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The William Charter



Charter of William I to the City of London. Manuscript on vellum, with seal, 1067 LMA COL/CH/01/001A

THIS SMALL BUT ICONIC piece of vellum, the 'William Charter', is the oldest document in the City's archive, given by King William I (the Conqueror) to the City in 1067, soon after the Battle of Hastings but before he entered the City of London. It has been in the City's keeping ever since.

It is written in Old English (and so, notably, not in William's native Norman French) and in the form of an administrative letter, a style commonly used by early English kings. Translated into modern English, it reads: 'William King greets William the Bishop and Geoffrey the Portreeve and all the citizens in London, French and English, in friendly fashion; and I inform you that it is my will that your laws and customs be preserved as they were in King Edward's day, that every son shall be his father's heir after his father's death; and that I will not that any man do wrong to you. God yield you.'

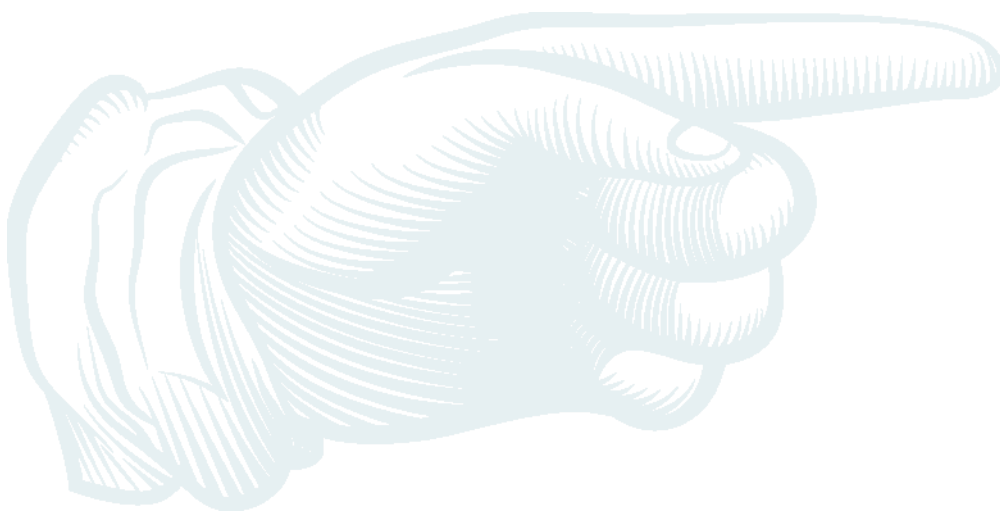
The charter reflects William's recognition of the importance of London, and of its concentration of trade and wealth, which he wished to safeguard. It was issued soon after William's coronation in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066, and was a key means whereby he won the support of Londoners; the degree of autonomy that it guaranteed has been valued and defended by the City ever since.

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The charter also reflects London's already established international character by addressing both the French and English residents and treating them with equal status. It is especially significant not only for its survival but also because it is the earliest known royal or imperial document to guarantee the collective rights of the inhabitants of any town. The charter granted nothing new to the Londoners but confirmed the citizens' rights and privileges already in existence. The document is one in a long line of charters that the citizens of London extracted from the sovereign; there are over a hundred royal charters in the City's archive.



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King John Charter



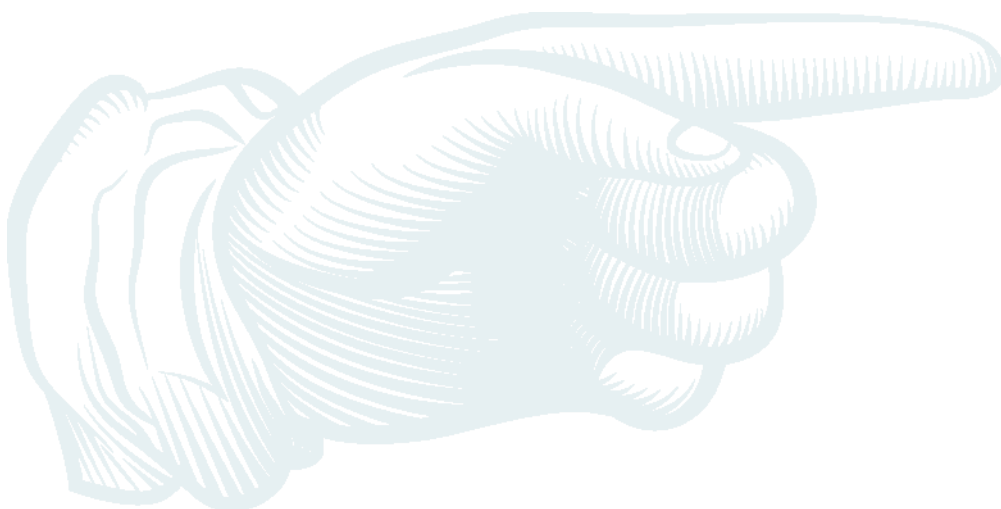
Letters patent of King John, granting the right to elect a mayor. Manuscript on vellum, with seal, 1215
LMA COL/CH/01/010

