

## The London Stone - A Place For Proclamations

The London Stone, close by our offices at 9 Dowgate Hill, is made of limestone and is mentioned in numerous historical records, the first of which was around 1098-1108. It is part of a rocky outcrop that once protruded in front of what is now Cannon Street Station. It is mentioned by Shakespeare, Wren, Blake and Dickens.

But what is the London Stone? For some it was a measuring post, a Romano-British distance marker, a centre point from which every distance in Roman Britain was measured. For others it was a prehistoric standing stone, or an altar built by Brutus of Troy the legendary founder of Londinium, or a magic symbol having magical powers. But for the citizens of the City of London it may have been where deals were confirmed and completed. It was “recognized as the symbolic authority and heart of the City of London” (Wikipedia). It was said to be a place where oaths were sworn, and the point from which official proclamations and declarations were made.



It is thought that if the stone is lost so is the City of London, and it has seen action. In 1742 it was moved to the North side of Cannon Street and protected by a specially built cage. In 1798, for greater security and preservation, it was built in a cage in the South wall of St. Swithin at London Stone. The church was severely damaged in the blitz of 1940 but the London Stone survived, remarkably left unscathed. When in 1962 the remaining bit of the South wall of St. Swithin's was demolished (the site having been sold for redevelopment) it was moved. Again it was built into a specially constructed cage in the middle of the front wall of No. 111 Cannon Street, constructed for the Bank of China, which lies equidistant between Salters' Hall Court and St. Swithin's Lane and is not far from the well-known pub at No. 109 called "The London Stone". Its last attack was in 2006 when developers of No.111 wanted to move it to a museum. BBC News Magazine with remarkable foresight ran a successful campaign against its removal. The building has not, as yet, been demolished.

Thus it was thought appropriate for the Master to open the Tercentenary Year by underlining the Statement of Aims and Objectives (adopted by the Court at its meeting on 23rd October 2008) by making the following Declaration at the site of the London Stone, prior to the Installation Service at the Fan Makers' Parish Church of St. James Garlickhythe:-

*“As Master of the Worshipful Company of Fan Makers I HEREBY DECLARE THAT the main aim of the Company during its ensuing Tercentenary Year is to be the acknowledged repository of fan enthusiasm and expertise in relation to antique and modern ladies fans, air-conditioning fans, aviation and aerospace fans and Her Majesty's Armed Forces' fans, and to use all the skills of a mixed Livery in the promotion and in the development of such enthusiasm and expertise. AND I HEREBY DECLARE THAT the Company's principal objective is to support Her Majesty The Queen and the Royal Family and the Lord Mayor of London, the Sheriffs and the City Corporation. Declared this 22nd Day of January 2009 at the London Stone.”*