

identifies the area now Union Street as 'Lambeth Marsh', across which ran a number of channels to aid drainage, and it is probable that the post-medieval ditch is one such channel. The first buildings erected in the area are those recorded on the Rocque map when Union Street was known

as Queens Street. The foundations recorded at 97–101 were typically 18th-century, and the houses above survived until the Second World War. The public house at 103 Union Street, on the corner of Great Guildford Street, was rebuilt, whilst the houses were not.

1. B. Yule and B. Rankov 'Legionary Soldiers in 3rd-century Southwark' in B. Watson (ed.) *J Roman Archaeol (Supplementary Series no. 24)* (1988) 67–77.
2. B. Barber and J. Hall 'Digging up the people of Roman London: Interpreting evidence from Roman London's cemeteries' in I. Haynes, H. Sheldon

- and L. Hannigan (eds) *London Underground, The Archaeology of a City* (2000) 102–121.
3. C. Cowan *Urban development in north-west Roman Southwark*. MoLAS Monograph 16 (2003).
4. B. Watson (ed.) *J Roman Archaeol (Supplementary Series no. 24)* (1998).
5. G. Milne *The Port of Roman London* (1985).

Letter

Medieval Gallery at the Museum of London

I was pleased to see the review by Andy Agate and his colleagues from the Institute of Archaeology of the Museum of London's new Medieval London gallery, that appeared in *LA* 11.4 (Spring 2006), and I hope it will encourage readers to visit the new gallery and make up their own minds.

However, perhaps I may be permitted to provide one update and a comment on the article.

What would not have been obvious at the time your reviewers visited the gallery was that the 'story telling space' – 'an incomprehensibly empty void' – was a temporary measure until funding could be found for what had from the start been intended to fill this space. By the time the review appeared in print work was already underway on the construction of a 'late Saxon house' in this corner. It is based on the MoLAS excavations in Guildhall Yard, which revealed 11th-century streets and buildings in the by that time waterlogged interior of the former Roman amphitheatre (see Nick Bateman *Gladiators at the Guildhall* (2000) 49–58). Our house (inspired in particular by 'Building 100' on the site – pp 54–5 in *Gladiators*) has been designed and largely constructed by Damian Goodburn, with input from the Museum's own technicians. Thatching the roof and wattle-and-daubing of the walls was carried out by East Sussex Archaeology and Museums Partnership, experts in traditional building techniques – visitors to the museum over Easter could see this in progress and smell the never-to-be-forgotten smell of fresh daub. This will be a venue for Saxon story-telling sessions

and for visitors to sit and soak up the atmosphere (!) and handle replica objects. In due course it will be balanced by and contrasted with a 'Tudor shop' at the other end of the gallery.

We are disappointed that the reviewers feel we have missed the opportunity 'to create a forward-thinking exhibition and use [our] collections in a dynamic and ground-breaking way'. I'd welcome advice on how we might have been more 'forward-thinking'. I'm afraid the one suggestion made – displaying an awl piercing a hole in a belt to demonstrate how it was used – would in the context of the Museum of London not be 'forward-looking' but decidedly 'retro', since such displays featured when we first opened in 1976. And, rightly or wrongly, our current design strategy largely excludes 'images and virtual representations of people in "real" situations' – our Roman London gallery is a fine example of an earlier MoL approach. There are features that we feel are at least up-to-date – the listening post and A/Vs, the children's captions and interactives, the 'Game of Life' and the computers (and you can now access the last on-line on the Museum of London's website at <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/EventsExhibitions/Permanent/medieval/>). All these come as part of the package, and were particularly aimed at a family audience.

The new gallery is certainly attracting more people, and comments are largely positive – we're just starting a formal evaluation of visitor reactions, and I look forward to seeing the results of that.

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