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THE TRIBULATIONS OF KING JOHN, and his quarrels with his subjects, have become part of English historical folklore. The concessions King John had to make to maintain peace mean that his reign is often perceived as particularly important for the development of the English constitution and for the establishment of people's rights and liberties. This charter is one of the milestones in the evolution of City government. John became king in 1199, but by 1215 he was faced with a major rebellion. Hoping to win the Londoners to his side, he granted them the right to choose annually a mayor, who should be faithful, discreet and fit for the government of the City. In doing this, he was confirming a custom that had already developed, as the earliest recorded mayor, Henry Fitz-Ailwin (d. 1212), is identified as such in a document of 1194 and is believed to have held office from 1189. The grant requires the mayor to be presented to the sovereign for approval and to take an oath to be faithful. These provisions have been respected ever since, and still govern the annual election and swearing in of the Lord Mayor. The charter carries a fine impression of John's Great Seal. Just a few weeks after he granted this charter, John's enemies – noblemen who resented his taxation, unsuccessful wars and conflict with the Pope – forced him to agree to a new statement of principles on the rights of subjects and the limits of royal authority. This was the famous Magna Carta of which LMA has two copies.



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THE CITY OWNS ONE of only six documents in the world bearing Shakespeare's signature. This is a title deed dating from 1613, when Shakespeare purchased a property in Blackfriars. The vendor is named as Henry Walker, citizen and minstrel of London, while the purchaser was William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon, gentleman, supported by three trustees: William Johnson, citizen and vintner of London, and John Jackson and John Hemmyng, both described as gentlemen of London. It is tempting to equate Johnson with the landlord of the Mermaid Tavern, who had that name, and Hemmyng may be the John Heminges who helped sponsor the folio; Jackson's identity is uncertain. This is the only London property known to have been owned by Shakespeare, but why he purchased it is uncertain. He may have intended to live there, as it was conveniently situated for both the Blackfriars and the Globe theatres, but there is no evidence that he ever did so. It is more likely that he bought it as an investment, or in order to enhance his status as a gentleman. The property itself, part of which was erected over a great gate, lay in Blackfriars, in the precinct formerly occupied by the Dominican house dissolved in 1538. It abutted the street leading down to Puddle Wharf, now St Andrew's Hill, and was 'right against the Kinges Maiesties Wardrobe', now commemorated in Wardrobe Place. It had been leased in 1604 to William Ireland, citizen and haberdasher. Shakespeare bequeathed the property to his daughter Susanna Hall, and it came subsequently to her daughter Elizabeth Nash, but it had passed out of family hands by 1667. The deed was purchased by the City of London Corporation in 1843 for £145.

