

The Living

Life in the Great Plague of London

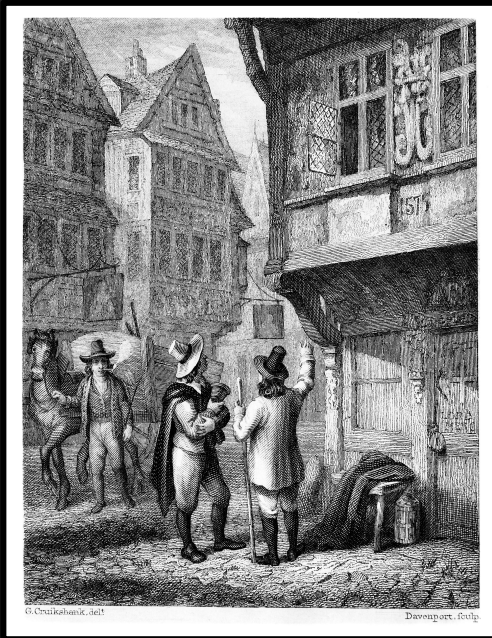
A guide to the happenings of 1660's England

ARCC fall production 2020

directed by
Lisa Weaver

By Bailey Rosdahl





Production credits

Creative team

Director..... Lisa Weaver

Technical Director/Designer..... Peter Lerohl

Stage Manager..... Sylvia Cabak

Dramaturg..... Bailey Rosdahl

Cast

Mr. John Graunt.....Luke Martin

Mrs. Sarah Chandler.....Sara Kunz

Dr. Edward Harman.....Nate Jacobi

Mrs. Elizabeth Finch.....Caitlin Sparks

Sir John Lawrence.....Hayden Tang

Lord Brounker.....Samuel Fish

Rev. Dr. Thomas Vincent.....Samuel Babkin

Ensemble.....Emily Rosdahl

Ensemble.....Cody Johnson



Designed for Marjorie Ryburn of London.

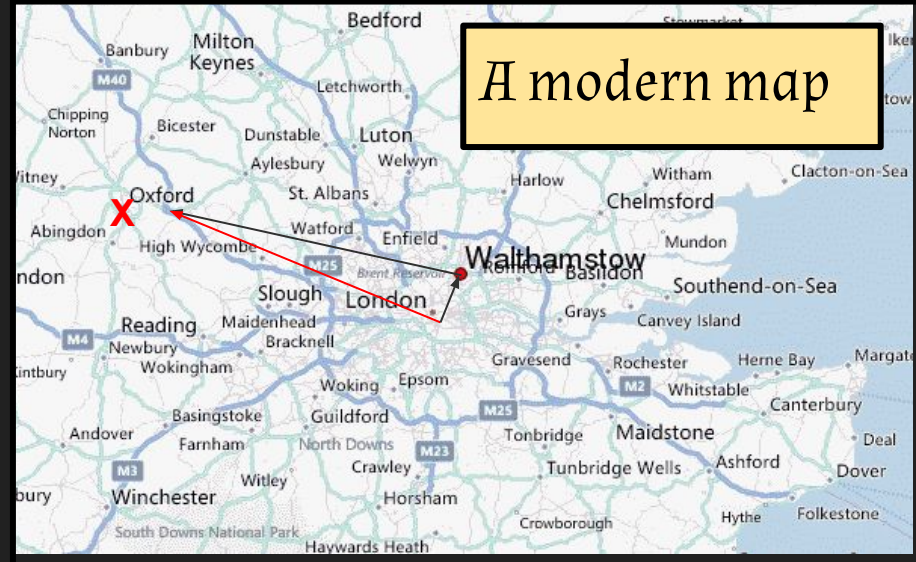
An EXPLANATION
of the
several Forts in the
City
for
COMMUNICATION.

1. A Watch-tower & half-moon of Wall at the North end of Strand Lane.
2. A Hornwork near the Windmill in White-chapel Road.
3. A Redoubt with a Flank near Brick Lane.
4. A Redoubt with a Flank in Westbury Road, Shoreditch.
5. A Redoubt with a Flank in Kingsland Road, Shoreditch.
6. A Battery & Hornwork at Mile-end.
7. A Battery & Hornwork at St. George's Street end.
8. A Small Redoubt near Brompton Place.
9. A Large Fort with four half-Batteries at the new River upper End.
10. A Battery & Hornwork with half-Moon of Blackfriars Side.
11. Five Batteries & a Hornwork at Middlesex, near Bedford House.

