

# Mapping Islington

## Historic maps and plans of Islington (1553-1894)

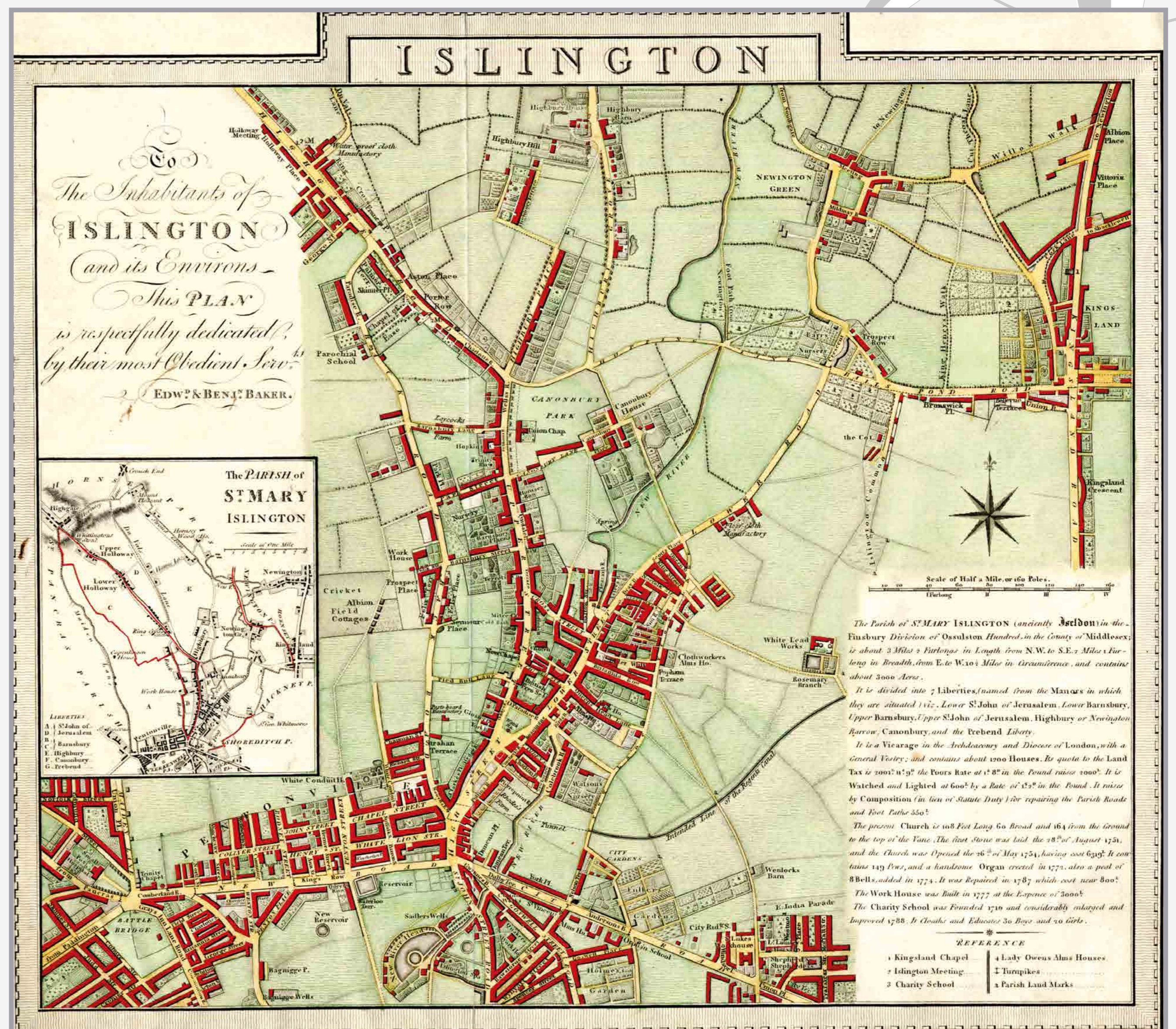
Mapping Islington showcases a selection of maps and plans relating to the three former historic parishes that now form the London Borough of Islington.

Maps are a window into the past. They provide historical evidence and offer a valuable insight to bygone streets, industries and landscapes. They are also an important source for local history research and help us to understand the development and changes that have shaped the character and identity of our borough.

The display's earliest map dates from mid-16th Century when Islington was a rural village outside of the City of London, ending with a survey published during the late-Victorian era when the area had become a densely populated and urbanised district of north London.

