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57 2006 Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society


# Transactions Volume 57 2006

LAMAS

## London and Middlesex Archaeological Society

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**Editors' note**: the editors are happy to consider articles for publication in *Transactions*. New contributors are advised to ask the Production Editor for a copy of *LAMAS Notes for Contributors* before submitting papers.

*LAMAS* also welcomes the submission of books for review in *Transactions*.

**Front cover**: Roman pottery from the Excavations at the Old Sorting Office, Swan Street, Southwark (*Pre-Construct Archaeology*)

## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Contributions should be sent to the Archaeology/Local History Editors (see inside front cover). All papers will be read by a referee.
2. Submission of articles on computer disk is usual. A clean print-out should also be supplied for editorial use; this should be on A4 paper, printed on one side only, in double spacing throughout, with generous margins all round. The disk and hard copy should be identical.
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5. The type area of a page in *Transactions* measures 208 x 149 mm. All artwork should be designed to be reduced to or within such a space. Fold-outs are very expensive and should be avoided. Scales in metres should be provided on plans. Electronic submission of artwork is welcome but this must be on CD and a printed version must also be supplied. Files should be Tiff or JPeg and designed for black and white reproduction. Line drawings in particular should be saved at the highest resolution possible – ideally 1200 dpi or above.
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LAMAS

Transactions of the

# London and Middlesex Archaeological Society

Volume 57
2006

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# London & Middlesex Archaeological Society

*Registered as a charity*

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# London and Middlesex Archaeological Society

151st ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION YEAR ENDING 30th SEPTEMBER 2006

Council met five times during the year.

Members of Council and others continued to represent the Society at meetings of the Standing Conference on London Archaeology, the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Excavation Committee, the London Archaeological Forum, and the Victoria County History (Middlesex). The year saw the culmination of the 150th Anniversary events with a party held at the Museum of London on Wednesday 14th December 2005, which was very well attended.

**Lecture meetings**

The celebrity lecture series marking the 150th anniversary continued in the Museum's lecture theatre in October with Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage and LAMAS President, speaking on 'How London Past Can Secure London's Future', and Sir Simon Jenkins, journalist, writer and architectural historian, on 'Old Buildings: Dead or Alive?' in November 2005.

The normal lecture series season, held on Wednesday evenings at the Museum of London and organised by Cheryl Smith, started in January 2006 with a presentation by Dr Matthew Davies, Director, Centre for Metropolitan History on 'The City Livery Companies before the Reformation'. In March, Ole Gron of the Institute of Archaeology spoke on 'Danish Mesolithic Dwellings and Landscapes Preserved Underwater' and in April, John Clark of the Museum of London gave a talk on the new Medieval Gallery. The final talk before the summer break was by Natasha Powers, a Human osteologist at MoLSS, who gave a lecture entitled 'Post-Medieval Burial Grounds in London'.

At the AGM in February the President, Dr Simon Thurley, gave his first Presidential Address, on 'Recent Archaeological Discoveries about Cardinal Wolsey'.

**Publications and Newsletter**

The *Newsletter* appeared three times under the editorship of Meriel Jeater, continuing to include a wide range of reviews and short articles as well as news of the activities of our own and other societies. *Transactions* volume 55, the 150th Anniversary volume, appeared. Council continues to appreciate the hard work carried out by our Production Editor Lynn Pitts and our Honorary Archaeological Editor Kim Stabler.

The Society's website, ably managed by Francis Grew, continues to attract attention. There have been discussions during the year about its future development.

**Membership**

Paid-up membership for the year was 632, compared with 619 last year and 662 for 2004. 42 new members joined the society, including 15 by way of the Society's website.

**Archaeology Committee**

The Archaeology Committee met four times during the year, in January, April, September and November. The Committee welcomed Martin Dearne of the Enfield Archaeological Society to its ranks.

Reports on archaeological fieldwork and related matters were received from MoLAS, GLAAS, SCOLA, and LAARC. The Committee also maintained its interest in the late John Kent's South Mimms archaeological archive, and set about gathering it together in LAARC to allow a proper assessment of its contents to be undertaken. Other matters concerning the Committee included the future of GLAAS and the difficulties encountered at St George the Martyr, Southwark, where insufficient provision had been made to allow the completion of a programme of archaeological recording.

Latterly the Committee was particularly exercised by proposals to form a CBA London Group. The Committee's

view, expressed to the CBA Director, was that this would have a considerable impact on the Society, in terms of matters such as its membership, conferences and lectures, publications and identity.

The Committee organised the 43rd Annual Conference of London Archaeologists, which was held in the Museum of London Lecture Theatre on Saturday 25th March 2006. 180 delegates witnessed the presentation of the tenth Merrifield Award to the Shoreditch Park Community Archaeology Project for its work on the excavation of a terrace of houses destroyed in the London Blitz. The morning session continued with a round-up of other recent archaeological work in London, including excavations in the Heathrow area, Oliver Close, Leyton, Hammersmith Embankment, Carew Manor, Beddington, and Cheapside, City.

The afternoon session was devoted to 'Recent Work on Roman Towns', and was addressed by Phil Andrews (Springhead, Kent), Pete Rowsome (London), Philip Crummy (Colchester), and Mike Fulford (Silchester).

**Local History Committee**

The Committee held a total of three meetings, in January, June and September, 2006.

The Annual Conference on 19th November 2005 was on the subject of 'When LAMAS Began: London in 1855', to tie-in with the celebrations of 150 years of LAMAS. Delegates heard talks on: 'Early LAMAS Outings', by Eileen Bowlt, 'Antiquarian Work in London 1855–6' by Barney Sloane, 'London Museums of the 1850s' by Anthony Burton, 'Edwin Chadwick and Sanitary Reform' by Ruth Richardson, 'Mayhew's London' by Peter Street, and '1855 Architecture in London' by Charles O'Brien.

There were thirteen submissions for the Annual Publications Award and the results, presented at the Conference, were: 1st prize to Hornsey Historical Trust for Peter Barber's *Gin and Hell Fire* and 2nd to Southgate Civic Trust for their Journal, *Oakleaves*. The Committee are grateful to Sally Brookes, MoL, and David Bradbury of Guildhall Library for acting as judges for the Award.

The Evacuation Questionnaire sent out in 2005 had a good response, with many interesting accounts being returned.

The Committee received ten submissions for the 2006 Publications Award.

**Historic Buildings and Conservation Committee**

The Historic Buildings and Conservation Committee met monthly throughout the year dealing with 6–7 cases at each meeting — a total of some 77 cases. These can be broken down as follows: Westminster 22; Kensington and Chelsea and Bexley 6 each; Camden 5; Hackney, Isleworth, Lambeth, Redbridge and Wandsworth 4 each; City, Harrow and Hounslow 3 each; Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest 2 each; and, finally Ealing, Havering, Newham, Richmond and Southwark 1 each. In addition, the Committee has dealt with larger projects such as proposals for Smithfield Market, the Kings Cross/St Pancras developments, the scheme for conversion of the Middlesex Guildhall to create a new Supreme Court, Battersea Power Station, major developments in Brentford and — officially backed proposals — to demolish the Grade II* Listed Commonwealth Institute.

The Committee has also discussed the proposals for a CBA London Region and have put our views (and concerns) to the CBA at a meeting with other LAMAS Committees. The Committee has also been invited by the CBA to have a place on the London Research Strategy Steering Group and have represented the 'Standing Structures' side of archaeology.

The Committee have debated the new GLA Bill and the powers that the Mayor might have for Listed Building and Conservation Applications; and we have discussed High Buildings in London — our views being presented to a recent international CABE seminar on the subject. We started the year with a Review of our Buildings at Risk project, which we will shortly be revisiting.

Over the year the Committee has dealt with many projects and cases, varying from the change of use of a basement in Bexley to 60-storey office buildings threatening the skyline of St Paul's and the City; if anyone would like to join us and contribute, please get in touch.

BY DIRECTION OF COUNCIL

Eileen Bowlt
*Chairman of Council*

Jackie Keily
*Honorary Secretary*

# LONDON AND MIDDLESEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2006
## AND BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2006

| *2004 / 2005* | **Income** | **2005 / 2006** |
|---|---|---|
| *£* | | *£* |
| *9,042* | Subscriptions | 9,928 |
| *2,354* | Dividends and interest | 2,736 |
| *4,871* | Grants for publications | 2,400 |
| *738* | Conferences surplus | 1,216 |
| *0* | Giftaid | 800 |
| *274* | Miscellaneous income | 437 |
| *499* | Sales of publications | 353 |
| *1,118* | 150th Year events income | 160 |
| *40* | Donations received | 0 |
| *18,936* | TOTAL INCOME | 18,030 |
| | **Expenditure** | |
| *9,021* | Transactions | 14,466 |
| *1,591* | 150th Year events expense | 2,596 |
| *2,269* | Newsletter | 1,926 |
| *298* | Postage, printing & stationery | 376 |
| *60* | Subscriptions | 200 |
| *783* | Miscellaneous expense | 103 |
| *0* | Ralph Merrifield award | 100 |
| *14,022* | TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 19,767 |
| *4,914* | Surplus / (Loss) for the year | (1,737) |

| *2005* | **Assets** | | **2006** |
|---|---|---|---|
| *£* | | *£* | *£* |
| *78,105* | Building society deposits | | 75,740 |
| *22,000* | Library | | 22,000 |
| *0* | Sundry debtors | | 3,217 |
| *4,269* | Bank & cash balances | | 2,839 |
| *2,006* | Investments | | 0 |
| *106,380* | | | 103,796 |
| | **Liabilities** | | |
| *12,053* | Publication fund | | 12,053 |
| *6,000* | Provisions | | 6,000 |
| *850* | Future publications | | 850 |
| *947* | Creditors | | 100 |
| | GENERAL FUND | | |
| *81,616* | Brought forward at October 1st | 86,530 | |
| *4,914* | Surplus / (Loss) for the year | (1,737) | |
| *86,530* | Carried forward at 30th September | | 84,793 |
| *106,380* | | | 103,796 |

# EXCAVATIONS ON THE SITE OF THE DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES, MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN, HYDE PARK, WESTMINSTER

*Timothy Bradley*

*With contributions by Malcolm Lyne, Carola Nooijen, Susan Pringle and Lisa Yeomans*

## SUMMARY

*Excavations on the site of The Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fountain, Hyde Park, Westminster, provided some evidence for later prehistoric activity which was superseded by multi-phase Roman occupation from the early to mid-2nd century to the 4th century AD. This included large quarry pits, as well as smaller pits, postholes and enclosure ditches. Whilst the majority of features produced high concentrations of cultural material, the finds recovered from the 4th-century enclosure ditch were particularly striking, and included large concentrations of unabraded building material, providing tantalising evidence of a building in the immediate vicinity. That this occupation was at least in part domestic was suggested by the nature and quantity of the associated pottery. As such, the site provides important new evidence of a Roman settlement in London's rural hinterland in an area where previous archaeological intervention has been minimal.*

*Also discussed here are the results of earlier evaluation and watching brief work to the west of the main excavation trench, which revealed evidence of an early 18th-century decorative bastion and associated ha-ha which formed part of a landscape garden feature separating the formal Kensington Gardens from Hyde Park.*

## INTRODUCTION

Archaeological fieldwork was undertaken intermittently by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between 23 September 2002 and 2 May 2003 in advance of the construction of The Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fountain, Hyde Park, City of Westminster (TQ 2701 8001). The work was commissioned by Andrew Boyle of Bucknall Austin, on behalf of the Royal Parks, and the archaeological consultant was Richard Hughes of Arup Geotechics. An area measuring 130m north–south by 145m east–west was examined during the course of the fieldwork; this was situated on the south bank of the Serpentine, immediately to the east of West Carriage Drive (Fig 1). The site was predominantly grassed and sloped down gradually from west to east, from approximately 20m OD to 17m OD.

Prior to the fieldwork a cultural heritage desk-based study was prepared (Hughes 2002), and an initial evaluation was conducted which revealed extensive evidence of post-medieval landscape structures and some evidence for Roman occupation (Hulka 2002). The proposed location of the Memorial was subsequently moved further to the east, however, and a specification for a second phase of fieldwork was prepared (Hughes 2003). This phase of evaluation recorded a large 19th-century gravel extraction pit across the majority of the proposed footprint of the fountain, which had effectively removed most potential for archaeological survival (Fig 2). The eastern edge of the fountain was situated beyond the area of quarrying, however, and here ditches and pits were found cut into terrace gravel, some of which yielded pottery of Roman date. Accordingly an excavation of this area, which measured

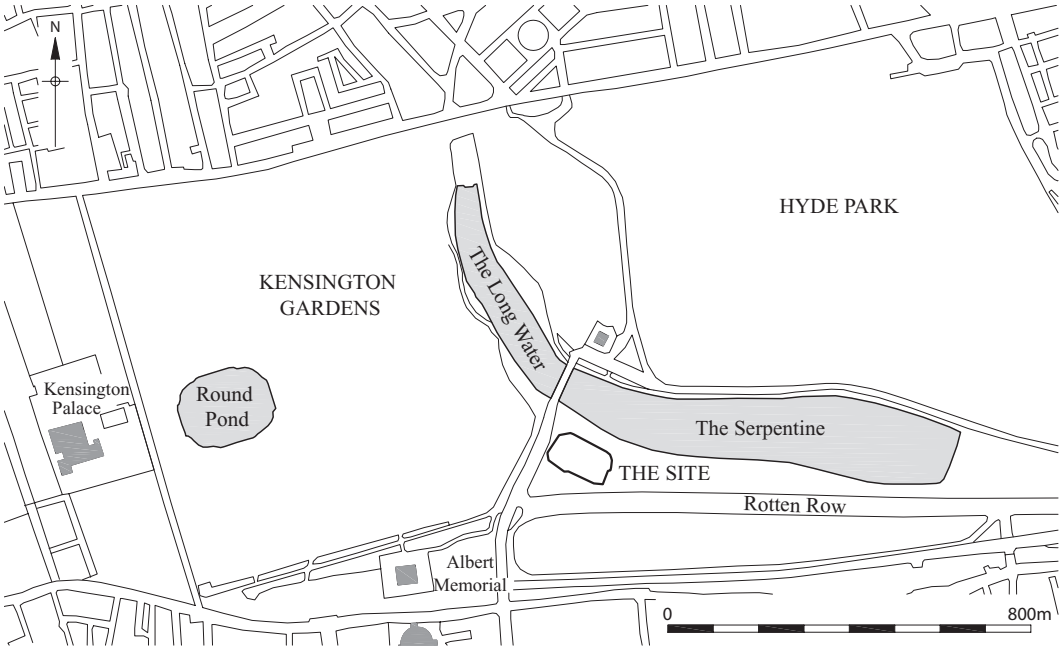


*Fig 1. Site location*

39m north–south by a maximum of 12m east–west, ensued. Subsequent to the identification of significant archaeological survival here, Catherine Cavanagh (English Heritage GLAAS) arranged for a geophysical survey over a larger area to establish whether the features could be traced any further. Unfortunately the results of these surveys were negative (Martin 2003).

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area of investigation lies on the western slope of, and within a large oval depression in open ground east of the southern abutment of the bridge across the Serpentine. The underlying geology of the site is London Clay, which is overlain by the northern extreme of the Taplow Terrace Gravel. This natural was at levels between 15.71m and 17.63m OD. Towards the southern, up-slope area of the excavation, the gravel was capped by a thin mantel of brickearth which was approximately 0.10m thick.

There is a general paucity of known archaeological finds in the area of the Memorial site, although this is likely to reflect the absence of substantial development, and associated archaeological intervention, rather that a significant lack of potential. The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record contains only one entry from within a 300m radius, which relates to a flint arrowhead and two flakes found in 1959. Despite this, it is known that the Thames flood plain was widely exploited in the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age periods, with other sites being found in abundance along the Thames. Indeed, significant later prehistoric activity has recently been identified in Kensington to the west in similar topographic conditions (Moore *et al* 2004; Bradley 2003; Wragg 2004).

Again, few Roman artefacts have been recovered in the vicinity. However, the site lies 2.2km to the west of the Roman city of *Londinium*, close to two of the main arterial roads into the city along the approximate lines of Knightsbridge and Bayswater Road (Margary 1955). As such it would have provided a good location for a farmstead, villa or settlement, possibly given over to market gardening.

The history of the area around the site is also poorly understood for the Saxon period. The early Saxon city was based in the Covent Garden/Strand area of London, with a royal/religious establishment on Thorney Island, later central to the late Saxon city of Westminster. Given the location of the site along former Roman roads, it

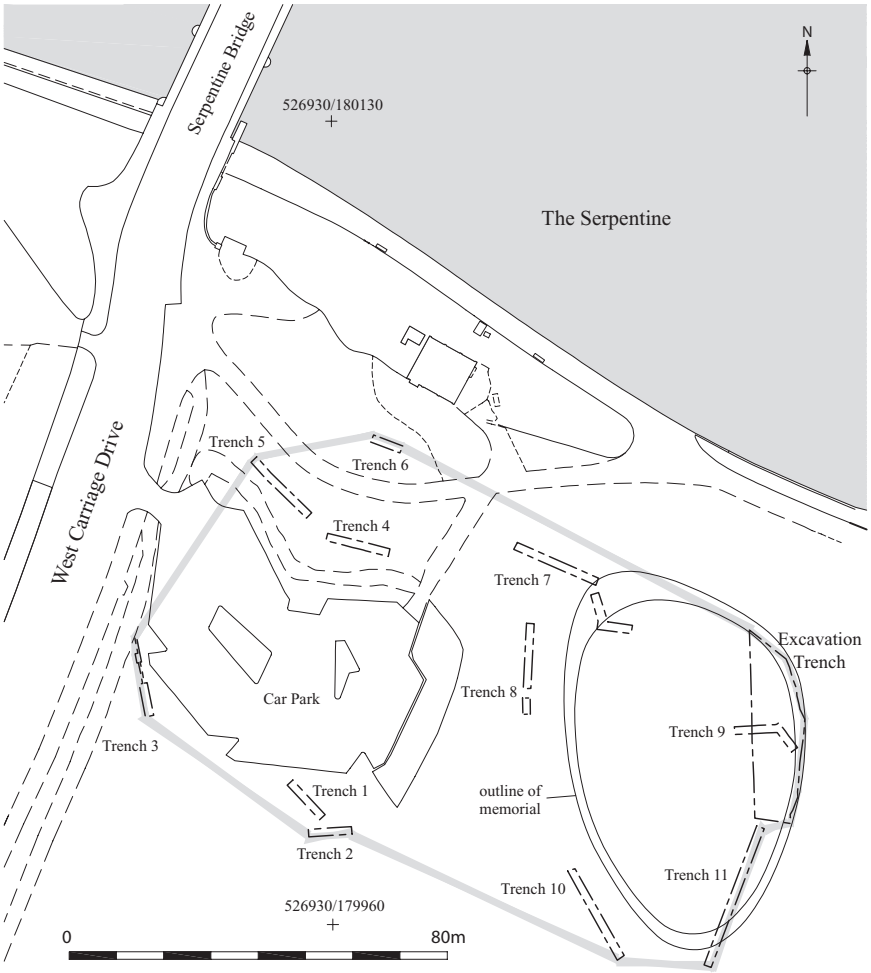


*Fig 2. Trench location (including projected line of quarry pit); Excavation Trench = Trench 12*

is probable that the area was farmed at this time. The Hyde Park area was acquired by Westminster Abbey in the late Saxon period, providing an income from agricultural activities, hunting, and fishing. Doomsday makes no reference to the area being woodland, rather it is listed as being under plough and pasture at this time.

During the first half of the 16th century the monastic lands of London were being broken up by Henry VIII, and it was at this time that Hyde Park was enclosed to allow it to be stocked with deer. Following the enclosure, cultivation in the park ceased, natural vegetation was encouraged, and the right of sport was jealously guarded. By 1573 the park was producing income from both pasture rights and deer, and it is also known that Elizabeth I used it for royal celebrations and military displays. In the second half of the 17th century it was enclosed by a brick wall and restocked with deer. The land comprising Kensington Gardens was enlarged by a succession of encroachments into Hyde Park, and by 1726 the eastern boundary of Kensington Gardens lay approximately on the line of West Carriage Drive.

In 1728 Charles Bridgeman was appointed Royal Gardener and he embarked on a massive redesign of Kensington Gardens. This included the damming of the Westbourne River below Long Water to create the Serpentine, and the construction of a ha-ha around the grounds to separate them from the deer park to the east.

The ha-ha consisted of a ditch with a retaining wall built against its steeper edge which prevented animals straying into the gardens, whilst providing an unobstructed view of the park.

Between 1825 and 1828 the Serpentine Bridge was built, and the water levels of Long Water to the west and the Serpentine were equalised. In 1833 the South Bastion was demolished and 34 years later it was completely infilled. In 1851 Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace was built and the Great Exhibition opened. It is at roughly this time that the large gravel extraction pit recorded during the archaeological investigations was excavated. It is likely that the gravel was intended for use within the park, and may have been specifically used to create the extra paths associated with the Great Exhibition. In 1916 the Middle and North Bastions were also infilled following the murder of a woman in the ha-ha.

## THE EXCAVATION

### Prehistoric

Several residual flints, which appeared to have later Mesolithic affinities, were recovered from more recent contexts. A narrow blade scalene triangle microlith, a long-end scraper, and a trimming flake were identified, all of which were consistent with this date and suggest a short-term presence. A narrow flake was also recovered from a later Roman ditch, although assigning a date to this was more problematic. Its size, condition, and degree of recortication were noticeably different to the other three struck pieces, and may point towards an earlier date, possibly Palaeolithic. Although the presence of material of that age would not be particularly surprising in the location in which it was found, it had no diagnostic traits to confirm such an interpretation, and this date must therefore remain speculative.

Two pits were recorded in Trench 12 (the excavation area) which were also interpreted as being prehistoric. They were cut through the terrace gravel and were sub-ovoid in plan with steep sides and flat bases. They were both filled with mid-greyish brown sandy-gravelly silt which was paler and more leached out in appearance than the other features on site, and suggested that they may be of greater antiquity. Whilst no *in situ* dating evidence came from them, six sherds of residual calcined-flint-tempered pottery of possible early Iron Age date were found nearby which may point to an early Iron Age date.

### Roman

*Early to mid-2nd century* AD

The earliest Roman features dated to the 2nd century AD, suggesting a possible hiatus in occupation of the area in the late Iron Age/early Roman period.

Three very large amorphous pits were recorded in Trench 12 (the excavation area) (Fig 3) which were excavated through the gravels to the top of the underlying London Clay (a depth of approximately 1.40m). These had been backfilled entirely with redeposited, structureless, weathered London Clay. The absence of any fill material underlying this clay suggested that the features had been 'rapidly' infilled. In addition, there was no sedimentological or geomorphological evidence to suggest the clay was colluvial. The pits were therefore interpreted as having been dug for gravel extraction, subsequently being deliberately backfilled with London Clay, itself possibly representing a surplus of material from works elsewhere. Seven sherds of pottery were recovered from the largest of the three quarry pits, including three fresh fragments from a Verulamium Region Whiteware mortarium, dated to AD 110–145.

Two amorphous features cut the largest of the quarry pits. Their very shallow nature suggested that they may have been horizontally truncated, and this precludes a precise interpretation of their functions, although the narrow linear form of the smaller of the two suggested that it might represent a truncated gully. Although stratigraphically post-dating the quarry pits, they yielded pottery in Highgate Wood C and Verulamium Region Whiteware fabrics of similar date.

*Late 2nd century* AD

A series of five postholes and an associated layer were present in the southern up-slope area of Trench 12 (Fig 3). The postholes were approximately 0.50m in diameter and generally less than 0.40m deep. Their alignment formed the southern and western sides of a timber-framed building constructed with 'earthfast' vertical posts. An associated thin deposit of dark brown clayey silt was interpreted as representing the remains of a floor or occupation surface within the building. Pottery from this surface dates from the mid-1st to mid-3rd centuries,

*Fig 3. Plans of main features in Trench 12 by phase: (a) Early/ mid-2nd century; (b) Late 2nd century; (c) Late 2nd/ early 3rd century; (d) Late 3rd to mid/ late 4th century*

although this date was stratigraphically refined to the late 2nd century. The eastern and northern elements of the structure were not seen, possibly having been truncated by later ground stripping, but the remaining features suggested that it would have had a ground plan measuring at least 8m by 6m.

*Late 2nd to early 3rd century AD*

The building had a relatively short life-span, as it was truncated by the western side of a probably early 3rd-century rectangular enclosure (Fig 3). This was defined by an internal enclosure ditch, with a north–south dimension of 22m. A relatively large pottery assemblage was recovered from the inner ditch which included fragments from a storage vessel in North Kent Shell-tempered ware (*c.*AD 50–150), a large number of fragments of BB2 cooking pots and 'pie-dishes' (*c.*AD 70–180), and jars and beakers in Highgate Wood C fabric (*c.*AD 70–180). However, a fragment from an Alice Holt/Farnham ware beaded flanged bowl indicated that rubbish was still being thrown into the ditch as late as AD 270. The quantities of pottery recovered strongly suggest that the enclosure was associated with settled domestic activity. The ditch also produced brick, roofing tile, and fragments of box-flue tile with comb keying. Several of the fragments were large, and suggested that the material had not travelled far. Evidence for stone building material was also present in the form of several flakes of Kentish ragstone and some fragments of sandstone, suggesting the presence of a structure of some status in the vicinity.

A single feature was recorded within the enclosure which was interpreted as forming part of the same phase of activity. This was an east–west orientated linear cut which measured 0.80m wide by 0.25m deep. Although it yielded no dating evidence, it was recut in the 4th century, and therefore the earlier form has been attributed to the previous phase of occupation. Its function was unclear, although its form was most suggestive of a ditch, possibly for drainage.

*Late 3rd to 4th century AD*

Following the backfilling of the rectilinear enclosure ditches, a further double enclosure ditch was cut further to the south (Fig 3). This was defined by two broadly parallel curving ditches at the extreme south of Trench 12 (the excavation area). A large assemblage of unabraded building material within the fill of the inner ditch suggested the presence of a substantial building(s) in the immediate vicinity from the 2nd to the late 3rd/early 4th century. Most notable amongst this assemblage were eleven almost complete *tegulae* in a red fabric with iron-rich inclusions, together with more fragmentary *imbrices*. These appeared to form a primary destruction deposit and are likely to have come from the roof of a nearby building. This fabric (fabric 3263) has not previously been recorded from London sites and its source is not known, but it is likely to be one of a range of fabrics brought into London during the later Roman period after the large tile works which had supplied London in the 1st and 2nd centuries had either ceased, or drastically reduced production (Betts 2003).

The outer ditch produced a large pottery assemblage, the majority of which was made up of Alice Holt/Farnham coarse kitchen wares, suggesting that the ditch was cut in the late 3rd century and had been fully backfilled by AD 350–370. The pottery is likely to have derived from the same source as the building material recovered from the inner ditch, and its presence suggests further domestic activity in the immediate vicinity in the 4th century.

Associated rubbish pits and a probable ditch terminus were also recorded which dated to this phase of occupation, and are also likely to be associated with the activity discussed above.

*Mid- to late 4th century AD*

A large east–west orientated linear ditch was present at the northern end of Trench 12 (Fig 3); this represented the only feature dating to the mid- to late 4th century. Its location on the margins of the lower ground, in an area that could have been susceptible to flooding, suggested that it would have been associated with drainage, and pottery recovered from its fill indicated continuity of occupation and land use in the area into, and possibly after, the late 4th century.

## Discussion

The excavation of the eastern portion of the footprint of The Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fountain produced evidence of utilisation of the area which may date as far back as the Palaeolithic. Probable later Mesolithic flintwork

*Fig 4. View of excavation trench (Trench 12), looking south*

was also found which contributes to the body of evidence for later Mesolithic activity in the Westminster area, including at Kingsway Hall (Hodder *et al* 2000), the National Gallery Extension (Merriman 1989), and Thorney Island (Sidell *et al* 2000). The probable Early Iron Age pottery suggests occupation of the area in the later prehistoric period; its location on a gravel terrace less than 40m above sea level is in keeping with the plurality of later prehistoric activity in the London area (Greenwood 1997).

A hiatus in occupation is suggested by the absence of finds or features predating the 2nd century AD. Given the location on what was a well drained and fertile gravel terrace next to the Westbourne River, in what had been an attractive area prior to this, a complete cessation of activity here seems unlikely. The lack of archaeological evidence for the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period may be explained by the truncation of the gravel terrace and the associated activity across the majority of the site during the 19th century, and the restricted area of investigation. A common feature of the countryside was the gradual Romanisation of existing settlements and farmsteads (Bédoyère 1993), and it is possible that such development occurred here. There is, however, a considerable body of evidence starting

to emerge that settlement and public services developed external to the limits of the Roman city from the 2nd century onwards, as indicated at Bow (Taylor Wilson 1999), Shadwell (Douglas & Sudds 2004), and Fairlop Plain (F. Meddens, *pers comm*). The evidence for Roman activity at Hyde Park may adhere to this pattern.

By the mid-2nd century AD the site had been targeted for gravel extraction, with three large quarry pits being recorded in the area of excavation. It is unclear for what purpose the gravel was intended, although the presence of two major Roman roads nearby, along the line of Knightsbridge to the south and Bayswater Road to the north, suggests it may have been associated with the surfacing or resurfacing of these or associated routes. The quarrying of aggregates for road building and other construction work is certainly likely to have affected the rural landscape around London in the Roman period (Perring & Brigham 2000). The pits were backfilled with brought-in weathered London Clay soon after extraction in the mid-2nd century; the clay itself probably represented surplus material generated during development elsewhere. Two shallow features recorded cutting the largest backfilled quarry pit also dated to the mid-2nd century and suggested that occupation in the area commenced shortly after the quarry pits had been backfilled.

Evidence of a timber-framed structure was recorded in the centre of the excavation area, which was stratigraphically dated to the mid/late 2nd century. Neither the precise function nor the ground plan of the structure could be ascertained in the confines of the trench, although pottery from an associated occupation layer implied domestic use. Relatively intact roofing tile and bricks in fabric group 2815 recovered from later contexts, which may have derived in part from this structure, also attest to the presence of a building(s) in the immediate vicinity by the mid-2nd century. It may be that this building represented part of a farmstead or small villa complex. Certainly the location of the site appears to have been prime for such a settlement, being just 2.2km from the Roman city of *Londinium* with the opportunity to supply food to its market by either the river or road. The Westbourne joined the Thames roughly in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital (Barton 1992); it would probably have been navigable as it passed the site and would thus have provided an important communication link. The population of *Londinium* would need to be supplied and this demand must have been met, at least in part, by its rural hinterland.

The timber building was comparatively short-lived, and was superseded in the late 2nd century by a rectangular enclosure, the western side of which was recorded during the excavation. Again, large quantities of pottery suggested associated domestic activity, and it may be that this enclosure represented an expansion of the earlier 2nd-century farmstead or villa. Rapid expansion in farmsteads and villas in other areas of the country was usually a product of their location, with the more successful sites being situated close to roads, rivers, and larger settlements (Bédoyère 1993). All three of these factors are met at The Diana Memorial site, and thus it is likely to have been well established. Rubbish was still being thrown into the enclosure ditches as late as AD 270, suggesting that this phase of activity was relatively long-lived.

Immediately following the final abandonment of the enclosure in the late 3rd century, a further double enclosure ditch was cut to the south at the up-slope end of the excavation area. Dating evidence suggested that occupation was contiguous, however, with the later enclosure, representing further alteration to the settlement rather than interrupted occupation. Again, the full spectrum of domestic refuse was recovered from both the enclosure ditches and associated pits which suggested domestic activity in the immediate vicinity. Although structural evidence for the extent of this phase of development was meagre, it may have represented further expansion of the settlement in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. Certainly it seems that at this time Roman Britain was at its most stable and productive, and a well situated farmstead would have been in a good position to exploit this stability and resultant economic productivity. Large deposits of roofing tile, both *tegulae* and *imbrices*, were dumped in the inner enclosure ditch along with pottery, which suggested that it had been entirely backfilled by AD 350/370. Whether this building material represented demolition or alteration to existing structures is unclear, but the presence of a large east–west ditch situated in marginal land towards the base of the slope close to the river suggested continued occupation and exploitation of the area until at least the later 4th century.

Other than a single, tentatively dated, medieval pit, no archaeological evidence was recovered

between the 4th century AD and the post-medieval period. The seeming abandonment of the area in the 5th century may have been linked to the demise of *Londinium* at this time. By the 5th century Roman London was being undermined by the failure of the Empire as a whole, which was marked among other things by the appearance of dark earth covering the streets by the late 4th/5th century (Perring 1991). This decline in the urban centre, and the associated reduction in the population dependent on food produced by others, meant that surplus agricultural production and associated wealth would have diminished. Such a pattern may have been responsible for the seeming disappearance of the settlement/farmstead recorded at the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fountain at this time.

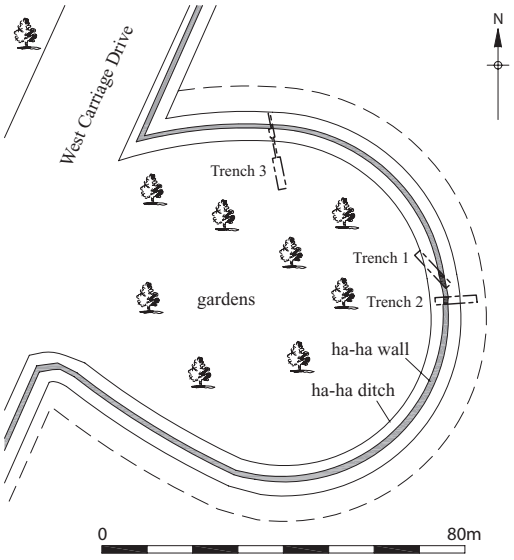


*Fig 5. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 superimposed on Rhodes' 1762 map of the South Bastion*

## The 18th-century ha-ha

As has been discussed, initial evaluation of the area immediately to the east of West Carriage Drive sought to accurately locate parts of the ha-ha built in 1731 by Royal Gardener Charles Bridgeman. It consisted of a ditch and retaining wall built against its steeper edge (facing into Hyde Park), to prevent animals straying into the gardens to its west, while providing an unobstructed view of the park from the gardens. The Hyde Park ha-ha consisted of three straight sections running north–south, north-west–south-east, and east–west. They were divided by large curving sections where the revetment protruded into the deer park. These were known as the South, Middle and North Bastions. Portions of the South Bastion were successfully located and recorded in Trenches 1, 2 and 3 (Fig 5) and the findings are summarised below.

The natural gravel in Trench 2 was cut by a large asymmetric ditch which was orientated north–south and had a moderate slope on its eastern side and near vertical western side. It measured 7.20m wide, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.55m, although due to the influx of loose sand and water it was not possible to expose the base of the feature. In Trenches 1, 2 and 3, the western (steep) edge of the cut was revetted by a brick wall (Fig 6a). The retaining wall was 4½ bricks thick (0.96m) on its top three courses and was narrower towards the bottom. The construction of the wall suggested that the ditch edge was unstable, as the base of the wall was built away from it. The gap between the lower part of the wall and the ditch edge was filled with planking between rough courses of fragmented brick and mortar, which probably stabilised the edge during construction and provided a working platform. The top three courses were built over this fill material, and when the mortar set, the filling material would have become an integral part of the wall.

The wall's outer face (*ie* that facing into the ditch) was punctuated with apsidal arched niches (Fig 6b). The wall was built in header bond using bricks of fabric 3034. The bricks towards the wall's outer face were purple and well fired, while those closer to the ditch edge were less well fired. The use of better quality bricks on the outer skin of the wall was normal practice at the time. Considerable evidence suggested that the wall was originally clad. The surviving wall face was uneven, and the bricks in the spandrels between the niches extended far beyond the uneven wall face indicating that they had tied cladding onto the brickwork of the wall. The brick arches were also flush with the brickwork above in the two niches revealed in Trench 2, but extended beyond the surrounding brickwork in Trench 1, further indicating that the original wall facing had been removed. The extent to which some of the brickwork projected beyond the rest of the masonry (up to 14mm) suggested that the cladding was either a very thick render

*Fig 6a. East view of ha-ha wall in Trench 2*

*Fig 6b. Detail of arched niche in ha-ha wall in Trench 2*

or more probably stone. Indeed, fragments of Portland stone, which may have come from the cladding, were recovered from the ditch fill.

The ha-ha was backfilled with sandy silt and gravel. These were in turn sealed and the feature levelled by dark brown sandy silt which contained frequent fragments of brick and two slabs of Portland Limestone.

## Discussion

At the time that the Hyde Park ha-ha was constructed, it was a relatively new device in English garden design. Horace Walpole suggested that Charles Bridgeman was one of the first to employ the ha-ha in his garden designs, and it may be that the earliest known ha-ha, at Blenheim (mentioned by the antiquary William Stukeley in 1712), influenced him while he worked there with Henry Wise (Thacker 1989). Bridgeman certainly created the extended series of ha-ha walls at Stowe, Bucks, where he worked from 1713 and where William Kent took over his work in 1730, and he also used the ha-ha in Claremont in Surrey, where he worked from *c.*1725. Kent's gardens were characterised by their irregular plans, small buildings, such as temples, and contrived natural appearance. The fact that Kent took over much of Bridgeman's work and subsequently removed much of it has led to him being credited as the main exponent of this style of garden. Bridgeman, however, worked with a combination of the by-then traditional formal garden and the new pseudo-natural style, and it is for this reason that he has been described as a pioneer in the change 'from the geometric layouts of the early 1700s to the freer designs of Capability Brown' (Willis 1977). The ha-ha can be seen as an important tool in establishing this new style of garden, in that it allowed unobstructed views of the park or farmland around a formal garden, thus integrating the garden into its natural landscape.

Whilst the North and Middle Bastions were shown on the 1762 Joshua Rhodes plan of the bastions as being circular, the South Bastion appeared to be horseshoe-shaped. Evaluation Trenches 1, 2 and 3 accurately located the position of the South Bastion wall and ditch, which correlated exactly with the Rhodes plan. However, they also revealed that it was more rounded than the distinctly horseshoe depiction by Rhodes, and as such, more in keeping with the other two bastions.

The example recorded in Hyde Park is among the earliest ha-has in England (Batey 1991). Being entirely the work of Bridgeman, the Hyde Park ha-ha is also of interest as it illustrates the transition to the new style of garden and Bridgeman's role in it. Thus, the retaining wall combines the formal classicism of the time (expressed in the niches and the probably stone or stone-effect cladding which was obviously meant to be seen) with the desire to create a 'natural' landscape where the retaining wall was hidden from the garden. The ha-ha recorded at Hyde Park was not built merely as a utilitarian device but would have presented a formal classical face when viewed from the deer park to the east, enhancing the formal classicism of the semi-formal gardens to its west.

## Conclusion

The archaeological investigations prompted by the construction of the Memorial Fountain revealed that the area had previously been occupied by a Roman farmstead or settlement between at least the 2nd and 4th centuries AD. The site would have been ideal for farming in the Roman period, being situated on a well-drained gravel terrace on the south bank of the Westbourne River, close to two arterial roads into *Londinium*. Indeed, the Romans were not the first to recognise the potential of the area, as prehistoric flints, Late Iron Age pottery and possibly contemporary pits affirm. That previous evidence of early occupation in the area has been scarce is therefore likely to reflect the absence of recent development, rather than a lack of significant potential.

The most recent wholesale landscaping of the area was carried out in the 18th century, shortly after Charles Bridgeman was appointed Royal Gardener in 1728. He embarked on a massive redesign of Kensington Gardens which included the damming of the Westborne River to create the Serpentine. The construction of the ha-ha was also undertaken at this time, and the evaluation work successfully located elements of its South Bastion, providing details of its construction, location, and appearance. These details are of particular interest given that the Hyde Park ha-ha was amongst the earliest examples in England, and also that it was entirely the work of Bridgeman. The excavations have therefore contributed significantly to our understanding of the southern bank of the Serpentine in Hyde

Park, its development through the prehistoric and Roman periods, and its later post-medieval evolution into managed parkland and formal garden in the 18th century.

## THE FINDS

### Pottery

*Malcolm Lyne*

The site yielded 1,592 sherds (28,007g) of pottery from 40 contexts, of which the bulk ranges in date from the 2nd to the late 4th century AD. There were, however, a few sherds of Late Iron Age date, all of which were residual in later features. All of the assemblages were quantified by numbers of sherds and their weights per fabric. These fabrics were identified using a x8 magnification lens with built-in metric scale for determining the natures, forms, sizes, and frequencies of added inclusions. Finer fabrics were further examined using a x30 magnification pocket microscope with artificial light source. Only one of the assemblages (from Context [154]) was large enough for quantification by Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs) based on rim sherds (Orton 1975). Fabric codings are those created by the Museum of London Specialist Services for use with assemblages from the City (Anon 2000). Codes used in Table 2 and elsewhere in this report are listed in Table 1.

*Table 1*

| Fabric code | Fabric name |
|---|---|
| AHFA | Late Roman Alice Holt/Farnham ware |
| BAET | Baetican Dressel 20 amphora fabric |
| DORBB1 | Dorset Black Burnished 1 fabric |
| GROG | Miscellaneous grog-tempered ware |
| HARSH | Harrold Shell-tempered ware |
| LNVCC | Lower Nene Valley Colour-coat fabric |
| MHADBS | Much Hadham Black-surfaced ware |
| NKSH | North Kent Shell-tempered ware |
| OXID | Miscellaneous oxidised fabrics |
| OXMO | Oxfordshire Whiteware mortarium fabric |
| OXPA | Oxfordshire Parchment ware |
| OXRC | Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat fabric |
| OXWS | Oxfordshire White-slipped ware |
| SAMLZ | Central Gaulish Lezoux Samian |
| SAND | Miscellaneous sandy greywares |
| VRW | Verulamium Region Whiteware |

*The assemblages*

Prehistoric

The various Roman contexts yielded six residual sherds of calcined-flint-tempered ?Early Iron Age pottery: none of the putative prehistoric features, however, contained *in situ* sherds.

Early to mid-2nd century (AD 100–160)

Only one feature yielded any pottery:
*Assemblage 1*, from the fill of Quarry pit [232] (fill context [231]). The seven sherds (322g) of pottery from this feature include three fresh fragments each from two vessels: a Verulamium Region Whiteware mortarium of Frere type 2657 (Frere 1984), fired buff-yellow, exterior rim diameter 220mm, *c.*AD 110–145 (Fig 7.1), and a straight-sided dish in very-fine-sanded ?Thames Valley greyware, exterior rim diameter 200mm, *c.*AD 140/60–270 (Fig 7.2). These fragments suggest that the feature was backfilled during the early Antonine period.

One small pottery assemblage from Pit [186] was not closely datable, but the presence of closed form sherds in Highgate Wood C and Verulamium Region Whiteware fabrics suggests an early to mid-second-century date for the feature.

Late 2nd to early 3rd century (*c.*AD 160–220)

These assemblages are for the most part lacking in diagnostic sherds except for the following: *Assemblage 2*, from the lower fill of the rectilinear enclosure ditch. The fill (Context [205]) yielded 183 sherds (2,640g) of pottery dated *c.*AD 150–220, including fragments from a storage vessel in North Kent Shell-tempered ware (*c.*AD 50–170), five large fresh sherds from an East Gaulish Samian Dr.37 bowl, and an everted-rim cooking pot in Dorset BB1 fabric. This had widely-spaced obtuse-latticing and was lacking a horizontal groove separating the decorated girth band from the burnished shoulder; exterior rim diameter 160mm. This vessel was similar to an example from the Phase 3 pot gully at the Redcliff BB1 production site (Lyne 2003, fig 10-61) and is dated *c.*AD 200–240 (Fig 7.3). Also present were an everted-rim cooking pot of Monaghan class 3J3 (Monaghan 1987) in BB2 fabric, exterior rim diameter 140mm, *c.*AD 150–250 (Fig 7.4), and a deep roll-rimmed 'pie-dish' of Monaghan type 5D1.6 in North Kent BB2 fabric exterior rim diameter 260mm, *c.*AD 120–180 (Fig 7.5). A greater part of a Class 2E neck-cordoned jar with white slip over its upper half, in grey Highgate Wood C fabric, was identified; exterior rim diameter 140mm; *c.*AD 70–160 (Fig 8.6). Thirteen fresh sherds from a Class 1B flagon

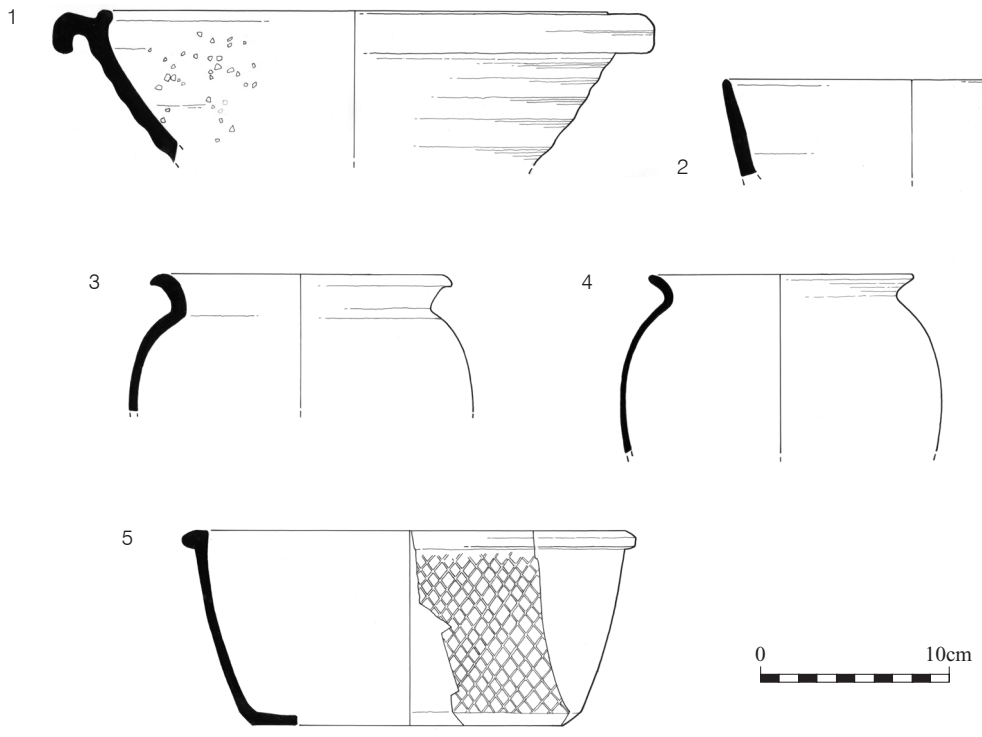


*Fig 7. Roman pottery, Nos 1–5*

of Frere type 805 (Frere 1972), in Verulamium Coarse White-slipped ware, were present; exterior rim diameter 60mm; *c.*AD 140–190 (Fig 8.7). This material indicates an assemblage which accumulated over the second half of the second century and on into the early third century.

*Assemblage 3*, from the upper fill of the north–south rectilinear enclosure ditch which yielded a fur-ther 92 sherds (1,186g) of pottery, including more sherds of late 2nd-century date and fragments of early to mid-3rd-century character. These latter include a BB2 dish of Monaghan Class 5F6 (Monaghan 1987), with burnished wavy line on its exterior; exterior rim diameter 120mm; *c.*AD 170–270 (Fig 8.8); a cooking pot with well-developed everted rim in Dorset BB1 fabric; exterior rim diameter 180mm; *c.*AD 200–280 (Fig 8.9); and a refired Alice Holt/Farnham ware beaded-and-flanged bowl of Lyne and Jefferies type 5B.4 (Lyne & Jefferies 1979) but with self-slip; *c.*AD 270–300 (Fig 8.10). This material indicates that rubbish continued to be thrown into the ditch until *c.*AD 270–300.

*Assemblage 4*, from the fills of the east–west continuation of the rectilinear enclosure ditch. The east–west ditch had a fragment from a Moselkeramik beaker (*c.*AD 200–276) in its primary silts. Its upper fill yielded 59 sherds (990g) of *c.*AD 200–270 dated pottery, including a burnt mortarium spout in Oxfordshire Whiteware (*c.*AD 240–400), a beaker sherd in Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat ware (*c.*AD 240–400), two large fresh sherds from a Central Gaulish Samian Dr.33 cup, and another fragment from a BB1 cooking pot (*c.*AD 200–280). There was also an S-profile bowl of Monaghan type 4A2.7 in very fine BB2 fabric with burnished zig-zag on the shoulder; exterior rim diameter 200mm; *c.*AD 170/190–230 (Fig 8.11), as well as a Class 1B flagon of Frere type 1938 (Frere 1984) in Verulamium Coarse White-slipped ware; exterior rim diameter 50mm; *c.*AD 180–210 (Fig 8.12). A complete absence of Alice Holt/Farnham greyware sherds suggests a *terminus ante quem* of AD 270 for the deposition of this assemblage.

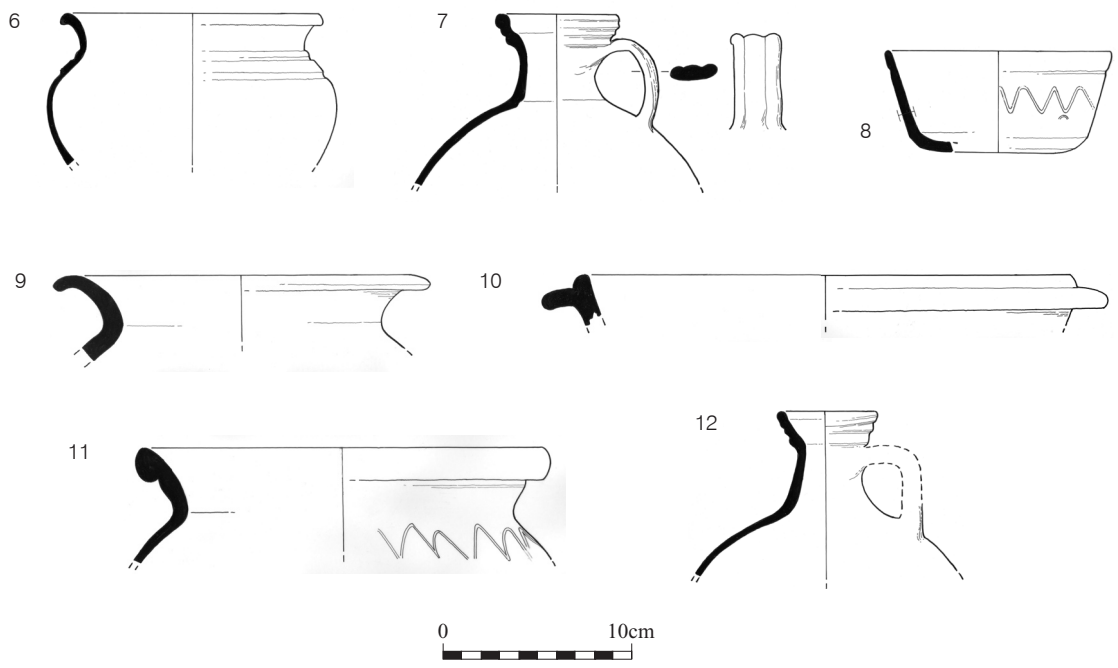


*Fig 8. Roman pottery, Nos 6—12*

Late 3rd to 4th century (*c.*AD 270–370)

The southern parallel enclosure ditches were probably cut shortly after AD 270 and remained open until *c.*AD 350.

*Assemblage 5*, from the fill of the external ditch, yielded the largest pottery assemblage from the site (637 sherds; 11,116g). This was quantified by Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs) based on rim sherds (Table 2).

Alice Holt/Farnham wares make up nearly 70% of this assemblage and most of the coarse kitchen wares; Oxfordshire White, Parchment, White-slipped, and Red Colour-coated wares make up a further 10% of the pottery and nearly all of the mortaria and finewares. BB1 cooking pots, bowls, and dishes of late 3rd- to early 4th-century date constitute a significant minority of the sherds and there are fragments of a cooking pot and storage vessels in Harrold Shell-tempered ware from Bedfordshire. An absence of sherds from rilled jars and other forms in Overwey/Portchester D sandy buff ware and from convex-sided dishes in Alice Holt/Farnham ware suggests that the assemblage had ceased to accumulate by AD 350/370.

The form breakdown was compared with those of broadly contemporary assemblages from Dowgate Hill (Symonds & Tomber 1994) and Bush Lane inside the City of London, and Brentford and Fulham Palace to the west of the City (Lyne 1994) (Table 3).

This comparison brings out the rural character of the assemblage from Hyde Park despite its proximity to the city. The three extramural sites, including Hyde Park, differ markedly from those inside the walls of Roman London in having much higher percentages of cooking pots and storage jars, other jars, and flagons, and correspondingly lower percentages of bowls and mortaria. It is probable that beaded-and-flanged bowls were used for casserole cooking and that their poor showing on the rural sites was due to simpler rural culinary practices: the high storage jar percentages may also reflect simpler methods of storage of dry goods than those employed by the inhabitants of the city.

The assemblage includes fragments of Alice Holt jar forms 3B.10 (Lyne & Jefferies 1979; *c.*AD 270–400), 3C.2 (*c.*AD 220–330), 4.38 (*c.*AD 200–300), bowl forms 5B.4 (*c.*AD 270–330), 5B.6 and 5B.8 (*c.*AD 270–400), dish forms 6A.4 (*c.*AD 270–370) and 6C.1 (*c.*AD 330–400), and storage vessel forms 1A.15 (*c.*AD 270–350), 4.44 (*c.*AD 270–350)

*Table 2*

| Fabric | Jars EVE | Bowls EVE | Dishes EVE | Beakers EVE | Storage jars EVE | Others EVE | Total EVE | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AHFA | 5.19 | 0.65 | 0.52 | | 1.28 | 0.50 | 8.14 | 68.5 |
| BAET | | | | | | | | |
| DORBB1 | 0.47 | 0.79 | 0.57 | | | | 1.83 | 15.4 |
| GROG | 0.20 | | 0.07 | | | | 0.27 | 2.3 |
| HARSH | 0.06 | | | | 0.09 | | 0.15 | 1.3 |
| LNVCC | | | | | | | | |
| MHADBS | | | | | | | | |
| NKSH | | | | | | | | |
| OXID | | | | | | | | |
| OXMO | | | | | | 0.22 | 0.22 | 1.9 |
| OXPA | | 0.02 | | | | | 0.02 | 0.2 |
| OXRC | | 0.34 | 0.05 | 0.20 | | 0.28 | 0.87 | 7.3 |
| OXWS | | | | | | | | |
| SAMLZ | | | | | | | | |
| SAND | 0.20 | | | 0.18 | | | 0.38 | 3.2 |
| VRW | | | | | | | | |
| MISC | | | | | | | | |
| | 6.12 (51.5%) | 1.80 (15.2%) | 1.21 (10.2%) | 0.38 (3.2%) | 1.37 (11.5%) | 1.00 (8.4%) | 11.88 | |

*Table 3*

| Assemblage | Jars | Bowls | Dishes | Beakers | Storage jars | Flagons | Mortaria | Others |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dowgate Hill | 26.3% | 25.3% | 10.7% | 14.0% | 0.7% | | 5.3% | 17.7% |
| Bush Lane ER976 | 29.8% | 34.2% | 17.2% | 7.4% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 7.5% | 2.8% |
| Hyde Park WTG02 159 | 51.5% | 15.2% | 10.2% | 3.2% | 11.5% | 6.6% | 1.9% | |
| Brentford Site 9 Z2 | 49.7% | 11.3% | 7.1% | 11.1% | 8.4% | 9.5% | 0.6% | 2.7% |
| Fulham Palace Context 9 | 48.4% | 18.8% | 11.5% | 1.6% | 12.8% | 5.6% | 1.3% | |

and 10.2 (*c.*AD 270–400). The BB1 includes developed beaded-and-flanged bowls of Lyne (1994) types 1.39 (*c.*AD 280–400) and 1.45 (*c.*AD 300–400) and dishes of types 1.55 (*c.*AD 220–370) and 1.59 (*c.*AD 325–370+). The finewares include Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat bowl and dish forms C51 (Young 1977; *c.*AD 240–400), C55 (*c.*AD 240–400), C59 (*c.*AD 310–360), and C75 (*c.*AD 325–400), as well as flagon form C13 (*c.*AD 350–400) and mortarium form C97 (*c.*AD 240–400). Other Oxfordshire industry forms include a P24 bowl in OXPA fabric (*c.*AD 240–400) and whiteware mortaria forms M20 (*c.*AD 240–300) and M22 (*c.*AD 300–400). A straight-sided dish in handmade Late Roman grog-tempered ware fired black, probably a Hampshire product of Lyne (1994) type 6A.21 (*c.*AD 250–370) was present. An everted-rim jar in similar fabric but with white siltstone grog (exterior rim diameter 120mm; *c.*AD 250–400) was part of this group (Fig

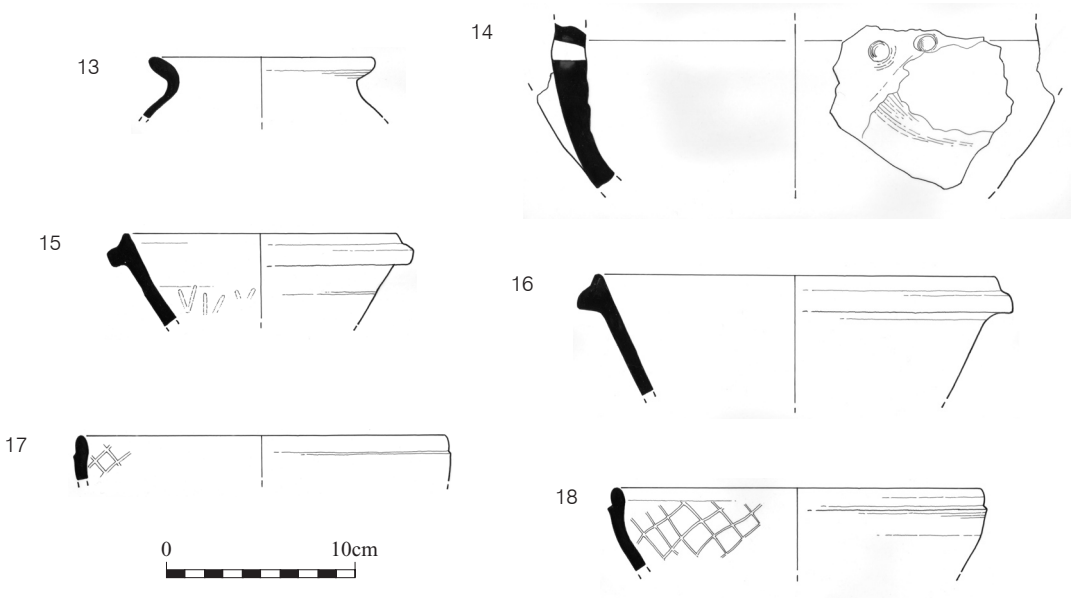


*Fig 9. Roman pottery, Nos 13—18*

9.13), as was a fragment of a large closed form in sandfree black fabric fired orange-brown, with circular section handle scar adjacent to two circular perforations (Fig 9.14).

Late 4th century

*Assemblage 6*, from the primary fill of the east–west ditch. The pottery from this context is slightly later in date than most of that in Assemblage 5. The 188 sherds (3,186g) constitute too small a group for quantification by EVEs but have a predominance of Alice Holt/Farnham wares by sherd count (60%), similar to that in Assemblage 5. Plain straight-sided dishes are, however, absent and are replaced by a variety of convex-sided and bead-rimmed straight-sided dishes (Lyne & Jefferies 1979, types 6A.10, 11 and 12). This, in itself, indicates a mid-4th-century or later assemblage; a continued absence of Overwey/Portchester D wares may be fortuitous. The presence of a developed beaded-and-flanged bowl of Lyne and Jefferies type 5B.10 in AHFA fabric with burnished internal latticing should also be noticed; exterior rim diameter 180mm; *c.*AD 350–400 (Fig 9.15). Another bowl, one of two examples of a type 5B.6, was in a similar fabric with applied internal white slip but had no decoration; exterior rim diameter 160mm; *c.*AD 270–400 (Fig 9.16). There was also a convex-sided dish of type 6A.10 in a similar fabric with internal lattice decoration (*c.*AD 350–400; Fig 9.18), as well as another, undecorated, example in blackened AHFA fabric (exterior rim diameter 200mm, *c.*AD 330–400) and a girth fragment from an Alice Holt/Farnham jar of type 3B.14 with wavy combed band (*c.*AD 350–400; Fig 10.19). Other sherds include fragments from two jars in Harrold Shell-tempered ware, a type P24 bowl in Oxfordshire Parchment ware, a type C46 bowl in Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat ware, and finally a copy of a Dr.37 bowl in very-fine-sanded and polished red ware with wavy line combing on its exterior surface (exterior rim diameter 160mm; Fig 10.20). Similar vessels of unknown origin are widely but thinly distributed across Sussex, Surrey, and Kent; an example from the small town at Neatham in Hampshire was dated *c.*AD 250–350 (Millett 1986, 70, fig 49-11).