12. A Redoubt with a Flank near St. Helen's Church.
13. A Small Fort at the East end of Finsbury Road.
14. A Large Fort with four half-Batteries across the River at Whitechapel Street.
15. A Small Fort at the place now called Oldbourne.
16. A Large Fort with five half-Batteries at Bishopsgate.
17. A Small Redoubt & Battery on Cornhill Hill.
18. A Chain of Guard at St. John's Temple.
19. A Battery & Hornwork in Pall Mall Field.
20. A Hornwork with a half-Battery near St. James's Park.
21. A Fort with a half-Battery at the Doge's Walk in St. George's Parke.
22. A Large Fort with a Redoubt near the end of Blackman Street.
23. A Redoubt with a Flank near the Lock Hospital in Kent Street.

A PLAN of the City and Environs of LONDON as fortified by Order of PARLIAMENT in the Years 1625 & 1633.

A map of the City of London Circa 1660. This area still exists much as it is described here, and exists as a separate municipality from London proper.



In the first act of the living, Sarah Chandler finds herself **walking** from the City of London to Walthamstow on the way to Oxford. The walk from London to Oxford by itself is 56 miles, or an 18 and $\frac{3}{4}$ hour walk indicated by the red arrow above.

Politics and Nobility



King Charles I

Queen Consort
Henrietta Maria of France



In 1642, King Charles I began the **English Civil War** otherwise known as The War of the Three Kingdoms when he joined forces with Scotland, against parliament. This war was the most influential in regards to setting **rifts** in the political climate in the civilized world. His wife, Henrietta Maria, was the **sister** of King Louis XIII of France, and because of this connection had a fair amount of **influence** in French politics and fashion.



King Charles II

Their **son**, Charles II, was the reigning monarch at the time of the Plague of 1665.

In this time, it was common for a king to have mistresses especially if the queen consort was unable to produce offspring as in the case of Catherine. King Charles had anywhere from two to seven extramarital affairs at any one time.

Despite these scores of women his favorite mistress was Lady Castlemaine.

She was not only extremely beautiful, but would go on to provide the monarch five illegitimate children.



