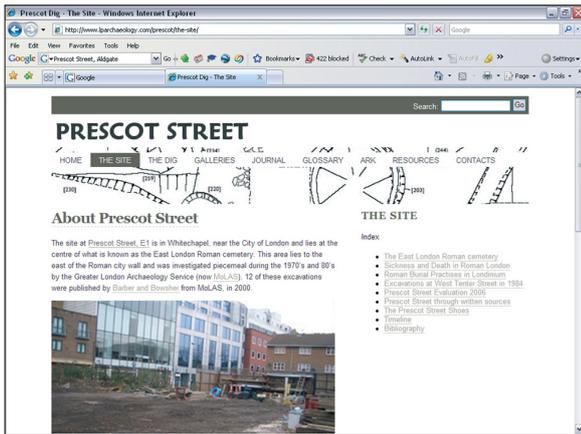


Dig goes digital in Prescott Street

Comprehensive resources on a new website will provide greater public access to an excavation on the City's edge. Lorna Richardson explains how.



In January 2008, L – P : Archaeology will be taking a big step into the future as we launch an innovative digital strategy for an excavation at Prescott Street, E1. We have created a project website that contains a diverse array of information that will bring to life the day-to-day work on an archaeological excavation and make raw data available to researchers and the public.

The site

L – P : Archaeology undertook an extensive field evaluation at Prescott Street in 2006. This demonstrated the survival of Roman, medieval and post-medieval remains. The Prescott Street site lies at the centre of what is known as the East London Roman Cemetery, and previous excavations in the area have revealed a substantial number of burials dating to the 1st – 4th centuries AD. This was one of several cemeteries serving the city of *Londinium* and its suburbs. The site is one of the largest areas of undeveloped land left within the range of the Roman cemetery.

Real-time results

All of the excavation data will be made available online in real-time, including: plans, photographs, written records, interpretations, environmental, stratigraphic and finds information and interpretive text. Using ARK (the Archaeological Recording Kit), a web-based recording system developed by L – P : Archaeology, data are entered into a spatially-enabled database. As soon as records have been checked the digital record will "go live", allowing the general public to see and interact with results as work progresses.

In order to make this resource more useful, information about the history and archaeology of the site and immediate area will be available on the website, offering pathways into the raw data itself. Part

of the material available will include original downloadable teaching resources, supporting the National Curriculum.

Site staff will contribute to the website through a regular 'blog' style journal as part of their paid work. These will focus on the thoughts and interpretations of individual excavators as they work.

Aims

Commercial excavations are not safe places for visitors and site visits are difficult to arrange. Using the internet allows commercial archaeology safe and comprehensive engagement with the community. By providing a means for non-archaeologists to access and understand the archaeology on site, L – P : Archaeology intends to provide an all important middle step between the raw data and the formal finished report.

This resource should be more useful as a research tool than the inclusion of data in CD or microfilm format within the final publication of the site. The aim is to enhance the accessibility of data and the ways in which it can be interrogated. ARK will allow people to link to and cross-reference raw data, ask new questions and create new narratives.

We hope that this web site will have something for everyone, from school children and the local community, to academics and professional archaeologists. In addition to providing the public with a window onto the excavation process, our aim is to drive forward digital recording methodologies, demonstrate their usefulness to other archaeologists and highlight some of the many different ways of sharing data with other archaeologists and the wider community.

View the website: www.lparcology.com/prescot/



TOP LEFT: A page from the Prescott Street website.

FAR LEFT AND LEFT: A Roman burial and a medieval pouline type shoe vamp and sole from the 2006 evaluation

Further information:
lparcology.com