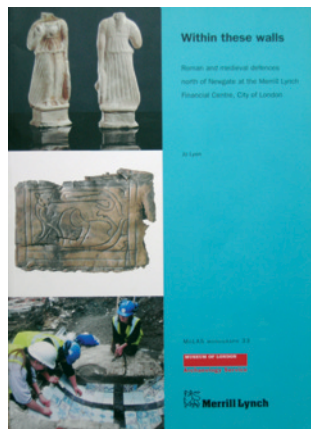


Within these Walls: Roman and medieval defences north of Newgate at the Merrill Lynch Financial Centre, City of London



Jo Lyon

Museum of London
Archaeology Service
MoLAS Monograph 33

2007

193 pages
165 figures: 127 colour, 38
black and white, plus 16 tables
Bibliography and index

£24.95

Reviewed by John Brown

This MoLAS monograph has been on my shelf for a while, and I have found myself going back to it on several occasions. It deals with the development of the Newgate area, focusing on the development and subsequent decay of the Roman, medieval and post-medieval defensive system, in particular the Roman walls and medieval town ditch. The site is also of considerable importance from an ecclesiastical point of view, as the location of the Greyfriars precinct and later Christ Church Hospital and the Compter Prison. This one volume arguably tells you most of what you need to know about the general development and predominant themes of western City archaeology.

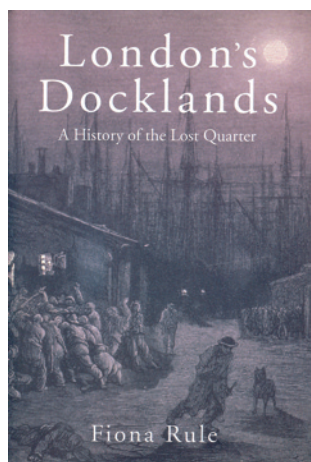
Author Jo Lyon has to be congratulated for a well constructed narrative of excavations over a long period. Archive records of the early 20th-century General Post Office site by Norman and Reader are integrated into the complex sequence, showing what can be done with old archives and new analytical techniques.

Two elements stand out for me, each from a different section: the coverage of early Roman development and subsequent defences, and that of finds from the medieval ditch. The artefact discussion for the medieval ditch deposits, particularly for leather, is fantastic, and the specialist analysis incorporated into the main body of the text was pleasing to see. However, while this works with large assemblages from significant features, the inclusion of lists of fabric codes to provide evidence for dating of smaller features is slightly cumbersome, and rather detracts from the narrative. This level of detail is fine in an assessment report or grey literature, but for publications I would prefer a more elegant solution, perhaps a table listing dating evidence for features of each phase, also cross-referencing the figures, which generally contain that same information anyway. The specialist appendices themselves are very good, in particular Ian Betts's discussion of the exceptional and rare tiled water cistern.

I would have liked to have more information about two things: the enigmatic N-S wall foundation placed in the early Roman period, the like of which is otherwise unknown in London (why was it phased so early, when the author admits there is a possibility of it being medieval?); and the Greyfriars precinct itself, considering its influence on the post-medieval topography.

We are getting used to MoLAS [now MOLA] volumes setting high standards, but this monograph deserves an Olympic gold for production values. The quality of the graphics generally is excellent, helped in no small part by the quality of the artefacts from this site. While the monograph format is still very much a 'technical' report, this publication is nevertheless of the highest order. It will remain on my bookshelf for a long time to come.

London's Docklands: A History of the Lost Quarter



Fiona Rule

2009

Ian Allan Publishing

289 pages

13 plates

Select bibliography and index

£19.99

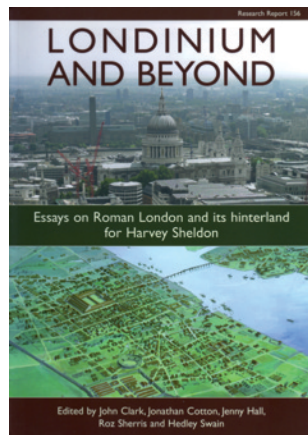
Reviewed by Clive Orton

As a popular account of the history of London's Docklands, this book has too many mistakes: for example, *garum* was not 'made by boiling whole fish' (p. 26), Grimes did not excavate the *Mithraeum* on behalf of the Museum of London (p. 29), and Roman London had more than two cemeteries (p. 31). Tilbury is not in Kent (p. 14), Arundel House and York House are not downstream of Baynards Castle (p. 57) and Willoughby and Chancellor explored the north-east passage (p. 94). The style focuses on the lives of individuals and groups, and their relationships with the area. I would like to have seen more on the topography, perhaps maps showing the extent and development of the docks at various periods.

There are weaknesses in the author's research: all the references are to books, only one from the MoLAS/MOLA series. Wider reading would have revealed topics, such as the construction of the medieval waterfronts and their dating by dendrochronology, and the Narrow Street 'pirate' site in Limehouse, which would have been more relevant than (for example) Drake's circumnavigation.