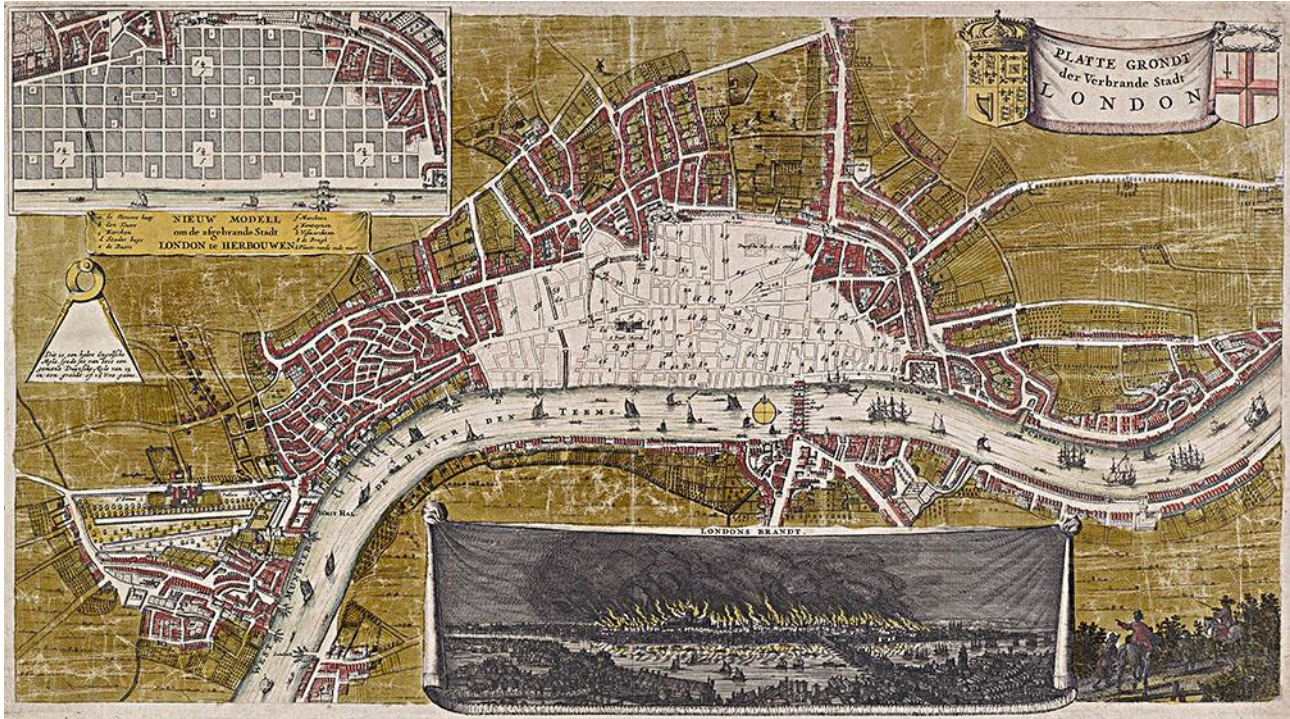


Detail of signature LMA CLC/522/MS0373

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Map of Burnt London



Marcus Willemsz Doornick, *Platte grondt der verbrande Stadt LONDON* ('Map of burnt London') engraving on paper, hand coloured, 1666 LMA SC/GL/STP/006/004/016

FIRE HAS ALWAYS BEEN an urban hazard, a bringer of disaster and then an opportunity for renewal. The fire that comes most readily to mind in the context of London's history is the Great Fire of September 1666, when the medieval City was almost entirely destroyed over three days. It started in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane, to the north of London Bridge; within hours it was beyond control, and by the time it was finally checked it had destroyed an estimated 13,000 houses, 87 of the 109 parish churches, 43 livery halls and the Royal Exchange, as well as St Paul's Cathedral. Although there were few recorded deaths, nearly nine-tenths of the City's then population of 80,000 saw their homes destroyed.

Many maps were produced showing the extent of the fire. Doornick's provides a clear depiction of the magnitude of the disaster. An inset panoramic view with hand-coloured flames licking against the night sky infuses the necessary drama into the scene. At the top left we see one of the proposals for the rebuilding of London, favouring a very rational grid-like plan. This trilingual map, published in Amsterdam, also highlights the level of international interest in London's disaster.

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London County Council Architects' Department Bomb Damage Map



London County Council Architects' Department, bomb damage map RM22 / 062 (detail). Printed map with hand-colouring, c.1940–45 LMA CC/AR/TP/P/039/036

THIS MAP IS PART of a set compiled by the London County Council War Damage Survey Section, showing the accumulated effects of bomb damage in London during the course of the Second World War. The section shown covers the western half of the Square Mile. The maps are based on the 1:2,500 scale Ordnance Survey maps of 1916, updated by the LCC around 1940, showing London as it was on the eve of the Blitz; 110 sheets were made, covering 117 square miles, including the City of London and the twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs then in existence.