The London Borough of Islington was formed in 1965 when the Metropolitan boroughs of Islington and Finsbury merged. In 2019 the borough covers an area of 14.86 km<sup>2</sup> and stretches from Highgate in the north to the City of London borders in the south. Before 1900 Islington was historically administered in three distinct civil parishes:

- St Mary Islington (north and central)
- St James Clerkenwell (south-west)
- St Luke Old Street (south-east)

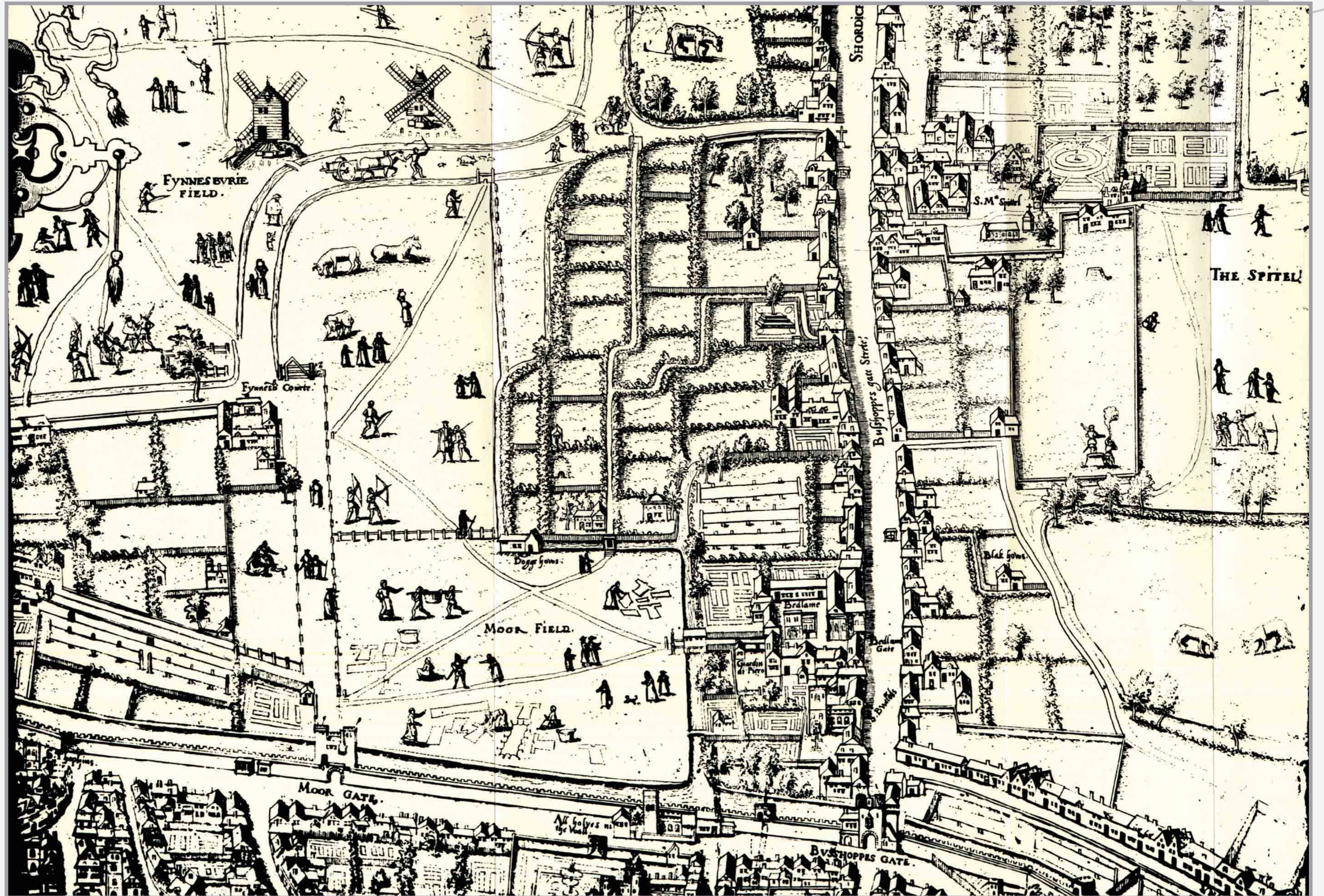


**Plan of parish of St Mary, Islington and its environs. Surveyed by Edward Baker (c.1793)**



# The Copperplate Map of London, c.1553-59

## Moorfields



The Copperplate Map of London is a large-scale plan of the city and its immediate environs. It was originally created in 15 printed copperplate sections, of which only three are still in existence. When assembled and mounted, the map would have measured approximately 116 by 229 cm with the scale of 34 inches to 1 mile. The Museum of London holds one of the surviving plates, which depicts the area around Moorgate. This includes parts of what today is Islington, such as Finsbury Square and City Road. The area is shown as a patchwork of marshes, moorland and meadows, with one named Fynnesburie Field (Finsbury Field).

