

The city of London – Development

In the past the term 'The City of London' was a definition for the whole of London/Londinium within the London Wall, a defensive wall, which was first built by the Romans. Until the later Middle Ages the wall defined the boundaries of the City of London.

The Origin - Londinium

London was created from the Roman settlement Londinium in 43 AD, after the Romans had built a bridge over the Thames.

In the 5th and 6th Century Angles and Saxons settled in the southeast of England, after the Romans moved away from Britain. In the 8th century London was attacked by the Vikings and was looted. 886 king Alfred of Wessex reconquered the town and London developed into an important commercial centre. In 1066 William the Conqueror was crowned in Westminster Abbey after the famous battle of Hastings. In the Middle Ages London grew to become the capital.

Destruction and Reconstruction

In 1485-1603 the Tudors ruled. During the reign of Elizabeth I in 1558 London developed into a commercial centre.

In 1665 the plague raged and about one fifth of the population died. In 1666 a fire broke out and burned for three days. The fire destroyed extensive parts of the town. The reconstruction started in 1675 with the Saint Paul's Cathedral and lasted ten years.

Period of Glory

1801 London was the biggest town of Europe with about 1 million inhabitants.

In 1834 Queen Victoria ascended the throne. She governed for 64 years. In this time Great Britain experienced a period of glory. London became the finance centre of the British Empire. When Queen Victoria died in 1901 at the age of 81 years, London already had 6.5 million inhabitants.

West End and East End

Because of the circumstances in London the term 'East End' became a synonym for socially underprivileged or working-class areas, in contrast to the 'West End', which is a synonym for „higher society“.

And the situation in the 19th century is still current today – different social classes live in different areas.

West End

The west end is the part, which was and still is rich in the attractions of the London city centre. The development of the entertainment centre started in the 17th century. Most of the growth of London happened in the west.

There, above all, prosperous citizens settled, because the western wind protects a quarter of the town from the smells and from smoke and gases. Today the west is known as the site of the most important London theatres and numerous places of interest and shows; beside Broadway in New York, the second-most important musical metropolis of the world.

East End

The London East encloses the districts to the east of the medieval city centre and to the north of the River Thames; today Tower Hamlets and the southern part of Hackney. It became a culture of street markets and small shops. There, because of the prevailing west wind situation, exhaust gases (heating, industry, etc.) were especially perceptible and the area was particularly endangered for smog (name for air pollution caused by issues).

Around 1820 a population explosion broke out in England.

This lured hundred thousands of people into the districts with hope for work.

The districts were not intended for this rush of people (in other words: they were too small). Overpopulation was the result.

Over the course of a century, the East End became synonymous with poverty, overcrowding, disease and criminality.

Subdivisions of London today:

The "City of London" is entirely different from Greater London. In fact Greater London contains within it two cities, the City of London and the City of Westminster.

The City of London is also known as "the City" or "the Square Mile". It is a tiny area (approximately one square mile) right in the centre of Greater London which during the medieval period was the full extent of London, before the surrounding area became developed into today's Greater London.

Greater London today is divided into two portions - Inner London and Outer London.

- City of London

- Greater London
 - 32 surrounding boroughs
 - 13 inner boroughs
 - Islington, Kensington, Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Camden, Hackney, Hammersmith, Fulham, Haringey, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and the City of Westminster
 - 19 outer boroughs
 - Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Merton, Barking, Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Ealing, Croydon, Enfield, Greenwich, Harrow, Havering, Sutton and Waltham Forest

Today the ancient Londinium is the City of London. In the past Londinium was bordered by a huge wall and today there is only a visual border.

