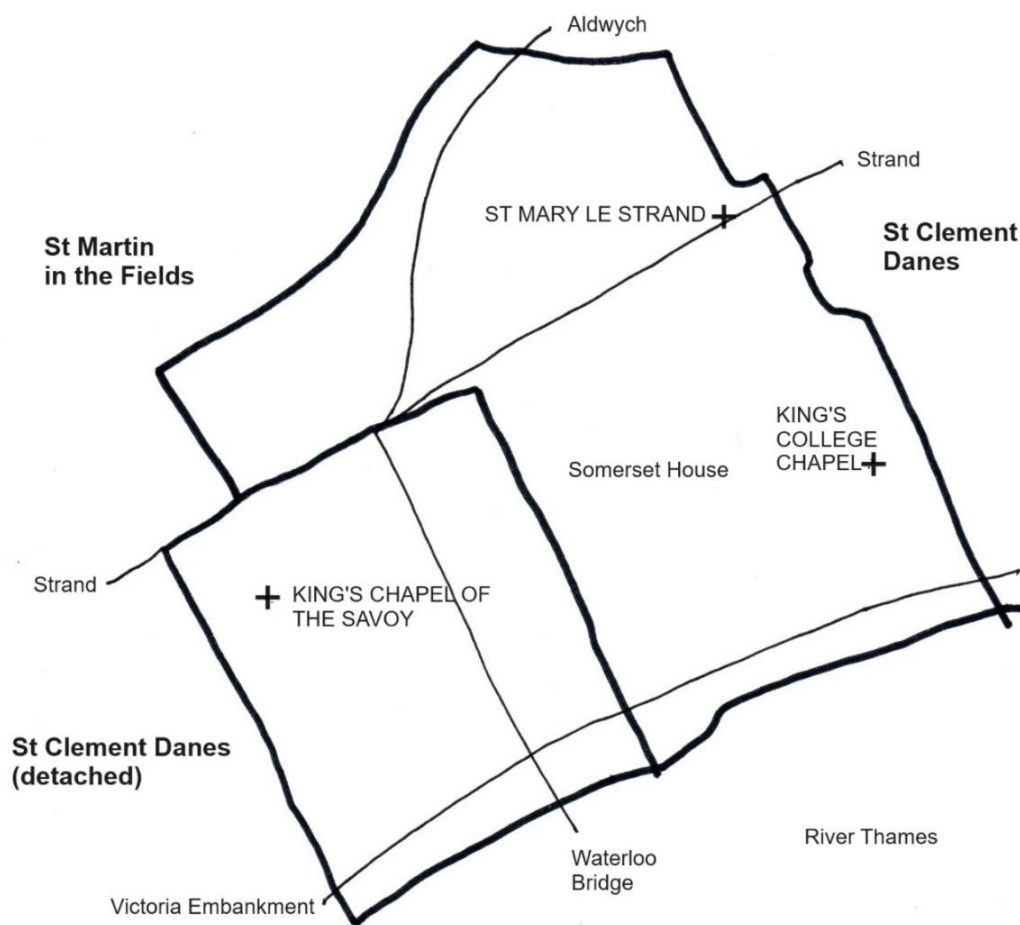




LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

ST MARY LE STRAND

The ancient parish of St Mary le Strand was partly in the Liberty of the Savoy and partly in the Liberty of Westminster. The Savoy was a manor and liberty located between Westminster and the City of London. It formed part of the Duchy of Lancaster and included the parts of the parishes of St Mary le Strand and St Clement Danes south of the Strand together with the whole of the Precinct of the Savoy. The Liberty of Westminster was in the Ossulstone hundred subdivision of the county of Middlesex. 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.



St Mary le Strand was an ancient parish on the north bank of the Thames. The church is mentioned as early as 1222 and lasted for over 300 years until it was demolished on the orders of Edward Seymour. The Savoy gets its name because land here was granted here in 1246 by King Henry III to Peter II Count of Savoy, uncle of his Queen, Eleanor of Provence. Peter duly built a grand house here which became known as the Savoy Palace. This later went to Henry and Eleanor's second son, Edmund, 1st Earl of Lancaster. In time, the earldom was raised to a dukedom and the Duchy became a county palatine, which allowed it to manage its own affairs separately from the Crown. This it did from the 14th to the 19th centuries.

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



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St Mary le Strand, Strand



The church of St Mary le Strand is mentioned in a document dated 1222 but this building was pulled down and Somerset House built on the site in 1549. The parishioners of St Mary le Strand used the Savoy Chapel between this date and 1714 but they retained their own records. The current church was consecrated in 1723. The graveyard was removed in the early 20th century in order to widen the Strand, with the remains moved to Brookwood Cemetery.

Records of the parish include baptisms (1558-2001), marriages (1558-1990), burials (1558-1853) and are at Westminster Archives Centre.



St Mary le Strand as seen in 2025



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St Mary le Strand viewed from the east

The King's Chapel of the Savoy (Savoy Chapel)



There were three chapels in the Savoy Hospital complex, one dedicated to St John the Baptist, one to St Catherine and one to Our Lady. This chapel, dedicated to St John the Baptist and finished in 1512, is all that survives of a charitable hospital built by King Henry VII to house poor men. The chapel is a private royal chapel but can be visited by members of the public.

It was known as the Savoy Chapel until 1939 but is now called The King's Chapel of the Savoy.

It is owned by the Duchy of Lancaster and as such comes under the jurisdiction of the monarch, rather than a diocese. This meant that it has not always had to follow the rules of other parishes and so, for instance, became a place where divorced people could be married in the late 19th century.

Records of the parish include baptisms (1680-1968), marriages (1680-1965), burials (1680-1854) and are at Westminster Archives Centre.



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The King's Chapel of the Savoy and its graveyard



The King's Chapel of the Savoy viewed from Savoy Hill

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