FG: Hello and welcome back to episode 8 of the Counties of England podcast. In this week’s episode we will be covering a very unusual county. This county is the smallest county in terms of area in England. It is also the smallest county in terms of population too. However, in terms of population density it is the third largest. I wonder what it could be. Have you figured it out? I’m not sure many people will have got this one, but today we will be covering the City of London.

FG: First of all, I would like to make you aware that the City of London and Greater London are separate. Greater London covers London as you know it with places like: The Shard, Big Ben, The London Eye and many more. However, there is this tiny square mile right at the centre. This is the City of London, and it is very different from the rest of London, and the rest of England for that matter. It is the historical centre of London. It was the initial fortified Roman settlement of Londinium. This clip will explain more about the history of Londinium. [Play Londinium history clip]

FG: With that out of the way, the City of London is a county which is an enclave of Greater London. An enclave is a territory which is completely surrounded by another territory. This makes the City of London the smallest county in England by far with an area of only 1.12 square miles, because of this it is sometimes referred to as ‘The square mile’ by Londoners. In terms of population the City of London is also the smallest county in terms of population, with only 8,706 people calling the Square mile their home. In terms of population density, it is however the 4th largest county behind Greater London, the City of Bristol and the West Midlands in that statistic.

FG: The City of London is most known for being a global financial hub. This is mainly down to the fact that it contains the two buildings mentioned in this clip. [Play Lloyd’s of London clip]. Lloyd’s of London in particular is crucial to the City of London’s economy. The City’s’ economy is dominated by the insurance sector. This comprises 26% of the city’s’ economy. Now Lloyd’s of London aren’t your traditional insurance brokers. They insure specialist items like tankers and planes. For example, if British Airways wanted one of their fleets of planes insured, they would go to Lloyd’s of London. The City of London is also very prominent in the Forex market, or the Foreign exchange market. This clip will explain a little bit more. [Play Foreign exchange clip]

FG: During a working day, the population of the City of London will increase from 9,401 to around 400,000. This is a 4,154% increase highlighting just how many people will work in the city on a typical day, and just how important it is for employment.

FG: I’m not sure whether you have thought of this yet or not, but the City of London is a very strange place. It has many quirks which I will run through. Some of these quirks are the fact that not every law in the UK applies in the City of London, The City of London has its own police force and the fact that it has its own mayor, completely separate to the mayor of London, who is Sadiq Khan. The governing body of the City of London is called The City of London Corporation and it operates from the Guildhall and is composed of the Lord Mayor of London, the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council. While the Lord Mayor of London may have a fancier title – and outfit – the Mayor of London wields significantly more political power.

FG: Some other quirks about the City of London include the facts that: The City has its own representative in parliament called the Remembrancer who works to make sure that laws passed in Parliament don’t adversely affect the city, so for example bills that relate to banking that are passed may not apply to the City of London as this could have an adverse effect on the City’s’ economy. The current remembrancer is Paul Double, a former barrister, and he has been in the role since 2003. Another quirk include the fact that the reigning monarch must ask permission from the Lord Mayor for entrance to the city. Also, the City’s boundaries are marked out by cast iron dragon statues. So if you are in London and you pass a cast-iron dragon statue, you know that you have entered the City of London.

FG: The flag of the City of London is based on the flag of England, having a centred red St George's Cross on a white background, with the red sword in the upper hoist canton. The sword is believed to represent the sword that beheaded Saint Paul, who is the patron saint of the city. The tip of the sword always points upwards; therefore, when the flag is held on its side as a banner, the sword would be printed to face hoist and would be located on the left as it is hanging down.

FG: So that just about wraps it up for the City of London. I would gamble and say that it is perhaps the strangest and most unique county in England, although I’m sure that claim is up for debate. I do actually have an announcement to make and that is that website for this podcast is currently in development. This website will contain blog posts covering extra information about the counties and just general announcements regarding the podcast. The website will also contain a transcripts page where you can download a copy of every single one of the podcast episodes. The website will hopefully go live by the end of the 21st February, as it is still in development and there is still work to be done. So that is all from me and I hope you are looking forward to the next episode where we will be covering the county of Cornwall on the 27th of February, until then have a good week and I will talk to you again next Saturday.