**Building material**

*Susan Pringle*

The excavations produced 97.32kg of ceramic building material, including 0.136kg of daub, and 8.238kg of stone building material. All was quantified by form and fabric, using a x10 hand lens. For the fabric type identifications the type

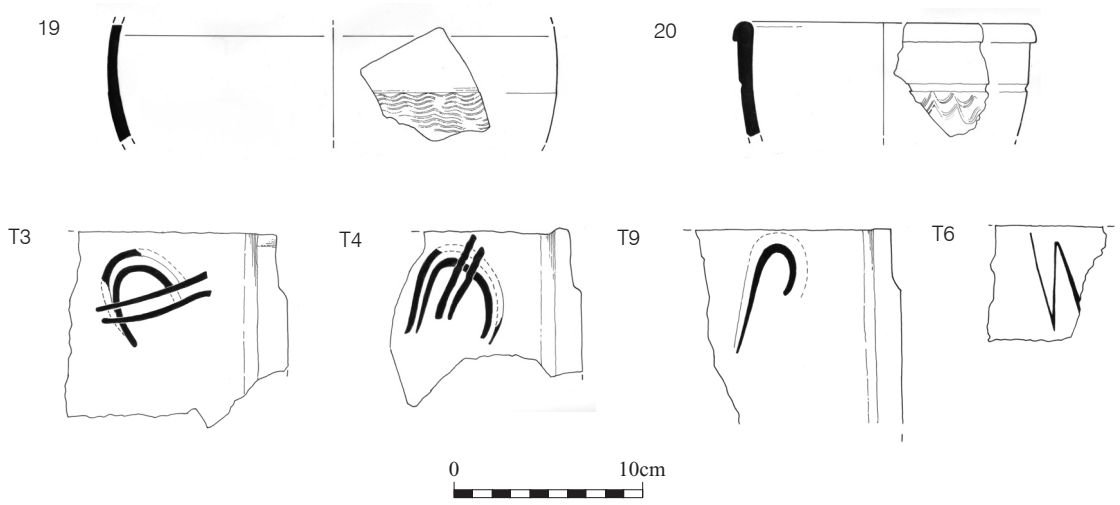


*Fig 10. Roman pottery, Nos 19—20; tegulae in fabric 3263 with signature mark types 3, 4 and 6 and graffito on tegula in fabric 2459B*

series collections held in the Museum of London and at Pre-Construct Archaeology were used.

The materials were almost all, 97% by weight, of Roman date. The remainder consisted of approximately equal quantities of medieval and post-medieval brick and tile.

*The fabrics*

The Roman tile fabrics present are predominantly the clean red fabrics of group 2815 (individual fabric types 2452, 2459A, and 3006), the most common types found in Roman London; these were produced at a number of kiln sites on Watling Street between London and St Albans, and probably also at the western limits of the city itself, as tile wasters in these fabrics have been found close to the site of pottery kilns lying to the west of St Paul's Cathedral (I Betts, *pers comm*). A later variant which has fine moulding sand, type 2459B, was perhaps made in north-east London or Essex. There is a single tile in fabric 2454, which has a colour range from pale pink to creamy yellow, and was probably made at kilns in the Maidstone area of north-west Kent. The tiles in fabric group 2815 are dated to AD 50–160, that in fabric 2454 to AD 50–80, and those in fabric 2459B to *c.*AD 120/140–250.

Of particular interest are a number of roofing tiles (both *tegulae* and *imbrices*) in a red fabric with prominent dark red and black iron-rich inclusions up to 3mm across. The clay matrix is similar to fabric type 3006 in group 2815, but the large iron oxide inclusions are sufficiently distinctive to justify giving the fabric a separate identity: fabric 3263. The similarity of the clays suggests that the kiln producing these tiles was probably located close to London, but their occurrence in the later 3rd century indicates that it was in operation after the kilns at which the 2815 group tiles were made had ceased production.

*Roofing tiles*

The best-represented tile types on the site were *tegulae* and *imbrices*, which account for 86% and 4.5% respectively, by weight, of the identifiable tile assemblage. Much of the tile is abraded and is likely to represent either reused or residual material. Of particular interest, however, is the roof tile from the fills of the late 3rd- to 4th-century enclosure ditch, which consists mainly of large *tegula* fragments, some of which join to form complete tiles. These are in the unusual fabric, 3263, discussed above. Three complete and seven almost complete tiles have been identified. In length, they range from 393mm to 410mm (ten examples), in breadth from 315mm to 327mm at the top (five examples), and from 260mm to 305mm at the bottom end (seven examples). The body of the tiles is between 21mm and 31mm thick. The length of flange cut away at the top ends of the tiles ranges from

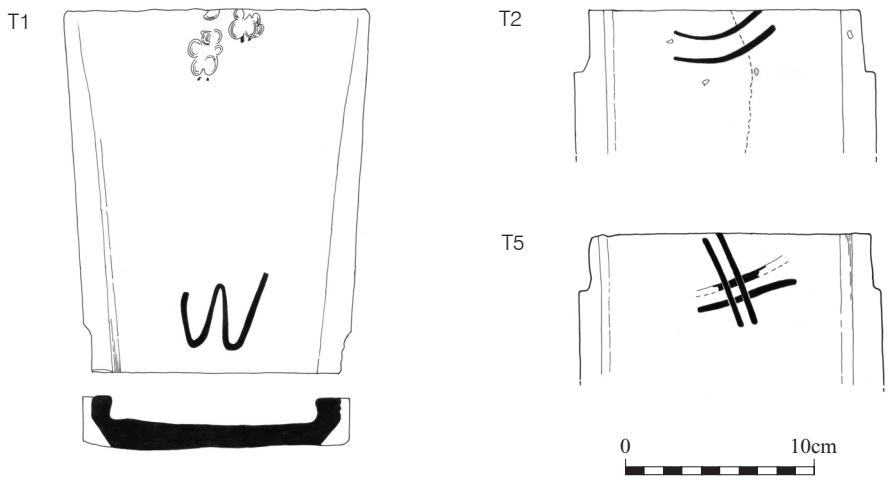


*Fig 11. Tegulae in fabric 3263 with signature mark types 1, 2 and 5*

57mm to 62mm and the lower end of the tile is cut back between 53mm and 60mm.

An unusual feature of the *tegulae* in fabric 3263 is the high proportion which have signature marks near the bottom of the tile. These marks, the purpose of which is not certain, were made with a blunt object or objects, probably fingers, while the clay was still wet. Six complete marks were identified, and several partial marks were also noted (Fig 10.T3, T4, T9; Fig 11.T1, T2, T5).

A fragmentary *tegula* in fabric 2459B from the ditch has part of a graffito inscription which is unfortunately not legible (Fig 10.T6).

Fragments of *imbrex* in fabric 3263 are also present, but not in the quantities which might be expected from a collapsed roof. However, they are most numerous in the context that produced the complete *tegulae*, so it is likely that they were used as roofing. There is no evidence to suggest that the *imbrices* were dispersed more widely across the site, so it is possible that they were retained for reuse, perhaps to repair another roof or for the construction of gutters or drains.

*Bricks*

Brick fragments account for approximately 9% of the ceramic tile assemblage by weight, although they are fewer in number than *tegulae* and *imbrices*. No complete bricks were recovered, but fragments range in thickness from 28mm to 47mm, with a median thickness of 38mm, which suggests that the assemblage consisted of the smaller brick types such as the square *pedales* or *bessales* and the rectangular *lydion* (Brodribb 1987, 34–40). The square bricks were primarily intended for use in the construction of *pilae* in hypocaust systems, while the *lydion* was used to construct bonding courses to strengthen rubble and mortar walls, but the bricks were so frequently reused for other purposes that their presence in small quantities is not a reliable indication of the presence of such structures. All the bricks are in fabrics of the 2815 group.

*Flue tiles*

Four fragments of box-flue tile were present, all in fabrics of group 2815. Three are similar in style, with straight bands of combed keying. That from the fill of the late 3rd- to 4th-century enclosure ditch was keyed with an eight-toothed comb, <T7>. The other pieces of combed flue came from the fills of the early enclosure ditches, <T8>. The fourth flue tile fragment, found in the Roman plough soil, has relief-patterned keying in a plain chevron design which is too abraded to permit identification of the die type. None of these tiles is likely to be earlier in date than the 2nd century.

*Tesserae*

Two coarse red *tesserae*, both in fabrics of the 2815 group, came from 19th- and 20th-century

features. Both are at the smaller end of the size range for this type of *tessera*; one has attached mortar and a worn surface.

*Daub and clay*

Small quantities of daub (31 fragments, weighing 276g) were recorded. All the daub is abraded and none has any distinctive features apart from some variation in the inclusions. From the fills of pit [181], linear ditch [182], and enclosure ditches [166] and [173] came fine sandy daub with fine organics, some of which have darker brown iron spots or streaks; from ditch [166] came a fragment with flint inclusions. Ditch [206] contained fragments of very fine-grained clay or daub which is exceptionally light in weight; its use is not known.

*Stone building material*

The building stone from the site is predominantly Kentish ragstone rubble, quarried from near Maidstone in Kent. It occurs in the fills of the late 2nd- to early 3rd-century enclosure ditches, and is very decayed, probably due to having been buried in conditions wet enough to have dissolved much of the calcite in the stone.

*Discussion*

The fabric assemblage from the site contains two main groups of material of different dates. The earlier group is made up predominantly of the red fabrics of the 2815 group, with a single fragment of fabric 2454 from north-west Kent. These fabrics are typical of those produced in the 1st to mid-2nd centuries, and used in London for much longer. The fact that fabric 2459B seems to be well represented in the assemblage suggests that the first phase of building in the vicinity is dated to the mid to late 2nd century, and that earlier tiles were reused in the structure or structures. The components of this building are probably represented in the fills of the late 2nd- to early 3rd-century rectilinear enclosure ditches. The occurrence of flue tile is interesting, but in such small quantities it may not be indicative of the presence of a domestic hypocaust system. Its presence could also be accounted for by agricultural activities such as drying cereals or malting barley.

The later group of material, from the fills of the late 3rd- to 4th-century enclosure ditch, is of greater interest, both because as almost certain primary destruction material, it provides evidence of a tile-roofed building close by, and for the information it gives on a tile type previously unrecorded from the London area. The dating of the pottery from this ditch to about AD 270 and into the 4th century suggests that this tile is likely to have been made for a building which was roofed in the second half of the 3rd century. However, three fragments occur in earlier features which have pottery dates of AD 150–220 and AD 200–270 respectively, suggesting that its first appearance on site may be in the earlier 3rd century. By the later 3rd century, tile was no longer being made at the old kiln sites which had served London since the mid-1st century, so the assemblage from Hyde Park may thus be an early example of a phenomenon first identified by Betts and Foot, whereby roofing tiles were being brought into the London area from more distant kiln sites in order to supply the demand for roofing materials in the city (Betts & Foot 1994).

## Small finds

*Carola Nooijen*

A small bangle was recovered from the late 2nd/early 3rd-century enclosure ditch. It was made by twisting two copper-alloy wires around each other and its size suggests it could have been used by a child. As it was bent out of shape, the diameter of the bangle could not be measured. It was incomplete, with only three fragments remaining; one of these had been stretched, apparently when somebody or something had pulled it with some force. This may have been the cause of the breaking and subsequent discarding of the bangle.

## Animal bone

*Lisa Yeomans*

Small quantities of bone derived from the fills of the late 2nd to early 3rd-century enclosure ditch, with the remainder of the material recovered from the late 3rd to early 4th-century enclosure ditch, and a cattle tooth from a pit of the same date. A single adult horse mandibular tooth was also recovered from the slightly later drainage ditch.

The site yielded a small quantity of bone, all of which was in very poor condition with extensive

surface erosion and weathering. The high proportion of dentition within the assemblage reflects the ability of enamel to withstand destruction by various taphonomic agents acting on the bone after deposition. The condition of the bone and its very limited quantity makes any attempt at interpretation of the animal bone futile.

### Environmental evidence

Due to the nature of the deposits, comprising predominantly coarse fraction sandy material, the environmental potential of the site was low. It was therefore recommended by Nick Branch of ArchaeoScape (Royal Holloway, University of London) that sampling was limited to cut features containing more promising material. Despite this, no organic remains were recovered from the samples taken.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ROMAN BOUNDARIES, ROADS AND RITUAL: EXCAVATIONS AT THE OLD SORTING OFFICE, SWAN STREET, SOUTHWARK

*Mark Beasley*

*With Philip Armitage and Malcolm Lyne*

## SUMMARY

*This paper details the excavations conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at the Old Sorting Office, Swan Street, London Borough of Southwark. It attempts to place the site in its setting within the Roman settlement of Southwark, and considers the land-use, in the context of Roman ritual, the landscape, funerary and economic activity in the area. During the Roman period the site lay at the southern margin of the Southwark settlement. The earliest activity on site, which was dated to the early to mid-1st century AD, consisted largely of agricultural features such as field ditches and drainage gullies together with a large ditch which may have marked the southern boundary of the Roman settlement. From the mid-1st century up to c.AD 140 a series of features, including pits and wells or ritual shafts, represents the growth of the settlement beyond its boundaries into former agricultural land. The period c.AD 140–250 witnessed a dramatic decline in activity on the site although wells and ritual shafts were still present. The late Roman period saw a further decline in activity with an absence of ritual shafts suggesting a change in religious attitudes. Medieval features dating from the 12th–14th centuries were revealed linked with the spread of Southwark along Borough High Street and Great Dover Street, whilst a number of post-medieval features survived later widespread modern truncation to reveal the growth of the urban area in the 17th century. The site is notable for its apparent ritual activity, which is represented by the placement of human and animal body parts and complete or near-complete pots both in boundary ditches and within the well and shafts. The site's location between the cemetery at Lant Street and the temple complex at Tabard Square may be of significance in this respect. The ritual activity is discussed at length placing it in both its pre-Roman and Roman context.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Old Sorting Office site (TQ 3245 7968) lies on the junction of Swan Street and Great Dover Street, *c.*1km south of London Bridge and the Thames (Fig 1). It is bounded to the east by Swan Street, to the north by Great Dover Street, to the west by properties along Borough High Street, and to the south by Avon Place.

The excavation (Site Code: SWN 98) was conducted in October and November 1998, and consisted of an area *c.*2,500m$^2$ towards the north end of the Old Sorting Office (Fig 2). The southern end of the site had been double-basemented, removing all archaeological deposits. The majority of the north end had been basemented to the level of the natural sand and gravel, leaving only the base of intrusive features. In addition, the archaeology was further truncated by numerous large concrete pier bases, walls, and service runs.

The only area (110m$^2$) where the complete sequence survived was at the northern end directly adjoining Great Dover Street. In this sector demolition works had removed the majority of the post-medieval deposits down to the top of the Roman levels prior to the arrival of

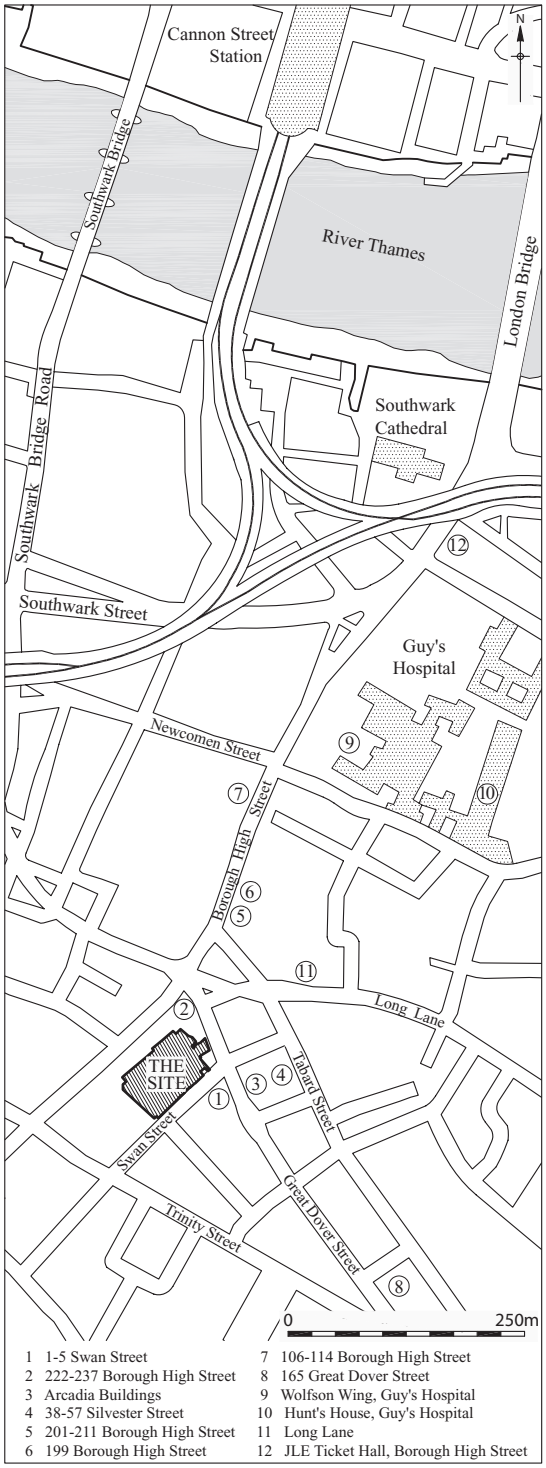


*Fig 1. Site location*

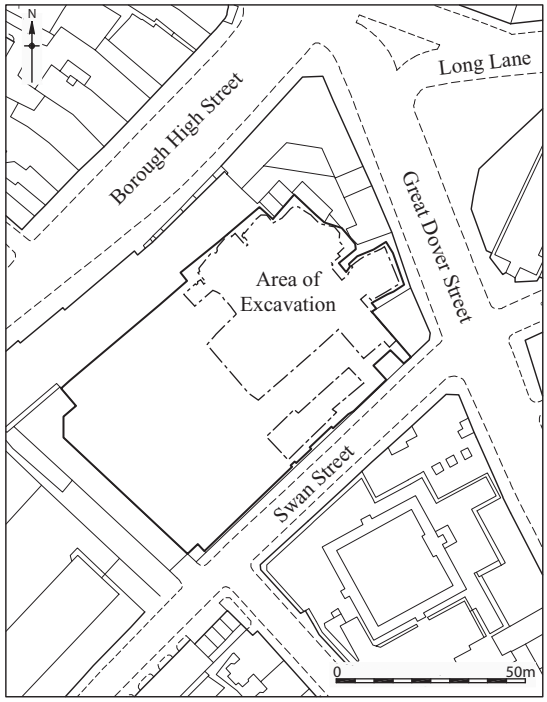


*Fig 2. Excavation area*

the archaeological team. The full sequence of the post-medieval deposits was, however, visible along the Great Dover Street frontage. The main body of this paper deals with the pre-Roman and Roman development of the site.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The late Iron Age and Roman topography comprised numerous braided channels which formed part of the Thames floodplain. Between these channels, gravel islands of higher, drier ground provided a focus for settlement (Fig 3). The height above sea level of the gravel eyots is generally around +1.60–1.70m OD (Graham & Hinton 1988), with the base of the nearest channel to the Old Sorting Office site being recorded at -0.20m OD (Ferretti & Graham 1978).

A maximum tidal amplitude of *c.*0.0m to +1.25m OD has been suggested (Yule 1988) for early Roman Southwark, while the waterfront excavations along the north bank of the Thames would indicate a maximum amplitude of -0.5m to +1.5m (Brigham 1990, 143–5). This suggests that the margins and even the upper areas of these

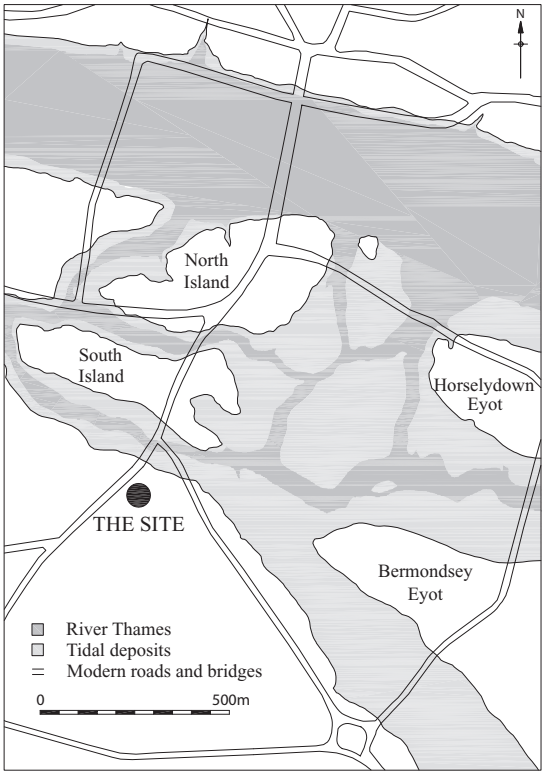


*Fig 3. The topography of Southwark*

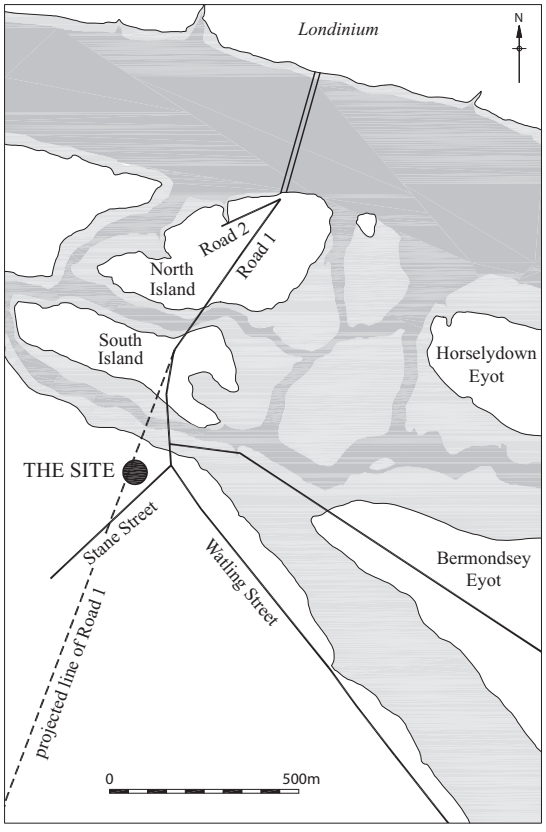


*Fig 4. Roman roads with possible projected line of Road 1*

eyots would have been subject to water-logging and periodic flooding. Timber revetting during the later 1st century AD has been recorded at several sites in north Southwark associated with raising and consolidating of the ground surface to the landward side. Evidence for land reclamation represented by the narrowing and backfilling of the channels has also been recorded on Borough High Street (Yule 1988) and more recently at Hunts House and the Wolfson Wing of Guys Hospital (Taylor-Wilson 2002; C Pickard pers comm). This may be due to marine regression from the 1st to 4th centuries AD, attested by the base and top levels of successive waterfront structures in the City (Brigham 1990, 143–5), the result of which is likely to have been a less brackish estuary and the consolidation of the mud flats.

Southwark was the first upstream location where it was possible to bridge the Thames at the time of the Roman invasion in the mid-1st century AD. The settlement of Roman Southwark was concentrated on two gravel islands, now known as the north and south islands. Four Roman roads have been recorded in this area (Graham & Hinton 1988) (Fig 4). Road 1, tentatively dated to AD 45–60, followed the high ground from the bridgehead at London Bridge southwards to meet Watling Street and Stane Street, the roads to the Kent and Sussex coasts respectively, roughly following the line of the current Borough High Street. The junction of these roads is thought to have been around the intersection of Swan Street, Silvester Street, and Great Dover Street, with Watling Street running south-east roughly parallel to Great Dover Street, and Stane Street thought to run south parallel to Swan Street. The fourth road, Road 2, headed south-west from London Bridge.

The Old Sorting Office site lies on the northern edge of the terrace gravels, at the southern edge of one of the Southwark channels, and close to the projected junction of Watling Street and Stane Street. The southern edge of the channel is believed to be *c.*70m from the north-easternmost part of the site.

Watling Street has been traced in several locations on Borough High Street (Graham & Hinton 1988), and recorded crossing the channel to the north at Arcadia Buildings, Silvester Street (Dean 1980) to the south, and 201–211 Borough High Street (Ferretti & Graham 1978) to the north. The road at this latter point appears to have been carried over the channel on a causeway rather than a bridge, with its foundations consisting of corduroyed timber. It has been postulated that this causeway may only have crossed the silted up edges of the channel and have led to a bridge over the main channel. At Arcadia Buildings, Watling Street consisted of a 12m-wide metalled road surface crossing a smaller tributary channel, with a quarry ditch or more probably a drainage ditch running parallel to the north-east. At 165 Great Dover Street (Mackinder 2000) a 25m length of the road was recorded.

The excavations at 201–211 Borough High Street indicated that the channel was open from the 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD, and that when the causeway and the road were built during the pre-Flavian period the channel became choked with vegetation and was only active during periods of flooding. The environmental information from this site suggests that the channel was filled with sedges and rushes, with a scrub environment, with species such as alder, nettles and campion, on the higher ground around. The road, with its overlapping timber foundation, appears to be of pre-Flavian date, but earlier post lines underlying it may be the remains of a bridge. This suggests that a causeway replaced a bridge when the channel silted up.

Within the main settlement areas the roads were lined with clay and timber buildings (Heard *et al* 1990), later replaced by stone buildings. This pattern is shown at 222–237 Borough High Street (Bird *et al* 1983), immediately to the north of the Old Sorting Office, where a clay and timber building was recorded, at Arcadia Buildings where a clay and timber building was superseded by a second building along the line of Watling Street, and at 38–57 Silvester Street (TAB 93, SMR 091738) where similar stratigraphy was recorded but not excavated (K Wooldridge pers comm). A small gravelled path was also identified at Arcadia Buildings, running at right angles to the road, indicating side streets between building plots.

## SITE SUMMARY AND SEQUENCE

### The natural: Phase 1

Natural deposits were composed of alluvial Holocene sands overlying terrace gravels. The excavation of basements through the top of the sand had masked the natural topographic profile. However, the sands gave way to gravels to the south and east, suggesting that the natural topography slopes down to the north and west, with the sands getting progressively thicker until no gravels were observed in even the deepest intrusive features.

The highest level recorded on the natural strata was at the untruncated north end where the sands were recorded at +1.58m OD, with the remainder graded to *c.*+1.40m OD. It should be noted that this grading may have distorted the distribution of features to the south and east, with only the deeper features remaining. This is particularly true for Phase 2 and the post-medieval phases.

On the north side of the channel, at 201–211 Borough High Street, the top of these sands was recorded at *c.*+1.70m OD, suggesting either that the land surface on the northern bank was higher or that *c.*0.30m or more of its thickness had been truncated by the basement on the south-west side of the site.

### The early Roman: Phase 2

This phase is characterised by linear features (Fig 5) representing a probable agricultural landscape based on a managed field system, comprising field ditches and drainage gullies. These are of early to mid-1st-century date. The remaining features relate to occupation activity to the north, and include ditches, pits, and post-holes, which appear from their alignment to have post-dated the field system. This may be evidence for the establishment of the southern Roman settlement over the top of the established pre-Roman agricultural landscape.

A large (4.5m wide) U-profile ditch ran roughly north to south along the south-west side of the site. This disappeared into section to the north and south, and it is presumed to terminate to the north as it was not observed across the remainder of the area. Pottery from the fills of this ditch is dated to *c.*AD 43–60 (Assemblage 1, Lyne 2000) and the assemblage includes three sherds of Early Roman Sand-tempered A and B ware as well as nine sherds from an early Alice

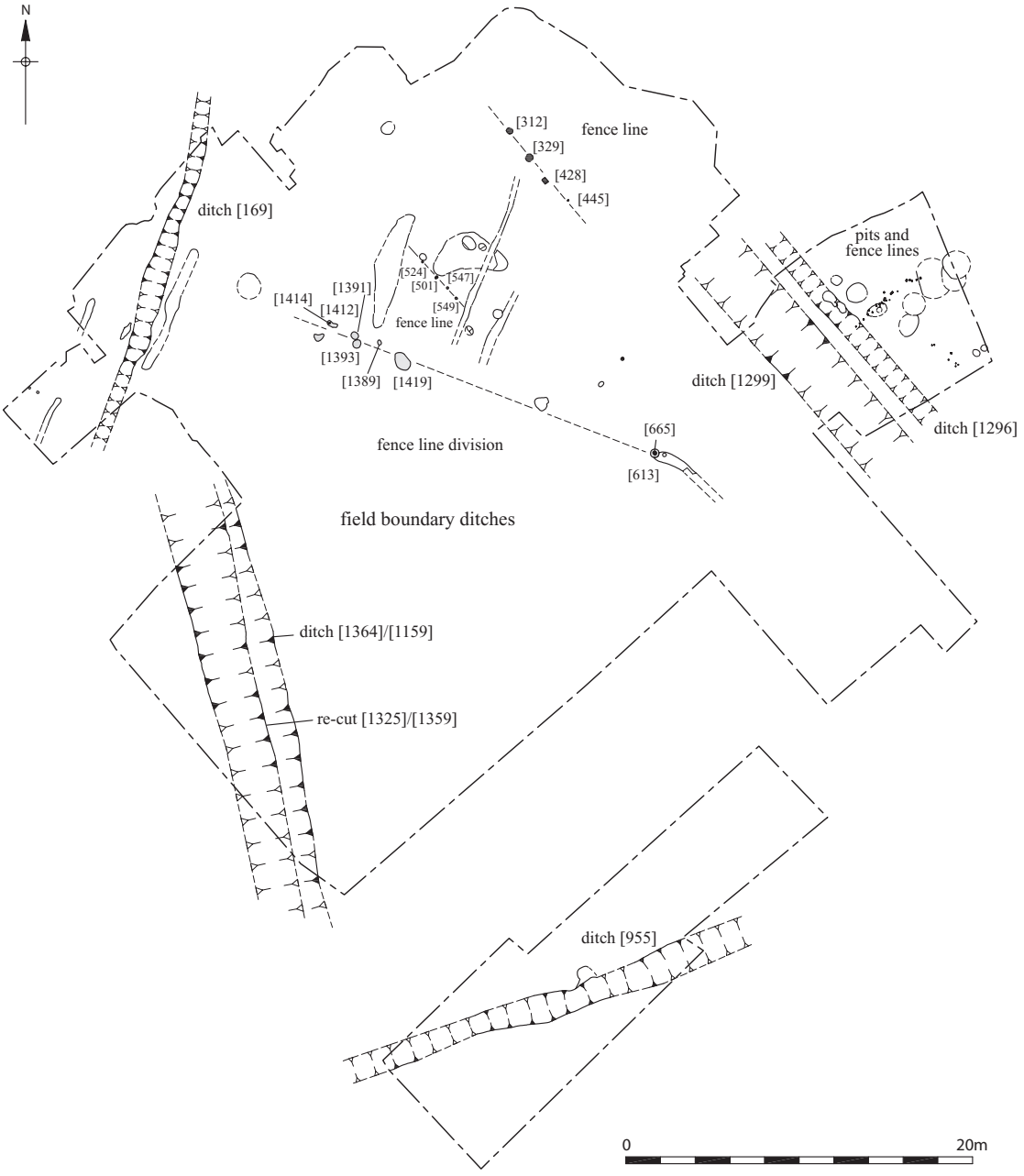


*Fig 5. Phase 2 features*

Holt/Surrey ware type 1-20 jar (Lyne & Jefferies 1979).

This ditch was recut and pottery from the fills was again pre-Flavian, with sherds from a Terra Nigra platter of CAM 13 form (*c.*AD 43–70, Fig 6.1), a bead-rim jar in North Kent Shell-tempered ware (*c.*AD 43–80, Fig 6.2), a necked grog-and-sand-tempered jar (Fig 6.3), and a moulded jar rim in Sugar Loaf Court ware (*c.*AD 50–60, Fig 6.4). The presence of sherds of Alice Holt/Surrey ware from vessels dating to AD 55–120 in the upper fills suggests that the feature was backfilled at a later stage to level the area.

To the north, a smaller U-profile ditch was

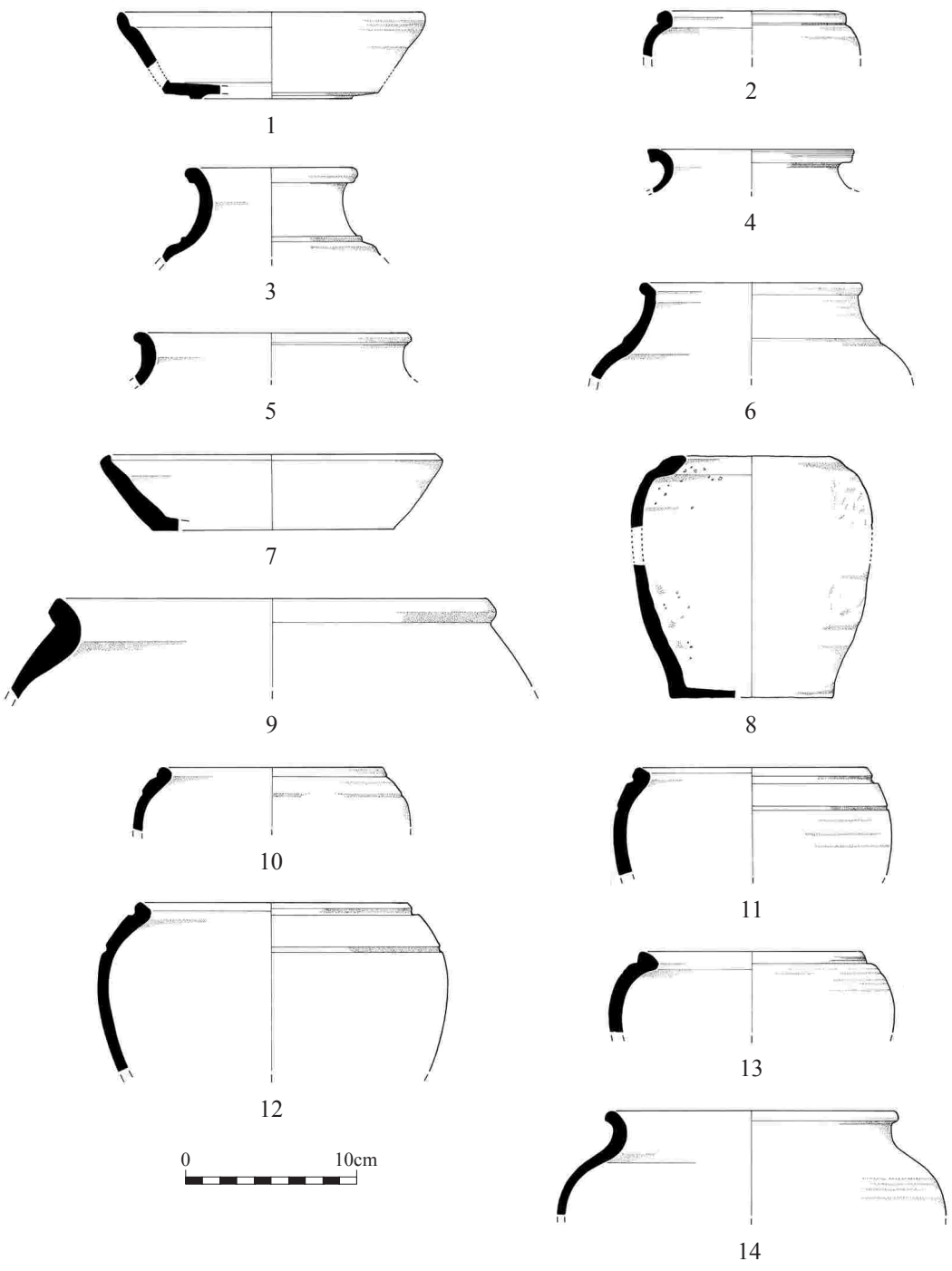


*Fig 6. Pottery Nos 1–14*

recorded on roughly the same alignment. Pottery dates this feature to AD 43–70. To the south a ditch of similar dimensions ran roughly east to west, continuing into the section at both ends.

It is thought that these three ditches represent field boundaries. Associated were sections of six

gullies. These all ran on north-east to south-west alignments, and probably represent smaller surface drainage in the fields defined by the major ditches, a likely necessity in this area, with its braided channels and the flooding hazard. Pottery from these features suggests a date of AD 43–80. To the south, and running at right angles, a series of post- and stakeholes was recorded; these produced two sherds in Alice Holt/Surrey ware (AD 55–120). The postholes may represent a fence line within the field system; they probably pre-date the construction of the roads in the area, and their alignment reflects this.

To the north end of the site a 3m length of ditch was identified, truncated by later features. It had straight sides and a flat base. There were no finds from this feature. It was on a north-west to south-east alignment, compared to the general north–south and east–west alignments of the other ditches, suggesting that it may follow a different set of boundary criteria, possibly respecting the line of the channel to the north-east rather than Stane Street to the south-east, and by implication that it may have had a differing function. This ditch appears to have been superseded late in the phase by a second, larger ditch on the same alignment, *c.*1m to the south. Finds were limited to two sherds of pottery dated to *c.*AD 43–50.

Four possible fence lines were recorded. All respect the north-west to south-east alignment of the ditches, implying a relationship to those rather than to the field system. The first consisted of a line of four stakeholes to the north. Parallel to these, *c.*8.5m to the south, was a further line of four stakeholes.

To the north of these ditches two further fence lines were found. The first comprised 28 stakeholes on a north-east to south-west alignment. The second ran at right angles to this, and on the same alignment as, possibly forming a fence along the truncated line of, ditch [1296]. A series of cuts may represent rubbish pits at the back of settlement activity. The change of alignment observed may be an indication of changing land use during this period, with encroachment or imposition of settlement onto the agricultural landscape. The ditches and their associated fence lines may represent a boundary, albeit much truncated by later activity, possibly parallel to the projected line of Stane Street.

The remaining features of this phase are confined to the north and west as a result of the levelling and consist of isolated pits, postholes, and amorphous features which may be quarry pits, suggesting that the land here was outside any settlement. The absence of clear structural elements would indicate that settlement activity was further to the north, outside the area of excavation, possibly in the form of ribbon development along the projected line of Watling Street or along the south bank of the channel. The presence of a vestigial boundary, in the form of a heavily truncated ditch, may suggest that it forms the boundary between the late Iron Age/early Roman settlement of Southwark and agricultural land to the south. This boundary appears to have been of some importance as it was cut twice on the same line.

Small quantities of lithics and prehistoric pottery were also found. Most of this earlier material comes from later contexts and must be regarded as residual; its presence is however an indication of earlier land use. Altogether 41 lithics were recovered (Bishop 1999), 54% of which were complete flakes and blades. The assemblage appears to date from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age and attests to activity over a considerable period. Although redeposited all the lithics were in reasonably good condition, indicating only minimal taphonomic displacement.

## The Roman: Phase 3

This phase is divided into four sub-phases, reflecting the continuity of Roman occupation of the site and the changing land use. The features appear to indicate encroachment onto the agricultural land, and represent the southward growth of the settlement during the 1st and 2nd centuries and its subsequent contraction.

### *Pre-Flavian and early Flavian (c.AD 50/55–60): Phase 3a*

This phase is represented by 49 features composed of ditches, pits, a line of stakeholes, and three wells (Fig 7). The features represent an increase in activity to the north and, presumably, a displacement of the agricultural landscape from the preceding phase. The phase is characterised by the reinforcement of the northern boundary, with a possible side road or farm track being established through the boundary. The first sign of the use of the site for ritual purposes comes in the form of three wells or ritual shafts, and the presence of possible votive offerings in the boundary ditches.

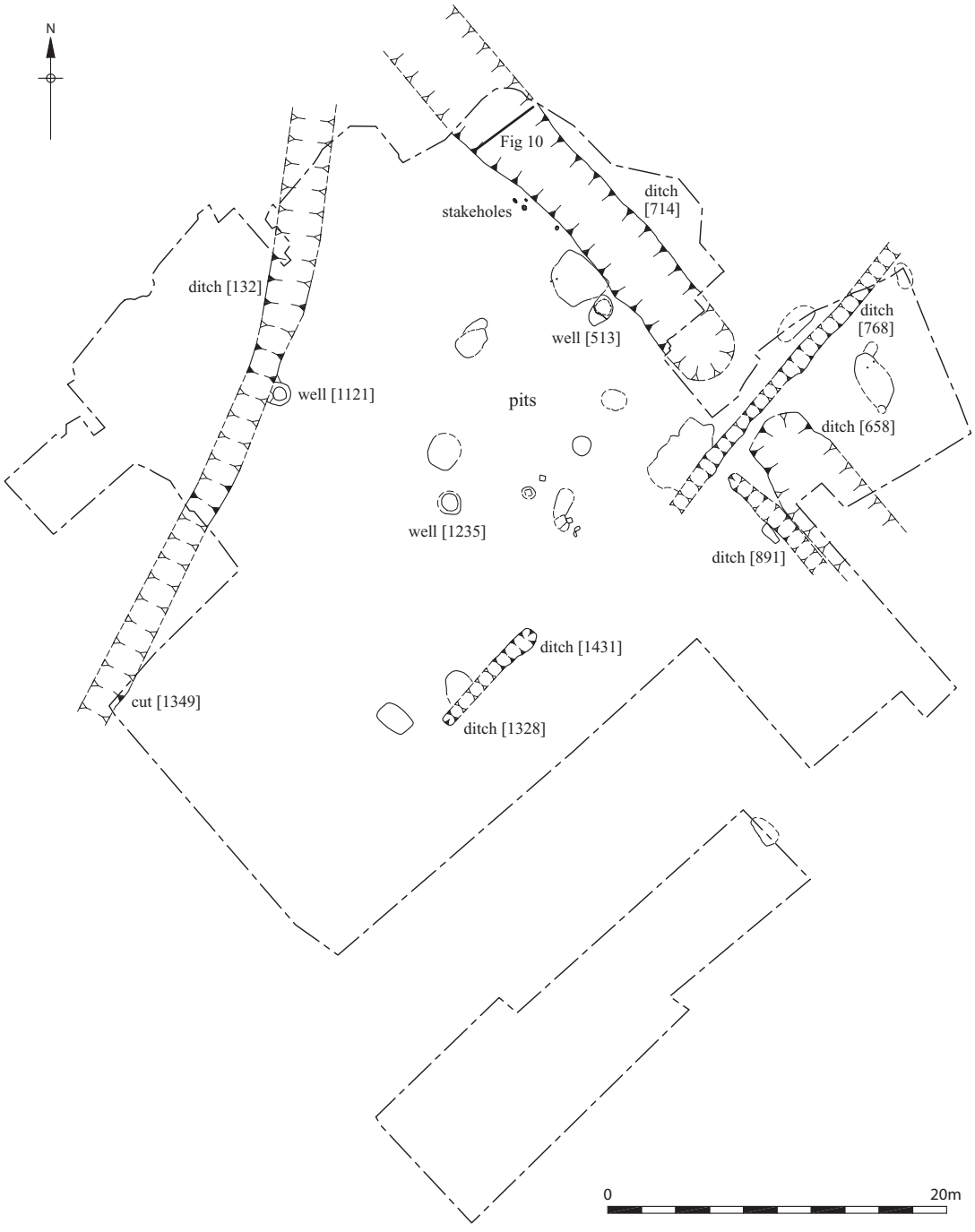


*Fig 7. Phase 3a features*

The major features consist of two large ditches on the north side of the site. The first [714] had a U-shaped profile and is *c.*4.5m wide, running north-west to south-east (Fig 7). This continued into section at both ends, and is assumed to have terminated under the south-eastern baulk. Next to this a similar sized ditch with a terminus to the north-west, beyond the edge of excavation,

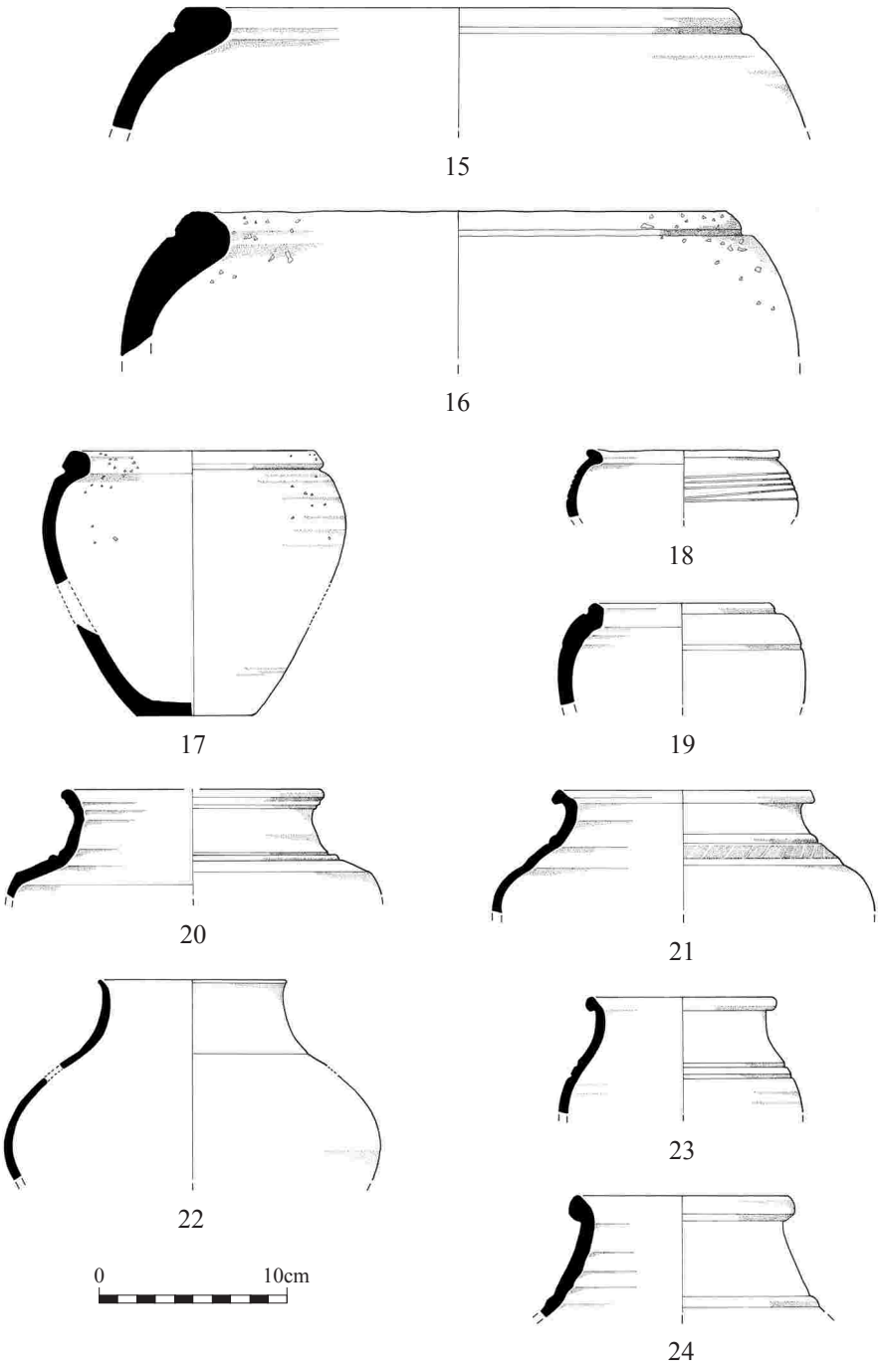


*Fig 8. Pottery Nos 15–24*

is assumed to be an extension of [714]. This cut ditch [1299] of Phase 2, and it is thought these features form a re-working of the boundary line established in the earlier phase, with a possible entrance way introduced through the ditch line, represented by the butt-end of [658] and presumed butt-end of [714].

The pottery assemblage (Lyne 2000, Assemb-

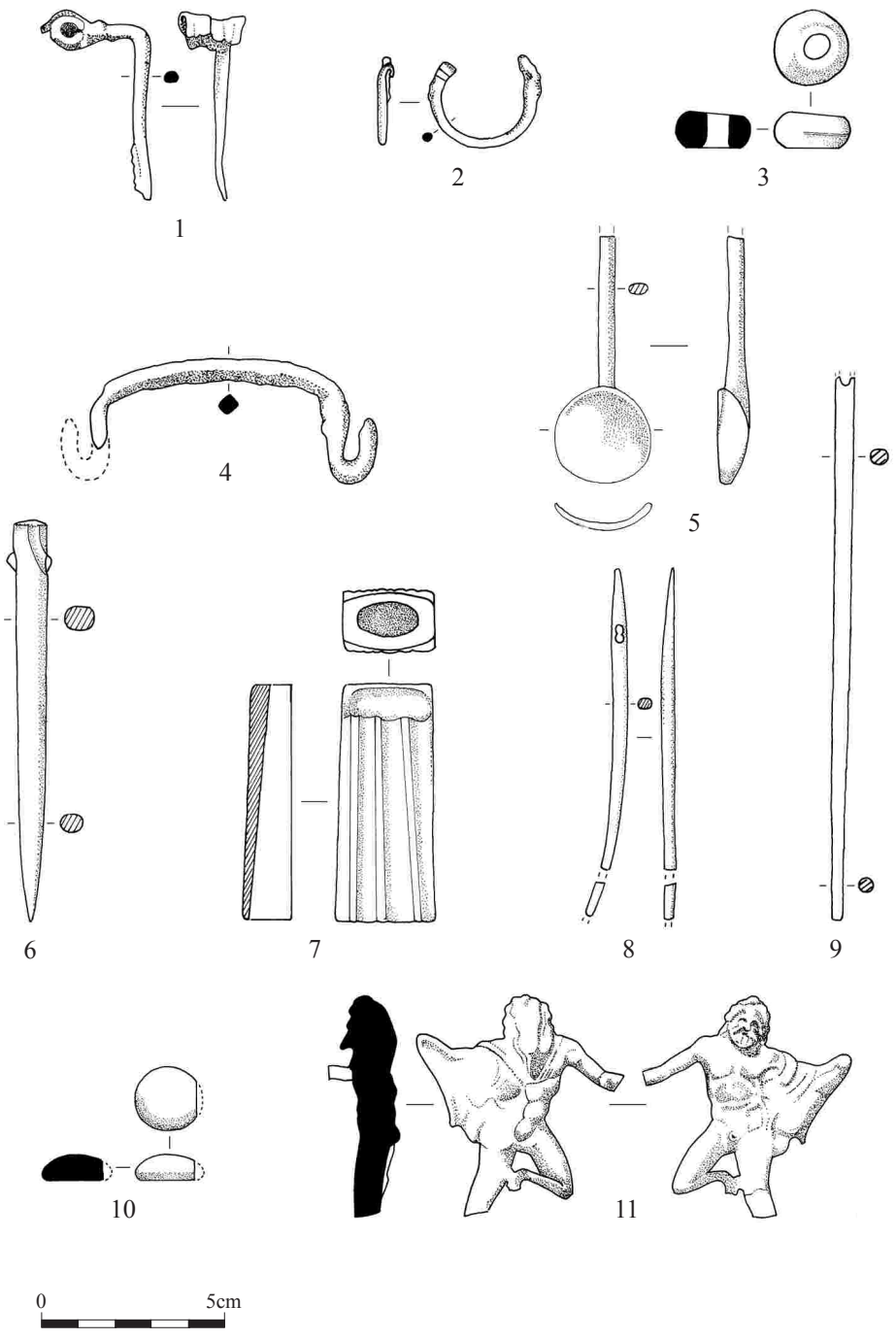


*Fig 9. Small finds Nos 1–11*

lage 4) from these two ditches is closely dated to between *c.*AD 50 and 60, indicating that the feature was relatively short lived (Figs 6.6–14; 8.15–24; 11.25–29). The lower fills of ditch [714] contained polished 'Belgic' grog-tempered ware in the Late Iron Age tradition dating to before AD 60 (Fig 6.6–7), while nearly all of the Alice Holt/ Surrey greywares from it (*c.*AD 50–120) come

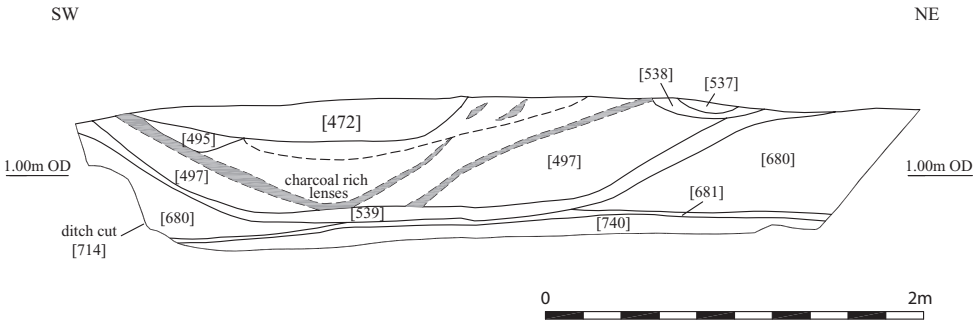


*Fig 10. Section of ditch [714]*

from the upper fills (Fig 8.19–21). The samian from this ditch is all South Gaulish and includes stamps of Modestus (*c.*AD 45–70) and Celer (*c.*AD 40–65) on Dr 29 bowl sherds. An incomplete bow brooch (SF 28, Fig 9.1) dated to the 1st century AD was also recovered and a 1st-century penannular brooch (SF 36, Fig 9.2) with a flat, rolled coil terminal was found in ditch [658].

Tip-lines visible in the sections of ditch [714] (Fig 10) suggest that material was dumped from the north, another indication that settlement activity lies in this direction. Four stakeholes to the south of ditch [714] may be the remains of a fence line further reinforcing the boundary represented by [714]/[658].

Two disarticulated human femurs were recovered from the lower fills of ditch [714]. These came from two separate sample slots *c.*5m apart. Faunal remains (Armitage 2000) from the same contexts include the near-complete articulated skeletal remains of a sheep and a goat aged 3–4 years, and the articulated remains of the left foreleg of a horse. It is of note that of the few articulated elements from the site, six out of eleven (55%) were recovered from three ditches interpreted as being boundary ditches, and three out of eleven (27%) were associated with human remains.

On the west side of the site a linear U-profile ditch [132] was recorded on a roughly north–south alignment. This appears to have been recut, and respects the line of ditch [169] in Phase 2. This would suggest that this boundary line is of significance, having been maintained and reworked through these phases. The pottery from this feature indicates a date of *c.*AD 43–70, with three amphora stoppers among the assemblage, a probable 1st-century sestertius (SF 7; Stabler 2000), and a 1st-century rosette brooch fragment (SF 3). Cut [1349] to the south is probably a continuation of this feature, but too little survived in the excavation area to be certain.

Three smaller ditches were recorded. The first of these was a north-east to south-west aligned, U-sectioned feature [768]. It ran through the presumed entrance way in ditches [714] and [658], at right angles to this ditch line. Included in the finds (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 5) was a shattered, but reconstructable Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere Type 107 (1972, *c.*AD 60–90), into the side of which a small hole had been drilled before it was broken. At the south-western end of [768] a section of U-shaped ditch [891] was found running at right angles to it.

A second ditch [1431], *c.*13.25m to the south, probably forms a continuation of the same line as [768], and further south still cut [1328] probably constitutes a butt-end of [1431]. The pottery from the fills of this feature (Lyne 2000, Assemblages 6 and 7) includes large fresh sherds from a small wheel-turned, bead-rim jar (Fig 11.30), a butt-beaker copy with rouletting over its body (Fig 11.31) in Early Roman Sand-tempered ware, large fragments from a South Gaulish samian Dr.15/17 platter, and the complete upper half of a flagon of Frere Type 112 in Verulamium Region Whiteware (1972, *c.*AD 60–75). The size of the fragments found and the presence of the half flagon suggest a purposeful placement of the pieces as votive offerings in the ditch terminal rather than waste disposal.

A copper-alloy figurine of Hercules (SF 70, Fig 9.11) was also found in the fill. This consisted of a well modelled male nude possibly dressed in a lion skin (Wardle 2000). A circular-sectioned bar projecting from the back of the (broken)

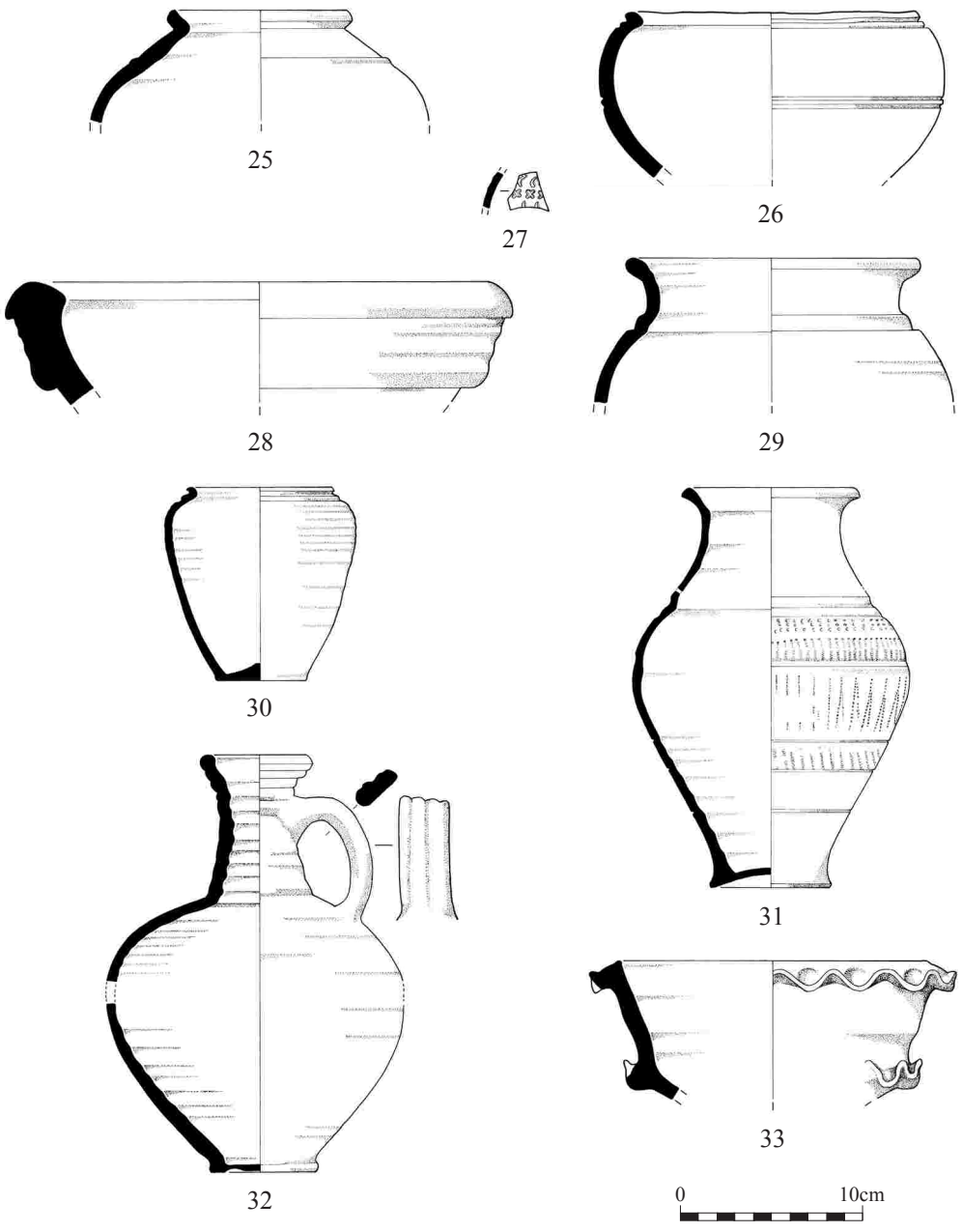


*Fig 11. Pottery Nos 25–33*

left leg may be an attachment, perhaps joining the figure to others in a group or to a support. The right forearm, which may have held a club, is also missing. The early date and its classical style indicate that it was made on the Continent, in Gaul or perhaps Italy.

