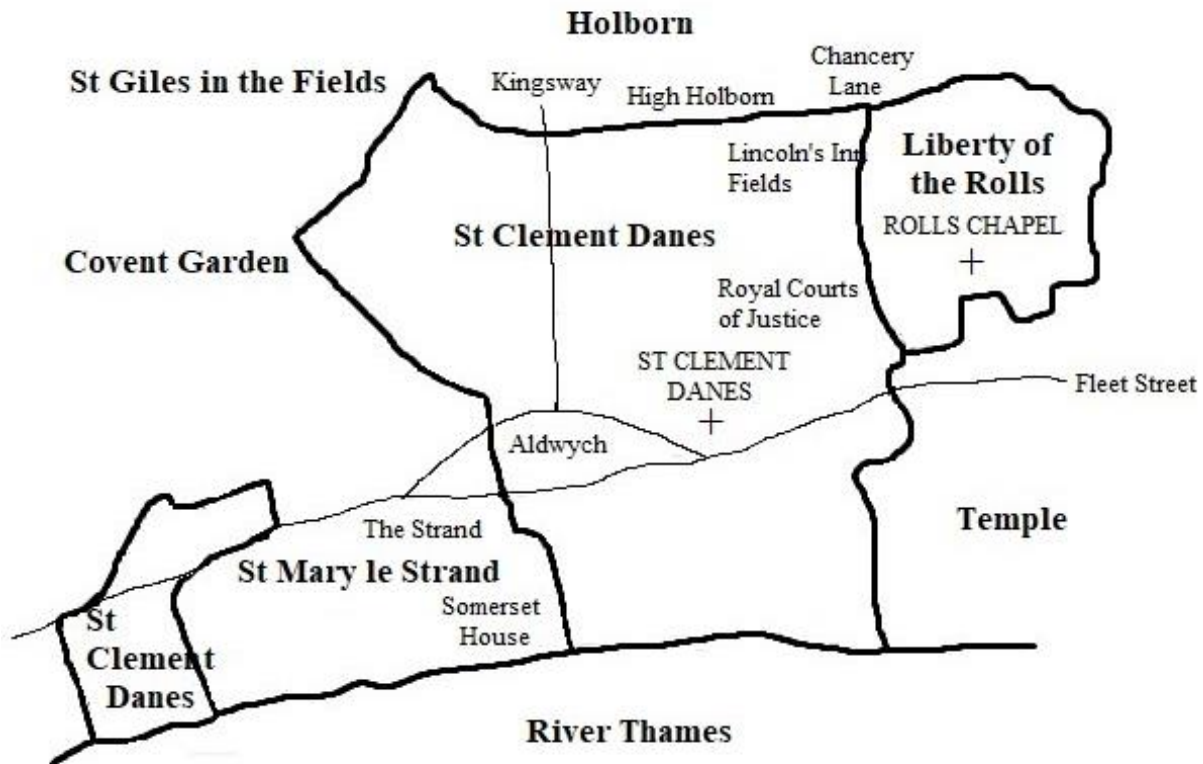




LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

ST CLEMENT DANES

St Clement Danes was an ancient parish part of which was in the Liberty of Westminster and part in the Liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster. The City and Liberty of Westminster was succeeded as an administrative body by the Metropolitan Borough of Westminster in 1900 and then by the London Borough of Westminster in 1965.



The parish of St Clement Danes initially appears in records in the 1190s but it is possible that the area had been settled by Danish people some time before this, as there is an earlier mention of a 'Danish cemetery' nearby. The church of St Clement Danes was first recorded in 1173 when King Henry II granted it to the Knights Templar. A 'holy well' stood to the north of the church and was the focus of pilgrimages from the Middle Ages. St Clement's Well was noted for its excellent spring water but was filled in when the new Law Courts were built over it. The parish occupied some 44 acres just outside and to the west of the City of London and was mostly in the Liberty of Westminster with the remainder being part of the Liberty of Leicester (which became known as the Duchy of Lancaster's Liberty and was also known as the Savoy). The Westminster Liberty part had four wards: Drury Lane, Holywell, Sheer Lane and Temple Bar wards, and the Duchy Liberty also had four: Church, Middle, Royal and Savoy wards. There is a small detached portion of the parish further west, on the other side of the parish of St Mary le Strand. St Clement was the patron saint of felt-workers and sailors and his symbol, the anchor, was carved on all the public buildings of the parish.

The Society has produced a Parish Guide to St Clement Danes which includes further information about the churches below as well as nonconformist and other denominations.



LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

St Clement Danes, Strand



The first church on this site was reputedly founded in the 9th century by the Danes and was rebuilt at various times but the present building was erected by Sir Christopher Wren in 1682. The tower from the previous building was retained and a steeple was added in 1719. The church was badly damaged during the Blitz – the scars can still be clearly seen on the outside of the building - and not restored until 1958. It is now the central church of the RAF.

Records of the parish include baptisms (1558-1972), marriages (1558-1986), burials (1558-1890) and are at Westminster City Archives.

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