>e</sup> Town, a great variety of Life, Air, & Light, the want of good Disposition, occasions Misanners which may be remedied by having an exact disposal of y<sup>e</sup> whole Capital, divided into proper Districts, & pulsed by Inspection of y<sup>e</sup> Officers, by Authority, this would restore y<sup>e</sup> ruined Parts to Beauty, & regulate y<sup>e</sup> scattered and confus'd Appearance, they make at present, and greatly to y<sup>e</sup> value of Property at y<sup>e</sup> same time be much more Healthfull & convenient.



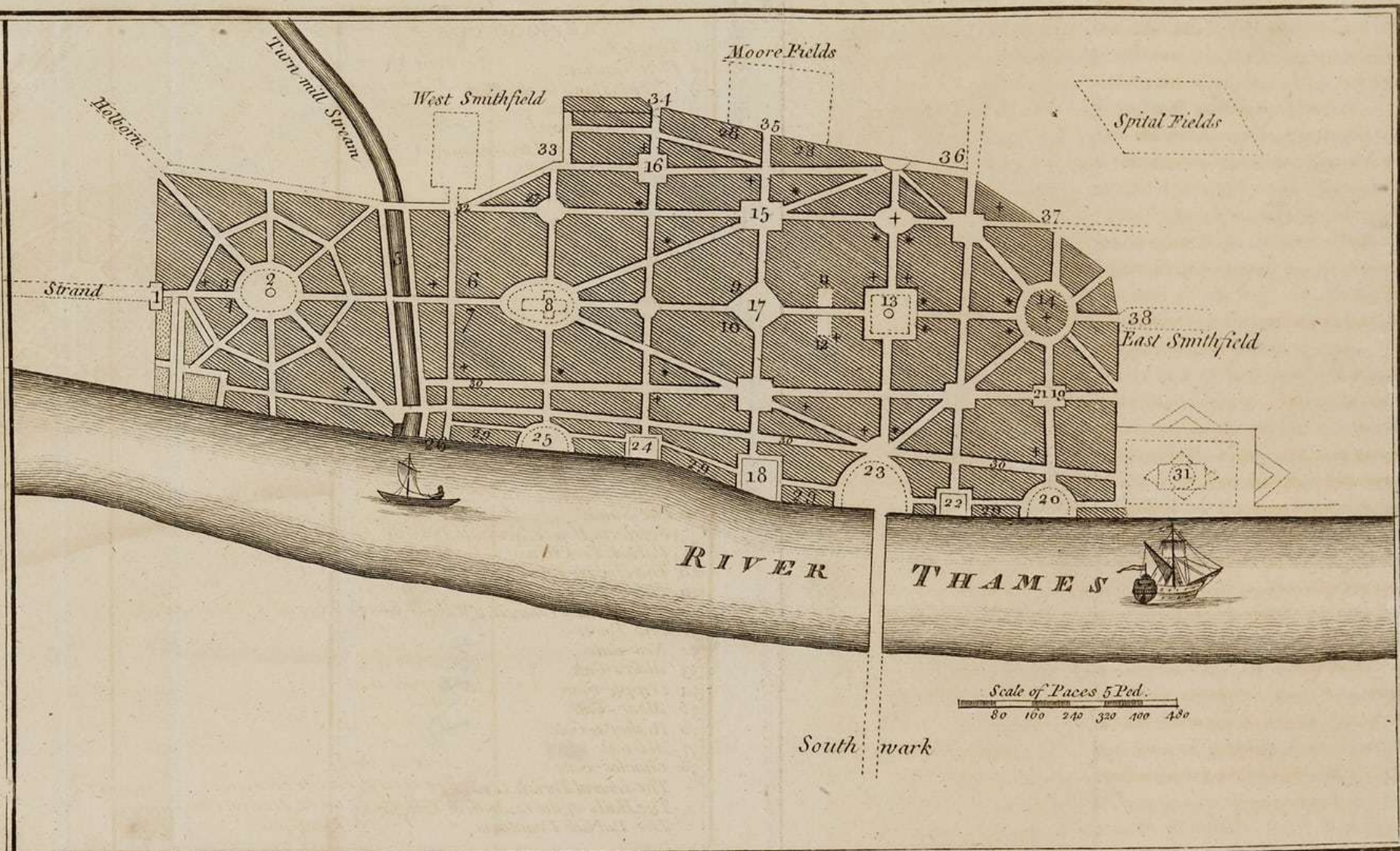
That part of the Plan strongly shadow'd, shows y<sup>e</sup> extent of y<sup>e</sup> Conflagration, with S<sup>r</sup> Christophers Design for Rebuilding the same, the Churches are mark'd thus +, and Markets thus &.