It is not clear what the function of these ditches was, but their alignment through the inferred entrance way of ditches [714] and [658] suggests drainage along the side of a thoroughfare through the boundary and into open land beyond. There is, however, no direct

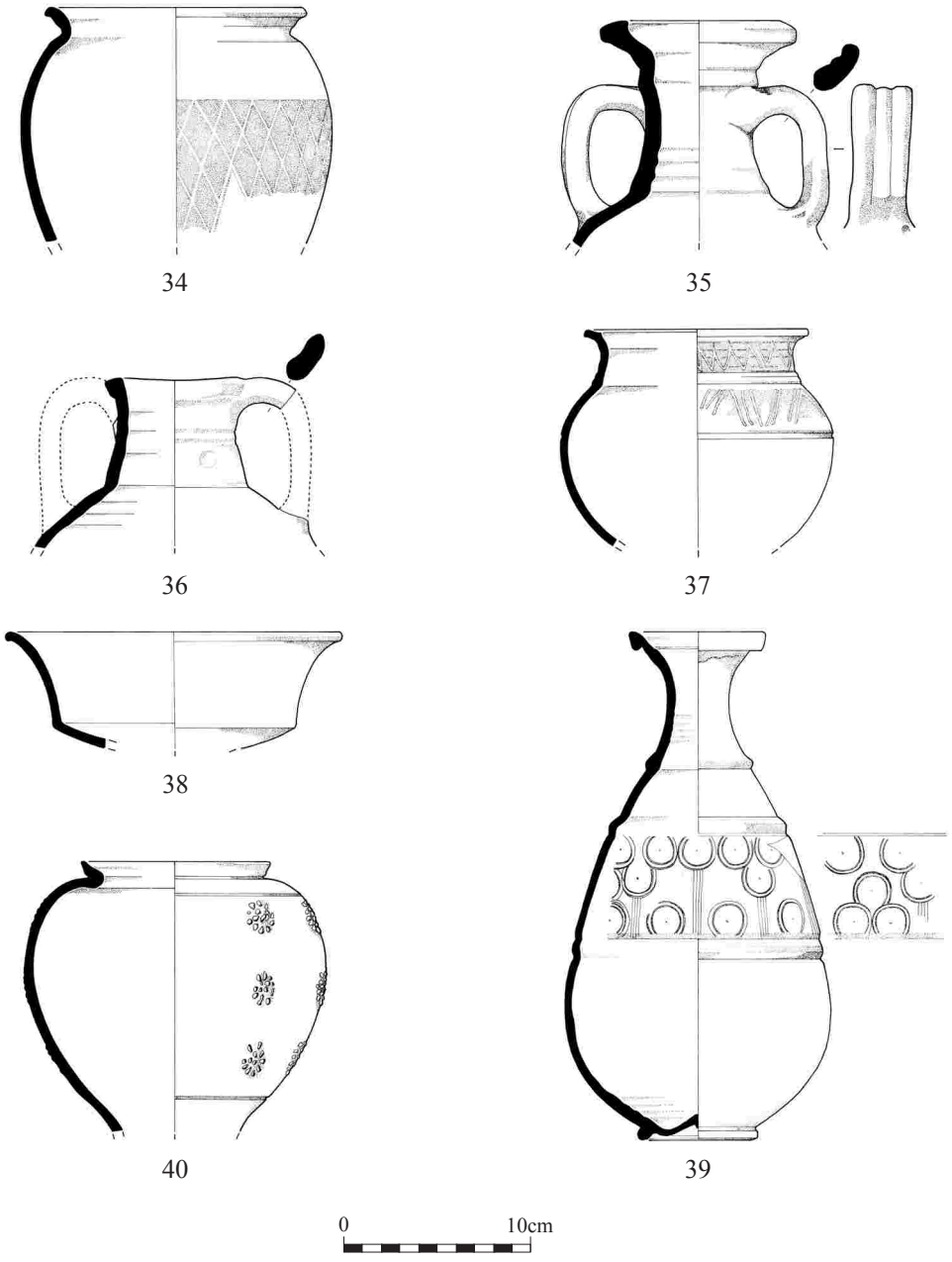


*Fig 12. Pottery Nos 34–40*

evidence to support this (for example in the form of metalling), or indeed a second set of ditches defining the northern side of any such route, and this interpretation must therefore remain tentative.

A small track leading from Watling Street was, however, recorded at Arcadia Buildings to the east of the site, and it is possible that this alignment of ditches constitutes the outline of a similar track. It is possible that it was unsurfaced, or, more likely, that the basementing of the site removed any surfacing, leaving just the

delineating ditches to the side. The pottery suggests that the ditches were dug later in the phase than the establishment of the principal boundary ditches. It is also interesting to note that they were on the same alignment and in the same place as the fence lines in Phase 2, indicating continuity of the boundaries. At 165 Great Dover Street a similar alignment of features was recorded running along, and at right angles to, Watling Street. These were associated with a rectangular post-built building, a well, and a wood-lined pit, and were interpreted as field or garden boundaries (Mackinder 2000).

Three wells were identified. These consisted of two unshored shafts, [513] and [1235], and a shored one, [1121]. The first of these, a circular unshored cut to the west of ditch [714], appears to have collapsed immediately after digging, a slump of natural deposits from the south-western edge having been found. The pottery from the fills (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 13) was limited to 16 sherds of *c.*AD 55–80 date, consistent with a collapse of the sides very soon after excavation.

Well [1235] was a sub-circular unshored shaft in the centre of the site. The fills yielded two complete flagon necks in Verulamium Region Whiteware, one of which showed traces of red paint on the neck (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 14). The third well, [1121], consisted of a circular central shaft of vertical timber planks within a sub-rectangular construction cut. Finds from its fills were probably deposited *c.*AD 70–80 and include a complete but shattered Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere type 102 (1972, *c.*AD 60–90) (Fig 14.44), the upper part of an orange Dressel 2-4 amphora in Koan3786 fabric(*c.*AD 70–100) (Fig 14.45), an aberrant necked and cordoned jar in grey Alice Holt/ Surrey ware (Fig 14.46), and a near-complete Lezoux samian Dr.18 platter dated *c.*AD 50–75 with a cursive Latin inscription (Tomlin & Hassall 2000, 442), bearing the name VRBICVS, 'Urbicus' (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 12).

The remaining features consist of pits, post- and stakeholes. They are in the main concentrated at the north end of the site and central to the projected entrance way through the boundary ditches. It is notable that the few features present appear to respect either the north–south alignment of ditch [132] or the north-west to south-east alignment of ditches [714]/[658], mirroring the alignments in Phase 2. This suggests that the same boundaries exist to the north-east and west of the site, probably following the lines of the channel and Stane Street. The small finds from these features (Swift 2000) include a tapering bone knife handle with ribbed decoration and a hole for a tanged blade (SF 46, Fig 9.7), and a gaming counter of black opaque glass (SF 42, Fig 9.10).

Complete and near-complete vessels, including painted and deliberately broken examples, were found in two of the wells, and ditch [768] contained the broken Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon with a small hole drilled through the side. These finds suggest deliberate ritual deposition of these pots in those contexts. In the light of this deliberate deposition, the presence of a goat skeleton, articulated animal parts, and human long bones in the large boundary ditch [714] may indicate further ritual activity. The implications of these features and finds are discussed more fully below.

### *The late 1st to early 2nd centuries (c.AD 80–140): Phase 3b*

The highest density of features is found in Phase 3b. Pits are present over the whole area, with a particular concentration at the north end. This appears to be a period of growth for Roman Southwark, with the abandonment of the early 1st-century boundaries and an expansion of the settlement southwards. The roadway postulated for the previous phase appears to have been maintained with the side ditches being recut. This may have served as a route between parallel property boundaries. The principal features of the phase consist of three ditches and seven wells (Fig 13).

The wells comprised one unshored shaft, two (possibly three) circular shored ones, and three square shored shafts. The fills of circular unshored well [1181] yielded a complete ring-necked Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere type 241 (1972, *c.*AD 85–105), the side of which had been pierced (Fig 15.50); the lower part of another flagon in the same fabric was also recovered from this feature. The rest of the pottery (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 17) includes a near-complete unguentarium of Frere Type 477 (1972, *c.*AD 105–130) (Fig 15.51), a carinated flanged bowl in micaceous greyware (*c.*AD 85–115) (Fig 15.52), and a closed form with a pedestal base in a largely sand-free orange fabric with external gilt-mica wash (Fig 17.53). This suggests an early 2nd-century date for the use and abandonment of the well. An annular

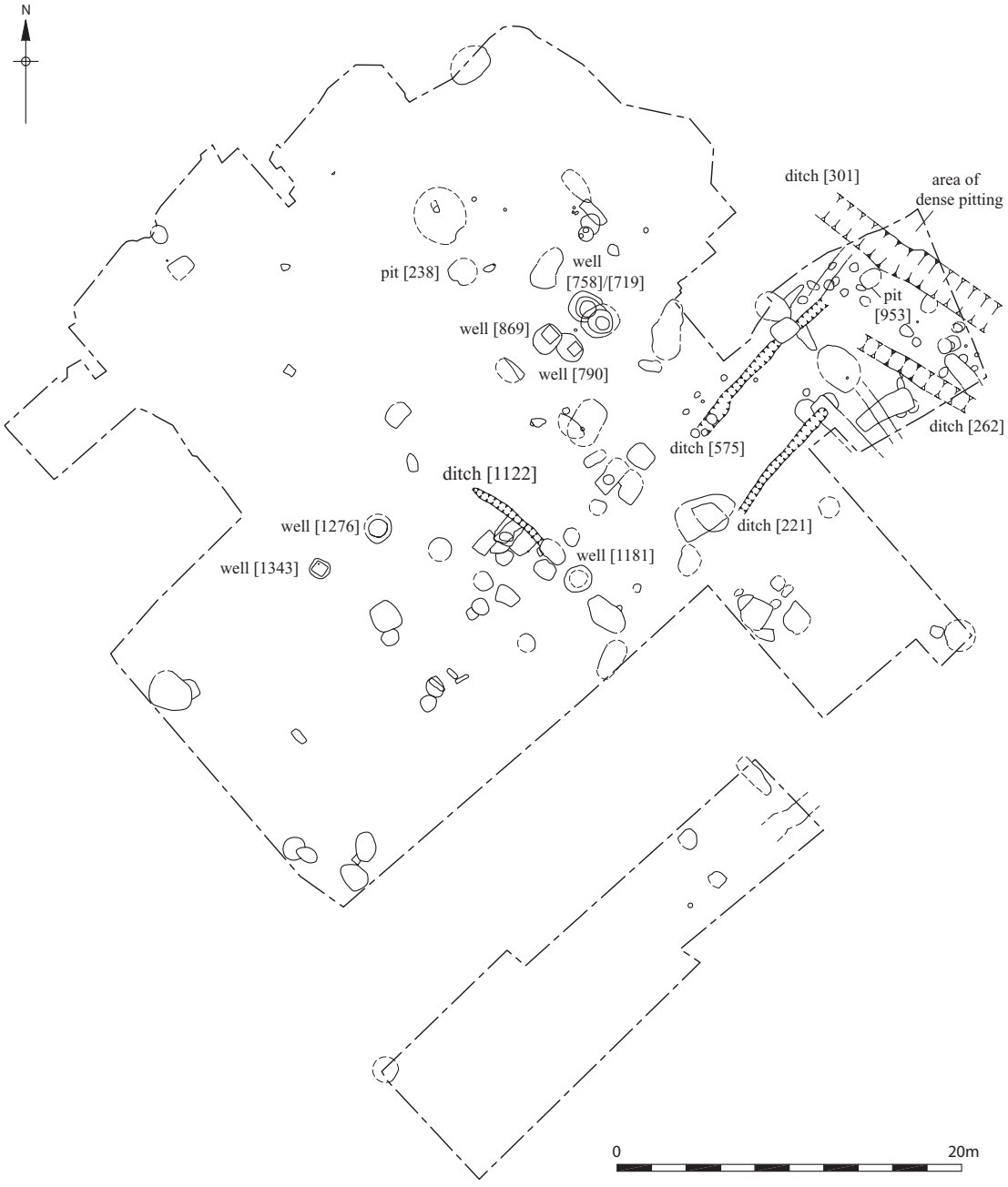


*Fig 13. Phase 3b features*

glass bead of blue-green glass, unusual in that it is made of uncoloured natural glass (SF 56, Fig 9.3), was also recovered.

Well [1276] consisted of a circular shaft in a sub-circular construction cut. No sign of timber shoring was observed but the presence of the shaft within suggests that it must have been lined. A single sherd, from a ring-and-dot beaker in RDBK fabric (*c.*AD 70–100), was recovered from its fills.

To the north of these wells, feature [758/719] consisted of a circular lined shaft with vertical

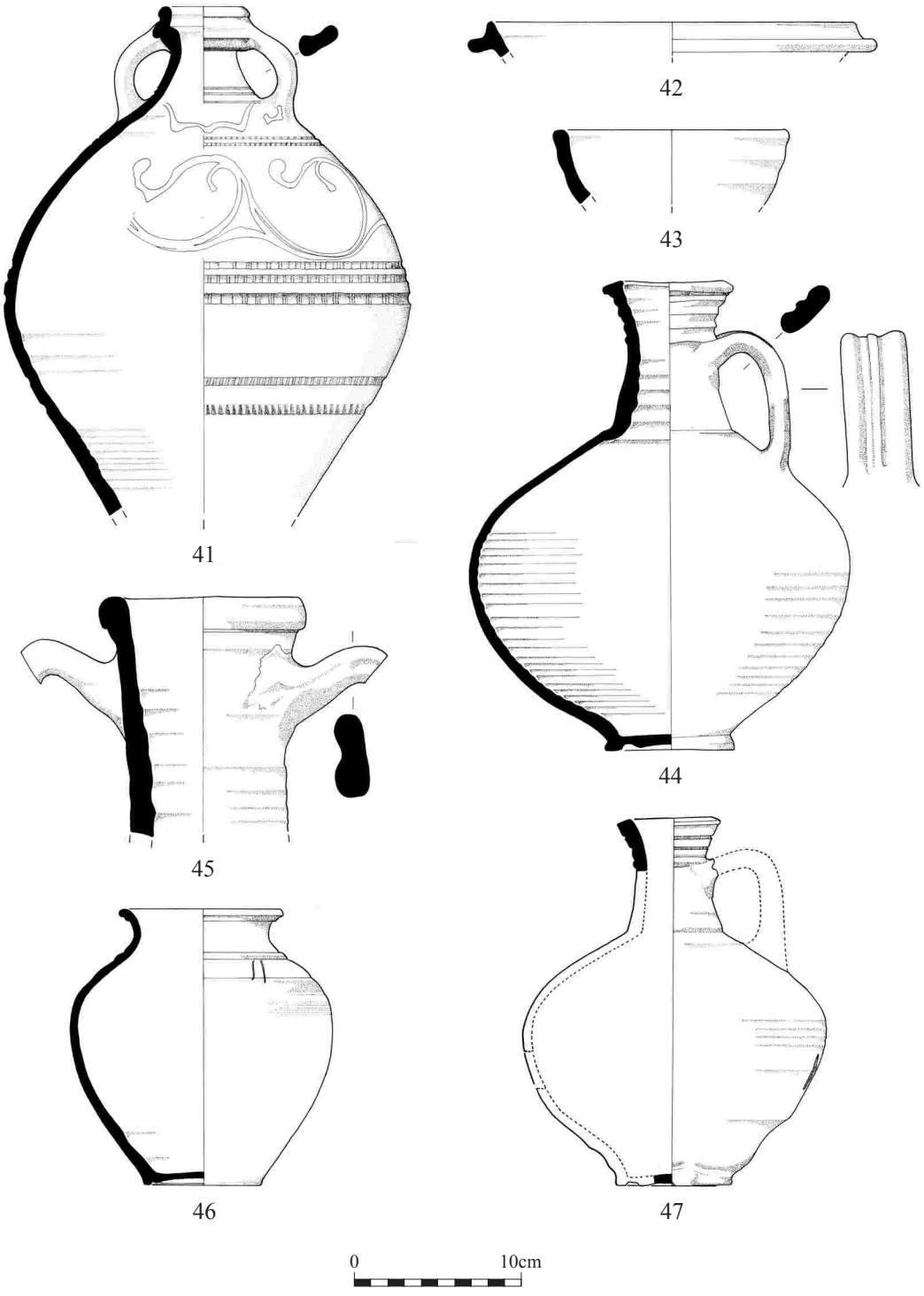


*Fig 14. Pottery Nos 41–47*

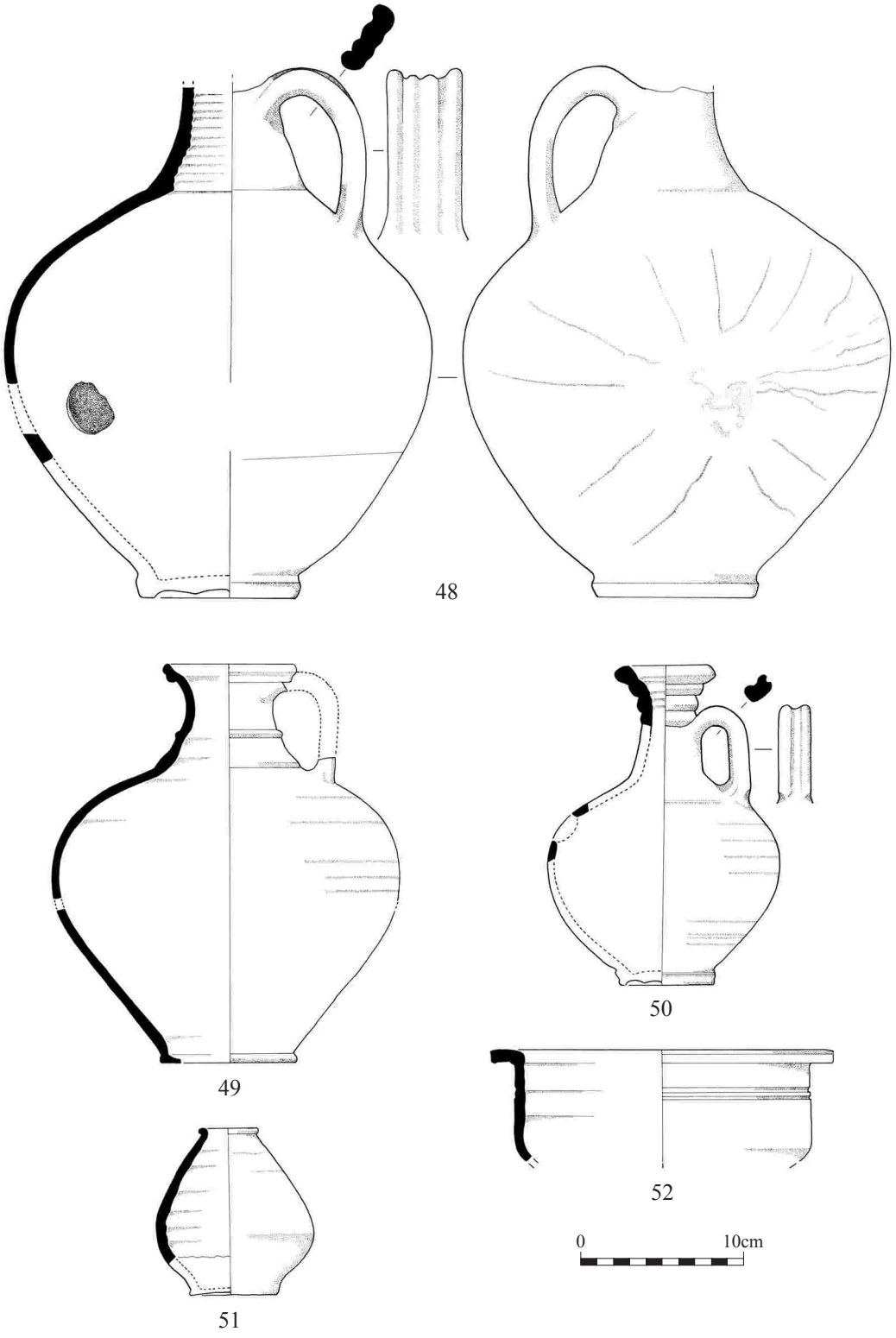


*Fig 15. Pottery Nos 48–52*

timbers in a sub-circular construction cut. The little pottery from its fills can be dated *c.*AD 70–100. This well was cut by well [761/317], which consisted of a circular shaft of vertical timbers in a sub-circular construction cut. The finds from its fill include the lower half of a Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon with a hole pierced in the side (*c.*AD 80–130).

To the south-west, was a second pair of wells. The first, [869], consisted of a square timber-lined shaft built in a sub-circular construction cut. The finds from the construction cut indicate that it was dug in the last two decades of the 1st century (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 20a). This cut a second square shaft with a sub-circular construction cut, [790]. A near-complete Verulamium Region Whiteware screw-neck flagon (*c.*AD 85–105), with the handle removed and a small cut made in the side (Fig 14.47), and the lower half of another flagon in the same fabric came from the lowest fill. The remaining pottery appears to be residual domestic rubbish dating to the end of the 1st century (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 15).

The earlier wells appear to have been superseded quickly by similar types of shafts in roughly the same locations, suggesting that the first of the group were backfilled deliberately. The presence of apparently ritually deposited vessels at the bottom, as well as the paucity of other finds, suggests that they were backfilled following the deposition, and are therefore purely ritual as opposed to being wells for water extraction with incidental ritual activity as a secondary role.

The fact that the earlier shafts contained votive pots at the base and the later wells did not also raises questions as to the nature and function of the later shafts. Their placement in roughly the same position suggests a continued ritual function, and implies a significance of their location in relationship to the boundary features recorded on the site. All these features appear to constitute the back edge of the settlement in relation to the roads and channel. In a wider context within the contemporary landscape their location approximately halfway between the temple precinct at Tabard Square (LLS02, Killock & Brown 2004), some 180m to the east, and the Lant Street cemetery (LTU03, Sayer 2006), *c.*170m to the west, would not seem coincidental. The morphology of the wells, with circular and square shafts being replaced by similar forms, suggests a continuity of function and construction.

A further square well [1343] was recorded to the south-west. This consisted of a square timber shaft in a sub-circular construction cut. A Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon (*c.*AD 70–150) with a red-painted radiate head on its side was recovered from the lower fill. The rim had been deliberately removed and a small hole drilled through the side (Fig 15.48) (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 16). From the upper excavated fill of the shaft was recovered the greater part of an Alice Holt/Surrey greyware flagon (Fig 15.49), dating to *c.*AD 70–120.

The square timber shafts of the wells in this group were all roughly aligned north-east to south-west, indicating a relationship with Stane Street to the north-west and to the alignment of ditch [575], running north-east to south-west at the north end of the site. This constitutes a recut of [768] in the preceding phase, with a parallel ditch [221] to the south-east.

To the south-west of these two features a small ditch [1122] ran at right-angles to the line of features, possibly defining the edge of a track running through the earlier boundary; these ditches may therefore form a continuation of the pattern established by the earlier land use in Phase 3a. This may support the idea that a thoroughfare was established in the previous phase which had continued in use. The existence of a possible track into the agricultural hinterland would explain the north-east to south-west alignment of the pits to either side in this and the preceding phases.

Two parallel short truncated sections of ditch, [262] and [301], were recorded to the north-east of the line of ditch [714]/[658] (Phase 3a). These turned slightly (*c.*8 degrees) more to the east than [714], and assuming that these features respected boundaries, this may indicate a change in building lines to the north-east. Between these ditches two possible alignments of shallow postholes may represent a fence. Heavy pitting in this area suggests the proximity of buildings, or alternatively this could be a reflection of the post-medieval grading of the rest of the site. The fills of ditch [301] yielded a large amount of pottery (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 8), including a shattered but reconstructable screw-neck flagon of Frere type 1417 in Verulamium Region Whiteware (Frere 1983, *c.*AD 130–140) (Fig 11.32), a tazza of Frere type 1449 in similar fabric (Fig 11.33), a cavetto-rim BB1 cooking pot similar to Gillam form 123 (Gillam 1970, *c.*AD 120–160) (Fig 12.34), a two-

handled amphora in cream Verulamium Region Whiteware (Fig 12.35), a double-handled Type 1E flagon of Frere type 577 (*c.*AD 130–150, Fig 12.36), the greater part of a necked and cordoned jar in fine sanded, brittle grey ware (Fig 12.37), and a carinated bowl in Grey North Kent Fineware, of Marsh's type 44.3 (1978, *c.*AD 70–130) (Fig 12.38).

The remaining features in the phase consist of pitting across the eastern side of the site, continuing the pattern established in the preceding two phases. Many of the features were aligned north-east to south-west along the line of the possible track to the south, and may represent rubbish disposal in open ground close to the settlement, with fewer pits respecting the north–south activity to the west. This could be indicative of a change in the focus of land use during the late 1st/early 2nd centuries.

From one these pits, [238], a shattered, near-complete grey micaceous London Ware bottle was recovered (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 9, *c.*AD 100–120) (Fig 12.39) and the greater part of a beaker in Fine Micaceous fabric (FMIC-1659) came from another [953] (Assemblage 10, *c.*AD 70–120) (Fig 12.40).

The pottery from many of these features suggests a mid-1st-century date, but is stratigraphically residual in late 1st-century or early 2nd-century features. Painted wall plaster, stone and ceramic building material are also present, indicative of demolition rubble. Coupled with the evidence of the southward expansion of the settlement during this phase, is renewed building/re-building during the latter part of the 1st century, possibly following the sacking of *Londinium* in the Boudiccan revolt of AD 61 (see below).

The excavations at 223–237 Borough High Street (Thompson *et al* 1998, 185), 1–5 Swan Street(Graham 1978), and Silvester Street (K Wooldridge pers comm) all reported a depth of agricultural soil overlying the natural. It is likely that this soil extended over the Old Sorting Office site also, but that it was truncated by the basements of the Old Sorting Office. Thin layers of similar material at the north end of the site may represent vestigial traces of this soil.

The small finds (Swift 2000) include a furniture drop-handle with a square-sectioned loop (SF 22, Fig 9.4), a fragmentary set of tweezers similar to a complete example from Colchester (SF 34), a stout tool with a pointed end and a shallow conical head (SF 8, Fig 9.6), and a broken bone needle with a figure-of-eight drilled hole (SF 80, Fig 9.8). An incomplete Colchester two-piece brooch (SF 77) and a copper-alloy bow brooch spring (SF 79) were also found (Wardle 2000).

### *The mid-2nd to mid-3rd centuries (c.AD 140–250): Phase 3c*

Phase 3c marks a dramatic decline in the activity on the site after the mid-2nd century AD. The features consist of four wells, a short section of ditch, and twelve pits (Fig 16). The number of features is reduced and the major ones are the three wells or ritual shafts.

Well [1306] was square and timber-lined in a sub-circular construction cut. The finds from its construction cut indicate a date of *c.*AD 70–100 (Lyne 2000, Assemblage 22a). The finds from the fill, following the termination of its use (Assemblage 22b), include the greater part of an unusual screw top beaker in ?Colchester Colour-coat fabric of *c.*AD 175–210 date (Fig 17.59), a complete Cologne roughcast beaker of *c.*AD 130–200+ date (Fig 17.60), the complete top of a Verulamium Region Coarse White-slipped ware flagon, and a complete small lid or platter in similar fabric that may be a kiln waster (Fig 18.61). These finds suggest a late 2nd- or early 3rd-century date for the backfilling. The presence of quantities of residual material of late 1st- to early 2nd-century date also suggests that it was backfilled with domestic rubbish. At the bottom of the feature the remains of a mineralised wooden bucket were found. This, along with the length of time it was open and the degree of residuality of the pottery, contrasts with the finds from the earlier shafts and would suggest that this was a well and possibly not primarily a ritual shaft, although buckets have been recorded elsewhere in ritual shafts of Roman date (Ross 1968).

The second well [1180] consisted of a square timber shaft in a sub-square cut. The fills of the construction cut (Assemblage 21a) contained a shattered but reconstructable flagon of Frere type 405 (*c.*AD 105–115) with a small hole made in the side (Fig 17.55), and a barrel-shaped flagon with red-painted 'solar rays' on the side (Fig 17.56) reminiscent of the decoration on a flagon in well [1343] (see below). Also present were the complete necks and rims of three more Verulamium Region Whiteware flagons dating from between AD 60 and 180.

The fills of the shaft contained the recon-

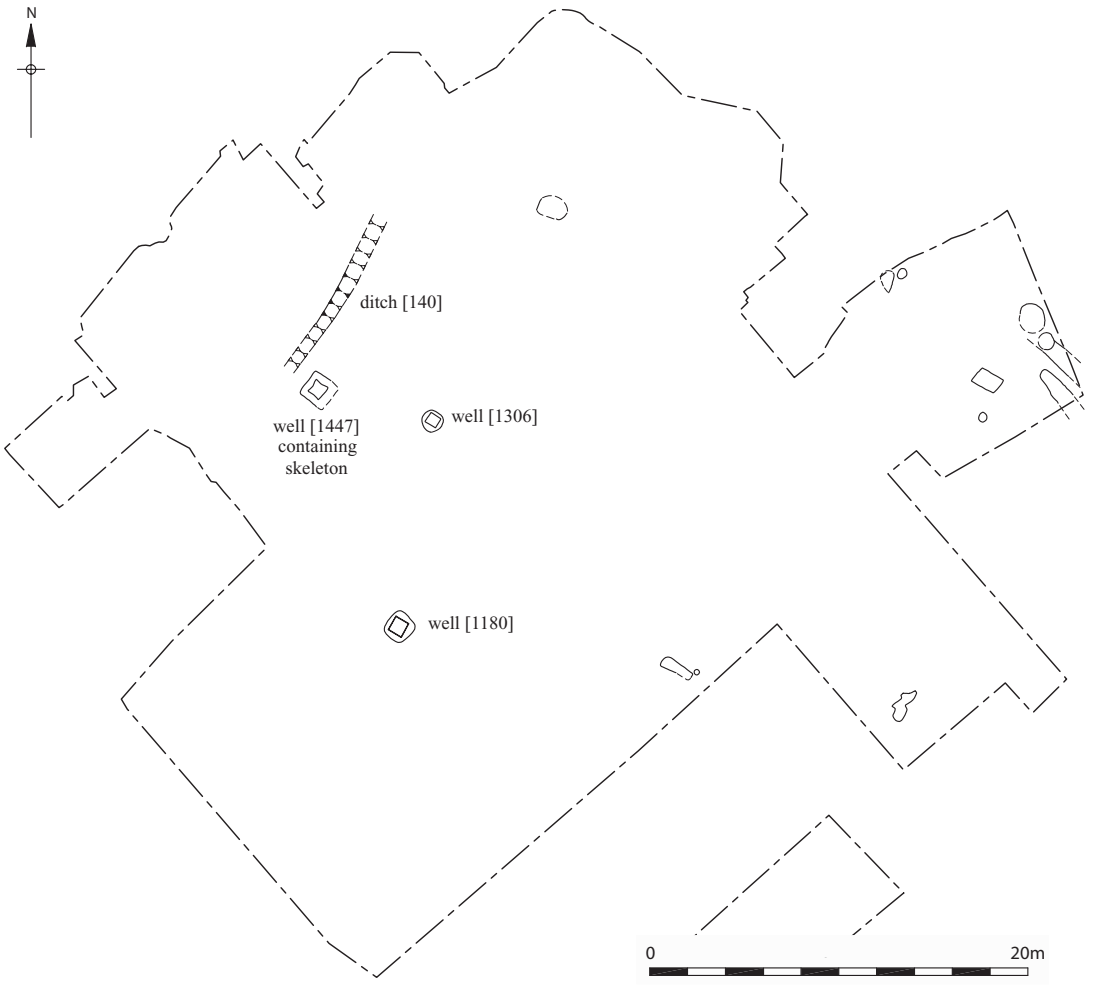


*Fig 16. Phase 3c features*

structable remains of a (near) complete carinated bowl in Verulamium Region Whiteware (*c.*AD 135–185, Fig 17.57), a large Highgate Wood C beaker (*c.*AD 70–160, Fig 17.58), and the lower portion of a flagon in Verulamium Region Whiteware fabric. The pottery dates (Assemblage 21b) suggest this shaft was dug in the third decade of the 2nd century and remained open until *c.*AD 160. These assemblages are of note as they appear to represent ritual deposition in both the backfilling of the construction cut and the shaft of the well itself.

The third well [1447] consisted of a square timber shaft in a sub-square cut. The top half of a human skeleton was found head down in the upper fills, the legs and lower torso were truncated, probably by the 20th-century basementing (Fig 19). The remains were of an adult male of between 26 and 45 years of age and standing around 1.70m tall (*c.*5' 7"). This individual had been deposited head-down in the well, with the back tight against the northern side of the shaft, and the head to the west. The left arm, shoulder, and ribs appear to have been removed but the detached left hand was found in place. There were no signs of later truncation from the remains lower in the shaft and no cut marks were identified on the surviving skeleton. This points to *post-mortem* manipulation of the body, probably after the flesh had gone but while the body was still articulated. There was no pathology indicating the cause of death of this

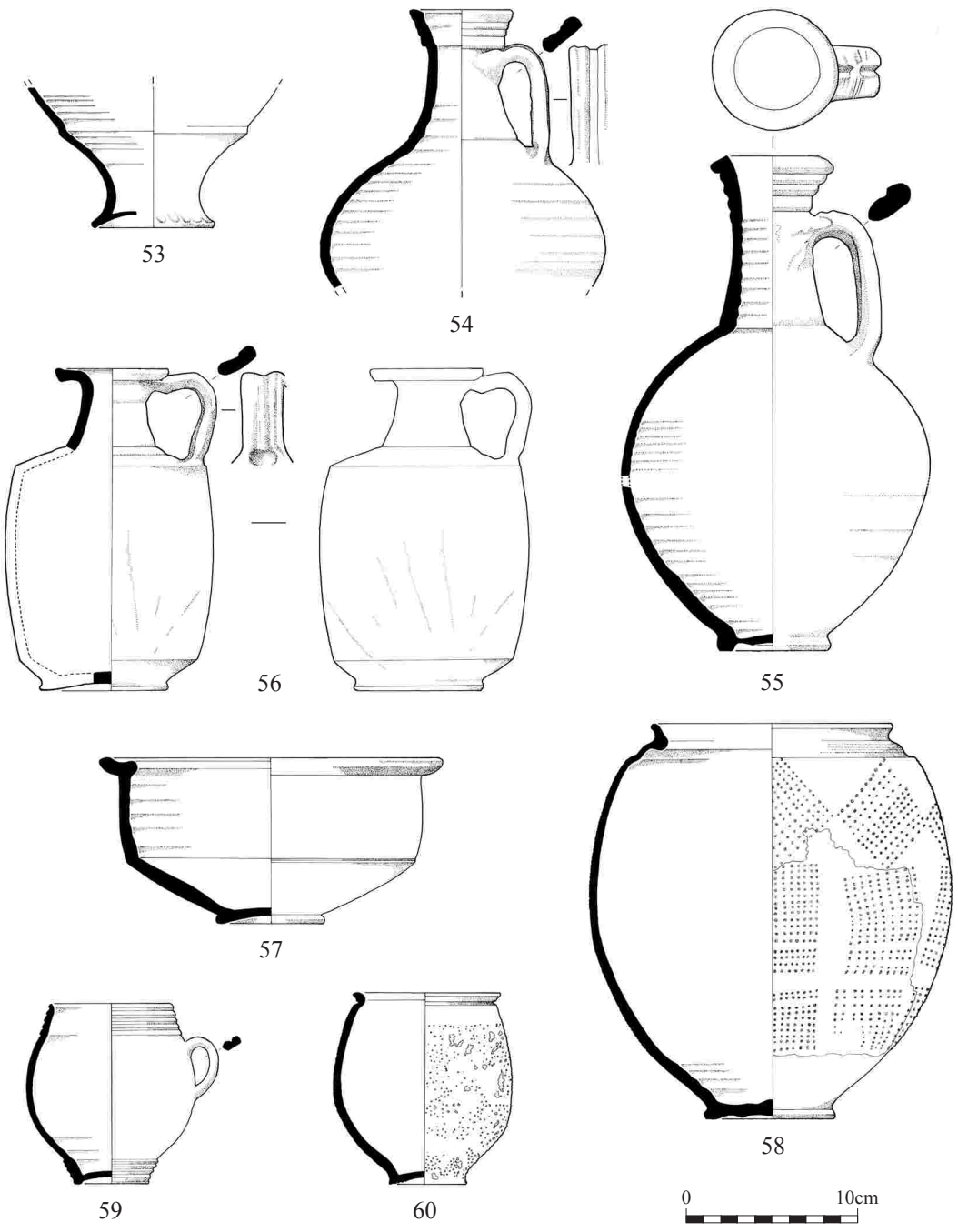


*Fig 17. Pottery Nos 53–60*

individual, although he did appear to have been subject to a degenerative joint disease of the upper spine, probably the result of increasing age (Dodwell 1999). The skeleton was associated with the lower part of a BB2 cooking pot, four iron nails (SFs 63–66), and the skeletons of three adult male dogs, apparently thrown into the well as complete but disarticulated carcasses; these

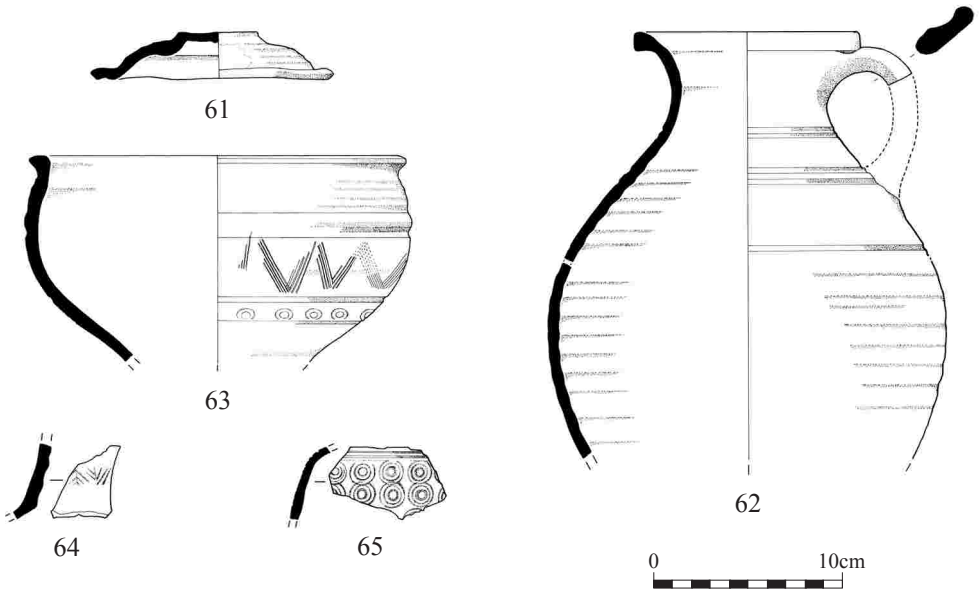


*Fig 18. Pottery Nos 61–65*

*Fig 19. Human skeleton in shaft (reconstruction)*

would, therefore, also have been defleshed at the time of deposition.

The pottery from the fills of the construction cut indicates a date of *c.*AD 120–160 for the cutting and includes fragments of the lower half of a Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon (Assemblage 23a). The pottery from the shaft (Assemblage 23b) includes the lower part of a Verulamium Coarse White-Slipped ware flagon and a Verulamium Region Whiteware jug (Fig 18.62). The dates of these and the rest of the pottery indicate that the feature remained open into the early 3rd century. The fact that it was open for a period of time, possibly in use as a well, may be indicated by the presence of the remains of two common frogs. The find of a flagon top in the construction cut may well represent ritual deposition at the shaft opening.

The orientations of the timber linings of these three wells all appear to correspond to the line of ditch [140], a short truncated section of U-sectioned ditch to the west of the site, and form a part of the north to south alignment observed in the previous phases. This alignment appears to have shifted to the east and was now closer to the current Borough High Street. This may be an indication of the boundary of the settlement to the west changing. It may indicate a change

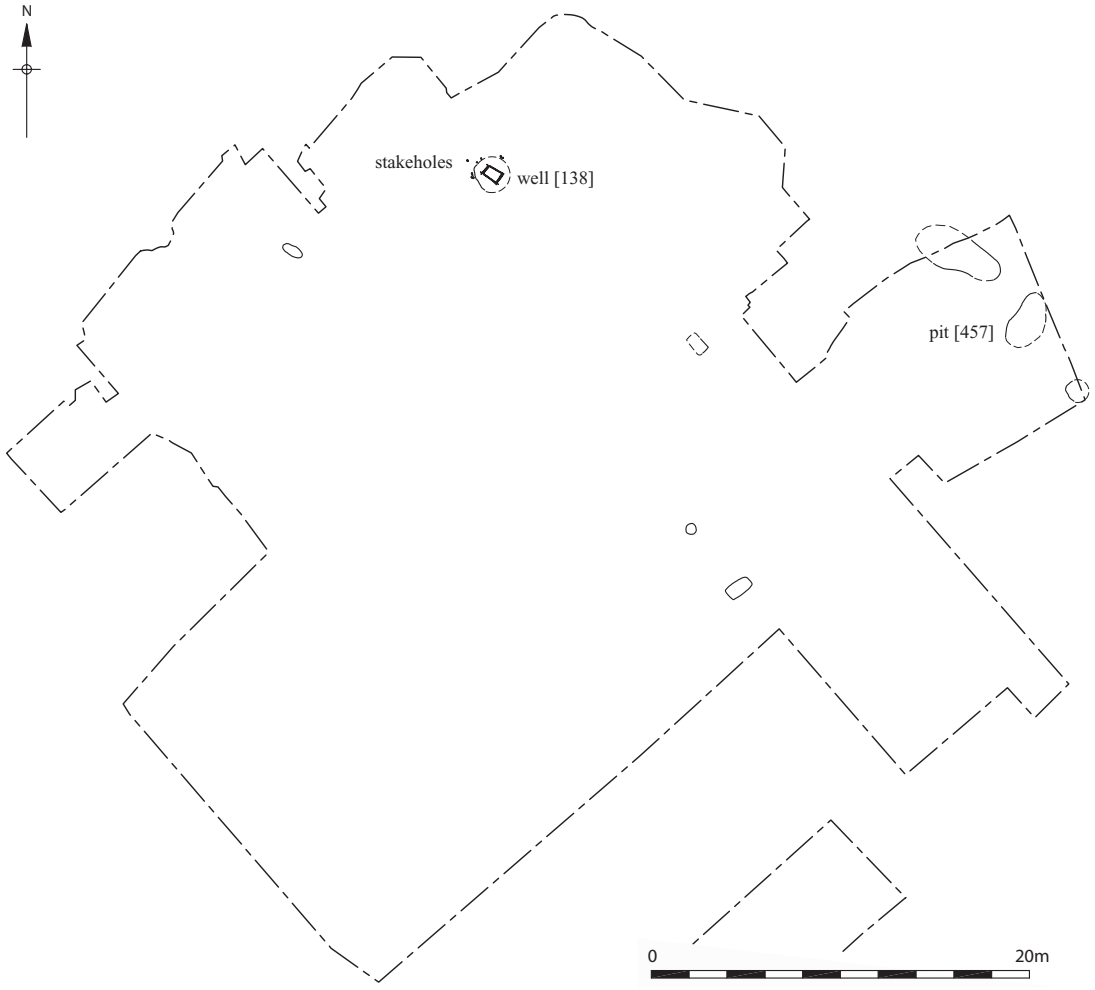


*Fig 20. Phase 3d features*

of settlement focus from the north-east to the west during the 2nd/3rd centuries. It is not clear, however, what the limits to the west would have been.

The fourth well in the phase, [1385], was a sub-circular cut with a timber-lined shaft, although the timber was too decayed to tell its type of construction. The pottery from the shaft fills is heavily broken-up and appears to be domestic rubbish. It suggests a date of *c.*AD 140–170 for the backfilling of the shaft. A Julio-Claudian copper-alloy coin (SF 59) of uncertain date with the letters […] AVG PM TP […] on the obverse was also recovered (Stabler 2000).

The remaining features of this phase consisted of pitting to the north-east and east, indicating much reduced activity, supporting the notion of a contraction of the Southwark settlement during this period.

### *The Late Roman (c.AD 250–400): Phase 3d*

The final Roman phase represents a marked reduction in activity during the late 3rd and 4th centuries, with features being recorded mostly to the north. These include a timber-lined well and seven pits (Fig 20).

The well [138] comprised a rectangular shaft in a sub-rectangular cut. This was associated with a scatter of stakeholes around the north and west sides. The pottery from the fills dates from the 1st to 4th centuries. There is nothing to

suggest any ritual deposition, indicating that the rituals associated with shafts may have ceased by the late 3rd century.

The remaining features consist of four small pits in the main area of the site and a small cut and two large pits to the north-east. From one of these, [457], were recovered a shattered but near-complete, two-handled Cologne Whiteware flagon (*c.*AD 300–350, Fig 14.41) and a handmade facet-burnished, beaded and flanged bowl in late West Kent Grog-tempered ware (Fig 14.42). The latter is closely paralleled in a grave assemblage at the Keston Warbank mausoleum and probably dates to *c.*AD 370–400+. Fragments from a deep handmade, convex-sided dish in facet-burnished grey fabric (*c.*AD 370–400+, Fig 14.43) also came from this feature (Assemblage 11). A broken bone needle (SF 8, Fig 9.6) was found in one of the pits from this phase.

Miscellaneous sherds of intrinsic interest in less significant Roman and post-Roman assemblages include those from a bowl in high-fired blue-grey LOMI-1247 fabric (*c.*AD 70–160, Fig 18.63), a flask in tournetted, very fine sanded grey ware with roller-stamping (Fig 18.64), and a bowl in pale brown stamped London ware (*c.*AD 80–100, Fig 18.65).

## The early medieval and medieval: Phase 4

The post-Roman and medieval remains on the site were concentrated to the north, and the majority range in date from the 12th to the 14th centuries. The complete post-Roman sequence was only seen in section at the north-eastern end, adjacent to the Dover Castle/Kitson House, with the result that only the bases of major intrusive features were found. Phase 4 is represented by two wells, two ditches, two large pits, eleven smaller pits, and a posthole.

Two ditches were found at the north-eastern end of the site. The pottery was exclusively Roman but the wide date range (AD 55–400) suggests that it is residual. These ditches were later recut and the fills, whilst containing much residual Roman material, also included Early Medieval Sandy Ware (EMS) and Early Medieval Shelly Ware (EMSH) dating between AD 900 and 1150. This feature cut a U-profile gully, butt-ending to the north-west and passing into the section to the south-east. A single sherd of Sandy Ware (SAND) from its fill indicates a date of AD 550–700. A small posthole was recorded to the north-east, but a single sherd of pottery dating to AD 1050–1150 suggests that either these features were not related or that this cut is early medieval in date and the Saxon pottery is residual as well. These features provide scant evidence of Saxon to early medieval occupation superseding the Roman abandonment of the area, given the quantities of Roman material recovered from these contexts.

Two wells were present, the first, dating to 1270–1500, consisted of a circular timber shaft in a sub-rectangular construction cut. After initial silting, a timber barrel was placed in the shaft, possibly to shore it up and keep it open. The second well consisted of a circular shaft in a sub-rectangular cut. There was no indication of the form of shoring used in the latter. A large rubbish pit [963] was recorded to the south-west, which was dated to 1350–1500. The remaining features consisted of 11 pits dating from between 1080 and 1600.

The spread of these features suggests that the occupation during this period was concentrated to the north of the site along the current lines of Borough High Street and Great Dover Street, with an open area behind, to the south, being used for rubbish disposal and domestic wells, although the extensive truncation may have distorted the picture presented.

## The post-medieval development: Phase 5

Phase 5 is separated into four sub-phases according to the date of the features, reflecting the growth of Southwark from the 16th to the 19th century.

### *The 16th century: Phase 5a*

The 16th-century features comprise two wells and three cuts confined to the north-east of the site. The first of the wells, [69], was a circular stone and brick shaft in a sub-circular cut. The fill of the construction cut dates from 1400–1550, while the pottery from the shaft is dated from 1690–1710, indicating a life span of over a hundred years.

To the south-west of this, the second well, [535], had a circular shaft in a sub-circular construction cut. The cut was packed with chalk blocks. The pottery indicates a prolonged period of use, with dates ranging from 1500–1600 from the lower fills to 1700–1900 in the upper fills.

*The 17th century: Phase 5b*

Phase 5b reflects the growth of Southwark during the 17th century. The features consist of five, possibly six, wells, a beam slot, rubbish pits, a possible tanning pit, and probable quarry pits, which were distributed across the whole site.

The first well, [113] to the north-west, was a barrel type in a sub-ovoid construction cut. The second, [121] to the west, consisted of an octagonal shaft within a circular cut. To the south-east of these features a single beam slot, [62], represents the only structural feature associated with this phase. This had a line of 13 stakeholes cut into the bottom, possibly part of a wattle and daub wall which continued into section to the south-east.

A third well, [335], was recorded to the west. This had an ovoid shaft within an ovoid cut. The fourth one, [1272], was located to the south and consisted of a barrel in a large sub-circular construction cut. The fifth, [1279], was to the west and consisted of a circular wattle-lined shaft in a sub-circular cut. The base of a possible sixth well, [1151], was recorded to the north, and comprised a possible circular shaft in a sub-square cut.

In the centre of the site, a sub-square stone-lined pit, [1060], was found. It was lined with elaborately moulded, re-used stone, which may have come from the remains of Bermondsey Abbey. There is no positive interpretation for this feature, but it may represent the bottom of a stone-lined cess or tanning pit. A second possible tanning pit was recorded to the east. Cut [493] consisted of a rectangular timber-lined pit.

A series of large sub-rectangular pits to the west of the site has been interpreted as quarry pits. This would suggest that the area was open land at the time they were dug, with the gravels being quarried to provide ballast for local building. Further possible quarry pits were recorded to the south. The remaining features consist of a series of smaller cuts, probably representing the bottoms of rubbish pits.

The concentration of these features along the east and west sides of the site suggests that they represent activity at the back of development along both Borough High Street and Great Dover Street. The Brett-Jones 1927 derivative of Stow's 1598 and 1603 maps shows the site to be in an open area behind properties fronting onto Blackman Street and Church Street (now Borough High Street and Great Dover Street respectively). The Newcourt map of 1658 shows a similar arrangement of buildings, but by 1720 the Parker map shows development and a new alley called Swan Yard running south through the area. By 1747 this is called the White Swan coach yard, and continues as such until the current road system was built between 1812 and 1824. The only evidence of structures in this phase was a single beam slot at the north-east of the site. The basements of later buildings have almost certainly removed other structures over the rest of the site.

*The 18th century: Phase 5c*

Phase 5c represents the 18th century. There was a total of eight small features. This is a reflection of the depth of material removed during the basementing. At the far north-east a series of dump layers and pits was recorded in section, including two pits filled with broken sugar loaf moulds.

*The late 18th and 19th centuries: Phase 5d*

The Phase 5d deposits are limited to a well and two pits, which is a reflection of the depth of the 20th-century truncation. Well [424] consisted of a circular central shaft inside an ovoid construction cut. The finds from the construction cut fills date the opening of the feature to 1580–1700, while the finds from the fills related to its use date to between 1745 and 1900, again indicating a fairly prolonged period of operation.

## ROMAN SOUTHWARK AND THE OLD SORTING OFFICE EXCAVATIONS

### The southern boundary

The Old Sorting Office lies close to the northern edge of the terrace gravels, some 70m from the edge of a channel, a fact reflected in the slope in the natural gravels down to the north-west. It lies close to the projected junction of Watling Street with Stane Street. The evidence from 1–5 Swan Street (Graham 1978) and Arcadia Buildings (Dean 1980) suggests that smaller side roads, metalled at Arcadia Buildings, ran from the major roads. Evidence from both Arcadia Buildings and 38–57 Silvester Street (K Woolridge pers comm), and the building directly to the north at 222–237 Borough High

Street (Thompson *et al* 1998, 185) suggests that this junction formed the focus of settlement, with buildings extending along both the roads and the line of the southern edge of the channel to the north. The Lant Street Roman cemetery site (Sayer 2006) is located just 170m to the west and the Tabard Square temple precinct (Killock & Brown 2004) only 180m to the east. A major road junction on the dry ground in front of the Southwark islands and the river crossing would form a natural focus for settlement and a focal point in the ritual Roman landscape. A date of *c.*AD 50 has been suggested for the founding of the settlement at Southwark (Sheldon 1978, 27), and the Old Sorting Office excavations tend to fit this early dating.

The recut ditches in the early phases of the Old Sorting Office excavations appear to follow the line of the main channel to the north and also the line of Watling Street to the east of Arcadia Buildings. This suggests that the road-side ditch adjacent to Watling Street extended along the banks of the channel to form the boundary ditch, whilst Watling Street turned north towards the bridge. The boundary ditch was dug at approximately the same time as Watling Street was constructed in the early pre-Flavian period.

There was no suggestion of a bank associated with these ditches. This may be the result of post-medieval truncation. However, the distribution of the features on either side of the ditches does not suggest the presence of a bank of any size, with contemporary and later features extending up to the edge of the ditches. At 1–5 Swan Street it is noted that there was no sign of a bank at the edge of a 3rd-century ditch. The pre-Flavian quarry/boundary ditch associated with Watling Street excavated at Arcadia Buildings also showed no sign of upcast or a bank. The presence of four small stakeholes to the south of the ditch line in Phase 3a is unlikely to represent fencing.

Excavations on the other side of Swan Street, at 1–5 Great Dover Street (Graham 1978), lie to the south of the extended line of this ditch, and the work here revealed no traces of occupation. Graham suggests that the area was under cultivation during the Roman period, and other excavations have suggested that much of the land was arable, with fields separated by ditches (Dean & Hammerson 1980, 21). A large ditch found at 1–5 Great Dover Street, dated to the 3rd century AD, ran roughly at right angles to the line of Watling Street, and along the projected line of Stane Street, and is therefore likely to represent a road rather than a field boundary. Two 4th-century inhumations were cut into the top fills of this ditch. The evidence from these two sites suggests that the recut ditches on the Old Sorting Office site formed the southern boundary line of the settlement along the channel at this time, with settlement to the north and marginal or agricultural land to the south of the projected junction.

A small road or track with ditches to one side has been postulated crossing this boundary line during the mid-1st century AD; this was then maintained in an apparent expansion of the settlement southwards during the later 1st century. The road ran parallel to the projected line of Stane Street to the south-east. Heavy pitting along the drainage ditches defining this presumed road would suggest that activity had moved southwards over the previous boundary lines. No sign of the late 1st-century boundary was recorded. It must be borne in mind, however, that the ground reduction over the majority of the site may have distorted this evidence. A similar arrangement of ditches was recorded at 165 Great Dover Street associated with a post-built building (Mackinder 2000).

Two distinct alignments were observed in the excavated features. The first of these aligned with the boundary ditches, side road, and consequently Stane Street, suggesting a focus of activity to the north and along Stane Street. The second alignment of features evident on the site is more problematic. This north to south alignment does not appear to conform to either the bank of the channel, or the lines of either Stane Street to the south-east or Watling Street to the north-east, although it may well relate to developments at the Tabard Square temple precinct immediately to the east.

The alignment of the early Roman field system does not present a problem of interpretation as the field boundaries and drainage gullies pre-date the road. The continuation of this alignment, however, through to the end of the Roman presence in the 4th century, suggests that whatever boundary was being respected existed throughout this period. For such a boundary to continue over such a time, it is reasonable to assume that it was permanent and significant.

The site slopes down to the north and west, which may indicate a possible stream-channel along the line of Borough High Street, although given the amount of archaeological work in

the area the existence of such a channel seems unlikely. A southward projection (Fig 4) of the edges of Road 1 from the last excavated section at 106–114 Borough High Street (Graham & Hinton 1988) would bring its line west of both 201–211 Borough High Street and Arcadia Buildings, and across the channel more or less at right angles. This would lead to a shorter and more practical crossing of the channel, rather than the more oblique angle suggested by the evidence of the two later sites (Dean 1980, 368).

This line would pass through the current post office on Borough High Street and through the basemented southern half of the Swan Street site at an angle corresponding with the north–south line suggested by the features at Swan Street. This would put the line parallel to ditch [132] in Phase 3a, and *c.*10m to the west. This ditch, therefore, may represent the back boundary of ribbon development along an extended Road 1. This would appear to have been maintained throughout the Roman period, with development respecting this line when the activity along the line of Stane Street and the channel had been much reduced in the 3rd and 4th centuries.

Alternatively, the possibility has to be considered that the proposed line of Stane Street and the junction with Watling Street to the east of the site may be incorrect. The exact line of Stane Street is not clear and it is possible that Stane Street passes to the west of the site to meet Road 1 and Watling Street on South Island, to the north of the current projected junction. This is one explanation of the unexplained second alignment of the features recorded but, as no evidence of either a southward extension of Road 1 or another channel has been recorded in excavation, this interpretation must remain supposition.

## Land use

Much of the nature of the settlement in the vicinity of the Old Sorting Office site must be inferred from other excavations in the vicinity, given that the excavations at the Old Sorting Office appear to represent activity at the southern margin of the Southwark settlement, and that the remains over the majority of the site were limited to the bases of deeper features.

The nature of the agricultural land to the south of the boundary ditch can be inferred from indirect evidence. The presence of drainage gullies in the earliest phase suggests that the area was low lying and wet. In the excavations at Arcadia Buildings, the pre-Roman ground surface was recorded at +1.6m OD, and soil analysis of this horizon indicated periodic waterlogging (Dean 1980, 367).

The maximum tidal amplitude, -0.5m to +1.5m OD, during the 1st century AD (Brigham 1990, 143–5; Yule 1988) suggested for Roman Southwark would certainly indicate that the area was low lying enough for flooding to have been a problem, and the presence of the possible field boundaries and drainage grips suggests that the land was under management during the first half of the 1st century.

The nature of the activity in the landscape may be indicated by the faunal remains. The presence of unusually high numbers of horse bones and the high incidence of cattle and sheep/goat remains may indicate the ranching of cattle and the presence of pasture for sheep/goats in the vicinity (Armitage 2000a, 6). The cattle appear to have been used as draught animals and as milk producers. The horses may have been disposed of at the edge of the settlement at the end of their working lives. This is consistent with both the general trend of meat consumption in Roman Southwark and with the findings from 165 Great Dover Street (Mackinder 2000), where the large numbers of horse remains have been interpreted as roadside dumping of carcasses (Sidell 2000). It should be noted that fragmentary horse remains associated with disarticulated human longbones and skull fragments are often found in Iron Age placed deposits. This is a tradition which appears to continue in the Roman period, and the location of the Swan Street site in a wider Roman ritual landscape appears to conform to this pattern.

The horse remains (Armitage 2000a) consist of fully adult animals, with no foetal or neo-nate individuals represented. There were no crania, jaw bones or pelvises from the excavation, so gender and, in the absence of dentition, precise age determination is not possible. Epiphyseal fusion of the long bones, however, indicates that all were fully adult at the time of death. They are similar in stature to the Iron Age horses recorded elsewhere in Britain, with three taller individuals corresponding more to the size ranges of Roman horses. These had withers heights of 131.4–148.7cm, and thus fall within the size range both of horses from military sites

throughout the Roman North-Western provinces and from villa and farmstead sites, where it is postulated that they were used for herding cattle and sheep (Luff 1982).

The cattle remains are also predominantly adult, and comprise castrates and females. The mean withers height of these individuals was 107.4cm, with the exception of a single individual from Phase 3b, which had a withers height of 124.3cm. The horn cores were predominantly from short-horned cattle, apart from two medium-horned cattle, suggesting that the local stocks were unimproved short-horned cattle of Iron Age type. The cattle represent the bulk of the bone from the site generally (Fig 21), becoming increasingly dominant through the 2nd and 3rd centuries (Table 2). This fits the general trend of Roman consumption both nationally, where cattle bones constitute between 30 and 45% of bone during the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, rising to up to 90% on military sites and in highly Romanised areas (King 1991), and locally (Locker 1988), reflecting the growing importance of cattle as a food source during the Roman period.

The only evidence for juveniles on the site consists of a broken horn core, a femur, and a calf jawbone from boundary ditch [714], and a tibia and a metacarpus from features in Phase 3b. The preponderance of adults in the assemblage probably reflects a primary role as plough or draught animals, or as milk producers, and that the value of their hides, horns, and meat was a secondary consideration. This fits with the pattern from other Iron Age/early Roman sites in Britain, with cattle only being slaughtered when their usefulness as either milkers or plough/draught animals was over (Grant 1989).

The ovicaprid remains consist of sheep and goat. The domestic goat remains consist of horn cores of a female and a female/castrate, jaw bones, and the articulated remains of a mature goat and a kid. The mature goat, recovered from boundary ditch [714], had a shoulder height of 60.9cm and the dental wear in the lower cheekteeth indicates an age of 3–4 years at death. The kid, aged between 2 and 3 months, bore defleshing marks on several of the long bones, indicating it had been killed at an early age as a sucking-kid; this may be an indication of high status cuisine, but is at variance with the assemblage as a whole which suggests a diet of poor quality cuts and little variety. The adult female goat may have been kept for breeding or milk as well as providing a source of skin, horns, and meat.