The book feels old-fashioned: the text is tightly packed in long lines, and the illustrations lie together in the middle. Although many will enjoy reading it, it is a missed opportunity – with more focus on what was happening on the ground, and less about famous personalities, it could have been much better.

Londinium and beyond: Essays on Roman London and its hinterland for Harvey Sheldon



John Clark, Jonathan Cotton,
Jenny Hall, Roz Sherris and
Hedley Swain (eds)

2008
Council for British Archaeology

294 pages
129 figures, in colour and black
and white plus 20 tables
Bibliography and index

£35

Reviewed by Becky Wallower

Harvey Sheldon, was reportedly amazed and delighted to learn not long before publication that friends and colleagues across archaeological disciplines, interests and backgrounds had collaborated on a 'festschrift' in his honour. The subject – what else? – was Roman London and its hinterland, a major focus of his own work, teaching and writing over more than 40 years.

In developing an idea of Martin Henig, the editors have sought not just to pay tribute to Harvey's career, but to extend knowledge and scholarship in the process, both by selecting a huge range of topics for the 31 papers, and by relating the four broad themes of the volume to the 2002 *Research Framework for London Archaeology*.

The first section forms a framework, covering Roman London's development, and its historical study, cartography and chronology. Discussions of the maps and illustrations we rely on, from antiquarian studies to computer generated versions, offer a useful framework. Fulford updates Harvey's own 1980s work on

the 3rd-century pattern of Roman settlement in light of studies since, and Cowie and Brown tackle questions of transition from late Roman to early Saxon London and Southwark.

And so it goes on. The environmental and landscape issues in the second section touch on tree ring dating, Roman gardens, the Walbrook and the Colchester Road on which Harvey cut some of his archaeological teeth (see *LA* vol. 11, no. 9). Aspects of the hinterland from Grim's Dyke in the west, to Westminster, to Shadwell in the east, also get an airing. Within the third section, dealing with the intellectual and religious context of the city's inhabitants, can be found work on Walbrook depositions, cults, burials, education, that 'woman gladiator' and the first known inscription (from Southwark) citing 'Londiniensi' – Londoners.

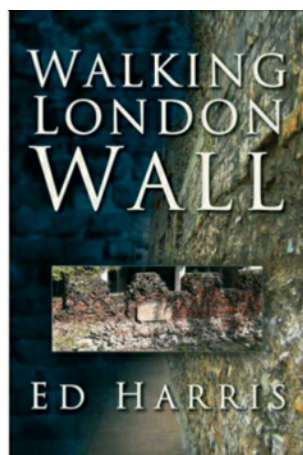
The fourth section is a bit different – it deals with the practical aspects of finds research and forms part of the Londinium series of projects and publications that aim to shed light on life of the people. Again, Southwark's importance is evidenced by Rayner and Seeley's update of the Southwark pottery type-series. Bathing, toilet implements and medical instruments deal with Roman health and well being, while luxury is reflected in catalogues of intaglios and Flavian glass vessels.

A final section details Harvey's own contribution to London's archaeology, complete with vintage photos.

This sort of collaborative venture is invariably difficult to review, so broad is the scope and so varied the style of the authors. I can say though, that the presentation is well paced, well illustrated and well defined. The short articles on the whole cover their topics clearly, thoroughly and to a defined purpose. The temptation is to dip in and sample, but there is much to be gained from reading at least a section through at a time as the issues thrown up within the broad themes are those that are supposed to guide our study of London's archaeology.

From my own knowledge of Harvey as teacher, excavator, lecturer, campaigner/stirrer and energetic enthusiast, I'm sure he has found much to use, to develop and to debate with the authors. For the rest of us, this provides a genuinely useful, thought-provoking set of papers that covers much of the state of knowledge of Roman London as of 2008. I expect it's already a classic resource for students and researchers of London.

Walking London Wall



Ed Harris

2009
The History Press

191 pages
66 black and white figures,
including plans and maps
Bibliography and index

£14.99

Reviewed by Alastair Ainsworth

The publisher's blurb states that "Walking London Wall can be read from the comfort of an armchair or as an on-site guide". I came to the book as a Londoner whose two main hobbies are archaeology and walking.

I initially read it in my armchair and was enthused enough to plan spending a day or two exploring the remaining wall locations. The book is full of fascinating archaeological and historical information about the Roman and medieval London walls, from their construction, through two thousand years of history, and finally the results of recent excavation work.

If you intend to use the brief Field Guide at the back of the book as a guide to walking the wall, then I would advise that, before you set-off, you write in the margin of the Field Guide the applicable pages in the main part of the book. This will allow you to easily find and read the relevant historical information at each stage of your walk, and thereby enhance the enjoyment of your day. Also, take an A to Z with you, as the line drawn maps provided in the book are not sufficient to find your way around.