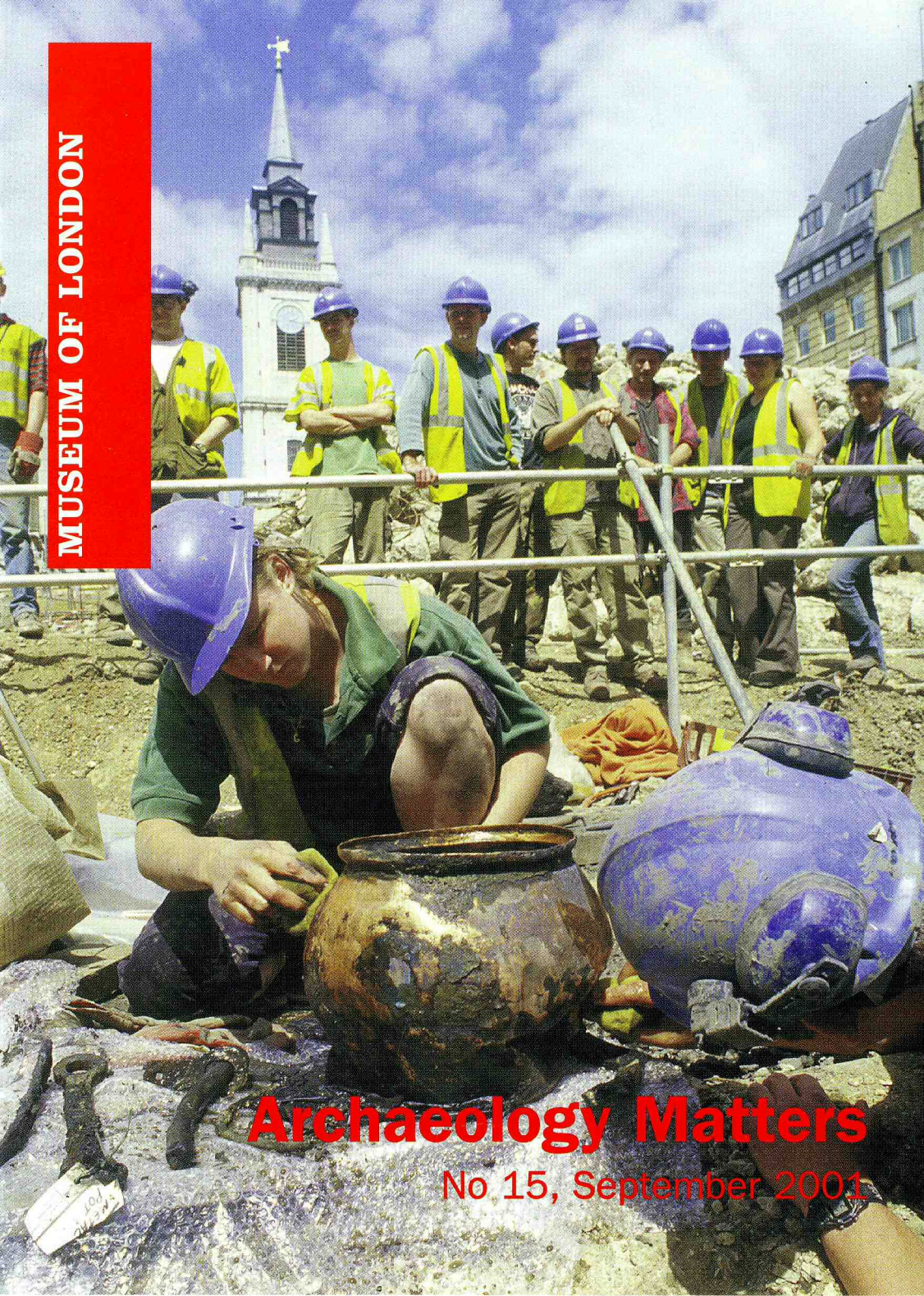


MUSEUM OF LONDON



Archaeology Matters

No 15, September 2001

Spitalfields

Spitalfields is the focus of one of the largest urban archaeological projects in Britain, covering over 12 acres and phased over nearly a decade. Much of the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital has been discovered, together with nearly 10,000 medieval graves and a Roman cemetery beneath. The next large area to be excavated lies between 250 Bishopsgate and Spitalfields Market, under the former Steward Street. Work (funded by the Spitalfields Development Group) will continue here into the autumn.

