

THE MITRE TAVERN IN
FENCHURCH STREET:
A FAVOURITE HOUSE OF SAMUEL PEPYS.

BY

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THE MITRE in Fenchurch Street held a high position amongst the London Taverns before the Fire, due perhaps in great part to the personality of the Vintner who then occupied it, Daniel Rawlinson. He kept the tavern through the two calamitous years of London's history, in 1665 and 1666. Dan Rawlinson has a further great claim on our attention and interest, in that he was a close personal friend of Samuel Pepys, and is often mentioned in the Diary.

The Mitre belonged to the Pewterers' Company, whose Hall was close to the tavern. Welch in his full and extremely interesting history of that Company gives a good many references to the tavern from their old records, but does not give details of the old leases. He says that Rawlinson succeeded Ashley Cheney in 1658, but the former was at the Mitre in 1641-2. He gives the following interesting note: "Before the Fire the Company's property in Fenchurch Street comprised 'the great house,' Mitre Tavern, and 'the lesser house,' both held by Daniel Rawlinson, and also the Helmet. After the Fire the Mitre was rebuilt, the lesser house was not rebuilt." He does not assist us to find the exact site of the Mitre.

The Mitre stood on the north side of Fenchurch Street, close to the east corner of Lime Street, and its position is given in a general way in Ogilby and Morgan's Map of 1677. Horwood's map of 1795, which gives the numbers of the

houses, shows Lime Street between Nos. 159 east, and 160, west. The Mitre stood at the position of No. 157. Part of the work I have been engaged in concerning interesting houses of Old London has been to identify their sites with the present numbers, which, simple as it appears, really entails a considerable amount of research.

St. Dionis Backchurch stood near the southwest corner of Lime Street, and there are numerous entries of members of the Rawlinson family in the Parish Registers: Daniel Rawlinson had a son, William, baptised in 1642; a daughter Margaret, in 1645; Thomas (son of Daniel and Margaret Rawlinson) in 1647; Mary in 1650; and Elizabeth in 1651.

The burial entries are of interest, and exemplify one of the many family tragedies of the Plague: 1665, Nov. 18, "Daniel son of Mr. Daniel Rawlinson." The disconsolate father on the death of his son shut up the Mitre and went into the country with his family and in the following summer, when the plague had almost died out in London, he deemed it safe to return to the City. Shortly afterwards these burial entries were made:—Aug. 6, 1666, Wm. Chombley servant to Mr. Daniel Rawlinson; Aug. 9, Mrs. Margrett Rawlinson wife of Mr. Daniel Rawlinson; and Elizth. servant of Mr. D. R. Presumably some infected rats were still in the Mitre. Pepys refers to these deaths; Aug. 10th, 1666:—"So homeward, and hear in Fanchurch Streete that now the mayd also is dead at Mr. Rawlinson's; so that there are three dead in all, the wife, a man-servant, and mayde-servant." In 1678, the marriage is recorded of John Mazine and Mary, daughter of Danl. R., vintner, and in 1679—"Mr. Daniel Rawlinson, vintner in this parish, buried in the Middle Isle." In 1686, Daniel, son of Alderman Sir Thomas Rawlinson, was buried in his grandfather's grave. Sir Thomas was Dan Rawlinson's son, and was admitted to the Vintners' Company in 1670. He was Master of that Company in 1687, and Lord Mayor in 1715. Sir Thomas was lessee of the Mitre Tavern after his father's death in 1679.

The writer possesses two specimens of Dan Rawlinson's farthing token, which, to all lovers of Pepys, is one of the most interesting in the series.

Token. *Obv.* At the Mitetr. In =(A mitre).

Rev. Fenchurch. Streete. =D.M.R. (Dan^l and Margaret Rawlinson).

The representation of a bishop's mitre and the initials D.M.R. occupy the fields on the obverse and reverse respectively.