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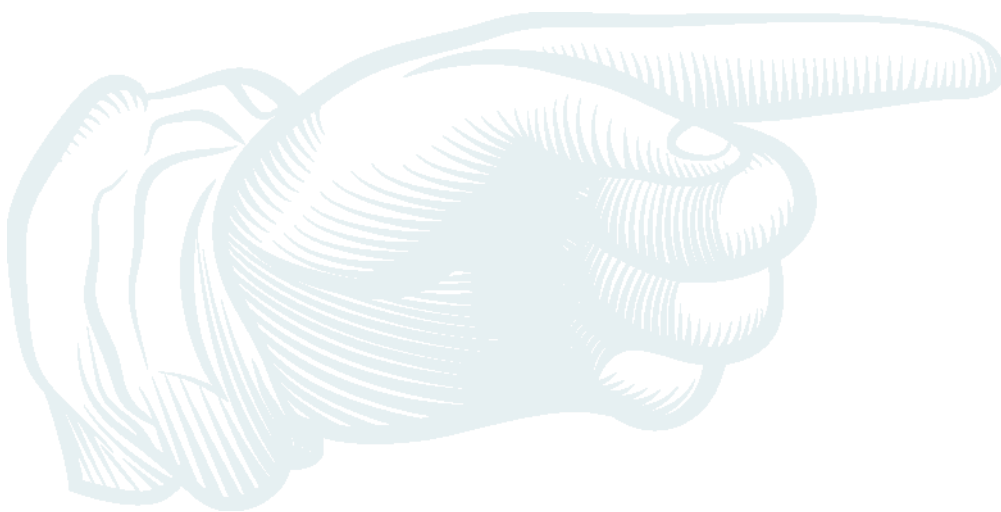
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Similar maps were compiled for other British cities, but the LCC set developed the most comprehensive colour-coding system for recording damage to buildings and property. Black indicates an area of 'Total Destruction', while purple represents 'Damaged Beyond Repair' (which, in the map here, includes most of the buildings around St Paul's Cathedral, and huge swathes of the City east and north of there). Progressively lighter colours indicate lesser degrees of damage. The position of V1 flying bombs and V2 rockets, which landed in 1944–45, is also represented by circular symbols (part of a circle is visible at the bottom right).

As well as the damage to London's homes and buildings, the bombing during and after the Blitz of 1940–41, coupled with later V1 and V2 attacks, resulted in over 85,000 Londoners being killed and injured. The bomb damage maps offer a comprehensive visual record of the extent of wartime damage to the fabric of inner London and highlight the huge problems that post-war planning and rebuilding programmes had to cope with.



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Industry and Idleness



IN 1215 THE KING was persuaded to issue a Royal Charter that allowed the City of London to elect its own Mayor. Every year the newly elected Mayor was required to travel upriver to Westminster and swear loyalty to the Crown. The Lord Mayor has now made that journey for 800 years, despite plagues and fires and countless wars, and pledged his or her loyalty to 34 kings and queens of England.

The Mayor's journey was the celebrity spectacle of its day. Over the centuries it grew so splendid and so popular that by the 16th century it was known everywhere as the Lord Mayor's Show. It features in the plays of Shakespeare, the diaries of Pepys and the adventures of James Bond and of course in the pantomime story of Dick Whittington.