Queen consort
Catherine of Braganza

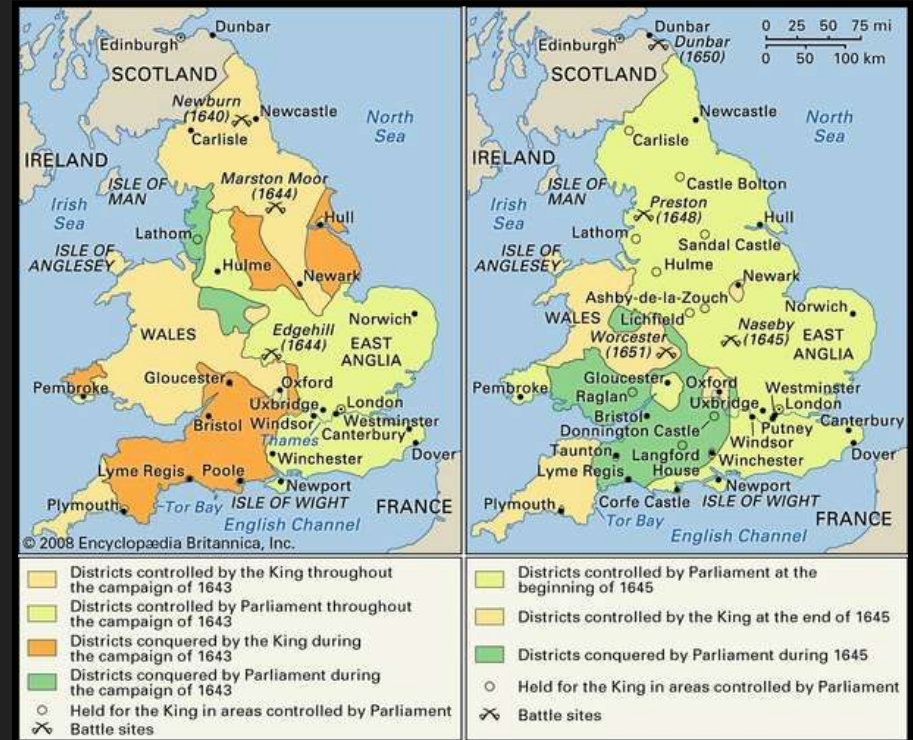


Lady Castlemaine,
mistress to Charles II

English Civil War



Left, Oliver Cromwell led the parliamentary army during the early phases of the war. Right, Prince Rupert of the Rhine led the Royalist army.



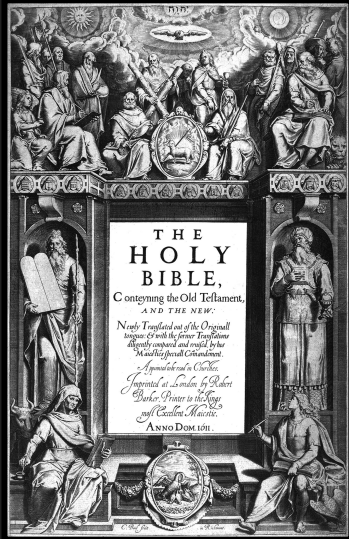
Map of England depicting the land conquered by the parliamentarians in the 1643-1645 Civil war.

Religion under King Henry VIII

The English Reformation marked the split from the Catholic church instigated by King Henry VIII of England in **1534**. In the connection between church and state, Henry's desire to **divorce** his first wife Catherine of Aragon, and marry Anne Boleyn, was not only illegal but also immoral in the eyes of the Catholic church.



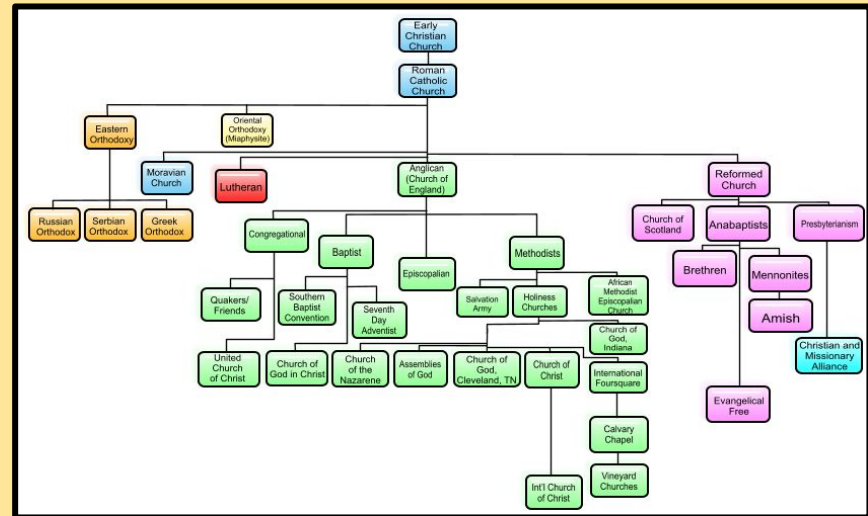
However, this did not stop the King, in fact, he pushed forward a new church called the Church of England, or **Anglicans**, and eventually, in **1611**, a new interpretation of the Bible under King James. King VIII was the **first** English king to hold the title of the head of the church as well as the state.



The title page of the
King James Bible

A diagram of the most prominent
Christian sects. Everything in
green derives its roots from the
Anglican church.