In the Clifford's Inn *Five Decrees*, 1667, (Guildhall, Vol. 1), Daniel Rawlinson appeared as petitioner against the Company of Pewterers and stated that he was the tenant of the Mitre in Fenchurch Street: his Counsel insisted upon his desire to rebuild the premises, "and to return to the place of his former habitation and there to follow his trade of a vintner"; and he offered to rebuild the said Taverne upon surrendering of his terme of 23 years—which he prayed might be made up to 61 years, at the yearly rent of £20. Decree:—The Petit^r to be the rebuilder of the premises; . . . the lease to be for 61 years at the rent of £30. This lease accounts for the long connection of the Rawlinson family with the Mitre Tavern.

The rebuilt tavern was decorated with large wall paintings by Isaac Fuller (1606-1672). Burn quotes Vertue's description of the Mitre pictures:—"the figures being as large as life; over the Chimney, a Venus, Satyr, and sleeping Cupid. . . . The Seasons between the windows, and, on the ceiling, two Angels supporting a mitre."

The great interest attaching to the Mitre, however, is due to the fact that Pepys was a frequent visitor there. In the case of most taverns we are thankful for one or two visits recorded by the great diarist, but in the case of the Mitre and Dan. Rawlinson there are some forty references! (Wheatley's edition; G. Bell and Sons).

July 14, 1660.—"So into Fenchurch Street, and did give

him [Mr. Butler] a glass of wine at Rawlinson's, and was trimmed in the street."

Aug. 12th, 1660.—"Called in at Mr. Rawlinson's, whither my uncle Wight was coming and did come, but was exceeding angry (he being a little fuddled, and I think it was that I should see him in that case)." On Nov. 4th, 1661, he had there "a most brave chine of beef and a dish of marrow-bones." Aug. 6th, 1666. "In Fenchurch Street met with Mr. Battersby; says he, 'Do you see Dan Rawlinson's door shut up'? (which I did, and wondered). 'Why,' says he 'after all the sickness, and himself spending all the last year in the country, one of his men is now dead of the plague, and his wife and one of his mayds sicke, and himself shut up'; which troubles me mightily."

Mr. John Battersby was an apothecary, and it will be seen presently that he was the tenant of a house adjoining the Mitre. This accounts for the fact that Pepys often found him there, on his visits to the tavern.

I cannot resist quoting another entry in the Diary, which shows the worldly wisdom of Pepys: July 4th, 1661, Pepys went with his uncle Wight to the Mitre, "Here Mr. Batersby the Apothecary was, who told me that if my uncle had the emorods, which I think he had—and that now they are stopped, he will lay his life that bleeding behind by leeches will cure him, but I am resolved not to meddle in it."

Maitland, 1756, p. 1092, gives the long Latin inscription on Dan Rawlinson's monument in St. Dionis Backchurch: ". he died aged 65, in 1679—By him lie his wife Margaret, his eldest son Daniel, and Elizabeth and Mary his daughters. . . . The Monument was erected by Thomas Rawlinson, his eldest surviving son."

Maitland relates that in 1747, at the execution of Lord Lovat:—"This morning Mr. Alderman Alsop attended by the two Under-Sheriffs and the proper officers, with the executioner, went from the Mitre Tavern in Fenchurch Street" to Tower Hill.

The story of my tracing the deeds to find the exact position of this interesting tavern is perhaps of some interest, and it may not be impertinent to relate it briefly, if only to show the remarkable courtesy and kindness of the gentlemen worried by me!

I knew that the Mitre belonged to the Pewterers' Company, and that it stood somewhere about Nos. 155 to 158 Fenchurch Street, but the house was sold many years ago by the Company, and had not been used as a tavern for over a century. The 1841 Directory showed that Mitre Chambers were at No. 157 Fenchurch Street. Mr. Sawbridge, solicitor, and the Clerk to the Pewterers' Company, met my request for information with the greatest kindness, and informed me that the Company sold some property called Mitre Chambers in Fenchurch Street, and handed over some bundles of old and expired leases; and that the City of London Real Property Company, who own the premises, might possibly permit me to see the leases. Mr. Kingscote, the Secretary of that Company, was equally kind, and granted permission to see the old leases. It is a great pleasure to record these instances of kindly assistance.