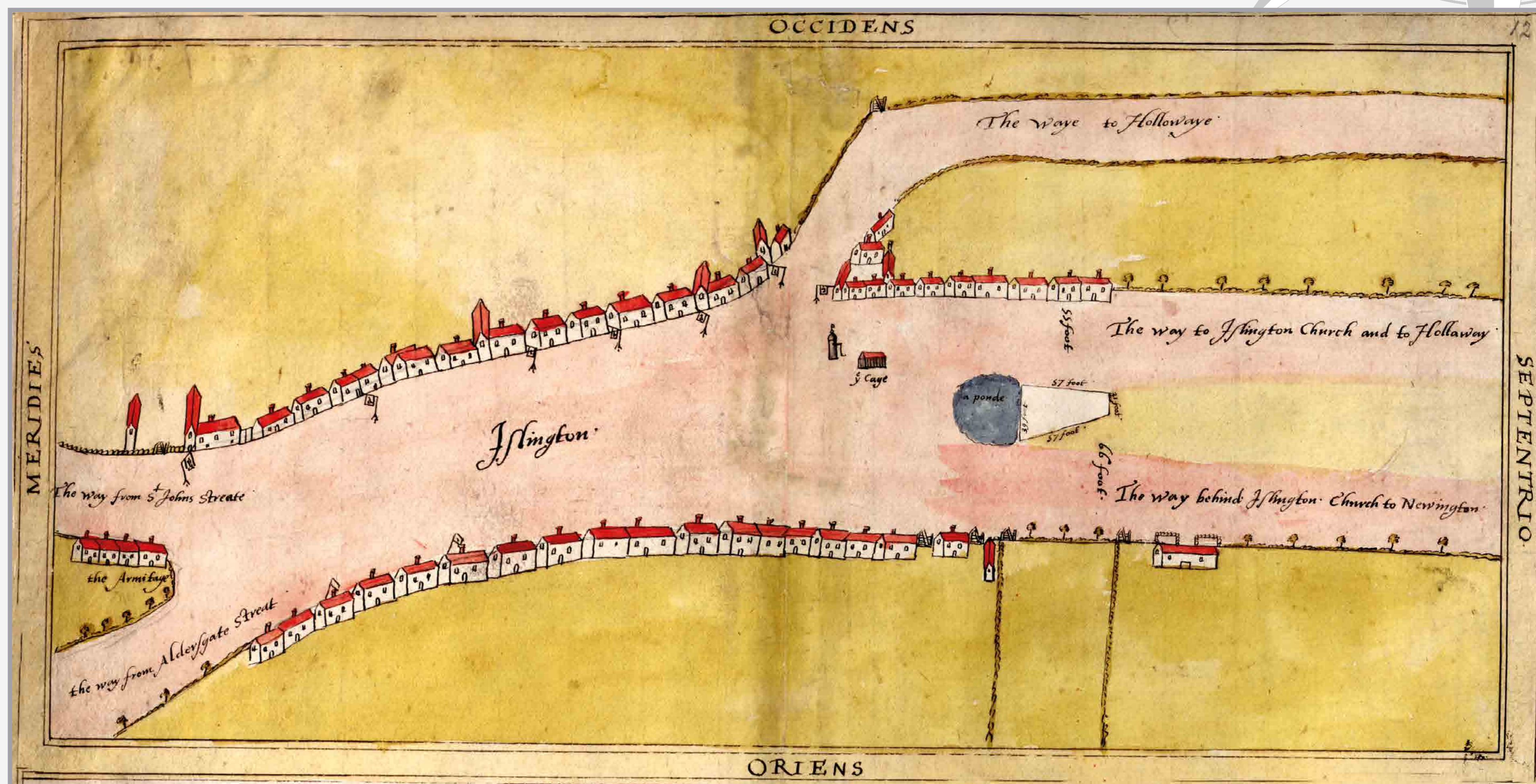
**Frans Franken**  
Museum of London

The map illustrates how 16th-century Londoners worked and played in the fields around Moorgate: Laundresses sit by their baskets with their washing spread out to dry in the sun, weavers stretched out long sheets of cloth with pegs called tenterhooks, young men practise archery and people stroll along the various lanes crossing the fields.



# Plan of Islington High Street, c.1590

Showing the area between  
St John Street and Islington Green



This is an Elizabethan-period map of Islington High Street that was discovered in documents relating to properties owned by William Cecil, the first Earl of Salisbury (1521–98). It shows rows of houses lining both sides of the street.