There is a high proportion of sheep (63.5%) during the early 1st century (Phase 3a), declining to 19.1% by the 3rd/4th centuries, fitting with a general trend of declining consumption of sheep observed nationwide. The sheep appear to be of Iron Age strains throughout the Roman period, with no evidence of improved larger Roman strains. They consist of both horned and polled (naturally hornless) types, with withers heights ranging from 52.7–66.7cm through all four Roman phases as opposed to the range of 69–72cm for the Roman varieties. The age-at-death data, based on mandibular cheekteeth, show a preponderance of animals killed at 6–24 months during the early Roman phase (Table 1).

*Table 1. Ages at death in the SWN98 Roman sheep as determined from dental wear in mandibular cheekteeth (using the criteria of Payne 1973 quoted in Armitage 2000a)*

| wear stage | age range | Sub-phases | 3a | 3b | 3c | 3d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0-2 months | | | | | |
| B | 2-6 months | | | 2 | | |
| C | 6-12 months | | 5 | 1 | 1 | |
| D | 1-2 years | | 9 | | 2 | |
| E | 2-3 years | | | 1 | | |
| F | 3-4 years | | | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| G | 4-6 years | | 2 | | | |
| H | 6-8 years | | 2 | 1 | | |
| I | 8-10 years | | 1 | | | |

This is thought to represent fat-lamb production, with culling of castrates (wethers) at one or two years of age, and further slaughter of surplus and/or barren breeding ewes in the fourth to sixth years. A similar pattern was documented at Vindolanda (Hodgson 1977), where the evidence was interpreted as flock maintenance for meat rather than wool or milk, with a few older wethers being allowed to live longer as flock leaders. This agrees with general trends for the Iron Age/early Roman period observed throughout the country (King 1991, 16). It should be noted that some of the immature bone elements could belong to kids due to the difficulties of distinguishing between

the two. A second possible interpretation for the preponderance of lambs/kids in the bone assemblage, and for the presence of a sucking-kid, is that these animals represent ritual offerings. This is explored more fully below.

The pig elements recorded from the site constitute between 9.4% and 11.9% of the total animal bone. This figure remains fairly constant during the whole of the Roman period, and does not show the increase in popularity during the later Roman period common to other Roman sites. Eight males/castrates and a single female were identified, with the majority coming from Phases 3b and 3c. The majority of these (66.7%) were aged 1–2 years at death, with only one individual aged more than 3 years. No neonates or sucking pigs were identified.

The faunal data for cattle and sheep/goat fit the overall dietary patterns of Roman Britain, where sheep/goat forms the bulk of the meat consumption on civilian sites during the Iron Age and 1st century, with an increase in beef and pork and a decline in mutton consumption during the later Roman period (King 1978). The exception to this conformity is the quantity of pig bone recovered in comparison to other sites in Southwark. At the Old Sorting Office site, while a change from sheep/goat to cattle is evident, there is no apparent increase in pork consumption (Table 2). This may be explained in two ways. Firstly, pork was considered a high status commodity during the Romano-British and early Roman periods and consequently restricted to the upper, Romanised, echelons of society (King 1991); thus the lack of pig bones may reflect the relatively low status or poverty of the southern settlement. Secondly, as suggested above, the area may have been used for the pasturing or herding of sheep and cattle during the early Roman period, and the dietary pattern may reflect this local activity.

The absence from these assemblages of the meatier cuts of the cattle and sheep/goats suggests that the animals were butchered on site and the meat products exported elsewhere. A site at Long Lane (Douglas 2000; Armitage 2000b), close to the northern edge of the channel to the north-east, shows an apparent reliance on market-bought food supplies, and this appears to be supported by the evidence of the Borough High Street Ticket Hall site (Sidell 2000), where the presence of dumps of skull and lower limb parts and heavily butchered upper limb fragments associated with a Roman building have been interpreted as a butcher's shop.

Some deposits included fragmented and spiral-fractured pieces of long bone shaft indicative of tertiary butchery of marrow bones, while the ends of cattle long bones with evidence of multiple chopping suggest that butchering debris was being cut and boiled to extract bone grease and/or marrow fat. Similar evidence was noted at both 199 Borough High Street (Locker 1988) and at Hunts House (Bendrey 1998).

Whilst the bone count (NISP) reflects the relative frequency of the principal animal types, the weight of the bones gives a better overall impression of the dietary habits in terms of meat consumption. This comparison is presented in Table 2 below:

*Table 2. SWN98 Phase 3, Roman animal bone assemblages. Relative proportional frequencies of the four main domesticates, by NISP and bone weight (% of the total) (Armitage 2000a)*

| | **Cattle** | **Sheep/Goat** | **Pig** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Based on NISP** | | | |
| Phase 3a | 25.1% | 63.5% | 11.4% |
| Phase 3b | 63.2% | 25.1% | 11.7% |
| Phase 3c | 68.2% | 22.7% | 9.1% |
| Phase 3d | 69.0% | 19.1% | 11.9% |
| (NISP: 3a = 394; 3b= 804; 3c=132; 3d=126) | | | |
| **2. Based on bone weight** | | | |
| Phase 3a | 50.3% | 38.9% | 10.8% |
| Phase 3b | 79.6% | 10.1% | 10.3% |
| Phase 3c | 80.9% | 14.4% | 4.7% |
| Phase 3d | 83.6% | 9.3% | 7.1% |
| (WT(g): 3a=6848; 3b=23196; 3c=4010; 3d=4101) | | | |

These four main groups of domesticates constitute the bulk of the diet, and seem to reflect what Armitage terms 'a diet of solid sufficiency'. This diet was apparently supplemented by few other food resources. The remains of domestic fowl, goose and duck, both domesticated (Mallard) and wild species, are represented in only small quantities (only 1.4% of the total bone assemblage). Fish made up 0.38%, and wild game 0.17% of the total bone (Fig 21).

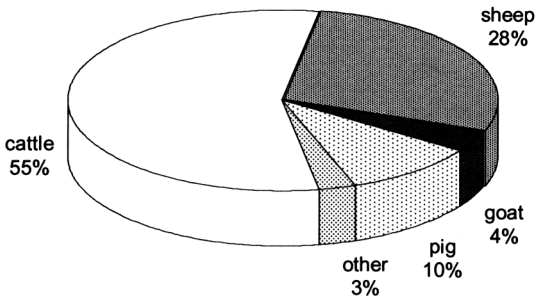


*Fig 21. Ratio of animal food groups based on NISP (Phases 3a, b, c, d)*

Domestic fowl made up the bulk of the bird bones. These birds were of a similar size to modern laying fowl, and included at least one individual of similar size to a modern bantam. The assemblage exclusively comprises male and female adults, with no immature birds being recognised. All but one of the bones were recovered from shaft fills. Wild or domestic duck and geese are represented by only ten duck and two goose bone elements. It is interesting to note that all the domesticated duck bones were from Phase 3b, while the wild duck and goose remains were found in Phases 3a–c. Of the two wild duck elements, one has been tentatively identified as Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*). This contrasts with the assemblage at Long Lane where a higher incidence of domestic fowl bones was interpreted as relating to backyard poultry production (Armitage 2000b)

The wild species represented on the site are limited to two mandibles and a metatarsal shaft of a roe deer, and a single adult hare femur. The deer remains are likely to have been imported with hides rather than deriving from food waste. A similar lack of wild species has been observed at the Roman sites at Long Lane and 199 Borough High Street. The lack of wild species is a common feature of Iron Age and indeed Roman sites (King 1991, 16; Hill 1995, 104).

The remaining bone consists of a single broken tibiotarsus from a corvid, probably a rook, a single cat vertebra, and five bones representing two frogs.

The lack of species diversity exhibited by the animal bone from the Old Sorting Office contrasts with the more sophisticated diet shown in faunal assemblages from other Southwark sites. At 199 Borough High Street (Locker 1988) bones from the 1st-century deposits show the same overall sheep/cattle/pig (34%/24%/8%) bias as at the Old Sorting Office site, although the relative proportion of sheep is higher at the Old Sorting Office. Roe deer, hare and domestic fowl are all present in similar quantities, while fish appear to have made a more significant contribution to the diet. From the late 1st century AD to the late Roman period both cattle and pig become increasingly important, and in the 3rd century the ratio is 71% cattle, 4% sheep/goats, 4% pig, with red deer, roe deer, rabbit, hare and domestic fowl representing increasing proportions of the assemblage. Four species of fish, both fresh- and salt-water, are present. The greater species range suggests a far more varied diet than that indicated at the Old Sorting Office.

The same pattern of dietary change is reflected at Long Lane (Armitage 2000b), where mutton consumption declined from as early as the 2nd century, with beef constituting 60% of the total and pig making up a third of the remainder in the 3rd century. The same predominance of cattle and pig bone is shown at the Hunts House site (Bendry 1998). The fact that the Old Sorting Office assemblage is at variance with this general pattern may indicate that the animals represented served a purpose other than primarily as food sources, perhaps representing instead a lamb/kid stock for ritual offering (Armitage 2000a).

Comparison with other sites to the north suggests that the activities to the north of the nearest channel, that is, at and behind the southern boundary, differed significantly from those closer to the river. At 199 Borough High Street the excavation produced cattle skulls, mandibles and pelvises in quantity. At the Old Sorting Office the same parts of horses were conspicuous by their absence. Ditch F32 at 199 Borough High Street, dating to AD 150+, yielded few skull fragments, metapodials and phalanges of cattle, interpreted as representing the removal of feet for glue-making (Locker 1988).

There is little evidence of cereal or crop production or processing on site, although cereal grains, including spelt and barley, were identified. Several large culm nodes (probably straw nodes), chaff fragments, and occasional weed seeds were recovered (Carruthers 1999). Given the evidence from the animal bone of cattle and sheep husbandry, the straw and chaff fragments probably derived from fodder or bedding rather than crop processing.

There is no direct evidence of the nature of the buildings on the site. To the west, at 223–237 Borough High Street (Bird *et al* 1983, 193–4), a clay and timber building was excavated with an associated gravel yard surface, which was demolished in the 2nd century, while at Arcadia Buildings two buildings were recorded composed of posts set into ground beams with an internal gravel surface. It is assumed that any structures of a similar nature either lie to the north of the site or have been removed by the extensive 20th-century truncation. There does not appear to be any evidence to the south of the river channel of the larger stone-built buildings that replaced the clay and timber buildings during the late 2nd–3rd century in the rest of Southwark.

The building material (Sabel 1999) recovered from the four Roman phases was all fragmentary and included *tegula*, *imbrex* and brick, 15 of which showed knife-cut or finger-scored manufacturers signatures or tally marks. There were seven fragments of keyed wall and box-flue tile and/or hollow voussoirs, showing toothed comb-scores, and nine probable tesserae. A small amount of wall plaster was recovered showing six colour variations and one element of a linear pattern (Meddens 1999). The building material is consistent with demolition material from Southwark being deposited at the back of the settlement.

All this material is consistent with other Southwark excavations, and probably represents demolition debris from a range of buildings, mostly of 1st- and 2nd-century date, many of which were heated by hypocausts. The roof tile is more dominant in the later fabrics, reflecting the re-use of bricks during the later Roman period, while roofing was undertaken with complete roof tiles, creating a continued demand for roof tiles into the later period.

While there is no historical evidence of the Boudiccan revolt affecting the southern settlement of London, archaeological evidence is starting to emerge that the sacking of *Londinium* may have included Southwark. Recent excavations on the Jubilee Line extension in Borough High Street (Hutchinson 1998, 58) revealed a series of probable workshops, shops, and houses destroyed by a major fire before AD 70. These buildings were then replaced by further clay and timber and masonry buildings during the later 1st century. The demolition of Roman buildings at the Winchester Palace site is placed at around the same time (Westman 1998, 65), suggesting major disruption during this period. Further south, the timber and clay building at Arcadia Buildings appears to have been replaced by AD 70, suggesting the possibility that the disruption may have spread as far as the southern boundary and was not just confined to the higher status and more densely populated areas along the Southwark waterfront.

The evidence from building materials and the large redeposited ceramic assemblages from Phase 3b, dated post-AD 80, may be related to rebuilding work following the Boudiccan revolt of AD 60.

## Ritual practices

The ritual practices of everyday life in Roman London have not received as much attention as other subject areas. Much of the research into religion being concerned with funerary ritual, for example at the East London Cemetery (Sidell & Rielly 1998). Very little published evidence exists for the more prosaic, non-funerary, ritual (Haynes 2000).

The ritual–secular dichotomy in an archaeological context has been the subject of much debate. Various authors, notably Wait (1985), Hill (1995) and Brück (1995; 1999), have written extensively on the subject of identifying, defining, and interpreting ritual activity on archaeological sites. A definition of ritual as equating to a non-functional rationality is simplistic and ignores the ethnographic and archaeological parallels for the ritual and ritualised aspects of human endeavour. Hill (1995) argues that any activity associated with settlement arrangement and space, domestic activity and rubbish disposal is inherently 'structured through deep-rooted cultural norms', and the distinction between rubbish and ritual, sacred and profane, is not necessarily clear-cut.

Where proven ritual/funerary practice exists, for example in the setting of a cemetery or a temple, the interpretation of other aspects of ritual is less problematic than on a site with no obvious ritual/religious focus. What may be attributed to industrial or domestic activity on a non-religious site may be interpreted as ritual on a site with obvious ritual significance (for example, the deposition of animal remains may be interpreted as food waste in a domestic context, and as ritual feasting in a cemetery). Yet the archaeological evidence is identical in both cases. The evidence of ritual use in a secular

setting may also be distorted by the additional deposition of genuine food waste and domestic debris in the same location (Hill 1995).

Evidence of systematic and prolonged ritual activity is apparent from the excavations at the Old Sorting Office, as demonstrated by comparison with assemblages of proven ritual provenance. The presence of 'killed' or ritually damaged pots in the assemblages from most of the shafts and from one boundary ditch provides the clearest indicator of ritual practice on the site, and as such raises questions about some of the faunal remains from the site. What follows is an attempt to define the nature of the ritual evidence and place it into its regional and historic context.

Activity on the Old Sorting Office site seems to reflect low intensity ritual, possibly the domestic religious and ritual life of the inhabitants of Southwark, as opposed to larger scale public ceremonials. The form of the ritual shafts, as well as the nature of the votive offerings within them and in other locations on the site, is consistent with local, small scale ritual activity (Ross 1968; Philpott 1991; Hill 1995). This activity does, however, show both continuity and change from the mid-1st century to the late 2nd to 3rd centuries, with a demonstrable development in the form of ritual.

The interpretation of these shaft features rests on the deposition of the ritually 'killed' pots, near-complete but broken vessels, painted face pots, a human skeleton that appears to have been manipulated *post-mortem*, and disarticulated dog skeletons. All these items have been documented elsewhere as being indicative of ritual expression (Niblett 1999; Stead & Rigby 1986; Philpott 1991; Wait 1985 amongst others). The remaining evidence is interpreted in the light of these deposits.

A significant proportion of the complete ceramic vessels recovered from Uley Romano-British temple complex had post-firing modifications in the form of holes drilled in the side or base, echoing the ritual damage of the pots at the Old Sorting Office. Similarly, the right forearm and lower left leg of the Hercules figurine are missing, suggesting ritual 'killing' of the object. Deliberate breaking of weapons and twisting and bending of miniature weapons was also observed at Uley (Henig 1993). The ritual 'killing' of objects was a relatively common practice in early Roman society. The object of destroying or spoiling the votive offering being to remove it from the physical world, in the same way that animals are slaughtered, and consequently made accessible to ancestors and deities in the other world (Philpott 1991, 239; Wait 1985, 240). The burning of objects on cremation pyres in Roman cremation is considered to achieve the same function as this killing of sacrificial objects. The difference between the two practices is that in the case of funerary activity, as observed on the East London cemetery (Sidell & Rielly 1998), it is the deceased that receive the offerings rather than the gods.

The 'killed' pots consist of both complete and partial vessels deposited in the shafts, which have all been damaged in some way to make them unusable, either by removal of key elements, piercing the sides, shattering the vessel or a combination of more than one of these methods. Nine vessels fall into this category:

1. A complete but shattered screw-neck Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere type 102 (Shaft [1121]) (Fig 14.44).
2. A complete Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon neck of Frere type 112 with a patch of red paint on the neck (Shaft [1235]).
3. A near-complete screw-neck Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere type 241. The handle is missing and a small cut has been made through the wall of the vessel (Shaft [790]).
4. A near-complete Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon with red-painted radiate head on the side. The rim is missing and a small hole has been drilled through the wall of the vessel (Shaft [1343]).
5. A complete screw-neck Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere type 241 with a small hole cut through the wall of the vessel (Shaft [1181]).
6. The lower half of a Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon with a hole cut in its side (Shaft [317/761]).
7. A complete but shattered Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon of Frere type 405 with a small hole made in the side (Shaft [1180]).
8. An unusual barrel-shaped flagon in similar fabric with carinated shoulder and base and radiating red-painted solar rays on the side (Shaft [1180]).
9. A near-complete but shattered Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon similar to Frere type 107, with a small hole made in its side (ditch [768]).

In addition, 13 other flagons had been divided into their top and bottom halves, and only one

half deposited. Six lower and seven upper halves of VRW flagons had been buried in this way. Other deliberately deposited pots and part pots were recovered including:

1. A near-complete but shattered Verulamium Region Whiteware lid-seated carinated bowl Frere type 683 and a near-complete but shattered Highgate Wood C type III beaker with diamond-shaped dot-barbotine panels above rectangular ones in Shaft [1180].
2. The upper part of a KOAN3786 Dressel 2-4 amphora, a near-complete Lezoux samian Dr.18 platter with a cursive inscription on the underside, and the larger part of an aberrant necked and cordoned Alice Holt/Surrey greyware jar with sooting over its lower half and an ownership mark of two parallel lines scored across its shoulder, from Shaft [1121].
3. The lower part of a flagon from Shaft [790].
4. The greater part of an Alice Holt/Surrey greyware flagon of Lyne and Jefferies type 8.6 (1979) (Shaft [1343]).
5. A near-complete Verulamium Region Whiteware unguentarium of Frere type 477 and the lower part of a flagon in similar fabric from Shaft [1181].
6. The top part of a Verulamium Region Whiteware screw-neck flagon Frere type 239 (Shaft [869]) (Fig 17.54).
7. The greater part of a very unusual barrel-shaped screw-top beaker with bilobate handle in Colchester fabric with patchy orange-brown colour-coat, a complete roughcast bag-beaker in white Cologne fabric with brown colour-coat, a complete warped small lid or platter, in similar fabric to Verulamium Region Coarse White-slipped ware (but with no slip so this may be a kiln waster), and the complete top of a badly made Verulamium Coarse White-slipped flagon of Frere type 1943 from the fills of Shaft [1306].
8. The shattered lower half of a Verulamium Region Whiteware flagon from the construction cut of Shaft [1447], the lower part of a BB2 cooking pot associated with the human remains, the lower part of a flagon in Verulamium Coarse White-slipped fabric, and the upper half of a Type IH jug of Frere type 1958 in Verulamium Region Whiteware.

There appears to be a progression of shaft forms on the site throughout the Roman period. During the mid to late 1st century they tended to be circular, both shored and unshored, with a relatively short life-span — the pottery from the construction cut of the only shored well in the phase, [1121], having the same date as the material from the shaft itself. These seem to be replaced during the period AD 80–140 by circular shored types with a longer period of use. These were then superseded by square shored shafts aligned north-east to south-west, and later still by square shored shafts aligned north to south during the period AD 140–250. At 165 Great Dover Street wells were associated with three phases of the cemetery and showed this same progression of shaft form (Mackinder 2000).

There also appears to have been a progression in the ritual offerings. In the earlier wells (AD 50–140) the ritual deposition was confined to the well shafts themselves. During the period AD 140–250 the deposition is in both the shafts and in the construction cuts, implying both opening and closing rites, while the practice of ritual deposition appears to have been discontinued by the 3rd century. The ceramic assemblages also show signs of temporal change. Whilst the presence of pot sherd assemblages and complete but shattered pots remained a common theme through all four Roman phases, the deposition of near-complete, 'killed' pots only occurred during the period AD 80–140.

During the period of AD 140–250, the deposition of skeletal remains in the shafts occurs, suggesting a further variation in ritual practice. The presence in the fills of one of the three shafts of articulated human remains and dog bone (Table 3), including the remains of three complete though disarticulated dog skeletons, appears to be a phenomenon of the later phases of the Roman activity here. The fact that, though complete, these dogs were disarticulated echoes the manipulation of the human corpse, and argues that the dog bones were defleshed or dismembered and curated for later use (Hill 1995, 109; Black 1983, 20), rather than being accidental remains. Dogs may have been sacrificed due to the special status accorded by their social proximity to man (Hill 1995). At Danebury (Iron Age) Ritual Pit A contained the remains of three disarticulated dogs, while at Ewell, Surrey, a decapitated dog skeleton was recorded (Black 1983, 20) and dog skeletons and skulls are frequently listed in Ross's inventory of ritual shafts (1968). A 3rd-century well excavated at 107–115 Borough High Street (Yule 1982) was found to contain four dog skeletons as well as quantities of cattle and other bone; these were associated with a large number of greyware

bowls identified as lids or covers for an industrial process, or alternatively as covers for cremation urns. The dating of this well to the AD 270s or 280s would make it roughly contemporary with the later Old Sorting Office shafts. Similarities to the Old Sorting Office finds suggest that it too may have had a similar role. Two dogs were also found together with a human skull at the Cannon Street site (Richardson 1983, 277).

It is more likely that these features were dug as ritual shafts than as wells for the extraction of water; the recutting of shafts of the same type and in the same place would tend to argue for ritual shafts, as discussed above. The digging of shafts with no shoring into loose sand would have resulted in fairly rapid collapse, as shown by well [513], and would tend to render their interpretation as wells unlikely. The distinction between ritual shafts and secular wells is problematic, not least because wells may function as the focus of ritual activity both during and after their active use as wells. Given the pre-Roman associations of water and ritual, Iron Age shrines are often situated near rivers or springs, and wells and springs are regarded in Celtic mythology as being portals to the Otherworld (Wait 1985, 54–5; Ross 1968, 255). The function of the Swan Street shafts as purely ritual is unlikely, given their depth in comparison to earlier exclusively ritual shafts of the Iron Age and the depth of the water table in the area. This may mean that the distinction between the two is not a useful one to make, and that some or all of these features may be regarded as wells with a ritual function (Wait 1985, 255).

The channel at 201–211 Borough High Street appears to have been choked by the mid-1st century AD, possibly as the result of tidal regression, suggesting that no clean running water would be obtainable from it (Ferretti & Graham 1978). This may explain the large number of wells in the area. The number of shafts in Phase 3b is greater than in Phases 3a, c and d, indicating that the concentration of features in 3b, taken as an indication of the growth and southward expansion of Southwark during the latter part of the 1st century, required a greater volume of water to meet population needs.

Given that the number of wells may reflect the size of the local population, the number of shafts may correlate to the population density or needs in any specific phase. The short life span of the shafts in the mid to late 1st century may relate to changes in water levels, pollution problems, or the uncertainty of the times. The latter in particular may have had an effect on ritual usage of the shafts. Shafts with a longer life span appear to have been dug during the mid-2nd to mid-3rd centuries, although the phase is also longer in absolute time which may have influenced the number of shafts. The find of a bucket in one of the shafts may be interpreted in a purely secular way, although Wait (1985) specifically mentions the presence of a bucket in a ritual context in a Roman shaft at Caerwent, and Ross (1968) records the deposition of buckets and baskets in several shafts. The shafts which may have been dug specifically as ritual features in the form of short-use shafts in the period AD 80–140 may reflect a change in ritual practice, and may coincide with an apparent reduction in the population during this period.

This does not, however, explain why most of the shafts appear to have been quickly infilled. The construction cuts contain, as would be expected, apparent domestic debris, while the fills of the well shafts themselves in the main do not. It should be noted that the bone assemblage from these 15 features (4% of the features recorded) constitutes 29% of the total bone recovered from the site; an obvious anomaly. Also, no horse bone came from any of the shafts, which is unusual, given the high proportion of horse bone from the rest of the site and the high incidence of horse bone in comparable shafts elsewhere (Wait 1985). If the bone in these shafts was derived from domestic waste, it follows that similar proportions of bone would have been deposited as in other features. Certainly the volume of excavated fill from the shafts was less than that from the other features, so the differences in quantities of bone recovered from the shafts versus other features appear significant. The fact that horse bone is absent from these shafts would suggest that the deposition of bone of other species, or the exclusion of horse bone is deliberate. This suggests that horses were not considered fitting subjects for the rituals conducted at the site. Alternatively their association with disarticulated human remains and ditch type features is linked to their ritual deposition being distinct from that in wells and shafts. Horse bone and disarticulated human remains have been found in specific ditch type features at the Tabard Square site (L Yeomans pers comm); this type of assemblage is also a notable component of deposits at the Lant Street Roman cemetery

(Sayer 2006) and in ditches at 165 Great Dover Street (Reilly 2000). Secondary iron smithing waste, found in many other contexts is also absent from the shaft deposits, again implying that, as this type of waste was usually dumped in any open feature available, the function of these shafts specifically excluded the disposal of, or the secondary use of, smithing waste (Keys 1999).

In his comparative study of ritual shafts, Wait (1985) defined 27 key deposit criteria categorising the Iron Age and Roman ritual shafts used in his study. These covered the deliberate layering of deposits, the inclusion of animal bone of various species, human bone, ceramic assemblages, the deposition of organic matter, and votive objects of various kinds. These criteria are examined in relationship to the Old Sorting Office shafts in Table 3 below. Wait recognised that none of these criteria is sufficient in isolation to denote the use of a shaft for ritual purposes,

*Table 3. Deposits from the Old Sorting Office shafts following Wait 1985 ciriteria*

| | 3a | 3b | | | | | | | | 3c | | | | | 3d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 513 | 1121 | 1235 | 317761 | 719758 | 790 | 869 | 1181 | 1276 | 1343 | 1180 | 1385 | 1306 | 1447 | 138 |
| Excavated depth m | 1.1 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.6 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 0.9 | post-ex | 0.9 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| Adjusted depth m | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 1.4 | | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Deliberate layers | | X | | | | | | X | | X | | X | X | X | |
| Lining | | X | | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Cattle bones | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Dog bones | | | | | | | | X | | X | | | X | X[2] | |
| Pig bones | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | | | | | X | X | |
| Horse bones | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sheep bones | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Deer bones | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bird bones | | X | | | | X | | | | | | X | X | X | |
| Misc animal bones | | X | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X | X | X | | |
| Oyster shell | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Human bones | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X[3] | |
| Weapons | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Body armour | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Complete pots | | | X | | | X | | X | | X | X | | | | |
| Complete but broken pots | | X | X | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | |
| Pot groups | | X | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | |
| Votive objects | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Iron tools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Quern stones | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ashes | X | X | | | | | | | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Jewellery | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Coins | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Other objects | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X[1] | | |

x[1] = bucket, x[2] = 3 complete disarticulated dogs, x[3] = partial skeleton

and that attribution best rests on a combination of them.

In the case of the Old Sorting Office shafts, the inclusion of organic material (leather objects, leaves and grasses, trees or logs, and nuts and twigs) could not be verified as the deposits were not waterlogged, and so these elements have not survived in the archaeological record. Sufficient wood remained of the linings of some of the shafts to be able to define the construction of the linings, but smaller and more fragile items such as grass, nuts and twigs did not survive (Carruthers 1999).

Another factor likely to bias the results of the Old Sorting Office shafts is the truncation of the tops of the features by 20th-century basements. This is likely to have distorted both the evidence for layered deposits and the depth analysis. The depths of the Old Sorting Office features in the comparative table (Table 3) are therefore given both as excavated depths and as calibrated depths based on the depth of truncation from the top of the Roman levels as observed along the untruncated north side of the site, +0.5m.

The Roman pottery assemblage from the Old Sorting Office site comprised 8,698 sherds (226,203g) of Roman pottery from 1,465 contexts. Of which 658 (26,014g) derived from the shafts constituting 7.6% of the total number and 11.5% of the weight from 93 contexts.

From this approach Wait developed eight principal criteria for shafts on Iron Age and twelve for Roman civilian and military sites, and also drew comparison between the twelve Iron Age shafts in the study in Kent and Surrey and the nine elsewhere in Southern Lowland England (Table 4).

It can be seen from comparison (Tables 3 and 4) that the Old Sorting Office shafts conform most to the Kent/Surrey Group, with all of the eight key criteria being represented in the group. The most obvious differences between the Lowland England criteria and the Old Sorting Office shafts is the lack of horse bones.

Comparison with Wait's table for both Roman civilian and military sites (Table 5) immediately shows a lack of non-ceramic votive items for the Swan Street shafts; objects such as miniature

*Table 4. Iron Age (after Wait 1985)*

| | *Kent/ Surrey Group* | | *Lowland England* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Linings | 1 | Layers |
| 2 | Cattle bones | 2 | Lining |
| 3 | Dog bones | 3 | Cattle bones |
| 4 | Bird bones | 4 | Horse bones |
| 5 | Human bones | 5 | Human bones |
| 6 | Pots, complete | 6 | Pots, complete |
| 7 | Pots, complete but broken | 7 | Pots, complete but broken |
| 8 | Ash deposits | 8 | Ash deposits |

*Table 5. Roman (after Wait 1985)*

| | *Civilian* | | *Military* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Layers | 1 | Cattle bones |
| 2 | Lining | 2 | Dog bones |
| 3 | Cattle bones | 3 | Horse bones |
| 4 | Dog bones | 4 | Pots, broken |
| 5 | Human bones | 5 | Tools |
| 6 | Pots, complete | 6 | Votives |
| 7 | Ash deposits | 7 | Deer bones |
| 8 | Tools | 8 | Oysters |
| 9 | Votives | 9 | Coins |
| 10 | Pig bones | 10 | Querns |
| 11 | Oysters | 11 | Weapons |
| 12 | Coins | 12 | Armour |

weapons, statuary or figurines, jewellery, and coins are largely absent. The divergence in the criteria between the Old Sorting Office shafts and Wait's Roman tables is far greater than for the Iron Age, with nine correlations with the civilian group and four for the military group. The major convergence with the Roman groups is in the depth of the shafts. Wait shows a concentration of shafts in the 2–4m depth range, slightly deeper than the range into which the Old Sorting Office shaft group falls, but this may be the result of the truncation of the site. The underlying geology suggests that the site sloped upwards to the south and the adjustment of the depth may not reflect this slope.

The use of deliberate layering in the Old Sorting Office shafts may be more extensive than is apparent, as post-medieval truncation removed the top fills of the features and may have destroyed evidence of structured deposition in the remaining shafts. The shafts identified as displaying structured deposition show marked concentrations of finds within layers interspaced with sterile or relatively clean fills. Of these shafts [1181] and [1343] showed the separation of ritual groups with a fill of clean sand, and shaft [1447] showed a distinct zoning of types of deposit, with the human and dog elements deposited in different fills. Those shafts with ritual pots also contain the highest numbers of broken sherds and animal bone.

The absence of non-ceramic votive offerings from the Old Sorting Office shafts may be an indication of a continuing pre-Roman tradition at this site. The votives from shafts found elsewhere have been identified as a Roman phenomenon, with personal objects being excluded from the more impersonal offerings of pre-Roman society. This shift in emphasis probably reflects a move away from group offering towards a ritual practice based more on private concerns, and a substitution of the more durable Romanised personal offerings for the organic offerings common to Iron Age shafts. A similar change has been noted in burials of the Roman period, and, as Philpott suggests (1991, 220), may reflect a substitution of an archaeologically durable item for a perishable organic one. The type of object deposited may be a signifier of the social status or wealth of the individual or group making that offering, and the lack of quality items in the offerings may be a reflection of the relative poverty or low social status of the population presenting the offerings.

The presence of votive offerings in boundary ditches, in the form of brooches and the Hercules figurine, may suggest that at the Old Sorting Office site the use of these offerings was inappropriate for the rituals associated with the shafts. This suggests that Iron Age ritual traditions and practices were prevalent in native society during the first hundred years of Roman occupation, with some Romanised influences, in the shaft forms and the occasional more Romanised offering, being introduced as the years progressed.

At the cemetery site at 165 Great Dover Street (Mackinder 2000), about 300m south-east of the Old Sorting Office, wells were associated with the shrine-mausoleum structures, as well as the earlier post-built structure, although no potentially ritual finds were identified from these. This post-built structure, consisting of a rectangular building (Building 1) dating to the 1st century, was defined by parallel lines of postholes and was associated with ditches reminiscent of those in Phase 3a at the Old Sorting Office. It was interpreted as a field system or garden. The structure was dismantled and the ditches backfilled to accommodate the early 2nd-century cemetery and temple-mausoleum. It may be that rather than representing field or garden structures, these features represent an earlier phase in the development of the cemetery, with a timber-built shrine being replaced by masonry structures. Similarly, as stated above, the Tabard Square temple precinct is located *c.*180m to the east. Numerous ditch features, including a large temenos ditch with significant accumulations of placed deposits, formed part of this complex.

At Folly Lane, St Albans (Niblett 1999) at least 28 shafts were recorded associated with a possible subterranean mortuary structure, burials, cremations, and a later temple. These ranged in depth from 2–6m and were cut into the underlying drift geology. They exhibited deliberate structuring of the fills, and included human and animal bone, broken sherds and near-complete vessels, including face pots. The fills of shaft AET contained a defleshed human skull on its floor, the partial remains of a puppy with part of a possible face pot, and large quantities of butchery waste. The majority of these shafts appeared to have been backfilled from the mid-2nd to the late 3rd century. The preponderance of flagon and jar forms in the ritual assemblages is noted as a particular characteristic of the shaft fills on this site (*ibid*).

At Baldock (Stead & Rigby 1986) eight wells and numerous deep pits or shafts, dating from the late Iron Age to late Roman times, were recorded. These ranged in depth from 2.5–15m, and human skeletons were found in the top fills of two. These burials are described as being muddled together and disturbed so that the bones were articulated but displaced, ascribed to subsidence of the fills. Additional disarticulated bone, consisting in the main of cranial fragments, was discovered in the wells, ditches, and pits. Two of the wells contained the carcasses of seven and six horses respectively, along with dumps of other animal bone, and in one were the semi-complete skeletons of two recently weaned red deer calves together with two hares, a fox, and the bones of pig, horse, cattle and sheep. Most showed signs of deliberate layering. A number of the deep pits or shafts contained near-complete pot assemblages resembling burial groups. At Baldock Site D, cremation burial 6, dated to the mid-1st century, contained samian jugs, a Verulamium region flagon, the hind leg of a pig, some domestic fowl bones and the shoulder and fore-leg of a sheep. The bones had apparently been laid in the grave on a wooden tray. Burial 7 (pre-Flavian) contained a broken flagon, apparently ritually killed, among the pot group with domestic fowl, cattle and sheep bones. Burial 50 at Site F, dating to the 3rd century, contained 31 lamps and 15 pedestal cups or candlesticks. The cups/candlesticks appear to have been ritually smashed elsewhere and only part of the debris deposited.

These two sites demonstrate the use of wells or shafts in a known ritual context, both being ceremonial complexes, and serve to illustrate similar elements of ritual to that identified at the Old Sorting Office site, albeit in a more complex and obvious form.

Flagons were the most common vessel type from the Old Sorting Office shafts, with 20 complete or part-complete examples being recovered from them and their construction cuts, in addition to a ritually 'killed' example from a ditch. The predominance of flagons in the ritual assemblages (67%) is not repeated at Folly Lane (Lyne 1999; 2000); here flagons made up only 18% of the 11 vessels in shaft AIJ/AIK (AD 155–200), 17% of the 12 pots from shaft AIL, and were absent in the others. Flagons and bottles only make up 9.5% of the 116 vessels from 13 shafts at Baldock (Lyne 1999).

At the Old Sorting Office, all but one of the flagons are from the Verulamium kilns *c.*35km to the north-west. There are considerably more VRW flagons from the Old Sorting Office site than from the ritual shafts found at Verulamium itself, where most of the examples were wasters from the local kilns. This may be a reflection of trade patterns, with the flagons being exported to London, and their subsequent use or re-use as votive vessels. The painted decoration on three of these vessels may support the idea of re-used vessels in the votive assemblages. Alternatively this may suggest a perceived suitability of these pottery forms for specific ritual (Lyne 1999). It has, however, recently been found that Verulamium Region Whiteware fabric vessels were also made at London in the Walbrook valley during the 2nd century (Seeley & Drummond-Murray 2006) and that these are indistinguishable from those made in the Verulamium area.

The presence of an inscribed name 'Urbicus' on a platter (Tomlin & Hassall 2000, 442) and the scored parallel ownership marks on a jar from one of the shafts may offer a clue to the rituals behind their deposition. The personalisation of these objects may point to one of two things: that the objects were deposited by the individuals themselves as a dedication by the named individuals, possibly as a plea for intercession by a deity or as objects offered by others to the (memory of) named individuals.

Further evidence of ritual use of features comes from the association of human remains with articulated animal bone in the fills of the 1st-century boundary ditch and the deposition of a 'killed' pot in the side ditch of the possible track running through the entrance in this boundary. There is the possibility of offerings of jewellery being made, with six out of the nine brooches found on the site (the only jewellery items found) and the Hercules figurine deposited in these same ditches. The presence of shattered but near-complete pots in three pits close by these boundary ditches may also be ritual in nature. This fits the general pattern of ritual deposits reinforcing boundary lines during the prehistoric and early historic periods (Brück 1995).

As with the interpretation of shafts as having a ritual use resting on the conjunction of a number of diagnostic factors (Wait 1985), the evidence for ritual deposition in the settlement boundaries does not rest on a single element but on their association with a number of related or associated deposits, or their disassociation from other deposits or finds (Hill 1995).

## The manipulation of human remains

The presence of two disarticulated femurs in the boundary ditch [714] is echoed in the recovery of a right femur, the anterior of the left half of a mandible, and fragments of a frontal bone from the major ditch at 1–5 Swan Street (Graham 1978). Graham postulates that these remains derived from known cemeteries further south, and does not assign them a ritual function. However, the evidence of the disarticulated human skeletal elements from the Old Sorting Office site, and, for example, the single human femur found in a pit containing otherwise exclusively votive artefacts at Uley Roman temple, suggests that this type of deposition may be deliberate (Levitan 1993, 266). At Folly Lane 18 human adult long bones were found in the fills of ritual shafts and the ceremonial enclosure ditch. These remains were interpreted as being indicative of a tradition of exposure and display of the dead (Niblett 1999, 404). Examples of this type of deposition are also clear from the 165 Great Dover Street site and the Tabard Square excavations to the east. Disarticulated human remains associated with animal bone in ritual, placed deposits are known from other sites in London, elsewhere in England, and on the Continent (Derks 1998; Fulford 2001; Graham & Millett 1980; Matthews & Hutchings 1972; Matthews 1981; Merrifield 1987; Stjernquist 1964; 1970).

The absence from the archaeological record (Wait 1985, 89; Hill 1995, 105) of the remains of a considerable proportion of the human population between the Middle Bronze Age and the late Iron Age might be explained by this practice of exposure and two-stage funeral practice — a mortuary practice involving not the disposal of the corpse as a whole (Brück 1995, 249), but rather the retention and separate deposition of token bone elements. This lack of human remains (between 90–95% of the population by Wait's calculations (1985, 90)) would support the idea that the few individuals that are represented in the archaeological record are the result of non-normative deliberate action.

The burial of token or single bone elements in pits and boundary or enclosure ditches is a widely documented pre-Roman practice (Wait 1985; Brück 1995), although it appears to decline during the late Iron Age. The majority of these elements consist of long and skull bones, mostly from the left side of the body, implying selection of symbolically significant elements for deposition. The absence of evidence of dismemberment on these deposits argues for secondary manipulation of corpses after the flesh had decomposed, much as has been suggested in the case of the partial skeleton in the well at the Old Sorting Office. The deposition of partial skeletons is infrequent during the Iron Age and Roman periods but not unknown (*ibid*), and Wait argues that rather than being sacrificial victims, a practice banned by the Romans, they represent a continuation of widespread two-stage disposal or burial ritual.

It has been argued (Wait 1985) that this type of burial rite reflects beliefs regarding both the nature of the afterlife and the soul's progression towards it. The two-stage mortuary ritual is seen as a signifier of the transition from one state to another, from life into the afterlife, with retention of some remains and disposal of others (Wait 1985; Van Gennep 1960 [1909]) either after excarnation or exposure of the remains. The core of the belief is that death is a process rather than a single event, with death beginning with the cessation of breathing and heartbeat and only ending with the final dissolution of the body. This process is accompanied by rituals to celebrate and facilitate the progression of the soul from one stage to the other. This idea of transition, or liminality, may explain the deposition of the ritually manipulated skeleton in the shaft. Wells and springs are associated in Celtic myth with openings to the Otherworld — a liminal doorway to the afterlife. The practice of secondary funerary or mortuary rites, attested to in ethnographic studies (see Wait 1985, ch 9), provides the opportunity for manipulation of the corpse, the retention of selected body parts, and the disposal of the remainder in a final resting place during the second funeral.

The fact that two-stage burial ritual, with either exposure or excarnation of corpses, is implied by the human remains on site raises the interesting question of the source of these body parts. It seems unlikely that the exposure of human remains for long enough for the flesh to have decayed would have been tolerated even on the outskirts of London during the late 2nd or early 3rd century, given the Roman imperative of burial outside the bounds of the city. This suggests that the remains were either from bodies exposed outside the boundaries of the habitation area, or obtained from the excarnation of bodies.

Given the number of Roman burials and burial grounds excavated both north and south of the river, a practice such as excarnation/exhumation or indeed the burial of individuals with specific bones missing, if this practice was widespread, would have been noted in the archaeological record. Two examples of possible exhumation were recorded at the cemetery complex at 165 Great Dover Street. Burial 8 consisted of two corresponding cuts, the upper of which contained an individual whose head had been separated from the body *post-mortem* and placed on the chest (Mackinder 2000, 15, 38). This was attributed to the desirability of the burial location, but could equally be interpreted as the exhumation and reburial of the individual after secondary manipulation and a second funeral. The upper body bones of Burial 12 were disturbed and the lower leg bones had been moved and placed next to the upper legs, probably as the result of reburial. However the evidence from the bodies buried in the formal London Roman cemetery sites indicates that the individuals buried there on the whole do not qualify for being the source of the disarticulated human bone found in ditches, pits and shafts.

The deposition of remains in boundary ditches may serve to emphasise the exclusion of the individual, and at the same time reinforce the social and legal boundary as a warning against further deviant behaviour. In this sense the boundary serves as a signifier of social expectations and behaviour as well as a physical reminder of territory (Hill 1995, 108), as discussed above. This does not however explain the apparent *post-mortem* manipulation of the Old Sorting Office body, and while the disposition of the body in the shaft may appear to fit with the idea of a dishonourable burial, its disposal, in what by other criteria seems to be a votive shaft, does not. Wait (1985, 239) suggests that this secondary manipulation may be either derogatory in the case of a criminal or complimentary in the case of a chief or leader. In both particulars this would point to the body being ritual in nature rather than casual disposal in a convenient location. The location within a walled cemetery of Burial 8 at 165 Great Dover Street (Mackinder 2000), with the suggestions of exhumation, secondary manipulation and reburial, would suggest that the treatment is not derogatory. The presence of human remains in Roman wells is not uncommon (Marsh & West 1981, 99; Ross 1968; Richardson 1983, 277; Stead & Rigby 1986, 390–1). This again would argue that this disposal is not the result of casual burial practice but of ritual deposition.

There is evidence from London and elsewhere of ritual deposition within boundary ditches. At the Baltic Exchange excavations (Sidell 2000, 95) a number of dog skeletons of various sizes, together with primary butchery waste, were recorded in a large boundary ditch, fitting the evidence for both the ritual use of dogs and the deposition of remains in boundary ditches. At Hunts House, Guys Hospital, a bead-rim jar containing the skull of a small dog and single fragments from a pig skull and a sheep-sized skull were found buried near the terminus of a 1st-century boundary ditch (Taylor-Wilson 2002), while at the Wolfson Wing site a near-complete vessel containing a dog skull was recovered from levelling fills over a silted-up channel (C Pickard pers comm). At 201–211 Borough High Street a high proportion of the animal bone from Ditch 2 was found to be from lambs, represented only by skull fragments (Ferretti & Graham 1978), while in Ditch 4 a human skull and two near-complete Neronian samian vessels were found in the lower fills. In Nash, Gwent, two adult human bodies were found buried parallel to field boundaries and a number of juvenile cattle had been interred in pits cut into the fills of ditches (Meddens & Beasley 2001). In Colchester limb bones and six crania were deposited in the legionary ditch by the west gate along with dog skeletons (Isserlin 1996, 94), while at Baldock a complete inhumation and cranial fragments were recorded in ditches (Stead & Rigby 1986, 392). Isolated human skulls in a ritual context from the Thames and its tributaries are widely documented (Bradley & Gordon 1988; Marsh & West 1981), again showing the tradition of token bone deposition in liminal contexts.

The majority of articulated animal remains came from ditches in Phases 3a and 3b, again suggesting the ritualisation of the boundary, or from wells. Armitage (2000a) places all but two examples of possible ritual remains in Phases 3a and b, apart from the dogs in shaft [1447] and cockerel bones in shaft [1306] (Phase 3c). This, along with the presence of complete but shattered pottery vessels in pits close by, may suggest ritual deposition in pits along the boundary as well as in the boundary itself. The only exceptions to this are two horse hooves, which may be the remains of leather working, and the articulated remains of an immature goat

from a pit to the north of the boundary ditch in an area of heavy rubbish pitting. The fact that this kid does not fit the characteristics of the rest of the animal bone assemblage may suggest that these remains are again special in some way, and may therefore show ritual deposition in pits

The non-butchered adult skeletons of a sheep and a goat in the boundary ditch [714] again may have alternative explanations for their deposition other than being the disposal of casualty animals considered to be unsafe for consumption and disposed of away from the settlement. The complete or partial fore and hind limbs of horses recovered from the same ditch may, because of their close association with disarticulated (token) human remains, also imply ritual deposition. The presence of an articulated hind limb of a cow in association with votive offerings and a human femur at Uley (Levitan 1993, 266), a foal leg and jaw from Nash in Wales (Meddens & Beasley 2001) and examples from elsewhere in England and on the Continent indicate that the practice was widespread.

The fact that only 0.3% of the bone assemblage showed any signs of gnawing by scavengers suggests that the remains were quickly buried or disposed of in such a way as to be unreachable by dogs and rats. This would tend to disprove the idea that the animal bone represents the casual disposal of domestic waste at a convenient location at the back of the settlement.

There are other indicators of the use of animal bones in ritual contexts. The cockerel bones from the site, as opposed to those from hens, only occur in wells and the boundary ditch [714], suggesting that cockerels were restricted to this use and are probably therefore purely ritual. A specific reference to the native Britons regarding the consumption of domestic fowl and geese as being taboo exists in contemporary Roman records (Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 5.12). A chicken carcass was recovered from Burial 26 at 165 Great Dover Street, interpreted as a ritual offering; chickens were relatively common grave goods in inhumations at the East London cemetery (Mackinder 2000, 45) and are also known from Lant Street (Sayer 2006).

The Uley Romano-British temple in Gloucestershire has parallels for the ritual deposits at the Old Sorting Office, such as the deposition of brooches in votive deposits. Brooches are seen to occur in significant numbers on temple sites (Butcher 1993) and are probably personal devotions at the temples. A number of beads were recovered from votive pits, again interpreted as individual offerings, suggesting that the deposition of a bead in shaft [1181] may have been intentional rather than accidental loss or rubbish.

The association of the site with the southern boundaries of Southwark may explain the presence of so many shafts in this area. The site appears to lie on the very edge of Roman Southwark at the junction of two, possibly three, roads leading from the bridgehead, through the settlement, to the coast, and in close proximity to the Lant Street cemetery and the Tabard Square temple precinct. Ritual deposition and activity to reinforce the boundaries of the settlement (Millett 1994) and the road lines, and therefore the transition between settlement (culture) and countryside (nature), may combine with a location for possible offerings to bless a journey as the road leaves the town (van Gennep [1909] 1960, 15). Similarly it is located in a ritual landscape between the dead and ancestors at Lant Street and the living and deities at the Tabard Square complex. On Bronze Age and Iron Age sites token bone elements are found in transitional deposits, for example in ditches or entranceways, sanctifying passage. Points of entrance and exit are often distinguished by human remains as a means of reinforcing the boundary at a point of routine encounter (Brück 1995; Wait 1985; van Gennep [1909] 1960). Bone elements at the Old Sorting Office may represent a continuity of this practice, in this case representing ritual reinforcement of the passage through the southern boundary of Southwark.

Ritual sacrifices in ethnological studies (Wait 1985, 244) are universal in the inclusion of food and ritual sacrifice. The ritual slaughter of animals, destruction of vegetable matter, and libations of blood or liquor associated with the food eaten during the ceremonials formed part of the animal sacrifice, with a greater or lesser part, possibly the inedible portions, being reserved for the gods and for deposition (Hill 1995, 103; Philpott 1991, 236). It has been suggested (Wait 1985, 244) that lower value offerings may represent the activities of family size groups, while slightly higher value devotions would represent communal activity and high value or large offerings are likely to represent a regional group. Similarly, Ross (1968) presents the idea that the largest and most impressive shafts were connected with the ritual of the

social and religious élite and that the smaller shafts and pits were the result of local worship. The low number of votive items found at the Old Sorting Office and the size of the shafts would, by these criteria, suggest that these shafts represent the ritual activity of a small group of people continuing a pre-Roman tradition.

The identification of the deities involved at the Old Sorting Office is unclear but the offerings may offer a clue. The only positive representation, a small figurine of Hercules recovered from the terminus of an early boundary ditch, is almost certainly a votive offering. Part of the right arm and left leg are missing, possibly to 'kill' the object, and it was found in association with two near-complete but shattered pots and the upper half of a flagon. Hercules was protected by Minerva and regarded as a bringer of victory and was particularly venerated by soldiers. He also appears in funerary contexts as symbolising the conquest of death, and was appealed to in domestic contexts to ward off evil spirits (Wardle 2000). Both these latter interpretations fit with the idea of offerings in the liminal setting of a boundary ditch.

The dog is associated with the Roman god Mithras, as well as Diana and other Greco-Roman deities and an unnamed British hunter god (Merrifield 1986). A canine figure is seen associated with Orpheus on mosaics in Britain of 4th-century date (Johnson 1995, 50), and dogs are also documented as guardians or guides in the Underworld. Nodens and the Celtic hammer god Sucellos have the dog as one of their attributes, paralleling the Irish custom of giving semi-divine heroes dog epithets (Ross 1968).

Both rams and cockerels are animal attributes of Mercury, perhaps indicating that the sheep, goat and cockerel remains in the boundary ditch at the Old Sorting Office are offerings to Mercury. This deity was associated with cures of diseases and sprains impeding movement, was the succourer of travellers and solver of disputes, and it was Mercury who guided the spirits of the dead to the Underworld. The fact that the form of the Old Sorting Office offerings corresponds in the main with pre-Roman traditions does not preclude their being used to worship a Roman god. The adoption of local ritual practices by the Romans is a widely accepted tenet, as is the adoption of Roman gods by the native population and the identification of local deities with a Roman gods.

A metal patera dedicated to Mars was found in a ritual shaft in St Erth, Cornwall, while at Carrawburgh, Northumberland, a well sacred to the Celtic goddess Coventina contained, amongst other things, bronze statuettes of a horse and a dog. At Great Chesterford, Essex, images of Hercules and an unidentified river god were recovered from a ritual shaft and at Sandwich, Kent, a pipeclay Venus figurine was found. From this it appears there was no set deity associated with shafts, and they probably served to facilitate offerings for a number of deities according to circumstance or local preference. The temple precinct to the east of the Swan Street site appears to have been dedicated to Mars Camulus as indicated by the dedicatory inscription found there (Millett 2005, 51).

## CONCLUSIONS

The Old Sorting Office site is ideally located to examine the interface between the settlement of Roman Southwark and the immediate hinterland of that settlement, located as it is over the apparent southern boundary during the 1st and early 2nd centuries AD.

The expansion of the southern limits of Roman Southwark from the late 1st century onwards is indicated, but no evidence exists for the expanded southern boundary, and evidence of contraction thereafter may have been distorted by severe 20th-century truncation of the later deposits.

The association of token human bone deposits with articulated remains, 'killed' pots, and jewellery deposition in the ditches of the early phases of the site strongly suggests a ritual significance attached to these boundaries. The ritual reinforcement of boundaries in pre-Roman society is well documented, and the Iron Age and earlier ritual tradition appears, perhaps unsurprisingly, to have continued on at least into the 1st and 2nd centuries. The close resemblance of the shaft deposits at the Old Sorting Office to deposits in other known Iron Age ritual shafts contrasts with the correlation in size to known Roman shafts, suggesting a continued Iron Age ritual tradition into the Roman period. This would indicate that the local population remained essentially unRomanised in their ritual and spiritual life through the 1st and 2nd centuries. The decrease in the number of these shafts after the middle of the 2nd century may reflect the contracting size of the settlement, but

may also reflect the changing religious practices of the populace.

The evidence from the shafts and ditches has highlighted the difficulties in identifying ritual deposits. The nature of the evidence, coupled with the persisting disinclination of archaeologists to ascribe ritual functions to deposits (*cf* the assertion (Sidell 2000) that the articulated remains of a horse, a dog and a red deer laid nose-to-tail in a circle within a pit are only 'likely to have been associated with ritual'), especially during the Roman period, makes it difficult, even on sites with proven ritual activity, to separate ritual and secular deposits, for example evidence of ritual feasting and deposition. As Brück (1995, 254) argues:

> … daily practices are informed not only by practical considerations but also by the same cosmological and symbolic principals that structure ritual. Furthermore, our ethnocentric division of the ritual and the secular is not supported by anthropological studies which suggest that ritual and non-ritual activities form part of a continuum of cultural practice and that it is difficult to sharply divide one from the other. It is therefore often difficult to distinguish archaeologically between ritual and non-ritual practice.

That ritual deposition is apparent in both the boundary ditches and the shafts on site possibly indicates two separate sets of devotion being carried out, and these two sets of ritual may be explained by the site's location. The first consists of ritual designed to enforce/demarcate the boundary lines of Southwark, and the transition from settlement to countryside, from order to chaos. Evidence from both the Old Sorting Office and nearby sites suggests that the population of the area was essentially unRomanised in their diet, their iron-working technology, and in the animal species they were rearing. That these rituals reflect a pre-Roman tradition, in the use of token bone and votives to define the southern boundary of Southwark is not surprising during the 1st century AD. The use of these forms of ritual are well-evidenced in the definition of liminal and territorial boundaries during the pre-Roman period, and may be expected to continue after the Roman occupation.

The second set of ritual activities comprises those associated with ritual shafts or the use of wells for votive deposition. The number of such shafts/wells in such a relatively small area implies some significance to the location. The site is situated at the junction of two major roads to the south coast and just on the edge of the Southwark settlement. This would place the shafts outside the settlement at the point where the roads cross the boundary ditches. Mackinder (2000) suggests that the walled cemeteries and mausolea extended from the limits of the settlement. The similarity in the plans of the mid to late 1st-century development of both sites, as well as the presence of wells associated with the temple and mausoleum structures, the Tabard Square temple complex in between the two sites and the Lant Street cemetery a little further west indicates that the Old Sorting Office remains are part of the ritual landscape extending along the edges of Watling Street and the southern boundary of Roman Southwark.

An argument could be made that the shafts are in this location as part of a shrine used by travellers departing *Londinium* towards the south coast ports or arriving in the city. While there is no evidence of a shrine itself on the site, there clearly are the remains of two Romano-British temples to consider immediately to the east. The similarity in the patterns of ritual behaviour at the Old Sorting Office and those at other known temple sites, such as Uley, Baldock, and Folly Lane, provides evidence for a similar configuration here. This may also explain, certainly in the earlier shafts, why no large assemblages of bone were recovered. If travellers used the shafts for transitional devotions, then portable offerings, such as animal-portions or pots, are likely to be made in preference to larger items such as a complete sheep. This theory may explain the evidence that one of the deities honoured at the site was Mercury, the god of travellers, guide to the Underworld, and curer of ailments affecting mobility.

The strength of this local practice, tied to the local Kent and Surrey traditions by the deposits in the shafts, appears to be such that ritual activity of an Iron Age nature continued into the 3rd century. The deposition of a semi-articulated corpse and the nature of the deposits within the shafts implies the continuation of Iron Age practices well into the Roman period. This strongly suggests the presence of an only partially Romanised population. The possibility of the body being either a casual low-status burial, or that of an outcast excluded from the normative burial rights, both documented occurrences in Roman Britain, is discounted by

the apparent *post-mortem* manipulation of the corpse, implying secondary funeral rites, and its association with defleshed dog carcasses and 'killed' pot assemblages in a votive shaft/well.

If the suggestion of the site functioning as part of a travellers' shrine is correct then this continued tradition probably represents the belief system of the wider locality. The introduction of more Romanised votives and the use of shafts/wells more in keeping with Roman tradition argues for pre-Roman tradition in a Romanised setting, possibly explained by the passage of travellers to and from the city.

Re-evaluation of similar evidence in light of an awareness of ritual context and ritual behaviour in the rest of London, in the absence of specific ritual/ceremonial context, may clarify patterns of ritual behaviour as yet unidentified in the archaeological record. This applies especially to the use of human bone in non-funerary and non-mortuary contexts, where previously such remains as disarticulated bone have been attributed to redeposited bone from funerary/mortuary contexts locally, and of associated animal bone groups.

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# SLAVERY IN THE LONDON AREA IN 1086

*Keith Bailey*


## SUMMARY

*At a time when the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 is being commemorated, it is appropriate to remember that in the late 11th century, around one-tenth of the population of England were counted as slaves, effectively the chattels of their manorial lords. While the horrors of the transatlantic slave ships and the inhuman treatment meted out on the plantations are probably far worse than anything experienced by slaves in the London area, those who form the subject of this paper were denied many basic freedoms. After a brief review of the pre-Conquest evidence for slavery in the area, the evidence of Domesday Book is used to examine the numbers, distribution, and possible employment of slaves around London. This sole source of hard evidence is timely, as slavery was a disappearing institution by then, after surviving since the prehistoric period. Within a few generations, slavery had gone, although the serfdom which replaced it could be equally harsh and restrictive for a large number of peasant families.*


## INTRODUCTION

Domesday Book is a source of unique value to local historians, although some might argue that it is uniquely problematic, yielding up its secrets reluctantly in many cases. Even after decades of statistical manipulation, much of what we might want to know about English society and its urban and agrarian economy in the late 11th century is still not apparent in its folios. The aim of this paper is to examine the information on the unfree section of society in the Greater London area (see Fig 1). This includes the whole of historic Middlesex; the Hundreds of Brixton, Wallington, and Kingston in Surrey; the Kentish Hundreds of Greenwich, Bromley, Ruxley, and Lessness; and the Essex Hundreds of Becontree, Chafford, and Waltham. (Domesday Book provides no population data for metropolitan Hertfordshire.) Since the boundary of the former GLC area is essentially an artificial construct based upon the local authority boundaries of 1963, it is sensible to include here those limited areas of the Hundreds listed above which lie outside its confines, as well as Spelthorne Hundred which transferred from Middlesex to Surrey in 1965. The principal effect of this is to bring Waltham Cross, Thurrock, Loughton, the Dittons, and Woodmansterne into the study area.

For a wide-ranging study of the whole question of slavery in Anglo-Saxon England, setting the institution in its historical and social context, readers are referred to David Pelteret's excellent book (Pelteret 1995). Also invaluable are the county surveys in Darby's *Domesday Geography* volumes (Darby 1952, ch V; 1962, chs III, VII, X).