The latest archaeological levels, beneath the modern street, have now been removed. Here we found the remains of about 25 houses, which once fronted onto Steward Street. They were originally built in the 1680s and 1690s, when the Old Artillery Ground was sold off for housing, but many were rebuilt in the 18th century. The cellars had brick walls and floors, and the remains of doorways and fireplaces still survived. Cesspits containing large quantities of pottery and glass had been dug in their back gardens. Beneath the houses

lay drains which fed into soakaways, either below the floors of the basements or out in the street.

Some of the buildings, including a pub once known as the Prince Albert on the corner of Steward Street and Brushfield Street, were rebuilt in the 20th century. In the 18th century many of them had been occupied by wealthy silk merchants, including the Delamare family and the Beuzeville family (both of Huguenot origin).

Beneath these houses we are starting to uncover medieval houses, which fronted onto a street within the precincts of the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital. Along this street in other areas of the site we have found the remains of similar medieval timber-framed buildings, some still with their fireplaces and the possessions of their occupants.

Chris Thomas
Museum of London Archaeology Service





As stage managers at the new Shakespeare's Globe were making final preparations for the 2001 season, archaeologists a mere 100m away, in Bear Gardens, were uncovering a pair of parallel brick walls of undoubted 17th-century date. Just 1.5m apart and turning through two angles of about 145 degrees, the walls appeared to describe a large ten-sided building with an internal diameter of 16m. Could these be remains of the Hope Theatre, built in 1613-14 at least partly as a replacement for the Globe, which had burnt down the previous year?

In terms of size and position, the archaeological evidence is persuasive. It is consistent with what we know already of the Hope from its building contract (which survives in its entirety) and from panoramas that show it as it was in the 1640s. On the other hand, the walls seem too closely spaced for them to have been the main front and back walls of the theatre. Seating galleries were normally about 12 feet (4m) wide. Perhaps the Hope was a

more complex structure than its Tudor predecessors – and, in any case, it was a unique building designed to fulfil the dual functions of playhouse and animal-baiting arena. The practice of that cruel sport was indeed much in evidence. The skulls of several large fighting dogs were discovered on the site. Having been found in pre-theatre layers, however, they can only be associated with animal-baiting on Bankside generally, rather than with this building in particular.

The Hope opened in 1614 with Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* but its later history was undistinguished. Closed at the outbreak of civil war in 1642, it had certainly been demolished by 1656. In the late 17th century the site was occupied by a glasshouse, part of which was found during the excavation.

*Information from Tony Mackinder,
Museum of London Archaeology Service*

Whitefriars

The Carmelites or Whitefriars – so called because they wore white cloaks over their brown habits – took up residence in London in the middle of the 13th century. Their priory lay outside Ludgate, on the Thames side of Fleet Street, occupying a narrow plot between the Temple and modern Whitefriars Street.

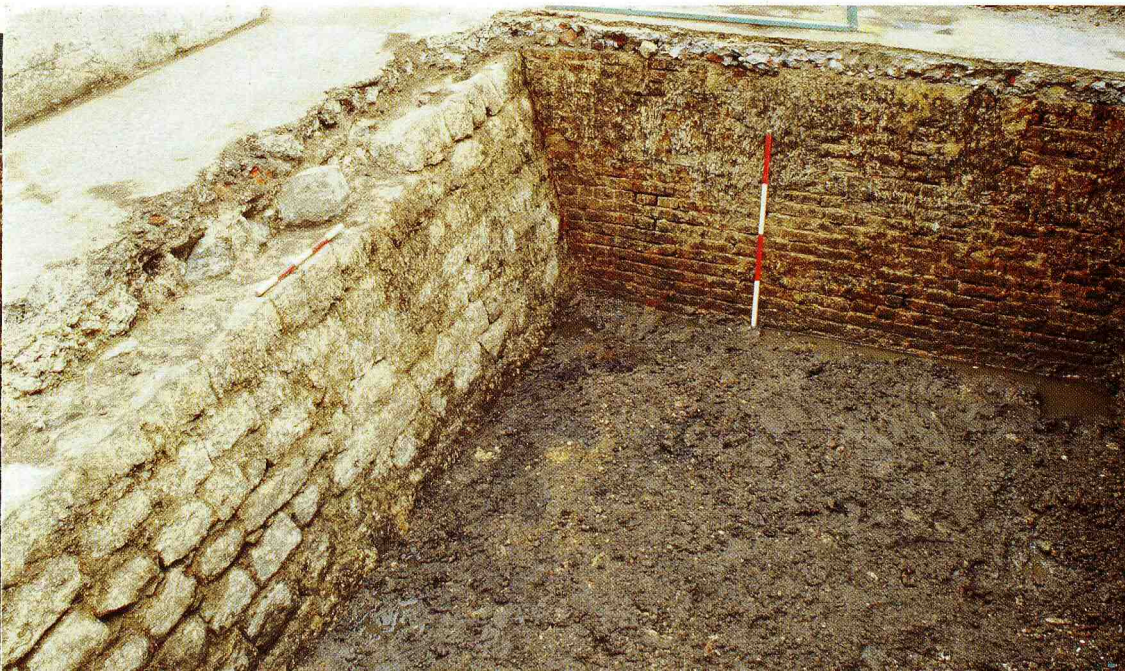
This year the opportunity came to investigate the area south of the original priory buildings, on a redevelopment site extending c 70m from Tudor Street in the north to Tallis Street in the south. Historical research indicated that in the mid-14th century the river reached almost as far as Tudor Street but that in 1395–6 the Whitefriars extended their precinct to roughly the line of Tallis Street by reclaiming land from the Thames. A stone wall delineating that new waterfront had indeed been discovered during trial work in 1999.