A Scale of 880 Yards, or  $\frac{1}{2}$  a Mile.  
100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 880  
The Union of Beauty w<sup>th</sup> Conveniency was never better consulted



- REFERENCES
- 1 Temple Bar
  - 2 Fleet Conduit
  - 3 St Dunstons in the West
  - 4 Seargeants Inn
  - 5 The New Channel
  - 6 The College of Physicians
  - 7 Doctors Commons
  - 8 St Pauls
  - 9, 10 Houses of the two Sheriffs
  - 11 Mercers Chapel
  - 12 Bow Church
  - 13 The Fountain in Grace-church Street
  - 14 St Dunstons in the East
  - 15 Guild Hall
  - 16 Christs Hospital and Church
  - 17 The Lord Mayor's House
  - 18 The Royal Exchange
  - 19 The Trinity House
  - 20 The Custom House & Admiralty Court
  - 21 The Navy Office
  - 22 Billings Gate
  - 23 The Fish Market
  - 24 Queen Hithe
  - 25 Pauls Wharf
  - 26 The Sluce
  - 27 Sessions House, Newgate Prison
  - 28 Publick Work House & Bridewell.
  - 29 The Church Yards
  - 30 The Key
  - 31 Black Friars Church & Watling Street
  - 32 The Tower
  - 33 New-Gate
  - 34 Alders-Gate
  - 35 Cripple-Gate
  - 36 Moor-Gate
  - 37 Bishops-Gate
  - 38 Ald-Gate
  - 39 Charles-Gate
  - + The several Parish Churches
  - \* The Halls of the 12 Antient Companies
  - o The Publick Fountains.



*Sir John Evelyn's Plan for Rebuilding the City of London after the Great Fire in 1666.*





Schlaagen einer halben Englischen Meilen:  
 6 machen eine Ungarische Meile



\*. Das äußerliche Zeichen so weit als es nicht schaffend ist und der grund der sache weg gelassen ist es alles abhandelt.



Model, wie die Abgebrante Stadt LONDON widrum Luftgehaümet werden solle.