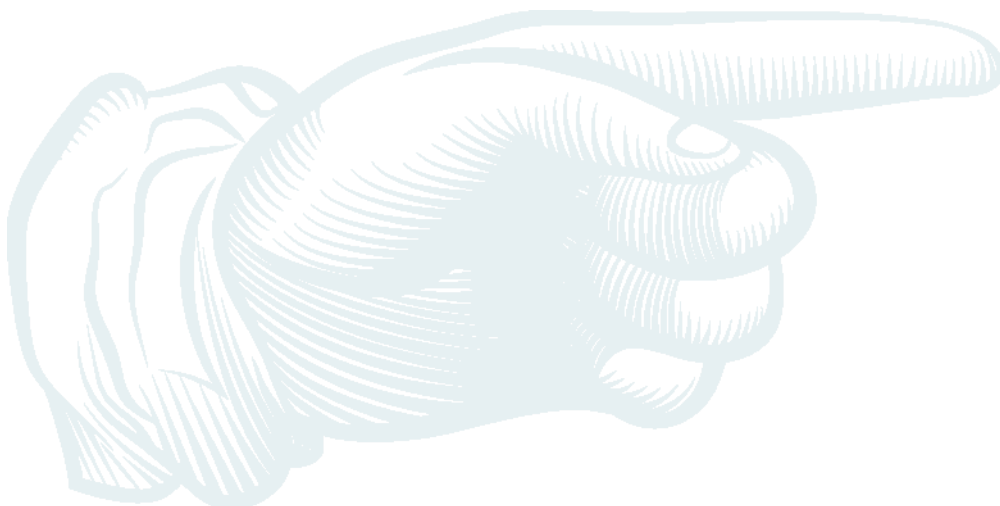
Hogarth's famous urban fable on *Industry and Idleness* concludes with the industrious apprentice Francis Goodchild elected Lord Mayor. Hogarth's take on his triumphant ride along Cheapside is not altogether reverent; the City marshal,

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with sword raised but hat falling over his eyes, together with the preened footmen clustering for position behind the coach, suggest that civic *gravitas* may not run all that deep. Hogarth always liked to remind his viewers that pride comes before a fall.



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Aquatint of the Great Hall of the Bank of England



COMMERCE AND THE CITY have long been closely intertwined. Today the Square Mile is one of the leading international hubs of the financial services industry, and the City of London Corporation plays an important role in facilitating and advocating its growth.

The Bank of England occupies a prominent place history of the City. The Bank was founded in 1694, initially as a mechanism for the Crown to get credit to rebuild the Navy. The Bank's role developed throughout the following century; the loan was not paid off but grew, creating the National Debt. By 1781, as well as loaning money to the government, it supported other banks by holding deposits and providing funds, becoming the hub of the national banking system. The right to issue banknotes was an integral part of the original scheme; the Bank did not originally have a monopoly on this but in 1844 the Bank Charter Act gave the Bank

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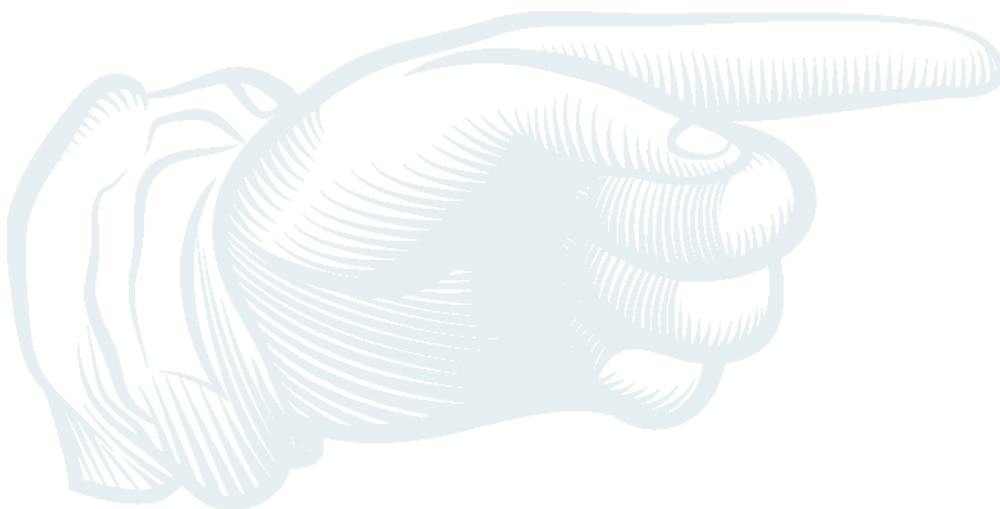
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of England sole national rights for the issue of banknotes, although some private banks retained existing privileges until the 1930s.

The Bank retains its own archive; the City's collections do, however, include a range of material relating to the Bank and its interaction with other organisations, as well as graphic sources that chart its development.