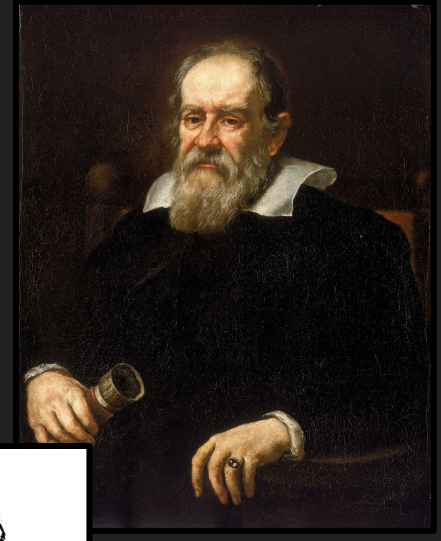
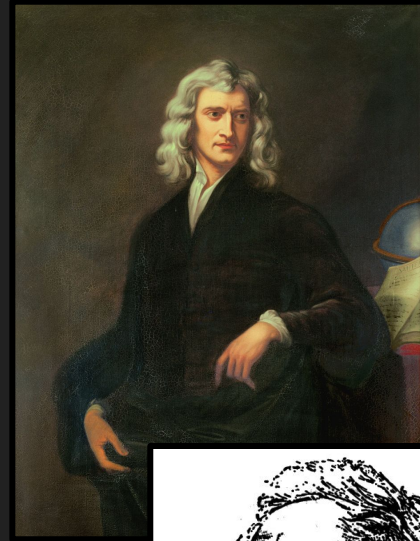
During this time **King Henry** decreed that all those living in England swear their loyalty to the **Church of England**, or be charged with treason. Many English Catholics who were unwilling to denounce their faith, were put in stocks, or locked up in the Tower of London to await their death sentence.



The science of the 1600's

Modern science in the 1600's was in its infancy. Galileo Galilei was one of the first astronomers and physicists. Born in Italy in 1564, he deduced that lighter objects fall at the same rate of change as heavier ones. This fundamental force in the universe influenced the young English Physicist, Isaac Newton in 1666 when he observed an apple fall off a tree on the grounds of Woolsthorpe Manor, in Lincolnshire. This was the beginnings of understanding gravity.

Another discipline being developed, was the study of statistics. In the living, we are introduced early on to John Graunt. Born in 1620, John Graunt was one of the very first statisticians, and students of demography. He was able to use the Bills of mortality to create the first Life table. This document gave an accurate estimation of how long each generation would live, and would be his key into the Royal Society.



Isaac Newton (Left)
Galileo Galilei (Right)
John Graunt (Bottom)

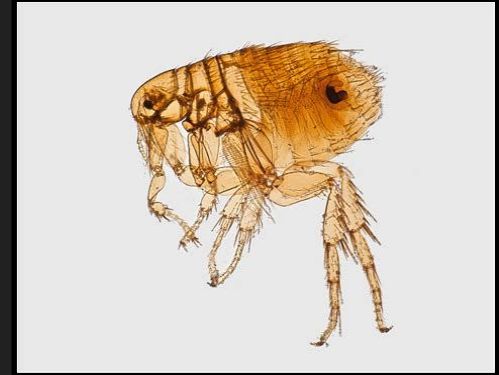
The Great Plague of London

1665-1666



Before I begin to explain the historical implications of the plague of 1665, we first must understand what the Plague is.

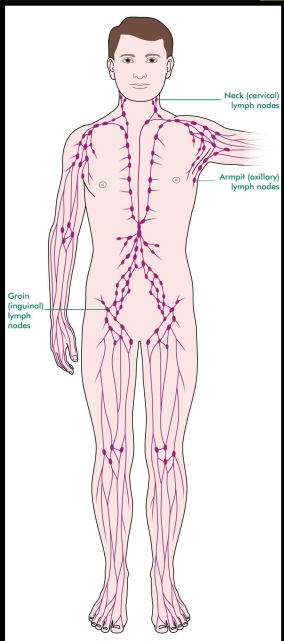
Yersinia Pestis is a bacteria that is naturally found in the digestive tract of the Oriental rat flea. It is harmless to the flea, but becomes dangerous when the flea bites a rat or other small rodent. The **flea** then deposits fluid under the skin of the rat, infecting the rodent.



At that point, the **bacterium** has two ways of spreading, in the bite from the rat or flea, or as scholars believe is most common, if any type of **fluid** from the rat (urine, fecal matter, blood, etc.) comes in contact with the human digestive tract.

Yersinia Pestis has three subcategories.

- The first is the **Bubonic** Plague. This bacterial strain attaching through the lymph nodes causes the development of flu-like symptoms and hardened lymph nodes filled with a fluid called Bubo along the neck, underarms, and groin.
- The second is **Septicemic**, whereby it infects the blood and causes extreme sepsis.
- Thirdly The **Pneumonic** version attacked the lungs and respiratory system of the body.