The Pewterers' Company owned the Mitre, No. 157, and the house adjoining it on the west, No. 158, which was also leased to Rawlinson. No. 159 was the house at the eastern corner of Lime Street, but these numbers now form one block of buildings, the City of London Real Property Company. In the plan attached to Dr. Richard Rawlinson's lease of a kitchen in 1730, the premises are bounded by Paul's Head Court on the east, and this Court was at No. 55. This suggests that the Mitre at one time included the site of No. 56.

Extracts from the original deeds.

1. Lease of 1591.

This lease introduces us to Wm. Hobson, the Vintner, who kept the Mitre for many years. The house was often referred to in the Company's records as 'Hobson's.'

1591. The Master and Wardens let "to William Hobson, Vintner, all that their house, with shops, cellars, etc., called or known by the name of "the Byshop's Mytre" now in the tenure of the said W.H." from 1599 (for 46 years). Hobson was probably there a year or two before this lease, for he had a daughter, Joyce, baptised at St. Dionis Backchurch in 1588.

William Hobson assigned his lease to Edward Organ in 1615.

2. 1615. Indenture between Edward Organ, vyntener, and William Hobson. One of the deeds connected with this lease by Hobson to Organ is of great interest, for a complete schedule is given of the contents of the rooms in the Mitre Tavern, and this shows clearly the fashion of naming the various rooms in large taverns. We all remember that Dame Quickly mentioned her Dolphin Chamber to Falstaff, but I believe I am right in saying that such a detailed contemporary account of a tavern in Shakespeare's period has never before been published.

1615. Whereas William Hobson has letten to Edward Organ all that tenement commonlie called the Bishops Myter for 21 yeares, and for the yearly rent of 11 poundes, 6 shillings, and 8 pence. . . . Edward Organ shall pay for a fyne to William Hobson the sum of £602. Schedule, Inp'mis one doore to the Streete with an yron knocker.

In the Taverne, Item, 4 seates and 3 Tables with benches and backs thereto. Item the barre and doore thereto conteyninge thre yardes and a halfe of wainscott.

. Kitchen and buttrye. 11 shelves and 3 dressers. Item the Kitchen yard Entrye and between the posts and seat at the Streete dore paved with Purbeck stone.

In the Phenix. 2 benches with a back, a doore, an oven, and a window or cleerestory. In the Lyon. Three score and four foot of settleing with Two backs, 50 yards of painted cloth, and a window containing 51 panes of glasse, whereof

X yron casements. In the First Gallery, a settle of wainscot. In the Beare, a wyndowe and two cleere storyes. (It would be wearisome to repeat all the benches, settles or long high-backed benches, wainscot, painted cloths, etc., in each room; the painted or stained cloths took the place of tapestry, being cheaper). In the Prymrose, a doore with a catche, a wyndowe conteyninge XI panes of glasse whereof one yron casement. In the Harte, a settle of wainscott with twoe Benches, 13 yards of paynted clothe, a wyndowe and two clerestoryes conteyninge nineteen panes of glasse. Rooms called the Rose and the Swanne follow; the latter had 22 panes of glasse. In the Spread Eagle, a window or light containing 10 panes of glasse; 2 panes of glasse at the staires head by the said room. The Greate Garrett, two doores, and one " boord " window to the pigeon house. In the uppermost chamber of the west side of the house there were 31 yards of painted cloth and 8 panes of glass. The schedule is necessarily abridged here.

The Lyon room, with its great window, seems to have been the principal room. It is interesting to remember that Pepys was doubtless familiar with these rooms. It is a pity that we are not told his favourite resort, or which was Dan Rawlinson's particular room, where he drank wine with his favoured guests.

Hobson, by his will dated 1609, bequeathed the remainder of his lease to the Master and Wardens of the Mistery of Vintners in trust for the maintenance of his daughter Joyce. She married Thomas Williams, Gent. An order in Chancery confirmed this to Thomas and Joyce Williams, and there is a release to them from the Vintner's Company in 1623. Elizabeth, wife of William Hobson, was buried at St. Dionis in 1617.

Edward Organ had children baptised at St. Dionis between 1616 and 1622; and his wife, Margaret, was buried there in 1623.

