

In Confidence
Not for publication in any form

**The Curious Story
of
62 Fleet Street
and
“the strip”**

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This is the parish map of the ward of Faringdon Without, dated 1858, and is the earliest map showing the junction of Bouverie Street and Fleet Street.. Fleet Street is at the top. Note that Bouverie Street narrows from 36 ft down to say 10 ft at the Fleet Street junction, and that both 62 and 63 have a slanting flank wall to Bouverie Street (source: London Met. Archives))



This picture of a water-colour shows the frontage of no.62 Fleet Street at the time of Richard Carlile's trial for refusal to pay church rates on the property. His bookseller's stock was seized on two occasions, and he eventually went to prison. He was one of the foremost advocates of the freedom of the Press, and was notable for being the one who would rather serve terms in prison (a total of nearly 10 years) than compromise on matters of principle with the authorities

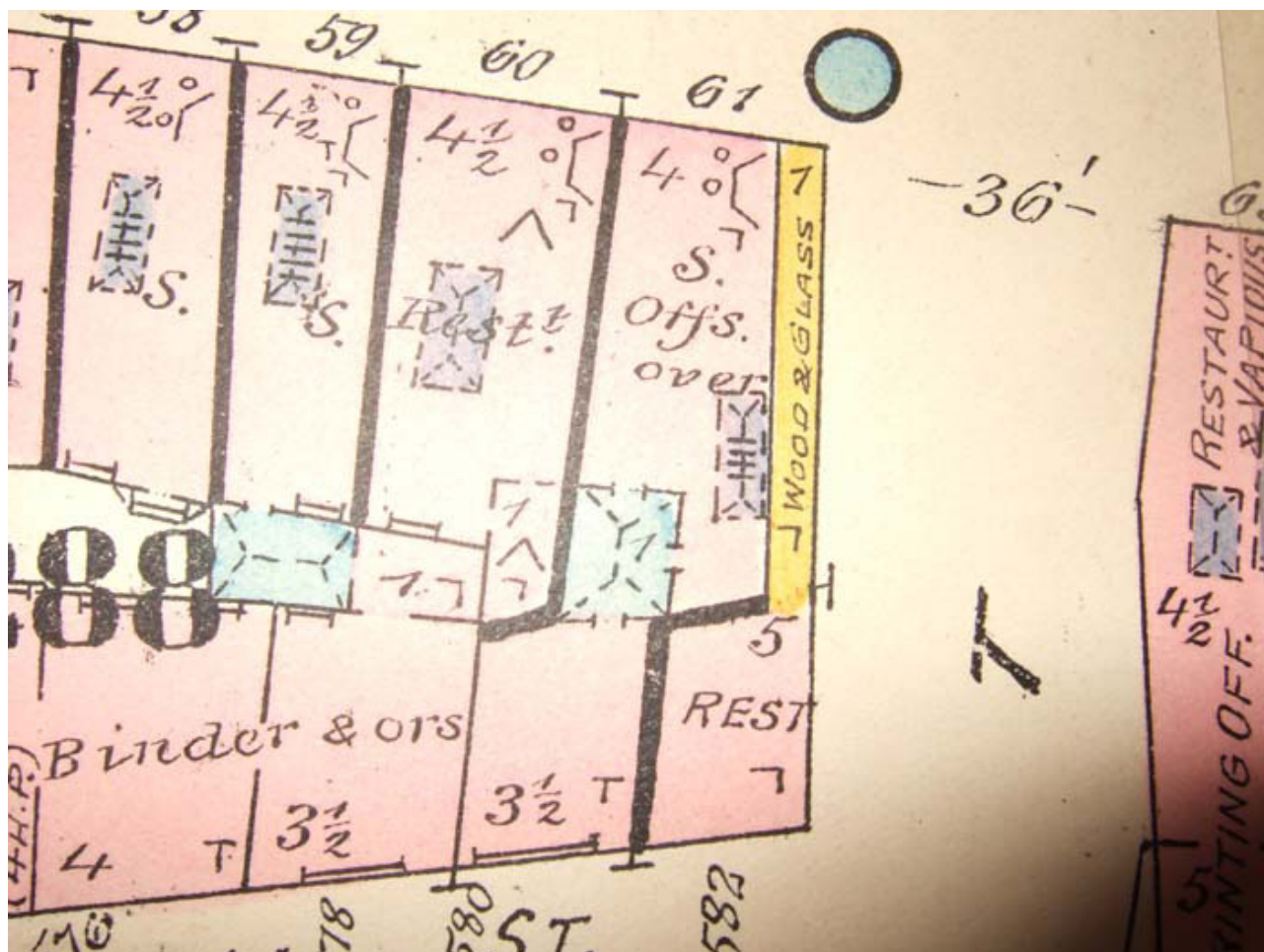
The tableau is captioned "Props of the Church" and the left hand window, showing a bishop with the Devil is captioned "Spiritual Broker" and the right hand one, perhaps showing a bailiff, is captioned "Temporal Broker" (source: Museum of London)



This picture, from Tallis' Street Views of 1848, shows the junction of Fleet Street and Bouverie Street, including no 62, which looks very similar to that shown in the watercolour. The general appearance of Fleet Street was of small frontages with small bay windows for shop fronts. The narrow frontages persist in this part of Fleet Street, though the uniformity of frontage has vanished (source: Guildhall Library)