It also stands to be mentioned that The great London plague is **NOT** the same plague as Black Death.

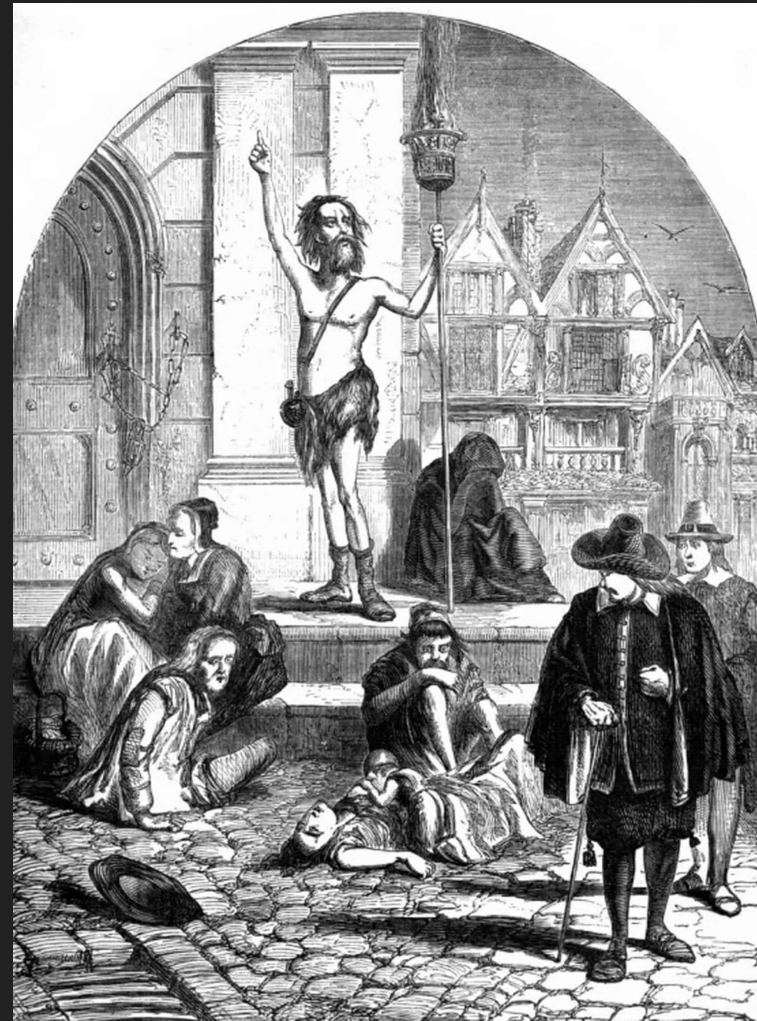
While they both came from what is considered the second wave of plagues from eastern Asia, our play is set in the spring and summer of **1665**, and Black Death ran rampant across Europe between **1345-1350**, and is the largest recorded plague in human history.



The great plague appeared first in the London neighborhood of **Covent garden** in the early spring. Within just a few days two were dead. By the end of the week, it had begun to spread like **wildfire** to the rest of the festering streets of London.