A word first on terminology: in the Latin text of Domesday Book, the unfree are called *servi*, meaning 'slaves'. The word appears in later accounts of medieval English society as 'serf'. By that time, however, the institution of slavery had disappeared, and these were the lowest category of semi-free peasants, albeit heavily circumscribed in their ability to act independently of their lord's will. In 1086, there were still wholly unfree individuals in England, the last representatives of a tradition which dates back through Anglo-Saxon and Roman times into prehistory. Slavery seems to have disappeared soon after 1086, as the last remaining slaves were freed by their lords, probably for economic as much as religious or ethical reasons. This paper is not concerned with how slaves had been deprived of their freedom, whether through warfare, crime, deliberate submission to obtain food or shelter, or because their ancestors had been regarded as such. In these counties there is no evidence in Domesday Book or other surviving sources which could help to answer this question, such as manumissions, and neither do we have any names for local slaves (Pelteret 1995, ch 5; very

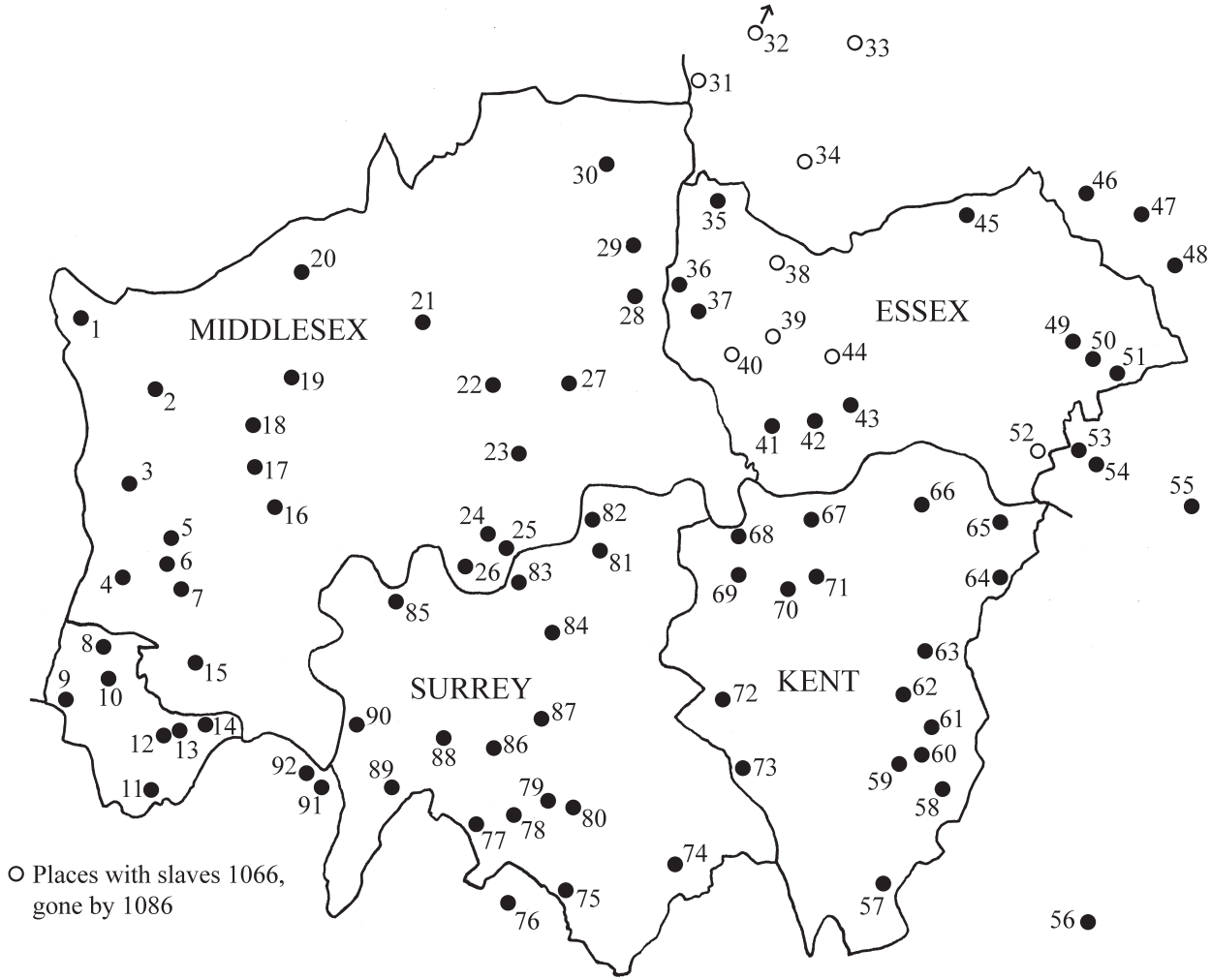


*Fig 1. Slaves recorded in the London area in the 11th century*

occasionally we have details of slaves' names, *eg* at Hatfield (Herts), *ibid*, 114–15, 180–1).

Old English was replete with words indicative of social status, and the usual word denoting slave was *þeow* (fem. *þeowen*), which is used to gloss Latin *servus*. The word *wealh* has a variety of meanings, from 'foreigner' through 'Welshman/Celt' to 'slave'. The institution of slavery in Anglo-Saxon England was not, apparently, like that which pertained in parts of the Roman Empire, nor in the Americas from the 17th century, where thousands of slaves were used to grow and process cash crops such as sugar and cotton, controlled by a small minority of free men. Rather, it seems from the available evidence to have consisted of relatively small numbers of men, women, and sometimes children, who were attached to the demesne holdings of estates and engaged in a variety of agricultural activities for their owners, who ranged from kings and churches to minor lay lords. The perpetual state of internecine warfare which characterised the post-Roman period must have ensured a steady supply of prisoners who could be enslaved, or, like the Northumbrian thegn Imma captured in battle in AD 679, sold to foreign slave traders (Sherley-Price 1955, 239–40 (ch IV.22)). There was apparently a vigorous slave trade with Ireland centred on Bristol as late as 1100. The Viking era after AD 800 would also have led to the enslavement of many individuals, although the later Danelaw area was not typified by large numbers of slaves in 1086.

The law codes issued by kings from the 7th century contain passing references to slaves, including penalties for killing them, implying that they enjoyed rights, if not freedom. The so-called Ordinance of the bishops and reeves of the London district (VI Athelstan, of the AD 930s) is the first mention of the institution in the London area, with penalties for stealing slaves and for runaways (Whitelock 1979, 423–7). The use of the plural suggests that it applied to a broad area around the City. Wills are a better source of information on slavery in the area. That of King Alfred implies that some actually chose slavery, for security or to obtain food. The will of Theodred, Bishop of London dates from 942x51 (Whitelock 1930, no. 1). In it he refers to the manumission of slaves on estates at St Osyth and Tillingham in Essex. Men were also to be freed on the demesne land at 'London', *Wunemannedune* (possibly Wimbledon), and Sheen. Fulham, however, was to remain as it was when he acquired it, 'unless one wishes to free any of my men' ('*butan hwe mine manne fre wille*'). Despite the teaching of the Church on the subject of slavery, it is clear that those at the highest level were motivated as much by economic as humanitarian factors, and this was equally true a century and a half later, as Domesday Book shows. The noble, possibly royal,

*Key to Fig 1 (opposite)*

1. Harefield
2. Ruislip
3. Colham
4. Harmondsworth
5. Hayes
6. Harlington
7. Cranford
8. Stanwell
9. Staines
10. West Bedfont
11. Shepperton
12. Charlton
13. Sunbury
14. Kempton
15. Feltham
16. Hanwell
17. Greenford
18. Northolt
19. Harrow
20. Stanmore
21. Hendon
22. Hampstead
23. Lisson
24. Kensington
25. Chelsea
26. Fulham
27. Tollington
28. Tottenham
29. Edmonton
30. Enfield
31. Waltham Cross
32. Nazeing
33. Epping
34. Loughton
35. Chingford
36. Higham Hill
37. Walthamstow
38. Woodford
39. Wanstead
40. Leyton
41. West Ham
42. East Ham
43. Barking
44. Ilford
45. Havering
46. South Weald
47. Warley
48. Childerditch
49. Upminster
50. Cranham
51. Ockendon
52. Wennington
53. Kenningtons
54. Aveley
55. Grays/Thurrock
56. Seal
57. Cudham
58. Chelsfield
59. Orpington
60. Sandlings
61. St. Mary Cray
62. St. Pauls Cray
63. Foots Cray
64. Crayford
65. Howbury
66. Lessness
67. Charlton
68. Greenwich
69. Lewisham
70. Lee
71. Eltham
72. Beckenham
73. West Wickham
74. Sanderstead
75. Woodmansterne
76. Banstead
77. Cheam
78. Sutton
79. Carshalton
80. Wallington
81. Kennington
82. Lambeth
83. Battersea
84. Balham
85. Mortlake
86. Morden
87. Mitcham
88. Malden
89. Tolworth
90. Kingston
91. Long Ditton
92. Thames Ditton

lady Æþelgifu made a will *c.*AD 990, which concerns estates in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Northamptonshire (Sawyer 1968, no. 1532). In it she is concerned in great detail with the slaves on these lands, freeing some and bequeathing others. A total of 70 individuals are freed, including 36 men and 18 women. It is clear that family groups could be counted as slaves, and although they were in a minority, this potentially affects the interpretation of the Domesday evidence (see below). A total of 60 slaves were left unfree, including 39 men and 16 women. In some cases, children were freed, while their parents were left unfree. Æþelgifu's will also reveals that it was not only agricultural workers who could be slaves, since we read of Edwin the priest (in flat contradiction of Church teaching), three women who were required to sing psalters in return for their freedom, a goldsmith, and a miller. In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Ulf freed 30 slaves on his estates at Aston and Oxhey (Herts), the latter just north-west of the London area (Whitelock 1979, 533–4). Another surviving reference to pre-Conquest slavery in London is contained in a lease of an estate at Beddington by Edward the Elder to the church of Winchester in 899x908, which included seven slaves (Darby 1977, 87–91). (Domesday Book indicates that six slaves were present in 1086.)

A serious problem which immediately confronts any study of slavery as depicted in Domesday Book is the extent to which recorded individuals in various categories represent additional household members. It is conventionally assumed that groups such as villeins, bordars, and cottars as enumerated do represent household heads, and must therefore be factored up by some multiplier to obtain the total population (Pelteret 1995, ch VII). By contrast, it is assumed that slaves are counted as individuals, even though there is evidence from the 10th century that whole families could be subject to this unfree status (Maitland 1897, 503–4). (Further confusion arises from the fact that families could apparently include both free and unfree individuals.) In order to avoid the question of what multiplier to use for slaves or other classes of tenant, all the data used here will be left in their recorded form, even if the effect is to over-state the proportion of slaves in the population. Many slaves in 1086 were employed within the lord's household on domestic duties and on tasks associated with demesne farming, notably ploughing, in numbers which suggest that they were counted individually. On the other hand, this does not preclude them having families of their own, who may or may not have been co-resident. The disappearance of the institution of slavery in the period just after 1086 does not help with this problem, as both families and individuals could have been transformed into bondmen of some kind.

In his seminal study of Domesday Book and its data, Maitland estimated that there were some 25,000 slaves in England in 1086 (excluding the four northernmost counties and much of Lancashire), accounting for just over one-tenth of the enumerated population (Maitland 1897, 51–61). In some counties, slaves are identified with specific sources of wealth, but in the London area they usually appear at the end of the various categories of the population, with no apparent links to specific activities. For example, at Harmondsworth, on the estate of Holy Trinity Rouen, six slaves are listed after the cottars, smallholders with up to five acres of land, who depended for much of their livelihood on work on the demesne or the lands of major tenants (*Domesday Book* (Phillimore edition for each county; hereafter *DB*), vol i, fol 128d). At Kingston upon Thames, the two slaves are mentioned after the church, although that is rather oddly placed after the villeins and bordars (*DB* vol i, fol 30c). Not far from London, at Send in Surrey, the link is explicit, with the 15 slaves who form 27% of the population specifically said to be *in dominio*, along with four ploughs, two mills, and five fisheries (*DB* vol i, fol 36d).

## 11TH-CENTURY SLAVERY IN THE LONDON AREA

The London area has a lower-than-average proportion of slaves compared to many of the counties in South-East England, as shown below. (The small non-rural population is omitted from the calculations.)

*Table 1. Proportion of slaves in selected counties in 1086*

| County | % Slaves |
|---|---|
| Buckinghamshire | 16.6 |
| Bedfordshire | 13.4 |
| Hertfordshire | 13.0 |
| Essex | 12.9 |
| Berkshire | 12.9 |
| Surrey | 12.3 |
| Kent | 9.9 |
| Greater London | 7.4 |
| Middlesex | 5.3 |

London is of course omitted from Domesday Book, although it is not clear whether this had much impact on the level of slavery in rural Middlesex. It is clear that in this group of counties, Middlesex is significantly different from its neighbours with regard to slavery.

Table 2 sets out the principal population groups in Middlesex and the rest of the Metropolitan area in 1086. Data for 1066 are also available for Essex, which belonged to the East Anglian 'Circuit' of Domesday Book, in which much more detail is provided on population and livestock, showing that the snapshot effect of the main survey can be misleading in its apparent simplicity.

*Table 2. London region: principal rural population groups 1086 (%)*

| County | Villeins | Bordars | Cottars | Slaves |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Middlesex | 55.3 | 17.3 | 22.1 | 5.3 |
| Surrey | 54.2 | 27.9 | 8.9 | 9.0 |
| Kent | 67.1 | 20.3 | 1.2 | 11.5 |
| Essex 1066 | 49.3 | 33.6 | 0 | 17.0 |
| Essex 1086 | 45.2 | 48.1 | 0 | 6.8 |
| Total 1086 | 54.4 | 27.7 | 10.5 | 7.4 |

In so far as they reflect actual population changes over the 20 years since the Conquest, the Essex data indicate clearly that slavery was a fast-declining institution, with a 60% reduction in the number of slaves, many of whom evidently becoming semi-free bordars; the latter group was experiencing dramatic increases at certain places, notably Barking, East and West Ham, Grays/Thurrock and Walthamstow, although Domesday Book offers no explanation for this. In all areas, villeins formed the core of the peasant population, accounting for 50–70% of those enumerated in Domesday Book. Apart from Kentish London, bordars and cottars account for a third of the population, although they are more significant in Middlesex, where the substantial class of cottars increases the proportion to 40%. The latter may be explained by the influence of London. It appears in a variety of counties that urban areas attracted a disproportionate number of bordars/cottars to their hinterlands (Dyer 1985). Many of the cottars in Middlesex may represent freed slaves, whereas those freed in Essex were counted among the bordars. The Domesday folios for Middlesex provide details of the size of holding for the various types of tenant, which show that there was a wide spectrum of tenure among the villeins especially, ranging from a few acres up to one hide, or more than one hundred acres, representing great variation in the level of prosperity. Many of the 'higher' villeins will have employed labourers from less fortunate groups of tenants, who needed to supplement the meagre income obtained from their small holdings.

There was also some variation in the size of holdings between bordars and cottars. At Staines, for example, 36 bordars held three hides between them, approximately 10 acres apiece, whereas at Tottenham, 12 bordars held 5 acres each (*DB* vol i, fol 128b, c (Staines); 130d (Tottenham)). Also at Staines, 8 cottars held 29 acres, about 3½ acres each, while at Westminster 41 cottars paid 40/- per year for their gardens, although the latter may well have belonged more to the urban than the rural economy (*DB* vol i, fol 128b). Apart from these clear differences between bordars and cottars in terms of size of holding, they probably owed different services and dues to manorial lords, a subject on which Domesday Book is unfortunately silent.

Not only was the proportion of slaves in the population very different between the four counties within the London area, but it also varied widely within their boundaries. Table 3 takes the level of disaggregation one stage to that of the Hundred, although it should be emphasised that these units of administration varied widely in size, for example Ossulston Hundred covered most of the eastern half of Middlesex, while the Hundreds in the Surrey Downs and the Weald were often much larger than their counterparts in the Thames Valley. For this reason, the density of slaves by hundred is shown as well as their proportion in the local population.

In Middlesex, there were no slaves in the small Hounslow Hundred, but adjacent Elthorne and Spelthorne had around 10% of their populations in this class, twice the average for the county as a whole. The remaining two-thirds of the county had relatively few slaves by 1086. This low proportion is matched by Brixton Hundred in Surrey, and by Bromley and Lessness Hundreds in Kent. With the exception of Chingford, none of the Essex estates had a significant proportion of slaves by 1086. Converting the numbers of slaves into a density reveals a rather different pattern, however. North of the Thames, Middlesex and south-west Essex have densities of less than 0.5 slaves per square mile, while north-

*Table 3. Slavery by Hundred in the London area in 1086*

| Hundred | Acres | Slaves | % Population | Slaves/ml² |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ossulston | 50554 | 16 | 2.1 | 0.20 |
| Edmonton | 31701 | 14 | 5.8 | 0.28 |
| Gore | 29185 | 5 | 2.3 | 0.11 |
| Elthorne | 36298 | 42 | 9.3 | 0.74 |
| Spelthorne | 23385 | 35 | 9.9 | 0.96 |
| Isleworth | 9394 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MIDDLESEX | 180517 | 112 | 5.3 | 0.40 |
| | | | | |
| Brixton | 31708 | 30 | 5.7 | 0.61 |
| Wallington | 38325 | 61 | 12.0 | 1.02 |
| Kingston | 15767 | 22 | 9.5 | 0.89 |
| SURREY | 85800 | 113 | 9.0 | 0.84 |
| | | | | |
| Becontree* | 53789 | 26 | 3.6 | 0.31 |
| Chafford | 34697 | 52 | 11.3 | 0.96 |
| Waltham | 23079 | 15 | 8.1 | 0.42 |
| ESSEX | 111565 | 93 | 6.8 | 0.53 |
| | | | | |
| Blackheath | 17138 | 21 | 9.9 | 0.78 |
| Ruxley | 37079 | 66 | 16.0 | 1.14 |
| Lessness | 10590 | 8 | 5.4 | 0.48 |
| Bromley | 8386 | 4 | 4.4 | 0.31 |
| KENT | 73193 | 99 | 11.5 | 0.87 |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL | 451075 | 417 | 7.4 | 0.59 |

*Including the Liberty of Havering-atte-Bower

east Surrey and north-west Kent have densities in the 0.75–0.85 range, around 50–70% higher. Broadly speaking, we find that moving further away from London, there is a greater proportion and density of slaves. This is not solely due to the urban:rural dichotomy, as London in 1086 was scarcely larger than the walled City, and the whole of its hinterland was agricultural, albeit already heavily influenced by the demands of the urban market.

The distribution of slaves was far from uniform within each Hundred, many estates having none recorded in Domesday Book, in contrast to those which had more than one-quarter of their population in this category. Broadly speaking, in Middlesex slavery in Ossulston Hundred was geographically restricted to a handful of estates, whereas elsewhere most estates had at least one slave in 1086. The same is true in Surrey, although there is a higher degree of concentration in Brixton Hundred. There is less evidence of the geographical concentration of slaves in metropolitan Kent and Essex, although in the latter, only one estate is named in each of Waltham and Havering Hundreds.

## SLAVE OWNERSHIP

It has been demonstrated that the geographical distribution of slaves in the London region in 1086 was far from uniform, and this lack of uniformity is repeated when the ownership of slaves is considered. Given that slavery was in decline by the late 11th century, it is the pre-Conquest owners of estates who probably offer more clues as to why this should be so; apart from royal holdings and those of the Church, there was a more or less complete change of tenants-in-chief after 1066. Data on the principal slave-owning tenants-in-chief are set out below

for the periods before and after the Conquest. It is essential to note that landownership was much more fragmented in 1066 than it was 20 years later. The great bulk of those holding estates with slaves at the former date belonged to the category of King's thegns. Some were the men of Earls, others merely local landowners. The repeated occurrence of identical Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norse personal names makes it impossible to be sure whether individuals with the same name are identical or different. For example, the same Askell probably held Beckenham and Howbury in Kent, but we cannot be sure whether the Askell who held Balham was the same man. Countess Goda, King Edward's sister held widely scattered estates, in this area Harefield and part of Lambeth.

The Crown had relatively few slaves on its estates in the London area in 1066, and many of them were on Harold Godwinson's lands, which he probably held by right of being Earl of Wessex before becoming King in January 1066. The number had halved by 1086, with several estates having been transferred to religious houses. Given that the Church was opposed in principle to the concept of slavery, and actively encouraged manumission, the fact that church estates had 84 slaves in 1066, increasing to 112 in 1086 — increasing from about one-quarter to one-third of the total — is at first sight surprising. In part, this probably reflects their conservatism as landowners and estate managers. These estates will have been managed by locally-based officials who may have seen more merit in retaining slaves to work the demesne, rather than freeing them in line with the teaching of the Church. Given that the slaves were probably free within a generation or two, the situation in 1066/1086 marks the end of an era, with the majority of church-owned land having few or no slaves. Although Odo, Bishop of Bayeux amassed vast holdings in Kent after 1066, this was not in his role as a churchman, but as the half-brother of William I, and one of the key players in the Conquest. By 1086, however, his star was waning following rebellion against William.

*Table 4. Slave-ownership by tenant-in-chief 1066 and 1086*

*A. 1066*

| | Mx | Sy | Ex | Kt | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| King* | 0 | 13 | 10 | 2.5 | 25.5 | 7.2 |
| Church | 30 | 29 | 13 | 12 | 84 | 23.6 |
| Asgar | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 4.5 |
| Azor | 8 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 8.7 |
| Others | 52 | 37 | 30 | 71.5 | 190.5 | 53.5 |
| Women | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2.5 |

* Including Harold, who was not recognised as King by the Normans

*B. 1086*

| | Mx | Sy | Ex | Kt | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| King | 0 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 11 | 3.1 |
| Church | 37 | 42 | 21 | 12 | 112 | 31.5 |
| Women | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 8 | 2.2 |
| Bishop of Bayeux | 0 | 6 | 0 | 74 | 80 | 22.5 |
| Geoffrey de Mandeville | 18 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 7.9 |
| Richard of Tonbridge | 0 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 9.8 |
| Robert Gernon | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 2.8 |
| Walter fitzOthere | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 3.6 |
| Others | 43 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 59 | 16.6 |

The principal concentration of slaves in ecclesiastical ownership was that of Westminster Abbey in south and west Middlesex, broadly the territory which had belonged to the minster church of Staines. Other religious houses had scattered holdings with slaves, and all had holdings in the London area which had none at all. Richard of Tonbridge, son of Gilbert de Clare, had very large holdings in south-east Surrey and Kent outside the London area, often with substantial numbers of slaves.

Among pre-Conquest laymen, only Asgar the Staller, with 16 slaves in Middlesex, and Azor, with 31 in Middlesex and Surrey, may be counted as major slave-owners. By 1086, the number of separate holdings had been substantially reduced, and the incoming tenants-in-chief often possessed large regional fiefdoms, for example Geoffrey de Mandeville, the Count of Mortain, and Richard of Tonbridge. None of these men had their main centres of power in the London area, and this is unlikely to have been accidental. King William perceived the City itself as a potential threat to his rule, and preferred to have significant blocks of church land in the immediate vicinity, a phenomenon whose roots went back to the early days of the conversion in the 7th century.

## THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF SLAVES

Before considering what roles slaves may have performed on those estates which still possessed them in 1086, we must address the significance of their absolute numbers at any given place, and of the proportion which this represents of the population as a whole. Details of the numbers and percentages of slaves on each Domesday Book holding in the London area will be found in Appendix 1, along with data on demesne ploughs.

Many places had only a solitary slave or a pair of slaves in 1086. Given the evidence from Essex of the decline in the number of slaves between 1066 and 1086, it is reasonable to assume that these individuals (or possibly households, see Introduction) were the last of their kind, and would soon have been absorbed into various semi-free classes of tenant. It is commonly accepted that one of the key roles performed by slaves in the Anglo-Saxon rural economy was the operation of ploughs on the demesne (Pelteret 1995, 194–202). It is also possible, since we have no indication of the gender of slaves in Domesday Book, that they were household servants of some kind, either as personal maid- or man-servants, as was often the case in the 17th and 18th centuries, or as workers in stables, dairies, or brewhouses. Clearly, this hypothesis would be more tenable in relation to estates where the lord (and lady) were resident for at least part of the year, which was very often not the case after 1066.

*Table 5. The numbers of slaves on estates across the London area*

| Slaves | Mx | Sy | Ex | Kt | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 5 | | 2 | 15 |
| 2 | 9 | 4 | | 3 | 16 |
| 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| 4 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 15 |
| 5 | | 2 | | 3 | 5 |
| 6 | 5 | | 2 | 1 | 8 |
| 7-8 | 3 | 2 | | | 5 |
| >9 | 1 | 3 | | 4 | 8 |
| **Total** | **32** | **22** | **13** | **17** | **84** |

Around two-thirds of estates had four slaves or fewer, evenly divided between those with one or two and those with three or four. In Essex, no estates had one or two slaves, but there is a substantial group with four slaves, in seven of which there is an exact ratio of two slaves to each demesne plough (see below). Among the estates with larger numbers of slaves, some have obvious correspondences between their numbers and those of the demesne ploughs, others do not, requiring other explanations of such groups.

Evidence from tracts on pre-Conquest agriculture suggests that each of the heavy ox-ploughs used at that time needed two individuals to operate them: the ploughman and his 'boy' (Garmonsway 1947; the ploughman laments his lack of freedom — late 10th or early 11th century); they were needed to keep the team in an approximately straight line (although the evidence of medieval ridge-and-furrow, with its highly characteristic S-curves shows how difficult this must have been, especially on heavy soils) and to turn up to eight beasts and the plough at the headland at the end of a furrow. From the data in Appendix 1, we find the following position with regard to the ratio between the number of slaves and demesne ploughs in the London area.

*Table 6. Ratio of slaves to demesne ploughs*

| Slaves/Plough | No. |
|---|---|
| <1 | 7 |
| 1 | 17 |
| 1-2 | 9 |
| 2 | 23 |
| 2-3 | 8 |
| 3 | 8 |
| >3 | 11 |

Domesday fractions are always a problem for the present-day researcher, and it is difficult to be sure whether estates where there is one slave or less per plough represent cases where they were kept for this purpose. Of course, there may be under-recording, although as assets of the demesne, this seems less likely. If recorded slaves represent households rather than individuals, then sufficient manpower could have been available to produce the 'expected' ratio of two per plough team, although that in turn would be undermined by the large number of exact 2:1 ratios (28% of the total; with a further 13% in the 1.5–2.5 range).

The problems multiply when there are in excess of three slaves per demesne plough. In some cases Domesday Book provides evidence of other demesne assets which may have been operated by 'surplus' slaves. At Mortlake, for example, where 10 of the 16 slaves are accounted for by demesne ploughing, there were two very valuable mills assessed at 100/-, which might account for the rest (*DB* vol i, fols 30d, 31a). Conversely, there seems to be no reason why 18 slaves were to be found at Woodmansterne on the dip-slope of the North Downs; 14 are surplus to the requirements of demesne ploughing, but only a mill worth 20/- and a small amount of woodland are recorded. Apart from employment in domestic roles, one possibility is that some were engaged in quarrying (*DB* vol i, fol 35a; there is a reference to quarrying at Limpsfield, about 9 miles away, although there the 10 slaves were accounted for by the 5 demesne ploughs (*DB* vol i, fol 34a)). At Carshalton, the mill on the Wandle was worth 35/- and its operators may have been among the manor's slaves (*DB* vol i, fol 36b). An anonymous holding in Wallington Hundred had six cottagers, three slaves and only one demesne plough; it had belonged to Alfward in 1066 and was held in 1086 by Hamo the sheriff from Chertsey Abbey (*DB* vol i, fol 32a). This looks like some kind of demesne farm, accounted separately from another holding. At Thames Ditton, the population comprised four bordars and four slaves, with one and a half demesne ploughs (*DB* vol i, fol 33a–b). Walter fitzOthere's anonymous holding in Kingston Hundred, although assessed at two hides, had only three slaves, working one demesne plough and a fishery (*DB* vol i, fol 36a).

Charlton in south-west Middlesex is interesting on several grounds. Its name means 'village of the *ceorlas* or churls', a grade of free tenant often noted in Anglo-Saxon law codes (Gover *et al* 1942, 22; Finberg 1964, 144–60). In 1086, however, it had six slaves who made up three-quarters of the population; there was only one demesne plough, and no indication of how the other four were employed. Charlton was held by two brothers in 1066 and by the minor Norman lord Roger of Raismes in 1086. It is possible that some of these slaves were used on the much larger Staines estate, which was probably regarded as the parent estate for smaller settlements in this area, and which had only twelve slaves for thirteen demesne ploughs. Northolt had substantial woodland, as did Greenford, indicating the possibility that some or all of the woodwards were unfree. Colham near Uxbridge was a substantial estate, with two 'surplus' slaves in 1086. It had two and a half mills on the Colne worth 46/-, another indication that some millers may have been unfree (*cf* Mortlake, above; *DB* vol i, fol 129a).

In south-west Essex, none of the Domesday Book estates with slaves had numbers in excess of those which could be accounted for by their use as demesne ploughmen. We know that there had been a significant reduction in their numbers since 1066, and, in some cases, this can be related to the change in the number of demesne ploughs. For example, at Rainham in 1066, there were eleven slaves and eight ploughs, in 1086 four slaves and four ploughs. At East Ham, in contrast, the number of slaves had been reduced from nineteen to three, with no change in the number of plough teams on the demesne (*DB* vol ii, fols 24b, 66b, 91a (Rainham); fols 64 a, b (East Ham)).

In metropolitan Kent, West Wickham, St Pauls Cray, Eltham and Sandlings all had 'excess slaves' in 1086, the first two of which had mills of little apparent worth (*DB* vol i, fols 6d, 7a (Sandlings)). Otherwise, there is no evidence

to show how the slaves were employed. In all four counties surrounding London, it seems probable that demesne ploughing was the principal employment of the remaining slaves in 1086. Where there were fewer than two slaves per plough team, it is impossible to decide whether this was because (a) those recorded are heads of families, rather than individuals, in which case both ploughmen and boys would have been available, or (b) those working the plough were a combination of those not yet freed and those who already belonged to the ranks of the landless, but semi-free, such as cottars or bordars. Slaves not so employed may have been millers, or associated with manorial woodland in some way, but may equally have been male or female servants used in and around the manorial complex on duties ranging from personal service to dairying, brewing, and stable work.

A broad measure of the relationship between slaves and demesne ploughs is provided by taking the notional 2:1 ratio for the various counties in the London area, to see what surpluses and shortfalls occur. Metropolitan Surrey (+28) and Kent (+26) both appear to have significantly more slaves in this respect, even though at the level of individual estates there are often shortfalls. In Middlesex (-12) and south-west Essex (-25), the reverse is true. In the case of the latter Domesday Book provides clear evidence of declining slave numbers, as they were freed and transferred to the ranks of bordars, and this seems to have taken place in Middlesex, where slaves were transformed into virtually-landless cottars.

Woodmansterne, Thames Ditton, and Charlton are local examples of estates were there is a disproportionate number of slaves in relation to the total population in 1086. Other examples occur in Surrey at Thorncroft near Leatherhead, Hambledon near Godalming, and Tatsfield and Tillingdon on the Downs close to the border with Kent, all with at least 40% of the enumerated population being slaves. This phenomenon also occurs in Buckinghamshire, a county with a much higher proportion of slaves than the London area. Ten estates have 40% or more recorded as slaves, often quite small places, some of which may have functioned as demesne farms, integrated economically, but not necessarily tenurially, with their neighbours (Bailey 1995). One example of the latter is Ivinghoe Aston, with four slaves in a population of six, compare Ivinghoe, with only six slaves out of thirty-eight. In the London area, the following places exceed the average proportion of slaves in their county by more than one standard deviation: Woodmansterne, Thames Ditton, and an anonymous holding in Kingston Hundred (Surrey); Charlton, with Kensington and Colham almost reaching the threshold (Middlesex); Higham Hill, Upminster (one holding), Warley (one holding), and Chingford (both holdings) (Essex); Cudham, St Mary Cray, St Pauls Cray, West Wickham, and Sandlings (Kent). These are not necessarily places where the numbers of slaves are in excess of the ratio of two per demesne plough, but further research is needed into slavery across 11th-century England before we can be sure precisely what lies behind such anomalies and their geographical distribution.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to show that although slavery was an institution in decline at the end of the Anglo-Saxon era, it was nevertheless a reality for hundreds of men and women, and possibly their children, in the London area. The reasons why these people had not yet obtained their freedom, or perhaps semi-freedom would be a more accurate description, cannot be known at this remove. They may have been members of families which had been slaves for generations, or may equally have been enslaved by the penal system in relatively recent times. Conflict at various levels was endemic in the 11th century, and capture in battle had always been a common source of slaves. The 1050s and 1060s had seen struggles between the English state and its neighbours in Wales and Scandinavia, and it is even possible that some of the slaves recorded in Domesday Book represent those on the losing side at the Battle of Hastings and in the various rebellions which took place against the less-than-emollient rule of William I. The opposition of the Church to slavery did not stop many of its religious houses and bishops from keeping slaves at the end of the 11th century, although in many cases the leading figures may not have been aware of the extent of enslavement on their estates.

The decline and ending of slavery in England seems more likely to have been for economic than ethical or religious reasons. The cost of keeping men and women as chattels employed on and around the demesne of estates across the

London area appears to have outweighed their manumission and transformation into semi-free peasants of the cottar and bordar classes. The latter, given what might be described as smallholdings to provide for themselves and their families, while at the same time obliged to work on the demesne, or for wealthier peasants, in order to achieve subsistence level, continued to be known as serfs in later medieval parlance. In truth their condition may at times have been worse than that of the slaves of Domesday London, for the lot of landless agricultural labourers remained harsh until their final disappearance in the early 20th century.

## APPENDIX 1: GREATER LONDON: POPULATION, SLAVES & OWNERSHIP 1066–1086

| PLACE | POP | SLAVES | %S | Demesne Plough | S:DP | OWNER 1066 | OWNER 1086 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SURREY** | | | | | | | |
| **Brixton Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Balham | 3 | 1 | 33.3 | 1 | 1 | Askell ex Harold | Orlateile |
| Battersea | 69 | 8 | 11.6 | 3 | 2.7 | Harold | Westminster |
| Kennington | 8 | 1 | 12.5 | 1 | 1 | Theoderic ex KE | Theoderic the Goldsmith |
| Lambeth 1 | 42 | 3 | 7.1 | 2 | 1.5 | Goda, KE sister | Lambeth Church |
| Lambeth 2 | 18 | 1 | 5.6 | 1 | 1 | Waltham Holy X ex Harold | Mortain |
| Mortlake | 110 | 16 | 14.5 | 5 | 3.2 | Canterbury | Canterbury |
| **Wallington Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Anonymous | 10 | 3 | 30.0 | 1 | 3 | Alfward | Chertsey |
| Beddington 1 | 27 | 1 | 3.7 | 1 | 1 | Wulf ex KE | Miles Crispin |
| Beddington 2 | 35 | 5 | 14.3 | 1 | 2.5 | Azor ex KE | Richard of Tonbridge |
| Carshalton | 32 | 10 | 31.2 | 2 | 5 | 5 free men ex KE | Mandeville |
| Cheam | 42 | 5 | 11.9 | 2 | 2.5 | Canterbury | Canterbury |
| Cuddington | 28 | 4 | 14.3 | 2 | 2 | Earl Leofwin | Bayeux |
| Mitcham | 10 | 2 | 20.0 | 1 | 2 | Brictric ex KE | Bayeux |
| Morden | 14 | 1 | 7.1 | 3 | 0.3 | Westminster | Westminster |
| Sanderstead | 26 | 4 | 15.4 | 1 | 4 | Winchester Abbey | Winchester Abbey |
| Sutton | 27 | 2 | 7.4 | 2 | 1 | Chertsey | Chertsey |
| Wallington | 32 | 3 | 9.4 | 1 | 3 | King | King |
| Woodmansterne | 31 | 18 | 58.1 | 2 | 9 | Azor ex KE | Richard of Tonbridge |
| **Kingston Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Anonymous | 3 | 3 | 100.0 | 1 | 3 | ??? | Walter fitzOthere |
| Kingston | 105 | 5 | 4.8 | 3 | 0.7 | King | King |
| Long Ditton | 12 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 1 | Aelmer ex KE | Richard of Tonbridge |
| Malden | 25 | 3 | 12.0 | 1 | 3 | Harding ex KE | Richard of Tonbridge |
| Thames Ditton | 8 | 4 | 50.0 | 1.5 | 2.7 | Leofgar ex Harold | Bayeux |
| Tolworth 1 | 22 | 7 | 31.8 | 2 | 3.5 | Alwin ex KE | Richard of Tonbridge |

| PLACE | POP | SLAVES | %S | Demesne Plough | S:DP | OWNER 1066 | OWNER 1086 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tolworth 2 | 9 | 2 | 22.2 | 1 | 2 | Edmer | Richard of Tonbridge |
| | 748 | 113 | 15.1 | 42.5 | 2.7 | | |
| **MIDDLESEX** | | | | | | | |
| **Edmonton Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Edmonton | 87 | 4 | 4.6 | 4 | 1 | Asgar the Constable | Mandeville |
| Enfield | 114 | 6 | 5.3 | 4 | 1.5 | Asgar the Constable | Mandeville |
| Tottenham | 66 | 4 | 6.1 | 2 | 2 | Waltheof | Countess Judith |
| **Elthorne Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Colham | 30 | 8 | 26.7 | 3 | 2.7 | Wigot | Earl Roger |
| Cranford | 14 | 3 | 21.4 | 1 | 3 | Thurstan, KE thegn | William fitzAnsculf |
| Greenford | 26 | 6 | 23.1 | 1 | 6 | Westminster | Westminster |
| Greenford | 5 | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 1 | Canon of St.P/ Asgar's man | Mandeville |
| Hanwell | 17 | 2 | 11.8 | 1 | 2 | Westminster | Westminster |
| Harefield | 25 | 3 | 12.0 | 2 | 1.5 | Countess Goda | Richard fitzGilbert |
| Harlington | 28 | 1 | 3.6 | 2 | 0.5 | Wigot | Earl Roger |
| Harmondsworth | 44 | 6 | 13.6 | 3 | 2 | Harold | Holy Trinity Rouen |
| Hayes | 108 | 2 | 1.9 | 2 | 1 | Canterbury | Canterbury |
| Northolt | 32 | 6 | 18.8 | 2 | 3 | Asgar the Constable | Mandeville |
| Ruislip | 53 | 4 | 7.5 | 3 | 1.3 | Wulfward Wight, KE thegn | Arnulf of Hesdin |
| **Gore Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Harrow | 117 | 2 | 1.7 | 4 | 0.5 | Leofwin | Canterbury |
| Hendon | 46 | 1 | 2.2 | 3 | 0.3 | Westminster | Westminster |
| Stanmore | 14 | 2 | 14.3 | 1 | 2 | Algar, Harold m | Roger of Raismes |
| **Ossulston Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Anonymous | 5 | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 1 | 2 freemen of KE | Mandeville |
| Chelsea | 12 | 3 | 25.0 | 2 | 1.5 | Wulfwen, KE man [sic] | Edward of Salisbury |
| Fulham 3 | 40 | 2 | 5.0 | 2 | 1 | Canons of St. Pauls | Canons of St. Pauls |
| Hampstead | 7 | 1 | 14.3 | 1 | 1 | Westminster | Westminster |
| Kensington | 26 | 7 | 26.9 | 4 | 1.7 | Edwin, KE thegn | Aubrey de Vere |
| Lisson | 8 | 1 | 12.5 | 2 | 0.5 | Edward s Swein, KE man | Edeva |
| Tollington | 9 | 1 | 11.1 | 1 | 1 | Edwin, KE man | Ranulf bro Ilger |
| **Spelthorne Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Charlton | 8 | 6 | 75.0 | 1 | 6 | 2 bros [Stigand/ Leofwin m] | Roger of Raismes |
| Feltham | 21 | 2 | 9.5 | 1 | 2 | 2 thegns ex Harold/ King | Mortain |
| Kempton | 19 | 2 | 10.5 | 1 | 2 | Wulfward Wight, KE thegn | Mortain |
| Shepperton | 25 | 2 | 8.0 | 1 | 2 | Westminster | Westminster |

| PLACE | POP | SLAVES | %S | Demesne Plough | S:DP | OWNER 1066 | OWNER 1086 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staines | 82 | 12 | 14.6 | 13 | 0.9 | Westminster | Westminster |
| Stanwell | 49 | 8 | 16.3 | 3 | 2.7 | Azor, housecarl | Walter fitzOthere |
| Sunbury | 22 | 1 | 4.5 | 1 | 1 | Westminster | Westminster |
| West Bedfont | 11 | 2 | 18.2 | 1 | 2 | Brictmer*/2 freemen+ | Walter fitzOthere |
| | 1170 | 112 | 9.6 | 64 | 1.75 | | |
| | | | | | | *Harold's man/+ Azor's m | |
| **ESSEX** | | | | | | | |
| **Becontree Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Barking | 236 | 6 | 2.5 | 3 | 2 | Barking | Barking |
| East Ham | 67 | 3 | 4.5 | 3 | 1 | Leofred freeman | Robert Gernon |
| Havering | 87 | 6 | 6.9 | 2 | 3 | Harold | King |
| Higham Hill | 17 | 4 | 23.9 | 2 | 2 | Haldane freeman | Peter de Valognes |
| Walthamstow | 65 | 4 | 6.2 | 2 | 2 | Waltheof | Countess Judith |
| West Ham | 130 | 3 | 2.3 | 4 | 0.7 | Alstan freeman | Robert Gernon |
| **Chafford Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Aveley 1 | 20 | 1 | 5.0 | 1 | 1 | Swein | John son of Waleran |
| Childerditch 1 | 10 | 1 | 10.0 | 1.5 | 0.7 | Harold | Sheriff of Surrey |
| Childerditch 2 | 5 | 1 | 20.0 | 1 | 1 | Alwen | Swein of Essex |
| Cranham | 27 | 4 | 14.8 | 3 | 1.3 | Aelfric | Bishop of London |
| Grays/Thurrock 1 | 70 | 8 | 11.4 | 5 | 1.6 | Harold | Count of Eu |
| Grays/Thurrock 2 | 21 | 2 | 9.5 | 2 | 1 | Aelmer | William Peverel |
| Kenningtons | 9 | 1 | 11.1 | 1 | 1 | 3 freemen | William Warenne |
| North Ockendon | 19 | 4 | 21.0 | 2 | 2 | Harold | Westminster |
| Ockendon | 19 | 4 | 21.0 | 2 | 2 | Harold | Westminster |
| Rainham | 25 | 4 | 16.0 | 2 | 2 | Leofstan the reeve | Walter of Douai |
| South Weald | 19 | 3 | 15.8 | 2 | 1.5 | Waltham Holy X | Waltham Holy X |
| Upminster 1 | 13 | 3 | 23.1 | 2 | 1.5 | Waltham Holy X | Waltham Holy X |
| Upminster 2 | 19 | 4 | 21.0 | 2 | 2 | Swein Swart | Walter of Douai |
| Warley 1 | 9 | 2 | 22.2 | 2 | 1 | Gyrth | Bishop of London |
| Warley 2 | 24 | 5 | 20.8 | 2 | 2.5 | Barking | Barking |
| Warley 3 | 12 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 0.5 | Goderic | Swein of Essex |
| **Waltham Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Chingford 1 | 18 | 4 | 22.2 | 2 | 2 | Canons of St Paul | Canons of St. Paul |
| Chingford 2 | 17 | 4 | 23.5 | 2 | 2 | 1 freeman | Robert Gernon |
| | 958 | 82 | 8.6 | 52.5 | 1.6 | | |
| **KENT** | | | | | | | |
| **Blackheath Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Charlton | 15 | 2 | 13.3 | 1 | 2 | Godwin/Alfward brothers | Bayeux |
| Eltham | 63 | 9 | 14.3 | 2 | 4.5 | Alfwold | Bayeux |
| Greenwich | 34 | 5 | 14.7 | 2 | 2.5 | Harold/Brictsi | Bayeux |
| Lee | 15 | 2 | 13.3 | 2 | 1 | Alwin | Bayeux |

| PLACE | POP | SLAVES | %S | Demesne Plough | S:DP | OWNER 1066 | OWNER 1086 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lewisham | 62 | 3 | 4.8 | 2 | 1.5 | St. Peter Ghent | St. Peter Ghent |
| **Bromley Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Beckenham | 34 | 4 | 11.8 | 2 | 2 | Askell | Bayeux |
| **Lessness Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Crayford | 34 | 5 | 14.7 | 2 | 2.5 | Canterbury | Canterbury |
| Howbury | 8 | 1 | 12.5 | 1 | 1 | Askell | Bayeux |
| Lessness | 65 | 2 | 3.1 | 1 | 2 | Azor | Bayeux |
| **Ruxley Hund.** | | | | | | | |
| Chelsfield | 28 | 4 | 14.3 | 2 | 2 | Toki | Bayeux |
| Cudham | 32 | 11 | 34.4 | 4 | 2.7 | ?? | Bayeux |
| Foots Cray | 13 | 1 | 7.7 | 1 | 1 | Godwin Foot | Bayeux |
| Orpington | 80 | 4 | 5.0 | 3 | 1.3 | Canterbury | Canterbury |
| Sandlings | 29 | 9 | 31.0 | 2 | 4.5 | Bondi ex Archbishop | Bayeux |
| Seal | 55 | 10 | 18.2 | 3 | 3.3 | Brictsi Cild ex KE | Bayeux |
| St Mary Cray | 21 | 6 | 28.6 | 2 | 3 | Toli | Bayeux |
| St Paul Cray | 17 | 5 | 29.4 | 1 | 5 | Alwin from Alnoth Cild | Bayeux |
| West Wickham | 37 | 13 | 35.1 | 2 | 6.5 | Gordric son of Karl | Bayeux |
| | 642 | 96 | 15.0 | 35 | 2.7 | | |

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# THE ADAMS' FATHER AND SON, VAGRANT CONTRACTORS TO MIDDLESEX 1757–94

*Audrey Eccles*


## SUMMARY

*This paper gives a brief account of the work of the Middlesex vagrant contractors in the second half of the 18th century. Many counties employed salaried contractors from the early 18th century; Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire appointed vagrant contractors soon after 1699 when passing vagrants was made a county rather than a parish charge (Clark 1979, 85), Hertfordshire had one by 1743, and the West Riding by 1750, to name only a few, but Middlesex waited until 1757.*

*The contractors are somewhat shadowy figures and little is known of their work. The work of the Middlesex contractors was not typical, in that Middlesex itself was not typical, having far higher numbers of vagrants to deal with than less urbanised counties. It is, however, unusually well documented, and may serve as a model of the contractors' work at its most highly developed.*


## INTRODUCTION

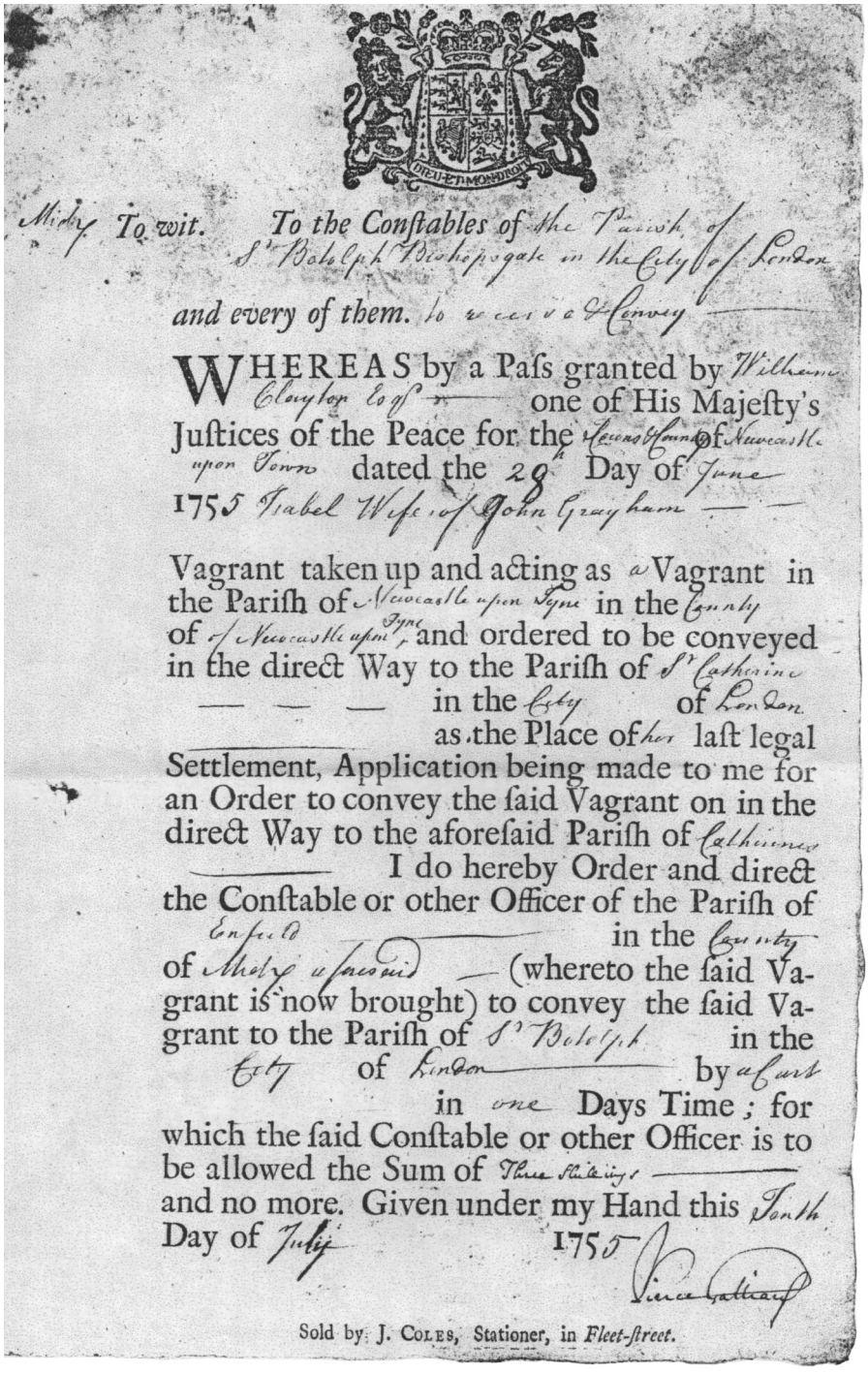
The first legislation against vagrancy dates back to the reign of Richard II, and Tudor measures were draconian, driven by fear of the masterless men and disbanded soldiers who, free of the social constraints on settled persons and lacking other means of survival, might become thieves and robbers (Beier 1985; Slack 1974). Elizabethan vagrants were to be committed, and if convicted at the next Sessions, 'grievously whipped and burned through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch across'. A third offence was to be felony without benefit of clergy.[1]

The Middlesex contractor was appointed in 1757, after the Vagrant Act of 1744[2] came into force. This Act required rogues and vagabonds found wandering and begging, or committing a range of offences, including lodging in alehouses, barns and outhouses, fortune-telling, playing unlawful games, and deserting their dependants, to be taken before a magistrate and examined; if an act of vagrancy had been committed, the magistrate was required to order them to be whipped or committed to bridewell at his discretion, and then passed by the most direct route county to county until they reached their settlement and became the responsibility of the parish overseers of the poor. The 1744 Act remained in force until a new Vagrant Act was passed in 1792.

## THE MIDDLESEX CONTRACTORS

Middlesex appointed a contractor in 1757, when the justices became concerned that the 1744 Vagrant Act was not being enforced consistently and that the problem of beggars was increasing. Middlesex, they declared, was 'greatly pestered with Numbers of Beggars… which are a public Nusance [*sic*], and bring great Burthen and Expence upon this County'.[3]

Hitherto parish constables had passed the vagrants in Middlesex, claiming a mileage allowance and subsistence for the vagrants, but the justices felt this system was not working; they decided to tighten up compliance, but were equally anxious to minimise the cost to the county. It was reported that between July 1756 and July 1757 Middlesex had paid £668 11s 9d for 1,951 orders for conveying vagrants, and £240 0s 0d for rewards. This 'most extraordinary and growing



Middx To wit. To the Constables of the Parish of St Botolph Bishopsgate in the City of London and every of them. to receive & Convey

WHEREAS by a Pass granted by William Clayton Esqr one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Towns & County of Newcastle upon Town dated the 28th Day of June 1755 Isabel Wife of John Grayham

Vagrant taken up and acting as a Vagrant in the Parish of Newcastle upon Tyne in the County of Newcastle upon Tyne, and ordered to be conveyed in the direct Way to the Parish of St Catherine in the City of London as the Place of her last legal Settlement, Application being made to me for an Order to convey the said Vagrant on in the direct Way to the aforesaid Parish of Catherines I do hereby Order and direct the Constable or other Officer of the Parish of Enfield in the County of Middx aforesaid (whereto the said Vagrant is now brought) to convey the said Vagrant to the Parish of St Botolph in the City of London by a Cart in one Days Time; for which the said Constable or other Officer is to be allowed the Sum of Three Shillings and no more. Given under my Hand this Tenth Day of July 1755

Pierce Gallian

Sold by J. Coles, Stationer, in *Fleet-street.*

*Fig 1. Printed vagrant pass 28 June 1755 for Isabel wife of John Graham, being passed from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to St Catherine City of London (By courtesy of City of London Metropolitan Archives MF/ V/ 1755)*

Expence' led to a committee of enquiry, which recommended engaging a vagrant contractor. Under the contractor system they calculated the expense of conveying vagrants would be at least £370 15s 0d less annually.[4]

Earlier in the year James Sturges Adams had submitted proposals for managing the whole business of conveying vagrants out of the county from Clerkenwell Bridewell and from Tothill Fields Bridewell, and also those brought to his house by parish constables without being committed. He asked for £120pa, paid monthly, plus a subsistence allowance. The court was very satisfied of the likely financial saving and his contract was approved in July 1757. The subsistence allowance was fixed at 6d per vagrant per day to be paid on bills and receipts submitted and sworn to by him, plus an allowance for blank certificates, coal and straw. He served as vagrant contractor until his death early in 1774, when his son Henry Adams succeeded him.

The vagrants taken to Adams' house on Lower Street in the parish of St Mary Islington were lodged in an outbuilding where they slept on straw, probably the same semi-underground room, 12ft by 9ft, plus a hay-loft reached by a ladder, which was still in use in 1790.[5] He agreed to provide a suitable covered cart and horses and twice every week clear the bridewells and other places where vagrants were to be lodged, picking up those going north on one day a week and those going south on another day.

On the county day of every Middlesex Sessions, and at every Quarter Sessions at Westminster, Adams had to deliver in a true list of vagabonds conveyed, distinguishing the bridewell or other place from where they were taken, the date of the pass, the place where they were delivered, their place of settlement, and the name of the magistrate who signed the pass. The blank certificates were completed with the vagrant's name and destination, signed by the receiving constable when the vagrant was handed over, and formed Adams' evidence for claiming the subsistence money from the County Treasurer. From the start the whole process was highly bureaucratic, but it furnished the justices with a great deal of information about the problem and enabled them to keep a close check on costs, and to predict them to some extent, since under this arrangement only subsistence varied with numbers.

Pass-houses were established at South Mimms, Enfield, Colnbrook, and Staines, for the reception of vagrants brought from the various points of the compass to be passed to settlements in the county, and of vagrants being passed out of the county to the constables or vagrant contractors of the adjacent counties. Very little is known about these pass-houses, which were referred to as 'prisons' in 1777,[6] implying at least an attempt at secure custody, but they were probably set up by agreement with the parishes where they lay and managed by the parish officers. Certainly later in the century the constable of Colnbrook caused difficulties by refusing to accept vagrants brought by Adams; on the other hand the justices complained in 1783 that the Enfield pass-house was neither wind- nor water-tight, which suggests that there at least the contractor was in charge.[7]

Later in 1757 the justices were gratified to note that Adams had conveyed 1,159 persons by 622 orders within the year, and that the measures of July had been 'productive of good Consequences to this County, by saving a large Sum of Public Money; and in many Respects it hath produced a more regular Proceeding upon the Vagrant Act',[8] probably referring to the improved detection rate for repeat offenders.

Adams now offered to make his rounds four times a week, conveying vagrants to the north and east twice a week, and twice to the west, for £200pa plus 6d per vagrant subsistence. The salary increase would be partly offset because clearing the bridewells more often would save half the subsistence money. The justices agreed, but made various amendments to his contract. He was to receive in his house all the vagrants sent from the liberties of the Duchy of Lancaster and Glasshouse Yard (whose constables had been particularly suspected of financial irregularities). A new scale of subsistence allowances was set out, 2d for each vagrant lodged at his house up to a maximum of 6d, 3d for each lodged at the pass-houses up to a maximum of 9d, and 6d for all those conveyed by him. There was to be no allowance for vagrants settled within the bills of mortality however.[9]

As early as 1764 James Sturges Adams found he had underestimated the task, partly because of price increases for corn and hay, and petitioned for an increase to his salary. The bench awarded him an extra £50pa, making his salary more than double his original £120.[10]

One of the improvements envisaged by the justices from the appointment of a vagrant contractor was a greater likelihood that repeat

offenders would be detected and punished as incorrigible rogues.[11] This was always a problem when the justices passed vagrants rather than committed them, since there was no way they could know whether the same vagrant had already been apprehended in another parish. Particularly so because the requirement of the Vagrant Act for submitting duplicate passes and examinations to Quarter Sessions was never systematically observed,[12] so that even the courts did not have a full record of offenders.

Thus in July 1757 James Sturges Adams was specifically instructed to keep a sharp lookout for such vagrants. If any were detected he was to take them before the committing justice for a warrant of detainer.[13] Certainly from 1774 when Henry Adams succeeded his father and much fuller lists were kept, the justices' hopes for improved detection were not disappointed. Henry Adams detected over 50 repeat offenders and usually applied for a detainer, though often the justices or the court passed the offender without further action.

James Sturges Adams died early in 1774 and Henry Adams took over on the same terms and conditions as his father, originally pending the appointment of a new contractor. Whether there was ever any other candidate is not clear, but Henry Adams was appointed county vagrant contractor in April 1774.[14] He was at first paid £200pa 'on his own application'. But the contractor's work became increasingly onerous as the century wore on and numbers soared, and within two years his salary was back to £250pa. Henry was several times awarded sizeable gratuities over and above his salary, once in 1781 when he was obliged to take in 89 vagrants who would normally have been sent to Clerkenwell Bridewell (then bulging at the seams because Newgate was out of action following the Gordon Riots the previous year), and £100 in each of the years 1784, 1786, 1788, and 1792 due to growing numbers.

In 1786 the justices held an enquiry into the causes of the increase from 1,307 in 1775–76 to 4,244 in 1784–85. Questioned, Henry Adams said he thought it due to the ease with which passes were obtained from City of London magistrates, and added that several had been passed from the City dangerously ill and some had died in his hands and in the hospital before he could convey them out of the county, and that 'many are passed as Vagrants who do not appear to be Objects of the Vagrant Laws'. The bench accepted this explanation and sought a meeting between William Mainwaring, the Chairman, and the Lord Mayor, which led only to promises to investigate.[15]

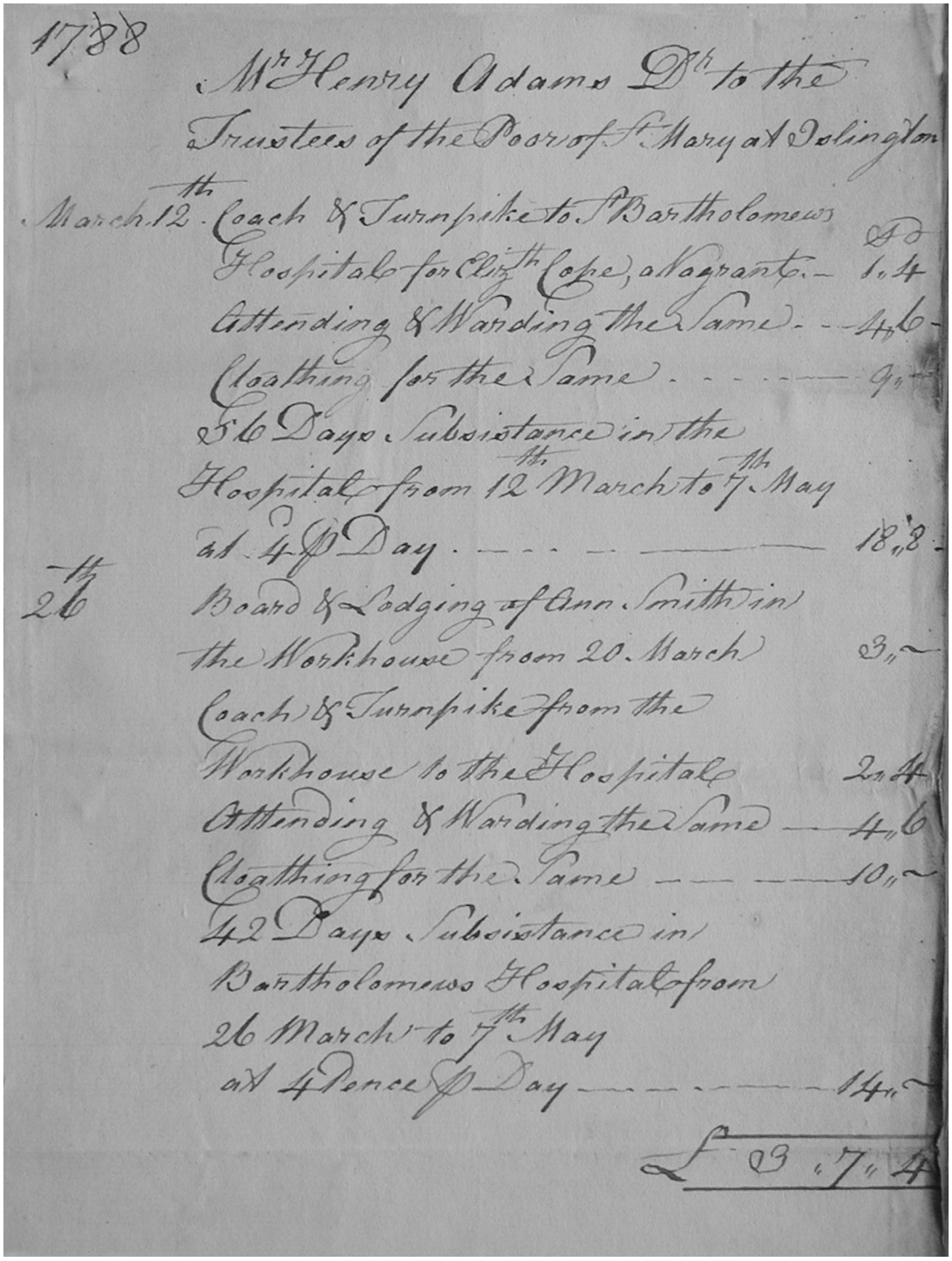
Henry submitted two lists to the justices at least quarterly, but frequently more often: one with the details required under the terms of his contract, and one with details, often with bills annexed, of any extras claimed for vagrants who stayed at his house or one of the pass-houses longer than the usual two or three days. The most common reasons for extra costs were sickness and administrative problems. The lists are complete for only two years, but those that survive show that between 1777 and 1786 he conveyed 5,710 men, 6,696 women, and 3,316 children.