3. 1635. The Pewterers' Company leased to Ashley

Cheyney, Vintner, the house called the Byshopps Mytre for 22 years, in 1635. Cheyney probably succeeded Edward Organ about 1627, in which year "John son of Ashly Cheyney" was baptised at St. Dionis.

4. 1642. A lease to John Prince, goldsmith, of the house on the west of the Mitre "abutting East on the Mitre Tavern now in the occupation of Daniel Rawlinson, vintner." This shows that Daniel was here nearly twenty years before Pepys commenced his Diary. In 1652 Rawlinson leased this house as well as the Mitre.

5. June 22, 1652. The Master and Wardens in consideration of the sum of £150 to them in hand by Daniel Rawlinson duly paid have letten to the said Daniel Rawlinson the Bishoppes Miter (now in his occupation) at the yearly rent of £40 from 1658 for 25 years. Daniel Rawlinson in 1660 surrendered his lease of 1652, and was granted a lease for 30 years, 1660-1690 at £40 a year.

6. 1652. Lease of the house on the west of the Mitre to Rawlinson:—"All that messuage sometime in the occupation of Edward Cooke apothecary sithence in the occupation of John Prince and now in the occupation of Daniel Rawlinson abutting east upon the tavern called the Mitre." Edward Cooke lived in "the Helmet" next door. A poll Tax list of 1641 (Rec. Office), unfortunately much damaged, gives the following adjoining households in the parish of St. Dionis Backchurch. In the house of Thomas Turgis—2 freemen, 2 female servants. In the house of Edward Cooke for his wife and his sonne John Cooke and for John Brackensley and six other servants. In the house of Daniel Rawlinson for his wife, Robert Shoate a freeman, Francis Turner and Rhode Rawlinson servants, 2s. 6d. (He paid his own "pole money" separately to the Vintners' Company).

The Helmet. The house known by this sign stood close to the Mitre, and as it was also connected with Mr. Battersby, Pepys's friend and Apothecary, a short sketch of its history will not be out of place here. It was a natural sign for an

Armourer. 1541. Lease for 50 years by Thomas Urswyk, Master, and John Sherwyn and John Dey wardens of the Pewterers' Company to Roger Tyndall Armourer. Roger Tindall had children baptised at St. Dionis in 1544 and 1553. The house is described in the lease as "situate between the tenement belonging to the Craft of pewterers wherein Thomas Darker Barber and Surgeon dwells on the east," and the tenement belonging to St. Margaret Moses church on the west. 1644. "The Helmett" was leased to John Cooke apothecary, and described as "late in the tenure of Edward Cooke apothecary . . . abutting east upon the tenement in the occupation of John Prince, west on the tenement of Thomas Turgis, grocer." 1660, Lease of the Helmet from the Pewterers' Company "to John Battersby apothecary and now in his tenure . . . abutting east on the tenement late of John Prince and now of Daniel Rawlinson." It is interesting to note that Battersby and Rawlinson paid their fees on the same day for having their sites marked out after the Fire, as shown in the "Day Booke for ye receipts . . . for ye stakeing out of Foundations in the Ruins of the Citty of London":—1667, Sept. 9th, "Recd. of Mr. Daniell Rawlinson for one site in Fenchurch Street, 6s. 8d.," and a similar entry for Mr. John Battersby. This was three days after Pepys had seen Rawlinson "looking over his ruins." On Sept. 2nd., 1661, Pepys, "meeting with Mr. Battersby the Apothecary in Fenchurch Street to the King's Apothecary's chamber in Whitehall, and there drank a bottle or two of wine." On Feb. 8th, 1663, Pepys was "mightily troubled with an itching all over my body which I took to be a louse or two that might bite me, I found . . . that all my body is inflamed and my face in a sad redness" . . . next day "keep my bed and by the Apothecary's advice, Mr. Battersby, I am to sweat soundly" . . . "In the evening came Sir J. Minnes . . . to see me," and . . . "would not have me take anything from the apothecary, but from him, his Venice treacle being better than the others,

which I did consent to and did anon take and fell into a great sweat." In the morning most of his disease, "itching and pimples were gone." Culpeper, in his "London Dispensatory," 1679 edition, gives the astonishing number of ingredients in this famous medicine, "Theriaca Andromachi or Venice Treacle." There were no less than sixty ingredients including squills, vipers, opium, pepper and a number of vegetable drugs, with Canary wine and honey:—"Make them into an Electuary according to Art."