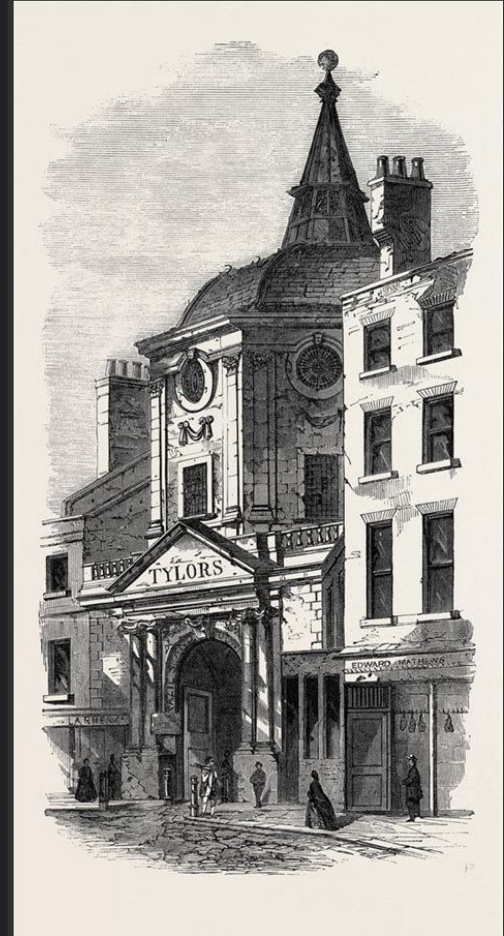
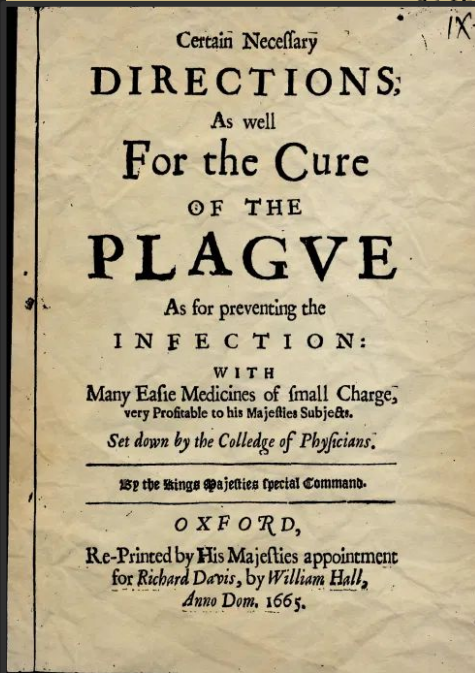
During this period of unrest, new **rules** for the city were **implemented** in stages. In the early months, the families of anyone who was suspected to have contracted the plague were **severely** punished, and usually exiled into the countryside or shoved into a pest house.

To **avoid** this, people started moving away from the most infected streets and boroughs and **lie** about what family members died from. This, of course, did nothing but spread the disease **faster** and further through the city.



By early **June** new methods of prevention were applied. Fires of burning sea coal were created in the streets in hopes to cleanse the **air**. The College of physicians published a document, one for the rich and one for the poor, detailing supposed “remedies to the plague” that were

distributed among neighborhood **ies** so they may gather the
nts and roots.



When someone in your family began to show symptoms of either form of plague, your entire family would be locked in your house by an iron padlock, and a red cross painted on the door, until the house stayed healthy for two weeks.

However, this usually is not what happened. Due to the healthy family being contained with the sick, the rest of the household was usually infected by the end of the week, and dead at the end of two.



Doctors found that they needed to adapt their clothing to the dangers of the plague. Long robes, a brimmed hat and heavy boots were commonplace in this era. Also common were gloves that had a sort of talon on the end of each finger to create distance between the flesh of the living and of the dying.



No article is more recognizable in this period than that of the Plague masks. These masks completely covered the face and neck, with a long beak or snout that would be filled with flowers and herbs to filter the air the doctors breathed in.



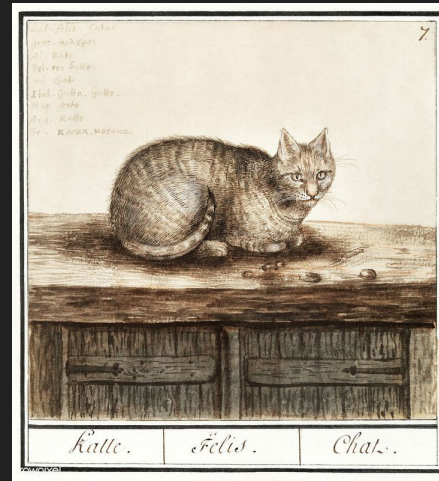
Nurses, much like today had the grueling task of caring for the dying and their families on a daily basis. This group of primarily women would administer herbs and tonics as specified by the College of Physicians. Unlike modern nurses (hopefully) nurses would risk their lives for their patients covering their faces with only an apron or scarf.



New jobs were created to insure the safety of the rest of the town.