Anonymous  
Cecil Papers  
Hatfield House Library  
and Archives

The orientation of the map is marked in Latin while the route details are in English:

- **Occidens (West):** The road splits westwards from the high street across open fields heading north-west showing 'The way to Hollowaye' (today, Liverpool Road).
- **Septentrio (North):** The road splits into two separate paths – 'The way to Islington Church and to Holloway' (Upper Street) and 'The way behind Islington Church to Newington' (Essex Road).
- **Meridies (South):** The road splits into two separate paths – 'The way from St Johns Streate' (St John Street) and 'the way from Aldersgate Streate' (Goswell Road).

There are nine signposts along the street indicating individual inns and public houses. The building with a gateway beside it on "The way from St Johns Streate" would become the famous Angel Inn in c.1614.



# An exact delineation of the Cities of London and Westminster and the suburbs thereof, together with ye Burrough of Southwark, c.1658

## Clerkenwell and St Giles Cripplegate



Map makers Faithorne and Newcourt surveyed London between 1643 and 1647 and published their map 11 years later. It depicts London as it stood before the Great Fire of 1666. Dense clusters of houses appear very close together, separated only by narrow streets – an indication of the city’s vulnerability to fire.

**William Faithorne and  
Richard Newcourt  
British Library**

This northern section of the map shows the Farringdon and Smithfield area. This was already built up by this period, especially St John Street and Golden Lane, with double-pitched roof houses lining the respective streets. The former Nunnery of St Mary (c.1100–1539), which once stood near Clerkenwell Green, was developed into a residential suburb following the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536–41).

Further east, the Moor Fields have been laid out as a public recreation ground, with trees and cross walks. The open space to the west is marked on the map as ‘Bun Hill’ which would become the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground in the 1660s – a popular burial place for early nonconformists, radicals and dissenters.



# Plan of the Parish of St Mary Islington in the County of Middlesex, c.1805

## Highbury



This survey of the Parish of St Mary Islington was produced by Richard Dent. It is a large scale plan (66 yards to one inch) displaying an accurate delineation of the site of every house, garden and field, throughout the parish. The plan's accompanying reference book or 'terrier' gives the names of building and land proprietors and description and size of their properties.

**Richard Dent**  
Islington Local History  
Centre

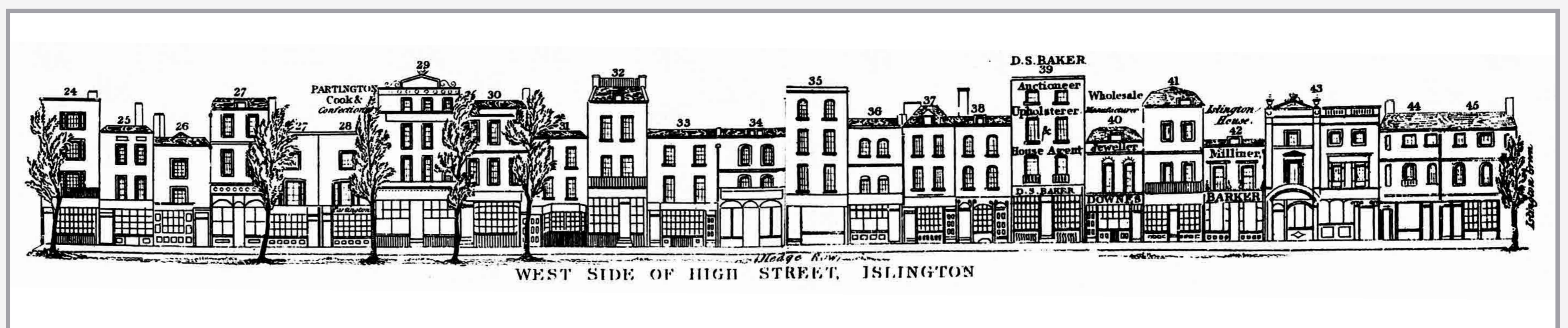
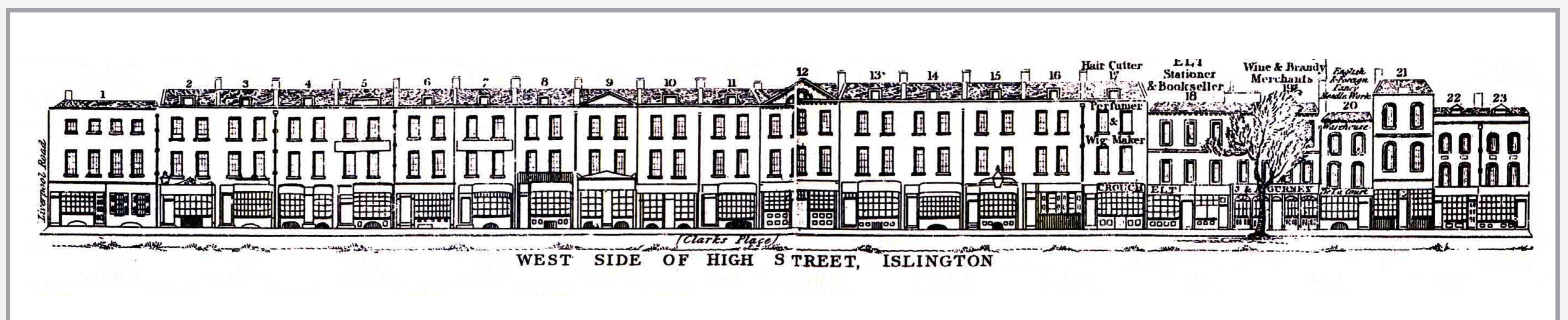
The above section shows the area around Highbury, which, then, consisted of Highbury House, Highbury Hill House, Highbury Terrace and Place.

