

CORONER'S INQUESTS IN CLRO

The sources within CLRO and elsewhere relating to Coroner's inquests held on deaths within the City of London and the ancient Borough of Southwark are summarised below.

In cases of sudden or unexplained death, an inquest was held by the Coroner for the district where the death was certified, usually within a few days of the death. Inquest details (date, place, Coroner's name and jurisdiction) are always noted on a person's death certificate.

Before 1478 the King's Chamberlain was King's Butler and Coroner for the City. In 1478 the Corporation of London was granted the right to appoint its own Coroner for the City of London, and has done so ever since, as well as appointing the Coroner for Southwark 1550-1932. Before 1932 the same person acted as Coroner for both Southwark and the City. After 1932 the Corporation kept the right to appoint the Coroner for the City, but the Southwark Coroner was appointed by London County Council [or LCC, later the Greater London Council, or GLC].

CLRO holds Coroner's inquests for the City of London (including St Bartholomew's Hospital) and the Borough of Southwark (including Guy's Hospital, and St Thomas's Hospital before it moved in 1871). In this context, the Borough of Southwark covers only the ancient borough, just at the southern end of London Bridge, not the larger, *post*-1889 London Borough.

City of Westminster inquests c.1760-1879 are held at **Westminster Abbey Muniments and Library** (London SW1P 3PA, telephone 020 7222 5152, ext. 228, fax 020 7222 6391, e-mail library@westminster-abbey.org). Some inquest records for Paddington, 1860-1864 are at the **City of Westminster Archives Centre** (10 St Ann's Street, London SW1P 2XR, telephone 020 7641 5180, fax 020 7641 5179). Inquests for the Duchy of Lancaster, Middlesex 1817-1878 are held by the **Public Record Office** [PRO], (Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU, telephone 020 8876 3444, fax 020 8392 5286, e-mail enquiry.pro.rsd.kew@gnet.gov.uk, website <http://www.pro.gov.uk/>).

Most other surviving Coroner's records for Middlesex and the LCC/GLC area (i.e. most of the greater London area outside the City of London and Southwark) are held by **London Metropolitan Archives** [LMA] (40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB, telephone 020 7332 3820, minicom 020 7278 8703, fax 020 7833 9136, e-mail ask.lma@corpoflondon.gov.uk website <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/archives/lma/>). However, surviving *pre*-1889 Coroner's inquests for those areas which only became part of Greater London in 1889 or 1965 are still held by the county record office for the former county. For details see *Coroner's Records in England and Wales* by J Gibson and C Rogers (Federation of Family History Societies, 2nd edition, 1997).

CORONER'S INQUESTS BEFORE 1788

A City of London Coroner's roll of 1272-1273 is held by the PRO. Most other City of London and Southwark Coroner's inquests before 1788 are in CLRO. All the medieval Coroner's inquests held by CLRO have been edited and published. Inquests, many earlier than the eyes themselves, are included in *The London Eyre of 1244* ed. HM Chew and M Weinbaum (London Record Society Vol. 6, 1970) and *The London Eyre of 1276* ed. M Weinbaum (LRS Vol. 12,

1976). A copy of the Coroner's rolls for 1276-1278 is published in the *Calendar of ... Letter Book B* ed. RR Sharpe (London, 1900).

CLRO holds Coroner's Rolls 1300-1378 (with gaps), edited and published in the *Calendar of Coroner's Rolls of the City of London 1300-1378* ed. RR Sharpe (London, 1913). One gap in the series is partially filled by a Coroner's Roll for the City of London 1315-1316, held by the PRO. A transcript and translation of this roll (and some of CLRO rolls) is available in the **Manuscripts Section of Guildhall Library** (Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ, telephone 020 7332 1863, fax 020 7600 3384, e-mail manuscripts.guildhall@corpoflondon.gov.uk, website: <http://ihr.sas.ac.uk/gh/>).

CLRO has a Coroner's roll of 1590, with a manuscript calendar, including inquests on Newgate prisoners. This has been published in "London Coroner's Inquests for 1590" by TR Forbes in *Journal of the History of Medicine & Allied Sciences* XXVIII, 4, Oct 1973, pp 376-386.

CLRO has London Sessions Papers which include some depositions made c.1670s-1780s before the Coroner for the City of London in cases where a trial was subsequently held at the Sessions.

CORONER'S INQUESTS AFTER 1788

CLRO has a complete series of Coroner's inquests and depositions for the City of London 1788-1992, and for the ancient Borough of Southwark 1788-1932 (all available inquests are indexed). These records are closed for 75 years, and if you wish to see the closed records, you need to obtain written permission from the present **Coroner for the City of London**, Coroner's Court and Office, Milton Court, London EC2Y 9BL. Bring the letter of authorisation with you come to CLRO to see the records. Records within the 75 year closure period cannot be copied, even if access is allowed.

The handwriting of most 19th and 20th century Coroner's inquests in CLRO is very poor, and sometimes illegible. In the worst cases, you might have to see press reports for details. Copies of the City of London's local newspaper, the *City Press* (succeeded by the *City Recorder*) from 1857 are held on microfilm by the **Printed Books Section of Guildhall Library** (Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ, telephone 020 7332 1868, fax 020 7600 3384, website: <http://ihr.sas.ac.uk/gh/>). Southwark local newspapers after 1856 are held by **Southwark Local Studies Library** (211 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JA, telephone 020 7403 3507, fax 020 7403 8633).

CLRO also holds records of cases of sudden death for which no inquests were held 1901-1937, and records relating to fire inquests 1888-1947. Please ask us for further details.

CLRO has inquest records for the City's prisons (including Newgate, Bridewell, Ludgate and the Compters) and the Fleet in a separate series 1783-1839 (with gaps). The City Coroner's jurisdiction also covered Holloway Prison 1852-1965 and records of these are amongst London Coroner's inquests and depositions in CLRO.

CLRO holds the inquest on Catherine Eddowes, a Whitechapel (or 'Jack the Ripper') murder victim.

The City of London Coroner's inquests series includes inquests on suicides who threw themselves off the Monument. Their names 1788-1842 are listed in *A Guide to the Monument*,

available from the **Guildhall Library Bookshop** (Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ, telephone 020 7332 1858, fax 020 7600 3384).

TREASURE-TROVE

Treasure trove is any gold or silver coin or other object hidden in the earth or other private place. It belongs to the crown, unless its owner claims it. The City's jurisdiction over treasure trove in the City of London and Southwark was granted by various charters. Records of treasure trove inquests are amongst the series of Coroner's inquests and depositions in CLRO. Some of the more famous artefacts (such as the Cheapside jewellery hoard, found 1912, and items found in Budge Row and at the Temple of Mithras in 1958) are now in the **Museum of London** (London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN, telephone 020 7600 3699, fax 020 7600 1058, e-mail info@museumoflondon.org.uk website <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk>).

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Publication by Corporation of London Records Office, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ
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