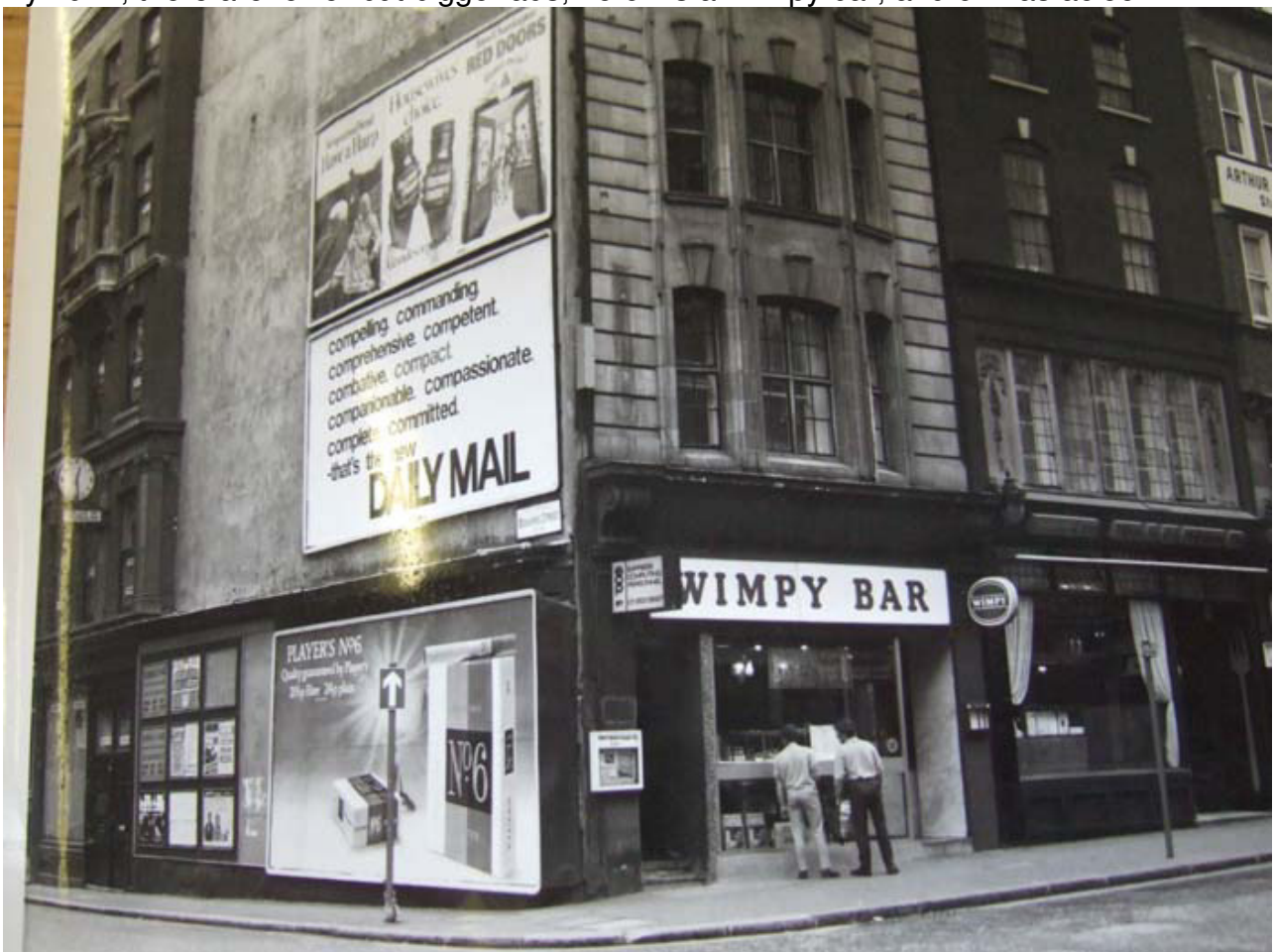
This detail from Goad's Insurance plan shows the Bouverie Street/ Fleet Street junction a few years later, after Bouverie Street had been widened to 36 ft. throughout its length. The bottleneck at the Fleet Street junction was removed by demolishing no.62, though some 2 feet of its width was not required for the road, and was thus left as an appendage on the title of 62 Fleet Street, which now consisted only of the back premises of the original building (source: Guildhall Library)



This is the earliest photograph showing the flank wall of no.61 with the “strip” in front of it. It is said to date from the 1930s, though visually it appears to be a bit earlier. The wall now has on it 16 full-size posters arranged in a 4 x 4 grid above ground floor level, and some smaller advertisements at ground level. No. 61 is a Lyon’s Corner Shop.
(source: Museum of London)



By 1971, there are fewer but bigger ads, no.61 is a Wimpy bar, and 62 has a clock



By 1986, there is one fewer advertisement, no. 61 is a Pasta house, and 62 has lost its clock but gained a "College of Journalism" signboard. (source: Guildhall Library)



By 1990, no 61 is a Sue Ryder shop and there is a small sign for a recruitment agency
(source: Guildhall Library)



In 2002, the wall carries only 1 illuminated advertisement (source: Fleet Street Developments Ltd)



By 2006, that advertisement has gone too, leaving a blank wall (source: 62 Fleet Street Ltd)



and a small urban junkyard at its foot (see detail below). This seems a sad ending for the site which, more than any other, was the cradle of the freedom of the press, on which so many of our current freedoms are based.

The end of the story? We hope not. The Fleet Street Heritage Sundial will make this wall an exciting part of the street scene of Fleet Street, and will remind everybody of the great history of Fleet Street. (source: 62 Fleet Street Ltd)