The excavation revealed substantial remains of east-west timber revetments not far from the Tudor Street frontage. Typically medieval

front-braced structures, they survived in the form of baseplates and the driven uprights used to hold them in place. The technology employed is consistent with a mid-13th to 14th-century date – and so with the arrival of the Whitefriars in the area. About 9m further south, however, a remarkable discovery was made: a finely-built east-west wall (see picture), with a chalk and rubble core and a sloping face on the river side. Although truncated, it measured 1.5m wide at the top and must have been around 2m thick at the base. As its location tallies with that given by documents for the river wall in the mid-14th century, it seems to denote a major intermediate extension to the Whitefriars property, before the known enlargement of 1395-6. With further research, this archaeological sequence will significantly improve our understanding both of medieval river management and of the priory's history.

Douglas Killock
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Photo: Pre-Construct Archaeology



The Museum of London and University College London (UCL) have a long history of collaboration in archaeological matters. It is no coincidence that two former Keepers of the Museum – Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1926-44) and W F Grimes (1945-56) – went on to become distinguished Directors of the Institute of Archaeology (now a department of UCL). This summer the two institutions concluded a formal Memorandum of Agreement, which will be the platform for a series of exciting new initiatives.

One such initiative is UCL's launch in October 2001 of an MA course in the Archaeology of London. It will be co-ordinated by Professor Clive Orton, and will be taught by Institute of Archaeology staff who have direct experience of London, as well as by staff from the Museum. In a second development, one of the UCL lecturers, Gustav Milne, has also been seconded to the Museum, to coordinate research at the new London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre.

In terms of fieldwork, one notable collaborative project is already in progress. During April an excavation was mounted on the Thames foreshore at Vauxhall (see picture), where Bronze Age piles with radiocarbon dates in the second millennium BC had first been discovered by the Thames Archaeological Survey. The project team included Jon Cotton and Mike Webber from the Museum, Gustav Milne and Jane Sidell from UCL, and their colleagues Jon Hather and Sophie Seel, who are studying the prehistoric woodland environment. The timbers appear to have been part of a bridge or jetty, comprising two rows of piles extending far out into the deep water channel of the present-day Thames. Other associated finds included two copper-alloy side-looped spear heads, also of Bronze Age date. The dig was filmed by Channel 4's *Time Team* and will



Photo: Adrian Green

be screened early next year. In the meantime, report preparation is providing a fresh challenge for the combined museum/university team.

For information about the new MA in the Archaeology of London, please visit the UCL website:
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/>

HADAS – the Hendon and District Archaeological Society – is one of the liveliest archaeological societies in North London. It was originally established 40 years ago to investigate the Saxon origins of Hendon (one of only two places in North London mentioned in the Domesday Book), but it has subsequently expanded to cover the whole of the London Borough of Barnet and indeed further afield.

HADAS's glory days were in the 1970s and 80s when first it excavated a series of medieval sites in Hendon itself and then undertook its biggest and most important dig: a Mesolithic site on Hampstead Heath. In recent years, like most other local archaeological societies, it has been wrestling with the problems of PPG16, which has dealt so successfully with the problems of rescue archaeology that many amateurs are now uncertain as to how to fit in and what they should be doing.

HADAS, however, is continuing with a number of small scale digs (see picture) and has three

major new initiatives. One of the most exciting is a project with Birkbeck College of the University of London to run an evening class to write up the results of some of the excavations carried out in the 1970s. Secondly, it is about to launch a HADAS Journal in which to publish the results of its excavations. And thirdly its web site is about to be re-launched in an exciting new format, which promises to be the whizziest web site in archaeology. Log on to www.hadas.org.uk and see for yourself!