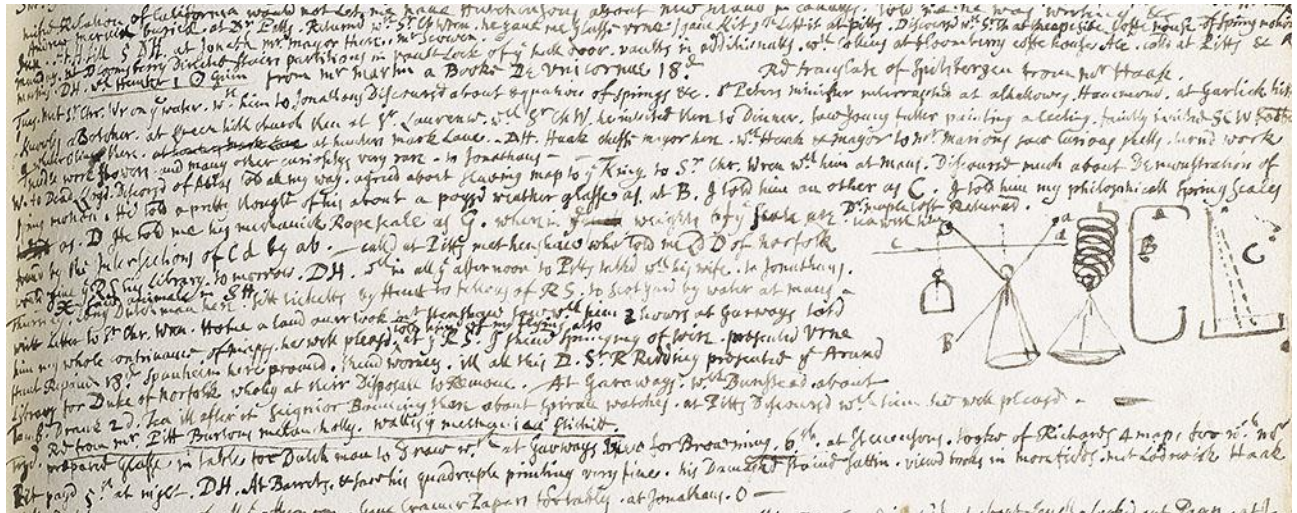
This image of the Great Hall is one of a series of illustrations originally produced for *The Microcosm of London*, one of the great early nineteenth-century colour plate books issued by Rudolph Ackermann, a German publisher who settled in London and established a reputation in this field. Intended to showcase the city as a whole, the book was published in parts between 1808 and 1810, with illustrations combining the work of Thomas Rowlandson, who drew the figures, and Augustus Pugin, who used his skill as an architectural draughtsman to provide the buildings and backgrounds.



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Robert Hooke's Diary



Robert Hooke, Diary (details). Manuscript on paper, 1672-83 LMA CLC/495/MS01758

FOR NEARLY THREE HUNDRED years Robert Hooke was the forgotten man of English science, eclipsed by brighter stars such as Isaac Newton and Christopher Wren, but more recently his achievements have come to be better recognised. He is remembered for Hooke's Law, the theory of elasticity familiar from school physics, but that is only one of his many contributions to knowledge.

Hooke was a major scientific figure, publishing the first fully (and beautifully) illustrated scientific textbook, *Micrographia* (1665), which introduced the microscope as an indispensable instrument and showed the wonders of cellular structure. Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary his fascination with this book, sitting up late reading it and wondering at the fantastic illustrations. Hooke experimented widely and invented many devices including the spring balance (which he sketched in his diary). Hooke was hired by the City of London as a surveyor and architect. Working with Wren after the Great Fire in 1666, he was closely involved in the design of many buildings and new street layouts, including Bethlehem Hospital (Bedlam), the Monument, the Royal College of Physicians and City churches.

Hooke's contribution to science and architecture is clearly revealed in his diary, purchased by the City in 1891. The diary runs from 10 March 1672 to 16 May 1683, and shows Hooke's scientific thoughts and experiments rubbing up against his work as City Surveyor. Hooke's diary is not an easy read. It is the memorandum book of a secretive man in a perpetual hurry. Hooke's use of symbols in the diary is evidence of his drive to express science in a more rational and internationally understandable way but also of his haste and secrecy (his private life is hidden from immediate view). Robert Hooke's diary has been included in the UK Register of the UNESCO Memory of the World Register programme.