## SICK VAGRANTS

The vagrants collected from the bridewells were particularly likely to be sick or otherwise in distress, since it had been recommended in 1757 that only objects of real distress should be passed 'and that from Bridewell'.[16] James Sturges Adams' reports contain no details of sick vagrants, but he claimed for five burials in the 1760s. Henry Adams' reports were much more detailed, and indicate that he dealt with a number of difficult cases, increasing over the years as the numbers of vagrants increased.

Between 1777 and 1794 he coped with 90 vagrants too ill to travel, a further 36 who died at his house or a pass-house, 13 women who fell into labour and one who miscarried, and 24 lunatics. The lunatics might be so refractory that guards were needed. Jane Dowse 'Broke the Glass of the Stair foot Door Untiled part of the Hayloft & committed other Acts of Violence endeavouring to get away'.[17] The justices, whose Accounts Committee kept a beady eye on the bills, hesitated to pay the 12s 10d cost of the repairs, but did so eventually. Possibly because of this case, Henry was later paid a fixed one guinea for passing a lunatic. Another lunatic, an Irishwoman, was brought to the house on 14 September 1780 in the evening, without any notice being given of her insanity, and at half past four in the night disturbed the family by many acts of violence until she was properly secured and conveyed to Ridge.[18] One of the lunatics died at the house.[19]

None of the women who fell into labour gave birth at the house, although one woman



1788

Mr Henry Adams Dr to the
Trustees of the Poor of St Mary at Islington

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| March 12th | Coach & Turnpike to St Bartholomews Hospital for Elizth Cope, a Vagrant | £ 1,4 |
| | Attending & Warding the Same | 4,6 |
| | Cloathing for the Same | 9,– |
| | 56 Days Subsistance in the Hospital from 12th March to 7th May at 4d ⅌ Day | 18,8 |
| 26th | Board & Lodging of Ann Smith in the Workhouse from 20 March | 3,– |
| | Coach & Turnpike from the Workhouse to the Hospital | 2,4 |
| | Attending & Warding the Same | 4,6 |
| | Cloathing for the Same | 10,– |
| | 42 Days Subsistance in Bartholomews Hospital from 26 March to 7th May at 4 Pence ⅌ Day | 14,– |
| | | £ 3,7,4 |

*Fig 2. Bill to Henry Adams for sick women vagrants sent to St Bartholomew's Hospital, 1788 (By courtesy of City of London Metropolitan Archives MJ/SP/1788/06/028)*

was brought from the City sick and miscarried there,[20] and one gave birth in the Colnbrook pass-house, where she stayed for 29 days;[21] in another case the pains passed off. The others he got admitted to a workhouse or passed back to the parish where they were apprehended. A typical case was Elizabeth Somerby who was brought by the beadle of St Andrews, with her husband and three children, in the afternoon of 22 January 1784, went into labour at 8pm, and was immediately taken by coach to Islington workhouse, where she gave birth to a girl at 2am, which died about three hours later. Her husband and children were passed via Ridge to Bedfordshire immediately, but she stayed in the workhouse for a while. The case cost Middlesex £1 2s 6d.[22]

Henry Adams seems to have had a good relationship with several workhouse masters, who took in some of the sick vagrants. A few very sick vagrants he got into St Bartholomew's Hospital. A sick Irishman was sent first to the workhouse, but not improving there was transferred to the hospital. He stayed from July to November 1785 before he was well enough to be sent home to Ireland.[23]

Vagrants who died at Adams' house were buried at St Mary Islington; those who died at a pass-house were buried in the local churchyard. The funeral bills were all paid by Henry and reimbursed by the county. In addition to the medical bills and extra subsistence (in the case of sick children for the whole family), there were in some cases expenses for coach hire to transport the patient, turnpike tolls, a nurse or midwife, or items of clothing. For burials there were charges not only for the coffin and shroud, but also for washing and laying out the body, to the searchers, to bearers carrying the coffin to church, and to the officiating minister and sexton.

It is very seldom possible to know the cause of the sickness and death — often 'fever', which might have been any febrile illness — but four vagrants were brought to him suffering from smallpox. Dennis Sullivan and his child were brought from Guildhall on 23 December 1783, 'the Child then had the Smallpox out very full upon it'. Adams got a justice's order to provide a nurse and the child improved enough to be conveyed to Colnbrook with its father on 12 January 1784.[24] In a similar case Adams applied at the Guildhall and the child and family were taken back to the City. Elizabeth Smart was also 'bad with ye Smallpox',[25] and Mary Greenwood was left at his house while he was out 'having the small Pox very fresh on her'.[26] A few vagrants were lame — one a wounded discharged soldier, another with a bad leg wound. Mr Church the surgeon charged 5s for 'Reducing a very large Prolapsus Ani Jasper Moss'.[27] Several vagrants were 'subject to fits'; in Thomas Leake's case, his fits were so severe he needed four or five men to hold him and could not safely be left alone. He was settled in Wapping, and despite his being a repeat offender Adams did not apply for a detainer as an incorrigible rogue because of the fits.[28] In 1788 Elizabeth Cope was sent in a coach from the City and left at the house in his absence 'bad with a fever and a mortification coming on in her feet. She was got into the Hospital 12 March'.[29]

Generally Adams seems to have coped reasonably well with the sick vagrants, though some were already at death's door when they arrived. In the case of the disabled soldier, who had been repatriated from Gibraltar and was being passed to Lancashire, Adams went to the trouble of getting him his pay and a place in Chelsea Hospital.[30] The previous year, however, Jane Hill Osbaldiston died in the cart on the way to Enfield. At the inquest Adams' man William Rogers said she had been brought from the workhouse to Clerkenwell Bridewell on the Saturday. On Sunday he saw her in the bridewell and she was then ill. On Monday when he collected her she walked to Adams' house and was lodged in the usual way with four or five other female vagrants. They slept on straw with 'some covering like a Blanket'. She had nothing to eat that evening or next morning but was given 2d on leaving the house. In the cart she often asked him to stop and said she was dying, she was so very cold. He stopped at the Horse and Groom at Tottenham and tried to make her comfortable by moving the benches in the cart so that she could lie down. She had two pennyworth of purl[31] there, Rogers paid for half but she paid for the other half. The landlord confirmed this and said they stayed about half an hour at Tottenham. Rogers also stopped at Ponders End to buy a truss of straw, and found her dead on arrival at the churchwarden's house in Enfield.[32] This unfortunate affair caused the justices for the only recorded time to reprimand Adams 'for ill Conduct in the execution of his Office'.[33]

## ABSCONDING AND PROBLEM VAGRANTS

Escapes multiplied with pressure of numbers; 50 vagrants ran away in 1784 and 45 in 1785, but they were only 2.4% of those conveyed, and the justices seem to have realised the problem could not be overcome without more staff, and hence more money; there is no indication they blamed mismanagement on Adams' part. Many, probably most, vagrants were quite willing to be passed, but some were determined to get away. Many of the absconders went from the Islington house; one took off part of the roof, another took a panel out of the door and drew back the bolt outside, some got over the garden wall. Others ran away while being conveyed, especially on uphill stretches — probably they simply jumped out of the cart. One slipped away while the driver was busy delivering another vagrant. Usually the escape succeeded, but in two cases where a couple tried to escape from the house, the man did so, but the woman was stopped and conveyed on. James Home, who escaped when an accident happened to one of the carts at Highgate Hill on 9 December 1784, was brought back to the house a week later by one of the Bow Street runners and conveyed to Ridge the next day;[34] it is doubtful, however, if he ever arrived at his settlement in Northumberland.

Four women absconded leaving children behind, one a baby five weeks old, which Adams took to the workhouse. Workhouses, at least in urban areas, regularly had to look after foundlings (Neate 1967, 30). One vagrant attempted to rob the house, another actually did so, making off with a large copper saucepan.

Adams had other problems to contend with caused by the bridewell keepers not doing their paperwork properly and by the justices themselves directing the passes wrongly, forgetting to sign them, omitting the name of a vagrant, or being unavailable.[35] Several times he had to make extra journeys because the constable or overseer refused to accept the vagrant. Besides his routine appearances at Quarter Sessions, he had to appear at gaol deliveries to swear to vagrants' identities, and occasionally to give evidence before the court or the Vagrant Committee.

In one exceptional case in September 1787 he gave evidence against Daniel Lott, a wealthy farmer who refused to accept Benjamin Sears, his wife and child. Benjamin Sears was settled in West Twyford by serving for a year as a shepherd to Daniel Lott's father. Lott would neither take the pass nor sign a receipt, and Adams left the vagrants at the gate and the papers stuck on the gatepost. Lott told Adams he would call on him next day but never did. Instead Benjamin Sears came back to Adams and said Lott had told his servants not to open the door to the family and threatened to send him to bridewell. Henry Adams paid for the wife and child to lodge at the local pub for a while and they were subsisted by the county either there or at Adams' house from September 1787 to March 1788. It may not be irrelevant that the child, Francis Sears, was sick and died in March 1788. Lott was fined £20 for refusing to take them.[36]

Henry was apparently very aware of his responsibilities under the vagrant laws, especially in the matter of repeat offenders. In 1776 when he had been in office only a short while William Robertson Esq wrote to the Clerk of the Peace about a difficulty that had arisen when Adams did exactly as his contract required and detained William Lowers, who was apprehended in St Giles in the Fields and committed to bridewell by John Cox Esq. At the same time Cox made out a pass to convey him to his settlement at St Nicholas Deptford, Kent. 'As this Poor Fellow (who is little better than an Ideot) was Removed about 2 years ago, Mr Adams the Contractor for conveying Vagrants, has discovered an Impropriety in Passing him again, observing (perhaps wisely) that he should have been committed as Incorrigible until the Sessions. Mr Contractor has accordingly been induced, by his great [regard] to Legal nicity [*sic*], to detain the Man, who, not being brought [up] at the Gaol Delivery, still remains in Bridewell. Adams is now at a loss what to do with him, and has been with me several times concerning him. I advised him to convey the Poor Fellow away as the Pass directs, but he pretends this would now be illegal, and desires me to send you a copy of his Examinations when removed 7 July 1774, which you have inclosed, and also the Duplicate of his late Examination and Pass as a Vagrant. I presume you will not see much impropriety in his being conveyed to the Place of his settlement, and that Adams will receive directions for that purpose tomorrow'.[37] Possibly the justices then gave Adams permission to use his own discretion, since he later did not apply for a detainer several times, noting the reason, usually sickness or old age. William Lowers, however, was truly incorrigible and

came back eight times, despite being whipped once and imprisoned twice.

## THE NEW ACT

In July 1792, following the new Vagrancy Act of that year[38] and believing this would 'very much alter the system of the Vagrant Laws', the Vagrant Committee recommended termination of Adams' contract. Possibly his application in May 1792 for yet another supplementary payment based on the increased number of vagrants conveyed in the foregoing two years concentrated their minds.[39]

The committee advised compliance with s5 of the new Act, which empowered justices to pass vagrants from Houses of Correction by the keeper or his servants instead of by parish constables, and to direct constables to deliver them to the House of Correction to be passed on, effectively making the keeper of the House of Correction the vagrant contractor.[40] The bench did not accept this recommendation however and Henry Adams was still operating in 1794, when he died. Probably this was the right decision, since there were immediate problems with the execution of the new Act, especially complaints of excessive payments to constables.[41] Almost certainly the cancellation of his contract would not have been financially advantageous to the county.

Lydia Adams, Henry's sister, applied to take over from her father and brother, but the bench thought the job unsuitable for a woman and Henry Bothwell was appointed vagrant contractor in June 1795, bringing the 40 years' service of the Adams', father and son, to an end.

## AFTER THE ADAMS'

The end of the Adams' contract by no means ended the vagrant contractor system in Middlesex. Henry Bothwell served for 14 years, and was succeeded by Thomas Davis who was still the contractor in 1821, at nearly 70 years of age. Davis gave evidence to Parliamentary Committees on mendicity in 1815 and on vagrancy in 1821.[42] By then his salary had increased to £350pa, 1,000 vagrants a month were being passed, and his establishment had grown to three carts and two covered vans, seven horses and three men, with four receiving houses at Egham, Colnbrook, Ridge and Cheshunt, which he rented for 6 guineas each per annum.[43]

The contracting system still represented the best value for money to those counties where the problem was severe, since not only had no change to legislation eased the problem but it had actually worsened after 1819, when it was made legal to pass Irish and Scottish poor in the same manner as vagrants, but without their being convicted of a vagrancy offence or punished by imprisonment or whipping.[44] The measure was intended to enable the parishes in the metropolis to clear out the swarms of Irish beggars from areas such as the rookeries of St Giles. Davis declared that where he had conveyed one Irish vagrant before the Act, now it was 50.[45] The 1824 Vagrant Act[46] added yet more offences to the ever-lengthening list of behaviours punishable as vagrancy offences, leaving the pass system apparently untouched.

The Middlesex justices, however, had doubts about the effect of s20 of this Act on the contractor system and in December 1825 they sought counsel's opinion, which was that 'the power of the justices to contract for the removal of vagrants, not being given by the only Vagrant Act in force no longer subsists'. The court therefore ordered that the office of pass-master be discontinued from 26 January 1826 and Thomas Davis' salary discontinued likewise, ending a system that had served Middlesex reasonably well for nearly seven decades.

## NOTES

(All references to mss are to sources in the London Metropolitan Archives.)

1 14 Eliz c5 1572.
2 17 Geo II c5.
3 MJ/SP/1757/04/11.
4 MJ/SP/1757/07/08.
5 In 1791 Adams spent £100 on a brick-built room 20ft square at the request of the bench; MJ/SP/V/Misc. Report 1790.
6 MJ/SP/1777/10/055.
7 MJ/SP/1783/01/009.
8 MJ/SP/1757/07/08, p 8.
9 MJ/SP/1757/07/08, pp 9–13.
10 MJ/SP/1764/05/042-3.
11 MJ/SP/1757/07/04.
12 17 Geo II c5 s7.
13 MJ/SP/1757/07/04.
14 MJ/SP/1774/04/084.
15 MJ/SP/1786/03/106. The Middlesex justices were not always more meticulous, as repeated admonitions from the bench demonstrate.
16 MJ/SP/V/Misc 6 Draft report April 1757.
17 MJ/SP/1778/09/111.
18 MJ/SP/1780/10/014.
19 MJ/SP/1784/04/045.

[20] MJ/SP/1793/04/180.
[21] MJ/SP/1780/06/24.
[22] MJ/SP/1784/02/006, MJ/SP/1784/02/033.
[23] MJ/SP/1785/12/034, MJ/SP/1786/01/110.
[24] MJ/SP/1784/02/006.
[25] MJ/SP/1786/04/113.
[26] MJ/SP/1778/04/052.
[27] MJ/SP/1784/02/033.
[28] MJ/SP/1783/06/002, /06/049, /07/002.
[29] MJ/SP/1788/04/021.
[30] MJ/SP/1783/06/049.
[31] A mixture of hot beer and gin, sometimes with ginger and sugar, used as a pick-me-up. It was commonly prescribed for the sick at Clerkenwell Bridewell.
[32] MJ/SP/1782/04/002.
[33] MJ/SP/1783/01/008.
[34] MJ/SP/1785/01/025.
[35] The problem of finding a justice was, however, uncommon in Middlesex because the so-called 'trading justices' sat regularly at the Rotation Offices.
[36] MJ/SP/1787/09/078 & /132.
[37] MJ/SP/V/01/021/156.
[38] 32 Geo III c45.
[39] MJ/SP/1792/05/022.
[40] MJ/SP/1792/07/020-21.
[41] MJ/SP/1794/12/023.
[42] Report of the Committee on Mendicity in the Metropolis 1815, 59–62; BPP 1821 iv p 151; *Commons Journals* xxiv pp 25–32.
[43] Report of the Committee on Mendicity in the Metropolis 1821, 27.
[44] 59 Geo 3 c12 s33.
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# ‘LIFTING ON TO A NEW PLANE’: GYMNASTICS AND THE SOMERFORD STREET WOMEN’S FREE EVENING INSTITUTE 1917–1921

*Carol Bentley*

**SUMMARY**

*In 1913, the Higher Education Sub-Committee at the London County Council proposed changes to the provision of evening education which it hoped would greatly improve the outcomes for the young people of the city. The encouragement of non-vocational subjects and of wider social activities led to the provision of more broadly educative experiences through the setting up of such organisations as the East London Girls’ Gymnastic Association. A review of its activities will illustrate the contribution of gymnastics to the social development of young women and the Committee’s initial proposals will be compared with the experiences of staff and students at one of the evening institutes offering post-school education to young women in East London in the years 1917–1921.*

## EVENING SCHOOLS: A NEW START

The evening school system in London needed ‘lifting on to a new plane’.[1] This is how in May 1913 the Higher Education Sub-Committee (the Committee) summarised its report to the Education Committee of the London County Council. Continuing education at evening schools had been provided for those who had attended elementary schools but there had for some time been concerns about ‘serious defects in the attendance’. The Report on Technical and Continuation Schools in 1912 had stated that:

> … the students themselves develop the bad habit of non-attendance. Their enrolment and subsequent withdrawal destroy classes wholesale, rendering useless the efforts and organisation provided for their instruction and spreading want of confidence among staff as to the value of all or any efforts.

To remedy this situation, the Committee considered, but rejected, a system of compulsory evening education and opted instead to attempt to make continuing education more attractive to potential students. The need for non-vocational subjects was accepted, as was the desirability of fewer restrictions on the subject choices of post-18-year-olds. They also advised that ‘a strong effort should be made to infuse freshness and attractiveness into the system’. Financial constraints, as ever, precluded provision of new premises, facilities, or equipment, but at least there could be a new name. The Committee recommended that ‘the evening schools and centres shall in future be designated institutes’.

The work of these Institutes impressed the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1919, but H J Edwards (1961) felt that many of the LCC’s optimistic plans came to nothing in the period of serious necessary economies after the First World War. This assertion will be examined in the light of the experiences of staff and students at an Institute in Bethnal Green. Those of the staff are recorded in the Log Book of the Institute. My records and recollections of treasured conversations over many years with the late Caroline Barker and Margaret Brion reveal the responses of two of its lively students (Fig 1).

The Institute that Caroline and Margaret attended was the Somerford Street Women’s Free Evening Institute. It shared the premises

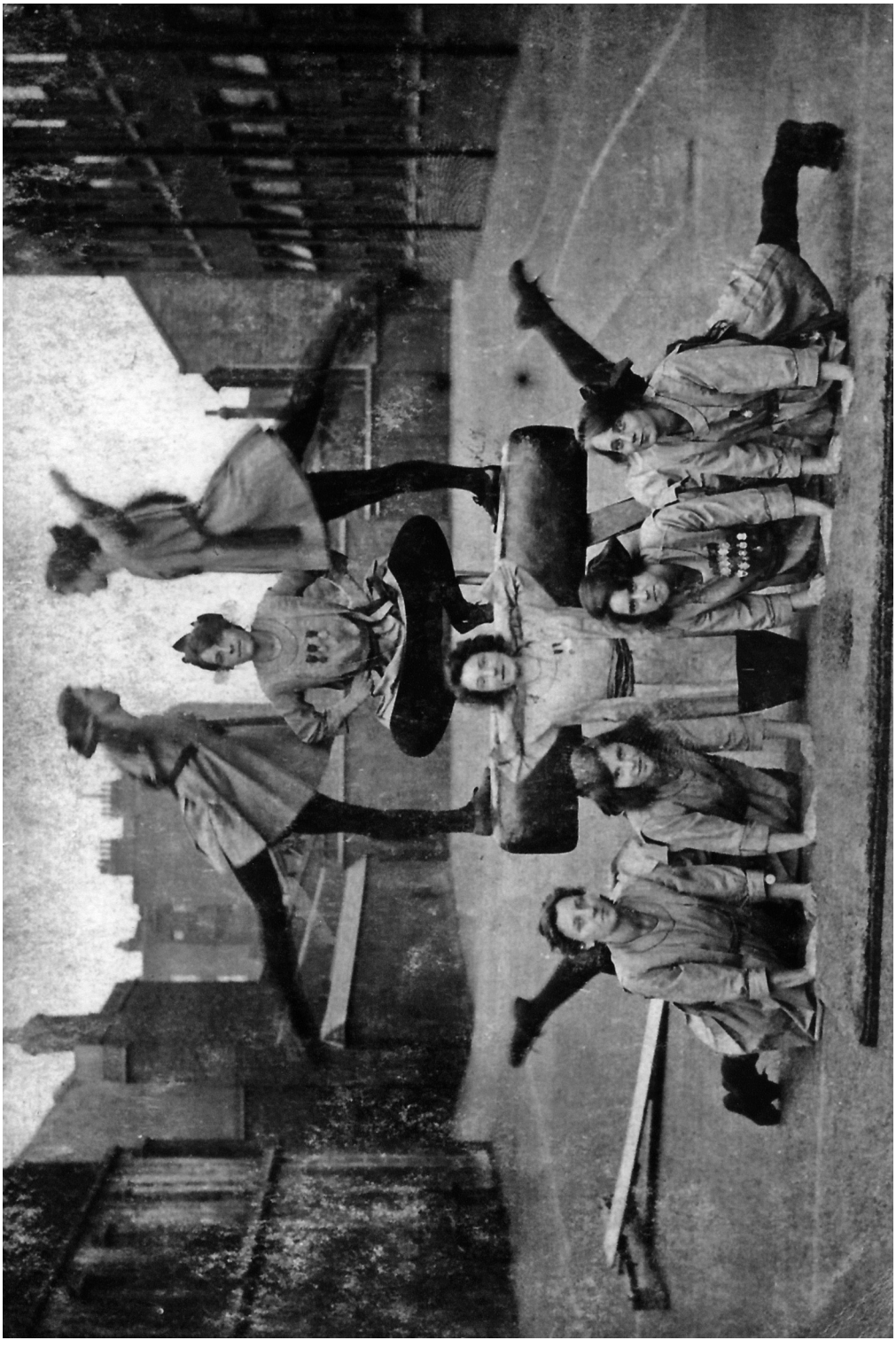

*Fig 1. The Somerford Street senior gymnastics team in 1921 wearing their green gymnastics uniform. Margaret is second from the left in the front row and Caroline is maintaining a straight-backed squat position between the pommels of the vaulting horse. Several of the exercises recommended in the LCC Syllabuses of Instruction are shown here, including the stand, kneel and squat positions with alternate or combined leg extensions backward. The photograph was probably taken in the playground of Somerford Street School (Photo: author's collection)*

of Somerford Street School and had two other branches, at the Robert Montefiore School in Vallance Road, Whitechapel and at the Pott Street premises of the Bethnal Green Congregational Church. Most classes took place from 7.50 to 9.50pm on Mondays to Thursdays. The eventual catchment area was bounded to the north by Bethnal Green Road, to the east by Globe Road, to the south by Mile End Road, and to the west by Commercial Street (Fig 2).

Miss Edith Dunn was appointed Responsible Teacher, based at Somerford Street, and evidence of her work between 1917 and 1921 will be considered, since this is the period when Caroline and Margaret, both born in 1901, were students. The Institute was renamed when it transferred to the Essex Street Junior Mixed School in November 1921, when Somerford Street School was being reconstructed.

## THE SOMERFORD STREET INSTITUTE: THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The nature of the environment in which the Institute was set is best conveyed in Miss Dunn's own words, taken from the book in which she was required by the Education Committee to characterise it.[2]

1916–17
> SW Bethnal Green contains the Parish of St Bartholomew, the poorest in London. Condemned streets by Gov. not pulled down owing to crisis. Upper portions of Brady St, Neath Place, Somerford St, Pereira St and various blind alleys leading from Brady St works. Bethnal Green: machinists and blind alley occupations. Whitechapel: tailoring, wholesale blouses, underwear, millinery, furs, jewellery.

She mentions frequently the large population of immigrants, whom she refers to as 'aliens'.

1917–18
> The aliens are more industrious and sober than the Bethnal Green people.
> Many of the better class in the factories do not live in district but come from Bow, Poplar, Hackney.

1918–19
> This Institute works in a plague spot unhealthy and wretchedly housed, 15,000 considered living in insanitary homes. Many of the slums are condemned, some since 1854, zymotic diseases are prevalent. 40% of men offering for the army were tubercular.

1919–20
> After the peace many women became unemployed. Money is not so good and the pupils desirous of education cannot afford material, etc.

1920–21
> All pupils mainly in Clothing factories, Box making, Packing — groceries, etc.
> The mass of the pupils are unskilled.
> … unsuitable scholastic building.

Momentous and destructive events were taking place in the wider world in this period. Severe economic problems exacerbated the personal tragedies visited upon local people as a result of the First World War. Homes and places of work had been destroyed; rents and the prices of basic commodities had risen dramatically — wholesale prices to three times pre-War levels by 1919. Unlike Caroline's family, a large proportion of residents were not native Londoners, many of them being, like Margaret's family, of Irish extraction. Miss Dunn lists Russians, Poles, Germans, families from the Netherlands and Portugal, and Jewish people from many European countries in her catchment area and notes particularly the large number of Jewish families in Somerford Street where previously there had been none.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 and the continuing Civil War; the influenza pandemic in 1918; the formation of the IRA in 1919 and the Irish Home Rule Bill in 1920; the Balfour Declaration favouring a Jewish homeland in Palestine. All these must deeply have affected many people in Bethnal Green. Some must have felt restless from their experience of upheaval and become subject to multifarious anxieties: others would have been excited and energised by the perceived prospect of fundamental change and burgeoning opportunity. The population in almost all senses was 'on the move'.

It was in this social environment that Miss Dunn worked to maintain an attractive and effective Evening Institute for the local young women.

## THE CURRICULUM

Institutes for women were expected to provide classes in these categories:

Domestic
Needlework
Health
Humane Subjects
Light Physical Exercises (Drill or Gymnastics).

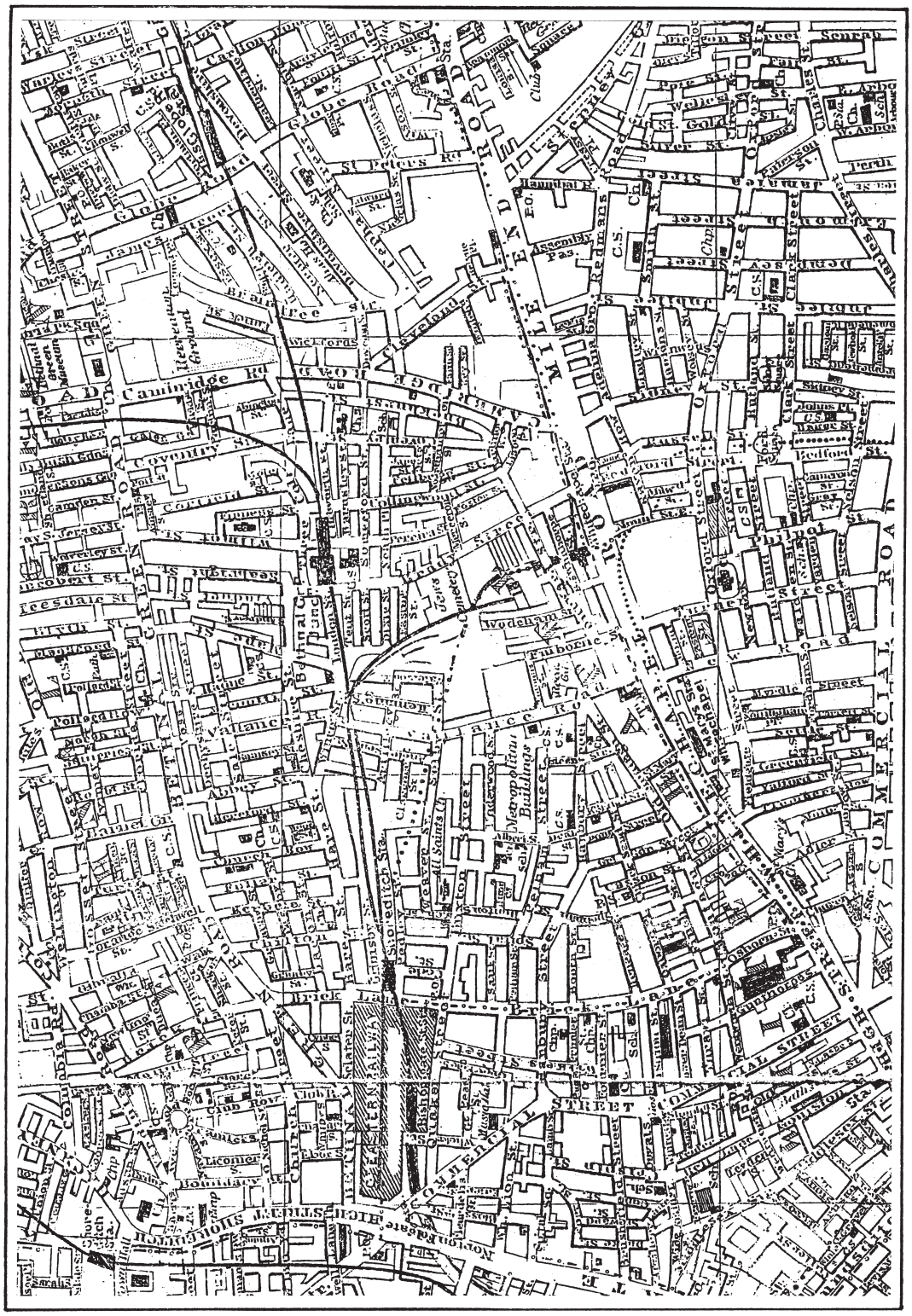

*Fig 2. Bethnal Green 1918. The area served by the Somerford Street Institute. Somerford Street is just south of Bethnal Green Station (Post Office Directory Map: Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive)*

As a Free Institute, Somerford Street was required at least to aspire to such provision and to make as many classes as possible available not only to young single women like Caroline and Margaret, but also to older and married women.

**Domestic subjects**

A cynic might relate these subjects to the 'servant problem' of late Victorian and Edwardian London, though the government was in theory unwilling to allow elementary education to be used for training domestic servants. Certainly in the 1911 Census, 34.8% of girls aged fourteen to eighteen were in some kind of domestic work. Immediately on leaving school, Margaret had been placed in domestic work at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and was amazed at the environment around her in Tite Street.

There were powerful pressures from the almost entirely male medical and other professions to increase domestic training for schoolgirls, and remedying the very poor standards in health and fitness discovered in Boer War recruits was regarded largely as women's responsibility. The government's Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in the population had recommended in 1904 that cookery and household management should be compulsory for all girls, even possibly after they had left school. Proficiency with the needle was thought to imply the much valued qualities of femininity and thrift — regarded as particularly appropriate in areas necessitating Free Institutes — and there was also a growing number of women teachers, examiners, and inspectors of needlework powerful enough to promote their own interests. This part of the curriculum, then, had scarcely been lifted 'on to a new plane'.

Caroline and Margaret would have preferred to enrol for gymnastics alone. This was not allowed but such was their enthusiasm that they were prepared to endure two hours of cookery and needlework, the price then exacted for access to the world of gymnastics. Their cookery teacher had a strong Scots accent and her pronunciation of the names of ingredients led to much mirth, Caroline in particular being easily reduced to helpless laughter. Needlework proved useful since throughout their lives they were able to make many of their own and their families' clothes in mid-20th-century times of widespread hardship. They followed fashion as far as their finances allowed. On one occasion, a milliner friend gave them some surplus georgette. Caroline's was pale lilac, Margaret's apple green, and Margaret cut out a low-backed dress for each of them. Caroline's mother was horrified when they tried them on without wearing vests, but they bought satin in the Roman Road market to make under slips and used long strips of georgette as scarves, looped over their hair and down their backs. Their sewing gave them a great sense of achievement, unlike the mundane and repetitive tasks allocated to young women in local clothing factories, where, as Miss Dunn noted, they were never involved or trained in the more interesting and skilled work of cutting out garments.

Laundry and housewifery were also offered, in part to correct the perceived inability of women in such areas to care properly for their homes and families. There is an irony here in that in 1919 Queen Mary visited that very place — incognito according to Miss Dunn's log — guided by the Mayor of Bethnal Green, who showed her the deplorable state of the housing stock which he had long campaigned to have replaced by sound homes and well-planned streets. Although shocked by the squalid, insanitary buildings, she was reported in the *Daily Chronicle* as contrasting them with 'the general cleanliness and splendid housewifery which she saw in evidence so abundantly'.

The notion of discovering what the customer wants and then providing it was yet to arise and students were offered subjects that the Advisory Committee and staff considered appropriate. One can imagine that the activities least likely to raise the spirits and aspirations of the young women would be more of the drudgery of home, laundry, and kitchen work. The Institute, however, gradually offered a wider range of non-vocational subjects.

Infant Care and First Aid were offered, possibly in response to a suggestion from local brewers Truman and Hanbury, and English and Drill were combined as a course. Embroidery and Design became very popular and students obviously made great progress since on one of her visits Miss Moore, an inspector, suggested organising the classes by ability to offer some students more demanding work. Miss Dunn, however, knew that they much preferred to stay within their own age group and that the very best embroidresses might lose their class altogether if there were not sufficient enrolments at their

level. By the time of the move to Essex Street the Institute also offered Drawing, Dramatic Literature and Education, and Vocal Music.

## Humane subjects

On the handbill for 1921–22, the Institute offers:[3]

a) History and Geography,
b) Nature Study with lantern lecture.

This is the first appearance of what the Committee referred to as the 'Humane subjects', history and geography, and dealt with in its Report at length and with enthusiasm but concern, particularly about history. They felt that existing evening schools had failed their students in these subjects which 'ought to be approached directly, not through a text book, but from the living event'. They listed some of the important events that had taken place since September 1912 which they felt could form the subjects of 'interesting (and well illustrated) talks on "living" events; a live point of contact between the student and the world in which he lives'. This would help to 'cultivate the reading and reflecting habit'. They proposed that twelve centres should concentrate solely on lectures of this type and that 'lecture centres' should be available to serve, in a similar way, 'better educated audiences'. Among the subjects to be presented they mentioned:

> In particular, much broad and wise teaching as to the great peoples in France and Germany — their history, traditions, science, art and literature — would come as a revelation to the people of London.

The Committee's Report was presented in May 1913. It was not attendance at lecture centres that in little more than a year brought the young men of London into the closest and most tragic contact with 'the great peoples of France and Germany'. Nor were the majority of sufferers from the 'better educated audiences'. Bethnal Green sent a larger proportion of men to the war than any other part of London and their total death rate was the highest of any in the metropolis. The Committee members, of course, could never have foreseen the tragic events of the First World War, but a modern reader must surely feel the ghastly and heart-wrenching ironies in the expression of their sound and optimistic proposals, particularly that of the value of learning 'from the living event'.

Few students in Bethnal Green can have been without close contact with one of the thousands of men and women who had become visual aids in the terrible lessons that Europe was teaching itself. Caroline lost a very dear friend but the menfolk in Margaret's family were merchant seamen. It was grim work stoking boilers, but at least they were not directly in the line of fire. The war, of course, had come to the Institute's students, involving them too in living events from which others would later learn. Nevertheless, it was commendable that the Institute was eventually able to offer a 'humane subject' through illustrated talks and it is tantalising to guess what was presented under 'History' and how it was interpreted.

## Light physical exercises

Gymnastics and Drill were both included in the Institute's courses. The LCC 'Syllabuses of Instruction'[4] lists three schemes:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | No apparatus work. Includes dancing and indoor games. |
| B | Exercises on fixed apparatus. Free exercises with or without music and light hand exercises. |
| C | Only to be taught by fully qualified teachers of Swedish gymnastics and only in a gymnasium fitted with Swedish apparatus. |

Drill classes probably followed Scheme A. Although some teachers were fully qualified in Swedish gymnastics, the various premises were not fully equipped and Scheme C could not have been operated. Caroline and Margaret spoke enthusiastically about using the vaulting horse and about the music which accompanied their exercises, so Scheme B was probably the one they followed in gymnastics.

Interest in and opportunities for gymnastics had been developing for many years in Bethnal Green, which was home for well over a hundred years to the Orion Gymnastics Club, the oldest in Great Britain and regarded by the British Amateur Gymnastics Association as having made a unique contribution to British gymnastics. The club began in temporary premises in St Peters School, Mile End in 1868 and by 1883 had a permanent purpose-built gymnasium in Casteton Street, Hackney, continuing with help from the Bethnal Green Men's Institute until late in the 20th century.

This club was, of course, open only to men

and followed the German system of apparatus gymnastics pioneered in the early 19th century by Carl Voelker and Friedrich Jahn, and involving strenuous exercises on vaulting horses, ropes, rings, and parallel and horizontal bars. The aim was to develop strength and sporting prowess and originally there were clear military overtones.

However, the exercises which Caroline and Margaret enjoyed so much were probably a modified version of the system devised by Per Henrik Ling and taught at the Royal Central Gymnastics Institution in Stockholm from 1814. Ling based his system of precise and highly regimented exercises on what he called his 'exact knowledge' of human anatomy and physiology and, unusually for the early 19th century, considered it suitable for women as well as men. He believed that it would develop its practitioners physically, mentally, and morally.

Until the late 19th-century developments in gymnastics, unlike those in team sports, took place outside the mainstream of education and athletics. Entrepreneurs took advantage of the increasing interest of women as well as men in bodily health, and established private gymnasia employing various systems in London and other cities. It became perfectly acceptable for properly chaperoned women and girls to attend their classes and, although these were wealthy and well-connected patrons, the acceptability of organised gymnastic exercise eventually percolated through to respectable young women at other levels of society.

In 1881, Concordia Lövfing, a graduate of the Stockholm Institution, was appointed Superintendent of Physical Education in Girls' Schools in London at the instigation of Mrs Alice Westlake of the London School Board, there being no suitable English candidate. She was succeeded by Madame Martina Bergman-Österberg (Fig 3), an energetic and visionary proponent of the value of physical education for girls and a brilliant organiser who realised the immediate necessity of providing excellently trained teachers. In 1885, she founded a college for this purpose in a house in Broadhurst Gardens, Hampstead (Fig 4), later transferring to larger premises in Dartford, Kent.

The Hampstead gymnasium (Fig 4) was fitted with the equipment Madame Bergman-Österberg had incorporated into her development of Ling's system. Within five years, 1,300 women teachers had been trained in Ling gymnastics.

*Fig 3. Madame Martina Bergman-Österberg 1849–1915 (The Bergman-Österberg Archive, University of Greenwich)*

At the Chelsea College of Physical Education, established in 1898, the course included German, Swedish, and Military gymnastics, but by 1907 the Ling system predominated. Bedford College too had a Ling-based course. A most important aspect of the courses in these colleges was that, unlike the university courses, they were all promoted, institutionalised, and authorised by women. The female staff were intelligent and idealistic and they sent out qualified teachers with a missionary zeal not just for gymnastics but also for women's emancipation. In 1908, the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society was formed and it was students from this enlightened background who went as teachers, judges, and inspectors into London's elementary schools and evening institutes. It was these influential women with whom the Somerford Street students came into contact in their classes, competitions, and displays of gymnastics.

## THE RESPONSIBLE TEACHER

The person in charge of each Institute whom we

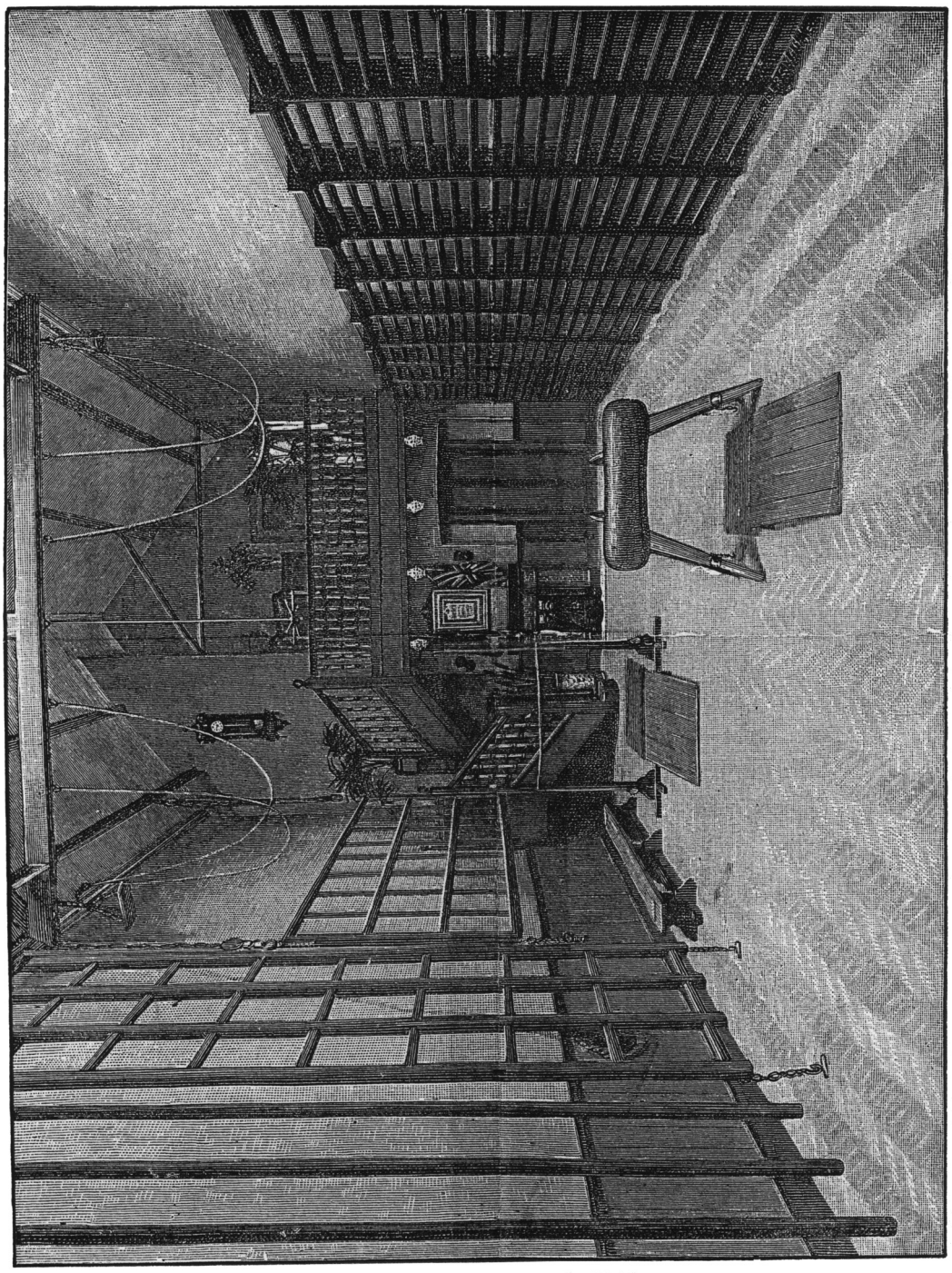

*Fig 4. The gymnasium of the College founded in 1885 by Madame Bergman-Österberg to train women in the Swedish gymnastics methods of Per Henrik Ling (The Bergman-Österberg Archive, University of Greenwich)*

might now refer to as the Principal was called the Responsible Teacher (RT). The Committee was most concerned that these teachers should not, as had happened in the past, also be daytime teachers. They wished to avoid the accusation of having 'tired pupils taught by tired teachers' and wanted the RTs to be free to forge links with those in commerce, industry, and education in their areas to the benefit of their students.

They hoped to find and develop 'freshness of mind and width of outlook' in their RTs. By employing them on a full-time basis, they felt that the RTs would 'enjoy a certain necessary amount of leisure for recreation and for enlarging their own views'. Miss Dunn's role as administrator, teacher, and ultimate disciplinarian would have occupied her fully when the Institute was in session. An examination of her Log Book entries relating to other tasks and the likely expenditure of time on them shows that she may actually have had little time for other valuable pursuits. Although she was in an area of particular need, other RTs in East London almost certainly had similar experiences.

Until May 1919 she had no clerical assistance and that was instituted only after a petition had been presented to Sir Robert Blair, the Education Officer, by the Responsible Teachers. The clerical assistant, Mrs Archer Clark, resigned in February 1921 as she received only 5s 8d (*c.*28p) for two hours work.

Miss Dunn was required to visit all local elementary schools to enrol as many leavers as possible and to make frequent visits to local businesses and factories to do the same for their female employees. She was a member of the LCC's Care Committee and was elected to the executive of the Juvenile Advisory Committee at Oxford House, a local university settlement in May 1918. She was a very active member of the Association of Responsible Teachers, presenting papers and leading discussions. In addition, she frequently attended conferences on matters of social concern. She worked very hard to help set up the East London Girls' Gymnastic Association (ELGGA) and, after its inauguration in 1917, much of her time was taken up with meetings and personal contacts to organise and finance its activities. The tasks which consumed a great deal of her time and energy related either to finance or staffing.

**Finance**

Her students were required to enrol for courses rather than single subjects and this enabled Miss Dunn to integrate their work to some extent. In October 1918, she recorded the purchase of 20 yards (about 18m) of casement cloth for the Tuesday Drill class to make into drill slips in their Needlework class, though she does not record how the cost was met. In its proposals for Women's Institutes, the Committee wrote:

> We think that under appropriate safeguards the Council might provide materials at cost price for making a gymnastic uniform.

Such recommendations, of course, are statements of the ideal — the actualities are almost invariably less favourable. No receipt of funds is logged and, in the light of the desperate need to finance post-War reconstruction, any failure of provision is understandable. Nevertheless, the uniforms were needed and the students themselves had too many other calls on their meagre wage packets. There is no record of who paid for the cloth in 1918, but Miss Dunn records in November 1920 'this year all needlework materials supplied by me'.[5]

The cost of the green drill slips for gymnastics classes was a recurring problem and in 1921 even obtaining cloth for them and other dressmaking became increasingly difficult. However, Miss Connington and Miss Smyth, His Majesty's Inspectors of Physical Education, visited the Institute in May 1921 and were obviously so pleased with what they saw, as indeed they had been on their previous visit, that they allocated 36s (£1.80p) for the outfit of a team.

Financing specifically ELGGA activities was a constant problem. Within months of its inception Miss Dunn reports, perhaps quite cheerfully, that they were 'only short of 18/-' (90p). Three years later they had a debt of £7 14s 3d (*c.*£7.71p) and she reports an interview at the Mansion House with the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, Lady Cooper, who 'undertook to pay off the debt'. In more prosperous areas of London, students could have afforded to meet the costs as they arose and there would have been plenty of local benefactors able and willing to underwrite costs. For RTs in East London, lack of money must have been a constant serious concern.

In May 1921, Miss Dunn investigated the cost of shoes for the Drill and Gymnastics classes.

She notes:

> Drill shoes. Rope sole with unbleached upper.
> Price 13/- doz sizes 2–6
> 15/- doz sizes 7–10
> To be got from
> A Norman & Sons, 130–132 Shoreditch Road E1.
> NB (1) Not less than one doz at a time of any one size can be ordered.
> (2) All business to be done by correspondence.

The minimum order requirement, though appropriate for a shoe shop, was an impossible arrangement for her and she was forced to abandon the excellent idea of providing the proper footwear.

At exactly this time a much more serious matter was occupying her thoughts. On 6 May she had read the Council's proposal to abolish the free status of some Institutes and to charge fees to all students. On 25 May she signed the petition against the proposal, but learned at the beginning of June that the imposition of fees was a certainty. How worrying and disheartening this must have been at just the time when the staff and students were working so hard on preparations for the splendid annual ELGGA gymnastic competition. At the beginning of May she had noted 'the trouble to outfit the various teams this year is greater than I have ever experienced. The poverty is great and the result will be fewer teams than usual'.

Later that year 'the enrolment was very large' with a particularly high demand for Drill. Wage rates in the area had already fallen and by November the number of unemployed students was 'very great'. Some needlework students had already started work on their drill slips but it seems that either they could not afford the cost of the material or, because of the fees, they were unable to attend classes at all. At any rate, Miss Dunn reports the most disappointing outcome of all:

1. Material cut up and left.
2. No drill garments made.

Fees were imposed rigorously and, at this time of high female unemployment and half-time working, those who could pay could only do so in instalments. Fortunately for them, Caroline worked as a machinist at a men's tailoring company and Margaret was a box maker at the Ardath Cigarette Company, so they were able to afford the fees.

Unemployment was, of course, a severe national problem for years beyond those dealt with here, particularly in areas such as Bethnal Green. The young women who were employed, therefore, had no option but to work long hours in unpleasant or potentially dangerous places for low wages and with no job security. There were other problems too. Margaret, for instance, worked for a short time as a wire stitcher at dingy premises in Whitechapel Road. Concerned about her employer, an unpleasant elderly man, she asked Caroline to accompany her through the dark corridors and up the ladder-like stairs and sit with her while she worked. At the end of the first week she received only 2s (10p) and discovered that her employer had allowed another member of her family to take away the rest of her wage.

Her records show that Miss Dunn was intimately aware of the work-related problems of her students and that she responded with genuine sympathy and understanding. A great deal of her time and energy had to be spent dealing with problems caused directly by the poverty of the area, so that much of the energy needed to further the educational and social development of her students was constantly expended on dealing with finance. As is still the case in the 21st century, educators like Miss Dunn felt compelled to try to mitigate the effects of problems utterly incapable of solution within the education system itself.

## Staffing

Miss Dunn's final log entry for 1916–17 is 'I find great difficulty in getting staff for Cookery and Drill'. Staffing was, in fact, a constant problem. It seems that she had no help in recruiting teachers and she records many visits made in search of them. Those she obtained were 'very crude' at the outset.

Staff were to be engaged not by the evening as previously, but by the term so as to ensure continuity. The Laundry teacher who failed to turn up after two weeks, however, was not untypical and Miss Dunn ruefully noted 'this is often the fate of classes in the East End'. Teachers simply did not 'care for the quarter'. Teachers were often absent through illness. Dr Bate, the Medical Officer of Health, frequently reported to the Council on the insanitary conditions in the area which must have made the Institute an unhealthy working environment.

Most staff lived out of the area, travelling in by

train. When wartime raids and post-war strikes disrupted services the Institute's work obviously suffered and potential transport problems may well have deterred some teachers. There were the usual problems of sharing premises and equipment — notably sewing machines — with the day school, which Miss Dunn occasionally had to resolve, and the ever-present incidence of petty theft.

Students came from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds but were mainly Protestants like Caroline, Catholics like Margaret, or Jewish. There is no mention at all of problems with languages, but some staff had difficulties in dealing with students from particular backgrounds, though the nature of these is not specified. By 1921, finding staff was even more difficult than it had been in 1917. Miss Dunn wrote, 'an enormous trouble to get staff. There is no choice, the institute simply takes what it can get'. In March 1921, the Montefiore branch was closed for lack of staff. Many of the teachers she did manage to appoint, however, were obviously dedicated to their work and took a genuine interest in the welfare and advancement of their students.

Displays and competitions were frequent and teachers must have worked tremendously hard to prepare the teams and choirs. The good standard reached in day-to-day classes is shown in Miss Dunn's comments and those of inspectors, though pertinent criticisms are also logged.

Some examples of particular dedication are recorded.

> Miss Kirkup, a cookery teacher, 'brings in supplementary food every evening' and 'deserves great credit'.
>
> One of the needlework teachers paid for all the materials for her class for one session.
>
> Miss Duschek, Caroline and Margaret's much-respected gym teacher, initiated classes from 5.30–6.30pm on Saturdays to meet demand. She also became concerned on one occasion about how pale Caroline had become and made an appointment with a local doctor she knew, who diagnosed anaemia and treated Caroline.
>
> In order not to be absent from her post because of a planned coal strike affecting transport, Miss Wakefield, Miss Dunn's dep-uty, offered to sleep overnight at the Pott Street premises. Fortunately the strike was cancelled.

When Margaret joined the singing class she was complimented on her good voice and the teacher invited her to free lessons at her home near Victoria Park, a luxuriously furnished house with a grand piano covered with a multi-coloured tasselled shawl. Sadly, after a few lessons, no-one answered when Margaret knocked and a neighbour told her that her teacher had died suddenly the previous night.

Miss Dunn frequently mentions the commendable conduct of her staff during air raids. During one such raid, the Infant Care teacher kept her students calm and continued the lesson in the dark. No problems ensued and to Miss Dunn this showed the right spirit.

### Assessment

Miss Dunn was required to submit to the LCC a regular report on the work of the Institute but it is only in November 1920 that she refers to this. She had received from 'Head Office' the response to her report and it is quite distressing in the light of all her good work to read that,

> It is simply a summary of the disabilities and not one word of commendation — nothing inspiring. The Office would seem to penalise the Institute for its poverty.

Her frustration and even anguish are clear as she spills into the log at this point her notes of some of the deficiencies with which she is having to cope. Apart from having personally to finance many activities, she does not even have a cupboard for her administrative documents. She was provoked by the injustice of the response to visit 'Head Office' and there is a cold feeling of resigned impotence in her log entry, 'was informed my interpretation was not correct'.

The Committee required its teachers to inspire but the officials charged with running the system were clearly unable to inspire the teachers, especially those working in areas where there was the greatest need for encouragement.

## A SOCIAL SIDE

One of the factors which had influenced the Committee was the work of clubs and societies such as fellowship groups attached to places of worship, university settlements and other philanthropic organisations. Having indicated that 'the clubs have shown the evening schools the need for developing a social side', the 1913

Report proposed that 'the Responsible Teacher's time will be taken up to a large extent on this side of the work' and that, in the Women's Institutes,

> … her initiation and supervision of social gatherings, clubs, magazines, excursions and so on would be fully as exacting as those of the Responsible Teacher of the commercial centre.

Gymnastics proved to be the most significant activity at Somerford Street which led to 'social gatherings', 'excursions', links with other institutions, and the organisation of competitions. Many entries in the Log Book for 1917 detail the problems resulting from the war but in spite of these it was in this year that Miss Dunn spent a great deal of time making personal contacts and attending meetings to set up the East London Girls' Gymnastic Association.

The inaugural competition for seniors on 9 June was held at Mansford Street School and was an impressive event with an audience of three hundred. The *East End News* and *London Shipping Chronicle* recorded that the gymnastic competition lasted almost three hours and that the event had begun at 6.30pm with a concert by the combined choirs of Somerford Street and the Montefiore branch. The Rev Stewart Headlam of the LCC (Fig 5), President of ELGGA, presided over the function with Miss Kingston and Mr G O H Smailes as judges. The Somerford Street team was beaten into second place; other competitors included a team from the 10th London Girls' Life Brigade and from a local firm, Glanfield and Sons.

In 1921, Caroline and Margaret were members of the winning Senior Team at the fifth annual ELGGA Competition for the Shield and Cup. They had been well prepared by Miss Duschek and performed with great skill and agility in spite of the heat of the July evening — that summer had been the hottest for many years. They must have been very proud to receive their medals from Baroness St Helier (Fig 6), an enthusiastic and active supporter of the Somerford Street Institute. Miss Dunn later wrote in the Institute Log Book 'A very successful evening. The public evince a great interest'.

They were unlikely to have attended them, but these events and the work that led up to them seem to epitomise the sort of achievement to which members of the Committee intended their Institutes to aspire and looked to their RTs to create. Participation in such events, the Committee felt, would help young people avoid the pernicious influences often present in their surroundings. The more tired the young workers, they wisely admitted, 'the greater their moral effort in resisting the inducements to ease and amusement'.

Social functions at the Institutes could, however, offer suitable 'ease and amusement'. It may have been attendance at the Institute and its social events which brought Protestant Caroline and Catholic Margaret together. They were energetic, intelligent, and of good character — Caroline's attested to by the award of a beautiful bible by the Shaftesbury Society — but where could an unaccompanied respectable young woman go in the evening after a long working day? Hardly a pub, the music hall, or any costly quality entertainment venue. Street life, though

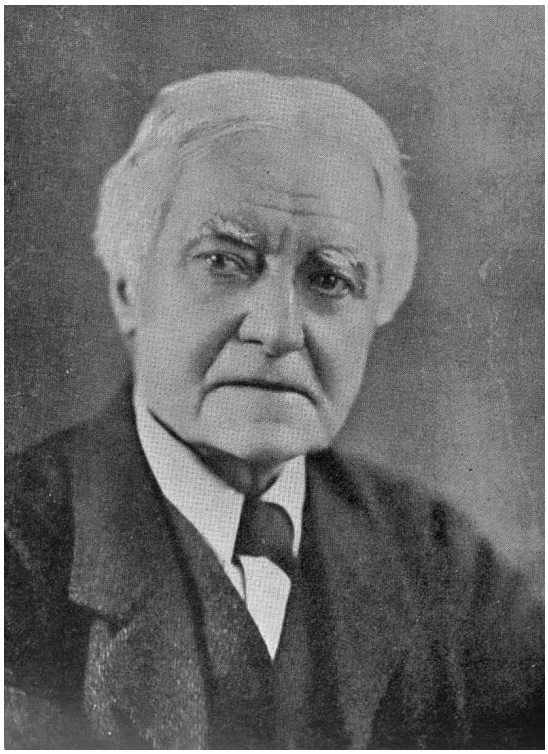

*Fig 5. Rev Stewart Duckworth Headlam 1847–1924, President of ELGGA and a loyal supporter of the Somerford Street Institute. A Christian Socialist and member of the Fabian Society, he was elected to the London School Board in 1888 and to the LCC in 1907. He was a passionate supporter of evening education and campaigned to persuade the government to help intelligent members of the working class to receive a university education (London Metropolitan Archive)*

it may have seemed lively, undemanding and free, was fraught with risks.

Miss Dunn recorded the organisation of several functions which, though not free, offered relaxation and enjoyment. Margaret's family circumstances were less secure than Caroline's and when she could not afford a ticket, Caroline and their friends would pool resources to help. They all enjoyed the

> Fancy Dress Ball. May 3rd at Mansford Street. Limited to 200 at 1/- each. Profits to defray cost of [gymnastic] medals

recorded in the Log Book in 1919 (Fig 7). Other socials were held; all of them, obviously, solely for the young women. Miss Dunn reports in November 1920,

> A highly successful social, 7.30–10. Present: Misses Wakefield, R. Wakefield, Morrison and about 300 pupils.

She adds, rather darkly, '20–30 young men outside but no teacher with them'!

*Fig 6. Mary, Baroness St Helier CBE 1920, DBE 1925, d. 1931. Alderman of the LCC 1910—1927. A brilliant society hostess, she was nevertheless an indefatigable campaigner for the improvement of housing conditions in London and the St Helier estate in Sutton bears her name. She was an energetic woman who enjoyed bicycling, riding and skating, and was a keen supporter of the Somerford Street Institute. She presided at a number of the gymnastic competitions and displays of the East London Girls' Gymnastic Association and in July 1920 she offered a holiday in the country, at her expense, for six deserving students (Copyright: National Portrait Gallery, London)*

Even more frequent than social evenings were displays of gymnastics at the various branches of the Institute and at others further afield, such as Clerkenwell and the Regent Street Polytechnic. Caroline and Margaret both remembered their great enjoyment in travelling to displays in unfamiliar and interesting parts of London, usually beginning with a climb to the upper deck of the No. 8 bus. Displays must have been enjoyable social occasions with the spice of inherent, if not formalised, competition to keep everyone almost literally on their toes. Quite apart from the value of the exercises in compensating for the static or sedentary nature of many students' work, they must have increased their self-esteem and also attracted new students.

