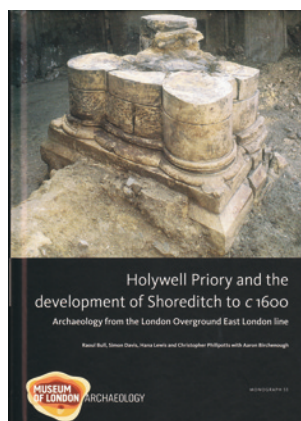


## Holywell Priory and the development of Shoreditch to c1600



Raoul Ball, Simon Davis, Hana Lewis and Christopher Phillips with Aaron Birchenough

Museum of London Archaeology

2011

210 pages, hardback  
colour illustrations, bibliography  
and CD-ROM

£22

Reviewed by Richard Gilpin

Construction work associated with the Overground East London rail line presented an opportunity in 2005–7 for historical and archaeological investigation across a significant part of south Shoreditch. This monograph takes earlier evidence and adds new discoveries from five excavations that took place approximately

300m north of Londinium's northern cemetery.

It is noted briefly that the landscape in the pre-Roman period was probably unoccupied, while evidence of Roman activity includes a group of three burials cut into an earlier Roman ditch. Few finds from the late Saxon period were made, and it is suggested that during the early medieval period the area was an open landscape of fields and moorland.

In the 12th century however, work started on the construction of an Augustinian nunnery in close proximity to a moorland spring called Haliwelle (Holy Well), which gave its name to the Priory now known as Holywell. Documentary evidence for this structure and that of the early priory church (up to 1190) is provided, followed by detailed archaeological evidence from the excavations, during which a total of thirty-one burials were discovered. The same approach, enhanced by many colour plates, is adopted for the later priory church (1190–1539). Evidence from the excavation is discussed within the context of medieval Shoreditch, followed by consideration of the dissolution of the priory, including the reuse of the land on which it had stood. Burbage's 'The Theatre' was constructed on part of the site before being itself dismantled and its timbers used in the construction of the Globe theatre in Southwark.

A further chapter offers an architectural reconstruction of the Priory and compares its architecture and construction to other buildings performing the same functions elsewhere. A detailed presentation of the burials within the church is made.

This fine monograph from MOLA concludes with a collection of appendices by specialists, and the equivalent in A4 of 19 pages of appendices and 97 pages of tables have been placed on a CD-ROM providing data for detailed investigation.

## The Royal Ordnance Factory Hayes: the Story of a World War II Gun and Tank Factory at Hayes in the London Borough of Hillingdon



Nick Holder

Prologis / Museum of London Archaeology

2011

48 pages  
numerous illustrations

£7

Reviewed by Gabriel Moshenska

This is a big title for a tiny book about a large and fascinating site. The history of the Royal Ordnance Factories, the products that they produced and their role in the Second World War is a largely forgotten one: like so many aspects of the 'home front' they lack the glamour of the front lines in popular images and accounts of the conflict. Hayes was a 'gun and carriage

engineering' site specialising in the manufacture of armaments such as medium and heavy artillery. ROF Hayes' most successful product was the 'Firefly' tank: US-built Sherman tanks fitted with the powerful British 17-pounder anti-tank gun, making them the most formidable tanks that the British could field after D-Day. Several atmospheric photographs highlight Fireflies in action.

One of a series of ROFs built around the country, work was completed on ROF Hayes between mid-1940 and late-1941, using prefabricated modular concrete buildings to speed the construction process. The ROF compound included canteens, offices, boiler-houses and garages. It was also built with air raid shelters spaced around its perimeter and pillboxes for land-based defence, all recorded in the survey. The heart of ROF Hayes was the two vast machine sheds, 'A' and 'Y', each measuring 160m by 82m, with a 9m ceiling at the highest points. Guns and other war materials were moved through the sheds by gantry cranes as they proceeded towards completion, with raw materials and finished products entering and leaving the site on the train tracks that ran into the site and into the machine sheds themselves.

Holder's little book provides a potted history of ROF Hayes: its construction and subsequent uses, its major products and its workforce. The use of oral history materials throughout sheds light on features such as the security infrastructure, the canteen and the nursery. Alongside the excellent and plentiful photographs and plans these bring the site to life, and make an interesting and attractive book that is likely to be of value to school students and Second World War history enthusiasts as well as to those who worked at ROF Hayes and their families.