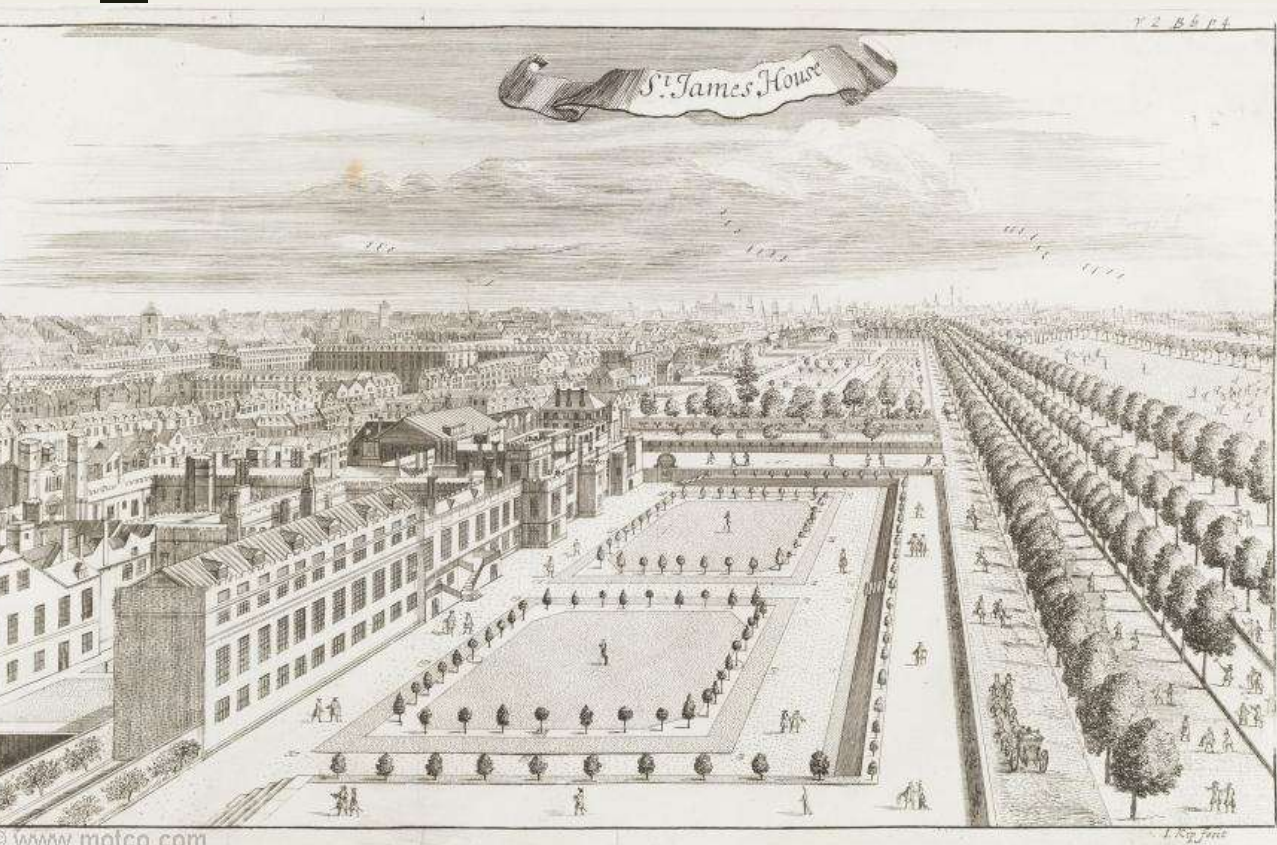
# Reconstruction

- Christopher Wren, John Evelyn, Robert Hooke and others imagined a London of wide boulevards, grand civic spaces, in a uniform grid, of 'pomp and regularity', with a public quay along the Thames
- While Charles II promised to broaden the main thoroughfares of Cheapside and Cornhill, the Dutch wars deprived London of money
- Property-owners quickly began rebuilding along the medieval street patterns
- From February 1667 to 1672, a Fire Court begins settling disputes between tenants and landlords, while a Rebuilding Act regulates heights of new buildings and materials used
- Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke are appointed to rebuild London, constructing 50 churches, a new St Paul's, and the Monument, and new thoroughfares at King Street and Queen Street













# Diaries as historical source

- Other diarists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century tended to focus on politics, accounts of travel and sightseeing, or the spiritual life
- Pepys is unusual for his candid discussion of his domestic life, habits, consumption and activities
- Diaries also useful because they emerge in a period of censorship
- The Licensing of the Press Act (1662, to 1679) restricted the importing of books and number of printing presses
- The only newspaper of this period was the government-controlled *London Gazette*, with no proper record of public events being kept, and reporting on parliamentary debates prohibited
- Pepys' diary gives us an invaluable public record of events from a man who was often close to them



# Evaluating the Diaries

‘Pepys lets us know that each of us inhabits a perpetually fluctuating environment, and that we are changed, moved and sometimes controlled by our inner tides and weather fronts even when we are most engaged in official functions. Committee hearings, office life and relations with colleagues are laid out in all their bristling competitiveness, jealousies, fears, pomposities, backbiting and disappointments. It makes high entertainment, and at the same time provides real insight into how administrative procedures work’

– Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self*