The young women were not cast aside when they had completed their courses. In October 1920, Miss Dunn proudly reported that, 'We have now 4 Old Scholars' Clubs: Hague St, Wilmot St, Essex St, Somerford St.'

If Caroline and Margaret's estimation of the value of their Institute days is any guide, what a fund of goodwill and possible voluntary help must have been present among the club members. Unfortunately, it is almost invariably the case that with educational establishments for those other than the most financially secure the support, financial or otherwise, that could flow from the old students cannot be used because the establishments themselves have later metamorphosed or been abolished under new legislation. However long they lasted, though, these clubs would have been enjoyed by the students and had the wholehearted approval of the Committee.

## WHAT DID THEY WEAR?

When performing in competitions or practising in class, the Somerford Street gymnasts wore the very practical uniform shown in the photograph of the 1920–21 gymnastics team (see Fig 1). It consisted of a loose blouse with three-quarter length sleeves worn under a box-pleated tunic. The generous round neck of the tunic and the

*Fig 7. Caroline's medals. The silver medal was awarded in 1919 and the bronze in 1918. Social events were held at the Institute to defray the cost of medals (Photo: author's collection)*

blouse cuffs have piped decoration and a narrow sash is threaded through the box pleats at the waist. These are exactly the garments initiated by Madame Martina Bergman-Österberg for the students of her College. Each student was given a list of the clothing she would require and the lists for this period together with photographs of the students in action indicate what Caroline, Margaret, and their friends wore *under* their tunics and blouses.

The list specifies that the 'Gymnastic and College Costume' is to be ordered on arrival at the College, which indicates the services of a specialist supplier and prices beyond the budgets of the Somerford Street gymnasts. It is not clear whether special underwear or hosiery was included in this category, but garments in the clothing lists are probably the ones generally available and acceptable to young women. In the absence of tights, it was necessary to have some other means of covering the body and legs from waist to toe. Part of the answer lay in the 'plain black Cashmere stockings (extra long)' available from 'Afford, The Village, Blackheath, S.E.'. The cover-up was completed by the garment displayed in the photograph of a student performing a beautifully poised handstand in the College grounds (Fig 8). The knickers are close-fitting and have legs long enough to cover the tops of the 'extra long' stockings.

But what kept up those stockings? This concern with the minutiae of clothing is not an irrelevance. The development of women's clothing is intimately connected with aspects of their emancipation, which is often mirrored, sometimes followed, and occasionally led by the activities women feel they are able to undertake and the clothes that are appropriate for those activities.

The half century leading up to Caroline and Margaret's gymnastic achievements had seen considerable changes in women's daily lives, not least in the possibility of their being more physically active other than of necessity at work or in domestic chores. Those, unlike Caroline and Margaret, able to finance a leisured lifestyle

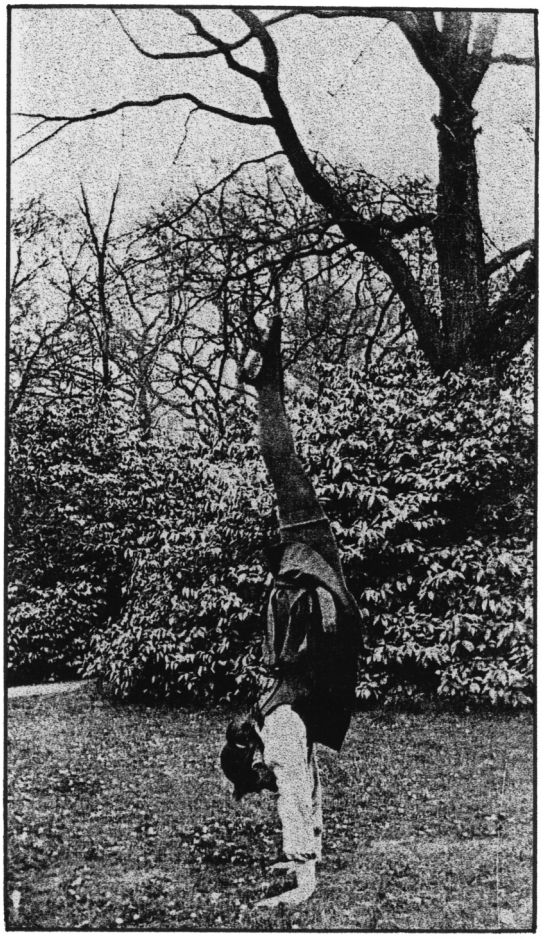

*Fig 8. A student of Madame Bergman-Österberg performing a handstand in the grounds of the College at Dartford in Kent c.1920 (The Bergman-Österberg Archive, University of Greenwich)*

could engage in a variety of sporting activities and it was adventurous young women at this level of society who paved the way for the eventual acceptance of energetic activities as suitable for women. They were in no danger of placing their social position and reputation in jeopardy, as might have been the case with women whose families had a less secure position in the social pecking order.

In 1894, Paul Rénouard produced for *The Graphic* a drawing from life in the Girls' Gymnasium at the People's Palace, Mile End Road (Fig 9). It is entitled 'Drill Instruction' and the instructor is a ramrod, moustachioed man whose clothes could be a tee shirt and trousers. His students, however, have a much more 19th-century appearance, wearing thigh-length, long-sleeved tunics over baggy knickerbockers over stockings – which returns us to the question of what held up those stockings.

The three clearly delineated young women in Rénouard's front row are all tightly corseted. Their stocking support was probably the 'bony stays with suspenders' that Gwen Raverat describes an 1890s schoolgirl as wearing. They of course were performing Drill, not gymnastic exercises. Garters, though widely worn until decades later, cannot have been the means of support, since they would have been useless during strenuous movement. By the time the Somerford Street gymnasts were exercising, women were encouraged to suppress rather than accentuate their curves, and corsets had less boning and more elastic, or were even replaced by unboned supports with suspenders, such as the liberty bodice. This garment then is almost certainly what kept up the Somerford Street stockings.

Illustrations in *Punch* in 1891 show Victorian ladies in large hats playing croquet, tennis or golf and even roller skating while dressed in long heavy clothes, even crinolines, over tightly laced corsets. These, however, are sports in which they were intended to remain upright and they could engage in as much or as little exertion as they chose or their clothes permitted. When cricket became popular for women such clothes were less suitable. The 'Original English Lady Cricketers', for example, are shown in *The Illustrated London News* in 1890 wearing voluminous but loose clothing and skirts only to mid-calf. It would just be possible to perform Drill in such clothes, though the skirt would be an encumbrance.

Gymnastics, however, absolutely necessitates moving freely in all directions, supporting the weight of the body other than by the feet, and exerting sufficient force to propel the body through space. None of this would be possible for a woman trapped in heavy, voluminous, tight clothing. In terms of women's dress then, gymnastics was probably the most emancipating 'non-vocational' activity that could have been offered to Evening Institute students and may indeed have made them less accepting of other, non-physical constraints. Caroline and Margaret were certainly interested in current affairs and occasionally attended political meetings where the extension of women's suffrage was addressed.

*Fig 9. Drill instruction in the Girls' Gymnasium at the People's Palace, Mile End Road. An accompanying article notes that '… it is wonderful to note how surprisingly graceful and agile girls can be when placed on an equal footing with their brothers so far as costume is concerned' (Drawing by Paul Rénouard, 1894, from The Graphic)*

According to *The East London Observer*, the first ELGGA gymnastic competition attracted a large audience. The reactions of these people to the activities and dress of the participants would have varied greatly: what made some envious would have horrified others. When King George and Queen Mary visited Madame Bergman-Österberg's by then renowned College at Dartford in February 1918, the Queen was reportedly 'dismayed by the sight of young ladies doing handstands in their gym tunics'. Displays of gymnastics by men and women were frequently presented in East London, but at any such event there would have been some in the audience in that less image-rich society who had not seen young women in such a context. For them, the activities and clothes must at least have been a challenge to their preconceptions and 'confounded stereotypes of womanly weakness and inactivity', an important contribution to changing public opinion.

## LIFTED ON TO A NEW PLANE

In *The Evening Institute*, H J Edwards considered the proposals made by the Committee in 1913 and judged that many of the optimistic plans came to nothing in the period of necessary economies after the First World War. This may be true of the whole London-wide plan but planners of vision always aim for far more than can readily be achieved or afforded in order to raise the standards and extend the horizons of those being advised.

The Committee acknowledged that excellent work had been done by their ablest teachers under the previous system and that there had been 'brilliant exceptions' to the generally mediocre standards. This must also have been true of the post-1913 Institutes. Whatever the fate of the whole scheme, at Somerford Street, despite the local, national and international circumstances, the staff achieved and the students experienced much that was of lasting value. If much good resulted from efforts in

such an unpromising area, what must have been the outcomes for students in more favourably endowed parts of London?

At the very least, even if they gained not one fact or skill, students were removed, however briefly, from the potentially corrupting evening life of the streets and what did *not* happen to them was what mattered. The Institute, in the shape of Miss Dunn, sought them out at their school or workplace rather than leaving them with the daunting task of making the first approach.

The healthy gymnastic exercise helped to combat the effects of static, sedentary work in close, poorly ventilated workshops and of the cramped conditions in which they lived. Participation in team sports is considered to inculcate habits and values beneficial to the individual and to society. Gymnastics has a particular combination of team and individual elements and the values of both were encouraged in the students who grew in poise and self-esteem.

Many of the drill and gymnastic exercises were performed to music and both Caroline and Margaret found that immensely enjoyable. Now that it is possible to summon good music at will, it is difficult to convey their very great pleasure in becoming familiar, through the piano arrangements of classical pieces, with a range of good music and developing an appetite for more. The tunes came back to their lips in times of content and relaxation throughout their lives and when Margaret later discovered a talent for playing the piano she was able to share her pleasure.

They both particularly valued the company of like-minded young women (Fig 10) and the opportunity to exchange experiences of work and family events in an unthreatening environment. Their environment and the necessity to change clothes for gymnastics also facilitated conversations about more intimate aspects of students' personal lives. Many women of all ages at this time were very ignorant about their own bodies and in the absence of ubiquitous advertising, it could be difficult for a respectable young woman to gain any information. Margaret knew nothing about menstruation until she experienced it and a relative advised a most unhygienic way of dealing with it, saying 'It will soon go away'. It was her friends who gave her sound advice.

The Board of Education Report of 1909 suggested that what young people needed was the 'friendly counsel which good teachers give'. For Caroline and Margaret their gymnastics session was the highlight of their week and they were fortunate in having in Miss Nelly Duschek (see Fig 10) just the sort of teacher envisaged by the Board. Her classes were well organised, she demanded high standards of performance and behaviour, and her students greatly respected her, but they also found her approachable, friendly, and a reliable source of advice and opinion. The gymnastics teams often travelled on the bus with her to displays and competitions — good opportunities for informal, though influential, conversations. She broadened their horizons with references to her home in Switzerland and shared with them her plans to emigrate to South Africa. Miss Duschek taught many classes: other teachers would certainly have had many of her qualities. It is difficult to specify the gains but much that was of value came to the students through interaction with such women.

The London for which the Committee made its proposals for continuing education in 1913 was different in fundamental ways from the city in which Caroline and Margaret were performing their energetic gymnastic leaps in 1920, particularly in terms of the lives of young women. In education, as in other areas of public administration, plans that seem appropriate and achievable almost invariably have some of their fundamental premises swept away by events beyond the conception of their initiators. Nevertheless, when capable and conscientious people are involved in their implementation, outcomes at the individual level can be of lasting value. The Somerford Street Institute helped to compensate its students for the deficiencies of their elementary education by developing in them qualities that in schools for more prosperous young people would have been taken for granted. It succeeded in fostering in many of them the qualities they would need to lift their own lives 'on to a new plane'.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the staff of the London Metropolitan Archive, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tower Hamlets Local History Archive, and the Essex Library Service for their efficient help. Meg Warren, Secretary of the British Association of Gymnastic Coaches, and June Tatch, Secretary of the London Gymnastics Federation, were most helpful in the initial stages of the work. Sheila Cutler and Betty Lewis are custodians of the

*Fig 10. The Somerford Street senior gymnastics class 1920–21. Miss Nelly Duschek is seated in the centre of the front row. Margaret is on the extreme right and Caroline is standing immediately behind the young woman on Margaret's right. Some young women, including Caroline, are wearing their medals. Margaret had been compelled to give up her medals so that the family could pawn them and this may also be the case with other young women in the photo who are not wearing medals. The question of whether it was proper to wear medals during competitions was a hotly debated topic in gymnastics at one time (Photo: author's collection)*

unusual and most interesting Bergman-Österberg Archive at the University of Greenwich and gave valuable help and encouragement.

My most sincere and heartfelt thanks are due to the late Caroline Barker and the late Margaret Brion who inspired this work and will live always in my memory.

## NOTES

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[2] LCC Evening Institutes. Record of Character of Area and Relations with Business Houses. LMA LCC/ED/HFE/10/10.

[3] LCC Evening Institutes: handbills. LMA LCC/EO/HFE/13/125.

[4] LCC Evening Institutes. Syllabuses for Instruction. Physical Exercises for Women. M2027 May 1915. LMA LCC/EO/HFE/13/119.

[5] LCC Log Book Somerford Street Women's Evening Institute, Essex Road (from 1921). LMA LCC/EO/DIV5/SOM/LB/8.

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# PAPERS READ AT THE LAMAS LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE HELD AT THE MUSEUM OF LONDON IN NOVEMBER 2006: 'LOST LONDON'

## THE LOST RIVERS OF LONDON

*Nicholas Barton*

Throughout its length, the Thames has tributaries of various sizes. In central London these were covered over centuries ago, mainly because people threw rubbish into them, which made them smelly and unpleasant and also blocked up the stream which caused floods. In outer London, some of the larger tributaries remain open, or partly open, but sometimes rather polluted.

These tributaries, and in the past even those now buried, have been used for military, domestic, and recreational purposes, to supply water for drinking and for industry, and to drive watermills. Some were navigable. Ever since the Lea formed the frontier between Christian Wessex and the pagan Danelaw, these small rivers have formed boundaries: between parishes, boroughs, parliamentary constituencies, police divisions, postal districts, and even, formerly, telephone exchanges.

Of those now lost, the most important on the south were the **Neckinger**, which flowed past Bermondsey Abbey and whose mouth is still open as St Saviour's Dock, and the **Effra**, which rose in Norwood, passed through Herne Hill and Brixton, and joined the Thames at Vauxhall (Fig 1).

On the north, part of the **Bollo Brook** formed an ornamental canal in the grounds of Chiswick House, but became so polluted that the stream now flows in a pipe at the bottom of the canal which is fed from the Thames. **Counter's Creek** was also made into a canal, this time for boats, but it was not profitable so its bed was used for the railway which runs through Shepherd's Bush, Olympia, and West Brompton; its mouth is Chelsea Creek.

The **Westbourne** arose on the west side of Hampstead and flowed down to Kilburn, named after a tributary stream. It is remembered in the names Westbourne Grove and Bayswater. In Hyde Park it was dammed up, at the suggestion of Queen Caroline, to make the Serpentine. Flowing under Knightsbridge it continues to Sloane Square, where it crosses the Inner Circle in a large iron pipe visible above the tracks and platforms, and joins the Thames near Chelsea Bridge.

The **Tyburn** arose on the south side of Hampstead hill and flowed down to Regent's Park, where it supplied the lake (Fig 2). The sinuous course of Marylebone Lane, in an otherwise rectangular grid of streets, was once the path beside the stream. Crossing Oxford Street (where it gave its name to Tyburn gallows) and Piccadilly at their lowest points, it divided near Buckingham Palace into a delta of small streams. Two of these embraced Thorney Island, on which lovely spot was built the Abbey of Westminster. It was not lovely for long as Westminster soon became the centre of the Court and government. The southern mouth of the Tyburn, driving the Abbey mill (hence Millbank), was still open in 1642.

The **Fleet** is the largest of the tributaries within London. It arises by two heads on Hampstead Heath: one in the Vale of Heath and the other in the grounds of Kenwood House. The first supplies the Hampstead ponds and the second the Highgate ponds. They go underground

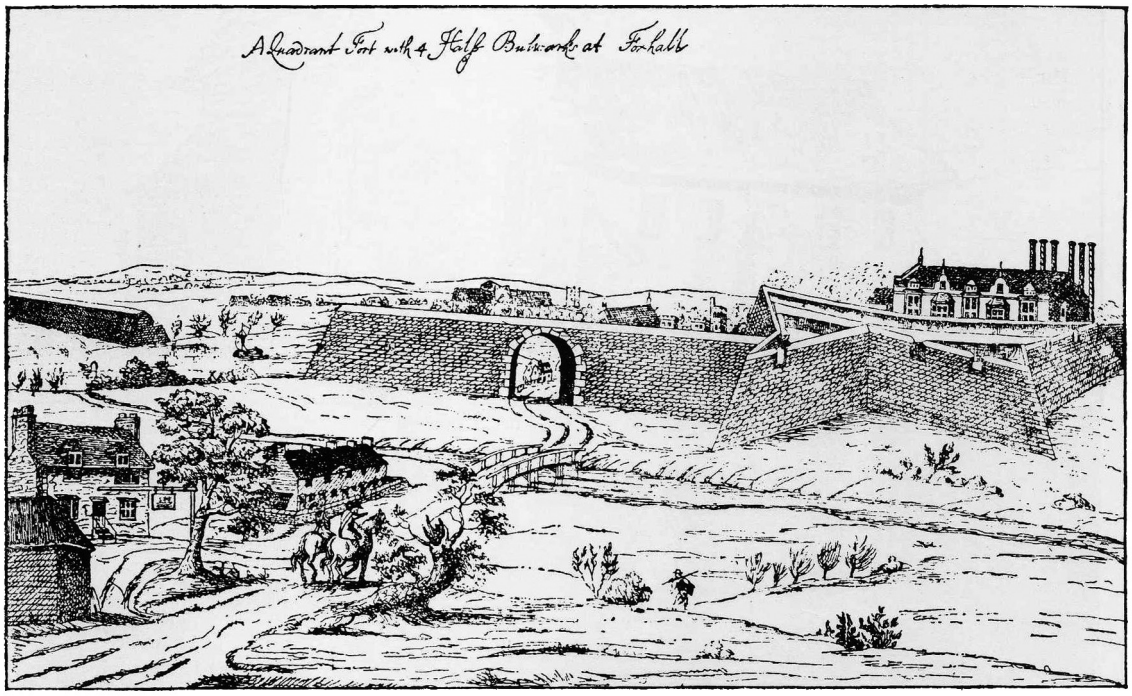


*Fig 1. The River Effra at Vauxhall beside the fort that was built as part of the Civil War defences. The River Thames is on the left. The drawing is thought to be a mid-19th-century forgery. From Nicholas Barton, The Lost Rivers of London (1992).*

*Fig 2. The Tyburn at Marylebone c.1750. The view is taken from the site of the present Wigmore Street. From Nicholas Barton, The Lost Rivers of London (1992).*

where the heath ends and join near Camden Town, forming a stream which was 65 ft wide in flood in 1826, at which time it was still quite attractive as far down as King's Cross. However, it soon declined 'from a river to a brook, from a brook to a ditch, and from a ditch to a drain', when it was enclosed to make the Fleet sewer. It followed roughly the course of King's Cross Road and almost exactly the course of Farringdon Road and Farringdon Street, where its valley, though not as deep as it once was, is still clearly visible where it is bridged by Holborn Viaduct. After the Great Fire, the Fleet below this point was converted into a canal under the direction of Wren and Hooke, but it was not used much except as a rubbish dump and by 1745 only the section below Ludgate Circus remained open; it now flows under New Bridge Street.

These polluted streams caused much disease until 1860 when Joseph Bazalgette devised a system of intercepting sewers, completed in 1865, which carried the sewage out of the tributaries before it reached the Thames and down to outfall works to the east of London where it was disposed of safely. Thanks to him, the lost rivers of London are not only out of sight but out of mind — except on an occasion such as this.

**Further reading**

N Barton *The Lost Rivers of London* (1962; revised 1992) — still in print and distributed by Phillimore: ISBN 0 948667 15 X.

## LOST CHURCHES AND CONVENTS OF MEDIEVAL LONDON

*Vanessa Harding*

Medieval London had a host of convents and religious houses, built up over a period of time, most of which were formally closed or abolished in the mid-16th century, despite their size, wealth and apparent prosperity. A few survived, but many of those that disappeared as living institutions have nevertheless left their mark on the fabric of the capital. Certainly the names of many of London's medieval religious houses and convents will be familiar, even if their connotations are not always prominent in our consciousness. Thousands of people every day get off the Underground at Temple, Blackfriars, and St Paul's; or walk along the Minories, St Martin le Grand, Crutched Friars, or Clerkenwell Road; or visit Covent Garden or the Savoy. Two of London's most famous hospitals, St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's, date from the early Middle Ages, while Westminster Abbey, of course, is one of the most visited and widely recognised buildings of today's London.

### Monasticism and mendicancy

What was the purpose of religious communities? The medieval church acknowledged two main ways of fulfilling its mission of salvation: that of ministering directly to the laity, with teaching and sacrament, to help them attain salvation themselves, and that of establishing a distinct and separate world of religious whose prayers and vicarious penances, more intense and arguably more effective than those of the lay world, would help to secure it for them. The clergy also fall into two groups, roughly corresponding to these different approaches. They can be divided into secular and regular, the secular clergy being those who ministered directly to the laity in the world, or *saecula*; the regulars, those who lived, usually in communities, under a specific rule or *regulus*. The secular clergy comprised principally priests, chaplains, deacons, and clerks in minor orders, who served the laity in parish churches and chapels and formed the lowest tier of the hierarchy of ecclesiastical authority, crowned by bishops, archbishops, and ultimately the pope. The regular clergy, sometimes just called the religious, were monks and canons (and nuns) living in communities, and the leaders of those communities, priors and abbots, prioresses and abbesses. All of these people, secular and regular, had made a lifelong commitment to service in the church, accepting celibacy as part of that commitment (apart from those in minor orders like parish clerks), but only the regulars had made a binding profession of obedience to a particular rule of life, which dictated exactly how and where they lived. The secular clergy were wholly masculine; the only significant opportunities for women religious lay within the regular life, in houses of nuns or sisters.

Over the years, a range of institutions developed within each of these broad missions. The older monastic orders generally followed the order or rule of St Benedict or St Augustine, which related principally to the idea of fixed, resident communities of religious, sometimes distancing themselves from the lay world,

sometimes open to it, but convinced of the primacy of their mission of prayer and penance. Generally speaking, the Benedictine religious were monks and nuns, the Augustinians canons and canonesses. In the 11th and 12th centuries several new orders of religious were created, often with very prescriptive rules, catering for particular circumstances; these included the austere and separatist Carthusian order and the orders of Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller established to defend the holy places of Palestine and to care for Christian travellers and pilgrims there.

The dominance of the enclosed orders was challenged in the early 13th century by the teachings of St Dominic and St Francis, and the orders of friars that they founded. The friars were to be the type of later medieval religious, completely involved in the world in a literal and topographical sense, but spiritually isolated from it — in principle at least — by a complete rejection of its values. Both Dominicans and Franciscans adopted poverty as a guiding rule; unlike the regular houses, they eschewed the accumulation of property as a source of income, and depended on begging and alms. They criticised the church hierarchy and the older orders for accepting secular values, and especially for, as they saw it, having compromised the apostolic purity of motive and action of the primitive church by pragmatism. Their role was to minister to the laity directly, by providing an example, by preaching — the Dominicans' speciality — and by offering direct access to spiritual benefits, for example by acting as confessors. In this, they were phenomenally successful. By the beginning of the 14th century, less than a hundred years after their foundation, there were perhaps 600 Dominican houses and 1,400 Franciscan across Europe: say 12,000 and 28,000 friars of the two kinds. They benefited from the growth of towns, in which their houses were located, and also from the growth of the universities, in which they played an important role. However, they were looked on with some suspicion by older foundations and sometimes by the parish clergy, and their direct dependence on alms and donations could make them seem more rather than less implicated in the secular economy.

Alongside the houses of monks, canons, nuns, and friars were numerous hospitals, run by the religious as places of asylum and sometimes medical cure. Sometimes they split off from original monastic foundations, separating the mission of care from that of prayer; sometimes they were founded as hospitals from the first, perhaps for a special constituency such as clerics, lepers, or the insane.

## The London Houses

Medieval London had a significant number of religious houses: it was a centre of population, wealth, and royal interest from at least the 11th century, so that royal, religious, and lay founders all responded to its needs and circumstances. The majority of these houses generated significant archival records, with cartularies, collections of deeds, administrative documents, and estate records. Many of these passed to the Crown at the Dissolution, and now form part of the collections at The National Archives.[1] Some of these records have been published, and the histories of several individual houses written. A short history of each of the religious houses in and near the City of London was included in the *Victoria County History of London*, vol 1 (1909), with houses in outer Middlesex and Surrey covered in *Victoria County History of Middlesex*, vol 1 (1969), and *Victoria County History of Surrey* vol 2 (1967). In addition, the accounts of religious houses from the VCH *London* have been republished with new information and corrections as *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex*, edited by Caroline Barron and Matthew Davies. The following discussion relies heavily on the VCH accounts for information and detail; what is offered here is an overview.[2]

A brief listing of the London houses indicates their number and variety. The earliest religious foundation, apart from St Paul's, was the abbey of Benedictine monks founded at Westminster, well before the Conquest, which came to be the royal church and mausoleum. It was endowed and/or rebuilt by a succession of monarchs, notably Edward the Confessor, Henry III, and Henry VII. It was a large and wealthy house, with some 80 monks in the 11th century, and estates across southern England.[3] Bermondsey Abbey in Surrey, a Cluniac house, was founded in 1082, and St Helen's Priory, a house of Benedictine nuns, was established in the City in the 12th century. Several houses of Augustinian canons were also founded in the first half of the 12th century: the priory of St Mary Overey, in Southwark; the priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate (also known as Christchurch); and the priory of St Bartholomew in Smithfield. Houses of

Augustinian canonesses were founded in the same period, at Kilburn, Clerkenwell, and Halliwell (in modern Shoreditch). The 12th century also saw the foundation or evolution of London's major hospitals. St Bartholomew's Hospital had separated from the priory within a few decades of the latter's foundation to become a distinct institution, and St Thomas's in Southwark originated in the 12th century in the precincts of St Mary Overey, though it was refounded as a separate entity in the early 13th century. The hospitals of St Giles Holborn, for lepers, St James Westminster, St Mary Bishopsgate (also known as St Mary Spital), and St Katharine by the Tower were established before 1200.

London's religious houses belonged to international or transnational orders, and had interests and loyalties beyond their immediate setting, but their mission was local and specific: they were established to be of benefit to the family and community of the founder. The crusading orders were rather different, however. The order of Knights Templar was one of the results of the early crusading movement, which linked two aspects of Christian sanctity — the holy warrior in the just war, and the monk. The Knights Templar were founded to guard the Christian shrines in Palestine, as the Knights Hospitaller were established to defend and succour pilgrims and crusaders. There were relatively few active knights but many more members of the orders, though they were never numerous like for example the Cistercians, whose rule they followed, let alone the friars. The orders were international and military, with a command structure that crossed national boundaries; their active role was set in Palestine, but there were houses in Western Europe that served as resources for men and supplies or rent income, and also as hospices for travellers. They also actively channelled funds towards the Holy Land, and became expert at international exchange and remission of funds. They were credited with huge wealth, because of their money-handling activities, and indeed the French order acted as treasurers to the crown. The English order had an income of some £4,000 a year in the late 12th century. London had a house of Knights Templar, founded in the early 12th century in Holborn, but it had moved to its permanent site off Fleet Street by 1184, where the Temple Church was built. The Knights Hospitaller were established in Clerkenwell at the priory of St John of Jerusalem in the 12th century; they succeeded to some of the Templars' lands when the latter were disbanded in the early 14th century.

Most of London's religious houses were on the periphery of the built-up area of the City, but one new and distinctive house was founded in the city centre in the early 13th century, the house or hospital of St Thomas of Acre. Dedicated to London's popular patron saint St Thomas Becket, it occupied the site of his birthplace in Cheapside. Originally a military order, it later adopted the Augustinian rule. A few more small hospitals were founded in the 13th century, including one dedicated to St Mary of Bethlehem, later focusing on the care of the insane, in the northern suburb, but the foundation of large enclosed houses had effectively ceased by 1250.

But the 13th century was pre-eminently the age of the friars, and London, as a substantial urban centre, attracted all the major orders. Both Dominican or Black Friars and Franciscan or Grey Friars arrived in the 1220s, and established themselves within the city walls; unlike the enclosed houses, they needed to be close to and accessible to the lay population. The Carmelite or White Friars, the Augustinian (Austin) Friars, and the Crossed or Crutched Friars followed within a few decades, again mostly finding sites within the walls. A small foundation of Friars of the Sack, or of Penitence, was not long-lived, but the other houses were large (both Dominicans and Franciscans built large churches to which the laity were welcomed) and well-populated. The Franciscans were also known as Friars Minor, and a house of Franciscan nuns, of the order of St Clare, popularly known as the Minoresses, was founded outside Aldgate in the street now known as Minories.

Medieval London probably reached its maximum size in the early 14th century, and was certainly well supplied with religious houses by that date. The plagues of 1348–51, however, while decimating the population, also prompted a renewed interest in penitential and intercessory provision. The big plague burial grounds to the east and the north-west of the City became the sites of, respectively, the Cistercian house of St Mary Graces and the Charterhouse. Both orders had originated much earlier, and both were associated with seclusion and distancing from centres of population, and perhaps for this reason had not attracted the interest of potential founders in London. But the orders' reputation

for austerity and holiness may have made them newly attractive to a society that attributed plague to divine displeasure and sought to appease it through enhanced devotion and observance.

An increased interest in chantries, fraternities, and intercessory foundations has also been attributed to post-plague anxieties, especially to people's fears of dying spiritually or practically unprepared. Most of London's parish churches accumulated several chantry and obituary endowments between 1350 and 1548, while a few wealthier Londoners established colleges of chantry priests such as Whittington College, transforming the parish church of St Michael Paternoster Royal into a small religious community.[4] Londoners also continued to express care for the practical well-being of their fellows, in the foundation of almshouses and small hospitals, more for the old than the sick, quite often entrusting these to the administration of a city company. The last major religious foundation in London (actually just outside the City itself) was Henry VII's hospital of the Savoy, founded in 1509 and unusually well-staffed and equipped.

**Londoners and the London Houses**

Convents, friaries, hospitals were in London, then, but how far were they 'of' London? Certainly Londoners had contributed to, or even instituted, religious foundations, and continued to make donations, though the focus of lay benevolence shifted very much towards the friars in the later Middle Ages. The friaries were more in the world; friars acted as confessors to the laity, and the Dominicans especially preached to them. The prayers of the friars were frequently sought by the dying, and it was common for middling and wealthy Londoners to make bequests to the four orders of friars in London (usually omitting the Crutched Friars), either to attend their funerals, to hold simultaneous requiem masses, or to intercede after death. The Greyfriars church was especially popular for burial: Isabella, the wife of Edward II, was buried there, as were many of the mercantile élite. The Austin Friars, with their international profile, offered a home-from-home for the Italian community and were commonly remembered in their wills or requested as a burial site.[5]

Londoners also joined the orders and houses, though in what numbers over all it is hard to establish. A few daughters of wealthy Londoners became nuns, and by the 16th century some widows joined smaller institutions as vowesses or corrodians. Female houses might offer shelter and an effective retirement home, and the house of the Minoresses had several aristocratic lodgers and visitors. The closed orders and houses probably figured largely only in the lives of servants and precinct inhabitants, though there were probably more of those than we realise. One exception may be the centrally located house of St Thomas of Acre: the church became a landmark in London life, an important place for meeting and also for burial, and had been adopted, if not actually taken over, by the Mercers' Company in the early 16th century.[6] Several foundations, including St Thomas of Acre, St Paul's, and the Hospital of St Anthony of Vienne, offered schooling to London boys.

The most visible and significant religious institution for most Londoners was however St Paul's Cathedral, staffed by canons rather than monks and run by a Dean and Chapter.[7] The cathedral was literally open to Londoners, who used it as a place of worship and civic celebration but also as a meeting-place, for trading, hiring, recreation (up to a point), and as a pedestrian cut-through from one street to another. It always featured in royal entries and processions, and Prince Arthur and Katherine of Aragon were married there in 1502. The cathedral itself was never a major focus of civic burial, but some citizens founded chantries there, and a number were buried in the churchyard. The Dance of Death decorating the walls of the Pardon Churchyard was a noted feature, while the great churchyard was both an ancient locus of the folkmoot and a central site for preaching. To address a congregation from Paul's Cross pulpit in the churchyard was to address the City, and through it the nation. Sermons were preached declaring Henry VI the true king in 1471, proclaiming Edward IV's sons to be bastards in 1483, and denouncing Empson and Dudley, ministers of Henry VII, after the latter's death. Papal Bulls were read there, and in the 16th century both Protestant and Catholic Reformations were preached there. Wolsey pronounced anathema on Luther from a platform in the churchyard in 1521, and finished with burning his works; Tyndale's Testament and Coverdale's Bible were burned there in 1546. The precinct also housed the cathedral school, refounded by Dean Colet in 1509, and an important educational resource for Londoners. Some sense of the interest Londoners had in St Paul's is reflected in

references to events and incidents there in the 15th-century London chronicles. Memorably dramatic events for the people of London included the erection of the weathercock on the steeple in 1422, the lightning-strike that set the steeple on fire in 1443, and the storm that blew off the weathercock in January 1506.[8]

**The Dissolution of the Monasteries**

Apart from the house of Knights Templar, disbanded with the rest of the order in the early 14th century (though their church survives, encapsulated in the legal precinct of the Temple), London's religious houses mostly survived until the Henrician Reformation of the 1530s. By the early 16th century, however, many of the large old houses were dwindling in numbers, and some were allegedly suffering from poor discipline and financial problems. The flow of benefactions had decreased, as more was diverted to chantries and charities. The monasteries thus offered a comparatively soft target for the reforming zeal (and financial acumen) of Thomas Cromwell. If the monasteries were not fulfilling their role of liturgical and behavioural example, what were they for? Especially if at least some individuals had begun to doubt the spiritual efficacy of intercession at all.

Historians debate how much of the 'programme' of reformation was actually planned or foreseen at any stage, but it does look as if Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate, was something of a test case for the closure of religious houses. In 1532 the house still had 18 canons beside the prior, and an annual value of *c.*£355, so it was neither impoverished nor insignificant, but it was surrendered to the Crown with relatively little fuss. In 1534 the priory site was granted to the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Audley.[9] Smaller houses, arguably insufficiently endowed or manned to fulfil their mission, were surrendered in 1536. In London this included the 14th-century hospital of St Mary within Cripplegate ('Elsingspital'), with a prior and ten canons, and the house of Augustinian canonesses at Kilburn. The breach with Rome also brought about the downfall of the Charterhouse, despite its size (30 choir monks and 18 lay brethren) and prestige. Most of the monks were imprisoned, and either executed or died in prison, for resisting Henry VIII's claim to primacy in church affairs.

The years 1538–40 saw the closure of almost all London's religious houses, apart from some of the hospitals, and the confiscation of their assets (including their libraries and archives) by the Crown. The new Court of Augmentations, formed in 1536 when the smaller houses were being suppressed, handled a huge volume of business over the next couple of decades, surveying, valuing, and disposing of religious properties. Relatively little London property remained in the Crown's hands: in effect, there was a wholesale transfer of ownership from institutional and religious hands to those of the laity, prompting partnerships of courtiers and financiers to exploit the new opportunities for investment. In addition to the precincts and local rental properties held by the London houses, religious houses all over the country held endowments in London, so a very large amount of real estate changed hands. Churches, secular buildings (such as the lodgings of abbots and priors), and rental property met varying fates. Some monastic church buildings found new life as parish churches: the church of Elsingspital was taken over by the adjacent parish of St Alphege, while the Greyfriars church became the church for a new parish of Christ Church in Newgate Street. The Minoresses' precinct became the new parish of Holy Trinity Minories, with the conventual church becoming the parish church. The church of St Thomas of Acre was adopted by the Mercers' Company as their company chapel.

The priory church of St Mary Overey in Southwark became a parish church and later, in 1905, Southwark Cathedral. Others, however, were demolished or converted to secular uses. The town houses of provincial abbeys and priories were mostly snapped up by courtiers and nobles, as were some of the precincts of London houses, with their spacious gardens and attractive residential buildings. Sir Richard Rich, first chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, obtained the site and buildings of St Bartholomew's Priory; Charterhouse came into the hands of Sir Edward (later Lord) North, Rich's successor.[10]

It is difficult to estimate the numbers dispossessed by the closure of the religious houses in London. A rough count, based on the numbers returned to the Valor Ecclesiasticus in 1536, summarised in the VCH accounts, suggests that 280 or more religious lost their places. In most cases they received pensions, and a few of the monks and canons may have found other employment in the church. But most of the houses also had lay servants, administrative

personnel, and dependants, who also lost their immediate employment. Local circles of tradesmen and suppliers, such as the cornman, fishmonger, butcher, and brewer mentioned in the domestic accounts of St Helen's Priory, must have suffered from the loss of substantial and long-term customers. Monastic dispensation of alms and food may not have played such a significant role in London's economy of charity as it did elsewhere, but between them the City's religious houses gave out a considerable volume of relief, in pittances and doles, in addition to supporting longer-term inmates such as the 14 paupers resident in St Giles's Hospital, Holborn. Artistic treasures and traditions were lost, including liturgical books and manuscripts, music, church bells, and a large quantity of plate. The treasuries of the three major friaries alone yielded some 4,500 ounces of silver plate.

Several religious houses survived, though sometimes in a reformed or reconstituted state. Westminster Abbey was dissolved in 1540 and reconstituted as a cathedral chapter for the new but short-lived see of Westminster, with the last abbot becoming the first dean. The abbey was briefly refounded under Mary but in 1560 Elizabeth reinstated the collegiate body with a dean and prebendaries. The hospitals had a mixed fate: some, like Elsingspital and St Mary Spital were closed, and their assets surrendered, despite arguments for their valuable function; others, including St Mary of Bethlehem and St Katherine by the Tower, were spared. St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's underwent several difficult years before being revived as part of the cluster of new and restored foundations run by the City of London. A significant amount of their medieval endowment had been dispersed, however, though St Thomas's subsequently received part of the endowment of Henry VII's Hospital of the Savoy. Some of the buildings of the former Charterhouse also had a new history, from the early 17th century, as an almshouse (Sutton's Hospital) and school.

## Lost and Found

The dissolution of the religious houses undoubtedly had a profound impact on the appearance and cartography of the City. Communities established for centuries were dispersed, familiar landmarks transformed, ways of perceiving and experiencing the City reshaped. The historian John Stow, writing some fifty years after the event, catalogued the fate of many of London's religious sites, and his account leaves the reader in no doubt of the significance of the Dissolution, though at the same time his careful record ensured that the names and locations of the former religious houses would not fade into oblivion.[11] But the Dissolution was by no means the only agent for major change in Tudor London: the religious reformation of Edward VI had a greater impact on the parish churches and the liturgical lives of Londoners, while economic and demographic forces together transformed the size, social and occupational structures, and the economic topography of the metropolis. The secularisation of the precincts offered some new and often under-regulated spaces for the growing population to colonise, but did not in itself cause the population expansion of the later 16th century.

Nor is it likely that, without the Dissolution, we would still have all the abbeys and conventual buildings of the medieval city. The Fire of 1666, wartime bombings, changing architectural and ecclesiological tastes, and the pressure of redevelopment have between them decimated London's medieval buildings, including the churches that survived the Reformation. St Paul's Cathedral lost its magnificent spire in a lightning-strike in 1561, and was already in a seriously dilapidated state before the Civil War. The Great Fire destroyed what then survived of the Greyfriars church and St Thomas of Acre, as well as St Paul's. The parish churches of St Bartholomew the Less (within the hospital) and Holy Trinity Minories were largely rebuilt in the 18th century. St Stephen's chapel within the Palace of Westminster, formerly a royal collegiate foundation, was destroyed by fire in 1834. The church of the Austin Friars, given a new life as the church of the Dutch congregation after the Reformation, was bombed in 1940. Likewise, not all that appears to be medieval is in fact so: though Gothic in style, the western towers of Westminster Abbey date from the 18th century, while St Mary Overey, Southwark (the present cathedral) was extensively restored and its nave rebuilt in the 19th century.[12]

However, as noted at the beginning, though much has been lost, quite a bit survives, in one way or another. Many of London's religious houses are still traceable, as standing buildings or parts of buildings, in anomalies in the street-pattern, in place-names, through institutional continuities or successions. And sometimes what

was lost is unexpectedly found. Fire damage in 1941 to the standing, largely early modern, buildings on the site of the Charterhouse revealed much detail of the medieval priory's layout including the grave of Sir Walter Manny, the house's founder.[13] Wartime destruction also necessitated the rebuilding of Mercers' Hall, which brought to light a late medieval statue of Christ's recumbent body which had remained hidden since the 16th century. Probably once part of an Easter sepulchre in the church of St Thomas of Acre, it is a tantalising remnant and reminder of the artistic patronage of London's religious houses.[14] And even more recently, redevelopment on the site of Holy Trinity Priory uncovered the foundations of a chapel and part of the chancel arcade of the priory church. The chapel was consolidated for preservation and moved, but the arcade, which stands to a considerable height, and had been preserved inside a party wall since the 16th century, is still visible *in situ* from the street.[15]

## NOTES

1 For a listing of the records of religious houses holding property in London, see D Keene & V Harding *A Survey of Sources for Property-Holding in London before the Great Fire* London Record Society 22 (1985).

2 The VCH accounts are all now accessible via British History Online at http://www.british-history.ac.uk. See also C Barron & M Davies *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex* (2007). If no other source is given, the VCH accounts are the source for all details in the following discussion.

3 E Mason (ed) *Westminster Abbey Charters, 1066–c.1214* London Record Society 25 (1988); B Harvey *Living and Dying in England, 1100–1540. The Monastic Experience* (1993).

4 *cf* R Hill 'London chantries' in F R H Du Boulay & C M Barron (eds) *The Reign of Richard II*; C J Kitching (ed) *The London and Middlesex Chantry Certificate of 1548* London Record Society 16 (1980).

5 C L Kingsford *The Grey Friars of London: their History, with the Register of their Convent and an Appendix of Documents* (1915); J Rohrkasten 'Londoners and London mendicants in the late Middle Ages' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996), 446–77; S L Thrupp 'Aliens in and around London in the 15th century' in A E J Hollaender & W Kellaway (ed) *Studies in London History Presented to P.E. Jones* (1969), 251–72.

6 *cf* D Keene & V Harding *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire, vol i, Cheapside* (microfiche, 1987; full text available online at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.asp?pubid=8), 105/18.

7 For a recent and very full account of St Paul's, see D Keene, R A Burns & A Saint (eds) *St Paul's: the Cathedral Church of London 604–2004* (2004).

8 A H Thomas & I Thornley (eds) *The Great Chronicle of London* (1938; repr 1983), 122, 177, 286, 330.

9 M C Rosenfield 'Holy Trinity Aldgate on the eve of the Dissolution' *Guildhall Miscellany* 3.3 (1970), 159–73.

10 *cf* C M Barron 'Centres of conspicuous consumption: the aristocratic town house in London, 1200–1550' *London Journal* 20 (1995), 1–16.

11 J Stow *A Survey of London* (1603; ed with introduction and notes by C L Kingsford, 1908; repr 1971).

12 H A Harben *A Dictionary of London* (1918), under Trinity (Holy), Minories; N Pevsner *The Buildings of England. London, 1. The Cities of London and Westminster* (1957; 3rd edn, revised B Cherry, 1973), 181, 201–2, 406, 529–30; B Cherry & N Pevsner *The Buildings of England. London, 2. South* (1983).

13 *VCH Middlesex*, 1, 159–69; D Knowles & W F Grimes *Charterhouse: the Medieval Foundation in the Light of Recent Discoveries* (1954); B Barber & C Thomas *The London Charterhouse* MoLAS Monograph 10 (2002).

14 J Evans & N Cook 'A statue of Christ from the ruins of Mercers' Hall' *Archaeological Journal* 111 (1955 for 1954), 168–80.

15 J Schofield & R Lea *Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate, City of London: an Archaeological Reconstruction and History* (2005).

## THE ABERCROMBIE PLAN FOR LONDON — LOST OPPORTUNITIES?

*Kelvin MacDonald FRTPI, FRSA*

Archaeology and planning history are very similar. Some will see them as the study of things — artefacts in your case, plans in mine — but, in reality they are about people. People who suffered change and development, people who welcomed it and people who brought it about.

In the case of the Abercrombie Plans for London, it is often assumed that they were the innovative inspiration of one man — this man — Sir Leslie Patrick Abercrombie, born in 1879, the son of a Manchester stockbroker and destined to become, in the contemporary words of planning pioneer Sir Frederick Osborne, 'the only philosophic or sociological planner in the country', the Professor of Planning at University College London and a knight.

In fact the ideas that contributed to this — one of the greatest of all plans — can be traced back to a collection of ideas dating back to Elizabethan times and the people that mattered most in this plan were the people of London. As the Greater London Plan itself stated, 'Dominating … is the community idea — at one end the community of the Capital of the Empire, at the other the communities of simple people whose work and existence happen to lie within this imperial metropolitan region'.[1]

## The County of London Plan 1943 and the Greater London Plan 1944

Before tracing the thinking behind this plan and before we try to look at its legacy, I need to describe the essential characteristics of the plan. In fact there are two plans — the County of London Plan of 1943[2] and the Greater London Plan dated 1944[3] (but not published until a year later). The former was prepared by J H Forshaw, the Architect to the London County Council, and Patrick Abercrombie and the latter by a team led by Abercrombie. Abercrombie saw them as twin documents,[4] with one focusing on the area of the then LCC and the other looking at its hinterland.

The 1943 plan listed the 'four major defects of London' as being: 'overcrowding and out-of-date housing; inadequate and maldistribution of open spaces; the jumble of houses and industry compressed between road and rail communication; and traffic congestion.' The solution to these complex and interrelated problems was a bold one. As Professor Sir Peter Hall has stated, Abercrombie did nothing less than '… create a new spatial order for London: in it, fast traffic highways not only solve the traffic congestion problem, but also give definition and shape to the reconstructed communities they separate, by flowing through green strips which additionally bring much needed open space to London'.[5]

In the 1944 plan he took this spatial vision one step further to map out a new order for the whole region — epitomised in the diagram contained on page 30 of the Plan. The Plan stated that, 'After full consideration we have come to the conclusion that the main pattern of the Plan should be based upon the faintly indicated structure of concentric form. The natural evolution of disorderly growth can be shaped into some semblance of ordered design …' The four rings were the Inner Urban Ring — the overspill from the LCC area; the Suburban Ring — 'this ring, with regard to population and industry, is to be regarded as a static zone'; the Green Belt Ring — 'permanently safeguarded against building'; and the Outer Country Ring — 'the chief reception area for overcrowded London'. It was in this 'reception area' that Abercrombie and his team proposed ten 'new satellite towns'[6] and the expansion of existing towns. It is for this, the green belt and satellite towns, that the Abercrombie Plans are best known across the world.

However, the plans have four other attributes that cannot be forgotten. First, roads and traffic formed a key element of the plans. Second, the plans took a strategic view of a great city and of its hinterland but, ultimately, they were plans about the myriad communities that made up Greater London. One of the most exciting maps in the 1943 County of London Plan is that which shows the amoeba like communities in, and on the edge of, London.[7] The Plan stated that 'recognition of the existing community structure of London must be implicit in any main reconstruction proposals; to ignore London as it exists and treat it as one vast area for experiment would lead to incalculable and unnecessary disturbance to people's lives …'.

Third, the 1944 Plan was not just about a green belt around London, but about the relationship between the countryside and the built up city. The Plan states that 'there is the need to preserve, wherever they exist, wedges of countryside which still in a few places thrust their points into the built-up mass'. In particular, the Plan was instrumental in focusing on the need to prevent the Lee Valley from being industrialised.[8]

Finally, it was very concerned with the apparently prosaic issue of density. As Lord Esher has written, 'Residential density was an obsession of the period. It was something you could get your teeth into: the mathematics were elementary and the flats-versus-houses controversy was familiar and affected everybody …'.[9] Abercrombie was a leading light in the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), a national body promoting both garden cities and lower densities. One of the key points about the 1944 Plan's dispersal of population from London was that it would allow Londoners to live at much lower densities — predominantly in houses with front gardens.

Indeed, one of the few criticisms of the 1943 County of London Plan was from those who supported lower densities and felt Abercrombie

had not gone far enough. TCPA Director Frederic Osborne, in one of a series of letters to US urban seer Lewis Mumford, wrote, 'I could not have believed that any planner could state in full detail the case for Decentralisation and then produce a Plan that doesn't do the main thing necessary — permit the majority of people to have decent family homes'.[10]

Despite such criticisms — which Abercrombie was at pains to redress in the 1944 Plan — no one could deny that these were certainly bold plans. The boldness reflected the man himself. Lord Esher has written that, 'Abercrombie was an Edwardian … So his training was classical, his tastes Arts-and-Crafts. But with his wide culture, his curiosity, his vivid literacy, he was a renaissance man in the wider sense …'.[11] We hear stories of his arrogance, but also of his willingness to let others do the survey and analytical work that underpins great plans. Perhaps this emphasis on the more 'philosophic' side of planning, combined with a tremendous self confidence, can be seen in the Plan itself.

Professor Peter Self has commented that, 'By today's standards the GLP looks very unsophisticated. It contained no forecasts of population and employment except for the mistaken assumption that the population of the London region would not increase and might be slightly reduced. It offered none of the new fashionable "options" for public policy, which could be the subject of public consultation. (The hidden assumption here was that there was already sufficient consensus about goals.) The plan was not costed on the argument that well planned need cost no more than unplanned development and would produce unpriced social benefit; and Abercrombie added the perhaps perceptive remark that "any economic evaluation depends upon the breadth or narrowness of the conception of the word economics".'

## The context of the Plans

The clearest context for the 1943 and 1944 Plans is that they were prepared in wartime. Abercrombie and Forshaw were commissioned to do the County of London Plan in April 1941 — a month before the concerted period of the Blitz was to end and a year before the Africa campaign started to give some hope of an allied victory. London was devastated in the War. In October 1940, Sir Winston Churchill had stated that, 'Most painful is the number of small houses inhabited by working folk which has been destroyed … We will rebuild them, more to our credit than some of them were before. London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham may have much more to suffer, but they will rise from their ruins, more healthy and, I hope, more beautiful'. It is fitting and telling that the frontispiece of the 1943 Plan was a picture of a bombed out family packing up their belongings and, below it, the Prime Minister's 1940 statement.

The second context was, in many ways, related to the first. This was the paradoxically combined national desire to protect the countryside but to provide decent housing for all. One of a series of morale boosting propaganda posters showed an English landscape (the South Downs near Brighton), with the slogan 'Fight for it now'. The pressures for protecting the countryside date back before the Great War.[12] Abercrombie had been at the forefront of the lobby to protect the countryside after the First World War and had been a founding member of the Council for the Preservation (now Protection) of Rural England and he carried this view into the 1944 Plan — 'Let urbanism prevail and preponderate in the Town and let the Country remain rural. Keep the distinction clear'.

However, as Professor Peter Self has stated, 'The widely accepted arguments for "containing" London had to be squared with another at least as strong political imperative — namely to provide decent homes and associated facilities for very many deprived Londoners. The London Blitz had stoked these social aspirations, which were unlikely to evaporate (and did not evaporate) nearly so quickly as did "homes for heroes" after World War One'. This extract from a Labour Party leaflet of 1943[13] shows the clear link between thoughts of a forthcoming victory and the rewards that might be reaped in terms of housing conditions. This combination of a need for redevelopment brought about by war and a belief in both countryside protection and decent homes for all can start to explain the form that the Abercrombie Plans — and, in particular, the 1944 Greater London Plan — took.

Some may assume that, given the contexts above, the spatial vision for London sprang fully formed from Abercrombie's fertile brain. Let us examine this in a little greater detail. First, the origins of the idea of stopping the outward growth of the city. The GLP itself quotes a proclamation from Elizabeth I made over 360 years before the Plan.[14] Next the idea

of a green belt. That Elizabethan proclamation contained such thinking implicitly and this was made explicit in a plan for London produced by landscape designer John Claudius in 1829 showing concentric and alternating rings of open land and development.

Then the idea of the green belt combined with self-contained satellite towns. This is where Ebenezer Howard comes in. In his book, *Tomorrow — a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* published in 1898, Howard spelt out his ideas for a series of self-contained settlements, each separated from the next by open land and each being limited to a given population size — termed the 'social city'.

Abercrombie has a direct line to Howard through Raymond Unwin, Howard's architect for his first Garden City at Letchworth and Abercrombie's colleague. Unwin produced the first report for the London Regional Planning Committee in 1929, which posed the question 'Should London be provided with something which might be called an agricultural belt, so that it would form a dividing line between Greater London as it is and the satellites or fresh developments that might take place at a greater distance?' Abercrombie himself had set out such thinking before he undertook the London Plans. In his plan for the coalfields of East Kent in 1925, he proposed eight small new towns set within a green belt, which, as Peter Hall has pointed out, is 'a prophetic echo, down to the precise number, of his strategy eighteen years later for Greater London'.[15] In 1935 the London County Council voted £2m for buying up green belt land — and brought nearly 100 square miles by 1938.[16]

Whilst none of the ideas in the Abercrombie Plans may have been original, it was in the bringing together of them in one unified vision that genius lay. Added to this, the vision was brought together in a graphic — some would say 'cartoon' — form and was thus far more assimilable than text. As Peter Hall has pointed out, 'Abercrombie … was trained as an architect … that background shows in everything he did. He always thought in design terms, and to him a planning commission was very much like an architectural commission: he produced a one-shot, partly intuitive design solution to a problem'.[17]

This emphasis on design was also reflected in the level of detail to which both Plans went. At the one end there was a spatial vision for a very large proportion of the South-East, at the other were detailed plans for the redevelopment of parts of London at lower densities and for new satellite settlements outside the built up area. A proposal for an area of Bermondsey reflects the themes of the Plan itself: neighbourhood units 'each with its own schools, local shops and smaller open spaces'; roads canalised to avoid cutting up the neighbourhood units; an increase of open space and a re-ordering of land use to form a 'compact zone' of industry.

## How the Plans were received and implemented

The Plans were subject to a degree of publicity and fame that modern planners can only dream of. The County of London Plan was exhibited in the Royal Academy in November 1943 whilst the 1944 Plan was issued in a Penguin paperback.[18] The approach to planning espoused in the exhibition at the 1951 Festival of Britain was based on the principles put forward in the Abercrombie Plans. The Festival of Britain Guidebook to the town planning exhibition in Poplar stated that, 'On this ground, so recently a derelict and bomb-scarred wilderness, has risen not a tangle of Jerry-built and pokey dwellings, but a new urban landscape in which the buildings are growing together as a community' — a direct link between buildings and communities which would gladden Abercrombie's heart.[19]

The Plans received an equal share of praise from Abercrombie's peers. In their continuing exchange of letters, Lewis Mumford wrote to Frederick Osborn, 'I don't know which to admire more about Abercrombie's work: its intellectual penetration, its political skill, its beauty of presentation, or its all-round comprehension of the planner's and the citizen's job'. Osborn replied, 'The broad principle of the Plan is what we have been fighting for all these years. Everybody is talking Dispersal, Satellite Towns, Green Belts, Location of Industry, etc.'.[20]

As Peter Self has pointed out, the 1944 Plan, '…offered something for everyone. Rural interests were given the prospect of strict curbs upon London's growth geared to rural and agricultural protection. Urban interests, especially the long queue of people for public housing, had the prospect held out of a much improved and more attractive living and working environment geared to rural and agricultural protection. The GLP was both radical and conservative, romantic and traditional'.[21]

But this adulation of the Plan did not extend to those most directly affected by the creation of the new towns and the implementation of the Abercrombie Plan was not without resistance. The American magazine *Time* in 1946 reported a visit by the Minister of Town and Country Planning to Stevenage, 'That night, when Mr. Silkin rose to speak at the town hall, he was greeted with yells of "Gestapo!" "Hark, the dictator!" "We want our birthright!" Red-faced Mr. Silkin shouted back: "Really, you are the most ungenerous people." … Late that night Mr. Silkin rode gloomily back to London in a borrowed car. Some ungenerous soul had let the air out of his tires'.[22] Later that year, the same magazine reported that, 'Town & Country Planning Minister Lewis Silkin also got his share of panning. Sly residents of the little hamlet of Stevenage, which had furiously opposed Silkin's plans to reconstruct the town along model Socialist lines, Russified their railroad station signs and signposts leading into the town to read "Silkingrad".'[23]

Despite such opposition, we can see the fundamental implementation of the Plans in the structure of London today. The green belt has not only held, but has been extended and has become, to some, almost sacrosanct. The eight 'Abercrombie' new towns around London were joined by Milton Keynes on 23 January 1967 and while his other plans for town expansions did not fulfil their potential, we can see the Plans legacy in Peterborough and Northampton. The road proposals were not implemented in full but, for better or for worse, the M25 follows the line of Abercrombie's D ring road.

At the more local level, we can see the thinking of the Plan in the arts and office centre on the South Bank, in Thameslink, in the current plans to link London railway stations by cross rail, and in some of the estates that did get built at the densities of 136 persons per acre that the Plan had proposed. The best known of these is the Lansbury Estate in Abercrombie's Stepney and Poplar redevelopment area. This estate became the basis for the Festival of Britain's Live Architecture Exhibition.[24]

## Lost opportunities

So why have I have subtitled this talk 'lost opportunities'. This is not because the Plans, like so many today, lay unimplemented on bookshelves. The preceding section has shown how untrue this is. It is partly because the ideals in the Plan started to be compromised by changes that Abercrombie did not — and, perhaps, could not — have foreseen, but also due to the fact that the thinking in them and the boldness of vision they contained were not taken up by a new generation of planners.

The first of the unforeseen forces of change was that of changes to population and to jobs. The 1944 Plan was based on five assumptions:

> If the Port of London ceases to thrive, London will decay;
> that no new industry shall be admitted to London & the home counties except in special cases;
> the [population] numbers in the centre will decrease, those in the outer area will grow;
> the total population of the area will not increase but … will be slightly reduced;
> it is assumed that new powers for planning will be available, including powers for the control of land values.

In assuming that the population would not rise, Abercrombie was taking the best possible advice at the time. For example, the 1940 Barlow Commission on the Redistribution of the Industrial Population assumed that the population of the UK would rise from 46m to 47m and then decline to 46m by 1971 (54m actual).[25] But the population did rise and so, despite the dispersal out of London, the densities in the urban area did not fall. Indeed, they rose and this changed the nature of London from a planned-for city with a high proportion of houses with gardens to a higher density metropolis, and London started on a path of tower block construction that took them from the LCC Architects' Department Roehampton Estate in 1958 to the collapse of Ronan Point in 1968.

Nor did Abercrombie foresee that the new towns did, for a period, damage the economy of London. The Plan warned that, 'A number of entirely new satellite towns will be located … It must be made clear that not the whole of this population … will consist of the lower-paid workers. It is now an accepted fact that for the success of these towns they should contain all types of income and age groups'. This statement was prophetic but not in the way that Abercrombie had assumed. The London New Towns became too successful in attracting not the 'lower-paid workers' but those who were skilled and semi-skilled. In studies in the mid-

1970s, this was given as an important reason why some inner urban areas were in a process of rapid economic and physical decline.[26]

A third element of unforeseen change was the rise of, and effects of, increased car ownership and use. Professor Peter Hall has stated that, 'If we had really pressed ahead on all these fronts then, if we had built the London Ringways and introduced road pricing and Buchanised the neighbourhoods, then we would have had a London in which the car was civilised. Alas we blew it completely. Our failure to handle the problem of the car was the greatest disaster of our post war planning of London'.[27] But, as Hall continues, Abercrombie 'subscribed, like virtually all his contemporaries, to the idea that the car was the liberator and that it must be planned for'.[28] In the Greater London Plan, for example, Abercrombie states that 'new motorways can be things of beauty to the user and can drop into the landscape unobtrusively and enchantingly'.

