

Mosaic

1258 and all that

Many readers will remember the vast excavations at Spitalfields in the 1990s, when over 10,000 human skeletons, dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries, were discovered. Analysis of this enormous assemblage has taken over ten years, and its publication¹ has revealed some fascinating and unexpected results. Amongst the orderly burials were a number of mass burial pits, which although they could be accurately dated by radiocarbon, the timings didn't marry with devastating events known to have taken place in the medieval period, like the Black Death or the Great Famine. Osteologist Don Walker set about solving the mystery. He turned to contemporary documentary sources, in which he found mention of 'heavy rains', 'there was a failure of the crops; upon which failure, a famine ensued...many thousand persons perished'.

Whilst examining a possible cause for these climatic changes, Don found references to a cataclysmic volcano that erupted in 1258. It is believed to have erupted somewhere in the tropics, most likely Mount Rinjani, Indonesia, but perhaps El Chichón in Mexico or Quilotoa in Ecuador. Its force was such that ice-core data is evident in both hemispheres. The effects of this massive eruption were felt across the globe, as a 'dry fog' descended across the world, cooling the Earth's surface.

Bill McGuire, Professor of Geophysical and Climate Hazards at University College London, said: "This was certainly a prodigious volcanic event; one of the largest in the last few thousand years. Consequently, it is not really a surprise that one legacy should be a serious increase in mortality in London. Through their influence on climate, major volcanic blasts can affect any locality on the planet, and an eruption in distant Indonesia – which is one of a number of host candidates for the 1257/8 eruption – could without doubt reach out to take lives in the UK's capital."

1. Brian Connell, Amy Gray Jones, Rebecca Redfern and Don Walker *A bioarchaeological study of medieval burials on the site of St Mary Spital: excavations at Spitalfields Market, London E1, 1991–2007* MOLA Monograph 60 (2012).

Source:

www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/NewsProjects/SpitalfieldsVolcano.htm

A new service for developers

On 19th September 2012, MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) and FIND launch a new online heritage assessment service for Great Britain, available at HeritageRisk.co.uk. The online and tablet-friendly service offers planners, developers and surveyors the opportunity to order bespoke heritage and archaeology risk assessment reports, simply by selecting the area of a site on an online map.

Bespoke site assessment reports outline the potential impact of proposed developments on historic buildings, archaeological remains and conservation areas. The service is designed for anyone wanting to know what heritage issues there may be on a specific site. In particular, the service offers vital early-stage insight into risks that may impact on the success of a development.

By using HeritageRisk, users remove the time consuming process of communicating complex site boundaries and details over the phone or by email. The ease of usability makes this the only heritage assessment service of its kind.

HeritageRisk reports are available in two formats: a 'rapid', high-level site assessment that identifies significant archaeological and built heritage risks at the pre-planning stage of development; and a 'detailed' report that provides more extensive information to help to identify key archaeological and built heritage risks or opportunities for a site and to outline the work likely to be required as part of a planning consent.

HeritageRisk reports start from £320, and include the full range of historical maps from Ordnance Survey going back to 1890.

Success for The Rose Revealed

The *Rose Revealed* project has been awarded a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to work up its plans to preserve the archaeological site of the Elizabethan theatre on London's Bankside and to create a visitor and

performance centre (see *Mosaic* in Vol. 13, no. 6, 168).

Broomfield House

For many years Enfield Council has been working to find a solution to restore Broomfield House, a Grade II* listed building, to its former glory. After three fires, in 1983, 1993 and 1994 the house now lies derelict and supported by scaffolding. Previous solutions have included looking towards commercial uses, demolition or housing, but none has been successful.

The house is of national and regional significance, and encouraged by interest shown recently by the Heritage Lottery Fund the Council has made a bid for funding to restore it.

The bid has been produced by Enfield Council and the Broomfield House Trust, Friends of Broomfield Park and other interested local residents. It will, if successful, see the restored Broomfield House being a heritage and learning centre, a place which schools can use to bring history alive, and a venue to display artworks and other collections. It will be fully accessible to local residents, visitors and tourists.

William Morris Gallery re-opens

The William Morris Gallery occupies a Grade II* Georgian house, built in the 1740s, which was Morris's family home from 1848 to 1856. The only public Gallery devoted to William Morris, it reopened in August 2012 following a major redevelopment. It is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays to Sundays, and is located at Lloyd Park, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4PP.

£3000 prize for a thesis on Kent archaeology or history

Kent Archaeological Society's 2013 Hasted Prize will be awarded to the author of what is adjudged as the best master's or doctoral thesis on any aspect of the archaeology or history of Kent (including those areas once within the county but now part of London). For information and submission guidelines contact Professor David Killingray, Chair, KAS Publications Committee, 72 Bradbourne Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QA, tel: 01732 453008, email: dmkillingray@hotmail.com.

Diary

Please note that some societies anticipate a donation for attendance by non-members.

