

Mosaic

Henry VIII's chapel discovered at Greenwich

Excavations by the Museum of London Archaeology Service at the Royal Hospital in Greenwich have revealed the remains of the royal chapel from Henry VII's palace of *Placentia*, built between 1500 and 1504, and where Henry VIII married Catherine of Aragon. All that survives is a section of floor (about 10 ft by 5 ft) with black and white glazed floor tiles and a border in an elaborate lozenge pattern, some stumps of red-brick wall, and a piece of door or window frame made from Caen stone.

Restoration of Chiswick House gardens

English Heritage has announced that it has secured funding of £7.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the £12.1 million project to restore the gardens at Chiswick House. The gardens are of great historical significance; their layout by William Kent in the 1720s inspired the English landscape style, and they continued to evolve through the work of some of the most significant garden designers of their time. The project will revitalise and restore the historic gardens; landscapes will be replanted, miles of paths will be repaired, and access for the many people who visit every year will be improved, alongside the provision of much better information about the site.

Restoration of Pumping Station

The Pumping Station at the heart of London's historic sewage system is to be restored by the Crossness Engines Trust after receiving £99,000 in development funds and the provisional offer of a £1.4 million grant. Located on Erith Marshes in Bexley, Crossness Pumping Station was designed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette as part of a sewage solution to combat the cholera and typhoid outbreaks that crippled London during the 'Great Stink' of 1858. The system comprised 85 miles of sewers across London, and the Pumping Station was an engineering triumph, incorporating the four largest rotary beam engines in the world. Three Grade-I listed buildings will be restored, including the Boiler House, Beam Engine House and Triple Expansion Engine House, and a host of new facilities will be created, including an exhibition exploring the history of public health, pollution and the environment.

New funding for museums

Over £4m has been pledged by the HLF to London's Jewish Museum, with the aim of turning one of the city's less well-known museums into a world-class museum exploring the heritage of the Jewish community. As a legacy of its amalgamation from the former Jewish Museum and the London Museum of Jewish Life, the collection is currently split over sites in Albert Street, Camden Town, and at the Sternberg Centre in Finchley. The grant will extend the site in Albert Street, so that both collections can be combined in one location for the first time, and will triple the amount of space currently available.

A major milestone in the long-running efforts to create a Black History Museum and Archive was reached when Lambeth Council granted a 99-year lease to the Black Cultural Archives, securing Raleigh Hall in central Brixton as the base for a new Black Heritage Centre. Raleigh Hall has been empty for ten years and needs extensive repairs, but the new building should open in 2009. The Black Cultural Archive was created in 1981, when black history was little taught or recognised in UK schools. It exists to demonstrate the contribution of people of African and Caribbean descent to the history of Britain.

New research project on medieval London

The Arts and Humanities Research Council has awarded a grant of £240,000 to the Centre for Metropolitan History for a new research project called *Londoners and the Law: pleadings in the court of common pleas, 1399–1509*. It will open up a major source of information about the everyday life of Londoners in the 15th century, revealing disputes over such things as unpaid bills and runaway servants and apprentices. The research will deepen our understanding of how the law interacted with everyday life, in the areas of work, domestic and family life or urban regulation.

The project will analyse and make available online information from the 'plea rolls' of the court of common pleas – the largest surviving body of medieval English common law records, which are held in the National Archives. Data from the project will be made available on British History Online, the Institute for Historical Research's digital library of British history.