I also regret that Abercrombie did not look more explicitly at the options for the form of London. In Copenhagen in the same era (1948), the 'finger plan' had taken Abercrombie's emphasis on 'green wedges' to its logical extreme and planned for fingers of countryside to enter the city — whilst the growth was guided to corridors served by public transport. One aspect of the relationship between the green belt in London and the built up area has been expressed pithily in a history of London. 'Children playing in London's increasingly busy streets, and without most of the new local parks that [the Greater London Plan 1944] had promised, could console themselves with the thought that 10 or 15 miles away was a belt of agricultural land that they would never be able to spoil.'[29]

Finally, and importantly, Abercrombie did not see the rise of community involvement in planning and, in particular, the protests that would both see an end of plans to build his grid of roads in and around London and the protectionism that thwarted attempts to make the green belt a more dynamic tool for guiding growth.

But perhaps the greatest lost opportunity is that, as a nation, we seem to have lost the boldness and the ability to express and implement a vision that epitomised the Abercrombie plans. Some would blame the planning profession itself. 'At the end of the Second World War there were 1,700 members of the Town Planning Institute; now there are 10 times that number. Therein lies the rub. Most modern planners fill endless files, form study groups, and spend their time on Committees. It is impossible to imagine an Abercrombie emerging from a world buried under paper. Yet we need new Abercrombies, if only to interpret the needs of modern society and give it a sense of direction.'[30] I would look more to a loss of that consensus for national endeavour that epitomised the period in which these plans were prepared.

The Government White Paper on *The Control of Land Use* in 1944, covered the new welfare, health and education services, the need for housing and for rebuilding our economic base, for recreation and access to the countryside, and finished by stating that, ' … all these related parts of a single reconstruction programme involve the use of land, and it is essential that their various claims on land should be so harmonised as to ensure for the people of this country the greatest possible measure of well being and national prosperity'.

You don't hear planning talked about in that vein any more.

## NOTES

1 P Abercrombie *Greater London Plan 1944* (1945), 20.

2 J Forshaw & P Abercrombie *County of London Plan 1943* (1943).

3 *op cit* (note 1).

4 'The picture which these maps and this written Report attempt to present to the mind, or perhaps more properly to the imagination (for it relies on that) of the Londoner, is a direct extension of that already offered in the County of London Plan' GLP 1944, 20.

5 P Hall *Cities of Tomorrow* (1990).

6 White Waltham in Berks; Chipping Ongar, Harlow and Margaretting in Essex; Stevenage, Redbourn and Stapleford in Herts; Meopham in Kent; and Crowhurst and Holmwood in Surrey. Only eight towns were designated, with only the sites at Stevenage and Harlow remaining from Abercrombie's sites, the other satellite towns being Basildon, Bracknell, Crawley, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, and Welwyn.

7 Coloured pl 1, facing p 21 'Social and Functional Analysis'.

8 '… in the hands of a skilful landscapist this valley … could be turned into a miniature Norfolk Broads: there is still time to rescue it ….' GLP 1944, 11.

9 L Esher *The Rebuilding of England 1940–1980 — A Broken Wave* (1983).

[10] Quoted in P Hall *Abercrombie's Plan for London — 50 Years On: A Vision for the Future* Report of the 2nd Annual Vision for London Lecture 1994 (1994).
[11] *op cit* (note 9).
[12] 'Every two and a half years there is a County of London converted into urban life from rural conditions and agricultural land. It represents an enormous amount of building land which we have no right to allow to go unregulated.' House of Commons 12.05.1908, quoted in J B Cullingworth 'The evolution of town and country planning' in J B Cullingworth & V Nadin *Town and Country Planning in Britain* (13th edn, 2002), 14–33.
[13] Labour Party *Your Home Planned by Labour* (December 1943), available on http://library-2.lse.ac.uk/collections/pamphlets/document_service/HD7/00000366/doc.pdf .
[14] '… her Majestie … doth straightly command all manner of persons, of what qualities soever they be, to desist and forbeare from any new buildings of any house or tenement within three miles of any of the gates of the said cittie of London … where no former House hath been knowen to have been in the memorie of such are now living ….', Proclamation by Elizabeth I, 7 July 1580, quoted in GLP 1944, 29.
[15] *op cit* (note 5).
[16] P Self 'The evolution of the Greater London Plan, 1944–1970' *Progress in Planning* 57 (2002), 145–75.
[17] *op cit* (note 10).
[18] E Caplan, foreword to Hall, *op cit* (note 10).
[19] Quoted on www.museumoflondon.org.uk/archive/exhibits/festival/neighbourhoods.htm.
[20] These quotes come from the wonderful www.haroldhill.org website.
[21] *op cit* (note 16).
[22] *TIME* magazine, 20 May 1946.
[23] *TIME* magazine, 30 December 1946.
[24] For a detailed account of the development of the Lansbury Estate and its role in the Festival of Britain, see http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=46490#s4 .
[25] 'It surprised me looking back on it that Abercrombie did not point out that after the war there would be a lot of very fierce young men coming back from the battle who would grab themselves a wife and have a baby or two.' Sir Peter Shepherd, member of the GLP team, speaking in 1994.
[26] 'Families in their thousands have moved to owner-occupied houses in the suburbs and beyond, or to new and expanded towns. The point is that the bulk of this movement has been by middle class or skilled working-class people. The less skilled have much less opportunity to go.' G Shankland, P Willmott & D Jordan *Inner London: Policies for Dispersal and Balance: Final Report of the Lambeth Inner Area Study* (1977).
[27] *op cit* (note 10).
[28] *ibid.*
[29] S Inwood *A History of London* (1998), quoted in A Evans 'Green belts, growth controls and urban growth boundaries' in *Economics and Land Use Planning* (2004), 59–74.
[30] Professor Gordon Stephenson, member of the GLP team, writing subsequently, quoted in Self, *op cit* (note 16).

# REVIEWS

*Unlocking the Landscape: Archaeological Excavations at Ashford Prison, Middlesex*. By Tim Carew, Barry Bishop, Frank Meddens and Victoria Ridgeway. Pre-Construct Archaeology Monograph 5, 2006. Pp x + 127, 69 figs, 9 tables. ISBN 0 9542 2938 43. Price: £18.00 pb.

Prehistory is coming of age in Greater London — not before time — and nowhere more so than in the areas to the west of the capital. Here is a nice irony, for this is where many of the London region's most informative prehistoric sites have long been known to lie: Caesar's Camp, Heathrow, excavated by W F Grimes in 1944, and Yeoveney Lodge, Staines, excavated by Reay Robertson-Mackay in the early 1960s, are good examples. In recent years, of course, these famous sites have been complemented by a remarkable series of landscape-scale projects, many of which — like that conducted ahead of the construction of Passenger Terminal 5 at Perry Oaks, Heathrow — are now themselves well advanced towards publication.

The present slim monograph represents the no-nonsense conclusion to no-nonsense fieldwork conducted under less than ideal conditions at the former Ashford Prison site east of Staines over the winter of 2001–2. Its speedy appearance is a tribute to the work of Tim Carew and his team on-site, and to his fellow authors Barry Bishop, Frank Meddens and Victoria Ridgeway off-site, and also, one suspects, to the drive of Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Ltd. Whether or not the excavation justifies a monograph on its own is an argument for another day. Had the report been offered to a journal, however, it would probably have appeared in the Surrey Archaeological Society's *Collections* — something that would have given students of historic Middlesex more sleepless nights.

That said, the volume itself is neat and tidy, with a good balance of clear figures and nice touches of colour. Much of the credit for this is due to Michael Miles, PCA's Technical Illustrator, who died while the book was in production, and to whose memory it is dedicated. The volume adopts the format developed by MoLAS for their own monograph series: it is divided into a series of chronological chapters whose continuous narrative is seamlessly interwoven with the finds data at appropriate points. By and large this approach works, especially with regard to the topographic and environmental data, though the (necessary) level of detail in some of the specialist reports occasionally threatens to overwhelm the narrative flow. Occasionally too, one feels that potentially important finds have been overlooked as a result: the un-illustrated iron coulter of a plough from Roman ditch [2048], only mentioned in passing on p 86, is a case in point. It could be argued that this latter object comprises a 'special deposit'; it certainly seems to fit the pattern for the deposition of Iron Age and Roman agricultural implements identified by Richard Hingley for instance (R Hingley 'The deposition of iron objects in Britain during the later Prehistoric and Roman periods: contextual analysis and the significance of iron' *Britannia* 37 (2006), 213–57, fig 9, table 3).

Essentially the excavation revealed a sequence of Neolithic to Roman and possibly later activity (but see below) which is set out in five main chapters. The archaeological sequence conforms in many respects with the picture that is beginning to emerge elsewhere on the west London gravels. There is an eye-catching sequence of Neolithic features comprising pits, ditch alignments and a hengiform monument (ch 3), which appear to articulate with a now-silted former channel of the River Ash. This activity is preceded by a series of small-scale interventions (ch 2) and succeeded in turn by a co-axial 'Bronze Age' field system (ch 4), the latter hinting at changes in tenurial patterns, though the fields appear to commemorate alignments established earlier. Quite when this

changeover took place and for how long the fields remained in use is unclear, but archaeologically detectable activity picks up again from the Middle Iron Age (ch 5) with the establishment of an unenclosed settlement, comprising nine round houses, nine four-post structures, and three large pit groups. At least three phases of possibly seasonal activity are represented, each producing small but regionally important ceramic assemblages. Intriguingly the round houses cluster around, but do not impinge upon, the earlier hengiform monument sited on the higher ground overlooking the Ash. Later, and equally intriguingly, the hengiform appears to have been 'fenced-off' within its own specially dug Roman ditched enclosure, the latter springing from a major boundary that cuts obliquely across the other Neolithic and 'Bronze Age' alignments (ch 6). Finally, an undated post- and stake-built hall-like structure at the northern edge of the excavated area is tentatively ascribed to the Saxon period, despite the absence of any other features of this date on the site.

To this reviewer the 'Saxon Hall' could just as easily be switched to the other end of the structural sequence and interpreted as an earlier Neolithic long house 25m or so to the north-west of (Neolithic) Pit Group 2 (a possibility raised on pp 14 and 89 of the report, but not expanded upon). Its long axis lies parallel with the former river channel, and lines up on the point at which the Neolithic ditch alignments meet the same channel 170m to the south. As such, it is possible to imagine people moving from the house, along the left bank of the channel, crossing the latter and processing south-west along the 20m-wide avenue defined by the ditch alignments. Other elements of the phasing of the Neolithic sequence in this area are also open to alternative interpretations. For example, it could be argued that the ditch alignments [2035]/[2037] and [2040] that run from the channel actually focus on Pit Group 1 rather than the adjacent hengiform, and that the monument was only subsequently formally incorporated within this alignment through the digging of ditches [2042] and [2044] (figs 7 and 20). Furthermore, the positioning of these two ditches in relation to the hengiform suggests that the latter had an internal mound or bank. Although this is explicitly ruled out (p 18), the asymmetry of the ditch fills (fig 16, sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.5) rather supports the possibility. Clearly though, as the authors acknowledge, the sequence here is complicated and is likely to reflect a range of interventions and alterations periodically enacted over decades, if not longer.

The concluding chapter, 'A Certain Place', by Barry Bishop, is a brave attempt to embed the site within the sub-regional landscape. As Richard Bradley has noted: 'It is always too soon to synthesise, but it is always imperative to do so' (R Bradley 'Rethinking the Later Bronze Age' in O Bedwin (ed) *The Archaeology of Essex: Proceedings of the 1993 Writtle Conference* (1996), 38–45). This chapter focuses holistically on the landscape setting, and on the human actions inscribed upon it, enabling certain elements of continuity and discontinuity to be brought centre stage. Thanks to the co-operation of Rob Poulton, the opportunity is taken to explore the relationship between the Ashford site and the larger area examined by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit at Hengrove Farm immediately to the north (figs 67–9) (see also G Hayman 'Hengrove Farm, Staines: excavation of a multi-period landscape' *Bulletin Surrey Archaeol Soc* 382 (2005), 3–7), to the mutual benefit of both. This exercise acts as an appetiser for the wider region, where the next logical step is surely the collaborative development of a relational GIS database along the lines of that being pioneered by Framework Archaeology for the Terminal 5 project at Heathrow. With the necessary goodwill and funding this could provide a virtual (and searchable) archaeological A to Z map for much of the west London landscape — a delicious prospect. Meantime, it is vital to continue to assemble and publish the evidence. Attractive reports such as *Ashford Prison* — whether produced as stand-alone monographs or journal articles — furnish the essential building blocks. More please!

*Jonathan Cotton*

*Prehistoric Landscape to Roman Villa: Excavations at Beddington, Surrey, 1981–7.* Edited by Isca Howell. Museum of London Archaeology Service Monograph 26, 2005. Pp xiv + 135, 85 figs, 23 tables. ISBN 1 901992 56 X. Price: £10.95 pb.

*From Ice Age to Essex: a History of the People and Landscape of East London.* By Pamela Greenwood, Dominic Perring and Peter Rowsome. Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2006. Pp 64, numerous illus. ISBN 1 901992 61 6. Price: £7.95 pb.

These two books provide welcome information

about important excavations carried out several years ago. *Beddington* is a final report while *Ice Age to Essex* makes available some of the information from a series of excavations carried out in advance of gravel working in the eastern part of Greater London. It is clear that final publication of the results of this latter work will be an important addition to our knowledge.

The *Beddington* report is welcome particularly as a recent excavation of the surroundings of a Roman villa, for which there is little other evidence in Greater London, and only a little more in historic Surrey. A number of possible buildings were identified in the area south of the villa, of which three, probably successive 'barns' are the most convincing. Two of these were represented only by the postholes of the aisles, a salutary reminder of the difficulty of finding Roman-period timber buildings in our area, no doubt because of the construction techniques in use. Other building evidence included enough plaster from a collapsed ceiling for a reconstruction to be possible — another rare discovery in the area around London. A well with evidence for ritual termination was found, and useful information about crops and animals. Finds indicated that the site had also been used from the Mesolithic onwards and, as perhaps might be expected, those from the 3rd century BC onwards show links with west Kent. Late Iron Age enclosures and early Roman pottery imply some sort of continuity into the Roman period, developing gradually into the villa complex, although it is suggested that the villa as such and its associated bath house were not built until the late 2nd century. The villa may have lasted to around the end of the 4th century, but there was little evidence for Saxon occupation.

Isca Howell and his team were not responsible for the original excavation and they have done well to present a meaningful interpretation of the discoveries, while making possible reinterpretation by others. A few quibbles may be noted. It seems unlikely that ditch 116 went out of use in the early Roman period and was later reopened on the same line at a time when its course would have been very awkward in its relationship to other features (figs 21, 25, 30); more probably, later material sank into the top of an earlier ditch. The wrongly-shaped bath house apse is also unlikely, and is based only on stains from wall material (fig 32). Likely villas at Carshalton and Chelsham, not shown on the map on fig 50, give Beddington more of a context.

*Ice Age to Essex* is a short introduction to the discoveries from several different gravel pits and is clearly intended for a wider audience than just archaeologists. As such, a more eye-catching cover might have been provided (for example one or more of the generally excellent reconstruction drawings). The book is split into three parts: an overview of the development of the general area and its surroundings over time, then some details of the finds from each site, and finally a thematic overview. The last part is the least successful, probably because coverage of each topic is too condensed (and discussion of ritual (p 55) should not have been confined only to prehistory), but in general the approach works well. Mercifully the text is not dumbed down to the point where it is an insult to the intelligence of the average reader, and the abundant illustrations should interest even younger children.

It is always difficult to present archaeological information at a popular level because of the need to avoid overmuch reference to the hypothetical basis of so much of our interpretation of the evidence. A text littered with 'possiblies' can be irritating. Overall the authors have managed well but occasionally the general reader may be puzzled or misled. For instance, it might have been better to leave out terms like 'Deverell-Rimbury', given that they are not otherwise explained (p 12: note that the sword on the same page is merely 'Bronze Age'). It seems odd to say that the Roding flows into the Thames at Ilford, the average reader will find it hard to see either a town or a fortification in the reconstruction of Iron Age Colchester, and the implication that there is significance in the way five widely spaced hillforts form a 'line' does not ring true (all p 14). Some cross referencing would have been helpful: for example Uphall Camp is discussed on p 14, but there is no mention of the drawings of the site and other useful details on pp 42–3. A forward reference from p 15 to pp 32–3 might help the reader to consider the purpose of the Orsett enclosure. The curious statement that 'very few villas were imposed on the Iron Age settlement landscape, and most of these were located in Kent' (p 17), would make more sense if it was explained that this was because of topography and soils. In fact Beddington, also on gravels, might make a better comparison for the East London situation. Was Simon de Merk named after his manor, rather than vice versa? (p 37; note the apparent significance of the boundary).

In recent times we have gathered large amounts of new archaeological information and it is important that it is made available both for archaeologists and historians and for the general public. We need detailed work on the discoveries and publication to a sufficient level to allow for reinterpretation and provide enough knowledge about finds for researchers to pursue if they wish. This detailed work should then form the basis for more popular synthesis so that we can maintain a level of interest in real local archaeology (not the televisual variety), both for its general educational value and to create a climate that favours conservation. These two publications are good examples of how these ends may be achieved.

*David Bird*

*Coinage and Currency in London from the London and Middlesex Records and Other Sources: From Roman Times to the Victorians*. By John Kent. Baldwin, 2005. Pp xi + 115, 204 figs. ISBN 0 906919 20 7. Price: £15.00 pb.

John Kent was one of the foremost numismatists and prominent figures in London archaeology. His tenure included being Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum and president of both the Royal Numismatic Society and the British Association of Numismatic Studies, and he was actively involved in excavations in north London and Middlesex, *eg* Bush Hill Park and South Mimms. He was also president of LAMAS from 1985 to 1988, and it is from his three presidential addresses (entitled 'Coinage and Currency in the City of London and Middlesex Records', Parts I, II and III) that this book is derived.

Published posthumously five years after his death and edited by his daughter Hilary Meeks, it is much easier to speak about what this book is not, rather than what it is. The book, quite unashamedly, is not a systematic history of London coinage. Nor is it a book about coin types, iconography, distribution, or debasement. Coin reform, economics and the international monetary market are discussed not from the point of view of the crown or government — those enforcing change — but from the other side, that of those using the currency.

Drawn mainly from historic records such as civic and court records, with a liberal use of contemporary newspapers and magazines, and also including literary sources, such as plays and diary excerpts, and archaeological evidence, what the book really is about is money and how Londoners have used, abused, and thought about it.

The book is arranged chronologically in 15 chapters, beginning with 'Romans and Saxons', and ending with 'Paper Money and Modern Coinage'. I found the later chapters slightly more accessible and interesting, but perhaps this is a reflection of the availability of a wider range of documentary sources as we approach the modern day. This chronological approach has the additional advantage of demonstrating how very cyclical our economic issues are, with a constant battle of inflation and debasement, alternating between an influx of low value coinage at times of recession and a complete lack of everyday change, making daily monetary transactions for the average Londoner nigh on impossible. Also cyclical is the way in which people have responded to these situations. This has ranged from the illegal, from those involved in counterfeiting and clipping of coins (the first record of forged coinage is of a hoard of plated denarii of Claudius I, AD 41–54, found in St Swithin's Lane), to the self-financed production of private tokens, which created small change when needed. The proliferation of 17th-century tokens, very often coined by publicans, does make one wonder about the spending habits of City dwellers!

The volume is very slim — only 90 pages of text printed on paper the same size as the *LAMAS Transactions*, with almost half of each page given to footnotes and citations. Yet the amount of scholarship and information contained therein is so impressive as to be bordering on the formidable. The book is lavishly illustrated throughout with coins from the British Museum collection. Helpfully to the numismatist, all of these are shown full size (1:1).

Kent does, however, assume that the reader has a certain level of knowledge about numismatics and English coinage. If you don't know your farthing from your pfennig, or a shilling from a sovereign, you may struggle with the terminology and basic numismatic history. If, though, you are interested in something more than another account of the development of modern currency, and want to know how Londoners felt about their money, this is well worth space on the shelf.

*Kim Stabler*

*The Royal Palace, Abbey and Town of Westminster on Thorney Island. Archaeological Excavations (1991–8) for the London Underground Limited Jubilee Line Extension Project.* By Christopher Thomas, Robert Cowie and Jane Sidell. Museum of London Archaeology Service Monograph 22, 2006. Pp xviii + 224, 114 figs, 56 tables. ISBN 1 901992 50 0. Price: £29.95 pb.

The archaeology of Westminster has not been as well served in the past as that of the City despite the seminal role that Thorney Island has played in the history of the English nation since the late Saxon period. It is also designated as a World Heritage Site. Although many investigations and observations, mostly small in scale, were undertaken in the 19th and 20th centuries, no attempt has hitherto been made to assemble, digest, and publish the accumulated body of knowledge. That has now been tackled in a substantial and impressive multi-author volume. Two major opportunities for archaeological investigation arose in the 1990s: the construction of the Jubilee Line Extension and the activities of the Parliamentary Works Directorate at several locations (principally Old Palace Yard and St Stephen's Chapel). Excavations on several smaller sites along with watching briefs around Parliament Square have also contributed to building up the wider picture of the historical topography of Thorney Island.

All of this material has now been brought together in an integrated fashion and discussed, together with antiquarian finds and old excavations, which have been reassessed where necessary. The main body of the report is presented chronologically in 11 chapters, each covering a designated period. Two chapters deal with prehistory, there is one each for the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and Saxo-Norman periods, and three each for the medieval and post-medieval periods (down to 1834, the year of the great fire which destroyed the old Palace of Westminster). Each chapter begins with a consideration of the environmental and topographical evidence; then, for the Anglo-Saxon and later periods, there is a summary of the historical background, followed by a presentation of the archaeological evidence; all chapters end with a discussion.

The study begins with the geological origins of Thorney Island, a small and roughly circular plateau of gravel which lay at the confluence of the Thames and the Tyburn, but which gradually disappeared as a topographical entity as the encircling channels silted and medieval and modern development spread across the area. The authors claim that 'a high degree of confidence can now be placed on our understanding of the nature, shape and size of the island from the post-glacial period to the present'. The earliest human activity is represented by revetments, ephemeral features and a scatter of flints of the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. Evidence of later prehistoric and Roman activity is very sparse and does not suggest any significant settlement. The Anglo-Saxon period is poorly represented in the archaeological record too, despite the fact that there was probably a Middle Saxon minster on Thorney Island, and that the abbey was founded or refounded by Dunstan in the mid-10th century. The archaeologically crucial areas remain uninvestigated beneath the present Westminster Abbey. Mid-Saxon secular settlement has, however, been found immediately north of the island (Downing Street).

The first major structural evidence appears in the mid-11th century, when Edward the Confessor initiated a total rebuild of Westminster Abbey and constructed the adjoining palace. The report adds nothing new to our understanding of the former, and no buildings of the latter earlier than the reign of William II have yet been located. Only two excavations have taken place within the abbey precinct — in the misericord (1975) and in the dorter undercroft (1986) — and both have been published in *LAMAS Transactions*. As we move into the later 12th and 13th centuries, more archaeological evidence relating to the palace and surrounding area begins to appear, but it is still flimsy. It is to the reigns of Henry III and Edward I that large parts of Westminster Abbey and some surviving fragments of the palace belong, but their architecture is not discussed. The majority of structures and features described in this volume are assignable to the later medieval and early post-medieval periods.

Very few excavated finds are included in the study: the wooden vessels preserved in waterlogged conditions are noteworthy and the ceramic watering cans are striking, but for nearly all other finds we are given only brief résumés in specialist appendices.

As the authors are at pains to point out, this is not a conventional archaeological report, filled with detailed plans, sections, context descriptions and interminable catalogues of finds and specialist studies. Some will lament that, but most of us who have to grapple with

the aftermath of large-scale excavations on complex, multi-period sites acknowledge that there is no realistic possibility of publishing them *in extenso*. The reader simply has to take on trust the conclusions presented, or visit the site archive and personally interrogate the evidence. In parts, the evidence contained in this study is very thin, and the discussion no more than a superficial recitation of what has been said many times before. The emphasis is heavily weighted towards environmental and topographical studies, and the handling of structural archaeology is lightweight. There are also a few tiresome errors: *eg* Stukeley's article in *Archaeologia* 1 is given both the wrong date (1790 instead of 1770) and page numbers. These aside, the volume is attractively produced, well laid out, and in full colour. It is to be welcomed as a useful addition to the archaeology of London.

*Warwick Rodwell*

*A Priory Revealed: Using Material Relating to Merton Priory*. By Lionel Green. Merton Historical Society in association with Merton Priory Trust, 2005. Pp x + 130, 62 figs, 15 tables. ISBN 1 903899 52 4. Price: £7.50 pb (plus £1 postage from the Publications Secretary, Merton Historical Society, 57 Templecombe Way, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4JF).

Abbey, priory, or monastery are words which often conjure images of noble ruins set in romantic landscapes; spiritual and cultural edifices that have become part of our national inheritance. We have only to look at the majestic ruins of Glastonbury, Fountains, or Cleeve, or experience the grandeur of Westminster Abbey or York Minster to appreciate their impact upon our senses. However, as much as these standing monuments bear witness to our medieval history, there are those forgotten places, religious houses that were of equal importance, which by ill fortune have been lost to history, remembered only by the written word or by the action of place-naming. Such has been the fate of Merton Priory.

Founded on the site in 1117, the priory was to play a significant role in our nation's history, and can be placed among our most important religious houses. To look for the priory today would bring little reward. There are no evocative ruins to walk around — save for sections of the perimeter wall, the ground remains of the excavated chapter house, and a rebuilt arch standing some distance away by St Mary's Church, Merton Park. Nevertheless, the dearth of tangible evidence for this great priory has been much redressed by Lionel Green's admirable book. The book is a comfortable and informative read, equally suitable for the serious student or those with a passing interest. It has no pretences to be a definitive work, although the subject has been approached in a scholarly and detailed manner. The author sets his targets in the Prologue and asks: What was the priory of Merton? How did it begin? What was its purpose? What did it achieve? and What effect did it have on its locality? A tough challenge, bearing in mind the complex nature of the subject. Nonetheless, Lionel Green has tackled his targets well, albeit in a broad manner, and presents us with a first class book about the priory; a worthy successor to Alfred Heales' book *The Records of Merton Priory*, published way back in 1898.

A look at the contents page will reveal the wide range of subjects the author has researched. You will find for example chapters on 'Gilbert the Founder'; 'Augustinian Canons'; 'Daughter Houses'; 'The Monastic Day'; 'Administration Within'; 'The Precinct'; 'Hospitality'; 'Royal Visitors'; 'Endowments and a Local Landlord'. Two chapters, 'The Beginning of the End' and 'A Priory Laid Bare' are particularly interesting. These detail the background and final days of this religious house following dissolution and ultimate destruction, resulting in much of the building material being carted away from Merton to build Henry VIII's palace at Nonsuch. The text is accompanied by a variety of photographs, including views of archaeological excavations, plus many useful maps, plans, drawings and informative tables, such as the Number of Brethren at Merton Priory. In the appendices the reader will find a list of priors, chronology of events, and a monastic glossary, which are followed by a most comprehensive list of notes and sources and a full index.

No doubt this book will offset the dearth of published knowledge regarding the priory, where Parliament met and coronations occurred. Taken with the MoLAS publication *Merton Priory* and an expected MoLAS monograph, our knowledge of this nationally important site will be greatly enhanced. This will confirm Merton as being more than a place traditionally associated with William Morris and Liberty & Co art fabrics. *A Priory Revealed* is a commendable local history publication.

*Graham Gower*

*The Medieval Postern Gate by the Tower of London*. By David Whipp. Museum of London Archaeology Service Monograph 29, 2006. Pp xi + 73, 47 figs, 29 tables. ISBN 1 901992 60 8. Price: £7.95 pb.

*Saxons, Templars and Lawyers in the Inner Temple*. By Jonathan Butler. Pre-Construct Archaeology Monograph 4, 2005. Pp xii + 126, 99 figs, 29 tables. ISBN 0 9542938 3 5. Price: £15.00 pb.

How exactly should the results of archaeological excavations be published and disseminated? Perhaps surprisingly despite occasional attempts to review practices (for example the 1975 Frere report or 1983 Cunliffe report) the majority of archaeological excavations, when they are published at all, are still to a format that has barely changed since the beginning of the 20th century: bound, printed books or journal articles that describe and illustrate stratigraphic sequences and artefactual assemblages preceded by summaries and followed by discussion and synthesis.

For much of the last hundred years the major debate has not been how to publish but finding the time and resources to do it at all. Most archaeological reports are published long after they should be, and some struggle to ever be published at all. And the birth rate is often due to the pugnacious nature of individual archaeologists, or the vagaries of chance, rather than to the relative importance of results. As such it is perhaps churlish to ask this question in the context of the review of two well published excavation reports, part of a trend in London that has seen a steady flow of monographs, study papers, and journal reports in recent years.

Dave Whipp's report is an account of a 1979 excavation. The dig not only discovered foundations of the southern gate tower to the Tower of London's postern, slumped through subsidence into the Tower's moat, but also recovered important assemblages of early post-medieval finds, particularly pottery and evidence for bone and ivory working. The discovery of the tower represented an important addition to London's extant medieval architecture and it was preserved *in situ* and can be seen from a viewing platform. In many ways this is a very straightforward publication. The site was small but revealed an important monument with relatively straightforward archaeology, good associated documentary evidence, and important finds assemblages. The publication includes all the essential primary data and associated discussions that might be required for further research.

Jonathan Butler's report, although of about the same size, covers a quite different type of archaeological intervention. It reports on a series of small excavations, evaluations, and watching briefs within the precinct of the Inner Temple between 1999 and 2000. The small size of these sites would not normally warrant a report of this size. But this was a rare opportunity to investigate the archaeology of a historically significant part of London. Lack of modern development, the prime driver for archaeology in the capital, within the Temple precincts means that it is largely archaeologically unexplored. The work did uncover significant finds. Perhaps most importantly evidence for Middle Saxon occupation was found. This included possible Saxon burials further east than is normally expected for *Lundenwic*. The sites also produced fragmentary structural evidence for the medieval and post-medieval development in the area with associated artefactual assemblages including many fragments of medieval masonry and a large assemblage of 17th-century domestic ceramics.

Both reports are well put together and scholarly in nature, reflect well on their publishers, and are good examples of the already cited trend for better publication of the capital's archaeology. But many important sites still await publication and if all London's archaeology were to be published in this way we would drown under its weight. It is also the case that both these publications offer a range of different types of data (structural, finds, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval) that will be of interest to different researchers some of whom might struggle to find it. For example, someone wanting the most up-to-date data on Saxon *Lundenwic* would need to refer to a number of past *LAMAS Transactions*, the major Royal Opera House monograph by MoLAS, recent excavation reports in the *London Archaeologist*, the report reviewed here, a further PCA monograph, and numerous as yet unpublished site reports and their archives. To put the potential importance of the Saxon burials from this report into their full context one would need to know of the recently discovered and well publicised burials from St Martin in the Fields, and the far less well publicised but important Saxon graves recently found on the site of the London Transport Museum and in Floral Street. It is

therefore probably fair to say that despite the much welcomed growth in published excavation reports for the capital and the data revolution that has come from digital technology, easy access to London's archaeological resource is still far from straightforward.

The nature of digital data and the methods available for managing and disseminating it do now offer a new way to publish primary archaeological evidence and its analysis. But the profession has been slow to embrace this revolution. One suspects that one reason for a lack of progress is the kudos individual archaeologists and archaeological organisations still put in to the weight of the printed page.

As stated the individual authors and their parent organisations should be congratulated for these publications and the increased rate of archaeological publication in general in London. Perversely, however, this improvement is further highlighting the need to think differently about data retrieval and dissemination.

*Hedley Swain*

*Researching London's Houses*. By Colin Thom. Historical Publications, in collaboration with the London Archives Users' Forum, 2005. Pp vi + 186, 124 figs. ISBN 1 905286 00 7. Price: £13.95 pb.

House history is one of the most frequent forms of research undertaken by visitors to record offices today, and is a growing trend outstripped only by family history. Researching the history of houses in London presents peculiarly difficult problems because of the involved administrative history of the capital and the division of its records between a number of repositories. The publication of Colin Thom's guide through these complexities will, therefore, be welcome both to Londoners seeking answers about the histories of their houses and neighbourhoods, and the archivists who must try to respond to their questions. It aims to provide a description of the various categories of source material and a methodology for their use and interpretation. The geographical coverage is confined to London and its suburbs as they were at various periods; this corresponds approximately to the London County Council area before 1914, and extends to most of Greater London in the inter-War and post-War periods. The focus is on the dwelling houses owned or rented by ordinary Londoners, excluding the large town-houses of the aristocracy on the one hand and local authority housing on the other.

The book opens with a lengthy introduction sketching the story of London's housing stock from the dwellings of the medieval and early modern periods to the developments of the present day. There is little on the period before 1700, which reflects the chronological concentration of this guide on later centuries, but the story might have been usefully carried back to the reconstruction maps in Mary Lobel's *British Atlas of Historic Towns: The City of London*, which does not appear in the chapter bibliography.

There follow a series of chapters on different categories of documentary source material for house history, beginning sensibly enough with 'Maps and Plans' and followed by such subjects as 'Rates and Taxes' and 'Fire Insurance Records'. If the chapters are intended to be in approximate order of sources to be tackled, it would have been appropriate to place 'Illustrations' second, rather than in ch 9. The workings of each type of record are briefly and clearly explained, rendering even the tortuous story of title deeds comprehensible. Practical techniques are outlined for working through classes of records like rate books, with suitable notes of caution. Each chapter is equipped with end-notes and a bibliography recommending further reading on the subject area; these are full of useful suggestions. Ch 10 is a miscellany of 'Other Types of Record', which comprise various categories of newspapers and periodicals, legal records, bomb damage records, and business records. The coverage is comprehensive; all researchers have their favourite types of record, but it is difficult to think of any sources which have been missed out.

These chapters are followed by three case histories in which the advice previously given is put into practice, illustrating the step-by-step process of house history research. The three selected groups of properties are small early Georgian terraced houses in Mount Pleasant, Clerkenwell, near the Sorting Office; late Victorian terraced houses in Acris Street on the west side of Wandsworth Common; and 1930s suburban dwellings in Cornwall Road on the Ruislip Manor estate. These choices reflect the balance of the book's concerns, and provide an opportunity to deploy most of the categories of source material previously discussed. There is something of an obsession with discovering exact construction dates and building contractors, and rather less

attention paid to occupants, perhaps reflecting the author's *Survey of London* experience. The book ends with a general index.

It is generously illustrated throughout, not only with a good balance of maps, drawings, and photographs of London houses, but also with photographs of the various types of record under discussion; the reader can therefore appreciate their physical appearances, their difficulties and possibilities. The text refers directly to the figures, usually on the same or adjacent pages; the figures have their own points to make and are not merely window-dressing for the text. It is a pity that there are not a few pages in colour: Goad fire insurance maps, Booth poverty maps, and bomb damage maps all depend on colour-coded keys, and there are many decorative coloured estate maps. The pages are attractively laid out and apparently free of typographical errors. I noticed only one factual slip: Sir John Oldcastle was not a 'medieval catholic martyr' (p 164) but the leader of a failed Lollard rising.

As the provision of on-line catalogues is now evolving so rapidly, Thom deliberately eschews any detailed discussion of internet sources. It is, however, worth mentioning the availability of the catalogues of Surrey History Centre and Essex Record Office via the internet; many sources commonly used for family history, such as censuses and directories, are also appearing on-line. Of course, the material accessed by any sort of catalogue will remain the same, and present the same problems of interpretation. Although Thom warns about unrewarding types of record and the lack of indexes to some of them, the cumulative effect of such guides tends towards optimism. In reality the researcher must be prepared for a time-consuming journey through London's history, with a number of disappointing dead-ends and false trails. Hunting for house history can be as frustrating as hunting for houses. The case history chapters are therefore a particularly welcome addition, demonstrating how theory works out in practice, and pointing out the gaps in the extant records, as well as how to make imaginitive use of what does survive.

While aimed principally at amateur historians, the preface expresses the hope that this guide will also be useful to archivists, librarians, and professional researchers. I can see that I shall be referring to it for my London research projects, and all of London's archivists and librarians will want it to hand to provide the answers to those awkward questions asked by those coming through their doors.

*Christopher Phillpotts*

*The Riverside Gardens of Thomas More's London*. By C Paul Christianson. Yale University Press, 2005. Pp vii + 232, 111 illus, many colour pls. ISBN 0 300 10905 9. Price: £25.00 hb.

In this elegantly written and presented volume, the reader is taken on a tour of the gardens of the rich and powerful situated along the River Thames in the time of the first two Tudor monarchs. Eight different historic London gardens are linked by their associations with Sir Thomas More, on the premise that their combined study is more revealing than the examination of any one in isolation. Viewing More as a 'quintessential Londoner', the author highlights the importance of the garden in this time of transition between the medieval and the early modern by pointing to the idealised vision of *Utopia*, which he argues to be firmly rooted in More's London. Beginning with the gardens of London Bridge House, in Southwark, the focus moves to the royal gardens at the Tower of London, where More probably walked during his final imprisonment. Further upriver, lay the gardens of Winchester Palace, and York Place (later Whitehall), extensively remodelled by Thomas Wolsey while Archbishop of York. Next come the Archbishop of Canterbury's gardens at Lambeth Palace and More's own privy gardens at his estate in Chelsea, where he spent the last years of his life with his family. A short distance beyond this lay the gardens of Fulham Palace, the country home of the bishops of London, and, finally, the extensive palace and gardens built by Wolsey at Hampton Court, and subsequently stamped indelibly with the mark of Henry VIII in the magnificence of their layouts and heraldic displays, 'a crowning achievement in garden history'. These large gardens reflected the wealth, status, and political importance of their owners, all of them men of state and church with whom More was closely acquainted.

The selected gardens are described in some detail in ch 1 and placed in their topographical and historical context, focusing on the early Tudor period. Different kinds of garden are represented, created for monarch, bishop, and City administrative body, gardens for growing food, for show, for leisure and for quiet contemplation.

A wealth of fascinating information is presented, covering a wide range of topics from the cost of buying tools, seeds and fencing, to the types of flowers, vegetables and herbs that populated the well ordered beds. Particular emphasis is placed on the names of the garden staff and plant suppliers, where records survive, and the particular duties assigned to individuals, from Royal Gardeners, designers and plantsmen to humble weeders, waterers and labourers. This important theme is expanded in ch 2, which pays tribute to the men and women without whom these gardens could never have existed. Four appendices list the Royal Gardeners, and the garden staff at Hampton Court and York Place under both Wolsey and Henry VIII, as well as the gardeners at Bridge House. From this it appears that there was a well established community of trained gardeners in London, both men and women, working in a long-standing horticultural tradition.

In ch 3 the author opens up the early Tudor gardener's armoury of tools, using artefacts in the Museum of London, contemporary illustrations, and documents to bring to life the everyday world of garden maintenance and care. This is a particularly illuminating chapter, in which shovels, forks, mattocks, pruning knives and 'orchard tools' are put in context, with a fascinating discussion of their functions and place in the gardener's tool kit. Earthenware watering pots, pumps, water wagons and garden irrigation schemes are all considered, as well as the many kinds of container in which plants were nurtured and displayed. Bird pots or 'sparrow pots' also make an appearance, used for various reasons to encourage small birds to nest, and these in turn are linked to references to their purchase in the Bridge House accounts for 1527. In this way, the underlying theme of the book is maintained throughout, the details forming an essential part of and throwing light on the whole.

In the fourth chapter, the emphasis moves from the personal to 'design and innovation'. More's own gardens at Chelsea provide an ideal model, demonstrating the evolution of the integral house and garden, since he purchased the land in 1524 and started building the following year. The increasing importance of brick in garden walls is emphasised, as is the influence of the 'ordinary' gardeners employed, based on their experience working as part of a trained 'professional' community in 16th-century London. The garden as art is also considered, focusing on the development and laying out of knot beds, and exemplified by the provision of viewing platforms from which they could be seen in all their intricate glory.

Ch 5 draws the study to a conclusion by posing the question of how the riverside gardens under consideration were viewed by those who owned and visited them. There follows a close examination of More's relations with the king and the other powerful men with whom he was closely connected, based on contemporaneous accounts and More's own words in *Utopia*. These highlight the riverside gardens as settings for 'games of Tudor political discourse', places for privacy, intimacy and quiet reflection, as well as for elaborate entertainments and display. Throughout, these various strands are intertwined with the life of Thomas More as he moved through the London gardens of the powerful men of early Tudor England. The Epilogue draws this impressive and important study to a close by summing up, through the use of three different texts, what garden history has to say about the man and the world in which he lived.

Christianson's book is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of early 16th-century London, a multi-faceted and deeply thoughtful approach to a subject that has perhaps been somewhat neglected. Throughout, a high level of detail, based on meticulous research, is presented with a freshness that prevents the book from becoming a dry treatise on Tudor gardens. Beautifully illustrated and highly readable, it can be wholeheartedly recommended to the specialist and interested layman alike.

*Jacqui Pearce*

*John Baker's Late 17th-century Glasshouse at Vauxhall.* By Kieron Tyler and Hugh Willmott. Museum of London Archaeology Service Monograph 28, 2005. Pp xiii + 85, 79 figs, 7 tables. ISBN 1 901002 44 6. Price: £12.95 pb.

*The Doulton Stoneware Pothouse in Lambeth: Excavations at 9 Albert Embankment, London.* By Kieron Tyler with John Brown, Terence Paul Smith and Lucy Whittingham. Museum of London Archaeology Service Archaeology Studies Series 15, 2005. Pp xii + 63, 69 figs, 19 tables. ISBN 1 901992 63 2. Price: £7.95 pb.

The excavation by the river bank in Vauxhall

produced London's first 17th-century glasshouse. Also of considerable interest was the bargehouse excavated on the river's edge, adjacent to the glass site. Unfortunately this is not mentioned in the fashionably 'snappy' title and is therefore likely to be missed by anyone doing a keyword search on the internet. Documentary evidence suggests that the bargehouse was built between 1643 and 1649 for the Mercers', Fishmongers', and Clothworkers' companies. Each company appears to have its own compartment in the building, each with a laying-up bed. Excavation produced evidence for three such beds, though they were variably preserved, and for a stretch of the river wall. An adjacent glasshouse was constructed by John Baker sometime between 1663 and 1681 and was disused by 1704. The documentary history of the glasshouses is discussed using previously unpublished archival research undertaken for MoLAS by Roy Edwards. It is also contextualised by a general discussion of London glassmaking in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Excavation in the area of the glasshouse revealed a number of early modern brick buildings, brick-lined cesspits, drains, wells, and a circular soakaway, as well as remains of a 17th-century glass-furnace and adjoining oven. The rectangular oven base (S6) had two small fireboxes, along each long side, and five brick pads in its base presumably to support a raised floor. It was interpreted as a fritting oven, to melt and fuse raw materials, based on its style of construction. However, it seems to the reviewer that, given its position, it is more likely to have been an annealing oven to allow the glass products to cool slowly, an interpretation which is not discussed. The brick-built furnace (S7) had two sieges (on which the crucibles rested) and two flues to bring in the hot air which was forced up inside the furnace by a brick cross-wall or baffle. As noted in the report, the coal-fired furnace has similarities to the early 17th-century Haughton Green furnace in Lancashire and the 18th–19th-century Falcon glasshouse in Southwark. A compartmentalised brick building (S8) was interpreted as a store associated with the furnace. Artefacts recovered from the glass site included crucible sherds which were extensively glazed by use. ICPS (inductively coupled plasma spectroscopy) analysis indicated a soda glass with moderate levels of lime and magnesia. This is comparable to contemporary soda glass produced in the Low Countries. Important finds from the site include a sandstone gathering hole and two stones used to marver or smooth the molten glass. Analysis of the glass waste and cullet (old glass collected to be added to the glass mix) suggested that the site produced green-glass wine bottles and phials, as well as pink-tinted fine vessels and clear-glass goblets. ICPS Analysis indicated that the bottles and phials were made in a high-lime and low-alkali glass and the pink and colourless fine wares in soda-based metals.

The publication of the Doulton pothouse excavations in Lambeth is a welcome indication that the archaeology of the 19th and 20th centuries is increasingly being taken seriously within the context of developer-funded archaeology. Unfortunately, the lead that is being shown by London archaeologists is by no means universal across the country. The historical background of the site and of stoneware potting in London is summarised from standard secondary sources. This area of London was largely agricultural until the 17th and 18th centuries. Excavations revealed parts of 19th-century houses along the main road frontages. A few scattered 19th-century remains were associated with the Lambeth soap works and the Salamanca soap and manure factory. A firebox, probable vat base, and drain were associated with the Lambeth works, and several brick bases, an industrial oven, and two brick cesspits were ascribed to the Salamanca works. It is a pity that while the environmental evidence from the cesspits is summarised, only the overall date of the pottery is given, with no indication of the quantity or types recovered.

The Lambeth soap works were demolished to make way for the Doulton pothouse which was constructed in the 1870s with a series of down-draught kilns. Three kilns were illustrated on the 1889 Goad insurance plan and one of these was totally excavated together with most of an adjacent kiln — the two sharing a single chimney. In the 1890s the pot works expanded onto the Salamanca works and the 1870s kilns were demolished. The pot site was demolished after being sold in 1926. Three kilns were excavated from this second phase. A pair of ovens with a linked chimney had an exit flue stained red and yellow. No analysis of the minerals was undertaken, presumably because of limited resources. A second structure, interpreted as an oven, had an iron-lined firebox. This had a red material adhering to the interior of its multiple flues which is described imprecisely as a 'form

of iron oxide' with no indication of any analysis. It is suggested by the excavator that both oven structures were for producing glaze materials for use in Doulton's other pot houses. A possibility not discussed is that they produced iron oxide for creating the iron-rich slip used to create brown-coloured stoneware. The largest scale drawings of the pot kilns are only 1:400 which is inadequate for detailed comparison with other kiln sites. A specialist could presumably obtain these from the archive, but would the inclusion of a half-a-dozen larger scale plans really have added much to the cost of this volume? The monograph also contains detailed discussions of the fire-bricks by Terence Paul Smith and the kiln furniture and dumped wasters by Lucy Whittingham. Most of the fire-bricks came from the Cowan works in Newcastle and an essay on the links between the Doulton and Cowan firms by John Brown is included in the report. Kiln wasters were recovered associated with both phases of the pot works but analysis had to be limited to selected groups. Products included drink and ink bottles and jars, all in brown stoneware.

A few of the quibbles voiced above are no doubt a reflection of the constraints of working with the limited resources and tight deadlines of developer funded archaeology. Certainly, the authors and the Museum of London are to be congratulated on producing beautifully formatted and well illustrated reports with excellent photographic reproduction at an affordable price. This applies especially to archaeology of the post-medieval period which nationally is too often consigned to languish in 'grey literature' (unpublished in-house reports). The MoLAS monograph series as a whole has been a highlight of the last decade in British archaeology.

*Paul Courtney*

*Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500–1700*. By Lien Luu. Ashgate, 2005. Pp xiv + 366, 9 figs, 45 tables. ISBN 0 795460330 X. Price: £55.00 hb.

This study of the economic impact of immigration from the Low Countries is a welcome addition to the growing historical literature on London's migrant communities. The product of the author's 1997 doctoral thesis, *Immigrants and the Industries of London* considerably expands our knowledge of the long term impact of the migration on the economy of the metropolis during the early modern period. A number of books published over the past quarter of a century have explored the creation of the refugee stranger communities, in particular the establishment of the stranger churches, while several important works have looked at the individual contributions of outstanding individual master craftsmen, especially from the Huguenot diaspora. This book is distinctive in giving an in-depth analysis of the process of immigration, concentrating in particular on the role of migrants as transmitters of new techniques and skills into London's trades and crafts.

Students of London history will already be familiar with the outline of the history of migration recounted here. A tradition of migration from the Low Countries, dating from attempts to encourage an indigenous woollen industry in the 14th century gave way, after the Reformation, to a period of sustained migration in the second half of the 16th century, sparked by the religious persecution and economic dislocation consequent on the Dutch revolt and the wars of religion in France. Communities of Dutch, Flemish, Walloon, and French immigrants were established and, despite popular outbursts of xenophobia, these communities struggled to establish an accepted place in London's economy and society. With the onset of wholesale persecution in France during the reign of Louis XIV the French community in particular was vastly augmented by a new wave of Huguenot refugees in the last decades of the 17th century. These successive periods of migration helped to transform London's manufacturing economy as the new arrivals introduced innovative products, methods of production, and business practices, revivifying stagnant industries and introducing entirely novel ones in trades and crafts as diverse as textiles, brewing, glass, paper, porcelain, metal working, and printing and engraving. Though it is possible to overstate the extent of their impact, the immigrants were crucial to the long term growth of London's manufacturing base, helping to transform the city from a satellite of the main continental centres of manufacturing into a European capital of high quality artisanal skills.

*Immigrants and the Industries of London* charts this process through a series of detailed case studies of the crafts of silver- and goldsmithing, brewing, and silk weaving, tracing the state of

these crafts and trades before, during and after the first wave of mass migration of the later 16th century. These case studies and the analytical surveys which accompany them provide both notable insights and useful correctives to the established historiography on London's migrant communities. The process by which new techniques and methods were introduced was complex. Cultural insularity, bred both by the experience of flight, the desire to maintain community cohesion, and the often hostile reception of the 'host' community, often vitiated against the transfer of skills from immigrants to indigenous communities. The London guilds played a crucial role, ranging from open opposition to immigration to gradual acceptance, with formal apprenticeship by stranger craftsmen acting as a crucial vector for the transmission of new skills. This study also makes clear that the transfer of skills and technology was by no means a one-way process. Drawing on studies of migration from contemporary society, the author provides the insight that many immigrants took up their crafts and trades after their arrival in London, choosing to adjust to the demands of existing labour markets. Innovation through immigration was thus linked to a process of cultural assimilation, not unlike the ways in which modern immigrant communities have flourished through a two-way process of adaptation.

The story recounted here is made all the more fascinating by the breadth and depth of the sources used. The core of the study is a detailed analysis of the returns of aliens, linked to sources from Belgian archives, which gives a micro-historical picture of the origins, demography, and patterns of residency and occupation of the Low Countries migrants, providing a striking picture of the distinctive household structure and topography of London's immigrant enclaves. But this study goes beyond the confines of 16th- and 17th-century London, providing a profound insight into the mentality of migrants caught between worlds, hoping for the possibility of return to war-ravaged homelands while trying to adjust to life in a new culture. Given current debates on the effects of immigration, the suggestion that this process could be painful but ultimately beneficial to both the migrant and the host communities is a message that is highly worthy of attention.

*Michael Berlin*

*Streets of Kentish Town: A Survey of Streets, Buildings and Former Residents in Part of Camden*. Compiled by Camden History Society (edited by Steven Denford and David A Hayes), 2005. ISBN 0 904491 62 5. Price: £8.50 pb.

In her influential book, *The Fields Beneath*, written in the 1970s, Gillian Tindall remarked that 'there seems to be an unspoken agreement among local historians that the time after, say, 1900, or 1914 at the very latest, does not count as history and therefore cannot be worth serious interest. This, allied to the other widespread antiquarian fallacy — that once a district becomes part of an urban conurbation it ceases to have an identity of its own — has resulted in a gulf in the middle distance of the historical vista, roughly corresponding to that period when the old inner London suburbs became invisible to the educated middle classes except as Lowryesque landscapes seen from behind the windows of a moving vehicle.' The book did much to counteract this attitude, inspiring many (including myself) with an enthusiasm for Local History, and introducing her readers to the fascinating story that is the history of Kentish Town. With their new publication the Camden History Society, of which Miss Tindall is still a member, have taken a fresh look at this invisible inner London suburb and presented their findings in the format of a number of walks around the area.

Kentish Town, first mentioned as Kentisston in a 1207 document, developed around a crossing of the Fleet, someway north of the parish church of St Pancras. The land was divided between several manors and religious establishments, and its proximity to the City led to an early development of prosperous merchants' houses; land use was predominantly that of food and fodder production for the City as well as providing accommodation for the vast numbers of beasts en route for Smithfield, driven down one of the main north–south routes. This was to continue after the Reformation, with much of the land passing into the ownership of a few noble families, as well as Oxford and Cambridge colleges. It is the interrelationship between the location of the village, on a major transport axis, and the piecemeal development of these lands, that has made Kentish Town what it is today. First the Fleet river was exploited for industry and then, during the 19th century, just as it was becoming a desirable place to live, the railways

carved through the area; although bringing disruption and demolition, they were a major source of employment, both direct and through other industries. Today much of the railway land use has gone, replaced by business parks, but the road system still exerts a strong influence and the tube provides easy access for a very varied population.

In January 2007, I attempted two of the walks set out in the book — field-testing the product, so to speak. Emerging from Kentish Town tube my heart sank; a grimy, traffic-choked High Street with sad, run-down shops was the first impression, and must be that of many who see the place from 'behind windows'. However, the book was a revelation — pointing out the age and history of the many Georgian, and earlier, premises, with much detail about what had gone before and explanations of how things had got how they were. My second walk, took me around a more residential area of the Town, varying from bijou Victorian cottages to large council estates. The book is full of details about past residents; I was intrigued to find the house where Prime Minister Nkrumah of Ghana had lived between 1945 and 1947, whilst enrolled for *two* doctorates, in anthropology at LSE and philosophy at UCL — but was not told whether he qualified in one or both! Space does not allow a full evocation of the details supplied: factories making false teeth and pianos, duels fought, pop groups formed, Betjeman's nostalgia, innumerable girls' schools, a daughter of Karl Marx, and a retirement home for governesses are just a few titbits to whet your appetite.

The up-to-date streets are set out usefully in map form at the back, but the Stanford's 1862 map has been badly reproduced, proving on inspection to be created from two sheets, which only join correctly at a couple of points. There is no way a reviewer (from an outer London suburb) can check all the wealth of information provided, so other complaints are only slight: if taken literally as a 'walking guide', some idea of time taken would be useful, and the mass of information about what is no longer there can cause confusion. It is best to read thoroughly at home first, and to do the walks later — I just wish they had mentioned which house in Prince of Wales Road was the inspiration for Tindall's title, the one where squatters had carved into the lintel the evocative phrase: *The Fields Lie Sleeping Underneath*.

It is invidious to compare the two works, *The Fields Beneath* and *Streets of Kentish Town*, largely because the former has a far more wide-reaching remit, approaching Kentish Town as a historical and sociological study, whereas the latter is a straightforward, street by street, account of the place both in its present manifestation and its past incarnations — but the work of the second must have been inspired by that of the first, and certainly adds to our knowledge of that often unacknowledged historical period, the 20th century. Camden History Society are to be congratulated on producing a most useful addition to their series of area studies, and commended for their exhaustive research. The book was the prize-winner of the 2006 LAMAS Local History Publications Award, and well deserves its accolade.

*Ann Hignell*

*A Walk Through Whitton History — Mr Giltrow's Enumeration*. By Ed Harris. Phantom Books, 2005. Pp 216, 100 figs. ISBN 0 9551486 0 X. Price: £9.99 pb.

*Barnes, a Meander in Time*. By Mary Grimwade. Barnes and Mortlake History Society, 2005. Pp 68, numerous figs. ISBN 0 9542038 1 X. Price not given, pb.

*Hampton 1915–1937: the Story of Hampton from the First World War to the Amalgamation with the Borough of Twickenham*. By John Sheaf. Borough of Twickenham Local History Society, 2005. Pp 40, figs. ISBN 0 903341 82 4. Price: £3.50 pb.

*The Bronze Age Barrow at Teddington*. By Ken Howe. Borough of Twickenham Local History Society, 2005. Pp 28, figs. ISBN 0 903341 81 6. Price: £3.00 pb.

*Freda Emily Gent: her Uxbridge Ancestry*. By K R Pearce. Uxbridge Local History Society, 2006. Pp 11, 18 figs. Price not given, pb.

These five books specialise in particular localities, but deal with widely varying aspects of those places. They were submitted for the LAMAS Local History Award 2006 (though they do not include the winner), and exemplify the continuing range of talent in local societies in the fields of design as well as research. All are in A5 format, except the fifth which is A4.

In *A Walk Through Whitton History*, Ed Harris follows the route of John Giltrow as he walked

round Whitton in his role as enumerator of the 1901 Census, and uses it as an oasis for telling much of Whitton's history around the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries. It is an ingenious idea.

He identifies each householder and tells us as much as has been found out about him or her, and the members of the household. Each person is nicely placed in the local hierarchy — labourers, tradesmen, poor, men who could afford for their wives not to go out to work. With this also comes a good deal of information about the buildings as they were at the time, their range and condition. A peculiarity on Giltrow's route was Kneller Hall, the Royal School of Military Music. On the night of 25 March 1901, census night, there were 129 private soldiers under 19 in residence (13 did not know where they had been born), with 24 NCOs and the families of the Chief Resident and his Adjutant.

Ed Harris frequently seasons the basic information with earlier histories of the individuals or their houses, so that the focus is not wholly on 1901. There are no captions to the illustrations, the author relying instead on references to them in the text. This is not very satisfactory as the reader must always wait for the lead reference before looking at the picture, or find it again if looking back. Harris succeeds in bringing this census to life, maintains a nice style, and avoids the risk of turning such a catalogue of information into a list.

Mary Grimwade lived in Barnes from her birth about 1913 until she moved a few miles away in 1966. As a lover and historian of her birthplace, she wrote many articles of reminiscence and research which were published in the Quarterly Newsletter of the Barnes and Mortlake History Society between 1972 and 2002. *Barnes, a Meander in Time* brings them together. It offers a miscellany of items about Barnes in the past, sometimes the distant past. Because it does not attempt to set out a history, it makes agreeable reading and gives enjoyment even if you have only ten minutes to spare for the moment. There are personal memories of two world wars, pieces about Barnes authors, riverside dwellings, local eccentrics, a few famous people, past events. My favourites were the canny horse-dealer, the Christmas hero, William Cobbett's acacia trees, the lament for the 325-year-old elm trees of the churchyard, and especially the letter from a Barnes labourer in 1894. Mary Grimwade gives her sources at the end of each article, and the endpapers give a clear map of Barnes indicating a location for each piece. It is a well-designed, nicely illustrated, beautiful little book.

There is a very large amount of detail in *Hampton 1915–1937, the Story of Hampton from the First World War to the Amalgamation with the Borough of Twickenham*, and it must represent a great deal of work by the author. And yet the book is dull. If there was an editor, he or she has not served the author well. Though the contents are presented under nine subheadings, within each the information is presented almost as a list, with little human interest included. The full details of dimensions and costs of one particular service road are given, but what is their significance? I think the best part is the section dealing with the First World War, because it shows how people in Hampton were affected by what was going on. Might not some liveliness have been brought into, say, the Silver Jubilee celebrations? The book is nevertheless a useful work of reference. Its sources are good — newspapers, local authority minutes, histories of transport and organisations — and so is the map (though alas, as is often the case these days, it needs a magnifying glass).

Ken Howe recounts the excavation history of *The Bronze Age Barrow at Teddington* which intrigued him in childhood. He only began enquiring about it in 1985 and was surprised by the paucity of records, and what he calls 'bungling inefficiency'. Oh dear, both Surrey Archaeological Society and London and Middlesex Archaeological Society were involved! The author makes a little information go a long way, and does not always distinguish clearly the two barrows involved, but manages to keep the interest.

The subject of *Freda Emily Gent; her Uxbridge Ancestry,* was a native of Uxbridge, and this booklet tables her forebears in Uxbridge back to the early Victorian years. There are basic family and occupational details for most of them, except Freda herself (1913–2001), who was probably the subject of an earlier booklet. It is, of course, aimed primarily at historians of Uxbridge, but should also interest those who, like the reviewer, have some familiarity with the town, since there are several very interesting pictures of vanished places along with the portraits.

*Patricia A Clarke*

**Also received**

*Featherbedds and Flock Beds: the Early History of the Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London*. By J F Houston. The Three Tents Press, rev edn, 2006. Pp 200, 24 figs. ISBN 0 9521608 8 9. Price not given, hb.

A history of the Upholders' Company, from the earliest recorded mention in the 14th century to about 1918. The upholders or upholsterers made bedding and some items of furniture. Though a small company, the Upholders had a hall and administered charities like other companies. A good source of material for study of their craft.

*Sir Montagu Sharpe: Forgotten Man of Middlesex*. By Diana Wilment. Dandelion Publications, 2007. Pp 66, 23 figs. ISBN 0 9540590 4 2. Price: £6.00 pb (available from the author, 31 Numa Court, Brentford Dock, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 8QG).

A biography of Sir Montagu Sharpe, Deputy Lieutenant of Middlesex and Chairman of Middlesex County Council (1856–1942), who studied the history of Middlesex and especially Brentford, producing several books. A welcome exploration of an important phase in the development of the archaeology of Middlesex — the first half of the 20th century — and of interest to historians of Brentford.

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