Decorated page from the Churchwarden's account book of St Botolph, Aldgate, 1547–1585



Decorated page from the Churchwarden's account book of St Botolph, Aldgate, 1547–1585. Ref: P69/BOT2/B/012/MS09235/001

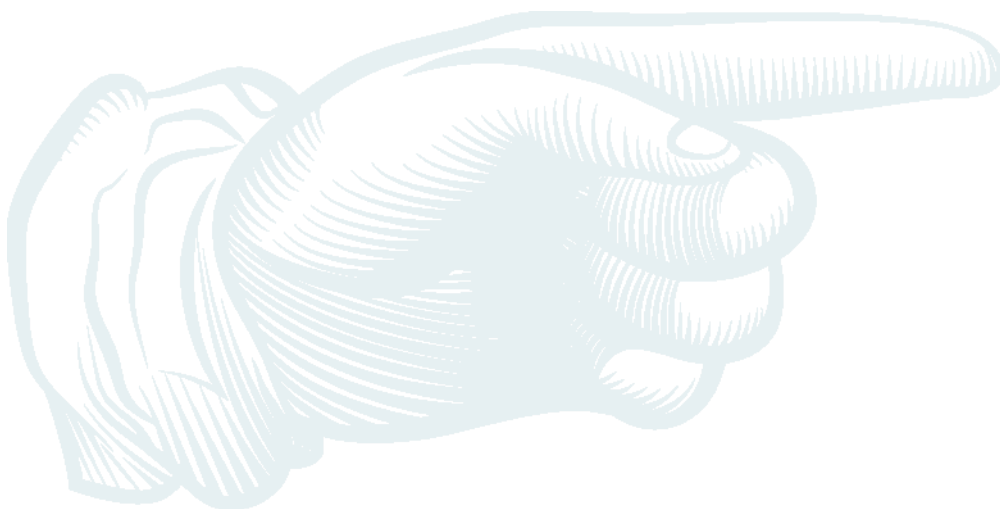
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THE CITY OF LONDON is famous for its churches: parish and cathedral alike. Documenting the milestones and the regularities of life at individual and local level, parish archives capture not only births and deaths but also expenditure, office-holding of various kinds, the resolution of disputes and parochial priorities. The parish was a key administrative unit of everyday life, as well as the focus of faith and worship.

During the medieval period, parishes mainly documented ecclesiastical affairs and matters relating to the upkeep of their churches and churchyards, but little by way of biographical information. In 1538, Henry VIII's minister Thomas Cromwell issued an order that clergymen must record all baptisms, marriages and burials taking place in their parishes, and the names of those involved. The legislation gradually developed further; Cromwell's injunction was reissued by Edward VI and Elizabeth I, and in 1598 it was ordered that the registers must be kept on parchment. Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, record keeping further expanded into areas of civil responsibility such as administering poor law legislation. It is this accumulation of early information that makes parish records invaluable for the study of social, economic, religious and administrative history.



