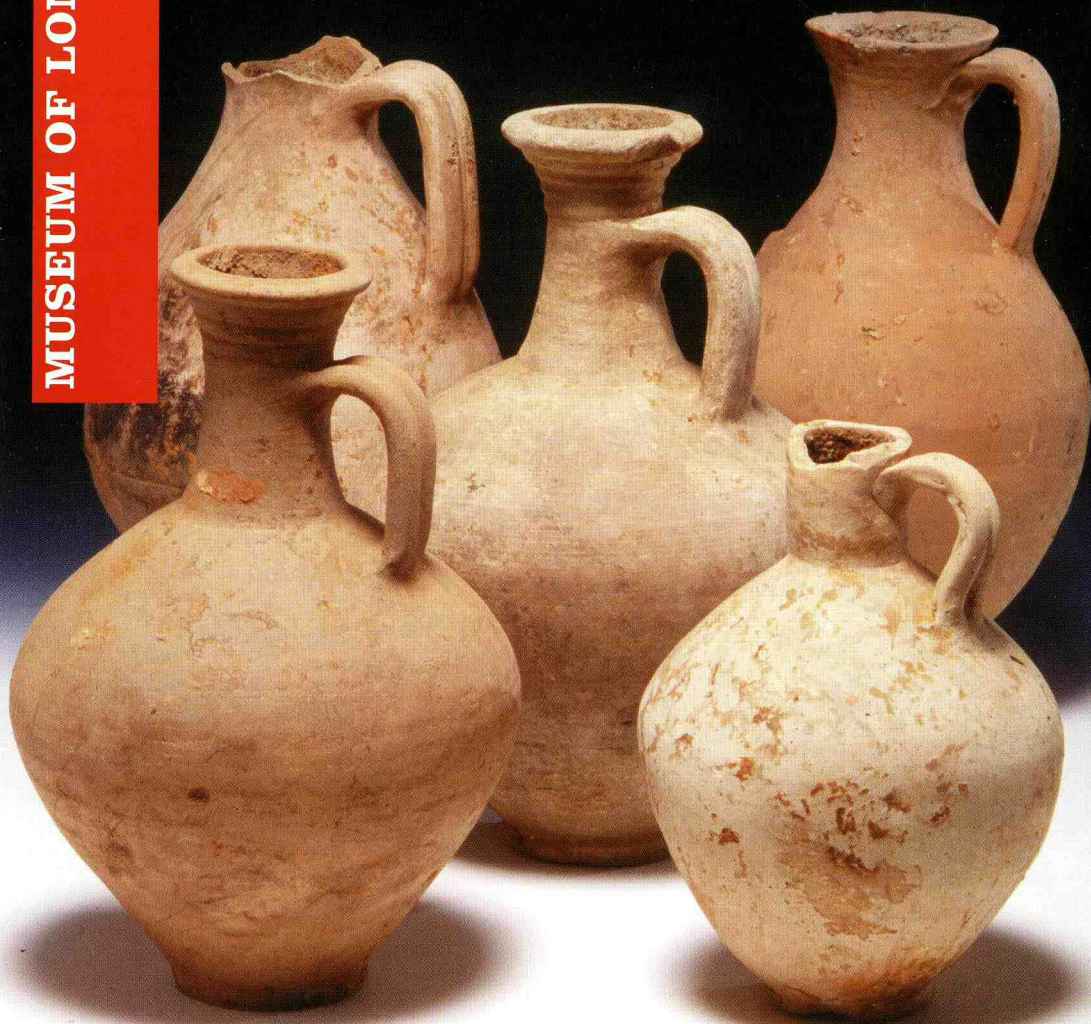


MUSEUM OF LONDON



Archaeology Matters

No 4, April 1999

Spitalfields

Thanks to the recent redevelopment of Spitalfields market, a major phase of archaeological work on the site is now underway. This will be a rare opportunity for the public to view at first hand an excavation in progress.

The area is named after the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital which was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1538. The main monastic features to be excavated are the cemetery, the east end of the church, the postern gate and a large part of the outer precinct. Excavations have uncovered a medieval street with late medieval buildings along its west side and the cemetery to the east. Earlier phases of occupation are likely to include pits dug for rubbish disposal and quarrying, and a Roman cemetery.

After the Dissolution the outer precinct became an Artillery Ground. This was bounded by a brick wall and a substantial ditch, dating possibly to the Civil War period. Within the area is the Master Gunner's House where artefacts recovered include musket balls and a cannonball.

