

Mosaic

Shakespeare's first theatre uncovered

It has long been known that an open air playhouse, called *The Theatre*, stood somewhere in Shoreditch, and traces of its location were found in by MoLAS in 2002.¹ A venture of the travelling player James Burbage, it was one of London's first dedicated playhouses when it opened in 1576, and it was here that a young William Shakespeare trod the boards as part of The Lord Chamberlain's Men company of players, and had his first plays performed. A tenancy dispute led to *The Theatre* being dismantled and its timbers transported south of the river, where they were used to construct *The Globe* in 1599.

Museum of London Archaeology, whose previous excavations at the sites of the *Rose*, *Globe* and *Hope* theatres, and earlier work on *The Theatre*, has helped map out the Shakespearian city, found the footings of what appears to be part of a polygonal structure during their evaluation of a site at New Inn Broadway, Shoreditch. The shape, age and location of these remains all point to their being part of the lost Theatre. It is thought that they form the north-eastern corner of the building, which followed a design described in Henry V as "this wooden O". A wonderful serendipity saw the discovery made during excavations on a site being prepared for the building of a new theatre, by the Tower Theatre Company. It is hoped that the plans of the new theatre building will allow the archaeological remains to be preserved *in situ*, and discussions are in progress between the Tower Theatre Company, English Heritage and Hackney Council.

1. J. Bowsher 'Holywell Priory and The Theatre in Shoreditch' *London Archaeologist* 11 no. 9 (2007) 231–234.

Gresham Ship Project

The discovery of an armed Elizabethan merchant ship in the Thames in 2003 was a major event for all those interested in maritime archaeology or in the history of Tudor London. The vessel was discovered by the Port of London Authority, during their estuary dredging programme in the Princes Channel. Substantial sections of the hull were recorded by a team of maritime archaeologists led by Jens Auer, and samples from these timbers have provided a dendro date of 1574. Many artefacts were also recovered, including iron bars, lead and tin ingots as well as four guns. One of these displayed the monogram 'TG' and was identified as the mark of the famous Tudor financier Thomas Gresham, who was responsible for establishing the Royal Exchange and also Gresham College.

A five-year research programme is now underway to study and publish the 'Gresham

Ship', and to set this discovery in its context, with the work co-ordinated by University College London and, appropriately, Gresham College itself. Other partners include the University of Southern Denmark, who are undertaking the study of the hull with the support of the Nautical Archaeology Society, and the Royal Armouries, who are responsible for work on the guns from the wreck. Specialist advice is also being provided by English Heritage, the Receiver of Wreck, the Museum of London and the Museum in Docklands.

As part of the wider context, Gresham College has already organised a lecture programme on historical studies of the Tudor Port, and a major one-day conference looking at recent archaeological studies of the 16th-century harbour and its shipping. These programmes are summarised below, and are scheduled to coincide with the Port of London Authority's centenary year in 2009. That year is also the 450th anniversary of the Elizabethan Port Reforms of 1559, which saw the 'Legal Quays' established in the Pool of London, a system that established the shape and workings of the harbour until the development of the enclosed docks in the 19th century.

It is intended to bring together all the papers from the lecture series and the conference, and to publish a major volume on the archaeology and history of the port of Tudor London, the success of which depended so much on the work of men like Sir Thomas Gresham. The lecture series will take place on Wednesday evenings, 6–7 p.m., at Gresham College, Barnards Inn Hall, Holborn, London EC1N 2HH. Admission to these lectures is free, and no booking is required, but arrive early to ensure you get a seat. See Diary for dates; later lectures will be listed in the Winter issue. For details of the conference see Diary.

Upminster Windmill restored

This 75-foot-high mill is the only one of its type in London, and is regarded as one of the finest surviving examples of a smock mill in Britain. One of the two pairs of sails, which once provided the power for her four millstones, was destroyed in a severe storm in January 2007.

After 18 months of waiting, a replacement pair was hauled up by a giant crane and attached to the mill on Tuesday 29 July. The sails measure 80 feet from tip to tip. They are so long that wood to make a new pair is not available in Britain and had to be specially imported from Norway. The new sails have cost around £30,000 and were made by Vincent Pargetter of Ingatstone, one of Britain's few remaining millwrights. It is nearly 40 years since any new sails were last installed on the mill.