On January 6th, 1663, after seeing 'Twelfth Night' at the Dukes House, Pepys and Battersby drove home by coach together. On Jan. 16th, Mr. Battersby "coming to see me, I called for the cold chine of beef and made him eat, and drink wine."

Welch gives the following extract from the Pewterers' Company Records:—1648-9. Fanchurch Street for severall taxes upon the Tenants. Upon the Mitre Tavern £8 10s. od. Upon the Helmet Mr. Batersby £5 2s. 6d. Upon John Prince's house £1 16s. 6d. This proves that Battersby took over the Helmet from John Cooke soon after 1644.

The Fire Decree already quoted shows that Daniel Rawlinson was given a long lease of 61 years from 1668; this terminated in 1729.

1730. An Indenture between Richard Rawlinson of Gray's Inn, Doctor of Laws, and the Company of Pewterers. He leased to the Company the Kitchen beneath his two houses extending to the Mitre on the west, and eastwards to Paul's Head Alley (between Nos. 154 and 155 in 1841). A plan of the kitchen is given, which shows a "drinking room" at the back, so this was doubtless an extension of the original tavern. The plan shows Paul's Head Alley on the east of the kitchen.

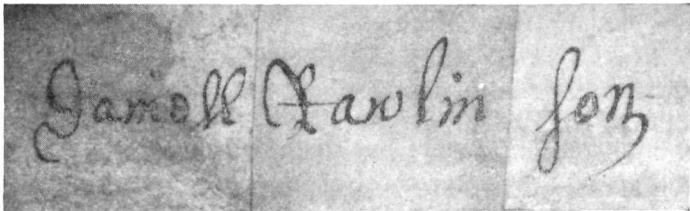
The Inventory shows, "In the Kitchen: An old Dresser and 3 shelves for Pewter; one shelf for Brass Pots; 3 Drinking Boxes, and the wainscot thereby." Outside the deed is written: "Dr. Rawlinson to Company of Pewterers—Lease of y^e Mitre Kitchen for 21 years at 40^{li} p. ann."

1773. The tenement "*formerly called the Miter Tavern*" was leased by the Company to Messrs. Taylor and Wright. To the counterpart lease of 1773 a plan of the Mitre premises is attached, which shows that they occupied almost a square site, with a south frontage on Fenchurch Street of 38 ft. 6 in. An Inventory of the rooms is of interest, for this was probably the house rebuilt by Rawlinson after the Fire. The "Two pairs of Stairs South Room wainscotted to the Top square work carved Cornice, two carved Chimney pieces set with blue and white tiles five sash windows." The "one Pair of Stairs South east Chamber a wooden carved Chimney piece, A marble Chimney piece." "Ground Floor Shop or Warehouse Front part wainscotted up to the top A Dorick screne of four columns and two Pillasters." In 1794 the house "*commonly called the Mitre Tavern*" was leased to Henry and Arabella Beard; and in 1812 to Mrs. Beard for 21 years.

In 1841, the house at No. 157 was called "*Mitre Chambers*" (Post Office Directory). The premises were sold by the Pewterers' Company some years ago.

Dan. Rawlinson was a Royalist, and must have had a difficult time in the troublous years, 1641-1660. His grandson, Dr. Richard Rawlinson, related that in 1649, after the execution of Charles I, Dan. Rawlinson "*hung his sign in mourning.*"

Here is a facsimile of Dan's signature to one of the deeds, reproduced by the kind permission of the Library Committee, Guildhall.