The current works are scheduled to take place between November 1998 and September 1999. Information on the excavations is currently on show in the market and there will be a display within one of the buildings from sometime in April. The Museum has also set up a dedicated website for the Spitalfields site which is updated regularly with news of discoveries as they happen: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/sdg.htm>

Chris Thomas
Museum of London Archaeology Service



Ralph Merrifield prize

The Ralph Merrifield Award has been won this year by the Orpington and District Archaeology Society (ODAS), a group which has been active in the excavation of the moated manor house at Scadbury.

This is an annual prize, established in 1997 by the London and Middlesex Archaeology Society (LAMAS) in memory of Ralph Merrifield. It is awarded to individuals, groups or institutions for their contribution to archaeology in the London region.

Scadbury is a 300-acre Nature Reserve about a mile east of Chislehurst, Kent. Within it, on a moated island, lie the foundations of a manor house. Outside the moat are the ruins of a walled garden, a gatehouse and a brick barn. There is considerable documentary evidence about the past manorial families, particularly the important Walsingham family (resident 1424–1655). However, there is very little

documentary information about the ancient buildings and the early history of settlement.

ODAS carried out a survey of the overgrown ruins in 1982. Four years later, with the co-operation of the London Borough of Bromley, ODAS began digging at Scadbury with the purpose of excavating a meaningful percentage of the archaeological area whilst preserving the majority of the site. The excavations, which still continue, show an early phase of settlement soon after 1200, whereas the construction of the island wall has been dated to the 15th century. A 16th-century gatehouse and brick-built barn have also been located and excavated.

The prize will be presented to the society at the Archaeological Research Conference of LAMAS which will be held in the Museum of London on 20 March 1999.

Harvey Sheldon
LAMAS Archaeological Research Committee



Triumphal Arch

A recent archaeological excavation on a site behind the Old Bailey unearthed two exciting new finds. The first discovery was a large stream or river channel from the Roman period which would have been at least twenty five metres wide and seven or eight metres deep. Analysis of the silts in the channel suggest that the stream was fast-flowing, presumably draining to the Fleet River. However, it appears that the channel was diverted to the south-east during the early Roman period and deliberately filled in. Analysis is continuing to establish the date when this work was done. It may be related to the construction of the Roman city wall in the late 2nd century. Later clay and timber Roman buildings were found built over the infilled banks of the stream.

Possibly the most exciting discovery appeared in the last week of the excavation. The remains of a substantial Roman foundation some six metres square were revealed beneath a modern lift pit. This foundation may have formed the base of a triumphal arch straddling the western approach road to the Roman city.

The arch could have been up to thirty metres wide and twenty metres high and would have had a wide central arch with smaller side arches. The foundation appears to predate the construction of the city wall in approximately 200AD.

Bruce Watson
Museum of London Archaeology Service



Medieval Kingston

Major redevelopment at Charter Quay is providing a rare opportunity to study Saxon and medieval Kingston-upon-Thames through large scale excavations within the town's historic centre. During the medieval period Kingston was an important trading centre, boasting the first Thames bridge upstream from London Bridge.

The first phase of excavations by Wessex Archaeology, completed in December 1998, examined an extensive area south of the Hogsmill river. It revealed evidence of continuous medieval occupation dating from the late 12th century which was remarkably well-preserved. This period of occupation was seen to be interspersed with episodes of flooding and land reclamation.

Along the High Street frontage earlier post-built structures were subdivided in the mid-13th century with a phase of industrial activity, represented by numerous clay and pitched-tile hearths. One of the later hearths was dated archaeomagnetically to the late 14th century. Preliminary analysis suggests several possible functions including textile finishing, metal-working, baking and possibly fish-smoking. The 15th century witnessed expansion of the settlement and construction of substantial timber buildings on stone foundations; one associated with a possible malting oven and another with a cellared structure which awaits further investigation. At least two Thames-side wharves, incorporating re-used boat timbers, are broadly contemporary.

Future excavations will concentrate on the area north of the Hogsmill where it is hoped that a similar well-preserved medieval sequence will be uncovered, but here underlain by evidence for Late Saxon occupation.

The post-excavation programme will combine archaeological and documentary evidence and produce a major publication on the history of Kingston-upon-Thames.

Jonathan Nowell
Wessex Archaeology



Fenchurch Street Forum

There have been exciting new discoveries at 168 Fenchurch Street which demonstrate that important parts of Roman London still survive in this part of the city. Excavations are taking place in advance of the construction of a new branch of Marks & Spencer.