The mill is located in St. Mary's Lane, Upminster, near Upminster Underground

station. It is open from 2 to 5 p.m. on some weekends from April to October. See <http://www.upminsterwindmill.co.uk/> for details.

£60 m for London's buildings at risk

As a sign of what can be achieved if only politicians would take more seriously their duty of stewardship towards the historic environment, London's Mayor, Boris Johnson, responded to the news that there are 572 at-risk listed buildings in the capital by pledging that £60 m out of the £331 m housing budget will be used to bring such properties back into use for much-needed housing. Recognising that not all at-risk buildings would be suitable, he nevertheless said that 210 were residential buildings, of which 140 (67%) were vacant and 42 (20%) partly vacant. He called on owners to work with their local authority to bid for money to improve the condition and use of these properties for housing.

Residential listed buildings in London which could be refurbished range from a Victorian villa in Enfield and a Gothick country house in Ealing, to the remains of a Wren church in Upper Thames Street in the City. There are also many non-residential listed buildings on the At Risk Register that could be successfully converted into housing, including a 19th-century sailmakers and chandlers in West India Dock Road and a former workshop and engineering works in Park Street, Southwark.

In a message to warm the hearts of conservationists everywhere, Boris said: 'I believe, like English Heritage, that London's heritage is possibly its greatest asset after its people. Buildings like these must be made to live again, to serve as much needed housing and to give character and dignity to our streets. I am not prepared, as Mayor, to stand by and see history, in the form of buildings like these, hit the skip.'

(Source: Salon, the Society of Antiquaries Online Newsletter)

A 'skeleton key' for London

The Museum of London, in association with *The Times*, has produced a new electronic map or 'skeleton key' of London. It allows users to view the locations of the 37,000 skeletons the Museum has located in the capital down to the level of postcode, and is available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/science/article4228215.ece>. The location of the skeletons on the map can be refined down with decent accuracy, and each location is accompanied by a pop-up box with details. Sadly these details don't include references, so the value of the map as a research tool is limited. Nevertheless, it's still a fascinating viewing tool.

Diary

October

9 (8 p.m.) Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. 'Excavations at Hatch Furlong' by Jonathan Cotton. Mayo Hall, United Reformed Church, Union Street/Eden Street, Kingston.

10 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'The Prescott Street, Aldgate, Excavation and Digital Outreach Project' by Lorna Richardson. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.

13 (7.45 p.m.) West Essex Archaeological Group. 'Recent Excavations at St. Martin's in the Fields' by Alison Telfer. Sixth Form Unit, Woodford County High School, High Road, Woodford Green.

14 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. 'The Archaeology of Standing Buildings' by Andrew Westman. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.

14 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'Community archaeology in Greater London. Outreach work and excavations at Prescott Street' by Lorna Richardson. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3.

17 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'The excavations at Drapers Gardens' by Neil Hawkins. St Katharine Cree Church Hall, Leadenhall Street, London EC3.

29 (6 p.m.) Gresham College. 'The Tudor Ports of London: Queen Elizabeth 1 and the Politics of Prosperity' by Robert Baldwin. Barnards's Inn Hall, Holborn, EC1.

November

5 (8 p.m.) Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society. 'Epsom through the camera' by Jeremy Harte. St Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell.

6 (6.30 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. 'Archaeological assemblages from 19th-century houses' by Nigel Jeffries. Terrace Room, Museum of London.

10 (7.45 p.m.) West Essex Archaeological Group. 'The Londinium Doughnut' by Jon Cotton. Sixth Form Unit, Woodford County High School, High Road, Woodford Green.

11 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. 'Montague Close Excavations 40 years on' by Graham Dawson. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.

11 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'Bletchley Park: Enigma – how cracking the enemy codes led to the world's first computer' by Hugh Davies. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3.

14 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'A bite of the past' by Melanie Parker and Jelena Bekvalac. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.