In 1805 Islington was a popular place for Londoners seeking a rural retreat close to the city. It was considered to have 'good air' with its green meadows, fresh dairy produce and many tea gardens and places of amusement. One of these was Highbury Barn, a famous pleasure garden (407) and is listed as having a resort with tea-gardens.



# Tallis's London street views, c.1838-40

## Islington High Street



These are engravings of the topographical views of Islington High Street in the early Victorian period. It shows the rows of commercial premises, together with accompanying plates, descriptions and advertisements and even house numbers. The plans were intended to help people find shops and businesses.

**John Tallis**  
London Topographical  
Society

Publisher John Tallis created 88 pamphlets illustrating London's street elevations in great detail. Today, they serve as a unique resource for historians and anyone interested in early Victorian cityscape. The pamphlets were later published, with the revised and enlarged views of 1847, by the London Topographical Society in a single volume.



# A balloon view of London, as seen from Hampstead, 1851

Looking south from Upper Street towards  
Clerkenwell and St Luke Old Street



Publisher John Henry Banks originally produced this balloon view map of London in 1851 as a souvenir to celebrate The Great Exhibition (Crystal Palace Exhibition) in Hyde Park.

**Banks & Co. Effingham  
Wilson  
Museum of London**

The perspective is from a hot-air balloon, looking southwards from its northern vantage point at Hampstead Heath. It is a three-dimensional aerial panorama, which names streets and shows individual buildings. The technique allows individual buildings to be distinguished and gives additional information on architectural design and landscaping. However, it is not accurate in scale and exaggerates the size of important buildings for ease of identification.