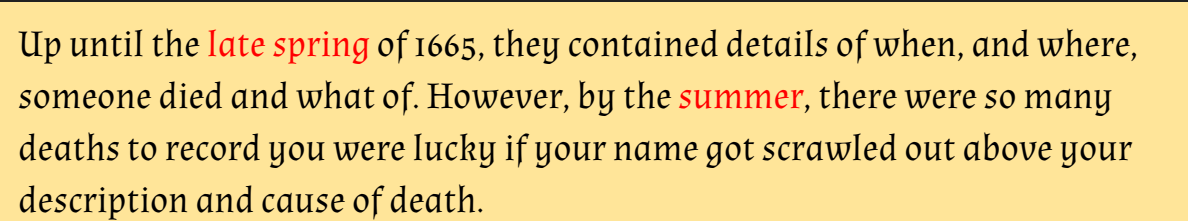
Watchers of houses were appointed and paid eight shillings a week to sit on a stool and make sure no one escaped the locked houses and administer food and water rations.

Searchers of the dead existed purely to see if someone had died yet, and record when they did pass.



By late July, bodies where piled up in the streets waiting for death carts to roll them to mass graves.

A law had been passed decreeing that cats and dogs be shot in hopes of deterring the spread of the plague, this however, was exactly the opposite of course of action necessary, as felines and canines were killing the rats that carried the fleas that carried the plague.



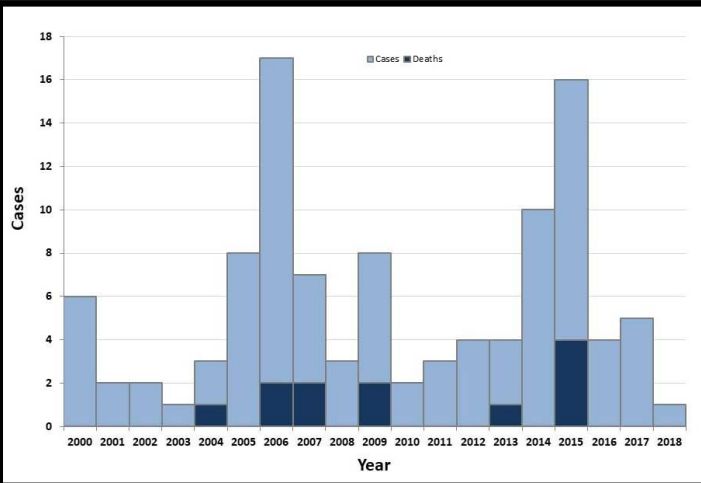
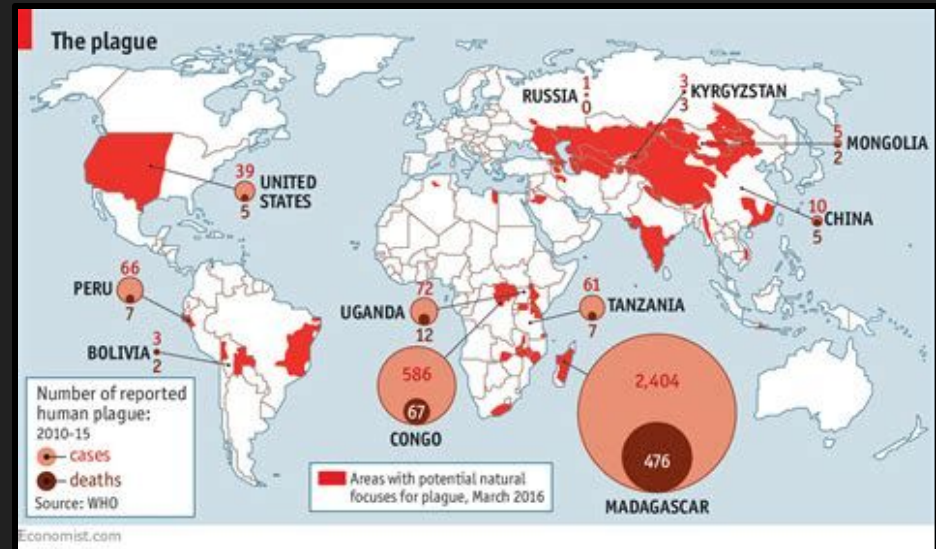
The first of these was created in 1592, to measure the mortality rates in any given parish. However, by 1819 parishes were failing to return numbers to the reporters of the dead, and they had completely disappeared by 1858.