January

8 (6.30 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. 'Shakespeare's London Theatreland: 20 years of archaeology' by Julian Bowsher. Museum of London.
8 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society. 'Further work on the Thameslink Project' by a speaker from PCA. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.
8 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'The reign of Akhenaten: revolution or evolution?' by Lucia Gahlin. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley, N3.
18 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'Excavations in the Roman town of Sandy, Beds' by Catherine Edwards. St Olave's Hall, Mark Lane, EC3.
18 (8 p.m.) Enfield Archaeological Society. 'The new look Cutty Sark' by Jessica Lewis. Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

February

2 (3 p.m.) Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society. 'Carshalton and Wallington before and after the railway' by John Phillips and Cheryl Bailey. Milton Hall, Cooper Crescent, Carshalton.
6 (8 p.m.) Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society. 'Fire Backs' by Jeremy Hodkinson. St Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell.
8 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'The Archaeology of the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar' by Catherine Sinnott. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.
12 (6.15 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. AGM and 'London and the Saxons: Wheeler 80 years on' by Julian Bowsher. Martin Biddle. Museum of London.
12 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society. 'The Guy's Hospital Roman boat – to lift or not to lift' by Jane Sidell. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.
12 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'From Longboat to Warrior: the evolution of the wooden ship' by Elliott Wragg. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley, N3.
15 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'AGM and speaker tbc. St Olave's Hall, Mark Lane, EC3.
15 (8 p.m.) Enfield Archaeological Society. 'Greeks, Romans and Byzantines: the archaeology of Constantinople' by Ian Jones. Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

March

2 (2.45 p.m.) Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society. AGM and reports on the year's activities. Milton Hall, Cooper Crescent, Carshalton.
6 (8 p.m.) Epsom & Ewell History &

Archaeology Society. AGM followed by a talk by Jon Cotton. St Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell.

8 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'Settlement under the sand – Viking Orkney' by David Griffiths. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.

12 (6.30 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. 'The medieval church and cloisters of Austin Friars' by Nick Holder. Museum of London.

12 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society. Symposium with various speakers. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.

12 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'The Railway Heritage Trust' by Andy Savage. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley, N3.

15 (8 p.m.) Enfield Archaeological Society. 'Old and new finds of the coin collection' by David Thorold. Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

April

3 (8 p.m.) Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society. 'The story of bee-keeping' by Liz Knee. St Mary's Church Hall, London Road, Ewell.

6 (3 p.m.) Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society. 'Tin-glazed tiles' by Ian Betts. Milton Hall, Cooper Crescent, Carshalton.

9 (6.30 p.m.) London & Middlesex Archaeological Society. '200 years of the Hunterian Museum' by Milly Farrell. Museum of London.

9 (7.30 p.m.) Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society. 'The Roman and medieval landscape at Bermondsey Square' by a speaker from PCA. The Housing Co-op Hall, 106 The Cut, SE1.

9 (8 p.m.) Hendon & District Archaeological Society. 'Nautical Archaeology – past, present and future' by Mark Beattie-Edwards. Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley, N3.

10 (5 p.m.) Royal Archaeological Institute. 'The coronation chair and the stone of destiny re-examined' by Warwick Rodwell and Marie Louise Sauerberg. Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. Non-members please make themselves to known to one of the officers before the meeting.

12 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'Zeppelins, Andersons and Ack Ack: the 20th-century conflict archaeology of London' by Andy Brockman. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.

Courses

Anglo-Norman London, 6.30 to 8.30 p.m., Wednesdays from 16th January to 27th March, at the Museum of London. Tutor: Robin Densum. Fee £325 with some concessions.

Everyday life in medieval London 1000–1500 AD, Mondays from 15th April to 1st July, at the Museum of London. Fee £300 with some concessions. For both courses, enrol with Birkbeck, University of London.

Conferences

Surrey Archaeological Society Annual Symposium 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 9th February, at the Peace Memorial Hall, Woodfield Lane, Ashted. Tickets price £10 from Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Guildford, GU1 3SX (please enclose s.a.e.) or £12 on the door.

Roman Cities and Ports: Londinium and Ostia, Council for Kentish Archaeology Conference, 2 to 5 p.m., Saturday 20th April, at Sevenoaks Community Centre, Cramptons Road, Sevenoaks. Speakers include Harvey Sheldon and John Shepherd. Further information can be found on the CKA website, www.the-cka.fsnet.co.uk, or from Ruth Plummer on (020) 8777 7872. Tickets price £5 from Dick Ansell, 7 Sandy Ridge, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8HP, or at the door. Cheques payable to CKA (enclose s.a.e. please).

Exhibitions

Doctors, Dissection and Resurrection Men, at the Museum of London until 14th April 2013. Not suitable for children under 12 years of age. Admission £9, children and concessions £7; to book call (020) 7001 9844 or visit www.museumoflondon.org.uk/dissection.

Membership

Individual membership of the Council for British Archaeology, which includes six issues a year of *British Archaeology*, costs £34 p.a. Visit: <https://shop.britarch.ac.uk/>.

Practical archaeology

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

London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre. Contact Archive Manager, Francis Grew (020 7566 9317).

Croydon & District. Contact Jim Davison, 8 Brentwood Road, South Croydon, CR2 0ND.

Borough of Greenwich. Contact Greenwich Heritage Centre (020 8854 2452).

Hammersmith & Fulham. Contact Keith Whitehouse (020 7385 3723).

Kingston. Enquiries to 020 8546 5386.

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

Surrey. Enquiries to Rob Poulton, Archaeological Unit Manager, Surrey History Centre (01483 594 634).