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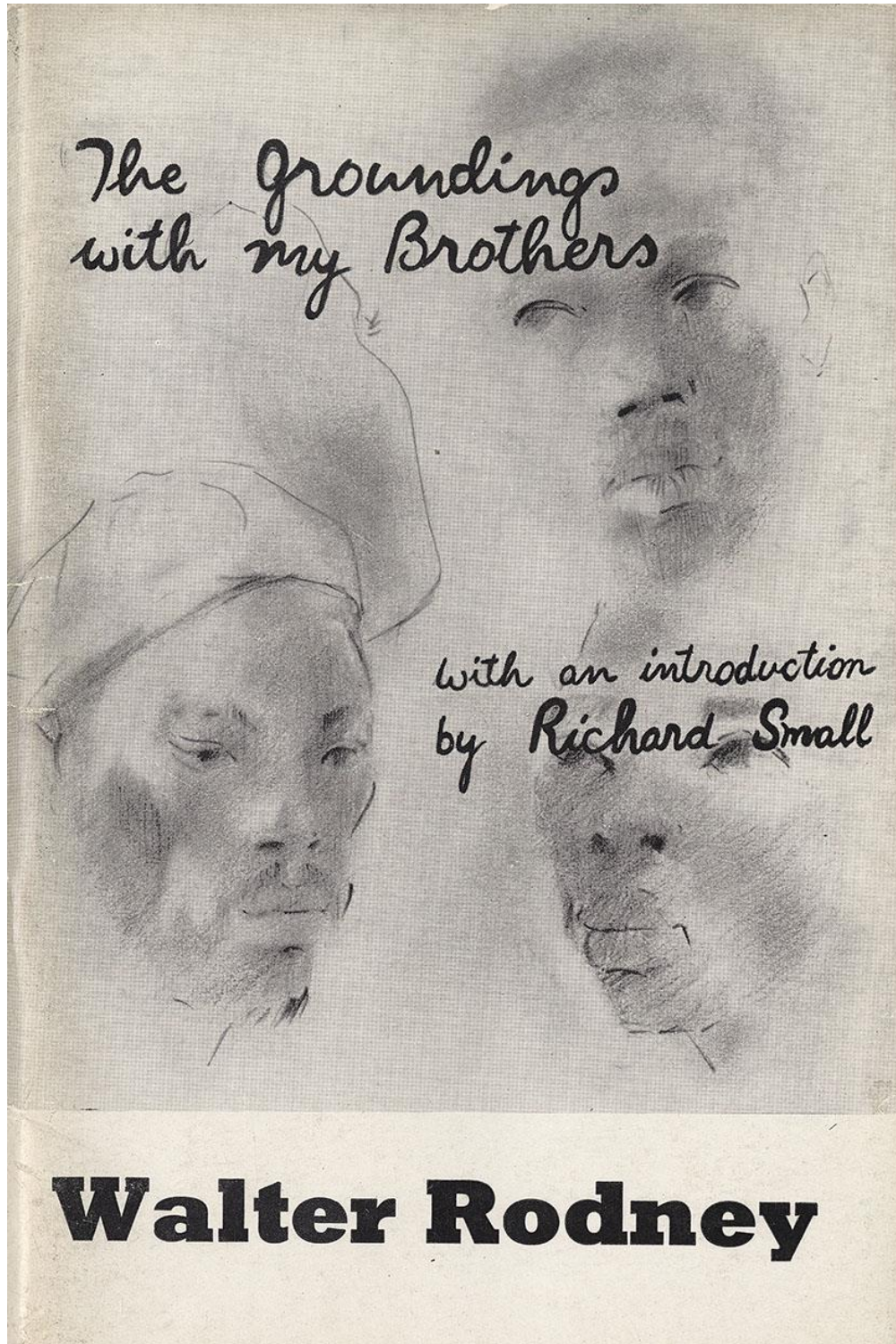


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The Groundings with my Brothers



Walter Rodney, *The Groundings with my Brothers* printed in London, 1969, front cover LMA 4462/E/01/029

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LONDON HAS LONG BEEN a centre for migration of people from across the world, and the City's collections represent the diversity of its population. In recent years a number of important Black and Caribbean community archives have been acquired.

The Huntley archives were deposited by Eric Huntley (b. 1929) and his wife, Jessica (1927–2013), political activists and publishers who played a prominent role in the Black Caribbean community. The motivating force behind the Huntleys' preservation of their records has been their belief in the power of the written word and in the importance of history in education.

Soon after they emigrated from British Guiana (later Guyana) the Huntleys met Dr Walter Rodney (1942–1980), a Guyanese historian and political activist. In 1968 the Jamaican government banned Rodney for his radical Marxist philosophy, and for teaching students and Rastafarians about the intellectual, sociological and military prowess of ancient African civilisations. The resulting 'Rodney Riots' triggered the development of Black Power, pan-Africanism and political awareness on a global scale.

In reaction to the ban, the Huntleys helped to mobilise support and arranged the printing and street distribution of Rodney's lectures. This culminated in their founding Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Ltd in 1969, named in honour of Paul Bogle and Toussaint L'Ouverture, both figureheads of Black rebellion against the Caribbean slave trade.

The firm became a political weapon to spread Rodney's works further afield. The first publication was the collection of his lectures *The Groundings with My Brothers*. This was followed in 1972 by *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, a seminal work by Rodney on the history of post-colonial liberation struggles. Following Rodney's murder in Guyana in 1980, the Huntleys kept his legacy alive by renaming their bookshop the Walter Rodney Bookshop and organising public memorials and anniversary lectures in his name.