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The Bubonic Plague in modern day

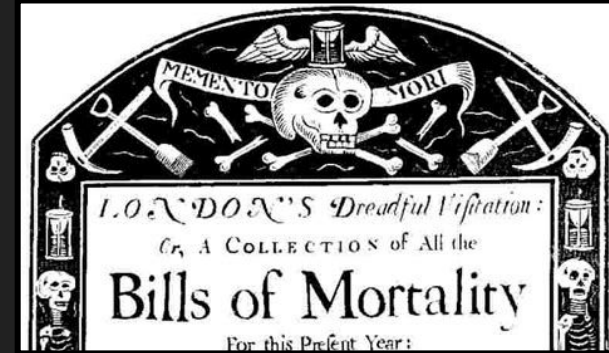
It may be a surprise to learn that the plague is not an illness of the **past**.

Concentrated in areas where animals and humans come in closer **contact**, most cases are found in Africa, specifically the island of Madagascar, and north central Asia.



According to the World Health Organization, roughly **2,000** cases of *Yersinia Pestis* are reported every year, and up to nearly eighteen cases appear in the United States alone.

Memento Mori



Memento Mori is a **Latin** phrase that translates to “Remember that you must die.” From the Medieval period all the way to the Victorian era, this phrase was engraved in epitaphs, and worked into art displayed as three **symbols**: A flower or plant for life, a hourglass representing time, and a skull as the ominous remembrance of death. Did you notice these two Memento Moris in the art of the plague?

Glossary

- **Alderman** - The Aldermen were the only democratically appointed officials in the British chain of command. Each borough of London would vote for a maximum of three aldermen to represent them for six years in a legislative council.
- **Apoplexy** - In modern English Apoplexy has two distinct meanings. The first, is a severe hemorrhage, an example would be Cerebral Apoplexy is what we call a stroke. The second meaning is a state of uncontrollable anger. Ie. "he was in a state of Apoplexy!"
- **Chandler** - A candle maker. It was common practice in this period for a person's surname to describe their occupation. This is where surnames such as Barker (Shepherd or tanner), Black (Dyer of clothing), Bowman (Archer), Carter (Delivery Man), Cooper (Barrel maker) Coleman (coal collector), Fisher (Fisherman) Miller (Grain processor) Stoddard (Keeper of horses) and many others.
- **College of Physicians** - The Royal College of Physicians was the forefront of "modern medicine" Established in 1518, the College of Physicians became the authority of health in the Great Plague.

Glossary Cont.

- **Dilettante** - Someone who is well enough off to take up an activity purely for the enjoyment of it such as art, sciences, boating, riding or needle crafts.
- **Dropsy and tympany** - Known in modern America as Edema, Dropsy is the buildup of fluid in the body caused by the inflammation of a major artery or organ such as the kidneys, liver or heart.
- **Haberdasher** - A shop that sells sewing notions. Buttons, clasps, and other small sewing wares.
- **Laystall** - A laystall is a pen for holding swine or cattle before being slaughtered. The manure was subsequently dumped into the street, which drained into the Thames.
- **Lord Mayor** - The mayor of a large city, typically in the United Kingdom or its commonwealth.

Glossary Cont.

- **Parish** - In this time period city and county governments were still being established. In the meantime Parishes (or Churches) were the authority of the local countryside. The Parishes were responsible for recording births, marriages, deaths and in some cases records of the trading of goods.
- **Privy Council** - The Privy Council was the King's closest court. In the civil war of 1643, the privy council was swept away in the turmoil but was later reinstated by King Charles II. The privy council stands to this day, but it mostly serves as social engagement and holds no political power. The Prime Minister holds the position previously controlled by the privy council.
- **Pesthouse** - Otherwise known as a Plague house, or a fever shed, was a house of forced quarantine for those who had communicable conditions such as cholera, tuberculosis, and smallpox. They were usually built next to a cemetery or a waste pond to dispose of the dead.
- **Sexton** - The person in charge of the maintenance and care of a church or synagogue and its surrounding graveyard.

Thank you,

and

Enjoy the show!