26 (6 p.m.) Gresham College. 'The Tudor Ports of London: The Legal Quays: Sir William Paulet, First Marquis of Winchester'

by Alan Bryson. Barnards's Inn Hall, Holborn, EC1.

December

4 (6.30 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. 'Revisiting the Temple of Mithras and St Swithin's house – new discoveries on 'old' sites' by Sophie Jackson. Terrace Room, Museum of London.

8 (7.45 p.m.) West Essex Archaeological Group. 'Essex or London? The archaeology of the Roding Valley' by John Shepherd. Sixth Form Unit, Woodford County High School, High Road, Woodford Green.

12 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'Bermondsey Abbey: ten years of excavation' by Alistair Douglas. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.

14 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. AGM and 'Local Museums and The Heritage' by Dennis Turner. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.

January

8 (6.30 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. 'Hospitallers and Templars in Greater London and beyond' by Pam Willis. Terrace Room, Museum of London.

13 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. 'Excavations at Drapers Gardens' by Neil Hawkins. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.

13 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'An exploration of the Western Desert of Egypt' by Nicole Douek. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3.

28 (6 p.m.) Gresham College. 'The Tudor Ports of London: Richard Hakluyt: London's role in navigation and history' by Anthony Payne. Barnards's Inn Hall, Holborn, EC1.

Conferences

Roman Discoveries in Kent and London. Council for Kentish Archaeology, Saturday 25 October at The Powell Lecture Theatre, Canterbury Christ Church College, North Holmes Road, Canterbury. Speakers include Neil Hawkins on the Drapers Gardens Hoard. Tickers price £4 from CKA, 7 Sandy Ridge, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8HP (sae please). Website www.the-cka.fsnet.co.uk.

The Tudor Port of London: An Archaeological Investigation, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 16 May 2009 at the Museum in Docklands. Building on the historical research presented in the lecture series at Gresham College, this conference provides an overview of the Tudor port from an archaeological perspective. It looks at the topography of the harbour, its wharves and

buildings, its ships and shipping, as well as the evidence for traffic and trade. There will also be presentations on the 'Gresham Ship'. Speakers include: Jens Auer, Geoff Egan, Hazel Forsyth, Damian Goodburn, Phil Magrath, Frank Meddens, Gustav Milne, Geoff Pavitt, Jacqui Pearce and Roy Stephenson. Places are limited. Admission is by ticket only, booked in advance from Gresham College (020) 7831 0575 or by email through enquiries@gresham.ac.uk.

Exhibitions

Jack the Ripper and the East End, at the Museum in Docklands until 2 November. The first major exhibition to examine the Jack the Ripper murders and their enduring legacy. Stepping back in time to late-Victorian Whitechapel, the exhibition will uncover the human stories behind the sensational reports and explore the lives of the victims, witnesses, suspects and police, and the world they lived in.

Pirates of the East End, an exhibition of artefacts from Limehouse residences of known privateers recovered during excavations by PCA and MoLAS at Narrow Street and the adjacent Victoria Wharf sites. At Sampson and Horne Antiques, 120 Mount Street, W1, Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. until 19 December. For more information see www.sampsonandhorne.com.

Membership

Individual membership of the Council for British Archaeology, which includes six issues a year of *British Archaeology*, costs £32 p.a.; joint membership with the *London Archaeologist* costs £40 p.a. Payment should be sent to C.B.A., St Mary's House, Bootham, York, YO30 7BZ (01904 671 417).

Practical archaeology

AOC Archaeology Group. Contact Melissa Melikian, Post-Excavation Manager (020 8843 7380).

London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre. Contact Archive Manager, Roy Stephenson (020 7566 9317).

Croydon & District. Contact Jim Davison, 8 Brentwood Road, South Croydon, CR2 0ND.
Borough of Greenwich. Contact Greenwich Heritage Centre, Building 41, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, SE18 6SP (020 8854 2452).

Hammersmith & Fulham. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 85 Rannoch Road, W6 9SX (020 7385 3723).

Kingston. Enquiries to 020 8546 5386.

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. Contact Finds Manager, Märit Gaimster (020 7639 9091).