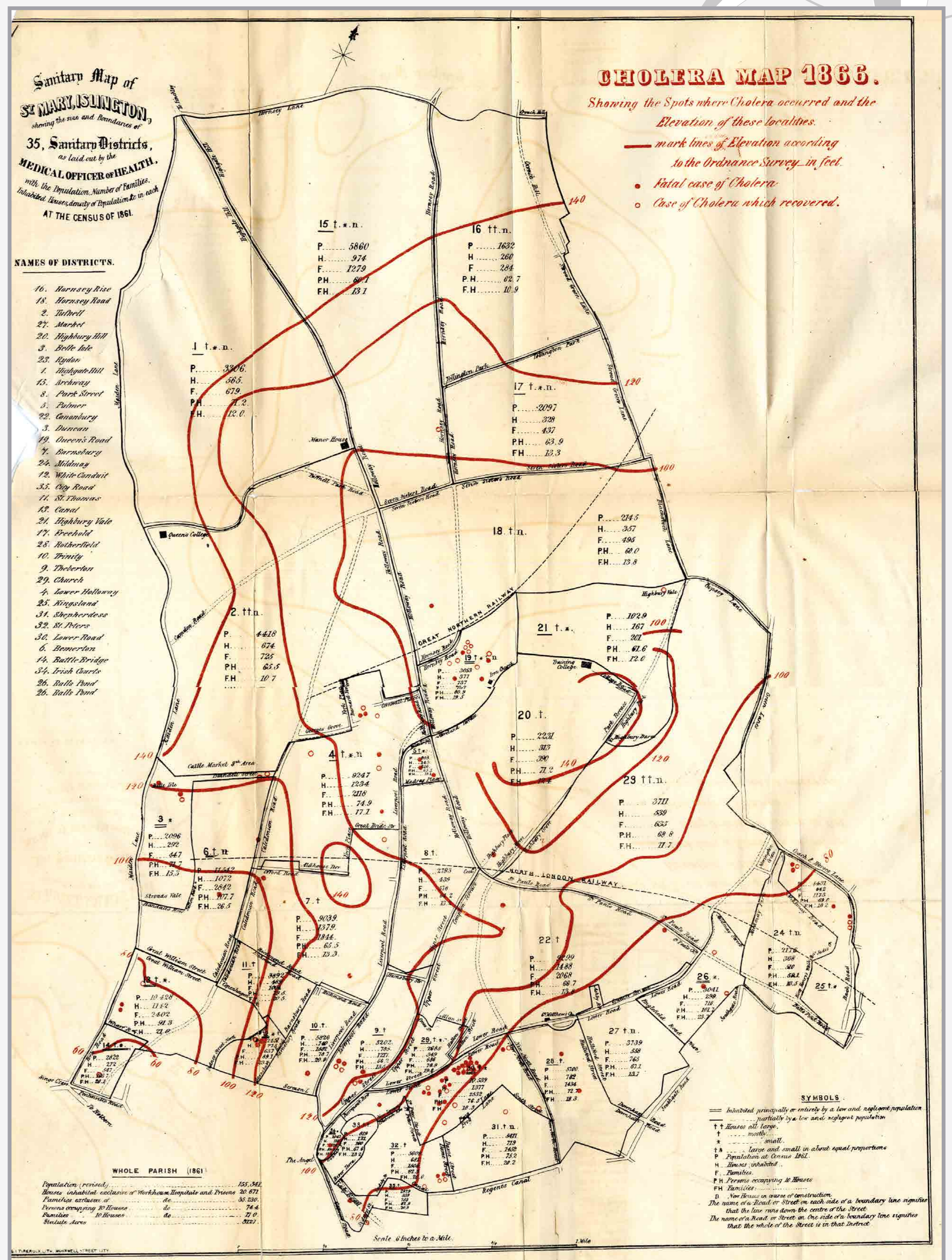


# Cholera Map, 1866

## Sanitary survey of the Parish of St Mary Islington

Between 1832 and 1866 four major outbreaks of cholera ravaged London communities and led to the death of tens of thousands of people. Cholera remains a potentially fatal bacterial infection caused by consuming contaminated food or water.

This parish sanitary map was produced as part of the Medical Officer report for Islington written by Edward Ballard. Its purpose was to plot the localities of the outbreak in order to pinpoint the areas of poor sanitation. It shows that the largest cluster of cholera outbreak in Islington was located on the east side of Essex Road, a poor and overcrowded working-class area which saw over 40 deaths from the 1866 epidemic.



Report of the Medical  
Officer of Health for  
Islington  
Islington Local History  
Centre



# Ordnance Survey, 1871-73

## Islington Green and surrounding area

Ordnance Survey (OS) is Britain's national mapping agency and was founded in 1791 for military purposes. By 1855, when the Industrial Revolution was well under way, there was a demand for more detailed and larger scale maps. The government authorised OS to produce plans for the majority of the country to a scale twenty-five inches to one mile (1:2500). This led to the most detailed topographic maps being produced from the 1850s onwards.

To the right is an example of a twenty-five inches to one mile OS map, showing Islington Green and surrounding area as it was in 1871-73. These maps provided extraordinary detail, even down to foliage in green spaces and back gardens. These maps are of immense value for local history research as they instantly provide a 'snapshot' in time and help form an accurate historical impression of any given location.