Danell Rawlinson

Pepys mentions Dan Rawlinson so often that it is only possible here to quote a few of the entries. On Feb. 27th, 1661, "with my father to Mr. Rawlinson's, where we met my uncle Wight, and after a pint or two away." On Oct. 26th, 1661, "we called at Dan Rawlinson's, and there drank good sack, and so home." Nov. 24th, 1661, "meeting Mr. Yong, the upholster, he and I to the Mitre, and with Mr. Rawlinson sat and drank a quart of sack." On Dec. 30th, 1661, "I staid at the Mitre, whither I had invited all my old acquaintance of the Exchequer to a good chine of beef, which with three barrels of oysters and three pullets, and plenty of wine and mirth, was our dinner and here I made them a foolish promise to give them one this day twelvemonth, and so for ever while I live, but I do not intend it." (The *sack* had evidently warmed Pepys's heart! the dinner was surely in "The Lyon.") In September, 1667, Pepys met Mr. Rawlinson in Fenchurch Street, "Looking over his ruins" there.

St. Dionis Backchurch, Rawlinson's Church, has disappeared. Its position is, however, marked by a small court, or passage, near the south-west end of Lime Street. Hatton, 1708, mentions a gift to this Church by Mr. Daniel Rawlinson of "a brass Branch of 16 Sockets"—a candelabrum.

As already mentioned, Pepys's friend was buried here, as well as his wife and several of their children. Dan. Rawlinson's son, Thomas, does not appear to have occupied the Mitre Tavern himself, for in the "Watch Book" assessment of Langbourne Ward in 1682 Daniel Rawlinson was assessed at 4s. 6d., and in the Poll Tax list of St. Dionis Backchurch in 1692 we find:—"Daniel Rawlinson Vintner and wife 12s., three men and two mayd servants 5s.—17s." Mr. Daniel Rawlinson, Vintner, was buried at St. Dionis in 1701. Another Daniel appears to have succeeded him, for in 1709 "John Jones servant to Mr. Daniel Rawlinson" was buried.

The house at the South east corner of Lime Street, afterwards No. 159, was occupied in Rawlinson's time by Thomas

Turgis, grocer. The City of London Real Property Company's premises are now numbered 158 and 159 Fenchurch Street. It remains to add that the Chairman of this Company Sir W. J. M. Burton, has now sent these old leases to the Guildhall Library. This is a noteworthy example of public spirit and if it were widely followed we should learn much of interest concerning our old City.

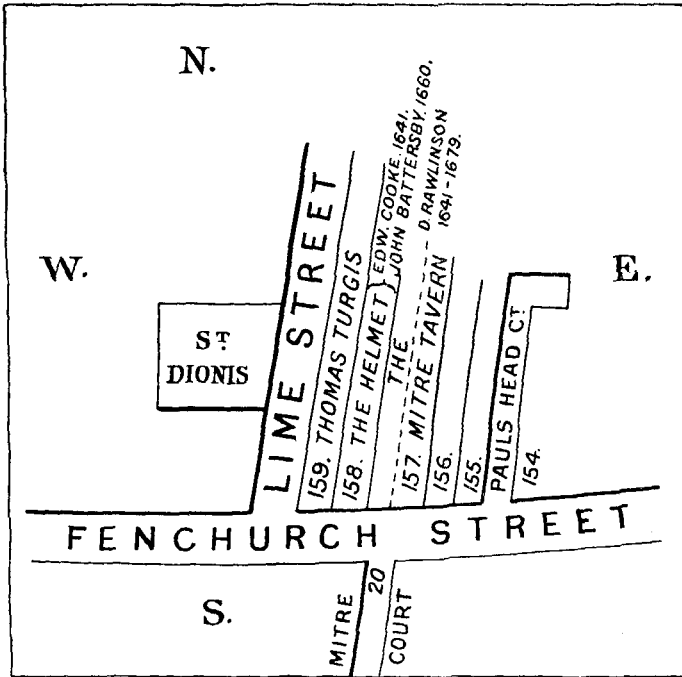


Diagram showing relative positions of the Mitre Tavern and adjacent premises.

In the Phenix, or upstairs in the Spread Eagle chamber, we will take our leave of Dan. Rawlinson, pressing his excellent sack on the willing Pepys, Uncle Wight and neighbour Battersby.