Remains of the mortared flint foundations of the late 1st-century first forum have been rediscovered beneath the present pavement of Gracechurch Street. Superimposed on these were the massive ragstone foundations of the much larger second forum, constructed during the reigns of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian. An unusual buttressed foundation constructed of large boulders may be part of a late Roman building which replaced the forum after its demolition in c. AD 300.

Beneath the forum were thick deposits of bright red fire debris, the graphic remains of a

substantial mudbrick building destroyed during the Boudican revolt of AD 60–1. Below these were several phases of floors and walls, built in the first decade of Roman occupation along the forerunner of modern Fenchurch Street. One room still contained grain carbonised by the intense fire. Behind the north wall of the building was a metalled yard, which may have adjoined a larger open space further west, perhaps the forerunner of the first forum.

Beneath the earliest buildings were an assortment of ditches and postholes, traces of the earliest site preparation by the first inhabitants of Londinium. These features and the many artefacts from the site will help us to understand the origins of this crucial part of the early town.

Sophie Jackson
Museum of London Archaeology Service



History in Tower Hamlets

The Thames has played an important part in London's development, but it has not always received the archaeological attention it deserved even though an enormous number of historically significant features survive on the foreshore.

The City of London Archaeological Society (COLAS) is now undertaking Thames-based research. *The Early Docklands Project for Wapping, Shadwell and Ratcliff* aims to make a thorough record of the archaeological features on the foreshore and to relate them as closely as possible to local history and topography.

These neighbourhoods were among the first in London to specialise in shipping and cargo-handling. Historic foreshore features include river stairs, slipways, barge beds and moorings, many using old ships' timbers. Areas where boat repairs were carried out can be identified from flat timbers embedded in the foreshore, while the importance of the coal trade is shown by the blackness of the subsurface deposits. Other bygone trades are indicated

by the remains of sugar-refining vessels and several types of pottery kiln waste.

The *Early Docklands Project* is being carried out by members of COLAS, with guidance from Thames Archaeological Survey Officer Mike Webber. Field work takes place from April until October. The project is being supported by 'Challenge Funding' from the CBA and the London Archaeological Research Facility. Opportunities for amateurs to take part in field work in inner London have been rare in recent years. Now thanks to the Thames, we have discovered one on our doorstep.

Rose Baillie
City of London Archaeological Service

The Museum of London is delighted to announce news of a major bequest from COLAS for £200,000. This will support the Museum's plans for the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre, a purpose-built home for archaeological material excavated in the capital. The Museum is awaiting news of its lottery bid for the LAARC.



Excavations at the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital

This well-illustrated report, combining documentary evidence with information from a series of excavations in 1982, presents a fascinating account of one of Britain's largest medieval hospitals.

Christopher Thomas, Barney Sloane & Christopher Philpotts

£ 32

ISBN: 1 901992 00 4

The Cross Bones Burial Ground, Redcross Way, Southwark, London

Archaeological Excavations (1991–1998) for the London Underground Limited Jubilee Line Extension Project

This fascinating account of post-medieval burial in London is the first in a series of 7 colour volumes, and concentrates on that more rarely investigated section of the community, the poor and destitute.

Megan Brickley & Adrian Miles with Hilary Stainer
£ 8.95

ISBN: 1 901992 06 3

The Medieval Household

Covering the period 1150–1450, this publication presents over 1,000 items excavated from medieval London homes.

Geoff Egan

£50

ISBN: 0 11 290490 4

Pilgrim Souvenirs and secular badges

This is the first major catalogue in English devoted to medieval badges, and illustrates nearly 800 items of medieval jewellery.

Brian Spencer

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ISBN: 0 11 290574 9

These publications are available from the Museum of London shop (tel 0171 814 5600) or from MoLAS at Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4AB (tel 0171 410 2200).

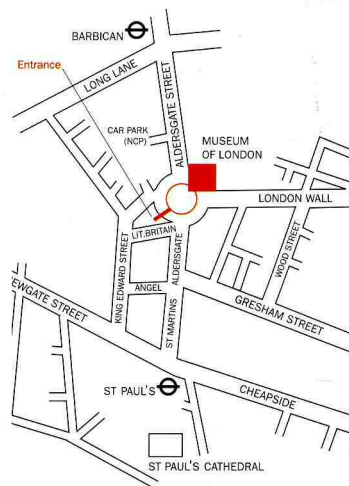
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Cover: Roman pottery flagons from the Spitalfields excavation.