Section VII 25  
Ordnance Survey  
Crown Property

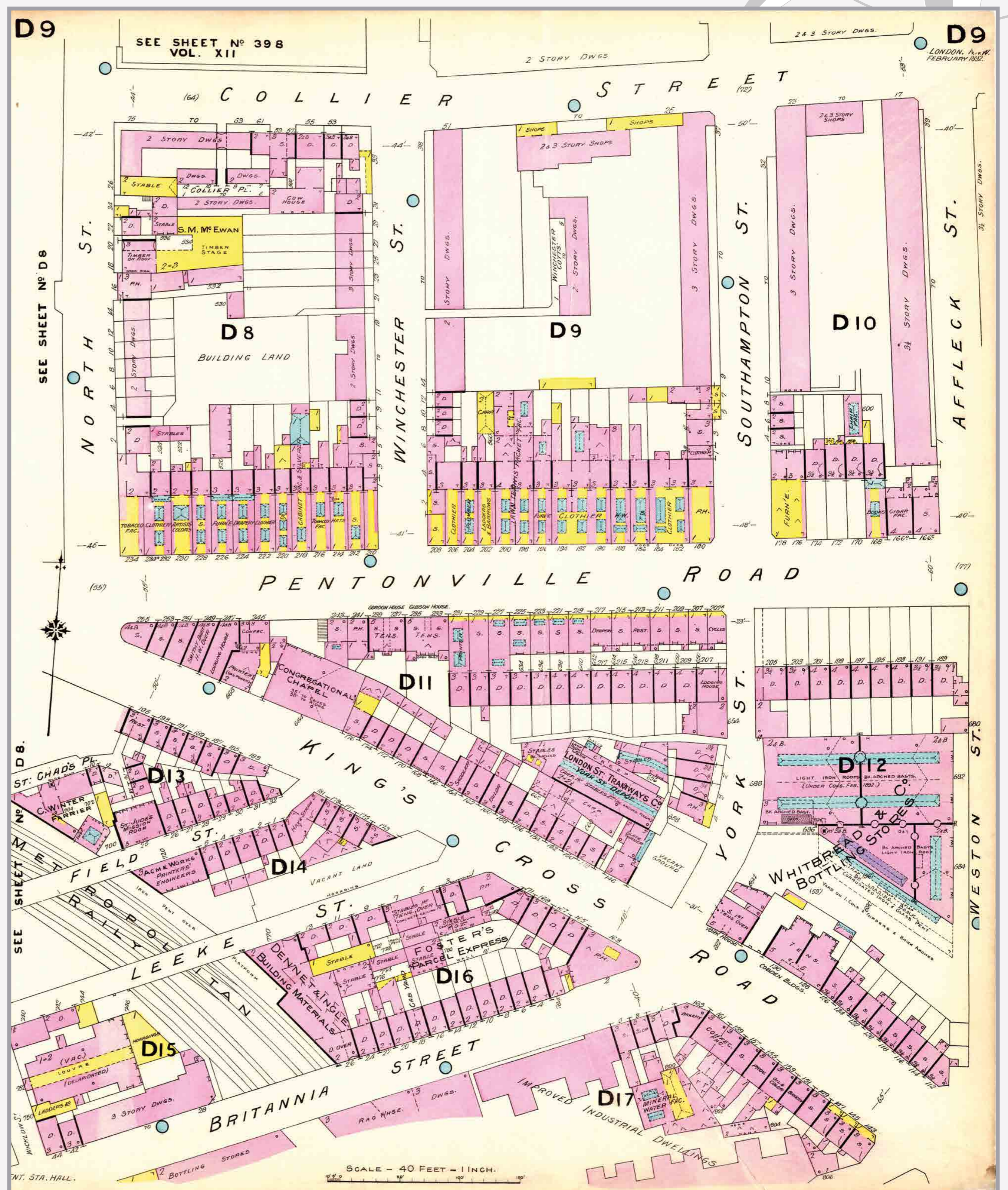


# Goad Fire Insurance Plan, 1892

## King's Cross area

This is an example of a Goad fire insurance plan from 1892, showing the Pentonville/King's Cross area. It was produced by Charles E. Goad Ltd. which operated in London between 1885 to 1970. The company used Ordnance Survey maps as base-maps to create fire insurance plans for commercial buildings and industrial sites. The plans hold key information such as:

- size of buildings and number of floors
- usage e.g. commercial, educational, residential
- construction materials e.g. concrete, brick, wood, glass
- particular fire hazards such as chemicals, kilns or ovens
- house numbers and in the case of larger premises, the business name of the occupier



Charles E. Goad Ltd  
Islington Local History  
Centre

This information was revised every three years and any changes would be updated using revision sheet overlays, which were pasted over the original plan. Today, we can utilise this data to better understand the functions and architecture of bygone commercial/industrial and residential buildings.



# A survey and admeasurement of all the public roads, lanes and foot paths in the Parish of St Mary Islington in the County of Middlesex

Benjamin Brathwait, William Kentish,  
Samuel Dennis and Henry Warner  
St Mary's Church, Islington

This is the earliest official survey and plan we hold of the Parish of St Mary Islington. It was surveyed by Benjamin Brathwait, William Kentish and Samuel Dennis and the measurements calculated by Henry Warner. The plan was published in 1735 to delineate all the public footpaths and boundaries of the parish with accuracy; the previous boundary lines were formed by natural borders and not by surveying. It shows how rural and sparsely populated the majority of Islington was at the time, with only 937 houses listed in the parish. The area it covered extended from Battle Bridge (later King's Cross) located to the south-west, to Highgate and 'Cruch End' in the north and to Kings Land (Hackney) to the east.

This map has been kindly deposited at Islington Local History Centre by the Parish Church of St Mary Islington, Upper Street.







**A SURVEY**  
 and  
**ADMEASUREMENT**  
 of all the  
**Public Roads, Lanes & Foot-Paths**  
 in the Parish of  
**ST. MARY ISLINGTON,**  
 in the County of  
 Middlesex.