Meanwhile, the lively programme of lectures and site visits continues. Last year we went to Orkney, this year we are going to Bangor. New members are always welcome. Details can be obtained either from the web site or from Judy Kaye, 12 Rydal Close, Holders Hill Road, London NW4 1LE.

Andrew Selkirk
Chairman, Hendon and District Archaeological Society

Photo: HADAS



Roman Waterworks

With at least two public bath-houses and a population of over ten thousand, Londinium would have consumed gallons of fresh water every day. Yet, in the absence of any evidence for an aqueduct, how could so much water have been supplied? Recent work at 30 Gresham Street is providing one of the answers, for here have been found the well-preserved remains of two Roman water-lifting machines – the first to have been discovered anywhere in Britain.

The machines were found in two deep, oak-lined wells or cisterns, where they had remained waterlogged for nearly 2000 years. The earlier well (see picture) – dated precisely by tree-rings to AD63 – lasted for less than ten years but was evidently part of a major public works scheme following London's destruction by Boudica in AD60/61. In the base of the well were remains of a wooden barrel (perhaps a silt trap), and tumbled into the deposits above was a series of wooden containers, which would have been linked together to form a continuous bucket chain. Contemporary Roman descriptions suggest that this may have been a double chain powered by a human treadmill.

The later well, perhaps used in conjunction with a shallow tank nearby, was constructed in AD108/9 and seems to have been destroyed by burning – possibly during the Hadrianic Fire, around AD120-30. A complete copper cauldron was found in the bottom (see front cover). The well contained charred wood and sophisticated, remarkably modern-looking ironwork, again forming part of a bucket-chain mechanism. Far more sturdy than its predecessor, with a much greater use of iron, this system conforms closely to one described by the Roman architect, Vitruvius.

The dig was funded by Land Securities and carried out by the Museum of London



Archaeology Service, in collaboration with AOC Archaeology Group.

Both water-lifting devices, together with a working model and computer simulation, will be displayed in the Museum until the end of the year.

Report by Ian Blair (MoLAS)
and Jenny Hall (Museum of London).

Events

THE DIG

1 September – 21 October: Weekends only
24 September – 19 October: Weekdays, KS2 school groups only
22 October – 28 October: Daily

Fee: £2 per child (accompanying adults free with Museum entrance ticket)

Roll up your sleeves, put on your hard hat, and get down to work at the Museum of London. You'll unearth loads of original objects, such as pottery and bones. You'll test your powers of observation by drawing walls and floors. Designed especially for families, schools and youth groups, **The Dig** is a great way to learn about history and archaeology. **Entry is by ticket only and advance booking is strongly recommended. For safety reasons, The Dig is not suitable for children under 5.**

The Dig sponsored by



LandSecurities

Day schools

THE THAMES – WHOSE RIVER?

Saturday 13 October: 10.30am – 5pm

Fee £20 (£15 concs)

From earliest times to the present day, the river Thames has been at the heart of London's prosperity. It has been used by sailors, ferrymen, fishermen, princes, entertainers, bishops and dock-workers. But who uses it today, and who controls it? The speakers' subjects range from the Thames in prehistory to 'this noble river' of 16th- and 17th-century London, closing with the presentation of new plans to turn it into a 'community river'.

Advance booking required

FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY: THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF ROMAN LONDONERS

Saturday 3 November: 10.30am – 5pm

Fee £20 (£15 concs)

The Museum of London has one of the most important collections of Roman religious material in Britain, revealing the co-existence of both imported and indigenous cults. But was Londinium a city of harmony and toleration, or did religious belief divide its citizens into factions? How did the rise of Asiatic and eastern Mediterranean cults, including Christianity, fit into this complex multi-faith society? And how did the Roman government use religion for political purposes?

Advance booking required

Books

MoLAS 2001 – Annual Review for 2000

Edited by Monica Kendall, Peter Rowsome, Taryn Nixon & Dick Malt

Read about the dozens of sites throughout Greater London that were investigated by the Museum's Archaeological Service last year. The 62 pages are illustrated in full colour throughout.

MoLAS, £9.99

For booking and information about events, please phone 020 7814 5777

To order books mentioned in this leaflet, please phone 020 7814 5600.

Payment by credit or debit card. Prices as stated, plus post and packing.

Cover: Archaeologists cleaning a large Roman copper cauldron on the Gresham Street site



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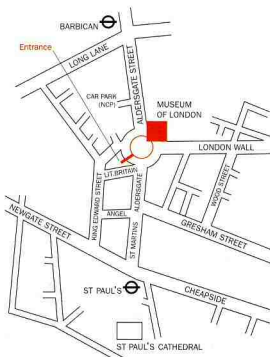
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