**THE TABLE.**

Letter	Description	Measurement
<b>Roads Belonging to the Turnpike.</b>		
AP	Gpswell Street Road from the Landmark at the Turnpike 2 Furlongs & from the Turnpike to the End of the Back Road at 30 Poles is a Party Road belonging half to Clerkenwell.	0 1 18
CP	The High Road from the End of the Back Road at Kingsland thro Islington Upper Street & both Holloways to the Landmark E by the Black Dog at Highgate.	3 2 03
BD	The Back Road	1 2 15
CF	The Lower Road From its turning out of the Upper Road thro the Lower Street to Kingsland Turnpike.	1 4 10
	Frog Lane from the Toll Gate at G to the Limit of the Parish next St. Lukes Old Street about	0 0 26
	<b>Total required by the Trustees of the Turnpike</b>	<b>6 2 24</b>
<b>Roads &amp; Lanes belonging to the Parish.</b>		
ab	The Cross Street from the Upper to the Lower Street	0 1 12
cd	Frog Lane from the Toll Gate at G to the Lower Road	0 4 32
ef	River Lane	0 1 10
gh	Almshouse Lane } from the Lower Street to Frog Lane	0 1 16
ik	Gunners Lane	0 0 33
lm	Batters Lane	0 1 08
no	Kettle Lane } from Upper Road to Back Road	0 1 04
pq	Barnsbury Lane	0 1 14
rs	Hopping Lane from the Upper Road to the Toll Gate at Balls Pond	0 5 24
tu	Road from the Toll Gate at Balls Pond to M <sup>r</sup> Wrights Corner of Newington Green	0 3 08
vw	Road from M <sup>r</sup> Wrights Corner to Kingsland 3 Furlongs a Party Road belonging half to Newington	0 2 20
xy	Boarded River Lane from M <sup>r</sup> Wrights Corner to the End of Green Lane leading to Southgate 2.5.4	3 0 0
z	Ditto Lane from the End of the Green Lane to the Boarded River 2.2.8 and from thence to the End of Heame Lane on Stroud Green 5.0.3 a Party Lane belonging to Hornsey.	0 2 30
aa	Stroud Green from Heame Lane to the Square Houses 5.0	0 2 23
bb	Ditto a Party Road Ditto	0 3 24
cc	The Lane from Stroud Green to Mount Pleasant	0 3 24
dd	Tallington Lane alias De Vols Lane from King Cross to Hornsey Lane	1 6 20
ee	Heame Lane from Tallington Lane to Stroud Green	0 4 20
ff	Roffs Lane from Tallington Lane to Lower Holloway	0 2 12
gg	Hornsey Lane from Highgate Road to Tallington Lane End 3.32	0 0 0
hh	Maid Lane alias Maiden Lane from the Black Dog at Highgate to Balls Bridge near Pancras 2.7.12 a Party Lane belonging half to the Parish of Pancras	1 3 26
	<b>Total of the Roads &amp; Lanes</b>	<b>8 2 24</b>
<b>Foot Paths &amp; Church ways belonging to the Parish.</b>		
ai	Canbury & Foot Path from the Landmark in Gpswell Street Road to the Turnpike & from thence thro the Town on the East Side of the Lower Street as far as Gunners Lane	0 0 11
aj	Ditto from the South End of the Back Road at Kingsland thro the Upper Road thro both Holloways to the Black Dog at Highgate	3 2 05
ak	Foot Path from the Upper Road by the Side of Major Ryars Walk & the Lower Street to the End of the Church Lane	0 1 11
al	The Church Lane from the Lower Street to the Church Yard	0 0 25
am	Foot path from the Corner of the Church Yard to Canbury House	0 3 08
an	Ditto from Canbury Park to the Spring Garden at Newington Green	0 0 20
ao	Ditto from the Spring Garden round Newington Green	0 2 10
ap	Canbury Lane from Kingsland to the Turnpike to the End of Cook Lane	0 1 34
aq	Foot Path from Frog Lane to the Rosemary Branch	0 2 32
ar	The Elder Walk from Frog Lane to the Lower Street	0 1 12
as	Foot Path from Frog Lane thro the Provence Field to the posts on the East Side of the Provence Field by the side of Almshouse Lane to the Lower Street	0 1 36
at	Ditto from the Posts at the Provence Field by the side of Almshouse Lane to the Lower Street	0 2 36
au	Foot Path from Hopping Lane thro Mother Field to Highbury	0 4 12
av	Ditto from the Spring at Yr Mothers Fields to Cream Hall	1 0 34
	<b>Total of the foot paths</b>	<b>8 7 04</b>

BENJ<sup>r</sup> BRATHWALT  
 WILL<sup>m</sup> KENTISH  
 SAM<sup>l</sup> DENNIS } Surveyors of the Highways

A Scale of Poles